

# Chakras, a Guide to Understanding Your Power

by Dirk Gillabel, © 2001 (text)  
images © by Carol Herzer

## Contents

### [An Introduction to the Chakras](#)

Characteristics of the Chakras:

[Muladhara: the root chakra](#)

[Svadisthana: the sex chakra](#)

[Manipura: the navel chakra](#)

[Anahata: the heart chakra](#)

[Vishuddha: the throat chakra](#)

[Ajna: the brow chakra](#)

[Sahasrara: the crown chakra](#)



## An Introduction to the Chakras

### **Foreword**

Chakras are well known among the new age community, but the nature of chakras is often not that well understood. The text presented here is an attempt to shed more light on this issue.

The chakras in the human body are related to specific energies and consciousness, to endocrine glands, colors, and psychic features. It is not always obvious to look for a linear connection between these systems, because the whole is more than the sum of the parts. If we tear out one part in order to analyze it, we might forget what its function is in relation to the whole. We can dissect a human body based upon the different biological systems, or upon the different organs, or upon the different cells, but this would not explain a living being. Be aware that every explanation of the chakras is an approximation of what they really are. The following can help you to better understand what they are and how they function.

### **What is above, is below**

In the cosmos, everything is present in everything. Macrocosmos and microcosmos have the same nature. The laws of the microcosmos are also present in the macrocosmos. At the source of all manifestations is unity, a cosmic

consciousness not understandable for humans. This unity creates all manifestations, from the subtle to the most dense matter. The most crystallized state of existence is the physical world we are living in. The crystallization process of consciousness went through seven stages, hence the existence of seven worlds, seven bodies, seven levels of consciousness. Each of these spheres of existence has a power center, a concentrated field of energy, that acts as a transformer to a higher or lower world. Each center is also directly connected with the ultimate source. This pattern is found in all fields of existence. Therefore the seven major chakras reflect on different levels of existence, consciousness, worlds, colors, endocrine glands in the body, and so on. They are like gates to the entire cosmos.

### **The Seven Major Chakras**

The seven major chakras are situated in the susumna channel, which is the main nadi in the very center of the spine. Nadis are ethereal, or subtle energy, channels for vital energy in the body. The names of the seven major chakras are:

- muladhara: the root chakra
- svadisthana: the sex chakra
- manipura: the navel chakra
- anahata: the heart chakra
- vishuddha: the throat chakra
- ajna: the brow chakra
- sahasrara: the crown chakra

In the text below, I have approached each of the seven chakras from four angles:

- tantric which also includes some esoteric view points;
- the endocrine glands which are under the direct influence of the chakras;
- colors: I have used the system of the rainbow colors, starting with red at the lowest chakra and ending with violet at the upper most chakra;
- psychic features: psychic, psychological or spiritual functions of the chakras that show with balanced or unbalanced chakras.

As most people are unfamiliar with the endocrine system, here is a short overview of the endocrine glands.

Every major chakra has a link to the seven endocrine glands of the physical body. Endocrine glands are glands that secrete their hormones directly into the blood stream. They are:

- the adrenal medulla (above the kidneys)
- the sexual organs (testes and ovaries)
- the pancreas
- the thymus
- the thyroid gland
- the hypothalamus
- the pituitary gland.

All the endocrine glands, with their hormones, work together to keep the body in perfect health. Hormones have many effects on many organs, tissues and bodily functions. Endocrine glands bring to life many spiritual qualities like will power, persistence, exertion, but they can also cause apathy, indifference, or laziness when hormone production is interrupted. The development of the brain is related to the secretion of hormones. When secretion of hormones is low, brain development stagnates. This has a psychological effect, as such a person will stay in own little world. What he does not understand he rejects. He ages quickly and becomes narrow minded.

Hormone secretion and function can be raised by breathing fully, by which more vital energy, or prana, is taken into the blood stream. The endocrine glands then have the opportunity to release hormones into the blood stream. Better breathing, a better blood circulation and an optimum function of the hormones will strengthen and develop the entire body to its maximum. Some glands have functions that oppose each other, thereby creating a sophisticated balance. Endocrine glands are also transformers of cosmic powers into the vital energy necessary for the physical body.

---

## Characteristics of the Chakras

### Muladhara, or Root Chakra



**In Tantra:** In the beginning Shiva and Shakti (the male and female principles of Cosmic Energy or Consciousness) were united in the cosmic sahasrara lotus. When Shakti (as a woman she represents power), left Shiva, six lotus flowers (the chakras) sprang up from her foot prints. Leaving Shiva in this way she created the entire universe from its most subtle realm to the most crystallized one. Each chakra left behind in the process of creation corresponds with one of these realms. This process of creation is also presents within man, from the sahasrara chakra on the crown of the head down the spine to muladhara or the root chakra, where Shakti now resides. At one point in time Shakti will rise up again and join her partner Shiva. Then she will take her entire creation with her, and live in unity again. In muladhara (the name means root support) creation is in its most crystallized state. The element earth is attributed to this chakra.

Muladhara is situated near the tail bone. Here Shakti lives, and she is waiting for the right time to return to Shiva. Shakti is symbolized by a serpent, and in this form she is called Kundalini. Kundalini Shakti is sleeping in muladhara, and she is waiting to be awakened. In fairy tales, the awakening is often represented by a kiss. Snow White (she is Kundalini Shakti) was awakened from her near death sleep (=the state of ignorance of man) by the magic prince (Shiva). It is also interesting that when Snow White arrived at the home of the seven dwarfs (=the seven chakras), she first tried six beds, and then fell asleep in the seventh one (=muladhara).

