

SADHANA SHAKTI

by

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There is a thing called *sadhana shakti*, a power that gets generated within oneself through the practice of *sadhana*. While *sadhana* may look like something that we are doing, there is another factor associated with this so-called doing - namely, an atmosphere that it creates. An atmosphere here is to be understood as a field of energy, a magnetic environment, as it were, with which one clothes oneself, and which acts as a blanket over the person practicing *sadhana*. Performances of any kind - works, whatever they be, and events taking place in any fashion anywhere - have a peculiar characteristic of creating an atmosphere around themselves.

When some event takes place or some action is performed, we generally believe that there are only two sides of the matter - the one that causes the event or does the work, and the other in the direction of which the event moves or the work is directed. Only two things are necessary for anything to take place. Someone should *do* on the one side, and there must be something in respect of which it is done. This is also the case with events which are not always associated with individual persons. An event also is like an individual. It is a stress in a particular location, even as the work that we do also is a stress in the location of our personality.

We generate two kinds of atmosphere around ourselves in accordance with the nature of our conduct, especially our psychological conduct. We call it character, but the behaviour of a person is principally a mental attitude. Whatever is the gesture of the mind at any given moment of time, that should be considered as the attitude of the person concerned, irrespective of physical gestures or external arrangements, and the like.

The person is the mind. The person is not the body. Anything that is material, externally tagged on to a person, cannot be regarded as essential to the person. So the person's behaviour is, therefore, not to be judged in terms of these external material associations, even if it be a large material gift offered. That gesture of a gift materially offered cannot be considered as the real attitude of the person because the person is the thought, the feeling, the intention, the purposiveness, the aim, and whatever is expected thereby. We create a negative atmosphere around ourselves if our relationship with people or things in general is centred around the exploitation of that particular thing, or the individual concerned, in terms of like and dislike, love and hatred.

To love or to hate – it may look like only two terms of relation are required: one that loves and one that is loved, one that hates and one that is hated. We require only two things for this to happen. But it is not so. The consequence of love and hatred is not limited to the locality of the loved person or the loving person, the hated person or the hating person. It is a field, the meaning of which has to be clear to our minds. It is a wide relation. To love a thing or to hate a thing, to mentally gesticulate in respect to a person or a thing, some action has to take place in the consciousness. This is not difficult to understand, especially if we can remember that objects that are loved and hated need not necessarily be very near us. A thing that is loved may be ten kilometres or a hundred kilometres away, and so is the case with that which is hated.

So how does love operate and hatred operate, considering the large physical distance that can be there between the two terms of the relation, love and hatred? The operation of love and hatred, irrespective of physical distance, brings to relief a great truth that loves and hatreds are not necessarily physical elements. They are not conditioned entirely by the physical personalities of the persons or things so related, apparently. A ripple, a gyration of a force, a whirl as it were, invisible to the physical eye of any person, suddenly erupts in the area of the action of the mind of the person that loves or hates; and this peculiar phenomenon that is inseparable from the mental attitude of love and hatred is always lost sight of in the hurry and bustle of the emotional activity of love and hatred.

There is an invisible factor operating behind the loves and hatreds. This invisible factor is imperatively there, without which love cannot be there, and hatred also cannot be there. This peculiar thing is not an object of sense perception, and cannot even be ordinarily believed to be existing at all because of our daily confinement to our bodies - this body, that body, etc. This peculiar thing is our bondage. Our bondage is not taking place within the anatomical structure of our physical body - taking for the time being that a person is just the physical frame.

To repeat once again, human beings are minds and not physical bodies, because if a person is only a physical entity, it is impossible to communicate affection through distant space. The communication is possible because of a non-physical element operating in everyone; and we are actually non-physical in our essentiality. Our thoughts make us, or mar us. By 'thought' I mean anything that is connected with the psychological operation - thinking, understanding, remembering, feeling, self-allocation, affirmation. All these various ramifications of mental operation will also have to be included in the word 'mind' when we generally use it in ordinary language.

The repulsion that one feels in respect of a hated thing and the attraction that one feels in respect of a loved thing is a trick that is played by this internal phenomenon, which plays hide and seek; and no one can know what is actually happening inside when intense emotions of love and hatred are made to charge upon external objects.

The externality of a thing is a point here which is very important to consider. How do we envisage the location of a so-called externalised object? In loves and hatreds we confirm their externality. We wish that they be entirely external. It is our prayer and our confirmation and our belief, and we are cocksure that the thing that we love or hate is actually physically, spatially distant from that which is loving or hating.

But nature is perhaps not made in this way. The affirmation of a distance spatially in respect of a loved or hated object is immediately a signal to nature's law, which will show a red light at once that something is wrong and some step has to be taken in this regard. It retaliates immediately – within a fraction of a second – as an agonising sorrow inside, and no one who loves or hates can ever be happy. Though we hate because we will be happy by that, and we love because we will be happy by loving, this is not the truth.

