



Free Yourself from the Past

Most people are pressured by the burden of the past. Constantly pursued by this demon, they live in the ruins of their history. Many are so dominated by their past that they are unable to benefit from the present atmosphere of freedom. Even during happy occasions and opportunities of the current moment, the past waves of bitterness surge over the mind, drowning the blooms of joy under the mantle of a misty melancholy.

It is therefore important to free yourself from days gone by. With a rational insight you

will recognize that freeing yourself from the past does not mean effacing your memories (which would be highly impractical), ignoring what has happened, or limiting the recollective functions of your mind.

Freeing yourself from the past implies that you do not allow your history to obstruct your ability to enjoy and utilize your present towards the attainment of Self-realization. You may recall your past experiences of pleasure and pain, but you will not be egoistically involved in them. You will be

like the sky sustaining all the drifting clouds of memories.

What is important is to free yourself from your judgements and false beliefs about past events. Allow the memories of long ago to arise, yet be a mere witness to them. Reflect on what messages are being given to you rather than involving your mind in bitterness and blame. Comprehending the lessons allows the resentment and hatred to dissipate. One then remembers the past with a tranquil mind.

We Are Tied to the Past By Manifestations of Rajas and Tamas

You are tied to the past on the basis of ignorance (lack of spiritual knowledge). Encumbered by ignorance, your mind adopts false concepts and theories about past occurrences and people, which in turn create hatred, animosity and sorrow. Because one has not established a spiritual practice, developed a relationship with Divinity through prayer and reflection, and recognized one's own misunderstandings and flaws, a person comes under the sway of the lower two *gunas* of Nature: *rajas* (distracted externalization), and *tamas* (dullness and inertia). According to their alternations, the moods of one's mind vary from day to day and from moment to moment if one lacks spiritual insight.

When *tamas* predominates, you remember past experiences with an attitude of grief and sorrow. Memories of anger, hatred and manifold perversions of the mind are entertained. There is more of an inclination to remember the negative qualities of others rather than the positive ones. Furthermore, with increasing *tamas*, you may begin to superimpose negative characteristics on others that are formed without any real basis. When *rajas* over powers the

mind, you are swept away by the distraction of pleasant as well as unpleasant memories and situations. The majority of people remain confined to these operations of *rajas* and *tamas*.

If you lack a rewarding plan in your daily life and depend too much upon the fulfillment of your desires, you consequently are unable to sublimate the impressions of anger, hatred, passion and manifold forms of boredom. There is a tendency to find fault with past failures, adding them to the current frustration. There is an absence of trust in the Divine Plan and you become like a sluggish stream of water overpowered by the undergrowth of various aquatic plants and green algae. Evil association, stormy days, a poor diet or any form of sickness may also augment your *rajasic* and *tamasic* memories. But when you begin to turn to Divinity, asking for guidance, you begin to discover that you are being guided by your Higher Self on a journey that allows you to rise above the sway of time and space.

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How to Promote Sattwa

Those who experience the third *guna*, *sattwa* or purity and harmony, are indeed blessed. These rare people recall moments of mental upliftment, inspiration and higher forms of joy. During *sattwa*, one recalls the lofty states of the mind and insights based on the previous practices of concentration, meditation and spiritual enquiry.

It is important for an aspirant to live in the present, control *rajas* and *tamas* in their personality and promote *sattwa*. You must understand that all circumstances occur for the benefit of the evolution of your own soul. Reflect upon what messages were woven into your experiences to free yourself of your frustrations.

Sattwa is promoted by maintaining a healthy diet, repetition of the Divine Name, prayer, meditation, associating with people of a high spiritual caliber, studying scriptures and translating that wisdom into everyday life. Of great importance is striving to perfect the practice of Karma Yoga—selflessly serving God for the benefit of the spiritual upliftment of oneself and others.

By a profound study of Vedantic philosophy and enquiry into “Who am I?” understand the illusion of time and space. While your intellect operates in the realms of time and space, your latent intuitive vision is constantly urging you to be free from the bondage of the world and realize the transcendental reality of your Self. In deep sleep, this latent vision asserts itself. Here you find yourself existing peacefully without the awareness of time and space, and you do not experience even a trace of sadness that you have temporarily left them behind!

It is important to understand that when you do not face the problems of the present with reflection and insight, your mind seeks refuge in the past to escape the imaginary monster of the current moment. But when you face your present with a balanced mind and penetrating insight, you realize that what you once considered a monster is, in reality, a gentle “lamb”—or indeed, no problem at all.

Therefore, utilize the conditions of the present to construct a golden future of spiritual attainment. Be alive, be full of vitality and enthusiasm. You are not the same individual you were in the past. Don’t turn back; don’t even look back. Move onward. The Biblical parable that warns Lot not to look back at the burning cities of Sodom and Gomorrah carries the same message. As the “cities” of love and hate are consumed by the fire of spiritual awareness, you emerge like a butterfly from an old cocoon; or like a swan, you soar high above the clouds of the world-process!

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