

Deciding a Better Destiny

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“Deciding a Better Destiny.”

If we look up the definition of destiny it says it means “preordained results, or fate.” The whole question of fate and destiny depends upon the Law of Karma. We must realize this one thing. The Law of Karma means the law of action. If you do something in this life, you are following a desire, and by that action you have set up a cause which must be fulfilled. And so, in a certain way, destiny and fate are true. But in another way, they can be superseded, and your fate can be alleviated.

The Law of Karma, as I have said, means the law of action. If I lift this book up, it's bound to fall, due to the great pull of gravity. And everything we do – any action that you do – lays up a cause, which has to be fulfilled. If you have a desire within your heart that you want certain things, that desire must be fulfilled. Therefore, that's your destiny.

And so we, all of us, have things within us which must be fulfilled, must be carried out, because we have laid up the cause for those things, either in this life, or some previous life, that must happen. But it can be alleviated. And even though it must happen, still our destiny can be something different than the fulfillment of that karma – it can be the realization of our oneness with God. And so, in spite of the fact that everything you have laid up must be carried out – that's a sad thing – but still, one part of us can supersede that Law of Karma, and we can escape, so to speak, into the Omniscience of God.

And so, those things that we have laid up are there, and we should not worry about those things as much as the fact that we should cease from this moment on, to lay up future causes which will have to be fulfilled. Realize that. What is done is done. Let us forget it – except to remember that what we are doing from now on will have to be fulfilled. The Law of Karma will work, therefore, we should watch, watch those things we do that they lay up desirable karma, and that our destiny, as the subject says, be better. We can do it, without question of a doubt.

And so, we are bound by the Law of Karma, but, we can, as I have said, lay up new karma that's good, and that will bring desirable results. But still, if we have a bad karma, so to speak, let us remember the

illustration of St. Francis, who didn't have a very good karma, because he was blind, his body was racked with pain, he was weak. Still, what did he do? He healed the sick and raised the dead. How? Because he had superseded that karma – he was one with the Infinite Presence of God. So we can realize that thing – even no matter what your karma is – because no one can tell. That's the unknown quantity, so to speak, of human action – what's in store for us. Who cares, if you have God. So that's the important thing to remember in destiny.

Now, we have within us certain stored up, or definite karmas, and which must be satisfied. We also have stored up within us certain and definite samskaras, or tendencies, which will affect our action, and thereby will influence our destiny. We have brought these things over. Some people, for instance, have a tendency to get mad easily; some have a tendency to overeat; some have a tendency to do this, and do that. Why? Because of their previous action they have stored up within themselves these tendencies, and they will influence, without question of a doubt, our previous action.

But the thing is, we have free will, and we can use our independent action, either to follow those tendencies – if they're bad habits they cause us lots of trouble – or to follow, or to rather, oppose those bad tendencies, and follow the good tendencies within us. These tendencies are good and bad. If you follow the evil tendencies, you lay up new undesirable karma. If you follow the good tendencies within you, you lay up good karma. And so, you see, destiny, although it is a fact, also is flexible, so to speak, for which we are very thankful.

We can alleviate our karma by knowing the Presence of God, or we can refrain from laying up undesirable karma in the future by beginning, right now, and following the things of Spirit, and the things of God. Therefore, these two things, of which I have spoken – the stored up karma within us, and these latent tendencies, plus automatic or independent action – these three things, they determine our destiny and fate. Once more, we have laid up within us certain karmas which will have to be fulfilled. We have also laid up within us certain tendencies, samskaras, which are the result of previous action, which will influence us. And thirdly, we can, as I have said, by either automatic action, or independent action, fulfill these things, or resist evil tendencies. It is this thing which causes our destiny, and so, and fate.

