



Issue 46

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Reach

Newsletter of the Vedanta Centres of Australia

<http://daintreephoto.com.au/>

SAYINGS AND TEACHINGS

Sri Ramakrishna on Christ

M: You also told us about Jesus.

MASTER: What did I say?

M: You went into samadhi at the sight of Jesus Christ's picture in Jadu Mallick's garden house. You saw Jesus come down from the picture and merge in your body.

Source: *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* by Mahendranath Gupta, Translation by Swami Nikhilananda, (Chennai: Sri Ramakrishna Math).

Swami Vivekananda on Christ

This self-control will tend to produce a mighty will, a character which makes a Christ or a Buddha. Foolish men do not know this secret; they nevertheless want to rule mankind.

Source: *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama), Vol. 1, pp. 33

Vedantic Sayings of Jesus Christ

For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you (NKJV).

- Luke 17:20-21

On that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you. - John 14:21

I and the Father are one. - John 10: 31

Source: <https://biblehub.com/>

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We welcome you all to the Vedanta Movement in Australia, as epitomized in the lives of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda, and invite you to involve yourselves and actively participate in the propagation of the Universal Message of Vedanta.

1. NEWS FROM AUSTRALIAN CENTRES 11 JUNE 2018 TO 10 SEPTEMBER 2018

ADELAIDE

506 Glynburn Road, Burnside, SA 5066

Email: vedanta.adelaide@gmail.com

Contact: Dr Raman Sharma on (08) 8431 9775

Mrs Pathma Iswaran on (08) 8379 5336

URL: <http://vedantaadelaide.org>

Daily Activities:

- The Centre is open every evening from 6:45pm for *aratrikam* starting at 7:00pm which is undertaken by the local devotees.

Regular Activities:

- Swami Sridharananda visited the Centre and delivered discourses on the *Srimad-Bhagavad Gitā* for three days in June 2018 and July 2018. A dedicated group of devotees attended his talks. These talks were also recorded.
- Reading of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, including discussion on relevant points, was held on the first and third Sunday of the month.
- Some devotees have been providing community-based support on a weekly basis at the Centre for meeting the educational needs of children from under-privileged backgrounds.

Other Activities

- Swami Vireshananda visited the Adelaide centre with Swami Sridharananda, Br. Swatmachitanya and Br. Ishwarachaitanya from 30 August to 1 September 2018. Swami Vireshananda met with the devotees from Adelaide and addressed the devotees on three different occasions.
- Swami Rajeshwarananda, Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo, Sri Lanka visited the Vedanta Centre of Adelaide on Friday, 27 July 2018 and sang some *bhajans* after the evening *aratrikam*. Swamiji also interacted and shared dinner prasada with the local devotees.
- The AGM of the Vedanta Centre of Adelaide was held on Saturday, 11 August 2018, from 11:30am.

BRISBANE

12 Greenwood Street, Springfield Lakes, QLD 4300

Email: info@vedantabrisbane.org

Contact: Swami Atmeshananda (07) 3818 9986

URL: <http://vedantabrisbane.org>

Daily Activities:

- Meditation and the chanting of hymns were conducted between 6:15 am and 7:15 am on all days except Sundays when it is held from 8 am to 8:30 am.
- Vesper service (*aratrikam*), *bhajans*, and readings from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* were held between 7:00 pm and 8:00 pm.
- Members were encouraged to visit the Centre and discuss topics concerning spiritual life.

Regular Activities:

- Sunday mornings:- a) *Yoga class* (8:30 am — 9:45 am). b) *Srimad-Bhagavad Gitā Class* (10:00 am — 11:00 am). (c) *Bala Sangha or children's classes* (10:00 am — 11:00 am during school term).
- A discussion group met on the first Monday of the month at Sunnybank Hills (7:00 pm — 8:30 pm).
- Religious classes for children were held every Wednesday at West End Primary School (3:00 pm — 4:00 pm).
- Classes on *Meditation and Spiritual Life* (7:00 pm — 8:00 pm at 134 Fleming Rd, Chapel Hill, Qld 4069) and the *Ramayana* (7:15 pm — 8:15 pm) were held on alternate Fridays.
- Chanting of the Sri Ramanama Sankirtanam* was held fortnightly at the Centre on *ekadashi* days (7:30 pm — 8:15 pm).
- Prayer meeting (satsangs)* were held on the first Saturday of every month.
- Devotees took turns in decorating and worshipping Sri Ramakrishna's image every week at the Sri Selva Vinayakar temple, South Maclean, Qld.
- Swami Atmeshananda conducted *Vivekachud-*

amani classes at Toowoomba on the first Thursday of every month.

- A class on the *Ashtavakra Gita* is conducted at 101 Sharpless Drive, Springfield Lakes, on a fixed day of the month.
- Yoga, Meditation and Bushwalk were held on the third weekend of every month at Vedanta Precinct, Vedanta Drive, Springfield Lakes.

Other Activities:

- The Theosophical Society, Brisbane, organised a lecture programme on 18 July on the subject 'Evolution of Spiritual Ideas in the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda'. Swami Vireshananda spoke on the subject and Swami Atmeshananda was also present.
- Swami Dhruveshananda, Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission, Dhaka, visited Brisbane from 3 to 8 August. He met groups of devotees and interacted with them during his stay.



Charis Mullen, MP for Jordon, Queensland, with Swami Atmeshananda and others



Swami Dhruveshananda and Swami Atmeshananda with the Bangladesh Association



Guru Purnima at Brisbane

- Swami Atmeshananda attended the Queensland Premier's Multicultural Community Reception programme on 7 August 2018.
- Charis Mullen, MP for Jordon, Queensland, visited the Centre on 14 August and discussed matters pertaining to the Centre.
- Global Persons of Indian Origin (GOPIO) invited Swami Atmeshananda to officiate as guest of honour at its India Day fair organised on 18 August at Roma Street Parklands.



Krishna Janmashtami

- A music concert was organised on 1 September at the Centre. Pandit Hindole Majumdar, who played the tabla was accompanied on Sitar by Saikat Bhattacharya of Brisbane and harmonium by Joseph Abhayanand of Brisbane.

Celebrations

- *Guru purnima* was celebrated at the Centre on 29 July 2018. Worship, devotional music and chants by the children of the Bala Sangha, a talk on the significance of the Guru, and *prasad* distribution were the different components of the programme.
- *Sri Krishna janmashtami* was celebrated on 2 September. Chanting of Vedic hymns, chants and music by the children of the Bala Sangha, formal worship, a talk on the life and teachings of Sri Krishna and distribution of prasad were the activities conducted on this day.

