

THE CHAKRAS

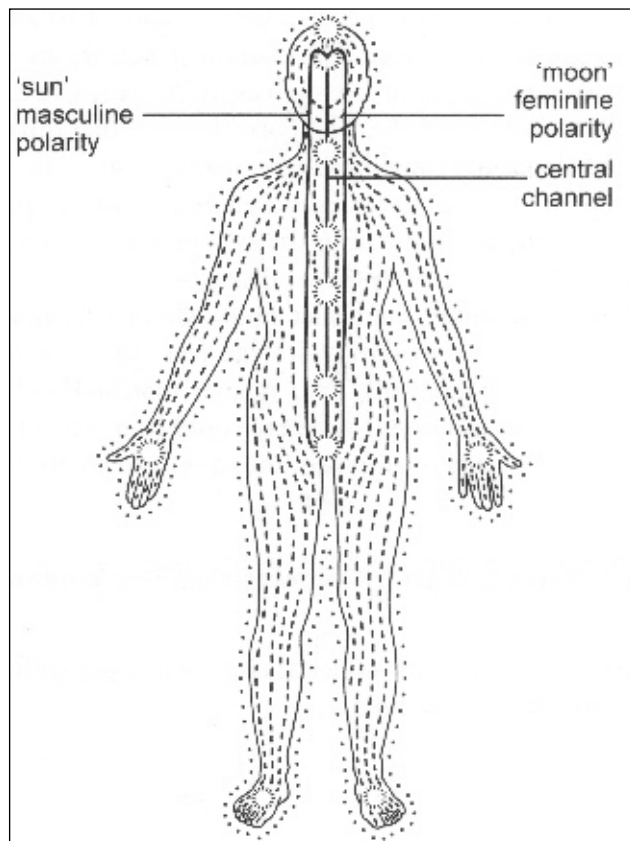
“The energy of the Universe is yours. It is your birthright. Just claim it.”
-Yogi Bhajan

Chakras are like power stations, they create and maintain energy. Chakras are at the very core of our existence. They are central to all we say and do. Understanding the principles of the Chakras gives us the tools to enhance physical health and well being, as energy is enabled to flow more freely through the body. Learning how energy moves through the Chakras we can begin to allow it to flow freely through the body, creating greater health. They are energy centres. The energy that radiates from the Chakras sets our thoughts and feeling in motion. Chakra means wheel in sanskrit and refers to cone-shaped vortices of energy, which spin and vibrate within the energy body. Humans are made up of many Chakras. We have seven major, twentyone minor, fortyfive minute and numerous minuscule ones. The seven major Chakras radiate out from different points along the spine, forming a vertical axis, which runs from the base of the spine to the top of the head.

PRANA, NADIS AND THE BREATH OF LIFE

Our bodies are made up of a matrix of energy pathways called nadis (Astral nerve tubes, or meridians in Acupuncture).

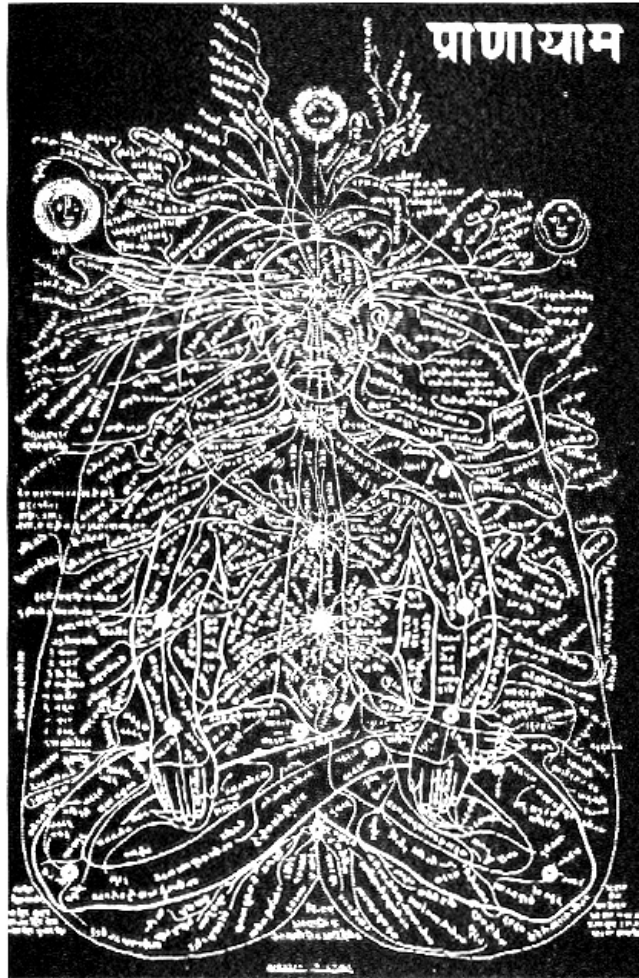
According to the yogic traditions there are about seventytwo thousand, of which the most important is the Sushumna nadi, which corresponds in the physical body to the spinal cord, and the two nadis, Ida and Pingala spiralling alongside the Sushumna,



