

Christ the Eternal

Om. A-sa-to ma sad gam-ma-ya. Ta-ma-so-ma jyo-tir gam-ma-ya. Mri-tyor ma a-mri-tam ga-ma-ya. Avir avir ma e-dhi. Rudra yat te dak-shi-nam mu-kham. Tena mam pahi nityam. Tena mam pahi nityam. Tena mam pahi nityam.

Lead us from the unreal to the Real. Lead us from darkness unto Light. Lead us from death to Immortality. Reveal to us Thy Resplendent Truth and evermore protect us, Oh Lord, by Thy Sweet and Compassionate Face, by Thy Sweet and Compassionate Face, by Thy Sweet and Compassionate Face.

Easter greetings to every one of you. Welcome to our celebration of the Easter this morning. In Christmas time we say, "Merry Christmas." There is a spirit of happiness at the birth of the divine child and the divine child in the lap of the Madonna. It is a divine sight, joyful sight. So we are very happy. We sing and we praise the glories of Christ. But Easter – at Easter we cannot usually bring that joyful feeling, because it is a very tragic atmosphere, the death of Christ.

Still when we read the Bible, we shall see that if we have true faith in Christ, his death was not to be mourned. He himself, at one point in one of the books, four books, of the Bible, in one of the books it is said that, the Christ on the cross at one moment he said, "Oh Father have you forgotten me?" Excruciating pain. And people were wondering but they could not do anything. There is a long story we should read in the Bible, but I shall read two passages from two books of the Bible and there we shall see that really speaking if we have true faith, in the incarnation, in the son of God, if we have true faith, then we shall see that Christ, after his ... after his... he disappeared from the grave, and appeared again. And for many days he stayed and gave tangible proofs of his existence, eternal existence. And in one place we shall see that: "I shall be with you for eternity." So really Christ is eternal. If we have true faith and true insight, then we cannot mourn, we cannot be sad.

The title of my talk will be "Christ the Eternal." This is just the quotation of Christ's words. But before that I shall read a few passages from two books of the Bible, St. Matthew's and St. John.

It is [Matthew] chapter 28 [1-20].

"In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from the heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said.

Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples the word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "All hail." And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders,

and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, "Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept." And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."¹

This is from St. John, Chapter, 20 [11-22, 24-31] and 21 [1-25].

"But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She said unto them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus said unto her, "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" She, supposing him to be the gardener, said unto him, "Sir, if you have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said unto her, "Mary...Mary." She turned herself, and said unto him, "Rabboni" which is to say, Master. Jesus said unto her, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her. Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and said unto them, "Peace be unto you." And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, "Peace be unto you: and as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said unto them, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace be unto you." Then said he to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." And Thomas answered and said unto him, "My Lord and my God." Jesus said unto him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise showed he himself. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples. Simon Peter said unto them, "I go a fishing." They say unto him, "We also go with thee." They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said unto them, "Children, have ye any meat?" They answered him, "No." And he said unto them, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said unto Peter, "It is the Lord." Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid

thereon, and bread. Jesus said unto them, "Bring of the fish which ye have now caught." Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus said unto them, "Come and dine." And none of the disciples darest ask him, "Who art thou?" knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead. So when they had dined, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" He said unto him, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." He said unto him, "Feed my lambs." He said to him again the second time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" He said unto him, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." He said unto him, "Feed my sheep." He said unto him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, "Lovest thou me?" And he said unto him, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said unto him, "Feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkest whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not." This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he said unto him, "Follow me."

Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, "Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?" Peter seeing him said to Jesus, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" Jesus said unto him, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, "He shall not die;" but, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" This is the disciple, which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen." ²

When we go to St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome, we see one of the world's... the sculpture, Pieta, that is mother Mary carrying the lifeless body of Jesus Christ. That is a very remarkable work by Michelangelo. There you see the mother, the same mother, Madonna, who when Christ was born took him on her lap and we adored that mother and the child together at Christmas time. But at Easter, we see the same mother and the same child, but the child's dead body. The sculptor has depicted in the face of both mother and the son: the son is dead, but the face is glory. At once you feel the two things: It is not all pain, suffering. The mother is there, the same mother and the same son, now dead, closing the chapter of his life, the mission of his life, for which he came.