Forthcoming Programmes

- A breakfast programme has been organised in aid of the Farmers' Drought relief fund on Saturday, 15 September 2018. Charis Mullen, MP for Jordon, and Swami Sridharananda will be present at this event. The programme will include worship and will be followed by the Annual General Meeting of the Centre.
- On the occasion of *navaratri*, Sri Durga Saptashati (Chandi) will be recited from 8 to 16 October at the Centre from 5.30 a.m. to 8 a.m.
- Durga Puja Ashtami worship will be performed on Wednesday 17 October at the Centre.
- Christmas Eve will be celebrated on the evening of Monday, 24 December 2018.
- Holy Mother's Birthday will be observed on 28 December 2018.

CANBERRA

17 Bean Crescent, Mckellar, ACT 2617

Email: vedacanberra@gmail.com

Contact: Mr Jaishankar Venkataraman 6258 7612 / 0433 593 860

Regular Activities:

- Swami Sridharananda conducted monthly classes on the *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* at the Quakers Friends Meeting House, Acton ACT - 2602, Canberra.

Other Activities:

- The Annual General Meeting for Canberra Chapter was held on the 26th of August 2018.

MELBOURNE

5-7 Angus Ave, Ringwood East, VIC 3135

Email: vedanta.melb@gmail.com

Contact: Swami Sunishthananda 03 8684 9594

URL <http://www.vedantamelbourne.org/>

Regular Activities:

- The shrine was open from 6:30 am to 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm seven days a week.
- Vesper service (*aratrikam*), bhajans, reading from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* and meditation were conducted between 7:00 pm and 8:00 pm daily.
- A children's class was held on Sundays from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm.

Swami Sunishthananda conducts:

- A class on Sundays from 10:00 am to 11:30 am on the *Isavasya Upanishad* followed by an interactive session and guided meditation.
- Chanting, *bhajans* and guided meditation followed by a class on *Narada Bhakti Sutras* on Wednesdays from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm.
- Guided meditation followed by a class on Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* on Fridays from 7:30 pm to 8:45 pm.
- A *satsang* is conducted on the first Saturday of every month from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm at 4 Bernard Street, Cheltenham. It began in May 2018.

Other Activities:

- Swami Sridharananda delivered a talk on a spiritual topic and met the devotees after the talk on Friday, 13 July 2018, at 7:30 pm, after the evening *aratrikam*.
- The Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday, 14 July 2018 at 11 am. Swami Sri-



Swami Sridharananda and others at the AGM



Swami Rajeshwarananda and Swami Sunishthananda with devotees



Swami Dhruveshananda in Melbourne



(l to R) Swamis Yuktatmananda, Sunishthananda, and Tattwamayyananda

dharananda presided over the meeting.

- Swami Sunishthananda was invited to speak on the 'Significance of Guru Purnima' on the evening of 29 July 2018 at Dandenong High School by the Hindu Parishad of Melbourne as a part of their Guru Purnima Celebration.
- Swami Yuktatmananda, Minister of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center of New York and Swami Tattwamayyananda, the Minister-in-Charge of Vedanta Society of Northern California, delivered lectures on Wednesday, 4 July 2018 after the evening vesper service.
- Swami Rajeshwarananda from Colombo visit-

ed the Vedanta Centre of Melbourne from 21 July to 25 July 2018.

- Swami Dhruveshananda, Secretary of Ramakrishna Mission, Dhaka, Bangladesh, visited our centre from 11th August 2018 to 14th August 2018. To meet and greet him, a get-together was arranged on Sunday, 12th August 2018 at 12.30 pm in Vedanta Centre of Melbourne. Another get-together was organised by the Bangladesh Association of Melbourne at Mount Street Neighbourhood House Inc. 6 Mount Street, Glen Waverley, Vic 3150 at 4:15 pm.

Celebrations:

- Guru Purnima was celebrated at the Vedanta Centre on 29 July 2018. The programme included puja, offerings and a talk on the significance of the Guru.

PERTH

51 Golf View Street, Yokine, WA 6060

Email: vedantaperth@gmail.com

Contact: Sumita Chetty 0438928136

Parthiv Parekh 0430 511 699

Daily Activities:

- Vesper service (*aratrikam*), *bhajans*, reading from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* are conducted between 7:00 pm and 8:00 pm.

Regular Activities:

- *Satsangas* were conducted on the first Sunday of every month. The programme included chanting, *Gita dhyanam*, *bhajans*, readings and *prasad* distribution.
- Swami Sridharananda continued to deliver monthly discourses on the *Srimad-Bhagavad-Gitā*.

Other Activities:

- A working bee session was held once every month.
- The Vedanta Multipurpose hall is used about 5 days a week by the organization called Prana Yoga which is led by an acclaimed yoga teacher who is a member of Yoga Australia.
- Swami Rajeshwarananda, from the Ramakrishna Mission, Colombo, Sri Lanka, visited Perth from 28 to 31 July. 2018 A *satsang* was held on 29 July which coincided with Guru Purnima. The devotees joined Swami Rajeshwarananda in singing *bhajans* and chanting.
- Swami Dhruveshananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Dhaka, Bangladesh, visited the Vedanta Centre in Perth from 14 to 18 August 2018.
- Swami Sridharananda visited Perth from 15 to 18 August 2018. He was accompanied by Swami Vireshananda and Br. Ishwarachaitanya.



Guru Purnima Puja



Janmashtami in Melbourne

- *Janmashtami* was celebrated in the Vedanta Centre on Sunday, 2 September 2018. The programme included puja, offerings and singing of *Shyamanama Sankirtanam* and *bhajans*.

Forthcoming Programmes

- Special worship of Mother Durga on the occasion of *navaratri* will be performed on Sunday, 14 October 2018.
- Christmas Eve will be celebrated on the evening of Monday, 24 December 2018.
- Holy Mother's Birthday will be observed on Sunday, 30 December 2018.



Swami Rajeshwarananda singing bhajans in Perth



Swami Dhruveshananda and Swami Vireshananda in Perth

SYDNEY

2 Stewart Street, Ermington, NSW 2115

144A Marsden Road, Ermington, NSW 2115 (Entry)

Email: vedasydney@vedantasydney.org

Contact: 02 8197 7351

URL: www.vedantaaustralia.org

Daily Activities:

- The shrine was open from 6:30 am to 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm to 8:30 pm seven days a week.
- Meditation from 6:30 am to 7:30 am and chanting from 7:20 am to 7:45 am.
- Vesper service (*aratrikam*), *bhajans*, and readings from *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* were conducted from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm. The times change on special occasions.

