

Kundalini Awakening

A Gentle Guide to Chakra Activation and
Spiritual Growth

John Selby

Conceived and painted by Zachary Zelig



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As one moves forward in the realm of full spectrum alignment with kundalini in the physical body, it becomes necessary that all separations of "self" are cleared and transmuted. It is only then that one's personal integrity harmonizes with the kundalini process. I want to thank Caroline Conley in Los Angeles for the three years I worked with her in clearing and transmuting my own separations. Without her training I would not be in "wholeness" to bring forth the true essence of the material in this book as it applies to grounded Earth Consciousness and transmutation.

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And to all of my Masters and Guides ... Thank you!

Zachary Zelig

Paris, France

May 28, 1991

In memory, with enduring love, to Thakin Kung, Krishnamurti, Alan Watts, and Rebecca Oriard.

John Selby

Kilauea, Hawaii

March 1992

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INTRODUCTION

Within the great spiritual traditions of the world there exists the wise teaching that at any given moment we are always being confronted with exactly what we need to experience, in order to progress into a higher level of mystic realization. This means that if only we tune in, the universe at this very moment is offering us access to the specific spiritual insights and instructions we're presently ready to encounter.

I remember vividly how this seemingly magical process brought kundalini meditation to my attention back in 1966, one cold November night at Princeton University where I was studying at the time. Perhaps if I share with you the drama of my own initial exposure to kundalini consciousness, you may sense directly the spiritual excitement and promise of the meditation techniques we will be exploring in this book.

I'd made plans that night to have an early dinner with a good friend. At the appointed hour I went running up two flights of dormitory steps and into his room, without bothering to knock. Quite unexpectedly, I found myself in the presence of a lovely woman, sitting cross-legged on my roommate's bed, her spine straight and her eyes closed, with the most remarkable, radiant expression on her face.

I stood awestruck in front of her. I'd seen pictures of various paintings and statues of ancient Buddhas in the act of deep contemplation. But having grown up in a cattle-ranching environment where Oriental meditation simply didn't exist, I'd never before encountered a real live person fully immersed in such a potent state of inner reflection.

This woman in front of me, sitting with her hands palms-up on her knees, her breasts rising and falling slowly and evenly with deep full breaths, her lips relaxed in a Mona Lisa smile—I immediately recognized that there was something extraordinary going on inside her. She seemed to be almost visibly broadcasting some sort of inner spiritual peace and energy. I felt face-to-face with something radically new—something that evoked both fright and intense fascination inside me.

As I stood there staring at her, before I could regain my composure and turn to leave so as not to disturb her meditation, her eyes slowly opened and looked directly into mine. Neither of us spoke a word. I felt momentarily transported beyond normal levels of consciousness. Her expression expanded into a friendly, beatific smile. I experienced a most peculiar and extremely pleasurable sensation in my heart region—a feeling that I would come to know more intimately when I began my own kundalini training.

The sound of footsteps coming up the stairs outside the room brought us back to more customary states of mind. My friend came running in, introducing the young woman as his sister from the West Coast, who had arrived unexpectedly. With little more said, we went off to dinner.

Somewhere between salad and baked potatoes, the woman started telling her brother about a spiritual teacher from Asia with whom she was studying—a quite young but already fully enlightened man who'd radically altered her understanding of life. Her brother, a physics major who considered such esoteric topics the height of nonscientific foolishness, immediately made a joke of her confession. She accepted his harsh attack without arguing, and said no more about her new spiritual path.

I for my part, having observed firsthand the blissful, transcendent state her meditative technique had moved her into an hour before, was all ears to find out what sort of mental tricks could induce such an illumined condition. When her brother excused himself to attend an evening lecture, I encouraged her to talk further about her spiritual

explorations.

“Well, the technique that I’m practicing is called kundalini meditation,” she said.

“I’ve never heard the word before,” I confessed. “What’s it mean?”

“*Kundalini’s* a very old term,” she explained, “from the Sanskrit language of ancient India. It refers to the basic life force that’s inside all of us.”

“So you meditate on your life force?”

“That’s where we begin. Kundalini energy’s infinite, but it’s mostly blocked in our bodies. We don’t need very much to survive physically.”

“So what’s the purpose of your meditating?”

“Well,” she said, reflecting a moment. “It’s to open up and experience who I am more deeply—to encourage more life force energy to flow through my body. It’s based on the fact that we all have seven subtle energy centers in our bodies. Kundalini meditation is a powerful, and pleasurable, way to wake them all up.”

“So how exactly do you do that—wake them up?”

“I’m only just beginning to learn,” she said, again smiling her special smile. “You’d have to meet my Master to find out. It’s a deep process.”

Seven months later, having read several rather difficult esoteric books about kundalini meditation that the young lady had kindly sent to me in the interim, I flew to San Francisco to visit her. We went the following morning to a house where I could meet her Master, a young man from Burma named Thakin Kung.

I was immediately struck by the particular quality of personal presence this man emanated. He was only five or six years older than I was, but he possessed a sense of inner certainty, of personal power, of heartfelt compassion that bowled me over. I sat down in the back of the room. About thirty people were meditating cross-legged on pillows. During the next hour, just by being in the presence of such an advanced kundalini teacher, I experienced a spontaneous rush of intense spiritual energy throughout my body that amazed me.

The next few weeks were like an idyllic dream in comparison with my usual life at Princeton. That summer of 1967 in San Francisco was the early blossoming of the spiritual and sexual revolution that was soon to sweep the country. My own experience proved to be a microcosm of the whole, as I went twice a day to study kundalini with the young Master, and also entered into a most beautiful sexual relationship with the woman who had first introduced me to kundalini.

