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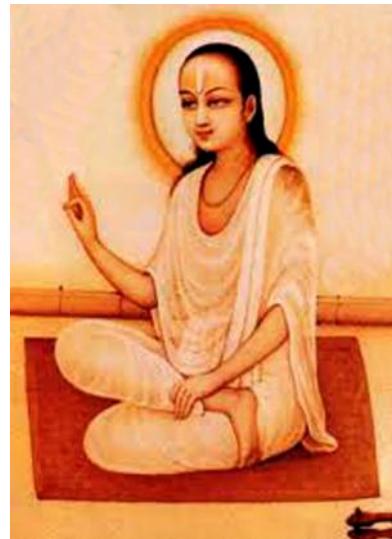
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# VALLABHACHARYA

*English Translation*

**Prof. M. Rajagopalacharya**



**Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams,  
Tirupati**

**Srinivasa Bala Bharati - 148**  
*Children Series*

# **VALLABHACHARYA**

*Telugu Version*  
**Dr. Bhimsen Nirmal**

*English Translation*  
**Prof. M. Rajagopalacharya**



*Published by*  
**Executive Officer**  
**Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati**  
**2014**

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Editor-in-Chief  
**Prof. Ravva Sri Hari**

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## **FOREWORD**

If a beautiful garden is to be raised, one needs to take proper care of tender flower plants. In the same way in order to create a good society, great care needs to be taken of young children who are going to be future citizens of India. All their intellectual attainments will be futile if they fail to learn of their culture and its greatness. They need to be told of great men and women of this country so that they are inspired by their ideals. The essentials of our culture should be given to them in the form of simple and charming stories. They will cherish these ideals and be guided by them. They will promote good and they will love the society they live in. They make their families proud and bring great prestige to their country when they grow up into good citizens.

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams have brought out these booklets for children in Telugu under Srinivasa Bala Bharati Series. Although meant for children, they are useful to the elderly too. They have found place in the book shelves of every family. The stories of legendary men and women are narrated in a simple way. We hope that more and more children will read them and profit by them.

I congratulate Dr. R. Sri Hari, Editor-in-Chief, TTD for his efforts in bringing out the English translations of SRINIVASA BALA BHARATI SERIES so well. We have received co-operation of many learned men and women in our efforts to popularize this series. I am thankful to them.

In the Service of the Lord

  
Executive Officer,

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams.  
Tirupati.

## **FOREWORD**

Today's children are tomorrow's citizens. They need apt acquaintance with the life-histories of celebrated persons at tender so that they get opportunity to lead their lives in an exemplary way. They will come to know that great things such as Indian culture, basic tenets of life and moral teachings are abundantly available in the life-experiences of great men. It is observed that there is no scope to teach such subjects in school curriculum.

Observing such circumstances the Publication Division of Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams has published about hundred booklets in Telugu about the lives of famous sages and great men written by various authors under the editorship of Dr.S.B. Raghunathacharya under "Bala Bharati Series". The response to these books is tremendous and it has given impetus to publish them in other languages also. To begin with, some of the books are now brought out in English and Hindi by T.T.D. for the benefit of boys and girls and the interested public.

These booklets, primarily intended to the growing children and also to the elders to study and narrate the stories to their children, will go a long way to sublimate the aspirations of the children to greater heights.

**R. SRI HARI**

Editor-In-Chief

T.T.D.

## **Welcome To Srinivasa Bala Bharati Series**

The series is the outcome of abundant grace of Lord Sri Venkateswara.

This will be an unfailing source of inspiration to the young.

It enshrines the best of Bharatiya tradition. May this noble endeavour be successful.

India has been known for its culture and civilization, its ethical and dharmic way of life from time immemorial. India has marched ahead with its commitment to dharma, its resistance to adharma, its espousal of life-affirming values and its humane attitude to life as a journey towards God realization. Those who embodied these values in their life have been a beacon of light to us. Their impact is deep on the life we lead. Young boys and girls will find them exemplary and feel proud of their invaluable heritage. They will love their motherland and dedicate themselves to its service.

It is therefore necessary that the young learn about these great men and women so that they will realize their indebtedness to them for their selfless contribution to the enrichment of life. This should indeed be a chief component of true education which ensures the perennial continuity of Indian Culture and Civilization. SRINIVASA BALA BHARATI SERIES has come into existence to acquaint the young boys and girls with right perspective of Indian life and values through a series of booklets written exclusively for this purpose describing in brief the lives of great men and women.

We welcome you to share our joy in launching these booklets.

