

“AN ANALYTICAL OVERVIEW OF THE SEVEN *CHAKRAS*: ANATOMICAL, SYMBOLIC, AND MEDITATIVE PERSPECTIVES”

Dr. Karishma Joshi¹, Prof. (Dr.) Madhavi Goswami²

1. P.G. Scholar, Department of Rachana Sharir, Rishikul Campus, Haridwar

2. M.D. (Ayu.) Ph.D. (Ayu.) (Former Registrar UAU), P.G.Departmentof Rachana Sharir, Rishikul Campus, Haridwar.

ABSTRACT

This article presents a comprehensive analytical exploration of the classical yogic *Chakra* system from anatomical, symbolic, and meditative perspectives. The *Chakras* have been described by ancient Yogis and sages not through anatomical dissection but through inner meditative experiences. These energy centers are believed to influence physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing. The seven principal chakras—*Muladhara*, *Svadhithana*, *Manipura*, *Anahata*, *Visuddha*, *Agya*, and *Sahasrara*—along with the auxiliary *Bindu chakra*, are described in terms of their etymological roots, elemental correspondences, physiological correlations, and psycho-spiritual functions. Drawing from traditional yogic scriptures and integrating modern anatomical insights, this work elucidates the *Chakras* as dynamic centres of consciousness that govern human physical, emotional, and spiritual development. Iconographic symbolism, associated mantras, and meditative techniques are discussed to underscore their relevance in yogic *Sadhana* and energy transmutation. Each *Chakra* governs a specific set of psycho-physiological functions and serves as a focal point within the *Sukshma Sharira*. The systematic understanding of these energy centres underpins the discipline of *Kundalini Yoga*, which aims to awaken and elevate consciousness through the activation of these energy centres. This article aims to connect ancient spiritual teachings and personal practices with modern academic research.

KEYWORDS- *Chakra* system, Energy centres, *Sukshma Sharira*, *Kundalini*.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of *Chakras*—subtle energy centres within the human body—forms an integral component of ancient Indian yogic and metaphysical traditions. Derived from the Sanskrit word for “wheel” or “circle,” the term *Chakra* refers not to a physical structure but to dynamic vortices of *Pranic* (vital) energy that regulate physiological, psychological, and spiritual processes. Though non-material in nature, *Chakras* are traditionally correlated with specific anatomical locations, particularly along the spinal axis, and are believed to influence both health and consciousness.^[1] Each *Chakra* is associated with particular behavioural tendencies, emotional states, and cognitive functions, many of which remain dormant until consciously activated through disciplined yogic practices such as *Pranayama*, *Dhyana*, and *Mantra Japa*. Symbolically, *Chakras* are depicted as lotuses with varying numbers of petals, inscribed with *Bija mantras*, and are governed by elemental energies (*Mahabhutas*), deities, and animal symbols representing their psychological and transformative aspects. Seven principal chakras—*Muladhara*, *Svadhithana*, *Manipura*, *Anahata*, *Visuddhi*, *Agya*, and *Sahasrara*—are aligned along the *Susumna nadi*, the central channel of the subtle body, which corresponds anatomically to the spinal column. These centres are interconnected by a complex network of *Nadis*, functioning as conduits for energy transmission, analogous to but more subtle than the physical nervous system.^[2] Though deeply embedded in esoteric traditions, the chakra system has found contemporary relevance in integrative medicine, psychology, and somatic therapy, making it a subject of renewed interdisciplinary interest.

OBJECTIVES

This article aims to:

1. **Explore the symbolic, anatomical, and energetic structure** of the seven principal *Chakras* and the auxiliary *Bindu Chakra*.
2. **Establish correlations between *Chakras* and modern anatomical structures**, particularly nerve plexuses and endocrine organs.
3. **Analyze the meditative and psycho-spiritual significance** of each *Chakra*, including their iconography, elemental associations, and *Bija Mantras*.
4. **Highlight the contemporary relevance** of the *Chakra* system in holistic health paradigms, integrating ancient insights with current psycho-energetic and physiological frameworks.

