Chapter VII

Conclusion

The thesis concludes, to begin with, with the finding that, the philosophical significance of Śrī Caitanya’s concept of divine-love, in spite of its symbolic-non-symbolic discourse, psycho-aesthetic and amorous expressions, is not a mere emotion or subjective state and a prescription for the contemplation on vicarious pleasures with which Śrī Caitanya is being alleged, and as such it is based on firm philosophical ground. It has been also argued that, it is the highest possible culmination of an evolving theistic conception of bhakti.

More importantly, the present research has found that, as a dynamic spiritual relation, in an unprecedented manner, divine-love dwells on its own in the highest ontological plane as Self-expression of the very Self-same overflowing creative fullness of the blissful Being of God. This is indicated by the self-subsisting, self-referring and self-reflexive relation of divine-amour exemplified by Rādhā’s mahābhāva. That is, without being reductionist or nullifying the two relata of lover and the Divine beloved-the śakti and the Śaktimat, the relation of divine-love is being transformed into an ontological entity within the ambit of inscrutable relation of difference and non-difference between them. The theoretical or conceptual reconstruction of such a philosophical basis of divine-love is reiterated as follows.

It has been established in the thesis that, there is no self-contradiction between a relational prema-bhakti’s being raised to the level of highest value-the fifth puruṣārtha (pañcamapuruṣārtha) which is trans-mokṣa in nature on the one hand and the religio-metaphysical belief that, Kṛṣṇa is the highest amongst the Bhagavat tattvas on the other. It is because, as it has been delineated in the thesis, divine-love (prema-bhakti) realised or experienced as a dynamic spiritual
continuum in its highest form as śṛṅgāra-rati either by the eternal associates or perfected human devotees of the Bhagavat is the manifestation of His core maddeningly sweet dynamic bliss-potency (ḥādinī-śakti).

The next finding is that, it is the manifestation of the Self-determined creative will of the Absolute. From the standpoint of the human-Divine-interface and its undercurrent vital process of intersubjectivity, divine-love as the stated unconditioned Self-expression of the Freedom of the Absolute is also found to be the most satisfying and concrete existential function of the selfhood of both man and the Supreme Being. On the transcendental plane this function of divine-love eternally remains in a dynamically Self-projected state of objectification constituting the central theme of the divine-histrionics of the nitya-līlā.

To reiterate, one of the crucial findings of the current research is that, this highest but dynamic spiritual experience, ever remains self-manifested and self-established or perpetually exists in a state of non-cognitive¹ objectivity in and through the human-divine intersubjectivity. The highest goal of human life consists in realising this truth and leading a life of self-transcendence through developing the Theo or object-centric (fondness or priyatā which has both subject and object or viśaya while in the case of ordinary pleasure — sukha being self-centric, there is only subject or āśraya) or self-less and intense loving attachments towards the Supreme object of divine-love.

This spiritual state further leads to the affirmation of the inexplicable (acintya) relation of difference and non-difference between the Bhagavat and His powers especially His parikaras or eternal associates and the human devotee lovers on the one hand and the Bhagavat on the other. Aesthetico-amorously speaking, this is being explained as the mutual transfer or fusion of energy (parasparāśaktyāvesa) between the lovers and the Divine Beloved. The process of

¹ The phrase “non-cognitive” only means that, the nature of the ontological implication of divine-love thus projected is different from the truth of the Śaṅkarite monistic ontology. Otherwise, being of the nature of the bliss-potency of the Bhagavat, it is the highest truth.
mutual interchangeability of positions between the lover as the subject (āśraya) and the Beloved as the object (viśaya) is operative in it through the bitter-sweet rhythm of divine pathos associated with the eternally alternating twin moods of sambhoga – “love-in-union” and virañ – “love-in-separation”. The confusion of identity between the lover and beloved on the one hand and the relish of bitter-sweet rasa resulting from the anguish of anticipated feeling of separation during the act of union on the other are the psycho-aesthetic expressions of alternating experience of non-difference and difference between the lover and Divine Beloved.

The above dynamic spiritual process necessitated the wholesome adaptation of aesthetics as a non-cognitive participatory religious language by Rūpa Goswāmi to the Self-revelatory continuum of prema-bhakti. According to Jīva Goswāmi priti or prema is self-revelatory, because it is of the nature of cognition (jnāna-rūpa) and self-revealing (sva-prakāśa) by its own nature. The similarity between art experience (rasānubhava) and spiritual experience (bhramānubhava), the communicative power of aesthetics as shown by its capability to induce the suspension of disbelief in the mind of the spectator, the rejection of the traditional method of ratiocinative polemics by the Gauḍīya thinkers and the conception of the very core Being of the personal Absolute as the reservoir of rasa are the main reasons for the conscious choice of the aesthetic method. These divine processes as the spontaneous play of the core creative joy of the statico-dynamic personal Absolute affirm the highest ontological presupposition of divine-love as the erotic-aesthetic and theologico-theatrical portrayal of the metaphysical doctrine of acintyabhedābheda. Hence, the uniqueness of divine-love as interpreted aesthetically in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism makes the process of human and Divine interaction a possibility here and now on earth. In this respect divine-love is a saving Grace for the suffering humanity. What reason could not do aesthetics takes over.