Muladhara lotus has four petals. The petals attributed to the lotuses each contain a Sanskrit letter, representing certain powers.

Muladhara is the seat of smell. A good working sense of smell is dependent on a well developed muladhara. Concentration this chakra will enhance the sense of smell. Concentration on the point of the nose will stimulate muladhara. Matters related to the physical or materialistic level of muladhara can be found in our language: "to pay through the nose", or a business man who "smells" where the money is.

Muladhara is the threshold to the first step of initiation through all the seven major chakras on the spine.

**Endocrine gland:** adrenaline glands. Muladhara is connected with the adrenal medulla (above the kidneys). The adrenal medulla secretes the hormone adrenaline. Adrenaline causes fear, anxiety, rage. It narrows the blood vessels, the blood stream flows faster, the heart is stimulated, and breathing becomes faster. More energy is released and consumed. Adrenaline is a hormone for survival issues.

**Color:** red. At one end of the color spectrum, red corresponds with the physical world, the end of the crystallization process of the cosmic substance. Red is associated with warmth, warning, anger, passion, courage, heroic virtues, stability, lust, blood, love. Red raises heart rate and blood pressure. Red clothes enhance sexual attraction, but can also create anger.

**Psychic features:** Muladhara is characterized by a strong will for survival. All survival issues have their place in this chakra. Survival is most basic for living beings. Life and death are closely intertwined in the game of life. A living being will always try to escape death and prolong life. Suicidal tendencies therefore suggest some major problems with muladhara.

Muladhara, the root chakra, is connected with the element Earth. As roots grow into the soil, the earth, so does the root chakra connect us with the element Earth. It helps us keeping our feet on the ground, to become rooted. By the root chakra we draw in basic, earthy energies. They help us with surviving in society by looking for work, earning money, achieving a stable position, acquiring a home and making sure the basic needs of the family are met.

Materialism expresses itself through muladhara, and how we use this energy will determine if we become dependent on material goods, or if we will use them for our spiritual development. A person who neglects the material world, needs to work more on his blocked root chakra.

A blocked root chakra can also show a low bodily vitality, and chronic illness.

Arrogance and self-importance are typical for an unbalanced root chakra. It is a widely spread problem, the sense of self-importance, the need to be different and more important than other people. The sense of being "above" others shows in the things we buy and display: the kind of home we live in, the expensive car we drive, and the position on the social ladder. When establishing our importance in the world we often distort our self-image. We become more arrogant and remove all obstacles to ensure our position, even if we have to hurt other people. The drive of these feelings is actually based on a feeling of poverty of being and worthlessness, that we try to compensate and camouflage. With arrogance we want to ensure that people recognize us, that they acknowledge our prestige and power. The more we build up the image of self-importance and power, the more we become afraid that one day our castle will crumble, and a poverty of being will be revealed.

On the other hand, feeling that one is worth nothing is an imbalance too. One stiffens up and builds a psychic armor, resulting in insensitivity.

People who are stuck in the root chakra like to live to a preset pattern of norm; any deviation is prohibited. They become inflexible, stiff, hard, humorless. Life is slow, nothing is really happening or developing. Inertia reigns, and alternatives are not visible.

The solution to this problem is to realize that the Earth contains all the richness we need. So do we. Everything we need in this life is present in ourselves. We do not need to strive to become a VIP in order to be happy. Happiness lies within oneself. It is there to be enjoyed.

A lot has to do with stability and security. Security is very tentative, based on the stability of our position in society, a secure income and other things we do not want to lose. Life is different. In Chinese philosophy it is said that life is nothing else but change. Change permeates the cosmos. Everything is in motion, everything is in eternal change. We can hold onto something for a while, but when the flow of life takes another course, then we need to let go, otherwise we become neurotic. We have to realize that nothing is forever stable, and nothing is forever secure.

We have to center ourselves in relation to our environment and what it offers us, and be open minded to every change that happens to come across our path.

## Svadhithana, or Sex Chakra



**In Tantra:** Svadhithana, meaning 'residence of the self' in the sense of the ego on the physical plane, contains some mysteries due to certain descriptions of this chakra. Here we find the invisible Paramlingam, the concealed eight petalled lotus, and the elusive Kanda which is not situated in svadhithana but nevertheless is connected with it. The mystery of the sex center also reflects in the movement of the Theosophy where svadhithana is not mentioned because "this center near the reproductive organs is "too dangerous". Instead they talk about the spleen center. Svadhithana is situated near the sacrum. The element of Water reigns here. The mystery of svadhithana is especially marked by the symbol of Paramlingam. This lingam, or symbolic phallus, is not visible in the chakra, it does not have color or form, in contrast with all the other forms and symbols attributed to the other chakras. Why is this? Is it that this lingam represents the high purity of the process of creation, that humanity is not yet able to perceive it?

