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ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १ ॥ विश्वकर्मा एमादुःखपुरीहाटकानि
नेता ॥ नवशोडशसाहस्रश्लोकैश्चैव त्राधिकम् ॥ ११ ॥ भवनानि मनोज्ञानि
योमध्ये चकल्पयन् ॥ परिजातनरुं चैव तासां भोगाय चकल्पयन् ॥ १२ ॥ या
सानोऽस्य हास्तवैद्यपे च शतकोटयः ॥ अनेपि बहुलोलोकावसि विगत
राः ॥ १३ ॥ अयं किं विविमुक्तिकेषु सुंदरं न च दृश्यते ॥ सवाजिनप्रसिनात्पु
तवुयस्य विद्युते ॥ १४ ॥ अमोघनीरमासाद्य तन्मनस्कतया च सः ॥ सवाजि
स्तपस्तेपेस्वर्यं मुदि यप बुद्धिमात्रं ॥ १५ ॥ वननिरस्य नैऋत्यस्वर्यं सवदलाव
तः प्रसन्नो भगवान् सवाजिनपुरस्थितः ॥ १६ ॥ सवाजिनोऽपि नृणां वदष्टादि वैदि
करश्च ॥ निजोराशनमस्तैस्तनमस्तैः सर्वतो मुखः ॥ १७ ॥ विश्वव्यापिन्नमस्तैः
मस्तैः निश्चरुः प्रिया ॥ करपयनमस्तैस्तैः हरिदश्वनमोस्तैः ॥ १८ ॥ गृहसज्जन
तस्तनमस्तैः चंद्राचिद्यो ॥ वेदत्रयनमस्तैस्तैः सर्वदश्वनमोस्तैः ॥ १९ ॥ प्रसीद
गहिद्वेशोऽस्युदष्टोऽसोदिवाकरः ॥ अयं सक्तयमानोऽसोद्वेदोऽदिवाकरः ॥ २० ॥
असोद्वेदोऽस्युदष्टोऽसोदिवाकरः ॥ अयं सक्तयमानोऽसोद्वेदोऽदिवाकरः ॥ २१ ॥
असोद्वेदोऽस्युदष्टोऽसोदिवाकरः ॥ अयं सक्तयमानोऽसोद्वेदोऽदिवाकरः ॥ २२ ॥



“CRITICAL REVIEW ON SAPTA CHAKRAS”**Bondre A.U.**

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ABSTRACT:

Chakras are a topic that is widely under discussion in today's world, but in Ayurveda this concept existed for a very long time and are widely used in practice till date mostly in the field of yoga as it is believed that these chakras can be activated through yoga only, but what if that is not the only way? In fact, many think that such concepts are not actual truth because of the effects that are described after proper activation of these energy points or the bundles present in our body. So, here we will understand and try to see different concepts related to it. This Prana is what is contained by the Nadis that are present in our bodies which helps in proper circulation and balance of this Prana throughout the body. there are innumerable Nadis in our body which helps in circulation of this Prana throughout the body but there are some primal Nadis which are of extreme importance, and these are three in numbers i.e., IDA, PINGLA AND SUSHUMNA.

KEYWORDS: Chakras, Ida, Pingla, Sushumna, yoga.

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INTRODUCTION:

