Chapter I

Introduction

Objective:

The main purpose of the thesis entitled “The Philosophical Significance of Caitanya’s Concept of Love” is to find solutions to the basic philosophical problems implied by the concept of divine-love or divine-amour known by different expressions as prema-bhakti, madhura-rati, śringāra-rati and kānta-prema. It is also called as Bhagavat-pritī. Thus, in Gauḍīya Vaiśṇavism, bhaktī as a theological concept ceases to be the popularly known idea of devotion or worship which has the connotation of measured distance between God – the Wholly Other and man. The unique and creative departure this concept has from the traditional counterparts is being investigated into by this thesis.

Bhaktī is no more the usual devotional worship being followed in other forms of Vaiśṇavism or theistic traditions of India Śaivism included. In the case of prema-bhakti, this measured distance (in dāśya-rasa) loses its traditional ground and God after having Self-limitation of His power of majesty (aśwaryā or mahimā) by the sweetness (mādhyra) of His power of blissfulness (hlādiṇī-sakti), plays as a human child, friend, and beloved. It is a divine mystery which this thesis seeks to reveal in its own limited way. Divine-love is this power which subdues the Almighty God and makes Him to enter into the reciprocal human-Divine relation of love.

Divine-love as the “object” (through its non-cognitive objectification via human-Divine intersubjectivity, otherwise Kṛṣṇa is the “object”- viśaya) of the religious experience of Śrī Caitanya and also sustained by the transcendent vision of this love, in the hands of capable, dedicated and inspired disciples like Śrī Sanātana Goswāmi, Śrī Rūpa Goswāmi and Jīva Goswāmi and others whose entire
lives became a “works of Love”\(^1\) — a lifetime’s mission to be accomplished, a passionate divine-obsession, ceases to be the generic notion of bhakti as a mere devotion or worship. The researcher considers this as requiring philosophical justifications with the following presuppositions.

Stated very briefly, divine-love as the expression of hlāḍini-śakti — the highest of three Internal or Primary Powers (Cit-Śakti or Svarūpa-Śakti or Antarāṅga-Śakti) of the Bhagavat constitutes His very self-same, core, creatively overflowing fullness of His dynamic blissful Being (rasahood). In another words, divine-love as it is experienced by His devotee-lovers is the eternally projected inner process (non-cognitive-objectification) of His Infinite creative freedom. It may be termed as His own self-determined divine-rhythm of self-actualisation or His self-love which by extension has a necessary reference to the self-transcending self-love of the His human lovers or eternal associates (parikara). This divine-process is a spontaneous free-play of His core and dynamic blissful essences or powers.

The concept of nitya-līlā as the transcendental histrionics portraying the permanent theme (sthāyībhāva) of śṛṅgāra-rati or the divine-amour is the endless enactment of this inner spiritual process. It has many theoretical implications to be analysed from the interrelated perspectives of psychology, aesthetics (Vaiśṇava-Rasa-Śastras), ethics (kāma-prema discourse) and theologico-metaphysics (acintyabhedābheda) of Gauḍīya Vaiśṇavism.

Otherwise, when seen from the perspective of the larger conceptual framework, in addition to delineating the above postulations, the thesis attempts to answer two specific questions — first is the nature of divine-love and the second is the apparent or actual inconsistency involved in claiming that divine-love or sādhya-bhakti (prema-bhakti) is the pañcamapurusārtha while at the same conceiving that, Krṣṇa is the highest reality. In another words it is being

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\(^1\) Kierkegaard, Works of Love, Editor and Translator: Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, Princeton University Press, 1995. The conceptual modal of the title is only adapted and one to one correspondence is not being claimed here.
considered here that \textit{prema-bhakti} as the highest value contradicts with the claim that, the Bhagvat is the ultimate reality. Hence, the thesis seeks to bring out those philosophical issues underpinning such claims.

\textbf{The Highlight of the Thesis:}

The thematic orientation of the above philosophical issues of the thesis: “The Philosophical Significance of Caitanya’s Concept of Love (to be read as divine-love)” is being discussed under seven chapters including the Introductory Chapter and Concluding Chapter, i.e., Chapter I and VII. Chapter II is concerned with “The Background of Bengal Vaiśnavism – For a discernible history of an evolving theistic consciousness”. Chapter III, i.e., “Some Classical Texts of Bhakti – A search for theistic consciousness” traces the particular manner in which the concept of \textit{bhakti} is being embodied in “The Bhagavad Gītā”, “The Bhāgavataṃ” and its further treatment as “The Representations of \textit{bhakti} in the Bhakti Sūtras of Nārada and Śaṅḍilya”. Chapter IV deals with “The Ontology of Divine Love”, Chapter V: “Aesthetics as Non-Cognitive Participatory Religious Language”, Chapter VI “Ethical Issues of Divine-Love” and Chapter VII: “Conclusion”. Brief introductory remarks of each chapter may be given as the following.

