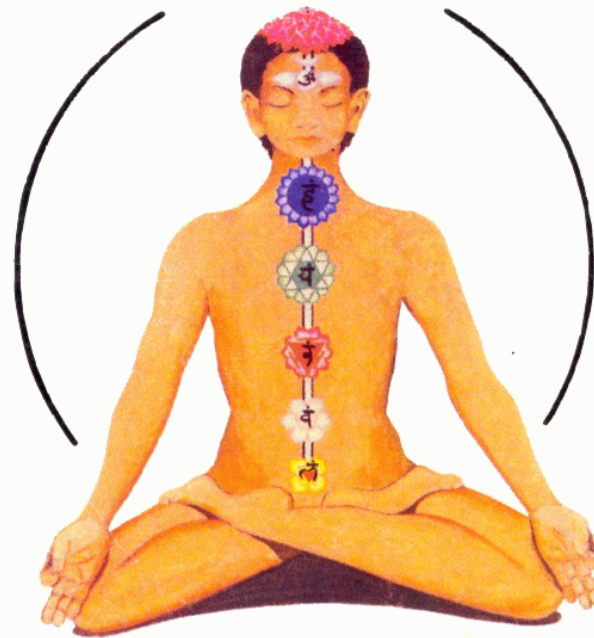


Shakti

HIDDEN Treasure of Power

Vol. I



by
Dhyanyogi Shri Madhusudandasji

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DEDICATION

SAJĀNANĀM NAMASTUBHYĀM ASHṬA SIDDHI PRADĀYAKAM /
DUḤKHA DĀRIDYRA HARTĀRAM SARVA VIGHNA VINĀSAKAM //1//

SRĪ RĀMA CARANĀM VANDE BHAKTĀNUGRAHA KĀRAKAM /
DĪNA BANDHURDAYĀ SINDHUḤ SAMŚĀRĀRNAVA TĀRAKAM //2//

DHYĀTVĀ KUNDALĪNĪ ŚHAKTĪM NATVĀ TAT PADAPANKAJAM /
SMRITVĀ SARASVATĪM DEVĪM IDAM GRANTHAM SRIJĀMYAHAM //3//

ĪSHVARĀM GURURŪPENA HṚIDAYE DHĀRAYĀMYAHAM /
JĪĀNAM ĀTMĀ SVARŪPASYA DEHI DEVA KRĪPĀNIDHE //4//

Honor to you, Lord Ganesha, bestower of the eight accomplishments, destroyer of suffering and poverty, annihilator of all obstacles. (1)

I praise the feet of Shri Rama, who showers kindness on his devotees, the brother to the suffering, the ocean of compassion, the savior from the sea of birth and death. (2)

Having meditated on Kundalini Shakti, having honored those lotus feet, having remembered Saraswati Devi, I will write this book. (3)

I will place in my heart the Lord in the form of the Guru who gives knowledge of the true form of the Self, the storehouse of compassion. (4)

Introduction to Shakti: Hidden Treasure of Power

For the past several decades, yoga, a spiritual discipline from India, has been a subject of interest to people of this country. Consequently, I believe that many of you are already familiar with this terminology. The purpose of this Introduction is to acquaint you with Shakti, Kundalini, and the related form of yoga known as Maha Yoga.

The principle on which it is based is very simple. In every human being, there is a source of divine energy called Kundalini in Sanskrit. It exists within the individual in two states, one dormant and one awakened and active. When it is dormant in a person, he finds himself leading an unhappy, unfulfilled life. His understanding of the universe is restricted and he perceives and interprets everything according to his limited capacity. When the Kundalini is aroused, he progresses very rapidly on the path of spiritual evolution. He realizes the full potential of body and mind, attains inner peace, harmony and integration, and ultimately experiences the sublime truth of unity in diversity—the fact that all life is one seamless fabric.

The purpose of this yoga is to awaken the Kundalini if it is dormant and to intensify its activity if it has been aroused. Thus, Kundalini Maha Yoga is a direct method of spiritual evolution and as such its importance is obvious. There are also side benefits such as the automatic healing of many diseases of body and mind.

A powerful yogi can awaken Kundalini by a transfer of his energy to the disciple which acts as the initial impetus. The process is called Shaktipat (*shakti* meaning “power” or “energy” in Sanskrit, and *pata* meaning “transfer”). Through the grace and advice of my own guru who gave me Shaktipat many years ago in India, I have been able to do Shaktipat on thousands of people both here and abroad. Because of this experience, I have been encouraged to bring this Kundalini Maha Yoga to your attention so that it may aid the spiritual endeavors of people in Universe.

First, let us look at the role Kundalini Maha Yoga can play in solving the problems of the world. As we all know, during the past several decades, scientific development has taken place at a staggering rate. It is both a joy and a surprise to watch science progress. However, since the storehouse of nature is limitless, the more we know, the more remains to be known. It is obvious that no one person can understand nature fully. Thus, there is a clear need to develop further the powers of the intellect, the capacity to comprehend, and also to develop the general powers of the mind to the extent that faculties heretofore unused may be involved.

In addition, the need for sound mental health cannot be overlooked. Much remains to be accomplished in the area of both mental and physical health. Many serious diseases still threaten mankind and neurotic and psychotic behavior abounds.

But even a strong body and mind are not sufficient. Today, despite our many developments, there is much fear, hatred and disharmony between individuals, communities and nations. This has led to the buildup of destructive weapons and the grave possibility of thermonuclear war. Peace, though much desired, has not been attained.

A basic cause of these problems is that the general level of conscience, consciousness and other spiritual qualities have not evolved to the same extent that the material side of civilization has. We are in a state of unbalanced development, lacking on the spiritual side. Therefore, to attain what is missing—peace, harmony and brotherhood—it is necessary to realize that the entire universe is the creation of God, that all life is one and that all are brothers. This realization is spiritual realization, not the merely intellectual comprehension of an ideal. Spiritual evolution alone is the solution to the problems facing us. Kundalini Maha Yoga is a way to spiritual evolution and therefore a significant tool for the development of mankind on the spiritual plane. It is a path to peace, prosperity, brotherhood and love.

In this book, I will describe in some detail the yogic theory of Kundalini.* In brief outline, Kundalini is divine energy which manifests in both cosmic and personal form. The cosmic form is the entire universe, the entire interconnected pattern of all that is and becomes. The personal form is the pattern of that energy within each individual living being.

