

## KUNDALINI YOGA CONCEPT IN PURANIC LITERATURES

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### **Abstract:**

Kundalini is assumed as a goddess in Hindu traditions. There are detailed descriptions regarding kundalini energy in yogic as well as puranic literature. The story of Ramayana has analogy with the awakening and movement of kundalini energy. Most of the yoga texts are presented in form of dialogue between Lord Shiva and his consort Parvati. Some texts are also presented in the form of advice, suggestion or teachings of Guru to his disciple. So in either of the way yogic teachings follow the Hindu tradition of transfer knowledge from God or Guru. In this article the author tries to present the description of kundalini, the mystic hidden potential of individual in different puranic literatures.

**Keywords:** Shiva, Kundalini, Serpent, Chakra, Nadi, Purana,  
Lord Shiva and Kundalini

### **Shiva with moon**

The word 'soma' stands for the Moon. Lord Shiva always carries lustrous crescent moon on his forehead. It indicates the flooding of the brain by the blissful radiance when Kundalini is awakened, sending stream full of pranic energy up the spine.

**Lingam-Yoni Symbol-**Linga and yoni worship is very common in Hinduism. It represents the union of the female and male principles (Shakti and Shiva, or energy). In other words it indicates consciousness resulting in enlightenment.

**Shiva and serpent-**Kundalini is also known as the 'Serpent Power'. Mythologically, the serpent symbolizes a being of awakening power and wisdom. Lord Shiva is almost always seen garlanded with a serpent around his neck.

Similarly Lord Vishnu reclines on the coils of a huge nine-headed serpent, with goddess Lakshmi in the ocean of milk.

The serpent Ananta (infinite support of Lord Vishnu in the same way that prana-Shakti supports the living being). The ocean of nourishing is ojas (bio-plasma) which is present in every cell of the body which gets collected and sent to the brain by the nervous system, ultimately getting transformed into consciousness.

**Nataraj: The dancing lord-**The Nataraj or 'Dancing Shiva', depicts the characteristics of one who has attained the state of cosmic consciousness. In the upper left hand he holds a flame which indicates blissful light. In his upper right hand, he holds a drum, symbolizing the sound experienced by one in the enlightened state. The lower right hand is in a form of the gesture indicating that in this state one has no fear of death. Under his foot being crushed is the ego, called 'the man of forgetfulness and misunderstanding' who does not perceive his divine characteristics.

**According to Yoga Vasistha:**

Function of Kundalini in the body which is made of the fivefold elements, is in the form of the life-force.

The same kundalini is known variously as

- Mind
- Jiva
- movement of thought
- intellect
- ego-sense

It is the absolute life-force in the body.

It flows downwards in the form of apana, it dwells in the solar plexus as samana and the same life-force rises up as udana.

These forces ensure the balance in the system.

Incase the downward pull is excessive and not arrested by appropriate effort, death ensues.

#### **Example of the awakening of Kundalini in Ramayana:**

Ramayana is a story of about 24,000 Sanskrit verses, attributed to the sage Valmiki. The three main characters in the story are the noble Rama, his beautiful wife Sita, and an evil demon named Ravana, who kidnaps Sita and imprisons her in his island fortress of Lanka.

**Ramayana: ‘Rama’ represents soul , ‘Ayan’ means journey of soul from time to eternity.** It is the voyage from limits of ego consciousness to the infinite expansion of cosmic consciousness, from darkness of ignorance to radiant competence. Ramayana is the science of spiritual growth and also progress towards achieving self realization. In another way we can interpret as: Rama stands for the male principle (i.e. consciousness). He is the epitome of virtue. He , by his courage, strength, faith, perseverance, high morals and ideals, eventually defeats Ravana and ‘releases’ Sita from prison (frees the individual consciousness to unite with the universal consciousness in enlightenment).

#### **Dasharatha:**

Dasharatha represents an individual capable of riding ten chariots. This ten chariots represent our ten senses. He who has command over his ten senses by his knowledge, capability and intelligence is known as Dasharatha. Dasharatha is the person involved in life of self control and discipline .

#### **The three queens of Dasharatha:**

Kaushalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi were the three queens of the king Dasharatha. They stand for the three main spinal channels of life force energy Sushumna, Ida and Pingla.

#### **Rama:**

**Lord Rama** represents soul or ,the immortal, unmanifest and immaterial essence of an individual being, which is the ultimate reality, purity and peace.

