

DR. RAMI
BLECKT



THE THREE ENERGIES

THE FORGOTTEN CANONS OF
HEALTH AND HARMONY

Rami Bleckt

**The Three Energies. The Forgotten
Canons of Health and Harmony**

«Благо-Дарение»

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Practically everybody, who reads Rami's books, notes that his books are both practical and useful, besides they are read easily. His books give readers the opportunity to find answers almost to all questions because they help to settle basic problems. This book, being republished several times, once again proves that the truth is simple and practical. The book "The Three Energies" was written on the base of ancient wisdom, the best modern scientific works and long life experience of a lot of people. Rami Bleckt gives answers to the questions in simple and interesting style. Without knowing these answers it is difficult to be in harmony with yourself in the swift stream of modern life, to keep one's health and spirits. This book is recommended for a wide range of readers, especially for doctors, psychologists, teachers, leaders and administrators of all levels.

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"Rami is a professional psychologist, astrologer, yoga instructor and Ayurveda practitioner, with vast practical experience and knowledge. This book is not merely an academic research, it is a result of many years of Rami's practice as a lecturer and a consultant. He managed to adapt ancient Eastern science of Gunas to the practical application in the modern world, and to deliver it to the present-day readers in a clear and simple form. As well as Sattva Guna is a key to the mind and psychological healing, Rami's book is significant for those who are seeking practical and spiritual approach to understanding of the mind and emotions."

Professor David Frawley, the author of many bestsellers, world-wide recognized Master of Oriental Astrology and Auverda

The book "Three energies" by Rami Bleckt, PhD, is highly valuable for the readers. It makes it possible to get in touch with practical application of the following principles of ancient wisdom. The readers can see the world through the prism of the author's view and perceive something they have never seen before. This material is a world of Universal laws of Love, Harmony and Justice in action. The practical experience of the author turns dull theory into vibrant reality, and inspires us to follow, apply and hands out Rami's life philosophy. This will help all readers to become happy and teach how to make others happy around them as well."

V. Tuneev [BV Gosvami], one of the best experts of the ancient Indian philosophy and psycology

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deep gratitude to all Teachers, through whom I was lucky enough to get a glimpse of how truly the highest knowledge is.

The English version of this book was published only due to the tremendous work that my friends have done, Zulfat Khismatulin – he translated this book and Patricia Rafferty – she edited the book.

Many thanks to them!

I hope that their belief that this book will bring a lot of good into lives of readers, will come true.

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Special thanks to my wife, Marina, for she, by just using some of our lecture notes, has written several important chapters instead of me.

Also, would like to further thank Professor David Frawley, for the important recommendations that he has given me and for the wonderful introduction that he wrote.

Inspiration for writing this book

*Life itself is neither good nor bad: it is a reservoir of both good and bad,
depending on what you make of it.*

Michel de Montaigne

In September 2006 we travelled around South India. It was extremely interesting. We undertook a full panchakarma course (cleansing the body of slugs and toxins) and met incredible people – astrologists, yogis, gurus (spiritual teachers)... But the most amazing of all was that we met one well-known Ayurvedic doctor. He was 80 years old and looked incredible, full of happiness and peace.

All his life he studied and practiced Ayurveda and became very successful. Many awards and photographs with government letters of appreciation were around his office. He would look into men's eyes, check their pulse, sometimes press different pressure points on the body and then give a correct diagnosis of the condition of different internal organs. Then he would give recommendations about diet and lifestyle. Some of us were given special Ayurvedic medicine. The doctor spent more time with the youngest member of the group, and found several very serious diseases, about which the young man knew. Other (Western) doctors had recommended a surgery for this young man. This Ayurvedic doctor told our young friend that if he followed the prescribed instructions, he would be cured in a few months. He prescribed some kind of herbs from the Himalayas which needed to be taken after boiling for several hours. The young man followed all the instructions and as a result the benign tumour, gastritis and urine-genital problems disappeared. The Ayurvedic doctor gave him not just herbs but also the knowledge by which the herbs miraculously worked. If one follows this system from birth then there will be no need for any medical treatments.

After few days we met one famous astrologer that prominent politicians and businessmen come to consult with. Meeting him was possible only due to a recommendation from a Maharaj we knew. Meeting this Master was of great significance for me because he agreed to become my teacher. Over the next few days he taught me many important lessons. He amazed all of us by his deep understanding of life and different karmic situations and also by his psychic abilities. He also spoke about the knowledge with which the inauspicious influence of planets can be neutralized and even how to become liberated from the laws of karma. For ordinary people such knowledge can eliminate disease and suffering and shed light on how one can be happy, healthy and harmonious.

Both teachers looked effulgent because they had applied this knowledge in their lives; despite their old age they radiated health and happiness. They inspired me to write this book in a way that people living outside of India can access this knowledge. In the past, Indian sages had this knowledge but nowadays few people know about it and even fewer realize how important and practical this knowledge is. I have seen so many times the phenomenal changes in people's lives when they start using this knowledge: eradicating different physical and psychological diseases; eliminating problems from their personal lives; achieving social success; developing powerful intuition; progressing rapidly in spiritual life. The most important transformation is the overwhelming contentment that develops independent from external circumstances. If you want these miraculous changes in your life too you should read this book at least once.

Foreword by Pr. David Frawley

Yoga is not just a physical discipline but contains a wonderful practical philosophy of life and healing. For this it is connected to Ayurvedic medicine, the traditional natural healing system of India, and to Vedic astrology, India's science of the stars and of karma.

Yoga philosophy has contributed many profound insights to world spirituality. Yoga sees the universe as a play of two primary forces, the power of consciousness or what is called the Purusha in Sanskrit, our inner being, and the forces of nature or what is called Prakriti or the primary power of creation. One of the main insights of yogic thought is its understanding of all the forces of nature according to three gunas or primary qualities. The term guna means what binds the soul as the forces of nature easily become powers of attachment to the external world of time and space and draw us away from resting in our deeper eternal nature of the Purusha.

Each of the three gunas called Sattva, Rajas and Tamas has its particular qualities and roles in the cosmic order:

Sattva, which means the quality of truth or being, is identified with light, mind, consciousness, goodness, virtue, harmony and balance. Rajas, which means turbulence and agitation, is identified with energy, life, emotion, manifestation, assertion, disequilibrium and change. Tamas, which refers to darkness, is identified with matter, inertia, the unconscious, dullness, resistance, entropy and stability.

All three qualities have their necessary place in the world of nature starting with the three great cosmic forces of light (sattva), energy (rajas) and matter (tamas). Everything in the universe consists of various interrelationships and intertransformations of these three powers of light, energy and matter, as the great scientist Einstein revealed in his equation $E=MC^2$ or energy equals matter times the speed of light squared. The forces of nature are constantly moving back and forth between all three qualities, which are not separate states but related modes of nature's workings.

All three qualities also have their place in our own human nature as body (tamas), vitality (rajas) and mind (sattva), which make the three levels of our functioning. The body is the material component of our being, the mind our inner light, and our vital energy or life-force (prana in Sanskrit) the energy between the two ones. These three forces are not separate but rooted in each other and mixed together. Body, life-force and mind are part of a single continuum and constantly influencing one another.

Here Yoga introduces another important aspect of this science of the gunas. The mind itself is the natural domain of sattva, requiring light, harmony, balance and clarity for its proper function. This means that when we take the standpoint of the field of the mind, then tamas and rajas, or the influences of the body and vital energy, can become factors of disturbance, with the bodily influences having the capacity to dull the mind, and the vital energy having the ability to disturb it. Rajas and tamas become 'doshas' or factors of disease at a psychological and spiritual level. Rajas and tamas allow factors of agitation and dullness, or wrong imagination and wrong judgment that cloud how our intelligence works. This in turn leads to the main difficulties, maladies and pain that life can bring us, as well as preventing us from gaining the wisdom (sattva) to handle with all these.

For this reason, yogic thought always emphasizes the development of sattva guna as its primary principle of inner growth and development. Yoga urges us to resort to those types of foods, impressions, ideas, expressions and associations that promote sattva guna and avoid those that promote rajas and tamas. The prime principle of spiritual development through Yoga and Ayurvedic medicine and the proper understanding of karma in Vedic astrology is this science of the three gunas and the need to promote sattva guna as the prime value for the human mind and soul.

The three gunas provide us a wonderful and practical system for both classifying our activities and learning to promote those actions that lead us to higher awareness. Its emphasis on sattva guna

is the basis of the yogic recommendation of a vegetarian diet, for example, and on ahimsa or non-violence as a prime behavioral principle. Indeed nonviolence is the foundation of sattvic living and thinking, meaning that we should not wish harm to others in any way not just to avoid violence but to foster peace and light within ourselves.

Yoga provides a system of values, exercises, emotional states, mental conditions, and practices of mantra, pranayama and meditation according to the three gunas. Even Yoga asanas are designed to promote sattva guna or the quality of peace and stillness at a physical level. Ayurveda, Yoga's complementary medical system, similarly provides us with a detailed classification of foods, herbs and therapies according to the three gunas. Vedic astrology provides an understanding of the influences of the planets according to the three gunas. An understanding of the gunas is central to all the Vedic sciences.

It is important for students of Yoga or of any spiritual sciences to learn, and apply this system of the three gunas in their own daily lives. However, there are few books that deal with the subject of the gunas and show us how to use them in a practical way. Most examinations of the gunas are content to list a few common characteristics of the gunas and do not go beyond that. It often leaves the students in doubt how to apply the gunas really in a meaningful manner.

In this regard Rami Bleckt has brought out an important new book on the gunas in the Russian language that brings them into a clear perspective for the modern reader. His book serves a vital need and offers many useful tools of self-healing, self-understanding and self-realization that can be of great transformational value for their lives and for their awareness. Rami is a trained psychologist, yoga teacher, Ayurvedic teacher and astrologer, who brings to this study much experience and knowledge. It is not just an academic presentation but the result of many years of personal practice, teaching and counseling. He has learned how to adapt this eastern science of the gunas to life in the modern world and can relate it to the reader accordingly in a clear and simple manner.

As developing sattva guna is the key to the mind and, therefore to psychological healing, his book has a great relevance for all those looking for a more practical and spiritual approach to dealing with the mind and emotions. How we feel in our minds cannot be separated from the food we eat, how we use our senses, our breathing patterns and our associations. In this way the science of gunas can add many new dimensions to psychology in all of its forms. All psychologists should examine this approach and see how our emotional well-being can be changed by shifts in behavior that are in our control to develop and do not necessarily require drugs or chemical interventions.

