

CHAKRAS

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Introduction

Namaste,

Ever wanted to know more about chakras and their practical benefits. The information is taken from the Book, "*The Universe Within - The Journey Through The Chakras*" by Paramhansa Prajnanananda of Kriya Yoga. The info is typed and represented 'as it is' without any spelling or grammatical corrections is: even though with grammatical errors and not so good representation, words of a realized soul has much more impact and capable of changing seeker's life and give insights than a well written and attractively presented book by a sanskrit scholar and a very good professional writer. I am not a scholar, not a natural writer. I am just another devotee walking on spiritual path. I prefer to keep things as it is and be a disciple than to be a Guru.

A Brief Info about Paramhansa Prajnanananda:



[Paramhansa Prajnanananda](#) (or phonetic: paramhansa praGYAnanda, Hindi: परमहंस प्रज्ञानन्द)

In 1995, Brahmachari Triloki Dash was initiated as a sannyasi, monk, by Paramahansa Hariharananda. Receiving the name Swami Prajnanananda Giri, he was directed by his Gurudev the next day to travel to Europe, the USA, and other countries in order to propagate Kriya Yoga through public lectures, seminars, retreats, and meditation. Long before Triloki Dash became a monk, Paramahansa Hariharananda predicted, "Whatever is started by me has to be completed by him."

Three years later, Paramahansa Prajnanananda was given the title of Paramahansa, the highest title given to monks and saints who attain the apogee of God-realization, by his Gurudev on August 10, 1998, on his birthday.

Lineage:

Every Lineage of Kriya Yoga Starts with Mahavatar Babaji - The Deathless Saint. Lineage of Prajnanananda ji is not an exception.

Babaji Maharaj, Shri Shyamacharan, Lahiri Mahasaya, Swami Shriyukteshwar Giri, Paramahansa Yogananda, [Paramahansa Hariharananda](#) and Paramahansa Prajnanananda.

(Useful Link: [Brief intro about Paramhansa Hariharananda](#))

Credits:

All credits to the original author - Paramhansa Prajnanananda Giri, Prajna Publication - Austria, Sai Towers Publishing, and all those involved in the creation of this book. Any errors are mine.

Not Affiliated to any foundation.

Disclaimer:

The info about chakras is taken from this holy book is out of inspiration, purely on non-commercial basis with the sole intention to be helpful to fellow seekers, right souls and like-minded people.

Prayer



Baba Hariharananda ji used to pray a beautiful prayer:

*"O God my forgetfulness is my sin,
please give me constant alertness."*

Let us also pray the same and begin with the inner journey of chakras along with their practical benefits.

The Seven Chakras

The One is revealed within the effulgent golden light.

The Absolute Brahman, who is Self-luminous, pure consciousness, who is the light of lights and whose supreme reality is known to men of Self-realization.

(Mundaka Upanishad, II-II-19)

A myriad books have been written on the mysteries of the chakras and how they can be used for healing oneself. This is not one of those books, it rather focuses on detailed insights which clarify how working on each one of these centers of energy, may influence the seeker's spiritual awakening. Some books depict the chakras as lotuses with a varying number of petals withholding strange powers, other books decry them as mystical non-sense and completely lacking any actual physical basis. Other sources warn of the dangers involved in arousing the kundalini energy which is said to be stored in serpent form at the base of the spine.

Rather than dwell on the metaphysical subtleness of the chakras or on intricate descriptions of their forms, on the number of petals in each lotus or on other useless information, this book focuses on the various human qualities associated with each energy centre and points out how to recognize, control and direct the peculiarities of each chakra so that the seeker may travel safely towards the goal of absolute happiness.

Practical Benefits

The main aim of this book is to stress the practical benefits one may derive from developing one's chakras through spiritual endeavors fulfillment, creative inspiration and finally spiritual realization by understanding and energizing the chakras.

Each chakra is a storehouse of immense potential, which can fulfill our deepest desires or plunge us into the deepest despair. Once we learn the art of controlling these chakras through the process of meditation, there is no limit to the infinite possibilities for physical, material, emotional, and spiritual success.

Although it is true that these chakras or energy centres cannot be anatomically pinpointed, it is also true that there are seven main chakras along human spine formed by the myriad of nerve channels flowing down from the brain when they get very close to each other at certain points along the spine. When this happens, new circuits of magnetic fields are created. These magnetic fields or chakras are subtle energy centres in the spine.

There are seven major energy centres, which are called either chakras or lotuses and, in modern times, have also been referred to as plexuses. They are:

Muladhara chakra, coccygial or money centre in the coccyx (base of the spine).

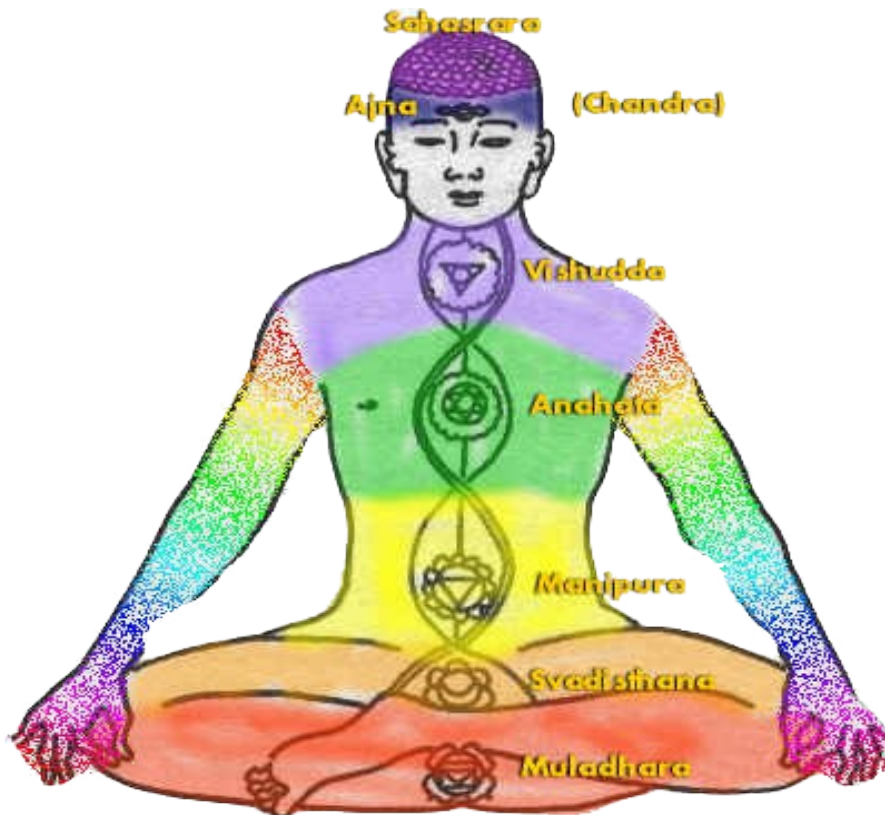
Swadhisthana chakra, sacral or second centre in the sacral region.

Manipura chakra, lumbar or naval centre in the lumber region.

Vishuddha chakra, neck or cervical centre in the cervix.

Ajna chakra or soul centre close to the pituitary gland.

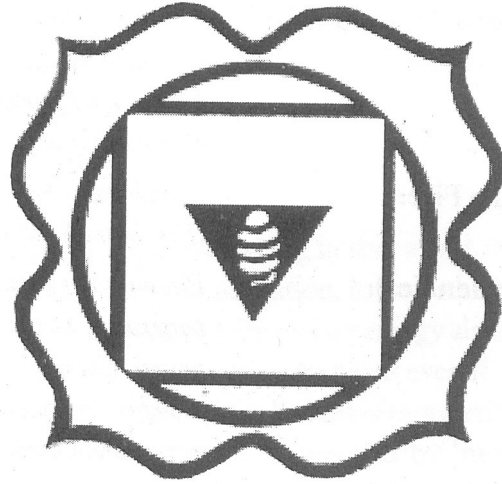
Sahasrara chakra, crown centre at the top of the head.



