

Learning Objectives for the Chakra and Koshas Lesson

Part One:

- For each Chakra, know the English name, location, colour, element, endocrine gland and mantra.
- Understand the relationship of specific yoga asanas to each major chakra.

Part Two:

- Know what the Kundalini energy is and what techniques activate it
- Know the 3 granthis and their purpose
- Know the five koshas and what they are

For this lesson you will use THREE text books:

- **The IYTA Handbook of 84 Traditional Asanas**, pages 119-121
- **Science of Yoga by Ann Swanson** pages 196 and 201
- **Letters from the Yoga Masters** by Marion Mugs McConnell, pages 133-136, 140-142, 156-158, 169-174, 211-223 and the Glossary pages 281-298

Please read the article below. Then go to www.soyayoga.com and click on “STUDENT LOGIN” in the upper right corner of the home page. Login to your account and proceed to answer the questions in the lesson on **Chakras and Koshas** based on all of the resources provided.

Be sure to print your answers as instructed on pages 5-6. We will review the answers in class discussion.

CHAKRAS and KOSHAS

Chakras:

There are said to be many chakras in the body, but for the purposes of our study, we are going to focus on the 7 major chakras. Chakras are considered to be vortices of pranic energy in the subtle or astral body (sukshma sharira). Energy flows through the nadis or subtle nerve channels to distribute the flow of energy throughout the human body (see nadi image on **page 136 in Letters from the Yoga Masters**). Although there are said to be 72,000 nadis, there are three main nadis: the Sushumna which is the central nadi situated in the spinal column of the subtle body. The Pingala nadi is on the right side of the body and the Ida nadi is on the left side of the body. The Ida and Pingala nadis are said to crisscross up the Sushumna, intersecting with each other at each of the chakras, as shown in your Anatomy text, **Science of Yoga**, on page 201 and the **IYTA Handbook** page 119.

(note: The drawing in the IYTA Handbook on page 119 is more correct, showing Ida and Pingala joining at the Ajna chakra between the eyebrows. From there, the energy travels up as one to the Sahasrara).

Chakras as transformers and distributors of energy:

Chakras transform and distribute the body's life force – the Prana – so that we move, think, act, etc. The life force pumps the heart, and moves the blood. It allows organs to function, body systems to work, and thoughts to come and go. This life force draws the breath in, holds it, and releases it out. All life is governed by Prana, and the chakras distribute this energy through the nadis. They provide the energy behind all the functions of the physical and the astral body. Therefore they are equated to the endocrine glands, the five prana vayus, and the transfer of information from our nerves to our brain, and from our senses to our mind. The asanas we perform help to stimulate the function of the chakras. You can get a good visual of all of this from the **Asana/Glands chart** (found in the online lesson - source unknown). *Please print the Chart.*

Yoga equates the location of these “wheels” of energy with the physical body's nerve plexuses. A great example of this is seen in the **Nerve Plexus Chart** (found in online lesson - source unknown). *Please print the Chart.* Chakras are also equated to the elements which the yoga philosophy states we are created from: earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind/light, and Cosmic Consciousness. You can find most of these elements on page 201 of your Anatomy text, **Science of Yoga**.

Chakras and Consciousness:

Chakras are related to our level of consciousness, from our need to feel stable and secure, or creative and emotional, all the way to our intuitive and spiritual consciousness. There is a seed or bija mantra for each of the 7 chakras, which are words of power that inspire and energize each energy center. You can learn more about these, aspects as well as more related asanas in the **IYTA Handbook of 84 Traditional Asanas on pages 119-121**, and in **Letters from the Yoga Masters on pages 140-142**.

