

Kundalini Awakening, Kundalini Awareness

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Abstract

The Kundalini Awakening is a type of spiritually transformative experience, also referred to as religious, spiritual, mystical or transcendental, that has traditionally been associated with eastern meditative / yogic practices, but recently in the west is often associated with spontaneous, enlightening shifts in consciousness. Subjects report such Kundalini experiences typically involve intense physical sensations associated with the spine and nervous system, and evidently occur most frequently in midlife (modal age ~30-35). They have also been referred to as 'cosmic consciousness' experiences inducing long-lasting, life-changing shifts in intellectual and spiritual sensibilities. The experience may be more common than thought in the west because subjects often did not use the term Kundalini. Nevertheless the term is becoming more often used in western reports. Many consider the Kundalini awakening phenomenon, a natural, evolutionary, developmental phenomenon, not unrelated to the natural energetic dynamics of organic systems, especially the nervous system. Vedantic and Tantric traditions have long recognized the Kundalini as a universal force (energy or prana) that manifests in humans with remarkable physical, psychological and spiritual effects.

Keywords: Kundalini, Spiritually Transformative Experience, Evolutionary Dynamics

Introduction

"We pray to ... [she]...whose substance is the pure nectar of bliss, ...who...rises to that brilliant energy which glitters with the luster of ten million lightnings. May She, Kundalini, who quickly goes and returns from Shiva, grant us the fruit of Yoga!"

Arthur Avalon 1919

"The knowledge that there is a central chamber of the soul, blazing with the light of divine love and wisdom, has come in the course of history, to multitudes of human beings."

Aldous Huxley 1952

The awakening of the Kundalini is a recognized, indeed even a desired objective of certain self-realization practices (i.e., Kundalini yoga) which originated with Vedic (Hindu) traditions dating back to ~1500 B. C. (Avalon, 1919; Krishna, 1967, 1972, 1976a,b, 1993, 1994, 1995; White, 1990; Kiefer, 1996). However, despite evidence of the transformative power of Kundalini awakening on consciousness, and its potential impact on paradigms in western psychology (e.g. Jung, 1996) the phenomenon is still poorly understood in the west. Indeed, to the western mind such practices, if known, much less 'understood' experientially, are often regarded as esoteric. At best they are often treated with caution or misunderstood; at worst they are misguidedly dismissed as delusion, hallucination, mental illness or even insanity. Avalon (1919, p. 4) who translates Kundalini-Sakti as "serpent power" points out that despite the fact that "recently some attention has been given to the subject in Western literature" this has been done "with considerable inaccuracies." No doubt we still have much to learn about the phenomenon, how to control or channel it, and how it affects consciousness (Wilber, 1977, 1997; Vitaliano, 1997). However, there are indications, discussed below, that attitudes towards, and understanding of Kundalini experiences are changing and being drawn to the sphere of the biological and psychological sciences (Kason, 2000; Dixon, 2008).

To date, reliable western case studies show that failure to recognize or explicitly identify the Kundalini Awakening phenomenon (Kundalini Experience) is mostly a matter of ignorance (lack of information), and not the result of the experience being unknown in the west. First hand Kundalini Experience reports, and the serious studies of qualified medical and therapeutic professionals indicate, great internal consistency in 'authentic' reports by subjects who typically regard them as beneficial, enlightening, and positive: i.e., often leading to significant, even radical transformation in physical, emotional and mental health, or what Bucke (1901) described as a great enhancement of intellectual and moral sensibility deserving of the label 'Cosmic Consciousness.' Conversely however, the experiences may be physically intense, and emotionally exhausting in the short-term, making subjects over sensitive, and very conscious of the delicate balance needed to maintain their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual equilibrium. In a minority of cases the experience is frightening and detrimental to health (Galbraith 1999, 2010).

Recent popular Western literature indicates a growing awareness of the Kundalini phenomenon as an intrinsic or latent potential in the dynamic organization of energy in the human body, especially, but not exclusively, in the nervous system (Dixon, 2008). As elaborated below, this energy may be part of a universal energy. The related phenomena of *prana* (energy) and chakras, (Sanskrit *cakras*, meaning wheel and referring to energy centers aligned with the main axis of the body: i.e. the spinal column) has received enough popular press in recent years to provide a useful context for understanding some of the physical symptoms of the Kundalini Experience. The question arises: does this increased awareness means that the frequency of experience is also increasing? If this so there are interesting evolution of consciousness implications (Lockley 2010).

However, the first step is to better understand the Kundalini experience. The raw material used in this study center on reports of the actual experiences of individuals

who have chosen to leave records or convey them to doctors, therapists and others for the archives of what we may broadly, and neutrally, call intense, psychological or spiritually transformative experience. The alternative, labels of religious, spiritual, mystical or transcendental experience also apply to varying degrees. As James (1905) indicates in *Varieties of Religious Experience* he, and his student (Starbuck 1899), regarded this field as worthy of serious academic study, a tradition followed and elaborated by Hardy (1997) and others (e.g., Rankin 2008; Morgan 2015). Alternatives to the adjective 'religious' indicate that 'spiritual' or 'mystical' descriptors almost always apply equally well to similar experiences of the transcendental or 'numinous' (*sensu* James, 1905). Such 'varieties' of experience often include the Kundalini Experience. But as many reports suggest, such experience may be somewhat different from other spiritually transformative experience in manifesting certain *diagnostic and intense physical symptoms*, associated with the powerful flow and redistribution of energy in the body, especially the nervous system. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to evaluate explicit descriptions of the Kundalini Experience. Subjective experiences are regarded as primary and provide the data for secondary, objective analysis.

Wilber (1986) noted differences between theory and practice in self realization quests. A first step to practice that may lead to changes in consciousness, may be to read up on the subject. A second or alternate step may be deliberate meditative / yogic practices (e.g., Semple, 2014). However, there are also many cases of spontaneous experience not induced by deliberate praxis or theoretical/academic study, but rather by stimuli such as stress, illness or shock, that were not sought after. All this suggests that shifts in consciousness are emergent properties that may not only be induced, but may also occur quite unexpectedly. They may, as noted below, be part of the ontogenetic and evolutionary development of consciousness. Objective or theoretical considerations propose that different consciousness, structures or states can be classified in various categories (Wilber, 1986) such as the mythical mode, (level 3), the rational mode (level 4) and various higher or integral states (level 5 and above): Lockley (2010). Although consciousness states are notoriously difficult to define or categorize (Wilber, 1986), especially by those not having had similar experiences they can relate to, experience is nevertheless the basis for discussion and subsequent analysis. Therefore, the reader may or may not use such labels when assessing the shifts in consciousness reported by subjects as a result of their Kundalini Experiences. However, subjects consistently report and attempt to describe the intensity, and significant transformations in consciousness that attend such experiences, and we should regard their reports as of prime importance in understanding the phenomenon.

It is perhaps unwarranted to refer to Kundalini "Awakenings" if the individuals having the experience do not also do so explicitly. However, subjects often report that they did not recognize the phenomenon until later. Thus, insightful therapists capable of recognizing the phenomenon may play an important role in retroactively identifying such experiences. Observers may be therapist to the patient, or teacher to the student. Subjects may be so impressed by the experience that they themselves research consciousness traditions until they recognize the Kundalini Experience. Shifts in consciousness are significant factors in making students their own teacher-researchers in subsequent quests to understand their Spiritually Transformative Experiences. Hence they proceed from 'Kundalini Awakening' experience to what I call 'Kundalini awareness' which subjects often describe as significant, life-long shifts in consciousness, manifest as an evolutionary journey in a more spiritual 'direction.'