Regular Activities:

- Swami Sridharananda conducted his chapter-wise study of the *Srimad-Bhagavad Gitā* on Sun-

days between 9:30 am and 10:30 am.

- Swami Sridharananda conducts a class on the *Mundaka Upanishad* on Mondays from 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm.
- A class for mothers was held every Monday between 11:00 am and 12:30 pm. Swami Mahabodhananda initiated discussion on *Meditation and Spiritual Life*.
- Swami Mahabodhananda conducts a class on the *Evolution of the Spiritual Ideas in India* on Fridays from 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm.
- *Bala sangha* classes which include moral and spiritual lessons, drama and movement were conducted for children every Saturday between 4:45 pm and 6:45 pm during the school term.
- Parlour talks were conducted by Swami Sridharananda at 1/98 Condamine Street, Balgowlah, NSW 2093, near Manly Beach on Tuesdays between 7:30 pm and 8:30 pm once a month.
- *Sri Rāmanāma Sankirtanam* was conducted on *ekadashi* days after the vesper service.
- Devotees also received spiritual counselling and guidance.
- 'Yoga for Everybody' was conducted by qualified Yoga Teachers on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

Other Activities

- Swami Sarvadevananda, Minister in Charge of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, Hollywood, delivered a talk at the Vedanta Centre of Sydney on 'Transcending Mind' on



Swami Sarvadevananda and Swami Tattwamayyananda

Sunday, 26 June 2018. The talk was an overview of the disciplines contained in the *Yoga Vasishta*.

- Swami Tattwamayana, Minister in Charge of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco, also visited the Vedanta Centre of Sydney and delivered a lecture on 'The Evolution of Karma in the Gita' on 2 July 2018.
- On 4 July 2018, Swami Tyagananda, Minister in Charge of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society of Boston gave a lecture on 'What Vivekananda has Done for Us.'
- Swami Yuktatmananda, Minister in Charge, of the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Centre, New York, delivered a talk on 'Marks of True Devotion' on 6 July 2018 at the Vedanta Centre of Sydney.



Swami Yuktatmananda



*Br. Andrew, Swami Dhruveshananda and
Br. Ishwarachaitanya*

- Swami Rajeshwarananda, from the Ramakrishna Mission in Colombo, Sri Lanka, sang some bhajans in different languages at the Vedanta Centre of Sydney on Wednesday, 18 July 2018.
- Swami Dhruveshananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Dhaka, Bangladesh, visited Sydney between 29 July to 2 August 2018 and 18 August to 23 August 2018. On 19 August 2018, he addressed the devotees after Swami Sridharananda's Gita class.
- A spiritual retreat on the theme 'Character Building Education for Spiritual Emancipation' was held on 25 August 2018. The programme included talks by Swami Sridharananda and the other monks of the Vedanta Centre of Sydney, and bhajans, group discussions and presentations, question and answer session. The retreat was capped to 40 people and there were 39 people who attended.

Celebrations:

- *Guru purnima* was observed at the Vedanta Centre of Sydney on Friday, 27 July 2018. The celebration began at 6:30 pm with *aratrikam*. This was followed by bhajans by devotees. After this the children of the Bala Sangha chanted the Guru stotram and other chants. Subsequently, Swami Vireshananda delivered a talk on 'The Significance of Guru Purnima'. The function ended with the distribution of *prasad* to the devotees. There were around 200 people who attended.
- *Krishna janmashtami* was celebrated on 2 September 2018. The evening programme after



Swami Rajeshwarananda singing bhajans



Children of the Bala Sangha performing on the occasion of Guru Purnima



Br. Andrew, Br. Ishwarachaitanya and Br. Zach



Sri Krishna Janmashtami performance by the children of the Bala Sangha



Sri Krishna Janmashtami performance by the children of the Bala Sangha

aratrikam included the singing of *Shyamnama Sankritan*, bhajans and some skits from the life of Sri Krishna by the children of the Bala Sangha. There were about 220 people who attended.

Forthcoming Programmes:

- Sri Sri Durga puja will be celebrated on 17 October 2018.
- Christmas Eve will be celebrated on 24 December 2018.
- Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi's birthday will be observed on 28 December 2018.



Sri Krishna Janmashtami performance by the children of the Bala Sangha

1. FEATURE ARTICLES

A. Jesus Christ Biography

Biblical Figure (c. 6 BCE–c. 30 AD)

Jesus is a religious leader whose life and teachings are recorded in the Bible's New Testament. He is a central figure in Christianity and is considered as the incarnation of God by Christians all over the world. Jesus Christ was born circa 6 B.C. in Bethlehem. Little is known about his early life, but his life and his ministry are recorded in the New Testament, more a theological document than a biography. According to Christians, Jesus is considered the incarnation of God and his teachings are followed as an example for living a more spiritual life. Christians believe he died for the sins of all people and rose from the dead.

Background and Early Life

Most of Jesus's life is told through the four Gospels of the New Testament Bible, known as the Canonical gospels, written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These are not biographies in the modern sense but accounts with allegorical intent. They are written to engender faith in Jesus as the Messiah and the incarnation of God, who came to teach, suffer and die for peoples' sins.

Jesus was born circa 6 B.C. in Bethlehem. His mother, Mary, was a virgin who was betrothed to Joseph, a carpenter. Christians believe Jesus was born through Immaculate Conception. His lineage can be traced back to the house of David. According to the Gospel of Matthew (2:1), Jesus was born during the reign of Herod the Great, who upon hearing of his birth felt threatened and tried to kill Jesus by ordering all of Bethlehem's male children under age two to be killed. But Joseph was warned by an angel and he took Mary and the child to Egypt until Herod's death, where upon he brought the fam-

ily back and settled in the town of Nazareth, in Galilee.

There is very little written about Jesus's early life. The Gospel of Luke (2:41-52) recounts that a 12-year-old Jesus had accompanied his parents on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and became separated. He was found several days later in a temple, discussing affairs with some of Jerusalem's elders. Throughout the New Testament, there are trace references of Jesus working as a carpenter while a young adult. It is believed that he began his ministry at about age 30 when he was baptized by John the Baptist, who upon seeing Jesus, declared him the Son of God.

