

Using mantras to balance your chakras

Simon Heather outlines the nature of the seven chakras and the five elements and describes the use of special 'bija' mantras to balance them

Our body is composed of a complex system of interwoven energy fields. Like the proverbial Russian doll, our physical body is akin to the tiny doll at the centre:

around it exist finer layers of energy, each of which is linked to an energy centre within our body.

Indian sages called these energy centres 'chakras', meaning 'wheel'. The first

known mention of chakras appeared in a number of early Upanishads around 800 BC.

Seven chakras exist within the subtle body, which are located along the spine and in the head, interpenetrating the physical body. One could compare the chakras to a series of step-down transformers, bringing universal energy into our individual energy systems. The crown chakra is composed of the finest, most subtle energy, while the base chakra holds the densest energy.

Each chakra is linked with a different gland in the body, different organs and physiological functions (the glands associated with different chakras may vary slightly in different texts). A number of petals is associated with each chakra (see Figures 1 and 2 below), the number for lower chakras being directly related to the pairs of nerves that emanate from the spinal column.

Chakra	Gland	Petals
Crown	Pineal	1,000
Third eye	Pituitary	96
Throat	Thyroid	16
Heart	Thymus	12
Solar plexus	Pancreas	10
Sacral	Gonads/ovaries	6
Base	Adrenals	4

The chakras exert their influence on the physical body through the glands and the hormones they secrete. The chakras also store all past experiences related to a particular issue, thus past emotions, memories and thoughts can affect the functioning of each gland.

For example, if we are unable to communicate our feelings and our needs, this may cause an imbalance in the throat chakra that will affect the thyroid gland. Many thyroid problems stem from a childhood fear of expressing our feelings.

When we are healthy, there is a smooth flow of energy through all the chakras. Our body is like an electrical circuit. 'Prana', or life force energy, flows into the crown chakra (see Fig 1), where it is then stepped down through all seven chakras until it reaches the base chakra, where we connect to the Earth.

Each chakra holds information about every experience that we have had. For instance, the solar plexus chakra regulates the pancreas, the stomach, gall bladder, liver, diaphragm and spleen. It also holds information about our sense of personal power, fear of rejection and self-esteem. It is the major energy centre connected with our sense of identity.

All experiences where we feel rejected, or lacking in self-worth, are held in this chakra. When we feel shame or disap-

proval from others, it registers in this area; when we feel rejected, it can feel like we have been kicked in the stomach.

The chakras also relate to levels of consciousness. As we move up the chakras we perceive the world differently. Each level of awareness has its challenges and lessons. (For more information, see my book *Reclaiming your Sacred Spirit*).

Chakra	Location
7 – Crown	Top of the head
6 – Third Eye	Centre of the forehead between the eye-brows
5 – Throat	Throat
4 – Heart	Heart area and between the shoulder blades
3 – Solar Plexus	Navel area and the lower back
2 – Sacral	Four inches below the belly button, the hips and pelvic area
1 – Base	Coccyx/base of spine area

The work of Leadbeater

The Reverend Charles Leadbeater was born in England in 1847 and was a natural clairvoyant. In 1884 he went to India to study yoga with a guru. In 1927 he wrote a book called *The Chakras*, in which he wrote about what he perceived when he looked at a person. He perceived that when divine energy flowed into each chakra, it generated a secondary force that moved in a circular motion.

The primary force (divine energy) created straight lines like the spokes of a wheel, while the secondary force created wheels of circular energy. Each chakra had a number of spokes, which determined the number of waves or ‘petals’ within. Each petal emitted a distinct, predominant colour and the chakras varied in size and brightness in different people (Fig 1 as an example). Leadbeater describes the individual chakras as follows:

Root chakra:	Four spokes, producing quadrants of alternating red and orange hues.
Spleen chakra:	Six undulations, red/orange/yellow/green/blue/violet.
Navel chakra:	10 undulations, predominantly red/green.
Heart chakra:	12 spokes, golden colour.
Throat chakra:	16 spokes, alternating blue/green.
Brow chakra:	Two halves, one yellow and one purplish blue, each half sub-divided into 48 spokes.
Crown chakra:	960 manifestations of divine force. Colour at centre: white/gold.