The upheaval, or ‘growing pains’ that sometimes accompany the experience may involve ‘dark night of the soul’ transformations, often prior to dawn ‘awakenings.’

1. On recognition of the Kundalini Awakening phenomenon in western psychology

Certain obvious signs of the influence of eastern spiritual traditions on modern western psychology can be traced to the 19th century (Muller, 1873, Avalon 1919) and its manifestations in ‘mainstream’ psychiatry (Bucke 1901), psychology (James, 1905; Starbuck 1899) and the more esoteric traditions of theosophy (Blavatsky, 1966; Steiner, 1994) and its more intellectually- and scientifically-compelling offspring—Anthroposophy (Steiner, 1924; Barfield, 1965; Blaxland-de Lange, 2006; Fetterman 2018).

Notwithstanding the much older Vedantic origins, this study owes a conceptually debt to the work of Richard Maurice Bucke. Like James (1905) Bucke (1901) was interested in religious or spiritual experience as a phenomenon amenable to serious psychiatric study at the turn of the century. To this end Bucke compiled reports of experiences both from historical records (some well-known) and from his clinical experience. Significantly, he also had his own spiritual experiences which helped him understand, identify and empathize with the experiences of others. As a result Bucke (1901) made the first ‘scientific’ attempt to synthesize standardized report categories such as age when experience occurred, time of year etc.; also see Starbuck (1899). As a result, Bucke compiled 34 records, from which he extracted data suggestive of a tendency for spontaneous spiritual experience to occur more frequently in midlife (average age of 37), and even in the springtime. Some of these experiences could probably be classed as Kundalini awakenings, although Bucke does not use this term explicitly. Likewise many subsequent students of spiritual experience (e.g., Douglas-Smith 1983) also do not use Kundalini vocabulary.

Three generations passed before any attempts were made to compile similar data. However, as noted by Lockley (2000), compilations by Sanella (1987), Bentov (1977) and Galbraith (1999) as well as Gopi Krishna’s classic on Kundalini Awakening (Krishna, 1967), effectively supplemented Bucke’s records, confirming his observation that such experiences often appear to ‘emerge’ as a spontaneous phenomenon in mid-life, with long term influence on subjects. Galbraith (1999, p.11), who recognized the ‘kundalini energy (KE) rising’ phenomenon by the label “spiritual experience up the spine” (SEUS), reported and tabulated 20 responses to her detailed questionnaire.

A very important source of information resides at the University of Wales, Religious Experiences Research Center (RERC) instituted, via Oxford University, by Sir Alister Hardy. As noted below, this valuable archive contains additional reports of Kundalini Experiences, which were compiled and synthesized in this study. Like Hardy, an increasing number of recent studies recognize that the Kundalini experience can be understood as a *bona fide* biological and psychological (or energetic) phenomenon amenable to scientific investigation, which prefers to support its findings through the observation of repeated patterns of behavior, with common threads: hence the linking of Kundalini Experiences with biology (Dixon, 2008) and the “biology of

consciousness" (Semple, 2014). When the present author first accessed the RERC records , around 2000, the term 'Kundalini' was a rarely used, although a few reports noted that experiences had later been identified by subjects as Kundalini awakenings, after researching spiritual literature or otherwise learning about the phenomenon. Such subsequent understanding has crept into the more recent RERC records to such an extent that Kundalini is available as a 'search' word, that often supplements and summarizes reports that were previously identified using search words like spine, electric, intense /rising energy etc.,

2. Methods

In order to test Bucke's hypothesis that spiritual awakening experiences leading to intimations or experiences of what he called 'cosmic consciousness' occur most frequently in midlife, attempts were made to duplicate his simple compilation methods by recording the age and season (date) when such experiences occur. Although Bucke did not use the term 'Kundalini,' recent reports and studies have been more inclined to use Kundalini vocabulary, and at least 40 additional reports were found in RERC archives which explicitly refer to Kundalini. Since the initial compilation, based on 27 reports, was made a decade ago, additional direct experience reports have appeared at various sites on the internet, and there has been a marked increase in sites which discuss the Kundalini release / rising phenomenon. The type and quality of available internet information is variable, but includes case studies. These are not included here, but could be of value to future studies (see Acknowledgements).

As the RERC records are confidential, each case is given a reference number, without personal information that identifies subjects. These numbers are used to identify cases discussed herein (see Appendix). Each record is different, and in many cases the age (or time of year) at which the individual experience occurred is not given. However, in a small majority of cases the age is given precisely or within a few years. In other cases clues allow age to be reconstructed or constrained to a particular decade or phase of life. As age at time of experience is not given in many cases such cases are left out of compilations which chart the age range of experiences (Figure 1).

'Typical' Kundalini experiences leave powerful impressions on people, often fascinating and bewildering at first, but later 'changing the course' of their emotional, mental and spiritual lives. For example, Caudill (2006) records particularly transformative experiences. This means that such reports may be lengthy, and many were written, or at least reported to the RERC (or elsewhere) years after the experiences. Counter-intuitively, where significant time lapses between experience and reports occur, there is little indication that the essence of the reports is compromised by inaccuracies or deficiencies of memory. On the contrary, the experience often stimulates deep reflection on spiritual matters of fundamental importance in the subject's life, leading to cogent and often profound insights into the 'meaning' of the experiences, which the subject is keen to report and share due to a sense of their 'importance. Thus, in summarizing reports (see Appendix), as well as recording the age (Figure 1), dates and types of physical, sensory and psychic experience, I have highlighted the stronger impressions and statements made by subjects regarding long-term changes in consciousness, life style and aspiration. In all cases I used the subjects own words and sentiments as much as possible.

Although subjective changes in individual consciousness are hard to analyze ‘objectively’ using standardized data acquisition techniques, it is helpful to note the frequency with which individuals express gratitude to a higher source for the experience: i.e., they are surprised, ‘passive’ (sensu James, 1905) recipients of transformative consciousness experiences. Also notable are the frequent reports that the experience is not understood until later. Reports that such experiences are ‘beyond words,’ and often beyond time, but of a spiritual nature, are common. Subjects may describe a ‘peace that passeth all [rational] understanding’— and stress the life-changing, long term fruits of such transformative experience. As noted below, when diverse individuals, unknown to each other, independently report similar life changing experiences, that require vocabularies they grasp for but do not possess, one wonders whether these experiences are similar or consistent. When many of these same individuals subsequently, often after many years, find the best explanations elucidated in the Kundalini literature, the experience has clearly not been consciously influenced by prior knowledge of the Kundalini phenomenon, but rather is symptomatic of a recurrent psycho-somatic phenomenon. Moreover, the consistency of such reports makes them amendable to objective scientific analysis (categorization).

In this author’s assessment in order to understand spiritual, including Kundalini Experience, objectively one must seek consistency (common threads, as sought here) in diverse historical reports. The *Perennial Philosophy* (Huxley, 1945) is a recurring theme in humankind’s quest for the immanent and transcendent ground of being, and is immemorial, universal and common to all authentic religious and spiritual traditions. Huxley (1952, p.69) stated that “we know... that the ground of our individual knowing is identical to the Ground of all knowing and being; that Atman (Mind...choosing...the temporal point of view) is the same as Brahman (Mind in its eternal essence). “Mystical experiences, theophanies, flashes of what has been called cosmic consciousness—[are] not to be had for the asking” (op. cit. p. 90). That the “ground of the individual soul is identical with the divine ground of all being” (op. cit., p. 92) is reiterated by many who have recognized as a gift of consciousness, shifts, awakenings or “flashes,” particularly in Kundalini events, within us, that reveal, beyond us, a greater, higher or transcendental reality, often involving experiences largely independent of space and time. In the Kundalini literature Dixon (2008, p. 96) is even more succinct: “Spirituality is the Realization of the Self as one and not separate from the Universal Organism” (her capitalization).

