Chapter IV

The Ontology of Divine Love:
A Case for Process Spirituality

The idea of bhakti as its own end i.e. it is both sādhanā (means) as well as sādhyā (end) or that bhakti in its highest form as prema-bhakti or pṛiti (divine-love) is the fifth puruṣārtha (pañcamapuruṣārtha) requires critical philosophical scrutiny. How bhakti as its own end presents itself as a problem when it is seen in the light of the fact that, it seems that, it comes into conflict with the claim that, the Bhagavat in the form of the two handed form (dvibhūja) and also having the enchanting three bended form (tribhanagamūrti) – who manifested in the form of the cow herd Boy (Madana Gopāla) and in whose Divine Persona all the other Bhagavat-tattvas are believed to be subsumed is claimed to be the highest reality. In another words how can the system hold that a dynamic aesthetico-erotic-spiritual-emotion like divine-love is the highest good (nīḥśreyasa or pañcamapuruṣārtha) achievable by man and is even placed on much a higher plane when it is said to be even superior to mokṣa while at the same time admitting that the Bhagavat is the supreme reality. If one has to offer any qualification to the Gauḍīya Vaishnavava contention and maintains that when bhakti is said to be the pañcama puruṣārtha and is thus the supreme spiritual end, what it means is that as the functional expression of the bliss-potency (hiñādini-śakti) of the Bhagavat the statement does not in any serious manner alter or is inconsistent with simultaneous claim of the highest ontological status accorded to Him. But this does not seem very clear in the system. One may also apply the principle of “unthinkable simultaneous difference and non-difference” (acintyabhedābheda) to this issue and say that, the contradiction mentioned is only apparent and not actual. But the school clearly claims that as the sādhyā as well as the sādhanā it occupies the highest ontological status. This requires us to examine how it is so. Because the question still remains in what manner prema-bhakti or divine-love as a relational concept has the highest
ontological status. It is also possible that, that, it is conceived as the highest or the fifth - puruṣārtha does not mean that, it has the highest ontological status, or may be that, what constitutes as the highest value or the supreme ontological status is a matter of perspective. There are theological reasons for saying this. These issues throw up certain conceptual framework for the eventual discerning of the ontology of divine-love.

The above philosophical moorings as specific questions raised in the context of the nature of divine-love may be placed within the broader structural framework of the concepts of process-theology (process philosophy), emotive-knowing and self-love. All these inter-related concepts are permeated by a dynamic religio-phenomenological and existential consciousness manifested in and through the eternal process of the divine-human intersubjectivity. The relevance of phenomenological and existential paradigm of prema-bhakti arise when we see that, the rejection of the conventional notion of jñāna goes hand-in-hand with the wholesome adoption of the entire technicalities of Indian aesthetics. At the same time it will be too early to say that, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism does not have any form of jñāna as it is understandable within its religious philosophy. The cognitive approach which was lacking by design rather than by any sense of inherent intellectual incapacity in Rūpa Goswāmi’s Bhakti-Rasa-Śāstra was filled up by Jīva Goswāmīn as per the former’s specific instructions. In all these the non-static objectivity of divine-love remains ever-established and revealed in the endless continuum of God-devotee interaction manifested in the nitya-līlā. It would mean that, the pure maddening delight of the emotion of aesthetic divine-amour (śṛṅgāra or madhura-rasa) ever remain as the object of

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1 Elkman, Stuart mark, Jīva Gosvāmī’s Tattvasandarbha – A study on the Philosophical and Sectarian Development of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Movement, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, First Edition, 1986, pp. 21-25. Elkman mentions the intellectual background and training etc. of Jīva at Varanasi before he undertook the task of laying the philosophical and theological foundation of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism by way of writing his Bhāgavata Sandarbhas and other works.
imaginative contemplation for both the devotee rasikas and the Bhagavat. It is in this sense that, the Gauḍīya scholars think about it as even superior to mokṣa. This can be explained in terms of self-love in relation to both God and His devotees. Its intuitive immediacy and vividness presented to the religio-aesthetic experience of it as divine-amour as the manifestation of the bliss-potency (hīḍnīšakti) of the Bhagavat in which the potencies of sarīvid (potency of consciousness) and sandhinī (potency of existence) are subsumed would make it possess the attribute of being a non-cognitive form of knowing⁴ that is more wholesome and satisfying to the soul than, the ordinary knowledge of the discursive intellect or the pure knowledge of the impersonalists. Divine-love which has the Bhagavat as its object cannot be thought of as a blind emotion. Its amorous expression is only human’s way of looking at a creative and eternal spiritual process as the unfolding of the core-blissful-energy of the Supreme Being. If the causation of the world is not an illusion, then, there is no way of interpreting the larger existential process except as the Self-Love of the Divine — a love that originates from Him and returns to Him.

But, an absolute focus to something which is relational in nature would tantamount to belittling the Bhagavat as one of the two relata of the relation of such a love. The question arises because of the fact that a devotional sentiment conceived in the dynamic and highest aesthetico-erotic form though is of the nature of a relation seems to have achieved a level of reality that is contended to be even on a superior spiritual plane rather a supreme yet non-static spiritual process where the inner psycho-spiritual events themselves achieve exclusive focus and thus acquires a state of objectivity⁵ in the inter-subjective communion

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⁴ Caird, John, An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion, Chuckervertty, Chatterjee & Co., Ltd. Calcutta, 1956, pp. 11-176. See the chapter VI: “The Religious Consciousness” where religious consciousness is interpreted as a form of knowledge. But Caird rejects the idea that, it has elements of feeling as against the devotional emotionalism of Gauḍīya Vaishnavism.

⁵ Vide: Majumdar, A.K., p. 319, cited in the preceding chapter. If the mahābhāva of Rādhā is devoid of any locus (nirāśraya), then as a dynamic psycho-spiritual amour it achieves an esoteric ontological state of its own which becomes an object of desire for both Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.
(intersubjectivity) between the divine and his devotees. In another words it seems to extend the highest ontological status to something dynamic like divine-love. It is also relatable to the notion of God as love where it comes to constitute the very selfsame being of God Himself and, in such a spiritual situation his other attributes like omnipresence (sarvagata or sarvavyāpaka) and omnipotence (sarva śaktimat) or greatness of His majestic splendors (aśvāry) recede into the background or remain subsumed within His divine persona. This is a religio-philosophical concept peculiar to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism in which the sweet power of devotional love subjugates the Lord (Bhagavadvaśakāraṇī) “Of there is anything that may vanquish the Lord, the vanquisher of all, it is Bhakti. Śrī Rūpa calls this: Śrī Kṛṣṇa kārṣaṇatva" the attractiveness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This can be either seen as Self-Love of God or His own Self-limiting-act. Hence, it requires a critical philosophical investigation so as to explain as to how a dynamic spiritual state may be ascribed with such a metaphysical status.

Process Theological Approach to Kṛṣṇa as the statico-dynamic Absolute:

The claim of a dynamic transcendental state to be something ontologically real and is something which is of the nature of highest reality is not new as it was already anticipated in the intractable debates between Parmenides and Heraclites and their respective followers. In Indian context we have corresponding controversies between Āstika schools and Buddhism. But as it is in Greek atomism where both the elements of permanence and change or becoming are synthesised in it, so also in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism as it is in Jainism (dhrūva and paryāya) both the tendencies are discernible. The discussion about the ontological issue of divine love may be undertaken keeping in view of this

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This divine erotic-aesthetic objectivity manifests itself in and through the divine psychosis of alternating moods of viraṭ and sambhoga which remains revealed more in the later. This is justifiable with help of Abhinavagupta’s concept of aesthetic experience as a self referring act in which pure delight etc. rest (viśrānti) or remains absorbed (laya) in the main emotion itself. Rūpa Goswāmi would give the analogy of the sweetness of sugar resting itself in the sugar candy itself. An art work after having created has its own autonomy, in the sense that, its pure delight is self-subsistent.

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particular philosophical framework. If we may consider divine love as a spiritual process, it comes very closer to the concept of process theology of the west. Process theology was a concept developed under the influence of Whitehead’s and Hartshorne’s theistic interpretation of metaphysics or “...more generally any theology that takes process or change as the basic characteristics of all beings, including God”\textsuperscript{7}. But it does not mean that God is reduced to a state of totally changing reality where no idea of changelessness or eternity is presupposed by such a contention.

Yet whatever is the case a strict logical scrutiny would reveal that conceiving change and changelessness in the nature of the infinite Self is self contradictory. Perhaps it is on account of this fact that In Chaitanya’s philosophy; such seemingly or actually inconsistent concepts are explained away with the application of concept like acintya - that the matters relating to God’s powers are inexplicable or logically incapable of being explained in definite terms. Rādhāgovindanāth says that, acintya does not mean unthinkable as in the impossibility to conceive the existence of sky flower\textsuperscript{8}. No matter what the critic may say it had been already anticipated by the cult’s thinkers and Śāṅkara’s own notion of anirvacaniya – “indescribable” may be understood in this light. The concept of sūnya of Nagārjuna is not voidism but similarly such a logically inexplicable situation. They were merely trying to bridge the gap between the demands of faith (śraddhā or śruti) and the necessity of reason (yukti) which none other than St. Thomas tried to do in his attempt to synthesise these two outwardly or else self contradictory concepts. Śāṅkara himself made a synthesis between śruti (revealed Vedic texts whose spiritual contents are based on faith) and yukti (reason). Therefore, we have to understand the inherent theoretical problems in the notion of process theology as implied by the concept of a


dynamic divine love as the inner movement of the supreme being whose movements is through human-divine-interface where they act on each other. That is, man and God influence upon each other without at the same time considering the theoretical difficulties involved as much of a problem. As far as the nature of this difficulty is concerned, the difference between the believers and non-believers would be paradigmatic. For the former it only indicates the mysterium tremendumm of the divine, where as for the later, it is the warning to halt the philosophical attempt to things religious as belonging to the realm of dogma. Being paradigmatic there cannot be any point of contention between them. One can only try to show the reasonability\(^9\) of matters of faith and not pretend that what are being shown thus are proofs which as per the very nature of the things studied can never be put in strict logical format as it is done in empirical matters. Hence, the present investigation will be limited by this understanding.

What is important to note here is that, as it is in process theology so also here Kṛṣṇa either through His own conceit or else is said to be unaware of the unpredictable depth of love which Rādhā has for Him. For, they state that He was always enamored by the extent of passionate, supreme state of Rādhā’s unfailing and unalloyed love for Him. They claimed that it was precisely to taste this undying love that Rādhā had for Him that Kṛṣṇa was believed to have appeared in the form of Caitanya in the religiously charged social condition of Nadia. Caitanya is said to be a divine persona who is internally Kṛṣṇa and outwardly donning the form of Rādhā’s complexion of golden hue. That is, Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa Himself who had appeared in the mood of Rādhā\(^10\). At the outset it may look like it

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9 Op. cit., Caird, vide: pp. 59-73. Caird says it is impossible to think about the absolute opposition between Revelation and reason. He makes a distinction between “what is contrary to reason” and what is “above reason”. This view is in agreement with Radhakrishnan’s contention that, spiritual truth is not irrational but non-rational or supra-rational (An Idealist View of Life, Blackie & Son India, Ltd, Bombay, Reprint 1979).

downgrades God to the status of a mere finite entity, but it is not the case. In the Indian context it is done in and through the self limiting act of God Himself (yoga māyā as different from ordinary māyā) and not under the impact of any material energy. Plotinus' idea of emanation of the world from the absolute Being as an act of degradation and diminution comes very closer to this view. In the Gītā Kṛṣṇa declares that His advent in human form and activities are transcendental and those who knows this fact as what it is will never be reborn again in this world and they would attain at His abode. Out of sheer compassion for His creatures and also to exemplify truth and values of the highest order, and also to enable the finite human being to have an access to the unfathomable reality of Godhood, form time to time He by His own sweet will chooses to appear in the world where jīvas had been trapped in bondage from beginning time (anādī). It is more an act of divine grace manifested in the form of divine-love as an expression of His blissful potency (hlādinī-śakti). Hence in the school under consideration when God appears to be involved in the endless process of divine-love and when He is said to be under the spell of it, His majesty and splendor (aiśwaryya) are not diminished, but that, it is only kept subordinated to that of His bliss-potency or from human perspective He comes under the control of the divine-love of His devotees. On the theological terminology it is expressed in terms of the fact that His blissful-potency is superior to that of opulent splendor of majesty (aiśwaryya) and also that amongst the Bhagavat-tattvas, Kṛṣṇa-tattva as the original source of all the avatāras (avatārī). There is a difference of opinion about the view regarding whether Kṛṣṇa is the avatār of Viṣṇu or vice versa between the south Indian and Bengal Vaiṣṇavas. This is not the point to be considered here, because it is a matter of faith and we are more concerned about the philosophical system established on it.

