

Acknowledgements

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I would like to thank all the students I have had the opportunity to share my experience with. It has been a joy to watch their journeys unfold. It is fascinating to see the human anatomy come into alignment as a result of The Eight Spiritual Breaths being practised diligently.

Above all, to the Universal Life Force for having orchestrated this journey in such a way that you have this book in your hands.

Introduction

The Mentalphysics Course—which consists of eight spiritual breaths, their respective affirmations and concluding meditations—was conducted by Justice M L Dudhat, a retired judge of the Bombay High Court, in Mumbai. He studied it from Swami Ramanathan, who was given the title of Guru Jyotirmayananda, who, in turn, had studied it as a correspondence course under the direct guidance of the founder, Edwin John Dingle. The latter made an arduous journey to Tibet in 1910, where he came to be addressed as Ding Le Mei and learnt these breaths from a lama. Much later, after coming to the West, he founded the Institute of Mentalphysics in the USA.

I studied the course under the guidance of Justice M L Dudhat. As I started getting into the practice of the breaths, the affirmations that followed each breath struck a deep chord in my heart. The Mentalphysics Course was a study of the human mind and its potential at different levels of human existence—physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. The practice of the course opened up a new dimension for me. This

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journey into the unknown slowly started to give me further clarity into the breaths and how they function, revealing the miraculous hidden potential that lies within us.

The duration of the course was eight months. We mastered one breath and its affirmation over a month, followed by the next breath. Each of the eight breaths was to be repeated a certain number of times.

The very first breath introduced me to a new feeling of *prana* flowing through the *nadis* and catapulted me on a journey filled with wonder. I started seeing a series of visuals in detail during my daily meditations and felt compelled to draw them immediately after finishing each session. I drew these visions with colour pencils on paper lest they fade from my memory. Thereafter, coincidentally and effortlessly, I was led to books, such as *Chakras—A Monograph* by C W Leadbeater, and articles that enabled me to understand what these visuals meant.

As time passed, I started awakening to a new way of perceiving myself in relation to my environment. The understanding that the human body was a dynamic energy field of nerves and energy centres gradually took shape. I felt that the practice of these breaths had started activating various hormonal glands. Soon, the realization set in that the breaths had stirred the *Shakti* (the *Kundalini* energy) lying dormant till then at the base of the spine and guided me to contemplate and

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study the play of Consciousness on human beings. By constantly observing what was happening within my body and documenting the visuals that unfurled on the screen of my mind, I started understanding the workings of the Kundalini and the *chakras* in the process of human evolution.

This deep study and understanding, through my own intense experience, lasted for five years and led me to write a book, *The Eight Spiritual Breaths*. The book was, in a sense, an extension of the Mentalphysics Course. In addition to the breaths and affirmations as practised in the course, it focused more on the subtler aspects of how each breath influences the students' consciousness. In my meditations, I saw in great detail how the entire subtle body needed to be cleansed of the belief systems and conditioning that create blocks in the flow of prana and the role that each breath played in this process.

This deeper study of the subtle dimensions I was immersed in revealed and helped me decode the entire process of Creation and human evolution. I learnt how the *jivatma* comes into manifestation, thus becoming limited, and how, through this practice, it is led towards a complete transformation with the blossoming of its consciousness. The Eight Spiritual Breaths, as a whole, are designed to unlock the deepest and most hidden secrets answering the primordial question 'Who Am I?'

Descending and Ascending Energies

‘When the descent of the Kundalini occurs, it means the lower mental planes of the human being are no longer influenced by the ordinary mind; the super mind takes over instead. This higher form of consciousness rules the body, mind and senses, and directs your life, thoughts and emotions. The Kundalini is, henceforth, the ruler of your life.’

—*Kundalini Tantra*, Swami Satyananda Saraswati,
Yoga Publication Trust, Munger, Bihar, India, pg. 81.

As mentioned in the book *Kundalini Tantra* by Swami Satyananda Saraswati, the body has three main subtle channels, or nadis: *Ida*, *Pingala* and *Sushumna*. These cannot be seen by our eyes. They run along the spine, from the base to the neck.