Ayurveda and Yoga Shastra both understand and work on the concept of Prana that is present inside the body, now, what is this, Prana? Prana, if to be stated in a simple language, is compared to the vital force of life present inside the body, it can somewhere be said similar to Atma, but still these two are not exactly same, there is that very small distinction between the two that is extremely difficult to make out, which can be explained as follows- Prana is that energy present inside the body that ascends and that is present throughout the body, it is what gives us the life while atma is what is present as a “sookshma” a minute body in our body which is kind of carrier of that Prana in our sharir. This Prana is what is contained by the nadis that are present in our bodies which helps in proper circulation and balance of this Prana throughout the body. there are innumerable nadis in our body which helps in circulation of this Prana throughout the body but there are some primal nadis which are of extreme importance and these are three in numbers i.e., IDA, PINGLA AND SUSHUMNA. These three nadis are what affects the functions of the body majorly there are many other nadis as well as stated earlier they are uncountable and are situated in the same line as that of spinal cord, in these nadis there comes the fact that the sapta chakras we are to talk about are also aligned on this very axis of spinal cord as well. So, from below to upwards the sequence goes as follows- 1. Muladhara Chakra; 2 Swadhishtana chakra; 3. Manipur chakra; 4 Anahat chakra; 5 Vishuddhi chakra; 6. Ajna chakra; 7. Sahastradhara chakra. So, we will know more and in detail about all of these chakras, but first we will learn about the three most important nadis that are present.

The Three Nadis:

The most important nadis that are present in the human body needed for proper functioning of the whole human body is called as ida, pingla and sushumna nadis, all of these three nadis have different importance that play an important role in maintenance of health in the body of a human being. All of these nadis are given importance in the Ayurveda as well as yoga and both of them have similar yet a bit different idea about the same three nadis that we will see. Out of the three the first nadi to be explained will be sushumna nadi as this is the nadi that is present in the middle and is the most important one. **Sushumna Nadi-** this nadi is also called as the “saraswati nadi”, saraswati all of us know is the goddess of knowledge and the synonym has a deep relation to it. As stated earlier, all the nadis have ayurvedic as well as yogic perspective to it, now, what yogic philosophy states that these nadis are not present in the physical body, but it is something that is present in our astral body which helps us in our spiritual growth, so they do not see any of these nadis and chakras as a part of the physical body, but Ayurveda states them in the physical form with the positions of each nadi and chakras. According to that then, the sushumna nadi is present in line with the spinal cord which in Sanskrit is called as the “meru-danda”, all the six chakras that are present inside the body are present exactly on this very nadi and then the seventh chakra is said to be placed at the top of the head. This sushumna nadi is the middle nadi around which the ida and pingla are present and this nadi is a very balanced one, by balance what is meant is that even ida and pingla finally attach with the sushumna nadi and all the other nadis that are spread throughout the body are also given by the sushumna nadi that helps in maintaining the balance in the body.

Ida Nadi- ida nadi is the nadi that is present on the left side of the sushumna and is also called by the name of the “sheeta nadi”, as the name suggests this nadi is responsible for the sheeta gunas in the body and helps to cool down the body on practice and since the nadi is responsible for the coolness of the body and the moon also represents the coolness it is also called as the “Chandra-nadi”, this nadi is extensively used in various purposes and the uses on the nadi will now be explained in details- this nadi is directly connected to the left nostril, it is represented by the rivers Ganga and Varun rivers which both are cooling as well in nature. Now, this nadi is used in yoga as well as Ayurveda for healing purposes i.e. as follows, in yoga, there is a yoga kriya in which the sheeta nadi is activated through the breathing process, in this type of pranayama the right nostril is covered and is restricted to intake the air through that nostril and then the person is to inhale and exhale using only the left nostril, and the person will observe that the air that is taken and released the both the air are mildly cold and relaxing to the body, this nadi is used to provide the calmness and relaxation to the body, to keep the body cool, to help the person relax from the state of anxiety, the left nadi is very useful for the creative factor and thus the left nadi is useful for artistic actions and so, but when this nadi is activated the ability of person to do actions that require a lot of strength such actions will be much difficult to perform. there is many similar pranayama that are extremely useful in activation of the sheeta nadi and many such pranayama and techniques are advised by the Vaidya or the yoga experts in some cases for treatment purposes and when done regularly the results are seen to be very good. The properties as told above is the coolness of this nadi, it enhances the ability to perform the creative actions and able to excel in them, helps

not just the body but also the mind and mana to be in a calm state so that proper decisions and discussions can be undertaken, the most basic process through which this nadi is activated is the breathing exercises which should always be performed under guidance of some expert that has experience in such yoga procedures. The diseases in which this nadi is useful are as follows- jwar, kasa, shwas etc.

