

A WHOLE-PERSON YOGA PSYCHOLOGY MODEL: A SYNTHESIS OF
INTEGRAL YOGA PSYCHOLOGY AND ANANDA MARGA

by

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ABSTRACT

With the growing development of yoga psychology, there is an increasing need for whole-person yoga psychology frameworks that showcase a comprehensive representation of human consciousness and personality, as well as the process of psychospiritual growth and development. While most yoga psychologies put emphasis on the transcendent dimension of consciousness, the purpose of this dissertation was to develop a whole-person yoga psychology model that embraced both the transcendent and immanent dimensions of human personality. The proposed model utilized Integral Yoga Psychology (IYP) as the foundational framework for creating a new whole person psychology model based on the synthesis of two holistic systems—IYP and Ananda Marga (AM).

An integrative hermeneutic approach was employed to provide the research strategy for the development of the new model. This involved an in-depth hermeneutic analysis of the whole-person principles and distinct features that pertain to a whole-person psychology in IYP and AM. The whole-person principles derived from the literature analysis are wholeness of personality, evolution of cosmos, gradations of consciousness, psychic transformation, and cakra biopsychology. The study integrated these whole-person principles and formed a unique whole-person model including distinct features of the psychic

being for personality transformation from IYP and the cakra biopsychology for harmonization and purification of cakras from AM.

Wholeness of personality is achieved by harmonization, purification, transformation, and integration along the gradations of consciousness. This whole-person model will further deepen the dialogue in the field of yoga psychology, and also lay the foundation for future research and formation of whole-person frameworks.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Yoga, as an ancient spiritual tradition, can be traced back over 5,000 years to the multicultural land of India, as an inquiry into the eternal depths of human consciousness (Feuerstein, 2008). The definitions and goals of yoga vary according to different yogic traditions. In the view of a respected yoga scholar, Georg Feuerstein (2008), despite the divergent viewpoints of yogic traditions, the underlying commonality of the different traditions lies in the “state of being, or consciousness” (p. 3). Broadly speaking, yoga, as an Eastern spiritual tradition, views the human psyche through the study of consciousness both within the individual and the cosmos.

Western psychology, which understands the human psyche from a different perspective—as a scientific discipline—explores various areas of human function and expression such as perception, cognition, attention, emotion, motivation, behavior, interpersonal relationships, and brain or nerve function (Mangal, 1998). The etymology of the word *psychology* is derived from the Latinized form of the Greek *psyche*, meaning “breath, spirit or soul” and *logia*, meaning “study of,” hence, the literal meaning of *psychology* is “study of the soul” (Koch et al., 2012). However, the study of mainstream psychology in its early development is usually limited to the reactions of the mind and behaviors as well as the influences from the environment—the observable conscious activities or unconscious subliminal desires which are all within the scope of egoistic psychology (A. Dalal, 1989).

The field of integral yoga psychology investigates the wide spectrum of an individual's consciousness and its correlations to the cosmic consciousness and aims at the transformation and integration of human consciousness to attain the full potentiality of consciousness evolution (Banerji, 2018a). Psychology has evolved from the mere superficial analysis of cognition and behavior to an in-depth investigation of the full spectrum of consciousness, from behaviorism, psychoanalysis, humanistic, and transpersonal psychologies to an integral model, which reflects the calling for a whole person psychology. Regarding the evolution of psychology, Shirazi (2018) stated that “the emergence of a whole person psychology is an exciting development for the field of psychology, perhaps leading toward the evolution of a fifth wave in the history of psychology” (p. 61).

This chapter is an introduction to the present study, which aims at developing a whole-person yoga psychology model as a synthesis of Ananda Marga (AM) and Integral Yoga Psychology (IYP). This chapter includes the background of the study on the essence of yoga, overview of selected yoga traditions, purpose of the study, and its significance, as well as an overview of methodology.

Background of the Study

The meaning of *yoga* differs based on the philosophies of various schools and systems and it is therefore difficult to identify a singular definition. However, there is one commonality across all schools of yoga: they are concerned with the state of union in consciousness (Feuerstein, 2008). The essence of yoga may be broken down into three aspects: union, separation, and suspension. *Union* means

the unification of consciousness between individual consciousness and cosmic consciousness. *Separation* refers to the separation from Maya, to separate or detach from the illusoriness of the phenomenal world. *Suspension* entails the quiescence of the mental function by transcending all mental processes. These seem to be divergent interpretations from different traditions, but they do lead to a common goal of unification in consciousness. Furthermore, there are several misinterpretations of yoga in the modern era that view it as a type of physical exercise and religious institution (Chaudhuri, 1974). These misunderstandings have narrowed the scope of yoga; however, the true essence of yoga lies in its all-embracing spirit to enhance well-rounded living in physical, psychic, and spiritual realms.

The Essence of Yoga

The essence of yoga is largely accepted as “the union of *Jivátma* (the individual self) with *Paramátma* (the supreme self)” (Feuerstein, 2008, p. 3) according to Vedanta (one of the six orthodox schools in Hindu philosophies), which has had great influence on majority of yoga systems. The meaning of yoga can be extracted from interpretations from the roots of Sanskrit terms. The term *yoga* suggests meanings that include “unite, yoke, join, bind, bond, link, harness” (Braud, 2011, p. 218). According to Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (1994), there are two methods to interpret the meaning of yoga from the Sanskrit roots. When yoga is derived from Sanskrit root *yuj*, it means unification, as in when a drop of water falls into the ocean, the droplet loses its individual identity and merges into oneness with the infinite ocean of consciousness. Alternatively, when yoga is

derived from *yuj*, it means addition, as in mixing flour with water, where the two identities remain separated. It is the first definition—that yoga is “the unification of unit consciousness with the Supreme Consciousness” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1994, p. 183)—which AM maintains as the essence of yoga. Furthermore, this union of consciousness brings about a crucial objective of yoga: “the union of the conditioned and limited self with the true Self, of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul, the identification with Puruśa (pure consciousness)” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1994, p. 183). The second meaning is more consonant with relational schools which maintain a distinction between individual and Absolute consciousness for the bliss of relations. Both these views are consistent with IYP, which means a paradoxical transformation of the individual where its union leads to a transcendental twoness-in-oneness. Further, Chaudhuri (1974) interpreted the meaning of yoga as union and control, “the union of man with God, of the individual with the universal reality ... of the mind with the inmost center of one’s own being, the self or Atman ... resulting in the integration of personality” (p. 21). This union can be divided into three stages: the first is to connect the body with the mind (*manas*), then the mind with the consciousness within (*Atma*), and lastly the individual consciousness (*Atma*) with pure consciousness (*Purusa*) (Rao & Paranjpe, 2008). In addition, attaining the state of union requires control—self-discipline in physical, psychic, and spiritual realms of training. That is, yoga entails not only the end goal of union with the ultimate but also the path leading to it (Chaudhuri, 1974). Nonetheless, the definition of yoga as union applies to specific yoga traditions.

While the notion of union makes some sense within the tradition of Vedanta, it is not representative of all forms of Yoga. It is valid in regard to the earlier (Pre-Classical) schools of Yoga and also applies to the later (Post-Classical) schools of Yoga, which subscribe to a type of Vedantic nondualist philosophy. (Feuerstein, 2008, p. 4)

From a different perspective, yoga implies the opposite of “separation” in Patanjali’s yoga (Feuerstein, 2008). The definition of union in yoga is only representative in regard to earlier yoga systems such as Vedanta and Tantra, or modern yoga systems that subscribe to nondualist philosophy in some degree such as IYP and AM (Feuerstein, 2008). Bhoja, in his 11th-century commentary on the Yoga Sutra, proposed that yoga is *viyoga*, which means separation (Feuerstein, 2008). He further described yoga as “an effort to separate the *Atman* (the reality) from the non-*Atman* (the apparent)” (Swami Prabhavananda & Isherwood, 2007, p. 11). It entails a method for detaching and transcending the material world. Both the classical Indian traditions and Western depth psychology point out that the human psyche is conditioned by physiological, cultural, and historical factors, and most crucially, the unconscious activities of the mind (Eliade, 2009). While the aim of yoga is union, it presumes “severance of the bonds that join the spirit and the world ... detachment from the material, emancipation with respect to the world” (Eliade, 1969, p. 10). Here, the essence of yoga lies in separation from attachment to the material world of desires and ignorance and realizes transcendental consciousness as the true essence within. This definition of yoga is commonly accepted in most traditional yoga systems such as Patanjali Yoga, Samkhya, and Advaita Vedanta (Chatterjee & Datta, 2007). Patanjali Yoga and Samkhya adhere to a strict dualism between the transcendental reality (*Purusa*) and the phenomenal reality (*Prakrti*) (Rao & Paranjpe, 2008). Advaita Vedanta

regards the transcendental consciousness (*Brahman*) as the ultimate truth and the phenomenal world as unreal (*avidya*). Nonetheless, AM recognizes the transcendental reality (*Purusa*) as the absolute truth and the primordial creative principle (*Prakrti*) as the relative truth. These are both different aspects of one *Brahma*¹ (Cosmic Entity) and their existence is inseparable (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2004). Moreover, there is a further step of bringing down higher consciousness to embody transformation within oneself, as detachment from the phenomenal world and transcendence into consciousness is not the final aim of integral yoga.

Lastly, yoga is interpreted as the suspension of all psycho-mental fluctuations, denoted as *yoga citta vrtti nirodha* in the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali (Feuerstein, 2008). This means removing fluctuations of mind, including all thoughts, desires, aversions, attachments, and ignorance, as they are seen as obstacles to transcendence (Whicher, 1998). When the suspension of psycho-mental propensities (*citta vrtti*) is executed, the “transcendental Witness-Consciousness shines forth” (Patanjali, as cited in Feuerstein, 2008, p. 4). When the mind and senses rest in a state of tranquility, the yogic trance of pure consciousness emerges, and one experiences oneness or union with all. This state of transcendental consciousness is beyond the influences of ordinary perceptions, as an eternal and unfettered state of consciousness—*samadhi*. According to

¹ In AM, *Brahma* denotes to “Infinite Consciousness...the Supreme Entity comprising both *Purusa* or *Shiva*, and *Prakrti* or *Shakti*... Supreme Consciousness” (Premamayananda, 2004, p. 30).

Feuerstein (2008), “*samádhi* is both the technique of unifying consciousness and the resulting state of ecstatic union with the object of contemplation” (p. 3). The technique to suspend all psycho-mental fluctuations leads to the unification with the pure consciousness.

In conclusion, the essence of yoga differs according to specific philosophical orientation of yogic schools. For some schools, yoga lies in the union of consciousness with the ultimate ground of existence; for some, yoga means detachment from illusions; for some, yoga denotes to suspension of mental fluctuations; there are still other interpretations of yoga that are not presented here. These distinct meanings of yoga offer a comprehensive background where a whole-person yoga psychology model is situated and originated from.

Yoga Traditions Overview

India is a cradle of dynamic culture and historical heritage embracing a wide range of orthodox and heterodox traditions. According to traditional Indian philosophical classification, there are six orthodox schools of philosophy in India: Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa, and Vedanta (Chatterjee & Datta, 2007). Yoga is commonly considered to be one of these in reference to the school of Patanjali Yoga dated from the second century CE (Feuerstein, 2008). However, this appears to be a partial understanding of yoga because its birth might well be traced back to the pre-Aryan Indus civilization dating back more than 5,000 years ago (McEvelley, 1981). Each yoga tradition has a distinct orientation in its philosophy and practices (e.g., Hatha, Jnana, Bhakti) and has contributed a significant amount to a specific aspect of human existence (e.g.,

body, knowledge, and love). The next section provides an overview of the philosophical orientation for five selected traditions: Patanjali Yoga, Advaita Vedanta, Tantra Yoga, Integral Yoga, and Ananda Marga. These traditions have been selected based upon their relevance to the yoga psychology model to be developed in this study.

Patanjali Yoga is acknowledged to be the authoritative system within the yoga traditions as one of the six orthodox philosophies (Feuerstein, 2008). Patanjali is not the originator of yoga but a great synthesizer who systemized various yoga philosophies and practices, and potentially drew on Samkhya metaphysics to form a comprehensive yoga system (Dasgupta, 1922, as cited in Rao & Paranjpe, 2008). Patanjali's most prominent work, Yoga Sutra, is the composition of two yoga lineages—Ashtanga yoga (the eight-limbs yoga) and Kriya yoga (yoga of action)—and consists of both theoretical and practical aspects of yoga for meditation, concentration, and self-realization. The Yoga Sutra practice is primarily composed of three aspects (Feuerstein, 2008). The first is detachment (*vairagya*) which means disentangling oneself from attachment in the realms of phenomenal world (*Prakrti*). The second is quieting the restless nature of mind to suspend all psycho-mental fluctuations. The third is identification (*abhyasa*) of oneself with the transcendental reality (*Purusa*) to attain liberation (*kaivalya*). Moreover, Yoga Sutra is divided into four parts: *samadhi* (coalescent attention), *sadhana* (spiritual practice), *vibhuti* (powers), and *kaivalya* (liberation)—these practices and doctrines aim toward the transformation of human consciousness to achieve liberation (Feuerstein, 2008).

Patanjali Yoga is theistic and emphasizes spiritual practices (*sadhana*) as the path for liberation (Rao & Paranjpe, 2008). In Patanjala Yoga metaphysics, the universe is essentially governed by two cosmic principles: Purusha and Prakrti. *Purusha*, pure consciousness, is the transcendental consciousness principle behind all manifested beings and is characterized as indifferent, neutral, and inactive (Rao & Paranjpe, 2008). *Prakrti*, the primordial principle of cosmos, is the principle behind the dynamic play of the world, characterized as ubiquitous and all-pervading. Patanjali posits that the world is an ocean of suffering, where each human being is conditioned by unconscious ego cravings and restless pursuit toward sensory pleasures. As Patanjali stated, “*dukhameva sarvam vivekinah*,” (Yoga Sutra, II.15, as cited in Rao & Paranjpe, 2008, p. 187) for the one who knows, all is suffering. The suffering could be altered by yogic contemplative practices (*sadhana*) to remove the covering of ignorance (*avidya*) and the individual realizing the eternal light of pure consciousness (*Purusa*) within (Rao & Paranjpe, 2008).

Lastly, the practical aspect of spiritual practice in Patanjali Yoga, is known as the eight limbs of yoga, and is based on Ashtanga yoga (Feuerstein, 2008). These are (a) *Yama* (discipline), (b) *Niyama* (restraint), (c) *Asana* (posture), (d) *Pranayama* (breath control), (e) *Pratyhara* (sense-withdrawal), (f) *Dharana* (concentration), (g) *Dhyana* (meditation), and (h) *Samadhi* (ecstasy) (Feuerstein, 2008, pp. 244–245). The first limb, *yama*, the practice of moral ethics, is to discipline the animalistic instincts and regulate social behaviours and consists of the following five points: *ahimsa* (nonharming), *satya* (truthfulness),

asteya (nonstealing), *brahmacarya* (chastity), and *aparigraha* (greedlessness). The second, *niyama*, the practice of self-restraint, concerns the inner life of the aspirants and consists of these five points: *shauca* (purity), *santosa* (contentment), *tapas* (austerity), *svadhyaya* (study), and *ishvara-pranidhana* (devotion to the Lord). Next, *asana* means to stay in a stable and comfortable yogic posture. The fourth limb, *pranayama*, is breath control to energize or purify the internal life force (*prana*). The fifth limb, *pratyahara*, is sense-withdrawal from external stimuli for inner psychic development and as a preparation for the next limb, *dharana*. *Dharana* is concentration inward to a given locus (*desha*) of an internal body part (*chakra*²) or external image of a deity. This one-pointed concentration naturally leads to the next step of meditative absorption, *dhyana*. *Dhyana* is a state of *ekatanata* (one-flow-iness of consciousness), which means merging with the object of contemplation. *Dhyana* further develops into the last limb, *samadhi*. The eight-fold limbs develop one upon the other as a progression toward purification and unification of consciousness (Feuerstein, 2008).

Next, Vedanta or *Uttara Mimamsa*, literally translated as “the end of the Vedas,” (Chatterjee & Datta, 2007, p. 317) was developed primarily from three texts: Upanishads, Brahma Sutras, and the Bhagavad Gita (Chatterjee & Datta, 2015). There are numerous Vedantic schools, which differ primarily by their interpretations of the ontological relationship between the individual soul (*jiva*), the primordial creative principal (*Prakrti*), and the ultimate reality (*Brahman*)

² *Cakra* and *chakra* are both used in the dissertation according to the spelling used by the tradition discussed in the text.

(Chatterjee & Datta, 2015). The major Vedanta schools are Sankara—*Kevaladvaita* (unqualified nondualism), Ramanuja—*Visistadvaitavada* (qualified nondualism), Nimbarka—*Dvaitadvaitavada* (dual-nondualism), Madhva—*Dvaitavada* (dualism), and the later modern synthesis of Sri Aurobindo—*Purnadvaitavada* (integral nondualism) (Chaudhuri, 1960). Advaita Vedanta, *Kevaladvaita*, views the transcendental reality (*Nirguna Brahman*) as a single ultimate reality and the phenomenal world shadowed by avidya as illusion or unreal. *Visistadvaitavada*, or qualified monism, understands the ultimate reality qualified by the primordial creative principle (*Prakrti*) known as qualified reality (*Saguna Brahman*). *Dvaitadvaitavada* or dualistic monism views both difference and nondifference in identity (*bhedabheda*) between *Brahman* (ultimate reality), *jiva* (individual soul) and *jagat* (world). *Dvaitavada* or dualism states that the ultimate reality (*Brahman*) and the individual soul (*jiva*) are completely different entities. *Purnadvaitavada* or integral nondualism views *Brahman* (supracosmic entity), *Ishwara* (cosmic creativity), and *jivatman* (individuality) as equally real and eternal, as an all-embracing cosmic entity (Chaudhuri, 1960).

The principal school of Advaita (nondual) Vedanta or *Kevaladvaita* expounds a transcendental and renunciatory worldview (Chaudhuri, 1960). One of the principle tenets of Advaita is that “Brahman is the only truth, the world is unreal, and there is ultimately no difference between Brahman and individual self” (Rosen, 2007, p. 70). The only real ultimate reality is characterized by the trilogy, *sat-cit-ananda* (being, consciousness, and bliss), whereas the world of multiplicity is regarded as illusion (*Maya*), which is unreal and the source of

ignorance (*avidya*) (Rao & Paranjpe, 2008). The way to free oneself from the illusion of Maya is known as *vidya* (knowledge), through the contemplation method of *neti neti* (not this, not that), and is used to negate the misidentification of the worldly experiences to attain union with the absolute Brahman (Feuerstein, 1998). This doctrine seeks union with the transcendental state of ultimate reality through renunciation and various ascetic practices.

Advaita's emphasis on the transcendental aspect of human existence has broadened the common conception of human consciousness to include higher spiritual realms, that has had great impact on transpersonal psychology in the West (Rao & Paranjpe, 2008). Nonetheless, the negative connotation of illusoriness of conventional reality (*Maya*) and approach to the diversity of the phenomenal world is likely to create a pessimistic and escapist attitude toward life where spirituality and ordinary life cannot co-exist. This position has been challenged by the latest school of Vedanta (Integral nondualism) to be introduced later in this chapter.

Next is Tantra. As Padoux (1986) observed, "Tantra is fundamentally a Hindu phenomenon" (p. 274). The origin and definition of Tantra is debated among scholars due to the paucity of resources and differs in each tradition. Nonetheless, the earliest findings of Tantra can be traced back to the Indus Valley civilization, with archaeological evidences of goddess worship, fertility rites, and proto-yogic practices (Dyczkowski, 1987). Tantra connotes to traditions of Buddhism and Hinduism in India. In Tantric Buddhism, this can be seen in Vajrayana traditions such as Tibetan Buddhism, Japanese Shinto, Daoism and

more (Gray, 2016). In Hindu Tantrism, the primary Tantric sects may be divided into three broad categories: the worship of Siva (the nondual tradition), the worship of Shaktas (Goddess worship), and the worship of Vishnu (Vaishnavism). Each tradition emphasizes different propositions on the two sides of human existence: the transcendental consciousness (*Shiva*) and the manifested creation (*Shakti*) (Padoux, 1986). Most nondual Tantras use an integrative approach to transform the lower consciousness, which might involve survival and procreative instincts of the body, toward realizing the realm of divinity on earth. This type of Tantra tradition emphasizes the holistic notion of living in the world while advancing on the spiritual path and not escaping from social bonds.

There are some characteristics of Tantra that distinguish it from the orthodox Vedic traditions. Two of the most important are the anti-ascetic and anti-renunciatory views toward the world and the body (Chaudhuri, 1974). While asceticism and renunciation are predominant traits in Hinduism, Tantra perceives the physical body as the vehicle for liberation and the world as the play of Divine on earth. The body is the microcosm and the world is the Macrocosm. The physical body is comprised of inner subtle energy centers (*cakras*) which are located along the spine from the base of spinal column where *kundalini* (spiritual serpent energy) is located to the top (crown) of the head. The number of cakras varies according to different schools of yoga (Goswami, 1980). The Tantric spiritual practices are comprised of mantras (spiritual chants), rituals, and mandalas (a spiritual symbol) which are often aimed toward awakening the dormant spiritual energy, kundalini (*Shakti*). The energy moves from the base of

spine to the crown (of the head) cakra, merges with the pure consciousness (*Shiva*), and the person attains liberation or ecstasy (Chaudhuri, 1974).

The fourth tradition, AM, was founded by Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar (also known by his spiritual name Shrii Shrii Anandamurti) in Jalmalpur, Bihar, in 1955. Its objective is self-realization (individual emancipation) and service to the world (collective welfare) with an emphasis on spiritual practice and social service. The organization quickly spread throughout India in the 1960s and became a global organization with branches in Europe, America, Africa, Asia, and Australasia in the 1970s (Krsnatmananda, 1992).

AM is a Tantric Yoga tradition, characterized by a positive outlook on the world as the manifestation of Divine consciousness and an emphasis on the spiritual intuitional practices which involve raising of kundalini through different cakras to reach the Supreme Consciousness. According to Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (1994), the meaning of *Tantra* could be interpreted in two aspects. It is written in the scripture, “*Tañ jādýát tárayet yastu sah tantrah parikiirtitah*, Tantra is that which liberates a person from the bondages of staticity” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1994, p. 36). Therefore, the first meaning of Tantra is that which liberates one from bondages of inertness. Secondly, Tantra is “the practical science that leads one to expansion and attains liberation” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1994, p. 37). The Sanskrit root verb *tan* means “to expand” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1994, p. 207). Therefore, the second definition of *Tantra* is a spiritual science that liberates one from the bondage of animalistic tendencies and expands the individual consciousness into the cosmic consciousness (Shrii Shrii

Anandamurti, 1994). Furthermore, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (1994) expands on Tantra, indicating that “a person who, irrespective of caste, creed or religion, aspires for spiritual expansion or does something concrete, is a Tantric. Tantra in itself is neither a religion nor an ‘ism.’ Tantra is a fundamental spiritual science” (p. 22). Tantra in AM is based on intuitional practice that allows one to expand the physical, psychic, and spiritual realms to awaken the divinity within the innermost core of the being.

The philosophy of AM is a modern synthesis of Indian Tantric Yoga traditions (Anandamitra, 2002). The traditional schools of yoga are largely influenced by Advaita Vedanta and often take a renunciatory attitude toward life, recognizing transcendental reality and disregarding the mundane world as mere illusion. Like many yoga traditions, AM also recognizes a “Cosmic Entity” or “Supreme Consciousness” (*Brahma*), which is both transcendental (*Purusa*) and manifested in all (*Prakrti*). *Brahma* consists of two aspects: *Nirguna Brahma*, the transcendental consciousness aspect as the supreme stage of Brahma, and *Saguna Brahma*, the qualified consciousness aspect as the cause of the creation of the universe (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). In contrast to the renunciatory attitude, AM maintains that the transcendental consciousness is the absolute truth and the manifested universe is the relative truth. The diversities of this phenomenal universe are the manifestations of the infinite cosmic consciousness.

Although the ultimate purpose of human life is self-realization, the social aspect cannot be overlooked or neglected (Taraka & Acyutananda, 2003). AM advocates a harmonious synthesis of the internal spiritual and external social

spheres of life. This balanced approach to personal development facilitates an expansion of consciousness through spiritual practice and fulfillment of social responsibilities with the mindset of selfless service. This perspective is used as a guiding principle for creation of a whole-person yoga psychology model in this dissertation.

Furthermore, yoga biopsychology can be a significant contribution of AM in the field of yoga psychology (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997). Yoga biopsychology has its theoretical framework based in the traditional Tantric subtle energy centers known as cakras. This framework is different from most cakra systems that recognize them as energy centers on a subtle-physical level. While AM is in agreement with this conceptually, it defines cakra as “the collection of glands and sub-glands” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997b, p. 1). These are understood to be related to the physiological functioning of various endocrine glands. This implies correlation between the physical and psychic realms of human existence. These centers are influenced by the hormone secretion of the endocrine glands and are associated with various psychological expressions and crucial for spiritual advancement. The yoga biopsychology of AM represents a holistic framework for the foundation of a whole-person yoga psychology model.

Finally, IY or Purna Yoga was created by Sri Aurobindo in the 1920s with his spiritual collaborator Mirra Alfassa (the Mother) (Banerji, 2018b). The primary objective of IY is the integration of the whole person and the creative and harmonious art of living (Chaudhuri, 1974). This integration can be understood as having three levels—the harmonization of the outer aspects (physical, mental, and

affective) of the individual; the integration of the outer aspects with the inner psychic being (the unique evolving soul); and the integration of the individual with the cosmic or transcendental realm (Shirazi, 2016). This process of integration awakens our inner spiritual potential so that we learn to live from within. IY acknowledges the importance of the uniqueness of the individual personality in the process of transformation of the whole person. Since unique individual characteristics vary, IY does not prescribe a predefined form of practice for all. IY emphasizes a balanced and complete transformation of each unique personality in the process of *sadhana* (spiritual practice) through an integration of the yogas of knowledge, love, action, and embodied practices.

IY³ is a modern synthesis of traditional yoga systems (Chaudhuri, 1974). It extracts, consolidates, and synthesizes inherent truths of various approaches to yoga into an integrated model. IY takes the essence of Hatha yoga to develop the body as the instrument for spiritual advancement without overemphasizing the aspect of physical existence. “Hathayoga [techniques] are very effective means of developing the body as a fit and strong instrument of higher spiritual living” (Chaudhuri, 1974, p. 54). It uses the essence of Raja yoga to attain self-realization by methods of mental tranquility and concentration without neglecting active participation in life. “According to integral yoga, simultaneously with the processes of inward self-purification and mental serenity, active participation in

³ This study used Haridas Chaudhuri and other integral scholars’ interpretations of integral yoga instead of primary sources from Sri Aurobindo because the scholars have translated integral yoga philosophy into psychological language, which is more relevant to the development of a whole-person yoga psychology model here.

life is essential” (Chaudhuri, 1974, p. 57). It takes the essence of total union with the eternal in Tantra yoga and develops it further into an integral union with the eternal bliss as well as union with the cosmic creative force. “Thus in integral yoga the notion of total union develops into integral union. ... It implies union with the creative force of evolution as well as union with the immutable joy of eternity” (Chaudhuri, 1974, p. 62). IY emphasizes the inseparableness between Jnana, Bhakti, and Karma yoga. It integrates the essence of Bhakti yoga as an expanded aspiration and love for the Divine; the essence of Jnana yoga as comprehensive knowledge of the existence; and the essence of Karma yoga as selfless action incorporated with the evolving nature of existence. “For integral yoga the ultimate goal of life is complete self-integration. Action, love, wisdom and peace are equally important elements in such self-integration” (Chaudhuri, 1974, p. 77). Love, knowledge, and action are interrelated and indispensable elements for complete self-integration as the ultimate aim of IY.

IY also emphasizes the spiritual destiny of life as complete and dynamic self-integration (Chaudhuri, 1974). The three elements in this evolutionary process are psychic integration, cosmic integration, and existential integration (Chaudhuri, 1974). Psychic integration involves the process of harmonizing different spheres of the psyche. This is a reconciliation of instinctual impulses—rational conscious and creative unconscious—without suppression of those instincts. In turn, one is able to discover a deeper, centered individuality that embraces all aspects of instincts, intellect, and sentiment. This is an aspect of the soul termed the “psychic being” (evolving soul) and it plays a central role as a

facilitator or catalyst in the process of transformation of personality in IY (Chaudhuri, 1974). The psychic being is a unique evolving soul-personality that resides deep behind the heart, as a delegate of *Atman* (individual consciousness), and guides one toward complete transformation (Shirazi, 2018). This leads to cosmic integration and realization of the interrelation to all beings in this universe—nature, society, and the cosmos. Cosmic integration connects us to a wider, deeper range of personal growth that includes caring for the welfare of all beings in this universe—as we realize we are part of the whole. Lastly, existential integration entails merging with the ultimate ground of eternal Being—the union of multiplicity and eternity, time and timelessness, mundane and transcendent. This is distinct from other prevalent life-renouncing and world-negating traditional spiritual views where achievement of self-realization requires seclusion from worldly associations. IY encourages “participation in life as an instrument of the eternal” (Chaudhuri, 1974, p. 40). Self-integration requires a balanced approach including personal growth to universal welfare, and spiritual integration to reach a harmonious and creative way of living.

The metaphysics of IY is based on Integral nondualism or *Purnadvaita* (Chaudhuri, 1956). It is a synthesis of Vedanta philosophies such as Dvaitavada, Visistadvaitavada, and Advaitavada. Integral nondualism recognizes that the existential reality (*Brahman*) comprises three modes of being: supracosmic transcendence, cosmic universality, and unique individuality (Chaudhuri, 1974). Supracosmic transcendence is in keeping with the Advaitavada view that there is a transcendent and ineffable aspect of eternal beingness (*Nirguna Brahman*)

(Chaudhuri, 1974). Cosmic universality adheres with Dvaitavada in that the spirit is the creator, governor, destroyer, and controller of the universe (*Saguna Brahman*). The principle of unique individuality follows the Visistadvaitavada understanding of the existence of the infinite plurality of the individual being (*jivataman*). The transcendence, multi-plurality, and individuality are all different aspects of cosmic existence. The ultimate aim of a spiritual journey is not merely *mukti* (liberation), as union with eternal transcendence, but includes the additional step of dynamic cooperation with the creative universe in this unique, evolutionary process.

IY represents a holistic view on spirituality and emphasizes the importance of participating in life and the possibility of the complete transformation of the embodied human on earth. Theories on the spectrums of consciousness have broadened the scope of understanding of human consciousness in the cosmic evolution process (Miovic, 2004). IY highlights the importance of the physical, vital, mental, and spiritual practices—holistically.

Yoga Psychology Overview

Yoga is fundamentally psychological in its orientation and encompasses both theory and praxis to achieve the highest potential of human condition. As Sri Aurobindo (1999) stated, “Yoga is nothing but practical psychology” (p. 44). Yoga psychology is an experiential and contemplative approach rooted in principles of ancient Indian spiritual traditions. The vast treasury of scriptures, which include Upanishads, Brahamanas, Aranyakas, Mahakavyas, and Puranas, provide insights into the reality of existence. In translating yoga traditions into a

psychological framework, it is important to account for cultural specifications, pragmatic epistemology, and subjective validations. Each yoga tradition has its distinct philosophy and practices which lead to the proposed subjective or collective realizations. As Banerji (2018a) stated, “yoga metaphysics are heuristic frameworks, derived partly from experience, partly from intuition, tested, nuanced, and course-corrected with practice and validation in individual and collective experience” (p. 29). Hence, contemplative self-inquiry, combined with qualitative and quantitative research methods, could be considered suitable for the development of a yoga psychology framework.

Western psychology is a discipline that came from a European science perspective, which provided qualitative and quantitative methods to study, analyze, and compare the totality of human subjective experiences (A. Dalal, 1989). Western psychology has gone through significant movements, from behaviorism to transpersonal psychology, and is gradually evolving toward the study of the whole person. This evolution has created a dialogue between Eastern spirituality and Western psychology (Sen, 1986). Psychology in the West has been a valuable part of scientific inquiry into the nature of human beings for over a century. It became an empirical science in the first laboratory of experimental psychology founded by the German physiologist, Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920). Psychology, as an independent field of study, initially became overshadowed by the natural sciences, and was limited to the study of surface aspects of behavior such as conditioned reflexes, perceptual functions, attention span, and localization

of functions in the brain. This was characterized by the first movement in psychology, behaviorism (Watson, 1926).

Not satisfied with merely surface-level observations, Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) explored the unconscious, the storehouse of our animalistic instincts, impulses, and desires. Freud came to a partial conclusion that the whole of human nature was driven by sexual impulse (libido) and understood human nature from a pathological point of view (Freud, 1938/1995). Later, Carl Jung (1875–1961) recognized the collective unconscious, as common to all members of the human race (Jung, 1969). However, the collective unconscious is limited to only the subliminal or subconscious spectrum of human consciousness, which consists of desires, impulses, emotions, sensations, and enjoyment. As a reaction to the reductionism of psychoanalysis and behaviorism, a third force in psychology arose—the school of humanistic psychology (Decarvalho, 1990). Abraham Maslow, one of the founders in the humanistic movement, proposed the idea of self-actualization, or the urge in the human psyche that pulls one to realize one’s true potential (Decarvalho, 1990). However, Maslow also stated that the third force of humanistic psychology is a transitional phase for a “higher” fourth psychology—transpersonal, which focuses on the transcendent aspects of the human psyche rather than just human needs, interests, and ego identity (A. Dalal, 1989).

Transpersonal psychology extends the field of psychology to include the awareness or state of consciousness that is beyond or outside the ordinary state of mind (A. Dalal, 1989). Transpersonal psychology maintains that Western science

is inadequate and limited by the rational and scientific-technological context in its view of reality (A. Dalal, 1989; Sen, 1986). Eastern spiritual traditions, which inform transpersonal psychology, offer something more substantial than the Western perspective on consciousness (G. T. Alexander, 1980). With the development of the field of transpersonal psychology, it has become apparent that there are psychological insights in Hindu philosophy and scholars have seized the opportunity to develop psychological insights based on Eastern yoga schools (K. Dalal, 2011). Transpersonal psychology, as the latest trend of Western psychology, offers the needed research space to translate Eastern philosophy and subjective validations of spiritual experiences into psychological framework (K. Dalal, 2011). Therefore, to translate yoga traditions into a yoga-psychology framework, it is important to look into the evolution of Western psychology that integrates scientific research methods with subjective validations and spiritual metaphysics.

