

HEART CHAKRA

ENTERING THE LIGHT

O my heart, my mother, my heart, my mother, my heart whereby I come into being. (Rebirth) Stand not up against me as a witness nor oppose me in the council of judgement. Weigh not heavy against me before the keeper of the balance. You are my divine essence which dwells in my body, the divine power which makes strong my limbs. When you come forth in the place of happiness where we go, may you not cause my name to send forth an offensive odour before those who assign people to their rightful place.

Dr Maulana Karenga¹

Translated from the Egyptian book *Coming Forth by Day*

THE HEART CHAKRA: CORRESPONDENCES

Sanskrit Name	Anahata
Meaning	Unstruck
Main Function	Transformation
Quality	Compassion
Location	Centre of thoracic cavity, behind the heart

Spiritual Correspondences

Colour	Green, rose pink
Element	Air
Symbol	Six-pointed star
Seed Sound	Yam
Petals	12
Planet	Venus ♀
Esoteric Anatomy	Pranic Sheath – permeates the entire body and extends beyond it, forming the aura
Yoga Path	Bhakti (devotion)
Guna Quality	Sattva (can also be rajasic)

Deities

Africa	Èṣù, Maat, Òyá, Shu
Asia	Kakini Shakti, Tara
Central America	Xochiquetzal
Europe	Aphrodite, Venus
Mythology	Moralistic themes that deal with truth and conscience.

Physical Correspondences

Gland	Thymus
Nerve Plexus	Cardiac plexus, brachial plexus
Body Parts	Heart, lungs, arms, hands
Air Energy Triad	Shoulder, kidneys, ankles
Expression	Truth, vocation, responsibility to others
Disturbance	Confusion and frustration

Psychological Correspondences

Statement	'I love'
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EMOTION

As we move into the fourth chakra the emotions become more subtle. Heart chakra love asks for nothing in return. It differs from the sacral centre, where love holds many expectations. Emotions of the heart centre seek balance. When emotion ceases to be

in balance, energy falls to the solar plexus and is experienced as personal feeling.

Chronology

14 – 21 years

Rite of Passage

Adulthood, key of the door (to your heart); separation from family group. Blessed by air.

Developmental Stage

Love for a significant other may develop, and/or true compassion for all people which can draw an individual into selfless service.

Ways of Working

Foods

Fruits, nuts, avocado

Herbs

Kelp, mistletoe, echinacea

Oils

All floral oils, angelica, palmarosa

Gems

Rose quartz, Green tourmaline, emerald, green jade, green aventurine, pink carnelian

Main Function: Transformation

The heart chakra, found in the middle of the seven centres, represents transformation. This is symbolized by the six-pointed star, which demonstrates balance and the equal importance of heaven and earth.

As we travel up the chakras, awareness of the root chakra develops grounding and a sense of embodiment. We learn to take up residence in the physical body and embrace our mother the earth. Consciousness is further raised as we develop centring in the sacral chakra and feeling in the solar plexus. Work on the three personal chakras prepares us for transition into the universal realms, which begin with the heart chakra.

Transition occurs between all the chakras. As we integrate teachings and gain knowledge at one centre, we then make a transition to the next chakra. The transition between the solar plexus and the heart centre is major. This is the transition from **Embodiment to Enlightenment**. We move into the universal realms, and before us lies the potential for rebirth. Just as birth into a physical body manifests at the root chakra, birth into a light body manifests at the heart chakra.

The light body is a vehicle that resonates at a higher frequency. To move on the physical plane we require a physical body; likewise, to move in the finer vibratory realms of light we need a light body. We enter the light body through the heart chakra, and move towards enlightenment. As soul consciousness is raised we are transformed by light. We reconnect to the cosmic wheel of life and remember our soul purpose. We are spiritual beings here for a reason, and we are not afraid to love

and learn. Inner wisdom is a sacred friend and guide, in whom we trust. We are seriously back on track, with our soul consciousness returning towards the Divine universe. We are lifted by spirit to another dimension and blessed with the gift of universal love and light.

A vibrational quickening is taking place on our planet right now. This means that evolution on all planes is speeding up. We are Opening to Spirit and learning our lessons quickly. We are reincarnations of the Ancient Ones. Their life-force moves within each one of us. The chakras are our spiritual archive. From this ancestral memory bank we can access knowledge of everything that was, is and ever will be. It is here in the centre of love and compassion that we acknowledge the unity of all beings. We are one people, each born from the Divine source of our creator. Chakras are not limited by time and space. The knowledge of past, present and future vibrates simultaneously within these wheels of life. That is the power we are opening to. We are bearing the fruit of spiritual seeds planted in previous lifetimes. As consciousness is raised we learn to use the knowledge we gain with compassion and love for a developing universe.