through which two nerve currents move, corresponding in the physical body to the right and left sympathetic ganglion. Where they cross each other six times at the sushumna, we find the Chakras.

Ida and Pingala represent the duality of life. They are two opposite energies: positive and negative, male and female, cold and hot etc. and in fact the prana moves in two opposite ways: upwards in the Pingala, downward in the Ida.

Nadis are like arteries or veins in the physical body, only the nadis are astral nervous channels, subtle vessels that carry Prana or energy. Prana (or Ki, Chi) is the Life-Force, it is the subtle energy that flows through the nadis into the entire body and mind, keeping them animated and alive. **Prana is the vital link between astral body and physical body.** Prana fuels the nervous system and the endocrine system; together these two systems give rise to what we are: the nerves and hormones work in unison to orchestrate many of the body's functions.



Prana is the body's fundamental life force - the Breath of Life.

Chakras are magnetic fields that process these positive and negative forces of energy: they have the ability to absorb energy from the Universe and redistribute it through the system. This distribution of energy creates and maintains our minds and physical bodies. Prana, or Breath of Life, or Life Force underpin our physical form.

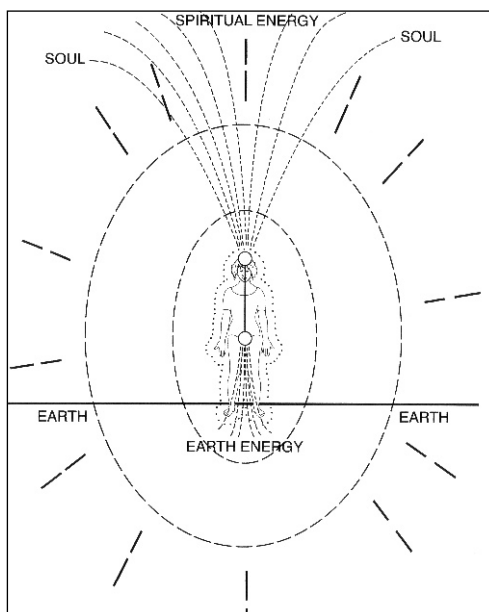
Through balancing the Chakras and improving the flow of energy we create change from the core, which is our energy system, to the periphery, which is the physical body.

“This fundamental life force is the body's inherent source of health and vitality and its free and unrestricted expression throughout the body restores and maintains health and vitality on all levels. Restrictions to the free expression of the Breath of Life result in disfunction, disease and ill health”. (1)

Every portion of the physical body is associated with its astral counterpart. Both the physical body and the astral body are intimately connected and in the material plane both are interdependent.

CHAKRAS AND THE SOUL

Each of the seven Chakras governs a different stage of psychological and spiritual development, creating various levels of consciousness. The first three Chakras - root, sacral and solar plexus - are responsible for survival, self-awareness and inner stability respectively. The heart centre, which is fourth, is the point of transformation from the inner world, our personal reality to the universal reality. The three remaining centres - throat, brow and crown - are spiritual centres focusing on communication, insight and wholeness. Physically every Chakra has various body parts under its control. The seven Chakras govern the seven main sets of endocrine glands and in this way influence the entire harmony and equilibrium of the body.



