

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.

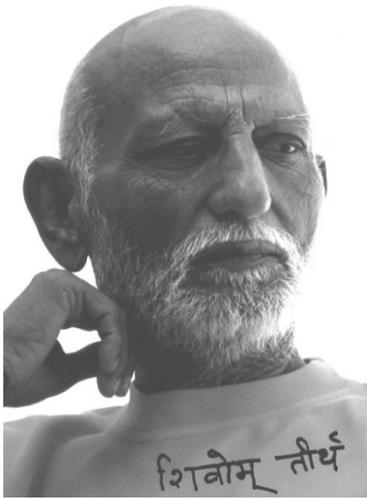
To the thousands of Sadhaks in the Maha Yoga tradition all over the world and other interested readers, this e-newsletter is intended to provide virtual Satsang. It is intended to encourage Sadhaks to remain engaged in Maha Yoga, be informed about Maha Yoga-related events around the world, and to provide 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 excerpts describe how Samskaras are created, reinforced and eventually eliminated through Sadhan and through complete surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti to allow her do the necessary "pruning".

A Change in Temperament

During the morning walk I asked Maharajshri, "Why is it so difficult to change our nature? Even after a million explanations a human being is not willing to give up his nature. If someone wants to change even then he cannot succeed. How helpless one is!"

Answer: "Nature is a ghost that, once it gets on your back, does not get off for life after life. This ghost does not know what death is. It comes alive again and again. It does not run away when chased, does not get scared when frightened, does not go away even by prayer. It does not understand explanations. It burns you within. It squeezes out all the energy in a living being. Even great souls are helpless in its hands. They can give up everything but their nature.

"What is nature? It is a specific state of the chitta, or psyche, in which some specific samskaras are predominant. Sometimes they are latent; sometimes they are active and cause waves in the psyche. When samskaras are latent, the disposition also remains suppressed, but when the samskaras come up to the surface the real temperament manifests. For example, if someone is hot-tempered, it means he has more samskaras of anger. When someone gets angry, it means that his samskaras of anger have arisen. If someone does not

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

have samskaras of anger, how will he get angry? When he is provoked, only a person will get angry who has samskaras of anger.

“When the same types of samskaras continue to come up and create waves in the mind, and continue to have an impact on the person, he is compelled to behave accordingly. He accumulates additional samskaras of the same type and samskaras accumulated in the past become stronger. That becomes the person’s nature.

“One’s disposition is always unnatural. The natural form of a human being is the soul, which is unchangeable and pure, free from faults and untouched by any layers. Nature, or temperament, is the attribute of individuality. The soul itself does not have any disposition. The greater the numbers of samskaras in the chitta, the greater are the variations in the nature of a person. The same person can have, in his nature, longing, anger, jealousy, hatred, gossiping and so forth. Whichever impression arises, that type of disposition will manifest. When samskaras change, the nature of a person also changes. When the samskaras of anger arise he will be angry but the next moment, when samskaras change, he might become fearful. The outside world is only a medium to awaken the samskaras and bring out one’s nature. Sometimes, without any help from the world, the samskaras can be awakened and bring out one’s nature. In solitude, with eyes closed, the memory of past events can arouse one’s nature of anger or jealousy.

“It is not true that the form of one’s disposition is always bad and impure. Good and sattvic nature is also there. Everyone’s nature has a mixture of good and bad. Some have worse characteristics and others have better characteristics. Sometimes good nature is displayed and at other times a bad nature may rise. Someone may assume divinity and the next moment be demonic. Some people are compassionate, forgiving and generous. For spiritual progress this type of disposition is definitely helpful.

“Can one’s nature be changed? Yes, it can change, but it changes by itself. It does not change by being changed, rather it changes by itself. When samskaras change, then one’s nature changes, too. As long as samskaras of a certain characteristic influence the mind, no matter how much you try, the nature will not change.”