One significant issue brought out by the thesis is the ethical problems of divine-love or divine-amour. The last finding relates to the fact that, when seen in
the light of the above ontological implications of divine-love, its non-symbolic amorous expressions, being a form of Self-expression (based on the formal theory in contrast to the instrumental theory of language) of the Divine, the ethical issues of this divine-amour are interpreted accordingly.

On the psychological front, the conception of bhakti is conceived in terms of an extreme form of devotional emotion ripened into the form of the intense object-centric desire, self-transcending longing for and attachment towards the object of love. The passionate nature of divine-amour or śrīgāra-rati presents certain theoretical issues which the researcher believes that the thesis has sorted them out. Yet, it seems to open up a new vista where the much maligned emotional dimension of life which is very much a part of existence, is resurrected and restored to the heart of reality as the very pulsating dynamic spiritual truth underlying as the principle of the unity of existence. For the human individual, being the human part of the intersubjectivity of divine-love occurring between the lover and Divine beloved, this loving relation which has its genesis in the core blissful nature of the Absolute is the most satisfying and joyous spiritual function.

Thus, the thesis proves that, when interpreted in the aforesaid manner, divine-love is not bereft of its own version of truth—a truth which is echoed in the popular maxim: “Love moves the world”; it is the basis and the inmost law of existence”. Hence in the language of Kierkegaard, such a love anointed or imbued concrete existence is a “Works of Love”. Therefore, it is no more deemed in Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavism as the blind strivings of the spiritually uninformed, fragmented and the polarised lives of the ordinary mortals whose worldly desires being self-centric has no necessary reference to their ideal truth or Divine object. Jīva Goswāmī describes this state of fettered life as vaimukhya – a state of beginning less (anādī) forgetfulness of God in contrast to its opposite – sāmukhya – a life sustained by divine-love. This has been shown to be the case in the light of various modern empirical theories where emotion is no more untouchable but can be treated as a form of knowing called “emotive knowing” vis-à-vis “cognitive
knowing” which in the statement of the Caitanya Caritāmṛta (Ādi, 1.5.17) of Kṛṣṇadāśa Kavirāj is called as prema-netra — “The eye of divine-love”.

Thus, divine-love as the unconditional and spontaneous Self-expression of the overflowing fullness of the dynamic blissful-power (hīdāni-śakti) of the creative freedom of the Supreme Being entails the resurrected self-hood of the individual souls as constitutionally located in this eternal dynamic process of divine-love or divine-amour. The realisation of this ever present inner movement of the personal Absolute by the spiritually alienated individual selves or the buddha jīvas will put an end to their endless entrapment in the cycles of saṁsaṛa. The highest beatitude of mankind consists in becoming sāmukhya — turning towards God from the earlier state of anādi vaimukhya) and the attainment of the state of divine-love. This state is known as prayojana or the highest end of spiritual perfection known as the pañcamapūrṣārtha or the sādhyā-bhakti. The knowledge of the ultimate reality (sambandha) and the Bhagavat as the subject matter (abhidheya) are not the ends but the attainment of divine-love. This puts an end to the perpetual sufferings of mankind borne out of the forgetfulness of God (vaimukhya) and the simultaneous experience of the erotic-aesthetic divine-love as the functional Self-expression of the blissful energy or hīdāni-śakti of the Bhagavat.

On the authority of the Bhāgavata Pūrāṇa they would even go to the extent of saying that, by contemplative situatedness in divine play of the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa dalliance, all the desires related ills of life will be cured. It is only a different

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3 Śrī Bhaktisandarbha of Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmi Prabhupāda, Fifth Sandarbhā, Trans. & Comm. by Śrī Hari Dāsa Śāstri, Śrī Gādādhara Gaura Hari Press, Kālidāla, Vṛndāvana, 1985, pp. 7-8. The main purpose (abhidheya and prayojana) of the entire Sāstras is not to be confined merely to the act of revelation of the knowledge of the Supreme Being alone; their main objective lies in showing that, it consists in the cultivation of the highest form of divine-love-Bhagava-prīti. Thus divine-love is the highest end of life. Also Op. cit., Krṣṇasandarbha, Viśiṣṭāpti (Preface), p. 1. Among the Six Sandarbhās (Ṣaṭsandarbhā), Tattva, Bhagavat, Paramātma, Śrī Krṣṇa Sandarbhā deal with the sambandha tattva (ontological or metaphysical reality); Bhaktisandarbha delineates the subject matter of abhidheya (the main subject matters) and Pritisandarbha-the sixth Sandarbhā brings out the prayojana tattva or the highest goal of life consisting in the realisation of prema-bhakti or prīti.
way of affirming the well known idea that, religio-philosophy is a therapeutic in nature. Indeed, every religion would claim that, human desire is the root cause of sufferings of life. Hence, self-transcendence means self-mastery or having a reign on ordinary desires of life. But then, this is precisely the issue. How divine-love or divine-amour cures all the ills of existence? The answer to this question also entails not only the implied spiritual truth undercutting such a transcendental love but also the ontology of ordinary love, every forms of desires and emotive elements which act as the driving forces of the mundane human life.

