

**Janmashtami**  
**Commemorative Service Reading**  
**Volume II**

## Commemorative Service Readings

Please use the reading from the volume appropriate for the year in which you are reading. The volume number of the commemorative service readings must match the volume number of the Sunday service readings.

There are two colors of font — black and blue. Black indicates a section created by the reader as an introduction, transition, or summary. These may be altered to suit your reading style. Blue indicates material taken from an SRF sources, such as *Autobiography of a Yogi*, *Mejda*, *Self-Realization Magazine*, etc. These are not to be changed. If you find an error, please notify the chairperson of the readers' committee for correction.

At the end of quoted material there is usually the source and page number from which the material is taken. This is for your information only and is not to be read.

# Janmashtami

## Reading

### Volume II

Our reading this evening is taken from the SRF publication *The Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita*.

Lord Krishna was born in a prison. Shortly after his birth, he was smuggled out of jail and given to foster parents, where he passed his childhood as a humble cowherd near Brindaban on the banks of the Yamuna River. He was hardly more than a boy when it came time for him to leave Brindaban to fulfill the purpose of his incarnation: to assist the virtuous in restraining evil.

Of kingly birth, as an adult Sri Krishna performed his kingly duties, engaging in many campaigns against the reigns of evil rulers. Much of his life is intertwined with that of the Pandavas, the family of Arjuna, and their cousins the Kauravas. He participated in many of their secular and spiritual affairs as ally and counselor; and was particularly significant in the Kurukshetra war, the setting for the Bhagavad Gita.

In the Bhagavad Gita our attention is focused on the role of Sri Krishna as the guru and counselor of Arjuna, and on the sublime yoga message he preached as preceptor to the world — the wisdom of which has enthroned him in the hearts and minds of devotees throughout the ages.

We hear of saintly ascetics, or prophets in the woods or secluded haunts, who were men of renunciation only; but Sri Krishna was one of the greatest exemplars of divinity, because he lived and manifested himself as a Christ and at the same time performed the duties of a noble king. His life demonstrates the ideal not of renunciation of action — which is a conflicting doctrine for man circumscribed by a world whose life breath is activity — but rather the renunciation of earth-binding desires for the fruits of action.

Krishna's life demonstrates his philosophy that it is not necessary to flee the responsibilities of material life. The problem can be solved by bringing God here where He has placed us. No matter what our environment may be, into the mind where God-communion reigns, Heaven must come.

Sri Krishna's message in the Bhagavad Gita is the perfect answer for the modern age, and any age: Yoga of dutiful action, of nonattachment, and of meditation for God-realization. To work without the inner peace of God is Hades; and to work with His joy ever bubbling through the soul is to carry a portable paradise within, wherever one goes.

The path advocated by Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita is the moderate, medium, golden path, both for the busy man of the world and for the highest spiritual aspirant. To follow the path advocated by the Bhagava Gita would be their salvation, for it is a book of universal Self-realization, introducing man to his true Self, the soul — showing him how he has evolved from Spirit, how he may fulfill on earth his righteous duties, and how he may return to God. The Gita's wisdom is not for dry intellectualists to perform mental gymnastics with its sayings for the

entertainment of dogmatists; but rather to show a man or woman living in the world, householder or renunciant, how to live a balanced life that includes the actual contact of God, by following the step-by-step methods of yoga. (PP. 10–13)

Paramahansa Yogananda had a profound respect for Lord Krishna. It is the teachings of Krishna combined with those of Christ upon which the spiritual foundation for Self-Realization Fellowship is formed. The following passage from *Whispers from Eternity* was written by Master in honor of Lord Krishna, entitled “Come to me, O Krishna, as the Divine Cowherd.” Look with attention at the picture of Lord Krishna while it is read as though you yourself are addressing these words to him.

O Krishna, Lord of Hindustan, I sorrowed by the lonely Junma river bank, where Thy flute-notes thrilled the air and led the lost calves to their homes....

I am one of Thy lost calves which followed Thy flower-footprints on the shoals of time. Listening to the melody of Thy flute of wisdom, I am following the middle path of calm activity, by which Thou hast led many through the portals of the dark past into the light....

Since all of us are Thy fold, whether moving, sidetracked, or held stationary by the fogs of disbelief, O Divine Krishna lead us back to Thy fold of everlasting freedom. O Krishna, Thou reignest on the heart-throne of each knower of Thy love. (PP. 50, 51)