Structurally speaking, in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism its theology, aesthetics, ethics and metaphysics are developed in such a way that in a coordinated manner

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12 Gītā, IV. 6-9.
they had been designed so as to bring out divine-love as the sum mum bonum of life (pañcamapurṣārtha). It is also evident from the fact that amongst the five forms of bhakti, śringāra-bhakti is the highest state of spiritual realisation. This could not have been appropriate had aśwarya been His top most of the attributes. But then these are only aspects of the larger conceptual framework which do not by themselves explain how and why bhakti is its own end and further how a dynamic and relational concept of prema-bhakti or divine love comes to acquire the highest ontological status. Any relational entity had been rejected on theoretical and logical grounds as absolutely unreal by Śaṅkara as well as during the modern times by Bradley.\(^\text{13}\) Hence, a relational concept like divine-love stands in the need to counter those arguments.

Notwithstanding the nitty-gritty about the underpinning philosophical problems concerning for and against absolute monism, in rejecting the extreme reductionism of Advaitism and its distinctionless and relationless pure non-dual reality, theistic Vedānta or Vaiṣṇavism has already taken a realistic and integral metaphysical stand where both the elements of permanence and change are accepted as the two inseparable facets of one and the same reality. Both the finite spirit and matter find their respective ontological places in the over all philosophical schemes of things; in such an inclusive absolute, change and time (kālo’asmi, Gītā, XI, 32) through their secular and divine expressions become different modes or potencies (śaktis) of the Absolute (śaktimat). As Lord Kṛṣṇa declares in the Gītā He is the essence of everything else under the Sun (I am the taste of water, sexual passion between man and woman, death etc.) and everything has a transfigured existence in His being; though they dwell in Him He is not in them. All these were already referred to in the preceding chapter. That is, He is not exhausted by the finite world of living and non-living entities. Therefore, no matter how long the world process goes on, while it is the

\(^{13}\) Op. cit., The Cambridge Dictionary, pp. 98-99, “In part I of Appearance and Reality Bradley relied on an infinite regress argument now called Bradley’s regress, to contend that relations and all relational phenomena, including thought are, contradictory”. It is on the same ground that, Śaṅkara long before rejected any form of relation and difference as logically untenable.
manifestations of His greatness or splendor through the different legs of spatio-temporal events, He is both involved in it through His external or material energy (bāhirāṅga or māyā-śakti) as well as in being inexhaustible by it. He remains in His selfsame unity and oneness. This is more or less implied by the theology and metaphysical theory of acintyabhedābheda of Gauḍijā Vaiṣṇavism which has within it the built-in sub-structure of saktivāda. In this intricate modal divine-love—Bhagavad priti or prema constitutes the dynamic core of the eternal inner movements of the integral absolute. Jīva Gosvāmī would explain the evolution of the world from the Bhagavat with his theory of saktiparināmavāda. Since, the transformation of the world occurs on the plane of his maternal energy, He remains unaffected by this process. Just as the heat and light etc. as the property of fire stands in a relation of unthinkable difference and non-difference to fire as their possessor, so also is the case between the Bhagavat and His different energies. The conception of God in personal term or as an integral Being is not the invention of the school as it was already developed by Rāmānuja in his Viśiṣṭādvaita. The absolute reality is interpreted in the organic sense to be qualified by cit and acit, and its pan-non-dualism is explained in terms of the principle of inseparable relationship—aprthaksiddhi sambandha.

We shall see that this non-static sanctum sanctorum of the Supreme Being is continuous with the more gross causal relation underlying between it as the ultimate cause of all the causes (sarva kāraṇa kāraṇam) and the world of living (jīva-śakti called as tataṣṭha-śakti or marginal potency) and non-living entities (māyā-śakti also referred to as bāhirāṅga-śakti or external potency). It will be seen later on that, Jīva Gosvāmī’s metaphysical position is somewhat similar to the modal of process theology, and is quite useful in explaining the nature of such an integral reality with reference to the eventual question of the ontological

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15 Śrī Bhāṣya 3.2.28.

status of divine love which is the functional expression of the highest of the three internal potencies (antaraṅga-śakti) known as bliss potency or hlādinī-śakti. For further discussion we may refer to Mahānāmabrata Brahmachāri's critical exposition of Jīva's philosophical ideas pertaining to his conception of the "static-dynamic Absolute" in his book: “Vaiṣṇava Vedānta (The Philosophy of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī)". He makes a comparative analysis in relation to the relevant ideas of Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and even Bradley in order to Jīva’s position clearer. At the end he would bring out Jīva's argument that, "the Absolute substance (as the static reality also) has eternal (yet dynamic) Primary Power (svarūpa-śakti or antaraṅga-śakti in the form of hlādinī-śakti) and this 'Power' is the same as Love". If one thinks in terms of the Śrutis like Br. Up., the transition from an abstract Absolute (Brahman or Ātman) to the dynamic state of transcendent Love constituting the very being of such a reality is not a quantum or an unjustified jump. As we proceed further we will see that, this Love will be interpreted as the spontaneous expression as an internal Power of the ultimate causal nature of the static Being. Mahānāmabrata would rephrase Jīva’s position as to be in existence is to be causal and to be the Supreme Causal Principle is to be in possession of Power; and this Power is the Power of Love (hlādinī-śakti manifested as prema-bhakti in the hearts of the bhaktas). Hence, Jīva seems to have had the anticipation of the popular maxim that: “Love moves the whole world” and on a more philosophical parlance God is Love or rather Love is God. From the perspective of the concept of divine-love as a relation, and its objectification as a divine amour in the human-divine-intersubjectivity, finding its corresponding ontological basis is necessary in order that, the true meaning of the fact that madhura or śrīgāra-bhakti is the highest summum bonum of existence is justified. This issue arises within the

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17 Ibid., p. 83.
purview of Jīva’s attempt to establish his conception of absolute in his Tattva Sandarbha\textsuperscript{20} and other works like Sarva Saṅvādini.

In accepting the Upaniṣadic definition of the Absolute as ekamevādvitiyam: “the one without a second” and as of the nature of knowledge – jñānam-cidekarūpam\textsuperscript{21} Jīva toed the line of Ādi Saṁkara and others. He also accepts Saṁkara’s refutation of all the three types of differences (bheda/raya) especially svagata/bheda which was admitted by Rāmānuja. But the notion of “power” (śakti) is one of the most important metaphysical as well as theological concepts inherent in his doctrine of acintyabheda/bhedavāda. Thus, he was left with the stupendous task of explaining as to how he may reconcile his form of non-dualism characterised by both difference and non-difference with his rejection of this third type of difference. Jīva Gosvāmin rejects all the three forms of relations just as they were refuted by Saṅkara. Rādhāgovindanāth explains that to say that two entities are different (bheda) from one another each has to be svayam-siddha (self established entities). But jīvas and māyā are dependent upon the Bhagavat as their Saktimat. Therefore they have no independent existence so that we may speak about their difference from the Bhagavat. The reasons for rejecting svagata-bheda (internal distinction) of Rāmānuja are that, the theoretical modal of body-soul (sārira-sārīra-sambandha) relation where this relation exists is not admitted by Jīva. The Bhagavat as the Absolute reality being conceived in personal terms is thought of as the nature of sat-cit-ānanda-vigraḥ\textsuperscript{22}. Hence, He cannot have sentient material principle māyā and finite jīvas constituting His body. In His integral Being there is no distinction between body and soul. Nāmabrata says that “Saṅkarites would not accept that the Absolute which is non-dual is still endowed with ‘Power’, for, according to them; this would

\textsuperscript{20} Śrī Tattvasandarbha (The First of the Six-Sandarbhas) of Śrī Jīva Gosvāmi, with his own ṭīkā- Sarvasaṁvādini, ṭīkā of Baladevavidyābhūṣaṇa and Rādhāgovindanātha’s ṭīkā-svarṇalatekha, Trans. and commentary by Haridās Sāstrī, Śrī Gadādhar Gourahari Press, Kalidaha, Vṛṣṇidhāvana, 1983.

lead to Jīva’s acceptance of svagatabheda (internal-differentiation) which he does not support.”23 Jīva had to establish that (1) the Absolute has “Power” and (2) that the Absolute is strictly non-dual in spite of the fact that it has “Power”. Jīva puts forward the argument in support of his thesis that “a thing cannot exist unless there is some power in it. If the ultimate reality exists, it must have power.”24

The notions of divine-love, relation as a theologico-metaphysical category applicable such a divine emotion, and its ontological status is inherent in Jīva’s conception of the Absolute as a statico-dynamic reality.25 His conception of power is logically tied up with such a contention. Mahānāmabrata says about Jīva’s idea that, it is neither the Absolute of Bradley in which all the contradictions are transmuted. For Aristotle (unmoved mover), Bradley and Śaṅkara the Absolute is unchangeable or has not dynamism of all sorts. He also refers to Rāmānuja’s refutation of Śaṅkara’s impersonal Brahman and the consequential affirmation of “liveliness and concreteness” of existence. But, Jīva admits Śaṅkara’s unchangeable and static or actionlessness (niṣkriyātva) nature of the impersonal Brahman. This does not come into conflict with his theory of statico-dynamic Absolute; because, his Absolute though “One and no-dual” has different levels of manifestations, and the Bhagavat is the highest reality (tattva). According to Jīva “being dynamic does not necessarily mean imperfection...the Absolute is ‘Love’ and dynamism is indicative of its fullness. Dynamism of the Absolute, therefore, far from being contradictory to unchangeability, is rather necessary to its perfection, because it is perfect in Love.”26 The primordial “urge to become many” of the Absolute during its beginning-less (anādi) pre-causal state as evident by Śruti statement: In the beginning, my dear, all this was Being alone.

23 Jīva Goswāmi’s Sarvasaṁvidādīni, Edited by R.M. Vidyābhūṣan, Sahitya Parishad, Calcutta, "Śaktileśam vinā na kvacidaugamyate vastutattamitī sarvānubhavasiddhīṁ ā, p. 33.
25 Ibid., p. 82.
one only without a second-sadeva saumye damagrāśid ekamevādvītiṣayam\textsuperscript{27}, perhaps explains its creative unfolding from its fullness of this world as well as divine-love. M.N. Sircar, in his Comparative Studies in Vedantism, says about the twin aspects of the same Absolute “this Svarūpa Śakti (Primary Power) merely indicates this static-dynamic nature or Bhagavān (Godhead) and differentiates it form the static character of the absolute\textsuperscript{28}. The whole idea is that, this Primary Power with the predominance of hlādinī-śakti (bliss-potency) is nothing but Love manifested as prema-bhakti in the hearts of the bhaktas.

Mahānāmabrata cites Tagore whose ideas agree with the above view: “Only love is motion and rest in one. Our heart ever changes its place till it finds love and then it has its rest. But this rest itself is an intense form of activity where utter quiescence and unceasing energy meet at the same point in love”\textsuperscript{29}. Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad 5, most probably conveys this idea of static-dynamic Absolute when it says: “It moves and it does not.” move-tad ejeti tan naijat\textsuperscript{30}. The adaptation of the traditional Vedāntic concepts of sat, cit and ānanda to the triune Powers of sandhinī, sarvīvid and hlādinī imply the said dynamic aspect of the Absolute. As Powers of the integral Absolute in Its personal form they manifest as its will-to-be, will-to-know and will-to-enjoy respectively. In the conventional Vedāntic terminologies they may be understood in terms of the ontological implications (in the non-reductionist sense) of asti, bhāti and priyam believed to be characteristics of the reality at large as it is given in the phenomenal experience. Amongst all these three, priyam as the human tendency

\textsuperscript{27} Op. cit., The Principal Upaniṣads, Radhakrishnan, S., Ch. Up., V. 2.1, p. 447
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., p. 83.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{30} Op. cit., The Principal Upaniṣads, Radhakrishnan, Īś. Up. 5, p. 571. This may also be interpreted by the Advaitins as the indication of the fact that, the Absolute is beyond empirical categories and the sense in which it is understood here may be subject to criticism. This is what Rādhakrishnan says in his comment on the text. Also see, Op. cit., Śrī Īśopaniṣad, Bhāktivedānta, pp. 28-29. Bhāktivedānta translates the text as: “The Supreme Lord walks and does not walk”. His purport runs thus: “Here is an example of the Supreme Lord’s transcendental activities by His inconceivable potencies (acintya). There are two sets of contradictory words mentioned herein to prove the inconceivable potencies if the Lord”. This is the standard Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava way of understanding similar such texts.
for seeking pleasure or bliss in its highest plane is to be understood in the light of the Absolute’s Power of Love. The other two are intimately bound to it in the sense that, to be in existence is to be always in the process of awareness and to be thus is to be in bliss. This traditional notion of bliss is transformed into a divine Power; it becomes the all encompassing Love on the basis of which the world moves. Jīva in his Tattva Sandarbha brings out this idea. These will be explained under the problem of self-love.

The concept of divine love as a relation is not a new thing in Indian philosophical traditions. Relation as a metaphysical concept having its bearing on epistemology, social relations, ethics and religion is an alternative philosophical paradigm to its opposite view envisaged by thinkers like Śaṅkara where no notion of relation or difference is admitted as not exhibiting the nature of the highest non-dual reality. The importance of discussing love as a relation lies in the fact that in metaphysics the later is one of the categories used as a conceptual representation of reality responding to the question—“what there is”? A deeper analysis would reveal that it touches upon other metaphysical categories like, causation or causality, change or becoming, time, space and eternity etc. These are spatio-temporal dimensions of the ten subject matters of the Bhāgavata already discussed. As stated earlier these concepts have their implications in the areas of epistemology, ethics, aesthetics and theology and metaphysics. These reveal that there is a world-Divine-continuum which ultimately must end in the realisation of divine-love. The expression “tattvam” with the deliberate silence about “asi” or “are” (which the Advaitins use for proving identity thesis) in Jīva’s Tattvasandarbha 51 means that, while admitting the unity of the Absolute, he intends to show that, the embodied souls indicated by the word “tvam”-“you” have no other basis of subsistence or āśraya other than the Lord as the highest refuge (paramāśrayam), shown by the word “tat”-.

