

# JOY: The Journal of Yoga

The Chakra System as a Biosociopsychospiritual Model of Consciousness

*Anahata* as Heart-centered Consciousness

*By Robert Beshara*

“Now here is my secret, very simple: you can only see things clearly with your heart. What is essential is invisible to the eye.”

The fox from *The Little Prince*

Today, to most scientific materialists the seat of consciousness is the brain. According to the dominant strand of this reductionist monist view, consciousness—and naturally the mind of which it is a part—is an epiphenomenon of the brain. This is a metaphysical assumption and as far as I know, there has not been any proof as of yet to support such a claim. According to scientism, the mind is an illusion, albeit, a useful one from an evolutionary standpoint. This illusion—which strangely enough is not too different from the Hindu notion of *maya*—has helped us not only survive for thousands of years but also adapt more quickly to our environment. Even though our holographic-like representations of physical reality or the *noumenal* world are not accurate they are close enough to *the thing itself* that we—the human species or at least a portion of it—have succeeded to control and abuse the planet and its resources while dominating other species along the way, to say the least. Why is this the case? Are we too much in our heads? Are we too caught up in our emotions? Clearly, there is an imbalance within and without us for which we are primarily responsible; the results of this global imbalance that is caused by humans—and hence is unnatural—are such things as threats to

biodiversity, war, poverty, and health issues to name but a few. We are using the wrong lenses metaphysically speaking and that is partially why we have been distorting reality, be it monism or dualism. The contributions of science ever since the Scientific Revolution are immense and grateful to them we are, especially in terms of their application (i.e., technology). However, the dark side is that industrialization has made us more dehumanized and technologies (esp. the Internet) have made us more disconnected in the real world yet virtually connected a la *The Matrix*. The argument here is not whether technology is good or bad, but rather the question is how can we create eco-friendly technologies (from our cars to our cities) that are harmonious with nature in the ultimate or *nondual* sense, especially that today we have the means and the bodyminds? So what is missing? Perhaps the will is. Maybe we have been blinded by our selfishness to the extent that we cannot see beyond our desires. The paradigm shift hinted at here is one that is reminiscent of the Buddhist concept of the Middle Way, the goal being global coherence through individual transformation, which cannot happen unless there is balance in the first place and the key is balancing the heart.

A *nondual* approach, if taken up by more and more people worldwide especially starting with the powers that be, can lead us to make more ethical choices (i.e., efforts towards a sustainable or resilient planet, peace, greater equality and fairness, improved health, etc.). This *nondual* approach may seem too optimistic, but I regard it as realistic and necessary for our survival as well as the survival of the whole planet. In other words, we do not need human-made disasters endangering us at this point or at any other point in time especially since we are about six billion years away from the natural death of the sun. So why is there so much imbalance in the world?

Apparently, Charles Darwin's theory of evolution has been somewhat misread, for most of us have been taught only one half of the theory which has to do with competition, but the truth is more along these lines, “**Cooperation** is a fundamental principle of evolution,” Nowak says today. ‘Without it, you don't get construction or complexity in life. Whenever you see something interesting, like the evolution of multicellular creatures or human language, **cooperation** is involved”’ (Ohlson, 2012). One quick interpretation as to why the cooperation aspect of the theory had been overlooked for years may have something to do with capitalism: how we've been conditioned to scientifically justify our selfish and unnatural habits (e.g., over-consumerism) amidst the economy of self-interest and how we've all fallen into the inescapable trap of polarization (i.e., Democrats vs. Republicans, the US vs. Iran, Judeo-Christians vs. Muslims, Israel vs. Palestine, Coca Cola vs. Pepsi, CNN vs. Fox, European Americans vs. African Americans, men vs. women, etc.). Let me stress here that taking a *nondual* approach does not mean that there will not be challenges or that problems will solve themselves magically; on the contrary, there may be even more challenges than we have at hand, but eventually the results from such an approach will be better because they will be more in line with the nature of our interconnectedness with one another and with universe. For this purpose particularly, I have chosen to propose a *biosociopsychospiritual* model of consciousness adaptively based upon the chakra system which is a very useful descriptive metaphysical model that stresses the *interbeing*—to use Thich Nhat Hanh's term—between the individual and society in the largest sense of the word.

