

## Descent of Power or Grace (*Śaktipāta*)

We'll answer questions, such as: What is descent of power? How does it occur? Who graces? Is there any occasion for *śaktipāta*?

The highest form of grace according to this system is insight, the intuitive insight, a kind of lucid understanding or *pratibhā* type of knowledge.

In Indian Philosophy, the word *pratibhā* has wide connotations:

- *Pratibhā* according to the Yoga System
- *Pratibhā* according to the Esthetic Theory
- *Pratibhā* according to Bhaṭṛhari
- *Pratibhā* according to the *Pratyabhijñā* System

**First 100 verses of TĀ 13, author refutes theories of other schools.**

Why God, who is all-powerful, doesn't save us? Why he allows all this suffering to occur? In the context of Indian Philosophy, we have three answers:

- Karma.
- Ignorance.
- The Reality is covered with impurity (*mala*).

This impurity is of 3 types.

- *Āṇava mala*: contracted consciousness
- *Māyīya mala*: Notion of duality
- Karma mala: Engagement in pure and impure activities

Dualist Śaivas: impurity is physical substance that can only be removed through action.

मलप्रध्वस्तचैतन्यं कलाविद्यासमाश्रितम् ।  
 रागेन रञ्जितात्मनं कालेन कलितं तथा ॥  
 नियत्या यमिनं भूयः पुंभावेनोपबृंहितम् ।  
 प्रधानाशयसंपन्नं गुणत्रयसमन्वितं ॥  
 बुद्धितत्त्वसमासीनमहंकारसमावृतम्  
 मनसा बुद्धिकर्माक्षैस्तन्मरैः स्थूलभूतकैः ॥

Caitanya (Freedom of the Self to know and do everything) is suppressed by mala (*āṇava mala*) and provided with *kalā* and *vidyā*, is tainted by *rāga*, limited in respect of *kāla* (time), restrained by *niyati*, magnified by the sense of being a *puruṣa* (an empirical self), furnished with the disposition of *prakṛti*, endowed with the three *guṇas* (*rajas*, *tamas* and *sattva*), *buddhi*, *ahaṁkara*, and *manas*, organs of knowledge and organs of action, subtle elements (*tanmātras*), and the gross elements. Svachanda Tantra 2: 39-41

धर्माधर्मात्मकं कर्म सुखदुःखादिलक्षणम् ॥

He (*jīva*) does good and bad deeds, which bring about pleasure and pain. MVUT 1:24.

### Non-dual Śaiva View:

The cause of bondage:

देवः स्वतन्त्रश्चिद्रूपः  
 प्रकाशात्मा स्वभावतः ।  
 रूपप्रच्छादनक्रीडा-  
 योगादणुरनेककः ॥१०३॥

103. God, whose essential nature is Consciousness, is of the nature of Light; [because of this] he is absolutely independent. It is because of his intrinsic nature (*svabhāvataḥ*) that he assumes the forms of the endless number of limited knowing subjects (*aṇu*) by concealing his real form; this is [nothing but] his playful activity.

स स्वयंकल्पिताकार-  
 विकल्पात्मककर्मभिः ।  
 बध्नात्यात्मानमेवेह  
 स्वातन्त्र्यादिति वर्णितम् ॥१०४॥

104. According to our system (*iha*), he binds himself through his freedom by the actions generated from differentiated thinking (*vikalpa*) which are the result of mental activity. All of this has already been explained.

स्वातन्त्र्यमहिमैवायं  
देवस्य यदसौ पुनः ।  
स्वं रूपं परिशुद्धं स-  
त्स्पृशत्यप्यणुतामयः ॥१०५॥

105. Although in the state of a limited knowing subject, it is again by the glory of his freedom that he touches [and thus regains] his original, pure form.

नं वाच्यं तु कथं नाम  
कस्मिंश्चित्पुंस्यसौ तथा ।  
नहि नाम पुमान्कश्चि-  
द्यस्मिन्पर्यनुयुज्यते ॥१०६॥

106. We shouldn't be asked here, "why does he manifest himself only in some knowing subjects"? No knowing subject exists with respect to which this kind of objection is justified.

देव एव तथासौ चेत्  
स्वरूपं चास्य तादृशम् ।  
तादृक्प्रथास्वभावस्य  
स्वभावे कानुयोज्यता ॥१०७॥

107. If God is such, and such is his essential nature, and the nature of his manifestation is such, how could an objection with respect to [his] essential nature (*svabhāve*) be justified?

