

ENERGY DYNAMICS IN THE CHAKRAS

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Abstract

Physical health and mental well-being are the very basis of all human endeavours. Technology has made possible things that were once considered impossible to the common man. At the same time, a plethora of new problems has raised their ugly head, which threatens the very existence of humans and this planet. Ancient Indian knowledge straddles the two realms of the physical and the spiritual, which gives it an edge in tackling even those problems that are still beyond the grasp of modern science. The research conducted by India's ancient Rishis established long ago that benevolent cosmic energy is ever present to help all creatures. Humans should develop the ability to tap into it by strengthening their subtle body, which surrounds the physical body. The Chakras and the Nadis of the subtle body perform functions similar to that of the various organs of the physical body. But, going beyond the physical level, they harness the life-sustaining energies that actually nourish the physical body so that it survives and prospers. The right techniques if followed diligently have the power to not only heal the body, but also to progress in the most unimaginable manner by riding the power of cosmic energy.

Keywords: Physical body, subtle body, cosmic consciousness, energy, Chakra, Nadi, Tatva, healing, awareness

Introduction

The physical body is well studied and addressed in modern medicine. However, often there are grey areas and ailments that do not have conclusive solutions. Many times things beyond the grasp of physical sciences are either described as chance or luck or divine will. The ancient Indian Vedic sciences and philosophy have always looked at the bigger picture, which includes the gross as well as the subtle. A person groomed in studying the physical world alone can also experience the subtle when he feels the wind, but cannot see it, and when the sight of the spring blossoms on trees such as Silk Cotton and Indian Laburnum evoke feelings of joy within. The subtle world was studied in depth by the ancient Vedic Rishis (scientists working in the physical and spiritual realms) to such an extent that the spiritual science in India attained the perfection of art.

The Vedic sciences assert the existence of an all-pervading supreme cosmic consciousness (Paramatma, Parameshwar, or Purush). The primordial cosmic energy (Prakruti) has been described as the force emanating from this consciousness, which in turn manifests in the subtle as

well as gross forms as the Panchtatvas (five basic elements) and Trigunas (three tendencies observed in all beings) that give rise to and sustain the world of nature. The cosmic consciousness and the cosmic energy permeate all beings and are represented in the subtle body, which encapsulates the physical body. India's ancient Shastras (holistic sciences) describes the presence of seven Chakras (centers of cosmic consciousness) in the subtle body. These are akin to the various organs in the physical body.

Physical, mental, intellectual, and spiritual well-being and progress are dependent upon these Chakras. These energy centers are constantly engaged in providing vigour to physical and mental activities. There are 14 important Nadis¹ (channels for the movement of cosmic consciousness) in the subtle body. These Chakras are connected with each other through the three key Nadis of Ida, Pingala and Sushumna, which are located along the spinal cord of the physical body. The Chakras are engaged in the tasks of absorbing the cosmic energy in the form of Pran (life-sustaining energy) from the environment, assimilating it and providing it to the physical and subtle bodies. This knowledge is a part of the ancient science of Yog. In fact the entire eight-step journey elaborated in Ashtanga Yog² can be traced to each of the Chakras from bottom to top. The body functions through the combined efforts of all Chakras and Tatvas. The objective of this paper is to study the energy dynamics in the seven Chakras and the ways in which holistic health can be achieved by ensuring equilibrium in the same.

Energy from Seven Chakras

Chakra – the Sanskrit word – actually implies a wheel. The profound meaning in the context of the subtle body talks about the vortex of cosmic energy located along the Sushumna Nadi at the site of each of the seven Chakras. From the waist upwards to the head, the seven Chakras are – Muladhar, Swadhishtan, Manipur, Anahat, Vishuddh, Adnya, and Sahastrar. Along with the assimilation of the cosmic energy and dissemination thereafter to various parts of the body, the various Chakras also hold one's desires and tendencies from the bottom to the top depending upon the grossness or subtleness of each one of them. Thus, apart from providing energy just as food does to the body, as a person grows spiritually, the strong upward movement of energy along the Sushumna Nadi through the various Chakras can also help get over any obstacle. The functions of the various Chakras are described below.