The chakra—Sanskrit for circle or wheel—system is a multimodal approach that can ultimately lead us to *nonduality* if we manage to balance all of our chakras, but that is a hard task for it requires consistent training and checking over a lifetime; in other words, it's a never-ending process, but it can possibly get easier and more enjoyable the more we do it just like developing any new skill. However, this may be one of the most important life skills to acquire: how to think, how to feel, how to act; in other words, how to live or how to be. The seventh chakra or *sahasrara* in Sanskrit symbolizes enlightenment as a mode of consciousness: when one is no longer separate, when one is completely open to all that is, or when the concept of 'one' is no more. That may be of interest to a number of people, but I find that goal to be overly ambitious for the rest of humanity not because they are lesser individuals but because they are struggling through the first three modes of consciousness symbolized by the first three chakra: *muladhara*, *svadisthana*, and *manipura*. Before we get into the details of the chakra system, let me provide a very general overview of the seven modes of consciousness in terms of selfish and selfless tendencies.

Imbalance in the lower three chakras (from 1 to 3) symbolizes the highest tendency towards selfishness with the first chakra representing most selfish and the third chakra representing least selfish. Those lower three chakras also primarily deal with the physical realm (e.g., eating, drinking, sleeping, sex, etc.), where dualistic notions are most prevalent. Balance in the higher three chakras—*visuddha*, *anja*, and *sahasrara*—(from 5 to 7), which primarily deal with the spiritual real, symbolizes the highest tendency towards selflessness with the seventh chakra representing most selfless (and hence, *nondual*) and the fifth chakra representing the least selfless. The fourth chakra

(*anahata*, which means unstruck) is a special case because it is situated exactly in the center of all seven chakras, so it symbolizes overall balance between all modes of consciousness and the ultimate potential for individual and global transformation. Since most individuals and societies are stuck at the lower three chakras, I suggest that we put all of our efforts to open up the heart chakra and make sure that is balanced by any means possible so there could be greater health, happiness, and peace on both the individual and societal levels. Based on this understanding of the two general tendencies of selfishness and selflessness, we can group the seven chakras or modes of consciousness into three broad categories: volition (chakra 1 to 3), affection (chakra 4), and cognition (chakras 5 to 7), which we shall call triune consciousness (Tallon, 1997). We will also set an ideal goal for each category: volition (health), affection (happiness), and cognition (peace). The interdependence between these categories in triune consciousness captures the notion of *interbeing*. In order for us to be happy as individuals, we need to be emotionally balanced. Before we can take any action, we must be physically healthy. And finally, in order for societies to reach peace within themselves and with one another, first there is a lot of unlearning that must take place so one can then see with greater clarity through a beginner's mind the *nondual* nature of reality.

Before we go any further, let me introduce the concept of the two hearts. Simply, there is an anatomical heart and a metaphysical heart that we will be referring to. However, emphasis will be put on the metaphysical heart especially since not only can it have an effect on the anatomical heart, but also it can have an impact on our bodymind as a whole, especially given its central location in the chakra system, so as a mode of consciousness one of its major qualities is balance. Additionally, I would like to point

out the importance of the heart as the seat of consciousness in ancient times across the world as Richard E. Lind noted, “In all ancient cultures there was a consensus that the ‘heart-mind’ (e.g., heart-soul) was the experiential location of subjectivity and of all the mental functions currently attributed to the brain” (Lind, 2007). If we go back in time to one of the earliest civilizations, we’ll discover that, “For the Egyptians, the brain (being bloodless in death) was not important and was generally ignored; the heart was the power of life, and the source of good and evil. Thus, in their funerary literature, the *Book of the Dead*, the heart was weighed, against feathers, to determine the balance of good and ill at death” (Gregory, 1989). I am not proposing that we ignore neuroscientific findings that suggest that the brain and consciousness are correlated or causally connected, but I am absolutely questioning the metaphysical assumption that the brain is the seat of consciousness. The brain or more appropriately the mind is one of the seven modes of consciousness (*anja*) but the rule is that imbalance through over-activity or under-activity in any of the seven modes of consciousness is not recommended. Instead of being too much in the mind (intellectually) or too much in the body (emotionally), why not balance out our bodymind via the heart chakra?

