

LLEWELLYN'S
TRUTH ABOUT

Chakras

ANODEA JUDITH



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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THE SYSTEM OF CHAKRAS

A chakra is a *spinning vortex of energy* created within ourselves by the interpenetration of consciousness and the physical body. Through this combination, chakras become *centers of activity for the reception, assimilation, and transmission of life energies*. Uniting the chakras is what we experience as the “self.” It is through our chakras that our self grows and changes and interacts with the world.

The word *chakra* comes from the Sanskrit word for “wheel” or “disk” and originated within the philosophy of the ancient yoga systems of India, most specifically from the Tantric texts. In this system, there are seven major chakras arranged vertically along the spine, starting at the base of the spine and ending at the top of the head (see Figure 1). In the physical body, these seven chakras correspond to major nerve ganglia, glands of the endocrine system, and various bodily processes, such as breathing, digesting, or procreating. While the chakras do exist *within* the physical body, exhibiting strong influence on such things as body shape or health, they are not made of any physical components themselves. A physician could not operate on a chakra anymore than an emotion, yet both can and do affect us physically.

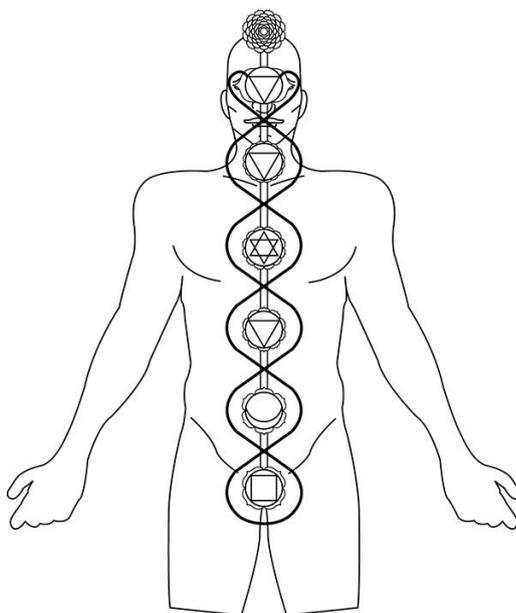


Figure 1

In the psychological realm (by which I include the mental, emotional, and spiritual) the chakras correspond to major areas of our lives, such as survival, sex, power, love, communication, perception, and understanding (see [Table of Correspondences](#)).

Taking the original meaning of the word chakra one step further, the chakras within us can be seen as our internal “floppy disks” that store our programming about how to function in life. The base chakra contains our survival program, such as what we like to eat and when we need exercise; the second chakra—our sexuality program, such as

ethics and preferences; the upper chakras—our modes of perception and information storage. Our body is like a computer, with each of us being a slightly different model, programmed in a distinct language with a unique operating system. Ideally, one's work on the chakras is to examine the programming we have been given on each of these levels, eliminating destructive programming and consciously recreating something more beneficial.

Philosophically, the chakras correspond to major archetypal concepts, such as the elements of earth, water, fire, air, sound, *light*, and thought. The elements describe the essential nature of that *chakra*'s function, such as earth that contains, water that flows, or fire that transforms. Numerous other correspondences, such as colors, sounds, herbs, and gemstones, have also been correlated to the chakras and can be used as tools for accessing and developing them.

There are many smaller chakras throughout the body, such as those in our hands and feet. These are functioning centers like any of the others but are not usually attributed to major philosophical areas. Yet those working with their hands are likely to have well-developed hand chakras, and a runner might have well-developed channels through their foot chakras.

As a composite system, the seven chakras describe a set of patterns that are evident through many aspects of life. In terms of cultural evolution, they describe the stages the human race has been through and where we are going, from the (first chakra) survival consciousness of the Paleolithic era to the power-dominated (third chakra) consciousness of the present era.

In terms of individual development, the chakras describe the progression from infancy to early adulthood that repeats itself again from adulthood to old age as we establish our survival strategies, form sexual relationships, develop our personal power, communicate, dream, and learn. As we understand the significance of these levels, we can better develop appropriate strategies for coping with our situations, whether personal or cultural.

