

Kundalini Yoga and the Western Magical Tradition

(Unfinished work used as notes for a talk)

by

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Preliminary Outline for Tonight's Talk

Before I get into the main areas of tonight's discussion I want to convey to you the ground plan of what I intend to cover and maybe, more importantly, what I will not be discussing. As you already know, the topic concerns kundalini yoga and its relation to the Western Magical Tradition. With that statement, I am already in trouble. Unless I just say flatly, their relationship is that they have no relation. Then we could call it a night, break out the wine and chat the evening away.

So we probably need to put some things in perspective before proceeding. The incredible system of mysticism that is embodied by the term kundalini yoga does not, in any appreciable sense, find its way into that other incredible system of spirituality that we have come to call the Western Magical Tradition until the last 150 years, maybe 200 at the outside. Can we see similarities? Yes. Are there very suggestive parallels in certain ways? Yes again. But wouldn't you expect that if they were looking at and experiencing the same basic things? I think so.

I will point out some of these similarities and suggestive parallels. Unfortunately, I have gained some undeserved reputation around here as focusing too long upon the history of a subject. But regardless of that, and risking censure, and just to spite Ed, I will need to give some brief sketch of the historical aspects. In my opinion, there is no better way to keep one's perspective.

So, after the brief, and therefore inaccurate, historical sketch, and some definitions, we will head right into the storm by trying to quickly understand the underlying theory of reality that confronts the noble minded yogi.

I will then go over the major aspects of esoteric physiology of yoga. This will include the theory of the subtle body, which include the nadis, the chakras, the granthis (or knots) and so on. My intent is to try and tone down the terminology and I will where I can.

Then, I want to discuss some of the strategies and techniques for the arousal or awakening of the kundalini or serpent-flame and its subsequent movement up the spine into the brain. Here I will discuss asanas, pranayama, use of mantra, yantras, mudras, and so on. I will also introduce some of the tantric ideas and philosophy.

Next, I will talk briefly about signs that the kundalini is awakening and the result to you of its awakening.

Then we cross the bridge, and begin looking at the Western parallels to this same phenomena. Now that you know what to look for, I want to give some examples of reports from Western mystics. I think you will find it very interesting. But I will also here introduce alchemical terms and place them in a kundalini perspective. The writings and work of Paul Foster Case are very helpful here and I will invoke his wisdom here tonight.

Finally, if you remember what I said at the beginning, regarding that the doctrines of kundalini have recently (historically speaking) made its way to the West, I intend to explore some of the work done in merging these two wonderful and powerful systems. And that leads me, not exclusively, but for our purposes tonight, mostly, to the work of Aleister Crowley whose Genius I will invoke (or maybe evoke!) We definitely want to look at some of his symbology – in his Tarot Trumps, his rituals, and his writings. And maybe even, risking the title of being a Center of Pestilence, I will comment upon various passages from the Thelemic scripture: *The Book of the Law*.

Now, what am I not going to talk about? Risking that at least half of you will get up and leave, I regret to inform you that I will not be going into great detail regarding either the sexual rites of the tantric school nor those of the O.T.O. Why not? First of all, I have a very strong Roman Catholic background – I spent many years at the wrong end of a paddle - and tend to blush beet red in discussing such things. Secondly, I am neither an initiate of a tantric cult nor the O.T.O.; therefore, I cannot speak from the inside perspective (meaning I don't want to sound stupid). But, some aspects of

sexuality will be necessary to discuss because there is no way to present the theories of kundalini without referring to sex. Moreover, I think that if you know the theories of kundalini yoga you will find yourself “furnished with complete armour and armed” like the goddess, and be much more confident in your endeavors in this realm.

Some disclaimers are in order as well: I am not a yoga teacher nor even a scholar of this subject. This is information I have acquired over the years in my Work. So please don't judge me by those criteria. But my hope is that you will find it as compelling, suggestive and helpful as I have in your own Work.

The Historical Perspective

The earliest written expressions of yoga are found in the *Rig-Veda*, the oldest of the four Vedic collections. Until recently, it was dated at 1500 BC but with some of the latest discoveries it is now estimated by some to be possibly dated as far back as 3000 BC. The word “yoga” is used as yoke or discipline and no systematic system is, of course, propounded.

The period of the *Upanishads* is considered to be from 800 to 500 BC. This date has also been considered suspect and the older ones may go farther back. There are traditionally 108 of them – of course there are more. They are considered to be a refinement of the older Vedic collections.

But by the time of the *Bhagavad-gita*, in the 3rd to 4th century BC, it is obvious yoga represents the discipline of Hindu spirituality.

Of course, one of the great compilers of yoga was Patanjali, in the 2nd century BC. The *tantras* begin showing up some 1500 years ago around 500 AD. There are traditionally 64 tantras but we know there are many many more. Two of the great texts of yoga are quite late and include the *Hathayoga –Pradipika*, which may be 16th century AD and the *Siva Samhita*, which is probably late 17 century

AD. There are, of course, several more texts in Sanskrit upon the subject. One book I have lists some 54 classic works written within the time span I just laid out.

