CHAPTER 2

IS HARI-BHAKTI-VILĀSA A SMṚTI?

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa is an important book for the guidance of the Vaiṣṇavas. It has been regarded as the most important smṛti work of the Bengal school of Vaiṣṇavism. For authoritative exposition of the Vaiṣṇava Ācāra, it has also been called the best Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Smṛti. Now calling Hari-bhakti-vilāsa as Smṛti work naturally raises questions: Does it conform to the definition of smṛti or to what extent it comes under the purview of the orthodox Smṛti śāstra? Should it be called Smṛti Nibandha or Āgama? To determine the status of the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa as a Smṛti we propose to give an exposition of the concept of Smṛti in this chapter.

2.2. WHAT IS A SMṚTI

The Indian-Aryan society was formed and run according to the injunction of śruti and smṛti. The works comprising compulsory Vedic duties and tenets which the sages remembered, the rules for the conduct of society as arranged by the sages although based on Vedas but not impersonal are known as smṛti. The smṛti is vitally connected with śruti which means the Veda-śrutistu veda. The Veda is the primary source of all laws. But, nevertheless, all laws (Dharmas) are not found in the extant texts of the Vedas. There are in the
"The word *smrti* means memory or recollection of what was previously cognized, and *smrti* works are the recorded recollection of those great sages who had deeply studied the Vedas and mastered their precepts, their injunctions as well as their prohibitions. The Vedas are *apauruṣeya*, i.e., these are not written by any human being and are therefore, self-authoritative needing no external support. The *smrtis*, on the other hand, are written by some persons, they are man made, yet they are accepted as authoritative because they come from men with profound knowledge of the Vedas. In other words, it may be said that *śruti* means knowledge which the sages obtained directly from the divine sources and *smrti* means their interpretation made after proper understanding of the import of the Vedas. The authoritativeness and validity of *smrti* depend on the conformity of the ideas of the sages to the imports of the Vedic precepts. The *śruti* and *smrti* are therefore, fundamentally related not withstanding their apparent difference. *Smṛti* also means a wide range of orthodox works dealing with the reminiscenses of Vedic teachings recollected by the sages who have studied the Vedas and realised their imports.
Further, it is stated that maharsibhirvedārthacintanam smrtih.

This means that the smrtis are composed by the sages on the speculation of the Vedas. The words dharma-samhitā, dharmaśāstra etc. are synonymous with the word smrti.

Smrti also means recollection or that which is remembered and handed down by tradition (as distinguished by audition). The smrtis are founded on śruti, i.e., direct revelation as their primary basis and only possess authority in so far as they are in harmony with revealed truth. In its widest acceptance, the term smrti includes the six Vedāngas, the Sūtras both Śrauta and Grhya, the law books, pravacana etc., the itihasa (i.e. Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata), the Purāṇas and the Nitiśāstras. The word smrti is used in two senses. It is applied to all ancient orthodox works other than the Vedas such as Pāṇini’s grammar, the Śrauta, Grhya and Dharma-sutras, the Mahābhārata, the smrti works of Manu, Yājñavalkya and others. Manu points out that the word smrti also includes works that are opposed to and beyond the pale of the Veda.

yā vedavāhyāḥ smṛtayo yāśca kāśca kudṛṣṭayah /

sarvāstä nisphālāḥ pretya tamoniṣṭhā hi tāh smṛtāḥ //
Thus Manu declared that the *smṛtis* which are outside the Vedas are false or fallacious are based on ignorance. In narrower sense *Smṛti* and *Dharmaśāstra* are synonymous. As Manu says –

\[
\text{srutistu vedo vijñeyo dharmaśāstramtu vaismṛtih}\\
\text{te sarvārthevamimāṃsyē tābhhyām dharmo hi nirvabhait}
\]

The meaning of the couplet is that the Veda is called *śruti* while *Dharmaśāstra* is called *smṛti*. In all respects, the scripture is beyond the argument as *śruti* and *smṛti* have revealed the knowledge of dharma. The *Atri-samhītā* and *Visnu-samhītā* hold the view that *śruti* and *smṛti* are the two eyes of Brahman who when is devoid of one becomes partially blind and when both becomes completely blind⁷. Gautama and Vaśiṣṭha speak of *smṛti* as one of the sources of Dharma⁸. The *Dharmarśāstra* represents the traditional teachings on Dharma or civil and religious laws. Its scope is not very narrow. “The term is *Dharmaśāstra* generally applicable to both the *Dharmasūtras* and metrical codes, otherwise known as *smṛtī”⁹ held in ‘The Dharmasūtras and Dharmashastras’ by V.A. Ramaswami Sastri. According to P.V. Kane *Dharmaśāstra* is a much wider term than *Dharmasūtras*. The *Dharmasūtras* are only a few while there are dozens of *Dharmaśāstras*. Yājñavalkya also tells of the wider scope of *Dharmaśāstra* as he includes fourteen Vidyās, viz., four Vedas, six Aṅgas, Purāṇa, Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā and *Dharmaśāstra*. It is said in the *Yājñavalkya samhitā*:

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Hence, the Dharmashastra taken in its wider sense is synonymous with the smrti as suggested by Manu and Yājñavalkya. The Mitākṣarā on Yājñavalkya-sanhitā says that "Even the Arthashastra is a branch of the Dharmashastra in the sense that it deals with the responsibilities of the King and the rules narrating those responsibilities are laid down in most of the treatises on Dharma"11.

