

Rays of the One Light

Week 9

By Thinking Can We Arrive at Understanding?

Truth is one and eternal. Realize oneness with it in your deathless Self, within.

The following commentary is based on the teachings of Paramhansa Yogananda.

There are many places in the Gospels where we see Jesus in open conflict with the Pharisees—that is to say, with man-made as opposed to true, mystical tradition. In the Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapter 15, we see a good example of how they and he “locked horns.”

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem came and asked Jesus, “Why do your disciples break our ancient tradition and eat their food without washing their hands properly first?”

Jesus, after scolding them for their hypocrisy in observing lesser rules so carefully while ignoring the much more important ones, said,

*“Listen, and understand this thoroughly! It is not what goes **into** a man’s mouth that makes him common or unclean. It is what comes **out** of a man’s mouth that makes him unclean.”*

It wasn’t that Jesus counseled against such wholesome practices as washing one’s hands before eating. In an age, however, when lesser rules were given too much importance relative to the truly important observances—cleansing the heart of impure desires, for example—he emphasized the supreme importance of loving God and of communing with Him.

The Pharisees—the orthodox religionists of his day, in other words—had brought true religion down to a level of intellectual hair-splitting. They mistakenly considered the way to understanding to lie through a minefield of definitions, which they tried to refine to ultimate exactitude. Jesus taught, however, that the intellect alone can never lead one to truth. Without love, indeed, there *is* no ultimate verity. Without fixity of purpose, born of the

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heart's devotion, the intellect wanders endlessly. It cannot settle for long on anything. As the Bhagavad Gita says in the second Chapter:

The intellects of those who lack fixity of spiritual purpose are inconstant, their interests endlessly ramified.

Thus, through holy scripture, God has spoken to mankind.

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