

Dancing and the Spiritual Path

From the book: "Dancing in the Eye of Transformation." Many cultures have used dance as a path to spiritual union. Sufi dervishes spin on and on to experience a sense of unity with all that is. Practitioners of Orisha worship invite the deities to dance through them. In Bali the Sanghyang trance dances are performed to spiritually protect and clear the village. Through dance, it is possible to move beyond the limited perspective of the persona and experience something greater moving in and through us when the ego mind gets out of the way. Much of what could be considered spiritual dance in modern society we now refer to as trance dance. The experience of trance dance requires releasing concern about looking good and focusing on the internal experience of sensation. When we can drop purely into sensation and allow the movement to come from an authentic place, the wisdom of the body is able to express itself more fully. This creates a remarkably powerful opportunity to drop into a deep state of trance meditation. So much of our expression has been limited by our ideas of what is acceptable or beautiful to others, but that type of dance is ego-focused. When we are focused on the ego, it is more difficult to attain liberation. If we can allow ourselves true freedom of expression and move for the joy of self-expression, it is possible to move into these deeper states.

Movement can be extremely therapeutic for the body, the emotions and the soul. When we move our bodies vigorously over a period of time, endorphins are released as a result of that movement. Those endorphins bring the mind into an altered state. In this altered state, we can move beyond the limitations that have bound us.

Dance is also an opportunity to express the emotions that have been locked within the body energetic. Any experience that we have had that was painful is likely to be held in a static state within the body energetic. When our lungs are pumping and our bodies are moving, we can focus our attention on sensation and emotions within the body. We can use the movement as a vehicle to release the static energy that has been lodged within the body from past trauma.

Wherever we have fear, grief, anger, or any of what we might term "negative or stuck emotions," we have an incredible store of energy. Through accessing those states within the context of movement, we can transform them to pure energy that we can use to make our lives better. When those emotions are released from the body, we are free to live a more unlimited life. When we transform these lower vibration energies through movement, it is possible to experience profound states of ecstasy and release.

Dancing the practice—a dynamic way to both workout and to meditate in the same breath. Dancing has the ability to teach us that life is energy in motion, freeing us from any fixed notions about people, places, objects or ideas.

They say that a picture tells a thousand words. One deep dance tells millions.

In dancing psychologist suggest that you can track perceptions and memories; seek out gestures and shapes; tune into instincts and intuitions. Dancing reveal ways to creatively express aggressiveness and vulnerability, emotions and anxieties, edges and ecstasies. Dancing has the ability to reconnect us to cycles of birth, death and renewal and hook us up to the spirit in all living things. They initiate us back into the wisdom of our bodies and unleash movement's dynamic healing power. The body becomes our spiritual path.

Chakra colours and musical response

For centuries, Eastern scholars have believed that emotions, dance moves and sound have a direct relationship with the chakra system. This diagram shows the colours of the chakra system and the associated instruments, musical quality and elemental properties. It is my own research, and seems to be congruent for all instruments, every time they are played. Yogic chakra systems - meaning 'wheels of light' allude to the subtle energies that emanate from certain parts of the body and resonate with a particular colour. Bellydancers may like to tune their costumes into this ancient theory - wear what colour that resonates with the essence of your dance. If you are experiencing the negative traits associated with the chakra, wear the correct colours and re-attune yourself with those qualities. The dance of the seven veils is a mythological dance that comes from the story of the Babylonian deity Ishtar's descent into the underworld or the "Welcome dance of Shalom", which later metamorphosed into the Biblical story of Salome. The seven veils are represented by seven chakras and colours. For further reading, I have an indepth article just published in [Wellbeing Magazine](#) Jan/Feb issue 2007 'The Power of Dance'.

Red - base chakra represents security, instinct, sexuality, passion, earthiness



Wear a RED costume to feel sexy, earthy

The base chakra is the first chakra, the most primal "wheel of light". Drums will activate this earth chakra. It is the base of the pelvic floor, activated by the 'earth star'. In Hindu and Buddhist philosophies, the belief in a personal core chakra called the 'earth star' connects each individual to the earth and enters the body at the base chakra. It holds our earthly energies (as opposed to the light spirit energies). **Kundalini yoga** (and tantric sex by the way!) is based on the merging of the masculine and feminine principles at this base chakra - the meeting point from where the 'earth star' energies rise up through the left (feminine) and right (masculine) channels via the feet and legs to meet at the base of the pelvis - our first chakra. Red is associated with the planet Mars and the bold sign of Aries. The colour of Aries is red - headstrong, bold and primal in nature in the first astrological house, and matches the qualities of the first chakra.

Element: EARTH

Qualities: Positive - Passion, Negative - Anger

Listen for: Base tabla, tabla, katem, doholla and deep drums

Music to try: African style dance, drum solos, Nubian dance

Orange - centre/belly chakra for creativity, abundance, birth and power



Wear ORANGE to feel more creative.