CHAKRA	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN
SANSKRIT NAME	muladhara	swadhisthana	manipura	anahata	vissudha	ajna	sahasrara
LOCATION	perineum	lower abdomen	solar plexus	heart	throat	forehead	top of head
ELEMENT	earth	water	fire	air	ether/sound	light	thought
PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTION	survival, grounding	emotions, sexuality	will, power	love, balance	communication, creativity	clairvoyance, imagination	understanding, knowing
EMOTION	stillness	desire, tears	anger, joy, laughter	love, compassion	expansion, excitement	dreaming	bliss
GLANDS	adrenals	ovaries, prostate, testicles	pancreas	thymus	hypothalamus, thyroid	pineal	pituitary
OTHER ASSOC. BODY PARTS	legs, bones, large intestine	womb, genitals, kidneys, bladder	stomach, musculature	lungs, heart, arms, hands	throat, ears, mouth, arms, hands	eyes	cns, cerebral cortex
MALFUNCTION	obesity, hemorrhoids, constipation	impotence, frigidity, uterine or bladder trouble	ulcers, diabetes, hypoglycemia	asthma, high blood pressure	thyroid, colds, flu	blindness, headaches, nightmares	depression, alienation, confusion

CHAKRA	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR	FIVE	SIX	SEVEN
# OF PETALS	4	6	10	12	16	2	1,000+
COLOR	red	orange	yellow	green	blue	indigo	violet
SEED SOUND	lam	vam	ram	sam, yam	ham	om	
VOWEL SOUND	o, as in rope	oo, as in due	ah, as in father	ay, as in play	ee, as in see	mmm, nnn	ngng, asinsing
TAROT SUITS	pentacles	cups	wands	swords			
VERB	i have	i feel	i can	i love	i speak	i see	i know
QABALS	malkuth	yesod	hod, netzach	tiphareth	gaburah, chased	binah, chokmah	kether
PLANETS	earth, saturn	moon	mars, sun	venus	mercury, neptune	jupiter	uranus
ANIMALS	elephant	crocodile	ram	antelope	deer	owl	

Figure 2

Chakras are sometimes referred to as lotuses—for they open and close like a flower—and in the Tantric system, they are shown with a varying number of petals. The petals, ranging from four at the base chakra to 1,000 or more at the crown, express their vibratory rate (see *Table of Correspondences*, Figure 2).

When a chakra is closed, the life force energy cannot travel through that part of the body, and one might say that the programming in that chakra is locked in a restrictive pattern. If this is the case, we feel a lack in our lives in its related area (such as the ability to communicate, chakra 5) and our physical health in that chakra may also be affected (sore throat, tight neck, etc.).

A chakra can also be “overblown” if it is out of balance with the other chakras in the system. In this case, that particular chakra uses so much of the body’s energy and the mind’s attention that other areas become deficient. For example, an overblown third chakra causes an attachment to holding power over others, hindering the ability to find the love and balance associated with the heart chakra directly above it. As the chakras are discussed individually in the following pages, the results of a chakra that is too closed or too open will be examined more closely.

With attention and understanding, we can control and influence our chakras. They can be developed like muscles, programmed like a computer, nurtured like a seed, or closed like a book. Development of the chakras occurs through understanding the system as a whole and then working directly on specific areas. Techniques may include physical exercises, processing of old traumas through therapy, visualization

and meditation, chanting of mantras, working with their elements, herbs, or gemstones, and personal ritual, as well as the general lessons that are brought to us through our daily lives.

The chakras can also be seen as the wheels of life that carry this vehicle through its evolutionary journey toward enlightenment. Within us these wheels are like gears, *each* one appropriate for different activities or stages of life. As we open our chakras, we become more conscious and more fully alive. Our journey becomes smoother, more productive, yet more exciting as we become more fully who we are.

KUNDALINI

Kundalini is a concept often spoken of in relation to the chakras. Mythologically, Kundalini is a serpent goddess who lies asleep at the base of the spine, coiled three and a half times around the first chakra, awaiting unfoldment. When she is awakened through any of a number of techniques, she unfolds and rises through the center of the body, piercing and awakening each chakra as she goes. When she has risen to the top of the head (crown chakra), then all of the chakras have been opened, and a person is said to experience enlightenment.

