

Light in the midst of darkness

['Krishna-Janamashtami']

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When all is lost, everything is dire, nothing seems to bring light in this miserable temple of the stave, we empty our scales and enter into the heart of Divinity wherein we pledge our last resort in prayers, faith, spiritualism and mystical divinity. Hope is born out of Divinity in the midst of darkness. Dark is “krishna”, and darkness is the divinity of Krishna benign in quietness of contemplation, ‘mantra-manjaree’ [recitals of mantras], hymns, devotion, invocation, spiritual practice and prayers. Krishna triumphs over the direness of the evil, the stubbornness of the ego, the cruelty of the lower mind, and the ignorance of the wretched ‘Kansa’ {cruelty} [the demon who killed seven new-born babies of Devaki {his sister} and Vasudeva in captive prison all in the fear of being killed by the child of Devaki and Vasudeva]. When the eighth child was born, in the midst of darkness [when all were asleep] divinity of Krishna brought miracles into the miserable temple of stave. The prison cells opened by miracles and Krishna was delivered to Vrindavan to YashodaMata, whose baby [mata-mahaDurga-bhavani-bhagavatti-devi] was replaced in Krishna’s place. This exchange encountered great salutations and hymns by the rough seas, the naughty rivers and the restless lakes, the thunderstorms and the fiery winds, the sparks of millions lightening and the Serpent Snakes. All rejoiced!

Krrushna, Krishna, Krrssna, Krisna, Krishan, Krishnandalal,

Kansa was put to shame by the baby [Maa Divine Goddess herself] when Kansa attempted to kill the baby. A huge thunderbolt lightening took place and the baby disappeared in the flash! Suddenly a voice appeared before Kansa: “Your destiny is alive oh miserable fool, oh miserable mean egotist, oh miserable evil doer!”

The mid night of the Krishna Janmashtami echoes hymns of Krishna all over the cosmic skies to commemorate the prelude to kaaliyug avatar of Vishnu in Gujarat, India. Jaya Kanaya-Lalaki, bhaja Govindam Govindam Govindam, BalaKrishna Lalaki Jaya!

“Krishna” is a mantra of kaaliyug the age of darkness that is covered by ignorance and wrath of cruelty, falsities, and mischief!

Krishna Janmashtami is the celebration of the birth of Lord Shri Krishna, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu, believed to have been born about five thousand years ago in Mathura in 'Dwapar Yuga'.

Aum Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya!”

Krishna is the conscience in the heart of all creatures, Krishna is the “pranna” [life breath] that is their beginning, their being of karma, and their end in death. Krishna is the higher mind of all the lower minds and master of all the senses in divine will. Krishna is the radiant purple beam of delight comprising million lights! And Krishna is the golden hue the radiant sun amongst sixty four thousand lights; eighty four billion stars and Krishna is the song in sacred lore, divine symphony, a poem of love of Radhika, a sound of flute for the glory of Radhika’s love. Krishna, is the king of all the kings of all the deities; Krishna is the seer, the priest, the manifestation of hope out of divinity, the emancipation of humanity, the beginning of joy and the benign deliverer of happiness...

“Krishna-Janamashtami”, commemorates the birth of Bhagavan Lord shree Krishna and it is believed to be symbolic of our imprisonment in worldly illusions, wherein Krishna [as dark purple illumination of the nightingale] took birth with us and led us to salvation and peace, vanquishing all evils depicted by Kansa [wrath of darkness of evil]. This is the birthday of Lord Krishna, the eighth Divine Incarnation. It falls on the 8th day of the dark half of the month of Bhadrapada (August-September). This is one of the greatest of all Hindu festivals. Lord Krishna was born at midnight. A twelve-hour fast is observed on this day, which is broken at midnight. Temples are decorated for the occasion. Kirtans are sung, bells are rung, the conch is blown, and Sanskrit hymns are recited in praise of Lord Krishna. At Mathura, the birthplace of Lord Krishna, special spiritual gatherings are organised at this time. Pilgrims from all over India attend these festive gatherings. The Lord appeared when the moon entered the house of Vrishabha at the constellation of the star Rohini, on Wednesday, the 8th day of the second fortnight of the month of Sravana, which corresponds to the month of Bhadrapada Krishnapaksha according to the Barhaspatyamana, in the year of Visvavasu, 5,172 years ago (from 1945), which means 3227 B.C.

Vedic Hindus, Sanatana Hindus, all over the world celebrate this auspicious occasion by plenty of songs, dance, music, sattvic food, sweets, flowers, Kirtans, hymns, transcendental devotion in colourful decoration of the baby krishna – Baala Krishna, etc. Study of the *Bhagavatam* and the *Pancharatras*, which are equal to the *Upanishads* and study of the Geeta are undertaken with great devotion and togetherness. One will know all about the glory of Lord Krishna, Krishna's Lilas and superhuman deeds if one studies Shriman Bhagavad Gita and the Purana shastras.

