

**ADDRESS BY THIRU BANWARILAL PUROHIT, HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF
TAMIL NADU AT THE SRI KRISHNA JANMASHTAMI FUNCTION ORGANISED BY
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS AT RAIL KALYANA
MANDAPAM, PERAMBUR, CHENNAI ON 03.09.2018 AT 6.00 P.M**

Anaivarukkum Maalai Vanakkam

Thiru. Sumitra Krishna Das

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Thiru. Mahavaraha Das

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Thiru. Jaya Gopinatha Das

Temple President, ISKCON Perambur

North Chennai

Thiru. L.Ganesan,

Member of Parliament

Distinguished Invitees

Ladies & Gentlemen

I am happy to be taking part in the Sri Krishna Janmaashtami celebrations being conducted by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. You are all aware that the festival signifies the arrival of the avatar of Lord Krishna on this earth to ensure the victory of good over evil. Let us all therefore on this joyous and auspicious occasion resolve to uphold virtue and goodness.

According to astronomical calculations, Sri Krishna was born several thousands of years ago, in the Dakshinaayana period, in the Krishna Paksha or dark lunar fortnight of the Tamil month 'Avani'.

Sri Krishna was the supreme light who came into this world to dispel darkness. He himself was dark in colour but his glory is shining luminously all these years illuminating our lives and showing the path for mankind to follow.

The avatar of Lord Krishna was marked by mellifluousness, radiance and smile and success.

As the beautiful Madhurashtakam stotra by Sri Vallabhacharya says, "Everything about the Lord of Sweetness, Madhuradhipathe, is sweet: his face, his words, his flute-playing, his gait, his actions, his friendship"...all of these are a sweetness that does not satiate.

Sri Krishna Bhagawan's personality, because of this divine nature, is uniquely multi- dimensional.

He is the divine child protecting the people while playing pranks in Gokula. He is the divine flute player whose music entralls all beings even while tending to cattle in Brindavan.

He is then the warrior who challenges Kamsa and brings the tyrant's cruel reign to a stop.

Sri Krishna as the king of Dwarka is the friend of the Pandavas and helps them in their times of distress. He is the divine diplomatic messenger who goes to the Kauravas to talk peace.

He is the counsellor, strategist and the protector of the forces fighting to establish goodness by destroying the forces of evil. And most importantly he is the revealer of the Srimad Bhagavad Geetha to Arjuna in the face of the latter's sudden decision to shrink away from his duty on the battle field.

There are so many divine facets the alluring personality of Sri Krishna has!

Let me recount here one more aspect of His personality. This is the facet of his friendship with the poor student Sudaama, also called Kuchela, who studied with him under Sage Sandeepani.

Later in life, prodded by his wife Susheela to meet his old friend Sri Krishna, Sudaama goes to Dwarka with the coarse puffed rice which is all that he has in his possession.

Krishna who is by then a king receives him with affection and asks him if there is anything that he can do to help him. At that state Sudaama is not able to bring himself to ask anything of Sri Krishna, but when he returns home after the meeting, he finds his

family enjoying wealth and riches and his hut converted into a palace.

That is the power of the divine who, silently helps all those who come to him with bhakti and devotion.

Sri Vedanta Desika, the multi-faceted genius of the 13th and 14th centuries whose life was characterized by simple living and high thinking, says in his 'Vairagya Panchakam' : "I will never sing the praise of arrogant, earthly kings who think the world about their petty dominions. I will seek only the blessings of the One who possesses innate compassion and who conferred the state of Kubera, the god of wealth, on Kuchela, who had nothing to offer except handfuls of puffed rice to Him".

In Tamil Nadu, the great mystic Nammaalwaar (नम्माल्वार्) experienced Sri Krishna intimately, saying, "The food that I eat, the water that I drink and the betel that I chew are all Sri Krishna..."

The way in which Periyaalwar celebrated the childhood of Sri Krishna is couched in the evergreen classical poetry of Tamil literature. His foster daughter Andaal's magnificent yearning for Sri Krishna as her consort is also deeply embedded in the inner consciousness of South India.

Sri Krishna makes this assertion in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, 'Maasaanam Maargasheersho Asmi'

(मासानाम् मार्गशीर्षो अस्मि) , meaning 'Among months, I am Maargazhi'.

