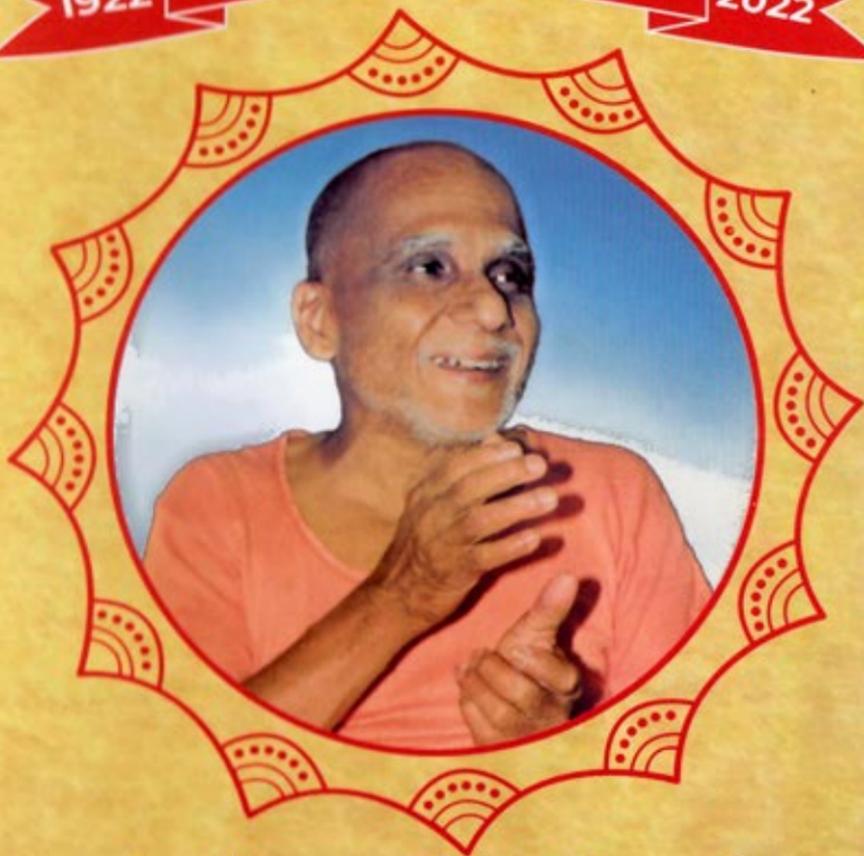




1922 CENTENARY SERIES 2022



# *The Birth of Heaven on Earth*

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA

# THE BIRTH OF HEAVEN ON EARTH

SWAMI KRISHNANANDA



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## **PUBLISHERS' NOTE**

The 25th of April 2022 marks the auspicious occasion of the Birth Centenary of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj. To commemorate this sacred occasion, the Headquarters Ashram has decided to bring out booklets comprising the illuminating discourses of Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj for free distribution.

Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj arrived at the holy abode of Gurudev Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in 1944, and remained here until his Mahasamadhi in November 2001. Swamiji Maharaj was a master of practically every system of Indian thought and Western philosophy. "Many Sankaras are rolled into one Krishnananda," said Sri Gurudev.

Over the years, Swami Maharaj gave many profound and insightful discourses during Sunday night Satsanga, and on holy occasions such as Sri Gurudev's birthday, Sri Krishna Janmasthanami, Mahasivaratri, etc., and also during Sadhana Week and Yoga Vedanta Courses conducted by the Yoga

Vedanta Forest Academy of the Ashram. Sri Swami Maharaj always spoke extempore, spontaneously, without any preparation, and every discourse was fresh, unique, and divinely inspired. The audience was bathed in that stupendous unfathomable energy that radiated from Swamiji Maharaj during these discourses.

We are immensely happy to bring out some of Sri Swamiji Maharaj's discourses in booklet form as our worshipful offering at his holy feet on the blessed occasion of his Birth Centenary. The present booklet, '**The Birth of Heaven on Earth**', consists of three discourses given by Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj on Christmas Eve during the years 1994, 1985 and 1990 respectively.

