

Kundalini and Ashrama

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Abstract: I will relate my clinical concerns for the maturation of individuals, marriages and families to one of most primordial unifying differentiations of Sanaatana Dharma (The Eternal Ordering-way, the indigenous name for Hinduism, and of all Indic vidya), the intergenerational, four quatercentenary ashramas or stages of life : the pre- and pubescent learner (brahmacharyin), the householder, young-adult parent (grihastin), mentoring, midlife grandparent (vanaprasthin), and blessing-bestowing, retiring great-grandparent (elder-sannyasin.) I will also discuss the role in the world-family (another connotation of Sanaatana Dharma) of the inwardly married lifelong sannyasin, according to the developmental model of Kundalini Yoga. In the process, I hope to clear up several confusions in transpersonal Euro-Hinduistic psychology, including ego and its transcendence, spiritual emergence/Kundalini awakening that have emerged due to 19th and 20th century historical factors surrounding the development of Euro-Hinduistic concepts in America. This will include the etiological (psychodynamic) and scientia sexualis hermeneutic of psychoanalysis and its offshoots, the instant-enlightenment images of the psychedelic era, the quirks of new age/transpersonal book publication, and the massive adaptation of Hatha Yoga to some 17 million stressed-out Americans.

Notes in progress:

1. The ashramas represent what we might call an ideal intergenerational social structure and template for the staged, maturation of individuals based in a range pleasures arising from the performance of one s duty (dharma, swa-dharma), a term that will require further explication for Euro-Hinduistic transpersonal psychology to grasp. For the concept of duty and its possible pleasures, and even of ideal roles and social structures are too easily heard by transpersonal and psychoanalytic psychologies as repressive, arbitrary and therefore imposed by authority, all contributing to a willingness to dismiss ashrama or other moralistic-sounding schemas.
2. The clinicians have understandably tended to focus on etiology in their developmental models, post-traumatics, breakdowns or parental failures, genetic pathologies, developmental impasse, and so forth. Likewise, the massive breakdown of marriage longevity and thus family coherence (divorce rates approaching 40%) make ideal schemas seem, to some, more guilt-inducing than helpful, besides being arbitrary.
3. Thus, the idea of a clinician being someone who saves marriages is largely unthinkable, but, rather she should simply help them arrive at their own decision, by honoring their process through facilitating communication. I use ironic quotation marks to denote that hidden in each of these terms is a quiet hopelessness about the prospect of transforming difficult marriages/relationships, and that each of

these terms is no more or less than a convention of practice among other potential and credible conventions of practice.

4. The Ashramas, I find, point to another way of defining the process that individuals, spouses, and families are in that is strongly guided by the priority of saving marriages, keeping families together, helping people to live up to their duties and to reap the pleasures, shared pride and admiration, and maturity therein.
5. The degree to which developmental stages are posited to exist throughout the entire lifespan is the degree to which parents, grandparents, children can interpret their struggles in terms of the demands and opportunities of these so-defined stages.
6. Yoga also speaks of various glowing radiances, virya, ojas, tapas, tejas, auras. Arguably, these radiances emerge temporarily in family members when they passionately strive to express various yama-niyama sentiments, such as love, contrition, or forgiveness. However, the fleeting nature of the facial blushes or tearfully inspired moment requires meditative regard as in *dristhi* or *trataka*, in order to be seen, otherwise these glowing moments (for example, of tapas, the glow of spiritual ardor and commitment to ideals) pass unnoticed, and the hopelessness of the bad marriage narrative barely changes. Struggles with money, commitment, impatience, insensitivities, etc. become spiritual tapas within the *grihasta ashrama*.
7. Thus, Sanaatana Dharma matures beyond its exotic image in Euro-Hinduism of mainly focusing on rarified meditative states. The ashramas help to ground the Eternal Ordering-way in daily life. Yet, as the Dharma is even more fully articulated in Euro-Hinduism (and in the transpersonal psychotherapies that draw from Buddhist and Yogic psychologies), it will be a far more sanctified daily life where parents, grandparents and great-grandparents are viewed with reverence by children, who, themselves grow up cultivating themselves in with yogic and other devotional practices. Curiously, the popularity of hatha yoga and Buddhism among young Americans is a kind of surreptitious introduction of the *brahmacharya ashrama* in this country.
8. While forest-dwelling belongs to another age, the third quaternary of life, so-called midlife, is still a time of spiritual reflection upon decades of career and family life. Will cynicism emerge, or faith, confidence and a passing on ever more responsibilities to younger generations? Will inner peace be obtained? And how does the (aging) generation of 45-75 year-old Euro-Hindus/Buddhists pass on dharmic teachings to future generations? By building retreat centers with youth programs and so forth. By bringing meditation practices into hospitals, hospice, prisons, airports, churches, etc., an enculturation of Dharma is occurring via the efforts of these midlife, modern *vanaprasthin*.
9. The esoteric mudras of Kundalini developmental theory (*khecari*, *shambhavi*, *unmani*, and *urdhva-retas* processes such as *pranotthana*, *sahaja Yoga*, and *shakti chalani*) largely unknown in the West (even in transpersonal circles) describe developmental breakthroughs over the lifespan equivalent to teenaged puberty, in terms of identity maturation, gender-sense, sense of life purpose, hormonal physiology. Modifications in the DSM IV normalizing Derealization and Depersonalization Disorders within cross-cultural theories of trance and meditation indicate a beginning appreciation by psychiatry for aspects of these maturational experiences, likewise, *v62.89 Code for Spiritual Problems*, and *Qi-gung reaction* as denoted in its cross-cultural glossary.

