



Message From Our Spiritual Head Vaishnavacharya Shri Dwarkeshlalji Mahodayshri

Vaishnav Samvad Part 4 - Jan 2021

“Curiosity is really important. The purpose of these Vaishnav Samvads is to go through the journey from questions to answers. They create a bond between the Guru and the Bhakt, between the Vallabhkul and Vaishnavs, and allow for an open environment that encourages Vaishnavs to harness their curiosity and grow closer to Thakorji. These sessions are particularly important for the Youth, who will have many questions, and I encourage them to raise these in the right forums.

Questioning things is not wrong. However, what we have to be careful about is who we take our questions to. If taken to the wrong person, a question raises doubt. If taken to the right person, a question is an opportunity to learn and grow. One of the most famous Samvads was between Shree Krishna and Arjun in the form of the Bhagwat Gitaji. Arjun had questions, and took them to Shree Thakorji, who was able to dispel his doubts and increase Arjun's faith and lead him down the rightful path. Imagine a Gitaji where Arjun took his questions to Dhritrashtra (his foe uncle) - imagine what path that would have led Arjun down - one of unrighteousness.

Let us ask questions, and let us ask them to the right people, in the right forums. As you, the Youth, walk this path of learning more about Pushtimarg - you may have many questions - please ask them in future Samvads, as well as in your satsangs and discuss and learn together.

As we start the new structure for the Youth Group, I encourage all 18-35 year olds to join the Vaishnav Youth Group, and encourage all those that want to help teach the Youth to register as teachers as well.”

Vaishnav Samvad Part 5 coming up on Sunday 28th Feb - send your questions in to Sonal Doshi (07505 364612)

Youth Registration Form: bit.ly/shrinathdham-youth

Teachers Registration Form: bit.ly/shrinathdham-teachers

Leela - Uddhavji - Part 1 : Who is Uddhavji?

Uddhavji is one of the most important personalities in Krishna Leela. Being one of the closest associates of Shree Krishna, Uddhavji is an incredibly special personality and one of the most important for the Vaishnavs to hear about. In Shrimad Bhagvatam, Uddhavji is mentioned in several places and through this we get to hear a lot about his personality. As early as Canto 3 in Shrimad Bhagvatam, we are introduced to Uddhavji. He is described as being a childhood devotee of Shree Krishna, which teaches us the importance of starting our spiritual practice at a young age.

Uddhavji is known to be a ‘Nitya Siddha,’ an eternal associate of Shree Krishna and an eternal devotee. Canto 10 of Shrimad Bhagvatam goes into more details about Uddhavji. He is described as being one of the wisest advisors in the *Vrshni*

dynasty (part of the *Yaduvamsha*). He is described as being a very close, dear friend of Shree Krishna, he is a direct disciple of the topmost guru, Brhaspati and he is extremely intelligent.

Later, whilst in Dwarka, we learn that Shree Krishna would often consult Uddhavji before making decisions. In Canto 11 it is seen through the Uddhav Gita how Uddhavji was the one who receives the final *Updesh* (message) of Shree Krishna before His departure from the earth. Uddhavji is not just a close friend of Shree Krishna, they are also related. Uddhavji is the son of Vasudevji's brother, Devabhaga, thereby making Uddhavji and Shree Krishna first cousins. Being such close friends, relatives and associates, there is said to even be a physical resemblance between Shree Krishna and Uddhavji. Both also have very similar mannerisms. Uddhavji wears the ‘*prashadi vastra*’ of Shree Krishna, meaning he wears Shree Krishna's used garments and ornaments.

The significance of Uddhavji is further revealed in Canto 10, when he is chosen by Shree Krishna to visit Vraj and personally take a message to the Gopis of Vraj. Uddhavji became so attached to Vraj that until this day, he resides in Vraj at Uddhav Kund in the form of a grass creeper.

In the coming newsletters, we will learn about the real significance of Uddhavji's visit to Vraj.

By Janaki Mehta



Basics Of Pushtimarg : Sodash Granths - 16 Doctrines

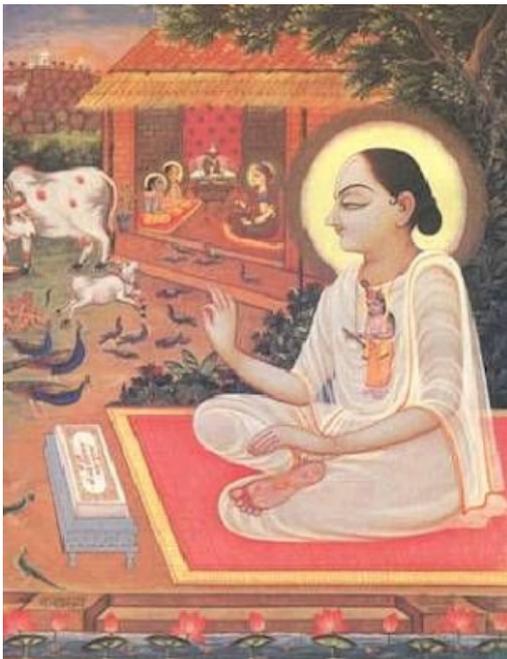
Shree Vallabhacharyaji has given us a legacy of great literature. His works are based on the Shrimad Bhagvatam, the Vedas, Shrimad Bhagvad Gita and the Bhrama Sutra. The Sodash Granths mainly deal with narrations as an introduction to the *Shastra* (holy scriptures), their relevance and various implications. They form the principle teachings and code of conduct and also define practical theology of Pushtimarg.

