

Self Awakening

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Maha Yoga - Effortless, joyful and no-cost path to Self-Realization



Contents

Editor's note	1
Churning of the Heart	2
Answers to questions	9
Upcoming events	20
Website updates	21
How to contribute content	22

Editor's note

Dear Readers:

The purpose of this quarterly newsletter, Self Awakening, is to inform Sadhaks (seekers of self-realization) and other readers about Maha Yoga, an effortless, joyful and no cost path to Self-Realization.

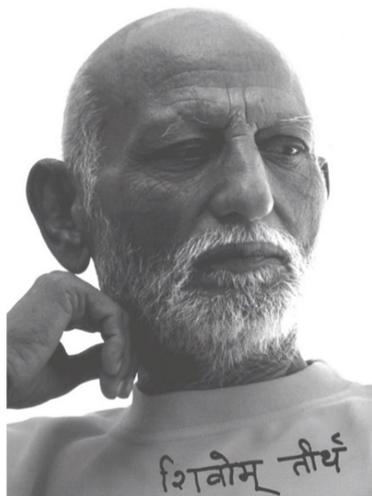
P. P. Shri Narayan Kaka Maharaj of Nashik, India was a leading teacher and exponent of Maha Yoga, a centuries old tradition, whereby a realized Guru (Siddha Guru) awakens the Universal Life Energy (Kundalini) within the Sadhak, eventually leading him/her to self-realization. This ancient tradition (Parampara) continues under the leadership of several Siddha Gurus, including the fourteen designated by P. P. Kaka Maharaj as Deekshadhikaris (those authorized to initiate Sadhaks into Maha Yoga). Additional details about Maha Yoga are available at www.mahayoga.org.

To the thousands of Sadhaks in the Maha Yoga tradition all over the world and other interested readers, this e-newsletter is intended to provide virtual Satsang. It is intended to encourage Sadhaks to remain engaged in Maha Yoga, be informed about Maha Yoga-related events around the world, and to provide a forum for getting guidance about Maha Yoga from leaders from P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj's lineage.

Readers are urged to contribute questions, thoughtful articles, interesting life experiences related to Maha Yoga and news about Maha Yoga-related events to this e-newsletter. Reminiscences of P. P. Kaka Maharaj are also most welcome. We will be glad to include them in future issues. Please send any content, comments, or questions you would like to submit to self.awakening@gmail.com.

Past issues of Self Awakening are archived at <http://www.mahayoga.org/selfawakening.aspx>.

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts



These excerpts are from P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj's trilogy, "Churning of the Heart". P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj (left) was from the same Shaktipat lineage as P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj, a lineage which can be traced in recent times to P. P. Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj who lived in the 19th century. In these excerpts, P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj describes his experiences and interactions with his Guru, P. P. Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj, who he refers to as Maharajshri or Maharajji. They are published here with the kind permission of Swami Shivom Tirth Ashram, Inc.

The two excerpts below are about two luminaries of the Maha Yoga path. The first documents the thoughts Maharajshri had about P. P. Swami Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj, a stalwart of our Maha Yoga lineage who first brought Maha Yoga to the common man in the second half of the 19th century (see details of the lineage in the February and August 2010 issues of Self Awakening archived at <http://mahayoga.org/selfawakening.aspx>). In the second excerpt, P. P. Shivom Tirth Maharaj describes the incident when P. P. Swami Muktananda of Ganeshpuri in Maharashtra, India received Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha from Maharajshri.

Swami Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj

In those days, during my spare time, I was trying to write a book, *Narayan Upadeshamrit* [a biographical sketch, in Hindi, of Swami Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj]. It was quite a job to collect the required material. The Guru, brother of Maharajshri, Swami Pranavananda, was staying in the Dewas ashram during that time. He had lived with Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj for a few days in his ashram. I learned some things from him, but Swami Pranavananda left after a short stay and I was unable to collect enough material for the book. Only thirty to forty pages were possible. In the meantime I found a book written by Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj in Bengali. Maharajshri knew some Bengali so he would translate for me. I could write the book based on that. The thoughts presented by Maharajshri regarding Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj included what follows:

(1) Shri Narayan Tirth Dev Swamiji was a great being of such high caliber that his Gurudev [Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj] put all his faith in him, which proved to be very fruitful. His Gurudev was a renunciate, an ascetic, who loved solitude, and yet he wished for the spiritual elevation of the populace. He was in search of a person who would live a simple ascetic life and work for the spiritual elevation of the people. In Swamiji he found such a personality. Shri Swamiji never sought money. He never gave initiation for the sake of money. Like ancient seers he ran the ashram on donations and lived in extreme poverty. Many kings and landlords came for initiation but he turned them down. He thought twice before trusting a rich person. On the other hand, his Shakti flowed like the River Ganges; all of India is swimming in it even today. Among his disciples there were great teachers such as

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

Shankar Purushottam Tirth Maharaj, Shri Yoganandji Maharaj and Shri Ashwini Kumar Bhattacharya. They expanded his work. Spirituality grows in a life of poverty, renunciation and asceticism like a lotus grows in mud. A true example of this was Swamiji Maharaj.

(2) The second example offered by Swamiji was of lasting patience. His Guruji instructed him to return home and fulfill his family duties. He further told him that his Shakti would remain dormant during that time. “When your duties are completed then the Shakti will become active again.”

He went back home, took a job, and fulfilled all his family responsibilities while continuing his sadhana. For almost twenty years he carried on his japa, waiting for Shakti to be activated. He recited the Gita, sang God’s praise, and so forth. He hungered for spirituality while performing his householder duties. This is an example everyone must contemplate and imitate. His patience, enthusiasm and perseverance for spirituality were so high that no difficulties or duties could interfere. In all kinds of circumstances he kept on marching on the spiritual path. After nineteen and a half years, the day came for which he had been waiting. The activity of Shakti manifested. And when it manifested, it was such that Swamiji started to shine like a brilliant star in the sky of spirituality.

