



# GITANANDA YOGA

## NEWSLETTER

# DOWN UNDER

Official Quarterly Newsletter of the Gitananda Yoga Association of Australia Inc  
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## NAMASTE!



Welcome to another vibrant Newsletter of the Gitananda Yoga Association of Australia Inc.

A warm Happy New Year yogic greeting to all of our readers, contributors and benefactors. We, at the Gitananda Yoga Association, hope you had a restful and enjoyable time with family and friends and felt much refreshed for a new start to the year.

The Association also had its rest so to speak and it is now rearing to go with the first edition of the 'Gitananda Yoga Newsletter Down Under' for 2008. At this stage, we have decided to retain the 'status quo' with the Newsletter. The format is attractive thanks to the computing and aesthetic skills of Candida Vassallo, our Association's Karma Yogini. The articles from our contributors have been of high standard again being reflective of the quality of the Gitananda Yoga Sadhaks. So in 2008, we intend to maintain the same high standard and look forward to all your contributions.

The theme for our inaugural Newsletter for 2008 is the Gunas. Much enlightening and at time extensive expose on the Gunas are offered here. The **Ashram Diary Dates** provides you with the important Guru Puja dates to further make that psychic link with the Paramparai. **Other Important Dates** for appreciation of key Hindu festival dates and **Full and New Moon dates** for special Sadhana. The last feature in our Newsletter is a list of contact of Gitananda Yoga Acharyas and their associated schools in Australia. Potential students can therefore contact a school near them in their own State.

**Key dates** to also remember are the 2008 Gitananda Yoga Down-Under Get Together, the yearly Satsangha on the Gold Coast and Dr Ananda's proposed visit to Australia in

April 2009. Please go to **Other Important Information** for more detail on these monumental events.

Please do take the time to read and above all enjoy this work of love!



Yours in Yoga  
The Editor

## THE GUNAS

### ☺ CLASSIFICATION OF ACTIONS ACCORDING TO THE GUNAS

An important concept in Yoga as well as other systems of Indian philosophy (Yoga is one of the six revealed philosophical views of life or the *Shat Darshana* of *Sanathana Dharma*) is the knowledge that our mental make up, our actions and the material world we live in, can be understood better by developing a deeper understanding and a greater awareness of the *Trigunas*, the three-fold natural divisions of our inner and outer nature.

Yogeshwar Sri Krishna in Chapter 17 of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, the song celestial explains in great detail this three-fold natural division into the Gunas of *Tamas* (inertial ignorance), *Rajas* (dynamic and passionate ego centric activity) and *Sattwas* (pure goodness).

Lord Krishna says that the food we eat, the way we worship, the sacrificial offerings we do, the austerities we undertake and the charity we perform may all be sub-classified under the *Trigunas* according to the spirit and inner nature of the act itself.

**TRIGUNAS AND WORSHIP:** Each of us will have a tendency to worship 'THAT' which is closest to our inner nature and inner calling. In Verse 4 of Chapter 17 Krishna explains how those who are of the higher *Sattvica* nature or pure goodness will have a tendency to worship the Divine in different manifest and un-manifest forms. This is a reflection





of their inner nature that deeply aspires to ascend to the higher states through the accelerated process of conscious evolution from animal-to-human-to-humane-to-ultimately becoming one with the Divine.

On the other hand, those who are of the *Rajasica* nature will be enamoured by the passion aroused in the worship of the demons. Demons have tremendous powers and *Rajasica* passion and non stop activity is at its height in such beings. Both will power (*iccha Shakti*) and the power of action (*Kriya Shakti*) is there in abundance, but the power of discriminatory wisdom (*Jnana Shakti*) is sadly lacking in such demonic beings. A good example of this is seen in modern times where rock stars and movie stars who live and behave like demons are worshipped by demonic fans in this mode of unbridled passion with no regard to consequences at all. Just go to any rock show or night club and you will for sure have a "Passionate trip to hell"!

