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 by achieving the Non-Duel 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 standpoint, 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.

Muladhara Chakra: ‘Muladhara’ means the supporting root. Like basal root supporting 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. 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.
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 vermilion & 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, Muladhar 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 Sushuman 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.

Visuddhi Chakra: Visuddhi is described as a deep purple lotus which has sixteen petals called Adharas which means support 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 bhija mantras, Am, Aam, Im, Eim, Um, Oum, Rim, Reem, Lrim, Lreem, Em, Aim, Om, Aum, Ah, Anh. 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.

Ajnya Chakra: At the top of the spinal column, is one of the most important Chakras, Ajnya Chakra, which has two silver 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.

Sahasrara Chakra: Sahasrara is a thousand petalled lotus situated at the crown of the head & is associated with pituitary gland. 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.

The spinal column consists of important Nerve plexus from downwards above 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 Swadisthana Chakra is supposed to be present in this region.
3. Solar plexus or ceoliac 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 the brain.

VARNA OF THE CHAKRAS:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAKRA</th>
<th>COLOUR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. MULADHARA</td>
<td>BRIGHT RED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. SWADHISTHANA</td>
<td>ORANGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. MANIPURA</td>
<td>GOLDEN YELLOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ANAHATA</td>
<td>GREEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. VISSHUDDHA</td>
<td>DEEP BLUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. AJNYA</td>
<td>SNOW WHITE (indigo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. SAHASRARA</td>
<td>VIOLET</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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, 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.

Accordingly the petals in each Chakra are considered as under:
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.”

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-

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAKRA</th>
<th>No. Of DALAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. MULADHARA</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. SWADHISTHANA</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. MANIPURA</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ANAHATA</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. VISSHUDDA</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. AJNYA</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. SAHASRARA</td>
<td>1000 (uncountable)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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(5) Chandogya Upanishad VIII.3
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 one’s 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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5. Chandogya Upanishad VIII.3

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Source of support: Nil
Conflict of interest: None
Declared