After baptism, Jesus went into the Judean desert to fast and meditate for 40 days and nights. The Temptation of Christ is chronicled in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke (known as the Synoptic Gospels). The Devil appeared and tempted Jesus three times, once to turn stone to bread, once to cast himself off a mountain where angels would save him, and once to offer him all the

kingdoms of the world. All three times, Jesus rejected the Devil's temptation and sent him off.

Jesus's Ministry

Jesus returned to Galilee and made trips to neighboring villages. During this time, several people became his disciples. One of these was Mary Magdalene, who is first mentioned in the Gospel of Luke (16:9) and later in all four gospels at the crucifixion. Though not mentioned in the context of the "12 disciples," she is considered to have been involved in Jesus's ministry from the beginning to his death and after. According to the gospels of Mark and John, Jesus appeared to Magdalene first after his resurrection.

According to the Gospel of John (2:1-11), as Jesus was beginning his ministry, he and his disciples travelled with his mother, Mary, to a wedding at Cana in Galilee. The wedding host had run out of wine and Jesus's mother came to him for help. At first, Jesus refused to intervene, but then he relented and asked a servant to bring him large jars



Christ with Arms Folded painting by Rembrandt, [The Hyde Collection, Photograph by Joseph Levy](#)

<https://www.biography.com/people/jesus-christ-9354382>

filled with water. He turned the water into a wine of higher quality than any served during the wedding. John's gospel depicts the event as the first sign of Jesus's glory and his disciples' belief in him.

After the wedding, Jesus, his mother Mary and his disciples travelled to Jerusalem for Passover. At the temple, they saw moneychangers and merchants selling wares. In a rare display of anger, Jesus overturned the **tables** and, with a whip

made of cords, drove them out, declaring that his Father's house is not a house for merchants.

The Synoptic Gospels chronicle Jesus as he travelled through Judea and Galilee, using parables and miracles to explain how the prophecies were being fulfilled and that the Kingdom of God was near. As word spread of Jesus's teaching and healing the sick and diseased, more people began to follow him. At one point, Jesus came to a level area and was joined by a

great number of people. There, at the Sermon on the Mount, he presented several discourses, known as the Beatitudes, which encapsulate many of the spiritual teachings of love, humility and compassion.

As Jesus continued preaching about the Kingdom of God, the crowds grew larger and began to proclaim him as the son of David and as the Messiah. The Pharisees heard of this and publicly challenged Jesus, accusing him of having the power of Satan. He defended his actions with a parable, then questioned their logic and told them such thinking denied the power of God, which only further hardened their resolve to work against him.

Near the city of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus talked with his disciples. According to the gospels of Matthew (16:13), Mark (8:27) and Luke (9:18), he asked, "Who do you say that I am?" The question confused them, and only Peter responded, saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus blessed Peter, accepting the titles of "Christ" and the "Son of God," and declared the proclamation was a divine revelation from God. Jesus then proclaimed Peter to be the leader of the church. Jesus then warned his disciples of the Pharisees' conspiracy against him and of his fate to suffer and be killed, only to rise from the dead on the third day.

Less than a week later, Jesus took three of his disciples to a high mountain where they

could pray alone. According to the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus's face began shining like the sun and his entire body glowed with a white light. Then, the prophets Elijah and Moses appeared, and Jesus talked to them. A bright cloud emerged around them, and a voice said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him." This event, known as the Transfiguration, is a pivotal moment in Christian theology. It supports the identity of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, the week before the holiday of Passover, riding on a donkey. Great numbers of people took palm branches and greeted him at the city's entry. They praised him as the Son of David and as the Son of God. The priests and Pharisees, fearful of the growing public adulation, felt he must be stopped.

All four Gospels describe Jesus's final week in Jerusalem. During this time, Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, confronted moneychangers and merchants in the temple, and debated with the high priests who questioned Jesus's authority. He told his disciples about the coming days and that Jerusalem's temple would be destroyed. Meanwhile, the chief priests and elders met with high priest Caiaphas, and set plans in motion to arrest Jesus. One of the disciples, Judas, met with the chief priests and told them how he would deliver Jesus to them. They agreed to pay him 30 pieces

of silver.

The Last Supper

Jesus and his 12 disciples met for the Passover meal, and he gave them his final words of faith. He also foretold of his betrayal by one of the disciples and privately let Judas know it was he. Jesus told Peter that before a rooster crowed the next morning, he would have denied knowing Jesus three times. At the end of the meal, Jesus instituted the Eucharist, which in the Christian religion, signifies the covenant between God and humans.

After the Last Supper, Jesus and his disciples went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Jesus asked God if this cup (his suffering and death) might pass by Him. He implored a group of his disciples to pray with him, but they kept falling asleep. Then the time had come. Soldiers and officials appeared, and Judas was with them. He gave Jesus a kiss on the cheek to identify him and the soldiers arrested Jesus. One disciple tried to resist the arrest, brandished his sword and cut the ear off one of the soldiers. But Jesus admonished him and healed the soldier's wound.

After his arrest, many of the disciples went into hiding. Jesus was taken to the high priest and interrogated. He was hit and spat upon for not responding. Meanwhile, Peter had followed Jesus to the high priests' court. As he hid in the shadows, three house servants asked if he was one of Jesus' disciples and each

time he denied it. After each denial, a rooster crowed. Then Jesus was led out of the house and looked directly at Peter. Peter remembered how Jesus had told him he would deny him and he wept bitterly. Judas, who was watching from a distance, became distraught by his betrayal of Jesus and attempted to return the 30 pieces of silver. The priests told him his guilt was his own. He threw the coins into the temple and later hanged himself.

The Crucifixion

The next day, Jesus was taken to the high court where he was mocked, beaten and condemned for claiming to be the Son of God. He was brought before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea. The priests accused Jesus of claiming to be the king of the Jews and asked that he be condemned to death. At first Pilate tried to pass Jesus off to King Herod, but he was brought back, and Pilate told the Jewish priests he could find no fault with Jesus. The priests reminded him that anyone who claimed to be a king speaks against Caesar. Pilate publicly washed his hands of responsibility, yet ordered the crucifixion in response to the demands of the crowd. The Roman soldiers whipped and beat Jesus, placed a crown of thorns on his head and then led him off to Mount Calvary.