The eighth Avatar [incarnation] –Krishna; became the beloved of India and the world at large.

Krishna had threefold objective:

[1] to destroy the wicked demons

[2] to play the leading role in the great war fought on the battlefield of Kurukshetra (where he delivered His wonderful message of the *Gita*);

and;

[3] to become the centre of a marvellous development of the Bhakti schools of India and to restore longevity and health back in Mother Earth.

There is no true science except the science of devotion to Lord Krishna. That man is wealthy indeed who loves Radha and Krishna. There is no sorrow or misery other than lack of devotion to Radha-Krishnan. "Krishna" is the God of nightingale, of dance, music, fine arts, and poetry. One who loves and endures in Radha-Krishnan is the foremost of the emancipated one and such a human is indeed a true divine lover of Great Spirit of LOVE. Love is difficult to conquer, hard to understand, and ever-effulgent light of billion delights of evergreen love forever shines like Radha and Krishna together. One who loves the purple glowing Krishna and the golden hue Radha has only love to give and love one becomes. There is no right course in life except the LOVE benign of Shree Radha-Krishna, the devotion comprising colourful dancing, singing, music, hymns, ceremonial rites and rituals, glory of beautiful divine festivity of sacred devotion! The Name, virtues and '*lilas*' divine pastimes of Krishna are the chief things to be remembered. The Lotus feet of Radha and Krishna are the chief objects of meditation.

Sri Krishna is the ocean of bliss. His soul-stirring 'Lilas' [divine manifestations], which are the wonder of wonders, are its waves. The honeyed music of his flute attracts the minds of humble devotees from all three regions namely the terrestrial, the spiritual and the celestial. Krishnan is unequalled and unsurpassed in wealth of beauty! Krishnan's glory is the delightful light in the midst of nightingale! Krishnan's purple glow amazes the animate and the inanimate beings in divine delight, enshrines light of hope in the darkest corners, brings joy of life into the emptiness, capers to the divine rhythm of every pure girl's heart just as Meerabai and Radhika are true exemplification of Krishnan's unparalleled divinity of million lights of delights put together. Krishnan adorns his true friends [like Sudama] with his incomparable love and hence Krishnan is our best friend! Krishnan is the most handsome purple shining being with extra ordinary eyes, beautiful eyelashes, and most beautiful coloured eyes. His palms bear the signs of a lotus and discus, the right sole of His feet of a flag, lotus, thunderbolt, an iron goad, barley seed, and the Swastika. His left sole has the rainbow, triangle, water-pot, crescent, sky, fish, and a cow's footprint. His Form is composed of condensed universal consciousness and bliss. His Body pervades the entire cosmos.

Devotion is the only means of attaining Lord Krishna. Bhakti kindles love for the Lord. When love is directed towards Krishna, man is freed from the bondage of the world. Though Lord Krishna appeared in a human body, He had a divine body not composed of the five elements. He did not take any birth here in the usual sense of the term. He did not die. He appeared and disappeared through His Yoga Maya as He has declared in the *Gita*. This is a secret, known only to His devotees, Yogis and sages.

His enchanting form with flute in hand is worshipped in myriads of homes in India. It is a form to which is poured out devotion and supreme love from the hearts of countless devotees not only in India but also in the West. Millions of spiritual seekers worship Him and repeat His Mantra, *Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya*.

Lord Krishna was great in knowledge, great in emotion, great in action, all at once. The scriptures have not recorded any life fuller, more intense, more sublime, and grander than the life of Sri Krishna.

Krishna has played various roles during His stay in the world. He was Arjuna's charioteer. He was an excellent political leader. He was a master musician; he gave lessons even to Narada in the art of playing the Veena. The music of His flute thrilled the hearts of the Gopis and everyone else. He was a cowherd in Vrindavan and Gokula. He exhibited miraculous powers even as a child. He killed many demons. He revealed His Cosmic Form to His mother, Yashoda. He performed the Rasa Lila, the secret of which can only be understood by devotees like Narada, Gau ranga, Radha and the Gopis. He taught the supreme Truth of Yoga, Bhakti, and Vedanta to Arjuna and Uddhava. He had mastered every one of the sixty-four fine arts. For all these reasons, He is regarded as a full and complete manifestation of God. Incarnations of God appear for special reasons under special circumstances.