And so you can see, destiny is not an exact thing. It is flexible, and behind it all, always remember, never mind what your destiny is – what your fate is – you have the power as a child of God, to get up out of this delusion, arise above, to supersede this destiny and this fate, by being one with the Infinite Father. Remember the illustration of St. Francis. In spite of all his troubles he raised the dead, he healed the sick. Why? Because he had superseded the law of destiny, so to speak – of course, it had to be fulfilled. He had a weak body, but he had God, and then it makes no difference. As our Master said, “When

Thy song flows through me, then death is sweet, or rather life is sweet, and death is sweet.¹ There's no difference. So we can, we can better our destiny, now, remembering these three things of which I have spoken.

In this New Year, two things are necessary to improve our destiny, or give us a better destiny, so to speak. The first thing is to resolve, to strongly resolve, that we do what we should do, not what we want to do. That's a very important thing. And that we not be cowed down by these bad habits which we have, and made to do the things that we know we shouldn't do. Let us resolve to do the things we should do, and not cater to these bad habits which we have. That's the first thing.

And the second thing is it must be followed by action – Spiritual discipline – whereby the resolve is put into fulfillment. You know, many make up New Year's resolutions, and you see them a little later and they've all vanished. Why? Because they forgot to follow through, to carry through by Spiritual discipline. Spiritual discipline simply means to make yourself do things that will lift you toward Spirit, and that means to carry forth these resolves, if they are, for instance, to overcome bad habits of restlessness and such things – to so discipline yourself that you utilize the power within you to carry them to fulfillment. Then your New Year's resolutions will not be lost and forgotten. These things are very important – and that leads us to the question of will.

Will is a very important thing – the question of will. Remember, God has given us all the will necessary to overcome each and every thing that comes before us. He has given us sufficient will to handle every problem, if we utilize the will in the right way. If we have simply the use of mechanical will, which means that we automatically do those things – and in the case of bad habits we mechanically follow them – that's using your will as an automaton.

We also see the explosive will of youth. Suddenly they get an idea and off they go, and sometimes it ends in a bad way. Why? Because they do not utilize the right form of will. In other words, it should be, our will should be the thinking will, the will of reason. And then when we have that, it should be followed by steady will. And that simply means, carrying whatever you were going to do to fulfillment. Many do not do that. We have the power to do anything we want because we're children of God – we're made in His Image. But we do not do it.

But the greatest use of will is to unite your will with God's Will, and then you have sufficient power for everything. Then your will is what? Divine Will. Because we're made in the Image of God, we are His children, as it says in the scriptures, "I say ye are gods, children of the most High."² (Sic) That means that

God's Presence is within us. His Will is within us, and if we remove the coverings which keep it obscured and unite our will with God's Will, it becomes Divine Will, sufficient for every need we have. Let us realize that will, plays a very important part in deciding, or bettering our destiny, or fate.

I have at this time, I'd like to rather, read one of Master's references – he points things out so nicely – taken from his little book, Law of Success, "Divine Will has no boundary. It works through laws known and unknown, natural and seemingly miraculous." And so, when you supersede this worldly living, and you are one with God's Presence, you will see His Hand working. You cannot follow how He works. He's too smart; He's too clever. But you can see His Hand working. Therefore, you have superseded the law, because "God's Will knows no boundaries," as our Master has said, "it can change the course of destiny – wake the dead."

I remember in India, Master was there, and some devotee was dying, and they asked him to go in. But he didn't go in. Finally, he went in, and the devotee lived. I said to him, "Before you went in, you knew God wanted you, wanted you to go, didn't you?" He said, "Yes, or I would not have gone in." Because the greater the person, the saint is, the more they realize that God is the Doer, and that His Divine Will can do anything. It can change the course of destiny, wake the dead, cast mountains into the sea, and create new solar systems, because God's Will created them in the beginning, and it still exists, and will exist eternally, and we are a part of that. But through delusion and Maya, we feel, we feel separated from the Divine Will of God. "Man, as an Image of God, possesses within him that all-accomplishing power of will." And so we have that power. The only thing is, we have to remove the separation that exists between us and God. And we can do that by superseding this destiny, or this thing called fate, because we are children of God.

