



Quotes from 'Concerning the Cakra' by TKV Desikachar

"The Cakra are points of concentration for the mind."

"The human energetic system is very complex and it is even harder to understand the mind, the structure, the limitations and possibilities, the relationship with the body and vice versa.

On the other hand, we can easily say to someone that there are seven Cakra, that they are like this or that, that there are found here or there in the body etc in all simplicity. But we must be aware if we do that we haven't really said anything, and the person will not be any the wiser.

The risk of confusion is even greater when we try to show the model of the Cakra scientifically, or to give spiritual characteristics some sort of scientific basis. Some try to do this, by linking Mūladhāra with the kidneys or the sacral plexus, or Viśuddhi with the thyroid, etc.

Have no illusions: the model of the Nāḍī and Cakra can never help to explain physiological processes which accompany Yoga practice, and that is as it should be. The wish to mix a system like that of the Cakra with physiological science only serves to increase confusion on the subject.

Those who still persist in trying to establish these impossible connections simply risk making fools of themselves. To this day, every attempt to establish correspondences between the two systems are shown as superficial, as of doubtful estimation, and falsely simplified science.

More seriously, they take no account of the real significance of this ancient system, and don't respect it, don't do it justice and place attention on other priorities than Yoga does. In proceeding in this way, they cut themselves off from any possibility of understanding why these concepts still have a validity today."

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"Each time we wish to understand a system whatever it is, we need a structure. What applies to modern science already applied to the ancient yogic sages when they were concerning themselves with the human system.

The method of the ancients was to reflect, to meditate and to attempt to find clear replies to their questions. They tried to give a form to what they wanted to understand, corresponding to what they already understood. In this way of proceeding, they did not differ from the sages of the ancient medical science of ayurveda who also tried to understand the human organism in a particular way, nor from the doctor philosophers of ancient China.

Later, modern science, and Western science, have sought in their turn a method of classifying the human organism and have worked out their own way of presenting this.

Amongst the innumerable ideas developed by the yogis around the human system, some have become the foundation of all the other considerations. So the opinion that all aspects of our lives are supported by a particular energy was widespread among the sages; they called this life force 'Prāṇa'.

Whilst Prāṇa circulates in us, we live, and when it goes, we die. Prāṇa is responsible for different functions in the body. Prāṇa expresses itself in everything that concerns life. there is an important question to be answered. How does Prāṇa penetrate the different areas of the body?"

"Bhāvana means that I create for myself a place, an idea, an image, a vision and I direct my attention towards it."

"A Bhāvana doesn't depend on the reality of what I fix upon. I can direct my Bhāvana to a real sensation, such as the contact between my feet and the ground, for instance. But I could easily imagine myself in good health, when in reality I am ill."

"Concerning the number of Cakra, we also find different ideas. The most frequent is that which considers there to be seven. However in his book '[Yoga Makaranda](#)' my father talks of ten. There are other ideas as to the number elsewhere, the form in which they are visualised varies according to tradition.

Many Yogins visualise them as circles or wheels. According to other sources, they are described as lotuses or Padma with varying number of petals. Compared to the idea of a wheel, which evokes more the idea of movement and rotation, the lotus evokes more the idea of creation.

If we analyse all this seriously, we see, in the respect of the Cakra, that the sages, during meditation, did not always have the same experiences and visions. There is no need to discuss this, because it depends on the personal experience of each seer. However, it is important to be aware of these differences and the consequences that they can have for the way in which we imagine the experience."

"It is clear that no examination of the body will reveal Cakra. The ancients knew this well and my father often repeated it. The system of Cakra is a subtle vision of the Yogi, in accordance with his own personal experience. For this reason there are different descriptions.

If we want to concern ourselves with the Cakra, we must accept them and recognise them in this way. This is why it is a waste of time to argue about it, as people tend to do these days. Why does it matter if this or that Cakra is one or two centimetres higher or lower, if it is vertical or horizontal, blue or green.

On the contrary, it is a question of showing that we are concerned with particular inner images and to avoid this ridiculous situation of having useless arguments."

"The great yogin Yājñavalkya said that the constant and intensive practice of Prāṇāyāma brought Prāṇa and Agni together, and gradually the obstacle at the base of the Suṣumnā would be totally dissolved.

He gave this block the name 'Kuṇḍali' meaning coiled or 'Kuṇḍalinī' meaning 'rolled up' in other texts.

Kuṇḍalinī represents that which blocks access to the central energetic channel. When this obstacle is eliminated, Prāṇa penetrates and begins to rise in the central channel."