

Easter Sunday

In the Christian spiritual calendar, today is Easter Sunday. It marks, at dawn, the resurrection of Jesus after being killed on the cross. It is the most significant occasion of the Christian calendar. Of course, Christmas, marking the birth of Jesus, is the most universally celebrated by devotees as well as non devotees, but Easter is the main observation because it is what is central to the Christian faith.

The life of Jesus life was remarkable in many ways. His teachings turned the normal teachings of the Jewish religion on its head. Like the Vedas, the Jewish teachings were based upon reverence for God and justice towards others; whereas the teachings of Jesus, like the Upanishads, were based upon a higher vision, a vision of the oneness of all things.

Therefore, central to the teachings of Jesus is a comparison to the old way of thinking and direction to act in a new way. For example, he said, “You have heard it said to the men of old ‘an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ [In other words perfect justice.] But I say unto you do not resist evil. Do good to those who injure you. Give to those who would take from you.” A totally different vision, a vision that no one would have a reason to accept because it seemed unreasonable.

But then, Jesus performed miracles that seemed to prove that what he was saying had the stamp of God’s validity on them. But performing miracles was also part of the function of all rabbis, although, of course, not as spectacular as those performed by Jesus. So the final validity of what He taught and His unique relationship to God, as being the son of God was that uniquely—having been killed—he rose from the dead.

Thus the real significance from a religious point of view of Easter and the resurrection is that they prove the relationship of Jesus to God. They prove the validity of his very radical teachings. Of course, here we interpret the resurrection as the resurrection of the Spirit after the death of the ego. And there is also another way of reconciling the teachings with the Eastern teachings. The Christian theology says that Jesus’s death on the cross was a sacrifice for the original sin of Adam that had separated mankind from God. In the Vedic way of life, we say that we have always been That, that we have never been separated. So both traditions are now on the same basis—reconciled to God, one with God. We are That.