The Sushumna is the central channel. The Ida (the Moon channel) is on the left of the Sushumna, while the Pingala (the Sun channel) is on its right. The Ida and Pingala cross each other over the Sushumna at six chakras.

The brain’s functioning is based on the energies of the Ida and the Pingala. The Pingala is the channel for prana shakti (the life force) and the Ida is the channel for mental energy. The Sun energy, which is needed for life to manifest and fructify, flows through the Pingala Nadi. The Moon energy, which is required to

counter the heat of the Sun energy, flows through the Ida Nadi. When both the Sun energy and Moon energy are functioning at their optimum, body temperature is maintained. Ultimately, the endeavour is for the Kundalini energy to freely move up the Sushumna channel.

The average human being uses only part of his brain. To activate the other parts, we need to get into the practice of *pranayama* or any breathing technique that appeals to and is suitable for us. The technique I chose was The Eight Spiritual Breaths.

As I completed learning the breaths and started documenting my intense visual experiences, I soon realized that, with the first five breaths, we were pulling down the Kundalini as the descending energy. It is only after years of study and reflection that I now realize the importance of a practice that starts by activating the descending energy.

The path of descending energy is safer, for a very important reason. In this course, the first five breaths help to cleanse the *Sahasrar*, *Ajna*, *Vishuddhi* and *Anahat* chakras in preparation for the Kundalini (as the ascending energy) to move up the lower three chakras: *Muladhar*, *Swadhisthan* and *Manipur*. The ascending energy is the Earth energy, which is fire. In the human body, it is stored at the base chakra (Muladhar), located at the perineum. With its movement upwards, all the

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latent data of the human condition (such as trauma, insecurity, fear and so on) may be brought up.

Therefore, the top four chakras—Sahasrar, Ajna, Vishuddhi and Anahat—need to be cleansed and healthy, and be in a certain state of balance to be able to absorb this ascending energy when it is activated. If the top four chakras are not cleansed, we will not be aware enough to deal with all the data thrown up by the ascending energy.

With the descending energy, we are first pulling in new consciousness, which gives us wisdom and thus a better perspective of life. We see the same situation from a different perspective, and this helps bring about a resolution to the problems or life situations faced by us.

The descending energy opens up the grooves within the brain thus supporting the better functioning of the seven main chakras, which, in due course, leads to their working in perfect rhythm and synchronicity for the unfolding consciousness.

We are born with the life force that helps us go through life at various stages. As we grow, the life force increases or decreases as per our activities. By adopting a breathing technique to enhance the life force flow, we work towards keeping our health in optimum condition to meet our growing physical, mental and emotional needs at different stages of our lives.

The Birth of This Book

While practising The Eight Spiritual Breaths, I became aware of the flow of energy in general—how our negative or positive thought patterns can interfere with the smooth flow of *pranic* energy to the different organs of the physical body.

Thereafter, I intuitively knew I would probe further into how The Eight Spiritual Breaths and the human body work in tandem, especially since most people were not familiar with the subject matter that warranted wider awareness.

As The Eight Spiritual Breaths Course took shape, over time, the aspirants who benefitted from it shared how deeply their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual bodies were getting positively impacted by the practice. As their testimonies fuelled my enthusiasm even further, I started delving deeper into the technical aspects of how the practice was causing significant changes in the body, mind and spirit. This resulted in the book you are reading right now.

Teaching The Eight Spiritual Breaths over the years has given me immense satisfaction. I can see changes taking place in the students' lives because of their dedicated practice and commitment to the course. All that is required is perseverance, faith and trust.

Hence, I know that those who have worked on this book as well as all the students of The Eight Spiritual Breaths will benefit from this book immensely.



Chapter One

Solving the Riddle of the Universe

We are confronted by situations and challenges in our life, and we have to face them. If we view them as tests, we are supported by the Universe through signs (which we need to be alert to) to go through them calmly. However, when the same situations keep coming up again and again to the point where we cannot handle them, through sheer exhaustion, we give up or surrender to them. Sometimes, at times like this, Grace steps in, and in one push, the aspirants are catapulted to another level of awareness.