As an author of thirty books in the yogic field over the last more than twenty years, it is heartening to see this deep knowledge spread to a larger audience in different countries in the world. I hope that the book meets with a heartfelt reception and that through it many more individuals can benefit from the tools of yogic knowledge, which are of relevance to everyone. We must thank Rami for his service and can only wish that he continues with additional contributions to the cause of the greater well-being for all.

Sattva guna has not only the ability to heal but to promote world peace and understanding. This is the need of our times. We cannot have peace unless we have a life-style that promotes peace. Peace must be rooted in our moment by moment action and awareness and in all our interactions with the world. It cannot be just an occasional concern or a mere political expediency.

Sattva leads us to Sat, which is the principle of pure existence allied with Chit, pure consciousness, and Ananda, Divine love and bliss. Trough promoting Sattva we prepare ourselves to become a vehicle of the higher powers of the universe. May this publication increase that wonderful quality of sattva guna for all those who delve into its pages!

Professor David Frawley

***Author: Yoga and Ayurveda, Ayurveda and the Mind etc., Santa, Fe NM USA
(HYPERLINK "<http://www.vedanet.com>"), June 2008***

Introduction

Major problems that face us cannot be resolved on the same level of consciousness on which they were created.

Albert Einstein

This book is about how to attract the energy of happiness, health, success and harmony into our lives, and how to simultaneously eliminate the energy of destruction, diseases and unhappiness. Everything in this world consists of different energies; modern science has also come to this conclusion. Thousands of years ago enlightened sages taught how to attract correct energies into one's life. The term Ayurveda is currently associated with an ancient medicine that can improve one's health through the use of herbs, massage, cleansing procedures and diet. Although this is correct, it is also a limited perspective that is convenient for advertising and business purposes. Today, only few know that Ayurveda is primarily a system of psychology that can free one from diseases quickly and simply at various stages of development.

In "Ashtanga-Hridaya Samhita" (one of the main Ayurvedic texts written by enlightened sages thousands of years ago) it is stated that there are six stages of illness:

1. Psycho-physiological (gunas).
2. Energy-informational, Ethereal (imbalance of energy, sensory and knowledge acquiring channels).
3. Neuro-endocrinal (aggravated doshas).
4. Endo-toxic (accumulating of the products of weak metabolism, toxins).
5. Manifested, symptomatic (appearance of clinical symptoms of diseases).
6. Terminal (death of an infected organ).

It is understandable that in the first two stages a disease can be cured easily, at stage three and four it is also curable, at the fifth it is difficult to cure and at the sixth it is incurable.

Modern medical systems usually deal with stage five and even stage six. Most Ayurvedic clinics function at stage three and four and the majority of purgative programs deal with stage four.

A well-known Russian researcher and author of the series, "Diagnostics of Karma", S. N. Lazarev, by seeing a person's energy field can successfully diagnose at the stage two. But his system would not help a person who is blocked at the first stage due to a predominance of ignorance and passion (Tamas and Rajas). For accuracy I should also mention that Ayurveda also describes the karmic stage which underlies all of the above six stages; it can be seen on the energy-informational, ethereal field of a person. How to change the karmic stage will be explained in the second chapter of this book.

This book explains the first stage and to some extent the second one. On these levels everything can be changed and improved and if one applies this knowledge, depression and disease will be forgotten.

I remember how amazed I was when I discovered that in ancient India and China people were astonished when someone became ill and doctors would be disgraced – "How could he let it happen?" The main duty of a doctor at that time was to visit his patients to develop a personal relationship with them through discussing various philosophical and metaphysical topics. He would also advise on lifestyle, diet and social interaction.

Interestingly, the Russian language originated from Sanskrit and belongs to the Indo-European group of languages, and has preserved within it many Sanskrit words and terminology. For example, the Russian word for "doctor" developed from the Sanskrit word "to talk". In ancient times practically

all Ayurvedic doctors were spiritually highly advanced. Famous doctors of ancient times, founders of their own schools and systems were prominent spiritual practitioners and gurus. This was happening outside of Vedic civilization as well. Slavic people turned for help to Magi (healers and priests), Rambam is a famous Jewish scholar, and Avicenna is a known Arabic scholar of medicine and philosophy.

Unfortunately this knowledge is generally written in a complicated way that many find it difficult to understand for a modern man. What I accomplished: after reading many books, and attending multiple seminars on this subject, I have compiled all this information in a simple language. I have seen how this knowledge has helped many people regardless of their spiritual orientation. I am confident that it can help all of you!

The first part of this book is based on my introductory seminars and is suitable for those who have limited understanding of this knowledge. We deliberately left the style of writing very close to the speaking style to make the subject more accessible. Our experience is that educated people can easily understand it. We have been pleased to receive warm feed back from people who are new to this knowledge as well as from those who have studied and worked in the field of eastern medicine and psychology for many years.

Even if your goal is not spiritual and you just want to be happy, healthy and successful then this knowledge can help you to achieve your goals in a practical way.

The scientific view on the subject discussed in this book

“Science is making highly significant developments that have and will have a vast impact on our lives and which have the ability to completely alter our perception of the human psyche, pathology and perspectives of healing. Some of these major developments challenge traditional psychology and psychiatry and the Cartesian/Newtonian paradigm, which is the foundation of Western science. They can radically change our understanding of human nature, culture, history and reality itself.”

Dr. Stanislaw Groff, Professor of Psychiatry and Director of the Psychiatric Research Centre, Maryland

Modern science has come to a conclusion that refutes the materialistic view on life: matter is not material in its essence. The essence, the finest particles do not weigh anything. They are something else and more – information, movement, vibration, sound beyond the range of the human ear.

The characteristics of an object are determined by its inner structure.

Many modern scientists, particularly physicists, came to the conclusion that all matter consists of only waves and nothing else.

There are two types of waves – corked, which refer to matter, and free, which refer to radiation or light. These scientific statements prove the ancient theory which explains that the foundation of the material Universe is simply a movement and there is no other foundation for the Universe except movement.

Anyone familiar with the latest scientific advancements knows that light is a rhythmical vibration or activity (irregular movements).

Light, activity and stability are three main types of movement which are not only the components of all substances but provide the foundation for the environment within which these substances exist.

According to modern science the characteristics of atoms and molecules depend only on their structure and in final analysis they are nothing more than different combinations of these three types of movement.

By studying physics and chemistry we can take any object and analyze its' components from the perspective of movement – rhythmical movement, non-rhythmical movement and an absence of any movement.

In the chemical synthesis of any compound, for example DNA, if we add a radical in one place and take out one atom in another, the characteristic of the substance changes. Thus it is the movement that can be considered as the foundation of the substance of the objective Universe.

The conclusions of Eastern psychology and modern science are similar and affirm that movement appears to be the foundation of the physical Universe. The path is now open for accepting essential ancient teachings which define the foundation of the Universe is mental, and everything that appears to be a combination of mental and physical phenomena, in reality is a result of a psychic experience or purely mental phenomenon.

“Whatever modern physics has discovered until now is described in full in ancient Indian Vedic texts, without any (mathematical) formulas. There were and still are two ways of perceiving the Nature of things. On the one hand it is represented by Western science, which requires proof, experiments, etc. On the other hand is Eastern science – the knowledge received from an outer esoteric source, for example, in the process of meditation. Esoteric knowledge is not taken, it is given to people. At some point the esoteric path was lost and then another way was developed, extremely

difficult and slow. In the last thousand years we have come to the knowledge that has been known in the East for over 5000 years.”

Director of International Institute of Theoretical and Applied Physics Professor A. E. Akimov

Despite the fact that not all of the colleagues agreed with this scientist, his statement is interesting. Certainly the further science progresses, the more it validates what was understood thousands years ago.

This book is dedicated to the “gunas”, the three main energies of the Universe, which determine the path of our lives.

In ancient ages, enlightened sages knew about these three energies and the three different types of movements. The excerpts from the book by I. K. Taimni “Glimpses into the Psychology of Yoga” are given below:

“The physical world, observed in it’s objective aspect of atoms and molecules, is a field of activity of three types of movement, which by their endless variety of combinations develop a flow of material manifestations. If we analyze how the gunas manifest in different aspects of life we see that they have their roots in their own fundamental and special natures, which depend on three types of movement – harmonious, chaotic and static.

Movement and nothing else is the structural foundation of the gunas. Actually, there are only three main types of movement. Movement can be rhythmical or non-rhythmical. The latter type is found in molecules moving in gas or liquid. Such movement is described by the Sanskrit word kriyā (which means an activity) and corresponds to rajas (passion). Movement can be rhythmical or harmonious, for example, light or sound. This is called prakasha meaning a vibration or light; light is a typical example of a vibration, enlightening a mind, where the movement of electrons is a “locked light”. Even sound vibrations evoke cognition of an object – the emitting sound can enlighten the mind. The third type of movement is a fixed condition and is called sthiti or stability. When we carefully study matter the “absence of movement” also can be considered to be a main type of movement which corresponds to tamas (ignorance), as prakasa corresponds to sattva (goodness).

One who has some knowledge of physics and chemistry can take any material object and analyse its composition in terms of rhythmical, non-rhythmical and static movements. Take water for example. What is the composition of water? Its’ mass consists of the chaotically moving molecules H₂O. It is kriya. Each molecule contains two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen, united together and separated by a fixed distance. That is sthiti. In each hydrogen and oxygen atom electrons spin with the speed of light, which we know as “locked light”. That is prakasa. Therefore, any object can be represented as a unique combination of these three fundamental types of movement or, using terms from yoga psychology, as a unique transformation of the gunas. The distinctive qualities of all objects depend on certain unique combinations or structures and change when the structure changes. In this way, only movement can be considered as the base and substance of the objective Universe. In this instance occultism and science are in agreement...”

Part 1

The Three Primary Energies Determining our Lives

Chapter 1

An Introductory Explanation of the “Gunas”

Definition of Guna

We are embarking on the discussion of an extremely important subject. If we understand and put the following ideas into practice, we can change our lives. Even a basic familiarity with these concepts can cause a change for the better. This knowledge can affect how successful, healthy and harmonious we are.

First we need to understand the definition of the word guna. There are two meanings – “rope” and “quality”, although these translations are somewhat superficial. The Yoga-Sutra, which is the foundation of Eastern psychology, gives a more exact, deep explanation – **the gunas are that lie at the core of all qualities.**

According to yoga psychology, **the gunas determine the internal as well as external qualities of everything.** If an object is a combination of different components then the quality of this object will be determined by the quality of all its components.

