SWAMI KRISHNANANDA BIRTH CENTENARY

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Sadhana Shakti

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

The 25th of April 2022 marks the auspicious occasion of the Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out booklets comprising the illuminating discourses of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj arrived at the holy abode of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in 1944, and remained here until his Mahasamadhi in November 2001. Swamiji Maharaj was a master of practically every system of Indian thought and Western philosophy. "Many Sankaras are rolled into one Krishnananda," said Sri Gurudev.

Over the years, Swami Maharaj gave many profound and insightful discourses during Sunday night Satsanga, and on holy occasions such as Sri Gurudev's birthday, Sri Krishna Janmasthami, Mahasivaratri, etc., and also during Sadhana Week and Yoga Vedanta Courses conducted by the Yoga

Vedanta Forest Academy of the Ashram. Sri Swami Maharaj always spoke extempore, spontaneously, without any preparation, and every discourse was fresh, unique, and divinely inspired. The audience was bathed in that stupendous unfathomable energy that radiated from Swamiji Maharaj during these discourses.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of Sri Swamiji Maharaj's discourses in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet, **'Sadhana Shakti'**, comprises two discourses given by Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj on 21st September 1980 and 24th May 1997 respectively.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

SADHANA SHAKTI

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. This atmosphere 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 who is practising 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 direction in which the event moves or the work is directed. Only two things are necessary for anything to take place. Someone should do it 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 is like an individual. It is a stress in a particular location, even as the work that we do 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. Therefore, the person's behaviour is not to be judged in terms of these external material associations, even if it be a large material gift that is offered. That gesture of offering a material gift 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 is centred round the exploitation of that particular thing or individual concerned, in terms of like and dislike, love and hatred.

It may look like only two terms of relation are required for love or hate to happen—one that loves and one that is loved, one that hates and one that is hated—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, and 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. In order 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 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.

Therefore, how do love and hatred operate, considering the large physical distance that can be there between the two terms of the relation? 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 entirely conditioned by the physical

personalities of the persons or things apparently related. 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 hustle and bustle of this emotional activity.

There is an invisible factor operating behind the loves and hatreds. This invisible factor is imperatively there, without which love or hatred 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 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. 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, our confirmation and our belief, and we are certain 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 spatial distance in respect of a loved or hated object is an immediate signal to nature's law, which will show a red light that something is wrong and some step has to be taken in this regard. It immediately retaliates—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 think we will be happy by that, and we love because we think 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 the person who is caught in the tangle of hatred is in a reservoir of sorrow. Therefore, only sorrow 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 who loves and of the person who 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 an altogether different way 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, 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 practise 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 reference, which abhors any kind of attempt on our part 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, while it is externalised in the usual loves and hatreds of life. This 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 from the usual 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 minds in respect of that which usually stands outside us. It may be people; it may be the world of nature. We normally dislike everything 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 minds, we will realise that we are not really liking anybody. It is a camouflage for something else that is behind it in the mind of the person. Psychoanalysts tell what it is. Nobody can like anything finally, except one's own self. This is a very tragic condition indeed.

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

Our dealing 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 us; and they have to stand outside in order that the emotion may work at all. But here, the object of meditation should not stand outside. It has to become, by an internal action of imbibing its own qualities, part and parcel of one's own nature.

It is important to remember here that nature works with a totally impartial outlook, inasmuch as in this organism, in this system of the operation of nature, the word 'partiality' has no meaning. Such a thing cannot be there in its dictionary. 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, motives and evolutionary processes, and the part of nature that we all are brings to our consciousness this fact of our inseparability from natural forces. They become our friends—not as social friends, but as 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 also strength, 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, and 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 types of property, and so on. 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. In this process, we include all people as well. Nature is not only brick and stone, 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 spiritual seekers. Here it is pure love, because there is nothing material that can be expected 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 all the treasures of the world cannot offer. The reason is that the more we enhance the dimension of our personality by this act of communion that we practise daily with the environments of nature and human society—little by little, stage by stage in smaller and then larger circles—the more will a

sensation be created of our becoming a larger soul than the soul that we were. 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 as everyone has a soul, to that extent there is a power in each person.

