

Self Awakening

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



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Editor's note

Dear Readers:

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

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

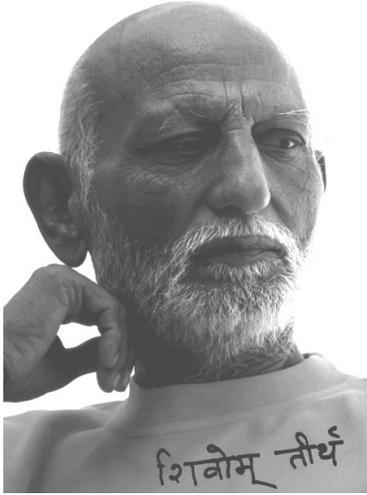
To the thousands of Sadhaks in the Maha Yoga tradition all over the world and other interested readers, this e-newsletter is intended to provide virtual Satsang. It is intended to encourage Sadhaks to remain engaged in Maha Yoga, be informed about Maha Yoga-related events around the world, and to provide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

Readers are urged to contribute questions, thoughtful articles, interesting life experiences related to Maha Yoga and news about Maha Yoga-related events to this e-newsletter.

Reminiscences of P. P. Kaka Maharaj are also most welcome. We will be glad to include them in future issues. Please send any content, comments, or questions you would like to submit to self.awakening@gmail.com.

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

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts



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

In the following two excerpts, P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj describes the time when he was given Bramhacharya Deeksha (initiation into celibacy) by his Guru, P. P. Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj. In the first excerpt he describes how Maharajshri explained to him the spiritual meaning of Bramhacharya, which goes beyond the observance of celibacy, towards developing an experiential understanding that our consciousness (Prajnana) itself is Bramha. In the second excerpt, in contrast, he describes how the trappings of being a Bramhachari, the wearing of saffron clothes and being recognized as an initiate, result in his ego getting boosted; exactly the opposite of what is expected of a Bramhachari. Many readers will recognize this as the trap that signs of spiritual progress, both external and internal, can create for an unwary Sadhak when he allows his ego to get the better of him. - Editor

My Bramhacharya Initiation

In the final months of 1960 I suffered from sciatica. It was quite a severe attack. At that time I lived in Maharajshri's cottage in the room opposite to his. I went to Indore for a week for treatment and then to Ahmedabad. On the 20th of January, 1961, I returned to Dewas. On that day the bramhacharya initiation [initiation into celibacy] of a certain gentleman was scheduled. The moment Maharajshri saw me, he said, "Good! He too has arrived."

Along with the other gentleman, Maharajshri initiated me into bramhacharya. After the initiation, he explained the *Maha Vakya* [the Great Pronouncement], "Prajnana Bramha." He said, "This is a sentence from the Rig Veda that states that prajnana [consciousness] is Bramha. But we interpret it from our point of view, which is in accordance with the philosophy of our sadhan. Prajnana is that state of Shakti that gives consciousness to the sense organs. This dynamism, be it extroverted or introverted, is nothing but the power of

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Bramha, in fact it is Bramha. Generally a living being cannot recognize its divinity and therefore thinks that it is the power of the sense organs. It has two levels, extroverted and introverted. In the extroverted state, it makes one perform worldly activities and acquire knowledge. In spite of being knowledge, it is not knowledge; that is, it is prajnana. Even false knowledge cannot be acquired without the activity of the Shakti. In the introverted state, upon purifying the accumulated impressions and desires, it moves towards the Self. In the terminology of yoga this is called chetana [consciousness] and in the terminology of jnana [the path of knowledge] it is called prajnana.

“Chitta-Shakti, Chaitanya Shakti, Chit Shakti and chetana [prajnana], all these are levels of Chiti Shakti, hence they are Bramha. The first and foremost thing in sadhan is to make prajnana introverted [turned inwards]. Then we experience prajnana through the medium of kriyas. The right understanding of prajnana cannot be obtained by only understanding its literal meaning. It is a subject of experience and not just the intellect, and that is why over a period of time the state of ‘So Hum’ [‘What thou art, I am that.’] arises. Without the experience of prajnana and lacking a pure mind, people start chanting ‘So Hum’. Before prajnana is directly experienced face-to-face, how can it be said, ‘What thou art, I am that’? Lacking experience, mere intellectual exercise is useless. The experience of the awakening of prajnana and its direct knowledge, or the sense of separation from the gross physical body, is the basis of sadhan. Just as a building cannot be constructed without the foundation, in the same way sadhan is not possible without the experience of prajnana. Today scholars have made prajnana a subject of logic, debate and sermons. However, it is a subject of experience. Only after the experience of ‘Prajnana Bramha’ are the other Maha Vakyas [great pronouncements] experienced.”

Question: “Until now you have been saying that the awakening of Kundalini Shakti is the basis of sadhan and its seat is the Mooladhar, whereas today you are saying it is prajnana and its seat is the sense organs.”

Answer: “You have asked a very good question. Every religious treatise is supported by a particular vocabulary, style and experience. Often various texts seem to contradict each other. Careful and unbiased observation reveals that all of them say the same thing. The difference is due to country, time, conditions, the author’s personal experiences and the presentation method of the subject. Vedanta is a highly advanced philosophy of knowledge [jnana] in which all subjects have been reviewed from the angle of knowledge. Thus chetana has also been called ‘prajnana.’ Elaboration of the lower levels of sadhan is almost negligible in Vedanta. Generally more stress has been laid on throwing light on Bramha. On the contrary, yoga does the difficult task of lifting up the normal being from lower levels and provides him with an introduction to sadhan. The subject of yoga is not describing the higher states of knowledge, but rather untying or resolving the knot of sadhan.