It is to reiterate that smrti which means recollection includes that class of Hindu sacred literature based on human memory as distinct from Vedic literature which is considered to be Śruti or revealed text. Smrti literature elaborates, interprets and codifies Vedic thought but being derivative is considered less authoritative than the Śruti. Most modern Hindus however, have a greater familiarity with smrti scriptures. In time the term smrti came to refer particularly to the texts relating to law and social conduct such as celebrated law books, like the Manusmṛti, Yājñavalkya-smṛti, Nārada-smṛti etc.

2.3. THE CONTENTS OF THE SMRTIS

According to Rajbali Pandey, the Smritis represent a later and a more systematic development of the Dharmasūtras. Like the Dharma-sūtras they are also mainly concerned with the social conduct of men rather than with
rituals. Their contents can be classified under three heads, viz., Acāra, Vyavahāra and Prāyaścitta. Acāra means duties in general. This forms a very important topic of Dharmaśāstra. Manu holds that acāra is the best dharma as it is in the Manu Samhitā—“ācārah paramo dharmah śrutvakta smārta eva ca”. Acāra has wider meaning. It means those observable rules for maintaining purity in individual and social life. As for example: four stages in the life of a Brāhmaṇa, conduct of student in the residence of Guru or preceptor, upanayana, daily pākayajna, marriage, Śrāddha, rule for partake of meal and matter related to women etc. are all included in the head of Acāra.

In order of authority Acāra (custom) comes after Vedic and smṛti texts. It should not prevail over the Vedas. That is the theory which is explicitly supported by many of the smṛti works. But in practice Acāra has prevailed over every other authority of dharma. Even in courts of justice now it is uniformly maintained that custom supersedes all law. This is also supported by the smṛtis themselves. For example Baudhāyana points out how Gautama’s view is different in respect of the prohibited practices of the south.

The branch of dharma dealing with secular law is known by the word vyavahāra. This is the most developed phase in the evolution of the concept of Hindu law. Kātyāyana discusses the etymological meaning of the word vyavahāra. He maintains that ‘vi’ means various, ‘ava’ means doubt and ‘hara’ means removal and as such vyavahāra indicates that it is that branch of law...
which removes various doubts. It is really the vyavahāra part of the smṛti literature which deals with law, properly so called. The administration of justice aims at the discovery of truth. Since the vyavahāra helps to remove doubts, it does help administration of justice in its quest for truth. Vyavahāra includes judicial procedure and sphere of substantive law such as crime and punishment, contracts, partition and inheritance, adoption, gambling etc. The topics are not treated in any fixed manner or settled order in the sūtra works. As an example we can take the subjects of partition and inheritance which occur at the end of the Dharmasūtra of Gautama, while Vasiṣṭha places the same subject in the middle of the work and Āpastamba deals with these topics after finishing three-fourth of his work. Vyavahāra formulates the legislation and its application and also rules for administration of the state. It also deals with profession of different classes of people. Further it deals with the actions and avocations permitted to the several castes in extreme difficulties.

Prāyaścitta is one of the three main pillars upon which the superstructure of dharma (duty) rests. Prāyaścitta (penance) is a technical term coined by the Indian sages. “The highest perfection of man can not be attained unless his religious and civil conduct (Ācāra and Vyavahāra) is refined by a proper regulation of his moral and spiritual relations. The sages started with this fundamental concept and its realization led to the formulation from very ancient times of an elaborate scheme of penances and vows which
sought to eliminate all sins and evils from society.” According to Vijñāneśvara, the word *Prāyaścitta* denotes a particular kind of causal (*naimittika*) act. Śūlapāṇi and others derive the word as a compound of two words viz., ‘prāyas’ meaning austerity and ‘citta’ meaning resolution. Raghunandana maintains that a penance is an act enjoined in a sacred precept as the means of removing sins. Manu, Yājñavalkya and other authorities hold that a man who omits a prescribed act or performs a blamable one or remains attached to sensual enjoyments only must perform a penance. Omission of obligatory acts is an offence (*pratyavāya*) and as such requires *prāyaścitta* for its atonement. There are many Vedic texts where expiation of sins by means of penances is referred to.