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 other things. These other things 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 that there is finally no separation between souls. All these 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 cooperate, 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 inadvertently occupying the mind, subtly, at the lower level of the mind, which are strong enough to demand attention. Or it may also be due to the absence of sufficient intensity in the gathering of consciousness for the purpose of concentration.

You may be wondering why there should be insufficient intensity when it is the thing that we are asking for every day. Our 'asking for' may not be an adequately strong asking. We cannot ask for a thing wholeheartedly unless we understand what it is. Something that is enigmatic and is known to be useful only from second-hand sources may look attractive and appear very worthwhile, but it may not pull us as much as that which we have seen and can directly appreciate. We had no occasion to have direct contact with God. Very rarely do we have occasion to come in direct contact with even

saints and sages of that stature, so we try to manage with our own resources of available information, our study, and the determinations that we have taken. 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 Bhagavadgita says that we will not be a loser even then. We might have dug several feet deep 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 *puruscharanas* of the Gayatri mantra and other mantras several hundred times, and they had no darshan of any kind of deity or divinity. 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 in 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 the result 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 our realisation very near us. "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 console ourselves that we have done our best and it shall come, that scriptures have proclaimed it. But yet, some voice will tell us that perhaps it may not be possible.

This doubt should not arise. We may oftentimes feel that we are very far from God, and this 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 for us. Such a terrible doubt may weigh heavily on our heads, but we should again illumine our minds with another consolation that, firstly, nothing is impossible for God, and secondly, our feelings may not be correct.

It is said that the darkest hour is a little before sunrise, and we know the meaning of this

analogy—pitch darkness, telling us perhaps that there is no hope of any illumination; but the sun will soon rise. "Today is my last day. All my effort is a vanity." Such thoughts, they say, occurred to Buddha himself. He was crawling with weakness of the body, as if he would collapse and go once and for all. That very night illumination came. We have to be expecting it every moment. At any moment it may come, and we should not allow this doubt to creep in, telling us this will not happen. The doubt will say, "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 have something else inside us which only God may see. A sudden and unexpected bursting into a 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, and it was impossible to expect that they could be saints and sages. But they became great examples of Godmen on earth.

Therefore, no one is so despicable as not to be fit for the entry of God into the heart, provided that

our heart says that we are fit for it—if we are sure in our own heart that we are not doing any double-dealing with God, that we do not have any secret that is to be kept from the eye of God, and also if we are sure that our sadhana is the best that we can do, and we have done everything that is possible and beyond that our present conditions will not permit. We have done our best, with the greatest of honesty, and so it has to come. May it come to every one of us in this birth!

PHYSICAL TRANSIENCY AND THE FEAR OF DEATH

We must be able to thoroughly conduct an analysis of our own makeup and the manner in which we are living.

When a child is in the mother's womb, it lives in one kind of world. It is said that in the later months of life in the womb it becomes aware that it is existing. The first thing that happens is that one becomes aware that one exists. This is a very important point to remember. Everything else follows afterwards. We must exist first in order that anything may happen. A kind of subliminal, undeveloped, vegetable life awareness is supposed to be the knowledge of this little baby inside. It knows that it is, and it is up to it to know where it is. Suddenly, it comes out and cries. Why does the child cry when it comes out of the womb? It is suddenly finding itself in a different world.

What would any one of us feel if we are abruptly transported to another world altogether? We will be flabbergasted. There is nothing around. The baby

cries out of fear of its aloneness. Don't you cry when you have lost everything, when nobody wants you, and you can see nothing around? You may feel lonely and wretched in that condition, but the child is afraid of there being nothing outside. People may be afraid if something is outside because that something that is outside may be terrifying or unwelcome. But here is a case where one is afraid because there is nothing outside. Oh, what a wonder!

