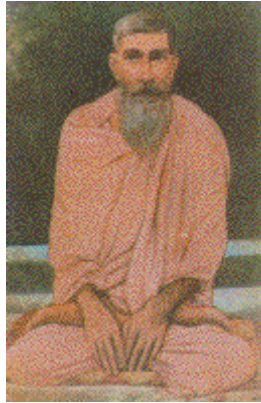


Swami Narayan Tirth



Swami Narayandev Tirth

The Shaktipat Initiation of Swami Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj was celebrated at the Swami Shivom Tirth New York Ashram on April 25, 1993. Shri Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj, was in attendance and he addressed the audience with remarks concerning the significance of this great event. Several other people spoke concerning events from the life of Swami Narayan Tirth, and the following is a transcript of one of these talks:

Today I would like to talk a bit about a marvelous incident which occurred over one hundred years ago. The event I would like to talk about took place in a remote part of Eastern India during the latter part of the nineteen century. It involved a solitary man, one who had withdrawn from the world and given up all thoughts of worldly pleasures. This holy man lived in a small cottage near a pond called Chandan Talab. Although nowadays this area has become a populated area, in those days the cottage was very isolated and sat next to a great forest. This secluded sannyasin lived a life of renunciation, spiritual practices, and meditation far from any village or farm. He was full of divine energy, but, because of the high state of his mind, this great man made no attempt to preach or otherwise attract any followers. This saintly man was named Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj.

Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj lived a very simple, solitary life, yet he was very concerned with the affairs of the world. His only contact with the outside world was through a disciple, a humble man who provided his Guru with food by begging in a nearby village. One day, the yogic powers of Swami Gangadhar Tirth revealed to him that difficult times were ahead for ordinary people because of the effects of the age or era in which we now live. The period in which we now live, as you know, is called the Kali- Yuga, or the Age of Darkness. The Swami knew that the effects of the Kali- Yuga made it very difficult for ordinary people to remain on any spiritual path. He knew people would need help in finding spiritual illumination, since the influence of the Kali-Yuga made it difficult for people to advance spiritually unless they had already progressed to a high state of awareness. A most important aspect of this account is that Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj had been blessed with the discovery of a very special means of awakening spiritual consciousness. This was truly a great discovery, since previously the awakening of spiritual consciousness was very difficult. Few people qualified for receiving help even from very advance souls. Because of the effects of the Kali-Yuga, no means were available to advance the cause of ordinary seekers because of these factors.

Now, although the great holy man was in possession of this marvelous means of assisting people in spiritual advancement, he was in a difficult position. He was restrained from spreading word of this remarkable method of awakening the sleeping spiritual energy in a person because of his unique state of awareness. He was in such a high state of spiritual bliss (samadhi) that it was not within his means to mix with people, to give talks, and to otherwise spread the news of this beneficial spiritual power. So he remained in solitude, waiting for that special person who would come to receive his gift, and to spread that gift among all those who had desires for spiritual advancement.

The remarkable event that was to take place also involved a young man, almost a boy. The boy was born as Kali Kishore in 1870 in East Bengal in what was then eastern India. He was born into a poor family and was married while he was still very young. However, even at that young age, he longed for a life of spirituality. Along with this longing for a spiritual way of life, he possessed many spiritual qualities. These qualities included detachment from worldly longings and control of his emotions. Soon, this yearning for a spiritual life became very uncomfortable for him, because it led him to make a decision that had a great effect on his later life. Kali Kishore decided at last to leave his home and family in order to seek out someone who could show him the way to find God.

Therefore, he renounce his home and family, and took up the ways of a wandering monk. He traveled widely, and he visited many holy places and sought the company of saintly persons. When he heard stories of holy men giving talks on spiritual matters, he would immediately go wherever they were rumored to be to hear their lectures. But, although he listened to a great many talks and spent as much time as possible in the company of these great men, he still felt unsatisfied, because these men did not reveal to him the truth he longed for. One day the young man was talking about his quest with another man, a Brahmachari, who was also dedicated to the quest for spiritual upliftment. When this Brahmachari learned of the longings of Kali Kishore, he told him of a saintly man who lived alone in a secluded woods, and suggested that this great man might assist him in his search. So the young man decided to accompany the Brahmachari to visit this secluded saint.

