

Origins of Yoga

The phenomenon of spontaneous kriyas: its source, forms of manifestation and deep meaning

TEXT BASED ON LIVE INTERVIEW: Igor Kufayev



"There is no awakening without kriyas... awakening itself is a grand kriya."

– Igor Kufayev

From the standpoint of Yoga, knowledge, no matter how profound, needs to be cognized and experienced directly — first-hand. There always have been teachers, who emphasized that direct realization by giving seekers direct taste of their own nature, which has always been associated with *shaktipat* — the transmission of Divine power. *Shaktipat* unlocks that hidden potential known as Kundalini. Kriyas, involuntary movements arise in meditation as the result of the stirring, awakening, and unfolding of Kundalini Shakti. The phenomenon of kriyas remains a relatively unexplored subject, yet is a profoundly interesting one. They are the by-product of greater activity of pranic flow through the subtler pathways of energy ushered by the activation of Life Force.

This fascinating phenomenon is a constant feature of the retreats of spiritual Teacher Igor Kufayev, arising in nearly every participant. It is his wish to provide deeper understanding of the journey of awakening and honor the Shakti, the Divine Mother, who is the timeless source and origin of yoga — and of all spiritual traditions.

Kundalini, Kriyas and the Path of the Heart

The term “kundalini,” though well known now in the west, is not just some esoteric force within human physiology. Kundalini controls absolutely all functioning in the body-mind. Whenever I try to dispel this air of mysticism around Kundalini, I often say that Kundalini is simply your soul. It is your soul. It is my and your soul.

From the Hindu perspective, Kundalini is that life force which is coiled at the base of the spine in the Muladhara Chakra, which represents the potential present in human Consciousness in a state of homeostasis. And that dormant energy needs to be awakened in order for necessary transformative processes to ensue. In other words, no practices bear any fruit unless the very force responsible for the transformation of Consciousness is being released. This is the loftiest aspiration behind all spiritual practices, regardless of where they were born, and where they were developed.

Kundalini is the soul in its pure potentiality within every being, as the potentiality of who we are, as opposed to what we perceive ourselves to be. Our perception of who we are is just that — a set of memories and concepts that have formed and instructed us from the moment we began to cognize our environment as toddlers and began

to make sense out of all that. With the progressive growth of the human organism, this set of ideas eventually crystallizes into what we then understand to be our individuality — this is what puts our consciousness into that state of homeostasis in the first place. In other words, it's as if we are undergoing a certain necessary programming; we are being programmed in order to grow and function as this evolved human, in order to be part of this culture we are born into. There has to be this aspect in consciousness, otherwise individuality cannot be experienced. Without the process of contraction, there is no individuality, no individual soul. And awakening is what deprograms us from that programming that took place.

I'd like to add that it's practically impossible to fully articulate what Kundalini is. Why? Because as we've said that Kundalini is our soul, another very suitable term for Kundalini is Consciousness. In other words, Kundalini is our Consciousness — our soul, our Consciousness, just different terms for the same thing — the same reality. We can never understand Kundalini, because Kundalini is not an object — it's our own Consciousness. Consciousness is that what illumines objects of our perception. But there is no other agency that illumines Consciousness.

The sanskrit word for Consciousness is *Chit*. *Chit* is the knower of reality. It cannot be reduced to an object by virtue of which one can know *Chit*. *Chit* is that which knows. Kundalini is *Chit* in the life force of a human body. As soon as we begin to think of Kundalini as some kind of energy residing in the body, we are running the risk of reducing our own Consciousness to an object of observation. When we understand that Kundalini is nothing other than our own awareness in a state of identification with the body-mind, then we can understand that in order for that energy to awaken, something has to happen within Consciousness itself, there must be some movement within that Consciousness, which is contracted away from its own glory. Something has to happen.



“There is no such thing as you without that Divine power. That’s all there is to it. Kundalini is the power behind your individuation. The Goddess is the individuation – it’s the soul in any of its states, absolutely all of them. So this is a very simple realization that you need to make. Kundalini is a greater you in you – as simple as that.”

