

## Lessons From Our Spiritual Head Vaishnavacharya Shri Dwarkeshlalji Mahodayshri (Kadi, Ahmedabad)

Day 04 | Shrimad **Bhagwat Saptah Mahotsav**

**TOPIC:** Our Qualities and Our Nature

**CLICK HERE TO WATCH** (1:45:27 - 1:46:25):

<https://www.youtube.com/live/SzG9YdJufwI?feature=share&t>

Don't make your good qualities conditional to circumstances. This means not to showcase your good qualities as a response to what someone does or says. Instead make your good qualities your nature, not your actions. For example, to have a pleasant scent is in a flower's nature, not its action. As a result, when someone comes to water the flowers or even when someone comes to cut the flowers, either way, they get a pleasant scent.

Another example is when spraying perfume. For instance, you might think 'it would be nice if my friend smells it', but in the meantime, your enemy comes and you think, 'I hope they don't get to smell it' - however, is that possible? Fragrance is fragrant.

Your good qualities, the fragrance of your personality should become your nature, not your activity. Otherwise you will have to count before giving each and every time due to the mindset that "...I'll do for this person but I won't do for this person..."

Therefore, our qualities should be part of our nature. If someone is on your side, they should get a pleasant scent and even if someone is against you or fighting you, they should still get just as much of a pleasant smell. Our good qualities are not an activity for us to perform. This is because only when our good qualities turn into our nature will it give us bliss, if they remain as our activities, they won't give us bliss.

## Lila - Shrinathji's Sakhas & Kantoda Teras

Adapted from:

<https://inbrindavan.com/shrinathji-kankoda-teras-leela/>

Shrinathji had four very dear friends who were also His beloved devotees: Kumbhandas, Sadu Pande, Manikchand Pande and Ramdas.

Kumbhandas used to live in Jamunavata (village near the banks of river Yamuna, Uttar Pradesh, India) and Shrinathji lived atop Govardhan Parvat (situated in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, India). Kumbhandas had a soft corner for Shrinathji even as a child. He used to go to Girirajji every day to spend time with Shrinathji. Kumbhandas also used to sing beautiful *kirtans* (devotional songs about the life of Shri Krishna) while doing Shrinathji's darshan.

One day, a *Yavana* (foreign barbarian) attacked several villages of *Vraj* (region in India on both sides of the Yamuna river) with the intention of conquering all of *Vraj*. Kumbhandas, Sadu Pande, Manikchand Pande and Ramdas were concerned about

Shrinathji's welfare. So, they asked Shrinathji how they could stop the *Yavana's* attacks as he might attack Shrinathji's temple. Shrinathji said he wished to visit the Thicket of *Tond* (a dense forest in present day village Tond, which is 31 kms away from Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, India). He requested them to take him there. The four devotees were wondering as to how would they take Shrinathji there and so asked Him that. Shrinathji responded that he wished to sit atop Sadu Pande's young buffalo and ride to Tond. Sadu Pande was delighted to serve Shrinathji and immediately brought his buffalo. The four friends seated Shrinathji comfortably atop the buffalo and embarked on their journey to Tond. Ramdas and Sadu Pande walked alongside the buffalo while Kumbhandas and Manikchand walked ahead to clear the path for Shrinathji.



After experiencing several difficulties (the path was covered in thorns) along the way for a few days, they found a clearing in the forest with a pond. Ramdas and Kumbhandas asked Shrinathji if He would like to visit there and Shrinathji smiled and nodded in assent. So, they created a small makeshift throne, put a cloth on it and seated Shrinathji on it. Here, Chaturanaga, an ardent devotee of Shrinathji was performing austere penances because he was yearning to take Darshan of Shrinathji. Shrinathji was aware of this and so asked his friends to stop at that very spot. Chaturanaga felt overwhelmed with gratitude for Shrinathji's efforts to give him Darshan. He celebrated this occasion by hosting an *Utsav* (festival). He gathered a vegetable called *Kantoda* which grew in abundance in that clearing and cooked a *shaak* (curry) out of it for Shrinathji.

