

Attributes of Mystical Experience and Kundalini Awakening

Mystical Experience

The following list of cross cultural attributes of mystical experience has been developed from the writings of authorities on the subject such as Evelyn Underhill and William James and from the accounts and works of mystics from a number of traditions, including the Christians, St. Theresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and St. Hildegard von Bingen; the Hindus, Lalleshwari and Akka Mahadevi, and the Sufi, Jalaluddin Rumi.

These attributes can be broken into those associated with mystical types of experiences themselves and those that are related to the actual transformation of consciousness often said to follow profound mystical experiences. While some mystics, for instance, as St. Hildegard, clearly exhibit all of the characteristics, others exhibit only some – usually a majority – of them. The degree to which the attributes are experienced or exhibited may be thought of as existing on a continuum.

The experience itself

- Light
- Oneness
- Love, bliss
- Sensations of the movement of “energy” or heat through the body; including sensations generally associated with sexual energy or experience. (Note the sexual imagery in the great mystic poets such as St. John of the Cross, Rumi, and Mirabai.)

The associated effects and/or transformation

- Experiences of the extra-ordinary
 - Psychic or paranormal abilities known as siddhis in yoga
 - And known as charisms in Christianity
- Concern for humanity
 - Compassion
 - Social conscience/work for social justice
 - Passion to ease suffering
- Inspiration
 - Ranging from creative inspiration to revelation
 - A continuum of experience
 - Genius – Creative genius – the experience of inspired creativity
- Loss of fear of death
 - And/or certainty of some sort of divine presence or overarching intelligence
- Development or increase in charisma

Kundalini Awakening

The following list has been gleaned from the writings on the kundalini experience by authorities such as Georg Feuerstein and Pandit Gopi Krishna. These attributes and experiences can be found described – sometimes symbolically – in such classic texts as the *Hatha Yoga Pradīpīka*, *Saundaryalaharī*, and *Panchastavi* and in the writings of Abhinavagupta. They are also described in the writings of such poets as the Kashmiri mystic, Lalleshwari (or Lal Ded), and the Virashaiva saint, Akka Mahadevi.

The experience itself

- A sensation of light, which can be external and/or internal
- An overwhelming sense of wonder and awe
- Unshakeable conviction about the reality of the experience
- A sense of infinitude and unbounded knowledge
- A vivid feeling of encounter with an inexpressible, all-knowing Intelligence of an omniscient Divine Being
- A flood of pure emotion, characterized by devotion, reverence, submission, love, or adoration
- An expansion of consciousness in which the experiencer becomes conscious of consciousness itself as an infinite, sentient presence and sees him or herself as part of this Oneness

The associated effects and/or transformation

- Transformation or alteration in character that may include altruism, charity, benevolence, heroism, and/or self-sacrifice
- An unshakeable belief in the existence of a divine or cosmic intelligence or being
- Inspired creativity, genius, or revelation
- The development of the paranormal abilities known as siddhis

Note: In cases of aberrant awakening, the ancient yogis described what today might be labeled as some forms of mental illness. There are also references to how what the yogis called being “God intoxicated” might be mistaken for mental illness.

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