

Melting of the Heart – in the Frying Pan of Sentimentality

[...] When the atma knows himself, Maya's gunas cannot bind him anymore, even when he is still in his body and mind. Whatever happens he “remains like stiff”, because his joy is to know his own I as atma (Bha.XI.11.5–17)

Note the expression: “he remains like stiff”, and compare this with the opposite effect of bhakti, which makes the atma exceedingly nimble, like flowing. What you always – in spite of my repeated warnings – describe as “the melting of the heart”, is not the melting of the heart, but the state of “nimbleness, flowing”, in contrast to “stiffness”. It is only when the atma has become agile, flexible, “flowing”, that he – during his experience of God and the lila – can be seized with joy, despair, fear etc. for Krishna's sake; and as a result of these cit-emotions one or more cit-symptoms will manifest, as tears, dance, laughter etc.

Please, keep this in mind now. The word “drava” does not mean “melted or melting” in the sense of butter melting in a frying pan, but “flowing, nimble”, in contrast to “stiff”. The word “drava” is the opposite of “jada” and “kathina”, “stiff and rigid”.

It is not that “the heart melts” when the bhakta beholds the lila etc., but through the power of bhakti the atma, who is stiff in himself, becomes nimble, flowing; he has become agile and flexible by his will to serve God.

As long as the bhakti has not yet become intensified to prema, but to rati, the first stage of the sthaya-bhava, the atma becomes soft, “masrinya”, but is not yet fully nimble and flowing. First of all, the atma must be pure through bhakti, i.e., free from all interests and desires, other than the wish to serve and please Krishna.

The next level is: Because of the intensified power of bhakti the atma simply cannot wish anything but to serve Him. Alert as a gazelle with his neck raised he eagerly awaits (utkantha) the moment when he can get the opportunity to serve.

The atma has become “drava” or fully nimble and flexible. He listens to or beholds the Damodara-lila – and suddenly, within or before himself, he sees Krishna, Who runs away, full of fear of Yashoda. Something unprecedented has

occurred – he sees HIM. He is seized with joy, because he is fully agile. But in the same moment he is seized with fear – for Krishna's sake. Krishna fears His mother. – He is afraid of being caught by her. – Krishna managed to escape! – Now, the bhakta's bodily hairs stand on end, now he laughs, now he cries for joy. Krishna has escaped – and now he does not see anything anymore.

This was not actual service, because he is still in the world, but with his mind and thoughts he has been allowed to serve Krishna; and now He has withdrawn – and dejected, the bhakta cries bitterly.

This happens here, as long as the bhakta is still on earth. And so much more when he enters His realm, when in every moment – through his atma's nimbleness, through bhakti, his will to serve – he is seized and captured with one or more of the cit-emotions that are triggered by the respective lila-situations. [...]

Svami Sadananda Dasa, Corrections