

CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	xiii
Introduction	1
Prana	7
• What is prana?	9
• How will the practice of pranayama help me in my daily life?	9
• Can Kundalini be awakened by practising pranayama?	10
• I have been practising pranayama and meditation for a number of years. Some months ago I had participated in a Chakra Workshop. Since then, when I sit for meditation, I feel something stirring in my body. I am quite afraid. How should I handle this?	12
• What is meant by the term 'subtle bodies'?	13
Kundalini	17
• What is Kundalini shakti?	19
• Is there any way to know whether I am ready for Kundalini experience?	20
• What are the other experiences associated with the phenomenon of Kundalini? I have experienced strange sounds, light, heat, tingling, and tears running down my face for no reason. What transformations may or may not occur, and at what level?	21
• When I sit for meditation, I feel something gently moving up from the base of my spine. Is this the Kundalini?	27
• Is it possible for a person to awaken the Kundalini by practising Kundalini Yoga?	28

• What is the difference between Kundalini and prana and how can one distinguish between them when they are manifested?.....	28
• How does the guru guide a disciple once the Kundalini awakens?	29
• Can Kundalini be awakened through any predominant chakra?	29
• Can mantras, and massage with special preparation of oils, ghee etc., help in the process of awakening? Can the process of shuddhi, basti as practised in Ayurveda or Yoga be of any help?.....	30
• What is the benefit of Kundalini awakening for the general public?	31
• If one does not feel the energy moving, does it mean the Kundalini is not awakened?	32
• What can cause Kundalini shakti to get active?	32
• What does shaktipat mean?.....	34
• Does shaktipat and grace mean one and the same thing?	34
• Does one get enlightened after shaktipat?	35
• Is shaktipat related to the mind?	35
• I am a cranio-sacral therapist. A client of mine, who is a yoga teacher, went through intense physical movement on the treatment table. It started with undulations of the spine and arching of the back, and went on to lifting of hips, legs, and turning from side to side. She felt very light and somewhat tired towards the end. Would this be a manifestation of Kundalini?.....	36
• You have had extraordinary experiences and I have read your record of all you went through. How has your life changed after your experience of awakening?.....	37
• I have heard people narrate experiences of Kundalini even though they do not have a guru nor follow any Kundalini technique. How is this possible?.....	39
• If I am following a course in Kundalini Yoga, do I have to adopt a particular lifestyle and diet?	40
• In your book Kundalini Awakening you have a visual with an inverted illustration of a jug pouring milk into a bowl. Does this have any meaning?	41

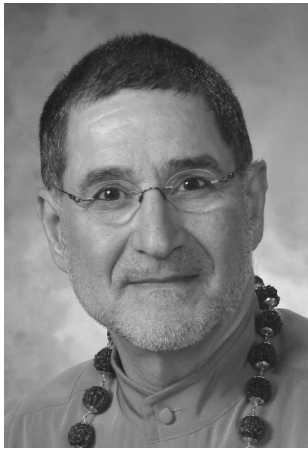
Meditation	43
• What is the purpose of meditation?	45
• In what way does meditation help an aspirant on the path of spiritual unfolding?	45
• Sometimes, when meditating, I see a snake moving up in my body or ants crawling all over my body. What does this mean?	46
• Even after I get up from meditation, my body keeps vibrating for almost an hour. What is happening?	48
• While meditating, at times my body is still and my head moves in a number eight pattern. The movement is horizontal. What does this symbolise or mean?	49
• When you give the omkara to indicate the end of meditation, I can't open my eyes. If I force myself out of meditation I feel uncomfortable and because the energy is high, I can't sleep.....	51
• I saw Kali very clearly in my meditation. Is that how gods reveal themselves or is it pure imagination?.....	52
• When I sit for meditation many strange sounds come out of my mouth. I am aware of it happening but am unable to control them. What are these sounds?	53
<i>Chakras: The Energy Transformers</i>	55
• During satsang with a master of meditation, there was a constant flow of tears. There was no sadness but the tears would not stop. Please tell me why this happens.	58
• As soon as I sit for meditation, there is a constant flow of thoughts. When will the thoughts stop?	59
• When I sit for meditation, sometimes for days there is a great deal of spinning and movement of energy, whereas there are days when there are only thoughts. Then days follow when there is just boredom. Kindly explain.	63
• Sometimes after getting into a meditative state, I am not able to get out of it. Why is that and how can one regulate the process?	65
• At times I feel extremely energised. I feel as if my body will just go and hit the ceiling. In meditation, I felt as if I have hit the ceiling and my head has exploded like a volcano and hot, golden lava is flowing out of it from all sides. I saw this happening to me in meditation but my physical body was still.	66