32 Supra, Chapter 3, Some Classical texts, Rf. No. 7.
“that” whose attainment culminates in the relish of the supreme bliss. The power of sandhinī sustains the realm of existence of both living and non-living entities, whereas the power of saṃvid enables the living beings to know and is also responsible for the manifestation of the objects. These two ultimately are consciously or unconsciously aim at the realisation of the highest bliss. Hence, to talk about such a form of spiritual reality would be a case of affirming a non-reductionist holism. And unlike the extreme reductionism of Śaṅkara, the philosophies of theistic schools adhere to the inclusive world view where every available metaphysical category is accommodated in it. Thus, ethically and epistemologically it is imperative that, such a truth revealed by “tat” should be realised and heard (dṛastavyaḥ śrotavyaḥ) so as to result in the attainment of prema-bhakti as the pañcamapurusārtha. This implies a process of knowing which becomes problematic for a system which is excessively aesthetico-emotive in the conception of its concept of bhakti.

Love as a relation is not a relation of mere conjunction (Sarhyoga) where two terms are only mechanically or accidentally connected for the time being. It comes closer to the concepts of samavāya sambandha (relation of inherence) of the Vaiśeṣika and apprthak-siddhi-sambandha (relation of inseparability) of Viśistādvaita. When one sees this kind of relation from the context of the theistic concept of integral absolute no matter Indian thinkers may not see eye to eye with one another, one can hardly move away very far from Vaiśeṣika’s notion of inherence. Jīva would say as an example that the burning power of fire inheres in it as its power. Fire is the locus (āśraya) and its capability of burning is its power. The idea of relation in the sense in which we are talking about is to do with the underlying notion of oneness or unity amidst the variegated of existence. The best explanation was provided by Rādhānuja’s interpretation of Advaita in terms of the inseparability between the Supreme Brahman and Its modes constituted by


34 Ibid., p. 140. Br.Up. 2.4.5, quoted by Rādhāmohan in his īkā on Tattvasandartha 51.
the sentient (ajaña) and insentient entities (ajaña). It stands as being eternally qualified by these two as its attributes (Qualified Non-dualism or Pan Non-dualism). He employs different models of illustrations for establishing the reality of internal distinction or organic distinction (svagata-bheda) existing within an organism. Body-soul relation (śarīra-śarīri sambandha), substance-attribute relation (dravya-guna sambandha), subject-predicate relation (viśeṣana-viśeṣya sambandha) and part-whole relation (šeṣa-šeṣi sambandha) etc. are some of those models of justification offered. But the merits if any of the arguments in favor of relation leis in the fact that, it are corroborated by the facts of experience. No matter how much any such a necessity is denied on logical grounds as did by Hume in rejecting the necessity of causal relation and was very much anticipated in Śaṅkara’s hair splitting arguments in his attempts to do away with the idea of bheda or any other spatio-temporal categories in respect of the ultimate reality which he conceived to be pure being (nirguṇa) devoid of every thinkable empirical concepts which he placed under nāma and rūpa (name and form). He was uncompromising in refuting the three types of differences (bheda trayo). Jīva’s insistence that, the Absolute is one and there is not internal distinction between its power and itself was further developed by Baladeva by bringing in the concept of viśeṣa.

Baladeva says that that, that, the Absolute has power does not mean that, it owns power, nor are they completely identical. They are just given in experience and therefore to do with the facticity of the integral reality. We say, writes Baladeva, “Being exists”, “time always exists”, (and) “space is everywhere” (Mahānāmabrata, p. 86). He seems to be moving towards some sort of realism where things exists because of their possession of the character of particularity or viśeṣa which he adapted from the Vaiśeṣika. The particularity observable in “power” and its locus is an observable fact. Viśeṣa as an individualising attribute make us think about the relative difference between power and the integral Absolute without at the same time it making it lapse into the problematic concept of svagata-bheda of Rāmānuja. Hence, the Gaudiya thinkers would say that,
divine-love as a self-reflexive relation of existing in the integral Being is a self-projection of its own dynamic power of bliss (hādinī-śakti). It is self-reflexive in the sense that, the power of bliss which had overflowed form the Lord flows back to Him in the form of the bhaktas’ divine-love or prema-bhakti directed towards Him. Thus within the Self-same integral Absolute, without its unity being disturbed, divine-love as a loving relation remains ever manifested and non-cognitively objectified in the intersubjectivity of the Divine an its individual sentient or marginal powers taṭaśṭha-śakti or jīva-śakti. In another words this state of objectification is nothing but His own eternal process of Self-actualisations for which He needs to bifurcate Himself as the “Other” within His own Being.

**Divine-Love and Emotive-knowing:**

The following serve as the background for the concept of emotive-knowing inherent in the Gauḍīya concept of bhakti. To start with from the larger perspective, the conscious relinquishing of a strict ratiocinative approach and the consequent adoption of aesthetic method either to convey or communicate and also used it as integral to sādhana-bhakti as well as sādhyā-bhakti believed religious truth, perhaps are the reasons why during the initial stage of the Caitanya Movement, there was no attempt to establish a proper philosophical justification for its beliefs. This contention of Rūpa expressed in his Laghuḥāgavatāmṛtam undercuts his own concept of uttamā-bhakti or the highest devotion as unmixed with jñāna, yaga and karma

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35 Srilaghuḥāgavatāmṛtam, Śrīla-Rūpagoswāmipādenviracitam, Śrī Caitanyaamaṭṭh, Śrīdhām Māyāpur, Nādiya, (Year provided as Śrigaurābda 488), texts 7-9. Nirbandham yuktivistore mayātra parimūņcītā/ pradhānāt vāt pramāṇa eva pramāṇaye/17/, Yatasteḥ śāstrayonītvāt iti nyāyapradarsanat/ śabdasyaiva pramāṇatvam svikṛtah paramaśṭanibhīḥ/18/, Kiśca tarkāpratisthānāt iti nyāyāvīdhānātah/ ambhir eva suvyaṁ tarkāsyāṇādah kṛtah/19/. Rūpa here takes Brahma Sūta 1.1.3, “śāstrayonītvāt” as the authority to give up the process of reasoning. But Radhakrishnan in his commentary on it says that, text 1.1.2 “janmādasya yataḥ” as the establishment of the ultimate causation of the world from the Absolute Brahman. And thus śrutī and yukti are synthesised in the Brahma Sūtra. Hence, Vyāsa or Bādarāyana per se does not relinquish reasoning altogether and accept the authority of the Sāstra as the only authority as Rūpa does as indicated by the above texts. It has to be understood in the light of the fact that, Jīva Gosvāmī later on attempted to integrate reasoning in establishing the philosophy of Gauḍīya Vaishnavism.
and is “the harmonious pursuit of  Kṛṣṇa” (ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśilana)36. But it will be too early to conclude that, there is no place for knowledge in Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavism. Jhāna and karma or yoga which are not included within sādhanā-bhakti here are only those sādhanas which are directed towards the realisation of impersonal Brahman or mokṣa which the school does not admit to be the highest reality or the highest puruṣārtha. But the agreeable concept of knowledge pertaining to the Bhagavat as “the object of devotion, His form and attributes and the relationship that obtains between Him and the rest of the world” is implied by the notion of suddha-bhakti. Caitanya Caritāmṛta warns against any indifference towards knowledge of this kind, which is necessary for fir, faith in Kṛṣṇa and exclusive devotion to Him (CC, Ādi, II, 99)37.

The next question is as to how; knowledge according to the system is to be understood? The aforesaid gives us some clue to discern the required answer.

The answer consists in the general perception that bhakti in the sense in which it is interpreted in Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavism is highly emotive and is a mere psychological sentiment and therefore is devoid of knowledge. Of course, by knowledge, what the critics mean is the traditional notion of knowledge associated with the abstract or impersonal ontology of Śaṅkara or Bradley, and as such they are not ready to pay even the minimum attention to the kind of truth which is believed by Caitanya and his followers. This is rather more to do with the long historic attitudinal syndrome of masochistic or patriarchal intellectualism38 and dualistic

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38 Lababouvie-Vief, Gisela, Psyche and Erose, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994. This is an illuminating book in which the binary modal of intellect-emotion-divide is articulated and shows that, the concept of mind and its historical development via diverse disciplines of philosophy, mythology, religion, literature, and psychology is based on the believed opposition between rationality on the one hand and, imagination and emotion on the other. In this modal rationality is seen as masculine while the rest are thought of as feminine. This exactly coincides with the attitude which some contemporary scholars had towards Caitanya who criticised him for being emotional and not spending time in the Vedānta oriented intellectual pursuits.
modal of reason and emotion, than its being the fact that, emotion per se is bereft of any cognitive value. It is pertinent to mention here that, since, Caitanya’s concept of bhakti is developed by Rūpa and others like Jīva in the line of erotic-aesthetics, and similar kind of attitude against devotional emotionalism is also observable in the western aesthetics. That is, there is a debate about if art experience, though, is a generalised (sādhārānikśta in Indian aesthetics) emotion has any cognitive value (truth) at all. We shall only assume that, the answer lies in the affirmative, though by truth in the context of art may not be the same as it is represented in sciences or the so-called cognitive studies. In the similar manner Caitanya’s mystical and rapturous experience of spiritual emotion of divine-love may be considered. A.K. Majumdar, on the basis of Caitanya’s biographical records speaks about the prolonged and uncommon nature of the religious experience in terms of various physical symptoms; because of the same reason he was abused by an elderly sanyāsi to which Caitanya humorously but self-deprecatingly says: “he had come to Varanasi to sell his bhāvakāli (emotionalism) but found that there were no buyers; but s the load was too heavy to be carried, he was prepared to sell it at a nominal price”.

It is not always that, devotional emotionalism of Caitanya is looked at as pure emotionalism. In this regard Prof. Daya Krishna in his “(Prolegomena to any

39 Croce, Benedetto, Aesthetic, Rupa and Co. Calcutta, Fifth Printing 1972. “As the aesthetic intuition knows the phenomenon or nature, and the philosophic concept the noumenon or spirit; so the economic activity wills the phenomenon or nature, and the moral activity the noumenon or spirit. The spirit which wills itself, its true self, the universal which is in the empirical and finite spirit...” p. 60. In the chapter VIII : “Exclusion of Other Spiritual Forms” truth is represented from the context of an artistic genius: “To dispute as to whether the word ‘genius’ should be applied only to creators of aesthetic expression or also to men of scientific research and of action be a mere question of words. To observe, on the other hand, that ‘genius’ of whatever kind it be, is always a quantitative and an empirical distinction, would be to repeat what has already been explained as regards artistic genius”, pp. 61-62. Also see for similar idea in Saxena, Sushil Kumar, Art and Philosophy-Seven Aestheticians, Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi, 1994. The author refers to the concept of art Susanne K. Langer: art as expressive form that is not only material but also “that it enables to comprehend what we only undergo and see but dimly in real life...Art liberates the ‘living’ or felt character of things from this yoke of necessity and projects it for our contemplation”, p. 289. This is criticised by L.A. Reid by saying that, his a “art as embodiment” suggests the thing directly to us while art as expressive form direct our thoughts other words to feelings or ideas which are expressed”, p. 325.


41 Ibid., p. 207.
Future) Historiography and Civilizations" says in Caitanya's God intoxicated persona both the sensibilities of the intellect and the deepest religious feeling are present without any mutual contradiction\(^{42}\). Whether he was actually fluent in Navya Nyāya or else is a contentious issue. That, Raghunāth Śiromoni who is mentioned in his biography as one of his followers is not accepted as the same Navya Nyāya logician by many scholars. Yet it is true that Caitanya belonged to the then Navadvipa well known as one of the two great centers of Navya Nyāya.

Hence it is highly likely that, he in fact was familiar with the intricacies of Navya Nyāya. That, the nature of his religious experience is not pure emotion with no agreeable idea of truth content within it is expressed by the concept of premanetra\(^{43}\) as a form of devotional emotive-knowing in Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's Caitanya Caritāmrta. This idea can be explained with reference to the Gauḍīya conception of the non-dual personal Absolute characterised by Its Primary or Essential Power (Cit-śakti or svarūpa śakti) of bliss potency which in its predominance is an integral expression along with the will-to-be (sandhni-śakti) and the will-to-know (saṁvid-śakti). As the manifestation of the all knowing Absolute reality, prema-bhakti in this sense is self-established (svayam siddha), eternal and self-revealed (sva-prakāśa). The only difference it has from other form of knowledge is that, it is not the truth implied by the conventional notion of mokṣa or impersonal realisation. These were what were discussed by Jiva in his Tattvasandarbha. This state of awareness is known as parāmukti\(^{44}\) and when situated in it, it is immaterial whether one is in hell or heaven or on earth; the only condition which the bhaktas want is the non-stop remembrance of their beloved Lord and spend their time in the endless process of imaginative contemplation (antar-sādhana of rāgānuga-bhakti) on His sweetness, activities and glories through their transcendental and imagined aesthetic-body (siddha-deha, antaścintitadeha of

\(^{42}\) Prolegomena to any Future Historiography and Civilizations, by Daya Krishna in a volume of the Project of History of Indian Science, Philosophy and Culture, Published by Prof. Bhuvan Chandel, Project Co-ordinator, New Delhi, 1977, p. 108-109.

