

# Self Awakening

November 1, 2012  
Volume 5, Issue 2

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.

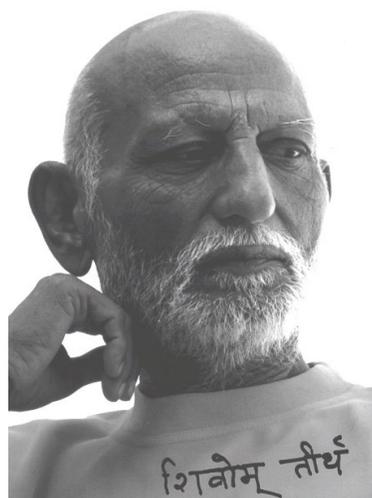
To the thousands of Sadhaks in the Maha Yoga tradition all over the world and other interested readers, this e-newsletter is intended to provide virtual Satsang. It is intended to encourage Sadhaks to remain engaged in Maha Yoga, be informed about Maha Yoga-related events around the world, and to provide 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](mailto:self.awakening@gmail.com).

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## Churning of the Heart - Excerpts



The following are two chapters 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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

In these two chapters P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj's Guru describes the role of Maya in obstructing a Sadhak's spiritual progress. This is a problem most Sadhaks face resulting in them getting sidetracked from the Maha Yoga path. Some Sadhaks think that they can get away from the traps that Maya has laid for them by seeking the solace of Sannyas and retiring from the material world in an Ashram or a forest abode. Others try to use their willpower to stifle the effect of Maya, often resulting in frustration and failed efforts. P. P. Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj suggests that the problem of Maya can best be dealt with, not by trying to run away from her or by trying to control her, but simply by being aware of the traps she lays for the Sadhak, by regular and diligent Sadhan and by surrendering to God, who is the ultimate source of Maya herself. - Editor

### Maya

Today there are many buildings in the ashram, but in 1960 it had a very different look: a temple that was too small, a kitchen extremely small in comparison to the one today, and Maharajshri's place of residence. The rest of the space was open. The ashram was situated at the base of a hill, built almost halfway into it. The town of Dewas was at a much lower level. In those days even the retaining walls were not like today and the ground was hardly even. Flowers of xenia and marigold bloomed everywhere. The ashram was open on all sides and, as a result, the flowering plants had spread out over a long stretch of the hill. There was a deep canal on one side and towards the lower side of the ashram there was an abundance of flowers. Due to this the ashram looked very pleasant, as if it were a big garden. When I arrived there on the first day, I was simply awestruck. Nearby, and even for some distance from the ashram, there were no buildings. Only the newly- built, shining railway station was visible in the distance. The rainy season had just ended. There was

## Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

greenery everywhere. More than anything else, there was the influence of Maharajshri's personality.

One day I told Maharajshri, "The ashram is so beautiful, surrounded by flowers on all sides, with solitude, silence, slithering of snakes, the mischief of squirrels. The mind wants to drown itself in this beauty."

Maharajshri laughed and said, "This beauty and ugliness is the misconception of Maya [illusion]. Maya manifests itself by taking various forms. Sometimes it attracts by beauty and sometimes it frightens through ugliness. If there are skyscraping mountain ranges, then there also are very deep valleys. There are saddening troubles of the past and golden dreams of the future. There is the kind, cool shade of motherly love and heat from the insensitivity of the heart. All these are the conspiracies of Maya. If it ties you in a bond of love with a friend, it also ties an enemy with a rope of hatred and anger. Friendship and enmity both are bonds. In the same way, beauty and ugliness both influence the chitta, destabilize it, and inscribe memories on the mind. Every person desires happiness in the world. Everyone wants a beautiful form, sweet voice and a delicate touch, but all these are as dangerous as ugliness. Actually, these are much more lethal.

"Now take your example. You visualized beauty in the ashram and you thought of drowning in it. You forgot that all this is Maya. Maya has many different types of weapons. She knows how to entice, entangle, ensnare, mislead and provoke. If at times one of the weapons does not work, she uses another. If, after her explanations, you do not give in, she will become a lover and influence your mind. Greed, attachment, anger, fear, love, trick or fraud – whichever can succeed on a living being, she takes up that weapon. Sometimes she calls you to the world by taking a beautiful form, at other times she pushes you into the world by showing her ugliness.

"Thinkers, yogis and devotees refuse to succumb to the incitements of Maya. They retain their mental poise. If at times the mind gets excited, they apply the restraint of discretion or love and bring it under control. They know that Maya is standing in the background of the beautiful and the ugly, thus they refer to Maya as an actress, a female thug and other things. She is very efficient at changing her form according to the situation. She can make something beautiful look ugly, and make something ugly look beautiful. She can make someone drink poison by making it look like nectar. By suggesting ideas about duty and ideals she can make someone go to the gallows. She can make big look small and small look big, an evil person look virtuous and a virtuous person look evil. She is so powerful that she has also hidden God within herself."