In many cases the underlying cause of illness and suffering, distress or unhappiness, approached in a holistic way, is found to be a partial or total disconnection from the spiritual dimension of life. This is in spite of the fact that each person's unique reason for being human, on Earth at this time, is soul-based, soul-designed and soul-directed. For so many, life has become soul-less. If the expression of soul is inhibited, for whatever reason, than its energies cannot be released to empower and influence the life of the individual. The vital force that encourages and supports the life mission is missing. **The soul's way of alerting us to the situation is through some kind of distress or illness.**

As seen before, a soul is able to fully experience the physical level, which is the major purpose of incarnation, through the astral and etheric body. The etheric body processes all human experiences - physical, emotional, mental and spiritual - via the system of the energy centres, or Chakras. The seven main centres can be seen to represent the human journey through life.

The Spirit, as energy of the Source has an energy frequency greatly beyond the speed of physical light. But the complete experience of physicality, existence on earth, needs the denser energy form of the physical body. Choosing to incarnate into a physical body is what being human is about. Because of the vast difference between the frequencies of the spirit, an energetic bridging level exists, known as etheric body. We are souls with a physical body, not bodies with a soul, and the etheric body plays a crucial role in the expression of the soul.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ETHERIC BODY

“Vibrating at a frequency beyond the speed of light, the etheric body projects some 5 to

10 cm beyond the edge of the physical body. The etheric body has a shape somewhat like the human form, with an outer surface composed of a glowing web-like structure, the whole appearing to be illuminated from within, containing hundreds of even brighter lines of light, some running from the top to the base of the form, which are transparent channels, permitting the flow of a vast range of subtle energies. Where these channels cross each other, a node or vortex of light is formed. **The nodes of light are the subtle energy centres of the etheric body, or Chakras.**

The seven main energy centres are seen to be connected to a central channel aligned with the spine (Sushumna nadi).

On each side of the central channel, and connected to it, are two further channels, which extend from the base, to the brow centres (Ida and Pingala nadis). The circulation of energy in the two channels creates a balance between the inflow and outflow of subtle energy throughout the system, including each of the centres.

For emotional and mental health, as well as physical well being, the energies of the two polarities need to be in a state of balance, but it is easy for them to get out of balance. When one energy stream is unused or underdeveloped, the other will try to compensate by dominating the system and all its activities. This is self defeating since it nurtures the weakness. The formation, development and composition of the physical body is controlled by the etheric. The etheric structures are the modifications made to the light body, or spirit, so that it can act as a template for the physical. For example, the symmetry of the physical body is derived from the symmetry of the etheric. The body's ability to process the flow of substance to and from the organs is derived from the flow of energies in the etheric polarity channels. **The seven main energy centres are the structures from which the seven endocrine glands are derived.** The nervous system is derived from the system of etheric channels and the vascular system from the flow of energies within the etheric network. Throughout the existence of the body, the etheric conveys life force, essential to the animation of all physical forms, along with two vitalising energies, which are conducted via the sacral and solar plexus centres. In this way, the etheric is the energetic support system for physical life. The etheric level (of energy vibration) is the gateway between the physical and the non-physical, the entry level for the light of soul into physical life". (2)

CHAKRAS, EMOTIONS AND THE PHYSICAL BODY

The Chakras profoundly affect the spirit, mind and body. The Chakras are not in the physical body, they are part of the subtle energy body. They do, however, have direct correspondences in the body and mind. Physically every Chakra has various body parts under its control. The seven main Chakras govern the seven sets of endocrine glands, and in this way influence the entire harmony and equilibrium of the body.

Psychologically the Chakras take us through many emotions and experiences. E-motions are simply movement of energy. They are energy in motion that we interpret as happy, sad, angry, fearful etc. At each Chakra different emotions are experienced. As we ascend our awareness through the Chakras we move from limiting emotions such as fear and pain through to liberating emotions such as freedom and ecstasy. We know the Chakras are located along the central column of the subtle body. The endocrine glands that secrete hormones and the main nerve plexuses, which are concentration of nerves, lie along

the central column of the physical body. They have a close relationship. Subtle energy from the Chakras animates these physical structures. Each Chakra affects specific nerve plexuses, endocrine glands and body parts. Chakras can therefore be used to strengthen particular parts of the body: **it is when the balance of energy flowing through the Chakras is disturbed that we eventually suffer dis-ease.** If we can maintain a harmonious flow of energy then we can prevent many physical ailments.