The person who is caught in the tangle of affection is an abode of misery. And so is the case with the person who is caught in the tangle of hatred, a reservoir of sorrow. So sorrow – that is all and nothing more, nothing less – will be there as a credit that will come to us from the balance in the repository of nature for the great thing that we have done – our achievement of love and hatred in this world. Gone forever is the peace of mind of that person that loves and of the person that hates.

I placed before you as a kind of introduction how the same law – this psychology of the operation of the mind in terms of the objects of the world, with whom we normally deal – works in a different way altogether in a spiritual

seeker. The same law, which means to say, the presence of an element transcending the work that we do or the object that we aspire for - this phenomenon which in ordinary daily life of loves and hatreds causes damage to the person - protects the person here.

Sadhana shakti is a protective power. The mantra that we chant, the prayer that we offer, the scriptures that we read, the meditations that we practice create a psychological field around us in the same way as we have a field around us in other erroneous psychological movements. Now for the time being we shall not think of these erroneous movements. The point is how *sadhana* protects us, guides us, strengthens us, comforts us, and gives us solace.

Nature's law is something to which I made a reference, which abhors any kind of attempt on the part of people to affirm the external existence of things. Nature has no externality within itself. It is a large body of internally related functions; and for anyone to act contrarily to this inherent system of the unitariness of nature would be to invite unnecessary trouble.

In *sadhana*, in the practice of spiritual living or yoga, we allow the mind to operate in a different way altogether from the way we usually allow it to work in loves and hatreds in the world. The mind is centralised in spiritual practice. It is externalised in the usual loves and hatreds of life. The centralisation is a sudden occurrence, following a correct position that the mind assumes in meditation or prayer. It summons the support of that which it originally considered as outside it. This is a totally different procedure of activity taking place, totally different from the usual, ordinary business life of people.

There is no commercial attitude in spirituality. There is no give-and-take procedure. There is an internal cohesion introduced into our mind in respect of that which usually stands outside us. It may be people; it may be the world of nature. We dislike everything normally, except our own selves; and even when we seem to be liking certain persons

and things, if we go very deep into the structure of our mind, we will realise that we are not really liking anybody. It is a camouflage for another thing altogether that is behind in the mind of the person. Psychoanalysts will tell what it is. Nobody can like anything finally, except one's own self. This is a very great tragic condition indeed.

But it is necessary to bring into the fold of one's existence everything that is around – not in a political attitude of handshake or a roundtable conference with people, but an internal feelingful contact. And meditation is a feelingful association with what one concentrates upon.

The dealing of ours with the object of meditation is not like the dealing we have with people whom we love and hate. Actually, the object of our concentration or meditation is not an object of love or liking in the ordinary sense of love and liking, because - the contrast is very clear here - the objects that are emotionally loved or hated stand outside; and they have to stand outside in order that the emotion may work at all. But here, the objects of meditation should not stand outside. It has to become, by an internal action of imbibition of its own qualities, a part and parcel of one's own nature.

It is important to remember here how nature works - perhaps God works in a similar manner - with total impartiality of outlook, inasmuch as in this organism, in this system of the operation of nature, the word 'partiality' will have no meaning. Such a thing cannot be there. It is fictional. It is impartial because it is itself involved in all the processes that it undergoes or initiates. It is vitally involved in all its aims and motives and evolutionary processes, and part of nature that we all are brings to our consciousness this fact of our inseparability from natural forces; and they become our friends – not as social friends, but inseparable, vital connections due to which we become inwardly strong.

We have a little strength even in our social relations. If many people like us, we feel some satisfaction and a strength also, due to the number of people so connected. But this is a different kind of strength altogether. Social strength is

extrinsic strength. It can be dismantled, like a broken house, at any time. But intrinsic strength is living strength. It is the strength that *I am* - not merely, that *I have*. It is a power that is me, and not a power that I possess in terms of some relations or instruments of property type, and the like. The physical universe, whose meditation is very much adumbrated and highlighted in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, calling it a *samadhi* by itself, is just this much - a summoning of all the particles of nature into a state of utter communion with our own selves. And in this process we include all people also. Nature is not only brick and stone and hill and sun and moon. Human beings and even animals - all living beings are included within the ambit of natural action.

People love us as a spiritual seeker. Here it is pure love, because there is nothing that we can materially expect from a spiritual seeker; and our love, if it is something that expects, would be a futile attempt in that case.

But that source of attraction which cannot be expected to materially offer anything for being loved or liked will be a different kind of blessing which not all the treasures of the world can offer. The reason is that the more we enhance the dimension of our personality by this act of communion that we practice daily with the environments of nature and human society, little by little, stage by stage in smaller and larger circles - this practice will create a sensation of our being a larger soul than the soul that we are already. Spiritual strength is the strength of the soul. It is not the strength of muscle, or anything that is material. The soul has a strength of its own, and everyone has a soul, of course; and in that sense, to the extent that there is a soul, there is a power in each person.

But the spiritually seeking or enlightened person has a soul which is larger than the ordinary souls of people - larger because of the inclusion by the process of meditation, within the soul of oneself, the souls of other things also, whereby the other things cease to be anymore other things. They become facets of the shining crystal of the soul that the meditator is.