Ideas about Kundalini

There are a slew of crazy ideas about kundalini. There are dire warnings that its activation will cause psychosis, a permanent bad trip, it will destroy your health, that it is the gateway to hell; that you will become satyrs and nymphomaniacs. Not that any of you care about that! Seriously, please be reasonable and think about what people say. Use your critical judgment (except towards me).

To me, it is the central core of all spirituality. It is the basis of all psychic powers; it is the power behind all mystical attainment. Do you treat it with respect? Absolutely. Do you need to use caution and reason in your endeavors? Sure you do. Should some people just leave it alone? You bet! But, remember who you are and what you are trying to do. The yogic path and the magical adventure are not for normal people. They are paths to accelerate your spiritual evolution. They are suited for the spiritual warrior and the spiritual elite. And I say this in all humility. It has nothing to do with your worth as a human being in contrast to others.

So let's begin with a few basic points. Swami Rama said: "The ultimate success of all yoga practices rests upon the awakening of kundalini. The aspirant earnestly seeks to awaken kundalini, which remains asleep in the ordinary person." Kundala means "coiled" and Kunda means "bowl" (used for rites). "Kundalini is the primal fire that resides, coiled like a serpent, at the root of the spinal column. ... the goal of yoga is to awaken kundalini and to channel this latent energy upward, enabling the aspirant to attain the highest state of consciousness and enlightenment."

Kundalini yoga is the practice of yoga in which the serpent-fire within the body is raised up the spine to enter into the skull or brain.

The Cosmic Loom and the Cosmological Perspective

In this section I am not trying to give any complete rendition of Hindu philosophy or metaphysics. I only want to point out certain areas that have relevance for us here so that you see the connections with the spiritual practices I will mention later. Keep in mind that there are numerous variations, refinements that have occurred and downright contradictions between one school and another. These are not our concern but for your further research it should be pointed out.

Traditionally there are six major schools of philosophy, or rather darsanas in Indian metaphysics. And even though they are quite different, you can find the yogic method utilized in both, say, the monists and the dualists. One of the dominant darshans of India is the Vedanta which derives from the Vedas and were further refined in the Upanishads. It is in most its forms: a nondualist or monist viewpoint; that is, that Reality-in-Truth is an undifferentiated unity and the phenomenal world is of the nature of an illusion (maya) and appears to the unenlightened as pluralistic.

The dualist darshans conceive of the universe as arising from the union of prakriti with purusha (almost identical with matter and spirit) – two abiding and pervasive eternal principles. In the dualist tradition of Samkhya it is by the act of discernment that they derive at their conclusions, but in the dualist tradition of classical Yoga it is, of course, by ecstatic states that the yogi disentangles from the phenomena to realize the transcendental Self. Then there is Tantra. Although its roots were much older, its flowering in India began about the 8th century AD and lasted to just about 1500. It is monist in essence.

The Doctrine of the Tattwas

The doctrine of the tattwas is very much an emanationist view not unlike Jewish Qabalah. From the transcendent unity there unfolds a series of tattvas until they reach a level of absolute duality – the

limits of shakti, or the manifested world. In tantra, there are 36 tattvas beginning with the first two: Shiva and Shakti.

The great source point is the so-called parabindu, wherein the gunas are in perfect equilibrium. From this – a loss of the gunas' equilibrium occurs, and originates the development of the world. The unfolding always works from the inside out.

“Once Shakti arrives at prithivi (earth), she stops and becomes fixed. Shakti now stands on the threshold of her own manifestation and, at the same time, identifies with the “other” losing herself in it. The action of manifestation, at this point, is worn out. Shakti becomes kundalini, “wrapped up.” She is represented asleep at the center of occult corporeity, which corresponds to earth (prithivi-chakra).” (*The Yoga of Power* by J. Evola)

From the Parama Shiva issue the Shiva-Shakti tattva.

“...the Tattvas, i.e., the Principles into which the endless variety of things we experience, or can ever experience, can be reduced. They, in all possible combinations and permutations, make up the universe, physical and super-physical, that is, all actual or possible experience.” (*Kashmir Shaivism* by J.C. Chatterji)

“Thus the range of Tattvas are present in their entirety even in the lowest of them. In other words, the lowest Tattva involves all the higher ones as each successively lower Tattva involves the ones which precede it. Each successively manifesting Tattva thus lives, moves, and has its entire being, as may be truly said, in the ones preceding it. That is to say, wherever there exists a lower Tattva, i.e. a Tattva of greater restriction (being produced from one of a wider scope ...”

The process of the production of the Tattvas as involution (more and more involvement)

The Three Gunas

Tamas (inactivity, inertia, indolence),

Rajas (activity, passion)

Sattva (serenity, calmness)

The gunas are the three attributes of Maya. And avidya (ignorance) is an excess of one of the three gunas within you.

“One of the three fundamental aspects of power displayed in manifestation.”