1. **Muladhar Chakra:** This lies at the base of the spinal cord and is represented by red colour. Steadiness is its subtle quality and is like the foundation of one's life. The efficiency of the body and mind is dependent upon this Chakra. When the Pran enters this Chakra, it triggers various powers in the body. These powers manifest in the functioning of the organs of action, blood circulation, and activities taking place in the Antahkaran (mind, intellect, ego, and awareness or Chit). This Chakra controls the bodily functions of immunity, development of new cells and blood, and excretion, along with the activities of the mind such as conscience and rational thinking. It is the center of inner inspiration. It is a factor of the Pruthvitatva (earth element) and absorbs the same from the environment in subtle form and provides to those parts of the body that require it.

This facilitates the functioning of the nervous system. All actions are done by a person get stored here in the form of impressions. A person's independent personality, identification with oneself, and one's ego emerge here. The powers residing here enable a person to express oneself and gain the attributes of courage and forgiveness. All the dense and hard parts of the body such as bones and flesh and the Nadis are controlled by Pruthvitva.

2. **Swadhishthan Chakra:** It is located near the reproductive organ. It is represented by orange colour. This Chakra is a factor of Jaltatva (water element). Fluidness is its subtle quality. It enables the functioning of the reproductive system. It controls the Muladhar Chakra. Semen, blood, saliva, urine, and sweat in the body are under the control of Jaltatva. This is the seat of the feeling of 'myself' in every person. Sexual feelings originate from here. The process of reproduction is controlled from this Chakra. It also plays a pivotal role in mental development.

3. **Manipur Chakra:** It is located on the navel and is represented by orange-yellow colour. This Chakra is a factor of Agnitatva (fire element). Heat is its subtle quality and form or vision is its basic attribute. It enables the functioning of the digestive process in the body. Hunger, thirst, laziness, sleep and sex are under the control of Agnitatva. The important functions of digestion, assimilation, blood formation, excretion, reproduction, respiration and circulation are governed by this Chakra. It undertakes the task of converting the food eaten into the necessary energy. It is the centre of all types of awareness. Its quality is to act according to the situation.

4. **Anahat Chakra:** It is located in the centre of the chest near the heart. It is represented by green colour. It is a factor of Vayutatva (air element). Mobility is its subtle quality and touch is its basic attribute. This Chakra controls the important organs in the chest - heart and lungs. The bodily functions of movement, contraction, expansion and regulation are under the control of Vayutatva. The important activities of breathing and blood circulation are controlled by Anahat Chakra. This is the centre of feelings and emotions. It is also known as the power centre in the body.

5. **Vishuddh Chakra:** It is located in the throat and is represented by blue colour. It is a factor of Akashtatva (space element). Dimension is its subtle quality and word is its basic attribute. The tendencies of desire, anger, greed, infatuation and fear are controlled by Akashtatva. Its chief function is to control the Saptpath (seven paths) in the throat and the wind pipe. This is the centre of the higher level of creation. It enables study, planning and creativity.

6. **Adnya Chakra:** It is located in between the two eyebrows. It is the centre of the mind power and the will power. It is represented by light violet colour. This Chakra controls the brain, ears and eyes. The human thought process, which is very important, is dependent on this. No wonder, it can be often seen that people tend to bend their eyebrows when engrossed in deep thought. It is the centre of mental inspiration. Strong will power is its basic attribute.

7. **Sahastrar Chakra:** It is located at the Brahmastrandhra or above the top of the head. It is the entry point of life energy into the body. It is represented by violet colour. The primordial feelings of love and oneness originate from this Chakra. This Chakra is the seat of Brahmajagruti or awareness about the Paramatma or Paramatva as the knowledge of the highest reality happens here. This Chakra enables experiencing the cosmic truth and realization. This Chakra enables love for the entire world.

The powers of the Chakras

The subtle energy moving in the Nadis and Chakras is responsible for the feelings of joy and sorrow, and the conditions of health and disease that arise in the physical and mental planes. This power of the cosmic energy can be felt on the surface by ordinary people when they face the above-mentioned situations and is experienced by the wise realized people at a deeper level on a continuous basis.

A person whose Muladhar Chakra functions efficiently is a good decision-maker and displays pragmatic behavior. Moreover, such a person will display steadfastness in his commitments such as those towards his family, friends, Guru, and chosen path. Such commitment enables one to not only love and help others, but also to continue unabated with the purpose in life.

