

Self Awakening

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



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 is 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.

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 P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj and other Maha Yoga leaders.

The success of this e-newsletter will depend upon Sadhak participation and through their contribution of content. Sadhaks are therefore encouraged to contribute news about Maha Yoga-related events in their parts of the world, thoughtful articles and life experiences (not experiences during Sadhan), and questions about Maha Yoga and their Sadhan (practice) they would like addressed. Comments and suggestions regarding this e-newsletter are also most welcome. Many readers have contributed questions on various aspects of Maha Yoga, and we would like to encourage such continued enthusiasm in that regards. However, we would also like our readers to contribute thoughtful articles, interesting life experiences related to Maha Yoga and news about Maha Yoga-related events. We look forward to receiving such content from those who want to contribute. Please send any content, comments, or questions you would like to submit to self.awakening@gmail.com.

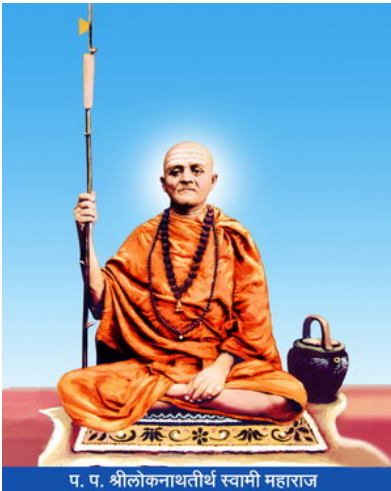
Contents

Editor's note	1
Maha Yoga Lineage- Part 4	2
Churning of the Heart	8
Answers to questions	13
Universal Brotherhood Day	18
Book announcement	19
Upcoming events	20
Website updates	20
New Maha Yoga Blog	20
How to contribute content	21

Our Maha Yoga Lineage - Part 4

Editor's note: This is the fourth installment of a series of articles on our Maha Yoga and Shaktipat lineage. In a previous issue (February 2010 archived at <http://www.mahayoga.org/selfawakening.htm> on pages 5 and 6) we presented a couple of charts of our lineage "tree" naming the luminaries who have brought this invaluable gift of Maha Yoga over the centuries to our present times. In this issue we present short descriptions of the lives of P. P. Swami Loknath Tirth Maharaj and P. P. Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj, the leading disciples of P. P. Swami Shankar Purshottam Tirth Maharaj and P. P. Shri Yogananda Maharaj, respectively. The description of P. P. Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj's life is available thanks to Dr. Kurt Keutzer from his web-site at <http://www.eecs.berkeley.edu/~keutzer/kundalini/shivom-tradition.html>

P. P. Swami Loknath Tirth Maharaj



The events unfolding in the temple of Goddess Kali presaged the birth of a Divine boy in the Chakravarty family who were the priests of the Dhakeshwari temple in the city of Dhaka in what is now Bangladesh. The wife of Chakravarty Babu, the temple priest, was sitting in front of Goddess Kali, watching her husband performing Pooja (worship). Suddenly her body was charged with a surge of Divine Energy which made her rotate like a top spinning about its axis. Her face was effulgent. Thus, with the blessings of the Divine Mother on Sunday 8th May 1892 on "Amrit Siddhi" yoga (omen) day, was born a Divine baby boy who was named 'Yogeshchandra'.

Yogeshchandra was a very handsome and charming boy and had a natural attraction towards the Goddess right from his childhood. He would sit in meditation with his eyes closed in front of the Goddess. He had an elephantine memory and mastered all religious rituals like Sandhya, Pooja, etc. at a very early age. In the absence of his father, even in his childhood, he could shoulder the temple responsibilities.

Unfortunately the Chakravarty family had a heritage of short life-spans, and Yogeshchandra's father expired prematurely. As the eldest son, the responsibility of taking care of his mother and younger siblings as well as the temple responsibilities fell upon young Yogeshchandra. As a result he was compelled to curtail his education just around the time he was in high school and seek a job. He worked for a few years at a jute factory while also serving at the Dhakeshwari temple. The shock of his father's demise had also made him introspective and he began to aspire for the eternal spiritual life. He prayed to the Goddess earnestly to give him a Guru who would guide him on the spiritual path.

Seeing his devotion and earnestness, the Goddess manifested herself in a dream and showed him a vision of his Satguru and also gave him directions to find him. Bidding farewell to his

Our Maha Yoga Lineage - Part 4 (continued)

family Yogeshchandra left his home to meet his Satguru P. P. Atmanand Brahmachari, who would later be known as P. P. Swami Shankar Purshottam Tirth Maharaj. The Satguru conferred upon him "Brahmacharya Deeksha" (initiation into a celibate life) and renamed him as Brahmachari Yogeshchandra Prakash. Later on, the Satguru also initiated him into Maha Siddha Yoga by conferring on him Shaktipat Deeksha (transfer of Divine Energy from the Guru to his disciple) or Vedha Deeksha.

After the Deeksha both the disciple and his Satguru went to Dhyan Sadhan Math where Satguru P.P. Shri Narayan Tirth Swami Maharaj, the Guru of P. P. Atmanand Brahmachari resided. The Swami Maharaj was pleased to receive both his disciple and his disciple's disciple. Brahmachari Yogeshchandra served both his Satguru and Paramguru (Guru's Guru) earnestly and performed meditation in their company for a period of two years. He got a variety of divine experiences and rapidly advanced spiritually.