\textbf{Chapter II:}

This chapter, though, appears to be a bit of a digression from the main course of the thesis and somewhat lengthy has been taken up in order to sort out certain objectionable postulations which may eventually undermine any attempt to look for those philosophical merits of the conception of \textit{bhakti} as divine-love in Gauḍīya Vaiśnavism. Since, the said criticism seems to intend to remove the very scriptural ground on which the concept of Gauḍīya Vaiśnavism stands, it is being felt by the researcher that, first and foremost, the said locus standee of \textit{bhakti} in general and its representation in the School in particular are to be restored to their rightful places. And this attempt shall be treated as the \textit{Pūrva-pakṣa} of divine-love as the main theme of the thesis.
The main contention of the critic is that, *bhakti* is a generic term and therefore, is not a distinctive doctrine or trait of monotheism which is usually contrasted from the pure or radical monism of Śaṅkara. The next point which the critic raises, and which the researcher considers to be damaging for the cause of *bhakti* as a monotheistic or theistic concept, is that, *bhakti* as a monotheistic concept has no known history. But, the debate whether *bhakti* can or cannot go with monism or not or on the contrary, is it an exclusive domain of monotheism or not, are not the same thing as saying that, it has no discernible history of its own. Notwithstanding their relative philosophical merits, the polemics between Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara and the Schools of theistic Vedānta under the pioneership of Rāmānuja and others who were in opposition to the Advaita Vedānta had been a historical reality. While their respective theories are based on the *prasthānatratraya*, the differences in their interpretations are paradigmatic. Monism and monotheism were two broader metaphysical frameworks which cannot be trivialised by saying that, in Hindu philosophy they can be reconciled to each other. That, they can be mutually reconciled is one thing and that, they are in mutual opposition is altogether another matter. If the critic is right then, *bhakti* according to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism would be rendered into a mere belief sans traditional grounding, a sectarian (critic uses this term) upstart, and may even be hinting at the prescription that, it does not deserve serious academic attention.

Though, done from the standpoint of Śaṅkara’s pure-monism, and thus his intention is a suspect, Krishna Sharma as the aforesaid critic in his book: “Bhakti and Bhakti Movement - A New Perspective”. Points out that, the radical opposition among the above three sādhanas is due to the distortions of their existing facts by the Western Indologists who had conceived them in terms of their mutual oppositions.²

Sharma’s arguments will be right if the rise of the two theistic schools of Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja and Dvaita of Madhva were not strong reactions to Advaita of Śaṅkara in which bhakti is only subsidiary to jñāna. It is also true that the two pioneer theistic thinkers did not conceive bhakti in purely emotive terms, and therefore, the elements of jñāna were integrated into its structure; but bhakti was surely the predominant means for salvation for them. And by knowledge in their theories does not mean the pure knowledge (kevala-jñāna or jñāna-mātra) of Śaṅkara. Keeping these issues in view, the concept of bhakti-rasa as developed in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and its aesthetic and erotic-devotional emotionalism indicated by the concept of kānta-bhakti or śṛṅgāra-rati etc being highly emotive has gone far away from the conventional notions of bhakti as mere forms of worship (upāsana) or devotional piety.

While, that, bhakti is both means (sādhana) and end (sādhaya) or it is its own end may not be an entirely new contention, but the manner in which it is developed as a theory by the Gauḍīya thinkers is consistent with the view that it is only Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism which may be treated as having established an entire religion out of bhakti and developed a Bhakti-theory accordingly. This is the view presented by Krishna Sharma in his book. His main contention is that, the idea of Bhakti-Religion which is most appropriate for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism is wrongly extended or ascribed to other theistic traditions including the Gītā etc. by western Indologists like H.H. Wilson, Albrecht Weber, Lorinser, Monier Williams and George A. Grierson etc. which he thinks was done without studying the works of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. By saying this he is not ascribing any merits to the School but he seems to perceive it as a traditionally unwarranted cultist upstart.

What Sharma means is that, if they would have studied the said works, then, it would have been clear to them that, the expression Bhakti-Religion or Bhakti-Theory, would be applicable only to the Gauḍīya School and not to other

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systems including the other theistic systems of India? This has serious implications for delineating the philosophical significance of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. This is nothing short of the disparagement of the system by way of de-authenticating its rootedness in the Āstika tradition. According to Sharma, true conception of bhakti is always to be understood within the synthetic model of jñāna, bhakti and karma, and as such according to him, the Gītā, the Bhāgavata, the two Bhakti Sūtras of Nārada and Śaṅḍilya of cannot be thought of as propagating the sectarian notion of Bhakti-Religion as done by the Gauḍīya School.

Therefore, Sharma would argue that the believed opposition amongst the three sādhanas is an arbitrary invention by the western Indologists. What is damaging about this contention by implication for the Gauḍīya School’s concept of bhakti is that, by saying that, it is only in it that, one may truly speak about Bhakti-Religion; he perhaps thinks that, the system is psychologising or emotivising the generic meaning of bhakti that cannot be reduced to as a monotheistic concept, thereby, emptying its spiritual and philosophical values which its thinkers claimed to be enshrined in the texts of the Indian religio-philosophical tradition. The word sectarian which he uses against the School precisely means this.

According to Sharma on the contrary to making the opposition between monotheism and monism in the Indian tradition by the western Indologists, these concepts are not mutually contradictory concepts and they can be reconciled to each other. It is true that, the reconciliation is done by every well known Vedāntins mainly Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja and so on. Jīva Goswāmi in establishing Kṛṣṇa-tattva as the highest personal Absolute also did interpret the impersonal Brahman in the light of the personal Absolute as the integral reality as in the Bhāgavata text: brahmeti paramāmeti bhagavān iti sabdyate. In the well known

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strong opposition to Śaṅkara’s pure monism, as against what Sharma says, Indian
religio-philosophical traditions actually had a clear cut evidence of an evolving
monotheism. The paper of R.C. Majumdar: “Evolution of Religio-Philosophic
Culture in India” in The Cultural Heritage of India (Vol. IV) clearly proves the
evolution of monotheism right from the time when the first inception took place
in the form of Bhāgavatism during sixth and fifth centuries B.C.6