\(^{43}\) Supra, Schweig, Ch. 2, Ref. No. 64.

\(^{44}\) Op. cit., Radhagovindanath, Gauḍīya vaisṇavāda darśan, vol.6, p. 44-46. The nature of the spiritual attainment according to the Gauḍīya Vaishnavas is not mukti but Kṛṣṇa seva-mukti gauḍīya vaisnavader kāmya nohe, gauḍa-govinder premaseva kāmya.
the *vidhi-mārga* or *vaidhi-bhakti*)⁴⁵ bestowed on them as an act of grace by the
Lord different from the external worship of *sādhana-bhakti*.

Just as in the case of the Brahma-Vihāra of Buddhism, mindfulness or
awareness is the characteristic spiritual consciousness of a bhakta in whose mind
the only source of anxiety is the ever present possibility of the forgetfulness of
God, i.e., the danger of becoming of *vaímukhya*⁴⁶ which cannot be reduced to a
mere state of ignorance. This has a lot of ontological implications for the overall
truth about the Godless ordinary existence. The conception of divine-love as the
very content of this spiritual awareness gives new meaning and perspective to a
life which is consciously or unconsciously haunted by an inner emptiness and
directionlessness. It also infuses a higher meaning to the ordinary human feelings
and emotions if they are spiritualised or at least their underpinning spiritual
resources is taped. They would cease to be non-cognitive in their integral
expressions in and through a life which is based on light and love. A. Weber
comes to very closer to the concept of *prema netra* when he says that, affection is
the intuitive vision of the oneness of reality⁴⁷. Martha C. Nussbaum, in her book
“Love’s Knowledge”, critically analyses about various issues pertaining to the
ontology of love or emotion and feelings in general which traditional history of
ideas has banished as not falling under objectivity of rationality⁴⁸. And from the
perspectives of hermeneutics and phenomenology, Richard J. Bernstein discusses
Gadamer’s critical review (in his first part of Truth and Method, which is entitled
“The Question of Truth as It Emerges in the Experience of Art”) of the Kantian
“radical subjectivisation” of art or aesthetics, and attempts to show that, art has

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⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 247-249, 250-251, 278-289.
here is to the beginning less state of the jivas’ turning from God which results in the endless
sufferings in their *samsāric* existence.
⁴⁷ Weber, A., History of Philosophy, Trans. By Frank Thilly Philosophy since 1860 by Ralph Barton
⁴⁸ Nussbaum, Martha C., Love’s Knowledge, Oxford University Press, New York, 1990. See Chapter
some sort of cognitive value\textsuperscript{49} and cannot be wholly reduced to something like the purely solipsistic experience.

What have stated above leads us to the theoretical issue of religious experience as a case of subjectivism\textsuperscript{50} and its related concept of subjectivity\textsuperscript{51}? Speaking from the perspective of the phenomenology of religious consciousness, spiritual experience like art experience has its own inner world which the mystics claim to be a state of divine-communion; and to that extent it a self-referring religio-psychic act. Its socio-cultural embodiment would make it a form of intersubjective experience not only between the Divine and human, but also between fellow spiritual aspirants who share a common religio-social space. This means that, such an experience though is manifested in and through mind, has its respective or appropriate ontological claim. Padma Sudhi in her book “Aesthetic Theories of India”\textsuperscript{52} speaks about “art as the social object” and as such “it means that it exists at the same level of society where individual humans are involved”. Since, both religious experience and art experience being subjective phenomena can only be understood through their socio-communicative functions. Their subject paradigm seems to have acquired a level of objectivity on the plane of religio-aesthetic subjectivity. The concreteness of the felt nature of religious


\textsuperscript{50} Dasgupta, S.N., A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. III, The Syndicate of the Cambridge University Press, New York, Reprint 1952, p. 62. He refers to the Āśwać as those bhakti mystics who preached the emotional Vaishnavism, thereby meaning that, their bhakti is qualitatively different from that of bhakti mixed with knowledge. Also see “Spirirtual Experience and Subjectivism” in the Ency. Of Religion \& Ethics, Vol. 5, Editor James Hastings, pp. 630-635.


experience is a shared religious phenomenon. Thus, though not very lucid on account of the very nature of the subject matter being discussed, some sort of truth is discernible through the religio-aesthetic process of emotive-knowing. It is not a wonder that, during the last two decades or so the value of emotion has been acknowledged by studies in psycho-neurology and related field like cognitive science, and now reflected in the process of developmental psychology. Emotional Intelligence acts as the theoretical basis for emotional quotient (EQ) in this respect.

The excessive emphasis given to rationality and its insistence on objectivity is now beginning to be questioned. What emerges from the above analysis is that, the instrumentality of rational knowledge is not an exhaustive understanding in as much as the epistemic conditions of existence is equally the direct or indirect affirmation of a reality of which we are not clearly aware of but suggestively conveyed through higher aesthetic experiences, religious consciousness and in the very acts of pursuing knowledge in various walks of life. In this respect, traditional philosophies equates God as a highest form of knowledge or even when traditional philosophers claim that true knowledge consists in the ultimate identification between the knower and the known, that is, one becomes what one knows or what one knows is one’s own inner essence or the very act of knowing in some way or other is a revelation of a common truth of both the subject and object without which there is no way that one can ever come to apprehend anything under the Sun. Elsewhere it is stated that a like thing knows the like in terms of the law of conformity.

Further when this is seen in the light of the integral metaphysical framework of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism where the jīva-śakti—the marginal or living –

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53 Golman, Daniel, Emotional Intelligence, Bantam Books, New York, 1995. The book is based on empirical research cutting across different sciences relating to mind and brain researches. Its relevance lies in its scientifically establishing the irreducibility of human emotions to any other functions of the mind mainly rationality. The philosophical implications of such a study is of profound importance for the history of ideas which have giving excessive importance to reason a and almost ignoring emotion or feelings grouped under affections to be of inconsequence and as having no truth to be emerging out of it. "Those feelings that take the direct route through amygdale include our most primitive and potent; this circuit does much to explain the power of emotion to overwhelm rationality", p. 20. It is somewhat the reminiscence of what Hume said: "reason is the slave of passion".
energy (parā-prakṛiti according to the Gitā) as well as māyā-śakti - the material energy of the integral Absolute stand in the logically inexplicable relation (acintya) of difference and non-difference to the Bhagavat as the Saktimati, the psychic manifestation of the blissful nature of the internal (aṁta-ranga-śakti) and the highest potency of the Bhagavat can only be seen as the mutual transfusion of energies between that of the Divine and human individuals. The different states of bhakti as a relation right from the stage of its rudimentary appearance during the initial period of sādhana to that of the highest emergence in the form of the supremely maddening and delightful (divyonmāda) bhakti-rasa must be understood from this perspective. That bhakti is its own end would mean that, only through it the highest core reality of the absolute being is realized or experienced as divine-love. Otherwise it is ever-present in the unmanifested form in the nature of the jivas. Being parts of the Supreme-Whole, the polarised and fragmented jivas afflicted with the beginning less (anādi) pathos of their finite existence necessitate to be terminated with the realisation of their constitutional position in the larger metaphysical and spiritual scheme of things. Prema-bhakti or divine-love is the relational or participatory-realisation of that spiritual connectivity through the inter-subjective Divine-human experience of such a transcendental emotion. When the idea of connectivity and holism have become the vital structural framework for saving mankind from the self caused fate of sliding into the abyss of extinction, and accordingly today's science has come to a state of awakening from the dogmatic slumber of an isolationistic, self centric life style encouraged actively by the neo- liberal individualism and narcissistic attitude, there is no reason why one should shy away from such an integral religio-philosophical framework only with reference to which we can discern meaning of life. If the finite living and nonliving entities can have no independent existence completely disconnected from their larger physical surrounding, and such a truth may have a greater affirmation in and through the revisiting of the affective-rooted-ness (highest ontology of divine-love) of mankind in the dynamic blissful core of the wholeness of God. Some form of predestination or Calvinism cannot be avoided altogether. On the aesthetic plane the prepared mind is
inundated with an overwhelming presence of the abundance of a dynamic yet blissful spiritual core; Divine is thus the ever present Grace whose pervasive presence is the self giving act of spiritual love. While experiencing this form of love one’s finite heart beats in unison with the eternally pulsating nectarine divine rhythm of which rāsa-līlā is the eternal enactment as a transcendental drama of Love. The beauty of the Gauḍīya conception of bhakti is that, it is never a one way process that is, only from that of the bhaktas alone. Not only earth seeks heaven but also that heaven seeks the earth. Climbing down from the extreme height of His own majesty and splendor (aśwarya) God plays like the ordinary lover of the human beloved. It is not merely that, man seeks God, God also seeks man. He forever remains bound by and indebted to the object centric devotional love of His bhaktas. Another theoretical issue thrown up by this is that of self love.

Is Prema-Bhakti the Self-Love of the Divine?

What emerges from the above accounts is that, the nature of prema-bhakti most probably is a case of Self-Love of God Himself? It may be charged as the fit example of transcendental narcissism. Perhaps, through the arrangement of the divine-histrionics of the sacred amour of the nity-līlā He is enjoying His own bliss potency. If God exists and the world of diversity is not a chimera, then the concept of līlā is the only feasible alternative justification which the classical Indian philosophers could ever think of as the very purpose behind the causation of everything. In the Gītā, the Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself has declared that, no man is entitled to enjoy the fruits of their duties and He is the supreme enjoyer of all the fruits of duties and austerities performed by men. One may charge God with being selfish but it has to be understood in a different light. The question of self love is not an entirely new concept introduced by the Gauḍīya thinkers. It was

54 Gītā, V, 29. "Bhoṭkāraṁ yajñatapasyaṁ sarva loka māheśvaram// suḥraṁ sarvabhiṣṭānāṁ jñātvā mam Śāntimeva./29/".
already declared in the Br. Up., 2.4.5. This was uttered by Yājñavalkya during the dialogue with one of his wives Gargī. The self here is not the ordinary egoistic self and thus self-centric love in the hedonistic sense is not meant here. It is the supreme self which is “one without a second” (ekameva advitiyam). Yet in a way it is not entirely unrelated to the ego-centric or self-centered-love (in this case the ego-centered-love in vaimukhyāvasthā will be a perversion of the Theo or object-centric or sacred-love of sāmukhyāvasthā). That is, it is amenable to interpret in the context of human actions which on the psychological plane is never freed from motives or desires. No human activity is motiveless or intentionless. It is not easy to think about such actions. Even the most sublime and ennobled like the so-called selfless duties which are very often eulogised in the history of literature are not conceivable if they are not dovetailed towards some transfigured or extended larger-self like the social or collective self etc. Otherwise, no moral world view and acceptable ideas of patriotic feeling which drives the self-sacrificing acts of heroes which brought epoch making turning points in the chaotic directions of history can ever be satisfactorily accounted for. It is too early to go by the views of some political theorists who have the penchant for rejecting the Hegelian notion of “whole” to which individuals etc, have to be subservient. Though the matter is much more complicated than what can be dwelt on here and to do that would out of place for the purpose of the thesis.

What is important is that Yājñavalkya did refer to these human acts by saying one loves one’s wife, children, siblings, friends and even country not for the sake of each, but for the sake of the Supreme Self which permeates as the unifying principle the variegated existence. In loving any object of love one simultaneously experiences pure bliss of the Self. What the traditional Vedāntins interpret this psychological implication of acts of ordinary love is that, though the said bliss is not the consciously willed or aimed at as their objective is at the core

of the dynamic human world. If human actions are unaccompanied by this mental state of pleasure or bliss, then they would be bereft of their basic driving force and is thought of as an impossibility. This bliss is manifested at four levels: first it is associated with self-centric-love (egoistic-love), secondly it is the underpinning psychological state of higher human actions like socio-moral and any other other-regarding acts of great men, thirdly it is the very nature of the highest state of spiritual realisation (mokṣa) and fourthly and lastly, the supra-mokṣa (parā-mokṣa) dynamic spiritual state of divine-love as the perennially inexhaustible self-expression of the blissful or Primary Power of the personal Absolute. This was what Mahānāma Brata had pointed out as the philosophical position of Jīva Goswāmī. Even when living beings naturally attempts to avoid pain and suffering or any life negating situations it is the very thing which their denial seeks to affirm as in the statement: “every negation presupposes a prior affirmation”. It is an altogether different matter that, Advaita conceptualises it in the reductionist sense and says that the Brahman or Ātman is the pure-existence-consciousness-bliss. Hence the Upaniṣadic dictum declares that everything is bliss, what it means is that, it is the blissful Brahman Itself. In Bengal Vaiṣṇavism this is further developed as the idea of bliss potency of the Bhagavad. Brahman not only is bliss, it also has bliss. The respective ontological direction which “is” and “has” lead to are to be noted. The latter is needed for the relational objectification of divine-love. This is the core and highest potencies of Him.

