

Birthday Song

Swami Suryadevananda

Introduction

Your biological birthday falls once a year and reminds you that another year has gone into the pages of history and you have used up one more year of your lifespan. If there has been inner ascent, the past year has been put to good use.

In this song, I would like to touch on the many ways to renew ourselves within and in doing so, have a string of birthdays that are not reminders of time lapsed but of inner ascent.

This song is set to a very simple tune of a kirtan or singing the Lord's Name. This will also form the chorus of the song, something we can sing together each time we come to it. With God, all things are possible. Let us begin...

Tune & Chorus

rama hare siya rama ram
rama hare siya rama ram
krishna hare radhe shyama shyam
krishna hare radhe shyama shyam



First Birth

Birthdays are of different types
Birthdays come at different times
They are celebrated differently too
As we journey in our evolution

The first type of birthday
Is this particular human birth
Within a specific family
And an initial set of conditions

This happens on a day and at a time
We refer to this as our birthday
Forgetting that this is one birthday
In a long procession of other births

We have been born at other times
In different species and families
In different conditions and locations
This birth is just one of many

But somehow we come to believe
That this birth is the only birth
This family and our conditions
Are the only thing of real value

Everything and every condition
Is part of the classroom of life
Every opportunity is a test
To move forward or to fall behind

There is no staying where we are
Or maintaining our status quo
Because we like our conditions
Satisfied with things as they are

Life does not allow complacency
Nature is the school's principal
Guiding the path of each student
Regardless of your opinions

We get attached to one family
To one community and society
To one country and a religion
And anchor to it our identity

Nature does not recognize this
Each is a string in her fabric
Strings come together and go apart
As she weaves an ever-fresh design

These attachments are our creation
They are not part of nature
Our likes and dislikes are the cause
Of all the turmoil we experience

Things do not often go our way
This is the cause of restlessness
Not because of changes outside
But refusal of a mind set in its ways

The turmoil within escalates
Prompting the need for a solution

The initial impulse is to change things
And hopefully, they will stay as is

There we go again creating
All we do is create more suffering
To ourselves and to others
As Nature insists on her design

We gradually become quite humble
Knowing our designs do not work
And begin the search for some wisdom
From those who have crossed the shores

This gives rise to the opportunity
If one is sincere in heart and mind
The death of clutches of personality
Is birth into the light of wisdom

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Second Birth

The second type of birthday
Is when one approaches a guru
One who has crossed turmoil's shores
In the spirit of an earnest disciple

A disciple is not a follower
He is fully awake and not asleep
He knows that he is somehow bound
And feels that he must attain freedom

The guru clears the doubts of one
Who approaches him as a disciple
One who is eager and ready to learn
How to cross the ocean of turmoil

The seeker becomes a disciple
He is prepared to exert fully
Each present moment is his laboratory
Guru's teachings guide his equipment

His equipment consists of faculties
Such as self-discipline and courage,

Fortitude to stay the course,
Absence of old fiery passions

Discipline is most necessary
It is not punitive but positive
As old outrushes are recycled
Channeled to support aspiration

He sees old ways were the cause
Of much pain and suffering
He embraces fully wisdom's way
The old habits loosen gradually

He must be eternally vigilant
As old ways do not give up easily
They fight to regain their power
If wisdom is not already enthroned

A mind that is always observed
Is what is called vigilance
The moment of rise of distraction
Uninvited thought which interferes

Thought is always of the past
In the present we perceive directly
With intelligence that is not tainted
By the colors of likes and dislikes

Past tries to interfere with present
This battle is of the hands of time
Past is the left, it is best left out
Present is right, it is right action

The disciple's new ways are rebirth
A new birth in this very life
Being born to the light of wisdom
Directed by goal of self-realization

The inner eye of eternal vigilance
Watches the movement of the ego
While wisdom sees with the outer eye
And decides the best that's to be done

The best is doing what needs to be done
But not in light of any personal gain
Or agendas and hidden motives
But as a responsible cosmic citizen

The disciple continues to evolve
From being a cosmic citizen
To being a trustee of everything
Including resources and faculties

The path of aspiration gets steep
Just as climbing a huge mountain
Which is gradual at its wider base
But steeper as the summit nears

In earlier stages you do not need
Special equipment as the climb is gradual
But once the grade becomes steeper
Stakes of everything get higher

It's good to lay a strong foundation
Right from the very beginning
Knowing that the grade will change
As you progress to the glorious summit

This is the Yoga of Synthesis
Of Gurudev Swami Sivananda
Great Master of our times
Founder of the Divine Life

Divine Life is the big umbrella
Under which Yoga of Synthesis fits
Divine Life principles guide all life
Yoga of Synthesis, our sadhana

What the Divine Life teaches us
Is to divinize all our actions
Thoughts, feelings, and words
As proof of our inner evolution

There is nothing secular in life
As 'God alone Is' is the truth
Everything we do is recognition
Of the Great Divine Omnipresence

Everything we do is worship
Of God in all and all as God
This is the way of Divine Life
Of Gurudev Swami Sivananda

As you progress in your sadhana
You will feel drawn to longer practice

And on facing life's seeming difference
Find it hard to reconcile the two

The joy felt in deeper sadhana
The turmoil felt in the world
The limitations of the instrument
Unable to prolong further sadhana