10. The universality of such phenomena of Kundalini development is seen (with far less detailed articulation) in Orthodox Judaism as the spinal-rocking prayer of davvening, inspired Sufi zikr, the whirling dervish, spontaneous tai chi, the Holy Ghost manifestations of Gospel, Quaker, Shaker or Pentacostal shaking, Eastern Orthodox hesychast quiverings, the ntum trance dance of the Bushman, Tibetan Buddhist tumo heat manifestations, inspired Islamic raqs sharqi (an esoteric precursor to so-called belly-dancing), the Indically-derived Andalusian flamenco, and in all other manner of ecstatic bodily movement. Thus, alchemically invigorated by the hormone-churning vibrations of The Eternal Ordering Way, Shiva, the Lord of Yoga is also the Lord of the Eternal Dance and of rasayana, the alchemy of emotional transformation. Kundalini Yoga points to a bodily, developmental basis of all religiosity centered in the spine, the somatic tree of knowledge and the anatomical armature of Darwinian evolution, the ascending spinal mountain range of Meru, Olympus, Sinai, Carmel.
11. These mudras can be seen as an extension of the psychoanalytic stages, involving chakra centers and mudra development of psychophysical potentials beyond those of genital puberty, what Freud called genital primacy, the name for the final matured state in psychoanalytic theory. Thus, these various bodily phenomena of numerous world spiritual traditions might be credibly seen as postgenital puberties of the spine, heart-emotions, and pineal, the locus of age-reversing, photo-transductive melatonin, and perhaps of amrita-soma of Vedic and Tantric scriptures, where, too the New Testament speaks of a state when thine eye becomes single and male and female become indistinguishable from one another, a sign of the puberty of the pineal, as I hypothesize.
12. Here, too we encounter a theory of eros (psychosexual development, in Freudian terms) so different from that in the West that Foucault coined the term *ars erotica* to distinguish it from the *scientia sexualis* theories of Freud, Reich et al. In *ars erotica*, assessments of pleasure and profundity take precedence over any conventional behavioral forms (such as those of sexual desire.) As Krishna notes in the Bhagavad-gita, I am the passion in beings in alignment with [Sanaatana] Dharma, of Son of Bharat. In his deconstruction of psychoanalytic sexuality, Foucault defines such dharmic passion in this way:

In the erotic art, truth is drawn from pleasure itself, understood as a practice and accumulated as experience; pleasure is not considered in relation to an absolute law of the permitted and the forbidden, nor by reference to a criterion of utility, but first and foremost in relation to itself, it is experienced as pleasure, evaluated in terms of its intensity, its specific quality, its duration, its reverberations in the body and the soul. Moreover, this knowledge must be deflected back into the sexual practice itself, in order to shape it as though from within and amplify its effects. In this way, there is formed a knowledge that must remain secret, not because of an element of infamy that might attach to its object, but because of the need to hold it in the greatest reserve, since according to the tradition, it would lose its effectiveness and its virtue by being divulged. The effects of this masterful art, which are considerably more generous than the spareness of its prescriptions would lead one to imagine, are said to transfigure the one fortunate enough to receive its privileges: an absolute mastery of the body, a singular bliss,

obliviousness to time and limits, the elixir of life, the exile of death and its threats. (Foucault, 1984, pp. 57-58)

13. The advanced stages of Kundalini Yoga, as an ars erotica so defined by Foucault, tend to occur almost exclusively in lifelong sannyasins, due to the energetic and time requirements for yogic developmental worship involved in their manifestation, exactly comparable to how consuming the parental role is in childrearing, and home-building. Thus, in my reading of Kundalini theory, the (lifelong and late life) sannyasin Ashrama is as biologically legitimate and critical for species well-being as is the reproductive behavior of grihastin and vanaprasthin.
14. A crucial social role for sannyasins is the dispensation of shaktipat, or grace. Here, we might include Maharishi's Effect, formula of 1% of the square root of a local population living as full-time (sannyasin) meditators will dispense a peace-inducing grace for those living in their vicinity
15. The Sanaatana Dharmic origins of European monasticism and thereby the Academy might also be explored.
16. The discourse of sexual liberation that emerged around psychoanalysis and its offshoots--what Foucault critiqued as a cultural historian (not as a moralist) as a mass deployment of sexuality --makes it nearly unthinkable that the virginity of the first ashrama, in the context of Kundalini, Raja, and other yogas, is not only nonrepressive, but contributes to the embodiment of highly liberating maturational states, what I term the postgenital puberty of the spine and the baseline states of consciousness corresponding to the neuro-endocrinal alchemy of such rasayana Yogic maturation. As Marcuse noted in his critique of psychoanalysis, Eros and Civilization, "the instincts are to be understood spiritually."
17. Yet, over the past ten years, a second generation of American Euro-Hindus/ Euro-Buddhist America has come forth who see the monks, nuns, lamas, and swamis of the origin traditions as matured, nonrepressed liberated and creative exemplars of the maturing powers of the first ashrama of brahmacharya and the fourth, sannyasa, as well as lifelong sannyasa. Others, however are disillusioned over confessed or rumored breaches by certain declared sannyasin gurus. The discourses surrounding such events have yet to be examined critically, perhaps from a Foucauldian perspective wherein moralistic critique is blended with intellectual (nonmoralistic) analysis. Such would help redeem these two ashramas by advancing our understanding of the challenges and problematic attendant to such ars erotica ways of life in American society. I am curious about the contemporary politicizing of Indian sannyasins.
18. Due to numerous dilutions of transpersonal or new age authors Grof, Greenwell, Washburn, Wilber, A. Judith, et al writing on Kundalini, the precursor energetic state of pranotthana has been misidentified as Kundalini awakening. The inner mudras and other yogic bodily maturations as described in the Hathayogapradipika, Pashupati Sutra, Ganakarika Sutra, Jnaneshvar-gita, and many Tantric works, are rarely mentioned. Instead, due to the quirk of Gopi Krishna's autobiographical Kundalini, the Evolutionary Energy in Man (1971) being the first widely read book specifically on this topic, it became the standard measure. Unfortunately, Krishna's awakening was extremely problematic, and may have in fact been pranotthana.