(3) What was his ashram? Two huts of straw and an idol of mother Kali under a banyan tree. There was no room for sadhana, no room for satsang [spiritual discourse], no room for people to come and stay, and no bathroom. Those living in the ashram and those who visited led a very simple life. They bathed in the lake, and meals and sadhana took place under the trees. There was no unnecessary conversation and no waste of time. Strict discipline was followed, but the atmosphere was full of divine love. There was no room for likes, dislikes, anger or gossiping. Every nook and corner of the ashram was overflowing with experiences of Shakti. The meditation room was wherever you sat; the temple of God was wherever you went. You could feel the presence of Swamiji Maharaj wherever you went. It felt as if devotion and Shakti were dancing everywhere in the ashram.

(4) East Bengal [now Bangladesh] was a very strange country. In the rainy season all the rivers and streams would swell and become one. Water flowing from Assam would come down and spread throughout the land. A major part of the country would be under water. In the middle of farms, soil would be piled to build hills on which houses could be constructed. One would need a boat to go from one house to another. Swamiji Maharaj used to go out for alms in such difficult conditions. For fire he would go to the forest and fetch wood, then do sadhan. How ascetic the life was, and how spiritual the aspirations were! When Bramhachari Atma Prakash [Swami Shankar Purushottam Tirth Maharaj] went to live there, he began going out for alms. Bramhachariji stayed in the service of Guru Maharaj for eight years. By then other people had also arrived. How a spiritual person can live in poverty was demonstrated by the way in which the ashram was run by Swamiji Maharaj. He was more interested in giving initiation to those who had little. Thus there was negligible funding from the disciples.

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

(5) It was a rule in the ashram that if any visitor got food from the market it must be shared with everyone. If it was not for all then it could not be for one's self either. Time was not to be wasted, and all the time was spent in reading and spiritual activities. If, at any time, anyone misbehaved or said something inappropriate then it was not tolerated. No one could waste any gifts of nature. It was one's duty to live in such a way as to present an example of spirituality, and to present a brilliant example of a life of endurance, generosity and asceticism. Those who arrived from outside burned with the fire of desires, tendencies, and likes and dislike; they were in dire need of affection, love and peace. If people came to the ashram and had to face the same worldly behavior then their coming to the ashram would be a waste.

(6) Swamiji Maharaj was the founding teacher of Shaktipat. This school of knowledge and practice had existed in the past, but it was like a river flowing underground. Swamiji Maharaj began the great task of unearthing it, just as one might excavate hidden treasure from the earth and offer it to the people. It was the responsibility of his holiness to bring it to the world in its pure form. He emphasized that one should not include the fulfillment of desires in spirituality. By involving desires in sadhana, it becomes impure. He explained this to the disciples repeatedly. He also demonstrated, through his own behavior, how to live without desires. He taught how to endure difficulties and sufferings caused by destiny [prarabdha]. Had he wished, he could have accumulated many things for his comfort and luxury. There was no shortage of rich people desiring initiation from him. But he never paid attention. He always based his decision whether or not to give initiation on the state of mind of the person.

(7) Swamiji used to rise at three o' clock in the morning. Residents of, and visitors to, the ashram were also awakened. Exceptions were made to this daily discipline only when someone was sick. Drinking tea in the morning was not a norm. Therefore, after performing the morning ablutions, the only thing to do was sadhan.

(8) Swamiji Maharaj had met his Guru Maharaj only once when he received diksha. Yet he constantly remembered his Guru's instructions. He followed his instructions throughout his life. After returning home he remembered Guru Maharaj daily before doing his prayers, puja, and so forth. Only after that did he undertake worldly affairs. Even while he was busy with worldly duties he remembered Gurudev and experienced his presence near him at all times. When he became a Guru he used to always feel that he was doing this work as a service to his Guru. Even though the Guru was physically distant, the Guru was always with him mentally.

(9) The account of Swamiji Maharaj would be incomplete without mention of the service of Atma Prakashji. It would be difficult to find such devoted service rendered to any Guru, incessantly for eight years. He was so intoxicated in serving his Guru that he could not think of anything else. He would go out for alms by swimming across the waters, bring wood for fuel, sweep the ashram, and still be ready for all the work of the ashram. He would rise at three in the morning for sadhan and then get busy with the ashram duties. He was like a

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

Bramhachari in the times of the ancient rishis [sages] and believed that the Guru was his God. Guru-seva, the service of the Guru, was his worship. In comparison to his, the services of other disciples seemed meager.

Later on, when he was established as Swami Shankar Purushottam Maharaj, he still worked with feelings of Guru-seva in his mind, just as before. For him doing Guru-seva while living in the ashram, and sitting on the Guru's chair, were two different forms of Guru-seva. If one nurtures the ego of being a Guru himself, it leads to his downfall.

(10) We have moved away from the path shown by Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj. Ashrams have added all kinds of comforts. The attitude of seva has vanished. The lack of commitment to sadhan has grown. No one follows the Guru's instructions. Initiations are given in order to increase the number of disciples. Discrimination of worthy and unworthy is getting lost. Generally, greed and ego are on the high pinnacle. Sadhan is done with an aim to fulfill desires.

When a religious tradition or philosophical school first begins, its form is different. Slowly impurities start to enter and separate groups are formed. When secret knowledge is revealed to a great being it is pure. With wider exposure the number of its followers grows but its purity declines. All paths have had the same fate, and recent ones have suffered the same. As a path proliferates, its original goal is lost and the distance from its original form increases. With the rise of a new path of knowledge its decline begins.

Question: "If you have had encounters with so many invisible ascended masters then you must definitely be seeing Narayan Tirthji also."

Answer: "Yes, I do see him. All this is the fruit of his grace. He definitely manifests before me, and I see him in all other masters, too. I also see in their hearts the feelings of faith and surrender to Gurudev. He has been the source of my inspiration at each and every step.

"Coming back to what I was saying, every path of knowledge goes through the process of manifestation and disappearance. The path of Shaktipat is no exception. The path that rises will fall one day. Someday only the external shell of Shaktipat will remain and its soul will be gone. Slowly people will forget the concept of Shaktipat."

Question: "Then what will happen to the resolve of Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj, the Gurudev of Swami Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj? He revealed the path of Shaktipat because it is very hard to perform spiritual practice in the Kaliyuga [the Dark Age]."

Answer: "No resolve can remain effective forever. The Lord's resolve to create the cosmos also ends with pralaya [the Grand Dissolution]. Every resolve rises and then dissolves. Those who are serious about sadhan have support. It cannot last forever. Many great beings have come and tried to bring people onto a good path, but only a few have been able to follow. The world continues to tread on in its old ways."