“...in the Samkhya system the gunas are the three powers constituting prakriti and operation in Shakti’s productions. In Tantric metaphysics, which does not consider prakriti a self-subsistent principle, the gunas assume a different meaning. They correspond to various modalities of shakti, which come into play once the on-going process has led one beyond the metaphysical “point”, that is beyond ishvara-tattva. ... Differences among beings are caused by the various ways in which the three gunas relate. Because of the three gunas’ interaction the purushic principle appears in the manifested world under various forms.” (*The Yoga of Power* by Evola)

Yoga Cudamani Upanishad: “It records that at primordial creation, an empty space (or ether) was created from Brahman, the One, the highest principle of the Universe. From this, air, fire, water, and earth were sequentially created. These five “elements” pervade all things and underlie their manifest form. ...Lord Brahma endows man with a body composed of the five elements and divided into three parts. (causal, astral, gross) ...Within the causal body, the three gunas exist in a harmonious state of perfect equilibrium. However, in the astral and physical bodies, the balance among the gunas is lost, resulting in dynamic interaction among the three. The seven chakras are the centers of the energy system in the astral body, and the nadis are the channels that distribute this energy.” (*Theories of the Chakras* by H. Motoyama)

The Cosmic Prana

Prana has sometimes been divided up into three major categories: solar, lunar and planetary or kundalini prana. All prana comes to us from the sun.

The so-called solar prana permeates everything but predominately enters the body through the navel chakra and the breath.

The lunar prana is prana that has been conditioned and reflected from the moon. It is absorbed through the solar plexus.

The planetary prana or kundalini prana is that prana that has been absorbed by the earth from the sun and moon. It is said that it enters the body through the soles of the feet and accumulates at the lowest chakra. It is also entered through the food we eat.

The Esoteric Physiology of Kundalini

The Subtle Body

With the commencement of yogic practices one will sooner or later begin to become aware of more subtle aspects of the body.

Generally a triple body is distinguished:

Causal body (karana-sharira) follows higher tattwas

Subtle body (sukshma-sharirika)

Material body (sthula-karira) consists of the coming together of the specification of the 5 elements (bhuta)

“From the seat of Kundalini arise the *vayus* (the energies of the body), *bindu* (the seed of life), and *nada*, or sound, the very source of speech.”

The vital “breath” has five modes of existence: prana, apana, vyana, samana, and udana. These are the 5 vayus, a word that can be translated as “currents”

The *Chandogya-Upanishad* says that the five principal breaths are referred to as the “gatekeepers to the heavenly world”.

The Nadis

Nadi can be translated as “vessel”. The nadis are a vast network of etheric nerve-like canals. The nadis of the subtle body are likened to the nerves of the normal body. But this may give a wrong impression in some ways. They are more like channels or conduits. In their natural state, they contain blockages or they seem to have high resistance to the flow of inner currents. The purification of the nadis is actually the first goal of the practice of pranayama or breathing techniques.

Many texts number the nadis at some 72,000, but the *Siva Samhita* claims 350,000. But for practical purposes 14 are most important, of these 14 there are 3 chief ones: these three are named: the Ida, the Pingala, and the Sushumna.

These three major nadis are centered about the spine. Although I have seen other attributions, the normal correspondence is that the Ida is considered on the left side while the Pingala is on the right. The Ida is whiteish or pale and the pingala is reddish. Both of these nadis begin in the lowest part of the spine and terminate in the brain. They are connected with the left and right nostrils as well. The Pingala is also considered masculine and the Ida feminine. (There are different attributions in different texts, whether Ida is feminine or masculine/ whether pingala is feminine or masculine; and which is white, which red. See appendix for quotations from different sources.)

The sushumna goes right up the central column from the base of the spine to the center of the brain. Some texts mention that it is composed of 3 layers or tubes within each other. And this is the path of the kundalini when it is activated. The ida and pingala twist around the sushumna similar to the serpents in the caduceus wand (symbol of the medical profession).

The Chakras

Actually, the nadis criss-cross the central channel and where they do are the chakras. Traditionally there are seven major chakras or centers where the pranic forces are gathered and redistributed. Chakra means “wheel” or “circle”. They are represented in symbolic ways usually as a lotus, each with a different number of petals. Each also has presiding deities, symbols and so on.

The number of petals at each chakra is important because each petal represents a Sanskrit letter. And all 50 Sanskrit letters are represented within the petals of the lower 6 chakras. This is important for the construction of mantras as the chants are sometimes used to affect certain chakras by resonance. The chakras are suspiciously located around very vital organs or glands of the endocrine system.

* Show representations of chakras *

Mooladhara	base of spine	bumblebee-like hum	earth
Swadhisthana	sacral	flutelike	water
Manipura	lumbar center	harplike sound	fire
Anahata	dorsal center	bell-like sound	air
Vishuddhi	cervical center	Rushing water	ether
Ajna	medulla	Oceanic roar	

The petals of the padma signify the amount of current present in each center. It is said that they are normally inverted. When the kundalini awakens them, the padmas lift their petals upwards. It is also said that as the kundalini recedes back to the base of the spine, it leaves behind various “gifts” at the chakras. The crown chakra or 7th chakra which is said to cover the top of the skull has traditionally been represented as having 1001 petals. But these are all turned downwards like an upside down bowl covering the head or a cap. Mystical literature also mentions that when the kundalini has been raised to this highest chakra, 12 of these petals rise up and resembles in appearance to one of clairvoyant vision, a crown.