The spinal canal or the backbone is formed by a total of 33 vertebrae out of which four are joined together. The Muladhara is located at the base of the spine or coccyx where five bones fuse together with the sacrum. The 24 vertebrae represent the 24 principles in the body. One who can control these vertebrae with his concentration can likewise control the 24 principles which consist of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air and sky), ten senses (five of perception – tongue, skin, nose, ears and eyes; five of action – mouth, legs, hands, genital organs and anus), five vital breaths and four inner instruments (mind, intellect, ego and memory).

Rather than going into an elaborate technical discussion of the properties of each chakra, I will focus on the immediate benefits we can derive from knowledge of what each chakra controls and how we can maintain control over all the chakras, thereby gaining immeasurable peace and happiness. The chakras are the medium of human evolution and emancipation.

Muladhara Chakra



Muladhara chakra, at the base of the spine, is ruled by the earth element, has strong impact on our material accomplishments through possession of wealth, prosperity, fame, success, popularity and power. Our longings for these things keep us anchored here in the lowest centre.

Location	: Base of the spine
Number of petals	: Four
Element	: Earth
Color	: Golden Yellow
Presiding Deity	: Ganesha
Quality of Nature (Guna)	: Tamas (Inertia)
Seed syllable	: Lam
Sense organs	: Nose (organ of smell), anus (organ of excretion)
Taste	: Sweet
Benefits due to concentration	: Physical comfort, External beauty, Money and Happiness of a lower grade.
Name of the Fire	: Dakshinagni (Fire of the South)
Vrittis (Tendencies)	: Pleasure through material possessions, Desire to possess, Charity prompted by ego and vanity; and Greed
Loka (Plane of existence)	: Bhuh
Vital breath	: apana (helps of excretion)
Glands	: Gonads

Virtue	: Shama (Control of the Mind)
Zodiac	: Aquarius and Leo
Ruling Planet	: Saturn

The Muladhara Chakra, which is located at the base of the spine, is one of the most powerful centers, since it represents the last confluence of three holy rivers – or three pranic channels passing through spine. We need to take a dip in these rivers, that is, concentrate at this centre, before we begin our spiritual journey upwards. In Sanskrit, Mula means root, and adhara means support or base. Whether within the body is represented by the earth or mula. The base of spine contains the earth element. This centre is also called the money centre because it is associated with the material world.

Acquiring Wealth

In order to acquire anything in this world, we need money. We need money for our education, to buy a house or a car or in case of wedding. We require money energy also for our simplest daily food and for some primary needs even if reduced to the minimum. The Muladhara is the chakra representing money, but money, in this particular case, doesn't mean currency or coins, but the physical resources or the buying capacity of a person. To be able to specify how much money we exactly need, we have to be either highly spiritual or complete lunatics.

Everyone says they want money, but no one is ever capable of specifying how much. Our needs and their complementary greed keep on increasing. The Muladhara takes up most of our time, life and energy. We spend the majority of our waking moments earning money to either pay off loans from the past, to enjoy ourselves in the present or to save up for the future. Our existence is ruled by this centre. In comparison other activities such as eating, sleeping, creative work, even building a relationship, in comparison, take up much less time.

We need to regulate this center and carefully analyze our effective physical and financial needs. Material wealth should be like a pair of shoes that fit us perfectly, nor too big nor too small. If shoes are small they hurt and if they are too big, they are uncomfortable.

The development of the Muladhara chakra enhances our material prosperity by strengthening our earning potential. Assets, fame, luxuries and power are all benefits of a highly developed Muladhara chakra. While focusing on Muladhara chakra, this chakra opens us up to the abundance of the Universe and makes us grateful recipients, as mere prosperity of fame without adequate understanding of their purpose can be extremely detrimental if not even outright dangerous. There are many influxes of fame and money, and who have not been able to handle the sudden influx of fame and money, and who have turned either to drugs or alcohol for support. Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe, and many other celebrities and millionaires ended their lives in despair despite being blessed with remarkable wealth.

Those who are engaged in regular meditation practices centered on the highest goal of self meditation, succeed in opening the chakras in a steady and informed way and gain steadiness of mind which makes the vagaries of affluence seem quite irrelevant. Such people are able to

handle the material benefits of the Muladhara without losing their balance and know how to use the wealth and power gained to benefit all of mankind, further than themselves. Their serene and meditative outlook helps them focus on the good of humanity and dissipates their selfish interests. To such people material wealth is nothing more than a reflection of the abundance of the earth and gold, unless useful for a higher purpose, is little more than dust to them. A story from Puranas well illustrates this truth.

Gold or Dust?

A husband and his wife, a very spiritual couple, were walking along a country road. On the way the husband saw a gold coin. Assuming that his wife would be tempted by gold if she saw it, he quickly covered it by kicking some dust over the gold coin with his shoe. His wife saw him scuffling and asked what he was hiding. So the husband has to confess that he had covered a gold coin with dust, so it would not become a source of temptation for her. The wife, who was much more spirituality advanced than her husband, replied: "Do you still see the difference between gold and dust? They are both same to me."

Ganesh

Ganesh is the presiding deity of Muladhara chakra. In the Indian spiritual tradition, Ganesh is worshiped for success before any important undertaking. In Hindu religion the form of Ganesh or the form of any deity is not only attractive and fascinating, but has a profound symbolic meaning. The rational mind is often unable to comprehend the subtle spiritual truths and the practical teachings that lie behind these images. Ganesh is depicted as having a human body with an elephant's head, a strange combination indeed, but the underlining meaning for this symbolic image is very interesting and hints to great truths. An elephant has big ears, a long trunk and very small eyes if compared to the rest of body. The elephant's long trunk symbolizes the importance of breath control, while its huge, floppy ears represent the receptive attitude necessary to absorb valuable knowledge and the small eyes indicate keen observation. Let's see how these three factors relate to our own spiritual journey.

Receiving Knowledge

Big ears highlight the need to listen more. To achieve real success in life, we need to talk much less and listen a lot more, but there is a further step required, as whatever one imbibes by listening more, can be termed as learning, but true wisdom dawns only when actual Truth is revealed and experienced in deep meditation.

Once we have stilled the mind, we need to listen to the divine sound, the continuous primeval vibration that resounds in the outer and inner universe. All our life we have been suffocating this vital sound with the constant rattling noise of worldly life, deafening music and even boisterous thoughts, but the divine sound has always been there waiting to be heard.

We need to ponder daily the ancient scriptures and possibly have them explained directly from teacher, a realized Master, as spiritual truths cannot be properly imbibed by reading any book

as random. Every day new volumes are printed describing all kinds of transcendental experiences. Most people regard the spiritual arena as an open forum to show off their own fantasies, as they perceive it like a place without rules, where one is free to indulge in one's own private reveries.

It is true that spiritual experiences are highly personal and may differ from one person to another, however, choosing the spiritual path involves a lot of discrimination, inner understanding and determined effort. Self-realization is the ultimate goal for everyone, but it is not an easy task, although the benefits far outweigh any effort required. We cannot expect immediate results not seek shortcuts avoiding efforts. We should choose the scriptural text that most appeals to us and meditate over one verse at a time, brooding over its deepest meanings, so that the most profound inner truths may be revealed to us. All the ancient scriptures, the Bible, the Gita, the Koran or the Torah contain the distilled wisdom of the ages.

Energizing the Body

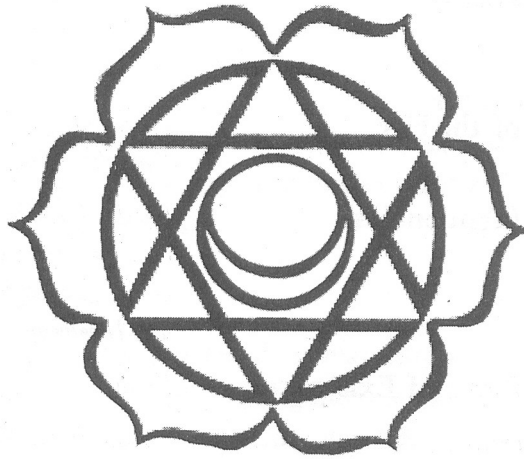
Ganesha's long trunk represents the importance of deep breathing. The modern world has only recently discovered the immense benefits to the entire physical and mental health spectrum of deep, rhythmic breathing. The fitness industry has been revolutionized by this "new discovery" and hundreds of new methods are being taught which incorporate this technique rather than strenuous physical exercises to keep the body and mind fit and active, yet in reality, this has already been discovered by the ancient sages of all religions thousands of years ago. Every scientific meditation technique incorporates this deep breathing, which floods the brain and the blood cells with the necessary oxygen and gives instant relaxation to the mind. Every serious spiritual aspirant needs to incorporate deep breathing into his or her daily routine.

