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Free Love and Bhakti

An Inter-religious Study on Martin Luther and Shri Krishna Caitanya

By

Edmund Weber

Martin Luther (1483 - 1546) and Vishvambhara Mishra (1486 - 1533), known as Shri Krishna Caitanya, have been the outstanding representatives of the great west-eastern religious revolution which shattered the hearts of their societies in the 16th century. They were the spiritual revolutionaries of the modern times.

The question may very well be raised if and how these two religious reformers on the edge of modern age share theological commonness, even though they lived wide apart and certainly did not know of each other.

We will see: Both Martin Luther and Shri Krishna Caitanya have taught the unconditioned, Free Love viz. Bhakti. Even if they did it in the tradition of the theological context they were born in they produced a new common setting of religion: the destruction of meritoricly bound religion and its substitution by free religion. The worship of God or charity were no more a mean for but the final state of salvation.

Their interpretation of this revolutionary religion has lost nothing of its existential meaning, even though having been twisted often enough to indiscernibility or even to the complete opposite - up to the present day.

The prevailing religion and weltanschauung of modern civilisation and barbarism will certainly protest this revolutionary east-western religion. In its view, Free Love and Bhakti cannot and may not be the fundamental destination of human living and dying. That is because both terms express the principal alter-

native to nowadays' all domineering world culture - a culture fixed on gratifications and frustrations or, in a traditional language, reward and punishment. Martin Luther and Shri Krishna Caitanya have clear-sightedly perceived the evolutionary conditioned religion of self-confirmation viz. Righteousness by Work (Werkgerechtigkeit) which can only result in destructiveness since it is a historically surpassed way of understanding and they have formulated their alternative. To understand this theological commonness more clearly, a preliminary explanation is needed.

Since for Shri Krishna Caitanya Bhakti is the fundamental idea it seems to suggest itself to compare it with Martin Luther's pre-eminent idea of Faith. Such decision, however, would in principle shut out comparative understanding of the two thinkers.

The term Bhakti and Faith do - from a systematic point of view - not belong to the same theological frame of reference. Faith (as complement of the Gospel) belongs to the founding of the religion, Free Love (as complement of the Law) belongs to the realisation of the same. Bhakti in a strict sense may of course be viewed as equal to Free Love but it must be kept in mind that Bhakti is often used in a broader context and that definitely also elements of what Western reformation calls Faith are meant with Bhakti.

Vaishnava theology has seemingly not cultured a specific term of Faith. This is undoubtedly due to the different front line situation of each of the two thinkers.

If, however, a corresponding specific term has not evolved it must not necessarily be concluded that the subject meant by the term does not exist or that in our case the matter of Faith has not been thought of or even that Faith was and is not realised deeply and by many. The mixing up of systematic theology and religious terminology as well as of declarative confession and living religion is a widely used means to compensate for religious weakness. One who does not use the term Faith and therefore does not confess to it *expressis verbis* can still have a theoretical and also practical idea of Faith. It is specifically the task of critical comparative dogmatics to identify what is meant respectively and not just what has been said. And that in matters of Faith an experienced minister looks not only at the mouth, should be common sense. Now, it is to be supposed that what is meant by Faith is contained in the word Bhakti at least partially, but to prove that is not the main subject of our treatise.

What we are concerned with is the comparative analysis of Free Love and Bhakti. In this regard there is need of an additional methodical remark. A comparative theology which - as critical science - chooses itself the rules of its understanding and the subject of its research in communication with the other sciences has to reject beforehand dogmatic ties to sociologically explainable social institutions - like dogmas, moral views or hierarchies - as authority on theological truth even though religious life may at times and places require some kind of whatsoever authority. A critical comparative theology must if it does not want to degrade itself to a mere ideology of empirical institutions or organizations in principle always expect that truth manifests itself empirically free from those

ties: the truth as the spirit of God rests where it pleases. Thus is also possible that just those theological truths which Martin Luther discovered in at that time Catholic old Saxony and Shri Krishna Caitanya discovered in mixed confessional Bengal are one and the same.

