



Message From Our Spiritual Head Vaishnavacharya Shri Dwarkeshlalji Mahodayshri

Shri Dwarkeshlalji Mahodayshri has expressed that He is excited and looking forward to the October event that is being planned. This will however be subject to the government regulations and the situation at the time. So in the meantime, we have a message from Him to keep our spirits up: "In the Geetaji, Arjun asks Shree Thakorji what can he use to help keep him humble when the times are extremely happy, and what can he use to keep his spirits high when the times are extremely tough. In response, Shree Thakorji says that during both these times, it is worth remembering that this too shall pass. Similarly, it is worth applying this to the difficult situation we find ourselves in with Covid-19, that this too shall pass. We should keep our faith in Thakorji as strong as ever, and use this time to grow our *bhakti* and develop our relationship with Thakorji."

Kanha: Makhan Chor!

All around Gokul, Thakorji was known as the *Makhan Chor* (butter thief). It was a fact known to all the gopis in Gokul – if you had made *makhan*, Thakorji would be at your house soon enough with a clever plan and a few *gopas* (friends) to help Him. He was very fond of *Makhan*. The gopis were never angry. In fact, they felt fortunate and blessed to be able to witness His mischief. Thakorji's divine feet never left any household in the village unvisited. The gopi's always wanted some excuse to visit Thakorji. So, under the pretext of complaining, one gopi even came to Yashoda Ma's house and told her about how they'd strung up the *makhan* in a *matki* (clay pot) to keep it away from Kanha. But Thakorji had simply called His friends to help Him – He climbed onto their backs and broke the *matki* to get to his *makhan*.

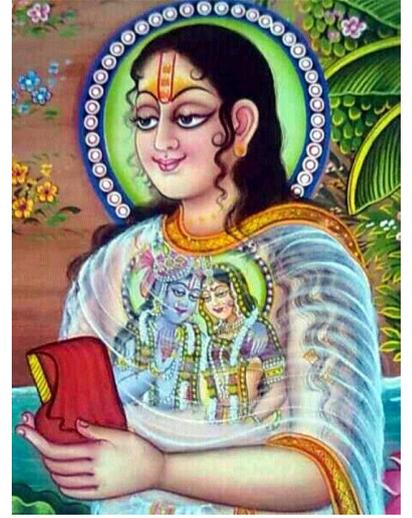


This became a nuisance for Yashoda. Once Yashoda caught hold of Thakorji and asked Him, "You mischievous little boy! We have enough butter in our home. Why do you steal butter from other homes?". Thakorji said, "Oh Mother! I do know we have a lot of butter in our home. It is not butter that I steal from their homes, but the soft butter like devotion they have in their hearts for Me".

Butter signifies the product of *bhakti* and *sadhana* (spiritual practice). Butter does not come on its own. To obtain butter, we must churn the curd. Similarly, the heart needs to be churned with *sadhana* to bring out the essence of divine love of Thakorji, *bhakti*. It is this product of *sadhana* that Thakorji is very fond of. Therefore as *Makhan Chor* He steals the butter of pure, selfless and sublime *bhakti* from the heart of His Vaishnavs.

Basics Of Pushtimarg

The *Ashtakshara Mantra* or the eight letter *mantra* 'Shree Krishna Sharanam Mama' literally means 'I seek refuge in Shree Krishna'. It is no ordinary mantra and is bestowed to the devotee who comes under the refuge of Shree Krishna. It has divine capabilities and contains the meaning of the four Vedas along with the Shreemad Bhagavad Geeta, Brahmasutras, and Shreemad Bhagavat, which collectively indicate that "Shree Krishna alone is the ultimate reality or the Supreme form of God", i.e. that He is "*Purna-Purushottama*", "*Paramatma*" or "*Para-Brahma*". Through this *mantra*, one is protected by Shree Krishna, the ultimate reality. Once Shree Krishna accepts one as His *daas* (servant), they need not fear anything or anybody.



For every individual in Pushtimarg, *Ashtakshara Mantra* is the ultimate *mantra*; whenever and whoever remembers and recites '*Ashtakshara mantra*' deeply in their heart will experience supreme bliss. It removes false ego and awakens pure affection of '*daas bhaav*', i.e. serving Shree Krishna as a humble servant and bestows firm devotion to His lotus feet.

This *mantra* is not a man-made *mantra*, nor is it derived from any of the scriptures but it divinely manifested in '*Goloka dham*' (Shree Thakorji's eternal abode, and our ultimate desired destination). During one of Shreeji and Swaminiji's (Radha- Krishna) leelas called *Maan Leela* (Maan Leela is when the Divine Couple are seemingly 'annoyed' at one another and try to lovingly pacify each other. We will write more on this in the coming newsletters, but feel free to read more on it online), their divinity intensified to such an extent, it exceeded all boundaries. The beauty of Shree Krishna's hidden feminine side glowed on Thakorji's lotus face, similarly the beauty of Shree Swaminiji's hidden masculine side glowed on Hers. The burning desire for divine reunion of these two hidden features manifested in the form of Shree Vallabhacharyaji who saw the Divine couple's entire Leela. Shree Vallabhacharyaji approached Shree Swaminiji with the utmost pure love and led her to Shree Krishna. The divine moment they reunited, Shree Vallabhacharyaji lovingly looked towards them and stated, "*Shree Krishna Sharanam Mama*", which means, "Shree Swaminiji and Shree Krishna, I surrender unto you". This was how '*Ashtakshara Mantra*' manifested. Shree Vallabhacharyaji, who is the Divine Couple's reunited form, is extremely beloved to all *Goloka dhama* Vaishnavs. This is why the name Shree Vallabh was given, as it means 'dearly beloved'. After this, as Shree Krishna instructed, Shree Vallabhacharyaji manifested on earth to grant salvation to all *daivi* souls (divine souls) by bestowing them with *Ashtakshara mantra* as their first means to attain Shree Krishna.

As mentioned this mantra has eight letters. '*Ashta*' means eight and '*Akshar*' means letter, thus it is called *Ashtakshara mantra*. These eight letters are not like ordinary letters, they can bestow divine powers. Over the next newsletters, we will explore the divine significance of each of these letters.