In the meditational affirmations (not included in this book) to be recited after all the eight breaths and their respective affirmations are practised, there is a sentence that says, 'The riddle of the universe is about me, and I am now solving it.' In the endeavour to actualize my potential, I was fortunate to become the

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recipient of the key that solved the riddle. The key has to open seven locks as each breath locks into the next one in sequential order. The working of the key depends on each aspirant's level of awareness, and this depends on their dedication to the practice.

This book is written to help make aspirants aware of the key embedded in these breaths and their related affirmations. It is a secret few understand, and if they do, then the journey to awakening can speed up. It helps if the aspirants know what they are seeking at the start or at least at some point during the practice. To actualize what the aspirants are seeking, a few attributes like Self-enquiry, persistence, contemplation and introspection create an environment for the key embedded in the breaths and affirmations to work.

For the practice to be fruitful, the students must be sincere and committed to it daily. If they are lazy, less committed, easily distracted by mundane attractions and wish to take short cuts, then the practice will be fragmented and will deliver fragmented results.

For example, the students may decide to practise only some of the breaths, that too in order of preference. However, if they do not practise the breaths and affirmations in the prescribed manner, then it can disturb the path of energy. Therefore, I always tell those who wish to enrol for The Eight Spiritual Breaths Course to first be sure that they can commit to it.

Ultimately, a practitioner's Truth will always guide

them. For, when we are sincere, honest and committed to daily practice, then we are in alignment with the universal principles.

Designed to Unlock Your Potential

I observed that practising these breaths and affirmations makes one feel good, energized and filled with positivity and vitality. However, perhaps unknown to the aspirants, the course not only gives them health benefits but also, unconsciously, awakens them to their highest potential. I also realized that the aspirants receive the knowledge in the way best suited to the development of their consciousness.

At a basic level, the course is simple and designed in such a way that anyone can learn the breaths. It clearly explains how each of the eight breaths should be practised and states the affirmations that must be recited after each breath. Once students start doing these breaths and affirmations daily, they will begin to feel a greater sense of wellness, freshness, vitality and improved mental and physical health.

Today, after twenty-five years of a deep study and understanding of the workings of the breaths, I value and appreciate more and more how scientific, subtle and deep this course is.

It is important to note that the way the breaths further impact an individual beyond their basic health

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benefits will differ from individual to individual, depending on the level of their sense of intuitiveness. The way a student approaches the practice will determine how the practice works for the student. Those aspirants who are seeking balance and success at their workplace will feel the breaths supporting them in the same. Those who wish to have harmonious relationships will also see that the breaths help them achieve that. And the ones who seek the answer to the question 'Who Am I?' will see that the breaths will set them off on this glorious adventure, which is full of joy, abundance and wonder as one starts unravelling their higher purpose.

I always tell my students that at no point in the curriculum is it ever stated that one must detach from their day-to-day life. The course does not require one to lead an ascetic lifestyle. The breaths are designed for those who need to be in the world and yet seek higher knowledge and wish to live at an enhanced level of consciousness.

Chapter Two

The Mind, the Body and the Breath Techniques

The Mind

The mind is that part of the brain which remembers, thinks, feels and has intelligence. It has three layers: the unconscious mind, the subconscious mind and the conscious mind.