Religious ideologists i. e. intellectual representatives of interests of mundane religious organizations will even if identity with regard to substance is given emphasise matters of secondary importance in order to succeed in justifying their own religious exclusivism or religious colonialism. After the failure of open religious colonialism which called itself foreign mission and was in fact spreading of Western culture now the same tries to continue in the Third World by material support (strategy of charitableness) and the so called readiness of talk (strategy of dialogue).

The dialogue ideologies are however almost all unscientific for they do not enter conversation with the possible premise that the complete truth could be found in the partner of dialogue's possession. As long as falsification of one's own truth brought into the dialogue is not actually permitted and in other words, no critical dialogue takes place, material power will ultimately decide the final judgement in such fake dialogues.

In the following, such a viewpoint dialogue is not intended. Rather, we are concerned with a co-operative dogmatic analysis which *sub specie veritatis* admits not only difference, analogy and similarity but also identity.

As Faith we understand perception or becoming aware of the transcendental fact that man is exposed to the unconditioned love of God. Expressed more trenchant, it means that God is in love with man and that his creature which carries his breath is blessed with his love, loyalty and pleasure unconditionally. To illustrate this God is called father in the Christian tradition.

From this metaphor results that the love of such God is unbreakable but at the same time also not forced. In the parable of the lost son (Luke 15, 11 - 24) God depends on man's will since he (God) uses no force of any kind. Thus, duty of Faith i. e. the idea that man must recognise God's love is the reason for actual inquisition and religious persecution but also of *resignatio ad infernum*. Obligation of Faith contradicts the nature of Faith. Rather, it can only be understood from this parable that there can be only a freedom of Faith. Only under the condition of freedom before God, Faith in God's unconditioned love becomes possible. The loving God, in the truthfulness of his love, lays himself open to man. The drama of God's love is the inevitable possibility of the failure of God's love because of man. The point herein lies not in God's experience that man does not love him back; rather the point is, first of all, God's experience that his love, loyalty and pleasure in man is not accepted. And just this is man's freedom and in this sense even as a non-believer he remains God's beloved child, son, heir, his very good creature, a perfect man - without restriction. That man who trusts God's love, loyalty and pleasure, has no other God -, also he does not cause God's love by his Faith. The Gospel, being but the declaration of God's unconditioned love, tolerates any force unless it wants to contradict itself. God's pain

resulting from man's non-Faith is therefore rooted in his own interest in man. Man is, consequently, not responsible for God's pain.

If man's Faith is an act of freedom of man toward God, man's love of God is not less the same. Man's love for God - the basic subject matter of theology - can express itself in many different shapes. Basically however, these forms can be reduced to two basic structures: Unconditioned or Free Love and conditioned or calculated love. Calculated love, when realised separately, is alienated love. It does not fulfil itself, is not in itself fulfilment of human existence, but makes love a means to an end. Free Love, however, that devotes itself totally to loving God unconditionally is not thinkable without God's preceding unconditional love. Would God love in a conditional way, would he as almighty authority of conscience set conditions, man could not out of himself realise the opportunity of Free Love. Therefore, because God has made no conditions, every rejected or conditioned love by man is without consequence. Now, if Faith confesses this unconditioned love of God it does not mean that it effects it - this would be theologically impossible. Rather, Faith is the shining up of the existential possibility of man's Free Love of God provided by God's unconditioned love.

Let us summarise: Neither God's love nor Faith in God's love can be demanded or even be enforced. God's unconditioned love and human Faith in it may exist without man's Free Love. A man full of Faith can enjoy God's love without experience of Free Love.

This is possible because God, if he wants to love boundlessly must also desire the freedom of the beloved not to love him. Only therefore, by God's wanting freedom of love or Free Love - meaning that he is ready to suffer and to tolerate the non-love of the beloved without revenge -, it is made possible that man can realise the final goal of his yearning - that love of God can be end in itself for him and thus realise the purpose of his life and death which needs nothing further - neither in heaven nor on earth.

