

# True Baptism

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The subject this morning, I'm sure you know, is "True Baptism," "True Baptism."

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world."<sup>1</sup> And by the cultivation of Inner Spiritual Consciousness, through True Baptism, which means contact with the Holy Vibration, we can, daily, contact that Holy Vibration; and then, we can know the kingdom of which Jesus spoke, and we can know it right now, while we're here on earth. And unless we know something about that kingdom of which Jesus spoke while we are here on earth, we will not know it afterwards. Realize that.

That's why, to know and understand True Baptism is so important. Because by that baptism, we become like God, and we know the kingdom of which Jesus spoke. And that kingdom is what? The kingdom of Cosmic Consciousness. That's the blessing we have in this path of Self-Realization, because, if we follow it, as the Master knew Cosmic Consciousness – he knew the kingdom of which Jesus spoke – so his true followers, will know of that kingdom. And understand, as it says in Titus, works of righteousness will not save you<sup>2</sup>. Works of righteousness will not give you the Consciousness of Cosmic Consciousness. But what will? "The washing and regeneration...by the Holy Ghost (sic)."<sup>3</sup> That's True Baptism. That's what we must know and realize.

Now, there are two types of baptism: one is by the "water of repentance,"<sup>4</sup> of which John spoke; and the other is baptism by Fire, or by the Holy Ghost; that's the Spiritual Cosmic Energy, Spiritual Fire, if you want to call it.

The first – baptism by water – in that you rightly resolve to change from following outward consciousness, and turn toward higher things – toward God. That is a wonderful step that changes you physiologically and psychologically.

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<sup>1</sup> St. John 18:36, "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."

<sup>2</sup> Titus 3:5, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 3:11, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:"

Because whenever you turn your consciousness toward God, it changes the vibration of your cells. Every cell vibrates at a higher rate of consciousness. Therefore, even by following the baptism of the “water of repentance,” you are changed, somewhat. But the trouble is, unless it is followed by right effort, which gives you True Baptism, you revert to your old customs and bad habits, because the Soul, being attached to the body – even though temporarily by ordinary baptism, is lifted out of that attachment – still it returns to its old habits.

So, you can see how necessary it is to follow the ordinary baptism by water – the ritualistic baptism, which is performed in most or all churches; it has its good effects. But, if you stop there, you’ll lose the effects of it. If you persevere, and give right effort, and receive True Baptism, then that’s what we must do. Understand that? We must follow it by right effort and attain True Baptism.

Now, Lord Shankara said these words: “Outward ritual cannot destroy ignorance.<sup>5</sup>” Realize knowledge can destroy ignorance. “Realize knowledge alone,” rather, “destroys ignorance.<sup>6</sup>” And so you see, by following the outward form of baptism, the ignorance is not destroyed, is it, because, you soon revert to your old habits. But by True Baptism, “Realized knowledge,” realized knowledge of the Holy Ghost within you – the Great Fire of God – when you contact that, that takes away your ignorance; and that leads you on to your home of Cosmic Consciousness.

And so, the effect, remember, of the first type of baptism is psychological, and with that psychological effect, a physiological effect. But, the effect of True Baptism goes far beyond the ordinary psychological effect of the first. It gives you contact. It has a Spiritual effect, because it gives you contact with the Presence of God within you, within me, within every one of us. And surely, that’s a Spiritual effect.

Understand the difference between the first, or symbolic, so to speak, baptism. It’s good to repent – to rightly resolve as the starting point. You see people who are baptized in some of the churches; their faces are changed, are they not, because it has its effect. But, usually, it is not followed up by True Baptism.

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<sup>5</sup> Autobiography of a Yogi, Paramhansa Yogananda, Revision 1951, Chapter 26, Page 251, “Outward ritual cannot destroy ignorance, because they are mutually contradictory,” wrote Shankara in his famous *Century of Verses*. “Realized knowledge alone destroys ignorance....Knowledge cannot spring up by any other means than inquiry...”

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

And so, in True Baptism, we merge again, and again, in the Holy Ghost – the Word of God. And by that merging, we supersede this worldly consciousness of which we are, with which we are so familiar. We supersede it with what? The Presence of God within us as the Christ Consciousness. Jesus said, “The words I say shall not pass away (sic).”<sup>7</sup> That Consciousness from which he spoke was not his ordinary consciousness. That was the Presence of God within him – Christ Consciousness. “I and my Father are one.”<sup>8</sup> When you feel the Presence of God within you as the Christ Consciousness, through True Baptism, daily merging, again and again in the Holy Vibration, you, too, will say, just as Jesus said, “I and my Father are one.” For Jesus said, “The things I do, ye shall do, and greater things (sic).”<sup>9</sup> Let us understand how necessary it is to have True Baptism.

