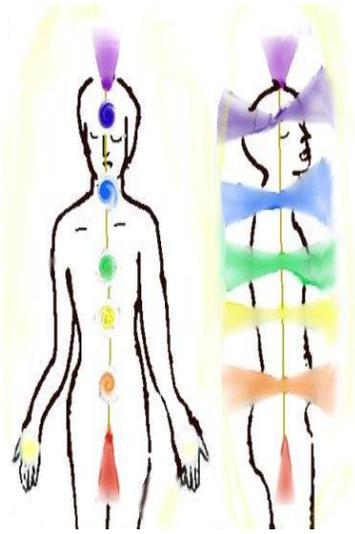


Chakras – The Body as Yantra

An exceedingly brief summary of these energy centers

In the state of complete yoga, there exists only One, but what does that look like? We can only know from direct experience of that greatest achievement of Self-Realization, but we can certainly deduce that the inner and outer world of experiences are reduced to the same thing. That thing, consciousness, is called in Sanskrit *prāṇa*, the



‘substance’ of the supreme life-force. The whole universe is in reality nothing but an endless field of *prāṇa* interacting with itself in a vast tapestry of infinite consciousness. Where *prāṇa* interacts with itself, there forms vortices in the tapestry, in Sanskrit these are called *chakras*. In order for an ‘individual’, or *jīva*, in the field of infinite consciousness to exist, that individual needs first a mind for cognition (*antaḥkaranas*), senses for perception (*jñānendriyas*), and finally powers of action (*karmendriyas*). The five elements are responsible for the powers of perception and action, the sixth element is the mind, and the seventh is the connection to the Source of One infinite consciousness. Thus, seven *chakras*, like spinning wheels of *prāṇa*, exist in the most subtle level of existence, the causal body, or *karana śarīra*.

The habitual conditioned patterns of existence, or *vāsanās*, create first a subtle body, or *sukṣma śarīra*, for interacting with the many worlds and individuals in those worlds of infinite consciousness. When an impure action is taken by an individual, it creates karma, which means that individual will have to experience the other side of that impure action to understand why it is impure. That karma appears like dust on the chakras, and this dust blocks the vision of the chakras in the subtlest/causal level of existence. Thus, only those who are completely free of karma are able to perceive the chakras¹.

Karma causes an individual to take birth in the physical world, without karma the sage is free to exist as limitless consciousness in the subtle world. In this sense, the physical world is actually the least real of the three worlds. Now, it’s true that each of the chakras correlates physically to major nerve ganglia which branch from the spinal column. And, it’s also true that the chakras also correlate physically to major glands of the endocrine system. But it’s important to understand that these aspects of our physical bodies require both a subtle body and chakras in the causal body to exist, however, the chakras require neither the physical nor the subtle to exist. One cannot purify the chakras through physical practices, nor can one purify them through subtle practices. Only those actions which burn karma by producing merit can purify the chakras.

¹ This is why it’s a good idea to take anything you hear about the chakras with a grain of salt, and very important to only take instruction on the purification of the chakras from a fully Self-Realized sage.



The body we've been given can be viewed as a sacred form which itself reflects the nature of the Divine, and in this way the chakras serve as a map of all creation. Each chakra represents a certain fundamental level or vibration of consciousness, and everything in the creation follows this pattern: archetypal elements, developmental stages of life, colors, sounds, body functions, and literally anything else one can seek to ask this Yantra.

Together, the seven chakras form a connecting ladder between matter and consciousness, body and mind, Earth and Heaven. The knowledge of the Divinity is not knowledge in the regular sense that we think of as something that can be called to mind and applied in life. This knowledge of the Divine, *kuṇḍalini śakti*, is more like a force, a power with Her own intelligence that is eternally connected to the absolute truth. With the descent of the spirit into matter, this force lays dormant in the densest of energy centers in the root chakra, and performs an eternal journey back upwards towards the lightest truth of the infinite. It is a light that forms a rainbow bridge between Heaven and Earth, ever evolving towards realization and integration.

When the chakras are functioning properly, they radiate with an intense light like that of a million suns, and this light itself pales in comparison to the full Light of the Self. They are the most beautiful lotus flowers, when purified they are the favorite flowers of God to receive in offering. Each chakra has a certain number of lotus petals, and each of the petals of the chakras has a seed sound, or *bijaśa*, corresponding to one of the fifty Sanskrit letters. The chakras themselves also have a specific seed sound associated with each.