So it was that, one day, the young Kali Kishore came and stood before Swami Gangadhar Tirth. We know a little about the thoughts that entered their minds as they met. We know that the spiritual master Swami Gangadhar Tirth joyfully received this young aspirant, because he instantly recognized that here before him was a disciple worthy to receive the special power of spiritual awakening that he had waited so long to share with the world. And young Kali Kishore realized that here was a true sage, one who was capable of taking him to his goal of God- Realization. The Swami questioned the young man and found out about his great desire for a spiritual way of life. He was also informed by Kali Kishore that he had no family ties and was free to take on whatever duties were required of him. And so it was that Swami Gangadhar Tirth immediately arranged for the initiation of the young man with the special system of spiritual awakening that he had discovered.

On the very next morning, just as thousands have done since then, the young man rose early in the morning to take his bath and prepare himself for his spiritual blessing. He carefully bathed, per the direction of the Swami, in the waters of the pond named Chandan Talab near the cottage. At 4:00 AM, he appeared before his Guru, but, being a poor wanderer, he didn't have even a single rupee or any gift to give to his new master, as was the custom. But such gifts from an initiate were not important to this sage. And so, the great Swami, using his special method of transmission of spiritual energy, initiated Kali Kishore and activated the

kundalini power within him. On April 25, 1889, Shri Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj initiated his first and only known disciple. Shakti, the divine internal power, became immediately active within the young man at the time of his initiation, and he felt the powerful experience of the awakened kundalini. His body started to shake and tremble; he experienced moods of crying and laughing. All these movements were happening without any conscious thought on his part; they were all the play of an awakened kundalini within him. The young man was filled with a great joy and was in a heightened state of awareness for three days. On the third day, however, the great Swami had a vision which disturbed him. In his meditation, Swami Gangadhar Tirth saw that this new disciple was not free of family obligations as he had said. When questioned, the young man admitted that he had left behind a wife, mother, and brothers and sisters.

Such were the powers of this Swami Gangadhar Tirth that he could recall the divine energy he had just activated in this boy. He announced his decision, stating that although kundalini was activated, the boy would not continue to experience the marvelous benefits of Shakti. The Swami told the boy that he must return to his home and fulfill his duties to his wife and family. However, in spite of his disappointment with the boy for his lie, he could not still contain his joy in knowing what the future held for this new disciple. The mahatma therefore revealed to the boy that he should not be disappointed. "You should not be impatient," the swami revealed, "Everything will be right in the course of time. I have given you a spark of fire. This will surely spread over many parts of the world after some period of time."

Thus the disciple obeyed his new spiritual master, and returned home to fulfill his duties to his wife and family. Surely he was disappointed in, having seemingly reached the great object he had longed for, now saw it, for all he knew, taken away forever. Yet, the young disciple remained true to his Guruji, and upon reaching his home, found a job to provide for his family. Although he continued to sit in meditation, all signs of the awakened kundalini were missing. Still, he continued his spiritual practices according to the instructions given him by his Guru. And so it was that, one morning, exactly nineteen years, six months, and thirty days later, that he sat down for his morning meditation as usual. Then, suddenly, he again felt the rush of spiritual fire within him. He felt the ecstatic flow of divine energy return to him. He knew then that his Gurugi's promise had been true, and that he was now fit to resume his great journey. Rising from meditation, with the great glow of awakened kundalini still active within his breast, he immediately began to settle his affairs so that he could devote himself to his awakened spiritual energy. Now that all obligations to home and family were fulfilled, he was free to live the life of a renunciate.

He quit his job, and constructed a small cottage outside his home town, where he lived and meditated. His meditative ecstasy was strong and constant. One day, he felt an intense spiritual rapture come over him, and gazing upon a statue of Divine Kali, he felt the sudden urge to clean the statue. He picked up the statue and wiped it clean. Suddenly, the statue began to shine with an intense light, and in a flash of divine insight, he realized that his duty was to awaken the same brilliance within the hearts of men and women. He cast off his ordinary clothes, and put on the saffron robes of a god-seeking man. He took the name [Swami Narayan Tirth](#) and began to receive and bestow blessings on worshipers who heard stories of this new holy man. This power which was now completely active in the Swami was, of course, the system we now know as Shaktipat. And so it was that, instead of being lost, Shaktipat, this most beneficial method of spiritual awakening, was preserved for us and for future generations.