*Prāyaścitta* forms an integral part of the *Dharmaśāstra*. It is dealt with by all the exponents of *Dharmaśāstras*, like Gautama, Baudhāyana, Āpastamba, Vasiṣṭha and Viṣṇu as well as by most of the comprehensive *Samhitās* and *Nibandhas*. Of the *Nibandhas*, the *Prāyaścitta Prakarana* of Bhavadeva Bhatta is the earliest and probably the best book on the subject. Śūlapāṇi and Raghunandana are the other two authorities on the subject in the Bengal school.

Under the first head i.e., *Ācāra* the *saṃskāras* are mentioned and the rules regulating them are given. The most exhaustively treated *saṃskāras* are the *upanayana* and *vivāha* as they are related to the first and second stages of
life of an individual. The pāñca mahāyajñas or five great sacrifices also figure very prominently in the smṛtis. Manu gives a very important place to them and describes them at length. From early Vedic times five daily observables called mahāyajñas were prescribed. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa says “There are only five mahāyajñas, they are like great sacrificial sessions, viz., the sacrifices to beings, the sacrifices to men, fathers, Gods and Ś sacrifice to Brāhmaṇas.” In the Taittiriya Āranyaka these five spread out continuously, viz., devayajña, pitryajña, bhūta yajña, manuṣyayajña and brahmayajña. That is called devayayajña when one makes an offering in fire even if it be a mere fuel-stick; when one offers to the fathers even if it be mere water by uttering the word svadhā that becomes pitryajña; when a man offers a bāli (a ball of food) to beings it becomes bhūtayajña; when he gives food to Brahmans that becomes manuṣyayajña and when one studies svādhyāya even it be a single yajus or a yajus or a sāman, it becomes brahmayajña.

The smṛtis also offer us a mass of information about prayers and sacrifices, household deities, eschatology, funeral ceremonies and sacrifices to the dead. We find in them discussions on the right of performing the samīskāras, minor ceremonies and rites, the worship of new Paurānika deities at various occasions in life unknown to the Grhya-sūtras and the Dharma-sūtras. The main feature of smṛtis as regards the samīskāras, is that they mark the transition from the Vedic to Smārta and Paurānika Hinduism. They omit
almost all the Vedic sacrifices and introduce new types of worship and ceremonies. However, all the smṛtis do not deal with the saṃskāras. Some like Nāradasmrți etc. are entirely devoted to vyavahāra or law while others like the Parāśara Smṛti are given to the prescriptions of prāyaścitta.

2.4. AUTHORITATIVE OF THE SMṛTIS

All the smṛtis are not equal in authority. Most of them are obscure and are only rarely cited by ancient commentators. Exclusive of the Dharmasastras hardly a dozen smṛtis have found commentators. If we are to judge of authority of a smṛti by the commentaries thereon, then Manu Smṛti stands pre-eminent. Next to it is the Yājñavalkya Smṛti.

Various sages composed various smṛtis. According to Yājñavalkya, Manu, Atri, Viśṇu, Hārīta, Uśana, Anāgīrā, Yama, Āpastamba, Kātyāyana, Brhaspati, Parāśara, Vyāsa, Saṅkha, Likhita, Dakṣa, Gautama, Śatātapa and Vaśiṣṭha are the nineteen principal smṛṭikāras. Hence, there are also nineteen smṛtis. Besides these, smṛtis like Nārada, Brṛdhātreya, Brṛhat Parāśara, Bṛṛgū, Baudhāyana are also worthy to be mentioned. Amongst these which are authoritative and which are not lead sometimes to controversy. In this regard Śaṅkaracārya has given a clear judgement in his Śārīrakabhāṣya. In his view, Smṛtis are the scriptural texts known as Tantra written by the great Rṣis and accepted by the enlightened people (śiṣṭaparīgrhīta) and also the other smṛtis that are in accord with them. When conflict arises among the different smṛtis.
those *smṛtis* which are based on the Vedas are acceptable and others are to be ignored. Nagendra Nath Basu has pointed out in the *Viśvakoṣa* that in many places, there is want of independent knowledge of men and knowledge of ordinary people is discursive and as such can not ascertain the Vedic truth with such knowledge. For this, men have to ascertain the Vedic truth with the help of *smṛtis* composed by famous authors. They do not have confidence on the interpretation of ordinary men but base on the high opinion of the *smṛtikāra*. Whenever there is conflict among the *smṛtis*, acceptability of a *smṛti* depends upon the rational analysis and consideration as to which *smṛti* follows the Vedas and which does not. The *smṛti* that is not opposed to the Vedas or follows the Veda is authoritative as the Vedas are infallible and impersonal, having no scope of partiality. The aphorisms of saints are based on the Vedas and as such their interpretations laid down in the *smṛtis* are considered to be authoritative. Hence, there will be no fault rejecting the authority of the *smṛtis* which are opposed to the Vedas.