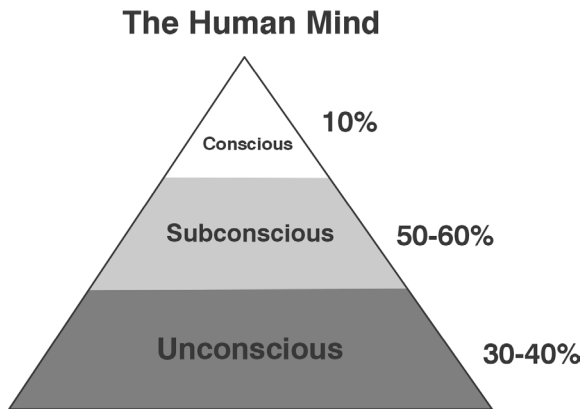
1. **The unconscious mind:** The content in this layer is not subject to introspection because there is total unawareness about it. According to Hindu philosophical thought, we carry impressions from our past lives which lie deeply rooted in the unconscious mind. However, these can manifest at the conscious level and affect our behaviour.
2. **The subconscious mind:** We behave in a particular manner or do certain things, but we don't know why we do them. This probably has its source in memory which is rooted in the subconscious mind

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and which can come up to the conscious level, although we do not know its origin.

3. **The conscious mind:** The conscious mind contains all the thoughts, memories, feelings and wishes that we are aware of. This is the data that we can talk about rationally and retrieve from memory.

So, as we can see, there is an overlapping of the three minds.



The Brain

The human brain is the most important command centre for the whole body and all its organs and glands. Research suggests that the human brain consists of about eighty-six to hundred billion neurons, or nerve cells, with trillions of connections

called synapses. It is the brain that enables thoughts, feelings and all the actions of the human body. Maintaining a healthy brain is the key to a healthy and long life.

We practise breathing techniques to stay healthy in body, mind and spirit. They help in clearing the congestion and blocks caused by emotional and psychological data from the brain's limbic system.

The nervous system in our body is a complex network that coordinates our actions, reflexes and sensations. It is divided into two main parts: the central nervous system (CNS) and the peripheral nervous system (PNS).

The CNS consists of the brain and the spinal cord. The PNS consists of the nerves that branch out from the brain and the spinal cord, and form the communication network between the CNS and the body parts.

The brain is broadly organized into three main regions: the forebrain, the midbrain and the hindbrain.

1. **The forebrain:** It is the largest region of our brain, which contains the cerebrum and several structures nestled within it, such as the pituitary gland, the pineal gland and the limbic system.
 - a) **The cerebrum:** It is where most of the important brain functions happen, such as thinking, planning, reasoning and language-processing.

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It helps in interpreting and processing inputs from our five senses.

- b) **The pituitary gland:** It is the master gland that controls the whole endocrine system (explained below) of the body. Its main role is to produce and release several hormones. The pituitary also controls metabolism, is responsible for growth and reproduction, balances the water and sodium levels in the system and responds to stress and trauma. The anterior lobe of the pituitary gland makes and releases hormones that play a role in how our body responds to stress.
- c) **The pineal gland:** It is a tiny, cone-shaped gland that is only about 0.8 centimetres long. It secretes the happy hormone, serotonin, during the day and the sleep-inducing hormone, melatonin, at night. The pineal gland helps us connect with the vibration of the cosmos and serves as a connection between the physical and spiritual world.
- d) **The limbic system:** It is also known as the limbic brain, developed around 250 million years ago with the evolution of the first mammal. It deals with emotions, memory and arousal (stimulation). It consists of the thalamus, hypothalamus, amygdala and hippocampus.