May the abundant blessings of the Almighty Lord, Sadgurudev Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj and Worshipful Sri Swami Krishnanandaji Maharaj be upon all.

—The Divine Life Society

## THE BIRTH OF HEAVEN ON EARTH

The Gospel According to John lays particular emphasis upon certain essentials of the principles of religion. It is not enough if we read the Gospels as a story or as a biography of a saint or a sage. We have not only to read the implications of the majestic pronouncements in these gospels, but oftentimes we have also to read between the lines because these are enunciations of truths which are eternal, transcending time. The necessity for the birth of God in man, as we generally call it—or, as I would say, the birth of heaven on earth—arose on account of a defect that was perceived in the existing religion of those days, which was the religion of Jehovah, if we would like to call it so. If it had been a practicable and adequate religion, satisfying the needs of the soul of man, there would not have been a need for the birth of God in man, or the birth of Christ. There was a lacuna in the very concept of the principle of religion as the way to God. In the Old Testament, God remained a remote Father in the heavens, removed from the dust of the earth, incapable of access, and religion became feeble

and incapable of consoling the heart of the crying individual on earth. God had to be born in man.

Oftentimes it is said that Christ is the Son of God, and sometimes he is called the Son of Man. Why is Christ called the Son of Man? Whose son is he? Generally in this context the word 'man' begins with a capital 'M'—Son of Man, not ordinary man. And he is also known as the Son of God. How can both these be possible? How to reconcile these two principles? How can one be the Son of God and also the Son of Man? Yet it is said that Christ was both. This means that in the religion of Christ, or the religion which Christ came to teach mankind, there was a reconciliation of God and man, a coming together of heaven and earth. Unless and until God is born on the surface of the earth, until God is born in man, in our own hearts, there would be no cognisance of the redeeming factor of religion. Even religious people felt that they had not been redeemed. So Christ came to redeem man through the principle of a strange religion that he taught—which the existing religion resented vehemently; and the consequences that followed are well known to everyone.

The fact behind all these enigmas and difficulties in understanding true religion is that man can

never conceive himself as anything other than man, however religious he may be in his outward conduct and even in his inner longings. To us, religion has always been an external affair—a church-going, a bell-ringing or a waving of lights, a reading of the Gospel, an observance of a vigil, and so on—which tradition continues even till this day.

We know the fate of religion today, towards the end of this twentieth century. We have been crying for God for ages and ages, and God has not come to us. We have been taking the name of religion hundreds and hundreds of times, and religion does not seem to be saving us. Religion itself seems to be at stake, and it is being threatened from all quarters of the world. How can this be possible? How to explain this mystery? If religion is the way to God, can it be threatened? And yet, it is being threatened. This is because, as I mentioned, religion has no practical connection with human life, unfortunate though this may appear to be. Whatever we speak and whatever actions we perform seem to be external to our inner nature. We are one thing within, and another thing outside. We may be deeply religious people, but that religion has nothing to do with our practical lives. This was the defect of that ancient religion that functioned before the birth of the Son

of Man in Bethlehem, and for the rectification of which this divine birth became necessary.

We celebrate Christmas, adore the Lord Jesus Christ as the baby, the Divine Child, the master of wisdom, the saviour of mankind, the protector of humanity, and so on. But we are miserable beings yet, a fact which cannot be gainsaid. We are sorrow-stricken, we are grieved in our hearts, and we are insecure in our lives. Unhappy to the core is each and every person in the world, for different reasons. Why should this be so?

We have celebrations of the birth of Sri Krishna, called Krishna Janmashtami; we have Ramanavami, the birth of Sri Rama; we have the birth of the Bhagavadgita. Tonight we are celebrating the birth of the Divine Child, Jesus the Christ. Are we going to be better persons tomorrow morning, or are we going to continue to be the same persons that we were yesterday? If tomorrow morning we are the same persons that we were yesterday, Christmas has not done us any good. We have merely sat and sat, and thought and thought, and sung and sung, to no purpose; and Christ was not born on this earth for no purpose.

