



### Message From Our Spiritual Head Vaishnavacharya Shri Dwarkeshlalji Mahodayshri

From Guru Purnima Maha Mahotsav 2020

On the 5th of July, we experienced the *Anand* of celebrating Guru Purnima with our Spiritual Head Vaishnavacharya Shri Dwarkeshlalji Mahodayshri. On this day, listening to all the reflections and messages of gratitude, Jeje Shree said:

“Every day of the year the Guru speaks and the *Shishya* (student) listens. Guru Purnima is the one day the *Shishya* speaks and the Guru listens...” and gave us all His “*khub khub Ashirwaad*” to continue having manoraths to learn more about and to please our Shri Thakorji.

Jeje Shree also ended His *Ashirvachan* with the message “The best Guru Dakshina you can give is to take up a new *niyam* (habit/practice) in your seva - whether it's doing one Ashtakshar mala everyday, or recite Yamunashtak, Sarvottam Stotra everyday” - perhaps something for all of us to reflect on.

### Meet One Of Our Youth Members

#### Nakul Shah

“Ever since I have known my religion I have wanted to know more and understand the reasons on what we do and why we do it. Unfortunately any time I try to know more I get thrown into the deep end with terminology and language beyond my comprehension. This is one of the reason the youth group has been amazing! It has been a place filled with people who not only understand pushtimarg, but I have learnt more than I ever thought. The group is filled with like minded individual who make you feel welcome and give off positivity as a whole. In the relative short time we have been a group (plus the distancing of COVID), we already formed a strong community with very similar morals and ethics who always want to strive for answers to the big questions in life! We're not just about the big questions too! We have chefs, athletes, hobbyists, and in general accepting and helping people, and I am very proud to be a part of this community!”

If you would like to give feedback to our youth satsangs and be part of future newsletters sharing your thoughts, please email [vaishnavyouthgroup@shrinathdham.org.uk](mailto:vaishnavyouthgroup@shrinathdham.org.uk).

### Details Of Next Youth Satsang On 5th July

TITLE:  
Q&A

TIME:  
10:30 AM

ZOOM ID:  
83588020713

### Leela : Appearance Of Shrinathji

About 500 years ago, on the hills of Govardhan, a cowherd Brahmin named Sadu Pande was leading his herd of cows over the crest of Govardhan as evening fell. One of the cows, Dhumar, broke away from the herd, and veered towards a mysterious black arm protruding from the rocks. She dropped her milk upon it, and continued to join the herd as if nothing else had happened. But every day, without fail, she would do this little ritual. Eventually, Sadu Pande began to realise she was giving less milk than usual. In an effort to resolve his confusion, he followed her daily journey, and witnessed the leela of Dhumar, the cow, offering milk to Shri Thakorji through the rocks of Govardhan.

The local Vrajvasis, similarly astounded, began to worship Shrinathji's raised left arm. They would offer milk and pray to His hand, knowing that this was the Lord's hand residing in the depths of the Govardhan. They came to find that all their desires would be fulfilled by the grace of the raised arm of Shrinathji. Worship of His raised hand lasted for 60 years until the *Pratham Milan* (First meeting) leela between Shri Vallabhacharya (Mahaprabhuji) and Shrinathji, during which Shrinathji's full swaroop appeared to embrace Mahaprabhuji. (*This was covered in our earlier Newsletter #2*).

Although He appeared in this form from the rocks of Govardhan in Rajasthan (present day Jatipura), Shrinathji is a divinity who played and interacted with His Vaishnavs regularly. He would win games of chopat (a game similar to modern day ludo) and would stay up all night to hear their *kirtan* (music). To Vaishnavs, Shri Nathji's raised left arm signifies Him calling all the Vaishnavs towards Him.

To behold Shri Nathji with their eyes, or with all their senses, was the vrajvasis true enlightenment at the time. All the activities taken by the Vaishnavs at the time were beyond karma, and held utmost spiritual value because they were undertaken in the vicinity of Shrinathji and for His pleasure. It is with this same view in mind that we should serve our Shri Thakorji. In this way, our activities will be beyond karma, and will therefore be very pure especially if undertaken for His pleasure. This will create that everlasting, blissful *Anand* in our hearts.