QUALITY: COMPASSION

The quality of the heart chakra needs little explaining; it is known to everyone reading these words. The heart is associated with love, truth and compassion. Ancient secrets are held in popular sayings of today, such as:

I love you with all my heart
I give you my heart
Let's get to the heart of the matter (truth)
Cross my heart (truth)
Open your heart (compassion)
My heart was touched (compassion)

These common sayings confirm our knowledge of the heart chakra and its wisdom.

Touch is the sense linked to the heart chakra. Touch has one of the longest entries in the dictionary. This is due to the breadth of the heart's energetic qualities. Love and touch are two powerful healers. They both contain the potential to open the energy field and allow an increased flow of vital energy. We all need love; we search for it because we know it has the power to hold everything in balance. To the ancient Egyptians the Ab (heart) was the conscience, the self-judging aspect of ourselves that seeks truth and frees us from limitation. In the Yorùbá language of today, *Ọkàn* is still the word for both heart and conscience. '*Ọkàn mi á jẹ mi lẹrì*' is the

strong belief that 'my heart will be my judge'. When the conscience is clear, the heart will not be heavy. Shackles of guilt and fear will not hold us back. Instead we will be able to spread our wings of compassion, open our hearts and send unconditional love flying through the air.

Element: Air

Air is lighter than all the other elements – so subtle, yet so vital. We can survive for weeks with no food (earth), days with no water, hours without heat, but only minutes without air. Breath is life. We begin life with inspiration: our first breath. Life ends as we take our final breath: we literally expire. Re-spir-ation comes from the Latin word 'spiritus'. Spirit means both breath and prana/energy. The Ancients knew the relationship between prana and breath; this knowledge remains in the language. Air travels from the heart and pervades the entire body. Prana follows a similar route through the nadis. Prana fuels the spirit of light that resides in the heart, known as the *akhandajyoti*, the eternal flame. Meditation on this light develops compassion.

The air element moves through the heart chakra, carrying the winds of change. We can be inspired, moved or blown over by this element. Thoughts have an airy quality; they are boundless and travel freely. Thoughts are powerful and, like the wind, they can change everything in their path. Positive thinking followed by right action can change this world.

Air is the element behind all movement. If you are feeling stuck, then heart chakra work is essential. A surge of love will soften the most rigid heart. At times love can be overwhelming, we are literally 'blown out' by it. It may seem easier to give love than to receive love. When this happens, we must remember that love is like the air we breathe. We cannot expect only to exhale. We must also open our hearts to receive the abundance of love that is our birthright. Each one of us is deserving of love. No matter how hard it may be to acknowledge, you will always remain worthy of love.

Birds fly freely through the air. They were viewed by the Ancients as carriers of messages from the Gods and symbols of transformation. Winged Goddesses of ancient Egypt are the original guardian angels; their wings demonstrated their power as protectors, keepers of higher knowledge and great female healers. Auset's gathering of the scattered remains of her husband Ausar's body and her ability to heal and re-member him are symbolic of the female power of love and transformation. Auset's wings are an extension of her heart chakra. Our shoulder blades and arms are our wings. They extend from the heart centre and should move freely, allowing us

to give and receive love and compassion. The more we breathe deeply and spread our wings, the more air energy we flow through the body.

Planet: Venus ♀

We experience the earth's energy at the root chakra; the moon reigns in the sacral centre, and the sun shines in the solar plexus. There is also of course the influence of the ruling planets: Saturn at the root chakra and Mars at the solar plexus. As we journey through the sky we meet Venus, who rules the heart chakra. Venus is the moon's daughter. In the dark sky, her light shines bright; only the sun and moon can outshine her. Venus is the ancient Roman Goddess of love and beauty; she guides us to a place of peace and harmony within.

Venus is a manifestation of the feminine, of woman, love and relationships. When the soul awakens at the heart centre it resonates with the planet Venus. Venus develops in the soul a longing for peace and harmony, a desire for love and happiness. She bestows on us the gentleness and empathy of a mother. Her energy connects the heart to the sacral chakra, creating love within sexual union. Venus brings joy to all relationships. She is humane and forgiving, seeking equilibrium always. Compassion and unconditional love can be shaped from the pure energy of Venus.

Venus controls circulation. Blood flows out from the heart, feeding and cleansing all the cells and returning through the venous system (veins). The thymus gland is a major organ of the lymphatic system (the body's defence mechanism), which is also ruled by Venus. Energetically, prana is circulated through the nadis to animate the entire body and maintain health. Venus is also responsible for circulating love. Love is available in abundance – we can be sure that the love we freely give out she will return to us tenfold.

When we go inside and search our hearts, we feel the warmth of Venus, we see the light of the eternal flame. Each breath we take is an act of grace that fans the flame of the soul. When your heart is hurting, speak with Venus, the bright star that shines in the morning and evening. She can bless you with forgiveness, healing and love.

