

Self Awakening

August 1, 2013
Volume 6, Issue 1

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 was a leading teacher and exponent of Maha Yoga, a centuries old tradition, whereby a realized Guru (Siddha Guru) awakens the Universal Life Energy (Kundalini) within the Sadhak, eventually leading him/her to self-realization.

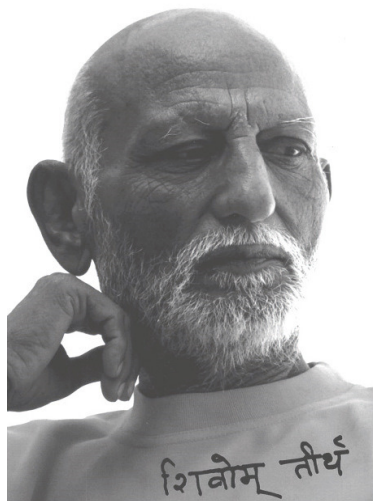
To the thousands of Sadhaks in the Maha Yoga tradition all over the world and other interested readers, this e-newsletter is intended to provide virtual Satsang. It is intended to encourage Sadhaks to remain engaged in Maha Yoga, be informed about Maha Yoga-related events around the world, and to provide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

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

Contents

Editor's note	1
Churning of the Heart	2
Remembering Kaka Maharaj	10
Answers to questions	12
Book announcement	20
Upcoming events	21
Website updates	21
How to contribute content	22

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts



The following chapter is 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

The chapter below is the Epilogue to Volume 1 of the Churning of the Heart trilogy. It is the essence of the teachings of P. P. Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj, who was P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj's Guru. It succinctly lays out many of the guiding principles of Maha Yoga and provides the Sadhak with guidance for how to conduct himself/herself after Maha Yoga initiation. - Editor

Epilogue to Volume 1

Today's era is a very frightening one. It is very difficult for aspirants. The more serious and disciplined an aspirant, the more difficulties he must face. In these days those whom you respect are determined to insult you. Those whom you love will reply with hatred. Those whom you help will betray you at the time of your need. Selfishness is so prevalent that there is no hesitation in slitting a person's throat for personal gain. Those who do not do these things still must endure it. The world has never improved, nor will it improve in the future. Even great aspirants, unable to face the flow of the times, lose patience and grow upset.

A person may go along with the times. If he doesn't do so he may become sad and disturb the chitta, or he may endure with joy and keep the chitta unaffected. Serious aspirants believe that it is beneficial to accept the third option. This secret of sadhan was understood due to the grace of Shri Guru Maharaj. I had heard and read about these things for such a long time, but until now I had never paid full attention to them. But this is the only reality. If an aspirant becomes negligent towards this, he does not remain an aspirant. By focusing on it he receives the fruit of his spiritual practice.

An aspirant has one definite path. Love and respect everyone. Remove the feeling of friendship or enmity, and love everyone equally. Forgive if someone makes a mistake. Do not allow the mind to be affected even while enduring sorrows and difficulties. Do good even to

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

those who do evil. Keep working to improve yourself and leave aside concerns about whether the world is good or bad and be ready to sacrifice anything to attain this goal. The essence of Maharajshri's teachings is as follows:

(i) Sadhan is not merely sitting cross-legged with eyes tightly closed. It is the unceasing process of trying to break the mind away from the world and unite it with consciousness. For this sadhan is necessary. So is keeping a constant watch on the movements of the mind. Stopping the accumulation of impressions is much more difficult than eroding them.

(ii) Many people take initiation but are unable to do proper and well-balanced sadhan. The Guru showers grace, but it is the job of the disciple to take advantage of it. One does not become a siddha [one who is liberated] by mere initiation. There is so much dirt inside a being that there is a need for sadhan over a prolonged period of time, for faith in the Guru, for a sense of service while performing an action, and for surrender to the awakened Shakti. All this is not possible without patience and enthusiasm.

(iii) Whether it is time for sadhan or for social interaction, a mental state of surrender and love, devoid of attachment and aversion, should be continuously maintained. For this there is a need to maintain a constant vigil on the mind. If this process is disturbed even for a moment, the mind will create some mischief or the other. The mind, always unstable and restless, is unwilling to stop at any object or place. While doing sadhan or singing devotional songs it is even more active.

(iv) Even before surrender, faith in God and the Guru is essential. If there is no faith, what kind of surrender can there be, and to whom? Surrender and tolerance have a very close relationship. Surrender and love are also dependent upon each other. Only a loving aspirant can surrender and only an aspirant full of surrender can love. Whatever be one's sadhan, love is necessary for all of them.

(v) Love is a principle that can grant continuity to sadhan. Love should be such that one's full heart is for God alone. No division of any sort should be there. Some love for wealth and luxury, some for home, family and others, and some love for God – that is divided love. A divided person can never be a devotee.

(vi) The greater the attachment and aversion within someone, the stronger is the feeling that the world is real. In addition, his mind is more affected by the events of the world. Attachment and aversion is a very acute state of the chitta. The greater the acuity, the greater the sorrow will be in the mind and to that extent life will be more worldly. Attachment and aversion are large obstacles in the path of sadhan. The tendencies of attachment and aversion are suppressed by maintaining a feeling of equanimity.

(vii) The total destruction of attachment and aversion and other defects is possible only when the Shakti, with its play and kriyas, completely erodes the impressions and tendencies and purifies the mind. Then natural equanimity will arise in the chitta. It is the duty of an aspirant to give Shakti an opportunity to perform independent and effortless kriyas. When

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

aspirants become proud and allow their wishes to affect their kriyas, the independent and effortless state of their kriyas is destroyed. Their accumulated impressions are no more the basis for them, their desires are. Kriyas on the basis of accumulated impressions are the cause of the destruction of the impressions, whereas kriyas on the basis of desires are the cause of their accumulation.