Those in the mode of *Tamasica* ignorance tend to worship ghosts and spirits and this is prevalent in the primitive societies of the world where Witch doctors and Voodoo men have a great time taking control over the weak *Tamasica* minds. The lower minds are highly influenced by the neither world and this is often seen in the way 'spirits' take over villagers and then the local exorcist has a gala time exerting his control over everyone near and dear. The use of these lower entities for revenge and getting back at enemies is a classic example of how the *Tamasica* minds worship these lower entities.



**TRIGUNAS AND FOOD:** In the Verses 8, 9 and 10 of Chapter 17, Lord Krishna describes the *Gunas* and their relationship with the different types of food in detail. It is not only just the type of food but also the time, place and how it is partaken that matters. It is also important to understand the resultant effects of imbibing the different classes of food.

*Sattvica* foods that are dear to those in the mode of pure goodness are those that increase the duration of life, purify one's existence and give strength, health, happiness and satisfaction to the person. The Bhagavad Gita describes such foods as those that are juicy, fatty, wholesome and pleasing to the heart. These foods are the nutrients for the Yogic minded ones and help the mind to be calm, composed and ready for the higher states of consciousness and evolution. There is a deep relationship between food and mind and this is only now being slowly understood by western science. We are what we eat and so it makes sense to eat that which will make us a better person.

*Rajasica* foods are those that are very bitter, extremely sour, salty, too hot, pungent, dry and tasteless or burning. These foods are craved by those who are always on the move. It is therefore no wonder that such foods are popular amongst modern men and women who are forever on the move in their attempt to be the rat that wins the rat race! Lord Krishna warns us that such foods ultimately lead to distress, misery and disease. Truer words were never spoken considering the modern pandemic of food related diseases that are sweeping across the globe in gigantic proportions.

Food that has been prepared more than three hours before

being eaten is considered the first of the *Tamasica* foods even if it is *Sattvica* or *Rajasica* in its constitution. As food ages, it starts to decompose and such foods are unsuitable for those seeking the higher states of consciousness. What to do in this modern time where most food is preserved, pickled or kept refrigerated for ages before being eaten? *Tamasica* foods also include those that are tasteless, decomposed and putrid. Food consisting of remnants and untouchable things is dear (*bhojanam tamasa priyam*) to those in the mode of darkness (*Tamasica Guna*) as it feeds their lower animal nature that loves to be inert and heavy. This lower nature avoids anything that may wake it out of its sound and deep sleep of animal hibernation where it resides for ages.

**TRIGUNAS AND SACRIFICES:** Verses 11, 12 and 13 of Chapter 17 detail the relationship between the performance of sacrificial offerings (*Yagna* or *Homa*), and the *Gunas*. Any offering or sacrifice that is done, can also be classified according to the *Gunas* based on how it is done, as well as by the reason for which it is done.

Those sacrificial actions and obligations that are performed without desire for reward and in accordance with the scriptural directions and with a sense of *Dharma* (righteousness) become those of the *Sattvica* nature of goodness. They are done for the sake of doing and not for the sake of anything else. As Pujya Swamiji, Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj used to say, "The reward for a job well done is to have done it well!" The *Sivapuraanam* one of the ancient Tamil scriptures tells us that, to even to bow to the Lord we need his blessings in the first place (*avan arulale avan thal vanagi*).



When such sacrifices are performed for some variety of material benefits or for the sake of pride they become those of the nature of *Rajas* or passion. The ego becomes involved in the action thus colouring the action with other elements of the individual nature rather than being of the Divine nature. These are the majority of sacrificial offerings seen today in most the religious places all over the world where even God is worshipped only for the sake of some benefit or the other! People bargain with God by saying, "I will do this for you if you do that for me!"

When such offerings are done with a total lack of faith and without regard for scriptural directions they become meaningless and when coupled with the lack of distribution of the offerings and without the chanting of *Vedic Mantras* and offering of *Guru Dakshina* they become of the nature of *Tamas* or ignorant darkness that has no intelligence, consciousness nor awareness. At many events such as modern weddings we find people instructing the Pundits to cut short the Pujas even if it descends to *Tamasica* proportions, so that other more important things such as flattering the egos of politicians can be done!

**TRIGUNAS AND AUSTERITIES:** There are three types of austerities (*Tapah*) mentioned in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita.