Pingla nadi- Pingla nadi is the nadi that is present on the right side of the sushumna nadi and is also called as the “surya nadi” because of its hot nature, it is a nadi that is basically responsible for the rise of temperature and if that is needed in the body then this nadi is activated by the person again through the same technique explained above. The properties of this nadi are as follows- it is useful for the increasing the body temperature and regulate it properly and according to need, it is useful in places or in work that needs a lot of physical strength, in mental work it helps a lot in like the mathematical problems or the ones that needs a lot of critical thinking etc. this way pingla nadi is described and this nadi is also used for treatment purposes so maintaining the balance in the body properly. In diseases where such pranayama can be useful are as follows- agnimandya (indigestion), vataj and kaphaj roga, shwas, kasa.

As the different properties are explained in the text above, our ancestors used various methods to explain the same concept to many people in a different way so that everyone can understand the importance to some extent, so this concept of nadis are introduced to explained in the pictorial form by the depiction of mata china-masta.

The Sapta-chakras:

There are seven chakras present in the human body that have a specific location and function in the body that if activated properly and in a right

manner, then these chakras become the keys of consciousness, it is said that all of these seven chakras, each chakra is a level of consciousness that helps us to reach the level through which we can attain the knowledge.

The seven chakras are as follows- 1. Muladhara chakra; 2 Swadhishtana chakra; 3 Manipura chakra; 4. Anahat chakra; 5. Vishuddhi chakra; 6 Ajna chakra and the last one 7. Sahastradhara chakra, so here we will understand each and every chakra in detail and try to understand the depth of it.

1. Muladhara Chakra- the name itself many a times explains a lot of things, like I this case the name "Muladhara" it is made up of two terms which are- mul+adhar, the meaning of these words is as follows "mul" which basically means core or base of something and then the second word comes-"adhara" which means support, so this chakra is the one chakra which I present at the core of the body and I responsible to support the body and life through this chakra, now this chakra has many important functions but first of all this chakra is placed at the base of the body i.e. near the genitals in both male and female, this chakra when properly activated then it helps in a lot of things including the healthy living, the skin or the aura of the person becomes much more beautiful and attractive as it is, proper digestion, disease free life etc. these are some of the benefits that one can achieve through the activation of only one chakra and there are other 6 chakras that are present and as it is said above each and every chakra is a single step on the staircase. Also, this chakra is directly connected to the gandha and thus the nasa-indriya that is present, so once this chakra is activated then one's sense of smell becomes very strong. This chakra is compared with some possible plexus present which are as follows- inferior haemorrhoidal plexus;

vesical plexus; prostatic plexus(males) and vaginal plexus (female); uterine plexus(female).

2. Swadhishtana Chakra- again, starting with the name and what it means is as follows- the term is made up of two terms again which are "swa+adhishtana" so the two terms mean "swa" means "swayam or self" and "adhishtana" means "the residing place" so the means that comes together is "the one that resides within itself" now, what does this exactly means? To understand this it is important to understand the position of this chakra, this chakra resides near the umbilicus i.e. almost 2 angula below the umbilicus, and this way this chakra resides in the amashaya region of the body which holds the function of digestion of food particles of the body, it is always said in Ayurveda that all the diseases takes place due to agnimandya now, the name becomes much more clearer as it is, being at the place that is close to the organ that performs the most important function of the body and the place that has an abundance of nerves, arteries and veins altogether, so this chakra basically resides in the place that is responsible for nutritional fulfillment of the whole body thus it affects the whole body bit more than the other chakras and thus this chakra is called the "Swadhishtana chakra". the biggest benefit of activation of this chakra is that the digestion will be proper at all times and it will not be disturbed which becomes the ultimate reason of staying disease free for a long time and this chakra is very closely related to the rasa-indriya and governs over the guna of rasa, so once activated the person will be able to taste all the different types of taste that exist and differentiate in between them properly. The plexuses that make up this chakra are as follows- spermatic plexus; left colic plexus; sigmoid plexus; superior haemorrhoidal plexus; inferior mesenteric plexus; hypogastric plexus.