Each chakra has a specific number of petals, totaling 50. Each petal is related to one of the 50 letters from the Sanskrit alphabet. Sanskrit is an original, ancient, and sacred language, which relates to the vibratory energy of the chakras in each of us as an energy being. The Devanagari script is known as “the Language of the Gods”. This website will show the Sanskrit letters on

each of the chakra petals <http://www.aryabhatt.com/occult/kundalini/chakras.htm>

As energy beings, we reflect our inner light. The colour spectrum is reflected in the chakras, like the rainbow colours that occur when the sunshine pours through a crystal prism: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and white (or sometimes violet). In **Letters from the Yoga Masters, on pages 156-158** there is a technique called “**Sushumna Darshan**”, which guides you through a process of inner visualization of your chakras and their colours. Practice this technique from SOYA’s [youtube video](#).

THREE GRANTHIS and KUNDALINI:

Granthis are **psychic knots**, which prevent the ascent of the kundalini energy until they are “untied” or pierced. We must and deal with our mental, emotional and psychic baggage in order to untie them before the kundalini energy can rise through the sushumna. They protect us until we are ready psychically for the flow of kundalini energy.

Brahma granthi is located at **Muladhara chakra** and relates to **names and forms**. Brahma is the creator of this manifested world of names and forms so this granthi is named after him. The knowledge of this world enters us through the 5 senses, occupies our consciousness and creates desires and ambitions. This traps the mind, and obstructs kundalini. As long as we limit our belief that we are just a body and mind, and this manifested world is more real than our spirit, this knot is tied. As our knowledge of the spirit increases, we focus on knowing the Truth, and this knot is untied. The kundalini energy can move freely through the sushumna/chakras up to Vishnu granthi.

Vishnu granthi is located at the **Anahata chakra** (some say the Manipura chakra). Vishnu is the Lord of Preservation, and the Vishnu knot creates the desire to preserve, in particular the desire to **preserve ancient knowledge, traditions, institutions and spiritual organizations**. The knot produces compassion with attachment, such as attachment to the cosmic good and desire to help suffering in humanity. Even though we want to develop compassion, we don't want to be bound to spiritual organizations and orders. As students we may get attached to your style or lineage and this can tighten the psychic knot (“my yoga style is better than yours”). It creates separation instead of unity. Through karma yoga and our ability to accept all pathways to the Spirit with non-attachment or aversion, this granthi unties and the kundalini energy can move up to Rudra granthi.

Rudra granthi is located at the **Ajna chakra**. Rudra is the Vedic name for Siva, which relates to transformation and change. Once the kundalini reaches here time is destroyed and the yogi has the power to see **the past, present and future** (there is no more linear time). Even here, with the enlightened mind, the yogi can become attached to the **intuitive power, psychic phenomena, visions and the siddhis**. It is a challenge to not be attached to these. As we realize these we are merely “signposts” that we are on the right track, and the ego lets go of them, this granthi is gradually untied. The kundalini energy can flow freely to the Sahasrara chakra and the person becomes established in the sheath of bliss.

PANCHA KOSHAS: The five sheaths. **Science of Yoga** on page 196 AND **Asana/Glands Chart**.

Vedanta philosophy states that the individual soul (Jiva atman) is enveloped by five sheaths. The five sheaths encase the True Self, forming our body as a vehicle for the soul to develop consciousness. These five concentric sheaths are layers envelop the Atman. **They are known as Koshas.**

- **Annamaya Kosha:** The food sheath, or the physical body made of atoms, molecules, bones, blood, etc. This is the outermost sheath.
 - **Pranamaya Kosha:** The vital, subtle, or pranic sheath, composed of prana, the life force. This sheath vitalizes and holds together the body and mind. The subtle prana “rides” on the breath. As long as this vital principle of prana exists in the organism, life continues.
 - **Manomaya Kosha:** The mental sheath, in particular the lower mind with multiple thoughts and emotions. This sheath receives information through the five senses.
 - **Vijnanamaya Kosha:** The intellectual sheath, or the higher wisdom and knowledge. This our intellect or the faculty of the mind that is discerning and non-reactive.
 - **Anandamaya Kosha:** The bliss sheath, of pure unconditional joy. This sheath is nearest to the blissful Atman.
- The sheaths are layers of maya or illusion. **Atman**, the individual soul, is “covered” by these sheaths but remains separate from them. If any of these sheaths are out of alignment, or unwell, it will affect our overall being.