The first is the austerity of the body (*shaariram tapah*) that includes worship of the higher Self and its manifestations with cleanliness, celibacy and nonviolence. The second is austerity of speech (*vaangmayam tapah*) that implies the speaking of words that are truthful, pleasing, beneficial and non-agitating to others along with the regular recitation of the *Vedas*. The third is austerity is that of the mind (*tapo maanasam*) that includes the inner qualities of satisfaction, simplicity, gravity, self-control, and purification of ones existence.

When this three-fold austerity is done with transcendental faith, without expectation of material benefits and for the sake of the Supreme alone, then it becomes the austerity of the goodness or that of the *Sattvica* nature. This is the type of austerity and *Tapah* that was followed by the ancient Rishis such as the ever youthful Rishi Dhruva who were concerned with the welfare of the entire universe, and were not filled with the ego centric craving for individual satisfaction at the cost of the downfall of everyone else.

When the penance is performed out of pride and for the sake of gaining respect, honour and worship it becomes *Rajasica* and is neither stable nor permanent. This was the type of *Tapah* done by most *Asuras* such as Ravana and Hiranyakashipu who wanted to conquer the world and used *Tapah* as a means to get the powers to help achieve their selfish aim.



When the penance is performed out of foolishness, with self-torture or to destroy or injure others is said to be of *Tamasica* nature. This was also seen in the types of *Tapah* done by the *Asuras* in ancient times and in more recent times in the barbaric sacrifices and sadomasochistic tendencies of modern people.

**TRIGUNAS AND CHARITY:** We normally think that all forms of charity are good but the Srimad Bhagavad Gita in Verses 20, 21 and 22 of Chapter 17, enlightens us on the three fold nature of charity that helps us become more aware and conscious of our actions.

In Verse 20, it is said that the charity (*daanam*) given out of duty and without expectation of return at the proper time and place, to a worthy person is that of the nature of Sattwas. It is important to realize that the time (*kale*), place (*desh*) and person (*paatre*) are important components to determine the nature of charity. Giving charity to an unworthy person, at the wrong time, or in the wrong way make the charity fall from its higher *Sattvica* nature to become one of a much lower nature.

Verse 21 tells us that when the charity is performed with expectation of some return or with a desire of the furtive results or in a grudging mood it is of the *Rajasica* nature. In modern times this type of charity is rampant as we often don't consider these aspects of time, place and person and just give charity for the sake of name, fame and other such egocentric considerations.



Charity performed at the wrong time (*akala*), in the wrong place (*adesha*), for the benefit of unworthy persons (*apaatre*), without proper attention and respect becomes that of the nature of *Tamasica* darkness. No good comes of such charity despite any claims to the contrary. This is made very clear in verse 22.

An understanding of this relationship between the *Gunas* and charity gives us a clue to a possible answer why so many of the social welfare projects and socialistic ideas have never been able to succeed despite the best of intentions. Until and unless we consider the multiple aspects of time, place and worthiness of persons involved in the act of charity, our best intentions are doomed but to fail.

**IN CONCLUSION:** When we deeply consider the Srimad Bhagavad Gita's classification of worship, food, sacrifices, austerities and charity we can conclude that there are some key elements that determine the *Trigunic* nature of not only these five but also the entire spectrum of actions and the materialistic world.



To be classified as being *Sattvica* in nature, our actions must be:

- done for the sake of common good,
- done without desire for the rewards or benefits arising from the action,
- done in accordance with scriptural rules,
- done with piety and devotion to the Divine,
- done with consideration for the right time and right place for the action, and
- done with due consideration of worthiness of the persons benefiting from such an action.

Our actions will be of the *Rajasica* nature if they are:

- done for the sake of the ego centric considerations,
- done for the mere self serving attainment of name and fame,
- done for material gains,
- done for self preservation,
- done grudgingly because we have no choice, and
- done without discriminatory intellect though they are done with great willpower and passionate action.
- 

Such actions will be *Tamasica* in nature if they are:

- done in ignorance,
- done without consciousness,
- done without awareness,
- done without devotion or piety,
- done without considering the time and place,
- done without considering the worthiness of the persons being benefited, and
- done with the evil intent of destruction



**AVOIDANCE OF RIGHT ACTION: SINS OF OMISSION.** An additional element to all of this can also be the avoidance of action, called in Christian parlance as the "sin of omission." Yogamaharishi Dr Swami Gitananda Giri Guru Maharaj used to teach us that the failure to do what should be done also



has disastrous consequences. A *Sattvica* failure to act may be the avoidance of a necessary action because one does not wish to offend the other (such as scolding an errant child). The *Rajasica* avoidance of action would be to not do something because one feels the reward is not great enough, or out of fear. *Tamasica* avoidance of action would be that due to sheer laziness, dullness or stubborn ignorant refusal to do what should be done.

