



## **THE CHRIST CROSSES THE EGO and DWELLS IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**

*By Principal (Dr.) Shripad Zarapkar*

### **His Birth**

Two thousand years ago, in Palestine, a province of the Roman Empire, there were Jews professing Judaism. The Jews believed in one God called Jehovah. They believed that God would send a messiah for the people of Israel. Jerusalem was the sacred city of the Jews and continued to be so even under the Romans.



This was the time when Jesus was born. Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary. When Mary was carrying him in her Womb, Joseph and Mary were required to travel to Bethlehem to take part in a census ordered by the Roman Emperor. They had to travel all the way riding on a donkey. It was an arduous journey.



When they finally reached Bethlehem, it was night. They were tired and there was no place for them to rest. Joseph searched and searched for a resting place, but could not find any. Finally, he went to a cattle shed and knocked at the door. He explained to the inn-keeper that his wife Mary was about to give birth to a child. The inn-keeper reluctantly gave them a place in a corner. Joseph went out into the road at midnight to seek some woman who could help. But soon, he heard the Baby's cry. Mary gave birth to a baby boy. The boy was named Jesus.



And the story says, there was a Star in the sky, which fell with a New Light. What the story signifies is this: There was a huge halo of splendour illuminating the sky over the village when Jesus was born. This meant that He, who was to overcome the darkness of evil and ignorance, had taken birth that He will spread the Light of Love in the heart of man and councils of humanity.

### His Divinity

Like the fragrance in the bud of a flower, Jesus's divinity was evident from his boyhood.



Three Arabian Kings from the East came to see him at the time of his birth. Seeing the new-born babe they bowed to the divine child in their hearts. Before leaving, each of them spoke about the child. One king told Mary: **“He loveth God.”** The second one said: **“God loveth him.”** The third king said: **“He is God.”** The first statement that “He loveth God” contains the implication that Jesus is a Messenger of God. A messenger can love his master, but the master may not so easily love his messenger. The second statement that “God loves him (Jesus)” implies that he is the Son of God. The third statement that “He is God” bears out what Jesus said: “I and my Father are One.” It means that as the Son of God he is entitled to acquire his Father's place. The unity of Father and Son was proclaimed by the third king.

When Jesus was a small boy, His parents took Him to Jerusalem to attend a fair. After some time, Mother Mary not finding her son Jesus by her side believed that He had lost His way in the crowd and searched for Him frantically. Ultimately, she found Him listening with rapt attention to the sermon of the

priest in a temple. That scene reminded her of the prophetic words of one of the Arabian kings, who visited Jesus at the time of His birth, that He would love God. She hugged her son and shed tears of joy. Jesus said, "Mother, you can find Me in the company of God, but you have been searching for Me elsewhere. I consider divine proximity as My greatest wealth."

## **His Childhood**

In the temple, the priest said "You alone are the truth; remember this." Constantly contemplating on this teaching, Jesus thereafter wandered and wandered alone for a long time and later came near a river, where some boatmen were sitting. The first among them seen by Jesus was Peter. Jesus asked him. "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Peter. He is my father" (pointing to an old man sitting nearby). The old man was making fishing nets. Jesus made friendship with Peter. Peter complained to Jesus, "We went in search of fish for the whole of yesterday, but could not find even one." Jesus then told him, "You go to such and such place. You will find fish in plenty." Jesus also accompanied the boatmen in this exercise. As foretold by Jesus, they could catch plenty of fish. The boatmen wondered, "How great Jesus is! He knows everything." From then on, they treated Jesus as their preceptor.