The conflicts of *smṛtis* among themselves present much greater difficulties. From ancient times authors of *smṛtis* differ greatly among themselves. A few striking examples may be cited. *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra* cites the views of ten predecessors on the question of the persons whose food may be partaken of by a Brāhmaṇa. There are also differences between Gautama and Baudhāyana on the one hand and Āpastamba on the other hand.
on the question of validity of certain usages in certain localities. Āpastamba's very general statement that practices of countries, families as authoritative can not be accepted as valid as it is opposed to the view of Gautama as Baudhāyana expressly states that certain practices though prevalent in certain locality can not be accepted as valid and binding even in those localities because they are opposed to the express words of authoritative and highly venerated smṛtis. The general rule is that when a custom or usage is opposed to the text of the Vedas the latter must prevail. When two smṛti texts are in conflict reasoning based on the practices of elders (śiṣṭas) is of greater force. When there is a conflict between two Dharmaśātras it is declared that one should resort to reasoning. Another rule is laid down that in case of conflict between Dharmaśātras and Ārthasastra the former is of more weight or authority.

In some cases, it is prescribed that where there is a conflict among smṛtis the view of the majority should prevail. Gobhila-smṛti prescribes that where there is a conflict among passages of smṛti authoritativeness rests with that view which is supported by a majority of texts. But where two passages are of equal authority reasoning has to be employed.

Between conflict of smṛtis and custom, smṛti is of superior authority to usage of the śiṣṭas. But from the early time there have been dissenting voices. Viśvarūpa states that the purport of the smṛtis is to be followed which is in
accordance with the settled practice of the śis्तas\textsuperscript{27}. The principle may be deduced that the principles of smṛtis need not be observed when they are vehemently condemned by the people.

2.5. SMṚTI AND THE SOCIETY

To attain the cherished goal one has to enter upon a course of discipline or practical activities. India is a land where people think of higher life and how to live perfectly in the spirit. To make possible a higher life and perfect or sane life in society, smṛti-śāstra was originated. The basis of smṛti-śāstra is society. The intention of the smṛti-śāstra is to maintain discipline and harmony in society. The concept of smṛti has been explained above. From the above discussion it becomes clear that smṛti means a traditional literature which analyses the nature of Dharma and conduct and behavior of social human beings. The smṛti analyses the conduct and duties of man minutely. The conduct of social man of India is controlled with the shackles of the smṛti. In the smṛti-śāstra, manner and conduct have been specially dealt with as they constitute the very essence of cultured life. Further more, social and ethical codes have also been described at great length in the smṛtis.

2.6. THE NIBANDHAS

After the composition of the principal smṛtis many commentaries and digests were written during the long period dating from about 7\textsuperscript{th} century AD to 18\textsuperscript{th} century AD\textsuperscript{28}. There is however, no hard and fast line of demarcation
between a commentary and digest. Both classes of composition therefore, pass by the name of Nibandha, though the name commonly and mainly refers to the digests. Even when in the earlier part of this period writers professed to compose only commentaries in particular works, they adopted the style of digests trying to introduce order out of a chaotic mass of smrti dicta and explaining away apparent contradictions. The digests seem to be adopted to some extent according to the changed taste and statement of the people living in different provinces. The act of such adaptation in the respective areas has been to keep the social, moral, religious and economic lives under proper guidance. However, the general tendency from 12th century onwards was to write works that were in the nature of digests containing a synthesis of all dicta of smrti writers on topics of dharma.

The Nibandhas do not always owe allegiance to any single Vedic school. The Nibandhas are huge compilations from ancient sources on various topics of dharma. So far as digests are concerned we notice that these texts make it their point to discuss the saṃskāras in detail. The Nibandhas or the medieval treaties gave a new orientation to the saṃskāras. By saṃskāra the digest writers only understood the body-saṃskāra. The funeral saṃskāra has been excluded. It is of interest that in these digests we get acquainted with quite a large number of minor rites and worships. These are offshoots of the major saṃskāras and have the popular elements in them. However, they have
been elevated to the position of separate *samskaras*. A very large number of such books were written in every part of India in successive ages, and it is impossible to give an accurate and adequate account of this vast literature. We may refer to some principal *Nibandhas* like *Mitāksara* (1070-1100AD) of Vijñāneśvara, *Vyavahāramātrka* and *Kālaviveka* of Jīmūtavāhana, *Śrīcandrikā* (1225 A.D.) of Devānna Bhaṭṭa, *Śrīti Kalpataru* of Lakṣmīdihara of Kanauj, *Śrītyārthasāra* of Śridhara (1150-1200A.D), *Ācāra-sāgar* of Ballālasena, *Caturavarga-cintāmani* of Hemādri, *Śrītitattva* of Raghunandana (1510-1565A.D.), *Vyavahāramayūkha* (1540-1570 A.D.) of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, *Viramitrodaya* (1610-1640 A.D.) of Mitramiśra, *Vivādārṇavasetu* (1773A.D) of Bāneśvara, *Vivādbhāṅgārṇava* of Jagannātha Tarkakapaṇcānana, *Śrīti Kaustubha* of Anantadeva and *Śrīti-viveka*, *Prāyaścitta-viveka* and *Śrāddha-viveka* of Śūlapāṇi (15th A.D.). On the study of *Nibandha* works it reveals that these were mostly prepared under the auspices of kings or royal power. *Nibandhas* were written in prose in the body of which all old authorities in either prose or verse were quoted.

