

## Fourth Chakra

When talking about the first three chakra's we paid attention to the basis of our development.

In the first chakra, it's about your existence, your body's connection to the earth, about having the right to be and to have.

The second chakra is about sexuality and emotions, creation, the discovery of "the other", about the right to feel.

The third chakra was about life force and energy and about the right to act.

So the lower three chakras are about survival, sexuality and how to act.

The top three chakras are about convictions or beliefs around spirituality and the purpose of life.

The fourth chakra is in the middle of it all, the center in a healthy chakra system.....

### **The fourth chakra: Anahata.**

In Sanskrit, Anahata means 'untouchable', 'invulnerable', 'fresh' and 'clean'. The element of this chakra is air, the color associated with this chakra is green.

We started with earth in the 1st chakra, followed by water in the 2nd chakra and the transformative fire was the element of the 3rd chakra.

The 4th chakra or heart chakra is the center through which we love. Here the energy of connection flows with all the life surrounding us. The more this center opens up, the greater our ability to love life becomes.

The Heart chakra stands for: love, renewal, less judgment, more accepting, trust, love and flow. The color is spring green.

### **Development: From focusing on ourselves to the relationship with the world**

Our first chakra provides us *with firmness, stability and form*. Our world of experience was one of *unity*. From that foundation we moved to the 2nd chakra and learned *difference (between "I" and "the other")*, *change* and *movement*. The third chakra brought us to the fire of our will, our *life force*.

In the first 3 chakras, the focus is on ourselves, on our survival, on our connection with others, on our sexuality and on our manifestation power.

In the 4th chakra, attention is focused on our *environment* and *our role in the web of relationships* that we build in our lives. And from here we bridge the gap to a wider consciousness.

In the 4th chakra we create a *social identity* and we use that identity to interact with others. We open up to really getting to know others, we leave behind the egocentrism and stubbornness of the 3rd chakra.

We also arrived with the 4<sup>th</sup> chakra in the center of our chakra system. Under the 4th chakra lie the 'worldly' chakras and above the 4<sup>th</sup> chakra are the mental chakras of the mind, imagination and insight. It is our heart, the 'inner spirit' that unites the forces from below and above in order to integrate body and mind and achieve balance.

### Your body's 7 CHAKRAS



The most important topics you will face in the 4<sup>th</sup> chakra are balance, love and relationships. Anodea Judith writes in the Chakra Psychology Handbook (p.242): "Balance brings us to the center from which we can love, love makes us enter into relationships, and relationships offer us the opportunity to awaken the self-centered ego of the lower chakras to awareness of the larger realm in which we are embedded".

The larger realm she is talking about, I think, means that we as human beings have spiritual faculties that give us fantasy, imagination, inspiration, spirituality and more. In addition to the purely physical part, we humans have a larger "world" that we create with those skills. So: After we have secured our basic needs, a new dimension opens up for us, the spiritual dimension and the journey begins with **opening us up to love for the other, from our heart.**

### Symbol

The symbol of the 4<sup>th</sup> chakra is a lotus flower with 12 leaves that surrounds a six-pointed star consisting of two triangles, one triangle with the point down and one triangle with the tip up. The two triangles symbolize the *descent of the mind into matter and the upward liberation of matter in spirit.* In perfect



balance they meet in the heart. It is more than meeting: it is an integration of body and mind or soul.

### **Exercise:**

The fourth chakra covers the heart, upper part of the chest and the top of the back. How do you feel about these parts of your body? Have you ever had a problem in your life?

### **Element: air - breath**

The element of air refers, among other things, to breathing, the vital process that keeps our entire organism alive. In yoga philosophy, prana is the name for life energy and with pranayama, i.e. breathing exercises, we work on the integration of body and mind. After all, with our mind we exert influence on our body by breathing in a certain way. For example, we know cooling, warming and calming breathing techniques.

