



Svaroopā® Vidya Ashram

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Spiritual Upliftment #12

## Instant Enlightenment

By Swami Nirmalananda, Rukmini Abbruzzi & Vidyadevi Stillman

Instant enlightenment! Are you ready? It is available to you, precisely because this is a Shaktipat yoga, fueled by the blessings coming from Himalayan masters. "I know that Shaktipat works because it happened to me," says Swami Nirmalananda. "Once I received this powerful initiation, I never looked back. I had a deep inner knowing that I was finally on the right path, making progress toward what I'd been seeking for so long." *Svaroopā*® yoga is a yoga for seekers.

Any style of yoga improves your health and happiness as well as giving you beauty and peace, but *Svaroopā*® yoga also gives you your own Self. It's the inner opening that makes it happen, revealing your own Divine Essence to you. That's the Shaktipat guarantee. This mystical initiation sets you on your way to getting enlightened while making the process faster and easier. This incredible gift pours through our lineage of masters, with Sadguru Swami Nirmalananda being the carrier of their blessings, like the Olympic torch bearer brings the flame.

Many Svaroopis receive spontaneous Shaktipat through attending classes and doing their personal practice. Others opt to get intentional Shaktipat from Swamiji in a retreat. While the initiation makes instant enlightenment available, Nirmalananda says, "I confess that receiving Shaktipat didn't give me instant enlightenment. My problem was that I wasn't ready. I had to grow into my Self. That took a while. But it went faster and easier once I learned how to cooperate with the process."

How do you cooperate with the process? Any yoga that you do helps you along the way. If you didn't get fully enlightened when receiving Shaktipat, simply do *Svaroopā*® yoga's practices. You are climbing the stairway, step-by-step, to attain the heights of spiritual greatness.

You don't need to get Shaktipat in order to climb the stairs. Each step gives you choice-full progress toward enlightenment. Vidyadevi says, "I much prefer to consciously work on myself by choosing to do the practices that help transform my mind. Getting tossed about by outer situations and people is a much harder and more painful process."

Even if you don't do yoga, life will transform you. Every challenging situation is designed to shine light in your blind spots. Life will body-slam you into situations and relationships, propelling your personal growth and spiritual upliftment. "Baba compared it to being in a rock tumbler," Swami Nirmalananda remembers. "Over time, as you go round-and-round, your edges get knocked off and smoothed out. You come out polished, shiny and beautiful."

It's your mind that needs the transformation. Your mind hides the brilliance of your own inner light. This is why all the practices of yoga are for your mind, even when you're working with your body and breath. The sage Patanjali listed it all in his eight limbs ([Yoga Sutras 2.29](#)):

#1 yama	#5 pratyahara
#2 niyama	#6 dharana
#3 asana	#7 dhyana
#4 pranayama	#8 samadhi

Lifestyle practices (#1-yama) are about cleaning up your act. You yogify your life by uprooting your self-limiting behaviors. This begins to magically change the way you think, accomplishing yoga's true purpose. You naturally stop creating and reinforcing your own pain; you begin to free yourself from inner turmoil. This leads to you applying your time and energy to niyama (#2), lifestyle practices that gradually attune you to God, both outside and inside.

The many benefits of doing yoga poses (#3-asana) can distract you from their true purpose: making you able to sit in an easy stillness. This is the entry point for meditation, the secret reason behind all the poses. Your breathing practices (#4-pranayama) certainly do improve your health and state of mind, even giving you energy, enthusiasm and stamina. Yet yoga's mono focus on meditation means your breathing practices make you able to blissfully immerse in deep meditations for longer periods of time.

After the first four practices, which are focused outward, the next limb turns your attention inward (#5-pratyahara). Already happy with all the benefits that yoga's giving you, now you discover that something more is available. Your quest becomes an inner quest, leading you to explore three deepening levels of meditation. You become able to steady your mind in an inward focus (#6-dharana). Then your mind begins to flow smoothly inward, (#7-dhyana), finally melting into a profound inner absorption (#8-samadhi). This was the goal all along. You climbed the stairs to attain the highest. The only problem with stair-stepping is that it takes 10-20 years of arduous, self-disciplined practice, or more.

What this means is that you get to choose which path you will take:

Stair-step: you work your way through the eight limbs, a step-by-step process that gradually uplifts your inner state. Over decades, this moves you toward profound inner experiences, even the possibility of enlightenment in this lifetime.

Shaktipat can give you instant enlightenment, but only if you're ready for it. If not, it gives you a taste of enlightenment, which lasts for a moment or perhaps for months. More importantly, you now have easy accessibility to your own Divine Essence every time you meditate. Yet you must still go through the steps along the way to being established in the light of your own inherent Divinity.

What's the difference between these two paths? With Shaktipat, you experience the bliss of your own Divinity from the very beginning, instead of having to wait decades to hopefully grow into it.

Shaktipat is the inner awakening that reveals your own Divinity to you, a gift of Guru's Grace. One who is appointed to serve as a Sadguru serves as an agent of God's Grace. Grace is a technical term in yoga, meaning the power of Divine revelation, gifting you extraordinary experiences of the bliss and vastness of your own Being. Through Shaktipat, you are given the goal at the very beginning. It's not merely a glimpse, like you're being given an acorn that you have to grow into a tree. You get the whole tree! You simply cannot see it all. Your practices are to make you better able to see what you've already got.

If you're not instantly enlightened by receiving Shaktipat, you have a great experience but aren't able to stay in it. Why do you lose your great state? It's because of your mind. Your mind distracts you with its endless thoughts and ever-present commentary. Even your mind's interest in your inner experiences can block them. Rukmini says, "I've had this happen so many times. For example, recently while in meditation, I became aware of a vast inner sky, filled with a multitude of stars. As soon as my mind jumped in with, 'Hey, look at that! Are those stars?' they were gone. Bye-bye, profound mystical experience."

This is why, along with receiving Shaktipat, it is important for you to practice Patanjali's eight limbs of yoga. Remember, every practice is for your mind. You already know your mind can use all the help it can get. Even if you haven't received Shaktipat yet, your practices get you ready so that you can attain Self-Realization in that moment. Every pose you do and each Ujjayi breath de-densifies your mind. Each repetition of mantra floods your mind with Divine Consciousness. All your other yoga practices help quieten your mind, even retrain it, giving you access to your own Self.

After receiving Shaktipat, your continuing transformation comes from the inside out. Each time you do yoga, you dip your mind into the experience of your own Divinity. This creates a "parinama," a gradual transformation of your mind. You are becoming more and more your own Self.

You were born to be free. This doesn't mean you have to leave your life to find freedom. There's nowhere you can go to escape the rock tumbler of life. The goal is to be in the tumbler, knowing who you really are while you engage in life fully, based in the ever-arising flow of joy, happiness and love.

Shaktipat frees you from fear, pain, self-doubt and loneliness by revealing your Divinity to you. Your birthright is to live in the easy, blissful, experiential knowing of your own Self, while recognizing that same reality in all. This is the ultimate state, called "sahaja samadhi." Shaktipat sets you free.

But if you don't get instant enlightenment when you get Shaktipat, you need to work on transforming your mind by doing more yoga. Along the way, you'll be healthier, happier, more beautiful and peaceful. What have you got to lose?

Do more *Svaroop*<sup>®</sup> yoga.

THIS IS AN ARTICLE IN A YEAR-LONG SERIES ON "SPIRITUAL UPLIFTMENT," OUR THEME FOR 2018, CO-AUTHORED BY SWAMI NIRMALANANDA SARASWATI, VIDYADEVI STILLMAN & RUKMINI ABBRUZZI.

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