Then, my vacation time over, back I went to my normal life with all its constant obligations and usual drudgeries. I’d had a taste in San Francisco of something marvelous, something utterly remarkable—the personal realization that we’re more than just physical bodies, that we can actually tune directly into the infinite wisdom and power of the universe if we master certain meditation techniques that encourage communion with the divine.

I found, however, that without the constant support of my San Francisco kundalini group, it was extremely difficult to maintain the heightened spiritual states of clarity and inner power that I’d encountered briefly and now hungered for. I searched urgently for another meditation Master to study with, but found no one with whom I felt compatible.

OUR INNER MASTER

One of the stark realities of modern life is that there are very few true spiritual Masters in Western society to whom we can turn for inspiration and instruction in kundalini meditation. And all too often, the Masters we do find are teaching an extreme path that is beyond our everyday ability to participate in.

I remember reaching a state of deep confusion and depression back at Princeton, yearning for my Master's presence, feeling sorry for myself for being separated from my source of spiritual inspiration and instruction. I had read in one of my many esoteric books that without a Master, no one can progress on the spiritual path. Since I could find no kundalini teacher at Princeton, I felt completely shut off from the world of spirit.

Then one fateful night a well-known spiritual writer named Alan Watts lectured on campus, and I talked with him afterwards about my plight. Alan, who eventually became a close friend of mine, took me aside for a few moments. The words that he said have ever since reverberated within me:

“John,” he said, “don't fool yourself. You are your own Master. We're all Masters. We all possess a higher self deep within us that's infinite, that's one with the All. Meditation is the process where we realize this. All you have to do is learn to look inside instead of outside all the time—open yourself to your own inner Master. That's the real trick of meditation.”

In perfect accordance with the spiritual notion I mentioned earlier—that we are always being given the lesson we're ready to learn—Alan had appeared just when I needed him, right when I was ready to learn that crucial lesson. And as I'm writing this book, I'm assuming the same for you—that you haven't come upon this particular book of kundalini meditation purely by chance, but rather hold it in your hands right now because you're ready to learn a potent way to advance into deeper communion with your own infinite spiritual presence.

Even though we all have our inner Master to aid us in our spiritual explorations, it's always, in practical experience, the combination of external suggestions and guidance, along with internal guidance from our spiritual center, that generates the momentum of spiritual growth. We do need help from the outside, both general inspiration and also concrete suggestions regarding effective meditation techniques. Books often provide this help and guidance.

WRITTEN WORDS THAT ENCOURAGE SPIRITUAL GROWTH

It's been my observation that all really good writing is by definition inspired writing. When a writer/teacher allows his or her inner Master to influence what is being written, words gain a special power and spirit that can genuinely evoke transformation.

When you read an author's words and feel somehow moved by the experience, this is because the higher Self of the writer is communicating directly with your own higher Self. Such is the underlying magic of both the written and the spoken word.

My intent in writing this book has been to channel into concrete verbal form the meditative wisdom and pragmatic techniques I've encountered during my own spiritual explorations, so that you can make intimate contact with the heart of kundalini meditation in your own life. I've designed the book to communicate on several different levels at once, depending on your own spiritual state of expansion. If you've never before explored a meditative practice, you will find the basic background information and instructions needed to begin the inner journey to your spiritual center. If you already have previous meditation experience, this book will provide advanced levels of instruction and insight to encourage your spiritual evolution.

The structure of this book is the result of the last fifteen years or so, during which I've been teaching students and clients how to approach kundalini awakening in a safe, gentle, enjoyable way. I'm very thankful to the many people who've helped me refine this program into its present shape and clarity, and I am pleased that you can now benefit from their input.

As you know, many different meditative traditions have come into being throughout the world during the last five thousand years, developing specific theologies and rituals through countless generations of deep spiritual exploration. In spite of their seeming differences, all these meditative traditions have one goal in common—that of bringing human beings into more direct experiential contact with the spiritual realities of the universe.

By definition, there can be only one Infinite Presence, one Universal Creative Source, one all-encompassing Consciousness for us to tap into. So even though the various human civilizations have developed quite diverse ways for approaching spiritual reality, the Infinite Presence we seek communion with is always the same.

The reason kundalini meditation is such a remarkable process for spiritual awakening is that it is not based on complex theological arguments, or culturally defined religious concepts. Kundalini meditation is focused instead upon the immediate, ultimate experience of the divine within all of us, not upon belief systems regarding that divinity. Therefore, regardless of our particular religious upbringing and theological beliefs, all of us can employ kundalini meditation to aid in our spiritual evolution. Once we learn to look beyond concepts, we are free to encounter—through direct spiritual illumination—the radiant core of Love and Life that lies at the center of our own personal consciousness.

KUNDALINI IN WORLD HISTORY

The Hindu meditative tradition of ancient India was the original source of present-day kundalini meditation techniques. At least four thousand years ago, a number of great spiritual Masters developed what later came to be known as the Yogic path to mystic illumination. This path included the regular practice of physical movements and hatha-yoga postures, concerted breathing meditations, acts of devotion in one's community, the chanting of certain sounds and evocative words, meditating upon visual images, and focusing upon the seven energy centers, or “chakras,” that lie up and down the human spine.

Kundalini meditation was considered the highest form of this ancient Yogic tradition of spiritual development. In many different variations and levels of intensity, it is still practiced throughout the Orient in both the Hindu and the Buddhist traditions by many millions of people. However, only in the last few generations has this vast spiritual tradition become available to Western people seeking the pragmatic “nuts and bolts,” the pure experiential process, of spiritual awakening.

