

Vallabhacharya

1478 – 1531

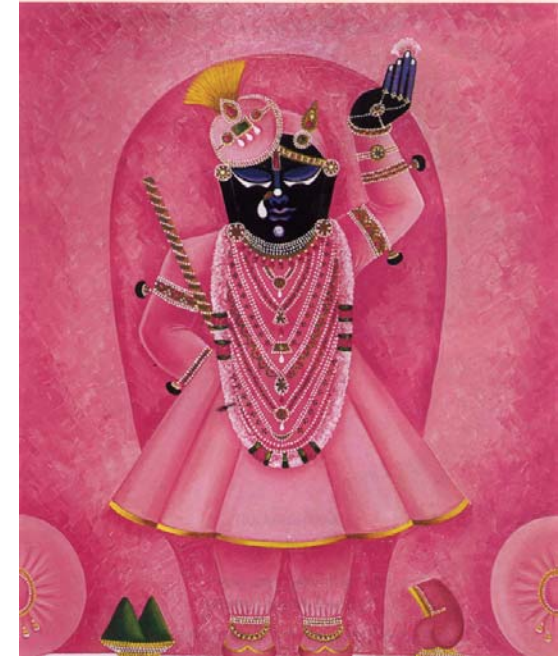
Shudha Advaita (Pure Non-dualism) Philosophy
Pushti Marg or Rudra Sampraday



Vallabhacharya ji



Vallabhacharya ji on pilgrimage



Shrinath ji = Bal Swaroop
of Krishna

Life History (1)

- Place of Birth: Champaran (near Raipur) in the state of Chattisgarh on the 11th day of Chaitra krishna paksh Vikram samvat 1535 (1478 AD) in Telgu Brahmin family. Born 2 months prematurely. Had no signs of life. Parents placed him under a tree and left. Krishna appeared to parents in dream and signified that He Himself had taken birth as a child. Parents rushed to the tree where they had left the baby and were amazed to find the baby alive and protected by a circle of divine fire. Mother extended her arms into the fire unscathed and received from the fire the divine baby
- Incarnation of Agni
- Family: Lakshman Bhatt (father); Illamma (mother). Were on the way to Varanasi for his birth but due to religious persecution by Muslims, had to flee the area. Reached Champaran jungles when Vallabha was born prematurely.
- Born after completion of 100 Somyagnas (once a year) by 5 generations of his ancestors - Yagnanarayan Bhatt (32), Gangadhar (28), Ganpati (30), Vallabh (5), Lakshman (5)

Life History (2)

- Childhood – Used to play with images of Krishna and his father's books
 - Yagyopaveet at the age of 5
 - Started studying Vedas at the age of 7 in Varanasi.
 - Name – Krishna Prasad, Janardana, Sravita, Vallabha (i.e. Beloved)
 - Brilliant student. Named by people as Bal Saraswati – could recite hundreds of Mantras from start to end and in reverse order
 - Father died at the age of 11
 - Completed education at the age of 12 and went to visit Vrindavan
- Guru – Father?
- Completed 3 Bharat yatras
- Discourses on Shrimad Bhagvat Mahapurana at 84 places
- 84 famous disciples

Life History (3)

- Family: Wife – Mahalaxmi
 - Sons – Gopinath ji (born 1510)
 - Vitthalnath Ji (Gusainji) (born 1515)
 - 2 Daughters
- Construction of Shrinath Ji temple in 1498 and reconstruction in 1519 at Goverdhan mountain
- 3 rules
 - Wear white dhoti and “upvarna”to cover upper part of the body
 - Barefoot pilgrimages
 - Always reside at the outskirts of the village
- Performed 5 soma yagnas
- Jal Samadhi in 1530 in Kashi
- Asura Vyamoha Lila: In the year 1530 A.D. or S.Y. 1587 (Asadha month), at mid day he entered the mid stream of Gangaji. Meditating upon divine being he bent forward in a posture of bowing soon after a brilliant flame emerged from Gangaji in the form of a huge beam of light. It spread and touched the sky. In that brilliant flame of light Sri Vallabha had made the journey of his body to Goloka. People heard the sounds of "Dundibhi" (a kind of instruments). The celestials showered flowers. All the citizens of Kashi had witnessed this divine conglomeration of light for nearly three hours. All were wonder struck. The disciples were chagrined. In this way Sri Vallabha who had manifested from fire had finally the means of fire had passed on to Goloka. He lived on this earth for 52 years two months and seven days.