Now, the nature, our nature is Spiritual. Our nature is Spiritual, and yet our consciousness is bound to matter. You all will agree to that, I know. And yet we’re Spiritual in nature. We’re made in the Image of God; children of the One Great Father. And yet, how bound we are to worldly consciousness. And therefore, we must be “born again.” We must be born again into that what we really are: the Presence of God within us; the Spiritual Presence of the Holy Vibration; the Great Word of God; something tangible, something real, something which can be perceived in the greatest possible tangible way; if I can use so many superlatives, because when it comes, you’ll know why I said that.

This comes – this being born again comes – not through theory. Not through listening to one person; reading this book, or that book. It comes through realized knowledge that you are not what you think you are. You are not this body, with its limitations. You are something far different. And when you’re “born again,” you will know, as we say in our prayers, “I am not this body. Within me, is Thy Presence, O Father, which is Eternal; always was and will be. That’s what I am. And the Witness is that I feel the Great Peace of Thy Presence.” Perhaps, you can say, “The Witness is I hear the Great Cosmic Vibration, the Great Holy Ghost.” Or perhaps, you can say, “In my heart I feel, I feel Thy nearness.” Or you may see the Cosmic Light, the Light which God created first, and from which Light all things have come. That’s realized knowledge. That’s quite different than theoretical knowledge.

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<sup>7</sup> Matthew 24:35, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” Mark 13:31, “Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.”

<sup>8</sup> St. John 10:30, “I and my Father are one.”

<sup>9</sup> St. John 14:12, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.”

And so, in St. John, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Chapter, the 7<sup>th</sup>, [then] 5<sup>th</sup> Verses: “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” And again, Jesus said: “Verily, I say unto you, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God (sic).<sup>10</sup>” Unless you have first, baptism by “water of repentance,” followed up by the True Baptism, you cannot, as Jesus said, that “...my kingdom is not of this world,” you cannot know that kingdom, unless these two baptisms take place.

First, the rightly resolve to turn from this transient consciousness to the Presence of God; and the second, of True Baptism, to do something real about it; to contact the Presence of God in you as the Holy Ghost, the Holy Vibration, the Great Word of God, the Om, the Amen. That’s doing something about it, isn’t it? That’s real effort.

And so, reason, blind beliefs, and theolog..., theological study alone, are not enough, because the attachment to matter is very deep. The delusion is very strong. It’s very hard to break it. You all know that. Therefore, we must daily, tune in, and be one with the Holy Vibration. We must be truly baptized, again, and again, and again, until we break this attachment of our Soul to this material creation. When we do that, when we “Win the conviction of God’s Presence through our own joyous contact in meditation,<sup>11</sup>” then we will have broken the attachment to matter. Isn’t that wonderful? I’ll read it once more. When we “Win the conviction of God’s Presence through our own joyous contact in meditation,” then we will know that we have broken that attachment of our Soul to the body. That’s True Baptism. Having that, you will have something real and tangible.

And so, replacing the old passions and habits with the Presence of God in a permanent way, is the goal of life. Following that, we will finally reach our goal; which is oneness in the Great Cosmic Consciousness of God. It can be done here on earth. Don’t think you’ve got to wait till you die. Do it now! Get busy, being baptized daily, by contacting the Holy Vibration within.

Now, Kriya Yoga initiation is the True Baptismal ceremony of SRF [Self-Realization Fellowship] Fellowship. Kriya Yoga initiation; because when that

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<sup>10</sup> “Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

<sup>11</sup> Autobiography of a Yogi, Paramhansa Yogananda, Revision 1951, Chapter 4, Page 40, “The master never counseled slavish belief. ‘Words are only shells, he said ‘Win conviction of God’s presence through your own joyous contact in meditation.’”

initiation is taken, because of Spiritual Law – the Great Lahiri Mahasaya has handed it down to us through Sri Yukteswarji; finally through our Master, and through the teachings which he has left. Therefore, that's the true, that's the baptismal ceremony of Self-Realization Fellowship.

But it is not just a ceremony. When that takes place, due to Spiritual Law, the Great Light of God, through the channels of these great gurus, flows in upon the disciple, and much past karma is alleviated by that Spiritual Light of God through these channels. That's why True Baptism is so important. And when you daily meditate and contact that Great Light of God in the form of the Holy Vibration, then you'll keep in tune with those Great Channels of Light, and you are helped on your way as you go back home to Cosmic Consciousness. Realize that. Realize that it is not just a ceremony – it's an actual baptism by Fire. But the wonderful part is you can do it every day. You can do it daily, and that's what changes us. That is what changes us.

