Chapter VI
Ethical Issues of Divine-Love

Introduction:

The ethical issues of the amorous divine-love are inherent in its being conceived as the highest form of sādhyā-bhakti as madhura-rati or priyatā directed towards its Supreme-object (viṣaya) the Bhagavat. The classification in the Vaiṣṇava-Rasa-Śāstra of the excitants or vibhāva, i.e., Kṛṣṇa and Gopis to be ālambana vibhāvas and their further division into pati or husband and upapati or amanta (paramour) and svakīyā or svīyā (wife) and parakīyā (mistress or another’s wife) raise moral issues. Parakīyā is again of two types: unmarried (kanyakā) and married woman (paroḍhā)\(^1\). Within the school of Gauḍīya itself there were apprehensions about the alleged immorality of the madhura-rati or kānta-rati involving parakīyā-rasa. Though, majority of the Gauḍīya scholars like Jīva would try to explain that, the Gopis are in fact that svīyās or svakīyās (eternal consorts) of Kṛṣṇa and for aesthetic and ontological reasons they are merely made to appear as if they are wedded to another men or simply unmarried beloveds of Kṛṣṇa\(^2\). Before proceeding further, it is necessary to refer to the framework for analysing this issue.

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\(^1\) Majumdar, Chaitanya: His Life and Doctrine, pp. 312-313.
\(^2\) Chakravarti, Janārdan, Śrī Rādhātattva O Śrī Caitanya (Bengali), University of Calcutta, 1997.

Citing the authority of Gopāla Tāpanī Śrutī (Upaniṣad), the author says: "prakātalātāy Śrī Kṛṣṇer e-i kāntagener porokīyā abhimāner kothā Gopālottara-Tāpanī Śrutī ukite jāy/ E-i porokīyā abhimāner hetu ki? Porokīyā vyato rosor āśvādan pūrmdñgo hoī nā/ Porokīyā āśvāditā rosor apārva comatāritya royeche/. In support this view Caitanya Caritāmṛta is cited thus: "Porokīyā bhāve oti rosor ullāsa/ Vraja-vinā iḥār onyatra nāhi vās". The word abhimāna as an aesthetic technique means conceit or a particular religio-aesthetic emotional mood assumed by the bhaktas.
Sexual Immorality as a Medieval Syndrome:

The immorality of the concept of divine-amour couched in every available detail of the technicalities of Alaṅkāra Śāstra or subtle nuances of the psychological elements of secular love portrayed in erotic Saṁskṛt literatures is based on the rigid medieval moral codes of conduct in which adultery became prohibited and freedom of love and sex which was more a general trend during the ancient times became repressed

3 Hence, the moral question of nitya-liīā depicting the dalliance between Kṛṣṇa and the Gopīs may be examined against this background. While the issue of sexual morality in terms of whether sexual love mainly adultery is ethical or unethical is beyond the scope of this thesis, it surely is the reason behind the whole question of looking at the parakīyā-rati or rasa as something immoral. The existence of the sub-religious systems like the Śākta cult and the Sāhajīyas within the Brahanical religious order of India indicate that, whether sex and religion can go together or sex is outside the purview of religion is a matter of opinion.

Though, during the medieval time the majority view is quite settled with the idea of adulterous sex as a sin and as such it was a prohibited practice

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3 The Koka Shastra Being the Ratirahasya of Kokkoka and Other Medieval Indian Writings on Love, Trans. & with an Intro. by Alex Comfort, Preface by W.G. Archer, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1964, pp. 18-19. "In ancient India, love and death were equally intermixed...Adultery might cause unhappiness, yet, equally, unhappiness might sanction adultery. Adulterous love was 'fatal'—but only when it was repressed. A man and woman had only to fall in love—to be gripped by an overwhelming passion—for their situation to become 'fatal'. When that happened, all controls and restraints were suspended...Life in ancient India involved extra-marital love... (and)... it had its own rational. It was more vital than theory. Practice over-rod precept...Vatsayana, in fact, returns again and again to love and sex as something a-moral, something which transcends ethics and has its own justifications".

4 Ibid., pp. 21-22. "Against this sharp bland and sensuous régime, medieval India stood in sharp contrast. The goal of life was still the same. It was a final breaking-out from a chain of births and rebirths. But the terms of living were now much harsher. Rigid principles had been adumbrated. Morals were tighter. There was more strain". Citing Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa the book also refers to the growing concept of the virtue of the chastity of a wife. From this also one can easily infer that, such an extolling of the virtue of the chastity of a married woman would not have been imaginable had the ancient Indian society was not adulterous. There are many references to this in the Upaniṣads to this effect.
parallel practice of Tāntric Maithuna or ritual-sexual practices in Sāhājiya and Śākta cults in which the feeling of bliss in self-extinction of sexual union is thought of either as a symbol of bliss of self-extinction of the finite in the Absolute or is a path leading to it would show that, sex is not altogether bad and rather is taken by some sects to be a part of sādhana. There is no other way of explaining about the conjoined erotic-mystic form of female sexual organ (yoni) and phallus (Śiva-Liṅgam) affixed on it except that, they stand for the positive attitude towards sex which is imbued with mystical import or even when looked at as fertility rite, healthy perception of male and female sexual union as a sign of life and the blissful nature of the ultimate oneness or union between the finite self and the Infinite Self. Why the medieval India and asceticism prescribed strict and stern ordering of life with its negative attitude towards love and sex may have its own social and historical explanations, sit is also not wrong to say, on a more realistic parlance and a life pravrtti-mārga (a life of activism or pragmatism) as opposed to nivrvti-mārga, the practical Indian mind nevertheless did seek to integrate kāma in the overall value schema of the puruṣārtha. If the conflict between the upholders of catuvarga and trivarga is not a methodological ploy of treating the

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6 Bose, Manindra Mohan, The Post-Caitanya Sahajiya Cult of Bengal, Gian Publishing House, Delhi, 1986. Intro., pp. viii-ix. “The Sahajiyās are the followers of the Rāgānugā ideal of divine love, and so they do not attach much importance to vaiḍī or formal worship except so far as it is conducive to the growth of Rāgānugā love in the primary stage of spiritual culture...The Sahajiyā doctrine is wholly based on the ideal of Parakāyā, however is denounced in society, but in religion it has been adopted as a symbol of intense love. The Sahajiyās take the Parakāyā companions for the culture of love by the lovers, but they denounce, in the strongest terms possible, conscious sensuality of any kind”. Also see Dasgupta, Shashibasan, Obscure Religious Cults, Ferma KLM, Pvt., 1976, vide: Part I Chapters I-IV, on Buddhist Sahajiyā cults and General Features of Sahajiyā systems etc, pp. 3-112 and Part II, Chapters on The Vaishnava Sahajiyā Cult, pp. 113-156.  
7 “The Meaning of the Puruṣārthas in the Mahābhārata” by Y. Krishnan in Moral Dilemmas in The Mahābhārata, Edited by Matilal, Bimal Krishna, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla and Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, pp. 53. The Mahābhārata 5.122.32; 12.59.20. etc. Manusmṛti 2.22, Kauṭilya’s Arthaśāstra 9.7.57. Mokṣa is being mentioned here as a latter addition. This is important in the light of the fact that, in the ancient Indian society Brāhmaṇical religion was more practical and given to sensual pleasures and material prosperity where as with the onset of the heterodox systems, the spirit of asceticism and mokṣa etc were gradually introduced and they were subsequently adapted by the mainstream Brāhmaṇical religion. Hence this agrees with the idea that, there were free love and sex in the ancient Indian society. For the Śramanic origin of
latter a mere *pūrva-pakṣa* for eventually entrenching the value of *mokṣa*, but is a sign of the unsettled issue pertaining to the differences in the attitudes towards love and sex, no matter how much the more licentious perception of them was overwhelmed by the repressive and suppressive opinion represented by asceticism.

