Bengal Vaiśnavism also known as Gauḍīya Vaiśnavism became a vibrant and dominant religious movement of Bengal during the 15th & 16th centuries with Śrī Caitanya as central figure. The Bengal Vaiṣṇavas are the worshippers of Rādha-Kṛṣṇa and are the upholders of the doctrine of Bhakti. According to Caitanyacaritāmṛta, the most popular biography of Śrī Caitanya, the Rādha-Kṛṣṇa cult has been originated from Mādhavendrapuruṣa who was the preceptor's preceptor of Śrī Caitanya. From Mādhavendra Puri it is transmitted to his disciple Iśvara Puri and from Iśvara Puri, Śrī Caitanya inherited it as his disciple. Then the followers of Śrī Caitanya developed it into a full-grown system with a philosophy and theology of its own 1.

Śrī Caitanya, the propounder of this sect, however, did not try to leave behind him any written document of his philosophical views. In fact in his life time he was absorbed mostly in devotional ecstacies and hardly sought to build up a cult or philosophical sect. There is no doubt that Caitanya was a great logician and scholar of repute 2. But according to Kavi Karṇapura, people became his devotees without instruction, by the very sight of Caitanya 3. It was due to his personality and religious enthusiasm that a philosophical sect and religious cult developed. Śrī Caitanya was the driving force by which the sect
was organized during his life time. He inspired his leading disciples to organise and propagate it after his death.

However, the later development of the sect into a full-fledged philosophical system and religious cult is due to the effort of his chosen disciples and associates. The study of the biography of the first twelve years of Caitanya after his renunciation reveals that he had the intention (i) to establish the philosophy of a new Bhakti cult and code of ritualism on solid foundation and (ii) to propagate the Bhakti cult in new way with renewed effort. He entrusted the responsibility to Rūpa-Sanātana and Gopāla Bhaṭṭa for the former project in order to establish the dignity of the new Bhakti cult to the eyes of society conceited with scripture and tradition of smṛti. Caitanya had no doubt about their devotion, wisdom and capability. He had selected Vṛndāvana of Uttar Pradesh for this mission. The Gosvāmis of Vṛndāvana, therefore, devoted themselves to formulate the philosophical doctrine of Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism on the instruction of Caitanya. For the second mission responsibility was given to cult in Advaitācārya and Nityānanda to propagate the Bhakti in Bengal in new phase.

Caitanya’s followers belonging to Navadvīpa did not try to systematize the doctrines and practices of the faith propounded by him. They were mainly concerned with the emotional aspect of Caitanya’s life and personality. Caitanya himself chose Rūpa and Sanātana for the highly technical and
difficult task of systematizing the philosophical doctrines and popularizing them among people. In this task their nephew Jīva Gosvāmi, a great scholar, and having great literary capability joined hands. With these three were added the names of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa and Raghunātha-dāsa whose contribution towards the said purpose is immense. They were the famous six Gosvāmis who were responsible of building the whole system of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism. They lived in Vṛndāvana and because of their effort Vṛndāvana became the great centre of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism in North India. All of them left their works for future generations which were written in Sanskrit.

Millions of people embraced Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism when that was introduced in Anga, Banga and Kalinga by Caitanya. But for the performance of rituals and festivals of this new creed some rules were necessary. The old Dharmaśāstras and Smṛti works were not sufficient for this purpose. The sākta sects were also very powerful on various places of Bengal at that time and there was controversy between the vaiṣṇavas and śākta regarding the system of performing rituals.