A person whose Swadhishtan Chakra functions efficiently is sociable, loving, and creative. Moreover, due to the flexibility associated with this Chakra, he is able to accept the changes that may happen along the way even while retaining his sanity. It also enables being open-minded and receptive to new ideas and possibilities at all levels, and at the same time be able to discern between the good and the bad, if the energy there is functioning in the right way. This Chakra provides the power required for creating something new. This is the Adhishtan (place) of the Swa (self) and hence called as Swadhishtan Chakra. This enables one to meet the real self inside.

A person whose Manipur Chakra functions efficiently is an achiever with discipline and determination. The dynamism of the fire element should be combined with the steadiness of earth element and fluidness of water element in order to create a beautiful combination in a person. The fire element also helps to overcome obstacles. A person whose Agnitatva is strong is able to grasp the right meaning of things and is balanced.

Anahat means that which cannot be conquered or pierced, which is impregnable. It is often said that a particular thing touched one's heart. This is because its impression is stored there. Any incident taking place in one's life gets stored in the heart (in the subtle body), with its good or bad repercussions manifesting in the physical body. A person whose Anahat Chakra functions efficiently is able to balance material and spiritual pursuits beautifully with the right combination of practical and emotional aspects. It represents freedom from excessive attachment when harnessed in the right way with devotion.

In the Vedic texts, there is the story in which Bhagwan Shankar had held poison in his body³, in the throat. The Shastras mention that the region below the Vishuddh Chakra or throat represents the Earth, while the region above it represents the Svarg (a higher state of existence attained based on one's Karma). Thus, in a way, Vishuddh is the horizon, and its function is to balance both of them. It prevents any of the toxins accumulated in it from going upward or downward. It is known as Vishuddh because it does Vishesh Shuddhi (special cleansing). A person whose Vishuddh Chakra functions efficiently can express himself clearly, and can be a good artist, or a successful politician, businessman or professional. This energy brings a deeper level of calmness and revitalization resulting in mental clarity and keen understanding of things.

The control of all the elements is with the Mahattatva, which resides in the Adnya Chakra. This is the sum total of all the elements. The task of decoding the meaning of any stimulus received from a sense organ is done by the Adnya Chakra. Thus, this Chakra controls them and provides instructions based on which the whole-body functions. It is the center of inner inspiration and intuition. The Sadhana (spiritual practice) that a person has done in the present and past lives results in a very active Adnya Chakra. A person whose Adnya Chakra functions properly, is determined, strong and completes the tasks undertaken, and can work for a higher cause since he is able to look at the big picture. This is often described as the third eye and enables one to go beyond the ego resulting in a greater awareness of cosmic principles.

A person whose Sahastrar Chakra functions properly is very helpful and aware of the real self. This is often described as a 1000-petaled Lotus, which is approached via the Adnya Chakra, where the Atma (consciousness in an individual) merges with the Paramatma or the state of Samadhi. The uniqueness of Sahastrar Chakra is that it enables a truly transcending experience of the Paramatva, which is beyond everything else. If one's kid falls down one naturally feels the pain, and quickly picks him up. But, when the Sahastrar Chakra gets active, anybody's kid falling down on the way, triggers a similar action and one picks him up too and takes care of him.

These powers can be utilized constructively to develop the relevant innate qualities of different people for the betterment of the self and the society. Interestingly, application of a particular quality in the wrong sense can however be detrimental in life. For instance, while the Muladhar Chakra brings steadfastness, it can also breed stubbornness, and while the Swadhishtan Chakra brings flexibility, it can also result in indecisiveness.

There are examples from India's ancient and medieval history of people who had worked from the level of various Chakras depending upon their level of spiritual evolution. The five Pandav brothers, Bhishma and Bhagwan Krishna are a case in point of those working from their respective plane.

Healing through Chakras

Typically, in most diseases more than one Chakra is affected. Simultaneously working on all the Chakras and the entire subtle body, along with the physical body helps. Thus, many diseases can be healed in one go. The time required for getting cured depends upon the level of complication of the disease, absorption capacity of the patient and frequency of such treatment. The Chakras are seen located at the place of various hormone secreting glands in the body. Every Chakra controls specific organs and feelings and ensures their smooth functioning. Any problem arising in the Chakras has its impact on the body and mind.