The number of petals in svadhithana is six. In general, six represents harmony, peace, equilibrium in duality. Vishnu consciousness is seated in this chakra. Vishnu is part of a trinity which also includes Brahma and Shiva. Brahma is the creative principle, Shiva is the destructive principle, and Vishnu is the maintaining principle, creating equilibrium. Six is also the number of enemies coming forth from the ego on this level of existence: desire, rage, greed, infatuation, pride and envy.

Kanda is an energy center close to svadhithana chakra. It is the center out of which all nadis of the body arise (nadis are ethereal channels for the flow of life energy).

**Color:** orange. Orange is not a primary color, but secondary. It is the result of blending red and yellow. Red belongs to muladhara and yellow to manipura, the navel chakra. As a mixture of red (the physical) and yellow (the intellect), orange is an energy stimulator. It has a strong harmonizing and balancing effect. This way it is very useful in healing.

**Psychic features:** Svadhithana is a center that, if not mastered can easily drag us down. This is the center of slavery, slavery to other person's wishes or demands. Actually one is enslaving himself by lack of control over this center, a lack of energy, a lack of development. It is also slavery to passions and desires,

and to cravings. An under developed sex chakra leads to instability and confusion. Therefore it is important to strengthen and purify this chakra. Without this a spiritual seeker will continuously stumble on his path, and he will be unable to achieve any progress. In svadhisthana we can bring body, soul and spirit in perfect harmony, and the purified lower desires can be brought into harmony with and service to the higher feelings. Duties and obligations will no longer be experienced as something we have to do to suit other people, but because we really want to do them. The sex chakra is a power center that contributes a lot of vitality to the body. It allows sexual energies to emanate from a person.

Manipura, the first or root chakra, is necessary for survival. When the immediate danger for individual survival has passed, a being will direct its attention to the opposite sex. Now the survival of the species has to be secured. The sex chakra is about attraction to the opposite sex, a purely bodily attraction. Sex is performed for procreation. On the human level, sex is also to be enjoyed for pleasure, which by itself is a powerful tool to guarantee procreation. With the root chakra, one is only concerned about himself. With the sex chakra he goes out to meet another person. This impulse leads him to a mate, and to the experience of intimacy.

The sex center is connected with the element Water. Water has to flow in order to remain pure. As soon as its flow is blocked, it begins to stagnate, and creates a swampy pool. The same applies to the emotions involved with the second chakra. When sexuality is blocked, and we live in a sexually repressed society, man is dragged down into a suffocating swamp of sexual constraint, perversity, and lack of the necessary flow and satisfaction of his natural sexual impulses. Swamps create diseases, this is also the case with a blocked sex center. The entire body will suffer, not only physically, but also psychologically.

Svadhisthana is the center of clarity (the clarity of Water). It refers to clarity of mind; unfortunately it is too often distorted by anger. Anger can display itself in several ways. It can be expressed in an active, violent way, destroying everything that happens to be around. An angry person can even go that far that he kills the one he hates or even one he loves. At the other side, anger can be expressed in a passive and cool way. Outwardly, one is perfectly normal, but inside one is boiling with anger, planning and executing revenge. Anger can also have a freezing effect, by which one is unable to express oneself., until the pressure is too great, and an explosion follows. In any case clarity of mind is lost.

Anger is the result of feelings of fear and vulnerability. We feel vulnerable, and we do not want to show it. We know we can be hurt, and we do not want anybody to know about it. We are afraid of these feelings, and we want to keep them out.

When we feel threatened by anyone, we will act in way that will ensure that they will not recognize that we are fragile. Thus we are defensive and attack. We cannot bear the thought that another person is stronger than we, so we want to destroy him and attack with anger. Anger is a major problem in our society.

When somebody is angry at us we have to recognize that he actually thinks we are stronger than him, or that we are able to hurt him. Do not make the same mistake he did, do not become afraid of your own vulnerability, and do not react in the same way. Instead recognize your vulnerability and strength. Tell him that we all feel vulnerable, that none of us likes to feel hurt, and that uncontrolled

anger will not resolve anything. Often people will give reasons to justify their anger. There is no justification. Every person is responsible for himself and for his own feelings. Nobody can hurt you, or make you angry. You decide for yourself if you will feel hurt and if you want to get angry. Hurt is based upon previous negative experiences, often from childhood. So the hurt comes up immediately, and that by itself is ok. We are human, we feel those feelings, but we do not need to dwell on them, and we do not need to get angry and retaliate. Usually anger is expressed in an active way, but it can also be subdued. In this case we deny our pain and repress it, because we want to get on with life. Then we stop enjoying life. We have been hurt, and we do not want that to happen again, so we shut ourselves off, and harden our feelings. So, be like free flowing water, accepting life as it flows through the universe.

### **Manipura, or Navel Chakra**



**In Tantra:** manipura means 'city of precious stones' or 'city of the sun'. It is situated around the navel, and has a connection with the solar plexus and the pancreas. As its name implies the solar plexus has a relationship to the Sun. Manipura is the reservoir where prana (life energy) is collected and accumulated, and then transported to those areas of the body that need vital energy. Manipura is the medium for distribution and transformation of energies to bodily functions. Manipura is also the transformer of thoughts into actions, of thought processes and of expressions of feelings. Manipura is an important center that is active in relationships. It not only absorbs prana energy from the environment but also from people. This is how we pick up good or bad 'vibes' from other people. Sometimes other people, unconsciously, draw energy out of you through manipura. After having spent some time with such a person, you will feel tired. I call these people 'vacuum cleaners' because they have a tendency to suck other people's energies. An easy way to prevent this from happening is to cross your arms in front of the solar plexus. The navel chakra corresponds to the element Fire. In this regard manipura regulates digestion, transformation, sublimation. In manipura is the fire of transformation, the transformation of inorganic matter into organic matter and from organic matter into psychic energies. Manipura can be seen as an alchemical



oven.