(viii) An aspirant performs his sadhan without caring for his life. He is not worried about anything other than sadhan. Whether the world makes fun of him or whether he succeeds or fails in the world, whether the world considers him foolish and cheats him -- unaffected by all these questions he remains immersed in sadhan. All great men have had to endure many difficulties. All of them were cheated by friends and strangers. All of them had to pass through the storm of success and failure and all of them had to face deprivation. Spiritual progress is not obtained by mere talk.

(ix) The entire world is filled with consciousness. Inside, outside, above, below, there is only consciousness. What people regard as inert is also a state of consciousness. However this is not something to be understood only mentally. It must be known through experience. By the grace of the Guru, this experience first takes place within us in the form of kriyas of Shakti. As the experience becomes pure, it spreads outward from within. In the world, which seemed inert, now one sees consciousness everywhere.

(x) There is a need for an aspirant to keep churning his heart. Introspection is a tool that brings an aspirant face-to-face with his real inner state. The moment his attention moves away from introspection, different types of confusion raise their head and every temptation to stray from the path comes in front of him. Churning of the heart places the defects and bad qualities of an aspirant before him, makes him aware of his existing state, and provides him with an opportunity to evaluate and improve.

(xi) Continuous efforts to purify social conduct are of great importance on the path of sadhan, because it is social conduct that drives an aspirant towards spirituality. It also pushes him toward the world. The cause of our current pitiable state is our social conduct. The development of detachment in an aspirant is very much dependent on the way he conducts himself. Conduct filled with attachment is the cause of bondage, whereas conduct filled with a sense of service is the cause of love for God.

(xii) Tolerance is another important part of sadhan. It plays a very large role in the purification of conduct, the destruction of Prarabdha and the rise of detachment. Some scholars consider tolerance to be a complete sadhan. Tolerance is the means of removing the feelings of attachment and detachment, favorable and unfavorable, and success and failure. Most of the problems of the world are due to the lack of tolerance. Tolerance gives rise to satisfaction in the mind. There can be no progress in sadhan without tolerance.

(xiii) The Shakti that is awakened within an aspirant due to the grace of the Guru should not be considered a common phenomenon. Such awakening is the most important event of one's life and opens up the path of divine experiences, real spirituality and attainment of the Self.

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

However, one must not become complacent after the awakening, thinking that now it is not necessary to do anything. The real test of an aspirant begins only after the awakening. Do not think that sadhan will continue without any obstacles. On the one hand, while the path of success is opened, on the other, a mountain of obstacles, difficulties and problems arise before you.

(xiv) The Guru-tattva [the fundamental cosmic principle in the Guru] has two forms – the external Guru and the inner Guru. The inner Guru is active in the external, physical Guru and lights up the path of progress in the disciple by means of different experiences. The fact is that, in reality, the inner Guru, or the awakened divine Shakti, is the Guru. It acts and manifests through the medium of the bodies of both the Guru and the disciple. An aspirant needs to recognize the Guru-tattva in the body of the Guru and associate with that. But to do so he first must see the Guru-tattva within himself. Only then is he able to recognize the Guru-tattva in the body of the Guru. The union of the Guru and disciple is the union of the Guru-tattva present in both bodies. At that point the Guru-disciple relationship disappears.

(xv) Guru-tattva is an all-pervading power. The beneficial aspect of this power is called “Guru.” This power also punishes a person on many occasions for his own benefit. Through the medium of the Guru’s body, it showers grace on him by imparting knowledge to him. To establish detachment in the being, this power insults, embarrasses, frightens and arranges for various kinds of sorrows, so that the real nature of the world is manifest.

(xvi) Sadhan is a systematic process that is daily, unceasing, and continuously flowing like a stream of oil in which there is no interruption, not even for a fraction of a moment. If there is an interruption, then the process of sadhan comes to a halt and is no longer sadhan. The division of time between sadhan and activities that are not sadhan-related, is only to explain the subject. In reality, all the time that an aspirant has, belongs to sadhan. Time apart from sadhan is occupied with social conduct. However an aspirant converts this conduct into sadhan, too.

(xvii) Call it a knot in the mind or a fallacy that is Maya. There is an illusion that the gross [jada] and animate [chetan] are tied together. This is not the case, yet it seems to be so. Stricken with this fallacy, the being has been nurturing pride, accumulating impressions feeling happy and sad, and has been taking one birth after the other for eons. This fallacy is the basis for the existence of the world. When it ends, the existence of the world comes to an end.

(xviii) A being sees the world according to his state of mind and thus the same world looks different to every being. A sinful mind finds the world full of sins, while a devotee sees God everywhere in the world. Inner feelings, desires, tendencies, qualities, perspectives, impressions all of them combined together determine the state of mind. If a being moves away from these feelings, impressions, and so forth, then the drama of the world will come to an end.

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

(xix) Unless one is blessed by God, sadhan is a process that goes on for a long time and in which an aspirant is tested at every step. Therefore an aspirant must maintain the continuity of sadhan with caution and patience. His inner defects incite him again and again and continually rock and corrupt his mind. On the one hand, an aspirant must wage war against his inner defects and, on the other, he must continue to try for spiritual advancement. Only an aspirant can understand this inner struggle. Worldly people laugh at it out of their ignorance. An aspirant has to endure that, too.

(xx) Until lust, anger and greed are destroyed along with their seeds, the incessant cycle of birth and death is not over. All this is the effect of attachment and aversion. They are suppressed for some time through sadhan, but again they raise their heads. Even jnanis, ascetics and yogis bow down before them when they attack. The battle between an aspirant and these defects is called sadhan.