**S.B. Raghunathacharya**

Chief Editor

## **PREFACE**

It was pitch darkness all around. There flashed a divine light from a distance. There was a sami tree. Underneath it, there was an infant whose looks you cannot avoid. A halo of light was around him. What a wonder? Isn't he the child of a mother? A great mother is taking him up into her lap. Somebody is standing by her side, maybe, her husband. How charming is this lad? He appears to be a man born for a cause. Isn't he Lord Sri Krishna? Who else can he be? He is the well-known Vallabhacharya, born of Kakarla Laxmana Bhattu and Yellamma. It is said that he emerged from Vaishwanara fire with the divine aspect of Lord Sri Krishna.

Dear child of Telugu land, Vallabhacharya is an unparalleled devotee who travelled all over the country several times giving discourses on the Bhagavata (Saptahas). Such was his selflessness that when Emperor Krishnadevaraya anointed him with gold coins, he accepted only seven of them and distributed the remaining ones to all the other scholars. When Rustum Ali erected a machine for the Hindus visiting Madhura to change their tufts of hair (sikhas) into beards, he retaliated by arranging a machine for the Muslims going to Delhi to transform their beards into tufts of hair. His self-restraint and commitment to dharma are laudable and exemplary.

Vallabhacharya proposed the Pushti Marga vindicating God's Grace as the highest end of life. The service motto and selflessness of the Acharya are worthy of emulation.

**- Chief Editor**

## **VALLABHACHARYA**

*Akalpa kalpadruma malpakalpana  
Vikalpa jalpa pratikalpa koutukam!  
Analpa kalpak lama samplavaplavam  
Mahaprabhoonam charanambujam  
vrune!!*

### **Born for a Cause !**

Lord Srikrishna in his *Bhagavad Gita* says: “*Dharma Samsthapanaaarthaya Sambhavami Yuge Yuge*” (“I will reincarnate Myself time and again in every *yuga* to establish dharma”). God manifested Himself on this earth whenever *adharma*, false logic, scepticism and foolishness were rampant among people. He will certainly do so in future also. He purifies the hearts of the people through His teachings, messages, actions, and leads them to the righteous path. The divine excellence (*vibhuthi*) of the Lord manifests itself in every *yuga*. Such are the great men like Vyasa, Gautama Buddha, Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya who are born for a cause. To this line belongs Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya. The Vaishnavas of *Shuddha Advaita Pushti Marga* call Srimad Vallabhacharya alone with the appellation, “*Mahaprabhu*” (Great Lord).

### **Kambhampati of Kakaravada :**

Sri Vallabhacharya, proponent of the easily accessible *Pushti Marga* and *Shuddha Advaita*

belongs to Telugu-speaking region. He is a Velanati Brahmin of Kambhampati family. He belongs to *Bharadvaja Gotra*, *Apastambha Sutra*, and *Krishna Yajusshakha* sect. He hails from Kakaravada village near Vyomastambha (the present Mangalagiri) on the south coast of Krishna river. Scholars interpret the meaning of the word “kakara” thus:

*Kam sukham kathyathe vignyairakaraha  
khaniruchyathe!  
Sukhana maakaratvat saa ‘kakare’  
tyabhidheeyathe!!*

‘Ka’ means pleasure. ‘Akara’ means refuge. So, ‘kakara’ means the refuge of pleasure. The ancestors of Vallabhacharya used to reside in such a Kakara street. As the village was dilapidated over the years, the Kambhampati family migrated to the nearby Agraaharam village.

#### **“I will manifest in your family” :**

Yajna Narayana Deekshita was the patriarch of Vallabhacharya family. He could boast of a wealth of best practices of tradition. He had the perpetual sacred fire lit at his home. A Vaishnava preceptor of Vishnuswami tradition initiated him into the Gopala mantra. The *shriti* of “*Yajno Vai Vishnuh*” regards Sri Maha Vishnu as the embodiment of *Yajna*. Hence, Yajna Narayana Deekshita resorted to perform a

hundred *soma yagas* to propitiate Him. Soon after the first *yaga* Lord Sri Krishna appeared to him and gave him the boon that He will manifest Himself in their lineage when their family completes a hundred *Soma yagas*. Deekshita completed thirty-one *Soma yagas*, while his son Gangadhara performed twenty-seven. A great scholar, Gangadhara wrote *Meemamsa Rahasya*. His son Ganapathi Bhattu performed thirty-two *yagas*. He wrote *Tantra Nigraha*. His son Vallabha Bhattu performed five *yagas*. Of his two sons, Lakshmana Bhattu and Janardana Bhattu, the former conducted five *Soma yagas*. Thus the Kambhampati family completed a century of *yagas*. After the completion of the last *yaga*, Lakshmana Bhattu went on a pilgrimage to Kasi, offered food to one lakh twenty-five thousand people, and fulfilled the desire of Yagnya Narayana Deekshita.