The reason kundalini meditation possesses such universal appeal at this point in history is that it offers a clear, experience-based approach for awakening our mundane minds to the presence of our true spiritual nature. Through kundalini meditation we can master the quieting of our habitual flows of thoughts, which normally block deep spiritual reflection. Then in this calm state of consciousness, we can observe and participate in the infinite life force as it flows through our bodies. And with regular meditation, we come to experience a most remarkable phenomenon directly at the center of our own being—the bright flash of illumination that brings us into immediate contact with the divine force of creation that animates all of life.

FREEING KUNDALINI FROM ESOTERIC OVERTONES

I was lucky enough to have a grandfather who was himself a deep spiritual Master, even though, as an old-time cattle rancher, he certainly never took on that role in any formal fashion. What he taught, or more precisely what he showed through his own life's example, was that to live life fully, we must learn to let go of all our chronic thought

flows, all our convoluted religious concepts, all our superstitious fantasies and theological belief systems—and encounter the depths and heights of spiritual life directly, through our immediate experience.

Even while I was getting my doctorate in comparative religions and training in formal therapy traditions, I was still regularly returning to Grandad's ranch to sit quietly with the old man, listen intently when he spoke, and nurture the qualities of contemplation he radiated. In reflection, I can see that his spiritual example was what enabled me to sense immediately, when I first encountered kundalini meditation, that here was a process that offered essential keys for advancing rapidly in spiritual directions.

His example also made me react and pull back from much of the esoteric baggage kundalini authors and teachers often present. If you've heard of kundalini meditation before reading this book, you've almost certainly heard of it as being a highly esoteric tradition, extremely difficult to master, even downright dangerous to explore. The public press has promoted this distorted image of kundalini meditation because it makes for a good story. I remember reading, for instance, that kundalini energy is like atomic energy—that it has vast powers, and if not handled with extreme caution, it can cause serious damage to the nervous system when unleashed. And, of course, in extreme situations with already unbalanced individuals, this is close to the truth. There are always extremes to be avoided in exploring potent systems of meditation.

Luckily, my first introduction to kundalini awakening was through one of the few true Masters who has come to the West with a reasonable, nonesoteric, completely safe approach to kundalini meditation. This man, Thakin Kung, whom I mentioned earlier, was in our midst only for a few intense years as a public teacher of kundalini awakening. But his remarkably practical approach to the ancient kundalini teachings, mellowed by his Burmese interpretation of the Indian and Tibetan tradition, has been spread throughout our contemporary spiritual community by the lives and teachings of his students.

In this book I want to make this practical, nonesoteric approach to kundalini illumination available in a form that we can all readily tune in to and apply to our everyday lives. I've regularly taught these meditative techniques both to spiritual students and also to therapy clients, and in the process of teaching have developed a step-by-step presentation that makes Thakin's meditative process relevant and applicable to our current everyday life.

Especially, I've removed the remaining religious overtones found in Thakin's teachings, so you don't have to adopt any new religious orientation in order to embrace these meditative programs in your own life. Kundalini is a power, a presence, an illumination that lies beyond human religious thought. We need no religious symbology dragging us down in our exploration of our deeper spiritual nature. All we need are core meditative techniques that enable us to quiet our thinking minds so we become still, and know through immediate personal contact our oneness with God—with whatever name we might give to the infinite and yet intimate spiritual presence that lives deep within us.

THE ANCIENT MEANING OF KUNDALINI

Many thousand years ago in Hindu mythology there was a sexually charged goddess called Kundalini. This goddess was said to exist in the form of a sleeping serpent, wrapped around the base of the spine, awaiting the opportunity to awaken and rise up through all the seven energy centers, or *chakras*, charging each of them with transformative insight and power.

In harmony with this ancient myth, the Sanskrit word *kundalini* can be traced back to its root term *kundala*, which means "coiled." Evolving through the generations, kundalini came to refer to the latent power of spiritual realization buried deep down in the human body, perpetually under pressure to rise up and manifest its ultimate truths, power, and bliss.

In one of the first kundalini books I read (Sir John Woodroffe's *The Serpent Power*, which stands as a classic on the topic), kundalini awakening was said to happen when our individual kundalini consciousness rises up the spine and merges with the infinite, cosmic, eternal kundalini. In Western terminology, this same experience is referred to as mystic communion with the divine—as we come fully alive to our full spiritual potential.

INTEGRATING KUNDALINI AWAKENING INTO CONTEMPORARY LIFE

Traditionally in India, Tibet, and outlying regions where kundalini meditation was taught, a devout student was required to put aside all worldly desires and aspirations, and under the constant guidance of an enlightened Master, concentrate totally upon attaining the ultimate state of absolute, permanent union with the divine.

Under the guidance of an advanced Yogic teacher, I followed this extreme path myself at an early point in my development—shortly after Thakin Kung departed for his homeland. I did my best to divorce myself from Western tradition, and to take on the Hindu mind-state and approach to spiritual discipline.

During these amazing two years of my life, I did have a number of very powerful kundalini breakthroughs. But ultimately, for me, adapting the Hindu mentality required a shift of consciousness that was too extreme. I came to accept that I was deeply rooted in my own culture—and for a spiritual path to work for me, it had to be integrated into my own cultural heritage. Exploring esoteric traditions of other civilizations proved worthwhile to a point, but when it came to the actual process of attaining illumination in everyday life, I hungered for a path that wouldn't force me to deny any of my own heritage, in order to awaken my kundalini energy.