The Gosvāmis realised that while they had been in Vṛndāvana the local elite culture would not accept the emotional sentiment only. The rituals or duties of the Vaiṣṇavas are to be defined. This important work was done by the deccan Brāhmin, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa. He composed Hari-bhakti-vilāsa which was considered as Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Smṛti for the guidance of the devotees and
spiritual aspirants. The rituals and religious observances of the Bengali Vaišnava tradition are guided by the views of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*. For better understanding of the relationship between the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and Gaudīya Vaišnavism, a comparative discussion of the views of the Navadvīpa disciples of Caitanya and of the Vṛndāvana Gosvāmis is felt necessary. The theology and philosophy found in the writings of the Navadvīpa disciples are vague and un-systematic. They were concerned more with simple and direct faith than with elaborate discussion, and their aim was to depict chiefly, the passionately devotional life of Caitanya rather than to set forth his teachings. Unlike the Vṛndāvana Gosvāmis they accepted Caitanya as the center of their thought and emotion and regarded him as the highest reality and the object of adoration of their faith. This has been characterized as the *Gaura Pāramyavāda* which the Vṛndāvana Gosvāmis never discussed or set forth in their theological treatises. Caitanya appears to have refrained from discussing metaphysical problems with his followers, who took his metaphysics according to their own light.

The Vṛndāvana based theologians and philosophers were chiefly concerned with the God-head of Kṛṣṇa and his līlā as revealed in the older scriptures. Kṛṣṇa in their theory is not an avatāra but is the supreme Reality Himself. They were almost entirely silent about *Caitanya-līlā* and seldom referred to his direct realization of spiritual truth. The divinity of Kṛṣṇa as the exclusive object of worship is elaborately established but the divinity of
Caitanya which is implicitly acknowledged in the namaskriyās and other devotional verses of their work is hardly ever discussed. If Jīva Gosvāmi wrote *Krṣṇa sandarbha* he never wrote Caitanya sandarbha. It is true that the devout life of Caitanya inspired his faithful disciples. But in building up their systems of theology and philosophy there is no reference to the life, personality or views of Caitanya himself.

Like other Vṛndāvana based theologians of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa is also silent about the divinity of Caitanya in his corpus compendium *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*. The work carries a large number of quotations from the *Tantras* in addition to the *Purāṇas* and other religious scriptures. This testifies to the fact that the *Tantras* exerted considerable influence on this work. It contains salutation of Caitanya at the commencement of each of its twenty chapters called Vilāsas though the cultic worship of Caitanya or worship of Caitanya image which turned out to be a remarkable feature of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism in later years has not been recognized by Gopāla Bhaṭṭa in his book. This confirms the supposition that the early Vṛndāvana Gosvāmis did not wholeheartedly approve the worship of Caitanya, as the leading figures of the Navadvīpa circles did.

Theoretically the Gosvāmis did not maintain any such worship of Caitanya as they insisted upon in the case of Krṣṇa who alone, in their view, is the supreme deity. They regarded Caitanya more as an *Avatāra of Krṣṇa*. 
Kṛṣṇa incarnated as Rādhā, as it were, for a special purpose. It appears, therefore, that Caitanya-worship has not become a definite creed with these Vṛndāvana disciples of Caitanya. Gopāla Bhaṭṭa’s Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, which is the most authoritative compendium of the Vaiśṇava ācāra of the sect, may be taken as a proof in this regard. The eighteen out of twenty Namaskriyās to the twenty chapters of this work express the author’s deep reverence for Caitanya which attribute such eulogistic epithets as Bhagavata, Jagadguru, Anantādhibhūta-aiśvaryā, Tīrthankara, Mahāścarya-Prabhāvaka etc. to him. But there is nothing in them that does not apply, for instance, to one’s Guru, and it is remarkable that nowhere is Caitanya directly identified with Kṛṣṇa or even spoken of as an incarnation. This elaborate authoritative text on the ritualism of the sect gives no direction for the worship of Caitanya or his image, although it deals elaborately with the everyday worship and the temple-rituals connected with Kṛṣṇa and his image. Gopāla Bhaṭṭa acknowledges Caitanya as an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, but not the highest God.