Yoga of Synthesis guides you
To well-rounded spiritual sadhana
So all facets of the personality
Are developed without specialization

Specialization is the choice of ego
That likes to show superiority
Avoid this pitfall by total approach
By the Yoga of Little of Sivananda

Do a little of different sadhana
Little asanas and pranayama
Little japa and meditation
Little kirtan and singing to the Lord

Develop also mind and intellect
By filling it with new ideas
By study of scriptures and also
The lives of Saints and Sages

Different sadhana will insure
Fresh efforts and raise quality
Quality out is quality in
As is the cause, so the effect

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Third Birth

Gradually have spiritual experience
This will lead to your third birth
Guided intuitively from within
Effort continues but without struggle

This is not requirement of time
It is because we cling

To old ways for varied reasons
Like walking in two directions

Once we embrace the path fully
The path embraces you even more
Letting go, you are never let go
This is a great wonder to experience

Whatever you hold onto
Holds onto you even tighter
Hold onto your little world
The little world imposes itself on you

Lord Krishna says in the Gita
You are your own worst enemy
You are also your own best friend
Because you want best of both worlds

This is absurd—an impossibility
Like going north and south as well
Like staying dry and wet at one time
This is the struggle in spiritual ascent

The third birthday is letting go
And offering yourself unto God
Without the least bit of reserve
Without hopes or expectations

Dismantle the rear view mirror
Of life's car and look in front
Of what is there every moment
Do your best without looking back

Drop your grip on all *memory*
Which is nothing but more of *me*
More of the past which interferes
With a glorious future that awaits you

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Fourth Birth

The fourth birth is attainment
Goal of life being self-realization
Making real the truth of all
Oneness of identity with the All

No need to concern about this now
You will be guided from within
On awakening to the third birth
Or the awakening of inner intelligence

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Summary

Let us re-look at the main points
With the impartial eye of wisdom
As habit likes its own old ways
Even if it be the tyranny of bondage

What is called biological birth
Is one in a stream of many births
It could be in any species or condition
Your actions direct the future rounds

It takes many rounds of struggle
To earn a birth of good conditions
What you have in this birth
Was paid for earlier at a high price

So do not waste this precious birth
Spiritual aspiration too is precious
As is the company of the wise
And great fortune of a spiritual guide

Biological birthdays come and go
But on this birthday do resolve
To have another birth in this very life
By awakening as a spiritual seeker

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Spiritual seeker is your second life
You have a new angle of vision
Self-purification is the priority
To make the instrument worthy

Lay a good foundation up front
By Sivananda's Yoga of Synthesis
A little of each type of sadhana
Embrace the principles of Divine Life

You will need a strong foundation later
When the mood to meditate comes about
Without sound health and strong body
You will have to pass due to weakness

You have to live a disciplined life
Up front to lay a good foundation
So when the climb becomes steep
You are ready for the summit

The struggle is really self-created
Owing to not letting go of old
While having new lofty aspirations
A game of your own tug-of-war

The sooner you break with the past
The more rapid will be your progress
You will gain spiritual experience
And be guided by the light within

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In the third birth the seeker
Transforms into a disciple
Following the spiritual way
Straight and narrow is the path

Simple living and high thinking
To attain mastery of the mind

Which comes when you directly see
Thought and the mental factory

There is still work to be done
Steady effort without struggle
Like the smooth flow of oil
From an old can into a new one

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Then comes the fourth birth
In this very life itself
Attainment of life's supreme goal
Finishing the task that must be done

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When you celebrate this particular birth
Remember that another year has passed
You are one day closer to the next round
And different conditions will be found

So waste not this precious opportunity
There are births to take in this very life
New understandings to awaken into
Claim your heritage of pure divinity

Why not have a double birthday
On this glorious day itself
Celebrate letting go of the old
And awakening into Divine Life

Put your foot firmly on yoga's ladder
Rung by rung you must climb
Ancients have laid out the path
But tread you must by your own self

You could if you really want to
Do good for yourself and for all
To take the next step this very day
And change in every single way

Two more births are still there
But journey begun is almost done
If you are sincere and unrelenting
Steady in your resolve and full of faith

This life would be very well lived
Even if you enter into the second birth
Rebirth in this very life itself
Facing the light do boldly march

All your responsibilities and duties
Are creations of your own mind
Your duty is self-realization
Life is given just for that purpose

How many births and conditions
How many fathers and mothers
Male, female, rich and poor
Are you not tired of this Ferriswheel?

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Even if it is not your birthday today
You can still have one this very day
Take birth into spiritual life
With full faith and firm resolve

You will not need any present
You give your own self the best one
Not something from the bargain store
But a bright future that awaits thee

This is the real happy birthday
Happiness by rebirth this very day
Not celebrating another year past
But celebrating all that is to come

Not celebrating more grey hairs
Or falling teeth or doctor's bills
Or problems just like yesterday
But celebrating a spiritual embrace

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Blessings

Happy Birthday to you...

May you be blessed today
With awakening into spiritual birth
Good health and long life
Peace and prosperity

May you be blessed today
With happiness and joy
And all the divine virtues
May you bring joy to all



om tat sat, om tat sat, om tat sat om
om shanti, om shanti, om shanti om



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