Step by step, I discovered during ensuing years of study and meditation that the primary techniques of kundalini awakening can be successfully separated from their cultural background. Rather than trying to stuff our spiritual experience into foreign mind-states and religious symbology, we can put aside esoteric mind-games, look to our own inner Master for guidance, practice particular meditative techniques that apply to all human beings and all historic ages, and reap the spiritual benefits that come to us. This seems to be the wise path, the moderate path, the contemporary kundalini path to spiritual illumination.

SCIENCE AND THE CHAKRAS

In the kundalini tradition, there are seven distinct energy centers known to exist in the human body, located up and down the spine and also in the brain itself. In Sanskrit terminology, the energy centers have traditionally been called *chakras*. These internal energy vortexes are not only grand symbolic notions. They are in fact definite energetic happenings inside each of our bodies—whether we're aware of them or not.

In the ancient Hindu spiritual understanding, these chakras were said to be empowered by a mysterious force called *prana*, which the human body takes in regularly through breathing. In a more contemporary scientific understanding, the inner energy vortexes empowering the human organism are understood in terms of the electromagnetic dynamics of subatomic physics. The chakras are in fact a primal expression of the cosmic dance described by subatomic physicists as a spontaneous shifting of matter into energy, energy into matter, and matter back to energy again.

As Einstein clearly posited—and ancient Yogic Masters knew many thousands of years before—our bodies are not just material in nature. They are also quite definitely energetic in nature. Science has amassed considerable knowledge concerning this electromagnetic, Bioenergetic functioning of the human body. But scientists are first to

admit that they don't really comprehend the underlying forces that generate life. Scientific instruments can look only so far into the matter-energy continuum, before reaching their perceptual limits.

However, as “spiritual experimenters” have known for thousands of years, the human mind itself is in fact capable of focusing directly upon the creative source of life. Consciousness has proven itself to be the ultimate tool for encountering and participating in the underlying forces that empower our lives, as we commune directly with the basic scientific realities of life.

Kundalini meditation is a specific, quite precise technique for awakening the conscious mind to the presence of the seven energetic centers—or chakras—in the body. Through focusing regularly on these energy centers, we learn to balance our energetic system for optimum functioning, while also increasing the overall flow of energy through all seven chakras, so that our entire being becomes illumined.

KUNDALINI AND SEXUAL AWAKENING

The popular press has often fixated upon the particular aspect of kundalini meditation that is overtly sexual. It is quite true that kundalini energy is grounded in our personal creative energy, which is sexual in nature. My own initiation into kundalini meditation, as I mentioned before, was combined with a very powerful and beautiful sexual relationship in which my female friend and I employed our wild rushing sexual charges for expanded spiritual progress.

Kundalini meditation increases our capacity to experience intense bliss and pleasure in all that we do. Because sexual intercourse is the ultimate union of male and female energies in the creative act, this is certainly a prime place where kundalini energy is experienced.

All the kundalini Masters I have known, however, have emphasized that a person must first tune into his or her own inner spiritual energies and conscientiously devote time to solitary meditation. Only then comes a heightened sense of energization, pleasure, and heart-to-heart union during sexual intercourse.

Several traditional schools of kundalini meditation encourage the use of erotic fantasies in order to awaken the Kundalini Goddess from her sleeping state at the base of the spine. This “sexual fantasy” path might make sense for celibate monks studying under a great Master high in the Himalayas a thousand years ago. But my experience has been that in our modern world, employing erotic fantasies to stimulate the rising of kundalini energies up the spine is usually counterproductive. The purpose of kundalini meditation is not to generate a masturbatory rush of sexual energy through the system, but instead to consciously nurture a steady increase in our overall energetic condition.

Certainly as you progress with your kundalini meditations, you will experience an increase in sexual potency and pleasure. I encourage you to explore with your sexual partner, if you have one, the deepening intensities of orgasm that are brought about through the conscious awakening of your kundalini presence during meditation. But make your solitary meditation sessions primary, and receive the sexual manifestations as a gift of grace bestowed upon you.

AVOIDING EXTREMES

I want to specifically address certain pitfalls sometimes encountered by kundalini meditators. Ever since the publication of Gopi Krishna's *Kundalini: The Evolutionary Energy in Man* several generations ago, in which this famous kundalini Master from India described his radical personal initiation into the fires of total kundalini awakening, too many writers and spiritual teachers have fixated on horror-story accounts of a few hapless

individuals who have tapped spontaneously into a total kundalini awakening and suffered prolonged bouts of physical and emotional turmoil.

It is true, as I have known from working with a number of clients in my psychological practice, that sudden spontaneous kundalini awakening, especially in already unstable personalities, can be chaotic, frightening—even shattering to a person’s normal life. Imagine what it’s like to suddenly experience a hundred times more energy flowing through your body without any preparation or warning. This extreme is certainly not a desired aim of kundalini awakening.

I myself had several such experiences of radical unpremeditated kundalini uprising through my nervous system, before I was prepared meditatively to understand or properly channel such an upflow. In translating the ancient kundalini meditative techniques into contemporary form, my aim has been to guarantee that my students don’t ever overamp their systems in such a manner.

In contrast, in the pages to come, you will find a program that leads you through a gentle, safe process of kundalini awakening, clearly avoiding the pitfalls that come to people who push too fast too soon into expanded levels of energization.

Many traditional approaches to kundalini awakening specifically aimed toward blasting a full surge of kundalini energy right up through all seven chakras, so that the top chakra, called the Crown Chakra, would be fully activated. For people seeking complete liberation from normal consciousness, once and forever, such an aim might make sense.