This has given rise to people with various undiagnosable neurological symptoms being mis-diagnosed by various mental health workers as a Kundalini awakening, due to similar-sounding symptoms in Krishna's book. Even specialist practitioners such as Grof's Spiritual Emergence Network perpetuate the misuse of the term Kundalini, effecting thousands of hot-line callers each year. Likewise, Grof, Bache, Washburn et al embed Kundalini phenomenology in Grof's prenatal matrix theories where they are related to birth struggles from the past, instead of to newly-originating Yogic processes. E.g., alterations in breathing are not seen as sahaja pranayama, but as regressive perinatal struggles during labor or neonate difficulties with breathing, replete with therapeutic guidance to remedy the birth trauma.

19. The fitness-focused Hatha Yoga styles now massively taught by tens of thousands of American instructors to some 17 million Americans bears the quirks of BKS Iyengar, whose interest in European ballet and hopes to adapt Hatha Yoga to a Western audience (perhaps Macaulayistic forces must too be considered) heavily shapes its pedagogy, and hides its energetic basis in pranotthana. The hardwood floors, mirrored walls, balancing props, and preoccupation with alignment reflects a subjugation of Hatha Yoga to the pedagogy of ballet. Bikram Yoga, the most popular style of Euro-Yoga, employs an external simulation of tapas with sauna-like heaters. Only via shaktipat swamis (Muktananda, Kripalvanand, A. Desai, et al) has the West been shown the energetic origins of Hatha Yoga. Too, these gurus reveal the most matured grace-bestowing powers of the sannyasin whereby the ontogenetic aspects of yoga are enlivened throughout the culture.
20. If even 1/100 of 1% of American Yoga practitioners should engender pranotthana, some 1700 persons would thereby begin experiencing degrees of the more advanced yogic phenomena. (coincidentally, this figure is nearly the exact number required to induce the Maharishi Effect in the entire US population). As the Director of the Kundalini Clinic for Counseling and Research (founded by followers of shaktipat Siddha Muktananda) since 1984, I have received hundreds of calls from people experiencing variously muddled pranotthana. Typically, this disturbs their marital and family life with strong urges to leave their families/marriages and become healers, yogis, and the like, given the scant information on how grihasta (family life) is a suitable context for pranotthana. Dhan Gopal Mukerji's life and suicidal death (Caste and Outcaste) is an example of such problems in an Indian American immigrant whose spiritual yearnings are confounded by conflicting ashramic responsibilities and cross-cultural dissonance.
21. In my reading of the theory of human development proposed in Kundalini Yoga, Kundalini credibly names the guiding impetus in embryological development that quickens its activity as the neural groove forms the rudiments of the spinal cord as blastulization and gastrulization of the fertilized egg manifest. Those fetal movements engendered by the literal coming into form of the limbs by these very movements must strike us as profound. From mere hand-buds, fingers move into elongated existence, sprouting from wavering arms that articulate themselves with wavery stretches into ever more matured limbs extending from a body whose spine-brain is blossoming into a cranium, expanding now to give it a protective home. The rigidly learned asanas of the so-popular styles of Hatha Yoga originate from these same depths, as becomes evident when Mother Kundalini awakens to animate them,

sahaja, self-arising, from within Thus, Jnaneshvar has states, That is called [Yogic developmental] action of the body in which reason takes no part and which does not originate as an idea springing in the mind. To speak simply, yogis perform actions with their bodies, like the movements of children. (Jnaneshvar, 1987, p.102)

22. Such spontaneous developmental movements also emerge during sexual intercourse, the laboring of childbirth, and in the throes of dying and death. At a subtle emotional level, the poignant and maturing pangs of love felt by parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents upon witnessing anew their children, grand- and greatgrand-children are part of this biospiritual development within The Eternal Ordering-way. The myriad details of family life comprise the further details of this process, down to each and every spousal or parent-child encounter, regarding money, schools, home-making, and so forth, of any historical era.
23. All such movements, vocalizations, and emotionalities are Yogic to the degree they foment the neuroendocrine transformations which comprise urdhva-retas ("refining maturation of bodily essence") grasped rudimentarily as "sublimation" by Freud, thinly as psychological "alchemy" by Jung, and externalized with uncertain results in medicinal rasayana external alchemies.
24. Thus, in contemporary terms, Kundalini might be termed, a meta-DNA. When the fetus is fully-formed, Kundalini sequesters Herself at the posterior node of the fetal spine (the muladhara chakra, the root center) and becomes dormant (unless awakened, as discussed below.) Thereafter, the more general life energy of prana is said to guide human physiology and maintenance-level growth..
25. When growth is especially rapid, prana enters a heightened condition called pranotthana (uplifted, intensified life-energy), as is visible in the blushing glow of children and teenagers, marrying couples, pregnant women and new parents, grandparents and great-grand-parents beholding their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and the (purported) glow of saints or that of any satisfied, fervently longing, or proud person.
26. Here, growth refers to a view of maturation that unifies character and body, that is, the embodiment of virtue, consistent with contemporary theories of virtue ethics. Understood in the terminology of endocrinology, the biochemistries corresponding to faith, humility, awe, devotion, etc. have maturational significance. Thus, too, the foundation of Kundalini Yoga is yama-niyama, character cultivation. Returning to this foundation, Euro-Hinduistic (and Euro-Buddhistic) therapists can better address the over-wrought and abstract concerns with ego and its transcendence that arose from the psychedelic sixties, and transpersonal theorists, such as Wilber, Washburn, Cortright, Grof, and others, who missed the significance of yama-niyama, and of life-long ashramas in their developmental theories.
27. Consider this generalized schema:
 BEGINNING IN UTERO: Sperm-ovum fertilization: zygote, blastula, and gastrula stages develop

FIRST MONTHS: Starting at the embryonic spinal base, Kundalini energy-intelligence guides the formation of the neural groove, the evolutionary fundament of all evermore complex vertebrate bodies, from amphioxus on; gill- slits, tail and other "ontogeny phylogeny recapitulation" vestigial phenomena emerge and vanish; organs

form, heart beats as ananda-maya kosha (causal body), vijnana-maya kosha (reflective-mind body), mano-maya kosha (neuroendocrine-based mind/emotion body), prana-maya kosha (mitochondrial-meridian vital energy body) and anna-maya kosha (food-eating or "ordinary" fleshy body) develop