Now another point in this struggle for destiny, is the control of mind and thought patterns, and this is very important – the control of mind and thought patterns. How the mind works in changing your destiny is this: we have certain thought patterns and they come first. We establish those thought patterns. You take an ordinary person in worldly living; they have within themselves certain thought patterns. You take a saint, he has certain thought patterns. And so, first the thought pattern is established, and you and I establish the thought patterns. We may have forgotten when it was established – when these bad habits bother us, but we established it all right. So the first thing is the establishment of the thought pattern. Then, the Life Force then flows. The Life Force within us is the Cosmic Energy of God. That Life Force flows, and passing through the thought pattern, pattern materializes it, and we perform action according to that thought pattern. That's how it works. And so, then you can see, it is important to watch the thought patterns. Keep them right. Keep them right, and then the materialization, or the fulfillment, will be right. If the thought pattern is wrong, the whole picture is wrong. It is very important to keep the thought pattern right.

Now, a strong mind is also necessary to change these deep-ingrained habits and modes of living. You all know that. I don't have to tell you this. We're all here in the same boat, so to speak. It is very difficult to dislodge those bad habits and modes of living, isn't it? You get up every day, and the first thing you know you're doing the same thing you did yesterday, whether you want to or not. Why? Because you're simply a product of habit, that's all. And, if the thought pattern is right, and the habits are good, you're all right. But, it's too bad to say, that they are not always the way we would like to have them. And so, this strong mind is necessary to change these deeply-ingrained habit and modes of living.

Right thought patterns must be reinforced by Soul Consciousness. They must be reinforced by Soul Consciousness directing the Life Force within us as mental power to materialize from these thought patterns the right action which will better our destiny. That is, you may have a good thought pattern within yourselves, but if it is not followed by Soul Consciousness directing the Divine Will within you, it will not be carried to fulfillment. So these things are necessary. Thought patterns are just the beginning. They must be followed by the Soul Consciousness directing the Divine Will.

Now, your ordinary, ego consciousness cannot direct Divine Will. It directs these ordinary wills, of which I have spoken: mechanical will, explosive will of youth, and the thinking will, and even the steady will. But that's not enough. We must have Divine Will to change our destiny fully. And Divine Will means the will within us is united with God's Will. And so, thought patterns are necessary, but they must be reinforced by the Power of God within you, otherwise, you will not carry them to fulfillment. They will help you, but that's not enough. They must be followed by action, by Spiritual discipline, and that means by uniting your will with the Presence of God within.

Now, strong thought can materialize anything. Strong thought can materialize anything. In India some of the Hindus can eat poison and live. Why? Because of this very thing; strong thought can materialize anything. Because how did God produce this universe? First thought about it. "In the beginning God created heaven and earth. And they were without form and void.³" (Sic) Where were they? They were in His Thought. And then what He did – what did He do? He used Force; He used Action; He used the Great Cosmic Energy to materialize that Thought Pattern. And so can we. We can overcome many things.

Now, don't go home and say, "I guess I'll try a little sulfuric acid today, as a diet." No. That's not the way. "Try the little things first," the Master said. "Try and do the little things first." And when someone speaks to you harshly – your wife, for instance – usually it's "give it back to her." But just wait and see if you can overcome a little bit. Then from that step, go higher. Until when your enemy, he does the meanest thing

to you, you can think of, and you can realize it doesn't touch you. Then you've won something. Then you've changed your destiny. When you reach the point when no one, no matter what they do to you, the meanest of the mean, it doesn't touch you, then you become, as the scriptures say, "as dust in the street." Then you've begun to change your destiny, and you can do it, because a strong mind can do anything.

But that means that your mind and consciousness must be united with God's Consciousness. Then it works, because He does it. Don't think you do it. But when you see His Hand working so wonderfully, that's the greatest thing. When you realize, as you progress on the path, and you feel the Presence of God in you, see Him just remove the veil, and you see clearly, then you'll realize that you never could have reached that point. That's why the Love of God is so tremendous.