Historical Evolution and Contemporary Relevance of the *Chakra* System

The concept of *Chakras*—subtle energy centres aligned along the human spine—originated within the oral traditions of ancient Indian spirituality and later became foundational to yogic philosophy. Early references to *Chakras* appear in the *Vedas* (1700–1100 BCE) and were further elaborated in the *Brahma and Yogatattva Upanishads*, contributing to the *Tantric Sakti* framework and *Vajrayana* Buddhist thought. [3] By 200 BCE, Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* codified yogic practices, though *Chakras* were more systematically described in later works like the *Yoga Upanishads* (circa 600 CE) and *Goraksha Shatakam* (10th century CE). A landmark text, the *Shatchakra Nirupana* (composed in 1577 CE), offered detailed descriptions of the seven major *Chakras* and their meditative practices. Its 1919 English translation by Sir John Woodroffe (as *The Serpent Power*) introduced the *Chakra* system to Western scholarship. [4] This same volume also includes Avalon's translation of another important *Tantric* text, *Paduka-panchaka* (The Fivefold Footstool) as well as his commentaries on both. [5]

Ancient metaphors such as “*Ashtachakra Navadwara Devanam Purayodhya*” (Vedic reference to the body as a divine city with eight *Chakras* and nine gates) reinforce the enduring symbolic and anatomical relevance of *Chakras* in both traditional and modern wellness paradigms. [6] The 1960s countercultural movements sparked renewed interest in *Chakras* as part of holistic and meditative healing. Today, *Chakras* are integrated into complementary health systems, with growing exploration into their physiological associations—especially their alignment with the endocrine glands and development along the fetal spinal axis.

THE SEVEN CHAKRAS [7], [8], [9], [10], [11], [12]

1. *Muladhara Chakra*: The Root Centre of Primal Energy

- **Etymology & Symbolism:** '*Mula*' means 'root' and '*adhara*' denotes 'support' or 'base', signifying its foundational status in the yogic energy system.
- **Anatomical Correlate:** Located at the perineum in males and at the cervix in females.
- **Associated Gland:** Adrenal glands
- **Elemental Association:** Corresponds to *Prthvi Tattva* (Earth element), signifying stability and groundedness.
- **Sensory & Functional Correlation:** Governs the sense of smell and the excretory system, especially the anus.
- **Iconography:** A four-petalled red lotus with a yellow square (Earth *yantra*), an inverted red triangle representing *Sakti*, a central *Swayambhu linga*, and a coiled red serpent representing *Kundalini*.
- **Psycho-Spiritual Significance:** Acts as the reservoir of dormant *Kundalini* energy, essential for spiritual ascent.
- **Imbalances May Manifest As:** Anxiety, fear of abandonment, chronic fatigue, lower limb issues (e.g., knee pain, sciatica), and digestive stagnation (e.g., constipation)

- **Meditative Focus:** Visualize a red inverted triangle or a yellow square to establish inner stability and vitality.

2. Svadhithana Chakra: The Centre of Subconscious Drives and Sensory Experience

- **Etymology & Symbolism:** Derived from 'Sva' (self) and 'Sthana' (abode).
- **Location:** Two fingerbreadths above *Muladhara*.
- **Associated Glands:** Testes and ovaries
- **Elemental Association:** *Apas Tattva* (Water element).
- **Symbolism:** Crimson lotus with six petals, a white crescent moon, and the *Bija Mantra vam*, symbolized by a crocodile.
- **Physiological Association:** Controls reproductive organs and the tongue.
- **Psycho-Spiritual Relevance:** Stores *Samskaras* (latent impressions); governs emotional expression and instinctual drives.
- **Imbalances May Manifest As:** Sexual dysfunction, infertility, lower back pain, urinary tract issues, emotional repression, resistance to change, and creative stagnation.
- **Meditative Practice:** Visualize a moonlit ocean to harmonize subconscious tendencies.

