

# You Make Me So Angry

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**Ruth:** Why did what you say make me so angry? No, why do you make me so angry? No, the real question is “why am I so angry?”

**James:** Yes, that is the real question. But the anger was a normal ego reaction to my statements. You felt insulted and put down. And even though there was a positive way to look at my statements, you chose to project the anger onto your idea of me. Probably in your mind you have reasons for this kind of reaction, whether you understand it or not. Usually, people trace it back to events in the past related to their family.

In the *Bhagavad Gita* Arjuna asks this question to Krishna. He says, “What is it that causes a person to become angry even though they would prefer not to react in this way?” Krishna does not refer to Arjuna’s childhood or all the events that would apparently justify his anger, particularly the actions of Duryodhana that caused the war. Instead, he says, “It is *rajas*, Arjuna.”

The three *gunas*, which you are familiar with, are the basic cause of all our feelings and emotions, Ruth. *Rajas* produces anger and projection. *Tamas* produces depression and denial, etc. You can read about them in my book. In another verse Krishna explains the chain reaction of emotions that come when *rajas* is dominant in a person’s psyche.

First comes desire, then anger, then delusion, then loss of discrimination. It always starts with desire. You want something. In this case you want me to think highly of you and then when I make a statement that does not fit into your idea of how someone who loves you should behave, the obstructed desire turns to anger. And then a chain reaction of unpleasant emotions happens. Because they are painful you want them to stop, but they do not stop right away. They are coming from the causal body, the unconscious mind, born of the *gunas* and they have to run their course, unless you have tools to climb out of them. Because you have no control, you become even angrier. And then eventually the anger collapses and you become filled with regrets, etc. *Tamas* takes over. Eventually a bit of *sattva* arises and you feel okay again. This is how it is with every human being.

The *Gita* does not leave it there. It discusses the *gunas* and how they affect the mind in many places and devotes a whole chapter to them called *triguana vibhava yoga*, which is a very sophisticated *yoga*. I devote two chapters to this *yoga* in my book. If *moksa* is equivalent to self-knowledge (not Ruth-knowledge) and knowledge happens in the mind, then is it essential that the mind be predominantly *sattvic* if self-knowledge is going to happen and if it is going to stick. Seen through this teaching, *sadhana* is all about gaining a predominantly *sattvic* mind. And you do this by getting rid of the *rajas* and the *tamas*. Chanting and worship produces *sattva*. This is why people like it. The *rajas* – it is a *rajasic shakti sadhana* – is sublimated into the chanting, etc. and the mind rests in the bliss body and you feel happy. But if self-knowledge is not the goal of a *sadhana*, if you are only looking for some kind of experiential enlightenment, a high state like a *samadhi*, you will not apply this *yoga* to your own mind. You told me of an incident when some of the officious clipboard ladies disrupted your worship and you become furious and threw a table

or something at them. This shows that *rajoguna* was operating even when you are worshipping. I suspect that it has caused a lot of trouble for you both in your relationships to people and your relationship to yourself. It robs your discrimination and your dispassion. See how much energy you waste on it. And to tell the truth, I was not bothered by it at all. I actually felt compassion for you because I knew that your mind was under the spell of *rajas*. I know how painful it is. There is nothing personal in it, Ruth. That you take things personally means that you do not understand how the subconscious mind works.

And if you are going to progress spiritually, you will have to address this issue of *rajas* because it will not go away on its own. It does not matter to me, because I have practiced the three-*guna yoga* for forty years and have purified my mind to such a degree that the little *rajas* and *tamas* remaining are helpful, not harmful, energies. The beauty of Vedanta is that it depersonalizes your suffering and gives you tools to remove it.

I don't know – I am just speculating now – but I suspect that you feel that because you have been on what you call a spiritual path for so long, that you must be qualified for *moksa*. You said something to that effect in one of your emails. And I believe that all my talk about qualifications probably irritates you – that old *rajas* again! – because it means that you still have work to do before you are even qualified.

I can schmooze you Ruth. I can seduce you with all kinds of huggy, kissy, warm, fuzzy, spiritual bullshit and make you feel like a million dollars. It would be so easy. There was a point last week where you were ready to fall in love, but I quickly shot down that idea. Had I gone along with your feelings, you would think that you found another savior like Guru Mayii or the *chi* master – but it would not help. I am a serious person, Ruth. You have no way of knowing, but I am a very successful teacher – because I do my job properly. It is my duty to find out who Ruth thinks she is, what her psychology is, so I can make helpful suggestions. I could tell you so much about yourself that you would think that I had been in your body-mind for forty years. If you are a mature person and have faith in the teachings you will observe your negative reactions to my statements – this is called dispassion – let them pass and look for the truth.

But if you are self-important and expect me to behave in a way that suits your idea of a *guru*, then perhaps you should write me off. It is fine with me. I do not want to fuck you or take your money or get you to worship me in any way. Life is too good for such silliness. I am in the winter of my life and I intend to be radiantly happy every day until I die. I have something to offer those that *Bhagavan* sends my way, but it is up to them to appreciate it.

You do not have to love me. If you love the truth, you will see the wisdom in what I say. Most people like me and get along with me, but I have several disciples who do not particularly like me, generally because I am too straightforward, but who have been with me for several years because Vedanta works. They respect Vedanta and the tradition and therefore they are open to my suggestions. You can either take my statements at face value and dig out the nuggets or you can make a big drama out of them and abuse me as you see fit. It is up to you. The fact is that the paths you have been following for so long are entry-level paths. That you could have been in the spiritual world for so long and still have this kind of mind shows that those *sadhanas* did not really attack the root cause of your suffering. I can understand your frustration and your disappointment, but it is time for you to roll up your sleeves and get to work on yourself.

In any case, the way forward in our interesting relationship is for you to read my book, think about it carefully, keep a log of your questions and write to me. Or perhaps when I am near the internet

or a phone we can talk. I will not offer you any more suggestions or make any more statements about you and what you should do. I haven't time to sugar-coat every word so it is to your liking. Evidently, this is going to have to be about you and Vedanta, not you and me. Mind you, Ruth, I am aware of your positive feelings too, but it is very difficult to make sense out of you when one minute you think I am wonderful and the next minute you think I am the Devil. I am not wonderful nor am I not not wonderful. It is useless for me to care what you feel from one moment to the next. It is all subconscious projections that have nothing to do with me at all. It is useless for you to care about what you feel from one moment to the next as well. I would think that at your age you are a little bit tired of keeping the company of such an emotional mind. The only salvation is in your relationship to it. You can take it seriously and go up and down with it or you can stand apart from it and observe it dispassionately.

~ Love, James