



FESTIVALS OF INDIA

KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI



LORD KRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY



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Krishna Janmashtami Lord Krishna's Birthday



Krishna Janmashtami is a significant Hindu festival. It is celebrated as the birthday of Lord Krishna—the most adorable deity. Lord Krishna is known by various names such as Gopal, Kanha, Murari, Murli Manohar, Govardhan Dhari, Devaki Nandan, Dwarakadheesh, etc. Krishna Janmashtami is celebrated with great devotion and enthusiasm throughout the country.

Krishna Janmashtami falls on the Ashtami (eighth day) of Shravan (August or September) month according to the Hindu calendar. At the time of Lord Krishna's birth, the Moon entered the Rohini Nakshatra, which is considered very auspicious.

History of Krishna Janmashtami

According to Hindu mythology, it is believed that whenever evil increases on the earth, Lord Vishnu comes to the earth to end the prevailing evil. In Dwaparyuga, Lord Vishnu came to our planet in the form of Lord Krishna—His eighth incarnation. Here is the story of Lord Krishna's birth:



Kansa was the king of Mathura. He was a very powerful and cruel king. He had a sister named Devaki. Just after Devaki's wedding with Vasudeva, a strange incident took place. There was a prophecy from the sky, “O proud King Kansa, your evil life is going to end soon. The eighth child of Devaki and Vasudeva will end your life.”

Everybody was shocked to hear the prophecy. Kansa became furious. He decided to kill Devaki but Vasudeva requested him not to kill Devaki. He promised that he would give his eighth child to Kansa just after his birth. Kansa spared Devaki's life but he imprisoned the newly wed couple under a very strict security. Kansa ordered his security guards to give him the details of all the happenings in Devaki and Vasudeva's life.



Devaki gave birth to her first child. Kansa got the news and reached the prison. He killed the infant heartlessly in front of Devaki and Vasudeva. In the same manner, Kansa killed all the seven children of the couple one by one.

When Devaki was about to give birth to her eighth child, Kansa was frightened and nervous. He increased the security around the couple.

In the month of Shravan, the night of Ashtami was dark and stormy. At midnight, the auspicious hour of Lord Krishna's birth arrived. Devaki gave birth to her eighth child.



Just after his birth, a miracle happened. All the security guards fell asleep and the gates of the prison opened miraculously. All the chains, shackles and locks were broken.

Devaki and Vasudeva heard a prophecy, “Vasudeva, your child is not an ordinary child, and he's the saviour of the Universe. He'll end the prevailing evil on the earth. But for now, take your child to Gokul and leave him at Nand's house and bring Nand's daughter here.”

Devaki and Vasudeva were saddened with the thought of leaving their child somewhere else. But they decided to follow the prophecy for the well-being of their child.



Vasudeva placed the baby inside a basket and covered it carefully. With tears in her eyes, Devaki hugged her child lovingly and showered her blessings on him.

Keeping the basket on his head, Vasudeva started his journey to Gokul. It was raining very heavily that night. Vasudeva had to cross the river Yamuna to reach Gokul which was all flooded with the rainwater. It seemed impossible to cross it.

While Vasudeva was still wondering, suddenly the water of the river got parted, giving way to Vasudeva. Vasudeva entered the river. Just then, another miracle happened. The divine serpent of Lord Vishnu—Sheshanag—emerged from the river. To save the baby from the rainwater, he covered him by his hood.



Vasudeva reached Gokul safely. With a heavy heart, he left his baby at Nand's house. He placed Nand's newly born daughter in the basket and came back to the prison.

The gates of the prison got closed on their own. The locks, shackles and gates all got back to their normal form. The guards woke up from their deep sleep. They came to know that Devaki has given birth to a baby girl. They rushed to deliver the news to King Kansa.

Within no time, King Kansa reached the prison. When he was about to kill the baby, she slipped from his hands and flew away in the sky. To Kansa's greatest surprise, the newly born baby spoke something. She said, "O cruel King Kansa, don't be so proud! Your slayer has already arrived on the Earth."



Saying this, the divine baby disappeared in the sky. King Kansa was shocked to see the sight. Devaki and Vasudeva were also surprised to watch the magical incident. Kansa began his search to find Devaki's child. He wanted to kill the child at any cost.

On the other hand, Devaki's son was being brought up at Nand and Yoshoda's house in Gokul. They named him 'Krishna'. He was an adorable child. People of Gokul were very fond of Krishna.