Deities

Numerous Gods and Goddesses exude heart chakra energy. Deities are the very essence of love and devotion. Earth Goddesses of the root chakra birth us onto the physical plane, but as cosmic mothers they also receive us as we are reborn into the light. The sensuous Goddesses of the sacral chakra also embody the love and compassion of the heart centre. These deities provide a continuum of life, death and rebirth. As you

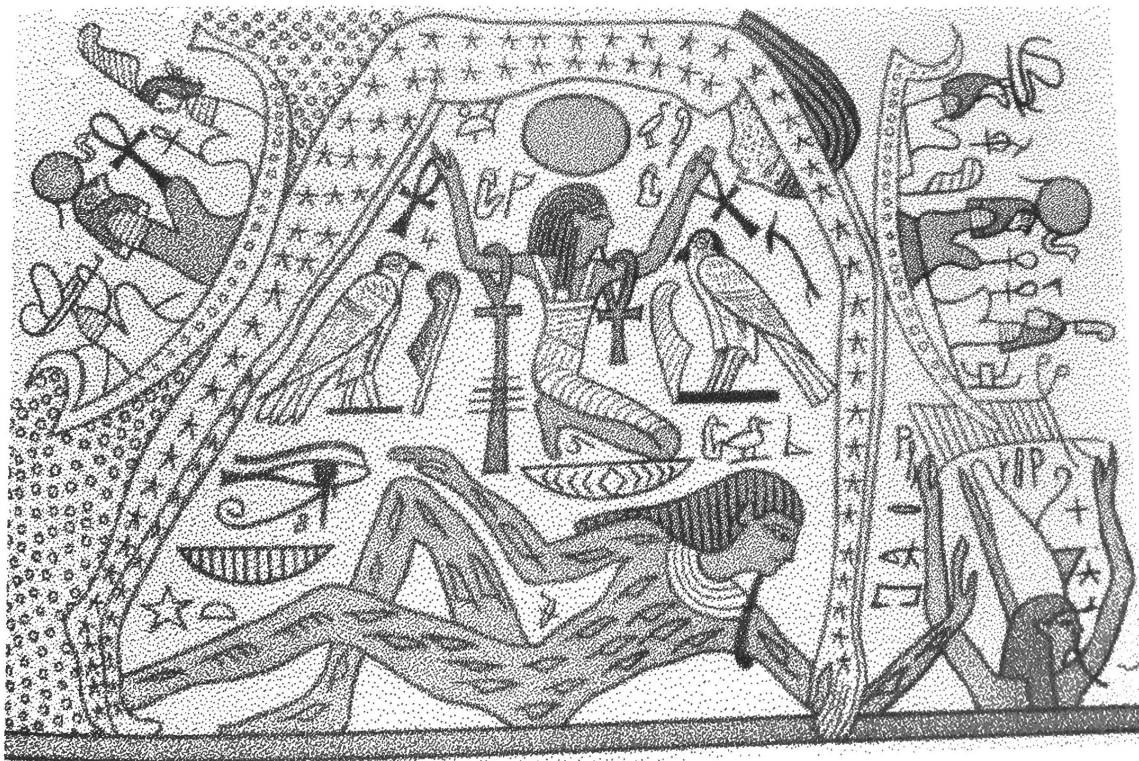
rise beyond the personal realms and open your heart, invite the indwelling deity to fill you with love, truth and compassion. Let the secrets of the rainbow be revealed to you.

ÈṢŪ

ÈṢŪ, Yorùbá God of the crossroads, is a trickster and messenger of the Òrìshà. He is the keeper of 21 roads, who clears obstacles and opens the path to success. The crossroads symbolize transition where ÈṢŪ the holder of aṣé (prana) has the power to help us progress or hold us back if we fail to honour the sacred. In the Ifá tradition, ÈṢŪ must always be contacted before invoking the other Òrìshà. In the same way we must contact the essence of the heart in order to raise awareness and open the path to the higher centres.

ÒYÁ

Òyá is the Yorùbá Goddess of wind. She can cause havoc in our lives through brewing up mighty storms. She demands that old patterns and habits which hold us back and no longer serve us be given to her so she can carry them away and bring forth change. Like Òyá, breath holds the secret of change. Welcoming the Goddess Òyá and breathing deeply may bring emotional storms, but it also brings the opportunity for transformation.



Shu – seen here separating the sky goddess Nut and Geb, god of the Earth.

SHU

Shu is the ancient Egyptian God of light and air. He is always mentioned with his sister Tefnut, Goddess of rain and gentle wind. Together they develop balance. It is said that they possess only one soul between them. Shu is the principle of air, breath and life. He is responsible for separating heaven (Nut) and earth (Geb), thus creating the universe. It is through controlling Shu, the breath, the essence of life (pranayama), that we are able to unite our internal heaven and earth.