Observing the Mind

Ganesha's small eyes represent keen, precise observation. We need to focus our attention on the workings of our own mind, watch how it runs here and there, never immobile, a continuous flow of unceasing thoughts. Our goal is to eventually still that turbulent flow of thoughts, focusing our mind, first on fewer and fewer thoughts till we are able to keep our attention concentrated on only one thought. In meditation, we try to still the mind, bringing it from one thought to the complete cessation of all thoughts. It is only in absolute silence that we can hear the divine sound, enabling us to take control of this chakra and then to move on to the higher centres.

Two sense organs are regulated by the Muladhara chakra, the anus and the nose; both are associated with smell; which is the quality of the earth element. These sense organs are regulated through the simple technique of concentrating in this centre.

Swadhisthana Chakra



This chakra is also known as the sexual centre: situated in the spine, behind the genital organs, it is ruled by water and has a strong hold over our emotions and passions. This centre often demands a good part of time and energy.

Location	: Sacral region
Number of petals	: Six
Element	: Water
Color	: Colourless
Presiding Deity	: Durga
Quality of Nature (Guna)	: Rajas (Activity)
Seed syllable	: Vam
Sense organs	: Tongue and genitals
Taste	: Astringent
Benefits due to concentration	: Control over water element and Fulfilment of material desires.
Name of the Fire	: Grihapati agni (household fire)
Vrittis (Tendencies)	: Doubt, Disobedience, Cruelty, Destructive desire, Illusive pleasure and Involvement
Loka (Plane of existence)	: Bhuva
Vital breath	: Apana (helps for excretion and ejaculation)

Glands	: Gonad
Virtue	: Dama (Control of Senses)
Zodiac	: Pisces and Virgo
Ruling Planet	: Jupiter

The Swadhisthana chakra is located in the spine in the sacral region behind the genital organs. Swadhisthana in Sanskrit means the place where the mind is established for a long time. After the Muladhara, this is the centre, which demands most of our time and energy. The water element predominates in this region and it is subtler than the earth element. While earth has a shape, size and independent existence, water needs a container and takes the shape of the container. In each chakra, there is a symbol. In the Swadhisthana the symbol is of two triangles like those found in the Jewish Star of David. One triangle represents the female aspect and the other represents the male aspect. In Hinduism, God or the Absolute divides into male and female aspects, then we have creation. Shakti, the female aspect, is a must for creation and therefore the presiding deity of the second centre is Durga which is another name of Shakti.

Sex and Food

The two sense organs ruled by this centre are the tongue and the genitals. Moderation in eating and in sexual activity, avoiding the pitfalls of gluttony and sexual overindulgence, is one of the prime requisites in attaining lasting peace and tranquillity. This is not to say that unless one lives the austere life of a monk, subsisting on roots and tubers and practising strict celibacy, one cannot attain realization. In fact, the overly zealous practice of austerities can be as much of a handicap as overindulgence in sensual pleasures. Those who eat too much, as well as those who continually fast, cannot progress spiritually. The life of Buddha is a perfect example.

Buddha's Realization

Prince Gautama left behind all his worldly possessions and pleasures in the pursuit of truth. He gave up his kingdom, his family and the luxurious life he knew. With the great determination he decided to sit and meditate until he achieved self-knowledge, declaring: "I will sit here. Let the body dry up. Let my skin, flesh, and bones be destroyed. I will be self-realized" (Buddha Charita)

He sat for forty days without food or drink, but when later on he related what he had experienced during those forty days to his disciple, Ananda he also specified: "I was so weak, I was hardly able to move my limbs. When I touched my stomach, I could feel my backbone. My scalp was so dry that the hair was falling off. My eyes had receded deep inside my skull and those who saw me thought that I was a ghost" (Buddha Charita of Ashvaghosh)

After this experience Gautama Buddha realized the folly of these extreme measures, since he

had discovered he could not concentrate in such physical agony. He accepted the food offered by Sujata, a noble lady of a nearby village and slowly came back to normal. Buddhism, therefore, advocates the middle way, which avoids all sorts of extremes, in order to gain self-knowledge.

Not Enough Salt

For meditation and spiritual progress, we need moderation in food as well as in sexual enjoyment. Spiritual seekers must be able to control the mind and make it listen to new instructions. A small example: if there is a little less salt in the food, instead of over reacting, we need to instruct the mind to accept it.

Ten years ago I visited a Shiva temple near Cuttack in Orissa. After the worship, when the pundits presented me with the consecrated offering on a banana leaf, they asked the brahmacharis to bring me some salt. I objected that I did not need any extra salt. The pundit replied that the food did not contain any salt at all. When I asked why, he explained that the king who had constructed the temple centuries ago had arranged for all provisions and supplies for the temple, but left out any provision for salt. Since that time, in the temple, it had become a tradition to cook all the offerings without any salt. After I heard the story, I answered: "If Lord Shiva Himself has been accepting the food offered here for centuries without salt, I can surely manage for one day without it."

It is essential to have some control over the tongue. One way of practising control over the tongue is to give up our favourite food for a while. If we are addicted to sweets, we should try giving up sweets for a certain period of time. If we have a strong habit of drinking coffee or tea, we might try foregoing it for a few days. In this way we can gradually gain control over the tongue.

The Seduction of Taste

In our search for pleasure, we go on abusing the seven centers, which have been given to us for our own personal growth and realization. The digestive fire burns within us to turn nutritious healthy food into fuel for the body, and yet in our craving for taste, we dump unwholesome, greasy, unhealthy chemical laden food and beverages in our bodies, If we think about it, the taste sensation hardly lasts a few seconds, the first two or three bites are all we actually taste and, after that, we might as well be eating tasteless cardboard. Yet we go on eating automatically, pouring food down our throats unaware of its taste. There are lessons in all we do and everything we experience, so we should try and understand what we are to learn from this particular one. Life is full of illusion; web of illusion is sheer light, delicate and feeble, it sparkles with a thousand rays of enticement and promises. It pulls us in so many different ways, luring us with its ephemeral quality, intangible yet palpable, promising so much yet giving so little.

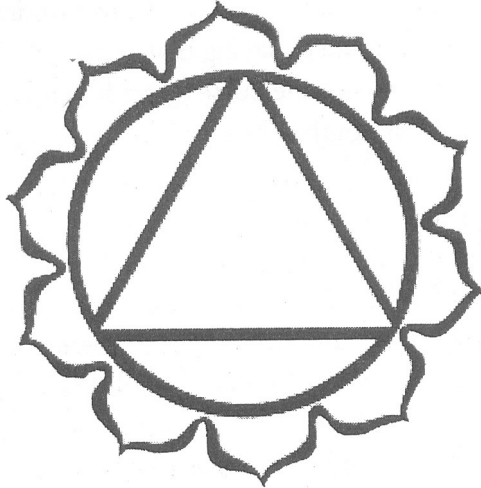
Knowing What We Want

It is so rare that we stop and ask: "What is it that I want? What is it really that I am looking for?" Instead we lunge at the nearest promise of happiness, whether it is food or sex or marriage or business and, when that promise is broken or unfulfilled, we still refuse to examine ourselves, but blame the circumstances, blame the situation or our partners, unwilling to look within and perceive what it is we really and truly want. We all want uninterrupted happiness, that unending bliss which cannot be found without, but within. The sooner we learn to permanent joy of the soul, the sooner we will reach our goal and fulfill the desire that has driven us on from the day we were born until the moment that, exhausted, we give up this weary body. So be moderate in enjoyment, as without this resolve, spiritual progress is very difficult.

