

Prana The subtle life force, the sub-atomic energy. The first unit of energy. Prana is the motion and coding of life energies through the realms of the mind and body.

Apana The eliminating force of the body.

Kundalini The uncoiling of your essential consciousness, your creative potential, the energy of consciousness, the energy of the soul itself. Literally it means "the curl in the lock of the hair of the beloved."

Nadis Channels of flow for the Prana. There are 72,000 *nadis*, of which 72 are vital. Of those 72, three major nadis are important for the understanding of Kundalini Yoga: *ida*, *pingala*, *sushmuna*.

Ida The *nadi* which ends at the left nostril. It brings in the cooling, soothing, mind-expanding energy of the moon.

Pingala The *nadi* which ends in the right nostril. It brings in the stimulating, energizing, heating energy of the sun.

Sushmuna The central *nadi*, or channel through which the kundalini ascends. The *sushmuna* originates from the base of the spine where the three nadis (*ida*, *pingala*, and *sushmuna*) meet. It travels up the center of the spine to the top of the head. It is also called the Silver Cord.

Vayus The different frequencies and modes of motion of the Prana. Each *vayu* has a natural home in the body. They are: *prana*, *apana*, *udana*, *samana*, *vyana*.

The Navel Point is a center of energy transformation in the body. This center is etheric. It is located a few inches below the navel, and in front of the lower spine. This center is a vital nexus. It encloses within itself the starting point of the 72,000 *nadis*, including, of course, the 72 vital *nadis*.

For more on pranayam, see *Breath* chapter.

Prana & Kundalini

Prana is the motion and the coding of energies through the realms of the mind and body. Prana is not kundalini. Kundalini is an emanation of the soul itself, the opening of the soul energy and awareness. Many people are confused by the writings on kundalini because it has become popular to think that there are "kundalini emergencies." Most of these so-called emergencies are actually imbalances of the Prana in one or another of your Ten Bodies or in the chakras. Most healing has to do with rearranging the Pranas in an appropriate way.

Vayus

Prana with a capital "P" divides itself into different frequencies or different types of motion within the areas of the body. These are the *vayus*. Each of these subdivisions of Prana has a natural home in the body. If too much of a particular Prana accumulates in an area away from its normal functioning or too little is there when it's needed, that creates a disorder, an illness of the body, mind, or emotions. Many of the techniques of posture and breathing and the way we eat, and act, are done to recreate the natural flow, or these subdivisions of *Prana* within our bodies. In this way our body can regain a sense of stillness, flexibility, and spontaneous intuition, so that it becomes a perfect instrument for the soul. We no longer worry about or obsess on our disorders or needs. We can sense the motion that's in the entire universe.

In the ancient times, the science of sensing the motion of the universe and of expanding your knowledge by using it was called *swarodaya*. A yogi would see the condition of the breath of a student, and he would know the state of illness, and the probability of success in the ventures he or she was going to encounter. It looked like a psychic miracle, but it was a sensitivity to the motions of the Prana. By blending the *Pranas* appropriately, you can regulate your moods and expand your mental capacity.

Imagine the *Prana* going into each area of your body. Prana divides into five *vayus*: *prana*, *apana*, *udana*, *samana*, and *vyana*.

Prana (small "p") accumulates between the base of the heart and the neck. It is linked to the function of the lungs and to inspiration. The motion of prana is accumulation and expansion of the lungs and of the internal energy. When you are full of prana, you're ready for life, you're charged with energy, your respiration is open and your mind takes on a sense of positivity.

Apana has its abode below the navel and governs all the functions relating to elimination. It is associated with elimination through the rectum, the bladder, the colon, and the genitals. *Apana* even flows down and exits the body through the feet, although its primary exit is through the rectum. Powerful *apana* is needed these days to deal with the elimination of toxins. It also gives you the ability to know what you need to retain and what you need to let go. *Apana* is associated with earthy qualities that sustain many of the body parts. Someone with too much *apana* will tend to be slow, lazy and have a sense of heaviness, a sense of confusion or stupidity. With strong *apana* comes a sense of security and the ability to put one foot in front of the other.

Samana rules the region between the heart and the navel and governs much of the body's metabolic activity. It tends to organize, systematize, and decide where things go. *Samana* helps in assimilation. It helps you to know what to assimilate and what to pass on to the colon. People with too little *samana* or upset *samana* have a sense of mental confusion, confused emotions, and an inability to know what is really true for them emotionally. Relationships can be quite confused. People with relationship boundary problems often have upsets in *samana*. Strong *samana* allows you to discriminate, and gives you emotional clarity.

