

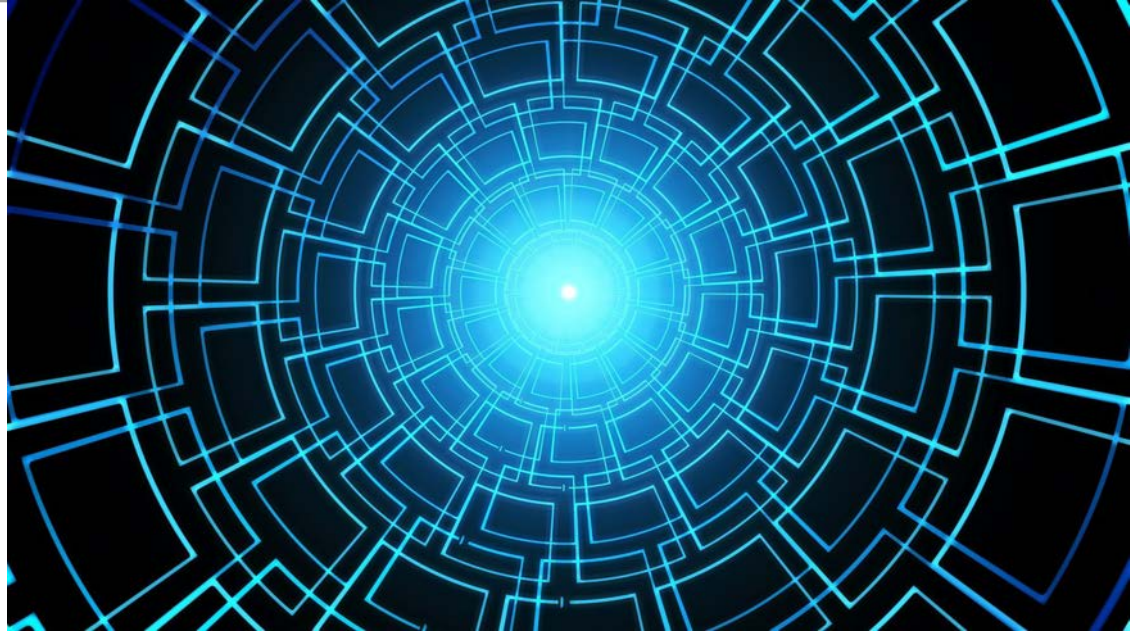


SAHAJA YOGA MEDITATION, FREE  
WILL &  
SCIENCE

# Overview

---

- Footsoak
- Video: What the bleep
- Presentation
- Ekadash Rudras meditation



The video: and a question

➤ Do we have free will?



# Do we have free will?

---

- Frontal lobe is in charge of firm intention, decision making, regulating behaviour and inspiration.
- We use the already-wired circuits, brain becomes hard-wired.
- We follow our conditionings and habits
- Brain does not know the difference between what it sees and what it remembers.

# The Kundalini and free will

---

The Kundalini respects a person's free will and will only rise if you desire it.

*“Through totalitarian regimes you are oppressed from outside, but this so-called freedom, this freedom of abandonment, destroys you from within... without Self-Realisation, one cannot understand the power of freedom.”*

*Shri Mataji*

# Shri Mataji on freedom

---

*“Human beings should not take freedom as abandonment, but freedom to enjoy completely and fully. The freedom that takes you to destruction is not freedom. The right idea of freedom must be taken.*

*And, people should know that freedom, ultimate freedom, is when you become your own master, when there are no habits, when you cannot be dominated by anything. You are above everything. That’s the freedom you have to achieve.”*



# THE SCIENCE: What happens when we meditate?

---

- Our metabolic activity is reduced (different from sleep)
- We relax physically
- We relax mentally



## West vs. East Source. (*Hernandez et al., 2018*)

---

Western psychology:  
3 states of consciousness:

1. Deep sleep
2. Dreaming
3. Wakefulness

Eastern philosophy:  
recognises a 4<sup>th</sup> “superior” state

4. Mental silence or consciousness  
without thoughts:  
Nirvichara Samadhi



# The effects of meditation

---

- Improves our psychological balance
- Improves our emotional stability
- Reduces stress, depression & anxiety



# THE SCIENCE & Sahaja Yoga Meditation

---

- 8-year study into the state of mental silence from the perspective of neuroscience and health at Kings College London, University of Leipzig, and Spanish universities in Castellon and Tenerife.
- Findings presented in journal Neuroscience
- Researchers recorded brain anatomy and functional connectivity in a state of mental silence during meditation in a magnetic resonance scanner.
- 23 SY practitioners and 23 non-meditators.