3. Manipura Chakra: The Centre of Metabolic Fire and Personal Power

- **Etymology:** '*Mani*' means 'jewel', '*pura*' means 'city'.
- **Location:** Lumbar spine, behind the navel.
- **Associated Gland:** Pancreas
- **Elemental Domain:** *Agni Tattva* (Fire element).
- **Iconography:** Ten-petalled yellow lotus with a red downward triangle; *Bija mantra Ram* and *Ram* as its vehicle.
- **Physiological Link:** Governs digestive organs and adrenal glands.
- **Psychological Attributes:** Source of willpower, self-confidence, and personal identity.
- **Imbalances May Manifest As:** Digestive disorders (e.g., ulcers, IBS), diabetes, liver dysfunction, hypertension, eating disorders, low self-esteem, and emotional frustration.
- **Meditation Technique:** Focus on a radiant fire at the navel to stimulate transformation and strength.

4. Anahata Chakra: The Centre of Emotional Integration and Higher Love

- **Etymology:** '*Anahata*' means "unstruck sound."
- **Location:** Thoracic spine, behind the sternum.
- **Associated Gland:** Thymus
- **Elemental Affinity:** *Vayu Tattva* (Air element).
- **Symbolism:** Twelve-petalled blue lotus, hexagram of interlaced triangles, *Bija mantra Yam*, and a black antelope.
- **Physiological Role:** Governs heart, lungs, and circulation.
- **Psycho-Emotional Scope:** Encourages compassion, forgiveness, and universal love.
- **Imbalances May Manifest As:** Feelings of loneliness, grief, respiratory disorders, cardiovascular diseases, and musculoskeletal tension in the upper back and arms
- **Meditative Visual:** Focus on a steady blue flame within the lotus for emotional balance.

5. Visuddhi Chakra: The Centre of Purification and Expressive Intelligence

- **Etymology:** '*Visuddhi*' from '*vi*' (intensified) and '*suddhi*' (purification).
- **Anatomical Position:** Cervical plexus.
- **Associated Glands:** Thyroid and parathyroid
- **Elemental Relation:** *Akasa Tattva* (Ether element).
- **Symbolism:** Sixteen-petalled violet lotus, white circular *yantra*, *Bija mantra ham*, and white elephant.

- **Physiological Domain:** Associated with thyroid, vocal cords, and auditory system.
- **Spiritual Role:** Facilitates pure expression and refinement of spiritual nectar (*amrta*).
- **Imbalances May Manifest As:** Communication difficulties, social anxiety, neck stiffness, thyroid dysfunction, dental issues, and throat infections.
- **Contemplative Practice:** Visualize a luminous drop of nectar or inner sound vibration.

6. *Agya Chakra*: The Command Centre of Intuition and Mental Clarity

- **Etymology & Significance:** '*Agya*' means 'command' or 'perception'; also called *Guru Chakra*.
- **Location:** Behind the eyebrow centre (*Bhrumadhya*).
- **Elemental Nature:** Associated with *Manas* (mind).
- **Symbolism:** Two-petalled silver lotus, *Bija mantra Om*, representing *Ida* and *Pingala Nadis*.
- **Associated Gland:** Pituitary gland and Pineal gland
- **Psychic Function:** Seat of intuition, clairvoyance, and supramental insight.
- **Imbalances May Manifest As:** Poor memory, impaired vision, sinusitis, headaches, neurological disorders, lack of insight, and self-doubt.
- **Meditative Approach:** Focus on a radiant point or Om symbol to access inner wisdom.

7. *Bindu Chakra*: The Subtle Source of Nada and Amrta

- **Meaning & Position:** '*Bindu*' means 'point' or 'drop'; located at the occipital region.
- **Symbolism:** Crescent moon on a dark sky.
- **Functional Significance:** Source of *Nada* (inner sound) and *Amrta* (nectar of immortality).
- **Associated Techniques:** Vital for *Pranayama* and *Mudras* like *Bhramari* and *Sanmukhi*.

8. *Sahasrara Chakra*: The Centre of Supreme Consciousness and Liberation

- **Etymology & Symbolism:** '*Sahasrara*' means 'thousand'; represented by a thousand-petalled lotus.
- **Location:** Cranial crown.
- **Associated Gland:** Pineal gland
- **Transcendental Role:** Beyond elements and dualities; symbolizes *Moksha* and pure awareness.
- **Iconography:** Central *Jyotirlinga* (light-linga) uniting *Siva* and *Sakti*.
- **Esoteric Function:** Enables *samadhi* and ego transcendence.
- **Imbalances May Manifest As:** Spiritual disconnection, depression, existential confusion, apathy, skepticism, and hypersensitivity to sensory stimuli.
- **Meditative Visualization:** Radiant infinite lotus; merging *Jivatman* with *Paramatman*.

