



Ayurveda and the Mind – a Brief Understanding

(Taken from *The Complete Book of Ayurvedic Home Remedies* by Vasant Lad)

Indian philosophy classifies human temperaments into three basic types: *sattvic*, *rajasic*, and *tamasic*. These types all differ in psychological and moral disposition, as well as in their reactions to social, cultural, and physical conditions, as is described in the classical texts of Ayurveda.

Sattvic qualities imply essence, reality, consciousness, purity, and clarity of perception. People in whom *sattvic* qualities predominate are loving, compassionate, religious, and pure-minded, following truth and righteousness. They tend to have good manners and positive behavior, and they do not easily become upset or angry. Although they work hard mentally, they do not get mental fatigue, so they need only four to five hours of sleep at night. They look fresh, alert, aware, and full of luster and are recognized for their wisdom, happiness, and joy. They are creative, humble, and respectful of their teachers. Worshipping God and humanity, they love all. They care for people, birds, animals, and trees and are respectful of every life and existence.

Rajasic individuals are loving, calm, and patient—so long as their own interests are served! All their activities are self-centered and egotistical. They are kind, friendly, and faithful only to those who are helpful to them.

All movement and activity is due to *rajas*, which leads to the life of sensual enjoyment, pleasure and pain, effort and restlessness. People in whom *rajasic* qualities predominate tend to be egoistic, ambitious, aggressive, proud, and competitive and have a tendency to control others. They like power, prestige, and position and are perfectionists. They are hard-working people but may be lacking in proper planning and direction. Emotionally they tend to be angry, jealous, and ambitious and to have few moments of joy. They suffer from a fear of failure, are subject to stress, and are quickly drained of mental energy. They require eight hours of sleep.

Tamas is darkness, inertia, heaviness, and a tendency toward materialism. Individuals dominated by *tamas* are often less intelligent. They tend toward depression, laziness, and excess sleep, even during the day. A little mental work tires them easily. They like jobs with less responsibility, and they love to eat, drink, sleep, and have sex. They tend to be greedy, possessive, attached, irritable, and uncaring toward others. They are willing to harm others for their own self-interest. There is a constant interplay of these three *gunas* in everyone's consciousness, but the relative predominance of either *sattva*, *rajas*, or *tamas* is responsible for an individual's psychological constitution.

	SATTVA ...	RAJAS ..	TAMAS
VATA	Clarity Creativity Lightness	Hyperactivity Nervousness Fear Anxiety Ungroundedness	Confusion Lack of direction Indecisiveness Sadness Grief
PITTA	Knowledge Understanding Comprehension Recognition	Aggressiveness Competitiveness Power Prestige	Anger Hatred Envy Jealousy
KAPHA	Love Compassion Forgiveness	Attachment Greed Possessiveness	Deep confusion Unconsciousness Coma Depression