

Self Awakening

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



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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.

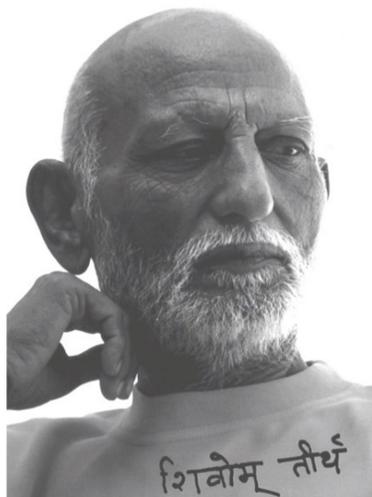
P. P. Shri Narayan Kaka Maharaj of Nashik, India was a leading teacher and exponent of Maha Yoga, a centuries old tradition, whereby a realized Guru (Siddha Guru) awakens the Universal Life Energy (Kundalini) within the Sadhak, eventually leading him/her to self-realization. This ancient tradition (Parampara) 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 following excerpts cover the issue of succession. Although P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj eventually succeeded P. P. Vishnu Tirth Maharaj in his lineage, these excerpts provide great insight into how Gurus and their successors approach this important issue. Stay tuned for more excerpts on this topic.

The Subject of Succession

One day, during the morning walk, Maharajshri said, "Now I am seventy-five years old and my health is likely to deteriorate slowly. I would like to spend the remaining time in quiet, retired from all activities. Therefore I suggest that you accept the succession of this lineage and take care of ashram responsibilities."

I was not ready for such a thing. The idea was placed before me so suddenly. After being silent for a little while I said, "Maharajshri, I am a person who likes solitude. It is your Shakti that makes me do all this work for the ashram; without that my skill in worldly affairs is nothing. Before coming to Dewas I lived in solitude. Besides, I have hardly been able to become a disciple. How can I be a Guru? This is why I have not yet been able to follow your instruction to give initiation. Thirdly, I am younger than everyone. Many other worthy people were here before me. From among them, whomever in your opinion is deserving, please, announce him as your successor."

After listening to me that day Maharajshri did not say anything more. But two or three days later he opened the subject, asking, "So what have you been thinking about the subject of being my successor?"

I pleaded, "I presented my thoughts to you the other day." Maharajshri became silent again.

Now I began to think of ways to avoid the problem of succession. If he was still considering the idea he would ask the question again in a few days. After thinking for some time I proposed the name of a certain Bramhachariji and presented a strong case in his favor. Maharajshri relented.

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

A letter was sent to that Bramhachariji inviting him to come. When a proposal of succession was placed before him he accepted it after some hesitation. I breathed a deep sigh of relief. I could not even imagine such a thing for me. There was no comparison between Maharajshri and me.

Where was his perfect personality, scholarship, high level of sadhana and worldly wisdom, and where was I?

In the evening, after a few visitors had come to the ashram, Maharajshri announced Bramhachariji as his successor. "I have appointed this person as my successor and he has accepted happily. I will depart for Rishikesh in a few days. In my absence the ashram will be the responsibility of Bramhachariji. I hope that you will all give him full support and cooperation."

I began to explain the functioning of the ashram to the Bramhachariji the same day. In my absence Maharajshri also explained a few things to him. I suggested to Maharajshri that, since a successor had been appointed, we send out a written announcement. He responded by saying, "What is the hurry?"

We went to Rishikesh with a few residents of Dewas, and Bramhachariji started to take care of the ashram. He gave discourses and watched over the administration of the ashram. But suddenly, something happened and he became uncomfortable. Perhaps someone said something unpleasant. Perhaps there was an argument with someone or someone threatened him. He was disturbed. Residents of the ashram tried to pacify him, but he did not listen and left. When we received the information by letter, Maharajshri said, "See? You asked me to send out a written announcement. But I knew that he would not last."

The Subject of Succession Resurfaces

Maharajshri had an inner desire that he give up his mortal body on the banks of the Ganges. He would express this desire occasionally. The thought would come to him because the Ganges River was not near Dewas. This shortcoming of the ashram would come to his notice from time to time, and he would be tormented by memories of the Ganges. This topic came up while traveling to Rishikesh, too. We checked a few places in Rishikesh and Haridwar. An agreement to purchase a building in Rishikesh was almost finalized, but it did not go through for some reason. Maharajshri used to say that he did not want an ashram in Rishikesh, only a room where he could take his last breath.