It was a tremendous purpose of God that made His manifestation, or incarnation, necessary.

Christ came for the sake of the Father in heaven, as he mentioned oftentimes. He said that he did not preach his law, but he preached the law of the Father in heaven. He came to the earth to implant the law of God in this world, so that God may be a living feature of this world and not merely a distant concept of a theoretical religion of academies or temples.

Now we are coming to brass tacks, practical affairs, hard truths staring at our faces, which are difficult to confront and more difficult to digest. What I would like to point out to you all is that the observance of this holy occasion of the birth of the Divine Child is the observance of the fact of the incarnation of God in the world, which is not merely a historical fact, but is also a spiritual reality. It is an act of consciousness which God Himself is. We are likely to imagine the descent of God as something like the coming down of a rocket from distant space, or the landing of an airplane. Not so is the incarnation of God. It is the purpose of the Gospel of John, as I mentioned in the beginning, to emphasise this inner aspect of the religion of Christ.

But we should not take the word 'inner' to mean something that is different from the outer. Then, again, we are in a defective state of religious

consciousness. Wherever we put our fingers, we are committing a mistake. Whether we are in the office, whether we are in the church or in the temple, whether we are performing this act or that act, we are prone to commit errors of different types. And it is this inclination to commit errors everywhere that has kept us bound to the earth. This is the original sin, the metaphysical evil that is spoken of: the incapacity of the mind to conceive God in His true nature, and in His true relation to the earth and to our bodily individuality.

To reiterate what has been said in these few minutes, the birth of Christ is the birth of God in our hearts, the birth of God in man, or mankind, or humanity as a whole, the resurgence of spirituality on the earth plane, the coming down of heaven to the very earth on which we are seated, wherein God and man shake hands with each other.

There is a very beautiful terminology in the colophon of the Bhagavadgita. Each chapter of the Gita concludes by saying that this is the conversation between God and man: *śrīkṛṣṇārjunasaṁvāde*. All great men think alike, and all great masters taught the same religion and the same gospel. Whether it is Christ or Krishna or Buddha, it makes no difference because they are only tongues of the same fire of

religion, rays of the same sun of the Eternal. When this concept of religion rises in our hearts, we can be said to be celebrating the true Christmas because if at all there was anything worthwhile in the life of Christ, it was spirituality; it was God-awareness. His life was saturated with God-being; and our adoration of the Christ, or the incarnation of God, is nothing but an attempt of our own soul to participate in that process of the divine incarnation. It is the soul's interpretation of the birth of the Divine Eternal through the religious consciousness which is true Christianity, different from the religion of the church, but the religion of the Christ; different from the religion of the temple, but the religion of God and Krishna.

This, in my opinion, is the urgent need of the hour—an awakening of ourselves to the consciousness of true religion, the lack of which has landed man in this mess and catastrophe which we see today. God bless us with this wisdom, with this awakening, with this light, so that we may become strong in our own selves and spiritually built-up in our personalities; that we may radiate this consciousness, this power and aura, this energy, around us; that mankind be blessed forever. God bless you!

## CHRIST AS A SIDDHA AND A SADHAKA

The glory and the suffering consequent upon the living of a life dedicated to God may be considered to be, at least from the point of view of a spiritual seeker, the quintessence of the whole dramatic portrayal we call the coming of Christ, God incarnating Himself in flesh and blood, and the Word eternal materialising itself into form. It is a dual function taking place simultaneously which we call the descent of God for the ascent of man to Godhood. Throughout religious history, we have this picture before the mind of seeking souls of an apparently contradictory act involved in the eternal descending into the temporal form—for us, the human form—and the striving of the human to regain its lost divinity and pristine originality.

