

## The Witnessing Attitude and Meditation

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If you want to be a drashta, be a drashta this year of your actions, attitudes and behaviours, and rectify them. If you want to meditate this year, remain focussed in all the moments of dissipation and distraction. That should be your meditation. Like Shukhdev, let the drums play and remain fixed and one-pointed, let the girls dance and remain fixed and one-pointed, let the wine flow and remain fixed and one-pointed.

### The story of Shukhdev

Shukhdev was a young sage, and a time came when society thought that he was greater than his father in knowledge, attainment, and in every way. Therefore, his father decided to teach Shukhdev that his attainments were not perfect and that he should have no pride in them. He called Shukhdev, the young sadhu, and said, "Go to the court of King Janaka and ask him how it was possible to become a self-realized being while governing a kingdom."

Shukhdev travelled to the court of the emperor, and there he saw the affluence, wealth and prosperity, the dancing girls, the wines, the gold and jewellery, and the beauty. He began to think, "How can this king, who is surrounded by all these objects of sensual gratification, tell me how to be liberated from the bondage of life?"

However, his father had told him to approach the king, so he had to do it. He went to the king and said, "King Janaka, I have come to learn why society knows you as self-realized, yet I see you surrounded by all these sensual trappings." King Janaka said, "I am engaged right now, as today we are celebrating the Foundation Day of our city, and there is a major festival in the city. Come and see me this evening. Today you may visit the city and see all the sights. My bodyguards will guide you." Shukhdev became very happy, thinking, "I will have royal bodyguards with me, and I shall walk around the city looking at everything". Then the king said, "However, there is only one thing that you need to do. Take a pitcher full of water on your head, and let not a single drop fall. If a single drop of water falls from that pitcher, my bodyguards will cut off your head".

Shukhdev said, "Fine", and he took a pitcher filled to the brim with water, put it on his head and started to walk, accompanied by the two bodyguards. Their swords were ready, and they told him, "If you spill a single drop of water, we will chop off your head." For five hours, Shukhdev walked amongst all the sights and the beauty of the city, and then returned to the court of the king.

King Janaka asked Shukhdev, "Did you like the decorations in the city, did you like the lights, the colours, and the pandals? Did you like the beauty of the city?" Shukhdev answered, "When there were two bodyguards with their swords ready to cut off my head, my whole focus was on not spilling the water. I did not see anything. I did not see any person, I did not see any colours, I did not see any lights, and I did not see any festival or fair. My whole attention was fixed on not letting a single drop of water fall." The king replied, "Now you have the answer for which you came."

## Peace and balance

That is the secret. That is what Sri Swamiji has taught also, when he said there is no noise in the world and there is no silence in the mountains. If one's mind is noisy, even in a cave one will not find silence, and if one's mind is at peace, even in the middle of Munger market one will not hear a single sound. King Janaka told Shukhdev, "If you can remain balanced, then the world cannot influence, affect, alter or challenge you." Therefore, one should maintain one's peace and balance – that is the biggest drashta and the highest meditation.