Whenever there is heightened wrath of injustice and emanation of too much unrighteousness; whenever confusion and disorder sets in on account of unrighteousness and baffle the well-ordered welfare and progress of humankind; whenever the balance of human society is upset by selfishness, ruthlessness and cruelty; whenever irreligion and unrighteousness prevails; whenever the foundations of social organisations are undermined - the great Incarnation of God appears in order to re-establish righteousness and to restore peace and justice. An Incarnation is the descent of God for the ascent of man. A ray from the Cosmic Being in His potential state of manifestation descends on earth with mighty powers to keep up the harmony of the universe. The work done by the Incarnation of God and His teachings produce a benign influence on human beings and help them in their upward divine unfoldment and Self-realisation. The Incarnation comes to reveal the divine nature of man and makes him rise above the petty materialistic life of passion and egoism. The greatest manifestations are called Incarnations proper. Rishis, Munis, prophets, sons of God and messengers of God are minor manifestations.

On the holy Krishna Janmashtami, the ladies in South India decorate their houses beautifully, ready to welcome the Lord. They prepare various sweetmeats and offer them to the Lord. Butter was Krishna's favourite, and this is also offered. From the doorway the floor is marked with a child's footprints, using some flour mixed with water.

This creates the feeling in them that the Lord's own feet have made the mark. They treat the day as one of very great rejoicing. There is recitation of the *Bhagavatam*, singing and praying everywhere.

On Krishna-Janamashtami, we undertake the following sadhanas [devotional practices]:

1. Jaapa of 'Aum Namō Bhagavate Vasudevaya' from morning till midnight may be undertaken by those who wish to cleanse their karma.

2. Others may recite the *Bhagavatam* during this period. Others will listen to it being recited. On the birthday itself, everyone fasts and spends the whole day in holy communion.

3. A grand *hammam* or *pushpanjalee* may also be performed.

4. Many hymns and portions of the *Bhagavatam*, especially the *Gopika Geetam*, are recited.

5. Towards midnight, there is a grand worship of Lord Krishna. The Lord is bathed with milk while His Name is chanted 108 times. This worship concludes with offerings of flowers, waving of lights (Arati), and reading of that portion of the *Bhagavatam* which deals with the birth of Krishna. This synchronises with midnight, the hour of the Lord's birth, at which time the *murti* of the Lord is rocked in a beautifully decorated cradle. Reciting and reading of Geeta is vital. Understanding the Geeta Mahatmya and its core is of paramount significance. Geeta is the mother of all Vedas and Upanishads. Reading Geeta everyday and reciting the mantra "Aum Namoh Bhagavattey Vasudevayah" will bring immense joy and immense bliss of divine happiness upon a devotee.

"Whom Krishna saves; who can destroy? Whom Krishna destroys, who can save?"

How can Krishnan be dark? How can Krishnan be Black? He is pure, divine glow of all glowing lights, in himself is woven into the universal beauty, sixty four million lights and eighty four billion splendour of the glow unparalleled by none other. We have spilled the ink of doubt over Krishnan with our own minds and we have led our own disillusioned thoughts towards mirage of the moon whereas Krishnan is light of all lights, the life of life, the wisdom of knowledge, the true friend of an acquaintance once made with the world of love and devotion undivided.

In the midst of darkness, hope was born out of delight.

At last, a meaning of soul's birth emerged into this universe terrible and sweet, at last a symphony of music harkened the earth's dark corners and the hungry battered heart of the earth aspiring rejuvenated to the music of Krishnan, song of divine, dance of the terrestrial in colourful rejoice of Gopis and Radhika all together capering in delight. Heaven came on earth as Krishna's feet capered to the divine dance of Vrindavan as the beauty of immortal eyes gazed in glowing delight and heard the passion of the Lover's flute, and known a deathless ecstasy's surprise and sorrow in the hearts for ever muted.

Nearer and nearer now the music draws; life shuddered with a strange felicity 'All' Nature is a wide enamoured paused; poised; hoping her lord to touch, to clasp, and to be. For this one moment lived the ages past; The world fulfilled at last; throbbing and tryst held her spirit of life in divine glory rejoicing Krishna and Radhika caper to the divine song of Glory! Hark, hark to His Flute of delight! On the bank of Life's lone shadowy river; He plays to quell our Night! Wreathed in sweet smiles, a vision of Gleam, He is crowned with His aerial Love! He dances, a beacon to derelict souls, On earth star's kinship to prove!

As waters would wipe out the dry dessert sands and rivers would bring abundance, love would replenish all sorrows. Here is a soul searching poem by Mirabai:

***" With my tears,
I watered the creeper of love that I planted;
Now the creeper has grown spread all over,
and borne the fruit of bliss.
The churner of the milk churned with great love.
When I took out the butter,
no need to drink any buttermilk.
I came for the sake of love-devotion;
seeing the world, I wept. "***

- Mirabai

Happy Krishna_Janmashtami to all!