On hearing Maharajshri's words, I stood gaping as if I had been swindled. For quite some time I could not figure out what to say. It was as if the mind had frozen. Then somehow I composed myself and asked, "Maya is of such a form? I have never imagined it. Our ancient rishis and sages carried out their spiritual practice resting in the lap of nature. They preferred the murmuring of brooks and fruit-bearing trees. They thought it was more fruitful

## Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

to stay far from cities and pass their life in the splendor of nature. Such samskaras have made a home inside me. That is the reason I said such a thing.”

Maharajshri said, “The rishis were well-acquainted with the tactics and doings of Maya. In a city there are more means for slipping. Thus they thought it more appropriate to carry out their spiritual practices in forests far from the cities. As long as this body is here, safety and satisfaction of hunger is a necessity. Water is definitely required. Thus they preferred to be near fruit-bearing trees and rivers and springs. Even in a forest there is fear of wild animals. However they considered desire to be more frightening than this fear. This in no way means that they were attached to the beauty of the forest. They knew that the root problem was attachment, whether they were in a city or in a forest.”

I said, “A normal, worldly householder who is an aspirant and has many responsibilities cannot even think of leaving the town, staying in a forest and performing his sadhana. What should he do?”

Maharajshri said, “I am aware of the difficulties of a householder. I have personally endured them. They can at least give up attachment. Living in a forest is not important. The state of the chitta is. Great saints, too, have lived as householders. If there is no attachment, beauty and ugliness, attraction and repulsion, happiness and sorrow all become the same.”

Question: “As you mention in your sermons and as I know from the study of your books, the sacrifice of attachment is very difficult. Yogis, ascetics and devotees, too, experience difficulty in giving up attachment. So is it correct that the perception of beauty and ugliness can never come to an end?”

Answer: “So long as the natural state, the state in which attachment comes to an end, is not achieved, one must practice restraint. The perception of beauty will continue to distract your mind. In every assault one samskar [impression] or another will be removed. If one loses tolerance, then the samskaras will become stronger. This is a long spiritual practice that requires great patience. Along with the erosion of samskaras, attachment will also weaken and over a period of time the perception of beauty will come to an end. Even if one falls from the path of spirituality, one should compose oneself and get back to sadhan and not give up.”

## The Problem of Maya

Among Maharajshri’s visitors there was a Judge Sahib [a Hindi term of respect; “Sir”]. He had retired from service in Ujjain. One day, when we went for our morning walk, we found him sitting on a bench at the railway station. After mutual greetings Maharajshri asked, “Judge Sahib, what are you doing in your retirement?” Judge Sahib said, “Earlier I would separate the water from the milk, now I am mixing it. Meaning: earlier I was a judge, now I am a lawyer,” and he burst out laughing.

## Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

After saying farewell to Judge Sahib, Maharajshri said, “He made such an apt statement. But why just lawyers? The whole world is involved in adding water to milk. The truth is hidden with great skill. Thieves, thugs and cheaters are portrayed as great men. A great man is proved to be dishonest. One has no food to eat at home, his every hair is steeped in debt, but still he shows himself as wealthy to the outside world. This is the era of ostentation. There may be nothing lacking in the house of a beggar, but he will act so miserable, sorrowful and deprived that you feel pity for him. It has become very difficult to find the truth.”

I said, “Maya is a criminal. The more a person is influenced by Maya, the more he will cheat.”

Maharajshri said, “You are right. That is the job of Maya. To show something that is not there. To restrict something that has no boundaries. If there is no day or night, to show that, too. To even hide the omnipresent. To make one feel happy in a state of sorrow. The hands of Maya are extremely skilled at adding water to milk. But what can be done? Today is the Kali Yuga. Having gained momentum, Maya roams rapidly in all four directions. She already has under her control the mind of every living being. Everyone is forced to see what she displays. Among worldly people, perhaps, it is understandable, but she hasn’t even spared the monks and saints. They, too, are drowning in the desire for heavenly pleasures, attraction and aversion, lust and anger, and other things. They are after physical pleasures, which merely contain a mirage of happiness. Even if an attempt is made to remove someone from the pit of Maya, no one is willing to come out. On the contrary, they try to drag the person who wants to remove them into the pit. Then those who are trying to get the world out of the pit of Maya themselves run away. They take shelter in caves, in solitary places. What an irony.”

I asked, “Maharajji, there must definitely be a way to escape from Maya.” He said, “As I observe the mental state of the common masses, it seems that, right now, there is no way of escape. Even if there were, no one is ready to follow it. When some people follow the way, they do not follow the regimen. Abstinence is necessary along with the medicine. Only then can the medicine take effect. As long as sadhana is not accompanied by restraint, sadhana cannot move ahead on the path of progress.”

