

Self Awakening

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



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Editor's note

Dear Readers:

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

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

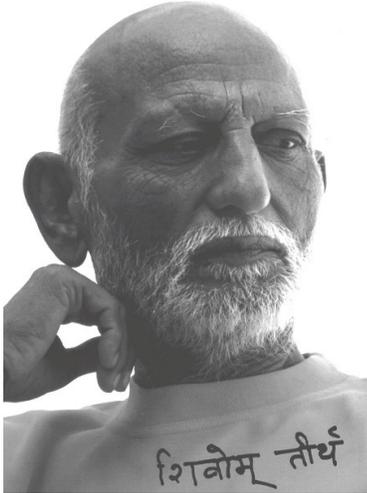
To the thousands of Sadhaks in the Maha Yoga tradition all over the world and other interested readers, this e-newsletter is intended to provide virtual Satsang. It is intended to encourage Sadhaks to remain engaged in Maha Yoga, be informed about Maha Yoga-related events around the world, and to provide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

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

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

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

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts



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

The following two excerpts shed light on Siddhis (miraculous powers) and their role as obstacles to spiritual development, and on the need for Maha Yoga Sadhaks to develop Sevak Dharma, or a sense of service.

Yogic Siddhis

It must be the grace of Maharajshri that my mind was never inclined towards attaining siddhis, or supernatural powers. It is also true that my mental state was never conducive to attaining siddhis. Before attaining yogic siddhis one must reach a state of pratyahara – withdrawal of the senses from external objects – whereas my mind was very active and restless. In such a condition, even if I hoped for siddhis it would be like seeing a dream in broad daylight. I was anxious to attain the siddhi of a pure mind. I was definitely interested in the siddhi of serving the Guru, but from time to time defects would come to the forefront of my mind and create havoc. My mind kept on swinging between hope and despair.

Maharajshri's thoughts on siddhis have already been enumerated in *Churning of the Heart, Volume One*. However, today one aspirant came and again raised the same question. This aspirant was quite serious and advanced. Maharajshri's comments here are very different from those given in *Volume One*.

Maharajshri said, "What are siddhis? They are the manifestation of the divine power of God within the framework of Maya [illusion]. Divine power has three aspects: wish, action and knowledge. All three aspects can manifest through the medium of siddhis. As such, a wish also contains an action and knowledge. Similarly an action contains a wish and knowledge, and knowledge, too, has a wish and an action Siddhis are named according to the predominance of one of these three aspects. For example in the siddhi of distant vision, knowledge is predominant; the siddhi of attaining things just by wishing is dominated by wish; and in astral travel action is the main power. In reality all these siddhis are natural for

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every human being. But they are lost under the illusory covers of ego and extrovert tendencies. The power of God is present in every living being, therefore its qualities and powers are present in all living beings. Birds manifest the siddhi of flying and aquatic creatures display the siddhi of living in water. Many animals, birds and insects have a forewarning of impending weather changes. Humans have a natural siddhi of intellectual development, and if one desires he can further develop that. If a baby animal is thrown into the water he spontaneously starts to swim. In a nutshell, all siddhis are present in each and every one because God dwells in everyone. This means that siddhis do not come from outside, they manifest from within.

“A human being sees birds flying in the sky every day, but for him this is not due to any siddhi that the birds possess, nor is it a miracle. The physical anatomy of birds is such that they can fly. Now imagine if someone sees a human flying – then he will immediately accept it as a siddhi, or a miracle, His eyes depend upon physical evidence only. However if a bird dies then, in spite of having the same body, it will not be able to fly because the power to fly has been rendered useless. Then again, a balloon does not have any wings but it can fly. Its flight does not depend upon wings. It rises into the air because it is light. But all such concepts are on a physical level. The root cause of all siddhis is beyond matter. This root cause is only experienced, or manifest, in these physical phenomena.”

Maharajshri divided siddhis into two categories. The first type is siddhis attained through samadhi. Here we are referring to samprajnat samadhi [samadhi with a seed, or conscious concentration]. Asamprajnat samadhi [seedless samadhi] is possible only when all siddhis, accompanied by all knowledge and activities of the chitta, dissolve into the soul. Nothing remains. The sense of individuality, the sense of an observer, and even the sense of surrender disappear. Only the pure soul remains. Thus, in that state, one cannot even imagine any siddhis. For siddhis ego is essential. Without ego and the activities of the chitta there is no foundation for siddhis to manifest. To attain siddhis one has to perform spiritual practices, but a true spiritual aspirant does not perform spiritual practices for attaining siddhis. Instead he does sadhana to remove the obstacles to siddhis.

Prior to attaining samprajnat samadhi an aspirant has to do many things. Without pratyahara, in other words without turning the mind and senses inward, disciplines such as concentration, meditation and samadhi are not possible. Without that control samprajnat is not possible, and without samprajnat, siddhis or supernatural powers cannot manifest. The essence here is that yogic siddhis are attained along the spiritual journey; when an aspirant attains siddhis he has gained victory over the mind and senses. He views siddhis as a milestone on the spiritual path. But it is possible that, when supernatural powers, or siddhis, are attained the aspirant may get attached to them. Therefore *Yoga Darshan* considers them as obstacles on the spiritual path and cautions aspirants.

Other siddhis are attained through japa [repetition of a mantra] and they are different from yogic siddhis. In japa, also, the mind and the senses have to be withdrawn. Without turning inward the mind cannot concentrate, and without concentration the deity of the mantra will

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not manifest and grant power. In essence all siddhis are the activities of the power of the conscious-self. The power that operates within the siddhi is called the “deity” of that siddhi, or power. In ancient times all branches of knowledge were developed on a supernatural level. Ayurveda [the science of longevity], music, astrology – all of them had the supernatural as their basis. In other words, all these were expressions of the divine energy. According to Mantra-Shastra, the science of mantra, all siddhis are the energy of a mantra and can be awakened through japa. Therefore to attain expertise in any field one has to serve the Guru, control the mind and senses, and perform japa and spiritual practice.