This makes up the second stair in the staircases of chakras.

3. Manipura Chakra- now, since we are seeing the meaning of the names of chakra first of all, the meaning of this name is “Mani+pura” where the term, “mani” means “a precious stone” and “pura” means “city”, now what exactly comes off as the meaning of this term comes off as “city of jewels”, now, why does this means city of jewels, so, the presence or activation of this chakra actually gives the person material growth, why or how does activation of a chakra can lead to material growth? First of all, we will see what is the position of Manipura chakra, it is positioned at the nabhi or the belly-button. Being exactly at the belly button i.e. the umbilicus portion and the center of it this chakra plays a very important role in the digestive functions of the body when going through it is stated that this chakra helps in proper pachan of the food plus it’s assimilation in the body is also regulated by this chakra, helps in proper formulation of blood (the reason behind this might be that the moola for the raktavaha strotas is yakruta and pleeha (liver and spleen)) it also helps in proper de-fecation which again comes under the digestive action, helps for breathing, reproduction etc. all of these functions are the vital functions of the body that one needs to stay healthy and being a healthy individual only then can a person work towards attaining the jewels or money in a physical manner and the jewel of health is being given to you by the chakra itself. This is the chakra that is extremely important for one more reason that is that in this chakra Prana and apana they come together. So Prana is the vayu that gives us the energy to live while the apana vayu is the vayu that is exclusively responsible for the actions of the lower body more specifically the actions of expelling things out of the body like the act of defecation or urine expelling or

birth of a baby all of such actions comes under the action of apana vayu so, the coming together of these vayus basically is that the two pranas where one stays in the lower part of the body while the other one that is coming from upwards to down to provide that pranic energy to the body the apana vayu should stay at the level of mooladhar and swadhisthana only but it’s coming together with the Prana states that the two together brings the equilibrium to the body. Mani pura chakra is exclusively related closely to the chakshu-indriya activation of this chakra helps in perception of the roopa properly. So, this is the importance of the Manipura chakra and the plexus that are told to be equivalent to this chakra are, we know that each chakra is represented with a specific number of dala, these plexuses that are named below are what those dala are-

Phrenic plexus; Hepatic plexus; Splenic plexus; Superior gastric plexus; Supra-renal plexus; Renal plexus; Pancreatic plexus; Colic plexus; Spermatic plexus/Ovarian plexus; Superior mesenteric plexus.

Anahat Chakra (Cardiac Plexus)

- So, the meaning of the term “anahat” this term is made up of two terms which are “an+ahat” so what does the meaning comes off as? “an” means “not” and “ahata” means “hurt” so the term itself means that which is not hurt or is un struck. But, in today’s world it goes the opposite way, right? What I mean to say is that the chakra is named anahat and is positioned at the place of heart and heart is one organ that is hurt the most in a psychological manner so what becomes the meaning of the term coined for the chakra now? We all know that heart is where the mana resides; this is where the Prana comes and circulates in the whole body, so this chakra is to be activated to help the person become strong mentally and emotionally. This chakra is very much related to all the emotional factors and

thus it needs to be looked after the most in today's world, this chakra can play a very important role in healing maximum of the emotional and psychological traumas that one goes through in the lifetime, also, in this chakra the Prana and mana they are aligned together and when they are aligned together then ears get the most activated and it gets some type of "ati-indriya" sense which basically means that it can hear a lot of things and many types of sounds are heard. This chakra is closely related to the twak-indriya and ne gets very strong perception of touch if this chakra is activated. This chakra is made up of 12 dala and the 12 coherent plexuses are as follows-