(xxi) Generally aspirants are unable to do the expected amount and type of sadhan that is necessary. The surrender, sentiment of the mind, purity of conduct and continuity in sadhan that is needed is hardly seen in aspirants. There is no control on speech, they cannot stop the waste of time, they have interests in unnecessary acts and they lose their composure in anger. As a result they cannot maintain the sentiment and the surrender that is necessary for sadhan.

(xxii) Seriousness is absolutely necessary for progress in sadhan. It is not necessary to reply to every comment. An aspirant must listen to many things and digest them. His stomach should be huge like that of Lord Ganesha. The world is involved in unnecessary things and actions and would like to drag the aspirant with it. It is dependent upon the state of the chitta of an aspirant whether he is carried away with the worldly flow or, while remaining an aspirant, he engages himself in sadhan. After all, if one has to live in this world one has to move with the world to some extent. But the movement is superficial. An aspirant should not let his mind be influenced. Generally aspirants find a solution to this problem in solitude. This is fine to a certain extent, but it is not possible for everyone.

(xxiii) Never let your mind remain without work. Do sadhan, japa, read, sing devotional songs or do physical work. Otherwise the mind will create mischief. It is said that an empty mind is a devil's workshop. If possible, do japa while doing any physical work. Otherwise, as the hands work the mind will fly.

(xxiv) Fear, anger, lust, shyness, surprise and other feelings are also manifested in kriyas because their impressions are collected in the chitta, and when the Shakti brings them to the surface it affects the chitta accordingly. An aspirant must endure these negative influences with utmost caution. Remember that even when it is Shakti that brings them to the surface, these are the influences of the impressions. It is the duty of an aspirant to endure them, and thereby neutralize their intensity. This inner tolerance at the time of sadhan is extremely important because it is through tolerance that impressions become active and erode. If an aspirant is carried away in their flow, then the impressions become stronger.

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

(xxv) While sitting in sadhan, an aspirant must not sit with any worldly desire in his mind. As the Shakti is knowledgeable, she is very well aware of all your needs and wishes. Shakti will give you only that which is beneficial. An aspirant lacks knowledge and thus is incapable of deciding what is good or bad for him. Perhaps one of the aspirant's desires is very strong, but its fulfillment may not be beneficial for him. Also destiny plays a big role in the fulfillment of desires. A being makes lofty wishes, however he only gets what is in his destiny. The path of spirituality is a path of sacrifices, not wishes. One should be satisfied with what one gets. Whatever kriyas one has, one should recognize them as the grace of the Guru. One should not get attached to harmonious [sattvic] kriyas and one should not hate inertial [tamasic] or disturbing [rajasic] kriyas. All kriyas are beneficial. A kriya happens and goes away. It is not one's duty to wish for any specific type of kriya. That is why an aspirant is advised to maintain a sense of surrender. By making a mental wish, the kriya of the wish takes place, not the kriya of the Shakti.

(xxvi) There is no benefit in starting your sadhan with an unenthusiastic mind. It raises the possibility of sadhan being disturbed. Only on entering the spiritual battle like a brave warrior, with enthusiasm and great patience, can one wish for success. This internal battle is no ordinary battle. In fact it is a difficult battle march that can be won only on the strength of unshakable faith in God, surrender, incessant sadhan, patience and service.

(xxvii) Do not underestimate the strength of your inner foes. Well-versed in the demonic arts, these enemies have always been successful in cheating you, through many births. They have deceptive weapons such as temptation, fear, attraction, confusion, and so forth. If need arises, they also use discretion as a weapon. They say one thing and do another. They are skillful in disguising themselves as duty. You are faced with deceptive enemies who shoot arrows while remaining invisible. Thus there is a need for the aspirant to remain very alert. He has the great weapon of the Guru's grace with him, but there is a fear of getting lost in kriyas. Even if one has a powerful weapon it is necessary to use it appropriately at the proper time. Enemies can be confronted by arming oneself with weapons like surrender, tolerance, generosity a lack of anger, compassion, and so forth. In the Gita, "asanga shastra," that is, remaining aloof from the world in spite of living in it, is a great weapon of the aspirant. See the kriyas happening within as separate from oneself and stay detached from them, that is, do not be affected by them. The active Shakti will destroy the inner enemies by giving them an opportunity to use their weapons.

(xxviii) Also, do not underestimate the kriyas of Shakti. Shakti is activated on the basis of the samskaras, but always remains unaffected by them. In the form of kriyas, an aspirant has a weapon that cannot be destroyed, neither does its sharpness ever get blunted, nor does it ever rust. The weapon of kriya will definitely complete its task. The only questions are: To what extent does an aspirant use it? How much does he use it? To what extent does he seek its protection? And to what use does he put it during times other than sadhan? If an aspirant uses the weapon of kriya properly, then he progresses at an intense speed. Just as the leaves fall during autumn, in the same manner samskaras, too, are eroded one after the other.

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

(xxix) Do not be afraid of difficulties, obstacles and problems. Failure comes in order to give you new energy and strength. There is a possibility that pride may arise in an aspirant as he continues to do sadhan, and so these obstacles are presented to shake the aspirant violently and awaken him. The occurrence of obstacles is natural and also necessary, because sadhan is improved only through obstacles, difficulties and failures. The one who is frightened by them and turns away from sadhan finds himself in the middle of nowhere. The one who confronts them and gets up again when he falls, his inner-self is imbued with the fragrance of sadhan.

Another point is that facing obstacles and difficulties is a process of inner purification only. It is the samskaras of the aspirant that manifest as obstacles. An aspirant should be happy that negative samskaras are being absorbed in the form of obstacles. A serious aspirant welcomes sorrows, hardships, failures and difficulties so that his chitta can be purified as early as possible. For those who have as their only goals the purification of the mind and the experience of the conscious-self, all other things are inconsequential. Sorrows come and go. But the inner journey of an aspirant continues uninterrupted. Climbing difficult slopes, facing storms, without worrying about heat and cold, he keeps forging ahead.