Jesus was crucified with two thieves, one at his left and the other at his right. Above his head was the charge against him, "King of the Jews." At his



The painting of Jesus meditating in the forest which Swami Trigunatitananda had made based on the one he had been shown in a Buddhist monastery in Tibet.

feet were his mother, Mary, and Mary Magdalene. The Gospels describe various events that occurred during the last three hours of his life, including the taunting by the soldiers and the crowd, Jesus's agony and outbursts, and his final words. While Jesus was on the cross, the sky darkened, and immediately upon his death, an earthquake erupted,

tearing the temple's curtain from top to bottom. A soldier confirmed his death by sticking a spear into his side, which produced only water. He was taken down from the cross and buried in a nearby tomb.

Rising from the Dead

Three days after his death, Jesus's tomb was found empty. He had

risen from the dead and appeared first to Mary Magdalene and then to his mother Mary. They both informed the disciples, who were in hiding, and later, Jesus appeared to them and told them not to be afraid. During this brief time, he beseeched his disciples to go into the world and preach the gospel to all humanity. After 40 days, Jesus led his disciples to Mount Olivet, east of Jerusalem. Jesus spoke his final words to them, saying that they would receive the power of the Holy Spirit, before he was taken upward on a cloud and ascended into heaven.

Source:

Reproduced from:

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Author: Biography.com Editors

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<https://www.biography.com/people/jesus-christ-9354382>

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B. DIRECT DISCIPLES: Christ the Messenger

—Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda, who delivered this lecture in America, compares the advent of messengers like Christ to a wave that rises in the ocean, and the decadence that precedes them as a trough in the ocean. The difference between an ordinary individual and a messenger like Christ is the energy they bring. An ordinary individual's energy will be spent in a few years at the most, whereas the energy of a messenger like Christ is still unfolding in spite of being over 2000 years. The character of these great souls are extraordinary and is higher than whatever concept of God that we can conceive of. So worshipping these great messengers with their exemplary character is a way to progress in spiritual life. Swami Vivekananda's perspective of Christ is from the perspective of an Oriental and Swamiji calls Christ an Oriental of Orientals. The Greek influence made people look to the outside, while the oriental influence of people made them look within. The oriental is practical in religion and Christ is said to be extremely practical. The Christ is said to have thought of himself as the spirit or soul. He said that the kingdom of God was within you and also I and my father in heaven are one. Similarly, he wanted others to also realize this, rather than thinking of themselves as sinners. After this Swami Vivekananda goes on to consider the three ways in which people worship God. The first is when there is a separation between God and the individual. The second is when they think that God is in the individual and they in God and the third is when they think that they are totally one with God. He also discusses the importance of purity, renunciation and the worship of an ideal, with or without a personality.

The Advent of Messengers as a Rise in the Ocean

The wave rises on the ocean, and there is a hollow. Again another wave rises, perhaps bigger than the former, to fall down again, similarly, again to rise--driving onward. In the march of events, we notice the rise and fall, and we generally look towards the rise, forgetting the fall. But both are necessary, and both are great. This is the nature of the universe. Whether in the world of our thoughts, the world of our relations in society, or in our spiritual affairs, the same movement of succession, of rises and falls, is going on. Hence great predominances in the march of events, the liberal ideals, are marshalled ahead, to sink down, to digest, as it were, to ruminate over the past--to adjust, to conserve, to gather strength once more for a rise and a bigger rise.

The Special Energy of a Messenger

The history of nations also has ever been like that. The great soul, the Messenger we are to study this afternoon, came at a period of the history of his race which we may well designate as a great fall. We catch only little glimpses here and there of the stray records that have been kept of his sayings and doings; for verily it has been well said, that the doings and sayings of that great soul would fill the world if they had all been written down. And the three years of his ministry were like one compressed, concentrated age, which it has taken nineteen hundred years to unfold, and who knows how much longer it will yet take! Little men like you and me are simply the recipients of just a little energy. A few minutes, a few hours, a few years at best, are enough to spend it all, to stretch it

out, as it were, to its fullest strength, and then we are gone forever. But mark this giant that came; centuries and ages pass, yet the energy that he left upon the world is not yet stretched, nor yet expended to its full. It goes on adding new vigour as the ages roll on.

Now what you see in the life of Christ is the life of all the past. The life of every man is, in a manner, the life of the past. It comes to him through heredity, through surroundings, through education, through his own reincarnation--the past of the race. In a manner, the past of the earth, the past of the whole world is there, upon every soul. What are we, in the present, but a result, an effect, in the hands of that infinite past? What are we but floating wavelets in the eternal current of events, irresistibly moved forward and onward and incapable of rest? But you and I are only little things,

bubbles. There are always some giant waves in the ocean of affairs, and in you and me the life of the past race has been embodied only a little; but there are giants who embody, as it were, almost the whole of the past and who stretch out their hands for the future. These are the sign-posts here and there which point to the march of humanity; these are verily gigantic, their shadows covering the earth--they stand undying, eternal! As it has been said by the same Messenger, "No man hath seen God at any time, but through the Son." And that is true. And where shall we see God but in the Son? It is true that you and I, and the poorest of us, the meanest even, embody that God, even reflect that God. The vibration of light is everywhere, omnipresent; but we have to strike the light of the lamp before we can see the light. The Omnipresent God of the universe cannot be seen until He is reflected by these giant lamps of the earth--the Prophets, the man-Gods, the Incarnations, the embodiments of God.

The Character of these Messengers is what is Important and their Worship

We all know that God exists, and yet we do not see Him, we do not understand Him. Take one of these great Messengers of light, compare his character with the highest ideal of God that you ever formed, and you will find that your God falls short of the ideal, and that the character of the Prophet exceeds your conceptions. You cannot even form a higher ideal of God than what the actually embodied have practically real-

ised and set before us as an example. Is it wrong, therefore, to worship these as God? Is it a sin to fall at the feet of these man-Gods and worship them as the only divine beings in the world? If they are really, actually, higher than all our conceptions of God, what harm is there in worshipping them? Not only is there no harm, but it is the only possible and positive way of worship. However much you may try to struggle, by abstraction, by whatsoever method you like, still so long as you are a man in the world of men, your world is human, your religion is human, and your God is human. And that must be so. Who is not practical enough to take up an actually existing thing and give up an idea which is only an abstraction, which he cannot grasp, and is difficult of approach except through a concrete medium? Therefore, these Incarnations of God have been worshipped in all ages and in all countries.