You realize, except His Grace came upon you, you never could have seen what He lets you see. You cannot do it yourself, and your Soul realizes it. Realizing that – that he has given you some, given you something which you could not have attained of your own self – then you realize how fortunate that the Grace of God descended upon you. That's why all the saints say, "God Alone."

We cannot attain God fully by our own powers. It must come through His Grace. And you realize that when He removes the veil, and you see clearly, you realize that is so. That's why you love God so much, because you knew He gave you something you could never attain without His Power, without His Love, without His Grace. That's why, feeling the Presence of God, you realize what a fool you've been to think you did anything, that your ego had any power. Realizing that, the Love of the Infinite is overwhelming. Master says, "Celestial things cannot be spoken of in words, God is so great."

And so, strong thought can materialize anything. I think it was Professor James, produced blisters, by thought, on his skin. And look at the martyrs. Martyrs put up with many, many things, horrible things. Why? Because their mind and thought is strong. They have reinforced it by contacting God, and being One with Him. That's why they can stand the thing an ordinary person could not. But when you are one with God, and feel His Power flowing through you, then you too, any of us, could be, and act as martyrs have acted. A strong mind is a great thing. It can do anything. It can materialize any line of action. Therefore, if you use your mind to change your line of action in the coming year, to do the things you should do, and not the things that are easiest to do, you will change your destiny, especially, if you unite your powers with the Presence of God and feel Him flowing through you. Destiny cannot stop you. Fate cannot change you, because you'll realize you are a child of God.

And so, thought pattern is very important. And to keep it right, the main thing is God-contact. God-contact is the crux of the whole question this morning. How can God-contact be attained? Through Self-

Realization Fellowship Yoga – the highest form of yoga – Raja Yoga. Yoga means union with God. If you practice the techniques of Self-Realization Fellowship, you will feel, without question of a doubt, your oneness with God, and feeling that, there'll be no doubt in your mind, that God's Power is flowing through you. This is a very important thing.

So the first thing is to attain God-contact. And the second thing is very important. "...nor be you of doubtful mind.⁴" (Sic) That used to be my trouble. Somehow, by the Grace of God, I had good realizations, and by the pushing of the Master, I guess, pushing me on – but I always doubted. He used to say, "Why do you doubt?" "Why do you doubt?" "Nor be you of doubtful mind." Now the doubt's gone – thank God. But never mind. Many people have it. My mother had terrific doubts. That's where I got it, I guess. And because I'd performed certain actions, I landed in that family, and that's why I got the doubt. So the Law of Karma is exact. But never mind. When God's Grace comes, and you feel His Nearness, there'll be no doubt left. That's why God-contact is so important. Yet we must not doubt – we must never doubt God. Nor be you of doubtful mind. Do not doubt God – is a very important thing. Why? Because it distorts and weakens your thought pattern.

And you know, if you have a pattern within your consciousness that you do not just want to be an ordinary worldly person – going from this, going from that – but you want to be like the Master, for instance, or like a saint, if you keep that pattern, and have faith in God, it will be fulfilled; it will be projected; it will be materialized, and your destiny will be changed. So thought pattern is a very important thing.

Now another thing is this: people will criticize you, especially when you try to be good. Why? Because they're sore, so to speak, because they're not good. That's all. They will criticize you when you try to be good. Therefore, an important thing in changing your destiny is the company which you keep. Watch your company. Mix with those who are trying to change, as you are. Not with those who are not trying to change, and are trying to pull you down to their level. Mix with good company. And I can assure you the company of Self- Realization Fellowship students, and the devotees of the Master – or of God, as he would say – that company is the best company for each one of us. Watch your company. Keep in that company which is struggling as you are. Not those people who are going along with the tide, and being worldly in their activities – but those who are struggling against the tide. Those are the ones to mix with. They will help you in your struggle, too. They are trying to change, and so you are trying to change. You should mix with those people.