Now, with all this information, please Login and begin the online Chakra and Kosha Lesson. When you have completed that lesson, **please fill in as much information as you can on the Chart below.**

Chakra + Sanskrit	Issues	Location	Body part	Endocrine	Sound	Colour	Element
Root 1 st Muladhara	Survival, Grounding Safety Elimination	Base Of Spine	Legs feet, sacral area, kidneys	Adrenal	Lam	Red	Earth
Sacral 2 nd Svadhastana	Emotional Balance, Creativity Sexuality Reproduction	Below the naval	Lower abdomen, lower back, uterus, intestines	Ovaries, Prostate	Vam	Orange	Water
Solar Plexus 3 rd Manipura	Power, Self- esteem, self discipline. Digestion	Solar Plexus	Digestive System, lumbar spine	Pancreas	Ram	Yellow	Fire
Heart 4 th Anahata	Relationships Self-love Compassion Service Respiration	Middle of the chest	Heart Chest Circulation Arms, lungs	Thymus	Yam	Green	Air
Throat 5 th Vishuddhi	Communication Discernment Spiritual Drive Expression	Throat	Mouth, throat, ears, jaw voice, airways	Thyroid Parathyroid	Ham	Sky Blue	Ether
Third Eye 6 th Ajna	Wisdom, Perception, Vision Intellect Senses	Center of forehead	Eyes, base of skull, Ears, Nose Sinuses	Pituitary	AUM <i>Kohas & Om on petals</i>	Indigo	Light or Mind
Crown 7 th Sahasrara	Spirituality, Awareness Neurological Functioning	Crown of the head.	Upper Skull, cerebral cortex, CNS	Pineal	Om <i>Silent</i>	Violet Or White	



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Granthis:

Vishnu Granthi at Anahata Chakra (can be at Manipura if felt there)

Rudra Granthi at Ajna Chakra

Koshas and Chakras and Bodies:

Annamaya Kosha: Muladhara, Svadhastana, Manipura Chakras, related to the physical existence

Pranamaya Kosha: Anahata, Vishuddhi Chakras – intake of prana, first of the higher chakras