I remember, years ago, when I met the Master, and sat in front of him, and he put his head against my forehead, and he showed me the Light of God coming in through the Spiritual Eye, and other great things – of which I can never repay him except to do the best I can to help others be lifted from this delusion – he said to me, "Your sins are forgiven." Why did he say that? I didn't know at the time, fully. I welcomed it, because anything that comes to do that, we want it. He said, "Your sins are forgiven." Why did he say that? Because through that baptism, the Great Spiritual Light of God flowed through me and took away mountains – perhaps lives – of karma I had laid up. As it did for me, it will do the same for you, because God is not partial. He's the same to every devotee. If there's any seemingly partiality, it is on the devotee's side, not on the side of God.

And so, that's the True Baptism. Those Great Channels of Light, flowing from God, are Real. Every saint is a Great Light, flowing from God. And the Master's of Self-Realization, the great gurus, have been established – not by men – but by God. Understand that. This channel has not been established by men. Men carry it out, but God has established it through these great channels of Jesus, Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, and Sri Yukteswarji, and our own beloved guru.

Years ago Master was telling me, he says, "You have the power to change Souls." I said, "I have the power?" "Yes," he says. I had no self-assurance – nothing. In the Face of God and what He has done, we are nothing, and I knew it; and you all know it. But he said to me, "You have the power to change Souls. You have

to learn how to do it. You have that power from your years of meditation and the practice of Kriya Yoga," which I practiced for many, many years, and through the blessings of the gurus.

Then he said, and this is perhaps one of the, the blessings, the greatest blessings I know I could receive, he said, "Lahiri Mahasaya," of which you heard Mr. Cook read, "Lahiri Mahasaya will work through you." I didn't ask for it, but when that came to me, by the Grace of God. That's why I will do, as long as I can, allow, if that's so, the Great Power of God, through that channel Master gave me to help you, and everyone who wants help. That's the greatest blessing. But realize, it wasn't my doing. If that's God's doing, the Master's doing, the Great Channels of His Presence, I am most blessed. And God will use each and every one of us as He sees fit. He is the Sole Doer.

And that's why I was so happy that Mr. Cook read that story of Lahiri Mahasaya. He was a family man, as you know. He had two children. He had a little trouble with his wife, I think, at first, but how did it come out in the end? Wonderful! That's the ideal for people who are married, and many of you are married here. God doesn't say, "You've got to be single, or married, or anything." He says, as Master says, "Love God, Love God." He loves you more than anything. He's crying for you. He's crying for me. Love Him. And that's what we must do. If we just do that, really want Him, we'll be truly baptized – every day. We will not miss a day without making the contact with God, receiving His Great Blessings.

And so, finally, daily and True Baptism, again, and again, in the Holy Ghost – the Light of God – lifts the devotee into Cosmic Consciousness, where you receive the Vision of God. Now that can be done right here on this earth. It can be done. That's the wonderful part of the Self-Realization Fellowship teachings.

And I'll close, to illustrate that, that Great Vision of God – you have to be daily baptized again and again to stand it – I mean to appreciate it. The vibration of that Great Cosmic Consciousness is so high, that unless you daily lift your consciousness, you cannot comprehend it; you cannot perceive it. But by daily work – sincerely, in the Presence of God – your consciousness is gradually lifted. And when you fulfill all the law, you will see the Vision of God. You will know that Cosmic Consciousness is your own Self; and the Self of everything.

And so, in the Bhagavad Gita, or rather in the AY [Autobiography of a Yogi], Master has written these wonderful things: "A master bestows the divine

experience of cosmic consciousness when his disciples, by meditation, have strengthened their minds to a degree where the vast vistas (sic).<sup>12</sup> "In my Father's house," Jesus said, "are many mansions:<sup>13</sup>" These vast vistas are spread all over. So, he says, when you have strengthened your mind to the degree where the vast vistas would not overwhelm the devotees. Mere intellectual willingness, or open-mindedness is not enough. "Only adequate enlargement of consciousness," enlargement of your consciousness – your cup must be increased. "Only," he says, "adequate enlargement of consciousness, by yoga practice and devotional Bhakti..." You've got to love God. You can do Kriya; you see the Light of God, but you've got to be devoted to God, through your heart, to really receive Him fully.

He says...

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<sup>12</sup> Chapter 14, Page 152, Revision 1951, "A master bestows the divine experience of cosmic consciousness when his disciple, by meditation, has strengthened his mind to a degree where the vast vistas would not overwhelm him. Mere intellectual willingness or open-mindedness is not enough. Only adequate enlargement of consciousness by yoga practice and devotional Bhakti can prepare one to absorb the liberating shock of omnipresence"

<sup>13</sup> St. John 14:2, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."