The discussion of this matter started up again after returning to Dewas. His devotees and disciples also took this discussion seriously, thinking that since he was mentioning it frequently that day must not be too distant. Maharajshri's health was perfect and nothing of this sort was apparent, yet Maharajshri's comments raised doubts. People began to accumulate funds to purchase a place on the banks of the Ganges. For me, there was another reason for entertaining doubt. He talked often about succession. This issue came up on our return to Dewas. Maharajshri raised the question again during the morning walk.

“Bramhachariji has gone away. Now what is your thought? Someone or the other must carry out this responsibility.”

I pleaded, “My shoulders are not strong enough to carry this weight. In a way my journey has barely begun. So much garbage is still accumulated in my mind. How can I sit on the chair of the Guru and give discourses? This seems very awkward for me. Besides, my mental state is not worthy of running an ashram. I still remember the mountain ranges and rivers of Himachal Pradesh. The gushing sound of the Sutlej River still echoes in my ears. How will I be able to run an ashram?”

Maharajshri replied, “An aspirant has to perform certain tasks that he does not wish to, either due to sentiments or a sense of duty. This is the life of an aspirant. Regard this as one such task. Is it not enough that I am asking this of you? Do you think there is a difference between a Guru's wish and a command? Don't you owe anything to the lineage through which you have had spiritual benefit? Think all this over with a calm mind.”

Maharajshri said all this, and I was in a dilemma. On the one hand there was Maharajshri's wish, along with my duty toward the lineage, and on the other hand my mind was just not ready to accept this responsibility. Why should a free, flying bird prepare for imprisonment in a cage? Besides, I did not think I was worthy of this. In the last four or five years I had gained some experience of the ashram. How enormous was this entanglement! It seemed so much bigger than the life of a householder; I thought that after accepting responsibility for the ashram I might have to live a double life. One would be internal, my real self, filled with weaknesses and impurities. The second would be external, a mere pretense, a facade, misleading people, and that would be deceitful. Thinking about the different personas – the internal and the external – I shivered and involuntarily uttered, ‘No. No.’

I made a mental resolve, but how could I explain that to Maharajshri. Suddenly I thought of a gentleman who had taken initiation about twenty years prior to me. He had just retired and wanted to live a spiritual life. My heart began to shine with a ray of hope as soon as I remembered him. The next day I proposed his name to Maharajshri. Maharajshri heard me quietly and said, “This means that you are not ready then?”

I pleaded, “If you can forgive me it will be a great favor.” Maharajshri thought for a moment and said, “Whatever you wish!”

I shared my thoughts with a few other people. I also met with the gentleman and informed him of what Maharajshri was thinking. After receiving his acceptance I told Maharajshri. Now I was very happy that the large problem was solved. The ashram is a cause of likes and dislikes and conflicts. This problem is even greater when the ashram is inherited through a lineage. One may receive a ready-made ashram with a group of disciples and other facilities, but many complexities are attached to it.

I put aside my worries and busied myself in the service of Guru Maharaj and ashram work. A certain Bramhachariji came to live in the ashram on a permanent basis. He took many responsibilities from my shoulders so I had an opportunity to attend many discourses. I also had more time to serve Maharajshri personally.

Maharajshri began one discourse by saying, “Spirituality and the world can never meet. They are like the East and West; like two banks of a river that can never meet. The mind will have

only one sentiment, either spiritual or worldly. Either there will be the desire for pleasures, or the desire for liberation."

Question: "This is difficult for me to comprehend because spirituality develops while living in this world. Has God made a different world for sadhan, bhajan, japa, study of scriptures, and so forth? Devotees live in the world, yet they consider it untouchable."

Answer: "The issue is not about living in this world. As long as the body is alive it will live in this world. The discussion is about whether one keeps the mind in the world, or keeps the world in the mind. The body does not accumulate samskaras, the chitta does. It does not matter where the body lives. Wherever the mind lives, it will accumulate impressions of that place. When I said that spirituality and the world couldn't coexist, I was talking not with reference to the body, but to the mind. I have said this to you many times, but it seems that the idea is not clear in your mind. If you are sitting in a temple or in the company of holy men, and if your mind is somewhere else, then your body is in the temple but you are not in the temple. And if you are at a place that is not appropriate from a spiritual standpoint, but your mind is floating in pure sentiments, then you are not in that place even though you are physically there. The act may appear impure, but it is pure.

