



Svaroop® Vidya Ashram

December 2025 Teachings Article:

Insight into Sutras #12

## **A Divine Birth**

By Gurudevi Nirmalananda

Every birth is a Divine embodiment, a manifestation of the One Source. Each and every one of us is made of the Divine energy that becomes all.

This means your birth was a Divine birth. It may be that your parents felt it. New babies are easy to adore. It is because they don't yet know how to block their inner light from shining through.

Yet some babies grow up to share the Divine Light with others. The world celebrates the birth anniversary of a few: Jesus, Buddha, Muhammed. But were they the only ones? No. Many saints are honored in several traditions, with their life stories told and retold in order to inspire and to bless others.

India specializes in saints. Not only do they honor more of them, throughout a longer timeline, but they acknowledge that anyone can become a saint. Even you? Yes, even you. But you have to apply yourself, like with anything you want to accomplish. And you need training.

Gururupaaya.h. — Shiva Sutras 2.6

The Guru is the goal as well as the path.

The Guru both teaches you about your Divine Essence and gives you tools to experience it — both the goal and the pathway to it. Since the Sanskrit word “guru” means teacher, it applies to a teacher of any subject. Maybe you had a piano guru when you were growing up. The West has adopted this term to refer to an expert in any field, like a stock market guru or a basement guru. Yet the term came from India, specifically naming the God-inspired yogis who began coming to America in the 1800s.

A Divine teacher teaches about God. This is true of any priest, minister or pastor. Yet yoga holds them to a higher standard in order to qualify for the title, Guru. They must have found God, not merely on the outside, but within their own being. Now they are a Divine teacher in two ways: being Divine and teaching about God.

You are also able to find God within, yet you might not have the dharma to teach. Being a saint without having a world mission means you simply enjoy your life from a deeper inner center. You revel in your own vastness and timelessness in the midst of life's activities. What a great future you have in store!

How do you get there? Get a Guru and do what they say. That's what I did. It worked for me. Yet I knew many other people who came to Baba and haven't fulfilled their potential. It's the same problem as with a Divine birth. Yours was a Divine birth, but what have you done with it since?

Looking at the Gurus honored by the West, we see that their lives featured a lot of alone time. They went into the desert, forest or mountain caves to commune with God. What does “commune” mean? In yogic terms, it means to become one with, like putting these words together: come-union. That is the purpose of meditation, to discover you are already one with God, for there is no other than the One.

The inner discovery is what's important. Your essence was Divine before you were born, has been through your whole life long and is true now. The highest spiritual goal is for you to know. The path to Self-discovery is given by the Guru. The goal of embodied Consciousness is modeled by the Guru.

I loved to watch my Baba. Whether he was leading a chant, giving a discourse or sitting silently, he was fascinating. The twinkle in his eyes, the sound of him clearing his throat, his singing to us in the midst of giving teachings — he captivated my mind and filled my heart.

It was the inner filling that mattered most. This is the difference between a Guru and a Satguru. The Guru teaches you how to find your own Self. The Satguru gives you your own Self, through the inner awakening called Shaktipat. My Baba explained it, “The Guru is one who dispenses Divine Power.” Yet the one who can dispense such power is one with its source.

It's not like the way a garden hose delivers water. The hose is connected to a spigot, which is connected to a pipe drawing its supply from the local river, lake or reservoir. The hose is delivering

something that is separate from it, a substance coming from a different source. But the Satguru delivers their own Divine Essence, flowing in a stream coming from their own Beingness — which is the same as your own Beingness. Oh, Shiva.

The only difference between the you that you are now and the you that you will be when enlightened is this — you will know your own Self. You already are Divine. You simply don't know yet, not all the time.

The Guru's practices are to condition you to the Self-Knowingness that is your destiny. It is like a football player practicing to catch a pass. He has to position himself on the field and be good at catching the ball, which is traveling at 60 mph. In the same way, you do practices in order to position yourself in the flow of Grace and be good at melting into it.

Whether you get enlightened in this lifetime or not depends on you, but once you have received Shaktipat, you are on a Divine trajectory. It may last lifetimes if you dawdle along the way. Or you may reach the goal this lifetime, or even today, if you so choose.

Baba gave us chanting as a primary practice, for six or more hours daily. I loved it. I loved the music. I loved all the names for God and Guru. I loved the bliss that chanting provided. I now know it worked because Baba's energy flowed through the chants. The Guru pours their energy through the practices, most especially mantra repetition.

While I loved the chanting, I also needed it. The chants rewired my brain and nervous system. I grew "bliss wiring." Your nervous system shapes itself to specialize in things you have been exposed to. Neuro-plasticity is medicine's term for how your brain reshapes itself based on what you experience. Yoga calls the process "parinama," the way your mind is transformed by marinating in God. The transformation leads to yoga's promise, found in the last sutra of this text:

Bhuyah syat pratimilanam.<sup>1</sup> — Shiva Sutras 3.45

Knowing your own Divine nature, you are aware of only Shiva, both inside  
and outside, again and again.

Dogs can hear sounds beyond the human capacity. Parrots see color variations we cannot see. Similarly, enlightened beings see the reality of Shiva's presence in all, being all. Their eyes don't change; it's their mind. Instead of ranking everything according to some external standard, they recognize the deeper reality, again and again. Why again and again?

Because wherever their eyes fall or their mind turns, they see Shiva. Looking at a tree — Shiva! Looking at the sky beyond the tree — Shiva! Seeing the person sitting under the tree — Shiva! Seeing their picnic, with the birthday cake — Shiva, Shiva! And the ants advancing on the cake — Shiva!

Who is Shiva? Shiva is yoga's name for God, yet it points to something more than what we usually mean by the name God. Western traditions identify God the creator, God the protector and God the destroyer, as described in the Old Testament. The New Testament gives us God the father and God the redeemer. The name Shiva points to something more.

In addition to being found outside, and being found in relationship, Shiva is found inside, meaning God is being you while being all. This is no longer about relationship. This is about Beingness.

Yet you need help finding your own Beingness. This is why you need a Satguru, to awaken and guide you in the process. But don't downgrade your Guru to being merely a specific physical form. It's not their charm, nor their energy, nor their scholarship that makes one a Guru. The Guru is one who has surrendered to Divine Grace and serves others in their holy quest. This is why we celebrate their presence on earth. This is yoga.

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<sup>1</sup> Bhuyah syat pratimilanam.