

The Gem

Svami Sadananda Dasa, the Corrections

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[...] When the clouds of aparadhas are driven away, aurora (rati or bhava-bhakti) may rise in the clear sky. Later, especially when there is lobha or intense longing to serve the parishadas, the sun of prema can rise. This is the absolute Sun, which is not a product of the sky, as little as bhakti could be the “result” of sadhana or the spiritual discipline.

Through bhakti as a discipline or through bhakti in the form of lobha or an intense longing to serve, all aparadhas are driven away or dispersed like the haze in the sky through the power of the not yet visible Sun. Before it rises fully, it appears in the form of aurora – and the bhakta now realizes that it was not his deeds, his power that made him sing the Name and polish the temple bells, but bhakti that made this through him. He becomes overwhelmed by the grace and goodness of bhakti, bhaktas and God, through whom he received this power, which he has not deserved in any way, because it is never an effect of a cause, but as causeless as God Himself.

To the individual atma a special and personal relation to God now appears for the first time, i.e. “sthayi-bhava” or bhava rises, the first clear sunbeams at the horizon.

What the nature of this relation (sthayi-bhava) means in shanta, dasya, sakhya, vatsalya or shringara, and to which of God’s eternal modes of being (majesty, sweetness etc.) this is related, depends upon the nature of the bhakta, not his heart, soul, mind, feelings and thoughts. The nature of the sthayi-bhava reveals itself and spreads to the mind, soul, feelings etc., as the power of the fire reveals itself in a bar of iron, placed in the fire.

Gradually – during one life as a bhakta it rarely happens, if not God or an avatara is visible on earth at that time and the bhakta comes in contact with Him and receives His grace – this sthayi-bhava turns into the Sun of prema or the direct loving service of God, which makes the atma worthy of beholding God etc.

Sthayi-bhava means the permanent form of one’s inner relation to God in serving

Love, because this relation never changes, as the bhakta has his own individual nature, which is not possible to lose. It is called permanent also because it is not produced, but follows from the individual atma's direct contact with the power of grace, which is always present but has not yet touched the atma.

This power is like the light of the pure, serving, knowing Love that comes to the atma, and touching him, it takes, like the light in a gem, the individual "colour" of the individual nature of the atma, i.e. sthayi-bhava (shanta etc.), and then it beams continuously back to God in the form of priti or serving Love for His sake.

Thus, sadhana or the religious discipline is the process, through which it becomes possible for the gem, the atma, to experience the presence of the Sun. "The eternally complete bhava becomes manifest in the heart." This is what it means when bhakti in the form of sadhana is mentioned. (Bhakti-Rasamrita-Sindhu 1.2,1)

"Becomes manifest" does not mean that bhakti is in the heart and that the atma in itself could have bhakti in a dormant form. Bhakti is the power of God, not of the atma, and it comes from God and is given through the bhakta as grace, it does not come from the atma. In Bha. XI.3.31 you can read clearly: "Horripilation etc. follows from bhakti (premabhakti) originating in bhakti." It never says anywhere, in the Bhagavatam or somewhere else, that bhakti comes from or out of the atma or is dormant in him.

Bhakti as a discipline thus leads to, that bhakti in the form of sthayi-bhava "rises" in the atma. Please, not from, out of the atma. The sun rises in the sky, not from, out of the sky. [...]