Yayati's Curse

There is a beautiful story in the Mahabharata about a king called Yayati who had married Devayani, the daughter of a Brahmin Sage called Shikra. Devayani brought with her as a maidservant a princess called Sharmishtha. In the course of time, King Yayati fell in love with his wife's beautiful maidservant and, eventually, even had children from her. Devayani's father, became enraged with Yayati's conduct and cursed him with premature old age. Yayati's mind, however, still longed for sensual pleasures and was unhappy to have an old body, so he begged his father-in-law to forgive him and withdraw his curse. The father-in-law relented, saying that if any of Yayati's sons would be willing to take the curse upon himself, then Yayati could regain his lost youth. The story goes that one of the sons of Sarmishtha, called Puru, agreed to this and the king could have his youth back which he used to continue his sense enjoyment. When he finally did reach a ripe old age with an ample of eventful life behind him, Yayati uttered a truth, which he had discovered through his life-long experience. As, despite all his sense indulgence, passion was still burning undimmed within him, he dies giving this following advice to his sons and grandsons: "Children, do not believe that by indulging in sense pleasures, you can extinguish the fire of passion. In reality yielding to a desire is like adding fuel to the fire. The more you indulge, the brighter it burns." Sexual desire is like smoldering fire and this fire burns out of control, life becomes miserable. We need to use this fire in regulated way, by disciplining the mind step by step. The sexual centre's passion and energy can be channeled toward the higher centres, where creativity and philosophy will emerge.

Manipura Chakra



This chakra is also known as the Navel Center: it is the food center where we derive our physical energy, beauty, lustre and vitality.

Location	: Navel region
Number of petals	: Ten
Element	: Fire
Color	: Red
Presiding Deity	: Surya or Sun
Quality of Nature (Guna)	: Rajas (Activity)
Seed syllable	: Rang
Sense organs	: Eyes and feet
Taste	: Bitter
Benefits due to concentration	: Knowledge of the internal function of physical body, better health and physical beauty
Name of the Fire	: Vaishwanara (digestive fire)
Vrittis (Tendencies)	: Shyness, Hatred, Fear, Sleepiness, Sorrow, Idleness, Beauty, Memory, Prosperity and Vitality
Loka (Plane of existence)	: Suva
Vital breath	: Samana (helps in digestion and assimilation)

Glands	: Liver, Spleen and Pancreas
Virtue	: Uparati (urdhvarati-upward journey / evolution)
Zodiac	: Aries and Libra
Ruling Planet	: Mars

The Manipura chakra or the navel centre is located behind the navel in the spine of human body. Manipura in Sanskrit means jewel centre. The presiding deity is Surya, the sun. The sun is the ultimate source of all activities and the primary cause of life on this planet. Just as the moon shines reflecting the sun's light and has a strong influence on the mind, also food which is directly affected by sunlight, has a strong influence on the mind. This chakra is otherwise referred to as the food centre.

People chant mantras like Gayatri to attract the divine illumination of the sun. By concentrating on this centre and experiencing our inner source of energy, we can also obtain divine illumination for the body and mind.

The two sense organs controlled by this centre are the eyes and the feet. Since we are born our eyes are constantly active in sensory perception. Even as children human beings immediately become attached to names and forms and smile only at familiar faces, but burst into tears when confronted with a stranger. As grown ups, all human beings mistakenly tend to make judgements based solely on appearance, always seeking out only what pleases the eye.

The beauty industry thrives on this tendency, luring us to spend small fortunes on products that will make us more attractive in the eyes of others. Today the fashion industry, the fitness industry, the entertainment industry and tourist industry and almost every consumer based market in the world, depends on our slavery to the sense of sight. If, instead of being attached to names and forms, we are able to see the beauty of God in everything, all these multi-million dollar industries, as well as their dire by-products such as eating disorders and depression, would disappear overnight.

It has been scientifically observed that the eyes of a restless person or mentally depressed person move very quickly and blink frequently. In the desperate urge to drink more and more stimuli, we become confused and mentally anxious. The eyes of those who meditate blink less. They have a detached look. By gradually controlling the mind through meditation and deep breathing, we are able to gain detachment from the sights which surround us, thereby avoiding sensory overload.

By focusing on the navel centre during meditation we can gain control over our restlessness and direct our vision inward to the immense inner splendor and start understanding the profound spiritual truths one may find within. Then, when we do look at the world again, we are able to perceive the magnificence of God's creation, see the essential inner beauty in all those who surround us and appreciate even the situations that confront us. We soon learn to love our surroundings without becoming excessively attached, so that we may enjoy the world without being enslaved by the world.

Our feet lead us towards many different directions. The urge to move here and there, never being able to sit still, is purely a physical reflection of the mind's inability to focus and remain

calm and still in one place. People travel all over the globe on the mistaken assumption that travelling thousands of miles will somehow make them happier.

Some people cannot last in one job for very long, they need change, excitement, diversity and are soon bored with their current environment. They drift from job to job, from town to town, continually seeking an elusive fulfillment. On a more basic level, we may have noticed how many people are simply unable to sit still. Their legs are moving even they sit on chair, they tap their feet or always shake their legs in nervous need for motion. Meditation enhances the ability to sit still on one position for an extended period of time. When the mind is tranquil, so is the body.

Meditating on the Manipura develops our ability to remain tranquil and peaceful, to direct our every movement for a useful purpose. Rather than looking here and there to seek satisfaction, yet finding it nowhere, by meditating in the Manipura chakra, we are able to progress thanks to the concentration and energy one can gain from this centre.

Food and Temptation

There is a story in the Hindu epic, the Ramayana, which illustrates the immense power food has on the mind and how food can lead man to temptation. This story proves that the old adage 'the way to a man's heart is through his stomach' to be true.

There was once a great sage called Vibhandaka, who underwent strict austerities and engaged himself in deep meditation in order to achieve realization. One day, tempted by the beauty of a celestial nymph, he lost his concentration and self-control and ran after her. They had a child, whom he named Rushyasruna. Having learned from the bitter experience that hidden desires may cause spiritual downfalls, he decided to raise his son far away from attractions of the world. Rushyasruna grew up in the forests under strict guidance of his father. He was always engaged in meditation, study and other spiritual practices and therefore was brought up totally unaware of life's luxuries, delicious food, alcohol or beautiful women.

Meanwhile, in a nearby kingdom, there was a severe drought, so the distressed king consulted his advisors who predicted that there would be rain if the young saint Rushyasruna, who possessed great spiritual wealth and purity, entered the kingdom. However one knew how to tempt him and take him away from the strict supervision of his father. The problem was solved when a beautiful courtesan named Jarata offered to undertake the task. She asked the king for a luxurious boat lavishly equipped with a great variety of delicious foods and beautiful damsels dressed in their finest clothes and jewellery. Docking at a distance, she waited for Rushyasruna's father to leave and then approached the young saint. The stunningly beautiful women fed him delicacies he had never tasted before and returned each day, bringing him new and tasty dishes to tempt his palate. Having eaten rich food, the young man developed body consciousness and then attachment to this body. One day, the courtesan invited him, on their boat and, once he was aboard, they set the sail for the kingdom. The moment Rushyasruna set foot on the ground, rain came pouring down, ending the terrible drought. The king asked the young saint's forgiveness for the ruse and offered him his daughter in marriage.

The old sage accepted the inevitable, realizing once again that, however far we may run from temptation, unless we cultivate inner strength, we cannot resist the lure of the senses. Food is

one of the strongest of these lures, tempting us like the bait tempts the fish, while it dangerous hides the iron hook.

We Eat Food and Food Eats Us

Both eyes and the feet are controlled by the Manipura chakra, which is the digestive centre. Therefore the food we eat has a specific effect on our tranquility as, though the majority is excreted and some parts nourish the body., the subtle part influences the mind. If, for example, we eat a lot of meat or yogurt, our mind will be dull and lethargic, since most of our energy is used in digesting their heavy protein content. On the other hand, if we drink too much coffee or other caffeine-filled drinks, our mind will become nervous and agitated.

