

Use of Sahridayata in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building

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Abstract

This article deals with spiritual philosophy and its implication for conflict resolution and peace building in awakening *astha chakras* through physical and emotional dimensions of human body. Being empathetic, compassionate, cooperative and feeling equal to be oneness, can be defined as *Sahridayata*. The concept *Sahridayata* comes from the word ‘*Saha*’ means a quality characteristics or state of being and ‘*hridaya*’ refers to names a person of that faculty. So, etymologically *Sahridaya* refers to ‘one with a shared heart’ or ‘like hearted’. Similarly, *Chakras* are the energy centers of human body through which physical, mental and spiritual functions take place.

Keywords: *Sahridayata*, philosophy, *Vedas*, reconciliation, peace, *chakras*, empathy

Introduction

The *sahridayata* philosophy, originating from Sanskrit, embodies a profound concept of viewing others with empathy and understanding. In the context of conflict resolution and peacebuilding, this philosophy offers a transformative approach. *Sahridayata* promotes reconciliation through forgiveness. By embracing the

healing power of *sahridayata*, individuals can release resentment and cultivate inner peace, paving the way for the reconciliation of relationships, promoting harmony, and addressing conflicts through compassionate engagement and the pursuit of common ground. Drawing from diverse cultural and philosophical traditions, it highlights the significance of empathy, openness, and interconnectedness in building sustainable peace. The *sahridayata* philosophy focuses on *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*—that is, universal brotherhood rooted in shared empathy, cooperation, coordination, and collaboration—which creates *cinergy*. A *sahridaya* is one who has attained *sahridayata*.

The concept of *sahridayata* is clearly defined in the Vedic texts. The *Rigveda* states, “Be humane and humanize others” (*Rigveda* 10.53.6). We need to be real human beings, and we must behave toward others accordingly. Similarly, the *Yajurveda* maintains, “One who sees all beings in his or her own self, and the self in all beings, hates none” (*Yajurveda* 40.6). This means that a person does not misbehave when they internalize others as part of themselves. Likewise, the *Samaveda* states, “All of us are of one race, one nationality of the same structure—of course, living in various regions.” Although people live in different parts of the world, the *Vedas* teach that we belong to the same human race.

Adhikary (2003) states that communication is a process of attaining mutual understanding, in which communicating parties interact within a system to achieve *sahridayata*. As Saraswati (2001, pp. 35–36) observes, the *Vedas* instruct humans that “all people should be mutually bound with each other; each one affectionately attracting the other, the way a cow showers her love and affection for her newborn calf” (*Atharvaveda* 3.30.1). This implies that *sahridayata* can be sustained through love and affection.

Everyone should look upon one another with a friend's eye (*Yajurveda* 36.18). Friendship, cooperation, coexistence, helpfulness, sharing, caring, and loving reconciliation through forgiveness are the core values of the *sahridayata* philosophy. Drawing from ancient wisdom and contemporary practices, *sahridayata* offers transformative tools for conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Mishra (2008) states that the word *sahridayata* has two components: *saman* (same, equal, harmony, being) and *hridaya* (heart, becoming) (p. 97). He draws on the following *Rigvedic* sutra to clarify its meaning: *Samani va ankutih saman hridayani yah saman mastu samano yatha vah susahasatih* (*Rigveda*, 10.191.4). It means, “Let our minds be in harmony, our hearts be in harmony, let our thinking be in harmony, and our thought process be in harmony so that we can live meaningfully together with a true sense of universal brotherhood.”

Gods also desire that the mantras of humans be the same. Similarly, their meetings, interactions, and beings are the same, comprehending all their vows; their consciousness pervading them is the same. Men invoke the gods with the same voice and vision:

We invoke you and supplicate you; let the same consciousness flow through us, so that our thoughts are the same, our hearts are the same, and our minds are the same, so there can be greater accord between you and us (p. 72).

Mishra emphasizes the need to understand the Hindu context of emotion in order to internalize the Hindu poetic experience and the concept of *sahridaya* (p. 69).

