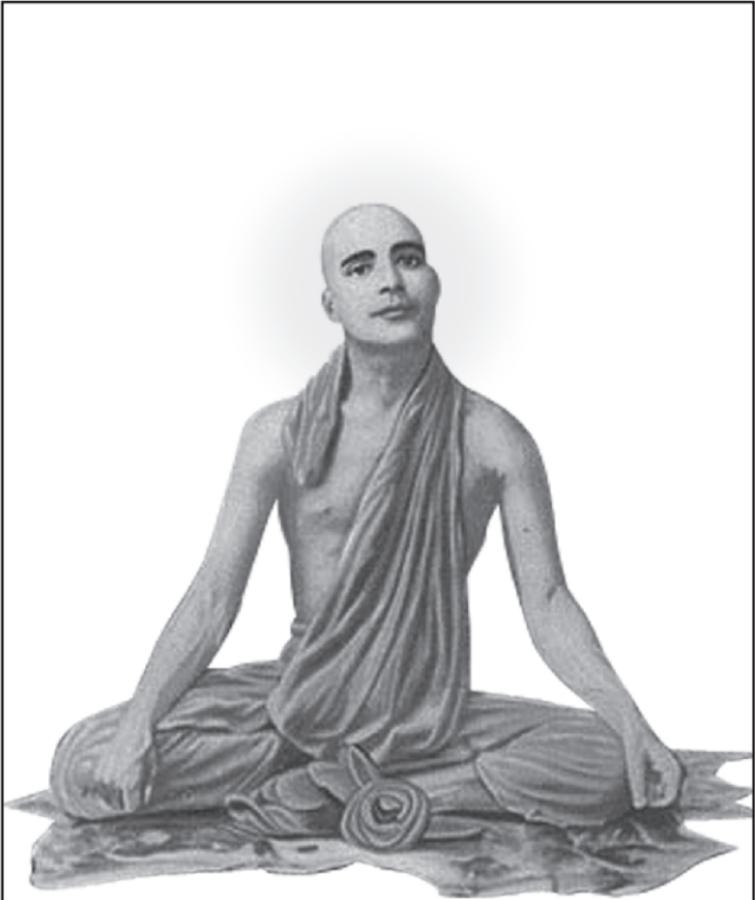


FREE WILL AND FATE

**GURU POORNIMA
KOLKATA • JUL 2022**



SWAMI RAMA TIRTHA

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(Lecture delivered by Swami Rama in 1905 at Lucknow)

You yourself ought to be the real authority on this subject. Are the religious books, then, of no avail? Nay, it is not so. They do help us in the beginning. I practised all that I learnt from the books. In the beginning they were certainly my preceptors but now my own experiences are my authorities.

The books on chemistry are only a sort of help to a student. In reality his own practical experiments confirm the theory in the books. The Vedas or the Koran can be of some help to you in the spiritual chemistry but ultimately your own personal experience should be the real authority. If you do not agree with my views today, you will have to do so tomorrow. If not tomorrow, then in the next birth you will have to agree with me. The truth must prevail.

The real Self of the man is God and all the powers of the world are under His control. But the one who is generally called a man is a collection of body, mind and intellect. He has got powers of nature in the same way as other natural phenomena like the sun, the moon, the air, water, clouds and rivers. If we take man in this

sense, he is not free and independent to work by himself, like any other natural element.

If we throw a ball into the air, a sort of motion is produced in it. If, somehow or other, the ball acquires consciousness, it is sure to say that it is moving by itself. But it is clear that it is not moving by itself and that there are different forces which make it move. Of them one is the human force which made it move and the other, is the force of gravitation.

In the same way, like other natural objects, the man also works under the influence of different forces.

The only difference is that the trees, fruits, flowers and other vegetables have not developed intelligence or power of introspection or scrutiny, while the man has. Hence the vegetables etc., do not say that they are the doers of any action, while the man asserts, "I am the doer. I am the doer." As a matter of fact, there is one and only one force that works in all, although it may be named differently. It may be called the force of gravitation in respect of the pull of the earth. It may be called love in respect of man. You can call it affinity in the mutual attraction of particles of matter. It can also be called devotion in respect of prayers or conscientious application.

Attraction or repulsion in the objects of nature is termed as attachment or detachment in man.