Christ the Incarnation of the Jews

We are now going to study a little of the life of Christ, the Incarnation of the Jews. When Christ was born, the Jews were in that state which I call a state of fall between two waves; a state of conservatism; a state where the human mind is, as it were, tired for the time being of moving forward and is taking care only of what it has already; a state when the attention is more bent upon particulars, upon details, than upon the great, general, and bigger problems of life; a state of stagnation, rather than a towing ahead; a state of suffering more than of doing.

Mark you, I do not blame this state of things. We have no right to criticise it--because had it not been for this fall, the next rise, which was embodied in Jesus of Nazareth would have been impossible. The Pharisees and Sadducees might have been insincere, they might have been doing things which they ought not to have done; they might have been even hypocrites; but whatever they were, these factors were the very cause, of which the Messenger was the effect. The Pharisees and Sadducees at one end were the very impetus which came out at the other end as the gigantic brain of Jesus of Nazareth.

The attention to forms, to formulas, to the everyday details of religion, and to rituals, may sometimes be laughed at; but nevertheless, within them is strength. Many times in the rushing forward we lose much strength. As a fact, the fanatic is stronger than the liberal man. Even the fanatic, therefore, has one great virtue, he conserves energy, a tremendous amount of it. As with the individual so with the race, energy is gathered to be conserved. Hemmed in all around by external enemies, driven to focus in a centre by the Romans, by the Hellenic tendencies in the world of intellect, by waves from Persia, India, and Alexandria--hemmed in physically, mentally, and morally--there stood the race with an inherent, conservative, tremendous strength, which their descendants have not lost even today. And the race was forced to concentrate and focus all its energies upon Jerusalem and Judaism. But all power when once gathered cannot remain collected; it must expend

and expand itself. There is no power on earth which can be kept long confined within a narrow limit. It cannot be kept compressed too long to allow of expansion at a subsequent period.

This concentrated energy amongst the Jewish race found its expression at the next period in the rise of Christianity. The gathered streams collected into a body. Gradually, all the little streams joined together, and became a surging wave on the top of which we find standing out the character of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus, every Prophet is a creation of his own times, the creation of the past of his race; he himself is the creator of the future. The cause of today is the effect of the past and the cause for the future. In this position stands the Messenger. In him is embodied all that is the best and greatest in his own race, the meaning, the life, for which that race has struggled for ages; and he himself is the impetus for the future, not only to his own race but to unnumbered other races of the world.

Oriental and Greek Influence

We must bear another fact in mind: that my view of the great Prophet of Nazareth would be from the standpoint of the Orient. Many times you forget, also, that the Nazarene himself was an Oriental of Orientals. With all your attempts to paint him with blue eyes and yellow hair, the Nazarene was still an Oriental. All the similes, the imageries, in which the Bible is written--the scenes, the locations, the attitudes, the groups, the poetry, and symbol--speak to you of the Orient: of the bright sky, of the heat, of the sun,

of the desert, of the thirsty men and animals; of men and women coming with pitchers on their heads to fill them at the wells; of the flocks, of the ploughmen, of the cultivation that is going on around; of the water-mill and wheel, of the mill-pond, of the millstones. All these are to be seen today in Asia.

The voice of Asia has been the voice of religion. The voice of Europe is the voice of politics. Each is great in its own sphere. The voice of Europe is the voice of ancient Greece. To the Greek mind, his immediate society was all in all: beyond that, it is Barbarian. None but the Greek has the right to live. Whatever the Greeks do is right and correct; whatever else there exists in the world is neither right nor correct, nor should be allowed to live. It is intensely human in its sympathies, intensely natural, intensely artistic, therefore. The Greek lives entirely in this world. He does not care to dream. Even his poetry is practical. His gods and goddesses are not only human beings, but intensely human, with all human passions and feelings almost the same as with any of us. He loves what is beautiful, but, mind you, it is always external nature; the beauty of the hills, of the snows, of the flowers, the beauty of forms and of figures, the beauty in the human face, and, more often, in the human form--that is what the Greeks liked. And the Greeks being the teachers of all subsequent Europeanism, the voice of Europe is Greek.

There is another type in Asia. Think of that vast, huge continent, whose mountain-tops go beyond

the clouds, almost touching the canopy of heaven's blue; a rolling desert of miles upon miles where a drop of water cannot be found, neither will a blade of grass grow; interminable forests and gigantic rivers rushing down to the sea. In the midst of all these surroundings, the oriental love of the beautiful and of the sublime developed itself in another direction. It looked inside, and not outside. There is also the thirst for nature, and there is also the same thirst for power; there is also the same thirst for excellence, the same idea of the Greek and Barbarian, but it has extended over a larger circle. In Asia, even today, birth or colour or language never makes a race. That which makes a race is its religion. We are all Christians; we are all Mohammedans; we are all Hindus, or all Buddhists. No matter if a Buddhist is a Chinaman, or is a man from Persia, they think that they are brothers, because of their professing the same religion. Religion is the tie, unity of humanity. And then again, the Oriental, for the same reason, is a visionary, is a born dreamer. The ripples of the waterfalls, the songs of the birds, the beauties of the sun and moon and the stars and the whole earth are pleasant enough; but they are not sufficient for the oriental mind. He wants to dream a dream beyond. He wants to go beyond the present. The present, as it were, is nothing to him. The Orient has been the cradle of the human race for ages, and all the vicissitudes of fortune are there--kingdoms succeeding kingdoms, empires succeeding empires, human power, glory, and wealth, all rolling down there; a Golgotha of power and learning. That is the Orient: a Golgotha of

power, of kingdoms, of learning. No wonder, the oriental mind looks with contempt upon the things of this world and naturally wants to see something that changeth not, something which dieth not, something which in the midst of this world of misery and death is eternal, blissful, undying. An oriental Prophet never tires of insisting upon these ideals; and, as for Prophets, you may also remember that without one exception, all the Messengers were Orientals.

Christ as Practical

We see, therefore, in the life of this great Messenger of life, the first watchword: "Not this life, but something higher"; and, like the true son of the Oriental, he is practical in that. You people in the West are practical in your own department, in military affairs, and in managing political circles and other things. Perhaps the Oriental is not practical in those ways, but he is practical in his own field; he is practical in religion. If one preaches a philosophy, tomorrow there are hundreds who will struggle their best to make it practical in their lives. If a man preaches that standing on one foot would lead one to salvation, he will immediately get five hundred to stand on one foot. You may call it ludicrous; but, mark you, beneath that is their philosophy--that intense practicality. In the West, plans of salvation mean intellectual gymnastics--plans which are never worked out, never brought into practical life. In the West, the preacher who talks the best is the greatest preacher.

