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What are chakras?

The Hatha Yoga texts describe, how the thoughts reflect themselves in the human body in form of energy-spots, or reflection-spots, which distribute over the body's 6 head zones: 1: the eyebrow-area, 2: the mouth-throat-neck zone, 3: the breast-heart-shoulder zone, whereto often the arms belong 4: the diaphragm and solar plexus, 5: the abdominal middle, 6: the pelvic floor, the sexual organs, thighs, as well as the legs as a wholeness.

The chakra concept is part of a very worked out and profound system of description, which is developed on the background of thousand of years of work with, and experiences of inner and higher states in Man.

The chakras function firstly with the purpose of bodily and energetical balancing and regulation of the energetical swings of the thoughts. This aspect corresponds to the balancing and regulative function of the dreams, which also reflect themselves in the body's reflection-spots and their equal distribution across the body's six head zones (compensatory karma).

Secondly the chakras have a development function, which also reflects itself in the symbol function of the dreams (progressive karma) – see my articles **What is karma?** and **What is Dream Yoga?**

As the dreams, the chakras therefore also both have a balancing and a development-specific function. It is in other words the same basic phenomenon, which reflects itself in the dreams and in the chakras.

In so far as the chakras are related to specific body-areas as an expression of the life energy which functions in and regulates these areas, in so far the chakras are defined as centres in the energyfield of Man, as the focus-spots of the aura, or as energy-whirls in the so-called energy-body of Man. Experiential they appear in the form of feelings.

When the chakras are related to the development-level of Man (the level of realization work and ethical practice), they are described as reflection-spots of the Source – the Good, the True and the Beautiful. Symbolical this is illustrated in the form of Mandalas.

You can talk about seven chakras. The first six chakras consist of two sides: content and essence. The seventh chakra is the Source itself, the essence without any content.

If we describe them bottom up they look like this:

1) **Muladhara-chakra**, which is in the body-zone, that includes the pelvic floor, the sexual organs, thighs, as well as the legs as a wholeness. The mandala-symbol consists of a red lotus-flower with four leaves. A yellow square and an elephant symbolize the earth-element. The elephant has seven trunks, which corresponds to the seven chakras. A triangle symbolizes the goddess Shakti's genitalia (yoni). Within this the god Shiva's phallus encircled by the kundalini-snake. At the top to the right the god of creation, Brahma, and the female "doorkeeper" to the kundalini power: Dakini. A gold-letter in the middle is the mantra "Lam". The content-side of the chakra is the manifested. It's essence-side is the unmanifested.

2) **Svadhistana-chakra**, which is in the body-zone, that includes the abdominal middle. The mandala-symbol consists of an orange lotus-flower with six leaves. Within this a lotus with eight leaves, which symbolizes the water-element. Herein a halfmoon and the water-monster Makara. The sanskrit-letter in the middle stands for the mantra "Vam". Over the mantra can Vishnu and Shakti Rakini be seen, gods of blood and body-fluids. The content-side of the chakra is movement. It's essence-side is the unmoved.

3) **Manipura-chakra**, which is in the body-zone, that includes the diaphragm and solar plexus. The mandala-symbol consists of a lotus-flower with ten leaves. An orange triangle and a ram symbolize the fire-element. Over the triangle Rudra, the god of storms and of tears, as well as the armed goddess Shakti Lakini. A black sanskrit-letter is the mantra "Ram". The color of the leaves is "as a rain-cloud". The content-side of the chakra is the emotions. Its essence-side is being.

4) **Anahata-chakra**, which is in the body-zone, that includes the breast-heart-shoulder zone, whereto often the arms belong. The mandala-symbol consists of an orange lotus-flower with twelve leaves. In the seedhouse two smoke-colored triangles which form a star: symbol on unification of opposites. An antelope stand for the air-element. At the top the god Vayu Bijar and Shakti Kakini, whose heart is softened by Nectar. The sanskrit-letter in the middle is "Yam". The content-side of the chakra is the opposites. Its essence-side is the oneness.

5) **Vishuddha-chakra**, which is in the body-zone, that includes the mouth-throat-neck area. The mandala-symbol consists of a lotus with 16 leaves in smoke-colored purple. A circle within a triangle is the full moon, which symbolizes the ether-element. In top

to the right, Sadashiva, whose five heads represent the five "lower" senses. The sanskrit-letter in the middle is "Ham". The content-side of the chakra is language. Its essence-side is silence.