MIDDLE MONTHS Jiva ("the one who lives") enters the causal body

LATE MONTHS Continued gestation of the fetal body toward fragile sufficiency by the sixth or seventh month as Kundalini completes its formation of the body and recedes into dormancy at the spinal base; the more generic "life energy" of prana of the prana-maya kosha (udana, samana, apana, prana, vyana circuits of head, gut, elimination, respiration, and circulation, respectively) continues as the flesh body's (anna-maya kosha's) sustaining force, as nourished with earthly foods and oxygen via the umbilical connection to mother;

BIRTH First breath, umbilicus cut, eye contact,

FIRST HOURS Reaching, anahata-nada (polysignificant neuroendocrinal developmental utterances that are related to the Yogic developmental breathing of pranayama--a "crying" that can be over-associated with adult anguish); psychomotor developmental movements akin to sahaja Yoga asanas and hand and finger mudras emerge; nursing;

FIRST DECADE Teething, walking, play; glandular secretions underlying character-building sentiments of yamas and niyamas begin to fructify within the child's social and family context; language appropriates mind, tongue and psychosomatic enculturation occurs; prepubescent pranotthana ("intensified life energy") sustains the child's growth, visible as "the glow of childhood"

SECOND DECADE Childhood pranotthana intensifies, fomenting genital puberty/fertility as the embodiment of infinite future human possibilities (the basis of the "endless impermanence" or survival of the species); hormonal- temporal urgencies quicken as gender-oriented desires; intermediate puberty of yama and niyama neuroendocrine secretions emerge, with emphasis upon developmentally sublimative brahmacarya (first ashrama, or "neophyte-learner" stage of "following the Telos"); basic prepubescent asana and pranayama emerge in willful and minimal sahaja or "spontaneous" forms, further maturing sapient embodiment toward Kundalini embodiment;

THIRD DECADE Karma Yoga, the life of responsible action and character maturation; the mind matures beyond childhood's scattered vitality toward pratyahara, the capacity for sustained perceptions and careful attention; second ashrama of "householder" family-creation of pravritti path or the solitary mystic nivritti path is entered; diverse worldly involvements are varyingly dharmic or aligned (aligned, as in religion) with the endogenous maturational process; the maturations known as the "good neighbor" or "well-balanced person" emerge; if pranotthana continues to intensify via dharmic life, the postgenital puberties of urdhva-retas quicken.

FOURTH DECADE Dharana begins: the dawning of awesome awareness of/as endless impermanence and soteriological radiance-secretions of tejas ("brilliance-radiance" of spiritual zeal) and virya ("virtue-secretion/ radiance") emerge; advanced asanas, mudras, bandhas (inner yearning-contractions) and shaking mature the body for more intensified energies; dhyana begins: devout and unwavering appreciation of the flow of endless impermanence and the poignant grace of life; the puberties of the linguistic anatomy (tongue, larynx, brain centers) underlying further meditative/mental maturations begin: simha-asana (tongue-extended "lion-pose" seen in certain goddess images) and nabho mudra (inward-turned tongue, "heaven-delight gesture") precursors of khecari mudra (tongue curls back in delight above the soft palate), initiating the puberties of the hypoglossal-larynx, hypothalamus, pituitary and pineal; anahata- nada, known rudimentarily as "speaking in tongues" and resounding in the sacred chantings of numerous cultures, emerge;

FIFTH DECADE The desire-self identity matures toward the immortal soul-self identity; soteriological radiance of auras (halo-auric glow of spiritual maturity) emerges; continuation of khecari mudra, culminating in the (subtle pineal?) secretion-radiance of soma or amrita ("immortal-time essence," revitalizing melatoninlike, endorphin-like hormone), the uroboric embodiment of endless impermanence; Kundalini awakens, initiating the puberties of the six chakras and the inner shamanic heat; shambhavi mudra, the puberty of the eyes and the pineal leading to inner vision of the soul's (melatonin-like) radiances and the matter-time-space-scent-taste- light-bliss continuum emerges as a phenomenon of embodied eternal impermanence; unmani mudra, the "delight-gesture of free consciousness" cerebral puberty emerges; internal or breathless respiration in the akashic-ethers emerges; grand-children emerge for householders and then the third ashrama of retirement and the fourth ashrama of worldly renunciation; great-grandchildren emerge for householders.

SABIJA-SAMADHI and NIRBIJA-SAMADHI: fully matured origin-consciousness with, and then without, future waverings emerge;

REPEAT 25 TO 50 INCARNATIONS Divya sharira: exceedingly rare full maturation of the ensouled body as "divine light body" and moksha: complete maturation of all soul-body potentials; ultimate liberation into eternal being-in-time.

In order to view Yoga and meditation as just as endogenous to human development (and as awesome) as gestation once was, as taking one's first post-umbilical breath, as adolescent puberty, we must deconstruct the over-formalized pedagogical edifices that have grown around it. Both indigenously over the ages, and in their translation and importation into the West, the "innately- arising" (sahaja) origins of Yoga and meditation have been shaped and over-shaped into formalized pedagogical constructs, cosmeticized or leveled for mass appeal, sterilized for upper-class gentilities, or otherwise tamed and over-tamed to avoid real or imagined dangers.

The reverentially ecstatic "Dance of Siva, Lord of Yogis," became stylized in public rituals, "classical" music and dance, and in the Yogic asanas themselves, or withered in the severe asceticisms of the fakir. By the second century A.D., Patanjali's dualistic, "classical" Yoga-sutra had formalized an over- separation between Nature (prakriti) and Ultimate Subjectivity (purusha), thus "rejecting the idea that the world is an aspect of the Divine" (Feuerstein, 1982, p. 412).

