

**Hindu Temple and Cultural Society of USA Inc.**  
**Sri Venkateswara Temple (Balaji Mandir) and Community Center**  
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### Janmashtami / Krishnashtami:

Janmashtami is the Birthday of Lord Krishna, the eighth avatar (incarnation) of Lord Vishnu. This festival is celebrated by all the Hindus, all over the world, as a great festive occasion. This special celebration is observed at home as well as the Temples. This occasion has a deep religious touch and is also filled with a lot of fun.

Krishna, the Divine son of Devaki and Vasudeva was born on a stormy night in a prison as his parents were imprisoned by Kamsa, Devaki's brother and the ruler of Mathura. Kamsa had been killing all her children as he had been warned that her eighth child would be his nemesis. However, on this rainy night with the birth of Lord Krishna, the prison doors opened by themselves and helped Vasudeva to take the child across the river Yamuna. Due to heavy rains the river was flooded. But miracles happened one after the other. The rain stopped and the river parted making way for Vasudeva. He went to Gokul and placed the child near Yasoda, and took her newborn daughter and went back to Mathura. On hearing the news of the newborn, Kamsa came to the prison to kill this child. As Kamsa seized the legs of this child, it slipped away from Kamsa's hand and flew out into the sky. This child manifested as Durga, an incarnation of Goddess Parvati, and warned Kamsa that his destroyer is still alive and well, and disappeared.

Lord Krishna was born on 'Rohini' nakshatram (star) on Ashtami day. The actual celebration can be on two different days as the star 'Rohini' and Ashtami may not be on the same day. This festival occurs on the eighth day (ashtami) of the dark half (Krishna paksha) of the month of Sravana/Aavani. This is celebrated over two days. The first day is Krishnashtami or Gokulashtami. The second day is Janmashtami. This festival is also called in different other names: "Krishna Jayanti", "Sri Jayanti". Main festivities of this event take place during the midnight (exact birth time of Lord Krishna).

Devotees fast on this day and break their fast at midnight. They also spend the day immersed in Sri Krishna's glory by reading, reciting and singing his divine leelas (pastimes). Janmashtami celebrations in our Temple include the following: Sri Krishna Abhishekam; Fruit Alankaram; Sri Krishna Janana Ghatta Parayanam (Sri Krishna's Birth Story); Raj Bhog (nine varieties of Naivedyam); Bhagavadgeeta parayanam; Dolotsavam (Unjal / Cradle Seva); Butter pot breaking ceremony; and Rukmini kalyanam. (Bhagavadgeeta – containing the guiding principles of life was given by Lord Krishna to humanity).

May the Blessings of Lord Sri Venkateswara and Sri Mahalakshmi be with you and your family.

**HTCS**