

FROM IGOR KUFAYEV

PRANA & CONSCIOUSNESS: PART I (ARCHIVES)

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Prana & Consciousness – Part 1

In this interview from the archives, Igor Kufayev offers rare insights into the nature of awakening and transformation of human consciousness. Transcribed from the 2nd interview with Rick Archer for the Buddha at the Gas Pump, Costa Rica, June 2012

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1. What Is *Prana*?

Rick: My guest this week is Igor Kufayev. I interviewed Igor several months ago and he had a lot to say, and toward the end of the interview, it became apparent that we could actually do a second one in which we answer a lot of questions that were obviously not yet answered. So we invited people to send their questions in, and we've got quite a list here. We are going to go through those in today's interview. If you want to know Igor's personal story, you might want to listen to his first interview first, as he goes into that in great detail from his boyhood, and his whole spiritual path; we're going to skip that in this one, and just go directly to the questions that have been sent in.

So, welcome Igor and thanks for coming back.

Igor: Thank you, it's a pleasure to be here again Rick.

Rick: It's funny – we got so many comments, “Boy, that guy is really handsome!”

Igor: I know, it's embarrassing, what can I do? I look as neglected as I could, so let's hope it will subside a bit, and divert people's attention to what is the content of the body ...

Rick: So, there is kind of a theme that Igor wanted to start with, and that is *prana* and Consciousness. Igor promised me that as much as possible he would answer all of these questions on the basis of his own experience, because anybody can read a lot of books and get fairly conversant with terminology and concepts like this. But Igor's experience is genuine and profound, and I think that to a great extent what he will be saying today has been confirmed or verified for himself in his own experience.

So the first question we want to address is, “What is *prana*?”

Igor: Okay. First of all we have to perhaps adjust the common understanding of that word, which by now has entered the Western lexicon. You can find that word in English, French, Italian, German, and Russian languages, untranslated as the Sanskrit intended. However, all these translations fall short or flat, and this is the limitation of all languages, especially when it comes to translating Sanskrit terminology.

When we say “*prana*,” most people understand it as life force or vital force, and indeed, that is what *prana* is; but that is not all. That is only a fraction, or just a very particular facet of that multi-dimensional – in fact it is an all-dimensional – term, the all-dimensional meaning. In order to answer that question, I would have to go all the way to the philosophical ramifications of that word, where the word has arisen.

The word itself comes from the sound “*pra*” and “*an*” in combination, which means “in constant motion.” A more precise translation means “something which constantly vibrates, something which constantly throbs

or moves.” For that reason, *prana* was often associated with *akasha* – ether, space, or indeed the air we breathe – but again, that was only one of the functions of *prana*. That is not *prana* in its full capacity. So what is *prana* then?

When Consciousness in its undifferentiated state completely converged onto itself, when there is no manifestation whatsoever, there is a slight movement in Consciousness. Many and various traditions try to explain it, like the *Upanishads* – as you know yourself that famous line, “I am One, let Me be many.” So the slight desire arises in the core of Consciousness, and that desire, that motivation, that intention then prompts Consciousness to throb within. That original throb is that which gives rise to *prana*.

So essentially speaking, *prana* is not separate from Consciousness. One may find various translations and various interpretations when teachers and even traditions, even doctrines when they speak of *prana*, they often give *prana* the meaning of the link between the manifested level of creation and the unmanifested level of creation. That is correct, but that is not giving the full measure of what *prana* is. *Prana* is not something, it is not a vehicle, it is not a link, it is not like some kind of invisible link – it’s not the agent either. In fact, it is Consciousness itself; it is *Brahman* itself, it is the Absolute itself, it is Being itself, in its state as movement.

If we will take this as a prelude, as a kind of preface, or an introduction to what *prana* is, that will take us to very interesting revelations and discoveries. So perhaps you can take it ...

2. Understanding Kundalini

Rick: Sure. In fact, I was going to ask you why is *prana* so significant that you wanted to make it the title of this? But you just led into the answer of that question, so we’ll get to that in a second. Your next point was *prana* and *Kundalini* and how the two relate. And in the course of answering that, and in the course of this discussion, let’s talk about why is it important for people to know what *prana* is, to spend time on this.

Igor: Well, it is the same here. If we want to talk about *Kundalini*, we would have to adjust what we understand by that term. The mainstream meaning of *Kundalini*, which by now has also entered the lexicon of the western hemisphere and there are many, many different kind of Kundalini schools, Kundalini Yoga and what have you – *Kundalini* this, and *Kundalini* that. There are many, many books, so it is not like it is unfamiliar like in the 60’s when people were hearing that word, that term for the first time and they were perplexed; not even like in the 30’s when Carl Jung gave his first lectures in 1933 or 1934 [I think] in Munich, his legendary seminars on the *Kundalini*. It is much, much more accustomed terminology that is going around.

When we talk about *Kundalini* in proper terms, we would have to forget all these ready-made formulations, because in essence, *Kundalini* is not separate from *prana*. Since we have established that

prana is inseparable from Consciousness, then *Kundalini* itself is not separate from Consciousness. In fact, several scriptures like the ancient *Upanishads*, Kashmir Shaivism, and some of the Tantras, they blatantly state that *Brahmanor Shiva* is indeed *Shakti* – so energy is not different from the source. It is not like the source can be separated from energy – or energy can be separated from the source; in the same way, *Kundalini* is inseparable from the originator of that original vibration of that original throb.

When we talk about *Kundalini*, we have to understand that there are several levels applicable to that term. There is the *Para Kundalini*, which is *Kundalini* of the entire creation, and that concept is pointless or useless to talk about very much, because it is beyond the human concept; it is beyond comprehension of the mind, it is beyond the dichotomized or polarized ability of the mind to grasp those concepts, so we will leave that. The second notion is that *Kundalini* is also as *Chit Kundalini*, or the *Kundalini* as Consciousness, and that *Kundalini* which is more palpable because the *jnanis*, the men of knowledge that experience it directly – they become one with that throb, one with that vibration. And yet, there is a third meaning, which is the *Kundalini* as a coiled – in fact the word *Kundalini* as I mentioned in the first interview, *Kunda* means something which is coiled within itself, literally coiled – so *Kundalini* is Consciousness which is coiled into itself; the Consciousness which is coiled within the human being.

So these three different levels, they are different expressions of the same *Kundalini*. They are inseparable from one another; they are never separable – even the coiled *Kundalini* is not for a second, for a moment, separate from *Para Kundalini*, even if that is apparently being experienced on the physical level.

Rick: So would it be fair to say that just as Consciousness itself is universal, and it has its individual expression through the individual nervous system, individual reflection, *Kundalini* is universal and is in fact perhaps even an quality of the same thing, a quality of Consciousness – and then it has its individual expression in the individual physiology, and in that individual expression it resides coiled up at the base *chakra* before it awakens? Would that be an accurate understanding?

