

Qualities of the Gunas

This is a brief overview of the qualities of the Gunas.

As yogis our task in life is to cultivate sattva guna so that we can transcend all the gunas...so we are no longer bound to this life and the illusion (maya) of it. The Bhagavad Gita is a great read to give more detail on them and the version by Jack Hawley is easy to understand! As you learn about the gunas take time to simply observe their play in your life.

| Rajas | Sattva | Tamas |
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| Activity, stimulating, restlessness, envious, angry, hostile, quick temper | Truth, Goodness, calm , happy, generous, aware, responsible. | Inertia, untruthful, apathy, indifference, lazy, sleepy |
| Energy, | spiritual essence | matter |
| driven under its influence of passion, desire, intense emotions | light, illumination. lightness of limbs and senses are clear and strong | shadow work, darkness, depressed, distorted thinking |
| Expansion | Upward flow | Downward flow |
| Movement, lots of actions yet not satisfied with results, always wanting more, bigger, greater | Intelligence, Consciousness, self-controlled i.e. not chasing desire. Becoming free from ignorance | limbs are heavy , senses slow, clouded mind, Darkness, dull |
| Binds by passion born of craving and attachment. | Binds by means of attachment to knowledge and joy. | Binds by means of ignorance and obstruction. |
| Is the ruling trait when greed, excessive projects, cravings and restlessness arise. | Is the ruling trait when the light of knowledge shines forth. | Is the ruling trait when darkness, dullness, stagnation, confusion, and inertia appear. |
| Avoid over work, loud music, excessive thinking, excessive material obsessions or situations that make you angry or restless. | Try to rest in the truth of who you are and observing the other two gunas at play and not reacting to either. Try to just BE | To avoid Tamas in life do not oversleep, or over eat, become inactive, or get into fearful situations. |

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| On your yoga mat practice being softer in your asanas, to feel, rather than doing a full on energetic routine. | A beautiful blend of asana with the breath, mudra, mantra. Meditation and relaxation. A well balanced yoga practice. | Get on your yoga mat even if you don't feel like it! |
| foods that are bitter, sour, saline, excessively hot, dry, pungent and burning; they produce pain, grief and disease. | Foods which increase life, purity, strength, health, joy and cheerfulness, which are lightly oiled and savoury, substantial and agreeable. | food that is stale, tasteless, putrid, rotten and impure refuse, refined, processed |
| Has to be doing | Calm | Delusion and sloth! |
| Greed, anger, great pain when out of balance | Purity, happiness, wisdom | Ignorance, dull, inertia |
| Born of desire, wants more, works hard | Purity, without malice, illuminating, has knowledge, happy disposition | Born of ignorance, lazy, sleeps a lot, many illusions |
| Impatient, greed and longing to come to the fore drive them into action. | Seeing is sharper, hearing is more acute, thinking and actions steadier and precise | The mind feels lazy, bewildered & uncaring |