Then he said, “He who is caught in the tide of a flowing river, willingly or unwillingly, is forced to flow with the tide. In the Kali Yuga all beings are in the clutches of Maya. When Maya makes one dance, he must dance – to some extent, at least. Only that being who holds fast to the hem of God’s garment can survive, in spite of flowing with the tide and dancing. Sadhana points towards the river bank. As a result the being is aware of his goal and eventually reaches the river bank.”

I said, “It is difficult not just for common people, but also for great ones to advance beyond this state.”

## Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

He said, “It is surely difficult. If you do sadhan, then the pride of sadhan drives you mad. Pride is the work of Maya and all other defects come behind it – lust, anger, jealousy, all of them. An act of love is also Maya’s pride. All defects nourish pride [the ego] and pride feeds all defects. Only the grace of God can save a being. But God himself has created Maya. Maya is under his control. She is activated by his inspiration. On one side of God there is Maya and on the other is his grace. What the being experiences is dependent upon what he desires. If he wants God’s grace, he must forsake Maya. When God showers his grace on a being he removes the Maya lying between them. All spiritual practices end at grace. If there is no grace then the being wanders around swollen with pride. Through sadhana the increase in Sattva guna [harmonious qualities] is possible but the states of all the three gunas [qualities] are subject to change. Again Tamo guna and Rajo guna will increase. The being will fall again. Until Maya allows him passage, a being cannot go across. Removal of Maya is under the control of God.”

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 Amazon.com, or in India from:

Devatma Shakti Society

92-93, Navali Gav

Post Dahisar, via Mumbra, Thane 400612

Tel. No.: 22-65148183

## The Importance of Acceptance and Patience

We sometimes hear from Sadhaks that they don't think they are making rapid enough progress on the Maha Yoga path. They claim they diligently follow the rules and restrictions, sit for Sadhan regularly, and that they experience various Kriyas (involuntary activities; physical, mental or Pranic) during their Sadhan (meditation) sessions. But, despite all this, they seem to have an expectation that they should be experiencing more exciting and vigorous Kriyas and that their progress ought to be occurring at a faster pace.

Some wonder if their progress could be speeded up by sitting for Sadhan for longer durations, or more often than once a day. Others wonder if they should practice Brahmacharya (celibacy), or give up the life of a householder and move into an Ashram and become a Sannyasi (renunciate). Still others want to know what they should do, so they too can become Maha Yoga Gurus. A common theme seems to be a desire for more and "better" Sadhan experiences and a certain amount of impatience with what they perceive is their slow pace of progress. All these concerns arise from some common misunderstandings about Maha Yoga and a lack of understanding of the importance of acceptance and patience in the practice of Maha Yoga.

Maha Yoga, at its core, is the yoga of surrender. Unlike other yoga forms which require that a Sadhak intentionally "do" various types of practices such as Asanas, Pranayama, Japa, etc., Maha Yoga does not have the Sadhak "do" anything with intent, other than to sit comfortably and surrender. The Sadhak does not surrender to anything external, but he surrenders to the awakened Prana Shakti (Universal Life Energy) within himself. Therefore, Maha Yoga is not a meditation of "doing" and striving; it is a meditation of surrendering to the awakened Prana Shakti within and observing what Kriyas and other signs of progress the Prana Shakti makes happen.

It is important to keep in mind that the Sadhak's role during Sadhan is not that of a "doer" (Karta) but is simply that of an observer. Once Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) happens, the Sadhak's Prana Shakti gets awakened, and during Sadhan the awakened Prana Shakti becomes the "doer" and is therefore responsible for all that happens. The Sadhak's responsibility is to sit for Sadhan diligently and to let the Prana Shakti do what is needed. The awakened Prana Shakti is fully aware of the Sadhak's accumulated Samskaras (impressions from current and past lives) and knows exactly what is needed for him to get rid of them and reach the final goal of self-enlightenment.

The elimination of the accumulated Samskaras is the key process by which a Sadhak achieves self-enlightenment. The accumulated Samskaras are what cause attachments and aversions in a person's mind and keep his Chitta (mind stuff) continually active and disturbed, and externally focused, thus making him unable to go within and experientially realize his true self. The externally focused Chitta causes a person to act with intent that is often driven by the expected fruits that are likely to come from his actions. This in turn causes new Samskaras to be created with new attachments and aversions, which further activate and disturb the Chitta.