Eastern psychology explains that gunas influence all spheres of life. The three gunas are the foundation of the manifested Universe, and determine the direction of all aspects of life and the condition of different types of objects. The Bhagavad-Gita (3.27) states that while a living being imagines itself as the cause of all its actions, in reality all activity is performed by the three modes (gunas) of material nature; the living entity can only desire.

The American professor of psychotherapy Abraham Maslow demonstrated by research that ninety-nine percent of people lead a mechanical or unconscious existence. Only one percent adhere to the principles of Eastern psychology, although unaware of these principles, and thus lead a more mindful life-style. These people are more successful than all the ninety-nine percent put together. If you put into practice the knowledge in this book, you can easily become part of this one percent – a healthy, happy and harmonious person who is no longer a slave to lower energies.

Everything is Defined by Subtle Energy

Everything we see in this world is a mixture of different energies. All people, places and things radiate some kind of energy. We all need energy to have healthy, creative lives. If certain forms of energy, such as oil or electricity, were to disappear suddenly, our modern civilization would deteriorate within a few days.

There are different types of energy – gross and subtle, material and spiritual, good and evil. If we received a written message saying “I love you”, we would be delighted; but if the “I hate you” written on the same paper with the same pen, it could be devastating.

Similarly, when we enter a place where a quarrel has occurred, the atmosphere often feels stiffed, producing a feeling of coming in contact with something filthy, even if people may be seating, working, or smiling. If we live mainly in tamas and rajas (ignorance and passion), we may feel quite comfortable in such an atmosphere, even finding pleasure in it, and at times creating similar situations out of a pure environment.

Everything is decided by subtle energy. If our subtle body becomes even slightly active by practicing yoga and chanting mantras or prayers, we will start to see and feel this energy.

Origin and Categories of Energies

The Vedas state that God, Adipurush, is the primeval Supreme Essence, the only Parabrahman from which all energies come.

The three main energies are:

1. Internal (spiritual).
2. Marginal (living entities, souls, living as we do in this material world).
3. External (material or illusory).

The spiritual or internal (1) energy is divided into three types:

- A. Samvit – knowledge.
- B. Sadhni – existence.
- C. Hladini – bliss.

The external or illusory (3) energy is also divided into three energies:

- A. Sattva (goodness) – the energy of sustenance.
- B. Rajas (passion) – the energy of creation.
- C. Tamas (ignorance) – the energy of annihilation.

Four Steps to Understanding the Absolute Truth

The topic of the three gunas will be examined in four main stages, according to the traditional system:

1. What are the gunas?
2. How do they act?
3. How do they cause unity?
4. How can they give liberation?

When a living being enters the material world, he comes under the influence of the gunas. Absolutely everything in the material world is created by these energies. They are like the three primary colours red, blue and yellow; by mixing them, a wide variety of colours and sub-colours are created.

The gunas are the force that gives all beings the opportunity to fulfill their desires, providing an endless variety of ways to do it. This arrangement is made possible by the Supreme Existence.

Knowledge of the three gunas is extremely relevant for us. If we understand it we can achieve liberation, or at least improve all aspects of our life, because these energies are present everywhere.

Sattva is the most important energy, because it determines how happy and successful we can be in life. But it does not come naturally to us: we have to choose it consciously. Rajas and tamas come easily; our civilization welcomes rajas and its qualities of passion, activity and creativity.

The gunas permeate everything – our clothes, food, speech and even our thoughts. When people quarrel, this is a manifestation of the energy of tamas. When a man lusts over beautiful women, this is rajas. When a person meditates, performs yoga and wishes happiness for everybody, this is sattva. It is tamas when we are half asleep or inert, or if we show signs of this destructive energy by thinking negatively about someone or wishing them harm.

When we learn to see the gunas in everything and how to change from one to another, it allows us to control our life and our karma.

We need to see through the eyes of knowledge to recognize the gunas everywhere and to choose the guna of sattva (goodness). The guna of goodness gives liberation from sins and bad habits and enables us to rise to the transcendental (spiritual) level. Conversely, it is possible to be engaged in spiritual practices and yet be in rajas and tamas. In this situation, even many years of spiritual practice will not bring enlightenment but only the opposite – we can destroy our own lives and the lives of those around us.

Success in Life Depends on the Right Choice

I can always choose; but I should know that even if I don't, I have still made a choice.

Jean-Paul Sartre

1. When we know the symptoms of the gunas and how they bind, we can determine which energy is controlling us. This can be compared to a map; you look at it and see where you are now and where you need to go. Without a map any journey can become difficult or lead to a tragic result.

2. By knowing what qualities are favourable for becoming a harmonious person, we are in a better position to make the right choice.

3. If we choose the guna of goodness, it will enable us to become happy and successful in all aspects of life.

4. According to Ayurveda, all psychological and psychiatric problems develop when rajas and tamas become active.

5. The ultimate achievement of the guna of goodness is a swift purification and transition to the transcendental level.

6. At this stage we can become free from the influence of all the gunas and achieve true freedom.

Modern western society is considered a free civilization, but from the perspective of enlightened sages, this is a society of slaves entangled by the lower energies and instincts. Everyone serves their senses, especially their tongue and sexual organs, and have a predictable reaction to everything – “if praised we are happy, and if criticised we are unhappy”. Recently I met an American man in California who seriously practiced yoga and various forms of meditation. He noted sadly, “Here in America everyone is crazy about food and sex”.

The Functions of the Gunas

1. Bind: They constrict and restrain all living beings, causing the forgetfulness of their true nature: eternal souls, pure Being, Consciousness and Bliss. Gunas force us to plunge into the temporary illusive life of this world.

2. Create variety: Like the three primary colours – red, blue and yellow – that are the basis of all colours and sub-colours, the three gunas are the foundation of all varieties of manifestations, whose purpose is to attract our attention and keep us here in the material world.

3. Permeate: Everything in this world is in the gunas: our bodies, the air we breathe, words, thoughts, objects, etc... For example, clothing can also be in the three gunas. A dirty shirt made of artificial materials is in ignorance, whereas a clean shirt made of natural materials is in goodness. Thoughts, subconscious agendas and arrangements are also in the gunas. Lazy and aggressive thinking is in ignorance. Thoughts of various desires for food, sex, work and honour are in passion. Thoughts in goodness are calm, magnanimous, and focused on self-realization and helping others to achieve happiness. These people attract others without any special effort. Only a few moments in the presence

with this kind of person, who thinks about God and service to others, will bring joy, peace of mind and tranquil breathing.

Our natural environment is also in various gunas. For example, a lake in tamas is dirty, stinky and barely worthy of being considered a lake; it is more similar to a swamp. A lake in rajas is usually in a city, surrounded by different man-made things; a place where lovers meet and modern music plays. A lake in sattva is surrounded by beautiful nature with clean water and wildlife, where one may be inspired to meditate and the air is filled with prana (living energy).

It is considered to be very difficult to overcome the gunas because everything is saturated by them; we need clear vision and consciousness to be able to see how they act and how to become free of their influence.

The guna of ignorance (tamas) is very dangerous because it is destructive from the beginning to the end. The destructive power of tamas can be compared to radiation; it is invisible yet capable of destroying the physical, psychological and spiritual aspects of our lives when we come in contact with it. If we went to Chernobyl for a holiday, we might think we were enjoying ourselves, drinking, eating, etc... but at the same time we would be completely destroying not only our own life but whatever we touch. Although we would be unaware of the effect it has, this kind of trip would bring suffering for ourselves and others, even our clothing would become contaminated.

The guna of passion (rajas) is activity performed with a goal to savour result of those actions. Karma-yoga is the method for overcoming this guna: the act of renouncing the fruits of one's labour by offering them to God.

The guna of goodness (sattva) is any action which purifies our consciousness.

When we clearly see our current condition we can raise to the transcendental state. Therefore, it is very important to liberate from ignorance, become well-established in passion and begin acting in goodness to achieve liberation.

Subject	Goodness	Passion	Ignorance
Symptoms	Cleanliness	Unlimited desires	
	Enlightenment	Lust	Anger
	Freedom from sin	Attachment	Grief
	Self-control	Separatism	Illusion
	Joy	Hard work for prestige and money	Violence
Result	Truthfulness		
	Knowledge	Suffering	Madness
	Happiness	Greed	Illusion

Questions and Answers

Replacing Ignorance with Passion

Question: What exactly does it mean to “become established in passion”?

Answer: Tamas is inertia, laziness, sleepiness and filth. It has to go away. There is a saying: “A brahman (teacher, priest) is not sorry for the time spent on cleanliness”. First of all, we need to become active and move away from apathy, to arouse curiosity and thirst for knowledge. People in rajas are very curious and active. It means to become established in passion: to replace ignorance with passion and minimize ignorance in our life to a minimum.

Disadvantages of Television

Question: What guna is watching TV?

Answer: TV is predominantly in the mode of ignorance, as it makes a person passive. To a certain degree the same can be told about computers (for the expectation when it is a part of your work). Children in particular should be protected from the virtual world of TV as it gradually saps their intelligence, and they become more dull and stupid. You will never meet a successful, active and happy person who spends more than one hour a day watching TV. One professor told me, “I got everything I have in life because I threw away my TV”. Despite this, some programs and films are in goodness and can be watched, such as those dealing with spiritual or philosophical subjects or about nature.

Chapter 2

Spiritual Life and the Gunas

“People where you live,” the little prince said, “grow five thousand roses in one garden... yet they don’t find what they’re looking for...

They don’t find it,” I answered.

And yet what they’re looking for could be found in a single rose, or a little water...”

Of course,” I answered.

And the little prince added, “But eyes are blind. You have to look with the heart.”

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, The Little Prince

Each of us is engaged in various types of spiritual practices to some extent and want to progress spiritually; otherwise we would not be interested in this kind of knowledge. But we need to realize that if we are established in the lower gunas, it is practically impossible to attain higher spiritual levels, regardless of how many years we practice. This is why it is extremely important to understand the gunas.

Religious Practices in the Lower Gunas Do Not Purify

If a priest, Rabbi or Guru is not mainly in sattva, he will neither be able to progress spiritually, nor help his followers to progress. Just consider how the majority of problems and wars in this world have been started by so-called spiritual leaders who were confident that what they did was right. For example, during the Crusades the Christian preachers used theft and violence to convert others to their faith; they did not consider it sinful to throw a pagan child into a bonfire.