KAKINI SHAKTI

Kakini is the four-headed Shakti that resides in the heart chakra. She sits on a pink lotus flower and is the embodiment of higher consciousness. As she directs energy upwards she inspires visionary arts, such as music, poetry and dance. Her art is pure bhakti (devotion), straight from the heart. Meditating on Kakini Shakti in the heart chakra brings balance to the body, mind and emotions.

TARA

Tara is the tantric Goddess of Ancient India and Tibet. She is the benevolent Goddess of wisdom and spiritual transformation, the destroyer of ego and bestower of compassion. Tara is a *bodhisattva*, an enlightened being who chooses to remain on the earth plane to ease suffering and guide each of us towards our Divine home. The most popular of 21 forms of this Goddess is Green Tara.

XOCHIQUETZAL

Xochiquetzal is the Mexican Goddess of love who lives on the mountaintop. Her peaceful spirit is found in symbols of rebirth and transcendence, such as doves, flowers and butterflies. She has the ability to transcend ordinary reality while continuing to hold the dancing body sacred. This beautiful Goddess shares the secrets of love and sacred sexuality. At death, those of us who have lived a life of love and devotion can join her on the mountaintop.

Mythology

MAAT

The Twa people of central Africa still know Maat by her original name, Matu,² meaning 'mother of the underworld'. This ancient African Goddess is the personification of balance, justice and truth. Like Auset, she can be seen wearing wings of transformation. Maat's main symbol, however, is a single green ostrich feather which

she wears attached to her head-dress. Maat's feather is used to weigh the hearts of the deceased in the hall of judgement.

Coming Forth by Day is one of the oldest spiritual texts. It guides the soul's journey through the underworld to the next life. To come before Maat, the deceased must be able to utter words of power. These words are keys to open the door of the hall of judgement. Once beyond the gateway and in the hall, 42 negative confessions (such as 'I have not committed murder') are recited before the same number of judges. Each judge represents one of Maat's 42 sacred laws. When the confession is complete it is time to impress upon the presiding deities the positive qualities that ruled the living heart, such as love and compassion. The heart of the deceased is then placed on the scales and weighed against Maat's feather. Have the worldly lessons symbolized by the gatekeeper Anubis and the wisdom of Tehuti been learned in this lifetime? Is this the heart of an honest, loving person who lived life according to the wishes of the Divine? If the heart weighs heavy, then the soul will reincarnate and return to the world. If the heart is as light as a feather (hence the popular saying), then all lessons are learned and the soul may return to the stars.

We have inherited a great legacy from the African Goddess, Maat. We still talk of hearts being heavy or light. Someone with a heavy heart is an anxious person striving to learn the lessons of life; while a light-hearted person knows the secrets of love and laughter. Symbolically the key of the door is given to people at the age of 21. This age is associated with the heart chakra. Twenty-one is the magical age of transformation, when young people are finally initiated into adulthood. Green, the colour of Maat's feather, is also the healing ray of the heart chakra. Her negative confessions precede the Ten Commandments and the yamas and niyamas found in yoga. Her scales are seen today in courts of law as symbols of truth and justice. Maat became synonymous with that which is honest and straight, to the degree that the Egyptologist Budge gave the definition of her name as 'straight', which is still common language for honesty today.

The Goddess Maat is not only the upholder of truth but a way of being. She guides us towards enlightenment. The way of Maat can be achieved while still alive. Every day we step towards rebirth and deliverance into the light. We must make this journey a conscious one, by examining our actions and moving forward in truth and harmony. We are each held accountable for our own conduct. When we choose to live according to Maat she helps heal our conscience and grants change. The ancient Egyptians strived to live a life of Maat, a life filled with balance and universal truth. This Goddess opens the gateway to spiritual achievement and transformation. She is the energetic quality of the heart. Maat is the love we hold dear to our hearts and the truth we seek to live by.

Expression

As we move into the fourth chakra, the emotions become more subtle. Love of the heart chakra asks for nothing in return. It differs from the love of the sacral centre, which is reciprocal. The heart chakra is concerned with balanced emotion. When emotion ceases to be in balance, energy falls to the solar plexus. Commitment and compassion spring from the heart. Love of a significant other develops here, as does universal love.

When the heart is truly open you will experience:

- compassion
- love of Self and others
- loving personal relationships
- balance
- a commitment to truth
- inner transformation
- a deep sense of pain at times
- respons-ability
- a calling/vocation
- desire to be of service to others
- movement towards social action for change
- respect for Ancestors, elders and those who made it possible for you to be where you are now
- free movement of your breath
- what it is to reach out and touch
- being touched
- a lack of fear and faith in the Divine.

Disturbance

If you limit the energy that flows through your heart chakra you may:

- feel confusion and frustration
- act unlawfully
- lack clarity and direction in your life
- lack commitment to essential mundane matters
- be tricked into thinking you are operating from the heart, when really you seek power and reward
- abuse love
- abuse alcohol (spirits)
- fear your great capacity to give love

fear your great need to receive love

be afraid to reach out and touch, paralysed by past hurts

stay hurt, thereby causing yourself physical ailments.