Not only the type of food we eat influences our mind, but also the way it is cooked. This is why, in ancient times, sages used to warn seekers that one had to take care of cleanliness of the pots and dishes, the freshness of the ingredients and, at the same time particularly that the emotions of those who cooked the food seeped into the food itself and that the consumer could be affected by the cook's thoughts and feelings of anger, sadness or joy. In this age of fast food and dining out, such careful approach is next to impossible as, although many more people are turning to vegetarianism for the fear of contamination as well as the influx of hormones released by frightened animals at the time of their death, eating out is still an integral part of today's modern man's life. Even if one is a pure vegetarian, one must also be careful about the quality and the quantity of the food one eats. The way people earn money, how they use it and their general lifestyle have a strong impact on the mind, so one should also be cautious where and from whom the food is being bought and where one is taking food.

The Deluded Saint

There was a wandering monk who absolutely had no attachment for belongings and, as he was always traveling, he always accepted indiscriminately the hospitality of those who invited him. Once he stayed for two consecutive days in a very rich man's house. On the second day, at midnight, he was awakened by the jingling sound of a bell. On waking up and investigating he found that it came from small bell attached to the neck of a cow which was in the yard. He thought it would be nice to have that bell to use in his worship. The thought became so overpowering that he went out into the yard, stole the bell and, after having hidden it in his bag, sat down to meditate. His mind so agitated and restless that at first he could not concentrate, but as he tried harder, he became focused and realized what he had done. He was ashamed and surprised for having stooped to stealing, therefore he tried to understand how it could have happened. As he searched for an answer that could possibly explain this unprecedented, strange behaviour of his, it became apparent to him that it might have been due to the effect of the food he had eaten. He returned the bell to its place next morning, as he was leaving, he called the host aside and asked him by what means he earned his money. The rich man remained silent for sometime, but then confessed that his means to acquire money were not honest or respectable. From that day onwards, the monk resolved to give up eating food in strangers'

Food and mind are casually connected. Food can make the mind calm and tranquil or restless

and agitated. Food is not only a means to nourish the body, but it may also promote calmness of mind and inner peace. When I say food eats us, I am referring to the various diseases caused by wrong food consumption, contaminated food, unwholesome foods or overeating, which in turn eat away our health. While some foods cause cancer, others caused high cholesterol and heart attacks. Everyday, the list of unhealthy foods becomes longer. It is advisable to take simple and wholesome food and to offer it to God before we eat. The tradition of praying before meals does not limit itself to simply thanking God for the food He has provided; but it also entails offering our food to God asking Him to accept it, thus making it safe for consumption, assimilation and for an overall benefit to our health.

The Fire of Illumination and Elimination

Fire has two qualities. It is a source of illumination and it provides light to others, it burns resulting in heat and energy, but it can also eliminate and destroy things. The navel center is symbolically the place of food and drink. One may obtain brilliance of mind and body from the digestive fire and, at the same time, through the process of combustion and digestion, one eliminates waste matter from the body. In Hinduism, the digestive fire is considered extremely sacred, and the Bhagavad Gita (15/14) states that God Himself burns as the fire in the navel centre, so what we eat is nothing more than an offering to Him. If we eat in that spirit, accepting food as a gift from God, choosing healthy and nutritious food, prepared in a clean and tranquil environment, and offering it back to the Giver, then we can come to no harm. By developing the navel centre, we can enjoy the food we eat and its effect on us will be wholly beneficial.

The Creative Knot

The Muladhara, Swadhisthana nad Manipura chakras together make up what is called the brahmagrahthi or the creative knot, as all creative activities are accelerated through these three chakras. This knot, on the other hand, is also a barrier for one's spiritual evolution, so one has to penetrate or cut this knot in order to evolve and go higher spiritually. To do this one needs four things: a strong desire, firm determination, immense patience, and sustained self-effort. If our desire for spiritual evolution is strong enough, then nothing can stop us.

If we analyze a day's activity we may realize how much time we spend on each chakra. We need to strive for balance in the chakras, neither ignoring them completely nor spending inordinate amounts of time on any single one.

While trying to evolve, we sometimes come across failure. At this point, many people lose their patience and decide that whatever method they are trying is not for them, so proceed seeking method they are trying is not for them, so proceed seeking and trying other different techniques. This is a typical disease of the modern mind. We should have the patience to persevere in our efforts and, eventually, we will be successful. Keeping the ultimate goal in sight is extremely important and determines the benefits we gain from our endeavours in spiritual evolution.

The Inner Pilgrimage

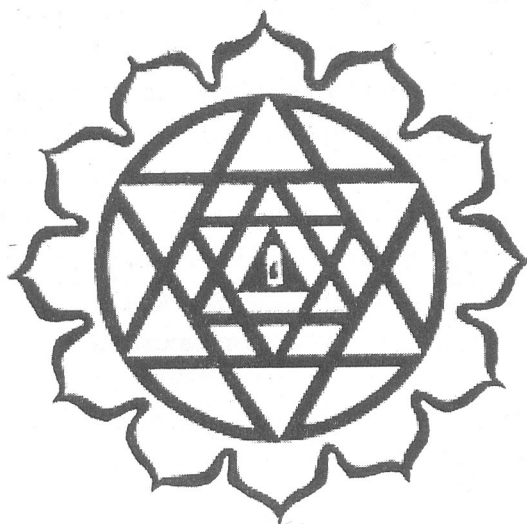
People go on vacation to striking seaside resorts or to secluded mountain resorts spending exaggarate amounts of money, take time off from work and leave their homes, in the hope to be able to relax and enjoy themselves, but then, eventually, ens up by indulging only in strenuous activities like mountain climbing, water skiing or hiking with activities they left. Even on weekends, people fill their itineraries with activities to enjoy themselves and, the next day Monday morning, they return to work dog-tired, only just able to function.

In India, until recently, people used to take time off for pilgrimages rather than holidays. Even nowadays, including people who cannot afford it, save money and take time off only to go and visit holy shrines like Tirupati, Puri or Kedarnath in the Himalayas. In India shrines and temples are usually either close to the sea, on riverbanks or high up some far away mountain top. A trip to places like Kedarnath or Amarnath, on the highest Himalayan peaks, is quite a strenuous one and it involves a lot of climbing, but at the end of the climb, pilgrims are rewarded and re-energized by the vision of the temple Deity and the holy vibrations of the sacred place.

So, whether one calls it a holiday or a pilgrimage, the process is the same, but the result is entirely poles apart. While tourists come home tired after having spent tons of money to enjoy an instant thrill that quickly fades away, pilgrims return to their homes with rejuvenated vigor, a peaceful mind and the satisfaction of having their goal.

Only if the goal is fixed will we progress on the path of liberation. The spiritual path is a continuous journey to which we can stick to only if we have a fixed purpose, immense patience and unrelenting effort. After having conquered the three lower centres, we have to strive more, as we need some further concentration in order to penetrate the knot and proceed upwards. In meditation, when we fix our attention and go from the Muladhara to the Swadhisthana and then to the Manipura all three to the Anahata Chakra or heart centre. While concentrating in these centres, one experiences spiritual energy and the unfolding play of divine consciousness.

Anahata Chakra



The Heart Centre: The heart centre is the air centre. It is the emotional centre, where all our feelings, our passions, our loves and hates, likes and dislikes, which the scriptures declare as pairs of opposites arise.

Location	: Heart or dorsal region
Number of petals	: Twelve
Element	: Air
Color	: Smoky
Presiding Deity	: Vishnu
Quality of Nature (Guna)	: Sattva and Rajas (Calmness and Activity)
Seed syllable	: Yam
Sense organs	: Skin (organ of touch) and Hands (organ of work)
Taste	: Acidic
Benefits due to concentration	: Emotional development, Material gain and Material knowledge.
Name of the Fire	: Ahavaneya (fire of Love)
Vrittis (Tendencies)	: Desire, Depressive thoughts, Endeavour, Possessive attitude, Arrogance, Mourning, Discrimination, Ego, Greed, Hypocrisy, Argumentativeness and Repentance
Loka (Plane of existence)	: Maha

Vital breath	: Prana (helps to maintain life)
Glands	: Thymus
Virtues	: Shraddha (faith in Scriptures and teacher)
Zodiac	: Taurus and Scorpion
Ruling Planet	: Venus

The Anahata chakra, or heart centre, is located in the spinal region of the human body, behind the middle of the chest. It contains vital energy.