Now, on the background of above-mentioned methodical and factual considerations, which in itself are already in the tradition of Martin Luther's theology, the term Free Love viz. Bhakti is to be developed from the viewpoint of both thinkers.

Martin Luther discussed the subject of man's Free Love of God in his "Sermon von den guten Werken" (1520), in his programmatic writing "Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen" (1521) and in many other places. Due to the situation at that time the subject Faith in contrast to Work as means of justification was in the foreground of his theological work. In regard to the doctrine of Work he elaborated an unconditioned Work without reward and an conditioned Work oriented toward reward and punishment as alternative religious possibilities. The latter is the religion of Righteousness by Works which has to earn itself God's love totally or partially by merit. Against this presumptuous conviction, which - because of its empirical impossibility ends in *resignatio ad infernum*, Martin Luther constructed his own doctrine of the Good Works.

The centre of his considerations in this regard is held by the thought that Faith in God's love is possible in any situation because anything happening is an act of divine love. This is "the highest degree of love", Martin Luther wrote, "when God does not punish with earthly sufferings but punishes conscience with death, hell and sin and at the same time denies grace and compassion as if to forever condemn us and be furious with us" (Sermon von den guten Werken, part 8).

The point of this statement lies in the confession of man that in the most extreme borderline situation God is met as a loving one, that his love is unconditioned - not restricted by anything, not even by the real experience of death, hell and sin. In view of this, God's love, in disguise as death, hell and sin, the senselessness of Righteousness by Work is revealed. It negates God's boundless Free Love, it declares death, hell and sin as conditions in which man is not loved unrestrictedly by God and that in case of hell, this love is completely withdrawn. But since God is only love - even where he meets man as death, hell and sin - Righteousness by Work means denying recognition to God's unrestricted love; it is a total distortion of God's nature.

"This (i. e. false prophets; the author) they are all, who by v good works (as they call it) want to draw God's favour and want s to buy it, so to speak, as if he were a day labourer and a merchant, who does not want to give his mercy and favour free of charge (op. cit., part 10)". God's love is for free. It costs nothing, nothing at all. This is Martin Luther's basic idea of God which in Christian religious history has been constantly distorted by sacramentalism, moralism and orthodoxism.

Martin Luther, however, is not concerned with those people, to whom God's love is unimportant but with those to whom being loved by God meant everything. The righteous by Work want to acquire God's love under all circumstances, at all cost - but since they understand God as a merchant - they believe that they have to buy it, that they have to pay. It is not the atheist, Martin Luther looks at but rather the deeply religious, pious man. Against this heresy which perverts the God of the Gospel who loves free of charge to some kind of merchant god he develops his theology. Those are the false prophets who, as preachers of the Gospels, teach the righteousness by Law: "Those are the wrongest persons on earth who are converted only with difficulty or never to the right path" (op. cit.). For the infidelis viz. man without Faith to whom God's unconditioned love is of no interest and who therefore also does not teach any heresy or perversion of the Gospel - which means he does not claim the Gospel for his own understanding like e. g. the Muslim or the determined non-Christian atheist - Martin Luther's anti-heretical polemics have no validity for the time being.

By revealing that theologically Righteousness by Work is in fundamental contradiction to the idea of God in the Gospel for - as expressed in the rabbinical symbolic of Saint Paul - he declares man to be just without the Works of the Law - he provides the dogmatic basis for the doctrine of Free Love.

Now, to consider Martin Luther too much as a theologian of Faith would basically not account for his theology on the whole.

Seen systematically, he is just as much a theologian of Free Love; for as consequence derived from the object of Faith - namely the transcendental fact of God's unconditioned love - man's non-calculated love is ascertained by Martin Luther. The "intrinsic man is one with God, joyful and jolly for Christ's sake" (i. e. for the sake of God's unconditioned love) so that "all his joy is in wanting to serve God free of charge in free love" (*Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, part 9).