"Only one from each pair – pure-impure, dharma-adharma, worldly-spiritual, tempting-beneficial – can exist in the mind at any given moment. Either the world will exist, or spirituality will exist. If you try to keep both then both will disappear. The person who remains in a dilemma attains neither the world, nor spirituality. Either there will be supremacy of angels or of devils in the mind. Either the mind will be oriented towards spiritual welfare, or towards worldly happiness. The path that goes to the world will take you to the world, and the path that goes to spirituality will take you to spirituality. There is no single path to attain both. Therefore saints say that friendship between a yogi and a bhogi [person engrossed in pleasures] is not possible. How can Lord Rama manifest in the mind in which worldly desires dominate? How can worldly desires flourish in the mind in which Lord Rama shines? If desires flourish then Lord Rama has not yet illumined."

Question: "Yes, but you advise us to do pure karma [action]. Karma can be performed with the senses. How does the mind enter the picture?"

Answer: "Yes, advice is given to do pure and pious karma. Once you understand the definition of pure karma your misunderstanding will be removed. The impurity of your mind speaks through this question, not you. The desireless state cannot be attained instantaneously. It develops in stages. When the mind remains indifferent towards worldly pleasures, and they start to give unhappiness, the appetite for spirituality flares up. Then the person has taken his first step on the spiritual path, although his samskaras and vasanas still persist. This is the start of moving away from the world. This condition gives a person the right to walk on the spiritual path and be initiated.

"When the chitta [psyche] attains this state, renunciation starts. Although this state is far from total renunciation, still first steps are taken in the direction of renunciation. In this state an aspirant needs the help of a real Guru. This is the first stop on a spiritual journey. From here Garuda takes off on the flight to see Lord Vishnu. This is the foundation stone of the mansion of spirituality. This is where distaste for the world begins.

“The subject of shreya [spiritual welfare] and preya [worldly pleasures or comforts] is very subtle. Even an intelligent person, at times, is misled in this decision. The shackles of the mind are such that it is hard to describe even through simile. Many times the mind presents undeserving activities with such convincing explanations that the individual soul is deceived. The intelligent person is one who can correctly decipher shreya from preya. Hence, at this time, a Guru is needed. When a Guru sees such a condition in a disciple, he knows that it is his duty to help.

“The path of preya is the path leading to the world. And the path to shreya is the path to spirituality. When directions are opposite they are unlikely to meet. One goes down and the other goes up. One goes after the world and the other turns away from the world. One is light and the other is darkness. One is extrovert and the other is introvert. One is always hanging on hope and the other is self-fulfilled. A person must choose one of the two paths. The one who runs after the world and talks about spirituality deceives the world and himself. A wise person always takes the path of shreya [spiritual welfare]. Ancient Indian sages were never interested in the physical sciences. It was totally clear to them that it would not bring peace and happiness to the world. It cannot solve problems of the world, either. On the contrary, with the progress of the physical sciences the world has become more restless. There is more animosity, distrust and suspicion. Along with comforts and luxuries, instruments of mass destruction are developing at a fast pace. Excessive use of natural resources has caused an imbalance of natural forces. Man has become the prisoner of scientific comforts. Physical sciences are oriented toward preya [worldly comforts].”

Question: “Isn't physical science related to the growth in population? With the growth in population, human needs also grow. One must make use of science. This opens up the path for progress.”

Answer: “Population growth is also indicative of preya. The life of people inclined toward shreya is moderate and self-controlled. They do not create this problem. First, an aptitude toward preya was developed, and then began the progression of modern science. Consequently craving for pleasures grew and the desire to live in comfort and luxury heightened. Many diseases, worries and problems grew along with them. Man was not so restless, unhappy and unsafe in the absence of all this progress, as he is today.

“This is about the materialistic attitude of people. Religious practices done with the purpose of fulfilling worldly desires are no less a hindrance to spiritual progress. For solving problems of life people run after deities. Not only that, they desire heavenly pleasures. They do not experience a reduction of attachment. In fact, it grows further. They desire pleasures of the world that do not even exist in the world. What a flight of imagination!