In the life of Jesus the Christ, the glory of God and the power of divine grace are well demonstrated, no doubt; but simultaneously, there is also a vivid picture of the ordeals that are inseparable from a search for the bliss of God. In this special form of divine coming, we have especially a most interesting

narration of the journey of the spirit, together with a touch of the grandeur of God's power and glory incessantly operating through every phenomenon in life, in every nook and corner of creation. This highlights the fact that in the darkest corner of the earth there is also the brightest ray of God illumining itself in all its majesty; and the suffering and the discipline associated with spiritual ascent is, to the seeker, the effort necessary to accommodate human individuality with the requisitions of God's universality—night trying to overcome itself and become day, the negative entering into the positive, the dreamer awakening into active consciousness. Some of these may be the illustrations that we may bring forward to give in a brief outline the mystical essentialities and the religious profundities that are not always visible to the naked eye that reads the life of Christ.

The inner man is the spirit of God, which gloried not only in the precepts and the practices connected with the life of Jesus Christ, but also in the inward communion which he perpetually maintained with God. But the outer Christ—if you like, we may call him the historic Christ, the one who took birth in a human frame, who had a father and a mother, who had a geographical location and passed through

human history—this outer Christ is symbolic of the struggling spirit that has lost its grip over its essence, which is divine universality, and suffers.

As I mentioned at the very outset, we will not read anywhere a greater abundance and exuberance of the glory of divinity than is portrayed in the life of Christ, and we will also not see a greater sorrow and suffering than we would read in his own life. Spiritual life is often seen to be a terrible contradiction—a war, in Indian parlance. In the epics of the world, we may say, generally speaking, this warfare is regarded as the main theme of narration and description—a war, as it were, between earth and heaven, between the body and the soul, between man and God, between the downward pull of the demands of the senses and the upward call of the universal divinity.

The teachings of Christ summarise and give us the sum and substance of all that true religion can mean, what spirituality could be. The Sermon on the Mount particularly is often placed beside the Bhagavadgita and such other teachings as the voice of God, the call of God summoning man to Himself. That is so, indeed. But there is also a portrayal of the *sadhaka* in Christ. A *siddha* and a *sadhaka* cannot be in one person, but when it is a requisite presentation for the purpose of teaching, it can be a beautiful

blend, indeed. We have saints of that nature in India and in other parts of the world who are masters in themselves, and at the same time pass through what may be called the turmoils of human existence and the sorrows of evolutionary ascent.

The necessity for accepting God as the be-all and end-all of one's life, the need to be perpetually in a state of awareness of the presence of the all-comprehensive God-being, the necessity to be entirely and wholly religious in one's outlook day in and day out, to be saturated through every pore and cell of one's body in the religion of the love of God, is one side of the glorious picture of the life of Christ. It is the *siddha's* teaching, the master's proclamation to humanity as a whole. But there is the *sadhaka*, the sufferer, the student whose predicament also is beautifully portrayed. The struggle, the war, the epic, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, and similar pictures we have drawn before us by the epics of the world are the story of the arduous movement with hurdles on the way towards the greatest glory that is God.

We live for God, and we die for Him. Here we have what Christ might have told any one of us. If we are born, it is for God's sake. If we live in any manner whatsoever, it is to hoist the banner

of the glory of God, to see to it that His presence is emphasised, accentuated in every thought and speech and action of man. It is to start life with a total surrender to God, to live throughout one's life in the awareness of this surrender, and finally to sacrifice oneself for the sake of God, the Truth of all truths—to die for Him, to abolish oneself and annihilate one's very existence in the name of that great Truth. That would be another message of Christ before us.

The penury in which he is portrayed as having been living, the humble, simple birth in an unknown place to poor parents, living the simplest life conceivable in this world, having nothing to call his own as property or belonging—no land, no house, no friends, no relations, having nothing to do with anyone—is known as the spirit's life, and is known as the life of the seeker. Such isolation depicted in the life of Jesus right from his very childhood, which he carried through till the consummation of his existence here, speaks volumes to us as to what religious life can be.

Austerity also may be said to be a byword and a watchword of his teaching. Keeping nothing for the morrow is something that is repeated again and again. Hard indeed is this kind of life. To say that it

is hard is to say little. To trust not tomorrow and to see that this day would be “sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” would indeed be a hard life. Who on earth can dare to live a life of this kind where the thought of the morrow is totally absent, and it is life in the present, and only in the present? Who can afford to live such a kind of life? We cannot have many Christs, even as we cannot have many God Almighty's. Perhaps true seekers also cannot be many in the world. Such dissociation from all kinds of temporal entanglement and association for the sake of complete association with the ideal which is God, which we call the Father in heaven—that life is hard indeed.