### ***Exercise: full breathing, yogic breath***

*Lie down on the mat, breathe in and out quietly at your own pace, relaxing breathing. Build step by step towards full breathing, first breathe to abdomen (navel) a number of times, then add flanks as second step, then chest (collarbones) as a third step. Maintain full breathing for some time (3 steps). Finally, return to your normal breathing.*

### **Development of the 4th chakra**

In the development of this chakra, which according to the literature takes place mainly between the fourth and seventh year, the child realizes that it is part of a family and the larger world. Step by step, the world is getting bigger. The child begins to develop his own style in dealing with people. The first example of this is family interaction and the child uses what it experiences in the family dynamics in the development of one's own style.

I mentioned already “the development of a social identity that we use to interact with others”. This is a part of us that we show on the outside. *It's not who we really are.* Our social identity can be the compulsive helper, the seductive lover, the pleaser or the entertainer. In the family it could be the good girl or the rebel. In our development as a child, we base our self-image on the reactions we get from others, i.e. are we popular or we are an outsider, are we praised, criticized or admired. Later in life this shifts and we learn to understand the world that is bigger than ourselves. After all, that image of

ourselves developed in the first 3 chakras had a limited scope. At this stage of development in the 4<sup>th</sup> chakra, we are learning how to relate to that larger world in which we will establish relationships with others.

It is ultimately about the development of social identity aimed at *self-acceptance*.

## Love

The heart chakra is the centrum of Love. The love we are talking about here is different from the more sexually focused and passionate love of the second chakra. The sexual love of the 2nd chakra is object bound passion, it is stimulated and aroused by the presence of, for example, a person. The love we're talking about here is no longer object bound. This is love that we can feel for everything we encounter, it comes out from within as a state of being. In this ideal love, acceptance of life as it is reflects and the discovery that we have everything and therefore need nothing more.

Here is the ideal: you can love yourself for who you are and you can accept life as it is. Unconditional.

This form of love is not easy to understand with your head.... That confusion is the beginning of your new relationship with 'love', you purify your own ideas with 'love' as soon as you start doing this. If you feel love for yourself and *when you are okay with all your beautiful and less beautiful sides*, then you can give love from a pure connection with yourself. Sincere love rather than with a need of it.

**In balance:** You are confident and loving, you love yourself and therefore you can love the other person. You stay true to your own needs within one relationship, with respect for the other. You are well anchored in yourself, flexible and free in expressing your emotions and needs. You have humor and you don't take life too seriously. Laughter is good for body and mind.

**Out of balance:** You are insecure and dependent on approval, quickly hurt, onverschillig (as if you don't care), less connected to yourself and the other, anxious to be alone, afraid to follow your heart. For fear of being hurt, you adjust to what other people need and are dependent of the approval of others.

**Fundamental right: the right to love and be loved**

The most common blockage in the 4th chakra is the absence of love for oneself. How can we connect with others if we keep ourselves at a distance? How can we open up to others when we feel shame about ourselves or constantly self-criticize? We cannot maintain a balance between ourselves and others in a relationship if we do not have an inner balance.....

We want to transform the shame that can be expressed in the 3rd chakra (think of: "I am not allowed not show my will, I can not do as I want "), so that we can start loving with respect for ourselves. That means loving yourself as you are, enjoying our own company when we are alone, honoring our limits and speaking our truth (satya). These are beautiful words and a great assignment at the same time: it's about developing self-love.

Self-esteem forms an excellent foundation for the development of the heart and for the successful maintenance of relationships. If the lower chakras work well, we are not dependent on our partner for our sense of security, for interpreting our feelings or experiencing a healthy ego. We can then surrender to the experience of love (4<sup>th</sup> chakra).

What is needed for the development of self-love or self-esteem: seeing and real understanding of the self... What do I mean by that? See yourself, go into your heart and see what you want there, and how you really are, there. Not what your head came up with, but "just how you are." When you do that, you start to self-investigate and you come into contact with your motives, actions, goals, hopes and fears. And it's not always fun, but when you start to investigate, you'll be able to find causes for what you discover. And if you know those causes, you can start transforming and break loose from old patterns. Once you have released old patterns, you are no longer stuck in the past but you are focused on the future with the healthy energy of the will (from your 3<sup>rd</sup> chakra).