There is a relationship between manipura and muladhara (root chakra). In muladhara one absorbs and collects impressions in order to have experiences. In manipura these experiences are destroyed but also enjoyed. The destruction, which actually is transformation, is necessary before one can enjoy them. Enjoyment means assimilation into one's being. In vishuddha, the throat chakra, that what had been transformed and enjoyed will be let go of, or set free. Vishuddha throws out what has been transformed because it does not have any value anymore.

The eyes and feet are related to the navel chakra. Both are responsible for maintaining a good balance. The eyes are directly related to manipura. When digestion is bad, vision will be impaired. Chronic digestion problems will often result in loss of vision.

There is another relationship between manipura and the eyes. Hypnosis is a process by which one gains power over the animal nature of a person; it is often induced by the eyes. By looking someone straight into the eyes, one can actually seduce, influence and even manipulate the other person. By penetrating the eyes of a person we can gain control over his solar plexus, and for example, nail that person to the spot (make him immobile).

**Endocrine gland:** the pancreas: The pancreas produces two major hormones that control the handling of glucose and fatty acid fuels in the body. After a meal, when blood glucose rises, it directly causes insulin release.

In the endocrine system there is a relation between the adrenal medulla (belonging to muladhara or root chakra) and the pancreas (manipura or navel chakra). The adrenal medulla produces adrenalin, and the pancreas produces insulin. The two hormones have an opposite effect. When the pancreas has been paralyzed by eating too much, the adrenal medulla is activated. Also, insulin binds sugar. It makes sure that as little energy as possible is used. Adrenaline consumes sugar. When insulin production is decreasing, the liver releases sugar (glucose). Then blood glucose becomes too high because the kidneys cannot absorb all that glucose, so it disappears with the urine.

**Color:** yellow

We have seen that manipura is the transformer of thoughts into actions, of thought processes and of expressions of feelings. This corresponds to the interpretation of yellow as an intellectual color, as the expression of the intellect. Yellow stimulates the logical mind and reason.

**Psychic features:** Manipura gives us insight into the abilities and talents of other beings, and into the role of living beings in nature. In manipura we learn to control and master our sense impressions, to eliminate illusions and fantasies, and to block out any impressions and energies we do not want. Mindless gazing and listening must be avoided, because by this we let in unwanted information. We must learn to see and hear what we really want, and focus on it. The same applies to thinking. The only way we can reach this level of consciousness is by self-discipline.

In the root center we are an individual struggling for survival. In the sex center we were approaching another person, creating a basic bond, based on animal

attraction. Once the interest in other people has been awakened, relationships start to form, for which the navel center is responsible. The relationships we have with other people are very real on the energetic level. Clairvoyants can see strings of energy going out of the navel chakra towards the people with whom we have created relationships.

With relationships, the issue of power comes up. Contact with other people results in exchanging energy. It is an automatic process. More powerful people will dominate the less powerful. Coming up for oneself and establishing a position in society all happen through the navel chakra. It is important to be aware of what you let in or let out through this chakra. The connections we make through the navel chakra are not limited to other people, they also extend to everything around us. Manipura gives you the feeling of belonging to a village, a country, a planet, the universe. Home sickness is the result of a pull felt through the navel chakra by an energy cord that is still linking you with the place or person you left. The element of manipura is Fire. On the psychological level we deal here with fiery emotions. As this center is also connected with power, these emotions when directed to another person can have a powerful effect on them, on the energetic level powerful blasts of energy are directed to that person. The person who is thus expressing his fiery emotions, will lose a lot of energy. After an emotional outburst, or a heavy emotional fight, one will feel depleted. Uncontrolled emotions never pay off, never lead to a solution. This does not mean that these emotions cannot be expressed. It would be wrong to suppress any emotion. One has to learn to use and express his emotions in the right way, with the right intent, in an effective way, to attain the desired goal. This demands an honest review of ones own interests, and respect for the other person. Emotions must be controlled, do not let emotions control you.

The desire to possess is a sign of an unbalanced navel chakra. The desire to possess something or someone does not leave room to enjoy the objects of desire. Enjoyment means absorption, transformation and release (the nature of Fire). In the desire to possess, transformation and release is prevented. Nothing is enjoyed, and even more is wanted, and this results in overindulgence. The quality of Fire is provocative and seductive, and before we know, the desire to possess has overwhelmed us. We have to realize that we came into this world with nothing, and we will leave it empty handed. As a human being we really cannot possess anything, possession is an illusion. The world, nature, and our environment are here to be enjoyed, not to be possessed and held on to. We have to appreciate what the world is offering and use it with clear awareness, in an appropriate way and with respect. The desire to possess stems from the feeling of isolation. When we feel isolated we tend to go out and try to get hold of something to fill that empty space inside of us. We have to realize that life has to be enjoyed, and this will by itself attract other people to you who will want to participate in your joy. The energy of the navel chakra is like fire, it burns wherever it can feed upon something. Fascination is the fire that keeps us going to pursue the things we want, but it can also lead to obsession. It starts with excitement. Then fixation tries to close in on the object of desire. Satisfaction of desires is a temporal thing. Once a desire has been satisfied one craves for more. This leads to obsession.