The Five Vayus in the body

These vayus are named prana, udana samana, apana and vyana. These are currents that course in different directions. In chapter III of the Siva Samhita it links the pranases with the chakras thus:

Apana – root chakra
Samana- navel
Prana – heart
Udana – throat
Vyana – all pervasive

It is thought that concentrating upon the symbols of the tattwas and certain breathing exercises, control of these currents is possible.

The Esoteric Aspects of Sexuality

Ojas – creative *essence* of the sexual glands.

Urdhva-retas - the upward conduction of semen (but really meaning ojas). Example of what is called the “twilight language” – a secret symbolic language.

- Refer to loose papers. Diagrams, charts.

Most traditions surrounding kundalini arousal advocate that once a yogi begins in earnest to awaken the force, that they need to practice extreme continence ranging to complete celibacy in order to conserve the energy. Of course, this is only a “discipline” prior to awakening.

There have been alternative approaches: tantric rites where intercourse is actually engaged. But, again the yogi does not climax, thus in effect, being the same as celibate. Other schools have sought ways to reabsorb the sexual fluids and have developed methods, which I promised I would not discuss.

It must be emphasized that the considerations of sexual activities, in relation to the awakening of the kundalini is not in the arena of morals and what not; it is only a yogic technique.

Techniques and Strategy for the Arousal of Kundalini

Let us begin at asana. There are two senses of this word: one is basically your meditation posture and the other consists of the movements- the so-called 84 postures.

Purification of the Nadis – can take one to two years of dedicated practice

As the nadis become purified, there are stages or signs. The first stage is when the body begins to perspire. The second stage, a tremor is felt throughout the body.

“As the nadis become cleansed, the inspiration and expiration unite at their apex and begin to enter the susumna. ...This process may be accompanied by pain or throbbing in the area of the base of the spine. A kind of inner fire is released within the body and at times can be felt as heat. This inner heat mingles with the inner subtle sound (nada) and spreads throughout the system of nadis, burning away impurities and latent karmic tendencies. ... Now a familiar “clicking” sound is heard within the susumna and the various nada sounds become more intense.” (*Essential Introduction to Kundalini Yoga* by Karl Lusink, p. 23)

Pranayama used to purify nadis. Ratio 1:1 is common. But 1:2 is traditional. With retention it is 1:4:2

Stages of success:

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1 st | the body perspires |
| 2 nd | the body trembles |
| 3 rd | the body jumps about |
| 4 th | the body levitates |

Mantras: recall that the “energy centers within the body are repositories for the various letters of the alphabet.” “The distribution of the Sanskrit letters over these energy centers forms the substance of a number of esoteric initiations known as *diksha*. The idea is that there

is potency in sound. It goes back to the overall cosmology: the human body is just a stepped-down version of the superconscious energy. The letters are thought to be “little mothers”. So a mantra must be awakened in order to unleash its inherent power. The cosmicized or divinised body is essentially a mantric body.

Yantras: the symbolic designs used as supports for concentration and meditation. But deeper than that, they are used as a matrix, a mediating substance, for the energy flow between the protocosmic and the metacosmic levels of cosmic reality. (*The Alchemical Body* by White)

Mudra: gestures that are not only symbolic but also work to channel the bodies internal currents in special ways.

The Bandhas or locks, bandha means tie. They are sometimes included as mudras. Jalandhara bandha or chin lock; moola bandha or anal contraction; and uddiyana bandha or abdominal contraction.

The moolabandha gives support for the vital breath. The neck/chin lock prevents amrita which flows down from the head chakras from being devoured by the digestive fire. The uddiyana bandha directs the prana into sushumna.

“Through pranayana the student tries to unite the prana and apana. Mudras seal this union of prana-apanas so that the union might not be disturbed. Bandhas lock this marvelous effect. When the prana and apana are thus held in union, a great mysterious and powerful spiritual current is generated within, which cannot be described in words, and which has to be experienced by each individual. This power pierces the entrance to the sushumna. By jalandhara bandha or chin lock the prana is prevented from flowing up, and with moola bandha or anal contraction, apana is prevented from flowing down. Therefore they unite to form an unimaginable power and begin to flow into sushumna. ... then the kundalini sakthi is awakened and taken from lower chakras or nerve centers to higher ones ...”

“... through the action of the Vishuddhi chakra which when activated, supposedly enables a person to subsist on astral energy in the form of “ambrosia”. This energy comes into the physical body from the bindu visarga of the astral body, and can be induced through a technique of halting respiration known as khechari-mudra.”
(*Theories of the Chakras* by Motoyama)

Shambhavi Mudra – eyebrow-center gazing (stimulates the ajna)

The Tantric Rites

The tantras promoted the idea that rather than being impediments, the world and body become channels to salvation.”
(White) The body is an instrument by which liberation is achieved and they worked to transmute the body into a divine vehicle.