Physically you may suffer:

immune disorders

cancer

heart problems

chest infections

disorders of the nervous system

depression.

At this time in our cyclical evolution as human beings, many of us have strong heart chakra energy. Our souls are speeding towards the Divine. We want to move into the heart chakra and love unconditionally; we want that so very much. We want to communicate with spirit and heal ourselves and the world. We want to live in unity. We are at the stage of development which I call aspirational – we are **aspirational humans**. We have visions of a harmonious planet and are beginning to take the necessary steps needed to create change.

Many of the problems we face stem from trying to run before we can walk. Before we can truly open to the universal, our personal stuff has to be dealt with. The Ancients survived intensive, often potentially fatal initiation rites, which illuminated the transition between the worldly and the Divine. Some became shamans or entered the priesthood, monasteries, the wilderness, and undertook long periods of spiritual practice. If we are to experience transformation of the heart, then we too must face our fears, remove all obstacles and commit to our spiritual practice. We have to be prepared to stop kidding ourselves and really change.

When we look round we see poverty, racism, war, and the study of objects taking precedence over study of the Self. We are not living in an enlightened age. This is the technological age, *kali yuga*, a time of great struggle. But through opening the heart, it is possible to make a difference in the world.

When we take respons-ability, things change. As we allow ourselves to breathe fully, the pranic sheath and the nadis are slowly cleansed. As prana flows freely the heart chakra awakens, bringing love and compassion. Change is inevitable; we cannot open the heart and at the same time remain stuck. Opening your heart and allowing your love to show transforms you and changes the world.

SEVEN WAYS OF OPENING TO SPIRIT AT THE HEART CHAKRA

Altar Work

Sit for a moment and give thanks to your fire altar. Feel fire energy as it moves more freely through your body. See before you the vision created as a result of your work with fire. Let the purpose of your soul's journey be clarified. Maintain this clarity as you move on from the solar plexus chakra and begin to focus on the heart chakra.

We are now going to work with air energy. This is the first of the higher energy centres. Our work now is less personal and more universal. Our concern is to generate an environment of love and compassion. This love and compassion will disperse through the element air and touch people everywhere.

You will need a green altar cloth, preferably in silk. Silk has a fine vibration – but if you cannot get silk, use cotton. Four green candles are to be placed in each of the four directions. Use a green vessel for spring water, if you have one. For incense or essential oils, use floral aromas such as rose, jasmine, orange blossom or melissa. They are all sweet-smelling and pleasing to the Goddess. Gems to use are those that harness green or pink rays, such as rose quartz, green tourmaline and emerald. Statues of Buddha, Maat or any Goddess of love will lift the energy of this altar. Some rounded wooden figures are particularly pleasant to hold and stroke; this will heighten your sense of touch. Place pictures of loved ones around that lift your vibrations. As before, use your creativity to develop your altar. Feel love as you attend to your altar. Let universal love be all around you.

Working from the heart chakra means working for the good of all beings. It means asking the Goddess Òyá to blow the winds of change and light the lives of those who live in ignorance. Air transcends all boundaries. Think not of yourself or of personal gain, but let your love flow through the air as a gift to the universe and all who dwell in it.

Journal-keeping

FORGIVENESS

The ability to forgive is truly a wonderful gift, and a great blessing for those on whom it is bestowed. As we work with heart chakra energy it is time to turn passion into compassion. Passion is a charged emotion. When passion fuels positive experiences we feel excited and high; we can remain uplifted for weeks. When it fuels

negative and painful experiences it can drain energy, leaving us exhausted and depressed. To forgive is a gift we can allow ourselves. As you journey through the chakras and allow healing to embrace you, forgiveness will come more easily. Working with heart chakra energy means working for the good of all beings. This exercise can be used for forgiving yourself or others.

Cultivating Forgiveness

Begin by creating sacred space. Cleanse the room with a smudge stick made from sage, which is a purifier of negative energies, and sweetgrass, which brings blessings and grace. If you cannot get a smudge stick, then use incense or burn essential oils. Cleansing with air is recommended for heart chakra work, but another element can be used if need be. Cleanse your aura by surrounding yourself in smoke from the smudge stick. Fan the smoke up the front of your body, pausing over your heart, and down the back. This prepares you for the sacred work that follows.

You will need your journal and a pen.

After cleansing, light the candles on your altar, then kneel down and say a prayer.

Give thanks for the life you live and choices you are free to make. Ask to be blessed with the strength, insight and blessings you need to create forgiveness. Forgiveness that is everlasting. Forgiveness that will free you of the pain you carry. Forgiveness that will heal each person involved. Forgiveness that will change your passion into compassion.