2.7. ĀGAMA

Āgamas constitute a huge corpus of religious literature. The Āgamas are the authority of Sanātana Dharma for sacred living, worship, yoga and philosophy. The Āgamas are the source primary and authority for devotional practice. Śabda-kalpa-druma defines Āgama as follows:
It means Āgama is so called because it came (ā) from the lips of Siva, the five mouthed one, because it went to (ga) i.e., was listened to by Pārvata, the daughter of the mountain and because it was accepted (ma) by Vāsudeva (Viṣṇu).

Āgamas talk about construction of temples, the rules for installation and consecration of the deities in temples, the method of performing pūjās in the temples, philosophy, linguistic occultism (mantra śāstra), theory of magical meditative figures (yantra-sāstra), yoga or bhaktiyoga, domestic observances, social rules (varnāśrama dharma) and public festivals, hygiene, food and many other things. Most of the Āgamas consist roughly of four parts which are also called paddas. They are 1. Jñāna Pada, 2. Mantra Pada 3. Kriyā Pada and 4. Caryā Pada. In this context, the view of S. Radhakrishnan may be mentioned. He says, “The Āgamas generally classify the topics of discussion under the four head of – (1) knowledge (Jñāna), (2) meditation (yoga), (3) construction and establishment of images (kriyā) and (4) rites (caryā or samskāras)”30. Similarly Dr. S.N. Dasgupta has referred to the topics of Āgama. He stated “But a large part of the Āgama deals with rituals, forms of worship, construction of the place of worship and mantras and the like.” Jñāna Pada includes the philosophical and spiritual knowledges and means for
liberation. It should be noted that the Āgamas have their own mantras for all their kriyās. Kriyā pada specifies rules for construction of temples with detail from site selection, architectural design, iconography, sculpting and carving the figures of deities for worship in the temples. ‘Caryāpada’ deals with daily religious observances, personal discipline (right conduct) of the worshippers, the Guru-Śiṣya relationship etc. The purificatory ceremonies for the individual from the time of his birth, dikṣā (initiation) etc. are described here.

Elaborate rules are laid out in the Āgamas for śilpa (the art of culture) describing the quality requirements of the places where temples are to be built, the kind of images to be installed, the materials from which they are to be made, their dimensions, proportions, air circulation, lighting in the temple complex etc.

2.8. STATUS OF HARI-BHAKTI-VILĀSA AS A SMṚTI

Now, it is to dilate on the issue to what extent Hari-bhakti-vilāsa can be regarded as a smṛti. As the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, “The Charm of Devotion of Hari” epitomizes Vaiṣṇava Ācāra, it naturally includes in its scope a great deal of Smṛti topics, and in that sense it may be regarded as the most important Smṛti work of the Bengal School of Vaiṣṇavism. Vaiṣṇavācārya Dr. Mahanambrata Brahmachari, Ph. D. D. Lit. holds that Hari-bhakti-vilāsa is a smṛti work. The prema-dharma (religion of love) which was introduced by Caitanya on the earth and worships and religious ceremonies etc. of this
religion can not be guided by the *smrti* of Raghunandana\textsuperscript{32}. Hence the creation of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* as a *Vaiṣṇava smrti* is needed. It is a sectarian *smrti*. If it is not called a *smrti*, then it may hurt the sentiments of *Vaiṣṇava* followers. This is regarded as the highest authority of the Bengal School of *Vaiṣṇavism*. As ordinary *Smṛti* regulates the social and individual life of man in the society, so the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* guides the duties of a *Vaiṣṇava*’s life. However, in its content, method and treatment it differs a great deal from the orthodox *smṛti* works. It professes to follow the *Śruti* and the *Smṛti*, but since the theology of Bengal School gives a somewhat different interpretation of these terms, it draws very largely upon the *Purāṇas*, especially upon *Purāṇas* which are regarded as canonical sources by this School. Little heed is paid to the orthodox *Smṛti* tradition, although it agrees with the later orthodox *Smṛti* *Nibandhas* in accepting the *Purāṇas* as an authoritative source. In the words of S.K. De, an authority of *Vaiṣṇavite* thought, “Like the orthodox *Smṛti* again of Bengal which absorbed very eagerly tāntic ideas, rites and formulas since the time of Raghunandana, most of the rituals and ceremonies of this *Vaiṣṇava Smṛti* appears to have been profoundly influenced by the tenets and practices of *Tantra*, which must have been widely and deeply spread in Bengal at this time”\textsuperscript{33}. No treatment is accorded here to the purificatory rites known as *Samśkāras*, although a section is devoted for initiation or *dikṣā* in which incorporation of Tāntic idea is a noteworthy feature. In the *smṛtis* *Dikṣā* is not
mentioned as a *Samśkāra*. The principal purpose of *Samśkāras* was re-orientation or purification of body of an individual. Manu also lays stress on the purificatory element of *Samśkāras* with reference to body. Kulluka Bhaṭṭa makes it clear that purification is not only for the world but also for the world hereafter. Similarly *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* has envisaged some account of ritualistic observances and devotional practices, performance of which bring out some mental and bodily purification. Earnest adherence to the practices laid down in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* makes the devotee free from all kinds of impurities such as passion, desire, hatred and lust; he is also expected to remain calm and balanced under all circumstances of life. Vices like greed, anger and jealousy are enemies to a devout life. The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* depicts such a virtuous devotee as a *Śādhu*, one of the highest character.

