

Bhagavan Sri KRISHNA - Source of Joy in Life

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Sri Krishna Jayanthi marks the celebration of the birth of Bhagavan Sri Krishna. Even saying and remembering His name brings joy because Sri Krishna himself was a manifestation of joy at all levels and in all walks of life. The Parabramhan (Supreme Being) as Sriman Narayana incarnated and manifested in Sri Krishna- the adorable son of Devaki and Vasudeva. The word Krishna itself refers to the causal force of all divine and joyful works (Sarva devata karyam karoti iti va Krishnaha). At the same time, Sri Krishna also refers to the causal force, which destroys the demonic energies and removes ignorance (Daityam karshayati iti va Krishnaha). Sri Krishna represents the total power of attraction (Aakarshana Shakti) like a magnet of infinite strength and size. Hence Krishna is the source of Joy.

Any festival in the Hindu context generally has three aspects namely philosophical, religious and cultural. The integration of the three gives spiritual joy. The *philosophical* aspects deal with the knowledge of the personality behind the festival. Sri Krishna, is the manifestation of Sanatana Dharma. Through the handbook on life namely Bhagavad-Gita in Mahabharata, Lord Krishna fully answers to the questions of devotee Arjuna by explaining the meaning and purpose of life for all devotees at all times everywhere. The great Bheeshma in Mahabharata through Vishnu Sahasranama (1000 names of Vishnu) gives the attributes of Vishnu in front of Sri Krishna, as both Vishnu and Krishna are essentially one and the same.

The *religious* aspects deal with the ritualistic details the corresponding worship, chanting and recitation. Sri Krishna's deity is formally worshipped through Vedic chanting and stotras or hymns. Since Lord Krishna was born at midnight, symbolizing light dispelling darkness, the worshipping is done in the night leading to mid-night. The mantapam or structure built to house the Lord, is elaborately decorated with fruits and specially prepared snacks and flowers, representing sensory joy as an offering to Bhagavan Sri Krishna. The *cultural* aspects are represented by the traditionally dresses worn by devotees. Devotees also offer raas or sacred dance to Bhagavan Krishna with spiritual joy.

Sri. Krishna resonated with devotees at all levels. He played as a child with children. He played youthful with the youth. He was a statesman in the politics. He was the blessing Bhagavan for His devotees. He manifested at all levels of joy, namely spiritual, mental and physical. If all the three aspects of the festival and joys are integrated, then the observance of the festival takes on the full meaning of Sri Krishnaarpanamastu - Let everything be offered by us to Bhagavan Sri Krishna. Let us remember the multi-faceted greatness of Bhagavan Sri Krishna. Let us all seek peace and joy from Bhagavan Sri Krishna, the source of joy.