Sit in quiet meditation for 10 minutes, focusing on your breath as it moves through your heart chakra. Allow your heart to open wide; let it fill with grace and receive healing energy from the Goddess Maat.

- ☉ Write down the name of the person or people you want to forgive.
- ☉ Write down what it was that hurt you.

Four Stages of Forgiveness

- 1 **Regain your power.** In your mind's eye, visualize what this hurt is doing to you. How is it draining your energy? How is this destructive force of fire (anger/rage, etc.) affecting you? Make a note in your journal.
- 2 **Reflect back.** Close your eyes and allow the negative energy to lift from you; feel it become light and fuse with the air element. Let this energy go – it is not yours, direct it back. See where it is going. Where did it come from? How was it created? Make a note in your journal.

3 **Recognition of universal love.** Be aware that we are all children of the universe, we each have lessons to learn. Close your eyes, open your heart and feel universal love flood through you. We are all connected through the heart and through the air we breathe. Inhale love, peace and harmony deep into your being. Now extend that love out to all beings. Write down your feelings.

4 **Forgiveness.**

Feel yourself fully embraced in the spirit. See the person/persons who hurt you fully embraced in spirit.

Let go completely, leaving it in the hands of the Gods/Goddesses.

Reclaim your power, reclaim your energy, reclaim your love and compassion.

Write down your feelings.

As you forgive, the energetic charge that was holding you back is released. You can feel compassion instead of rage. You can allow yourself to understand. You may forget, you may not, but the charge will slowly dissipate, leaving you free.

Remember to give thanks for all blessings received.

Yoga Path

BHAKTI YOGA

Bhakti yoga is the way of the heart, the path of devotion. Like all yoga, bhakti is to be felt and experienced. I have always loved singing, and the place I was encouraged to sing most was at church and Sunday school; to this day hymns touch me deeply. Sharing devotional hymns, prayers and chants is pure bhakti. I recall a very special moment in my life. I was walking through the Sivananda Ashram in Rishikesh, taking a short-cut into the town. As I walked I found myself being drawn towards sweet-sounding voices. I sat at the back of a large hall and listened to several women singing *bhajans* (devotional songs). I cried, something burst inside me and flooded out. I realized something deep inside me was missing. I didn't know what it was but I knew these women had a love, a joy, something so beautiful. I knew I needed to find that which was missing in me. Their devotion was a precious gift to me, a gift I absorbed into my being, allowing movement to take place.

Bhakti is not for everyone. The Krishna Consciousness Movement, well-known proponents of bhakti yoga, have done their part to encourage many people onto this path, but they have also put others off completely. Opening to Spirit, however, means opening the mind. Yoga suggests that we 'take everything in, chew it over and then spit out what we don't need'.

The practice of bhakti requires surrender based on the understanding of Divine law, as expressed in the following adage: '**Not my will but thy will, not my will but thine.**'

Bhakti yoga honours many deities. This is done through chanting prayers and puja – devotional rituals. Many deities are mentioned in this book. Choose one or two that you resonate with and find out as much about them as you can from books, myths and museums. Establish their favourite colours, foods, position in the house, numbers, seasons and specific days they predominate over.³ Then go inside yourself and experience their qualities from within. Learn from internal and external sources. Create an altar using the information you have gathered, following the guidelines of altar work. Meditate with and honour the deity regularly, sing his or her praise-songs if you are able to learn them.⁴ Keep company with other seekers and visit exalted ones – the presence of the wise will raise your vibration and bhakti will come easily.

You can ask deities for help. Like our Ancestors and guardian angels, they are here to assist us in our spiritual growth. Using the chakra correspondences, attain a knowledge of which deity presides over which problems. For example, Òṣun helps us deal with personal problems such as self-esteem, while Maat brings harmony and illumines truth. The deities you resonate with will change as you change.

Bhakti yoga opens the heart and teaches the lesson of devotion. It is a calming and soothing yoga that releases an abundance of compassion and love from deep within. Through bhakti your life can unfold to fulfil your sacred destiny.

Mindful Exercise

SPHINX

The Sphinx, which is half-animal and half-human, symbolizes unification between our instinctive Self and our higher Self. It blends the strength and magnificence of a lion with human consciousness. The Sphinx represents the integration of the higher and lower chakras.



Sphinx Posture. The Great Sphinx.

In this posture the chest is lifted and the heart area opened. Prana is encouraged to flow freely through the body.

Lie face-down on the floor, then bring your hands directly under your shoulders. Keep both elbows on the ground and let your forehead touch the floor. Now, slowly raise your head, shoulders and chest. Keep your feet together on the floor. Continue to lift up into a Sphinx-like posture. Lengthen your spine and breathe deeply. As you open your heart, allow it to fill with love and wisdom. Let the knowledge of the Sphinx be known to you.