Martin Luther constructs no necessary causal connection between God's love and man's love in a model of obliging thankfulness. He rather thinks in a model of the loving relationship of a bride. The bride discovers that her bridegroom loves her out of his own, that - independent of her possible services and favour - she is his beloved. That his (feudal) bride feels "joyful" and "happy" about it or that the intrinsic man has all his joy in serving God for free shows that Righteousness by Work is only done away with by man if he is certain about God's unconditioned love. According to Martin Luther, man is only capable of loving God freely if God precedes him in Free Love. In this, man is the addressee who consciously and from the beginning is concerned with the gaining God's love and now by right understanding of the Gospel learns that this God loves him freely without the Works of Law, who notices the free desire within to also love God freely with the feeling of joy and pleasure and in the shape of unification of the lovers between whom there is no relationship of use and obligation in any way. While Martin Luther ascertains the form of Free Love as realised by intensive ecstatic emotion he determines its content as service. What he means, is such a God who - again using the metaphor of the father - has heaped his child with gifts so abundantly that the child wants to "do again freely, joyfully and unobligatingly whatever pleases him" (*op. cit.*, part 27).

To do to God whatever he is delightful with means: to please him. Pleasing God out of free joyfulness ("Fröhlichkeit") and desire ("Lust") - this service, this serving devotion culminates according Martin Luther in the song of praise. Not in glorious Works culminates true love of God but in spontaneous, heart-felt hal-leluja: "God's judgement, amazing and right, is there because a poor man, whom no one has seen doing many and great works, praises God joyfully in his own home, when he fares well, or calls on him with full confidence when he suffers and thus performs a work greater and more pleasing than another one who fasts a lot, prays, donates churches, goes on pilgrimages and endeavours here and there to accomplish great deeds" (*Sermon von den guten Werken*, part 20).

This "work, greater and more pleasing" is specified by Martin Luther subsequently as the praise of God's Name from the bottom of one's heart (*op. cit.*). But just such devotional service, the essential and actual service to God, was - in the reformer's opinion - not at all in practice. To the contrary did the ecstatic praise of God's Name belong like the Faith to rarest and highest works (of *op. cit.*). That this work lies fallow and has been ousted "by high and nice-looking,

overly glittery deeds, thought out by man and outwardly resembling those right works (i. e. Faith and praising the Name of God; the author) is stressed by Martin Luther who - without intending to exaggerate - declares: "When we should see how few there are (i. e. who ecstatically praise God's Name; the author) we could despair in lamentation (op. cit.).

It is obvious that according to Martin Luther not only Faith had vanished but also that Free Love which culminates in the ecstasy of praising God's Name.

The outstanding importance of this service - the worship of God's Name - has been emphasized by Martin Luther in many places. Misuse of God's Name "weighs heavier than murder and adultery" (op cit., part 21). This is understandable; in it the faithful one seeks refuge and takes shelter because the Name on God is a firm tower and thus he stands beyond everything (cf. op. cit.). The Name of God has liberating power. To its protection the faithful one flees to escape the three main enemies: the own flesh, the world and the evil spirit (cf. op. cit.).

Martin Luther not only places devotion to God's Name into the centre of his reformatory religiosity but he also explains that service to God's Name did not exist any more in the traditional religion of his time: "These deeds (i. e. worship of God's Name; the author) and the power of the holy name have become unknown to us because we have not become used to it, we have not seriously fought against sins and have not taken advantage of his name for that purpose" (op cit., part 27). Here it becomes clear that Martin Luther not only ascribes the central purifying force to the devotion of the holy Name but also that the restoration of this religiosity was a fundamental factor of his reformation; the reformation was not only one of Faith but also of Free Love which manifests in ecstatic service to the Name of God.

Martin Luther's doctrine of Free Love can be summarised as follows: That God loves man unconditionally is the condition which makes Free Love possible. Due to the transcendental fact that God's love is boundless and his fidelity is unbreakable - which shines up in man's consciousness as Faith and is the only meaning of the Gospel - man has opportunity to also love God freely, without consequences and without merit-producing necessity. This Free Love is a devotional service with the purpose of pleasing God. The peak of this pleasing is singing the praise of God's Name which has liberating as well as purifying power.

