

THE CHAKRAS, THE TRUE WHEELS OF THE HUMAN BODY

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ABSTRACT :

Chakras (Wheels) are the psychic centers in the body that are active at all times, whether we are conscious of them or not. Energy moves through the *Chakras* to produce different psychic states. The ancient Indian science of *Yoga* therefore laid great emphasis on knowing these elements for the *Chakras*. In the ancient science of *Swara Yoga* (The *Yoga* of conscious breathing), various methods to identify the presence of the *tattvas* in the body are prescribed, and by mastering these techniques Yogis can perform themselves so as to accomplish much by using the least possible amount of energy. By the constant practice of *Shat Chakra Bhedhana* (piercing the six *Chakras* by visualization) & *Mantra Japa* (*Mantra* Recitation), they can finally transcend the *tattvas* which dominate the five centers of the body – That is the First Five *Chakras* – and thereby achieving the Non-Dual Consciousness that liberates them from the illusory world of *Maya*.

Key words: *Chakras, Sushmna, Prana, Apana, Kundalini.*

INTRODUCTION: *Chakra* is a Sanskrit word that denotes circle and movement. Because every -thing in the body is of circular shape & is constantly in movement, the centers of those movements are called *Chakras*. In discussing *Chakras* we are necessarily discussing the subtle aspects of these centers. Nerves are merely vehicles, but the message is subtle & is not devoid of consciousness or self- consciousness. The connection between the gross and the subtle in the human organism is through intermediate conductors that are connected with the sense organs& work organs. So *Chakras* are psychic centers that cannot be described fully from a materialistic or physiological stand point, but are described as centers of activity of subtle, vital force termed *Sukshma prana* and they are inter related with the Parasympathetic, Sympathetic, and the Central Nervous system, and thus the gross body is related to this.⁽¹⁾

Muladhara Chakra : 'Muladhara' means the supporting root. Like basal root sup-



porting the upper tree, the basal *Muladhara Chakra* supports all the other upper *Chakras* in our body. *Parashakti kundalini* or serpent power is lying in dormant or static state in the *Muladhara Chakra*. Awakening of this *kundalini* means transformation of bioenergy *kundalini* from static or dormant state into the active or kinetic nature occurs in *Muladhara Chakra* itself. Hence *Muladhara Chakra* has got utmost importance in *Yoga* science. In reality *Muladhara Chakra* is not beginning but the end of *Saptachakras*. But owing to the supreme importance of the place of *kundalini*, *Muladhara Chakra* is always referred to as the first *Chakra* in *Saptachakras*⁽²⁾. *Muladhara* is the lowest *Chakra* within the perineal floor. It is a four petalled red lotus& it influences the excretory & reproductive organs. *Muladhara* is directly connected to nose & sense of smell. At *Muladhara* human evolution begins & *Kundalini* Emerges⁽³⁾.

Svadhishtana Chakra: The circle with crescent shape. The moon shaped, crescent is the *yantra* of this *Chakra*. It is light blue in color. (Orange color) by some others, This *Chakra* is dominated by water element- the essence of life. Three fourths of a person's body weight is water. The moon effects people in the form of emotional tides. Women have a monthly cycle which is synchronized with the moon cycle. The *Svadhishtana Chakra* is the center for procreation, which is directly related with moon. Outside a white circle are six lotus petals of red(a mixture of vermillion & carmine) the color of mercuric oxide. The six petals represent the six important nerve endings in the second *Chakra*.⁽³⁾

Manipura Chakra: This *Chakra* is behind the navel, with in the spinal column. It is a ten- petalled yellow lotus called *Manipura* & it is associated with the solar plexus. *Manipura* influences the digestive process & the assimilation of food & *Prana*. It is also connected to the eyes & sight. ⁽³⁾Two important *bandhas* are to be perfected, *Moolabhandha* & *Jalandhara bandha* .when *moola bandha* is performed in conjunction with *jalandhara* the *Sushumna* passage between *Muladhara* & *Visuddhi* is isolated. *Jalandhara bhandha* prevents *Prana vayu* from passing upwards beyond *Visudhhi*. *Mula bandha* prevents the *Apana* from escaping down wards below *Muladhara*. These two *vayus* are forced together their union in *Manipura Chakra* is gradually accomplished. This awakening of *Manipura Chakra* is a definite milestone in the spiritual life of a Yogic aspirant. With this *Kundalini* is considered to have risen from *Muladhara* & become established in *Manipura* , and this effects the source in the brain where the nectar flows from *Bindu visarga*. In physiological

terms, this flow of nectar is associated with the release of hormones from pituitary gland into the bloodstream.⁽³⁾