*Swadhyaya*, the fourth *Niyama* of *Adhikara Yoga* (the tenfold moral and ethical path of the *Yama- Niyama*), is the key that opens up our understanding of the *Trigunic* nature of our day-to-day actions. It is only when we start to look inward that we can begin to understand the nature of our external actions. With clear-cut intellectual discrimination (*viveka*) between the false (*asat*) and the true (*sat*) we start to understand our actions and their repercussion better. As we begin to cultivate dispassionate detachment (*vairagya*) in the performance of our day-to-day actions, the larger picture begins to appear in our mind's eye and our actions start to take on a more *Sattvica* nature. This signifies yet another major step on the accelerated path of evolution facilitated by the art and science of Yoga.

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### ☺ THE GUNAS, MEDITATION AND FORGIVENESS

**GUNAS:** This word has multiple meanings including 'strand', and 'quality'. From a Samkhyan viewpoint the Gunas are three qualities of existence that bind us to the body and are often symbolized as a cord made of three twisted strands.

Many systems and teachers advocate striving to become pure "Sattva" – I disagree with this as while you are possessed of a Deha or physical body the object of Yoga

and Tantra is not to Transcend the first two Gunas but rather learn which Guna should be invoked according to need.

Let me attempt to simplify this:

**Tamas:** Often simply defined as "inertia" and given the negative attributes of slothfulness, lower desires etc.... Without Tamas you would never be able to fall asleep or enter into the deeper phases of Shavasana and Yoga Nidra. Natural disasters i.e. earthquakes (Earth), floods (Water), volcanoes (Fire), hurricanes (Air), would never come to an end, once commenced, if it were not for the Tamasic Guna.

**Rajas:** 'Activity, movement': Creativity, productivity, discovery all emanate from the influence of Rajas and without Rajas 'change' would be impossible – everything would exist in a state of immobility.

**Sattvas:** 'Light, Purity'. Sattvas is the source of pure cognition and beingness. Without Sattvas 'movement' would have no direction, goals could never be established, and pure beingness – "Sundaram (beauty), Satyum (truth), and Shivum (goodness)" would be unattainable.

To recapitulate we can build up a chart of rough equivalencies:

GUNA	AYURVEDIC	WESTERN PSYCHOLOGY	ELEMENTS
Tamas (inertia)	Kapha	Conation (Will)	Earth-Water
Rajas (Action)	Pitta	Affect (emotion)	Water-Fire
Sattvas (clarity)	Vata	Cognition (Reason)	Air-Space

- Without Tamas natural disasters would never cease, you could not sleep or rest
- Without Rajas great Art, literature, poetry, music would not manifest
- Without Sattvas humanitarianism, clarity of thought and meditative beingness would be impossibilities.

Perhaps I have over-simplified however the main point to remember is that while you are incarnate on this plane your need is to master the Gunas appropriately – not eliminate them! Do not strive to become one or the other but call them forth to dominate as necessary.

#### *When Do I Know I Need To Meditate To Relieve Stress?*

Other than tiredness, depression and anxiety I have learned, over the years, about a very subtle Stress Barometer indicator. Many of you have noted that meditation gives you a window into your mind allowing you to realize how much 'mental chatter' ("Chitta") or as Dr. Swami Maharishi Gitananda Giri used to say "Chitta Chatter!" goes through the mind.







Recurrent thoughts of "Criticism" and judgment concerning others, (He said...she said....") is an early warning indicator that it is time to 'restart', 'defragment', clean out the 'cookies', and remove obsolete 'registry' files from the mind-brain computer complex.