The field of transpersonal psychology has gradually evolved to embrace a whole-person view of the human being akin to IYP, which encompasses a more holistic view of the human psyche. Hartelius et al.'s (2007) theme analysis of transpersonal psychology revealed that the emphasis in the field expanded from the transcendental states of consciousness to the wholeness and transformation of the psyche.

Retrospective analysis of definitions published 35 years suggests the major subject areas of the field can be summed up in three themes: beyond-ego psychology, integrative/holistic psychology, and psychology of transformation. Theme frequency analysis reveals that early emphasis on alternative states of consciousness has moderated into a broader approach to human transcendence, wholeness, and transformation. This

expanded definition of transpersonal psychology suggests the field has much in common with integral psychology. (Hartelius et al., 2007, p. 1)

Further, Dr. Indra Sen, a prominent psychologist and disciple of Sri Aurobindo, is the first to coin the term “integral psychology” as a framework to translate Sri Aurobindo’s yoga philosophy into a yoga psychology framework (Sen, 1986, as cited in Banerji, 2018a). Subsequently, Haridas Chaudhuri, founding president of the California Institute of Integral Studies, proposed a different approach to integral psychology in the 1970s based on Sri Aurobindo’s teachings using terminology compatible with that of humanistic and transpersonal psychology (Shirazi, 2018). Chaudhuri (as cited in Herman, 2018) adopted the term *integral* to signify embracing the essence of both Indian ancient philosophies as well as Western psychological theories.

According to Chaudhuri integral psychology is not a Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, Christian or Jewish psychology, although it is broad enough to hold within itself each of those significant and valid traditions. Integral psychology should be open-ended, flexible, able to transform itself according to the demands of the fast-paced evolution of contemporary culture ... Chaudhuri was greatly influenced by Jungian psychology, existentialism, and other Western outlooks; so his version of Integral Yoga might indeed be called a type of “existential Vedanta.” (Herman, 2018, p. 246)

Regarding the emergence of integral psychology, Shirazi (2001) stated that integral psychology is a

psychological system concerned with exploring and understanding the totality of the human phenomenon ... a framework that not only addresses the behavioral, affective and cognitive domains of the human experience within a singular system, but is concerned with the relationship among the above-mentioned domains in the context of human spiritual development ... a system that, at its breadth, covers the entire body-mind-psyche-spirit spectrum, while at its depth dimension, encompasses the previously explored unconscious and the conscious dimensions of the psyche, as well as the supra-conscious dimension traditionally excluded from psychological inquiry. (p. 1)

IYP can be compatible with the latest trend in transpersonal psychology as a whole person psychology. As Banerji (2018a) stated, “Integral yoga psychology may be thought of as a whole person psychology, a seeking for the structure and experience of human wholeness, that is beyond individual to cosmic and transcendental dimensions of experience” (p. 29). A yoga psychology framework takes into account all dimensions of human experience which includes physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual aspects (Herman, 2018). Yoga psychology concerns itself with the totality of human experiences, from the observable manifestation of mental activities to the transcendental potentiality of consciousness, and the transformation of the whole being. Yoga psychology corresponds to the emergence of a whole-person psychology in the field of psychology. The research methods of yoga psychology utilize qualitative and quantitative approaches combined with contemplative self-inquiry for subjective validation and objective observation. The present study examined the main principles of IYP as a basis for creating a whole-person yoga psychology framework as a synthesis of IYP and AM.

Purpose of the Study

In the previous section we saw that both the yoga psychology tradition and transpersonal psychology movement had arrived at a new, whole-person or holistic platform (Shirazi, 2011). Yoga psychology, culminating in IYP, can connect with the ultimate ground of existence and transform phenomenal consciousness, rather than merely transcending it. We also saw that the field of transpersonal psychology is also trending toward a holistic framework that has as

its focus embodiment and psychological transformation. A holistic yoga psychology model that embraces all dimensions of human existence (physical, vital, mental, psychic, and spiritual) contributes to a greater synthesis of the Eastern spirituality and Western psychology.

Based on this premise, this study aimed to develop a whole-person yoga psychology model, using IYP as the foundational framework to formulate a synthesis of IYP and AM. Both traditions are holistic and emphasize the balanced integration of the physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects of the human personality. AM is universal in its vision and states that the diversities of the world are blissful expressions of the eternal Divine. It aims to cultivate a harmonious balance between the inner psychic rhythm and the outer collective living. It encompasses rich literature on the spiritual dimension of existence, including metaphysics that outline cosmology, consciousness studies, and biopsychology, as well as theories on the relative dimension of existence—the progressive utilization theory (PROUT), neohumanism, and natural medicines for health. Nonetheless, there has not been an explicit published systemized yoga psychology model in AM.

This dissertation drew from the principle tenets of whole-person yoga psychology in IYP as a framework to develop a holistic model as a synthesis of IYP and AM. IYP, as first coined by Dr. Indra Sen (as cited in Banerji, 2018a), is a whole-person psychology model. As such, it studies and promotes psychospiritual development to integrate and transform human egocentric consciousness to its highest potential for manifesting the Divine on earth. While

“yoga is nothing but practical psychology” (Sri Aurobindo, 1999, p. 44), IYP represents a broadened worldview of the human psyche in its study on the spectrum of consciousness, parts of being, triple transformation, and the psychic being (Banerji, 2018b). IYP is a suitable framework for the development of a whole-person yoga psychology model since it is concerned with the totality of the human existence, including the cognitive, behavioral, as well as the psychospiritual transformation of the psyche. Moreover, it has an established body of literature that demonstrates the efficacy of a whole person psychological model in the fields of psychology and philosophy. Scholars such as Haridas Chaudhuri (1974), Indra Sen (1986), Michael Miovic (2004), Brant Cortright (2007), Bahman Shirazi (2011), Matthijs Cornelissen (2018), Paul Herman (2018), Debashish Banerji (2018a, 2018b) and more have contributed to the field of integral psychology in both theoretical orientation and clinical applications.

This study used IYP as a framework to form a whole-person yoga psychology model of IYP and AM by analyzing and identifying principle tenets of IYP on multiple levels including metaphysical, psychological, biopsychological, and practical applications. It further used these principles as guidelines for developing a holistic yoga psychology framework within AM.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this theoretical dissertation is a combination of hermeneutic and integrative approaches to identify, interpret, and integrate whole-person psychology principles in IYP and AM with the intention to develop a whole-person yoga psychology model based on these two holistic

systems. It should be noted that IYP has an already established body of literature on integral psychology, whereas AM has yet to develop an explicit yoga psychology framework. The hermeneutic aspect of the methodology adopted in this work involves investigating selected literature in both traditions to identify key principles relevant to yoga psychology. These principles are then used as part of an integrative strategy to offer a new whole-person framework for yoga psychology. Therefore, this dissertation is not primarily a comparative study of the two yoga systems, although some similarities between the systems as well as unique features of each were highlighted.

In Chapter 2, three primary themes essential to IYP are reviewed: cosmology and evolution of consciousness, the parts of being and the planes of consciousness, and transformation of consciousness. Chapter 3 includes a review of AM teachings, including its cosmology and evolution of cosmos, layers of consciousness, as well as cakras system and bio-psychology. In Chapter 4, selected essential principles of a whole-person yoga psychology framework are identified. After reviewing the whole-person themes in IYP and AM, the study identified several common whole-person principles and two distinct features from IYP and AM as the foundational building blocks for developing a unique whole-person model. In Chapter 5, the study establishes six whole-person principles that can be applicable for whole-person frameworks and integrates them into a unique whole-person yoga psychology model. This unique psychology framework consists of theoretical and practical applications on three themes: the multidimensionality of personality, the psychic transformation from IYP for

personality transformation, and cakra biopsychology from AM for harmonization and purification of cakras. This section presents how the study conducted the research employing hermeneutic and integrative approaches to develop this unique whole-person yoga psychology model.

This study used a hermeneutic approach to understand, interpret, and generate new insights concerning the integrative project. There were two general guidelines in applying hermeneutics in the study. The first was an in-depth reading to yield richer insights and new interpretations. The second was to be aware of the social and cultural contexts of a text and be able to “move back and forth between the text and its context”(Gilhus, 2011, p. 276) in the hermeneutic circle. In other words, the study “approaches the text with one’s horizon of understanding, confronts the horizon of the text, modifies/opens up one’s horizon and reads the text anew with a real fusion of horizons” (Gilhus, 2011, p. 280). According to Gilhus (2011), *the fusion of horizons* is to bring the researcher as close as possible to the traditions for the fusions of the two horizons, that is, the text and the interpreter (p. 280). Furthermore, the researcher also adopted what Ferrer (2011) proposed as *critical participation*, a middle path between *engaged participation* and *critical distance* in which the researcher is moving between the continuum of insider and outsider to generate insights from different positions (pp. 185–188).

The critical participation and the fusion of horizons adopted in this study are crucial viewpoints for identifying whole-person themes in IYP and AM. Thus, this study began by researching the whole-person themes pertaining to

psychology in integral yoga and presented in the literature review of IYP. There were three primary themes identified—integral cosmology, spectrum of consciousness, and transformation of consciousness. Integral cosmology entails the process of involution in which the transcendent consciousness descends and conceals in matter, and evolution is the process by which consciousness awakens and reveals the essential divinity in the embodied form. Spectrum of consciousness presents two complementary approaches for mapping human personality in IYP—the vertical system and the concentric system. The vertical system consists of planes of consciousness from the highest transcendental realm of Satcitananda and Supermind to the lowest physical manifestations of the Inconscient and the physical planes in 12 gradations. The concentric system consists of the parts of personality in a spherical formation, from the outer or embodied egocentric realm to the inner subliminal being and to the inmost psychic being. The psychic being is a crucial concept in IYP, as the individual divinity within the core of the being that facilitates the transformation of ego personality. Last, transformation of consciousness corresponds to the triple transformation in IYP—the psychic transformation, spiritual transformation, and supramental transformation which are of particular significance in IYP.

Subsequently, the whole-person themes obtained from the literature analysis above were applied in the literature review of AM to identify possible parallel themes. The researcher was situated as the insider in the discipline as a practitioner of AM. The advantage to this is that the researcher was immersed in the conceptions, theories, and practices of the system, which enabled an enhanced

and genuine understanding. The researcher adopted critical participation as a middle path to investigate the two systems, IYP and AM, and the fusion of horizons to move from identifying common themes in IYP and employing the framework generated from IYP to research that was relevant to whole-person themes in AM. The study identified two whole-person themes in the AM literature review—cosmology and consciousness. A third theme, *cakra* biopsychology, was also included in this study, which is a unique feature of AM deemed indispensable to the whole-person model proposed in this study.

The cosmology in AM was revealed in the metaphysics of *Brahma cakra* where the Cosmic Being (*Brahma*) underwent transmutation into five fundamental factors with solidarity as the culmination point, and gradually evolved back through intuitional practice to reclaim the essential form of consciousness. The layers of consciousness (*kosas*) acknowledge personality within the five realms of existence from the instinctual *kamamaya kosa* (desire layer) to the luminous *hiranmaya kosa* (supramental layer); and the composition of mind from the crudest *citta* as mind stuff, to *ahamtattva* as the ego, and *mahattattva* as awareness. Finally, *cakra biopsychology* is the unique feature of AM that connects the biological aspect of endocrine gland secretions to the psychospiritual expressions of *cakra* propensities. The dynamic movement of critical participation and fusion of horizons aim to gain both empathetic and critical understanding that enabled the study to identify whole-person themes and unique features of the two disciplines in the process of hermeneutic cycles.

As noted, hermeneutics consist of various cycles, moving back and forth “between the parts and the whole of a text, between its structure and meaning, between the reader’s horizon and the horizon of the text, and between the text and its context” (Gilhus, 2011, p. 276). The study adopted the approach of moving between the parts, such as common conceptions and unique features within IYP and AM, and compared and analyzed literature reviews of the two disciplines and identified four common whole-person themes that are consistent between the two disciplines—evolution of cosmos, gradation of consciousness, integration of transcendent and phenomenal reality, and personal and collective evolution. In the evolution of cosmos, consciousness is identified as the origin and substance of the microcosm and Macrocosm where creation begins from inanimate objects with consciousness concealed within. Evolution is the process of unfoldment of consciousness from a dormant state in matter to life, mind, and spirit. In the gradation of consciousness, personality is not merely the commonly perceived ego personality, but is recognized as composites of various dimensions of existence from the lower nature physicality, to vital desires, to mental intelligence, and further to the psychic and spiritual realms of existence. Integration of transcendent and phenomenal reality reveals that within human consciousness both the phenomenal and transcendent levels are equally real and need to be integrated in the practice of yoga. This viewpoint encourages a positive and dynamic participation in life, rather than dismissing phenomenal reality as illusion. In personal and collective evolution, personality is viewed as a

participatory element in the collective evolution of the cosmos that has the potentiality to be transformed as the instrument of the Divine.

Moreover, the study identified two distinct features, one from each discipline—the psychic transformation in IYP and the *cakra* biopsychology in AM. Psychic transformation is a significant concept in that transformation of ego personality is facilitated by the psychic being as the inmost center of individuality and portion of Divinity within the core of the human being. Cakra biopsychology entails the interconnectedness of the biological, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of existence within personality and reveals how endocrine gland secretions influence *cakra* propensity expressions. These four common themes and two distinct features were further integrated into a whole-person yoga psychology framework.

The process of integration involves evaluating diverse insights and creating a common ground between concepts and theories, because integration emerges from “conflict, controversy and difference create or discover the underlying common ground between conflicting insights” (Repko, 2008, p. 248). These divergent goals and concepts are also the intersecting and complimentary common ground for integration of the two disciplines. It should be noted that the two yoga disciplines studied in this dissertation have a vast common ground to begin with. On the one hand, both are expressions of the spiritual traditions of India such as Vedanta and Tantra, and on the other hand, they are both 20th-century contemporary practices that have a whole-person orientation embedded in them either explicitly or implicitly.

The study formulated six whole-person yoga psychology principles through hermeneutic analysis of the common themes and integrated them with the two unique features to create a new whole-person yoga psychology model. The six whole-person yoga psychology principles are as follows: (a) the fundamental characteristics of wholeness are consciousness, dynamism, and bliss (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*); (b) there is an innate potential and drive for wholeness within human personality; (c) evolution of the cosmos entails a progressive process for the personality to liberate consciousness from its dormant state in matter to become whole; in other words, it involves the unfoldment of consciousness along the gradations of consciousness from the least conscious level to the highest possible level with the ultimate goal of achieving wholeness; (d) wholeness is intimately related to the processes of transformation, integration, harmonization, and purification of all parts and systems of personality along the gradations of consciousness; (e) gradations of consciousness comprise a complete or whole spectrum of personality that includes the subconscious, physical, vital, mental, psychic, subliminal, and spiritual realms of existence; and (f) integration of consciousness pertains to the transformation and reconciliation of various aspects of personality through the process of psychic transformation for an embodied wholeness. These themes are deemed as essential to any whole-person yoga psychology framework.

Integration as a research strategy was proposed by Ernest Boyer due to “the need for making connections across disciplines placing the disciplines in a larger context” (Boyer, 1990, as cited in Fisher et al., 1996, p. 33); this approach

can overcome the isolation and fragmentation of the disciplines. This study utilized an integrative approach to evaluate critically and synthesize creatively insights from IYP and AM to form a new integrated whole (Repko, 2008, p. 116). As suggested by Shirazi (2015), “integrative methods attempt to arrive at holistic knowledge” (p. 25). The choice of using an integrative approach reflected two primary objectives: (a) to critically evaluate and synthesize the diverse concepts, theories, and applications to create a new model that can contribute to the literature of both disciplines, and (b) to lay the foundation for future research and formation of holistic framework specifically relating to psychological and spiritual development.

The unique whole-person yoga psychology model proposed in this study is an integration of selected features of IYP and AM utilizing hermeneutic and integrative methods. This whole-person model first presents the multidimensionality of personality in six realms of existence—the subconscious, physical, vital, mental, psychic, and spiritual dimensions. Then, the model proposes that the wholeness of personality can be achieved by utilizing distinct features of IYP and AM. This involves the psychic transformation from IYP revealed in three phases—evocation of the psychic being, transformation of egocentric movements, and surrender of personality; and incorporates reinterpreted Ashtanga yoga practices from AM for harmonization and purification of cakras. While IYP laid the foundation of an integral framework with the unique element of psychic transformation as the guiding principle of the model, AM offers substantial Ashtanga yogic methods from cakra biopsychology

for a complete transformation and integration of personality. While IYP offers a broad framework for transformation of consciousness and personality which requires complete surrender of egocentric surface personality to the Divine through the facilitation of the psychic being which is unique process for each individual, AM cakra biopsychology provides specific yogic practices for purification and harmonization of personality. This is achieved through a combination of hermeneutic method and integrative research strategy to present a new whole-person yoga psychology framework.

The process of interpretation and integration of selected aspects of IYP and AM carries the potential drawback of the researcher's personal bias or unproductive prejudices, as termed by Gadamer (1975), that hinder the original understanding of the texts and partial selection of the concepts for integration. The researcher thus adopted the attitude, as suggested by Alvesson and Skoldberg (as cited in Repko, 2008) of "reflexive scholarship or self-critique" (p. 12) for constant self-reflection and awareness of the hidden motives.

Thesis Statement

The primary objective of this dissertation is to develop a whole-person yoga psychology model by interweaving whole-person principles and unique teachings from two holistic yoga systems, IYP and AM. The main argument of this dissertation is that through the integration of key elements from IYP and AM, a unique viable whole-person yoga psychology model that embraces the full dimensions of human existence and facilitates transformation, integration and wholeness of personality can be created. Furthermore, it is anticipated that the

unique teachings on the psychic transformation from IYP and the cakra biopsychology from AM can offer a comprehensive framework for healing and psychospiritual development through personality transformation and cakra purification allowing for a full integration and embodiment.

Significance of the Study

Academic Significance

Most Yoga psychology theories are based on Samkhya, Patanjali, or Advaita Vedanta (Chatterjee & Datta, An introduction to Indian philosophy, 2007). These schools either hold a dualistic (e.g., Samkhya and Patanjali) or renunciatory (e.g., Advaita Vedanta) view toward life in which they see the phenomenal world as mere illusion or as a source of ignorance and seek solely spiritual transcendence. They share the common assumption that the human condition is a sea of suffering or, as Patanjali stated, “for the one who knows, all is suffering” (as cited in Rao & Paranjpe, 2008, p. 187). The source of suffering stems from the false identification with the cosmic creative principle, *Prakrti*, which is often referred to as ignorance, unconscious nature or delusion (*Maya*; Rao & Paranjpe, 2008). To be free from the misidentification, some adopt the path of negation to disavow all worldly experiences in order to attain union with the transcendental truth, and some adopt a path of knowledge to dispel the darkness of ignorance and achieve freedom, in which they require renunciation from all social bonds. The view that the mundane and transcendent realms are seen as irredeemably separate has created a deep chasm between the ordinary day-to-day living and spiritual transcendence (i.e., between the phenomenal self and

the transcendent Self; see Chaudhuri, 1974). The diversity of the phenomenal world is deprecated as the source of ignorance (*avidya*). This commonly created a pessimistic attitude toward life that is life-renouncing and world-negating (Chaudhuri, 1974).

The whole-person yoga psychology model proposed in this study accounted for both the transcendent and the ordinary world. The yoga psychology based on AM holds a holistic view toward life, recognizing both the diverse universe as relative truth and the transcendental consciousness as absolute truth. IYP provides a holistic view toward yoga and spirituality as they relate to the phenomenal world, and also reaffirms the Tantric practice of participating in life as an instrument of the eternal Being (Chaudhuri, 1974). Similar to IYP, AM views this universe as the manifestation of the Divine will, which should not be denied nor be the ultimate goal of life. This approach adopts a positive view toward life, realizing the Divine in the core of oneself, and encourages a harmonious balance between individual and collective life, distinct from the major renunciatory yoga systems. The whole-person yoga psychology model based on this premise encourages active participation in life and views the phenomenal world as the manifestation of the Divine where the separation between the mundane and transcendent consciousness has ceased.

Furthermore, the whole-person yoga psychology model encompasses the full multidimensionality of human existence. Human existence includes not only the surface observable behaviors along with the phenomenal world within sensory perception and cognition, but also the vast underlying realms of consciousness

and the subliminal world. IYP introduces an in-depth psychology framework in its theories on the spectrums of consciousness, parts of being, and the psychic being which broadened the scope of psychology to recognize a fuller spectrum of human consciousness. Parallel to IYP, AM embraces the multidimensionality of life as the dynamic expression of the eternal being (Anandamitra, 2002). The model used in this study is based on AM and IYP, and includes the spiritual dimension within the metaphysics of the cosmos, the psycho-spiritual realms in the gradation of consciousness, yogic-psychological interpretation of personality, as well as the physical-psychic aspect of biopsychology on the *cakra* system. This integrative model offers a comprehensive framework encompassing the full dimensions of human existence—physical, psychic, and spiritual—as a whole-person model.

While the evolution of psychology in the West has moved from surface observations of cognition and behaviors in behaviorism, to a deeper exploration of the unconscious and subconscious in psychoanalysis, to the recognition of self-actualization in humanism, to the realization of transcendental potentiality in transpersonal psychology, there is a calling for a whole-person psychology model that embraces the full dimension of human existence in physical, psychic, and spiritual expressions (Shirazi, 2011). This whole-person yoga psychology model makes its contribution in three major areas. First, despite a vast treasury of philosophy in ontology, metaphysics, and biopsychology within AM, there is no systemic yoga psychology model. This whole-person psychology model proposed in this study contributes to the field of AM as a systemic and comprehensive

model which can be beneficial for AM practitioners to integrate psychological understanding to their spiritual practices for integration of self-growth and spiritual advancement.

Further, this work contributes to the field of psychology to broaden the scope of the human psyche and include an in-depth understanding of cosmology in relation to human psyche, consciousness study, and the biopsychology system. This model is also applicable in clinical settings to facilitate the healing process without overemphasizing pathology. Finally, this work contributes to the literature of yoga psychology as a whole-person psychology model utilizing essential elements in IYP to promote creative, dynamic, and balanced ways of living in personal growth, spiritual advancement, and social welfare.

Personal Significance

My quest for deeper meaning in life emerged at an early age and I was never satisfied with traditional religion. I have immersed myself in diverse spiritual practices and philosophies, such as Zen, Vipassana, Tibetan Buddhism, Sufi mysticism and various healing modalities. In 2006, I was on a spiritual quest and began to learn meditations and yogic metaphysics from AM. Consistent meditation has brought about deep transcendental experiences, awakened the innermost core of my spiritual longing, and completely transformed my whole being and worldview. AM expanded my worldview to see phenomenon in the world as the blissful expression of the Divine through the metaphysical teachings and personal spiritual realizations. It is by self-offering or surrender to the Divine

from spiritual practices and social services that one experiences this unconditional love.

In 2015, I started a master's degree in the Integral Counseling Psychology program at CIIS. The field of mainstream psychotherapy is largely occupied by cognitive behavioral therapy, psychoanalysis, and psychodynamic approaches. I find its limited scope unfulfilling, as the human psyche is seen merely as surface cognitions and behaviors, an accumulation of past history with an overemphasis on the unconscious complexes. I believe something crucial is missing to understand the human psyche from a more holistic standpoint where the spiritual component should be considered crucial. In my professional work, AM has helped me to see the pathology the client presents as the focus of therapy, as well as seeing them as a whole person with their own organic healing capacity. Their symptoms can be understood as a call for attention that their life is out of equilibrium whether physically, psychologically, or interpersonally. In turn, psychotherapy becomes a process—not for treating the illness, but as a sacred journey that meets the soul within—for healing and transformation.

The inspiration to form a whole-person psychology paradigm sprouted while I received my training in psychology and psychotherapy. At that time, I became interested in bridging a Western psychological perspective with Eastern spiritual philosophy to form a comprehensive modality for healing and transformation of the human psyche. This work is the culmination of that inspiration to develop a whole-person yoga psychology model founded on metaphysics, psycho-spiritual theory, the biopsychology of AM, with a whole

person psychology model—IYP—as the framework, for healing, transformation, and integration of human existence. The writing of this dissertation is also a spiritual practice for me personally to contribute to the AM literature, and as a continued learning process to integrate the teachings into my day-to-day practices as well as my professional work.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW ON INTEGRAL YOGA PSYCHOLOGY

This literature review presents three primary themes in IYP: cosmology in IY, including a discussion on the evolution of consciousness; the spectrum of consciousness, which includes a brief survey of the parts of being and the planes of consciousness; and transformation of consciousness, which delineates the process of triple transformation.

IY was developed by Sri Aurobindo Ghose (1872–1950) as a synthesis of several approaches to yoga (Sri Aurobindo, 1999). Sri Aurobindo extracted essential elements from the ancient yoga schools of jnana yoga (yoga of knowledge), karma yoga (yoga of work), bhakti yoga (yoga of love), and tantra yoga (yoga of kundalini) and integrated them to form purna yoga (*purna* means “holistic” or “full”). He presented this in his prominent work *The Synthesis of Yoga* (1999). In the book Sri Aurobindo (1999) stated that “Yoga is nothing but practical psychology” (p. 44). IY contains an in-depth study of the human psyche and nature of consciousness and extends and complements the Western understanding of the human personality in the continuum of psychospiritual development. His other principal book, *The Life Divine* (Sri Aurobindo, 2005), outlines his metaphysical outlook wherein he discusses a spiritual evolution of consciousness culminating at the summit of Supermind and the embodiment of Divine life on earth. IY is a holistic system that embraces psychospiritual development and the transformation of consciousness to expand the full human

potentiality on both the individual and collective levels for total integration toward wholeness of personality. According to Chaudhuri (1960),

The philosophy of Sri Aurobindo is all-comprehending in its integration of the past, and prophetic in its vision of the future. As a connected view of the totality of existence, it brings to light the ultimate unifying principle of life. On the basis of a balanced appreciation of the multifarious values of life, it shows how to reconcile the various conflicts of our human existence. Out of a broad survey of cosmic evolution it evolves a creative idea which bids fair to impart a new rhythm to the historical order. In reaffirming the central truths of ancient wisdom in the context of our present-day problems, it creates new values and opens up new vistas of human progress. In an endeavor to meet the challenge of the present age, it gives a new dynamic form to the spiritual heritage of the human race—a unified and integrated form to the highest cultural values of East and West. With a penetrative insight into the profound meaning of life it lays the foundation for a complete art of harmonious and creative living. (p. 17)

IY is further developed into integral psychology by some major integral philosophers and psychologists such as Indra Sen (1903–1994), an Indian psychologist who coined the term “integral psychology” and developed a psychological framework within IY (as cited in Banerji, 2018a). He compared this framework with Western psychologies such as the depth psychology of Freud and Jung (Freud and Jung, as cited in Sen, 1986) in his book *Integral Psychology: The Psychological System of Sri Aurobindo* (Sen, 1986). Integral psychology was further taken up by Haridas Chaudhuri (1913–1975), an Indian philosopher and founder of the California Institute of Integral Studies (as cited in Banerji, 2018a). Chaudhuri presented integral philosophy and psychology as an inclusive and flexible discipline embracing the essential principles of various Indian yoga and psychology traditions, as well as Western existential and humanistic philosophical principles and depth psychology, and existential/humanistic and transpersonal psychological frameworks (Chaudhuri, 1973). One of Chaudhuri’s major

contributions to integral psychology was the triadic principle of human nature as uniqueness, relatedness, and transcendence in correspondence to personal, interpersonal, and transpersonal domains of the self in psychological inquiry.

Integral psychology is a synthesis of Eastern and Western disciplines that addresses the wholeness of human existence in the context of the evolution of consciousness. Shirazi (2001) defines “integral psychology” as

a psychological system concerned with exploring and understanding the totality of the human phenomenon...[which] at its breadth, covers the entire body-mind-psyche-spirit spectrum, while at its depth...encompasses the previously explored unconscious and the conscious dimensions of the psyche, as well as the supra-conscious dimension traditionally excluded from psychological inquiry. (Introduction section, para. 1)

Integral psychology is a dynamic and multidimensional discipline that aims at transforming, harmonizing, and integrating human consciousness and personality in the process of psychospiritual development to reach the full human spiritual potentiality.

Cosmology in Integral Yoga Psychology

Sri Aurobindo (2005) held an evolutionary viewpoint on consciousness which forms the central theme of both integral cosmology and psychology. Consciousness plays a fundamental role in integral cosmology. The universe is in ultimate analysis a psychocosmic continuum. According to Sri Aurobindo (1970),

consciousness is a reality inherent in existence. It is there even when it's not active on the surface, but silent and immobile; it is there even when it is invisible on the surface, not reacting on outward things or sensible to them....Even when it seems to us to be quite absent and the being to our view unconscious and inanimate. (p. 234)

Consciousness is understood in terms of a twofold process referred to as involution, or the decent of Divine consciousness into matter, and evolution, or

the ascent of embodied consciousness through successive stages from physical to vital to mental consciousness and beyond into the higher mental and spiritual stages. In IYP, attainment of liberation is not the end of the evolutionary process as prescribed in most ancient Indian traditions. The goal of yoga is to transform the material, vital, and mental parts of human personality to allow for the complete descent of Divine consciousness. The following section presents the framework of IYP on the cosmology of involution and evolution.

In IYP, the movement of consciousness can be divided into two passages: descending involution and ascending evolution (Miovic, 2004). Involution is a gradient process where transcendent consciousness (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*) descends into material existence. Although the material plane is occupied by the force of inertia without the expression of higher consciousness, the Divine essence is still involved or concealed within the static physicality. Evolution is the gradual process where the Divine consciousness awakens and reveals its potent divinity in embodied form.

In the creating of the material world, there was a plunge of this descending Consciousness into an apparent Inconscience and an emergence of it out of that Inconscience, degree by degree, until it recovers its highest spiritual and supramental summits and manifests their powers here in Matter. (Sri Aurobindo, 1993, p. 45)

The process of involution and evolution of consciousness comprise the cosmology of consciousness in IYP.

The process of involution begins with the Supreme pure consciousness in the beginning of creation. Eventually, this Supreme Being sequentially differentiates a portion of its infinite nature to become finite matter (Miovic, 2004). The one consciousness descends part of the Divine being into an

appearance of inconscience and manifests into the apparent multiplicities of the world. In traditional Indian terms, when the pure consciousness, *Purusa*, expresses and manifests itself into forms, it is referred to as *Prakrti* (Varma, 2010). As Varma (2010) noted,

Since the ancient times the term *purusa* has been used to denote pure Consciousness, which when acting out from its latency and manifesting in and as Form, is regarded to as *prakrti* or nature. Both are two sides of the same coin, pure consciousness on one side and pure material on the other. (Sri Aurobindo's Perspective section, para. 2)

Thus, consciousness is the fundamental essence, dormant within the finite material world. This material world is embedded within the infinite, eternal, and blissful body of Divine consciousness. The descending process in which the infinite consciousness becomes matter is termed *involution* (Miovic, 2004).

After involution, the process in which matter gradually reveals the potential of Divine consciousness is termed *evolution* (Miovic, 2004). The process of evolution begins with inanimate forms of matter such as atoms and electrons. It begins from the inconscient level which is not conscious of its existence and evolves to animate living beings where life emerges and mind evolves with more complexities of structure and clearer reflection of consciousness (Varma, 2010). "Life is the first step of this release of consciousness; mind is the second; but the evolution does not finish with mind, it awaits a release into something greater, a consciousness which is spiritual and supramental" (Sri Aurobindo, 1977, p. 33). That is, evolution begins from inanimate matter to plants to animals and to the human being. In the beginning phase of evolution, the process is moved by a natural force without the conscious will of plants and animals (Stein, 1983). On

the other hand, human beings possess the capacity to evolve and expand and go beyond the current mental consciousness to experience the supramental state of consciousness. Evolution is the process by which one ascends from the densely unconscious, manifested as matter in the base to the fully conscious but unmanifested, Sacchidananda at the peak (Miovic, 2004). Miovic (2004) discusses the planes of consciousness in the process of evolution as follows:

Sri Aurobindo views each plane of consciousness as a universe unto itself, and the sum of created existence as a spectrum or stacked series of universes that ascend from densely unconscious but manifest matter at the base, to fully conscious but unmanifested Sacchidananda at the peak (sacchidananda is a Vedantic term that means “existence-consciousness-bliss”). (p. 116)

Thus, evolution is the process in which the individual consciousness gradually recovers the Divine essence within through embodiment of the planes of consciousness from matter to Sacchidananda.

In summary, involution is the descending process in which the Supreme Being manifests into matter, and evolution is the process through which the Supreme Being reveals the Divine essence involved in matter. Planes of consciousness are divided into 12 gradations from the highest to the lowest described in more detail in the next section on Spectrum of Consciousness. Moreover, each plane of consciousness is a universe in and of itself (Miovic, 2004). The nonmaterial planes of consciousness, from subtle physical to Satcitananda, exist independent of the material manifestation. This means even with the demolition of material existence the other planes will continue to exist eternally.

Spectrum of Consciousness

In yoga psychology, the study of the human psyche is inseparable from the study of consciousness (Shirazi, 2010). Human personality is not simply the makeup of observable cognitive processes, emotional expressions, behavioral patterns, or personal characteristics and preferences. In IYP, personality is recognized as an “onto-psycho-somatic continuum” or “spirit-mind-body unity” (Shirazi, 2018, p. 56). That is, the human psyche is composed of multiple layers of consciousness below—or beyond—the waking consciousness. In IYP, the spectrum of consciousness within the human psyche can be organized into two primary systems: the concentric system and the vertical system, which also includes the cakra system. The vertical system refers to gradations of consciousness from the highest and most luminous planes (i.e., Sacchidananda and Supermind) to the lowest and densest gradations, the inconscient and subconscious levels as described in the previous section. These planes or gradations of consciousness exist independently and can be generally referred to in terms of physical (and below), vital, and mental (and above) ranges.