- Heat seems to rise up my spinal column – from base to top of the head. Sometimes, though, this happens only from the heart level upwards. Why? 67
- I was sitting for meditation with my back resting against a wall in a Shiva temple. When the time came to get up, I realised that I could not move. Is there any explanation for something like this? 70
- During meditation, I saw myself going up and down coloured tiles as if I am climbing up and down a staircase. The colours are red, blue, orange, yellow, green, and pink. Could you please explain this? 71
- While meditating I sometimes hear sounds that no one else hears. They are sounds of popping, snapping or an explosion set off. What does this mean? 73
- Are your meditations guided ones? 74
- How can I reach a state of stillness in meditation? 74
- I am an editor by profession and invariably get material related to the scriptures. Over the past two days when I sit for meditation, I have been experiencing a vibrant circle of light on the wall behind me. What does this indicate? 74
- How do I ascertain if these experiences of sound, lights etc. are real? 75
- During meditation, pain and sorrow from many lifetimes seems to accumulate in my legs and then slowly leaks out of the toes. The legs feel thick and clogged as if circulation of blood has stopped. I then hear some gentle cracking sounds, like the snapping of fingers. With the completion of this process, the clogged energy flows out through the toes and my legs feel much better. I rub them down after the meditation and they feel normal. 76
- In meditation, I sometimes get the feeling of wings flapping gently in my head. What does this mean? 77
- During a group meditation, a shape like a dish antenna appeared above my head and kept moving in different directions as if it were collecting information. What does this mean? 78
- I have heard some people narrate experiences of Kundalini even though they do not follow any Kundalini technique or have a guru. How is this possible? 79
- Why do bad experiences appear to get manifested when I pursue meditation seriously? 80

General Questions	83
• You have had extraordinary experiences and I have read your record of all you went through. Can you share with us how that has actually changed your perspective in life?	85
• I know you live with your children and go about your daily duties like before, but yet you have a heightened sense of awareness that we don't. Can you tell us something about that?	86
• How do you explain these experiences of light and Kundalini awakening that you have experienced? Is the light you see the same as anyone else having a similar experience? Or is everyone's experience different? In which case, which is the reality? Yours or theirs?	87
• I read in Gopi Krishna's book 'A Path to Higher Consciousness' that these images of light, or even other people's experiences of seeing Krishna or Jesus etc. are only a figment of the mind. The mind translates such experiences into a language that can easily be understood by the person having that experience. For example, Mira Bai saw Krishna and not Jesus, while St. Therese saw Jesus and not Shiva. What do you say about that?	88
• As a householder how do I balance my spiritual life with my daily life?	89
• What do the terms 'detachment' and 'involvement' mean?.....	89
• I have heard several masters tell us that on our journey to finding the Truth, we must keep our focus and clarity on the final objective and not get distracted by events and changes that come to us in the process. In other words, that if we get too involved with the siddhis or our experiences of light or channeling, we could live in the wonder of exploring rather than aiming for the Truth. What do you think?.....	91
• Is it necessary to have a guru? It is said that 'when the disciple is ready the guru will appear'. I visit different masters, how will I know which one is my guru?	92
• How does the guru's grace occur?.....	94
• What is meant by a positive mind?	95
• What is the nature of the mind?.....	96
• Should one talk about one's experiences to friends and family?	97

