

THE DIVINE FIRE

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Devotion is the full measure of surrender and in the practice of Kuṇḍalinī Sādhana, we discover that this means allowing the powerful force of śakti within us to do its work.

We can describe that energy in many ways, but in the context of Kuṇḍalinī Sādhana we are talking about Śiva's Śakti — about the energy through which Pure Consciousness expresses and manifests Its primal urge, which is the expansion of fullness, freedom, and joy. All form arises and subsides on the field Consciousness, and this happens without Śiva losing any sense of Oneness. Manifestation comes into existence through Kuṇḍalinī Śakti, and in the nondual Trika tradition She is known as the Goddess Parā. Her primary attributes are that She is the power of will, knowledge, and action, the energies that Śiva uses to express His innate joy into form, into manifestation.

When we talk about “god” or “goddess” in the Trika tradition, we are referring to Consciousness and Its own power. Within the many traditions that focus on Kuṇḍalinī there are various names for the Goddess Kuṇḍalinī. But regardless of what She's called, it is important to understand that when we talk about deity, we tend to perceive that vital force within a framework of duality. Referring to them as deity does not imply that they are outside of us, because, in truth, they are the deities of our consciousness.

When I say that devotion is the full measure of surrender, and worship is the surrendering to the Goddess Kuṇḍalinī, we must understand that we are surrendering to the primal urge of Consciousness to express Itself as us — for the very purpose of knowing that our individuality is not separate from our divine source. Kuṇḍalinī, the Goddess Parā, is calling us back to the freedom inherent within us.

Our deepest misunderstanding is that we are separate from that energy and from that divine Consciousness. Projecting our energy and consciousness out into the world from misunderstanding leads us to believe that the dynamics of our life are something outside of us and different than us.

The practice of Kuṇḍalinī Sādhana therefore involves the internalization of the energy of this misunderstanding. Any thought-construct is ultimately a form of consciousness, and through the energy of mind, it reinforces its own limited perspective. Yet, because we share God's powers of will, knowledge, and action, we do have within us the power to know the truth. It is by the grace of Śiva that this awakening takes place within us. That initial opening is supported when coming into contact with an energy source — generally in the form of a teacher and lineage — that can fuel the rocket of Kuṇḍalinī to rise; to generate enough energy to lift off from the gravity of the ego and ascend back to its source.

When we engage in a Kuṇḍalinī Sādhana practice the subtle dynamics within our psychic body are revealed. What we start to discover is that are three levels of kundalini within us: praṇa kuṇḍalinī (the energy of the body), citta kuṇḍalinī (the energy of mind and emotions, and our individuality), and parā kuṇḍalinī (the energy of our spiritual Self). Kuṇḍalinī Sādhana focuses on internalizing all three aspects of kuṇḍalinī, allowing the deepest core of the pure energy of Consciousness to awaken in us. As it does that it opens and rises through the central channel back to its source, which is also our source. As we surrender to the śakti and allow it to do its work, our awareness begins to be liberated.

There is a fundamental shift in our consciousness in which we come to understand that all of life is śakti; that even our thought forms and emotional patterns are a form of this energy.

Our practice is to perpetually fold this energy back upon itself so that it can open and expand our consciousness. In this way, it reveals to us our own consciousness.

“Kuṇḍalinī is the volcanic flow of śakti that burns away all obscurity as She erupts into the central channel and our awareness.” The central channel (suṣumṇā) is the energetic skeleton within us, as well as the place where all of our misunderstanding, tensions, patterns, and karma accumulate. This debris begins to block that channel and, like a subtle silt, fills it up until there is no possibility for energy to rise unimpeded — to reconnect, to recognize itself as Parā, the power of Consciousness Itself. When we surrender to śakti, we surrender to the fire that burns through all misunderstanding and obscurity, through the clumps of energy that have filled up the suṣumṇā, like an avalanche of boulders that have filled up a canyon.

One of the names for the central channel is śmaśāna, which translates as “cremation grounds.” This is where the body of our misunderstanding is set on fire and cremated. Abhinavagupta points to this process in the Parātrīśikāvivaraṇa, where he states:

“There is no other divine fire able consume duality than Kuṇḍalinī.”

As Kuṇḍalinī Śakti climbs up through the central channel, She awakens a kind of volcanic process, and a few tremors may result. This is what happens when Kuṇḍalinī frees Herself, thereby freeing us from our own karma, tensions, and patterns. As that vital force purifies the central channel, you will periodically experience mental or emotional upheaval (kriya). This is very much like the lava that pours forth from a volcano: you must let it run its course. Any attempt to control or avert this process is the ego’s resistance to the change of consciousness that is taking place within us.

You may have powerful revelations and experiences of your past karma. You may recognize patterns in yourself which cause you to see the extraordinary and subtle power of your ego that has prevented you from seeing your own self-serving will. This is what happens when the goddess Kuṇḍalinī purifies Her pathway for ascent. She is purifying the limited consciousness that has kept Her buried.

Kuṇḍalinī Sādhana is the practice that Śiva brought me to almost 50 years ago, and I’ve been doing it everyday since then. I’m extraordinarily amazed at the profound freedom that it is available to each of us if we are able to surrender to the spiritual force of Kuṇḍalinī Śakti.

So my advice is: Try it, you might like it. Try it, even if you don’t like it!

— Swami Khecaranatha



Swami Khecaranatha teaches from his personal experience and revelations, as well as from the practices and knowledge he received from Swami Rudrananda and Bhagavan Nityananda. His study of the wisdom of ancient scripture provides a means to articulate the teachings of his lineage within the larger context of these powerful nondual traditions—while emphasizing the essence of his teaching, which is to empower students to discover their own innate divinity. Swami Khecaranatha emphasizes that the most important aspect of sādhana is one’s own direct experience, and that all other elements of practice, including the relationship with a teacher, are only supports in bringing about the state of liberation that is every individual’s divine birthright. The simplicity of Nathaji’s teaching is best expressed in his core message:

“Open your heart, surrender to the śakti, reside in Consciousness.”