Let it be made clear by an example. The summits of the mountains are covered with snow. It is from this snow that the glaciers are formed. They are, so to say, the river caused by the snow which moves onward, pushing its way forward and making the trees fall here and there on its way. What is it due to? It is due to the sun and other forces that are working simultaneously. The sun melts the ice into river and the force of earth's gravitation makes the river flow onwards. Thus the sun, gravitation and other forces are working behind the river. But, as the river is a liquid, there is also an image of the sun in it. The development of the mineral, vegetable and the animal kingdoms is due to God, the eternal and omnipotent Force. But these objects are like solid snow and cannot reflect the image of the sun. Or, you can say that they have no obvious egotism or consciousness. The relation of man with other objects is just like that of the melted river with the solid snow.

In the river, there can be an image of the sun but not in the snow. Similarly, there can be an image of All Consciousness in man but not in other material objects. Man has, therefore, consciousness in him and the

element of egoism, he being more developed and evolved. He can and does now say, "I am the doer. I am the doer", although the motive forces are the same.

In reality, God of the trees and other objects is the same as that of the man. The trees are, therefore, your brothers, nay, all the objects of nature are your brothers, because we all emanate from mother Nature or God who is the common motive force in all of us, animate or inanimate. This process of evolution can be seen in the life history of every human being, in respect of the development of the embryo. In the case of the developed body of a man, when he was only a baby, though the Atma or the inner self was the same, yet there was the absence of ego or the little self. In the snow of the mountain there is no reflection of the image of the sun. But when the snow further evolves to melt in the form of the river, the image of the sun is quite clear. Similarly, when the man is only a baby, the ego (sense of mine and thine) is not developed in him. In his babyhood he is not sufficiently developed to say, "I have done this thing. I have done that thing." But when this body further grows up into a developed man, the consciousness of egoism, mine and thine, is quite distinct in him, just as the image of the sun is quite clear in water of the snow, though not in the snow itself.

Let us take another example. In the deep sleep state, even in spite of the fact that you continue to be living with your usual circulation of blood etc., there is an absence of the egoism, as if you are the brother of the mineral and the vegetable kingdom. But as soon as you come in the waking state you develop egoism and start saying, "I wrote that book. I wrote that pamphlet. It was I who delivered that lecture and did this or that etc., etc." This egoism, this concept of mine and thine, was developed in you, when you evolved from the deep slumber into the waking state, just as the image of the sun was seen in the river, when it developed from the snow.

If we observe more minutely, we will find that this egoism is absent, when a man is absorbed in higher stages wherein he loses his egoism. Let us take some practical examples. A poet, while submerged in his poetic ideas, forgets himself altogether. At this stage there is no egoism or notion of "mine and thine". It does not strike him that it is he who is composing the poems. He is all absorbed. He is, so to say, in a state of self-forgetfulness. Similar is the case of a Mathematician. While solving any difficult problem, he forgets his little self. It is only after the problem has been solved, that

his egoism, his little self or his "mine and thine" reappear. He is, then, puffed up with joy and begins to say, "What an intricate problem I have solved! After all, I have solved this problem." Mind you, there was no egoism in him, when he was all absorbed in solving the problem. In that state of self forgetfulness, his mind was as if taken hold of by God Himself. He was oblivious of everything around him.

Look at Napoleon. He is standing in the battlefield. Guns are booming. Cannon balls are bursting this way and that way; thousands of persons are being killed. But he is unconscious of all that. He is in a state of self-forgetfulness. There is no ego in him at that moment. Here, his condition is like that of a glacier, the image of the sun is absent. The little self is lost, when there is one pointed concentration. It is to be remembered that the more the concentration or the more the absorption or self-forgetfulness, the more the power a man develops in himself. You can see that all great works have been done, only when there is complete absorption, or self-forgetfulness or, so to say, when there is absence of egoism. As soon as the idea of ego comes in, the work is spoilt.

A man is delivering a lecture but as soon as the idea

comes that, "I am delivering this lecture beautifully", the flow or the beauty of the lecture is gone. As soon as the idea, "How elegantly I am reciting this poem", enters into the mind of a school student, his fluency is no more there. His mouth is gagged.

