



TOPIC OF THE MONTH November 2014

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What is kundalini rising?

In my inside out research on Kukkutasana, I got to research “raising your kundalini”; This was a very rewarding journey. Raising your Kundalini has a lot of mysticism and folk lore around long meditations and enlightenment necessary to achieve some higher conscious state, that is a daunting task. But it’s really not. Let’s break it down and see how accessible it is for everyone.

Most yoga texts describe kundalini rising as some dormant magical “snake” energy (the kundalini is described as a cobra) that is coiled up sleeping at the base of your spine in your “first chakra”. Yoga exercises, breathing, and meditation awaken this energy or awareness. As it awakens, it rises up our spine piercing our “chakras” and we magically become “enlightened”.

Let’s look at the individual components of Kundalini Rising.

So What is Kundalini? and what is a “chakra”? Many people explain chakras as “energy centers that are situated along our spine and head, that are not tangible and you can not see on an x-Ray. I beg to differ though ... Chakras are tangible; each chakra coordinates with a major nerve plexus in the body, and the kundalini is rises inside our spine, very closely related to the nervous system. In reality all this kundalini talk seems to be pointing to our nervous systems.

Each chakra or nerve plexus deals with different aspects of being human. There are 7 in our body, the lower three dealing with our outer experience with the world (family, relationships, vocation, ego) and the upper 4 dealing with our inner experiences (love, guidance, will, clairvoyance, and spiritual connection).

In yogic lore there is a lot of use of colors, shapes, flowers, and Hindu deities to explain the chakras, but this does not translate very well to our current way of living in a different part of the world. However many people have taken the understanding of the chakras and have been able to translate them into current times and current languages. One of my favorite authors and speakers on this is Carolyn Myss. She has a book called “Anatomy of the Spirit” and an audio version called Energy Anatomy. They are worth the read/listen.

Kundalini is a bit harder to explain . . . there is a lot of lore and mysticism around the term as well — along with ancient texts that are hard to translate and falling apart, there is not much solid written or spoken about Kundalini energy.

Kundalini means coiled or circular and it is viewed as our life energy sometimes referred to as shakti. When your kundalini is rising it means your self development is rising and transforming into a spiritual awakening or higher understanding of types. It is indicative of understanding the nature of why things happen as they do — acceptance — peace with the world ...

In reality the Kundalini has a lot to do with our nervous system. The channel the kundalini rises in is called sushumna and its our spine — where our nerves are housed — specifically the central nervous system.

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system. The function of the Sushumna nadi is to connect the flow of energy from one chakra to the next — the function of the central nervous system is to communicate between the brain and the body or the peripheral body and the central body.

Enlightened is not so hard to explain. It literally means filled with Light. Enlightened is a way of being that is accessible to everyone. Please read on.

So how does doing yoga poses equate to raising your kundalini and what yoga means — Union — Uniting ourselves with a higher universal power ... Yoga exercises can do this?

The physical asanas are exercise for a healthy body, to release stress and toxins, and for discipline — discipline is necessary in our life, we do sometimes have to do things we just doing feel like doing — and in our modern life exercise is more needed; in the old days our lifestyle naturally had more exercise built into it that is not there today.

I like how Jiddhu Krishnamurti (an Indian philosopher) described “real” yoga:

“The real yoga which is to lead a highly moral life (not morality according to circumstances or culture) — True ethical activity; not to hurt, clear thinking, acting morally, right amount of sleep and food, doing the right thing.”

Or as one of my favorite Buddhist sayings say: Just do the next Right thing!

The other point I feel this is making . . . the highest good for all involved. Not just what is good for ourself, but everyone who could be effected by what we do and think . . . Highly moral for every being effected “not morality according to circumstances or culture”. This means societies that put women down, this is not moral even if it is accepted or expected in your culture. Or if you steal because you are poor and hungry — even if you steal from someone rich and bad — it is still not moral.

I want to expound on kundalini rising energy and leading a highly moral life; This means we get rid of “our agendas”, no longer do we want to operate looking for what is best for ourselves only, it’s not just about me or you. We want to operate in a way that what we do — even our vocation — is the highest good for all effected.

What is raising your kundalini?

If you get the right amount of sleep and food, and exercise You have more energy ... you are not dulled by disease, feeling sluggish from bad food; you are less likely to be in a bad mood attitude if you move your body and eat fresh foods ... This increased energy makes you feel better and be happier and more caring with others -- this is your kundalini rising!

Here I will try to put in tangible terms what it is like when our “kundalini begins to rise”:

- Focus your attention on your pelvic floor.
- ॐ The first chakra deals with our family (sense of belonging to a community), our home (food water shelter). As we learn to accept the predicaments we were born into and love our family members even though they may be radically different than us (or me radically different from



them), this would be higher minded ... For example say you decide to go vegetarian ... and this makes your family uncomfortable or judge you over it — you don't need to convince them about it or push it on them. If you choose to be vegetarian and your family is not, do not expect them to have vegetarian food for you at family gatherings. (Pre-eat if you have to.) Don't eat meat if you don't want to, just eat what is there without meat (without saying anything about vegetarian food) and enjoy the food and the company — this is operating from a higher understanding allowing room for everyone to believe what works for them.

- o If we live modestly, a comfortable home without being wasteful or indulgent, this does not waste our resources. These may be signs your kundalini has pierced your first chakra ...