Swami Narayan Tirth soon began to initiate others into the Shaktipat system and as the number of followers grew, he founded a meditation center. The great spiritual personality of Swami Narayan Tirth bloomed as the years went by. The mood of ecstatic communion was constant in this great man, and it was said that he was in continuous meditation. Among the great teachings left by this saint, the following teaching is beautiful in its clarity and simplicity:

1. Get up early before sunrise every day without fail. Fold up your bed and sit in meditation after performing the morning bath.
2. Nature is infinite and extravagant. It is capable of giving you anything you need. You should, however, exploit it to the extent you need. The sources of nature should never be wasted.
3. Lead a simple life and cherish high spiritual principles. Remain constant during pleasure or pain. Take your work to be the worship of God.
4. Do not interfere mentally in the movements of Shakti during meditation. Surrender yourself completely to Shakti, and give it liberty to operate upon you. Remain a witness throughout and rejoice while Shakti has its play in you.

Finally, and of great importance to us, among those he initiated was [Shri Yoganandaji Maharaj](#). Shri Yoganandaji Maharaj in turned initiated [Shri Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj](#), who initiated our present day Guru-Maharaj, [Shri Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj](#). Thus this majestic power of spirituality has been handed down and this same power is now available to all of us. Because of this important event, the science of Shaktipat is now spreading all over the world, as predicted by Shri Swami Gangadhar Tirth over one hundred years ago.

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Excerpt from the book “Kundalini, Evolution and Enlightenment” by John White.

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If the latent power of kundalini slumbering at the base of the spine, awaiting release, is the atom bomb of the human body, as has been claimed, its potentials for benefiting or destroying the individual - and hence society - are profound. Its elucidation and control may be as essential as is the control of the energy of the atom.

What is it? Where does its power come from? What do we do about it

If the sages of the ages are correct that the release of kundalini power can be the cataclysmic for a body which is physically emotionally and - most important spiritually unprepared by sustained spiritual discipline, then we are indeed “playing with fire” !

Can science, concerned with physical facts and physical phenomena, expand its paradigm to include the spiritual warnings so that experiments with kundalini’s physical effects do not create havoc?

Will the growing popular enchantment with vaunted kundalini values - from sexual excitement to spiritual bliss - become a siren song luring the unwary and unprepared to destruction?

Or will we with care and caution discover safe paths to individual and social regeneration through correct understanding and release of this unprecedented potential power?

The thoughtful and socially-responsible questions raised by Jeanne Rindge, president of the Human Dimensions Institute, in a special issue of *Human Dimensions* (see Appendix), should be pondered by everyone concerned with kundalini. Its potential for harm and destruction to bodies and minds is great. We have seen evidence that kundalini, if improperly aroused, without right guidance and preparation in the student, can be horribly painful and destructive, even fatal. The “white light” experience of the mystics can become “ugly glaring light” of a schizophrenic; the “signs and wonders” performed by saints can turn into psychic phenomena and paranormal experiences that terrify people who naïvely venture beyond the limits of their understanding and preparation. In those who are not sustained by a sensible, healthy manner of living - one that is regulated, balanced, and ethical, not ascetic or orgiastic - kundalini can turn malignant and bring about deteriorating health, terrible bodily heat and chills pain, many forms of physical and mental illness, and even sudden death.

Gopi Krishna points out in his book that there is another condition, too, even worse for humanity. Kundalini gone astray, he says, has created the evil geniuses of history. In such cases the kundalini energy was active since birth, as in all geniuses. However, their lives were so filled with difficulties that the kundalini energy became malignant because the finer qualities of mind necessary for psychological stability had not been part of their upbringing. The absence of those finer traits constitutes nature’s safeguard barring access to the highest levels

of consciousness. Short of enlightenment, though, the serpent energy can indeed turn venomous and from someone born with high intelligence produce a Rasputin, a Hitler.

This section is intended as a final word of warning. As people see in various ways to know and to grow, some naïvely think that higher consciousness can result from forcefully practicing certain disciplines in a mechanical fashion. This sort of sophisticated “power trip” is warned against by spiritual masters in the kundalini tradition. *Don’t meditate* to awaken kundalini, they say, because you will probably harm yourself. Forcing it prematurely is possible but extremely dangerous. Rather, seek to grow in love and understanding. Seek to refine your character and cultivate your mind through selfless service, discriminating studies, and dedicated spiritual training. Do that, and kundalini will awaken gently, automatically and without the unhealthy effects that are being seen more and more frequently. *Desiring* something - even such a noble goal as the awakening of kundalini - is misguided.

Nor is the awakening of kundalini in itself a magical key to samadhi. Swami Kripalvananda, in his *Science of Meditation* (see Appendix), cautions against what he terms “the menace of kundalini” during advanced stages of spiritual practice.

