



Philosophy of divinity *Caitanya Mahāprabhu* thinking and its relevance in the spirit of religious moderation

I Gede Pradnya Wiguna^{1*}

¹ *The Hindu center of Indonesia, Kota Denpasar, Bali 80237, Indonesia.*

*Correspondence: pradnyawigunagede@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Background: This research aims to examine in depth the philosophy of divinity in the thoughts of *Caitanya Mahāprabhu* and explore its relevance in developing the spirit of religious moderation in the contemporary era. *Caitanya Mahāprabhu*, a spiritual figure and philosopher from the 15th century, offered a strong philosophical foundation for overcoming polarization and promoting peaceful coexistence. Concepts such as *ananya Bhakti* (unconditional devotion), *prema* (divine love), and *rasa* (spiritual feeling) in *Caitanya's* thought are highly relevant in building constructive interfaith dialogue and promoting mutual understanding. **Method:** The research method used in this research is a qualitative method. Meanwhile, the data collection method used by researchers in this research is literature study. This research uses hermeneutic theory as a theoretical basis. In the context of this research, hermeneutics is used to interpret written texts collected through literature study, with the aim of understanding the meaning contained therein. The data analysis method in this research was carried out through thematic analysis. This method allows researchers to explore the meanings contained in the data systematically and transparently. **Findings:** The research results show that the divine philosophy in the thoughts of *Caitanya Mahāprabhu* has significant relevance to the spirit of religious moderation, especially in the current context of globalization and religious diversity. *Caitanya Mahāprabhu*, with his teachings which emphasize *Bhakti* (devotion) and universal love, offers a framework of thought that can be used to create harmonious inter-religious dialogue and cooperation. **Conclusion:** The findings of this research confirm that *Caitanya Mahāprabhu's* divine philosophy offers deep and relevant insights to support the spirit of religious moderation in the modern era. **Novelty/Originality in this Study:** Implementing the concepts of *Bhakti* (unconditional devotion), *prema* (divine love), and humility in various aspects of social and religious life can help create a more harmonious society. So *Caitanya's* philosophy has a significant contribution in building a more peaceful and civilized world, making it relevant to the spirit of religious moderation today.

KEYWORDS: *Caitanya* thought; *acintya bhedabheda*; religious moderation

1. Introduction

In this era of globalization which is full of complexity and diversity, a deep understanding of divine philosophy and the spirit of religious moderation are becoming increasingly significant. *Caitanya Mahāprabhu*, a spiritual thinker and philosopher from the 15th century, introduced a philosophical framework that not only offers theological depth but also relevance in the context of today's religious plurality. *Caitanya* had a broad outlook and *Caitanya* was a generous person. He openly accepted converted Muslims. Haridasa was one of his students who was an Islamic fakir (Sivananda, 2007 in Surpi, 2021). It seems that his generous nature also influenced his way of thinking. *Caitanya* developed the concept that nature and spirit are dependent on God, even though they are separate and distinct from Him. They are neither completely one with God nor completely different from Him. There is incomprehensible difference as well as incomprehensible indifference (*Acintya*

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Bhedābheda). Therefore, *Caitanya* still adheres to the unity of divinity which supports various popular forms of statue or murti worship (Surpi, 2019). Surpi (2023) stated *Caitanya's* divine philosophy centered on *Bhakti* (devotion) and universal love provides a unique and important perspective for addressing contemporary challenges of tolerance and inter-religious dialogue.

Religious-based conflicts that are often fueled by attitudes of exclusivity and dogmatism show an urgent need to explore concepts that can bridge gaps between communities. Religious moderation, in this case, is not just political or social jargon, but rather a philosophical imperative needed to create conditions of peace and harmony in a multicultural society. In *Caitanya's* thought, the concepts of divinity and universal love can serve as a strong philosophical foundation for overcoming polarization and promoting peaceful coexistence.