The Tiruppaavai hymn, which is part of the rituals practiced in the month of Maargazhi, also called Dhanur maasa, brings the magic of Gokul and Brindaavan located in far away Uttar Pradesh, in the times of Aandal to Srivilli-puthoo in Tamil Nadu. Whenever the Tiruppaavai hymn is rendered devoutly, one feels the living presence of Sri Krishna, even as Mira's ecstatic song in Mewar in Rajasthan brings 'Giridhara Gopal' before our eyes.

At another level, Sri Krishna Bhagawan's words in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita are the essence of the Upanishads, which are the crux and kernel of the Vedas.

As the famous verse goes, all the Upanishads are the cow and Sri Krishna is the Divine Personality who milked the cow to give humanity the essence of the greatest wisdom in the form of the Bhagwad Gita. **सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपाल ननदनह**

'Sarvopanishado Gaavo, Dogdha Gopaala Nandanaha'.

Great personalities have spoken in glowing terms about the greatness of the Bhagavad Gita.

Srilasri Prabhupada the founder of the international society for Krishna Consciousness points out how in chapter after chapter, the scripture unfolds new dimensions till it reveals the

most important doctrine of taking refuge at the feet of the Supreme Personality.

Let me quote his words in this regard: "On perusal of the first chapter of Bhagavad Gita one may think that we are advised to engage in warfare. When the second chapter has been read, it can be clearly understood that knowledge of the soul is the ultimate goal to be attained. On studying the third chapter it is apparent that acts of righteousness should be given the highest priority. If we continue and patiently take the time to complete the Bhagavad-Gita and try to ascertain the truth of its closing chapter we can see that the ultimate conclusion is to surrender, fully and unconditionally, to the Supreme Lord." Unquote.

There are many lessons that one can learn from the Gita. I mention here a few of them. The importance of Karma is beautifully set out as follows "Karmanyē Vadhikaraste, Ma phaleshou kada chana, Ma Karma Phala Hetur Bhurmatey Sangostva Akarmani"

You have a right to perform your prescribed duty, but you must do it without any expectations about the fruits of your actions. Never consider yourself to be the cause of the results of your activities, and never be attached to not doing your duty.

Another message of the Gita is about the importance of being detached from sensual matters. When a man dwells in his

mind on the object of sense, attachment to them is produced. From attachment springs desire and from desire comes anger.

From anger arises bewilderment, from bewilderment loss of memory; and from loss of memory, the destruction of intelligence and from the destruction of intelligence he perishes.

The Bhagavad Gita forges a harmony between different strands of Indian thought: jnana, karma and bhakti.

It is also a great synthesis of the ideas of the impersonal spiritual monism with personalistic monotheism, of the yoga of action with the yoga of transcendence of action, and these again with yogas of devotion and knowledge.

Uniquely blessed were the visionaries like Lokmanya Tilak, Sri Aurobindo and Subramaniya Bharathi who experienced the divinity of Sri Krishna when writing their commentaries on the Bhagwad Gita or when composing poetry visualizing Sri Krishna as a friend, as a king as a mother or as a Sewak.

Subramanya Bharatiyar also had a vision of Sri Krishna in every aspect of creation.

He sings:

“In the feather of the crow

Your darkness you show, O Nandalaala!

In the trees that are seen,

I see your hue that is green, O Nandalaala!”

In this manner, let us experience on this Krishna Janmaashtami day, the divine greatness of Sri Krishna and become aware of Sri Krishna in every aspect of our lives!

May this Krishna Consciousness elevate our brethren in our country and elsewhere, and may India grow to its fullest height and stature and fulfill its extraordinary potential with the blessings of Sri Krishna and those who truly follow his teachings in their lives.

There are amongst us here, children who have received certificates and prizes for the competitions held on the eve of Krishna Janmastami. I appreciate their knowledge and understanding of our culture and tradition.

I extend my greetings and best wishes to ISKCON and particularly the Perambur branch for the efforts taken to organise the Janmashtami Celebrations in a grand manner. I wish them success in all their endeavours.

Nandri Vanakkam

Jai Hind