The entire divine play of the nitya-līla is the transcendent al enactment of the overflowing fullness of this supreme blissful potency transformed into the Power of Love. This can only be explained from the context of the integral nature of the Absolute conceived as having both the seemingly or actually contradictory concepts of change and changelessness. On the metaphysical plane it is done with the help of the doctrine of śaktiparīṇāmāvāda⁵⁶ as the causal principle of

⁵⁶ Op. cit., Gaudīya-vaiṣṇava Dārśana, Rādhamāndana, Vol. 5, pp. 50-55. The author refers to Jīva’s arguments in detail and presents the latter’s view that, change-parināma is only of the power of Brahman and not the reality or Brahman Itself.”tasmāt tatvahanyathyā bhāvab parināmah’ityeva lakṣaṇam, na tu tatvasyet/” Sarvashvādī, Bangiya Sāhitya Pariṣad, p. 143, as
acintyabheda. This model of causality is essential for understanding the concept of divine-love as the functional manifestation of the bliss-potency of the personal Absolute. Whatever is the justification offered for showing as to how the unity or oneness of the Supreme Being is not violated by such contradictory traits existing in its nature, the whole account given is done to show that everything else in the dynamic whole ness of such an integral reality is done mainly to indicate that they are so arranged only for the purpose of indicating as to how the reciprocal relation of divine-love between God and man permeates such a world view. Here, divine-love acquires a distinctive ontological status. Love in this sense seems to have some level of objectivity to which both the lover and beloved are addicted to by its natural dynamic sweetness (mādhurya). The explanation here will be multi dimensional in its narratives. One of which is the possibility of conceiving divine-love to be Self-Love of the Supreme Self. The statement of Yājñavalkya also has this connotation. This may be analysed with reference to both bhaktas and the Bhagavad. It depends as to how the concept of self is to be understood in respect of the lover and beloved. For the former, divine-love as the self-love is the object-centric or other-regarding-love directed towards the Bhagavat as the Paramātman or the Supreme Self. The Self-love of God therefore, has a necessary reference to both Himself and the bhaktas. His Self-love is so only via the back-flow of His own bliss potency redirected from the bhaktas. This may be elaborated by saying that, according to Russell, self-love even in the ordinary sense has no meaning without the "other". This is explained with twin concepts of svarūpānanda and śaktānanda. The former is the Bhagavad's enjoyment of His own blissful nature. Kṛṣṇa as the reservoir of the inexhaustible ocean of rasa both enjoys His own overflowing rasahood and by His

quoted therein. He also mentions Baladev's Govindabhāṣya 1.4.26 in which the transformation or causation is explained in terms of para-śakti, kṣetrajña or jīva-śakti and māyā-śakti of the personal Absolute. He further cites Baladeva's—"ūtmaṅkrteḥ pariṇāmāt", Br.S. 1.4.26, and "śrutetu sabdamūłatvāt", ibid. 2.1.28. Thus, the causation of the world is interpreted as originated through the acintyāsākāt of the Absolute.

57 Trināth, Bandhopadhyay, Man: An Essay in Philosophical Anthropology, Published by Arijit Kumar for Papyrus, Calcutta, 1988, p. 112. He quotes the statement of B. Russell: "An individuality which is kept in a glass case withers, where as one that is freely expended in human contacts becomes enriched".
Primary Power (svrūpa śakti) He also makes others to relish it. But śaktyānanda is the bliss He derives from His bliss potency returned to Him from the bhaktas in the form of the highest form of devotional-love (Bhagavad-prīti). The Bhagavat takes great pleasure in the enjoyment of śaktyānanda than He enjoys His own bliss or svarūpānanda. Hence, bhakti may be defined as the functional expression of the selfhood of both God and man. Bhakti as such is essentially the bliss potency of the Bhagavat. Therefore, just like the concept of agape58 in Christianity which is differentiated from eros characterised by the element of sublimation of human-love directed towards God, divine-love as the very expression of the said potency is the spontaneous expression of the fullness of His Selfhood? While the concept of agape comes very closer to bhakti as the functional expression of the hlādinī-śakti of the Bhagavat, erose is more similar to the Indian concept of kāma. It is one way of saying that it is also His divine Grace. It is His gift to mankind. Similar truth is echoed in the Biblical proclamation that one should love one's neighbor as God loved humanity first. Agape as God's love for mankind is later on manifested as the latter's love for other fellow beings. In the case of bhakti according to Jīva Goswāmi is dawned in the mind and heart of the prepared life of the bhakta only when the bliss potency of the Bhagavat is placed (ksīpta) in his heart. The nature of cit (jīvas' counterpart sarvīvid or power of consciousness) of the individual soul acts only as the qualitatively similar channel for the manifestation of the said potency of the Lord. It is a form of gift or Grace bestowed upon the bhaktas by the Lord. This potency of the Lord awakens the dormant corresponding finite bliss potency of the bhakta and the passion of devotional love is manifested in his heart. So, when this dynamic spiritual feeling is redirected towards the Bhagavat, He experiences His own bliss potency in the form of bhakti to Him (śaktyānanda).

Anybody who is in this dynamic state of spiritual process is naturally bound to love the entire world as God's own creature. For as the finite selves and as parts (āṃśa) or the tātāṣṭha-śakti of the Śaktimat their separate and

fragmented existence would have no meaning. If the world or the physical universe can be conceived as a complex system than no parts of constituents of it would have no sense if they are viewed without their larger backdrop with which they have an inseparable relationship. Otherwise it would be like the absurd situation of mistaking the tree for the forest. Nor this view takes the position of mistaking the forest for the tree. With the predominant position of the forest as the Hegelian whole, its trees are accepted as having a dependent existence on the integral “Whole” explained in terms of the relation amongst external, marginal or sentient powers on the one hand and the internal or essential or primary powers of the said Absolute and the Absolute Itself on the other. The concept of “whole” as per Rāmānuja’s body-soul-relationship (śarīra-śarīri-sambandha) was already rejected by Jīva Goswāmi. Love in the spiritual sense is the way of manifesting the core blissful Being of the “Supreme Whole” with the awareness of which alone the finite jives would attain at the highest state of perfection. This is the whole point about Ekāntika or Bhāgavata-Dharma which the Chapter 3 attempted to highlight. Otherwise, being afflicted with beginning less (anādi) ignorance of the forgetfulness of one’s constitutional position as the eternal parts (artha) of the integral absolute, one shall ever remain bound in the sāṁśāra. Unlike other schools it has to be remembered that mokṣa is not the highest puruṣārtha but Bhagavad prema or prīti is the supreme state of spiritual attainment. The concept of self-transcendence is no more life negating but consists in merely becoming aware of this ever-present blissful core of the said Integral Reality, and not in transcending the world as an illusory appearance. It is only the matter of recontextualising life based on the sacred-love which would reappear to one’s heart when one somehow, becomes sāmukhya or ceases to be vaimukhya. This spiritually overhauled life would come very closer to the religious existentialism of Kierkegaard and its resulting authentic pattern of life which he calls as “works of love”\textsuperscript{59}.

Given that, in the light of the aforesaid divine-love occupies the highest ontological status and as such is the spiritual end achievable by any mortal, than, what transpires would be that, the relational concept of such a form of love shall remain eternally, yet dynamically objectified as an erotico-aesthetic-spiritual consciousness in the intersubjectivity of the Divine and His eternal associates (parikaras). It is imperative on the part of the ordinary mankind to appropriate (or imitate) or realise this spiritual state in and through their aesthetic-ethical practice of imaginative contemplation called as rāgānuga-bhakti. The aesthetic process of this sādhana operating via a particular imagined spiritual body as per one’s svabhāva (natural inclination) bestowed on the spiritual aspirant enables him or her to vividly visualise the divine-amour of the nitya-lilā of the Bhagavat and the parikaras. Since the original attachments of the eternal associates towards the Bhagavat being the function of His bliss potency, the ordinary sādhakas have no right to enter into the nitya-lilā and participate in it. They can only remain in a state of perpetual imaginative contemplation (antara-sādhana) through the erotico-aesthetic-process operating through the mediation of their imagined transcendental bodies (antaścintīta siddha deha) on the original divine-amour of the nitya-lilā. This has thrown up a significant space for conceiving divine-love as an eternal Internal Law derivable from the conception of the conception of cit-śakti or the svrūpa-śakti which is also called as antaraṅga-śakti of the Bhagavat. Divine-Love as the functional manifestation of the Internal-Power but the highest in the order of His powers thus becomes an Eternal Law with the inner moral imperative of joyous duty ought to be obeyed by mankind. This Law is the inner movement of the blissful nature of a God of Love. Thus the critic’s argument that divine-amour or sacred-love of the Gopīs cannot be a duty

60 Śrīmad Bhāgavata, 3.9.11. yad yad dhiyā urugāya vibhāvantī tattadvapuḥ praṇayase sadanugrahāya.
61 Rider, Haggard H., AYESHA-The Return of “she”, Wilco Publishing House, Bombay, 1960, p. 49. “Water makes the sand fertile...where water falls life comes, and sorrow is the seed of joy. Without love there is no life. Love is the Law of life. I seek love that I may live. I believe that all these things are ordained to an end which we do not know...” Also see Op.cit. Works of Love, “Love is the Fulfilling of the Law” pp. 99-135, and “Our Duty in debt the debt of Love to Each Another: pp. 171-198.
is untenable. Some critics would even go to the extent of maintaining that, love is not a value at all.\textsuperscript{62} They seem to base their criticism on the fact that, the Gopīs were placing love before duty (to their husbands and elders etc.) and thus what they did was a case of placing the cart in front of the horse. This argument is misplaced and the whole issue is to be seen in a different light as the thesis has been attempting to project. The entire discourse on the ontology of love is to show that, Sacred-love is the highest end of life. From the perspective of the finite souls there is no way that they can ever come to have a direct access to its inner workings without the Merciful Divine intervention which Indian philosophy of religion calls as \textit{avatāra} about which reference have been already made while discussing about the concept of bhakti of the Gītā. This matter is also related to the concept of grace (\textit{anugraha} or \textit{kṛpā}). That is we have to see as to how divine-love has a bearing on it.

Bipin Chandra Pal in his book "Bengal Vaiṣṇavism"\textsuperscript{63} gives his opinion that, if we go by what Gauḍiya believes, the reason behind Kṛṣṇa's advent on earth is less to do with His "protective function" (\textit{abhyutthānamadharmasya} and \textit{paritrāṇyā sādhunāṁ vināśāya ca duṣkṛtāṁ} etc. Gītā: IV, 7-8) but to reveal the truth about the Supreme Secret and Sacred divine-love. It is to this sacred-love as the function of His bliss potency that, His own \textit{mahimā} or \textit{aīśvarya} (greatness or heavenly splendor and majesty) is subjugated. Bipin Chandra says this is His "inner reason". In the theological language this may be described as His Divine-Grace\textsuperscript{64}. In another sense, this may also be expressed as the overflowing of His

\textsuperscript{62} Op. cit., Trināth, Love is shown to be a value by Trināth as the purpose towards which one prepares one's life. Also see Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. 8, Editor: James Hastings, 151. A passion (love is to do with passion) has been defined as an "organized system of emotions and desires"...various emotions of the soul. Have found or have become devoted to an idea, about which they cluster and develop, a system of self-restraint grows up within the emotions". What it means is that, when emotions become organised as a result of passion as one of the elements of love surely aims at an object conceived to be of value.

\textsuperscript{63} Pal, Bipin Chandra, Bengal Vaiṣṇavism, Published by Jhānanjan Pal for B.C. Pal Centenary Committee, Calcutta, 1962, pp. 125-126.