The seeker who dares to awaken the kundalini power without the grace and guidance of a guru might become insane succumb to diseases, or even die. This is because he does not possess the necessary knowledge, steadiness of mind, or patience required for this difficult undertaking.

Many seekers are found wandering here and there in search of a guru who will awaken their kundalini ... Although thousands may claim that their kundalini is awakened, it is doubtful if even one of them really has such knowledge or experience.

To awaken the kundalini power is one thing, but to make it move upward into the passage of the sushumna is something else. In the beginning, as the kundalini is awakened, the seeker feels a lot of enthusiasm. But as he advances in (meditation), he begins to encounter various menaces of kundalini. Only one with great courage can cope with these menaces; it is simply not possible for all to do so.

The brief articles assembled in this section call attention to various difficulties and dangers that may be encountered on the path of spiritual development. They are presented without further comment.

In closing, the words of the American-born yogi Ram Dass, formerly Richard Alpert, professor of psychology at Harvard, seem appropriate, Ram Dass describes his

spiritual awakening in several engaging books, notably *The Only Dance There Is* and *Grist for the Mill*. He reports the following insightful experience with his guru, Maharaj-ji, which is offered here as a sage advice to the student: “When I asked Maharaj-ji, “How do you raise kundalini?”, he said, ‘Serve people’. Which is like a real shlock answer. And I’ve worked with that, and it’s so far out, and I see as I orient myself to seeing this whole thing as a process with everyone I meet, I keep getting into these spaces of incredible love and connectedness and that’s the kundalini ... It’s like ... don’t just sit there doin breathing exercises - serve people.”

THE DANGER OF AROUSING KUNDALINI

by Alice Ann Bailey

How this fire at the base of the spine can be aroused the form its progression should take (dependent upon the Ray), the blending of the fire with pranic fire and their subsequent united progression are things of the past with many, and fortunately for the race, the work was achieved without conscious effort. The second blending with the fire of manas (mind) has to be effected. Scarcely as yet men succeeded in directing the fire up more one channel of the threefold column; hence, two-thirds of its effects in the majority is yet confined to the stimulation of the organs of race propagation.

Only when the fire has circled unimpeded up another channel is the complete merging with the fire of the manas effected, and only when it progresses geometrically up all the three - with simultaneous action and at uniform vibration - is the true kundalini fire fully aroused, and therefore able to perform its work of cleansing through the burning of the confining web and of the separating particles. When this is accomplished the threefold channel becomes one channel. Hence the danger.

He who directs his efforts to the control of the fires of matter, is (with a dangerous certainty) playing with a fire that may literally destroy him. He should not cast his eyes backward but should lift them to the plane where dwells his immortal Spirit and the by self-discipline, and control of the mind and a definite refining of his material bodies, whether subtle or physical, fit himself to be a vehicle for the divine birth and participate in the first initiation. When the Christ-child (as the Christian so beautifully expresses it) has been born in the cave of the heart, then that divine guest can consciously control the lower material bodies by means of concreated mind.

I do not in any way intent to take up the subject from such an angle as to convey rules and information that will enable a man to vivify these centers and bring them into play. I sound here a solemn word of warning. Let a man apply himself to a life of high altruism, to a discipline that will refine and bring his lower vehicles into subjection, and to a strenuous endeavor to purify and control his sheaths. When he has done this and has both stabilized his vibration, he will find that the development and functioning of the centers has pursued a parallel course, and that (apart from his active participation) the work has proceeded along the desired lines.

Much danger and dire calamity attend the man who arouses these centers by unlawful methods; and who experiments with the fires of his body without the needed technical knowledge. He may, by his efforts succeed in arousing the fires and in intensifying the action of the centers, but he will pay the price of ignorance in the destruction of matter, in the burning of bodily or brain tissue, in the

development of insanity, and in opening the door to currents and forces, undesirable and destructive. It is not the part of a coward, in these matters concerning the subjective life, to move with caution and with care; it is a part of discretion. The aspirant, therefore, has three things to do:

1. Purify, discipline and transmute his threefold lower nature.
2. Develop knowledge of himself, and equip his mental body; build the causal body (soul) by good deeds and thoughts
3. Serve his race in utter self-abnegation.

