

# Do I Need a Pure Mind?: *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas*

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2003-02-19

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/1594>

**Joseph:** Dear Ram, since we talked three days ago things have been really quite strong for me. I just don't have a clue about Joseph anymore. I somehow lost him down the plughole.

**Ram:** There is nobody there. There is no Joseph.

**Joseph:** Yes, I know.

**Ram:** It's just a word that has been assigned to a bundle of *vasanas*.

**Joseph:** So probably I don't have a *sattvic* mind? Should I work on making myself have a *sattvic* mind?

**Ram:** It's not like that. Every mind has *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* in it. And *rajas* is a good energy, it just shouldn't be the dominant energy. *Tamas* is a good energy also, but it should not be dominant either – *sattva* should. *Rajas* is helpful for accomplishing things and for providing motivation for noble projects and good ideas. *Tamas* should be there for grounding, in that it helps to turn your ideas into reality, into making them practical. When the mind is *sattvic* you pay close attention to reality, you let it tell you where to go and what to do. You gather information and make decisions based on what you have learned, not on your passions. You don't move until you get the proper information. If this is the case *sattva* is operating in your mind. You must be pretty *sattvic* because it is rare for a *guru* to listen to anybody.

**Joseph:** But I don't really see myself as a *guru*.

**Ram:** Well, that is right. In fact you are not really a *guru*. I am not a *guru*. There are no *gurus*. There is only the self. I am the self. You are the self. This is what the *Upanishads* say, "*Tat Tvam Asi*" – you are the self. *Guru* is just a role, a limited concept.

**Joseph:** But you were suggesting that a *sattvic* mind is essential?

**Ram:** Yes, for grasping this knowledge of the self it is essential because if your passions are pushing you everywhere, you are never going to realize who you are. If you are too dull, the knowledge "I am whole and complete" is not going to happen and you will continue to be buffeted about in the *karmic* world. When the mind is dull you don't take in information correctly, so you get confused, your discrimination goes and you just can't make the proper decisions. You end up

running around like a chicken with its head cut off. *Rajasic* people have so many conflicting desires they get easily confused. Things are all popping up at the same time and they don't know which way to go.

**Joseph:** I have moments like that sometimes.

**Ram:** Earlier today you were *rajasic* – speaking of all the events that were happening and somehow assuming that you were needed to work them out. It certainly makes your talk about non-attachment seem suspect. But now you are in a *sattvic* state, your mind is essentially clear, and a little *tamas*, a wave of sleep, is coming into the mind because you are relaxing.

The mind is always going to have these energies in them. This classification is just for identification of your mind. When you are practicing *sadhana* you analyze your behavior, thoughts and so forth, to see how they impact on the mind. If you have too much hot sex you are going to be *tamasic*. It's just a fact. You look at debauched people and you can see from their faces that their energy levels are very low. Their brains don't work right. If you eat lots of chillies and spices and drink Starbucks coffee you are going to be *rajasic*. Or, more accurately, we could say that you eat chillies and drink coffee because you are *rajasic*.

You should analyze every single thing you do. Some relationships make you very *tamasic* because the people you are dealing with are *tamasic* and that energy gets into your mind and brings your mind down. If you associate with passionate, active people then you become like that too, shaking and vibrating just like them. You should examine every association; ask yourself if you really need a particular relationship or not.

If you do your work with non-attachment, eat fruits and vegetables and go to bed at 10:30 or 11:00 at night, your mind will become very powerful and still and you will get right through things. It is not that in *sattva* you can't work quickly or accomplish things. It is the best state for getting things done. Being in a state of *rajas* is often inefficient because you have so many irons in the fire that you never get all the loose ends tied up. So there is a continuous feeling of never getting anything completed or tidied up. And finally, in the *tamasic* state you tend to ignore things – to your detriment.

Understanding the nature of these energies is just a way to monitor and therefore purify your mind. You can't make a blanket statement about what is good or what would be bad for you. You need to experiment and see how a particular energy helps or hinders your work. But the general trend should be toward more *sattva*. As the mind becomes more *sattvic*, more self-experience happens and your knowledge of the self gets more and more clear. I hope this clears up the issue of a pure mind.

~ Love, Ram