Right deep cardiac plexus; Left deep cardiac plexus; Anterior pulmonary plexus; Posterior pulmonary plexus; Superior cardiac plexus; Cardiac ganglion of wrisberg; Right coronary plexus; Ventricular plexus; Left coronary plexus; Endocardiac plexus; Myocardiac plexus; Bibder's ganglia

Vishuddhi Chakra (Throat Chakra) - the term coined for this chakra is very clear in tis meaning itself, "Vishuddhi" made up of two term "vi+shuddhi" so, the term basically comes out with the meaning that "the one that is pure or the one that purifies" and this chakra and its properties are very in line with the name that is coined for the chakra. This chakra is placed at the base of our throat and is very closely related to the glands present in our throat. The properties that are explained for this chakra as for a person who has activated this chakra are as follows- the person is shanta-chitta (which means that this person is very clear at mental level and is peaceful) is a person who speaks very clearly, is aarogya (disease-free), being disease free the factor of long life comes along with it and then the person has a very positive aura and a radiance on their face (teja) , person has immense knowledge and is always about the

betterment of people around them. Now, for the Prana to reach up to the level of the Vishuddhi chakra it first has to reach up through the Manipura and anahat chakra and after this comes the Ajna chakra and Sahastradhara chakra and these two above chakras are the epitome of consciousness and thus this chakra is controlled and balanced by many factors some of which are all the organs that comes together at attach at the point of the throat which are as follows- the arteries, veins, esophagus, mouth, tongue, teeth, palates, thyroid gland, pharynx, larynx etc. this chakra is closely related to the karna indriya so the sense of hearing is very strong for a person who has activated this chakra of theirs. This chakra is made up of 16 dala and the name if these dala are as follows-

Superior cervical plexus; Carotid plexus; Cavernous plexus; Pharyngeal plexus; Vertebral plexus; Laryngeal plexus; Superficial cardiac plexus; External carotid plexus; External middle cervical plexus; Thyroid plexus; Middle cardiac plexus; Superior and inferior cervical plexus; Subclavian plexus; Inferior cardiac plexus; Internal and external cerebral plexus; Superior, inferior and middle cervical plexus.

All of these plexus makes up the 16 dala of vishuddhi chakra and this chakra is called as the cervical plexus.

Ajna Chakra (the third eye) - Ajna chakra, what does this name suggests? Ajna or agnya chakra, this name itself suggests that the meaning is permission, it is not even permission to be exact, and it is a bit different. Even though the term coined means permission, it is also the chakra that makes up the third eye of lord Shiva. So, this chakra is extremely powerful and it is compared to the penial gland in modern anatomy to be exact. This chakra is made up of two dala which are the thalamus and the hypothalamus. The properties of this chakra are that the person who has activated this

chakra basically reaches the higher level of consciousness and this is the point of the body from where all, the kind of actions and functions are governed, now this directly relates to the function of brain because It is the organ that governs the actions of the body and here the meaning of the term Ajna comes up to be more clear, the governance of the mind, the Ajna or agnya this term represents the efferent action of the brain and the sangya action which is the transmission of information from the body to CNS is the afferent action of the brain, so Ajna chakra is the center in the brain which is basically the concentrated center of brain through which all of these actions can be reached out to and then when this chakra of a person is activated then person gets a siddhi called as the “vaka-siddhi” i.e. the person what so ever he says becomes real. This siddhi is also a result of the awakened consciousness.

