

## **Kundaini Awakening, the Physical and Psychological Aspects**

Satyanarayan Mishra<sup>1\*</sup>

### **ABSTRACT**

Kundaini is otherwise known as serpent power lying coiled in the mooladhara chakra at the base of the spine. The ultimate yogic achievement Samadhi can't be attained unless Kundaini is awakened. Awakening of kundaini requires a rigorous hathayogic practice. Traditional gurus have given the ways and means for practice of Kundaini. Modern scientists, psychologists and medical practitioners have also probed into the study of this mysterious yogic power and revealed a lot in form of different models and theories. By studying in depth the science, technique and effects of the practice, one can have a better understanding of this energy. Different physical and psychological aspects associated with Kundaini energy are discussed in this article from research point of view.

**Keywords:** *Mind, Prana, Tanmatra, Kosha, Pranayama, Kundaini, Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Brahma, Psychic powers, Sushmna channel, Brahmanadi, Negative mind, Positive mind, Neutral mind, Hatha Yoga, Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Automatic Nervous System, Psychosomatic, Bentov's model, Jung's model, Cosmic Energy*

**K**undaini power is known as the serpent power which is assumed as a goddess, coiled in shape, lying dormant in the mooladhara chakra. Mooladhara chakra is situated at the end of the spinal column, which is linked with prana and in turn linked with mind. Samadhi or super conscious state of mind cannot be attained unless this primordial energy of Kundaini is awakened by any of the yogas i.e. Raja yoga, Bhakti Yoga or Jnana Yoga. Different concepts have been developed regarding the existence of this mysterious energy force within the body. Most of us spend their life time without the knowledge of this force. Some by yogic processes or by the grace of guru (teacher) may be able to discover and utilize this untapped energy. There are many associated biological and psycho-physical interpretation of this primordial energy which has been discussed below.

<sup>1</sup> Research Scholar, Yoga, PG Deptt. of Sanskrit, Utkal University, Vani Vihar, Bhubaneswar, India

\*Responding Author

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### **Traditional Explanations**

#### ***Swami Sivananda's View***

According to Swami Sivananda mind and prana are the two major tattvas in this universe. Mind is operated by prana says Swamiji. Food is ultimately digested, turned into chyle and blood and then sent into brain and mind and as a result mind is able to think and consider. Mind is subtler than prana, Prana is formed out of the sum total of the rajasika essence, whereas mind is formed out of the sum total of the sattvic essence of the five tanmatras.

#### ***Koshas***

The pranamaya kosha (vital sheath) is subtler than the physical body which overlaps the Annamaya kosha (physical sheath). Manomaya kosha (mental sheath) is subtler than the pranamaya kosha.

#### ***Mind, Prana and Vitality***

Mind, Prana and Vitality are inter connected says Swami Sivananda. If any one of them is controlled, the other two are controlled by themselves very easily. Raja Yoga emphasizes on control of mind, whereas Hatha Yoga puts emphasis on control of prana. Similarly Jnana Yogis start their spiritual practice with buddhi and will. Mind is dependent on prana or life. Prana is therefore the innermost of all i.e. Brahman.

#### ***Kundaini and Mind***

Kundaini is the serpent like power which is coiled in shape and lies having face downwards in the mooladhara chakra. Mooladhara chakra is situated at the end of the spinal column which is linked with prana and in turn linked with mind. 'Samadhi' or super conscious state of mind cannot be attained unless this primordial energy is awakened by any of the yogas i.e. Raja yoga, Bhakti Yoga or Jnana Yoga.

#### ***Yogic practices and effects***

The serpent power or energy of Kundaini can be aroused when one is free from passions and desires. Different practices like sakti-chalana, Aswini mudra, Tadana etc help in awakening of kundalini power. Mahabheda helps also in taking this power of Kundaini higher up. When this divine shakti of Kundaini is awakened, mind along with prana and jiva enters the sushumna nadi. Only then the perceptions of the yogi are available in mental space or chidakasha. Then after prana finds its way upwards through Sushumna channel or Brahmanadi within the spinal cord along with mind and fire (agni). Yogi then does not possess physical awareness. He finds himself shutout from the physical world. Generally six types of experiences occur which are Ananda (spiritual bliss), kampana (tremor of body parts), udbhava (rising above the ground level), Ghurni (body moving in a circle), nidra (sleep) and murcha (fainting) and these may last for a short time. After arousal of Kundaini, the expert yogi or practitioner has to raise it up to sahasrara chakra in the top of the head.

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When the movement of Kundalini takes place from chakra to chakra, mind or mental faculty gets opened layer after layer. Different kinds of experiences and achievement of psychic powers are achieved in course of time. The yogi gets control over the elements. He understands, realizes and perceives the whole universe in its causal or subtle form and gets the full knowledge of the various types of forces operating in causal plane. When this power of Kundalini reaches the sahasrara chakra, the yogi finds himself in knowledge space or chidakasha.

### ***Yogi Bhajan's Concept***

Yogi Bhajan says on the three types of minds in the context of Kundalini. The three minds are positive, negative and neutral.

First mind gives us life, tells where the danger lies, so it has to act first. Positive mind must tell what is good for us. But it does not do that as the subconscious supports the negative mind. If positive mind gives us what is positive, the negative mind gives us what is negative, the neutral mind will give us what soul will do. This is a habit and has to be created (July 1, 1987).

