

# **Chakras Theory: awareness of spinal movement as a way of dealing with our neuromuscular system effectively**

By: *Cristina Elias*

“In order to understand the human being we have to examine the flow of energy through the system. We can think of this energy as excitement, charge, attention, awareness, or simply the life force.” (Judith, 1996: 9)

Within the scope of the Sacral-Cranial Technique, the theory of the chakras is applied as a way of connecting the vibration of each of these “wheels of energy” to areas of the spine and the flow of vital energy through the body to the respiratory system, namely the flow of breath.

“The word *chakra* literally translates as “wheel” or “disk” and refers to a spinning sphere of bio-energetic activity emanating from the major nerve ganglia branching forward from the spinal column.” (Judith, 1996: 4-6)

The expression “flow of energy” is very often mislabeled as an “exoteric” concept. However, “flow of energy” primarily refers to the most essential and simple action a living being has to continuously perform in order to keep living: to oxygenate his body. Through oxygenation we build internal heat, which can also be called “internal energy” and consists of a pure biochemical element to which one may attach spiritual/religious meaning or not (yoga, for example, can be practiced as ritual but also as a physical training system). Internal energy (“heat”) is created namely by the gradual activation of all the centres of energy (chakras) distributed along our vertical axis.

“To use the language of yoga, the life on this planet requires an integrated relationship between breath (prana/apana) and posture (sthira/sukha). (...) The prana/apana concept is explored with focus on the breathing mechanism. (...) the torso consists of two cavities, the thoracic and the abdominal. (...) Both cavities are bounded posteriorly by the spine (...) Both share an important structure, the diaphragm (it forms the roof of the abdominal cavity and the floor of the thoracic cavity).” (Kaminoff 2007: 4)

Along the vertical body, from the base of the spine to the top of the head, there are seven main chakras. There are also minor chakras distributed along distal ends of the body such as shoulders, hands, feet and fingertips, which function in close connection to the major ones. However, it is the seven major chakras that point out to basic 'states of consciousness' establishing a bridge between the anatomical and the psychological individual characteristics:

"Each of the seven chakras have also come to represent a major area of human psychological health which can be briefly summarized as follows: (1) survival, (2) sexuality, (3) power, (4) love, (5) communication, (6) intuition, (7) consciousness itself (...) The lower chakras, for example, which are physically closer to the earth, are related to the more practical matters of our lives – survival, movement, action. They are ruled by physical and social law. The

upper chakras represent mental realms and work on a symbolic level through words, images and concepts (Judith, 1996: 4-6).

There is a horizontal division in the vertical line of the chakras where the 'matter' of the lower chakras (namely 'root' and 'sex') will start a transformation process towards the upper chakras - namely 'heart' (love), 'throat' (communication), 'third eye' (intuition) and 'crown of the head' (consciousness). This boundary is the third chakra, placed in the 'solar plexus' (top of the naval), exactly in the centre of the spine (Judith, 1996: 180). The third chakra is connected to the idea of power as WILL or self-determination (Judith, 1996: 30-32). Its functioning depends on the regular and balanced activity (mainly) of the second (sexual) chakra - the sacral or sex chakra, which points out to the dominant idea of 'desire': "desire fuels the will" (Judith, 1996: 180).

So, it is at the level of the 3rd chakra that the energy flowing through the body will start to gain a certain 'form', going through a process of transformation dictated by the upper (creative) chakras. This makes of 'creativity' a factor of a clearly defined sense of Self. The re-creation of nature - which composes the soil upon which any Art grows - has its starting point at the level of the solar plexus, right in the core of the human body, and is a matter of Will:

"Metaphorically, the chakras relate to the following archetypical elements: (1) earth, (2) water, (3) fire, (4) air, (5) sound, (6) light, (7) thought [...] Earth and water are passive and dense. They move downward. Chakras 1 and 2 are instinctual. They follow the paths of least resistance. The fire of chakra 3 is dynamic and light, rising upward, moving away from gravity [...] The purpose of the third chakra is to transform the inertia of matter and movement into a conscious direction of willed activity" (Judith, 1996: 171).

In the instinctual/survival layers of the chakras (namely one, two and three), dualities rule the relationships. In this line, other people are still seen as 'separate' beings. Here, the application of Bartenieff Fundamentals meets the Chakras theory, namely in the aspect of Core-Distal Connectivity, which "sets up a basic pattern of 'Twoness", as opposed to the 'Oneness' in the Breath pattern" (Hackney, 2002:82).

This tonic will start to change as the vertical path up goes further to the next four 'creative or 'God' chakras, when one starts to develop an existential sense of 'Oneness'. The fourth chakra (Heart chakra) is the first experience of the unity of feeling. Here starts the beginning of the end of fear, aggression, exclusion and self-seeking, which should be completed at the height of the Crown Chakra (chakra seven). The seventh chakra represents the union with the universal: the place where all 'binaries' merge into One. There are no dualities anymore. No 'Here' nor 'There', no 'In' nor 'Out', no 'Male' nor 'Female', no 'Me' nor 'Not Me'... This sense of "Oneness" achieved at the culmination of the journey of energy along the verticality of the body is actually the same general aim of the application of Bartenieff Fundamentals: first the body is dissociated in parts; than body parts are set in connection/opposition to other body parts; and, from this previous dissociation, a sense of awareness of "total body connectivity", of 'Oneness' of the body (and its 'parts' that work together in order to accomplish a certain physical action) is achieved.

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