When the union of *Prana* & *Apana* in *Manipura* is induced , the behavior of the lower *Chakras* & the Instinctive functions they govern, undergo modification . Production of the reproductive hormones diminishes to a steady baseline level, so that the inhibition upon the pituitary secretion is released . the pituitary then begins to secret its stimulating hormones continuously. As a result stream of consciousness becomes one pointed and continuous. ⁽³⁾

Manipura is also called the middle *Chakra* because it is midway between the earth, *Muladhara* and the sky (*Visuddhi*). All the practices which unite the two opposite forces ,*Prana* & *Apana* generate and release immense heat. This increases the metabolic rate for a short period, and as a result elimination and degeneration are decreased, absorption and assimilation are improved and the nervous system, blood circulation and brain functions are greatly stimulated. The mind becomes alert. Sensual desires and the need for sleep decrease, and even during dream state, there is greater awareness. When *Moola bhandha* is practiced regularly, the physiological need for food decreases, *Prana* & *Apana* unite , urine and stool are decreased, and even an old persons becomes young.⁽³⁾When the perineal body is constantly contracted , the *Prana Shakti* which normally escapes through this passage is redirected to the navel center , which is the seat of the fire element or *agni tattva*. When any *Chakra* is activated, heat will be produced, but *Manipura* becomes excessively hot because of the fire element. This center is responsible for maintaining the body temperature and regulating the digestive fire.⁽³⁾

Anahata Chakra: Above *Manipura*, in the proximity of the heart, is *Anahata Chakra*, with twelve blue petals. It is connected to cardiac plexus, heart, respiration and responsible for emotions of love & hate, compassion & cruelty. *Anahata* is also connected to the sense of touch & hands.

The spiritual heart is not the same as the heart *Chakra*, which is called *Anahata* in Sanskrit, though it does have a close connection with it. The spiritual heart is not simply a place on the spine or an energy center in the subtle body. It is the core of awareness that is both the basis of the casual body and the supreme self beyond all manifestation. It contains all the *Chakras* and yet is beyond them.

We can identify the spiritual heart with the *Sushumna* or Spinal *Nadi* itself. Ascending the *Sushumna* is also a process of opening the spiritual heart. The *Kundalini Shakti* is not just a movement up the *Sushumna* but an expansion of the spiritual heart. *Sushumna* in itself, an expansion of the spiritual heart. The *Sushumna* in itself is experienced as space or the void. One need not actually move out of the *Sushumna* into the different *Chakras* but can remain in it, going directly to the crown *Chakra* and the spiritual heart.

The movement of *Kundalini* fire up the spine is complemented by a descending flow of nectar, *Amrit*, *Soma* or grace, while an expansion occurs at the level of the heart as the enfolding of a solar force. The different ways how these forces move is important for particular *Yoga* practices, even though ultimately, as part of the same process of self-realization, they dissolve into the one and their details are forgotten.⁽⁴⁾

Visuddhi Chakra: *Visuddhi* is described as a deep purple lotus which has sixteen petals called *Adharas* which means sup-

port or receptacle which contains a particular fluid. Each petal or *Adhara* has a specific potential power or force. The eighth petal is said to contain poison, the sixteenth, *Amrit*, (nectar). The potential force of each petal is represented by the *bija mantras*, *Am,Aam, Im,Eim, Um, Oum, Rim, Reem, Lrim, Lreem, Em, Aim, Om,Aum, Ah, Amh*. These *Bija Mantras* relate to various bodily functions, mental & psychic and even subtler capacities. It is said that the realization through the first fifteen letters is the dissolution of conscious, subconscious & unconscious into *Atma*, i.e. *Om*. Sixteen petals or *Adharas* are also found on the *Sri Yantra* and the *Shakti* or potential forces of each are : desire, intellect, ego, sound, touch, form, taste, smell, *chitta*, steadfastness, memory, attraction by speech, growth, the subtle body revivification, and the gross body. These are also called the *Adhi Devatas* of the *Pancha Tattvas, Jnanendriya & Karmendriya*. *Visuddhi* is referred to as the middle *Chakra* in *Hatayoga Pradipika*, because below *Visuddhi* the *Chakras* are concerned with the four grosser *tattvas* or *Mahabhutas* but above *Visuddhi*, *Shakti* comes directly into contact with consciousness. *Visuddhi Chakra* contains the subtlest of the *tattva* or elements *Akasa*, the sound principle. *Visuddhi* is the middle *Chakra* between manifest *Shakti* (in the form of *tattvas*) and the unmanifest *Shakti* in the form of *Mahat* (consciousness). It is also via the voice box in the throat that thought is converted into audible sound. So this *Chakra* draws the unmanifest *Shakti* into a manifest form.⁽³⁾