'Annoyance' with others, lowered *tolerance* for the foibles represented in the human condition – are all indicators your mental computer needs that freshly 'washed' and a 'Disc Check' process through a meditation break.

The kind of meditation to be employed under these circumstances should be twenty minutes of processing that allows you to drift into a dreaming 'Theta' state for refreshment and reintegration of your PC with the software (Mind) files and hardware drives (brain) being flushed and rinsed.

Fractional Relaxation, Autogenic meditation, Yoga Nidra are all alternative methods that may be adopted at such times – according to individual proclivities.

When you sense yourself approaching a state of useless perturbation, mentation and rumination you know you are overloaded and remedial action time has arrived. Such measures ensure you're CPU and RAM will be adjusted before a "crash" occurs with 'freezing' and 'blue screens'. Meditation will push Cntrl, Alt, and Delete thus breaking the cycle and permitting you to come out refreshed and ready for 'New Tasks'



Becoming aware that you moving into a state of unreasonable criticism and judgment is the one of the best early warning indicators for a "Meditation"!

### How Can I Approach the Problem Of 'Forgiving'?

Nothing has ever occurred in my life, that with a few moments reflection, I cannot trace to an antecedent action on my part – sometimes many years back – and lifetimes!

Understanding Karma from this perspective is very empowering, for we are truly masters of our own destiny, and to adapt the attitude that every event occurring we created for ourselves – even to choosing our parents – is a very valuable mental health manoeuvre that takes us out of 'victim consciousness'.

I have employed a method for years, which I am delighted to find has now been substantiated by psychologists, about dealing with feeling hurt by the actions of friends or ex-lovers.

The key to forgiveness lies in the introspective ability to ruthlessly find a time in your life that you hurt someone in exactly the same way that you feel hurt now! When you find it write out the details and match them to your presently perceived hurt by another's actions.

This may be temporarily uncomfortable, and for some



difficult, but the rewards are immense in maturing into acceptance of the foibles and fallibility of the human state. A whole new perspective on the "What comes around goes around" New Age Mantra, will emerge. It is so true and which one of us will "cast the first stone!"

Not forgiving is to not let go and this is a process that eats at us and even can cause high blood pressure and considerable deterioration in other aspects of our 'well being'! Here is an abstract of the original paper recently published. [bolding is mine]



The Effects Of Apology And Perspective Taking On Interpersonal Forgiveness: A Dissonance-Attribution Model Of Interpersonal Forgiveness  
Claremont Graduate University, California, USA. Takaku S.

"The author investigated (a) the effects of a victim's perspective taking and a transgressor's apology on interpersonal forgiveness and (b) forgiveness as a mode of dissonance reduction. Before the participants read a scenario describing a situation in which they imagined being mistreated by a classmate, the author randomly assigned them to 1 of 4 perspective-taking conditions: (a) recalling times when they had mistreated or hurt others (i.e., the recall-self-as-transgressor condition); (b) imagining how they would think, feel, and behave if they were the classmate (i.e., the imagine-self condition); (c) imagining how the classmate would think, feel, and behave (i.e., the imagine-other condition); or (d) imagining the situation from their own (i.e., the victim's/control) perspective. After reading the scenario, the participants read an apology from the classmate. The participants in the recall-self-as-transgressor condition were significantly more likely than those in the control condition to (a) make benevolent attributions, (b) experience benevolent emotional reactions, and (c) forgive the transgressor. The relationship between the perspective-taking manipulation and forgiveness was mediated by the benevolent attributions and positive emotional reactions experienced by the victims."

*Dr Swami Anandakapila Saraswati*  
Ambassador, Gitananda Yoga Association

### ☺ FIVE ELEMENTS AND THREE GUNAS

As I walked past the entrance, a display sign read "our personal trainers can give you the body you desire".

Yoga is based on the fundamental principles of 5 elements (pancha, maha, bhutas) earth, water, fire air and ether (or space). as well as 3 gunas (trigunas)



Sattva is the principle of consciousness or knowledge (wisdom). Satvik qualities are evolving, refined, pure, shakthi (energy), composure. Satvik diet fresh fruits,



cereals, rice, milk, green vegetables. (all keep the body agile and mind calm)

Rajastic qualities are action, motion, passion. rajastic diet consists of too much salt, spice, taste enhancers, coffee or alcohol in excess, which result in restlessness and irritability.