Air is the vital life energy. Air is the symbol of stillness. The still air outside is a symbol of the still air inside which is the same vital energy referred to as prana in Hindu scriptures. When the air becomes restless outside, it blows as a breeze or a wind and when air moves inside the body, it manifests as the breath. When the wind outside becomes strong, it can take the form of a cyclone or a hurricane, causing a natural disaster. Likewise, when our breath becomes fast and strong, it results in the damaging emotions of anger, passion, depression, and tension.

Through breath control and self-control, Yogis regulate their life energy and are able to tread the path of inner peace and joy. While prana or life energy can be classified into different types, each responsible for a diverse number of activities, the heart remains the place of the main vital life force, which regulates the breath.

The Sons of Vayu

Breath control is self-control, breath mastery is self-mastery and breathlessness is the state of realization. Through breath control, Yogis are able to control their inner universe, which in turn brings control over the outer universe. Through breath control one attains immense mental and physical strength. The heart centre is the controlling and regulating chamber.

In Hindu mythology, Vayu is the God of Air. Vayu's two sons are said to be mythical heroes. One is Hanuman, the monkey god who, possessing superhuman strength and performed incredible feats in the Ramayana. The other hero is Bhima, the immensely powerful Pandava who, in the Mahabharata epic, single-handedly killed the hundred Kauravas who represented evil and animosity. By controlling the breath and thereby controlling the mind, these two sons of Vayu became invincible.

Life is preserved in the body through breath. All the other centres are only sporadically used, but even when the body is resting, the heart centre preserves life through constant breath circulation, the unique life energy.

Emotional Disorders

The heart centre controls our emotions. Most of us are ruled by emotions. Our loves are deep and our agonies are devastating. Too rapidly do we become attached in our relationships and just as quickly do we become bored and detach. Our moods swing like a pendulum from wildly

happy to dramatically miserable and desperate. Anger is an emotion we have great difficulty in controlling. It burst forth in harsh, cruel words that, a few minutes later, we would give anything to take back. Despite our own moods, we are all extremely susceptible, unable to bear the slightest criticism, resenting it as a wound to the very soul. The heart, which should be a place of love, have become a place of anger, ego and pride.

In recent times, emotional problems have become rampant. Mood disorders, stress related disorders, depression, anxiety, suicides among adults and teens alike, have become dramatically prevalent in today's world. The place of modern society, the stress of any work place, the loneliness and isolation of urban life and the widespread disintegration of the family unit have all turmoil. Whatever caused pain, anger or depression, there is only one cure. That is to achieve a balanced emotional state in which neither pain nor pleasure can disturb the inner calm and tranquility of our minds.

Universal Love

Heart centre can be the source of either immense emotional satisfaction or intense emotional despair. By focusing on this chakra and by developing our awareness through deep meditation, we can energize this centre and turn it into a source of profound inner joy – first, by achieving the balance needed to deal with ups and downs in unwavering equanimity and, secondly, by channeling our emotions into a constructive course. Our selfish love, which is the root cause of many of our problems, will be replaced with an expansive, all encompassing love for others. All of us have the same basic need: to love and to be loved. By transforming and turning the selfish love we feel towards ourselves and our immediate circle into warmth will find ourselves released from the self-made prison of our emotions. At last we will be free to love wholly, without fear and without restraint. Through loving others, we love God, and that love returns to us a thousand-fold when it is given unselfishly and without ulterior motives.

How can such a state be achieved? Through the same process of relaxation, meditation and self-inquiry with which we overcome the downward pull of the other chakras. Selfish emotion drags the mind downwards, burdening it with feelings that bury our spiritual energy and dissipate it in fleeting, momentary joys and sorrows. True happiness and spiritual awakening require that we expand our love to envelope the entire universe and thus the riches therein.

Vishnu – the Symbol of Tolerance

The presiding deity of the heart center is Vishnu. Vishnu is the maintainer, the sustainer of creation and a great symbol of tolerance.

Once, a great sage called Bhrugu went to visit Vishnu with the intention to test His Tolerance. When Bhrugu arrived, Vishnu was sleeping, while his divine consort Laxmi was massaging his feet. Bhrugu expected Vishnu to get up and greet him, as Vishnu is the omniscient god, but when he did not show any signs of recognizing his presence, Bhrugu became very angry and, as the greatest insult, kicked Vishnu on His Chest. Vishnu woke up and seeing the angry sage. He respectfully bowed to touch the sage's feet and said: "Please don't be upset. I am sorry I

was sleeping and therefore did not acknowledge your arrival. Then Vishnu, to pacify the sage started massaging his feet with sandalwood paste.

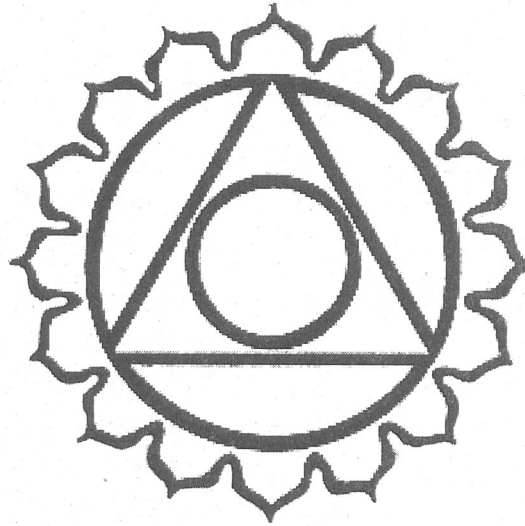
Just as Brahma creates the universe with patience and Vishnu maintains the universe with tolerance and love, life is maintained in the body through tolerance, love and patience.

Centre of Transformation

Located in the middle of the seven chakras, the Anahata chakra is also called the centre of transformation. When necessary, from here, the mind can go down to the lower three centres or travel upward to the super-conscious state, reaching the upper three centres. The path of spirituality requires the transformation of passion into compassion and emotion into devotion. This transformation is possible through the art of breath regulation and breath control which should be learnt under the proper guidance of a teacher. Sometimes people are transformed only temporarily and, after a while, temptation and passion again get hold of them, but through regular practice and determination, transformation becomes permanent, just as butter, once separated from milk by the churning process, cannot go back to the initial milk stage.

Being Vishnu the presiding deity, many believe that the presence of God is manifested more in this chakra than anywhere else in the body. Those who meditate concentrating in the heart centre develop love and devotion which should then be properly directed by ascending to the Vishuddha chakra.

Vishuddha Chakra



The Neck centre is the centre of creativity and of the intellect. Our best creative work, including literature, art, music, philosophy and theology emerge from the activities of this centre.

Location	: The base of the throat
Number of petals	: Sixteen
Element	: Sky
Color	: Smoky white
Presiding Deity	: Shiva
Quality of Nature (Guna)	: Sattva (Tranquility)
Seed syllable	: Sham
Sense organs	: Ears (Organ of hearing and Mouth (Organ of speaking)
Taste	: Pungent
Benefits due to concentration	: Purification of the mind and Intense joy.
Name of the Fire	: Samidbhavana (Ritualistic fire)
Vrittis (Tendencies)	: Poison, Nectar, Happiness, Sacrifice, Calmness, Vociferation, Dynastical pride, Noble nature, Truthfulness, Forgiveness, Knowledge, Self control, Compassion, Straightforwardness, Vanity and Pride.

Loka (Plane of existence)	: Jana
Vital breath	: Udana (helps for evolution)
Glands	: Thyroid and Parathyroid
Virtues	: Titiksha (Perseverance)
Zodiac	: Gemini and Sagittarius
Ruling Planet	: Mercury

The Vishuddha Chakra is the centre of religious and intellectual activities. The intellect can be used for material success as well as spiritual progress. Most intelligent people use their skill and talent to achieve fame and fortune, but only a few realize the intellect's potential for inner evolution and develop love, compassion, detachment and understanding. The expression of these qualities through speech and the written word, results in the development of philosophy, which is an art as well as a science that probes deeply into the meaning of life.