– Igor Kufayev

When this movement occurs, the life force is released from its seat, and it begins to send profound waves of energy throughout the entire subtle body. The subtle body begins a process of purification by release of deep-seated stresses and psychic tendencies, where each release is accompanied by some jolts — some movements, which we call *kriyas*. *Kriyas* can be physical, mental, emotional, psychological. The body can shake and tremble and sway and jump and hop and contort. The body can perform various forms of known and unknown yoga asanas, mudras, various bandhas, spontaneous vocalization or glossolalia. Or the body can be immovable as a sphinx. And *kriyas* here are not something that we *do*, but something that simply happens to us when life force begins to release from its seat. *Kriyas* are signposts of progressive freeing of the system from all that information which contracts our awareness away from what we are. Unprocessed information is what we call “stress.” It lays

as a sediment in our nervous system and creates blockages in an otherwise perfectly wired human nervous system, designed to experience this wonder of being at once human and divine.

“Oh, holy, holy, holy! I'm being cleansed, purified, glorified, washed in rivers of flowing gold; folded, crumpled, stretched, released... begins in the heart pulsating with love, then diving down, down, down, igniting the churning, flowing, simmering, flashing, exploding – thrilling me for hours on end.”

~ Karen Miller, student of Igor

Now, although kriyas are an inseparable part of this work, this is not a “Kriya path.” This is the Path of the Heart. This path is a non-intellectual and direct cognition of the essence of one's reality, intuited in the Heart of one's being. The Path of the Heart is present in absolutely every tradition — whether this is the tradition of the bushman of Kalahari Desert, or the shamans in Siberia, or yogis of any path, or the Sufis of any order, whether this is an early Christian tradition, or any gnostic tradition. Paradoxically, the path of the Heart also transcends any tradition. Because by definition it cannot be contained by a set of doctrines. The Path of the Heart discards any attempt to grasp the nature of our essential reality as the very limitation we must overcome. Because grasping belongs to the sphere of the mind. On the Path of the Heart, knowledge is not spoken of in terms of acquisition. The knowledge is not mental or intellectual. It is a simple and most direct knowingness itself. It is beyond concepts and precepts, beyond understanding, and beyond language. It's prior to everything.

The Bhagavad Gita reminds us to surrender all actions to God, to free ourselves from the sense of “mine.” Kriyas that arise in meditation are a daily, visceral reminder of the truth that all action is the action of God, that nothing in this life — not even the control of our bodies — is really ours.”

~ Yogananda Menzel, student of Igor

An important reminder is that the process of activating, awakening and releasing of Kundalini from its dormancy requires supervision of an adept. The teacher initiates but very often safeguards the process itself. In this work I come across of many people who have their Kundalini activated or awakened for many years, yet due to not having a proper guidance their awakenings are often accompanied by physical, mental or emotional complications. That's why we can find so many poetic lines in so many cultures on the role of the guide. One from Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī comes to mind: *without a guide it takes 200 years to make a 2-day journey*. The true beauty of that relationship only opens when our perception is refined, when our heart is cultured enough to experience the rising waves of deeper connection. Because that relationship often unlocks the heart to experience devotion, that what truly completes even the most advanced process, even the most advanced stage and phase. And devotion is what leads us to realization of Love as our ultimate nature.

“My hands that were forming movements and mudras froze in front of my body and the whole posture became immobile. I sit like an Indian murti. Silent. Absolute still. The breath is not noticeable any longer. There is this shift deep within, which feels like stepping through a hidden gateway into my own Being. The secret gateway is Grace, the presence of the Divine Mother... This inner 'step' feels like the agreement to die consciously to be reborn in this ocean of bliss, the primal waters of Sat-Chit-Ananda...”

~ Sundari Ma, student of Igor

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Igor Kufayev — an artist, Advaita Tantra Teacher and founder of the Flowing Wakefulness community, for over a decade Igor Kufayev has been serving as a conduit of transmission for awakening towards the new era of heart-centered consciousness. Speaking from direct realization of Oneness, he inspires all seekers of truth to recognize the fullest potential present in human birth. He travels extensively offering gatherings and retreats for the seekers of truth worldwide, at the present mainly in North America and Europe.

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