This second chakra is also known as the 'hara' centre in Japanese Martial arts philosophy. Developing this chakra gives one the ability to birth new and creative ideas and projects. It is a life force energy and strengthening it will improve health. A strong lower abdominal core will also support your back by working in sympathy with back girdle muscles. In dance, yoga and martial arts this centre point must be filled with awareness to activate it. The process is largely mental, but the muscle strength and power generated is so concentrated it becomes a physical manifestation of intense energy with zesty potential for a dynamic, creative force. It is our main power centre and in Pilates, the movements are focused on the activation of the core muscles around this chakra. As our centre it is also a 'home-base' or material possessions chakra. The sign of Taurus (peach or Orange with LIGHT) ruled by Venus the feminine planet of beauty in astrology is traditionally the house of possessions and abundance also represented by the throat and neck area (the opposite and equal) and zesty creative Gemini's colour is orange. Hindus offer oranges to the Gods for abundance!

Element: EARTH/FIRE

Qualities: Positive - Creativity, Negative - Destruction

Listen for; Cello, oud, qanoon, string instruments

Music to try: Passionate flamenco with guitars or classical Arabic qanoon orchestrals

Yellow - solar plexus chakra is about confidence, the ability to shine, courage



YELLOW or GOLD costume for radiance.

The third chakra brings with it the sun's radiance, confidence and pride. At home in the sign of Leo, which astrologers say is usually present in the natal charts of entertainers and entrepreneurs, the masculine yellow chakra represents confidence. It reflects leadership and the ability to show by example. Egyptian god RA, the masculine element in nature depicted by the sun and the metal gold, embodies this chakra's qualities. The colour itself is known to bring joy, resonating with uplifting, healing qualities and boosts the confidence of those who wear it. Yellow stands out from the crowd! It brings happiness through its radiance.

Element: FIRE

Qualities: Positive - Confidence. Negative - Cowardice

Listen for: Saiidi instruments - mizmar & rababa, trumpets, brass instruments

Music to try: Jubilant Saiidi or saxophone music

Green - heart chakra deals with emotions and love - the pathway to the heart



Wear a GREEN to celebrate the heart

The fourth chakra is emotive and heart-based, it also directly affects the chest area on a physical levelExpansive green, like the luscious fabled garden of Eden, represents freedom and nurturance, a relaxed nature and open heartedness. Green is the colour of the rolling fields, deep water and nature. It manifests itself in the heart area - the emotional seat of the body. The chest and heart areas are relaxed and comfortable when this chakra is balanced. When unbalanced, however, through grief, resentment or closed-heartendness, there will be a physical tightness around that area. Dancing with an 'open-heart' and relaxed upper body is vital to authentic, flowing expression. The signs of Virgo, Libra and Scorpio are all associated with the colour green in its various stages. Virgo is light green (or green with LIGHT) for purity and discernment. Libra, like the scales is a perfectly balanced green, a secondary colour between yellow and blue primaries. Lastly, Scorpio is dark green (or green with DARKNESS) that represents Plutonic secrecy, envy and the shadow self. The three shades of green reflect the main vibrations of the heart chakra - the love centre and the dramatic emotions it is capable of.

Element: WATER

Qualities: Positive - Love, Negative - Envy/Resentment

Listen for: Violins, accordion, saxophone (many baladi instruments) - element

Music to try: Heart opening music includes emotive songs by Om Kolthoum, Warda or Feiruz.

Blue - throat chakra reflects clarity, communication, speaking the truth



Wear BLUE for dance with clarity, precision

The fifth chakra is based around the throat, voice, voacal expression, song and speech. The colour blue represents freshness, clarity and the ability to communicate clearly. The throat chakra, when activated allows for truth, vocal expression and clear self expression. Clear water and the element of air and wind is associated with this chakra. The throat area should be relaxed, as a clenched jaw interferes with self expression and the ability to 'speak out'. Interestingly, in yoga, the throat and orange creativity chakras are interlinked, and one strengthens (or weakens) the other. In astrology, Sagittarius, the philosopher and altruist - the traveller who returns to tell tales, the humanitarian, the activist - is represented by the colour blue.

Element: WATER/AIR

Qualities: Positive - clear communication. Negative - repressed opinions

Listen for: Flutes, oboe, zills (drums of the air), vocals especially mawaal "calling"

Music to try: Egyptian balads that begin with a mawaal introduction and songs with lyrics



Wear INDIGO
costume
for deep
intuition

Indigo - third eye chakra represents intuition, inner knowing, deep compassion

The sixth chakra rests between the eyes, it intuitively sees the "unseen". This chakra represents the spiritually charged "third eye" area or sixth sense, otherwise known as deep intuition. It is the sympathetic partner of the yellow chakra, hence an intuitive feeling often is accompanied by a "gut feeling" or physical sensation in the solar plexus. The indigo chakra is the chakra of the sphere of the mind, mental awareness and a sense of understanding, compassion and mental clarity. Isis, mother goddess of compassion, reflects this chakra with her indigo wings, and the mythical eye of her son, Horus. Ruled by Uranus, Aquarius, the unconscious, electrical impulse of intuition is represented by the Indigo colour.