From another perspective siddhis can, again, be divided into two categories: siddhis attained through personal effort and those granted by a great being. For siddhis attained by one’s own effort one has to do sadhana. In the second kind a saint can shower his grace and grant a specific siddhi, just as the sage Vishwamitra gave weapons to Lord Rama. To be able to grant a siddhi to another person is also a siddhi.

Kalpita and akalpita are two further distinctions in understanding siddhis. Kalpita is the kind of siddhi that is attained through spiritual practice done with a resolution in mind to attain the siddhi. These siddhis are short-lived. They are lost with time. Kalpita siddhis are not of much use because if one has a desire for attaining a siddhi he will naturally develop attachment to the siddhi and ego arises on its attainment. One also feels like showing off these kalpita siddhis, which can further inflate attachment and ego. The path of the kalpita siddhi is not a spiritual path. Akalpita siddhis manifest spontaneously. The aspirant is not busy in making an effort to attain these siddhis, but rather he is absorbed in a spiritual pursuit and the siddhis emerge along the way. An aspirant must remain indifferent to these siddhis.

Yoga Darshan shows five causes of siddhis. They are: birth, herbs, mantra, austerities and meditation. Among these, siddhis due to meditation are known as yogic siddhis and those through mantra are known as mantra siddhis. Austerity also is a kind of yoga; the only difference is that it emphasizes austerities instead of self-control. In today’s age we cannot find siddhis through herbs. Possibly, with the passage of time, such herbs may have vanished. Perhaps the knowledge of such herbs is lost. However we do find reference to these siddhis in books. In a siddhi acquired from birth, sadhana is unnecessary. Siddhis attained with spiritual practices in the previous life manifest effortlessly in this life.

Siddhis of the spirits, in which ghosts and invisible spirits are brought under control and miracles are performed with their help, are tamasic siddhis. Practitioners of such techniques ultimately meet with an undesirable fate.

A spiritual aspirant has only one goal: the attainment of the Self, which will permanently free him from worldly miseries. All other siddhis are roadblocks in the attainment of the Self; hence a real spiritual seeker does not get involved in those.

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A self-realized spiritual master can utilize siddhis for the benefit of the world. They do not become egoistic by the use of siddhis.

Sevak Dharma: Duties of a Sevak

By now I was fairly well established in the ashram. No one mistook me for a servant because I was wearing saffron robes. My work of serving the ashram went on as usual. I tried to follow the rules of a sevak [an attendant] as before. In spite of all this the impurities of the mind did not leave me alone. Even now my anger continued. On feeling bad about something, I just suppressed it in my mind. I understood that I should not feel bad about anything, but I would recognize it whenever my mind was affected.

I realized that the life of an ascetic was very difficult only after living with Maharajshri. People used to be preoccupied by their own affairs and would remember Maharajshri only during their spare time. Someone would be free at one time and others at another time. Everyone expected that Maharajshri would be available whenever they came to the ashram. If someone tried to tell them differently, then they had bad feelings towards that person. I tried to explain this to some and they would be upset. They would respond, “Maharajshri does not say this. You are making it up yourself.”

Another problem was that of space. Whenever there was a special occasion or festival and many people would come, each person would want the best room. This was not possible. Some would not even get a room. They would have to be content with staying in the hall. Some would understand the limitations, but others would be ready to fight and, being displeased, eagerly await an opportunity to seek revenge and release their anger. They did not understand that this was the place of a Guru. No one had special privileges here. No one could say anything to Maharajshri so I would end up being the scapegoat.

A third problem was that of water. There was a shortage of water. There was a well, but who was going to draw water from the well? Everyone wanted to take a bath in the bathroom because it had running water. And everyone wanted to wash clothes in the bathroom. People who did not get a chance to use the bathroom would complain because they would have to draw water from the well to bathe and wash their clothes. I realized that it was extremely difficult to maintain a sense of service.

To Maharajshri all the disciples were equal. I also made an attempt to always treat everyone the same, as far as possible. Some reasonable people would say, “We have all the amenities and luxuries at home. We have not come here to enjoy comforts. We have come here to be with Maharajshri.” But such people were few in number. Most of the people preferred comfort. During festivals many people would settle in my room, and in the night I had to search for a place to sleep. But who had the time to notice this inconvenience?

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In this world it is extremely easy to criticize someone. Prejudice is a weapon that can be used against anyone. This weapon of prejudice was severely used on me as well. It is natural for someone to like certain people, but even with such feelings I always ensured that I was free from bias. However, the strange thing is that I was accused of taking the side of people for whom I did not have any special affinity. When a human being gets fixated on a point, then he does not abandon it and does not want to let go. Sometimes he realizes that his point is baseless, but he does not give it up, making it an issue of pride and honor. As a result the sevak or attendant of the ashram is the one who suffers. He is helpless because in every situation and circumstance he has to serve the people. He has to love, even if those people are going to blame him for something. The sevak does not want any respect or a medal. Even if someone disrespects him he continues to serve that person.

This world is merely a stage for a human being to bear the fruits of his actions. This world does not disturb him. By refreshing his memories of old and new faults, the world alerts him toward the future. But a human being becomes sad because of this. A living being makes mistakes, but he does not like to remember them. If anyone reminds him of his mistakes he gets angry; that is why he becomes happy and sad in this world. He declares that this world is a house of miseries and thinks of running away from it. When he reaps the rewards of good actions he feels very happy, but when inauspicious samskaras manifest their demonic forms he starts to scream. This is the problem of a human being. This is his destiny.