The sacramental and devotional practices of Bengal School of Vaiśnavism has been codified in this most outstanding Āgama work, Hari-bhakti-vilāsa aims at an exegesis of obligatory and occasional rites and ceremonies to be observed by each and every follower of the faith. Each vidhi or injunction included in the work is fortified by profuse citations from the Purāṇas, Samhitās, Tantras, other scriptures and the religious treatises of the
This speaks for the author's erudition in Vaiṣṇava devotional literature in general and *Purānic* literature in particular. It has been accepted as the most dependable guide to the cultivation of *vaidhi* or *sādhana-bhakti* which is the stepping-stone to the attainment of *prema bhakti*, the unconditional supreme love for God. *Vaidhi bhakti* depends upon the *Vidhi* or injunction of the *śāstra*. But it is well known that Caitanyaism in its highest form does not attach much importance to the śāstric rules and ceremonies or to the observance of various religious injunctions. On the contrary, it lays great, if not exclusive emphasis on an inner and deeply mystical way of realization. *Premabhakti*, the state of intense devotional love for the Lord has been set forth to be the ideal of a Vaiṣṇava spiritual aspirant. However, Bengal Vaiṣṇavism has not altogether dispensed with the necessity of or has minimized the importance of *Vaidhibhakti* which depends on devotional acts performed in accordance with scriptural injunctions. As such some hard and fast rule for devotional acts is to be set forth by the saints of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism for according to them religious life pre-supposes a disciplined moral life. This purpose was served by Gopāla Bhaṭṭa's work.

The outlook and thought of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa as reflected in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* is completely conservative and sometimes reactionary also. The vaiṣṇava *smṛti* which the Vṛndāvana based Gosvāmis composed indicates a compromising spirit with the Brāhmanical *smṛti*. To whatever extent, it may be
liberal but the formulated smr̥ti has recognized the four fold caste and order law, varnāśramadharma, undisputed pre-eminence of the Brāhmīns, service of the śūdras to superior caste, prohibition of acceptance of gift from the etc. A śūdra can initiate only men of his own caste, not to high caste person (prātilomyam na dīkṣayet). In his Hari-bhakti-vilāsa there is no room for flute-player (Vāsudeva) Kṛṣṇa rather importance has been given upon Caturbhuja Vīśṇu. He has admitted special right of Brahmin Vaiṣṇavas. Gopāla Bhaṭṭa holds that whatever would be earned by the Śūdras serving the Brahmīns would be Śukla (dvijaśuṣruṣayā lavdham śuklam śudrasya kārtitam). A Brāhmin will not take the food of the Śūdra’s (nādyācchudrasya vipro ‘nna mahādvā yādi kāmatah). Whatever is given to Brāhmīns is a gift to Vīśnu. Men of high caste can expiate or wash out the vice generated from the sight of Candālas looking at the sun. In vilasa XVII of Hari-bhakti-vilāsa there is a rule for formal feeding and bestowing to the Brāhmīns.

But Caitanya did not preach the doctrine of according priority to the Brāhmin. He has not given any instruction for entertaining food and gift to the Brāhmin. Caitanya has never said that Caturbhūja Vīṣṇu is superior and more important than muralīdhara Kṛṣṇa. He has not also said that the sight of candāla and Yavanas generate sin. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja has noted down that Caitanya has instructed to observe some duties. But the injunction of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa is fundamentally different from those of Caitanya. Gopāla Bhaṭṭa has also not
given any instruction for the worship of Caitanya. Yet _Hari-bhakti-vilāsa_ is the principal book for _Vaiṣṇavācāra_ relating to the conduct of the Vaiṣṇavas.

