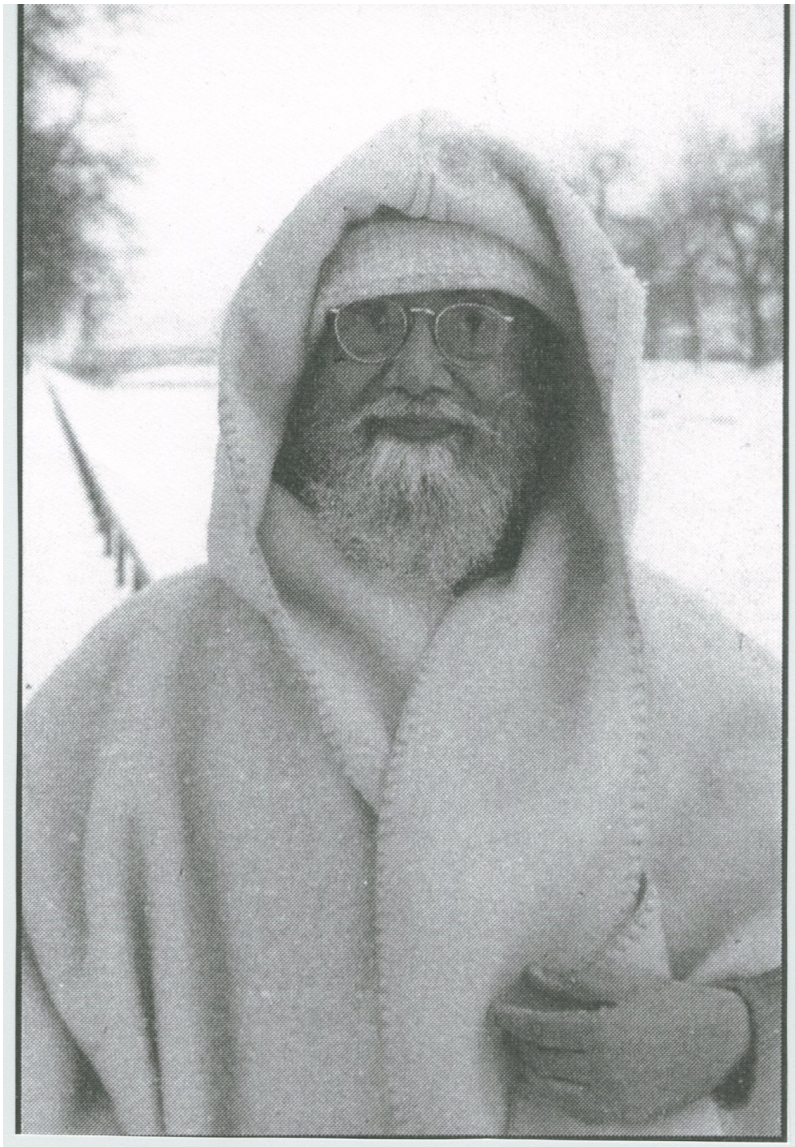


a christmas story

By Paramahansa Hariharananda



I want to bow to all people. God bless you all. I bow to one Heavenly Father of all religions. I bow to God, I bow to the Son of God, I bow to the children of God, I bow to saints and sages of all religions. I bow to Moses, Daniel and Abraham. I bow to all advanced people of the universe. I even want to bow to Hariharananda with deepest love. I am telling a short-cut life of Jesus because Jesus is the topmost spiritual person in the world.

My respected souls, in the *Bhagavad Gita*, fourth chapter, seventh verse, it is written:

Yadá-yadá hi dharmasya
glánir bhavati bhárata
abhyutthánam adharmasya
tadá 'tmánam s^jámy aham

“When there is extreme corruption in the spirituality of the world, then God sends His messenger to the universe to remove the corruption and to establish Godhood and spirituality.” When Jesus was born it was the Kali Yuga, the Age of Darkness. There were no roads, no electricity. Nothing.