# Definitions

---

- **Gray matter.** Contains most of the brains neuronal cell bodies. It serves to process information in the brain. Located throughout the CNS in both the spinal cord and brain.
- High concentration of grey matter in various parts of the brain is positively linked to general intelligence.
- Gray matter is highly heritable but also strongly influenced by environmental influence.

# Examples

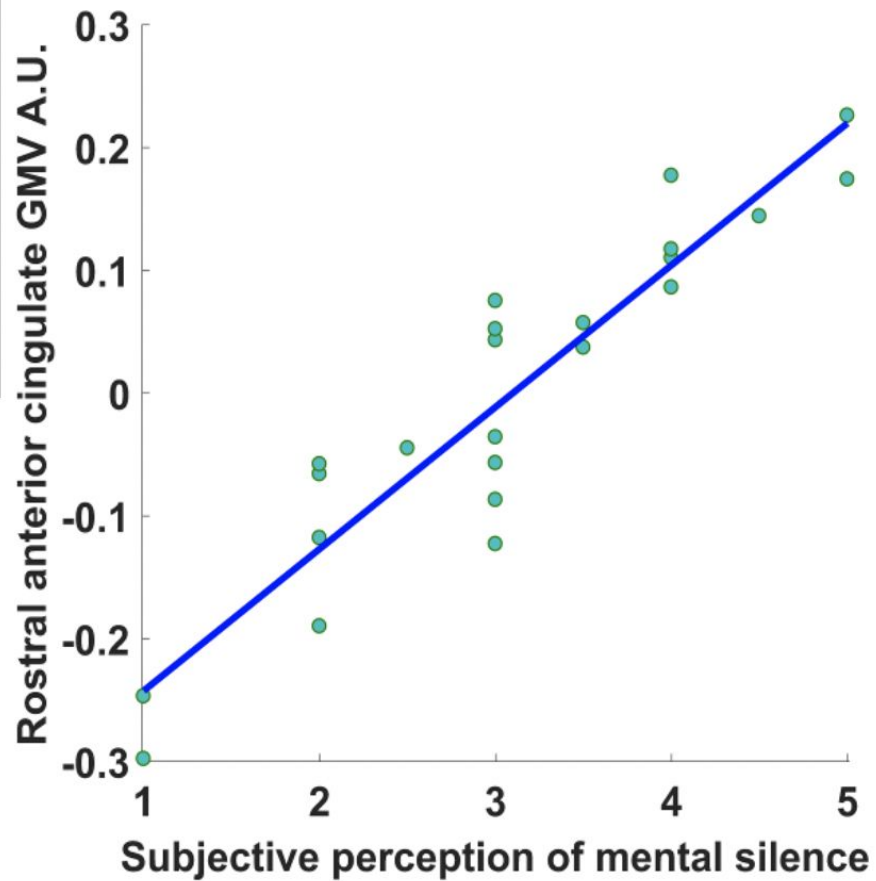
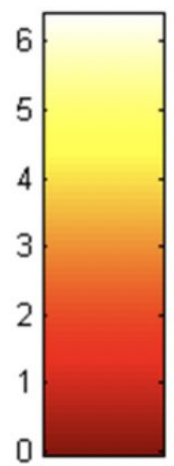
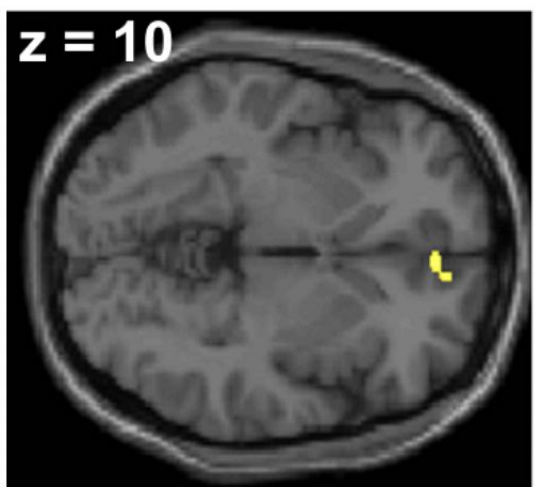
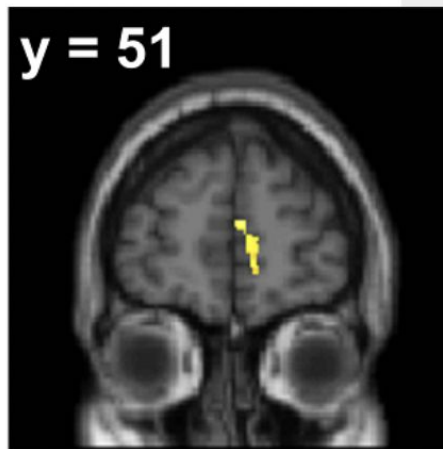
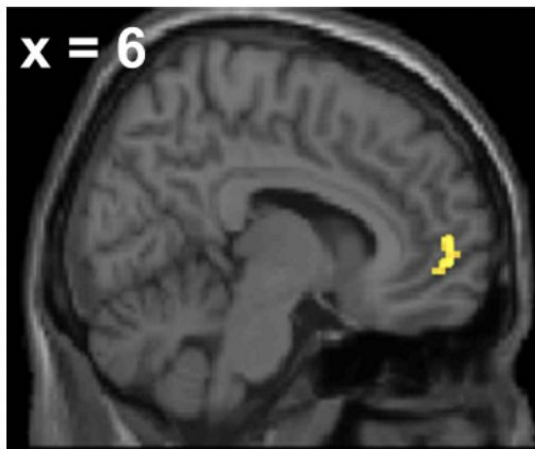
---

