

# KUNDALINI

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## KUNDALINI

**QUESTION:** What is **Kundalini**?

**ANSWER:** **Kundalini** is **Shakti** or Holy Spirit. It is God's Infinite Power whereby He exists, experiences and accomplishes whatever He wills.

To understand what Kundalini is, it is necessary to have some idea as to what is meant by God. God is the Supreme Being, the Ultimate Reality, the Highest Truth. He is that than which there is nothing higher. God is the Highest. God is also the Supreme Principle of Goodness, the Highest Good, the essence of everything that is Good. Hence He is called **Shiva** which means "good", "beneficent", "auspicious".

Another meaning of the word Shiva is "pure". Shiva is the purest, the most subtle, the most noble, the best and the highest. Shiva is not some material substance. Indeed, He is Pure, Boundless Consciousness. Nothing can be more pure, more noble, better or higher than Consciousness itself. This is why Consciousness and Shiva, Consciousness and God are One and the same.

Shiva, of course, is beyond man's capacity of conception or perception. He cannot be seen, heard, touched or grasped by the mind. Even so, He can be known by certain qualities, properties or attributes. Indeed, it is man's duty to try and know God. It is knowledge of God (Shiva-Jnaana) that distinguishes man from animals. It is knowledge of God that links man with Truth. It is knowledge of God that gives meaning and direction to human life. Therefore, a proper human being must strive to know God.

How can we know God? Just as the Sun, the Moon and the Stars are known by their light, God is known by His Divine Light. This is why it has been said that "God is Light". Because God is the Light of Consciousness, the Light of Intelligence, the Light of Wisdom, of Goodness and Compassion whereby He establishes and rules the Universe.

### The Light of Consciousness

Just as the Sun and his power to shine, or fire and its power to burn, are inseparable from one another, so God's Consciousness and its Power to know, illumine or reveal things are for ever One. Therefore, by knowing God's Power we know God. By knowing Shakti, we know Shiva. This is the foundation of the science of Kundalini, the Science of the Holy Spirit of God which was revealed to the World by Shiva Himself at the beginning of time.

Kundalini expresses itself in three main ways according to the level of existence on which it operates:

**1. Para Kundalini** is the Divine Force operating at the transcendental level of existence and upholding the entire Universe. As such, it is identical with Shiva's Universal Consciousness. In the individual Soul it represents the driving force behind all Spiritual effort.

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**2. Chit Kundalini** is that aspect of the above which operates at the psychological level of human existence, upholding the psychological and mental processes of thinking, feeling, perceiving, etc.

**3. Prana Kundalini** is the force that operates at the physical level of existence and manifests itself in the physical body as biological and chemical processes such as breathing, assimilating food, moving, etc.

These three fundamental forces are the same one Shakti (Divine Power) who manifests its power in three different ways just as fire, though being one, manifests as 1) the power to give light, 2) the power to produce heat and 3) the power to consume by burning.

Being man's very life-force, Kundalini is always and already there, within man, yet due to their mental and emotional conditioning, humans become so absorbed in other things that they never develop the capacity to experience it. Sadly, most humans are born, live and die without as much as suspecting what a glorious treasure lies buried within them. Therefore, mankind is sitting in the dark, as it were, not knowing where to go or what to do.

It is for this reason that all authentic Spiritual traditions remind us of the fact that the Light of God burns in the temple of man's own heart. "Look within and you shall see the Light" is the message of all genuine Masters who are the true Prophets of God. Indeed, as it is by the very Light of Consciousness that we are able to experience all things, where else may we seek that Light if not in our own heart?

## The Chakras

When, after many lifetimes of confusion, suffering and error, man understands the futility of his outward concerns, he acquires a disposition to inward contemplation and begins to see the light. Through pious deeds and association with the wise, he finally - by the Grace of God - comes across a Teacher who instructs him in the secret knowledge of Kundalini.

Every Soul or inner Self (Antaratma) is covered by two bodies: a subtle one, made of energy and not normally visible (shakta sharira) and a gross, physical one which is made of material substance and is visible to all (sthula sharira). The former is permanent and envelops the Soul in dreams, out-of-body experiences and after death. The latter is temporary and disintegrates upon man's departure from the physical world.

The subtle body (sukshma or shakta sharira) is a field of luminous energy radiating or spreading out from the Soul. It contains certain points of focus where energy tends to concentrate. These are known as **Wheels or Whirls (Chakras)** due to their circular shape and movement.

It is through these centres that energy (shakti) flows from the Soul into the energy system and further into the physical body as well as from these back to the Soul. The function of the Chakras is to facilitate and regulate the flow of energy vibrations between Soul, mind, physical body and the surrounding world, by means of energy currents known as **Nadis** or channels.

In the same way as both the body's skeletal structure and nervous system are supported by the central axis of the spinal column, the energy system of the subtle body is supported by a Central

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Channel (Madhya Nadi) or energy current running along the spine and connecting the main Chakras from the base of the spine to the top of the head.