He said that we heard... that in several places he said, "I shall be with you always, if you have love for me." So he asked Peter thrice, "Do you love me?" "Do you love me?" "Do you love me?" If you love Jesus Christ, if you have real genuine faith in him, then this story, these episodes that happened do not count much. The real Jesus is eternal, as he said, "I shall be with you for eternity." So your duty now is not to cry, but to follow the teachings you have heard from me. And what are those teachings? Those teachings we read in the Sermon on the Mount. What should be the pattern of a life [of a person] who has understood Christ? A devotee: what should be the pattern of his life? If we read the Sermon on the Mount carefully, then we see that it is a hard task, lifelong task to change our character, to change our emotions, to change our habits, to change our life.

The common man likes this world which he considers to be real, but for Jesus Christ, this world was real in a sense, but not eternally real. The eternal is God. The eternal is God's son, God's messenger, He himself. And the pattern

of life is built up through these teachings, which we read in the Sermon on the Mount. [It] gives us another picture of life: this world is a transient world, as in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "What shall you give if the world... if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?" It is the soul consciousness, which Christ stressed to the intimate disciples.

The common people won't understand. The common people thought, as we sing in some of the carols – he is the king, he is to... because Israel was under the domination of the Romans. So they thought he has come to rescue us, rescue us from the slavery to the Romans. He is the deliverer. But few understood. Even the great disciple, Peter, had his doubts. So that is our spiritual life, our spiritual life passes through such doubts and wonders and hopes, but we shall not give up. We should remember at the back of us, there is God's messenger. God's messenger is Christ. And we in Vedanta say that God has several other messengers are possible through ages. We should not be dogmatic.

And Christ – one principal teaching, which we read in the Sermon on the Mount [is] love the God, thy Lord with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul. Many church people wanted him [Abraham Lincoln] to be a member of the Christian church, any church but he said, "I am not going to join any church. If I find the church is following this teaching of Christ, love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, then I shall join that church." This loving God is that great message and in another place in the Sermon in the Mount we read, Lord Jesus Christ says, "I am the Light of the World... and ye are the Light of the World." That is the soul, the human soul of which he spoke is the most important thing of the human personality. We must seek our soul.

Our body is transient. Our mind is flimsy; it is distracted. Our life principle is not eternal. It also dies, but what does not die? The soul does not die: the soul in man, the soul in every man. The soul in everyone... every man has a soul and that soul is eternal. That soul is one with God. God is spirit and the soul is spirit. So these and various other very striking teachings we read in the Sermon on the Mount. And he referred to that, so when I go your life pattern will be to build your life and then preach. Don't go to preach before building your life, you see. And many of the early Christians, early fathers did that. They lived in the desert, austere life, always remembering and meditating on God. If some of them would say, "I want to have a little pilgrimage." They would say, "Don't do that. Don't be distracted now. Build up your light first. Then you go and preach."

So from the books from the Bible, the four books of the [New Testament of the] Bible we gather these lessons [from] Christ: that you don't cry uselessly. There is no good [to do that], but build up your life. Follow the teachings. Follow the teachings that you have heard from my lips through the days -- not to give importance to outward things. When he was a... when... Jesus, we read in his life story when he was just a boy, he went to the temple and scolded the priests that you are businessmen. You are carrying business here. So that is why the priests were always angry with him. And when he disappeared for twelve years, where he went there is a surmise, but surely it was a preparation. It was a period of sadhana, which we do not know. Some people have different theories where

he went. Some people say he went to India. Anyway, when he returned he lived only for about four years. That was his day of preaching. And people followed him. The priests could not bear that. That is why their anger was with him. Somehow this man should be killed. Somehow this man should be...should not live because that will create danger to our position.