The Vertical System: Planes of Consciousness

The vertical system is the gradations of consciousness from the higher to lower planes within the human psyche. While individual consciousness is the refraction of universal consciousness, the planes of consciousness are also the reflection of the involution and evolution process of the cosmos (Miovic, 2004). Sri Aurobindo (2005) discussed the cosmos and individual consciousness as follows:

The cosmos also is a play of this Divine self-delight and the delight of that play is entirely possessed by the Universal; but in the individual owing to the action of ignorance and division it is held back in the subliminal and the superconscious being; on our surface it lacks and has to be sought for, found and possessed by the development of the individual consciousness towards universality and transcendence ... we perceive that our existence is a sort of refraction of the Divine existence, in inverted order of ascent and descent. (p. 278)

The planes of consciousness are essentially derived from the Vedic teachings on the Sevenfold Chord of Being with an additional eighth principle of the *psyche* (soul or the psychic being) (Stein, 1983). Sri Aurobindo (2005) delineates the Sevenfold Chord of Being with an additional eighth principle as follows: Existence (*sat*), Consciousness-Force (*cit-shakti*), Bliss (*ananda*), Supermind (*vijnana*, or *mahas*), Mind (*manas*), Psyche, Life or Vital (*prana*), and Matter (*annam*) (as cited in Cornelissen, 2018, pp. 67–75; Sri Aurobindo, 2005, pp. 276–284). The following section presents the planes of consciousness in IYP in further detail.

The first plane is *Sacchidananda* (or *Sat-Chit-Ananda*), it is a Vedantic term meaning “existence-consciousness-bliss” (Miovic, 2004, p. 116). *Sacchidananda* is the transcendental or eternal origin of Consciousness prior to manifestation or existence of the mental, vital, and the material planes. The second plane is “Supermind” and referred to as “Truth-consciousness” by Sri Aurobindo (2005, p. 137) or “the self-determining infinite consciousness” (Miovic, 2004, p. 116). *Sacchidananda* is the pure infinite blissful consciousness beyond the bounds of time, space, or knowledge. From this transcendent poise, the cosmic creation of forms and powers came into existence by the Divine Will and Knowledge. “The Supermind then is Being moving out into a determinative

self-knowledge which perceives certain truths of itself and wills to realize them in a temporal and spatial extension of its own timeless and spaceless existence” (Sri Aurobindo, 2005, p. 154). The Supermind is the intermediate link between this transcendent poise and the multiplicities of the world. Therefore, the Supermind can be seen as the subordinate aspect of Sacchidananda and is responsible for the creation of the planes of the phenomenal world.

The third plane is “overmind,” and it is “the delegate of Supermind Consciousness” (Sri Aurobindo, 2005, p. 992), the opening to the cosmic consciousness where all beings are connected in which oneness and unity is experienced. This is also the plane of the gods and goddesses which are different expressions of the same Divine in various religions and cultures. As Sri Aurobindo (2005) noted, it is

only by an opening into the cosmic consciousness that the overmind ascent and descent can be made wholly possible: a high and intense individual opening upwards is not sufficient, to that vertical ascent towards summit Light there must be added a vast horizontal expansion of the consciousness into some totality of the Spirit ... when the overmind descends, the predominance of the centralizing ego-sense is entirely subordinated, lost in largeness of being and finally abolished. (p. 985)

The former ego-centric thoughts, feelings, and emotions may continue but “occur as currents or ripples in the cosmic wideness” (Sri Aurobindo, 2005, p. 985). All of one’s perceptions and intelligence are surfaced from the universal cognition of consciousness rather than one’s ego identity. On this level, the individual mind is united with the cosmic mind, but is still within the consciousness of multiplicity rather than unity of the supramental stage.

The fourth plane is termed “intuitive mind.” Sri Aurobindo (2005) referred to intuition as “truth-remembrance” (p. 982). Intuition is the capacity for direct

perception of the original knowledge as truth. Intuition occurs at the meeting point of consciousness between the subject and the object of perception. When intuition penetrates through the veil of appearances, one is directly in touch with the truth as perceived through vision, feelings, or vibrations. The intuition “leaps out like a spark or lightning-flash from the shock of the meeting” (p. 981). In the human mind, intuition is like a “truth-remembering” or “truth-conveyance” (p. 982). However, intuition is often subject to the danger of misinterpretation by one’s mental preconception.

The fifth plan is termed the “illuminated mind.” Sri Aurobindo (2005) has used the term “revelatory ideograph” (p. 980) for the stage in which one comes into direct contact with the essence of Truth without verbal expressions. This realm illumines the cognitive mind with a direct inner vision and brings spiritual light to the heart which illuminates the physical, mental, and vital parts of being. Within this illumined stage, the soul lives in direct experience with higher realms in which one receives light and vision from higher sources and perceives the Divine in all things as mystics or seers do.

The sixth plane is termed the “higher mind” and is the first higher realm beyond ordinary human experiences of instincts, impulses, perceptions, and cognition. Within this realm is the source of “spontaneous inherent knowledge [and] powerful multiple dynamisation” (Sri Aurobindo, 2005, p. 974). That is, with the ascent to this higher mind, one owns the capacity to form a multitude of spontaneous ideas, knowledge, and actions. This is also the mind that

philosophers and thinkers experience at their highest potential levels or in the state of flow.

The seventh plane is termed “mind” and in a common sense usually denotes to the entire consciousness of human being. Nonetheless, in IYP, mind has to do with mental functions of cognition and intelligence, which includes thought processes, perceptions, and the conscious will (Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 2002).

The eighth plane is termed “the vital” and is the life force energy full of impulse and possession. The vital consciousness is comprised of “desires, impulses, force-pushes, emotions, sensations, seeking life-fulfilment, possession, and enjoyment” (Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 2002, p. 26). When life emerges from the physical plane of consciousness, the joy of the self-existent life force degenerates into need and desire.

The ninth plane is termed the “subtle physical sheath” and is the subtler aspect of the physical body, which refers to the etheric or astral body/plane (Miovic, 2004). It has freedom, plasticity, intensity, color, and power, which can travel a distance from the physical body and still be aware of its subtle existence. This sheath also includes the cakras. The 10th layer is termed the “physical proper” and is the universal physical plane of consciousness, which is dominated by the force of inertia (*tamas*) (Miovic, 2004). The physical body of human beings or animals are within and influenced by this realm of physical consciousness.

The 11th plane is termed the “subconscious” and is the submerged part of consciousness, without coherent or organized thoughts, feelings, or actions (Miovic, 2004). This plane receives and stores memories or primitive reactions in the waking consciousness and sinks down into the subconscious field of obscure impressions to form persistent habitual patterns, complexes, and dreams. Thus, the characteristics are observed as obscure, disorganized, and chaotic (Sen, 2018). In the human mind, the subconscious is the realm of unconsciousness or inconscience in the process of becoming conscious, termed as “half consciousness”(Sri Aurobindo, 2005, p. 578) and contains the lower nature of animality. Additionally, *subconscious* refers to the part of conscious that is below the physical consciousness, and *subliminal* refers to the part that is beyond the waking consciousness of the outer being and is associated with the inner being (A. Dalal, 1989). The method to transform this realm is not to directly plunge into it, as that will pull one to the state of incoherence or dulled trance. It is important to first ascend to the superconscious or subliminal levels and then descend to transform or integrate this inferior nature (Sen, 2018).

The last plane is termed the “inconscious” and is the lowest form of consciousness that can be found in an inanimate being or a physical matter, such as the basic molecules of atoms and electrons. This is consciousness of an involved trance of forgetting its Divine essence. Although its very nature is inconscient, it is “the inverse reproduction of supreme superconsciousness”(Sri Aurobindo, 2005, p. 572) that owns the same superconsciousness dormant within. In human beings, this is the realm of consciousness that is unconscious. To

transform this lower nature, the approach needs to be that of exploration and integration, rather than suppression or negation.

The human psyche is comprised of a multidimensional consciousness ranging from the lowest biological instincts to the summit of supermind. The evolution of consciousness is the march from matter to spirit, from unconscious to supermind. It involves a complete transformation of the entire being and reveals the Divine essence within as the embodiment of supramental existence.

The Concentric System: Parts of Being

The concentric system describes the organization of the parts within the human being from the outer to the inner realms, to the inmost center (Miovic, 2004). There are three major realms within the parts of being: the outer being, the inner being, and the psychic being. The two realms of both the outer and inner being belong to Prakrti and the innermost or true being is Purusa (Cornelissen, 2018). As Cornelissen (2018) noted, “in the concentric system, Sri Aurobindo distinguished three major realms: an *outer nature* and an *inner nature*—both part of *prakrti* universal Nature—and an *inmost, or true nature*, which belongs to the *purusa*, the Self”⁴ (p. 65).

The outer being is the part of being that one is aware of in waking consciousness and daily life as the ego personality (Miovic, 2004). This is also the part of the being that is connected to the ego or self in the Western biopsychology model (Miovic, 2004). This outer being consists of three parts: physical

⁴ The terms *purusa*, *prakrti*, and *Self* have distinct interpretations in different systems, the interpretations stated here are drawn from Cornelissen (2018).

(biological), vital (emotional and libidinal), and mental (cognitive). Each of the outer being parts has an individual separate consciousness, yet they are interconnected and interacting. Thus, they are often mixed and indistinguishable for one to be conscious of their separate existence. “Each plane of our being—mental, vital, physical—has its own consciousness, separate though interconnected and interacting; but to our outer mind and sense, in our waking experience, they are all confused together” (Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 2002, p. 14).

There are three realms in the outer being: physical, vital, and mental. The physical part has two aspects: the physical on an individual level and the physical consciousness on the universal plane. The physical part of an individual consists of three layers: physical, vital-physical, and mental-physical.

- The physical comprises the cells of the physical body which have their own consciousness.
- The vital-physical is the connection of the nervous responses from the body supported by the lowest level of the vital. This consists of smaller sensations, desires, needs, and reactions of the body.
- The mental-physical is the physical sphere where the mind resides (Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 2002, pp. 12–46).

The vital refers to the life force, emotion, and libido, which is characterized by force and power and governed by the mutative (*rajas*) principle. The vital within human beings is composed of desires, sensations, feelings, impulses, possessions, and instincts of greed, anger, and lust (Sri Aurobindo,

1993, p. 53). Although it has the mind element transfused in it, the vital has to be distinguished from the mental plane. The vital plane is divided into four parts:

- The mental vital gives a mental expression by thoughts, speech, emotions, desires, passions, sensations, or other movements of the vital being. The corresponding body region is from the throat to the heart.
- The emotional vital or higher vital includes various emotions such as love, joy, sorrow, or hatred. The corresponding body region is the front of the heart.
- The central vital contains stronger vital longings and reactions such as ambition, pride, fear, fame, attractions, repulsions, desires, or passions. The corresponding body region is from the heart to the navel.
- The lower vital is occupied with small desires, feelings and wishes of daily life including food, sexual drive, preferences, quarrels, love of praise, and anger. The corresponding body region is below the navel (Sri Aurobindo, 1993, p. 53; Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 2002, pp. 26–37).

Next, the mental—or mind—is the part of being that corresponds to the operation of cognition and intelligence such as mental perceptions, reasoning, vision, and will. The mental possesses the power to formulate and organize thoughts and inspirations into actions. The mind interacts with the physical as well as the vital planes, which is distinguished into three subsystems:

- The sense-mind, physical mental, or externalizing mind is the medium of the mind and the physical.
- The emotional-mind or vital mind is the mediator of the mind with the vital. It converts the vital longings of desires and emotions to mental forms of imagination and dreams.
- The thought-mind or the mind proper corresponds to the Sanskrit term *buddhi*. This mind proper consists of five subplanes: the ordinary mind, the higher mind, the intuitive mind, the illumined mind, and the overmind. These belong to the planes of superconscious (Cornelissen, 2018, p. 71; Sri Aurobindo, 1993, pp. 55–56).

The outer being is the part of consciousness on the surface realm where one is conscious of the expressions of sensations, emotions, thoughts, and life impulses. This is the ordinary exterior self or ego that one identifies with. This outer being is distinguished into three major parts: the physical or biological, the vital or emotional/libidinal, and the mental or mind. Each part exists on its own plane of consciousness but the interaction and influence between them creates further subdivisions (Miovic, 2004).

Following, the inner being or the subliminal, is the invisible interior of a human being which can be experienced subjectively, and at its core resides the psychic being (or evolving soul). The inner being includes three subtle sheaths of consciousness: inner physical, inner vital and inner mental, as well as the cakra system and the subconscious (Miovic, 2004, p. 124). This subliminal realm connects vertically to the planes of consciousness above and below one's ordinary

consciousness and horizontally to other beings, the environment or planes surrounding one's existence (Cornelissen, 2018; Miovic, 2018). With *sadhana*—spiritual discipline—one is able to live in the inner being where experiences of deep peace, light, love, and intimacy with the Divine become the central reality and the outer being becomes its instrument (Sri Aurobindo, 1993). The inner being is considered the largest part of one's nature which stands behind and supports the exterior self (Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 2002). The inner physical, vital, and mental are larger and more influential than their outer respective counterparts. The inner being consists of the inner physical, the inner vital, and the inner mental.

- The inner physical or subtle-physical sheath is located between the physical body and the subtle body and forms protection from fatigue, exhaustion, illness, and even accidents. Energy or hands-on healing methods are considered to affect this realm.
- The inner vital is related to astral travel.
- The inner mental is associated with clairvoyance and telepathy (Miovic, 2018, pp. 201–203; Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 2002, pp. 61–71).

Moreover, in IYP, the cakras are centers of consciousness within the subtle body of the inner being with corresponding locations to the physical body (Cornelissen, 2018). The cakras belong to both the Purusa as the center of consciousness and to Prakrti along the spine of the physical body. In relation to the classic Tantric doctrine of the cakras, Sri Aurobindo (as cited in Miovic,

2004) generally agrees with the descriptions of the cakras but disagrees with the practice of raising the kundalini from below to the top, which may cause spiritual emergencies as acknowledged by transpersonal psychology. This is generally because opening the cakras unleashes hidden energies that the individual personality may not be strong enough to properly handle resulting in imbalances in the physical or vital structure, or even possibly cause fragmentation in the psyche resulting in psychotic symptoms. Instead, IYP recommends either opening the highest cakras first or bringing forward the psychic being and allowing it to infuse the entire inner being (Miovic, 2004). Then the outer being will gently open up to the cakras and the kundalini without the danger of abrupt psycho-spiritual disturbances (Miovic, 2004). The cakras can be organized into three realms of mind, vital, and physical. The mind operates through the top three cakras of *sahasradala*, *ajna*, and *vishuddha*; the vital operates through *anahata*, *manipura*, and *svadhithana*. The physical operates through the *muladhara*. The following descriptions are the IYP cakra system corresponding to the planes of consciousness and the parts of being (see Sri Aurobindo, 2012, pp. 229–244; Cornelissen, 2018, pp. 75–76; Miovic, 2018, pp. 201–203).

Sahasradala is the thousand-petal lotus on the top of the head and is blue with a golden light. “This cakra commands the higher thinking mind (buddhi) and the illumined mind and open upwards toward the intuitive mind and overmind” (Miovic, 2018, p. 202). That is, *Sahasradala* governs all between the ordinary mind and the supermind. The center of the crown is the communication between the individual being and the infinite consciousness above.

Ajna is the two-petal lotus located around the forehead and is white. This cakra is the center of inner consciousness and governs the dynamic mind of inner will and vision. It is the location of the third eye with occult power and vision. “The center between the eyes is that of inner (occult) thought, will and vision. This inner or occult vision is called by ordinary people psychic vision” (Sri Aurobindo, 2012, p. 237). When the *ajna* cakra is open, the communication between higher consciousness and inner being as well as outer being is clear.

Vishuddha is the 16-petal lotus located in the throat region and is grey. This cakra is the center of the physical or externalizing mind and functions primarily through speech, expression, and mental dealing with the physical world. This cakra corresponds to the externalizing mind that “commands expression and externalization of all mental movements and forces; also called physical mind when it gives a mental order to external things and deals with them practically” (Miovic, 2018, p. 202).

Anahata is a 12-petal lotus located in the heart region and is golden pink. This cakra governs the emotional mind or higher vital with various feelings such as love, joy, and sorrow. The psychic being is located behind the heart. The physical heart is located in the left side of the chest, but the psychic heart center is in the middle of the cardiac center.

Manipura is the 10-petal lotus located in the navel region and is violet. This is the main vital center. This cakra commands the central vital which is the “seat of the stronger vital longings and reactions, e.g., ambition, pride, fear, love of fame, attractions and repulsions, desires and passions, life-forces and life-

energies” (Miovic, 2018, p. 202). “The navel is the seat of the central vital, below it is the lower vital” (Sri Aurobindo, 2012, p. 242).

Svadhithana is the six-petal lotus located in the abdomen region (between the navel and the base of spine) and is a deep purplish red. This cakra is the lower vital center where small physical or daily desires such as food or sex “as well as small likings and dislikings, such as vanity, quarrels, love of praise, anger and blame” (Miovic, 2018, p. 202) originate and interact with heart and mental centers above. Sri Aurobindo (1970) further notes the origin of desires:

The heart center is the emotional center. The navel is the main vital center. In the abdomen is the lower vital center. It is in these two that there is the origination of desire—but desire rises and becomes emotional in the heart and mental in the higher centers above. (p. 241)

Muladhara has four petals and is located at the base of spine and is red. This is the center governing the physical consciousness (Sri Aurobindo, 1970). This cakra “governs the physical being down to the subconscious. When not transformed, is prone to inertia, ignorance, repetition of habits, slowness, resistance to spiritual consciousness” (Miovic, 2018, p. 202).

Finally, this section presents the psychic being, as the inmost center. The inmost center is located at the center or core of the innermost being. There are three parts within the innermost being, with the psychic being as the center of the individual existence—true mental (*manomaya purusha*), true vital (*pranamaya purusha*), and true physical (*annamaya purusha*) (Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 1999, p. 18; Teklinski, 2018, p. 108). Within the innermost being, the psychic being is central to the practice of IYP and evocation of it can transform the entire being.

Psychic being, or the evolving soul, is coined from the Greek root *psyche* which means the soul (Miovic, 2004). Sri Aurobindo (as cited in Miovic, 2004) credited the Mother for the discovery of the psychic being. Although the psychic being and soul are often used interchangeably in IYP, there is a subtle difference between the two. The soul is the spark of the Divine and comes down to manifestation and dwells at the center of all living beings to support the process of evolution. The soul is identical with the origin of the Divine as the individual divinity within each being. The psychic being is formed by the soul in the evolution as the delegate of jivatman (Cornelissen, 2018, pp. 81; Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 1999). Initially, the psychic center (*antaratman, caitya purusa*) is a tiny kernel of psychic entity. Gradually, a complete psychic being is formed as a sheath or inner personality around the soul.

The psychic being sits behind the heart cakra and supports the growth of body, vital, and mind in the human being. It is the agency that carries the essence of all individual experiences through many lifetimes. The psychic being is a portion of Divine and acts as its instrument in manifestation for revelation of the Divine essence. Initially, an individual is identified with the ego personality and the psychic being is veiled behind the expressions of the ego. The ego personality is temporary for a single lifetime and is created by the soul as a mold of expression for Prakrti to devise her force within each being (Cornelissen, 2018). The soul creates an inner personality that matures during the process of evolution of consciousness (Miovic, 2018; Sri Aurobindo, 1970). The soul or the psychic being is the eternal being which exists beyond the limitations of death and birth.

Through sadhana, the psychic being comes forward and transforms the body, vital, and mind. The transformation is centralized within the entire being and subtle feelings of sweetness, love, surrender, and devotion for the Divine arise naturally. Miovic (2018) depicted the nature of the psychic opening as follows:

Subjectively, the psychic being is usually felt as residing deep within the center of the chest, behind the heart chakra, with which it is frequently confused. Opening to the psychic being brings feelings of spiritual devotion, surrender to the Divine, gratitude, sweetness, quiet joy, love of all that is good and beautiful and harmonious, and a spontaneous recoil from all that is false, evil, dishonest, selfish, or discordant. (p. 123)

When the psychic being becomes more prominent than the identification with the ego, it makes possible the complete transformation of mind, vital, and body (Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 1999). On the other hand, the union of jivatman with the Supreme Being or *Atman*, brings the sense of liberation as emphasized by classical yoga (Miovic, 2018). One feels detached and liberated from all things as the jivatman merges with the Divine. While both methods are available, the central aim of IYP is to bring forward the psychic being to transform all egoistic movements including thoughts, feelings, and actions into spiritualized movements as the expression of the Divine on earth (Miovic, 2004).

The central being and psychic being are often mixed or indistinguishable in the Upanishads or other systems while they are different forms of the same reality (Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 1999). “The jivatman, spark-soul and psychic being are three different forms of the same reality and they must not be mixed up together, as that confuses the clearness of the inner experience” (Sri Aurobindo,

2012, p. 64). In IYP, it is necessary to differentiate these parts although each occupies a separate meaning and marks a different type of progress in sadhana.

Atman or Self is the universal Divinity and exists beyond the course of life or death, time or space, body, or mind (Miovic, 2004). Atman is unborn and independent of the manifestation of Prakrti and exists eternally without bondage.

As Sri Aurobindo (2002) delineated:

The Atman is the Self or Spirit that remains above, pure and stainless, unaffected by the stains of life, by desire and ego and ignorance. It is realized as the true being of the individual, but also more widely as the same being in all and as the Self in the cosmos; it has also a self-existence above the individual and cosmos and it is then called the Paramatman, the supreme Divine Being. (p. 80)

Jivatman, or Spirit, is the individual divinity or the individualized version of Atman. It is superior to life or death and is independent of the manifestation. As Sri Aurobindo noted,

the Jivatman or spirit, as it is usually called in English, is self-existent above the manifested or instrumental being—it is superior to birth and death, always the same, the individual Self or Atman. It is the eternal true being of the individual. (Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 2002, p. 83)

Transformation of Consciousness

The aim of IYP is a complete transformation of the whole person, from the surface ego transformation through awakening of the psychic being, and finally to supramental transformation of the entire being down to the physical or cellular level (Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 2002). Transformation means a radical and complete change of consciousness in spiritual evolution. The concept of transformation is unique to IYP which differs from traditional yogic views of self-realization. Self-realization is commonly accepted in most systems as the ultimate goal of spiritual progress (Miovic, 2004). Realization of the Self in this sense is to

rise or ascend to the consciousness of higher planes and realize the *Atman* or Self as the true being. However, this type of realization alone does not transform the whole being of a person as the working of Prakrti on the lower planes will pull the consciousness back down to its ordinary states of imperfection. Thus, transformation is a necessary step to bring the higher consciousness down to the mind, vital, and body and is a gradual process that cannot happen instantly as the realization of the Divine truth needs to happen before transformation can take place (Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 1999).

There are three types of transformation described in IYP: psychic, spiritual, and supramental transformation (Sri Aurobindo, 1993). Psychic transformation involves the outer being (egocentric consciousness) through the evocation of and facilitation by the psychic being or soul within the inmost place of our heart center; spiritual transformation involves the descent of higher planes of consciousness and the opening of different lower planes of consciousness and union with cosmic consciousness; the supramental transformation is the complete supramentalization of the entire being from inner consciousness to the physical plane. The following sections presents the triple transformation as a central and unique feature of IYP.

Psychic Transformation

Psychic transformation refers to the process of transforming the outer personality through activation of and facilitation by the psychic being (Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 1999). The psychic being is a portion of the Divine seated deep behind the heart center and is the eternal soul within. The psychic being

connects directly with the Divine truth but is hidden by the surface physical, vital, and mental movements which are governed by the desire-soul. Sri Aurobindo

(1999) differentiated between the psychic being and the desire-soul:

We have a double psychic entity in us, the surface desire-soul which works in our vital craving, our emotions, aesthetic faculty and mental seeking for power, knowledge and happiness, and a subliminal psychic entity, a pure power of light, love, joy and refined essence of being which is our true soul behind the outer form of psychic existence. (p. 24)

In ordinary life, one is influenced by the desire-soul seeking mental, vital, or physical fulfillments. Psychic transformation begins with a realization that there is a portion of the Divine within the heart supported by the Divine truth. One has to bring this hidden psychic being, or soul, to the front of consciousness, to allow its presence to guide us and transform the movements of the outer being. By this process, one feels the psychic being to be the true being and the mind, vital, and body become the instrument of the soul. Psychic transformation awakens and brings this guiding soul within the heart to the front as the doorway to supramental light and bliss. As Sri Aurobindo (1999) indicated:

By coming forward is meant that it comes from behind the veil, its presence is felt already in the waking daily consciousness, its influence fills, dominates, transforms the mind and vital and their movements, even the physical. One is aware of one's soul, feels the psychic to be one's true being, the mind and the rest begin to be only instruments of the inmost within us. (p. 111)

The process of psychic transformation involves three phases: aspiration, rejection, and surrender (Miovic, 2018; Shirazi, 2016). Aspiration is defined as the longing for and invocation of the Divine. It is a spiritual yearning from the soul which is different from egoistic desires or ambitions. Aspiration involves quieting the egoistic movements and centering one's consciousness in the inner

being until the presence of the Divine is experienced within in waking consciousness. Rejection means using the discernment power of the psychic being to remove or transform the egocentric movements of the lower nature, such as divisive and harmful thoughts, feelings, or actions. Rejection is different from egoistic suppression where the ego defense mechanisms use mental power to control expressions of certain emotions. Discernment allows us to clearly distinguish wholesome spiritual aspects of consciousness from those of our lower nature, and thus, removing the impediments to spiritual development. Surrender refers to the surrendering of all the egoistic tendencies to the Divine and is different from adherence to any external authority or internal ego vulnerabilities. It results in opening to the inner Divine and transforming the egoistic consciousness into instruments of Divine expression. Surrender is the primary instrument for the psychic transformation in IYP (Miovic, 2018). Aspiration, rejection, and surrender are the three phases in the process of psychic transformation.

Psychic transformation requires practice of sadhana with two necessary elements: purification and consecration (Sri Aurobindo, 1993; Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 1999). Purification means purification of the heart, which aims to turn the heart fully to the Divine and allow the inner being to take full dominance over the outer movements. Consecration is the practice of self-offering to the Divine; that is, the process of training the consciousness to offer itself to the Divine. Purification and consecration aim at changing the base nature through the process of psychic transformation.

According to Sri Aurobindo (1993), there are three main elements in the process of psychic transformation. First, it is the opening of the inner being including the inner mental, vital, and physical, which lies behind the surface egoistic movements. Second is bringing the psychic being forward to the front to guide all the mental, vital, and physical movements and turning them to the Divine. The third is to open the lower nature to spiritual light for psycho-spiritual transformation (p. 205). The opening of the inner being, psychic being, and lower nature to the Divine truth are three prominent elements in the process of psychic transformation, which may lead one to realization of the cosmic consciousness, oneness of the self, and universal love.

The process of psychic transformation can lead to the transformation of the ego personality (Miovic, 2018; Shirazi, 2016, 2018). The ego personality is the observable or surface part of the nature within an individual and includes the outer mental, vital, and physical movements. In mainstream psychology, it is associated with the expressions of cognition, affect, and behavior. According to Sri Aurobindo (as cited in Miovic, 2018), there are two ways to transform the ego, either by opening of the psychic being within or descent of higher consciousness from above. The opening of the psychic being acts to purify the ego consciousness and surrender all to the Divine such that one becomes selfless or un-egoistic through self-offering and surrender. Furthermore, the psychic being has the power to bring forth psychological strength and to heal psychological wounds through its direct link with the Divine (Miovic, 2004). This means using

the psychic being as the catalyst to transform ego function into instruments of Divine action.

The psychic being (soul) is entirely real and can, through its direct link with the Divine, bring to the outer being a deep source of psychological strength and sustenance. Practically, this means the psychic being (soul) has the power to transform ego functioning, even to heal psychological wounds that seem therapeutically unsolvable. (Miovic, 2004, p. 128)

In conclusion, psychic transformation is the awakening of the psychic being, the portion of the Divine within the heart center so it can act as a catalyst for the process of psychospiritual transformation and healing of the ego personality. This process is unique for each individual, but can be generally characterized in terms of three phases: aspiration for the Divine, rejection of that which is not Divine, and surrendering to the Divine through the practice of purification and consecration (Shirazi, 2016). As Banerji (2018) summarized:

The psychic integrates the personality from within. It does so by its capacity to integrate the mental, vital, and physical personalities of the human being—each of which has emerged separately in evolution and hence is discontinuous with the others. The psychic is also a first level of integration of Purusha and Prakrti, as it is a being with qualities—a soul person with a soul personality. The emergence of the psychic being becomes the key to this integration of the personality. (p. 46)

Spiritual Transformation

Spiritual transformation involves the descent of higher consciousness from above to the lower nature resulting in a complete transformation of the entire being (Miovic, 2004; Sri Aurobindo, 1993, pp. 209–229; Varma, 2010). Spiritual transformation is not merely the ascent of individual consciousness to higher planes of consciousness for the purpose of self-realization or attainment of liberation as in most traditional yogic systems. While the ascent may bring the sense of liberation and widening of consciousness, the lower nature remains

unaffected even after this realization. Therefore, IYP emphasizes the significance of the descent of higher consciousness down to transform the lower nature (Miovic, 2018). Spiritual transformation first involves an ascent that opens upwards to the higher planes of consciousness—the “Divine Peace, Force, Light, Ananda” and then a descent that brings it down into the lower planes and body for a complete transformation (Aurobindo, 1993, p. 216).

The practice of this yoga is double—one side is of an ascent of the consciousness to the higher planes, the other is that of a descent of the power of the higher planes into the earth-consciousness so as to drive out the Power of darkness and ignorance and transform the nature. (Sri Aurobindo, 1993, p. 219)

First, in the process of ascent, consciousness gradually rises up out of the body and above the head and takes station in the higher planes. This means “an ascension of the consciousness to a position which is no longer in the body but above it ... there comes a definitive rise by which the consciousness permanently takes its station above” (Sri Aurobindo, 1993, p. 219). One realizes that the consciousness is not limited to or identified with the body or ordinary consciousness but also resides above and extends to the space. According to Banerji (2018b):

In a Cosmic Consciousness ... each being, thing, or phenomenon is perceived as an aspect, hence a portion of the Whole. The One is experienced behind each being, and behind the entire cosmic manifestation. ... Arriving at that experience is the foundation of the spiritual transformation, which draws on the power of an ascending series of cosmic mind planes culminating in the Overmind, to spiritualize the human nature. In each of these transformations, there is a double achievement—the realization of a consciousness and the transformation of the nature by that consciousness. (p. 46)

This realization of consciousness can be distinguished in two aspects. One is the static realization of peace, silence, and freedom as a detached and indifferent

witnessing Self. The other is the dynamic realization of the cosmic Self or Spirit that is both “one in all [and] transcend[s] all” (Sri Aurobindo, 1993, p. 214) as the universal Self.

After the ascent, a descent of the higher consciousness is required to transform the lower nature within the being. It is recommended by Sri Aurobindo (as cited in Miovic, 2018) as a safer method to establish peace before the descent of the higher Divine force. When the Divine consciousness descends, it first enters the head and opens the inner mind centers, then into the heart opening the psychic being and the emotional being, next into the navel and other vital centers to open the inner vital, and finally into the muladhara and below to open the inner physical being. This descent works for “perfection as well as liberation. ... It integrates, harmonizes, establishes a new rhythm in the nature” (Sri Aurobindo, 1993, p. 215).

The role of the psychic being is significant in the process of spiritual transformation as it works to prepare and support the progress of transformation (Sri Aurobindo, 1993). When the psychic being is opened and is in front of consciousness, the feelings of love, bhakti, and surrender grow in the heart center. This makes the progress easier, safer, and more rapid for the transformation of nature.

The first opening is effected by a concentration in the heart, a call to the Divine to manifest within us and through the psychic to take up and lead the whole nature. ... The second opening is effected by a concentration of the consciousness in the head (afterwards, above it) and an aspiration and call and a sustained will for the descent of the Divine Peace, Power, Light, Knowledge, Ananda into the being. (Sri Aurobindo, 1993, p. 216)

Spiritual transformation, with the assistance of the psychic being, brings about a spiritual change of the nature from the inner to the outer being, from the overmind to the subconscious.

Supramental Transformation

The supermind is the truth-consciousness that possesses infinite inherent knowledge, force, and will. Its nature is omnipresent and omniscient and moves in the direction of Divine truth and will without ignorance or falsehood. The supramental nature does not act from mental speculations or vital impulses of division and limitation, but rather from the perspective of oneness and unity to penetrate into the truth of all things. The momentum of supermind is “calm, self-possessed, spontaneous, plastic; it arises naturally and inevitably out of a harmonic identity of the truth” (Sri Aurobindo, 2005, p. 1001). This is the supramental gnosis that exists in unity and oneness of all. *Supramental transformation* is the culmination of the evolution that leads to a complete transformation of the mental, vital, physical consciousness, and the body.

There are preliminary stages preceding the final one—supramental transformation (Sri Aurobindo, 1993, p. 231).

The true direct supramental does not come at the beginning but much later on in the sadhana. First, the opening up and illumination of the mental, vital and physical beings; secondly, the making intuitive of the mind, through will etc. and the development of the hidden soul consciousness progressively replacing the surface consciousness; thirdly, the supramentalising of the changed mental, vital and physical beings and finally the descent of the true supramental and the rising into the supramental plane. ... These stages may overlap and intermix, there may be many variations, but the last two can only come in advanced state of progress. (Sri Aurobindo, 1993, p. 231)

The openings of the illumined mind, intuitive mind, and overmind are essential stages before the supramental change can take place. The final two stages are advanced steps of yoga that can only come as a natural course of sadhana. Supramental transformation is not only the change of inner consciousness, but also of the physical body and external manifestations, which is the most difficult step (Sri Aurobindo, 1977). The body needs to be prepared in a calm, pure, and surrendered state for the Divine to work in the field of matter. Only then can the supramental transformation completely change the mental, vital, physical consciousness, and the body as the true embodiment of Divine on earth.

Supermind is the bridge to the unitary gnosis of Sacchidananda (Sri Aurobindo, 2005). The descent of the Supermind results in the realization of Divine potentiality within the sphere of multiplicities. Supramental transformation is the complete change of both the inner and outer being on all levels—mental, vital, and physical—resulting in an integrated consciousness and personality. Indeed, the goal of IYP is to lead human society toward a complete and integrated evolution of consciousness to reveal the Divine within and to establish Divine consciousness on Earth (Varma, 2010).