The idea of divine-love as the ontological underpinning of ordinary or profane love is negative in nature. It is negative, because, the sense of incompleteness or want of the ideal mode inherent in such a self-centered love shows the ethical imperative to seek the attainment of the God-regarding or object centric love. This state of ethical necessity for self-transcendence is also borne out of the fact that, selfishness has no sense for the human individuals whose existence is a pre-given facticity in an integral world and is implied by the doctrine of śakti-vāda inherent in the theory of acintyabhedābheda. Man has no other choice except seeking the ideal loving relation as the core truth of the unity of existence. It is on the par with “Thy shall love thy neighbor, because God loved us first” of Christianity. The holistic nature of existence leaves man with no other choice, but he or she is condemned to remain ever connected to the principle of divine-love. This is being considered by the researcher as the vital inference to be made from the entire arguments of the thesis and is being entailed by the interpretation of sādhya-bhakti as the pañcamapurusārtha.

Unlike in Śaṅkara’s radically monistic ontology, all the facets of empirical life of humanity as necessary elements of the realism of the individual souls even during post-liberation state find their rightful places in the integral or personal Absolute. The research has proved that, for the highest ontological affirmation of

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*Chaterjee, Margaret, The Therapeutic Theme in Philosophy, Presidential Address-History of Philosophy Section, The Indian Philosophical Congress, 43rd Session, Karnataka University, Dharwar, 1969, pp.1-7.*
divine-love, the reality of the individuality of the human existence is presupposed. In another words divine-love as the perpetual Self-actualisations of the statico-dynamic Absolute, requires individuated human beings who shall ever remain as those who relish the sweetness of the bliss-potency of the Bhagavat in its manifested form as prema-bhakti. This was shown through the relative but qualitative difference between svarūpānanda (Kṛṣṇa’s enjoyment of His own bliss) and śaktīnanda (His enjoyment of prema-bhakti which is nothing but a transformation of His own bliss-potency) of the Bhagavat. This cannot happen if the finiteness of the jīvas is illusory. The very personification of Rādhā as Kṛṣṇa’s Counter Whole or Co-Equal and all her companion Gopīs etc. in the nitya-līlā is essentially the fulfillment of this Divine-necessity.

The thesis also indicates that, though trans-mokṣa, divine-love is not other-worldly. While the eternal world of the archetypal Goloka Vṛndāvana remains only as an ideal possibility for the human beings, the ultimate ontological nature of prema-bhakti, only requires one to always remain in a state of contemplative awareness of it irrespective of where they are - may be hell or heaven or earth. In this manner life becomes a work of love. Rāgānugā-bhakti as an internal spiritual practice or the aesthetic process of contemplative imagination (antara-sādhana) precisely aims at imitatively appropriating the archetypal rāgātmikā-bhakti of the parikaras of the Goloka. The communicative power of aesthetics employed in this sādhanas makes the process of human-Divine-intersubjectivity via media divine-love a vivid and living experience here on earth. This has significant practical implications. In this respect, Jīva Goswāmi in his Bhakti Sandarbha comments on the Bhāgavata 1.2.14. He explains the text as meaning that, devotional love towards the Bhagavat would destroy all the sufferings of existence caused by the ego related actions by way of dovetailing the deepest desires, passions and longing towards the Theo-centric or object

divine-love. It may sound a mere spiritual truism, but the Gauḍīya Vaishnava thinkers had made original contributions towards this religio-philosophical claim; and in that, they seemed to have had the affirmation of the same truth realised by other non-Indian traditions.

The thesis finally reveals on the pattern of Yājñavalkya’s views in Br. Up. that prema-bhakti or pṛiti – divine-love in its highest form as Śrīgūra-ratī, is self-love for both God and man. In the case of man’s self-love, self means the Bhagavat as the Supreme-Self (paramātman) – in which relinquishing his or her erstwhile ego-centric existence, becomes self-transcendent or attached towards the loving devotion of the Supreme Self as its object. Therefore, there is no element of narcissism involved in it. But, one thing is sure that, this Self-love is a never ending process, and in that sense, divine-love eternally remains as the projected goal. Thus, its non-cognitive objectification in the intersubjectivity of God and human beings remains as an inner movement of the Divine.

Lastly, what emerges from the preceding chapters of the thesis is that, from the human perspective under the Vedāntic modal the Śarīraka-Mīmāṃsā another name of Vedānta Sūtra, the truth about human life is not self-explanatory. Its authentic existence consists in redefining itself by relocating itself into the interconnected world implied by the concept of the integral personal Absolute whose highest Selfhood is Self-manifested as divine-love. This is supposed to be the central controlling truth of every sphere of human existence.