He also draws on two other concepts—*sakhya*, participatory communion, and *samvad*, a sounding together—while delineating the meaning of *sahridayata*. Everyone should

look upon each other with a friend's eye (*Yajurveda* 36.18). *Sahridayas* have a “common sympathetic heart” (Yadava, 1998, p. 188). In other words, a *sahridaya* is a “person in a state of emotional intensity, i.e., a quality of emotional dimension coequal to that of the sender of the message or communicator” (Kundra, n.d., p. 200). In this context, *sahridayata* can be considered “social preparedness” that “entails living amongst.” The concepts *sakhya*, participatory communion, and *samvad*, a sounding conversation together, are important in understanding the meaning of *sahridayata*.
Sahridayata and Chakras

Integrating *sahridayata* and the concept of *chakras* into conflict resolution and peacebuilding provides a comprehensive approach that promotes empathy, effective communicative resolution, personal empowerment, and intuitive understanding, leading to deeper and more sustainable outcomes. The *Atharvaveda* states, “*Astha chakra navadwar devanam purdhyaya, tasyam hiranya kosah sworgo jyotir sabritaha*” (10.2.31). This verse clearly points out that our spinal cord consists of eight *chakras* and nine *gyanindriyas* (sensory organs) and *karmindriyas* (motor organs), along with *hiranya kosha sad-chid-ananda* (the inner light). The eight *chakras* are like different stations of bioelectric energy in our body. *Chakras* represent the sum total of the input and output of different segments of the body. The psychic body is the zone where both inner and outer experiences are visualized and experienced.

Adhikary (2012) explains:

Sahridaya is the core concept upon which the meaning of *sadharanikaran* resides. It is the state of common orientation, commonality, or oneness. Communicating parties become *sahridayas* through the completion of the process of *sadharanikaran*. In a society with asymmetrical relationships between

communication parties, it is only through *sahridayata* that two-way communication and mutual understanding are possible. Thus, communicating parties can attain *sahridayata* irrespective of complex hierarchies of caste, language, culture, and religious practices, and the communication process qualifies to be considered *sadharanikaran*. (p.70)

Sahridayata plays a vital role in fostering mutual understanding between communicating parties by breaking the boundaries and hierarchies of caste, language, culture, and religion. Thus, *sadharanikaran* develops from the *sahridaya vava* of communication parties. Drawing on the dual perspectives of human consciousness, Satyananda (2013) quotes Carl Jung's statement: Natural processes are phenomena of energy constantly arising out of a "less probable" state. This apparent dualism is actually a unified, holistic process from another level of consciousness, but at our own level we see it from a fragmented, limited and partial perspective (p. 331).

Life has two main aspects upon which all our perception, activity, and experience take place: our mind and body, which are the outcomes of two main forms of energy interacting and creating endless manifestations in the universe of our body. For example, we have a right and left brain, a parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous system, an anabolic and catabolic metabolism, and a conscious and unconscious mind. All the special objectives of the universe are manifested in the human body with energy centers. In the yogic context, a better translation of the Sanskrit word *shakti* is energy, which is visualized and experienced as circular movements of energy at particular rates of vibration. Judith (2003) maintains, "The value of the chakra system is that as the inner and outer worlds connect, we become

aligned spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and physically” (p. ix). As the *chakras* get awakened, a person’s inner world, *susumna*, becomes known to the existing outer world. It is believed that there are seventy-two thousand *nadis* in the human body. Among these *nadis*, *ida*, *pingala*, and *susumna* are the main ones. With their arousal, all the *chakras* are activated. Judith (2003) further remarks that “Chakra patterns are programmed deep in the core of the mind-body interface and have a strong relationship with our physical functioning” (p. 5). Although they do not appear physically, their functions bring vast changes to the physical and mental parts of our body. To clarify the concept of *sahridayata*, Adhikary (2012) states in his journal article *Hindu Teaching on Conflict and Peacemaking*:

Treating *sahridayata* as a state of being and becoming, which is within the reach of all, seems to be in consonance with the Hindu worldview. It is not an exclusive faculty, but it certainly has prerequisites. Culture is the foundation of *sahridayata*, upon which an individual must undergo a natural course of evolution. (p.73)