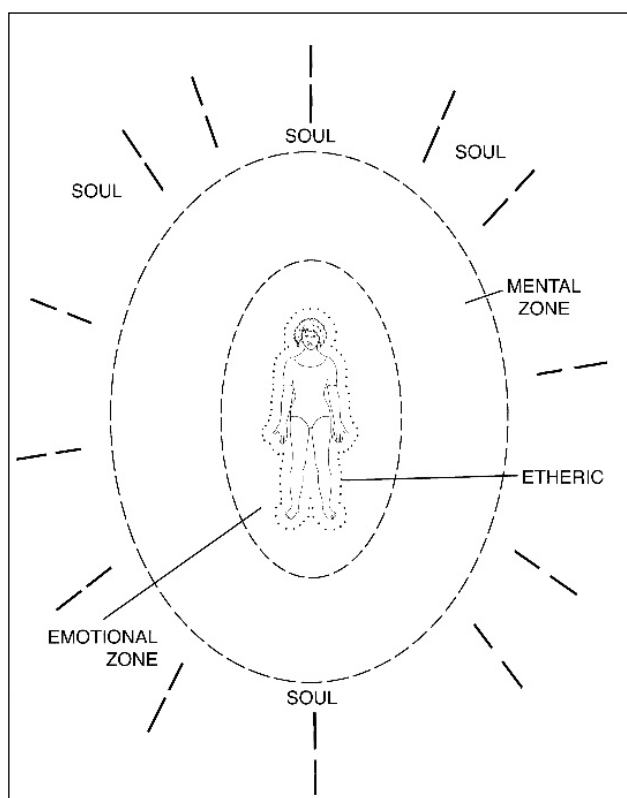
“While specific processes are going on in each centre, the system operates as a complete and interconnected whole and through etheric consciousness, the centres are aware of all the activities in the system. The centres may be observed as a slight depression in the luminous weblike surface of the etheric body, in which the motion of energy creates a vortex of light. Each centre is joined to a central channel, aligned to the physical spine, which is in turn connected to a network of many other channels running through the etheric. This network provides the basis of the meridian system known to those practicing Acupuncture, Shiatsu and traditional Chinese medicine.

During the operation of a centre, the vortex of light moves out from the surface of the etheric body to project into the energy field. The etheric acts as the communication vehicle for the soul, enabling the passage of energies from soul to the physical and from the physical back to the soul. Thus, the centres act as a distribution system for all the energies, including the emotional and mental, that are generated during a person’s life experience. Another of the functions of the centres is to identify subtle energies and, if possible, to process them. Very often a person is not ready to deal with a certain situation, such as bereavement, so that etheric consciousness directs these energies to be stored for processing later.

However, **the system is designed to alert us to the presence of stored, unprocessed material. The alarm signal could take the form of mental or emotional distress or physical ill health**”. (3)

MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL SUBTLE ENERGIES

Mind is a soul’s instrument. When mind interacts with physical life, feelings and emotions are generated. The frequencies of mental and emotional energies are faster than the etheric, so they radiate beyond this level. These energies occur in the human energy field as a series of



zones in the astral body.

The emotional body is that zone of energy vibration where emotional material is stored and/or processed.

The mental body is that zone of energy vibration where mental material is stored and/or processed.

All the zones of energy have a range vibration whose frequency bands are slowest at the edge, nearest the physical.