Sharma opines that Śaṅkara’s Advaita bears the sign of the reconciliation
between monotheism and monism may not withstand a close scrutiny. Śaṅkara’s
making a distinction between saguṇa and nirguṇa Brahman from the perspectives
of “The Three Standpoints” (dṛṣṭi-traya) does not absolve the issue pertaining to
the monotheism-monism conflict; rather it is aimed at establishing his thesis of
non-dualism which being a reductionist stand is the glaring case of monism in
which from the ultimate or transcendental standpoint (pāramārthika dṛṣṭi),
monotheism in the sense of saguṇa Brahman has no ultimate ontological ground
to hold. Śaṅkara did not reconcile but explained away monotheism and its
integral realism. It may be suggested that, in rejecting this reductionist
metaphysics of Śaṅkara, the case of bhakti as a historically evolving and
identifiable theistic religious attitude (which in the words of Sharma is not
irreconcilable to the impersonal Brahman) is vindicated. This finding is crucial for
establishing the philosophical merits of prema-bhakti or madhura-rati as the
sumnum bonum of existence.

Sharma, most probably indicates the impossibility of speaking in terms of
any discernible history of bhakti when he speaks about a new perspective of
bhakti based on ten postulations of which only the following may be referred to
for our consideration. He says: - “(i) Bhakti is neither a cult, nor a doctrine. Nor
does it signify any specific religious mode or belief, (ii) The tendency to equate

6 The Cultural Heritage of Indian, Vol. IV, The Religions, Editor: Haridas Bhattacharyya, The
bhakti primarily with Vaisnāvism is not justifiable, (iii) Explanations of bhakti as a monotheism (as opposed to monism) involve a misrepresentation of the nature of Hindu monotheism, (iv) Nirgūṇa bhakti has its own rational and is understandable on its own ground. It cannot be understood in the light of the current academic definition of bhakti. Hence, it does not require any reference to that definition⁷ (as a theistic or monotheistic sādhana).

It is deemed necessary that, for an eventual establishment of the philosophical significance of the concept of divine-love as attributed Śrī Caitanya, the above postulations of Sharma shall be considered as the pūrva-pakṣa and will be refuted accordingly in order that, there definitely existed a distinctive theistic consciousness associated with the concept of bhakti and in a way it is not entirely unopposed to jñāna and karma in the way in which they were meant by their respective upholders. Yet, in rejecting them by the theistic thinkers mainly by the Gauḍīya Vaisnāvas, one must not presuppose that, both these sādhanas are utterly absent in their thinking provided, they are understood in the spirit in which they are ingrained or presupposed by the very concept of bhakti in their systems. They were rejected in the form in which they were made out to be in Advaita or the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā; otherwise compatible ideas of jñāna or karma will be found in their religious thoughts.

In Caitanya’s philosophy it is only bhakti unobstructed by jñāna and karma (anyābhilāṣitāsūnyam Jñānakarmādyanāvṛtam)⁸ which leads to the attainment of the highest, yet, dynamic spiritual state conceived to be even superior to mokṣa. Hence, bhakti (i.e., Bhagavad-priti or prema-bhakti) is the pañcamapurusārtha the fifth and highest end, and is thus even beyond mokṣa – rather according to Rūpa the “trivialisation of mokṣa” (mokṣalaghutākṛt)⁹ is the third of its six qualities. Yet, what emerges from the examination of the Gauḍīya concept of

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⁹ Ibid, Text 12.
bhakti is that, it is devoid of jñāna and karma of the Advaita and the Pūrva Mīmāṃsā, and not their versions of them.

Only the first two postulations may be considered here. As far as the first postulate is concerned, Sharma may not be entirely wrong, because, the world or the reality is always holistic and no dismembering of any of its distinguishable but inseparable parts is warranted by facts. But believing in the Śaṅkarite variety of Vedānta as the only non-sectarian Hindu mode of philosophisation he has explained away bhakti which in terms of its being a religious experience, even the great Advaitin like Śrī Madhusūdana had accepted as higher to the non-dual experience. Sharma has overlooked the existence of historical facts to show that, bhakti as theistic religious attitude is definitely a form of reaction to certain aspects of Brāhmaṇical religion (read as Hinduism) which had extolled either excessive emphasis on the elitist pursuits of highly analytical and abstract knowledge or jñāna and the kind of ritualism well entrenched in a caste structured social system under the Varṇāśrama Dharma which is rejected by the Gaudīya School and many other Medieval Bhakti Movements. One of the main reasons behind the rejection of mokṣa as the highest ideal and replacing it by prema-bhakti by the Gaudīya scholars is that, it can only be understood within the socio-cultural structure of Varṇāśrama dharma. It had its precursor in the rise of Bhāgavatism during the six and fifth centuries B.C. Even in the case of Śaṅkara, the opposition between jñāna and karma or bhakti is very much evident when he categorically contended jñāna as the only means of mokṣa consisting in the realisation of non-dualism.

