54. He whom Christ announced

RELIGIONS arise from the minds of good men, who crave to make all men good; they strive to eliminate evil and cure the bad. They are many, since they have to be adjusted to the individuals, their activities, their professions and roles, their character and characteristics. The individual has to start observing the limits and laws laid down, and derive joy and strength thereby. And, then, his cleansed mind will lead the way, to higher and higher stages. He and the society of which he is a unit will benefit thereby.

It is therefore appropriate that the Birthday of Jesus, who felt the need to save mankind and who strove to achieve it, is celebrated; but, the celebration must take the form of adherence to the teachings, loyalty to the principles, practising the disciplines and experiencing the Awareness of the Divine that he sought to arouse.

These days, the world is deriving satisfaction in mere words, and in witnessing clever rules designed to cover up one's faults. The Birthdays of the Great are honoured by such hypocrisy and external pomp. There is no examination in the light of the message they gave, nor, any effort to practise it and derive the bliss it promises.

The Great Teachers belong to mankind. It is wrong to believe that Jesus belongs only to the Christians and the Christmas is a holy festival for the West only. To accept one of them as one's own and discard the rest as belonging to others, is a sign of pettiness. Christ, Raama, Krishna---they are for all men everywhere.

Man's life is conditioned by feelings and deeds

The various limbs and organs together form a body; various nations and communities together form the world. The sustenance given by Divine Grace circulates in every part of the body, helping it to function in unison. The stream of Love, endowed by Divine Grace, has to circulate in every State and community to make the world live in Peace and Joy. If this truth is realised, there will arise no idea of difference.

If the members of a family are at loggerheads, the lands and other possessions of the family will be uncared for, and be either wasted or lost. The separation of one member will also be a big loss, for, the Grace that sustains the family will diminish and get lost. When a hand is amputated, the limb loses its function, and a great deal of blood too is lost during the removal. So too, the Divine Grace of Love is lost when a country sets itself apart: it also becomes a weak and functionless limb of the World community.

Division, difference and distinction cuts one off from the life-giving Grace, that feeds every cell of the body and every individual in the World. The World is sustained by the self-same Grace. A tree requires for its growth, soil, sunlight and atmosphere. But, more than these three, it requires the seed. Man's life is conditioned by feelings and. deeds, and the consequences of 'these feelings and deeds. But, his existence, his very Is-ness, depends on the Will of God.

Growing trees may differ, according to the nature of the soil, the quantity of sunlight and the quality of the soil. So too, men may differ according to the consequences of the types of feelings and deeds that emanate from them. But, just as it is true to say that" the seeds are the same, is One, without any difference, the variety of forms, the variety of emotions and attitudes, the variety of communities and loyalties are the result of man's ignoring his fundamental Unity in the one Divine Will, and his acting contrary to that Unity.

Meaning of three statements made by Christ

The moving water of a river has the Moon in its depths; the still water of a lake has also the Moon underneath; the sky has the Moon up above. The Moon in the flowing river is broken and fragmentary, it flows fast, apparently, with the floods. The Moon in the lake is calm, unmoved, undistracted. These two are but reflections of the real Moon in the sky. The Moon reflected in the flood is the Individual Soul, engaged in activity, embroiled in-Maaya, cause and effect. The Moon reflected in the placid face of the lake is the *Yogi,* the Saint, who has attained balance, equipoise, peace, dwelling in the One. The real Moon in the sky is the Eternal Witness, the Absolute, the Primal Principle.

Christ spoke of these three, when He made, one after the other, three statements. Referring to the active individual soul, the flickering Moon, he said, "I am the Messenger of God;" referring to himself as the *Yogi,* who has risen beyond dualities, and attained balance, he said, "I am the Son of God." Realising that these two are but reflections, and that the real Moon is the Witness in the sky, that he too is the Formless, Nameless Absolute, he declared, towards the end of his life, "I and My Father are ONE."

All beings are images of the Universal *Aathma,* in the names and forms they have apparently assumed. This is the truth, enclosed, elaborated 'and demonstrated in the spiritual texts of India, which form the basis of *Bhaaratheeya* culture. The essence of all religions and faiths then, is this: the merging in this Unity. The goal of all spiritual endeavour is this: the merging in this Unity. The object of all enquiry is this: to cognise this Unity. But, this patent fact is ignored, and persons create strife, anxiety and unrest for themselves and perpetrate horrors to hold forth the support, the disunity so dear to their fractioned minds.