My condition was no different. The mind is very strong and tricky. Many intellectuals have been rendered helpless by the mind. I understood very dearly that the world is like a cinema screen on which scenes of joy and sorrow keep manifesting. The world is not the cause of these scenes. But this knowledge would disappear when someone would say something good or bad, or when there would be an incident of some kind. My mind used to drag me into difficult terrain where I would lose my way. Believing that the world is everything, I would try and find the cause of my problem in the world. At that time anyone's misconduct used to take on a very scary appearance and stand before me. I used to get disturbed. This was the weakness of my mind, and I was unable to control it.

In such times I used to remember Gurudev and other spiritual masters. I would try to establish a connection with their minds, and also remember saints like Mirabai, Kabir and Tukaram. My mind would become quiet for some time, but after a few moments it would again take the demonic form and create havoc, I was placing the entire blame on the world and was indifferent to my own mental state. I kept on suffering in my own mind.

One day I talked about my mental state to Maharajshri. He replied, "Bramhacharya initiation is a ceremony for entering the life of austerities. This internal suffering, burning of the mind, getting disturbed – this is the process of austerity. But the feeling of sadness causes insufficiency in the level of austerity. The fact that you are becoming miserable means that your sense of attachment is quite strong. You may say that you do not want respect for the work you are doing, but when you are disrespected you get unhappy. This means that the

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seed of desire for respect is not yet destroyed. You are simply pretending that you do not want respect. Make an effort to endure respect and disrespect both with a balanced mind, without becoming happy or unhappy. This will be your austerity. To endure mental attacks with a calm mind is austerity.

“It is extremely difficult to remain in the service of a Guru. When mental blows are inflicted, even the strong ones run away. If there is the slightest desire to attain respect then it becomes very difficult to bear the mental torment. But the austerities that can be done while serving the Guru cannot be done in any other way. The street of Guru-seva [service to the Guru] is so narrow that if you walk even a little bit forward, the inner faults and other companions leave your company. By the time an aspirant reaches the destination of love for the Guru he becomes totally alone. Only the sentiment of service to the Guru remains.

“Mental torments do not come from the world; they come from within. The source of thoughts, tendencies and feelings is within, and they accumulate in the chitta in the form of samskaras, or impressions. The meaning of the assault of thoughts and torments of the mind is that the accumulated impressions are arising and coming to the surface. Sometimes the accumulated impressions rise without any external factor. You must have had direct experience of this at the time of sadhan, or meditation, when there is no external stimulus, yet feelings of anger, shame, joy, and so forth, manifest. By enduring them peacefully – that is, through austerity – the force of samskaras is stopped; they lose strength.

“The joy and misery that you experience, and the mental shocks and obstacles you have to bear, are not caused by the world but by your own mental state. Without understanding this, the color of austerities does not become fully radiant. Even after understanding this completely, mental tendencies do not allow you to go on the straight path; for that you need discerning intellect and self-control. Every aspirant has to go through a mental struggle in the beginning. The aspirant falls down frequently. But he who does not struggle will not know what it is to fall and to rise up.

“Bramhacharya initiation does not mean that once you are initiated your impressions and tendencies are cleared. This initiation is only a resolve to practice austerities. It is not true that everyone who is initiated gets absorbed in austerities. Most are stuck at the initial stage of initiation. If, with patience in your mind and enthusiasm in your heart, you get involved in austerities then perhaps your problem will be solved.

“Even if a human being is aware of his faults and weaknesses, it is extremely difficult to repel them. He might be restless inside, he might be suffering, he tries to protect himself, but when the force of his weaknesses becomes strong he surrenders to them. An aspirant is in the same condition as someone who is in strong chains and unwilling to budge, but who is forced to move by fear of the whip. You do not know the mental condition of the aspirant who has caused inconvenience to you. It is possible that they are burning in the fire of repentance. They might also be going through an internal struggle. They may be falling and

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getting up. Aspirants must give support to each other and go further. They have to tolerate and help each other. If someone is falling and one thinks of making him fall further, it will be damaging for both. Help is only possible with mutual cooperation. Tolerance is essential for this.

“If you do not receive cooperation from the other party and continue to face misconduct, you should still maintain your ascetic perspective. This will help in the purification of your own chitta. If you do consider yourself a servant then your responsibility is greater than that of others. Others will escape this responsibility by being worldly, but the goal of a servant is service. The task of serving is not limited to making arrangements for food and lodging. To be part of the people’s spiritual upliftment is also included in service. For this you will have to be big-hearted and tolerant. An aggressive attitude is an obstacle in spirituality. By aggression someone can be defeated from a worldly perspective but that is not spiritually beneficial for either the aggressor or the aggrieved.”

I said, “But Maharajji, if you try to lift someone and they try push you down then that is going to cause distress.”

Maharajshri responded, “The common rule of the world is to throw down the ladder by which one has climbed to the top. The perception of such people is worldly, even if they claim that they are spiritually inclined. If a worldly person does not change his ways, then why spiritual servant give up his ways? He must always strive for the upliftment of others, as well as his own.

“In this matter you are committing the same mistake. After doing good to others you are blaming them for bad behavior. You are not paying attention to your own thoughts. Generally, aspirants make this mistake, and this is a big hindrance in the development of a spiritual attitude. Generally, feelings of anger, ego, likes and dislikes are very strong in aspirants. Even those who have great interest in sadhan have these faults. Pride increases with more sadhan. On thinking deeply, the reason for this seems to be their lack of desire to serve. A sense of service brings an understanding of surrender and adds radiance to sadhan.”