- o Focus your attention on your lower belly, around the area of your uterus / ovaries (if you're a woman) or just below your navel if you're a man.

ॐ Second chakra energy is relationship energy and vocation energy. Signs of kundalini rising through your second chakra may be things like caring for your partner -- feeling true affection for one another. Also, signs of kundalini energy in your second chakra might be choosing a vocation that gives back to humanity, not just choosing a vocation to make yourself some money. We all have our strengths and weaknesses, ideally we get a job based on our strengths and skills, and hopefully something we enjoy as well that helps our community and/or world. Then pray to God we can earn a comfortable living from it! There is a balance with money; too little and you are struggling with no time for Spiritual pursuit . . . and too much also interferes with spiritual pursuits! We do want to be comfortable, this is good. And yes we do need to earn money, but keep it in perspective. It is not what makes life happy or fulfilling.

- o Focus your attention on your solar plexus.

ॐ Third chakra energy is the core of our personality. Our ego is housed here. Kundalini piercing the third chakra might take the form of something along the lines of giving up the "ego". This gets a lot of attention when starting on the yogic path -- the absence of ego. This might include things like not talking about yourself so much, not always trying to get attention, not trying to pretend you are so important or that your job or what you do is more important than what someone else does. Being humble even in areas you are quite skilled. Other places we get trapped up in our third chakra have a lot to do with where we place our self worth.

- o **Not putting your self worth in how well you can do yoga postures**
- o **Many women end up putting their self worth in how much they weigh, or how beautiful one is**
- o When your kundalini influences your third chakra you feel confident in who you are, and able to bare your inner soul — you are not afraid to just be yourself. You don't worry what other people think about you (what other people think about you is none of your business)! These are a good sign your kundalini has made it to your third chakra.

- o Focus your attention on your heart area

ॐ Fourth chakra kundalini rising is all about love. Unconditional love. For example, give love even if you don't get it in return. This is a biggie, giving love even when it is not returned. Respond with love in all your dealings and doings. Don't hurt others with your words, sarcasm for example means to "tear flesh". Being aware of how you present yourself and your choice



of words to always be loving and accepting of others and not trying to judge why they are where they are or have done what they do. Just. Be. Love.

- o Place your attention on your throat area
- ॐ Fifth chakra kundalini rising is something like giving up your will, letting the universe guide you -- have faith you will either be given solid ground to stand on or wings to fly ... and then roll with it.
 - o Have faith that the unplanned events of our lives are a source of higher guidance, bravely following this path is a sure sign your kundalini is rising.
 - o Also the fifth chakra governs what goes in our mouth and what comes out. **Eat Smart and Speak Kindly.** I like what Yoga Mala says about satya or truth ... Speak the truth, but don't hurt. Very difficult.
 - o Feel your 3rd eye center (just between and slightly higher than your eyes), around the area of your pineal gland.
- ॐ Sixth chakra piercing may give us clear visions and clear thinking. Intuitive wisdom is what you experience as your third eye opens. Your third eye is closely linked with your gut feelings. Your sixth chakra, when honed is your "sixth sense". It gives you an inner knowing beyond what you can see, smell, hear, taste, and touch. When we are "grounded" in our 6th chakra we are easier able to operate in a meditative state most of our day.
 - o Meditation is the best tool we have to encourage our kundalini energy to rise up to the level our 3rd eye center. This center is connected with vision and it is right behind and between our eyes, which happens to be where our pineal gland is. Our pineal gland senses light, and controls our melatonin which is a powerful anti-oxidant in the body.
 - o **There is something important to point out here:** The yogic textbooks (Kundalini Tantra by Bihar School of Yoga) states that it is important to open your 6th chakra first when you start to work with your kundalini rising . . . then go base to crown with your 'openings'. *"If our kundalini starts rising before we open our 6th chakra it will rock the stability of the practitioner; one may experience physical, mental, and/or emotional shocks. The awakening of the 6th (ajna) chakra brings a great degree of detachment, which allows one to withstand the lower chakra awakenings without excessive shock. One is able to observe chakra experiences with the attitude of a witness."*
 - ★ As we progress on this path many times big life changes occur — could be job, home, partner changes — these are tough changes to make and to follow through on these changes it requires a degree of detachment to the things we were used to.
 - o To open your 6th chakra meditate! There are specific 3rd eye meditations commonly called Trataka, some use candlelight and others just use visual imaging with your eyes closed.
- ॐ And the kundalini reaching the 7th chakra; the 1000 petal-ed lotus flower on the crown of our head where we connect with our spirituality ... Wow ... I guess when that happens you go sit by the River all day ... or work for charity ... or feed everyone ... Or just live your daily life with acceptance and contentment and love for everyone.



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So really what this is saying is the practices of yoga get us healthy, help us get grounded in family and community, give us self esteem and strength, help us respond with love and develop the ability to see the big picture in life. When these fall into place we are at able to follow a higher path of understanding and serving our communities.

I like how Dr. Kelly Brogan, Functional Medicine Doctor and Kundalini Yoga Teacher used the pyramid to describe this process:

First we must get our home, health, and family stable, then we need to feel safe, have a job and connection to people and community, then we need to love ourselves and respect others. After all this is in place we are ready to work on our spiritual journey, the rising of our consciousness. The practices of yoga are aligned with this principle, get the body and mind healthy then you can see the bigger picture and operate in a way that all you do is the highest good for everyone effected in any of your thoughts, words, and actions.