To summarize, psychic transformation is the opening of the psychic being to bring this individual Divine within to the front as guidance for healing and transformation of the ego. Spiritual transformation is the opening from higher mind to overmind and union with the cosmic consciousness, followed by descent of cosmic consciousness into the lower parts of the being. Supramental transformation is the complete change of the entire being including the physical

plane. The three transformational processes presented by IYP present a unique and holistic path for the evolution of consciousness. It is not only realization and liberation of Divine in a traditional spiritual sense, but a complete transformation of the entire being for the complete embodiment of Divine consciousness within the individual as well as collective transformation of the human species.

The three themes covered in this literature review—cosmology of involution and evolution, planes of consciousness and parts of being, and the triple transformation—comprise the central elements of integral yoga psychology. These themes in IYP, combined with the essential elements of yoga psychology in AM, lay the foundation for a whole-person yoga psychology model.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW ON ANANDA MARGA

Ananda Marga (AM) is a modern renaissance of the holistic Tantric yoga tradition. The founder, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti extracted, reinterpreted, and synthesized the ancient teachings of the Vedas and Tantras to develop a new structure for both spiritual and social evolution suitable for the modern era. The spiritual philosophies in AM share some similarities in terminology with traditional teachings of Tantra and the Vedas, in terms of cosmology and practices in Samkhya and Ashtanga or the cakra system in Tantra and Kundalini yoga. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti extracted the holistic essence of metaphysics in these ancient teachings, with further refinement and reinterpretation, to formulate a unique foundation for AM spiritual philosophies and practices. There are also some perspectives that ancient teachings of the Vedas and Tantras held that AM is opposed to, such as withdrawal from mundane life in Advaita or the use of occult power in some Tantric traditions. Lastly, the social theories of AM are founded upon a spiritual ideology for the collective evolution of consciousness. Thus, AM is a social-spiritual system that maintains the necessity of spiritual development on the individual level as well as collective evolution of the cosmos as a whole.

As a holistic yoga discipline, AM introduces a balanced approach to a whole person development in both spiritual and social realms (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1999). In the spiritual realm, the aim is self-realization which includes practices and metaphysics in cosmology, consciousness study, cakra biopsychology, and microvitum theory. In the social sphere, the approach is selfless service, which includes practices and theories on neohumanism and

PROUT (progressive utilization theory). The spiritual aspect guides one to expand the potentiality of consciousness and realize their inner Divine essence. The social aspect leads one to render selfless service to all beings in the universe and realize the interconnectivity of collective consciousness. PROUT is a socioeconomic approach, whereas neohumanism is a psycho-intellectual approach and spiritual practice is a spiritual-intuitional approach (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001f). The three-fold integrative approach assists one to maintain equilibrium in physical, psychic, and spiritual realms.

In the sphere of spirituality, AM introduces cosmology, consciousness study, cakra biopsychology, and microvitum theory (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1999). AM cosmology pronounces a nondual view that recognizes the cosmic entity, *Brahma*, as One with two aspects—transcendental consciousness (*Purusa*) and operational force (*Prakrti*); these two aspects are coexistent and indivisible. Both the transcendental aspects of consciousness and manifested phenomena of the world are sourced from *Brahma*. The study of consciousness proposes five layers in the microcosmic mind which correspond to the seven realms of consciousness in the Macrocosmic mind. Cakra biopsychology presents seven primary cakras with associated propensities and glandular influences. *Microvitum* are the subtlest cosmic elements that exist within the cosmos, which may contribute to future research to bridge science and spirituality.

Sarkar sees microvitum as the “mysterious emanation of Cosmic Factor,” or as a highly subtle and microscopic entity emitted into the universe by the infinite field of pure consciousness. These microvita exist in both the physical and psychic dimensions. In the realm of physicality, microvita are smaller and subtler and subtler than electrons, protons, neutrons, and positrons, while in the psychic realm, they are subtler than ectoplasm or

“mind-stuff” (the constituent of *citta*, the crudest layer of the mind).
(Kang, 2009, p. 79)

Spiritual metaphysics and practices lead one to progress on the path of self-realization and consciousness expansion.

The realm of social welfare introduces the theory and practices of neohumanism and PROUT (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001a). *Neohumanism* is a universal philosophy that extends the human-centric view of humanism to include all the strata of being as dynamic expressions of cosmic consciousness against prejudices of race, religions, countries, or less-evolved creatures. When one establishes this universal worldview in their heart, love for the Supreme Consciousness will naturally overflow to all beings and objects in the universe as the manifestation of the Divine love and bliss. As Sarkar (1987) stated:

All molecules, atoms, electrons, protons, positrons and neutrons are the veritable expressions of the same Supreme Consciousness. ... When the underlying spirit of humanism is extended to everything, animate and inanimate, in this universe—I have designated this as Neohumanism. This Neohumanism will elevate humanism to universalism. (p. 370)

The essence of neohumanism is universalism based on spirituality (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001a). *PROUT* is a socioeconomic theory that envisions a society that enables all individuals to develop their full potentiality and uniqueness in physical, psychic, and spiritual realms and where all resources can be utilized and distributed in a sustainable way (Maheshvarananda, 2003). The PROUT model introduces an integral model for social justice and collective welfare that advocates a decentralized model with a people-centered economy, community-focused living, cultural revolution, and environmental sustainability.

This model is designed to ensure optimal development for each individual in all three strata of existence—physical, mental, and spiritual.

In summary, spiritual and social aspects are both crucial and indispensable for a balanced and harmonious living. This literature review emphasized the theories and practices that are most relevant to intrapersonal development in a whole-person yoga psychology model.

Cosmology in Ananda Marga

In AM, cosmology constitutes the foundation for the study of consciousness and mind (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b, 1998b). AM, as a modern renaissance of Tantric tradition, draws from traditional Indian philosophy with further refinement and restructure of philosophical stances and meanings (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b, 1999). In this section, cosmology and metaphysics of AM are presented here in three subsections: defining Brahma, the Cosmic Entity; the evolution of Cosmos—Brahma cakra; and the composition of mind.

Defining Brahma—The Cosmic Entity

The Cosmic Entity is One, represented as Brahma. Brahma is composed of two attributes—Shiva and Shakti (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2004). These two attributes are indivisible and concomitant, as a piece of paper with two sides: one cannot exist without the existence of the other. *Purusa*, or *Shiva*, is the term used for Cosmic Consciousness or Supreme Consciousness, and is characterized as masculine. *Purusa* is transcendental, immutable, and blissful. He is the witnessing entity beyond the play of pain and pleasure. *Prakrti* or *Shakti* is the term for

Cosmic Operative Principle or Cosmic Force. Prakrti, as the Cosmic Operative Principle, is the force that creates and characterizes objects in the universe, and is viewed as feminine. She is the force that is responsible in the creation of this world, animate or inanimate. In the relationship between Purusa and Prakrti, Prakrti is the qualifying force or principle of Purusa and She also qualifies Purusa. That is, the Cosmic Operative Principle adheres and belongs to Cosmic Consciousness and also metamorphosed consciousness by her qualifying force. Although Purusa and Prakrti are seemingly distinct entities, they cannot be separated. Whenever Prakrti exists, Purusa is present, and the collective term for both is *Brahma*. In the course of spiritual practice, Purusa and Prakrti appear to be distinct in the beginning phase. After realizing *Brahma*, the individual does not see the two as separated. There is no differentiation as One—everything in the phenomenal world is the representation of Divine consciousness, as *Brahma*.

As previously mentioned, Prakrti is the force that creates and characterizes objects. She executes action with three attributes (*gunas*)—*sattvaguna*, *rajoguna*, and *tamoguna* (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). This perspective is similar to the *guna* theory of Samkhya and some traditional Indian systems. The meaning of *guna* is a “binding string,” the Cosmic Force (*Prakrti*) that binds Consciousness (Purusa) into various representations and vibrations. *Sattvaguna* is the sentient force that denotes the sense of “I am” (*Mahattattva*). It conveys happiness and awakens spiritual longing. *Rajoguna* is the mutative force characterized by action of “I do” (*Ahamtattva*), the ego. It denotes the sense of ownership and a doer. *Tamoguna* is the static force which creates the objective portion of the mind as

citta. With the bondage of *tamoguna*, the physical world of five fundamental factors is created. It is the force of inertia and crudeness. In the universe, these three gunas of Prakrti are constantly present with different degrees of domination in every phenomenon. In the example of a flowering bud, while blossoming, the force of rajoguna is more powerful than tamoguna, the result is a beautiful luster of sattvaguna. When the flower gradually withers, the force of tamoguna is the most powerful and transforms it to the state of crudeness as death. Prakrti, with her three binding principles, transforms pure consciousness into this dynamic and creative phenomenal world.

In regard to the creation of this phenomenal world, Purusa is the material cause of creation and Prakrti is the linking, instrumental force that adheres to it (Anandamitra, 2002). This can be demonstrated in the relationship between a potter and clay. The potter and the clay are both Purusa. The energy links the potter and the clay as well as the action of molding it is Prakrti. With the will (Purusa) of the potter and the skill (Prakrti), the clay (Purusa) is molding into a pot (Universe). That is to say, the ultimate cause of the universe and the material basis of the world are made from consciousness (*Purusa*), and the dynamic and creative representation of the universe is the function of the Cosmic Operative Principle (*Prakrti*). Purusa is the efficient cause of creation and Prakrti is secondary. This manifested world is the *liila* (Divine play) between Purusa and Prakrti, consciousness and His force.

Lastly, Brahma has two states—*Saguna Brahma* (attributional Cosmic Entity) and *Nirguna Brahma* (non-attributional Cosmic Entity). These two states

do not represent duality, rather they are two states of a single entity (Anandamitra, 2002). *Saguna Brahma*, a state of qualified consciousness where pure consciousness (*Purusa*) is influenced or qualified by the creative force (*Prakrti*), transforms pure consciousness into manifested vibrations. In this state, *Purusa* is merely witnessing the dynamic play of *Prakrti*. *Nirguna Brahma* is a state of transcendental consciousness, where the creative force is dormant, and consciousness exists beyond the influence of the binding principles of *Prakrti*. This can be illustrated in the example of an iceberg in the ocean (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1999). Due to variations in climate, some water in the ocean freezes into condensed icebergs while part remains liquid. The ocean is analogous to *Nirguna Brahma*, the iceberg to *Saguna Brahma*, the climate that freezes the ocean to *Prakrti*, and the unfrozen water in the ocean to *Purusa*. When the climate (*Prakrti*) freezes the water (*Purusa*) into icebergs (*Saguna Brahma*), *Prakrti* is qualifying *Purusa* in the *Saguna Brahma* state. When the climate does not influence the ocean, the water remains in its original liquid form, where *Prakrti* is dormant and *Purusa* exists in the eternal flow as in the *Nirguna Brahma* state. The iceberg and the unfrozen water are two different forms of water, where the ice is a metamorphosed form of water. *Brahma* is One, as the composition of both ocean (*Nirguna Brahma*) and iceberg (*Saguna Brahma*) where *Saguna Brahma* exists in *Nirguna Brahma*. Therefore, it is important to note that *Brahma* is infinite, and Its supreme state is *Nirguna*, the realization of *Saguna* is not the realization of the ultimate state.

Moreover, AM recognizes a unique aspect of Brahma, *Taraka Brahma*, which means “liberating Brahma” and acts as a bridge between Nirguna and Saguna Brahma (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993a). Taraka Brahma is at the tangential point between two states—the transcendence and the manifestations—and is intimately connected with all beings through the spiritual practices of devotion and surrender. As Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (1993a) stated:

It is only in Tantra that the sadhana of Taraka Brahma has been specially defined distinct from the sadhana of Nirguna and Saguna and has its own peculiarity. Theoretically speaking, Saguna Brahma has infinite samskaras, and so for an infinite time to come Saguna Brahma will continue to enjoy the fruit of His own past actions. Nirguna is the Objectless Entity with no action or derivation, but Taraka Brahma is the middle point and can fulfil the function of both. He guides, loves and favors His affectionate sons and daughters. ... This complete surrender is the *summum bonum* of all spiritual sadhana. (pp. 45–46)

The perspective of Taraka Brahma is distinct from traditional Vedantic philosophies. Its existence is based upon spiritual devotional sadhana to arouse love for the Divine within, as a bridge between qualified and nonqualified states of Cosmic Entity (*Brahma*).

While AM draws from traditional teachings of Indian philosophy with further refinement and reconstruction, there are some variations in philosophical stances (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997a). Here, the main distinctions of AM from traditional schools of Samkhya, Advaita, and Vishista are presented without going into the philosophical details of each system to position AM within and beyond the traditional teachings. First of all, in Samkhya or Dualism philosophy, Prakrti is the ultimate cause of creation, termed *Pradhana* (foremost), and Purusa is an indifferent and passive controller who does not act and simply witnesses as a presence behind all manifestations, termed as *Janya Ishvara* (Chatterjee & Datta,

2007; Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997a). The manifestations or individual consciousness (*jiivas*) are part of Prakrti and are separate entities from Purusa. AM metaphysics differs from Samkhya that recognizes the primordial cause of creation is Purusa, and Prakrti is the subordinate cause. There are multiple manifestations in the world but there is only one singular *Parama Purusha* (Supreme Consciousness). The manifestations, or *jiivas*, are a portion of the Divine manifested in the universe with the principles of Prakrti. Moreover, Purusa is not merely an indifferent, transcendental reality. AM recognizes the Taraka aspect of Brahma as an intimate Divinity that connects and guides all manifestations with sweet devotion.

In Advaita Vedanta, unqualified nondualism, the main contention is Mayavada, that “Brahma alone is real; the jagat (the creation) is false or illusory; all *jiivas* are nothing except Brahma” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997a, p. 121). Advaita, an absolute nondualistic philosophy, admits only the existence of transcendental reality and sees creation as merely illusory. Advaita recognizes only the Nirguna aspect of Brahma. AM differs from Advaita in that AM recognizes Brahma as the composition of Purusa and Prakrti, where both the transcendence and phenomenon coexist as absolute and relative truth in Nirguna and Saguna states. In contrast to the renunciatory attitude in Advaita, AM encourages living in the world as the instrument of Divine to bring all to the path of bliss and self-realization. Last, Vishishtadvaita, qualified nondualism, recognizes that Brahma is characterized by multiple qualities. The individual consciousness (*jiiva*) is inseparable and exists within Brahma but never becomes

Brahma. “Brahman is eternally Brahman, and the selves within Him eternally exist as such” (Chatterjee & Datta, 2007, p. 393). While Vishishtadvaita recognizes only the Saguna aspect of Brahma, AM observes both the Nirguna and Saguna aspects to be true as two states of the same one Brahma. In Saguna and Nirguna states, Purusa and Prakrti both coexist. In the Nirguna state, Prakrti is unable to influence Purusa, whereas Prakrti qualifies Purusa in the Saguna state. Saguna Brahma is true where the multiplicities of the world come into existence but the supreme stance of sadhana is Nirguna Brahma, the eternal infinite consciousness.

To conclude, AM extracts parts of traditional teachings within each system and reformulates its own metaphysics as a holistic system. AM recognizes the Nirguna aspect of Brahma from Advaita and the Saguna aspect of Brahma from Vishishtadvaita both as true. Brahma is the composition of both the transcendental and qualified consciousness represented in different states. The ultimate cause of creation is Purusa in the Nirguna state of transcendence and Prakrti is the subordinate cause that manifests consciousness into multiplicities of expressions. Therefore, the individual consciousness contains within itself the Divine essence identical to Purusa in the process of evolution to realize this Divine essence.

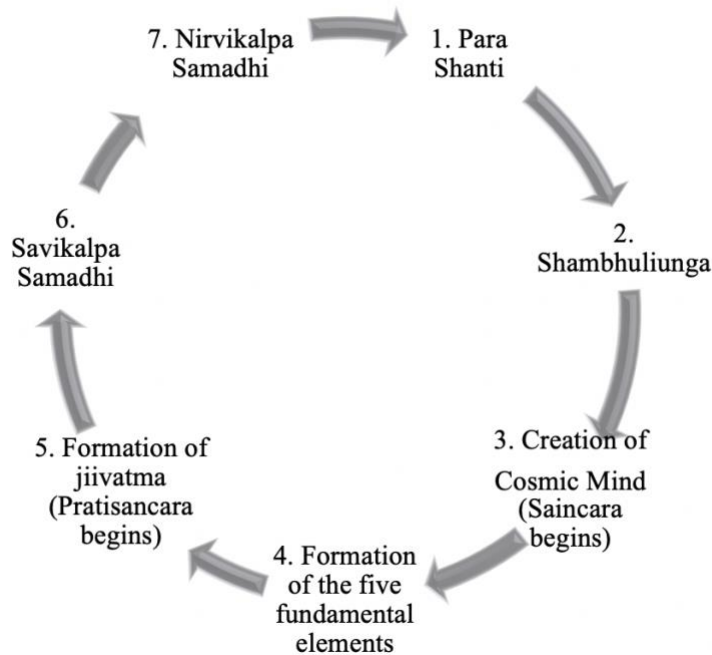
The Evolution of Cosmos—Brahma Cakra

Brahma cakra, the Cosmic cycle, is the theory that represents the evolution of the Cosmos in AM (Anandamitra, 2002; Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). The evolution of the Cosmos is also the representation of the evolution of

consciousness. The evolution of consciousness is crucial in yoga psychology because it delineates the origin of consciousness and the formation of the phenomenal world. In Brahma cakra, there are two processes forming the full cycle—*Saincara* (centrifugal process) and *Pratisancara* (centripetal process). The origin and nucleus of this Cosmic cycle is termed *Purusottama* (nucleus of Consciousness). With the force of *avidyamaya* (force of ignorance) on pure consciousness, the gradual extroversive movement away from the nucleus is known as *Saincara* (centrifugal process). With the force of *vidyamaya* (force of knowledge), the gradual introversive movement toward the nucleus is termed *Pratisancara* (centripetal process).

Figure 1

Brahma Cakra—The Evolution of Cosmos in Seven Stages



Note. Adapted from *The Spiritual Philosophy of Shrii Shrii Anandamurti: A Commentary on Ananda Sūtram*, by A. Anandamitra, 2002, pp. 18–76. Copyright 2002 by Ananda Marga Pracaraka Samgha. Author’s image.

The complete cycle can be divided into seven stages. Figure 1 shows a graphic illustration of the Brahma cakra cycle.

1. Para Shanti

This is an initial phase of *para shanti*, absolute peace—the state of eternal peace of Parama Purusa (Anandamitra, 2002). In this phase, Purusa and Prakrti both coexist where Purusa or Consciousness is not metamorphosed or influenced and Prakrti is in a latent state, as in the state of Nirguna Brahma where the gunas of Prakrti still exist but lies in a quiet state. In this preevolutionary phase, the three gunas of Prakrti are in a state of equilibrium. In Tantra, this latent state of Prakrti is termed *Anucchunya Prakrti*, which is the causal phase of the three gunas and is purely abstract in character. The three gunas are *sattva* (sentient), *rajah* (mutative) and *rajah* (static). Anandamitra (2002) denoted the meanings of the three gunas:

Sattvaguna imparts happiness and a sense of relief; it awakens the desire to seek liberation from bondage...Rajoguna is characterized by action; it wants to keep the "I" busy with action and then enjoy the results of action... Tamoguna is the force of inertia; it gives the result of the action, it expresses the reaction to the action. (pp. 5–6)

These triple-attributional flows continue their movement and form endless triangles or infinite polygonal diagrams without waves or clash between them (Anandamitra, 2002).

2. Shambhuliunga

Gradually, the three gunas transform into a matrix triangle, constantly transforming themselves into another in endless, mutual transformation. This is called *svarupa parinama* (homomorphic evolution), in which *sattva* transforms into *rajah*, *rajah* into *tamah*, *tamah* into *rajah*, and *rajah* into *sattva*. When the

causal Anucchunya Prakrti is disturbed, the three fundamental principles start to be expressed in the state of *Saguna Brahma* or “Subjectivated Transcendentality,” as referred by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (2001h).

Shambhuliunga is the point where the process of creation begins (Anandamitra, 2002). The three gunas are belligerent in nature and begin to clash and struggle for dominance as they come from pure consciousness in a triangular motion. This clash results in sattvaguna bursting out from one point on the triangle. At that point, lies the Cosmic desire of creation, termed *icchabijja* or seed of desire which is static in nature. At this point, Purusa is called *Shambhuliunga*, which is the starting point of creation, the fundamental positivity. From this point, the force is expressed in a straight line as *nada*, and further into curvature as *kala*, from non-expressed to expressed. Even though the point is dominated by static principle, further expression is dominated by sentient forces.

3. Creation of Cosmic Mind (Saincara Begins)

This is where the process of Saincara begins. *Saincara* is the extroversive process moving away from Supreme Nucleus by the force of *avidyamaya*. When Prakrti starts influencing pure consciousness, it is called *Maya*. *Maya* is the origin of the multiplicities and diversities of the universe. There are two types of forces in the *Avidyamaya*—*viksepii shakti* and *avaranii shakti*. *Viksepii shakti* is a repelling force with degenerating and repulsive desires that drives one away from the Nucleus. *Avaranii shakti* is the concealing force—like a black curtain that veils the eyes where one cannot recognize the Divine (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b).

With the influence of the sentient principle on pure consciousness, it loses its transcendental and transforms into *Mahattattva* or *Mahat*, the feeling of “I exist” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). Prakrti awakens the sense of existence in Purusa with her creative force. Next, the mutative force gradually dominates over the sentient force, a portion of Cosmic Mahat transforms into Cosmic *Ahamtattva* or *Aham*, the sense of “I do,” or having the ego arise. When the mutative force wanes, the static force influences a portion of Aham into Cosmic *Citta*, the objectified mind or “done I.” Purusottama was metamorphosed into the Cosmic Mind owing to the influence of Prakrti. The Cosmic Mind is composed of the three Cosmic Mahattattva, Ahamtattva, and Citta, and is also known as Macrocosmic Mind.

4. Formation of the Five Fundamental Elements

The Cosmic Citta, under the influence of the static principle, gradually evolved into five fundamental factors in sequence—*akashatattva* (ethereal), *vayutattva* (aerial), *tejastattva* (luminous), *apatattva* (liquid), and *ksititattva* (solid)—as the composition of this phenomenal world. The transformation of one singular Consciousness into Cosmic Mind and the five fundamental factors is called *Saincara* and the culmination of this process is formation of the solid factor as the final stage (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b).

5. Formation of the Unit Mind, Jivatma (Pratisancara Begins)

This is where the process of Pratisancara begins. *Pratisancara* is the process of moving toward the Nucleus, and *vidyamaya* is the force that influences the process. Vidyamaya has two respective forces—*samvit shakti* and *hladinii*

shakti (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001e). *Samvit shakti* is the force that awakens spiritual longing in the mind. *Hladinii shakti* is the force that bestows happiness and Divine bliss which guides one toward the Divine nucleus on the spiritual path. This process of synthesis is where all unit entities are guided toward the singular entity of Parama Purusa—from many to one (Anandamitra, 2002).

Due to increasing influence of the gunas, clashes within the five fundamental factors occurs; energy is created where vital energy (*pranah*) evolves from within. After *pranah* is created, a portion of the fundamental factors transformed to subtler factors—the unit *citta* (mind-stuff) is evolving. Due to the mutative principle of Prakrti, *ahamtattva* or *aham*, the feeling of “I do” or the ego, is created. In the next stage, under the influence of the sentient principle, *mahattattva* or *mahat*, the feeling of “I am” emerged. The mind is the composition of *citta*, *ahamtattva*, and *mahattattva* in *jiivatma* (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b).

AM philosophy maintains that the unit mind evolved from matter because matter evolved from the Cosmic mind (Anandamitra, 2002). The five fundamental factors were created from Cosmic Citta by the bondage of Prakrti in Saincara. In Pratisancara, the unit mind evolved from the Cosmic Mind, therefore, the potentiality of consciousness is latent in matter. Matter is the crudest manifestation of Cosmic Citta, while unit *citta* is the metamorphosed form of Cosmic Consciousness (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). The unit soul, or *jiivatma* or *anucaetanya* (microcosmic consciousness), formed in the process of pratisancara, is the reflection of the Supreme Consciousness. The Supreme Consciousness, *Paramatmann*, is a singular entity but reflects itself on many

souls. In the example of a flower reflecting on a number of mirrors, their reflections are *jivatma*, the original one is *Paramatmann*, and the mirrors are *Prakrti*. When the mirrors are removed, there is no difference between Cosmic Consciousness and unit consciousness, as the unit dissolves into the larger ocean of Cosmic Consciousness.

6. *Savikalpa Samadhi*

When the unit *citta* merges into *aham* and *aham* then merges into *mahat*, with the absence of *citta* and *aham*, *mahat* cannot maintain its integrity and merges into the Cosmic *Mahat* (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). That is, the unit mind merges into the Cosmic Mind, and is called *sagunasthitih* or *savikalpa samadhi* (the stance of determinate absorption). There are five stages in *savikalpa samadhi*—*salokya*, *samiipya*, *sayujya*, *sarupya*, and *sarsthi*—all of which are associated with the rising of *kundalini* through each *cakra* (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001e). This will be discussed in more detail in the *cakra* biopsychology section. When this state becomes permanent, it is called *mukti*, or liberation, which the mind absorbs into the qualified state of *Saguna Brahma*.

7. *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*

When *mahat* further merges into Cosmic Consciousness (*Atman*), the mind completely dissolves into pure consciousness—this is the state of objectlessness or nonduality (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). There is no longer any differentiation between the unit mind and Cosmic Consciousness, they return to the original state of pure consciousness in *nirvikalpa samadhi* (the trance of indeterminate absorption). When this state becomes permanent, it is known as

moksa, complete salvation. There is a difference between *mukti* and *moksa*. In *mukti*, when the unit mind merges into the Cosmic mind, it merges into Saguna Brahma. In *moksa*, when the unit mind merges into Atman, Cosmic Consciousness, it merges into Nirguna Brahma, beyond the comprehension of mind (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b).

Brahma Cakra is the evolution of Cosmos in AM and also represents the evolution of consciousness (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). The dynamic and creative universe was born from the metamorphosis of pure consciousness to the crudest solid factor during the process of *saincara*. In the process of *pratisancara*, the mind emerges from the solid factor and evolves back to pure consciousness from where it came. The evolution of Cosmos begins from consciousness and transforms back to consciousness.

Layers of Consciousness

As previously described, the microcosmic mind was formed during the process of *pratisancara*. The mind is called *antahkarana*, an introversive psychic force, composed of *citta* (mind-stuff), *ahamtattva* (feeling of “I do”), and *mahattattva* (feeling of “I am”; see Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1999). The mind is subtle and resides in the brain as the base (*adhara*) to perform its functions and expressions. The mind and the brain are different. The mind is a subtle psychic force and the brain a crude physical base composed of five fundamental factors (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1999). They are closely connected such that one cannot work without the existence of the other. The mind is analogous to a mechanic and brain to a machine, where the mind expresses itself through different parts of the

brain with various sensory functions and thought waves. In this section, the composition of mind will be discussed in further detail.

The mind is composed of three parts in AM: *citta*, *ahamtattva*, and *mahattattva* (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). *Citta* is psycho-physical in nature and is the crudest and most objective portion of the mind. *Citta* can be understood as the substance of mind, owing to the characteristics of becoming like the object of its perception through the senses (*indriyas*). For example, when *citta* sees a tree, it becomes like the tree; when a sound is heard, it becomes like that sound. Its function is to take the form of the vibrations perceived from the external world and transmit them to *aham*. Moreover, *citta* controls the vital energy by means of instincts to affect subsidiary glands to produce certain behavioral patterns (Anandamitra, 2002). This differs from Advaita's definition, which accounts for the functions of "planning, exploring, inspecting, arranging and so on" (Paranjpe & Rao, 2011, p. 264). Living organisms with an undeveloped ego (*aham*) and feelings of self-existence (*mahat*) function instinctively according to the momentum of the Cosmic Mind, driven primarily by the functions of *citta*. Secondly, *ahamtattva* or *aham* is the sense of ownership or doership, the feeling of "I do." *Aham*, the ego, executes the action and experiences the reactions—it experiences pleasure and pain. It has two psychic functions: *samkalpatmaka* (determination) and *vikalpatmaka* (translation into action; Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1969). In *samkalpatmaka*, *aham* creates the psychic vibration of an action on *citta* as it mentally prepares to perform an action. In *vikalpatmaka*, the psychic vibration is put into action with the presence of the *citta*, sensory, and

motor organs. Last, *mahattattva* or *buddhitattva* is the sense of self-existence, the feeling of “I am,” created by the sentient principle of Prakrti. It is with the awareness of self-existence that aham can take action, and similarly citta can only take the form that aham wants. Buddhitattva, ahamtattva, and citta constitute the mind.

Inside every being in the universe, the mind of citta, aham, and mahat are present. The degree of their domination varies depending upon the evolutionary gradation of the being (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2004). In the case of most undeveloped organisms, citta is expressed, while aham and mahat remain dormant. In yet more developed organisms, aham and citta are both active and mahat remains dormant. In the most developed organisms, mahat, aham, and citta are all active. The difference between the mind of undeveloped beings and humans is that the former have “subordinated co-operation” with the Cosmic Mind and follow the principles of Prakrti with their inborn instincts without egoistic will (the function of aham); the latter have “coordinated co-operation” with the Cosmic Mind so that human minds could function with their own egoistic will (Anandamitra, 2002; Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2004). Moreover, the development of intellect and intuition are feasible in the human mind (Anandamitra, 2002). When aham is dominant over citta, intellect or *buddhi* evolves. Intellect is the cognitive sense that controls the instinctive tendency of citta. In human beings, those with more intelligence are prone to the dangers of the ego. When mahat is dominant over aham, intuition or *bodhi* evolves. Intellect is an analytic capacity within the boundaries of time, space, and person, whereas

intuition is synthetic beyond all the boundaries. Spiritual practice (*sadhana*) develops intuition and allows the intuition to guide the intellect (Anandamitra, 2002).

Despite *citta*, *aham*, and *mahat* as the composition of mind, there is a subtler portion within the individual consciousness called *Atman* or *jīvatma*. Mind and Atman are separate entities, yet they must associate with each other. *Atman* means that which is “omni-telepathic,” *omni* means “all knowing,” and telepathy means “to act over a distance” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2004, p. 2). *Atman* is the term for individual consciousness or soul and is the reflection of Cosmic Consciousness in the individual. It is a mirror-like soul that reflects and witnesses all the mental and physical waves of the mind but is not influenced by the actions. It remains as pure consciousness as its origin, the Cosmic Consciousness. In essence, there is no difference between the *jīvatma* and Cosmic Consciousness (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2004).

In conclusion, the mind is composed of *citta*, *aham*, and *mahat*. *Citta* is the crudest objective mind-stuff, *aham* is the ego of doership, and *mahat* is the awareness of “I exist.” *Mahat* is broader and covers *aham*, *aham* is broader and covers *citta*. Atman acts as a witness overlooking and reflecting all activities of the mind but not affected by them (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2004). Atman remains as pure consciousness as its origin, the Cosmic Consciousness.

Layers of Consciousness in the Microcosm

Consciousness is the basis, origin, and destination of souls (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1999). The mind, dwelling in soul, is a metamorphosed form of

consciousness. There are five kosas (*paincakosas*) or layers of consciousness within both the Macrocosmic and microcosmic mind. The physical body, *annamaya kosa*, is not considered to be one of the layers of mind because it is composed of matter (Anandamitra, 2002). These kosas, in addition to the physical body, are functioning as the base or container of Atman. The kosas are formulated in the extroversive process of Saincara where Cosmic citta is crudified by the influence of Prakrti.

This process of crudification of citta to the solid factor is divided into five phases, known as *kosas*. Starting from the initial phase, they are *hiranmaya kosa*, *vijinanamaya kosa*, *atimanasa kosa*, *manomaya kosa*, and *kamamaya kosa*, in addition to *annamaya kosa* (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). *Kosas* are layers of consciousness formed in the evolutionary phases. In the pratisancara process, the solid factor is metamorphosed again from *annamaya kosa*, *kamamaya kosa*, *manomaya kosa*, *atimanasa kosa*, *vijinanamaya kosa*, and *hiranmaya kosa* back to Atman. These kosas are distinguished by their degree of influence of Prakrti over them through the gunas of *sattva* (sentient), *rajah* (mutative), and *tamah* (static) principle. Ashtanga yoga (the eight-limbs of yoga) is incorporated as a spiritual practice to develop and purify each kosa. The AM kosa theory is similar to the Advaita kosha theory in some respects and differs in some ways. The Advaita kosha theory consists of five sheaths from *annamaya kosha* (made of food), *pranamaya kosha* (vital breath), *manomaya kosha* (mental), *vijinanamaya kosa* (cognitive), and lastly *anandamaya kosha* (joyous) (Paranjpe et al., 2011). The differences are that first, AM kosa theory, *annamaya kosa*, or the physical body is

not considered to be one of the kosas of consciousness because it is the physical aspect; secondly, AM includes kamamaya kosa, atimanasa kosa, and hiranmaya kosa in addition to Advaita; and third, the *pranamaya kosha* in Advaita denotes the function of pranah and nadis, where the *kamamaya kosa* in AM refers to desires associated with the physical sphere (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). There may be some other similarities or differences which will not be the focus of this study. In the subsequent paragraphs, each kosa will be presented with corresponding Ashtanga practices reinterpreted in AM.

Annamaya kosa means the physical body (Anandamitra, 2002). Anna means “food” and this layer is composed of the five fundamental factors (and thus not considered to be one of the kosas). However, annamaya kosa does not belong to one of the layers of the mind in the physical realm. This physical body is like a machine without its own will. It is the vehicle of the mind and can only execute actions through kamamaya kosa. The annamaya kosa is perfected through proper diet, exercise, and asanas.

Next, *kamamaya kosa* is *sthula manah*, meaning crude mind. Kama means “desire” and this layer is concerned with all the survival instincts, physical desires, and sensual enjoyments such as eating, shelter, and procreation (Anandamitra, 2002). In the example of a tree that draws life energy from earth, water, and sun, it executes these vital functions through its kamamaya kosa. There are three functions within this kosa: first, to perceive stimuli from the external world through the sensory organs (*indriyas*) of the annamaya kosa; second, to produce desires from those stimuli; and third, to act upon those desires using the

motor organs. This kosa fulfills the instinctual tendencies of annamaya kosa. In this kosa, tamah is dominant, sattva is less dominant, and rajah is least dominant (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1957a). To develop this kosa, the practice of yama and niyama sadhana is recommended.