The mind has three vital functions, says Yogi Bhajan, the Negative, Positive and Neutral. Negative mind instinctively protects and alerts us to something when there is something wrong or where is a threat. Our positive mind has access to our sub conscious. It can expand the thoughts in lieu of contrasting it.

Similarly *Yogi says*—

A person who does not deal with the neutral mind, even with all the wealth, shall not prosper and cannot be happy because negative and positive minds cancel each other. It is the neutral mind which becomes the intuitive force in you (April 22, 1997.)

### ***Spontaneous awakening and experience***

Awakening of Kundalini can occur through various yogic practices. In addition devotional practices, self less services, meditations, mantras and rituals also help in awakening of this dormant power. Spontaneous awakening of this great power also can be precipitated in various ways such as-traumatic experiences, near death experiences, deep sorrow or even initiation in dreams given by wise persons.

When the dormant spiritual energy gets awakened, her sole aim is the transformation of the individual consciousness (body, mind) into fully awakened divine consciousness. However there are many dangers in this way. The process of arousal can create psychiatric and somatic problems. The aroused energy can gear up everything from latent illness of the body to emotional or psychological disorders.

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### ***Kundaini Symptoms***

Since Kundaini energy renovates body-mind relationship, there may be a feeling of chaos as descended upon the practitioners. When Kundaini arousal occurs following symptoms may appear. Those are –sweating, heat/cold sensation, trembling, rush of energy through the body up or down the spine, anxiety, fear, weight loss, weight gain, cravings for food, dissociation, visions, out of body experience, change in breathing pattern, mantra and sound from within ,profound stillness, calmness and peace, distortive perception of time and space, habits or addictions dropping away ,rejuvenated energy and feeling of enhanced creativity, boundless ecstasy , feeling of flow of love from within having no apparent reason.

However these symptoms are often misdiagnosed as anxiety disorders, psychotic illnesses, dissociative disorders, fatigue, hysteria and other diseases. However food appetite and enhanced craze for sex together with attitude are the most stressful areas of transformation. Like a door opened with the help of a key, the yoga practitioner unlocks the door to liberation with the help of Kundaini energy says Hatha yoga pradipika. (H.Y.P-chapter3, Verse105).

Kundaini has been so meaning fully elaborated in classic texts like Hatha yoga Pradipika, Gheranda Samhita or Shiva Samhita, it can never be ignored from medical and psychological analysis point of view. Let us review some of the important theories in short in this connection.

### ***Theories of Kundaini***

The theories are

1. Autonomous nervous system theory
2. Special Energy theory
3. Psychosomatic Theories
4. Bentov's medical model theory
5. Silent brain awakening theory
6. Jung's model

### ***Autonomous nervous system theory***

This theory was proposed by an Indian Doctor Vasant G. Rele which was published in his book "The mysterious Kundaini" in year 1927. In this theory the core idea is the upward movement of Kundaini energy which can be identified with the activation of the right vagal nerve. A well recognized Indian doctor, Professor Udapa, regards the basis of awakening of Kundaini power to be the stimulation of the plexuses of the automatic nervous system (Udapa, 1982)

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### ***Special Energy Theory***

Kundalini is considered as a special form of energy new to western science. According to Motoyama, Kundalini is considered to be the life force called 'chi' in Acupuncture and Chinese medicine system, which moves along certain acupuncture channels or meridians. Kirlian photography techniques have been regarded to take the picture and measure the energy levels in living beings. The meditation can be regarded as a communication or interaction with the prana or cosmic energy which removes the blocks of energy flowing in the body.

### ***Bentov's Biomedical theory***

This theory gives emphasis on the resonance of the vibrations made by the heart-aorta system. The symptoms appear only when this journey is not "stress-free". (Bentov, 1977). Dr. Le Sannella (1979) adopted Bentov's theory in her works and tried to help people to overcome possible difficulties with the help of awakened Kundalini.

### ***Silent Brain awakening theory***

Awakening of Kundalini does not take place in the spiral passage but in the brain, it is projected to the different parts of the body say Cn. Hills. As per teachings of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, 1981, many yoga experts would agree that awakening of Kundalini activates the silent or unused parts (area) of the brain and thus enhances one's mental and spiritual abilities.

### ***Jung's model***

C.G. Jung's seminar on Kundalini yoga, was presented to the psychological club Zurich in 1932. It is widely accepted and viewed as a mile stone in psychological understanding of the Eastern concept and the associated transformations exhibited in the forms of inner experiences. Jung's model describes the developmental phases of higher consciousness interpreted symbolically in terms of the process of individuation.

## **CONCLUSION**

The changes that occur in the human organism for the manifestation of a richer consciousness affect the energy system and the microscopic structures, beyond our probe at the moment. The general construction of the body remains intact, which makes it difficult to locate the changes wrought. Our regrettable failure to act up to the aim of nature is clearly reflected in the unstable condition of the world today. Says Gopi Krishna, a pioneer in the field of research and experience of this mystic power. Much research has yet to be done to unfold the mystery as told by yogis and saints down the ages. A true seeker should always be conversant with the teachings, practice process and experience of this practice. It is always advisable to learn the practice under the true guidance of a guru to avoid hazards which may arise in course of practice. Thanks to the Indian system of yoga and philosophy that has done a lot of contribution towards this secret science of Kundalini. This is high time for us to explore more possibilities and harness the untapped energy source of human energy into creative and spiritual achievements.

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