Thus the shamanic Pashupata Yoga and its bond with mystical phenomenology maintained in the living moment through oral transmission in the hoary past (and still, with all manner of attendant difficulties), arose and then fell into evermore secularized, scriptural fundamentalisms and dilutions. The sequence of its fall from only-happening-now time and in-the-moment-utterances into formalized theories and "histories of events" might be as follows:

- (1) the spirit-in-time revealed as a superlative, private bodily experience (ecstasy or enstasy),
- (2) emergent publically as pre-semantic ecstatic-catalytic utterances and dancing-swaying movements, then
- (3) languaged orally as sheer descriptions of the experience, then
- (4) memorized and scripted into an orthodox text or externalized liturgical commemoration (Yoga and meditation as teachings; the movements classicalized as ritual forms),
- (5) its lessons fableized for charm (the ancient myths), then
- (6) in search of a genteel purity, its sparkling and sensual phenomenology put into disembodied descriptions of "heaven- realms" or sheer "higher states of consciousness," and
- (7) as texts and practices exported into the West, formulized for mass pedagogical ease to address the construed needs of stressed modern life (the contemporary Yoga books and aerobics-like classes, stress-reduction courses, and other holistic applications or "new age" appropriations),
- (8) made abstract or "symbolic" of something else, as in Jungian psychology; "primitivized" by scholars for learned discourse (the transpersonalist's synthesizing schemas), and, at all junctures,
- (9) suppressed or championed by religio-political forces; eroded by sectarian rivalries and scandals; desiccated as the legalistic, purely academic word, or scorned as mere superstition.,
- (10) until some reformer or charismatic, grace-dispensing saint (incarnation of a god, goddess or demi-god, goddess) redresses the excesses or desiccation He or She

encounters in the traditions He or She reforms or invigorates with experiential vividness. (Here, psychedelics functioned as a pseudo-invigorating agent in the 60s)

Thus the Yogic textual metaphors which paint accurate pictures of various phases of the inner experience of certain neuroendocrinal maturations--of, for example, "fluids raining down from the heavens" and "sacrifices made into further sacrifices," referring to the transmutation of subtle melatonin-like pineal secretions as they appear (to the rishika, "the seer who sees the described referent actually happening") with his eyes closed in ecstatic witness to their flickering precipitations in the ever-spiraling-higher ["sacrificed and further sacrificed"] into the ever-spiraling higher center of the cathedral-domed cranium were transposed to the externalized space of the firmament and, ironically, buried within the homologous brahmanic sacrificial rituals (or myths) which were meant to be subservient pointers to the inner hormonal developmental experiences. The "higher and higher heavens" became abstractions, instead of aesthetic descriptions of how it floatingly actually feels when the cerebral puberty unfolds meditative glimpses of the infinity of love-space-time. For, what are all pubescent hormones but the "sacrificial" materializations of the infinite? And what are these sacrifices, except givings-to-physical-humans of the sensual path to their own highest joys and matured clarities. (N.B., the above and the next run-on sentences are literary devices that attempt to induce some version of the experience described therein.)

Via further translations into the modern pragmatic- scientific vernacular, instead of an inner awe of wonder and delight, we now speak of "spiritual practices," "visualization techniques," Yogic "states of consciousness" and quasi-Newtonian "spiritual energies." Instead of a well-mapped, but dynamic, esoteric phenomenology of marvelous fluttering, whorling, meditative experiences of cerebral-hormonal "flowing-juices" (soma) and "brilliant sunlight" ("savitri," a Vedic term for Kundalini illuminating the mind and for which Elizarenkova counts more than fifteen verbs denoting its "brilliance" in the Rig Veda), we have the dry brahmanic (Indian or Western) abstractions or translations depicting only exoteric ritual libations, "transrational" evolutionary schemas, tantric visualization practices, and theonyms for sun-worship. The "Burning Bush," whether Western or Eastern, as aptly describing the overwhelming, experienced glow of Kundalini in the cerebrum, is lost in its own metaphor. But sometimes not, as Allama Prabhu, the tenth century dionysian bhakti yogi sang:

Looking for your light	[of hope],
I went out	[into meditation]:
it was like a sudden dawn	[a breakthrough of inner luminescence]
of a million million suns,	
a ganglion of lightnings	[the cerebral puberty]
for my wonder.	

O Lord of Caves	[Hearted Flesh-bodies],
if you are light,	
there can be no metaphor	[an experience beyond words].

(Ramanujan, 1973, p. 168)

And why Kundalini is called serpentine should not rest upon its coiled shape or as a "symbol" of the infinite, but to convey the charm of its mercurial iridescence when it is actually seen or felt: the inexplicable glimmer of human developmental detail, down to each glittering bone-cell or mitochondrion fibril-thrill as the incessant resurgence of creation. To hear a life-long yogi choked up, unable to speak in daunted admiration for his predecessors while describing their inner maturations: perhaps this memory of one of my interviewees conveys my point.

For Kundalini names those degrees of our own potential that, like conception and birth, the shimmerings of the surf, or the unpredictability of Brownian movements, exceed the leveling grasp of too-formulaic developmental models, narratives, or measurings. Thus, the complexity of Indian classical music and the greater complexities beneath it: the dhun (chant) and din resolving to Aauummmm and returning to Maaaaaaa. What else could enrapture us to the point of climax for eternity but the marvel of the never- before, forever? What else could wean us of every selfishness, vengefulness, and even the fear of death? Such is the next puberties: the rebirth into soul-Time that all religions point to.

Yes, by imitating others' endogenously originated movements, heartfelt utterances, righteous actions or rapt concentrations, we can go through the back door (literally via a ventral ["front door"] or "Eastern" bodily channel) into the same depths of wonder, wisdom, and delight. And, by motionless meditation, too, one can enter. Thus, we have numerous helpful Yogic texts, new and ancient, and a proliferation of Yoga and still-meditation classes. But when Kundalini is reintroduced (via the "Westernly" and more body-involving spinal channel) to our understanding of Yoga and meditation, something deep and primordial ripples through the viscera and Yoga or meditation "practices" can no more be considered mere "teachable techniques" than gestation or puberty can be. For Kundalini Yoga surfaces from the same bodily depths as gestation, the first breath, adolescent puberty, and now, beyond.