(xxx) When the Shakti rises upwards it often feels as if one is going to die at any moment. There is still attachment to the body in the mind of the aspirant. He is afraid of dying and wishes to live, yet he begins to see that death is close to him. At such a time he opens his eyes out of fear and gets up from his sadhan. An aspirant must definitely understand that the kriyas of the Shakti are for his welfare and not for his misfortune. So far no one has seen or heard of a person dying during kriyas. On the other hand, many aspirants get the feeling that they are losing their lives.

(xxxi) The path of spirituality is the way to end our ego, a way to die while being alive. Therefore the defenders of ego, that is, lust, anger, greed, and so forth are ended first. The more these defects exist in a person, the stronger is his ego. Do not think that if your ego is dead, then your life will become meaningless. What a common man believes to be life, that is not life. Death is always running behind such a life and one day it takes it away from this world. Real life will begin when you have no fear of death. That life will be obtained only when the ego has been vanquished.

Whatever divine words spoken by Shri Guru Maharaj in 1960 I can remember I have written down. Maharajshri was an ocean of knowledge. The Ganges of knowledge would keep on flowing through his divine lips in every statement, but my cup was very small, and thus I could grasp only a little. From that, too, much has been forgotten over a period of time. It is also difficult to remember when he said a particular thing. In spite of this, I have attempted to compile only the events of 1960. As I have already stated in the introduction, it is extremely difficult to remember every word used by Maharajshri after an interval of forty years. However the sentiments described in this book are those of Maharajshri's, and an attempt has been made to express them in the most appropriate words. If any impurity is noticed in that, then it is the fault of my limited intelligence, for which I pray forgiveness.

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

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

Remembering P. P. Kaka Maharaj

Shri Anand M. Kulkarni, a Maha Yoga Sadhak from Pune, has been actively involved in Maha Yoga Prasar (spreading awareness of Maha Yoga), and over the years has had the good fortune of having been in close contact with P. P. Kaka Maharaj. The following remembrances of P.P. Kaka Maharaj were contributed by him for publication. - Editor

A Sadhak's role in Maha Yoga Prasar

To those Sadhaks who volunteer to participate in Maha Yoga Prasar, i.e. spreading awareness of Maha Yoga, here is the definitive guidance from our dear Guru, P. P. Kaka Maharaj himself, on how they should approach such service.

About a year or so ago, I was fortunate to be sitting in P. P. Kaka Maharaj's holy company, with a couple of other Sadhaks. I knew that despite his health issues he had recently personally gone out of his way to meet and to explain Maha Yoga to several political and public figures.

As a Sadhak also engaged in Maha Yoga Prasar as Guru-Seva (service to the Guru), I asked him if there was any point in explaining Maha Yoga to people such as politicians and other public figures who were quite unlikely to accept and follow a spiritual path, even one as effective and impactful as Maha Yoga?

To this, he looked dazzlingly into my eyes and said, "Who are we to decide about who will or will not accept this path? It is the Mother Shakti who will decide. Our job is to tell the whole world about the availability of this wonderful path in the most sincere and devoted way. Having an expectation that someone accept what we say brings us down as Sadhaks, because in doing so we have started expecting fruits from our actions, the right to which rests solely with Almighty Mother. So, even in Seva (service), be free from the expectation of fruit from that Seva and you will get immense joy."

Where else, but from P. P. Kaka Maharaj, can such a supreme secret be revealed?

The Importance of Forgiveness

Once, when I was with P. P. Kaka Maharaj, there was someone who was complaining to him about the indiscipline of one of the Ashram staff and wanted P. P. Kaka Maharaj to punish him.

After listening patiently, these were the words that Mother Shakti said through the medium of P. P. Kaka Maharaj: "Here, there is no punishment; only forgiveness."

These words struck me like lightning. May we all learn to be as forgiving.

Remembering P. P. Kaka Maharaj (continued)

Mr. Kanahyalal's story

Mr. Kanahyalal of Indore, India has shared this story of his Deeksha:

"For many years, I used to recite Hanuman Chalisa as a part of my spiritual practice, supplemented by only one prayer that I be fortunate enough to meet my Guru in person.

Many years passed this way and on one occasion, I visited a Swami Samarth temple near Dewas, India. Since Akkalkot Swami Maharaj, also known as Swami Samarth, was considered to be an avatar of Lord Dattatreya, out of curiosity I asked the Gurujī (temple priest) there as to where could I find a good and active "Dattatreya Parampara (lineage)". He told me to visit Vasudev Niwas in Pune, the Ashram built by P. P. Gulvani Maharaj and which was under the trusteeship of P. P. Kaka Maharaj at that time.

That was that; I didn't follow up for some reason or the other. After a few more years, I was at a function where devotees were celebrating Kriya Yoga Master Paramhansa Yoganand's birth anniversary. There, I met a person named Shri Alok Tiwari, who was there with his brother, a devotee of H. H. Swami Yoganand. As we were conversing, Shri Alok asked me whether I was under the guidance of any Guru. I said I am still waiting for that fortunate day to arrive but I did not then have a Guru.

On my way back, I was again with Shri Alok Tiwari, who then gave me a small booklet "Siddhayoga / Mahayoga" to read. This is a booklet on Maha Yoga authored by P. P. Kaka Maharaj and which has been translated into several languages.

After reading the book, I had a strong feeling within that its author is my Guru. Shri Alok Tiwariji and I decided to travel from Indore to Vasudev Niwas, Pune to find out more about Maha Yoga and to perhaps meet P. P. Kaka Maharaj in person.

As soon as we reached Vasudev Niwas, the attending person asked from where we had come. We said, Indore. He right away asked us to sit for a meal (Prasad) there itself as P. P. Kaka Maharaj had already told them that "two persons will be coming from Indore."