Manomaya and Vijnanamaya Kosha: Ajna Chakra

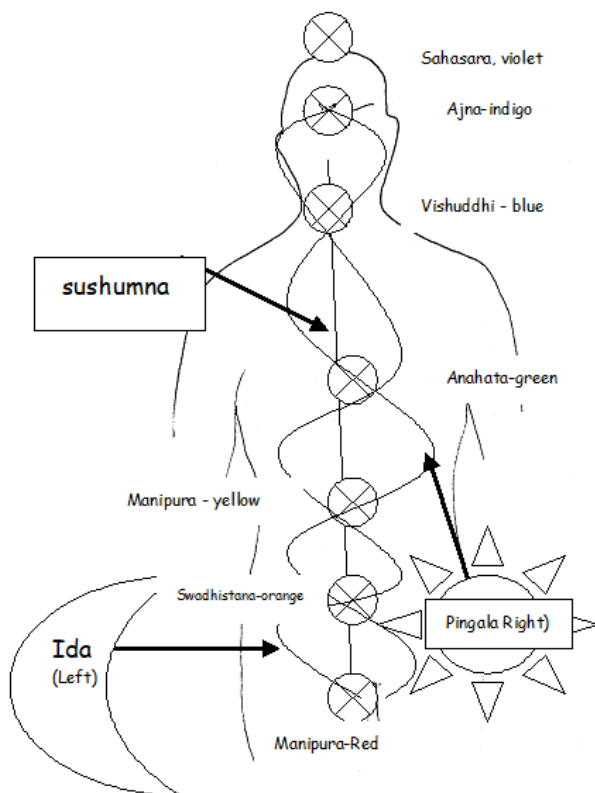
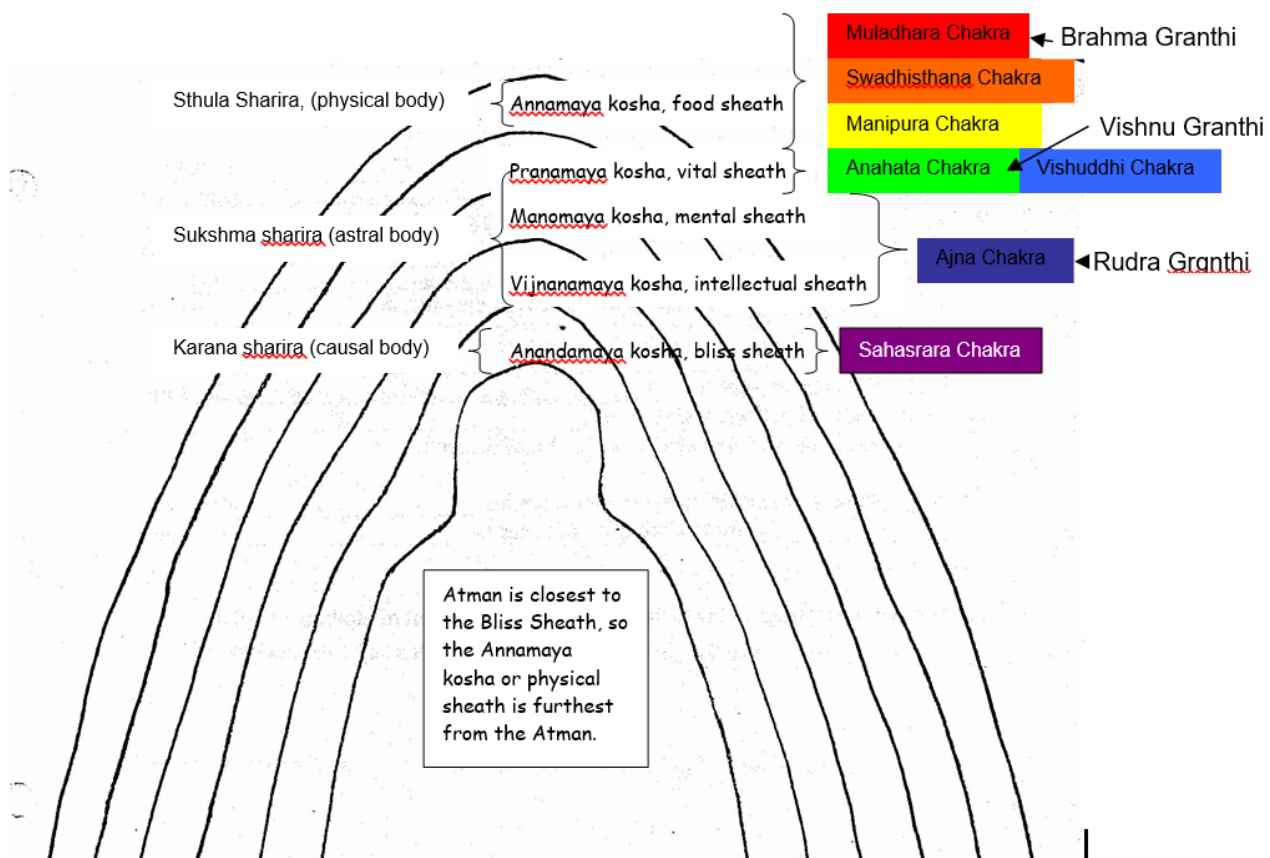
Anandamaya Kosha: Sahasrara Chakra