Igor: Well it would be a classical or a traditional understanding, and yes, it is correct in principle. However, whenever we try to pinpoint or graphically locate where Consciousness is coiled, this is when we inevitably will fall into certain conceptualized understanding. In this discussion I prefer to break through some of the existing concepts. It doesn't mean that those existing concepts have outlived themselves or that they are not valid in their own right, but sometimes in order to understand something, you need to leave the territory of inquiry; you need to leave the territory where you locate the subject.

On the factual physiologic level, *Kundalini* is not coiled at the base of the spine – although many, many scriptures say so – because when you go through the clinical experiences of *Kundalini*-awakened aspirants, many of them will relate that the experiences were not taking place there and then. *Kundalini* could awaken in various places; it could awaken and be experienced at the soles of one's feet – and I would like to talk about this later when we talk about physiologic symptoms – it could be experienced at the base of

the spine, it could be experienced at the gut, it could be experienced at the solar plexus, or indeed, it could be experienced directly in the heart in some very rare cases.

Rick: Well, actually people might argue, “Well fine, but it started out at the base of the spine and then it rose up and it became experienced at the heart.” I wouldn’t argue that perspective because I don’t know what I’m talking about, but some people might say, “Well that’s what is really happening there.”

Igor: Sure. However, *Kundalini* when it travels, it doesn’t travel in that kind of linear fashion, and it doesn’t travel in that sense that we get accustomed to speak about. Because when we speak about the spiritual anatomy, *Kundalini* is chiefly assigned to reconstruct our spiritual anatomy: that of the astral domain, that of the subtle domain, in order to usher that process of transformation on the physiologic level.

So, the transgression of *Kundalini* is something that is still, very, very little understood – I would dare say even in some of the traditions which claim to be heirs to the Kundalini Yoga practices. For that reason, I am very skeptical when I hear that this and this teacher is giving *Kundalini* classes and people talk about piercing of the *chakras*, opening of the *chakras*, and what have you. If you have enough understanding and experience, you know that a lot of these talks [are basically] would have to be taken in very allegorical terms – and in fact, mean very little in the context of this conversation.

Rick: So you are saying that the function of *Kundalini* – if we had to boil it down to one function – ultimately is to transform the physiology.

Igor: Well, absolutely, because the physiology itself is the result of the convergence of Consciousness into the state where it can be experienced through physical matter, through this wondrous world. So the purpose of *Kundalini* – if that term could be applied – is in fact to take Consciousness back to itself. So the energy has to converge or transgress through the same passage or passages, which were used in the original stages of creation. So it is a transgression; it is the gradual withdrawal of *prana* from the respective stations ...

Rick: Back to its source.

Igor: Exactly, because the physiology is a projection which is manifested at the level of the elementary system, the five elements [which we know what they are composed of]. That gradual withdrawal, is that which creates the profound sense of dissociation, which then translates into the detachment, dispassion, and what have you, and which eventually renders the body toward what that body was originally meant to be – before the coverings took place.

3. What Constitutes Awakening And Self-Realization?

Rick: This actually may lead us into the third group of questions about the symptomatology of awakening – signs of pre-awakening, types of awakening, and so on. So let's talk about that now.

Igor: The symptomatology of awakening, again, is where we come into the domain where a lot of people experience all these various degrees of awakening. They are traditional so to speak – classical interpretations and explanations of the awakening, and by now there is also a very large protocol of clinical studies. Unfortunately, they were not done yet in a systematic manner as they could have been done, because these cases have been reported probably since Lee Sannella founded the Kundalini Clinic together with Gabrielle Cousins, who then migrated into more of a dietary – he runs retreats to do with diets and proper eating. He successfully combined the knowledge that existed in *Kabbalah* and the ancient Tantric knowledge of *Kundalini*. Those were the days when I was a kid, so I know very little about those days – it is more of your age group. In the 70's people were experiencing all of this through various and different means – so there is this clinical and there is this classical protocol.

When we talk about the symptomatology of awakening, it is very important to understand that many, many people who experience awakening are not necessarily experiencing *Kundalini's* full measure – and this is something that will lead us to the following questions, like the proper awakening and the improper awakening, and how the *Kundalini* could awaken. For instance, when *Kundalini* is stirred and agitated – in fact, many spiritual traditions speak of the purposeful, systematic stirring of *Kundalini* – so that they can prepare the body for that profound ascent.

Today, we live in a time when there is a tremendous flux – a tremendous flux of ideas, tremendous flux of energy, tremendous flux of what have you – which causes some people to “pop up” out of the blue, when they have no clue, no idea of what is happening to them. Many attribute that to the awakening and indeed, some experience genuine awakening, but in many of these cases *Kundalini* is not awakened as it were; it is being “poked at” – it moves, perhaps it becomes agitated. It is here that the traditional understanding comes in handy – that the difference between awakening and between agitation or stirring – is vast.

Rick: Well, I'll tell you from my perspective from doing this interview show, I have interviewed about 125 people and a great many people say, “Well, when I awoke such and such,” and they make it sound like this static event that took place at a certain time – they awoke. I often say, “Well, have there been further awakenings since then – or is that it?” Some of them say, “Yes, it keeps deepening and unfolding,” and others say, “How could there be further awakenings? I'm awake – that's it.”

The term “awakening”... it's hard... there's a group with some representatives over in Germany that I am going to interview one of them, and I got an email from someone the other day who said, “Okay, well now 200 and something people have awakened with this group and has seen through the illusion.” I always scratch my head, and think, “Well, to what extent have they awakened? To what extent have they seen through the illusion? Is it just a sudden, complete fulfillment of the entire course of evolution, or is there

just some glimpse and perhaps in many cases some people are just assuming that the glimpse is the full enchilada?”

Igor: Remember during the Siddhis Course, you remember very well when people received the flying *sutra*, and when people started moving about and started to hop; there are a lot of cases when people experienced that kind of awakening. And indeed these are awakenings in many, many individual cases – these are genuine awakenings.

Rick: Most of those people wouldn’t presume to say, “Okay, well, this is enlightenment.” There is just something going on, as you say, a “stirring” has taken place, but most of those people at least in that group in the TM tradition haven’t jumped to the conclusion that this is full enlightenment.

Igor: Well, because they probably have been prepared in a much, much more gradual fashion to understand that this whole process of self-realization is not an overnight event... it may be, but for one in a billion, I would say. Even the *Bhagavad Gita* says that such and such number proportionately would be able to sit down and listen to that teaching; then from that number you have to take that percentage that will be able to comprehend that teaching; then from that number you have to take a percentage who will be able to actually cognize that teaching.

So if you take that mathematical quotation, literally it is a very, very narrow segment of society, a very narrow...

Rick: Right, but that narrow segment is a fairly large number of people these days with the popularity of Advaita and all these sorts of spiritual things...

Igor: The demographic explosion alone...