The soul is eternal , indestructible and immeasurable.

It cannot be cut, burnt, weltd or otherwise removed and is all by itself, all pervading, stable, immovable and ancient.

Soul or self which is wholly immaterial has to take form, which comes out of matter.

**Sita:** Sita represents primordial kundalini power or Shakti, the form side of manifested world known as matter, nature or prakriti.

She is the epitome of feminine virtue (i.e. the ideal wife), representing the creative female principle, i.e. Kundalini.

**Lakshmana:** He represents focused or one-pointed devotion to his chosen ideal. Through one-pointed devotion and loyalty the seeker gradually attains God.

**Hanuman:** Hanumana is the representative of mind and intellect. He is the son of wind (pawan putra) representing the prana energy functioning actively on the path of Sushumna. By harnessing this prana energy properly, the path of kundalini [Sita] gets cleared in order to unite with her husband soul [Rama]. Hanuman stands for power of breath, concentration, energy, strength and devotion of a person. Prana is the primordial energy which vibrates as the life force in every living being.

**Ravana:** Ravana is the demon king, which stands for pride, ego and ignorance. His personality was influenced by the negative qualities. He as the king of Lanka, which is analogous to Mooladhar chakra representing a very primitive, animalistic, unconscious urges and instincts. In another way we can interpret as follows. Ravana has ten heads, representing the five organs of sense and five organs of action, which lead to desire, and prevent us from realizing our true divine nature.

**Geographical representation of spiritual states:** Ayodhya can be compared with Ajna chakra, a state of conflict less and a seat of consciousness.

**Aranya** is equal to a mind, fully occupied with confused and complex thoughts. Kiskindha is comparable with Visudhi chakra [throat chakra], the centre of nectar and poison. Vali was the poison which was discarded and nectar in the form of Sugriva was saved and preserved. **Rameshwaram** represents the Manipur Chakra [solar plexus] where Bhagawan Rama conducted Shakti Pooja to achieve great siddhis for the purpose of defeating Ravana. **Ocean** stands for Swadisthana chakra and Lanka for the unconscious state of mind lying in dormant state represented by Mooladhar chakra. In another interpretation, Lanka signifies the physical body, in which Kundalini is 'imprisoned'.

### **Role of Kundalini in life cycle**

When a child is conceived in a mother's womb, Sahastrara chakra [crown chakra] is first formed in the head by the Shakti and this Chakra is the seat of pure consciousness.

Ajna chakra [third eye chakra] is next formed between eyebrows by the Kundalini and this is the Chakra where one can control any adverse circumstances and become fully illuminated.

Later on the kundalini forms Visudhi chakra, where complete mental purification is achieved and the attainment of different mystical siddhis is possible.

Then kundalini forms Anahata chakra [heart chakra].

Descending further downwards the kundalini forms Manipura chakra [solar plexus] which controls the life and death. The creation of heat and astral body experiences are related to this chakra.

Then kundalini starts forming Swadisthana chakra [naval chakra] which is water element. Awakening of this chakra can cause great increase in physical desire, so it is dangerous and should be crossed in quick manner.

Lastly the kundalini form the Mooladhar chakra which is the seat of unconscious mind and then kundalini goes dormant and rests there.

After the birth the individual focus of consciousness separates from supreme consciousness and under the spell of senses and ego it becomes dormant and inactive.

Kundalini gets unfolded with regular practice, then the conditioned soul becomes absolute and self realized.

### Analogy of kundalini with Ramayana:

**Balkanda khanda** describes the cosmic and celestial appearance of lord Rama, his childhood and avatar characteristics. It can be interpreted as a conscious journey of the consciousness to the realm of ultimate with wonderful experiences at different levels. The inner consciousness slowly becomes awakened by the process of meditation and travels upward towards total spiritual absorption.