Historically, *Caitanya's* teachings have proven their capacity to adapt and integrate various traditions and perspectives. The *Bhakti* movement pioneered by *Caitanya* showed that love and devotion to God can overcome caste boundaries and religious barriers (Rao, 2019). *Caitanya* is seen not only as a religious reformer, but also as a philosopher who offered deep insight into the essence of divinity that transcended sectarian barriers. In this context, *Caitanya's* philosophy has significant relevance for the study of religious moderation (Mukherjee, 2020). Moreover, the ability of *Caitanya's* teachings to unite various cultural and spiritual elements shows its flexibility and openness to changing times. This can be seen from how this teaching remains relevant and accepted by various levels of society today. *Caitanya* also taught the importance of harmony and tolerance in religious life, a principle that is very relevant in an increasingly pluralistic world. *Caitanya's* philosophy emphasizes that devotion to God is the primary path to achieving inner peace and social harmony (Kumar, 2019). In this way, these teachings serve not only as a spiritual guide but also as a foundation for building a more inclusive and tolerant society. The uniqueness of *Caitanya's* teachings lies in his ability to combine the theological and practical aspects of religious life, thereby making a valuable contribution to interreligious dialogue and the development of a deeper understanding of moderation in religion.

Caitanya's divine philosophy, with its emphasis on devotional service, emphasizes the importance of direct and personal experience in understanding and feeling the Divine presence. *Caitanya* taught that sincere love for God not only connects individuals with the Divine, but also binds them in bonds of love with their fellow humans. This sincere devotion gives birth to humility, tolerance and deep empathy for the existence of other people, regardless of their religious or social background. In *Caitanya's* thought, God is not only seen as a transcendent entity but also immanent, present in every aspect of life and in the heart of every individual (Sharma, 2018a). This perspective leads to an inclusive and holistic understanding of divinity that can support religious moderation. An immanent God means that every act of kindness, compassion, and sincere devotion is a manifestation of a divine experience, which in turn can form the basis for more harmonious and tolerant social interactions.

An in-depth study of *Caitanya's* divine philosophy will reveal the essential philosophical foundations to support the spirit of religious moderation. Concepts such as *ananya Bhakti* (unconditional devotion), *prema* (divine love), and *rasa* (spiritual feeling) in *Caitanya's* thought underscore the importance of universal love and devotion that transcends the boundaries of dogma (Das, 2020). These values are very relevant in building constructive interfaith dialogue and promoting mutual understanding in this modern era.

The urgency of research on the Philosophy of Divinity in *Caitanya Mahāprabhu's* Thinking and Its Relevance in the Spirit of Religious Moderation in Indonesia is very important considering the complexity of Indonesia's multicultural and multireligious society. Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, as well as home to various religions and beliefs, faces challenges in maintaining harmony between religious communities amidst diverse beliefs. In this context, *Caitanya Mahāprabhu's* teachings that emphasize love, equality, and unity in diversity offer relevant and applicable insights to strengthen religious moderation in Indonesia.

This research is also important because it can contribute to building a more inclusive interfaith dialogue in Indonesia. *Caitanya's* teachings that emphasize divine love without discrimination provide a strong philosophical basis for creating tolerance and mutual understanding among adherents of different religions. In the context of the increasing potential for religious conflict and radicalism, a deeper understanding of *Caitanya's* philosophy can help create a more moderate religious narrative that respects pluralism. Thus, this study can support the government's efforts in promoting harmony and preventing religious polarization in Indonesia.

Furthermore, this study is urgently needed to address the challenges of globalization and digitalization, which are accelerating the spread of radical ideology and religious intolerance. By highlighting the relevance of *Caitanya's* teachings that emphasize unity amidst differences, this study can provide a new perspective for Indonesian society to deal with the influence of radicalism that emerges through social media and digital platforms. *Caitanya's* philosophy, which is full of messages of universal love and inclusivity, can be an effective tool to strengthen moderate and peaceful religious education in Indonesia.

It is hoped that the research results will provide significant academic benefits for students. It not only deepens students' understanding of philosophical and spiritual concepts but also serves as a practical tool for addressing the challenges of religious diversity in an ever-changing global context. Through this research, it is hoped that students can develop broader insight and the skills needed to become agents of change who promote peaceful and inclusive coexistence in society. Thus, this research not only provides theoretical but also pragmatic contributions in efforts to create a more peaceful and civilized world.

Caitanya's thoughts are important to discuss because *Caitanya Mahāprabhu's* thoughts offer significant insights in the context of interfaith dialogue and efforts to promote tolerance in pluralistic societies. Amidst increasing tensions and religious-based conflicts in various parts of the world, *Caitanya's* ideas about universal love and unity in diversity provide a strong philosophical foundation for building harmony. His philosophy of *Bhakti* as a path to God regardless of caste, social background, or religion provides a relevant perspective to strengthen the values of religious moderation, which emphasizes tolerance, inclusiveness, and respect for diversity.

