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The awakening of kundalini

Kundalini is a concept in Indian philosophy. According to Tantrism it is a latent spiritual power, which is situated in the bottom of the spinal column, behind the sexual organs. Symbolic it is seen as a slumbering, rolled serpent. The serpent can be awakened; that is: the spiritual energy can be released, normally through a special yoga technique.

In spiralform it then moves from the foot of the spiral column up in the head, while it opens a line of psychological centers, called chakras (see my article **What are chakras?**).

By awakening the Kundalini the yogi is said to gain supernatural abilities and spiritual insight, and he can attain the final liberation.

So the awakening of Kundalini is said to be a necessary part of the spiritual practice; that is: the proces of awakening. But in the West Kundalini is best known as a part of a spiritual crisis. Spiritual crises often appear as unintended consequences of yoga, one-sided meditationtechniques, bodyoriented- and experiential psychotherapy, healing, energy transmission (for example Deeksha/Shaktipat), different types of rituals. Among other factors of release can be mentioned: births, unhappy love, celibacy, deep sorrow, high fever and intake of drugs. But a spiritual crisis can also come suddenly without traceable cause. You can suddenly be thrown out in such a crisis.

When it is a matter of a spiritual crisis, then your consciousness and personality have slipped fundamentally out of balance, though in most cases not so much that you can be diagnosed as having a mental disease. But your process of awakening, your spiritual development, has left the rail, and ended up blind, either in suffering – *The Dark Night of the Soul* – or in ego-inflation (see my article **Spiritual crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena**).

The manifestations of this form of crisis resemble the descriptions of the awakening of the serpent power, or Kundalini, found in historical Indian literature. As mentioned, then, according to the yogis, Kundalini is a creative cosmic energy that resides in latent form at the base of the human spine. It can become activated through

meditation, specific exercises, the intervention of an “accomplished” spiritual teacher, or sometimes for reasons that are unknown.

The activated Kundalini rises through the channels in the “subtle body”, which is described in the yogic literature as a field of non-physical energy surrounding and infusing the physical body. As it ascends, it clears old traumatic imprints and opens the centers of psychic energy, called chakras. This process, although highly valued and considered beneficial in the yogic traditions, is not without dangers and requires expert guidance by a guru, whose Kundalini is fully awakened and stabilized (an enlightened master).

The most dramatic signs of Kundalini awakening are the physical and psychological manifestations called kriyas. One can experience intense sensations of energy and heat streaming up in the spine, associated with violent shaking, spasms, and twisting movements. Powerful waves of seemingly unmotivated emotions, such as anxiety, anger, sadness, or joy and ecstatic rapture, can surface and temporarily dominate the psyche. Visions of brilliant light or various archetypical beings and a variety of internally perceived sounds, as well as experiences of what seem to be memories from past lives, are very common. Involuntary and often uncontrollable behaviors complete the picture: talking in tongues, chanting unknown songs, assuming yogic postures and gestures, and making a variety of animal sounds and movements.

Recently, unmistakable signs of this process have been observed in thousands of westerners. California psychiatrist and eye doctor Lee Sannella, who first brought the Kundalini syndrome to the attention of Western audiences, single-handedly collected nearly one thousand such cases.

So, the core-phenomenon in the Kundalini-process is some form of rising through the chakra-system, where the sexual, subsidiary the emotional, energy is built up and concentrated in the bottom of the body, for then to flow upwards towards the higher chakras in the transformation-event. Either can then the energy, which before was in the sexual or emotional expression-form, after the transformation, be retrieved as extended love, where focus is in the Anahata-chakra, or as creative energy, where the center is the Vishuddha-chakra, or as intuitive energy, where the key-spot is Ajna-chakra.

Several dimensions can occur at the same time. Finally the transformation can lift the energy, and therewith also the consciousness, if this is meditative well-trained, all the way up to the crown-center and out through the central channel, upwards in the more universal duality-transcendent aspects of experiences of the enlightened consciousness (Sahasrara-chakra).

Generally you can talk about three forms of rising:

1. The cross-rising. The rising is experienced and can be seen as a movement from the sexual glands up towards the heart, where the tracks crosses each other, past the nipples up in the two brain hemispheres, where then the flowering-phenomenon unfolds.
2. The fountain-rising. The transformation is described as an up-flow of energy in the central channel (physical the spine, ethereal Sushumna) all the way up and out of the body in the crown-center. Here the energy stream turns – very much like the fountain – and flows down outside the body in the aura on all sides, for then again to unite at the basis of the spine.
3. The melting-rising. Again the energy rises, streaming in a central movement. But when the consciousness – the experience – reaches the brain, or the energy-fields above the top of the head, a quite special occurrence takes place. Something, which is described as a static or frozen connection between the right and left hemisphere of the brain, or as a static pattern of masculine and feminine energy in the fields over the crown center - this static, crystalline or frozen double field is being brought to melting, apparently by force of the up-streaming energy. The energy, which hereby is melted or is melting, flows down through the body and fills it up from below with a feeling of bliss.