The Panca makara or Rite of the 5 M’s. (also called panca tattva)

Ritual of the Five Substances

Madya – Wine
Mamsa – Meat
Matsya – Fish
Mudra – Grain
Maithuna – Copulation

But a little digging and you find a suggestive correspondance:

Prana	Ether	maithuna	sexual intercourse
Apana	Air	Madya	wine & intoxicating drinks
Samana	Fire	Mamsa	meat
Udana	Water	Matsya	fish
Vyana	Earth	Mudra	cereals

Signs of Kundalini Awakening and its Result

As with most every aspect of this endeavor, there is a wide open spectrum of possibilities available as we make progress. And because of this variability, it is virtually impossible to make of it an exact science. This is not to say that we can't use the scientific method. We can, and many yogis do claim theirs' is a spiritual science. But one must be flexible or at least generous in the application. And, not least of all, is this the case when we begin to consider the signs of the awakening kundalini.

As Swami Sivananda said: "Various persons get various spiritual experiences." Consider what is happening. This process of spiritualization is accelerating a natural growth rate. The aspirant is going from a zone of ordinary experience to one of transcendental experience. The normal transition time is considerably shortened – which is the whole point – in effect the aspirant is taking a leap. So with that may come some rough and rugged moments and sometimes not. In any case, it is a matter of stabilizing and that period varies with each individual.

What are some of the things the yogi can expect?

Some have listed that there are three forms of awakening: the nadis, chakras, and the sushumna. This classification is probably a good one to keep in mind. But there are several more specific possibilities that can arise not only during your practices but also impinge upon your normal everyday life. Some can be alarming, some just curious oddities, and some down right astounding.

Sometimes with the beginning of a meditation program or ritual regime there are stirred up memories of long ago, emotional swings, and sometimes obsessions. Initiations can sometimes stir the contents of the unconscious. And this applies to kundalini yoga as well. This is a good thing actually. So you need to be aware of possible temporary negative consequences as well as the positive ones. But a warning is necessary here: look at these phenomena with discernment. Don't attribute everything to the stirrings of the

kundalini. Analogous to taking a semester of abnormal psychology, by the time you are finished with the course, you are convinced how sick you really are. The cure for this is to actually go to a psychiatric facility and see the extreme cases.

The point is that you need to be aware of some of these things but not to obsess on them. You have to gain some distance from these – even the very positive ones. So what is called for is a detachment. So let us assume that you are a dedicated yogi following out a dedicated protocol. Some of the situations possible:

Sometimes different passions can be activated, things that have been suppressed: anger, hurt, obsessions of sex or food, etc. Sometimes one can get the feeling of being closed in. Sometimes period of depressions that seem inexplicable. These states pass and it is important to keep that in mind. There can be what is called by some: the unloading of the unconscious. This can be a period of churning of a lot of negative stuff, but the power of it subsides in time. And the negative is not a given and it is completely an individual matter. On the other side of this coin, there can be times of poetic and other artistic outpourings. And these can be quite dramatic.

Sometimes the appetite for food and sleep decreases. There can be great fear, insomnia, and restlessness. There can be headaches which seem extreme. Release of energy like an electric shock from the bottom of the spinal cord. Peculiar burning sensation at different locations.

Feelings of pressure

Tightening around head

Pressure in solar plexus and abdominal region

May have uncontrollable bodily movements

Movement in spine, like a crawling sensation. Ants moving

Subtle energy flowing in eyes or ears

Drill boring at location of chakras (piercing the bindu)

Whole body begins to suddenly shake or vibrate

Hundreds of little lights are burning inside body

Spinal cord is perceived like a florescent light

Body feels light

Begin to experience psychic powers: clairvoyance, telepathy, healing
Sweet peace pours into you
Sometimes feel a bit intoxicated

Lights of various colors (red, white, blue, green etc). These are called Tanmatric lights. Sometimes lightning-like flashes. When this stabilizes one perceives a golden hue with a blue center. Within this center is a bright Star. (Paramahansa Yogananda)

Anahata sounds. It is a sign of purification of the Nadis or astral currents, due to pranayama. Usually advised to listen to the right side where the Solar Nadi (pingala) is. Different kinds: bell, conch shell, lute, cymbals, flute, drum, thunder, waterfall – sounds of many waters.

There is no better description of what happens to one than Aleister Crowley's description in the introduction to *Book Four*. I quote:

“ Finally something happens ... For the moment let it suffice to say that this consciousness of the Ego and the non-Ego, the seer and the thing seen, the knower and the thing known, is blotted out.

There is usually an intense light, an intense sound, and a feeling of such overwhelming bliss that the resources of language have been exhausted again and again in the attempt to describe it.

It is an absolute knock-out blow to the mind. It is so vivid and tremendous that those who experience it are in the gravest danger of losing all sense of proportion.

By its light all other events of life are as darkness.”

“... the ‘vision of God’ or ‘union with God’ or ‘samadhi’, or whatever we may agree to call it, has many kinds and many degrees, ... (A.C. intro to *Book 4*)

“In the course of our concentration we noticed that the contents of the mind at any moment consisted of two things, and no more; the Object, variable, and the Subject, invariable, or apparently so. By success in Dharara the object has been made as invariable as the subject.

Now the result of this is that the two become one. This phenomenon usually comes as a tremendous shock. It is indescribable even by the masters of language; and it is therefore not surprising that semi-educated stutterers wallow in oceans of gush.”