Udana resides in the larynx and upwards into the head. As opposed to *prana*, it throws the air up and out. It is about projection. It is active in all forms of speech as well as in expelling through vomiting. It interacts with all the senses in the head. When *udana* is not properly regulated, the voice is irregular; and there's an inability to create musical notes properly. If *udana* is strong, you can project, and you can create with your word.

Vyana pervades the entire body. It is like a subtle connecting tissue. It governs the overall coordination and movement of muscles and joints throughout the body. *Vyana* gives both the body and your thoughts a sense of integrity, a kind of viscosity to the Pranic Body. When it's very strong, there's a sense of interconnectedness and flow. When *vyana* is disturbed, one part of the body may feel isolated or disconnected from the others. When *vyana* is imbalanced and disturbed, the mind has a difficult time staying with any one thought. Ideas constantly change, and thoughts are scattered into competing parts, instead of all the parts coordinating and connecting.

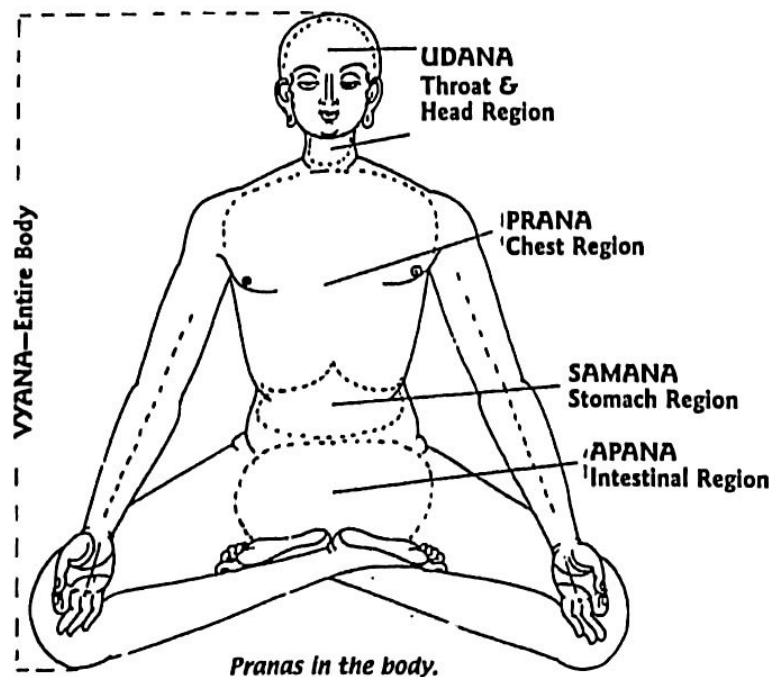
Though there are many more subdivisions of Prana that go along with the different motions of the body, these are the major ones.

The Flow of the Kundalini

One of the central processes in most Kundalini *kriyas* is to strengthen the accumulating energy of *prana* and the eliminating energy of *apana*. When *prana* and *apana*, which act as the central axis of all the Pranas, are strong and balanced, the others tend to adjust. When *prana* and *apana* are both strong, the opposite energies mix together, uniting through the navel by applying *mulbandh*. This opens the doorway to the flow of Kundalini, which is the opening of the soul energy of awareness.

Nadis

What do these different types of Prana have to do with the meridians and channels of flow in the body? In Kundalini Yoga, these channels are called *nadis*. A *nadi* is not a nerve or a muscle, but just a channel of flow, which may go along a bone or a vein, or may go straight through what we'd think of as space without a physical organ. There are seventy-two major *surs*, or zones, through which the *nadis* flow. Of the seventy-two, there are three major ones: the *ida*, on the left, the *pingala*, on the right, and the *sushmuna*, in the center. Of those three, it is the central channel, the *sushmuna*, which Kundalini Yoga concentrates on mostly, because if you can vibrate the *sushmuna*, then you can vibrate all three *surs*. When you vibrate all three, you vibrate the seventy-two, and you can adjust the entire system. It is for this reason that when we chant and we use the power of *shabd*, we consciously locate that *shabd* in the central channel so that we can vibrate all the seventy-two major meridians. Now, those seventy-two span out to 72,000 channels throughout the body in different systems. It is the interaction with the Crown Chakra that gives 1,000 thoughts per smallest time unit, 1,000 vibrations or seeds of the mind. Those 1,000 strokes of the mind strike the seventy-two major channels, giving 72,000 vibrations. Just think of a string being plucked by a pick. It vibrates and creates a shape in both time and space. The plucking of the seventy-two major channels by the interaction with the mind, gives all your Ten Bodies a shape in time and space. It shapes your physical body, your emotional bodies, and your mental bodies. Kundalini Yoga decodes how to pluck those major strings by using the central channel.