3. The Kundalini Awakening phenomenon as a subset of mystical or spiritual experience

There is a huge literature on mystical and religious experience which takes us deep into human history. Aforementioned classics by James (1905), Starbuck (1899), Bucke (1901) and Avalon (1919) reveal the subject as worthy of serious investigation by modern psychology. For example, when Bucke (1901) labeled such mystical, religious or spiritual experiences as “cosmic consciousness” he made the case, widely accepted among religious studies scholars, that such experiences have recurred among men and women of diverse religious and cultural backgrounds throughout human history. For example, studies of mysticism (e.g. Stace, 1960) not only recognize common threads in experience among reports from diverse traditions

ranging from Christianity, and Sufism to Hinduism and Buddhism, but generally also regard the messages of authentic mystics as uplifting spiritual ‘teachings’ that benefit the self-realization quest of aspirants. Many, though perhaps not all mystics, may as a result of their experiences, be more open to viewing the common themes and aspirations of diverse religious and spiritual traditions, and may often turn away from institutionalized doctrines that they consider too restrictive and narrow. One might go further and argue as done by Fetterman (2018) that the shifts in consciousness reported by many who have had such experiences are accessible to understanding by cognitive science, a position that was foreshadowed by Rudolf Steiner (1924, 1991, 1994, 2008a,b, 2009) in his extensive work on Higher Modes of Cognition and his founding of the Anthroposophical tradition or movement which he and his followers describe as “spiritual science” in which cognition is amenable to study.

It may be somewhat fruitless to differentiate religious, spiritual or mystical experience as all three adjectives may be largely synonymous, all describing transcendence. The subject’s choice of words may reflect, religious upbringing, education, experience etc., Mystics, although often associated with well-established religious institutions, frequently find that the intensity of their experience, and in particular the sense of direct contact with ‘God’ or the divine Ground of all being leaves them at odds with other members of their religious establishments who have not shared similar experiences. Historically, those reporting or manifesting such experiences may have been regarded by others as being heretics or worse: possessed either by the holy spirit or, worse, the devil (Huxley 1952). Such contrasting interpretations are still seen in contemporary cases. But interpretations of others are today considered secondary, and distinct from, the subjective reports of those undergoing the experiences. For example, Flanagan (1989) has suggested that the 12th Century German mystic Hildegard of Bingen suffered from migraines. In her day the interpretations of others (i.e. the Church, as self-appointed guardians of spiritual matters) were of much greater import! It is always risky to reinterpret the ‘subjective’ experience of another. However, even when ill, a genuine experience can occur as evident from a minority of reports in the RERC library under the category of mental illness (see Galbraith 1999; Dixon, 2008, for further examples). germane to this point is the obvious connection between severe illness and Near Death Experiences (NDEs), documented by Rivas et al., (2016). Despite frequent NDE reports of the heavenly, positive and restorative aspects of transcendence, including a sense of immortality and universal consciousness, the physical realities of life-threatening illness may in a few cases lead to negative experiences.

Generally speaking intense mystical and religious experiences defy words, or at least are difficult to express easily in everyday language. (A narrower worldly consciousness structure is suddenly expected to describe a transcendental universal structure). Likewise, efforts to use analytical, scientific language, especially to describe another’s experience, may result in, or generate, cumbersome technical, even ambiguous or inappropriate vocabulary that only a few specialists understand, *from their analytical viewpoints*, and not form the perspective of the experiencer. For example, the language used by Steiner (1924, , 1991, 1994, 2008a,b, 2009) although he considered it thoroughly scientific, and most accessible through deliberate practice, has proved difficult for many to comprehend, even though, in his case, he both experienced higher modes of consciousness and wrote extensively and analytically about them. Thus others, (e.g., Fetterman, 2018) review his work applying cognitive studies vocabulary.

In short, technical language, even if appropriate, might not make sense to those who have had the ‘experience.’ Conversely, those who take the bold step of trying to report their experiences offer us fascinating, often poetic and spiritually-uplifting commentaries, which in turn may inspire others to regard them as spiritually literate, even enlightened— Hildegard being a case in point. Such inspiring commentaries may in some instances be supplemented by darker reports of fear and disequilibrium. However, these constitute a minority of negative cases. Experiences may be unreported, thus evading the archives, or seriously misunderstood, leading to charges of delusion, hallucination, lunacy and/or heresy. In this regard the objective analyst may find subjective reports too poetic and lacking in the type objective vocabulary they can understand.

In short spiritual experiences are individualized and atypical to some extent, and so do not easily compare with milder or mundane experiences of well-being or the satisfying sense of communal membership in a religious congregation or spiritual community. Although such generalizations are open to criticism, some account must be given as to why the different terms (religious, spiritual, mystical and Kundalini experience) are used in different contexts. The position adopted here is that the four terms, and others like transcendence, form a loose or near-synonymous assortment of terms comprising a continuum or gradient encompassed by the term “spiritually transformative experience” (STE), a general term, which also includes NDEs. Kundalini experiencers may report experiencing a form of death and rebirth.

This position may be validated, by noting that more people objectively understand or even subjectively claim some degree of mild or moderate religious, spiritual or mystical experience, whereas a lesser number report intense Kundalini Experiences. For example, out of a total of ~6660 reported (recorded) religious experiences recorded at the RERC, (**see acknowledgements**) only about 40 individuals have so far been identified who explicitly identify theirs as a Kundalini Experience. While this may be in part a semantic problem of definition, it may also reflect significant differences in the intensity or nature of the experience (degree and/or kind). For example, Spilka et al. (1992) appear to use the term ‘religious mystical experience’ as a synonym of ‘religious experience’ without any knowledge of or reference to the Kundalini phenomenon (Spilka personal communication, 2007). In their study 194 seminary students, church members, college students and clergy reported having had a ‘Christian mystical experience.’ Thus, in their study the sample comes from a rather well-defined, non-universal, religious community, with the experiences evidently reflecting membership or affiliation with that religious denomination: see Shusan (2018) for overview of the ways culture is thought to influence [spiritual] experience.

In contrast, many reports of Kundalini Experience appear quite independent of institutionalized religious influences, both in terms of the context in which they occur, and in terms of the more-universal, non-denominational content of the experience. Likewise subjects seem to have very diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. (Mystics come from all spiritual traditions). The same also appears true of a subset of mystical experiences which are associated with the ‘natural world’ (Marshall, 2005). Thus, in general, all such psycho-spiritual experiences tend to be similar in that they are associated with pronounced temporary, and long term, shifts in consciousness. Different individual experiences, although imprinted with universal themes, reflect the

historical, cultural and educational context in which individuals find themselves.

Despite the differences in definition surrounding diverse reports of religious, spiritual mystical and Kundalini experiences, it is important to stress that they share many common threads. The aim of this analysis is primarily to highlight awareness of the Kundalini phenomenon among individuals reporting what they would otherwise, more generally, refer to as religious, spiritual, mystical or other transformative consciousness experience categories.

