



Svaroopa® Vidya Ashram

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Multi-Dimensionality #6

God's Grace

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When I lead a meditation, at the end I ring the gong quietly five times. It invokes Grace, the fifth of the five powers of God.

Creation marks the beginning. However, from Shiva's perspective, this universe is part of the continuity of his own existence, which continues whether there is a universe or not. Creating the universe out of his own energy is a Divine act of great joy and playfulness, like a dog jumping up and whirling around in circles.

Maintaining what he has brought forth is another of Shiva's cosmic powers, supporting and nurturing its continuation. Bringing things to an end when their time is up is another Divine act, called destruction. This includes unforeseen endings as well as the end of winter. Shiva as the destroyer is greatly honored by yogis, for he grants enlightenment by ending delusion.

These three actions are frequently cited in the Old Testament, naming God as the creator, the nurturer, and the chastiser. The book of Psalms includes all three:

O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. (104:24)

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (46:1)

He opposes the wicked and condemns them. (34:18)

Yoga recognizes two additional Divine actions: concealment and revelation. Of many Sanskrit names for God, it is specifically Shiva that conceals and reveals. Shiva is the mysterious one, the mystical one, the most benevolent, the revealer of the hidden dimensions within every human being.

Concealment is accomplished by Shiva masquerading as the mundane world, hidden within all beings, all objects and all actions. God disappears by appearing to be merely mundane. It is like the back curtain of a puppet theater hiding the puppeteer (Shiva) who is being all the characters, enacting the dramedy of his own creation.

Revelation is Shiva opening up your inner knowing of your own Shivaness and your ability to see Shiva in all. This is called Grace, a technical term in yoga meaning that you are filled with Divine Light. You are set free by one who is already free. Such a one is honored by the title, "Guru." To be an agent of Grace is their seva, the way they serve God — by serving you.

You also perform all five actions. You create things, nurture them and bring them to an end. You also conceal and reveal things.

Tathaapi tadvat pancha krtyaani karoti.¹ — Pratyabhij~nah.rdayam 10

Though being a contracted form of Shiva, the individual performs the five actions.

One of the most glorious things about the human is your versatility, your incredible capability, and your many options for how to apply it. But you can get completely lost in your actions, thinking of them as merely mundane. Yet the whole of Shiva's power is hidden within them.

It is easy to see with creativity. Whether you're painting a canvas or your living room, there's an inner prompting that brings this about. When I was living in my Baba's Ashram in Los Angeles, we held workshops for screenwriters, producers, directors, actors and costume designers, to help them tap into their "creative muse." That's Self, merely by another name.

Similarly, nurturing comes from a deep place inside. This is your own Self pouring into the simple actions that support a relationship or grow a garden. Your own meditation and yoga practice comes from that same inner source, your own Self prompting you to find your own Self.

¹ Tathaapi tadvat pa~nca k.rtyaani karoti.

Destruction comes from inner wisdom, recognizing that, “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.”² Sometimes you are the one bringing things to an end. Sometimes the end happens to you, to deepen your access to the inner source of wisdom.

The only time these three powers become a problem is when you think of them as your personal and individual powers. “I’m so creative!” “I take such good care of others.” “I know when to stop.”

While I celebrate your ability to act, don’t forget about concealment. Your own Shivaness gets buried deeper within when you think it’s all about you.

Tad-aparijnane svashaktibhir-vyamohitata samsaritam.³ — Pratyabhijñāna. rdayam 12

Not-knowing the five actions as Divine makes you infatuated by your own powers,
bound unto lifetimes.

The remedy is to contemplate your actions and thoughts, looking for their Divine Source within. In psychology, you look inward to discover the motivations for your actions. But this sutra tells you to look a little deeper, all the way to your own Self. Every action arises from Shiva.

It is a physical process. Every thought comes from your spine. As Consciousness coalesces into your body and mind, your spine is the central energy conduit. The energy of aliveness moves through your spine and spreads through your whole body. A Divine spark triggers every action, even every thought. This means you could be living a Divinely inspired life.

But the blockages in your spinal current create peculiar twists and turns that cast a shadow inside. Thus your actions and thoughts become dedicated to making yourself feel better, or to making others see you in a certain way. Too often, working for the greater good gets lost.

Yet the Divine spark is there. It is the source of your creativity, even your ability to solve problems. It is the source of love and joy, the inner depths from which you care and share. Your ability to step away when it’s time, to hide what would be harmful and to reveal what is uplifting — all this comes from inside.

Find the source! The next sutra promises that your mind will be uplifted and expanded fully, to the plane of pure Consciousness. A Divine Mind! Now every word you speak will ring with the resonance of Truth. Every choice you make will benefit you as well as all who are affected.

The texts give you an exemplar of this — the Guru. The Guru embodies God’s Grace, revealing your inherent Divinity to you. You have forgotten that you are Shiva, being the puppeteer and all the characters, including your own. The word Guru is spelled, “gee, you are you.”

For one to serve as the conduit of Grace, they give up their own stuff so it doesn’t pollute the stream. They surrender their own peculiar twists and turns so their inner shadows are illumined. While every enlightened person must give up their pettiness in order to discover their greatness, the one who serves as Guru gives up more. They give up self-interest. They give up need, greed and fear. Their sole interest is in illumining you.

I was graced by such a Guru, who had a Guru like this, who had a Guru who did the same for him. The lineage tracks back through the ages, to Adinatha, the first Guru, who was Shiva in-person. This stream of illumined teachings and practices is time-tested, proven by generations and generations. All to benefit you. Are you ready?

Yes, it means you need to do more yoga.

THIS IS AN ARTICLE IN A YEAR-LONG SERIES, “MULTI-DIMENSIONALITY”

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² Ecclesiastes 3:1

³ Tad-aparijñāna svashaktibhir-vyaamohitata sa.msaritam