#### **“Take me from the *Sami* tree” :**

Lakshmana Bhattu married the daughters of Susharma, the Vaishnava preceptor of Vijayanagara royal dynasty. He felt inclined to renounce as soon as his first wife gave birth to two daughters and a son. Then a great person came to him and exhorted him not to resort to renunciation as Lord Sri Krishna was going to manifest Himself in his family. Meanwhile, fearing the rumours that Muslims were going to demolish Kasi, all the southerners settled in Kasi fled

to their respective places from Kasi. And so did Lakshmana Bhattu with his family to the Andhra region. They reached the Champa forest near Rayapur village of the present Madhya Pradesh. There Yellamma had an abortion in the eighth month itself due to the fatigue of travel and anxiety. In the pitch darkness of that night, they mistook the child for dead, and left it in the cavity of a *Sami* tree wrapping it in a piece of her saree. While taking rest in the nearby Choda village, both Lakshmana Bhattu and Yellamma had a similar dream in the early hours of the day. Lord Sri Krishna appeared and ordered them, “I kept my word and manifested Myself in your family. Go and fetch me from that *Sami* tree.” With pleasant surprise, they rushed to the tree to witness amidst a circle of fire an extraordinarily handsome child on the same piece of cloth. As milk gushed forth from her breasts with maternal affection, Yellamma took the wonder child into her lap thinking that the fire will not harm her if the child born of her were to be really Sri Krishna. Fire God left her untouched. There rained flowers from the sky and trumpets blew. The weather turned serene all over. Thus *Vaishwanara* latent in the mouth of Sri Krishna was born as Vallabhacharya to the family of Lakshmana Bhattu around 8.30 pm on Sunday, the eleventh day of Vaishakha’s waning Moon in 1535 of Vikrama Saka (Vallabhacharya was also known as *Vaishwanara*). Lakshmana Bhattu named him after his own father.

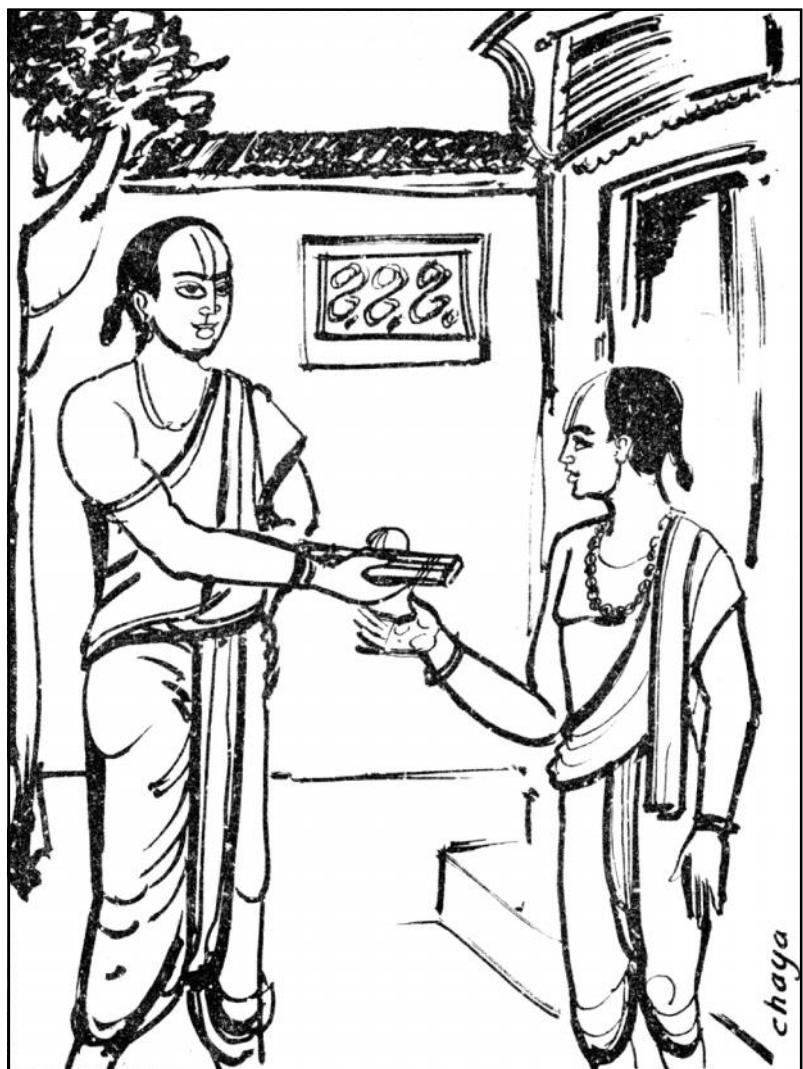
Endearing himself to his parents and neighbours, he became the real “Vallabha”.