Sodash Granth is called the "*Vallabh-Geeta*" of Pushtimarg. Vaishnavs also call it our "*Upanishad*" because it has all the principles of Pushtimarg. These 16 hymns were written independently and at different times to provide guidance and clarification on principles of Pushtimarg for Vaishnavs.

The Sodash Granths serve as a lighthouse for devotees and they speak volumes about cultivating *Prem-Bhakti* (love and devotion) for Shree Krishna through *Seva* (service) and *Smaranam* (remembering, chanting etc). The core message of the Granths is total surrender to the lotus feet of Shri Thakorji.

The Sodash Granths as narrated by Shree Vallabhacharyaji are:

- 1) **Shree Yamunashtakam:** Eight verses sung in praise of Shree Yamuna Maharani. Shri Vallabh wrote this at the age of 14 on the banks of Shri Yamuna at Vishram Ghat in Mathura, upon having *Darshan* of Shree Yamunaji
- 2) **Bal Bodh:** A guide for beginners on the path of devotion
- 3) **Siddhant Muktavali:** This is the "String of Pearls" forming the principles of Pushtimarg, which teaches us the principles of serving Thakorji
- 4) **Pushti-Pravaha-Maryada Bhed:** Explains the characteristics of the different types of souls
- 5) **Siddhant Rahasyam:** Known as the 'Secrets of Pushtimarg', it teaches us how to cultivate qualities of politeness, patience and total surrender to Shri Krishna
- 6) **Navaratnam:** Explains that "Brahma Sambandhi Jiva" should not worry about this physical world
- 7) **Antah-Karan-Prabodh:** Advice to one's heart that when one gets free of all worries, he should use this human body to serve Shri Krishna by devoting his all possessions in *seva* (service).
- 8) **Vivek-Dhairya-Ashray :** How to cultivate qualities of politeness, patience and total surrender to Shree Krishna



9) **Krishna-Ashray:** An explanation of why Pushtimargiya bhaktas have to surrender to Shri Krishna

10) **Chatuh Shloki:** Verses illustrating four main pursuits of life: *Dharma* (Duty), *Arth* (Wealth), *Kam* (Desire), *Moksh* (Salvation)

11) **Bhakti Vardhini:** Instructions on how to increase devotion and apply it to our lives

12) **Jal Bhed:** For complete devotion, we need to praise Shree Krishna and to listen to his leelas. Jal Bhed means "Difference in waters" and refers to the different types of speakers

13) **Panch Padyani:** In a similar way, Panch Padyani are five instructive verses on different types of listeners

14) **Sanyas Nirnaya:** A text on the decision to renunciate from the material world

15) **Nirodh Lakshanam:** Teaches us to identify the characteristics of detachment

16) **Sewa Phalam:** Explains the fruit and reward of performing *Seva* (service)

Garu Svami - Child Renunciate

Garu Svami, a Brahmin from Mathura renounced his home at the age of eight and pilgrimaged to Vrindavan where he sat by the banks of the Yamuna, contemplating Divine Grace.

In time, the local people began honoring him as their guru and he would advise them, "Always chant the Lord's names."

One evening, Guru Svami pondered, "Because I have not seen God, my life has passed wasted."

Tears welled in his eyes while his soul filled with divine anguish. Eventually, when he fell asleep, Krishna appeared in his dream and said, "Shri Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya will come here in the morning. After becoming his disciple, you will experience My grace."

The following morning, Shri Mahaprabhu arrived there and, after bathing, Garu Svami approached him and prayed to be made a disciple. Shri Mahaprabhu questioned, "Why do you want to become my follower when everyone calls you Svami?"

Garu Svami revealed, "It is the Lord's order." Shri Mahaprabhu then blessed him as well as all of his disciples. When Garu Svami requested teaching, Vallabh explained to him his work, 'Trividha Namavali', and from its recitation, Garu Svami began to experience Shri Krishna.

Day and night he became absorbed in the mental worship of the blessed Lord. Because he experienced the supreme devotional state, his realization remains ineffable. Therefore, the account of his life cannot be further elaborated.