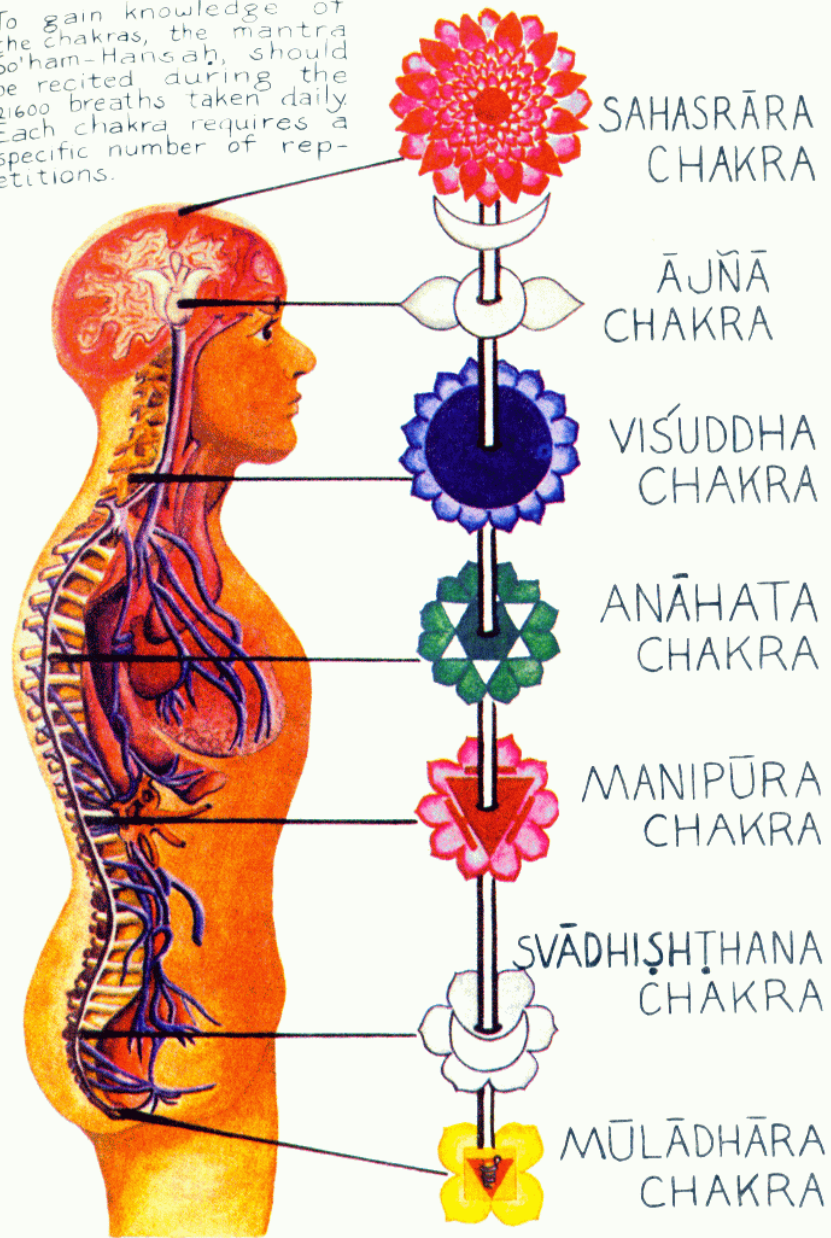
Yogis believe that the development of the universe is cyclic. Each cycle consists of creation, maintenance and destruction, just as each life does on a smaller scale. When a cycle of the universe is completed, all individuals attain liberation in the general dissolution of all limiting forms. But the individual does not have to await the end of the cycle for his liberation. With the awakening of Kundalini, he may attain it in one lifetime.

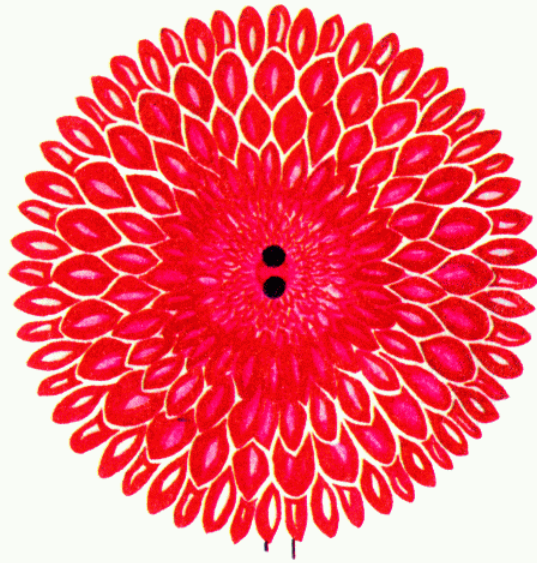
In my own training period of over thirty years, I had contacts with large numbers of capable yogis. I did severe austerities at Chitrakut, Girnar, the Himalayas and on Mount Abu. Then, by the grace of God, I met my guru who performed Shaktipat on me. Since that time, I have done Shaktipat on a large number of people whose Kundalini has been awakened bringing them good health, peace of mind and leading them along the spiritual path.

I have come for the dissemination of spiritual knowledge. It is my hope that *Shakti: Hidden Treasure of Power* will aid this purpose. I wish to express my thanks to all the many people who helped in preparing this book. I consider the whole world to be my family. The message is straightforward. I invite you all to come, sit, meditate, experience and judge for yourself. May God bless you all.

Dhyanyogi Madhusudandas

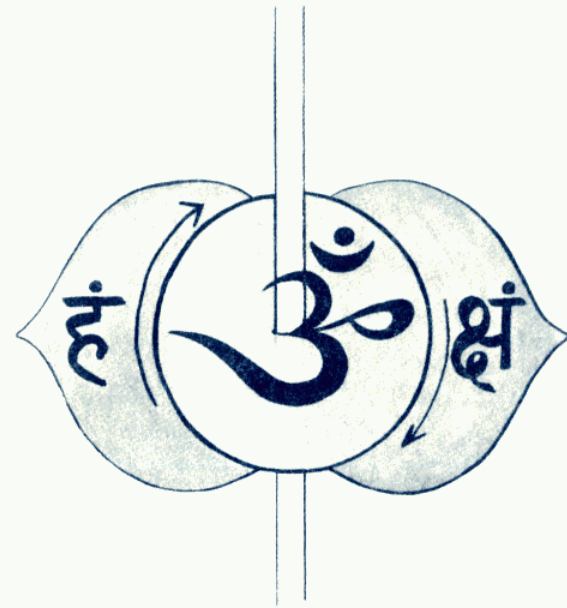
To gain knowledge of the chakras, the mantra So'ham-Hansah, should be recited during the 21600 breaths taken daily. Each chakra requires a specific number of repetitions.