Shudhaadviata Acharya Lineage

- Shree Adi Purushottam
 - Mahadevji
 - Narad Muni
 - Shree Krishna
 - Guru Vyas
 - Shuk Devji
 - Shree Vishnuswami
 - His Disciple Mahayogi Bilvamangal
 - Shreemad Vallabhacharya Mahaprabhu
- The above-mentioned lineage is taken from
Shandilya Samhita**

Vallabhacharya's Philosophy

Main points of the Shuddha Advaita (Pushti Marg) philosophy are:

- the Universe that have appeared before and infinite period is constituted by Brahm itself.
- The cause and the effect (result) i.e. Jagat, Jiva and Jad is also Brahm itself.
- Krishna=Brahm,
- Brahm sambandh Mantra (ashtakshar mantra):
“Shri Krishnam Sharadam Mamah”
- Jiva and World are real and dependent on Krishna's grace.
- In the absence of the effects of Maya- Jiva and Brahm are One (not separate)
- Total submission to Krishna with humble desire for His Grace
- Srimad Bhagvat Mahapuram is equivalent to Vedas and is the pramana for vedas
- Vallabha's followers worship Bal Krishna (Vatsalya Bhava) as Shrinath Ji and emphasized his Seva.
- Vallabha laid great stress on Pushti (grace) and Bhakti (devotion).
- Maha Pushti is the highest grace or Anugraha which helps the aspirant to attain Godhead. Things come out of the Akshara (Satchidananda) like sparks from fire. These are his salient teachings

Importance of Shrimad Bhagwat Mahapuram

- Only Acharya to teach significance and importance of Shreemad Bhagwat Mahapuram and gave it a unique position in Shastras and to be considered as Pramanas in the level of Puranas
- Vedas are Kalpatara (i.e. Divine tree) and Shreemad Bhagwat is the "Nigam Kalpataru Fal" (i.e. ripe fruit of the divine tree or essence of entire Vedas).
- Shreemad Vallabhacharyaji proclaimed the 'Shuddha-advaita' siddhant in such a way so as to interpret all shastras consistently and coherently.
- Vallabhacharyaji says:
 - Doubts originating from Vedas must be resolved by reading Bhagvad Geeta
 - Doubts originating from Shreemad Bhagvad Geeta must be resolved by reading Brahmsutras and
 - Doubts originating from Brahmsutras must be resolved by reading Shreemad Bhagwat Mahapuram.

Writings of Vallabhacharya

- The important works of Vallabhacharya ji are
- *Vyasa Sutra Bhashya*,
- *Jaimini Sutra Bhasya*,
- *Bhagavata Tika Subodhini*, (Commentary on Srimad Bhgavatam- based on discourses by Vallabhacharya ji written by disciple Madhav Bhat Kasmiri)
- *Pushti Pravala Maryada*
- *Siddhanta Rahasya*

Shrinath Ji Temple

- The deity (Swaroop) at the famous Vaishnav temple of Shri Nathadwara near Udaipur in Rajasthan. SHRINATHAJI = 7 year old Child Krishna who manifested Himself from the mountain Goverdhan
- SHRINATHAJI's appearance (1408). Sadu Pandey's cows from a vilage new near Govardhan were always going to the top of mountain Goverdhan for grazing. One of the cows would go to a particular spot and would discharge her milk there. Upon inquiry, a stone, which resembled a raised hand, was found at the spot. People started worshipping this place and offered milk, fruits, etc. The worshipper would have their wishes fulfilled. After 70 years of worshipping, on the day of appearance of Shri Vallabhacharya ji in 1478, the whole figure emerged from this spot by itself. People asked Him who He was and He said, "I am Lord Krishna of Saraswat Kulp. I have reappeared in this Kaliyug. I will be known by the names of Shri Devdaman, Shri Indradaman or Shri Nagdamanas." Shri Devdaman, eventually became known as SHRINATHAJI.
- In the year 1492 Lord Krishna appeared before Vallbahcarya ji and said," I have appeared as Lord SHRINATHAJI on the mountain Goverdhan. Go there to meet me. I am eagerly awaiting your arrival." He immediately came to meet Govardhannathji started climbing mount Goverdhan. Lord Krishna met Shri Vallabhacharyaji half way on this mountain. The meeting was very emotional.

