

### **Dictionary Definition of “Kundalini”**

To the Editor:

Gene Kieffer wrote (1994, p. 169) that “the word ‘kundalini’ has still to appear in any dictionary.” He was wrong. It is to be found in the 3801-page, two-volume *New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1993). The definition reads:

1 The latent (female) energy which lies coiled at the base of the spine (late C19). 2 In full *Kundalini yoga*. A type of meditation which aims to direct and release this energy (mid C20)

Kieffer may think this definition inadequate, but the dictionary’s editor would doubtless appreciate his improvement on her definition, providing it was no longer than the original.

## References

Kieffer, G. (1994). Kundalini and the near-death experience. *Journal of Near-Death Studies*, 12, 159-176.

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[Editor's note: Stimulated by Canon Perry's letter, I looked in the one-volume dictionary that sits on my desk, *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1992), and found the following definition of kundalini:

Energy that lies dormant at the base of the spine until it is activated, as by the practice of yoga, and channeled upward through the chakras in the process of spiritual perfection.

While these discoveries do not detract from Kieffer's thesis, it is encouraging to note this increased awareness on both sides of the Atlantic.]