This integrative framework highlights how disruptions in *Chakra* functioning can manifest in physical ailments, emotional dysregulation, and spiritual disorientation. Recognizing these patterns provides valuable insight into the holistic interconnection between subtle energy dynamics and modern psychosomatic health.

Table 1- Below is the brief description of Seven *Chakras*:

<i>Chakra</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Dal</i>	<i>Varna</i>	<i>Dev</i>	<i>Yantra</i>	<i>Tatva</i>	<i>Shakti</i>	<i>Indriya</i>
<i>Mooladhara</i>	<i>Ling v Guda Madhya</i>	4	<i>Rakta</i>	<i>Brahma</i>	<i>Chatushkon</i>	<i>Prithvi</i>	<i>Dakini</i>	<i>Nasika &guda</i>
<i>Swadhisthan</i>	<i>Ling moola</i>	6	<i>Sindoor</i>	<i>Vishnu</i>	<i>Chandrakar</i>	<i>Jal</i>	<i>Rakini</i>	<i>Rasna, Linga, Yoni</i>
<i>Manipur</i>	<i>Nabhi</i>	10	<i>Neel</i>	<i>VridhaRudra</i>	<i>Trikon</i>	<i>Agni</i>	<i>Lakini</i>	<i>Netra , Charan</i>
<i>Anaahat</i>	<i>Hridhpradesh</i>	12	<i>Aruna</i>	<i>IshaanRudra</i>	<i>Shadkon</i>	<i>Vayu</i>	<i>Kakini</i>	<i>Hasta, Twacha</i>

<i>Visudh</i>	<i>Kanthpradesh</i>	16	<i>Dhumra</i>	<i>Panchvktra</i>	<i>Sunyachakra</i>	<i>Aakash</i>	<i>Shakini</i>	<i>Karna, Vaak</i>
<i>Aagya</i>	<i>Bhrumadhya</i>	2	<i>Shweta</i>	<i>Ling</i>	<i>Tapah</i>	<i>Mahat</i>	<i>Haakini</i>	–

- **Correlation Between *Chakras* and the Endocrine System and its application in Human life**

The *Chakras* are often associated with the body's endocrine glands, which are responsible for hormonal regulation. The stimulation and activation of these *Chakras* through systematic yogic practices are believed to initiate transformations at multiple levels of human functioning—physical, psychological, and spiritual. *Kundalini* awakening (*Kundalini Jagrana*) involves a sequential and deliberate activation of the six major *Chakras* along the spinal column. This process, when interpreted through the lens of modern science, aligns with the stimulation of the endocrine system. Each *Chakra* is said to correspond to a particular endocrine gland and a related neural plexus, suggesting a Neuroendocrine interface through which Yogic *Sadhana* may affect bodily functions and psychological well-being. [13] From an Ayurvedic standpoint, this interaction may be mediated via *Vata Dosha*, the principle responsible for movement and neural activity in the body. The anatomical proximity and functional association between individual *Chakras* and their corresponding glands—such as the hypothalamus-pituitary complex (*Agya Chakra*), thyroid gland (*Vishuddha Chakra*), or adrenal glands (*Manipura Chakra*), provide a plausible explanation for the holistic effects of *Chakra*-oriented practices on personality development and self-regulation. Thus, the integrative view of *Chakra* physiology, combining yogic philosophy, Ayurveda, and modern Neuroendocrinology, offers a compelling framework to understand how spiritual disciplines can naturally facilitate comprehensive growth i.e, physiological, emotional, and cognitive leading to overall well-being and spiritual elevation. A critical examination of this *Chakra*-endocrine interplay may offer deeper insights into the psychosomatic processes that underlie health, transformation, and consciousness. [14]