Thereafter Satguru Atmanand Brahmachari went with Brahmachari Yogeshchandra Prakash back to his home to obtain consent of Yogeshchandra's mother for him to receive Sanyas Deeksha (initiation into a renunciate's life). Yogeshchandra's mother gladly consented. Thereupon Yogeshchandra received Sanyas Deeksha from P.P. Swami Tripurling Saraswati at the age of 22, committing himself to a life of total renunciation, and was renamed as Swami Chinmayananda Saraswati.

Swami Chinmayananda Saraswati and his Satguru then returned to P.P. Narayan Tirth Swami Maharaj, who blessed them both and placed the responsibility of spreading the Maha Yoga message on the shoulders of young Swami Chinmayananda. Satguru P. P. Atmanand now permitted Swami Chinmayananda to carve out his path independently.

Swami Chinmayananda thus set out for the Himalayas where he stayed in Tehri Garwhal performing constant spiritual practices for two years. One day the "Chit Shakti" (Divine Power) instructed him to go south. Thus Swamiji left the Himalayas and reached Hathras, in what is now the state of Uttar Pradesh in India. Here the Goddess in a vision asked him to go further south. A kind railway passenger gave him a ticket to the city of Hoshangabad, in what is now the state of Madhya Pradesh in India.

At Hoshangabad, some miscreants played a cruel trick upon Swamiji and recommended that he stay in a house they knew to be haunted by evil spirits. The history of this house was that anyone who entered it was found dead the next day. But the miscreants were amazed to find the Swamiji unscathed the next morning. Swamiji had not only defended himself from the resident spirits but had also mercifully granted release to the tortured souls from their ghostly existence.

At Hoshangabad, Swamiji met Shri Vamanrao Gulvani, who would later be known as P. P. Gulvani Maharaj, and conferred Shaktipat Deeksha upon him and several others. They all experienced the Divine Power operating within themselves and were amazed by their divine experiences during the initiation. Following the Deeksha, Shri Vamanrao Gulvani became a

Our Maha Yoga Lineage - Part 4 (continued)

devout disciple of Swamiji. Thus Swami Chinmayananda began the spread of Siddha Maha Yoga message in central and southern parts of India.

After a few years Swami Chinmayananda obtained "Dandi Sanyas" (a more austere form of renunciation) from his Satguru and was renamed as Swami Loknath Tirth on January 30th, 1927 (Poush Vadya Dwadashi day based on the Hindu lunar calendar). He travelled to various parts of India, propagating Siddha Maha Yoga. In between his travels to cities and towns in southern and central India he would go and stay in the holy city of Kashi, which is also known as Varanasi. His life was controlled by the Divine Mother as he had completely surrendered to her. During his travels he would confer Shaktipat Deeksha on Sadhaks who he sensed deserved it.

The Swami had tremendous spiritual knowledge, knowledge of Tantra, Mantra, Siddhis (Powers) such as distant hearing and seeing (clairvoyance and clairaudience), knowledge of divine healing as well as healing with plants, herbs, etc. He didn't like to perform miracles for material gains or to seek popularity, yet people were tremendously attracted towards him for some mysterious reason. Sometimes he would behave in such a way as to invite criticism and insults in order to practice developing tolerance and also to scare away excessive crowds of people. He also composed religious poetry, shlokas (verses) and sung them in a melodious voice. His routine started at 4 a.m. in the morning with several hours of meditation followed by a bath and bhiksha (ritual seeking of alms of simple food). His food habits were very simple. After a short rest around noon, he would start reading, writing and meeting visitors. He would go for a walk in the evening. Then he would perform Sandhya (evening ritual), partake a frugal dinner and conduct hymns and discourses. He preferred to retire early.

Shri Swami had a fatherly affection for his disciples. He had a divine power to foresee calamities that would befall them and sometimes he would alert them in advance and present himself at the spot of the calamity to reduce their distress. Although Swamiji disliked performing miracles, there are several instances of his having done so when the need arose, but never for personal gain. Many of them were healing miracles among others. Those interested in knowing more about the miracles he is known to have performed may refer to his biography.

Swamiji was free from attachments and was a true renunciate. Once when Swami Tripurling Saraswati offered him the position of Cardinal Designate of a rich prestigious Math (Spiritual institution) in Dhaka, he declined. One of his disciples later built an Ashram for Swamiji's residence. But this disciple faced a financial crisis, having ignored a forewarning by the Swamiji. Seeing the disciple's plight, Swamiji sold off the Ashram to help his disciple pay off his debts. In the last moments of his life, he admitted to one of his disciples that although he had several spiritual powers (Siddhis), including an ability to raise or lower body weight, floating on water, etc., he never did use them for any personal or material benefit of his disciples because doing so would have proved an obstruction to their true spiritual welfare. He said that in today's world, purity in action (Karma Yoga) was very difficult to practice for

Our Maha Yoga Lineage - Part 4 (continued)

most people and that the Shaktipat/Maha Yoga approach provides Sadhaks an easier way to ensure spiritual progress.

Throughout his life, Swamiji's health would often deteriorate, but he would always remain in a joyous mood despite his ill health and never changed his routine. In early February 1955 he called together his disciples in Kashi and told them about his intention to leave his earthly body and gave them instructions on what to do after his demise. He asked them to put his body in a stone box and leave it in the river Ganga. He also told them to perform a Pooja of goddess Kali and give offerings to 54 virgins. He told them that they would see a sign at that moment.