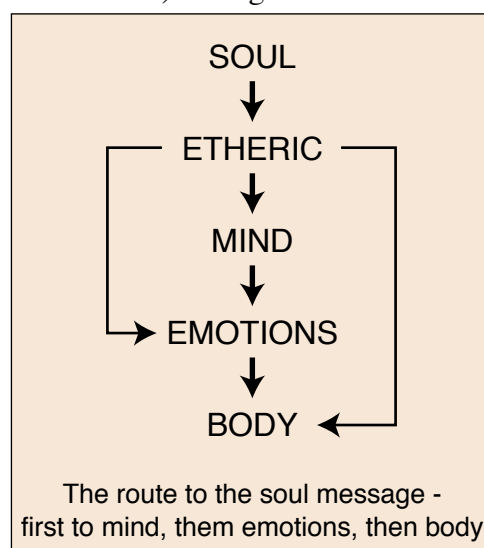
The physical, mental and emotional bodies are the communication vehicles of the human. They communicate the experience of being human both to the person themselves and the soul (via the subtle energy system of the etheric). Through its structures, the etheric controls the energy that is made available to the physical, mental and emotional levels. This has important implications for healing.

SOUL COMMUNICATION

Soul communicates with the personality (what we think we are) through the etheric.

It is etheric consciousness that directs the soul message first to our mind, than the emotions, than the body. More often than not our mind blocks the signals because of its conditioning. Similarly it can suppress our emotional response.

If this happens, the soul message is conveyed to the body where a physical condition or response is generated. This is how many of our aches and pains, accidents and incidents, are actually clues to an earlier soul message, which the mind and emotions have blocked, missed or suppressed.



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CENTRES AND THE ENDOCRINE GLANDS

“The physical gateways for the energies of the main etheric centres are the endocrine glands. Their function is linked to the life issues of the relevant centres.

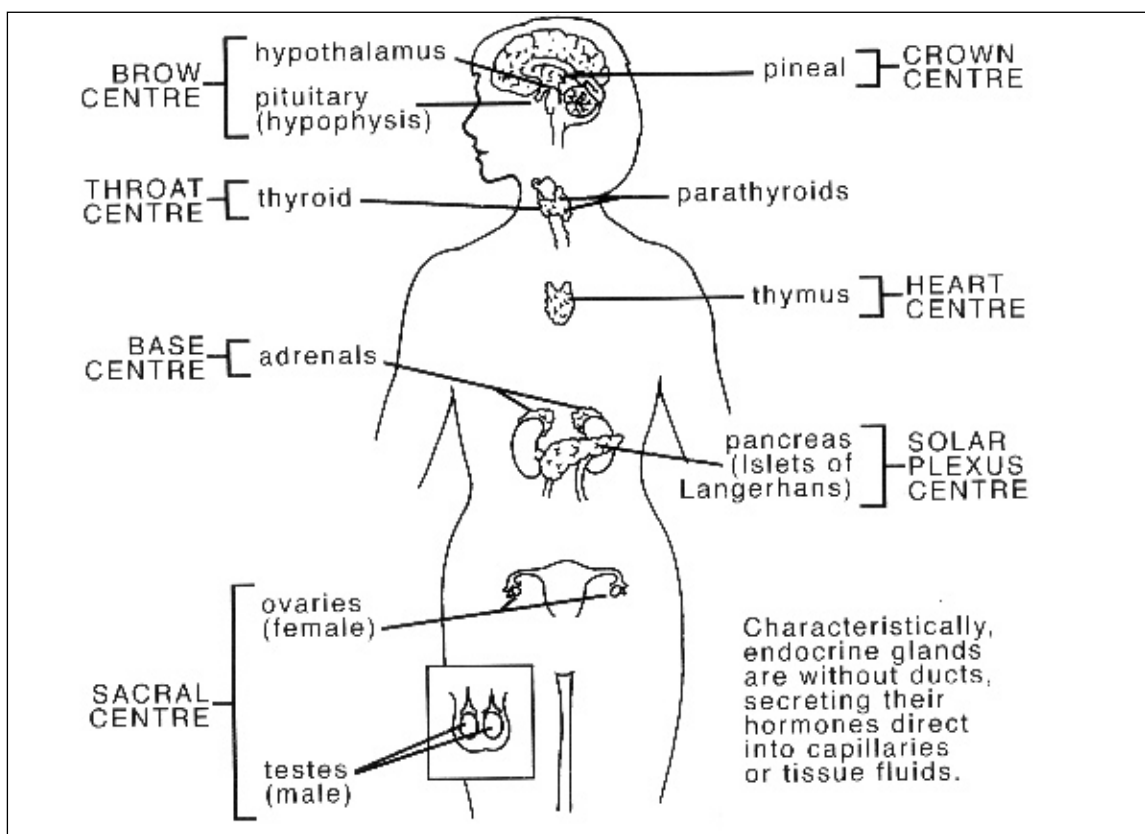
The endocrine system transmits chemical messages in the form of hormones carried in the bloodstream to affect a particular organ or organs. The numerous functions of the glands are their physical role, but they also receive a range of subtle energies, via the etheric centres, which have a direct effect on these functions.