SAHASRĀRA CHAKRA

Location — BRAIN (at crown of head)
 Number of Petals — THOUSAND
 Color — RED
 Prāṇa-Vayu — VYĀNA
 Presiding God — PARAMATMA
 Quality — SATTVA
 Seed Letter — VISARGA :
 Result of Meditation — LIBERATION
 Repetitions of So'ham Hansah Mantra required
 during twenty-four hour period — 1,000



ĀJÑĀ CHAKRA

Location — BETWEEN EYEBROWS
 Number of petals — TWO
 Color — WHITE
 Shape — ROUND
 Related Element — MANUS-TATTVA
 Prāṇa-Vayu — PRĀṆA
 Presiding God — JIVATMA
 Quality — PURE SATTVA
 Seed Letter — AUM ॐ
 Results of Meditation — NECTAR — UNLIMITED
 VISION — CONTROL OF
 ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES
 Repetitions of So'hum Hansah Mantra required
 during twenty-four hour period — 1,000



VIŚUDDHA CHAKRA

- Location — BASE OF THROAT
 Number of petals — SIXTEEN
 Color — DARK BLUE
 Shape — ROUND
 Related Element — SPACE
 Prāṇa-Vayu — UDANA
 Presiding God — JIVATMA
 Quality — SATTVA
 Seed Letter — HAM हं
 Vehicle of Kundalini — ELEPHANT
 Results of Meditation — PURIFICATION OF MENTAL ATTITUDE AND PHYSICAL BODY
 KNOWLEDGE — INTENSE JOY
 Repetitions of So'ham Hamsaḥ Mantra required during twenty-four hour period — 1,000



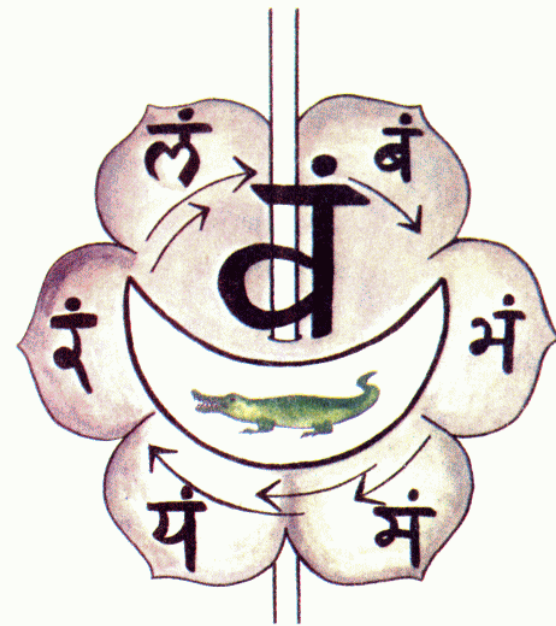
ANĀHATA CHAKRA

- Location — HEART
 Number of petals — TWELVE
 Color — GREEN
 Shape — HEXAGON (formed by six-pointed star)
 Related Element — AIR
 Prāṇa-Vayu — PRĀṆA
 Presiding God — MAHESHVARA
 Quality — SATTVA WITH SOME RAJAS
 Seed Letter — YAM यं
 Vehicle of Kundalini — ANTELOPE
 Results of Meditation — MATERIAL GAINS
 — KNOWLEDGE
 Repetitions of So'ham Hansaḥ Mantra required during twenty-four hour period — 6,000



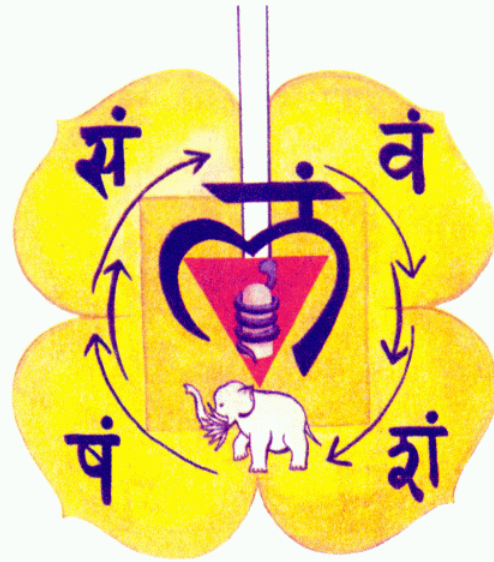
MANIPŪRA CHAKRA

Location	NAVEL
Number of petals	TEN
Color	RED
Shape	TRIANGLE
Related Element	FIRE
Prāṇa Vāyu	SAMĀNA
Presiding God	VISHNU
Quality	RAJAS
Seed Letter	RAM रं
Vehicle of Kundlini	RAM
Results of Meditation	KNOWLEDGE OF INTERNAL FUNCTION OF PHYSICAL BODY
Repetitions of So'ham Hansah Mantra required during twenty-four hour period	6,000



SVĀDHIṢṬHĀNA CHAKRA

Location	BETWEEN NAVEL AND GENITALS
Number of petals	SIX
Color	WHITE
Shape	CRESENT
Related Element	WATER
Prāṇa Vāyu	APĀNA
Presiding God	BRAHMA
Quality	RAJAS
Seed Letter	VAM वं
Vehicle of Kundalini	CROCODILE
Results of Meditation	CONTROL OF THE ELEMENT WATER — CONTROL OF MATERIAL DESIRES
Repetitions of So'ham Hansah Mantra required during twenty-four hour period	6,000



MŪLĀDHĀRA CHAKRA

Location	BETWEEN ANUS AND GENITALS
Number of petals	FOUR
Color	YELLOW
Shape	SQUARE
Related Element	EARTH
Prāṇa-Vayu	APĀNA
Presiding God	GANESHA
Quality	TAMAS
Seed Letter	LAM लं
Vehicle of Kundalini	AIRĀVATA ELEPHANT
Results of Meditation	GAIN KNOWLEDGE OF SCRIPTURES INCREASE INTELLECT
Repetitions of So'ham Hansah Mantra required during twenty-four hour period	600

CHAPTER 1

What is Kundalini?

by *DHYANYOGI SHRI MADHUSUDANDASJI*

Yogis say that there are many similarities between the human body and the entire universe, the microcosm and the macrocosm. The Upanishads say that in the region of the heart is a hollow space the size of the tip of the thumb which contains all things. All elements, all things, regardless of whether they are present or absent in the immediate external environment are present in this microcosmic universe in the heart.

There are one hundred and one types of nadis, the channels through which prana flows in the subtle body. One called Hita is of particular significance here for, just as a road connects two towns, this nadi is connected to the Sun and energy is collected from the Sun through it. By concentrating on this nadi, one can achieve various kinds of powers, like seeing things happening very far away, having visions of gods, saints, previous incarnations, having the ability to do healing, etc.

In this world, on both the subtle and the physical level, although the atoms and molecules are in constant motion through their mutual attraction and repulsion, many of the laws of their behavior are unknown. Consider, on the physical level, the planet Earth. Her dimensions and composition are well known. She has a surface of 512 million square kilometers. The Sun is vastly larger and is over ninety million miles away from the Earth. The star called Jyestha in Indian astronomy is many times greater than the Sun and other stars are known to be even larger. The number of stars within this galaxy cannot be counted and there are innumerable galaxies within that part of the universe that our telescopes can reach and many, many solar systems within each of them. The nearest star is so far away that its light takes over four years to reach the Earth.

Yogis believe that life exists around millions of stars, based on the searches made up to this time. Great sages have described the universe as endless. One begins to lose one's mind when the extent of this universal creation is considered. Such is the physical universe.

This gross physical substance comes into being from the subtle. The atomic structure of the elements of nature is also full of wonders. Every substance in this world is composed of molecules and atoms with their fields of moving charged particles. It has been found that the general laws of the substantial

world hold true in many ways for the subatomic world also. Ongoing research is constantly revising and perfecting its understanding. It cannot be said that we know all that there is to know. Initially, it was thought that the atom was indivisible—that is what its very name means—but today it has been broken up and the analysis of its many parts is continuing. Various types of research are being done in this area. Weapons have been invented using this knowledge which could destroy the entire world in a moment. Even the researchers become uneasy when they consider the destructive power of these weapons. Research is also being done on constructive uses for these energies. I hope they will be successful.