The root of *sahridayata* lies in Hindu culture, which developed through Vedic and post-Vedic texts. Philosophically, Hindu teachings embrace oneness, humanity, and universal brotherhood. This association is reflected in the way the *nadis* emerge from each *chakra* and carry *prana* (cosmic energy) in both directions. There is a forward and backward respiratory motion in the *nadis*, which is analogous to the flow of alternating current in electrical wires. Outgoing communication and incoming reactions enter and leave the *chakra* in the form of this respiratory flow through the corresponding *nadis*. Based on their location in the body, the *chakras* have become associated with various states of consciousness, archetypal

elements, and philosophical constructs. The lower *chakras*, for example, which are physically closer to the earth, are related to the more practical matters of our lives—survival, movement, and action. They are governed by physical and social laws.

The upper *chakras* represent mental realms and work on a symbolic level through words, images, and concepts. Each of the eight *chakras* has also come to represent a major area of human psychological health, related to survival, sexuality, power, love, communication, intuition, and consciousness. Paraphrasing Judith's illustration metaphorically, the *chakras* correspond to the following archetypal elements: *muladhara* symbolizes earth, *swadhisthana* water, *manipura* fire, *anahata* air, *vishuddhi* sound, *anjana* light, and *sahasrara* thought. Satyananda (2013) maintains:

Muladhara is the most basic, fundamental *chakra* from which our evolution is completed. As we evolve toward *sahasrara*, outer experiences come our way in life, and inner experiences come to us in meditation, as different capacities and centers awaken progressively within the nervous system. This occurs as energy flows at higher voltages and rates of vibration through the different *nadis* in the psychic body (p. 119).

The use of *sahridayata* in conflict resolution and peacebuilding plays a significant role by activating the *astha chakras* in our body. The point of connection is yoga, which deals with the union of the soul and supersoul, consisting of multiple dimensions such as *bhakti*, *raja*, *karma*, and *jnana* yoga, as well as *hatha* yoga. In *bhakti* yoga, union takes place through love and devotion. In *raja* yoga, realization of superconsciousness comes from meditation. In *karma* yoga, salvation takes place by doing work without any personal

expectation. *Jnana* yoga unites the human self with the supreme self through discernment. In *hatha* yoga, *yama*, *niyama*, *pranayama*, *asana*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi* are taken as yogic disciplines. Communication functions optimally when there is union with activated *chakras* and the *sahridayata* bhava.

The *chakras* have become associated with various states of consciousness, archetypal elements, and philosophical constructs. The lower *chakras* are closer to the earth and relate to more practical matters of our lives, such as survival, movement, and action. The upper *chakras* represent mental realms and operate on a symbolic level through words, images, and concepts. All five elements of the universe—earth, water, fire, air, and ether—are reflections of our *chakra* system, which can be activated, awakened, and generated by applying yogic techniques. Pointing out the consequences of awakening *Kundalini*, Mookerjee (1986) remarks:

When *kundalini* awakens, the aspirant listens to cosmic sound. When the *kundalini* leaves *muladhara*, one hears the chirping of a cricket. When she crosses to *svadhisthana*, the tinkling of an anklet; in the *manipura*, the sound of a bell; at the *anahata*, the music of a flute; and finally, when *kundalini* crosses to *vishuddhi*, the cosmic sound *Om*—the first manifestation of Shiva-Shakti as sonic consciousness—leads to the attainment of supreme consciousness (p. 30).

The awakening of the *chakras* is a very important event in human evolution. It should not be misunderstood as mysticism or occultism because, with the awakening of the *chakras*, our consciousness and mind undergo significant changes. These changes have important relevance and influence on our day-to-day life. Our present state of mind is

often not capable of handling all the affairs of life. Our love and hatred, and our relationships with others, are consequences of the quality of our current mind.

