

Soul Snack: All About Chakras



Understanding ourselves and the world around us begins with an understanding of energy. The world is made up of things like chairs and flowers and rocks and people and glass vases and bicycles, right? What is the common denominator amongst those items? They are all made up of energy. We are all energy. Everything around us in our world is made up of energy. If you've studied Feng Shui, the ancient Chinese art of placement, or Qi Gong, you will have heard of the concept of Chi or Qi which is energy that flows. Or maybe you are a Star Wars fan and prefer to call it the Force. It doesn't matter what you call it but it is this universal energy that flows through everything and also connects us all.

Keeping that in mind, you can begin to understand energy in terms of your own body using an ancient system called the Chakras. The idea of distinct pools of energy within your body has been around in several cultures for thousands of years. From Karla McLaren's book, *Your Aura & Your Chakras*, she writes that "Chakra is a Sanskrit word for a series of circular energy centers in and around your body" and "there are seven central chakras in a line up the center of your body."

So let's think about chakras in terms of a starship like the U.S.S. Enterprise from Star Trek. With a starship, everything runs on energy from dilithium crystals and this energy runs along a series of circuits supporting 4,000 specific power systems. Each power system like the Holodeck or Life Support or Replicators could be thought of as distinct pools of energy within the body of the Starship. Let's say that Life Support is like the Root chakra which is all about survival and that the Holodeck was associated with the Sacral Chakra (center of pleasure). Now if the energy coming into the Root Chakra or Life Support was blocked, do you think you'd even care about entering the Holodeck? Would you even be able to?

If the energy is formulated into a series of pools, is that even possible? If one is blocked, there is no energy for the next pool. Does this make sense? If Life Support systems were in trouble, it's all hands on deck and Commander LeForge working overtime to fix it. You can begin to think about your own chakras this way. You want them to be open and flowing to allow all of your pools of energy to be healthy and thriving.



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Story



I also like to compare this to Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow developed this theory of psychology and presented it in a paper in 1943. It's part of every Psychology 101 class in college. He describes our needs in a pyramid shape where the bottom of the pyramid is our physiological needs (food, water, sleep, etc.). The next need on the pyramid is safety and going up from there, love/belonging, esteem, and finally, self-actualization. Self-actualization is fulfilling one's potential through creativity, seeking spiritual enlightenment, or pursuing knowledge. If you are consumed with finding your next meal and safe place to sleep tonight, are you thinking about your next creative project or the meaning of life? No. Certain conditions need to be met lower on the pyramid to pursue the items above that.

I find it interesting to compare Maslow's hierarchy to the chakra system where the root chakra deals with your survival (your physiological needs) and even safety in that chakra. There is a heart chakra which is all about love, connection, and belonging which parallels Maslow's need for love and belonging. And self-actualization could be covered in the Third Eye Chakra and the Crown Chakra. If you don't know much about the chakras, that's OK. We're going to cover them more in detail so this comparison will make more sense.

Each chakra represents a different aspect of your being and they are often assigned colors, symbols, musical notes, shapes, animals, and/or specific abilities. It is good to explore what interests you in regards to the chakra system in order to begin working with this internal energy structure. You may want to read some books and investigate the chakra systems from various cultural points of view so you can find what appeals to you. It is my belief that exploring a variety of concepts helps you develop your own unique perspective on them and what feels right to you. There is never any one right answer for everyone. The main concept is that there are individual pools of energy in a series within your body that you can study, clear, and use for healing and maintaining your overall energetic state. What you call them or what colors you associate with each one is less important but I do maintain that there is a specific sense/meaning for each chakra that cannot be changed. I do also believe certain colors can enhance the power of each chakra so you can learn how to work with that for your advantage.

When my son was younger, we came across an animated TV series called "Avatar: The Last Airbender" and we both became hooked on it. The rich storylines and interesting characters resonated deeply with me and my son. One particular episode contained a great explanation of the Chakra system and I enjoy using it as an introduction to the Chakra system for those just learning about it. Please take the time to obtain this episode for your entertainment and attainment of knowledge concerning chakras. Stories are great tools for learning.

The Story

Avatar: The Last Airbender: Episode 18 Season Two— "The Guru/The Crossroads of Destiny"

Available from Amazon Video (free to Amazon Prime members) for \$1.99 (as of 6/16)

https://www.amazon.com/Guru-Crossroads-Destiny/dp/B000HJ0XC4/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1467067046&sr=8-2&keywords=avatar+the+last+airbender

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Story Description

If you are not familiar with Avatar, let me give a little backstory. The main character is Aang, a twelve year-old boy, who is the Last Airbender. He must restore peace and unity to the four nations (Air, Earth, Fire, and Water) by ending the war started by the Leader of the Fire Nation. Aang is learning how to be the Avatar by bending air, fire, earth, and water and by achieving the Avatar State in a controlled way. In this particular episode, which I recommend watching, Aang is going to study with a guru to find out how to control the Avatar state. He learns about the chakras from this guru. The writers take a little poetic license to make the scene more dramatic but I don't want to spoil it for you. Take the next page with you to watch the episode filling in the names of the chakras and then come back to here to find out more.

Avatar: The Last Airbender Activity Sheet

Please watch Episode 18 of Season 2 and fill out the names of the chakras and what each one deals with per Aang's Guru. There is great wisdom in what he says and how he describes each one and it's different but similar to the traditional system on the left. Which system resonates more with you?