- **Ramayana** symbolically represents the spiritual journey of self realization by rising of kundalini in the Sushumna path through various chakras. Self realization is the natural urge in every human being. Inner condition of mind and body, complexes, constraints, phobia and fantasies prevent us from attaining self realization.
- **Yudhya** means war and conflict where as **Ayodhya** means a place free from conflict and war. Dasaratha [a person who has won his ten senses] was the father of Rama. An individual who has mastered all his ten senses through his intellect and become free from all outer and inner conflicts, consciousness in its purest form is revealed.
- In yogic terms **Ayodhya** represents the Ajna Chakra where Rama dwells with his eternal consort Sita.
- **Colour of lord:** Rama is opal blue in colour, which represents the Sparking blue light of soul residing in Ajna chakra. Shri Rama represents the power of soul. Bharata -the power of body, Lakshmana -the power of will, and Satrugana-the power of action. They grow up in a conflict less place like Ayodhya i.e. Ajna chakra
- **Vasishtha** and **Vishwamitra** were enlightened gurus who were self realized. The gurus guide the intellect of a person towards pure consciousness. The guru ignites the inner fire of knowledge within the seeker which burns away all the

illusion of ignorance. A guru can transform the gross consciousness into divine consciousness. He can stimulate the power of awakening the dormant Shakti in others. For practicing spiritual techniques, seekers are always connected to a teacher, Guru or lineage. The crown chakra or Sahasrara is the seat of Guru. So for a disciple the crown chakra will always remain the seat of the Guru even after the guru leaves the mortal body.

- **Lanka kanda** describes the Battle between armies of Rama and Ravana, destruction of Ravana, Rama's victory, meeting of Rama and Sita and coronation of Rama upon his return to Ayodhya.
- Balance of earth is maintained through the axis passing through the north and South Pole. Similarly in human body Ajna [Ayodhya] and Mooladhar chakra [Lanka] at the base of spinal Column are the two poles of the energy pattern, between which all energies, powers and experiences are stored.
- In Ramayana demons are the embodiment of evil or negative characterizes. Ravana represents rajasic ego, Kumbhakarna -tamsic ego and Vibhishana represents the sattwic ego.
- Rama's invasion to the Lanka [Mooladhar chakra] with Hanuman [air element], implies that consciousness accompanied with prana Vayu can unlock the Kundalini [Sita] from Mooladhar chakra [Lanka].
- After destroying the wildness of ten senses [Ravana] confined in the lowest physical planes [animal instincts of lower chakra] Rama regains his eternal consort Sita.
- Kundalini remains in a dormant stage since consciousness becomes physical because of external factors and limitations generated by the mind, ego, intellect and senses. In case of the awakening of the consciousness and movement of kundalini, towards crown chakra, all restriction that bound the individual to the physical and material world drop away and consciousness begins to change from gross to divine. This is the return of Rama and Sita to Ayodhya [Ajna chakra]. Unity of purusha and prakriti is again established.
- Ajna chakra has connection with Sahasrara chakra [supreme consciousness] and Mooladhar chakra [the seat of unconsciousness]. Hence it is the link between lowest unconsciousness set of power and supreme centre of consciousness within the individual. Kundalini after crossing the Ajna chakra can enter the Sahasrara chakra without any further problem which is the ultimate union with the God.

Ramayana is the symbolic war story between gross and subtle astral currents in the spine of the human being in the process of kundalini arousal.

## BRAHMANDA PURANA

Kundalini is mentioned in Uttarakhanda of Brahmanda Purana. Chakras represent the major energy centres of the subtle body. So, the chakras are not confined to only 7. There are many other chakras also. However 7 Chakras are considered vital. The references of 7 chakras and Kundalini Shakti are given in Puranas and Upanishads. We can take the example of **Lalita Sahasranama stotra from Brahmanda Purana** which gives the most precise description of Kundalini in just 3 verses.

मूलाधारैक निलया ब्रह्मग्रन्थि विभेदिनी ।  
 मणि पूरान्तरुदिता विष्णुग्रन्थि विभेदिनी ॥  
 आज्ञा चक्रान्तरालस्था रुद्रग्रन्थि विभेदिनी ।  
 सहस्राराम्बुजारूढा सुधा साराभिवर्षिणी ॥  
 तडिल्लता समरुचिः षट्चक्रोपरि संस्थिता ।  
 महाशक्तिः कुण्डलिनी विसतन्तु तनीयसी ॥