Sharma also had not taken into consideration of the fact that, if one can speak in terms of taking any one of the three as the more primary sādhanā than

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10 Nath, Śrī Rādhāgovinda, Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavadīs, Saṭṭha Khaṇḍa (Vol. VI), Sādhanā Prakāśañ, Calcutta, Second Edition 1982, pp. 11. He cites Maitreyī-Śrutī 1.13 which rejects Varṇāśrama-dharma as the means for the attainment of mokṣa - Varṇāśrama-dharma vimūḍhāḥ karmāṇusāreṇa phalaṁ labhante / Varṇādīdharmāṁ hi parityajantaḥ svānandatrpāḥ puruṣā bhavantīḥ. This agrees with the Gītā’s statement - sarva dharmān parityāya māme karṇaḥ saraṇaṁ vraja (XVIII. 66).
the rest, one has already taken an identifiable religious attitude and bhakti is one such a doctrine due to which Nārada, Śaṅḍilya and even Maudhāsūdana had to write on it as exclusive theme of their works. It is quite possible that, that, they or any individual who had used them as namesakes had to write about bhakti perhaps also indicates that, they were compelled to do so. That is, most probably, the least they wanted to do was to show that, bhakti somehow is compatible with jñāna and karma as it was done by the author of the Gītā. But mainly Nārada and Śaṅḍilya did show that, bhakti definitely is a distinctive religio-philosophical consciousness associated with theism or monotheism, though they did not do so in direct opposition to the extreme monism of Śaṅkara. That, they may be reconciled to each other, does not mean that, a predominant metaphysical position was not taken by either Śaṅkara or other Vedāntins.

As for the second postulate, while bhakti may not be the exclusive domain of Vaiṣṇavism, Vaiṣṇavism surely takes bhakti as distinctive mode of spiritual practice associated with their belief pattern which means that, bhakti is meaningful only when it is seen as a distinctive religious consciousness as far as the system is concerned. Therefore, without monotheism and monism as the underlying ontological presuppositions, the difference between Śaṅkara’s Advaita Vedānta and that of Rāmānuja cannot be made. What either jñāna or bhakti means to them is subject to their respective interpretations of them. Their respective accommodations of both bhakti and jñāna in their religio-philosophical schemes do not mean that, each sādhana is to be taken as generic concepts.

Using the historical approach of R.C. Majumdar, this chapter brings out the gradual evolution of the concept of bhakti as a predominantly monotheistic belief with reference to the framework of (1) Historical Background of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism, (2) Age of Revolt (C. 600 B.C.-A.D. 300), (3) The Evolution of Bhāgavatism, (4) The Rise of Vaiṣṇavism in the Paurānic Age (A.D. 300-A.D.1200), (5) Southern Vaiṣṇavism (A.D. 500-A.D.1100), (6) North Indian Vaiṣṇavism: Nimbārka and Vallabhaśāra, (7) Socio-cultural genesis of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism, Some Resistance to Caitanya’s Movement, (8) Bhakti Renaissance and (10) Special
Features of Caitanya Movement - Śaṅkīrītana Mahāyajña, the Religion of the Iron Age. Thus it has been argued that, bhakti definitely had been a gradually manifesting theist or monotheist religious consciousness which became matured into a fully fledged religio-philosophic in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

Chapter III:

In continuation of the idea of an evolving monotheist religious consciousness associated with the historically growing concept of bhakti, this chapter entitled "Some Classical Bhakti Texts - A Search for Theistic Consciousness", have a survey of the ways in which it is represented in the Bhagavad Gītā, Śrīmad Bhāgavata and the two Bhakti Sūtras of Nārada and Śāṅḍilya. As for the Gītā, its position about the concept of bhakti is well known and only the manner in which it embodies theistic elements has been shown; otherwise bhakti according to it is a correlative sādhana of jñāna and karma. Whether what constitutes the central teaching of the Gītā in terms of the three sādhanas is a matter of belief. Though, it is still controversial, as for the Bhāgavata, on account of its tenth canto dealing with Rāsapāñcadhyāy in which the dalliance between Kṛṣṇa and Gopīs is depicted, it is being argued that, it is as a monotheistic text.

There is the continuity of the theme of bhakti in the two Bhakti Sūtras. Nārada and Śāṅḍilya appear to accord a distinctive place to bhakti as a relatively predominant sādhana leading to mokṣa. While Nārada is more Paurāṇic in his treatment; Śāṅḍilya's approach to the idea of bhakti is more on the plane of the overall beliefs of Vedānta. Both of them had showed a synthetic approach as they heavily cited the Gītā, the Bhāgavata and various Śruti texts (mainly by the latter) during the courses of their analysing the important position the concept bhakti occupies in the process of spiritual pursuits.

Both of them had cited the case of the Gopīs, as the best exemplification of the self-less or object-centric or self-transcending divine-love. Nārada argues that their love for Kṛṣṇa is not that of a paramour. They had shown bhakti as an
intensely emotional and passionate attachment towards the Parameśwara. As it is in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, the vital process of sublimating natural phenomena of desire (the word kāma is used by Nārada) and longing etc. towards the Lord is being recommended by Nārada. Both did not consider bhakti as a mere devotional worship, but in its ultimate form, it is interpreted as divine-love (prema-rūpam) or of the nature of the highest attachment towards to the Lord (parānurakitrīśvare). These are some of the important psycho-spiritual components of bhakti developed in their detail aesthetic and emotive forms by the Gauḍīya aesthetician like Rūpa in his Bhakti-Rasaṁrta-Sindhu and Ujjvalanilamani. Hence, they are significant for the further discernment of the philosophical merits of the divine-amour of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. In addition to the Gītā and Bhāgavata, these two Bhakti Sūtras prepare the ground for the critical theoretical investigation of the nature of divine-love of the School under consideration. Lastly, on the contrary to what Sharma says they had shown critically that, bhakti is a distinctive doctrine associated with the loving attachment directed towards the Supreme Being.