“The same is the case with devotional texts. Their sadhan is only love for God. They do not break their heads on the very advanced elements of knowledge. In this way, the various texts of knowledge, devotion and yoga each have a vocabulary and a way of sadhan of their

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

own. They have their own levels. It is natural for the sadhan and beliefs of an aspirant of a lower level to be different from those of an aspirant of a higher level. When the lower aspirant attains the higher level, there is a change in the nature of his sadhan and beliefs. The difficulty arises when an aspirant leaps ahead and directly associates with a false understanding of the tenets of Vedanta philosophy. Even though the knowledge imparted by Vedanta is true, he flies and roams in imaginations.

“With this background, we may now approach the main subject. As Vedanta does not address the lower levels of sadhan, it calls the lowest level of chetana ‘prajnana,’ and positions it there. It is also called Bramha, and the sense organs are considered its basis. The field of sadhan in yoga is from a low level to a specific level. Thus it dissects the various states of the chetana, its various levels, and its activities at various levels. By showing the difference between the dormant and awakened states, it tells us in which direction they are active. It regards the inert Kundalini as awakened towards the world, flowing outwards. The basis of the flow is the sense organs. Yoga might call Mooladhar the base of the Kundalini, but common people recognize the inert Kundalini as the power of the sense organs. In essence, this means that the inert Kundalini of yoga is the prajnana of Vedanta. The inert Kundalini can be experienced through the medium of the sense organs. An awakened Kundalini starts giving up its dependence on the sense organs and, by opening the inner door, starts advancing towards the Self. Such terminology is not used in the context of prajnana, but it can be called ‘inert prajnana,’ and ‘awakened prajnana.’ The indication of awakened prajnana was given by saying ‘Prajnana Bramha [‘Prajnana is Bramha.’] The reason we can accept this meaning is that all the succeeding Maha Vakyas require the awakening of prajnana.

“If we examine this matter from another point of view, then, in spite of the Kundalini being stable in the Mooladhar, the sense organs are the basis of its activity in the inert state. Vedanta does not say anything about the basis of the awakened prajnana. It merely gives an indication about its awakened state and leaves it there because its main topic of research is Bramha. However, disagreements arise when yogis lose sight of the goal of Vedanta and the followers of Vedanta neglect yoga in the form of sadhan. By not accepting both schools of thought as sequential links in spiritual progress, they start comparing them.”

Question: “The essence is, that prajnana, be it awakened or inert, is the Bramha in every state?”

Answer: “Awakened and inert are only technical terms. ‘Whatever the level of chaitanya, its vibrations and activity never cease. Even in the inert state, it remains active in the world. It is called inert because it is asleep with respect to the soul from which it was born. Indicating this, Lord Krishna has said in the Gita,

*Yaa nishaa sarvabhutanaam tasyaam jaagarti sayami
yasyaam jagrati bhutani saa nisha pashyato muneh.*

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

When it is night for all other beings the disciplined soul is awake,
When all other beings are awake it is night for the seeing ascetic.
(II, 69)

When the night is spread all over the world, almost all beings are established in the inert state of prajana. Neither do they have knowledge of themselves, nor do they have true knowledge of the world. At that time the yogis are awake. In other words, they are established in the awakened state of prajana. Just as a being has direct knowledge of the world, similarly a yogi has direct knowledge about the awakened prajana. In that destructible, momentary world where all beings are awake, which indicates their prajana is active, the sages who know the cosmic principles are asleep. In other words, they are disinterested in it. Their prajana moves away from this world and flows inward.”

Churning of the Heart

January 19, 1961. In the morning at eight o'clock, after getting relief from the pain of sciatica in Ahmedabad, I stepped down from the train at Dewas railway station. In front of me a hill was visible, standing with its head lifted before the clear sky. Visible in front was Narayan Kuti, shining at a distance in the cold sunshine of winter. On reaching the ashram, that very day, Maharajshri gave me Bramhacharya diksha [initiation into celibacy, on the path to Bramha – ultimate reality]. I had worn white clothes until then, but now I started wearing saffron clothes; only my loincloth remained white. The right to wear a saffron loincloth is received only after sanyas, renunciation. I started wearing saffron clothes, but I was not used to it yet. When I went to the market to shop I would feel shy. When people stared at me I would look down or turn my face away and look somewhere else. Sometimes visitors at the ashram would ask me when I had started wearing saffron and I would only smile.

On the one hand I was shy; on the other ego had begun to sprout. Now I began to consider myself different from ordinary people. What was the difference? I did not know then. So far, the difference was limited only to the color of my clothes. In the market, if someone bowed to me looking at my saffron clothes I would feel happy. Those who bowed to me became good in my opinion; my ego was on the rise. Slowly my mental state became such that if someone approached me I would expect him or her to bow. If he passed by without bowing I would feel disappointed.