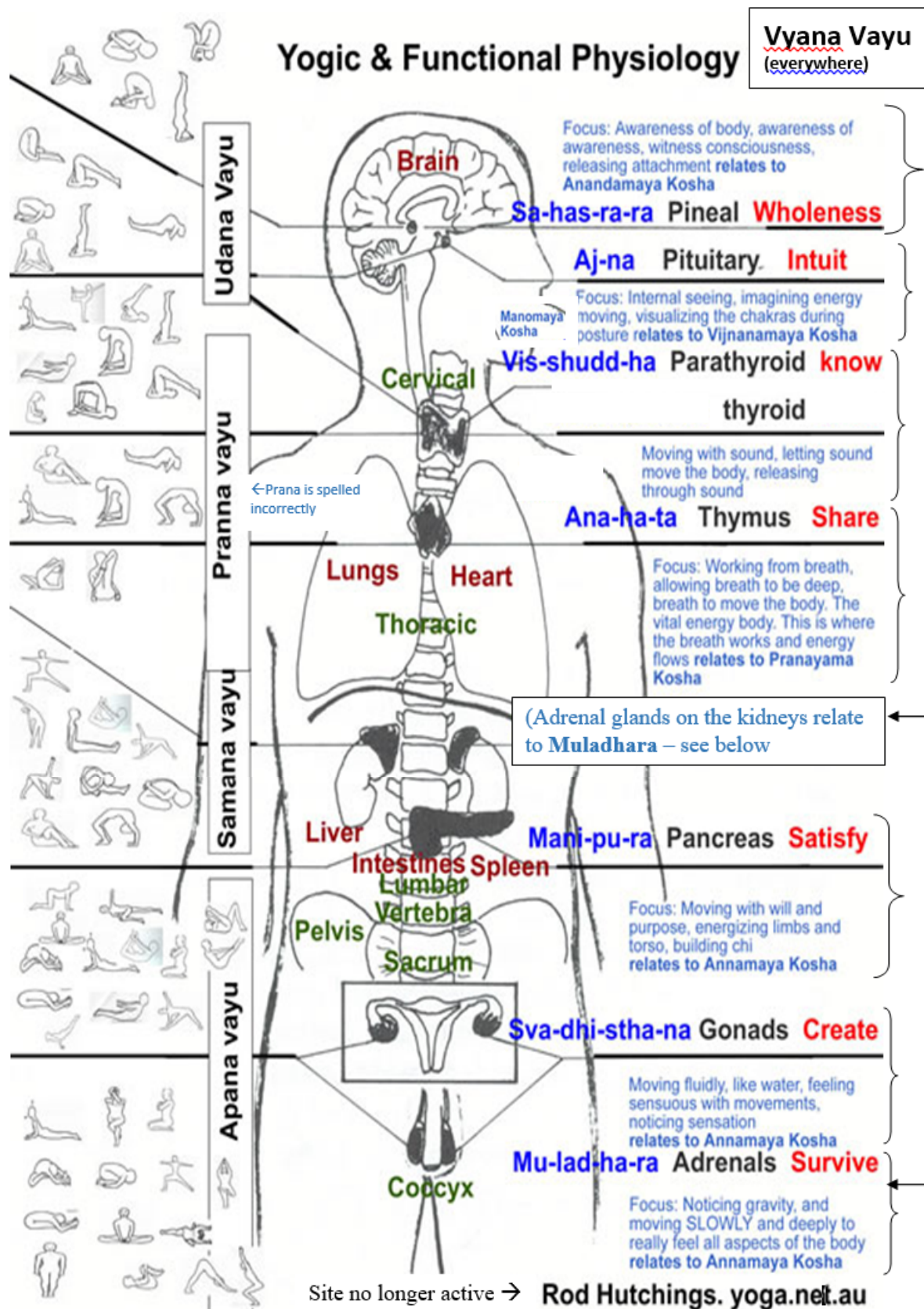
Shariras (Bodies):

Sthula Sharira (physical body): Annamaya Kosha

Sukshma Sharira (astral body): Pranamaya, Manomaya and Vijnanamaya Koshas

Karana Sharira (causal body): Anandamaya Kosha





AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