Chapter IV:

Chapter IV "The Ontology of Divine-Love" shall discuss the following issues:- (1) The Process-theological approach to Krṣṇa as the Static-Dynamic Absolute whose essential nature or power as the dynamic and core blissful (hlādinī-śakti) being expresses itself as divine-love or prema-bhakti via the process of human-divine interface. (2) Divine-love as Emotive Knowing or the eyes of divine-love (CC. 1.5.17, prema-netra). (3) Prema-bhakti as the Self-Love of the Divine. (4) Nature of Divine-love in relation to the distinction between sukhā (pleasure) and priyatā (fondness) of Jīva Gosvāmi and (5) Consideration of Divine-Love as a relation. (6) Its non-cognitive objectification in the human-Divine intersubjectivity and (7) Mutual-transfer of energy (parasparaśaktīveśa) and (8) Subject and object interchangeability between the lover and beloved etc. are
some of the main theoretical issues to be highlighted as the core problems of the thesis.

The investigations on the basis of these perspectives are ultimately shown as the statico-dynamic affirmation of the inexplicable (acintya) difference (bheda) and non-difference (abheda) between the Śaktimat or Śaktimān and His Powers (māyā-śakti or bāhiraṅga-śakti - material or external power, jīva-śakti or taraṣṭha-śakti - sentient or marginal power and svarūpa-śakti - internal or primary powers). But this investigation is being carried out not on the plane of the causality of the physical world, but on the level of divine-love. The eternally alternating inner movements of love in-union (saṁbhoga or saṁśleṣa) and love-in-separation (viraḥ or viśleṣa) in their own ways exhibits the characters of inexplicable difference and non-difference between the devotee lovers and their Divine beloved. In the ultimate analysis all these are the spontaneous and unconditional blissful play of the creative joy (nitya-līlā) of the freedom of the personal Absolute. The detail examination of them is further continued to chapter 5 in the context of aesthetics as non-cognitive participatory religious language.

Is it Self-love of the personal integral Absolute in relation to which the self-love of the individual human selves is to be somehow explained? In what manner the issue of divine-love as Self-love of both the Divine and the derivatively of the bhaktas is interpreted to be the manifestation of the bliss-potency of the Divine and how such a love is the saving Grace of the mortals and becomes the highest functional expression of the selfhood of the Divine Being? When this out flowing of the over flowing creative fullness of the blissful potency of the Bhagavat reaches the human heart it transforms itself into priti or sādhyā-bhakti. But the query remains as to how something which is of the nature of a relation is being conceived to be the trans-mokṣa spiritual ideal called as the pañcamapuruṣārtha? the supreme state of spiritual perfection ever attainable by human beings.

Love divine or ordinary being of the nature of a sublime emotion, rather for the School under consideration is the divine-amour or madhura-rati is not a
blind emotional expression but is imbued with its own form of knowing more appropriately non-cognitive or emotive-knowing; in the language of Kṛṣṇadās Kavirāj Gosvāmi it is called as prema-netra literally the eyes of love. Being an emotional relation coupled with being conceptualised as the object of desire for both God and the devotees, it eternally remains non-cognitively objectified in the human-divine (lover-beloved) intersubjectivity. In the context of the distinction between kāma and prema, their respective natures as self-centric profane-love and object-centric divine-love will be examined. It will be shown that, the erotic-pychological elements of desire, passionate longing and attachment towards the Divine object of love as they are necessary components of the particular form of religious language of Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism in no way make divine - love on the par with sexual - love between ordinary man and woman.

In addition to the aforesaid what the thesis intends to discern is the manner in which the non-cognitive objectivity of divine-love is ever manifested in the human-divine intersubjectivity. The two alternating eternal spiritual process of śṛṅgāra rati-sambodha (love-in-union) and virah (love-in-separation) and their underlying elements of interchangeability of the identity of the lover and beloved as the subject (aśraya) and object (viṣaya) are the dynamic spiritual process or process theological ways of expressing the most esoteric, yet the highest spiritual state revealing the metaphysical truth of the inscrutable difference cum non-difference between the Śaktis (Jīva-Śakti) and the Bhagavat or the Śaktimat. Jīva Goswāmi explains this state in terms of the Upaniṣadic proclamation of tattvamasi - thou art that.

The intention of the thesis is not to enter into finding those psychological, literary and aesthetic elements of divine - love or compare it with the most idealised forms of secular love portrayed in well known and celebrated love tales

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like Layla and Majnun, and Romeo and Juliet etc. At the same time for sake of analytical clarity and the discernment of the true import of the concept of divine-amour which is being raised to its extreme ontological height in Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism as the sādhya-bhakti or the pañcamapurusārtha, those well known elements of secular literatures and aesthetics were comparatively analysed vis-à-vis similar concepts of the Gaudīya aesthetics.

Chapter V:

Divine-love as the highest spiritual attainment; being couched in the erotic and aesthetico-emotive religious language, though has its own compatible element of cognitive truth, is not presentable in the traditional medium of jñāna or rather in the words of Rūpa Goswāmi, the conventional cognitive method of the systems of Darśana is relinquished (tarkānadarāh) as an inadequate or incompatible means for conveying an erotic-o-emotive cum dynamic spiritual truth like the divine-amour. This deliberate choice of aesthetic medium is better explained by the model of the method of any research being determined by the particular subject-matter chosen for investigation or an art-form being conditioned by its motif or content. This makes the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavas to resort to the aesthetically as well as theologico-metaphysically constitutive aesthetic techniques of the Saṃskṛti poetics (Alaṅkāra Śāstra) operative during its imaginatively contemplative internal process of sādhana-bhakti mainly (antarāsādhana) rāgānuga-bhakti as the imitation of the rāgātmikā-bhakti as unfolding of the blissful potency or hlādiṇī-śakti which is the highest of the highest of the three Primary Powers (Cit-Śakti or Svarūpa-Śakti or Antaraṇga-


13 Śrī Laṅghubhāgavatārāntam of Śrīla-Rūpaprasādānanda, Published by Śrī Bhaktivilāstirtha Mahārāj, Śrī Caitanya Math, Śrī Dhām Mayapur, Nadia, Second Edition, Gaurābhā 477 (No year as per English Calendar is found), Pūrva Khaṇḍam, Prathama paricchedah, Text 9, p.3.
Śakti) of the Bhagavat. In a sense, this more or less explains the saying love moves everything under the sun.