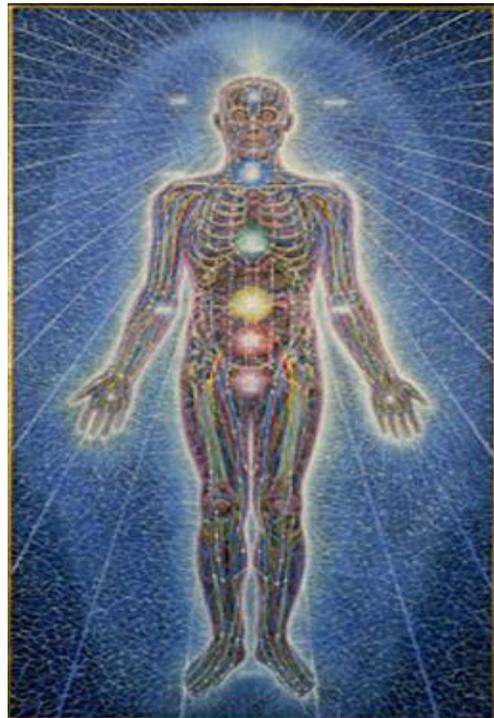
The EARTH chakra, *mūlādhāra*, (which means 'the root holder') has 4 petals and a predominant seed sound of "LAM". It glows with a rich deep red color and is the Divine Seat of *kuṇḍalini śakti*, which means "coiled force", as the Goddess rests here coiled around a Śiva lingam three times. Lord Gaṇeśha is the presiding deity, dwelling here in eternal worship of His Divine Parents. When the dust of toxification covers *mūlādhāra*, we experience the most base, and hence the most terrifying, fears of self-preservation and security. *Mūlādhāra* controls gravity and physical/magnetic energy strength. It is also here that the origin of the moon (*īḍa*) and sun (*pingala*) channels (*nāḍīs*) and is also the source of the four pravrittis (basic urges): *āhāra* (food), *nidra* (sleep), *bhaya* (fear), and *maithuna* (sex). The organ of perception is

smell and the organ of action is elimination. It rules *apāna vayu*. In Mahārṣi Patañjali's Yoga, the *yāma* is ahimsa, and the *niyama* is śauca.

The next chakra, *svādhiṣṭhāna* ('the dwelling place of the self') is the WATER chakra, which has 6 petals, and the seed sound "VAM". The presiding deity is Divine Mother as it is in the waters of the emotions that compassion reigns supreme. It glows a vibrant orange color, and the symbol, or *yantra*, contains the crescent moon. It is the lunar brahmasthānam (seat of the moon), and has a strong connection with the mind. When dust covers Svadhishthāna, we get lost in the six enemies: kama (lust), krodha (anger), lobha (greed), moha (delusion), mada (pride) and matsarya (jealousy). It gives us perception of the six tastes, and the power to procreate. It rules *vyāna vayu*. The *yama* is brahmacharya, and *niyama* is saṅtoshā.

Maṇipūra ('the jeweled-city') is the FIRE chakra, has 10 lotus petals, and the major bijaksha "RAM". *Maṇipūra* radiates a brilliant yellow and is the chakra that links and processes the major types of energy in the body-- solar, magnetic, and cosmic. It is located at the solar plexus and is the seat of tapas (austerity, inner fire, pain), the solar brahmasthanam. The deity is Lord Rama, who symbolized perfected action in accordance with dharma (righteousness/duty). The yantra is an upside down triangle symbolizing fire and Goddess in the form of Tripūra Sundari— MahāKālī, MahāLakṣmi, and MahāSaraswati. Being the center of our willpower, it is where *icchaśakti* (shakti of desire) is processed from the 10 senses (five physical and five corresponding subtle). *Maṇipūra* purifies through fire the *prāṇa* rising from the troublesome lower two chakras before such *prāṇa* reaches the heart. Dust on *maṇipūra* can cause major health issues. It gives us the power sight and the ability to traverse space through walking. Thus, there is an energetic connection between our feet and the solar plexus. It rules *sāmana vayu*. The *yama* is asteya and the *niyama* is tapas.

The heart chakra, *anāhata* ('the unstruck sound') is the AIR chakra with 12 lotus petals and bijaksha "YAM". The yantra includes the star of David, which symbolizes the meeting point of heaven and earth, of Shiva (the upward facing triangle symbolizing absolute pure consciousness) and Shakti (downward facing triangle symbolizing the manifest universe as Divine energy), of the cosmic and the material. The heart is an easy place to understand the symbolic significance, all the adages of the heart ("heart of the matter", "listen to your heart", etc.) apply as this chakra is also where the Atman rests in *prajña* or *susupti*—the deepest of the three states of consciousness also known as deep sleep or primal ignorance. Thus, it is most central to our soul's evolution and is connected to the twelve houses of the zodiac. *Anāhata* glows with an indescribable emerald green who's deity is Lord Krishna or the most enchanting/irresistible aspect of the Divine. Dust on this chakra can cause attachment to duality and hyper-orthodoxy. It gives us the sense of



touch, and allows us to manipulate the world around us through the power of grasping. Thus, there is an energetic connection between our hands and our heart. There is also a profound connection with this chakra and the crown center. It rules *prāṇa vayu*. The yama is *aparigraha*, and the niyama is *iśvara-pranidhāna*.