The purpose of Maha Yoga is to stop this cycle by beginning the process of gradually eliminating a Sadhak's accumulated Samskaras. This happens during Sadhan when the

## The Importance of Acceptance and Patience (continued)

awakened Prana Shakti brings up individual Samskaras into the Sadhak's awareness; and when the Sadhak simply observes them and lets them go, those Samskaras get eliminated from his Chitta. The Kriyas that happen are the result of these accumulated impressions being brought up by the awakened Prana Shakti into the Sadhak's awareness and then being eliminated from his Chitta. If a Sadhak has a preponderance of Tamasik (indolence and ignorance promoting) tendencies, the Kriyas he experiences during Sadhan will be Tamasik in nature, causing him to feel groggy or fall asleep, feel fear, anger, jealousy, etc. If he has a preponderance of Rajasik (action/activity promoting) tendencies, the Kriyas will likely be physical movements, Asanas, Mudras, Pranayam, etc. If he has a preponderance of Sattvik (spiritually enhancing) tendencies, he might experience hearing Divine music, seeing "God" in whatever form he has been brought up to believe, or Saints, or simply experience a feeling of intense or subtle joy. Most Sadhaks have a mix of the three types of tendencies (Gunas) and as a result the Kriyas they experience will likely be a mix of all three types. The role of Sadhan is to eliminate all three types of Samskaras, eventually resulting in the elimination of the disturbances and fluctuations (Vruttis) of our Chitta (mind stuff) and turning it inwards.

While many of the Kriyas can be pleasurable, a Sadhak should think of the process of Kriyas as being similar to "garbage removal". A Sadhak should simply observe this process and not get attached to any Kriyas, because once the Kriya happens, i.e. the "garbage" of that specific Samskar has been removed; there is no need for that Kriya to recur. In fact, if a Sadhak gets attached to specific Kriyas, he develops new impressions which add to his accumulated Samskaras, thus counteracting the whole point of Sadhan, which is to eliminate the accumulated Samskaras. So an attitude of acceptance and detachment towards the Kriyas he experiences during Sadhan is critical for progress on the Maha Yoga path.

Once a Sadhak is able to understand this core principle of Maha Yoga, it becomes easy for him to realize that he is there just for the ride; the awakened Prana Shakti is the driver and he is just the passenger. So, it is best for him to leave everything in Her capable hands and not try to second guess where exactly he is on the path on any given day, or how long it will take for him to get to his destination. Doing so only puts the Sadhak in the role of a back-seat driver instead of a trusting passenger; and those of us who have experienced back-seat driving know that such second guessing does not bode well for the journey and in fact becomes counter-productive. It usually makes the journey less pleasant, more frustrating, and might also cause the driver to miss an important turn, thus making the journey longer than necessary.

It follows from this that in addition to being diligent about sitting for Sadhan on a regular basis, it is important for the Sadhak to accept what happens during Sadhan without having prior expectations or attachments to any specific Kriyas or other signs of progress, and being patient with one's progress. We all would like to have the best experiences during our journey and to get to our destination as soon as possible. But each of us comes into our lives with unique baggage in the form of accumulated Samskaras, which makes each of our paths unique, which results in a unique set of experiences along the way, as the Samskaras get eliminated.

## The Importance of Acceptance and Patience (continued)

The path and the pace of our Maha Yoga journey depends on the nature and the amount of accumulated Samskaras, the new Samskaras we create in our day to day lives, and the diligence with which we sit for Sadhan in order to allow the awakened Prana Shakti to get rid of the Samskaras through Kriyas. Thus, the path and the pace of the journey will be different for each of us because we come to our current lives with different sets of accumulated Samskaras; we sit for Sadhan with different degrees of diligence and attitudes of surrender, which results in differences in how quickly the Samskaras get eliminated; and we add new and different Samskaras in our day-to-day lives at different rates. So, while the destination of Chitta Vrutti Nirodhaha (the elimination of the disturbances of the Chitta) is the same, the paths each of us takes will naturally be different.

Some Sadhaks who have come into their current lives with fewer Samskaras and the resulting attachments and aversions, might find themselves making rapid progress, while others might progress at a slower pace. But these initial conditions do not guarantee the nature and pace of progress. The attitude of a Sadhak as he goes through his day-to-day life also affects the nature and pace of his progress. A Sadhak, who is a householder and conducts his day-to-day life doing even the meanest of jobs, but with an attitude of duty and detachment from the fruits of his action, i.e. being a true Karma Yogi, does not accumulate new Samskaras. He does not develop new attachments and aversions, and his Chitta remains untarnished by his day-to-day actions. On the other hand, a Sadhak who moves to an Ashram to become a Brahmachari or a Sannyasi with an express desire, arising out of impatience, to speed up his progress, or so he too can become a Guru, is unlikely to experience much progress. His actions will have resulted in new Samskaras with the concomitant attachments and aversions, which will likely retard his progress.

First, it is important for Sadhaks to keep in mind that the purpose of Maha Yoga is for them to eventually achieve Self Realization, not to become Gurus. If a Sadhak practices Maha Yoga with the intent of becoming a Maha Yoga Guru, rest assured that it will become impossible for him to experience Self Realization, leave alone the likelihood of becoming a true Siddha Guru. The Maha Yoga path is not a goal-oriented path at all. If a Sadhak approaches it with specific goals, he will automatically get himself sucked into the world of ego and spiritual progress will simply not happen.