Master has something to say about that. From his Autobiography,⁵ he says, "There are always those in this world, using Browning's⁶ words, 'who endure no light, being themselves obscure'.⁷" They want to

pull us down to their level. Then he goes on to say, ordinary, “Ordinarily, an outsider, fevered over some imaginary grievance, would berate Sri Yukteswarji, but my Guru would listen politely, analyzing himself to see if any shred of truth lay within the denunciation. These scenes would bring to my mind one of Master's observations, ‘Some people try to be tall by cutting off the heads of others’.8” (Sic)

Many people will do that. They'll depreciate you. Why? Because you're taller than they are. You're trying at least to better your destiny. They are satisfied to be an automaton, and go along with the tide. So let us watch our company.

In conclusion, the best company is God's Company. The best company is God's Company. You say, “Well, I don't know God.” Yes, you do know God. Every day you can be in God's company by doing your meditation, being one with the Holy Vibration, which is the Presence of God. “In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God.9” There's no reason, there's no excuse, why any one of us cannot be in the Presence of God – and that's the greatest company we can keep.

Of course the reasons are that we have followed bad habits so long we have become automatons, and we cannot act independently, at the present point. But we can – because we're made in the Image of God – we can meditate regularly every day and be in God's Company.

And so, meditation is the answer to good company. There's no company better than God's Presence. And every one of us can attain that in meditation, because you can, by following the techniques of Self-Realization, hear the Cosmic Sound; you can merge in it; and as the Cosmic Sound is God, merging in it, you become that Cosmic Sound, you become one with the Presence of God within you. Therefore, good company is necessary. The best of good company is God's company – attainable by each and every one of us, we are made in His Image.

And so, we can be in the company of God by following the great saints – Jesus, our own Masters, and the teachings of our founder, Paramhansa Yogananda – we can be in God's company. Being in that company, we're bound to change our destiny – we're bound to, we can't help it – that's the law of environment. If you mix with outside people, you become just like them. If you mix with crooks, you become crooked. If you mix with God, you become like Him. And, finally, you will become one with Him, through His Grace.

And so we can change our destiny – we can better our destiny. We cannot fail, if we do these things. Destiny must, must bow down to us as children of God. Let us not forget that.

And I'll close by reading the final reference from Master's works, Law of Success. And this is the key to solving this question this morning, bettering our destiny. "To discover through right meditation how to be in harmony with the Divine Will is man's highest obligation." Not a privilege, but an obligation, for each and every one of us: to know how to tune ourselves with the Presence of God. That's our duty. That's why we're here. That's the goal of life. "Jesus said, 'Thy will be done.' When man attunes his will with God's Will..." which is guided by Wisdom, "he is using Divine Will. Through the use of right techniques of meditation, developed anciently by India's sages, all men may achieve perfect harmony with the Will of the Heavenly Father." All men!

In the scriptures say, "I say ye are gods, all of you." Not a few selected ones. All of us are children of God. Being children of God, realizing our oneness with Him, destiny must bend before our will, because our will, then, will be one with Divine Will, or God's Will.

1 Paramhansa's Cosmic Chants, "O life is sweet and death a dream; Then joy is sweet, sorrow a dream; Then health is sweet, sickness a dream; Then praise is sweet and blame a dream, When They song flows through me; My Lord, when They song flows through me."

2 Psalm 82:6, "I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High."

3 Genesis 1:1-2, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

4 Luke 12:29, "And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind."

5Autobiography of a Yogi, by Paramhansa Yogananda, First Edition 1946 (may be downloaded Free from various websites on the Internet).

6 Robert Brown, Poet, May 7, 1812, London, England

7 Op. cit. Autobiography, Chapter 12, "There are always those in this world who, in Browning's words, 'endure no light, being themselves obscure.' An outsider occasionally berated Sri Yukteswar for an imaginary grievance. My imperturbable guru listened politely, analyzing himself to see if any shred of truth lay within the denunciation. These scenes would bring to my mind one of Master's inimitable observations: 'Some people try to be tall by cutting off the heads of others!'"

8 Ibid.

9 St. John 1:1