People today relish the very things religion condemned

The passage of time has clouded the splendour of the message, the fascination exercised by the material and the worldly has drawn them away from the path, and the expansion of science and technology has made them conceited and wrong-headed. So, people now relish the very things prohibited and promote the very things condemned by religion. All religions teach that one should revere the parents and evince gratitude to them; but, ridiculing them and neglecting them have become fashionable now. All religions lay down that the aged are to be honoured, since they are the repositories of experience and their guidance is indispensable; but, now elders and the aged are treated as nuisances and handicapped. All religions insist on truth; but now, the man who sticks to truth is laughed at as if he were a fool. Cruelty and violence, condemned by all religions, have raised themselves to the status of weapons of progress and means for desirable ends. However, the basic truths of religion are not affected or tarnished by the evil that men practise or the competitive propaganda they indulge in.

On Christ's Birthday, sacrifice at least a desire or two

Only those who are not keen on practising the message will waste their energies in condemning other religions and glorifying their own. And, once you enter sincerely into the path of spiritual practice, the urge to find faults in others or publish one's own excellences will disappear. Such people will celebrate the Birthday of the Founders in a spirit of dedication only, deepening the faith in their hearts and revering its doctrines by more intense practice rather than by more emphatic argumentation. If one has the yearning to reach the goal, one has to follow the path that leads to it. When you learn to reach God, you have to observe the guidelines He has marked out.

You need not dwell on His name, or His lineaments all the time! That may not take you far. But, walk along the Path; every step will bring you near. When you need to reach a village, you have to rise and move towards it; it will not rise and move towards you! When you need to reach God, rise and move, as He has directed you to. By this means alone you can make life worthwhile.

Jesus taught simple practical lessons in spiritual advancement for the good of mankind; He manifested Divine Powers to instil faith in the validity of his teachings; he marked out the path that can confer on men the sweet nectar of *Aanandha.* He exhorted people by precept and example to cultivate the virtues of charity, compassion, forbearance, love and faith. These are not separate and distinct qualities, they are only the many facets of the Divine in Man, which he has to recognise and develop.

Significance of the story related to Christ's birth

People talk of the sacrifice of Christ as evidence by His crucifixion. But, he was surrounded and bound, and crowned by the crowd who captured Him with a crown of thorns, and later, nailed to the cross by his captors. A person bound and beaten by the police cannot say that he has sacrificed anything, for, he is not a free man. Let us pay attention to the sacrifice that Jesus made while free, out of his own volition. He sacrificed his happiness, prosperity, comfort, safety and position; he braved the enmity of the powerful. He refused to yield or compromise. He renounced the 'ego', which is the toughest thing to get rid of. Honour Him for these. He willingly sacrificed the desires with which the body torments man; this is sacrifice greater than the sacrifice of the body under duress. The celebration of His birthday has to be marked by your sacrificing at least a desire or two, and conquering at least the more disastrous urges of the ego.

The followers of Jesus have got broken into schisms on various counts; but, the life of Christ is a lesson of Unity. When Christ was on the cross, ill-feelings towards the men who tortured Him troubled Him. Suddenly he heard a voice alerting him. "All Life is One, my dear Son{ Be alike to every one!" This was followed by another admonition, "Death is the Dress of Life." As one casts of the worn clothes and dons another set, so, the soul dons and doffs bodies. Therefore, Jesus was warned against hate and ill-feelings, as well as the lamentation to which man is heir.

Manifestations seen when Christ was born

The lives of such personalities are lived out, in order to establish the welfare of humanity, the prosperity and peace of the world, and individual liberation from bondage to sensual desires and passions. This is illustrated by the strange phenomenons that occur at the time of their Advent. It is believed that when Christ was born there were such manifestations. The ruler of the realm had ordered a census, and each had to be counted in his own village. So Mary and her husband moved along the road that led to his native village. Mary was with child; the pains started mid-way; they knew no one in the hamlet through which they were passing; so they took refuge in a cowshed. Joseph made ready the space between the cows, and went out into the road at midnight, to seek some woman who could help. But, soon, he heard the Baby's cry.

And, the story says, there was a Star in the sky, which fell with a New Light, and this led a few Tibetans and others to the place where the Saviour was born. This story is read and taken on trust by many, though stars do not fall or even slide down so suddenly. What the story signifies is this: There was a huge halo of splendour illuminating the sky over the village when Christ was born. This meant that He, who was to overcome the darkness of evil and ignorance had taken birth, that He will spread the Light of Love in the heart of man and councils of humanity.

Use and misuse of wealth and wisdom

Appearances of splendour, and other signs to herald the era that has dawned are natural when incarnations happen on earth. Jesus was to shatter the darkness that had enveloped the world and the aura of light was a sign that announced the event. The Masters arrive in answer to man's prayer. *"Thamaso maa jyothir gamaya"* (Lead us from darkness unto Light!)