\textsuperscript{64} Op. cit., Bhakti Sandharbhaḥ, Haridasa, p. 274. "Evam bhaktirūpyāṣeṣachakṛterjivo 'bhivyaktou bhagavāneva kāraṇam/ ājīva’s refers to two types of grace of Bhagavān-sādharanī-kṛpā (ordinary grace) and asādharanī-kṛpā (extra-ordinary grace). The former enables the ājīvas to enjoy worldly sense-objects which actually is the case of kṛpābhāsa or mercy by default. The later makes
omnipresent blissful nature when received or placed (kṣipta) in the heart of the bhaktas it is experienced as prema-bakhti. The Unknown and Unknowable can become manifested on the world of the finite beings only when God chooses to reveal Himself out of His infinite Mercy as the spontaneous expression of the overflowing abundance of His blissful Being. But this problem entails a lot of theoretical issues which the thesis cannot indulge in, and it has been brought in full by Anders Nygren in his book Agape and Eros. The concept of “leap of faith” of Kierkegaard is the bridge for reaching God’s ever present unconditional Grace. How the human “leap of faith” meets with the Divine-Grace is a Divine mystery. Grace instills hope and courage in the exhausted world weary souls. The meeting point between self-effort and Grace is a contentious issue in religious philosophy.65

On a more esoteric plane, Bhagavat has a climb down from the supreme height of His Absoluteness and hankers for tasting the sweetness of the devotional sentiment (bhakti-rasa or śāktīnanda) that His bhaktas have for Him. To do this He is said to be keeping His nature of the greatness of majesty and splendor (aiśvarya) subordinated to His essential nature of the attribute of sweetness (mādhurya). This may be explained as a self-limiting act of God Himself and not the effect of any external coercion. Hence, it does not violate His absoluteness. This would make the apparent or actual contradiction between human self-effort and Grace pale into insignificance. One should not misread the objectification of divine-love as untenable. In a sense the supreme and dynamic objectification of divine-love is nothing but God’s Self-manifestation of His own core blissful potency. It may be viewed as a kind of self-reflexive relation. Being a

bhaktas to come to the stage of relishing Kṛṣṇa’s svrūpānanda (svasvṛūpāṇandastvaṇādā). That is divine-love is revealed to the bhakta only through the agency of His Saving Grace. Also see Op. cit., Bhaktirāsāṁtāsadhi, Bon, Intro. XXVI. The Gopīs who are illiterate etc. achieved the prema for the supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, because of His causeless Grace only. Bon also cites Bhāg. XI. 12.7.66 Pandit, M.P., Commentaries on Śrī Aurobindo’s Thought, Dviti Publications, Śrī Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, 1988, pp. 38-38, 53-54. Though, on the basis of Kathā Upaniṣad, Aurobindo admits as done by Anders Nygren (Agape and Eros), that, Grace is unconditional, he presents his ideas to show that, somewhere there has to be a meeting ground for self-effort and Grace. In reality, no conclusive view can be drawn about it and it will always remain controversial.
relation it is capable of entering into an inexhaustible and infinite number of
further relations of love. This is best reflected in Juliet’s love for Romeo.
Paradoxically perhaps, Juliet’s “Bounty is boundless as sea / My love as deep; the
more I give to thee / The more I have, for both are infinite”\textsuperscript{66}. Similar is what the
mind bogglingly complex nuances of the psychology of bhakti-rasa of Rūpa
Goswāmi reveals. His religio-aesthetic analysis of prema-bhakti only reveals the
nature in which the divine nature is creative and it is to be manifested in endless
processes of inner spiritual movements which may be termed as the version of
the process-theology of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. Since the Self-Love of God needs the
“Other” for its infinite play (līlā) starting from His “Counter-Whole”\textsuperscript{67} - Śrimati
Rādhā and the rest of the human jīvas remain eternally projected in as His
respective Powers. Since it is the overflowing of the blissful fullness of a static-
dynamic spiritual necessity, it can have no apparent or actual driving force as it is
in the case of the jīvas. No doubt this explanation has its limitations as already
shown in the history of religious philosophy. No complete justification of it can
ever be provided. For the question of the ontological issue of this form of love the
concept of divine-love as a relation as one of the metaphysical categories needs
to be examined.

The Nature of Divine-Love:

Jīva Goswāmi in his Pṛiti-Sandarbha goes deeper in analysis of the nature of
prema-bhakti as a divine-emotion. He does the said examination from the
psycho-spiritual perspective. After speaking at length that, the purpose of
existence is the removal of sufferings, pains and sorrows of life arising out of
beginning less (anādi) vimukhya or the souls’ turning away from God and the only
panacea for mankind to bring end to this life process called sarīśāra is to tape the
ever present Grace of divine-love, he reveals the truth about it\textsuperscript{68}. He begins by

\textsuperscript{66} Romeo and Juliet, II. ii. 133-5, as quoted by Op. cit., Kakar and Ross, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{67} Op. cit., Bhaktirasāmytasilndhu, Bon, Intro., p. xvii, Rādhā is being described by the commentator
as the Predominated “Counter-Whole-Divinity or Divine Moiety”.
\textsuperscript{68} Pṛiti Sandarbha of Śrīla Jīva Goswāmprabhupāda, Trans. And commentary by Haridasa Śāstri,
commenting on Prahlāda’s prayer in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa in which he says: “May I have unswerving love for God through constant recollection of Him, even as the worldly persons have abiding love for objects of sensuous pleasures”\(^69\). The similarity between worldly pleasures and love for God is only apparent. Jīva interprets this by saying that, the former is within the domain of māyā-śakti of the Bhagavat and the later operates within the realm of His svarūpa-śakti\(^70\). But as we have seen in the section dealing with Nārada and Śaṅḍilya Bhakti Sūtras, the psychological states like desire, fondness and attachment towards objects are common to both sensuous pleasures and love for God. At the same time the nature of the object would make all the difference. Being of the nature of marginal-energy (tātaśtha-śakti) the jīvas can either come under the spell of māyā-śakti or svarūpa-śakti of the Bhagavat. Coming under the power of the former means that, being in a state of the forgetfulness of God, it can no longer exists in a state of selflessness. Whereas, the very fact of coming under the svarūpa-śakti of the Bhagavat would mean that, one leads a life of self-transcendence. That is, the nature of spiritual-love is brought out through a comparative analysis between it and ordinary pleasures. This would become clearer from the following ideas of Jīva.

Love for God (Bhagavat-prīti) in the words of Jīva has two elements: pleasure (sukha) and fondness (priyatā). The mental states like delight, happiness joy and bliss etc. are the characteristics of pleasure (sukha). Cordiality, “ardent love”, friendship and like are the expressions of fondness (priyatā)\(^71\). Jīva ascribes the elation (ullāsa) or excited state of emotion to both pleasure and fondness. He takes as of the nature of cognition or knowledge (ullāsamayajñāna viśeṣaḥ) and as such is not a mere mode of consciousness. Jadunath Sinha, points to this fact


\(^{70}\) Ibid., Pārvasyā māyāśaktivaivṛttimayatvena, uttarasyāḥ svarūpaśaktivaivṛttimayatvena bhedāt...p. 190.

\(^{71}\) Ibid., For sukhā-“Muta-pramoda-harsānanandādi sukhamucyate”, and priyatā-“bhāva-hārda souhrddātiparyāyā priyatāccayate”, p. 190.
while describing Jīva’s conception of divine-love in terms of prīti. Yet, this subtle distinction brings out the nature of divine-love as an emotion and a form of knowing. Consciousness and knowledge may not be entirely different from each other, but conscious is different from being in a state of knowledge. Just as Rāmānuja, views jñāna as an attributive consciousness (dharmabhūta jñāna)\(^72\) where it enters into a state of relation with its object, so also prīti or fondness as of the nature of knowledge also enters into a sort of relation with its “object”. Hence this distinction between consciousness and knowledge is significant from the standpoint of the earlier deliberation on the notion of emotive-knowing. Once again, no idea of svagatabheda is being implied here as in the case of Rāmānuja. The triune inseparable types of svarūpa-śakti of the Bhagavat-the “will-to-be” (sandhini), “will-to-know” (saṁvid) and “will-to-enjoy” (hlādini) underlie the idea that, priyatā is characterised by knowledge. Yet, it is not very clear in what sense Jīva means by pleasure as a form of knowledge like fondness; because it is under the control of māyā-śakti. Perhaps, what he wants to convey is that, well within the realm of ordinary experience, though, perverted every experience is by its very nature has the element of self-revelation. This echoes the concept of “perception of perception” or “knowledge of knowledge”-the first cognition being cognised by the second cognition (anuvyāvasāya)\(^73\) of the Nyāya.

The above is done by Jīva to show that, pleasure and fondnesses as elements of the emotions of love in general are not bereft of cognitive truth. The character of elation (ullāsa) as closely related to the idea of delight or relish of rasa thus has the power of manifesting its “object” or “referent”. The idea of “referent” is applicable when pleasure is thought of as devoid of object but as found in a locus or within āsraya and thus a self-refering act of the narcissistic self-love operative in the domain of vimukhya or a beginning-less (anādi) state of

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\(^72\) Op. cit., Gupta, p. 103, “The soul feels and knows all that is happening in any part of the body with help of its ‘dharmabhūta jñāna’ (attributive consciousness).

What emerges from the above discussion is that fondness as cognition (anubhava) is caused by the apprehension of the object. It has three features: “(1) agreeableness or favourable attitude towards the object of love; (2) a longing for it arises from this favourable attitude towards it, and (3) a feeling of elation (ullāsa) arising from these two factors”. Pleasure is selfish and fondness is selfless attachment to the object of love. Fondness associated with Bhagavat-pṛiti consists in seeking only the welfare of the Bhagavat as the object of love in utter absence of self-seeking attitude or ego-centricity. One may wonder at how the concept of welfare is applicable to a complete Being like the Bhagavat. It may mean only the agreeableness or favourability of fondness as an inner necessity of the spontaneous Self-expression of the over-flowing abundance of the dynamic bliss-hood of the core nature of the integral Absolute conveyed by the idea of nitya-līlā. Hence, the notion of welfare as applicable to the Bhagavat as the personal Absolute need not be misread as a sign of imperfection.

But the state of objectlessness of pleasure (sukho) and its being located only in the subject (āśraya) on the one hand and fondness as having both object and subject on the other need to be seen in the light of the conception of niṣkāma-karma-yoga of the Gitā. Similar theoretical structure of the Gitā’s conceptions of inaction-in-action and action-in-action seem operate in the differentiation between pleasure and fondness. This is related to what the Bhāgavata says and also repeated by Madhusūdana that, bhakti is meant for those who are neither too attached nor too detached. In another words, for embodied beings (dehabhṛt or dehinam or the jīva) complete detachment or inaction of the niṣ्कृत्तिमार्गa or the path of asceticism of the pre-Gita notion of jñāna-yoga is deemed too difficult if not impossible for the embodied beings to follow. At the same time the Gitā acknowledges the evil nature of actions per se. Thus, taking a mean position which is neither total (or literal) renunciation of action nor ordinary individuals’ engrossment with attachments to the fruits of their actions, the Gitā prescribes that, attachments and desire etc. normally

75 Op. cit., Sinha, p. 168. This is how Sinha sums up.
associated with human actions are to be dovetailed towards the loving devotion
directed to the Lord of Sacrifice. That is the Gītā makes a distinction between
“self-centric-desire or attachment” and “selfless-desire and attachment” as in the
two models of actions. The elements of sublimation is involved in the act of
channelising all what one does etc towards the process of worshipping the
Bhagavat. Similar is the case with regard to pleasure. Pleasure is self-centric not
because, it is literally devoid of object, but because, object is hankered after for
satiating oneself which is interpreted to be the case of the absence of object in
the same way the Gītā interprets desire tainted inaction as action. That is, in the
Kāntain language the object is debased or is used as a means to one’s end. Hence,
when Jīva Goswāmī says pleasure is devoid of object and but has only the subject
is to be understood accordingly. Thus, desire, passions and attachment per se are
not literally relinquished but are selflessly dovetailed towards the Bhagavat with
the sole aim of pleasing Him as the object of divine-love (prīti). Pleasure resulting
in being experienced by the subject-the lover or the bhakta as its locus (āśraya) is
only accidental or a by-product and not something aimed at deliberately or
consciously. These ideas were already reflected in the respective concepts of
bhakti discussed in the Bhakti-Sūtras of Nārada and Śaṅdilya.

Yet, it is possible that, one may scoff at the whole idea of non-self-centric
desire or detachment. If it is to be taken to be ridiculous than, there is no reason
why one has to subscribe to the idea of a “disinterested-action” of the Gītā; it is
simply because the state of desirelessness is psychologically impossible for
ordinary individuals who are mental beings. It is either the very nature of the
object (Supremely desirable object like the Bhagavat) of desire and attachment
etc or the psychological elements of self-centeredness and selflessness (object-
centeredness) associated with them which make them good or bad moral or
immoral. Badness of desire and attachment consist only in when they are directed
towards ordinary sense-objects, but they would lead to the attainment of the
supreme good (nīhśreyasa) or when they are treated as constitutive psycho-
spiritual elements of divine-love as the highest-value they remain ever-projected
in the divine-play of the nitya-līlā⁷⁶. Hence, Rādhā may be called as Kṛṣṇa-kāmī in the same fashion as Pārvati being described as Śiva-kāmī. This kāma is theocentric or object-centric though couched in the terminologies of ordinary kāma.

But the absence of self-centeredness in the related emotion of fondness when looked at from the standpoint of ordinary psychology is problematic and it throws up not only mystical elements of divine-love as a religious experience, but also the idea of subject-object-interchangeability and the proposed idea of the perpetual non-cognitive⁷⁷ objectification in the intersubjectivity of the alternating inner spiritual movements of samśleṣā (love-in-union or samboga) and v ileṣaṣa (love-in-separation or viraḥ)⁷⁸ of such a divine-amour (madhura-rati). The element of mysticism from the finite perspective arises out of the fact that, the object-centricity of fondness (priyatā) or priti has the element of self-transcendence. In the language of K, C. Bhattacharyya it may be restated as self-abnegation or self-denial or self-as-nougat which implies a prior-affirmation of an over-personal-self. In the case of divine-love the Bhagavat as its viṣaya or object shall constitute the said over-personal-self. He describes this religious phenomenon as the deepening of being operating through the process of spiritual

⁷⁶ The Encyclopedia of Religion, Editors: Mircea and Eliade, Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, 1987, p. 131. “When passionate attachment to the Lord is stressed, bhakti is a striking contrast to yoga and other ascetic paths to salvation that stress detachment and the overcoming of all passions, positive as well as negative...Yet many forms of bhakti also stress the detachment from all worldly objects. But attachment to the Lord is not denied but rather prescribed. The Gīta use the language of ascetic philosophy to extol bhakti to sub-serve its conception of detached-action”.