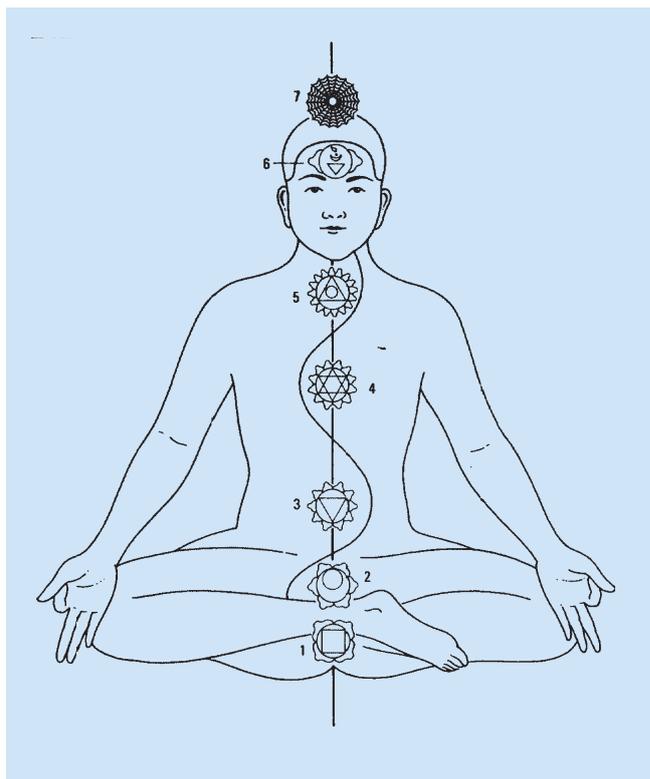
Leadbeater’s own psychic research tallies very closely with ancient, Vedic wisdom. However, even within the Vedic system slight differences in interpretation occur from teacher to teacher.

The Five Elements

The *Yogatattva* Upanishad (slokas 83–101) lists five chakras and describes them as being interrelated with the five elements. There are said to be five great elements (*bhutas*) that make up the world; earth (*prithivi*), water (*apas/jala*), fire (*tejas/agni*), air (*vayu*) and ether (*akasha*). Each element is linked to a different chakra and a different organ. As we move up the chakras each element is subtler than the previous one.

Akasha (Ether) – throat chakra – hearing

Akasha is the subtlest of the elements and serves as the medium in which the other elements manifest. It is the essence of all things in the material world. Akasha is the all-pervading, etheric substance that is imperceptible to the five senses.



Facing page: **Figure 1.** Elements of the chakras. Reproduced from *Chakras: Energy Centers of Transformation* by Harish Johari; coloured by Kanti Freeman. Above: **Figure 2.** Chakra symbols and locations. Reproduced from *Theories of the Chakras* by Hiroshi Motoyama.

The main characteristic of akasha is *shabda* (sound). Sound vibrates in the akasha element creating form (see Fig 4). The word ‘akasha’ can also be translated as space. It is the space in which all created forms manifest. The emptiness of space is necessary for the existence of all life.

Akasha is associated with silence and with the capacity simply to be. Tibetan Buddhism teaches us that ultimate security is only found in the element of space. The Earth can crumble or be carried away by water and wind but nothing can affect space.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche says: ‘He who masters this element, knows the nature of spirit. He knows the essential and does not search on the outside in order to find the cause of his problems. Seeing them arise in space, he does not identify with them anymore.’

The area of the body connected to this element stretches from the collar-bones up to the bridge of the nose. It includes the thyroid chakra, the vocal chords, the nose, the eyes, the ears and the mouth. The voice is directly connected with the Akasha element.

The Sanskrit name for the throat chakra is *Vishuddha*, which means ‘to purify’. This indicates how important the voice and sound are for purifying ourselves and the environment around us. When we think, speak or sing, we create patterns of energy in the akasha. If these vibrations are constantly reinforced through repetition they will eventually take on a material form.