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

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Answers to Questions from Sadhaks

Question: I recently received Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha and I have thus far had very good experiences during Sadhan. I was wondering if it would be okay for me to sit for Sadhan during the Global Maha Yoga Trials that get announced periodically. I would also like to know if once a Sadhak has received Deeksha, is it possible for him to deactivate the awakened Kundalini Shakti if he so desires? Or is it impossible for anyone to deactivate the Kundalini Shakti once it gets activated?

Answer: All Sadhaks, whether they have received Deeksha or not, can participate in all Global Maha Yoga Trial events. Please sit for Sadhan at the designated time (local time) wherever you are on that day, and if you know others who might be interested in Yoga and spirituality please let them know about these events as well. Details about future events will get announced at <http://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-global-meditation.aspx>.

About your question regarding whether or not a Dixit Sadhak can deactivate the active Kundalini Shakti within him; I don't think the Sadhak can do that on his own. He can avoid sitting for Sadhan and ignore following the rules and restrictions, which will suppress and retard his spiritual growth. But once the normally outward-directed Prana Shakti is turned inward during Deeksha, she will inevitably lead the Sadhak on a path of spiritual enlightenment. Perhaps not in his current lifetime or even the next, but once the Kundalini Shakti gets directed inward, i.e. awakened, she will eventually take him there. In other Yoga approaches that are effort-based (Hatha, Japa, Laya, Raja), the Sadhak is trying to hold on to his Mother Shakti's hand with his efforts, and if he quits making an effort to hold on to the Mother's hand she will leave him behind. But for a Maha Yoga Sadhak, the Mother Shakti is holding his hand. She is making the effort to lead the Sadhak; the Sadhak's role is simply to allow her to lead him. And she won't let go of the Sadhak's hand unless the Deeksha Guru redirects her to let go. So, if you want to deactivate the awakened Prana Shakti you cannot do it on your own. You can suppress it by not sitting for Sadhan, etc., but you will need to have your Deeksha Guru deactivate her if you so desire.

Question: I have received Maha Yoga Deeksha recently, but I was wondering if I receive Maha Yoga Deeksha once again from a different Maha Yoga Guru, will it create obstacles for me in my spiritual growth? And if I do receive Deeksha a second time, should I seek guidance from my prior Guru or from the second one?

Answer: There may not be any harm from receiving Deeksha a second time from a different Maha Yoga Guru, but there is frankly no need for it. Once Deeksha has happened, i.e. the Prana Shakti within a Sadhak has been directed inward, all a Sadhak need do is to let her do what is necessary by sitting for Sadhan diligently. During Sadhan, the Sadhak surrenders to the awakened Prana Shakti within him; she becomes his Inner Guru and leads him through the physical, mental and Pranic Kriyas that are needed for him to get rid of the Samskaras he has accumulated in his Chitta over his current and past lives. The nature and sequence of Kriyas that happen during Sadhan depend on the nature of the accumulated Samskaras in the Sadhak's Chitta and are therefore unique to each Sadhak's needs. By simply observing

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

the Kriyas without developing any attachments or aversions to them and by letting them go, the Sadhak's Chitta gets cleansed of the "garbage" of Samskaras accumulated over multiple lifetimes.

As he advances in his spiritual development the Sadhak's attitude of surrender during Sadhan also begins to permeate the time when he is not sitting for Sadhan. He begins to see his entire life as the work of the awakened Prana Shakti. She becomes his Guru not only during Sadhan but also in his day-to-day life. So, with the establishment of the Inner Guru during Sadhan right after Deeksha happens, and later in his day-to-day life as well, the need for another Guru does not even arise. Clearly, being in the Satsang of realized souls can always be uplifting and spiritually beneficial, but once a Sadhak becomes aware of the Guru within him, the awakened Prana Shakti, the importance of Sadhan, during which the Sadhak allows the Inner Guru to direct him, becomes far greater than trying to find other external Gurus.

So instead of "shopping" for other external Gurus, which can be very distracting, it is much better for the Sadhak to let his Inner Guru direct him. Of course, if a Sadhak has any specific questions or doubts regarding Deeksha or Maha Yoga, he can consult his Deeksha Guru or others who might be able to guide him. But ultimately, it is the awakened Prana Shakti within that will lead him step by step towards spiritual enlightenment. That guidance by the Inner Guru is experiential, not in the form of verbal directions.

Question: I am a college student and I received Maha Yoga Deeksha recently. But soon after I received Deeksha I developed flu-like symptoms with my sinuses getting congested and my head feeling heavy. I got concerned such symptoms might indicate that the Deeksha might not have happened correctly in my case, a doubt that got reinforced by a relative who suggested that I should not have taken Maha Yoga Deeksha. Later when I consulted with a senior Maha Yoga Sadhak he told me that I was indeed very fortunate to have received Maha Yoga Deeksha at such a young age and that instead of getting swayed by what others unfamiliar with Maha Yoga have to say, I should sit for Sadhan regularly and let my inner experiences guide me. He also told me that most of those who have become self-enlightened owe it to the transfer of Grace from their Gurus, and that Maha Yoga and its variants have been around for a long time and it is the greatest gift anyone who is interested in spirituality can receive. Since then I have been sitting for Sadhan regularly with a great deal of enthusiasm, twice a day, at least for an hour, and I am beginning to experience a sense of calm during Sadhan. Sometimes I have a great deal of difficulty opening my eyes towards the end of my Sadhan sessions. I was wondering if given all the issues I have had right after Deeksha and the doubts I have experienced since then, has Maha Yoga Deeksha happened in my case or did I do something wrong in having such doubts?