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

Question: “Please tell me why Narayan Tirthji never went back to meet his Guru?”

Answer: “Those days were very different from today. Railways, buses and roads were not developed. Most people journeyed on horse- carts, bullock-carts, or on foot. The distance between Madaripur in East Bengal and Jagannathpuri was not short. Due to poverty, Narayan Tirthji was not able to bear a large expense. If he went on foot, it would take a long time. The main duty for him was to do as Gurudev had instructed him. Fulfilling his duties with the sense of Guru-seva was more important than meeting him.

“Once a gentleman went to Jagannathpuri and, upon his return, gave the news of Gurudev’s merging with the Divine, but Gurudev never departed from Swamiji’s heart. He possibly passed his responsibilities to Narayan Tirthji Maharaj and ended the play of his mortal form.”

Now I wanted to stay in solitude somewhere and complete the book. In those days a mahatma named Vilinatma used to come to visit Maharajshri. I went with him to a farmhouse in Lasalgaon, in Nasik district. I stayed there for fifteen days, completed the book and came back.

Swami Muktananda

The families of a few disciples lived in Mumbai [Bombay]. They were always inviting Maharajshri to come. Finally their request was accepted. They arranged for Maharajshri’s stay near the Mahalaxmi temple. I want to draw the attention of readers to an important event that took place during this trip. Mahatma Swami Nityananda was very well-known in those days. He was originally from South India, but he had followers from many different states. He spent most of his time in the Avadhuta state [a state wherein one is free from worldly feeling and obligation]. Arrangements were made for Maharajshri to seek his company.

Swami Nityananda had a disciple named Muktananda, who eventually did noteworthy work in the field of Shaktipat. He traveled through America, Europe, Australia and many other countries showing the path of Shaktipat to the masses and earning international fame. In those days he lived in a cottage near the ashram of Swami Nityananda. It is now a huge ashram, almost like a palace. This was in 1962.

Among the disciples of Maharajshri there was a doctor who was a trustee for Swami Nityananda’s ashram, and also knew Swami Muktananda. When Swami Muktananda heard that Maharajshri was coming to meet Swami Nityananda, he asked the doctor to bring Maharajshri to his cottage for a visit, even if it was for a brief moment. It was decided that Swami Muktananda would stand on the street across from his cottage and wave, and the

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

doctor would stop his car. At that time Swami Muktananda would ask Maharajshri to visit his cottage.

The next day, at the scheduled time, the car arrived at Ganeshpuri near Swami Nityananda's ashram, and Swami Muktananda was waiting on the street according to the plan. He saw the car coming from a distance and waved. The doctor was driving. He stopped near Swami Muktananda. Swami Muktananda bowed to Maharajshri. The doctor said, "This is Swami Muktananda. He is a disciple of Swami Nityananda and lives in the cottage nearby. He requests that you please visit his cottage." Maharajshri paused briefly, then got out of the car and walked to the cottage.

Swami Muktananda had already made preparations to offer puja [to worship Maharajshri]. He had laid a woolen seat at an appropriate place. Maharajshri was respectfully seated on the woolen seat. Swami Muktananda did Maharajshri's puja. After completing the puja Swami Muktananda immediately fell into the lap of Maharajshri. His eyes were half dosed. Maharajshri's eyes were closed and his hand was on the head of Swami Muktananda. This divine scene lasted for about fifteen minutes. The whole room was saturated with Shakti, as if waves of Shakti were silently circulating throughout the room. Only Maharajshri and Swami Muktananda knew their inner states, but all those present in the room felt an extraordinary intoxication, Swami Muktananda opened his eyes after about a quarter of an hour, Maharajshri's hand also moved away from his head. He sat up. Both were silent, looking at each other. Neither did Maharajshri say anything, nor did Swami Muktananda utter a word. A silent discourse. Maharajshri left.

No one could see the process that took place on the subtle level, but the goal that cannot be accomplished with thousands of lectures and long-term spiritual practice and propitiation was accomplished in no time, without a single word spoken or heard. That state for which ascetics remain engrossed in austerities in the jungles and still fail to attain was experienced by Swamiji Muktananda while lying in the lap of Maharajshri. After the experience Swami Muktananda's face was shining with divine lustre and Maharajshri's face had unfathomable solemnity.

Only a saint can know the greatness of other saints. How can a worldly soul, lost in the thick forest of pleasures, be capable of understanding mysteries on a subtle level? What a saint does, when he does it, and to whom, is known only to the saint. Scriptures have described saints with precision. These detached mahatmas are free from the bondage of the world and they do not expect anything from anyone. The play of their life is only for the benefit of the world. They also have karmic debts to others from past births. Only the fortunate can benefit from the grace of a saint.

Maharajshri returned after meeting Swami Nityananda. On our way back, these were his words in the car: "This Muktananda took a lot – much more than I had expected."

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

The next day Swami Muktananda came to where Maharajshri was staying to see him. He was asked how he came to know about Maharajshri and Shaktipat. This is what he said, of his own accord:

“I was a wandering monk in those days. I came to a village in Maharashtra (I do not remember the name of the village now.) and stayed at the house of a village chief for the night. I was put up in their guest house. Just above the place where I was seated there was a cupboard in the wall. I was sitting in the dark doing japa, and again and again one book there grabbed my attention. I was trying hard to concentrate on doing my japa, but again and again I was distracted by this same book. I turned on the flashlight and took the book. It was a book by Swami Yogananda [Maharajshri’s Shaktipat Guru] named *Mahayoga Vijnana*. I read a few pages by the light of a flashlight. That night I experienced all the kriyas I read about in the book. Thus I knew about this branch of knowledge. I had already heard the name of Maharajshri. I also knew that he was the worthy successor of Swami Yogananda. Thus I had a pre-existing desire to meet him, and God fulfilled my wish.”