4. Results

4.1 *The numbers*

As noted above, the number of experiences explicitly identified as Kundalini awakenings so far gleaned, by this author, from the RERC archives is only 40, about equally divided between males and females (Table 1). 36 of these are plotted (Figure 1) where age is known to the nearest 5 years, along with 73 other spiritual experience reports ($n = 109$) many of which are also described as Kundalini experiences (Krishna, 1967; Bentov, 1977; Sanella, 1987; Lockley 2000; Lockley and Morimoto, 2010) or 'spiritual experiences up spine' (Galbraith, 1999). The results indicate that the modal age for such experiences is indeed in the 30s. This result is consistent with the claims of Bucke (1901) that the Cosmic Consciousness experience most often occurred in midlife (around age 37). It is also interesting to note that the result is consistent with those of Douglas Smith (1983) who also reported two modal peaks, for spiritual experience – one at aged 35 and the other at aged 19 (Figure 1). Many more reports probably need recording in order to help distinguish age frequency patterns and to establish whether Kundalini awakenings occur with frequencies similar to more general reports of religious, spiritual and mystical experience. The 320 reports (109 + 211) that form the basis of the compilations given in Figure 1 do not include several dozen convincing reports of Kundalini experiences from the Near Death Experience Research Foundation website <https://nd erf.org/index.htm>. However, not all reports provide comprehensive details on the age of subjects when they had their experiences, or the date the experiences occurred. Nevertheless as research into spiritual experience progresses the databases grow and become refined. For example the RERC website now has a separate NDE category.

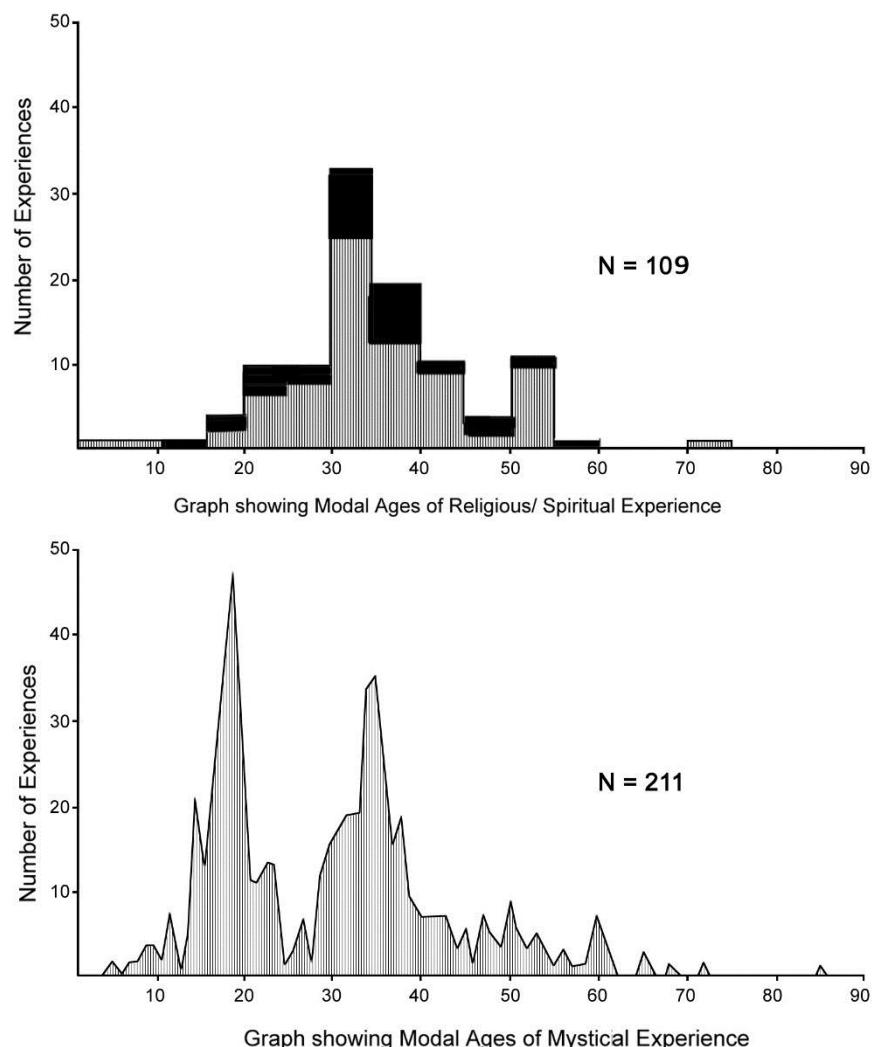


Figure 1. Plots showing age of reported spiritual experience: modified after Lockley and Morimoto (2010). Upper graph, compiled from various sources, includes a subset (black) specifically labeled as Kundalini Awakenings. Lower graph redrawn after Douglas Smith (1983) deals only with cases labeled as ‘spiritual experience.’ See text for details

4.2 Physical manifestations of the Kundalini Awakening

The physical manifestation of Kundalini awakening are remarkable, both for the intensity of the experience, and for the consistency of reports that deal with the energizing of the spine, nervous system and whole body. I have extracted and summarized the following 18 examples from the appendix, and note that in the RERC sample of 40, 33 individuals, or 82.5%, reported such intense physical sensations: see Table 1.

CASE 001046. ‘Later noticed lump at the base of spine.’

CASE 001082. ‘I was conscious of a movement at the base of the spine and the Hindu Kundalini (as I now know it) began to move up the spine traveling up the neck to the base of the brain’

CASE 002547 ‘I had a sort of volcanic eruption of mystical experience... A severe spinal curvature since childhood, has gone completely.’

CASE 002607 ‘[a] great spasm of electrical energy discharging from the base of my brain down through my spinal card [cord] which trashed like a snake inside me’

CASE 003315 ‘my back straightened out, my whole body filled with electricity.

CASE 003422 In dream ‘at the bottom of my spine something was uncurling upwards towards my head ...it was a monstrous snake.’

CASE 003487 ‘I felt the “serpent of Kundalini” move up and around my spinal chord.’

CASE 004435 ‘Suddenly I felt a spasm of pure pleasure, starting in my solar plexus and expanding to fill my whole body.’

CASE 005167 ‘I clearly felt an influx of energy through the top of my head’

CASE 005342 subject ‘started to have what I can only describe as full body orgasms...a warm rushing waves of tingling energy, beginning in my upper thighs, spreading quickly across my torso, and back and forth across my chest and stomach.’

CASE 005371 ‘I had a Kundalini serpent rising up the spine.. [a]nd burst out through the head...so powerful ... everything all at once.... There is a cosmic consciousness’

CASE 005549 ‘some tremendous force seemed to unleash itself from about the base of my spine, shot up my spine and exploded in my head’

CASE 005458 ‘a very powerful surge of energy coming from the base of my spine, up through my body to my head and beyond.’

CASE 100001 ‘an ENERGY hit .. something like a real living fist hit ... I involuntarily shouted and jerked and stumbled.’

CASE 100006 ‘There seemed to be a current of energy running through my body... The energy rose to my brain’

CASE 100041 ‘a feeling of infinite space moving up through spinal column’

CASE 100043. felt ‘tingling rays shooting up from the lower part of my back... a great pulsating force ...a pulsating sensation along my spine’

CASE 200019 ‘at the top of my vision came a bright white sparkling ball made up of silver white rays/blades of light flickering.. The physical sensations intensified over my whole body ...and the electricity was intense. Then a few minutes later, a massive surge of upwards energy towards this light actually made me stand up from a sitting mediation as I felt that I was being shot up out of my body.’