Tamasic qualities, inertia and devolving: Tamasic diet consists of stale, over-heated, oily foods as well as foods with a lot of preservatives,

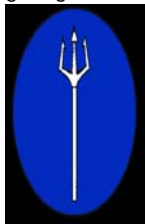
Chapter 13 of Bhagavad Gita lists 20 human qualities, necessary for evolving, stipulating that if one controls the 3 qualities of tamas, rajas and sattvas, (gunas) they can evolve to a higher level of consciousness. A caution is also given, advising that viveka (discrimination) is required.

As most attracted to yoga are rajastic (active, out going) this is where yoga becomes beneficial. Yoga practises/ techniques maintain homeostasis (stability/balance) of the entire human body, muscular, skeletal, respiratory and digestive systems to name a few, this homeostasis has a direct effect on the "doshas" which are a grosser form of invisible energy, which in turn affects the more subtle energy in the form of gunas [human qualities]

First we can lie in shavasana, with head to north becoming aware of our breath, as well as our body (am I relaxed), normal parameters of our being that are taken for granted in an active outgoing lifestyle.

There is a natural law of causation (karma) that covers cause and effect, how we react to life's experiences, can transform our life, in a positive manner. Physically hard work, can assist removing (tamas) inertia, in a tamasic type.

Whereas a rajastic type, may use pranayama (breath control) prana is beyond the senses therefore pranayama can elevate the mind by reducing (tamas) inertia. Expanding your awareness is rajastic, accordingly Bhagavad Gita suggests sattvic (guna) may be achieved by dedicating our work, to the spiritual benefit of all. Expanding your consciousness is sattvic. our thoughts, become words, become actions. Sattwa can manifest, as clarity, creativity knowledge, understanding, compassion and forgiveness, giving control of our body-mind constitution ( prakriti)



Shiva represents change and carries a trident which symbolizes these 3 gunas.

*Yogacharya Muralidharan*

## 😊 THE GUNAS – A TRANSCENDENTAL PERSPECTIVE



I shall approach this subject matter from a transcendental perspective instead of a philosophical one which most would be familiar with. I shall also make reference to some of the relevant verses both in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the Bhagavad Gita to enunciate my brief expose of this most interesting subject. I have purposefully omitted techniques and specifics on how to transcend the gunas as these are best learnt under the auspices of a qualified spiritual preceptor or Acharya.

The gunas, 'qualities' or 'constituents' as they are known, are the principal building blocks of nature. In the Yoga sense they are the triad forces of sattva (principle of lucidity), rajas (the dynamic principle) and tamas (the principle of inertia). On our material plane of existence (physical embodiment and the created universe) which is characterized by duality, the gunas are the material forces behind the veil of maya (to the unenlightened) or Leela (to the aware). All three 'qualities' or 'constituents' are in a constant state of fluctuation but in most cases in a seemingly less temporal state than the pancha mahabhutas and hence why it is easier to designate a 'state' or a 'thing' as being sattvic, rajasic or tamasic. However in a more pronounced state of viveka and varaiga, the gunas as in all forces and manifestations fluctuate, change (and interchange), transmute and transform through acting and being acted upon.



The gunas also provide contrast giving rise to our objective and subjective experiences (and not the Ultimate Reality as we shall see). For example, elation may be construed as a rajasic (very dynamic) state of mind while depression as tamasic (a quite inert state of mind) while contemplation may be perceived as a sattvic state of mind. Moreover, the three forces of nature in manifestation give rise to our existence as physical beings. Sattva gives rise to the mind (and hence our thinking abilities), rajas to the life-force (that animates our being) and tamas form and substance, i.e. our body – our vehicle of expression and enlightenment. All three gunas are therefore in essence necessary both for our physical existence and our awakening into Truth. However, in the way they operate in the world within and without, are only indicators and 'stepping stones' to something more Supreme. In fact the gunas themselves are reflected in the modification of our state of consciousness:

Sattva is guna in the waking state

Rajas in dream state

Tamas in deep sleep state and

Turiya, the Undifferentiated State is the state of Nirguna or the state beyond the gunas.