Rick: But then you have to wonder among the group of people who are actually interested in this stuff, and even claiming to have awakenings, it would be interesting if there were a clearer understanding – or a charting – of the degrees of awakenings that they are having. For instance, I heard an interesting quote from an old Zen master recently – I don’t remember his name – and he said, “Well, I’ve had 17 major awakenings and countless minor ones.” You don’t usually hear that kind of talk among contemporary spirituality, there is not the sort of fine discrimination about degrees of awakening, and so on – it’s usually just “awakening.”

Igor: Let’s face it, that the New Age and perhaps the currently prevalent Nondualist tendency is to view self-realization as something which is already a given, so there is really no need to self-realize yourself.

Rick: Because you are already realized.

Igor: Exactly! You are already realized because nothing is separate from Consciousness, hence all there is, is That.

Rick: That's just an understanding.

Igor: Exactly. That still vibrates on the level of dichotomized thought; it belongs to the domain of the language, and language is the greatest limitation.

Rick: A lot of people seem to be assuming that that is what realization is – just this intuitive, familiarity with the essential non-dual nature of life. And in many cases, when that becomes clear to them, in many cases they assume that that is what is meant by liberation.

Igor: Yes, as I said, this is normal because when certain teachings are basically watered down, when a lot of nuances and subtleties are being removed or brushed aside as not so important, let's face it, the western approach tends to extract everything very quickly; and the intellectual penetration into the essence, it is because we have a long history of science which is still there on a genetic level. There is this tendency to go to the core, cut through what have you in order to say, "Okay, I've got it!"

But it's not like that with spiritual knowledge; if you remove something, you remove a very important layer which vibrates on its own, and has value of its own. So this is why – the example of the Zen master, the Buddhist practitioner with 17 awakenings which he described as major and minor- because there is this subtlety, and there are those nuances that exist in their culture that cannot be just brushed off as irrelevant because all of this constitutes part of the greater whole, and every part of that greater whole cannot be neglected on the basis that it is less relevant because the greater is still greater, because it is applicable to that particular situation. There still are beings who are contained within the bound physiology in space-time convention.

So in my view, that is the beauty of journey of it all if you will; it is a pathless path – we agree on that, but the journey is that at the same time we are realizing our essential nature and yet we are constantly embodying – living from moment-to-moment within this physiology, within this human body, experiencing it – all the register of emotions and feelings, interactions with each other, and what have you. So this kind of clinical approach, "Okay, I've figured it all out," only creates a mood, and that mood can take you just that far – but not further. And you are bound to fall on your butt sooner or later.

4. The Science Of Pre-Awakening And The Internalization Of *Prana*

Rick: In your notes, you have “signs of pre-awakening” and then “types of awakenings – proper and improper, higher and lower.” Let’s go into more detail about first, the subjective stages of awakening, and then we’ll talk more about the physical symptoms of these stages.

Igor: Sure. If we go back to the concept of *prana*, because we should keep going back in order to fully establish the fact that the words *Kundalini* and *prana* are just words for the same thing; basically for the same thing that constitutes energy in its different states. One of the sure signs of pre-awakening is the internalization of *prana*, because what is awakening? Let’s just do this little detour.

Awakening is the gathering of *prana* in a particular place in the physiology, where it can combust in order to unleash its full potential. That alone – that in itself – creates the possibility for the individual to experience himself or herself beyond previously identified concepts of being so-and-so. This is what happens in all awakenings, regardless of how profound, how mild they are, what culture and what situation they take place in.

Rick: What do you mean by “combust?”

Igor: Combust is when *prana* gathers in a certain place, because all of our physiology is sustained by *prana*. Just going back to the Upanishadic myth, to give full understanding to the importance of *prana* – I forgot which *Upanishad*, I think it is the *Chandogya Upanishad* – is that all the deities, all of the *devatas* gathered together and started arguing that, “I am the most important! I am the one who is basically responsible for the functioning of this body.” Agni was boasting, “I am sustaining life, the thought processes,” and what have you. Varuna, the deity of the water was saying, “I am ruling this and that, the body is seventy or ninety percent water anyway.” Each deity would basically claim his right. Prana was quietly listening to all of this argument, and started packing to leave the body; as soon as the *prana* started to leave the body, all other deities found themselves spontaneously following the *prana*. So when that took place, they realized that there is a subordination; they all are subordinate to Prana. It is an interesting story ...

Rick: Is *prana* considered to be a deity?

Igor: Well this is it; *prana* is considered to be a deity in some of the *Upanishads*. However, it is not a deity in the sense like, let’s say, Agni, the *devata* of fire.

Rick: By deity or *devata*, I think we would want to translate as, “an impulse of intelligence.” Right? An embodiment of intelligence that has a particular role to play in creation, or in the body.

Igor: Sure, but hopefully we’ll talk about it a little later on – I don’t want to jump ahead.

So, going back to that story – that story in my view, illustrates something very profound. It illustrates the experiences that people have during *Samadhi*, or on a practical level, during the total withdrawal of the breath in yogic – in those who practice yoga, it takes place in the profound state of *kumbhaka*, spontaneous breath retention – or in some schools, forcible breath retention. We are not advocating that, because gone are the days when *pranayama* can be practiced without dangers, because our environment is no longer safe.

So that is what happens when *prana* moves and withdraws from the body, it draws out all functioning with it, and the body becomes like a log of wood; the body becomes inert as it were. All metabolic processes ...

Rick: Do you mean dead or are you talking about *Samadhi*?

Igor: I am talking about *Samadhi*. So the body becomes inert, metabolic processes become next to nil – everything subsides. In that story I forgot to mention, that when the deities re-entered the body, they assumed full authority of *prana* and never, never raised any arguments. This is very significant! It is a joke, it is a very sweet... the Upanishadic stories are for kids, but they are very profound stories.

So what that means is that the being who has experienced *Samadhi*, when he regains the body consciousness, the deities act in accord with *prana*. And that is what it means – it is a very beautiful state in one's spiritual evolution – that you become in control of the physiologic processes, mental processes, emotional processes, subconscious processes, unconscious processes; you become the master in your own home for that very, very simple reason – everything becomes subordinate to the *prana*. Prior to that, in a normal human being, *prana* goes haywire – it goes here, it goes there; the being is not containing his or her own *prana*. It is being sustained by that *prana*, but it is at the mercy of all these conflicting tendencies within.

When we go back now to the symptoms, and to what constitutes the science of pre-awakening, it is that the *prana* starts from going out of the physiology... The normal human being is constantly losing *prana* through all of the apertures; losing *prana* through looking, excessive consuming through the eye's sense organ, through excessive talking, through excessive indulgence in sensual pleasures, through what have you – *prana* is constantly going out. However, when awakening is about to happen, it is that process of internalization, and that is when people naturally prefer silence, they prefer to be alone; it may coincide with a tremendous emotional withdrawal, it may coincide with actually very painful symptoms of no longer being able to take this world ... you need to go *inward*. You need to internalize completely, so that is one of the most important signs. Please do not confuse it with depression; it has nothing to do with depression, even if at the onset it might feel like such. You don't want to see people, you don't want to talk too much – all of us meditators for many years know that; when you just want to be left alone, you just want to be within yourself.