The axis through the North and South Poles maintains the balance of the Earth. The Earth rotates around this axis and revolves about the Sun in a fixed orbit because of the physical forces operating around these poles. Some scientists believe that the Earth would be thrown many millions of miles off of its present orbit if there were major changes at the poles so it is considered unwise to conduct heavy experiments near them. Similarly, in the human body, the Sahasrara chakra in the crown of the head and the Muladhara chakra at the base of the spinal column are the poles of the energy system, the two main centers of the body. All energies, all powers and all experiences are stored between these two centers.

We know the major planets of our solar system: the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto and so forth. But everything is not known. In the course of time, many new things are likely to be found. That is the nature of the universe.

Now let us talk more about the human body. It is made up of natural elements like all bodies but has capacities not found in other animals. Man has superior intelligence, discretion and thinking abilities and has the art of writing and other faculties no other animal known to us has.

By using the human body as a vehicle and by exerting oneself in the right direction, one can see God and finally become one with Him. Meditating on the subtle structure of the body leads to that end. That is why it is said in the scriptures that fire is in the form of speech in the mouth, the Wind God in the form of energy in the nose, the sun with the power of sight in the eyes, the directions of space as sound in the ears, Vayu as protection against disease in the skin, the moon in the form of the mind in the heart, death in the form of Apana Vayu in the navel, and water in the form of semen in the senses of enjoyment.

According to Indian Astrology, the essence of the Sun is in the form of the soul, the Moon in the form of the mind, Mars in the form of blood, Mercury in the form of speech, Jupiter in the form of knowledge, Venus in the form of seminal fluid and Saturn as the agent of the experiences of joy and misery in the body.

Expansion and contraction, attraction and repulsion, are movements constantly going on in the universe. After finishing a course of development, creation returns to its original condition. After a time, a kind of repeated tre-

mor begins and the energy of God in the form of Kundalini Shakti, by creating vibrations, brings about a new creation in eight archetypal forms: solid, liquid, gaseous, radiant, energy, space, consciousness, intelligence and ego. In the Bhagavad Gita it says:

“Earth, water, fire, wind, space, consciousness, intellect and ego: thus my Prakriti has been divided into eight parts.”

(Gita, Chap. 7, Verse 4)

Creation begins with the union of Purusha and Prakriti, that is, by the union of God and Mayashakti. God creates this universe from himself by producing subtle energies by a process akin to autosuggestion. This is like the generation of sparks from a fire. The individual manifestation of Kundalini is like a spark from the cosmic Kundalini. This personal form of Kundalini is responsible for the creation of an individual.

After the jiva, the individualized focus of consciousness, separates from God, it acquires certain attributes including the senses and a feeling of ego. At first it is very pure and full of knowledge but as it comes under the full spell of Maya, it becomes like a caged animal.

“My eternal part, having become a living being in the world of life, commands the indriyas (the organs of sense and action) with the mind as the sixth (sense), fixed in Prakriti (Nature). [7]”

“When the Atma obtains a body and also when he leaves one, he takes these (indriyas and mind) and goes, like the wind takes scents from their sources. [8]”

“Inhabiting the organs of hearing, sight, touch, taste, smell and thought, He enjoys the objects of the senses. [9]”

“The deluded do not discover Him united with the gunas (the qualities of Nature), who departs or stays or enjoys. But they who have the eye of knowledge see (Him). [10]”

(Bhagavad Gita, Chap. 15, verses 7-10)

Many forms of energy are circular in nature. If you fly in a straight line over the surface of the Earth long enough, you will come back to where you started. Nature proceeds by expansion and contraction. Since time immemorial, these forces of creation and destruction have operated in a circular manner.

When a child is created by the union of male and female energies in a mother's womb, Shakti first forms the Sahasrara in the head. Many forces are stored there. The Sahasrara has a thousand petals and is red in color. Its presiding deity is Paramatma. The prana-vayu named vyana operates there, and the quality of the shakti there is sattvic. Its seed letter is the visarga. Medita-

tion on this chakra brings liberation.

After forming the Sahasrara chakra in the brain, the Kundalini Shakti forms the spinal column from the nerves which branch from the brain. Just as currents are created in the flow of a river, so the energy forms six centers, called chakras, in the flow pattern through the spinal column.

In the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali Muni, it says:

“In the light from the head, you can see the siddhas and other deities.” [III-33]

Kundalini next forms the Ajna chakra between the eyebrows. It is round in shape and has two white petals. Its related element is the manas tattva and its prana-vayu is prana. The presiding deity is Atma and its quality is pure sattva. The bija mantram or seed letter is Aum. Meditation on this chakra brings near, unlimited vision and control over adverse circumstances.

A sadhaka becomes more powerful in all respects by meditating on this chakra. When it is fully opened, one can see anywhere, into every place and time, without limitation. If one desires to do so, he can control adverse circumstances. That is why it is called the Ajna (towards knowledge) chakra. In the upward movement of Kundalini during meditation, after crossing this chakra, the Shakti can enter the Sahasrara without any further problems. This stage is called the union of the jiva, the individualized being, with God.

After forming the Ajna chakra, Kundalini forms the Vishuddha chakra in the throat region. It has sixteen dark blue petals and is round in shape. It is related to the element akasha (space or sky) and its prana-vayu is udana. The presiding deity is Jivatma and the quality sattva. The seed letter is Ham. The vehicle of Kundalini at this chakra is the elephant. Meditation on this chakra brings a purification of mental attitudes and the attainment of siddhis. One is showered with knowledge and experiences intense joy. The physical body is also purified and diseases, impurities and physical difficulties are eliminated. That is why this chakra is called Vishuddha (completely cleansed).

Patanjali Muni says:

“In the cavity of the throat, hunger and thirst are turned away.” [Yoga Sutra, III-31]

“From the conquest of the udana, water, mud, thorns, etc., become harmless; and one can die at will.” [ibid., III-40]

Kundalini Shakti next forms the Anahata chakra in the region of the heart. It has twelve green petals and a hexagon shape. It is related to the element air (gas) and its prana-vayu is prana. The presiding deity is Maheshvara and although its quality is still sattva, that quality is no longer pure as it was in the Ajna chakra but is now mixed with rajas. The seed letter is Yam and the vehicle is an antelope. Continuous sounds exist in this chakra including the sound of Brahma and Aum. These are the first sounds created during the formatio

of the universe and their location in this chakra means that it is created spontaneously as soon as the Shakti is present. Anahata means unbeaten or unwounded and refers to the Aum sound which is not produced by percussion. The name also suggests the pristine quality of undyed (i.e. unwounded) new cloth. Various types of material benefits and knowledge come from concentration on this chakra.