**Muladharaika nilaya bramhagrandhi vibhedini | Manipurantarudita vishnugranthi vibhedine || – 38**

**Aagyna-chakrantaralasdha rudra-granthi vibhedini | Sahasraranbujarudha sudhasarabhivarshinee || – 39**

**Tadillata Samaruchi: shatchakropari sansthita |**

**Mahashakti: kundalini bisatantu taniyasi || – 40**

## FIRST INTERPRETATION

Salutations to Her whose chief abode is the Muladhara .  
 Salutations to Her who ,while ascending from the Muladhara breaks through the Brahma –granthe.  
 Salutations to Her who then comes out s in the Manipura Chakra.  
 Salutations to Her who then breaks through the Vishnu-granthe.  
 Salutations to Her who next resides in the centre of the Ajna Cakra.  
 Salutations to Her who finally breaks through the Rudra-granthe.  
 Salutations to Her who then ascends to the Thousand-petalled Lotus..  
 Salutations to Her who sends streams of nectar from the transcendent moon in the Sahasrara.  
 Salutations to Her who dazzles like a steady flash of lightning.  
 Salutations to Her who then establishes Herself above the six Cakras.  
 Salutations to Her whose immense pleasure consists in Asakti .  
 Salutations to Her who resides in the Muladhara as the Kundalini .



(Sri Lalitasahasranama Stotra 99 – 110 during the dialogue between Hayagriva and Agastya in the Uttarakhanda of Sri Brahmanda Purana translated)

## SECOND INTERPRETATION

You are the one who is sitting in the **Muladhara**, you are the one who pierce the **Brahma Granthi**(knot of Brahma) You are the one who resides in the Manipura. You are the one who pierce the **Vishnu Granthi**( knot of Vishnu). You are the one who is in the **Ajna Chakra**, you are the one who pierce **Rudra Granthi**(knot of Rudra) Reaching in the Sahasrara you rain the Nectar (Soma) / Amrita there. Brilliant like Lightning you reach above the **Six chakras**. You are **Kundalini** ,the great power or energy which is subtle in nerves.

It is evident from above that there are **7 Chakras including Sahasrara chakra**.

There are **three knots** known as **Brahma granthi, Vishnu granthi and Rudra granthi**. Thus it is difficult to pass Kundalini from these Chakra.

Since first knot is in in Muladhara , it becomes difficult for Kundalini to pierce this knot. Brahma knot is there around Swadhisthana and Manipura area. Vishnu knot is in Manipura and Anahata area and Rudra knot is present in Ajna Chakra area.

### RIGVEDA

Thus Kundalini ascends the three great steps  
 From Brahma granthi to Vishnu Granthi,  
 From Vishnu Granthi to Rudra granthi  
 From Rudra granthi to the Highest place  
 Then the nectar flows.

This process has resemblance with the story of RigVeda where Vishnu takes three steps, reaches the highest place in His third step and then flows Soma [RigVeda1.32.12]

### SKANDA PURANA

Skanda Purana in the chapter "The Tandava Dance of Shankara" describes how music originated from Chakras. It also deals with Beeja mantra associated with Chakras.

The most charming Sriraga. is the first son of Isvara. He has a seat in the middle of the eyebrows and known as the giver of the supreme Brahman (Parabrahman),

The excellent Gana born of Mahesa is in the centre. From the waist region the second (Raga)Vasanta was created which is of great repute.

The third raga Pancama (name of a Raga), the ornament of the universe got originated from Visuddhi Chakra (situated in the inner throat). This raga is marked by the principle Mahat.

The Anahata Chakra was created from the heart of Maheswara. From the region of nostril was created the Raga Bhairava which itself is Bhairava (terrible).

This Chakra is called Manipuraka , the bestower of salvation. The fifty Varnas (letters) named Anka got originated from Maheswara.

From Svadhisthana chakra the twelve Rasis (signs of the zodiac) and the constellations were created along with the seeds of the universe.

Within a moment the organ of generation of Isa gets enlarged and Retas (semen virile) issues forth, from the Retas the universe is created.

From the Adhara Chakra originates the great sixth (Raga) named Nata Narayana. It is the favourite son of Mahesa. Its colour is Nila (blue) and it has the exploit of Vishu.

These personified Ragas are assisted by their wives (Raginis) originated in this way. From the region of the head of the Pinaka-bearing Lord, wives of Ragas were created..

The Suta Samhita of Skanda Purana deals in details about the position of Nadi and Chakras in a separate chapter called 'Nadi Chakra Nirupana

There are about 20 Yoga Upanishads which deal with the description of Nadis and Chakras.