For many years, Kansa tried to kill Krishna. He sent various demons to kill Krishna. But Krishna ended the evil lives of all the demons. Thereafter, Kansa called Krishna to Mathura, where Lord Krishna ended the life of Kansa. Lord Krishna destroyed many evil lives and restored the peace of the Universe.

Lord Krishna delivered precious and divine sermons to Arjuna during the battle of Mahabharata. His sermons were later compiled as the Bhagwat Geeta—the most revered Holy Scripture of Hindus.

Krishna Janmashtami Celebrations

Krishna Janmashtami is celebrated with splendid grandeur throughout India. On this pious day, people keep fast (Vrata) for the whole day and worship Lord Krishna. The houses are cleaned and decorated, especially the place of worship. The baby idol of Lord Krishna, which is popularly called as 'Bal Gopal', is placed in a cradle. People create beautiful miniature representation called 'Jhankhi' by clay and toys depicting the scenes of birth of Krishna and village Gokul. Various delicacies like, makhana kheer, coconut burfi, shrikhand etc are prepared on this day.



The temples are beautifully decorated for the festival. Lord Krishna's baby idol, 'Bal Gopal', is placed in a huge cradle. The cradle is decorated with fresh flowers and other embellishments.



In the evening, people gather at temples. Children dress up like Krishna, Radha and gopies to perform ras leela and matki game. Women sing bhajans of Lord Krishna. At midnight, priests of temples perform the rituals of Krishna Janm, followed by Aarti. We all love to see the baby form of Lord Krishna and move his cradle lovingly. After the celebration of Krishna Janm, people break their fast and eat prasadam. On this pious day, we remember the divine acts of Lord Krishna and worship him wholeheartedly.



Krishna Janmashtami in Mathura and Vrindavan

Mathura, Vrindavan and Gokul are the places associated with Lord Krishna's birth and childhood. Hence, this festival is celebrated with great enthusiasm and devotion at these places.



The temples, houses, roads and every corner of these towns are decorated like a bride. On this festival, special pujas and yajnas are performed in the temples. People from all over the country gather at Vrindavan to visit the most popular Bankey Bihari Temple, Krishna Janma Bhoomi and other temples of Lord Krishna.

The most attractive feature of this festival is the game of Matki, which is associated with the childhood mischief of Lord Krishna. As a child, Lord Krishna loved eating butter. In those days, women used to prepare butter at home by churning the cream. The pots of the butter were hanged very high to protect it from the reach of children and animals. Lord Krishna's friends used to make human pyramids for him and he used to climb up to steal butter from the houses of Gokul.

This adorable mischief of Krishna is still remembered through this game. In this game, the matki (pot) of butter is hanged very high and the teams of young boys make human pyramids. Then, one of them tries to climb up and reach to the matki. The team that succeeds in breaking the matki is declared the winner. This game is very popular in Mathura, Vrindavan and also in the cities of Gujarat and Maharashtra.



The Indians settled abroad also celebrates this festival with the same spirit. In almost all the countries where Indians are living, Lord Krishna's temples have been built. In these temples, Krishna Janmashtami is celebrated in the same manner.

This divine festival is celebrated with great fervour and zeal.

Throughout the year, we eagerly wait for this festival. We should celebrate this festival with pure devotion and pray to Lord Krishna to bless us and fill our planet with love, peace, truth and righteousness.





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KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI

Krishna Janmashtami is a significant Hindu festival celebrating the birthday of Lord Krishna – the most adorable deity. It is celebrated with great devotion and enthusiasm throughout our country. It falls on the Ashtami (eighth day) of Shravan according to the Hindu calendar which is considered as a very auspicious day. We should celebrate this divine festival with pure devotion and pray to Lord Krishna to bless us and fill our planet with love, peace, truth and righteousness.

The Great Indian Festival Series

The books in this series have been structured thoughtfully to make children learn and enjoy our culture. Presented clearly and simply for a better understanding involves the child in easy learning process.

Note for Parents:

The present book has been created with the help of experts and parents to provide young children the essence of our festivals.

Using this book

It is important to create a relaxed

atmosphere, allowing the child to set his or her own pace. Encourage the child and give lots of praise, and always try to finish on a positive note. Build their confidence and encourage them to enjoy learning

Tips for parents

- Read aloud to the child - talk and read to him
- Promote and develop imagination
- Make learning process interesting and creative
- Each child is an individual - customize learning as he likes
- Enhance vocabulary skills
- Be patient
- Keep it simple
- Repetition helps

Titles in the Series

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