On Wednesday, February 9th, 1955 at 12 p.m. Swamiji gave up his earthly body. His disciples carried out his instructions as Swamiji had requested. On the 14th day after Swamiji's demise, 54 virgins were seated in a row on wooden seats. Plates of food were placed in front of them as offerings. At that time, as mentioned by Swamiji before his passing away, a miracle took place. A flame of light emerged out of the idol of the Goddess and floated before the eyes of each of the virgins and traversed back to the Goddess. Everyone attending felt compelled to prostrate in front of this Divine light. Thus did the Emperor of pure consciousness, Chaitanya Chakravarty P.P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj become liberated and attained Moksha (liberation).

An English language translation of P. P. Swami Loknath Tirth Maharaj's biography is available. Please see page 19 for how to order it. - Editor

Our Maha Yoga Lineage - Part 4 (continued)

P. P. Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj



Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj, also known as Munilal Swami, was born in Jazsar in the district of Rohtak in what is now the state of Haryana in India. He always had a love for spiritualism. While still a young man, he had a divine experience that occurred while living in a hostel as a student. He was resting on his roof at night when he saw a huge circle of fire approaching. Ultimately this circle of fire entered into his person and disappeared. He thereafter experienced a sort of intoxication and trembling in the form of automatic physical movements and breathing patterns (Pranayam).

After passing his matriculation exam, Munilal stayed with his uncle who was employed by the Railways at Nagpur in central India, where he obtained his undergraduate degree. After graduation, he got married and was employed as a teacher in Bilaspur in the state of Madhya Pradesh in India. While teaching, he simultaneously obtained a postgraduate degree and passed the L.L.B. from Aligarh University. Thereafter he began practicing as a lawyer in Ghaziabad Tehsil of the District of Meerut in what is now the state of Uttar Pradesh in India.

The seeds of spiritualism were deeply rooted in him from the very beginning. At first, he was not clear about the meaning of his strange experience. He met a number of holy persons and practiced yoga. He devoted himself to deep study of Indian spiritual classics and scriptures. His life was very simple and truthful. Naturally the job as a legal practitioner did not suit him well.

There was a judge named Mr. Mehra in Ghaziabad. Shri Yoganandaji Maharaj was his Guru. Learning of this, Munilal wrote a letter to Shri Yoganandaji and very soon afterward received a favorable reply. His wife had expired already and his son and daughter were both married. He was thus free from the burden of his family. All these factors soon led him to decide to renounce the world in search of enlightenment. This decision took him on a path straight to Rishikesh in what is now the state of Uttarakhand in India.

Munilal met Shri Yoganandaji in the Swargashram at Rishikesh and received Shaktipat initiation from him. This was in the year 1933. Afterwards he traveled to many religious places around Badrinath and Kedarnath. In 1939, Munilal expressed a desire for initiation into the system of Sanyas (renunciate life), and Yoganandaji directed him to Swami Shankar Purushottam Tirth Maharaj in Benaras. Swami Shankar Purushottam Tirth initiated Munilal into the system of Sanyas in the Mohan Ashram of Haridwar near the bank of the holy river Ganges. His name became Swami Vishnu Tirth after the initiation. As directed by Shri Yoganandaji, Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj proceeded toward Indore and finally settled in Dewas, in what is now the state of Madhya Pradesh in Central India, where he laid the foundation of Narayan Kuti Sanyas Ashram.

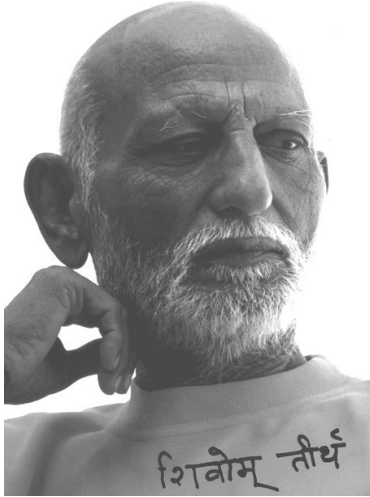
Our Maha Yoga Lineage - Part 4 (continued)

Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj initiated many spiritual aspirants into the system of Shaktipat and wrote a number of books including *Sadhan Sanket*, *Shaktipat*, *Adhyatma Vikas*, *Atma Prabodh*, *Prana Tattva*, *Upanishadvani*, *Geetatatwamrit*, *Shiva Sutra Prabodhini*, and a commentary on *Saundrya Lahiri* and *Prityabhigyahridyam*. He wrote one memorable book in English entitled *Devatma Shakti*. This book is an in-depth study of the Divine Power (Devatma Shakti) and the science of Shaktipat. This work is based on traditions recorded in ancient scriptures supplemented by direct experiences of divine revelation. This book is considered a classic in the field of Shaktipat and the awakening of internal consciousness.

Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj had a profound love for the Ganges River and he spent around two months a year near the river in Rishikesh. His disciples soon carried out the construction of a center in Rishikesh in 1965 which came to be known as Yoga Shri Pith. Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaja occupies a prominent place in the galaxy of Shaktipat Gurus. He was highly educated and had a sharp and brilliant mind. He left his mortal body in 1969 dissolving into the Absolute.

Books authored by P. P. Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj can be ordered from:
Devatma Shakti Society
92-93, Navali Gav
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Churning of the Heart - Excerpt



The following is a chapter 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. These excerpts are published here with the kind permission of Swami Shivom Tirth Ashram, Inc. For those Sadhaks who are interested, copies of the trilogy are available at Amazon.com

On Anger and Aversion

In this excerpt, Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj discusses how important it is for Sadhaks to not run away from social conduct but to use it for spiritual growth. He reminds us that while solitude is necessary for spiritual practice, purification of conduct is possible only through social involvement. - Editor

In general I never interfered in any way with any decision of Maharajshri. I only followed orders. But as far as matters related to initiation were concerned, I surely never interfered. The fact is I wasn't a very important person in the ashram. There were many people who were initiated long before me. From the perspective of initiation, I was very junior and my role went no further than service of the ashram.