5. Types Of Awakenings: Higher Versus Lower And Partial Versus Full

Igor: Then what happens next, and depending upon the degree of that *prana* that was built up in a particular place, is that sooner or later that *prana* will reach the point when it can no longer be contained in that place where it has gathered. In classical terms, *prana* is gathered just below the gut, so that although awakening is taking place in the *muladhara*, the actual combustion of *prana* takes place in the gut, and that itself – that itself – awakens the dormant energy in the lower *chakra* and creates a very, very powerful resonance throughout the whole body – as if awakening the astral realm, the realm of the *chakras* – for the onslaught of *Kundalini*.

There are some rare cases when that awakening can take place in the much higher regions, and this is where not many people actually know that, not many people understand – even those who practice Kundalini Yoga so to speak – that a very profound concentration on something can create an awakening from the cortexes down; this is the *jnani*'s way of awakening. A contemplation on “I AM” will eventually awaken the vital force, although the contemplation takes place in the cortexes so to speak, through the mental faculties ...

Rick: But you say that is rarer ...?

Igor: It is more rare, because the physiology has to be pure. The reason why all the recent common awakenings are down upwards, is because our physiology is completely polluted; it needs to go through the profound process of purification – I think it's kind of the following theme, but going back to the questions, the theme of signs of awakening, and the types of awakening, is that there are higher and lower awakenings; higher and lower awakenings not what I just mentioned in terms of the gut versus frontal lobes, but the awakening in terms of in itself, the *Kundalini* can awaken very much down below. When we talk of *Muladhara Chakra*, it is not like a little disc in the picture portrayed in all these new age books – you know, the trunk of human physiology, and then along the spine. It's not like that.

The *Muladhara Chakra* encompasses the entire lower area, and that is what connects us to the earth; it includes all of our organs of locomotion – our legs and feet and what have you – and it goes deep down into the earth a little bit, because that is how we are rooted, through *muladhara*. So the awakening could take place in the lower regions, and in the higher regions.

When awakening takes place in the lower regions, then it will not take the aspirant anywhere; *Kundalini* will not have enough force to leave *muladhara*. There will be all this paraphernalia of awakening, there will be all this – but no more. That is why you see people who are awakened – you've met them three years ago, they were on top of the world, they were going through these experiences; three years later, or five years later, or one year later, you see that person doing the same things, maybe she or he thinks of herself

or himself as being an entirely new being. However, from the outside you can see that there is a kind of falling back into the same patterns.

Rick: So what you are saying, is that a really complete awakening would bring about a transformation of both inner and outer, but that a lot of awakenings these days are incomplete, and so they only go so far and they stop.

Igor: Yes, because there is not enough force – or dare I say pressure in *prana* to drive *Kundalini* into *Prana Shakti*.

Rick: Do you think that there is a force of evolution which would prevent a person from getting stuck forever, or do you think that a person could be literally stuck for decades at the same level of awakening, thinking perhaps that it was complete – and yet it's not?

Igor: Absolutely. You see this all of the time, you see it around everywhere.

Rick: So even a lot of these people who are out there teaching, they may have had a partial awakening and they think that they have the full thing, and they have set themselves up to teach ...?

Igor: Well, if pushed to answer this question – because I don't want to cast shadows on any teachers – you know everyone fulfills their role, and everyone fulfills their karmic patterns – both those teachers who teach, and those who follow those teachers. But let me tell you this, Rick – the majority of teachers out there, teach from three basic *chakras* – three basic *chakras*; very few teach from the level of the heart, and there are a handful of those who actually teach from a fully realized state. In fact, just to give you an example, in some of the Buddhist sects in the northeast of the Himalayas, *Kundalini* practices were aimed at taking the *prana* up to the solar plexus, or the *Manipura Chakra*. Why? Because when the Consciousness resides there, when Consciousness purifies that region – it is known as the City of Jewels – this is where the willpower is the strongest, digestion is the strongest, ego is the strongest, and power is the strongest, because this *chakra* is associated with the sun; it is a *chakra* of command. Many great *avadhuts*, or many great beings, had this *chakra* awakened; those beings who were able to lead people through the historical moments, when unbelievable, almost beyond human potential – it is another subject altogether ...

Rick: So, is that all that they were aspiring to? They consciously, knowingly, willingly, they didn't even ...

Igor: Consciously, because they knew. The interesting thing is that – if we just talk a little bit about it. [when Consciousness] *Manipura*, the City of the Jewels, or the solar plexus, or the *chakra* of the willpower is situated below the *Anahata Chakra*. The next station is the heart, but the difference is tremendous. Everything that you have gained in the City of Jewels, you would have to lose in the City of the Heart. This is why – and this has all been known, that in order to enjoy life, the idea of *bhogi* and *yogi*, the one on the

path to Union or the one who is on a path to enjoyment – in some traditions they actually deliberately manipulated these processes, in order to enjoy worldly possessions. It is known, it is documented, and you can read about it – but the physical appearance, also the individual becomes the most vital at that time, extremely powerful, extremely convincing, and charismatic. When Consciousness moves further, it is a radical shift. It is a radical shift in spectrum; in terms of colors, yellow emanates at one length, and green emanates an entirely different wavelength level entirely.

Rick: I have met masters who seem to have progressed certainly to the heart and beyond, but they haven't lost their charisma or their power, or their ability to accomplish things, or anything like that.

Igor: Sure, like ...

Rick: Like Amma, or Maharshi, or whoever. Great masters ...

Igor: Sure, absolutely.

Rick: So it's not like it's all lost or left behind maybe ...

Igor: It is lost on the level of the heart, but is regained at the higher level, when the *Kundalini* moves into the cortexes, when it enters the frontal lobes, when it actually rekindles the most important glands, when the pituitary and pineal glands are being completely decalcified, then ...

Rick: In other words, when you reach the highest then you gain it all, but in the process of progressing toward that, you might have to relinquish something in order to move on to the next stage.

Igor: Absolutely. At the level of the heart, you leave your possessions; you have moved so far with everything, you have to leave it because you cannot move further, and that is what the heart does. At that stage, the yogi, the aspirant, the meditator, what have you, Kabbalist Sufi, Zen, householder – at that stage, you feel the most vulnerable. You cry, you weep all the time – you are madly in love with God. All this Sufi poetry, it comes from that experience of the heart level.

Rick: So, leaving your possessions means that you would have to leave your family, leave your job and all that? You couldn't sort of hold that all together and keep progressing?

Igor: Some can, some cannot. Look at some of the great historical examples like Ibn 'Arabī, the greatest mystic and philosopher of the Sufi tradition; he had to leave his family. He had a very, very big job; he was teaching as a man in the capital of the then Muslim world. He was teaching in Damascus, and he had to leave it. He had to basically leave his family, kiss his son, and kiss his job goodbye, because he was appointed by the local sultan. One day he just realized that – he is a profound scholar and his mouth was

sealed – he could not speak. In the middle of a speech, he was not able to say much; so this was a realization that he can actually no longer speak what he cannot experience. So he left everyone and everything, wandered around, was realized – and then came back. So, just an example that some people can – but some people cannot.