Sahridayata, Rasa Theory and Chakras

Adhikary (2014), in his *Theory and Practice of Communication—Bharatmuni*, discusses the *rasa* theory attributed to Bharata Muni, an ancient Nepali sage and scholar from Bharatpur, Chitwan, Nepal. His theory outlines several key elements essential to evoking emotional responses, known as *rasa*, in the audience. There are nine primary *rasas*: love/beauty (*shringara*), humor/laughter (*hasya*), compassion (*karuna*), anger (*raudra*), heroism/courage (*vira*), terror/fear (*bhayanaka*), disgust (*bibhatsa*), wonder (*adbhuta*), and tranquility/peace (*shanta*). The ultimate goal of the *rasa* theory is to transform the audience into a state of aesthetic bliss or *rasa-ananda*.

Along with *rasas*, the psychological states or emotions expressed by characters on stage and elsewhere serve as stimuli for evoking the corresponding *rasas* in the audience. There are eight primary *bhavas*: love (*rati*), mirth (*hasa*), sorrow (*shoka*), anger (*krodha*), energy (*utsaha*), fear (*bhaya*), disgust (*jugupsa*), and astonishment (*vismaya*). To arise *bhava*, the determinants or causal factors are the *vibhava*. These include various external and internal conditions such as actions, situations, sentiments, and states of mind that influence the characters' emotions and behaviors. After experiencing the *bhavas*, the participants' responses—gestures, facial expressions, vocal modulations, and other physical or verbal clues—convey the characters' emotional states to the audience. The predominant or enduring emotions that form the basis of a character's personality are known as *sthayi-bhava*. To complement the *sthayi-bhavas*, there arise *vyabhichari-bhavas* as transitory emotions.

The concept of *sahridayata*, along with the concept of *rasa*, should not be limited to the domain of drama, poetry, and aesthetics only; these concepts can be—and, in fact, have been—interpreted in the domain of modern communication discipline (Adhikary, 2003).

For instance, *sahridayata* is treated as a “construct”—a combination of concepts, but with contextual import—thereby relating its exact meaning only to the context in which it is defined (Kerlinger, 2004; Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). Hindu society is made up of complex relationships consisting of various—sometimes even conflicting—factors such as hierarchies of caste, social status, language, culture, and religious practices. In this context, asymmetrical relationships between communicating parties are prevalent in most cases. However, Hindus of different castes, social statuses, languages, cultures, and religious cults are capable of enjoying the very process of communication. Hindus have been able to receive and understand diverse, even contradictory, perceptions. Moreover, the ethics as conceived in Hinduism envision communion between communicating parties. This implies that there exists something that binds people and facilitates communication. Any model of communication that claims to be from a Hindu perspective or worldview must acknowledge this.

Sahridayata is crucial in the *SMC* for ensuring that the model inherits the Hindu ideal of communication for communion. Since its entitlement is as a construct, its exact meaning relates to the context in which it is defined. However, its root is firmly established in earlier concepts from which it is drawn. Therefore, the term *sahridayata* has been used to designate all concepts and practices considered significant in ensuring communication for communion in Hindu society. *Sahridayata*, as a technical term or construct,

represents a wide range of relationships between communication parties. In the broadest sense, *sahridayas* are people who have the capacity to send and receive messages. However, ideally, *sahridayata* is the state of common orientation, commonality, or oneness, and *sahridayas* are those who have attained this state.

In the SMC, *sahridayata* provides an explanation of how different communicating parties become able to transcend the unequal relationships prevalent in society, thereby facilitating the communication process. In other words, the term embodies the sum of all those factors by which the asymmetrical relationships between communicating parties do not hinder two-way communication, allowing mutual understanding to take place.

Vidya Niwas Mishra (2008) draws on *Samanjasya Sukta*, which teaches living in harmony, in accordance with each other, suffused with each other, with your hearts mingling as the gods did in the earliest times with an understanding of their interrelationship. The gods also desire the mantras of humans to be the same; comprehending all their vows, their consciousness pervading them is the same. Men invoke the gods with the same voice and vision: “We invoke you and supplicate you, that the same consciousness flows through us, that our thoughts are the same, our hearts are the same, and our minds are the same, so there can be greater accord between you and us” (Atharvaveda 6.64).