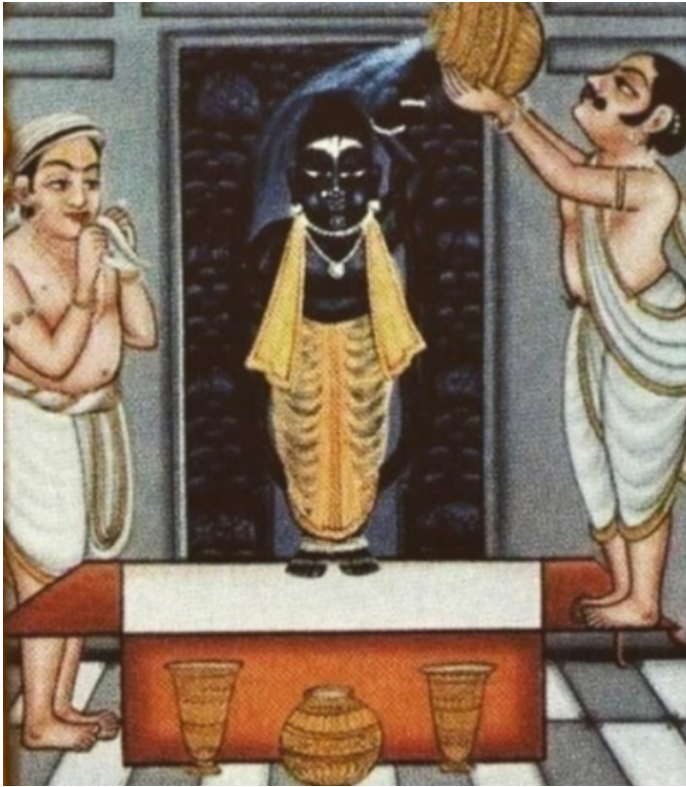


Till today, this day is celebrated as Kantoda Teras on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of Shukla Paksh of Shravan to remind ourselves of this special *leela* of Shrinathji. This day serves as a reminder of how Shrinathji performs these *leelas* and goes through any trouble to fulfil His *Bhakt's Manoraths* (desires). This year, it will be celebrated on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2023. Special offering of *Kantola Shaak* and *Sheera* (pudding) is made to Shrinathji on this day.

## Basics Of Pushtimarg : Snaan Yatra & Keri Manorath

*Snaan Yatra* (bathing voyage) falls on the auspicious day of Jyeshtha Poornima. This year, it was celebrated on Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2023. It commemorates the *Rajyaabhishek* (coronation) of Lord Shri Krishna on this day. This Abhishek is done during the Jyestha Nakshatra, hence this occasion is also called as Jyeshthaabhishek.

The *Bhaav* (sentiment) of *Snaan Yatra* is that *Vrajbhaktas* (devotees residing in Braj, India) are very happy that their beloved Prince Shri Krishna would now be their King. Due to this, *Vrajbhaktas* do the *Manorath* (celebration from the heart's joy) of *Jal Krida* (water sports) with Shrinathji & Shri Yamunaji.



**Seva Prakar:** Shri Thakorji has to be adorned with white dhoti and uparna with *Chandan-border* (sandalwood border) and light pearl ornaments and nothing to be donned on the *Shri Mastak* (forehead). *Shankh* (shell) is the *Adhidevik* (supremely divine) form of water amongst *Bhagwad Ayudh* (divine instruments).

Hence, the *Snaan* (bath) is performed with *Shankh*. *Adhivasan* (Ritual to establish divinity) is performed so that Shri Yamunji comes in *Adhidevik* form and Shri Thakorji does *Jal Krida* with a boat in *Adhidevik* Yamunaji. *Kirtan* has to be performed in front of Thakorji with *Shankhnaad* (conch shell sound), *Ghanta* (bells), *Mrudang* (drum) & *Tambura* (drone instrument).

Out of joy, the *Vrajbhaktas* offer Lord Shri Krishna *Aam* (mangoes) which is why *Aam Manorath* is also celebrated in the month of Jyeshtha.

## Committee Meet Up & Team Building Event

10 members of the VSUK Vaishnav Youth Group (National) Committee got together for their first in-person meet-up. It was an afternoon of planning, team building and creative fun at Shrinathdham Haveli on Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> of May.

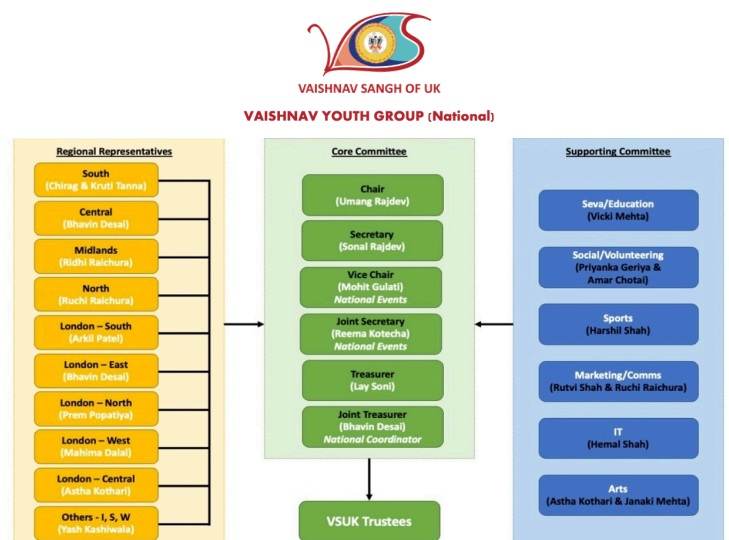


Members shared a *Prasad* meal together before beginning the main activities. The afternoon then began with some games and icebreakers, followed by group planning activities where members brainstormed ideas on different topics regarding how to progress & better serve the wider youth group. Other highlights included particular members showcasing individual projects they are working on & encouraging others to get involved. The afternoon finished with a religious element where members recited *Paath*, shared some personal stories/reflections and listened to *Jejeshri's Vachnamrut*.