What I mean about detachment from possessions, where you have to leave your possessions, is that even if you don't leave them physically, you have to leave them in terms of your attachment to them.

Rick: Right, right. Well, that's not a problem; being attached to them is a problem, so if you can progress to the highest level spiritually, and all you have to do is relinquish your *attachment* to things, then that probably would sound appealing to most people. Having to actually leave the things, especially if those things happen to be children or something, it might not sound so appealing to people.

Igor: No, but we have to be honest here because this isn't a *Hope Unplugged* interview; [an unplugged show and program] we have enough façade spirituality even in the big movements, we have enough promises. We have to actually face certain facts – your particular program, as far as I understood, is listened to, heard, and watched by many, many very advanced, highly advanced spiritual practitioners. So certain things... if we hide behind slogans here, then what do we do?

Rick: No, I'm not trying to do that!

Igor: Yes, I know that...

Rick: Many of the people that I interview actually also watch these interviews; they are teachers themselves and have undergone profound awakenings, but they like to watch to watch a lot of these things themselves.

Igor: Let's go back to Maharishi. Maharishi was already a *jagadguru*, he was teaching all over the globe in his travels, and he was still reading the scriptures. He was still reading the scriptures. His *Apaurusheya Bhashya*, *The Commentaries on the Brahma Sutras*, which were assisted by Vernon Katz, and Vernon Katz at some point realized that, "Maharishi ... you are just actually reading it now!" With childlike innocence he replied, "Well, yes."

Rick: He was always very inquisitive, and he was always surrounding himself with people who knew more than he did about certain things, in order to learn more himself and to augment and supplement what he was trying to do.

Igor: Absolutely. I admire these examples. For instance, from the history of art, the great French painter of the classical period, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, when he was already in bed practically dying – he

was lying in bed with cushions propped up and doing some drawing. When one of his fervent disciples came over and said, “What are you doing Master?” He said, “I’m copying Giotto.” The guy is about to pass away, he created already everything that would be distributed in the world’s top museums and...

Rick: So he was still bettering himself.

Igor: Well, not bettering himself ...

Rick: Learning?

Igor: Learning, exactly... why not? If you know the history of art, Giotto is considered to be the beginning of the Renaissance; a very primitive painter compared to the versatility of the visual expressions that commanded at the age when Ingres lived. That is an example of humility, an example of beauty, and a profound appreciation, as he said that, “We are giants only because we stand on the shoulders of our predecessors.”

Rick: Right. Amma, the hugging saint, always says – she says this in pretty much every lecture – “We should always have the attitude of a beginner.” Meaning that you should never rest on your laurels, and you respect the mystery, and continue to be open to further clarity and depth of understanding and experience.

Igor: Well, isn’t that the state of a true mystic... a perpetual state of wonder? Because whenever you understand something on a certain level, whenever you understood even what is considered to be *the* essence of everything, it immediately brings in a new paradox, and that throws you into that state of wonder. So that every time we gain something – a new territory, or covered some ground – that immediately brings a following paradox, because that whole relationship, that whole *lila*, that whole play, is founded on these paradoxes. The state of wonder is the state of the beginner, isn’t it like this?

Rick: So, do you feel we’ve done justice to this discussion of types of awakening – proper and improper, higher and lower – and stages of awakening, or is there anything more you want to say about that?

Igor: I don’t know what the next question is, but...

Rick: There is a point about sexuality in relationships in different stages.

6. The Physical Expression Of *Prana Shakti*: How Does It Affect One’s Sexual Attitudes And Relationships?

Igor: Okay. So we can just move to the physical expression of *Kundalini*, or the physical expression of *Prana Shakti*. I have received some questions from some people on the wake of the first interview, in relation to how does awakening affect one's physical functioning, and above all, the primal sexual attitudes, and sexual relationships? Because we are beings where on the lower level, on the base level, sexual energy is the ultimate manifestation of that energy. The orgasm itself is, as the French call it *petit mal*, the "little death," this is when you experience yourself without "I am" as this individual. You lose that identity for however a short time, for however small, however sweet, but is wonderful. It's not the actual physical sensation, but that experience of being completely lost – that is what drives us crazy and manic about sex – because we love that experience. Like U.G. Krishnamurti, that angry teacher, he used to say, "Sex is terribly, sex is painful – it is painful from the beginning, painful through the middle, and painful at the end." Obviously, people take it two-dimensionally, but that is what he meant; people are mistakenly driven to what sex should provide, by actually missing the essence of what it does indeed provide.

Going back to how the life of an aspirant is affected, there is an amazing paradox that again, when *Kundalini* is first awakened – and if it is awakened powerfully enough – the position of the earth-based *chakra* and the water-based *chakra* are so close together; they are almost next to each other, and their energies are engulfing each other. It is earth and water, all these primordial, basic, very heavy, elemental realms, and the water realm is the realm of all relationships; it is a fluidity because Consciousness itself is fluid. At that level, Consciousness finds its most acute expression on the physiologic level, because when it projects itself further into the earth, it solidifies, it calcifies, it is what we take as the creation in that state. Matter, for a very long time, was associated with everything solid – at least in the scientific realm, in scientific terms. But when we talk about fluidity in terms of water, which is where Consciousness is very in Her own element in that realm, this is why many saints, many mystics were exclaiming that sexual energy is the closest in its expression in the way that it behaves, to the Absolute Energy, to the Primordial Energy. We try to contain it – a whole culture, all cultures are attempts to contain that energy – to channel it, to allow it to be expressed in a proper so-to-speak 'civilized, acceptable manner.' But we know when we tap into that energy, we get incredibly lost – this is what happens.

In terms of awakening, all of this could be magnified a thousand times over, because when *Kundalini* is awakened, and when the *prana* is combusted... Quickly going back to the proper and improper awakening: when awakening is proper, it's not like, "Okay I'm awakened in the first *chakra*, now I'm doing second *chakra*, now I'm doing third *chakra*" – it's not like that. Proper awakening is literally – you poked that cobra, and it stood on its head fully – that is proper awakening. It literally, literally penetrates several *chakras* immediately, but it doesn't mean that they are opened, and it doesn't mean that the *Kundalini* is established in the higher regions; it will drop down. It is bound to drop down and it does; and from there on it starts its work.

Many properly awakened teachers, when they speak of the initial impact of their awakening, and if you hear their story carefully, they are remarkably similar in terms of what they experience. What they

experience is what often then takes years to stabilize, cognize and integrate. Why? Because the initial energy comes to erect itself, and it literally engulfs and takes over the entire physiology. So it is not uncommon for *Kundalini* to actually enter the median channel right from the moment of awakening, if there is enough *prana*. But these are rare cases, so we are not going to focus on them.