Sahasradhara Chakra (Crown Chakra)- again taking the name as the basis of the explanation, the Sahasradhara chakra is made up of the term “sahasra” first which means a thousand, now a thousand what? So, the dala for this chakra are thousand, which can be equivalent to uncountable as well. So this chakra is made up of many dala which cannot be penned down easily.so, all of these dala makes up this chakra and the location of this chakra is not exactly defined, some say that this chakra is present on the crown while some say this chakra is present outside the body, which creates a controversy over its position, but as of now, t=since in brain at the crown many neurons comes together and forms innumerable numbers of connections and clusters which helps us in proper functioning and thus this chakra can be said to be placed at the very crown of the head. Not much is known about this chakra by anyone till date, but the activation of this chakra leads to the epiphany or enlightenment

in all the true manners. This is how the sevenchakras helps in the balance of the whole body and makes a person physically, mentally and emotionally healthy and all of these chakras can be used in treatment procedures as well which helps a person tackle the diseases in a better manner by the improvement if the internal health of the body.

Activation of Chakras:

All the seven chakras are explained above and all of these chakras are present inside our body within our reach that becomes the path to attain the 4 purusharthas of the human and there are various ways that can be used to activate these chakras and bring the balance to the life which are-

Meditation- Meditation is one of the most burning topics in today’s world which everyone wants to practice for better mental health and to have some peace in their own lives, meditation helps a lot in having mental focus and peace and even helps the people in tackling various kinds of mental disorders such as anxiety complex and stress etc. in the similar way meditation can also help in activation of chakras through different techniques, meditation is of various types and there are many types of meditation that helps in activation if these chakras.

Mantras- Mantras are a specific set of words that are chanted in a specific tone and way to properly project its effects on the body. This to be made easy to understand, actually can be considered under the sound therapy, so when u chant a specific mantra, a specific sound in a specific tone and clarity it helps in channelizing the energy and it is scientific fact that sounds helps in channelizing energy inside the body and that is why many are advised to listen to soothing sounds to help them keep the calm etc. in the similar way these specific mantras helps in channelizing the energy of

body is a specific manner that helps in activation of the chakras.

Medicines- there are various herbal formulations that are used by various meditators to help them focus better to channelize the energy in the body a bit better, so medicines are not exactly that can activate the chakras, but it helps in fastening the process so, it acts more like the catalyst in this situation and helps in attaining the goal of activation of chakras better.

Physical Contact- A physical touch in a specific manner can also help in activation of the chakras like many put a mild pressure on their Ajna chakra regularly that helps in proper focus and even better retention power etc. in this way each and every chakra can be activated through this method as well. There are many other ways that can help in activation of the chakras but all of these methods must always be practiced under expert guidance alone. All of these techniques need proper guidance throughout the process.

DISCUSSION:

We saw how the seven Chakras are present in the body and before that we saw that there are three main nadis present in the body that helps a person in balancing the whole and out of those three the 7 chakras are placed on the middle nadi which is the sushumna nadi, the most important of all the nadis but the numbers are not limited to just the 3 nadis and the 7 chakras, actually there are innumerable numbers of nadis present in the human body and similarly there are innumerable numbers of chakras present in the body the chakra can be explained as a point of cluster of nerves that have come together at a specific point and the 7 mentioned are ones that are the most important ones and even those 7 are made up of varied numbers of plexus each and that numbers keeps on increasing so all of these are not just limited to the numbers of singular values. All of these points given in the

body make up the basis of treatment procedures for a Vaidya who has knowledge of them and helps in proper treatment and betterment of a patient. Like, the mooladhar chakra which is related to the nose so closely, related to the anal and rectal region and the genitals so this chakra can be useful for the treatment of such organs and the issues related to these organs and this is one field that is not very extensively researched upon but needs to be researched upon in much more details than it is.

CONCLUSION:

This whole review about the various aspects of the chakras and their effects, the concept of presence of chakras and presence of dalas and then the knowledge that all of those dalas are if the same number of plexus present in that area for that specific chakras explains that the ayurvedic and yogic sciences are just as authentic and scientific as the modern science, along with the fact that the exact positioning of each and every factor explains that they had the source and the medium to attain that knowledge that have been recorded into various books for us to know and explore and apply it for the betterment of the society itself. All of these chakras can be activated through various sources as mentioned above like mediation, mantras, gestures even some medicines are useful as well.

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