### HAMSA UPANISHAD

Hamsa Upanishad (4th verse) says this:

Now we describe the true quality of Hamsa and Paramahamsa for helping a Brahmacharin, who has controlled his desires, dedicated to his guru, ever contemplates (as) Hamsa and realises thus: This is the Hamsa that permeates all bodies like fire in all types of wood or oil in all kinds of gingelly seeds.

Knowing it thus, one does not meet with death.

One raises the Vayu from Mula Adhara Chakra by contracting the anus. He makes circuit thrice round Svadhisthana, going to Manipuraka, crossing Anahata chakra, controlling Prana in Visuddhi, then having reached Ajna, one contemplates in Brahmarandhra (in the head). meditating there always 'I am of three Matras', cognises (his Self) and becomes formless. .... This is Paramahamsa having the radiance of Crores of suns, pervading all this world.

### DHYANA BINDU UPANISHAD

52-53. Of these (nadis), the main nadis are ten and they carry the Pranas. The ten nadis are Ida, Pingala, Susumna, Gandhari, Hastijihva, Pusha, Yasasvini, Alambusa, Kuhuh and Sankhini.

54-55(a). This Chakra of the Nadis should ever be perceived by the Yogis.

The three Nadis Ida, Pingala and Susumna carry Prana always, they have moon, sun and Agni as their deities respectively.

55(b)-56(a). Ida lies on the left side and Pingala on the right side, while the Susumna nadi is in the middle. These three nadis are known to be the paths of Prana.

56(b)-57. There are ten prana and vayus:

**Prana**

**Apana**

**Samana**

**Udana**

**Vyana**



**Naga**  
**Kurma**  
**Krikara**  
**Devadatta**  
**Dhananjaya**

Out of the first five are called Pranas and last five Naga, etc., are called Vayus (or sub-Pranas).

All run along the one thousand Nadis, in the form of life. There exists Jiva under the influence of Prana and Apana which goes up and down.

**YOGA KUNDALINI UPANISHAD**

Chapter 3 of Yoga Kundalini Upanishad:

8(b)-9(a).

Knowing Vayu, Bindu, Sattva-Prakriti and the six Chakras, one should enter the Sukha-Mandala (the Sahasrara).

9(b)-11. There exist six Chakras.

Muladhara ( in the anus)

Svadhithana ( is near the genital organ)

Manipuraka ( in the navel)

Anahata ( in the heart)

Visuddhi ( at the root of the neck)

Ajna ( in the head between the two eyebrows)

Knowing these six Mandalas, one should enter the Sukha-Mandala (Sahasrara). One should draw up the Vayu and send it (Vayu) in upward direction. He who practises in this way (the control of) Vayu becomes one with Brahmanda.

**HATHA YOGA BOOKS**

There are Yogic texts like Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Gheranda Samhita, Shiva Samhita and Goraksha Sataka etc and other Agama texts which extensively deal about Kundalini Yoga.

**DEVI BHAGVATA PURANA**

In this scripture very precise description of Chakras and Nadis is there. Some minor chakras have also been dealt. Some extracts are given below.

Pierce,..... transfer along with it the heart united with the Shakti to the Sahasrâra. Meditate the Saktî united with Sambhu at that place.

Out of the intercourse of Shiva and Shakti, a type of nectar-juice, like sort of red-dye (lac) is generated there in the Vindu Chakra.

Satisfying all the deities (devas) in the six Chakras with the offerings of Nectar so produced, the Yogi brings the S'aktî down again on the Mûlâdhâra Lotus.

Daily practice of, all the above mantras will definitely be made to achieve complete success.

**SRIMAD BHAGABATAM**

Srimad Bhagvatam from 4.4.24-27 also describes Sati Leaving her body through Kundalini Yoga:

Then she carried the life air upwards and placed it in the position of equilibrium near the Nabhi

Chakra/ Navel Chakra (Manipura Chakra.) (Srimad Bhagvatm 4.4.25)

PADMA PURANA

Similarly Padma Purana also describes some concepts of Kundalini .

## CONCLUSION

Kundalini awakening is the main objective of a yoga practitioner who is intense and devoted in his mission. India is a land of yogis and saints. From time immemorial, yoga had flourished in the Indian subcontinent. There are stories of mystics having enormous yogic abilities in the past. Kundalini is a dormant energy residing in the base root near spinal base in a form of three and half coil. This dormant energy gets awakened by hatha yogic practices. However other than yoga, it was also prevalent in Puranic era which is evident from the above discussions.

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