Rick: I was going to say, I have seen both; I have seen most people in fact whose awakening seems to be a very gradual, incremental, gentle progression, and then others who have this sudden dramatic awakening. I know people who had sudden, dramatic awakenings 30, 40 years ago, who ended up getting into drugs, or getting completely lost in something, so they didn't end up properly integrating or stabilizing it.

Igor: Sure, well this is a theme in itself, and we are coming to it. Back to the sexual energy. When *Kundalini* is awakened, that long process of internalization often occurs in pre-awakening stages, and we become celibate. We want to be celibate.

I remember acutely, not even wanting to be touched by anyone; I just wanted to be completely left alone. You know, in spiritual community, people often come and give each other hugs and everything, and some people thought, "Oh, his heart is not open." But that wasn't the case! It was just that every touch felt like a slight electrical shock – speaking in plain language, it felt unpleasant, because the internalization was so profound. Then when the combustion takes place, when *Shakti* is awakened, then all this "stuff hits the fan." It just smears all over the walls – all your *vasanas*, all your psychic impressions are unleashed, and obviously a wild appetite for sex, for sexual pleasure – could be the result. However, that said immediately, if *Kundalini* is not awakened fully, then very often awakening will even intensify the desire for celibacy, because you still need that internalization.

When *Kundalini* enters the water domain, when it enters the domain of fluidity, the domain of *Svadhithana Chakra*, the *chakra* of water, the *chakra* of relationships, the *chakra* of all forms of communication – in terms of that lower form of communication – there is no longer the erogenic zone... your whole body becomes erogenic! Your nails become erogenic, your eyeballs – you look at things and you feel excited!

Rick: I presume you are speaking from experience...?

Igor: I am speaking from direct experience.

Rick: In your case, were you able to keep this under control, or did you start acting like a wild man?

Igor: No, I had enough practice in discipline and I hope that in my case, there was a profound wisdom at the same time when the awakening took place, because there were a lot of spontaneous manifestations. My awakening was accompanied by very important yogic procedures: spontaneous *asanas*, spontaneous

pranayamas, like *kumbhakas*, spontaneous *mudras*, and spontaneous *bandhas*. I used to do yoga for many years and I was very versed, I was a master of yoga by the age of 32, 33 ... but to tell you the truth, I could never sit comfortably sit in lotus, in full *padmasana*. I would force myself, but when Consciousness has boosted out – in one of the meditations I remember, I wasn't even moving my legs with my hands – my feet just naturally locked themselves into perfect, proper lotus – not *siddhasana*. It happened as if there were no bones, as if everything was in a jelly-like state, and I was amazed. I was like, "Oh, wow, that's amazing!" From there on, all of my meditations – it didn't matter how long – 1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours – I would meditate for 6 to 7 hours a day with breaks, I would sit in lotus. After that I would just release my legs, stretch them out, and then I could just walk. There was this absolute... that's why it is called *asana*; being steadily established.

When the *bandhas* took place, sincerely speaking, I had this permanent erection that took place for a very long time. In fact, I didn't even know how to... you are a man, you know how when you sit in lotus, there is kind of not enough place where the appropriate member should go. That had to be adjusted, because I had a permanent erection, like in a straight spine, and internally I realized that this erection had nothing to do with lust or desire on that level. It was literally being erected towards that higher purpose.

Rick: By permanent, do you mean several hours during the course of your meditation?

Igor: Stiff as wood; as my spine would be straight, so there would be an erection. Often during sleep...

Rick: But there weren't a lot of desires and all in the middle of that?

Igor: When you are in *bandha*, don't forget, and when you have this spontaneous withdrawal...

Rick: Maybe you should define *bandha*.

Igor: *Bandha* is a lock. In yogic terminology, *bandha* is one of those very important tools in hatha yoga, like *asana*, *bandha*, *mudra*, and *pranayama* are prerequisites for stabilizing and tuning in the body and mind to experience higher states of consciousness. For instance, some of the *bandhas* that TM meditators experience, I know that, because when you see them sitting, the head goes down, the chin completely, completely – you think they are falling asleep, but when you speak to them, it actually happens spontaneously. That is one of the *bandhas*. It is the *bandha* which locks – what *bandha* means in Sanskrit is a lock; it has to lock certain stages so that *prana* moves in the body, not in a disorganized fashion, but in a directed fashion.

Rick: So one stage is locked so the next stage can go on?

Igor: Exactly. So yoga starts with forcibly introducing lower *bandhas*. In fact, *siddhasana* – you know, one leg over – it is a *bandha*. Your heel is pressed at the perineum, and the heel of the other leg is spread at the pubic area.

Rick: In your case, the *bandhas* were happening spontaneously.

Igor: They were happening on their own. This is why I said, there was this inner wisdom unleashed at the same time, so I didn't have to deal with all of this. Whenever those kind of latent tendencies would appear, I was just watching them, because the whole body was tuned into it.

Rick: This thing about yogis having all this kind of sexual energy, potentially going wild; a few weeks ago, I interviewed Yogi Amrit Desai, who had become a very famous yoga master in the United States, and then he had a number of sexual affairs and it became a big scandal and he got kicked out of the ashram that he was leading. Then he dealt with it in a mature way, and everybody made amends and so on. I asked him about that, and he said, "Well, this happens with yogis, they have so much sexual energy that it is easy for them to fall; if there is not enough discipline it is for them to get involved in things like that."

There are some people who are just profligate, like Adi Da for instance, just a huge amount of sexual behavior all over the place with other men's wives and so on. In his case, it was rationalized as "crazy wisdom" and "being for the benefit" of all these people he was sleeping with, and so on. I gather that you would say that is just insufficient discipline to deal with that stage of the awakening of energy that is taking place?

Igor: Am I supposed to comment?

Rick: Yes, please!

Igor: Well, okay. By the way, I know very well who Yogi Amrit Desai is, because I have some very close friends who were direct disciples of his, and now are yoga teachers in their own right in that hatha yoga lineage, Kripala Yoga. Some of them were in the midst of it all, when the scandal broke out. I don't want to put any qualitative judgments. However, when there is enough *udana prana*, and when we talked about *prana*, I am sorry I forgot to mention the specific divisions of *prana* in the body.

Some may think this is the stuff of an academic approach, but *prana*, in order to exist in the physiology, and in order to sustain the physiology, it becomes delta-like, it spreads out. Each particular *prana* deals with a particular functioning, so there is *prana*, *apana*, *udana*, *samana* and *vyana*. Each of these *pranas* are functioning in their own right, and they are subordinate to the main *prana*.

Prana is the descendent vital energy, but in the ascending order – please try to understand. It is coming from here (points to the top of the head), but it is an ascending *prana*. *Apana prana* is that which is only descending *prana*, is that which discharges the feces, the urine, the semen, and the menstrual cycles. The *samana* and *vyana*, it is all integrating *prana* of the digestion, metabolic rates and everything. The *vyana prana* is present everywhere, that which holds everything together – all this “soup” – because human beings we are like this jelly liquid with some bones. We think of ourselves as being very solid, but in fact we are not; and all this is kept together by *vyana prana*.

