



Working with the Chakras

'We are endowed with such great powers! Yet normally, we only use a small fraction of our inborn capacities.'

- Hazrat Inayat Khan

'The body is a wonderful vehicle in which to foster realization, so long as one develops its potentialities.'

- Lama Geshe Gyatsu

Here lies the key to perhaps the most important and vital knowledge that has ever been explored and practised in the spiritual traditions of humanity: how to transform the body so that it may become an optimal instrument to attain illumination.

Each plexus of the autonomic system (the physical counterparts of what the Yogis call the chakras) is connected with a particular endocrine gland. By concentrating intentionally, intensely and methodically on a particular chakra, one will spark the secretion of the corresponding hormones in the body. These highly specialized chemical 'magical wands' of the body have specific effects upon body functions, mind patterns, and particularly upon the realm of emotional attunement. Endocrinology is one of the least explored areas of physiology, or rather psycho physiology. However, the experiential research of Yogis on the effect of concentrating upon certain chakras in the course of meditation gives us invaluable clues which may then be researched further with modern scientific techniques.

An invaluable guideline stemming from Tibetan Buddhist practices is: do not look upon a chakra from your usual vantage point as though it were the object of your attention, rather, identify with it by turning your consciousness within the body. While inhaling, imagine that you are drawing energy into a vortex, and that this energy is reversed from positive to negative. In fact negative energy is a paradigm referred to in some equations of the new physics. The Tibetans call it 'resorbing the four winds into the void in the centre of the body', and practise it mainly in the solar plexus. The four winds represent four directions in which energy flows in the course of breathing. These are, during inhaling, from the zenith downwards, from the bottom of the spine upwards, from the right towards the centre, from the left towards the centre.

Following this, one exhales and extends energy upwards, downwards, to the right and to the left. I feel more comfortable representing the energy during exhalation as flowing outwards from the heart chakra.



This practice can be applied to each chakra, since the core of each chakra is looked upon as a vacuum at the centre of a vortex of energy in the energy field of the body. From this vacuum emerges new energy into the universe (such as we conceive of it), precisely like the white holes we hear about in the views of astro-physicists.

The metaphysics behind all of this, which can now be confirmed by some modern theories in physics, is that space can be inverted. Physicists speak of tunnelling, linking areas of space in ways that do not fit into classical theories about modes of communication in a space hypothesized as being three dimensional. This is probably one of the ways of understanding the meaning of the Buddhist term *sunyata*, 'the void'. Perhaps it may be helpful to imagine that within these tunnels, space is less densely packed. The central channel, the spinal chord, will appear like a tube, sometimes called a lift shaft, bamboo, or chimney, within which you displace yourself at will.

It is helpful if you can envision yourself as a spotlight of intense light so that, as you move and zoom your light upon the area from within, it lights up. As you explore the internal pathways from inside, you will notice that at each junction (chakra), there are innumerable ramifications whose numbers have been catalogued by yogis. The sanskrit word chakra means a wheel, the spokes of which are these ramifications.

You could engage inside these; beware not to get lost but to return to the main channel. You can confirm that the heart chakra (*anahata*) seems to be home quarters where you come to rest most comfortably. Dwell within it for some time. You will feel a great psychic power, a strong, life giving, magnanimous emotion.

Now transfer your attention to the solar plexus. Can you feel the difference in the energy? The energy seems introverted in comparison with the extroverted energy of the heart chakra. For the moment, you are simply making a trial run. You will need to explore and study each chakra in depth to ascertain its effect on your attunement.

Before you do this, you need to shift your model of yourself further. A more advanced paradigm would consist in considering oneself as a force field rather than a substantial body studded with junctions and tunnelled with worm holes!

This energy field is intricately landscaped. Instead of thinking of pathways, one thinks in terms of streamers of energy specifically contrasting with the energy of the areas they are penetrating. To make this a little more understandable, imagine a current of high intensity streaming through a field of low intensity but much wattage. Similarly, the areas called chakras are now considered as vortices within the energy field, typified by the nature and frequency of their energy in contrast with their environment.



Dwell now in the heart chakra; experience it as a particular brand of energy, its powerful magnetism emerging out of an impersonal, internal, and cosmic power source. It is outgoing, therefore giving, but also all encompassing. The Sufis look upon this energy as a fragment of the heart of God endowed with unlimited magnanimity, unconditional love for all beings, whether likeable or not, reprehensible or not, even criminal. The Hindus liken the awakened and enlivened heart to an oyster which accommodates a grit of sand and transforms it into a pearl, smoothing its edges.

Now compare the way you feel in the heart chakra with what you feel as you transfer your attention and sense of identity to the solar plexus. Dwell within it for some time. It is extremely sensitive, like a vulnerable sensor open to influences accruing from nearby and far away. You will notice wounds: resentment, feelings of rejection, misunderstandings, feelings of underestimation, overstress and scars from earlier wounds hailing from your childhood. If you practise expanding your consciousness, you will pick up distress signals from beings - humans, animals, even plants - suffering agony on the planet and even beyond, at cosmic reaches. You will feel immense compassion.

The Sufis look upon the solar plexus as a fragment of the heart of God. This heart is bleeding because of the cruelty of beings who abuse the Divine gift of free will, a token of God's generosity. By now it must be obvious that the heart chakra and the solar plexus form together the two poles of the same reality, just like joy and pain.

Let us once more explore the nature of the energy field at this junction. Here you really do feel very intensely the negativity of the energy, a suction effect. One imagines a black hole, drawing you into a whole different dimension of reality. Now you are experiencing the *vairagya* (the withdrawal from life, detachment, imperturbability) of the *sannyasin*. In this state, you will find great peace in fact, a peace beyond what one could ever have imagined. It is not indolence; it is a peace out of which a new dispensation of activity emerges. You will be touching upon the new blossoming of your personality before it has jelled into idiosyncrasies. Now you understand what is meant by inverted space: everything is everywhere.

If you bear in mind that you exist at several levels, then you need to consider the aspects of what you have been exploring in the realm of light. Shifting your consciousness to the plane of light, the heart will appear as a miniature sun. You are that miniature sun within the sun. Since the sun does not have a boundary, you bathe within the sun.

Envision yourself now as a solar being, radiant, effulgent. You will now be identifying with the entire aura, but, if you apply the rule of keeping your consciousness turned within, you will look upon the aura as an extension of the heart chakra. That is, the heart chakra is really the radiant centre of the aura. Identify yourself with it; you are a golden light breaking up into arrays of various hues as you extend beyond the centre. Of course, each chakra has its own brand of radiation



contributing to that vast intermeshing of rainbows that is the likeness of the aura. If you concentrate insistently upon this whole pattern of effulgence, you will feel as though you exist in a world of light. The physical world is just a crystallization of that level of reality with which you are now identifying.

If you now shift your identity into the solar plexus, you will feel as though you are plunging into an incandescent gas sucking you into a black hole. Steady yourself, counter the impending dissolution. You will now discover that deep area which is still you and where a lot of psychological waste is being incinerated. The Tibetans describe it as a burning fireball. It burns more brightly by dint of your concentration upon it.

There is here an intricate interaction between physiological and psychological effects. The esoteric chemistry of the body reacts very markedly to our moods. Despair acts adversely upon our ability to transform the physical environment, in the form of food, into the particular pattern of our body cells. Conversely, one can counter this dysfunction by joy; laughter therapy. Out of the raging fire incinerating our impurities, arises the burning flame of love in the heart, another example of the need to work with both chakras in conjunction.

Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan

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