In ancient times almost all girls were virgins. There was a teenage girl named Mother Mary, who lived in Bethlehem. She was a virgin and a spiritual girl. One day God sent the angel Gabriel to her. He appeared before Mother Mary and told her, "God sent me to tell you that God the Son will come into your womb without any sex joy. You will be the mother of the Son of God. You are fortunate, but you will get into trouble for conceiving the Son of God. It is not actually trouble; it is really a joy. His name will be Jesus, the Savior."

Mother Mary was extremely happy to hear this. She sat calmly, got a warm sensation in her body and understood what to do. Mary thought, "I am to go to my Auntie, Elizabeth, who lives far away, and tell her what the angel told me, because Elizabeth is a divine lady, a spiritual woman." Elizabeth and her husband, Zacharias, are very old, but at a very advanced age Elizabeth conceived a child without sex joy.

So Mother Mary ran and ran up the high hills of Judah and reached the town where Elizabeth lived. Elizabeth was six months' pregnant with a divine child whose name would be John the Baptist. Mother Mary told Elizabeth in detail how God had sent the angel Gabriel to her. "The angel told me that God the Son will come into my womb and not by sex pleasure. I am so happy. But how is it possible?" Elizabeth was very happy at the news. Elizabeth, who was lying down, sat up and told Mother Mary, "Come here and sit down next to me." Then she touched the head of Mother Mary. The moment she touched her head Mary saw the illumination and the whole room was full of light. She was spellbound and found divineness within her, as if the power of God had entered into her. Then she was lying down on the floor in a state of joy. After ten minutes, she looked at her auntie and said, "Oh, I conceived a divine baby. The angel said that his name will be Jesus." She was very happy and stayed with Elizabeth for three months. Then she went to the home of Joseph, the man she was to marry.

King Herod was a very bad king, a boastful man, full of pride and ego. Joseph, a spiritual man, thought, "I will leave this place with Mary and go to Bethlehem." They went to Bethlehem and stayed near the house of Mother Mary's family. Mother Mary told her parents that God had sent the angel Gabriel to her. "Gabriel told me that I will be the mother of the Son of God and his name will be Jesus. Then I went to Auntie and she

blessed me. When she blessed me, I got the divine illumination and I conceived a baby." At first they disbelieved, but after a while they believed her.

In due course of time Mother Mary became fully conceived. Joseph and Mary were roaming around Bethlehem trying to find a place for her to give birth. Joseph tried to get a room at the inn, but he couldn't because they had no money. They couldn't find a place anywhere. Then Joseph brought her to the stable manger where the horses are fed. They were given fresh grass, which they covered with a cloth, and there Mother Mary gave birth to the child. It was noontime and it was drizzling. They heard the divine sound coming from a long distance. The stars came down to the Earth below, and the whole room became full of light because the Son of God, Jesus, was born in the manger. He's known as the manger child.

Two spiritual men, one of the East and one of the West, also saw that in this auspicious moment the King of kings was born in that place where the stars came down to Earth. They saw the stars and divine flowers falling down from Heaven. The two religious men went to King Herod and told him, "The King of kings has been born nearby. Do you know where?" Herod said, "No, I am the king." They said, "No, he is the King of Kings, a divine person, the Son of God. We are going to search for him." Then Herod said, "Find him, then come back and tell me where he is." The two spiritual men thought, "This king is a very bad man. He will probably kill the child, so we will not tell him where the child is."

When they found the child, they saw the illumination in him. On the eighth day a ceremony took place.* Many children came and gave Jesus sweets and everything they could. Everyone worshipped the divine child. The two religious persons also gave many gifts. Then they left for their own countries, but they did not go to Herod. Herod, however, found out that the King of kings, a divine child, had been born in Bethlehem. He sent many cavalry soldiers there with the order to kill all the children under the age of two.

An angel came from heaven and told Mother Mary, "Leave this place immediately or your son will be killed!" So Mother Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt. Herod's soldiers killed all the infants of Bethlehem, but they did not find Jesus. The power of God cannot be killed. God is God. He is all-pervading. No one can kill God. No one can cut God. No one can burn God. No one can dent God. And Jesus, the Son of God, cannot be killed.