Maharajshri and Swami Muktananda met three times after that. Once in 1966, when Maharajshri came to Mumbai, he went to see Swami Muktananda at Ganeshpuri. By then the cottage with the two rooms had taken the form of a large ashram. Later, when Swami Muktananda invited Maharajshri, he went there for an overnight stay. The third meeting took place in 1968, in Delhi, when Maharajshri’s health was not good. Swami Muktananda had come to Delhi and, upon hearing about Maharajshri’s ailing health, came to see him. These three meetings are not the subject of this book. If God grants me time and preserves my health then it will be more appropriate to write about these meetings in the third part of *Churning of the Heart*. This book only describes the period up until 1965.

Presented here with kind permission from Swami Shivom Tirth Ashram, Inc. Thanks to Mrs. Alison Kamat for transcribing the excerpts.

“Churning of the Heart” trilogy by P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj is available from:
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Answers to Questions from Sadhaks

Question: I had been accepted to receive Deeksha on the last Deeksha Day. I did everything that was asked of me in preparation to receive Deeksha. However, I did not experience anything during the time I was sitting for Deeksha as requested. What should I do?

Answer: The experience a Sadhak has during Deeksha is entirely dependent on the condition of his Chitta (mind stuff), whether or not he has an attitude of surrendering to the awakened Prana Shakti within him, and how sincere he is about his desire to grow spiritually. Also, for some Sadhaks who might have the right condition of their Chitta, a sufficient level of surrendering to the awakened Prana Shakti within them and a sincere desire to grow spiritually, the experiences during Maha Yoga Sadhan can be quite subtle and difficult for a novice Sadhak to notice. It is best for a Sadhak to surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within him and allow her to do what is needed for his spiritual growth, not try to second guess her or get impatient about his perceived progress.

Kriyas that happen during Maha Yoga Sadhan can be physical, mental or Pranic. Of course, vigorous physical Kriyas are easily noticed by a Sadhak, but sometimes even physical Kriyas can be quite subtle; as in the gentle swaying of the upper body that a Sadhak might not notice. Pranic Kriyas can also be vigorous, but they are often quite subtle, and therefore difficult to notice, like the gentle flow of Prana in the Sadhak's extremities, or the flow of Prana accompanying the Sadhak's normal breathing. Mental Kriyas often appear as random thoughts that arise in a Sadhak's mind, so a Sadhak might not realize that the thoughts that arise in his mind during Maha Yoga Sadhan are in fact mental Kriyas and he should simply observe them as they arise and let them go. Observing the thoughts that arise can be quite difficult for a novice Maha Yoga Sadhak, but the best way to let go of such thoughts is to redirect his attention to his normal breathing whenever he notices some random thought coming up in his Chitta.

Having said all this about Kriyas, please understand that Kriyas are not an end in themselves. They are just a means whereby the Samskaras a Sadhak has accumulated over his current and past lives get expressed during Maha Yoga Sadhan as Kriyas, and by simply observing the Kriyas and letting them go without fearing them or getting attached to them, the Samskaras underlying them get eliminated from the Sadhak's Chitta. So, the Kriya process is just a process of eliminating the garbage of accumulated Samskaras, and the Vrittis they create in a Sadhak from his Chitta. When all the accumulated Samskaras have been eliminated from a Sadhak's Chitta does he begin to experience the presence of the Atma within him and sees it as his true self, being one with the ParamAtma that pervades the entire universe.

Going forward, I would like to suggest that you continue to sit for Sadhan every day with an attitude of surrendering to the awakened Prana Shakti within you, not have any expectations of any specific Kriyas happening, and simply observe what happens. Try to observe the subtle physical or Pranic Kriyas that might be happening and if random thoughts keep arising just redirect your attention to your normal breathing. Normal breathing is one Kriya that happens as long as we are alive, so it is best to observe it if other Kriyas are difficult to

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

observe or simply do not happen. Gradually, you might begin to experience more vigorous Kriyas, if they are needed for your spiritual growth. But do not be disappointed if they don't happen. You may not need for them to happen for you to grow spiritually. The awakened Prana Shakti within you knows all there is to know about you and will be your inner Guru guiding you on your spiritual journey. Just trust her to do what is best for you at a pace that is right for you.

Question: I have been practicing Maha Yoga for the past three years and about a year and a half ago I began to feel the presence of the Kundalini Shakti in my throat Chakra (Vishuddha Chakra). Following that time I began to feel a pull in the Chakra between my eyebrows (Ajna Chakra). For the past two months I have begun experiencing a pull in my head combined with a similar sensation between my eyebrows during Sadhan and a couple of times I experienced a very bright light that almost seemed intolerably bright. Nowadays I get the feeling of something tapping on the top of my head during Sadhan.

Having had all these experiences, I would like to know if I am on the right path. I am starting to crave the experiences of being in the presence of God during Sadhan and I am thirsting for spiritual awakening and enlightenment. How long is the journey ahead for me to experience oneness with the Almighty?

Answer: Glad to read that you have been practicing Maha Yoga for the past three years.

The Kriyas you describe suggest that you are on the right path. While Kriyas are a good indicator of a Sadhak's progress it is very important for the Sadhak to not fear them nor develop any attachment to them. Kriyas happen during Sadhan because the awakened Prana Shakti, also referred to as the inward-directed Prana Shakti, brings up into the Sadhak's Chitta (mind stuff) various Samskaras he has accumulated during his current and past lives. These Samskaras get expressed as Kriyas during Sadhan, and if a Sadhak simply observes them with a sense of detachment and lets them happen, the Samskaras underlying them get eliminated from his Chitta. The entire objective of Maha Yoga Sadhan is to allow the inward-directed Prana Shakti to get rid of all the Samskaras the Sadhak has accumulated over his current and past lives. So, the process of Kriyas happening can be thought of as a cleansing process whereby the garbage (Kachra) of accumulated Samskaras, and the Vruttis they have developed in a Sadhak's Chitta, get gradually eliminated. (चित्त वृत्ती निरोधः). There is therefore no reason to get attached to any Kriya that happens nor develop a desire to experience specific Kriyas that have not happened. As P. P. Kaka Maharaj used to say, Maha Yoga is not a Yoga of doing, it is a Yoga of happening.