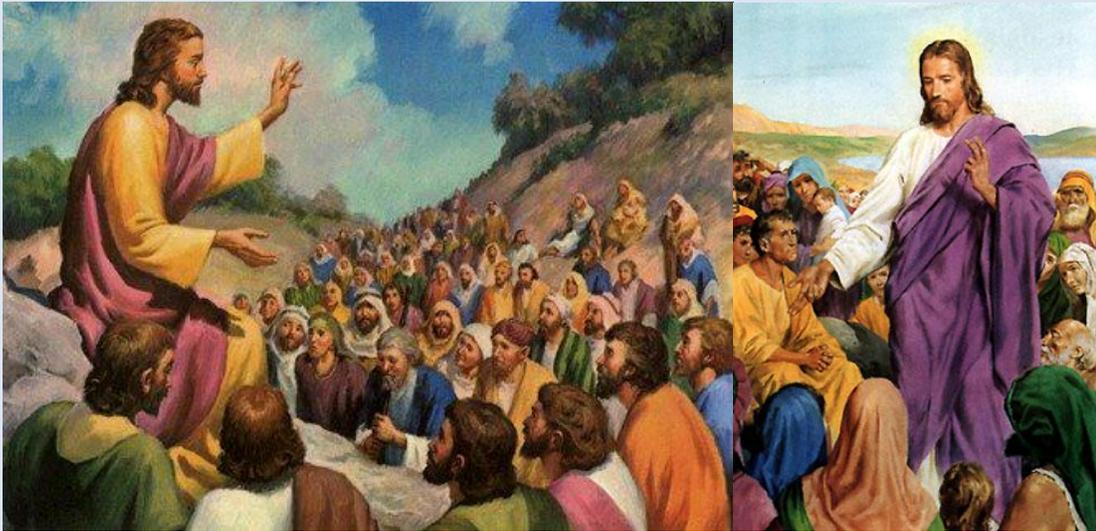
He helped them in many ways. Once while he was crossing the desert, a poor woman approached him begging for food. He gave her bread saying, "Take this." When someone enquired where bread came from, Jesus replied that it was Divine Will. There is nothing greater than Divine Will. Everything is God's will. The foremost duty of a human being is to realise the Will of God and submit himself to that Divine Will. Those who developed faith in the Will of God will be protected, while others not.

After they returned from Jerusalem, Jesus felt that service to his parents was his foremost duty, because he owed everything to them. In this spirit, he used to assist his father in his carpentry work. Joseph passed away when Jesus was thirty. He sought his mother's permission to devote himself to the service of the needy and the forlorn.

After leaving home, Jesus had himself baptized by John. Then for forty days Jesus observed severe austerities without food and drink. At first he considered himself as Messenger of God. During the penance, he prayed to God for three things: One—He should be blessed with the virtue of loving equally everyone; Two—He should have the strength and forbearance to suffer patiently any

indignity or persecution that he might be subjected to by anyone; Three—He should be enabled to use his God-given body wholly in the service of God. After the penance he realised he was the Son of God. He began his ministry with a group of fishermen as his first disciples. He taught them that they should first seek the Kingdom of Heaven. To enter that Kingdom they had to cultivate loving hearts. Then, their hearts would become the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus further declared to them: “I and my Father are one.”

### His Teachings

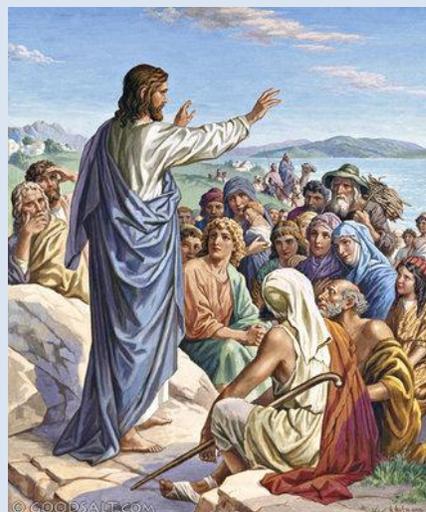


Jesus taught simple practical lessons in spiritual advancement for the good of mankind. He manifested Divine Powers to instill faith in the validity of his teachings. He marked out the path that can confer on men the sweet nectar of *Anand (Bliss)*. He exhorted people by precept and example to cultivate the virtues of charity, compassion, forbearance, love and faith:

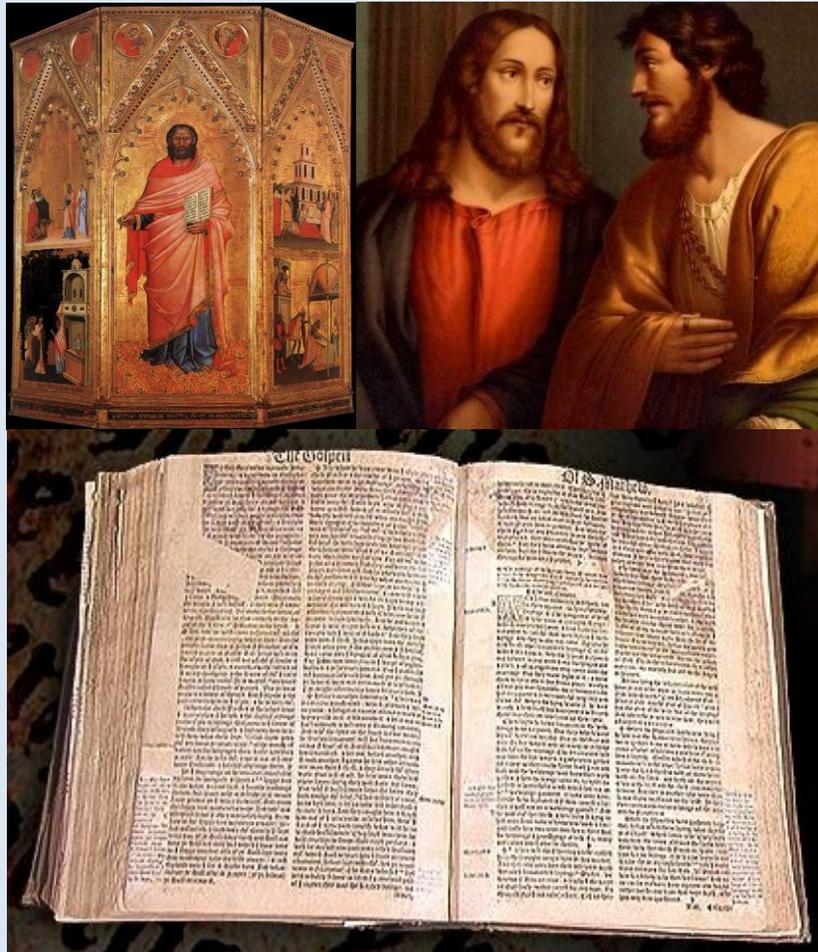
(i) Once a young disciple asked Jesus, “O Master, when I am faced with some problems, how am I to solve them? Jesus replied, “O simpleton, do not seek solutions to your problems. Love even those that hate you because God is present in them also. How can you ever have suffering when you love all? Your heart will be filled with bliss when you love everybody.”



(ii) Jesus advised one of his foremost disciples, Peter, to live in love, for Love is God. Man can experience God only when he becomes the embodiment of Love, which doesn't seek anything or expect even gratitude in return, Love which becomes sacrifice and service, spontaneously. When Peter listened to such exhortations from the Master, he found a new joy welling up within him and a new meaning in the word "Joy." 'J' meant Jesus and the letter directed him to love Jesus first; 'O' meant others who must be loved next; 'Y' meant yourself who ought to be loved only last. But, look at the human condition today. Man loves himself first, others next and Jesus last!



(iii) Matthew was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. He was an income tax collector by profession and used to meet the fishermen to collect taxes. Jesus used to impart sacred teachings to the fishermen every day.



Matthew noted down all His teachings and wrote the Holy Bible. Later on, many others wrote the Bible based on their own feelings. Nowhere has Jesus ever stated that he was God or the Master. He always addressed God as his Father. He has shown the path to experience unity. He never gave scope for multiplicity. He always said that all were divine.

(iv) In those days, people used to sacrifice pigeons in the temple of Jerusalem thinking that God would be pleased. Jesus sought to put an end to these cruel practices. Like Buddha, he preached non-violence He went to the place where pigeons were sold and let them all free. The affected persons turned against

him. But Jesus carried on regardless of their hostility. He did not attach any importance to praise or blame as they pertained to the body, not the Self.

(v) Jesus also set no value on wealth or position. Once a rich man came to Jesus when he was in the house of Martha and Mary. The rich man told Jesus that despite all his wealth and possessions he was not having peace of mind. He was harassed by many worries and appealed to Jesus to show him a way out. Jesus told him: "There is a simple way but will you follow it? You have been accumulating riches and your worries have grown with them. What are you going to do with all this wealth, which some day you will have to leave behind? Distribute it among the poor and the needy and all your worries will go. Accumulate instead the wealth of God's grace through love of your fellowmen."

