Isa

THE followers of every religion, in their own way and style, call upon the One God who is Omnipresent. It is the same God who confers upon all mankind, health, prosperity, peace and happiness. No religion has a separate God showering Grace upon those who profess to abide by that faith alone! It is the destiny of man to journey from humanity to Divinity. In this pilgrimage he is bound to encounter various obstacles and trials. In order to illumine the path and help him overcome these troubles, sages, seers, realised souls, Divine personalities and Incarnations of God take birth in human form. They move among the afflicted and the seekers who have lost their way or strayed into the desert, and lead them into confidence and courage. Certain personalities are born and live out their days for this very purpose. They can be called *kaarana-janmas* (born for a purpose), for they take on *the janma* (birth) for a *kaarana* (cause, purpose). Such guides, exemplars and leaders, appear among all peoples and in all lands. They inspire faith in higher ideals, and teach in the Voice of God, counselling from the heart.

Of course there are many aspirants who by their devotion, dedication and disciplined lives, attain the vision of the Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient One. They are content with the Bliss they have won for themselves. There are others who go out to share this bliss with those beyond the pale; they guide and lead and are blessed thereby. They teach that multiplicity is a delusion and that Unity is the Reality.

The three stages of Jesus' life

Jesus was *kaarana-janma,* a Master born with a purpose, the mission of restoring love, charity and compassion in the heart of man. He had no attachment to the self, nor paid any heed to joy or sorrow, loss or gain. He had a heart that responded to the call of anguish, and he went about the land preaching the lesson of love. His life was a libation for the upliftment of humanity.

Like most seekers, he first searched for the Divine · in the objective world. But he soon realised that the world is a kaleidoscopic picture created by one's own imagination, and sought to find God within himself. His stay in the Himaalayan monasteries in Kashmir and in other centres of eastern asceticism and philosophical inquiry, gave him greater awareness. From the attitude of being a Messenger of God, he could now call himself the Son of Clod. The bond of relationship increased: the 'I' was no more some distant light or entity; the light became a part of the "I." With the body-consciousness predominant, he was a messenger. With the heart-consciousness in the ascendant, he-felt a greater nearness and dearness, and so the son-father bond seems natural at this stage.

Later as the *Aathman-consciousness* was established, Jesus could declare, "I and 'My Father are One." The three stages may be described as: "I was in the Light," "the Light was in me," and "I am the light," and may be compared to the *Dhwaitha* (dualism), *Visishtaadhwaitha'* (qualified non-dualism) and *Adhwaitha* (non-dualism) stages as described in *Vedhic* philosophy. The final stage is the one when all duality has been shed. This is the essence of all religious disciplines and teachings.

Jesus' original name was Isa

Jesus was honoured by the populace as Christ, for they found in his thoughts, words and deeds, no trace of ego. He had no envy or hatred, and was full of love and charity, humility and sympathy. Jesus' original name was Isa which, when repeated, is Sai. *Isa* and *Sai,* both mean

Ishwara (God), the Eternal Absolute, the *Sath-Chith-Aanandha* (Being-Awareness-Bliss). In the Tibetan manuscript, at the monastery where Isa spent some years, his name is written as Isha, which means the Lord of all living beings.

When Jesus proclaimed that he was the Messenger of God, he wanted to emphasise that every one is a messenger of God and has to speak, act and think like one. This is the true *Karma-Kaanda* (branch dealing with action and its reaction) of the *Vedhas: saadhana* (discipline) of *karma* (work), *japa* (prayer), *seva* (service) and *dhyaana* (meditation). When progress is furthered, Jesus asserted, each one can recognise all as Sons of God, Children of God, brothers and sisters of oneself, and so, deserving of worship. The *Upaasana Kaanda* (branch of *Vedhas* dealing with contemplation) is the scripture in *Sanaathana Dharma* (Eternal Universal Religion) for this stage. Finally, knowledge ripens into wisdom and' the goal of *Jnaana Kaanda* (branch of *Vedhas* dealing with spiritual wisdom) is reached, when each one realises, "I and my Father are One."

Do not confine Jesus to one community

The Birthday of Jesus must be celebrated by all mankind, for such *kaarana-janmas* belong to the whole human race. They should not be confined to a single country or community. Jesus found that scholars and ritualists had befogged the true religion, He engaged himself in teaching both spirituality and morality, for education is the very light of life. Jesus found that people were running after glass beads, imagining them to be diamonds and attaching great value to them. He went round the holy shrines and discovered that they had become bazaars where Grace was being bargained and commercialised. He condemned the priesthood which tolerated and encouraged these practises. So he drew upon himself the anger of the heads of temples and monasteries. They tempted one of his disciples with 30 silver pieces, to betray him into their hands.

The Roman rulers were told that Jesus was attempting to assert himself as King and so could be punished for treason. Their insistence made the Governor order his crucifixion. When the nails were being driven into him to fix him on the Cross, Jesus heard the Voice of the Father saying, "All life is one, My dear Son. Be alike to every one," and he pleaded that those who were crucifying him may be pardoned for they knew not what they did. Jesus sacrificed himself for the sake of mankind.

Carols and candles, readings from the Bible and acting out the incidents that surrounded His Birth, are not enough to celebrate the Birth of Jesus. Jesus said that the bread taken in the 'last supper' was His Flesh, and the wine, His Blood. He meant that all beings alive with flesh and blood are to be treated as He Himself and that no distinction should be made. of friend or foe, we or they. Every body is His Body, sustained by the bread; every drop of blood flowing in the veins of every living being is His, animated by the activity that the wine imparted to it. That is to say, every man is Divine and has to be revered as such.

Man forgets or ignores the goal of life

You work as a messenger or servant; later, you worship, as a son does his father, and finally, you achieve the wisdom that You and He are One. That is the spiritual journey of which Jesus has shown the way in clear terms. He announced very early in life that he had come to illumine the spiritual path. Even as a bud, he emitted fragrance. He had the light in him, or else how can the tiny glow-worm light a lamp?

To elevate man, to raise the level of his consciousness, He has to incarnate as man. He has to speak to them in their own style and language, He has to teach them the methods that they can adopt and practise. Birds and beasts need no Divine Incarnation to guide them, for they have no inclination to stray away from their *dharma.* Man alone forgets or ignores the goal of life.

Christmas day, Prashaanthi Nilayam, 25-12-1978