Empirically this Free Love manifests in strong emotions, in ecstatic joy and desire since in it man experiences unification with God.

Martin Luther also became song writer and with his songs reached the hearts of people in a special way which only emphasises that he wanted religious emotion. The fact that he put Mrs. Music ("Frau Musica") just next to theology also serves to question the anti-psychologism of the Dialectic theology.

The equivalent to this Free Love of God which Martin Luther taught, lived and artistically developed is Bhakti as realised by Shri Krishna Caitanya.

More recently, the German theologian of Bhakti Walther Eidlitz endeavoured in various ways to present a timely account of Shri Krishna Caitanya's life and teaching. According to him Shri Krishna Caitanya is to understand as Radha who ardently longs to serve Krishna, God, the distant one (cf. Eidlitz, W.: KrsnaCaitanya. Sein Leben und seine Lehre, 1968, p. 219). Just this desire and joy to serve, that "has no (more) time for enjoying the experience of a lila or vision of God" (cf. op. cit.), that lines to exchange heavenly existence of visio beatifica for service, the never ending activity of pleasing God (see Luther as explained before) is the heart of Free Love and s Bhakti.

While the Catholic devotee of the Middle Ages understands contemplation and peace as highest level of bliss, Martin Luther, however, regards it as the endless active service to the Lord: "As the human being because of his nature can't exist any moment without doing or letting, suffering or escaping (for the life never stands still as we see): Well, start if you want to live piously and if you want to become full of good deeds, and exercise your Faith all the time you are living and working, and learn constantly to do and to accept everything in such a confidence" (Sermon von den guten Werken, part 18).

In his "Eight Stanzas of Instruction (i. e. Shikhsastakam)" Shri Krishna Caitanya describes his view of Bhakti concisely: The bhakta's only desire is the unmotivated Bhakti to the Lord (cf. 4th stanza, see: Eidlitz op. cit., p. 495), and nothing in the world shall prevent him from doing that it may be in heaven, on earth or even in hell. Therefore this groundless Bhakti is nothing else than Free Love, which wants nothing for itself and wants to give pleasure to God only. And even that desire and joy to serve, which haven't any time left for enjoying experience of a lila or the vision of God, i. e. which has given up the fruitio Dei and the visio beatifica as goal of spiritual life in order to serve God freely and without any interest, that attitude is the fulfilled existence.

Martin Luther says that the highest degree of religiosity consists in letting pass God as loving one, "who is gracious to us", even if he is plunging us into the most extreme misery (Sermon von den guten Werken, part 8).

In his 8th stanza Shri Krishna Caitanya confesses: "If He embraces Me - dedicated to His feet - or He crashes Me and hurts My innermost nature, while He is not present before Me: His behaviour makes no difference to Me - that insatiable, that voluptuary One. However, He is the Lord of My life and nobody else" (Eidlitz op. cit., p. 498). The suffering, God has sent to the bhakta, is the most noble happiness of the pious one (cf. op. cit.). Eidlitz annotates the stanza as follows: "Even My suffering seen by God is highest happiness" (op. cit.).

This theology of suffering ('Leidenstheologie') we find in Martin Luther as well as mentioned above. In his critique of the Righteousness by Work (Werkgerechtigkeit) this subject plays an important role. He quotes against this Righteousness by Work Ps 116.15 where is said that "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Sermon von den guten Werken, part 7). The already mentioned confidence, which is the ultimate degree of Faith, as it remains steady even while facing damnation (op. cit., part 8) we find again in Shri Krishna