तिरोधिः पूर्णरूपस्या-  
पूर्णत्वं तच्च पूरणम् ॥१११॥  
प्रति भिन्नेन भवेन  
स्पृहातो लोलिका मलः ।

111cd-112ab. The concealment of the fullness of Supreme Reality consists in the realization: "I am incomplete" (*āpūrṇatvam*); and the craving

(*lolikā*) to fill up this emptiness with limited objects is the desire that is known as *mala*.

विशुद्धस्वप्रकाशात्म-  
शिवरूपतया विना ॥११२॥  
न किञ्चिद्युज्यते तेन  
हेतुरत्र महेश्वरः ।

112cd-113ab. Without Lord Śiva, the pure self-luminous Light, nothing could be explained; therefore, the cause [of *mala* and karma] is Maheśwara.

इत्थं सृष्टिस्थितिध्वंस-  
त्रये मायामपेक्षते ॥११३॥  
कृत्यै मलं तथा कर्म  
शिवेच्छैवेति सुस्थितम् ।

113cd-114ab. Thus, it is firmly established that with respect to the three acts: creation, maintenance, and dissolution the will of Lord Śiva [is the main cause,] but to accomplish these, he depends on *māyā*, karma, and *mala*.

यत्तु कस्मिंश्चिन शिवः  
स्वेन रूपेण भासते ॥११४॥

114. But when Lord Śiva shines in all his fullness in someone [and thus graces them].

तत्रास्य नाणुगे ताव-  
दपेक्ष्ये मलकर्मणी ।  
अणुस्वरूपताहानौ  
तद्गतं हेतुतां कथम् ॥११५॥  
ब्रजेन्मायानपेक्षत्व-  
मत एवोपपादेयेत् ।

115-116ab. With respect to the act of gracing (*tatra*), Lord Śiva doesn't depend on either *mala* or karma, which are found in a limited knower. How can *mala*, which is the cause of the state of the limited knower, also

be the cause of its removal? Thus, we can conclude that Lord Śiva, for his acting, is also independent of *māyā*.

तेन शुद्धः स्वप्रकाशः

शिव एवात्र कारणम् ॥११६॥

116. Therefore, Lord Śiva alone, pure, self-luminous Light is the cause [of the descent of grace].

### Action is not the cause of the descent of power:

ननु पूजाजपध्यान-

शंकरासेवनादिभिः ॥२५९॥

ते मन्त्रादित्वमापन्नाः

कथं कर्मानपेक्षिणः ।

259cd-260ab. But people attain [identity with] mantra and other [such perfections] precisely by the acts of worship, mantra repetition, meditation, service to Lord Śiva, and the rest. So how can you say that this takes place independently from karma?

मैवं तथाविधोत्तीर्ण-

शिवध्यानजपादिषु ॥२६०॥

प्रवृत्तिरेव प्रथम-

मेषां कस्माद्विविच्यताम् ।

260cd-261ab. It is not like that. Let's first examine where that inclination – which inspires them to engage in mantra repetition, meditation on Lord Śiva and the rest, which transcends the above mentioned karmas – comes from.

### No occasion for the descent of power

कुलजातिवपुष्कर्म-

वयोनुष्ठानसंपदः ॥११७॥

अनपेक्ष्य शिवे भक्तिः

शक्तिपातो 'फलार्थिनाम् ।

या फलार्थितया भक्तिः

सा कर्माद्यमपेक्षते ॥११८॥  
 ततो 'त्र स्यात्फले भेदो  
 नापवर्गे त्वसौ तथा ।

117cd.- 119ab. The descent of grace, the devotion to Lord Śiva of one who doesn't expect any worldly fruit is in no way dependent on family, birth, body, karma, age, conduct or wealth. On the other hand, the devotion of one who desires such a fruit depends on karma, and the rest. Therefore, there is a distinction with respect to the fruit of the actions of the latter, while this is not the case with liberation.

### The nature of *mala* according to Non-dual Śaivism

श्रीमन्निशाकुले 'प्युक्तं  
 मिथ्याभावितचेतसः ।  
 मलमायाविचारेण  
 क्लिश्यन्ते स्वल्पबुद्धयः ॥१२६॥  
 स्फटिकोपलगो रेणुः  
 किं तस्य कुरूतां प्रिये ।  
 व्योम्नीव नीलं हि मलं  
 मलशंकां ततस्त्यजेत् ॥१२७॥

126-127. It has also been said in the revered *Nisā Kula* that those of little intelligence, whose minds are infused with false knowledge, are afflicted by a poor understanding of the real nature of *mala* and *māyā*. O Beloved, what can a speck of dust that has fallen on a pearl do? This *mala* is just like blueness in the sky. Therefore, one should abandon any doubt with respect to [the nature of] *mala*.