7 Chakra System

- Crown**
Deals with Spirituality
- Third Eye**
Deals with Intuition/Awareness
- Throat**
Deals with Communication
- Heart**
Deals with Love/Healing
- Solar Plexus**
Deals with Wisdom/Power
- Sacral**
Deals with Creativity/Sexuality
- Root**
Deals with Survival/Grounding



Avatar Chakras

- _____
- Deals with _____
- _____
- Deals with _____
- _____
- Deals with _____
- _____
- Deals with _____
- _____
- Deals with _____

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Discussion



So, what did you think of this episode of Avatar: The Last Airbender? Did you find the concepts introduced by the Guru to be applicable to your own life? Have you ever heard the expression “head in the clouds” or “feet planted firmly on the ground?” You can see how these relate to the chakras.

Someone whose head is in the clouds might only have their upper chakras cleared and flowing. They may need to do some work on their lower chakras especially the root chakra to open it up and get it flowing so they are more “grounded.” On the other hand, you might feel stuck with your feet too firmly planted on the ground and in need of inspiration. That’s when you work on the upper chakras to clear them and gain divine inspiration and access to your intuition.

Discussion Questions

1. Does the concept of the stream and pools of water needing to flow work as a metaphor to help explain chakras in your own body?
2. Using the Guru’s explanations, do you see how you could focus a meditation on a particular chakra to help you clear the energy around it? Find a chakra that spoke to you during the episode and go back and write down the questions the guru asks Aang to contemplate. These can be great starting points for a powerful and healing meditation.
3. The Guru told Aang that he could not achieve the Avatar State until all his chakras were cleared? What do you think about that? What do you think the Avatar State is? How does that relate to you in your life? What is your Avatar State? How do you achieve it?
4. Ponder the quote from the Guru, “We are all one people but we live as if divided.” Do you agree or disagree? Do you think if more people achieved their own version of the Avatar State that we would be a more peaceful people?
5. How does Aang seem to you? Is he grounded firmly in his root chakra? Or is his head in the cloud? Do his emotions get the best of him in this episode? If you were the guru, which chakras would you recommend he work on clearing and energizing?
6. The Guru says at one point, “In the Avatar state, you are at your most powerful but you also are at your most vulnerable.” What do you think about that quote? Do you find that vulnerability can lead to power? Have you ever thought of it that way? Do you think that’s true? Why or why not?

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Further Study



Activity Suggestions

1. Find a meditation that focuses on your chakras and begin to experience each one. Explore the energy of each.
2. The next time you find yourself ill or with a physical ailment of some sort, check to see which chakra is nearest to the place that hurts in your body. In addition to getting medical treatment, reread the list of chakras and what each one deals with. Is there a connection there? Do you have a sore throat and also find that you have been unable to communicate your needs to your partner? Do you find that your feet are giving you trouble, could there be a place in your life where you are not feeling grounded or that your physical needs are not being cared for making it impossible for you to move forward on your feet? See if you can see a mental/spiritual connection with the places that hurt in your body. If you find one, you can meditate on clearing that chakra or hire a Reiki Master or healing professional to help you clear it. You can also wear that color or find a fragrance linked with that chakra and apply it daily to that spot.
3. Look at your wardrobe from a distance and just notice what colors appear most often. Which chakras are those colors associated with? What chakras would you like to send more energy to? Do you need more love and you want to energize the heart chakra, then find something green to wear. Do you want more power, then find some yellow. It can be a scarf or a pendant or a belt if not shirt, skirt, or pants. Be creative.
4. Buy some essential oils designed to energetically lift each of your chakras. Easy to purchase and fun to play with.
5. Choose a song or a sound for each of the chakras and play them with the intention of energizing that chakra.
6. Take a yoga class where chakras are discussed as part of the poses. Ask around if you are unsure. It's a fun way to move your body and learn about opening and clearing your chakras.

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Resources



Moving Forward

If you would like to know more, here are some resources for you. These are great for further exploration of your chakras.

The Chakra Bible: The Definitive Guide to Working with Chakras by Patricia Mercier

https://www.amazon.com/Chakra-Bible-Definitive-Working-Chakras/dp/1402752245/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&qid=1467074715&sr=8-5&keywords=chakra+books

Chakra Clearing by Doreen Virtue

https://www.amazon.com/Chakra-Clearing-Doreen-Virtue/dp/1561705667/ref=sr_1_6?ie=UTF8&qid=1467074715&sr=8-6&keywords=chakra+books

Color Your Chakras: An Interactive Way to Understand the Energy Centers of Your Body by Dr. Susan Shumsky

A fun and informative way to learn about the chakras and engage in some mindful coloring to relax and restore you.

https://www.amazon.com/Color-Your-Chakras-Interactive-Understand/dp/163265041X/ref=sr_1_18?ie=UTF8&qid=1467075222&sr=8-18&keywords=chakra+books

Avatar: The Last Airbender - the entire series

Available on Amazon.com.

Aura Cacia Chakra Balancing Essential Oils

I love products from Aura Cacia and having roll-on essential oils for each of the chakras is a true luxury. Feeling like you need a spark in your creativity? Roll on some oil on your sacral chakra (below your belly button). Fun and it smells great!

Sacral Chakra: https://www.amazon.com/Aura-Cacia-Organic-Balancing-Sensual/dp/B00AHQW6XG/ref=sr_1_3_a_it?ie=UTF8&qid=1467082753&sr=8-3&keywords=essential+oils+chakras

7 Chakra Tuning Fork Set

Play with the sounds for each chakra and begin to attune and heal through the power of sound.

https://www.amazon.com/Chakra-Tuning-Color-mallet-Shipping/dp/B00KSZCQ2C/ref=sr_1_13_s_it?s=hpc&ie=UTF8&qid=1467083136&sr=1-13&keywords=chakras