- I am a cranio-sacral practitioner. When I started a session with a client, neither of us had any intention of awakening Kundalini but it seemed to have awakened on its own. It produced some mild undulations in the body and made my patient arch her back and re-adjust her body position a few times. All this was also accompanied by deep, loud breathing that seemed very cleansing in nature. Towards the end, my client ended up in a very energised and awake, yet grounded, state. She was told in the Bihar School of Yoga that Kundalini awakening should happen only under the supervision of a guru, and it's very dangerous if the energy gets stuck around the Manipura chakra. Is that true? 97
- On the third cranio-sacral session, her body began exhibiting very large undulations with the back and neck arching, and the chest making circular movements etc. These undulations continued in the car on the way back from the session, and have been going on now for a couple of months. They don't disrupt her daily schedule and she can easily will these movements whenever she wants. It's definitely not her that's making them, rather, they seem to be controlled by some inner force. After a month, she found that by simply putting her hands on a particular part of the body, she could produce the undulating movement in that spot. She also became inspired to put her hands on other people, including her husband and children..... 98
- Do you still have visual experiences? 100
- I don't know if this has anything to do with the pulsing light circle above my shoulders, but my body has begun exuding a very peculiar aroma that gets into all my clothes and has marinated my skin. Actually, it's very pleasant and people think I am wearing some kind of exotic perfume. What is truly strange is that today, even my urine and stool had the same odour! I am not getting carried away by the phenomena trap, but it is unusual and not to acknowledge it is also untruthful. It smells like some kind of agarbatti. 100
- I had gone to an ashram and during meditation on the banks of the Ganga, I had a past-life experience. In this experience, I saw myself as a soldier on a battlefield, which reminded me of the Mahabharat war. I saw myself fallen on the ground and my limbs being crushed under the wheels of a chariot. When I came out of the meditation, I was still carrying the trauma and the pain in my limbs and had a swelling in my joints. Can you please explain this?..... 102
- What are kriyas, and what is their purpose? 103

• If I follow some course designed to help me evolve spiritually, how would I know whether I am moving in the right direction?	103
• I have been practising a self-development course for a number of years. I have had experiences that have helped me to be the balanced person I am today. I would like to teach the same course so that it can help others who want to be helped. My guru is no longer in his body. Can I teach the course?	104
• What is a psychic attack? How does a person defend against a pre-planned malicious attack without resorting to gems, pujas, and talismans?.....	105
• Time and again one hears that happiness is a ‘state of mind’. How does one achieve that state of mind?.....	108
• How should a person in sadhana react to personal attacks and troubles, especially when they seem unmerited?	109
• How does one get out of repetitive patterns of behaviour and interaction which we know are futile and self-destructive?	111
<i>Living a Balanced Life</i>	113
• What does it mean to ‘live a balanced life’? How does one achieve such a balanced state of being?	113
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	125
<i>Bibliography</i>	127



Master Charles Cannon
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Synchronicity Foundation
and originator of the
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FOREWORD

Many years ago, during a visit to Mumbai, India, I met Santosh Sachdeva in person. I had known her for several years through her children and had interacted with her in relation to her books on Kundalini. Meeting Santosh in person validated my distant experience of her. She radiated a unified presence, the hallmark of fully actualised Kundalini experience. Her writings are the outcome of many years of Kundalini experience – from initial awakening through the resultant, progressive process of ever-increasing, integrative wholeness.

Santosh is also a lovely woman who selflessly shares her experience and serves as a guide for many on the evolving path of Kundalini Yoga. I am thus honoured to write this Foreword to this book of questions and answers about Kundalini culled from her experience of many years.

My guru, Swami Muktananda Paramahansa, was a Kundalini adept. For twelve years, he personally trained me in the art and science of Kundalini Yoga. He often reminded me that while it was relatively easy to awaken Kundalini energy, it was the mark of the master to guide

it to its culmination in substantiated wholeness, or the experience of unified consciousness. Santosh validates this time-honoured principle as she masterfully guides her students through this intricate and transformative journey.