“The person who desires heavenly pleasures is in the clutches of attachment and has not taken a single step toward detachment or spirituality. The bondage remains the same as before, even if you attain heaven. Even then anger, greed and pride are the same. The sense of individuality remains the same. The chitta is still engulfed in Maya as before. As good deeds are exhausted they will be pushed out of heaven as if they never belonged there. The desire for heaven is like a king begging in front of his palace. A king becoming a beggar. What a paradox! What a downfall of mankind!

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

“Only that person deserves spirituality who has no desires of the world, is detached and hungry for spirituality. The Guru who will initiate the disciple must decide whether the person is ready for initiation into bhakti or not, otherwise the disciple is likely to become entangled in desires and hopes. There is a greater need for caution in giving Shaktipat initiation than in giving initiation into other, effort-based spiritual practices.”

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 was initiated into Maha Yoga in 2014. After the initiation I meditated regularly for quite some time, but for whatever reason I stopped doing so a few years ago. I would like to restart my meditation practice again. In order to do so, do I need to get initiated again - a renewal of Maha Yoga Deeksha? Also, please let me know how I can deepen my Maha Yoga Sadhan. And where can I get material on learning about and better implementing the practice of Maha Yoga.

Answer: Glad to read that you received Maha Yoga Deeksha in 2014, but sorry to read that you stopped sitting for Sadhan (meditation) some time ago. If you now want to sit for Sadhan, please do so by all means. Once a Sadhak has received Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha (initiation), i.e. his Prana Shakti has become awakened and inward directed, it will always remain awakened. So, there is no need for you to receive Maha Yoga Deeksha again - because your Prana Shakti is already awakened. The question of getting it awakened again therefore does not make sense. Also, once Maha Yoga Deeksha has happened for a Sadhak, the awakened Prana Shakti, also called the Mother Energy, grabs the Sadhak by his hand, and if the Sadhak will allow her to guide him (by sitting for Sadhan on a regular basis) she will guide him on his spiritual journey. The Sadhak does not need to grab the Mother's hand; the Mother herself grabs the Sadhak's hand and does not let it go. So, even though you have not been sitting for Maha Yoga Sadhan for quite some time, please sit for Sadhan from now on, on a daily basis and allow the Mother Prana Shakti to do what is needed for your spiritual growth.

When you sit for Maha Yoga Sadhan, please do so with an attitude of surrendering to the awakened Prana Shakti within you. Please do not "do" anything with intent during Sadhan. As a Sadhak, your role during Sadhan should only be that of an "observer" (Sakshi) while allowing the awakened Prana Shakti within you be the "doer". Also, please do not have any expectations about what should or shouldn't happen during Sadhan. If physical Kriyas (involuntary activities) happen, allow them to happen without getting attached to them or being afraid of them. Simply observe the Kriyas as they happen in a detached manner. Same goes for Pranic Kriyas and mental Kriyas. Just observe what happens without having any specific expectations, attachments or fear of Kriyas. If random thoughts arise (mental Kriyas), simply observe the thoughts as they arise. And if you find it difficult to observe your thoughts, simply redirect your attention to your normal and automatic breathing process, which is a Kriya that we all experience as long as we are alive.

The physical, mental or Pranic Kriyas that happen during Sadhan are expressions of the Samskaras (impressions from current and past lives) that get brought up in a Sadhak's Chitta (mind stuff) during Maha Yoga Sadhan. By simply observing the Kriyas and letting them go, the Samskaras underlying the Kriyas gradually get eliminated from the Sadhak's Chitta. The purpose of Maha Yoga is to have the awakened Prana Shakti gradually eliminate all Samskaras from a Sadhak's Chitta, so he can actually experience the Atma within him being one and the same as the ParamAtma that pervades the entire universe. The Kriyas that happen during Sadhan are simply the result of the Kachra (garbage) of Sanchit (accumulated) Samskaras being eliminated from the Sadhak's Chitta. So, there is no reason for a Sadhak to

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

get attached to them. In fact, once a specific Samskara gets eliminated from a Sadhak's Chitta, the Kriya that was associated with that Samskara will stop happening. As a Sadhak progresses on this path, and as the accumulated Samskaras gradually get eliminated, the Kriyas will become more subtle, and the Sadhan will become more and more peaceful.

Given the above, the answer to your second question (about how you can deepen your Maha Yoga Sadhan) is that there is nothing you can/should do other than to sit for Sadhan with an attitude of complete surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you, without having any expectations about what should or should not happen, and allow the Prana Shakti be the "doer" with you playing the role of an observer (Sakshi). That is all there is to it. There is nothing for you to "implement". Just sit, surrender, and observe what happens!