The adrenal glands at the top of the kidneys, control the balance of salt in the body fluids and help prepare the body for emergencies and stress through secretion of adrenaline. This is the link of survival and physical life with the base centre.

The testes in males control sexual development and maturity and the production of sperm.

The ovaries in females control sexual development and maturity and production of eggs. These are the creative links with the sacral centre.

The Islets of Langerhans in the pancreas are groups of endocrine cells. These produce a range of hormones, among which is insulin, the controller of the blood sugar level. The secretions of these hormones are linked to the functions of the solar plexus centre. Through this link with mind and emotions, our thoughts and feelings have a powerful effect on this gland and the neighbouring organs.



The thymus gland is closely related to the development and function of the body's immune system. In the baby it is relatively very large. In childhood it controls the production of white blood cells and the 'T' lymphocytes of the lymphatic system. Though its activities may not appear to be important in the adult, the thymus gland is directly influenced by the energies of the heart centre. Practice shows that this centre continues to have profound influence on the immune system, via the thymus gland, throughout life. There is therefore a strong connection between the state of love in our life and our immune health.

The thyroid gland controls the rate of metabolism and body growth. Embedded in the thyroid are the parathyroid, which control the level of calcium in the blood and so have a relationship to the skeleton and teeth. These glands are directly influenced by

the energies of the throat centre. This centre also affects the ear, nose and throat, via the thyroid gland.

The hypothalamus is the main controller of the pituitary gland and the endocrine system and monitors all information about body states. This controlling aspect of the pituitary gland is a mirror of some of the functions of the brow centre to which it is linked.

The pituitary gland is the main controller of the activities of the nervous and endocrine system (the two control systems of the body), and acts as an intermediary between the body and the brain. The brow centre also coordinates the activities of the centres and the system of etheric channels and meridians. The hypothalamus communicates with the pituitary either by nervous impulses or by its own hormones. These in turn stimulate the pituitary to secrete a range of hormones, which affect most of the body's functions, through the stimulation of other glands and organs. Thus all of the body's functions are affected by the energy of the brow centre.

The pineal gland lies behind and above the hypothalamus. It is sensitive to light. As light fades to darkness, the pineal gland secretes the hormone melatonin. As daylight returns secretion stops. During the winter months, melatonin secretion is higher than in summer. In this way the pineal gland acts as a light sensor, informing the body of the rhythm of day and night and passing of the seasons. It is the topmost gland of the endocrine system. It is affected by light and it talks to us about light. This is its link with the crown centre, the place where the Light enters our subtle energy system.

Because of their interconnectedness, what happens to us physically has an energetic effect that is conveyed to the etheric centres and, if necessary, to the emotional and/or mental levels. Similarly, energies from these levels move to the physical to be processed in this form. When energies from the soul, mental and emotional levels move into the body, via the endocrine system, they first affect the organs associated with the particular gland and then move further to affect related organs and systems”.

CHAKRAS AND THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

“Most of the control and communication that goes on in the body is carried out by the nervous system. Its messages are transmitted by means of electrochemical impulses, with the brain acting as the command centre. The extensive network of nerves branching from the spinal cord allows the brain to keep in touch with all the other body systems and to process everything that is happening to us internally and externally. These are the physical functions of the nervous system. The light aspect of the system is to gather up the messages of the network of consciousness and convey them to the etheric level and thence to the centres, via the etheric network of channels.” (4)

Controlled by the hypothalamus, the Autonomic Nervous System has a particular interconnection with the endocrine system. Consequently it plays a very significant part

in many of everyday conditions affecting our health and our lives.

“The ANS is an involuntary system controlling all involuntary processes.