Element: AIR

Qualities: Positive - Intuition/Knowing, Negative - Disassociation/Ignorance.
Listen for: Reed pipes, nay, Artemis' finger cymbals known as 'drums of the air'

Music to try: Light flute music and classical pieces

Violet - crown chakra represents highest spiritual awareness and connectivity



Wear VIOLET to
dance with
divinity

The seventh chakra is linked with spirituality and connectiveness. Spirituality and royalty are symbolised by the colour violet. It is the colour at the end of the spectrum before white light (also ultra violet light). The crown chakra reflects us as spiritual beings, spirit over matter. The chakra is light, etherial and tuned to its highest source. It is the opposite of the base chakra, dense and earthy, and it is also the sympathetic partner of the heart chakra. With spiritual awareness and complete understanding in a metaphysical sense, the heart will also be open. Violet is the colour of Pisces, the ruler of the feet - the polarity of the Crown chakra. Its symbols are the fish, the unconscious self and the spiritual realm.

Element: ETHER

Positive - Highest Spirituality, connected to source, Negative - Disconnection from Source

Listen for: Lightest of reed pipes, kawala and whirling derwish music

Music to try: Whirling music, flute solos

***The white light** is the cleansing energy of the total alignment of all the chakras (colours of the spectrum) and is widely used in healing and visualisation. Dancers wear white when the dance feels light. It is what the Sufi's and Mervlana wear and also what they channel into when whirling - they report to visualise a stream of white light they believe enters their body through the crown chakra. White light is used in Reiki hands on healing and many other types of energetic cleansing and healing arts.*

Black is void of colour and is powerful, describing shadow and the unseen - often dancers wear black when they are about to transform themselves in some way.

All of life is MOVEMENT!!! The Trees, the breeze, the birds and the bees, the undulation of the waves, the rotating planets, the atoms and molecules are all in state of dance and transformation, as are we. Movement is the universal language. It is the gift given to us by Spirit, made possible through these amazing temples we call our bodies and since the dawn of time, our ancestors have danced as a medium for prayer, meditation, communion, worship, celebration, communication, empowerment and healing. Throughout all cultures, dance and movement can be traced back as the original and purest form of union with the Divine. This was how our ancestors expressed their connection to Life and the Great Mystery. Even before we could speak, we danced! To dance oneself into silence, oneness and stillness, and to pierce the veils of illusion and separation, is to connect completely to the healing power of Spirit. It is from this sacred and devotional approach that Spirit Dancing opens a shamanic portal to the Divine, where time and place, ego and mind dissolve into infinite grace.

In Spirit Dancing, you are literally praying with your entire being. Body, mind and spirit are unified in a spirit dance of oneness. When you access that state of oneness with pure Spirit in the ecstasy of the moment, you are fully connecting to your true self, your Higher Self, and Spirit is literally dancing with you, through you, and as you. Spirit Dancing beckons you to come home to yourself, to the lover and beloved within. Healing and transformation is the inevitable outcome of this dance of Divine Union. Movement is deeply healing, catalytic, cathartic and a powerful integrative tool. Old emotional "issues in the tissues" and negative patterns that could take months and years to analyze and process through the intellect or language can be released and transformed in a few dances. The body does not lie, it only feels... if we allow it. The fastest way to quiet the mind is to move the body. Movement is medicine for the body and psyche. It heals the split between mind and heart, body and soul. Movement transforms and shapeshifts us, catalyzing our inertia into ecstasy and life force. Movement becomes 'sacred' when there is an inner power, a living Spirit directing it. With this power, it becomes a dance that can lead us back home to ourselves...our true essence, innocence, passion and purpose for being. When we can truly surrender and "let go and let God", that's when something greater can move through us. When we open ourselves, to allow Spirit to flow through freely, it simply goes where it is needed to create balance and harmony on the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual levels of being.

This practice is designed to open the channels to higher creativity and to activate the flow of Spiritual Energy in the body. It takes us out of the over-active, distracted mind and its chaotic energetic patterns and into the smooth, intuitive, flow of the movement and the moment. This is facilitated through guided sacred movement meditation drawn from ancient spiritual practices that enhance one's ability to be completely involved in the moment. It creates present-moment, heart-centered awareness and ecstatic embodiment. Sacred Movement has been an important component of many ancient traditions and spiritual paths including Sufism, Taoism, Buddhism, Shamanism, Liturgical Dance, Temple Dance, Native American Dance, Gurdjieff's Movement Work, Martial Arts, Trance Dance and all the Yogas. Very simply, these techniques awaken Spirit in the body! Spirit dancing is one of the oldest practices, guiding us back home to the Divine One Within. This is Dancing from the Source!