The specific Chakra-related Kriyas you have been experiencing seem to be Pranic Kriyas. There are also two other types of Kriyas, physical and mental. The specific Kriyas that happen depend on the nature of the Samskaras that underlie them. P. P. Kaka Maharaj's advice to Sadhaks has been to not dwell too much on the specifics of the Kriyas; i.e. what Chakra the Prana Shakti is at or what specific Samskara a specific Kriya is an expression of. He would advise Sadhaks to simply allow the awakened Prana Shakti to do her job of

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

garbage removal by sitting for Sadhan regularly, and leaving it up to Her to do her job at whatever pace that is best for the Sadhak's spiritual progress. Sit for Sadhan regularly for however long you want, but at least for one hour every day, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you without having any expectations for any specific Kriyas to happen, observe what happens in a detached manner without fear or attachment, accept it all with a sense of gratitude to the Mother Prana Shakti, and above all be patient. It is good you are beginning to crave the experience of the presence of God and spiritual awakening. It will create a लगन (lagan - intense desire) in you to sit for Maha Yoga Sadhan regularly and for longer duration.

Only when all the accumulated Samskaras have been eliminated from a Sadhak's Chitta will he experience the Atma within him as being one with the ParamAtma; i.e. he will experience Self-Enlightenment. However, it is a long road, because not only does the accumulation of past Samskaras have to get eliminated through Maha Yoga Sadhan, but a Sadhak needs to make sure he is not accumulating new Samskaras or strengthening existing Samskaras on a day-to-day basis when he is not sitting for Sadhan. A Sadhak has to pay some attention to this in his day-to-day life by not developing new attachments or aversions that would lead to strengthening existing Samskaras or accumulating new ones. Although initially most Sadhaks will need to consciously develop such a detached attitude, with regular Maha Yoga Sadhan the Sadhak will find that this attitude will gradually become effortless. This is the attitude of a Karma Yogi, whereby the Sadhak sees that he has a right to action but not to the fruits of the action. (कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते, मा फ़लेशु कदाचन).

Developing the attitude of a Karma Yogi and being patient is extremely important for experiencing progress on the Maha Yoga path, especially given where you are on this path now. I urge you to not concern yourself so much about when Self Enlightenment will happen for you, but try to develop a sense of surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you and let her be in charge, not only during Maha Yoga Sadhan but also during your day-to-day life. It is also very important for you given where you are on your spiritual path and the progress you have already experienced, to develop a sense of detachment and patience. Getting too attached to the goal of achieving Self Enlightenment will itself create new Samskaras, which while being Sattvik will also need to be eliminated to actually experience Self Enlightenment. So the best thing is to entrust yourself and your spiritual progress entirely in the hands of the awakened Prana Shakti within you and allow her to take you where you need to go!

Question: I just finished my meditation for one hour as suggested for receiving Maha Yoga initiation. During my meditation I had a vision of a woman with a big black scarf on her head who put some white seeds in my left hand and which went through my fingers. I also had a vision of a big dog and experienced pressure in my Ajna and Sahasrara Chakras. I think I had a premature activation of my Kundalini some time ago which had only strengthened my ego and reinforced my desires and fears. Today, during the initiation meditation I felt peace and tranquility. Thank you for the gift of Maha Yoga initiation.

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Answer: Glad to read that Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha (initiation) happened for you. It is clear from the description of the visions you experienced, the pressure you felt on your Ajna and Sahasrara Chakras, and most importantly, the fact that you felt peace and tranquility, that Deeksha happened for you. The experiences you had during Deeksha were simply an expression of the specific Samskaras that were brought into your Chitta (mind stuff). It is best to simply observe them and to let them go.

It is a good thing you asked for and received Maha Yoga Deeksha because it had the beneficial effect of moderating and channeling the premature activation of your Kundalini that you say happened to you in the past and which had caused negative tendencies in you. Glad to read that the Maha Yoga Deeksha helped overcome those negative effects of the prior premature Kundalini activation.

Question: I received Maha Yoga Deeksha a few days ago. These days, when I sit for my daily meditation, my inner vision turns black/dark, I start sweating and my body feels weak. I also hear a male and a female voice reciting “Om namah Shivaya”. What does all this mean?

Answer: Glad to read that Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha happened for you recently. Also glad to read that you are sitting for Maha Yoga Sadhan (meditation) on a daily basis. The experiences you have described during Sadhan, such as your vision going black, a feeling of weakness and sweating, and hearing the chanting of a Mantra, are all Kriyas that are happening as the awakened Prana Shakti within you is beginning the process of eliminating the Samskaras (impressions) you have accumulated in your current and past lives. You are indeed quite fortunate that the Kriyas that are happening to you are clearly noticeable and not subtle as happens for many Sadhaks in their early experience.

The Kriyas that happen during Sadhan are entirely dependent on the nature of the Samskaras that have been accumulated in the Sadhak’s Chitta (mind-stuff). Each Sadhak comes to Maha Yoga with a unique set of Samskaras so the mix of Kriyas that happen during Sadhan are unique to each Sadhak and the stage the Sadhak is at on his Maha Yoga path. The Kriyas are simply the way individual Samskaras in a Sadhak’s Chitta get expressed during Maha Yoga Sadhan. They can be physical, mental or Pranic (energy-flow) and they can be pleasurable or sometimes scary. All a Sadhak need do when they happen is to not get attached to them or fear them, simply observe them and let them go. A Sadhak’s role during Sadhan should be to allow the awakened Prana Shakti within him to be the “doer”; he should simply play the role of a detached “observer”.

By surrendering to the awakened Prana Shakti within him and allowing Her to be the doer of the Kriyas that happen, and by simply observing the Kriyas and letting them go, the Samskaras underlying the Kriyas get gradually eliminated from the Sadhak’s Chitta, and the Vrittis (tendencies) that were caused by the Samskaras also get eliminated. This is the entire purpose of Maha Yoga Sadhan - the gradual and eventual elimination of the accumulated Samskaras and the Vrittis from the Sadhak’s Chitta, so that he can actually experience the Atma within him that the Samskaras and the Vrittis were covering up and

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

hiding from him during his current and past lives. When all the Samskaras have been eliminated, will the Sadhak experience the presence of the Atma within him and see it as one and the same as the Param Atma (the Universal Soul) that pervades the entire universe. This is the experience of Self-Realization, the Yoga (union) of the Atma with the Param Atma.