One of the simplest forms of Dhyana may be called “the Sun”. The sun is seen (as it were) by itself, not by an observer; ...

A further development is the appearance of the form which has been universally described as human; although the persons describing it proceed to add a great number of details which are not human at all. This particular appearance is usually assumed to be “God”. (Crowley, *Book 4*: part 1)

This is also called Vishnurupadarshana. Swami Sivananda states: “When you advance in meditation you can see your Ishta Devata in physical form.” (Sivananda)

There are further developments of Vision. Beyond this there are more, the hallmark ones being Atmadarshana – the Vision of the Self and beyond that Shivadarshana.

But yogis differentiate these higher trances in many ways. Like the ladder of interior sounds, there is a ladder of realization.

Amrita:

Before leaving this section, I want to mention a phenomena mentioned as Amrita.

“The tradition holds that in the center of that space (where susumna ends at sahasrara) dwells the microcosmic moon. From here ambrosia is continually exuding. This moon-fluid flows in a continuous stream as the elixir of life.” (*Essential Intro to Kundalini Yoga* by Lusink)

“In tantra yoga it is said that the moon excretes ambrosia, which is consumed by the sun of the manipura. The moon here refers to the brain, the region of the sahasrara, which is often symbolized by a

moon or half-moon (perhaps corresponding to the ventricles of the brain) in both Hinduism and Taoism. The ambrosia or divine nectar formed there flows down to the manipura, where it is consumed as fuel to sustain life. The nectar secreted from the sahasrara forms into drops at bindu visargha, the psychic “point” at the back of the head. It drips down to a minor chakra called lalana in the upper part of the epiglottis or the base of the nasal orifice, which serves as a reservoir for the nectar. It is secreted when such mudras as khechari are practiced, and flows down to the vishuddhi chakra. If the vishuddhi has been awakened to some degree, the nectar undergoes purification and becomes the divine nectar which rejuvenates the body, ...(*Theories of the Chakras* by Hiroshi Motoyama)

Western Symbology and Reports of Kundalini-type phenomenon

In this section I want to just point out certain Western correspondences to these experiences. First, a few reports from Christian saints which I think you may find interesting. Then, I want to take an abbreviated look at the symbols of alchemy.

“It pleased the Lord that I should sometimes see the following vision. I would see beside me, on my left hand, an angel ... not tall, but short, and very beautiful, his face so aflame that he appeared to be one of the highest types of angel who seem to be all afire. They must be those who are called cherubim ... In his hands I saw a long golden spear and at the end of the iron tip I seemed to see a point of fire. With this he seemed to pierce my heart several times so that it penetrated to my entrails. When he drew it out, I thought he was drawing them out with it and he left me completely afire with a great love for God.” (St. Teresa vision: the “Transverberation of the Heart” recorded in *Life*)

“And the soul sees that every time that delicate flame of love, burning within, assails it, it does so as through glorifying it with gentle and powerful glory. Such is the glory this flame of love imparts that each time it absorbs and attacks, it seems that it is about to give eternal life

and tear the veil of mortal life, ...” (St John of the Cross; *The Living Flame of Love*)

“And this is what happens, in an indescribable way, at the time this flame of love rises up within the soul. Since the soul is completely purged in its substance and faculties (memory, intellect, and will), the divine substance, which because of its purity, as the wise Man says, touches everywhere profoundly, subtly, and sublimely, absorbs the soul in itself with its divine flame. And in that immersion of the soul in wisdom, the Holy Spirit sets in motion the glorious flickerings of His flame...” (St. John; *Living Flame*)

“It will happen that while the soul is inflamed with the love of God, ... it will feel that a seraph is assailing it by means of an arrow or dart that is all afire with love. And the seraph pierces and cauterizes this soul which, like a red-hot coal, or, better, a flame, is already enkindled. And then in this cauterization, when the soul is transpierced with that dart, the flame gushes forth, vehemently and with a sudden ascent, like the fire in a furnace or an oven when someone uses a poker or bellows to stir and excite it.” (St. John; *Living Flame*)

“One touch of divine love enables you to take all the pleasures of the world and throw them in the wastebasket.” (Thomas Keating; *Open Mind, Open Heart*, p. 74.)

“The contemplative state is established when contemplative prayer moves from being an experience or series of experiences to an abiding state of consciousness.” (Keating, p. 75)

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Kundalini’s Pervasive Impact upon Thelema

Anyone who has read both the material regarding kundalini yoga, tantra and Thelema cannot doubt the large impact it has had on the work of Aleister Crowley. Consider the origins of OTO (Kellner & Reuss). First let’s just consider a few of his Tarot images:

Key XVII THE STAR

“The picture represents Nuith, our Lady of the Stars. ...she is represented as bearing two cups, ... From the golden cup she pours this ethereal water, which is also milk and oil and blood, upon her own head, indicating the eternal renewal of the categories, the inexhaustible possibilities of existence. The left hand, lowered, holds a silver cup, from which also she pours the immortal liquor of her life. (This liquor is the Amrita of the Indian philosophers ...”

