

# Raunchy Rajas

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**Lin:** Hi, Daniel. At your website you describe *triguna vibhava yoga*, managing the *gunas*.

**Daniel:** *Triguna vibhava yoga* is a topic usually introduced in the later stages of the teaching. I'm not sure how familiar you are with the teachings of Vedanta, but the *guna* teaching is best applied once The *Vedas* 101 basics are in place!

**Lin:** How does one manage the *gunas*?

**Daniel:** Here is something written by Ted Schmidt:

“*Triguna vibhava yoga*, the management of the three *gunas*, encompasses every aspect of one's life. Essentially, one has to carefully observe the post-digestive (i.e. long-term) effects of one's actions and indulgences on one's state of mind. Observe the effects of the foods you eat, the way you recreate/exercise, your personal grooming habits, the way you interact with others and the kinds of relationships you have, the way you have sex, the kind of work you do and the way you approach work, the way you keep house, the way you manage money, the way you worship God, etc. Assess whether your indulgences and activities produce *rajas* (i.e. mental and emotional agitation, anxiety, desire, stress, anger, jealousy, etc.), *tamas* (i.e. dullness, confusion, uncertainty, doubt, fear, lethargy, weariness, hopelessness, negativity, etc.) or *sattva* (i.e. clarity, discriminative insight, understanding, calm attentiveness and the ability to concentrate, peace of mind, dispassion, adaptability, compassion, contentment, kindness, gratitude, acceptance, patience, etc.).

“*Guna* management essentially boils down to reducing the excessive influence of *rajas* (i.e. desire and agitation) and *tamas* (i.e. dullness and ignorance) in order to cultivate a predominately *sattvic* (i.e. clear and intelligent) mind. For only in a pure mind will the assimilation of self-knowledge take place.”

**Lin:** And where do I start?

**Daniel:** You start by evaluating your motivations and goal. As inquirers our goal is peace of mind. This is because freedom is self-knowledge fruited by the application of self-inquiry. And because self-inquiry only works when the mind is calm and clear— *sattvic* — we want to manage the *gunas* in light of this objective, cultivating a mind suitable for the contemplation of self-knowledge.

**Lin:** The steps?

**Daniel:** By recognising the predominant *guna* at the given time allows one to manage or manipulate the quality of environment – to a large degree, that is. This recognition needs to be with understanding though.

Firstly, we want to understand the basic qualities/characteristics of each *guna*, and secondly, we want to understand the *guna* from the *jiva*'s perspective, and also from you, awareness's point of view.

**Lin:** Could you give me a practical example or method?

**Daniel:** Step 1: Note the predominant *guna*. There will always be the three *gunas* at play, but there will be a predominant one driving the *jiva* at a particular time. Step 2: Adjust and manipulate the environment (whether it be mentally or externally) according to your goal, which in our case is peace of mind.

Example: If you see that the mind is overstimulated and scattered all over the show, then you have identified the predominant *guna* at play, *rajas*. *Rajas* is fine, but it does not serve as the apt environment for the application of self-inquiry.

Now that you've identified the predominant *guna*, you can then take an appropriate action to support your priority – to cultivate a calm/clear mind. Have a little meditation, chant a calming *mantra*, read a book or do something that will help tone down the active energy that is currently buzzing. Your motive is to replace this buzz with a more settling energy, *sattva*.

Simply put, note the *guna* and adjust to it in the light of what kind of mind you are trying to create. Make peace of mind your aim at all costs. A peaceful mind is what's needed to contemplate the teachings of Vedanta.

**Lin:** I read a term called "*triguna-aitita*." Is that also to do with *triguna vibhava*?

**Daniel:** The next step is to manage the *gunas* by dis-identifying with them as awareness, meaning by the application of self-knowledge, the *jiva*, Lin, will eventually realise that the "person" walking around is no more than a notion/object in you, awareness. The *gunas* have nothing to do with you, awareness, because you are not the subtle body, the person/doer. You are *triguna-aitita*, which means that you are beyond the *guna*.

**Lin:** Hi, Daniel, thank you for your response. I have studied Vedanta and continue to, and follow ShiningWorld videos with Jim, and have a pretty good understanding of Vedanta, but my question, or disturbance, is *rajasic* sexual thoughts. Like when one arises, I just say, "This is not who I am," or, "I don't need this, because I'm already complete and whole awareness," and not act or respond to this desire. Is this in the realm of what you are speaking of?

**Daniel:** I'm not too clear as to what you've written, Lin. But just to say, "I am already complete and whole awareness," does not solve the issue. We need to know what it means to be whole and complete awareness.

Lets go back to the *gunas*. The problem is not the *guna*, but rather the identification with it. The same applies to thoughts. Thoughts are not the problem, but only the incorrect identification or relationship with one's thinking that causes an issue.

**Lin:** But surely I can act out the desire without attachment?

**Daniel:** It's fine to act out one's desire if: (1) it's in harmony with the *dharma* field, meaning that it's not causing any sort of conflict for you or anyone else, and (2) if it's done in a *karma yoga* spirit.

But unfortunately when we act out our desires it tends only to reinforce the notion that happiness lies in the object, an object being anything other than you, awareness, in this case the object being a sexual experience.

**Lin:** Thank you, I get what you are saying, that objects will not get me peace of mind, and there lies the problem. I think that the sexual experience (object) will get me relief but only temporarily. And the *rajas* gets reinforced, or binding!

**Daniel:** Exactly. Objects will not get you peace of mind. On the contrary, they will just cause more agitation, as all objects/experiences are short-lived. You're also correct by saying that the desire, and the impulse to act out that particular desire, will only get further reinforced. Action creates a *vasana*, which is the seed of another action. Thus one gets trapped in the chain of action-desire-action. Chasing objects is a tedious pursuit, and before you know it "the tail is wagging the dog." And in the case of sexual desire, we definitely don't want the tail to wag the dog!

A desire is just a "positive fear," meaning we think that we need something, only because we feel a sense of lack. This lack is born out of ignorance of our true nature, whole and complete awareness. This existential problem can be resolved only through the application of self-knowledge, and for self-knowledge to work the mind needs to be concentrated on *moksa*, freedom.

The only topic for those of us looking for freedom is the self because it is the only free thing! The way to keep it in mind is to bring it back to the teachings over and over until the tendency to wander is curbed. Contemplate your desires and fears in light of them until daily life conforms to the inquiry moment-to-moment. One needs to see that inquiry is not just an occasional activity.

Difficulty focusing is a values issue. Do you have a difficulty focusing on sex? No, because it is highly valued. Failure to focus means that clarity with reference to what you want, in our case freedom, is not the number-one priority. When freedom is the number-one value, concentration takes care of itself.

**Lin:** My last question is, what do you mean when you say "if it's done in a *karma yoga* attitude"? Thank you for the input. No more questions.

**Daniel:** *Karma yoga* is the understanding that the person (*jiva*) has the right to act, but is not the

dispenser of the results. He/she performs appropriate and timely action whilst understanding that the results are dished out according to fit the needs of the total. Understanding that the results are not up to the person gives the doer of the action peace of mind, which in return allows the action figure (person) to maintain a clear (*sattvic*) mind for the application of moment-to-moment self-inquiry. *Karma yoga* is the pillar practice for inquirers.

Sincerely investigate your motivations. There are helpful and unhelpful desires. Weigh them up in the light of your goal – which should be freedom if you're writing this email to me. Is it *moksa*, Lin?