

This festival is celebrated in India on 22nd August, 2011.

Janmashtami 2011 in Different Parts of India

Krishna Janmashtami Mahotsav - August 22 midnight from 11:30 PM onwards in North India and Gujarat Dwarakadish Temple.

Janmashtami Vrat is on August 22 in North India

Sri Krishna Jayanti - on August 21 day and midnight in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Orissa and eastern parts of India.

Ashtami Rohini - August 21 in Kerala

Dahi Handi and Gopalakala in Maharashtra - August 22

Vittal Pindi at Udupi Sri Krishna Temple - August 22

Kalo in Goa - August 22

Shri Krishna is today one of the most widely revered and most popular of all Hindu Gods. He is worshipped as the eighth incarnation or avatar of Lord Vishnu. Krishna is also worshipped as a supreme god in his own right by numerous sects around the world.

King Kansa was the most absolute and tyrannical monarch of the ancient period; the bare mention of whose name was sufficient to send fear through the hearts of all good and peace-loving people. His sister's name was **Devaki** upon whom his brother Kansa showered brotherly love. And that is the reason why, on the day of Devaki's marriage to **Vasudev**

, when the time came for Devaki to travel to her husband's house, that king Kansa wanted to drive the carriage himself as a token of his brotherly love.

As the procession was proceeding from the King's house, taking his sister to her husband, an unaccountable fear suddenly gripped the minds of all in the procession. At such a time, an unseen voice, an oracle, was heard from above which said:

"Oh you foolish one, whom are you driving so merrily? Would you not know that the eighth issue of her womb shall be the cause of your death?"

On hearing this, the terrible Kansa sprang up from his seat, drew his sword, and was about to

kill his sister on the spot, had not Vasudev intervened. Falling upon his feet, on behalf of his newly married wife, reminding Kansa that not Devaki but her eighth child would be the cause of his death. So he requested Kansa most humbly, to spare her life, she being fully innocent, and promised, since he had fear from her children, that each and everyone of them would be given over to him. Kansa felt the force of the reason and agreed to the proposal of Vasudev.

Besides his newly married bride Devaki, Vasudev had another good wife, named **Rohini** and with these two loving and dutiful wives he managed to live in peace and comfort.

In the course of time, the first male child was born to Devaki. Vasudev, true to his word, sent the news to King Kansa, who sent his servants to fetch the child whom he instantly killed with his own hands. Six children were thus killed by the cruel king, who foolishly wanted to avert the course of fate.

In the case of the seventh child, somehow or other the womb appeared to be fruitless, although it was really transferred, through divine agency, from Devaki to Rohini, who in due course of time, brought forth a child that, on account of its transference from one womb to another came to be known by the name of **Sankarshana**.

Now when the time for the birth of her eighth child was approaching, Kansa ordered Vasudeva and Devaki to be cast into his prison, bound with the same chain.

Both the wife and husband did not know what to do. Every minute of their lives they called upon their only hope, their only deliverance, God. In His own mysterious ways, was filling their souls with power of endurance which kept them steady and safe.

For us, there is a lesson to be derived from this words in the Geeta, where the Lord tells us: Ch.8, verse 58- "Fixing your mind on Me, you shall by my grace, overcome all obstacles..."

Devaki about to give birth to her eighth child said: "O darling, be not born of me to be smashed to death by the cruel king Kansa". And with this, both Devaki and Vasudeva fell into a swoon. In the gloom of that unconsciousness, suddenly a light flashed, and a beautiful youth of sixteen, said with his sweet smile. "Father and mother, weep no more. I have come at last to your rescue and to the rescue of all the good people. Open your eyes and see me as your child. Carry me father to the house of your friend **Nanda** in Gokula. His wife **Yashoda** has given birth to a daughter just now. Exchange me for that daughter. Bring her back to this prison leaving me on the lap of Yashoda who will be sleeping at the time. Nothing shall bar your path".

With these words, the charming youth vanished.

When Devaki and Vasudeva opened their eyes, they saw the most charming and beautiful baby ever a parent was blessed with. That was at midnight of **Ashtami-Rohini** day, the divine baby was born in Prison. The earth and the heavens were filled with joy. Devaki and Vasudeva forgot their miserable condition for a while, looking at the smiling baby playing with its tiny limbs.

The mother kissed the sweet face and forgot her danger. Then after a while, they realised the real state of affairs and both the husband and wife shuddered. Then the sweet instructions of the fascinating youth in the vision flashed into their minds. Vasudeva clasped the child at once in his bosom to start for Gokula, but found that his legs were in chains. He did not know what to do. In his haste he gave a jerk, and his legs were released! He sprang upon his feet and ran towards the door of his dungeon. The massive iron-barred doors were locked with three fold locks; but the guards were all asleep, and therefore fearlessly he gave a push forward and the gates were unlocked and flew open of their own accord. The crossing over the river Yamuna was just as miraculous. Vasudeva reached

Gokula

and to his astonishment found the door of Nanda's house open. He exchanged the babies and hurried back to the prison of Kansa. Early in the morning, all the people at Gokula came to know that a beautiful male child, a prince had been born the previous night at midnight to Nanda's wife, and their simple hearts were filled with unbounded joy. This child was called Krishna.



Janmaashtami, popularly known in [Mumbai](#) and [Pune](#) as *Dahi Handi*, is celebrated with enormous zeal and enthusiasm. The

handi

is a clay pot filled with

[buttermilk](#)

that was positioned at a convenient height prior to the event. The topmost person on the human pyramid tries to break the

handi

by hitting it with a blunt object. When that happens the buttermilk is spilled over the entire group, symbolizing their achievement through unity. Various

handis

are set up locally in several parts of the city, and groups of youngsters, called

[govinda](#)

, travel around in trucks trying to break as many

handis

as possible during the day.

Many such Govinda Pathaks compete with each other, especially for the *handis* that dole out hefty rewards. The event, in recent times, has gathered a political flavor, and it is not uncommon for political parties, and rich community groups to offer prizes amounting to [*laks*](#) of rupees.

Some of the most famous *handis* are at , [Dadar](#) , [Lower Parel](#) , [Worli](#) , [Mazgaon](#) , [Lalbaug](#) , [Thane](#) and Babu Genu, Mandai in Pune.

Cash and gifts are offered for *Govinda* troops to participate; for over 4,000 *handis* in Mumbai, 2000 Govinda troops compete for the prizes.

[Source](#)