But what could be a harder truth for us to swallow than to be told that Christ was ready to even sacrifice himself? Sacrifice—the very word is frightening. Who would like to sacrifice? Grabbing is the law of life. Accumulation, exploitation and multiplication of wealth, glory in gold and silver, in brick and mortar is the life of man, usually; but this is the Antichrist speaking. The life of Christ is the life of the present. It has neither a past nor a future. There was no yesterday, and there shall not be a tomorrow. It is only today. It is not even today, it is just this moment. God is eternal presence; hence,

life in the true presence, the eternal present, was told us by way of demonstration and living, apart from his precepts.

You may have heard it said that *yajna* is the greatest *sadhana*; sacrifice is the highest of spiritual practices. The crucifixion of mortality in the spiritual nature is dramatically presented in the life of Christ, and no greater drama could ever be written. No playwright will touch his pen to write a better story than this coming and going of the immortal and the mortal put together—Christ glorifying God, and Christ dying on the cross. Such is the spirit of a *sadhaka*, of every spiritual seeker. It is not enough if we observe a day once in a year in the name of a bygone person. It is also not the reading of a scripture or a passage. It is not even trying to emulate the life of a person who lived years ago. It is to live by God. To love God with all one's heart and mind and soul, and to rejoice in the name of God and in nothing else, to find joy in nothing else in this world, and to be prepared to undergo the highest of ordeals, the cruellest of perpetrations for the sake of God's name, such a spirit is tough indeed, and that is the stuff of the spiritual seeker.

We cannot adequately describe in words what hidden significances we could discover in the life of

this great master, Jesus the Christ. If we read through the little descriptions we have in the Gospels, we will, of course, have before our mental vision the literal meaning of the story; but there is a diviner content lying as the undercurrent of the story, which is the cry of the soul for God, the suffering of man for the sake of the Almighty, the utter sacrifice of everything that one owns, and a complete dedication of even what one may consider oneself to be. Not only 'mine' but also 'I'—both these go.

We need not go on haranguing that Christ possessed nothing. Everyone knows that he did possess nothing. But, perhaps he did not have even I-consciousness. That also he surrendered. It was given up, and given up in a miraculous manner which touches our souls, which breaks our hearts, which makes us cry and weep, and which we will not be able to remember without a shudder in our hearts. Such is the glory and the terror, I should say, of the life of a spiritual seeker that is portrayed in the divine Incarnation, which is a double demonstration before us of the glory of God and the suffering of man as a spiritual seeker.

These are the few words I felt like speaking today. Glory be to the Almighty! Glory to Christ!

## THE ACCEPTANCE OF GOD IN OUR LIVES

The coming of God into the lives of people is the essence of what we call the divine Incarnation. This intriguing phenomenon is, fortunately for us, a daily occurrence, notwithstanding the fact that it is always bypassed in our day-to-day routines. It is the only eventless event, we may say, and it escapes our notice, since what attracts our attention in our daily life is just what is not this essential soul-filling, life-giving process of God coming into our lives. The idea is that we remember everything and are conscious of everything except that God is with us. But it is not merely that. God is not just with us, He is within us and, even much more than that, He is inseparable from our very being. The wondrous activity of this creation, this world, this entire life, is actually the work of God.

I mentioned that the Incarnation is the coming of God into our lives. How does God come into our lives? Eternity is the nature of God, because time is a kind of evolute that came after the act of creation.

God created heaven and earth, we are told, and simultaneously He created time and space because time and space do not stand outside heaven and earth, and vice versa.

Where was God before time was created? He was not in time. This story of God coming as an Incarnation is explicable only in terms of the time process. Inasmuch as we cannot understand what is other than time, we use the word 'eternity' to designate that which we cannot understand, which really passeth understanding.