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

Question: “You said that once the ghost of nature is on your back, it does not leave you alone. But now you are saying that when samskaras change, one’s nature also changes.”

Answer: “What I said is correct. When samskaras change the nature of a person does change. But when the samskaras awaken again, then the nature of the person changes again. These changes and suppressions of nature are all transient. As long as the samskaras are not destroyed from the root, the process of awakening and dormancy will go on and on. Destruction of samskaras is not easy. You can continue with your austerities, keep trying to awaken your power of discretion, do chanting for long hours, but the samskaras will not die and nature will not change from its root.”

Question: “What is the way to get released from one’s nature?”

Answer: “There is a way, but it is not in an individual’s hands. It is in God’s hands. When God’s energy awakens, becomes active and destroys samskaras, you can be freed from your nature. That is when the root cause of nature is eliminated.”

Question: “We see many aspirants whose Shakti is awakened. It is active for many years but their nature does not change. Does this mean that God’s Shakti has not destroyed their samskaras?”

Answer: “Shakti does its work, but the sense of being an individual soul hinders the path. The surrender needed for spirituality usually is not present in the aspirant. Surrender provides the scope within which Shakti can do its work. Surrender makes one free from desires and expectations. It turns the attention inward. Otherwise the aspirant remains extrovert. He nurtures the pride of being a mahatma. His ego gets blown up with experiences of kriyas. As a result, instead of uprooting nature it gets strengthened.”

I was able to see many vices inside that had taken the form of nature. Now my life was passing as I fought with those vices. I had not been able to defeat even one. I was wondering whether life would end like this. “Will this life pass away just like this, sunken in the mud of vices?”

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

But the words of Maharajshri were reassuring. At least Goddess Kriya-Shakti is present for our help. The only thing required is surrender.

Past Memories

At the end of 1962 Maharajshri went to Raipur, Bilaspur, Jabalpur, Wardha, and other places. At the request of his devotees and disciples, Maharajshri used to visit them. Not everyone could come to Dewas. Some people would have financial limitations and others, perhaps, were old and unable to come to Dewas. Some would have difficulty getting leave and others would have family responsibilities. If Maharajshri visited them then they all had the benefit of meeting him. For the first time I had the opportunity to travel with Maharajshri. In Jabalpur Maharajshri's uncle was a railway guard. Maharajshri lived with him when he was a student. His primary schooling was completed. He showed me the school in which he used to study. Then we reached Bilaspur, where Maharajshri had his first job, as a school teacher. We stayed on the same street where Maharajshri used to live. He showed us the room in which he resided. A major portion of the building had collapsed. Maharajshri said, "Who knows where destiny takes someone? Who knows how destiny keeps him? My birth was in Haryana. My primary schooling was in Jabalpur, high school in Rewadi [Haryana], and college in Nagpur. My first job was in Bilaspur. After traveling throughout India, now I live in Dewas.

"When old memories come back the events of life play on the screen of the heart like a film: memories of childhood, family life, the life of a lawyer, and then my monastic life. Generally a person is lost in the memories of the past or the golden dreams of the future, but he lives in the present. Memories of the past are not for growing sad but for learning. What had to be suffered due to what mistake? From memories of the past one can understand to what depths one has fallen, or was saved from falling. The past has already gone, but one can learn lessons from that and take advantage of that. The value of the past grows as it recedes. The experiences that we have today are gifts of the past.

"What benefit is there in imagining the future? Nobody knows what is hidden there. An individual keeps on building houses of imagination, keeps on making plans, but nobody knows what is to come. Our imagination flies away in thin air. What manifests then? One does not know that in the present. How limited

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

is one's knowledge. He does not even know what is going to happen in the next moment. But one rides in the airplane of ego and flies in the sky of imagination. When this directly visible world itself is false, then how can there be reality in the world of imagination? Our past has been lost in the depth of darkness and it has left some memories behind. The future is covered with uncertainty. What is going to happen is yet to be seen. The present is here, but who understands it? With the blink of an eye the present becomes the past. We are left holding on to it. It slips away from our hand and is submerged in the deep ocean of the past. How can one trust even the present? The life-span of the present is only one moment. The individual soul has reached such a state of ignorance that in the deep darkness of infinite emptiness he wanders without direction, without seeing anything, and with his hands extended. On the top of that he is intoxicated with egoism. To come out of this ignorance and progress towards omniscience is called spirituality.

