

Gurus and Disciples - Part 5

Shaktipat

The Transmission of Spiritual Energy

Shaktipat is known as the grace of God or *guru*. A *shaktipat guru* can give *shaktipat* to many aspirants at a time, even at a distance. If a seeker cannot visit the *guru* in person but has great faith in him or her and believes this person to be his *guru*, he or she will be able to obtain *shaktipat* from a distance. If a seeker studies the writings of the *guru* and practices the *guru's* teachings, *shaktipat* can be received from a distance, even without the internet, television or a phone call.

Traditionally, *shaktipat*, the transmission of spiritual energy, is given only to a few qualified aspirants, but this does not mean that those who do not qualify could not benefit from *shaktipat*. *Guru's* grace, like the rain, falls equally on everyone. Depending on the degree of one's readiness, some aspirants derive its benefits quickly and completely, while others are benefited more slowly or to a lesser extent.

Seekers who are already on the path of *yoga* (union with God) are usually more affected by *shaktipat diksha* (initiation). It has been said that only an aspirant who enjoys the practice of *yoga* more than worldly life becomes fit for the grace of *guru*; a seeker who is very involved with worldly affairs will not make as much progress as someone with previous experience with *yoga*, even after *shaktipat diksha*.

Qualified Aspirants

Why is there a tradition of giving *shaktipat* only to "deserving" persons? After all, it can't do any harm.

There are many expectations in the minds of persons seeking *shaktipat* ranging from awakening *kundalini*, healing, special powers, enlightenment, liberation, and even the ability to give *shaktipat* to others out of a need for self-importance. Persons seeking *gurus* solely for the purpose of getting *shaktipat* are not usually knowledgeable about *shaktipat*, nor would they know what to do with it if they got it. These people are generally not interested in anything beyond instant and effortless gratification.

Many seekers have a strong desire to attain miraculous powers. If they get even one, they start to use it and become distracted from further spiritual practice. On the other hand, if they do not come across any powers, they

begin losing interest in *yoga* and ultimately give it up. So there is little reason for winnowing anyone out, as *shaktipat* and the practice that follows is self-selective.

A *guru* will always direct the most support to serious aspirants; in this world, there is something to be said for efficient use of time. But what is the real purpose of *shaktipat*? What is it really for?

Pranotthana

The purpose of *shaktipat* is the release of *prana*. Contrary to popular opinion, *shaktipat* does not directly awaken *kundalini*.

Prana is the life energy in the body. Until it is set free, *kundalini* does not awaken. Even though it may be set free through *shaktipat*, this does not mean that it remains free. For this, one must know how to proceed after *shaktipat diksha*. This is where the guidance of a *guru* who knows *yoga* is essential, for when *prana* is allowed total freedom, it becomes very strong and awakens goddess *Kundalini*, who then becomes the agent of either abject misery or the bliss of *samadhi* and ultimate liberation. It has been said that *samadhi* can only be attained by a seeker who has found favor or grace of *guru* or God.

Kundalini

There are other ways to release the *prana* in order to awaken *kundalini*, however, it takes longer for a seeker to attain the desired results when these disciplines are practiced without the guidance of a *guru*. If the seeker chances to experience *pranotthana* and the awakening of *kundalini*, he or she will not be able to recognize them correctly and may become frightened by the experiences of *kundalini* and lose the courage to continue.

Without proper understanding, it is easy to fall into the trap of considering blessings to be obstacles when in fact, they are not obstacles but attainments of *yoga*. At this point, one will feel the necessity for guidance from an experienced *guru*, but if this relationship is not already in place, the seeker is up against a shopping and waiting period. This is why *yogic* texts say that one should obtain the guidance and grace of a realized *guru*. A seeker who inherits spiritual knowledge from such a *guru* is in a position to reach the highest peak of *yoga* (union with God).

So it is possible for someone who doesn't "qualify" to receive *shaktipat*, directly or indirectly. Also, even the most ignorant or reprehensible of us can

attain God when past inclinations of spirituality are awakened and one is drawn to moving forward on the spiritual path. Even a little bit of progress can relieve the sincere seeker of great danger. And progress is never lost.