It has already been pointed out that the major *smṛti* works are divided into three parts— *Ācāra*, *Vyavahāra* and *Prāyaścītta*. *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* may be brought under the *Ācāra* part of the *Smṛti* as is obvious from the words of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa which he has mentioned in the third Vilāsa—

\[
\text{ācārah likhyate kṛtyam śrutismṛtyānusārataḥ}.
\]

*Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* is much concerned with the *ācāra* part of *smṛti*. Gopāla Bhaṭṭa compiled the Gauḍīya *Vaiṣṇava Smṛti* in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, much of which is a concession to the orthodox brāhmaṇical climate that permeated the religious landscape of that time.
Ācāra in the smṛti stands for ‘fixed principle or rules of conduct’. The sense of religious rites does not suit the context. Smṛtis as dharmaśāstras were mostly concerned with rules about the conduct of men as members of the Aryan community and did not deal with ritual of any kind.

But the word Ācāra has been used in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa in the sense of religious duties or rituals – prohibitory as well as prescriptive duties. On the viewpoint of Ācāra, Hari-bhakti-vilāsa is dissimilar with the smṛti proper. Hence, Hari-bhakti-vilāsa may not come under the category of smṛti.

Some Vaiśṇava thinkers hold that there are two kinds of Smṛti Śāstra, viz., (1) spiritual or Sātvata Smṛtis and (2) material or fruitive work oriented Smṛtis. Sātvata Smṛtis include Śri Bharadvāja Saṁhitā (included in Nāradapañcarātra), Brhat-saṁhitā, Viṣṇu-samuccaya, Vaikhānasa-saṁhitā, the Āgama-prāmāṇya compiled by sage Alavandaru, also known as Yamunācārya. the Sadācāra-smṛti compiled by sage Purṇa Prajña, the Kṛṣṇamitra-mahārṇava, the Smṛtyārtha-sāgara by Chalāri Nṛsimhācārya, the Prameyamālā and the Prayogacandrikā by Vīra Rāghava, the Vaiśṇavadharma-suradrumamaṇjarī by Saṁkarṣaṇa Śaraṇa, the Smṛtiratnakara by Viṭṭhalācārya, the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmi, Śrī Satkriyāsāradipīkā and the Samskāracandrikāpaddhati by Dhyānacandra. This reveals that the upholders of Vaiśṇavism intend to give the honour of the Vaiśṇava smṛti to Hari-bhakti-vilāsa.
Hari-bhakti-vilāsa is based on the teachings of Caitanya. The religion preached by Caitanya did not altogether break away from the orthodox smārta tradition in its social and domestic usages. Hence, Hari-bhakti-vilāsa does not altogether prohibit regular offerings and libations to Yama and Pīṭḥs, Nāṇḍī Śrāddha etc.

Manifolds are the topics of smṛti or Dharma-śāstras. All these subjects are not treated in any fixed or settled order in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. Vyavahāra (judicial procedure), Prāyaścitta (expiation of sins), partition, inheritance etc. are so many topics which do not occur in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. Rather Hari-bhakti-vilāsa deals more elaborately with rites and ceremonies that a Vaiṣṇava person has to do with reference to his station in society. They are, therefore, principally concerned with Vaiṣṇava dharma and not with sādhārana dharma (duties common to all).

Manu does not specify the total number of samskaras. Different smṛti works specify their number differently. While Gautama mentions the largest number of Samskaras, i.e., forty, the principal ones are sixteen. They are: 1. Garbhādhāna (conception), 2. Pumsāvāna (engendering a male issue), 3. Simantonnayana (parting the hair), 4. Jātakarma (natal rites), 5. Nāmakarana (naming), 6. Niskramana (first outing), 7. Annaprāśana (first feeding with boiled rice), 8. Cūḍākarana (tonsure), 9. Karnabedha (piercing the ear lobes), 10. Vidyāraṃbha (learning the alphabet), 11. Upanayana (sacred thread

On perusal of Hari-bhakti-vilāsa it is revealed that it has omitted the Sāṃskāras normally dealt in smṛtis from conception to funeral rites and rules for judicial procedure too. Although Gopāla Bhaṭṭa has pronounced as stated above that acāra has been detailed following the smṛti but the acāras which he mentioned, e.g., dīkṣā, ācamana etc. are neither sāṃskāras nor the topics of smṛtis. On account of such omission of the topics and required characteristics of smṛti, it is futile to call Hari-bhakti-vilāsa a smṛti in the truest sense of the term.