Caitanya. Again here it becomes obvious that the conception of Bhakti is including that of Martin Luther's Faith. The 8th stanza makes apparent, that Bhakti as spontaneous love is based on this confidence when Shri Krishna Caitanya confesses: "He only remains the Lord of My Life unconditionally and nobody else" (Eidlitz, op. cit., p. 498). The confirmation of Krishna being his Lord unconditionally by Shri Krishna Caitanya does not relieve that cruel deeds of the Lord from its cruelty, but from its inherent temptation to forsake the Lord and turns its interpretation of despair into the interpretation of happiness. When Shri Krishna Caitanya is calling out like the Psalmist in the Old Testament that God when taking away and destroying from man whatever is precious and holy to him, yes when he "hurts his innermost existence", when he grinds him and hides himself before man as *deus absconditus* ('the hidden God') and when man declares his "nevertheless", that he nevertheless is the Lord of his life, it is to be understood according to Eidlitz: "According to the definition of unalloyed prema (i. e. the highest form of Bhakti; the author), the tie of love between Radha and Krsna can never be destroyed, even if all causes of destruction are present" (op. cit., p. 499). The love of Radha for Krishna is therefore unconditional, not dependent on any circumstances it meets; it is therefore Free Love, as it knows, that it exists in the tie of love with Krishna who is always the Lord even if he as such may remain for the bhakta completely concealed. Considering this situation the commentary draws like Martin Luther its "leidens"-theological conclusion: "I am not concerned with My suffering - I am only concerned with His happiness. His happiness is My goal of life. If He causes My suffering, then this suffering is the highest of My happiness I can imagine" (op. cit.). The identity of happiness and suffering for the bhakta is not less clearly expressed by Martin Luther: a Christian "works happily and freely, not for the sake of good deeds, but as it is satisfaction to please thereby the Lord, and so he serves God in an unalloyed and unmotivated fashion: it suffices for him that God is pleased" (op. cit., part 6). The proof of such a Free Love, which is not at all interested in any divine gratification or sanction, consists in accepting the suffering of all God is burdening his people: "Here it is the art to have good confidence in a God that poses himself to be angry according to our understanding, and to expect a better fate from him than that one man is experiencing" (op. cit.). And in his interpretation of the Song of Solomon 2.9 Martin Luther is agreeing almost word for word with Shri Krishna Caitanya's experience: "In our sufferings which try to separate us from him like a wall, yes like a rampart, he is hidden and yet is gazing at me and does not leave me" (op. cit.). Contrary to this confidence the people who are believing in the Righteousness by Work "designate such evil to man and the devil, and so there remains no confidence in God" (op. cit.). Yet as much as Shri Krishna Caitanya the lovers of God - according to Martin Luther - designate suffering to God, but not bearing it in fate-surrendering way. They much more understand it as "nothing but precious merits and the most noble goods, that nobody can appreciate highly enough" (op. cit.). Suffering is therefore to the Christian nothing but happiness.

The confidence, as expressed by Shri Krishna Caitanya, is not only rendering possible devotional service; it can also as well remain to when "ecstatic love" fails to appear and one is merged again in "the ocean of reincarnation" (Eidlitz, op. cit., p. 496). Here it becomes obvious that the religiosity of Shri Krishna Caitanya is not Righteousness by Work. While Righteousness by Work has confidence only in good deeds therefore if failing to appear is experienced as an absolute catastrophe. The religiosity of Shri Krishna Caitanya, however, can separate deed (i. e. devotion) from the devotee himself. By Krishna's grace the devotee can remain a servant of Krishna although he is not capable to render any devotion.

It is amazing that Eidlitz does not comment on this radical theology of grace. Perhaps the closeness to Martin Luther was here too strongly perceptible. We desire therefore to investigate this aspect of possible identity of both reformatory doctrines.

Shri Krishna Caitanya confesses first of all his inability to love the Name of God ecstatically: "But My fate in this birth is very much dreadful, as ecstatic love of the Name did not appear in Me", although Krishna reveals his Name in multifarious ways, invests all his shakti in this Name and requires no chronological rule for the worship of his Name (cf. op. cit., p. 494). Out of this incapability to realise the love of God, which has been made so easily available, Shri Krishna Caitanya draws the Lutheran conclusion: "I am indeed Your servant, but I have fallen in this ocean of birth and death, which is full of contradictions. Have mercy on Me and regard Me as a particle of the pollen at Your lotus feet" (op. cit., p. 496). According to the commentary this Faith in Krishna's grace which brings Shri Krishna Caitanya to beg to be able to "perform Krishna's Samkirtana with Prema" (op. cit., p. 496).