This fire consumes our energy, and in the process we eventually burn out. People with an over-active navel chakra have a lot of energy, but are likely to take risks and chances, and are often too impulsive. They tend to fly up like sparks into the sky, and loose contact with the Earth, and with reality. They are impatient, and often turn into fanatics. Those people need to learn to be patient. Uncontrolled fire destroys, but with controlled fire we are able to craft the most beautiful things.

One of the biggest stumbling blocks people can have is that they think they posses their partner. It shows in our language, we speak of 'my' wife, or 'my' husband. We cannot posses another human being, we can only share our lives with someone else.

### **Anahata, or Heart Chakra**



**In Tantra:** anahata means 'singular sound'. It is the middle chakra in the line of seven. What is below and what is above intertwines in anahata. The upper and lower energies take on the form of two interlaced triangles.

Anahata, the heart chakra, is the seat of the human ego. We point to the heart when we want to refer to ourselves. The physical ego has will power, center, vitality, warmth, stability, radiance. A strong heart chakra shows talents of leadership and independence.

Anahata shares with muladhara (root chakra) the image of the lingam. In muladhara the lingam stood for creation of the physical world. In anahata, the heart chakra, the lingam represents the subtle, or astral, world. The third lingam is in ajna (brow chakra), where it stands for the causal, or mental world.

The skin is the organ that has its seat in anahata. The skin is the threshold between the inner and outer world. What we refer to as 'me' is underneath the skin. What is outside the skin is all the rest, people, nature, the universe. The skin is also an instrument to express and receive affection and love, hugs and caressing, flowing out from the heart chakra. As a function of limitation, the skin is related to muladhara (the root chakra).

**Endocrine gland:** the thymus. The thymus is the gland that gives self-confidence. A properly working thymus paves the way to success by confidence and faith in the right action. This is a spontaneous, intuitive process as we find it

in children. However around the age of twelve the thymus stops working almost entirely. It then works only on a very basic level to keep the body alive, but its connection with the brain ceases. Self-confidence is pushed to the background, self-maintenance now arises, expressed by the action of collecting things. The thymus is closely connected with heart and blood. The thymus creates a sense of togetherness through love and community life. When the thymus stops functioning, the sense of togetherness disappears, and instead the sense of ego appears, the sense of being different than others. The child loses its sense of unity, and becomes an ego. The ego seeks pleasure in material things, but pleasure is not always what the ego expected and it never lasts long. So the ego becomes dissatisfied, and when it finally realizes that there must be something more to life, it jumps into a church. After a while it gets dissatisfied with the church too, and the ego becomes completely frustrated.

A person whose thymus continues to function properly becomes a spiritual person. He seeks happiness within himself. He has confidence in life because he looks behind the outer appearance of things. He is open to the unknown. He focuses his mind to the real life issues, in contrast with the materialist who scatters his energy as he seeks diversion.

The connection between the thymus and reproductive organs shows in the sexual development, which is latent until the child reaches the age of about twelve. At that time the thymus stops working puberty arrives.

**Color:** green. Green is the middle color of the spectrum, and thus has balancing qualities. Green is essentially a healing color. It is the color of growth and renewal. Being in the presence of green plants all around us makes us feel good and healthy. Living in a highly industrialized society, we still like to go out for a walk in the woods, in a park or a back yard to relax. We even take plants inside our house. Somehow their green color reassures us that we are still connected with nature and its healing energies.

Green is the color not only of nature but also of the elemental forces in nature. It is the color of the nature spirits, specially of elves and fairies, who often dress in a green robe.

**Psychic features:** With both vishuddha, the throat chakra, and anahata half of the petals of the chakra (each petals represents a certain energy) were already active at the beginning of mankind. The remaining six of anahata we can activate by developing their corresponding properties in ourselves: controlling and directing the thought processes; control and direction of our actions; cultivation of perseverance; development of tolerance towards other beings and events; development of openness and impartiality towards all phenomena of life (faith, trust); cultivating balance or serenity.

Anahata, the heart chakra, gives us the ability to gain insight in the mentality and character of other beings. With it we are able to feel the warmth and cold emanating from other people.

With the heart chakra we send out and receive love. In the navel center we create relationships; with the heart center, a higher dimension, or meaning is added to these relationships. With love you express that you are willing to give, to share your feelings. The feeling of love can be so great that one is willing to give his life

for the other person. However it can also go the opposite way. With an unbalanced heart chakra, the love one gives is merely an expression of a longing for egotistic possession and domination of another person. Giving love without expecting anything back is really something that is reserved for only a few persons. At the present level of humanity, most people are unable to let the beloved one totally free in what he does. Even when the beloved wants to go on another path of life, it is so difficult for most people to still love him without any expectancy.

Love is total connection with everything in creation. It is feeling one with what is loved. When this feeling is lost, one slides back to the chakra below (manipura, or navel chakra) in order to control his environment, and people, in an effort to make sure his survival in terms of the meaning of life. Domination and control are rampant in the world at the moment.