That is the story we read, the cruel story of how they... how Christ suffered. They made him carry his cross and they put him on the cross. There are the details we find in the books in the Bible. Every book details some story. There are minor deviations in each book. That is a sad story, but the total, for a reflective lover of Christ: Christ's word. As he said, "I shall be eternally with you. I am eternal. I am not the... the human Christ. I am one with God. I and my Father are One. I am the Light and ye are also the Light." These are spiritual messages, which we also read in Vedanta. That is why we adore Christ. We worship him every day, but we are not dogmatic, you see.

We are not interested in outward show and glamour. But the real Christ, the real Christ agrees with our ideal. That is why we... we celebrate the Christmas [holiday] with joy, with songs and... but the Christ at Easter we should be serious. We should be serious and seriously reflect, reflect these last teachings of Christ and we should believe. We should not say, "How it could happen? How should Jesus disappear?" Our reasoning, our human reasoning is very limited. We do not believe in miracles. But we say: what is the harm in believing miracles, if through believing miracles, believing this the last story of Christ's life, his suffering and all, but remembering how he again... He was not... he was a responsible teacher. His sheep! We are his sheep, the devotees – his sheep. And, so at Easter time we should seriously think of the spirit, the soul, the wealth, the great wealth which man has, that is the wealth of God. God is in us, and every one of us, so we should love everyone, just like... [not] just the common love but the love that we all are light, lights of God. We all are Divine Lights.

Christ was a great light and we are mini-lights, but we are one, and our duty is to follow the great teachings we heard from him, when he was in flesh and blood. But even after he passed away, he appeared, and he pointed out to us those teachings and we should build up our life. Then, really we have shown that we have loved Christ. And so many times in his message, after he reappeared, he said, "Peace... Peace... Peace... Peace." Peace was his message, not fight. But we have unfortunately... our mind looks to externals. Our mind cannot give up its craving for greed, craving for power, craving for... sex. And that is a life, which is anti-Christ. But the true Christians, a true lover of Christ should build up his character according to the teachings he delivered. And we call it generally, the Sermon on the Mount.

So let that Christ on this holy day, let that peace, let that peace which Christ proved by even when he was living and even after his death, he stressed the message of peace, the message of brotherhood, the message of godliness, of purity. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." That is one important teaching, which we read in the Sermon on the Mount, [rustles through papers]... [in] this book [the Bible], but in my packages, in my packing it was so

much stuff there was no place for this. So I had to carry it by hand. [He laughs and audience laughs with him.] [I carried] my other small bag, packages bag, and this Bible. I carried [it] all through my journey of ten days, stopping at different places. The Bible was with me, and it is always with me.

Om. Madhu vAtA R^itAyate madhu xaranti sindhavaH.

mAdhvIrnaH santu auShadhIH..

madhu naktamutoShaso madhumat.h pArthivam.h rajaH.

madhu dyauH astu naH pitA..

madhumAnno vanaspatiH madhumAm.h astu sUryaH.

mAdhvIrgAvo bhavantu naH..

Om madhu madhu madhu. ³

Sweet blow the winds and the very oceans give forth blessedness. May the herbs and plants bring us health and happiness. Sweet unto us be the nights and dawns. May every particle of mother earth be charged with blessing and may the heavens shower us with benediction. Sweet unto us be the noble forest trees. Sweet unto us be the shining sun. Sweet unto us be all living creation. Om. Sweetness, Harmony, Peace.

1. Matthew Chapter 28. King James Version.

<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+28&version=KJV>
accessed July 24, 2013.

2. John Chapter 20-21. King James Version.

<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%2021&version=KJV>
accessed July 24, 2013.

3. [Transliteration of Rg Veda verse is taken from

http://satsangh.tripod.com/pujatexts/satya_baskegar.html] accessed June 26, 2012.