If we are in rajas we think, “My religion is the only right one. To bring goodness in the world means converting everyone to my religion”.

In tamas we think, “Violence is required and should be used.”

People in rajas engage in service with the purpose of gaining some result or benefit for themselves. This is why these religious practices are on the level of, “I will pray and God will help me by fulfilling my needs”. This is very common in modern society. We often come across religious symbols being sold for money, with the claim that they can bring happiness. People often come to religion for recognition, power or wealth; people organize pilgrimages to holy places so that they can become rich, establish/improve personal life and so on.

Many people believe that Paganism is another form of worship, a form of Polytheism. Yet at some point it becomes a worship for the sake of material profit – “God, send me this, or save me from that”. In the construct of this type of a mindset, if our desires are fulfilled – we say “God is good”, but if not – “God is bad” or people say that Satan has won. In some cases people ask a question, “What happened to God? What on earth is He thinking? How did He let THIS or THAT happen?” Only the sattva guna can truly inspire us to follow the path of spiritual perfection, helping us to become harmonious and balanced personalities.

A Combination of Passion and Goodness Can Positively Change Situations

If the person is in goodness he experiences happiness, contentment and is able to hear his intuition. If we do not experience these symptoms, it means we are bound by passion and ignorance. **If**

everything surrounding us becomes permeated by goodness, it permeates us as well. Ignorance and passion come easily into our lives, but for goodness to come, we have to work first and input effort into achieving it. In order to become elevated into goodness, we must learn how to act proactively (which includes doing things in advance).

If we are living in ignorance, we will always complain about unfulfilled expectations, but in reality have little interest in changing ourselves. To make changes and progress, rajas and sattva are required. This is important for all of us, not only those engaged in spiritual practices. There is a real life story that illustrates it.

* * *

A bomber of the USSR North Navy crashed due to a failure of the navigation system. The coastal service had sent the airplane in the opposite direction of the coast. When the air crew understood that they had been sent in the wrong direction, they turned around but there was not enough fuel to return to their base. They abandoned the airplane, parachuted and landed in the Barents Sea. They had three rafts. The captain thought they would not make it due to being too far of shore and it was too cold, so he shot himself. The second pilot got drunk and after a few weeks was found frozen to death. The navigator, a young lieutenant, had a dear wife and baby at home. His intense desire to see them again influenced his decision to make it at any cost. He paddled on his raft for two days without any food or water, using only his hands. When he reached the shore he had to walk for many hours, finally losing consciousness within sight of a fisher-man's cottage. He was found and after regaining consciousness, was brought home to his family without any serious harm. This is the guna of passion (action, determination) combined with goodness (optimism, fearlessness) – together they can become a powerful force that can create miracles in all areas of our life.

* * *

When we are in passion we try to change things; when in ignorance we just complain about our illnesses without a true intention to heal from them. **Most sick people on an inner/ energy level actually want to remain as they are.**

In passion, one who is sick will try first and foremost to **relieve the symptoms** by taking powerful Western/conventional medicine. The symptoms can actually disappear (for example, some tablets can eliminate a fever in one hour) but damage is also caused to our body because each tablet has many side effects. In passion we do not consider the consequences of the damage done, and our main concern is “Now that it is gone I can get back to work/partying/etc.”.

I have a relative who is in his seventies. When he was young he once read about how dangerous and harmful almost all chemical medicines are; as a result he stopped taking them completely. After a couple of years all his ailments had gone and today he is still healthy and physically active on his farm.

Chapter 3

How to Raise Children Harmoniously

Child Rearing and the Gunas

*Don't bother just to be better than your contemporaries or predecessors.
Try to be better than yourself.*
William Faulkner

According to Ayurveda, it is important to undergo various processes of physical and mental purification for at least one year before conceiving a child. It is also necessary to choose a suitable day for conception, to attract a pure and harmonious soul that will bring happiness to everyone. A pregnancy in sattva can be a source of tremendous happiness and benefit; the mother can receive countless spiritual and psychological realizations.

Unfortunately, modern doctors are not in Sattva in their majority. Western modern medical science – allopathic medicine – in predominantly is in passion (rajas) and ignorance (tamas).

* * *

Recently one lady informed me how doctors had tried to dissuade her from having her child, saying she was too old (thirty-eight) to give birth to, that the child might have defects such as Down's syndrome, she would need to have serious medical tests done, and that the best option was to have an abortion. I know many other similar cases.

* * *

In rajas, people are strongly attached to their job. Many women work throughout their pregnancies, and some also return to work as soon as possible after birth, although for a proper child development breastfeeding for at least two years is highly recommended. In the worst cases children may grow up with little love for their parents, and leave them in a sheltered housing as they become older, as a payback.

It is often due to the influence of passion on the mother – rather than spending valuable time with her child, she could immediately return to work, with little concern for their proper feeding or having a sattvic environment. But if children are raised properly they can bring great fortune to everyone. Even very busy parents need to find at least some time each day to focus on their child.

Upbringing in Ignorance: parents consume alcohol or take drugs, physically abuse each other or their child (it is considered that before the age of five, children should be treated like God and should never be subjected to physical violence, especially girls). Ignorance is when parents listen to heavy/disturbing music, watch pornography or horror movies, or the house is dirty. Ignorance is also present when teachers use force on children or sexually abuse them, come to school under the influence of alcohol, use illicit language and so on.

Upbringing in Passion: it is the most popular model of bringing up today. Parents focus on giving stuff to their child, or helping them to achieve some material wealth or power. These days it is extremely common for parents to give their children very little love and warmth; their main goal is to support their kids (and themselves) materially. They send them to prestige schools, buying expensive

presents in an attempt to fulfill their duty as parents. This enables them to remain preoccupied with their jobs and social lives, but they forget that children need unconditional love most of all. Their priority is for their child to become externally successful by getting some impressive position, status or rank; it shows that their child has become truly established. Parents are attached to their own children and indifferent to others.

Teachers in passion have no interest in developing the moral qualities of character or spiritual values of their students. Their main concern is to provide as much information as possible to help them achieve better exam results. No one is interested in whether the delivered knowledge is valuable in real life, as long as the students can obtain a prestigious diploma. Competitive models of education have become very popular. Most schools are located in large cities (with rajas predominance). Parents take their kids to multiple extracurricular classes (dancing, sports, etc) which increases guns of passion in children.

Teachers and parents are not aware that early sexual life, pornography, erotics influence the adolescents in a destructive way. If the element of ignorance is added, the child is familiarized with sexuality subjects before puberty, in a visual manner, this closes of their top energy centres, and the child become incapable of studying and processing information well. This way children are taught at early age, they become the slaves of their desires and urges.

For example, in Switzerland there are kindergartens, where children are told that homosexuality is a norm. In Germany they distribute Kama-Sutra for children for free, where they are taught how to have sex. In Canada, in Ontario, where I currently reside, the proposal was approved at the parliament level to introduce graphic sexual education curriculum from the first grade (age 6–7), where a lot is shown in pictures and again, the introduction of “the norm” or homosexuality” and so on.

As of now, this horror starts 3–4 years later. Thus, a relative of my wife in the age of 10–11, after these classes was taught how to put on a condom (on the mannequin) and also that you need to have a condom with you always, just in case (but it won't be needed if she decides to have sex with a girlfriend).

It was a norm in advanced civilizations to kill those who defile and corrupt children and adolescents, condemning them for a miserable life, and dooming society for extinction, high levels of crime and compete destruction of the institute of family.

We had a nanny from Lithuania, who told us that her close relative who worked in England, shared with her, with shock that there are more than ever bars where a woman can visit with an infant. There is loud music, smoke, they are drinking alcohol, and look for new sexual partners between breastfeeding...

Upbringing in Goodness: it is important for mother to eat fresh and nourishing food – food in goodness allows mother to stay healthy and helps the child develop properly. The best place to live in is in the countryside, surrounded by nature; it makes it easier for mother to remain relaxed and peaceful during the pregnancy. She should also associate with those who are loving and supportive, avoiding those who are heavily influenced by lower or negative energies.

When a child is raised in goodness, the home is clean and located in the countryside with an atmosphere of mutual respect and harmony. Parents, particularly the mother, consider the upbringing of children to be the primary duty. Children receive ample love. When they make a mistake the parent's reaction is “You have made a mistake”, but never “You are bad”. Parents nurture their child according to their individual talents and desires and not based on their own selfish motives, “My child must become a diplomat, celebrity, doctor, lawyer, etc...” Their prime concern is to make sure that their child becomes a balanced, virtuous person. Parents watch the diet of the child and feed him natural sattvic food, choose his association and communication. Parents develop altruistic mindset from the childhood. They teach him to be generous, not an egoistic consumer. Parents teach to say a prayer before meals, take part in charitable events, help others, be modest. They prepare a child to a happy family life, teaching him that family is a value of utmost importance.

A system where boys and girls are educated separately is a main condition of raising children in sattva especially in adolescence. Schools located near parks, on the nature, in beautiful places are in goodness. The mother, ideally, stays at home, or works part-time for her own pleasure, and this work does not interfere with a child's upbringing.

I read that minister of education of one of the Canadian provinces admitted that it is best for children's health and happiness when the mother is staying at home with children.

Raising a child begins even before conception. Approximately one year in advance parents must start cleansing their bodies of toxins, purify their consciousness and subtle bodies from resentment, anger and other negative emotions. The act of conception is performed in a responsible manner – in a clean atmosphere, during an astrologically auspicious time, in an elevated state of consciousness and preceded by prayer.

During the pregnancy everything is arranged so as to allow the mother to stay in a loving and pleasant environment. It is understood that the pregnancy and the first two or three years of a child's life are essential periods for their physical and psychological development. At this stage it is important to relate properly to the child, giving him plenty of time and affection.

There are special methods for raising a child which we have only touched on here.

From the age of **six to fifteen**, parents should be somewhat strict with their child, because they know that during this period they need some restrictions. Otherwise, if they are given the freedom to do whatever they want, they would start to eat all kinds of junk food, and may even end up smoking, taking alcohol or drugs, watching pornography, etc...

From the age of fifteen parents should adopt a more friendly relationship with their child. By this point his character has already been formed, so it is generally unfeasible and utterly unnecessary to maintain a strict control over him.

