

The Throat Chakra



Western Colour: Blue

Traditional Colour: Blue

Bija Mantra: Ham
(pronounced with a short 'a' and a nasal 'ng' sound, rhyming with 'nun').

Language is the evolutionary leap that is often considered to be the major factor in the success of our species. Language has given us the ability to understand what is happening to others. The growth of society and civilisation is based on co-operation and a shared dream communicated by language.

Traditional texts never linked endocrine glands to the chakras, but the thyroid is often linked to the throat chakra. The physical organs and structures of the throat area can be seen clearly as letting energy move through – either inwards or outwards. The mouth, nose and throat are where we first come into contact with the air around us. Even though the breath is initiated in the solar plexus we feel the air as it passes over the back of the palette and in the upper throat. The mouth and oesophagus come into contact with our food first of all – in fact vital digestive processes are carried out in the mouth. So much happens in this small area and it all has to be carefully regulated – we can only speak on the out-breath as air passes over our vocal cords; we must avoid breathing in at the same time as swallowing or we choke. Wrapped around the trachea and oesophagus are the thyroid and parathyroid glands. These major endocrine glands regulate the body's metabolism so that enough energy is produced from food for our needs. Lethargy and sluggishness result from an underactive thyroid and hyperactivity when it is overactive.

The voice allows us to express what is felt in the heart and mind. Blocks in our ability to communicate may not cause an immediate problem with the physical organs of the throat, but personal expression is deeply disturbing to the energy systems as a whole. It denies our existence, our individuality, our right to be heard.

Personal expression of ideas and thoughts, the ability to communicate through spoken language or the symbolic languages of writing, singing, performing or any of the other arts help to maintain the healthy flow of energy through the throat chakra.

As the body becomes less active, mental activity also reduces and observant detachment becomes more apparent. With a balance of energies within the throat chakra peace is a

tangible experience, a familiar relaxed occurrence. Where the throat chakra is stressed or blocked in some way, peace may be a longed for wish but it is difficult if not impossible to achieve. Expression and communication is this outward flow from the body via the activity of the throat chakra. If the expression is blocked in some way the energy will release through one of the other major chakras.

Communication is not simply about personal expression. It is also necessary to listen to what is being expressed by others. Problems also occur if individual expression has been stifled, often by over-bearing discipline or unsympathetic schooling. To not be expressive simply because you believe that you 'can't paint' is just reinforcing the same repressive values that have probably caused the problem in the first place.

Communication and sound are the keys to the throat chakra. Those who use these skills in their work are drawing on the energy of this centre. Communication by simple repetition has a tendency to break down very quickly, as the game known as Chinese whispers graphically illustrates.

The effective teacher is a person who feels excitement and interest and can express it to the students in a way that allows the knowledge to become their own, not simply repeated as inflexible dogma.

Learning to explore alternative views, even taking up opposite viewpoints in debate, is a useful way of developing attitudes of flexibility and tolerance. Without these skills there is the danger that whatever is communicated to us will be automatically believed.

The throat is traditionally associated with the element of space, also called ether and, in the original Sanskrit texts 'akasha'. This fifth element was conceived as an original container, a vessel that held all the other elements. Creation myths often combine the moulding of inanimate matter with the life giving addition of breath or by the process of naming. Naming myths and stories show the magical and spiritual significance of knowing the right names for things.

At its highest level the throat chakra brings out our own truth into the world. Truth is not just correct information. Each of us will dismiss as untrue those things that do not fall within our personal construction of how the universe works.

Imbalances in the Throat Chakra: a stiff neck, throat infection or tension in the shoulders, headaches, problems with swallowing or eating, metabolic disorders, frustration leads to shouting, or a complete withdrawal of communication; weak voice, rigid or extreme views, sees the world as only 'black' or 'white, 'right' or 'wrong' - inability to see 'greyness'.