

Kundalini

by cleaves *Saturday, Jan 15 2005, 10:26pm*

international / personal development / article

(The Sublime Power)

As a result of the widespread commercialisation of 'Yoga' in the US and the overnight manifestation of numerous 'expert' teachers, an alarming amount of misinformation and misinterpretation of Yoga philosophy has occurred. Unlike other fanciful fads, which pose no health hazard to participants, Yoga improperly taught could result in serious physical and psychological injury to the student. This is particularly the case if advanced levels of Yoga are pursued without proper preparation or expert guidance.

Various bastardisations of advanced Yoga are now being 'packaged' and offered to raw beginners. 'Kundalini Yoga' is one example. Due to the fascinating appeal of the word "Kundalini" some have decided to invent a Yoga by that name; however, no such Yoga exists in the Indian tradition. The Yoga that deals with the movement of accumulated vital energy is "Laya Yoga," details of which I am loath to openly discuss. Authentic teachers of this Yoga have been entrusted to safeguard both the tradition and their students. While I have a thirty eight year background in Yoga studies and other Eastern disciplines I would not presume to adopt the title of Guru. All sincere students are advised to thoroughly check the credentials of those who profess to be 'experts' prior to undertaking any course or program - some (teachers) openly advertise a grand total of two years (or less) prior experience! [And that with Gurus of questionable repute.] I hope this introduction serves as an alert to those who would surrender their well being and hard-earned funds to avaricious charlatans. I also hope you find the following information on the subject of Kundalini informative and helpful.

Regardless of popular misconceptions pertaining to profound aspects of Yoga philosophy the integrity of the Yoga tradition prevails, as it has done for thousands of years. The reason is quite simple, profane minds are unable to grasp (and therefore pollute) that which they cannot see! Unlike the unwary and gullible, who often find themselves in life's 'cul de sacs,' Truth is never lost. That principle to which the word Kundalini alludes is one inviolate aspect of Yoga philosophy. Kundalini is not a dormant energy, as many would have you believe it is rather, a constant power dynamic. This dynamic eludes nearly all that attempt to apprehend it, as it is by nature inapprehensible, yet it forever remains freely accessible.

The 'serpent power' (so-called) coiled up at the base of the spine escapes anatomical observation, as it is not comprised of gross organic material. The description of "coiled" is accurate however, as it refers to the actual spinal cord, which terminates in three coils at/in the base of the skeletal spinal structure. [The relationship between this force and the nervous system will be discussed later in the article.]

The 'Kundaline' power is a perpetual dynamic upon which the very life of the entity depends. Its state is of the highest level of activity, in frequency and scope. It is the life force of all living things and the formative impulse of the macrocosmic universe. It is the original 'Light' or the first/primal energy of existence from which all else continuously issues. All notions that it lies dormant are the height of absurdity. Furthermore, arrogant Western notions that this force can be controlled or coerced are tantamount to believing that we are able to coerce God, or the 'universal creative impulse,' if theism is not your preferred mode of understanding.

All subjects that pertain to the mystical are necessarily shrouded in allegory, metaphor and symbolism, as their true character cannot be apprehended by mundane thought. A popular misconception [of Kundalini] is something akin to a Jack-in-the-box that is released after certain unlocking 'techniques' are applied. This is but one fanciful notion of many, there are far too many erroneous ideas relating to the serpent power to mention here. It would be safe to disregard anything you think you may know about this energy and to refrain from any conceptual thought regarding it, as it cannot be understood by finite means, inclusive of language or thought. Language can only approach this 'subject' indirectly.

Science has long been baffled by the disparity in human talents, intelligence, skills etc; what is the reason for these disparities when the physiology of the human body is common to all of us? Why is one person in deficit and another a genius when their bodies show no appreciable difference in function? It is obvious there is an activity present to account for these differences but it cannot be measured, hence science is left in the dark or at best left to measure effects not causes.

We often hear we are not using our full potential yet no one offers a sane or adequate explanation of how to utilise all our potential. The Rishis of ancient India were among the first in our history to undertake the serious study of human development. Their approach was radically different to empirical scientific methodology; in fact it was its opposite. Their approach was intuitive and introspective; they utilised the most sophisticated apparatus known to man, human consciousness! What better means is there to gain understanding? Empiricism limits itself to that which can be apprehended by the five senses - consciousness knows no limitations other than those self-imposed by ignorance. The Rishis simply focused all their mental faculties on themselves and viewed, with the heightened awareness that concentrated focus provides, not only the subtle workings of human life but also the greater Life to which everything owes its existence.

Fortunately for future generations (as most human lineages have been corrupted) some of these Sages chose to encode their accumulated knowledge in texts. Fully conscious of the fact that language was incapable of adequately transmitting the reality of their experiences, these Sages encoded their knowledge utilising symbolic images, and various literary devices.

The body of work dealing with Kundalini and the associated Chakras is a typical example. These texts are saturated in symbolic imagery, allegory, metaphor, allusion etc; for those able to decode these texts it becomes clear they relate to the brain, nervous system and the associated vital force that animates these channels and (ganglia) centres. However, as is often the case, superstition in the form of magic and myth corrupted an otherwise broader understanding and allowed gross misinterpretations to occur. The grossest error is mistaking the symbolism for the message or description for the thing itself. As a result the serpent power is regarded as being dormant/asleep and in need of awakening - a not dissimilar situation to "Sleeping Beauty" of the popular children's fairytale. I would cite as a precaution to the literal reading of any Scripture, the famous and authoritative Kularnava Tantra. This text is laden with overt sexual content. In the introduction, it states clearly to the effect that if copulation and sexual practices culminated in liberation then every farmyard animal would be a liberated Sage - the central text then proceeds to describe how liberation is achieved through copulation! Fools 'rush in...'

Kundalini never 'sleeps' but particular (or separated) minds do - usually for the entire duration of their earth-bound existence. The distinction between the particular and universal or the finite and infinite is being made here for the reason that Kundalini represents the universal aspect of our life force as opposed to notions of something separate or personal.

The Rishis discovered the universality of all things and how each is an expression of one continuous

whole and how everything is 'maintained' by one vital principle. Put in the context of the human mind-body, the interface of the finite and infinite are the central nervous system and the Kundalini process respectively. In other words, the Kundalini is none other than God/Siva (infinity) in all its glory or the Life force par excellence. It is therefore little wonder that this animating force triggers and enlivens the various nerve ganglia and brain as it courses rhythmically through the body - some would say to the beat (Spanda) of Siva's (symbolic) drum. At no stage is there ever stasis or dormancy (physical death being the exception.) The distinguishing factor that accounts for the various disparities in human capabilities (and the full utilisation of potential) is the degree to which the universal Life force (Kundalini) is active. The more we harmonise with the pulse of universal Life and resonate to its peaceful, harmonious rhythm the more active the Kundalini process becomes.

[Atunement or] Atonement is harmonisation not coercion; for yoga practitioners and other devotees of Eastern philosophy, harmonisation is best achieved by following the breath to its source - there is no higher form of pranayama and no safer approach to the increased generation of 'Kundalini' energy.

A final word of warning to the faddists and those who think they can purchase a quick ticket to heaven. Any attempt at forcing or controlling this Life force with practices no longer properly understood, will end in personal calamity. Symptoms would vary in accordance to the degree of disharmony created. They would range from total insanity to the most deplorable psychological and physical symptoms - for which the physicians would be at a loss to diagnose but ever ready to administer psychotropic 'medications.' How often have I seen this, be warned!

Peace to you all.

Om Tat Sat

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