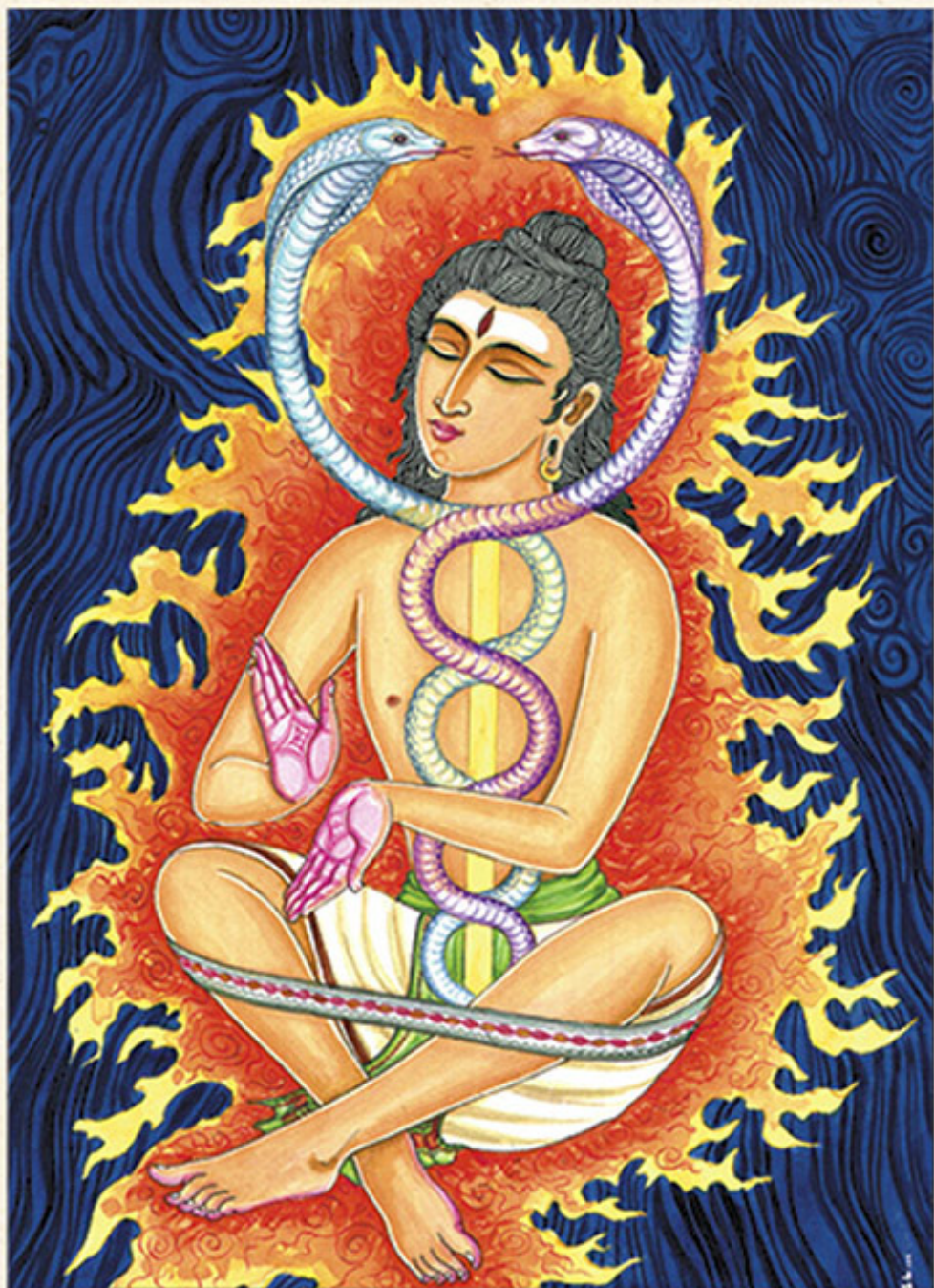


Our Subtle Energy