There is this very important *udana prana*, which allows us to speak, because that *prana* governs speech, and as a result also the thought processes. It is an uprising *prana* which is usually functioning from the vocal cords on the level of the throat, all the way up into the point of confluence. But in a normal human being, that *udana prana* only directs what I just mentioned – the normal mental faculties and the speech. However, in the one in whom Consciousness is awakened, what drives Consciousness into the *sushumna*, the middle channel, it is the property of *udana prana*. So that is what really happens; all of these *pranas* that were gathered in the gut created combustion, triggered the awakening, and then converted into *udana*. *Udana prana* is when you cannot have sexual desire to express yourself outwardly, because it is already moving upward in this subtlety of your inner subtle physiology. It is moving in the median channel; so when one is fully established in *udana prana*, a leakage of sexual energy is simply impossible.

So, as I said, not putting any qualitative judgment, if a yogi then goes loose, it means he is not fully established in that *udana* movement. It means that *Kundalini* does not have enough force to enter the *sushumna*, and it still wanders, and a tremendous amount of energy is still leaking out. That said, let's not confuse that with self-realized, God-realized – what have you – masters, who were caught in some promiscuous sexual activity with the disciples. I often get those questions as well about so-and-so, with some masters that I have great respect for – you know, like Swami Muktananda for instance. You hardly hear about Siddha Yoga anymore because of all these scandals, and again, if this is an “unplugged” show, certain concepts, certain culturally accepted behavioral patterns, you cannot apply them to the spiritual domain. The mistake of these masters was only that they were perhaps allowed to practice this where they should not have practiced it.

Rick: So you are saying that there are two types of situations: one where *udana prana* is not properly established, and so a person does not have full discipline or control over their sexual energies and so they engage in some promiscuous behavior, or there could be someone in whom *udana prana* is established, who is an enlightened, God-realized master who still has sexual relations with disciples. On the outside it might appear that the same thing is happening, but they are actually two different situations. Is that what you just said?

Igor: Yes, but with a correction that in the self-realized being there is no need for *udana prana* anymore, because the whole movement of *prana* has terminated – and we will speak about it later on, where it is

terminated – and then the being is functioning, just in accord just with *karmic, dharmic leisha avidya* trajectory.

Rick: So the conclusion is, it is hard for a person to judge.

Igor: It is impossible to judge, but to be more specific, let me give you an example. This is a bit hard, because especially in the United States and Canada, in the Anglo-Saxon world, in North America and in England, the attitude towards sexuality is already covered with so many social, cultural *vasanas* and prejudices.

Rick: Even more in the Muslim world...

Igor: Yes, but we are not talking about the Muslim world now, and this show is not in Riyadh or in Bagdad – this show is taking place in America, mostly it is being broadcast from the United States. So the subject of sex in itself has not yet reached a liberation on the level of social understanding, let alone in spiritual terms.

The example I want to give you is that Tantric scriptures openly talk about several ways of transmission of energy. Some of them will sound disgusting for the western ear. For example, one of them is spitting in the mouth of a disciple. Why is that? Because saliva is the most direct expression of plasma, and plasma is the first *dhatu* in Ayurvedic terms, of all these different *dhatu*s. Plasma is the first *dhatu*, and that is where the transmission of energy is the most direct. There is obviously *drishti*, the passing or transmission of the energy through sight, through touch. The spitting into the mouth – ejaculating even – into the disciple, is it a sodomy or is it a rape? We are not ready to discuss these things yet, Rick.

When I try to reply to these people who say, “So-and-so has been caught doing so-and-so... isn’t that immoral and what have you?” I cannot judge, because these are two very different levels of consciousness. You are trying to judge from this localized level of consciousness, something which takes place on a very different level of consciousness. Immediately saying that, I know that the western audience is utterly and terribly uncomfortable with this, because in the world where the democracy is the most cherished concept, yet it is a failed concept. An utterly failed concept, because there is no such thing as a democracy. It is one very big misunderstanding of what the Greeks were trying to implement. So this ideal of individual freedom being taken for granted and abused in spiritual terms and in spiritual organizations – all of these are very sensitive issues.

So my comment on that is relevant to that one case of that yogi who says, “Because I am swelled with *ojas*, then it is very hard to contain so I go and I sleep with the others.” It is a bit contradictory, because when you are swelled with that, the convergence of energy... Well, first of all when *Kundalini* actually enters the *sushumna*, and when it travels properly, it becomes gaseous. The need for sexual expression outwardly is

only when the *ojas* is raw and uncooked – that kind of raw physiologic substance – then it is eager to express itself. But once it is sublimated inwardly at the level of the heart mentioned above, it becomes gaseous, it is no longer liquid – it is no longer fluid.

Rick: It gets converted.

Igor: Exactly. Later on it reenters the domain of the cortexes, where it can become transformed into a qualitatively different substance, which is issued back into the physiology in terms of the qualitatively different hormones. It is basically like you are having sex with yourself. Why do you need someone else? It is like Shiva is entirely in an embrace with Shakti. Shakti is on the lap of Shiva, and it actually feels like that physically. You are totally happy! That is why they say, “For the yogi in that embrace, all of the *gandharvas* naked – divinely seductive beings – they walk around, but they will not distract him.” The yogi who is not in that embrace of Shiva-Shakti, then any temptation is a temptation.

Again, coming back to all these other stories about realized masters playing with their disciples and what have you – found in promiscuous activities – I am not there to judge. I am not there to pass a comment, because we have to apply a completely and very different perspective of understanding. Then of course, we enter the domain where certain accepted criteria will crumble – and we don’t want to do that. So I would say, follow your intuition, follow your guidance. For me, the physical activity of so-and-so is irrelevant, as long as there is a connection on the heart level. Of course someone will say, “Oh, but you were not the victim, you were not the one who was raped,” or what have you.

Rick: What I hear you say is, “Don’t judge.” My feeling is that I have to reserve judgment on a lot of these situations. I can’t come down with some sort of adamant attitude about it, because I really don’t know. But then, I am also open to the possibility that in some cases it was just unbridled hedonism; the guy was just using spirituality as an excuse for indulging in all kinds of stuff, and was totally out of control.

So when we say, “Don’t judge,” we are not meaning to imply complete condoning, forgiving, and acceptance of whoever wants to do anything and use any excuse for it. We are just saying that there may be a spectrum, and you have to be careful coming down hard on any particular position – because you don’t know.

Igor: Absolutely, and every case is unique and different. So we cannot brush off everything, “So-and-so, and so-and-so, and so-and-so have been found doing the same activity,” so this is where a generalization...