Manomaya kosa is *suksma manah*, which means “subtle mind.” It is the sphere where *samskaras* (reactive momenta) exist in which one experiences pleasure (*sukha*) and pain (*dukkha*) (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993). The primary functions of this kosa are *smarana* (memory or recollection), *manana* (contemplation or thinking capacity), and dreaming. In the manomaya kosa, rajah is dominant, tamah is less dominant, and sattva is least dominant (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). The manomaya kosa is perfected through the practice of pranayama (breath exercises).

Atimanasa kosa means “higher mind layer” or supramental mind and is the first layer of the causal mind. This is the expanded, supraconscious mind with all knowing capacity transcending the bondage of time, space, and person. It has full knowledge of past, present, and future from the Cosmic Mind. The capacity for intuition and creative insights also originate here. When lower kosas are calm and concentrated, a clairvoyant vision or extrasensory perception from the causal mind penetrates into the conscious mind as intuition or inspiration (Anandamitra, 2002). In the field of art and science, some extraordinary discoveries or projects are formed while being in a state of intense concentration and flow where knowledge from the higher kosa descends down to the conscious mind. This is the layer where the seeds of *samskaras* originates. In this kosa, rajah is dominant,

sattva is less dominant, and tamah is least dominant (Anandamitra, 2002). It is through the practice of *pratyahara* (withdrawal of senses) that the atimanasa kosa is perfected.

Vijinanamaya kosa means “special knowledge” or subliminal mind (Anandamitra, 2002). In this kosa, the awareness of self-existence and the subtle feeling of “I am” exists. In this middle layer of the causal mind,

many Divine attributes are expressed: mercy (*krpa*), gentleness (*mrduta*), patience (*dhaerya*), serenity (*susthir*), non-attachment (*vairagya*), steadiness (*dhrti*), success (*sampat*), chearefulness (*hasya*), spiritual ecstasy (*romaninca*), humility (*vinaya*), meditation (*dhyana*), seriousness (*gambhira*), enthusiasm (*udyama*), imperturnanility (*aksobha*), magnanimity (*aodarya*), and undisturbed attention (*ekagrata*). (Anandamitra, 2002, p. 154)

The aspiration for sadhana originates here. In this kosa, sattva is dominant, tamah is less dominant, and rajah is least dominant (Anandamitra, 2002). The *vijinanmaya kosa* is perfected through *dharana* (concentration).

In addition, the capacity of *viveka* (discrimination) and *vairagya* (non-attachment) arise here. When one raises one’s consciousness to this state, true *viveka* and *vairagya* develop naturally (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1973). There are five types of *viveka*—*nityanitya viveka* (discrimination between permanent and impermanent), *dvaetadvaeta viveka* (discrimination of whether eternal entity is one or many), *Atmanatma viveka* (self and non-self discrimination), *paincakosa viveka* (the discernment of five layers of minds are not Atman), and *mahavakya viveka* (the discernment that the mere pursuit of knowledge cannot bring one to spiritual realization) (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001j). Moreover, *vairagya* can only be achieved after *viveka* has been awakened. *Vairagya* has been often interpreted as renunciation, or an aversion or avoidance of instinctual desires for

eating, sleeping and sexuality—a negating approach in traditional teachings (Anandamitra, 2002). Nonetheless, AM interprets *vairagya* as a positive attitude which stems from the love for God—to recognize universal consciousness hidden within all changing forms and view all the finite manifestations as the expressions of the infinite (Anandamitra, 2002). From this, the love for finite and infinite merge into one.

Last, *hiranmaya* means “made of gold” or subtle causal mind, the state that is as pure and radiant as gold (Anandamitra, 1999). *Hiranmaya kosa* means “golden” kosa, and is the layer of brilliant golden effulgence. When the Divine attraction for the infinite overflows in one’s existence, a radiant flood of light blazes through one’s entire being. The “feeling of I” is latent and the awareness of individuality is not manifested here. This is the subtlest layer of mind around the Atman and is also the initial expression of mahattattva. The spiritual attainment in this kosa is termed *savikalpa samadhi* (Anandamitra, 2002). When the hiranmaya further merges in Nirguna Brahma, it is called *nirvikalpa samadhi*. In this kosa, sattva is dominant, rajah is less dominant, and tamah is least dominant (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1973). It is through the practice of dhyana that hiranmaya kosa is developed.

Within the five layers of consciousness from crude to subtle, the higher kosas are more expanded than the lower ones and the most expanded is Atman (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). Atman underlies all the kosas within the core of being, the pure consciousness beyond all duality and experiences of pain and pleasure. The last three kosas—atimanasa kosa, vijinanamaya kosa and hiranmaya

kosa—are more subtle and collectively termed as *causal* or *astral* mind (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). In other words, there is always a cause behind all phenomena in the world, in the same way that a seed is the cause of a plant. To trace back to the origin, Parama Purusa is the ultimate cause of the universe. “Astral” is *samanya* in Sanskrit, which means the level above mental, psychic, or subtle realms (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). These layers of the mind can be divided into three categories: crude mind or conscious mind (*kamamaya kosa*), subtle mind or subconscious mind (*manomaya kosa*), and causal mind or unconscious mind (*atimanasa kosa*, *vijnanamaya kosa*, and *hiranmaya kosa*); this category is divided based on the degree of clarity of consciousness reflected upon them. The terms *conscious*, *subconscious*, and *unconscious* are not equivalent to their interpretations in Western psychology (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). Moreover, the division of the microcosm into a causal portion is merely a philosophical proposition (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). Practically speaking, there is no separate existence of the unit causal mind from the Cosmic Causal mind. When one raises consciousness to higher kosas through spiritual practices, it is expanded into the state of Atman where the division between Cosmic consciousness and individual consciousness dissolves.

Strata of Consciousness in the Macrocosm

The Cosmic Mind is composed of seven layers, termed as *lokas*, and each corresponds to the kosa within the unit mind (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b, 2001g). In the process of *saincara*, the Cosmic citta is gradually transformed into different realms by the bondage of the three gunas of Prakrti. Cosmic

Consciousness remains as a witnessing entity behind all stages. The seven strata of Cosmic Mind are presented here.

First is the *bhurloka*, or the physical sphere. This is the realm of physicality and is composed of the five fundamental factors—*ksititattva* (solid factor), *apatattva* (liquid factor), *tejastattva* (luminous factor), *vayutattva* (aerial factor), and *akashatattva* (ethereal factor) (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001g). It is the crudest metamorphosis of the cosmic mind and corresponds to the *annamaya kosa* in the form of the physical body in the unit being. In this realm, *tamah* is dominant, *rajah* is less dominant, and *sattva* is least dominant.

The second sphere is *bhuvarloka*, or the crude mental sphere. This is the sphere of the cosmic mind. The vibrations of instinctual tendencies and enjoyment concerning the physical world including eating, sleeping, and procreation are pulsated in this realm (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001g). Here, *kamamaya kosa* of the unit mind is created. It is through *bhuvarloka* that Brahma enjoys the internally mental-created world. In this *loka*, *tamah* is dominant, *sattva* is less dominant, and *rajah* is least dominant.

Next is *svarloka* or the subtle mental sphere, it is the pure mental sphere where pain (*dhuka*) and pleasure (*sukha*) are experienced, and where *samskaras* exist (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001g). This sphere is also termed *manomaya jagat* (world) and corresponds to *manomaya kosa* in the individual. In this sphere, *rajah* is dominant, *tamah* is less dominant, and *sattva* is least dominant.

Following next is *maharloka* or the supramental sphere, and this is where *samskaras* first originated (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001g). That is, *samskaras*

originate in this loka and are experienced in svarloka. The longing for sadhana also exists here. This sphere corresponds to atimanasa kosa in individual. In this sphere, rajah is dominant, sattva is less dominant, and tamah is least dominant.

Janah loka corresponds to vijinanamaya kosa in individuals, where the attributes of *vijinana* (true knowledge), *viveka* (discrimination), and *vaeragya* (non-attachment) are dominant (Anandamitra, 2002). In the English language, there are no equivalent words ascribed to the phenomenon beyond the supramental state. In this sphere, sattva is dominant, tamah is less dominant, and rajah is least dominant.

Tapah loka sphere corresponds to hiranmaya kosa in individuals (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). In this loka, consciousness is in an unmanifested state where the ego or “I” feeling is not clearly present but exists in a latent state. In this sphere, sattva is dominant, rajah is less dominant, and tamah is least dominant.

In *satya loka* all the three gunas of Prakrti (sattva, rajah, and tamah) are present but in a dormant state where Purusa is dominant (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). This is the state of Nirguna Brahma. The universe consists of seven spheres, six of them are in a qualified state where the gunas of Prakrti influence the body of *Purusa* (consciousness) in different degrees of dominance. The last sphere, *satya loka*, is the nonqualified state of Nirguna Brahma, where the force of Prakrti is dormant and Purusa is manifested.

In conclusion, the microcosmic and Macrocosmic Mind both possess seven layers and they correspond to each other (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b).

In the process of creation, the microcosmic mind is created in the process of *pratisancara* which transforms matter into subtler elements, from *annamaya kosa* to *hiranmaya kosa*. In contrast, the Macrocosmic Mind is created in the process of *saincara* to metamorphose consciousness into cruder manifestation (from *Bhurloka* to *Satyaloka*). In this process, *Purusottama* (nucleus of the universe) acts as the witnessing entity. Purusa is both the object of metamorphosis and the subject of witness. Purusa is linked to each microcosm individually in close proximity, termed *ota yoga*, the yoga of individual association. He is also linked with the whole universe collectively, termed as *prota yoga*, the yoga of pervasive association. From witnessing and linking, Purusottama is hidden in each microcosm in *ota* and *prota* associations (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b).

Four States of Consciousness

There are four primary states of consciousness in the mind: *jagrata* (wakefulness), *svapna* (dream), *nidra* (dreamless sleep), and *turiya* (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001a). These states are distinguished by particular layers of mind (*kosas*) that are active under different degrees of influence from sentient, mutative, and static principles. This is analogous to traditional teachings with additional AM kosa theory.

In the *jagrata*, or waking state, all layers of the mind are active, including crude, subtle, and causal (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001a). However, the crude mind, *kamamaya kosa*, is predominant over the subtle and causal ones. In this state, the mind is interacting with the external world, perceiving, desiring, and acting from the desires concerning physical enjoyment. The mind is more

vulnerable to the forces of avidya in the waking state, while it is influenced by the crude physicality of the world made up by the five fundamental factors.

The differences between the dream state and the waking state is that in dream state all the mental expressions are internally self-conceived without the influences from the external world (world of five fundamental factors; Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001a). In the svapna or the dreaming state, the crude mind ceases to function in regard to interacting with the external world. The mental impressions of the imagination or actions formed in the waking state have been stored in the subtle mind of manomaya kosa and reappear during the dreaming state in a disjointed form (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001a). In addition, there is a different type of dream, known as prophetic dreams. The causal mind, *atimanasa kosa*, the storehouse of all knowledge beyond time, could penetrate into the subtle mind and bring about inspirations or predictions of past, present, or future in a supramental vision (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001a).

In *nidra* or dreamless sleep, the crude and subtle mind ceases to function and only the causal mind—*atimanasa*, *vijinanamaya*, and *hiranmaya kosa*—operates. In waking and dream states, visual perceptions and experiences of pain and pleasure are still active in the crude and subtle minds. However, in dreamless sleep, internal or external expressions from the ego are absent and result in a state devoid of all feelings. The mind is in a state of “absolute cognition” (the state without distinction), which enjoys a passive, calm, and tranquil happiness solely from the presence of the causal mind (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001a).

In both sleep and *turiya*, the cognition of material and mental distinctions is suspended, the crude and subtle minds are dormant, and the causal mind is the most predominant. The difference between sleep and *turiya* is that the former is a passive (static) absolute darkness and the latter is a state of brilliant radiance in which all objects appear radiant (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001a). *Turiya* means the state of nonduality or *kaevalya* (absolute identity with the Divine essence). There is no difference between Brahma and the unit mind; they emerge as One. While the causal mind of the microcosm and the Macrocosm are the same, the unit mind cannot maintain its separate identity and merges into Brahma (Anandamitra, 2002). In *turiya*, the influence of Prakrti is absent and is a state of bliss beyond the bondage of time, space, and person.

In summary, each of the four states of consciousness correspond to particular layers of consciousness that are predominant in that state (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001a). In the state of *jagrata*, the crude mind is more active; in *svapna*, the subtle mind is more active; in *nidra* and *turiya*, the subtle mind are more active (the difference being that *nidra* is predominantly static and *turiya* is predominantly sentient). In the first states of waking, dream, and sleep, the microcosmic mind is separate from the Macrocosmic Mind under the bondage of Prakrti. The last state, *turiya*, is the state of nonduality, where the individual consciousness is emancipated from the influence of Prakrti and dissolves into Cosmic Consciousness in a state of absolute bliss (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001a).

Cakra Bio-Psychology

Cakras are situated along the spine at the intersecting points of three psychic channels, *ida*, *piungala*, and *susumna* (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997b, p. 1). *Ida* is the left *nadii* (psychic channel), corresponding to the left nostril, and controls the right side of the body; *piungala* is the right *nadii*, which corresponds to the right nostril, and controls the left side of the body; *susumna* is the middle *nadii* between the intersecting points of *ida* and *piungala* (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2005).

Cakras are psychic centers and also “a collection of glands and sub-glands” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997, p. 1) that secrete corresponding hormones and express propensities. In the mind, the phenomena of thoughts and emotions are influenced by the underlying *vrttis* or propensities. *Vrttis* are situated in clusters like flower petals around cakras and are where the mind expresses its momentum through sentiments. The sentiments influenced by subsidiary glands (meaning all glands except the pituitary and pineal glands) are inherently known as “instincts [or] accumulated sentiments” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b, p. 29). From a physio-spiritual perspective, the seed of each propensity is in the brain and expression is through the glands and cakras as subcenters of mind (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997b). To manifest internal mental waves (thoughts) of the mind into actions, the brain sends messages through the nerves to glands, which secrete corresponding hormones and in turn affect the operation of motor organs.

The number of *vrttis* differ according to the complexity of the physical structure (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997b). The more complex the structure, the

greater the number of vrttis. Therefore, more developed animals possess more vrttis than less developed ones. There are 50 main propensities in the human mind, expressed internally (mental and emotional) and externally (behavioral) through 10 *indriyas* (organs) (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997b). However, Shrii Anandamurti (1997b) stated that the number of vrttis will increase in the evolutionary process.

The number of vrttis will not necessarily remain confined to only fifty because the complexities are gradually increasing, complexities in social life, family life, in the world of thoughts, and in the world of intellect. Hence, many new vrttis may also originate. (p. 7)

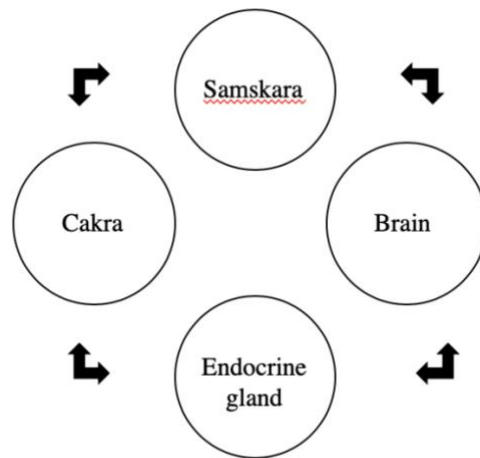
In the present human structure, the collective number of vrttis numbers one thousand (50 propensities x 2 expressions x 10 organs = 1,000 vrttis) and are expressed through the vibration of cakras. These vibrations cause hormones to be secreted from the glands. In turn, the secretion (normal or abnormal) of the hormones influence the natural or unnatural expression of the propensities.

The expression of propensities are influenced by one's inherent samskaras. *Samskaras* means the reactive momenta or impetus in potential form from past actions (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997b). That is, the reactive momenta where actions are done, and the reactions await. In AM samskara theory, every action (*kriya*) has a reaction (*pratikriya*) (Sarkar, 2011). This reaction is physical-psycho in nature and in turn leads to psycho reaction (*prati-samvedana*). There is psycho reaction to every psycho action (*samvedana*) and these psycho reactions lead to the samskaras of a person. "That is to say: saṁskāra (reactive momenta) → saṁvedana (psycho action) → kriyá (action) → pratikriyá (reaction) → pratisaṁvedana (psycho reaction) → saṁskāra → ..."(Sarkar, 2011, p. 126).

Therefore, when *citta* (mind-stuff) takes various forms according to the will of the mind, it leaves a latent impression in the mind in the form of samskaras. The mind exists as long as the propensities are expressed, and the human mind is the collective expression of the vrttis. The expression and control of the propensities are dependent upon the cakras. Please see Figure 2 for the interrelation between samskara, brain, endocrine gland, and cakras within personality.

Figure 2

Interrelation Between Samskara, Brain, Endocrine Gland, and Cakra



Note. Image by author.

Samskara influences the seeds of reactions inside the brain to send signals through the endocrine glands secreting hormones that affect the expressions of propensities in cakras which leave impressions in the mind that form samskaras as a circular, cause-effect cycle (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). This figure illustrates the correlation between spiritual-mental-vital-physical spheres within personality.

The cakra system in AM includes seven primary ones with the corresponding fundamental factors (*tattvas*) of color, acoustic root, layer of consciousness (*kosas*), propensities (*vrttis*), as well as the glandular system of biopsychology (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997b). There are five fundamental factors (*tattvas*) and designated acoustic roots (*bija mantras*) that are controlled by different cakras along the spine. The five fundamental factors refer to solid, liquid, fire, air, and ether as the basic elements that form all entities' existence in the universe. The human body, as a microcosm, is also the representation of such in the universe. These five factors are controlled by different cakras and are active at different times throughout the day. Each factor has its own color, so the mind and body vibrate with a particular color when the factor is predominant within the individual. For example, the base cakra, *muladhara cakra*, controls the solid factor and vibrates with a golden color. The second cakra, *svadhisthana*, controls the liquid factor and vibrates with translucent white color. Moreover, the cakras are controlled by particular *bija mantras* (acoustic roots) that emanate sound vibrations of a particular kind of thinking. The nucleus located in the center of each cakra is the controlling point of the corresponding propensities. In addition, the cakra system is associated with corresponding *kosa* (layers of consciousness) in each sphere. In sadhana, when the mind rises and expands to higher kosas, it corresponds to kundalini rising to higher cakras. Thus, the five kosas control the corresponding first to fifth cakras. In the next section, the cakra system of AM is discussed in detail (Anandamitra, 2002; Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997b).

Muladhara Cakra—Terranean Plexus

The midpoint of the last spinal column vertebra is the central point of the *muladhara cakra*, which the whole body is balanced on (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997b, p. 25). The cakra is golden light and the acoustic root sound is “lam.” It is the terranean plexus that controls the solid factor and, in turn, is controlled by kamamaya kosa (the desire layer) (Kang, 2009). *Cakra* is a Sanskrit term and *plexus* is the Latin term. This is the cakra where the four fundamental longings of human beings originate, which consists of the physical (*karma*), psychological (*artha*), psychospiritual (*dharma*), and spiritual (*moksa*) that lead to the creation of multiplicities and potentiality for one’s realization of Cosmic consciousness. *Kulakundalinii* is the latent or unexpressed Divine force, the unconscious animality residing in coiled form in this cakra, having the potential to be awakened and raised upward for self-realization.

The four propensities in the muladhara cakra are as follows:

1. *dharma* [va] (psycho-spiritual longing)
2. *artha* [sha] (psychic longing)
3. *kama* [s’a] (physical longing)
4. *moks’a* [sa] (spiritual longing; Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1998b, p. 138).

Svadhithana Cakra—Fluidal Plexus

The *svadhithana cakra* is situated on the spinal cord directly behind the root of the genital organs (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997b). The color of the cakra is translucent white and the acoustic root sound is “vam.” It is the fluidal

plexus which controls the fluid factor which is controlled by manomaya kosa (Kang, 2009).

In biopsychology, this cakra corresponds to the testes, ovaries, and prostate, which are in physical proximity (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997b). When the secretion of testes and ovaries are normal, the sense of dutifulness, responsibility, and sexual longing are created. When there is oversecretion of these hormones, the sense of rationality, intelligence, love for children, and universalism are formed. Where there is undersecretion, the tendency toward antisocial behavior, cruelty, and being less kind are present. When there is imbalance in the secretion of these glands, one will develop the sense of helplessness, hopelessness, or melancholia. In extreme imbalance, this may lead to schizoid personality with paranoia and hallucinations (Singh, 1998).

The six propensities in the svadhisthana cakra are as follows:

1. *avajina* [*ba*] (indifference)
2. *murccha* [*bha*] (stupor)
3. *prashraya* [*ma*] (indulgence)
4. *avishvasa* [*ya*] (lack of confidence)
5. *sarvanasha* [*ra*] (defeatism)
6. *krurata* [*la*] (cruelty) (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1998b, p. 138)

Manipura Cakra—Igneous Plexus

The *manipura cakra* is located on the spinal cord behind the navel region. The color of the cakra is red and the acoustic root sound is “ram’.” This igneous plexus controls the luminous factor and is controlled by the atimanasa kosa (Kang, 2009). The *igneous plexus* is the controlling point or center of the body

that maintains the balance of the physical structure, the symmetry of psycho-physical, and psycho-spiritual orders. This cakra is also known as “agnya shaya,” or the “shelter of heat” as the center holding the maximum accumulation of heat in the body (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1998b, p.138). It is the primary location of the body’s fire (*dehagni*)—the sphere of vitality.

In biopsychology, the pancreas and adrenal glands may be associated with this cakra (Singh, 1998). The pancreas secretes insulin and glucagon and is responsible for the blood sugar level providing fuel for the metabolism of the body and is the primary gland that controls the 10 propensities in the manipura cakra (Singh, 1998). The adrenal gland performs a triple function in metabolism, fluid regulation, as well as sexual functions.

The 10 propensities of the manipura cakra are listed below (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1991, p. 138):

1. *lajja* [*d'a*] (shyness, shame)
2. *pishunata* [*d'ha*] (sadistic tendency)
3. *iirsa* [*n'a*] (envy)
4. *suspti* [*ta*] (inertia)
5. *visada* [*tha*] (melancholia)
6. *kasaya* [*da*] (peevishness, irritability)
7. *trnsa* [*dha*] (craving)
8. *moha* [*na*] (infatuation, blind attachment)
9. *ghrna* [*pa*] (hatred)
10. *bhaya* [*pha*] (fear)

Anahata Cakra—Sidereal Plexus

The *anahata cakra* is situated in the center of the chest on the spinal cord. The color is greenish smoke and the acoustic root sound is “yam’.” This sidereal plexus controls the air factor and is controlled by the vijinanamaya kosa. Anahata is predominantly influenced by the reflected and refracted light from the celestial stars (Kang, 2009).

In biopsychology, the thymus gland and respiratory system may be associated with this cakra. The thymus gland—or *anahata cakra*—is fully developed by the age of four to five years old when children begin to express signs of attachment toward immediate family members (Singh, 1998). This is the primary cakra for the expression of worldly love, which includes propensities such as “hope and aspiration, anxiety and depression, ego and vanity, voracity and hypocrisy, conscience and repentance” (Singh, 1998, p. 81). A developed sidereal plexus arouses love for children. Oversecretion from the sidereal plexus transforms human love into universal love for the Cosmic Consciousness. When one suffers from hopelessness or extreme fear in the manipura cakra, this will cause imbalance at the respiratory system so that one feels pain in the chest or has restless breath. There is close interrelation between the cakra propensities and somatic symptoms.

The 12 propensities in anahata cakra are as follows:

1. *asha* [ka] (hope)
2. *cinta* [kha] (worry)
3. *cesta* [ga] (effort)

4. *mamata* [*gha*] (love and attachment)
5. *dambha* [*una*] (vanity)
6. *viveka* [*ca*] (conscience, discrimination)
7. *vikalata* [*cha*] (nervous breakdown)
8. *ahamkara* [*ja*] (conceit, egoism)
9. *lolata* [*jha*] (greed, avarice)
10. *kapatata* [*ina*] (hypocrisy, deception)
11. *vitarka* [*ta*] (argumentative, contentious)
12. *auntapa* [*t'ha*] (repentance) (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1998b, pp. 139–140)

Vishuddha Cakra—Solar Plexus

The *vishuddha cakra* is situated around the throat region on the spinal cord as the center of speech and crucial for “enlightening of intellect” (Kang, 2009, p. 133). The color is a mixture, with no particular shape and the acoustic root sound is “ham’.” This is the plexus which controls the ethereal factor and is controlled by the hiranmaya kosa. In the *vishuddha cakra*, there are seven propensities related to sounds produced by particular animals. Each animal is controlled by a single dominant characteristic and produces a distinctive sound. The corresponding propensity pertains to the dominant characteristic of the animals.

In biopsychology, this cakra is associated with *kurmanadii* (sinusoid nerve), *brhaspati granthi* (thyroid gland), and the *Brihaspati upagranthi* (parathyroid gland) (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997b, pp. 87–88). These glands are associated with psychic development and intellectual elevation. The vocal cord

residing in this cakra is responsible for transforming mental ideas into vocal expressions. A developed thyroid gland increases the sense of self-reliance, an underdeveloped thyroid gland results in a quarrelsome, irrational nature, and vain tendencies.

There are 16 propensities in vishuddha cakra:

1. *sadaja* [a] (sound of peacock)
2. *rsabha* [a'] (sound of bull or ox)
3. *gandhara* [i] (sound of goat)
4. *madhyama* [ii] (sound of dear)
5. *paincama* [u] (sound of cuckoo)
6. *dhaevata* [u'] (sound of donkey)
7. *nisada* [r] (sound of elephant)
8. *onm* [rr] (acoustic root of creation, preservation, dissolution)
9. *hum* [lr] (sound of arousing kulakundalinii)
10. *phat* [lrr] (putting theory into practice)
11. *vaosat* [e] (development of mundane knowledge)
12. *vasatha* [ae] (welfare in the subtler sphere)
13. *svaha* [o] (performing noble actions)
14. *namah* [ao] (surrender to the Supreme)
15. *vis'a* [am'] (poisonous mentality)
16. *amrta* [ah] (pleasant ideation) (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1998b, p.

142)

Ajina Cakra—Lunar Plexus

The *ajina cakra* is located between the eyes. It is beyond color, shape, or sound, and is the lunar plexus beyond the five kosas. It is the controlling point of *citta* and mind which primarily controls the conscious mind and secondarily controls the subconscious mind (Kang, 2009).

In biopsychology, the pituitary gland is associated with this cakra. This gland is psycho-spiritual in nature and is concerned with mundane knowledge and spiritual knowledge (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997b). Ajina cakra is also known as the third eye, when the secretion of the pineal gland overwhelms the pituitary gland in spiritual trance, the pituitary gland—with omniscience—sees through the past, present, and future. The pituitary gland acts as a central thermostat maintaining the homogeneity of all the glands below (Singh, 1998). It secretes trophic hormones to control the hormonal output of glands such as thyroid, adrenals, gonads and more, which correspond to the right side of the pituitary gland and is associated with degenerating propensities of lower cakras such as shyness, shamefulness, and fear. The left side of the pituitary gland controls the spiritual tendencies of the pineal gland and superconsciousness. When both sides of the pituitary gland are balanced, this can lead to apexed intellect and self-knowledge as well as extracerebral memories of past lives. The two propensities in the ajina cakra are as follows:

1. *apara'* [*ks'a*] (mundane knowledge)
2. *para'* [*ha*] (spiritual knowledge) (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1991, p. 144)

Sahasrara Cakra

The *sahasrara cakra* is situated 10 fingers above the pineal gland outside the cranium and is the shelter of Atman and Paramatman (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997b). In this cakra, resides the seed of 1,000 vrttis, so it is named *sahasrara*, which means “one thousand.”

In biopsychology, the pineal gland is associated with this cakra. This gland is predominantly spiritual in nature and is known as “the gland of mystics” (Singh, 1998, p. 68). From a biological perspective, the pineal gland secretes melatonin which is responsible for inducing sleep (Singh, 1998). This is the highest cakra and the hormones secreted here control all the glands of the body. There are actually two cakras associated with the pineal gland: one is guru cakra as the internal physical side of the pineal gland within the cranium, the other is sahasrara cakra, as the psychological point outside the cranium (Kang, 2009).

In conclusion, the cakra system in AM recognizes seven primary ones. Each cakra is associated with a certain number of psychic propensities that correspond to particular glandular secretion. The cakra biopsychology system in AM encompasses the physical, psychic, and spiritual realms of advancement. This sets the state for the development of a whole-person yoga psychology model.

Essential Elements of Yoga Psychology in Ananda Marga

In summary, this literature review covered three primary themes: AM cosmology, layers of consciousness, and cakra bio-psychology. AM cosmology is a theory on the evolution of consciousness. The layers of consciousness outline the realms of consciousness in both Macrocosm and the microcosm. Cakra

biopsychology connects the psychic centers with physiological glandular influences and psychic propensities. Each theme corresponds to the essential elements of yoga psychology of AM and includes the physical, psychic, and spiritual realms of development.

These essential elements in AM can be summarized in four primary points: evolution of consciousness, integration of transcendent and phenomenal layers of consciousness, and cakra biopsychology. First, the evolution of consciousness posits its origin, potentiality, and transformation. It illustrates the evolutionary process that living beings in the universe originate from pure consciousness and gradually evolve back to their original state of transcendence. Although the transcendental state of pure consciousness is the ultimate aim of evolution, the phenomenal world formed by cosmic forces cannot be overlooked. This leads to the second point that both transcendental consciousness and the phenomenal world are the representation of one *Brahma* (Cosmic Entity). The integration of consciousness and phenomenon propose a balanced way of living for the inward oriented spiritual practice and outward oriented social service. Third, layers of consciousness explain the composition of the microcosmic mind and correspond to the realms of consciousness in the Macrocosmic mind. The individual being is the reflection of universal consciousness. Lastly, cakra biopsychology represents the connection between cakra psychic centers within the physical body and include a comprehensive system of psychospiritual propensities. These essential elements constitute the basis for a holistic yoga psychology framework for physical, psychic, and spiritual realms of development.

The four primary elements of yoga psychology in AM represent a harmonious way of living in the world. The understanding of the evolution, composition, and transformation of consciousness constitutes the theoretical foundation for a yoga psychology model. Cakra biopsychology offers a systematic framework for understanding physiological influences and psychic expressions. These essential elements in AM demonstrate the foundation for development of a holistic framework in the field of yoga psychology.

CHAPTER 4: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS IN WHOLE-PERSON YOGA PSYCHOLOGY

The heritage of yoga can be traced back to the sacred scriptures of Vedas and Upanishads containing spiritual philosophy, methods of contemplation, myths, hymns, and sacrificial rites for spiritual realization and enlightenment (Feuerstein, 2008). From the ancient, treasured teachings, various schools of yoga came into existence with specific orientation toward the individual, world, and spiritual attainment. Some schools of yoga emphasize training the physical body, the heart, or the mind, while others focus on the transcendental realms of existence or the activation of spiritual energy (*kundalini*; see Chaudhuri, 1974). A whole-person yoga psychology model aims to embrace all aspects of existence (physical, vital, and mental), as well as the transcendent dimensions (soul and spirit). The whole-person approach accounts for all planes of consciousness, from the physical reality to the transcendental realms. It encompasses a complete portrayal of an individual's personality including the mental, vital, psychic, and spiritual facets. The aim of spiritual progress is not only personal spiritual liberation, but to view oneself as the instrument of the Divine for the collective transformation of consciousness for all beings in the universe. This section explores common themes essential to a whole-person yoga psychology within IYP and AM.

Common Themes of Whole-Person Yoga Psychology

Based on the analysis presented previously, IYP and AM are both whole-person yoga frameworks from which a whole-person yoga psychology may be

derived. This has already been done within IYP framework through the works of Indra Sen (1986), Haridas Chaudhuri (1956) and others. In this section, four common themes between these two systems are discussed: evolution of cosmos, gradation of consciousness, integration of transcendent and phenomenal reality, and personal and collective evolution. Later in this chapter, unique features of each of the two yoga systems are discussed. In the next chapter, the study will develop a whole-person yoga psychology framework that integrates both the common elements and the distinctive features of the two yoga approaches to propose a more comprehensive whole-person yoga psychology framework.

Evolution of Cosmos

In IYP, the cosmology of consciousness is presented in terms of a two-fold process termed involution and evolution (Miovic, 2004). Involution is the descending process in which pure Divine consciousness ultimately involves itself into material, vital, and mental existence and is concealed within the physicality and planes of consciousness; evolution is the ascending process in which the dormant Divine consciousness awakens and reveals the Divine potentiality (Miovic, 2004). In AM, the cosmology of consciousness is shown in the *Brahma cakra* (Cosmic cycle) as two processes forming a full circle (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). *Saincara* is the centrifugal process where the Supreme consciousness transforms into the Cosmic Mind and five fundamental factors (ether, air, luminous, liquid and solid) with the solid factor as the culmination point; *pratisancara* is the centripetal process where the unit mind or soul (*jivatma*) evolves from solidity to life and move back toward the Supreme Entity in the

course of spiritual path (*sadhana*) (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). The two evolutionary movements in IYP and AM are comparable: involution in IYP corresponds to *saincara* in AM, which views phenomenal reality stemming from the transmutation of Divine consciousness into matter; evolution in IYP corresponds to *pratisancara* in AM, which acknowledges movement from inconscient matter returning to the original state of Divine consciousness. The similarity is not in the details of the process, but in the overall cyclical nature of the process connecting the Macrocosm to the microcosm. The cosmology theories in IYP (Miovic, 2004; Sri Aurobindo, 2005) and AM (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b) represent crucial elements signifying whole-person yoga psychology. Two crucial points consistent within the two cosmology systems are presented.