The Maha Yoga path is the path of surrendering to the awakened Mother Energy and letting her do what is needed. If a Sadhak's spiritual progress needs for him to be in the role of a Guru, it will happen. If not, it won't. And, while someone who is not self-realized or anywhere near self-realized might think, "Wow, being a Guru seems wonderful, having all these Sadhaks following you, hanging on to your every word, etc.", the Siddha Guru in fact is completely beyond all that. He has absolutely no attachment at all to being a Guru, the role of being a Guru has "happened" upon him; he has not desired it nor sought it. As a self-realized soul whose only remaining Sankalpa (resolution) is to help others reach Self-Realization, he is only doing the job of a "postman" delivering the "mail" of Maha Yoga to Sadhaks who are interested.

## The Importance of Acceptance and Patience (continued)

P. P. Kaka Maharaj sees himself in exactly this role (the May 2009, May 2010, February 2011 and the February 2012 issues of Self Awakening available at <http://mahayoga.org/selfawakening.htm> have Discussions with P. P. Kaka Maharaj on this and other topics). He does not consider himself the “doer” even during Deeksha. He simply prays to his Guru (and thus the entire lineage) and to the Mother Energy to bless all those who are seeking Deeksha and lets the Mother Energy do what is needed. Thus Deeksha “happens”, it is not “done” by the Guru. The reason it happens when a Siddha Guru prays for it to happen, is because the Guru being in a realized state is very close to the Mother Energy and his Sankalpa for Deeksha to happen is done without any sense of ego or self at all. If a Sadhak explicitly desires to become a Guru, his ego will clearly be in the picture and it will keep him from being a true Guru. He might call himself a Guru and even have some Sadhaks follow him, but the role of his ego will keep him from being a true Guru.

Secondly, the practice of Maha Yoga does not require a Sadhak to become a Brahmachari or a Sannyasi. Most Maha Yoga Sadhaks are neither Brahmacharis nor are they Sannyasis; they are householders (Grihastas). Progress on this path does not depend on being a Brahmachari or a Sannyasi. In our Maha Yoga lineage (Parampara) some Gurus have been Sannyasis, others such as P. P. Kaka Maharaj and P. P. Gulvani Maharaj have been Brahmacharis, while still others have been householders as well.

As a Sadhak progresses along the Maha Yoga path he will gradually develop a sense of Vairagya, which is a state of dispassion and detachment from worldly life. This is the key because it begins to put him on the path of being a true Karma Yogi. Thus, even though he might not be a Brahmachari or a Sannyasi in the formal sense, his sense of detachment allows him to function as a Grihasta without developing new attachments and aversions, while the practice of Maha Yoga Sadhan keeps eliminating the attachments and aversions that arise from his accumulated impressions (Sanchit Samskaras), thus bringing him closer and closer to Self-Realization. If a Sadhak who has a huge stock of attachments and aversions related to the material world thinks that accepting Sannyas will free him from that burden, he is sadly mistaken. He will simply be taking all those attachments and aversions with him into Sannyas or Brahmacharya, and will find himself with the added burden of dealing with the frustration of not being able to fulfill the related desires, which will keep arising because the Samskaras which cause them will not have been eliminated.

If Brahmacharya or Sannyas “happens”, i.e. a Sadhak truly realizes that he has no attachments/aversions and desires he wants fulfilled in those regards, he may in effect live like a Brahmachari or a Sannyasi by being truly detached while remaining a Grihasta, or he may take the formal vows of Brahmacharya or Sannyas and follow those precepts. But it is important for Sadhaks to not think of becoming Brahmacharis or Sannyasis under the belief that it will speed up their spiritual progress or is essential for becoming a Maha Yoga Guru.

A Sadhak should sit regularly and diligently for Sadhan, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within, observe what happens, and patiently accept what happens without judgment. Gradually, his Chitta will become calm and become free of its Vrutis (disturbances), he will increasingly find himself becoming detached but contented (Vairagya) and he will begin to

## The Importance of Acceptance and Patience (continued)

experience the true bliss of Maha Yoga, not just the thrill of Kriyas. As he becomes more of a Karma Yogi, when his actions arise out of a sense of duty rather than with specific goals in mind, and he truly believes he does not have to fulfill any duties as a householder (Grihasta), might he think about becoming a Sannyasi. Sannyas or Brahmacharya should “happen” for them to be effective; they should not be taken on without the necessary sense of detachment.

**By Dilip Kamat**

## Answers to Questions from Sadhaks

- **Question:** I was initiated into Maha Yoga a few months ago and have been diligently sitting for Sadhan and following the restrictions related to food, etc. In recent days, I have noticed that physical Kriyas do not happen anymore when I sit for Sadhan. Do I still need to refrain from eating meals for four hours prior to sitting for Sadhan?

**Answer:** Sadhaks are asked to not sit for Sadhan for three to four hours after a meal because the digestive process is very active for that much time after a meal. And during that process, a significant share of the Sadhak's Prana Shakti (nervous energy) gets diverted towards digesting the food that the Sadhak has ingested and it gets directed downwards towards the abdomen during digestion.