(vi) What he preached was in accord with the basic teachings of all religions. He engaged himself in a mission of mercy to the sick and the poor. He offered food to the hungry. Seeing his acts of love and kindness, people declared that he was a "Messenger of God." Jesus constantly referred to God as the father. Later he declared: "I and my father are one." Jesus dedicated his life to the propagation of faith in one God who is common to all mankind.

(vii) Jesus was full of Divine qualities and was imparting the Divine message to those around him. He declared to the world three important things:

- (1) God is one.
- (2) He is omnipotent.
- (3) Do not hurt anyone. God is the indweller in every being.

He embarked on his mission and went about calling upon people to earn the love of God by developing love towards God.

(viii) Jesus taught that God is Love. Instead of recognising this basic truth, men are allowing hatred, envy and other evil qualities to pollute their love. Man is gifted with the quality of love not to express it for selfish purposes but to direct it towards God. Jesus declared that there was nothing great about returning good for good. They should do good even to those who harm them. Christ's basic teachings were related to promotion of compassion, sympathy, love, sacrifice and fellowship among human beings. Jesus was named the Christ as he was regarded as the "chosen" messenger of God.

## Crucifixion

As Jesus went on with his preaching and drew multitudes towards him, some of the priests and those in authority grew envious at his popularity. This happens in all countries. They started persecuting him and charging him with treason. Jesus, however, continued up to the end to carry on his mission of Love and Righteousness, first, as the Messenger of God, and later as the Son of God.



Jesus was also put to suffering in every possible way, though he strove tirelessly for the peace and welfare of society. He was the epitome of compassion and the refuge of the poor, needy and forlorn. But many people tried to create troubles for Jesus as they did not like his sacred teachings and activities. Their hatred for Jesus increased day by day. Even the priests turned against Jesus as they became jealous of his growing popularity. But the fishermen held teaching and became his followers. As he became more and more popular, many people, out of jealousy, raised obstacles in his path and even tried to kill him.

From the beginning, Jesus never said that he was God. He only said that God was his father. He taught people that there was only one God and all were his children. His critics complained to the head priest against Jesus. The priests knew that Jesus was speaking the truth. But they did not support Jesus in order

to safeguard their own position. It was decided that Jesus should be crucified. The Governor issued the orders, but later he repented. He told Jesus, "You are a great man. These stone-hearted people are trying to kill you without any reason." Jesus replied "I am happy that at least you have realised that I am a good person." He went on propagating the glory of Jesus, when Jesus rose from the Cross.

Finally, at the time of his crucifixion, his mother Mary came near him and started shedding tears. Jesus consoled her saying, "Why did you cry, mother? The body is like a water bubble. Let them do whatever they wish with this body. You think these people are trying to kill me. I have no death. None can kill me." Mary then told him, "Are you not the son of this body?" Jesus replied, "Of course! I am related to you at the physical level, as a son. But, 'I am I' only. You are all like children to me. You are all embodiments of Divinity."

### **His real sacrifice**

People talk of the sacrifice of Christ as evidence by His crucifixion. But, he was surrounded and bound, and crowned by the crowd who captured Him with a crown of thorns, and later, nailed to the cross by his captors. A person bound and beaten by the police cannot say that he has sacrificed anything, for; he is not a free man. In reality Jesus sacrificed his happiness, prosperity, comfort, safety and position; he braved the enmity of the powerful. He refused to yield or compromise. He renounced the 'ego', which is the toughest thing to get rid of. We must honour Him for these. He willingly sacrificed the desires with which the body torments man; this sacrifice is greater than the sacrifice of the body under duress.