The transcendental histrionics of Rādhā-kṛṣṇa dalliance in the nitya-līlā has every feature of literary and aesthetic elements. And the conscious and the inevitable application of them based on the Alaṅkāra Śāstra (Saṅskṛt aesthetics) as the non-cognitive or emotive method for communicating a dynamic and existential spiritual truth may be thought of as the anticipation of the Keirkegaardian rejection of essence in favour of concrete existence. This is evident from Rupa's deliberate joining hands in his Laghubhāgavatāmṛitam with Veda Vyāsa who slighted tarka (tarkānādaraḥ) in his Brahma Sūtra in favour of sabda-pramāṇa.

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava aesthetics which later became the Rasa-Śāstra heralded a new tradition both within the traditional Alaṅkāra theories of rasa as well as the concept of bhakti in theistic schools of Vedānta. That bhakti ceases to be mere matter of choice based on personal dispositions (svabhāva), but rather is the main focus of an integral philosophical view within which it has transformed itself into the highest ideal love possible for a human being to realise. It has been posited right into the very heart of both theological and metaphysical theories of the school.

As such aesthetics is not a mere method for communicating a spiritual truth which is not amenable to ratiocinative investigation but something which can only be grasped through aesthetic experience (rasānubhava). Just as the light knows the light; as in the compatibility between form and content of art, so also the creatively blissful rasahood of the Supreme Being can only be realised through a compatible method which is nothing but aesthetics. When the devotee-lovers-the subject or the āśraya (locus of prema-bhakti) realises it, it is done so in the form of prema-bhakti, and for the personal Absolute as the object (viśaya) of this love, it is its Self-determined Self-love as the perennially Self-actualising process of its dynamic rasahood. The Absolute’s relishing its own blissful nature is known
as sva-svarūpānanda and its tasting of the sweetness of the redirected prema-bhakti which had originated from its blissful-energy is called as saktyānanda. The latter is said to be superior to the former. It is already a well known fact that the Śrutis describe the Absolute as rasa-rasa vai saḥ. This unprecedented aesthetic adaptation of a traditional notion of bhakti as a corollary of the nature of divine-love conceived in erotic-emotive terms is the creative contribution of Gauḍīya Vaishnavism.

One of the main thirsts of this chapter is that, in an unprecedented manner, divine-love is aesthetically portrayed as the eternal process of human-Divine-interface (nitya-līlā). The mysterious nature of this phenomenon is that, both God and His devotees are hooked to its sweetness (mādhurya) and it ever remains as their sole object of desire. Divine-love becomes the all powerful spiritual emotion even conquering the normally unconquerable omnipotent God (Sarva-Saktimat) of incalculable majestic splendor (mahīmā or aśvarya). The most secret and sacred truth of the personal Absolute consisting in Its dynamic core blissful nature is thrown open to the invincible power of prema-bhakti-madhura-rati. This is nothing but God’s own Self-limiting act of making Himself subjugated by His own enchanting sweetness called as mādhurya.

The power of divine-love is indicated in the acts of Kṛṣṇa being controlled as a child by mother Jaśodā’s maternal or parental love (vātsalya-prema) or by the over-powering divine-amour (kānta-rati or śṛṅgāra-rati) of Rādhā or the other Gopīs which in fact are nothing but His own creative Self-limiting acts. The power of prema-bhakti is the expression of His blissful power known as hlādini-sakti. Hence, divine-love as the expression of His blissful nature being a form of His Self-curtailed creative freedom in no way comes into conflict with His infinite greatness (mahīmā). The entire divine-play of the nitya-līlā is nothing but the eternally creative, unconditioned and spontaneous Self-unfolding of God’s Self-reflexive enjoyment of His own essential being of rasahood (through the dynamics of svarūpānanda and saktyānanda) which is interpreted to be the highest truth in Gauḍīya Vaishnavism. The significance about this process revealed
in and through the built in aesthetic process is the processes of human-Divine-interface. This is being conceptualised in this chapter as the aesthetic process of non-cognitive and participatory religious language operating through the ever manifesting spiritual phenomenon of intersubjectivity between the lover and beloved. The main focus of this intersubjectivity or mutual indwelling between them which is being non-cognitively objectified is the self-manifesting (svapракāśa) and self-established (svataḥ-siddha) divine-love. But, when seen from the standpoint of religious language, the aesthetico-erotic manifestations of divine-love which is also called as divine-amour raises certain ethical issue.

Chapter VI:

Sacred-love or divine-love thus understood; except its qualifying words like sacred and divine, its expressions has all the necessary literary and aesthetic elements associated with the pathos of secular love immortilised by world famous love stories. Though, the Gauḍiya thinkers would be vehement with the insistence with their claim of the realism of such a transcendental form of erotic-aesthetic love, and emphasise that, its similarity with ordinary love would be only apparent or rather the latter is a perverted reflection of the archetypal spiritual love, if one closely examines the texts of the Vaiṣṇava-Rasa-Śāstras14 and the work like Jayadeva’s Gitagovinda15, one would be left aghast on account of the fact that, the line of distinction between divine and profane love becomes very thin16.