All actions begin with a thought; every project, every building begins as an idea. The Buddha said each of us is the result of our past thoughts:

‘Our present thoughts create our future life. Our life is created by our mind. If a person speaks or acts with a mind grounded in fear, suffering will follow him as surely as summer follows spring. If a person speaks or acts with a mind grounded in love, happiness will follow him as surely as his

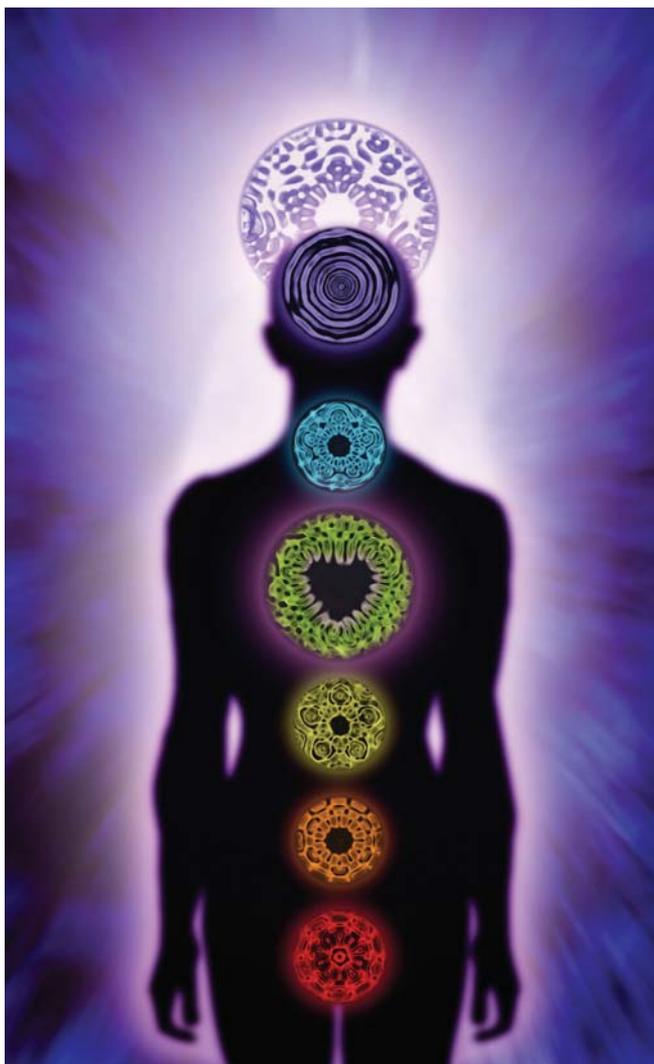


Figure 3. Chakras represented by their cymatic resonance frequency produced by John Stuart Reid using a CymaScope (on cover of issue 77 and available as a poster, see website).

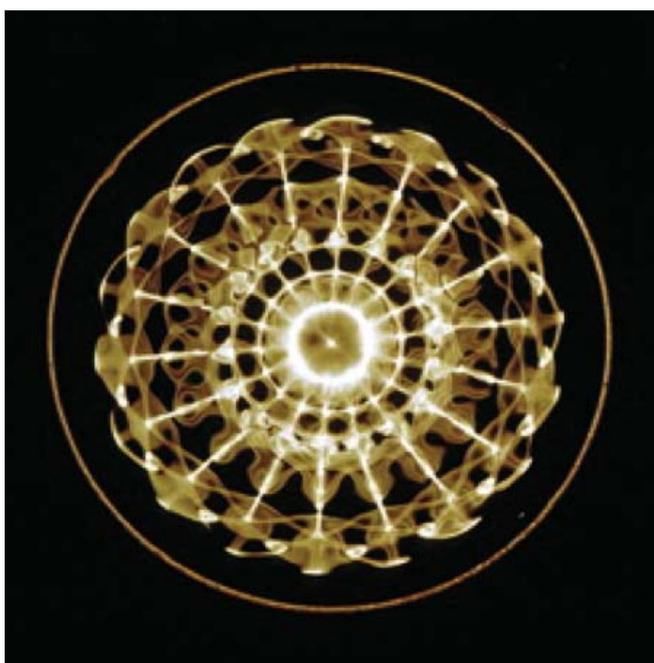


Figure 4. A cymatic image taken from *Caduceus* 71, p12: An 18-element structure standing wave, 35.1 Hertz (from *Of Sound Mind and Body and Vibrational Healing*, Lumina Productions, 1992. DVD available from MACROmedia Publishing: www.cymaticsource.com)

shadow never leaves him.’ (*Dhammapada*)

Vayu (Air) – heart chakra – touch

Movement is the essential principle behind this element. Vayu gives rise to all motion and change and to all processes in creation.