While Taylor (2009 p. 11) claims that “spiritual experiences are overwhelmingly positive,” and we may include Kundalini experiences in this otherwise broad category, they are not always so. Galbraith (2010, p. 31) disputes Taylor’s assertion with the simple statement that they “are not overwhelmingly positive experiences.” Taylor admits that such experiences are often triggered by depression and despair, but nevertheless calls them “awakening experiences” that lead to peaceful breaking of old attachments and liberation similar to the new spiritual outlooks gained by Near Death Experiences (NDEs). Likewise Caudill (2006) cites her own difficult transformative Kundalini experiences, which followed earlier shifts in consciousness. At times her experiences made her “a total mess, barely functional” as if she had almost “tipped over the edge of psychosis.” (p. 144). But she was rescued by a friend who suggested she “might be undergoing a Kundalini awakening” (p. 145). She found

and cited an article that stated “Many individuals whose Kundalini has been unexpectedly unleashed *do not know what is happening...* the risen Kundalini flings open gates to all sorts of mystical, paranormal and magical vistas but few realize it can also dramatically impact the body.” (p. 145, original italics).

Here we see an example of both the negative (disorienting) and positive consciousness transforming aspects of the Kundalini experience, almost always occurring in this ‘happy ending’ order (not vice versa). As noted below both aspects are often reported in varying intensities. We may perhaps note a parallel with a remark made by Steiner, quoted in Fetterman (2018) to the effect that without the ‘cognition’ to understand the experience, the subject is like one staring at writing one is unable to read. To continue the analogy recognizing the Kundalini Experience phenomenon is akin to finding the language in which the experience is conveyed (the language of consciousness) but that does not mean the experience is deeply understood in terms of its cognitive, psychological, energetic or spiritual import or complexity: see Dixon (2008) for complex analyses.

4.3 Sense of divine bliss, and other sublime, transcendental attributes of Kundalini experience

Just as there is consistency in the reports of physical experience and sensation, so too we find considerable consistency in the emotional reports of bliss, well-being and the sense of light, enlightenment and love that defies language. These experiences were most intense at the time of awakening or soon after, but sometimes recurred later and at unexpected times. At least 28/40 subjects, or 70 %, reported sublime, transcendental feelings, clairvoyant visions, clairaudience etc., (See Table 1). A representative sample of twelve cases is presented in the following list, with the additional case of Richard Maurice Bucke from the year 1872 at the top of the list. Bucke wrote of his experiences in the third person, and it must be acknowledged that the experience, while spiritual or mystical in nature, Bucke and subsequent commentators have never explicitly described the experience as a Kundalini awakening. However, his references to a lightning-flash of Brahmic Splendor indicate both an awareness of the eastern traditions and one of the typical Kundalini attributes – the sudden flash of pure light.

BUCKE. (1901, p. 9-10) ‘It was in the early spring, of his thirty sixth year. He and two friends had spent the evening reading Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Browning and especially Whitman. They parted...his mind deeply under the influence of the ideas, images and emotions called up by the reading...All at once, without warning or any kind, he found himself wrapped around as if it were by a flame colored cloud...the next, he knew that the light was within himself. Directly afterwards came upon him a sense of exultation, of immense joyousness accompanied or immediately followed by an intellectual illumination quite impossible to describe. Into his brain streamed one momentary lightning flash of Brahmic Splendor which has ever since lightened his life; upon his heart fell one drop of Brahmic Bliss, leaving thence-forward for always an aftertaste of heaven... he learned more within a few seconds during which the illumination lasted than in previous months or even years of study.’

CASE 002329 ‘suddenly surrounded by a large circle of golden light’

CASE 003205 ‘felt as if the top of my head had opened up...a brilliant white light came through ... the light beyond description.’

CASE 000554 ‘a sublime consciousness of a personalized sustaining power which defies description.’

CASE 000593 ‘feeling of blissful transcendence.’

CASE 001046 ‘peace not of this world’

CASE 003315 ‘filled with tremendous feeling of love’

CASE 005046 ‘Love radiates Love creates Love manifests worlds and Planets Love unconditionally IS’

CASE 005342 I know that I am an embodiment of the forces of life, love. As we all are

CASE 005549 ‘the true meaning of ‘the peace that passeth all understanding,’ was made known to me’

CASE 100041 Personal revelations came very quickly with crystal clear dreams, sudden insights, finding the right books and people...I had a vivid impression of the angel putting a comforting arm around my shoulders and I felt a deluge of calming energy rush through my whole body...’

CASE 100048 saw everything alive with radiant energy and light. The spring buds had golden auras and banks of flowers erupted like a bubbling, vibrant slow motion display of fireworks. Spring buds had golden auras.

CASE 200019 ‘I had a completely overwhelming sense of bliss/love. It was awesome-it made everything else I had ever experienced pale into [sic.] comparison.

4.4 Long term effects

Given the profound impact Kundalini Awakening experiences appear to have on the subjects surveyed in this sample, it is perhaps logical to conclude that the experience or experiences would be remembered long after they occurred. However, memory of the experience is not the only a factor at play in many of these cases. It appears that subjects frequently report marked shifts in consciousness typically initiated at the time of their experiences but almost invariably sustained as a life-long spiritual transformation processes, even after the more extreme sense of transcendental bliss has faded. These spiritual growth and maturation processes are often described as ‘evolutionary’ and expressed, as the following examples indicate, in such a way as to suggest that emergence of a new or ‘different person’ with subtler, more humane and compassionate sensibilities and even the ability to heal. The following examples are typical:

CASE 001847 ‘it was like meeting life and death all at once- to me life has never been the same since’

CASE 004435 ‘the incident had greater importance later in life than at the time.’

CASE 004814 ‘the greatest event of my life.’

CASE 004827 subject reached a “plane of unconditional love and acceptance...the most transforming of all my experiences ... Today I am a different person ... transformed... beginning the journey of joy” ...

CASE 100048 The whole experience was life changing ... the subject professes gratitude for the enriched insight that has steadily developed.

It is difficult to assess the frequency of long term effects on subjects who reported Kundalini awakening experiences to the RERC. This is simply because some subjects reported their experiences soon after having them, rather than with the benefit of years, even decades of hindsight, as in other cases. Therefore, the number of subjects ($20/40 = 50\%$) reporting such long term effects is probably too low. Such potential biases creep into any survey based on a single sample point, in time, without the possibility of follow up surveys that can monitor long term changes in subjects.

Anyone familiar with the work of psychiatrist Ian McGilchrist (2009) in his acclaimed book *The Master and Emissary* may note the tendency of such transcendental experiences to reorient subjects to a more overtly spiritual interests and awareness of love, compassion and the unity of all things, is consistent with a shift in emphasis from left to right brain functions. Not only does such a supposition underscore the importance of such shifts for psychological and healthy cognitive balance, with implications for consciousness studies, it is also consistent with McGilchrist's thesis that such balancing shifts are needed in a world where left brain 'functions' predominate and are too heavily emphasized as objective and scientific. Note the resonance of this exposition with the famous, if controversial, thesis of C.P. Snow (1959) that, much to its own detriment, western culture is split into *Two Cultures*: i.e., the sciences and the humanities.