When comparing Western systems of education, the English private school system used to have, and still has to some extent, a substantial element of sattva. For example, such schools were usually located in rural areas, surrounded by nature. Before the age of fourteen boys were disciplined very strictly, but once their individual characters were formed they were treated like gentlemen. Yet once the lament of passion and ignorance was introduced – free sex – the whole system stopped working.

How to Protect Your and Your Child's Future

Taking care of children is an extremely serious matter; it is essential to understand that **children are our future. They are our future both directly and indirectly: directly they continue our genetic lineage and indirectly (on a subtle, energetic level) they increase our future energy. Our future is greatly affected by how we care for and relate to our children. Yet this potential power can be destroyed by over-indulgence or by excessive fear for them and their future. On the other hand, negligence can also be damaging.**

For example, influenced by passion, a father who is absorbed in his work may only see his children when they are asleep or briefly at the weekend. Because he is working to supply all necessities for his family, he thinks that his wife is responsible for looking after their children because she is not working, and thus justifies his behaviour. But they also need their father's love – the energy of the Sun (yang). He may experience success for some time despite ignoring this important part of his life. However his actions create a conflict which triggers nature's defensive system; nature does not forgive the neglect of children. As a result illness, depression and financial difficulties will come, and problems will arise in various relationships. Not only the individual and his family can be affected, but society as a whole. The effects' can be even worse if it is the mother that becomes overwhelmed by or absorbed in her career.

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Such women frequently come to me for consultations in Moscow. I met one lady, divorced and in her late thirties, who wanted a normal family and more children. But at the same time she was neglecting her child from her first marriage, although by sending him to the best school and buying him expensive toys she imagined herself to be adequately doing her duty. Why should nature give her more children?

* * *

A pleasant, pregnant woman used to work at one bank in Jerusalem where I had an account. She stopped working just a few days before giving birth and I thought I would not see her for a long time. But three months later when I popped into the bank, I was surprised to see her again. I asked her if she was okay and she joyfully replied, “Yes, everything is great, the baby is wonderful”. When I asked why she had returned, she explained that her maternity pay only covered the first three months and the bank would ask her to leave if she did not work. She worked from eight to ten hours a day and most of her salary was spent on child-minding fees. Her main concern was whether she would get promoted the following summer. This shows passion in action.

Such is the life of many modern women, regardless of the assertion of modern scientists and psychologists that the longer a child is breastfed the healthier he will be, physically and psychologically. During one of the Dalai Lama’s visits to America he was asked, “What is your main message?” People were stunned and confused when he replied, “Ladies, breastfeed your babies!”

* * *

Recently one businessman came to me for a consultation. His company secretly inspects and monitors the conduct of babysitters when the parents are absent. He almost went bankrupt because so few people wanted to use this service. Parents were worried that if they found out the babysitter was unsuitable, this would affect their work schedule or their social life. Their main concern was that at least there should be someone to look after their children. Eighty percent of those who used his service decided to change their babysitter because they could see how badly their child was being cared for. This is passion – to leave a baby with a practical stranger rather than hinder their own enjoyment.

Chapter 4 Being Proactive

Life should be lived now; it can't be put aside all the time.
Irvin Yalom

Being Proactive brings Success in Life

Sattva means that we act proactively in all aspects of our life, that we plan our lives in a conscious manner rather than carelessly reacting to things or being carried along by others. One of the most important areas of our life is how and what we eat – the eating process is connected to our mind and nervous system and is the first and most basic step to come to sattva. We should be thoughtful about what, how, where and whom we eat with. Of course, we can eat quickly or while walking around, paying no attention to the actual food and process of eating; this however will lead to disease and aggravate the nervous system. It is better to sit peacefully, to say a prayer before eating and spend a little more time if we want to eat under the influence of goodness. Many things in our lives are determined by the way we eat. If we eat properly, it will be significantly easier to establish ourselves in goodness and thus experience improved health and inner peace.

If we are considering marriage, we should spend a few years preparing for it – read relevant books, study how to develop harmony in family life and how to find a suitable partner. If we want to go to university to learn something new, we should research at least one year before. We need to understand why it is important to us, and if it will suit our nature, mission and goal in life.

Sleep is also important. We always have many things to do, and to go to bed at ten or eleven in the evening may seem impossible. This happens daily over many years and has a negative influence on our health. At the beginning, it may seem difficult to train ourselves to go to bed early because our mind tries to find excuses. But if we are determined, we will see how everything around us changes, even our relatives will suddenly begin going to bed early.

Regarding employment, we may complain that we find it difficult to work, are undervalued or do not get promoted. But we need to consider how much time we regularly give for self-education. According to statistics received by American researchers, if we spend at least one hour a day on training ourselves in our chosen occupation, by reading or taking relevant courses to upgrade our qualifications, a powerful energy is produced that increases our chances of success, causing unexpected things to happen. Suddenly we may get promoted, or interesting projects or job offers in good companies come your way. In order to make this happen, we must be proactive – this is exactly how successful people act.

Genuine self-education implies sattva. When in ignorance we open a book, but have no interest to read or understand it, when in passion we cannot concentrate, are distracted all the time, or we spend five hours at a time studying and then do nothing for two weeks. It is better to study short periods as long as it is regular – for example, such studying is recommended for those training themselves in a new language. This is education in goodness.

Politics and the Gunas

Today it is almost impossible to find a political or social system in sattva. They are mainly in passion: most politicians focus on winning an election and snatching lots of money from the state. Much effort is invested in looking good and putting on a show, for example, charity work is performed only under the condition that it gets huge publicity.

When in ignorance politicians physically abuse each other, engage in revolutions or rebellions. I remember once reading, “There are politicians and there are statesmen”; the difference between them is that the latter’s aims to serve his country and citizens. Statesmen put lots of energy into long – term projects and plan better for the future, which means that sattva is dominant.

* * *

While in New Zealand recently, I made contact with an old acquaintance that I had not seen for many years. He has lived there for a long time and told me how well everything is organised. Occasionally he works part-time at a hospital as an interpreter and was surprised to see their approach to health care. For example, just after a patient has had surgery, someone is assigned to find out the cause of their disease: poor diet, social problems or something else. Then a medical specialist comes (dietician, social worker, etc...) to help solve the patient’s problems. For patients recovering from surgery or some illness, a caretaker may go to their house and install handrails in the shower and other places. This is an intelligent approach: if this person falls down and is injured, it will cause suffering for him and unnecessary disturbance and expense for the state.

The Police there have established a department for overseeing multicultural issues, although there are no racial problems. They are trying to prevent such problems from happening in the future by educating people and monitoring potential racial issues. These and other signs (practically no corruption, an excellent educational system, sincere kindness) indicate that there is a strong influence of sattva in this society. Why is this influence so strong? Because these people are the most sattvic I have encountered.

Physical Exercise and the Gunas

If we want to be healthy and have no weight problems, we should engage regularly in physical exercise. Ayurveda states that we should choose a form of physical exercise according to our individual needs. Swimming, fast walking and hiking are good for both men and women. Rowing is good for men. Modern sports played at sub-professional level and higher are in passion and therefore can be harmful, not only physically but also intellectually. Many doctors can confirm it. How often do we think of the words “sportsman” and “intellectual” as synonymous? Bodybuilding is pure passion and can reduce sexual potency and vitality. Many bodybuilders drink artificial supplements and can have quite negative reactions when they stop exercising; they become flabby and look older than they really are. Large, attractive, artificially pumped muscles are not indicators of health and strength; however, if we are in tamas it is good to engage in sports as this helps prevent laziness.

The best exercise is Hatha-yoga because it enables our body to come quickly to a balanced state. In contrast to modern sports that cause us to feel completely shattered after two hours of training, a few hours of yoga will cause a feeling of elation, increase our energy levels and boost our intellectual abilities. Yoga in passion, by contrast, appears comical and has little in common with what the great Masters teach. For example, nowadays, American companies organise yoga competitions or advertise, “We will open your chakras at \$100 per chakra” or “Yoga will increase your sexual potency”.

To Be Proactive Initially Requires Effort

There is a good phrase in a book by Robin Sharma: “Diamonds get formed through intense pressure”. Beneficial pressure, however, is not such pressure that is in passion. It is important to develop a habit by doing an action and maintain it through constant and intense repetition; this is a beneficial condition of pressure. The terms ‘consistent’ and ‘maintain’ belong to the guna of goodness.

For example, getting out of bed early in the morning is difficult to get accustomed to at the beginning. If the Sun has a weak influence in our horoscope, we will be inclined to get up late. However, if we take a shower after 9 am, our body will absorb toxins that were produced while sleeping, causing us to poison ourselves. Those of us who are categorised as 'night owls' become more active and productive in the evening. Nevertheless, a 'night owl' can become an 'early bird', but that requires substantial effort. Up to eighty percent of us can get up earlier if our horoscopes are reasonable and we have some desire to change; this can take a few months or sometimes years. The main thing is to have faith in ourselves and to change our outlook; thus our vitality and energy will increase with persistent effort.

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When I raised this subject in one group, it generated a heated discussion; many were doubtful that it was possible to become an 'early bird'. Yet several months later one woman from this seminar, who had always considered herself a 'night owl', started to change her daily schedule gradually and began to go to bed early so she could get up before 6 am. She happily related to the entire group how it had improved her life and health.

Chapter 5

Seeing the Gunas in our Daily Lives

Everything in this world goes through three stages: creation (rajas), maintenance (sattva) and annihilation (tamas).

Conscious Choice of Gunas Can Help Establish Successful and Lasting Projects

If we want to create a solid foundation for any successful project, we need to attract the appropriate energy consciously.

To create something we have to be active; any kind of creation in this world requires activity – rajas. Although creating takes effort, it is even more difficult to maintain (sattva) what we have created, because it involves consistent effort on a daily basis.

For us to destroy something, in most cases, little effort is required – destruction (tamas) often comes by itself. To produce a good car countless number of people need to work for many years, but any inexperienced driver can demolish it in just a few minutes. The same applies to our lives; **if the guna of ignorance enters, our life can be ruined in a moment.** In the Vedas it is stated that Brahma is responsible for creation, Vishnu for maintenance and Shiva for annihilation.

Each type of energy has a purpose and value; by understanding this we can make intelligent choices to help us in whatever situation we are in. We should consciously transfer ourselves to different gunas, to choose the guna whose energy we need at any given moment.