Since you seem to be interested in learning more about Maha Yoga, we would suggest the following reading list:

- The four Discussions with P. P. Kaka Maharaj that can be found in the Article Library at our Maha Yoga webpage (<http://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-library.aspx>).
- *A Short Description of Maha Yoga* (<http://mahayoga.org/library/Short%20description%20of%20Maha%20Yoga.pdf>),
- *Maha Yoga - the Key to Self-Realization* (<http://mahayoga.org/library/Maha%20Yoga%20the%20Key%20to%20Self-Realization.pdf>)
- *The Importance of Acceptance and Patience* (<http://mahayoga.org/library/The%20Importance%20of%20Acceptance%20and%20Patience.pdf>)

There is also a lot of other material available at our website www.mahayoga.org.

Question: I have been following your advice since I wrote to you some time ago about my dissatisfaction with my progress on the Maha Yoga path, and I am quite happy with the results. I have recently been wondering if Self Hypnosis might be useful on our path.

Answer: Glad to read that you have been following the advice we gave you earlier and have been very happy following it.

Now, about your question on Self Hypnosis, I am not aware if it has any benefits regarding meditation or Maha Yoga Sadhan. Please continue to sit for Sadhan on a regular basis and don't distract yourself with self-hypnosis, etc. Please follow what I had suggested to you in this paragraph in the e-mail I sent you some time ago:

I would suggest that you continue to sit for Sadhan as you have been on a regular basis, without having any expectations of what should or should not happen, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you, just play the role of an observer and allow the

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

awakened Prana Shakti to be the doer. Having expectations of, attachments to, or fear of Kriyas only results in new Samskaras being created, thereby reducing the pace of progress. If you are not experiencing physical Kriyas any longer, take it as a sign of progress. If you feel like you are getting distracted by random thoughts arising during Sadhan, put yourself in the role of an observer (Sakshi) and observe those thought. The arising of thoughts is itself a Kriya process, and by observing them the Samskaras underlying the "random" thoughts will get eliminated and you will begin to experience the calmness of Sadhan. If you are unable to observe the thoughts as they arise, simply observe your normal and automatic breathing. This will help you develop the attitude of an observer rather than the doer and gradually, you will begin to observe the thoughts as they arise, which will help in their elimination and result in calming your mind, which is an important objective of Sadhan.

Hope this addresses your question.

Question: Is it okay for a Maha Yoga Sadhak do Kirtan (chanting) together with Krishna Consciousness members or some similar activity?

My concern is about Shakti Sankraman (dissipation). I know that collective meditation with non-initiates is not recommended. Does the same apply in this case? Or if I do Kirtan with others, should I try to control Shakti outflow with conscious intention? I find doing Kirtan with others fulfilling my need for some spiritual\emotional communion.

Answer: It is fine for you to participate in Kirtan, chanting, and similar intent-driven activities with non-initiates when you are not sitting for Maha Yoga Sadhan. The chance that Shakti Sankraman might take place during such events is usually very small unless one is an advanced Sadhak. But if you sense that you are losing control of yourself while participating in the chanting/Kirtan you can always stop participating and get a hold of yourself and the Shakti will stop flowing.

Question: I received Maha Yoga Deeksha last Tuesday. So today is the third day of my Maha Yoga practice. I am really not able to focus on my breath. Continuous and consuming thoughts keep running in my mind and I get lost in those thoughts. Even if I get back to focusing on my breath I can do so only for two or three breaths. And my knees, legs and back begin to hurt. It seems like all I did for the last three days is just trying to sit. I simply sat for an hour each day, thinking about random things. There was no deep involvement. So, please give me some motivation. How can I improve my experience with Sadhan? How can I calm my mind?

Answer: Glad to read that you received Maha Yoga Deeksha very recently.