Are you afraid if there is nothing outside? This is one kind of fear. That kind of fear which the child had has not gone from us even now. Only, in a more complicated manner, we have the same feeling of a kind of uncomfortable aloneness. When we are driven to the corner of life, we behave like the child only. We will cry, we will weep, we will curse ourselves. "Oh, everything has gone. Father has gone, mother has gone, children have gone, land has gone, property has gone, I lost my job." At that time we will behave in the same way as the little crying child.

The initial experience of the baby continues even till our old age, though we think that we have become very mature. The baby is in us even now, if only all social relations which artificially create an atmosphere of security for us are cut off. Human

relations are untrustworthy. We learn this in later years. Read history. Read the lives of kings and emperors, great historical personages. They left the world like babies. When you came like a little baby, and you are going away from this world like a wretched, unwanted, stupid baby, how in the middle are you a great man? "Oh, so much I have got. I am a great authority. I rule the world." How did this idea arise in that unfortunate, helpless baby, which continues to be only that even at the end of life? This is why people say life is an illusion. We need not be Sankaracharya and others to understand that. Our own practical experience shows that all life that we consider as valuable in terms of human society is an utter magical show. Your friends, your enemies, your relations, your properties, even the confidence that you will live long, is all a jugglery that is presented before you.

Yet, a kind of unintelligible awareness that you are existing follows. Whatever may happen, you are existing. Isn't it wonderful that after so much study of philosophy you realise that things are not very trustworthy? How do you trust your own feeling that you are existing?

Here we have two great teachers telling us two different things. What is the meaning of your saying,

"I am existing"? Who is existing? Buddha, who was as great as Sankara himself, opined that nothing can be said to be existing in the sense of anyone's permanency of location. There is no location. That means to say, we cannot be considered as situated at some point of time for even a moment. There is a flow of events, not things. There are no things here. The things are only events. Even modern science tells us events do not take place in space. We cannot make any sense of this. We are saying so many events are taking place in this world, but our great scientists say events finally do not take place in space. Let us not touch that subject now.

So Buddha's teaching is, neither do you exist nor does anything else exist. Buddha does not want to use the word 'existing'. A flow is not an existence. Take the instance of a flowing river. The water seems to be existing. You can touch it. But this touching the solidity of the water, according to Buddha, is an illusion. An illusion of the sensation of touch comes in contact with another illusion of the solidity of the water. Illusion coming in contact with illusion, like rogues coming in contact with rogues, dacoits coming in contact with dacoits, leaving nothing in the end, creates an illusion of friendship. Robbers are friends, dacoits are friends, but you know what

kind of friends they are. Similarly, the sensory touches are friendly with a non-existent, imaginary something which we call flowing water. What we are touching is only a flow, and not water which is existing. The word 'existing' must be clarified first. Flow is there. Can we call a flow as an existence?

Some people say that Buddha denied God, and also denied the Self. Buddha did not really deny God, if we understand him properly. Human beings are unfit to think of a thing called God because these so-called human beings, like us, are part and parcel of a flow and a fluxation, and all that we perceive as the world outside is also a part of the universal fluxation. The thing that we call God is out of contact with fluxation. Who is going to think of God? None of us, because we are a part of the moving fluxation. An eternity cannot be conceived by a flexible, flowing centre. In that sense, there is no use of talking about God.

When questions were put to Buddha, he replied that you should not have anything to do with these matters. First of all, see your condition. He gave an example. If an arrow hits your toe by chance, would you ask for a physician to come and take the arrow out, or would you like, first of all, to know what the arrow is made of—is it steel, silver, gold, or what?

Would anybody first put a question as to why the arrow came, who shot it, and what is it made of? Your concern at that time is that the pain should go. The world is a pain, a suffering, because of an unending series of fluxations in which every so-called living entity is involved, searching for something which it cannot get. That is the suffering. Remove the cause of suffering.