After the meal we met P. P. Kaka Maharaj and in due course Shri Alokji and I, both received Guru's grace, i.e. Shaktipat Deeksha."

Well, how did P. P. Kaka Maharaj know that two people were coming over from Indore? There was absolutely no prior communication..!! Imagine the purity of this Great One who could see all the links.

By: Shri Anand M. Kulkarni

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks

- **Question:** I have read about Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) online and I am extremely eager to receive it. However I am somewhat concerned about my ability to follow some of the rules and restrictions for those who receive Deeksha, especially the rules that require Sadhaks to quit eating onions, garlic, non-vegetarian food etc. after receiving Deeksha. I am currently a student in India but I will be going to the United States in August for further studies, and I am concerned that it will be quite difficult for me to completely avoid consuming such foods. I have also read that consuming such foods leads to extremely slow spiritual progress. So, will it be possible for me to receive Deeksha, but continue to consume such foods, although avoiding them as much as practically possible? I am aware that the process of spiritual development will proceed at very slow pace, but I am also very eager to receive Deeksha. Please guide me on this important issue.

Answer: Glad to read that you are interested in practicing Maha Yoga and are interested in receiving Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha. However, I understand that you have some concerns about being able to follow the dietary restrictions related to Maha Yoga Deeksha, especially given that you will be coming to the US for higher education.

In addressing this issue it is important to understand why such restrictions exist in the first place. The rules and restrictions related to food and drink are there for a couple of reasons. First, they limit the consumption of substances that are likely to increase Rajasik (action/activity promoting) and Tamasik (ignorance/indolence promoting) tendencies, enabling the emergence of Sattvik (spiritually enhancing) tendencies which are key for counteracting the constant onslaught of Rajasik and Tamasik stimuli one receives in one's day-to-day life and also during Sadhan. The consumption of non-vegetarian food, onion, garlic and alcoholic drinks, etc. causes a high degree of mental activity in a Sadhak, results in an increase in Rajasik and Tamasik tendencies, creates an attachment to food and drink, and creates blockages to the free flow of Prana Shakti within a Sadhak, thus being counter to what is needed for the spiritual growth of a Sadhak. Therefore the consumption of such food and drinks should be avoided as far as possible.

A second reason for the restrictions is that the very acceptance of the restrictions initiates the Deeksha process. It indicates (to the Sadhak himself, not to the Guru) a willingness on part of the Sadhak to surrender to the Prana Shakti once it is awakened. It also indicates that the Sadhak is beginning to develop an attitude of non-attachment, beginning with not being too attached to food and drinks. An attitude of surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti is extremely important for Deeksha to happen, because without such an attitude the Sadhak might feel something happen during Deeksha, but if the Sadhak's ego does not enable him/her to let the Prana Shakti do what is needed (i.e. let go and not be the doer), the Deeksha will be for naught. The Sadhak will feel frustrated that the Deeksha has been ineffective and the Guru's Sankalpa (intent) will have been in vain. Therefore, if one is serious about receiving Mahayoga/Shaktipat

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Deeksha one has to be willing to subsume one's ego to enable the awakened Prana Shakti to do what is needed.

Having stated the reasons for having the restrictions in the first place, you should also be aware of what P. P. Kaka Maharaj said regarding this topic in the last "Discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj", which was published in the February, 2012 issue of Self Awakening (archived at http://mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self_Awakening_Vol_4_Issue_3.pdf, see pages 11 and 12). He said, "The restrictions by themselves have no inherent value per se. They can be relaxed. The most important thing is the experience of connecting with the Almighty through the practice of Maha Yoga. The restrictions are there only to make the traversing of the Maha Yoga path easier for Sadhaks. That's all". To the issue of Sadhaks who have received Deeksha and would like to follow the restrictions, but their living situation does not allow them to be strict adherents, and they feel guilty about it, here's what P. P. Prabhune Maharaj (who was present during the discussion) had to say, "Yes, we have heard of many situations when Sadhaks have great difficulty following the restrictions. P. P. Kaka Maharaj's advice to them is to try following the restrictions if possible, but if you can't that is okay. No reason to feel guilty about it. Sadhaks can consider following the restrictions as "desirable" rather than "essential". And here's what P. P. Kaka Maharaj said following P. P. Prabhune Maharaj's comment, "Yes, if Sadhaks follow the restrictions, their progress will likely be accelerated. But if they cannot follow the restrictions then they need not dwell on it as there is no point in their feeling guilty. I agree that the restrictions can be considered as "desirable" rather than "essential". Those who are able to follow the restrictions should follow them because they will benefit from doing so. The restrictions are not "essential" to Maha Yoga happening; they are "desirable" for progress along this path."

So Sadhaks should use their judgment in terms of how they follow the restrictions. The restrictions are not intended to create undue hardships; they are intended to make the Maha Yoga path easier for Sadhaks. Sitting diligently and regularly for Sadhan should be the most important priority for a Maha Yoga Sadhak. Please read the entire discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj on this topic in the February 2012 issue of Self Awakening e-newsletter and use your judgment.

If you decide that you do not want to seek Maha Yoga Deeksha at this point in your life but still want some of the spiritual benefits of Maha Yoga, you also have the option of practicing the Introductory Approach to Maha Yoga as described at <http://mahayoga.org/introductorypractice.htm>. Practicing the Introductory Approach does not require you to follow any restrictions per se. You can think of the Introductory Approach as Deeksha "lite". It has the backing of P. P. Kaka Maharaj's "intent" (Sankalpa) for Sadhaks to get an introductory experience of Maha Yoga. Sadhaks who diligently practice this approach experience some of the indications of Deeksha and find themselves growing spiritually. Following this approach (without judgment) will give you the serenity and some of the Maha Yoga experiences you seek, while at the same time gradually developing in you a sense of non-attachment. And at a later point in your life you can request Maha Yoga Deeksha if you feel comfortable with receiving it.