### **Child prodigy Vallabha :**

As peace restored in Kasi, Lakshmana Bhattu went back to Kasi and started living in Hanuman Ghat. Vallabha’s childhood was spent in the scholarly milieu of Kasi. Vallabha underwent the sacred-thread ceremony (*Upanayanam*) at the age of five. At that tender age, Vallabha used to accompany his father or go on his own to the meetings of scholars and challenge well-known scholars with his extraordinary scholarship. His book *Patravalambanam* written at that time got the approval of great scholars. He studied the *Vedas*, *Vedangas*, *Sastras* and *Puranas* thoroughly under the guidance of his preceptor Madhavendrapuri. He came to the firm conclusion that *Vedas*, *Vyasa Sutras*, *Bhagavad Gita*, and *Srimad Bhagavatam* are the only standard texts. Stunned by his scholarship, the scholars wondered whether Goddess Saraswati Herself has come in the guise of Vallabhacharya.

### **Lakshmana Bhattu’s union with Sri Venkateswara :**

At the age of 11, Vallabha was back home at Agraharam with his parents. He was given a rousing reception by the villagers. His paternal uncle Janardana Bhattu presented a *saligram* and *Bhagavata Mahapurana* to him. From that day onwards, he made it a point to deliver week-long discourses on the



*Bhagavata (Saptaham)* wherever he went. At the instance of his mother, he accompanied his parents to Venkatadri. Gazing at the Lord of the Seven Hills, his father Lakshmana Bhattu became one with the Lord attaining his fruition of life. The place where Vallabhacharya sat in the Varahaswami temple has become a place of interest for the pilgrims today.

#### **Anointment with Gold coins :**

Vallabha stayed in Tirumala for some time and delivered week-long discourses on the *Bhagavata*. Later, he went to Vijayanagara on the shores of the Tungabhadra river and stayed in his maternal uncle's home. Those were the days when the great emperor, literary figure and warrior Sri Krishnadevaraya was ruling the Vijayanagara kingdom. He was fond of organising religious and spiritual meetings. Scholars and preceptors from different places used to participate in these meetings to vindicate their own doctrines and refute the others. Sri Krishnadevaraya invited Vallabha to these meetings with great regard. With his extraordinary merit and rhetorical skills, Vallabha refuted all the other traditions and established his *Shuddha Advaita Pushti Marga* as the ultimate in the arguments which ran for 28 days. Everyone was overawed by the argumentative skills, merit and scholarship of the child. Sri Krishnadevaraya anointed him with gold coins and awarded him the titles, "Acharya Chakra

*Choodamani*" and "Sri Veda Vyasa Vishnuswami sampradaya samuddhara sambhoota Sri Purushothama vadanaavatara sarvamnaya sanchara Vaishnavaamnaya prachurya prakara Sri Bilva mangalaarpita Samrajyaasanaakhanda Bhoomandalacharyavarya Jagadguru Mahaprabhu Srimadacharyah". Sri Vallabhacharya gave away all the wealth to the people there. Rejecting the royal palanquin, he preferred to walk back home. He conducted all his tours only on foot. Sri Krishnadevaraya along with his companions received initiation from Vallabhacharya into *Pushti Marga* Vaishnava tradition. Sri Vishnuswami Mathacharya and Sri Bilvamangalacharya also followed suit.

### **Seven coins are enough :**

When Sri Krishnadevaraya offered 7000 gold coins to Sri Vallabhacharya as *guru dakshina* (tuition fees), Vallabha accepted only seven coins and distributed the remaining to the people there. It is said that he offered a gold waist-band with those seven coins to Lord Govardhana of Srinath Dwara. Some say that he purchased a cow belonging to the cowherd of Nanda of *Dwapara yuga* with this money. We can see the offspring of that particular clan of cows even today.

### **Propaganda tours :**

Vallabhacharya commenced his all India tour from Vijayanagaram to propagate devotion to Lord Sri

Krishna and *Pushti Marga*. During the tour he rested for sometime on the bank of the Pampa river which was sanctified by Lord Sri Rama. As usual, he gave week-long discourses on the *Bhagavata*. He initiated a *kshatriya* by name Krishnadasu into his fold. From there he visited Kanchi, Chidambaram, Rameshwaram, Totadri, Padmanabham through Rishyamukam, Kishkindha and other holy places. In Padmanabham he exorcised the queen of the evil spirits.

#### **Award of the title “Vakpati” :**

During the course of the tour, a scholar by name Ravinatha Vaidiki approached Vallabhacharya to challenge his Vedic wisdom. He started reciting Vedic mantras alternately to show off his command. In turn, Vallabha started reciting them in reverse order from the last to the first and dispelled all his doubts. Humbled by his scholarship, Ravinatha honoured him with the title, “*Vakpati*”. With great awe for the oratory of Vallabhacharya, Pushpadantacharya and other preceptors of *Pratibimbavada* also became his disciples.