These three types of rising should describe the enlightenment-process. And I am not in doubt about, that this also could be the case. The problem is, that you can experience them, exactly as described, without that there happens any transformation, transcendence or enlightenment. You can purely and simply just experience it like energy movements – it can be very pleasant, but also unpleasant. Finally it can result in a spiritual crisis.

As far as I can see, it depends of, whether the energy is turned inwards towards the essence of the mind (of the chakras), or outwards towards the content of the mind (of the chakras) - again: see my article **What are chakras?**. In order to, that it can happen correct, there precisely is needed much meditative training, and with meditation is here meant Meditation as an Art of Life; that to ask philosophical questions in a meditative-existential way. And this aspect of meditation is, as far as I can see, often neglected in the forms of meditation I have met, which not directly is based on the traditional spiritual practices, but have become mixed with psychology and psychotherapy – the New Age-ideology (see my article **Philosophical counseling as an alternative to psychotherapy**).

It is directly wrong, and very deceptive, to claim, that the unpleasant consequences of a rising-process are due to, that old traumas dissolve, that you are in a transformation-process, and that you just shall go ahead and go the process through. This is a dangerous form of psychologizing (which origins from the experiential psychotherapy and its cathartic theories), that you will meet at practically all the meditation teachers you meet within this environment. They are all characterized by the power psychology and psychotherapy have got in our society (see my articles **The devastating New Age turn within psychotherapy**, and **Humanistic psychology, self-help, and the danger of reducing religion to psychology**).

The problem is, that you can't go the process through if you turn yourself towards the contents. The contents is unfathomable, there isn't any end of it. And if you nevertheless do it, the process will grow worse and worse and worse, till you end up in a psychiatric hospital.

The problem is, that unless you are very cognitional and ethical trained, you will still be identified with the painbody and the Ego (see my article **The emotional painbody and why psychotherapy can't heal it**). This means, that certain challenges will be able to activate the painbody exactly as before the awakening of Kundalini - you will in other words give it your energy. And after an awakening of Kundalini this means a drastic increase of the volumes of energy an awakening of Kundalini implies.

The ridiculous is, that many of those, who advise people in their Kundalini-experiences, absolutely no own experience have of it. They have read the whole thing in some self-help books, which are written by people, who neither have any experience. And if you are making them aware of it, they are being furious. They are often intellectual inflated, and would begin to advice Dalai Lama himself, if they could (see my article **The ego-inflation within the New Age and self-help environment**).

What is it that can go wrong in the rising-process? The past and the future is the thinking's time-dimension, which physical reflection-spot therefore is in Agna-chakra - the eyebrow-area. This area is in other words quite central when you start with meditation. When the thoughts therefore are building energy up, this energy runs up in the head. Different said there is being created a spiral-like, creative up-tension of the whole of your being.

When this tension is rising to a certain critical point in the different chakras, it breaks like a wavecrest, and there happens an experience of one or the other kind. The experience is the breakers of the wavecrest. The built-up energy breaks in the content and visions, feelings and symbols of the experience. And if the built-up volume of

energy is big enough, you can create an opening wherethrough the contents of time and its images can begin to flow in.

Time is not just the personal history, but also the collective and the universal history, and therefore the contents of time and its images are unfathomable. A completely fascinating perspective, and dangerous, especially in connection with the meeting with the collective time, where the wholeness begins to dream.

In its positive aspect the contents of time and its collective images is sublime and divine, and therefore a source to fascination. Many so-called upward meditationtraditions make an effort to build energy up in a wave in order to get an experience of this sublime and divine content. Among other things they do this through concentration – it can be concentration on a chakra, a mantra, an object or something else. But you must all the time remember, that concentration alone is a pure mental thing, and therefore a thought-activity.

The type of rising is completely dependent on the exercises you practise. For example you can practise exercises, which visually imitate one of the three types of rising. There is in other words not anything common necessary in, that spiritual development shall happen through a certain way of rising. To claim this will be to mislead people. All techniques are moreover content, contrary to being in the Now, which direct you towards the form, or the essence. Awakening of Kundalini is therefore completely dependent on what technique you are using.

The danger lies in the identification with your thoughts and your painbody – and therewith in the identification with the collective imageworld of time, which is a part of the structure under the thinking. The identification itself is the same as the Ego, and the energy which is built up in the positive aspect of the collective imageworld of time, will be able to blow the Ego up in inflation. And then you have a spiritual crisis, which absolutely not has any healing and transformational potential.

The ”positive” aspect of a spiritual crisis is the most self-deceptive, because it usually ends up in Ego-inflation and total lack of self-realization. When the Ego has embezzled itself energy, which rightly belong to the collective time, there arises inflation. The Ego blows itself up using energy, which not rightly belong to the Ego (again: see my article **The ego-inflation within the New Age and self-help environment**).