**Kāma in Trivarga-Caturvarga Discourse:**

In respect of the *trivarga-caturvarga* controversies Prof. Rajendra Prasad\(^6\) believes in the self-sufficiency of the *trivarga* schema and thinks that, *mokṣa* as a value is redundant, and it can be very well included in *kāma*. In his opinion: “I have already argued elsewhere (cf. “Karma, Causation and Retributive Morality”, ICPR, New Delhi, Chapters 13, 14) that *mokṣa* can be dropped as the fourth *puruṣārtha* by being included in *kāma* as the fulfillment of one’s personal, as distinct from his social aspiration for perfection of certain type”. Prof. Prasad thinks that, the very nature *mokṣa* as an ideal being a solitary spiritual pursuit need not necessarily be a part of a more external pursuit of value like the performance of duty as implied by the value of *dharma*. He is meaning here that, *mokṣa* as such can be integrated to the pursuit of *kāma* in the sense in which it is meant in the Tāntric *sādhana*. In what sense he speaks about the reducibility of *mokṣa* to *kāma* needs further clarifications which will not be done at this juncture.

India as a land of diverse and opposite poles of gay and daring abandonment of love and sex represented by Kāma-Sūtra of Vatsyayāna and Kokkoka-Śāstra, Tāntric-sexual practices and graphic depictions of sexual-copulations of yogi and yoginī in temple sculptures of Khajurāho and others, and the extreme spirit of ascetic renunciation may not warrant any single or finale verdict on the immorality or incongruity of synthesisng sex and religion. The

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*mokṣa* and asceticism read “Conceptions of Dharma In the Śramanical and Brāhmanical Traditions: Buddhism and Mahābhārata”, by Peter Della Santina, *ibid.*, pp. 97-115.

\(6\) “The Theory of Puruṣārthas: A Proforma of Human Values” by Rajendra Prasad in Studies on the Puruṣārthas, General Editor, P.K.Mohaputra, Department of Special Assistance in Philosophy, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, 1994, p. 41
Upaniṣad themselves are abound with self-unconscious, pure and innocent attitude to sex life, and it is seen either as a window to the bliss of Brahman or the nearest example of the bliss of merging with the infinite. In Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavism much to the chagrin of the modern followers of medieval and Victorian moralist and whose moral sensibilities are outraged by the aestheticised divine-amour even making Kṛṣṇa the God of love being completely intoxicated by its maddening sweetness (mādana), “Divine-Sex or Pure or Transcendental Sex-Life” remains eternally projected as the alternating divine rhythms of love-in-union (saṃśleṣa or saṃbhoga) and love-in-separation (viśleṣa or vīrabh). In the language of the “Love of Love” of Tristanism of Denis de Rougemont, “Tristan and Isolde do not love one another...What they love is love and being in love...Their need of one another is in order to be aflame, and they do not need one another as they are. What they need is not one another’s presence, but one another’s absence”. Rougemont also speak about the aesthetic value of obstacle and death (as the element of self-transcendence in the idealised secular love). The former may be compared to parakiyā-rama created as obstacle for heightening the passion of divine-love and is a universal aesthetic-literary method for making a projection of love as a value-in- itself which according to Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavism is the Self-expression of the creative blissful freedom of the personal Absolute. Pure-Sex has meaning only in this sense.

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9 Op. cit., The Koka Śastra, p. 28, Br. Up. “In the embrace of his beloved, a man forgets the whole world—everything both within and without’ in the same way he who embraces the Self knows neither within nor without”.

10 Foucault, Michel, The Will to Knowledge, The History of Sexuality Volume 1, Trans. from the French by Robert Hurley, Penguin Books, 1976, pp. 3-5. Foucault describes the repressive Victorian society in ‘We “Other Victorians” and even Freud’s psychoanalytical findings are termed as conformism. ‘Perhaps some progress was made by Freud; but with such circumspection, such medmal prudence, a scientific guarantee of innocuousness, and so many precautions in order to contain everything, with a fear of “overflow”, in that safest and most discrete of spaces, between the couch and discourse: yet another round of whispering on a bed’.

The a-moral bliss of self-extinction in the highest climax of sexual-love is the nearest example or the temporal expression of the bliss of oneness which in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism is not substantial identity (tadātmya) but more of the nature of psychic union via the God’s own projected ideal love to which both Him and man are hooked. In order that, the rhythm of divine-love is kept sustained as the ennobling blissful relation which is the same thing as Self-actualisation of God’s own dynamic and blissful creative freedom, and also, through it, the realisation of the constitutional position (ontological) of the human individuals consisting in the eternal servitude to Him, necessary distance and distinctiveness or particularisation (viśeṣa) of the Divine object and creatures is needed. The different types of heroes (dhiroḍāto) and heroines mainly parakīyās admitted in the Vaiṣṇava-Rasa-Śāstra of Rūpa is not only to bring out divine-love as the supreme object of spiritual attainment, but also has the element of “love as perfection of difference”. This concept is of Max Scheler according to whom the “Ideal of love is two free and distinct individuals who by their love become more free and distinct. Love, thus functions to realize the person as the unique and irreplaceable individual he is”\textsuperscript{12}.

As in ordinary love, transcendental love also needs variety. The first requirement is the distinction between lover and beloved. The infinite rhythm of divine-love necessitates parakīyā lovers so as to perpetuate and deepen the passionate longing of love. The ideas of obstructions, distance and longing act as necessary aesthetic conditions in the conception of the parakīyā and not in one’s legal wife. But in spite of all these things which have become well known as far as Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism is concerned, the morally rooted medieval and contemporary mind hardly finds it amusing or acceptable as of philosophical value. Since, nitya-

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., pp. 71-74. He cites the following verse of Tagore: “Free me from the bonds of your sweetness, my love; No more of this wine of kisses. This mist of heavy incense stifles my heart. Open the doors, make room for the morning light. I am lost in you, wrapped in the folds of your caresses. Free me from your spells, and give me back the manhood to offer you my freed soul”.
II. is the very heart of the theology and metaphysics of the school, no symbolic import can be read into its texture. The highest ontological status attached to madhura-rati and parakīyā-rasa and the refusal to accept any symbolic interpretation of divine-amour by the Gauḍiya Vaiśnavas is a problem of which no easy solution can be found except believing in what they make it out to be that, such a love is not self-centric and therefore is nothing to do with ordinary sexual desire. How shall one understand the idea that, Krṣṇa as the object of love is either husband of the queens of Dwārka and Mathurā, and amant or upapati or paramour of the Vraja-Gopīs and that, their passion has overcome their sense of conventional duty, and this establishes the superiority of śṛṅgara-rasa (atraiva paramottkarsah śṛṅgārasya pratiśhitah)\textsuperscript{13}? We have already cited Jīva Gospāmī who maintains that, it is deliberately created by the yoga-māyā of the Lord so as to increase and heighten the passionate delight and illuminating nature of śṛṅgāra. One of the natures of parakīyā-rasa is that, every moment it is experienced as something fresh or new and is nowhere found except in Vraja (apūrva camatkāritva). But his does not solve the initial question we have raised.

