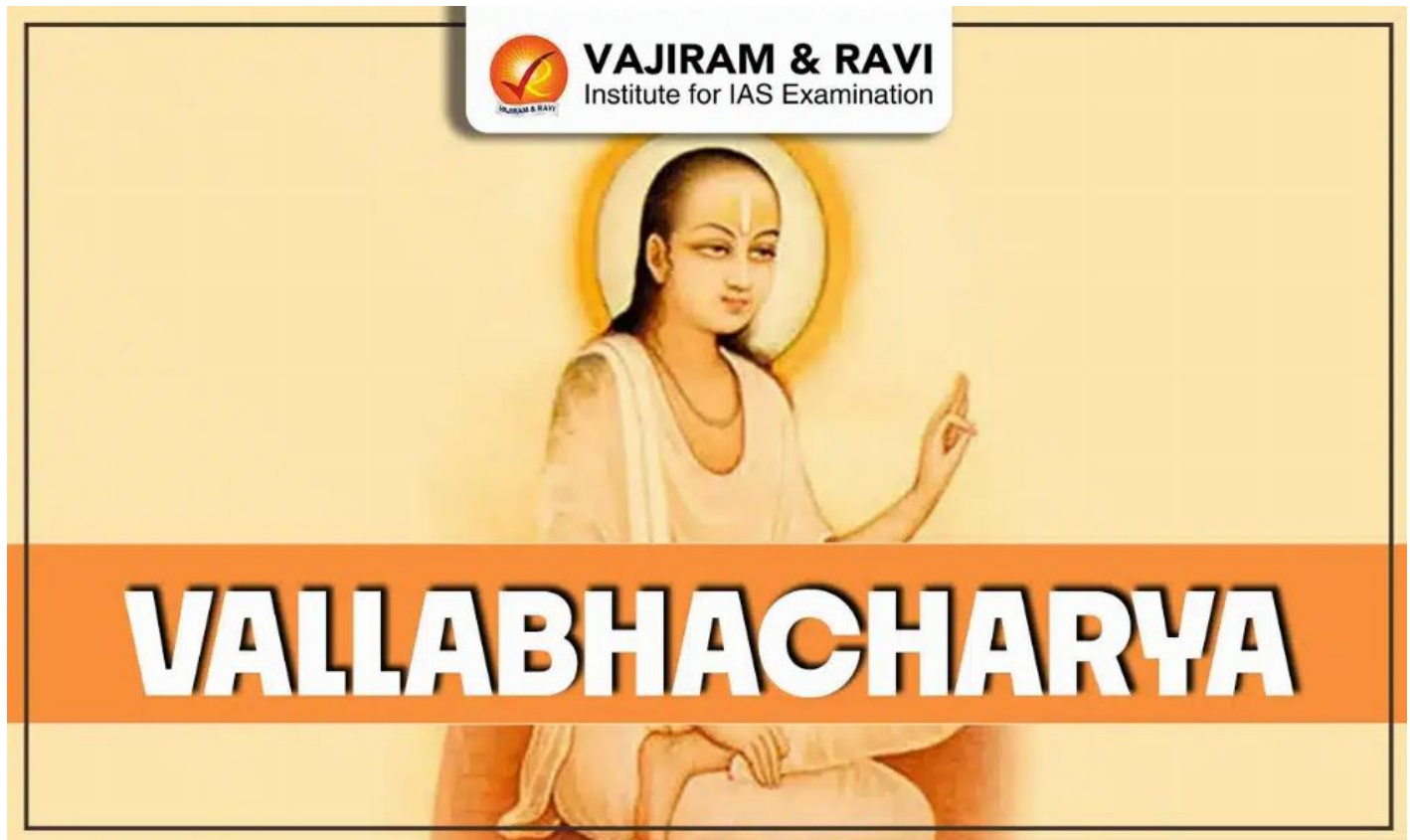


Vallabhacharya, Philosophy, Literary Text, Pushti Marg

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Vallabhacharya, revered as Mahaprabhuji, was a prominent Hindu saint and philosopher born in Champaranya (Chhattisgarh). He founded the **Pushtimarg sect**, centring on divine grace and devotion to Lord Krishna, and developed the doctrine of **Shuddhadvaita** (Pure Non-Dualism), which emphasised the unity of Brahman with the soul. Vallabhacharya spread his teachings through three Bharat Parikramas, engaging in scholarly debates that earned him titles like “**Jagadguru**” and honours such as **Kanakabhishek**.

His profound literary contributions, including the Shodash Granth, Subodhiniji, and hymns like Madhurashtakam, continue to guide *Pushtimarg*'s followers.

About Vallabhacharya

Vallabhacharya (also known as Mahaprabhuji), was a prominent Hindu saint, philosopher, and theologian, born in 1479 CE in the small village of Champaranya (Chhattisgarh, India). Vallabhacharya was recognised for his spiritual inclinations and intellectual depth from a young age. His parents, Lakshman Bhatt and Illamagaru were committed devotees, instilling in him an early reverence for Hindu philosophy and scripture.

- In 1497, he participated in a famous debate in **Jagannath Puri**, where his doctrine of Shuddhadvaita gained prominence. This success earned him the title of "Acharya" (Teacher) and "Jagadguru" (World Teacher).
- His teachings focused on an accessible, loving relationship with Lord Krishna, and he established the **Pushtimarg**, a unique sect within **Vaishnavism** dedicated to divine grace, devotional love, and service to Krishna.