In this book, however, our aim is different. Rather than fixating overmuch on the seventh, ultimate chakra at the top of the head, we maintain the fourth, “middle” chakra, the heart/love center of our spiritual body, as our primary focus, and integrate the other six energy centers around this compassionate centerpoint. Rather than aiming to blast ourselves forever free from everyday human life, we’re going to explore how to charge ourselves with radiant compassion and spiritual power that integrate perfectly into the routines of our contemporary lives.

THE FOUR KEY MEDITATIVE TOOLS

Meditation in general, and certainly kundalini meditation in particular, should not be seen as a vague, mysterious process that lies beyond our normal awareness. What we do in the meditative experience is straightforward—we learn to focus our all-important power of attention in particular potent directions, so as to awaken areas of consciousness that lie dormant until consciously tuned into.

There are four primary ways to direct our power of attention toward illuminatory experience.

- (1) First of all, we can turn our attention inward to our own moment-to-moment sensory experience of being alive in the present moment. We do this by focusing on our breathing, our heartbeat and pulse, the pull of gravity on our bodies, and our spontaneous whole-body awareness in the present moment.
- (2) The second technique, or “vehicle,” for carrying us deeper into contact with our spiritual selves is to focus our power of attention directly on each of the seven chakras in our bodies, so as to stimulate these energy centers into higher, more balanced levels of participation in the infinite dance of life.
- (3) The third primary tool we will use in this program is the power of sound vibration—specifically, the power of our own voices to awaken each of the chakras up and down our spines. There are particular sounds, or chants, called *mantras* in traditional Sanskrit terminology, that are associated with the awakening of each of the energy

centers. When we chant these sounds either silently or aloud, we stimulate our deeper spiritual nature into higher levels of consciousness.

- (4) The fourth vehicle for kundalini awakening is the use of visual images for activating and balancing each of the chakras. The noted transformational artist, Zachary Zelig, with whom I collaborated in the creation of the text, has created seven key chakra paintings, known as *yantras* in traditional Hindu practice, which provide the very essential impetus for chakra activation.

During his fifteen years of study, meditation, and research into the inner workings of yantra artwork, Zachary found that every great civilization has developed specific geometric symbols and color combinations that are associated with the qualities of each of the energy centers in the body. The paintings he has prepared for this book are contemporary interpretations of these ancient yantra traditions. “To relate totally with the diagram,” Zachary explains, “is to unleash the combined forces that each form represents.” The paintings provide a visual metaphysical alphabet or “thought forms” to help the reader and viewer to focus internally and retain a color memory of the energy encountered in meditation.

In Part II of the book, we will take each of the seven chakras in turn and learn the particular visual image, vocal chant, focusing technique, and breathing pattern that most powerfully and yet safely awakens it. Then, once we have learned to effortlessly move through the particular meditations on each chakra, we’ll learn how to expand our meditations to include all the chakras at once.

IMMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM BENEFITS OF KUNDALINI MEDITATION

The meditations in this book, instead of being based on the “big bang” theory of spiritual awakening, are designed to bring about step-by-step illuminations that can be readily integrated into your everyday sense of identity. Each meditation you learn will encourage a movement in the direction of reduced anxiety and tension in your mind and body, and a concurrent increase in spiritual insight, sexual pleasure, mystic bliss, heightened self-awareness, and mystic communion.

Even in the preliminary meditations you will feel something changing, something expanding, something awakening in your deeper realms of being. As you learn to direct your awareness in new ways, you will immediately experience yourself as more “here.” Your senses will awaken so that the present moment becomes truly multidimensional, full of new dimensions.

Many people begin meditation in a goal oriented mind-state, aiming toward some imaginary final state of total mystic realization and bliss. As you will discover quite quickly in this program, all such future-tripping is counterproductive. There is in fact no “future” to aim for in meditation. There is only the eternal present moment. It’s rediscovery is the central theme of all meditation.

The great cosmic joke of all time is, of course, that we are already enlightened. In Christian terminology, we are already living in Christ Spirit. We are the Buddha, as they say in India. As the Zen tradition states so clearly, there is “nowhere to go, and nothing to do” to attain enlightenment—it is, we are, now.

Meditation can be seen as the process through which we rediscover our true identity beyond the confines of three-dimensional, chronological time. Each new step into this realization offers a flash of bliss, beauty, pleasure, and realization. Every new breath we breathe can thus be a breath of new life, of sudden self-discovery.

During his short period of public teaching in America, Thakin Kung said so often that “if you are not fully

enjoying your meditation in the present moment, you're not doing it in the proper spirit."

The "right" way to meditate is simply with a calm eagerness to look and see what is happening in your expanding consciousness right now. You are breathing in the present moment, so look to experience that reality. Your heart is beating, so look to experience that. Gravity is constantly causing you to dance the magnificent muscular dance of maintaining moment-to-moment balance—experience that. You have energy flows happening in your body—tune in to those flows. And you have an inner Master at the center of your being—tune in to its illuminatory presence.


Kundalini meditation is a magnificent, trustworthy, perfected technique for expanding into all these interrelated dimensions of human consciousness. It allows you to function, even in the midst of everyday life, as the perfect, illumined, sentient, conscious being you in essence are, even right now at this very moment.

It gives me great pleasure to offer this pragmatic approach to kundalini awakening, which you can explore, integrate into your present life, and use to awaken your own kundalini spirit. Especially during these traumatic times, we all carry the pressing responsibility to break free of our conditioned blinders and limitations, so that we can radiate the power of infinite love and wisdom in all that we do in life. With this planetary vision in mind, I hope you find the programs in this book to the point, personally insightful, and just what you're needing.