It is further stated, in the classical tradition of Kundalini Yoga, that the authentic Kundalini master must fulfil specific qualifications. First, he or she must be substantiated in the state of unified consciousness which is validated by their holistic presence. Secondly, their unified state of being must serve as the empowerment that awakens and guides the Kundalini energy in their disciples. And thirdly, they must be thoroughly trained under the empowering guidance of a Kundalini guru, and thoroughly knowledgeable about all aspects of the evolving Kundalini experience. In my humble opinion, Santosh Sachdeva thoroughly fulfils all these qualifications as is evidenced not only in her writings, but also in the very living of her daily life and her interactions with those she empowers, awakens and guides.

In this modern world, there are many would-be gurus, some half-baked and some hardly baked at all. True and authentic masters are rare indeed.

As you read these rich pages, you will encounter a true and authentic master of Kundalini experience. I encourage you to be grateful for what you have found, and to celebrate your most fortunate experience. It is

said that when the student is ready, the master comes. If you are reading this book, you are ready. Now, simply open yourself to the authentic master who has come. In doing so, you will come to know Santosh Sachdeva as the adept that she is and you will inevitably love her, as do I, for all that she embodies and so selflessly shares.

It is said that the true guru is the one who takes you from the darkness of ignorance into the light of truth. It is my sincere hope that you will flower within this experience, and come to know Santosh by the name I have given her... Mataji... which means... Dear Mother. May Mataji Santosh Sachdeva shower you with her many blessings while you are reading this most masterful book.

Master Charles Cannon
H.H. Swami Vivekananda Saraswati
April 2010

INTRODUCTION

Since the release of *Conscious Flight into the Empyrean*, *Kundalini Diary*, and *Kundalini Awakening*, three of my books that form *The Kundalini Trilogy*, there has been a constant flow of questions regarding the mystery of Kundalini; how it works and the risks involved in practising Kundalini meditation and yoga. Some readers sent in letters and emails while others came over in person to discuss their doubts and to seek clarifications.

I found it surprising that it was mostly young people between twenty-five and forty years of age who appeared to be awakening to the changes and the stirrings taking place within them. Somewhat confused and ignorant of what was happening, the first person they approached was their doctor, and sometimes, a psychiatrist.

There was a young lady who had attended a Chakra Workshop some years ago, which had led to constant headaches and other physical problems. She had visited several doctors but they could not offer any solution. The only advice I could give her was to go back to the group that had conducted the Workshop and seek their guidance. If properly guided, she would be alright.

In another instance, I remember how shocked I was when a girl from Germany who came to meet me mentioned that a doctor had put her on a course of medicines because of the nature of the experiences she had begun to have. It was quite clear to me that in reality what she was experiencing was an aspect of Kundalini awakening. In another instance, a young lady who had returned from a yoga session she had attended at some spa found to her horror that each time she would start to meditate, she began to make peculiar sounds. Another young man experienced a premature opening of his Ajna chakra. In each of these cases, the energy had been disturbed and not guided. As a result, the symptoms that were being manifested were not being effectively relieved by medical intervention.

People who have read *The Kundalini Trilogy* have responded in their own unique way. For some, the books have helped them to awaken to a new experience without the fear that is generally associated with Kundalini awakening. Others who experienced strange and inexplicable sensations realised that a certain awakening was happening and they had to seek guidance. There were still others who identified with the illustrations in each of the books in the Trilogy and began to understand that though they were going through an experience that was out of the ordinary, there was an explanation for what was transpiring with them. They felt validated and reassured.

This book endeavours to provide answers based on my experience and understanding of the working of Kundalini meditation and awakening. You may relate to some aspect of this book, a question, or experiences similar to those being discussed. Hopefully, these answers will help you on your spiritual journey.

I have also included extracts of talks given by Master Charles Cannon, an American mystic and disciple of Siddha Yoga Master, Swami Muktananda Paramahansa. These comments should provide a contemporary understanding of the subject.