So, please do not get scared of the specific Kriyas that are happening to you during Sadhan. Just observe them dispassionately and let them go. If they become too distressing, turn your attention to observing your normal breathing. Gradually, the Samskaras underlying the Kriyas that are happening will get eliminated, so those Kriyas will stop happening, and other Kriyas will begin to happen as the Samskaras underlying them get brought up into your Chitta during Sadhan. Regardless of whether the Kriyas that happen are pleasurable or distressing, do not get attached to them or get scared by them. Think of the Kriya process as just a process of garbage removal, whereby the garbage of accumulated Samskaras gets gradually eliminated so you can actually begin to experience the presence of the Atma within you. That's all there is to Maha Yoga Sadhan. You are very fortunate that Maha Yoga Deeksha has clearly happened in your case. Please be patient and allow the awakened Prana Shakti within you to do what is needed for your spiritual progress. She will surely take you to Self-Enlightenment.

Question: I received Maha Yoga Deeksha a few months ago. Recently, during my daily meditation (Sadhan) I feel some energy or blood rotating in my head. Is this Kundalini energy? I have heard that Kundalini energy reaches the crown Chakra (Sahasrara Chakra) only after many years of Sadhan. Please clarify.

Answer: During Maha Yoga Deeksha the Prana Shakti within a Sadhak becomes inward-directed and begins the process of Nadi Shuddhi (cleansing of the Prana pathways). During Sadhan following Deeksha, the awakened Prana Shakti continues the process of Nadi Shuddhi by bringing up Samskaras from the Sadhak's Chitta and expressing them as Kriyas. Some of these Kriyas are physical, others are mental (thoughts) and still others are Pranic (the flow of Prana). The purpose of all these Kriyas is to help the Sadhak get rid of the accumulated Samskaras in his Chitta, which happens only if the Sadhak observes the Kriyas with an attitude of detachment, and lets them go.

The Kriya you have observed as described in your e-mail is clearly a Pranic Kriya, whereby the awakened Prana Shakti is causing the movement of Prana in your head to clear out some of the blockages that might be present in the Nadis (Prana pathways) in your head. It may very well be in the region of the Sahasrara Chakra or it may be in the region of the Ajna Chakra, this is just the process of Nadi Shuddhi. Incidentally, during Deeksha the Prana Shakti rises all the way to the Sahasrara for most Sadhaks, but settles down in one of the lower Chakras. But very few Sadhaks can even notice that it has happened because their Nadis are not sensitive enough for them to observe it during Deeksha. Only with regular Sadhan, when the Nadis have gotten cleansed, are Sadhaks even able to notice the movement of Prana within them.

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

So, what you are experiencing is the normal process of Nadi Shuddhi. This does not mean that the awakened Prana Shakti has settled in the Ajna Chakra or the Sahasrara. It is just an aspect of the clean-up that is going on within you. While the awakened Prana Shakti does Nadi Shuddhi all over the Sadhak's body, including in the upper Chakras during Sadhan, it takes years of Sadhan for most Sadhaks to have the Awakened Prana Shakti **residing** in one of the higher Chakras. Not just that, but it takes quite some time for most Sadhaks to even experience Prana flows in the upper Chakras. So consider yourself fortunate that you have begun to experience Prana flow in one of the upper Chakras, but that does not mean that the Prana Shakti has taken residence in one of the upper Chakras.

Having said all that I would like to suggest that you please not devote any attention to what Chakra the Prana Shakti is at, etc. Focusing on such things will only add to the Samskaras you have in your Chitta or strengthen ones that are already there, and it will take longer for you to reach Self Enlightenment as a result. You are clearly making progress on the Maha Yoga path. Please use these experiences only to motivate you to sit for Sadhan regularly, and not to get attached to any of the Kriyas that happen. Just observe what happens with a sense of detachment. Attachment to Sadhan is good, but attachment to what happens during Sadhan is to be avoided.

Question: After receiving Maha Yoga Deeksha and realizing the importance of Sadhan, is there a possibility that a Sadhak will quit his job, sever family connections, and just get "addicted" to the "Supreme" and become a Sannyasi (renunciate)?

Answer: Maha Yoga does not at all require a Sadhak to become a Sannyasi. Most Sadhaks and even Deekshadhikaris (those authorized to grant Maha Yoga Deeksha) are householders living their day-to-day lives. But, a Sadhak's attitude as to how he lives his day-to-day life will likely change for the better with Maha Yoga practice. He will not necessarily give up living a normal life, his job or his family, he will be engaged in doing things (Karma) that he needs to do, but he will begin to develop a sense of detachment to the fruits of his actions, i.e. he will develop the attitude of a Karma Yogi. And developing such an attitude will not only lead to his spiritual uplift, but it will likely make his actions (Karma) more effective.

There are rare instances when a Maha Yoga Sadhak might get motivated to become a Sannyasi, but unless the motivation is coming from a genuine sense of detachment from the material world, the Sadhak's spiritual progress is likely to suffer as a result. Taking Sannyas in order to run away from participating in worldly affairs because of frustration or anger or other negative feelings about one's situation in life will not only **not** lead to detachment but will cause more frustration and anger, thus hurting spiritual progress. Any Sadhak who thinks that taking Sannyas might help his spiritual growth should consult with his Guru first and take Sannyas only if the Guru is convinced that it makes sense for the Sadhak to do so. No Siddha Guru will approve of a Sadhak taking Sannyas if he is doing so to avoid dealing with the consequences that result from his Prarabdha (प्रारब्ध फल). So, please don't worry too much about any such eventuality. It can happen only if it is spiritually beneficial for the Sadhak, given his situation.

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Question: I received Maha Yoga Deeksha 10 years ago, but was unable to sit for meditation regularly for the first three years. But for the past 7 years I have been sitting for Maha Yoga meditation for one hour in the morning and for one hour before going to sleep. Is this much meditation enough? During meditation I feel some energy currents in me, which I think are the flow of Prana, but I do not feel the Kundalini rising to the higher Chakras like the Sahasrara, and I have trouble entering into anything like a Samadhi state. I feel like 10 years has been a long time since I received initiation, so perhaps I have some blockage or I am doing something wrong in my Sadhan. Please advise me on how I might experience better progress. Should I apply for Maha Yoga initiation once again?

