

A Brief Overview of the Relationships between Chakras, Endocrine Glands, and Autonomic Neural Plexuses

By Mark Olson, Ph.D., LMT

Most of the literature on the 7 chakras draws a close relationship between the chakras and either the endocrine glands or the plexuses of the autonomic nervous system or both. One of the earlier popular texts on the subject, Leadbeater's *The Chakras*, originally published in 1927, focused on the chakra-plexus relationship. Leadbeater states in his book that the chakras should not to be equated with the plexuses, an idea that he suggests was popular with writers of the time. Whoever those other writers were, their focus on the plexuses has not had a great impact on the chakra literature today. The popular literature in bookstores today will usually focus on the endocrine glands, unless its a very thorough text on the subject, such as Gach's *Acu-Yoga* or Judith's *Wheels of Life*.

With the exception of a few, but very consistent, discrepancies, the modern chakra literature shows a high level of agreement concerning which chakras relate to which endocrine glands. The first column in Table 1 provides an overview of these relationships. As one can see, the root chakra is associated with either the adrenal glands or the gonads. It is this identification of the adrenals with the root chakra that is perhaps the oddest in the literature, given that the adrenals are located above the 3rd chakra. The sacral chakra is associated with the gonads, and occasionally the adrenal or lymphatic glands. The solar plexus relates to either the pancreas, the adrenals, or the spleen. The 4th chakra is always associated with the thymus gland, and the 5th chakra is always associated with the thyroid (and parathyroid) gland(s). The 6th and 7th chakras are associated with the pituitary and pineal glands; the literature is split on whether the pituitary comes before or after the pineal, but most authors put the pituitary with the 6th and the pineal with the 7th.

The scant literature on the relationship between the autonomic neural plexuses and the chakras is much less consistent and clear than the endocrine-chakra literature. Most authors will state that chakras work through the endocrine glands and the neural plexuses, but very few will actually give any details about the latter. The few details available are summarized in the second column of Table 1. One can see in the table that most authors agree about which plexuses are associated with the 4th and 5th chakras. Authors also agree that the solar plexus chakra is associated with the solar plexus (hey, that one was easy!) The root and sacral chakras, however, are far from clear, with some authors placing the sacral plexus with the root chakra (Fritz, Gach), others placing it with the sacral chakra (Judith), and still others offering different theories. As was the case with the endocrine theories, the locations of the plexuses are sometimes out of order in terms of what one might expect. Leadbeater, for instance, associates the 2nd chakra (which he refers to as the spleen chakra) with the splenic plexus; this is an odd discrepancy given that both the spleen and the splenic plexus are located superior to the 3rd chakra. Fritz, in her book *Mosby's Fundamentals of Therapeutic Massage*, provides the reader with a diagram that at first seems to bring clarity to the issue. Unfortunately, her diagram is not accompanied by any explanatory text, and it also neglects to illustrate the 6th chakra, leaving the reader to make her own inferences (my own shown in Table 1). Given the lack of agreement and clarity with this issue in the literature, there is certainly not any "common knowledge" regarding the relationships between chakras and autonomic neural plexuses.

In summary, most books on chakras relate each of the chakras to a particular endocrine gland, and there is a fair amount of agreement across authors concerning these relationships. Those relationships that seem discrepant, such the adrenal glands being associated with the root chakra or the lack of agreement concerning the 6th and 7th chakras, are nevertheless consistent in their discrepancies. As a result, there exists a fairly "common knowledge" concerning chakra-endocrine relationships. In contrast, there is very little written about the details of the chakra-neuroplexuses relationships, even though many authors make a point to mention that such relationships exist. The little that is written is also quite inconsistent. Thus, there is little "common knowledge" about the relationship between the nervous system and the chakras, and there is nothing written about how the endocrine theories and the neuroplexuses theories fit together.

Table 1: Chakras and Their Neuro-Endocrine Relationships

	Endocrine Glands	Neuro/Autonomic Plexuses	Other Organs
Root	Adrenals (Brennan, Bruyere, Judith, Paulson) Gonads (White) Gonads-male (Gach, Judith)	Sacral plexus (Gach) Coccygeal plexus (Judith, Leadbeater) Parasympathetic nerve roots to Genitals, Bladder, and Large Intestine (Fritz)	Large Intestine (Gach, Judith) Legs, Bones (Judith) Rectum, Prostate (Gach) Kidneys (Brennan)
Sacral	Gonads (Brennan, Judith, Paulson) Gonads-female (Gach) Adrenal (Gach) Peyer's Patches / Lymph (Bruyere, White)	Prostatic plexus (Gach) Splenic (including Pelvic and Hypogastric) plexus (Leadbeater) Sacral plexus (Judith) Sympathetic nerve roots to Inferior Mesentery Plexus to Large Intestine, Bladder, Genitals, and *Kidneys (Fritz)	Kidneys, Bladder (Gach, Judith) Uterus, Genitals (Judith)
Solar Plexus	Pancreas (Brennan, Bruyere, Judith, Paulson) Adrenal (Bruyere, Judith, White) Spleen (Bruyere, Gach)	Solar plexus (Gach, Judith) Celiac or Solar plexus (including mesenteric) (Leadbeater) Lower thoracic sympathetic nerve roots to Superior Mesentery Plexus and Celiac Ganglia to Adrenals, Liver, and Digestive Organs (Fritz)	Liver, Gall Bladder, Stomach, Small Intestines (Brennan, Gach, Judith) Muscles (Judith)
Heart	Thymus (Brennan, Bruyere, Gach, Judith, Paulson, White)	Cardiac plexus (Gach, Judith, Leadbeater) Sympathetic nerve roots to Lungs and Heart (Fritz)	Heart, Lungs (Gach, Judith) Arms, Hands (Judith) Heart (Brennan)
Throat	Thyroid (Brennan, Bruyere, Gach, Judith, Paulson, White)	Pharyngeal plexus (Gach, Judith, Leadbeater) Sympathetic Superior Cervical Ganglion to Face (Fritz)	Throat, Ears, Arms, Hands, Mouth (Judith) Cervical spine (Gach) Lungs (Brennan)
Third Eye	Pituitary (Brennan, Bruyere, Gach, Leadbeater, Paulson) Pineal (Judith, White)	Carotid plexus (Judith, Leadbeater) Cavernous plexus (Gach)	Eyes (Judith) Gall Bladder, Brain (Gach) Lower Brain, Left Eye, Ears, Nose (Brennan)
Crown	Pineal (Brennan, Gach, Leadbeater, Paulson) Pituitary (Judith, Bruyere, White, Leadbeater)	Meridian plexus (Gach) Cerebral Cortex (Judith) Brain Stem/Parasympathetic Cranial Nerves III (to Eyes), VII (to Nose and Mouth), IX (to mouth), and X (to Lungs, Heart, Liver, Digestive Organs, Large Intestine, and *Kidneys) (Fritz)	CNS and Brain (Judith) Liver, Bladder, Gall Bladder (Gach) Upper Brain, Right Eye (Brennan)

* denotes anatomical error on part of author

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