6) **Agna-chakra**, which is in the body-zone, that includes the eyebrow-area. The mandala-symbol consists of a lotus-flower with two leaves. In a triangle in the middle can be seen a luminous phallus. To the right the goddess Hakini, whose six heads represent the five "lower" senses + the "sixth sense". The mantra is "Um". The content-side of the chakra is time. Its essence-side is the Now.

7) **Sahasrara-chakra**, which not is in any body-zone. The mandala-symbol consists of a lotus-flower with thousand leaves. The Source itself, the essence without any content.

In Zen it is said about the spiritual process of awakening: "In the beginning mountains are mountains, and woods are woods. Then mountains no longer are mountains and woods are no longer woods. Finally mountains are again mountains, woods are again woods."

This refers to the three forms of states the wholeness can be in: sleep, dream, awake. The three states can also be described as the personal, collective and universal images of time. Furthermore it can be described as the personal history, the collective history and the universal history. Time and history constitute the structure under your thinking. This structure is also called the astral plane, the astral world or the Akashic records (read more about this in my article **Paranormal phenomena seen in connection with spiritual practice**).

The personal and collective images work in sequences in past and future, and therefore in absence of awareness. The universal images work in synchronism with the Now, and therefore with awareness, or consciousness.

The Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna said, that the Now's lawfulness around the function of a universal negationpower, is due to, that energy works as streams and dividings within a superior wholeness. And because the wholeness is a reality, each part will always fit into a correspondent part. This means, that each part only can be understood in relation to its negation; that is: what the part *not* is. Firstly this implies, that each part comes to appear as part of a polarization-pair, or a pair of opposites – like in the teaching of Yin and Yang. Secondly it implies, that each part only can be understood in relation to *everything* else; that is: in relation to the wholeness.

So the more you, through the Ego's evaluations, isolate these parts from each other, the more the abandoned parts will work stronger and stronger on their polar partners.

Therefore these polar partners in their extremes will finally switch over in the opposite extreme. Another aspect of this lawfulness, or another way to describe this lawfulness is: energy returns to its starting point. This is also called compensatory karma, and the lawfulness works as wave movements and pendulum movements.

And since everything in this way only work correlative, yes, then Nagarjuna claimed, that we actually can't say anything about the wholeness, only about the parts. Therefore he called the wholeness the Emptiness (*'śūnyatā*) – a teaching, which had one quite determinate purpose: the neutralization of all the dogmas, theories and viewpoints, which ignorance has created.

Nagarjuna's argumentation leads to the thought about that human beings have two aspects: an energy aspect and a consciousness aspect. Like the mind, or the thoughts, the chakras contain both these aspects. That is what is meant with, that they both have a content side and an essence side.

Seen from the energy aspect lawfulness rules: your body is subject to the physical laws of nature, your psychic system (and the chakras) is subject to the lawfulness of the energy fields and of the energy transformations. The energy aspect is the area of compensatory karma; it is the area of experiences, the area of the personal and collective images of time, which work in sequences in past and future, and therefore in absence of awareness, or absence of consciousness. And that also means that it in itself is without realization.

Seen from the consciousness aspect, then a human being seems to be akin to the wholeness, to be transcendent in relation to these lawfulnesses. The consciousness is the area of progressive karma, spiritual development; it is the area of realization, the area of the universal images of time, which work in synchronism with the Now. The Now seems to be a quality of awareness, and therefore also of consciousness and wholeness. Realization has to do with the three states the wholeness can be in: sleep, dream, awake. So it is only here you can talk about the spiritual insights of the great mystics. It is only here you can talk about genuine mystical experiences; that is: experiences, which are followed by realization.

When you reduce everything to the energy aspect, there can't happen any realization. Whatever you do within this area - therapy, exercises, use of drugs, stimulation of brain cells, Holotropic breathwork, etc., etc, - then it only will result in experiences without realization. It will also result in absence of awareness, because the consciousness will be distracted by the personal and collective images of time, which work in sequences in past and future, as well as in fragmentation.