Discussion of the relevance of *Caitanya Mahāprabhu's* thoughts is also important because the modern world is in dire need of a spiritual approach that can bridge religious differences without reducing each person's religious identity. Religious moderation, as a response to extremism, requires guidance from spiritual figures whose teachings emphasize love, simplicity, and unity. *Caitanya's* thoughts, with their emphasis on love as a universal path to drawing closer to God, make a real contribution in creating a theological framework that can be used to reduce fanaticism and radicalism. In addition, discussing this topic is also relevant to understand how the teachings of religious philosophy can be applied in a modern social context, especially in a pluralistic society like Indonesia, where religious moderation is an important foundation for maintaining harmony. This research can be an important reference in formulating educational policies or programs that support interfaith dialogue and promote peace.

2. Methods

This research uses qualitative research. Qualitative research is a research method used to understand social phenomena from the perspective of participants or informants. This method emphasizes natural data collection, and prioritizes in-depth understanding rather than generalization of data. In qualitative research, the researcher acts as the main instrument in data collection and analysis. According to Moleong (2017), qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena in depth and comprehensively from the participant's perspective. This research prioritizes detailed descriptions and interpretive analysis rather than statistics and quantitative figures.

Data collection in this research was carried out through the literature study method. This method involves collecting data from various written sources, such as books, scientific journals, articles, research reports, and other documents relevant to the research topic. Literature study is used to obtain comprehensive and in-depth information about the topic being researched. Zed (2018) states that library research is an effective method for collecting data from various existing written sources. This allows researchers to conduct theoretical studies and understand the research context more broadly before conducting field research.

This research uses hermeneutic theory as a theoretical basis. Hermeneutics is a theory and methodology related to the interpretation of texts, especially texts related to culture and history. In the context of this research, hermeneutics is used to interpret written texts collected through literature study, with the aim of understanding the meaning contained therein. According to Sugiharto (2019), hermeneutics does not only focus on the text itself, but also on the historical and cultural context of the text. Thus, hermeneutics allows researchers to understand texts more deeply and comprehensively, uncovering hidden meanings that may not be visible at first glance.

The data analysis method in this research was carried out through thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is an analytical method used to identify, analyze and report patterns (themes) in data. This process involves several stages, namely familiarization with the data, coding the data, searching for themes, reviewing themes, naming themes, and writing the final report. Braun and Clarke (2006), quoted by Prastowo (2020), explained that thematic analysis is a flexible method and can be used in various types of qualitative research. This method allows researchers to explore the meanings contained in the data systematically and transparently.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 *Caitanya's divine philosophy of thought*

Caitanya Mahāprabhu, a reformer in Vaiṣṇava philosophy, lived in the 15th century and is known for his strong influence on *Bhakti* culture that has continued into modern times. Lord *Caitanya* or Gaurāṅga can be considered the greatest Vaisnava teacher of the North, who gave a new form to the Vaisnava faith. He was born in 1486 AD in Bengal. He had a broad and generous outlook, and he accepted the repentance of Muslims freely. One of his students, namely Haridasa, was an Islamic fakir; while *Nityananda* spread and developed the *Caitanya* movement. Rūpa and Sanātana, who were descendants of a Karnataka prince and settled in Bengal, and nephews of Jīva Gosvāmī, were renowned Sanskrit scholars and were indeed the fathers of the *Caitanya* movement, while Jīva Gosvāmī and Baladeva completed the philosophical basis of that school (Maswinara, 2006).

Caitanya's philosophical thought is a teaching centered on *Bhakti* (devotion) to God through love and equality, promoted by *Caitanya Mahāprabhu*, a 15th-century Hindu saint and philosopher. The core of *Caitanya's* philosophy is the principle of *achintya-bheda-abheda tattva*, which teaches that God and living beings are "one and inconceivably different." This philosophy combines the view that humans and God are connected in essence but different in individuality, creating space for both unity and diversity in spiritual relationships. *Caitanya* emphasized that love for God transcends the boundaries of religion, caste, or social status, emphasizing inclusivity and the elimination of social barriers in religious practice.

The relevance of *Caitanya's* teachings in studying Hindu philosophy is very important to support the religious moderation movement in Indonesia. *Caitanya* taught that love for God (*prema*) is a universal path to liberation (*moksha*), which can be taken by everyone regardless of differences in religion or social status. This is in line with the basic principles of religious moderation that reject sectarianism and fanaticism. In the Indonesian context, where religious plurality is an integral part of social life, *Caitanya's* teachings on equality

and unconditional love can serve as a philosophical foundation for promoting interfaith tolerance and respect for diversity of beliefs.