For while "health" is a function of "normalcy," both must be contexted developmentally, that is, both must be understood temporally as what quality of embodied life next becomes possible as a result of such "health" or "normalcy." And, then, from that basis, what quality of life next becomes possible, and so on. As Sartre mused, the meaning of things is to be derived destinally or by where, finally, they tend toward. Thus, "the normal" could be attuned to "the Absolute," if we but knew what the Absolute was, and then dedicated ourselves to it as the discovered, most matured possibility for homosapiens sapiens. In this case, let us consider that to be homosapiens Kundaliniens.

I am aware of the rhetorical impact of making such grand word choices--"postgenital puberties," "the Absolute" "homsapiens Kundaliniens. I know that, in this day and age, I risk provoking a dismissive skepticism by hoisting a claim for ultimate truth and a teleological evolutionism. Yet, even the highly sophisticated postmodern project of laying bare the hypothesis of metaphysical closure (that the constructs of reason might eventually exhaust their explanative effectiveness) and the insubstantiality of the authoritative subject does not guarantee its own finality. A consequence of noncynical, profound doubt regarding all received wisdom can be that within it something utterly new

or "foreign" might be noticed and granted credibility by the community of experts (or by any individual.)

In a state of radical doubt or openness we must no longer dare to assume that answers to the timeless questions must easily fit in with established theory, nor that they must originate within traditional Western research institutions or discursive methods. The strange discipline in Western academic philosophy and psychology of seeking answers primarily, if not exclusively, within the established Western canon can seem like working with one hand tied behind the back, or worse.

The sectarian approach to spiritual truth is another unfortunate and at times tragic limitation. That the search is best done in chairs, with the eyes fastened to books and the ears to discourse, or in a lab where the researcher does not change, or even in motionless contemplations with no attention to the glands, interior vibrations, the spine, and the rest of the body, will seem from within the Yogic methodologies to be overly formalistic and distinctly restrictive.

However, only a scientifically verifiable new discovery concerning human possibility would be compelling enough to foment a "re-worlding" (after Heidegger's verb, "to world" a world) breakthrough beyond the postmodern shifting play of words, time, and ideologies of difference; for example, repeatedly measurable alterations of endocrine secretions resulting from the serpentine intelligence of Kundalini Yoga.

Yet, in a theological, political, and then in a pre-potent semantic sense, Western science is prevented from exploring spiritual matters not so much by the grossness of its methods as by a lingering dualism which has long minimized the spirituality of the physical world. If science can or has studied it, then it probably should not be deemed *spiritual* is the syllogism preempting the intermingling of these "two" domains, finally, of spirit and body. DNA may be profound, but it cannot be spiritual because it is (merely) molecular. For the limitations of dualism to be obviated, we must grant spiritual import to the body. But, to avoid a too-facile nondualism, we will have to look much more profoundly into the body.

The Postgenital Pubescent "Alchemies"

Known in Vedic times as shamanica medhra (releasement beyond genital puberty, and from which the term, shamanism is likely derived), the essential alchemy of urdhva-retas is the distillation of thesecretion-radiance of ojas (subtle glycogen or health-energy radiance) such that desire-based love (the alchemical "lead" or "mercury") begins to mature into ever more unconditional love (the alchemical "gold," or the "nectar" of endless love).

Through its pathologizing concepts of "self-stimulation," "somatic cocooning," and "auto-hypnotic states," psychoanalysis has obscured its view of Yogic phenomena. Even Winnicott's "self-soothing" misses the spiritual depths from where this "internal mothering" emerges and what further nurturance it is fully capable of providing. As well,

the more bodily-oriented therapies of Reichian orgonomy and bioenergetics focused its therapies exclusively on orgasm-like emotional "releases" or catharses to increase energetic flow. Characterized as a mere "bio-electrical energy," the motherly force lost more of her nurturing powers. As Reich's innovator, Alexander Lowen asserts with confident authority:

When growth has reached its natural limits, some other use must be made of the excess [sic] energy that is being produced....In the higher animals, the excess energy is discharged in the sexual function, as Wilhelm Reich showed. Maturity means that the energy that was formerly needed for the growth process is now available for discharge.

(Lowen, 1967, p. 57)

Repeatedly, conventional developmental theory is delimited by its unfamiliarity with any postgenital maturational stages--stages that require the very energy that is otherwise construed as having no other purpose than its availability for discharge or for an ambiguous sublimation.

The obvious question would seem to be: How could maturational phenomena worthy of such a genetic characterization as I assert be so unknown and rare? Part of the answer lies in:

1. The limited exploration of the positive role of the body in spiritual development by various world religions and their missed appreciation of any continuity of genital puberty with "spiritual rebirth" and their consequently short-sighted and, thereby, often repressive moralities and dry monasticisms; the inherent richness of genital puberty and sex which can obscure the existence of any further bodily awakenings and any interest in cultivating them.
2. Centuries of Western biases against "animism," "vitalisms," and "heathen religions" and, more recently, in the developing third world against its own "superstitious backwardnesses". (The cross-cultural sensitivities noted throughout the DSM-IV are a significant improvement, in this respect, as was the critique of Christianity in Feuerbach's The Essence of Christianity, 1841)
3. Misinterpretations of Hindu relics and texts that result when researchers are deprived of the Yogic bodily referenced hermeneutic. For example, the "Ganges River" is to be understood homologously as the main flow channel for certain maturational radiances; references to "dancing in the sky (ethers)" or "cow worship" esoterically refer to the tongue (the "cow") giving up its articulations of words in khecari (khe: "sky," cari: "dance in") mudra to stretch upward nonverbally into a vibrationally churned, subtler, "milky-buttery," (the cowherd Krishna's quintessential delight) inner alchemical medium of truth; Natural elements (diamond body, mercury, gold, moon- or sunlight) as the phenomenal lustre of internally-sensed hormonal distillates; the "heaven-realms" as the eyes-closed cranial-vault space (replicated universally as cathedral domes) in which the flickering nonverbal truth-nectars of infinite time-light-

sound- bliss flow; while the proverbial "mountainous ascent" describes what the spinal puberty of Mt. Meru, Mt. Olympus, Mt. Moriah, Mt. Kailash, or Mt. Carmel feels like and its glorified bodily locus.

