

KRISHNASHTAMI SANDESH

Divine Discourse
by
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GOD'S BIRTHPLACE IS A PURE HEART

All the names and forms are but the manifestations of the Supreme Being who is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute and non-dual. He is the embodiment of Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram (Truth, Auspiciousness, Beauty). (Sanskrit Verse)

Embodiments of Love!

Krishnajanmashtami is celebrated to commemorate the birthday of Lord Krishna. Man's Hridaya (heart) is the birthplace of Krishna. To worry over why Krishna and Rama were born on such inauspicious Thithis (8th and 9th phases of the waning and waxing moon) is foolish. It is only when the Hridaya becomes cool, pure and peaceful like the Himachala (the Himalayan mountains), that is the true birthday of Krishna. God makes such a heart His dwelling place which is pure, sacred and peaceful.

From the worldly point of view, Krishna was born on Ashtami in the midnight. People consider Ashtami to be inauspicious. How can the birthday of a Divine incarnation be inauspicious? In fact, all days are auspicious and are meant to confer welfare and prosperity. God incarnates to bestow auspiciousness on all. Hence, His birthday should be treated as highly sacred.

Krishna was born in a prison. All the guards of the prison, who were supposed to be on high alert as per Kamsa's instructions, were overpowered by sleep. Only Devaki and Vasudeva were awake at the time of Krishna's advent. Fearing danger to the newborn child in the hands of wicked Kamsa, Vasudeva decided to take the child away to a safe destination.

He gently wrapped the child in a cloth, placed it in a basket, lifted it up on his head and came out of the prison. The doors of the prison opened of their own accord. As there was a heavy downpour, Vasudeva prayed that the child be protected. By the Divine Will of Krishna, a huge serpent appeared there and started following Vasudeva with its hood raised over the Divine child, thereby protecting it from the downpour. By the time Vasudeva reached Yashoda's house on the opposite bank of river Yamuna, it was very late in the night. Just then she had given birth to a female child. Everyone including her husband was fast asleep. Vasudeva quietly placed the divine child Krishna by the side of Yashoda and picked up the female child born to her and quickly returned to the prison.

The stories of the Lord are most wonderful and sacred in all the three worlds. They are like sickles that cut the creepers of worldly bondage. They are most ennobling and elevating. They confer bliss on the sages and seers doing penance in forests.

(Telugu Poem)

None can comprehend the ways of God. Even Vasudeva was not fully aware of what he was doing. He took the child Krishna to Yashoda's house and brought the female child with him. He did all this as if he was in a trance. Radha, a small girl

then, was a witness to the entire episode. It got imprinted on her heart. People think Radha was younger to Krishna and talk in derogatory terms about the relationship she had with Him. In fact, she was much older than Krishna, 26 months to be precise. Her feeling towards Krishna was very sacred and became stronger day by day.

Vasudeva became his normal self after he went back to the prison. As he entered the prison, the doors closed behind him and locked automatically. No sooner did he place the female child by the side of Devaki than the bell rang. The guard of the prison at once got up and informed Kamsa about the birth of the child. Kamsa promptly arrived at the prison with all his paraphernalia. As was his wont, he lifted the child with his left hand and threw it into the sky. He held a sword in his right hand and was ready to behead the child as it fell down. But the child vanished as it went up and in its place, a goddess appeared and warned Kamsa that his nemesis Krishna was born and that He would kill him. She was very powerful and none could do any harm to her. After warning Kamsa about his impending peril, she too vanished. Devaki was perplexed beyond words about the happenings. She understood that the entire episode was Krishna's Will. Kamsa became restless and agitated as he came to know that Krishna was being brought up elsewhere. Day and night, he was thinking of ways and means to capture Krishna and kill Him.

Krishna was growing up under the loving care of Yashoda and the story is known to everyone here. Krishna demonstrated His Divine powers in innumerable ways. Kamsa was at a loss how to capture Krishna. He issued an order

that all the newborn babies of Repalle be killed. Initially, he wanted only the male babies to be killed. Later on, he changed his mind and wanted even the female babies to be killed. He resorted to such heinous acts only out of fear. As days progressed, the stories of child Krishna's divine pranks spread far and wide. God's deeds are wonderful and mysterious. All the while, the messengers of Kamsa were in intensive search for Krishna. Ultimately, they spotted Him in Repalle and informed Kamsa.

It is said, *Vinashakale Vipareeta Buddhi* (discrimination fails to work when one is destined to be destroyed). Kamsa started sending many powerful demons to Repalle to kill Krishna. But Krishna, with His mighty power, destroyed all of them. Kamsa's end approached fast. He devised a nefarious scheme to lure Krishna and Balarama to Mathura and kill them. Kamsa sent his messengers to Repalle to bring Krishna and Balarama to Mathura to attend some Yajna which he was performing. He deputed Akrura, who adored Krishna and Balarama to persuade and bring Krishna and Balarama to Mathura.