Consciousness is the origin and fundamental essence behind the creation of the universe. Yoga psychology differs from the Darwinism of Western science in which natural selection of species and organisms is responsible for evolution of consciousness from a biological perspective (R. D. Alexander, 1982). IYP recognizes consciousness as the basic element for the creation of the universe. As Sri Aurobindo (2012) stated,

Consciousness is a fundamental thing, the fundamental thing in existence—it is the energy, the motion, the movement of consciousness that creates the universe and all that is in it—not only the Macrocosm but the microcosm is nothing but consciousness arranging itself. (p. 22)

Additionally, AM theorizes that the creation of the universe stems from the Cosmic entity (*Brahma*) where the Cosmic principle (*Prakrti*) transforms Cosmic consciousness (*Purusa*) into phenomenal multiplicities. As Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (1999) noted,

Brahma is the cause of the entire creation and Brahma is the collective name for Prakrti and Puruṣa ... Prakrti is a unique force—a principle, the only function of which is to qualify Puruṣa ... Puruṣa alone is projected in all the different shapes of the creation. He is the stuff of which everything is made. But Puruṣa is consciousness; hence everything in this creation has consciousness. (pp. 33–34)

In both IYP and AM, consciousness is identified as the fundamental essence which created the entire universe from inanimate objects, living organisms to human beings. Consciousness is not only the substance that forms creation, but is also the origin where everything came from. Consciousness is dormant within physical structures awaiting to be released or realized in the evolutionary process. This process leads into the second point—evolution is the movement that releases the concealed Divine consciousness.

Evolution of consciousness is the process that reveals the dormant Divine consciousness. While consciousness is involved in all objects or organisms, the degree of it that is expressed through the veil of physical structure depends upon the degree of development in evolution. Sri Aurobindo (2013) further explained the evolution of consciousness:

The Being which is hidden in what seems to be an inconscient void emerges in the world first in Matter, then in Life, then in Mind and finally as the Spirit. The apparently inconscient Energy which creates is in fact the Consciousness-Force of the Divine and its aspect of consciousness, secret in Matter, begins to emerge in Life, finds something more of itself in Mind and finds its true self in a spiritual consciousness and finally a supramental Consciousness through which we become aware of the Reality, enter into it and unite ourselves with it. This is what we call evolution which is an evolution of Consciousness and an evolution of the Spirit in things and only outwardly an evolution of species. (p. 393)

Evolution of consciousness begins from inconscient matter, then forms life, followed by mind, and further expands to spiritual and supramental consciousness. This is similar to AM in that the evolutionary movement from

inanimate to animate and to higher human structures are all moving in a direction toward Supreme Consciousness. According to Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (2001b),

From the inanimate to the animate goes the process of evolution. ... Just as evolution takes place from the subtle to the crude, similarly the unit entity reverts step by step from the crude to the subtle, towards the same Absolute Consciousness from whence it came. (“Evolution Towards Perfection,” para. 4)

IYP views matter as the transmuted form of consciousness where evolution is the process of life and mind emerging from matter and moving toward Divine consciousness. As Varma (2010) noted,

First plants, then the lower animals, then the higher, and finally the human being comes into existence ... humans are in the process of evolving further—consciousness grows to its higher forms and ultimately merges with the One or original state of Sacchidananda. (“Sri Aurobindo’s Perspective,” para. 2)

IYP and AM both affirm, with regard to the evolution of consciousness, the movement from inconsistent matter toward Divine consciousness where all creation originates.

Gradation of Consciousness

Whole-person yoga psychology recognizes that individual consciousness is the reflection of universal consciousness divided into gradations of existence, ranging from crude to subtle, physical to spiritual realms. This differs from mainstream psychology, where consciousness is limited to observable mental activities and subconscious or unconscious impulses, desires, or unresolved issues within the human psyche. As Sen (2018) observed, “Western psychologists, whether Freud or Jung, or any other, regard all that is not conscious as unconscious and do not distinguish between the unconscious that represents the past, and the unconscious that may represent the future” (p. 124).

In IYP, gradation of consciousness is termed *planes of consciousness* (Miovic, 2004). Following Sri Aurobindo's teachings, Miovic (2004) described the planes of consciousness in terms of 12 levels: Sacchidananda, supermind, overmind, intuitive mind, illumined mind, higher mind, mind, vital, subtle physical, physical, subconscious, and inconscient. This can be simplified in terms of three major ranges of consciousness: physical and below, vital, and mental and above, which are parallel to the traditional teachings on the kosas of the Upanishads (Stein, 1983).

In AM as well, the teachings on the gradation of consciousness draws from the Upanishads with different interpretations ranging from the crude to subtle: kamamaya kosa, manomaya kosa, atimanasa kosa, vijinanamaya kosa, and hiranmaya kosa (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). Two points consistent within these systems of consciousness that are crucial for a whole-person yoga psychology are described below.

First, the gradation of consciousness expands the range of the human psyche to include physical existence, intellectual capacity, and vital impulses to subtle realms of spiritual potentiality. This holistic view acknowledges the totality of the human psyche and encompasses the physical, mental, vital, and spiritual realms of existence. According to Sen (2018), "three distinct spheres have to be recognized in human personality: the conscious, the unconscious, and the superconscious" (p. 124). In IYP, *conscious* refers to the observable surface of physical, mental, or vital expressions; *unconscious* refers to inconscient and

subconscious realms of disorganized lower nature; and *superconscious* denotes the higher subtle realms beyond ordinary mental perceptions.

Most Western psychologies focus on working with the surface aspects of consciousness such as mental activities, emotional imbalances, behavioral dysfunctions, or the unconscious impulses and complexes within the inconscient or subconscious spheres (Sen, 1986). On the other hand, some traditional yoga schools or transpersonal psychologies in its early formation emphasize the transcendental and subliminal realms of spirituality but suppress the unconscious and instinctual impulses and desires (Chaudhuri, 1974). IYP acknowledges the continuum of human consciousness, from the lower nature of inconscient and subconscious to the observable outer personality and further into subliminal realms of spiritual potentiality. As Indra Sen (2018) noted, “Sri Aurobindo’s pursuit is a complete integration and transformation of consciousness, and therefore, while the superconscious interests him for its wholeness quality and harmonizing function, the unconscious interests him as the vast realm of personality which needs harmonization” (p. 124).

This is consistent with the AM theory on kosas, the layers of consciousness that include the surface working of *kamamaya kosa* (desire sphere) and *manomaya kosa* (mental sphere) as well as three higher subliminal spheres of *atimanasa kosa* (supramental sphere), *vijinanamaya kosa* (subliminal sphere), and *hiranmaya kosa* (causal sphere; Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b). The AM teachings on kosas essentially correspond to the planes of consciousness in IYP. In IYP, the *kamamaya kosa* and *manomaya kosa* contain expressions of instincts,

desire, memory, intellectual reasoning, and experiences of pleasure and pain and may resonant with the planes of consciousness from inconscient to mind. The atimanasa kosa may correspond to higher mind, illumined mind, and intuitive mind also, which contain expressions of clairvoyant perception, creative insights, intuition, and inspiration. The vijinanamaya kosa may correspond to the overmind, which opens the cosmic consciousness with the sense of oneness and unity in IYP. The hiranmaya kosa may correspond to supermind, which is the infinite truth consciousness. Supermind is considered the intermediate link between the creation of multiplicities and transcendental poise of Sacchidananda. As Sri Aurobindo (1977) noted, “Supermind is between the Sacchidananda and the lower creation. It alone contains the self-determining Truth of the Divine Consciousness and is necessary for a Truth-creation” (p. 65). This corresponds to the description of Taraka Brahma in AM, which stands between the Saguna state of multiplicities and Nirguna state of transcendence (Anandamitra, 2002. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (2001e) distinguished between Saguna, Nirguna and Taraka Brahma, and stated, “In our philosophical treatise, *Ānanda Sūtram*, it has been enunciated, *Bháva bhávátīitayoh setuh Tárakabrahma*—‘The common point bridging together the empirical state of Saguña and the metempirical state of Nirguña is called Táraka Brahma’” (“Our Concept of Taraka Brahma,” para. 1). In short, the layers of consciousness in AM correspond to the planes of consciousness in IYP and encompass conscious, unconscious, and superconscious aspects of existence. This is not a mere coincidence, as both of these yoga systems

are rooted in traditional yoga teachings and propose more refined and more detailed maps of gradations of consciousness.

Moreover, the layers of consciousness within the individual soul are interconnected within the planes of the Macrocosm. “The Cosmic Entity extends in different lokas (worlds) wherein the different kosas and the unit minds dwell” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b, p. 36). In other words, the planes of the Macrocosm are reflected in the microcosm as layers of consciousness. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother (2002) also discussed the relation between the individual and cosmos:

First we must understand what we mean by planes of consciousness, planes of existence. We mean a general settled poise or world of relations between Purusha and Prakrti, between the Soul and Nature. ... That existence in its relations within and its experience of becoming is what we call soul or Purusha, individual soul in the individual, universal soul in the cosmos. (p. 11)

In summary, gradations of consciousness in IYP and AM expand the spectrum of individual consciousness from instinctual nature, disorganized subconsciousness, vital movements, intellectual capacity, and subtle psychic expressions to spiritual and supramental realms. The individual consciousness exists within the Macrocosmic planes. The Macrocosm is inherently a pure consciousness that undergoes transmutation into multiplicities of the phenomenal universe.

Integration of Transcendent and Phenomenal Reality

In some yoga and spiritual traditions, the core teachings emphasize the transcendental aspect of reality and disregard the phenomenal manifestations as illusion (Chaudhuri, 1974). Advaita Vedanta is one example where Brahman is

the ultimate origin of reality and is interpreted as Being, consciousness, and bliss (*sat, cit, Ananda*; Paranjpe et al., 2011). Advaita follows the monism view that “Brahman is considered to be the immanent and transcendent principle of the universe” (Paranjpe et al., 2011, pp. 255–256), and the rest of the physical world and individual experiences are consequences of primal illusion or *Maya*. The aim of spiritual progress focuses on personal spiritual liberation merging into the transcendental realm (Paranjpe et al., 2011). On the other hand, the material world and the physical body are regarded as illusion and bondages. IYP and AM acknowledge the existence of both the transcendental aspect of consciousness and the phenomenal aspect of multiplicity, but have a different understanding about the relationship between these two realms. The following section presents the holistic world view of IYP and AM.

IYP views the phenomenal world as real, which is the manifestation of Divine consciousness and force (Miovic, 2004). IYP disagrees with the ascetic negation and renunciation of life as a means to emancipate one from the bondage of ignorance. This differs from *Mayavada* (illusion doctrine) of Advaita. Sri Aurobindo (1977) presented a realistic definition of Advaita, which follows:

The philosophy of The Life Divine is such a realistic Advaita. The world is a manifestation of the Real and therefore is itself real. The reality is the infinite and eternal Divine, infinite and eternal Being, Consciousness-Force and Bliss. This Divine by his power has created the world or rather manifested it in his own infinite Being. (p. 27)

The manifested world is the creation of the Divine with Its consciousness, force, and bliss. The ultimate existence lies not only in the undifferentiated, eternal, and blissful consciousness but also in the phenomenal world created by the Divine force of movements. The evolution of consciousness begins from eternal

consciousness to the manifested world and culminates as Divine life on earth. As Sri Aurobindo noted (2013),

All other yogas regard this life as an illusion or a passing phase; the supramental yoga alone regards it as a thing created by the Divine for a progressive manifestation and takes the fulfilment of the life and the body for its object. The supramental is simply the Truth-Consciousness and what it brings in its descent is the full truth of life, the full truth of consciousness in Matter. (pp. 482–483)

In IYP, supramental yoga brings the supramental truth-consciousness down for the transformation of the material world and the physical body for spiritual embodiment and transformation of consciousness on earth.

This holistic view is congruent with AM's ideal of active participation in life as the instrument of the Divine which brings all to the path of bliss (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1999). AM objects to the traditional ascetic practices of tormenting the body or retreating into the mountains to seek emancipation from the mundane bondages for spiritual realization. AM philosophy recognizes that the universe is the creation of Brahma as a relative truth that cannot be denied as an illusion, as Brahma is the absolute truth. As Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (1999) talked about the creation of the universe, he stated:

The citta of Brahma has manifested itself in the form of this universe, and even though the form in which it has manifested itself is imaginary, it is a fact that it has manifested itself in the form of the universe. This is a reality or Satya. The universe has a form, so it cannot be said to be unreal, but at the same time, as the form is in the imagination of Brahma, it cannot be Satya. Hence the universe has to be considered as neither true nor false; it is something between the two; it is relative truth. (p. 44)

In practice, AM employs a positive approach to life, viewing the phenomenal world as the expression of the Divine being within the practice of Brahmacharya. *Brahmacharya* is commonly perceived as sexual abstinence or

celibacy in most yoga traditions (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1999). AM reinterprets the practice of Brahmacharya as looking upon every creation in the universe as blissful expressions of the Divine being (*Brahma*). This is psycho-spiritual parallelism, the method which assists “the assimilation of the psychic wave of the unit mind into the eternal waves of the Macrocosm” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b, pp. 64–65). Thus, the differentiation between the mundane and spiritual dissolves.

In summary, both IYP and AM yoga systems deny the teaching that the phenomenal world is purely an illusion and encourage active engagement in life. While from a technical perspective their positions are not identical, they both hold a holistic perspective with regard to the relationship between ultimate and phenomenal reality.

Personal and Collective Evolution

As discussed, most yoga or spiritual traditions emphasize personal spiritual liberation or self-realization as the ultimate aim of spiritual progress. Some may regard the world or worldly relationships as illusions or bondages that can become an obstacle to spiritual goals and escape from any associations in favor of an ascetic life and personal spiritual emancipation. IYP and AM oppose this renunciatory view and embrace the totality of human existence for both personal and collective evolution.

IYP views personal evolution within the full spectrum of cosmic evolution. The aim of IYP is not spiritual liberation into the transcendental realm, but rather a manifestation and embodiment of Divine consciousness on earth.

Personal evolution begins with psychic transformation and brings about collective transformation in society. As Herman (2018) discussed cosmic evolution,

All human beings may assist in cosmic evolution, as well as help resolve personal, social, national and international conflicts, by centering consciousness at the innermost core of the being until its guidance and energy are activated. The transformative process may develop from this innermost center because it is the locus within the human being of balance, harmony, release of psychic energy, joy, and intuitive wisdom (p. 248).

The establishment of harmony and peace in the universe requires a transformation of collective human consciousness. IYP views this common notion of personal self-realization as merely the beginning phase of spiritual advancement with subsequent steps of transformation of the entire being and manifestation of spiritual consciousness on earth. According Chaudhuri (1974) “personal salvation is not the highest end. It is the means to a still higher end, namely, the liberation and transformation of human society—the out flowering of the Divine in collective humanity” (p. 43). The aim of IYP is not personal liberation but transformation and spiritualization of the collective universe.

AM promotes comprehensive progress of the individual and collective progress in both spiritual and social spheres. The ideal of AM is self-realization and welfare of the universe. The two-fold path consists of inner spiritual realization and outer service to the universe for a balanced and harmonious development of personality and community. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (2001k) affirmed the need for collective salvation and reinterpreted salvation in an expanded sense. He stated that

Salvation does not mean salvation in the spiritual stratum only. Humanity must get salvation in all spheres of life, in all strata of life, without any exception. All humanity wants salvation in the social sphere, they want

salvation in economic strata, they want salvation in the realm of intellectual liberty, and they want salvation in the spiritual sphere. These are the minimum wants of human beings. (“Incantation and Human Progress,” para. 13)

The ideology of AM is founded on a socio-spiritual equilibrium where intellectual, psychic, spiritual, and social spheres of progress in personal and collective realms are equally important. PROUT, as a socioeconomic theory based on spiritual values in AM, advocates a vision of creating “a society where every individual can fulfill his or her potential and where all resources are utilized in an efficient and sustainable manner” (Prout, 2020). Besides, neohumanism is a psycho-intellectual philosophy in AM based on universal love that regards all created beings in the universe from inanimate to animate as expression of the Divine for the elevation of humanism to universalism. As Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (1993a) noted:

All objects are the varying forms of Puruśa. When one realizes that all these diverse objects finally merge into His supreme singularity, social service becomes more important than anything else, because service to individuals or the collectivity means service to Brahma. (p. 6)

AM encourages a positive attitude toward life to view the universe as the expression of the Divine and oneself as the instrument of the Divine. Selfless social service is the means to serve the Divine in different forms and is an indispensable as part of spiritual practice. IYP encourages dynamic participation in life as the instrument of the Divine in the act of self-offering and decent of Divine consciousness for complete transformation on earth. Both IYP and AM recognize the importance of participation in life as means for personal and collective evolution of consciousness.

Distinct Features of Integral Yoga Psychology

There are two distinct features of whole-person yoga psychology in IYP highlighted in the present study: the psychic being and the triple transformation. This section explores how these features are crucial and unique for IYP as a whole-person yoga psychology.

The Psychic Being

The *psychic being* is the Divine essence within an individual that supports and transforms the whole being to Divine truth and love. There are three crucial elements that constitute the concept of the psychic being as an integral part of whole-person yoga psychology.

First, the psychic being, also known as the evolving soul, accounts for the uniqueness of an individual and is the catalyst for transformation and wholeness of personality and healing of psychological wounds. Traditional yogas often overlook the uniqueness of an individual and emphasize merging the ego-free state with the Divine and often dismiss the psychological aspect of personality. On the other hand, mainstream Western psychology emphasizes the outer aspects of personality (cognitive, affective, behavioral) and psychological disorders and does not take into account human spiritual potentiality (Sen, 1986). IYP recognizes not only psychological and spiritual development but also psycho-spiritual integration as the bridge between psychology and yoga traditions. As Shirazi (2016) discussed integration in IYP,

Integral Yoga aims at integration of the whole person. This may be described as harmonization of the outer or embodied aspects of the individual human being (i.e., cognitive, affective, and behavioral); as well as the integration of the outer with the inner dimensions of being through

the catalytic role of the embodied, evolving soul—the psychic being—on the one hand, and integration of the individual dimension with the cosmic and transcendent dimensions on the other hand. In other words, the unique personal or individual characteristics of the individual are taken into account and not simply transcended but fully transformed. (p. 22)

IYP recognizes the uniqueness of an individual as the source of support and strength from the Divine. The psychological wounds caused by egoistic conditioning can be transformed into spiritualized movements of generative love and intimacy. The invocation of the psychic being brings about harmonization, integration, and transformation of the whole being.

Second, awakening of the psychic being as the guiding soul within enhances inner trust and intuition for decision making and guidance in life. The uniqueness of an individual lies within the psychic being as a portion of the Divine, located behind the heart. After the psychic being is brought to the front, one listens to the soul's guidance without blind adherence to authority, spiritual guru, or familial and societal norms. The psychic being acts as the soul's guidance and discriminative force. When the psychic being is dominant, the ego personality becomes the instrument of the soul after it undergoes a series of transformations. Stein (1983) discussed Sri Aurobindo's view on the psychic being as the soul's calling and explained that

His vision included the individual personality achieving manifest divinity in whatever role or field of life was chosen for it by the soul, apart from socially defined roles. The “psychic being” (that part of the soul connecting its inmost recesses to the mental, vital, and physical aspects of the being) would thus replace the guru as a source of guidance and would determine the outer form of the life according to its true calling. (p. 16)

Lastly, the opening of the psychic being brings about positive and spiritual influences in life that transform vital impulses into spiritualized movements.

When the psychic being is opened, feelings of sweet joy and love, surrender, and self-offering spread through the entire being. According to Miovic (2018), “cultivating contact with the psychic being creates a range of beneficial qualities including sincerity, honesty, compassion, joy, love (in the sense of *agape*), forgiveness, patience, humility, courage, devotion, gratitude and the appreciation of beauty” (p. 206). On the other hand, vital drives are characterized by “passions, desires, ardours, troubled emotions, cloudings, depressions, despairs” (Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 1999, pp. 21–22). The psychic being can transform these egoistic vital impulses into spiritualized movements of courage and love.

Triple Transformation

Triple transformation refers to a complete transformation in psychic, spiritual, and supramental realms and consists of spiritual movements of ascent and descent. This transformation is a unique and central principle in IYP and is essential to a whole-person yoga psychology.

Triple transformation is a dynamic and complete spiritualization of the entire being from higher planes of consciousness to the lower nature. Most spiritual traditions emphasize self-realization as the ultimate spiritual attainment. When the spiritual aim to reach higher planes of consciousness is for the attainment of spiritual liberation, it may cause the development of a pessimistic attitude toward life. One may experience dissociation and separation between worldly and spiritual lives and experience development of a passive attitude toward the world as illusion, viewing relationships as superfluous and responsibility as burdensome. In IYP, realization of the transcendental and eternal

state of consciousness is considered a passive, incomplete realization. It requires further descent to transform the inner and outer being.

Sri Aurobindo often refers to the realization of the nondual awareness ... as spiritual liberation, because it brings a release from the egocentric consciousness of the outer mind, life, and body. However, he notes that this first realization of the Self is passive, and can be followed by a dynamic heightening and widening of consciousness that leads eventually to transformation of both the inner and outer beings. (Miovic, 2018, p. 118)

The higher realms of consciousness may lead to spiritual experiences of bliss, transcendence, and freedom. However, if the lower inconscient, subconscious, and physical spheres are not transformed, the lower nature will eventually pull one away from spiritual experiences. Sri Aurobindo (1977) differentiated between realization and transformation:

Light of realization is not the same thing as Descent. Realization by itself does not necessarily transform the being as a whole; it may bring only an opening or heightening or widening of the consciousness at the top as to realize something in the Purusha part without any radical change in the parts of Prakrti. One may have some light of realization at the spiritual summit of the consciousness but the parts below remain what they were. (p. 202)

To that end, IYP recommends the further descent of Divine consciousness and force for complete transformation of the lower nature.

Furthermore, the descent of higher consciousness is considered a safer and gentler method for openings of the cakras. Some Tantric traditions emphasize raising the kundalini energy from the base cakra to the crown cakra and then merging with Divine consciousness above the head as the practice of spiritual realization such as Kundalini yoga (Miovic, 2018). IYP considers the method of raising the kundalini up from the bottom as one that potentially results in abrupt, immature spiritual experiences. Due to a precipitous rise of kundalini energy, one

may encounter spiritual emergencies and find difficulty integrating the spiritual experiences into the ordinary life. IYP suggests an alternate method for a gradual and gentle transformation devoid of this potential deficiency. Miovic (2018)

noted:

IYP proceeds by bringing forward the psychic being from behind the heart chakra and opening to a higher consciousness that descends from above the head. The advantage of this method is that it slowly and gently opens the chakras and releases the kundalini power without danger of inducing what transpersonal psychologists now call “spiritual emergencies.” (p. 203)

The awakening of the psychic being and descent of higher consciousness for the transformation and opening of the cakras is considered a safer alternative in IYP.

Lastly, triple transformation involves a complete supramentalization of the entire being, including the physical body for supramental evolution on earth. In IYP, realization and spiritualization are not limited to the planes of consciousness in the inner- and outer-beings, but include supramentalization of matter and the physical body on earth. As Sri Aurobindo (1977) noted,

The supramental creation, since it is to be a creation upon earth, must be not only an inner change but a physical and external manifestation also ... it is the actual descent of the supramental Divine into Matter and the working of the Divine Presence and Power there that can alone make the physical and external change possible. (p. 232)

The physical body can be transformed as an expression of the supramental being. This is a spiritual evolution on earth as embodiment of the Divine, rather than transcending the body or the physical world. As Varma (2010) confirmed the ideal of supramental evolution in IYP, “the basic goal of Sri Aurobindo’s Integral Yoga is that by the conscious collaboration of humans the supramental principle

will lead to an evolution of the species to a new stage of being” (“Supermind,” para. 1).

Distinct Features of Ananda Marga

AM is a Tantric yoga tradition and the teachings on the cakra biopsychology that connect the psychic-spiritual aspect of the cakras with the physical aspects of the body is a unique feature of it as a whole-person yoga psychology. This section explores how cakra biopsychology is a crucial theme in AM.

Cakra Biopsychology

The cakra biopsychology in AM connects the yogic cakra centers with the endocrine system which creates a parallelism between the physical body and the psycho-spiritual realms (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997b). The cakra centers are not only psychic centers within the spiritual realms, but are also intimately associated with the hormone secretions that have enormous impact on thought and mood regulation. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (1998b) defined cakras in AM as “a collection of glands and sub-glands, and the location of these glands and sub-glands differ from animal to animal. In humans, the cakras are situated at the intersecting points of the ida, piungala and susumna (psychic energy channels)” (p. 136). There is a close interrelation between the glandular system and the subtle psychic channels within the human physical body. Furthermore, the mental and psychic expressions (propensities or *vrttis*) are expressed through the vibrations of the cakras and influence the secretion of hormones.

The fifty main propensities of the human mind are expressed internally or externally through the vibrational expression of these cakras. These

vibrations cause hormones to be secreted from the glands, and the natural or unnatural expression of the propensities depends on the degree of normal or abnormal secretion of the hormones. (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1998b, p. 136)

In turn, secretion of hormones influence the expression of propensities within an individual and their expression are dependent upon the inherent samskaras of each individual to form a unique character or personality.

In the human mind various thoughts are constantly emerging and dissolving. Behind these psychic phenomena are the underlying vrttis (propensities) which are primarily related to the inborn samskaras (reactive momenta) of human beings. Propensities are formed according to one's inherent samskaras and the expression and control of these propensities are dependent upon the various cakras. (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1998b, p. 136)

Thus, the physical, mental, psychological, and spiritual realms are closely interwoven and form a complex system within the human psyche. The cakra biopsychology offers the ground for finding the link between physical, psychic, and spiritual realms.

Moreover, cakra biopsychology provides an alternative method to comprehend the human psyche for healing in the field of psychotherapy. In AM cakra biopsychology, each cakra is associated with a specific set of psycho-spiritual expressions. The yogic methods to purify and control the cakras may also be used as healing methods to balance and harmonize the psyche. In the West, some psychologists such as Anodea Judith (1996) combined cakra theory in their therapeutic work. In her prominent book *Eastern Body, Western Mind*, she states that cakra theory

focuses on vital issues in therapy today: addiction, codependence, physical and sexual abuse, family dynamics, character structures, personal empowerment, feminism, male emancipation, sexuality, politics, and

spirituality. It integrates techniques from bioenergetics to visualization, depth psychology to spiritual practice. (p. 10)

Anodea places psychological issues within the ancient cakra system to create an East–West modality for healing psychological wounds. As such, cakra biopsychology in AM has the potential for the development of an integrative yoga psychology model combining yogic cakra biopsychology with a psychotherapeutic outlook as a contribution to the field of psychotherapy, somatic psychology, and yoga traditions.

CHAPTER 5: A PROPOSED MODEL FOR WHOLE-PERSON YOGA PSYCHOLOGY

In this dissertation, two whole-person systems of yoga, AM and IYP, have been discussed. Both systems are concerned with wholeness of personality and each has unique teachings not recognized in other yoga traditions that can contribute to a broader understanding of how wholeness of personality may be achieved through transformation and harmonization of various aspects of personality. The primary aim of this dissertation was to develop a whole person framework for yoga psychology inspired by these two traditions.

In IYP, the process of psychic transformation has been significant for this study. This process can be understood as the transformation of egocentric consciousness through the influence of the psychic being which is a deeper center of individuality involved in the evolution of consciousness on the personal level (Miovic, 2004). IYP acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and the fact that the process of psychospiritual development is specific to each person. Therefore, there are no set or predetermined methods in IYP. However, the overall process of psychic transformation may be understood as having three phases: aspiration, rejection, and surrender.

AM emphasizes the processes of purification and harmonization of cakras through teachings of cakra biopsychology and specific yogic methods (Anandamitra, 2002). While IYP provides a general framework for understanding the transformation of consciousness, AM offers specific yogic practices that can be utilized to purify and harmonize cakras, which have corresponding

propensities associated with specific endocrine glands showing the link between biological, psychological, and spiritual levels. This chapter first presents the principal tenets that comprise the wholeness of personality followed by applications central to the evolution of personality and concludes with a unique whole-person yoga psychology model.

Wholeness of Personality

The fundamental principle and aim of a whole-person yoga psychology is to attain wholeness of personality (Shirazi, 2011). Etymologically speaking, wholeness comes from the Greek root *holos*, which implies the unification of separate parts (Smuts, 2013). Human personality is often fragmented with egoistic mental, vital, and physical movements that veil the spiritual potential to become whole. Shirazi (2011) discussed the principle of wholeness as follows:

Human beings have a natural right to, and an *innate potential for, wholeness*; and *urge toward wholeness* is the primary motive in human life ... [and further suggested] this essential wholeness is already present at the innermost core of the human psyche and our evolutionary challenge is to manifest this wholeness in our embodied existence. (p. 8)

Wholeness entails the evolutionary process to awaken this innate potential for a comprehensive development of personality in physical, psychological, and spiritual realms of existence.

This research has led to the understanding that the wholeness of personality contains essential characteristics which are akin to that of *Brahma* (Cosmic Being)—*sat* (consciousness), *cit* (force), and *ananda* (bliss). *Brahma* is the composite of Consciousness (*Shiva*) and Force (*Shakti*), which is essentially pure, transcendent, creative, dynamic, and blissful. There is an innate tendency to pursue happiness within every living being from the crudest self-preserving

instinct of pleasure seeking to the subtlest self-transcending practice of spiritual awakening. This tendency to pursue happiness in its ultimate form is infinite happiness or bliss which is synonymous to Brahma. As Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (2004) denotes in *Ananda Sutram*:

2-2 Sukhanuraktih parama jaevirttih. The attachment to happiness is the primary vrttis of living beings.

2-3 Sukhamanantamanandam. Infinite happiness is ananda (bliss).

2-4 Anandam Brahma ityahuh. This ananda is called Brahma.

2-5 Tasminnupalabdhe parama trsnanivrttih. That (Brahma) having been attained, all thirst is permanently quenched

2-6 Brahadesanpranidhanam ca dharmah. To long for and run after the Great is dharma. (pp. 24–25)

The wholeness of personality pertains to actualization of the attributes of the Cosmic Being (i.e., consciousness, energy or force, and bliss within the human psyche).

The wholeness of personality is an overarching principle that engages the four common themes discussed in the previous chapter—evolution of cosmos, gradations of consciousness, integration of consciousness, and personal and collective evolution. Evolution of the cosmos reflects that consciousness is the essential element as the origin and the composite makeup of human personality. This entails that human personality is a participatory agent within the evolutionary journey of the cosmos to become whole. Gradation of consciousness reveals its comprehensive spectrum from the lower instinctual realm to the mental and higher spiritual spheres. This comprises a holistic spectrum of consciousness for transformation and integration within the personality. The ultimate goal of a

whole-person approach to yoga psychology is not to transcend the phenomenal or egocentric consciousness in favor of transcendental consciousness. Instead, the goal is transformation of the egocentric consciousness and its integration with transcendent or spiritual consciousness. This integration results in spiritualization of the embodied self and requires a dynamic and positive outlook on life. Last, personal and collective evolution views personal or microcosmic evolution as being embedded within the larger context of collective cosmic evolution as a whole. As Chaudhuri (1975) stated, “the psyche and the cosmic whole are inseparably interrelated. The universe is in ultimate analysis the psychocosmic continuum” (p. 233). This necessitates a surrendered and selfless devotion within the heart to utilize the personality as the instrument of the Divine for collective evolution.

Broadly, wholeness of personality encompasses six whole-person yoga psychology principles:

1. The fundamental characteristics of wholeness are consciousness, dynamism, and bliss (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*);
2. There is an innate potential and drive for wholeness within human personality;
3. Evolution of the cosmos entails a progressive process for the personality to liberate consciousness from its dormant state in matter to become whole; in other words, it involves the unfoldment of consciousness along its gradations from the least conscious level to

the highest possible level with the ultimate goal of achieving wholeness;

4. Wholeness is intimately related to the processes of transformation, integration, harmonization and purification of all parts and systems of personality along the gradations of consciousness;
5. Gradations of consciousness comprise a complete or whole spectrum of personality that includes the subconscious, physical, vital, mental, psychic, and spiritual realms of existence;
6. Integration of consciousness pertains to transformation and reconciliation of various aspects of personality through the process of psychic transformation for an embodied wholeness.

There is a consensual understanding in IYP and AM that there is a correspondence between the psyche and the cosmos—between the microcosm and the Macrocosm. The Cosmic Being is described in terms of three fundamental qualities (*Sat*, *Chit*, and *Ananda*) that comprise the cosmic whole (Macrocosm). The personality is on an evolutionary journey toward wholeness as its original stance to reveal essential characteristics of consciousness, dynamism, and bliss. In IYP, the transcendent consciousness involves itself in matter and through successive stages of evolution of consciousness from physical, to vital, to mental, and finally to spiritual consciousness; similarly, in AM, the Supreme Consciousness goes through stages of transmutation to solidarity as the culmination point and gradually evolves back through intuitional practices recovering its spiritual essence—the original wholeness of Sat-Chit-Ananda is

reclaimed in embodied consciousness here on earth. This is represented by the first three principles above.

The next two principles—4 and 5—assert the multidimensionality of wholeness and the totality of consciousness within personality. For the human personality to achieve wholeness, various dimensions of personality need to undergo the processes of purification, transformation, harmonization, and integration. Further, the transformation of ego consciousness is not possible without the assistance of a deeper level of self, known as the psychic being. Transformation and reconciliation of the various aspects of egocentric personality with the assistance of the psychic being is called psychic transformation in IYP, represented in the sixth principle.

Evolution of Personality

The evolution of personality results from the processes of transformation and harmonization toward wholeness. In this section, two key principles that pertain to transformation and harmonization of personality are discussed: (a) psychic being as the catalyst for personality transformation; and (b) harmonization and purification in the context of cakra biopsychology. These principles highlight important contributions from IYP and AM respectively, comprising the essential core of the whole-person yoga psychology framework offered in this dissertation, and derived from a comparative study of the two systems in previous chapters.

Psychic Being as the Catalyst for Personality Transformation

The psychic being in IYP is central to personality transformation. It represents the essential individual Divinity within and guides the evolutionary process of personality. With the psychic being as the catalyst, there are three processes involved in the transformation of personality: evocation, transformation of egocentric movements, and surrender of personality.