KUNDALINI IS NOT THE SOLE TRUTH

M.P. Pandit

Gopi Krishna writes from direct experience, in addition to his vast knowledge of ancient Sanskrit treatises and his considerable research in the tantric tradition. Thus his work should provide the much-needed corrective to the lack of understanding that is present in the West regarding tantra yoga and kundalini. There is one point, however, on which it is not possible to agree with Gopi Krishna. He says in *The Awakening of Kundalini*, “An enlightened consciousness is never possible without a biological transformation” and asserts that the brain mechanism has to undergo a radical change before a more divine consciousness can be embodied. Yogic experience indicates that the process is just the reverse: a change of consciousness is anterior to alterations in the physiological system are a consequence. It is the consciousness that builds the form and shapes it to its needs. Further, the changes in consciousness effected by the direct descent of the higher consciousness through the head center - rather than the ascent of the kundalini from below - must be accounted for. There are lines of yogic discipline - Sahaja Marga, for example - in which it is expressly forbidden to go below the center at the chest level because they do not want to touch the kundalini; and yet they do register changes in consciousness, mental illumination, and spiritual transformation. Kundalini is a great truth, but not the sole main truth.

In fact, from the point of view of Sri Aurobindo's Integral yoga, kundalini disciplines don't have much relevance. What is being laboriously attempted, dangerously pursued, and problematically achieved in kundalini yoga can be assured in a yoga like Sri Aurobindo's in a very natural way. And without one's mind deciding, “This is to be my way of progress”; but rather by throwing oneself open into the divine consciousness and grace, letting it descend into oneself and letting it decide which centers of consciousness are going to be operated upon which one is most open and ready. It is more in the natural way of evolution to let things develop in this matter rather than having a systematized procedure.

Even if one has a capable guru who works with the kundalini, it is not sufficient for reaching transformation as understood from Sri Aurobindo's point of view. Kundalini yoga practiced under a capable guru can lead to the realization of a certain overhead consciousness (awareness of some higher planes associated with the overhead chakra's), but one who does this may nevertheless continue to experience anger, desire, etc. And generally speaking in such people these emotions are more intensified. Nevertheless, that continuous joy, happiness, delight is there. For some people, there are more powers such as writing, painting, psychic abilities.

Still, you cannot say that such a person will have a spiritual consciousness. It is left to him to use his state for further development. If a person takes advantage of

that state to transform himself or to divinize himself, then we may say he has true spiritual consciousness. But usually people remain at that level, saying they have attained the ultimate, that Shiva and Shakti have joined - the power and the Self have joined - and that the purpose of the kundalini is fulfilled. Thus the possibility of genuine transformation in the tradition of Sri Aurobindo is forsaken through ignorance and a subtle addiction to bliss.

THE TWO PATHS TO KUNDALINI

Sri Chinmoy

Blessed is he who practices kundalini yoga as a part of self-discovery and not in order to acquire power in hypnotism, black magic, or other low forms of occultism which operate in and from the vital world. A genuine student of kundalini yoga is he who tries to unite the vital power and the spiritual knowledge in perfect harmony with the evolving spirit of life. A genuine seeker never considers the hidden powers or occult powers as his goal. He cares only for God. He longs only for God's loving presence in his life.

The kundalini power is the dynamic power in us. When the dynamic power and the spiritual knowledge go hand in hand, the perfect harmony of the universal consciousness dawns and the conscious evolution of the human soul reaches the transcendental self.

There are two ways for one to enter into kundalini yoga: through the tantric process and through the vedantic process. The tantric approach is systematic and elaborate but, at the same time, quite dangerous. The vedantic process is simple and mystical, but it is safe and in no way less convincing or less fulfilling.

The tantric method is dangerous because it deals first with the lower vital and emotional life. The approach is dynamic and courageous. Either one will purify himself by entering bravely into the vital world and coming out triumphant, or one will be totally lost in the ignorance of the vital world if he is not strong enough inwardly to conquer the vital forces there.

The vedantic way is safe because the seeker concentrates and meditates to raise, purify, and illumine his consciousness before he tries to deal with the obscure impure lower vital forces that want to bind him. When the seeker enters into the lower vital world with the light of illumination, to his wide surprise he sees that the lower vital world is illumined, purified, and divinized.

The tantric process demands from the seeker constant and conscious awareness of the inner and upward movement from the muladhara chakra to the sahasra chakra. The vedantic process demands from the seeker conscious and constant awareness of the evolving and liberating consciousness.

If anybody would like to practice kundalini yoga, I advice that seeker to follow the vedantic method, which is safe and, at the time, sure. If you follow the vedantic method, you are destined to reach the goal certainly and safely.