What is this strange and mysterious Goddess force? I like to think of Kundalini as a metaphor of connecting gears. In an undeveloped person, the chakras are likely to be small. Each one is spinning in its relative place, but the spinning of one does not necessarily affect the spinning of another. As the chakras grow through the capacity to handle increased energy, they are more likely to touch each other and thereby stimulate the spinning of a chakra above or below. When this occurs, we feel an increased rush of energy and awareness throughout our whole system. We experience the Kundalini force.

Kundalini is a strong and powerful force which can produce radical physical and mental changes. Some find it hard to function in the day-to-day world when the Kundalini force is strong. Others find it an exhilarating and enlightening experience. Some say it is sublimated sexual energy; others say it is vibrational rhythm entrainment between brain waves and physiological subsystems. There are many theories and none of them are conclusive. It can be triggered by yoga practices, meditation, physical stimulation (such as a car accident or strenuous exercise), mental excitement (scary movies sometimes do it to me), or by a learned master in the art of Kundalini awakening. It is generally *not* advisable to invoke Kundalini without a teacher or support system that can help you process the changes it may bring. It is however, a *healing force*, and is most beneficial to us when we can surrender to it gracefully.

OPENING THE HAND CHAKRAS

To experience what a chakra feels like, try the following exercise.

Sit comfortably with your hands pushed straight out in front of you, elbows straight. Turn one palm downward and one palm up. Quickly, with repeated motions, open and close your fists tightly, as fast and for as long as you comfortably can. Switch the positions of your palms and repeat until your hands are tired. Drop your arms, open your fists, and bring your palms together *slowly*, moving them together and out again. Do you feel a ball of energy between your hands? If you tune in closely, you can feel the spinning. These are your hand chakras, a smaller version of your spinal chakras.

MULADHARA—THE ROOT CHAKRA

Element: Earth

Color: Red

Verb: I have

Attributes: Survival, grounding, solidity, the body

The first chakra is found at the base of the spine, the point you are sitting on right now. Its name, *Muladhara*, means “root,” and the paths of energy in this chakra extend downward like a root through the legs and feet to contact the solid Earth below. Its color is a deep red, and its symbol is a lotus of four petals within which is a downward-pointing triangle, symbolizing root energy.

A simple way to energize this chakra is to sit up straight in your chair with your feet flat against the floor and push slightly into your feet. Your legs will tighten a bit and there will be an increased flow into your base chakra. As you relax your legs and feet, you will feel that flow recede, and as you tighten them, you can feel your body become more solid. It is not necessary to push into our legs at all times for the first chakra to function, but this is a simple way we can increase the flow of energy into our lower body while doing such mental tasks as working at a desk, talking on the phone, watching TV, or sitting in a job interview.

The Muladhara chakra is the *foundation* for the whole chakra system. Its function is to respond to any issues concerning *survival*: eating, sleeping, *exercising*, recovering from illness, earning a living, or simply feeling safe and secure. If our survival needs are properly taken care of, then we can safely focus on other levels, such as learning, creativity, or relationships. If there is some damage to this chakra, then we find ourselves repeatedly coping with threats to our survival which keeps us from accomplishing other things. These threats might be changing jobs, having to move, *recurrent* health problems, weight problems, and/or a general feeling of fear for one’s safety.

These are all issues that occur occasionally in the normal course of one’s life. Anytime they occur, they trigger our first chakra programming. Having to move may make us feel insecure, bring on a cold, or make us eat more. It is only when such issues become a *frequent pattern* that a first chakra problem is indicated.

Survival consciousness is the primary state of the infant, and if this phase of life is properly taken care of, it should not be a recurrent issue later in life. Children who are abandoned, separated from their mothers at birth (such as incubator babies), physically abused, or suffering from severe childhood illnesses will be more likely to have first chakra problems throughout their lives.

The result can be the situational problems mentioned above, as well as psychological problems having to do with lack of focus or discipline, dependency issues, possible eating disorders, feeling vague and “spacy,” and a general inability to “let go and relax.” These are all signs that the first chakra is blocked in some way, generally indicating that the chakra does not open properly and allow energy to flow through freely.

If, on the other hand, the chakra is too open, then we become overly attached at this level. We may be obsessed with money and possessions or our health, unable to allow change to occur or to let go, and as a result, we get stuck in the same routines, same old job, and same old patterns.

When the chakra is closed, we lack stability. When it is too open, we are frozen solid. The ideal state would be to have stability *and* flexibility in balance.

