

## Transforming Challenge into Ecstasy

### Spiritual Wisdom

*The heart, like the grape, is prone to delivering its harvest in the same moment it appears to be crushed.*

—Roger Housden

Some ancient philosophies from India describe intense emotions, such as great joy and paralyzing fear, as potent opportunities to break free from the world of illusion and move into a higher awareness.

One scripture called the *Spanda Karikas* explains that during experiences of vehement anger, surprise, and fear, your mind automatically stops. These moments are some of the best times to focus your attention inside yourself with the intention of gaining entrance into the background consciousness behind your thoughts. This practice of vigilance in the midst of emotional challenge can help you grasp the ecstatic experience of supreme reality that exists behind all the illusions of worldly life.

One example given in this scripture is of someone who is running for his life from an elephant — a more likely event in ancient India than it is in modern societies! Picture this person, though. An elephant is running after him. The fellow is running for his life, and while that's happening, he remembers the greater vision of universal reality and shifts into a spiritual awareness beyond the running, beyond the fear, and beyond thought. He becomes identified with the witness who is dreaming the dream of his life.