There was a panditji who was learned and performed prayers and recitations. He was also considered well-versed in astrology. He would come to the ashram periodically. Whenever he came to the ashram, for reasons unknown to me, I did not like him, although we had never spoken to each other, nor was there ever any dissention between us. There had been no dealings between us, or any sort of altercation. I do not know from which birth these mutual samskaras arose, but I did not like him. I often tried to explain away the situation to my mind, but the negative thoughts did not leave me. Maharajshri respected the man a lot. Once when he came he prayed to Maharajshri for initiation. Maharajshri agreed and gave him a date and time for his initiation. I did not like the acceptance of his initiation. I thought, "Why is Maharajshri giving initiation to him?"

When the date set for his initiation arrived, Panditji did not come. That evening we were informed that the night before he had suffered from diarrhea, because of which he could not come in the morning. I was very happy that at least one problem had been avoided. He did not come to the ashram for the next four to six months. The next time he came he

Churning of the Heart - Excerpt (continued)

requested initiation and again Maharajshri gave him a suitable time. Maharajshri said, "Panditji, you have already received an approval. There is nothing to think about." Again when the time came, Panditji did not turn up. We learned that his employer had sent him away on some project.

I was taking walks with Maharajshri in the morning. Most of the time I would be alone with him. While strolling Maharajshri would discuss various spiritual topics. On seeing an appropriate occasion I asked, "That Panditji who comes - I have no dispute with him. I don't converse with him. I don't know why I don't like him. Every time you gave him approval for initiation, I did not like it."

Maharajshri laughed loudly and said, "Now I know it is your resolve that is blocking Panditji's way. That is the reason why he has met some obstacle or the other and hasn't come." Then explaining in detail he said, "Accumulated impressions keep on affecting the chitta. Sometimes we feel very happy for no reason. Sometimes we become very sad for no reason. We like a person naturally whereas other people find the same person evil. I too dislike certain people without any reason. All this happens due to past impressions. The impressions influence the mind internally. No one knows from which births the impressions arise, gain strength and influence the mind. It is the duty of an aspirant to observe these inner ripples and resist getting carried away in their flow. However much your mind urges you, you should neither like, nor dislike, Panditji's initiation.

I started thinking, "Why had a resolve against Panditji surfaced in my mind?" I started thinking that I had wronged him. I started praying to God for Panditji to come back and be initiated so that I might atone for my sin, but Panditji never came back. I felt regret in my mind.

I would be very careful in dealings related to the ashram. One thing was that my mind was weak, full of desires and defects. A house of anger and pride, even though I rarely got angry in a way that was evident, I would keep burning internally. Generally the people who came to the ashram were very nice. They wished to be freed from desires and bad qualities; hence they had come to the feet of Guru Maharaj. But the world is not the same everywhere. How can any part of a house, office, organization or nation remain untouched by defects? All places are afflicted with defects, even though the people are good. How can attachments and aversions emerge so quickly? How can one save one's self from gossiping and backbiting? In a way I was new to worldly dealings. Where was the solitude of the green valleys of the Himalayas? I would try to keep myself in solitude even in a crowded environment, but sometimes the mind would still be affected. The anger would boil internally. Just as a volcano erupts after many years, similarly, suppressed anger manifests in a fearful form.

I remember one such incident. Once I had a dispute with an ashramite who was worthy of Maharajshri's special grace and trust and served him wholeheartedly. He also loved me a lot. My pride awakened all of a sudden, my body trembled with rage and I could not control myself. I had no right to comment about that ashramite, but I exceeded my limits. It

Churning of the Heart - Excerpt (continued)

seemed as if my body was on fire. You already know that in anger the intellect is constrained and there is no awareness of right and wrong. In such a state an angry person ends up losing control. Neither did I remember my responsibility and my service, nor my respect for Maharajshri. In the darkness of my anger the divine form of Guru Maharaj disappeared from before my eyes. Only one thought came to my mind: "Leave the ashram!" Repeatedly, thoughts about Himachal Pradesh, the place where I had been before coming to Dewas, came to mind. "Solitude is so much more blissful! No arguments with anyone, no fights. Just sing devotional songs and seek alms. I came here and was ensnared in complications. It would have been advisable to leave immediately after my initiation!"

In this state of anger I went to Maharajshri and told him that I could not stay. I was leaving. Maharajshri tried to reason with me, but does an angry person listen to anyone? He has already lost his senses in his agitation. I even refused to listen to Maharajshri's explanation and remained firm in my decision to leave. The train was scheduled to leave at 9 a.m. the next day. I announced that I would leave the next morning. I went to my room and lay down. Neither did I eat food, nor did I go to Maharajshri again. Neither did I talk to that ashramite again.

That night I tried to sleep but couldn't. By that time my anger had subsided and the churning of thoughts had already started. The whole incident was playing before my eyes like a movie. It had become my habit, while contemplating, to observe my own mistakes first. Due to this sequence the occasion to look at others' mistakes never arose. I will not say anything about that ashramite being at fault or not; I was seeing nothing but my own mistakes.