Answer: Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha is indeed the greatest gift a Siddha Guru can give to a Sadhak. Most yogis who have reached Self Realization have attained it only because their Siddha Gurus conferred this gift on them, in the form of touch, sight, mantra or Sankalpa. The Guru's Sankalpa is the key, which also lies behind the other three forms (touch, sight or

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mantra) of Shaktipat Deeksha. All effort-based forms of Yoga (Hatha, Mantra, Raja and Laya) pale in comparison to this effortless form of Yoga, so you are indeed very fortunate to have sought it and to have been granted the Deeksha.

Maha Yoga Deeksha can never do any harm to a Sadhak. So, to the extent you had a cold and a fever right after the Deeksha happened, it is likely to have been a coincidence if it was a viral infection, or it might have been caused by the Deeksha as it made your body eliminate certain obstructions to the free flow of Prana Shakti within you. Regardless, it does not seem to have negatively affected you in any way.

It seems from your e-mail that despite having good experiences during Sadhan, as exemplified by your enthusiasm to sit for Sadhan, the inner calm you experience during Sadhan and even your inability to open your eyes during Sadhan, you seem to harbor doubts about whether or not Deeksha has happened in your case. It is quite clear that Shaktipat Deeksha has indeed happened. A Sadhak would never be able to sit for an hour or longer, twice a day, with enthusiasm, and experience the inner calm you have experienced and feel unable to open his eyes, without Shaktipat having happened. Once the Siddha Guru's Sankalpa is made, Shaktipat inevitably happens, unless the Sadhak did not really have any desire to receive Deeksha in the first place and had requested Deeksha only for frivolous reasons. So please be assured that Shaktipat has happened.

Now, the reason Sadhaks typically have doubts about whether or not Shaktipat has happened is because they read/hear about the experiences of other Sadhaks who have received Deeksha and compare the Kriyas they themselves are experiencing with what they read/hear others have experienced. So, if someone else has some physical/mental/Pranic Kriyas that the Sadhak does not have, he feels that he might not have had the Deeksha happen to him because of something he did, or it might not have been granted to him at the same intensity as to the other Sadhaks.

Please be assured that this is never the case. The Siddha Guru's Sankalpa is the same for every Sadhak who has requested Deeksha, and there is nothing the Sadhak does or does not do, that keeps the Deeksha from happening. How the Deeksha manifests itself can and will be different for each individual Sadhak depending on the nature of the accumulated Samskaras in his Chitta, but the Deeksha will have happened to them all if they had asked for it in earnest and having had a true desire to receive it.

So, I would suggest that you not compare what you are experiencing during Sadhan with what others might have experienced. If certain types of Kriyas are not happening to you now, either you may not have the Samskaras associated with those Kriyas in your Chitta to get rid of, or if you do, they may be getting teed up for later, so you may not need for those Kriyas to happen at this time. Please keep in mind that the Kriyas that happen are only for the elimination of the Samskaras that underlie them from your Chitta. It is the process of "garbage removal". Once the "garbage" of a specific Samskara is removed by the Kriyas associated with it happening during Sadhan, those Kriyas do not need to happen again and

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

again. The key here is for the Sadhak to surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within him and simply play the role of a Sakshi (observer) during Sadhan. Allow the awakened Prana Shakti to be the Karta (doer) and let her do what is needed. Do not get in her way or try to enhance what she is making happen with any effort on your part. Try to develop an attitude that Sadhan happens; a Maha Yoga Sadhak does not “do” Sadhan, he simply sits for Sadhan and lets the awakened Prana Shakti “do” it for him. Also, do not develop any attachments to any Kriyas or have expectations for them to happen. This is like developing attachments to specific processes of “garbage removal” or wanting specific “garbage removal” activities to happen. Both seem silly if one looks at the Kriya process in this manner.

Incidentally, many Sadhaks experience such periods of doubts and concerns. Please do not get discouraged by them. Please read carefully the article on “The Importance of Acceptance and Patience” in the November 2012 issue of Self Awakening (archived at <http://mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self%20Awakening%20Vol%205%20Issue%202.pdf>). I think it might address the doubts and concerns you might have had and perhaps still have.

Question: After I received Maha Yoga Deeksha a few months ago, but despite having had good experiences during Sadhan I became concerned that I did not receive a specific Mantra. Later I saw Guru Siyag on a YouTube video initiating Sadhaks by giving them a Mantra and emphasizing the importance of Ajapa Japa (the Mantra Japa that happens without having to articulate a Mantra). I consider myself a devotee of P. P. Gulavani Maharaj since I received Maha Yoga Deeksha at Vasudev Niwas, the Ashram he developed in Pune, India, but I am now wondering if I need to receive Mantra Deeksha from a Siddha Guru in P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj’s lineage. Please guide me.

Answer: Glad to read that you feel close to P. P. Shri Gulavani Maharaj. He was initiated by P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj, so he too was from the P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Parampara (tradition), which can be traced with historical evidence to P. P. Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj in the mid-19th century. The Deeksha that most currently living Maha Yoga Sadhaks have received, whether it was from P. P. Gulavani Maharaj or P. P. Kavishwar Maharaj or P. P. Kaka Maharaj or any of the current Deekshadhikaris assigned that role by P. P. Kaka Maharaj, or even from the other branches of the Parampara (e.g. P. P. Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj’s lineage), the Deeksha is the Deeksha of P. P. Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj’s Parampara which comes all the way from Lord Shiva. If you are interested in the Parampara and the Gurus who have led this Parampara, you can read about all that in the February 2010, August 2010, November 2010 and the May 2011 issues of Self Awakening archived at <http://www.mahayoga.org/selfawakening.aspx>.