The SMC is a representation of the communication process from the Bharatavarshiya/Hindu perspective. It is a systematic description, in diagrammatic form, of the process of attaining mutual understanding, commonality, or oneness among people. It illustrates how the communicating parties become *sahridayas* with the completion of the process of

sadharanikaran. In this light, the SMC envisions communication for communion.

The SMC is the first-ever model of communication presented in diagrammatic form that illustrates communication from the Bharatvarshiya/Hindu perspective. A point to note at this juncture is that the SMC is not the only possible model of communication from the Bharatvarshiya perspective; rather, there is scope for other communication models. With the vast diversity of cultures and philosophies within Hindu society, it is just one of many models that could be developed. Many theories and models of communication would emerge if the discipline of communication embraced the enthusiasm to engage with different Hindu philosophical traditions (Adhikary & Shukla, 2013). The introduction of the term *sahridayata* into communication is essentially due to its relevance in this regard. What has been said regarding *sahridaya* and *sahridayata* in the context of poetry is clearly sufficient for generalization to any form of communication.

As in other scientific disciplines, there involves the reinterpreting and redefining of concepts and the development of constructs. Whereas the concept of *sahridayata* discussed and delineated in various Sanskrit texts envisions an ideal state of being and becoming, the term as a technical term in the SMC has been used in a broader sense and “refers to people with a capacity to send and receive messages” (Adhikary, 2009, p. 74). Though ideally (as discussed earlier), a *sahridaya* is a person not only engaged in communication but also having attained a special state (*sahridayata*), this is not the only case within the framework of the SMC. Here, any parties engaged in communication and capable of identifying each other as sender and receiver are *sahridayas*. It is important to emphasize that the *SMC* incorporates both the ideal (former)

and general (latter) meanings of *sahridayata*. In brief, *sahridayata*, as a technical term or construct, represents a wide range of relationships between communication parties. In the broadest sense, *sahridayas* are those who have attained this state. It is *sahridayata* that makes communication for communion attainable.

The point of connection is that *sahridayata* philosophy and *astha chakra* awakening help in conflict resolution and peace building. Vedic texts—including the *Vedas*, *Samhitas*, *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas*, *Upanishads*, and other post-Vedic texts—vividly discuss the promotion of universal brotherhood and humanity for all human beings. Specifically, by awakening the *anahata* (heart) chakra, every human being becomes more humanitarian. The *anahata* chakra can be awakened through regular yoga practice: *yam*, *niyam*, *asana*, *pranayama*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi*. Yoga, which deals with the union of the soul and supreme soul, consists of multiple dimensions, such as *bhakti*, *raja*, *karma*, *jnana*, and *hatha* yoga. In *bhakti* yoga, union takes place through love and devotion. In *raja* yoga, realization of superconsciousness comes from meditation. Doing work without any personal expectation, leading to salvation, takes place in *karma* yoga. *Jnana* yoga unites the human self with the supreme self through discernment. In *hatha* yoga, *yam*, *niyam*, *pranayama*, *asana*, *pratyahara*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi* are taken as yogic disciplines.

Chakras are considered centers of consciousness and power. Although they do not appear as physical entities—*chakras* do not actually exist in the physical body—they are visualized in certain locations on the body: *muladhara* in the perineal region, *swadhisthana* in the sacral region, *manipura* in the lumbar region, *anahata* in the thoracic region, *ajna* in the midbrain, *bindu* at the top of the head, and *sahasrara* at

the crown of the head. These areas correspond to the chakra points in the physical body. The experience of *chakras* and *kundalini* takes place in the psychic body, which ultimately bypasses many deep mental experiences. However, *kundalini* yoga is considered one of the quickest methods of yoga through which one can achieve the goal of awakening primal energy with a high level of understanding and personality development.