Rick: There is a story about Shankara – it is probably just one of these stories – but he was walking along with some disciples, and he was ahead of them and they saw him drinking something. He kept walking, and they caught up to it, and it was some beer; so they drank some of the beer, and they kept walking. A little while later, they saw him drinking something else, and then they caught up to where he had been – and it

was molten glass. It probably didn't really happen, but it illustrates the point that you don't necessarily just mimic whatever you see someone else doing, because their circumstance and state of consciousness and everything else, might be quite different than yours.

7. The Dangers Of Premature Awakening And Falling Out Of Grace

Rick: On your next point [on the paper here], we have kind of discussed this but maybe we have a few wrap-up points about this. You mention the dangers of premature awakening and falling out of Grace, and you use the words, "the other worlds and human beings."

Igor: It is a very big theme in its own right, but I will try to be as brief as possible. Basically, the dangers of prematurely awakened *Kundalini* are seldom talked about in today's Kundalini Yoga circles, because only the glorious side is being portrayed; you know, the glorious, the divine, the transformative, and the beatitude of that. Indeed, that *Kundalini* awakening is the culmination of this whole process of wherever that evolutionary path has taken the individual. It is an entirely new era; an entirely new phase of existence can begin, because *Kundalini* awakening is just the beginning – let's not forget that.

However, premature awakening is extremely dangerous because firstly, the physiology has to be able to withhold the...

Rick: When you say "premature awakening" do you mean that somehow an awakening takes place without the person having undergone very much preparation for it, and so they are not able to handle it? Right?

Igor: Absolutely. The premature awakening it is like the physiology is in a different state in relation to the *prana* that is awakened. The physiology, the body, is a vehicle, a content, a vessel which would be recharged with an entirely different level of energy. If that vessel has not undergone a qualitative preparation, then more likely the repercussions or ramifications could be quite dramatic. Often, I myself witnessed several cases of premature awakening, and I have witnessed a tremendous de-what have you – everything that begins with "de" – the degradation, because the physiology crumbles.

First of all, *Kundalini* is associated with extreme heat; at least in the early stages that is what happens. In order for the impurities to be molten out of the body, in order for that process to ensue, a tremendous amount of heat is being produced – and that heat can damage brains, and it can damage the nervous system. If the nervous system is not powerful enough to withstand the charges of this energy, it will burn. The endings of the nervous system are extremely subtle. The human body can be compared to a sponge; the sponge, although it appears like it has a shape, you can squeeze it into your hand like that (demonstrates) and release it. Inside there are all these bubbles, holes of air, and only the outer structure

of the sponge is making the shape of a sponge. In a way, that is how the subtle channels keep the body intact, but those subtle channels, called *nadis* in Sanskrit, are blocked in a normal human being. They are as if waxed; only a few major ones are functioning, but a lot of them are blocked.

So what happens when *Kundalini* is awakened in the individual when she or he is not prepared, is that that heat goes everywhere, and with the toxins that are still present – with all this that you call kind of fillings, all this wax that needs to be molten out. Instead, that is being spread everywhere – all over, and illness could be a result. I am not talking about the purificatory illness, because every aspirant during the course of *Kundalini* will experience illnesses from time to time, because that is what is stored there in the subtle body, in the *karmic* body, so that the evolution progresses experientially because the *sushumna* channel has layers. Although it is thinner than the human hair, and perhaps it is thinner than the spider's web, but even within that very fine, fine pathway, there are three different channels; that is where the physical, the subtle, and the karmic are being stored. That is for the adept – we will leave it maybe for some other time for those who are interested.

Premature awakening is undesirable, and for that reason, many masters don't even talk much about *Kundalini*. They don't want anyone to start getting this idea that, "Oh, I am going to facilitate this very fast, rapid success in my *sadhana* by awakening *Kundalini* by means of agitation." You know, certain drugs can awaken *Kundalini*, certain *bandhas*, – certain forceful applications.

Rick: Sure, you could do a whole lot of *pranayama* and you might awaken it.

Igor: Absolutely.

Rick: Christ spoke of "not pouring new wine into old wineskins." You know, you have to have a wineskin that is suitable for holding the wine.

Igor: Beautiful.

Rick: Personally I have seen a number of cases where people have just gone stark raving crazy, when they had some profound awakening, and they literally had to be guarded and protected from hurting themselves because they were just so nutty. And yet from their side, they had thought that this wonderful and profound thing was happening.

Igor: Yes, this happens because everything gets magnified – everything gets magnified.

Rick: Sometimes the ego gets magnified too...

Igor: Not sometimes, it has become magnified; both positive and negative gets magnified. Everything – everything. Let's say you had the tendency toward that, it would become a massive tendency; if you had a predisposition for that, in a normal condition when Consciousness was dormant, you know, you could deal with that. But suddenly, it is eclipsing all of your – because what happens, let's just go back again to the notion of *prana* and *Kundalini* and what it is.

What is *Kundalini* on an individual level? What is it?

Rick: Are you asking me?

Igor: Yes, I am just asking you, so that I just kind of like ask myself.

Kundalini on the individual level, is that portion of ego that identifies with the body. So, it is you in essence – it is greater than you, because in essence that is what *prana* in the body is. So when that is awakened, it is like a new you; your dormant you is awakened. Even if at the initial stages you still feel like the “old me” is still there, and having that relationship, “I am experiencing these amazing experiences,” because it is far from the merge yet, and this is where all of the problems are of the early stages of awakening. Because the conviction that “I am great” is skin deep, you come very close to actually jumping to conclusions. Also, on a visual level people see lights, or hear lots of sounds in their lobes with the eyes closed, and they think that *Kundalini* is already in the head, but that is a projection. This is the magnificence of our physiology, is that something could happen down there in the very low, basic energetic centers, but the registration of the experience is as if it is happening here (in the head); the distance is vast. The distance is in light years, because *Kundalini* travels in the *sushumna* at the speed of light.

Rick: So that is another way of explaining what we were talking about earlier, that it is easy to mistake a very preliminary awakening for a final one. Actually, along the lines of what you are saying, I was thinking about these instances of people that had gone crazy when they had some sort of awakening, and it is very true. One guy proclaimed himself to be a world teacher and he was the “Shankaracharya of the west” and all this stuff. There are many cases I can think of, where people went into great ego aggrandizement.

Maharishi was asked one time when people were on some long course doing all this long meditation and rounding and everything, and they said, “Can't you just shortcut this? Why can't you just enlighten us?” He said, “You wouldn't want it – I would need ten strong men to hold you down.”

Igor: Absolutely. That is exactly what premature awakening could cause, or improper awakening could cause, because there is a lot that the body has to deal with – we forget that. That is why I am not at all interested in those dialogues that are prevalent in the Nondualist circles. Because to assume that you can just mentally shift, and forgo millions of years of this evolution – millions of years and countless

incarnations – and suddenly – poof! New you, you know? Like suddenly your identity with Parabrahman has been complete.

<End of part 1>

Cover Image: Igor at Roussillon, South of France, August 2005.



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Lakshman

March 27, 2019 at 5:09 am

A great blessing to have these Q&A's back... and hopefully one day, the video interviews as well!

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