The element associated with the first chakra, is earth. Earth is solid, earth is heavy, earth is below us, and earth supplies us with our survival needs: food, clothing, and shelter. The universal force that flows downward, like roots, toward the Earth is gravity. Gravity is created by mass—the more mass something has, the stronger its gravity. The force of gravity allows us to stay connected with the Earth. We need not *do* anything, and gravity is there. When we allow ourselves to flow gracefully with gravity, we are in harmony with the downward flow of the first chakra.

The common term for this flow as it occurs in the human body is *grounding*. Grounding is a process of dynamic contact with the Earth that occurs through our legs and feet. When grounding is done appropriately, our whole body is nourished and energized.

Grounding is the building of a foundation. We ground ourselves in biology and chemistry before practicing medicine. We build a foundation before we build the walls of a house. Without a good foundation, nothing that follows will be as durable. Grounding puts us in touch with our bodies. Uncovering the truths buried within our bodies brings us to a solid connection with our ground, manifesting in greater health, prosperity, and well-being.

Eating is a basic first chakra survival activity. Without food, we will not survive very long. Eating disorders (too much or too little) often indicate first chakra imbalance. Eating is a grounding activity—it helps to bring us down, helps us to feel settled, calm, secure. Excess weight can be an attempt to ground out high stress, to protect the body, or to replace proper grounding techniques. Eating too little or being

chronically underweight can be an attempt to avoid grounding and physicality because it seems too frightening or confining.

GROUNDING EXERCISE

Stand upright with your feet shoulder width apart, toes slightly in. (Take your shoes off so you can feel the floor under you.) Press into your feet as if you were trying to push the floorboards apart between your feet. You will feel a solidity come into your legs as you do this. This comes from pushing down into your feet.

Once you can feel that solidity, you are ready to begin the exercise. Inhale deeply and bend your knees, letting your belly relax. Now exhale and push into your feet *s-l-o-w-l-y*, pushing as you did before and allowing your legs to slowly straighten. Do not let them straighten all the way but bend them again and inhale as you go down into your legs. Push again against the floor as you exhale, pushing your energy downward through your body.

Do not completely straighten your legs, keep breathing, and move slowly. If you are doing this correctly, you will start to feel a slow vibration in your legs as you push against the floor. This vibration is the charge of energy moving through your legs and into your first chakra. It can be used to push out blocks, to increase your sense of contact with your body, or to simply make you feel awake and refreshed.

It is possible to get overcharged, however, so exercise caution in how long you keep this up. If you get overcharged and feel anxious, kick your feet into a pile of pillows, shake your body, or let out whatever feelings are arising.

SWADHISTHANA—THE SEAT OF LIE

Element: Water

Color: Orange

Verb: I feel, I want

Attributes Polarity, movement, sexuality, pleasure, emotion

We have come from the Earth, energy that is still, solid, dense. We have gained an understanding of our bodies, our grounding, and things associated with one. We are now ready to introduce a new dimension.

As we enter the second chakra, we encounter *change*. Our singleness becomes duality; one point becomes a line; the solid, a liquid; stillness becomes movement. We have gained a degree of freedom.

Through change we create and discover difference. Difference, at its extremes, creates polarities. Polarities create attraction and movement. Movement is essential and characteristic of all life.

The second chakra is in the lower abdomen, centered between the navel and the genitals. It corresponds to the sacral vertebrae and the nerve ganglion called the sacral plexus. This plexus hooks into the sciatic nerve and is a center of motion for the body.

It is often called the "seat of life." Its element is water. Therefore, the chakra corresponds with bodily functions having to do with liquid: circulation, urinary elimination, sexuality and reproduction. Traditionally, this chakra is the center of sexuality, emotions, sensation, pleasure, movement, and nurturance. Like water, it is ruled by the Moon, which influences the tides and our emotions.

The Sanskrit name for the second chakra is *Swadhisthana*, which means "sweetness." This is an apt name for the sweetness of desire, pleasure, and sexuality associated with the life-giving waters of Swadhisthana. Its color is orange, and its lotus contains a crescent Moon surrounded by six petals.

The second chakra embodies the nature of "two" and runs on polarity, instigating the movement in the body and psyche that begins the process of coiled Kundalini as she rises through the chakras. Encountering "other" creates desire, and desire gets us to move, to reach out, to grow and change.

