

The Problem with *Rajas*

Ram (James Swartz)

2004-01-30

Source: <http://www.shiningworld.com/site/satsang/read/1600>

Jennifer: Dear Ram, one day when you were visiting you didn't seem to enjoy the dinner I fixed, and when I asked you about it you were polite and didn't say what you actually felt, so now, since you are gone, I would like to hear something specific about the cooking issue.

Ram: I was put off by the soggy rice and you cooking on a stove that is completely heat non-responsive, throwing different energies and tastes together without considering what the effect would be on the digestive system and the mind. I don't like your cooking when there is no love in the food, when you are in a hurry to get the food thing out of the way because there are so many more items on your list of to-dos that you don't take care with the food.

Mind you, this is not personal, Jennifer. It's not how I think about you, about hidden negative feelings. It's just observations that are meant to be useful in understanding the mind, etc. I honestly don't care how you cook, because food is not an issue of mine and if it were I wouldn't care about your cooking either. The real spiritual issue in this situation is *rajas*.

I don't think people rush because they want to rush. They rush because they think they have to. They don't have to. If they feel they have to, it means they have too many pieces to juggle or they believe their priorities. I know I hated myself when I was *rajasic*, so I set out to reduce the number of juggling balls and at the same time focus on myself as the self, not the juggler, the doer. The problem with rushing, from the spiritual perspective, is that there is nothing to accomplish here. Everything is already accomplished. So to see people running around as they do is a big joke to me.

Jennifer: You mean being mentally agitated means you're not fully present, so you don't get the fullness of the experience, the clarity of the experience?

Ram: Yes. And if you are actually subtle, mindful of how the mind feels when it is agitated, you will see that it is doing you a lot of violence. Perhaps you are not subtle enough to notice, but *rajas* pounds away at the nerve currents, it sends spiking, agitating *shakti* rushing through the *nadis*, and this affects one's physical health. But if your mind is not subtle, and it won't be that subtle if there is a lot of *rajas* in it, you will not be able to "feel" what an agitated mind is doing to you. You will eventually be confronted with physical symptoms, like insomnia and others, and you will think it is related to something gross, like food or some other physical condition. And when you try to correct the physical condition, the underlying condition does not resolve, except temporarily, because of the placebo effect because the cause was not physical. The cause was the condition of the mind. This is true of *tamas* too. It is not true of *sattva*, because *sattvic shakti* is peaceful and healing. I've observed you for years going through the same types of activities, looking for a solution, yet the basic condition remains. I told you this when we met eight years ago and only recently are you starting to become receptive to the idea. This is probably because you believe that you "have" to do certain things and that somebody or something out there other

than you sets the priorities or something. I don't know. The whole idea is a hard sell. But I have no doubt about this. *Rajas* is violence. You're concerned about how your *rajas* impedes non-violent communication with others. It also inflicts violence on oneself. What is the cause of the feeling that one's health is always under siege? Why do people take out health insurance? Because at some level they know that they are injuring themselves. But owing to bad values, attachment to comfort or security or pleasure, they ignore the obvious – which is to just cut back and rest – and instead go about changing some physical thing or other – taking a different pill or another new activity or whatever.

Jennifer: I think that I would experience that balance more if I didn't have so many pieces to juggle. I don't necessarily think that I don't enjoy these tasks as much... I just didn't think they need my full attention... like you say... they're not rocket science.

Ram: Yes, “pieces to juggle” is the key. Juggling is stressful: the balls are always ready to drop. The juggler is under (self-imposed) pressure. It (juggling) is the thought that creates priorities and *rajas*. “Pieces to juggle” means there is a doer and this is where the second layer of stress comes in, the first layer being the very act of juggling itself, not to mention the idea of “so many pieces.” According to spiritual science, the quantity of things to do comes from emptiness-inspired greed – about which much could be said.

If the idea behind the doing is *karma yoga*, which is based on the fact that action happens independently of a doer (and that there is in fact no doer or if there is it is the unconscious), then there are no priorities and no pieces to juggle – and no time involved. Therefore there is no stress, worry and no hurry. You just take up one thing without the next thing or series of things impinging on the mind, and when it is accomplished, the next thing pops into consciousness and you methodically dispatch that. If you are not mindful of the fact that you are the whole and complete, already-accomplished self or if you are doing *karma yoga* to purify your mind, you will notice that while you are doing one activity the consciousness of all the remaining day's to-dos will be driving your mind to work faster and faster. In this state of mind time is a tyrant, a real slave driver, out to bend you to its will. You are not free. The joke is that in reality there is no time at all – unless you create it with your desires. *Rajas* is called the mode of passion because what causes the mental and emotional turmoil is desire. One of Sally's stepsisters has so many pieces to juggle that her candida, which is definitely stress-related, has graduated to lupus. And true to form, she is now frantically rushing around looking for a cure when the cause is so obvious – too many pieces to juggle and the concept of doership – which in her case means an exaggerated sense of duty and responsibility. When I suggested this, she looked at me like I was absolutely mad.

Karma yoga is an attitude of sameness that you take with respect to action. You take this attitude because you understand that at bottom this is a non-dual universe and that one thing is not more valuable than another. “A person with equal vision sees no difference between a lump of gold and the excreta of a crow.”

Jennifer: What does it matter if my cooking is careless or not?

Ram: It matters if you are a doer, if you're doing life as *sadhana*, going for a pure mind. It does

not matter to the self.

~ Ram