Guru Maharajji adored that ashramite, and I should tolerate everything in the interest of Maharajshri's happiness. Where does a disciple have the right to hate, dislike and get angry at someone whom Guru Maharaj adores? Besides, the ashramite also loved me a lot. He cared for me a great deal. Even if he said something I found unpleasant, he did so considering it as his right. But I disrespected his authority. The saddest thing is that I did not even respect Maharajshri's words. Who could be such a sinner and egotist before such a Guru Maharaj, at whose words a disciple should sacrifice everything he has. I kept holding on to my ego. Because of these thoughts my mind filled with repentance. I felt like going to Maharajshri right away, holding his feet and begging for pardon. I also felt like apologizing to the ashramite, but it was late in the night. I thought it advisable not to disturb their sleep.

However morning seemed too far away. Perhaps the ashramite, too, could not sleep throughout the night and was awake, thinking. I do not know the nature of his thoughts, but when we woke up in the morning he was not to be seen anywhere. He had left. Later a person coming from town informed us that he had seen him heading towards the bus station. Due to the departure of this ashramite, I delayed my own.

My mind became very uneasy. Again and again I would remember the ashramite - that neither had he forgiven me, nor did he give me an opportunity to ask for his forgiveness.

Churning of the Heart - Excerpt (continued)

Now I was hesitant even to look at Maharajshri. I was the sole cause of the ashramite's departure. If I hadn't had a conflict with him, he wouldn't have left. What had happened to my rules? Where did my tolerance go? Where was that plan to love everyone? What had happened to my decision to serve for one year in silence? I cried a lot over my condition. What had happened to me? Where had my discretion gone? Is this the life of an aspirant? I condemned myself again and again. Now I was scared even to go before Maharajshri. When it was time for lunch, I went to invite him, but Maharajshri did not say anything. His silence spoke volumes.

This incident shook me up. My pride and anger became like orphaned calves. My pride did not die but it was definitely suppressed. After four months the ashramite returned. When he arrived, I apologized to him. I do not know if he forgave me or not. Still my mind did not calm down. The mind was burning in a self-ignited fire. I started following my rules even more strictly. It was becoming clear to me how helpless a being is in front of destiny. When desire exerts its force, great warriors fall to the ground. I was also discovering how difficult it is to fight against one's own mind. In the face of this inner battle even the greatest battle in the external world is meaningless. When someone falls, we laugh. The next day we ourselves fall flat and others laugh at us. God alone knows his games. What we see are games of the mind.

I resolved to try again, but this time it felt as if I were starting from scratch. I became like a stone lying in the street, even though it was contrary to my nature. I would get kicked as people came and went. People did not even realize they were kicking me. A stone doesn't resist. It rolls in the direction it has been kicked. Neither does it complain, nor does it scold. It just lies silently. It is the nature of the world that the more you serve, the more you love and the more you tolerate, the more it troubles you. When I made myself a stone on the road, the world played with me more openly. Sometimes, when the blow was severe, my reaction showed in my face or a sigh escaped my lips. I would explain to my mind again and again that all this is destiny. How can anyone understand this inner turmoil? No one has the time to understand it. What was the point, then, in being upset or complaining about the world? A very large and strong support was available to me: Shri Guru Maharaj. If someone can hold on to such a support, it can take him to the ultimate goal.

By the grace of Guru Maharaj, I had realized that social conduct has a close relationship to spirituality. Conduct can cause a downfall and conduct can be the means to purify the chitta. Conduct leads you to hell and conduct, too, shows the way to heaven. For purification of conduct, the path of social action or the path of dutiful action is necessary. Conduct paints the mind with the colors of the world and it also washes these colors away. Just as solitude is necessary for spiritual practice, so purification of conduct is possible only through social involvement. Perhaps this was the reason why Maharajshri stopped me from leaving the ashram and going into solitude.

Due to a lack of discretion I was unable to understand the essence of this. Like other people I wished to progress spiritually as quickly as possible. I wanted to find a shortcut. Thus I wanted to take a big leap and build a hut on the banks of the Sutlej in Himachal Pradesh. I

Churning of the Heart - Excerpt (continued)

wished to escape into nivritti [inner contemplation] and occupy myself with sadhan. This was my mistake. Nivritti does not arise in this manner. So long as the natural state of nivritti is not attained, what is nivritti? I would compare nivritti and pravritti [social action].

The understanding that if one wants nivritti he first must embrace pravritti came from Guru Maharaj. Guru Maharaj was very well aware of the fact that the destruction of my prarabdha was possible only on the path of pravritti. Thus he took care of me and stopped me from going into isolation to do sadhan. It is Maharajshri's infinite grace that he showed me the ephemeral nature of the world through experience. No one is for anyone in this world. All relations are based on selfishness. The world is covered with lust, anger, greed and attachment. The world continuously changes its appearance and its qualities. He inspired me to live in the ashram and carry out my service and spiritual practice in order to give me first hand experience of all these things.

Presented here with kind permission from Swami Shivom Tirth Ashram, Inc. Thanks to Mrs. Alison Kamat for transcribing this and all previous excerpts from "Churning of the Heart".

**"Churning of the Heart" trilogy by P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj is available from Amazon.com, or in India from:
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Answers to questions from Sadhaks

- **Question:** I am a 20 year old man from Hong Kong, China and I sit for Maha Yoga Sadhan (meditation) every day. Recently, during Sadhan, I have been feeling the Kundalini (Universal Life Energy) rise along my spine all the way up to my Crown Chakra (Sahasrar), and when that happens I feel a very intense tingling sensation there. Since I have heard that the goal of the Kundalini is to rise up to the Crown Chakra I wonder what comes next. Does it mean that the Shakti has experienced union with Shiva and that once she fully unites with Shiva I will have attained spiritual enlightenment? What should I do next?