Moving towards North from there, Vallabhacharya then visited Gokarnam and Udipi, circumambulated Narmada river, travelled to Siddhapuram, Kundinapuram, Pateshwaram, and reached Pushkaram of Rajasthan. Later, he visited pilgrim centres of Gangotri, Badarinath and Kedaranath of the northern region and reached Kasi after nine years.

### **Come to me to offer services :**

A miracle happened on Govardhanagiri mountain of Brindavanam when Vallabhacharya was in the Champa forest. The bust of Lord Sri Krishna who lifted Govardhanagiri mountain on his little finger protruded from the hidden caverns of the mountain. It was worshipped for about fifteen years by the devotees.

On the eleventh day (*ekadasi*) of Phalgun in Vikrama Saka of 1549, the Thursday, this Srinatha of Govardhanagiri appeared to Vallabhacharya in his dream and directed him to offer his services. Immediately, Vallabha left for Madhuranagaram and stayed with “Uzhagar Chowbe”. At Govardhanagiri, it is said that the Lord’s idol came out of the mountain completely and embraced Vallabha. Vallabha got a small temple constructed for the Lord on the mountain and arranged for daily rituals of worship. The idol consecrated by Vallabhacharya is worshipped in Nathdwara near Udayapur of Rajasthan even today. The Goswamies of Vallabhacharya progeny continue to be the trustees of this temple till now. Nathdwara is next only to Tirupati in its treasure.

### ***Yantra* for *Yantra* :**

A miracle happened in Madhura. It appears the Military General of Sikander Lodi got a strange Yantra constructed on the way to Madhura which used to

transform the tufts of hair (*sikhas*) of the Hindus traversing that way into beards. When some Hindus complained about this, Vallabhacharya in turn arranged for another *Yantra* on the way to Delhi to reverse the trend. This *Yantra*, it appears, transformed the beards of the Muslims travelling that way into tufts of hair. Aghast Sikandar Lodhi rebuked Rustum Ali and ordered for its removal. In turn, Vallabhacharya also withdrew his *Yantra*.

### **The Boon of Balarama and Krishna :**

After constructing the temple for Srinatha and Lord Sri Krishna, Vallabhacharya circumambulated the Govardhanagiri a distance of about 14 miles (seven kos) and Brindavanm (*Vrajamandala*) the distance of about 168 miles (84 kos). Contented by his commitment, Balarama and Sri Krishna, it appears, offered him the boon that they will manifest in his family as sons. Later it has become customary for all the Vaishnavas to circumambulate Govardhanagiri and Vrajamadala. In due course, Vallabha got two children by name Gopinatha and Vithalanatha. Followers of Vallabha tradition regard these two children as the incarnations of Balarama and Sri Krishna.

### **Initiation into *Brahma Mantra* :**

During his stay in Gokulam, Vallabha used to reside in Govindaghat on the banks of the Yamuna river. Once

on the eleventh day of Sravana, he was in a restive mood and went out to the banks of the Yamuna river to relax. He was at a loss to understand as to how the tainted *Jiva* could be related to the all-virtuous *Purushothama*. He could not go to bed till midnight. There descended Lord Sri Krishna then before him with the charms of a thousand Gods of Love and initiated him into the *Brahma-mantra* of Self-surrender. He ordained the Acharya who was burning with the desire for upliftment of the *Jiva*: “To whomsoever you may initiate into this mantra of self-surrender, all the sins of his past births shall be destroyed, and he shall immediately be sanctified. He shall then be qualified to belong to me. Thus through your initiation into the *Brahma-mantra*, they shall become my devotees and be eligible to serve me. They shall earn my grace and reach me.”

Thus ordained by the Noblest Sri Krishna, excited Vallabhacharya offered the saffron-soaked sacred grass-ring (*pavitram*) and sugar-candy to the Lord. He started giving initiation into his *Pushti Marga* based on God’s Grace. First, he initiated his beloved disciple Damodar Dasu who offered the sacred grass-ring and sugar-candy to the Acharya. Later, they started initiating all *jivas* with divine origin, both great and small, into the *Brahma-mantra*. Vaishnavas regard the eleventh and twelfth days of Sravana as *Guru Parva* to mark this occasion.

### **Meaning of *Mahamantra* :**

While taking initiation into this *mantra*, one should keep the sacred basil-leaf (tulasi) in his hand and chant the *mantra*. The meaning of this *maha-mantra* is: “Oh Lord! Severed from you we have been languishing in the cycle of birth and death for several *yugas*. We have had enough of travails of this vicious cycle and are subject to tapatraya—the triple cares caused by (i) ourselves, (ii) others and (iii) the will of God-- in every birth. Our passion for the worldly pleasures has overshadowed the yearning for union with you and the consequent experience of *ananda*. I am such a fool and sinner. Thou art enriched with the six-fold wealth of gunas and endowed with the *dharma* of the other world. Thou art the manifestation of *vijaya* and *samyoga* rasas, Lord of the *Gopikas*. I surrender to you, oh Lord, all of my passions, ego, body, sense organs, soul and conscience, their characteristics, sins and virtues, and my Self itself. I am Thy servant. Hey Lord! Hey Sri Krishna! I belong to you. I abdicate everything and fall at thy feet. Please accept me.”