Even in the ashram I began to feel that I was someone special in contrast to others. In place of feelings of service, I began to feel that I had special rights. There was no difference in the work I was doing but there was a difference in my attitude. Thus Bramhacharya diksha had an adverse effect on me in the beginning. This was not really due to Bramhacharya diksha but to the saffron clothes. One day, upon introspection, I found that I was on the way to a downfall. Pride and display were growing in me. The feeling of being someone special in

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

comparison to others was arising in me. I had come to expect a show of respect. Observing this state of my mind I became frightened. I was better off before getting Bramhacharya diksha. My mind was already polluted, and now was added a heightened ego. Who knew where it would take me? I was shaken. I decided to present the whole situation to Maharajshri.

At the time of our morning walk I presented the situation to Maharajshri. I described my mental state and lamented my regression. Maharajshri became serious and said, “Bramhacharya diksha means that you are now entering upon the life of a tapasvi – an ascetic. You are well familiar with the meaning of tapa: It means lighting a fire under you, burning the tendencies and impressions, destroying your mind and ego. With a peaceful chitta and tolerance, go through life and put an end to your destiny. It means controlling the senses and burning the jiva bhava, the individual identity, to ashes. Very often people doing austerities develop pride about them, whereas the purpose of austerities is to annihilate the ego. You have not even started austerities. You have simply pledged to live an austere life. Because of this your pride has begun to increase. This means that you still lack discrimination. You will have to make an effort to clearly understand and grasp the purpose. Only after understanding the intent [of diksha] does the question of implementation arise.

“Your problem is due to lack of discrimination, but there is another factor here. The source of your ego is your saffron clothes. You have not understood their significance and implications. The saffron color is a symbol of fire and fire reflects austerities. The way in which anything thrown into fire turns to ashes, similarly whatever you throw into the fire of austerities – all desires, memories, defects, impression and destiny – are consumed. There is a defect in the austerities of an aspirant whose ego or anger increases due to austerities. That person who puts on a saffron robe but does not live an austere life is deceiving people. The defects of his mind never get burned away. In the fire-pit of his chitta, the fire of austerity is not yet ablaze.

“There is one more thing to be understood about the saffron color. Geru [the soil used for dyeing saffron clothes] is a special kind of silt. Its saffron color symbolizes the fire of austerities, and also indicates that, ultimately, all is going to be one with the earth. For this reason Bramhacharis and sanyasis [renunciates] wear it while they are still alive. This is to remind them that if they are ultimately going to be one with the Earth then why have an ego? After this analysis you need to look at yourself carefully. After wearing geru, which should remind you of the fire of penance and ultimate merging with the Earth, you have instead given rise to pride. In this way you have not only insulted geru, but you have also exemplified your ignorance.”

This advice pierced through my heart like a sharp arrow. On the one hand I was ashamed of myself and hated myself; on the other I was enthused to receive the appropriate guidance. It was natural for me to resolve to fight with my ego. I touched Maharajshri’s feet there on the road and accepted that this was really my own mistake. “I should have started on the path of austerities after Bramhacharya diksha. Instead, because of my ignorance, I turned

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

towards egoism. Now please tell me whether one can walk on the path of austerities without formal initiation into Bramhacharya?"

Maharajshri replied, "Formal initiation is not just a mere act of performing the external ceremony. It should influence the mind. If the external ceremony were a necessity then householders would have no authority to perform austerities. There are householders who conduct their married life according to the scriptures and live like ascetics. Most of the ancient rishis [sages] were householders. Each phase of life has its own rules and regulations. By following those rules one can live a life of an ascetic."

We had returned to the ashram and my mind was filled with a constant stream of thoughts. I had lived like a voluntary servant and I must continue to do the same. A servant does not have anger, pride or narcissism. A servant does not demand anything. He does not demand any authority. His only authority is to serve. Then how come I felt that I was someone special? A year earlier I had made the decision to serve my Guru. Then why were my feelings opposing my decision? My mind was filled with remorse. I kept on thinking that I could not fulfil the duties of a servant. Ego, anger and selfless service cannot co-exist. My heart sank frequently and I kept on trying to lift it. Finally I decided that as long as I lived in the ashram I would remain a servant. I would neither expect any special authority nor expect to be respected.

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**

Democracy and Dharma

Human civilization, after painfully experiencing the perversions of monarchy and aristocracy over millennia, is bravely marching ahead and embracing democracy, famously described as rule 'by the people', 'of the people' and 'for the people', with the last part actually implying 'for the good of the people'. But, we have often heard the wise declare that rather than the form of rule, the good of the people lies in 'Dharma'. Is this true? And if so, can democracy support Dharma and coexist with it without creating conflicts?

Some people equate Dharma with religion and might question whether it makes sense to bring religion into the political realm. But, this is not about mixing religion and politics. Dharma is defined as '*Dharayati, Uddharayati iti Dharmah*', which means, 'that which supports and is responsible for the existence and sustenance of a particular system, is its Dharma'. Under this definition of Dharma, it has nothing to do with religion. It is also a fact that all systems, whether natural or man-made, without exception, have some Dharma, some power from whence they emerged and continue to depend upon for sustenance. Being a system, democracy too then must have Dharma, the power to which this people-owned, people-driven system owes its existence and sustenance.

Some may say that a democracy arises out of its Constitution and depends on the laws and the rights and duties of its citizens as defined in the Constitution for its continued functioning and health. So, shouldn't we consider the Constitution of a democratic state as being its Dharma? It might be tempting to do so but it would be wrong. Because the creation of the Constitution and the observance of the laws and the rights and duties that it grants its citizens, is itself dependent on the collective power and the aspirations of the human beings that make up a democracy. The system of democracy is therefore comprised of the vast number of distinct and diverse human beings that are its citizens. Therefore, we have to address a more fundamental question, as to what powers and energizes the human beings themselves that make up a democracy.