⁷⁷ Non-cognitive objectification may sound implausible. The general impression is that, by being cognitive one means objective in the scientific sense or rational truth which this thesis toing the line of the trend of existentialism and many other emerging ideas of hermeneutical and phenomenological studies would consider as being problematic, and emotive-knowing as an alternative process of emotion situated knowledge hints at a relevant truth which it presupposes. Therefore, non-cognitive objectification here has to be read in the sense of phenomenological human-Divine inter-subjectivity.

⁷⁸ Op. cit., The Encyclopedia. of Religion, 1987, p. 132. “The moments of experienced union (samśleṣā) and anguished separation or desolation (viṣleṣa) alternate...the realization of the fleeting character of the experience of union may intrude into it, while on the other hand, the grief at separation is sharpened by the memory of previous shared delight. That grief itself, if it passes the moment of despair, expresses itself as a passionate yearning for a new moment of divine presence or as a more serene confidence in the finale goal of unending communion with God”.
introspection via psychological introspection. The difference between his views with the Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavas would be that, as it is in his case, there is no completion of the process of spiritual introspection in the complete transcendence of the realm of the subject-object distinction. The element of mysticism is evident in the various erotic-aesthetic psychosis or pathos of divine-love shown in all the possible nuances of the varied but endless unfolding of prema-bhakti right from prema to mahābhāva. The metaphysical states of inexplicable difference and non-difference between the Bhagavat and His saktis are alternately realised through the said alteration between sarṅśleṣa or union and viśleṣa or separation between the lover and the Divine-Beloved. The process of subject-object-interchangeability is also another way of expressing divine-love as the Self-actualising process of the integral Absolute. Mahābhāva of Rādhā as the locusless or self-subsisting frenzy of divine-love (divyonmāda) is the highest aesthetico-erotic objectification of divine-love. Mysticism is involved in the reality of subject and object or the finite and infinite communion which leaves the finite in the constant throes of an unending cloistered passionate longing for uniting with the Divine object of love. Whether it is an aesthetic-contemplative-imaginative-union (antarasādhanata) which is more psychic rather than physical or actual physical union with the body of the Divine is a matter of interpretation. But in Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavism Rādhā as the co-equal or the Counter-Whole of Kṛṣṇa is not the finite jīva; hence the ordinary bhaktas have no access to mahābhāva. The facticity of the finiteness of the human lover makes it to always remain in a perpetual act of longing on the imaginatively contemplated (antarasādhana) Divine object of love. The element of self-transcendence involved in this process, leads to the breakdown of the normal mental framework.

79 Op. cit., Studies in Philosophy, Bhattacharyya, and p. 476. What I have stated to be K.C. Bhattacharyya’s ideas are only superficial and as such may not be exactly what says. I have used his conceptual model not in toto.
80 Op. cit., The Encyclopedia of Religion, pp. 132-133. References are made here to the cases of physical embrace or union of Āṇḍāl and Tiruppām Ālvar into the Lord’s image incarnation Raṅganātha (arcāvatāra). “Similar stories are told of the Rājput woman saint Mīrā Bāī, absorbed with Kṛṣṇa’s image at Dwārka, and of Caitanya” whose body is believed to have been absorbed into the image of Jagannātha at Puri in Orissa.
of the human lover. Though believed to be the combined divinities of Rādhā and Krṣṇa, Caitanya’s God intoxicated life was completely seized with the ecstatic and rapturous experience of divine-love which is thought of as the same mahābhāva of Rādhā. His psycho-physical frame could not any more contain his continuous and rapturous mystical experience beyond the age of forty-five. It was on the basis of his uncommon experience of divine-amour that, the entire super structure of devotional philosophy was reconstructed by Rūpa, Sanātana and others like Jīva etc.

Next is about the reconstructed theoretical model of alternating subject-object identity or interchangeability. The believed divine persona of Caitnaya as the combination of “the internally Krṣṇa” and “outwardly assuming the mood of the mahābhāva of Rādhā” is itself the best example of the case of subject-object interchangeability or identity between the lover and beloved. The object (viśaya) of divine-love Krṣṇa assumes the role of Rādhā, the lover or subject (āśraya)-the chief insatiably yearning lover for Her actually or imaginatively absentee Dark beloved. Even when She is in physical proximity to Her beloved She under undergoes intense love pathos caused by anticipated pang-of-separation or in Kapoor’s expression-loving apprehension of separation (premavaicitātya). Premavaicitātya is the second of the four Anurāgas (rāga intensified). Premavilāsa-vivarta is a state of uncommon “love capable of inducing simultaneously the joy and pang of separation; with complete oblivion of selves and surroundings; and imbuing the lovers with a sense of identity to each other”\(^{81}\). This state of interchangeability of subject and object and achieving a level of psychic union was experienced in the intra Divine persona of Caitanya which kept him in prolonged spells of ecstatic rapture. A.K. Majumdar refers to the fact that, this can be experienced only by Caitanya. This may be a pious view, but if one goes by his biographical accounts and the spiritual power and authority he held on the minds and lives of his followers who completely dedicate their lives to actualise their Master’s divine-love a living presence on “earth-here and now”,

there is no reason for doubting the purity and the depth of his religious experience.

Especial mention may be made about two more phenomena of priti which brings out the subject-object interchangeability. The first is Parasparāveśatva—the state of psychic identity and not of substance between the devotees and the Bhagavat (rather between śakti and śaktimān). Priti has the power to subjugate the lord which in the true sense of the term is nothing but the Lord’s own Self-limiting act. It is a state of mutual indwelling where in the identity one is confused to be the other”. This psychic phenomenon of love is also evident in Juliet’s thinking that she is Romeo and vice-versa. “Their has become a ‘symbiosis’ of sorts, a confusion of identities” (Kakar & Ross, p. 27). The second is the first Anurāga-parasparavaśibhāva-mutual-self surrender between the lover and beloved. As it was already mentioned earlier, the Gitā in its own way supports this loving phenomenon of mutual indwelling or mutual-engrossment between the lover and beloved. Both “the hero and heroine have a feeling of self-surrender or subjugation towards each other”.

In the “Devi Goddesses of India”, in the Chapter on “Rādhā/Consort and Conqueror of Kṛṣṇa” Dona Marie Wulff brings out the above spiritual fact. The chapter mainly deals with the divinity of Rādhā as She is represented in Rūpa Goswāmī’s play Vidagdhamadhava and in the Padāvalī Kirtan. In the light of subject-object-interchangeability Rūpa moving away from the traditional notion of bhakti in which God is the object of devotional worship or divine-love, makes Rādhā as the object of Kṛṣṇa’s object of love. Notwithstanding the theoretical implications of such a radical conception, the spiritual attitude skirting around the

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divine-love as the central theme of _nitya-līlā_ as the spontaneous creative unfolding of the dynamic and the simmering abundance of the blissful core of the personal Absolute, determined this entailment. It has been already shown as to how this has to do with the Self-Love of the integral Absolute, and this mutual exchange of positions between the lover and beloved is to be discerned accordingly. And self-love in the transcendental histrionics of the _nitya-līlā_ is not narcissistic but an eternally Self-enacted divine-play permeating every order of existence through the Self-bifurcation of the Bhagavat into Himself and His Co-Equal or "Counter-Whole" Rādhā who is said to be Lord Himself. Wulff refers to the cloistered passionate mutual engrossment between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa where the later cease to be a mere object of love for the former. In terms of the extent of mutual absorption in each other they are compared to Yogīs who achieve oneness with the objects of their intense meditations. Kṛṣṇa cannot live even for a moment without Rādhā (VM 3.22), He calls Rādhā as "the life giving herb" a as His very life (VM 2.46.1; 5.31). In His intense moments of love-sickness (_kāmā-jvara_) He suffers from the visual illusion of seeing Rādhā everywhere. Rādhā also has similar delusion of visualising Kṛṣṇa everywhere and mistaking Tamāla tree as Her beloved Dark Lord. In this respect Kakar and Rose would say whether love in its sublime or highest treatment as the theme of world famous love tales, is sacred or profane is a matter of perspective and it is very difficult to say where the line of distinction has to be drawn between the two.

The only philosophical import which one may discern from the above theological drama of the _nitya-līlā_ of Rūpa is the implied ontology of prema-bhakti which had become an entire life's "work of love" for him and other direct

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85 Ibid., "Rādhā as Object of Devotion", p. 115.
86 A Source Book in Indian Philosophy, Edited by S. Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1957, p. 628. God is spoken of as "...the divine darkness as well as encompassed light". The imageries of colour is interesting for noting that, Kṛṣṇa is dark-agreeing with the night of nothingness of Eckhart and Rādhā is of fair complexion described as of golden hue (_tapta kālacana Gaurāṅgi Rādhā_). The darkness of the former represents the ineffable divine mystery which remains unapproachable in itsaloneness and the later personifies the core yet dynamic bliss of the divine.
disciples of Caitanya. To be precise the ontology of love is to do with its being the inevitable function of the eternal Self-actualising process of the inexhaustible abundance of the Supremely Creative Freedom of the personal Absolute which is indicated by the declaration in the Chāndogya Upnāṣad- “tadaikṣṭa, bahu syāma prajñeyet, tat tejo ’srjata: tat tejo aikṣate bahu syāma prajñeyet, tad apo’srjata...”—“It thought, may I become many, may I grow forth. It sent forth fire. That fire thought, may I become many, may I grow forth. It sent forth water...”87 and from water so and so forth everything came into existence. Śaṅkara on theoretico-logical grounds would explain away similar such metaphysical narratives as the illusory superimposition on the nirviśeṣa and nirguna Brahman. But for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas divine-love as the functional Self-expression of the static-dynamic personal Being is a phenomenologically given and aesthetico-existentially experienced spiritual truth. Looking at from the angle of the facticity of the variegated world, Jīva Goswāmī’s concept of statico-dynamic personal Absolute as in possession of powers based on his idea that, to be in existence is to be in possession of power, may be explained using the conceptual framework of Aristotle’s concept of “energia”. It is claimed here that, there is a one to one correspondence between the concept os sakti of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and the idea of energia. The word energia according to Aristotle means: “activity” and “an act”; “more literally a state of functioning”. The function of an object is its telos (Interchangeable with entelecheia) or aim. As differentiated from the concept of “kinesis” (change or motion defined in terms of its terminus), energia is a “state-complete-in-itself”, e.g. the act of “seeing”88. Similarly, the functional expression of God’s different powers like causation and the manifestation of divine-love as the His core blissful power may be thought of as complete-in-itself in the sense


that, on the contrary to what Socrates says of love as a sign of lack or want, Supreme Love of Rādhā as the functional expression of the blissful creative freedom of the Absolute eternally remains projected as a divine-process complete-in-itself in the inter-subjectivity of human-Divine-interface. It is only through love and love as the redemptive Grace alone that, God can ever appear in His self-determined appropriate form so that the finite souls may seek direct communion with Him. Otherwise, the givenness of their finiteness in an expansive universe will always be consciously or unconsciously haunted by the abject of absence of the central referent of their weary endless journey of existence. In love they would find their root of existence revealed.

What emerges from what have been so far discussed as above is some sort of parallelism between what William James says to be a universal phenomenon of religious mysticism and the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava conception of human-divine-interface through the God-subduing power of divine-love. According to the finding of James the entire cross-cultural traditions of mystic triumphalism is that, the mystics of the world irrespective of their differences in terms of time, place and circumstances speak about the unity of the finite and infinite, the individual and Absolute. He says the mystics “Perpetually (had been) telling of the unity of man and God, their speech antithesizes language, nor do they

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89 Olson, Robert G., An Introduction to Existentialism, Dover Publications, Inc. New York, 1962, pp. 7-8. Also see, The Acintya-bhedabheda School, by Rādhāgovindanāth in “The Cultural Heritage of India”, Editor: Haridas Bhattacharyya, Vol. III, The Ramakrishna Institute of Culture, Calcutta, Reprint 1983 of the enlarged and revised edition 1952, p. 373. Kṛṣṇa is being described by the author as being affiliated with the fervent unfulfilled desire to taste His sweetness (mādhurya) which consumed Rādhā’s being. “According to the Bengal School, Śrī Caitanya is the embodiment of Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa (C.C.Ca.,II, 233, 238) of Pūrṇa-Śakti (Rādhā) and Pūrṇa-Śaktimāt, of Rāsarāja Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa the highest expression of rasa) an mahābhāva (the highest expression of kānta-preman) - the object and subject combined, in one and the same form, the subject aspect preponderating (That is why Śrī Caitanya always use feminine language as he is in the mood of Śrī Rādhā)”.