This *brahma-mantra* being self-initiation (*Atma Deeksha*) is greater than all the bodily commitments. *Jivas* who are committed to this will attract no blemishes. This mantra should be preceded and followed by chanting of eight-lettered *astakshara mantra*, “*Sri-Kri-shnay-Sha-ra-nam-ma-ma*”. The meaning of each letter of this *mantra* is as follows:

*Sri:* Endowed with the Goddess of fortunes (*Sowbhagya Lakshmi*), it imparts royal reverence

*Kri:* burns all sins

*Shnaha:* dispels three-fold grief

*Sha:* obviates the grief of the cycle of birth and death

*Ra:* imparts philosophical knowledge of the *Brahman*

*Nam:* inculcates strong devotion to Sri Krishna

*Ma:* Unites you with the Lord (*Sayujyam*) and breaks the cycle of births

#### **All Religions' Conclave at Puri :**

Vallabhacharya then set on his second all India tour giving discourses on the *Bhagavata* and offering initiation into *Brahma mantras* and *ashtakshara mantra*. In this Conclave, he refuted all other theories and established the sovereignty of Sri Krishna irrevocably.

*Ekam Sastram Devakiputrageetam*

*Eko Devo Devakiputra eva!*

*Mantropyekastasya namani yani*

*Karmapye kam tasya devasya seva!!*

(Gita is the only Science (*Sastra*). The Son of Devaki is the only philosophy. The name of Sri Krishna is the only *mantra*. The service of the Lord is the only *karma*). It appears Lord Jagannatha Himself wrote this

*sloka* on a leaf and placed it before the august members, defending Vallabha's doctrine.

### Vithala Deva's Orders :

Thus Vallabha toured throughout the country propagating his *Shuddha Advaita* theory and *Pushti Marga Bhakti*. He was accompanied by three of his close disciples-Damodara Dasu, Krishna Dasu, Vasudeva Dasu. During the second tour when he was on the banks of Chandra Bhaga river, Vithala Deva ordered him to take to marital life (*Grihasthasrama*). Reaching Kasi after the tour, Vallabha married Srimati Mahalakshmi, daughter of Deva Bhattu.



### Third pilgrimage :

After the marriage, Vallabha set on the third pilgrimage along with his wife. They used to walk not

less than 12 miles a day halting here and there giving discourses on *Bhagavata*, offering initiation to the devotees into *Brahma-mantra* and *ashtaakshara mantra* and participating in the philosophical discussions and service to the Almighty.

### ***Prabhuji ki Baithak :***

After the third tour, Vallabha spent about 22 years in villages like Adel (Alakapuram), Charanat and Brindavanam. Most of this time, he lived in Adel situated on the south bank of the Yamuna river near *Triveni Sangamam* (confluence of the *Ganga*, *Yamuna* and *Brahmaputra*). We can find there the *Pushti Marga* tradition even now.

During his tours, Vallabha conducted the *Bhagavata* Discourse weeks in 84 places, thus staying for more than a week at every place. These places are called “*Prabhuji ki Baithak*”, those visited by Prabhu. We have *mathas* (monasteries) of Vallabha tradition known as “*Prabhuji ki Baithak*” in Mangalagiri and Tirupathi of our Telugu region.

Vallabha used to write in solitude. He wrote eighty-four books to explore the hidden meanings of the *sastras* and *puranas*, the easy accessibility (*soulabhyam*) and sweetness of devotion to Sri Krishna. Eighty-four of his disciples have been renowned Vaishnava devotees.

### **The Meaning of Pushti Marga :**

Vallabha recommended *Pushti Bhakti* as the easiest means of reaching God. *Pushti* means the Grace of God. The *Bhagavata* remarks “*Poshanam tadanugrahah*” (We live by God’s Grace). *Pushti* is the means to the well-being of the soul. The chief feature of *Pushti Marga* Bhakti is God’s Grace named *Pushti*.

### **Distinction of Pushti Jivas :**

Souls (*Jivas*) are of three kinds in this world, namely-*Maryada Jivas*, *Pravaha Jivas*, and *Pushti Jivas*. *Maryada Jivas* are those who follow the prescribed rules of the Vedas and Sastras. *Pravaha Jivas* are those who are not bound by any rules or regulations. *Pushti Jivas* are those who deserve God’s Grace and live by devotion to Sri Krishna. The *Pushti Jivas* are the best of the lot. God’s Grace is obtained by initiation into *Astakshara mantra*, chanting of Lord’s name, and receiving initiation into *Brahma-mantra*. Service to God through Self-surrender, love and affection enables one to receive God’s Grace.