Patanjali Muni mentions one:

“In the heart is understanding of the mind.” [Yoga Sutra, III-35]

Descending further, Kundalini creates the fifth or Manipura chakra. It is located at the navel, has ten red petals and a triangle shape. Its element is fire (radiant energy). The prana-vayu is samana, the deity Vishnu, the quality rajas, the seed letter Ram and the vehicle a ram. This chakra is the center of the human body and all of the main nadis meet there. It is very important to the functioning of the body. A child in the womb is connected to the mother through the umbilical chord attached near this center and is fed from there only.

Yogis believe that during times of astral travel, the subtle body and the physical body remain attached to each other by subtle cord coming out through this center. Just as a high flying kite is drawn back by its connecting string after travelling great distances, so the subtle body is pulled back to the center of the physical body by this cord. The cord is silvery and shining like a jewel (mani) and the chakra is its city (pura) or home so the chakra is called Manipura.

Concentration on this chakra brings control over life and death, the creation of heat and knowledge of the internal functions of the physical body.

Patanjali Muni describes the experiences that come from the entry of the Kundalini into this chakra:

“In the navel chakra is knowledge of the workings of the parts of the body.” [Yoga Sutra, III-30]

“From the conquest of the samana comes blazing light and heat.” [ibid., III-41]

The next below this is the Svadhishtana chakra, located between the navel and the genitals. It has six white petals and is crescent shaped. The deity is Brahma. It is related to the water element (liquid). The prana-vayu is Apana and the quality rajas. The seed letter is Vam and the vehicle a crocodile. This chakra is the origin of the urge to procreation and is called Svadhishtana (good standing place, well positioned; usually said of a war chariot).

Concentration on this chakra brings control over the water element or the powers of transformation and can bring control over material desires. However, piercing this chakra does cause a great increase in physical desires so it is dangerous and should be crossed over quickly.

Finally, below this is the base, the Muladhara chakra, which is also referred to as the bhuta shringata (the junction or knot of being) and the mula shringata (root junction) in the Bhuta Shuddhi mantra.

The Muladhara is located between the anus and the genitals. It has four yellow petals and a square shape. Its element is earth. The prana-vayu is Apana, the presiding deity is Ganesha and the quality is tamas. The seed letter is Lam and the vehicle is the Airavata, seven tusked white elephant. Concentration on this chakra brings knowledge of the scriptures and increases the intellect and the ability to write. It also brings knowledge of the earth and the nature of the physical world.

After creation of the Muladhara chakra, Kundalini goes dormant and rests there. The petals of the chakra hang downwards and are closed. The person's perception of the world is also closed and limited so that his life feels enclosed in frustration and unhappiness. The awakening of Kundalini and her reentrance into the spinal column causes the petals to turn upwards as each chakra is penetrated and opened. Because it is the place where the Kundalini lays dormant, this chakra is called Muladhara (root hold).

Upon reentering the Sushumna nadi in the spinal cord, the speed of the Kundalini Shakti and the manner of its motion varies from chakra to chakra. At times she is deliberate and ponderous like an elephant, at times leaping like a deer or gliding sinuously like a crocodile in water. This motion is described in terms of the various animals called the vehicles of Kundalini.

When the chakras are created, the movement of the Kundalini creates shapes in the form of the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. These are the bija (seed) mantra at the center of each chakra and on the petals of each lotus. It is by the vibration of this movement that the petals are formed.

There are three granthi (knots) in the passageway of the Sushumna nadi, related to the three gunas or qualities. As each knot is straightened out, the binding quality of its associated guna disappears leaving finally a state of turiya (impersonal spirit) or nirguna (qualitylessness). In the Muladhara is found the Brahma granthi related to rajas-guna. In the Anahata chakra, is the Vishnu granthi related to the sattva-guna and in the Ajna chakra is the Rudra granthi related to tamas-guna.* These granthi may be considered like obstructions blocking the entrance to that chakra to the awakened Kundalini. There are also various deities in each chakra whose precise functions will be discussed at another time.

Similarly, when She is asleep in the Muladhara chakra, the Kundalini Shakti is in the form of a serpent coiled about a lingam in three and a half turns, each of the turns representing one of the gunas and the half-turn representing nirguna or turiya.

* There is considerable difference of opinion with regard to the granthis. Some sources say that the Brahma granthi is located in the Svadhishtana chakra and the Vishnu granthi in the Vishuddha chakra. In the outline that I have given above, I have followed the Yoga-Kundalini Upanishad. This is an area where more research needs to be done to settle these questions through personal experience.

The Yoga Sutra also mentions other benefits that flow from the workings of the Kundalini on the body:

“From the loosening of the cause of bondage and from knowledge of the wandering currents of the mind (is the power) to enter another body.” [Yoga Sutra, III-39]

This refers to knowledge of the nadis and chakras.

“From the Kurma nadis, firmness.” [ibid., III-32]

Here, the specific nadis are mentioned by name (the words “Kurma nadis” appear in the original Sanskrit). They are subsidiary channels in the neck just behind the throat. “Firmness” means the ability to maintain one asana for a long time without moving and also indicates firm control in general.

“From meditation on the relationship between body and space (akasha), one becomes light like a tuft of grass and thus goes into space.” [ibid., III-43]

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna says that maya, the world-creating shakti of Vishnu, has these three gunas or qualities: sattva, rajas and tamas. These manifest as balance or intelligence, force or passion, and inertia or stupidity, respectively. This maya is very impressive, very energetic and powerful. It binds the world together.

“Divine indeed this guna-creation,
My maya-illusion difficult to cross over;
Those who truly surrender to Me,
They cross over this maya.” [Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 7, Ver. 14]

God says that on one side is his maya which keeps all the individual lives bound to this world, to this materialistic life, and on the other side is his bhakti, the devotion that grants liberation. They both belong to him. At different times, the forms and methods of devotion change but meditation is the easiest tool. One can reach God very quickly with that. After Shaktipat initiation, once Kundalini is awakened, She can grant one liberation.

Until recently, physical scientists and even psychologists have learned very little about Kundalini. Like one carefully examining the trunk of an elephant without knowing of the rest of the body, they have not been able to tap the great energy of the chakras of the subtle body.

A great river springs up in the Himalayas, where the rain waters fall from the heavens, and eventually merges itself in the sea. In its path, the flow of the river creates currents that are many times stronger than the flow of the river itself. A steamer can sink and the best of swimmers can drown in these currents.

In a similar way, the life force of the Kundalini arises in the Sahasrara at the top of the head and ends in the Muladhara chakra below the base of the spine. In its path, the Kundalini creates the six chakras like currents or whirlpools in a river. Just as the currents of a river are stronger than the flow of the river itself, so the energy levels in the chakras are of a much higher intensity than the energy of the steady flow of the Kundalini.

At the Ajna chakra, the energy flow divides into three nadis or channels. Along the two sides of the spine are the nadis Ida (on the left) and Pingala (on the right), with the Sushumna nadi down the center. In the ordinary living being, the life forces flow through the Ida and Pingala, and the Sushumna is closed. Their effects are variously concentrated in the five lower chakras so that worldly activities may go on. The sixth or Ajna chakra is the dwelling place of the Atma in its purest state as a separated and individualized life form.

