

# Lalita & The 9 Circuits of Becoming

In the stories of Lalita, particularly those described in the Lalita Sahasranama and other scriptures of the Sri Vidya tradition, the "9 Circuits of Becoming" or "Navavarana" are referred to as the nine enclosures, veils, or layers that surround and protect the Sri Chakra, which is the symbolic representation of the goddess Lalita herself. Each of these enclosures is associated with specific deities, mantras, and yogic teachings, and they form an integral part of the Sri Chakra or Sri Yantra worship. These enclosures are arranged in layers of complexity and each is meant to represent different aspects of the cosmos, the human body, and spiritual awakening.

## The 9 Circuits (Avaranas) of the Sri Chakra

### 1. **Bhupura (Earth Stretch)**

1. The outer square that represents the earth element and serves as the gateway to the Sri Chakra. It symbolizes the four directions and the foundational energies.

### 2. **Shodasha Dala Padma (16 Petal Lotus)**

1. Represents 16 aspects of desire that a spiritual aspirant needs to control. Each petal corresponds to specific human qualities to be overcome, such as anger, fear, attraction, repulsion, etc.

### 3. **Ashta Dala Padma (8 Petal Lotus)**

1. Symbolizes protection from all directions and the eight siddhis or powers that are attained as one progresses spiritually.

### 4. **Chaturdasha Dala Padma (14 Petal Lotus)**

1. Contains 14 syllables that represent divine qualities that are essential to cultivate for spiritual awakening.

### 5. **Bahirdasha Dala Padma (10 Petal Lotus)**

1. Each petal is associated with one form of inner learning or psychic experience, reflecting emotional and spiritual transformations.

### 6. **Antardasha Dala Padma (10 Inner Petals)**

1. Represents the protection from negative energies and the nourishment of positive vibrations in the practitioner's environment.

### 7. **Ashta Matrika (8 Deities)**

1. Represents the eight forms of energy and the various aspects of nature, aiding the devotee in overcoming different challenges and obstacles.

### 8. **Trikona (Triangle)**

1. The innermost triangle represents the convergence of all energies and the embodiment of creation, sustenance, and dissolution.

### 9. **Bindu (The Central Point)**

1. The central point or dot in the Sri Chakra is the ultimate goal of the spiritual journey, representing the goddess Lalita herself, the source of all creation and the supreme state of consciousness.

## Spiritual Significance

Each layer or circuit in the Sri Chakra is not just a physical structure but also a map of spiritual transformation. The journey from the outermost layer to the innermost bindu is symbolic of the soul's journey from material existence to spiritual enlightenment, encountering various challenges, mastering different energies, and gradually dissolving the ego to realize the oneness with the divine goddess Lalita.

The meditation and worship practices involving the Sri Chakra and these nine circuits are highly intricate and are meant to bring about spiritual growth, balance in life forces, and ultimately, a direct realization of the divine. Each circuit is meditated upon with specific mantras and visualizations to unlock deeper spiritual insights and states of consciousness.

The Sri Chakra, also known as Sri Yantra, is a complex and sacred symbol used in the Tantric tradition of Hinduism. It is not only a symbol but also a tool for spiritual journeying and meditation, embodying the essence of the universe and its underlying unity. The Sri Chakra is highly revered in Sri Vidya, the esoteric worship system of the goddess Lalita Tripurasundari, who is considered the supreme manifestation of the Goddess, or Divine Mother.

## Structure of the Sri Chakra

The Sri Chakra is made up of nine interlocking triangles that surround and radiate out from the central point, or bindu. The structure of the Sri Chakra includes:

1. **Four Isosceles Triangles Pointing Upwards:** These represent the masculine force or Shiva and are called the Shiva triangles.
2. **Five Isosceles Triangles Pointing Downwards:** These represent the feminine force or Shakti and are called the Shakti triangles.

The interlocking of these triangles creates a total of 43 smaller triangles, each representing a particular aspect of existence or divine quality. This complex geometric pattern is further surrounded by two concentric circles of lotus petals, the outer circle with 16 petals and the inner circle with 8 petals, and finally enclosed by a square with four gates (one on each side), called the Bhupura or Earth Stretch.

## Symbolic Meaning

The Sri Chakra symbolizes the entire cosmos and its design reflects the union of the divine masculine and feminine, the passive space and the active time, Shiva and Shakti. The central point or bindu is considered the focal point of creation and the source from which all forms and structures emanate. It represents the goddess in her most esoteric form as Lalita Tripurasundari, the beauty of the three worlds.

## Usage and Significance

The Sri Chakra is used in various ways within spiritual practice:

**Meditation:** Practitioners meditate on the Sri Chakra, using it as a tool to aid in visualizing and accessing the various aspects of the divine feminine energy. The visual complexity of the Sri Chakra helps concentrate the mind and direct awareness inward.

**Ritual Worship (Puja):** The Sri Chakra is often installed in temples and homes where it may be consecrated and worshipped daily. Rituals involve offerings, chanting of mantras, and ceremonial worship (archana), aiming to invoke the divine energy resident in the Sri Chakra.

**Yantra:** As a yantra, the Sri Chakra is used to attract spiritual and material benefits to the practitioner. It is considered a tool that can bring about peace, prosperity, and harmonious energy in the environment where it is established.

## Cultural Impact

The Sri Chakra has also permeated other aspects of Indian culture, including art, architecture, and dance. It is considered a visual expression of the Vedantic concept of the unity of the universe and the ultimate reality that underlies all appearances.

The study and worship of the Sri Chakra are considered highly advanced spiritual practices, traditionally taught by a qualified guru in a lineage of teaching that goes back centuries. The depth of meaning in the Sri Chakra continues to be a source of inspiration and exploration for devotees and spiritual seekers around the world.

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