ISIS, POSE OF IMMORTALITY

In this posture the heart is opened wide, the rib cage, arms and wings of the body are extended in a universally receptive gesture. As the body twists the full length of the spine is massaged. The spine is stretched, cleaned and refreshed, bringing elasticity and youthfulness to the spinal cord. The spinal cord communicates with every cell in the body. The bones, muscles, organs all have a relationship with the nervous system. Yoga tells us that if the spinal cord is kept healthy we will enjoy a long and fruitful life, hence the name of this Egyptian posture.

Begin by sitting comfortably over your heels. Now place your right foot alongside your left knee. Take a deep breath and extend both arms out to the sides, as you breath out, soften your arms, letting them slightly curve into a universal embrace. From this position turn first to your right, keep your arms outstretched and twist your spine as far as is comfortable. Turn your head and look to your right. Take a full breath. Keep your legs positioned and turn your upper body around to the left.

Twist your spine, breath and look left. Return to the centre sitting over both knees, relax your hands onto your knees.



Isis, Pose of Immortality

LOVING TOUCH

I had a wonderful experience recently while visiting the bank. I was in a hurry and became increasingly frustrated at the length of time I was kept waiting. When finally an assistant came to help me, I got upset with her and she got upset with me. Once the transaction was completed and tension released, we apologized to each other. The assistant then intuitively offered me a hug, which I happily accepted. I felt so uplifted to find human contact in this place of bars, locks and officialdom. This was an unexpected gift I both needed and appreciated.

At the time this felt so natural, that it was not until later that I realized the real power of what had taken place. We all have the power to offer loving touch. I invite you to follow your intuition. Next time you feel like reaching out to touch someone's hand, or have the urge to smile open-heartedly, or hold a loved one in your embrace, don't hold back. Let your loving heart energy flow. I am not suggesting forced contact, I am simply saying when the feeling is there, let it show. Remember, when touch is offered honestly from the heart, it will always be received.

Keep your heart in wonder at the daily miracles of your life.

Kahlil Gibran

Keep your awareness tuned for what is being offered to you each day. Every day is full of miracles and blessings. It is your responsibility to recognize these gifts. They come in many guises – it may be a felt sense, an answer to a prayer or the sighting of a rainbow. Life is a Divine blessing. Be mindful of the many miracles unfolding right now in your life.

Meditation

This is where you transcend the personal into the universal realms. To gain most from meditation on the universal chakras, purification of the pranic sheath is necessary. This is achieved through fasting and pranayama (*see Chapter 5*). As energy becomes more subtle, meditation practice needs to be less dynamic and more still. We will therefore omit dynamic meditation and focus on dharana for the remaining chakras.

We will continue dharana on the chakra symbols. Anahata chakra has at its centre a six-pointed star. This symbol of transformation is made up of two interlaced triangles. The downward-pointing triangle relates to involution and the movement of spirit into matter. The evolutionary shift of matter back towards spirit is pictured in the upward-facing triangle. Together they represent the marriage of opposites, the merging of heaven and earth, male and female, Ida and Pingala, Yin and Yang. This is one of my favourite symbols because of its significance. The six points represent the six chakras in balance. Lying in the middle of all the chakras, the six-pointed star does not discriminate, instead it upholds the equal importance of all the chakras. ☆

DHARANA

Start by raising energy in your environment through cleansing and lighting candles on your air altar. Practise pranayama before meditation. You can use alternate nostril breathing, discussed in Chapter 5, or this simple cleansing breath.

CLEANSING BREATH

Sit upright with your eyes closed and your mind focused on your breath. Let your abdomen rise on the inhalation and fall on the exhalation. Focus attention on anahata chakra. This centre controls the heart and lungs and, consequently, the breath. Now prolong the out-breath. Inhale to a count of four and exhale to a count of eight. Continue this breathing pattern for at least 10 minutes ... The lengthened-out breath has a cleansing effect on the whole system. Return to your natural breathing rhythm.

Continue to breathe gently and repeat the word 'compassion' with each breath. This plants a seed in your mind. Now move your attention to your mind's inner screen and visualize a six-pointed star ... tune to the pulsation of the star ... see its

light and feel its love. Slowly move the star to your heart centre. See its form, feel its vibration and colour (green or pink) within. Let the love, compassion and unity of heaven and earth fill your entire being.

Gently shift your vision to the Black Dot in the centre of the star. Concentrate solely on the dot – gateway of consciousness.