Concentrating in this centre seekers acquire devotional love for God. They study and listen to the scriptures, intellectualize them and practice religion. Religion is the practical aspect of philosophy. But over a period of time, religions become overly dogmatic and, as a result, fanaticism, erupts, blinding their followers up to the point of forgetting their religion's true significance. Religion is a means to evolve from the lower centres to the higher ones. All the religions of the world are petals of the same lovely flower; the flower of life and, in truth, they all complement one another.

Religious intolerance

Here is a story of three different religious representatives who were traveling in an overcrowded Indian train. They were a Hindu priest, a Muslim teacher and a Christian minister. The three of them were seated on same row of seats, in the same compartment, and as each one of them believed to be superior to the others and obviously thought his own religion was greater than any other, they were rigidly trying to keep their distance and not even looking at each other. In front of them was sitting a journalist who was amused by their behaviour and was wondering how people could become so narrow-minded and dogmatic. It was late at night and sleep was overpowering the three men. When one is on threshold of sleep, the gross body becomes inactive, the subtle body becomes weak, and the causal body takes over. The three men started dozing and falling on each others, but would quickly check themselves and sit straight again. Finally they all went asleep and ended up lying with the head touching the feet of each other. The journalist, seize the rare opportunity and with his instant Polaroid camera, took a picture of the three men. Next morning, when they got up. They quickly moved away from each other and once more tried to maintain their air of superiority. The journalist quietly showed them the photograph with a smile.

It is our body consciousness. Which creates so many differences. Religions based on such difference become compartmentalized and create only division. People who meditate deeply understand the spirit behind all religions and the inner harmonious unity that links all faiths.

The cleansing and purification of the mind are the main activities of the neck centre, which is

located in the spine behind the throat. According to the Vedas, there are eight holy places within the throat, the region of purity, liberation and knowledge. Hindus believe that by taking a dip in holy rivers like Ganga or Yamuna they become pure. The body undoubtedly gets cleansed and, due to the aspirant's strong belief, also the mind may result purified to a certain extent, but this is only a temporary cleansing.

A Dip in Ganga

Once a disciple asked the great saint Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa: "People believe that they will be totally free from sins and negative qualities by taking a dip in the river Ganga. Is it true?" Ramakrishna replied: "there is no doubt about it." The disciple argued: "My master, I have seen people daily taking dips in Ganga, yet committing the same sins again and again." Sri Ramakrishna smiled and answered: "When a person enters Ganga, all the sins do leave him because at that time he is immersed in his love for God. The sins leave his body, but patiently sit on a nearby tree or on top of a roof. When the devotee comes out of the water and he returns to his old self again, all the sins descends on his head and he starts committing again and again the very same mistakes."

If we look at our own life, we can see the same pattern emerge. We vow to reform ourselves; we make new resolutions at least once a year, we begin with great zest and spirit, but how easily we resume our bad habits, our addictions, and our faiths. There is a simile in Sanskrit, gaja snana vat, which means 'like the bath of an elephant' and this suggestive expression is used to describe those who never drop their bad habits. An elephant takes an elaborate bath, filling its trunk with plenty of water and repeatedly pours it over its body to cleanse it thoroughly, but as soon as it emerges from river, it rolls in mud again. Rather than bathing in external holy rivers, what the Vedas extolled was inner purification through bathing in the internal oasis of the self, located in the Vishuddha chakra. The eight Vishuddha tirthas (holy places) are described as: non-violence, truthfulness, forgiveness, compassion, knowledge, straightforwardness, purity of the Self, and liberation.

All these eight virtues are in the neck centre. When we dive into these eight types of human bondage. The causes for human bondage include: shame, hatred, fear, sorrow, jealousy, pride, ego, and prejudice. All human beings are strongly bound by these eight negative qualities, which are like strong ropes keeping us tied down. By bathing or filling ourselves with the eight divine qualities, we can purify our minds and escape the state bondage.

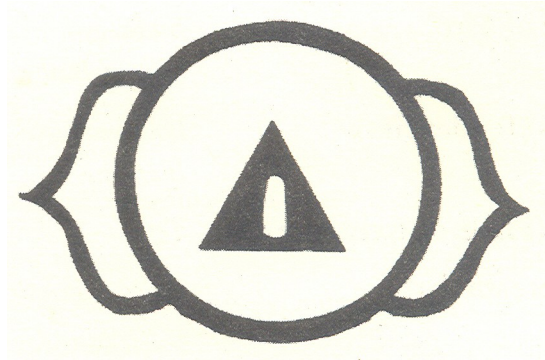
Nilakantha – Blue Throat

The Hindu God Shiva is the presiding deity of the throat centre. Shiva, in order to save the world, once again drank a deadly poison, which was threatening to engulf the entire universe. As Shiva knew that if he swallowed the poison, he too would be destroyed, unable to swallow and unable to spew out the venom, Shiva kept it locked within his throat. His throat, which held the poison, took on a permanent blue hue, earning Shiva the name of Nilakantha or the one with the blue throat.

Hindu myth always contains an underlying metaphor. Here, the throat is the centre of speech,

which can be extremely powerful. With our speech, we can either create a state of harmony, love and understanding or one of hatred, bitterness and pain. The throat this has the potential to contain poison or nectar. We need to speak with understanding and love. Like Shiva, we need to contain the bitter poison and refuse to hurt others through our words.

Ajna Chakra



The Soul Center: or the dwelling place of the third eye is the center for spirituality, and the residence of the soul within the body.

Location	: Between the eyebrows
Number of petals	: Two
Element	: Beyond all elements
Color	: Smoky white
Presiding Deity	: Jivatma (the individual soul)
Quality of Nature (Guna)	: Pure Sattva (extreme calmness)
Seed syllable	: Ham, Ksham
Benefits due to concentration	: Control over adverse situations and Immortality
Name of the Fire	: Brahmagni (Fire of Brahman)
Vrittis (Tendencies)	: Inner peace and Inner love.
Loka (Plane of existence)	: Tapa
Vital breath	: Prana (Life-energy)
Gland	: Pituitary
Virtues	: Samadhana (Balanced nature or equanimity)
Zodiac	: Cancer and Capricorn
Ruling Planet	: Moon and Sun

The soul centre is located between the eyebrows, two to three inches inside the brain. Below this centre lies ignorance and above lies blissful and divine knowledge. Ajna also means, wish, will and instruction or direction. The directions of a teacher can take us only up to the soul

centre, but beyond that we have to go on our own. The journey is strictly personal, we have come alone to this world and we have to proceed to the goal by our own efforts alone. The Ajna chakra is also called Kutastha, which in Sanskrit means immovable, self-controlled, firmly established and imperishable.

The Inner Anvil

Kuta in Sanskrit means the anvil on which precious ornaments are cast. The soul is ever unchanging and unaffected by the blows of the hammer and still yields such beautiful jewels. The process of meditation and self-purification can be compared to the blows of the hammer that mould gold into delicate ornaments.

Another meaning of kuthastha is that which is hidden from our sight. Our vision is directed outwards, but the soul itself is hidden within the body waiting to be discovered. With the extrovert senses we search for happiness in the outside world while the hidden kutashtha is the real source of peace and joy. The soul is the source is the source of all physical and mental energy.

The kuthastha is imperishable and is also called the third eye. When we concentrate in the Ajna chakra we may see a white or golden coloured light, sometimes other colours may also appear due to the predominance of any of the other chakras. The Ajna chakra is some times also referred to as Jnana chakra or Ajnana chakra – The centre of knowledge and ignorance. Those who concentrate in the Ajna acquire complete self-control. Once one is firmly established in this centre, the senses are defeated as their source of strength lies in the centres below.

The Third Eye

The Ajna chakra is also called third eye or Vishuddha. People normally have two eyes that are the eyes of duality, which allow them to identify friends and enemies, good and bad, pleasure and pain. Duality is the cause of bondage and suffering, therefore, to pursue harmony in the duality of nature is true spirituality. Jesus said: "The eye is the light of the body. If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." the Bhagavad Gita we well mentions that the top of the nose, in the centre of the two brows, is the place to concentrate while meditating. The right eye is the sun, the left is the moon and the third eye is fire; the fire of knowledge. The fire is known as brahmagni, the fire of God, the fire of purity, knowledge and illumination. One may use the third eye only while meditating.