P A R T

I

*The Kundalini Path to
Illumination*



Coming Alive in the Present Moment

For you to gain a firsthand understanding of what the kundalini experience is like, you have only to look back into your own childhood, when the lifeforce energy in your body was still comparatively free to express itself spontaneously. Unless you grew up in an especially repressive family environment, you almost certainly entered quite often into a diffuse type of kundalini consciousness, especially when you were engaged in free play.

To recall these moments of childhood bliss, of innocent communion with the divine, is to realize that the kundalini experience, rather than being some vague foreign territory you have no previous knowledge of, is actually the most intimate inner terrain of your personality.

Many times as a child you felt an intense sense of oneness in your heart—a sense of total immersion in the world around you. Perhaps you have maintained in memory the beautiful moments of bliss and pure pleasure you felt, when running wild outside, while gazing at a flower, while laughing and wrestling with a playmate. Can you recall special moments when your body was electric with energy, when your spirit was burning bright with an inner flame, when you felt totally alive, alert, empowered by some magnificent, invisible, infinite source of energy?

You will find as we progress through the programs in this book that childhood memories of spontaneous kundalini experiences will continue to come to you, aiding you in your progress into adult kundalini awakening. These memories offer a reflective view of how energy manifests in the human body.

However, as an adult, with your nervous system now completely developed biologically, the kundalini experience will not be the same as it was when you were a child. During your developmental years and through puberty, your kundalini energy was being directed almost entirely toward nurturing and completing your grand genetic design. Now, as an adult, with the biological phase of your development completed, you are in position to employ your kundalini energies toward more subtle, spiritual dimensions of development.

SPONTANEOUS KUNDALINI UPSURGES

Even without formal kundalini meditation or meditations by other names that achieve a similar effect, we are all continually evolving spiritually. It's a mistake to think that only people who practice formal meditation are progressing spiritually. One of the true mysteries and blessings of humanity is that our kundalini energy often spontaneously surges up through our various energy centers, encouraging a new awakening into more expansive levels of

consciousness.

In every culture, there are various traditional ways that communities allow for stimulating moments of kundalini illumination and release. Dancing, for instance, has always been a part of all human cultures. Through moving totally into rhythm, into breathing, into movement into our physical presence here in the eternal present moment, we can readily induce a sudden increase in the flow of kundalini energy through our bodies, minds, and souls.

A variation on this theme is the playing of sports. Jogging, for example, recently became an extremely popular way to regularly shift into higher levels of kundalini consciousness. Pleasureful walking with the mind at rest accomplishes the same desired aim.

Traditionally, singing was also a powerful vehicle for transforming one's consciousness and energetic condition quickly into kundalini illumination. Both in the church and the home, groups of people used to sing themselves communally into the kundalini experience.

Another very common way to induce spiritual states of mind has been through the use of concoctions that alter consciousness. Alcohol has been one of the primary vehicles for temporarily increasing the flow of kundalini energy in the body, which in a very limited and distorted way it sometimes does. Hashish and marijuana have also been used throughout the world since time immemorial for temporarily providing a rush of kundalini energy through the nervous system. And definitely, strong psychedelics such as magic mushrooms (psilocybin), peyote (mescaline), and the recently invented LSD all can induce a radical temporary increase in kundalini energization. A great many people have at least temporarily satisfied their spiritual hunger for transcendence by using such drugs. Many report remarkable kundalini experiences. However, the dangers and limitations of such chemical-induced initiations into higher states of consciousness are legion.

Another primary way to move into kundalini empowerment and realization has been through the hatha-yoga path of physical postures, as developed for many thousands of years in India, and now quite popular in our culture as well. By consciously holding certain postures that stimulate various glandular secretions in the body, and by quieting the thinking mind through tuning in to the breathing, a deep purification and energization can take place.

Perhaps the main source for regular kundalini energization and temporary illumination has always been, is now, and probably always will be, the human act of sexual intercourse. Because our sexual energy is our most intimate expression of the infinite creative power of the universe, erotic experiences provide us with a direct form of access when we seek a rush of kundalini illumination. Orgasm is our most certain way to interface with the divine.

With all of these ways for accessing kundalini surges of power and pleasure, bliss and self-realization, almost all of us find our own everyday patterns for at least momentarily tapping into a short rush of kundalini presence as we go through each week's routines. Human beings do hunger for transcendence—this is a natural, instinctive, God-given desire. The true challenge of spiritual life is to discover the most effective, satisfying, and rewarding techniques for tapping into increased spiritual energy in our everyday lives.

Perhaps in an ideal world where emotional inhibitions and mental contractions didn't exist we would have no need for consciously encouraging our spiritual development through kundalini meditations. If children were taught from birth onward to value and nurture the spiritual dimensions of consciousness, rather than to fear and avoid them, our spiritual development would progress with the same natural certainty as our biological development.

However, as you know from your own childhood, and as I have seen with sometimes upsetting clarity in my work as a psychologist, almost all of us grow up with our minds focused on the material dimensions of life. We receive very little encouragement from our culture to tune in to our spiritual nature, to trust our inner Guide, and to open ourselves to the radical inflow of kundalini energies in everyday life. We live in a society that encourages us to be consumers rather than meditators, that reinforces our ability to work at a boring job all our lives, but discourages our natural desire to explore the vast unknown mystic realms of our being.