Caitanya's philosophy also teaches the importance of *Ahimsa* or non-violence, which is relevant in preventing religious radicalism in Indonesia. Religious moderation promotes peaceful attitudes and interfaith dialogue, and *Ahimsa* provides the basis for this approach by emphasizing the importance of avoiding violence in any form, whether physical or verbal. *Caitanya Mahāprabhu* practiced *Ahimsa* in his *Bhakti* movement, where he promoted peace and divine love as a path to building a harmonious community. In this regard, *Caitanya's* teachings can be used to support the Indonesian government's policy of preventing extremism and promoting interfaith dialogue.

Furthermore, *Caitanya's* teachings on kirtan or communal singing as a form of expression of love for God creates space for interfaith dialogue based on shared spiritual experiences. The activity of kirtan, which involves communal singing and dancing, can be seen as a symbol of inclusivity and togetherness. This tradition emphasizes that spiritual experience is not limited to religious differences, but can be shared in a loving and devoted community. In the Indonesian context, this can be adapted as a cultural approach that allows various religious groups to experience spiritual experiences together without having to sacrifice their respective faith identities.

Therefore, *Caitanya's* thought offers a significant contribution to the study of Hindu philosophy that supports religious moderation in Indonesia. His teachings on universal love, unity in diversity, and non-violence create a strong ethical and philosophical foundation for developing harmony and tolerance between religious communities. In facing the challenges of globalization and radicalism, *Caitanya's* philosophy can provide direction for strengthening an inclusive and peaceful spiritual identity, which is in line with the spirit of Pancasila and Indonesia's commitment to pluralism and harmony between religious communities.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu harmonized and unified various concepts, including adopting some thoughts from *Śaṅkara* by creating the concept of *Acintya Bhedābheda*. He states that there are incomprehensible differences and similarities. Therefore, man must raise his consciousness through devotional service to understand it. Lord *Caitanya* was known for his profound devotional and devotional movements, exerting significant influence both during his lifetime and afterward. In fact, its influence on the spirit of devotion and devotion in modern times is enormous, combining philosophy with the spirit of devotion so that it is not just a dry intellectual debate without meaning. *Caitanya* succeeded in combining logic and the spirit of devotion, so that devotion has a strong foundation in human thought (Surpi, 2021).

The doctrine of *Acintya Bhedābheda* promoted by *Caitanya Mahāprabhu* emphasized the divine unity that underpinned the popular practice of murti worship. Through this synthesis, *Caitanya Mahāprabhu* developed a *Bhakti* culture that strengthened the rejection of the *māyā vāda* doctrine of *Śaṅkara* philosophy. Thus, *Caitanya Mahāprabhu* emphasized the superiority of *bhakti-Vedānta* philosophy as a more effective approach in understanding God and man's relationship with God (Sharma, 2018). Lord *Caitanya's Acintya Bhedābheda* doctrine is seen as a universal form of Vedic interpretation, encompassing all underlying doctrines and capable of synthesizing conflicting doctrines. Therefore, this doctrine is considered a transcendent aspect of *Sanātana Dharma*, with its external aspects appearing different (Das, 2012).

The advantage of *Acintya Bhedābheda* is that it is considered capable of harmonizing various different concepts, synthesizing two major approaches namely *advaita* and *dvaita*, offering a complete method and offering universal welfare. A universal explanation of the Veda that covers all the doctrines under it and is able to synthesize conflicting doctrines. So this doctrine is considered a transcendent aspect of *Sanātana Dharma*. The deepest aspects of *Sanātana Dharma*, with external aspects that appear different (Surpi, et al, 2020).