The tremendous diversity of how the citizens of a democracy sense, think and act is an important benefit of such a form of government, because it can bring all types of diverse viewpoints to bear on every major issue that affects its citizenry, often leading to long-lasting solutions that are well thought through and bought into by its citizens. However, if the diversity of opinions is not based on a shared sense of the common good, democracy can lead to turmoil or paralysis and unnecessary suffering. This brings up the question; can the diverse minds of so many individuals in a democracy, while maintaining their diversity and distinctiveness, have a shared sense of what defines the common good? Is there a common factor or a common power that underlies the minds of so many people? We are in effect asking, "What is Dharma for the human mind?"

One might expect the answer to this question to be complicated, but it is surprisingly quite simple. The Dharma of the human mind is the Prana Shakti, the mysterious life-principle or life force that animates us as long as we are alive. It is this Mother Energy from which emerges the mind and which continues to sustain it and drive it throughout life, hence representing its Dharma.

Democracy and Dharma (continued)

If humanity has any dreams of coming together with a shared sense of the common good, then we all must, for a few minutes daily, engage our minds in its underlying Dharma, i.e. engage with the Prana Shakti within us, setting aside for some time the worldly activities dictated by the objects of the senses.

This is not at all difficult as it may sound! Although Prana Shakti pervades the entire universe, for us air-breathing humans, breath is the signature of Prana Shakti, i.e. the life-principle. Thoughts too, owe their existence to Prana. Hence, for humans, our breathing is an easily observable activity (Kriya) of Prana Shakti and the air that we all breathe is its most perceptible form. One can thus easily allow the mind to get merged with the Prana Shakti, as represented by the divine air that we all breathe as long as we are alive, for a few minutes every day. Here's how:

- Sitting in any comfortable position, let your body relax as much as possible. Relax as if the body is not there!
- Close your eyes calmly, with deep devotion to Prana Shakti, the Divine Life force within.
- Let your normal breathing take place while simply observing the air automatically entering and leaving your body, or sometimes even remaining still. Your surrender to the Prana Shakti should be so deep that you let the Prana Shakti itself do the breathing!
- Allow full freedom to the Prana Shakti, the divine life energy within you. Do not do anything of your own will. This is the cardinal principle. Those who observe this process of normal breathing with a sense of deep devotion to the Mother Energy within, will gradually begin to experience currents of energy rising up and up along the spine. Some may even experience involuntary body movements or the upwelling of emotions and thoughts. Such involuntary activities are called Kriyas. Please allow the Kriyas to take place without fearing them or getting attached to them. Simply observe them and let them go. The Kriyas take place thanks to the Prana Shakti doing the cleansing work within.

Sit this way every day for at least 18 minutes or longer. Better still; open your eyes only when the Mother Energy opens them for you.

With daily and regular practice of this simple approach, gradually the aspirant will be able to experience the joy of existence that goes beyond his body and mind. If we all can experience this pure joy that is free from the demands of our individual bodies and minds and is the common animating energy within us all, it will certainly lead to a shared sense of brotherhood and mutual cooperation in all our day to day interactions. It can therefore be the basis for the common Dharma that can make our democracies more effective and bring about true world peace! Air is neither specific to any nation, race or creed, nor biased towards any individual.

Democracy and Dharma (continued)

This simple practice has the potential to also become the foundation for everyone's spiritual journey, because it at once connects us to a divinity within us that purifies and stabilizes the mind, enabling it to understand the subtleties and differences among the various cultures of the world, while recognizing the common Divinity that resides in us all.

Let us all try this. Let us give the nectar of Prana Shakti a chance to bring about peace within each of us and all over the world!

By Anand Murlidhar Kulkarni
Email: mahayoganand@gmail.com

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks

- **Question:** I have been trying out the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga (<http://mahayoga.org/introductorypractice.htm>) for a few days and during meditation I find myself chanting Aum internally along with my breath. Also, sometimes my focus remains at my forehead and I feel a divine light is blessing me, and when that happens, my breathing stops automatically. As suggested in the instructions on the Introductory Practice I try to keep my focus on my breath, but with my internal chanting of Aum and my breathing stopping occasionally, how can I maintain my focus on my breath?

Answer: The meditation experience you described, with Aum remaining continually in your Chitta (mind stuff) while observing your breathing, and the feeling of divine light/energy while your focus remains at your forehead are types of Kriyas. Kriyas are involuntary activities, physical, mental or Pranic (energy flow within the body), that happen during Sadhan (meditation). The key here is “involuntary”; i.e. activities that happen without any intent on your part. When you sit for the Introductory Practice, please do not try to do anything with intent; simply observe what happens.

For most Sadhaks who try out the Introductory Practice, usually the only easily observable Kriya that happens automatically to them is their normal and automatic breathing. That is why they are asked to observe the Kriya of normal and automatic breathing, a Kriya that all humans experience as long as they are alive. The key here is “observe” not “focus”. You are somewhat fortunate that you are already beginning to experience Kriyas other than just your normal and automatic breathing.