So what are chakras exactly? “THE WORD CHAKRA means ‘wheel’ in Sanskrit, and the idea of the chakra system entered India's sacred texts between 1800 and 800 B.C. According to the yogic sages who first described the system, a set of seven invisible energy centers animates each person's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual body. These vortexes aren't physiological, though they correspond to specific locations along the spine and are associated with particular physical as well as emotional functions” (Catalfo, 2006).

Why chakras? I completely agree with Dr. John E. Nelson's answer to this question, he said, "So when I came across the ancient Tantric teachings concerning the chakra, I found them to be an ideal *metaphor* to characterize the way we expand our consciousness as we progress through life. I was delighted, for it matched my deepest intuitions derived from my own spiritual practice" (Waldman, 1992).

Why seven? There is no satisfying answer to this question; however, the historical explanation is that most Western models and interpretations, including this one, are based upon—knowingly or unknowingly—Arthur Avalon's (aka Sir John Woodroffe) *The Serpent Power: The Secrets of Tantric and Shaktic Yoga* (1919). Certainly, I side with the skeptics (lead by Michael Shermer) regarding some of their criticisms towards the chakra system when it comes to the number of chakras involved and the neurophysiology of chakras. It may be arbitrary that there are seven modes of consciousness and not six, eight or any other number for that matter. Our model is based upon the consensus among many scholars of chakrology that mainly there are seven chakras. However, our model is not set in stone and it is only a working model that is primarily helpful symbolically but that also has practical implications given the importance of symbols in psychological life. But I want to expand this further and ask: why are there seven days in a week? Why are there seven colors in a rainbow? And why are there seven notes in the traditional Western diatonic scale?

Regarding the neurophysiology of chakras, there is a growing field called Energy Psychology, which tries to investigate such things as 'subtle energy' that supposedly moves through the chakras, but that is not the route I take. I am not opposed to research into the neurobiology of chakras (see Maxwell, 2009) and I find that jumping to the

conclusion that it is pseudoscience is harsh; however, my approach as stated previously is to regard chakras metaphorically as modes of consciousness (see Meadow, 1993).

So what are modes of consciousness? Modes of consciousness are modes between which we can oscillate. If all of our chakras are balanced metaphorically speaking then we can move seamlessly between the seven different modes of consciousness. These modes symbolically signify our awareness (or lack thereof) of the different levels of reality starting with the physical all the way to the spiritual. It has been argued that Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs was probably based upon the chakra system (see Tomasulo, 2011). However, Maslow—the godfather of the Psychology Department at the University of West Georgia—was not the only psychologist to have been influenced by the chakra system, for the list includes: Carl Jung, Timothy Leary, Ken Wilber, and Richard Barrett among others who came up with their own maps of consciousness.

Why metaphor? Because even though there's not enough physiological evidence for the subtle energy that supposedly passes through the chakras, working with chakras however, as metaphors can be useful in many ways, whether theoretically as a way to better understand reality through the symbolic modes of consciousness or practically in therapy or healing through meditation, yoga, massage, etc.

Heart-centered consciousness is special for a number of reasons, so let us look at some of the positive qualities associated with the *anahata* mode of consciousness to understand why it is so special. Those include: direct knowing and ego-transcendence (Louchakova, 2007), intuition (McCraty et al., 2004), compassion and wisdom (Bai et al., 2009), synchronization and coherence (Bischof, 2008), direct cognition ("The seven chakras," 2011), integration (Catalfo, 2006), intentionality (Tallon, 1997), balance



(Judith, 2002), healing and empathy (Nelson and Evans, 1996), self-acceptance (Tomasulo, 2011), universal love (Waldman, 1992), and transformation (Barrett, 2012).