“In the eleventh chapter of the Gita, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna to see the past, present and future all together in one place. How is that possible? If it were possible then what would the experience be like? How would the journey be from ignorance to an all-knowing state? An ignorant being cannot even imagine. Even after accumulating much knowledge from the scriptures he remains ignorant. By explaining things to others he increases his pride, but he cannot extricate himself from the ditch of ignorance. Lord Krishna shows the three times – past, present and future together – to Arjuna. An ignorant being cannot see even one of them. But it is possible to see the past, present, and future together.

“We are walking toward a mountain. We cannot see the other side of the mountain. The scenery behind us also is becoming invisible due to distance, trees, and so forth. But as soon as you reach the peak of the mountain you can clearly see the landscape around you. However this example is also incomplete, because you may be able to see the scenery only in front of you, not behind you. Lord Krishna talks about seeing all past, present and future, simultaneously, from the same place.

“The wheel of time is turning and we are moving with it. We do not even know that we are moving. We do not even know that we have become ignorant. We nurture an ego of being very intelligent and powerful. The path of spirituality is to bring the aspirant out of this wheel of time to his real Self, and to show him

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that the wheel of time is separate from him. As long as an individual is going round and round with the wheel of time he keeps on wandering, sometimes in the illusion of the past, sometimes the present and, at times, the future.

“When the wheel of time is seen as separate from the self, then the past, present and future are visible together at the same time. Such an adept knows the past and perceives the future. One sees all these as a play of time. It is not the goal of an aspirant to look into the three periods of time. It is like trees and fruits seen during a trip. It can also be said that when someone sees into all – the past, present and future – he has attained a state that is beyond time.

Yoga Darshan says, in the aphorisms regarding God, that the seed of omniscience is present in God. This is one difference between God and the individual soul. A living being knows very little and God knows everything. Wherever there is a presence of God, the seed of omniscience must also exist there. Whatever energy the individual soul possesses belongs to God. In him, too, omniscience is present in the form of a seed. The sprouting of that seed is called Shaktipat. This is the spiritual path. Everything prior to this is an effort to enter the spiritual path.”

I said, “Maharajshri, our conversation went from where to where? It started with your memories of the past and reached Shaktipat. Now, please explain: What is the relationship between Shaktipat and omniscience. And how that can be attained with sadhan?”

Answer: “I have said this earlier, that the divine power is present in the Shakti – that is, Kundalini – and hence omniscience is present in the seed form. In the dormant state the Kundalini is dormant; hence the seed also is dormant. To awaken it and start the process of sprouting is Shaktipat. Omniscience cannot manifest at the very inception of sprouting. Prior to evolving into the grand tree of omniscience, Shakti has to cross many difficulties, many delays and many obstacles. This is not a one-day job. For a long time continuous sadhan and service with conviction are necessary. It is like a gardener who does not forget the seed after it is planted. He regularly gives it water and fertilizers. He prunes the plant on a timely basis, and protects it from buffaloes and goats. He builds a fence, sprays insecticides and makes arrangements to protect it

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from too much rain and sun. In the same way, simply planting the seed is not enough for spirituality.

“In sadhan, storms of desires arise within. Floods of samskaras come, and fires of impurities are ablaze, and there is a possibility that the plant of sadhana might be uprooted or burnt down. In addition, attractions of the world trouble the aspirant. Vices stop you at every step. Sometimes lust, anger and greed erupt, and sometimes attachment, hate and jealousy arise and bring calamity. A long, inner spiritual pilgrimage is essential in order to remove the layers of desires, samskaras and impurities that cover the seed, which needs to manifest in the form of the great Banyan tree of omniscience that already exists within.