This egoism or "little-self" is like a fly that, sitting on the back of a running horse, may say, "It is I who is making the horse run." You may laugh at the fly, because it is the horse who is running all by himself and not the fly. Similar is the case of egoism, "the little self" in man. He thinks that it is he who is the doer of his work, while, as a matter of fact, it is God, the "Universal Self" who does everything. Man is only an instrument, a toy, a play thing in the hands of God, the Omnipotent.

As soon as the idea of egoism enters into the mind of a man, differentiation creeps in and he begins to say, "I am different from you and you are different from me." It is the egoism that makes him think that he is the doer, although nothing is done by him alone. Just as the heat of the sun, the force of gravitation etc., are responsible for the melting of the snow and the flowing of a river, so, too, God is at the back of all the work done. But generally people do not seem to think that the sun makes the river flow. Similarly, it is not your little self or

egoism that is working. Whatever you are doing or whatever is being done is due to one Reality - God.

Just as in a scientific laboratory practical experiments are performed and observations made, so in America practical experiments are made to study thought power.

Rama will give evidence of some of the experiments actually seen by him. A man can be thrown or converted into such a state of mind, where his personal ego does not work, or, in other words, when the image of the sun may not be formed, although the river may be running. This is the state, when the man is hypnotized.

Before Rama, a man who was suffering from tertian fever was hypnotized and with a strong will force it was instilled into his mind that there was no tertian fever in him. On coming to his original state, the tertian fever was off but he did get some fever everyday. On further investigation it was revealed that it was 'not the fault of the thought power but there was some mistake in instilling the right sort of the idea into him. After sometime, he was again hypnotized and the idea of the total removal of fever was instilled, with the result that he was totally cured of the fever. This fact proves that

the condition of your body depends on your own thoughts.

Let us take another experiment in which the man was a chain-smoker. In order to put a stop to his bad habit, he was hypnotized and the idea was put in his subconscious mind that he should smoke only one cigarette a day. On waking up, he began to smoke such a big cigarette as compensated his chain-smoking. It was not the fault of the thought power but the mistake of the person who put the idea in his mind. He was, therefore, again hypnotized and then he gave up the habit altogether.

These experiments were obviously failures in the beginning but, with necessary amendments, ultimately, they were crowned with success. The other day you were told that by the thought power Mr. John was so changed that he was made to act like Mr. Paul.

It depends upon you to believe the results of these experiments or not. Sometime back, people did not believe in the working of the telegraph, telephone, railway engines and the wonders of electricity. But today they are hard facts. Rama cannot deny the facts which he has actually seen himself.

What are the forces which determine the health or the

disease of your body or the flush of your face and the like? It is thought power. Your outward actions and conditions depend upon your thought power. Rama pointed out to you the other day that a man was hypnotized to feel the floor as a lake and he was also seen trying to fish therein. It was also seen that a man was hypnotized to feel that he was a log. When his head was put on one table and the feet on the other, his body did not bend at all, although sufficient weight was put in the middle and boys were made to walk on his thus suspended body. What is it due to? It is all due to thought power. It clearly proves that the bodily outward actions depend upon your own thoughts. You must have heard the famous saying, "As a man thinks, so he becomes." The last condition of a man indicates the ideas he had entertained all through his life.

There is a state of human mind in which the ego is absent. It is called subjective mind in causal body. There is another state in which the ego is present. It is called the objective mind in your subtle body. And the third stage of mind is in this gross body in our waking condition.

All these three bodies are related as ice and water. Whatever you do by the hand, has got its effect upon

the mind as well. For example, you are hearing this lecture through the vibration caused by the voice of the lecturer upon your organs of hearing (the ears). It is the function of your physical body. Its effect is carried to the brain and it is here that the mind grasps the ideas and entertains them. It is the function of the subtle body. After sometime, ideas or the effect on the mind will be obliterated or forgotten. But since nothing is lost in this world, the ideas will also remain somewhere. They will not be lost. Where will they remain? They will remain in the subjective mind or the causal body. They will sink to the bottom but will again come to the surface, when reminded. The objects thrown into a lake generally remain on the surface for sometime. But afterwards, they sink down to the bottom and come up again to the surface, when the water is stirred up or under other favourable conditions.