We say that eternity is timeless, but that is a negative connotation. Eternity may be without time, and therefore we may call it timeless, but eternity must also be something by itself, positively. The positivity which is the content of what we call eternity is the being of God. It is said that such a thing enters into human affairs; an Incarnation takes place. That is, eternity ingresses into the time process. That which is not in time enters into time. That which is incapable of explanation in terms of time becomes the very soul of the time process. This is also called the descending of the kingdom of God into the lives of people. "Thy kingdom come." The word 'kingdom' occurs many a time in different contexts. "The kingdom of God is within you." "The

kingdom of God is at hand.” And our aim is the attainment of the kingdom of God—call it the kingdom of heaven.

The word ‘kingdom’ is significant in many ways. It is a large empire that is ruled by a potentate. This is how we understand the meaning of a kingdom. God may be said to be the king of this universe. There are many religions in this world who adore God as the Emperor, the King Supreme, the Potentate par Excellence. Generally, the king occupies the kingdom. In that sense we may say God occupies what we call “the kingdom of God”. Is this universe the kingdom of God? Maybe. And God occupies His kingdom, which is inside us. Is this intelligible to us? Can a large kingdom be contained within us? Has anybody thought over this matter? How wide is the kingdom of our physical body? How wide is this mental realm of our daily operations? Is the kingdom of God, which is eternity made explicit in time, capable of being contained within this six-foot frame?

Something of this nature seems to be implied in the great proclamation that the kingdom of God is within us. This has to be told to us many times, and we have been told this by a competent master at a particular context in history. It has been told to us,

and we have heard it, so where do we stand today, after having heard it? We see no such kingdom anywhere. We have been told that it is very near us; it has already come. We may be under the impression that it is yet to come, but it has already come. That is the idea of eternity being involved in the time process. Eternity is not a tomorrow. There may be a tomorrow for the time process, but there cannot be a tomorrow for eternity. Therefore, the kingdom of God does not enter into us after some time, in the same way as eternity does not come tomorrow or even the next moment.

The very notion or concept of God is to be clear before us. The more is this concept clear, the more we may be said to be secure in this world and complete in our personalities. The only thing that can be said to be complete in every way is God-being; everything else is fractional, located, physical, isolated, perishable in its nature. Therefore, it has to be understood clearly as to what significance is there behind our notion of God coming into us. What do we expect from God? This question is as intriguing to us as the very meaning of God Himself.

We have many difficulties even with God Himself, not merely with people in this world. Perhaps our trouble is with God only, not with

people. We can understand our brothers, our sisters, our neighbours, people in this world, but we cannot understand that which seems to be more significant and more vital to us than the phenomenon called human society or natural history.

We may be under the impression that the idea of God is clear to us and, therefore, we may also be convinced that we understand what Incarnation is—how God helps us by coming to render succour—but this is not the case. Our psychophysical individuality, this bodily encasement which we think we are, has caught hold of us with such intensity that our interpretation of eternity, of the coming of God or of religion, happens to be in terms of this perception through the apertures of the sense organs, which are the avenues through which our physicality operates. That is to say, physical perception, very unfortunately, can condition our religious awareness, and we may look at God through the fleshy eyes. It does not matter. We may say God can become flesh; let it be so. Yet, it is not an ordinary phenomenon; it is a timeless eternity that is getting transmuted, as it were, into the time process.

All this amounts to saying that we are perpetually in utter proximity to God's existence if we can appreciate the meaning of eternity

masquerading in the time process. Else, we cannot understand how a large kingdom can be within us. It is like saying that the whole ocean is in a drop. Here is a little analogy for us to make some sense out of this great declaration that the kingdom of God is within us. Is the ocean in the drop? We may say the ocean cannot be in the drop. But the ocean is in the drop. We can conceptually see the drops which constitute the ocean—conceptually, not physically, because there are no drops in the ocean, the ocean itself being a drop, a large mass. The entry of eternity into the temporal personality and the social life of people is something like the ocean entering into the drop of which it consists. Even this analogy is not clear enough because our idea of a drop is that it is a fractional unit of a larger whole we call the ocean.

