

QUESTION AND ANSWER WITH LYNN BOOTES

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An ACVA student asks: **Where can I find a list of the chakras and planets? A quick internet search gave lots of different answers. If I heard correctly, you put the Moon as the left eye and the left channel, pingala. So the Sun would be the right eye and the right channel, ida?**

As the Sage Parasara might have said, “this is a very insightful question, O Student!” There are three reasons you are finding inconsistent information. First, a random internet search for matters related to esoteric knowledge tends to produce confusion because it is a random process. Subtleties of a number of different traditions and teachers are sampled at random. It is precisely for this reason why a serious student of Jyotish needs to find a teacher or school with a consistent and coherent approach. One of the really wonderful things about Jyotish is that over thousands of years of instruction, both written and oral, there is a core base of knowledge and competency. As one goes beyond the basics, there may be subtle differences on certain matters, as taught from various texts or by various teachers. But the teachers acknowledge the traditions and their own teachers. Whereas, the person with the “Random Internet Search” as a teacher ends up with a confusing mess.

Second, in the traditional texts in Jyotish you don't find an explicit chart or list regarding Chakras and Grahas or planets. While Jyotish, including the planets and signs, is a very old tradition with ancient texts, there are other texts and traditions. The traditions of Yoga and Tantra are very ancient and have their own texts and oral traditions. Ayurveda, the traditional Indian theory of medicine and health, has its own traditions and texts. Now when one goes to the Slokas or verses of the astrology texts, nowhere do you find an explicit discussion of the Chakras, but you do find a lot about the planets and zodiac signs. Similarly, in the Vedas, Upanishads and Yoga Sutras, there are references to the Nadis (Ida and Pingala – Sun and Moon) as the two channels which parallel the spine and which allow the exchange of various energies up and down the physical, vital and mental bodies. The spots where these paths cross are commonly described as the Chakras or wheels. But you don't find explicit descriptions of the planets as related to these Chakras. And in the Ayurvedic texts, the focus is on those various bodies in and around the physical body, and on the five elements and the three gunas or qualities. The Ayurvedic physician is instructed to use Jyotish to choose the best time for a treatment, or to examine a birth chart for clues to a person's condition, but the particulars are not in the Ayurveda text. So why is this? Because ALL the texts are built upon the assumption that you will have a competent instructor who will help you assemble the bits and pieces into the living tradition.

And yet...there is circumstantial evidence of attempts at synthesis of these concepts and experiences in the very ancient past. I have seen with my own eyes a copy of the Pyramid Texts from Egypt, in which there is a discussion of the reborn Pharaoh seeming to activate seven energy centers from the sacrum to the crown when rising from death to life – and while performing what appears to be a “Cobra pose.” There is a carving in ancient Mesopotamia from 2100 BCE which appears to show the

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interlocking coils of ida and pingala, and from the Indus Valley Civilization there is a carved seal showing what appears to be a Shiva-like figure seated in a lotus pose. It appears that the Greek philosopher Plato was aware of traditions about the flow of kundalini energy which he might have learned at the school of Pythagoras at Croton (who may have learned them from a Persian doctor). Or, Plato may have studied in Egypt, or he may have learned from an Indian teacher of yoga who came to Athens.

Here is the consensus view I find in the texts in English from Jyotish teachers I trust. Usually I defer to Dr. Vamadeva Devid Frawley, who has gone to the trouble after decades of study and scholarship to integrate these three traditions in a handy guide: *Ayurvedic Astrology*. Another recent publication which I like is *Yoga and Vedic Astrology: Sister Sciences of Spiritual Healing*, by Sam Geppi. Note that there are many subtleties in the understanding of Chakras – this is only a bare description. There are other mantra syllables and connections one can learn with meditation and study.

Divine Bliss State – Crown Chakra	Sahasara - Beyond
AUM – Third Eye Chakra	Ajna – Sun /Moon, Leo/Cancer
HAM – Throat Chakra	Vishuddha – Mercury, Gemini/Virgo
YAM – Heart Chakra	Anhata – Venus, Taurus/Libra
RAM – Digestive Chakra	Manipura – Mars, Aries/Scorpio
VAM – Genital Chakra	Swadishthana – Jupiter, Pisces/Sagittarius
LAM – Sacral Chakra	Muladhara – Saturn, Aquarius/Capricorn

Now the third part of the answer has to do with why you do find other systems out there. First, as I said, the oral history of the planets and chakras is very ancient, and there are traditions passed down in the West from ancient Egypt and Greece to Roman and post-Roman times. These traditions were part of secret temple initiations, and later they were often kept hidden to prevent practitioners from being in jeopardy from the Christian Church authorities. Along the way, one adaptation/evolution was that Mercury in the West took on meanings of Esoteric wisdom associated with Hermes Trimegistus, a god who had some different meanings from Mercury/Budha in the ancient Babylonian and Indian traditions. The colors and gem associations in the West changed in these times, and it was often better not to name a planet but instead a guardian angel for the Chakras.

Much later, in the 19th century, Western Occultism had a revival and studied these traditions openly again at about the same time that European Colonialism reached the Middle East and India. One group which “discovered” Indian sacred traditions was the Theosophical Society, which brought an awareness of karma, reincarnation and astrology back to Europe and the United States, but interpreted through their own lens. The differences are enough that those trained in the Indian traditions tend to wince when faced with the certitude of Theosophists on what is the “real” system. Often the “New Age” take on Chakras blends the western occult traditions with more recent Theosophy and with mixed interpretations found in some westernized yoga studios.

I am not criticizing anyone's system here. But for the purposes of learning Jyotish, I recommend that the student stick to this one at least to start. I would also like to point out that in the Jyotish Khovid (200 series) Courses at ACVA, we have an entire course devoted to Astrology and Ayurveda.