However, "culture bashing" is pointless—it does little good to cry over our cultural fate. Life for everyone everywhere always has been and always will be a challenge. We are quite lucky to live during a period of history when we can readily find help in our personal spiritual explorations. It is a true blessing to be able to go to a bookstore or library and immediately find books that teach the ancient, secret techniques for waking ourselves up to our own infinite presence.

What we are actually doing through learning conscious kundalini meditation techniques is simply accelerating the natural process of spiritual awakening, as we gently put aside the psychological hindrances in our personalities that block spiritual illumination. By assuming responsibility for turning our personal attention toward the divine within us, toward the inner Master who will guide us lovingly toward greater and greater union with the infinite divine, we are giving ourselves the ultimate gift of love and liberation.

NATURAL KUNDALINI BLOCKING MECHANISMS

Although the universe's infinite kundalini energy is available to each of us every moment of our lives, our nervous systems as well as our cultural systems contain definite blocking mechanisms that keep us from being constantly overwhelmed with creative power.

Our biological constitution can realistically be seen as a step-down transformer in which the infinite flow of lifeforce in the universe is filtered and reduced to just the right level to maintain a single human body. If the balance were too high or too low, we would not survive. And since the survival function of the body is primary for the continuation of our species, it makes perfect sense that over the aeons, we have naturally evolved into creatures who limit the kundalini flow in our bodies to functional levels.

Perhaps here we can see the crucial difference between the other creatures that populate this earth and humans—we possess not only the basic kundalini lifeforce that animates all creatures but also the ability to consciously develop our nervous systems so that they can receive more kundalini energy, so as to enhance our deeper levels of consciousness that lie beyond the gross dimensions of physical survival.

Very good reasons remain for honoring and maintaining the genetic blocking devices in our nervous systems that limit the flow of the life force through our bodies and minds. If too much of this energy flows through us too fast, our nervous systems, unprepared, react much like an electrical system that receives too powerful an electrical upsurge. This is the serious danger of uncontrolled kundalini awakening.

As I mentioned briefly already, in this book I am offering a path to kundalini awakening that avoids this “overamping” danger completely. My assumption is that what you are seeking is *not* a path that blasts you out of your normal life and into extreme spiritual states of consciousness that can prove dysfunctional. Instead, what is needed is a potent yet safe approach to opening up to higher levels of kundalini energy.

For most of us there is simply no reasonable possibility of leaving our present situation even if we wanted to, and devoting our entire lives to the solitary pursuit of our private spiritual awakening. Most of us hunger instead for a meditational life that fits perfectly into our existing routines and habits, but that magically transforms our everyday experiences into a higher level of awareness.

To seek a pragmatic way to enhance our life force so that in everything we do, we have more energy, more pleasure, and more intuitive clarity into the deeper spiritual levels of human existence—this is nothing less than our natural spiritual birthright.

LOOKING TO THE SOURCE: YOUR OWN SEVEN ENERGY CENTERS

As I mentioned in the Introduction, and as we will explore in depth throughout this book, a series of chakras, or specific energy centers, are located at different positions up and down the human spine. These energy centers are both physiological concentrations of nerve ganglia that control different regions and organs of our physical being, and also energetic spiritual centers, specific vortexes of energy beyond present scientific examination or description.

These energy centers are of course empowered by the basic life force of the universe. When, through meditation of one kind or another, increased kundalini energy is brought up into these energy centers, they become, as Itzhak Bentov says in his book, *Stalking the Wild Pendulum*, “receptors and distributors of inflowing cosmic energy for the body.”

In the same way that physics shows us that everything is constantly vibrating back and forth between matter and energy, as Einstein envisioned, kundalini meditation shows us directly that our physical energy centers vibrate constantly into their parallel energetic forms and back again—they are both physical and energetic, as is all of creation.

The ancient Yogic Masters discovered through direct perceptual investigation of their own inner realities that in the human body there are seven such energetic vortexes, which correspond to the seven main groupings of nerve ganglia up and down the spine. These energetic vortexes are not separate esoteric entities as they are sometimes portrayed but instead are the nervous system’s higher-level centers of organization and control, directing all the supposedly mundane functionings of the body and mind. Our thoughts, our diet, our physical activity or lack of it, our emotions, and also our spiritual meditative routines all

influence our energetic centers, and are strongly influenced by them in turn.

Let me speak at this point in more depth about the primary qualities of each of the seven chakras that at this very moment are actively present in your own body, reflecting your present state of development toward ultimate union with your divine nature. I will begin with general insights into the nature of the chakras, and as the book progresses we will refine our understanding to include the more subtle explanations of chakra functioning. Please hold in mind that these beginning descriptions only aim us in the general direction of understanding the interrelated functioning of the energy centers. Only by tuning directly into the experience of your own particular chakras will you gain true personal insight into their nature.

The First Chakra

Often called the “Earth Chakra,” the first chakra lies at the base of your spine and is the energetic gateway between the organic world of Mother Earth beneath you and the mental and spiritual worlds that can be awakened step-by-step up your spine.

This chakra strongly connects you to your childhood past and to the entire outside world of physical phenomenon. It therefore is of vital importance in your life. This chakra energizes your physical development up through puberty, and maintains your basic sense of physical contact with the planet.

Through meditating on this chakra, as you will learn to do in this book, you help yourself become more grounded, more solid and powerful at physical levels of survival. First-chakra meditation is also very important if you have health problems. Furthermore, this chakra underlies your ability to go out and be a success in the everyday world around you.