Caitanya taught that God can be realized only by means of love that surges and absorbs everything, even in the midst of worldly activity. According to him, passion comes from the culture of devotional service and if passion deepens, it is called *Prema* or loving

kindness. From tasting (*ruci*) arises a strong inclination (*aśakti*) which gives rise to shoots of affection (*rati*) for *Kṛṣṇa*. When this feeling deepens, it becomes *Prema*, which is the permanent form of devotion to *Kṛṣṇa* (Singh, 2018). If love grows successively it is called *sneha*, *prānaya*, *anurāga*, *bhāva* and *mahābhāva*, like we have sugar cane, sugar cane juice, liquid sugar, sugar and confectionery sweets (Prabhupada, 2003). When fixed feeling (*bhāva*) is mixed with *rasa*, it turns into *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, *sattvika* and *vyabhicāri*, just as milk curd, when mixed with black sugar, black pepper and camphor, becomes something very delicious, which is called *Rasāla*. There are 2 types of *Vibhāva*, namely: (i) *Ālambana*, which is kindled by *Kṛṣṇa*, etc. (ii) *Uddīpana*, by the sound of His flute etc. *Anubhāva*, stimulated by smiles, dances, and songs. *Anesthesia* and other sensations are included in *Sattvika anubhāva*, while there are 33 types of *Vyabhicari* including pleasure, excitement, etc (Rosen, 1996).

There are 5 types of *Rasā*, namely *Śānta*, *Dāsyā*, *Sakhya*, *Vatsalya*, and *Mādhurya*. In *Santa Rasā*, *Rati* goes to the *Prema* stage and in *Dāsyā* goes to *Rīga*, *Sakhya*, and *Vatsalya* reaches the limit of *Anurāga*. Devotees who have developed *prema* are always associated with *Kṛṣṇa* and have no interest in worldly objects, or material success; because *Kṛṣṇa*'s love is the highest achievement, where *Bhakti* is the way to achieve this attachment (Prabhupada, 2003). Worship of teachers is a fundamental feature of Lord *Caitanya*'s teachings, where study of the *Vedas*, *Bhāgavata Purana* etc. deeply implanted; in addition to implementing ethics and developing ethical virtues such as generosity towards all creatures, humanity, purity of heart, freedom from worldly desires, calmness and honesty without distinguishing between class or worldly social position. They depend only on *Kṛṣṇa*.

3.2 The relevance of the divine philosophy of *Caitanya*'s thought in the spirit of religious moderation

Religious moderation is a religious attitude that is balanced, not extreme, and encourages tolerance and respect for diversity. This attitude is important to maintain peace and harmony in a pluralistic society. Meanwhile, religious moderation is an effort to understand and respect differences in religious beliefs and practices, as well as avoid extremism which can trigger conflict. Religious moderation is very important in preventing radicalization and strengthening national integration, especially in a country as diverse as Indonesia (Saifuddin, 2019).

Based on the opinion above, it is known that religious moderation is an approach that prioritizes a middle attitude in religion, avoids extremism, and encourages tolerance and respect for diversity. This concept is important in maintaining social harmony in a multicultural and multireligious society. Considering that in the midst of increasingly strong globalization, modern society is faced with complex challenges related to religious and cultural diversity. In this context, the spirit of religious moderation becomes increasingly important as a foundation for creating peace and harmony. Religious moderation is not just a principle of passive tolerance, but rather a proactive approach that encourages dialogue, understanding and cooperation between religions.

The Indonesian government views the importance of the concept and implementation of religious moderation because religious moderation is one of the main foundations for maintaining social harmony, national integrity, and diversity in a country with a multicultural and multireligious population like Indonesia. Religious moderation is very relevant in facing global and national challenges, such as radicalism, intolerance, and extremism that can threaten national unity. Indonesia is the fourth most populous country in the world and the country with the largest Muslim population. However, Indonesia is also home to a variety of other religions such as Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, as well as various local beliefs. This diversity requires an approach that encourages tolerance and mutual respect. The concept of religious moderation, which teaches a middle stance and not extremes, is key to creating social cohesion amidst differences in belief.

One of the serious threats to Indonesia's social and political stability is the emergence of radical and extreme movements that use religion as a foundation. Religious radicalism can trigger horizontal conflict, terrorism, and polarization in society. Therefore, the government through various institutions such as the Ministry of Religion and the National Counterterrorism Agency prioritizes religious moderation as a strategy to prevent the spread of radicalism and strengthen national insight. Religious moderation emphasizes an inclusive religious attitude and rejects exclusivism and fanaticism, which are often the source of radicalization.