Vallabhacharya’s first son Sri Gopinatha was born in 1567 of *Vikrama Saka* on the twelfth day of waning Moon of *Ashwayuja* month in Adel. Another son, Vithalanatha was born in 1572 of *Vikrama Saka* on the ninth day of the waning Moon of *Pushya* month in Charanat. These two, as you already know, are

regarded as the incarnations of Balarama and Sri Krishna.

### **The arduous vow of Gopinatha :**

Gopinatha never used to take meals unless he completed the recital of *Srimad Bhagavata Purana*. Often it was not possible for him to take meals for three or four days. Yet he never broke the rule. Observing this, Vallabha wrote the essence of *Bhagavata* in brief under the title, *Sri Purushottama Sahasranama* and ordained that its recital would give the same result as that of *Bhagavata*. From then onwards, Gopinatha was able to read *Sahasranama* and take meals without delay.

### **Gopinatha's union with Balarama :**

Gopinatha who succeeded Vallabhacharya to the *Acharya Pitha* was a man of great impact. He used to conduct the daily worship of Lord Sri Govardhana with great efficacy. He propagated *Pushti Marga* in Gujarat, Orissa and the Southern India. He spent most of his life in Puri. He shaped the ritual of worship in the Jagannatha temple on the lines of *Pushti Marga*. He had union with Lord Balarama's idol in Puri Jagannatha right before the devotees. Gopinatha had only a son by name Purushottama. As Purushottama renounced worldly life in his childhood itself, the progeny ended with him.

### **Vithalanatha and *Bhakti* Literature :**

Vithalanatha, the second son of Vallabhacharya, succeeded Gopinatha to the Preceptor's Chair (*Acharya Pitha*). Under his guidance *Pushti Marga* tradition of Bhakti spread far and wide. Since Vithalanatha was well-versed in music and painting, these fine arts had a special role in the *Pushti Marga* ritual of worship. This *Pushti Marga* tradition occupied an important place not only in the visionary and religious fields, but also in the literary. Eight disciples, four of his father and four of his own, named *Ashtachap* gave shape to the literature of music (*Sankeertana Sahityam*). Sur Dasu and Nanda Dasu are prominent among these eight friends (*Ashta Sakhulu*). *Krishna Bhakti Sahitya* pioneered by Vallabhacharya flourished in the hands of Vithalanatha.

### **The title of Goswami by Akbar :**

Many kings and emperors in the North of the day became disciples of Vithalanatha and sanctified their lives. Emperor Akbar also had great reverence for him. He ordered prohibition of cow slaughter in the vicinity of Madhura and Brindavan. He gave in charity Gokulam, Mahavanam, Jathipura and other villages to Vithalanatha down the generations. These Charity Plaques, documents and Pharmanas (Orders) issued by Akbar are available even now with Tilakayat in Srinath Dwara. Akbar honoured Vithalanatha with the title

“Goswami”. Vithalanatha fulfilled many tasks launched by his father.

### **Analogy of Appointment :**

Once Akbar visited Gokulam alongwith Birbal, while Vithalanatha was performing his daily prayers to the Sun God (*Sandhya Vandana*) in Thakurani Ghattam. Akbar asked Vithalanatha as to how one can see God. Vithalanatha replied thus on the lines of *Pushti Marga*: “Had I come to visit you, if you wanted you would have called me to the inner palace or the royal court. Otherwise, you would have refused the appointment for want of leisure. But since you came on your own, there is no objection of any sort for the visit. Similarly, God’s proximity cannot be assured even if a *Jiva* struggled a thousand ways. But if God wanted, He would salvage the *Jiva* then and there itself. Hence the *Jiva* should struggle to obtain God’s Grace through his holy practices and service to God.” Akbar bowed down to him and left contented.

### **Sur Das in Ashta Chap :**

Two hundred and fifty-two of Goswami Vithalanatha’s disciples are quite prominent. There were not only Hindus, but Muslims, Pathans, and Harijans among them. Vithalanatha allowed the people of all castes and women the privilege of offering service to God. Blind Sur Das, one of the *Ashta Chap* poets, rose like the Sun in the firmament. His songs (*keertans*)

depicting the wonderful deeds of Sri Krishna overflow with devotion.

After Vithalanatha, his seven sons headed the seven *peethas* and attained fame. All the preceptors of *Pushti Marga* tradition in India today are the progeny of these Acharyas. Even now they prefer alliances with Telugu families.

#### **Instruction in Siksha Sloka:**

At 52, Vallabha felt that he accomplished his task and took to renunciation under the name, Purnananda.