The Pole Star

The Ajna chakra is also referred to us as the Dhruva chakra. Dhruva means to be fixed or undisturbed. In Hindu mythology Dhruva nakshatra is the name of the pole star. In the olden days, navigators looked up to the pole star. In the north to determine the direction of their voyage. Similarly, in the inner universe, one should look up to the upper part of the body for direction. When one meditates in the soul centre one sometimes sees a bluish coloured star,

the pole star.

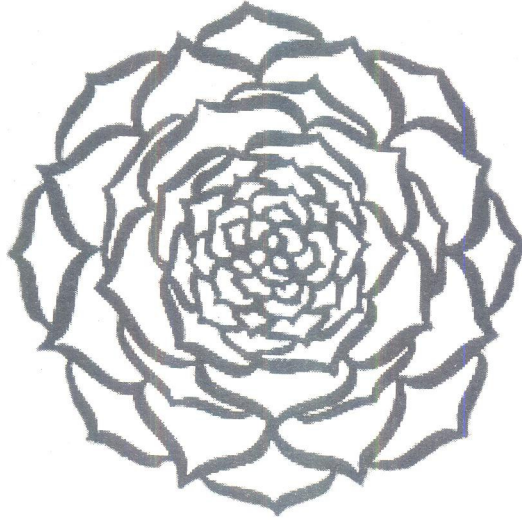
The mythological legend states that Dhruva was a young prince who had dedicated all his life to experiencing spiritual truth. Once Dhruva became very dejected and deeply hurt when his step mother humiliated him. Suniti, his real mother, consoled him and advised him to only meditate on God. The five year old boy asked his mother where and how to proceed. She instructed him to go to the forest and meditate in peace and seclusion, this becoming her child's first Guru. The young child followed her advice and went to the forest. At first he was afraid of the wild animals roaming free in the forest, but he soon established himself so firmly in the omnipresence of God that he saw only God everywhere. Dhruva is believed to have become that very pole star, which is the guiding light to many spiritual seekers.

When one meditates in the soul centre one becomes free from animal propensities and negative thoughts.

The Knot of Liberation

Two out of the three knots, the creative knot; Brahmagranthi and the knot of preservation; Vishnugranthi are situated below the Ajna and are helpful for the creation and preservation of life. For liberation, however, one must be able to penetrate Rudragranthi. Rudra is another name of Shiva. Rudra means prana, or the tranquil breath. Below are forty-nine pranas, which by combination and permutations become multifold and bring vibrations of various types of thoughts and propensities into our life. Then one meditates in the knot of liberation this knot opens gradually and one becomes released from the pull of nature, the mind is at last disentangled and will be able to climb further up. By meditating in each chakra one becomes free from bondage and when one, with the help of Guru, reaches the ajna chakra, one is ready to enter alone in the realm of spiritual enlightenment. When Rudragranthi, the knot of liberation is opened, the seeker, at last, becomes emancipated.

Sahasrara Chakra



Sahasrara chakra: is the entryway to the Absolute, where the soul unites the limited universe with the unlimited universe without. This chakra is otherwise known as Brahmastrandha (the adobe of Brahman) and muktidvara (windows of liberation).

Location	: Crown of the head
Number of petals	: 1,000
Element	: Beyond the elements
Color	: Colourless
Presiding Deity	: The supreme Self (Paramatma)
Quality of Nature (Guna)	: Beyond all qualities
Seed syllable	: OM
Benefits due to concentration	: Wisdom / Liberation
Name of the Fire	: Visarupa mahanaagni (Cosmic Fire)
Vrittis (Tendencies)	: Experience in the atom point
Loka (Plane of existence)	: Satya
Vital breath	: Vyana (omnipresent vital breath)
Gland	: Pineal
Virtues	: All virtues manifested

Zodiac : Beyond the zodiac
Ruling Planet : Beyond the planets

The Sahasrara chakra is located in the fontanel at the top of the head. It corresponds to the soft place in the scalp, the hole in the skull of new born babies, which closes when the child is around three or four months old, leaving a very small gap still open. The Sahasrara chakra is the chakratita chakra, the chakra beyond all chakras. *Sahasra* means thousand and *ara* means the spoke of a wheel. It is a wheel of one thousand spokes. Why a thousand? It is multiple of $1 \times 10 \times 10 \times 10$. The number one is the Supreme Soul within the body expressed in three states of existence. The first ten represent the ten directions; four sides, four corners, above and below, which cover all the existing space. The indwelling self manifested like this is the causal body. When it is expressed through mind and breath, it is subtle or the astral body with its ten vital breaths, and when expressed through the ten organs, it is the physical or gross body. The wheel of life rotates in a thousand directions (a thousand is not to be taken literally. It simply represents a multiplicity of activities).

The Sahasrara is also called the lotus of a thousand petals. It is the biggest lotus. Unlike the other chakras, where the lotus blooms upwards, in the Sahasrara, the lotus blooms downwards. Modern scientists have defined this chakra as the energy surrounding the brain.

The Yogis call it the doorway to the infinite. When one concentrates in the Sahasrara there is a mixture of seven colours just as when sunlight, passing through a prism, is split into seven colours. The outermost is indigo, followed with blue, green violet, red, orange and yellow. The inner place is also called the brahmarandhra, the hole of the Absolute. Through this opening, the soul enters the body of the baby in the mother's womb and then a few months after birth this door is being closed again.

The Vast Inner Sky

When one goes into deep meditation and reaches beyond the Ajna chakra, one experiences the Sahasrara as a vast inner sky. There are stars and planets just as in the outer sky, but if one goes even higher up, beyond stars and planets, there is one vast sky where there is only light. In deep meditation, when one reaches great heights, one experiences the limitless, formless aspect where all lights merge into a single light.

Polarity

The earth has terrestrial magnetism. It has a north pole and a south pole. Correspondingly, the body also has a north and a south pole. We normally say north to indicate up and south to indicate down. South is the place of material activity and north is the area of spirituality and calmness. Between the northern and southern poles of the body, all activities, material, physical, emotional, religious and spiritual are possible. At the extreme end of the North Pole, when one reaches the atom point, everything dissolves and one attains realization.

Beyond Name and Form

A father took his five children to a store to buy some candies. The sweets were in the form of dissimilar animals and each of the children picked a different form: a lion, an elephant, a deer, a bird and a human figure. Each child was convinced his candy was the best of all. The first one said that the lion was the most powerful as it could eat all the other animals and even human beings. The second said the elephant was far better as it was the biggest of all and soon started a big argument. When their mother came to see what was happening she inquired about the reason for such a quarrel and the children, sustaining their reasons, explained the origins of the fight. Their mother smiled and reminded them that in reality the essence of all the candies was only sugar, that all the different candies were all just as sweet, so they had no reason to quarrel. All they had to do was to enjoy the sweetness inherent in the various forms. The five children represent the five lower centres, busy with name and form and the mother represents the sixth centre, asserting that all names and forms are only apparent and once in the mouth the candy melts leaving only sweetness and joy. In the Sahasrara one is free from all names and forms, totally absorbed in oneself, experiencing inner peace and happiness.

Chakra Purification

The seven chakras form a garland of fourteen lotuses going up and down along the spine. Dedicate this garland to God as God was the one who have these cosmic energy centres to man. Always connect each centre with the source of energy and, when acting through any chakra, never forget to act in God consciousness. While meditating, when you focus your attention on each chakra, offer each chakra to God. Concentrate, purify and energize each chakra through your concentration, the negative propensities of each chakra will be removed and your mind will be pure, happy and peaceful. The chakra purification is also a part of an intricate yogic process, which highly advanced Yogis do, infusing their energy in order to help the student savor supernatural experiences.

Stars and Planets

Just as the outer universe has stars and planets that are believed to influence human life, all along the spine, in the inner universe, one finds the entire zodiac. By meditating and energizing the spine, the adverse effects of the stars and planets are neutralized. People go to astrologers to know their future through astrological calculation, yet it is our inner stars and planets, the subtle zodiac present inside the spine that can be instrumental in radiating cosmic light and thus benefiting our life's endeavours.