### **Celebration of Christmas**





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

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

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

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

The Christmas festival is celebrated in many countries with a lot of fanfare, merriment and riotous festivities. You should note one thing. **Nowhere in the world is Christmas celebrated in the manner in which it is done in Prashanti Nilayam. People belonging to different countries, different faiths and different cultures, coming together to adore God and celebrating this festival in such a holy atmosphere cannot be found anywhere else. Prashanti Nilayam has become a mini-world. All of them work in unison. This should spread to all countries.**





Christmas is celebrated in America, Germany, Italy and other countries. But in what manner? By sumptuous eating, drinking and dancing and wasting time. At Prashanti Nilayam also the devotees indulge in drink. But what is it they are drinking? **They drink Pure Divine Love. It is this Love that you must offer to the world.**

### **Unity of Religions**

All religions, all scriptures, all spiritual teachings point only to one truth—the Unity of Divinity. You may profess whatever faith you like. But you should not disparage another’s beliefs. It is a travesty of devotion.

The propagandas, indulged in by propagators of their own religions, casting aspersions on other faiths, do great harm to the personalities of the founders. All faiths have emphasised one common factor—that there is only One God and Truth is His form. There are no differences between Hindus, Muslims and Christians on this basic concept. All religions, all scriptures, all spiritual teachings point only to one truth - the unity of Divinity. Instead of realising this, men are lost in wrong paths.

Jesus sacrificed his life for the regeneration and welfare of mankind. Today there are some who exaggerate the so—called differences between different faiths and, for their own selfish purposes, exploit these differences and thereby bring a bad name to the great founders of these religions, who were spiritual giants. No prophet or messiah asked his followers to hate other religion or the followers of other faiths. Every religion has declared that God is One and that the Divine dwells in every being. Jesus also proclaimed the truth that the One Spirit resides in all beings. When Jesus was addressing the Jews, an ethereal voice declared: **“All lives are one, my dear Son. Be alike to everyone.”** When Jesus was being crucified, the same ethereal voice declared that the human body is only vesture for the Spirit. The body is subject to constant change. But the indwelling Spirit is immortal. This was the truth proclaimed by Vedanta when it said: **“The body is a temple in which the Eternal Spirit resides as the Indweller.”** The inner meaning of this is that wherever you may go, the Eternal Spirit remains with you. You must regard the body as the temple of the Spirit; bear in mind that Divinity is ever within you. Only when you realise this truth can you begin to experience the Divine.



Whether in Hinduism or Buddhism, Jainism or Sikhism, Christianity or Islam, Divinity is One and ONE ONLY. Those who profess great love for their particular religion are indulging in make-believe when they assume that their religion is superior to that of others. Hindus regard Hinduism as the greatest religion. Wherein lies its greatness? If you declare that the God of all religions is One, why claim superiority for Hinduism and decry other religions? Does that bespeak your love for Hinduism? This applies also to those professing Christianity. They say: "We are Christians. We believe in the unique divinity of Jesus. There is no other divine Saviour." One may claim that Jesus is Divine. But is he entitled to deride other religions? No religion should allow decrying of other faiths. It is not a religion at all that cavils at other religions. It is a form of arrogance. The great saints who worshipped Christ or Rama or Krishna or Allah were inspired by their profound teachings. But how many of the followers of these faiths live up to these teachings today? If the teachings of the Founder of a religion are not followed, can it be called a religion? Those who, in the name of religion, further their selfish interests are bringing on the founder of the religion.

At present there is a growing tendency among propagators of different faiths to cast aspersions on other religions. Money is being spent lavishly for conversions. Such propagandas do great harm to the personalities of founders who were supremely pure and sacred. There is no use in merely invoking the name of Jesus and praying to Him without regard to His most vital message: **“God is in everyone. Do not revile anyone. Do not cause harm to anyone.”** This was Jesus’s greatest message.

What the world needs today is the redeeming and unifying force of love—love which continually expands and embraces more and more people. By giving up narrow ideas regarding one’s religion, nation or caste, by developing a broad outlook and cultivating the company of the good, you can elevate your life and make it meaningful and satisfying.

