

10. The effects of the three qualities

One who has achieved the destruction of agitations and their shapes and forms (*swarupa-naasa*) would have eliminated the two qualities (*gunas*) of sloth (*thamas*) and activity (*rajas*), and will shine with the splendour of pure serenity (*sathwa*). Through the influence of that pure quality, such people will radiate love and beneficence and mercy wherever they move. (In the already liberated individual (*Brahma-vidvarishta*), even this serene quality (*sathwa-guna*) is absent.)

The serene quality will have as its unmistakable concomitant characteristics: splendour, wisdom, bliss, peace, brotherliness, sense of sameness, self-confidence, holiness, purity, and similar qualities. He who is saturated in only that can witness the image of the *Atma* within. It is when the pure (*sathwa*) quality is mixed with the slothful (*thamasic*) and active (*rajasic*) qualities that it is rendered impure and becomes the cause of ignorance and illusion. This is the reason for the bondage of humanity.

The active (*rajasic*) quality produces the illusion of something nonexistent being existent! It broadens and deepens the contact of the senses with the external world. It creates affection and attachment, so, by means of the dual pulls of happiness and sorrow (the one to gain and the other to avoid), it plunges people deeper and deeper into activity. These activities breed the evil of passion, fury, greed, conceit, hatred, pride, meanness, and trickery.

And the slothful (*thamasic*) quality? Well, it blinds the vision and lowers the intellect, multiplying sloth,

sleep, and dullness and leading one on the wrong path, away from the goal. It will make even the seen the “unseen”! One will fail to benefit even from one’s actual experience if immersed in sloth (*thamas*). Sloth will mislead even big scholars, for scholarship does not necessarily confer moral stamina. Caught in the tentacles of sloth, the pundits cannot arrive at correct conclusions.

Even the wise, if they are bound down by sloth, will be affected by many doubts and misgivings and be drawn toward sensory pleasures, to the detriment of the wisdom they have gained. They will begin to identify themselves with their property, their wives and children, and such other worldly temporals. They will even confuse untruth with truth and truth with untruth! Note what a great trickster this slothful quality is!