Religious moderation supports the basic principles of the state, namely Pancasila, which upholds diversity and freedom of religion. The first principle, "Belief in the One and Only God", contains the value that Indonesia is not a religious state, but rather a state that recognizes various religions and gives its citizens the freedom to worship according to their respective beliefs. The implementation of religious moderation is in line with the spirit of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution which emphasize equality and human rights. This is important to strengthen national identity based on unity amidst plurality. Harmony between religious communities is a strategic agenda of the government to maintain social stability. On various occasions, the Indonesian government has emphasized the importance of interfaith harmony as a primary requirement for national development. Religious moderation, with the principles of mutual respect, dialogue, and avoiding violence, is the foundation for encouraging the realization of a peaceful society. In this context, religious moderation aims to create a space for healthy dialogue and interaction between religious communities, reduce tensions, and encourage collaboration. As a country with high diversity, Indonesia is in a unique position to be an example for other countries in managing religious plurality. The government is trying to promote religious moderation as part of Indonesia's international diplomacy and soft power. In various international forums, such as ASEAN and the UN, Indonesia often highlights the values of tolerance and religious moderation as part of its contribution to world peace. The implementation of religious moderation domestically helps strengthen Indonesia's position as a model of success in building harmony in diversity.

In the era of globalization and digitalization, information and ideas from various parts of the world easily enter and influence Indonesian society, including radical ideologies. The government sees religious moderation as a bulwark against the spread of extreme ideologies through social media and digital technology. Moderate and balanced religious education, both in schools and in society, is very important to equip the younger generation with an inclusive understanding of religion that is open to differences.

Religious moderation is an important agenda for the Indonesian government because it is the key to maintaining harmony between religious communities, preventing radicalism, strengthening national identity, and promoting Indonesia as a tolerant country on the global stage. By implementing the concept of religious moderation, the government is trying to create a harmonious, inclusive society that is in line with the spirit of Pancasila and responds to the social challenges that arise in the era of globalization.

The relevance of religious moderation in Hindu philosophy can be seen from the concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, which means "the world is one family." Hindu philosophy intrinsically teaches inclusiveness and tolerance, where diversity is seen as part of a larger reality. In texts such as the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Upanishads*, Hindu teachings emphasize that truth (*Brahman*) is one, though manifested in various forms and names. This attitude reflects the essence of religious moderation, which encourages religious people to understand that there are many paths to spiritual enlightenment, and all religious traditions have value that is worthy of appreciation. This concept of spiritual pluralism creates a strong foundation for tolerance and interfaith dialogue.

In addition, the concept of *Dharma* in Hindu philosophy emphasizes the importance of balance, harmony, and order in the world. Religious moderation is in line with the value of *Dharma*, which emphasizes the implementation of moral and ethical duties without extremism. In Hinduism, every individual is expected to fulfill his social and spiritual obligations in a wise and balanced manner, not only in relation to religion but also in

everyday life. Religious moderation demands a similar attitude—that is, practicing religious beliefs with a spirit of devotion and piety without violating the rights or beliefs of others. This attitude also prevents the emergence of fanaticism and exclusivity that can damage social harmony.

On the other hand, Hindu teachings also recognize Ahimsa, the principle of non-violence, which directly supports the concept of religious moderation. Ahimsa teaches to avoid all forms of physical and mental violence against other living beings. In the context of religious moderation, *Ahimsa* reflects the importance of a peaceful and compassionate attitude towards adherents of other religions. Hindu philosophy that encourages attitudes of tolerance, respect, and harmony shows that religious moderation is not something foreign, but rather inherent in the Hindu tradition. Thus, Hindu philosophy offers a strong foundation for the implementation of religious moderation in the context of a multicultural and pluralistic society like Indonesia.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu was a spiritual figure and philosopher from the 15th century who offered deep and relevant insights through his teachings about *Bhakti* (devotion) and universal love (Ghosh, 2018). *Caitanya's* divine philosophy emphasizes the importance of a sincere personal relationship with God, manifested in love and service to others (Chaudhuri, 2017). This thinking has great potential to support and enrich the spirit of religious moderation in the contemporary era.