Passion is required for creative work, for example, to develop and start a new business project. This is not an easy task – passion means applying substantial effort. People who are mainly in passion are extremely energetic. Warriors (ksatriyas) must fight, and for battle they need huge amounts of energy. If we were to try to hold an ancient sword in our hand, even for ten minutes, it would be practically impossible. In history books, we read that battles used to continue for many hours or even days. In modern society wars also require great physical and psychological strength, and without passion and energy it would not be possible to endure it. That is why in Vedic culture warriors were allowed to have a few wives, to eat fish and drink wine; all these things gave the warrior the passionate energy he needed.

But after creation comes the most difficult stage: maintenance. For example, if we started a new business which was beginning to operate and develop successfully, we would need to come to sattva to further maintain it. We would have to go to work in time, prepare to meet clients, file regular financial reports, provide good customer service regardless of the kind of people we have to deal with, not let up when the business is going well etc. For modern businessmen, who are mostly under the influence of passion, these things are incredibly difficult. According to statistics, out of the huge number of new businesses created annually, only a few stay afloat after the first five years.

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England is considered to have the most beautiful lawns. Once a foreign journalist wanted to find out England's secret of success so he enquired from some local gardeners. The answer was, "It is not difficult – the grass should be trimmed every morning at exactly 9 am and if there is no rain, it has to be watered." "That's all?" the journalist asked. "Yes, and do this for 300 years." This is the nature of action in sattva.

How to Create Paradise at Home

If we want to keep our home in sattva, it is necessary to keep it pleasant, tidy and clean every day.

It is essential to make our bed; a bed is considered to be in tamas and therefore if a bed is not made, it spreads ignorance. Even if we are very tired after coming home from work, we need to spend at least twenty minutes cleaning. It is difficult but you will feel how a completely different energy spreads around the home. If we top this off by taking a shower, we will be plunged into a completely different atmosphere. The science of Vastu (the origin of Feng-Shui) states that, “Even if your house is correctly built and organized, if it is dirty (ignorance) inside or outside, the energy of Rahu enters and quickly destroys everything”. The health and relationships of the inhabitants of the house are the first things to be destroyed.

To have family relationships in sattva, it is necessary to cook fresh food at home for ourselves and to come together to eat as a family at least several times a week. Most semi-finished foods contain passion and ignorance. If we want harmonious relationships at home, we must cook our own food, using fresh, high quality ingredients, and do it with love.

Modern marriages are usually established in passion as the main focus is sexual compatibility; as a result of it, they do not last. Sattva means maintenance: spouses respect each other, never complain or argue (particularly in front of children), the husband regularly presents flowers to his wife, and the wife makes herself look attractive for her husband and never directly contradicts him. It is said if there is peace in a family then the Goddess of fortune, Lakshmi, enters into home.

Sages state that a woman is compared to a witch if she does not greet her husband with a smile when he comes home from work, speaks harshly or does not keep their home clean; she is considered to be stupid if she argues and disagrees with her husband rather than taking a more flexible and understanding position. If a woman argues with a man after he has expressed what he thinks is a most intelligent statement, even if she is right, it is a painful stab for his big, delicate ego and he will not forgive her.

This is not only true for marital relationships. A long time ago it was noted that the statement, “The truth comes from arguments”, was concocted by people in passion. As Dale Carnegie has so accurately noticed: “Only enemies come from arguments.” The more intensely emotional the arguments, the more enmity is created.

Questions and Answers

Sattva and Modern Living

An important question to consider is how we can stop our feelings from becoming agitated while living in the big city, driving in our car or going to work. If we live in a city, our first and main priority should be to choose a suitable house or flat; after all, most of our time will be spent at home. Before we make a choice it is good to find out about our neighbours. It is important to follow the basic rules of Vastu-Shastra (the original ancient Indian text and source of Feng-Shui). It is also essential to have a park or natural scenery nearby as that will help to make it more sattvic.

If that is not possible, then we can create a more sattvic atmosphere within our home. **We absorb the energy of our surroundings; therefore the atmosphere at home should be sattvic by maintaining high standards of cleanliness, starting with washing ourselves regularly. A home is heavily contaminated by TV; if we have one, we should try to choose shows that will lead to higher consciousness, although these are difficult to find.**

When we travel around the city we should avoid looking at billboards, shop displays, etc. We can listen to classes, wish everyone well, be friendly toward others, chant prayers or mantras, even meditate, or think and make plans for the next day. Basically, we should be able to switch ourselves off from external objects. It is good to have an audio player in our car which allows us to listen to classes and audio books.

If we cannot keep our eyes away from advertisements, then in our mind we should at least try to create an objective picture. Try to remember that only two percent of all advertised products are actually useful. Generally it is better to try to avoid watching and listening to adverts; if this is not possible, we can remember that the advertised product in and of itself will not make us happy. For example, when we see cigarette advertisements, we should just visualise how these “happy” people are inhaling the tobacco smoke and how this black energy enters their lungs and entire body. Remember the story of the actor and model, Alan Landers: he was the face of Winston cigarettes during the 1960’s and 1970’s and died from throat cancer. Once his modelling career was over, he became even more famous as an activist for major antismoking campaigns.

A job should be viewed as a way to use our talents for the benefit of the whole world. Regardless of what kind of work we do, we should do it with all our heart.

It is important to carefully choose whom we associate with. It is better to limit how often we spend time with people in passion. We should completely avoid those who are in ignorance, refrain even from answering them and ignore them completely.

Try to be a channel for pure energies in this world and to give it to everyone you meet. Then a balanced and peaceful life is possible, even in a city. But even so it is still important to remember that cities in fact take energy away from us, particularly large ones, as they are manifestations of ignorance and passion. Therefore it is vital to have a source from which the energy of goodness can be obtained. As we mentioned before, it can be from associating with exalted individuals, attending seminars, reading literature that contains wisdom and love, regular visits countryside, etc.

The Guna of Ignorance – Instant Energy of Destruction

*Fire, diseases and debts should be dealt with immediately.
Ayurvedic Wisdom*

The guna of ignorance is practically never needed and has to be avoided and ignored.

Why does it have to be avoided? As previously mentioned, this energy is similar to a nuclear weapon: once under its influence, destruction and ruin immediately follow. Just consider how much time and resources are needed to manufacture, for example, a Mercedes or BMW. Huge institutions are involved in this – two hundred and fifty thousand employees work for BMW in Germany only! And now, think of how much energy and time are needed to destroy a new car? One wise Ayurvedic doctor once told me, “Everything bad in this world happens quickly and unexpectedly.”

Recently I had a conversation with one acquaintance that lives in northern Israel. There was some trouble in his family: he had to go to hospital due to a bad cardiogram result, even though for many years he had enjoyed good health and used to work at least twelve hours a day. Even while being in hospital, while receiving phone calls from colleagues, he would talk only about his job. He was completely oblivious to the cause of his illness and had little interest in changing his lifestyle. This is the typical attitude of someone in passion, and if passion is not transformed to goodness it degrades to ignorance.

Ignorance in the form of diseases, scandalous break-ups in relationships, fire, burglary and accidents generally come into our lives quickly and unexpectedly. If we are wise and sattvic, we will

be able to notice the signs that imply their approach, and avoid them easily through a proactive lifestyle and mentality. Even the situations that come due to karma and are unavoidable, we can accept with gratitude, tranquility and love; thus by the influence of sattva, we can come out from a bad situation as a winner. There have been many great politicians and military leaders who were able to turn their mistakes and losses into great victories.

One of the signs of ignorance is performing useless and meaningless activities: checking emails ten times a day, pointless chattering on the phone, watching the 384th episode of a TV series, as well as any aimless and meaningless activity and inactivity. **“There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all,”** stated Peter Drucker, a management specialist.

Ignorance is dangerous and must be avoided at any cost. Even two minutes of association with an ignorant person can later cause one to unexplainably become aggressive, fatigued or ill seriously.

Despite all this, ignorance is also needed to some extent. For example, correct sleeping (sleep as a state of consciousness belongs to ignorance), demolishing old buildings, etc.

We are composed of an eternal spirit, souls that are beyond the gunas and transcendental in nature, yet we are within material bodies which are tamasic (ignorant) in nature. Some may find this statement offensive: How is it that my body or the body of my loved ones are in ignorance when we have such beautiful eyes, nails and hair? Undoubtedly, the eyes are the mirror of the soul and if a person is spiritually advanced, in sattva, then their eyes are truly attractive. But if they were to be plucked out and put on a plate, it would be impossible to enjoy them anymore. Regarding hair and nails – Judaism says that if a pregnant woman walks on nails, she will suffer a miscarriage. In Vedic culture it is believed that if a hair falls into food, all the food is contaminated and should be thrown away.

Just imagine what would happen to our body if we forgot to brush our teeth or did not wash ourselves for a few days. We would stink and our friends would pray that we keep our mouth closed. Similarly, if we are in tamas (selfish, jealous, greedy), even if we brush our teeth, we will still give of a foul odor when we talk. Modern research shows that if one lives for sixty years, twenty years of these are spent sleeping, four years going to the toilet and even more for eating. Our physical body requires all this time, and usually the lower our consciousness the more it requires; yet as soon as the soul leaves the body, the body begins to rot and decompose.

Chapter 6

Optimum Sleep – The Source of Health and Happiness

Ayurveda states that a woman's health rests on three key principles: optimum sleep, optimum diet and healthy sex. In my opinion, these are no less important for men.

Sleep is ignorance, yet it is necessary for our body.

The more we are in ignorance, however, the more we want to sleep. When in sattva we require less time for sleeping – it has been proven that even four hours of sleep is enough for our nervous system. If our life is interesting and has a defined goal, then we just will have no need for lots of sleep. Generally people believe that it is necessary to sleep at least eight hours; but if we sleep properly, we will need much less. Sleeping is also affected by the gunas. **Sleeping in sattva means to go to bed before 10 pm**, or 11 pm at least. Sleep between 9 pm and 1 am is the most valuable, as it is the only time the nervous system rests and the long-term memory is not working. Everything in nature sleeps at this time; only modern tamasic-rajasic people are awake. One interesting point worth noting is that the concept of 'night owls' and 'early birds' only appeared quite recently. In the past practically everyone was an early bird. Scientists in Canada – a country with one of the highest rates of insomnia – are convinced that most problems with insomnia appeared only because people started to go to sleep later.

Preparing for Sleep

Two hours before going to sleep, it is necessary to prepare by doing the following:

1. Ayurveda does not recommend taking a shower less than two hours before sleeping – it weakens the energy field of the body and aggravates the nervous system, especially if the shower is cold. If it is necessary for us to take a shower, it has to be warm.