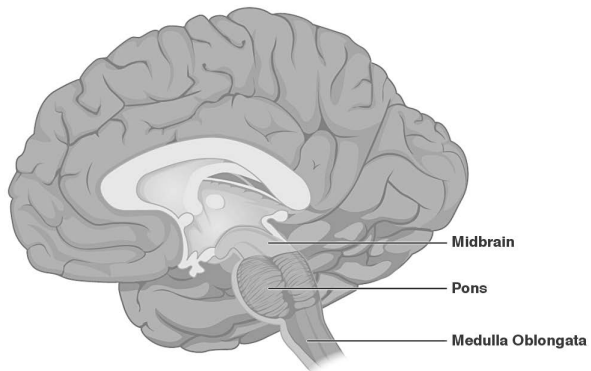
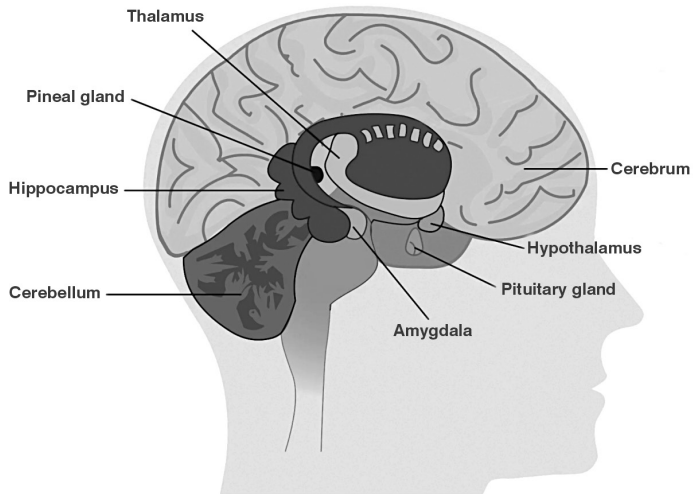
It sits on top of our brain cord and is also known as our primitive brain. It is responsible for the formation of our personality and our emotions, actions, memory and motion.

- **The thalamus:** It is the body's information relay station for all incoming motor (movement) and sensory information. All that we see, hear, sense, touch and taste comes first to the thalamus, from where it gets directed to various parts of the brain.
- **The hypothalamus:** It is shaped like a kidney bean, and its size is about one per cent of our entire brain. It regulates the autonomic nervous system and is responsible for the fight-or-flight response and the rest-and-digest response.
- **The amygdala:** It is an almond-shaped gland. Our emotional state is governed by this tiny structure, which is responsible for processing positive as well as negative emotions. The amygdala plays a key role in our emotional responses, including feelings such as pleasure, fear, anxiety and anger.
- **The hippocampus:** It helps to convert our experiences into memories and convert short-term memories into long-term memories.

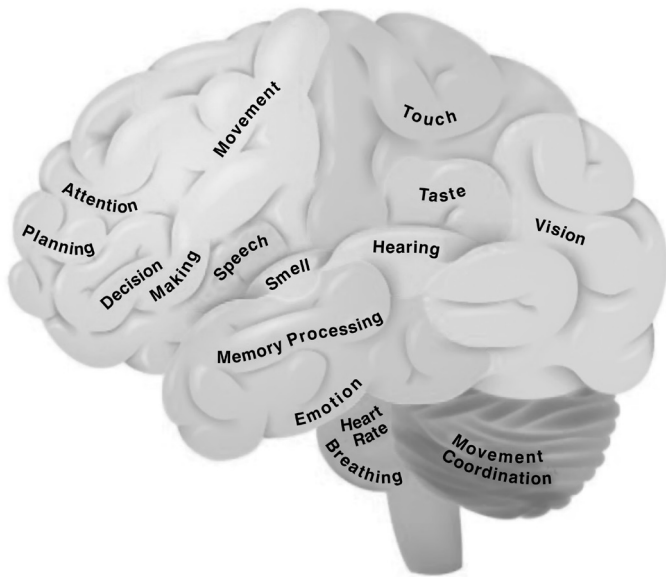
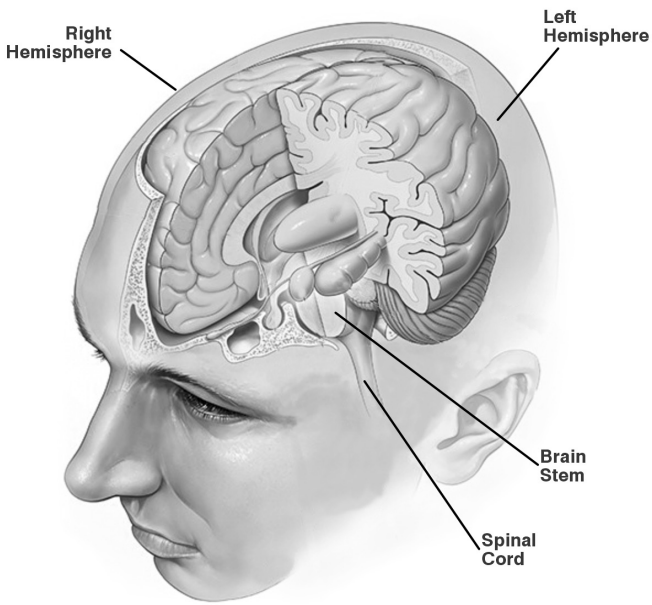
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2. **The midbrain:** It connects the forebrain and the hindbrain. It is the top part of the brainstem, which connects the brain to the spinal cord.
3. **The hindbrain:** It is the lowest portion of the brain, containing the brainstem, the pons, the cerebellum and the medulla oblongata.
 - a) **The pons (bridge):** It connects the rest of the brainstem to the cerebral cortex (the outer surface of the cerebellum) and serves as a coordination centre for signals and communications that flow between the two brain hemispheres and the spinal cord.
 - b) **The cerebellum:** It coordinates our sensations with responses from our muscles, enabling most of our voluntary movements. It also processes nerve impulses from the inner ear and coordinates them with muscle movement, thus helping us maintain balance and posture.
 - c) **The medulla oblongata:** It contains the control centres for our autonomic vital functions—heart rate, blood pressure and breathing—and many involuntary reflexes, such as swallowing and sneezing.