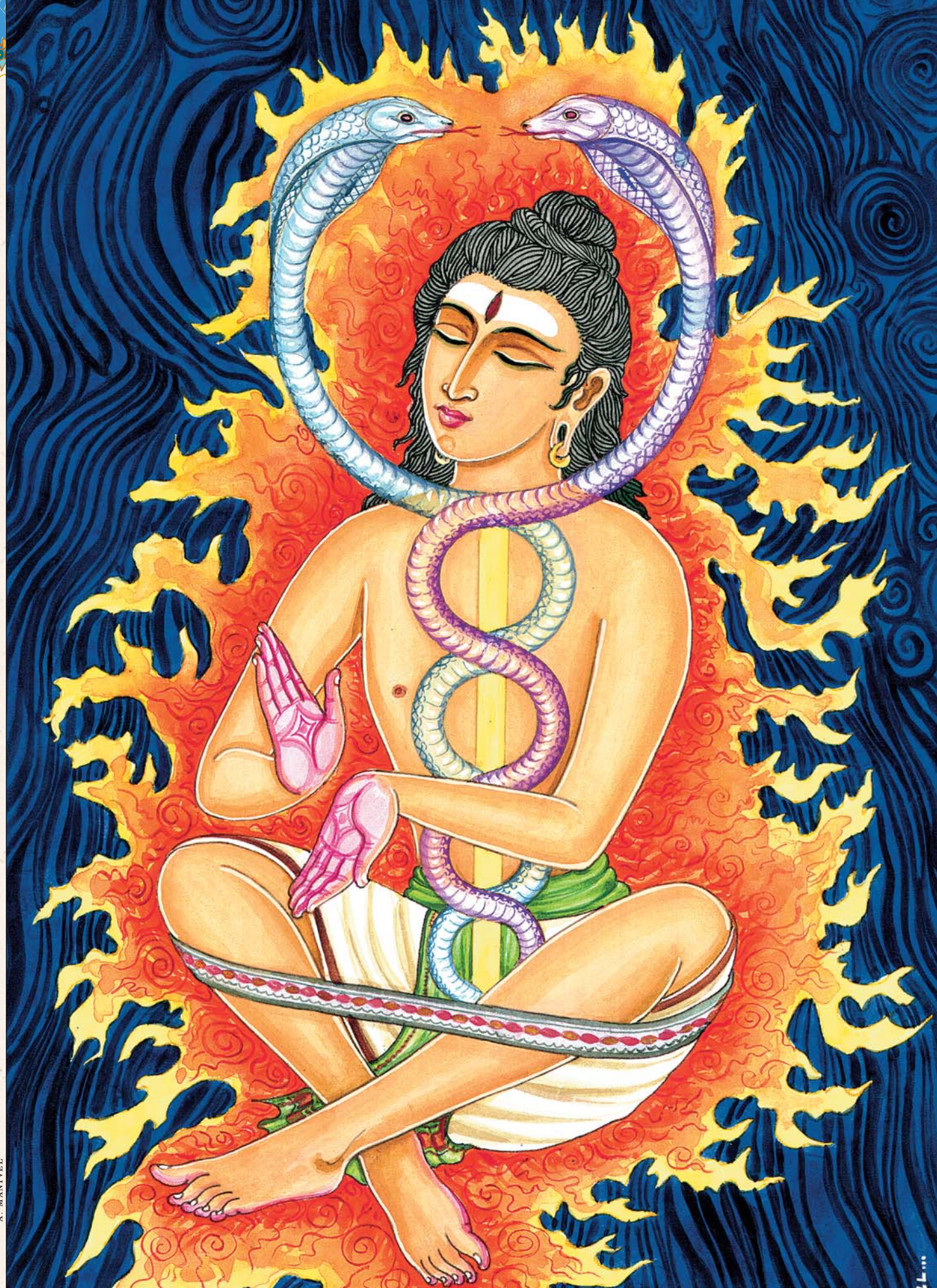
Insights from Scriptures, Saints and Scholars