This is exactly the opposite of what happens during Sadhan when the Prana Shakti within the Sadhak gets directed in the upward direction relative to his abdomen. This has the potential to create a conflict if a Sadhak sits for Sadhan during that period, i.e. either the digestive process will get inhibited or the Sadhan will get compromised.

Whether the Kriyas that happen are physical or not is not the issue; the restriction is not the same as the one where people/athletes are asked not to exercise after a meal because it might result in stomach pain, purely a physical/physiological effect. The effects of Sadhan on the digestive process and vice versa are more subtle, operating on the Pranic (nervous energy) level.

- **Question:** For how long does a Sadhak need to follow restrictions related to eating non-vegetarian food, garlic, onions, etc.? Is there a stage beyond which such restrictions do not matter?

**Answer:** Before answering your specific questions it is important to clarify why Maha Yoga Sadhaks are asked to follow the restrictions in the first place.

Most Sadhaks have a preponderance of Tamasik (indolence and ignorance promoting) tendencies and Rajasik (action/activity promoting) tendencies which have resulted from the Samskaras (impressions) they have accumulated over their past and current lives. The Tamasik tendencies are the cause of negative thoughts, such as indolence, inertia, selfishness, doubt, obstinacy, etc., arising in a Sadhak's mind and the Rajasik tendencies result in thoughts related to acquisitiveness, jealousy, hatred, egoism, anger, etc. If unchecked, these tendencies will block a Sadhak from making any progress on the Maha Yoga path because they will constantly cause such thoughts to arise in his mind, which will drive him to act on them, thus accumulating new Samskaras in the process and negating the whole purpose of Maha Yoga, which is to rid the Sadhak of his Sanchit Samskaras (accumulated impressions).

As a first step, therefore, it is important for a Sadhak to balance these Tamasik and Rajasik tendencies with Sattvik (spiritually enhancing) tendencies which will help a

## Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Sadhak begin to develop a sense of detachment from the material world and to overcome some of the negative effects of the Tamasik and Rajasik tendencies. It is for this reason that the Sadhak is urged to follow the restrictions, especially the ones recommending the avoidance of food and drinks that enhance the Tamasik and Rajasik tendencies and substitute them with consumables such as vegetarian food that enhances Sattvik tendencies.

With regular Maha Yoga Sadhan, the Tamasik and Rajasik tendencies get gradually eliminated as the related Samskaras get erased and the balance of the three Gunas (tendencies) begins to move towards the Sattvik. The restrictions are therefore suggested only to help a Sadhak achieve unimpeded progress on the Maha Yoga path. Eventually, however, the Sadhak has to go beyond the three Gunas, as even the Samskaras related to the Sattvik tendencies get eliminated with regular Sadhan. At that point all the Vrutis (disturbances and tendencies) in his Chitta (mind-stuff) disappear; in the Bhagvad Geeta this is referred to as Chitta Vrutti Nirodhaha or the elimination of all tendencies from the Chitta. That is the goal of Maha Yoga.

With the above context, a Sadhak does not need to follow any of the restrictions once he reaches the Nishpatti Avastha or Avadhoot stage (the final stage in his spiritual evolution). This is not because God or his Gurudev grant him the freedom to indulge in whatever he wants at that point, but because the material world, and hence the restrictions which are essentially related to the material world, become completely irrelevant to him. He will have gone beyond the three Gunas. Even though he lives in this world, he is not of this world at that stage. He is constantly experiencing Prana/Chaitanya Shakti within himself as well as in the entire universe. He is the living embodiment of Chaitanya Shakti, a Self-Realized soul, devoid of ego, completely above and detached from the material world. (The four stages of a Sadhak's evolution are described in the May 2009 issue of the Self Awakening e-newsletter archived at: <http://mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self%20Awakening%20Vol%201%20Issue%204.pdf>)

One note of caution; we all have a tendency to get caught up in trying to find out exactly where we are on the Maha Yoga path and quickly want to reach the final stage. This is a waste of time and in fact can be quite counter-productive. It keeps us from unconditionally surrendering to the awakened Prana Shakti, and the focus on the "end result" keeps us from developing the attitude of a Karma Yogi, which is very essential for spiritual progress. It is a better to assume that most of us Sadhaks will continue to remain in the Initial Stage (Arambha Avastha), so we can be happily surprised by our progress when it occurs.

- **Question:** Recently, a couple of times during Sadhan I was overtaken by sexual urges, which subsequently caused me to indulge in masturbation and ejaculation. I have been feeling very guilty about this and have been wondering if such things happen as a result of Sadhan or whether I was simply overwhelmed by my Samskaras (accumulated impressions) and Sadhan had nothing to do with it.

## Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

**Answer:** Experiencing emotions such as sexual urges is not uncommon during and outside of Sadhan. During Sadhan the awakened Prana Shakti brings up various Sanchit Samskaras (accumulated impressions from past and current lives) into the Sadhak's awareness in the form of Kriyas. Some of these Kriyas are physical, others mental and still others Pranic. The role of the Sadhak is to simply observe these Kriyas as they happen and to let them go. When Samskaras related to sex come up into a Sadhak's awareness, the Kriyas manifested can be mental, such as sexual thoughts; physical, such as experiencing erection and even ejaculation/orgasm; or Pranic, when the Sadhak feels nervous energy in his/her sexual organs. The key here is for the Sadhak to simply observe what happens and not get attached to the specific Kriyas nor dwell on them.

But often this is easier said than done, and the sexual intensity can last beyond the Sadhan and cause the Sadhak to satisfy his/her urges through masturbation or sex. There is no easy solution to this and there is no need to feel guilty about it, since the feeling of guilt will only result in adding another negative emotion to one's Chitta (mind stuff) and even cause the accumulation of new Samskaras. The only solution to this and other such issues is to continue to sit for Sadhan on a regular basis, try to simply observe what happens without developing any new attachments, and be patient. If you find yourself indulging in masturbation, etc., just attribute it to the Sanchit Samskaras that are being brought up in your awareness and not develop guilty feelings about it. Gradually, as your Sadhan progresses, those Samskaras related to such thoughts will gradually get eliminated and you will develop more of a detached attitude towards sexuality and other such emotions. The key here is regular Sadhan and patience. Eventually, all Sanchit Samskaras will get eliminated and your Chitta will become pure.

- **Question:** I received Deeksha (Maha Yoga initiation) on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2012. I have been trying to sit for Sadhan for an hour every day since then, but my legs begin to ache after 15 to 20 minutes of Sadhan, which creates a disturbance in my mind and keeps Sadhan from being enjoyable and peaceful. Should I sit for Sadhan on a chair or a sofa? Is this an indication of my not being as devoted to Maha Yoga as I should be, and if so, what can I do to strengthen my faith in Maha Yoga so I will be able to sit for Sadhan for one hour at a stretch?

**Answer:** Congratulations on your Deeksha having happened on August 2<sup>nd</sup>.

About your query, it is better to sit cross-legged on the floor on an Asana, so I would urge you to keep trying to do so. Make sure you are sitting on a soft Asana made up of a soft rug or a carpet covered with a white cloth. If your legs begin to ache/cramp after 20 minutes, stretch them or stand up for a minute and resume your Sadhan once the ache/cramp goes away. With some practice you should be able to sit for longer and longer times without suffering any pain or aches or having to get up and stretch. You might also try Hatha Yoga Asanas under the direction of a Hatha Yoga teacher to help you improve your physical flexibility and strength. You can also try to sit on the floor with

## Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

your back against a wall for support and see if that keeps your legs from cramping or aching.

However, if none of this seems to work you can try sitting for Sadhan on a couch/sofa provided you are not experiencing any active physical Kriyas (involuntary movements) which might cause you to fall off the sofa and hurt yourself. If you are experiencing active physical Kriyas I would urge you to continue to sit on the floor and try out the suggestions above.

There is no need to infer from this that you are in any way less devoted to the Guru or Shakti. Sometimes our physical limitations keep us from being able to do what is needed for our spiritual growth. But one can often overcome those limitations by practicing to sit for gradually longer and longer times without interruption, or by improving one's flexibility and strength by the practice of Hatha Yoga.

- **Question:** When I sat for initiation on August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00am as prescribed, I felt tears rolling down my cheeks. What do you suppose that means? I was also wondering if after initiation whether Gurudev is able to look into my life to help me progress spiritually.

**Answer:** Congratulations on Deeksha (initiation) having happened on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. The fact that you had tears rolling down your cheeks is an indication of the Bhakti (devotion) related emotion that the Deeksha seems to have brought up in you, a clear indication that the Deeksha happened. Different Sadhaks have different experiences during Deeksha and after they sit for Sadhan (meditation) subsequently. These experiences usually take the form of involuntary activities (Kriyas) which can be physical, Pranic (nervous energy-related) or mental/emotional. The specific Kriyas that happen depend upon the Sadhak's unique situation and the preponderance of the accumulated impressions (Sanchit Samskaras in the Sanskrit language) from the Sadhak's current and prior lives. The role of Sadhan is to bring up these Sanchit Samskaras one by one into the Sadhak's awareness, thereby eliminating them from the Sadhak's Chitta (mind-stuff).

The Sadhak's role during Sadhan is to simply surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti (Mother Energy) and let her be the "doer" of whatever happens during Sadhan. The Sadhak's role should simply be that of an "observer". If a Sadhak's spiritual progress requires him to be doing some type of Asana (physical posture) or any other physical activity, the Prana Shakti will make that activity happen automatically. If some sort of Pranayam (structured breathing) is needed, the Sadhak will find himself doing it without any specific intent on his part. The Prana Shakti will make that Kriya happen. If, as in your case, a Sadhak's spiritual progress requires him to develop some form of devotion to whatever deity he has faith in, he will experience intense emotions along those lines, such as experiencing tears rolling down his cheeks, etc.