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

- **Question:** I have received the initiation letter with the instruction sheet for Deeksha preparations. I have a few queries regarding this. The instructions given in the Deeksha sheet suggested that I use a 6'x6' woolen or silk cloth with a white cloth spread over it as an Asana. Am I supposed to sit or lie down on it? I got this doubt since a 6'x6' Asana is prescribed. If it is only for sitting, wouldn't a 3'x3' Asana be adequate? I intend sitting in my Puja (worship) room to receive Deeksha. It has a free space of 5'x5' leaving the altar. I have a wooden stool 2'x1.5' - 8" high with a padded mat of the same size. I use this stool during my usual puja rituals since I am unable to sit and rise from the floor due to my old age (75) and femur bone fracture in my right leg 15 years ago. If I have to lie down then I have to choose some place other than my puja room. Please guide me on this issue. I look forward to receiving Mother's blessings and to the experiences I have read about in the articles on Maha Yoga.

Answer: Glad to read that you have requested Maha Yoga Deeksha and have been accepted to receive it.

We suggest that Sadhaks sit for Sadhan (and for Deeksha) on the floor, on an Asana of some sort, soft enough to not have the discomfort of sitting on bare floor, but not so soft (e.g. cushions) that it might make the Sadhak fall asleep because it feels too comfortable. Sitting cross-legged on the Asana on the floor is suggested so there is little risk of the Sadhak falling off and hurting himself in case energetic physical Kriyas (involuntary actions) happen. The size of the Asana should be big enough so that in case the physical Kriyas result in the Sadhak falling back or laying prostrate, he does not hurt himself hitting the bare floor. This may or may not happen in any particular Sadhak's case, either during Deeksha or during Sadhan following Deeksha, but the precaution is suggested to minimize the chances of a Sadhak being harmed on account of any physical Kriyas that might happen.

Therefore it is suggested that Sadhaks sit, preferably cross-legged, on an Asana that is big enough to accommodate their lying prostrate on the floor, if that happens during Sadhan. It is not recommended that Sadhaks lie down on the floor to begin the Sadhan/Deeksha, because a Sadhak needs to be aware when he begins Sadhan, and lying down on the floor might result in the Sadhak falling asleep. However, if at some point during Sadhan/Deeksha, after having surrendered to the awakened Prana Shakti within, a Sadhak finds himself prostrate on the Asana and falling asleep, that in itself is a Kriya and the Sadhak need not try to fight it, but he should surrender to it. The key is to surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti and let her do what is needed and not try to suppress what happens, or intentionally do anything. The Sadhak should simply "observe" what happens, not be the "doer" (Karta) during Sadhan. Please surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti and let her be the "doer"; you simply observe what happens. If you are unable to sit on the floor for Deeksha or Sadhan because of your physical limitations, you may sit on a comfortable chair or sofa with enough padding and support so as to not injure yourself in case you have any intense or energetic physical Kriyas.

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

There is one thing I do want to caution you about Deeksha and Sadhan. And that is, **not to have any preconceived notions or expectations about what should or should not happen during Deeksha and Sadhan.** So please do not “look forward to” any experiences during and after initiation. The reason for this is that the experiences that happen during Deeksha and Sadhan are uniquely dependent on the Sadhak’s Sanchit Samskaras and the degree to which the Sadhak surrenders his body, the flow of Prana Shakti within him, and his mind, to the awakened Prana Shakti within. Sadhaks who have a preponderance of Tamo Gunas will likely have experiences/Kriyas that might bring out the indolence, anger, jealousy and other Tamasik Vruttis. Those who have a preponderance of Rajo Guna might experience physical Kriyas (involuntary actions) like bodily movements, Asanas, Pranayam, Mudras, etc., and those with a preponderance of Sattva Guna might experience mental/emotional/Pranic Kriyas that are much more subtle. So, what you might have read or heard happened to a particular Sadhak might not happen to you. But that is not because the Deeksha/Sadhan you experienced is in any way inferior to what you might have heard or read. You come to Maha Yoga with a unique set of Sanchit Samskaras which the awakened Prana Shakti within you is best aware of. So, just let her do what is needed for you!

The best thing a Sadhak can “do” is to not expect anything a priori, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within and not intentionally do anything other than to observe what happens. The Kriyas that happen are the Prana Shakti’s way of cleaning up the accumulated Samskaras in the Sadhak’s Chitta by bringing them up as Kriyas, and to the extent the Sadhak simply observes them as they happen he lets go of the attachments and aversions that underpin the Samskaras, he gets them erased from his Chitta. So, the Deeksha is the beginning of the “garbage cleaning” process of removing Sanchit Samskaras from one’s Chitta, a process that continues with regular Sadhan.

Gradually, as the Sanchit Samskaras get erased and new ones do not get accumulated as the Sadhak develops the attitude of a Karma Yogi (which will also happen gradually), the cleansing process becomes more and more subtle. A corollary to this is that a Sadhak should also not get attached to any Kriyas that happen. The Kriyas that happen are a process of garbage removal, so once a particular type of “garbage” is removed from your Chitta there is no need for the Kriya that brought up that Samskara, to happen again. So, while some of the Kriyas may be pleasurable or “miraculous” please do not get attached to them and expect them, or long for them. The idea is to have the awakened Shakti erase all the accumulated Samskaras and to take you beyond the three Gunas that will result in “Chitta Vrutti Nirodhaha”, which is the eventual elimination of the Chitta’s Vruttis leading to Self Enlightenment or Atmasakshatkar.