All the chakras are connected by a nonphysical channel running straight up the spine called the *sushumna*. Two alternate channels, *ida* and *pingala*, twist in figure-eight like patterns around each chakra, crossing the *sushumna*. These channels are among thousands of psychic channels called *nadis* (from *nad*, meaning "motion"). *Ida* and *pingala* represent the lunar and solar aspects, respectively. They are responsible for "charging" the chakras, causing them to spin.

We have added a degree of consciousness to our bodily awareness. Our psychic sense at this level is experienced in the form of emotions. We may "feel" something is wrong, but the information is not yet conscious. If the chakra is too open, there is a tendency to feel everyone else's emotions or to be overly ruled by one's own emotions with frequent and drastic emotional episodes. If the chakra is closed down, then we are flat, dull, lifeless, dry. We are out of touch with our emotions, have very little desire or passion, and little or no interest in sex.

Ideally, we should be able to embrace polarities, feel our emotions, and express ourselves sexually without losing the connection with our own center.

The main aspect of the second chakra, however, is *sexuality*. Sexuality is a life force. It is the water that softens the hard Earth and readies it for change. It is a force too often denied or perverted, and being robbed of our pleasure, we are robbed of our power. When we lose our desire, we lose our will. Power and will are attributes of the next chakra, and pleasure and desire are their seed. Sexuality is the flower of that seed. Power and will are its fruits.

EXERCISE

Pelvic Rock 1

Lie flat on your back with your knees bent so that the soles of your feet are planted firmly on the floor. Breathe into your chest fully and exhale completely, pushing into

your feet at the end of the exhale and tipping your pelvis upward. Imagine you are pushing the breath out between your legs.

When the exhale is spent, relax your legs and hips, returning them to the floor, and inhale fully into your chest again. Then repeat. Keep this going for a minimum of five minutes to feel the effects.

Pelvis Rock 2

If the first one stirs up a great deal of energy, or if there is too much stiffness to perform it smoothly, try repeating the same sequence much faster. In this exercise, the *pelvis* is snapped up and back quickly, with as much force as possible. Let yourself make any sounds that come naturally. This helps to release blocked energy (make sure you do this on something soft, like a yoga mat, rug, or bed).

MANIPURA—THE POWER CHAKRA

Element: Fire

Color: Yellow

Verb: I can

Attributes: Power, will, energy, transformation

Earth, water, fire. With our bodies grounded and our emotions flowing, we now move on to power, energy, and will.

This is our third chakra, a yellow lotus of ten petals, located at the solar plexus—the place where we get those butterfly feelings when we feel scared or powerless. Its element is fire—fire that radiates and transforms matter into energy, giving light and warmth. This chakra represents our “get up and go,” our action, our will, our vitality, and our sense of personal power. Its name, *Manipura*, means “lustrous gem.” We can think of it as a glowing yellow Sun, radiating through the center of our body.

On the physical plane, the third chakra rules metabolism, the process whereby we turn food (matter) into energy and action.

Digestion troubles, stomach troubles, hypoglycemia, diabetes, ulcers, or addictions to stimulants such as caffeine are all related to the malfunctioning of the third chakra. Weight problems may also be an indication that the body is not properly turning its matter into energy.

We can also assess the health of this chakra by examining our body structure at this level: tight, hard stomachs, sunken diaphragms, or large potbellies are all indications of third chakra excess or deficiency.

Examining your relationship to the properties of fire can give further clues to the nature of your third chakra. Are you frequently cold, physically or emotionally? Do you get overheated, hot-tempered? Is your style quick and energetic, or slow and lethargic?

When the third chakra is closed down, one may feel tired, afraid, shaky, quiet, or withdrawn. There is a fear of taking risks, confronting people or issues, taking charge, and with all this, a lack of energy. There may be too much seriousness and not enough laughter, ease, or fun, all of which help the third chakra open and relax. Pleasure from the chakra below helps make the fire warm and easy; without it, our fires are cold and hard.