Answer: Glad to read that you received Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) over 10 years ago and have been sitting for Sadhan quite regularly, at least for the past seven years. So it seems that the “light switch has been turned on”, therefore you don’t need to keep applying for Maha Yoga Deeksha again and again. The issue now seems to be “if the light switch has been turned on, why isn’t the light getting brighter?” Correct? Let me now address this issue that you face.

It is important to keep in mind that unlike other effort-based yoga forms like Hatha, Japa, Laya and Raja, Maha Yoga is an effortless form of Yoga whereby the Sadhak simply surrenders to the awakened Prana Shakti (also referred to as Kundalini Shakti) within him and allows her to “do” what is needed for his spiritual progress. The key here is for the Sadhak to develop an attitude of surrendering to the awakened Prana Shakti within him, seeing Her as the “doer” with the role of the Sadhak being simply that of an observer. An important aspect of this sense of surrender is a sense of acceptance of whatever happens during Sadhan as well as the patience to stay on the path without developing a sense of anxiety that “my progress is not rapid enough”.

The entire purpose of Maha Yoga Sadhan is to eliminate the Samskaras (impressions) accumulated over current and past lives in a Sadhak’s Chitta (mind stuff) and the Vruttis (tendencies) that he has developed as a result, so he can actually experience the presence of the Atma within him as being one with the Param Atma that pervades the universe (see article: “Maha Yoga - the Key to Self-Realization” in the February 2017 issue of Self Awakening archived at <https://tinyurl.com/y7tkmesv>). A Sadhak’s progress on this path is therefore a function of:

- The Samskaras (impressions and tendencies) the Sadhak has accumulated in his Chitta (mind stuff) over his current and past lives
- The successful elimination of the Samskaras as they get expressed as Kriyas during Maha Yoga Sadhan, with the Sadhak simply observing them dispassionately and letting them go
- Reducing or avoiding entirely the accumulation of new Samskaras in the Sadhak’s ongoing life.

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

On the first point, clearly, the collection of Samskaras that a Sadhak has accumulated prior to his receiving Maha Yoga Deeksha is just the initial condition, which he can't do anything about. Some Sadhaks who seek Deeksha have a large trove of accumulated Samskaras while others might come to Maha Yoga with a small accumulation. This is just the hand we are dealt with before we begin our Maha Yoga journey

On the second point, when a Sadhak sits for Maha Yoga Sadhan with a true attitude of surrender, the process of Samskara elimination through Kriyas happens, so he should sit for Sadhan on a regular basis to allow the awakened Prana Shakti to do her job of Samskara elimination by dispassionately observing the Kriyas that happen and letting them go. However, if a Sadhak sits for Sadhan diligently/regularly but with an attitude of impatience and second guessing what the awakened Prana Shakti is doing for him, instead of the Samskaras getting eliminated during Sadhan he will only be adding new Samskaras or strengthening existing ones. So, while it is important for the Sadhak to sit for Sadhan regularly, he needs to do it with a sense of complete surrender, a sense of acceptance of what happens, and the patience to not second-guess the Prana Shakti within him. Otherwise, even with him sitting for Sadhan on a regular basis for many years, his progress will remain limited.

On the third point, even with regular Sadhan, if a Sadhak develops new attachments and aversions during his day-to-day life (when he is not sitting for Sadhan), he will continue to add to the trove of Samskaras he has accumulated, despite having some Samskaras getting eliminated during Sadhan. It is therefore very important for a Sadhak to develop the attitude of a Karma Yogi in his day-to-day life, whereby he understands that he has a right (and a duty) to act, i.e. do Karma, but he does not have a right to the fruits of his actions. He does not need to, and should not, give up his day-to-day activities, but he should try to develop an attitude of detachment towards the fruits of those activities. This attitude will get strengthened automatically with diligent Sadhan, but the Sadhak needs to make an effort initially to develop such an attitude. In a way, this is an extension of the sense of surrender a Sadhak has during Sadhan to the times when he is not sitting for Sadhan but is involved in worldly activities. If a Sadhak sits for Sadhan without an attitude of surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within him it is unlikely that he will be able to develop the attitude of a Karma Yogi when he is not sitting for Sadhan.

So, how quickly a Sadhak progresses on the Maha Yoga path is entirely dependent on the above three points.

Regarding your question of "how much meditation is enough?" please understand that P. P. Kaka Maharaj has suggested a minimum of 1 hour every day. Of course, it is up to the Sadhak to sit for longer stretches or more often than once each day. The key here is that the Sadhak should not see meditation (Sadhan) as a chore, but as something he looks forward to. Just as sleep is essential for all of us whether we are Sadhaks or not, and we are simply drawn to sleep if we haven't had enough sleep, so it should be with Sadhan for a

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Maha Yoga Sadhak. So, sit for Sadhan as long as or as often as you feel compelled to and don't see it as a chore.

Also, when you sit for Sadhan, for it to be effective, sit with an attitude of complete surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you, with acceptance of whatever happens and patience, without being judgmental about whether or not you are making progress. Also, please do not pay any attention to distractions like "what Chakra has the Kundalini Shakti penetrated?" etc. During Maha Yoga Deeksha the Kundalini Shakti goes all the way up to the Sahasrara Chakra, but settles down in one of the lower Chakras depending on the condition of the Sadhak's Nadis (pathways for the flow of Prana). If the Sadhak's Nadis do not have any blockages she can remain in the Sahasrara, but if there are blockages (caused by the prevalence of accumulated Samskaras) she works on getting those blockages removed during Maha Yoga Sadhan, eventually clearing the path to the Sahasrara. Having said all this, P. P. Kaka Maharaj and other stalwarts of the Maha Yoga lineage have asked Sadhaks not to focus on what Chakra the Kundalini/Prana Shakti is residing in at any point in time. Doing so only creates "performance anxiety" in a Sadhak's mind, keeping him from truly surrendering to the awakened Kundalini Shakti within him and allowing her to be the "doer" during Sadhan. Focusing on this will only result in keeping you from experiencing the inner sense of calm that comes during Sadhan when the interval between two thoughts begins to lengthen. These mini Samadhi states eventually extend to longer and more continuous states of Samadhi.

