

Is Your Life Predestined?

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San Diego, 7-12-53

The subject this morning: "Is Your Life Predestined?"

I'm not going to try to answer that directly, but rather to point out some pertinent facts, whereby you may satisfy yourself as to whether this is so or not.

One time I was discussing with the Master about certain Spiritual things. I was rather in quite a confident mood, and so he said to me, he said, "Remember," he said, "I know when you are going to leave this plane. I also know when Mrs. Lewis is going to leave this plane, and your two children."

But I will add that that was after he had practically lived our lives, and made us over, so to speak. And so, whether that is predestination, we have to decide for ourselves. I do know that he has saved the lives of some of the members of the family. Whether that was predestined is another thing. But those things he did do; and he said those things.

Now, you also know that Lazarus was dead, but Jesus lifted him again. In other words, Jesus changed the Dream of God so that Lazarus lived again. Whether that was predestined, you will have to decide.

In the case of my own mother, she, one day was taken with a stroke; and the doctor said she wouldn't live until morning. But I got in touch with the Master, and she lived for nine months after that.

And I was in New York, visiting him four months before she passed away. And in discussing other things, we came to the matter of her condition. And I said, "How about my mother, Sir?" "Well," he said, "if she lives another four months, we must be satisfied. God has spared her life." She lived just four months.

And then you also have read in the Autobiography¹ about Sri Yuktswarji, who extended his life span, I believe it was 15 years, in order that he might meet the Master when he came to visit him.

¹ Autobiography of a Yogi, by Paramhansa Yogananda, Release 1946

And so, we have these pertinent facts before us, whereby we must judge, ourselves, whether predestination is a certainty or not.

Now, a few things I would like to point out. Perhaps, as far as our cycle of life goes, there is predestination. In other words, each one of us is a character in the Dream of God, and we live a certain length of time. I mean normally. Say seventy years. Some live more, some less. But there's a certain definite cycle there, in God's Dream, whereby we have the use of this vehicle, this instrument, that is, I think, predestined. No one lives, that is very often, over a hundred and twenty-five, or two hundred, or so.

So, you see, that cycle of life is predestined; a cycle, whereby we have this part to play in God's Drama of Life; we have the use of this vehicle to go back home. Perhaps, that is predestined. But, in that time, whereby we are using this vehicle, whereby we are playing our part in the definite cycle of life, of say seventy years or so, during that time, we can speed up our Spiritual evolution, without question of a doubt.

So therein, there is no predestination, except through the fact that we have certain latent impulses, and karmic conditions known as "samskaras,"² which are good or bad, which are strong, which are weak. Those influence us. But nevertheless, we can, without question of a doubt, change the length of time required to attain Spiritual Consciousness while we are living in a predestined cycle of life.

I think, if we view the question that way, we will see, although we are predestined – this body does wear out, though it may wear out in a less number of years, it may last a greater number of years – that is predestined according to God's Dream. Just like the whole creation is predestined to go out, and then it's predestined to go back to God. But the time element in our going back to God, attaining Spiritual evolution, can, without question of a doubt, be varied. It can be shortened, even to one lifetime, we will go back to God, to return back home to Him. That certainly goes beyond faith, destiny. And our lives, surely, are not

² Yoga Journal, by Bo Forbes, "The word *samskara* comes from the Sanskrit *sam* (complete or joined together) and *kara* (action, cause, or doing). In addition to being generalized patterns, samskaras are individual impressions, ideas, or actions; taken together, our samskaras make up our conditioning. Repeating samskaras reinforces them, creating a groove that is difficult to resist. Samskaras can be positive—imagine the selfless acts of Mother Theresa. They can also be negative, as in the self-lacerating mental patterns that underlie low self-esteem and self-destructive relationships. The negative samskaras are what hinder our positive evolution."

predestined in that question, because God has given us free will to accept Him, to make a great effort, to make a smaller effort, to go back home to Him.