So, we find Jesus of Nazareth, in the first place, the true son of the Orient, intensely practical. He has no faith in this evanescent world and all its belongings. No need of text-torturing, as is the fashion in the West in modern times, no need of stretching out texts until they will not stretch any more. Texts are not India rubber, and even that has its limits. Now, no making of religion to pander to the sense vanity of the present day! Mark you, let us all be honest. If we cannot follow the ideal, let us confess our weakness, but not degrade it; let not any try to pull it down. One gets sick at heart at the different accounts of the life of the Christ that Western people give. I do not know what he was or what he was not! One would make him a great politician; another, perhaps, would make of him a great military general; another, a great patriotic Jew; and so on. Is there any warrant in the books for all such assumptions?

Christ as a Soul or Spirit

The best commentary on the life of a great teacher is his own life. "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." That is what Christ says as the only way to salvation; he lays down no other way. Let us confess in sackcloth and ashes that we cannot do that. We still have fondness for "me and mine". We want property, money, wealth. Woe unto us! Let us confess and not put to shame that great Teacher of Humanity! He had no family ties. But do you think that, that Man had any physical ideas in him? Do you think that, this mass of light, this God and not man, came down to

earth, to be the brother of animals? And yet, people make him preach all sorts of things. He had no sex ideas! He was a soul! Nothing but a soul--just working a body for the good of humanity; and that was all his relation to the body. In the soul there is no sex. The disembodied soul has no relation to the animal, no relationship to the body. The ideal may be far away beyond us. But never mind, keep to the ideal. Let us confess that it is our ideal, but we cannot approach it yet.

He had no other occupation in life, no other thought except that one, that he was a spirit. He was a disembodied, unfettered, unbound spirit. And not only so, but he, with his marvellous vision, had found that every man and woman, whether Jew or Gentile, whether rich or poor, whether saint or sinner, was the embodiment of the same undying spirit as himself. Therefore, the one work his whole life showed was to call upon them to realise their own spiritual nature. Give up he says, these superstitious dreams that you are low and that you are poor. Think not that you are trampled upon and tyrannised over as if you were slaves, for within you is something that can never be tyrannised over, never be trampled upon, never be troubled, never be killed. You are all Sons of God, immortal spirit. "Know", he declared, "the Kingdom of Heaven is within you." "I and my Father are one." Dare you stand up and say, not only that "I am the Son of God", but I shall also find in my heart of hearts that "I and my Father are one"? That was what Jesus of Nazareth said. He never talks of this world and of this life. He has

nothing to do with it, except that he wants to get hold of the world as it is, give it a push and drive it forward and onward until the whole world has reached to the effulgent Light of God, until everyone has realised his spiritual nature, until death is vanished and misery banished.

Historicity of Christ

We have read different stories that have been written about him; we know the scholars and their writings, and the higher criticism; and we know all that has been done by study. We are not here to discuss how much of the New Testament is true, we are not here to discuss how much of that life is historical. It does not matter at all whether the New Testament was written within five hundred years of his birth, nor does it matter even, how much of that life is true. But there is something behind it, something we want to imitate. To tell a lie, you have to imitate a truth, and that truth is a fact. You cannot imitate that which never existed. You cannot imitate that which you never perceived. But there must have been a nucleus, a tremendous power that came down, a marvellous manifestation of spiritual power--and of that we are speaking. It stands there. Therefore, we are not afraid of all the criticisms of the scholars. If I, as an Oriental, have to worship Jesus of Nazareth, there is only one way left to me, that is, to worship him as God and nothing else. Have we no right to worship him in that way, do you mean to say? If we bring him down to our own level and simply pay him a little respect as a great man, why should we worship at all? Our scriptures say,

"These great children of Light, who manifest the Light themselves, who are Light themselves, they, being worshipped, become, as it were, one with us and we become one with them."

Different Conceptions of God

For, you see, in three ways man perceives God. At first the undeveloped intellect of the uneducated man sees God as far away, up in the heavens somewhere, sitting on a throne as a great Judge. He looks upon Him as a fire, as a terror. Now, that is good, for there is nothing bad in it. You must remember that humanity travels not from error to truth, but from truth to truth; it may be, if you like it better, from lower truth to higher truth, but never from error to truth. Suppose you start from here and travel towards the sun in a straight line. From here the sun looks only small in size. Suppose you go forward a million miles, the sun will be much bigger. At every stage the sun will become bigger and bigger. Suppose twenty thousand photographs had been taken of the same sun, from different standpoints; these twenty thousand photographs will all certainly differ from one another. But can you deny that each is a photograph of the same sun? So all forms of religion, high or low, are just different stages toward that eternal state of Light, which is God Himself. Some embody a lower view, some a higher, and that is all the difference. Therefore, the religions of the unthinking masses all over the world must be, and have always been, of a God who is outside of the universe, who lives in heaven, who governs from that place, who is a punisher

of the bad and a rewarder of the good, and so on.

As man advanced spiritually, he began to feel that God was omnipresent, that He must be in him, that He must be everywhere, that He was not a distant God, but clearly the Soul of all souls. As my soul moves my body, even so is God the mover of my soul. Soul within soul. And a few individuals who had developed enough and were pure enough, went still further, and at last found God. As the New Testament says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." And they found at last that they and the Father were one.

You find that all these three stages are taught by the Great Teacher in the New Testament. Note the Common Prayer he taught: "Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name," and so on--a simple prayer, a child's prayer. Mark you, it is the "Common Prayer" because it is intended for the uneducated masses. To a higher circle, to those who had advanced a little more, he gave a more elevated teaching: "I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Do you remember that? And then, when the Jews asked him who he was, he declared that he and his Father were one, and the Jews thought that that was blasphemy. What did he mean by that? This has been also told by your old Prophets, "Ye are gods and all of you are children of the Most High." Mark the same three stages. You will find that it is easier for you to begin with the first and end with the last.