It subdivides into 2 divisions:

Parasympathetic (anabolic, vegetative, builds up and conserves resources)

Sympathetic (catabolic, responsive to environment, especially stress, uses up and expends resources)

Ideally, in a perfect world, the two divisions work together, balancing each other with opposing functions, so creating a dynamic balance (homeostasis), constantly changing according to the needs of the moment.

In modern pressured society, however, the two divisions are often set against each other creating conflict and dysfunction, or, chronic persistent pressure and stress, leading to exhaustion of the ANS and confusion and malfunction of both divisions.

Continuing pressure and stress lead to a continuing excess of sympathetic activity affecting the whole body, physically, chemically, mentally and emotionally. A continuing excessive secretion of adrenaline leads to a vicious circle of over-stimulation and over-activity. The continuing conflict between the sympathetic and parasympathetic divisions leads to both divisions working harder and harder and ultimately becoming exhausted.

The accumulation of sympathetic responses needs expression. When the natural responses of the sympathetic nervous system - the fight or flight response enabled by the secretion of adrenaline - are suppressed, leading to a build-up of pressure, tension and adrenaline in the system in turn may lead to physiological disturbances and dysfunctions.

Autonomic nervous system dysfunction can manifest in many different ways. Because the Autonomic Nervous system co-ordinates so many functions throughout the body, its dysfunctional effects may similarly be felt anywhere in the body. These include:

- digestive disturbances such as constipation, diarrhoea, duodenal ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome, liver and gall bladder dysfunction and many others
- vascular disturbances, including high blood pressure, migraine and disturbances of temperature control mechanisms (cold hands and feet) or disturbances of blood supply to any part of the body
- visual disturbances
- asthma and other conditions affecting the lungs
- immune system dysfunction, disturbances of glandular secretions, skin conditions, allergies and many others.

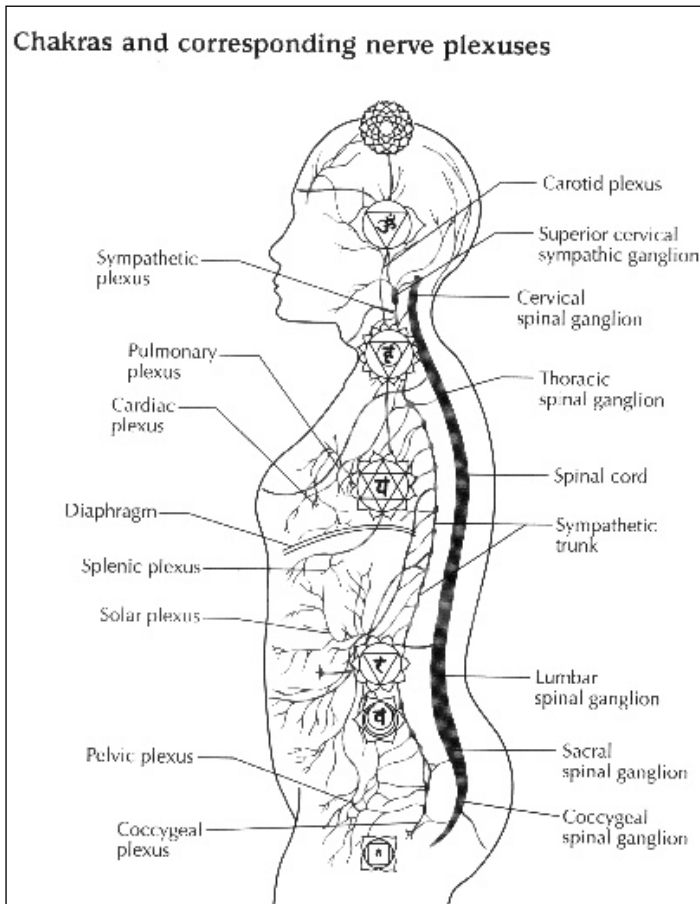
This dysfunctions may also manifest in:

The organs

In the nerves themselves

In the vertebral level associated with the entry and exit of the nerves

In the muscles of the back surrounding the associated vertebral levels
 In the central nervous system
 In the psycho-emotional state, or in the person as a whole.



The sympathetic ganglia (points of synapse or nerve interchange) are clinically very important sites since they are focal points of Sympathetic nerve activity, and therefore are very significant.