- An increased volume of gray matter in Broca's area of professional musicians, reflecting, at least in part, the number of years devoted to musical training.
- An increased volume of gray matter in the posterior **hippocampus** of experienced London taxi drivers (a brain region involved in spatial navigation), with volume correlated with length of taxi-driving experience.
- An increase in the development of new brain cells in older adults who underwent an aerobic training program compared with those who did not.

## THE SCIENCE and Sahaja Yoga meditation: Findings Part 1

---

- A region in the brain called the rostral anterior cingulate cortex (rACC) is **directly related to the ability to be in mental silence.**
- The meditators had an average of **7.5% more grey matter** than the non-meditating group in this area.
- The meditators who experienced a deeper mental silence in their meditation in the scanner had more grey matter in this area than those with a less lasting mental silence.



# THE SCIENCE and Sahaja Yoga meditation: Findings Part 1 cont.

---

According to recent scientific publications:

- People with mental illnesses have less grey matter in the rACC.
- People who are happier and have greater self-control over their emotions have more grey matter in this area.

# THE SCIENCE and Sahaja Yoga meditation: Findings Part 2

---

- Meditators experienced greater functional connectivity between rACC and areas in both hemispheres of the brain in charge of internalised attention and simple state of joy.
- State of mental silence produced a disconnection of the rACC with the thalamus – less attention to the outside world in favour of greater internalised attention during meditation.



# THE SCIENCE and Sahaja Yoga meditation: Conclusion

---

- Mental silence experienced through Sahaja Yoga meditation is associated with the development of neural networks and areas in the brain that are crucial for the control of attention and emotions.
- This may have a direct positive impact on mental health and indirect impact on physical health.

## Other studies: Effect of Sahaja Yoga Meditation on Quality of Life, Anxiety and Blood Pressure Control

---

Study compared two groups receiving treatment from:

- International Sahaja Yoga Research and Health Center
- Mahatma Gandhi Mission Hospital (control group)

Measurements taken before and after treatment

# Results

---

## Meditators

- Significant improvement in quality of life, anxiety and blood pressure

## Non-meditators

- Quality of life deteriorated
- No improvement in blood pressure

# Sahaja Yoga: An Ancient Path to Modern Mental Health?

Research thesis, University of Plymouth, by Adam Morgan

Conclusion:

- Sahaja Yoga is a valuable and promising treatment for anxiety and depression

# Sahaja Yoga Meditation as a Family Treatment Programme for Children with ADHD

Universities in Australia, King's College London

Sahaja Yoga Meditation may offer families an effective management tool for family-oriented treatment of childhood ADHD.



# Results

## Children

### Benefits at home:

- Better sleep patterns
- Less anxiety

### At school:

- More able to concentrate
- Less conflict

## Parents

- Felt happier
- Less stressed
- More able to manage their child's behaviour



Meditation

EKADESHA RUDRAS