Viśuddhi (‘special purification’) is the ETHER (space) chakra with 16 lotus petals and bijaśṣa “HAM”. The yantra is the full moon enclosed in an upside down triangle symbolizing unity of consciousness. The throat chakra naturally rules communication but is also where the atman rests in *svapna*, the dream state of consciousness, and is also where the immense purification of the subtle ethers takes place. *Viśuddhi* glows a brilliant sapphire blue and is the last filter of cosmic energy before it reaches the heart. The deity is Lord Shiva who drank the world’s poison that the nectar of immortality may be available to all, and also Saraswati Ma, the Goddess of sweet speech and fine arts. Dust on this chakra can cause psychosis and schizophrenia. All sixteen phases of the moon exist here along with the sixteen vowel sounds that make speech possible. Thus, thanks to this chakra we can hear and we have the most powerful of all abilities which is that of speech. It rules *udāna vayu*. The yama is *satya*, and niyama is *svadhyāya*.

Ajña (‘the command center’) is the seat of the four instruments of the mind- ego (*ahaṃkāra*), intellect (*buddhi*), thought forms (*citta*), and mind (*manas*). It is a curious ruby colored lotus with only 2 petals. These petals are the seed sounds, “HAM” (exhale) and “SO” (inhale), and represent the male (*śiva*) and female (*śakti*) principles. *Ajña* has the powers of *vairagya* (dispassion) and *viveka* (discrimination), and is also where the atman rests during waking consciousness (*jagata*). The yantra contains an upside down triangle symbolizing mastery of the three attributes of nature (*guṇas*). The Sun and Moon channels re-connect here at this point between the eyebrows in the center of the head, and when the third eye opens the *purvaka* (inhale) meets the *rechaka* (exhale) and only the *Praṇava* “OM” is perceived. Dust on this chakra can lead to attachment to psychic powers and mysticism. The presiding deity is *Sadāśiva*, or Lord Śiva in His *sattvic* nature.



Sahasrāra dala (‘thousand-petals lotus’) is the final chakra with 1000 lotus petals, which is symbolic of the infinite. As pure undifferentiated consciousness, it radiates a white light bright beyond all conception. *Sahasrāra* is said to be where the Atman rests in *turiya*, the fourth state of consciousness which is beyond the other three states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep (*jagata*, *svapna*, and *prajña*). The fourth state is experienced only by those who have achieved the highest state of *nirvikalpa samādhi*. *Sahasrāra* is also where the aperture where the soul enters and leaves the body at birth and death is located at the crown of the head (*brahmaruṇḍra*). *Sahasrāra* is generally not counted as a ‘main’ chakra in the body’s subtle anatomy as it exists outside of the body. It has no seed sound, contains all colors,

and is beyond description.

In addition to these seven main centers, there are several lesser chakras (*upachakras*) to be found in the body. A junction of two lines of subtle *prāṇa* (*saṃyoga bindu*) form what is known as a śakti chakra. Many such śakti chakras in one location form an upachakra. There is an upachakra behind each ear and eye, one in each of the palms, heels, and knees, and two each in the thyroid, thymus, stomach, and spleen. There are another two on the other side of maṇipūra near the adrenals and there is one more upachakra close to the liver (21 total + 6 main chakras)².

The subtle ‘circulatory system’ is composed of *nāḍis*, or subtle lines of flowing *prāṇa*, which is essentially composed of cosmic energy coming to the *jīva* (individual soul) through sahasrāra and magnetic energy collected through mūlādhāra. Cosmic energy is the subtle intelligence of the super-soul, called ‘cosmic’ because the celestial bodies contain this intelligence, and this energy can’t be measured physically though it can have physical effects. Magnetic energy is what our bodies’ muscles use to exert strength, and this can be measured physically. Thus, wherever there is a *saṃyoga bindu*, there is always a magnetic energy center that corresponds to the śakti chakra formed at the bindu. The two upachakras behind the ears are each composed of four smaller upachakras. These eight upachakras together with the two behind the eyes are controlled by ajna chakra with a total of 10 corresponding magnetic energy centers. Viśuddhi chakra controls the two upachakras found in the thyroid, which each hold 40 magnetic energy centers (*kendriya*). Anāhata controls the upachakras in the palms, controlling 60 magnetic energy centers total. Maṇipūra controls the two in the spleen and the one near the liver having 14 magnetic energy centers total. Svādhiṣṭāna controls three upachakras having 36 magnetic energy centers and mūlādhāra has four upachakras with 24 total magnetic energy centers.

This gives us a grand total of 224 upachakras and sahasrāra has an extra 100 magnetic energy centers in the brain. $224 * 324 = 72,576$ nāḍis.³

Mūlādhāra bījakṣas: va, śa, ṣa, sa

Svādhiṣṭāna: ba, bha, ma, ya, ra, la

Maṇipūra: ḍa, ḍha, ṇa, ta, tha, da, dha, na, pa, pha

Anāhata: ka, kha, ga, gha, ṇa, ca, cha, ja, jha, ṇa, ṭa, ṭha

Viśuddhi: a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, ṛ, ṛī, ḷ, ḷī, e, ai, o, au, aṃ, aḥ

² There are 27 stars in the Vedic science of astrology (*jyotish*), and the position of the moon in relation to the 27 stars is the largest factor determining one’s individual astrology. Thus, one will often find in ritualistic worship (*pūja*) the use of 27 different sacred offerings to the deity.

³ Thus, the “72,000” nāḍis referenced in many scriptures