This confidence facing one's own lack of Bhakti is expressing itself now in the calling, the praising of the Name of God. Samkirtan is according to Shri Krishna Caitanya devotion par excellence. Krishna has given this simple method to man in this age of Kali, the age of darkness, so that the people may grow in Bhakti. Right in the first stanza it is said: "(This Samkirtana of Sri Krsna) is increasing the ocean of divine happiness to serve" (op. cit., p. 491). To the confident servant of God who does not experience the attraction to serve God, the Lord without expecting any qualifications, has freely given in his grace the Samkirtan, by the performance of which - so it is promised - one grows in "unmotivated" Bhakti - more and more. But the goal of growth is non-different from the way: samkirtan the unrestricted worship of the Name of God, is also the goal.

Martin Luther describes the power and meaning of the devotion to the Name as such: "Yes, there is no deed through which confidence and Faith can be as directly experienced. It is very much helpful to increase and multiply one's Faith" (Sermon von den guten Werken, part 18).

According to Shri Krishna Caitanya samkirtan "is being victorious as the highest in a very special way" (Eidlitz op. cit., p. 491). Martin Luther interprets the 4th psalm in no other way: " ... because the psalms have a unique reviving power,

they are made to become victorious ..." (Martin Luthers Psalmenauslegung 1, ed. by Erwin Mühlhaupt 1959, p. 56).

This unique victorious power of the psalms, the samkirtan bhajans of the Old Testament, is increased according to Martin Luther through the musical element: "The music is of such kind and nature that it is able to wake up a lazy and stupefied mind" (op. cit., p. 55). That samkirtan - to be complete - has to be celebrated musically is only too obvious.

The actual "art of the pious ones" (i. e. the bhakta; the author) is for Martin Luther "that they know: if they know: if they want to be saved they have to praise the Lord and find solace only in our Lord, only in this way they will conquer" (op. cit., p. 255). And this art to be victorious in spiritual warfare, by praising the Lord, to perform samkirtan, is leading to the situation that "the heart which in God is of good confidence" changes. It changes into a heart which "is performing and suffering God's will freely and joyfully (op. cit. 2, ed. by Erwin Mühlhaupt 1962, p. 5). Here also the praise of God is - to quote Shri Krishna Caitanya - "increasing the divine happiness to serve" (see above).

It is further the achievement of Martin Luther to defend the freedom of the service to God in principle so it says: "Service to God is praise of God which desires to be free, at the table, in the room, in the basement, in the attic, in the house, in the field, in all places, with all persons, at all times. Who tells you different is a liar" (Adventspostille 1522, see: D. Martin Luthers Werke X, Weimar 1925, p. 80 sq.); and in this matter we recognize in Shri Krishna Caitanya an ally of the western reformer: "While eating, while resting, wherever one may be", he says in his commentary, "one can serve the Name of God. There are no restrictions as far as time and space is concerned. Everywhere and all the time the Name gives you whichever you desire" (Eidlitz op. cit., p. 494).

We have seen that Martin Luther and Shri Krishna Caitanya are to be seen as contemporary allies as far as Free Love or Bhakti is concerned. Their theological identity is not just in reference to Bhakti as a form of worship of God but also in its dogmatic reasoning: i. e. the Faith that "He is the Lord of My life nevertheless and nobody else".

Finally we want to mention another form of Bhakti, Free Love, which we know in the West as "love of thy neighbour", as it is seen as a proprium of Christianity in comparison to the seemingly man-forgetting Hinduism. Shri Krishna Caitanya stresses in the 3rd stanza of his "Eight Stanzas of Instruction": "One should not expect any respect but should offer all respect to others, in this way one should realize Hari's kirtan constantly" (Eidlitz op. cit.).