## Basics Of Pushtimarg : Utsavs, Mahotsav, Mahamahotsavs & Manoraths

**Utsavs:** One of the important parts of human life is to experience Anand eternal bliss, divine enjoyment, enthusiasm and zeal. Expression of this enthusiasm and zeal is done by celebrating festivals - Utsavs. The word 'Utsav' is derived from the word Utsaah (enthusiasm). The uniqueness of Pushtimarg is that everything is done for *Tatsukh* (the pleasure of our Thakorji). Festivals, thus, are celebrated for Shri Thakorji's seva (*Shree Prabhu Viniyog*). Our mundane and materialistic desires (*kaam*) are diverted to a pure and divine path where all our senses (*indriya*) are diverted to the seva of Shri Thakorji. This is well described by Mahaprabhuji in Aapshri's commentary of Shreemad Bhagwat Puran i.e. Shree Subodhini, where He explains that this experience of eternal bliss in the form of *Utsavs* is also done by *Vrajbhaktas* in Maharaas (grand *Raas Leela*). Also, whenever Shri Thakorji returns from the afternoon *Gocharan* (tending the cows), during *Sandhya* (dusk), there comes an enthusiasm in the eyes of *Gopikas* and *Vrajbhaktas* (devotees of Vraj) for being able to have a glance of their dear Prabhu after a long day of separation. This is the true sentiment of an Utsav, which celebrates the end of *Virah* (separation) from Shree Prabhu.

**Mahotsavs:** A Mahotsav is a bigger Utsav and is celebrated at a larger scale with many Vaishnavs. A Mahotsav celebrates the appearance day, vivah or any auspicious occasion of Thakorji or any Vallabhkul Balaks (descendants of Mahaprabhuji) and allows Vaishnavs to express and experience *Anand*. For example, patotsav is a Mahotsav.



**Maha Mahotsav:** Particularly significant or auspicious Mahotsavs that are of prime importance may be called Maha (Grand) Mahotsavs. For example, the sudden appearance of the divine arm of Shree Govardhanathji was celebrated as a Maha Mahotsav by the Vrajvisis due to the astounding nature of the occasion. Another example is when Nandbawa got Shri Thakorji as his son, Nandbawa celebrated the utsav in the form of a Maha Mahotsav. When Shri Thakorji married Shri Rukshamaniji in Dwarika, the people of Dwarika celebrated this vivah of Shri Thakorji in the form of Mahotsav.

**Manoraths:** Manorath is derived from the word 'Man' which means mind and therefore Manorath refers to a divine desire that originates from the mind. Vaishnavs desires arise solely for the purpose of pleasing Shri Thakorji and are fulfilled by continued desire and pre-planning. For example, one may have a Manorath to please their Thakorji by celebrating Hindola Utsav as part of their seva during that utsav period. Manoraths help us divert our desires from worldly matters to desires and longings to make arrangements for Shri Thakorji's *Anand*. Jejeshri says that we should always have a manorath in our mind. This way our minds are occupied in looking forward to and planning for this manorath, and our thoughts are constantly engaged in Shri Thakorji's seva.

The main aim of any utsav, mahotsav and manorath should be to achieve *Sukh* (pleasure) for Shri Thakorji. The daily seva of Thakorji from *Mangala* to *Shayan* (first darshan to last) is also a form of utsav and is known as *Nityotsav* (*Nitya*=daily) and therefore should be performed with equal enthusiasm.



## Guru Purnima

In Verse 27 of Shikshapatra (Letter 9), Shri Harirayji Mahaprabhuji writes:

"Faith in the path is not based on your own limited understanding, but founded upon the teachings of the Guru. Do not concoct meanings. Follow the principles of the lineage."

### Commentary:

Faith in the Path of Grace does not arise without knowledge from the Guru. When the Guru is pleased and grants understanding, faith in the path arises. The student with firm faith in the teachings repeatedly contemplates their inner meanings. He does not imagine what the teachings mean, but takes the assistance of other advanced followers to fully understand the Guru's instructions.

On the occasion of Guru Purnima let us spend some time reflecting the importance of our Spiritual Head Vaishnavacharya Shri Dwarkeshlalji Mahodayshri in our lives. Many of you already sent some wonderful messages through, reading all of which gave Jeje Shree khub *Anand*.

Perhaps a story worth remembering on this occasion is the encounter between Damlaji (Damordardasji Harsanna, Shri Mahaprabhuji's 1st Vaishnav Disciple) and Shri Gusainji (Shri Mahaprabhuji's second son). One day Shri Gusainji asked Damlaji, "Who is greater, Shri Thakorji or Shri Vallabh (Mahaprabhuji)?" To this, Damlaji answered with what is one of the most significant lines in Pushtimarg, "*Daan se bado Daata*".

This means what is given (to you) is bigger than the giver. In this way Damlaji signifies that Shri Mahaprabhuji (his Guru), who led him to Shri Thakorji, is more significant, because without the grace of his Guru, Damlaji would not have experienced the *Anand* of Shri Thakorji. Similarly, if it wasn't for our Guru, without Jeje Shree, we wouldn't have the grace of knowing and learning about Shri Thakorji. We should always be grateful for the endeavours Jeje Shree does for us, His beloved Vaishnavs, travelling the world and taking us closer to Shri Thakorji. In return, what we can do is endeavour to live by His principles, guidelines and lessons in life.