It is important for Sadhaks to sit for Maha Yoga Sadhan on a daily basis for an hour. Let me first address the physical discomfort you feel when you sit for Sadhan. It is best for Sadhaks

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

to sit on the floor on an Asana as described in the initiation letter you received because it gives them the freedom of experiencing physical Kriyas without the risk of hurting themselves physically in case they experience vigorous physical Kriyas. If you cannot sit cross-legged on the floor because of age-related issues, please sit on a couch/sofa/comfortable chair making sure that it does not significantly impair your bodily movements or result in you getting physically hurt in case you experience vigorous physical Kriyas. However, if the discomfort is not on account of age related issues like arthritis, etc., please continue so sit on the floor as prescribed; you will gradually become used to sitting in that manner without discomfort or pain. Having said that, since you have not experienced vigorous physical Kriyas up to this point, you might be able to sit on a chair/couch/sofa without too much risk of hurting yourself. If, at a later date you begin to experience physical Kriyas, please make sure you have enough room to allow them to happen without hurting yourself.

When you sit for Maha Yoga Sadhan, first take a few deep breaths, relax your body and surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you and put yourself in the role of an observer (Sakshi), not the “doer”. If involuntary physical movements happen without any intent on your part, allow them to happen; simply observe them in a detached manner. These movements are called physical Kriyas. If you feel the movement of Prana happening in your body, just observe that it is happening, without fearing it or getting attached to it. Such movements of Prana are called Pranic Kriyas. If thoughts arise at random, thoughts that lead to emotions - happy, sad, angry, etc., just observe the thoughts as they arise and let them go. These are mental Kriyas. If you cannot observe the thoughts as they arise, redirect your attention to your breathing process and observe your normal and involuntary breathing process.

Our breathing process is a Kriya that happens to all of us as long as we are alive. Some new Sadhaks find it very difficult to observe their breathing process beyond a few breaths, just as you have mentioned in your e-mail. Some random thought will arise and you will get distracted by that thought and quit observing your normal breathing. That is perfectly fine. But when you come to realize that you have been chasing your thoughts and not observing your normal breathing process, just redirect your attention to your breathing and the chain of thoughts will stop automatically. Again, after observing a few breaths, you might find yourself engaged in another chain of thoughts. When you realize that your attention has shifted away from your breathing process to the chain of thoughts, once again redirect it to your breathing process. Gradually, as you continue to redirect your attention to your normal breathing every time it gets distracted by random chains of thought, you will notice that your attention will stay on your breathing for more and more breaths. It is just a matter of conditioning yourself to redirect your attention to your normal breathing every time you get distracted by random chain of thoughts. So, just continue to sit for Sadhan regularly, and with time, and patience on your part, you will be able to be in the Sakshi role for much more than two or three breaths. This will also help calm your mind. You do not have to do anything with intent for it to happen. It will happen gradually. Just sit for

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Sadhan with an attitude of surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you and allow her to do what is needed.

Eventually, you will be able to observe the thoughts themselves as they arise without having to shift your attention to your normal breathing. When that happens, you will be able to disassociate from the thought when it arises and to let it go without even having to shift your attention to your normal breathing. The gap between that thought going away and the next thought arising is the experience of Enlightenment that we all seek. It too will happen eventually; we just have to be patient.

Question: I have a question that does not have any bearing on my spiritual progress, but I am curious as to why our tradition of Maha Yoga does not charge any amount of money to Sadhaks for Maha Yoga Deeksha, while other traditions do?

Answer: I have no basis to comment on why some Deeksha Gurus ask devotees to pay a fee for receiving the grace of Deeksha. I am simply speculating here, but some might do so to seek some commitment from Sadhaks to show that they are truly interested in receiving Deeksha; others might be doing so to help them have the resources to spread the word of Maha Yoga so other Sadhaks might benefit from it as well; while still others might be doing so for purely material reasons.

In our Maha Yoga Parampara (lineage) our Maha Yoga Prasar (spreading the word) is based on the notion that we want everyone on this earth become aware that the gift of Maha Yoga Deeksha is available to all those who are interested in receiving it and are willing to make the commitment needed (daily Maha Yoga Sadhan and following the prescribed restrictions to the extent they can) to help them eventually experience Self Enlightenment. We want everyone on this earth be able to receive Maha Yoga Deeksha regardless of their financial or material status, religion, gender, caste, creed, etc. We do not want anyone to be deprived of this access to Deeksha on account of their financial/material condition. Therefore we do not charge a Sadhak anything for receiving Maha Yoga Deeksha.