Just to clarify that what is being promoted here is balanced heart-centered consciousness, let us list some of the negative qualities of an imbalanced heart chakra. When *anahata* is over-activated, we may experience ourselves being co-dependent, sentimental, smothering, inordinately responsible, and given to overdoing it and burning out; however, when that mode of consciousness is under-activated, we may experience ourselves being hard-hearted, stingy, uncaring, thoughtless, callous, greedy, and calculating. On the contrary, when our heart-centered consciousness is in balance we may feel generous, compassionate, sensitive, showing unconditional positive regard for others, and caring of self and others (Catalfo, 2006). Therefore, the three potential stages that any chakra can be in are: under-active, balanced, or over-active. Through certain techniques mentioned later we could balance our chakras.

Now, we shall investigate the importance of a heart-centered consciousness biologically, socially, and psychospiritually. Then we shall end this chapter by proposing some ways with which we can activate our heart chakra in a balanced manner, on the individual and global levels.

Biologically, ischaemic heart disease—usually due to coronary artery disease—is the number one cause of death worldwide amounting to 7.25 million deaths in 2008 according to the World Health Organization. Clearly, we have shifted our focus toward the anatomical heart at this point, but only to understand the connection between the two hearts (the metaphysical and the anatomical), which is an area that has been heavily researched at the Institute of HeartMath (IHM) in California. One of their most radical

findings is that “[t]he heart’s electromagnetic field—by far the most rhythmic field produced by the human body—not only envelops every cell of the body but also extends out in all directions in the space around us. The cardiac field can be measured several feet away from the body by sensitive devices. Researching conducted at IHM suggests that the heart’s field is an important carrier of information” (McCraty et al., 2001). In the *Science of the Heart* (2001), they have concluded that:

“Scientific research now tells us plainly that anger, anxiety and worry significantly increase the risk of heart disease, including sudden cardiac death. Landmark long-term studies conducted by Dr. Hans Eysenck and colleagues at the University of London have shown that chronic unmanaged emotional stress is as much as six times more predictive of cancer and heart disease than cigarette smoking, cholesterol level or blood pressure, and much more responsive to intervention.”

Their core tools for increasing the heart’s psychophysiological coherence, as outlined in the same book, are such techniques as: Freeze-Frame (which stops stress by shifting perception in the moment), Heart Lock-In (which establishes increased physiological efficiency, mental acuity and emotional stability as a new baseline), and Cut-Thru (which extinguishes recurring, intrusive thought patterns and emotions). To revisit the notion of triune consciousness, volition was the physical dimension that grouped the lower three chakras. Volition may have to do more with selfishness and competition; however, balance in the lower three chakras would signify improved general health.

Socially, Richard Barrett came up with his own model of consciousness indirectly inspired by the chakra system via Abraham Maslow; he calls that model *The Seven Levels*

of *Societal Consciousness*, to him “[t]he level of growth and development of consciousness of a society depends on the ability of the leaders and the government to create an economic and social climate that meets the needs of its citizens” (Barrett, 2012). Clearly, the fourth level in his model that is equivalent to *anahata* is the most important one for it lies at the center and is called *transformation*; in other words, this is a level not only of balance but also of transition if a paradigm shift to take place at a local, regional, national, or global level. The connection between individual, social, and global coherence is well articulated in the *Global Coherent Initiative*, a project by IHM. The hypothesis is that:

“when enough individuals and social groups increase their coherence and utilize that increased coherence to intentionally create a more coherent standing reference wave in the global field, it will help increase the global consciousness. This can be achieved when an increasing ratio of people move towards more balanced and self-regulated emotions and responses” (McCraty et al., 2012).

Let us remember that capitalism emphasizes competition while ignoring the other side of the evolutionary coin: cooperation (see Ohlson, 2012). Now, it becomes clear we have been conditioned to accept a simplistic and incomplete version of evolutionary theory, which partially explains why there’s so much imbalance in the world, at least way more than what’s necessary or natural. The second dimension of triune consciousness is affection, which corresponds with *anahata* or the transition from selfishness to selflessness via a balanced heart-centered consciousness. The result of such a heart-centered approach to consciousness socially would unsurprisingly be peace.