RE Center number	Research Case and gender	Intense sensations in spine, nervous system & physical body	Sense of divine bliss, love, visions, voices, lucid dreams etc.,	Life-changing results, new directions, healing gifts etc.,
000554	male		x	x
000593	female		x	
000146	female		x	x
001082	female	x	x	
001847	female	x	x	x
002245	female			x
002329	male		x	
002547	female	x	x	x
002607	male	x	x	
002806	female			
003205	female	x	x	
003315	female	x	x	
003339	male		x	
003422	male	x		
003487	male	x	x	
004435	male	x	x	x
004814	female		x	x
004827	female	x	x	x
004857	female	x		
004903	male	x		
005046	female	x	x	x
005149	male	x		
005167	male	x		x
005371	male	x	x	
005386	male	x		x
005432	male	x	x	x
005458	male	x	x	
005541	male	x	x	
005549	male	x	x	
005555	male	x	x	x
005562	male	x		
100001	male	x	x	x
100006	female	x	x	x
100015	male	x		x
100041	female	x	x	x
100043	male	x	x	x
100048	male	x	x	x
100072	female	x		
200019	male	x	x	
300274	female	x		x
Number of reports 40		33/41 = 82.5 %	28/40 = 70%	20/40 = 50%

Table 1. Generalized summary of symptoms and after effects experienced by subjects (23 males and 17 females) reporting Kundalini Awakenings, based on 40 reports

gleaned by the author from the literature and RERC archives through 2009. See text for details

5. Synthesis

It is clear that the Kundalini awakening experience is often associated with intense physical sensations affecting the nervous system, and often leading to heightened visual and auditory sensitivity. Sensory and psychological experiences such as the sense of inner and external light, remote viewing, telepathy, divine voices etc., are shared to various degrees by those reporting religious, spiritual and mystical experiences, including NDEs and OBEs (out of body experiences) not labeled as Kundalini phenomena. However, this does not mean that they are necessarily of a wholly different kind, only that the degree of intensity and impact on different sensory organs is different. Thus, the Kundalini experience may just be a rather unusual and physically intense species of religious, spiritual or mystical experience. It has even been suggested that some spiritual experiences may be remembered parts of unremembered NDEs (Robert Mays personal communication, 2018).

Subjects reporting religious, spiritual, mystical and Kundalini experiences may be equally likely to report 'expanded' or 'raised' consciousness – what Bucke described as an enhancement of intellectual and moral faculties. Put another way, the experience brings enlightenment or illumination that subjects, and many outside observers may recognize as a transformation, growth or maturation of the higher faculties. The abruptness of the emergence of different consciousness structures may be seen as analogous to the monumental shift that takes place when children pass from the state of simple consciousness to self consciousness (Lockley 2000; Lockley and Morimoto, 2010): a phase shift in consciousness involving the awakening of latent faculties, arguably one of the aspects of organic evolution. At this early stage in childhood development infants are acquiring language and the ability to walk erect (Piaget, 1976; Konig, 1969). It could be argued that transformative religious, spiritual, mystical and Kundalini experiences represent an analogous shift from ego-centered self consciousness to ego-softened sage, cosmic or Super Ego consciousness, a stimulus or awakening of higher-self faculties. This shift also involves changes in the mode of self expression and language. According to Steiner (2009) and others (see Gebser, 1986, and Wilber 1986 for summary), humans also went through a transformation 'into' self-consciousness from a pre-self-consciousness structure. In the vocabulary of the latter two authors the spiritual experience phenomena may represent a shift from the "mental-rational" to the "integral" consciousness structure.

Beyond this suggestion it is outside the scope of this analysis to find objective criteria to support the idea that individual Kundalini awakening experiences represent a part of the broader evolutionary trajectory of the human species as a whole. Nevertheless we can point to certain analogies that make such inferences plausible, and it is significant that Krishna (1967) and other consciousness researchers and observers, including some of the subjects considered herein make the evolutionary argument explicitly. In recent years, a number of professional scientists are also

inclining to this, or a similar, view and seeing the Kundalini phenomenon as a legitimate field of study for mainstream biology, psychology and cognitive science (Kason, 2000; Dixon, 2008; Semple, 2014, and aforementioned authors such as Bentov, 1977 and Sanella 1987). All normal humans go through the childhood shift from simple to self consciousness. So it follows that rapid or abrupt developmental shifts in consciousness are a normal psychological phenomena, and, arguably, little different in principle from physiological and biological changes such as tooth replacement, puberty and menopause. If they occur in ontogeny, why should they not occur in phylogeny?

The link between physical and psychological experience is significant, especially involving reports that serious physical disorders may sometimes be healed almost instantly. First, it suggests that the body-mind is an integrated entity. Second it suggests that the body's natural power to heal itself, may be enhanced and accelerated in circumstances where vital energy is intensified. Although rare, spontaneous healing is dramatic in a minority of NDE cases (Rivas et al., 2016). Rapid shifts in bodily or somatic growth, may be uncommon, but they are not inconsistent with biological evidence. Indeed our biological and evolutionary science recognizes naturally-occurring instances of rapid growth known as 'sports' or 'mutants,' and the theory of 'punctuated equilibrium' allows for the rapid appearance of new species (even if the 'mechanisms' are not completely known). Advances in the scientific investigations of biophysical organization in organisms converge with the idea of morphogenetic fields proposed by Sheldrake (1981), and morphodynamic, non-Darwinian evolutionary dynamics (Verhulst, 2003; Lockley 2010; Schad, 2018). Simply put, the biophysical dynamics responsible for guiding or organizing organic growth from the genetic and molecular level, up to the level of organs and whole organisms, could under the right conditions of Kundalini, or nervous system activation, lead to rapid and unexpected, reorganizations and transmutations analogous to natural growth spurts. Even though conjecture about such rapid physiological changes may be challenged, the science of chronobiology, dealing with the functions of organs on different time scales from milliseconds to years, is well established (Rohen, 2007). Dixon (2008, p. 82) makes the interesting observation that Kundalini experiences may more often occur after "full myelination" of the nervous system which does not occur until the 20s (27-29) and may occur about 7 years after (age 34-36) as an "individuation crisis," an "organic process... an alchemical upheaval and restructuring of the brain." Certainly, subjects who have experienced Kundalini awakenings often feel they were propelled into a physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual growth spurt or quantum evolutionary leap, and find such terms the best descriptors of their experiences. If these propositions are plausible, then the intensification of vital evolutionary energy 'within' us might explain certain otherwise 'supernatural' reports of miraculous healing (e.g. Semple, 2014). Certainly increased 'awareness' of the Kundalini Awakening phenomenon, promises researchers in the fields of biology, psychology and religious studies fertile ground for further investigation.

Finally, given that the whole concept of Kundalini awakening originates in the eastern Vedantic and Tantric traditions (Avalon, 1919) it is worth noting the observations of Scott (2005 p. 23) that "far from being a force confined to the human body the scope of Kundalini is universal." Energy (prana) acts at the physical level to create "more and more complex life forms from the amoeba to the whole vegetable kingdom." Subsequent levels of "mental prana required Kundalini to devise forms capable of

mediating the energies of mind” which was accomplished by the evolution of the higher organisms and the human vessel. As Scott puts it “in order that the divine may manifest on the physical plane Kundalini must first provide structures that can respond to pressure from above.” This is clearly what would be described as a top down creation or activation of matter by spiritual forces. This echoes ancient and modern wisdom traditions, including Rudolf Steiner’s Anthroposophy in which the lower mineral and vegetative, and the higher sentient animal and human consciousness realms are seen as manifestations of different evolutionary dynamics, consciousness structures and potentials. Regardless of whether Kundalini energy is regarded as a universal force or one centered in, or having a special resonance with, the human nervous system, (and there is no reason to consider the domains as separate) it appears that there is a remarkable convergence in focus when it comes to understanding the Kundalini as a phenomenon of special evolutionary significance with respect to consciousness.