We are unable to conceive the nature of God; we have to accept defeat here. Therefore it is that we are unable to know how God is perpetually with us, almost walking with us in the streets, and our breath that we breathe every day is made possible by His working within us. The heartbeat, the working of the lungs, the circulatory system, the breathing process, and everything that we seem to be made of are examples before us of activities

that are beyond our control, processes which make us what we are.

The acceptance of God in our lives is the religious process. That God has entered us is to be accepted. This acceptance is religion. That which is entirely involved in the time process—in the process of cause and effect, relation and objectivity though sense perception—cannot make this acceptance. We always have a reservation. This reservation that is deep-seated in our very unconscious makes it difficult to understand what will happen to us if God comes to us. We dread the very idea, for various reasons.

The reasons are, firstly, the tremendous contradiction that appears to be there between the conditions prevailing in the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the earth. A total abnegation of all values that we consider as important here seem to be a precondition to the acceptance of the invitation to the kingdom of God—abnegation, renunciation. We cannot imagine a greater renunciate than the great being whose birth we are celebrating today, who owned nothing. Foxes have holes and the birds have nests, but the Son of God has no place to keep his head. The man of God has no place to live in this world. The world rejects him because

it has rejected God Himself. This situation makes religions define the world in many ways, sometimes as the manifestation of God, as the creation of God, or perhaps the den of evil itself.

Spirituality at its height and renunciation gone to the extreme may be said to be a blend that we see in the personality of Christ. Religion is here at its apex—total fulfilment consequent upon total abnegation. The more we renounce, the more we are filled. “Empty thyself and I shall fill thee.” But what kind of emptiness is it that we experience in our own lives? We are already full. Are we not full? We are filled with the satisfaction that all is well with us. “But the hour has come,” said the great master at a particular juncture, which had many meanings, which nobody around him could understand.

What kind of hour has to come for God to receive us? What happens to us when God receives us? For a few seconds we can close our eyes and imagine that God is receiving us now, in a few minutes. We will shudder from the bottom of our hearts, not knowing what is going to happen to us.

We aspire for God, we love God, we crave for God, but we dread God at the same time. Even a mastermind such as Arjuna, in the context of the

Mahabharata, could not suffer the coming of God in the form of that extended eternity blazing like millions of suns before him. It had to be taken away from his sight. May God withdraw Himself for some time. Too much of God is difficult for us.

These are the difficulties of a spiritual seeker. We also have a problem with too much of God. This problem Arjuna had: “Oh, it is too much. Withdraw.” How could it be? Could God be in such an excess, in a flooding over-abundance, that we cannot tolerate it anymore? Can we not tolerate God? Let this question be put to one’s own self. Is God intolerable? The ego, which is flint-like, hard like rock, is the obstacle before us. It is awake to itself, but asleep to God.

*Yā niśā sarvabhūtānām tasyām jāgarti saṁyamī, yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneḥ* is a verse from the Bhagavadgita, which is pertinent in this context. When God comes, the soul awakes, but the senses sleep. Midnight is the birth of great masters—Christ or Krishna, as the case may be. Midnight is the utter negation of sense activity, physical consciousness, and everything pertaining to that state of affairs. It is in the thick darkness of the senses that the light of the soul emerges and the birth of Eternity takes place in time.

When God comes, nobody knows. He may knock at the door at any time. It is not necessary for us to imagine that, after all, it may not be today, that He may knock tomorrow. I mentioned that there is no such thing as tomorrow for God; it is here and now, just at this moment. The lives of saints and masters, Incarnations, are eye-openers for us to the fact that religion is not an easy affair. We cannot be religious in the true sense of the term if our acceptance of God in His true nature is inadequate and we are partially accommodative, but not completely.

In the coming of Christ we have an illustration of the requirements of the seeker who is prepared to receive God completely. It may end in the death of the body, but is it acceptable? Even disciples, many of them perhaps, have been said to have fled from the place for fear of death. Death of what? Death of that which is very dear to us. What is it that is dear to us? Why is the devotee fleeing from the circumstance of the negation of that which we consider as the most beloved—this personality, this body, this life, this me? Here is the great problem before religion and spirituality. One cannot be a saint so easily, because one cannot accept God wholly.

