



The Present Moment

Talks with Babaji

What is the yogic remedy to allow us to live in and enjoy the present moment, rather than dwelling in the past or the future?

In theory, it's very easy. Only a few words are used. In practicality, it's like a mountain standing in front of us. We are never in the present. We either dwell in the past or worry for the future. The present gets lost. If we veil our past memories somehow, then we are in the present. Think what kind of thoughts come in the mind. Thoughts of past and future, or thoughts of the present. Present has no thoughts; it's just existence.

We know that the previous life samskaras come up in this lifetime; do samskaras that we experience in this life come up again later in this lifetime?

They come from the past. Past past and past present.

If we are searching for peace in this lifetime, how much is that affected by the past?

We are living our past in the present. But we are capable to block the past in the present and live only in the present.

Is a way to overcome the past to lead a spiritual life?

Overcome means samskara? Samskaras germinate if they get the right soil. If you don't provide the right soil, they don't germinate. If you don't go to a gambling place, you don't gamble.

You said we could "block the past." Do you mean blocking thoughts, feelings, actions? How do we really live in the present?

Living in the past memories. If a person who stole something from a store and then got caught and punished thinks about it after 20 years, he or she will be in the same pain as they felt 20 years ago. So we brought the past of 20 years into the present and lived in it.

Is there a difference between living in the past memory and understanding the past, because both do bring up strong emotions?

What do you understand if that past is still keeping attachment? How it affects your present actions. It is affecting you because you are dwelling on it. You are not in pain if the memory is not there. It's only the memory which is causing the pain. Why is that memory coming up? Because we are attached to it.

It seems that the attachment to the past memory may have something to do with not having fully accepted the pain of that experience.

Pain is never accepted because it is opposed to love for life. I want to apply that to the example of the memory which keeps coming back because there is something unfinished about the experience that needs to get finished.

Example?

Someone who stole something and couldn't accept that their punishment has taken care of their actions, then the memory will keep coming back because they haven't fully accepted it. The ego doesn't accept any kind of loss. That boy or girl wanted something and stole it. When they were punished, they felt the ego was a loser. Ego always expresses itself in a negative aspect of life. If the boy or girl would not get caught and punished, then there would not be a memory or only a very faint memory. So when we dwell in our past, the ego expresses itself. "I am alive; I am in pain." We create it.

It seems to me that you have to resolve the problems of the past. How does that work in terms of a conflict in a specific instance in this life?

Yes, the past must be resolved. If we accept that what happened in the past can't be changed, what's done is done, then it separates the mind from the past. But everyone can't do it so easily. So we use different ways. In the Indian system, they do pilgrimage, ritual bath, worship, mantras, etc. By doing such things, the mind starts thinking "I am really purified; I have done this, this and this." In the western system, they go to psychologists who use similar things in a different way. Past event doesn't change but the effect in the memory changes. One could also resolve them personally by going back to the person and asking for forgiveness. If the person says, "yes, you were wrong," then the ego will again stand up. Sometimes people do say, "I was wrong; I am so sorry." This calms down the situation. But in another situation, it still exists. You can't go on making up with every person and every event. In yoga, we deal with it through the ego which is the cause and the experiencer.