So don't try to “focus” on your breath or on your forehead, or do anything with intent, simply observe your breath going in and out of your body, or being still inside or outside your body, as seems to be happening in your case with the stoppage of your breath for short periods. If you find yourself no longer observing your breath, but observing some of the other Kriyas that are happening, such as the automatic internal chanting of Aum or the feeling of divine light, that is perfectly fine. When you sit for Sadhan do so with an attitude of surrender to the Prana Shakti within you and let Her do what is needed for your spiritual progress. Your role should only be that of a detached observer (Sakshi).

As you continue to sit for Sadhan (the Introductory Practice is also a form of Maha Yoga Sadhan) the Kriyas that happen might change over periods of weeks or days. So please do not get attached to any of the Kriyas that happen nor fear them either. Kriyas, whether physical, mental or Pranic are the process whereby the Prana Shakti within you brings up in your Chitta the Samskaras accumulated during your current and past lives. When you observe the Kriyas with a sense of detachment as a Sakshi instead of as the Karta (doer) of the Kriyas, the Samskaras underlying the Kriyas get eliminated. So, in a way the process of Kriyas happening can be compared to Kachra (garbage) removal, i.e. the removal of the Sadhak's Sanchit (accumulated) Samskaras. Gradually, with regular and diligent Maha Yoga Sadhan, the accumulated Samskaras and the Vruttis (tendencies) that are in a Sadhak's Chitta will get eliminated. Thus Maha Yoga fulfils the dictum “Chitta Vrutti Nirodhaha” as the goal of Yoga practice.

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

- **Question:** I would like to get your guidance on whether or not ghosts and evil spirits (Dushta Atmas) exist. I also want to know if Tantric practices and the chanting of Mantras can bestow powers on practitioners who may use such powers for good or bad. I don't think God will allow such things to happen because God is the only one who can punish people based on their Karma. Please guide me in my thinking on these topics.

Answer: After death, a person's gross physical body perishes, but the Samskaras and Vasanas (attachments and aversions) that have accumulated in his Chitta continue on along with the Atma to enter an appropriate Yoni (class of beings). In some cases the Atma might continue its existence in the form of spirit beings that may be "good" or "bad". In other instances the Atma might enter a human or animal Yoni. In still other instances, such as in the case of spiritually advanced beings, the Atma might merge with the Param Atma. This all depends on where the Atma is on its spiritual journey, a journey it has been on for innumerable lifetimes. So spirits and spiritual beings do exist. There are written descriptions of some advanced Yogis such as P. P. Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj and P. P. Swami Loknath Tirth Maharaj having encountered both "good" and "bad" spiritual entities. Yogis and spiritually advanced people such as them do not get affected by the intent of any "bad" spirit beings, and their contacts with "good" spiritual beings usually help them on their own spiritual journey.

Mantras and Tantric practices do have the ability to endow upon practitioners certain powers which are also referred to as Siddhis. The recitation of Mantras can have the power to affect certain outcomes because of certain vibrations they create in the Prana Shakti which underlies our entire universe. Such practices can be used for "good" or "bad". Once again, Yogis and spiritually advanced people are not affected by the powers that come from such practices.

In these matters it is important to note that "God" does not sit somewhere monitoring what each of us does. Whether we are "good" or "bad", is of little relevance to the cosmic reality. And in Maha Yoga we have to go beyond "good" and "bad". What happens to each of us depends on our Prarabdha and on our own Karma (actions). And our Prarabdha is not doled out to us by a "God" who is keeping score of our Karma, but is the result of our accumulated Samskaras over numerous lifetimes. As Maha Yoga Sadhaks, it is best for us to not get too involved with such issues. Diligent Maha Yoga practice will protect us from the intent of entities who might want to do us bad, and since we have to go beyond both "good" and "bad", why waste time and mental energy worrying about such things?

- **Question:** I have been reading this book Autobiography of a Yogi by Swami Yoganand in which he also talks about Kriya Yoga. How is Kriya Yoga different from other forms of Yoga, especially Siddha Yoga/Maha Yoga that we have been initiated into? Will it help me in any way? I have also been thinking about Kundalini yoga. I have read that there are a few Asanas or Kriyas, as they call it, that help in opening the Chakras. Is it

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

advisable for me to try these out or should I be initiated by our guru into such practices? I realize that as Maha Yoga Sadhaks we have been told to only sit for Sadhan (meditation) and regulate our diet but when I found out about the existence of Kundalini Yoga and Kriya Yoga I was wondering how they differ from Maha Yoga which is my current approach.

Answer: We are no experts on Swami Yoganandji Maharaj's Kriya Yoga but from what we understand about it, it is a Yoga of "effort", i.e. the Sadhak is the "doer" of the Kriyas, and he/she does the Kriyas prescribed with the intent of doing them. The same thing applies to Kundalini Yoga, where the Sadhak "does" Asanas or specific Kriyas with the intent of opening specific Chakras. All these effort-based forms of Yoga are very difficult to practice, require the long term guidance of experienced Gurus, and because the Sadhak is the doer throughout the practices, it becomes quite difficult for him to give up his doership during the advanced stages of Yoga (Samadhi stages) when it is absolutely necessary to have one's ego be subsumed.

In contrast to all these effort-based forms of Yoga practices which have the Sadhak be the "doer", a Siddha/Maha Yoga Sadhak is not asked to do anything with intent during Sadhan. All he need do is to surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within him, let Her freely "do" what is needed, while the Sadhak simply observes what happens.