The Muladhar Chakra manages the adrenal gland located above the kidneys. When problems arise in the functioning of this Chakra, the very support of the body collapses leading to ailments such as pain in the back, waist and knees, joint pain, arthritis, rheumatism, muscle contraction, sciatica, joint dislocation, backaches, spondylitis, shoulder pain, slip disc, bamboo spine, frozen shoulder, tennis elbow, heel ache, weakness, kidney disease, stunted growth, low immunity and blood cancer. Problems here can also lead to mental issues such as depression, suicidal tendencies, unsteady behavior, lack of decision making power, insomnia, inability to execute things and impractical behavior. Performing Dhyān (meditation in which the mind is fixed on the object of concentration) on the earth element helps in overcoming such ailments. Performing the Pruthvi Mudra (specific arrangement of fingers where the tip of the thumb is touched to the tip of the ring finger while the other three fingers are kept straight) while performing Dhyān helps as the requisite measure of earth element reaches all the bones, muscles, blood vessels and cells thereby providing strength. This way, by enhancing the innate qualities of the Muladhar Chakra various problems can be overcome. Simple exercises such as squats also help in strengthening the Muladhar Chakra.

When problems arise in the functioning of Swadhishtan Chakra, it can lead to ailments such as reproductive problems, infertility, enlarged prostate, disorders of reproductive organs, urinary bladder disorders, chronic kidney disease, kidney stone, menstruation issues, PCOD and difficulties in conception and delivery. It can also lead to mental retardation, uncontrolled sexual desires, and a doubting and suspicious nature. Practising Dhyān on the water element helps in such cases. Performing the Jal Mudra (the tip of the thumb is touched to the tip of the little finger while the other three fingers are kept straight) while performing Dhyān helps. Letting go of various wrong notions and tendencies in the true spirit of this Chakra can help cure many problems. Gentle marching on the spot can also help in balancing this Chakra. When the energy of this Chakra is in order, Kaph (one of the three bodily tendencies), which is formed through a combination of Pruthvitatva and Jaltatva, remains under control. Kaph manifests in five types in the body. When all of them are in order, the respiratory tract remains moist, digestion happens well, brain is nourished, body temperature is maintained and joints remain lubricated.

It is often said that all diseases originate in the stomach. Jatharagni (digestive fire) transforms the food ingested into an extract that makes the Sapt Dhatus (seven fundamental components that

make the body structure). When the functioning of Manipur Chakra is affected, it leads to digestive disorders, vomiting and dysentery, constipation, problems of the liver, fatty liver, liver cirrhosis, bile troubles, ulcerative colitis, gall stones, piles, appendicitis, jaundice, IBS, circulatory problems, diabetes, ulcer, food allergies and hernia. It can also lead to mental problems such as energy deficiency and confusion. Performing Dhyān on the fire element can help in overcoming such problems. Performing the Agni Mudra (the ring finger touches the base of the thumb and the thumb rests on the latter with a little pressure, while the other three fingers remain straight) is helpful. All the wrong thoughts, wrong desires, ego and defects can be burnt in the divine fire, which in turn will help gain and retain wellness. To ensure proper digestion of food, along with this Dhyān, it is advisable to practise Shatpavli, which involves walking a hundred steps after meal. When the energy of Manipur Chakra is functioning well, digestion and assimilation of the ingested food happen well leading to enhanced immunity.

Anahat Chakra regulates the thymus gland. When the functioning of this Chakra is affected, it leads to heart attack, palpitations, irregular heartbeats, hole in the heart, expansion of the heart, chest pain, chronic cough, asthma, pneumonia, emphysema, shortness of breath, tuberculosis, lung disorders and contagious diseases. It can also lead to mental issues such as selfish and cruel nature, self-centred introvert behavior, greed, imaginary fears, hallucinations and unwarranted sorrow. Performing Dhyān on the air element helps in overcoming these problems. While inhalation and exhalation one can focus on exhaling all the impurities and tensions in the body and the mind. Performing the Vayu Mudra (the tip of the index finger touches the base of the thumb, which rests gently on the latter) while practicing Dhyān is helpful. Among the Asanas (body postures that are one part of the eight-stage process of Ashtang Yog) for a strong heart, the Anahat Asan is beneficial. It involves sitting in the same pose as Vajrasan and slanting the body forward while keeping the arms in the front. Other Asanas such as Ushtrasan also help in keeping the Anahat Chakra strong.