6. Conclusions

A number of conclusions and inferences can be drawn from these preliminary results.

- 1) The Kundalini Awakening Experience is a type of spiritually transformative experience that has attracted much interest among students of the evolution of consciousness.
- 2) The Kundalini Experiences discussed herein mostly involves intense physical experience associated with energizing of the spine and nervous system, as well as other organs of the body.
- 3) The Kundalini Experience tends to occur most frequently in midlife: i.e., the modal age is between 30-35. In this regard it appears to occur with a frequency similar to that reported by other investigators using the more general labels ‘spiritual experience’ and ‘cosmic consciousness.’
- 4) Those reporting the Kundalini Experience, claim it is mostly a positive experience inducing long-lasting, life-changing shifts in intellectual and spiritual sensibilities.
- 5) Kundalini Experiences are still infrequently reported in comparison with other religious, spiritual or mystical experiences. This may reflect the rarity of the experience. However, the experience may be more common than suspected because subjects unfamiliar with the phenomenon report it using different vocabularies that omit the term ‘Kundalini.’ Moreover the number of reports now being added to internet websites is growing steadily, as is associated literature.
- 6) The Kundalini Experience, may be a natural evolutionary phenomenon of unusual intensity, but no different in principle from other relatively rapid biological and psychological developmental transformations, even ‘growth spurts’ recognized by biological and evolutionary science, and in many cases forced by stress, crisis, or even illness, the latter clearly associated with NDEs.
- 7) Vedantic and Tantric traditions have recognized the Kundalini Experience for millennia and hold that it is a universal force (energy or *prana*) that helps shape the evolution of life forms on the material plane: i.e. manifesting in evolution. In humans it is recognized as having mental/cognitive/psychological

manifestations, as well as physical effects, that are mostly experienced as spiritually meaningful shifts in consciousness.

- 8) It is anticipated that reports of Kundalini Experiences will continue to be reported, probably with increased frequency. This predicted trend may be attributed to better understanding of the phenomenon, enhanced by new books and media, an increase in the frequency of experiences, deliberate kundalini raising practices, a natural acceleration in evolutionary rates surrounding kundalini energy releases, or a combination of all these factors. In any event, the increase in “kundalini awareness” promises opportunities for future research.

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<http://www.studyspiritualexperiences.org/uploads/3/6/6/5/3665804/kundalini-lockley.pdf> However, the link was removed when this paper was revised and expanded. Many additional internet reports of Kundalini experiences could be included in future studies, and it is anticipated that the number of reports will continue to grow.

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APPENDIX. Excerpts from RERC reports of Religious experience that specifically mention (or strongly imply) the Kundalini phenomenon. **Commentary in bold.** Subject's own words "in quotes" with omissions (...) shown. The author is responsible for edits and suggests other researchers consult the full original case texts for full details and contexts.

CASE 000554. Male. Experience in 1966 (as adult possibly in midlife). Experience changed life. Left his job because he could not relate to co-workers/job. Went to India and was writing about life changing experiences 32-33 years later. "a sublime consciousness of a personalized sustaining power which defies description... Mental perception and originality of thought were heightened...Continuing gratitude for experience even if it is now no more than a memory... Reading Tom Aston's details of the Kundalini experience I realize that this explains my experience in 1966. Kundalini and what Christians call the Holy Spirit are one and the same."

CASE 000593. Female. Experience in 1955 at the ages of 13-15. Writes of a "feeling of blissful transcendence... No barrier [to] one great being ... can't put it into words....no one around me understood my experiences...I recognized 'Kundalini' and many others" **Her G. P.** "diagnosed me as dangerously ill with Schizophrenia... later present husband diagnosed me as more of a 'mystic.'" **Subject could induce a trance state easily.**

CASE 001046. Female. Experiences at 25, 38, 40. "Dual locality consciousness. Sensation of "peace not of this world." Was in bed and "saw coiled whitish serpent on the floor ...confused, afraid but nevertheless bearing goodwill ... I attempted, rather terrified to pat it on the head. Immediately ...it was seemed ... in front of me... it "entered" into me seemingly in the region of the solar plexus. I remember thinking, ... of the words "pristine force." Later was "greatly interested to hear of the Kundalini."

CASE 001082. Female. Experience in 1942 at age 31. "All at once the room was full of life... I felt physically alert, fresh and full of wonderful rest , peace and reassurance...When the peace reached its climax I was conscious of a movement at the base of the spine and the Hindu Kundalini (as I now know it) began to move up the spine traveling up the neck to the base of the brain. A voice then said audibly..."you see pain and suffering belong only to the physical world" ...I saw a blue void and felt my own primordial basic spirit entity...I had never heard mention of the Kundalini before that day."

CASE 001847. Female Experience at age 32. Doing Bakti yoga "on path of self realization... sat in chair doing office work...one single straight bar supporting my back ...was constructive in arousing the kundalini in my spine." **Then had a frightening experience – words don't suffice – subject would paint experience if she could** "It sounds like a dream... **but subject was** ...wide awake and experienced this most wonderful and beautiful experience...The spiritual body was like an X ray of the whole nervous system...Dear Reader, it was like meeting life and death all at once-to me life has never been the same since."

CASE 002245. Female. Experience in 1934. While walking along street a voice said "THIS IS NOT REALITY" Later had buzzing in ears. Read about "the Serpent

Power by Avalon (Sir John Woodroffe)"... and ...“peculiar buzzing ... referred to the awakening of the Kundalini and its ascent up through the chakras”

CASE 002329. Male. Experience at age 54. An experienced meditator tried Kundalini ‘Hindu’ method very cautiously only five times. Also prayed for guidance. In the middle of the night got up and was “suddenly surrounded by a large circle of golden light.”

CASE 002547. Female. Experience in 1972. “I had a sort of volcanic eruption of mystical experience.” Person could visit sick people telepathically, and they would recognize that she had visited them. Her short/long legs grew to equal length and lost stretch marks after 30 years “A severe spinal curvature {sic} since childhood, has gone completely, ...all this is very joyous to me... in Hindu philosophy it is ... Kundalini - the evolutionary life force.”

CASE 002607. Male. Experience at age 37, in 1946 heard “A voice said ‘He’s coming’ ... woke up in ecstacy [ecstasy], great spasm of electrical energy discharging from the base of my brain down through my spinal card [cord] , which trashed like a snake inside me {cf. kundalini, Diana Hasting 15, ix 1999} ... then subsided leaving me perfectly happy and relaxed ...”

CASE 002806. Female. Experiences at ages 16-17, 31(9) 44. Aged 16-17 saw Annie Besant ‘in cloud of white light’

CASE 003205. Female. Experience in March 1970 at age 34. Lying in bed “Suddenly I felt as if the top of my head had opened up...a brilliant white light came through ... the light beyond description...after much reading ... I believe it to be a Kundalini, as described by Gopi Krishna, or perhaps a brief glimpse of Cosmic Consciousness as described by Dr Bucke.”

CASE 003315. Female. Experiences at ages 44/45 (also 47/23). Sitting getting ready for bed saying “our Father... after a few words ...my back straightened out, my whole body filled with electricity, and then I simply lost the feel or awareness of my body completely...‘filled with tremendous feeling of love... God’s love ... I ...am aware of Kundalini awakening in me”

CASE 003339. Male, born 1911, had experiences at age 8 and again aged 45 (3-9) 47. Poor family miserable peasant child in Poland. Aged 8 “in deep meditative mood ... as I suffered in silent desperation ... saw a great white cloud in the sky... became calm ...lost all feeling of hopelessness.” **In 1956 in Chicago had** “another vision... the message was very distinct “everything will be alright ...I was attempting to understand ... that the seat of this power [love] lies in that gland ... I think ... the pineal gland (I wonder if this is a positive to the negative in ‘Kundalini,’ at the base of the spine).”