Rama is speaking in Hindustani at this moment. His vocabulary of English or Persian is settled down for the present at the bottom of his mind. But it can come to the surface again, when the mind is strained or, so to say, the water of the mental tank is stirred up, to change the medium of expression from Hindustani to English or Persian. You must have observed that at times

certain ideas, all of a sudden, flash into your mind to do a particular work in a particular way. Do these ideas strike you from somewhere outside or inside? Where do they come from?

Rama will explain it to you again through the psychological experiments seen by him in America. A boy was hypnotized and the idea was put into his subjective mind that on his waking up, when hands were clapped, he would go towards the river, pick up a stick lying there, and, on return, sit down after singing and dancing. But when the boy woke up he forgot as to who gave him this idea. As a matter of fact, he forgot everything that he was told in his unconscious or hypnotized state. However, the idea was fully preserved at the bottom of the lake of his mind. As soon as the water was stirred, i.e., he was reminded by the clapping, he went towards the river, picked up the stick and, keeping it over his head, sang and danced and then sat down on return. When asked as to why he did so, he replied that it was his own sweetwill, his desire or fancy of his mind. He would not admit that he was ordered to act that way, while in the hypnotized state.

Often they commit certain deeds for which they cannot give any reason. They fail to explain their conduct,

when asked in the court. They are ignorant of the laws of psychology and also do not care to feel the necessity of finding out the cause of their action.

What is fate? It is the result of our past actions. Are our actions done by our bodies ? No. They have got their roots in the mind. The action is defined as "the work which has connection with the mind." It is the mind which produces ideas and desires in us. And, it is the desire which instigates us to work. Our ideas, thoughts or our desires actuate us to do certain actions or deeds. And these deeds, good or bad, are responsible for certain results which go to make our fate. Therefore, our fate is the result of our own ideas, thoughts or desires. It is to be noted that, according to the Hindus, human life has finally evolved after passing through eighty four lacs of physical forms or births. In America, this theory of evolution has been explained in a maternity museum. There, various stages of development of the foetus in the womb of a woman have been exhibited in glass cases. You can see its development from its very conception of one day to nine months. A careful observation will reveal that the foetus has taken various forms - fish, frog, monkey, etc., before taking up the final shape of a human being.

What does it mean? It means that nature has designed circles within circles like the scales in the bulb of an onion or like - layers within layers of the sari of Dropadi (in the Mahabharat). The law of nature is the same everywhere. The development of the foetus shows that during the process of evolution man has passed through various stages of lower animals. And, in the human womb, he repeats all these various stages just as a student of B.A. hurriedly revises his previous courses in a short time before his final examinations.

The human nature shows that the habits of your previous births are still stored in your subjective mind. You might have heard about persons stopping the beat of pulse. In spite of the fact that the heart of such a man does not beat for the time-being, he is revived after being apparently dead. It is only the repetition of the hibernation of the frog. Running after the so called miracles and the physical feats, so highly spoken of by some people, is no spiritual development. It is simply to acquire some of the qualities of your evolving stages of frogs and dogs who still possess good many physical powers which are not easy to be attained by human beings. A dog can smell from a great distance. If, somehow, you acquire this power, it is no progress. It is

simply the repetition of your old habits of evolutionary stages.

You should, therefore, develop your will force or thought power which may help you to achieve any thing which you desire. Rama will tell you the direction in which your will force should be channelized. Let us take the example of the game of chess in which success is not possible, unless the opposing chess figures are eliminated. If you want success in this game, you have to eliminate the figures of the opposite side. Nature is proclaiming at the top of its voice that you will be crushed, if you do not adjust yourself according to time. Take this lesson from the natural objects like the stars, the plants and the stones. People say that the wild tribes and the barbarous men are still very backward and uncivilised. But, if we observe minutely, we find that their eyesight is strong enough to discern from a distance a green parrot perched on a green tree. Their legs are so strong that they can overtake a deer, while running after him. Their hands are so strong that they can fight with a lion without any weapon. But a civilised man has no such physical strength either in his eyes, legs or hands. What is the reason? The reason is quite clear. The wild or the uncivilised men have to put into

use their natural powers. Their progeny also inherits the same physical powers. On the other hand, the civilised man cannot run like them, because he has a motor car or similar vehicle to take him anywhere. In America the railway trains are available every two minutes both on the ground and under the ground. He is, therefore, not required to use his feet much. The railway trains are, as if, his extended legs. The civilised man has invented weapons in place of hands used by the uncivilised ones. When their eyesight becomes weak, they use eye glasses. They have also invented telescopes to observe objects of long distances. Thus, it is clear that the civilised man got the chess figures of his legs, hands and eyes beaten by those of his brain. The life of a civilised man would be vexatious and put to a great inconvenience, if he were to try to retain the physical powers of the barbarians.