### **The mission of Jesus Christ**

It was to teach mankind the greatness of divine love that Jesus came. His father passed away when Jesus was ten years old. Thereafter, with the permission of his mother, he embarked on his ministry of service to the people. He resolved on three tasks: one, to be filled with Divine love and to share it with others was the main purpose of his life; two, he should not succumb to praise or censure in carrying out his mission; three, to inspire in others the conviction that the Divinity within is omnipresent. Jesus considered spreading the gospel of love as his foremost task. He encountered many ordeals in carrying out his mission, but he regarded them all as challenges to be overcome. He was determined to treat pleasure and pain, sickness and failure with equanimity. He could not bear to see any one suffer. He was opposed to the traffic in birds going on in the temple in Jerusalem. The affected persons turned against him. But Jesus carried on regardless of their hostility. In the end he sacrificed his life for the sake of others and out of his love for all.

### **Prophecies by the Christ and the Bible about the Advent of Sri Sathya Sai Baba**

Swami in His discourses made occasional remarks about the prophetic references made by the Christ and Bible about His advent.

They are:

1. At the moment when Jesus was merging in the Supreme Principle of Divinity, He communicated some news to his followers, which has been

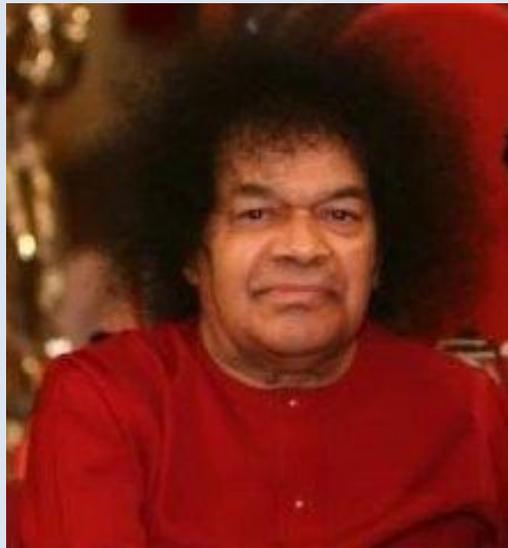
interpreted in a variety of ways by commentators and those who relish the piling of writings on writings and meanings upon meanings, until it all swells up into a huge mess.

The statement itself has been manipulated and tangled into a conundrum. The statement of Christ is simple: **“He who sent me among you will come again!”** and he pointed to a Lamb.



The Lamb is merely a symbol, a sign. It stands for the voice---Ba-Ba; the announcement was the Advent of Baba. **“His Name will be Truth,”** Christ declared. *Sathya* means Truth. **“He will wear a robe of red, a blood red robe.”** (Here Baba pointed to the robe He was wearing!). “He will be short, with a crown (of hair). The Lamb is the sign and symbol of Love.”

Christ did not declare that he will come again. He said, “He who made me will come again.”



That Ba-Ba is this Baba and the short, curly-hair-crowned red-robed Baba, is Sai who has come now.



He is not only in this Form, but, he is in every one of you, as the dweller in the Heart. He is there; short, with a robe of the colour of the blood that fills it.

## **The Rider on White Horse**

**I SAW HEAVEN STANDING OPEN AND THERE  
BEFORE ME WAS A WHITE HORSE WHOSE RIDER IS  
CALLED FAITHFUL AND TRUE**

(The Bible, Revelation 19.11)



*(Bhagavan Baba's first name is Sathya which means Truth. The Hindu scriptures also indicate the Lord incarnate riding on white horse as the 'Kalki Avatar')*

**WITH JUSTICE HE JUDGES AND MAKES WAR**

(The Bible, Revelation 19.11)

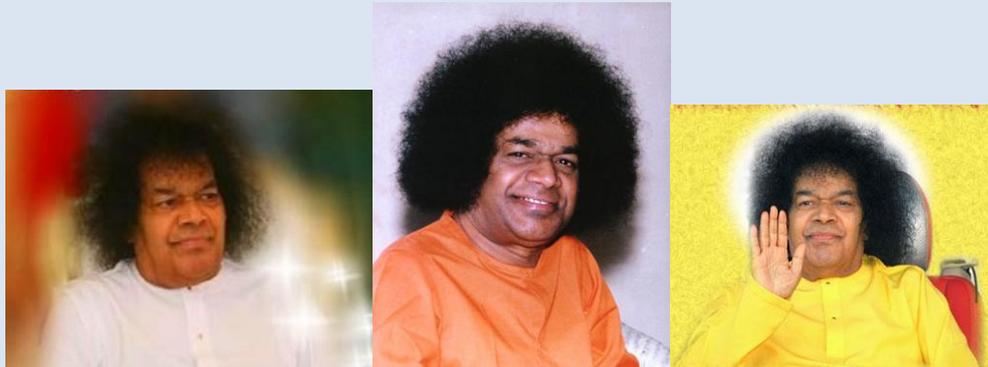
*(Bhagavan Baba says, "All are tainted by wickedness, and so who will survive if the Avatar decides to uproot? Therefore, I have come to counsel, help, command, and standby as a friend to all, so that they may give up evil propensities and, recognising the straight mark, tread it and reach the goal". So He makes war against our evil propensities.)*

