

The Gunas Acting the Part

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Elliot: Hello, Sundari!

I've got a new question rising in my mind recently, and please do correct me if I misunderstood something:

To be simple, I'm an actor in training, and to perform this work I had to come to understand all about emotions, as they are an important instrument in the craft of acting. (what they are, how to generate them in me and others, etc.).

Thanks to Vedanta, I discover that there is only *shakti* (the self as energy, power in the form of *maya*), and that with your will you can play with it. I read a *satsang* of James' on this topic, and he talks about someone call Uma. The *manas* ("the instrument that interacts with the field of emotions") of this woman is very well-developed, as I read.

So I'm very curious to know if it's possible to develop our *manas*, and if so, how? Which practice can I perform (as *jiva*) to develop my sensibility toward *shakti*?

Do you have any video or *satsang* of Uma (I didn't find on ShiningWorld)?

Sundari: Uma is a made up name; we do this for teaching purposes. I understand what you mean, speaking as a *jiva* operating in *mithya*, but the Self is not *shakti*. It is the knower of *shakti* – energy – which is an object known to it. An object is anything other than you, consciousness. If you know something, it cannot be you, and you know *shakti*, not so? I think you know this.

Speaking as a *jiva*, it is true that the Self seems to appear as energy in the form of *Maya*. And yes, *manas*, the mind, is the instrument for thinking and feeling. If the mind is *sattvic*, it will have *sattvic* thoughts and feelings; if it is *rajasic* or *tamasic*, it will have *rajasic* or *tamasic* thoughts and feelings. To develop the mind, mind management is key. To manage the mind, you need to understand the *gunas*, what they are and how they condition the mind. And as the *gunas* all generate predictable thoughts and feelings, *guna* management is mind management.

To develop the emotions, you need to express as an actor is no different from learning to manage the mind for normal life. *Sattvic* thoughts are peaceful, aware, content. *Rajasic* thoughts are agitated, anxious, driven, full of desire – usually projected onto others – *tamasic* thoughts are dull, in denial and slothful. To conjure up the feelings you need for a particular part, use the *guna* knowledge with *karma yoga*; surrender the results to *Isvara*. Read James' book on the *gunas* to learn more about how they express.

Elliot: I do know that it's only the Self experiencing its Self and that there is nothing to "gain" by doing this practice. But as we are here to enjoy and love ourselves, I'm curious to know how to play with it!

Sundari: I am glad you know this and don't take thoughts and emotions seriously!

Elliot: You answer perfectly my question! Its clear. Ha ha, so great, thank you very much, as usual, love.