Chapter I, verse 16 Samadhi-Pada and chapter IV, verse 32 Kaivalya-Pada Yoga Sutras of Patanjali point this out:

I.16 tat-param purusa-khyater-guna-vaitrsnyam  
'that freedom from the gunas due to an individual's [Self]-realization is Supreme'

The average individual has no control over the forces that shape his or her nature – continually fluctuating between activity, inertia and attempting to maintain balance. The aware individual and the Sadhak committed to his/her Sadhana cleanse their subconscious tendencies with the emerging awareness of the Self bringing a natural detachment putting things into perspective leading to increasing equanimity.

IV.32 tatah krta-arthanam parinama-krama-samaptir-gunanam  
'then the gunas terminate their sequence of transformation because they have fulfilled their purpose'

An aspirant that reaches such a state is called a Guna-Atita, a person free from the gunas.

Chapter XIV, verses 22-25 of the Bhagavad Gita provides a description of such a person:

Illumination, activity, as well as delusion, O Pandava – he is not adverse to these when they are operant nor does he desire them when they have ceased. He who sits in neutrality is not moved by the gunas; he observes merely that 'they operate with one another' and does not respond.

Alike to pain and pleasure, Self-dwelling, beholding a lump of clay, stone, and nugget of gold as the same, holding the pleasant and unpleasant as equal, endowed with wisdom, alike to praise or censure.

Alike in honour and dishonour, equal to the friendly or hostile sides, renouncing all endeavour, he is said to have transcended the gunas.

Only after having transcended (i.e. consciously gone through and beyond) all three gunas, through purification of the mind, expanded awareness and developing the witness consciousness by Swadhyaya, Tapas and reaching the meditative state as well as one-pointed devotion to Truth can one come to realize Brahman – the One Without A Second, the Timeless, Nameless and Formless – the True Reality behind all names and forms, including the gunas.



*Yogacharya Devidasan Giri*

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## 😊 A GROUP OF HUMAN ATTRIBUTES



The gunas are one group of attributes that classify the human condition. In yoga we have loma - viloma which describes the two basic opposites in human nature - happy/unhappy, well/unwell, devolutionary/evolutionary; then a more detailed classification of our characteristics is grouped into three groups of three of which the gunas are one group. The three groups are; doshas (body condition), vasanas (karmic status), and gunas (emotional, mental character).

The three gunas are; tamasic (sluggish, lazy, devolutionary), rajasic (active, intense, involved), and sattvic (peaceful, pure, evolutionary), But Krishna says in ch. 13 of Smrad Bhagavad Gita that the yogi aspires to a state beyond human weaknesses called nirguna.

The fourth rule of the niyamas (ethical observances) is swadhyaya or self study. By self analysis we can become aware of the three qualities in our nature, then start to control them, and eventually rise beyond them to the nirgunic state.

In Yoga-step-by Step, and the many teachings that Dr. Swami Gitananda left with us, we are able to reclaim our birthright of health and happiness.



*Wendy Snape*

## 😊 THE GUNAS – IDENTIFICATION WITH

By now we all know what the Gunas are and have several points of view on how they impact our life generally. Reading the above articles has been very enlightening for me and expanded my thinking and led to reflection on how the Gunas impact on my life and living, now that I am more conscious of their existence.

So, how does "*Sattva, the power of harmony, balance, light and intelligence – the higher or spiritual potential*" fit with me?

I have to say, it is something that I am constantly working towards, constantly seeking, that it is sometimes elusive, sometimes attained, sometimes consciously enjoyed, and when connected to it, is always the time I feel most alive and true. However, because nothing stands alone, it needs to be complemented and defined in order to manifest its Shakti.

So then the Universe brings to our attention the need for "*Rajas – the power of energy, action, change and movement, the intermediate or life potential.*"

This bit is exciting to say the least, because through this energy we can manifest and grow and move and live our

best life. However, I recognise that I need to put a bit of Sattva in with the Rajas (nothing stands alone) because I can get carried away with the excitement and become out of balance and so lose a bit of light and intelligence. Bit of a challenge, but hey, how exciting is that??