The element Air is connected with anahata. Love, just as Air, likes to flow and reach every little corner on the planet. Air is the mediator between the Sky and the Earth. Thus the heart connects our physical existence with a power that comes from the universe. Just as the Air channels the light from the Sun towards the earth, so the heart receives love and passes it on to our physical existence. Trust is an expression of the heart chakra. When you love somebody you trust him. When trust is lacking, one starts to worry. Worry that can grow into paranoia. Like the element Air, it starts moving, restless seeking over the Earth, whirling, developing into a tornado. Then we are constantly looking for information and reasons to sustain our suspicion, even dragging other people into our paranoia. We get lost in the realm of Air and lose our connection with the Earth, with reality. Lack of trust and suspicion are the result of fear that our territory is under attack. Territory not only in the literal sense but also in the psychological sense. It can turn into a vicious circle by which we always anticipate the negative.

We have to realize that worry, suspicion and lack of trust are unreal if they are unfounded. Often we have to shift our point of view in order to understand where the other person is coming from. Trust implies the acceptance of movement. We cannot dominate other people, especially our partner, in order to satisfy our insecurity. Trust is like the wind, you have to let it blow freely, and trust that it will bring you fresh air. Let the wind remove the unnecessary defenses of your territory, make more space in your life and learn to fly like a bird in the sky. Not always easy in our society, but who wants to spend the rest of his life in a bird cage?

## Vishuddha, or Throat Chakra



**In Tantra:** vishuddha means 'pure'; it is the center of purity. The syllable 'vi' means removal, in all directions, totally, completely. 'Shuddha' means pure, clear. Thus vishuddha means completely pure, clear in all directions. With the throat comes the ability to utter sounds. The primordial sound, 'om' consists of two pure sounds, the O and M. From this primordial sound emanated the sixteen pure vowels which reside in vishuddha. From here on the impure sounds, the consonants, originated and took seat in the chakra below vishuddha. Sahasra, the crown chakra (above vishuddha), contains all the sounds together. The reason why vowels are considered pure is that when spoken the vocal cords are strained but the voice channel remains open, which is not the case with consonants. The throat chakra governs the area of the throat, vocal chords, and the entire voice channel. It does not surprise us that many opera and other singers, both male and female, whose vishuddha has become well developed, are well proportioned, voluminous, robust men and women.

The body is strongly influenced by the activity of vishuddha, and thus muladhara, the root chakra, has a strong link with vishuddha. In muladhara sound is still in its 'para' aspect: it is not yet manifested physically. The physical manifestation of sound happens in vishuddha, with the cooperation of the throat, nose and mouth, determining what kind of sound is being produced.

Let us have a look at the human body. The throat divides the trunk from the head. The throat not only divides but also forms a transition. Vishuddha forms the transition point from the four lower chakras to the two higher chakras. In this sense it is related to Saturn which, in traditional astrology, is the end of the known world (the seven visible planets) and the beginning of the unknown world (beyond Saturn). However vishuddha is more; it is the collection of everything below. In vishuddha a process of synthesis takes place, before the energy can move upwards into the head. At the same time it is a purification station that clears the wine from the drab. Only purity can ascend to the higher centers of the head. All this happens when energy moves upwards through the body. When energy from the crown chakra moves downwards in the body, Vishuddha acts as a transformer for the higher energies, making them suitable to function in the more dense levels of existence below the throat chakra.

There is a strong connection between the larynx and the reproductive organs. In

very ancient times the larynx was a part of the reproductive organs. This might sound weird, but we have to imagine that this was in a time when the human body did not have the form, nor the physical state as it has now. In a later phase of human development, the body changed in such a way that only the lower part of the body developed the reproductive organs as we know them now. The area of the larynx was originally open, but gradually closed itself. In Dutch the larynx is called 'schildklier', meaning shield gland. It formed a 'shield' to close itself. The reproductive organs would express themselves creatively by producing new life; the larynx would express itself creatively by producing sounds. It is said that in the future there will be a time in which people will manifest the creative word. They will be able to create with words, or with sound. By that time the reproductive organs will degenerate.

The larynx has another important meaning. The esoteric teachings say that animals which have a horizontal larynx are under a group spirit. Man, when his original body changed into an upright position, obtained a vertical larynx, which allows the sense of ego to enter. This ego distinguishes man from the animals, for now he is able to utter his thoughts in a comprehensive way. When we look at the chakra system, we can say that the first four chakras are animal related. Animals have survival instincts (muladhara or root chakra), they reproduce (svadhisthana or sex chakra), they create relationships (manipura or navel chakra) and they display affection and love for their like (anahata or heart chakra), but they are not capable of intelligent speech (vishuddha).

The relationship between vishuddha and sexuality also shows at the beginning of puberty when the gonads cause the development of the Adams apple (expansion of the larynx), and a change in the vocal cords by which the voice becomes "heavier". The nice and soft voice of the child disappears and makes way for a stronger and more harsh voice.

Vishuddha has the element of Ether. In Ether the four elements are united as one. At the same time Ether brings forth the four elements. Ether has an expanding quality. It likes to expand and fill the entire universe. It transcends boundaries and knows no directions. Likewise, the throat chakra helps us to expand our awareness.