Vallabhacharya Philosophy

Vallabhacharya founded the **Pushti Marg** (Path of Grace) sect of Vaishnavism. His philosophy, Shuddhadvaita (Pure Non-Dualism), presents a unique view of reality where the world and individual soul are seen as manifestations of the divine, with no illusion or separation. He emphasized that Brahman (the Ultimate Reality) is both the creator and the creation and that devotion to Krishna offers a path to realizing this divine unity. Key Aspects of Vallabhacharya's Philosophy:

- **Shuddhadvaita (Pure Non-Dualism)**: Unlike Advaita Vedanta, which emphasizes the absolute oneness of the individual soul (Atman) and Brahman, Shuddhadvaita maintains that while the individual soul is qualitatively identical to Brahman, it is quantitatively distinct. This means that the soul is a part of Brahman but not the whole.
- **Krishna as the Supreme Being**: Vallabhacharya emphasized the worship of Krishna as the Supreme Being. He believed that through loving devotion (Bhakti) to Krishna, one could achieve salvation.
- **Rejection of Asceticism**: Vallabhacharya rejected asceticism and monastic life, suggesting that salvation could be attained by anyone, including householders, through devotion to Krishna.
- **Importance of Bhagavata Purana**: Vallabhacharya placed great importance on the Bhagavata Purana, considering it the main scripture of his school. He believed that the Vedas, the Vedanta, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Bhagavata Purana are progressive expositions of the revealed truth.
- **Institutional Worship**: He initiated the institutional worship of Shrinathji, an image of Krishna, at Govardhana Hill, which later became central to the worship by his followers.

Vallabhacharya's teachings and philosophy have had a lasting impact on the Vaishnava tradition, particularly in the regions of Rajasthan and Gujarat.

Vallabhacharya Pushtimarg

Vallabhacharya founded the **Pushtimarg** (The Path of Grace), a devotional path that centers on the worship of Lord Krishna as Shreenathji (a child form of Krishna), often depicted in a playful and youthful manner. This path is characterized by practices that nurture a personal and loving relationship with God. The central idea of Pushtimarg is that by relying on Krishna's grace, devotees can achieve the highest spiritual goal. Key aspects of **Pushtimarg** include:

- **Emphasis on Bhakti**: Devotion, love, and surrender to Krishna are the main tools for spiritual realization.
- **Non-Ashrama Path**: Unlike other paths that require asceticism, Pushtimarg encourages devotion while leading a family life.
- **Rituals and Offerings**: Devotees offer food and other symbols of love, including *prasadam* (blessed food), to Krishna, recognizing him as a child or friend.

- **The Role of the Guru:** A guru plays a key role in guiding the devotee on the path of devotion.

Vallabhacharya Literary Text

Vallabhacharya's literary works are pivotal to Vaishnavism, with texts like Shodash Granth and Subodhini central to Pushtimarg, offering guidance in Seva and divine love. His hymns, such as Madhurashtakam and Yamunashtak, celebrate Krishna's beauty, enriching Hindu devotional literature. Vallabhacharya's contributions include works such as:

- **Anubhashya (Brahmasutra Bhashya):** Vallabhacharya's key commentary on the Brahma Sutras, offering deep insights into Brahman while addressing philosophical views from Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, and Buddhism.
- **Shodash Granth (Sixteen Treatises):** A collection of sixteen smaller works that encapsulate his teachings on devotion and spirituality. Includes Yamunashtakam, Balabodha, Krishnashraya Stotram, Chatusloki, Sanyas Nirnay and others.
- **Subodhini:** His extensive commentary on the Bhagavata Purana (though incomplete beyond the 9th Skandha) interprets Krishna's pastimes, highlighting themes of grace, beauty, and joy in the divine realm.
- **Madhurashtakam:** This lyrical composition praises Krishna's divine beauty, celebrating his sweetness and evoking devotion among followers.
- **Brahmasutra Bhashya:** A commentary on the Brahmasutras that interprets them through his non-dualistic lens.
- **Tatwartha Dipika:** This text explores concepts like Tirobhaava (obscuration) and Avirbhaava (manifestation), explaining how the universe emerges from and returns to Brahman.

Vallabhacharya Contributions

Vallabhacharya's contributions include establishing the Pushtimarg sect, promoting Shrinathji worship, and pioneering devotional hymns like Madhurashtakam, emphasizing grace-based devotion and unconditional love, with his legacy continued by his sons.

- **Bharat Parikramas and Debates:** Vallabhacharya embarked on three Bharat Parikramas, spreading his philosophy, debating scholars, and establishing his doctrine.
 - His victories in philosophical debates against Advaita Vedānta followers, including those in Odcha and Vijayanagar, earned him honours like the Kanakabhishekam (Gold Bath) and the title "Jagadguru."
- **Formation of Pushtimarg:** Vallabhacharya formalized Pushtimarg, a devotion-centered path based on divine grace. His teachings emphasized connecting with the divine through Seva over renunciation.
- **Promotion of Shrinathji Worship:** Vallabhacharya was the first to establish Shrinathji's worship on Girirajji, creating distinct Seva traditions that brought Krishna's presence to devotees.
- **Family Legacy:** His sons Gopinathji and Vitthalnathji (Gusaiji) continued his teachings and spread Pushtimarg's devotional practices further.

Vallabhacharya UPSC PYQs

Question 1: Consider the following statements: (UPSC Prelims 2014)

1. 'Bijak' is a composition of the teachings of Saint Dadu Dayal.
2. The Philosophy of Pushtimarg was propounded by Madhvacharya.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

1. 1 only
2. 2 only
3. Both 1 and 2
4. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (d)

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