If each one does his duty, in the spirit of · dedication, the Light can illumine all, but, if the doors of the heart are shut against the Light, how can darkness disappear? You cannot sit back, and expect the Incarnation to bring peace and joy into you. The incarnation comes to warn, to guide, to awaken, to lay down the path, and shed the light of Love on it. But, man has to listen, learn and obey with hope and faith.

There is a tale told of old that Wisdom and Wealth once quarrelled loud and long, about their relative importance. Wealth argued that without it, the body will be weak, the brain hazy and wisdom a will-o-the-wisp. Wisdom retorted that, without it man cannot even distinguish wealth from non-wealth or know how to earn it or use it. The Soul intervened and told them that they were both equally important, but, only when properly used. Wealth without wisdom becomes an instrument of exploitation and tyranny: wisdom without wealth becomes mere fantasy and a bundle of blueprint. Use makes them worthwhile; misuse makes them disastrous.

It is like the knife in the hands of a maniac, which becomes an instrument for murder; in the hands of a surgeon, it becomes an instrument which saves a life! Are you doing good with wealth? Are you benefitting others by means of wisdom?---that is the test. This day, Christmas, when we celebrate the birth of Christ, resolve to lead the lives of loving service to the weak, the helpless, the distressed, the disconsolate. Cultivate tolerance and forbearance, charity and magnanimity. Hold dear the ideals He laid down and practise them, in your daily lives.

The best way of celebrating the Birth of Christ

The ways in which Christmas is being celebrated now show how far men have moved away from those ideals, how much ignominy they are heaping on his name! The midnight hour is revered; illumination is arranged; the Christmas Tree is set up; and then, the night is spent in drinking and dance. It is a day of Holy *Aanandha,* but, the *Aanandha* is reduced to the level of the poisoning excitement of intoxication!

Drink is so pernicious an evil habit, that when man puts the bottle in, he himself gets into the bottle and cannot escape! First man drinks wine, then the wine drinks more wine; and finally, the wine drinks man himself! He is sunk and drowned in drink. Liquor destroys the humanity in man! How then can it develop the Divinity in him? One must dance in Divine Bliss; instead, sensual dance is indulged in as a deleterious substitute! Make your hearts pure, your activities holy, and your feelings beneficial to all. That is the best way of celebrating the Birth of Christ.

There is one point that I cannot but bring to your special notice today. At the moment when Jesus was merging in the Supreme Principle of Divinity, He communicated some news to his followers, which has been interpreted in a variety of ways by commentators and those who relish the piling of writings on writings and meanings upon meanings, until it all swells up into a huge mess.

Christ's announcement of the Advent of Baba

The statement itself has been manipulated and tangled into a conundrum. The statement of Christ is simple: “He who sent me among you will come again!" and he pointed to a Lamb. The Lamb is merely a symbol, a sign. It stands for the Voice---Ba-Ba; the announcement was the Advent of Baba. "His Name will be Truth," Christ declared. *Sathya* means Truth. "He will wear a robe of red, a bloodred robe." (Here Baba pointed to the robe He was wearing!). "He will be short, with a crown (of hair). The Lamb is the sign and symbol of Love."

Christ did not declare that he will come again. He said, "He who made me will come again." That Ba-ba is this Baba and Sai, the short, curly-hair-crowned red-robed Baba, is come. He is not only in this Form, but, he is in every one of you, as the dweller in the Heart. He is there, short, with a robe of the colour of the blood that fills it.

The great axioms *of Bhaaratheeya* culture found in the *Vedhas---Ishwarassarvabhuuthaanaam, Isaavaa-yamidham sarvam, Vasudhevassarvamidham---"God* is the inner Motivator of all beings. All this is enveloped in God, All this is Vaasudheva, the Divine"---are to be in every one. This is the inner mystery of Incarnation, God incarnating in all! All are One; The One is All.

There is only one God; He is Omnipresent. There is only one religion, the Religion of Love; there is only one caste, the Caste of Humanity; there is only one language, the Language of the Heart.

Bangalore, 24-12-1972

Roga *denies you ease and peace. The* roga *(disease) can be cured by* yoga *(Divine communian), not by* bhoga *(material enjoyment).*

Bhoga *means catering to the whims and wildness of the senses.*

Yoga *means the regulation and reform of the impulses of the mind which run after goals laid down by the senses/*

Make the senses the servants of the intelligence, not the overlords of the mind.

Tell them that the mind is dethroned, it is non-existent/ Sensuousness is a disease.

Sri Sathya Sai