

A Poster Child for *Tamoguna*

Ram (James Swartz)

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James: Hi, Mary.

Lovely to hear from you. I'm in Spain, just arrived last night. Here's a pic of *Isvara* welcoming us the first morning! It's a permanent move.

The topic of this *satsang* is *tamoguna*. You have correctly identified the problem, which is good for a mind that tends toward *tamasic* thinking. Gold star, go to the head of the class. :-) *Tamas* is the veiling power. It is denial. Not willful denial, which is just lying. It is lying to yourself without knowing that you are doing it. Or knowing but pretending you don't know. Or knowing but being unwilling to disrupt your pleasure patterns.

The following quotation from your email is a poster child for *tamoguna*. "The issue is aversion to discomfort. Can't tolerate it. Leads to all sorts of avoidance tactics, some of which include taking it out on others or exploiting others even. Here's trusting that knowing this will man the shift back toward what matters. I've been stuck in an indulgent *tamasic* cycle and couldn't find the will to step out and now I suspect I will. I watched three of your videos, the most effort I manage."

The *tamasic* keywords are: aversion, intolerance, avoidance, exploitation and "the most effort I manage," i.e. laziness. I remember casually asking you a question that would have led you to a place where you would be faced with your *tamas* a couple of months back and noted that you chose to avoid answering. But what's a couple of months. You got there on your own. We speak as loudly by what we don't say as we do with what we do. A *tamasic* mind is particularly overprotective about its bad habits. It hates even petty discomforts and is attached to easy, convenient solutions. It champions expediency over *dharma*.

If you don't have *The Yoga of the Three Energies* please get it and carefully study pages 134 to 144 and see how many of those characteristics apply to your mind. If you're too *tamasic* to order it, donate \$15 on the website and I will email you a copy. :-) Once you're pretty sure of its upsides and downsides, then go to the beginning of the book and read it properly to get the big picture.

Anyway, the *tamas* also caused you to hope. You said, "Here's trusting that knowing this will man the shift back to what matters." The road to hell is paved with good intentions because it leaves the avoidance option open. If you are really committed to transforming your mind - leave enlightenment and the Self out of it - then you have to shit or get off the pot, no "dicking around," as we say in America. I think you are working hard on yourself these days. Transformation takes discipline - willfully establishing consistent habits that generate *sattva*, which shines the light of awareness on the *tamasic* mind. Transformation demands sacrifice, a nasty word for a clinging, *tamasic* mind.

Procrastination makes real change more difficult because the more you put off doing what is right for yourself spiritually the more energy is required later. At a certain point as you age you just can't get over the *tamasic* hump into the blissful freedom of *sattva*. Using your will takes energy. *Tamas* is a death of a thousand cuts. None of

the little indulgences mean much in the short run – they are kind of fun – but in the long run they sabotage you. There is nothing worse than arriving in old age knowing that you avoided doing your best spiritually.

So I applaud your efforts and “hope” that your hopes take the form of committed action.

~ Much love, James

Magdolnagrants: James, where do you find stories like that 105-year-old Aussie who wanted to die and so was forced to go to Switzerland?

It costs several thousands of Euros to go there.

~ Love, Magdoln