Psychospiritually, there is a variety of transpersonal applications in terms of therapy and healing that are focused on the *anahata* mode of consciousness. We can apply some or all of these heart-centered techniques of healing with a clinician or on our own (if possible):

- Breathing through the energy centers, centering through the heart, chakra meditation sequence, etc. (Hover-Kramer et al., 1997)
- Meditation as the key to the Eightfold Path and compassion as a Zen principle of psychotherapeutic value (Mruk and Hartzell, 2003)
- Bhakti yoga and chanting through the chakras (Nelson and Evans, 1996)
- Prayer of the Heart (Louchakova, 2007)
- The symbolic act of incense altar offering (Meadow, 1993)
- Breath work: mindfulness of breathing or *Anāpānasati* (Bai et al., 2009)
- Synchronization and coherence of body systems and biofields through sustaining states of positive emotion and relaxation (Bischof, 2008)
- Balancing exercises include chest openers in yoga (Cobra, Camel, backbends), mentally examining our relationships, and volunteer work (Catalfo, 2006)
- The Arch Exercise (Judith, 2002)
- Self-love (Cohen, 2006)
- Quick Coherence Technique (“The quick coherence”)

To revisit the notion of triune consciousness, when the higher three chakras that are categorized under cognition are balanced we get selflessness or *nonduality*. The result of a heart-centered approach to this third and last (spiritual) dimension of triune consciousness is happiness.

In conclusion, before we can transform the world, we ourselves must first balance our *anahata* mode of consciousness so we can experience health, peace, and happiness, within and without. The key to balancing out and transforming our (individual and global) triune consciousness lies in heart-centered consciousness, wherefrom we can clearly see the *interbeing* of volition, affection, and cognition.

## Annotated Bibliography

Bai, H., Scutt, G., and Fraser, S. (2009). Touching the earth with the heart of enlightened mind: The Buddhist practice of mindfulness for environmental education.

*Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*, 14, 92-106.

This paper explores the Buddhist practice of mindfulness as way to cultivate nondualistic consciousnesses, which may lead to compassion to not only humans but also to the whole planet. This collective compassionate outlook supports my argument for the social dimension of the *anahata* mode of consciousness on the path to global peace.

Bischof, M. (2008). Synchronization and coherence as an organizing principle in the organism, social interaction, and consciousness. *NeuroQuantology*, 6(4), 440-451.

This paper considers the role of synchronization and coherence in the integration of physiological systems, in body-mind integration, and in a field model of consciousness. This leading research by the Institute of HeartMath (IHM) in California supports my argument for the connection between the metaphysical and anatomical hearts on the path to greater emotional health.

Barrett, R. (2012). *The seven levels of societal consciousness*. Retrieved from

<http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&ved=0CDgQFjAB&url=http://www.valuescentre.com/uploads/2012-03-15/The%20%20Levels%20of%20Society.pdf&ei=IdG7UNSZJley8ATq1ICYAw&usg=AFQjCNFnRWPK3430bxO4LTgYYcUz495SGQ>

In this paper, Richard Barrett proposes seven levels of societal consciousness based upon Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which in turn is based on the chakra system. The fourth level in Barrett's model that is equivalent to the *anahata* mode of consciousness is transformation emphasizing the necessity for a paradigm shift on the path to peace.

Catalfo, P. (2006). Chakras 101. *Natural Health*, 36(2), 60-67.

This article is a basic introduction to the chakra system as the title implies; however, it is not over-simplistic or shallow and contains a lot of important information regarding the history and meaning of chakras among other things.

Cohen, R. (2006). *Using the chakra system in psychotherapy*. Retrieved from

<http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&ved=0CDYQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ross-cohen.com%2Fpdf%2FUsingChakras.pdf&ei=ndG7UKCVO4689gS5pIHQDg&usg=AFQjCNEz2mboeEU3ZBHfnG7PTfSo4jBtBA>

As the title implies, this article explores the use of the chakra system in psychotherapy. For the psychospiritual dimension of the *anahata* mode of consciousness I draw from different sources on transpersonal psychotherapy and this is one.