Buddha has four noble truths. There is a cause of suffering, there is a way of removing suffering, there is something beyond suffering, and there must be some freedom from suffering. Now, this is one view, like Schopenhauer. He also thought, like Buddha, that the whole world is evil, and nothing good is here. In his two great volumes called *The World as Will and Idea*, he demolishes any kind of acquiescence in the goodness of things in the world. As Schopenhauer has his opposite in Hegel, we have the opposite of Buddha in Sankaracharya. Sankara does not deny what Buddha said, but he says something more than that. What does he say that is more than what Buddha said? We shall accept that what Buddha said is correct: There is suffering, there is a cause of suffering, there is a way out of suffering, and there must be some freedom from suffering, finally. All right. Nothing is existing.

Here comes Sankara. If nothing is existing, how does anyone, while knowing he is not existing, know that nothing is existing? Listen to me carefully. How does one who does not exist, according to Buddha, know that nothing is existing? This is a logical contradiction. If you yourself do not exist, who are you to say that nothing is existing? The statement is utterly meaningless. In order to know that nothing is existing, there must be something that knows that nothing is existing. That knowing principle itself cannot be a non-existent thing. That is the Atman. This is a great modification which Sankaracharya introduced into Buddha's philosophy. Both were great people. We should not compare one with the other or say one is right and the other is wrong. They are right in two different means of perception and experience, just as we may consider the world as very good in some way or very bad in another way.

Now comes the main point of the consciousness of existence, which persists from our childhood. This inveterate insistence that we are existing is followed by another conviction that other things also are existing, because the sense organs see other things. Immediately the finitude of this individual existence feels a pinch of its finitude, feels helpless by it, and wants to remove this sense of finitude by

adding something from outside which may expand the finitude, for the time being, with the impression that an expanded finitude is better than a restricted finitude. A large kingdom ruled by a king makes the king feel that he is large, but he is only a finite person. The illusion that the king is not a finite being arises on account of a presumption that the visible kingdom outside is part of his own existence, while it is not.

All our life is just an adumbration of a kind of escapism from finitude, in a wrong way. We are doing things in a wrong way. Otherwise, why one should become a king? Even a king is a finite individual, like a beggar. When he goes, he goes like a beggar only. He kicks the dust as a beggar does.

So the insistence that we are existing has the corollary of others also existing, limiting our freedom. Freedom is utter suzerainty over the whole atmosphere. This means to say that if I want freedom, you should not exist because you will limit my desire for freedom and say, "How can you have all the freedom? We also want freedom." The desire for freedom on the part of other people limits the desire of one's own self for utter freedom. Utter freedom does not exist as long as other people are there; as long as the world is there, as long as the

sun, moon and stars are there, utter freedom is not possible. Therefore, we start crying like a baby: "I don't want your wretched finitude. I want to be infinite." The ego will be asserting its existence; not being able tolerate its finitude, it projects some apertures, the sense organs. Through the sense organs we come in contact with other things, other people. What do we do? "I am poor, I am miserable. Let me have that. When I get that which I consider as desirable, the sorrow of my finitude will be diminished. Let me see that which will be good for my health. I am wretchedly finite. I have a kind of ugly existence. Let me have beautiful things from outside," the ego says.

The beauty that one perceives, rightly or wrongly, in a thing outside is made to transfer its vibration into one's own finitude, and one feels "I am beautiful". One cannot feel that "I am beautiful", but that "I have in my possession the beautiful". The sense of the ugliness, the wretchedness one feels about one's finitude is wrongly and artificially mitigated by an assumption that the so-called thing which looks beautiful diminishes the wretchedness. So people run after beautiful things: "Let us go there, let us see that. Oh, how beautiful, how beautiful!" Everyone says, "How beautiful!" They

want it. The ears want beautiful sounds. They do not want the crack of thunder; they want beautiful sound, very mellifluous intonation, like music. Let me touch soft things through the sense of touch. Nothing is soft in this world, really speaking. There is no velvet spread out everywhere like a carpet. But the perception of there being things which are softer than oneself makes one want to touch them, though they are illusory. So is the case with smelling fragrance and tasting delicacies. All this arises on account of the initial assertion that we are existing as finite individuals.

