

Celebrate the Spirit of Krishna Consciousness

Chaitanya Charan Das

Whatever name we prefer to give the Supreme Being — Jehovah, Allah, Buddha, Shakti, Vishnu or Krishna — the concept of a Supreme Creator is that He is of extraordinary attributes, and is universally attractive. The name Krishna means 'the all-attractive One'. "Sarva akarshati iti Krishna" — this describes the attractive nature of the Lord and so describes the absolute Truth, the supreme personality of Godhead, in full.

The Lord administers the world through the laws of material nature — gross such as the law of gravitation and subtle such as the law of karma. But when predominance of materialism over spirituality disturbs the universal order, the Lord descends "to deliver the pious, annihilate the miscreants and re-establish divine principles", says the Bhagavad Gita.

Krishna descends not just to maintain law, but to awaken love. The love that our heart longs for through relationships with various persons finds fulfilment only when it is reposed in the Supreme. When we love Krishna, our love is never interrupted, never betrayed, never let down, never disappointed.

Unfortunately in this world of matter, all living beings are attracted not to the Lord of their heart but to matter and material enjoyment. However, matter being limited and finite, it can never fulfil the unlimited desires of our spirit; material enjoyment satiates, but never satisfies.

God comes to the material world and performs superhuman activities which reveal His supreme nature and unparalleled love for all. Krishna lifted the Govardhan mountain in order to protect His devotees from rains. Such acts appear impossible to the sceptical mind, but an ant would similarly consider the lifting of a book by a human being as 'impossible'.

For Krishna possessing unlimited power, such an act is not at all difficult. Realising the infinite love of Krishna enables us to return to the kingdom of God, with Him.

On Janmashtami, Krishna entered the material world at midnight. This is significant. Midnight is the time of maximum darkness and from the moment the Lord appeared, the darkness started diminishing. Similarly, our heart is dark being afflicted by multiple anxieties and miseries. But in the darkest hour of our lives, when we turn to Krishna, He appears in our heart, and all the darkness recedes and the light of eternal hope starts streaming in. The Lord appeared in a prison cell and then freed His parents of their shackles. This indicates that all of us who are shackled by our own self-destructive desires can be freed by the Lord who appears in our heart which is obscured in darkness.

Janmashtami celebrates Krishna's presence in our hearts. Indeed, amidst all the chaos and disorder prevalent in this Kalyuga, why has the Lord not appeared as per His eternal promise in the Bhagavad Gita? The Vedic scriptures declare, "kali kale nama rupe Krishna avatar" — that in Kali Yuga the Lord incarnates in the form of His Holy Name.

All religions recommend chanting the names of God. The Bible says "Let the Lord always be on your lips", Islam exhorts the chanting of the 99 names of Allah. And among all the mantras — empowered sound vibrations — mentioned in Vedic scriptures, the maha-mantra "Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare, Hare Ram Hare Ram Ram Ram Hare Hare" is specially recommended for our age. So let us experience the love, care, protection and happiness of Janmashtami — the appearance of the Lord in our hearts — by devotedly chanting His holy names.

The writer is a member of ISKCON, Pune.



THE
SPEAKING
TREE