Experiences without realization will therefore be characterized by existential categories such as unreality, division, anxiety, stagnation and meaninglessness, no matter how “divine” or “demonical” they occur to the experiencer. And that is actually in direct opposition to the genuine mystical experience, which are followed by realization. The mystical experience is namely characterized by the opposite existential categories, such as reality, co-operation, safety, movement and meaning (see my article **Suffering as an entrance to the Source**).

So in a spiritual practice it is the form of the consciousness it is about (realization), not its content (experiences). Or said in another way: in a spiritual practice you must concentrate about the essence-side of the chakras, not their content-side.

On the plane of the universal images, and therefore on the Now’s plane, the central is the form of the consciousness - the actual consciousness and its clarity and openness. Not the content of the consciousness. In spiritual practice the spiritual, and spiritual active, is the consciousness’ course towards its source (the Now, the wholeness, the otherness). What the consciousness and the mind and the senses are filled by, is of less crucial importance.

The third chapter in Patanjali’s *Yogasutras* describes the paranormal experiences and abilities, you can achieve in connection with yoga-practice. Patanjali is intimately making account of, that you ought to be very careful with - in connection with yoga-practice – to try to achieve paranormal abilities and experiences, since this can be due to (or result in) a so-called spiritual crisis – a debugging in your spiritual development.

It is therefore problematic, that it is the fewest New Age directions, which connect chakras with kundalini and spiritual crises (see my articles **Six common traits of New Age that distort spirituality**, **The awakening of kundalini** and **Spiritual Crises as the cause of paranormal phenomena**).

The problem in connection with the New Age-movement is the attempt to integrate the philosophy of the East (for example chakras) with Western psychology and psychotherapy. Psychology is after all today a science, which works with empirically proofs, or empirical content. But within the spiritual area you are precisely *not* working with content, but with essence, and this has not anything to do with psychology as a science, but with philosophy.

The psychologizing therefore results in, that you direct yourself towards the contents and forget the essence, exactly what also characterizes a spiritual crisis. It is for example my opinion, that the Czech-American psychiatrist Stanislav Grof, despite his pioneering work of mapping spiritual crises, as well as his great knowledge of history

of philosophy, ends up in such a psychologizing. Here I am especially thinking about his examinations of the concept of oneness-consciousness, where the touchstone of authenticity has with essence (realization) to do, and not content (experiences). Grof was for example seeking - first through LSD-therapy, and later, when that was forbidden, through an experiential oriented, body psychotherapeutic technique (Holotropic Breathwork) - to provoke experiences of the same kind as them you experience in a spiritual crisis – that is: through a so-called upward technique – in the belief that such a crisis always has a healing and transformational potential.

Grofs assertion is in other words, that you through LSD, or a holotropic session, should be able to skip many years of meditation practice and experience the same as the great enlightened masters.

But what he in reality skips are the *philosophical* aspects of the meditationpractice (the philosophical questions´ self-inquiring practice – see my articles **What is philosophy?**, and **Philosophical counseling as an alternative to psychotherapy**), and when these are left out, he creates breeding ground for many different types of spiritual self-deceit. The case is namely, that an important part of the opening in towards the Source is the realization of what basically hinders this opening (see my article **The four philosophical hindrances and openings**). Unless you know, for example the Ego´s, fundamental *nature*, you will not be able to recognize it, and it will deceive you to identify with it again and again. But when you realize the hindrances in yourself (your ignorance), it is the Source itself - the Good, the True and the Beautiful – which makes the realization possible. The realization can therefore only come from within, never from outside.

When Grof seeks to open up for collective experiences, without having been working with realization of the Ego´s nature, he intervenes disruptive in the Ego´s self-regulating structures, which are thinking and time. Therewith he also intervenes in the balancing and development-specific function of the chakras. Unknowing he creates heavy energetical swings without understanding, that the karmacially consequences are being equivalent heavy contrabalances and back-swings. Grof seems himself to be in a possession state, a possession of experiences, which is mirrored in the level of fierceness in his methods, which almost seem to be attempts to rape spirituality (read more in my article **A critique of Stanislav Grof and Holotropic Breathwork**).

In my article **Humanistic psychology, self-help, and the danger of reducing religion to psychology**, I describe the tragic consequences it can have when you reduce religion to psychology, and therewith create an ignorance about the function of karma and the energy-laws.

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