So, it is wonderful that you feel close to P. P. Gulavani Maharaj for some reason (perhaps you might have encountered him in a prior life) and the devotion to one’s specific Guru is important, but ultimately it is the Maha Yoga Parampara that is responsible for the gift of Deeksha. It is not very productive for Sadhaks to judge and compare various Gurus and

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Deekshadhikaris in the Parampara with each other, because by doing so a Sadhak puts himself in a position above those who have been given the role of Deekshadhikari, which only results in boosting the Sadhak's ego, not a very good outcome for a Maha Yoga Sadhak. Also, as you progress on the Maha Yoga path, the presence of the inner Guru, the awakened Prana Shakti, becomes much clearer, especially if you have an attitude of surrender and play the role of a Sakshi (observer) during Sadhan. It is that inner Guru, which in your case you may be choosing to personify as P. P. Gulavani Maharaj, who will guide you. But please keep in mind that the personification of the inner Guru is something the Sadhak does, the inner Guru is formless. Eventually the Sadhak has to go beyond any attachment to an external Guru or even to the personification of his inner Guru. So, I hope you are able to maintain your devotion to P. P. Gulavani Maharaj, but please do not judge other Gurus in the Parampara by making comparisons. They are all of the same Parampara and embody the same inner Guru, the awakened Prana Shakti within you.

Shaktipat Deeksha is a Sankalpa (intent) Deeksha. Some Siddha Gurus use touch to indicate their Deeksha Sankalpa, others use sight (i.e. they simply look at the Sadhak), and still others give a Mantra. But the underlying cause of Deeksha is not the touch or the look/sight or the Mantra; it is the Sankalpa of the Siddha Guru that causes the Deeksha to happen.

P. P. Gulavani Maharaj used to give Deeksha earlier in his life by touch, by sight or by giving a Mantra. But he is also the one who made Maha Yoga Deeksha available to Sadhaks all over the world, who could not be in his physical presence, by giving Deeksha by his sheer Sankalpa (intent) to Sadhaks who requested it by mail/post. P. P. Kaka Maharaj carried on that same tradition by granting Deeksha through his sheer Sankalpa to Sadhaks around the world who requested it by post or e-mail or at the Maha Yoga website indicating that they had an earnest desire to receive it. The Deekshadhikaris following him have also carried on this same tradition of Sankalpa Deeksha, whereby Sadhaks requesting Deeksha do not need to be in the presence of the Deeksha Guru or have to chant a specific Mantra for Deeksha to happen. It is the sheer Sankalpa of the Deekshadhikaris in this Parampara that makes Deeksha happen.

Once Deeksha happens, one of the Kriyas that might happen to some Sadhaks during their regular Sadhan is the automatic chanting of a Mantra. The Mantra might or might not make any sense to the Sadhak, but the Kriya of chanting the Mantra might happen without any specific intent on part of the Sadhak. If such a Kriya happens, the Sadhak should just let it happen, not try to suppress it or try to recite that specific Mantra with any intent. He should just treat it as one of the Kriyas that happen, a result of some specific Samskara from his past (from current or prior lives) that is being brought up into his Chitta, so he can simply observe it and let it go. There is no need for him to recite the Mantra in his day-to-day life, but if he simply finds himself automatically reciting it in his day-to-day life there is no need for him to suppress it or do it intentionally. He should just observe that it is happening and not develop any attachment to it. This is a form of Ajapa Japa. But for Maha Yoga Sadhaks, it is not a requirement for Dhyana.

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Maha Yoga, as opposed to Japa Yoga, is not to be done; it is a yoga of "happening". If Japa happens, so be it. If Japa does not happen, so be it. The Kriyas that happen during Maha Yoga Sadhan are not the "ends" nor are they the "means" of spiritual growth. The Kriyas are simply the "by-products" of spiritual growth that happen as the Sanchit (accumulated) Samskaras get brought up into the Sadhak's Chitta; and by simply observing the Kriyas as a Sakshi (observer) and letting them go, the underlying Samskaras get eliminated from his Chitta. The Kriyas are therefore the by-products of the process whereby the Sanchit Samskaras get eliminated, thereby eliminating the Vruttis in his Chitta. This is the process of चित्त वृत्ती निरोधः (Chitta Vrutti Nirodhaha).

Having said all this, if you are just gung-ho about having a Mantra or Ajapa Japa, you can try Soham Japa. But here again Soham should not be chanted by Maha Yoga Sadhaks with intent or with any effort. Simply observe the "Sa" sound as you breathe in normally and the "Ham" sound as you breathe out normally. Please don't try to say the syllables out loud or structure your breathing with any effort. Just breathe normally and simply observe the sounds of "Sa" and the "Ham" as you breathe in and out. This is the Ajapa Japa (effortless Japa) Kriya of automatic and normal breathing that happens to all of us living beings. All a Maha Yoga Sadhak need do, if he feels like it, is to observe this Kriya as it happens, during Sadhan or otherwise.

I would like to suggest that you cast aside your doubts regarding whether or not Deeksha has happened in your case. Many recent Sadhaks have some doubts because they cannot believe that they have been worthy of such a gift and therefore tend to interpret what happens during Sadhan as perhaps being caused by self-delusion. But please understand that having such doubts is quite common and the way to overcome them is to sit for Sadhan regularly and to experientially understand that what happens is not a result of one's self-delusion but is the direct result of one's Prana Shakti getting awakened.