We continue to be wretched, finite individuals in spite of all the things we have that give satisfaction, as it were, to the sense organs. We are living in a sensory world. The senses are most untrustworthy because as the evolutionary process goes on, the things that we need also differ from time to time. What I want today, I will not want tomorrow. What I reject today, I will invite tomorrow. This is due to the unity that seems to be existing between universal movement and the individual which is simultaneously dragged into this movement. The evolution is not only outside; it is a universal event taking place. When a railway train moves, those who are inside also start moving. The passenger is

not stationary inside the train, but moves at the same speed as the carriage.

Similarly we, ourselves, move, change, in the same speed as the speed of the evolutionary process of the cosmos. This is why we cannot say what we want and what we do not want. It is a question of time and the manner of perception. The manner of perception changes from moment to moment on account of the change in the process of evolution from moment to moment. It is called *raga-dvesha*, arising out of *ahamkara* that we are existing.

Lastly, there is the fear of one's own destruction. The confidence that we are existing is also followed by another apprehension: we will not be existing always. Why do we feel like that? The confidence that we shall be existing always arises on account of eternity seated within us. The feeling that we are not going to live long, that we are perishable entities, arises on account of our physical personality getting involved in the transitory process of evolution. So we are living in two worlds. The first is the world of eternity, which gives us an affirmation that we shall live always. Nobody believes that death will come tomorrow. There is no person who will say that tomorrow is the end. The eternity inside will not permit that feeling. We feel that we will always

be there. Who does not think like that? People build marble houses, purchase lands, increase their ownership of property. Will anybody do that if it is sure that tomorrow they are going? The eternity inside us says, "You will never go." But the other sense, which is physical, involved in the changes in the evolution, says we will not live even until tomorrow. Then we start running here and there, doing pujas and worships, chanting mantras and so forth so that in case we die we shall have a sorrowless existence.

We are perpetually harassed by the nature of things. What is the harassment? One person inside says that we are going to live permanently, and another person inside says that we will not live tomorrow. This is the harassment we are passing through. Whom to believe? Is it true that we will never die, that we are eternal, as our instinct says, and that we can go on acquiring property? Or it is true that it is not so, that we may go tomorrow, or even now itself? This conflict between these two feelings keeps us perpetually awake to the world of dread everywhere. We live in utter fear, and we, like the ostrich, bury our heads in the sand, thinking that if nobody sees us, this situation does not exist. We forget the mischievous situation in

which we are involved so that we may not be crying every moment. Forgetfulness of a fact due to some pleasure is the most dangerous. There is a Damocles sword, tied with a thin silken thread, hanging over our heads.

There is a story about the wife of Kalidasa, the great poet. Kalidasa was a shepherd, not a learned Sanskrit scholar as we think him to be. Somehow it so happened, due to *prarabdha*, a very intelligent lady married him. After marriage, she realised her husband is a fool, but she was a good person. She did not want to abandon him, but to reform him. "Look at this idol of Devi Durga in front of you. Go on thinking of it, go on thinking, go on thinking. There is a sword above it. Think of that also." She gave him a rod of sandalwood and asked him to rub it on a stone until the sandalwood became paste; but because of his concentration on the sword above, he did not know that he was actually rubbing his hand also, and it started bleeding. He was thinking only of the sword over his head that could fall at any time, so he went on rubbing without knowing that blood was flowing from his hand. It flowed to the feet of the Devi idol. At that time, the story goes, Devi burst out from that idol, caught hold of the tongue of this man, pulled it, and wrote the Sri

Vidya mantra: *shreem*. From that moment he started speaking in Sanskrit—not merely in Sanskrit, but in Sanskrit poetry.

There is a Damocles sword over our heads, but we have no friend like Kalidas' wife to tell us the right way. The feeling of our permanency for all times in the future cannot be trusted because of physical transiency.

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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. This atmosphere 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 who is practising 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.

—SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

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