It is now to be seen in which direction the branches of the tree of evolution are going. It is said that man is the highest evolved creature in the world. But, all the same, it is only partially true. Evolution is still going on, because there is still scope for further evolution. It is, however, to be seen to which direction it is going now. What is the aim or object of the progress in this world?

The next higher stage is one in which the man has to become more and more selfless. He has to feel and realise his oneness with all. He has not only to understand intellectually but also to feel from the heart that this whole universe is his own self. All the worldly objects have to be realised as part and parcel of himself. All the world has got to merge into him. You have to acquire that stage in which you realise the entire universe to have become your body. These birds and beasts, mountains and trees are your own self. The flowing rivers are like the circulation of blood in your arteries or veins. The sun and the moon are like your eyes. It is your own heart that is throbbing in the breasts of all. Efface the idea that you are something different from the other inhabitants of the country, nay, from any one else. You are all pervading and interpenetrating.

Only that nation can survive, the inhabitants of which translate this idea into practice. As Rama has pointed out to you yesterday, the Japanese brought this truth of Brahma Vidya into practical life. Only they survive, who consider the self of others as their own self. This is the only criterion to ensure your survival. It is only in this direction that you should channelise your will-force.

The law of gravitation points out that, if many forces are working together, the resultant force will be according to the strongest force. And, when the effect of the strongest force diminishes, the resultant will be inclined towards the next strongest force. In the same way that thought power will work first which will be the strongest of all others. After that, that thought power will work which will be the next in intensity.

Now let us see the relation between the inner forces and the outer ones. The lamp that is burning attracts the oxygen gas for its ignition from the outer atmosphere. Here the inner forces are directly related to the outer ones through a proportionate power of attraction. So, too, our desired objects are provided to us according to the intensity of our will-force. The negative electricity is by itself created in relation to the production of positive electricity. It is the natural law. On the birth of a female the nature provides a male too. You perhaps know that there are both male and female flowers. If on one side of the river there are female flowers having pistils, then on the other side there must be male flowers having pollen grains in the anthers. This arrangement by nature is very necessary for fertilisation, in the interest of propagation of the

species. In short, there is fulfilment according to the intensity of one's own desire.

That is why both the Hindus and Mohammedans had to suffer in response to their earnest prayers in temples or mosques. They prayed, "O God! You are our Lord and we are your servants and slaves. We are sinners. Have mercy on us and be gracious to grant us your pardon. We are your slaves and you are our master." By repeating their prayers, "We are slaves and we are servants", they forced God to make them both (Hindus and Muslims) slaves and fulfil their sincere desire of slave mentality. God, accordingly, in the form of white men as Britishers, conquered and enslaved them. They became what they desired and prayed for. So you see that you are what you desire. You are rich or poor according to the intensity of your desire. Your own thoughts, ideas and desires bind you or grant you freedom or liberty. It is the infallible law. Believe it.

Now let us consider again, as to how far we are bound and how far we are free. How far do the free will and fate control our actions? To take an example, it is like the railway line. The railway train is both free and bound in its movement. Its freedom lies in its swift movement on the railway lines only. But its limitation is

that it cannot run beyond the railway line. Similarly, fate lines are formed in the journey of your life train, according to the ideas you entertain. Necessary circumstances are, therefore, created to materialise your strong desires, with the result that your future life runs accordingly. It goes to show that your destiny entirely depends upon the intensity of your own thoughts. You can make or mar your destiny or change it. Take the example of a silk-worm. It is free to produce or not to produce silk. But once it produces silk, it is confined to its own cocoon. Its freedom to produce the silk is the cause of its bondage. Same is the case with human beings as well. According to a Persian saying, "O light of civilisation! You have been curse to me."

A man wrote a deed in respect of payment of a loan. The man was free to write the deed. But after signing the deed, he has been bound down by his own writing. In the same way, a man is free to act, but, if once he has committed himself, he is bound to face its, result. The very action, for which he was free to act, becomes binding on him, after it has been done by him.