Answer: Congratulations on your recent experiences during Sadhan, since they indicate that you are making progress along the Maha Yoga path! While individual experiences vary, an experience such as the one you described is indicative of the Kundalini having been awakened. Many Sadhaks have such an experience during Shaktipat Deeksha (initiation) or later during Sadhan, when the Kundalini rises all the way up to the Sahasrar. It indicates that the pathway (Nadi) for the Kundalini to travel up to the Sahasrar has been cleared, at least temporarily.

The trick is to keep that path, as well as all other Nadis clear, so that the Kundalini/Chaitanya Shakti can pervade your entire being. This is not as trivial as it sounds, because not only the blockages created by our prior Samskaras (results of past actions) need to be cleared, but new ones, created by the Karma (actions) of our day-to-day lives, also need to be removed. Once this happens on a sustained basis, i.e. when one remains in this state at all times, does one reach true spiritual enlightenment.

Diligent and regular Sadhan is a sure-fire way to remove blockages to the Nadis on a continuing basis. Therefore, you don't need to do anything special, just continue to sit for Sadhan on a regular basis and simply observe the Divine Mother Shakti's automatic progress. Regular Sadhan will continue the process of Nadi Shuddhi (cleansing of the pathways) and over time will enable you to become one with the Chaitanya Shakti, i.e. reach true spiritual enlightenment.

Incidentally, we urge all Sadhaks not to focus too much on such physical experiences, because they are only one type of indicators of progress and not the end goal. Also, there is a risk that if one pays a lot of attention to such experiences one can get attached to them and such attachments will only enhance one's ego and retard true spiritual progress. The key to Maha Yoga is to sit diligently for Sadhan, surrender to Chaitanya Shakti i.e. let her be the "doer", and simply observe what happens without getting one's ego involved, i.e. with a certain level of detachment.

- **Question:** I have read somewhere that one should not sit for Sadhan between midnight and 3 am. Is this true? Are there any restrictions on the time of day when one should sit for Sadhan?

Answers to questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Answer: There are no specific restrictions for the time of day when one can sit for Sadhan. We only suggest that one not sit for Sadhan for 3 to 4 hours after having a meal, because the digestive processes are active during that time and Sadhan can interfere with those processes and vice versa.

It is a good idea for Sadhaks to sit for Sadhan at specific designated times during the day consistent with their daily routines so Sadhan becomes a regular and habitual part of their daily routine. Of course, as Sadhan duration increases, Sadhaks will need to make adjustments to accommodate for such changes. Morning and evening are good times to sit for Sadhan, especially early morning during the period one and a half hour prior to sunrise (Brahma Muhurta). P. P. Gulvani Maharaj had also suggested that it is very beneficial for Sadhaks to sit for Sadhan when they wake up in the middle of the night after the first round of sleep, even right there on the bed if it is convenient.

- **Question:** I am a Sadhak residing in the US who was initiated into Maha Yoga in 2009. When I sit for Sadhan (meditation) facing the East I find my Kriyas are more intense. Is there a preferred direction to face when sitting for Sadhan? Is there also a preferred direction to point one's head toward when sleeping?

Answer: What you have observed is quite correct regarding Sadhan. We recommend that Sadhaks face East or North when they sit for Sadhan since doing so best aligns our bodies with the magnetic fields of the earth and the sun which can have subtle influence on the Kriyas that happen during Sadhan. For similar reasons we also recommend that Sadhaks sleep with their heads toward the East or South.

- **Question:** I am a 33 year old woman living in France and I have been a spiritual person all my life. I have always felt a link to God, the true light and love, within me since my childhood. Feeling compassion for all beings. I have been blessed with unusual spiritual experiences and a great deal of sensitivity to others. Since the age of fifteen I have been on a path of spiritual self-development through self introspection, meditation, etc. In recent years I have tried Vipassana meditation, Kundalini Yoga, Hatha Yoga, etc. I believe that my Kundalini has been awakened, because about 6 months ago while at a Kundalini Yoga Festival I felt very strong vibrations in my Muladhar Chakra and I had an experience of ecstasy that was quite convincing. To this day I feel the vibrations in my Muladhar Chakra but they are not as intense as they were earlier.

Since the opening of my Muladhar Chakra I have had a desire to seek my true nature, be able to live fully with it and to accelerate my spiritual growth. In that regards I have been wondering why the Kundalini hasn't progressed beyond the next Chakra, i.e., the Svadhishtan Chakra. Should I do something about it or can I expect it to rise on its own? I would like to get initiated into Maha Yoga, but I am not sure if I will be able to give up eating meat, fish, eggs, garlic, onions and wine, which are so integral to the French diet. Please advise me on what I should do.

Answers to questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Answer: I feel very fortunate and extremely pleased to read your e-mail, especially about your experiences of the Divine Mother Energy!

Since you have already studied Kundalini Yoga and Vipassana meditation and have already had experiences indicating that the Kundalini Shakti has been awakened, I pray to God to lead you in making further progress on your spiritual journey. In case of any difficulties I would suggest that you discuss them with the Spiritual Master who has already initiated you into Kundalini Yoga. The Spiritual Master will guide you in this regard and please have no doubt that the activated Kundalini Shakti will not stop, and Sadhan will automatically help you in your spiritual progress. Since you have already been initiated, I don't think it is necessary for you to get initiated once again.

