

## Why Love Turns into Hate

by Satya Narayana Dasa

Does love really turn into hate? Really speaking it does not. Real love never changes into hate or anything else. Krishna says that by deliberation, meditation, or dwelling upon an object one develops attraction or attachment for the object. This attachment leads to desire to possess and enjoy the object. This desire, or *kama*, is taken or mistaken for love. But it is only a *vritti* of the mode of passion (*rajo guna*). The modes are always in flux. This gives rise to different qualities. When one's desire is not fulfilled, anger arises (*kamat krodho'bhijayate*). Anger is a family member of hatred, and it leads to destructive thoughts and actions.

A soul is part of the Lord's energy. It can find enduring solace only when it is united with the Lord. But when the soul identifies and becomes engrossed in the material body, the outcome is duality. The soul feels lost like a baby lost from the mother. In that lost state, out of ignorance, it looks for union in material relations. The root cause of this urge to unite with someone in a loving manner is a spiritual one. There is also an undercurrent of fear—fear of loneliness, fear of losing one's self (the body), and the things related to the self such as family members, relatives and possessions. This is because of duality arising from misidentification with the material body.

There is a deep and unconscious longing to end the duality and to attain a state of completeness. When one identifies with the body there is always an inner feeling of void and emptiness.

At the physical level nobody is complete or perfect. It is not possible. One is considering oneself to be a man or woman, i.e., only one half of the whole. Therefore, at the bodily level the desire for completeness manifests as an attraction to the opposite gender. It is like the irresistible attraction between the opposite poles of a magnet. The sexual union is the closest completeness one can attain at the level of the body. This is the most attractive and most satisfying activity at the physical level. But this is also the most binding and delusive activity because it completely entrenches one in the bodily concept of life. To believe that "falling in love" is genuine love is the most powerful and pervasive misconception. This is the definite conclusion of Srimad Bhagavatam. Therefore all the great religions of the world have laid down certain restrictions on the union between man and woman.

The male-female union seems to offer a release from the deep-rooted state of fear and incompleteness. But alas it is far from the truth and it is only a fleeting relief. It is a "sure to fail" attempt for liberation. It is the ego's substitute for salvation. The famous psychologist M.Scott Peck describes falling in love as a partial and temporary collapse of one's ego: "The act of falling in love is an act of regression. The experience of merging with the loved one has its echoes from the time when we were merged with our mothers in infancy." A newborn baby does not have its own distinct ego. There is no distinction between I and you. It and the world are one. There are no boundaries that separate the infant from the rest of the world.

But as the child grows and gains experience, it begins to realize itself as a distinct entity from the rest of the world. A sense of "me" begins to develop. Slowly its ego develops. The baby begins to learn its own size and physical confines. It understands its voice, its thoughts and feelings. It knows about its limitations. The knowledge of these limitations in one's mind is called ego boundary. This process of growth of the ego boundaries continues through childhood into adolescence and then into adulthood.

A grown up person feels lonely behind these boundaries. There is a feeling of isolation, which is painful. Therefore there is an irresistible desire to break these boundaries and regress back to the state when one was in the mother's womb. Falling in love gives that facility temporarily. It breaks the ego boundaries and one feels merged with the beloved. One does not feel lonely anymore. But this is only a temporary relief. This is how psychologists describe the drive for falling in love. But from the spiritual point of view it is related with the constitutional position of the soul. The soul cannot have permanent happiness until it takes unmotivated shelter of the Lord. When one does not surrender to the Lord one has to surrender elsewhere. There is no choice. Therefore Bhagavatam says that only the Lord and his devotees are free from sex desire. Even the great yogis like Vishvamitra had their stint with the opposite gender.

When one surrenders to the Lord one feels complete and fulfilled. One becomes situated in one's constitutional position. There are no more material desires. The ocean is the source of all water. Water which is not part of the ocean, such as a river, always has the tendency to flow towards the ocean. Once it reaches the ocean it does not move out of it. The soul's situation is similar. It has the tendency to unite with the Lord. But in the conditioned state, out of ignorance, that tendency is misplaced in a material person. That does not give him or her lasting peace and satisfaction because the other person is suffering from the very same lacuna. Therefore, the so-called love comes to an end, and mostly it turns into a bitter feeling. This is because your partner sooner or later, behaves in a manner that does not satisfy the needs of your ego. The reason for that is that your partner has an individual ego distinct from yours. His or her expectations and desires are different from yours.

When you are in love, there is only partial collapse of egos. The remaining ego asserts itself. At the physical and psychological level both you and your partner are imperfect. Two imperfect entities combined together do not add up to perfection. Both seek individual satisfaction. This brings clashes of egos. The feelings of fear, pain, loneliness and incompleteness, part of egoistic consciousness, that were covered by love now resurface. The love relationship is like a drug addiction. A drug makes you high only for some time. When you become used to it then it no longer works. Therefore, any love relationship which has existed long enough and close enough must eventually turn into sour feelings.

When the feelings of loneliness, pain and fear strike they seem to strike even harder than before. This is because you are not used to them. Your power of tolerance becomes weak. And the funny thing is that you think that your partner is the cause behind them. Hence the object of love turns into the dump yard of hatred. You attack him or her with all the savage violence that is part of your pain. This sets up a vicious cycle. He or she counter-attacks and that seems to confirm your feelings of hatred. Because this so called material love is in the mode of passion it has to end in misery. Krishna puts it beautifully (BG 18.38), "The delight which arises from the contact of the senses with their objects appears like nectar in the beginning, but is eventually like poison. This is called happiness in the mode of passion."

Real love cannot change into its opposite suddenly. Love has only one direction. It leads to more and more love. If in your relationship you feel both love and the opposite of love, know for sure that it is not love. Any feeling of love which turns into physical and emotional violence was not love to begin with. You cannot be jealous of the person you love.

Does it mean that we should renounce all material relations? This is neither practical nor possible. A human being is a social creature. No man or woman is an island. We have to live in the society and we are dependent on others for our existence. Therefore, we cannot avoid relations, but we must know the fleeting nature of material relations. Our real relation is with God. Everything is related to God. He is the source of everything. By realizing our relation with God we can relate with everything else. That is real love and it will never turn into hatred. It can only increase and it will never reach a limit.