

# The *Gunas* Are the Doers

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**Inquirer:** Hi, Daniel.

It's me again. Reading James' book, doer or non-doer: Is *jiva* a doer? It appears not, rather a combination of things where ego claims it for itself, hence if we identify with the not-self we think the doing is all ours.

If this is so, I think I am right. Please, can you elaborate on how the combination of things are worked up?

Also, I am getting in a twist with *samskaras* and *vasanas*. Please, can you help here?

**Daniel:** The *jiva* is an apparent doer, "apparent" being the operative word. It's the *gunas* that are responsible for all the doing, which includes doing the doer.

You're exactly right, when the free Self mistakes itself to be the limited self (*jiva*), then a sense of dense doership (i.e. limitation) is experienced.

The *gunas* govern the creation of everything. This includes the *vasanas* and the individual's *svadharma*, giving rise to "their" conditioning.

The *gunas* are called macrocosmic *vasanas*, i.e. they belong to *Isavra*, or the total, the creation, not to the person. To an apparent person, or *jiva* (the self under the spell of ignorance), they are in the "driver's seat." The person thinks he/she is the doer.

But what's important to realize is this: the *gunas* belong to *Isvara* and have nothing to do with you, awareness, or with the apparent person.

I'm not sure what type of expansion you'd like regarding the *vasana/samskara* topic, but perhaps the below will help untwist a few things.

## ***Vasanas* and *Samskaras***

The traces left in the causal body by repeated experience are called *vasanas*, impressions, in Sanskrit. When they accumulate, *vasanas* become *samskaras*, deep channels, and generate terrible internal pressure. Instead of waiting to see what comes, we try to make the things happen that we think will give us relief. *Samskara* means "formation" and is similar to the psychological idea of a "complex," an amalgam of subtle tendencies that produce a particular mental/emotional condition.

## **Involved but Not Involved**

Awareness, the self, is not directly involved in life processes. Just as the sun blesses earthly

activities with its radiance but doesn't participate in them, awareness simply illumines the gross, subtle and casual bodies. These bodies are actually inert matter, but they seem to be alive and conscious because they are illumined by awareness. Although the self is present as the substance of the subtle body and the modifications in it, it is not known, because the *vasanas* extrovert attention to the thoughts arising in awareness and the material objects in the field of awareness.

**Inquirer:** Many thanks again, Daniel.

Much more comfortable with things now. I have mild dyslexia, so I have to revisit things over and over to get the understanding.

My main issue is a poor working memory, so anyone giving me verbal directions, I am screwed. In my posts and emails I miss words out.

Anyway, the Vedanta "journey" is just so incredible. Long before finding Vedanta I was adamant that there must be a third way between Darwinism and creationism. Also, many years ago there was a BBC article called *A Sea of Faith*. This lifted me.

In addition, I considered God to be like a wildlife photographer. He could observe but not intervene in life. So as you can see, finally coming across Vedanta has been a massive eureka moment.

If you add in the findings of quantum mechanics, everything becomes so elegant.

~ Kind regards