Vibrational Work

COLOUR

Green is the dominant ray of the heart chakra. Many clairvoyants also see rose pink in the heart and aura at this level. Green is balancing and cooling, with many healing qualities. It is probably the most widely used colour in healing. We find an abundance of green in nature; it is the colour of spring. Green propels new growth, change and transformation. Its gentle energy helps heal the 'emotions of change', such as pain, loneliness and jealousy. These emotions cause the heart centre to close down – the chest collapses and we are literally starved of oxygen. Heart energy can become clogged, leaving the green colour grey and cloudy. We know that green in nature cannot exist without oxygen. The same applies to us: the heart is the air centre which fuels the whole body. When the heart aches and we cut off the green ray, we invite all manner of ailments to invade the system. Raising the green vibration is therapeutic. It lifts the spirit and harmonizes the body. Green stimulates the thymus and lymphatic system; it can be used for cancer patients, HIV and other ailments associated with immune deficiencies, alongside conventional medicine. Green is said to be antiseptic, having the ability to destroy viruses and infections. It helps lower blood pressure by its calming and balancing nature. It is also good for inflammation of the joints and reducing physical pain.

Consider your relationship to the colour green. Do you need to increase its use in your home, your food, clothes or environment? Green energy can easily become depleted. Women, especially mothers, often ooze green energy. We are nurturers, naturally giving, loving and compassionate, often to a point where our own energy suffers depletion. Surrender is a skill women must learn. Let some of the control go and allow someone else the pleasure and satisfaction of taking care of you. Each time you do for yourself you deprive someone of the honour of doing for you. (Even if you can do it better!)

Turquoise is the colour band between green and blue. Although it doesn't relate directly to the major chakras, it is an important vibrational energy for healing. It helps unite the heart and throat chakras, facilitating the expression of love and compassion. Turquoise (the gemstone) is widely used by Original Americans for

its healing qualities, and was also known to the ancient Egyptians, who used it to balance heaven and earth energies.

ESSENTIAL OILS

Sweet-smelling oils open the heart and lift the spirit. Rose, jasmine and geranium are all useful oils for the heart chakra. You may have offered roses to sweeten the heart of someone you love. Rose oil is also used as an aid to meditation and prayer. Rosary beads were originally scented with rose oil to calm the mind. The beautiful aroma of jasmine is used during ceremonies in India. The flowers are picked at night and worn in the morning. Unlike rose and jasmine, geranium is a stimulating oil, which lifts depression and reduces stress. Massage is an excellent way to use essential oils to raise heart chakra energy, because it incorporates touch, the sense associated with the air element.

GEMS

Emerald, green jade, green aventurine, green tourmaline, pink carnelian and rose quartz all have balancing effects on the heart chakra. Take some time to find a stone that you resonate with. You can set the stone in a piece of jewellery to wear around the heart area, or carry the stone in a pouch. Larger pieces can be placed in your environment and used to enhance your meditations. Always cleanse your stones and create an energetic relationship with them.

Ritual

SACRED JOURNEY (PILGRIMAGE)

Life is a journey with many destinations. There are achievements, disappointments, mundane rituals and celestial highs along the way. At this junction you are invited to make a sacred journey. The Ancients travelled for days, even months on foot to reach sacred sites. People arrived, performed rituals and asked for healing. They would celebrate the harvest and other sacred times together. Holy water, stones and amulets would be taken away in exchange for a prayer of thanks. Today sacred sites are mostly frequented by tourists, but the energy of the Ancients can still be felt if you enter deep meditation.

As personal energy is transformed at the heart chakra and you open to the universal realms, make a promise to yourself to visit the place of most spiritual significance to you. It may be the home of your Ancestors, a temple or a sacred mountain. Take time to prepare yourself for this sacred journey; be sure your vehicle is cleansed and open to receive fully the healing this visit will bring.

Sacred sites are created either naturally or by humans on the Earth's chakras, for the Earth has major and minor chakras just as we have. She also has a system of nadis – ley lines on which sacred sites are aligned around the world. Her energy charges these sites. Mount Meru, the Pyramids, Uluru (Ayers Rock), Glastonbury Tor, Machu Picchu and numerous other sacred places are ancient initiation sites.

Before you travel, find out as much as you can about how the Ancients received blessings at your chosen site. A dark, narrow tunnel, resembling the birth canal (rebirth canal), forms the entrance to the Great Pyramid. The Tor at Glastonbury was circumambulated seven times. The Kaaba (Black Stone) at Mecca is also walked around seven times. Make your visit a time of personal initiation and rebirth. Use meditation to help you understand what you need at this point in your life's journey. Create a rite of pass-age (*see Chapter 6*) or another ritual to perform at the site which will harness the energies you require, or just be still and meditate. Always offer a gift in return for your healing. You can light candles or incense, or give food, money and praises.

Planning is a significant part of the journey – the doubts and fears, the waiting, the excitement, the miracle of bringing your sacred journey into being. It is something we all deserve and the universe is waiting to help you make it happen. So allow your next holiday to be truly filled with holy days. Take your journal and start planning straight away.

The tree of eternity has its roots in heaven above, and its branches reach down to earth. It is Brahman – pure Spirit, who in truth is called the immortal. All the worlds rest on that Spirit and beyond it no one can go:

This in truth is that.

*Katha Upanishad*⁵