Evocation of the Psychic Being

Each individual is a unique composition of the outer being (outer or ego personality), the inner being, and the psychic being. Shirazi (2016) discussed the principle of uniqueness, and stated “Each person is a unique combination of outer personality factors, inner personality characteristics and has a unique psychic personality” (p. 23). The psychic being is a portion of the Divine that resides behind the heart as the individual Divinity in the center of the being. The psychic being, having the characteristics of uniqueness and connectedness, acts as the guiding soul within and connects one with the Divine (Shirazi, 2016). However, the psychic being is usually veiled by the outer personality with its fragmented and chaotic mental, vital, and physical movements. As Sri Aurobindo (1993) denoted, “the soul, the psychic being is in direct touch with the Divine Truth, but it is hidden in man by the mind, the vital being and the physical structure” (p. 204). Therefore, the first step to access the psychic being is to evoke it—to bring the psychic being that is behind the veil of the outer personality to the forefront of consciousness.

The evocation of the psychic being requires an attitude of aspiration or yearning for the Divine (Miovic, 2018). This is to feel the presence of the Divine within the core of one's being. The initial stage is to redirect awareness from external preoccupations of mental, vital, and physical activities to the inner being—"the opening of the occult inner mind, inner vital, inner physical, so that one becomes aware of all that lies behind the surface mind, life and body" (Sri Aurobindo, 1993, p. 205). The inner being is broader than the outer one and connects to higher and deeper realms of psychic influence. The opening of the inner being requires calming the chaotic nature of the outer being and turning the awareness inward to the psychic being. The practice of *samatha* (tranquility of the mind), an ancient yogic practice of concentration and one-pointedness to bring the focus of the mind to an object of meditation such as breath, sound, movement, point of light, and so on can be adopted at this stage (Shirazi, 2016). This practice brings about qualities of concentration, equanimity, equality, and mindfulness as the result of calming and quieting surface movements of the outer being, that is, to loosen the veil that has covered the innermost psychic being (Shirazi, 2011). In turn, the equanimity serves as a foundation for the practice of introspection which Sri Aurobindo (2005) introduced.

Introspection is a witness-consciousness meditation which is practiced with dispassionate and nonjudgmental self-observation (Battle, 2018; Shirazi, 2016). Initially, one watches the rising and falling of mental activities, emotional energies, and physical sensations with detached, nonjudgmental observation. With sincere and sustained self-observation of mindfulness, the surface movements

from the outer being gradually calm down. Then, the locus of consciousness is shifted toward the presence of the psychic being and established therein. Considering the nature of the psychic being is in direct touch with Divine Truth, when it is brought to the front from the veil of surface movements as the center of consciousness, it becomes the guiding soul that illuminates the whole being with Divine truth, love, and light. As Sri Aurobindo (1993) discussed the psychic opening, he stated “the opening of the psychic being or soul by which it comes forward and governs the mind, life and body turning all to the Divine” (p. 205). The evocation of the psychic being develops a sense of personal relationship with the Divine within the core of the being that generates “a relation of Bhakti, love, reliance, self-giving, rejection of the insinuations of the separating and self-asserting mental, vital and physical ego” (Sri Aurobindo, 1993, p. 207). The surface ego is fragmented in nature and needs transformation through facilitation by the psychic being. This leads to the second process in which the psychic being acts as the catalyst for ego transformation.

Transformation of Egocentric Movements

The *ego personality* is referred to as the outer being which is composed of mental, vital, and physical activities (Miovic, 2004). This is the part of personality of which one is ordinarily conscious and identified with as the self or ego. The nature of this outer personality is chaotic and fragmented which is the storehouse of desires, temptations, thoughts, and various pursuits. Sri Aurobindo (1999) portrayed this human condition:

To the ordinary man, who lives upon his own waking surface, ignorant of the self's depths and vastnesses behind the veil, his psychological

existence is fairly simple. A small but clamorous company of desires, some imperative intellectual and aesthetic cravings, some tastes, a few ruling or prominent ideas amid a great current of unconnected or ill-connected and mostly trivial thoughts, a number of more or less imperative vital needs, alternations of physical health and disease, a scattered and inconsequent succession of joys and griefs, frequent minor disturbances and vicissitudes and rarer strong searchings and upheavals of mind or body, and through it all Nature, partly with the aid of his thought and will, partly without or in spite of it, arranging these things in some rough practical fashion, some tolerable disorderly order—this is the material of his existence. (pp. 74–75)

The *outer personality* is a mixture of disintegrated intellectual processes, emotional upheavals, and sensational cravings influenced by the workings of subconscious below the waking consciousness. The *subscient* is obscure, incoherent, and half-conscious and consists of repeated imprints and habitual patterns from the past (*samskaras*). The ego personality is analogous to the tip of the iceberg as the surface waking consciousness with the subconscious realm underneath. The spiritual realm is the wider ocean that surrounds the iceberg and constantly brings in psychic influence. The ego personality is the part of nature that can be transformed and integrated by the psychic being into the Divine instrument.

When the psychic being is awakened and established as the center of being, the power of discrimination shines through the veil of the outer being (Shirazi, 2016). The Divine presence becomes dominant over the movements of the ego personality and one becomes consciously aware of the Divine within. The psychic being is the guiding soul that illuminates through the ego movements with the power of discernment and rejection of all that is false, divisive, and harmful. Sri Aurobindo (1993) described the discernment faculty of the psychic being as follows:

When the psychic being comes in front, there is an automatic perception of the true and untrue, the divine and the undivine, the spiritual right and wrong of things, and the false vital and mental movements and attacks are immediately exposed and fall away and can do nothing; gradually the vital and physical as well as the mind get full of this psychic light and truth and sound feeling and purity. (pp. 206–207)

This is the true discernment that witnesses and removes the workings of the lower nature and egocentric movements. This rejection tactic is different from egoistic suppression or moral judgment and results in an effortless discrimination of Divine truth—a stance from the psychic being rather than the ego personality. This is followed by a progressive transformation of the ego personality.

The psychic being's direct link with the Divine can transform the parts of the ego personality that are false, scattered, destructive, and primitive. The method can be two-fold: one is to raise the submerged part of consciousness into the light of the psychic being, or to bring forth the illumination of the psychic being to transform the lower nature. The former is “the process of rising up the lower movements into the full light of consciousness in order to know and deal with them is inevitable, for there can be no complete change without it” (Sri Aurobindo, 1941, as cited in Cornelisson, 2018, p. 77). This is to bring forward to the subconscious, the conscious light of the psychic being for a complete transformation of the lower nature within the ego personality. It is crucial to keep a connection with the psychic being while working to transform the lower range of nature without sinking into the chaos. As Sri Aurobindo (2014) recommended:

If you go down into your lower parts or ranges of nature, you must be always careful to keep a vigilant connection with the higher already regenerated levels of the consciousness and to bring down the Light and Purity through them into these nether still unregenerated regions. If there is not this vigilance, one gets absorbed in the unregenerated movement of the inferior layers and there is obscurity and trouble. ... The safest way

is to remain in the higher part of the consciousness and put a pressure from it on the lower to change. (p. 636)

The psychic being is the individual Divinity within as the source of truth, light, beauty, and love connecting to the universal Divine. The egocentric movements are transformed by the psychic being into Divine expressions. This opening of the psychic being brings about positive qualities of spontaneous joy, universal love, courage, devotion, and appreciation of beauty which become the strength for healing psychological wounds and psychospiritual development (Miovic, 2004). The ego personality is transformed and filled with the psychic presence which becomes the instrument of Divine consciousness. This leads to the next process—surrender of personality.

Surrender of Personality

Surrender is a complete self-offering to the Divine, a final process by which the ego personality is transformed as the instrument for the expression of Divine consciousness. In the evocation of the psychic being, awareness is brought to the front and influences the ego personality with all its mental, vital, sensational, and behavioral movements to undergo transformation. The psychic being with the power of true discernment, rejects and removes parts of the personality that are impure or egocentric. The whole being is offered to the Divine, which requires the inner qualities of trust, patience, and confidence in the Divine. The psychic being becomes the center of the being and the ego personality turns into an instrument of Divine consciousness and expression after it is transformed. In this way, the personality is identified with the psychic being, replacing the identification with the ego personality. The ego structure has to be

prepared first before it can be surrendered completely to the Divine and transformed as its instrument. Surrender is at the core of the psychic transformation that guides and connects the ego personality with the Divine (Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 1999).

In conclusion, the psychic being is the catalyst for personality transformation. The psychic transformation requires its evocation and bringing forth to the front of consciousness. When the psychic being is in the front, ego personality can be transformed into spiritualized movements of psychic expression where its movements are purified. Last, the ego personality is surrendered to the Divine and transformed as its instrument, with the psychic being as the guiding soul within. This entire process is referred to as psychic transformation in IYP.

Harmonization and Purification in Cakra Biopsychology

Cakra biopsychology in AM represents a close interrelation between the endocrine system, the cakras, and psychospiritual expressions (propensities; i.e., the influence of the cakras on psychological and spiritual spheres of personality). In other words, cakra biopsychology is concerned with the interrelationship between the physical, psychological, mental, and spiritual movements that are influenced by cakras. The cakras are psychic centers within the body consisting of specific propensities of psychospiritual expressions. The psychospiritual movements within the personality are influenced by these underlying propensities. From a psychospiritual perspective, the endocrine system is a network of glands and sub-glands that produce and transport hormones throughout the body

responsible for expressions of propensities (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997b). Each cakra has corresponding propensities associated with specific endocrine glands which are the links between biological, psychological, and spiritual realms. The higher cakras, or glands, have more control over the lower ones. For example, sahasrara cakra is the controlling point of all the 1,000 propensities of the mind, and the corresponding pituitary gland controls the testes and ovaries to convert lymph to semen and ovum (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1991). Specifically, the balanced development of the cakras needs to be built from the lower ones and gradually work up to those that are higher for personality development. If one conversely works on the sahasrara cakra without establishment in the lower cakras, the psychospiritual development may be hampered (Shrii Shrii Anandmurti, 1997b).

The following section explores practical applications of cakra biopsychology drawn from Ashtanga yoga and reinterpreted by AM for psychospiritual development divided into two sections as harmonization and purification of cakras. The harmonization of cakras pertains to the development of annamaya, kamamaya, and manomaya kosas employing asanas, yama-niyama, and pranayama. The purification of cakras concerns the development of atimanasa, vijinanamaya, and hiranmaya kosas utilizing pratyahara, dharana, and dhyana. The development of each kosa has influences on the corresponding cakras. According to Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (2001i)

To convert the mind into a real mirror, every kosa has to be made transparent and crystalline. The attitude of the lower kosas has to be sublimated into the higher kosas and then again the higher kosas have to be made still more transparent by means of sadhana—by means of the

penetrating projection of the sentient force—and merged in the still higher kosas. (This World and Next section, para.16)

Ashtanga practices are the means to perfect each kosa with sentient force by psychospiritual ideation of the Divine. Moreover, there is a close interrelation between kosas and cakras.

The human body is made of five fundamental factors. These five fundamental factors are being controlled by prana, the first of the five internal vital principles. The prana is being controlled by the mind. ... The different seats of the mind for the indirect control of the different corporal factors are called “cakras” or “circles” or centers of psychic force ... the five kosas chiefly control the five cakras. (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, as cited in Anandamitra, 2002, pp. 161–162)

Prana is the connecting medium between kosas and cakras illustrating the mind–body connection. Each kosa controls the corresponding cakra up to vishuddha cakra because there is no fundamental factors from the ajina cakra to the top.

Harmonization of Cakras

The harmonization of cakras is to balance the propensity movements of physical, vital, and mental realms within the personality. The ego personality is intrinsically fragmented by the influxes of samskaras that express through cakra propensities. The imbalance occurs in personality when glandular secretions are insufficient or are in excess and vital energy flows (*prana*) are chaotic within the body. Harmonization of cakras pertains to the harmonizing propensities by balancing endocrine secretions, vital energy flow, and spiritual ideation for equilibrium within and between cakras. This section discusses yogic methods—*asanas* (yoga poses), *yama niyama* (yogic moral discipline), and *pranayama* (breath control) for harmonization of cakras to balance propensity movements for a harmonious development of personality.

The yoga poses, *asanas*, are yogic exercises crucial for balancing the secretion of endocrine glands and in turn the expression of propensities (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001d). Asana is “a position in which one feels comfortable—*Sthirasukhamásanam*” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001d, Asana section, para. 1). The practice of asanas is beneficial for the development of annamaya kosa (the physical body; Anandamitra, 2002). The asana is not only beneficial for the body’s health, but most importantly, it is crucial for balancing the secretion of glands, specifically the propensities (psycho-spiritual expressions) to express oneself. Some asanas are named after the forms of certain animals. “The physical structures of those animals and birds are such as to further certain glandular secretions, and as a result certain special qualities are developed” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001d, Asana section, para. 4). For example, the *kurmakasana* (tortoise posture) helps to withdraw the mind from the external world due to the special characteristic of the tortoise to retract its limbs (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001d). When the secretion of glands are imbalanced, certain propensities may overwhelm the psyche and cause ego fragmentation. The practice of asana brings about composure in the body, mind, and propensity expressions.

The relation between the physical body and the mind is very close. Mental expression is brought about through the vrttis, and the predominance of the vrttis depends on different glands of the body. There are many glands in the body and from each there is a secretion of a particular hormone. If there is any defect in the secretion of hormones or any defect in a gland, certain vrttis become excited. (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001d, Asana section, para. 2)

In the example of opening the anahata and manipura cakras, cobra or *karmasana* are recommended for balancing the heart cakra and can be beneficial for the propensity of melancholia within manipura cakra (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti,

1997b). When one suffers from shyness or speaking in public, the bow yoga pose helps to overcome shyness within manipura cakra. Asanas harmonize propensity expressions by balancing the glandular secretions.

Further, *yama* and *niyama* are yoga moral disciplines essential for the harmonization of propensity expressions. There are five parts to the practice of *yama*: (a) *ahimsa* (nonharming); (b) *satya* (benevolence and truthfulness); (c) *asteya* (nonstealing); (d) *brahmacharya* (keep the mind always absorbed in Brahma); and (e) *aparigraha* (nonpossessiveness and greedlessness). Additionally, there are five parts to the practice of *niyama*: (a) *shaoca* (purity); (b) *santosa* (contentment); (c) *tapah* (self-sacrifice for service); (d) *svadhyaya* (true understanding of the study); and (e) *Iishvara pranidhana* (surrender and devotion to Divine) (Feuerstein, 2008; Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1998a). The practice of *yama niyama* is beneficial for the perfection of the *kamamaya kosa* (desire layer) to transform crude propensities into spiritual expressions and further controls muladhara cakra (Anandamitra, 2002). It is a discipline with conscious discrimination which balance the cruder propensities of sadism, hatred, cruelty, low confidence, and attachment within cakras. This is different from suppression, which may result in the aggregation of propensities and the vital energy that causes mental confusion and personality fragmentation. The discipline is a gradual process, founded upon spiritual ideation of the Divine to transform crude propensities and regain harmonization within the personality. *Yama* and *niyama* are important practices for balance and harmonization in physical, psychological, and spiritual spheres of life: “While dealing with their specialties, we may say that

Yama Sadhana is the practice of the physical and psychic strata while the Niyama Sadhana carries equal weight in mundane, supramundane and spiritual strata” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2000, p.31).

Next, the yogic breath control, *pranayama*, is the practice of controlling movements of the 10 vital energies (*prana*) in the body (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001d). When the vital energy in the body is chaotic or disturbed, the mind becomes restless and imbalance occurs in propensity expressions. Pranayama controls the flow of the vital energy in the body and is beneficial not only for the physical health to increase vitality, but also for the development of the *manomaya kosa* (the mental layer) for concentration and apperception of the mind (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001d). The development of manomaya kosa further controls svadhithana cakra (Anandamitra, 2002). It is crucial that pranayama is done with *bindu dhyana* (meditation on a particular point) and cosmic ideation, so the mind can stay in a composed state of consciousness. “The psycho-philosophy behind the practice of práñáyáma is that the spiritual aspirant tries to let the pranendriya (ten vital-energy currents) remain in a state of pause so that the paused unit mind will merge into the ocean of consciousness” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1998b, p. 150). Pranayama is beneficial for mental concentration and propensity harmonization when the vital energy is brought to a composed state.

Purification of Cakras

Purification of cakras refers to removing mutative and inert impressions in cakra propensities and the mental plate that cause imbalanced expressions and disturbances within the personality. Purification of cakras aims to expand the

egoistic existence to the psycho-spiritual realm of consciousness, which is essentially pure, harmonious, and blissful. This section presents yogic methods—*pratyahara* (sense withdrawal), *tattva dharana* (cakra control), *cakra shodhana* (cakra purification), and *dhyana* (absorbed contemplation) for purification of cakras.

Pratyahara is the practice of withdrawing all mental faculties, sensual attractions, and propensity expressions from external influences of the world to focus on inner contemplation. *Pratyahara* literally means withdrawal, which is not complete in itself and is recommended in conjunction with *dharana* (concentration) (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1994). The practice forms the primordial phase of *sadhana* (intuitive practice) and occupies a crucial role in withdrawal of the mind from inert influences of the phenomenal world. Hence, *pratyahara* is essential for the perfection of *atimanasa kosa* (supramental layer) for the development of intuition and creativities and further controls manipura cakra (Anandamitra, 2002). When the extroverted orientation is being diverted inwardly, the influences from propensities are transformed and brought under control for self-surrender and selfless service.

Only when all the indriyas are fully controlled can it be said that the mind is under the complete control of the átman [unit consciousness]. This is real *pratyáhára*, or *vashiikára siddhi*, for it means Prakrti has merged into the Supreme Cognitive Principle. This is called *Krśńasharaña* [taking the shelter of Krśńa] in devotional psychology. The importance of *pratyáhára sádhaná* is immense, because it involves a harmonious blending of knowledge, devotion and action. ... The *pratyáhára* yoga with which a Shákta starts rendering service to the world reaches its consummation in the perfect and total service of the Vaeśńava. *Pratyáhára* begins with vigorous action and culminates in selfless devotion. (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1994, p. 21)

In pratyahara, all the propensities and mental faculties are withdrawn and surrendered to settle within, which results in the culmination point of devotion.

Moreover, there are meditations designed for control and purification of cakras—*tattva dharana* (cakra control) and *cakra shodhana* (cakra purification). *Tattva dharana* involves concentration on the respective controlling points of the fundamental factors within cakras in the body with respective acoustic sounds and ideation on the Supreme Consciousness (Cidghanananda, 2007). The practice of dharana perfects vijinanamaya kosa and controls corresponding anahata cakra. The physical body is made up of five fundamental factors—solid, liquid, luminous, air, and ether—and the controlling points of the factors are located in the corresponding cakras. Muladhara cakra controls the solid factor; svadhisthana controls the liquid factor; manipura cakra controls the luminous factor; anahata cakra controls the aerial factor; and vishuddha cakra controls the ethereal factor (Cidghanananda, 2007). Since the physical body and the phenomenal world are made up of the fundamental factors, dharana helps to maintain balance and vitality of the body on the physical realm; and cultivates occult powers when one establishes control over the five fundamental factors. However, occult power is not the goal of the practice which can cause egocentric attachment. The strength and power generated from the practice is to be diverted toward cosmic ideation. From a psychospiritual perspective, when one establishes control over the five fundamental factors, the inner strength is elevated, and personality is not disturbed by inferences from samskaras and attractions of the phenomenon world, which enables one to accelerate spiritual progress.

Next, *cakra shodhana* is concentration on the respective shape and color of carkas to remove mutative and inert forces within, with ideation of the Supreme Consciousness (Cidghanananda, 2007). This practice is unique to AM and is not part of Ashtanga practices. As earlier stated, Supreme Consciousness is essentially pure and blissful and concentration on cakras with the cosmic ideation generates sentient vibrations in the body. “This rhythmical vibration of the Great creates a thrill and bliss in the whole body, because the Supreme idea is given to the different plexi which control the five fundamental factors of which the body is made” (Cidghanananda, 2007, p. 15). The purification results in a sense of lightness, calmness, upliftment, and joy within the body and the psyche.

Cidghanananda (2007) illustrated the benefits of *cakra shodhana* as follows:

Cakra Shodhana also brings about easing of the tension of the mind. A person attacked by innumerable conflicts and ideas, experiencing great tension, can get ease and comfort of his or her mind. A person suffering from hypertension (high blood pressure) is also helped a lot by this. The nerves, the glands, and the whole body together with the mind, enjoy rest and ease. Since different nuclei of the different cakras are also touched and vibrated, a lot of force is created in the mind and a spiritualist feels most energized after doing this lesson. (p. 17)

Cakra shodhana relieves tension, stress, and fragmentation by purifying the mutative or inert impressions within the cakras.

Next, *dhyana* is defined as “the unbroken flow of the mind-stuff, or *citta*, in one continuous stream, like the flow of oil, where all the propensities of the mind are fixed on the goal” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001c, Sadhana section, para. 10). The practice of *dhyana* perfects *hiranmaya kosa* and controls corresponding *vishuddha cakra*. *Dhyana* is a dynamic and continuous flow of all mental faculties and propensities to focus on the attribute-less consciousness or

Nirguna Brahma in the sahasrara cakra. There is an upward movement of all propensities to move beyond inert, mutative, or even sentient inferences in the body to merge in the Supreme Consciousness where samadhi is the result of dhyana.

Finally, the ideation of psychospiritual parallelism is the underlying principle of the Ashtanga practices reinterpreted by AM presented here. Psychospiritual parallelism is to channel all psychospiritual waves of propensities within the personality and convert them into identification with the Cosmic Being, which is pure and blissful in essence. The psychospiritual pabulum of personality is constantly influenced by internal impulses or external attachments within its limited capacity for spiritual evolution. Psychospiritual parallelism is to channelize all internal propensities and transform them into consciousness expansions that are applied in the Ashtanga practices. This inner channelization generates strength within the personality—“The psycho-spiritual approach makes a person deeply introversial [inward orientation], one-directional, strong and dynamic” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001a, Psycho-Spiritual Channelization section, para. 5). This approach also arouses sweet feelings of devotional love for the Divine as in Shrii Shrii Anandamurti’s (1994) words:

Bháva (psycho-spiritual parallelism) means that type of special ideation which makes the entitative rhythm very pure and holy, which arouses the latent love for Parama Puruśa, and which makes the mind smooth-surfaced and soft owing to the spiritual effulgence. (p. 51)

The psychospiritual parallelism brings about devotion within the heart and purity within the mind, which purifies the personality in all spheres of existence. This parallelism is achieved by constant ideation or contemplation on the Cosmic

Being to purify the mental and psychic waves of expressions. “If human beings repeatedly ideate on Paramátmá, their psychic waves gradually straighten, because they come in contact with the perfectly straight spiritual waves of that Entity” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1994, p. 52), which transforms ego identification to cosmic identification.

A Unique Whole-Person Yoga Psychology Model

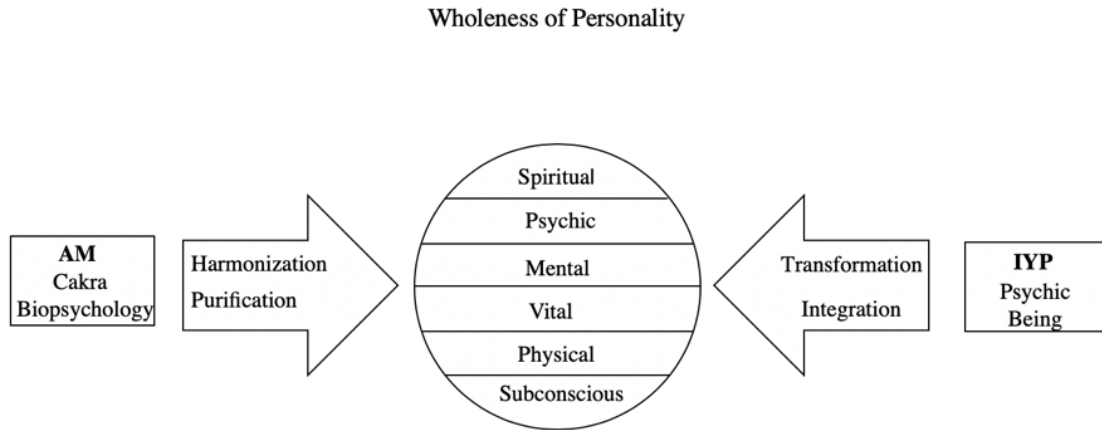
The central aim of this dissertation was to present a whole-person psychology model featuring unique contributions from two yoga disciplines discussed in this dissertation. These are the process of psychic transformation, or the transformation of egocentric personality facilitated by the activation of the psychic being which is a unique contribution of IYP, and purification and harmonization of cakras as developed in the cakra biopsychology of AM. These two features along with six principles of whole-person yoga psychology proposed earlier will now be synthesized into a single framework.

Historically, yoga has been the discipline through which the evolution of consciousness is accelerated. The framework presented below takes advantages of the whole-person psychology principles of IYP and AM toward achieving wholeness of personality, as well as unique features of each one discussed previously. While IYP offers a general framework for psychic transformation and integration of personality, AM offers specific yogic practices for purification and harmonization of personality.

Please refer to the graph below (Figure 3) for the composition of this whole-person yoga psychology model.

Figure 3

Whole-Person Yoga Psychology Paradigm



Note. Author's image.

This graph illustrates the composition of the whole-person yoga psychology model presented here. In the middle, the circle represents the gradations of consciousness in six spheres of existence: the spiritual, psychic, mental, vital, physical, and subconscious realms. Wholeness of personality can be achieved through purification and transformation of each layer, and harmonization and integration of all levels. The contribution of IYP can be summarized in terms of the principles of transformation and integration of personality as facilitated by the psychic being. AM contributes to this model with cakra biopsychology to achieve wholeness of personality through the processes of harmonization and purification. This model is a synthesis of IYP and AM for the unfoldment of wholeness within personality on the evolutionary journey of consciousness.

Gradations of Consciousness

Wholeness of personality requires balanced development in the six realms of existence—subconscious, physical, vital, mental, psychic, and spiritual. These realms are interconnected and interacting and constitute personality as a whole. We saw earlier that in IYP personality is comprised of an outer aspect (outer being, egocentric personality), and an inner aspect (inner being), with the psychic being at the innermost center. The inner being, which is comprised of inner physical, inner vital, and inner mental, plus the psychic being at the core are represented by the term *psychic* in the above model. Gradations of consciousness above the ordinary mental consciousness (higher mind to supermind) comprise the spiritual dimension in the model, which may be considered transpersonal dimensions of personality. The general functions and descriptions of these realms along with applications from IYP and AM for their development will be discussed in this section.

The subconscious realm corresponds to the subconscious in IYP as the submerged part of consciousness that is below the waking and the physical consciousness (Sri Aurobindo, 1993). This realm stores primitive instincts of animality from the beginning phase of evolution, as well as habitual and repetitive conditionings and repressed complexes from past memories. The subconscious is obscure and disorganized, and its contents can surface in dreams, imageries, or repetitive and compulsive thoughts and behaviors. This realm can be developed by methods of introspection or psychotherapy, where one can observe and identify underlying patterns and motives of subconscious movements in thoughts,

emotions, images, or memories. Then, one can work to bring those submerged parts of consciousness into the conscious light for further transformation and integration. This can be seen in the example of the active imagination of Jungian psychotherapy, where the client is encouraged to freely and spontaneously make conscious and interpret the unconscious materials of dreams or fantasies in narratives, images, or visualizations to uncover the unconscious and bring into the conscious realm (Jung, 1969). The unconscious in Jungian (1969) psychology is referred to as the subconscious here.

The physical realm corresponds to the physical body and subtle physical in IYP and *annamaya kosa* in AM. Wholeness in the physical realm requires balance and harmony of the biological systems within the body as well as the subtle physical body. This can be achieved by wise selections of food and proper physical exercises for physical health. The subtle physical body refers to the mental physical—the mind of the body and the vital physical—the sheath of subtle energy around the body in IYP (i.e., the nervous system and the *cakra* system belong to this realm of personality) (Sri Aurobindo, 1993); and the 10 *vayu* (prana or vital energy) and *nadiis* (psychic channels of *ida*, *susumna*, *piungala*) in AM. The subtle physical body is like an envelope that surrounds the gross physical body and the wellness of the two are interconnected.

There are people who lead quite an ordinary life, who know how to sleep as one should, eat as one should, and their nervous envelope is so intact that they pass through all dangers as though unconcerned. It is a capacity one can cultivate in oneself. If one becomes aware of the weak spot in one's envelope, a few minutes' concentration, a call to the force, an inner peace is sufficient for it to be all right, get cured, and for the untoward thing to vanish. (Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 2002, p. 17)

Here, The Mother suggested a healthy and natural lifestyle following the needs of the body that can keep the physical realm intact and protected. In addition, on the collective universal level of the physical realm, it means that the minimum necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and education are met for the people in the community (Maheshvarananda, 2003).

The vital realm corresponds to the vital realm in IYP and kamamaya kosa in AM. This realm involves psychological impulses toward physical or sensual fulfillment, which include instincts, desires, pleasures, impulses, emotions, sensations, possessions, enjoyments, and so on. The vital is the composite of life force, the vitality of life, that can be directed toward egocentric enjoyments “in a blind and ignorant search for pleasure and self-satisfaction [or] acquire and develop more and more the power of discerning the quality, origin and effect of the various vital vibrations ... towards transformation” (Sri Aurobindo & Alfassa, 2002, p. 30). The discernment and rejection power of the psychic being can be utilized to transform and strengthen the vital realm into an aspiration for the subtle pursuit of harmony, balance, and beauty. The psychic being is in direct touch with the Divine and discerns and transforms vital movements that are egocentric or destructive, so the vital can be gradually transformed as the instrument of psychic illuminations and actions. Besides, the yogic moral discipline of yama niyama, especially the principles of brahmacarya in yama and Iishvara pranidhana in niyama, are the underlying spirit of yoga moral disciplines.

The practice of Brahmacarya is held in higher esteem than the other four items of Yama. Similarly, in Niyama, the most important item is Iishvara prañidhāna. To be more clear and concrete we may say that out of the ten principles of Yama and Niyama the remaining eight are subordinated parts

of the two items, Brahmacharya and Ishvara Prañidhāna. (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2000, p. 31)

Brahmacharya, as reinterpreted in AM, means to absorb the mind in the ideation of Brahma. It is a psychospiritual approach to channelize extroverted propensities to subtle inner ideation.

Brahmacharya Sādhanā is to treat the object with which one comes in contact as different expressions of Brahma and not as crude forms. By means of such an ideation, even though the mind wanders from one object to another, it does not get detached from Brahma because of the Cosmic feeling taken for each and every object. (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2000, p. 20)

Similarly, *Ishvara Pranidhana* is reinterpreted as “to have firm faith in Ishvara (the Cosmic Controller) in pleasure and pain, prosperity and adversity, and to think of oneself as the instrument, and not the wielder of the instrument, in all affairs of life” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1998a, p. 6). Yama niyama can be used as guidelines to harmonize egocentric desires and cultivate subtle inspirations toward the Divine. As Sri Aurobindo (1993) suggested, “the vital has not to be killed or destroyed, but purified and transformed by the psychic and spiritual control” (p. 53). The vital realm can be transformed and harmonized through the influence of the psychic being and yama niyama for a balanced growth of personality.

The mental realm corresponds to the mind realm in IYP and the manomaya kosa in AM. The mental pertains to faculties of thought process, cognition, rationality, intelligence, and so on. This realm is intimately connected and influenced by the passion and drives of the vital realm—the mental acts to convert those vital desires into mental manifestations and expressions. When the mental layer is balanced and strengthened, the mental can keep vital impulses in

control. *Pranayama*, the yogic breath practice to control movements of the vital energy (*pranah*) in the body, is essential for the development of the mental realm.

When the vital energies are out of balance in the body, the mental processes become relentless and disorganized.

There is an inseparable relationship between the *váyus* of the body [ten basic energy flows] and the mind. Unsteadiness of respiration means unsteadiness of mind and vice versa. *Prááyáma* is the scientific process to control respiration and hence the mind, as a result of which *sáadhaná* is especially facilitated. (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 2001c, Sadhana section, para. 6)

Pranayama, with proper instructions, calms the flow of vital energies and in turn cultivates the mental capacities of concentration and apprehension. However, it is important to note that pranayama is recommended to be practiced with *bindu* (concentration on a point) and cosmic ideation. “If *prááyáma* is not associated with *bindu dhyana*, it will affect self-restraint. *Prááyáma* will make the mind restless” (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1994, p. 97). This is because pranayama increases prana or vitality in the body, without its control by mental concentration, excess prana may become chaotic flow in the body and make the mind restless.

The psychic realm corresponds to the act of the psychic being in IYP as a significant feature for ego transformation. The activation of the psychic being is essential for the transformation of the egocentric personality and its evocation involves three phases: aspiration, rejection, and surrender. Initially, an individual has to quiet egoistic movements by the practice of *samatha* and turn inward, centering in the inner being for the presence of the psychic being to arise, as one aspires and longs for the inner Divine. When the psychic being is consciously

present within the core of an individual, it has the discerning force to reject and remove destructive egocentric movements. Then, all the egoistic movements are ready to be surrendered and transformed as the instrument of Divine expression. For example, Miovic (2018) recommended the practice of psychospiritual inquiry and accessing the inner being through practices such as meditation and imagination. With the agency of the psychic being as facilitator, he was able to resolve a somatized form of darkness residing in the body. The psychic being can assist one to uncover, resolve, and transform destructive movements of the ego personality within all dimensions of personality.

The spiritual realm corresponds to the higher mind, illumined mind, intuitive mind, and supermind in IYP and vijinanamaya kosa, atimanasa kosa, hiranmaya kosa in AM. This realm contains expressions of clairvoyant perception, creative insights, intuition, and inspiration, which connects one with cosmic consciousness. The yoga meditations of *pratyahara* (sense withdrawal), *tattva dharana* (cakra control), *cakra shodhana* (cakra purification), and *dhyana* can be beneficial for the development of this realm. *Pratyahara* is to withdraw extroverted tendencies to inner contemplation that can be helpful to facilitate transpersonal experiences. *Tattva dharana* and *cakra shodhana* control and purify propensities expression from mutative and inert influences, which can perfect the spiritual realm. The individual consciousness expands and attains union with the universal and transcendent aspects of Divine consciousness and arrives at a potential for supramental transformation in the physical world. This realm can be further developed by *dhyana* to channel all the internal propensities with

contemplation on the Divine for expansion and purification of consciousness. With the guidance of the psychic being, personality is prepared for further spiritual transformation to transform the entire being by the descent of Cosmic consciousness, as well as the supramental transformation by the descent of the supramental being for the embodiment of Divine on earth. These six realms of existence within the personality require specific methods of harmonization, purification, transformation, and integration to achieve the potential for wholeness in the evolution of consciousness.