90 Op. cit., A Source Book in Indian Philosophy, p. 627. The reference cited here does not directly refer to divine-love. But by implication the mysticism of the spirit or soul may be considered as applicable to divine-love as the journey of the finite soul. A Christian St. says: “And being admonished to return into myself, I entered even into my inmost self. Though being my guide, I entered and beheld with the eye of the soul, above the same eye of my soul, above my mind, the light unchangeable” (Confession, vii.10, 32). The idea of the “eye of soul” comes very near to Caitanya’s idea of prema-netra - the eye of divine-love.
grow old". Leaving aside the tendency for reductionist ontology which Eckhart also has, if such is the universal phenomenon of mysticism, the unity of man and God is what the dynamics of divine-love means with the only qualification that, such a unity does not entail the nature of ontology which is brought out by Eckhart’s statement: “There is something in the nature of the soul which is above the soul, divine, simple, an absolute nothing...This light is satisfied only with the supra essential essence. It is bent on entering into the simple ground, the still waste wherein is no distinction, neither Father nor Son nor Holy Ghost, into the unity where no man dwelleth.” In Caitanyism the highest spiritual essence is revealed through the alternating vibrations of the pathos of divine-love whose eternal inner movements alternate between unity (saṁleśa or viroha) and separation (viśleśa or sambhoga) of the lover and divine-beloved. The night of nothingness or the dark nights of the soul only indicates the inexhaustible divine mystery of the Dark Lord. In being not only a sādhana but also a sādhyā or the highest value is life, prema-bhakti ceases to be a mere means or a bridge just as Diotima says of “Love . . . (as) a powerful spirit existing halfway between the mortal and the immortal”.

Consideration of Divine-Love as a Relation:

The Paurāṇic narratives of Kṛṣṇa bowing down to Rādhā or Rādhā becoming the object of love for Kṛṣṇa Who has thus taken the role of a lover or the subject of the relation of love and allowing mother Jośoda to bind the naughty and prankish Child Kṛṣṇa (Dāmodara) by the affectionate rope of her Vātsalya prema are some of the ways of narrating the supremacy of an objectified divine-love. The revelation of the highest spiritual truth thus is also the same thing as showing where the purpose of human existence (puruṣa-prayojana) lies.

91 ibid., A Source Book in Indian Philosophy, p. 627.
92 ibid. Also Op. cit., Mysticism East and West. Rudolf Otto also accepts the position of Eckhart. He makes extensive cross-cultural examination of mysticism with reference to Eckhart and Śaṅkara and seems to subscribe to reductionist ontology.
If the Infinite does not have a climb down from the height of its Absoluteness as its own Self-limiting act, being the “Wholly Other” there is no way that either the Supreme Truth will ever be revealed or the reciprocal relation of divine-love as its functional expression can ever take place. In this manner divine-love becomes a Grace as well as the panacea for the fragmented finite. In this respect the nature of divine-love as a kind of relation may be delineated with reference to the concept of śaktiparināma-vāda as the form of satkārya-vāda where in is embedded anyonyaśaktyāveśa or parasparaśaktyāveśa. That is, this doctrine of causal relation or causality as a relation is operative on two mutually related levels of (1) the causation of the world and (2) the endless enactment of divine-love on the plane of the transcendental histrionics of the nitya-līlā. We shall give greater focus on the later and refer to the former as and when it is necessary to do so. But relation being an abstract metaphysical concept can only be understood within the framework of the various models of relations obtaining between power and its possessor. This may finally reveal the truth about the objectification of something like the relation of divine-love.

Because of the characters of being natural (svabhāvika), of the nature of inherence (samavāya) and eternally situatedness in anything which is its locus, power or energy stands in an inscrutable (acintya) relation of difference-cum-common-difference to its possessor or locus. This is illustrated through making a distinction between the acquired burning powers (dāhika-śakti) of a red hot piece of iron on the one hand and the inherent or natural burning power of fire and fire itself on the other. The former’s power being acquired from fire it cannot be considered as its power as that of fire. In the case of fire, its power of burning is not acquired (āguntuki) like that of iron but a natural one. What is meant here is that the link between śakti and śaktimat is a natural and inseparable relation (avichedya svabhāvikī sambandha). But, due to the rejection of the concepts of svagata-bheda and śariṇa-śariṇi sambandha this relation is not the same as the one accepted by Rāmānuja under the name aprthaksiddhisambandha.

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Speaking on the theologico-metaphysical plane of the cult, this form and other compatible modals of explanations, the three powers of the Bhagavat are conceived to be His natural powers (svabhāvikā-śakti). Being natural these powers cannot be separated from the Saktimān-the power wielder. Together they constitute one integral reality – śaktimān hoīte tāhār svabhāvikā śoktike prthak korā jāy na boliyā śokti o śaktimān ei ubhaye miliyāi ek bastu. In this sense in spite of the fact that the Gauḍiya thinkers attempted to explain in a different manner from that of Rāmānuja and others, in conceiving the absolute in integral terms they do not seem to move away from the latter’s position.

The wielder of power - Śaktimān the integral being is the viśēṣya (substance or subject in the propositional sense) and the powers - śakti is the viśēṣana (attribute or adjective). This concept is in conformity to the general theistic position that the Supreme Brahman is a qualified reality (ṣagūna Brahman and is savīṣeṣa) without at the same time as Śaṅkara would relegate it to a lower ontological order when seen vis-à-vis the pure or attributeless (nirgūna Brahman) and distinctionless (nirviśeṣa Brahman) Brahman which is taken to be ontologically the highest to be experienced via the paravidya. Accordingly the blissful Brahman is viśēṣya – the Śaktimān and Its powers viśēṣana. Their relationship is eternal and inseparable from one another (nitya avicchedya sambandha). Generally speaking this affirms the realism of the school that objects are always viśēṣya(s) and accordingly are characterised by viśēṣana(s) - tai viśēṣana yukta viśēṣyei hoīlo bastu. While these two words have other meanings, the ones relevant here are for viśēṣyam – the “...word qualified or limited by an adjective, the object to be defined or particularized by another word; a noun...” and for the second a “...word which particularizes, qualifies, or defines another, an adjective, attribute, epithet” i.e. opposite of viśēṣya. They may be formulated as the propositional expression

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subject-predicate or adjective relation. Every understandable logical difficulties involved in it (acintyajñānāgocaraḥ) when it is examined in the context of the absolute being is not thought of as much of a problem. But nevertheless as the admission of this difficulty the Gaudīya thinkers had introduced the concept acintyā. Therefore, there is no point in further dwelling on those fine areas of logical arguments and indulge in the acts of the chewing the chew. The philosophical values of their views lie in the fact that in a different sense they reaffirmed the attitude of realism with regard to seeing God in relation to man and world which seem to be suggestive of a deeper meaning of life not perceived to be a chimera. We can at least hope that the vehement criticisms of the impossibility of a rigorous ethical existence under Śaṅkara’s illusionism (māyāvāda) are not applicable to the philosophy of Gaudīya Vaishnavism. Because, there is no way that in spite of the religio-ethical necessity of mankind to have some kind of self-transcendence (not in terms of an otherworldly notion like mokṣa but) by re-authenticating empirical life based on a divine-love imbued modal of concrete but comprehensive existence, the variegated world of living and non-living entities can be disrobed of their ontological status as it was done in advaitism.

The nature of the kind of relation existing between two terms which can neither be said to be that of difference nor non-difference and to that extent is inexplicable, and yet in no way this logical difficulty is thought of as the ground for the impossibility of the loving relationship between God and the man which is characterized by it is crucial for the eventual delineation of the nature of such a love conceived to be the sādhya or the pañcamapurusārtha raised to an ontological state which is even higher than the traditional conception of mokṣa. This requires us to explain and examine in detail the nature of such a relationship already implied by the different modal referred to above.

In Indian philosophy the concept of relation (sambandha) as it is in the west occurs both in the context of metaphysics as well as logic and

epistemological enquiries. In Śaṅkara's non-dualism it is one of the contentious issues which he dwelt on while refuting the reality of the world. Where as, in the case of the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika philosophy the relation of inherence (samavāya sambandha) is one of the seven categories (saptapadārthas). Its importance consists in the fact that, it is distinguished from that of the relation of conjunction (samyoga sambandha) which exists between two separable terms. Its acceptance is consistent with the non-advaitic modal of realism where our thought essences necessarily reflect the nature of the variegated world as the very backdrop of their existence. Therefore, it is essential to find out the viable conceptual framework for the particular ontological claim of the Gauḍīya thinkers that divine love in their own formulation is even superior to or the supreme but a dynamic spiritual state. At the same time it would be too simplistic to say that it comes nearer or is of the nature of the relation of inherence implied by the different aforesaid modals of explanations.

To begin with divine love as an erotico-emotive devotional sentiment (bhakti-rasa) may be understandable from the standpoint of the view that it is something in between the natures of the concepts of relation as "one-place-property" and "a two-or-more-than-two-place property". It also seems to have the character of being a reflexive-relation where "...like identity, each thing bears to itself". Here we are only using the modal as a convenient tool of clarification and it has the possibility of being an unsuitable modal. The subsequent analysis would show that it comes very closer to saying that it is something like "...for all a, aRa". It is more of the nature of being self-reflexive. It is evident when the bhaktas or the parikaras (eternal associates of the Bhagavat) directs their spontaneous loving attachments and longing towards him as the supreme object of such an intensely passionate spiritual emotion imbued with their own awakened finite blissful nature (ānanda). This outward flow of devotional love is made possible by the prior inward flow of His blissful energy towards the bhaktas

98 Ibid.
or was deposited (kṣipta) in the well prepared heart of the bhaktas. When the inwardly flowing blissful energy flows back in the form of prema-bhakti from the bhaktas towards the Lord, it causes greater sweetness to Him (sva-svarūpaśaktyānanda) than enjoying His own blissful nature (svarūpānanda). In this process the relation of devotional love acquires a unique ontological status of its own and it remains objectified in the human-divine intersubjectivity. It is in the state of a halfway house between love-relation as a “one place property” and “two or more than two place property”. What is important here is that, the Bhagavad receives back His own blissful energy via the awakened dynamic religious consciousness of the spiritual aspirants. This is as good as saying that, divine-love or man’s love of God is nothing but either Self-love of God Himself or an eternal and Self-reflexive spiritual relation which began from God and culminated in Himself. But the idea of time is not involved here as it is in the case of ordinary process of relations. Here mysteriously the process rather then either the starting point or the destination becomes more important; that is, its beauty lies more in the pilgrim’s progress rather than the destination. Being the Self-expression of the Infinite, the spiritual process of the dynamic erotic-devotional love is inexhaustive in its manifestations. This will be better explained by the concept of process theology which comes very closer to the theology of the Guadiya School. This is presupposed by the concept śaktiparīnāma-vāda as the metaphysical theory of the cult. The aesthetic theory of the system also points to this fact. Kṛṣṇa as the highest or the origin of all the avatāras is described as the Rasarāja – one who is the reservoir of rasa; as such He both relishes His own bliss and also enables others to relish it. This is an eternally ongoing process embodied in the nitya-līlā of the Goloka-which may be termed as the transcendental histriionics eternally enacted for the purpose of self-manifesting His blissful dynamic core as the highest reality which is experienced as divine-love by God’s own eternal associates or the human bhaktas.

Another aspect of this relation is that it is intrinsic in nature; something like the relation of inherence (samavaya sambandha) of the Vaiśeṣika. It is
intrinsic in the sense that it is determined by the very nature the things related to each other and not by any other external conditions. But divine-love as a relation is made a dynamic entity or predominating process in and through which the inexplicable religio-metaphysical concepts of difference and non-difference between saktis and the Šaktimat remains continuously manifesting via the alternating processes of unity and separation of the erotico-aesthetic divine amour of the lover and beloved. This will become evident when we see that bhakti as per the school under consideration is the very self expression as the self-same function of the eternally dynamic blissful core nature (hlādinī-śakti) of the Bhagavat. Hence, bhakti is also definable as both the functions (direct) of the Supreme Self as well as indirectly the individual selves (jīvas). It is in this context that it may also be conceived as some form of self-love for both God and men without at the same time committing to the hedonistic connotations it may involve. It has certain existential and aesthetic paradigm where the nature of the relationship can be understood in better terms than it can be comprehended from the perspective of critical logical analysis.

The ontological height of the relation of divine-love Bhagavat-priti entailed by its being conceived to be the pañcamapuruṣārtha without at the same coming into conflict with the position of the Absoluteness of the Bhagavat in the form of Kṛṣṇa tattva in its mādhurya form has its own theoretical issues of the symbolism or otherwise of religious language. This problem is so pertinent that, a symbolic interpretation of the concept of the nitya-līlā would stultify the entire theological ontology surrounding its divine-passion of the sacred amour of śṛṅgāra or madhura or kānta-bhakti which ends with the self-subsisting and intoxicating (mādana) divine frenzy of Rādhā's mahābhāva. There is not room for bringing in any allegorical meaning into the texture of the religious language of the prema-bhakti achieves its own non-cognitive and aesthetico-emotive objectivity in the human-Divine intersubjectivity. The entire problem involved in the said religious language is in relation to the amorous elements of the aesthetic-devotional emotionalism the prema-bhakti. This requires detail investigation
which will be done in chapter 6 “Ethical Issues of Divine-Love”. Before the said ethical issues are taken up, as the logical corollary of the relational nature of divine-love delineated in this chapter, chapter 5 shall discuss about “Aesthetics as Non-Cognitive and Non-Symbolic Participatory Religious Language”. 