So, there is no need for you to get distracted by what you see on YouTube etc. Just observe what happens on your "inner tube", the "Chitta Tube" that you become aware of during Sadhan. Different Gurus, even in our P. P. Gangadhar Tirth Swami Maharaj's Parampara, have different external styles/modes of granting Deeksha. But underlying them all is the Sankalpa of the Siddha Guru that makes Deeksha happen right away. Sadhaks following effort-based yoga approaches, such as Hatha, Japa, Laya or Raja, need to spend years under the guidance of Gurus adept in those practices just to get their Prana Shakti awakened, and then many more years following that to reach Samadhi states. In our Maha Yoga tradition, a Sadhak's Prana Shakti gets awakened right away, caused by the Siddha Guru's Sankalpa. Also, once the Prana Shakti gets awakened within the Sadhak, i.e. she gets turned inwards; she becomes his Inner Guru who guides him on his spiritual journey. All the Sadhak need do after Deeksha is to simply let her do her job by sitting for Sadhan regularly. There is nothing else to it!

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Question: I received Maha Yoga Deeksha several months ago. More recently, I have been experiencing some career-related trouble and I was wondering if I should try to receive Mantra Deeksha to help me overcome those difficulties. I had practiced some Japas and Mantras in the past and I had found that practice to be somewhat effective. I am also wondering if the practice of Maha Yoga itself can help me deal with worldly problems. I would appreciate any guidance on these issues.

Answer: If you have had Maha Yoga Deeksha happen, you do not need to seek Mantra Deeksha or any other type of Deeksha. All you need do is to sit for Maha Yoga Sadhan, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you, let her do what is needed for your spiritual progress and simply observe what happens as a Sakshi. If it is necessary for you to be practicing Mantra Japa, it will automatically happen during Maha Yoga Sadhan. If your spiritual progress needs for you to be “doing” specific Asanas or Pranayam, they too will happen, without you intending them to happen. So, please entrust the awakened Prana Shakti with your spiritual progress and give her free rein to do what is needed. Please let her be the “doer” (Karta) while you simply observe what she gets done through you as a Sakshi.

The purpose of Maha Yoga Sadhan is to advance on the plane of spirituality, not for material gain. In fact, Maha Yoga Sadhan helps one become a true Karma Yogi, a person who completely and experientially understands that he has a right to action but not to the fruits of his action. For people like you and I who are householders, developing such an attitude is far more important than developing attachments to material things and gains. This does not mean that we should not participate in activities related to our day-to-day lives. In fact most Sadhaks are householders. But being householders, we need to act with a sense of duty to our families, the society we live in and the world at large, and surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within and not act with the expectation or attachment to what material benefits our actions can bring us. So, if you are looking to Maha Yoga to help you with material gain you are barking up the wrong tree. Perhaps there are some forms of Mantra Yoga, etc. that can be used for obtaining material gains (Siddhis), but such practices go very much against the entire purpose of Maha Yoga, which is to help Sadhaks become Karma Yogis, getting rid of their accumulated Samskaras and eliminating the Vruttis of their Chittas (चित्त वृत्ती निरोधः).

Having said that, the practice of Maha Yoga does help Sadhaks with their ability to concentrate, become more creative, develop self-confidence, as well as deal with the ups and downs of life without affecting their inner peace and happiness. Please read “Maha Yoga - A Key to Success” in the June 2012 issue of Self Awakening archived at <http://mahayoga.org/selfawakening.aspx> which addresses this issue at some length.

Question: I am a female Sadhak living in Mumbai and I received Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) earlier today. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to Gurudev and to Ma Chit Shakti for bestowing me with the Deeksha.

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

I have had a wonderful experience during my Deeksha meditation. I did not experience any kind of Kriyas as in Pranayam (structured breathing) or Bandhas (holds) but I did feel the Prana Shakti. I could sense it going from my palm upwards towards my arms and after some time I felt it going up my spine. I also felt energy around my chest and heaviness initially but later experienced it going up to my head. Later again I felt the energy in my chest and abdomen area but this time it felt light instead of heavy. Towards the end of the meditation I also felt heaviness in my legs.

The icing on the cake was the internal peace and calmness that I felt, and even after coming out of meditation I did not feel like talking to anyone. Even now as I write this note (it is 10.30 am right now) I feel like keeping quiet. I am soaking in the silence and enjoying every bit of it.

One peculiar thing I observed and I don't know whether it is of any significance or not, was this one thought that arose completely out of the blue; I heard an inner voice say, "You will get Moksha on Mahavir Jayanti day". I don't know what to make out of it because I have never consciously thought about this. Was it just another random passing thought or was it something significant?

Answer: Very glad to read that Deeksha happened for you. Clearly, you had some excellent experiences as evidenced by what happened during Sadhan but also during the rest of your day.

The experiences you had of feeling the Prana Shakti move within you as well as the thought related to Moksha that arose automatically are all Kriyas. There are three types of Kriyas, physical, mental and Pranic (energy flows/movements). The Kriyas are what gets manifested to the Sadhak when her Sanchit Samskaras (accumulated impressions from her current and past lives) get brought up into her Chitta (mind stuff) during Sadhan. If a Sadhak has accumulated a preponderance of Tamasik Samskaras, the Kriyas associated with them typically bring up negative emotions like anger, jealousy, indolence, etc. into the Sadhak's Chitta and which might get manifested further with physical and Pranic movements related to those emotions. If a Sadhak has a preponderance of Rajasik Samskaras, the Kriyas get manifested as physical activities, including Asanas, Mudras, Pranayam, etc., accompanied by an awareness of the flow of Prana Shakti related to those physical Kriyas. If a Sadhak has a preponderance of Sattvik Samskaras, Sattvik emotions like Bhakti, feelings of benevolence to all, an internal sense of peace, etc., accompanied by related Pranic flows might happen. So, depending on the baggage of Samskaras one brings into one's life, Kriyas that express those Samskaras happen during Sadhan.