But if you still have the desire to get initiated into Maha Yoga you will need to discuss that with the Spiritual Master who has already initiated you into Kundalini Yoga and get his/her permission. You will also need to accept the restrictions on dietary intake which are required for formal initiation (Deeksha). These restrictions have been prescribed by our lineage and are imposed on Sadhaks to ensure their unimpeded progress down the Maha Yoga path once they are initiated. The restrictions enhance Sattva Guna in a Sadhak which is essential for spiritual progress. Eventually, we have to go beyond the three Gunas (Sattva - spiritually enhancing, Rajas - action/activity promoting, and Tamas - ignorance/laziness promoting), but until we get there, it is very important to offset the effects of the daily accumulation of Rajas and Tamas (action and indolence) with the spiritual calmness of Sattva.

If you do not want to accept the dietary restrictions required for receiving formal Deeksha, you are welcome to practice the Introductory Approach to Maha Yoga (as described on page 15 of Self Awakening e-newsletter Volume 1, Issue 4, May 2009, link: <http://www.mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self Awakening Vol1 Issue 4.pdf>). This introductory approach is extremely easy to follow and does not require you to observe any of the rules and restrictions associated with formal Deeksha. If you sit for Sadhan every day as described in the approach, your Sadhan will flourish and you will begin to get the spiritual benefits of Maha Yoga.

I request the Divine Mother Energy to guide you on your spiritual journey.

- **Question:** How old does one have to be in order to receive formal initiation (Shaktipat Deeksha) into Maha Yoga?

Answer: Usually we require that a Sadhak be 18 years of age or older in order to receive formal Deeksha (initiation). This is because we want to make sure that the Sadhak has a certain level of maturity and understands the full meaning and implications of Deeksha. Deeksha is a life-changing experience and it is very important that a Sadhak not seek it to satisfy a whim on the spur of the moment. Also we need to make sure that the Sadhak

Answers to questions from Sadhaks (continued)

will be able to observe the rules and restrictions that he agrees to before receiving Deeksha and that the conditions at home will support his ability to do so. For that reason we ask one or both parents (if alive) to sign the application form if the Sadhak is younger than 18 years. We have made exceptions to this rule when we have been convinced about the sincerity of the Sadhak seeking Deeksha and his willingness and ability to follow the rules and restrictions.

- **Question:** Can a Maha Yoga Sadhak be a householder, i.e. get married; have a family, job/business, etc. even if he wants to receive formal initiation (Deeksha)?

Answer: Receiving formal Deeksha does not require a Sadhak to give up being a householder at all. In fact most Maha Yoga Sadhaks are householders with spouses, children, jobs, businesses, etc.

- **Question:** I am a 32 year old software engineer living in Pune, India and have been married for the past 6 years. I have a wonderful wife and a one year old daughter. Ever since childhood I have been interested in spirituality, and about 15 years ago I was initiated at the Samadhi of P. P. Gondavlekar Maharaj into being a follower of that tradition. I do not have any vices such as smoking tobacco or drinking alcohol and for the past few years I have been a diligent reader of spiritual texts such as those written by Saints such as Ramdas and Sant Tukaram. Perhaps as a result of this activity I have recently developed a strong attraction to spirituality. I am not sure if this attraction is only a temporary phase but the following issues have preoccupied me in recent weeks:
 - I have a strong sex drive, and although my marriage has been wonderful in that regard, I would like to get more control over my urges.
 - I eat non-vegetarian food and I would like to move towards being a vegetarian.
 - Diabetes runs in my family and I also suffer from the same, however I would like for it not to inhibit my spiritual quest.
 - I would like to progress spiritually while remaining a householder.

I am wondering if the practice of Maha Yoga will help me deal with the above issues and whether it would help me have my Kundalini Shakti (Mother Energy or Universal Life Energy) become awakened through formal Deeksha. Do I need to do any preparatory studies for that to happen? Also since I am a follower of P. P. Gondavlekar Maharaj will it be appropriate for me to seek advice and Deeksha from you?

Answer: Thank you for your interest in Maha Yoga and for your frank questions. It is clear that you are spiritually inclined and have a strong interest in moving down a path of spirituality. I don't think your interest in spirituality is temporary, it seems to have gradually evolved over the years to the level of intensity it currently has. Here are my thoughts on the four issues that have been preoccupying you in recent weeks:

- The intensity of one's sex drive is dependent on the Samskaras (past impressions) from this life and prior lives. It is very difficult to overcome it, and it can take an entire lifetime or longer to get completely beyond it. Replacing the desire for sex

Answers to questions from Sadhaks (continued)

- with other more spiritually enhancing interests is the best way to reduce its intensity. The practice of Maha Yoga also helps diminish its intensity over time.
- The avoidance of non-vegetarian food is very important for making unimpeded spiritual progress. Doing so enhances Sattva Guna (spiritually enhancing qualities) within oneself while reducing Rajo Guna (activity promoting) and Tamo Guna (indolence promoting), so essential for spiritual progress until the time when one goes beyond the three Gunas and reaches the enlightened state.
 - One can overcome the effects of diseases such as diabetes by controlling one's diet as prescribed by your physician, regular exercise and being diligent about taking the prescribed medications. Regular Sadhan can also help mitigate some of the effects of such diseases.
 - There is no reason why being a householder will retard one's spiritual progress. The Rishis and Munis (Vedic Seers) were householders. The diligent study and practice of Yoga will ensure spiritual progress regardless of whether one is a householder or a renunciate.