When Herod died, Mother Mary and Joseph took Jesus to return to Nazareth. Jesus grew and was brought up very nicely. From his infancy he cured many persons and he gave many spiritual talks on liberation. When he became old enough, he worked with his father, Joseph, who was a carpenter. Jesus had very little education, but by the time he was twelve years old, he was spreading the message of God.

When Jesus was eleven, the son of Elizabeth, John the Baptist, came to him and said, "Come with me and I will initiate you." They went to the sea where John the Baptist poured water on Jesus' head and cleaned his body and baptized him. It was drizzling. Many drops fell over the body and over the head of Jesus. Divine light also flashed over the body of Jesus. When the baptism was finished, Jesus then baptized John the Baptist. Afterward, they went up into a cave in the high hills where John sat calmly and fixed his attention in

the pituitary and taught Jesus to meditate. Jesus meditated for two years. After that he heard divine sound, saw the divine light, and felt the vibration and was extremely happy because he had gained that.

At the age of twelve, Jesus left and nobody knows where he was for eighteen years. It is my conception that Jesus was in seclusion. He was hiding himself, as Buddha was hiding himself and as the five Pandava brothers were hiding themselves in the jungle. No one found them. Similarly, Jesus was hiding himself, meditating very deeply and keeping in direct touch with God to get direct lessons from God. In this way, Jesus became highly realized.

At the age of thirty Jesus came back to Bethlehem. He was sweet, kind, and loving and he spread the message to everybody. Jesus traveled from country to country, healed people and taught humanity about love. John the Baptist also spread the message, even in the place of his enemies, so they killed him. Jesus wasn't afraid and continued to spread the message of love and forgiveness.

For example, he met a woman who was a prostitute. Her name was Mary Magdalene. Jesus said to her, "Why don't you stop doing these bad things and fix your attention on the soul?" She left her old life and sat for meditation. So Jesus said, "However perverted or wicked a person may be, if he meditates, then surely he will be divine." He said that if you give money or help to the poor, then God will give you everything. "A camel can penetrate inside the eye of the needle, while those who are rich cannot go to God. Until you love mankind, God cannot love you. Therefore, the rich should offer their money to needy persons and they should also seek God and meditate daily." Several persons were throwing many stones at a wicked woman. Jesus asked them why they were throwing stones. They said, "She's a very bad woman, so we will kill her!" Jesus said, "If any of you has no bad qualities, then pick up the stones and kill her. But if you have bad qualities, then you should not pick up the stones and throw them at her." Then all the people stopped and left.

Jesus had twelve disciples. Peter was one of them. He was a fisherman. He was also a very bad man, a scoundrel, a thief who beat so many persons. Jesus corrected Peter, brought him along with him and told him everything. Then Peter was extremely divine. Jesus' disciples were always being instructed by him, and they spread the message of Christianity wherever they went. Sometimes Jesus went on a donkey's back, sometimes he walked. In this way, Jesus spent three years. Herod Antipas, the king in Jerusalem came to hear of Jesus and wanted to see him. He thought, "I killed John the Baptist. Who is this person?" Jesus decided to go to Jerusalem. He walked and thousands walked with him. He cured many sick and fed all the thousands of people when they became hungry.

In Jerusalem he spread the message of Christianity. The king and priests and many of the people there were unhappy with Jesus and wanted to kill him. It was a holiday** and Jesus feasted with his disciples. When they finished their food and were lying down, Jesus said, "I have an enemy in this room who will betray me. Tonight the enemy soldiers will come and arrest me." After twelve o'clock all the disciples were unable to sleep trying to protect Jesus. Peter, a very big man, clasped Jesus to him, his sword next to him. When the

enemy and their soldiers entered, Judas stood and pointed, "This is Jesus," A soldier pulled Jesus up. Peter stood up, took his sword, and with one blow cut off the soldier's ear. Jesus said only, "You shouldn't do this. You should keep your sword inside the sheath." Jesus did not say anything else because he was carefree. He did not fear death. He did not fear anything.