And so, let us bear in mind those two important things. As far, as far as our cycle of this earthly body is concerned, there is predestination – no question. But as far as the Spiritual evolution, evolved while we have this body, that is not predestined. We can lengthen the time, or we can shorten the time whereby we can go back to God. Why? Because we have free will; we have free choice; and we can perform independent action from the high point of Soul Realization.

The body will go along about a certain path. Sometimes we'll escape sickness; sometimes we have sickness. It'll last about so long. But during that time, we can go back to God in short order; or we can act automatically, follow our latent impulses, and take a long, long time – incarnations.

And so, in that matter, our life is not predestined – the Spiritual aspect of it. But in the vehicle, the body, its cycle – that is predestined. Now, let us go on just a little bit, following this line of thought concerning predestination in the *abstract* and in the *concrete*.

Now in the abstract is the overall picture. Creation comes from the Great Force of God, the Great Force of Repulsion going out from His Great Consciousness, backed by His Great Will. That's the Force of Creation. Now that goes out and creates all things. Now, just as sure as that goes out, it's predestined to go back to God. And science is proving, and has proved, I believe, that this creation is like an expanding balloon. What expands from God's Consciousness, due to His Great Force of Repulsion, must come back through the Law of Attraction, back to God. And so, we all, as Rama Krishna said, "All will be saved." All will go back once more into His Ocean of Consciousness. Therein is predestination in the abstract.

But in the concrete, in our own individual life, there we can vary it. There we can use our own independent action and speed up the time, whereby we do not go back as creation goes back into God's Great Consciousness, but we go back individually into His Presence, while creation goes on. That's why we are children of God. That's why we have that power, because we're made in His Image. He has given us free will. We have the power of acting independently, thereby going back to Him before creation is drawn back into His Bosom. And once going back to Him, consciously, through independent action, through the effort of independent action, there is no forceful return.

Saints come, because they want to come to help humanity. But we are not pushed back into it like we are when we do not consciously go back to God. And so, that individual part, that concrete part, is not predestined, because God gave us free will to go back to Him.

I might give an illustration, which would perhaps help you. We want to go from here, downtown; here to the Civic Center. According to predestination, we're going to the Civic Center and we're coming back. But, we can either go way out around, down through even around Imperial Beach, Coronado, and cross the ferry to the Civic Center... sure, we can have lots of fun wasting time... or we could go right direct to the Civic Center, because we have free will.

And so, you can see, in the abstract, we do not have free will. But in the concrete, God has given us free will to go back to Him, to accept Him, to reject Him, as we wish. Remember that illustration. In the abstract, it's God's Show. He's running the business. But in the concrete, He has given us the power, because we are made in His Image, not to wait, not to wait a million years before we get back to Him.

It takes a million years to go from ego to Cosmic Consciousness. Who wants to wait that time? He has given us the power, even in one lifetime, as the Master has said. And as many who have meditated deeply can prove to you, that Cosmic Consciousness can be contacted in one life. Is that predestined? No. It is not predestined. It is because we have the power of free choice. We have the conscience to tell us what to do. And we can act automatically, following our natural impulses, which keep us tied to this life, or following the Intuition of the Soul through independent action. If we follow our natural impulses, we will stay in this wheel of birth and death. We will stay in outward consciousness. But, if we use our independent action, being guided by the Soul Consciousness, which is God within us, then we can, in a short, short time, go back to Him. That aspect of us is not predestined.

Now going on; predestination means "preordained results or fate." The whole question of fate hinges on the Law of Karma – that's the important thing – hinges on the Law of Karma, "cause and effect." Now we are born, we have brought over certain karma with us. An illustration is this: you see a little child born. He lives a few days, and then he's gone. Why? Because that child's karma is such, the causes were laid up, that the effect is such that it couldn't retain its life here. Yet still, that's predestined due to the Law of Karma, the law of cause and effect.

But even that, even that, can be changed by God-contact and prayer. But usually that is predestined.

Now, we are also born with certain latent impulses called "samskaras."³ Now, those are good, or they are bad. If they are good, if we use our independent action to go back to God, we will quickly go to Him. If the samskaras are undesirable, keep us attached to matter, we will have a harder time. But still, because we are made in the Image of God, we can do it. We can overcome those latent impulses, no matter if they do keep us tied to matter. We can overcome them, because we're made in the Image of God.