Vayu governs the movement of everything in the universe, from the tiniest subatomic particles to the most immense galaxies. Vayu impels blood to flow, food to move through the gastrointestinal tract and neural impulses to be carried along our nerve tracts.

The sense of touch arises out of the principle of movement or vayu. The skin is capable of detecting movement in the form of subtle or gross changes in pressure, friction or vibration.

Vayu governs the organs whose function requires movement in the form of contraction and dilation, such as the colon, uterus, urinary bladder, heart, muscles, eyes and the transmission of nerve impulses. Vayu creates restlessness, activity, movement and a desire to do something.

Vayu can also be translated as Wind. Problems with the heart and the lungs can be due to an imbalance in this element.

Agni/Tejas (Fire) – solar plexus chakra – sight

Agni is the principle that lies behind all transformation in creation. This manifests as the qualities of heat and light, and gives colour and visual form to all things.

In non-living systems, it is responsible for changing matter and decay. In living systems, it facilitates all growth processes. In the form of light, agni generates photosynthesis in plants.

Agni also stimulates conversion in both organic and inorganic processes through catalysts, acids and enzymes. Agni creates food metabolism (the digestive fire) and allows us to see form and colour; it governs the digestive system and a properly functioning fire element will help us better to ‘digest’ life.

Jala/Apas (Water) – sacral chakra – taste

The element of jala embodies the principle of liquidity and cohesion. Jala element governs fluidity and its nature is to bind or hold together.

Water is the major component of all life forms. In the blood, it binds nutrients and oxygen within itself. Jala protects the mucous membranes of the body and lubricates the joints. Semen, blood, fat, urine and mucus in the body belong to the water element. In the form of cerebrospinal fluid it surrounds and protects the delicate nervous tissue of the brain and spinal cord.

The sense of taste arises out of jala element. The water element is linked to our vitality, sexuality and creativity. If we have a good connection to this element our body will move in a fluid way.

Prithvi (Earth) – base chakra – smell

Prithvi is the most solid of the elements. Any substance or particle, no matter what its size, indicates the presence of prithvi. This element governs shape and structure of everything in creation and is associated with the sense of smell.

In the human organism, the bones, flesh, skin and hair consist of the earth element. Patience, greed and the desire for survival are attributes connected with the element earth. Its nature is stable. Collecting and saving are associated activities.

The basic qualities of the element earth are stability, permanence, heaviness and solidity.

Mantras to balance each chakra

Each chakra has a *bija* mantra or ‘seed sound’ associated with

it. Although the bija mantras were first mentioned in the *Yogatattva* Upanishad, later texts, such as the *Shat-Chakra-Nirupa*, written by Puranda in 1577, laid down many of the practices that we use today. This text was translated into English by Sir John Woodroffe in 1918 and published in his book, *The Serpent Power*.

For example, the bija mantra for the base chakra is 'Lam' (sounded like the word 'Lang' with a silent 'g'). This is the sound for the earth element. By creating this sound in our base chakra, we are connecting with the earth element and balancing this chakra.

Each sound has a long nasal sound at the end, a sound halfway between an 'mmm' and an 'nnn' sound. In Sanskrit this sound is called *Anusvara*, which is the term for nasalisation in Sanskrit grammar. It means 'the sound that hums' and in the Devanagari script it is written as a dot above the preceding letter, called *bindu*.

Using this long, nasal sound directs the healing energy of each sound into the relevant chakra (see box). Sounding each bija mantra balances the element and the associated chakra. If this nasalised sound is not used at the end of each bija mantra, the effect is lost – in fact you would be creating an entirely different word with a different meaning!

Bija mantras for healing

The bija mantras can be used to balance your chakras. Most imbalances in the physical body begin with an imbalance in the elements and the chakras. When the elements and the chakras are balanced, the body will generally heal itself.