In the life of Christ, which is briefly given to us in the New Testament, we have a wealth of details

which will give us some insight into what religious life is. We may read it literally from the point of view of linguistic understanding, and appreciate it, be touched by it when we go through it, but we cannot wholly accept it. There is always reservation because we cannot leave this world, even for the sake of God. Here is a very crucial point before us. This world does not mean merely the world of nature, mountains and rivers, the world of values. We know what values of life we hold sacred, sacrosanct and dear to us these days. There is the industrial revolution, there is military build-up, there is economic growth, there is every blessed means to perpetuate the comforts of psychophysical existence and the socio-economic perpetuation of human life. This is pleasant indeed. When we are able to accentuate the relationship of space and time with this bodily existence, we feel comfortable. When we seem to be isolated from this association, we feel discomfort.

But the greatest discomfort is to be encountered by us, and we know what it would look like if we can deeply, with sincerity, contemplate the meaning of the last days of Christ's physical existence in this world. It is shattering even to imagine. It will tear our ego. It will be like an earthquake which shakes

the whole personality. One saint said that when God comes, it will be like a wild elephant entering a thatched hut. The hut will not be anymore there. God invades the human personality, takes possession of it entirely, and the earthly kingdom ceases. It melts in the blaze of divine light.

To emphasise once again, the life of Christ is a beautiful, inseparable coming together of renunciation and spiritual fulfilment. They are actually not two phenomena; it is one thing that appears as a twofold process. No fulfilment is possible until we renounce. We have all renounced something, of course. All of us here are seekers of God. Everyone who is in this hall now, in this audience, in this satsanga, in this worship, has of course renounced something. Attachments have been severed in some measure. But what is it that has been severed from us?

A very intense check-up of personality may be required here. The renunciation that is required of a spiritual seeker who loves God and seeks God is actually the abandonment of everything that is anti-God in us—the Antichrist. And what is it? It is everything that is not capable of accommodation with the eternity that is God's nature, and it is a characteristic of the time process—the love of objects,

the craving for sensations, and an interpretation of the values of life in terms of society, economics and politics, which are in their heyday at this moment in this world. The renunciation of such values, which are the greatest comfort to the ego-ridden individuality involved in space and time, is what we require for the entry of eternity into us—for Christ to come into us, for God to be near us, with us, and inseparable from us.

The scripture is the embodiment of this divine teaching. The vibrations of God get condensed into the word of the scripture; that is why the scripture is holy. The word is not ink and paper. It is a vibration. It is a concentrated pinpoint of a transcendent element that is operating in the word of the scripture. Therefore, scripture is very holy, sacred. We keep it on the head and worship it, and hug it, kiss it and adore it. Scripture is an alternative for us when actual masters are not before us. We would like to be with God Himself, or at least with the masters who incarnate themselves for giving us the message of God. Otherwise, only the scripture is before us. But we should not dilute this process further into a mere church or temple where there is a visible temporality once again manifesting itself in brick and mortar, gold and silver, and all the

variety and humdrum of social existence minus the power of the scripture, the greatness of Incarnation and the wonder of God.

These are some of the ideas that occur to my mind at this holy hour. Let us be seekers of God. I would say, let us be God-men.

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The necessity for the birth of God in man, as we generally call it—or, as I would say, the birth of heaven on earth—arose on account of a defect that was perceived in the existing religion of those days, which was the religion of Jehovah, if we would like to call it so. If it had been a practicable and adequate religion, satisfying the needs of the soul of man, there would not have been a need for the birth of God in man, or the birth of Christ. There was a lacuna in the very concept of the principle of religion as the way to God. In the Old Testament, God remained a remote Father in the heavens, removed from the dust of the earth, incapable of access, and religion became feeble and incapable of consoling the heart of the crying individual on earth. God had to be born in man.

—**SWAMI KRISHNANANDA**



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