So Jesus was arrested. At his trial the Roman governor Pilate said that Jesus could not be crucified because he had not committed any crime. But the enemy wanted to crucify him. They forcibly took Jesus into a room and tortured him mercilessly. "So you are the King of kings!" They gave him the cross to carry on his own shoulders. They whipped him with a thorn stick, but Jesus did not shout. In this way they took Jesus up the hill and crucified him. When he was helpless, Jesus said, "Oh, Lord, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." While he was hanging on the cross, Jesus said, "Oh, Lord, have you left me?" But the Lord cannot leave the Son of God. As God is immortal, so the Son of God is immortal.

The moment Jesus was crucified, three dramatic incidents occurred. There was an earthquake, the curtain in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the day became as dark as night and rain poured down, as if the power of God was shedding tears. Many of the enemies then believed that Jesus was the Son of God. Crooked persons are always crooked and some were glad that he was crucified. Many people came to see Jesus on the cross. Mary Magdalene came, Peter and Thomas. They were in extreme grief and fear and they left.

When Jesus was dead, the enemy put his body inside a tomb, shut the door and rolled heavy stones in front of it. Jesus' disciples went to the tomb and took his body. On the third day after the crucifixion Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and found it empty. She came out and saw a person standing by the side of the road, his head covered with a cloth. She asked that person, "Do you know where the body of Jesus is?" The person removed the cloth from his face and Mary Magdalene saw Jesus standing there. He said, "Go and tell my disciples that you have seen me." Mary Magdalene ran to where they were taking a feast and told them that she had seen Jesus.

Jesus reached the place where the disciples were feasting and told them, "I am not dead. I have come back. I am an immortal soul. Thomas is not here, so go and tell Thomas. Then go and spread my message to the whole world." They went to Thomas, who said, "I don't believe because I saw Jesus dead." The next day Jesus reached Thomas' house and told him, "Please place your finger inside my wounded chest—you won't find any blood. The Son of God cannot die, and the immortal soul cannot die."

This is the real example of Jesus in the world. All other great men and prophets died. But Jesus was the deathless, immortal soul. He proved that he was the Son of God. God is immortal. Similarly, the Son of God is immortal. Then Thomas believed. The feast was finished and, in the presence of all who were there, Jesus gave charge of spreading the message to Peter. "Take charge of my lambs, my students, and teach all the people of the world." Peter said, "I have no power to do it." Then Jesus said, "No, you have the power. You are the fisherman. Come with me, cast the net into the sea and you will see that fishes

are in the net." Then Jesus said, "Slowly, slowly pull the net" When he pulled the net and saw that it was full of fish, Peter was convinced and took charge.

Jesus was crucified on May 28 and on June 28 he ascended to Heaven in the presence of all his disciples. They were very unhappy and afraid to spread the message. After one month Jesus returned to again teach them the lesson of Kriya Yoga. He appeared to them and said, "Touch me. See, I am real, just as I was when I was here with you." Then he ascended again to Heaven. The disciples all got the power, and fearlessly traveled throughout the whole world and spread the message of Christianity. Christianity has indeed spread throughout the whole world. Jesus gave many good techniques. He said, "If, therefore, thine eye be single, then your whole body shall be full of light." (Matthew 6:22-23). If you read the Bible, then you can come to know all the instructions that are written in it. Jesus left and his message is still spreading all over the world. Jesus is still immortal.

Jesus was undoubtedly the Son of God. If the followers of Jesus meditate on him and follow his lessons, then they will be divine. It is written in one poem:

'I knew not how the Bethlehem Babe could indeed Godhead be. I only know the manger child who brought God's light to me.'

On this Christmas Day I am giving my life to Jesus with deepest love. I bow to him a thousand times. He spread the message.

* "When the eighth day came and the Child was to be circumcised, they gave Him the name Jesus, the name the angel had given Him before conception"... Luke 2:21

** Passover is one of the most important of the Jewish holidays ... Exodus 12

[Originally published in "Soul Culture Magazine" in 1990]