This right away puts the awakened Prana Shakti in the role of the Karta (the "doer") and the inner Guru, and the Sadhak in the role of the Sakshi (observer). The Kriyas that happen, whether physical, mental or Pranic, are not "done" by the Sadhak but are the work of the Prana Shakti as she goes about the process of getting rid of the Samskaras that have been accumulated by the Sadhak during his current and past lives. If a specific Asana or Mudra is needed for the Sadhak's spiritual progress it will happen automatically. If a specific Mantra is needed, the Sadhak will find himself chanting that Mantra without any effort or intent on his part. If he needs to experience certain Pranic flows or even specific emotions, they will happen without any effort or intent on his part. His role during Sadhan should only be that of a Sakshi (observer) and not get attached to or afraid of any of the Kriyas that happen. He should simply observe the Kriyas that happen and let them go.

By being only a Sakshi (observer) to this process of Samskara elimination, the Sadhak does not accumulate new Samskaras and instead rids himself of his past accumulations. Eventually, as the Sadhak begins to develop the attitude of a Karma Yogi (which also happens without effort with diligent Maha Yoga Sadhan) and quits accumulating new Samskaras in his day-to-day life and during Sadhan, the Prana Shakti is able to complete her job of getting rid of the Sadhak's trove of accumulated Samskaras, taking him to the advanced stage of Savikalpa Samadhi. At that point, given that his entire practice of Yoga till then has been devoid of ego or doership, his continued surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within makes his transition to Nirvikalpa Samadhi that much easier compared to other effort-based Yoga practices.

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

So, simply surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you and let her do her magic!
You simply watch (observe) what happens!

- **Question:** (From a Sadhak living in England). Around 20 years ago I experienced spontaneous illumination while in meditation. I now believe this, correctly or not, to have been a level of Samadhi, and Mother Kundalini rising to the Sahasrara. Having had this experience, it totally changed my life. Over the years the illumination, while in meditation, became less frequent, and shorter. Due to this, and from extensive reading, I began to look into receiving Shaktipat and maybe even finding a teacher.

Around 4 or 5 years ago I received distant Shaktipat initiation by the grace of Shri Narayankaka Dhekane Maharaj. Having received this, I was not aware of any changes within my psyche. I then took distant Shaktipat from Guru Madan Gautam from Delhi, (who says he is connected to Tirth lineage). Last year in February I travelled to India and received Shaktipat directly from Madan Gautam. It was a profound experience, yet I didn't receive what I was expecting. Upon returning to England I started to experience laughing and crying Kriyas. The crying became so intense that it started to lead me into depression, and the continual inner bliss I had been experiencing for several years previously, vanished. I prayed for the crying to stop, and it did. I then wanted it back. Madan Gautam told me it would be ok to take further Shaktipat from another, should I feel it would benefit me. In June last year, Swami Nardanand Tirtha from Ujjain was in London, so I spoke to him, and I received Shaktipat again. The Kriyas started as before, but not so intensely. A year later now, I am considering seeing Madan Gautam again. He tells me, and gives me the impression, it is good to see your Guru at least once a year, and further Shaktipat would help accelerate my development.

My questions are; do I need further Shaktipat? Will it help me? Is Shaktipat from different Guru's and Swamis, although the same Divine Mother Shakti, slightly influenced by the person who is giving it? The energy I received from Madan Gautam appeared extremely powerful, with a very strong sexual element. It didn't feel so much spiritual, more of a sexual nature. Is this normal?

Some days I feel Shakti quite intensely and the laughing and crying kriyas are less now, and not so intense, but now I have this hip rotation as though I am making love or being made love to. Also the crying feels as though I have a Tibetan entity within me that chuckles and laughs and is enjoying what I am experiencing, almost in a perverted manner. I always try to remain purely an observer. This is all so far removed from the illuminations, the Light of the billion suns, and the Divine bliss that I used to experience. There are other things that I wish to say, yet on an intuitive level, I also believe and feel that Mother Shakti will be within this email, so the answers that I need will be returned.

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Answer: Glad to read that you received Deeksha from P. P. Kaka Maharaj a few years ago. Thanks for sharing with us your experiences and history related to Shaktipat and Mahayoga. It gives us a basis for responding to your questions with some understanding about what you have been going through over the years.

You clearly had some kind of an awakening 20 years ago. This suggests that you must have had your Kundalini awakened in a prior life and the spontaneous awakening in this one was a result of the prior awakening. Often such spontaneous awakenings can be wonderful experiences for some Sadhaks, but they can also be somewhat troubling to others who may not understand what has happened or the awakening might not be at the level needed to sustain the Sadhak through spiritual growth in his current life. So, we are glad you decided to receive Shaktipat initiation (Deeksha) from P. P. Kaka Maharaj by making an e-mail request. Receiving such an initiation helps regulate the awakened Prana Shakti after a spontaneous and uncontrolled awakening has happened.

Having said that, it is completely unnecessary for you to seek Shaktipat Deeksha from other Gurus. The Gurus you mentioned are all from the same tradition/lineage as P. P. Kaka Maharaj and it is a good thing for Sadhaks to be in their presence. But once the Prana Shakti is awakened and regulated, i.e. it is directed inward towards your Atma with the level of intensity you need, subsequent Shaktipat Deekshas are completely unnecessary.