When there in connection with Kundalini-awakening is talk about a spiritual crisis, then this is characterized by, that the ”positive”, like the negative, contains elements of unrealized unreality, division, stagnation, anxiety or meaninglessness. The consequence is, that your spiritual development stops.

The collective images of time will, as images, always be defined by their negations. And in its negative aspect the contents of time and its collective images therefore are frighteningly and demonical. The opposites in this structure can't be separated, but define each other. So the more you identify yourself with the one pole in such a pair of opposites, and expel the other pole (as it is the case in the Ego-inflation), the more the abandoned pole will work stronger and stronger on its polar partner. This is because, that energy works as streams within a wholeness. The energy you have build up in the divine pole (which you shall remember only is a collective image) will finally switch over in its opposite demonical pole. Simply in order to balance an imbalance in the wholeness. The problem (the self-deception) is lying in, that a contrabalancing don't have to happen in this life, but first in the next. In Indian philosophy you must therefore necessarily see yourself in such large perspective (see my article **What is karma?**).

However, many in a spiritual crisis have experienced such a contra-balancing development. This is the aspect of suffering, but on the other hand a much better possibility of self-realization.

When you identify yourself with your thoughts and your painbody you loose your being and is being identical with the swings of the energylaws, which within the wholeness work as a universal balancing-system (as for example also in the teaching of Yin and Yang, where too much Yin brings about a swing over in Yang and reverse). In this identification you will in other words become exposed by troughs of the waves, of contrabalances, as well as karmacially back-swings. And these will be very heavy taken in consideration, what volumes of energy you in a spiritual crisis have to do with.

A spiritual crisis in its negative aspect is known under the term *The Dark Night of the Soul*.

All people in an intensive, spiritual training (no matter what tradition it belongs to) runs in a short time through a considerable amount of existential stuff, which is the cause of suffering. This existential stuff lies in time and its images. Certainly you awake to a greater presence and a greater life-intensity. But this is also an awakening to your own and others, realized or unrealized, suffering.

However there is big difference between, whether the spiritual training develops into a spiritual crisis or not. The spiritual crisis is intimately tied up with the Ego, and therefore the identification with the thoughts, the painbody and the images of time. In this identification the mind is - when there is talk about a spiritual crisis - so to speak being flooded with experiences of the contents of time and its images, and you don't

understand what is going on. And therewith you either have the Ego-inflation or the deep suffering.

However this doesn't happen, when the spiritual training goes off correct. And it is my experience, that the so-called downward meditationtraditions are a much better securing towards spiritual crises than the upward meditationtraditions.

The spiritual practice, which I have developed – Meditation as an Art of Life - must necessarily come within a downward meditationtradition, where all creative up-tensions, through being in the Now, are relaxed away from the images of time. Being in the Now starts in Agna-chakra, with awareness-training (training of neutral observation). But the training of awareness must necessarily begin with focusing or concentration. And at this point there is a lot of pitfalls in meditation, because what shall you focus the consciousness on (a point between the eyes, a inner image, a chakra, an outer object, a mantra or a prayer)?

Through focus and concentration the energy-level is rising, and how do you secure, that this increased energy runs into the Now, and not into the thoughts and up in the head, with the risk of ending in a spiritual crisis? The head is in time, while the body is in the Now. Neutral observation must therefore be connected with the body. My own experiences with an awakening of kundalini say me, that Hara-focusing is the best guarantee for, that the energy runs in the right course. And if the energy already circulates wrong (for example if you are in a spiritual crisis), then the training of Hara will correct this (see the supporting exercises in my book **Meditation as an Art of Life – a basic reader**)

The energy flows in this practice back from the content-side of the chakras, towards their essence-side. In Agna-chakra the energy flows back from past and future, back from sorrows and bindings, plans and worries, into the Now and therefore down through the head, down into the body, from chakra to chakra, whilst the energy, which is tied in their content-side, is being released, moving inwards towards the essence: therefore from language to silence, from opposites to oneness, from emotions to being, from movement to the unmoved, from the manifested to the unmanifested. The body is being surrounded by the new energy's presence and joy of life. The whole thing happens through a melting, a letting go, a devotion (here the training of love and compassion will help, for example as in bhakti-yoga). And such has the progress for example also been described by the enlightened Indian master Sri Aurobindo (and also by the enlightened Danish master Martinus). The chakra-process here goes off the other way round – from above and down.

It reminds about the third type of rising, the melting-rising, only the energy is not rising. But what is described as a static or frozen connection between the right and

the left hemisphere of the brain, or as a static pattern of masculine and feminine energy in the fields above the crown center, this static, crystalline or frozen double field is being brought to melting, not by force of up-streaming energy, but by force of Relaxationmeditation, Hara meditation and Tonglen meditation jointly. The energy, which hereby is melting, flows down through the body and fills this up from below with a kind of feeling of bliss. The melting of the freezing in the head opens at the same time upwards, so that energy from the spiritual dimension can flow downwards.

In my article **A critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork** you can read more about my own experiences with the awakening of kundalini.

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