In my opinion, the practice of Maha Yoga will help you address all of the above issues. Maha Yoga is also the easiest, most direct and no cost way of having your Kundalini Shakti become awakened. You do not need to conduct any preparatory studies to receive Deeksha; all that is needed is a firm commitment on your part to receive Deeksha, faith in Maha Yoga and the Guru, and a commitment to follow the prescribed rules and restrictions. You may follow the Introductory Approach to Maha Yoga (as described on page 15 of Self Awakening e-newsletter Volume 1, Issue 4, May 2009, link: <http://www.mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self Awakening Vol1 Issue 4.pdf>) until you receive formal Deeksha. It will give you a sense of what the Maha Yoga experience is all about.

As a follower of P. P. Gondavlekar Maharaj's tradition you might be aware that some Sadhaks in that tradition have had their Kundalini Shakti awakened through Naam Jap (chanting of Lord Rama's name, i.e. Mantra Yoga). Clearly, it is an approach you could pursue as well. However, if you are interested in receiving Maha Yoga Deeksha, I would urge you to mentally seek P. P. Gondavlekar Maharaj's blessings (since he departed from this earth in 1913), before you apply for Deeksha. Doing so will enable the Kundalini Shakti to become awakened at the time of Maha Yoga Deeksha.

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

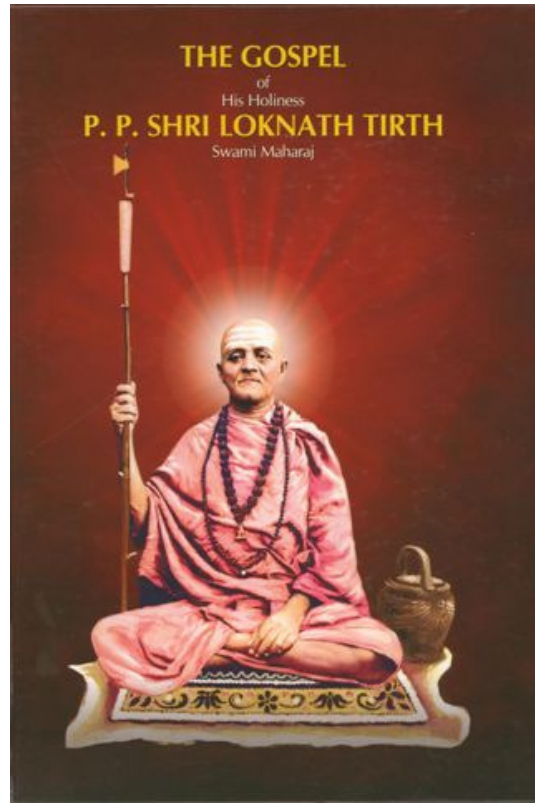
Universal Brotherhood Day and Global Maha Yoga Trial - May 15th, 2011 from 6:06 am to 6:27 am local time

P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj would like to invite everyone on this earth to participate in a Universal Brotherhood Day and Global Introductory Trial of Maha Yoga Shaktipat (Siddhayoga) for the uplift of all humankind. This introductory trial will be held on May 15th, 2011, from 6:06 am to 6:27 am local time, i.e. **based on the clock in your own country and time-zone**. Those interested can participate during that time at no cost, from the privacy of their own homes. All are eligible to participate in this trial regardless of religion, race, gender, age, caste or creed. This world-wide trial can be considered to be a “trailer” or a precursor for the awakening of one’s Kundalini Shakti (Universal Life Energy) through Shaktipat (transfer of Energy) from a Siddha Yoga Master. It is a rare opportunity to experience first-hand such a transmission of Energy from a Siddha Guru.

Here’s how to participate:

- At the designated time (on May 15th, 2011, from 6:06 am to 6:27 am, local time) sit comfortably with your eyes closed in a quiet location in your home. Instantly observe a wave of energy along your spinal column.
- Relax your body completely in order to minimize the awareness of your body.
- Let your mind observe your involuntary breathing.
- Observe your experiences during the designated time interval and if you wish you may share them by e-mail with P. P. Narayan Kaka Maharaj at (mahayoga_kaka@yahoo.com).

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



The English language translation of P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj's biography is now 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:

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Sadhaks outside of India can send an e-mail indicating their interest, including their postal address, to self.awakening@gmail.com. The price will be determined by the number of orders received from each country and estimated shipping cost, and Sadhaks will be notified accordingly. The price is unlikely to exceed US\$20.

Upcoming Events:

Deeksha Day (Initiation Day) on May 15th, 2011

Those desirous of receiving Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) should go to the website: www.mahayoga.org for instructions.

Universal Brotherhood Day/Global Maha Yoga Trial on May 15th, 2011

Please see announcement on page 18.

Website Updates:

The Maha Yoga website www.mahayoga.org has available a web-based Deeksha application form for the next Deeksha day to be held on May 15th, 2011. Also available at the website are instructions for conducting online interactions using Skype

The Maha Yoga videos website at <http://www.mahayogavideos.org/> has available videos of various Maha Yoga related events and speeches by P. P. Kaka Maharaj.

We also 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.

New Maha Yoga Blog:

We are also starting a Maha Yoga blog at <http://mahayoga-blog.blogspot.com/>. The purpose of the blog is to share with Sadhaks P. P. Kaka Maharaj's guidance on issues related to Maha Yoga, and to keep them updated on Maha Yoga-related events and new developments. Please feel free to join the blog and comment on the content.



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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!