**Endocrine gland:** the thyroid. In front of the larynx and the trachea, is the thyroid gland. The thyroid produces thyroxine and triiodothyronine. They act throughout the body to maintain activity of all metabolic pathways in the cells at a steady rate. Energy-producing and energy-using processes are increased and fuel storage is reduced by thyroxine. The thyroid secretion also directly influences the digestion. Lack or absence of thyroxine causes insufficient digestion of food, resulting in corpulence, slowness and lethargy, idiocy and so on. When there is too much secretion, digestion is too fast, and the body does not get enough energy intake because the energy has been consumed too fast. When the thyroid gland works normally, it gives us pleasure and we enjoy life. When it does not work properly, it takes away our pleasure, and life is not enjoyable anymore. The thyroid gland requires much of the dietary iodine intake, and cannot function adequately if this element is lacking. The thyroid has a strong influence on the gonads, and influences sex appetite, menstruation and pregnancy.

**Color:** blue. Blue has a cooling, calming effect. It is relaxing. It is connected with intuition and gaining knowledge from other planes. Blue is the color of the sky, and through the sky we enter into the heavenly realms.

**Psychic features:** Eight of the sixteen petals of vishuddha have already been developed in the distant past of man. These eight petals gave man a dreamlike and dull consciousness. Maybe this is why concentration on vishuddha promotes sleep. As man's consciousness became clearer, these eight petals ceased their activity. The remaining eight petals can still be developed by conscious effort. The eight qualities corresponding with these petals are: the way in which we acquire ideas or mental images; the way we make decisions; speech; the ordering of outer actions; the arrangement and organization of our life as a whole; right striving and effort; the effort to learn as much as possible; and the ability to look inward and mentally review our life.

The mouth takes in food, the nose and mouth take in air. Mouth and nose belong to vishuddha, and refer to the capacity of taking in what the world offers us. When we have difficulty with this, or when we are forced to accept something, then we have to 'swallow it'. Or we 'throw up', or we feel 'strangled', or we 'suffocate'. When somebody is overwhelmed by too much information, he is up to his neck in it.

Speaking is an expression of oneself that happens through the throat chakra. Success in society not only depends on one's capacities, but especially on how well one speaks. Often, people with great talents do not make it in society because they are not able to express themselves verbally. At the other hand people with only little talents make it in society because they are good talkers. Survival at the level of svadhsthana is reflected in the amount of success one has in society, be it in his immediate environment or in the world at large.

In anahata we experienced personal love, unselfish love and we even can have a taste of universal love. With vishuddha, or throat chakra, we are able to expand our consciousness, drifting on the Ether, "to go where nobody has gone before". With vishuddha we learn about the vastness of Space, which contains everything in existence, everything in potentiality. Space exists both inside and outside of us.



## Ajna, or Brow Chakra



**In Tantra:** ajna means 'rule', or 'command', as it is from here the other chakras are guided. In ajna we find the third of the three lingams. The lingam in muladhara, or root chakra, gives entrance to the physical world. The lingam in anahata, or heart chakra, gives entrance to the subtle or astral world. The lingam in ajna gives entrance to the causal or mental world.

In man karma works on the level of his causal body, which is connected to ajna. In the causal body all information is stored about our past and past lives. Things in the present and future that will happen to us, are based on this information. For example, the place, time and circumstances of birth will be determined by what has happened in previous lives. Past and future create a tension that causes the present to come into existence.

Traditionally, ajna has two petals. Now this is very strange, because when we look at the numbers of petals of the chakras, it would seem logical that ajna would have more:

Muladhara: 4

Svadhithana: 6

Manipura: 10

Anahata: 12

Vishuddha: 16

Ajna: 2

Sahasrara: 1000 (symbolic for unlimited)

From muladhara to vishuddha, the number of petals increases, but then they suddenly drop at ajna. The 1000 petals at sahasrara is a symbolic number, as there are innumerable petals in this chakra. Why does ajna only get two petals in a series of increasing numbers? In most books you will find that the two petals stand for duality that comes into existence at the level of ajna, when creation came forth from sahasrara. Ajna is the center where duality came into being. However this does not explain why ajna should not have more petals. An explanation for this apparent anomaly I heard from Yoga Muni, a western yogi in Belgium, who talks from his own experiences. He said that, when he was meditating on ajna, he perceived that ajna has indeed more petals, but they are revolving so fast that most people are not able to distinguish them, or see them as separate petals. It has to do with frequencies. Let us take the example of a

movie. A roll of film has a speed of 25 images a second. A hay wagon has wheels with a certain number of spokes. When the wagon is in motion, the spokes revolve with a certain frequency. When we film the wagon in motion, we will see the spokes of the wagon blurred or disappearing, and sometimes they appear with a different number of spokes, because the frequency of the information (on film) is different from the actual frequency of the revolving spokes. A similar thing happens with the petals of ajna. The petals of ajna revolve with a particular frequency. However, the frequency of perception of most yogis is not the same, and thus their perception is distorted. They will only see two petals, but they are actually a resonant image. When one is able to tune his frequency of perception with the frequency of ajna, one will see all the petals.

**Endocrine gland:** the hypothalamus. The hypothalamus is the main coordinating center between the endocrine system and the nervous system. It also releases growth hormone. The hypothalamus controls sleep and waking, body temperature and appetite. It regulates our mood, alertness, sensitivity to pain, eating, drinking, sexual activity.

The hypothalamus controls the front part of the pituitary gland by secreting hormones that flow into the pituitary gland through tiny connecting blood vessels.