W.G. Archer, in his Preface to The Koka Shāstra writes that, Brahma Vaivarta Purāṇa in contrast to its earlier extolling of the virtuous position of chaste women, and its consideration of adultery as serious and unpardonable crime also depicts special love that Krṣṇa had for Rādhā which defied and breached the medieval morals. He says that, its special pleading that, their love was not adultery as they were in fact eternally married “... is unconvincing for the meaning of Krishna’s romance with Rādhā is that it places love before duty. Vishnu as Krishna brings a new opposite extreme from that of Rāmā. Love, from being outside religion is made its crux... Love for Vishnu or Krishna ... was an act of grace, a grant of salvation, a divine reward not for correct living but for love and adoration”\textsuperscript{14}.

\textsuperscript{13} Op. cit., Caitanya: His Life and Doctrine, p. 312.
\textsuperscript{14} Op. cit., The Koka Shastra, p. 25.
Similar view is also expressed by John Mackenzie Chapter 5 entitled "Ethical Implications of the Bhakti Movement" in his book "Hindu Ethics." He makes a comparison between the worship of Rāmā and that of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and concludes that the former is a pure form of worship where as the latter involves worst excesses. Rādhā as the chief parakiya is described as "The favourite mistress and consort of Krishna while he lived as Gopāla among the cowherds in Vṛndāvana. She was wife of Ayana-Ghosha, a cowherd. Considered by some to be an incarnation of Lakshmi, and worshiped accordingly. Some have discovered a mystical character in Rādhā, and consider her as the type of the human soul drawn to the ineffable god, Krishna, or as that pure love to which the fickle lover returns." These are only some of the criticisms against the moral implications of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa dalliance as samples of medieval and Victorian era attitude towards the erotic elements of religion mainly emotional Vaiṣṇavism of Caitanya. Though Caitanya Movement cannot be clubbed together with the degraded sects of Sahajiyā Vaiṣṇavism in terms of moral purity, in terms of the more literal use of aesthetic and psychological elements of ordinary love, and to that extent it is a marked emotionalisation of bhakti which was started by the Ālvars, its refusal to admit any symbolic reading of the nitya-nilā is still a moral issue for the medieval and Victorian era moral sensibilities. Hence, the entire issue boils down

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15 Mackenzie, John, Hindu Ethics, Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, New Delhi, 1971. Chapter 5: "Ethical Implications of the Bhakti Movement" pp. 165-179 speaks about the devotional worship as relating to the cult of Śakti-energy of God or His consort states that, though it has significance from the perceptive of the history of religion, it has no significance for the student of the history of ethics. The cult of Śakti being related to Tantric worship is non-moral and in some cases it has immoral implications.

16 John, Dowson, A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion, Geography, History, and Literature, Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, New Delhi, 1973, p. 251. As against the reference made to Rādhā, she is not taken to be the incarnation of Lakshmi, rather he is thought of as the very source of all the other Indian Goddesses in the theology of Gauḍiya School.

17 Dasgupta, S.N., A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. III, 1952, pp. 82-83. It seems fairly certain that the Ālvars were the earliest devotees of such emotional transformation... But, though yearning after God is often delineated on the analogy of sex-love, this analogy is seldom carried to excess by studied attempts at following the pathological symptoms of erotic love. It therefore represents a very chaste form of expression of divine-love in terms of human love. The Ālvars were probably the pioneer in showing how love for God may be on terms of tender equality, softening down to the rapturous emotion of conjugal love."
to the problem of religious language and its inherent elements of symbolism\textsuperscript{18}
which to the insiders of the School, were never an issue. Thus, these problems are for the outsiders whose understanding of it would partly bring out the philosophical significance if any of divine-love.

**Religious Language, Symbolic and Non-Symbolic Discourse:**

If the Gauḍiya thinkers would have accepted that the entire erotic elements of madhura-rati are symbolic in nature, its ethical issues would have been almost solved. But the very elaborate aesthetic and theological structure of the nitya-līlā would not permit that. The nature of Caitanya’s religious experience being not falling under radical monism, no allegorical reading of it is possible. Four possible meanings of amorous religious language may be considered. (1) The first is that, it is allegorical or symbolic; (2) the second meaning would be that, amorous language is participatory in nature; (3) thirdly it is the self-expression of Absolute freedom of God and (4) fourthly it is the necessary element of the act of total self-surrender to the saving or the loving Grace of God. The first alternative is more or less already discussed by saying that, the transcendental amour of the Gauḍiya School is neither symbolic nor allegorical\textsuperscript{19}. The second meaning has in it some amount of truth about the human-divine interactionism through the process of divine amour. It has been already discussed, in the preceding two


\textsuperscript{19} Sharma, Dr. Ram Nath, Philosophy of Religion, Kedernath Ram Nath, Delhi, Second Revised & Enlarged Edition 1988-89, p. 266. In chapter 32 entitled “Language, Symbolism and Myth in Religion”, Sharma cites a statement of Hans Denk which runs as: “So long as the symbol remains in worshipper’s mind, firmly attached and instrumental to that which is symbolized, the use of such things can do no harm. But if the symbol breaks loose, as it were, and becomes an end in itself, then we have at the best, a futile aestheticism and sentimentality, at the worst a form of psychologically effective magic”. This quotation exactly is the description of the nitya-līlā of Gauḍiya Vaishnavism with its negative connotation ascribable to it.
chapters that God through His own Self-limiting act or as showing His Divine-Grace in the form of His infinite Love He enters into a loving relationship with the mortals. This is implied by the idea in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism God’s power of sweetness, beautiful form etc. (mādhurya) as the manifestation of His essential nature (svarūpa-śakti) is superior to His majestic splendor (aiśvarya). This has been developed in its highest theological plane in the School so as to facilitate the highest loving relation between the devotees and God. The aesthetic and erotic language associated with such a loving relationship is integral to such a divine-process and they have a self-reference and they do not have any other reference to any extra nitya-līlā context.

The concept of the participatory nature of divine-love or divine-amour is understandable through the language theory of sex of Robert Solomon criticised by Hugh T. Wilder in his paper: “The Language of Sex and the Sex of Language” in “The Philosophy of Sex: Contemporary Readings”20. Solomon argues that, sex has the function of interpersonal communication like the ordinary language is. But this is rejected by Wilder by saying that, the above theory of Solomon which based on the Instrumental theory of language (Solomon, Searle, Austin and many other post-Wittgensteinians). Along with Chomsky he seems to accept the formal theory of language (Descartes, Humboldt, Chomsky, etc.) which contends that, language essentially is a means of thought and self-expression. These being purely empirical studies, would only give us a model for understanding the meaning of the obsession for the erotic religious language of divine-love. Both the theories, i.e., sex as a psycho-physical language of inter-personal relationship and sex as a self-expression are applicable to the religious language of the divine-amour. The concept of Rāsa-līlā as a spontaneous aesthetico-erotic self-expression of the personal Absolute has no reference to any further truth but it is an autonomous or

self-contained or a self-referring act\textsuperscript{21} of Self-love of the Divine. The erotic religious language is more participatory in nature.

The above matter can never be settled unless there is a discernment of the final truth embodied in the differences of paradigmatic contentions relating to (1) the ascetic attitude to sex or ordinary desires (kāma), (2) the middle path of integrating sex or ordinary pleasures right from the gross to the more refined pleasures or aesthetic joy of art and literary experience (rasānubhava in the sense of secular aesthetics) in the value schema of the puruṣārthas which is more of the nature of sublimation or gradual elevation of the embodied individuals towards the highest ideal of mokṣa. This still views sex as an evil to be transcended completely and if possible to completely avoid it. The concept of brahmaṇārya as the first āśrama points to these facts. While this position is more accommodative rather than the outright but the impossible rejection of ordinary desires by the embodied self (jīva as the dehīnam or dehabhṛt according the Gitā). But this is in marked contrast to (3) the positive acceptance of the facticity or the given-ness of human sex and sexuality by the Tāntric sādhana and linking the bliss of sexual union to the bliss of spiritual union between the finite and infinite. In the terminology of Paul Tillich the Tāntric sex is more participatory than its being purely symbolic in contrast to a “sign” which does not participate in and through its “referent” or “truth” of which it is the indicator. Lastly (4), while being participatory, the non-symbolic aesthetico-erotic representation of divine-love is not of actual physical sex as in Tāntric sādhana, but it is more on the psychospiritual plane considered to be eternally self-manifesting emotive religious experience. This is evident from the ascetic ethical values chastely followed by Caitanya himself and his own immediate followers. And what happened to the post-Caitanya Sahajiyā Vaiṣṇavism was in spite of Caitanya.