**HIS EYES ARE LIKE BLAZING FIRE**  
(The Bible, Revelation 19.12)



**AND HE WORE MANY CROWNS ON HIS HEAD**

(The Bible, Revelation 19.12)



*(Bhagavan Baba's hair gives the appearance of crown. It looks like as He has thousands of crowns on His head.)*

**THE ROBE HE WORE WAS COVERED WITH BLOOD.**

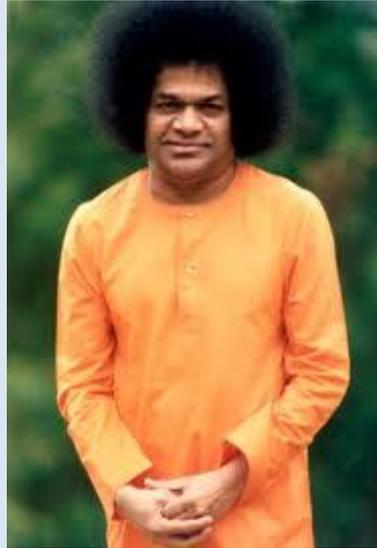
(The Bible, Revelation 19.13)



(It indicates the red and saffron colour robe Bhagavan Baba wears.)

**HIS NAME IS “THE WORD OF GOD”.**

(The Bible, Revelation 19. 13)



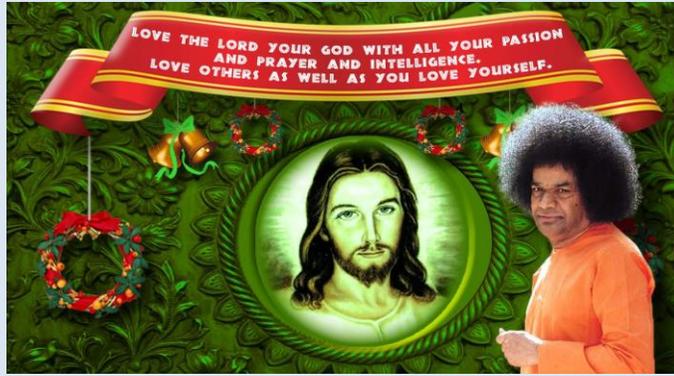
(Bhagavan Baba’s name is “Sathya Narayana”,  
Which is another name of Lord Sri Vishnu.)

**THE ARMIES OF HEAVEN FOLLOWED HIM RIDING  
ON WHITE HORSES AND DRESSED IN CLEAN WHITE LINEN.**

(The Bible, Revelation 19. 14)



*(The disciplined and composed students of Sri Sathya Sai University and Schools and Bhagavan Baba’s devotees wear white dresses. Physically also, being closed to Bhagavan Baba, the Students of institutes are spiritually at higher level and their faces shine with bliss of God, resembling as the armies of heaven.)*



**We wish all of you a Holy and Merry Christmas...!!!**



May the Choicest Divine Blessings be bestowed on all at all times and places...!!!

**II SAMASTA LOKAH SUKHINO BHAVANTU II**

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#### **Notes**

- 1. The contents of this article are excerpted from Bhagavan's Discourses on the occasions of Christmas Celebrations in Prashanti Nilayam as published in various volumes of Sri Sathya Sai Speaks.*
- 2. Principal (Dr.) Shripad Zarapkar, the author of this article is the former Principal of Siddharth College of Commerce and Economics, Mumbai, India. He can be reached on [drshripad10@gmail.com](mailto:drshripad10@gmail.com)*