“The seed of omniscience implies that a jiva, a living being, may cover himself with many layers of ignorance and illusion, but the ability to know all is always there in a seed form. A human with cannibal tendencies and an animal – both have an abundance of animal instincts, yet omniscience is present in seed form. The seed does not need to be planted because it is always there. For it to sprout, attention, awareness and continuous sadhan are required. To make the seed of omniscience turn toward sprouting is called Shaktipat. That is when the destruction of one’s ignorance begins. Simultaneous with the seed moving forward to become a big tree, sadness disappears, boundaries are broken, and omniscience starts to unfold within the individual. An aspirant has to remain mindful, surrender, and continually do sadhan and service. Very often aspirants cannot do this and therefore, even after being initiated into Shaktipat, they remain empty. On the contrary, they put on another layer of ego regarding their sadhan.

“Shaktipat is a spiritual technique that has the power to transform ignorance into omniscience. It opens the door to omniscience by activating the Kundalini towards the Self. Kriyas give proof that it is awakened, but the proof of progress is manifestation of omniscience. It is up to the aspirant how much benefit he reaps from the awakening.”

Question: “Usually aspirants do not pay attention to omniscience. They remain engrossed with kriyas and are happy with that.”

Answer “Those who have strong kriyas need that. Due to excess rajo guna, strong kriyas take place. Those who have either excessive tamo guna or sattva

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guna will not have strong kriyas, nor do they need them. To believe that intense kriyas are a sign of good sadhan indicates a lack of understanding. On the contrary, strong kriyas take place more at the physical level. Less bliss is experienced if more kriyas are on the physical level. As the kriyas ascend from the physical level they will become gentle. But greater bliss is experienced. Attention will be more and more introverted. The aspirant will be closer to omniscience.”

Cutting and Pruning

I was working in the garden. Maharajshri was sitting in the garden on a chair. I was clearing the ground under a tree. Maharajshri told me to trim a particular plant, since that would help its development.

I was amazed to hear this and looked at Maharajshri. He was asking me to cut the plant when he had been a strong opponent of cutting trees and plants. I remembered a time when an unfinished building next to the cave was in progress. There was a small tree bearing yellow flowers in one corner. If the tree were not cut down, the building could not be built straight. Maharajshri was unyielding. “The building may be crooked but the tree will not be cut.” Finally the size of the corner room was reduced. There was a brick wall in front of the building near which the tree was growing. To save the plant, it was decided that we build terraced flower beds in front of it. The flower beds were built. The plant was saved; the corner of the building was lost.

It rained heavily that night. All the buildings started to leak. The rain did not spare the flowerbeds under the tree. In the morning we saw that, due to the pressure of the water, the black soil had expanded and all the flowerbeds were now turned into heaps of soil and had shifted down. The tree had toppled. Even its roots had come out of the ground or were broken. Finally, sadly, Maharajshri said, “We tried our best to save the tree, but this was its fate!” The tree was planted at another location and it started to grow there. Maharajshri was very happy. But today he was asking me to cut the plants. I did the cutting, but I was very confused within.

During the morning walk I expressed my confusion. He said, “In general terms it is called cutting, but in reality it is pruning. There is a big difference between

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cutting and pruning. To cut means to cut down the tree and throw it away. Pruning means to cut unnecessary branches that may stunt the growth of the tree or destroy its beauty. Pruning makes the tree more beautiful. You can shape it the way you want by pruning. What is sadhana? To cut out unnecessary branches, such as desires and impurities, which stunt the growth of life and destroy the beauty of life. If cutting is death then pruning is life. If cutting is the evening of life then pruning is a beautiful morning.