The “Earth Chakra” should be seen as the foundation for everything else that will come to you when working with the higher chakras. The Kundalini Goddess is said to lie coiled three and a half times around this chakra. Only by lovingly focusing on this beginning energetic base can kundalini energy be consciously tapped and sent upward through all the other energy centers.

The Second Chakra

The second, or “Sexual Chakra,” located in the sexual organs, becomes activated once the work of the first chakra is completed at puberty. Through the awakening of this chakra you move from being a creation of your parents to becoming a creative being who in turn creates the new generation. As Joseph Chilton Pearce states so succinctly in *Magical Child Mature*: “The physical system (the first chakra) is the support system for sexuality (the second chakra), and sexuality is the support system for further development of kundalini (the higher chakras).”

By doing second-chakra meditations, you will increase your sexual charge and bring spiritual vitality to your erotic feelings and interactions. At the same time, you will feel the raw procreative energy being transmuted into a more pure vibration that can rise up and

permeate your other chakras and also flow down to energize your first-chakra survival powers. There is also great purification and cleansing power in this chakra, especially related to imbalances in your emotional personality.

The Third Chakra

Called the “Power Chakra,” the third chakra is associated with fire, with combustion, with anger, joy, and laughter. It is located between the navel and the solar plexus in the body and is said to generate a mythical fire in the belly. It is the energy of the solar system radiating through our personal lives, and like the sun, creates energy for us to burn.

This chakra strongly influences the adrenal glands. By learning to balance the energy in the third chakra you will bring your physical and emotional condition to a point of moderation. Your heartbeat will become even and calm. Your raw willpower will become especially powerful, transformed into a higher quality of spiritual presence in the world. In Western terms, the Holy Spirit can be employed to transform your raw willpower so that your actions harmonize with the will of the Spirit instead of your ego-centered will.

Many traditions, such as those of the Yaqui Indians, the Zen Buddhists, and the martial-arts disciplines, focus a great deal on this third chakra, since it is the center of raw, uncommitted willpower. Whether we send this energy down into brute sexuality and worldly dominance or up into the heart to be used for personal transformation, determines if we use this energy in malevolent or positive ways.

As we will see later, empowering the third chakra through kundalini meditations is especially powerful because it awakens our contact with the sun—the masculine fire-energy of the universe. When this potent surge of energy is merged with both the lower, grounded chakras and the higher, love-dominated chakras, our whole experience of life becomes transformed.

The Fourth Chakra

The “Heart Chakra,” located in the center of the chest, is the guiding light that shows the third chakra how to burn its raw energy in loving ways, shows the second chakra how to manifest its sexual energy through the transmutation of love, and shows the first chakra how to merge the physical with the divine.

The Heart Chakra is equidistant between the first and the seventh chakra, between earth and heaven. It is the centerpoint of the primary emotional energy of the universe, which we call love. It balances the chakras above with the chakras below, all of equal importance.

Although in Yogic tradition, and in Christian tradition as well, “the above” has often been valued higher than “the below,” it seems that, as ecologically minded human beings, we must put aside this prejudice of the past against the lower chakras if we are to value this earth as much as we value the heaven above us. A great deal of terrible damage has been done to our planet because of our religious prejudice against the lower chakras. We must value the balance of all the chakras as equal energetic presences, rather than always striving to leave

the lower and rise up to the higher.

As mentioned before, my approach to chakra balancing, as taught to me by my many teachers, is to make the Heart Chakra central, and excursions into the realms of spirit (above) and matter (below) always in conjunction with the heart. This for me makes kundalini meditation ecologically sound as well as energetically safe.

Love, the primary quality of the fourth chakra, is, as Jesus taught, God manifest in human life: “God is Love.” If the fourth chakra is where love is to be found, we spontaneously know where to place the center of our kundalini explorations, and how to avoid extremes that throw us off center spiritually. With the fourth energy center we have reached the natural centerpoint of kundalini meditation.

The fourth chakra strongly influences the functioning of the thymus gland, located in the center of the chest just behind the upper breastbone. Because this gland directly influences the functioning of our immune system, fourth-chakra balancing and energization can also have a profound effect on our overall health and resistance to disease.

The Fifth Chakra

The fifth chakra, often called the “Communication Chakra,” is located in our throat region—in our larynx and thyroid gland from a physical point of view. This is the center of communication, of talking, of expressing our inner depths of feeling in words that the people around us can understand.

Vocalization is one of the main vehicles for kundalini awakening, as we will see in detail later on. When I speak of chanting, I speak of activating this fifth chakra and using it to empower the other chakras.

In our everyday lives, this chakra is our vehicle for spreading our spiritual realizations to the world around us. This is where we begin to listen to ourselves and realize what we are saying.

The fifth chakra is also the center for dreaming and imagination activity, and sometimes for what are called out-of-the-body experiences as well. This chakra stimulates and integrates conceptual realization of spiritual insights. It is the bridge between feeling and thinking between the concrete and the abstract. Spiritual visions emanate from this chakra, sometimes in great glory and infinite detail.

This fifth energy center is often overly stimulated in our culture, even without the supposedly lower chakras being energized. When this happens, a person is fixated on the conceptual mode of the mind without adequate heart resonance to balance intellect with love. Meditation on this chakra is equally important for those of us who are overly intellectual and those of us who have yet to tap into our intellectual, verbal powers.

The gland controlled by the fifth chakra is the thyroid and parathyroid, which of course affects the entire nervous system, metabolism, and muscular control. If this gland is out of balance, people tend to have chronic colds and sore throats, stiff necks, and later in life hearing problems. Balancing this chakra will help relieve these conditions at the same time that it opens kundalini energy to flow up and down into the other chakras.

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