If the chakra is too open, then we have a kind of bully archetype—someone who also needs to be in control, to dominate, to seek after power, prestige, ambition. As the lower chakras in general are more ego-oriented, third chakra excess can make a person narcissistically self-centered. An appropriate concept for a healthy balance in this chakra is the archetype of the warrior—standing strong, staying in touch with feelings, confronting only when appropriate, and quietly maintaining a sense of power. A healthy third chakra can take on a task and complete it, take on a risk and not be bound by perfectionism, or act in the role of leadership without domination or self-aggrandizement.

In the second chakra we encountered desire. Desire is the fuel for the will, the passion within our body giving strength to our decisions. Fire is the spark of life that ignites will to action. Fire is the spark that lies between the poles, and the third chakra creates power by combining the polarity introduced by the second chakra, just as electricity is made by the combination of polarities. Having made yet another step toward consciousness, we now temper our desires and instincts with knowledge, making decisions that are then put into action, again combining the poles of mind and body.

Power, then, is seen as an act of combination, of joining together parts to make a greater whole. When we embrace and combine all the parts within us—our bodies, our emotions, our visions, our knowledge—then we emerge whole and powerful.

A good rule of thumb for stimulating the third chakra is to get your energy moving. Jogging, yelling, or pounding a pillow can help you loosen up. Or you might try the following exercise:

EXERCISE

Woodchopper

Stand with your feet planted firmly on the ground, knees slightly bent, heels about two feet apart. Raise your arms together over your head with hands joined. Arch your back slightly. Making an "ah" sound as you descend, swing the whole upper portion of the body downward, bringing your hands between your legs and through. The motion should be smooth and rapid, emitting as much force and power as possible. Let the sound be full and loud. Repeat five to ten times in a session, and feel the energy break through into your upper body. This exercise is also an excellent anger release.

ANAHATA—THE HEART CHAKRA

Element: Air

Color: Green

Verb: I love

Attributes: Love, balance, relationship, compassion

We are now halfway through our seven-leveled chakra system. Below us are the first three chakras which relate to things and activities in the external physical world. Above us are the top three chakras which relate to internal representations of the physical world that are experienced mentally. The fourth chakra, located over the heart, is the balance point between these two extremes: the integrator of mind and body, believed to be the central home of the spirit.

The twelve-petaled lotus symbol of the heart chakra contains within it two intersecting triangles forming a six-pointed star. These triangles represent the force of matter moving upward toward liberation and the force of spirit moving into manifestation. It is at this chakra that they are evenly combined, creating a center of peace and balance. Its seed sound is “yam” and its animal is an antelope, running free.

The heart chakra is related to the element of air and the quality of love. Air is formless, largely invisible, absolutely necessary, and the least dense of our elements. Air is expansive as it will expand to fit any space it is put into, yet it is soft and gentle.

So, too, is love. Love is the expansion of the heart, the transcendence of boundaries, the interconnectedness of spirit. Love is balance, ease, softness, forgiveness. And love at the heart chakra is felt as a state of being, existing independently of any object or person, unlike the passion-oriented love of the second chakra.

The Sanskrit name for this chakra is *Anahata*, which means “sound that is made without any two things striking.” This describes a state where we are no longer fighting or confronting what we love but moving with it in graceful harmony. The fight of the third chakra gives way to graceful acceptance in the fourth.

Because Anahata is related to the element of air, it is accessible through the breath. The Hindus call the breath *prana*, which means “first unit,” and they believe it contains the essence of all vitality and nourishment, being the point of commonality between the mental and physical worlds. Opening up the breath, unloosening whatever tensions are constricting it, is a way of accessing the heart chakra.

If the heart chakra is closed down, the very core of us suffers. Our breathing is shallow, slowing down our metabolism and our physical energy. Blocked at the center, we feel divided between mind and body. We pull in to ourselves, withdraw, and become a closed system. When the heart chakra is too open, there is a tendency to give all our time and energy away, to be so focused on “other” that we lose our own center.

Ideally, the heart chakra should radiate love from a strong, solid center of self-acceptance and reach out with supportive care and compassion toward others. With its

essential message of balance, our self-love and love for others need to be balanced and interconnected. Directly below the heart chakra is another small lotus that is seldom talked about but is significant to the heart chakra. Called the *Anandakanda lotus*, it has eight petals and contains the *Kalpataru*, or the Celestial Wishing Tree. In front of the tree is an altar for worship, and it is believed that the tree contains the deeper wishes of the heart chakra—those things we hardly dare name but are most integral to our deepest hopes. It is believed that when one worships at this altar by wishing from the heart, the tree bestows even more than is desired.