\textsuperscript{21} Sax, William S., The Gods at Play, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995, p. 50. In the light of the concept of itī with reference to the process of art creation in the aesthetic tradition of India the author speaks about the nature of the aesthetic object from the perspectives of subjective and objective factors. The view presented in the thesis is a reformulation these issues. The researcher has already written a paper touching upon these issues.
But the critic still insists that, the tendency to become degraded was already ingrained in his theory of bhakti-rasa as develop Rūpa and others, and this tendency became a reason for the critic to charge him with heralding the immoral sexual practices of the Sahajiyās. The unsympathetic attitude of the critic is exemplified by S.K. De's opinion that, Caitanya had contemplated on those vicarious pleasures which he actually shuns in real life. De is not very far from truth as the imaginative erotic-aesthetic contemplation or internal spiritual practice of rāgānuga-bhakti (called as antaraasādhana) is a necessary sādhana different from vaidhi-bhakti. Without this sādhana there is no way of realising the highest ideal of madhura-rati and its corresponding rasa. The rejection or reducing of the entire aesthetic and erotic paradigm to the status of symbol or allegory would tantamount to pulling out the very foundation of the theory of bhakti-rasa of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism. This matter will end only when sexual love ceases to be immoral. The problem is that, the Gauḍīya thinkers themselves would subscribe to the traditional attitude to the immorality of sex as seen in their vehemence in denying that, their divine-amour is the same as profane-love. It seems that in the notion of madhura-rati as embodied in the divine-sport of the nitya-līlā of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, in terms of the nature of its religious language, the boundary line between sacred and profane love appears to be very thin. This is the opinion arrived at by Kakar and Ross on the one hand and Lee Siegel in his "Sacred and Profane Dimensions of Love in the Indian Traditions as Exemplified in The Gītāgovinda of Jayadeva" on the other. The former authors’ finding a parallelism between idealised forms of secular-love portrayed in cross-cultural literatures and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s romance would show that, it is not possible to arrive at complete settlement of the question of the immorality of divine-love.

The whole aesthetic terminologies which Rūpa had employed for delineating his theory of bhakti-rasa were wholesome borrowing from the Sanskrit poetics. He and his fellow thinkers can only say that, these are the perverted reflections of the eternal divine-happenings of the divine-play\textsuperscript{23} of the Rāsa-līlā of the Goloka or Vraja. But whether it is perverted reflection of the eternal love-sports of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā or it is more in the nature of an attempt to have the non-cognitive aesthetic choice as a viable medium for communicating a believed esoteric reality or not, the success in the said task of its erotic-aesthetic portrayal is evident. As stated earlier, either sex as a means for interpersonal communication or a self-expression of the respective beings of God and man is quite plausible. This pious opinion also explains away the original issue of the ethical implications of divine-love. That, the Gauḍiya thinkers were apprehensive of the charge of being immoral is evident from their internal debates about the truth claims surrounding the concepts of svakiyā-rasa and parakiyā-rasa by Edwar C. Dimock, Jr. in his "The Place of the Hidden Moon"\textsuperscript{24}. The whole idea is not if the thinker like Jiva was successful in his offering the theologico-ontological justifications of parakiyā nāyikas (ālmbana-vibhāvas along with Kṛṣṇa-the main excitants of madhura-rati) like Rādhā and Her associate Gopīs or not, but their eagerness and serious intent behind their attempts to providing a justification reveals that, the ethical issue of divine-love was in fact a matter of concern to them. Whether they were successful in doing that is beside the point.

\textsuperscript{23} The Brahma Sūtra-The Philosophy of Spiritual Life, Trans. with an Intro. & Notes by S. Radhakrishnan, George Allen & Unwin Ltd. London, 1960, Second Impression 1971, II.133, p.362. The concept of līlā as interpreted in Gauḍiya Vaśnavism, though is still related to the one employed by Bādarāyana as a way out of the difficulties of giving a rational argument in support of the causation of the world from Brahman."But, as in ordinary life, creation is a mere sport"- lokavat tu līlā kaivalyam is quite internalised. The idea of līlā as a self-referring or as having no purpose outside God's own Self-expression of His infinite creative freedom is related to the manifestation of hiādinī -sakti which gets transformed into bhakti-rasa.

Amorality or Supra-Morality of Divine-amour:

Another dimension of the ethical implication of divine-love is in relation to the consideration of its supra-moral nature. What emerges from the above discussions is that, the comparative analysis between love and sex of ancient India and that of medieval strictures on the practices of adultery and the related extolling of the virtue of the chastity of married women serves as one of the reasons behind the perception of immorality in the concept of parakīyāvāda. The Guādiya thinkers themselves were affected by this sexual ethics of the medieval times which was relatively absent in the ancient times. Hence, it may not be a wrong idea to suppose that, one of the reasons for the rise of Caitanya Movement as one of the medieval Bhakti Movement based on a subtle but excessively erotic-devotional emotionalism is the conscious or unconscious, reaction to the suppressed and repressed natural desires of people\textsuperscript{25}. We shall return to this matter latter on. In the meanwhile, the supra-rational or a-moral nature of the divine-amour shall be discussed.

The supra-moral nature of Rāsa-krṣa or līlā is that, it is designed as the Self-expression of the Supreme and blissfully creative freedom of the personal Absolute without the presupposition of which the causation of the world cannot be explained through logic. Līlā is another traditional term for this phenomenon. But the highest and the most essential manifestation of the divine-truth consists in revealing Its Primary Power (svarūpa-śakti) i.e. Self-actualising Its dynamic blissful nature. This is in consonant with the conception of Brahma as the Supreme Bliss (ānandam Brahma). The episode of Kṛṣṇa's stealing the cloths of the Gopīs etc. only shows the extent of the unreserved mental condition

\textsuperscript{25} Op. cit., The Koka Shastra, pp. 24-25. "So stern an ordering of life, so blatant a denial of the senses provoked its own reaction. When rigid fixity informs society, when sex is viewed with shuddering disapproval except when strictly moral, the very fact of repression engenders revolt. In medieval India, religion itself developed certain cults and sects as if in compensation. In these cults, passionate abandonment was given direct expression and sex received mystical and symbolic interpretations. A first sign of this contrary tendency is the cult of Krishna, the divine-lover...During his brief idyllic youth; he made love to all the young married women".
necessary for self-surrender to God. It also shows that, being the Absolute and transcendental, He is above good and bad or conventional morality. It was also indicated by the fact that, the Nārada and Śāṅḍilya Bhakti Sūtras and the Gītā did mention that, even if one is a great sinner etc. one will become pure if he or she develops devotional attachments towards God and surrenders to Him as the ultimate refuge. Nārada also pointed out that, even desire and anger etc. may be employed as components of bhakti towards the Lord. We have also mentioned that, through hatred Śisupāla attained mokṣa. These may be exceptional cases but, it reveals the power of the redemptive Grace of God. That is, common morality cannot be always applied to the case of the redemptive power of the loving Grace of God.