Hover-Kramer, D., & Shames, K. H. (1997). *Energetic approaches to emotional healing*. Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers.

This book introduces a number of hands-on approaches to emotional healing and especially working with chakras. The authors are clinicians with years of experience in their fields, so their book is full of insight on an area of research that is somewhat on the fringe.

Judith, A. (2002). Anahata - the heart chakra. In *The Llewellyn Encyclopedia*. Llewellyn Worldwide. Retrieved from <http://www.llewellyn.com/encyclopedia/article/255>

This encyclopedia entry on the heart chakra is by one of the world's experts on chakras, Anodea Judith, so it's been helpful to borrow from her expertise on the subject.

Lind, R. E. (2007). *The seat of consciousness in ancient literature*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers.

This book explores the seat of consciousness historically across the world way before reductionist scientists boiled it all down to the brain. Instead, the author shows the fact that most cultures from time immemorial have considered the heart-mind or heart-soul to be the seat of consciousness, which is the metaphysical position I am adopting and I propose a return to this place of potential balance and direct knowing.

Louchakova, O. (2007). Spiritual heart and direct knowing in the prayer of the heart. *Existential Analysis*, 18(1), 81-102.

This paper puts its emphasis on the spiritual heart or what I call the metaphysical heart, which is the seat for the *anahata* mode of consciousness. The author suggests the Eastern Christian contemplative practice known as Prayer of the Heart (PH) as a technique on the path to ego-transcendence, which is similar to my proposition of balance the *anahata* mode of consciousness to go from selfishness to selflessness or from dualism to nonduality.

Louchakova, O. (2007). The prayer of the heart, ego-transcendence and adult development. *Existential Analysis*, 18(2), 261-287.

Whereas the previous article served as an overview of PH, this one expands on the practice and puts its emphasis on development. One implicit argument in my paper is that the seven modes of consciousness can be translated as stages for human development, but the focus of my paper however was to emphasize the importance of heart-centered consciousness.

Maxwell, R. W. (2009). The physiological foundation of yoga chakra expression. *Zygon*. 44(4), 807-824.

Even though I use the chakra system as a symbolic one for the different modes of consciousness, there is research out there on the physiological basis for chakras in an attempt to prove that they and the subtle energy that go through them are real. This is not my stance but I do point to such research if the readers are curious about that.

McCraty, R., Atkinson, M., & Bradley, R. T. (2004). Electrophysiological evidence of intuition: Part 1. the surprising role of the heart. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 10(1), 133-143.

Similar to the research done at the Institute of HeartMath (IHM), this paper proves that the heart's purpose is not only biological but also somewhat logical if not translogical.

McCraty, R., Atkinson, M., & Bradley, R. T. (2004). Electrophysiological evidence of intuition: Part 2. a system-wide process?. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 10(2), 325-336.

A continuation of the previous paper with more fascinating findings, which again supports my position that there is a connection between the anatomical and metaphysical hearts and that there are different types of intelligence or modes of consciousness. In other words, it's not all in the brain!

McCraty, R., Atkinson, M., and Tomasino, D. (2001). *Science of the heart: Exploring the role of the heart in human performance*. Boulder Creek, CA: HeartMath Research Center.

This book contains research compiled by Rollin McCraty et al. of groundbreaking work done at the Institute of HeartMath (IHM) showcasing the importance of the heart on more than an anatomical level. They have also developed techniques to improve our emotional health psychophysically.

McCraty, R., Deyhle, A., and Childre, D. (2012). The global coherence initiative: Creating a coherent planetary standing wave. *Global Advances in Health and Medicine*, 1(1), 64-77.

The research in this paper suggests that global coherence through positive emotion, relaxation, and meditation, for instance, can induce peace. This supports my social dimension of the *anahata* mode of consciousness.