As a matter of fact, for the rejection of the dominance of ritualism and superiority of Brāhmnical Caste _Bhaktivāda_ had become a stage of social protest and vangeance. This was an offshoot of Hinduism against casteism, Brāhmanical conservatism and loyalty to _Smṛitiśāstra_. The Bhakti movement as created by Caitanya focused on the oppressed strata of the society against feudalism. The contribution made by Caitanya in this respect was in a word unprecedented. The information found in ‘The Ethnological Notebook of Karl Marx’ points out that Marx himself would consider Caitanya as a social reformer and also mentioned the role of vaisṇavas in reducing at least the intensity of caste discrimination in Bengal. Caitanya held undoubtedly the role and position that history demands from an individual. What is that history? A particular aspect of the democracy is mass-communication and its resultant social mobility. *Candālo'pi dvijaśreṣṭho haribhaktiparāyana*; this revolutionary slogan was the tool of mass communication to Caitanya. To make every one from the highest to the lowest of the society his own men with deep love is a form of social dynamism of Caitanya. Śrī Caitanya was the exponent of spiritual democracy and non-violent movement. Rabindranath Tagore said that Vaiṣṇavism flooded the contemporary temperament with ecstatic feeling. It gave redemption to all from the contemporary condition to
an all pervasive love. Caitanya gave a blow to *nayavasmiti, nayavyakarana* of that period. He attacked the process of learning devoid of devotion, conservative institution guided by śrīts and above all the Tāntric cult prevalent at that time. He also stood against the conceited royal force. Caitanya’s religion was not a religion of the weak, but it was against the weakness of all men. The announcement of Bhakti cult enriched with the tradition of scriptures and *Purāṇas* was undoubtedly a revolutionary in the social milieu of that time. Caitanya and his followers were ostracized for his opposition to the *smārta* system. The movement of Caitanya repudiated the law of caste and order or *varnāśrama dharma* of medieval Hinduism relegating it to a lower stage of religious and social evolution. In our country Caitanya made a blow to castism. As is known, the *varnāśrama-dharma* has been the central core of Hindu ethics. According to *Manusamhitā*, the human race is organized into four natural psycho-physical types (*vānaśas*): likewise, each individual life is divided by Manu in four natural states or stations (*āśram*: The four *vānās* or castes viz brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya and śūdra were created according to the individual merits of each person*. However, during the passage of time, rigidity appeared in the ancient social system when the individual character and conduct (*guṇakarma*) were not taken into account. Caste was determined by one’s birth in a particular *vāna* alone. Such an inflexible expression of the *vāna-dharma* brought in its wake inequality and it
was against such a state of affairs that Śrī Caitanya raised his voice. In this regard his clarion call to his followers was to leave the varnāśrama-dharmān altogether. According to Śrī Caitanya, a Vaiṣṇava has no caste and his only duty or svadharma consists in serving Lord Kṛṣṇa alone and reciting His name. Further, Śrī Caitanya sincerely believed in the concept of individual equality and never considered caste-rank as a criterion for determining one's social superiority. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja wrote in his Caitanya Caritāmrta

\[\begin{align*}
nīcā jāti nahe kṛṣṇabhajane ayogya / 
satkula vipra nahe bhajaner yogya // 
yei bhaje sei bada, abhakta hīn chār / 
krṣṇabhajane nāhi jāti- kulādi- vicār //^{18}\end{align*}\]

In order to instill a sense of equality in the contemporary society, Śrī Caitanya declared that all and every body remained inseparable parts of the Divinity; every single heart is the abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is in this sense that all are to be treated as equal and each member of the society irrespective of caste and rank should be honoured. Caitanya declared-

\[\begin{align*}
kibā vipra kibā nyāśī śūdra kene nay / 
yei kṛṣṇa tattvavettā sei guru hay //^{19}\end{align*}\]

Kṛṣṇadāsa has faithfully reported, "jīve sammān dive jāni kṛṣṇa adhiṣṭhān". Further it is said "jīver svarupa hay kṛṣṇera nitya-dāks" which
means that every individual is an ever-attendant of Kṛṣṇa and hence, they are equal.

Śrī Caitanya denounced varṇāśrama-dharma not only because it creates inequality, but also because it implants in the minds of the followers the desire to attain material happiness either in this life or the next. As long as such desires are there in a man, he cannot attain the grace of God. And without the grace of God, he fails to become a true devotee and attain God. Varnāśrama-dharma therefore, cannot be accepted as an integral part of devotion.