This does not mean that one set of Kriyas is superior to another. The process of Kriyas happening is like "Kachra" (garbage) removal; i.e. it is the process whereby the Kachra of Sanchit Samskaras gets eliminated from the Sadhak's Chitta, which is the entire purpose of Maha Yoga Sadhan. So, the key here is for the Sadhak to simply observe the Kriyas as they

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

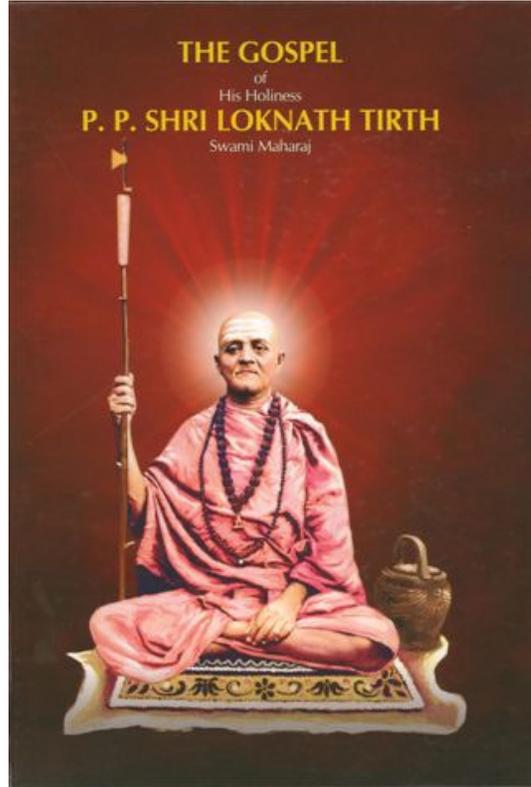
happen, whether they are Tamasik, Rajasik or Sattvik Samskara-related, not be judgmental about them, not develop any attachment to them or get afraid of them, not try to suppress them or try to “make them happen” or yearn for them. Simply observe the Kriyas and let them go, just as one would let go of the Kachra that is being removed from a room. If a Sadhak develops attachments or aversions to specific Kriyas, that itself will create new Samskaras, i.e. more Kachra for cleaning up later. The point is to have all the Samskaras, even the Sattvik ones, get removed from the Sadhak’s Chitta. The Sadhak has to allow the awakened Prana Shakti to take her beyond the three Gunas (Gunatit) to get enlightened. That is why even trying to understand whether a specific Kriya arose because of a specific Tamasik/Rajasik/Sattvik underlying Samskara is futile.

Over time, the occurrence of Kriyas will get diminished as the Sanchit Samskaras get gradually eliminated and new ones do not get added. This is a gradual process and as a Sadhak makes progress on this path, the Kriyas get gradually fewer and fewer and the Sadhak finds herself more in a state of Dhyana during Sadhan rather than experiencing Kriyas (physical, mental - thoughts, or Pranic) one after another. Another clear marker as to whether or not a Sadhak is making progress is the feeling of inner peace she gets not only during Sadhan but even in her day-to-day life. That is clearly what you experienced, so you are on the right track. With regular Sadhan your path to Self-Enlightenment will be wide and obstacle-free.

About your specific question regarding the thought that suddenly arose in your Chitta of getting Moksha on Mahavir Jayanti day, that’s great if it happens, and it might be a wonderful portend. It might be the voice of your Inner Guru, the awakened Prana Shakti, but usually the Inner Guru provides guidance not portends. My suggestion would be to treat it as a mental Kriya, something that the awakened Prana Shakti brought up into your Chitta for you to observe, most likely because of some related Samskaras in your past (current or former lives), conscious or sub-conscious. My advice would be to simply observe that the thought happened and to let it go. If Moksha happens on Mahavir Jayanti that’s great! But getting attached to it and giving it a lot of weight will likely create new Samskaras that will need to be eliminated over time. On a related issue, it is possible for Sadhaks to experience Siddhis, including getting insight into future events, but when Siddhis arise, they can act as traps that severely retard spiritual progress. Sadhaks are best advised to treat them in the same way as Kriyas. Not get attached to them or fear them. Simply observe them, not use them, and let them go.

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,

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Nashik, Maharashtra, India 422013

Phone: +91-253-2311616

Upcoming Events:

Deeksha Day (Initiation Day) on April 15th, 2015

Those desirous of receiving Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) should go to the website: www.mahayoga.org for instructions. The online application form is also available at the website.

Maha Yoga Sadhan Shibirs (workshops) at Nashik Ashram

The Nashik Ashram holds Maha Yoga Sadhan Shibirs on the first Sunday of each month from 8 am to 1 pm. Sadhaks sit for Samuhik (Communal) Sadhan, which is followed by a discourse on Yoga. Maha Prasad (lunch) is also served. About 250 Sadhaks typically attend this monthly event. These and other events at the Nashik Ashram and at other locations are posted at <http://www.mahayoga.org/progcal.aspx>.

The Nashik Ashram is located at:

P.P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Mahayoga Trust

P.P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Chowk, Shrirang Nagar, Gangapur Road,
Nashik 422013, Maharashtra, India.

Tel. no.: +91 - 253 - 2311616

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

The Thane Ashram hosts a series of lectures/talks on Maha Yoga and Yoga on the first Sunday of every month.

The Thane Ashram is located at:

A/9 Sector # 7, Behind Omega Apartments

Vasant Bungalow, Shree Nagar, Wagle Estate, Thane 400604, India

Please contact P. P. Dr. Deshpande Maharaj in Thane, India at 22-2581-2811 for additional information. The Thane Ashram also hosts Samuhik Sadhan (communal Sadhan) every Sunday from 8:30 am to 9:30 am. The lecture will follow the Samuhik Sadhan (communal Sadhan) on the first Sunday of every month.

Website Updates:

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.

We also have a Facebook page, Mahayoga World at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/mahayogaworld>.



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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!