- **Question:** I have few questions regarding Sadhan. I have received Shaktipat initiation two years ago from P. P. Kaka Maharaj. I am now interested in taking Shree Vidya sadhana initiation, Shivyog sadhana and Sambhavi sadhana initiation by Baba Avadhut Babaji. Will this affect my Maha Yoga Sadhan? Will I lose the Guru Tattva (Guru Principle) that P. P. Kaka Maharaj has instilled in me? Is it possible to have more than

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

one Guru for Shaktipat? I am somewhat confused about these issues and would like some guidance.

Answer: First, we want to make clear to you that while we understand a little bit about what Shri Vidya Sadhana and the related Sadhanas are all about, we are not intimately familiar with those Sadhanas. To the extent these Sadhanas are intended to awaken the Kundalini Shakti within a Sadhak and to guide the Kundalini's progress, they are unnecessary if you have already experienced Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha. Once Shaktipat Deeksha has happened and the Kundalini Shakti is awakened, additional Deekshas are quite unnecessary. All a Sadhak need do is to sit for Sadhan on a regular basis, surrender to the awakened Mother Energy within her, let the awakened Mother Energy do what is needed for the Sadhak's spiritual progress and have faith in the process that will eventually lead to Enlightenment. Keys to spiritual progress on this path are surrender, acceptance and patience. Please read the article on "The Importance of Acceptance and Patience", which was published in the November 2012 issue of the Self Awakening e-newsletter available at <http://mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self%20Awakening%20Vol%205%20Issue%202.pdf>.

Second, I want to make sure you understand a very important difference between Maha Yoga **Sadhan** versus other Yoga **Sadhanas**. While most other Yoga Sadhanas involve **intentional effort** on part of the Sadhak - the chanting of Mantras, doing Pranayam or Asanas or Mudras, etc. - Maha Yoga Sadhan simply happens without the Sadhak doing anything with intent. **Sadhana** is done; **Sadhan** happens. In fact, if a Sadhak tries to do something with intent during Maha Yoga Sadhan, like intentionally chanting a Mantra or doing Pranayam or Asanas or Mudras, the Sadhan becomes ineffective in eliminating the Sadhak's accumulated Samskaras (impressions), which is the whole purpose of Maha Yoga Sadhan. Sadhana done with intent, in fact creates new Samskaras, which retard a Sadhak's spiritual progress. If the chanting of a Mantra or Pranayam or Mudras or Asanas automatically happen during Maha Yoga Sadhan, without the Sadhak's intent, then that's perfectly fine. The Sadhak's role is simply that of an observer rather than a doer, so no new Samskaras get created and accumulated and in fact, the Samskaras that made the Kriyas happen get eliminated. But anything done with intent, with an expectation that the action will bear a specific result, whether during Sadhana or otherwise, will result in the creation of new Samskaras which will accumulate in the Sadhak's Chitta (mind-stuff), retarding her spiritual progress. So, to the extent Shivyog Sadhana involves you doing anything with intent, whether it is the intent-based chanting of a Mantra or the doing of a specific type of Pranayam or Asana or Mudra, please be aware that the intentional "doing" of these Kriyas is very different from the Kriyas that "happen" during Maha Yoga Sadhan, and might go against the grain of Maha Yoga Sadhan, which is to surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within and to let Her do what is needed while you play the role of an observer.

Having said all that, it is entirely up to you whether or not you want to get initiated into Shri Vidya Sadhana and the other Sadhanas. A Sadhak typically needs only one competent Guru to make Shaktipat Deeksha happen and to have her Prana Shakti be

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

awakened. However, if a Sadhak has not experienced Shaktipat Deeksha and does not have the faith and patience needed for spiritual progress through the practice of Maha Yoga Sadhan, she is free to pursue other paths. The Shastras do confirm that full faith and the dedicated practice of one approach will lead to long term success. But as an individual you are always free to make your own decision in this regards.

- **Question:** I participated in the 'Global Mahayoga Meditation' earlier today. As directed, I sat for meditation at around 6 am. Initially I was expecting something to happen physically, so I was scanning my back to see what happens. But except for some vague sensation in the middle of my back, nothing happened. However, after some time, my attention was shifted completely to my breath. Then I started experiencing different feelings, kind of like hallucination, as if my 'non-physical' body started moving in a clockwise direction. After some time some objects like pictures started appearing in my mind and I was kind of 'piercing' and 'going into' them. In between there were some involuntary actions and sensations in my throat and mouth, which I felt my body was doing automatically, without my being the 'doer'. In last phase there was the thought in my mind of 'getting up'. But I observed it as a mere thought and stayed in the same state. Finally, I had a very strong urge to 'get up'. I tried to think of it as a mere thought, but at that point my attention shifted from my breathing to my body and gradually I ended the session. It had lasted for an hour and twenty minutes.

I have the following questions related to this event:

- As a newbie, this was my first experience of 'being in the state' for an hour and twenty minutes. What does this indicate? Was it just a one-of experience or will I continue to have other such experiences?
- Are my experiences mere hallucinations? Do I need to do something different?
- Do I need to sit daily at the same morning time or evening time will do?

Answer: Your description of what you experienced during the Global Maha Yoga Meditation event suggests that you got a taste of what formal Maha Yoga Deeksha is all about. P. P. Kaka Maharaj devised the Introductory Approach to Maha Yoga (<http://mahayoga.org/introductorypractice.htm>), which is what Sadhaks were asked to follow during the Global event, as a pre-cursor to formal Deeksha, but he also had his Deeksha Sankalpa (intention) behind it. (Please read the Discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj in the May 2010 issue of the Self Awakening e-newsletter archived at <http://mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self%20Awakening%20Vol%202%20Issue%204.pdf>). As a result, many Sadhaks who sit for Sadhan following the instructions for the Introductory Approach actually experience what for all practical purposes is a form of Maha Yoga Deeksha. So there is no reason for you to be surprised by it, nor is there any reason to be concerned about it. You are indeed fortunate to have had this intense an experience while following the Introductory Approach. You can follow this approach as often as you want every day, whenever you want (except for three/four hours after a meal), and sit

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

for as long as you feel like, until the time you receive Deeksha. Following formal Deeksha it is recommended that you sit for Sadhan for at least an hour every day.