**Color:** indigo. Indigo is the result of mixing the three primary colors red, yellow and blue. Let us have a look at the three lingams. The first one, in muladhara or root chakra, is called the swayambhu lingam which is red (a primary color). The second one in anahata, or heart chakra, is called the bana lingam, which is green (a secondary color, made from yellow and blue). The third one is in ajna, and is called itara lingam, which has an indigo color (the tertiary color, made from yellow, blue and red).

Indigo helps with making a connection with the higher self. It promotes intuition, and it is the color of wisdom. Philosophy and science. It is connected with the development of intuitive thinking and with deductive reasoning in order to expand the known towards the unknown. It opens the door of the subjective self to the objective no-self.

**Psychic features:** Concentration on ajna, situated between the eyebrows, can produce out-of-the-body and other spiritual experiences. This center is a gateway to other realms. One can also concentrate on the back of the head, where the 'backdoor' of ajna is.

Ajna rules over the eyes. Through the eyes one can penetrate the soul of a person. Do we not say "look at my eyes", or "let me look into your eyes" when we want to discover the truth. With the eyes one can convey a message without words. Clear, sharp and evident. The eyes can seduce but also manipulate. It is all soul language, it all works on the level of the soul.

Ajna gives us the ability of visualization and the formation of mental images and concepts. Here is the center with which we build our view of the world, and of reality. If we create a world view based on fantasy, then we are not connected with reality and we will experience difficulty in life. We might find that life is unjust, unfair. Most people then blame the outer world. One is responsible for one's own actions. Blaming does not help, and thus it is better to look what is wrong with our ideas and have another look at what reality is about.

An unbalanced ajna chakra might lead to distorted opinions about life, and compulsive, obsessive behavior. Ajna is also the center where creativity is, and a person with an unbalanced ajna chakra might develop into a mad inventor, a criminal, or a crazy Dr. Frankenstein.

### **Sahasrara, or Crown Chakra**



**In Tantra:** The realization of sahasrara is the goal of every yogi. It is the primary root of liberation. Once sahasrara has been realized, rebirth in the world of illusions is no longer necessary. Sahasrara links us to the divine Sea of Light, the Kingdom of Light, out of which everything has emanated. The sahasrara lotus traditionally has 1000 petals. This number is symbolic and means unlimited.

Sahasrara is like an invisible Sun, in rest, existing above all the realms of creation, in unity.

**Endocrine gland:** the pituitary gland. Ajna and sahasrara have a close connection on the physical level. The pituitary gland is attached to the upper edge of the inner portion of the brain. It is the size of a small pea, and sits protected in a bony depression, the Turkish saddle, at the base of the skull. It produces melatonin (a chemical that produces sleep) which is affected by light. The pituitary gland is also involved in sexual functions but it is not yet quite clear how this functions. The hormones secreted by the anterior pituitary gland direct the activities of its 'target' glands elsewhere in the body. One of the pituitary's hormones acts on the body's tissues in general to produce growth in childhood and adolescence. The production and release of hormones from the anterior pituitary gland are affected by the hormones of the hypothalamus.

The hypothalamus and the pituitary gland work close together. The posterior pituitary bears no secreting cells, but stores two hormones which are produced by the hypothalamus, and which are passed down the nerve fibers in the pituitary stalk. These hormones are oxytocin, which acts on a smooth muscles, and vasopressin, which is an antidiuretic hormone. Vasopressin acts as a water preserver in the body.

According to esoteric teachings, the pituitary gland is a remnant of an earlier phase of evolution, but not in the sense that it is pining away. The third eye,

which was active in man's earlier evolution, is not a physical organ, but a subtle one. The fact that it is not active anymore, means that man does not know how to use it anymore.

With anahata, or heart chakra, we saw that the thymus atrophies after childhood. The same thing happens with the pituitary gland. As long as this gland is still working, the child is very connected with his inner world. When the gland begins to atrophy, the child becomes more self-conscious. At this point man loses his ability to enter the inner worlds. At a later age he will be able to gain access again, but this time by using his will.

**Color:** violet. Violet is at the end of the color spectrum and stands for the transition to the invisible realms. In relation to sahasrara it creates a connection with the divine essence in man, and with the divine itself. It is the gateway to the entire cosmos.

Violet has always been connected to priesthood. In this sense it is the color of Divine Love, goodness, purity and dedication. It is the magical color that sublimates everything to Spiritual Gold.

**Psychic features:** The crown chakra connects us with the Divine, with the Kingdom of Light, with Christ. From the crown of the head a golden energy cord goes towards the divine source. We are all continuously connected with the Divine. Nobody is left alone. The golden cord nourishes us with divine food, inspiration and spirituality in the highest sense.

People with an unbalanced crown do not see the meaning of life, nor do they believe in the existence of the Divine. For them, life is just a coincidence, some molecules that came together and developed life on this planet. A purely biological event. Others who are blocked may adhere to a dominating church. With the new age, sahasrara is turning into motion. Consciousness is expanding. Society and churches do not provide the answers to the spiritual questions that live deep inside man. People are looking more and more to what life is about and who they are. They are starting to see their place again in the vast cosmos, and are discovering what their destiny is. It is a process each of us has to go by himself, but we can help each other on the path to the Divine Light.