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14 Śrī Śrī Rūpa-Goswāmi-Prabhupāda Viracitaḥ Śrī Bhaktirasāmṛtasindhuḥ, with Jīva Goswāmi’s Tīkā “Durghara-Saṅgamani” and Critical Textual Analysis, Bengali Trans. by Śrī Mad Bhakti Rākṣaka-Śrīdharā-Deva-Goswāmi, Śrī Caitanya-Sāraswata-Kṛṣṇa-nilāna-Saṅghata, Calcutta, Baṅgābda 1996. Also Ujjvalanilaśi of Śrī Rūpa Goswāmi, Hindi Trans. and Comm. by Dr. Shyama Narayan Pandey, Grantham, Kanpur. These two books along with Jīva Goswāmi’s Bhakti Sandarbha and Pṛti Sandarbha constitute the main Vaiṣṇava-Rasa-Śāstras.


16 Ibid, “The Gitagovinda is not so much an allegorical work as an allegorically interpreted work. In the context of the Sanskrit literary tradition a kavya could be erotic, literarily sexual, without being in conflict with religious ideals; the Gitagovinda is literally about carnal love but it is also devotional. There was no contradiction-just as Kṛṣṇa was at once a playful lover and the
The issue will be considered as more to do with the history of the medieval Indian sex and sexuality (which has its counterpart in the sexually repressive Victorian society in Europe), than it is to do with such a conception of bhakti itself. But the Gauḍīya thinkers themselves were apprehensive about the immoral nature of certain aspect of the Rādhā Kṛṣṇa dalliance. This is evident from the intra-School dialogue about the immorality-morality of the parakīyā- svakīyā debates. In this respect the ethical issues of divine-love is discussed more from the perspective of an outsider, but in the process the insiders view point is also amply taken into consideration. What is presupposed here is that, because of the explicit sensuousness of the religious language of the divine-amour of the nitya-līlā, the question about its immorality when seen in the light of the refusal by the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas to interpret it symbolically necessitates some further explanations. Therefore the thesis shall argue that, the ethical issues of the erotic elements of śṛṅgāra-rati or madhura-rati are less to do with their immorality, but the innocuous expression of the repressed unconscious desires during the medieval time\(^\text{17}\). In the aesthetically and literarily and philosophically skilled hands of Rūpa Goswāmi, Sanātana Goswāmi and Jīva Goswāmi, and it became the central theme and religio-philosophical obsession of their erotic-aesthetic theory of bhakti-rasa. The persuasiveness of their passionate obsession with this apparent or actually amorous spiritual love is so strong that, some of their

\(^{17}\) History of Sanskrit Literature—Classical Period, Vol. I, General Editor: S.N. Dasgupta, (The Editor and S.K. De are the contributors to this Volume), Second Edition 1975, Calcutta University, Calcutta, Intro., p. xxxviii : “But the Sanskrit poets being thwarted in dealing with free passionate love as the chief theme of a glorious Kāvyas gave indulgence to the repressed sex-motives in gross description of physical beauty and purely carnal side of love both in long-drawn Kāvyas and also in lyrics...The repressed motive probably also explains why we so often find carnal and gross aspects of human love so passionately portrayed”. Kālidāsa is being cited here as a creative poet who skillfully skirted the moral issue by sanctifying erotic plot (in Abhijñān Śākuntalam) by portraying it in a spiritual context. Also see The Koka Shastra—Being the Ratirahasya of Kokkoka and other Medieval Indian Writings on Love, Trans. with an Intro. by Alex Comfort, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1964, p. 24. The rise of the medieval cult of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is stated in this book as a first contrary sign of the highly repressive medieval Indian society.
modern teachers would call it as divine-sex or pure-sex-life\textsuperscript{18}. This requires philosophical explanation.

But, divine-love as a divine-amour presents its own ethical problem. The theologico-aesthetic concepts of \textit{parakīyā-nāyakī} (Rādhā and other Gopīs as belonging to other men as one of the main excitants - \textit{ālambana vibhāva} of \textit{madhura-rati}) and \textit{upapati} (Krṣṇa as the other \textit{ālambana vibhāva} styled as the \textit{upapati} or the paramour) involved in the dynamic process of divine-love has certain built in ethical issues. The concept of \textit{parakīyā} is used as a literary or aesthetic technique of obstruction so as to heighten the pathos of divine-love—especially the mood of \textit{vīraḥ}. Ethically speaking, the exalted position accorded to the amorous devotional sentiment of \textit{sṛṅgāra-rasa} as the controversies between its two types of \textit{parakīyā-rasa} and \textit{svakiyā-rasa} further create the theoretical and practical problems of the possible tussle between love and duty.

The ethical issues of divine-love which are briefly highlighted as above are examined with reference to the perspectives of (1) Sexual Immorality as a Medieval Syndrome, (2) \textit{Kāma} in \textit{Caturvarga-Trivarga} Discourse, (3) Religious Language, Symbolic and Non-Symbolic Discourse, (4) A-morality or Supra-morality of Divine-amour, (5) Desire, Attachment and \textit{Prema}, Sublimation or else and (6) Divine-amour, Body and Embodiment-Theology. This chapter touching upon these perspectives has argued that, in the ultimate analysis, the issue of sexual immorality involved in the erotic imageries of the \textit{nitya-līlā} can only besettled by referring to its underlying metaphysical postulation which as it is done in the School is the reinterpretation of the Upaniṣadic statement—"It thought, May I become many"—\textit{tataikṣate bahusyāmah}. That is, the meaning of sex does not lie

in sex itself or in its being a constitutive element of religious language but in its larger metaphysical context. The alleged immorality of divine-amour is being discerned accordingly.