These ganglia are located in a chain running alongside the vertebral column on each side throughout its length from C1 to the Coccyx, and also in the plexi such as the cardiac plexus, coeliac plexus etc.

All the plexi, equivalent to the Chakras along with the ganglia, reflect Sympathetic nerve activity, and are therefore important indicators of stress and sympathetic stimulation, both locally and generally.

Collateral ganglia are located in aggregation on major blood vessels (e.g. Aorta) forming plexi.

Plexi are important because they are nerve/energy centres, areas for regulation of ANS function, areas where you may feel stress, agitation, emotion, areas equivalent to the Chakras. These plexi are located in various places:

Cardiac plexus equivalent to the **Hearth Chakra**

Coeliac plexus equivalent to the **Solar plexus Chakra**

Pelvic plexus equivalent to the **Root Chakra**". (5)

“According to the need to maintain boundaries between the outside world and our inner self we wear a protective cloak - physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually - and this is reflected in our physical bodies and consequently in our energetic field.

Chakras are areas of physical and emotional holding, reflecting into the body as tissue tension, preventing free expression of the Breath of Life, consequently leading to physiological dysfunction, disease and pathology.

Each Chakra operates to a varying extent depending on how open it is.

Take the heart Chakra, for example. It may be that as a child your heart centre was very open and loving came easily to you. At some point you may have experienced rejection or humiliation and as a result of the pain, you closed down the heart Chakra, limiting the amount of energy you allow to flow through it. We sometimes hold tightness in the chest and abdomen to keep our emotions from flooding out. This reduces energy through the solar plexus and heart centres.

Four focal areas of particular significance are:

The heart Chakra: the heart centre - cardiac pulmonary plexus - thymus gland

The solar plexus Chakra: the coeliac ganglia and superior and inferior mesenteric ganglia - adrenal glands

The root Chakra: the pelvic plexus - superior and inferior hypogastric plexi - gonads

The throat Chakra: the superior cervical sympathetic ganglia in the suboccipital region - thyroid and parathyroid

Just meditate on the first Chakra, just feel it. If one can feel it, one can stimulate the seventy-two thousand nerves located here in no time. The moment you concentrate on it, the spinal fluid starts flowing directly through the gray matter of your brain.

-Yogi Bhaajan

From a structural point of view, these regions are also significant, since they are all areas where the body tissues are more transversely orientated as compared with the longitudinal orientation of tissues through most of the body. (6)

The vertebral column plays a very vital part in coordinating neurological activity throughout the body. It houses the vital structures of the spinal cord and the spinal nerves emanating from the spinal cord and allows the passage of those spinal nerves through the intervertebral foramina to the peripheral structures, organs, muscles and glands throughout the body. Proper integrate function of the vertebral column is therefore essential to proper functioning of all these structures.

These areas can be identified by their vertebral level as:

With the specific task of response to environment, the Sympathetic Nervous System provides an important link between our emotions and our physical body and is one of the principal mediums through which responses to the outside world are channelled and processed and therefore **plays a great part in affecting the balance in the Chakras, and can be affected by imbalanced Chakras.**

The Sympathetic Nervous System mediates every choice we make every moment of our life.

Unexpressed emotional responses accumulating within the system can play an important part in causing autonomic disfunction, and this reflects to the organs related to the Chakra or plexi affected.

“No amount of wordly success or money or knowledge can ever be as valuable as feeling comfortable in your body.”

- Gurumukh Kaur Khalsa

Bibliography: SACRED HEALING, Jack & Jan Angelo, *Judy Piatkus Limited*, 2001; WAY OF CHAKRAS, Caroline Shola Arewa, *Thorsons*, 2001; ANATOMY OF THE SPIRIT, Caroline Myss, *Transworld Publishers*, 1996

(1) *CCST notes, Stage A, Thomas Attlee*

(2) *Sacred healing p. 80-87*

(3) *Sacred healing, p. 105.*

(4) *Sacred healing p. 151-155*

(5) *CCST notes, Stage C, Thomas Attlee*

(6) *CCST notes - Stage A “Opening up the system”, Thomas Attlee.*