It is assumed that the reader who has picked up this book is at some stage of Kundalini awakening and is looking for reassurance or for answers that will guide the process of awakening. If so, you will find your answer in some section or the other of this book.

Finally, I would like to encourage everyone who is experiencing inexplicable symptoms that cannot be addressed by science to seek a guide or someone who can explain what is transpiring. Through meditation, you can be guided on your journey within. Once you begin to understand the process, the symptoms will disappear and you will experience an opening to another dimension.

My best wishes are with you.

PRANA

What is prana?

Prana is that substance in the air from which all life has emanated. It is both macrocosmic and microcosmic. Because *prana* is part of the air and atmosphere, we are constantly breathing it in. However, when we speak of *prana*, we do not mean breath, air or oxygen, but rather the original life force which is everywhere, pervading all existence – animate and inanimate.

Prana is visualised as a misty, cloud-like flow of energy so subtle in form that it is undetectable by scientific methods. In the physical body, *prana* flows like an electric current through an intricate pathway of subtle nerves called *nadis*. “The cosmic manifestation of *prana* in the individual body is represented by Kundalini,” says Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati.

How will the practice of pranayama help me in my daily life?

Firstly, it is important to understand what is meant by the practice of *pranayama*. The simple act of breathing in and out is an involuntary process, whereas in the practice

of pranayama you consciously direct prana throughout the body. Therefore, the benefits you derive will be felt at all levels and you will create a balance between your physical, mental and emotional bodies. Your organs will function better, your circulation will improve, your respiratory system will work better and you will feel more relaxed and energetic.

As you progress in your practice, you will find that your awareness levels are much higher and you are now better able to deal with challenging situations. You will be less prone to mood swings. Instead, there will be a realisation that there is a definite purpose behind every thought, action and deed.

If and when pranayama becomes a part of your daily life, then, with the purification of your whole personality you will, in due course, achieve a state of fixed concentration and an expansion of consciousness which, in turn, will lead to spiritual awakening.

Can Kundalini be awakened by practising pranayama?

Pranayama is not just a breath-control technique or a means to increase prana in the body. If followed correctly, and in the sequence prescribed, it can prove to be a powerful method to awaken dormant energy. Swami Niranjanananda Saraswati explains the process:

“Prana is the inward moving force which is said to create a field moving upwards from the navel to the

throat. *Apana* is the outward moving force which is said to create a field moving downwards from the navel to the anus. Both prana and apana move spontaneously in the body, but they can be controlled through yogic practices. The Upanishads say a method has to be employed to reverse the direction of the oppositely moving forces of prana and apana so that they unite with *samana* in the naval centre. The result of these forces coming together is the awakening of Kundalini.”

If you want to know the process of change that pranayama and yoga bring about, you have to experiment with the technique and try to understand the energy and structure of the change process – the Kundalini. To shift or alter the state of consciousness, both the mental and physical bodies must be stimulated and coordinated. This is why every meditation and kriya has a mantra. The kriya stimulates the physical body while the mantra directs the activated energy.

When a spiritually evolved aspirant is regular in the practice of pranayama and his/her diet is light, the awakening of Kundalini may take place. When starting on such an endeavour, it is advisable that an aspirant restricts his/her diet to fruits and juices for a specified period of time. With this preparation the awakening can be rapid. If there is a flaw in the practice, then the results can be harmful. This is why any programme

dealing with Kundalini should be studied under the guidance of an experienced teacher so that, if the need arises, an aspirant would be able to clear any of his/her doubts and move on confidently.

I have been practising pranayama and meditation for a number of years. Some months ago I had participated in a Chakra Workshop. Since then, when I sit for meditation, I feel something stirring in my body. I am quite afraid. How should I handle this?

Because you have been meditating, the workshop has probably activated the dormant energy within you which is rising upwards. It is crucial that you bring this to the notice of your guru. If you don't have one, then you should go back to the person who conducted the Chakra Workshop and ask for guidance. You could either discontinue your practice and get on with your life or you could become regular with your practice. Begin by fixing a time and place for meditation because once the energy starts to move upwards, the physical, mental and emotional bodies will undergo several changes. You must exercise complete surrender. Do not resist the energy. Let go of yourself completely and float along with the current. Higher forces have taken over, you need not worry.