The Chakras are situated 1) at the base of the spine, 2) in the lower abdomen (1-2 fingers above the first), 3) in the upper abdomen (near the navel), 4) in the chest (near the heart), 5) in the throat (just above the chest), 6) in the forehead (between the eyebrows) and 7) at the top of the head. Their traditional names are as follows: 1) Muladhara or Root Support, 2) Svadhishtana or Own Abode, 3) Manipura or Jewel City, 4) Anahata or Unbeaten, 5) Vishuddha or Without Blemish, 6) Ajna or Command and 7) Sahasrara or Thousand-Spoked.

Although there are many other energy centres, the above seven will suffice to form a clear idea as to the nature of the energy system or body according to the Yoga Tradition. The seventh centre is often not counted as a Chakra as it corresponds to Cosmic Consciousness and not to the human body proper. However, without it, no clear understanding of the Chakras is possible, hence it is included here. Some traditions only mention six, five or four centres yet they all are based on the same system.

## The awakening of Kundalini

The awakening of Kundalini is a much-talked-about subject in Spiritual and pseudo-Spiritual circles. The acquisition of power and new experience is something that most people feel inclined at least to attempt achieving once in a lifetime if not as a life-long dedication.

The possession of Spiritual or psychic power is no doubt tempting to most humans. What could one not achieve even with a little supernatural power! To counteract this temptation and the dangers it can pose to unsuspecting aspirants, it is imperative to understand that the power or powers we are here talking about are the Power of God. Not something to play with or take lightly!

The Power of God, Universal Energy, God Force, Holy Spirit, Shakti or Divine Light, first descends from the highest to the lowest level of experience and remains dormant at the base of the spine. Only some of its infinite radiance remains in operation so as to animate the body-mind complex. For this reason, it may accurately be described as the Breath of Life, the Breath of God whereby He gently breathes life into man and infuses him with His life-supporting Holy Spirit.

The Awakening of Kundalini in man consists in the rise of the Divine Life Force from the lowermost Chakra and its ascent along the Median Channel (Madhya Nadi or Sushumna) and through the remaining Chakras to the crown of the head. For this reason, Kundalini has been described as the "Serpent Power", being coiled up like a serpent when inactive and rising along the spine in the manner of a serpent ascending a tree, when awakened.

In addition to its conventional meaning of "ring-like" or "serpent-like", Kundalini may also be etymologically derived from "Kunda" which means a well or hole in the ground for preserving water or fire, as well as a sacrificial pit containing the sacred fire. It therefore refers to the sacred power preserved in the storehouse of life at the root of man's innermost being.

When, by the Grace of God or His human representative (Guru), the **Prana Kundalini** is awakened, it begins to remove the unconscious psychological blocks or Karmic sediments in the Chakras. This process may give rise to spontaneous involuntary movements known

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as **Kriyas** and experiences of the Chakras revolving or otherwise becoming activated one by one in ascending order. All of this leads to an awakening of man's awareness of the inner Life Force as a strange energy which animates his body from within.

An important point that needs to be understood at this stage is that the awakening of Kundalini is only the beginning of a long Spiritual journey that may take two or three lifetimes to complete depending on the seeker's Spiritual development, Karma and, above all, the Will of God. In most cases, the awakening of Kundalini only serves to convince the aspirant of the realities of Spiritual facts and reinforce his belief in the Supreme. Years of Spiritual Practice (Sadhana) will still be needed to secure, stabilise, assimilate and deepen one's experience step by step.

When **Chit Kundalini** is awakened, it rises straight up the Central Channel to the top of the head and beyond without activating the Chakras. This is usually a much more powerful experience, rather like an overwhelming surge of luminous energy culminating in a dramatic unfolding of a higher blissful Awareness accompanied by a simultaneous loss of body-centred consciousness.

As a rule, the full rise of Chit Kundalini is only experienced by advanced Yogis whose Soul is pure and who have a pure, blockage-free energy system. This experience enables the aspirant to recognise the inner Life Force as his own energy and brings about the realisation that he is a free and independent Soul made of Light, Intelligence and Energy, and existing beyond the limitations of the temporary body-mind structure with which ordinary man identifies himself.

The awakening of **Para Kundalini** is nothing but the Soul's full realisation of his Identity with Shiva. This form of Kundalini Awakening represents a direct realisation of God that completely bypasses the Chakras and any practices or experiences associated with them. It is a rare experience that is only attained by highly evolved Yogis. Though glimpses of it may be had already in this lifetime, it can only fully unfold after the death of the physical body. This is due to the fact that the body being limited, it naturally causes the consciousness of the Soul to contract however lightly.