Śrī Caitanya’s views were very clear, Prema or love for God remains the highest puruṣārtha (object of desire). The four traditional puruṣārthas (dharma, artha, kāma and mokṣa) were rejected by him as relatively insignificant. It may be mentioned here that mokṣa as the goal of life is given the highest value by almost all schools of Indian philosophy. But in the Caitanya School, this has been treated so insignificantly. The reason behind this may be that while the devotee’s only object of desire is to attain God by means of love, the mumukṣatva (desire of liberation) aims at the union of the two (that is the devotee and this object of devotion). Thus mokṣa acts as an obstacle in the path of Kṛṣṇa-bhakti and cannot satisfy the devotee’s desire to live in the constant company of God. In the event of this merging of the two (the devotee and the object of devotion), the very desire in a devotee to live in
the constant company of God gets jeopardized. The devotee does not want to become one with God; he prefers to remain separate and enjoy the bliss of his company. However, it should be mentioned here that Caitanya’s attitude towards the question of caste and social order in general appears to be rather complex. He felt no hesitation in embracing Haridāsa, Rūpa and Sanātana and admitting them to his order, but separate living quarters were arranged for them and there was some discrimination about eating food with them. These are revealed from the Caitanyacaritāmṛta of Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja. Most of this conservatism is apparent, as we shall see, in Gopāla Bhaṭṭa’s Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, which recognizes caste restriction in ritualistic worship.

And after the death of Caitanya the castism was restored almost fully according to the rule or code of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa formulated in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa.

The work of Gopāla Bhaṭṭa departs in many other details from the accepted views of Caitanya sect. The Kṛṣṇa in this work is Caturbhūja Cakradhārī and not dvibhūja muralīdhārī. Rādhā cult does not figure as prominently as it should, Rādhā being even omitted in the dhyāna of Kṛṣṇa. There is no direction for the construction of images of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa although there are rules for those of Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa and Rukmini and other forms of the deity.
A careful perusal of the text gives the impression that our author has not accepted the worship of the joint form of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa which is another distinctive feature of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism. Strictly speaking Hari-bhakti-vilāsa has not always adhered to the familiar orthodox views of the sect, rather it represents the views of an outstanding scholar who had some lingering Śrīvaiṣṇava leaning.

Moreover, some instructions of Hari-bhakti-vilāsa in respect of some affairs are not accepted in the school launched by Śri Caitanya. Śri Caitanya gave his own śālagramaśilā to kāyastha Raghunātha-dāsa. Inspired by this ideology Gopāla Bhatṭa has given the code as follows—

\[
evat śribhagavān sarvaiḥ śālagramaśilāmakah \\
dvijaiḥ strībhiṣca sūdraśīca pujya bhagavataḥ paraḥ /^{21}
\]

This means that the twice-born i.e Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and even Śūdras and women can worship God in the form of śālagrama. Sanātana Gosvāmi comments on this thus—Bhagatvaddīksāprabhāvena Śīdrādināmāpya viprasāmyam siddhameva. But in Bengal the Śūdras have not got right to worship śālagramaśilā.

Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism has accepted Bhāgavata as the most authoritative book on which the teaching of Caitanya is largely based. Caitanyaiteś based their religious beliefs on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam and exalted Rādhā to high position and laid stress upon the Rāsampānācādhayaśa section of the Bhāgavata.
Caitanya and his adherents were saturated with Radha-vada. The adoration to Kṛṣṇa-Rādhā is woven round the texture of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism.

As a most authoritative text of Vaiṣṇava compendium, Hari-bhakti vilāsa carries large number of quotations from Śrīmad Bhāgavata in addition to other Purāṇas and religious scriptures. A considerable part of the 10th Vīṇāsa of Hari-bhakti-vilāsa contains the references of the Bhāgavata under the caption Śrīmad Bhāgavata Māhātyam (Glorification of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata). Gopāla Bhaṭṭa has dealt with elaborate glorification of Śrīmad Bhāgavata. While describing the merit of reading or listening to the scriptures Bhāgavata has been stated as the most sacred and purifying. By listening to the deeds of Kṛṣṇa described therein both the speaker and the hearer ensure the highest religious merit for themselves by the removal of their sins, gratification of all desires and awakening of resignation and love for the deity22.