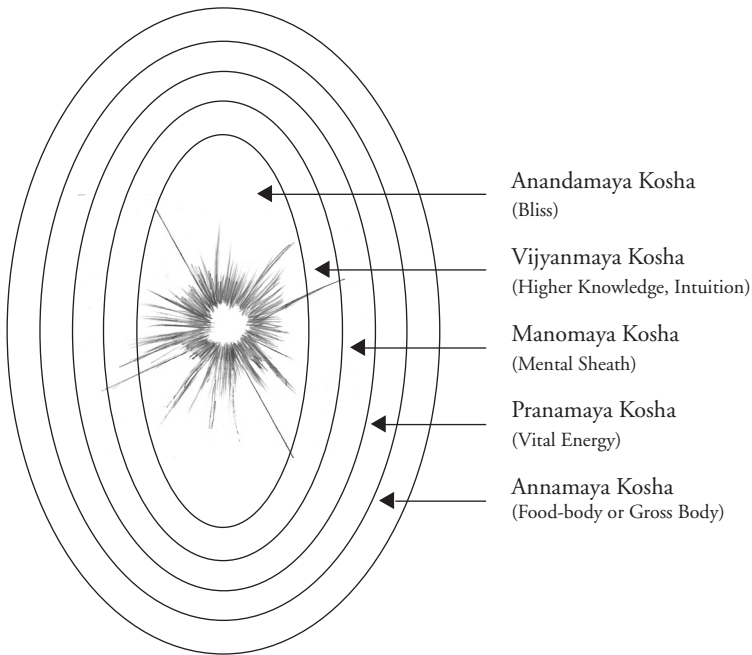
With the upward movement of the Kundalini many unexpected things may happen because you are now

moving into the region of the unknown. Do not be afraid, things will unfold as you go along with your practice. At this stage, any resistance is liable to create problems and can prove to be harmful. If possible, get in touch with someone who has been through the Kundalini experience or talk to like-minded people who are going through a similar process. Remember, if there is even an ounce of fear, either discontinue your *sadhana* or consult the person who had conducted the workshop.

What is meant by the term 'subtle bodies'?

'Subtle bodies' is a term used for psycho-spiritual bodies, each corresponding to a subtle plane of existence in a sequence that culminates in the physical form, moving outward, from invisible to visible. The subtle body is that part of our being in which we experience our thoughts and emotions. It is made up of light and energy and cannot be seen with the physical eyes. It is usually described as an oval halo of shimmering light that surrounds the physical body. In the scriptures it is defined as *Panch Kosha*.

The subtle body comprises of the mind, intellect, ego, accumulated impressions, *jnanendriyas* (subtle aspect of the senses), *karamendriyas* (subtle aspect of the organs of action) and the pranic body comprised of five pranas (the five vital airs); *prana*, *apana*, *samana*, *udana* and *vyana*.



The Panch Koshas.

The human form is made up of five sheaths. Moving outward, from invisible to visible, from subtle to gross, these sheaths are:

- Anandamaya Kosha; a dimension of pure bliss.
- Vijyanmaya Kosha; the sheath of higher knowledge which manifests itself as intuition or insight.
- Manomaya Kosha; the dimension of mind which contains intellect, memory, concept and reason.
- Pranamaya Kosha which is composed of prana; the vital energy that activates the body and motivates the mind.
- Annamaya Kosha; the physical body, so called because it is dependent on *anna* – grain or gross food.

In simple terms, these sheaths of existence are said to be composed of bliss, intuition, intellect, energy and food.

All these dimensions of being interpenetrate and interact with each other. Each sheath is said to be composed of energy and the energy in each sheath has its own speed of vibration. In the physical sheath the energy vibration is slowest, though, as we move through the koshas the vibration becomes faster and finer until it once again resolves itself back to Pure Consciousness.