Regarding your specific questions:

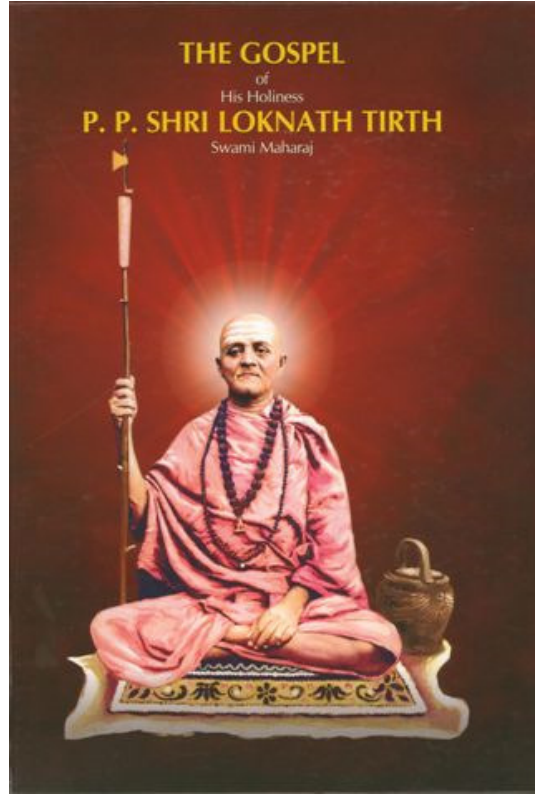
- As I mentioned above, you experienced what for all practical purposes is a form of Maha Yoga Deeksha. The experiences you described are called Kriyas (involuntary activities), which when they happen to a Sadhak for the first time, give the Sadhak an unambiguous experience of the awakened Prana Shakti (Mother Energy) within him. This is the stage when a Sadhak goes beyond just an intellectual understanding of the Prana Shakti to actually experiencing it within himself. The Kriyas serve the purpose of bringing up Sanchit Samskaras (accumulated impressions of your current and past lives) for you to observe dispassionately, which begins the process of eliminating them from your Chitta (mind-stuff). Since Sanchit Samskaras within us are unique to each one of us, given each of our unique journeys through innumerable past lives and our current ones, the specific Kriyas we experience during Maha Yoga Sadhan are also unique. Kriyas can be of three types, physical, Pranic (nervous energy-related) or mental. Most Sadhaks experience various proportions of all three types of Kriyas. It is very important, though, for Sadhaks to think of the Kriya process as one of "garbage" (Kachra) - removal. The Sadhak's role during Sadhan should simply be that of an observer (Sakshi) and not the doer (Karta). He should simply observe what happens and let the awakened Prana Shakti "do" what is needed to get rid of the Sanchit Samskaras from his Chitta. Please do not get attached to any specific Kriya, because once the Kachra of a specific Samskara has been eliminated, that Kriya does not need to happen again! Eventually, as the heavy-duty Samskaras within a Sadhak's Chitta get removed by sitting for Sadhan diligently and allowing the awakened Prana Shakti to do what is needed, the Kriyas become more and more subtle. At some point when the Sanchit Samskaras have all been eliminated, the Kriyas become unnecessary and the Sadhak reaches a spiritually elevated state, ultimately leading to Nirvikalpa Samadhi (Enlightenment).
- The experiences you had are not hallucinations at all, but are the effects of the awakened Prana Shakti within you. You do not need to change anything. Please continue to sit for Sadhan on a daily basis with an attitude of a Sakshi (observer), not a Karta (doer). Surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within when you sit for Sadhan, do not get attached to any Kriya that happens, and develop an attitude of patience and acceptance. Please also keep in mind that the awakening of the Prana Shakti, whether it happens as a result of practicing the Introductory Approach or formal Maha Yoga Deeksha, while a very important event, is only but the first step of this awakened phase of your spiritual journey. Sitting for Sadhan on a regular basis is a must for getting rid of the vast trove of Samskaras each of us has accumulated over innumerable lifetimes, and without eliminating these accumulated Samskaras it is impossible for us to reach the enlightened state.
- You can sit for Sadhan at any time of the day or night, except during the three/four hours following a meal. The ideal time for Sadhan is during Brahma Muhurta (about an hour and a half prior to sunrise) but any other time is fine as well. Sadhaks are

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

also encouraged to have a set time during which they sit for Sadhan, primarily to have it be a habit that does not get affected by the priority of the day, but that too is more of a guideline rather than a "must do". In practice, though, many Sadhaks find it easier to get into a calm state more quickly when they sit for Sadhan at a habitual time, especially when they have minimum distractions due to external noises or happenings, such as during Brahma Muhurta.

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

P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj's biography- English translation 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 Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Mahayoga Trust
P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Chowk,
Shrirang Nagar, Gangapur Road
Nashik, Maharashtra, India 422013

Phone: +91-253-2311616

Upcoming Events:

Deeksha Day (Initiation Day) on September 18th, 2013

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

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 Program Calendar at <http://mahayoga.org/progcal.htm> has been updated.

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.



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

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

To Subscribe: Please visit the
website
<http://www.mahayoga.org/>, enter
your email address in the box that
appears on the left-side below the
menu and click on 'Subscribe'
button.

To Unsubscribe: Send us an email
to (self.awakening@gmail.com) and
put 'UNSUBSCRIBE' in the subject
line.

How to contribute content to the e-newsletter

The goals of our e-newsletter are:

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

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

self.awakening@gmail.com

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

May all desire to follow this nectarous Siddhayoga Path!