Our Subtle Energy Highways

THERE ARE TWO BASIC ENERGY CURRENTS within our subtle body. These are *ida* and *pingala*, which surround a central major current, *sushumna*. The *ida* current is feminine and the channel of physical-emotional energy. When energy is flowing through *ida*, we are more conscious of the physical body. We are not in the world of thought but in the world of feeling. We feel strongly and experience strong emotions. The *pingala* current is masculine and the channel of intellectual-mental energy. When energy is flowing through the *pingala*, we are aware in the mind. We are inquisitive. We like to talk a lot. We tend to argue and to reason. *Sushumna* is the central energy current, rising through the spine up to the crown of the head. The life force within the *sushumna* becomes very powerful when the *ida* and *pingala* forces are balanced. Through yoga, the kundalini energy is awakened and made to rise up *sushumna* through each chakra to the *sahasrara* at the top of the head.

Energy flow: The *ida* current, pink in color, begins on the left side of the body, while the *pingala* current, blue, begins on the right. The *ida* and *pingala* cross at the chakras. The yellow current in the middle is the *sushumna*, the central source of energy. The kundalini energy can flow through the *ida* and *pingala*. This energy flow appears psychically like two serpents.

A. MANIVEL



Insights from Scriptures, Saints And Scholars

The *sushumna* ascends upward and conducts prana. It is separated between the two sides of the palate. Uniting the prana with the syllable Om and the mind, the yogi ascends upward. And as he turns the tip of his tongue towards the palate and collects the sense-organs into a unity, he sees greatness. Through that he attains to the state of selflessness, and does not participate in joy or sorrow.

Krishna Yajur Veda, Maitrayana Upanishad 20

Where on the left guards *ida* and on the right the *pingala*. Between them is the chief spot. He who knows it, knows the Veda. Dustless, entering into Brahman, the *sushumna* is related to it. It's the pillow on which rest the 72,000 arteries.

Atharva Veda, Kshurika Upanishad 16-17

When the breaths of *ida*-moon and *pingala*-sun course their way unhindered through the spinal channel, your body will be imperishable, and abiding joys shall arise even here in this world below. This is the true way of Siva yoga.

Tirumantiram, verse 883

The yogi ascends along the *sushumna* from chakra to chakra. The ascent is made gradually by patient efforts. Even a mere shaking of the opening of *sushumna* causes a great deal of bliss. You become intoxicated. You will entirely forget the world. When the opening of *sushumna* is shaken a bit, the kundalini *shakti* tries to enter *sushumna*. Great dispassion comes in. You will become fearless. When the *sushumna nadi* is working, i.e., when the breath flows through both the nostrils, meditation proceeds with ease and joy. The mind then is calm. When the mind is in the *sushumna*, the yogi is shut out from the objective, physical consciousness of the world. He is practically dead to the world, sees various visions and moves in the mental, ethereal space. Samadhi starts.

Swami Sivananda

The *ida* and *pingala nadis* govern, on the physical level, responses of the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems. Through controlled breathing in which life force is guided along the *pingala*, yogis can speed up their heart rate and metabolism and improve eyesight and hearing. And, through controlled breathing in which the life force is conducted along the *ida*, yogis can greatly slow down their metabolism. This can be pushed to the point where expert yogis can remain underground in an airtight container for hours, even days.

Georg Feuerstein, in The Yoga Tradition

A CURIOUS CORRELATION TO THE *IDA*, *PINGALA* AND *SUSHUMNA* currents is found in the caduceus of Greek mythology.



The caduceus was a winged staff with two serpents twined around it, carried by Hermes, messenger of the Gods, as a symbol of peace. Romans believed serpents discovered the secret of eternal life, interpreting shedding of skin as a return to youth. In modern times the caduceus was adopted as the physician's symbol and as the emblem of the US Army Medical Corps.

© PHOTODISC