Chapter VII:

The thesis concludes with the following findings as they are gleaned from the critical philosophical investigations in the preceding chapters. Firstly, it has become evident that, the philosophical significance of Śrī Caitanya’s concept of divine-love, in spite of its symbolic or non-symbolic psycho-aesthetic and amorous expressions, is not a mere emotion or subjective state. That is, when it is interpreted to be the *sumnum bonum* of existence (*pañcamapurusārtha*), it is already presupposed that, it is not bereft of the particular form of ontological truth which is consistent with the patterns of the metaphysical doctrines of the School under consideration.

The aforesaid truth consists in the fact that, divine-love is the Self-expression in the sense of the spontaneous manifestation of the maddeningly sweet (*mādhurya*) blissful power (*hlādinī-sakti*) of the static-dynamic personal Absolute.

The next finding is that, it is the manifestation of the Self-determined creative will of the Absolute. When seen in the light of it’s being claimed as the supreme truth to be realised by man as the highest state of spiritual perfection\(^\text{19}\) is thought of as even higher than *mokṣa*\(^\text{20}\). As the highest but dynamic spiritual experience, it ever remains self-manifested and self-established or perpetually

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\(^{19}\) Op. cit., Bhakti Sandarbha, pp. 14-15: “...tatsantoṣaṣṭātham evaṁtvto dharmah paraḥ śreṣṭhah”. This is stated in Jiva’s commentary to Bhāg., 1.2.13.

\(^{20}\) Rādhāgovindaṇāth, Śrī, Gauḍiya Vaśīṇava Darśana, Pañcama Parva: Sādhyasādhanatatta, Śaṣṭha khaṇḍa (Vol. VI), Sādhana Prakashani, Calcutta. After discussing about the four puruṣārthas in Ch. 2 as socio-ethical functions within the varṇāśrama dharma (pp. 7-11), in Ch. 4, prema as the fifth puruṣārtha is being discussed, pp. 34. Caitanya Caritāmṛta (C.C.), 1.7.137 is quoted as the evidence for this claim – "pañcamapurusārtha sel prema mahādhona/ Kṛṣṇamādhuryarosa korai āśvdon/". Caitanya says in C.C. 1.4.125: "Āmār mādhurya nitya nava nava hoi //."
exists in a state of non-cognitive objectivity in and through the human-divine intersubjectivity.

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. Whether the sensuous element of religious language involved in the nitya-līlā as the embodiment of the highest form of bhakti-rasa is symbolic or else loses its ground when understood in this manner.

The above findings also directly or indirectly give ontological basis to the much sidelined and maligned affective or emotional side of human life which except in art and literature, philosophy in general tends to ignore as effeminate passion seen in opposition to a more masculine intellectual pursuits\(^{21}\). In a sense, in the language of Margate Chatterjee\(^{22}\) divine-love is being projected as the panacea of all the ills and sufferings of existence—some sort of a religio-philosophic therapy.

**Methodology Employed:**

This thesis does not entertain itself with those trodden paths already brought out in more expository works of many scholars like S.K. De (Early History of The Vaiṣṇava Faith and Movement in Bengal), O.B.L. Kapoor (The Philosophy and Religion of Śrī Caitanya), Sudhindra Chandra Chakravarti (Philosophical Foundation of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism), A.K. Majumdar (Caitanya His Life and Doctrine-A Study in Vaiṣṇavism), Jadunāth Sinhā (Jīva Gosvāmī’s Religion of

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\(^{22}\) Chaterjee, Margaret, The Therapeutic Theme in Philosophy, Presidential Address-History of Philosophy Section, The Indian Philosophical Congress, 43\(^{rd}\) Session, Karanataka University, Dharwar, 1969, pp. 1-7.
Devotion and Love-Bengal Vaiśnavism), Mahānāmabrata Brahmachārī (Vaiśṇava Vedānta-The Philosophy of Jīva Gospāmī), A.N. Chaterjee (Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya: A Historical Study on Gauḍīya Vaiśnavism) and the more traditional scholar like Śrī Rādhāgovindanāth (Gauḍīya Vaiśnav Darśan in nine Volumes) and many others. Rather standing on their shoulder, those unexplored philosophical questions are taken up. Say for instance, the thesis in no way repeats the types of bhakti, its comparative studies across schools or delving into controversies whether of the three sādhanas which one is superior or inferior or even which one is the primary etc. But while, keeping in view of them, and based on their respective findings, only their philosophical implications are given exclusive focus in the thesis.

In addition to the above Indian writers many western works on the relevant topic are also cited during the course of thesis. Especial mention may be made of William S. Sax (The Gods at Play-Lilā in South East Asia), Jonathan Stratton Hawley and Donna Marie Wulff, Editors (The Divine Consort-Rādhā and the Goddesses of India), Graham M. Schweig (Dance of Divine Love), Lee Siegel (Sacred and Profane Dimensions of Love in Indian Traditions as Exemplified in The Gītagovinda of Jayadeva), and Sudhir Kakar and John M. Ross (Tales of Love, Sex and Danger).

While the above materials are the secondary sources, all the relevant primary materials in original texts were consulted and cited in support of the presuppositions of the thesis. They are: Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī’s Bhakti-Rasāmṛta-Sindhu and Ujjvalanilamāni, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī’s Tatva Sandarbha, Kṛṣṇa Sandarbha, Bhakti Sandarbha, Pṛiti Sandarbha and Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāj’s Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta.23 The relevant Upaniṣadic texts, the Bhagavat Gītā, the Bhāgavata and the two Bhakti-Sūtras of Nārada and Śaṅḍilya are being treated as the primary materials.