He decided to unite with God. He took the vow of renunciation with *Tridanda* (a bundle of three sticks), and the vow of silence (*mouna vrata*), and went on foot for 18 days to Hanuman Ghat in Kasi from Prayaga. He stayed there for seven days wearing just a loin cloth. He went to the Ganges on the second day of Ashadha at noon and stood in the current of waters up to his navel. Distressed, his sons and disciples asked him about their fate. Then he spontaneously recited the following five verses, known as *Siksha Slokas*.

*Yada Bahirmukha yuyam bhavishyatha  
kathanchana!*

*Tada kalapravahasthaa deha chittadayopyuta!! 1*

*Sarvadha Bhakshayishyanti yushmaniti matirmama*

*Na laukikaha prabhuh Krishno manute naiva*

*laukikam!! 2*

*Bhavastatrapyasmadeeyaha sarvasvam*

*chaihikashcha sah!*

*Paralokashcha tenayam sarvabhavena sarvatha!! 3*

*Sevyaha sa eva Gopeesho vidhasyatyakhilam hi nah!*

*Mayi chedasthi viswasah Sri Gopeejana vallabhe!! 4*

*Tada kritartha yuyam hi shochaneeyam na karhichit!*

*Muktirhitvanyatha roopam svaroopena vyavasthitih!!*

If you are engrossed in the day-to-day affairs of the world as extroverts and lost in the stream of life, you are engulfed by the body and mind (*deha and chitta*) totally. That means, you surrender to the body and mind and become a servant to the senses. Lord Sri Krishna is not of this world; nor is the mind. With universal outlook, you should regard everything, this world and the other world, as Sri Krishna. I think and believe that Sri Krishna, the beloved of *Gopikas*, is the only refuge for us. No regrets if you serve Him. Liberation means abdication of all forms and courting your own.

### **Union of Vallabha in the splendour of the Sun :**

Thus instructing his sons and disciples for the last time, Vallabha stood gazing at the Sun intently. Suddenly, a flash of light descended from the Sun. As everyone was witnessing the phenomenon, Sri Vallabhacharya became one with it. This is called “*Aasura Vyamoham*” in the *Pushti Marga* tradition. A foreigner by name Wilson was also a witness to this wonderful event. He wrote thus in his diary: “Hindu Saint Sri Vallabha with his aura of splendour stood in the waters of the Ganges in Benares, the great pilgrim centre of the Hindus. There descended a great light from the sky, and the saint merged into the light. There appeared a pillar of light from the sky to the earth.

People there were overawed by this strange and wonderful phenomenon.” This was published in an English booklet in England.

### **Egoism and self-love are the basis of all grief :**

According to Vallabha, Sri Krishna is the ultimate God and Omnipotent. The weal of the Jivas lies in serving Him without any distraction. As per his doctrine of *Suddha Advaita (Pure Monism)* and *Pushti Marga Bhakti*, a devotee’s aim is to seek refuge in Sri Krishna and serve Him with absolute self-surrender. *Jiva* is an aspect of God. He is subject to untold suffering due to his separation from Him. The only means of redemption from all kinds of grief is complete surrender to Sri Krishna. Egoism and self-respect are the root-cause of all sins. There will be no room for them if you feel with all abjectness and humility that Sri Krishna is the refuge, destiny and protector. That is why Vallabha pronounced:

*Yaddainyam tvatkrupaheturnatadasti  
mamaanvapi!  
Tam Krupam kuru Radhesa! Yaya te  
dainyamapnuyam!!*

(Hey Radhesa! My abjectness is the cause of Thy Grace. I don’t have it the least. Please, make me helpless and abject.)

### **Helping the Detractors :**

Vallabhacharya exhorted all the Vaishnavas, that is, devotees not to court anybody except Sri Krishna, not to take any food without offering to God, not to indulge in gossip, and not to be friends with the wicked. He instructed further to be courteous and obedient to parents, to conquer the senses, to serve the cows, to help the detractors, to be magnanimous and charitable to all beings.

### **A New Definition :**

Vallabhacharya gave a new definition to the four *Purusharthas* of *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha* thus: “Service to Sri Krishna is *dharma*; experience of the miracles of Sri Hari is *artha*; Vision and Company of God is *kama*; Union with God (*Sayujyam*) is *moksha*.”

### **Famous Works :**

With his commentaries on *Brahma Sutras* through his works, *Anubhashyam*, *Tatvartha Deepika*, he established that both the *Brahman* and the World are true and *Jiva* is just an aspect of God. Among his 84 works, mention may be made of *Bala Bodha*, *Siddhanta Rahasyam*, *Viveka Dhairyashraya Nirupanam*, *Bhakti Vardhini*, *Nirodha Lakshanam*, etc.

Vallabhacharya’s life is, thus, exemplary and worthy of emulation for all as he dedicated himself to

the service of God and preached and practiced the precept that service to mankind and the entire world is service to God.