CASE 003422. Male. Experiences at aged 5, 17. “awoke in terror because at the bottom of my spine something was uncurling upwards towards my head... [Kundalini] told himself ...it was a monstrous snake... Had dream ...in it, my “I” was rising up above a grey area which softened into a blue, vast sea...I felt, not heard the words: “in time, In Time” ... As for the snake ... [it is] ... in Gopi Krishna’s work n

the oriental ‘fire-serpent’ that rises up the spine: Kundalini.”

CASE 003487 Male. **Reported experiences of** “timelessness [and] crystal clear peace... Although I could not move I felt the “serpent of Kundalini” move up and around my spinal cord.”

CASE 004435. Male, born 3-10-46 had experience in 1972 (aged 26). Reports that after he had “rushed my yoga exercises...suddenly felt a spasm of pure pleasure, starting in my solar plexus and expanding to fill my whole body... **The experience was** ...connected with vision, with a clarity of perception... The loss caused me to cry, so intense was the sense of having been diminished... the incident had greater importance later in life ...”

CASE 004814. Female aged 16. **Subject writes of meeting Yogananda** “the greatest event of my life... **Subject had** ...led a repressed life... **and developed a hobby of health and nutrition and read** ...about an oriental exercise ... I did not know it was Lauliki Mudra to raise Kundalini. I tried it and soared... Selfishness completely disappeared. *I was awake when asleep. And I had no fear.* (Original italics) ... I often sang a popular song. “Why is the sky bluer? Why is my heart truer... Why is the sun brighter? Why is my heart lighter? “It took months to fade. “Wherever I sat... I held my spine straight.”

CASE 004827. Female aged 30. Report made in 1987. Subject writes a piece on experience of awakening the Kundalini. “I activated the energy within and without myself that I now term “the kundalini energy... this began an altered state of consciousness.... **Subject learned from a lecture given by a psychiatrist on the subject** ...Kundalini, inspiration or madness” and had to draw on inner strength to prevent “going over the edge.” **Subject became a healer and clairvoyant counselor and has reached a** “plane of unconditional love and acceptance...the most transforming of all my experiences.”

CASE 004857. Subject 66 years old (born 1921). At age 32 “born again.” **At age 66 the subject writes** “The other night a vivid scary dream awoke me. I could feel the Kundalini Fire raising in and to the heart area.”

CASE 004903. Male born 1950 experiences in mid 20s, at 30, 32/33 and 47. seems to involve negative Kundalini experience- “cool energy” in spine “bolts of energy” from cerebellum to cerebrum- “once saw white energy coming from a dried snakeskin.” “Dr [X] ...analysed his brain activity and found it like others with Kundalini activity.” **Subject laments lack of information on** “anyone undergoing similar experience related to Kundalini.”

CASE 005342. Male aged 33-38. Date of reported experience 2002. “in the Spring of 2003 ... I started to have what I can only describe as full body orgasms...a warm rushing waves of tingling energy, beginning in my upper thighs, spreading quickly across my torso, and back and forth across my chest and stomach...Then the ‘orgasms’ started to happen when I was out dancing... ...about 13 or 14 times ...an especially intense bubbling of energy ... very intense and can last for minutes on end ... like an awakening of nerve endings....I think I have experienced a kundalini awakening...I know that I am an embodiment of the forces of life, love. As we all are.”

CASE 005458. male “was experiencing a wonderful, though overwhelming, welling up of my spirit, and was finding it very difficult to accommodate the feeling. I asked my friends if they could drop me off at the local cathedral. On entering...I sat, ...experiencing a very powerful surge of energy coming from the base of my spine, up through my body to my head and beyond... as if my crown had spiritually dissolved , with an inexplicable shaft of ecstatic energy... (*I once read something of the ‘chakras’ and the ‘kundalini spirit’ which reflected this experience accurately.*) [original italics]... noticed a young man nudge his friend to look in my direction... I wondered if the energy ...I was giving out was somehow responsible.”

CASE 100015 Male, had experience in 1972. Subject “felt lightness in abdomen which ... I much later came to realize was the kundalini experience.”

CASE 100041. Female aged 38 had “powerful experience in which with my inner eye, I could see my doorway to the absolute as Jesus Christ...but insisting he was not God...I felt a deluge of calming energy rush through my whole body... I was assailed by a phenomenal amount of sexual energy. I was slightly prepared for this because I had learned about Kundalini, the force that brings enlightenment... I think that Kundalini energy actually changes the way the brain and nervous system operate – making us more naturally inclined to have a world view that considers the collective need as much as the personal. Loving ones neighbour becomes easier...Kundalini experiences felt like immensely strong sexual energy ... moving up through spinal column.”

CASE 000043. Male born 1944. **Subject was a** “serious, determined ‘searcher’ ... **In 1993 he** ...experienced strong spasms at night and did not sleep for 5 nights. **He considers in retrospect that** “sensations like mine are ‘pranic energies’ associated with ‘the awakening of the kundalini’ .” **Subject experienced vibrations inside the body** “intense pulsating pressure ...imagine being softly kissed on the neck by a lover.” **His wife gets a mild shock of she touches his chakra locations.** **Subject concludes that** “Cosmic consciousness is massive, intricate multidimensional and transpersonal...Spirituality involves exhausting work” and requires **your total ego demolition** (bold font original).

CASE 000048. Male born 1950. 18 page report on experiences in 1987 at age 37, summarized in 3rd person as follows: a “Kundalini release” ...peak experience partially documented by the subject and qualified medical practitioners in [Spring] 1987. The ...experience of pure white light, was shared, at least peripherally, by the [subject’s] young daughter. The experience left the author with a changed state of consciousness,” **The report** “is, in part, a medical case history regarding an unusual and short-lived, but life changing ... Kundalini ... experience” **where the subject speaks of** “the dreamy richness of vision” and states “I am eternal... The power is great use it wisely ...” **[and speaks of a]** “belief in the power, glory and energy of the universe,” observing that “the vital energies of the Kundalini had been unchained, and pure energy had run rampant through a body and brain. But the energy seemed to know what it was doing, even though [at the time] it mystified the patient and his doctors.” The subject noted that ‘soon after the 1987 kundalini episode the subject began to feel an overwhelming sense of joy. Joyous songs, including “Amazing Grace” and Stevie Wonder’s “There’s a place in the sun,” came spontaneously to mind, and

he sang and hummed them with unconcealed rapture, and beaming smiles."

CASE 200019. **Male had experiences at ages 22 and 33. While meditating,** in 2004, in a "deep state of concentration... noticed white lights at the side of my vision ... I experienced a lot of physical sensations like electricity/tingling over my forehead and ... at the top of my vision came a bright white sparkling ball made up of silver white rays/blades ...The physical sensations intensified over my whole body to such a degree that I felt numb...and the electricity was intense...at this moment I had a completely overwhelming sense of bliss/love. It was awesome- it made everything else I had ever experienced pale into comparison. Then a few minutes later, a massive surge of upwards energy towards this light actually made me stand up from a sitting mediation as I felt that I was being shot up out of my body...I believe that I experienced a Kundalini awakening where the Kundalini energy shoots upwards toward the crown chakra. An amazing experience."