As the brothers entered the city, the citizens of Mathura were mesmerised by the charming forms of Krishna and Balarama. They were already suffering from deep frustration and anguish over the atrocities committed by Kamsa and they prayed to Krishna to come to their rescue. As Krishna and Balarama were proceeding towards Kamsa's palace, they came across a lady who used to supply garlands to Kamsa everyday. Krishna took two garlands from her. He and Balarama garlanded each other. Then they encountered the royal washerman, took

Kamsa's silk garments and dressed themselves in regal style. Later they met a hunchback lady Kubja, who was carrying scents and perfumes for Kamsa. She had an ugly appearance with a crooked body. She knew that Krishna was God. Seeing the two brothers, she was overjoyed and she sprinkled the perfumes on them. She said, "Krishna, today my life has found fulfilment. I must have performed great penance in the past, to have deserved this opportunity to serve You." She then prayed to Krishna to straighten her body. Krishna planted His foot on her feet, caught hold of her chin and lifted it up. Lo and behold! Her hunchback was gone. She assumed the form of a beautiful lady. In this manner, Krishna demonstrated His divine powers by performing many stupendous feats and in the process relieved many from their curses.

On coming to know that Krishna and Balarama were wearing his royal garments, Kamsa was furious. In the meanwhile, Kubja approached Kamsa and said, "Oh master, none can comprehend the divine play of Krishna and His mysterious powers. Don't make any attempt to understand his powers. It is better that you ignore the matter." Kamsa wondered, "How could she speak to me with such impertinence! Surely Krishna has instigated her." At that moment Kamsa's attention was diverted by someone and Kubja, seizing the opportunity, quietly left the scene.

Krishna and Balarama entered Kamsa's court like two lion cubs. They defeated the court wrestlers. Thereafter, Krishna, in a trice, leapt on the platform where Kamsa was seated, pinned him down and rained severe blows on him. Balarama, who was

equally strong, joined him. Together they crushed Kamsa to pulp. Seeing the gruesome killing of Kamsa, the assembly was fear-stricken. They were amazed how such a young boy as Krishna could vanquish the mighty Kamsa. There was a platoon of soldiers specially deployed by Kamsa to kill Balarama and Krishna. They too could not withstand the onslaught of Krishna. Ultimately, they fell at His feet and prayed for mercy.

Krishna and Balarama left for Repalle unnoticed by others. The inhabitants of Repalle were anxiously awaiting their return. They were highly depressed as they could not see any sign of their arrival in the vicinity. Mother Yashoda was very nervous thinking of the well-being of her sons. The Gopikas too were drowned in sorrow and started abusing Kamsa, presuming that he must have harmed Krishna and Balarama. All the men and women of Repalle were praying to Krishna all the time chanting His Name. All of a sudden, Krishna and Balarama appeared in their midst to their astonishment and joy. Krishna spoke to them soothing words and pacified them.

Kamsa had two wives. After his death, they went to stay with Jarasandha, their father. Jarasandha was very furious with Krishna and wanted to avenge the killing of his son-in-law. Many of his relatives had also developed hatred towards Krishna. This news reached Yashoda and Nanda as also Devaki and Vasudeva. They were concerned about Krishna's safety. However, Devaki was one of courage and also a great devotee. That is why she could withstand all the suffering caused by her brother Kamsa with equanimity. She was sure that none could harm Krishna. She had

total faith in Krishna's Divinity. As the enemies could not dare to challenge Krishna, they tried to harass the residents of Repalle. Krishna at once came to their rescue and drove the enemies away.

Days rolled by and it was time for Krishna's marriage. Rukmini, princess of Vidarbha loved Krishna and wanted to marry Him. But her brother Rukmi wanted to give her in marriage to his friend Sisupala and was making arrangements for the same. Krishna was well aware of all this. He had a masterplan of His own. Devaki and Vasudeva, after they were freed from prison, were staying in the house of Nanda and Yashoda. Meanwhile, Rukmini had sent a message to Krishna through a brahmin in which she wrote, "Krishna, I can no longer bear the pangs of separation from You. My father has decided to perform my marriage with Sisupala, against my wish. The marriage is scheduled to take place tomorrow. If You do not come before that and take me away from here, I will put an end to my life."

