



Svaroopa® Vidya Ashram

February 2020 Teachings Article:

Focus on Enlightenment #2

## **Slow or Fast? Hard or Easy?**

By Gurudevi Nirmalananda

You're already on your way; life pushes you into growth even when you don't choose it. That's the slow path. Water dripping on a rock wears it away. A river carves a canyon through desert. How long does that take? Geologists disagree on the timeline for the Grand Canyon, somewhere between 5-70 million years. If getting enlightened is going to take that long, are you really on board?

The good news is that there's a fast track. Instead of the gradual wearing away of the rock-like density blocking access to your inner light, you can opt for the cosmic breakthrough of Shaktipat. This is the path of Self-discovery, the unveiling of your inherent Divinity. Choosing the fast path was easy for me, once I'd found it, a spiritual path based on the lightning bolt of Consciousness climbing my spine — Kundalini. I've never looked back.

One of the reasons the *Svaroopa*® Yoga poses work so powerfully is because they mimic the spinal decompression that Kundalini gives you. Even if you haven't received Shaktipat yet, the poses give you some of the inner openings. But what you can do on your own is only 5-10% of what Kundalini will do for you once awakened.

You hear a lot about Kundalini these days, a big improvement over when I began. Back then it was a scary word, with lots of stories about people going crazy or having a "spiritual emergency." I wasn't scared because I'd been living in a spiritual emergency for decades, in my futile attempts to be fulfilled by a mainstream lifestyle. One of Baba's teaching stories describes it well:

The advisors and seers on the King's council warned him that a terrible storm was coming, but the rain water was polluted and must not be drunk. The King sent messengers around the kingdom, "Cover your wells, barrels and water pots. Don't drink the water from the lakes and rivers until three days after the rain." People laughed. They knew that rain is a great blessing from the heavens.

The only one who covered his well was the King. Everyone else drank the water. They went crazy. The King ran from person to person, looking intently into their eyes, calling them by name. He shook them by their shoulders, trying to shake some sense into them. Nothing worked. He couldn't rule the kingdom because no one listened to him. No one would do what he said.

After days of trying to reach them, he figured out what to do. He drank the water.

I felt like this, trying to do all the things "they" said would make me happy. They even lied, saying those things made them happy. They probably believed the lie. I couldn't drink the water, metaphorically speaking. I always knew that I wanted something the world didn't offer.

Muktananda's gift of Shaktipat changed everything for me. When Kundalini climbed my spine the first time, I had a powerful sense that this was what I had been looking for, even over lifetimes. Shaktipat is the cosmic breakthrough that shattered my ideas of how I should be, of who I should be and even of why I should do the things I did. Yoga calls it freedom. Baba set me free.

Yet I had to work for it too. He gave me the fuel: the light, heat and power of Consciousness climbing my spine, opening me inward to my own infinite Beingness. But I couldn't sustain the state. I'd have ecstatic and transformative experiences every morning during meditation, then go back to trying to make sense out of a crazy world. The next morning I'd meditate again. Though I still lived in the midst of craziness, I was gradually becoming more and more sane, more and more whole.

So I amped it up — I did more yoga. I trained as a yoga teacher, then as a meditation teacher. I led one of Baba's weekly meditation centers. Finally I went to live with him, to do even more yoga for a longer time. It wore away my resistances. It melted my density like water dripping on stone. Instead of it taking millions of

years, it all happened in a few short years. Baba speeded it up like time-lapse photography. That's called Grace. But it was still hard, which he acknowledged in this metaphor:

The potter presses, pokes and prods the lump of clay as it spins on the wheel. He even takes sticks and stones to press against it, shaping the lump into a pot, something beautiful as well as useful. Yet all the while, his hand is inside, lifting and supporting it through the process.

I could feel his internal support. The external process was intense, as I truly did lifetimes worth of lessons in a few short years. I became less reactive to others because I was progressively more able to feel inner joy, love and bliss. I became less needy because I was being filled by God from the inside-out. The dissolving of my density and blockages was both fast and easy, because it was all burned in Kundalini's fire. Shaktipat gives you both — the inner discovery as well as the burning away of your limitations.

One approach to spiritual development is called "negation." The Sanskrit term is "neti neti," meaning "not this, not this." Nothing you grab for on the outside will truly satisfy you, thus you remind yourself, "not this, not this," each time you want to grab for something. Even on the inside, with your reactions, rationalizations and resistances, you say, "neti neti." Over time, a long and arduous period of time, you quit grabbing for things. Left utterly alone, with nothing even on the inside, you find the only thing which remains, the One Reality that has always existed. This path works, if you've got the time and patience. I had neither.

Spiritual negation is a way of working from the outside-inward. Most DIY seekers get trapped in wrestling with their mind and emotions, believing they cannot make headway until they transcend their mind or annihilate their ego. Trust me, you'll need both once you're enlightened, that is, if you want to function in the world.

Shaktipat works the process the other way around, from the inside-outward. When the Guru awakens your Kundalini for you, it is the mystical revelation of your inherent Divinity. Best of all, now the light of Consciousness is awakened within. Kundalini arises within when you meditate, chant and do other practices. She blazes inside, dissolving the outer layers that used to block you. It's called Grace, specifically Guru's Grace. It is the continuing blessing that comes from your continuing relationship with your Shaktipat Guru.

You can cooperate with this mystical revelation by doing the practices that reshape your body and mind so they are attuned to Consciousness. Your practices are called Disciple's Grace. It's how you work from the outside-inward, while Consciousness is blossoming forth from the inside-outward. Both are essential if you want to get enlightened in this lifetime.

This path of Self-discovery is the opposite of the path of self-negation. "Neti, neti" says nothing is Divine. Tantra says everything is Divine:

Na shivam vidyate kvachit — Svacchandra Tantra

There is nowhere that Shiva is not.

It all begins with Shaktipat. Before Shaktipat, it's like you're running on batteries that get drained as you use them. After Shaktipat, you've got a nuclear power plant inside. Once you receive Maha-Shaktipat Diksha, the "Breakthrough Initiation," from an authorized Shaktipat Master, you can get enlightened in one lifetime. You choose — slow or fast, hard or easy.

THIS IS AN ARTICLE IN A YEAR-LONG SERIES ON "FOCUS ON ENLIGHTENMENT"

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