The Vishuddh Chakra controls the thyroid and thymus glands. When problems arise in the functioning of Vishuddh Chakra, it can lead to throat disorders, defects in the larynx, laryngitis, tonsillitis, mouth ulcer, goiter, diseases of the thyroid or para-thyroid glands, asthma and problems of the lymphatic system. It can also lead to mental issues such as unnecessary worrying, irritability, feeling of guilt and confusion. Performing Dhyān on the space element is useful in such cases. Performing Akash Mudra (the tip of the middle finger touches the tip of the thumb) while practicing Dhyān is helpful. Imagining the infinite space all around the body brings the desired effect of this act. Moreover, using one's voice or singing in such a way that it emits kindness and positivity can also develop the energies of this Chakra, which would be useful in overcoming problems. Practices such as Pooja (deity worship as a cleansing technique) help in removing any negative emotions or toxins accumulated in this Chakra. A feeling of nothingness arises in case of some people that leads to an increase in Akashtatva, which can be corrected by eating food with satisfaction and cultivating the emotion of unconditional love. Performing Bhastrika, which is a

type of Pranayam (one part of Ashtang Yog), helps in cleansing and purifying the Vishuddh Chakra. Similarly, Asanas such as Uttanasan and Sarvangasan also help in balancing the Akashtatva, which strengthens the Vishuddh Chakra. Proper pronunciation of words, good words and clear speech also help in this cause. Forgiving others and seeking forgiveness from others also aids in balancing the energy of this Chakra.

The Adnya Chakra controls the pituitary and endocrine glands in the brain and also the other main Chakras. When problems arise in the functioning of this Chakra, it can lead to cancer, Parkinson's disease, cerebral palsy, motor neuron disease, multiple sclerosis, meningitis, epilepsy, coma, mental retardation, paralysis, Alzheimer's disease, dementia, autism, muscular dystrophy, stuttering, memory loss, chorea, cataract, glaucoma, macular degeneration, retinopathy, deafness, tinnitus, problems of the eardrum and vertigo. It can also lead to mental stress, irritability, depression, and lack of energy. Performing Dhyana on the third eye between the eyebrows can help tap the energy from Adnya Chakra to overcome such problems and move towards the realization of the existence of the cosmic consciousness. Simultaneously performing the Dhyana Mudra (the tip of the index finger touches the tip of the thumb) is helpful.

The Sahastrar Chakra controls the brain and pineal gland. When faults appear in the functioning of Sahasrar Chakra, it can lead to physical ailments related to the brain or pineal gland. It can also lead to a state of dissatisfaction and lack of mental peace. Performing Dhyana on this Chakra can help one overcome such problems as well as attain realization of the infinity of cosmic consciousness and eternal bliss. Simultaneously one should focus on Om. Keeping the hands in a receptive pose on the thighs is recommended.

Conclusion

It is clear from the study and practice of the ancient Shaastras that the real nourishment of the body and the mind happens when food is supplemented by connecting with the subtle energy. One's subtle body is one's connection with the all-pervading cosmic energy. The Chakras are the powerhouses in the subtle body that synthesize this life-giving energy for dissemination throughout the body. Ancient Indian scholars who dexterously traversed the physical and spiritual realms in the most scientific manner have devised techniques to harness this benevolent energy through the Chakras.

The various Chakras from the Muladhar to the Sahastrar have specific functions that ensure wellbeing of those parts and systems in the body that come under their respective jurisdiction. Moreover, they work in tandem in a manner that enables overall physical and spiritual development, both of which are considered important for human birth. In fact, the latter has been accorded far greater importance since it has been established as the ultimate goal of a human. Interestingly, balancing the subtle energy in this labyrinth of Chakras and Nadis is of use to the average student or householder as much as it is useful to the one seeking the ultimate liberation.

Thus, this science practically covers the entire human race irrespective of one's age, aptitude, objective, or background. Healing myriad physical and mental ailments by balancing the subtle energy may sound like a miracle to the uninitiated; but to the believer and the seeker, this is nothing short of mastering the ultimate scientific truth

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