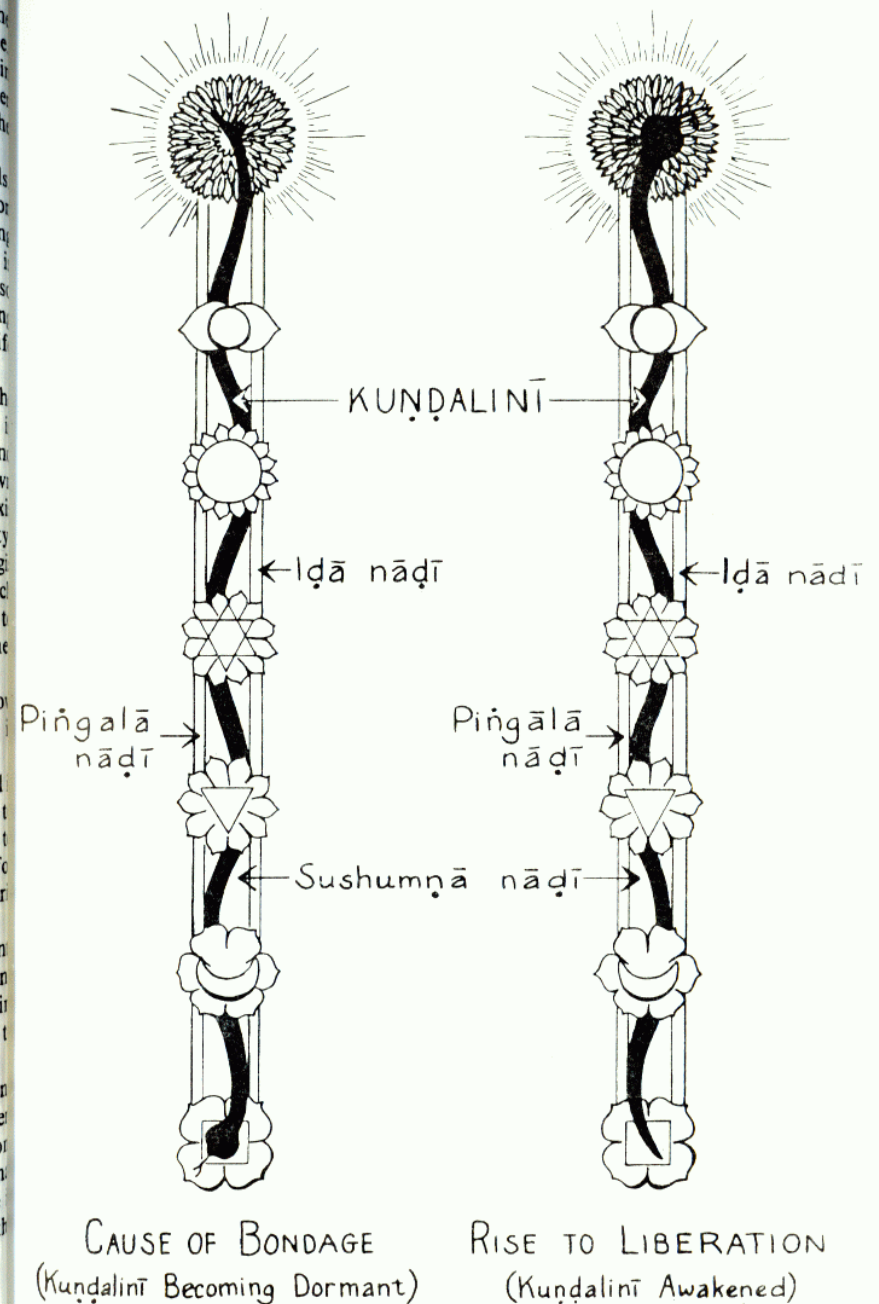
Within the yellow cube of the Muladhara chakra between the rectum and the genitals, there is a triangular shaped place where the dormant Kundalini is coiled around the Svayambhu-lingam (the lingam is a form of Shiva and Svayambhu means literally "own-going-being" or what God is in his own being). The place is called Sumeru after the mountain that represents the axis of a universe. The Kundalini there is like a subtle form of static electricity. This area is very delicate and can produce intense emotional feelings. Yogis have discovered that whenever a person has intense emotional feelings (which may be devotional, or may involve just high thinking, or be related to accidental gains of pain or pleasure), then this area is affected and becomes hot immediately.

This is proof that the Kundalini is coiled here, and whenever there is a flow of intense emotional feelings, then this flow strikes against the area and is affected, which in turn produces heat.

In order to carry on the activities of the world, desires are formed here and are satisfied through this area that male and female unite in sexual intercourse to procreate despite all their conflicts in life. During sadhana, it is helpful to retain the energies spent on sexual relations so that they may be used for spiritual development. In order not to waste these energies, brahmacharis (celibates) wear a loin cloth.

After forming the Muladhara chakra and assuming the form of a serpent, the Kundalini goes to sleep face downwards, closing the door to the Sushumna nadi. The nature of all subtle energies is to move in a circular path. Kundalini too after returning to her origin coils up in a circular fashion. She continues to be active as long as the activities of nature operate.

Yogis have learned by experiment how to turn this energy away from going around and around in these coiling circles so that it turns upward and enters the Sushumna nadi. Then, instead of creating bondage, it grants liberation. When the Kundalini Shakti starts her travel from the base of the spine up the column, the individual rises higher and higher in spiritual insight. His life becomes fulfilled. When she reaches the brain center from which she started, then the



individual reaches liberation. He understands his true identity and attains eternal happiness. The spiritual evolution of the disciple depends directly on this upward travel of the Kundalini. After she reaches the crown chakra, the mind of the disciple is always peaceful.

Thus, Kundalini works in two ways. As long as worldly concerns are dominant, she causes further bondage but once she is awakened and enters the Sushumna, she grants liberation. All of the samskaras—the ideas, attitudes and habits that mark an individual person—are embedded in the pattern of flow of this Kundalini energy. Even when we see unimaginable visions in dreams, these are just the samskaras, the mind impressions from our past births, operating. They are part of the flow of Kundalini herself.

A river flowing from the mountains to the sea can cause great destruction to farms and cities if it floods without control. But if the same flood waters can be scientifically controlled by dams and distributed by canals, it can irrigate thousands of acres of land, generate electricity and be useful in many ways. Its formerly destructive power can be put to good and constructive use.

Similarly, if the life force of Kundalini Shakti is controlled and made to flow through the huge, riverlike Sushumna nadi, then various types of joy can be experienced and many doors to peace and happiness are opened. The joy felt when the Kundalini reaches the Sahasrara is many times more intense than any kind of physical sensation. This is called the yoga or union of jiva and Shiva. There is no greater joy than this merging of the individual life with God.

It is a strict universal law that on any spiritual path, whether undertaken consciously or unconsciously, unless Kundalini is somehow awakened, no benefits of any kind can be obtained. Whether by devotion or knowledge, by renunciation or divine grace, by austerities or by Shaktipat, when Kundalini is awakened and begins her journey home through the Sushumna, then all spiritual experiences can be attained. Many disciples have visions of deities; many get answers from within. Some persons who do japa for a long time finally get visions and do not know that their Kundalini has been awakened but it has been. Only when Kundalini is awakened can such experiences occur. This is a fixed law.