Ajnya Chakra: At the top of the spinal column, is one of the most important *Chakras*, *Ajnya Chakra*, which has two silvery grey or clear petals. Above *Visuddhi* the *Chakras* are mainly concerned with

higher intelligence. *Ajnya Chakra* is the Command *Chakra*. It operates in connection with reticular activating system, medulla oblongata & Pineal gland. *Ajnya Chakra* is the third eye through which the whole subtle world can be perceived. It is known as the gate way to liberation.³

Sahasrara Chakra: *Sahasrara* is a thousand petalled lotus situated at the crown of the head & is associated with pituitary gland³. In our opinion this is the cerebral cortex. Truly speaking, *Sahasrara Chakra* is the most important *Chakra* where universal bioenergy is converted into the physical form or *Pranashakti* in the foetal stage. Like *Sushumna Nadi*, *Ida* and *Pingala* also, originate from *Muladhara Chakra* and terminate in the *Ajnya Chakra*.²

The spinal column consists of important Nerve plexus from downwards above as under:²

VARNA OF THE CHAKRAS:-Table 1

CHAKRA	COLOUR
1. MULADHARA	BRIGHT RED
2. SWADHISTHANA	ORANGE
3. MANIPURA	GOLDEN YELLOW
4. ANAHATA	GREEN
5. VISSHUDDHA	DEEP BLUE
6. AJNYA	SNOW WHITE (indigo)
7. SAHASRARA	VIOLET

DALA (PETALS, BRANCHES): *Yoga* science regards that, each energy seed is present in the form of a specific syllable. Accordingly, as per the number of petals in each *Chakra*, one basic energy seed is present in each petal in the form of a Sanskrit syllable. As *Yoga* science is explained in the ancient Indian Sanskrit language the basic syllabi are also named in Sanskrit

Accordingly the petals in each *Chakra* are considered as under:

1. Sacral nerve plexus in the region of the sacrum. Yogic 1st *Muladhara Chakra* is considered to be present in the region of sacral nerve plexus.

2. Superior hypo gastric nerve plexus is situated just in the uppermost sacral region. The 2nd *Swadhishthana Chakra* is supposed to be present in this region.

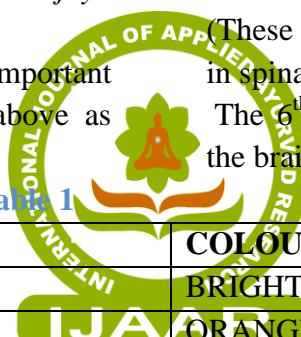
3. Solar plexus or celiac plexus is situated in the navel region and the 3rd *Manipura Chakra* is supposed to be present in this region.

4. Cardiac plexus in the region of heart is supposed as *Anahata Chakra* the 4th *Chakra*.

5. Cervical plexus in the region of throat is supposed to present in 5th *Visuddhi Chakra*.

(These are the important *Chakras* Present in spinal column.)

The 6th & the 7th *Chakras* are present in the brain.



language. Accordingly, there are 50 basic energy seeds present in the petals of the 1st Five Yogic *Chakras*, in the form of basic syllabi. *Yoga* science has regarded the shape of each *Chakra* as that of the lotus flower and that each *Chakra* has particular *Dala* or Petals like those in the lotus flower.

Table 2

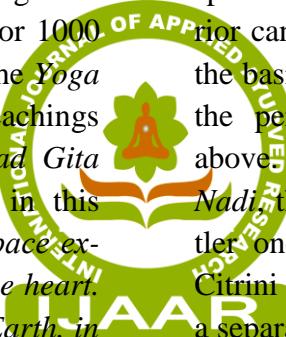
CHAKRA	No. Of DALAS
1. <i>MULADHARA</i>	4
2. <i>SWADHISTHANA</i>	6
3. <i>MANIPURA</i>	10
4. <i>ANAHATA</i>	12
5. <i>VISSHUDDHA</i>	16
6. <i>AJNYA</i>	2
7. <i>SAHASRARA</i>	1000 (uncountable)

When we consider the tremendous potential energy present in each energy seed, there is no doubt that considering the presence of energy of millions of suns in a single *Sahasrara Chakra*.

