

# Life is Tasty with Rasa (feeling)

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## The 9 Rasa

Yoga and the Indian tradition describe “9 RASA” or 9 essential feelings. *Rasa* is a complex Sanskrit word with many meanings – such as taste, juiciness, essence or feeling – *rasa* itself could be described as the essence of feeling. *Rasa* is what gives things spice, interest and life – without RASA they can become mechanical, boring, and dead-like.

## Molecules of Feeling/Emotion

The mind and body are considered as One in eastern thought, and modern science is beginning to recognise this fact also. Feelings are thoughts connected to physical body responses and chemicals – sometimes referred as the molecules of emotions. Total health depends upon balance – physical, mental and emotional balance. By understanding the nature of the 9 RASA, being aware of our own inner feelings and how we use them, we can move toward better balance. Although suppressed feelings can be unhealthy, we also need to be aware of when we are overcome by negative emotions – these can be both harmful to ourselves and affect others. Emotional balance is required and this can come from understanding the 9 *Rasa*, and being more aware of our selves.

*If you are experiencing problems and imbalance with negative RASA don't be afraid to seek help – there are many great counsellors or even LIFELINE out there to help.*

## Artistic Types Rejoice

*Rasa* is best expressed in magnificent art work, beautiful poetry, great literature and dance/movement.

Most successful things are associated with *Rasa*. Think of a good movie – the best movies convey a feeling. That feeling can be positive or negative. I remember an award winning black comedy movie “No country for old men” – hated it, felt pure disgust, but they certainly got the *rasa* right. Some movies are funny, others convey mystery, a thriller puts you on the edge of your seat, sometimes there is a hero figure or nasty villain, etc. Good actors convey the feeling of *Rasa* effortlessly, from their own centre.

Much of modern music is associated with *Rasa*. Love ballads abound, but there is also the powerful emotion of anger expressed from the depths of Street American Music.

When younger we used to go to an aerobic class – the teacher there gave us a great workout, but was also good at using the art of the dramatic and Fear to convey his message. He became an extremely popular teacher – with over 100 participants in his class.

Have you ever been to a lecture and fallen asleep? What was missing? Nothing to hold your interest, no feeling perhaps.... What about a talk that you remember – what was so special? Perhaps the speaker was humorous, maybe they said something you disagreed with, maybe they instilled some fear. Whatever, you remember the emotion and the associated passion.

## How to remember things easily

The part of the brain connected with storing new memories is closely positioned to the part of the brain connected to Feeling - the limbic brain. Neural science recognises that emotion

helps lay down new memory – so if you want to remember important information, associate it with a strong feeling.

### **Good Rasa, Bad Rasa**

No *Rasa* is considered good or bad. (There are degrees to *Rasa*, from weak to strong and from positive to negative.) The key is to understand the feeling and its effect. If sad, know that you are sad; if laughing know you are joyous; if angry know you are angry – but then use the emotion in a positive way to move forward. Knowing the 9 basic *Rasa* (emotional moods) helps us to understand why certain moods come and stay even though the original cause has gone, and how to use this knowledge to gain more emotional balance.

- Feeling (thought/physical/molecule) is important for transformation.

### **The 9 Rasa**

- Shringara – Love - all types of love, beauty, devotion. We start with Love, as this can override and underpin every other emotion; usually associated with Heart energy. Come back frequently to Love.
- Hasya – Laughter, also humour, even sarcasm. Self evident – Ho Ho Ho! On occasion, lighten up!
- Bhayanaka – Fear, fearful, terror, also anxiety, worry. Face your fear/s. As a modern writer says, “Feel the fear and do it any way.”
- Virya – Heroic, also courage, confidence. The role of hero has these days given way to the anti-hero. Think of who you emulate or admire. Who are your heroes, and why?
- Karuna – Sadness, also compassion, sympathy. This is the favourite of the Dalai Lama’s. Cultivate compassion to enhance your emotional growth and development.
- Vibhatsa – Disgust also depression, self pity. A difficult one to acknowledge. This could be the person who has willingly left their old world and sought a seachange. Another example is the Buddha, who in disgust renounced the world of hedonism, his throne, his family, his religion, and went in search of spiritual development. Yes, he obtained enlightenment from the *rasa* of vibhatsa!
- Raudra – Anger also irritation, stress/frustration. Use your anger to galvanise you into action. Anger, when acknowledged, (and not taken out on others) can be transforming.
- Adbuta – Wonder, wonderful, awesome, also curiosity, mystery. My favourite – feeling the wonder of life, its myriad mysteries, keeps you fresh and young.
- Shanta – Calmness, also peace, relaxation. Any of the *Rasa*, when embraced honestly, can lead to Peace. Om Shanti Shanti Shantihi (Peace Peace and Peace to all).

### **Yoga practice through rasa awareness**

Life is not a dress rehearsal. Become aware of your emotional feelings, or cultivate this awareness. For example, try practising your yoga with *Rasa*. Each practice can convey a *Rasa*

- start with good Intention (shringara – dedicate your practice to a higher purpose)
- do the practices nicely, but don’t take yourself too seriously (hasya)
- arm balances could be an acknowledgement of bhayanaka (anxiety or fear of falling)
- the hero practices with virya (courage, heart-lifting)
- cultivate compassion for yourself (karuna) an excellent foil to self-injury
- every so often, push the edge, renounce the same-old same-old way of doing things and find a new way to do the practice (vibhatsa). Or practise that asana you always shun!
- lion face could be associated with raudra (anger and its release)
- meditation with adbuta (wonderful - if you can’t have the meditation you want, love the one you’re with....)

- all roads lead to peace (shanta). Practise calmly and with grace.

When you practise with *Rasa*, you begin to see they are all temporary states – moods that can come and go. Observe, watch, embrace, understand.

Living your life with *Rasa* awareness, understanding and balance slowly all *Rasa* can lead towards Shanta (calmness), our true inner nature. By fully expressing our *Rasa* it can help lead us toward who we really are.

How can one become enlightened?  
One can, because one is enlightened -  
one just has to recognize the fact.

*Osho*