Further, the gradations of consciousness within the personality are interconnected such that the well-being in one realm influences the state of the others. When an individual is suffering from psychological symptoms, they may be associated with biological, psychological, or spiritual causes. Therefore, the treatment plan needs to take into account all relevant aspects of personality. “Mental disorders are not ultimately separable from physical, emotional, and spiritual problems; therefore, diagnoses and interventions must take into account the whole person; often symptoms manifested at one level have roots originating at another level” (Shirazi, 2011, p. 9). This integral viewpoint in IYP recognizes the interconnectedness of all levels within the personality for healing and psychospiritual development. When an individual is enthusiastic about exploration of spiritual experiences, if they ignore the health of the physical body or interpersonal relationships, imbalance might arise from the neglected aspects and create disturbances in personality that impede spiritual development. Therefore, a balanced development of each realm is imperative for the wholeness

of personality. At the same time, all these layers of consciousness, which correlate with various aspects of personality need to be integrated into a unified and integrated personality.

IYP—The Psychic Being, Transformation, and Integration

In this whole-person framework, IYP provides the ground for utilizing the psychic being as the catalyst for transformation of the ego personality and integration of different parts of the psyche. When the psychic being is recognized and awakened as the individual divinity within the core of one's being, transformation and integration of personality can take place with the help of this guiding soul within. This section discusses concepts of the psychic being, transformation, and integration in IYP.

Ordinarily, one is identified with the ego personality, which is compartmentalized in nature and influenced by outer mental, vital, and physical movements. The ego personality is limited in its scope of self-identification and potentiality to become whole. However, personality is more than ego identification, which is bound by life and death; there is yet an inner divinity or soul which is immortal throughout the cycles of life. The psychic being is the inner soul that guides the personality to reveal its Divine potential to become whole. This can be done by the three-fold processes of aspiration, rejection, and surrender. One begins by aspiration and longing for the revelation of the Divine within; with the discerning power of the psychic being, egocentric movements can be rejected and removed; the ego personality is prepared to be surrendered as the instrument of Divine consciousness. The psychic being is in direct touch with the

Divine truth and force and has the capacity to transform and expand the ego personality to become an instrument of Divine expressions.

The processes of transformation and integration are unique features of IYP that contribute to the wholeness of personality. Transformation is a dynamic and complete change of personality that begins with the psychic transformation utilizing the psychic being as the catalyst for ego transformation; to spiritual transformation, which involves the descent of the higher planes of consciousness to transform the lower nature, and finally culminates in the supramental transformation or complete supramentalization of all realms of personality from spiritual to the physical plane down to the cellular level. This is known as triple transformation in IYP. This triple process recognizes the potentiality of personality to become whole in the evolution of consciousness (Sri Aurobindo, 1993). Integration involves the reconciliation of different parts and realms of personality. The relationship needs to be established between the outer and inner personality such that the expansion of consciousness experienced within the inner personality can manifest in the consciousness of the outer personality. Similarly, all the realms of personality from the spiritual to the subconscious need to be perfected and integrated as a whole so that the personality can become an instrument of Divine consciousness.

AM—Cakra Biopsychology, Harmonization, and Purification

AM offers the perspective on the bio-psycho-spiritual interrelation through cakra biopsychology and specific yogic practices for harmonization and purification of propensities for personality development. This section briefly

reviews the processes of cakra biopsychology, harmonization, and purification in AM.

The human body is an intricate physical instrument with complex biological functions controlled by the individual consciousness that resides within the body. *Cakras* are defined as psychic centers at the intersecting point of psychic channels (*ida*, *piungala* and *susumna*), which correspond to the location of endocrine glands and sub-glands in the body (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997b). The endocrine glands produce certain hormones responsible for not only biological functioning, but also mental and psychospiritual expression and regulation. The individual consciousness carries inherited or incarnated unrealized impressions of *samskara* from past lives as well as impressions acquired from the present life. These impressions, or *samskaras*, are stored in the individual mental consciousness, which finds its unique expression through the brain as the controlling center of the mind. The brain sends and receives signals through various biological systems including that of the endocrine system (Singh, 1998). The vibration of propensities are unique for each individual personality under the influence of unique *samskaras*. Hence, the seed of every propensity begins in the brain and manifests through the glands, nerves, and *cakras*. *Cakras* are subcenters of the mind, receiving signals from the brain to secrete corresponding hormones and expresses through propensities (*vrttis*) (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997b) Cakra biopsychology contributes to this model by demonstrating a close interrelation between *samskaras*, the brain, *cakras*, glands, and propensities that

are synonymous to the realms of spiritual, mental, vital, and physical within gradations of consciousness in the personality.

The applications for harmonization and purification of propensities align with the development in each realm of personality toward wholeness. The harmonization methods presented here—*asanas*, *yama niyama*, and *pranayama*—are designated for balanced development in the physical, vital, and mental spheres. *Asanas* are yogic postures that balance secretions of endocrine glands from excess or insufficient flow for the expressions of propensities. While each realm of personality is interconnected and interdependent, development in one realm will influence the others. *Asanas* develop the wellbeing of the physical body through balancing endocrine glands and in turn harmonize psychospiritual propensity expressions. *Yama niyama* are yogic moral disciplines practiced with cosmic ideation that harmonize crude propensities of the vital realm to subtle expressions. *Pranayama* is yogic breath control that harmonizes the vital energy (*prana*) flow in the body and are intimately associated with mental development. Sequentially, when the vital energy is calm, the mind becomes composed and concentrated for development in the mental sphere.

The purification methods presented here—*pratyahara*, *tattva dharana*, *cakra shodhana*, and *Dhyana*—are designed for development in the spiritual realm of personality. *Pratyahara* (withdrawal of senses) is to withdraw all extroverted propensities and mental faculties to focus on inner contemplation for development of the spiritual realm and culminate in devotion and self-surrender to the Divine within. The *cakra* meditations of *tattva dharana* and *cakra shodhana*

are to establish control and remove mutative and inert impressions within the cakras that can balance propensity expressions and cultivate inner strength.

Dhyana is absorbed contemplation of the Supreme Consciousness on the sahasrara cakra for union with the Divine. Harmonization and purification are Ashtanga practices associated with cakra biopsychology that demonstrate interrelation between all dimensions of personality to arrive at its innate wholeness.

In conclusion, personality in its wholeness consists of six realms of existence—subconscious, physical, vital, mental, psychic, and spiritual spheres that are fully transformed and integrated. IYP contributes to the wholeness of personality utilizing the psychic being as the catalyst for transformation and integration of personality. AM contributes to the wholeness of personality employing cakra biopsychology for harmonization and purification of personality. Wholeness of personality is a process involving transformation, integration, harmonization, and purification within human personality in all realms of existence to actualize essential characteristics of consciousness, dynamism, and bliss (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*) as the embodied instrument of the Divine for personal and collective evolution of consciousness.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The aim of the present study was to develop a whole-person yoga psychology model for psychospiritual development as a synthesis drawing from unique features of two whole-person yoga systems—Integral Yoga Psychology (IYP) and Ananda Marga (AM). Traditional yogas often emphasize a transcendental and renunciatory worldview that overlooks the development of a unique embodied personality because the phenomenal self is seen as being illusory and unreal relative to the transcendent Self, which is considered to be ultimately real. The study concluded that IYP and AM are both modern whole-person yoga systems that embrace both aspects of the self—psychic (individual or personal) and cosmic (impersonal). There is a growing appreciation and a trend in the fields of both yoga and psychology for a whole-person framework that addresses the full spectrum of existence from physical, to psychological, and to spiritual dimensions. The present study provided an example of such a whole-person framework and focused on the key issues of psychospiritual transformation, harmonization, and integration of various dimensions of the self to achieve wholeness of personality, which is a practical aim of a whole-person psychospiritual framework. In this final chapter, the summary, contributions and limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and conclusion are presented.

Summary of the Study

Yoga psychology is the bridge between yoga traditions and psychology disciplines. A whole-person approach to yoga psychology explores the

potentiality for transformation and integration of human personality to achieve wholeness. Most traditional yogas, as in the example of Advaita Vedanta, put emphasis on spiritual realization of transcendental experiences as the ultimate goal and view the phenomenal world as being illusory. The ascetic and renunciatory world view is a predominant characteristic of orthodox Vedanta which can create a pessimistic mindset toward life as involving suffering and illusion. Therefore, traditional approaches to yoga aim for liberation from the embodied self and seek union with the transcendent Self and are not concerned with the transformation of the phenomenal or embodied self. On the other hand, Tantra has a more embodied worldview that aims at the transformation of lower instinctual nature through the cakra and kundalini system. AM is a modern renaissance Tantra tradition with emphasis on both spiritual and social aspects of personality that encourages positive participation in social life as a spiritual practice.

IYP is also different from traditional yogas in that it does not aim for liberation from the body as the final goal of spiritual practice. Sri Aurobindo (1999) critiqued those yogas and spiritual practices that consider the physical world to be illusory and sought emancipation from embodied existence. IYP is a synthesis of the key features of Tantric and Vedantic philosophies and asserts that human existence and evolution of consciousness on earth has a purpose—to bring down Divine consciousness and establish it on the physical plane. To this end it seeks transformation of egocentric consciousness with the aid of the psychic being, the aspect of the soul that evolves on earth, through the process of psychic

transformation. This would be the first step toward spiritual transformation and supramentalization of life and consciousness on earth.

This dissertation identified several whole-person psychology principles in IYP as the foundational framework to formulate a whole-person yoga psychology model derived from a synthesis of IYP and AM. As Sri Aurobindo (2010) stated, “Yoga is nothing but practical psychology” (p. 44). IYP is a whole-person psychology framework concerned with all dimensions of consciousness and the transformation of personality from the egoistic state to the highest potential for the embodiment of Divine consciousness on earth. IYP has an established body of literature with contributions from scholars such as Haridas Chaudhuri (1974), Indra Sen (1986), Michael Miovic (2004), Brant Cortright (2007), Bahman Shirazi (2011), Matthijs Cornelissen (2018), Paul Herman (2018), Debashish Banerji (2018), and others who contribute to both theoretical and clinical fields of IYP. AM is a modern Tantra yoga tradition founded by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti in the 1950s. The outlook of AM is universal and maintains an ideology based on balance between the personal spiritual progress and social service for harmonious living and collective evolution. AM encompasses rich literatures on metaphysics, consciousness study, spiritual-social economics, natural medicines, cakra biopsychology, and spiritual practices; however, it does not have an explicit yoga psychology framework. Both IYP and AM are holistic systems that affirm wholeness and transformation of personality in all dimensions of existence. The current study offered a new yoga psychology framework that outlined some

general principles for a whole-person yoga psychology as well as unique contributions from AM and IYP.

The study employed a combination of hermeneutic and integrative methodologies to identify, integrate, and formulate whole-person psychology principles in IYP and AM as the foundation for the development of a unique whole-person model. While IYP has an established body of literatures on yoga psychology, AM has yet to have a congruent psychological framework. The study adopted the hermeneutic approach to examine and identify whole-person themes in selected literature pertinent to psychology in both systems and presented in the literature review. In the review of IYP, three whole-person themes were identified and investigated—integral cosmology, spectrum of consciousness, and transformation of consciousness. These whole-person themes were applied to the information found in the AM research and were presented in three themes—cosmology, consciousness studies, and cakra biopsychology. The study utilized hermeneutic analysis to investigate these whole-person themes and formulated six whole-person principles combined with two unique features as the foundation to develop a whole-person yoga psychology model. This yoga psychology model is the integration of these whole-person principles with the intention to support evolution of personality toward wholeness. This model proposed that personality is comprised of six realms of existence—subconscious, physical, vital, mental, psychic, and spiritual. The wholeness of personality can be achieved by two unique features of IYP and AM. This involves the psychic transformation in IYP indicated in three phases: aspiration, rejection, and surrender; and the cakra

biopsychology in AM incorporated with reinterpreted Ashtanga yoga practices. This unique whole-person yoga psychology model presented in this study is the synthesis of IYP and AM employing hermeneutic and integrative approaches.

This study began by reviewing psychospiritual principles in IYP that can lay the foundational framework for the development of the whole-personal yoga psychology model. There are three crucial areas of focus central to the whole person development that emerged from the literature analysis: cosmology, consciousness, and transformation. Integral cosmology is described in terms of two-fold processes of descending and ascending consciousness referred to as involution and evolution (Miovic, 2004). Involution means that the universe begins from pure being, consciousness, and bliss (*Sacchidananda*), which descends into material existence as the phenomenal world; and evolution is the ascending process where the consciousness dormant in matter moves up through successive stages of physical, vital, mental, and spiritual consciousness. Consciousness comprises the essential structure of the cosmos as well as the human psyche and personality.

In IYP, human personality is described in terms of two dynamic systems of consciousness—vertical and concentric (Miovic, 2004). The vertical system is comprised of planes of consciousness ranging from the highest spiritual realms such as supermind and overmind to the lowest realms such as the subconscious and the inconscient, in 12 gradations. The concentric system consists of the outer being (the embodied ego personality), the inner being (the subliminal realm), and the inmost core (the psychic being). The psychic being is a portion of Divine

which resides behind the heart and is the eternal personal divinity within an individual throughout lifetimes and supports the growth of personality and acts as the catalyst for ego personality transformation through a process that is termed *psychic transformation*.

Psychic transformation involves the evocation of the psychic being for the purpose of this veiled divinity coming to the front of consciousness for guidance and transformation of the outer ego personality. The psychic transformation process involves three phases: aspiration, rejection, and surrender. Aspiration is spiritual longing for the Divine from the core of our being; rejection is removing and rejecting destructive egocentric movements by using the discerning power of the psychic being; and surrender is transforming and surrendering the whole personality as the instrument of Divine expressions. There are two more stages of transformation possible for advanced practitioners of IYP. *Spiritual transformation* involves the descent of higher consciousness directly to transform the lower nature, and the third and final stage is called *supramental transformation*, which involves the transformation of the entire being by the power of the supermind. These are termed the *triple transformation* in IYP that result in the complete transformation of the whole being in all dimensions of personality. The psychospiritual themes in IYP can provide a suitable framework for the development of the whole-person yoga psychology model.

The whole-person principles in IYP were centered on three primary themes—the evolution of the cosmos, the gradations of consciousness and the transformation of personality in the literature review. Hence, the study adopted

these fundamental themes to research comparable whole-person themes in the literature review of AM. The cosmology in AM is termed *Brahma cakra* (cosmic cycle), which is the composite of two semicircular processes—*Saincara* (centrifugal process), and *Pratisancara* (centripetal process), forming the full evolutionary cycle. *Saincara* is the beginning phase where the pure consciousness transmutes into the Cosmic Mind and five fundamental factors (ether, air, luminous, liquid, and solid) with the solid factor as the culmination point; *pratisancara* is the returning phase where the soul (*jivatma*) evolves from physicality to life, mind and back toward the Cosmic consciousness (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1993b).

Moreover, the gradations of consciousness pertains to two systems in AM—the composition of mind and the layers of consciousness (Anandamitra, 2002). The composition of mind (*antahkarana*) consists of three layers from the crudest to the subtlest: *citta* (mind-substance and instincts), *ahamtattva* (egoistic sense), and *mahattattva* (self-awareness). *Citta* is the substance of mind owning the characteristics of becoming like the objects of its sensory perceptions and act of instincts; *ahamtattva* is the sense of ownership or doership; and *mahattattva* is the sense of self-awareness. Layers of consciousness or *paincakosas* are five layers ranging from the crudest *kamamaya kosa* (desire layer) to the subtlest spiritual *hiranmaya kosa* (causal layer).

Last, the transformation of personality takes place through *cakra* biopsychology, which is a unique feature in AM (Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, 1997). *Cakra* biopsychology consists of seven primary *cakras* (psychic centers) and each

cakra corresponds to specific *vrttis* (propensities) associated with secretions of endocrine glands. The cakras are influenced by the impact of *samskaras* (reactive momentum) on the secretion of endocrine glands and in turn affect the psychospiritual expressions through cakras that create new *samskaras* as a circular cause effect chain. The cakra biopsychology demonstrates the interrelation between biological, psychological, and spiritual realms within personality that can be harmonized and purified by yogic Ashtanga practices. From the analysis above, we can see that AM is comparable to IYP as a whole person yoga psychology system that embraces all aspects of personality for an all-round transformation and evolution of consciousness.

The study examined psychospiritual aspects of metaphysics in IYP and AM pertaining to the wholeness and transformation of personality in the literature review. Based on the analysis above, we can see that IYP and AM are both whole person yoga systems from which a whole-person yoga psychology can be developed. Subsequently, the study compared and integrated the whole person areas of focus of cosmology, consciousness, and transformation in the two systems and formulated four common themes and two distinct features of each as the foundation for the development of the whole person yoga psychology model. The four common whole person themes are (a) evolution of cosmos, (b) gradations of consciousness, (c) integration of transcendent and phenomenal reality, and (d) personal and collective evolution. *Evolution of cosmos* concedes that consciousness constitutes the basic structure of reality both at the Macrocosmic and microcosmic levels. Evolution is the process through which

consciousness progressively reveals the potential toward wholeness through successive progression from physical, to vital, mental, and spiritual stages. *Gradations of consciousness* acknowledges a comprehensive spectrum within human personality from the lower instinctual realm to the higher spiritual spheres—from the inconscient to the superconscient. *Integration* refers to reconciliation and harmonization of various levels of consciousness and of transcendence and phenomenon reality to attain wholeness of personality. *Evolution* encourages transformation and integration of egocentric personality with the transpersonal aspects of the self (soul and spirit) on the individual level with the final aim of collective transformation of consciousness on earth.

Furthermore, the psychic transformation of IYP and the cakra biopsychology of AM account for distinct features of the two systems that are not recognized in existing yoga traditions. Psychic transformation emphasizes the importance of the role of the soul as the catalyst in transforming egocentric consciousness and evolution of consciousness. Cakra biopsychology illustrates the indivisibleness and interrelatedness of biological, psychological, and spiritual realms of development within the personality. The study contended that the wholeness of personality is the underlying principle employing these common themes and unique features presented here that are fundamental to a whole person framework.

The objective of the study was to develop a whole person yoga psychology model which constituted essential principles from IYP and AM. The fundamental aim of a whole person psychology framework is to attain wholeness

of personality. On this account, to construct a whole person psychology model, it is crucial to establish essential principles as the foundation for such a framework. The study identified six principal tenets that comprise the wholeness of personality based on earlier analysis: (a) the fundamental characteristics of wholeness are consciousness, dynamism, and bliss (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*); (b) there is an innate potential and drive for wholeness within human personality; (c) evolution of the cosmos entails a progressive process for the personality to liberate consciousness from its dormant state in matter to become whole; (d) wholeness is intimately related to the processes of transformation, integration, harmonization, and purification of all parts and systems of personality along the gradations of consciousness; (e) gradations of consciousness comprise a complete or whole spectrum of personality that includes the subconscious, physical, vital, mental, psychic, and spiritual realms of existence; and (f) integration of consciousness necessitates transformation and reconciliation of various aspects of personality through the process of psychic transformation to achieve embodied wholeness.

Furthermore, the proposed framework for the evolution of personality involves two unique principles regarding harmonization and transformation of personality toward wholeness. These principles feature two key contributions from IYP and AM, respectively: (a) the psychic being as the catalyst for personality transformation and (b) harmonization and purification in the context of cakra biopsychology. Personality transformation necessitates the aspiration by the psychic being toward higher or Divine consciousness as the first step, as well

as self-observation through practices of samatha (tranquility of the mind) and introspection to observe egocentric movements in the initial phase. These practices require one-pointed concentration and nonjudgmental self-observation. Over time, this allows for evocation of the psychic being as the catalyst for transformation of outer or ego personality. As the ego personality is transformed, it can be surrendered completely to the Divine so it can function as the instrument of Divine consciousness and action. This process is termed *psychic transformation* and is a crucial contribution from IYP for transformation and evolution of personality.

Further, for the harmonization and purification of cakras in the proposed yoga psychology framework Ashtanga yoga practices, as reinterpreted by AM, may be utilized. For harmonization of cakras, *asanas* (yoga postures) are recommended to balance secretions of endocrine glands, which in turn harmonize corresponding cakra propensities; *pranayama* is beneficial for controlling the vital energy (*prana*) in the body for mental composure; and *yama niyama* or psycho-ethical discipline practices may be engaged to control lower instinctive propensities. For purification of cakras, psychospiritual parallelism along with brahmacharya practices may be utilized to transform egocentric identification to cosmic identification for pacification and expansion of consciousness. *Cakra shodhana* (purification of cakras) is concentration on specific cakras to purify and remove inert or mutative influences from cakras. *Pratyhara* (withdraw of senses) is to withdraw all extroverted propensities to focus on inner contemplation of the Cosmic consciousness. AM offers yogic contemplative practices essential for

harmonization and purification of cakras and propensities. The six whole-person principal tenets along with two distinct features derived here form the essential core for the development of the whole-person yoga psychology model.

The unique whole-person yoga psychology model proposed here has three primary features. Firstly, human personality is conceived as the composition of six spheres ranging from the subconscious to the physical, vital, mental, psychic, and spiritual realms. Wholeness of personality can be accomplished by methods presented earlier to transform, harmonize, and purify each layer and finally integrate all of them as a unified whole. Secondly, the principles of transformation and integration as facilitated by the psychic being known as psychic transformation are important contributions from IYP for achieving wholeness of personality in this model. Lastly, AM offers yogic practices of harmonization and purification through the principle of cakra biopsychology for the personality to achieve wholeness. This whole-person yoga psychology model is a synthesis drawing from psychospiritual foundations of IYP and AM for a holistic development of personality. The innate potential and need for wholeness has driven human personality on the evolutionary journey from its initial fragmented state toward manifestation of embodied wholeness. This was the central aim of the study to contribute to the field of whole-person psychology for personality to evolve toward its essential wholeness.

Contributions of the Study

The central contribution of the study was the establishment of a unique whole-person yoga psychology model drawing from two holistic systems of yoga.

This whole-person model offers fundamental whole-person principles that can be implemented and inspirational for future whole-person psychology frameworks. Besides, this model consists of distinct features of psychic transformation and cakra biopsychology from IYP and AM that offer practical applications for yoga psychology. The contributions of the study can be summarized in terms of three dimensions: (a) contribution to yoga psychology; (b) contribution to AM; and (c) contribution to IYP.

Contribution to Yoga Psychology

The present whole-person yoga psychology model is a contribution to the emerging whole-person frameworks in yoga psychology. As the psychological dimension of each yoga system, various yoga psychologies convey the psychological and practical implications which are aligned with the metaphysical and philosophical orientation of that system. The yoga psychologies developed from Advaita Vedanta or Samkhya tend to put the emphasis on the transcendental aspect of consciousness and disregard the phenomenal aspect of human personality and the world. This renunciatory world view of illusionism (*Mayavada*) may result in a pessimistic outlook toward life as mere suffering and encourage spiritual bypassing. In contrast, whole-person yoga psychologies such as IYP as a modern synthesis of traditional yogas do not condone the traditional ascetic worldview. Similarly, AM as a modern Tantric yoga tradition, encourages a positive participation in both the spiritual and collective life for the evolution of consciousness. This unique model presented here is a synthesis of the two whole-person yoga traditions as a part of the emerging trend of whole-person yoga

psychologies. The whole-person principles and unique features demonstrated in this model can be adopted for the development and expansion of whole-person yoga psychology frameworks. This is especially true of the six common principles offered in this study as indispensable to any whole-person yoga psychology regardless of additional specific or unique features.

The wholeness of personality as a guiding principle allows one to access and actualize the innate potential for wholeness within oneself for transformation and integration of personality. The principle of the gradations of consciousness that recognizes personality as the composition of multiple realms of existence offers a multidimensional understanding of personality. With this perspective, one is able to implement a whole-person approach to yoga practices for a balanced development in each realm of personality.

Moreover, this model integrates two distinct features with practical applications for the attainment of wholeness. The psychic transformation proposed a unique approach involving the psychic being as the catalyst for personality transformation. The evocation of the psychic being provides support, strength, and resources from the personal Divine for healing and transformation. This is a key dimension that is not explicitly discussed in traditional yoga psychology approaches. The harmonization and purification of cakras incorporating Ashtanga yoga practices offers an embodied method for psychospiritual development. The cakra biopsychology demonstrates the interrelation between the physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of existence. This model comprised of whole-person principles and distinct features

contributed both theoretical and potential practical implementations to the field of yoga psychology as a participatory part of emerging whole-person frameworks.

Contribution to AM

This unique model offers a yoga psychology framework that was not explicitly developed in AM. AM is a modern Tantric yoga system in which the founder Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (1993a, 1994) extracted and reinterpreted the ancient teachings of Tantra and Vedas to make them suitable for the modern era. Although AM has vast literature on cosmology, cakra biopsychology, neohumanism, arts, natural medicines, social-economics, and more, there is not a single established psychology framework. This model contributed to AM literature by selecting and organizing metaphysics and practical applications relating to whole-person psychology. The study investigated the whole-person themes relevant to yoga psychology in AM: cosmology, consciousness study, cakra biopsychology, and Ashtanga yoga practices. AM practitioners or Tantric yogis can acquire a whole-person perspective on spiritual practices and lay emphasis on one's own psychospiritual development. From this perspective, psychospiritual growth on a personal level becomes an indispensable part of spiritual progress. Further, the yoga psychology model proposed for psychospiritual development can be beneficial for the AM ideal of spiritual realization and collective evolution.

The unique concept of the psychic being and the process of psychic transformation from IYP can be valuable for ego personality transformation for AM practitioners. The spiritual practices of AM are primarily oriented from

reinterpreted Ashtanga yoga practices and cakra biopsychology to control and purify cakras for spiritual realization. The notion of the psychic being as the Divine center within each person can assist the AM practitioner by providing a psychospiritual framework for implementing these yogic practices. The discriminative power of the psychic being can support the observance of yama-niyama without the potential pitfall of egocentric suppression. With the evocation of the psychic being, AM practitioners may gain intuition or insights in areas of imbalances in the cakra system for further purification. The psychic being can also act as the catalyst for personality transformation for AM practitioners to place more emphasis on personal ego transformation. This yoga psychology model contributed to AM practitioners by offering a whole-person perspective on spiritual practices and the importance of psychospiritual development.

Contribution to IYP

This whole-person yoga psychology model can specifically contribute to IYP practitioners by offering specific yogic practices and cakra biopsychology. IYP does not have a prescribed set of routines for practitioners due to the unique personality and psychospiritual makeup of each individual. It provides the larger framework and parameters that must be adapted uniquely based on the individual characteristics of each practitioner. For example, according to Shirazi (2016), for individuals with a more developed mind, mind-based yogas are recommended as the starting point; for practitioners who are heart centered, devotional or bhakti yogas are recommended in the beginning; for those who are inclined toward action or service, action or karma yogas are recommended; and for those who are

more in-tune with their subtle body, Tantric or kundalini yogas would then be recommended as a starting point. However, the ultimate goal is to achieve harmony and balance between all of the parts of being and in the later stages of practice, suitable complementary practices would be appropriate with the ultimate goal of strengthening the underdeveloped parts of personality so that they can be fully integrated. IYP offers a full spectrum of options to choose from according to personality makeup and inclination. The cakra biopsychology from this model may be beneficial for practitioners who are inclined toward the body or the subtle body.

Cakra biopsychology offers an embodied approach that highlights the interrelation between the endocrine system and psychospiritual expressions. The reinterpreted Ashtanga yoga practices offer specific methods for harmonization and purification of cakras that may support the transformation processes in IYP. In the cakra meditations of tattva dharana and cakra shodhana, the cakras can be controlled and purified by concentration on specific elements. When cakras are harmonized and purified, the psychospiritual propensities can be expressed in a balanced manner. The psychic transformation combined with specific practices of Ashtanga yoga offer an embodied experience of personality transformation for IYP practitioners.

Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study was limited to the development of a whole-person yoga psychology drawn from selected features pertaining to psychology in AM and IY and is not a comprehensive study of yoga psychology, or various schools

of yoga. This study focused primarily on the psychological aspects of yoga, even though other dimensions are briefly covered. The study excluded the social, philosophical, or spiritual themes in both systems. In AM, there are socioeconomic theories of PROUT and Neohumanism, which were briefly discussed in this study. PROUT offers practical guidelines for the maximum and progressive utilization of resources in the physical, mental, and spiritual strata for personal and collective welfare. Neohumanism is a philosophical theory designed to elevate humanism to the level of universalism (Sarkar, 1987). In IYP, Sri Aurobindo's teachings on *The Synthesis of Yoga* (1999), in which he addressed the synthesis of three yogic paths of knowledge, work, and love as well as other yoga traditions such as Hatha, Raja, and Tantric yoga, were not presented in this study explicitly. There are many other aspects of IYP that are also outside of the scope of the present study. The aspects of IYP selected for this study are primarily those that are relevant to the foundational principles of a whole-person psychology, which resulted in the six principles discussed earlier.

This study focused on the multidimensional and dynamic nature of personality and its potential for attaining wholeness in the course of evolution of consciousness. Additionally, the study was centered on personal and transpersonal dimensions of personality and did not focus on features at the interpersonal level such as family, marriage, relationships, and community dynamics. However, both systems of yoga covered in this study emphasize the importance of positive and dynamic participation in life without escaping into the transcendental or ultimate states of consciousness and thus avoiding the problems connected to what is

known as *spiritual bypassing*. AM affirms engagement in worldly life as an opportunity to serve humanity, while IY encourages cooperation with Nature in the process of evolution of consciousness and collective transformation of life on earth. Both systems view personal evolution within the larger context of collective evolution; however, this topic is beyond the focus of the present study.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study presented a whole-person yoga approach to psychology for healing and psychospiritual development of personality. This unique model offered a comprehensive understanding of personality that can potentially be beneficial for clinical psychotherapy. Through the lens of a whole-person psychological framework, clinical diagnosis can take into account a multidimensional perspective on personality in the assessment and treatment plan. In the instance of insomnia, the assessment could consider each realm of personality to investigate the potential source of causation contributing to insomnia. The subconscious realm can be examined to uncover unresolved complexes; the physical realm can be examined in terms of habits, diet, exercise and the physical health that the client is exhibiting; the emotional realm can be examined to reveal any suppressed or chaotic vital energy; the mental realm can be examined to understand the functioning of the mental processes; the psychic and spiritual realms can be taken into consideration to further guide the client beyond the ego structure in later stages of healing. Based on the aforementioned assessment a multicomponent treatment plan may be devised. Specific

interventions may be recommended encompassing a range of therapeutic approaches, including Ashtanga yoga practices.

This whole-person perspective can broaden the understanding of psychological disorders in that when imbalance occurs in one realm, it can influence other realms within personality. Moreover, the treatment strategy in psychotherapy is generally centered around strengthening, organization, or exploration of the ego personality. While this may be needed in the earlier stages of treatment to create a relatively healthy ego-structure, in later stages of psychotherapy what would be desirable is further transformation of ego personality, ideally through the activation of and facilitation by the soul. Since the ego personality is the source of destructive patterns and fragmented nature, the treatment plan centered only on this part of personality may result in remaining stuck in egocentric conditionings. This whole-person model offers two practical approaches that can be implemented in the healing process. One is the psychic transformation as a therapeutic tool to access support and guidance from the internal Divine for a complete personality transformation of ego personality. The other is Ashtanga yoga practices that can be incorporated in the treatment plan, for those clients who are interested and ready, to harmonize and purify each realm within personality. The whole-person yoga psychology model can be employed in what is known as transpersonal or integral approaches to psychotherapy for a more integrative and comprehensive healing approach.

One of the distinct features of the study was the discussion on cakra biopsychology. Cakra biopsychology demonstrated the close interrelation

between the secretion of endocrine glands and propensity expressions within each cakra. The specific endocrine glands correspond to the proximal biological location of the designated cakra; however, one gland may exhibit influences upon several cakras and propensities. Cakra biopsychology is derived from yogic intuitional knowledge from contemplative practices. The biological aspect of cakra biopsychology can be further developed and experimented by Western scientific experiments and research to investigate the functions of specific glands and their propensities. In the instance of the pineal gland, it has been known as a major gland in many traditions for spiritual advancement. However, the medical or biological understanding of this gland is still unknown and limited to the regulation of melatonin in sleep. In the case of the pancreas, the biological functions are related to digestion and regulation of the blood sugar. Cakra biopsychology indicates that the pancreas is responsible for 10 propensities in manipura cakra. The correlation between biological functions and cakra propensities of a particular gland or organ can be further researched to discover the link between biological and psychospiritual connections.

This whole-person yoga psychology model is a response to the need for a holistic framework for development and transformation of parts of personality in each realm of existence, and personality on the whole. It may be possible to further examine this model or aspects of it empirically to establish scientific validity.

Conclusion

This study offered a unique whole-person yoga psychology model as a synthesis of two modern yoga systems, IYP and AM, for the attainment of the wholeness of personality on the personal evolutionary journey. These two yoga systems hold common whole-person themes in evolutionary cosmology, consciousness studies, the integration of phenomenal and transcendent consciousness, as well as personal and collective evolution. Opposed to the renunciatory and ascetic worldview from traditional yogas, these whole-person themes entail a positive and dynamic participation in life for an embodied transformation of personality within the cosmic evolution of consciousness. IYP offers a unique perspective on the psychic transformation through the phases of aspiration, rejection, and surrender to facilitate complete personality transformation from the psychic being and the descent of Divine consciousness. IYP does not have specific practices, because each person's path is unique and a combination of unique practices must be developed for each person under the larger framework of IYP. AM presents a distinctive feature on cakra biopsychology demonstrating the interrelation between the endocrine glands and psychospiritual expressions with reinterpreted Ashtanga yoga practices for the harmonization and purification of cakras. This model is the integration of the common themes and unique features from these two holistic systems that offers whole-person principles and practical applications for the development of future whole-person frameworks. This is the central aim of the study—to offer a unique

whole-person psychology model in the field of yoga psychology as a contribution to the emerging whole-person frameworks.

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