As I mentioned before, just as the Earth is balanced around its axis through the North and South poles by the attraction and repulsion of the positive and negative forces that are continually operating, so in the human body the forces operating between the Sahasrara and the Muladhara are responsible for maintaining and controlling the body and function as the main control center. These two chakras are the poles of various human experiences such as knowledge, joy, misery, etc. For this reason the Muladhara and the Sahasrara are very important chakras. Many emotional kriyas also begin in the Sahasrara.

In the ordinary human being, the flow of these currents is through the Ida and Pingala and the mind is distracted and externally oriented. Yogis direct their feeling and emotional currents through the Sushumna to the head and their minds, instead of being externally directed, turn inwards.

As long as the mind is oriented outside, you cannot gain any success in spiri-

tual work. It was said by Gohrakhnath, a great saint in India, that as long as you cannot focus and concentrate your mind, any type of work in this world is useless. You may wear saffron colored clothes or dress all in white, you may do a lot of austerities and penances but unless your mind is concentrated, it is all of no use. You must first win over your mind—all else is secondary. As long as you cannot win over your mind, you may try to control your senses by not talking or seeing or hearing, but all that is useless if you cannot keep your mind calm. Until your mind becomes one-pointed, all such efforts are of no avail. If you try to fast but are always thinking about food, it is of no great benefit.

“The sense objects turn away from the abstinent man leaving the taste; the taste also turns away, when he has seen the Supreme.” [Bhagavad Gita, Chap. 2, Verse 59]

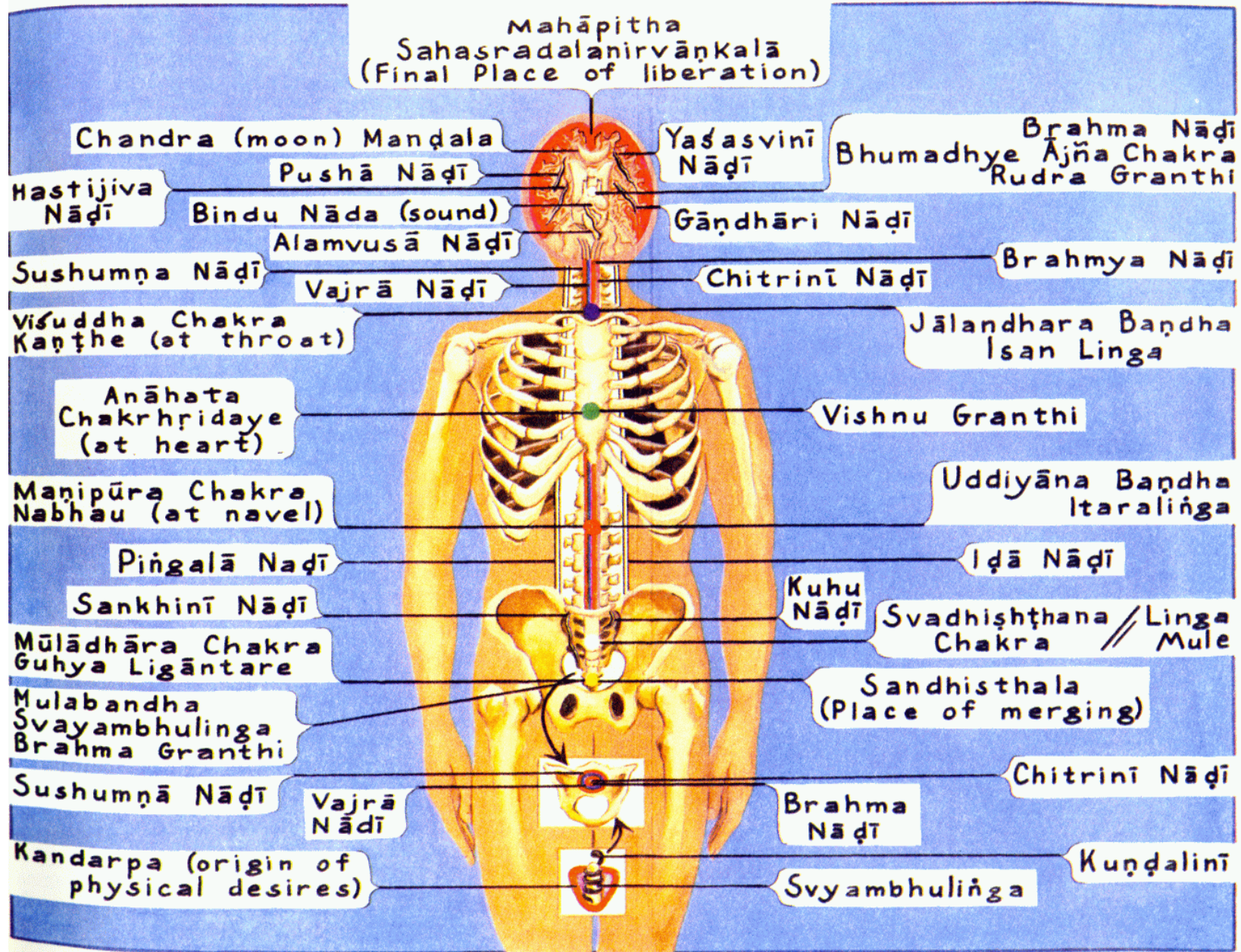
Many people say that one should go away to the forest or to the mountains and live the life of a recluse for spiritual growth, but even if you go there, your mind is going with you and will keep thinking about things back home unless it is detached. It is no good to go to the forest and keep thinking about your friends and family. It is better to live with them and train your mind to be detached from them. That person is the real yogi. If, while you are living in society, you direct your thinking toward God and believe that you are “So’ham”, that is, a part of him, an atom of him, your mind will become detached and concentrated.

(When the Kundalini awakens, she passes through the Sushumna and pierces the chakras one by one. If she reaches the Sahasrara, then the big problem is resolved by itself. The mind turned inward by the great energy drawn up the Sushumna becomes automatically one-pointed and concentrated. So much energy is liberated that nothing in this world remains impossible to do. That is to say, when one has control over the prana-vayu, the currents of vital energy, he is the master of the entire world. The rays of the sun diffuse gently all over the surface of the world but if concentrated with a lens can start a fire. Yogis believe that if the sun rays falling on only sixty acres of land could be collected, they would provide energy sufficient to run all the factories in the world. Nowadays, science is working on ways to tap those energies and I hope they will be successful.

Likewise, if we can tap the powers of our intellect and concentrate them internally, then so much energy is created that no task remains impossible. On the contrary, any work can then be done with great ease. Finally, by the awakening of Kundalini and the realization of the union of God and the individual living being, the darkness of ignorance is eliminated and one is set free.

In the Upanishads it is written that: “Upon reaching the higher levels, the knot of ignorance is loosened, all doubts are eliminated and all karmic bondage is destroyed.”