The Mind, the Body and the Breath Techniques



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The Endocrine Glands

A gland is an organ that makes one or more substances, such as hormones, digestive juices, sweat or tears. Based on their function, they are divided into two groups: exocrine glands and endocrine glands.

The exocrine glands secrete substances out of the body such as tears, sweat, etc.

The endocrine glands release hormones directly into our bloodstream and are controlled by the brain through the pituitary gland. These hormones are chemicals that coordinate different functions in our body by carrying messages through our blood to various organs, muscles and other tissues. These signals tell our body what to do and when to do it.

Our negative thoughts overload the glands and cause them to become sluggish, weak and incapable of carrying out repair and maintenance work (see figure on next page).

In short, we are as old as our glands. If a young person feels old and weak, it is the glands that are responsible. If one feels vibrant, fully alive and energetic, it is again the glands that are responsible. If one is depressed or enthusiastic in all that they think or do, it is the glands that are responsible. In fact, our health depends on the normal function or malfunction of one or more glands.

The glands can be recharged and stimulated medically, or you can recharge them through the

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Endocrine glands

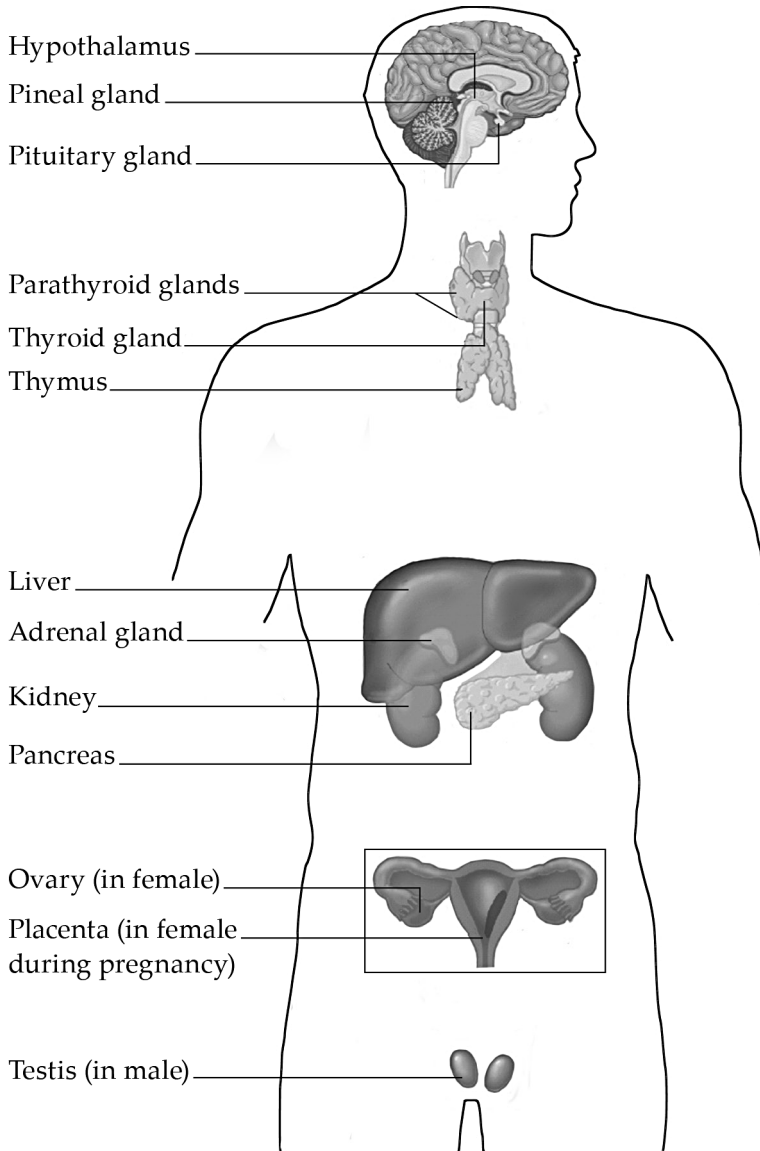


Diagram showing the location of glands

practice of The Eight Spiritual Breaths, along with their affirmations, and by your positively focused thoughts. It is a very powerful, scientific system that has been put together. Each endocrine gland draws in the amount of energy required for its optimum functioning. This, in turn, allows proper body-mind functioning so that Higher Consciousness can be accessed.

The Endocrine Glands and the Chakras

Our endocrine glands in the physical body are connected to the chakras, which are part of the etheric body, or subtle body (the body that cannot be seen with our eyes). The etheric body is an extensive network of energy channels (nadis) and, at the point where these channels cross each other, they form a plexus, or centre of energy, called a chakra.