P. P. Kaka Maharaj used to say that Maha Yoga is like a box of sweets that we have been extremely lucky to have come upon. We can be selfish and keep the entire box for ourselves, or charge others for a sweet, or share the sweets with everyone on this earth. The box, incidentally, has an infinite number of sweets in it, so there is no need for us to be selfish. And since the supply of the “sweet” of Maha Yoga Deeksha is infinite, the cost of sharing that sweet with others is zero. The only cost we bear is to have the resources to let everyone on this earth **know** that such an excellent sweet is available at no cost to all those who are truly interested. So, we ask those who have received the sweet of Maha Yoga Deeksha to volunteer to help spread the word to others (Prasar) if they are interested, and/or donate, if they can afford, to help others to spread the word. This way, those who have the resources can contribute what they can afford, and those who do not have such resources can still have access to the sweet of Maha Yoga Deeksha without having to contribute a dime. That is all there is to it. We are not interested in Maha Yoga Prasar to

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

just enhance our numbers metrics or to improve the material conditions of our Gurus or our Parampara. We simply want to share our spiritual good fortune with everyone on earth so they too can benefit from it spiritually, regardless of their financial/material capabilities.

Question: I received Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) this morning. The experience was truly amazing. I was wondering if there are advanced practices of Maha Yoga or whether I should continue to follow the instructions for the Introductory Practice, which I had been following until today.

Answer: Glad to read that Maha Yoga Deeksha happened for you on Deeksha Day. Welcome to the Maha Yoga Dikshit/Sadhak community.

There is no “advanced practice” of Maha Yoga other than to sit for Maha Yoga Sadhan every day for at least an hour. Just sit like you did for the Introductory Practice, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you, and observe what happens.

The difference between the Introductory Practice and Maha Yoga Sadhan after Deeksha is the fact that the Prana Shakti within you has now been awakened by the grace of the Guru and his Parampara during the Deeksha process. Just let the awakened Prana Shakti within you do what is needed for your spiritual progress. Let Her be the “doer” during Sadhan, with you only playing the role of an observer (Sakshi). If Kriyas happen simply observe them with a sense of detachment and without fear. If the Kriyas are too subtle to observe, simply observe your normal breathing process - the Kriya that happens to all of us as long as we are alive.

Question: I was scheduled to receive Maha Yoga Deeksha on Deeksha Day and I sat for Deeksha as suggested in the Deeksha letter. However, I did not have any distinctive experience and I am feeling very disheartened. Please guide me as to what drawbacks I might have and what I should do about them.

Answer: Glad to read that you received Maha Yoga Deeksha on Deeksha Day. But I am sorry to read that you have become disheartened because of your perceived lack of any experiences during Deeksha. And I am also concerned that you are seeing this perceived lack of experiences during Deeksha as something negative about yourself. Please understand that this is absolutely not the case.

First, of the billions of people in this world, only a very small percentage are interested in spirituality, and of those, a very small percentage are fortunate to have even heard of Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha, leave aside even considering applying for it. So, the fact that you applied for and were granted Maha Yoga Deeksha makes you one of a very, very small percentage of people who are actively seeking spiritual progress. You are indeed very

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

fortunate to have been granted this incredible gift of Maha Yoga Deeksha in your current life.

The purpose of Maha Yoga Deeksha is to awaken the Prana Shakti (Universal Life Energy) within a Sadhak, and by sitting for Sadhan every day after Deeksha has happened the Sadhak allows the awakened Prana Shakti within him to begin the process of elimination of Samskaras and Vrittis (impressions and behavioral tendencies) he has accumulated over his current and prior lives. When all the accumulated Samskaras and Vrittis have been eliminated by diligently sitting for Sadhan after Deeksha, does the Sadhak attain Self Enlightenment. The purpose of Maha Yoga is चित्त वृत्ति निरोधः.

Second, we all come to our current lives with Samskaras and Vrittis that we have accumulated over innumerable prior lives and then, in our current lives, we add new Samskaras and Vrittis and strengthen the ones we already had. Thus, when Deeksha happens, we have the baggage of Samskaras and Vrittis that are unique to each of us depending on our current and past lives which have, by definition, been different for each of us. Thus the impact of Maha Yoga Deeksha can be very different for each and every one of us.

For those of us who have accumulated a vast trove of predominantly Rajasik Vrittis and Samskaras, the Deeksha experience can be physically vigorous with the Sadhak experiencing vigorous physical Kriyas (involuntary activities) like Yogasanas, Bandhas, Mudras, bodily movements, Pranik movements, etc. Sadhaks who have a preponderance of Tamasik Vrittis and Samskaras are likely to experience Kriyas that express Tamasik tendencies like feelings of laziness, sleep, intense anger, jealousy, etc. Some of these experiences can be quite fear-inspiring. Sadhaks who come to Deeksha with a preponderance of Sattvik tendencies are likely to experience Sattvik Bhavas as those Samskaras get expressed, with feelings of calm, serenity, detachment, etc.