It is not that we create a big party, or a parliament of souls, or an organisation of spirits in the meditational process. The souls melt into each other, as it were, and the so-called many individuals will act as one person.

The power of the spirit that is generated in meditation is consequent upon the conscious affirmation on the part of the seeker of there being finally no separation between souls; and all these so-called apparently separated souls daily crave for a coming together of themselves in a vast sea of spirit. We cooperate with the law of God and nature in our spiritual meditations. That is, we cooperate with the highest law that works in creation. And the more we do this cooperation, the more is the blessing that we will have from the source from where this law originates.

Many a time we may not feel sufficiently successful in our meditations, and days may pass with no sign of any improvement. The causes behind this possible despondency in the mind of an otherwise-honest spiritual seeker may be, on the one hand, due to other thoughts occupying the mind inadvertently, subtly, at the lower level of the mind which are strong enough to demand attention. Or it may be also due to absence of sufficient intensity in the gathering of consciousness for the purpose of concentration.

You may be wondering why should there be insufficient intensity when it is the thing that we are asking for every day. Our 'asking for' may not be also an adequately strong asking. We cannot ask a thing wholeheartedly unless we understand what it is. Something that is enigmatic and is known to be very useful only from secondhand sources may look attractive and may appear very worthwhile, but it may not pull us so much as that which we have seen and we can appreciate directly. We have had no occasion to have direct contact with God. Very rarely we have occasion to come in direct contact with even souls – saints and sages – of that stature. So we try to manage with our own resources of information available, and our own study, and the

determinations that we have made. To that extent, of course, we shall not be losers.

“Let there be no despondency in the mind of the spiritual seeker who has not felt any improvement even after months.” The Bhagavad Gita here says that we will not be a loser even then. We might have dug several feet below and found no water, but yet we have dug. That effort is still there. We are going nearer the source of water, though it may be very, very deep. That after several diggings nothing has been found should not be a source of any kind of remorse on the part of the seeker. Effort has to be pursued.

We have illustrations of great masters who appear to have conducted *purushcharanas* of the Gayatri mantra and other mantras several hundred times, and they had no *darshan* of any deity or divinity of any kind. And the anecdote tells us that they heard a voice which said, "All that you have done is very good. It was enough to wipe out all the encrustations of karma that had grown over your personality. The light shall dawn only the next birth."

Even cleansing, keeping everything neat and clean, is also an achievement, though the purpose for which it is done is not easily seen and it may look a little far. But even if it is far, it has to be near one day or the other.

Very intense aspiration will bring the object of your realisation very near you. "Doubts are our traitors," said the great poet, and every one of us, however great we may appear to be, may have some doubt. After all, is it going to come, or is there some mistake? We may pat ourselves with the consolation that we have done our best and it shall come. Scriptures have proclaimed it. But yet, some voice will tell that perhaps it may not be possible.

This doubt should not arise. Honestly we may, many a time, feel that we are very far from God; and that feeling may be honest. It is not a hypocritical feeling. So bad seems to be this world in which we live, and so wretched seems to be the life we are living in the world that it becomes difficult for us

to accommodate ourselves with the feeling that this birth is the last birth of us. Maybe such a terrible doubt may weigh heavy on our heads, but we should again illumine our minds with another consolation that, number one, nothing is impossible for God, and secondly, our feelings may not be correct.

The darkest hour is supposed to be a little before sunrise, and we know the meaning of this analogy - pitch darkness, telling us perhaps there is no hope of any illumination; but the sun will rise after one and a half hours. "Today is the last day of mine. All my effort is a vanity." Such thoughts, they say, occurred to Buddha himself. He was crawling with weakness of the body, as if to collapse and go, once and for all. That very night was the illumination night. We have to be expecting it every moment. Any moment it may come. And we should not allow this doubt to creep into the middle, telling us this will not happen. The doubt will tell, "What is the good of your expecting? It will not come to you, foolish person that you are."

But we need not always be told that we are so foolish. Though we may look foolish even to our own selves, we may have something else inside us which God only may see. Sudden bursting of a particular way of life into an unexpected phenomenon of spiritual stature is something that we hear of in the lives of great saints and sages. Many of these saints and sages were described as people of a common, rustic type, very crude in their lives and even sensuous many a time, impossible to expect that they could be saints and sages. But they became the great examples of God-men on earth.

So no one is so despicable as not to be fit for the entry of God into the heart, provided that the heart says, "I am fit for it" - if we are sure in our own hearts that we are not doing any double-dealing with God, that we do not have any secret that is to be kept away from the eye of God, and if we are also sure that our *sadhana* is the best that we can do, and we have done everything that is possible and beyond that the present

condition will not permit. We have done the best, and with the greatest of honesty. It has to come. May it come to every one of us in this birth! *Hari Om tat sat.*

*Om purnam adah purnam idam purnat purnam udachyate
purnasya purnam adaya purnam evavashishyate.*