## The Guru

In the Yoga Tradition, Shiva, the Supreme Being, has always been recognised as the real Guru or **Sat Guru**. Yet because Shiva is normally beyond the experience or even imagination of ordinary humans, Yogis first meditate on their human Guru, and by doing so their consciousness is gradually elevated to the level of the Guru and, finally, to that of Shiva Himself. The Guru or Spiritual Guide being the link between the individual Soul and Shiva's Universal Consciousness, his importance must not be underestimated by the seekers of Truth.

Those who expect the Guru to "open their Chakras" or "awaken their Kundalini" so that they can sit back and enjoy some exotic experience without any effort or contribution on their part, are deluded Souls who do not deserve to be accepted as disciples. Even if the Guru did deliberately awaken the pupil's Kundalini, self-effort would still be required for the thorough purification of the energy system, as no Guru can or will completely cancel the pupil's Karma.

Therefore, the Western-inspired idea of a saviour who would somehow cancel the sins of all Souls and save the entire human race in one go is absurd. As experience shows, though various "saviours" have made their appearance on Earth throughout the long and painful history of

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mankind, man's best strategy is still to save himself by following the teachings of those who, having understood the higher Laws of the Universe, know what they are talking about.

The fact is that an Enlightened Guru is inwardly identical with God (Shiva-sama). If God is not willing to absolve a man's sins, the Guru won't absolve them either. The Guru may temporarily postpone the effects of some of the aspirant's past actions, yet without the latter's own effort, his Karma will sooner or later catch up with him. In other words, nothing can substitute man's own Spiritual effort.

## The Practice

Kundalini or the Divine Potency of Shiva cannot ordinarily be awakened without preliminary practice and preparation. Among the preliminary practices necessary to this end are Image-Worship, Study of Scriptures, Dietary Observances and Yoga Postures. Among the advanced practices we may mention Meditation on Shiva in the form of the Guru followed by Breathing Exercises, Meditation on the Chakras, Meditation on the Breath and Meditation on Light. Chanting of and Meditation on Mantra may also be practised as and when directed by the Guru. In all instances, details of the individual practices and techniques must be obtained directly from a competent Guru and not from books and other secondary sources which outsiders are bound to misinterpret without adequate guidance.

## Tantra Yoga

**Tantra Yoga** is based on the polarity of Consciousness and Energy which are the Static and the Dynamic aspects of Reality, respectively. Kundalini is regarded as the Feminine, dynamic aspect of God while God Himself is the Masculine, static or changeless Principle. Thus Shiva and Shakti, God and Goddess, are the two fundamental aspects of Ultimate Reality through the interaction of which everything comes into existence. The Awakening of Kundalini in the human body is interpreted as the Reunion of the Dormant Feminine Principle lying at the base of the spine, with the Waking Masculine Principle situated at the crown of the head.

## Tantric Union

**Mithuna, Duti-Yajana, Yogini-Yaamala, Yogini-Melaapa, Kula-Yaaga** or "**Tantric Sex**" as it is erroneously called in the West, consists of certain ritual practices designed to bring about an awakening of Kundalini. As all experience is the product of the interaction of the two fundamental principles described above, intercourse between man and woman is regarded as capable of bringing man closer to the State of Absolute Unity and Oneness from which all other states and experiences ultimately derive.

Contrary to Western-inspired beliefs, the Sacramental Union of man and woman in Yoga is not practised for sexual gratification but for the purpose of elevating man to a state of Union with God. It is important to understand that even Western Scriptures admit that God made man and woman in His own image. Similarly, Yoga is a holistic and unitive Spirituality which regards the Universe as a manifestation of God. Man and woman are images of God and reflections of each other.

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In Yoga, therefore, devotees are enjoined to see God in each other. "Every man is Shiva (God) and every woman is Shakti (Goddess)", says the Shiva Mahapurana. What becomes obvious is that the Sacramental Union of man and woman is not sexual but Spiritual. This is why Tantric Scriptures declare: "Woman must not be touched for the sake of bodily pleasure but for the perfecting of the spirit".

Given their notorious lack of Spiritual guidance, knowledge and purity, however, it is not surprising that Westerners and Western-indoctrinated Indians alike fall prey to all kinds of misunderstandings. The main misunderstanding stems from the fact that Tantric teachings are couched in symbolic language reminiscent of sexual practices due to the fact that the blissful states of Yogic experience often resemble those ordinarily known only from such practices. Indeed, from a Spiritual point of view, all experience of pleasure, whether physical or Spiritual is an expression of Shiva's Power of Bliss (Ananda-Shakti) a fragment of which is also present in man. It is therefore legitimate for Spiritual experience to be described in language ordinarily associated with more mundane activities.

Be that as it may, the fact remains that Mystic Union in Yoga generally consists not in physical intercourse but in certain inward concentration and visualisation techniques aiming at the integration and unification of man's own inner being. Ultimately, the Mystic Union is nothing but the Union of Shiva Himself with the Light of His Own Consciousness which every true Yogi or Follower of Unity seeks to bring about in himself. As with all Yogic practices, this can be successfully achieved only under the guidance of a competent Master (Guru).

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