The key here is that after Shaktipat Deeksha (initiation) when the Siddha Guru has awakened the Prana Shakti within the Sadhak, the Prana Shakti is the "doer" and the

## Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Sadhak is simply the observer. So, in that sense, the awakened Prana Shakti becomes the Sadhak's Guru, making all the Kriyas that are needed for the Sadhak's spiritual progress to happen automatically once the Sadhak surrenders to her and allows her to "do" what is needed. In fact the awakened Prana Shakti within the Sadhak is also referred to as the Guru Tattva in Sanskrit, or the essence of the Guru. So, P. P. Kaka Maharaj does not look into each Sadhak's life at all times to see what is right for him, but it is the awakened Prana Shakti within each Sadhak that knows exactly what a Sadhak needs. The Sadhak's role going forward is to sit for Sadhan every day for an hour or longer, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within him, let Her do what is needed, not have any specific expectations of what should happen (or not happen) during Sadhan, not develop any attachments to or aversions from any Kriyas that happen, and simply play the role of an observer, not the doer, during Sadhan. The awakened Prana Shakti will play the role of the Guru within and she knows you inside and out, and she, in the role of the Guru Tattva, will automatically guide you on the Maha Yoga path. Of course, if a Sadhak has any specific questions, P. P. Kaka Maharaj will be glad to address them.

**Editor's note: Please send your questions regarding Maha Yoga and Shaktipat to: [self.awakening@gmail.com](mailto:self.awakening@gmail.com).**

## Portrait of P. P. Kaka Maharaj

Shri Viraj Katdare, a student of Fine Arts (Commercial Arts, B.F.A) at the Bharatiya Vidhyapeeth, Pune, India, is a young Sadhak who was recently initiated into Maha Yoga by P. P. Kaka Maharaj. As a token of his gratitude for P. P. Kaka Maharaj's generosity, he created this wonderful pencil portrait of P. P. Kaka Maharaj and presented it to him. P. P. Kaka Maharaj was very appreciative of Shri Katdare's work and blessed him for his devotion and effort. - Editor



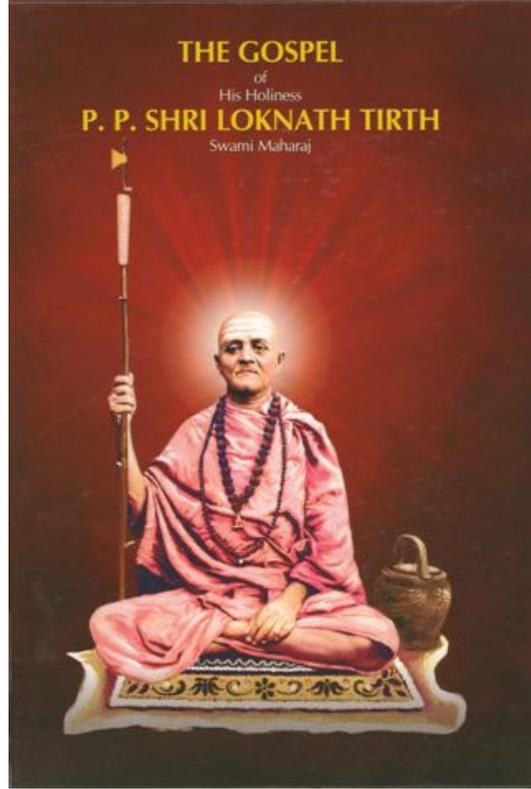
## Universal Brotherhood Day and Global Maha Yoga Trial - February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013 from 7:09 am to 7:30 am local time

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 February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013, from 7:09 am to 7:30 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 February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013, from 7:09 am 7:30 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](mailto: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:  
P. P. Shri Vasudevanand Saraswati Swami Maharaj &  
P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Trust  
Vasudev Niwas  
41/17 Erandvane,  
Pune, India 411004

Phone No. +91-20-25455584

## Upcoming Events:

Deeksha Day (Initiation Day) on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013

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

Universal Brotherhood Day/Global Maha Yoga Trial on February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Please see announcement on page 18.

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

The Thane Ashram will be hosting 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

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:

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.



P.P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami  
Maharaj Mahayoga Trust  
Shrirang Nagar, Gangapur Road,  
Nashik 422013, Maharashtra, INDIA

Phone: 91 - 253 - 2311616

E-mail: [self.awakening@gmail.com](mailto:self.awakening@gmail.com)

Self Awakening is the English  
language quarterly e-newsletter  
of the P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth  
Swami Maharaj Mahayoga Trust.

Editor: Mr. Dilip Kamat

Design: Mrs. Neha Vishwarupe

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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](mailto:self.awakening@gmail.com)

**We're on the Web!**

<http://www.mahayoga.org/>

**May all desire to follow this nectarous Siddhayoga Path!**