क्लिश्यन्त इति वृथा क्लेशमनुभवन्ति इत्यर्थः । यथा स्फटिकोपलगतो रेणुर्व्योमगतो वा नीलिमा तयोर्न किञ्चिदपि वस्तुतो मलिनत्वादि कर्तुं शक्नुतामेवं शुद्धबुद्धस्वभावस्य आत्मनः स्वेच्छामात्रपरिकल्पिते मलकर्मणी इति तच्छंकां त्यजेत् वस्तुतः किञ्चिदेतन्नास्ति इत्यर्थः । यदुक्तं तत्र

न मलो मलिनः कश्चिद्विद्यते वस्तुतः प्रिये ।  
 स्वमनोमलिनत्वेन मलमात्मनि कथ्यते ॥  
 मलमायाविचारेण क्लिश्यन्ते स्वल्पबुद्धयः ।

स्फटिकोपलगो रेणुः किं तस्य कुरुतां प्रिये ॥  
 अज्ञानमात्रं तु मलं ज्ञानं शुद्धं स्वभावतः ।  
 शुद्धस्वभावबोधस्य न बन्धः स्यात्कदाचन ॥  
 आकाशे नीलिमा यद्वन्मलमेवं चिदात्मनः ।

इति ॥१२७॥

They are afflicted (*kliśyante*) [means that] they for no good reason (*vr̥thā*) experience suffering. Just as a speck of dust or blueness in the sky cannot darken or in any other way affect these two, in the same way, *mala* and karma, which are nothing but products of the imagination, cannot in any way affect the Self, whose essential nature is pure knowledge. Therefore, give up any doubt with respect to the nature of *mala*, which, in reality, is non-existent. As it has been said elsewhere:

In reality, O Beloved, *mala* doesn't exist in one who is polluted by it; but rather, *mala* is said to exist in the Self because of the impurity of one's mind. Those of little intelligence are afflicted by a poor understanding of the real nature of *mala* and *māyā*. What can a speck of dust that has fallen on a pearl do, O Beloved? *Mala* is nothing but ignorance, whereas knowledge is, by nature, pure. Consciousness which is, by nature, pure can never be bound; just like the blueness [that] is present in the sky, so also, *mala* is found in the Self.

### Dualist Theory of Karma-sāmya. 13: 128-129ab

श्रीमान्विद्यागुरूश्चाह  
 प्रमाणस्तुतिदर्शने ।

128ab. Revered Vidyāpati has said in his *Pramāṇa-stuti-darśana*:

तदेवाह

This is what he said:

धर्माधर्मव्याप्तिविनाशान्तरकाले  
 शक्तेः पातो गाहनिकैर्यः प्रतिपन्नः ॥१२८॥  
 तं स्वेच्छातः संगिरमाणाः स्तवकाद्याः  
 स्वातन्त्र्यं तत्त्वय्यनपेक्षं कथयेयुः ।

128cd.-129ab. The followers of Dualist teachings accept the view that the descent of power occurs at the intermediate time, when the pervasion [of the continuous generation of two-fold karmas of equal strength ceases] and the destruction of auspicious (*dharma*) and inauspicious acts (*adharmā*) takes place. But those who write and sing eulogies to you declare your sovereignty and teach that the descent of grace is the result of your free will alone – completely independent of [any external cause].

इह गहनिकैर्गहनं मायामेव विश्वकारणत्वेन अभिदधद्भिर्भेदवादिभिर्धर्माधर्मयोः कर्मणोर्या व्याप्तिः कार्यं जन्मने प्रसरणं तस्या विनाशः प्रतिबन्धस्तदात्मन्यन्तरे साम्यलक्षणे काले तदेपेक्षो यः शक्तिपातः प्रतिपन्नस्तमेव स्तवकाद्याः स्तोत्रकारादयः स्वेच्छामात्रेणैव प्रतिजानानास्त्वद्विषयमनन्यापेक्षं तत्स्वातन्त्र्यमावेदयन्ति इत्यर्थः ॥१२८॥

The word *gahanikaiḥ* refers to those Dualists who accept *gahana* [; meaning] *māyā*, as the cause of the universe. They argue that in the intermediate time, a pervasion (*viyāpti*) occurs; that is, when the generation of the effects of auspicious and inauspicious acts are blocked. It is at this particular time, when an equilibrium of two opposite karmas of the same strength occurs, that the descent of grace takes place. But, those who sing eulogies to you proclaim your independence, as being independent from anything external, and say that the [descent of power] occurs as the result of your free will.