Prana, Apana, Nadis & Kundalini

PRANA IS THE LIFE FORCE INTERPENETRATING EVERY ATOM of your form—and indeed the universe. *Apana* refers to the eliminative functions of the body. These functions operate at all levels, both gross and subtle to expel negative energy and waste. For the purpose of raising kundalini, let us describe *prana* as the “vital air” above the navel, and *apana* as the “vital air” below the navel.

There are 72,000 currents or *nadis* which emanate from the Navel Point and end in the hands and feet. It is through these that the *prana* is carried to all the parts of the body. Of these 72,000 *nadis* there are three which are most important: the *ida*, the *pingala*, and the *sushmuna*. The *ida* and *pingala* travel the distance between the nostrils (*ida*, left, and *pingala*, right) and the base of the spine. The *sushmuna* originates from the base of the spine where the three *nadis* meet, and travels up the center of the spine to the top of the head. This center at the base of the spine is called the seat of the kundalini and is the place where the kundalini energy lies dormant. The *ida* represents the negatively charged energy (*apana*) or lunar energy which eliminates body wastes and has a calming, cooling and restorative effect upon the body and mind. The *pingala* carries the positively charged energy (*prana*) which has an energizing and heat producing effect on the body and mind.

The kundalini will not awaken and rise until these two energies—*prana* (positive) and *apana* (negative)—are integrated and balanced in the Root Chakra. This pressure is required to raise the kundalini and cause its ascendance through *sushmuna*, also called the Silver Cord.

Thus, through inhalation and retention, *prana* is directed down to the Navel Chakra, while the *apana*, through exhalation and retention, is drawn upward from the Root Chakra to the Navel Point. The meeting and uniting of the two forces in the pranic cavity creates tremendous heat in the Navel Chakra—not hot heat, but white heat. The combined energies are often described as energizing the filament of *sushmuna*, meaning that *sushmuna* lights up like the filament in a light globe suddenly plugged into its source of electric power.

Responding to breath control and mental direction, the integrated energies depart the Navel Chakra and descend to the Root Chakra where they stimulate the kundalini. Further breath and the application of the will causes the kundalini energy to rise, charging the higher centers of consciousness. In this way the lower forms of energy can be transmuted into higher forms.

The first law of thermodynamics is that energy can neither be created nor destroyed, but rather, it can be changed from one form

to another. In order for this energy to flow, certain blockages and impurities in the nerves have to be removed and the channels must be cleansed. This is most effectively done through the power of the breath and mantra in conjunction with various postures and locks.

Kundalini Yoga teaches that to raise the energy through the *sushmuna*, the student can apply hydraulic locks, which implies the conscious application of pressure. It requires such pressure to raise kundalini and the *prana-apana* of the lower chakras and send them ascending up the *sushmuna*. Pressure in the Root Chakra sends *apana-ida* force up to the Navel Chakra. Applying the hydraulic lock in the diaphragm sends it further upwards to the Throat Chakra. From there, the Neck Lock takes it into the brain to complete its journey.

In order to stimulate the pineal gland, or the seat of the soul, the Tenth Gate or Crown Chakra at the top of the head must be “unsealed.” Under normal circumstances the gate remains sealed. But when kundalini heat rises, the pineal begins to transmit a beam of radiation and project it toward the pituitary. The pituitary, in turn, projects impulsations, and something like a “cosmic color-vision.” When both the pituitary and pineal are aroused and unite in their mystic marriage union in the third ventricle, the majestic Third Eye, the gate to the Crown Chakra opens.”

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Questions & Answers with the Master

Question: What is the kundalini? What is it like when the kundalini energy rises? Is kundalini like electricity?