Conclusion

The *chakras* represent a symbolic theory of emotions and psyche that allows us to perceive things from the *sukshma* (subtle) aspect. They represent intuitions about the psyche as a whole and symbolize it from a cosmic standpoint. *Chakras* are activated through various yogic activities; among them, *pranayama*, or the science of breathing, plays a vital role in vitalizing the body's subtle centers. It develops through systematic techniques of breathing, regulating its speed, depth, and rhythm. Under normal circumstances, our breathing is very irregular; it is not only shallow during inhalation and exhalation but also lacks harmony. Oxygenated blood flows to every part of the organ with the help of *pranayama*. By taking deeper and fuller breaths, we begin to absorb the maximum *pranic* current (life energy) with each inhalation. To proceed further, knowledge of the respiration unit is required. Each unit consists of three parts: inhalation, retention of breath at any point during inhalation—the chief method of absorbing energy from the atmosphere—and exhalation of used air. Balanced rhythm in breathing depends on achieving the correct ratio among these three units. Breathing such as inhalation is known as *puraka*, retention as *kumbhaka*, and exhalation as *rechaka*.

When *kundalini chakras* awaken, the aspirant or *sadhaka* listens to sounds of music inside. When the

kundalini leaves *muladhara*, he/she hears the chirping of a cricket; when she crosses to *swadhisthana*, the tinkling of an anklet; in the *manipura*, the sound of a bell; at the *anahata*, the music of a flute; and finally, when *kundalini* crosses to *vishuddhi*, the cosmic sound *Om*—the first manifestation of Shiva-Shakti as sonic consciousness—is visualized, which is the real transformation of *sahridayata*. Proper knowledge and understanding of sonic consciousness lead to the attainment of supreme consciousness. Transformation and sublimation of the physical, mental, and spiritual states are only possible with activation of the *chakras* and the arousal of *kundalini shakti* and her reorientation from downward to upward movement as she rises to unite with Shiva. The aspirant raises himself/herself from the grosser body element (*sthula sharira*) to the subtler (*sukshma sharira*) to realize, in a transcendental experience, the union of Shiva and Shakti as the cosmic man.

Ida, *pingala*, and *sushumna* are three types of *nadis* or flows of consciousness, like electric currents, known as *pranic* force, mental force, and spiritual force. The *ida nadi* represents the moon and controls all mental processes. The *pingala nadi* symbolizes the sun and controls all vital processes. The *sushumna nadi* is the channel for awakening spiritual consciousness. Though the *ida* and *pingala nadis* separate from the *sushumna* channel at the *muladhara chakra*, they meet the *sushumna* in the region of the *anahata chakra*, then separate again, running into the left and right nostrils.

Sahridayata is a deeper aspect of the subtle body and the causal body, or the subconscious and the unconscious. The subconscious area is known as the subtle body, and the unconscious as the causal body. The approximate borderline zone between the subconscious and unconscious is known as the emotional aspect. The four states of consciousness—

gross, subtle, causal, and transcendental—are known as the two experiences of yoga. Gross and subtle represent the external experiences of the mind, whereas causal and transcendental represent inner experiences of the mind or consciousness. The *sahridayi vawa* is the zone where both inner and outer experiences are visualized and experienced.

Chakras are known as psychic centers. *Muladhara*, *swadhisthana*, *manipura*, and *anahata* are the four psychic centers that belong to the realm of our outer experience, both gross and subtle. *Vishuddhi*, *ajna*, *bindu*, and *sahasrara* belong to the inner dimension. *Muladhara* represents self-identity and security; *swadhisthana*, deep *samskaras*; *manipura*, external or manifesting dynamism; and *anahata*, emotions and feelings. These four *chakras* deal with outer experience. Going beyond them to the aspects of transcendence, purity, expansiveness, and openness is *vishuddhi*. The intuitive faculty, pulling something from the unknown and translating it in terms of the known, is *ajna*. In *bindu* there is awareness of the source, the point where macrocosmic and microcosmic experiences merge into one. Finally, in *sahasrara* there is illumination. These four *chakras* belong to the inner experience.

All these experiences take place in the psychic or emotional field, which is made up of different forms of vibration. These vibrations have been given sounds that can be understood by the lower mind—*manas*, *buddhi*, *chitta*, and *ahankara*. To internalize positive transformation and the psychological impact of awakening *kundalini* through *chakras* in the human body, we need the higher mind (*diya drishti*), which is *sahridayata*.

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