In the words of Tillich the Christian act of confession has this spiritual fact and should not be confused with conventional ethics; for he says that, the fact of confession is nothing but praying God to forgive the sins one has committed. This he opines is inconsistent with the over-emphasis on “liturgical formulae, hymns, and the reading of lessons from the Pauline Epistles”. He laments that in spite of these, the message of Grace has been lost. This may be compared with the Indian practice of the Vedic rituals without deeper devotional love towards the lord and take refuge Him as the ultimate refuge. Hence he speaks about “the liberation of the moral conscience by its trans-moral foundation” 26. The criticisms of John Mckenzie against the following declaration about the power of bhakti by Bhaktiratnāvalī (about A.D.1400) are to be judged as per what Tillich says.

While acknowledging that, Bhaktiratnāvalī is free from the impurer elements that are found in Kṛṣṇa worship, McKenzie argues that the efficacy and praise of bhakti-mārga in this devotional text are exaggerations and they have not room for ethics. These texts are as follows: “Neither charity nor asceticism, nor purificatory rites nor penances and religious vows please him. He is pleased

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with pure devotion. Everything else is futile, mere mockery”. “Even a murderer of a Brāhmīn, of his own mother and teacher, and of a cow, even a low born brat of Śūdra mother and a Nishāda (low-born pariah) father becomes purified by singing the praise of the Lord”\textsuperscript{27}. McKenzie has misread the true import of these texts which are only examples and there are still many more similar texts in the Bhāgavata and even in the Gitā. Elsewhere it is also stated that, there is no amount of sin which a man can commit which God’s grace cannot purify. The true meaning of these texts does not mean to encourage a life bereft of morality. He has also overlooked the fact that, these are only exceptional matters relating to bhakti and are given only to highlight the power of the Grace of God and the necessity for man to take refuge in Him and not in the sense of laying a way of life which people may lead and ask for God’s forgiveness latter. This is the same situation which Tillich is referring in which people confuses ordinary morality with the power of God’s Grace which in way is suggestive of the fact that, people first lead a vile life a come to God later on for confession and forgiveness.

The Christian doctrine of confession does not intend to hint at men to go on with their sinful life and come to God for mercy afterwards. Tillich’s liberation of moral conscience based on a trans-moral foundation does not mean that, he aspects people to make life astray from the path of rigorous ethical life. Keeping the heinous sins side by side with God’s boundless mercy is only aimed at insisting mankind to deepen their faith which has the power to invoke the redemptive power of divine-love. It is to reveal this power that, even desire and extreme forms of attachment towards God are prescribed as the best form of worshipping God. And these are devoid of any self-centric motive. Thus, in the similar fashion, the so-called divine-amour is only theo-centric love aimed at pleasing God and not to derive any form of pleasure for oneself. This was what we show in the distinction between sukhā and priyatā. Hence, the question as to what

constitutes moral or immoral cannot be established in terms of conventional standards of ethics.

The above analysis may become clearer if one examines it in the context of Michel Foucault's deliberations on the concept of True Love which in many respects affirms Rūpa's distinction between pleasure (sukha) and fondness (priyatā). According to him "Knowing the nature of true love will no longer be a matter of answering the question: who one must love and under what conditions can love be honorable both for the beloved and for the lover? Or at least, all these questions will be subordinated to another, primary and fundamental question: what is love in its very being?" Foucault mentions Xenophon's presentation of Socrates' drawing a distinction between love of the body and love of the soul (In the Symposium and Memorabilia). Socrates disqualifies the love of the body in his person, and makes love of the soul the true love and seeks in friendship (philia) the principle that gives value to every relation (synousia). Though for the practical people of the ancient Greece, perhaps friendship here is spoken of in the ordinary sense. But this is also present in the theological concept of sakhyā bhakti in Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. In the aesthetic-spiritual conceit (abhimāna) of the eternal relationship between God and man friendship (as it is between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna; the former declares in the Gītā that the latter is His devotee as well as best friend - bhakto'śi me sakhā ceti) is one of the five modes of devotion of which madhura-rati (conjugal-love) is the highest form of divine-love. Being a form of true love or fondness in the language of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism which is object-centric, there is no direct reference to or aim at satisfying oneself. No doubt pleasure of the subject (āśraya or as a locus of true love it is adhāra) is an accidental consequence of such an ideal love. What Xenophon speaks of Socrates' idea of true love is in the ultimate analysis what is meant by

29 Ibid., cf. "On Socrates' reply to Aristophanes, see Plato Symposium, 205e".
30 Ibid., cf. "Xenophon, Symposium, VIII, 12; VIII, 25; VIII, 13".
Yājñavalkya in the Br. Up., that, every form of love to be true is to be true love of the Supreme Self – ātmānastu kāmāya sarvam priyam bahuvat\textsuperscript{31}. This is not what was meant by Socrates, but the parallelism is to be noted. According to Kakar and Ross this is the state of spiritual love of Sufism which is exhibited when Majnun refuses to touch Laila when the latter approaches him for union after the death of her husband. Majnun is in constant contemplative union with the soul of Laila, hence his love has transcended the ordinary pleasures of the body.

But the Rādha-Kṛṣṇa romance involves various physical expressions of mutual love like as in the Kāma Sūtra Kṛṣṇa’s drinking Rādhā’s nectarine lower lip (adhara pānacak) etc. are depicted in the erotico-aesthetic rendering of their divine-love in the histrionics of nitya-līlā. Jayadev’s Gitagovinda is replete with such simmering love scenes. The title of Lee Siegel’s book on this celebrated Vaiṣṇava devotional literature – “Sacred and Profane Dimensions of Love in . . . The Gitagovinda of Jayadeva” points to this fact. He brings one fundamental truth about the Gauḍiya conception of love by saying that “The distinction between the sacred and profane does not seem to in the expression of love, in the feeling or yearning of the lover, but only in the nature of beloved”\textsuperscript{32} towards whom the lover has sacrificed all his or her self-interest. This point was already referred to elsewhere in the thesis. This supreme act of sacrifice is seen in the Gopis offering their own chastity modesty and bodies in the service of their beloved. This is what is meant by Jīva Gosvāmī when he says that bhakti is the agreeable devotional service in conformity with the nature of the object (anukulya). But this does not absolve the ethical question of divine-love; because the idea that the lover or the bhakta does everything solely to please God and not to please himself or herself, means that, God is the Supreme Enjoyer (bhoktarām yajña tapasyāṁ sarva loka maheśvram). This creates logical difficulties as to how God who is perfect can be the enjoyer. As we have already discussed in the theologico-metaphysical concept

\textsuperscript{31} The English rendering is a rephrasing by the researcher of the exact utterance of Yājñavalkya.
of the static-dynamic personal Absolute it was explained in terms of its Self-
expressions of the simmering and overflowing blissful fullness. The erotic
dimension of such love when seen in this larger philosophical framework acquires
a new meaning. It falls into its right place in the creative Self-expression of the
Absolute. Whether one likes it or not the unmoved mover of Aristotle or
Śaṅkara's static Brahman is only the static side of the integral personal Absolute.