So, my advice to you is:

- Maha Yoga Deeksha has surely happened for you; therefore you do not need to keep asking for Deeksha repeatedly.
- Sit for Sadhan regularly for as long as or as often as you want, but do so with an attitude of true surrender.
- When you sit for Sadhan do not have any expectations or desires or fears of having specific Kriyas. Just sit with an attitude of surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you, acceptance of whatever happens, and patience. Do not be judgmental about your progress, or worry about what Chakra the awakened Prana /Kundalini Shakti is residing in. Allow Her to be the doer, you simply play the role of a dispassionate observer. The true test of progress is whether or not you are experiencing a sense of calm during Sadhan as well as in your day-to-day life. With such a change in attitude you will find Sadhan to not be a chore but something you look forward to.

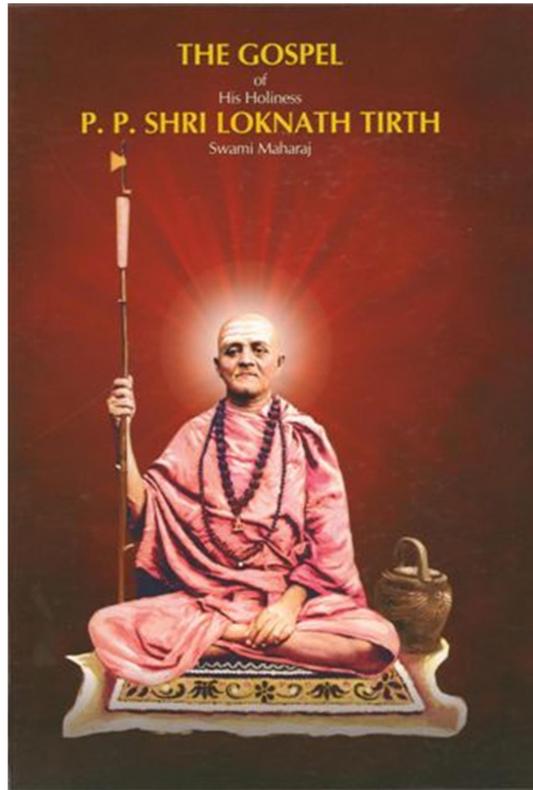
In your day-to-day life, try to develop the attitude of a Karma Yogi. Just as you surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within yourself during Sadhan, see if you can extend that attitude to the times when you are not sitting for Sadhan. When you are doing something see if you can do it without giving a thought to what you will get out of that action. Do the action just for the sake of doing it. Gradually you will find this happening without any effort

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

on your part. But until it happens, you might need to make an effort to develop such a detached attitude.

Editor's note: Please send your questions regarding Maha Yoga and Shaktipat to: self.awakening@gmail.com.

P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj's biography- English translation



The English language translation of P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj's biography is available in hardcover edition. P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj was the Shaktipat Deeksha Guru of P. P. Narayan Kaka Dhekane Maharaj as well as P. P. Gulvani Maharaj. The original biography was written in the Marathi language by Shri A. S. Potbhare and it was translated into English by Dr. R. V. Urankar.

Copies of the book are available in India for Rs. 299 plus postage at:
P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Mahayoga Trust
P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Chowk,
Shrirang Nagar, Gangapur Road
Nashik, Maharashtra, India 422013

Phone: +91-253-2311616

A couple of copies of the book are available for Sadhaks in North America. Those interested can send an e-mail including their postal address, to self.awakening@gmail.com. The cost, including shipping, will be \$11 for shipment within the US, but about \$24 for shipment to other countries.

Upcoming Events:

Deeksha Days (Initiation Days) on February 9th and March 6th, 2018

Those desirous of receiving Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) should go to the website: www.mahayoga.org for instructions. The online application form is also available at the website. Dates for Deeksha Days are posted on the Maha Yoga program calendar at <http://mahayoga.org/progcal.aspx>.

Maha Yoga Sadhan Shibirs (workshops) at Nashik Ashram

The Nashik Ashram holds Maha Yoga Sadhan Shibirs on the first Sunday of each month from 8 am to 2 pm. Sadhaks sit for Samuhik (Communal) Sadhan, which is followed by a discourse on Yoga. Maha Prasad (lunch) is also served. About 250 Sadhaks typically attend this monthly event. These and other events at the Nashik Ashram and at other locations are posted at <http://www.mahayoga.org/progcal.aspx>.

The Nashik Ashram is located at:

P.P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Mahayoga Trust

P.P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Chowk, Shrirang Nagar, Gangapur Road,
Nashik 422013, Maharashtra, India.

Tel. no.: +91 - 253 - 2311616

Lecture Series at the Maha Yoga Ashram in Thane, Maharashtra, India

The Thane Ashram hosts a series of lectures/talks on Maha Yoga and Yoga on the first Sunday of every month.

The Thane Ashram is located at:

A/9 Sector # 7, Behind Omega Apartments

Vasant Bungalow, Shree Nagar, Wagle Estate, Thane 400604, India

Please contact P. P. Dr. Deshpande Maharaj in Thane, India at 22-2581-2811 for additional information. The Thane Ashram also hosts Samuhik Sadhan (communal Sadhan) every Sunday from 8:30 am to 9:30 am. The lecture will follow the Samuhik Sadhan (communal Sadhan) on the first Sunday of every month.

Website Updates:

We have an active discussion group at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kundalinishaktipatayoga/>

Please feel free to post messages there about Maha Yoga, the website, or this e-newsletter. You will need to join the group to read or post messages.

We also have a Facebook page, Mahayoga World at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/mahayogaworld>.

We also have a Twitter feed at https://twitter.com/Mahayoga_Org. Please check it out for photographs of the recent events held at various Maha Yoga Ashrams.



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The goals of our e-newsletter are:

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2. Provide virtual Satsang to Sadhaks
3. Share relevant life experiences which might help the Sadhak community
4. Seek and provide guidance on Siddha/Maha Yoga
5. Share news about Siddha/Maha Yoga events around the world

If you want to contribute content (articles, news reports, questions, life experiences) or comments related to any of the above objectives please send them to:

self.awakening@gmail.com

We're on the Web!
<http://www.mahayoga.org/>

May all desire to follow this nectarous Siddhayoga Path!