The chief purpose of Bhāgavata seems to be the glorification of Bhakti and Kṛṣṇalilā, which, therefore, came to be regarded as one of the supreme scriptures of Vaiṣṇava literature. Contrasted with Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism Gopāla Bhaṭṭa has not mentioned Rādhā in his book Hari-bhakti-vilāsa just like the Bhāgavata which is silent about Rādhā. She is unnamed in the Purāṇas although the Bhāgavata refers to a favourite Gopi with whom Kṛṣṇa wanders and sports alone. But in Caitanyaite Vaiṣṇavism joint worship is accorded to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.
There is no doubt that the first and the most important literary record of pre-Caitanya Vaiśṇavism in Bengal is *Gītagovinda*, the passionate lyrical poem of Jayadeva. This has been the source of inspiration of such later Bengali poems as *Śrīkṛṣṇa Kīrtana* of Bodu Caṇḍidāsa towards the end of 14th century A.D. The Caitanya movement in Bengal undoubtedly accepted the *Gītagovinda* as a source of inspiration. Caitanyaite Vaiśṇava would regard the *Gītagovinda* not merely as a poetical composition of great beauty but also as a great religious work. Jayadeva who flourished under the Sena Kings towards the end of 12th century A.D. made the eternally fascinating love-story of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā as the subject-matter of the probable source of accepting Rādhā as Kṛṣṇa’s consort by Caitanyaite Vaiśṇavas.

On the perusal of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, it is found that Gopāla Bhaṭṭa has not quoted *Gītagovinda* as one of the sources of his compendium magnum opus. He has avoided this book. It is difficult to conceive why such a devout Vaiśṇava like Gopāla Bhaṭṭa has left this book outside the reference of source book. Most probably for this reason, the reference of Rādhā is missing in his *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*. Had Gopāla Bhaṭṭa accepted that book as one of the source books, the concept of Rādhā would find place in his *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*.

*Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* has dealt fairly fully with extant Vaiśṇava festivals of the medieval period. It is interesting to note that in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* the worship of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa has been prescribed but no specific mention
has been made therein about Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa worship—a cult so earnestly propagated by Bengal Vaiṣṇavism. While festivals connected with deities other than Kṛṣṇa are excluded, an exception is made in favour of Śivarātri; but the most important Vaiṣṇava festival of Rāsa-Yātrā, is conspicuous by absence of all reference. The reason is not known why Gopāla Bhaṭṭa has omitted the important Vaiṣṇava festival Rāsa-Yātrā but included the non-Vaiṣṇava Śivarātri.

Any discussion on religion remains incomplete without a reference to moral and ethical values. The case of Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism is no exception to that. It is true that ethics has not been systematically treated by the Gaudīya Vaiṣṇava philosophers and that this issue has not been discussed independently, yet the philosophers of this school maintain that spiritual progress is hardly possible without moral endeavour. However, the absence of any methodical exposition has been fulfilled by the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. Hari-bhakti-vilāsa gives us a detail account of ritualistic observances and devotional practices. A faithful following of this ritual brings forth a constant rememberance of God and this naturally purifies the mind of a devotee. It enriches the thought system of humanity as a whole. S.K. De therefore, said “An elaborate scheme of devotional acts, therefore, is to be prescribed for the less enlightened and larger mass of devoted followers; and the task was accomplished with such successs by Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, in collaboration with
Sanatana, that this stupendous compilation is now regarded to be the highest ritual authority of the Bengal School of Vaisnavism”.

Although *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* is a ritualistic guide-book of Caitanyaism, the author is somewhat singular in emphasizing devotion to Viṣṇu, which form of the deity is apparently exalted even over Kṛṣṇa. This fact is noteworthy because the other Gosvāmīs and followers of Caitanya regard the form of Viṣṇu to be a lower manifestation than that of Kṛṣṇa, who in their view is exclusively the highest deity and the only object of worship. “This partiality for Viṣṇu which is distinct throughout this work, is presumably due to the lingering influence of the Southern Vaisnavism of the Śrīvaiṣṇava sect to which Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, hailing from the South is said to have originally belonged”.