As per Rukmini's wish, Krishna devised a strategy to bring her to their house. In those days, it was customary for the bride to offer special worship to the village goddess prior to her marriage. As per the tradition, Rukmini was proceeding to the temple to offer special prayers. Rukmi, the evil-minded brother of Rukmini had made elaborate security arrangements fearing an attack from Krishna. He had joined hands with Sisupala and Dantavakra, who were bitter enemies of Krishna.

Rukmini was walking slowly towards the temple. She was deeply dejected thinking that Krishna had not come to her rescue. She was unaware that Krishna had indeed come to rescue her and was waiting at the entrance of the temple without being

noticed by others. As she reached the entrance, Krishna deftly put her in His chariot and drove away. A fierce battle ensued between Krishna and Rukmi and his associates. Krishna defeated them all. He took Rukmini along with Him and married her. Krishna had incarnated to punish the wicked and protect the pious. Sisupala hated Krishna from the core of his heart because He had taken away Rukmini whom he was supposed to marry.

Krishna had to encounter many odds and hardships all through His life. That is why people consider Ashtami, His birthday as a day that brings difficulties. Right from the time He was born, Krishna faced difficulties at the hands of Kamsa. During his infancy, people of other villages also had to undergo sufferings inflicted by Kamsa. He had to face the challenges posed by wicked people like Sisupala and Dantavakra. Even His marriage with Rukmini resulted in battle. However, He vanquished all His adversaries and emerged victorious.

Krishna spared Sisupala's life for a long time in spite of his hostility. When Dharmaraja performed Rajasuya Yajna, he gave Agratambulam (first offering) to Krishna. Watching this, Sisupala flew into a fit of rage and hurled abuses at Krishna. He described Him as a mere cowherd boy and said that He did not deserve the honour.

"When elders like Bhishma are seated in this assembly, how could you choose a cowherd boy for this great honour", he questioned Dharmaraja. He was ready to fight with Krishna. He said to Him,

Do you think that you deserve this honour because you stole the saris of the Gopikas

when they were having a bath? Or do you think that you deserve this because you spent all your time in the company of cowherdesses? Stop this self-aggrandisement and shut up!

(Telugu Poem)

It was then that Krishna killed Sisupala. Many are under the mistaken notion that Krishna used His divine weapon, the Sudarshana Chakra (disc) to behead him. In fact, Krishna just threw the plate, in which He received the first offering at Sisupala. In this age of Kali, people talk of Vishnu Chakra and Sudarshana Chakra as the weapons of Krishna. But whatever Krishna used served as Chakra with His Divine Will.

In this manner, Krishna had to wage a number of wars during His lifetime. That is why elders say that the birthday of Krishna, Ashtami, is associated with difficulties. When Krishna was born, the day was Ashtami and the star was Rohini. It is a common belief that whoever is born with such a combination of day and star, will face hardships throughout his life. There is another belief that such a person will be the emancipator of the nation. Krishna destroyed the wicked and protected the righteous. He established Dharma. Hence, do not consider the time of Krishna's advent to be inauspicious. It is a noble and a sacred day.

Later, as time passed by, it was Arjuna who brought the shocking news that Krishna shed His mortal coil. Mother Kunti had become very old. She had lost the power of vision and her limbs had become very weak. She was a great devotee and considered Krishna as her very life. She was eagerly waiting for Arjuna to come and tell

her about Krishna's well-being. Arjuna came to her calling, "Mother, Mother" in an agitated voice. She at once asked him, "Son, where is Krishna? How is He?" Arjuna was crestfallen. He said, "Mother, what can I say? Krishna, who is our friend, relative, guide, guardian and God, is no more." Hearing this tragic news, Kunti at once left her mortal body. She was such a great devotee. After Krishna's departure, the entire Yadava clan perished as a result of severe in-fighting that followed. It was the consequence of a curse pronounced earlier on Yadavas by a sage.

The Pandavas decided to renounce the world and retire into the forests. It was a strange situation. On the one hand the coronation of Parikshit had to take place; on the other the last rites of Kunti had to be performed. Making her head rest on his lap, Dharmaraja issued instructions to Bhima to make arrangements for the coronation. He told Arjuna to make the necessary preparation for Kunti's funeral. At the same time, he instructed Nakula and Sahadeva to make arrangements for them to go to the forest. All the three events took place on the same day. Only those with unwavering faith in God can perform such tasks simultaneously with equanimity. Everything happens according to His Will.

Right from the beginning till the end, the tasks performed by Krishna were wonderful, sacred, mysterious and beyond human comprehension. Therefore, it is not proper to consider the birthday of Krishna to be inauspicious. It is a highly sacred day and is to be celebrated with unbounded joy.

Here is another point that needs mention. When this body was born, there

was a lot of chaos and confusion among people of this village and also in the neighbouring villages. The epidemics of Cholera and Plague were rampant everywhere. People were afraid to visit each other's house or even drink a glass of water outside. Such was the situation in those days.