Shrinath Ji Temple

- Six years after this historic meeting (1498), Shri Vallabhacharyaji started constructing a temple for SHRI NATHAJI on top of the mountain Goverdhan. Reconstruction in 1519.
- Appointed Priests (known as Mukhiajis), Singers, Musicians, Cooks, and Manager etc. to manage the Seva-worshipping- of Lord SHRINATHAJI. The sanctum of Shrinathaji was thrown open eight times a day at fixed intervals for Darshans which enabled devotees to see Him for a few moments.
- During the time of Aurangzeb, SHRINATHAJI temple's safety was at stake and it was decided to relocate the deity (Swaroop) to a safer place. The swaroop was transferred to a decorative chariot and after traveling for almost two and half years, a new location in Sinhad (now called Nathdwara) in a palace of the king of Udaipur (disciples of Vallbhacahrya ji) was selected to settle down. Two other reasons for selection of this place : Resting place for Shri Gusainji Shri Vithalnathaji (a son of Shri Vallabhacharyaji) on his travel from Dwarika from Vraj. It was also to fulfill the promise of Shrinathaji to princess Ajabkumverbai of Udaipur (a devotee of Shrinath ji). Temple in Nathdwara constructed in 1728
- The swaroop of SHRINATHAJI is four feet high and is black in color. The left hand is raised-inviting disciples to go to Him. Right hand fist rests on the waist. The swaroop has a square Pithika, containing nine objects: Two Cows, A Cobra, A Sheep, A Man(Muni), A Parrot, Two men (Munies), A Snake, A Lion and Two Peacocks.

First Bharat Yatra (Pilgrimage)

- Just before death – Father asked him to occupy the seat of Acharya and propagate the path of devotion
- First Pilgrimage of the country at the age of 11 (took 7 years)
- Barefoot, wore only Dhoti and Upvarna
- Accompanied by 4 learned scholars
- Carried the basket containing his family deity on his head wherever he went
- Prepared food with his own hands, offered first to Sri Thakurji and only then ate
- Recited Srimad Bhagavatam for the benefit of listeners
- Asta Akshar Mantra
- Fast on Ekadashi – only took water on this day
- Pilgrimage route: Kashi to Champaran, Jagannath Puri, Wardha and back to Kashi and then to Prayag to Ujjain (camped near Sandipani Rishi Ashram), Orcha, Andhra Pradesh, Vijaynagar, Mathura, Vrindavan, Gokul, Gujrat, Himchal Pradesh (Himalayas), Kanauj, Prayag, Kashi
- In Jagannath puri temple he sang in the praise of Krishna for over 24 hours non-stop in standing position. His right hand finger impressions can be seen even to-day on the nearby wall where he stood resting a hand to steady himself

First Bharta Yatra (Pilgrimage)

- Won debate in Jagannath Puri temple (organized by ruler Purushottam Rai) by providing the following answers:
 - Who is the chief 'deva' ? Krishna
 - Which is the top most 'Granth' ? Bhagvat Geeta
 - Which is the most important 'Mantra' ? Shri Krishna name
 - Which is the most important 'Karma' ? Devotion to Krishna
 - These answers were confirmed by Jagannath ji himself
- Creation of Peepal Tree in Ujjain from a leaf and Bhagvatam discourse
- Ujjain to Orcha (MP)- defeated Ghata Saraswati in debate and was honored with "Kanakabhisek"
- Title from this point on - Sri Vallabhacharya
- Orcha to Vindhya mountains to Andhra Pradesh. Took Mother to Bala ji temple (Vijaynagar)
- Then North to Mathura
- Protected Hindus from trick "yantra" conversion by Muslims
- Brought cow statue to life and convinced Muslim rulers to allow Hindus to pray
- Vraj Parikrama
- Vrindavan stay every 6 months and Bhagvat Puran discourses
- Moved to Gokul at the age of 14 Composed Yamunashtakam and Madhurashtakam in Gokul
- Mathura to Gujrat