The committee have got some really exciting events planned over the coming months and are looking forward to serving the VSUK youth community.

## Meet The Team

Our committee is set up to serve the VSUK youth across the country – each of you will also have been assigned a regional representative as your point of contact – if you've got any questions, please do reach out :)



## Volunteering Day Out with the Cows

VSUK Vaishnav Youth Group (National) recently organised its first volunteering day trip with **Ahimsa Eco Farms** based in Lincolnshire. 15 youth between the age group of 18-40 years from **London, Leicester, Oxford and Warwick** participated in this initiative.



The event had a stellar line-up of activities immersing each and everyone in the vibrant rural life and in the service of our beloved cows. Our host, the farm manager, and his wife, were very warm and welcoming. They narrated their connections to the land and the cows. They also shared their experiences in producing cruelty free fresh milk and cheese.

It was not only fascinating to see their children enjoying the farm life but the sights, sound and the smell of the farm filled us up with the zeal to explore more.

Some of the **Topics that were covered** at the event were:

- Meaning of the word "Ahimsa" - Non violence
- Different breeds of cows
- Different grades of milk
- Difference between industrialised, organic and cruelty free Ahimsa cow's milk
- Milk and cheese production, quality and standards
- Ideal amount of consumption of milk in a day
- Methods of storing fresh milk
- Home gardening
- Farm building: ploughing, de-weeding, painting outdoor tables and benches
- Cow experience - Cuddling and brushing



### Our Key Takeaways/Learnings

- New experiences, purposeful teamwork, spending time in the countryside and with animals was very relaxing and therapeutic. A perfect weekend getaway, spiritual exchanges and uplifting conversations with peers
- Benefits of collaboration, sharing food, reconnecting with our heritage and screen-free time can also be fun!

A big **thank you** to our **volunteers, donors**, as well as our **VSUK trustee (Minaben Popat)** for supporting and enabling such an event for the youth. We look forward to welcoming you all at future events.

To receive event updates and register with the youth group:

## July Upcoming Events

### 1) Cricket:

Saturday 9th July  
Saturday 23rd July

For more information, please contact  
**Harshal Shah**  
(07877 367 364)

2) **Online Seminar**  
**Zoom**  
July - Date TBC

3) London Regional Meet Up at **Shrinathdham Haveli, in July (Date TBC)**.

All youth in London are invited to join! Please contact **Bhavin Desai**

## August Upcoming Events

### 1) Join us in Volunteering at the Sodash Granth Saptah:

12<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> August;  
27<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> August

To volunteer please contact  
**Priyanka Geriya**  
(07747 157 353)

To participate in **dance performances** at the Saptah please contact  
**Janaki Mehta**  
(07736 956 615)

Date	Activity	DRESS CODE
12 <sup>th</sup> August १२ अगोष्ट	Shree Yamuna Moti Mahel श्री यमुना मोती महल	Any colour bandhani
13 <sup>th</sup> August १३ अगोष्ट	Shuk Kunj Manorath शुक कुंज मनोरथ	Green
14 <sup>th</sup> August १४ अगोष्ट	Daan Leela 56 Handi Manorath दाण लीलापट्ट हांडीनो मनोरथ	Navy Blue/Black
15 <sup>th</sup> August १५ अगोष्ट	Kunwaro Manorath कुंनवारो मनोरथ	Red
16 <sup>th</sup> August १६ अगोष्ट	Rasiya Gaan & Fulfaag रसिया गान અને ફુલફાગ	Chaniya Choli
17 <sup>th</sup> August १૭ અગોષ્ટ	Nand Mahotsav નંદ મહોત્સવ	Orange
18 <sup>th</sup> August ૧૮ અગોષ્ટ	Rasmayi Faloni Kunj Manorath રસમયી ફળોની કુંજનો મનોરથ	Any colour patola

2) **Cricket:** Saturday 13th August  
For more information, please contact  
**Harshal Shah (07877 367 364)**

If you are aged 18-40 and haven't registered for the Youth Group yet, you can do so using the following link:

<http://bit.ly/vaishnav-sangh-youth>