Viṣṇu is the highest God and the only saviour and He is the Bhagavat. Viṣṇu is incomparable; one who compares him with other deities is a low-born infidel and is sure to go to hell. The worship of a god other than Viṣṇu is compared to saluting a caṇḍāla woman rather than one’s own mother and taking poison instead of nectar. This is very evident from the verses appeared in first vilāsa of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*.

\[
vāsudevam parityajya yo 'nyadevamupāsate / 
svamāṭaram parityajya śvapacīm vandate hi sah // 
vāsudevam parityajya yohanyadevamupāsate / 
tyaktvāmṛtam sa mūḍhātmā bhumkte halāhalam viṣam //
\]
yastu visnum parityajya mohadanumupasate
sa hemarasimutsrijya paniṣurāsim jighṛksati
anādrtya tu yo visnumayadevam samāśrayet
gangāmbhasah sa trṣṇārtto mrgatṛṣṇām pradhābati/
yomohādi viṣṇumanyena hīnadeven durmmatih/
sādhāraṇam sakṛdbrute sohantyajo nāntyajohantyajah //

But the attitude of Caitanyism towards Viṣṇu does not agree with what
is expressed so distinctly in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. In Gaudīya Vaiṣṇavism Kṛṣṇa
holds a higher position. Essentially Kṛṣṇa and Nārāyaṇa are one and the same.
The Vaiṣṇava siddhānta is “Siddhāntastu abhede pi śrīkṛṣṇasvarūpavyott”.
Although they are non-different in terms of tattva (essence), Kṛṣṇa is superior
in terms of power of attraction due to his being the emporium of aesthetic
rapture. “rasenotkṛṣyate kṛṣṇa rupamesā rasa sthiti”.

It is recognized that moral training is an essential requisition of
purifying oneself in order to attain the Supreme Being who is presupposed to
possess all moral excellences and to be absolutely pure and free from moral
defects. It is believed that however, imperfect, man is essentially divine and
can by divine grace as well as by his own exertion, mental and moral enter into
communication with the divine being. Ritual practices help to the discipline and
purification of the mind and body. Hari-bhakti-vilāsa is considered to be most
reliable work on the practice or observance and rituals of the Gaudīya.
Vaiṣṇavas. According to Vaiṣṇavism, religion becomes incomplete without reference to devotional practices and code of conduct. For spiritual progress also these are essential. Hari-bhakti-vilāsa has fulfilled these essentials. The cardinal rules for ritualism, worship, practices and observances as laid down in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa by Gopāla Bhaṭṭa are the means for morality, ethics, discipline and purification of the mind and body. It follows that religious deeds parse are more potent than moral acts.

NOTES AND REFERENCES


2. cf. Jayananda’s verse—

candra sārasvat nava kāvya nātake /

smṛti tarka sāhitya paṭīla eke eke //

is quoted in Caitanyadeva: itihāsa o avadān, edited by Avantikumar Sanyal and Ashok Bhattacharya. Calcutta. P.150; Krṣṇadāsa Kavirāja also cited in CC, Ādililā. Ch.16 P.115 about Caitanya—
sarvaāstre sarvapaṇḍita pāya parājay/

vinay bhangīte kāro duhkha nāhi hay//


5. *HBV* 2.1.

6. ibid., 3.1.

7. ibid., 4.1.

8. ibid., 11.1.


11. ibid., 9.75.

12. ibid., 9.75.

13. ibid., 13.16.

14. ibid., 17.118.


16. ibid., introduction P. 40.


18. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Antyaliśa, Ch. 4, P. 512.

19. ibid., Madhaśiśa, Ch. 8, P. 213.

20. ibid., Antyaliśa, Ch. 4, Madhaśiśa, Ch. 11.

22. Ibid., 10.303-304, 323.

23. Ibid., 18.96.


27. Quoted from *Bhaktirasāṁrta-sindhu*. Vol.1, 2nd lahari. 32 in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Madhyālīla, Ch.9, P. 233.

28. Ibid., P.233.