### How does this lucid knowledge develop?

Spontaneously (*svataḥ*), by studying scriptures (*śāstrataḥ*), by associating oneself with a qualified teacher (*gurutaḥ*).

किरणायां तथोक्तं च

गुरुतः शास्त्रतः स्वतः ॥१६२॥

ज्ञानयोग्यास्तथा केचि-

च्चर्यायोग्यास्तथापरे ।

162cd-163ab. Thus, it is written in the *Kiraṇa Tantra* that [knowledge arises] from a teacher (*gurutaḥ*), from the scriptures (*śāstrataḥ*) and by itself (*svataḥ*). Some are fit for the path of knowledge (*jñāna*), while others for discipline (*caryā*).

## Various degrees of the descent of power.

तारतम्यप्रकाशो य-

स्तीव्रमध्यममन्दताः ॥१२९॥

ता एव शक्तिपातस्य

प्रत्येकं त्रैधमास्थिताः ।

129cd-130ab. The descent of energy is three-fold: strong (*tīvra*), medium (*madhya*) and mild (*manda*), each of which is further divided into three subdivisions.

यो नाम शक्तिपातस्य तारतम्यप्रकाश उक्तस्ता एव तीव्रमध्यमन्दताः प्रत्येकं तैधमास्थिताः । तीव्रतीव्रादिरूपतया अस्य नव प्रकारा इत्यर्थः ॥

That Light, which as it was explained earlier, manifests the descent of power in various degrees of intensity, is primarily three-fold; that is, strong, medium and mild. Each of these is further divided into three, as for example, strong-strong, etc., in this way, we obtain a nine-fold division.

एतदेव फलतो दर्शयति

Next, the author presents the fruits for each of these types of the descent of power:

तीव्रतीव्रः शक्तिपातो

देहपातवशात्स्वयम् ॥१३०॥

मोक्षप्रदस्तदैवान्य-

काले वा तारतम्यतः ।

मध्यतीव्रात्पुनः सर्व-

मज्ञानं विनिवर्तते ॥१३१॥

स्वयमेव यतो वेत्ति

बन्धमोक्षतयात्मताम् ।

तत्प्रातिभं महाज्ञानं

शास्त्राचार्यानपेक्षि यत् ॥१३२॥

130cd-132. The strong-strong decent of energy, by itself (*svayam*) grants liberation after one leaves one's body; this can occur either immediately or at some other point in the future, depending on the intensity of the

descent of power. On the other hand, the strong-medium descent of power removes all types of ignorance by itself, from which great intuitive insight (*pratibhā*) [arises], through which one knows one's own Self as the originator of bondage and liberation, independently from either scriptures or a teacher.

ननु एवंविधप्रतिभाभाजनभूतो 'पि को नामासाविति निरूप्यम् । न तावच्छासिता व्युत्पत्त्या-  
सादनसमये तत्त्वाभावात् । आसादितव्युत्पत्तिर्हि परान्व्युत्पादयन् कामं शासितेत्युच्येत । नापि  
शिष्यस्तस्य पराधेयव्युत्पत्तिकत्वात् । तत्कतरस्तावदयमिति न जानीम इत्याशंक्याह

**Please tell us, what kind of person he is who has attained this intuitive insight? You cannot call such a person a teacher because he is still in the process of gaining that knowledge (*vyutpatti*) in which this intuitive insight is absent. A teacher, on the other hand, is one who has already attained that knowledge and is also teaching others. But you cannot also call him a student because a student is one who is studying with others. Thus, we don't know which of these two he is.**

स शिष्टः कर्मकर्तृत्वा-  
च्छिष्यो 'न्यः कर्मभावतः ।

**134ab. [He is neither teacher nor disciple,] but self-taught (*śiṣṭa*) because he is both the object and the agent of action. On the other hand, a disciple (*śiṣya*) is only object of instruction [by others].**