The investigation in yourself brings you to a new balance between body and mind, can you imagine that? When you see old patterns for what they are, namely as old patterns that once served you and belonged to an awareness of the past, then you can make new choices with your consciousness of this moment. These new choices are a new balance between body and mind, appropriate to this moment. Lahma is teaching a beautiful series about this next week, as soon as the studio's are open again.

### Your body's 7 CHAKRAS



We keep coming back to the word balance. The fourth chakra has 3 chakras on both sides, it is in itself the center of the chakra system, where balance should prevail. Balance is a must-have for entering into relationships. Balance in yourself, that's what we were just talking about. Balance between you and the other, that is also necessary for a permanent and lively relationship. We all know the feeling of "wanting to be very close

to another", just think of being in love. That feeling lasts a while and feels great, you just want to be with your partner. For a stable relationship, however, you need to find yourself again, so take some distance. It is also necessary that you can stay with yourself while you are in the relationship. Here too, you can see the natural search for balance.

I'm sure you know the examples of imbalance in relationships. One partner feels suffocated, the other is too distant. One partner needs sex more than the other, does all the communication work with the friends/outside world, or always solves the problems. And there are many more examples.

Nature strives for balance and when there is no balance, pressure arises which is often experienced as frustration or stress. In turn this erodes the openness and goodwill, the result: the partners will separate themselves from each other.

The creation of balance in the 4<sup>th</sup> chakra requires an energy of opening up and bringing in or handing out. You might imagine that you need your arms to be open. This can be difficult for people, sometimes impossible. A blocked 4<sup>th</sup> chakra can block the deployment of your arms. We'll do an exercise with that later.

#### If your fourth chakra is not balanced:

From deficiency	Out of excess
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being withdrawn, being cold</li> <li>• Depression, lack of self-respect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being focused on others at the expense of themselves</li> <li>• Being demanding</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear of intimacy and/or relationships</li> <li>• Loneliness, seclusion</li> <li>• Narcissism, lack of empathy</li> <li>• Critical, judgmental towards others, bigoted towards themselves and others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overt sacrifice, tendency to give everything away</li> <li>• Sticky adherence</li> <li>• Jealousy</li> <li>• Weak borders</li> </ul>
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### **Affirmations**

I'm worth loving, I deserve love.

I fully accept myself.

I feel compassion and love for all living beings.

I love myself unconditionally.

I receive and give easily. My heart is open.

### **Exercise: opening your heart (option)**

Place a meditation pillow or a bolster on your mat, lie on the pillow with your upper back, maybe put another pillow behind your head so you don't stretch your throat too much and lie comfortably. It's about the opening of your chest, your heart area.

Open your arms next to your body, in a receiving gesture. Feel the opening of your chest. Feel what is happening in your heart area, at the place of the heart chakra.

### **To try at home**

#### Give

For example: Smile to a stranger in the street, share some of your joy and love. Or give to a good cause, help someone.

Notice when you shut down, when it doesn't feel safe to give. Also notice when you feel obliged to give, when you feel pressured, when you know it's not good for you to give at that time. How do you usually react in a situation like that? Where are your boundaries and what do you do to strengthen them?

#### Air

Pay attention to smells, look to the sky, see the clouds and observe your own

breathing. Try to be aware of these things a few times every day. You can do a breathing exercise, for example.

### Relationships

It could be a good time to explore and balance your relationships. Pay attention to important relationships in your life, both the relationships you like and that you don't like. Research those relationships in terms of their energetic dynamics, the balance of giving and taking, the needs that play a part. What makes these relationships important to you? What could you improve? Spend extra time on positive relationships, spend extra time with your kids or your partner or a close friend. Try greeting everyone you come into contact with eye contact and a friendly 'hello'. For example the cashier, the tram driver, a conductor, a security guard at the supermarket, greet them with consciousness.

You can also investigate your relationship with food, nature, study, work. What makes you stuck with unhealthy habits or what keeps you from a healthy balanced relationship? See if you can take steps towards balance by dealing with underlying needs in a healthier way.