G r i h a m A m m a y i (M o t h e r Easwaramma) would not visit others' houses. Kondama Raju, grandfather of this body, was also one of strict discipline and principles. He would never accept anything from others. In those days, I was staying with Kondama Raju. He did not permit other children, including Parvatamma and Venkamma (Swami's sisters) to come near Me, lest I should be infected with the epidemic. But I used to slip out of the house without his knowledge. On coming to know of this, he would gently chide Me saying, "Sathya, why don't you listen to Me? You should not go here and there." He instructed the villagers to bring Me home at once if they spotted Me outside. This way, he would try to restrain My movements. But can anyone restrain Me? I used to move around in the village without being noticed. There were occasions when people of ten different houses would invite Me for food. I would visit all those ten houses, dine with them and satisfy them. Sometimes, Karanam Subbamma would call Me from the window and pass on food packets. She was a great devotee.

Kondama Raju did not relish My visits to others' houses. He was anxious about My safety and well-being. In those days, Reddy and Karanam were the two heads of the village. Subbamma was the name of Karanam's wife and Reddy's wife was

Subbulamma. She was feeling jealous that I was making frequent visits to Karanam Subbamma's house. Hence, she decided to poison Me. One day she came to Me and invited Me to her house, saying, "Babu, today you must come to our house for snacks. I will make delicious vadas for You. Come alone, do not tell others about this." When I visited her house, she served Me poisoned vadas. I knew her evil intentions, yet I ate the vadas without hesitation. My body at once turned blue. People who saw Me, ran to Karanam Subbamma and Easwaramma and informed them about this. In those days, there was bitter rivalry between Reddy Subbulamma and Karanam Subbamma. Not only here, in most of the villages, such animosity existed between Reddys and Karanams. People came down heavily on Reddy Subbulamma for her evil act.

Kondama Raju lived in a tribal locality. When he came to know of the incident, he became furious. He summoned the tribals and goaded them to teach a lesson to Reddy Subbulamma. I told Kondama Raju, "Grandfather, being elders of the village, you should not resort to such harmful acts." If you do not stop the tribals from attacking her, I will go and stay with her forever. Both Kondama Raju and Karanam Subbamma acted on My advice and stopped those tribals from going to Reddy Subbulamma's house. In this manner, I removed hatred from the minds of people and strove for unity in the village.

There was never any fear in all my actions. I would eat whatever others offered Me without any hesitation. Once the thatched hut I was staying in, was set on fire by some miscreants. You may be knowing that there was a hut in the place

where the Kalyana Mandapam stands now. As the hut was being consigned to flames, there was a heavy downpour of rain, only on the hut and nowhere else. People realised My Divinity. Right from that day, people of Puttaparthi, Kammavaripalli, Jankampalli, etc., started coming to Me with veneration. They were conducting Bhajans in the surrounding villages.

I want to tell you something that happened in the recent past. When I was at Bangalore, there was a wide propaganda that I had a fall and had sustained a fracture. People of all villages including Puttaparthi conducted regular Bhajans praying for My well-being. In many villages Sathyanarayana Vratam was performed. In this manner, they became recipients of Swami's love. During this period, there was none who did not think of Swami. The glory of Swami has spread far and wide. Whenever I travel from Bangalore by road, at every village enroute people stop My car and offer Arati. On the previous occasion, the road at Chikballapur was blocked by eager devotees, doing Bhajans, waving Arati. They hailed My arrival full-throated, "Sathya Sai Babajiki Jai". People at Kappalabanda and Mamillakunta also expressed their love

and devotion for Swami in a similar manner.

The doctor had said that a rest of one year was required for the hip to heal completely. I told that it would not take one year. "The loving prayers of devotees would cure Me in no time", I assured them. I told the doctors that I did not need any medicine or further treatment. The prayer of the devotees is the panacea for this body. Their prayers have given Me immense bliss. In spite of the fracture, I was smiling always. When I was taken to the hospital, everyone was in tears, but I was smiling all the time. The doctors who operated on Me were astonished to see Me smiling. Usually the pain that results from a hip fracture is like that of an electric shock. But I was least affected by it. Even now I have no pain whatsoever. Devotees are My property and I am the property of devotees. I have no fear or anxiety. Even in such a situation, I can happily go round the country. Hereafter, I will travel around far and wide more frequently. You don't need to worry about Swami's well-being. I am always happy and blissful. May you all be happy and prosperous always!

Bhagawan concluded His Discourse with the Bhajan, "*Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam, Govindam Bhaja Moodha Mathe...*"



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