THE CHAKRAS AND THE SPIRITUAL HEART: Most Tantric *Yoga* approaches emphasize the 7 *Chakras*, with the highest self-realization occurring with the opening of the crown *Chakra* or 1000 petal lotus of the head. However, the *Yoga* of knowledge and many ancient teachings like *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita* emphasizes the heart instead, as in this *Upanishad* statement. “As far as space extends, so far is this space within the heart. Placed in it are both Heaven and Earth, in it are both Fire and Wind (Agni and Vayu) both sun and moon (Surya and Chandra), both lightning and the stars, whatever is here and whatever is not here, all of that is placed within the heart.”⁽⁵⁾ *Chandogya Upanishad* VIII.3

The *Yoga Sutras* III.33 similarly regards the origin of the mind or *Chitta* to be in the heart. “Through meditation on the heart, comes knowledge of the *Chitta*.”

CONCLUSION: All the *Tattvas*, cosmic principles, in creation are there embedded in the body. Each *tattva*, however, has its own centre of activity, the place where it is most preponderant and from where radiate its energizing’s into the system. These are the loci called, in the *Tantras*, the centres



or *Chakras* (circles). They are not, of course, anatomical locations sizeable by the gross eye. They are subtle centers-seats-of consciousness, *Shakti*, active in the body and are situate within the spinal system beginning from the lower end of the spinal column up to the top of the brain. The *Sushumna* is situated within the spinal column, the *Merudanda*, in the interior canal; it extends from the *Muladhara*, the basic plexus, to the 12-petalled lotus in the pericarp of the 1000-petalled lotus above. Within this *Sushumna* is a subtle *Nadi* the *vajrini*, and within it a still subtler one, the *Citrini*. The interior of the *Citrini* is called the *Brahma Nadi*. It is not a separate *Nadi* in the usual sense, but only a *Vivara*, a hollow passage the central canal. The opening of this *Citrini Nadi* is the door through which the *Kundalini* enters the Royal road, *kula marga*, on its way to the Lord and it is known as *Brahma-Dvara*. According to *Yoga* science, *Kundalini* (Serpent Power) is lying in a dormant condition in the first *Muladhara Chakra* which is situated in the base of the spinal column at the lower end of the Spinal cord (*Sushumna*). If this Latent Bioenergy *Kundalini* is activated by Yogic practices, it leaves *Muladhara* and pierces upwards to the 2nd *Swadhisthana Chakra*. *Kundalini* further travels upwards through the spinal cord (*Sushumna*) by piercing the remain-

ing 4 *Chakras* one by one and ultimately

enters the last *Sahasrara Chakra*(.6)

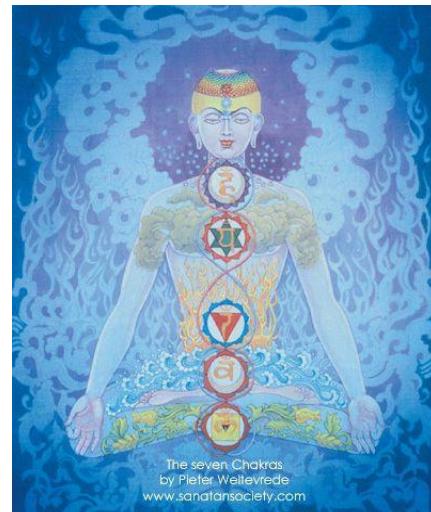
Every one of the centers that are called *Chakras* corresponds to an area of the body, certain behavioral characteristics and a stage of spiritual growth. *Chakras* represent specific psychophysical energies that are activated one by one through the breath along with the flow of the elements throughout daily life. Aroused by the practices of *Tantra Yoga*, the dormant spiritual *Kundalini* energy can be made to leave the first *Chakra* and pierce the *Chakras* above, causing various spiritual experiences to occur.

Each of the seven *Chakras* represents a definite set of desires that correspond to a particular element (up to the fifth *Chakra*). While desires should not be cultivated, they should be fulfilled if they are found to be really present instead of artificial. Otherwise one will be inevitably drawn back to them. **The understanding of the seven *Chakras* offers a way to balance ones desires and lead a more happy and spiritual life along personal destiny. Regular practice under correct conditions increase the voltage of Prana in the Nadis & Chakra circuits. The entire energy function of the body is amplified. All organs & systems of the body functions optimally. Muscles remain flexible and skin tone is enhanced. The responses of the immune system are sharpened. Each living cell is permeated by greater energy.** (7)

In *Kundalini Yoga* or *Laya Yoga*, a large set of techniques is used to concentrate all life force in the *Sushumna Nadi* and raise the coiled *Kundalini* energy through all six *Chakras* towards the seventh *Chakra*. In this way, the divine mother *Shakti*, in the form of *Kundalini*, can find union with her beloved, the supreme *Shiva*, who resides in eternal bliss at the top of the skull. Thus one can move beyond the elements and achieve the non-dual consciousness that brings liberation from the ever-changing world of illusion (*Maya*) (7)

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Source of support: Nil

Conflict of interest:None

Declared