Answer: What is kundalini? It is the whole energy of the cosmos in the individual and beyond the individual. It is the energy of consciousness. Without the constant flow of that energy, you could not live. With a large flow, your mind begins to flow and awaken. You stop living in imaginary realities and become very dutiful to the tasks and joys of life. You experience it when the energy of the glandular system combines with the nervous system to create such a sensitivity that the brain in its totality receives signals and integrates them. A new clarity accompanies your perception, thought, and intuition. Normally you use a small portion of the brain's potential. When kundalini awakens, one understands the effect and impact of an action at the beginning of a sequence of action and reaction. He has the choice to take an action or not. In other words, a person becomes totally and wholly aware. That is why it is called “the yoga of awareness.” Just as all rivers end up in the ocean, all yoga ends up raising the kundalini.

The kundalini is the creative potential of the human being. To get this experience of the kundalini, technology and science is needed. After the eighth year of life, the pineal gland does not secrete fully. Some people think it is functionless in the human structure. Kundalini Yoga activates its dormant potentials in the brain. It needs to tap the reserve energy that is stored near your Navel Point. There is a pure source of energy at the navel area that is known, perceived, and understood by the yogis. It is that pure energy that guides and develops your shape and connects you to this Earth. That connection and that pure energy is still there. It is part of your subtle structure as a human being. All you have to do is uncoil that energy and make a functional connection with your pineal gland. Once that master gland, the channel of the soul, has started secreting, it will give you the power to reach your self-realization in relationship to the total universal awareness.

This is what must accompany the awakening of Kundalini. I mean it scientifically. This mechanism happens but I realize that some people are still ignorant of these processes. If I would have talked a hundred years ago about atomic energy people would have said, "It is frightening. It is impossible. Who wants to do that? That can't be inside each substance." They didn't know about the atom, its internal structure, and its potentials. We still have that same ignorance of the internal nature and structure of human consciousness and its potentials. People want it but they are frightened, they make up stories when they lack experience, and they base their belief on rumor and misinformation. This is a human problem, not the problem of an individual. Without knowing anything about what something is or what something actually means, we settle for opinions and get opinionated. That is why I encourage you to ask questions, learn, and experience.

Occasionally you will see certain people who may not be practicing Kundalini Yoga but who are known to have a sixth sense. They have a unique awareness and inborn capacities. They have an intuitive power which tells them that the consequences of certain actions will be disastrous in the end. They have an inner radar which warns them of danger and guides them toward effective actions. If you have this intuitive relationship between your individual consciousness and the universal consciousness, you can compute what someone is trying to say before they say it. What they actually say is unimportant. You will know what they intend and what they mean behind the words. This is not very difficult.

Most people are not aware that they have this ability in them. With a little mental work, it can be activated and achieved. This intuitive capacity is natural. The real action behind it is that you become sensitive to the auric radiance of the other person. That radiance comes from the subtle bodies that compose the unseen

human structure. All you have to do is compute the signal of the aura as it comes to you. You will know what that person really wants. If a person comes to you, you immediately know his projection. Before he even talks, you just say, "You have come with many stories, but you are ultimately going to ask me for a hundred dollars. Friend, I don't have it to give to you." I used to speak that bluntly to people, but word started to spread that I am a great psychic. People would seek me out for predictions and for their ego. That is not a good reputation for a simple man of God, so now I am very restrained about showing it.

Question: I have a friend who is a psychotherapist. He teaches Hatha Yoga as a part of his therapy. He told me that Kundalini Yoga is an extremely dangerous form of yoga and that it can lead to insanity if not handled right. Is this true?

Answer: It is very unfortunate that some people talk that way. First of all, they do not know what they are talking about. Is money dangerous? It is just an energy. Kundalini is a latent energy that can be used for total consciousness. The only dangerous thing is the person whose Kundalini is raised properly. That person is totally conscious. He cannot be lied to or cheated or politically swayed. The kundalini is essential. As long as you practice a total discipline or a complete and balanced *kriya*, there is no difficulty. In Kundalini Yoga, you will notice that every meditation and *kriya* has some form of mantra in it. This insures the channelization of the energy.

Second, they don't have any real experience of it. The truth is Kundalini Yoga produces whole human beings, teachers, and yogis. A yogi is one who has a union with the supreme consciousness. Some people teach yoga as if it is a bunch of dumb exercises, but they have no right to call themselves yogis. To teach this yoga you must have authentic experience and practical knowledge of the technology. There is never a problem with Kundalini Yoga taught as the original sacred science.

Question: What about great visions, psychic experiences, or jerking and trembling after meditation? Is this the kundalini rising?