All a Sadhak need do once Shaktipat has happened, (which it clearly has in your case) is to sit for Sadhan regularly without any expectations of or attachments to or fear of any specific Kriyas, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within, and simply observe what happens. Playing the role of an observer (Sakshi) instead of seeing himself as the “doer” is extremely important. A Sadhak should not do anything with intent during Sadhan. If you experienced laughing and crying during Sadhan, there is no reason to get elated or depressed about such Kriyas. The Kriyas of laughter and crying are not of your doing or intent; they are the work of the awakened Prana Shakti within you bringing up Samskaras (accumulated impressions from current and past lives) into your Chitta (mind stuff) for you to observe and to let go!

P. P. Kaka Maharaj used to compare the process of Sadhan to garbage removal. During Sadhan, the awakened Prana Shakti brings up past Samskaras into a Sadhak's Chitta by expressing them as physical, mental or Pranic Kriyas/activities. If the Sadhak simply observes these Kriyas without getting attached to them or fearful of them and lets them go, the Samskaras underlying those Kriyas get erased from the Sadhak's Vignyanamaya Kosha (the “hard disk” that stores all past accumulated Samskaras - see the article “Revealing the Paramatma Within” beginning page 6 in the May 2013 issue of Self Awakening archived at <http://tinyurl.com/krmcu7c> for a description of the five Koshas that cover the Atma). This is the process whereby the garbage of past Samskaras is removed from the Sadhak's Chitta, which is the entire purpose of Sadhan.

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

On the other hand, if a Sadhak gets attached to or fearful of specific Kriyas, or sees them as his own doing, new Samskaras get created and instead of having the “garbage” getting removed, the Sadhak ends up accumulating new “garbage” - new Samskaras that arise out of the new Kriya-related fears or attachments. So, please do not fear the Kriyas of crying nor get attached to the “illuminations, the Light of the billion suns, the Divine bliss” that you used to experience. All these Kriyas are of the same worth - they are simply the process whereby the Chitta is being cleansed. More vigorous Kriyas, physical mental or Pranic are no better or worse than the more subtle Kriyas. In fact, as the Sadhak progresses on the spiritual path, the vigorous physical Kriyas, which are the expressions of Rajasik and Tamasik Samskaras and tendencies get replaced by more subtle Pranic and mental Kriyas. None of these are better or worse than the others, they are simply being brought up into the Sadhak’s ken for him to observe them as the work of the awakened Prana Shakti and to release them from his own “doership” thereby erasing the Samskaras that caused them to rise up in the first place.

The specific Kriyas you mentioned experiencing recently and after you had received Deeksha from Shri Madan Gautam, some with a strong sexual content, are not the result of anything specific related to the transfer of energy you might have experienced from Shri Gautam. The energy transfer does not have any such qualities such as sexuality or joy or sadness. The Shakti is completely neutral. The Kriyas are your own Samskaras being brought up. And we all have such Samskaras from our past (current and prior lives), and they will get brought up. But there is nothing to fear or get attached to. Just observe what is happening and understand that the awakened Prana Shakti is conducting the process of “garbage removal” very effectively. Just let her do her job! Also your description of feeling a Tibetan entity within you chuckling and laughing at some of the Kriyas you are experiencing is itself a Kriya. Just observe all these happenings, as you say you are, and attribute them to the awakened Prana Shakti within, without trying to value them as more or less “good” compared to your past experiences. They are what they are and they are happening when they need to happen.

About your question regarding seeing one’s Guru periodically: it is of course a good thing to be in the presence of one’s Guru, both to get guidance from him/her and also to benefit from being in the presence of a strong source/conduit of Prana Shakti. However, it is not essential. Once a Sadhak’s Prana Shakti has been directed inwards (awakened), she becomes his inner Guru and guides him during Sadhan. Gradually, a Sadhak also learns to listen to his inner Guru not only during Sadhan but also in his day-to-day life. So, it is a good thing to visit Shri Madan Gautam or others in the lineage who might come by in London or elsewhere, but it is more important to be in the presence of the inner Guru during Sadhan and to surrender to her.

We would also suggest that you develop an attitude of acceptance and patience. Many Sadhaks want to reach self-realization right away and want to know what they can do to get there fast. But there is no faster, easier and effortless way to get there other than Maha Yoga. In fact, the harder one tries to get there with a sense of doership, the more

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

distant it gets. Maha Yoga is the Yoga of surrender and “happening”; it is not a Yoga of “doing”.

- **Question:** We are told that Sadhan helps a Sadhak eliminate the Samskaras (impressions) he has accumulated over lifetimes through the Kriyas that happen during Sadhan. We are also told that the elimination of Samskaras reduces the attachments and aversions a Sadhak has to people, things and activities in the material world, thus helping him to become detached. But I don't understand how Kriyas such as involuntary and unintended Asanas, physical movements, falling asleep, dancing or singing, etc. can cause this to happen.

Answer: In our day-to-day life, the thoughts that constantly arise in our Chitta occur because of the Samskaras that bubble up from the Vignyanamaya Kosha (the “hard disk” that stores all past accumulated Samskaras - see the article “Revealing the Paramatma Within” beginning page 6 in the May 2013 issue of Self Awakening archived at <http://tinyurl.com/krmcu7c> for a description of the five Koshas that cover the Atma).