Thus, if one sees the larger theological and metaphysical picture against
the background of which divine-love shines as its central truth and the whole is
the īlā of the Lord as stated also in the Upaniṣads that, the world came into
existence due to the spontaneous and effortless divine-play of His, sex on the
mundane becomes a insignificant but a participatory window into His creative
urge. Otherwise, one has to settle with the chance and materialistic theory of the
origin of the world. One cannot both believe in God and at the same time refuge
to turn a blind eye to the ultimate causality everything from Him. Why human
beings are irresistibly drawn towards sexual desire is not self-explanatory and to
know its meaning one has to go outside of it. Its meaning is surely not in the
theory of sin. In the Indian context something becomes sinful only when it is
unconnected to God. But it is not stated here that, one's act of stealing is to be
related to God. Therefore, it is necessary that, one sees the trans-moral
foundation of the moral conscience. This cannot be done if one sticks to the
repressive and suppressive medieval moral gun. True spirituality does not lie in
doing violence to one's natural urges like desire and emotions. Their trans-moral
foundation of divine-love which requires that our hearts deepest desires shall be
fulfilled only when we transform them to Godward desires. The idea of divine-
love assumes that we can have Theo-centric desires and attachments. The desires
and love of the Gopīs were precisely that. In their passionately anguish moods of
vīraṇa of the śṛṅgāra- rati solely aimed at pleasing their beloved Lord, their self-
effacing love is indicated by the forgetting of their identity and assuming the
identity of their beloved as in the statement of a Gopī: "I am Kṛṣṇa".
That is, it is not desire, the deepest human passion and longing and attachments per which are to be shunned to be evil but, their directedness to the ephemeral worldly objects in the spiritually uprooted, fragmented and polarised and beginninglessly (anādi) wondering souls in the endless cycles of births and deaths (saṁsāra or bhāva-cakra in Buddhism) that, they are said to be tainted with evil causing endless sufferings (Three types of sufferings: ādi-bhautika, ādi-ātmika and ādi-dālivika) to mankind. If the world is not the figment of imagination caused by the māyā’s twin powers of concealing (āvarana-śakti) the truth of identity or non-dualism and projecting what is false or “what is not” (vikṣepa-śakti)33, then there has to be a bridge between the necessity of the psychophysical givenness of the embodied selves and the spiritual necessity of self-transcendence within the metaphysical set up of the conception of the integral reality conceptualised in Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavism. In another words as already cited by Foucault of Socrates’ idea of true love that, it is the nature of object which determines its trueness, these psychological associated with ordinary eros should be gleaned accordingly. This is what is stated in the Bhāgavata and repeated by Madhusūdana that, bhakti is meant for those who are neither too attached nor attached. The concept of the integral nature of the personal Absolute means that, everything else is dovetailed towards the centrality of its dynamic blissful Being. This, the Gauḍiya School does not do in the pattern of the Tāntric sādhana but through the erotic-aesthetic process of creative and imaginative contemplation (antara-sādhana or internal emotive devotional practice) of the rāgānuga-sādhana. This may be discussed as per the expositions of O.B.L. Kapoor in his Vrajañé Rasopāsana (Hindi)34 and Bipin Chandra Pal’s “Bengal Vaiṣṇavism”35.

32 According to Bhaktivedānta’s interpretation māyā means: mā—“not”, and yā—“that”, i.e., “that which is not real or false is projected as real”.
33 Kapoor, O.B.L., Vrajañé Rasopāsana (Hindi), Published by Dr.Vrajavallabhadas Navanīta lāl, Śrī Rādharamana-Nivās-Āśrama, Rāmaṇeṣṭri, Vrinda vana, 1984, See the sections on “Sambandharūpa Rāgātmikā-Bhakti ur Kāma-Rūpā Rāgātmikā-Bhakti” pp. 104-108.
Desire, Attachment and Sublimation or else:

Kapoor’s exposition is done from the perspective of the relation between rāgānuga-sādhana (sādhanabhakti practiced by the individuals in the state of bondage) and rāgātmika-sambandha (between Kṛṣṇa and His parikaras), and the relative position desire (lobha or kāma) as it is operative therein. Pal’s strong contention justifies the constitutive erotic-aesthetic method of antara-sādhana as the underlying ontological justification of the secular male-female relationship or pleasures sought by the pleasure seeking tendency of human nature in general. Whether is it a process of sublimation or else is only a matter of perspective and will become clearer as we proceed? It is suffice to briefly mention here that, this idea was already approved by the Bhāgavata when it says that, the divine-passion of Kṛṣṇa and Gopīs is therapeutic or curative of all the diseases caused by the afflictions of mundane desires. This is what Pal brings out in his presentation of Caitanya’s philosophical position in respect of divine-love.

Rāgānugā-bhakti as the imitation is a mental process done through the imagined mental body (antaścintita-siddha-deha) obtained as a Grace from the Bhagavat, is different from the external worship (vaidhi-bhakti) done out of fear (bhaya) of transgressing the positive and negative injunctions of the Vedas. As a part of the internal process of mental worship through one’s imagined psychic body, desire as a natural inclination towards the Bhagavat as the supremely worthy object with the sole intention of pleasing Him is a religio-ethical necessity.

37 Op. cit., pp. 113-114. Kapoor discusses in detail as to how an imagined or mental body can be something spiritually oriented. He cites the Bhagavat where it is said that, “If one leaves the body at the time of death while one is in intense mood of attachment, hatred and dear, one obtains their corresponding objects”. This is also the well known position of the Gītā. It is maintained that the mental body is of the nature of consciousness of the self (cintaya-rūpa) and as such is not purely mental. He cites Prīti Sandarbha which speaks about the fact that, the Bhagavat has innumerable or infinite “forms of consciousness” which gets transformed into the imagined body and at the time of death one leaves being one’s causal body or kāraṇa-sārīra (linga-sārīra or subtle-body) and enters into His abode through the Grace granted imagined body of the rāgānugā-bhakta, Prīti Sandarbha, anu, 11 as quoted by Kapoor.
of a higher order when it is compared to the external worship of vaidhi-bhakti. The significance of the said element of desire due to which rāgānugā-sādhana is also known as kāmānugā-bhakti or sādhana, is that, as per the eternal constitutional position of the jīvas, they can never directly participate in the original attachment or loving relation between the Bhagavat and His eternal associates (rāgātmika). Since the parikaras of the Bhagavat are the manifestations of His svarūpa-śakti, they are non-different (abhinna) from Him. Therefore, the Human bhaktas have no right to enter into the nitya-līlā as the divine-play of the Bhagavat and His parikaras. The implication of this theological fact would be that, the human-bhaktas are constitutionally predestined to be always in the forlorn state of longing or desire (manifested as the erotico-aesthetic mood of vīrah) to be in the psycho-spiritual mood of imaginative contemplation on and the imitation38 of the divine-play. Desire as a necessary component of this sādhana is so important that, without it, there will not be divine-love to be experienced by the bhaktas as the summum bonum of life. Rāgātmikā-bhakti is defined as the emotional attachment towards and desire for serving the Lord—“Rāgamayī bhaktir hoi rāgātmikā nām”39.

What is important here is that, object-centric-desire with all its associated erotico-aesthetic elements like longing and emotional attachments40 towards the Lord for His own pleasure is a constitutive psycho-spiritual process even in the unmanifested (aprākṛta or aprakat) transcendental world of Goloka. This is clearly

38 "Flowing and Crossing: The Somatic Theologies of Mechthild and Lallewari" by Michelle Voss Roberts in Journal of the American Philosophy of Religion, Vol. 76, No. 3, Sept. 2008, Oxford University Press, p. 642. The medieval Christian mystic (woman) “Mechthil’d struggle to reconcile with her body is hard won; but in her desire to imitate her suffering divine love, Christ, she concludes that the suffering body is integral to the divine flow of love”.