Put up pictures of:

Key VI: THE LOVERS and Key XIV ART

THE LOVERS: “... this card is the celebration of the Hermetic Marriage.”

ART: “This card represents the Consummation of the Royal Marriage which took place in Atu VI. “

“To sum up, the whole of this card represents the hidden content of the Egg described in Atu VI. ... In this card, therefore, is foreshadowed the final stage of the Great Work. Behind the figure, its edges tinged with the rainbow, which has now arisen from the twin rainbows forming the cape of the figure, is a glory bearing an inscription “Visit the interior parts of the earth; by rectification thou shalt find the hidden stone.” ... This ‘hidden stone’ is also the Universal Medicine. It is sometimes described as a stone, sometimes as a powder, sometimes as a tincture. It divides again into two forms, the gold and the silver, the red and the white; but its essence is always the same. ...”

“The initials of the alchemical motto given above form the word Vitriol. ... It represents a balanced combination of the three alchemical principles, Sulphur, Mercury and Salt.”

Key XVI: THE TOWER

“This suggests another (and totally different) interpretation of the card. To understand this, it is necessary to refer to the doctrines of Yoga, especially those most widely current in Southern India, where the cult of Shiva, the Destroyer, is paramount.”

Little Essays Towards Truth

“There is in fact only one Magical Operation of whose propriety we may always be sure; and that is the increase of our sum of Energy. It is even indiscreet to try to specify the kind of Energy required, and worse to consider any particular purpose.

Energy being increased, Nature will herself supply clarity: our Vision is obscure only because our Energy is deficient. ...

Let therefore the Magician divest himself of all preconceptions as to the nature of his True Will, but apply himself eagerly to increasing his Potential.” (chapter on *Energy*)

Book Four

The chapter on the *Magick Cup*, A.C. relates it to the chakras . “All these lotuses are figured by the Magick Cup.”

“Around this crown is twined the golden Uraeus serpent, with erect head and expanded hood. ... The serpent is ... the Kundalini serpent, the Magical force itself, the manifesting side of the Godhead of the Magician, whose unmanifested side is peace and silence, of which there is no symbol. In the Hindu system the Great Work is represented by saying that this serpent, which is normally coiled at the base of the spine, rises with her hood over the head of the Yogi, there to unite with the Lord of All.” (Chap on *The Crown*)

Of course, in Liber XV: the Gnostic Mass it is declared: “Be the Serpent thy crown, O thou Priest of the Lord”

Go through the *Book of the Law* and point out parts directly related to kundalini:

Chapter 1: 14,16,27,57,60,61

Chapter 2: 6,21,22,26,50,63

Chapter 3: possible 3, 4 & 17, 34, 45

Appendix: Suggestive Correlations between Eastern Yoga and European Alchemy

The following are quotes from different sources, including: tantras, upanishads, swamis and religious scholars.

“Ida is of a pale colour, is moon-like, and contains nectar. Pingala is red and is sun-like, containing “venom”, the fluid of mortality.” (*Intro to Tantra Sastra*, Sir John Woodroffe, p. 48)

“The ida is pale and ethereal, slightly pink, like the color of the almond flower. The pingala instead is bright red.” (*The Yoga of Power*, Julius Evola, p. 147)

“According to the *Sammohana-tantra*, ida is the Sakti and pingala is the Purusa. Other texts tell us that Lalana (=ida) and Rasana (=pingala) respectively convey the semen and ovum. But semen is of the essence of Siva and the moon, and blood (generally assimilated to the “rajas of women”) is of the essence of the Sakti and the sun.” (*Yoga:Immortality & Freedom*, Mircea Eliade, p. 239)

“Ida is white (in colour) ... The pingala is like the pomegranate flower in colour (that is vermilion) (*Laya Yoga*, Shyam Sundan Goswami, pp. 171-172)

“Ida is milk-rayed.” (does not mention color of pingala) (*Siva Samhita*, chap. 2)

“The selfsame bindu is of two varieties: the white and the reddish. The white they call sukra (semen); the name of the reddish variety is

maharajas; the rajas which resembles the coral tree in color stands in the seat of the genitals. The semen abides in the seat of the moon midway between the ajna chakra and the 1000 peteled. The union of the two is very rarely attained. The semen is Siva, the rajas is the Sakti; the semen is the moon and the rajas is the sun."
(*DhyanaBindu Upanishad*)

“The bindi is of two types: white and red. The white is shukla (sperm) and the red is manaraj (menses). White bindu symbolizes Shiva, purusha, or consciousness lies in bindu visaga; red bindu symbolizes Shakti, prakrati, or the power of manifestation in mooldhara.
(*Yogachudamani Upanishad*)

“...samarasa is the commingling of two drops (bindu). One of these, solar and red is identified with Sakti, while the other, lunar and white, identified with Siva; combined into a great drop (mahabindu) or “white-red nectar”. (*Alchemical Body*, Daniel White, p. 202)

“A south Indian alchemical source, the *Kongama3000*, identifies the male drop (which it calls bindu) with Siva and mercury, and the female drop (which it calls Nada) with Sakti and sulfur, which when combined, produce bodily immortality is a process called *kalpasadhanai*; ...” (*Alchemical Body*, White, p. 202)

“The Ida artery on the left is white and corresponds to the lunar principle. She is the goddess or female principle whose form is energy and which is the embodiment of the true ambrosia. On the right is the Pingala artery, the male shape, the solar principle. Here the Arch-goddess appears as the Lord of Tears of shining red, like the filaments of a pomegranate flower.” (*Sanmohana Tantra*)

Of further interest:

“The seat of *prana* is the heart; of *apana*, the anusThe function of *prana* is respiration and its color is that of a red gem; *apana* does excretion and its color is a mixture of white and red; ...” (*Complete Illustrated Book of Yoga*, Swami Vishnudevananda, p. 231.)