It is further seen that the topics of the work are peculiar to itself and differ from those of an orthodox smṛti treatise. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas have only extolled it calling it Bhakti Smṛti out of mere complacence.

2.9. IS HARI-BHAKTI-VILĀSA A NIBANDHA

Some tend to call Hari-bhakti-vilāsa a Nibandha (digest). The Hari-bhakti-vilāsa has dealt fairly fully with the extent Vaiṣṇavite festivals of medieval Bengal. It is an exhaustive compendium of the Vaiṣṇavite rites and customs. Dr. S.C. Mukherjee stated that “Hari-bhakti-vilāsa of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa of circa 17th Century A.D. also an important religious digest of Bengal
Some of the salient features of digests are found in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. Hari-bhakti-vilāsa is a huge compilation of excerptions from ancient sources. There is plethora of quotations from recognized smṛtis, like those of Baudhāyana, Manu, Nārada, Atri, Hārīta, Vyāsa, Śatātapa, Śukra, Dakṣa etc. Quotations have been drawn from numerous other Purāṇas, Sāṁhitās etc. numbering about 279 ancient books which have swelled the work enormously. Like Nibandhas, Hari-bhakti-vilāsa also deals with body purificatory sāṁskāras and has omitted the funeral sāṁskāras. It has laid down the rules for rites and worships like other Nibandhas. The digest writers understood only body sāṁskāras and advocated these accordingly. The purpose of the Nibandhas was to protect the Hindu Society following the Smṛtis from the onslaught of non-Hindus. Nibandhas are basically book on societal laws like the Smṛtis. There is no basic difference between the Smṛtis and Nibandhas and as such Nibandhas represent the characteristics of the Smṛtis. But such characteristics as envisaged above are not found in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa and hence Hari-bhakti-vilāsa can not also be called a Nibandha proper.

2.10. HARI-BHAKTI-VILĀSA IS AN ĀGAMA

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa constitutes a serious attempt for the reformation of man. In the Āgamas we find descriptions of ritual performances such as...
initiation, deity worship, festival, temple building, image making etc. as well as discussions of yoga, kriyā, caryā and jñāna. If any thing in our tradition resembles an Āgama, it would be Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. Hari-bhakti-vilāsa has given us a detailed account of ritualistic observances and devotional practices. This is a liturgical and disciplinary compendium. Hari-bhakti-vilāsa gives us the behavioural codes and ritualistic procedures for Gaudīya Vaisnava sampradāya.

Vilāsa XI of Hari-bhakti-vilāsa contains a list of rules of virtuous conduct and traditional usages for Vaiṣṇava householders. Some of the rules are almost similar to those prescribed for a Snātaka in the Dharma Śāstras. Some injunctions are noteworthy. For instance, one should expiate by looking at the sun if one comes across the sight of a low caste Candaśa, an atheist or a yavana. It is forbidden to receive any gift from a Śūdra. These and similar injunctions point to a regard for Varnāśrama Dharma as curious feature of this Vaiṣṇava faith. Since the author appears to have great faith in Varnāśrama Dharma in his general acceptance of the system of caste, in his exaltation of Brāhmaṇas and depreciation of Śūdras, it may be presumed that Vaiṣṇavas in his opinion are to be governed by ordinary Smṛti rules in their social duties and relations.

For fear of the influence of sāktācāras or mlecchācāras the Vaiṣṇava Gosvāmis lay strict and hard bound rules of conduct to be followed by the
Vaiṣṇava people or general people as a safeguard against likely aberrations.

For the aforesaid reasons Gopāla Bhaṭṭa had no other alternative but to ensure the stability of the Vaiṣṇava society by tightening the conduct with rigid and watertight religious injunctions. This was best exemplified by the great yet conservative religious codes or compendia prepared by Gopāla Bhaṭṭa. It is of the nature of a guidebook to the Vaiṣṇava devotees rather than a work on social and legal customs and usages.