40 Op. cit., The Encyclopedia of Religion, Vol.2, Editor in Chief: Mircea Eliade, 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 overcoming of all passions, positive as well as negative. Yet many forms of bhakti also stress the detachment from all worldly beings that must accompany attachment to the Lord, or like the Bhagavad Gītā, which speaks of bhakti yoga, they use the language of ascetic philosophy to extol bhakti".
shown by the distinction between the two types of rāgānugā-bhakti and rāgātmikā-bhakti known as kāmānugā-bhakti and sambandhānugā-bhakti.\textsuperscript{41} Between these two, kāmānugā-bhakti, in which the relationship is based on the conceit (abhimāna) of kānta-rati or śṛigāra-rati or conjugal-love, is raised to the highest plane of divine-love culminating in Rādhā’s mahābhāva. Desire or kāma here is metaphysically constitutive in the sense of its being the psycho-spiritual expression of the mutual-transfer-of-energy (anyonya or parasparasaktvyāvesa) between the Divine and the bhaktas. This reciprocal process of divine-love is explained on the basis of the out-flowing process of the Bhagavat’s svarūpānanda and inward-moving, (i.e. towards the Bhagavat) process of śaktyānanda or the return of the original blissful power of the Lord after having transformed itself in the form of bhakti-rasa of the highest order. The latter is said to be far superior to the former and the Bhagavat Himself is intoxicated by it. This is another way of stating about the creative Self-unfolding of the over-flowing blissful power of the Lord as His essential nature.

Rāgānugā-bhakti is further sub-divided into sambhogaiiccchāmayī and tattadbhāvecchāmayī. The former being based on one’s own pleasure (svaṣukha vāsanāmayī) is of lower order and because of the same reason, the Mahiṣis (the queens of Dwārka) who are always hankering after physical union with their object of love are not eligible to enter into the kānta-bhāva of the Vraja-Gopīs. It shows that, the kāmanugā-rati of the damsels of Vraja is not svasukha-vāsanāmayī (self-centric). But tattadbhāvecchāmayī – kāmānugā-bhakti is not directed towards sambhoga or union with Kunj; therefore it is object-centric in nature\textsuperscript{42}. This explains as to why virah is believed to be higher than sambhoga. The implication of this would be that, without the self-transcending or object-centric desire, the imaginative contemplation or the antara-sādhana which is ever focusing on the feeling of absence of the beloved even while the lover is in proximity to his or her beloved

\textsuperscript{41} Op. cit., BRS., 1.2.131, as quoted in Vrajakī Rasopāsanā, p. 108.

\textsuperscript{42} ibid.
will not take place and the erotic-aesthetic process of divine-love will never remain objectified in the intersubjectivity of the Divine beloved and lover whose positions as subject and object were already shown to be interchangeable.

One may wonder at as to what all these are to do with the proposed philosophical significance of divine-love. Their values, most probably consist in their providing as the highest ontological foundation of natural human emotions like sexual desire or other forms of pleasures in general. This ontology of love does not seek an outright rejection of normal human desires and emotions, but only exhorts mankind to find their respective places in the larger metaphysical schema of the integral existence. Thus, the act of immoralising the innocent sex by the philosophers in absolute terms is a medieval syndrome or Victorian syndrome determined by the dictates of the pontiff (in Europe) which is closely linked to power and politics, smacks of the narrow vision of missing the wood while absolutising the tree. The meaning of sex or mundane desires or pleasures are not self-explanatory, but are to be justified by locating them within the larger canvas of the interconnected world laid out as the inexhaustibly Self-actualising process of the personal Absolute. This contention has been well elaborated by Pal as the following.

Keeping in view of the necessary positive attitude one should have towards ordinary desires or natural appetites, Pal says that, carnal pleasures, instincts and passions are not to be repressed or destroy them as evil. They are to be conquered or re-channelised towards the Lord in the manner in which it has been stated as above. He writes: "Even without being conscious of their God-reference we experience this idealization and spiritualization in those rare moments when carnal passions rise to the plane of the truly romantic and our love loses itself into the infinite. It is however a very rare experience. Ordinarily, our passions and appetites, born of our sense-object contacts, remain imprisoned

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The problem of the immorality of certain form of sexuality like adultery is not entirely a legal issue or the betrayal of trust, but it has a long history behind it of conceiving chaste married women as the reservoir of virtue. In both elevating women to the highest pedestal of satihood on the one hand and in the case of adultery on the other, the ultimate victim is woman. This had begun with Sāṅkhya’s conception of Prakṛti or material nature which is grammatically feminine gender, and is held responsible for the bondage of the Puruṣas (souls) which are masculine in terms of gender. This grammatical categorisation of Prakṛti and Puruṣas as feminine and masculine genders may be considered as the extension of male chauvinism which is the main source of feminist movements. This can be denied only by the non-holistic or piecemeal way of looking at the world. The issue of sexual morality cannot be isolated from the relation between sex, power and culture. If one sees religion as one of the expressions of cultural refinement of mankind, from a holistic perspective, it would be very naïve to think religion to be independent of power politics pertaining to gender relations. Hence from the contemporary or the outsiders’ standpoint, the allegation of the unethical nature of sex outside marriage or adultery involved in the concept of Parakīyā-rasa needs to be further in the light of the aforesaid. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava thinkers themselves are caught in the dilemma of their acceptance of erotic elements, though on the psychic plane and their adherence to the medieval attitude towards sexual ethics. No doubt the distinction made by them between the two elements of prīti-sukha or pleasure (self-centric) and priyatā or fondness (object-centric) to a greater extent removes the dilemma whether it is sensual or non-sensual.

Divine-amour, Body and Embodiment-Theology:

Though, it still needs to be worked out, in considering Rādhā as Kṛṣṇa’s co-equal or the Counter-Whole, and the act of His even bowing down to Her or

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46 Kennedy, M.T., The Caitanya Movement, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., First Published 1925, This 3rd Edn. 1993, Delhi, Mā Gosāins or Vairāgīnī for gender issue, p. 86.
worshipping Her as an object of love and adoration, for the feminist theologists, Bengal Vaiṣṇavism offers a fertile area of exploring new insights into the ontology of the power equations between the two sexes. But Caitnaya’s well known case of ostracising Junior Haridāś from his religious group and finally driven him into suicide for his speaking to and begging rice from a middle aged woman may spoil the entire initiative to undertake any gender related research in the field of Caitanyaism. The elevating of Rādhā and Gopīs as the top God intoxicated feminine souls (Rādhā is not the finite jīva) could not save Haridāś from Caitanya’s wrath for meeting a woman (read as women in general) perceived in the Indian religious tradition as the source of all the evils which entangles the puruṣas in a life of bondage. Perhaps, Caitanya, despite of his spiritual height could not come out of the medieval notion of sex and its immorality. As a product of his time he cannot be expected to have had the possibility of having modern gender sensibilities. This unhappy and tragic episode which deeply affected all his immediate followers whose repeated pleadings to Caitanya were futile had taught a strict lesson of moral regiment to them, proves that, no charge of ethical laxity can be charged him and his direct disciples. Yet, as it is alleged by S.K. De, Caitanya, imaginatively contemplated on the vicarious pleasures of the divine-amour of the nitya-līlā. Whether this allegation is true or not is to be judged as per what the theologians of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism had conceptualised.