The Importance of Purity

The Messenger came to show the path: that the spirit is not in forms, that it is not through all sorts of vexations and knotty problems of philosophy that you know the spirit. Better that you had no learning, better that you never read a book in your life. These are not at all necessary for salvation--neither wealth, nor position nor power, not even learning; but what is necessary is that one thing, purity. "Blessed are the pure in heart," for the spirit in its own nature is pure. How can it be otherwise? It is of God, it has come from God. In the language of the Bible, "It is the breath of God." In the language of the Koran, "It is the soul of God." Do you mean to say that the Spirit of God can ever be impure? But, alas, it has been, as it were, covered over with the dust and dirt of ages, through our own actions, good and evil. Various works which were not correct, which were not true, have covered the same spirit with the dust and dirt of the ignorance of ages. It is only necessary to clear away the dust and dirt, and then the spirit shines immediately. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." Where goest thou to seek for the Kingdom of God, asks Jesus of Nazareth, when it is there, within you? Cleanse the spirit, and it is there. It is already yours. How can you get what is not yours? It is yours by right. You are the heirs of immortality, sons of the Eternal Father.

Importance of Renunciation and Unselfishness

This is the great lesson of the Messenger, and another which is the basis of all religions, is renuncia-

tion. How can you make the spirit pure? By renunciation. A rich young man asked Jesus, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said unto him, "One thing thou lackest; go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven: and come, take up thy cross, and follow Me." And he was sad at that saying and went away grieved; for he had great possessions. We are all more or less like that. The voice is ringing in our ears day and night. In the midst of our pleasures and joys, in the midst of worldly things, we think that we have forgotten everything else. Then comes a moment's pause and the voice rings in our ears: "Give up all that thou hast and follow Me." "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it." For whoever gives up this life for His sake, finds the life immortal. In the midst of all our weakness there is a moment of pause and the voice rings: "Give up all that thou hast; give it to the poor and follow me." This is the one ideal he preaches, and this has been the ideal preached by all the great Prophets of the world: renunciation. What is meant by renunciation? That there is only one ideal in morality: unselfishness. Be selfless. The ideal is perfect unselfishness. When a man is struck on the right cheek, he turns the left also. When a man's coat is carried off, he gives away his cloak also.

Unselfishness as an Ideal

We should work in the best way we can, without dragging the ideal down. Here is the ideal. When a

man has no more self in him, no possession, nothing to call "me" or "mine", has given himself up entirely, destroyed himself as it were--in that man is God Himself; for in him self-will is gone, crushed out, annihilated. That is the ideal man. We cannot reach that state yet; yet, let us worship the ideal, and slowly struggle to reach the ideal, though, maybe, with faltering steps. It may be tomorrow, or it may be a thousand years hence; but that ideal has to be reached. For it is not only the end, but also the means. To be unselfish, perfectly selfless, is salvation itself; for the man within dies, and God alone remains.

Worship of the Ideal with or without the Personality

One more point. All the teachers of humanity are unselfish. Suppose Jesus of Nazareth was teaching, and a man came and told him, "What you teach is beautiful. I believe that it is the way to perfection, and I am ready to follow it; but I do not care to worship you as the only begotten Son of God." What would be the answer of Jesus of Nazareth? "Very well, brother, follow the ideal and advance in your own way. I do not care whether you give me the credit for the teaching or not. I am not a shop-keeper. I do not trade in religion. I only teach truth, and truth is nobody's property. Nobody can patent truth. Truth is God Himself. Go forward." But what the disciples say nowadays is: "No matter whether you practise the teachings or not, do you give credit to the Man? If you credit the Master, you will be saved; if not, there is no salvation for you." And thus the whole teaching of the Master is degenerated, and all the struggle

and fight is for the personality of the Man. They do not know that in imposing that difference, they are, in a manner, bringing shame to the very Man they want to honour--the very Man that would have shrunk with shame from such an idea. What did he care if there was one man in the world that remembered him or not? He had to deliver his message, and he gave it. And if he had twenty thousand lives, he would give them all up for the poorest man in the world. If he had to be tortured millions of times for a million despised Samaritans, and if for each one of them the sacrifice of his own life would be the only condition of salvation, he would have given his life. And all this without wishing to have his name known even to a single person. Quiet, unknown, silent, would he work, just as the Lord works. Now, what would the disciple say? He will tell you that you may be a perfect man, perfectly unselfish; but unless you give the credit to our teacher, to our saint, it is of no avail. Why? What is the origin of this superstition, this ignorance? The disciple thinks that the Lord can manifest Himself only once. There lies the whole mistake. God manifests Himself to you in man. But throughout nature, what happens once must have happened before, and must happen in future. There is nothing in nature which is not bound by law; and that means that whatever happens once must go on and must have been going on.

Idea of Incarnations

In India they have the same idea of the Incarnations of God. One of their great Incarnations, Krishna, whose grand sermon, the Bhaga-

vad-Gita, some of you might have read, says, "Though I am unborn, of changeless nature, and Lord of beings, yet subjugating My Prakriti, I come into being by My own Maya. Whenever virtue subsides and immorality prevails, then I body Myself forth. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of Dharma, I come into being, in every age." Whenever the world goes down, the Lord comes to help it forward; and so He does from time to time and place to place. In another passage He speaks to this effect: Wherever thou findest a great soul of immense power and purity struggling to raise humanity, know that he is born of My splendour, that I am there working through him.

Respecting all the Great Souls and Prophets

Let us, therefore, find God not only in Jesus of Nazareth, but in all the great Ones that have preceded him, in all that came after him, and all that are yet to come. Our worship is unbounded and free. They are all manifestations of the same Infinite God. They are all pure and unselfish; they struggled and gave up their lives for us, poor human beings. They each and all suffer vicarious atonement for every one of us, and also for all that are to come hereafter.

In a sense you are all Prophets; every one of you is a Prophet, bearing the burden of the world on your own shoulders. Have you ever seen a man, have you ever seen a woman, who is not quietly, patiently, bearing his or her little burden of life? The great Prophets

were giants--they bore a gigantic world on their shoulders. Compared with them we are pigmies, no doubt, yet we are doing the same task; in our little circles, in our little homes, we are bearing our little crosses. There is no one so evil, no one so worthless, but he has to bear his own cross. But with all our mistakes, with all our evil thoughts and evil deeds, there is a bright spot somewhere, there is still somewhere the golden thread through which we are always in touch with the divine. For, know for certain, that the moment the touch of the divine is lost there would be annihilation. And because none can be annihilated, there is always somewhere in our heart of hearts, however low and degraded we may be, a little circle of light which is in constant touch with the divine.

Our salutations go to all the past Prophets whose teachings and lives we have inherited, whatever might have been their race, clime, or creed! Our salutations go to all those Godlike men and women who are working to help humanity, whatever be their birth, colour, or race! Our salutations to those who are coming in the future--living Gods--to work unselfishly for our descendants.

Source:

The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama), Vol. 4, pp. 138-153