

Gunas

..refining the mind by knowing its nature and patterns

The nature and patterns of thinking by the mind can be:

- pure, peaceful, content, clear, cheerful, inspired, coming from knowledge etc. or
- agitated, restless, full of desire, anger, greed, arrogance, ambition etc. or
- slothful, stubborn, dull, coming from ignorance, inertia, fear etc.

Above are called *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas gunas*, respectively

Everything in the universe has a particular composition of *gunas* that determines its personality and behavior

Humans have the capacity to modify the play of *gunas* in their life; we can use it as a tool for monitoring our spiritual progress

Examples of monitoring *gunas* in daily life

Activity	Sattvic	Rajasic	Tamasic
Food	Tasty, soft, promotes health	Spicy, dry, causing pain	Stale, tasteless, impure
Action	As required, not motivated by fruit	Long for fruit, ego boosting, effortful	Careless of consequence
Charity	As a duty, fit time and place, worthy cause	Expects return, reluctant, ostentatious	Wrong place or time, unworthy cause, without respect
Knowledge	Sees the One in All	Conscious of distinctions	Clings to partial view as if it is whole
Pleasure	Born from within, poison at first but nectar at the end	Born from sense pleasure, nectar at first but poison at the end	Born of sleep, indolence, negligence, deludes

All *gunas* create bondage

- Sattva: attachment to happiness
- Rajas: attachment to action
- Tamas: attachment to sleep

Spiritual practices help transform tamas to rajas and rajas to sattva

Ultimate aim is to transcend the *gunas* altogether

A self realized person beyond *gunas* abides in the self and

- sees all actions as rising from *gunas*
- is unperturbed by events or others' actions
- is unaffected by praise or blame
- has nothing to gain or hold on to