The operating force in this chakra is the force of *equilibrium*. That which stays in balance has longevity and lives in harmony. Enter the peaceful balance of the heart within yourself and others, and you will experience, the mysteries of Anahata.

EXERCISE

The Arch

Form the grounding position of chakra one and begin breathing into your legs, building up some charge. Then bring the charge into your pelvis by moving your hips back and forth until your second chakra feels some of this same energy.

When your hips and belly feel connected, begin to form an arch with your body, keeping your knees bent, thrusting your pelvis forward, then your stomach and chest, and finally reaching upward with your arms, head back. (Be gentle with your spine, and do *not* hold this position if you start to feel any discomfort.)

If you are holding the position correctly, you should feel a vibration in your chest. Breathe into this and relax as much as you can in this difficult position, imagining a green light filling and opening your heart. Return *slowly* to your upright position, keeping the knees slightly bent, and slowly return your arms to your sides, eyes closed. Stand at rest a few moments to feel the effects of this exercise. Repeat when ready.

VISSUDHA—THE THROAT CHAKRA

Element: Sound

Color: Bright Blue

Verb: I speak

Attributes: Sound, vibration, communication, creativity

Chakra 5 is located in the region of the neck and shoulders and is the center of *communication and creativity*. Its color is a bright turquoise blue, mixing the deep indigo of the sixth chakra with the green of the heart. Its lotus has 16 petals, upon which are inscribed all the vowels of the Sanskrit language. Vowels are generally thought to represent spirit, while consonants give the edges and definitions which define matter. As we enter chakra 5, we are crossing deeper into the realms of mind and spirit.

This lotus is called *Vissudha*, which means “purification.” To successfully reach and open the fifth chakra, the body must attain a certain level of purification, which helps to achieve the sensitivity needed for the subtler levels of the upper chakra.

Classically, the element associated with this level is ether, or *akasha*, meaning “spirit,” as well as the element of sound. Sound is a rhythmic vibration of air molecules as they are impacted by matter in movement. If I clap my hands, the sound that reaches you is from the air I have displaced. All sound is a vibration, and all things, living and nonliving, have a unique vibration. At this level, we do not just see the world as individual things or their activities, but as a complex interwoven net of energies with characteristic vibrational rhythms. The Hindus believe that the universe itself is made of sound. Mother Kali, the destroyer, is said to have the power to remove the letters of the alphabet from the petals of the chakras when she chooses to destroy the world. Without sound and language, there is no form.

Sound waves are subject to a principle called *resonance*, also known as “rhythm entrainment” or “sympathetic vibration.” Resonance is what occurs when sound waves of similar frequency meet—they lock into phase with their vibrations oscillating at the same time. That which is in phase tends to remain in phase; hence, the interlocking of vibrational waves creates the ongoing harmony and substance that we experience in the world. Our breathing, heart rate, brain waves, and sleeping and eating patterns are all rhythmic activities that “entrain” or connect us with the world around us. When we are feeling harmonious with our surroundings, then our internal rhythms are resonating within ourselves. This resonance will, in turn, call other wave forms into harmony with it, bringing strength and integrity to the organism.

From sound comes communication. Communication is the activity and function of the fifth chakra. Here we have language, a complex pattern of sound and rhythm, through which we symbolize the physical world around us. Through symbol, we have a more efficient way of dealing with the world. I can describe my car, but I can’t bring it into the room with me. I can call New York without actually going there. Our minds work with symbols. We think in words, as well as images and sensory memory. The world of the upper chakras is symbolic of the world below.

Communication is a rhythmic activity. The more resonant our own internal rhythms, the more easily and pleasantly we will communicate. Studies have shown that regardless of the content of words used, listeners and speakers enter into a rhythm entrainment as they converse. It is believed that understanding occurs only when entrainment can take place.

Communication involves both listening and speaking. If one’s fifth chakra is closed down, then there is fear of expressing oneself, fear of speaking one’s truth, or excessive shyness. The voice itself is timid and the words are few. If the chakra is too open, we are so busy expressing that we forget to listen or our voice is dissonant, and we are unable to enter into resonance with those around us. Ideally, the fifth chakra

should be connected to the self—to all the other chakras above and below—to visions of the mind and the feelings from body with equal ease.