And so, predestination, although the effect is there, still, really we can overcome everything that is predestined, including our own latent impulses and karmic conditions. So, we must remember that we may be down for the time being, but not permanently. We must always keep our head up. Realize that we are children of God. Predestination cannot affect our Real Self. It affects the vehicle remember, but not the Soul.

Now going on; God having given us – this is the important thing – conscience and free choice; God, having given us that, we know what to do, because we've got conscience. You know what to do if you look within. Only you don't want to look within, sometimes. Nobody does. But you have the power of conscience and free choice. Therefore, you can remember, you can act automatically, following your latent impulses of drifting along with the tide, dying, being born again; or you can use the power of independent action, which you have, to do those things which spring from Soul Consciousness, and thereby you lay up good causes. Do you see, you lay up good causes, which produce good results, and produce in you good latent impulses, to be used later in this life, or in the next life. So that's the thing to remember; we, having free choice, and the power to act as we like, can act like an automatic machine; or we can act like a real child of God; that we have – that power.

Now, going on, as far as automatic action is concerned. If we automatically follow our karma, we drift along with the tide. But we do not have to do that. That's the important thing. You know the story in the Master's, the Autobiography,⁴ about the fact that he was supposed to be married – I don't

³ Ibid.

⁴ Release 1946, Chapter 16, "You may as well be resigned to your fate," my brother Ananta had remarked. "Your written horoscope has correctly stated that you would fly from home toward the Himalayas during your early years, but would be forcibly returned. The forecast of your marriages is also bound to be true."

know whether once or twice, but that doesn't make any difference. The point was he was supposed to be married, but did he do it? No. Why? Because we have independent action, we have free will, to do what we should do, not just to follow our latent impulses.

And, also, we have the power to overcome environment. Even though environment is bad, don't give up and say, "Oh, I can't meditate...this noise, and that noise, and so forth." Change your environment. Get into a closet, or someplace. I used to go up in the rafters in my father's summer home to get out of the noise. But where there's a will, there's a way, because our life is not predestined, if you don't believe it, or don't accept it. So do not accept it. Do not accept predestination, especially about your Soul. The body is pretty difficult, but not the Soul. The Soul is always free, even in a diseased and bad body. So remember, don't let predestination be applied to your Soul activity.

And now, to close, I would like to point this one thing out. Because we have free choice, conscience, and the power to act independently, we, we are molders of our destiny. We are not just automatons, but we are molders, if we wish, of our destiny, because we are made in the Image of God. Therefore, bow to no predestination. Bow to no predestination, except the destiny which Jesus bowed to when he said, "Father, Thy will be done."⁵ We'll all gladly bow to that. But we will not bow to the destiny which is called "karmic destiny." We will not bow to that. Because we will not be born, be satisfied to be born a human being, and to die a human being. No. We will be born a human, but we will, by the Grace of God and our independent action, die a child of God, not a human being.

We die realizing we are God's child, because we are made, we are made in His Image. We are His children. Free, free-born to accept Him or reject Him. And we will not be relegated to the destiny of karma; to the destiny of God's Play, His Dream, because He has given us the power to get out of it. If we accept it, accept His Dream, then, we have to go along with the Dream for ages, for ages. But we are not. We are made in His Image. We are children of God.

And remembering the 82nd Psalm, the 6th Verse wherein it says: "I say ye are gods, I say ye are gods, that ye are children of the most High."⁶ (*Sic*) Is a child of God, made in His Image, going to bow to predestination? No! Because God has given us the free choice to accept Him or reject Him; to accept His Omniscience,

⁵ Matthew 26:42, "He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done."

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

His Light, or reject it; to be a human, or to be a god. Self-Realization, remember, gives you the techniques and the ways, whereby you cannot, will not have to succumb to destiny, but that you can, as a free child of God, once more, consciously, without waiting for incarnations, go back home in Cosmic Consciousness.