Balancing the chakras is also very beneficial for mental and emotional problems. Teenagers benefit from regular chakra balancing while they are going through major hormonal changes.

The bija mantras can also be used in a sound healing treatment to balance another person's chakras. With the person lying on their front or back, each mantra can be toned three or seven times over each chakra. This is a very powerful form of healing which is taught on the courses I run.

Conclusion

The sages and rishis have passed down to us a simple yet profound method of healing. Using the bija mantras to balance the chakras will keep us healthy and in touch with our own inner light. ☺

References

1. Cooppan, R. *Foundation Training in Clinical*

Applying each chakra mantra

All mantras should be sounded without the 'g' sound at the end. Direct the sound into the relevant chakra.

Lam for the Base Chakra – base of the spine – Earth; sounded 'lang'.

Vam for the Sacral Chakra – sacrum/genitals – Water; sounded 'vang'.

Ram for the Solar Plexus Chakra – abdomen/lower back – Fire; sounded 'rang'.

Yam for the Heart Chakra – chest/upper back – Air; sounded 'yang'.

Ham for the Throat Chakra – throat – Ether; sounded 'hung'.

Aum for the Third Eye Chakra – point between the eyebrows.

Aum for the Crown Chakra – top of the head.

Experiences of a course participant using the chakra CD

Lam – I feel the earth, thick and loamy. As I focus on the vibration of the mantra in my chakra I feel a great sense of stability. I am rooting down. I am preparing for the journey up the chakras by gaining a good, solid base.

Vam – My body starts to sway. I feel like stiff patterns within me are loosening, finding a flow. My energy seems to dance, which is very sensuous and great fun.

Ram – My body seems to come alive. I feel heat in my body, jumping around. I get a sense of solidity that comes from having a warm interior – a sense of presence. I sense my inner heat is low and am able to direct the vibration of the mantra around it to support and strengthen it. My mind becomes more active at this chakra.

Yam – I feel the air around me and within me. I feel an air current circulating in my chest. I feel how the air brings communication, carrying atoms of everything it touches to everything else it touches. My heart space becomes very warm indeed.

Ham – I feel space in the vibration. I seem to be concentrated in a point of light at my throat. After the expansiveness of the previous chakras, I feel myself as a discrete point but one located in immense distance around it. At times I feel I am in outer space – and I am part of this space. When I chant the mantra I feel myself expanding, so I am both the point and the space.

Aum – I can feel a merging at my Third Eye. I have seen diagrams of this chakra as two petals that integrate. I can feel this integration happening in my Third Eye as left and right join and become one.

Aum – At one point I feel like I am a single point of light exquisitely balanced on the top of my head.

Ayurveda. Back 2 Health Publishers, Perth, 2002.

2. Heather, ST. *Reclaiming Your Sacred Spirit: The Essential Guide to Healing the Chakras*. Sai Publishing, Montgomery, 1998.

3. Johari, H. *Chakras: Energy Centers of Transformation*. Destiny Books, Rochester, NY, 2000.

4. Leadbetter, CW. *The Chakras*. Theosophical Publishing, London, 1927.

5. Motoyama, H. *Theories of the Chakras*. Quest Books Wheaton, IL, 1984.

6. Perret, D. *Sound Healing with the Five Elements*. Binkey Kok, Holland, 2005.

7. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. *Healing with Form, Energy and Light: The Five Elements in Tibetan Shamanism, Tantra and Dzogchen*. Snow Lion Publications, New York, 2002.

8. Woodroffe, J. *The Serpent Power*. Dover Publications, New York, 1974.

An internationally known workshop leader and healer, Simon Heather is one of the leading teachers of sound healing in the UK and is author of Reclaiming Your Sacred Spirit – The Essential Guide to Healing the Chakras (www.simonheather.co.uk). He has produced a CD, The Sounds of the Chakras, which contains two sound meditations to balance the chakras. Using this CD has a healing effect on the chakras and subtle bodies (£10 plus £1 p&pp).

Simon is also the Principal of the College of Sound Healing, a non-profit-making organisation that brings together some of the leading teachers in the UK; www.collegeofsoundhealing.co.uk .