In this discussion, researchers will explore the relevance of *Caitanya's* divine philosophy in promoting religious moderation. Through the analysis of key concepts such as bhakti, universal love, humility, and interfaith dialogue, we will see how *Caitanya's* teachings can provide a strong philosophical foundation for overcoming polarization and promoting peaceful coexistence in a multicultural society (Bhatia, 2020). This approach offers not only theoretical but also pragmatic solutions that can be applied in various social and religious contexts. (1) The Concept of *Bhakti* in *Caitanya's* Thought. In *Caitanya's* philosophy, *Bhakti* or devotion is the essence of the divine experience. *Bhakti* contains elements of sincere love and selfless devotion to God. *Caitanya* taught that devotional service is the most effective path to attaining direct understanding and experience of the Divine. This devotion involves the totality of the self, transcends the boundaries of the ego, and leads the individual to deep spiritual realization. (2) Universal Love and *Ananya Bhakti*. One of the important elements in *Caitanya's* teachings is the concept of universal love or prema. This divine love is not limited to an individual's relationship with God, but also includes all living creatures. *Ananya bhakti*, or unconditional devotion, teaches that true love knows no boundaries of religion, caste, or nation (Patel, 2020). In the context of religious moderation, this concept emphasizes the importance of love and devotion that transcends dogmatic and sectarian barriers, creating a basis for tolerance and respect between religious believers. (3) Humility as the Key to Moderation. Humility is another key aspect in *Caitanya's* philosophy. In the process of devotional service, individuals are taught to admit their weaknesses and limitations and see all beings as manifestations of the Divine. This humble attitude eliminates the sense of superiority and exclusivity that is often a source of inter-religious conflict. By adopting humility, religious communities can more easily open themselves to dialogue and cooperation, which are essential for building religious moderation. (4) Interfaith Dialogue Based on Love. *Caitanya* emphasized that true divine experience must be manifested in daily behavior through love and service to others. This provides a strong foundation for interfaith dialogue based on mutual respect and understanding. True religious moderation includes not only passive tolerance, but also active engagement in understanding and respecting the beliefs and practices of other religions. By emphasizing love as a central principle, *Caitanya's* philosophy offers an inclusive and constructive approach to interfaith dialogue. Implementation of *Bhakti* Values in Religious Moderation. (5) The values of bhakti, universal love, and humility in *Caitanya's* philosophy can be implemented in various religious moderation strategies (Sharma, 2018).

This includes religious education that emphasizes the values of tolerance and love, interfaith dialogue programs, and joint social service initiatives. By integrating these principles, society can be built on a foundation of mutual respect and cooperation, reducing

the potential for conflict and increasing social harmony (Desai, 2019). Based on the explanation above, it can be said that the divine philosophy in the thoughts of *Caitanya Mahāprabhu* has strong relevance to the spirit of religious moderation today. *Caitanya's* thought, which is centered on the concepts of *Bhakti* (*devotion*), universal love (*prema*), and humility, offers various significant advantages in supporting and promoting religious moderation amidst the diversity of modern society. So researchers can conclude that *Caitanya Mahāprabhu's* divine philosophy offers deep and relevant insights to support the spirit of religious moderation in the modern era. Implementing the concepts of bhakti, prema, and humility in various aspects of social and religious life can help create a more inclusive, harmonious and just society. Therefore, *Caitanya's* philosophy has a significant contribution in building a more peaceful and civilized world, making it relevant to today's spirit of religious moderation.

The philosophical thoughts of Hindu philosophers, if explored more deeply, have a significant impact on the development of science and are applied in practical forms to support life (Untara, *et al.*, 2024). Furthermore, Patel (2020) emphasizes *Caitanya Mahāprabhu's* approach to religious pluralism and how his teachings can be applied to understanding various religious traditions. In this regard, Sen (2017) assesses the relevance of *Caitanya Mahāprabhu's* teachings in the context of the modern world and the role of *Bhakti* in religious moderation.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught that all individuals, regardless of caste, social status, or religion, have the potential to develop a spiritual relationship with God through sincere devotion. *Bhakti*, in *Caitanya's* understanding, is a universal path accessible to all. He introduced the concept of love (*prema*) as the primary means to attain union with God. In his teachings, one's devotion is not determined by formal rituals or theological dogma, but by purity of heart and sincerity in devotion. *Caitanya* believed that all people, regardless of religious or cultural identity, are part of the same spiritual whole, God (*Krishna*). This is in stark contrast to the exclusivist view often found in many religious traditions, where only certain followers are considered to have direct access to divine truth. *Caitanya* firmly rejected social stratification and casteism, which were then dominant issues in Indian society. In this context, *Caitanya Mahāprabhu's* thought can be seen as an attempt to build harmony across social and religious identities.