5. The several gurus who breached their spiritual vows and numerous exposed religious scandals and ensuing cultural cynicisms. War, bloody religious crusades, inquisitions, sect rivalries, and other social devastation that erodes faith in the existence of any true saints or spiritual Absolutes.
6. Yogic archival and cult tendencies to exaggerate, mythologize or conceal in metaphors the spiritual practices and attainments maturation-movements"; The tendency of intensive spiritual lifestyles to become remote from mainstream culture, and thus "esotericized" while secularized lifestyles that dilute the teachings proliferate as exoteric "churches" or "religions"; the arising of misleading fanaticisms in esoteric groups and in mistaking licentious debauchery for the dionysian spontaneities and ecstasies resulting from careful cultivation of Yogic saints; the formulization of Yogic phenomena into teachable, willful practices, as Patanjali devised in his Yoga-sutra and by many others that marginalize or miss the endogenous quality of sahaja ("spontaneous") Yoga or kriya-vati: "spontaneous
8. Centuries of Yogic pedagogical secrecy and the often unassuming humility of many spiritually matured, inconspicuous yogis. The safety that reclusion promises for those with spiritual powers otherwise besieged or even feared and, not uncommonly, harmed by others.
9. The slow progress in Western science to measure instrumentally subtle bodily phenomena such as "energy" and the lack of biofeedback research on the spine's role in meditation.
10. The popularization, effectiveness, and simplicity of "straight-back" (uju kaya) meditative paths which tend to marginalize or eliminate bodily movements, emotional utterances, etc., from the spiritual path.
11. The numerous hours per day in Yogic worship that development toward this physical-spiritual Absolute comes to consuming, as the fundamental purpose of life, time, and the body seems to be to enact the Yogic cultivations and then to contribute to one's community; the developmental importance of initiating Yogic practices before the age of 35, in keeping with its bio-genetic basis; and even then, the inherent difficulties affecting appetite, sleep cycles, and the Promethean temptations of hubris which can short-circuit the completion of the path and generate false accounts of its requirements.
12. The time and energy demands--a kind of repressive back pressure or cultural inertia--of contemporary world structures that exist only if these stages do not unfold except perhaps rarely. In a vicious-circle fashion, this "wheel of worldly life" includes the dramatic and real need for extensive altruistic service to address the extreme deteriorations of society and the environment ironically resulting from missing these

endogenous joys and then compensating by over-using the outer world. (I am reminded that in the 1970's when Burmese farmers were taught modern ways to triple their crop yield for cash export purposes, many chose to work one-third as much and to instead increase their meditation time.)

From Worded Truth to Wordless Gnosis:
The Puberties of Khecari, Shambhavi, and Unmani Mudras

Khecari Mudra: Linguistic Transcendence
and Hypoglossal Maturation

The rediscovered meditation practices of both Eastern and Western spiritualities have bequested transpersonal psychology an appreciation for the "wisdom-beyond-language." Psychologies of meditation now abound. Yet, when movement during meditation is kept within apollonian forms, as is commonly taught, further maturations of the body can be inhibited. Thus, the postgenital puberty of the tongue and hypothalamus known as khecarī mudra ("the sky-dancer delight-gesture"), so supportive of the meditative maturations of consciousness, is little known. (I am not referring to the intentionally contrived practice of lengthening the tongue, but the mudra that emerges spontaneously via pranotthana.)

During this puberty, the anatomy underlying speech and linguistic-knowing outgrows the "grip" of language and its limitations and passes through all manner of maturational longings and sacred utterance in which semantic purport, somatic auto-developmentalism, and ecstatic worship converge. Thus, the impact of the khecarī puberty is wide-ranging. It spiritualizes the voice, distills mental energies to a quivering stillness, and revitalizes the body. Subjectively, longing (kama) arises throughout the body and into the pharynx and the hypoglossal nerve. The tongue literally moves beyond its linguistic-enunciating function into an esoteric vocabulary of tumescent archings and developmental "delight-gestures"--mudras--and panlinguistic utterances.

As the tongue leans fore- and backward in graceful or impassioned, movement, whatever theological discourse hopes to achieve, is arrived at by purely somatic means. The articulative mechanics of utterance become the sonic and fleshy props for this oral-spiritual ascent. Here, the gap between words and wordless meditation, or body and spirit, is filled in exquisite detail, like the warbling lark at dawn.

These particular swaying, arching, and yearning tongue, and other bodily movements and soundings--more so than all those of the logico-semantic ilk--unfold now a somatic-aesthetic way to the truth. Guided inwardly by the alluring scent, glow, taste, cool then heat, and eternally beckoning yin-yang whorl of the subtle-pineal's heavenly portal, the tongue takes on this postlinguistic purpose. The central nervous system, with its elaborately beautiful structural and energetic subtleties, becomes its own highest thought and proprioceptive feeling, and the tongue its now-silenced and prostrate devotee.

Comparative anatomy reveals that homosapiens has the most elaborately enervated tongue of all lifeforms. That this anatomical fact should be interpreted by sociobiologists as an evolutionary advantage or selective adaptation whose purpose is precise verbal articulations is cast into the background of a far more profound bodily potential, in the light of khecari mudra. The unusually complex hypoglossal nerve gives the tongue the sensitivity and muscular-articulating capacity to stretch back toward an inner-calling, thus stimulating the brain/mind in its maturation beyond language-knowing toward deeply embodied, meditative gnosis.

Embryology as well suggests that khecari mudra is part of a developmental continuity from the earliest to this most advanced stage of bodily manifestation. For we find that the timely secretion of sweet-tasting mucopolysaccharides causes the proto-tongue to lick itself away from its embryonic contact with the hypophysis (the rudiment of the hypothalamus and pituitary) and out of the then-forming cranial cavity and into the just-developing oral cavity. It is interesting, then, to find that after years of pranotthana, other sweet-tasting brain secretions (soma, amrita) will again draw the tongue toward further bodily maturations in khecari mudra. This time, the sweetness guides the tongue back behind the soft palate proximal to the hypothalamic "appetitive-drive satiety center" and the pituitary developmental "master gland." The breath-less "hermetic" meditative episodes that occur during its arousal quicken the maturations of this puberty.