Second Bharat Yatra (Pilgrimage)

- After the first Bharat Yatra Wanted to settle in Puri
- Went to his native place “Kakaravda” and stayed for sometime with relatives to settle family affairs
- Took only 3 things with him: Shaligram Ji, family Bhagvatam and Mukundaraiji (deity) and Sri Madan Mohanji - their family deity
- Kakarvada to vijaynagar to Kashi (with mother) to Prayag (built a cottage for mother), and contued commentary on Bhagvatam
- After 2 years started on 2nd Bharatyatra with 4-5 disciples
- Prayag to Jharkhand when Shri Krishna came in his dream to ask him to come to Vraj as he has manifested as Sri Govardhannath and asked him to built a temple to give him Swarup and start seva.
- Vallbhacharya ji changed his plan to go to Puri and started for Vrij. Reached Giriraj Ji.
- Climbed Giriraj ji with his permission and recovered his idol. Installed the icon of Shrinath ji in a temple and started his seva.
- Went back to Jharkhand and Puri to Pandharpur and had darshan of Vithoba as well as Shrinath ji in his dream. Both Vithoba and Shrinath Ji asked him to marry to have son in the family.
- Pndharpur tp Gujarat and then to Badrinarayana to Vyas Muni hermitage, to Haridwar, then to Kanauj and then to Prayag. Thus he returned to his house in Adel (near Prayag). In Prayag all the four Vaishnava Acharyas had given him unforseen welcome to the young Acharya. This second Bharat Yatra was completed in a short period of four years (1497- 1501 A.D).

Third Bharta Yatra (Pilgrimage)

- Married to Mahlaxmi in 1501 at the age of 22 in Kashi and 6 months later with the permission of his elders left for the third Bharat Yatra
- Kashi to Vraj, to Gokul to Giriraj ji, installed Shrinath ji in new temple (built by a business man from Punjab) in 1507.
- Started the yatra again and went to Vijaynagar after learning about the great debate between Siva Acharyas and Vaishnava Acharyas in the court of Krishna Deva Rai (the Emperor of Vijayanagar). Arrived on the last day of the discussions. The doormen were instructed not to allow any new comer to the court. Sri Vallabha came and stood at the entrance of the court. The doormen were terribly impressed by the brilliance on the face of Sri Vallabha. They sent a word to the ruler Krishna Deva Rai. The emperor himself come to the entrance of the court to receive him with great honour. Vallbhacharya was allowed to participate in the debate that lasted for another 28 days. Ultimately Sri Vallabha achieved victory over them. Thus Sri Vallabha had established his "Sudha Advita Brahmavada" in the presence of scholars of all religious Sects.
- The ruler offered him gifts but he did not accept it as only his disciples could offer him guru Dakshina. The ruler became his disciple and offered 100 gold mohurs but he accepted only 7 to have Nupurs made for Vithalnath Ji in Vijaynagar
- Completed Bharat yatra by 1509 (in 7 years) and reached Adel (village near Prayag- place of his permanent residence)

Disciples

- 2 Sons – Gopinath ji and Vithalnath ji
- 84 famous disciples
- Damodardas Harsani first to receive Brahm Sambandh Mantra ,a mantra of self dedication or consecration of self to Lord Krishna
- Madhav Bhat Kasmiri – Wrote Subodhini Tika (Commentary on Srimad Bhgavatam) based on discourses by Vallabhacharya ji.

References for further Reading

- <http://www.hinduwiki.com/index.php?title=Vallabhacharya>
- <http://www.vallabhkankroli.org/home.html>