2. Before going to sleep we should avoid eating; the food will not be digested and will turn into toxins and fat. It is best to take slightly sweetened warm milk at this time as it calms the nervous system and strengthens the intellect. The first rule for those looking for to put on weight is – eat after 6 pm! And if the food is in ignorance-passion, like white bread or meat, then within a few weeks our friends will start to joke about our huge jelly-belly. In addition to getting fat, we will want to sleep more and more. If we are hungry, it is acceptable to take a small amount of steamed vegetables, nuts or bananas.

3. We should avoid watching or reading anything that causes excitement. It is better to read something spiritual (but not very philosophical), to meditate or say some prayers. Whatever we do or hear before sleeping enters our sub-consciousness; therefore it is extremely undesirable to count money at this time because it intensifies greed. If you lend money to someone at this time, be prepared not to get it back and that they will become your enemy.

4. The room where we sleep should be clean and well ventilated. We need to be especially careful in choosing the type of pictures and even books that are in our bedroom – whatever they represent leaves an impression on our consciousness and enters the sub-consciousness during sleep. It is desirable to have books in sattva, and it is very good to have some holy books near your head. Pictures should depict pleasant, peaceful landscapes. The TV should be in another room or even better, in another house.

Practical Recommendations for Sleeping

In Ayurveda it is stated that the duration of human life is determined by the amount of inhalations and exhalations we take – the more often the breath the shorter the life.

Ayurveda recommends leading a sattvic lifestyle as it strengthens the immune system. Rajas and tamas are the opposite; they weaken or destroy our immunity and stimulate frequent and incorrect breathing. Breathing increases when we experience negative emotions like fear, anger or mental anxiety, during intense physical activity, sex and as strangely as it sounds, during sleeping. In a state of tranquil wakefulness, the length of exhalations within a half-hour period is 10,800 centimetres (108 metres), and 27,000 centimetres (270 metres) while sleeping. In this way, an extra 30 minutes of sleep results in the loss of three-quarters of an hour of life. When we suffer from serious illness, we breathe the same way as while sleeping, and at the time of death the last exhale is the longest. By coming to sattva we not only increase our health by strengthening our immune system, but also increase our duration of life by breathing less.

There is one more important recommendation – to avoid sleeping with our head facing north or northeast. Throughout our life we are all subjected to the influence of various energies and fields. Solar energy, the magnetic field of the Earth, the gravitational field of the Moon and the magnetic storms on the Sun – they all influence us. The human body possesses magnetic characteristics similar to those of the Earth planet.

The Earth's magnetic field runs from north to south, as the human magnetic field does – from the head to the feet. As a result of it, if we sleep with our head towards the north, our magnetic field will be overcome by the magnetic field of the Earth. It can cause problems with blood circulation, an excessive heart rate and cause general deterioration of our health. You probably remember how two magnets act when the north poles are put together, face-to-face? They spin away from each other because they cannot stay in such a position. Now imagine what would happen to our aura if we were to sleep with our head facing north – the next morning it would be ripped apart, literally. After waking up, we would not feel rested and cheerful. But if we sleep in the opposite direction, toward the south, our magnetic field will interact correctly with the Earth's magnetic field and we will feel fresh and full of energy when we awaken.

Early to Bed and Early to Rise Makes a Man Happy, Healthy and Wise

It is important to brush our teeth and take a shower immediately after waking to get rid of the guna of ignorance. It is best to have a bowel movement before taking a shower. At night the body gets rid of toxins, and if we do not go to the toilet or take a shower before 9 am, then all the toxins are absorbed back into the body.

A. S. Pushkin said, "Blessed is one who moves his bowels every morning without any force."

One famous Ayurvedic doctor confirmed, "One of the main rules of good health is to empty the bowels in the morning; if it does not happen then disease will come soon."

The guna of goodness means knowing the purpose of life, having a life that is stimulating and filled with goodness. In contrast to it, ignorance is destructive from beginning to end; the more our consciousness is influenced by ignorance, the more we want to sleep, watch TV series, associate in ignorance and passion.

We may ask, "But what should we do when we get up early?" The time of sattva is approximately from four to nine in the morning; at this time of day we feel absolutely no desire to drink alcohol, swear, watch movies or engage in similar activities. This time is designed for prayer, meditation, study, planning for the future – the long-term memory works at full power during this time. It is in these hours that we should receive a positive burst of energy for the whole day. In America there is a millionaires club, where one of the conditions of membership is that you have to get up before 5 am. They realised that without rising early it is very difficult to succeed.

One famous proverb says, “Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man happy, healthy and wise.” By understanding how the gunas work we can see the truth in this statement – during the early morning hours the energy of sattva (happiness and tranquility) totally saturates the atmosphere.

Brahma-muhurta

Masters of Ayurveda consider a proper daily routine to be a powerful form of therapy for improving health and have devoted the first chapters of their classic works to it.

Dinacharya, or strictly following a standard daily routine, is one of the best ways to enable one to remain in harmony and to prevent and cure disease.

Vagbhata in “Ashtanga Hridayam” begins his description of the daily routine with the following words:

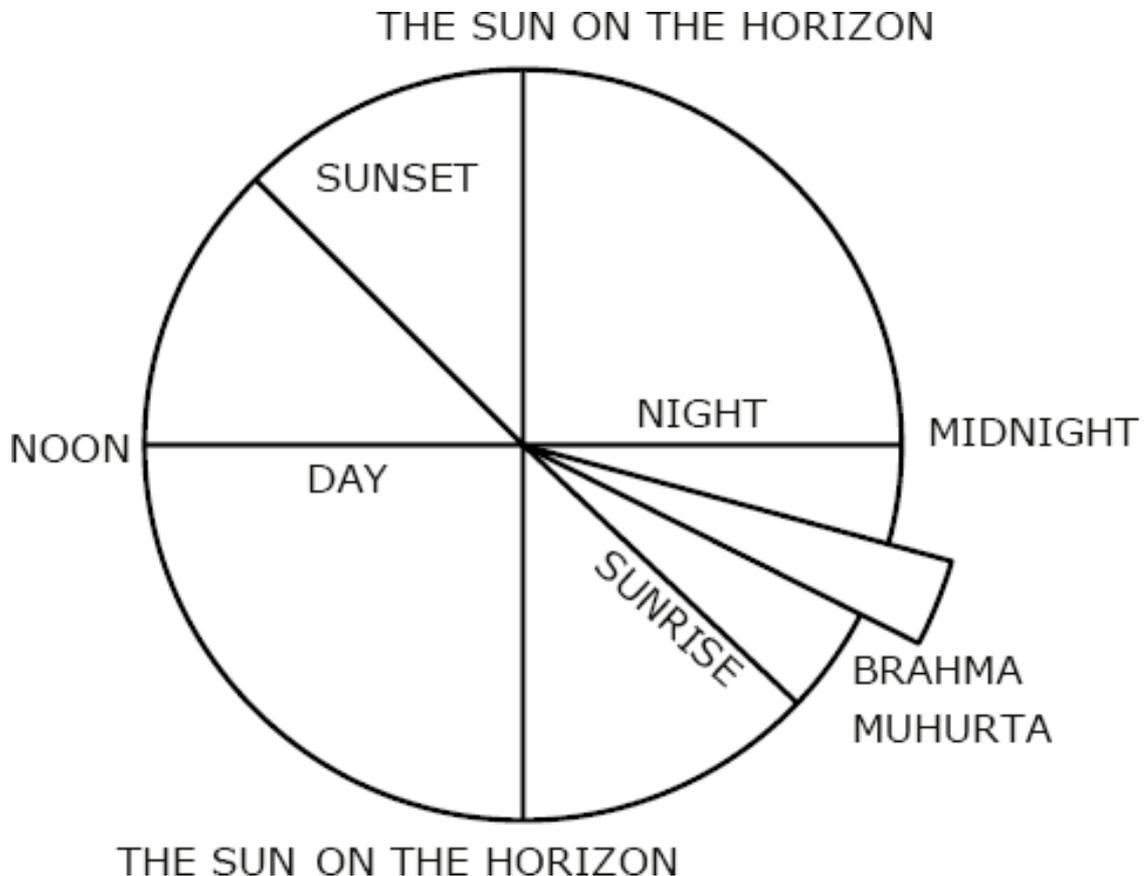
brahme muhurta uttisthet svastho raksartham ayusah

“Get up from sleeping during Brahma-muhurta to preserve your health and life itself.” (AH)

The word **brahma** can be translated as belonging to Brahman, saint, sacred, the divine; to sacred knowledge, prescribed by Vedas; sacred science, study of sacred texts and study of Vedas.

Muhūrta means a moment, an instant, any short interval of time, or a defined period of time such as 48 minutes.

The time of day for receiving spiritual knowledge and happiness is known as Brahma-muhurta. According to Ayurveda, a healthy person needs to get up two muhurtas before sunrise, at 4.30 am to be exact – this is a calculation for South India when day and night are of equal duration. Depending on the geographical latitude of a particular place or the season of the year, the time of sunrise changes, but the duration of a sandhya always remains the same. Therefore, Brahma-muhurta always begins one and a half hours before sunrise, regardless of the place or season.



If we wake up during the Brahma-muhurta, it allows us to begin the day with calm and cheerfulness and maintain this state throughout. This is the time when sattva predominates, which itself brings harmony to all energies. Passion starts at sunrise. With the sunset tamas takes over. Before sunrise the atmosphere is saturated with sattva; this is the only time of day when this energy is dominant. At this time there is a positive flow of energy which creates the best conditions for meditation. Thus it is the most beneficial time of a day. By getting up at this time, we can synchronise our rhythm with the rhythm of the Sun. Rising during Brahma-muhurta increases and maintains the best qualities of our unique nature – svabhava – and allows us to be established in it. This condition is called svastha. Svastha is veritable health, the achievement of which is possible only when one becomes established in virtue and goodness. Brahma-muhurta is also the best time for us to pay respect to elders and gurus, offer prayers, meditate, read spiritual scriptures and chant sacred names. The Goddess of Fortune shuns us if we do not perform these morning rituals.

Sri Chanakya-niti-sastra (15.4) states: **“He who wears unclean garments, has dirty teeth, eats like a glutton, speaks unkindly and sleeps after sunrise, although he may be the greatest personality, will lose the favour of Lakshmi.”** In other words, prosperity, health, beauty and vitality leave us if we get up after sunrise, no matter how important we are.