For, during certain breathless meditative passages that emerge during the mudra's hypoglossal tumescence, a "psychic membrane" opens, certainly related to the hypothalamic monitoring of blood oxygenations. Through this permeable boundary between psyche and soma, an internal respiration, known as kevala kumbhaka, begins to gasp sustenance. The yogini becomes like the first amphibious fish who risked crawling ashore breathing no longer through gulps of water, but now of atmospheric oxygen. She finds a motionless way of breathing life into her body from the "lungs" of the akasha, the glowing pranic ethers of her own endless mind. This motionless inspiration feels interminably deep, going to the source of life itself, and even without khecari is common to many meditative paths. For here the mind-brain, which is, in part, based in pranic vibration, deepens its meditative maturation and the meditator begins to identify with such wordings as "The Self," "Atman," "Space," or with the Ineffable of "not this nor 'not-not' this."

Shambhavi Mudra: The Inner-Outer Visual Puberty. The expanse between shambhavi ("delight-gesture of divine knowing-seeing") and unmani mudras ("no-mind mind delight-gesture") tracks visual attentiveness from the outer seeing to the inner, esoteric visions and finally, into the enstatic samadhis of the fully matured ensouled body.

In popular parlance, a "soft-focus" of the eyes into the space in front of one's face is a way into shambhavi, as are the various interpersonal gazing meditations of tantra. The clinical eye movement techniques known as "EMDR" (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) derive from the release of ocular tensions while focussing mentally on traumatic memories moreso than on the openness of perception that just then emerges as ocular tensions have been released. Thus, gazing or abreactive techniques, however

helpful, can divert us from the more endogenous depths where the beauty and poignancy of seeing into sheer-space-in-time can catch our attention. Whatever chronic tensions there may be, and whatever memories one might associate with them, we can still become naturally allured and spellbound by the now-emergent simplicity: the innate blossoming-open of the eye-mind-heart complex.

Yet, technically, shambhavi mudra covers concentrations only so far as the eyes remain open, and somewhat downward in focus. As the eyes enter a kind of tumescence, they raise slightly. This indicates the beginning of unmani mudra, described below.

Unmani Mudra: Puberty of Cortical-consciousness. In the next puberty, unmani mudra, the cerebrum-mind further outgrows the grip of semantic processing. This "no-mind mind" correlates with various stages of Buddhist and other meditations, whereby the originating Source of moment-to-moment consciousness is lived into with sustained, fully consumed concentration, thus pre-empting any "later" generations of thoughts, recalled images, or comparative multiplicities of any sort (smritis). This is the mental puberty otherwise known as "enlightenment," continuous flow of shruti (revealed truth) develops in the silent hush of this womb of consciousness: "The uninterrupted news that grows out of silence" (Rilke, 1963, p. 25); Or, as J.D. Salinger put it in his story, Teddy, "God pouring God into God."

The expanse of these maturations of consciousness begin with pratyahara, the capacity to focus attention to the degree that this focusing itself can be felt and attend to. Next emerges dharana, such focus sustained to the level of a flow of concentration hovering in sheer impermanence itself. Dhyana next emerges as impermanence is continuously embraced as the temporal nature of the on-flowing of attention, on and on and on and on.

Thus quickens the consolidation of truths: being-in-time, quiddity, the love-bliss of pristine creation as first, sabija- samadhi, constant knowing of the Source, beyond the need for explication, yet with the "seeds" of thought; and then nirbija- samadhi, constant knowing of the Source so convincingly as to extinguish all "seeds" of hankering.

After many lifetimes of Yogic "gestation" at this advanced level of maturation, so it is said, the body, enters its fully matured status of divya sharira ("divine light body"). Thus, Kundalini Yoga logs maturations beyond the meditative absolute of the "enlightened mind" which correlatively fructify in the body as its regenerative rebirth.

Complete maturation: divya sharira and ultimate possibility: the body become one with the immortal soul. Thus, in the spinal paths, after some thirty to fifty lifetimes of dedicated postgenital cultivations (Kripalvanad, 1979), the entire body more and more partakes of this fundamental deathlessness, as body, mind, and eternal soul become a fully integrated whole. The term "embodied spiritual truth" leaves the realm of metaphor or vague adjectival and becomes as concretely literal and remarkable as a newborn baby.

Although exceedingly rare and seemingly outlandish, the "divine body" (divya sharira) is held to be no less or more miraculous or unnatural than the matured pubescent body

which supports progenitive immortality and the awe of conception, gestation, and childbirth. (Here I am offering a heightened way of looking at "ordinary" reproductivity.)

According to the Pashupata Sutra and the Ganakarika Sutra (Collins, 1988, p. 137-38), the Pashupata sect practiced an ecstatic ritual including wild laughter, sacred singing, "dancing consisting of [all possible] motions of the hands and feet: upward, downward, inward, outward and shaking motion," a sacred "sound produced by the contact of the tongue-tip with the palate...after the dance when the devotee has again sat down and is still meditating on Siva," an "inner worship," and prayer.

The Pashupata sect which spread throughout Hindu, Buddhist and Jain India for some 600 years (and originating the Yogic lineage of Gorakshanath and Matsyendranath and all modern hatha yogis) was noteworthy in Indian history in its scorn of the caste system and its belief in a diety capable of bestowing forgiveness and redemptive grace beyond the mechanistic dictates of karma. They believed that, as homeless forest-dwellers they transformed the enmity of city-dwellers who derided them by never striking back and instead blessed them. Given the open-heartedness, the breadth of emotionality inclusive of anahata-nada out-pourings and shamanic, animal-like dancing within the Pashupata Yoga, I conjecture that this sect functioned not only as a sainted-spiritual community, but, for some few, as a psychiatric haven, drug and criminal rehabilitation center, and homeless shelter. As with the appearance of many other saints, heaven lived on earth, and those within its fold were, for a time, redeemed into fully dharmic and joyous life.