There are seven main chakras, though the seventh, the Sahasrar, is not really a chakra as it is not a plexus. Each of the remaining six chakras has its counterpart in the physical body in the form of a vital organ and vitalizes the area around it. The health of an organ is dependent on the condition of the associated chakra.

The Brain and the Breath

The main source for energizing and cleansing the brain and the meridians (nadis) is the breath. Breathwork

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helps oxygenate the brain and thereby nourishes the entire endocrine system.

The energized, deep, fresh breath helps focus our energy to cleanse and recharge the grooves of the entire brain and resource the glands. Each breath in The Eight Spiritual Breaths Course is scientifically designed to help throw out toxins from the human body.

By practising these breathing exercises every day, gradually, a new sense of vigour starts developing in the aspirants. Certain limiting beliefs are dropped, which helps bring the students to a new level of consciousness whereby they start looking at and dealing with the same situations with a new perspective. This, in turn, revitalizes the whole body and mind.

The breaths increase the prana in the brain, resulting in good physical health, mental stability and emotional well-being, thereby helping them blossom into their fullest potential.

Meditation and the Brain

Studies show that the front half of the brain shrinks with ageing, but with meditators, the shrinkage is slower or absent as compared with non-meditators. The hippocampus gets negatively impacted by stress, and it has been found that meditation helps to reduce that detrimental process.

The amygdala plays a key role in the processing of emotions and is also the fight-or-flight decider for the brain. Data shows that the amygdala gets bigger in animals who are put through stress. It has been observed in humans that it reduces in size with meditation, which helps in de-stressing a person.

To sum up, here are some of the benefits of regular meditation:

- Reduces stress and anxiety, thereby decreasing the production of stress hormones detrimental to the body
- Increases grey matter in areas like the hippocampus and the prefrontal cortex. As a result, the former boosts memory and learning, and the latter, decision making and attention
- Promotes neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to adapt and change
- Helps in recovery from addiction by reducing cravings and improving emotional regulation
- Brings about positive changes in your brain and life ultimately