Chanting is an activity that increases the overall resonance of our being, allowing all our internal systems to enter into a rhythmic harmony. When chanting is practiced as a group activity, it enhances resonance and communication within the group as a whole. From Zen monasteries to rock concerts, this is a powerful tool for enhancing collective consciousness. The fifth chakra is also a center of creativity, another form of symbolic communication. As we open up this center, we open up our creative potential. The greater our resonance within, the greater the power within our creations.

Experiment with the resonant frequency of your chakras by chanting the following tones with each chakra, varying the pitch from low to higher as you climb up the chakras. Try to find the pitch that resonates with your body. Work on letting your sound be full-bodied and resonant.

Chakra One: O as in home

Chakra Two: U as in rule

Chakra Three: Ah as in father

Chakra Four: Ay as in play

Chakra Five: Ee as in free

Chakra Six: Mm as in hum

Chakra Seven: Ng as in sing

AJNA—THE VISION CENTER

Element: Light

Color: Indigo

Verb: I see

Attributes: Clairvoyance, memory, dreams, vision, color

Chakra 6, located at the level of the forehead, is also known as the third eye. A lotus with only two petals, it is visualized as a deep indigo blue. This is the center of visual, psychic, and intuitive perception—the place where we store our memories, perceive our dreams, and imagine our futures.

Its name, *Ajna*, means both “to perceive” and “to command.” Just as words are used to shape our world, so do the images we hold in our minds influence the events of our lives. What we perceive and remember is also what we command. A visualization held strongly is the first step in bringing an ethereal thought-form into manifestation.

Its element is light—a higher, faster vibration than that of sound, the least dense and most versatile of any element we have encountered thus far. Traveling at *speeds* beyond comprehension, communicating across distances and events that may have ceased to exist millenia ago, light in *all* its splendor allows us to perceive the world in

an infinite display of pattern. And when we view the world, we must remember that it *is not* objects we see but reflected light.

The Ajna chakra relates to the *pineal gland*, a vestigial light sensitive organ located in the exact geometric *center* of the head. In utero, the pineal gland begins as an actual third eye and later degenerates. It has been demonstrated that the pineal gland is sensitive to light, even when optical nerves have been cut. However, the functioning of the pineal gland *in* the mature adult is still a mystery. It is believed by some to play a part in producing the internal visions that sometimes come with meditative states.

Chakra 6 is our *intuitive* level, bringing us information through internally experienced visual imagery. Dreams are the clearest example of this. Clairvoyant sight is the ultimate example—the product of an open and functioning Ajna chakra. The purpose of this center is to become aware of the images inside our minds—the ones we perceive and the ones we create—so that this vast visual screen can be used consciously to call images at will and bring us information unavailable through other means.

Those who are open on this level are aware of their perceptions and can interpret them usefully. If the chakra is closed down, we may experience eye trouble, headaches, or troubling dreams. If the chakra is too open without solid ground to back it up, one may experience hallucinations, confusion from too much input, or over-interpretation of everyday occurrences. It is my firm belief that psychic perception is something that everyone has and uses profusely, whether or not they are aware of it. It is important to validate these subtle psychic perceptions that float through our minds each day.

Opening psychic perception is largely a function of learning to recognize patterns and creating an internal visual language with which to interpret them. If you see someone has done something in the past, chances are likely it will happen again. As we climb higher into the upper chakras, we approach a sense of divine order, and perception of that order allows us easily and accurately to “fill in the blanks” and perceive, like light waves, that which is actually at a distance, spatially and temporally.

Outside of our own imaginations, the images that surround and rule us are a major factor in mass consciousness. Television, billboards, clothing trends, cinematography, and other visual media feed into our consciousness on an immediate and whole brain level. To clear the chakra, we must get away from the images of what we expect to see and begin to experience the world with the freshness of a child. Only then can our organ of psychic perception begin to see accurately. And when we do, we discover an exciting world of patterns and colors unlike anything in the physical realm.

Each of the chakras is related to a color, and though the system has changed from the ancient Tantrics to modern associations, the most popular pattern is the *rainbow spectrum*. Red light has the longest and slowest wavelength, so it is associated with chakra 1, and the chakras proceed in rainbow order to violet at the crown.