In the sixth chapter of the Shri Jnaneshwari Gita, after discussing the five prana-vayus we have spoken of in connection with our description of the chak-



ras, eight kinds of pranayama (methods of controlling the breath so as to affect these energies) are mentioned, and three kinds of bandha for closing temporarily various channels of the energy flow: mula bandha for stopping energy from going past the Muladhara chakra, udayana bandha for stopping energy flow at the navel and jalandhara bandha for cutting off the energy flow at the level of the throat. When pranayama is done together with these bandhas, it will be perfected. Shri Jnaneshwar Maharaj writes:

“When yogis practice mula bandha for long periods of time, heat is created in the body and the apana vayu, instead of going downward and passing out of the body through the rectum, turns upward and goes towards the stomach. It produces some activity in the stomach and intestines, creating a type of sound. By spreading around in the stomach, it removes excess mucous there, cleansing it. By purifying the seven materials of the body, it destroys excess fat and often eliminates diseases by removing their causes. At that time, due to the heat of the mixing of prana and apana, the Kundalini that was dormant and coiled becomes awakened and straight and eats up the impurities in the disciple's body. After removing wastes of various sorts, it settles in the heart chakra and removes all of the air below it. Then, from the feet up to the head, it finishes removing all of the impurities from every part of the body. Then the yogi's body becomes very dry. The elements of earth and water become purified and dried. Then the energy enters the spinal column, emitting nectar from its mouth and the body of the yogi receives nutrition. Finally, the Kundalini comes to the Ajna chakra and drops nectar there so that the yogi's body is brightened and rejuvenated, getting a sort of luster. Such a yogi receives several powers and after self realization becomes victorious.”

Kundalini can also be awakened by attaining perfection in the asanas or physical postures of hatha yoga, by pranayama (breathing exercises aimed at controlling energies through controlling the breath), by God's grace, by meditation or by intense devotion.

Another technique of awakening the Kundalini is Shaktipat, the transmission of power. A powerful yogi can transmit energy to the disciple in any one of four ways: by touch, gaze, words or thought. He may touch the disciple and transmit the energy through physical contact or gaze at the disciple and let the energy flow through his eyes. The yogi may utter words or mantric sounds as the carriers of the energy or, more subtly, he may do it directly by mere thought. Of course, he may also use any combination of these methods.

Shaktipat can be performed only by those yogis who have gained complete control over prana, the energy of the subtle body. This help is of immense value. His guidance and example help to keep the disciple on the correct path and from time to time his energy can give fresh impulse to the disciple's Kundalini and help to eliminate obstructions and blockages that may occur.

Once Kundalini is awakened, the disciple begins to get various experiences,

like flashes of light, visions, bodily movements and vibrations, intense devotional feelings, increased emotionalism, etc. Different individuals have different experiences and there is no particular pattern applicable to everyone. But once the Kundalini is awakened, this fact becomes known to the disciple by his own set of experiences. Then, if the disciple persists in his spiritual practices and meditation, the Kundalini travels upwards through the Sushumna piercing the chakras and finally reaching the Sahasrara.

As long as Kundalini is dormant, the individual spends an unhappy, unfulfilled life, bound by his limited perception. When the Kundalini is awakened and travelling upward, the disciple develops deeper and deeper spiritual insight and his life is more and more fulfilled. When the Kundalini completes her return to the Sahasrara, the disciple perceives his true identity and thus gains liberation and is established in eternal happiness. Spiritual knowledge—a distinguished from mere book knowledge—is dependent directly on this upward movement of the Kundalini.

Now, a word on meditation and breathing. Of all the forms of meditation, meditation through attention on breath is probably the easiest and most direct method. By doing pranayama in conjunction with meditation, the disciple can coordinate and integrate the various energy systems and learn how to get control over prana. That, in turn, leads to control over the mind which brings unique joy and peace. Then he realizes that the entire world is the creation of one God. If that happened on a large scale, the miseries of the world would end and there would be peace and happiness everywhere.

Self realization is the ultimate and most desirable state to be attained. Although awakened Kundalini leads to that state, there is no guarantee that it will be attained in one lifetime though the awakening does very substantially hasten the process of that evolution. It is encouraging to know that there are many, quite tangible, side benefits gained even during the early stages of the awakening of Kundalini and her upward travel. The health of the disciple improves. His skin and body become more attractive and his voice becomes rich and sweet. Body odor is reduced and wastes substantially decrease. He feels light and energetic and his mind becomes rested and peaceful. Many diseases of body and mind are automatically eliminated. This is all due to the general purification effect of Kundalini on both body and mind. Diseases caused by irregularities in the flow of prana are gradually eliminated. At more advanced levels, these benefits are intensified and encompass subtler realms. The disciple achieves peace and mental control, becomes creative, develops a profound understanding of nature, and enjoys inner bliss. He becomes a strong individual, a complete person and is able to function in adverse circumstances with great poise. He learns to consciously draw prana from the universe and how to use it to cure mental and physical diseases in himself and others. Ultimately, of course, he encounters total reality, the absolute truth and knowledge of the Self.

At this stage, I would like to point out that spiritual evolution cannot take place unless Kundalini is awakened. There are many spiritual disciplines and

techniques that do not aim at directly awakening Kundalini. However, Kundalini must be aroused if there is to be any spiritual progress. Thus, if any discipline is successful, that means it has awakened the Kundalini at least in an indirect way. The practitioner of the discipline may not even recognize the fact that his progress and experiences are the result of the functioning of Kundalini. Nevertheless, the Kundalini does keep working and is the source of his enlightenment. Once Kundalini is awakened, She does not become dormant again. All the time She will try to execute her upward progress and will keep the aspirant on the spiritual path, giving him the protection and encouragement that he needs.

Finally, I must add a warning against attempting to directly arouse the Kundalini without the aid and protection of a competent guru. One would not attempt to build a high rise building without an engineer and an architect and this path of spiritual development is just as complex, just as filled with opportunities to make disastrous errors. After Shaktipat, as my disciples know, I am always with them and they need have no fear of the misstep, but one entering this area without a teacher is like an untrained city person who wanders off into the jungle alone.

God always sends a guru to those who are ready and need one. When the time is ripe, the teacher appears. You may search for a guru or not search, as you wish, but one will come along when he is needed. Your feelings will tell you who is the correct teacher. Trust them and when your guru appears, accept his teaching.

Different teachers have different styles of talking and use various differing methods. This is because different people have different needs. Ultimately, all true teachers are one. I spread a banquet for my disciples where they may eat until they are satisfied. If you are hungry, come, meditate and experience for yourself.

The awakening of the Kundalini, the realization of the Self and the subsequent practice of the controlled use of these energies for the benefit of others is Shakti Yoga, or Kundalini Maha Yoga.

SARVE BHAVANTU SUKHIHA, SARVE SANTU NIRAMAYAH,
SARVE BHADRANI PASHYANTU, MA KASCHID DHAKHABHAG
BHAVET. (Let everyone be happy. Let everyone be healthy. Let everyone see good fortune and never be filled with suffering.)