Answer: This is glitter at the bottom of the ladder. These hallucinations, psychism, and nerve weaknesses mean nothing. If a student practicing Kundalini Yoga is very blocked up in the spine and pranic nadis, he may have a one time experience when the channels are cleared. But that is one time, brief, and does not disrupt anything. These things may happen when someone's nervous system has not been properly prepared, or if they do not use the mantra or breathing technique properly. The real measure of kundalini rising is your consciousness from breath to breath and courage you bring to your life. These momentary flashes brought on by weakness have nothing to do with kundalini.

Question: Is the goal for the yoga student to bring all the energy into the brain?

Answer : No! The energy of kundalini releases from the navel center, then rises to the top of the head. When it descends to complete its cycle of energy, the chakras open fully. By chakras opening I mean the talents of each chakra are consolidated into the character and behavior of that person. It does no good at all to fill a person with energy that he cannot integrate.

Question: Most Kundalini Yoga students let their hair grow. Is this necessary?

Answer: No. You can practice with any length hair, but the hair was the first technique to raise the kundalini energy. When the hair is at its natural full length and coiled over the anterior fontanel for men or the posterior fontanel for women, it draws pranic energy into the spine. The force of this downward positive energy causes the Kundalini energy to rise for balance. This is why you always find grace and calmness in a person with uncut hair from birth if they keep it well. Actually the hair was so important that the word for consciousness, kundalini, actually derives from *kundal* which means "a coil of the beloved's hair."

Question: You referred to the chakras as centers of consciousness. Would you describe the qualities each gives?

Answer: There are seven centers in the body. They are all in the spine. They each have a projected center or chakra. First is the rectum. Second projected center is the sex organ. Third is the navel center. When you pull the rectum and sex organ together, the energy projects to the third center of consciousness. Fourth is the center between the two nipples, the heart center. Fifth is the neck. Sixth is between the two eyes at the top of the nose. And the seventh is the last at the top of the head, corresponding to the pineal gland.

Do these centers have some correlation with the human? Yes. A person whose consciousness dwells in the rectum will never have a normal, direct sexual relationship. One whose center of consciousness is the second center will define himself in terms of sex, may even use pain or other forms of intense stimulation as an approach to pleasure in sex. At the third center of consciousness a person can't overcome greediness. He may try his level best. Somehow he will like to get others' things. They may be useful to him or not. The fourth center of consciousness is the heart center where the nipples and throat form a triangle. Here a person gets knowledge. The fifth center of consciousness is at the throat. He may talk without flowery English, but his words will have that weight that goes right into the heart. At the sixth center of consciousness, a person can know everything around him. He may use the knowledge or not. The pituitary gland gives him the greatest

intuition. At the last center of consciousness, which is the highest center, a person becomes most humble. He has extreme humility. In the highest center the ego becomes universal ego, so that person has no pain and no pleasure. What he says happens. That is the highest center of consciousness. In a long deep meditation, you can know where your consciousness is. It can be seen and judged by assessing what your environments are and what are the most important needs in your life. You can know which chakras you are operating from.

Now, knowing does not make any difference. Can you pull it up and change gears in such a way that you can come out of it?

Question: Is it possible for a teacher to raise the kundalini of his students just by his presence?

Answer: The kundalini can be stimulated directly by a teacher. But that teacher is not much of a teacher! The students should be prepared, then given a technology to raise it themselves. Why should they wait at the feet of a teacher like puppies? They should go through the experience, then share the techniques with others.

Question: Does a student of Kundalini Yoga have to be celibate?

Answer: The student should be a householder, raise a family and fulfill the obligations of a spiritual society. Celibacy actually means to be by yourself without abusing your sexual and regenerative abilities. A married person is by himself, for both people are merged as one. Even in marriage the sexual energy is respected and built up. A normal couple will find a frequency of one time a month completely satisfying if approached correctly. If you want to be celibate without ever having sex, remember to practice Sat Kriya each day so you can utilize the energy and not go nutty.

Question: When the kundalini rises, do you go into trance or become rigid?

Answer: A raised kundalini will give you grace of motion. Life fills every cell so you are able to move smoothly with an awareness of the rhythm and music of all your environments. The kundalini makes you alive and graceful, not rigid like some kind of death.

Question: Why are these teachings being shared so openly now?

Answer: The techniques belong to those who practice them. They are the heritage of humanity. I am just a postman with a lot of letters to deliver. You can open them and use them or not—that is your problem. But the world is going through changes. Your future generations will need these techniques to stay mentally healthy and physically strong. These teachings will help humanity as it awakens from adolescence. I am sharing these teachings to create a science of the total self.

From an 1976 interview with Yogi Bhaajan