Table 2: *Chakras* relation with location and endocrine glands

<i>Chakra</i>	Site in the Body	Endocrine glands
<i>Agya</i>	Head	Pituitary and Pineal
<i>Vishudha</i>	Neck	Thyroid and Parathyroid
<i>Annahat</i>	Thorax	Thymus
<i>Manipur</i>	Abdomen	Pancreas and adrenal
<i>Swadhisthan</i>	Pelvis	Gonads
<i>Mooladhara</i>	Pelvis	Gonads

- **The Energetic Interplay of *Chakras*:**

The concept of *Chakras*—subtle energy centers embedded within the human body—forms a foundational principle in yogic and Ayurvedic thought. These "energy wheels" are perceived as dynamic vortices that mediate the flow of *Prana*, or vital life force, thereby influencing physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being. From a bioenergetic standpoint, *Chakras* are theorized to resonate with specific vibratory frequencies reflective of broader cosmic energies, integrating the human system with the universal electromagnetic field. The energetic influx is believed to originate from the Earth's magnetic force, ascending through the lower *Chakras* located along the spinal axis, and eventually reaching the higher *Chakras* associated with cognition and transcendence. This pranic flow is not unidirectional; rather, it functions as a bidirectional and cyclical current, maintaining a dynamic equilibrium between grounding and transcendence. *Chakras* thus serve as mediators between the macrocosmic field of universal energy and the microcosmic structure of the individual. [15]

• **Balancing the *Chakras*: Therapeutic Interventions and Implications**

Imbalances within the *Chakra* system are considered to disrupt the harmonious flow of energy, potentially leading to a range of physiological disorders and psychological disturbances. The interdependence among *Chakras* suggests that dysregulation in one center may propagate instability in others, contributing to complex patterns of energetic disequilibrium. Various integrative techniques are utilized to assess and restore *Chakra* balance. These include breath modulation (*Pranayama*), visualization techniques, vocal toning (*Mantra Japa*), chromotherapy (color therapy), auditory stimulation (sound therapy), olfactory interventions using essential oils, as well as somatic practices such as yoga and *Chakra*-focused meditation. Each method targets the vibrational frequency associated with specific *Chakras* to either stimulate underactive centers or pacify overactive ones, thereby re-establishing energetic coherence. ^[16]

• **Therapeutic Significance and Advantages of *Chakra* Healing**

The regulation and harmonization of the *Chakra* system—termed *Chakra* balancing—is emerging as a complementary therapeutic modality in the management of various physical and mental health disorders. While *Chakra* healing alone is not positioned as a replacement for biomedical interventions, its integration with pharmacological treatments and lifestyle modifications may enhance therapeutic outcomes. Balanced *Chakra* are believed to support optimal energy production, efficient removal of psychological toxins, and the cultivation of positive mental states. Energetic coherence across the *Chakra* network may contribute to improved emotional resilience, mental clarity, hormonal stability, and immune regulation. Notably, *Chakra* healing has been implicated in addressing glandular dysfunctions and hormonal imbalances—underlying etiologies of numerous chronic and psychosomatic conditions. As an adjunctive intervention, *Chakra* therapy aligns with the principles of holistic medicine by fostering alignment between body, mind, and consciousness. Further interdisciplinary research is warranted to substantiate its physiological correlates and to explore its applicability in integrative clinical settings. ^[17]

CONCLUSION

The *Chakra* system is understood as an interconnected network of subtle energy centers that collectively influence physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. While theoretical knowledge of *Chakras* provides a foundational understanding, the cultivation of awareness and intentional focus on these centers through practical methods is considered essential for holistic health. Energy imbalances within the *Chakra* system are often associated with specific emotional disturbances, psychosomatic symptoms, or disease states. Although sustained engagement in practices such as meditation, Yoga, aromatherapy, prayer, or affirmation-based therapies may not be feasible for every individual in the context of modern lifestyles, even a basic awareness of the subtle body and the signs of energetic disharmony can encourage more mindful responses to distress. Recognizing and addressing *Chakra* imbalances offers a constructive alternative to reliance on maladaptive coping strategies, such as emotional eating, substance use, or overdependence on pharmacological interventions. This integrative approach to self-regulation and healing promotes deeper alignment between body, mind, and spirit.

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