The four petals of the muladhara chakra are red; the two petals of the ajna are white. (Listed in *Kundalini Yoga for the West*, Swami Sivananda Radha)

.....

As you can readily see, it apparently seems that there is no consensus upon this matter. My first thought is that the texts dealing exclusively with kundalini yoga portray the Ida as lunar, pale/white, and female while the Pingala as solar, reddish, and male. The tantric texts seem to avoid terms ida and pingala (not entirely of course and when they do it is just opposite) but prefer to just refer to the Sakti as red and Siva as white (obviously referring to the red menses and white semen as symbols). Also, the tantra texts seem to rather refer to sakti as solar and red as the kundalini seated in the lower spine where the “sun” is and Siva as lunar and white as consciousness seated in the upper spine where the “moon” is. **In other words, a vertical separation rather than a left/right one.** One would have to consider the context in each case.

Actually, it does seem that the Atu VI – THE LOVERS of the Thelemic deck (the Hermetic Marriage) actually show the Red Lion on the side of the King with the Golden Crown and the White Eagle on the side of the Queen with the Silver Crown which would fit the horizontal pingala-male/ida-female scenario. This switches in significant ways in the consummation of that marriage in Key XIV. The King and Queen have merged (A.C. refers to this being as the goddess Diana; the Lion becomes white and the Eagle red.

Although the Rite of Liber XXXVI would fit the vertical scenario, as well as other Thelemic rites. But not being an initiate of O.T.O. I can only conjecture.

In my mind I cannot say that a definitive conclusion can be reached with the paucity of information provided above – I just don't

have access to the texts needed for me to make that judgment. But regardless, there is no consistency – that is the fact of the matter.

Personally, as a practical matter, in such yogic practices of pranayama etc the male/female attributions do not matter. In the understanding of the “twilight language” it does, of course, matter in many important ways.

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Now, for possible further elucidation, I wanted to mention some of the Western symbolic language that, because of the time involved, I did not get to on Friday night. As usual, I owe the following to Case and Crowley.

As you know, the Great Work of Alchemy is the production of the Stone. This has been variously referred to including: the Philosopher’s Stone, the Stone of the Wise, the Universal Medicine and so on.

And it is in Hebrew ABN (aleph-beth-nun) which letters refer to the Aleph as vital essence, beth as mercury, and nun (being Scorpio) as the gluten of the White Eagle (ojas).

So what is the Red Lion? It is defined as the result of sublimated Sulphur, combined with Mercury. Another is that it is the combination of the solar Lion with the energy of Mars. (This in fact would be of interest to those practicing the “Mass of the Phoenix”.) (as an aside, consider the interplay of red and white in the Magician card –Mercury).

Case claims the “blood of the Red Lion” is the highly charged blood that is the result of the combination of prana absorbed through the action of the lungs mixed with the Virgin’s milk – subtle essences extracted in the digestive process (Mercury in Virgo).

Of course, Teth means the Serpent and the Hebrew letter corresponds to the zodiac sign Leo the Lion. In traditional Tarot, the

Woman in White is with the Red Lion. Leo governs the heart and spinal cord – the path of the Serpent.

Teth also corresponds to the alchemical stage of digestion, or the exposure of a substance to the action of water acted on by fire.

The sense of taste is also attributed to Teth. Case states: “The subtle aspect of the Stone is the “dew of heaven,” the nectar mentioned so often by the yogis. This nectar is distilled when the woman tames the lion, or when the serpent is transformed into the eagle. The sense of taste is a metaphysical sense, developed by continual practice.”

And to add to that, consider Atu XVII – The STAR of A.C’s images. In his explanation he states: “The left hand, lowered, holds a silver cup, from which also she pours the immortal liquor of her life. (This liquor is the Amrita of the Indian philosophers ...”

In closing this, it is fun to look at the fact that Mercury is thought of in connection with Siva and Sulphur with Shakti (see quote above in first section). In the occult tradition of converting signs to numerals the circle is 22, the crescent or half-circle would be 11, and the cross as 4, the triangle is of course 3. The symbol of mercury then (semi-circle over a circle over a cross) would be $11 + 22 + 4$ or 37. The symbol of sulfur (triangle over a cross) would be $3 + 4$ or 7. Then the merging of mercury with sulfur would be 37 plus 7 or 44. And as we all know, 44 is also the hebrew gematria for blood (daleth, mem).

Put that in your athanoor and smoke it!

By the way, the Doves of Diana brought Zeus his food – ambrosia.