The concept of religious moderation is often associated with the idea of tolerance, dialogue, and a willingness to accept religious diversity without sacrificing one's faith identity. Religious moderation emphasizes an approach that avoids religious extremism, both in the form of radicalism and exclusivism. In this context, *Caitanya's* teachings are very relevant. His thinking that prioritizes love (*prema*) over differences in religious identity provides a basis for respect for other religions. The principles he taught can be applied in interfaith dialogue in the modern era, where religious differences are often a source of conflict. *Caitanya's* influence in emphasizing unity through devotion is also in line with the principle of religious moderation that prioritizes universal values such as love, peace, and respect for fellow human beings.

Caitanya also criticized excessive formality in religious practice, which often triggers division. Instead, he promoted a spiritual approach that emphasizes the essence of sincerity and honesty in practicing faith. In this teaching, he called for religious freedom marked by a desire to love fellow human beings regardless of religious background (Basu, 2015). *Caitanya Mahāprabhu's* thoughts on unity amidst diversity are highly relevant in the effort to promote religious moderation. By emphasizing love as the primary element of devotion and inviting people to transcend narrow religious identities, *Caitanya* offers an inclusive spiritual vision. His ideas can serve as inspiration in promoting interfaith harmony and religious moderation in the contemporary era full of challenges of plurality.

4. Conclusions

This research reveals that the divine philosophy in the thoughts of *Caitanya Mahāprabhu* has significant relevance to the spirit of religious moderation, especially in the

current context of globalization and religious diversity. *Caitanya Mahāprabhu*, with his teachings which emphasize *Bhakti* (devotion) and universal love, offers a framework of thought that can be used to create harmonious inter-religious dialogue and cooperation.

Bhakti, which is the essence of divine experience in *Caitanya's* thought, emphasizes sincere and total devotion to God. It is not only an individual spiritual practice, but also a way to bridge the gap between religions. By recognizing that all true devotion is a manifestation of the same divine experience, *Bhakti* provides a strong philosophical basis for supporting tolerance and respect between religious believers. *Bhakti* involves selfless devotion that transcends the boundaries of ego and sectarian identity, thereby reducing the potential for conflict.

Caitanya's teachings of universal love (*prema*) and unconditional devotion (*ananya bhakti*) are especially relevant in the context of religious moderation. Universal love that transcends boundaries of religion, caste, and nation supports an inclusive approach and respects all humans as manifestations of the Divine. True love that does not recognize dogmatic barriers effectively reduces the potential for inter-religious conflict and promotes cooperation and mutual understanding. The humility taught by *Caitanya* is another important element that supports the spirit of religious moderation. By admitting one's weaknesses and limitations and seeing all creatures as manifestations of the Divine, this humble attitude eliminates feelings of superiority and exclusivity. This facilitates more open and constructive dialogue and cooperation between religious communities, which is key to establishing moderation and overcoming polarization in society.

Caitanya also emphasized the importance of embodying the divine experience in daily behavior through love and service to others. It provides a practical basis for interfaith dialogue based on mutual respect and understanding. True religious moderation includes not only passive tolerance, but also active engagement in understanding and respecting the beliefs and practices of other religions. *Caitanya's* approach encourages active involvement in creating inclusive and constructive interfaith dialogue. The values of *bhakti*, universal love, and humility in *Caitanya's* philosophy can be implemented in various religious moderation strategies. This includes religious education that emphasizes the values of tolerance and love, interfaith dialogue programs, and joint social service initiatives. The integration of these principles can create a society built on mutual respect and cooperation, reduce the potential for conflict, and increase social harmony.

Overall, *Caitanya Mahāprabhu's* divine philosophy offers deep and relevant insights to support the spirit of religious moderation in the modern era. By emphasizing devotional service, universal love, and humility, *Caitanya's* thought provides a strong philosophical foundation for overcoming polarization and interreligious conflict. Implementing these values in various aspects of social and religious life can help create a more inclusive, harmonious and just society. Therefore, *Caitanya's* philosophy not only makes a theoretical contribution but also a pragmatic one in efforts to build a more peaceful and civilized world. This research underscores the importance of integrating *Caitanya's* teachings in religious moderation strategies to create social conditions conducive to peace and interfaith cooperation.

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Biographies of Author

I Gede Pradnya Wiguna, Universitas Hindu Negeri I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa, Kota Denpasar, Bali, 80237, Indonesia.

- Email: pradnyawigunagede@gmail.com
- ORCID: N/A
- Web of Science ResearcherID: N/A
- Scopus Author ID: N/A
- Homepage: N/A