* * *

We may wonder what time of day is more suitable to perform various activities – morning or evening. Undoubtedly the morning is more suitable; it is easy to experience how calm and blissful the atmosphere is in the morning. If we are in tamas (ignorance), we become more active at night and sleepier in the morning. Most crimes are committed at night. Darkness and gloom are characteristics of tamas, that is why night-time should be for sleeping. Almost everything in nature falls asleep when the Sun sets and awakens as the Sun rises. You will never see a bird or animal covering their face with a wing or paw from the light of the Sun as it rises.

The nervous system rests from approximately 9:30 pm to midnight; if we do not sleep at this time, our rest will never be satisfactory, regardless of how much we sleep. According to Ayurveda one of the most detrimental things for our health is staying awake at night, particularly for night work. The World Health Organization’s research department announced the inclusion of night work in its list of factors most likely to cause cancer.

Morning is the time of goodness (sattva); our most creative ideas occur to us and our intuition is heightened at this time. There is a saying, “Morning is wiser than evening”. We should never make serious decisions in the evening, but wait until the morning. If we follow this rule, we will not have to waste energy fixing unnecessary mistakes.

Chapter 7 Association

Most people are other people. Their thoughts are someone else's opinions, their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation.
Oscar Wilde

Our Life is a Theatre Where Everyone Plays a Role

Eastern psychology says that we are similar to a chameleon; we take on the colour of the things we associate with. Our lives are determined by association because we absorb the qualities of environment we live in – such is human nature and nothing can be done to change it.

There was a famous experiment some years ago: some mentally balanced, successful students were selected and then divided into two groups. The first group was told they were prisoners and the second that they were wardens, and they would conduct themselves in accordance with their roles. After four days the experiment had to be stopped, although it had originally been intended to last for one week. The students in the prisoner group were starting to manifest signs of severe depression and other modes of behaviour similar to real prisoners. Those who were wardens became more aggressive and rude toward the prisoners, although they were friends in real life. One student warden even became physically violent. They had become completely immersed in the mood of prison life.

Even actors who play angry characters become angrier. There are also examples of actors becoming more harmonious and wise after playing the role of a saint. The lives of contemporary actors are often tragic as they rarely play roles of balanced, spiritually advanced people.

On a larger scale, life is a big theatre where we play defined roles, and how we play determines the role we take in our next life. Although we are eternal spirits, because we are embodied in this world, we play specific roles – men, women, French, Jewish, German, Ukrainian, engineer, teacher, boss, etc. It is interesting – **we write our own life story, consciously or unconsciously creating the paradigms which govern how we think and behave. The more ignorance is in our life, the more darkness and misfortune there will be. On the other hand, the more goodness, the more light and happiness we will experience; we will be more aware, our lives will be interesting and full of possibilities.**

Would you like to play the role of a person who is angry, unhappy, bored, constantly criticizing others and demanding of everyone and everything? Why do we choose such roles?

Association must be Chosen

We need to choose consciously what roles to play and who to associate with. We have already been given some roles in this life; usually we cannot change our nationality, parents, relatives, or radically change the size of the body. But even within these limitations there is a wide range of possibilities and choices. If we want to understand who we are, we must look at the people with whom we spend most of our time and have the closest relationships.

Ayurvedic psychology states that correct relationships are the basis of our psychological wellbeing. It is important to be surrounded by harmonious people who assist us in our progress, bring emotional equilibrium and help to preserve our peace of mind. It is equally essential to avoid those who destroy our nervous system, cause degradation and reduce our mental composure.

We should associate with such people only if and when they are willing to listen to our advice and are ready to make changes in their lives; otherwise, we should just pray for them and wish them well.

Regular association with people who encourage harmonious growth and love is more therapeutic and valuable than visiting a doctor. Even the mere presence of a wise person cools and calms the mind.

By thinking of someone we absorb their energy. This is why Eastern philosophy and psychology says, “**Think of God, think of saints, and contemplate what the Holy Scriptures and enlightened personalities say**”. These things will influence us with pure sattva – the transcendental stage.

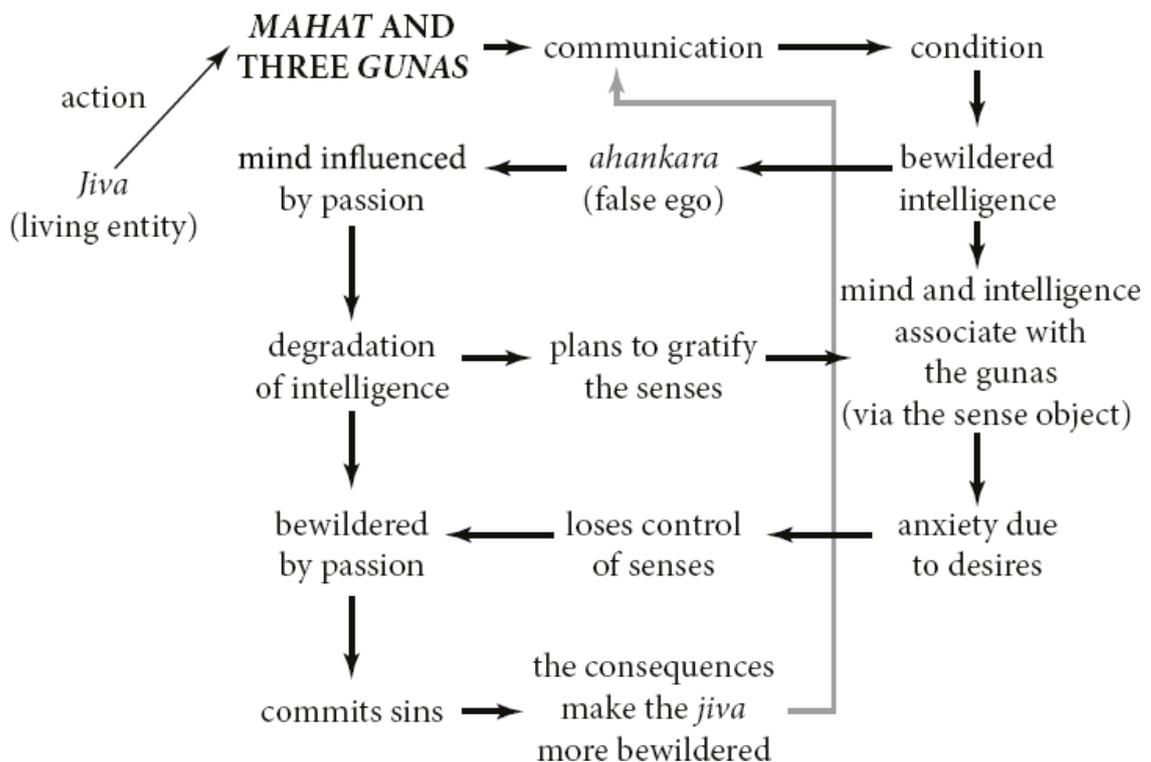
Chapter 8 Philosophy – the Basis of Psychology

How the Living Entity Descends To This World

We will now discuss how the *jiva* (Sanskrit – living entity) descends to this material world and how it can become entangled there. We consider the *gunas* in terms of psychology because it can help us to develop proper personalities. At the present moment, the main problem of our civilisation is that the two *gunas*, *rajas* and *tamas* (passion and ignorance), have thoroughly penetrated the consciousness of many people. As a result, there is often no point trying to help someone if they have not been purified.

This table clearly shows how the *jiva* (living entity) descends to this world.

We are part and parcel of God, a spiritual substance which is united with Him.



Initially living existence was situated in the spiritual world (in Christianity it is referred to as the Kingdom of God) – a place that is unrelated to materialism and where everyone is aware of their Union with God and full of eternity, knowledge and bliss. But living existence somehow (we will not now proceed to discuss this theosophical moment) falls into some kind of stew of material energy. **This is the mahat-tattva – the great material energy which consists of the three gunas of material nature.**

When the soul descends from the spiritual world, this first embodiment carries the energy of the transcendental world.

But regardless of which part of the material world we are born into, we have a body and begin to associate with others. Then the next step is to identify ourselves with the surroundings – “Now I am in this world. I am such and such, I am a yogi, I am a sage, I am small, I am great, I relate to this

family or tribe; others have such qualities...” This is the beginning of self-identification with matter. Firstly the gunas penetrate the intellect and then these conditioning develops.

Degradation of the Intellect

At the first stage, the intellect understands that the soul is eternal, that one needs to live in a loving relationship with God. But the intellect becomes slightly contaminated and then ahankara appears (Sanskrit – “false ego”). With the appearance of false ego, we begin to identify ourselves with something that is not our true self: with the body, subtle body, intellect and mind.

First of all we begin to identify ourselves with the senses and mind. Despite the mind initially being in goodness, it becomes contaminated through passion and begins to plan for sensual gratification. It overflows with passion and loses control over the senses, instead coming under their influence. Then the mind becomes engaged in material activity, despite seeing that this does not give satisfaction. Despite the mind being initially sattvic and mellow – for example, if we perform meditation and remain free of any attachments, then our mind is peaceful and happy – when the energy of the false ego is in effect, the mind becomes impassioned.

In this world there is always someone who is higher or lower than us. For example, our neighbour’s house may be better than ours, so we also begin to want one that is at least as good. When our mind becomes absorbed in mediating on satisfying our senses, it becomes incredibly powerful, even more powerful than our intelligence. As a result, it can engage the weakened intelligence in fulfilling our desires for gratification of the senses. Then the intellect also begins looking for different ways to satisfy the senses. If our intellect is developed, then it can plan many and varied forms to this end. In modern society, many possibilities have been developed for sense enjoyment.

The gunas (mainly, passion and ignorance) influence the mind and intellect through the sense objects – and the mind becomes infuriated because it cannot be completely satisfied with sense enjoyments. As a result the mind becomes more and more agitated. Have you ever seen a person walking the streets of New York or Moscow that is satisfied and peaceful? In large cities, the energy of passion is so strong that just by being there we will eventually start acting more passionately, we will begin to bustle around after only a short while of simply strolling calmly and peacefully. Cities are mostly absent of sattva, with only ignorance and passion. Goodness is found in more natural surroundings.

An Agitated Mind Loses Control of the Senses

By coming into contact with advertisements or something that attracts the senses, or by simply living in a modern metropolis, the mind becomes infuriated and wants countless things. Even if we live peacefully in the countryside, as soon as we come to the city, a desire to buy some object arises, then another, and another.

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