When these thoughts arise we get pleased/displeased with what they signify (people, places, things), and we act (or not act) on them with explicit intent. At those times we are in the mode of a “doer”, and when we are in that mode, the Samskaras get reinforced and even new ones get created as we experience pleasure/displeasure when the thoughts arise or on the results of our action/inaction. If the thoughts or the results of our actions cause us pleasure/happiness we develop attachments to those thoughts and actions, etc. and if they cause pain/displeasure, we develop aversions, i.e., we reinforce our impressions and/or create new impressions, thus building up our trove of Samskaras.

The Kriyas that happen during Sadhan are also the result of the Samskaras being “expressed” as they come up from the Vignyanamaya Kosha into our Chitta (mind stuff). But since the Sadhak is in the mode of a Sakshi and not the “doer” (Karta) having surrendered to the awakened Prana Shakti within, the awakened Prana Shakti plays the role of the “doer” and causes the Kriyas to “happen”. If the Samskaras that come up are Tamasik in nature, they get expressed as negative emotions/feelings such as anger, jealousy, etc., or the Sadhak might simply fall sleep. If they are Rajasik Samskaras, they might get expressed as physical/body movements and even Asanas, or Pranic movements such as surges of energy in various parts of the body. Sattvik Samskaras might get expressed as feelings of compassion, Bhakti (devotion), elation, etc., as well as pleasurable Pranic activities. Usually Kriyas may not be so clearly identifiable, they might have a blend of different types of Samskaras that underlie them.

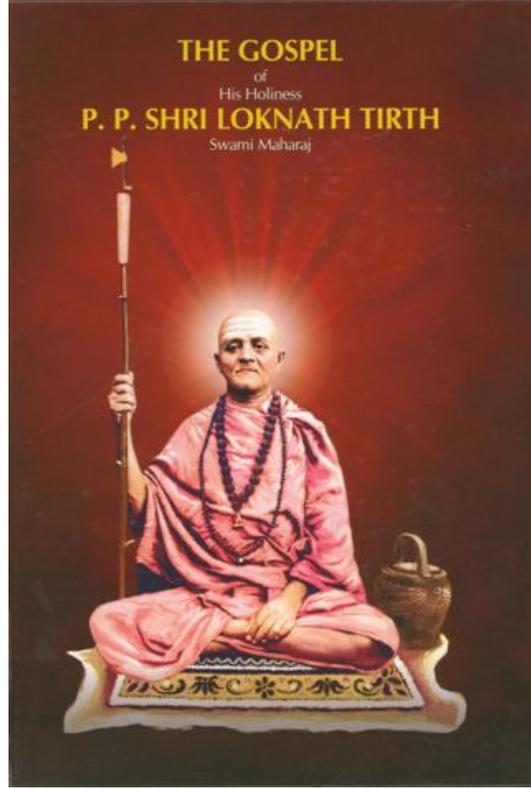
But regardless of the specific type of Kriyas, as long as the Sadhak is in the role of a Sakshi, and allows the awakened Prana Shakti to “express” as Kriyas the Samskaras that bubble up, without developing an attachment to or an aversion of the Kriya itself, he essentially distances himself from the Samskaras and lets them go from his Chitta. So

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

when the “expression” of a Samskara happens as a Kriya where the Sadhak is not the doer and has let go of it without any attachment or aversion, that Samskara no longer has an effect on him. It might take several Sadhan sessions for specific Samskaras to completely fade away, because attachments and aversions that have been accumulated over lifetimes are very hard to let go instantly when they come up. But gradually, they will get erased from the Sadhak’s Chitta with diligent and regular Sadhan.

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

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Phone: +91-253-2311616

P. P. Narayan Kaka Dhekane Maharaj Maha Yoga Global Trial - July 3rd, 2014 from 6:08 am to 6:29 am local time

Everyone on this earth is invited to participate in the P. P. Kaka Maharaj Global Introductory Trial of Maha Yoga Shaktipat (Siddhayoga) for the uplift of all humankind. This introductory trial will be held on July 3rd, 2014, from 6:08 am to 6:29 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 the lineage of a Siddha Guru.

Here’s how to participate:

- At the designated time (on July 3rd, 2012, from 6:08 am 6:29 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 sending an e-mail to info@mahayoga.org .

Upcoming Events:

P. P. Kaka Maharaj Maha Yoga Global Trial on July 3rd, 2014

In honor of P. P. Kaka Maharaj, a Maha Yoga Global Trial will be held on July 3rd, 2014 from 6:08 am to 6:29 am local time. Everyone on earth is invited to participate in this Introductory Trial of Maha Yoga in the privacy of their own homes. Please see page 20 for details.

Deeksha Day (Initiation Day) on August 17th, 2014

The next Maha Yoga Deeksha Day will be on August 17th, 2014. Although the online Deeksha application form is not yet available at www.mahayoga.org because the website is in the process of being updated, those desirous of receiving Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) should monitor the website for when the form becomes available.

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 for the Nashik Ashram and for other locations has been updated and is available at <http://mahayoga.org/progcal.htm>. The www.mahayoga.org is in the process of being updated. The online Maha Yoga Deeksha application form will be available shortly. Please monitor the website for the updated version and the form.

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.



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How to contribute content to the e-newsletter

The goals of our e-newsletter are:

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

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

self.awakening@gmail.com

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

May all desire to follow this nectarous Siddhayoga Path!