The ethical issues of divine-love which is based on the medieval assumptions of the chastity of married women which is thwarted by the conception of the parakīyā-Gopīs, is therefore, closely linked to the issues of feminist theology or the theology of embodiment. It is closely related to the issue of body-mainly the female body perceived to be the source of evil by its ensnaring capability to overpower the male psyche. The concept of fluidity or water as metaphors for the embodiment of the divine in and through the female body in
feminist theology requires to be seen as the model of study for similar ideas in Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism. The integral metaphysical framework of the School provides ample room for bringing in the concept of fluidity into its structural textures. Keeping in view of the parakīyā-svākīyā debate, the prescription to worship the Super Male – the Puruṣottama in the feminine mood (Rādhā-bhāva or Sakhī-bhāva or Rūpānugā) to be adopted as an internal form of worship entails the idea of the continuum of body both in gross (sthāla-śarīra) and subtle forms (suksma-śarīra). It is not possible to have the subjective practice of contemplative worship in and through the imagined body (antaścintita-siddha-deha) received as God’s Grace without its embodiment in the gross body. The location of the imagined body in the gross body is the reason for the spiritual state of their fluidity or continuum between the divine and the embodied human self. The vindication of the body in the schema of divine-love consists in the affirmation of the applicability of human natural tendencies like desire and emotions as the psychophysical phenomena. The connection between the Divine and body is also indicated by the signs of rapturous experience manifested in Caitanya’s body when he was under the prolonged spells of mystic experience. The notion of body as the temple of the Divine - tanmandir is significant as it presumes that, the divine can dwell in the physical body which is a truism in Indian Philosophy.

The concept of fluidity and embodiment come very closer to the concept of the mutual transfusion of energy (parasparānupraveśa) into one another.

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47 Op. cit., Flowing and Crossing, pp. 638-641. “Metaphors of fluidity are pervasive in the theologies of Mechthild of Magdeburg and Lalleśwari of Kashmir... (In their theological ideas) the body flows with and into the divinity. For both the thinkers the universe and individuals proceed from a cosmic or divine flow and return by means of practices that participate in that flow. Their water metaphors diverge when the individual self returns to the divine: Mechthild retains images of water, whereas Lalleśwari converts to those of breath. This shift to imagery marks a gift of each thinker for a theology of embodiment: Lalleśwari more fully explores the body’s capacity for divinity, and Mechthild attends more closely to the suffering body”.

48 ibid., p. 654. “The love that makes it soar to God inflicts additional pain when the ecstasy of divine presence alternates with the agony of unquenched longing. As God reveals, neither body nor soul can survive rapture for long”. Caitanya Caritāmṛta is replete with the graphic description of his uncommon spiritual rapture which went on uninterruptedly for 12 long years in Pūrī. The above statement exactly fit into the nature of his ecstatic experience.
between the Bhagavat and His bhaktas.\textsuperscript{49} This mutual flow of divine-energy occurs only on the plane of divine-love i.e. between the Bhagavat’s hlādini-śakti and flow of divine-love towards Him, and not between His māyā-śakti and jīva-śakti; for the latter directly through its body as a product of māyā-śakti. But, the physical body is the vehicle through which a bhakta practices the imitative and erotic-aesthetic rāgānugā-sādhana which is done in and through the imagined body. In requiring being object-centric this worship through internal imitated emotional attachments and desires of the rāgātmikā-bhaktas or the parikaras, the sādhaka seeks self-transcendence. This process has a reference to the body-mind-complex of the rāgānugā-bhakta by way of dovetailing the activities of this complex towards the process of divine-love which has the single objective of pleasing the divine-beloved. Hence, in this we can say that, the body-mind complex flows towards the divine-who in return would grant His saving Grace in the form of a perfect psycho-spiritual-body (antaścintīta-siddha-deha). In that manner there is a reciprocal flow of the spiritual energies between the Divine and His bhaktas. The concept of mutual transmutation of energy between God and His bhaktas is derived from the Bhāgavata XI, 22.\textsuperscript{50} in which the expression - prasparāṇupravesā is being used in the context of the notion of the satkāravāda in which the identity between cause and effect is established. Jīva Gosvāmi interprets it in terms of his theory of inexplicable difference and non-difference between the cause and effect which are related as the wielder of powers and powers.

Another point to be noted from the angle of feminist theological notion of the spiritual importance of the body is that, the concept of embodiment is very much a reality in a Vaiṣṇava’s ideal dream to be always in the perpetual remembrance or mindfulness of God irrespective of whether one is in hell or heaven. This necessitates the realism of body which may be siddha-deha granted


by the Lord so that, His bhaktos can always partake the enchanting and delightful rasa of madhura-rati. While the spiritual body thus obtained may be kept as a distant possibility, the participatory nature of the physical body and mind during the contemplative process of rāgānugā-bhakti is quite significant when compared to the ascetic practice of mortifying the body-mind complex through a rigorous life of self-denial. The Vaiṣṇava-sādhana has a holistic approach to life in which the natural tendencies are not violently suppressed or repressed, but re-routed towards the attainment of divine-love as the highest end styled as the fifth-value or the pañcamapuruṣārtha ever achievable by mankind. The insistence of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas that, mokṣa is not the highest end consists in the reductionist approach or the negative attitude associated with it towards the embodied life.

Kunti’s prayer which was referred to in chapter 2, that she may be placed forever in the existential situation of abject poverty and sufferings speaks volumes about the notion of embodiment in relation to the idea of the fluidity of the body. The Vaiṣṇava capacity to endure physical pain and mortal sufferings is given in the Paurāṇic narratives of Prahlāda Maharāj who was ever ready to undergo every negative existential condition provided he does not lose sight of the vision or God or His fond remembrance of Him even for a moment. In being fearless he was bold and not ready to even imagine a life in which he will not be able to remember or render loving service to God. Hence, we have seen that, in the Bhāgavata he prays to God in the same way as an individual is passionately attached to his or her illicit lover. How can a Vaiṣṇava pray to God that he may be always placed in such an existence of a life based on the mindfulness of God if the body is conceived to be something to be totally ignored or not given appropriate place in the process of spiritual attainment? These are some of the related reasons for ultimate justifications for the dovetailing of all the psycho-physical activities mainly desire, one pointedness of mind, longing and intensely passionate attachment towards God. One of the lessons which may be learned from feminist theology is the importance it gives to body without which the contemplative worship
of God cannot take place. The body is not merely used as a locus of internal worship, but it is actively involved in the processes of the Theo-centric desire and attachments etc. These as acts of transcendence are in and through the body.

Human body, mind and the entire vital airs etc. are considered to be the microcosm containing the whole universe. Essentially it is the replica of the whole world. Through the body one can directly enter into spiritual communion with the essence of everything else in the world. Without the body as the starting point no ritual or worship of all sorts can begin. Vaiśṇavism accepts the natural tendencies of human nature as appropriate means or the bridge for spiritual communion. The Jīvas being the marginal energies (tataśtha-śakti) of the Bhagavat, the human beings has both elements of His māyā-śakti as well as cit-śakti or svrūpa-śakti. Moreover, on account of the integral metaphysics of the School, and thus it does not entertain reductionist ontology, the physical universe as the play of His external energy (bāhiranga-śakti) of which the body-mind-complex of the human beings is a product has its own role to play. Since, the human beings are marginal energies of the Bhagavat; they can come under the influences of both His māyā-śakti and svrūpa-śakti. What is being implied here is that, their psycho-physical systems may either dwell on a life of Godlessness (bahīrmukhi or vimukhyā) or that of an inwardised or Theo-centric existence (antar-mukhi or sāmukhyā). In the latter mode of existence one does not ignore the body (subtle and gross) but use it for the sake of a life imbued with divine-love.

Thus, the alleged immorality of the element of the concept of parakīyā-sādhana is only to dovetail our natural tendencies towards a self-less life of true love which consists in the sole desire to please and serve one’s dear Lord (hṛṣikesa hṛṣikena sevayā). This love is not something too subjective or too personal in the sense of its not having any social consequence or objectivity. This issue was already dealt with in chapter II under the “Background of Bengal Vaiśṇavaism”. The Caitanya Movement as one of the Medieval Bhakti Movements is based on such a conception of divine-love. Therefore, its social fall outs are