Meadow, M. J. (1993). Yogic chakra symbols: Mirrors of the human mind/heart. *Journal of Religion and Health*. 32(1), 67-78.

The approach taken in this paper is very similar to my approach to the chakra system (i.e., seeing the chakra as symbols). Metaphysically, I think that such an approach can be useful on many levels but especially psychospiritually.

Mruk, C. J., & Hartzell, J. (2003). *Zen and psychotherapy: Integrating traditional and nontraditional approaches*. New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company, Inc.

This book attempts to integrate Zen Buddhism with psychotherapy, which is admirable for a number of reasons but to mention a few: Zen Buddhism can provide an ethical framework for the therapist within which s/he can operate and a more compassionate therapist can tremendously help the healing process. The latter point is what I am interested in primarily in the book: heart-centered consciousness inspired by Zen Buddhism applied in a psychospiritual context. Ultimately, the goal is happiness in Zen and psychotherapy; that is also the goal I propose for the psychospiritual dimension.

Nelson, J. E., & Evans, D. (1996). *Madness or transcendence? Looking at the ancient east for modern transpersonal diagnostic system, & A shamanic christian approach in psychotherapy*. In S. Boorstein (Ed.), *Transpersonal psychotherapy* (2 ed.). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

This anthology book will probably become the bible of transpersonal psychotherapy to me. I found it unbelievably by accident at the library and what a find it is! I primarily focused on the specific psychospiritual techniques related to one's heart-centered consciousness. John E. Nelson is known for masterfully integrating neuropsychiatry with Eastern philosophy in his famous book *Healing The Split: Integrating Spirit in Our Understanding of the Mentally Ill*. In this article, he shares some of his insights on the chakra system specifically from a clinical perspective.

Ohlson, K. (2012). The cooperation instinct. *Discover*, 13(10), 34-77.

This article points out how Charles Darwin has been misread throughout the last 100 years or so mainly because most interpreters of his theory of evolution have focused on one half of his theory: competition, while leaving out the other half: cooperation. This clarification of the common understanding of evolution supports my emphasis on heart-centered consciousness as the seat for altruism among other qualities.

Prinsloo, M. (2012, 06 08). Consciousness models in action: Comparisons. *Integral Leadership Review*.

This article compares different models of consciousness and in that regard it is a useful and succinct overview of some of the most popular theories, while highlighting their roots, differences, and what they have in common.

Tallon, A. (1997). *Head and heart: Affection, cognition, volition as triune consciousness*.

New York, NY: Fordham University Press.

I use the model of triune consciousness from this book to group the seven modes of consciousness into three broad categories of volition, affection, and cognition, and in order to set the following general goals respectively: health, happiness, and peace.

*The quick coherence technique for adults*. (n.d.). Retrieved from

<http://www.heartmath.org/free-services/tools-for-well-being/quick-coherence-adult.html>

The quick coherence technique is a guided technique developed at the Institute of HeartMath to help balance thoughts and emotions to achieve energy and mental clarity among other things.

The seven chakras. (2011, 010203). *Hinduism Today*, 14-15.

This is a very short magazine article and I use it mainly because it includes one of the main qualities associated with heart-centered consciousness. Also, it has an excellent image of the chakra system, which I may use in the future.

Tomasulo, D. (2011). Maslow revisited: The hierarchy of chakra? *Psych Central*,

Retrieved from <http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2011/02/06/maslow-revisited-the-hierarchy-of-chakras/>

This article provides a reasonable comparison between Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the chakra system suggesting that Maslow may have been influenced by the chakra system in his conception of his model, which is convincing to me. In other words, the chakra system is not just some esoteric system from the East; it is universally useful on many levels.

Waldman, M. (1992). Science, psychology, and the seven chakras: Integrating western medicine and eastern spirituality. *Special Reports: Transpersonal Perspectives in Psychology*, 4(1).

This is an interview between Mark Waldman and John E. Nelson on the subject of chakras and psychotherapy.



© JOY: The Journal of Yoga

[www.journalofyoga.org](http://www.journalofyoga.org)