Clearly I have a way to go with the above and again I notice that there is help on the way with "*Tamas, the power of darkness, inertia, form and materiality – the lower or material potential.*"

This is my grounding, although I have to say I am not keen on the words darkness and inertia – but I do recognise their value and see them in a big picture light. With this grounding I am enabled to move forward solidly and with confidence. In so doing, completing the circle of the three Gunas.

Before reading these articles and having to write mine, I hadn't given the Gunas a great deal of thought as to their role in my life, except in classes with Devidasan, and then we go home and things get a bit diluted and sometimes even buried. However, they are now something that I will try to be statically conscious of and their role of enabling best potential in life and living and furthermore, leading to "*Prakriti the original state of pure potential, out of which all things become possible*".

*Candida Vassallo*

## ASHRAM DIARY DATES

6th March	Maha Shivaratri Puja
7th March	Srila Sri Shanmuga Swamigal Guru Puja
24th May	Srila Sri Shankara Giri Swamigal Guru Puja
19th June	Srila Sri Manikka Swamigal Guru Puja

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### 2008 GITANANDA YOGA GET TOGETHER DOWN-UNDER

Gita is once again making her beach house on the Gold Coast available for the Australian Gitananda Yoga Suddhaks to meet and revel in 4 days of ashram lifestyle. The dates are Thursday 13th March to Monday 17th March. All Acharyas and their students welcomed (and even encouraged to attend). A wonderful opportunity for Satsangha.

### DR ANANDA'S PLANNED TOUR DOWN-UNDER IN 2009



Opportunity to meet, greet, immerse yourself in Satsangha with Swami Gitananda's biological and spiritual heir Dr Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani. Dr Ananda is the current carrier of the Paramparai as well as being a carnatic vocal and mridungam exponent of international repute.



Dr Ananda of late has been active in traveling to Europe and is now including Australia as one of his destinations. The tour will start around the 12th of April 2009 and venues are currently being organized. If you would like to assist with plans in your area please contact Muralidharan.



## OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

Thursday	6 <sup>th</sup> March	<u>Maha Shivaratri</u> – The night of the worship of Shiva. It is the night when He is said to have performed the Tandava Nritya or the dance of primordial creation, preservation and destruction. Ananda Ashram observes puja at the Madam as well as the recitation of 10 malas (1080 japa mantra) of the Panchakshara Mantra.
Friday	7 <sup>th</sup> March	New Moon
Friday	21 <sup>st</sup> March	Full Moon
Friday & Saturday	21 <sup>st</sup> and 22 <sup>nd</sup> March	<u>Holi</u> – The festival of colors. Spring festival glorifying good harvest and fertility of the land.
Friday	21 <sup>st</sup> March	<u>Hindi New Year (Saka Era 1930)</u>
<b>April</b>		
Sunday & Monday	6 <sup>th</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup> April	<u>Telugu New Year</u>
Sunday	6 <sup>th</sup> April	New Moon
Saturday	12 <sup>th</sup> April	Vasanti Durga Puja (Saptami)
Sunday	13 <sup>th</sup> April	Tamil New Year
Monday	14 <sup>th</sup> April	<u>Bengali New Year Ramanavami</u>
Friday	18 <sup>th</sup> April	Mahavir Jayanti
Sunday	20 <sup>th</sup> April	Full Moon <u>Hanuman Jayanti</u>
<b>May</b>		
Monday	5 <sup>th</sup> May	New Moon
Tuesday	20 <sup>th</sup> May	Full Moon <u>Buddha Purnima / Vaisakhi Purnima</u>
<b>June</b>		
Tuesday	3 <sup>rd</sup> June	New Moon
Friday	14 <sup>th</sup> June	Ganga Dashami / Dussehra
Wednesday	18 <sup>th</sup> June	Full Moon





## OZ GITANANDA YOGA SCHOOLS AND CONTACTS



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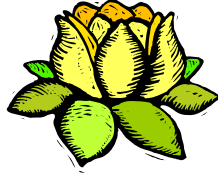
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### NEW SOUTH WALES

- KAILASH CENTER FOR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT INC.

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