Not only are these experiences very different for each Sadhak but the intensity of these experiences can also be quite varied. Some Sadhaks, who have a trove of Samskaras that are just ripe enough to get expressed as Kriyas will experience vigorous physical, Pranik or emotion-laden Kriyas, while others who may not have the intensity of ripe Samskaras will only experience subtle Kriyas that a beginner Sadhak may not even be able to notice. In fact, with regular Maha Yoga Sadhan after Deeksha, as the Samskaras get eliminated from a Sadhak's Chitta (mind-stuff), the Kriyas become more and more subtle. Advanced Maha Yoga Sadhaks will rarely experience vigorous physical, Pranik or emotional Kriyas. They generally experience the subtle and calming Kriyas related to Sattvik Samskaras that are getting eliminated from their Chitta.

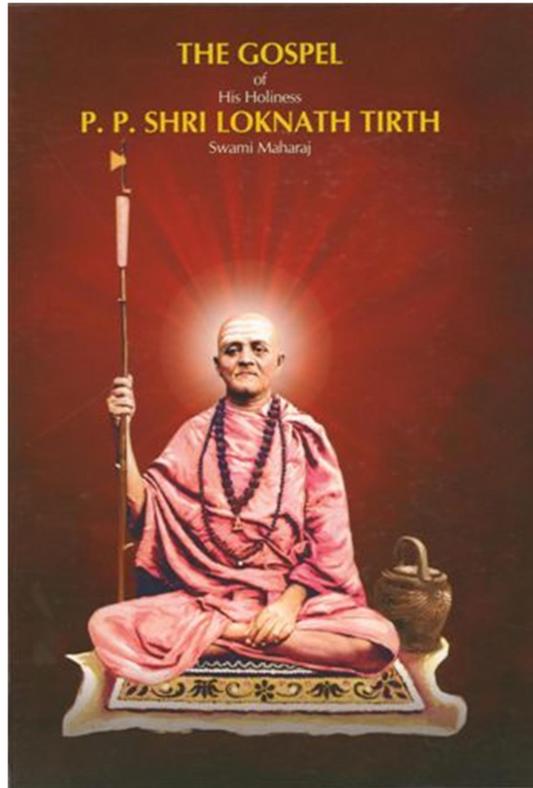
So, please do not make any judgment about whether or not you are worthy of Deeksha or have doubts about whether Deeksha happened for you. Please be assured that Deeksha happened for you and sit for Maha Yoga Sadhan every day on a regular basis. If you do not experience any specific Kriyas, simply observe the Kriya of your normal breathing process,

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

the Kriya that we all experience as long as the Prana Shakti is active within us. This will help you begin to play the role of a Sakshi (observer) while allowing the awakened Prana Shakti within you be the “doer”, i.e. the doer of your breathing process. Gradually, you will begin to notice the subtle Kriyas of the movement of Prana or even subtle physical movements. If vigorous Kriyas are necessary to have some of the Samskaras in your Chitta to get expressed and eliminated, be sure that they will indeed happen. If such Kriyas are unnecessary for your spiritual progress, they will not happen. Also, please keep in mind that the Kriyas are not an end in themselves; they are just the process whereby the Kachra (garbage) of Samskaras gets eliminated from one’s Chitta. If your Chitta does not have such Kachra in it, those types of Kriyas will be unnecessary and will therefore not happen. Wanting Kriyas to happen or getting attached to Kriyas that happen is like getting attached to the process of garbage (Samskaras) elimination. Sadhaks should look beyond the experiences of Kriyas to the serenity and calm that comes from Maha Yoga Sadhan as the Sadhak progresses on his/her spiritual journey.

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

Upcoming Events:

Deeksha Day (Initiation Day) on March 11th, 2020

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. Future 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 a Facebook page, Mahayoga World at:

<https://www.facebook.com/SiddhayogaMahayogaGlobal/>.

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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How to contribute content to the e-newsletter

The goals of our e-newsletter are:

1. Spread the word about Siddha/Maha Yoga.
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!