

Janmashtmi Celebrations
Alen's School of Indian Dances

29 August 2021
Stockholm

Remarks
Ambassador Tanmaya Lal

Ladies and Gentlemen

Namaskar

I would like to thank Ms. Alen and her colleagues for organising this event on the special occasion of Janmashtami.

This auspicious festival celebrating the birth of Lord Krishna, also marks the beginning of the festive season at this time.

Lord Krishna is among the most popular incarnations of the Supreme Lord in His aspect as the Sustainer of the World or Creation.

He is, in many ways, unusual and unique. Even unconventional.

He is remembered and worshipped in different forms and aspects of his personality –
as an endearing and playful child,
as a beloved of gopis, for his raas leela,
as a friend,
the destroyer of evil in the form of Kansa or Jarasandh,
a warrior, a charioteer and guide to Arjun,
a Guru, a kingmaker or a statesman,
and a loving compassionate God

In Gita, Krishna reveals : धर्म संस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे
That God manifests himself whenever there is a need to re-establish Dharma.

Facets of the story of Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu, are told in ancient Hindu texts through the ages.

From earliest references in Vedas to Upanishads to Puranas. And, of course, Mahabharata and later in Gita Govinda. It is also told in the Sangam literature and Bhakti poetry in south India.

He is venerated across India – from north to south, and Manipur to Rajasthan.

In Maharashtra Krishna is in the image of Vithoba of Pandharpur.

In Rajasthan and Gujarat he is seen in Shrinathji of Nathdwara.

In Puri as people connect with Krishna as Lord Jagannath.

In Assam through the many Namghars.

In Tamil Nadu, Krishna is rarely distinguished from Vishnu and inspired Alvar poets. In Kerala through Narayaniyum poetry.

Stories of Krishna are also found in Buddhist and Jain traditions. And The story of Krishna travelled to southeast Asia over 1,000 years ago.

Around 500 years ago, Krishna inspired Bhakti tradition with poet saints across India – Meerabai in Rajasthan, Narsi Mehta in Gujarat, Tukaram in Maharashtra, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in Bengal, and Vidyapati in Mithila.

Krishna is a wonderful musician, enchanting everyone with his flute. He is also a graceful dancer.

His stories are told beautifully through various musical traditions for instance Baul in Bengal or through classical dance forms – the Manipuri, Kuchipudi, Odissi or Bharatanatyam.

We had the occasion of watching some of the beautiful performances by the Alen School of Indian Dance a couple of weeks ago on the 75th Independence Day. We are now very much looking forward to today's event.

Once again, our greetings and best wishes to all of you on the occasion of Janmashtami

Thank you