_Hari-bhakti-vilāsa_ contains _Tāntric_ topics. The distinctive features of the _Tāntric_ religious practices include _mantra_ (sacred formula addressed to a deity); _bīja_ (mystical letter or syllable which forms an essential part of the mantra); _yantra_ (mystical diagram); _nyāsa_ (mental appropriation or assignment of various parts of the body to tutelary deities); _mudrā_ (particular position or intertwining of the fingers); _mandala_ (mystical diagram without _bīja_ letters); _Yāga_ (sacrifice); _yoga_ (meditation); _upāsanā_ (worship) and _yātrā_ (going on pilgrimage). The _Tantras_ also deal with the various details of _pūjā_ and other rites as well as temple architecture and iconography. _Tantras_ relate mainly to three sects, viz., the _Śaiva_, the _Vaiṣṇava_ and the _Śākta_. The _Tāntric_ texts belonging to these sects are called respectively the _Āgama_, the _Samhitā_ and the _Tantra_. It is generally believed that _Āgamas_ originated in Kashmir, the _Samhitās_ in various parts of India, but particularly in Bengal and South India and the _Tantras_ in Bengal and Eastern and North Eastern India.
Gopāla Bhaṭṭa has enumerated several topics of Tāntric practices in his work e.g., aṅganyāsa (in vilāsa 15), mudrā (in vilāsa 16), mandala (in vilāsa 14 and 21), yantra (in vilāsa 17) etc. On account of the presence of distinctive Tāntric features and conceding other relevant factors I am inclined to bring Hari-bhakti-vilāsa under the category of Samhitā and more properly a Vaiṣṇava Samhitā. The main distinguishing feature of Hari-bhakti-vilāsa when compared to other Āgama or Pañcarātra literature is the 10th and 11th chapters, where aspects of what we could call Bhāgavata Dharma are emphasized. This is also where the greater part of the Bhāgavata verses have been quoted.

Sanātana wrote a commentary namely Digdarśini on the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, without it much of the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa’s contents would be incomprehensible. In particular, the astrological directions given in chapters 12-16 are clarified by him there. The Digdarśini commentary is quite extensive, tending to supplement rather than explicate the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa text. The commentary tends to bring out the Āgamic tendencies of the text—rituals, mantras, maṇḍalas, yantras etc., are all expanded on. In several places, Hari-bhakti-vilāsa acknowledges the importance of Kramadīpikā, the Nimbārka Āgama text. Another important work that has influenced Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, especially in the ritual portions, is Sāradā Tilaka, which seems to be a really pivotal Vaiṣṇava Āgama work.
The common features of Āgama are found in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. For instance:

1. Installation and consecration of images, selection of site, the rites and ceremonies related to the various stages of the process are dealt comprehensively with quotations from authoritative texts in chapter XIX (namely Pratisthita) in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa.

2. Construction of temples, names and characteristics of various kinds of temples and structures are discussed deriving quotation from Purāṇas in chapter XX (namely Prāśādika).

3. The construction of images or iconography of different kinds of various form from diverse materials and their characteristics are treated in chapter XVIII (Śrimūrtiprādurbhāva).

4. The method of preparing yantra or mystical diagram and Īntric spells endowed with occult energies and defiant of all evil spirits are described in chapter XVII (namely Pauruṣcarāṇika). These are the subjects fall under kriyā-pada part of Āgama. Again, qualification of Guru, Śiṣya and their selection. Guru-Śiṣya relationship, dīkṣā, ācamana etc. are dealt in detail in chapter II (Daiksika) while pious duties and devotional acts are described in chapter III (Śaucīya) and IV (Vaiṣnava-lamkāra) respectively of Hari-bhakti-vilāsa.

These topics are generally included under the caryāpada of Āgama.
It is also seen on study of the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa that mantras, different kinds for worship of deity, consecration of images, japa and their efficacy have been discussed in the book and this has constituted the mantra part of Āgama.

In order to attain the highest type of spontaneous premabhakti, treatment of professed theology and spiritual knowledge are also dealt in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. Treatment on such topics indicates the jñāna pada aspect of the Āgama.

It will be seen from this discussion that the topics of the work are in conformity with the Āgamas. Hence, I am inclined to call the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa as an Āgama.

NOTES AND REFERENCES


3. ibid., Viśvakoṣa , P.308.


5. Manusamhitā, 12.95.

6. ibid., 2.10.


10. *Yajñavalkya Samhitā*. 1.3.


20. *Pañcaiva mahāyajñah / tānyeva mahāsātvāni bhutayajñāh manusyayajñāh/ pitryayajño devayajñō brahmayajñā iti* // *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. 11.5.6.1.


22. *Yajñavalkya Samhitā* 7.3-5.


27. Viśvarupa on Yājñavalkya Samhitā.


29. Śabdakalpadruma, P. 81.


Calcutta, 1961, P. 449.

34. vaidikaih karmabhih punyairnisekādirdvijanmanām /
kāryah śarīrasamśkārah pāvanah pretya ceha ca //
MS.2.26; Manvārthamuktāvalī on it.

35. titikṣavah kārunīkah sūḥdah sarvadehinām /
ajātaśatravah śaṅtāh śādadhavah sādhubhūṣaṇah // B.P., 3.25.21.


Vol.V, P.43.