Here I may tell you that there is also a stage at which a doer does a work but is not bound by its results or fate. It is, however, a separate subject and I may deal with it separately.

Persons will raise objections as to why God has made one rich and the other poor, one blind or crippled and the other hale and hearty. Why is it so? Rama says that the blame will lie, if God be different from your own self. Why is it that one is enjoying comforts, while the other is suffering from miseries, specially when they are the sons of one and the same father? Is He not merciful? Does He not have the power to save the afflicted from troubles? Had God been the father and you His sons, the blame of differentiation might have been true. But the fact is that God is not different from you. It is no cruelty or injustice, if one, of one's accord, goes to the lunatic asylum or falls into the river or greets the grave. It is the same God who is appearing as the Englishman on one side and the Hindu or the Mohammedan on the other; the rich on this side and the poor on that. The same whom you call father is appearing as son on the other side. It is He and He alone, here, there and everywhere.

Please listen to another topic. Everybody knows that the light of the sun is white, but, if we see it through prism, our previous conviction that it is white stands belied, because seven colours are now visible through the prism. How is it that first the sun's ray was white

and now it appears in seven colours? You may know its reason or not, but you'll have to admit this fact.

You say that this flower is white or that is pink. The leaves are green. But the scientists say that it is not so. They also prove it otherwise.

Take a flower in a dark room and then observe that it is equally soft, giving out the same fragrance, having the same number of petals and so on, but lo! where is the colour? It was due to light and so in the absence of light there is no colour. You say that the leaves are green, but in reality they have got the property like that of a photo plate. Out of the seven visible colours of the sun's rays, they absorb six colours and the seventh green colour is rejected by them which is reflected into our eyes and we call the leaves green. There is no black colour in the rays of the sun. But the object which absorbs all the seven colours of the sun's rays is called black, while white is the one which does not absorb any colour but rejects all the colours. In other words, it renounces all the colours.

O beloved one! All these colours, these powers, mind, intellect etc. belong to one omnipotent and omnipresent Sun. Not only the seven colours but all that we see and all these objects are only due to Him or

they are all He Himself in this diversity. But they look different. In the Vedantic terminology it is called Maya or illusion. It looks something different but, as a matter of fact, it is something which is all in All.

It is said that the right hand is stronger than the left. It is because it is being used more frequently or it spends more energy. The flower is named after that colour which it reflects or does not keep to itself. So dear one that very thing will come to you automatically which you give up or renounce. You have to stop worrying and the thing will come to you of its own accord. If you run after the shadow, it will run away from you. But when you face the sun and turn away from the shadow or give up the idea of catching it, it is bound to follow you.

To forget the selfish desire is to get all your desires fulfilled. The colour which you absorb vanishes, while the colour which you renounce becomes yours. You are not respected, when you desire others to respect you. But when you pay respects to others, others are sure to love you. Dark-hearted are those who have absorbed all the colours in their ego and who consider themselves to be different or separate from others. They are just like that selfish student (about whom I spoke to you yesterday) who had stolen pages of the

book (containing the drawing of the machinery) to meet his selfish end.

While the bright ones or the white-coloured persons are those who help others and lead a life of renunciation and self-abnegation, who dedicate their lives for the good of others and who by their actions proclaim that their body is the body of all and their property is the property for public good. They acquire knowledge to spread it to others. They make researches and discoveries for the benefit of all. They do nothing for their mean selfish ends. They do not keep things for themselves. They consider their little self to be the Self of All. For them there is nothing left to be desired. According to a Persian poet: "Entertaining any desire is an impediment in attaining union with Him. Therefore, my desire is that I may not have any desires at all." Anxiety for a selfish end is a partition which keeps me away from Him. Therefore, let my anxiety be to have no anxiety at all for desired objects. "Do away with the idea of the separate identity to such an extent that not even the smell of duality or differentiation may remain within you."

OM! OM!! OM!!!

- In the Woods of God Realization Vol 4

© **Swami Rama Tirtha Pratisthan**

9 Vishnu Puri, Church Road

Aliganj, Lucknow – 226022

Tel: +91-522-2332376

swamiramatirtha@gmail.com

www.ramatirtha.org

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