“I am not talking about worldly people. When an aspirant is pruning a plant, he also keeps his attention on his chitta. Just as I am trimming the unnecessary branches of this tree, in the same way unnecessary feelings, thoughts and impurities of the mind must be trimmed and thrown away. These unnecessary waves make the beautiful tree of mind very ugly. An aspirant may be working in the garden, but at that time he watches his inner vices and faults. He can see his spiritual path very dearly. Just as the tree has bigger and better flowers and fruits after pruning in the same way the chitta blossoms like a big beautiful flower after trimming off the branches of desires from the chitta.”

I replied, “My attention had never been drawn to the difference between cutting and pruning.”

Maharajshri said, “Not only you, but very few people think about that. Gardeners are aware of it, but they are not spiritual seekers. They cannot compare this process with the mental process. God does the cutting when the time comes. But a person has to do the pruning himself. A bad part of the body is cut away with surgery. Upon becoming fat, excessive fat is trimmed with exercise. Vegetables are cooked after bad parts are trimmed away. If there is garbage in the home, it is swept away with a broom. Desires and impurities are trimmed with sadhana. Pruning must continue in life or else the time for cutting turns up without notice.”

Presented here with kind permission from Swami Shivom Tirth Ashram, Inc. Thanks to Mrs. Alison Kamat for transcribing the excerpt.

“Churning of the Heart” trilogy by P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj is available from:
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Answers to Questions from Sadhaks

Question: I am very much interested in Maha Yoga and I have read a lot of the material available at the website <http://mahayoga.org/index.aspx>. But I still do not understand how I will be able to grow and increase my spiritual knowledge. Should I be reading more about Maha Yoga or is there something else I should be doing? I also want to understand how I will be able to balance my Prapanch (day-to-day life) with my spiritual growth.

Answer: The best way for you to understand how to grow spiritually on the path of Maha Yoga is to read about some of the basics of what Maha Yoga is, as described in the material available at the Maha Yoga website, **but more importantly**, you should try out the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga, if you haven't done so already.

The purpose of reading the material available at the website is only to make you familiar with the basic concepts of Maha Yoga and how it is different from other Yoga practices. But spiritual growth will not come just by reading about Maha Yoga; it will come only by actually experiencing it by trying out the Introductory Practice, and later, if you are willing to make the commitment needed to receive Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation), by actually receiving Maha Yoga Deeksha. Maha Yoga is not a Yoga of intellectualizing spirituality, or doing anything with intent. Instead, it is the Yoga of surrendering to the Prana Shakti within you and letting her do what is needed for your spiritual growth.

The Introductory Practice and the actual Maha Yoga Deeksha are mechanisms by which the Prana Shakti within a Sadhak gets awakened. The Sadhak's role is to sit for Maha Yoga Sadhan every day, surrendering to the Prana Shakti within him, and simply observe what happens. He is thus a Sakshi (observer) to what happens, not the "doer" or Karta. The awakened Prana Shakti within him is the Karta. Spiritual growth will happen with diligent and regular Sadhan as the Sadhak begins to experience the awakened Prana Shakti as distinct from himself, and the Kriyas that happen during Sadhan as not of his doing but the doings of the awakened Prana Shakti within him. The process of Sadhan then becomes the process through which the Samskaras (impressions) he has accumulated in his current life as well as in all previous lives get eliminated. Gradually, he will begin to experience the presence of the Atma within him and see it as a part of the Param Atma that pervades the entire universe. When this happens, even during the times he is not sitting for Sadhan, he will have reached the final stage of spiritual growth, the Avadhoot stage. Of course, this is a very advanced stage that all Sadhaks aspire for and it will happen in due course, but one will have to have a tremendous amount of patience and acceptance along the way.

As for balancing your day-to-day life (Prapanch) with spiritual growth; it shouldn't be any problem at all. Maha Yoga does not require Sadhaks to leave their day-to-day lives; in fact most Sadhaks and Maha Yoga Gurus are householders. The practice of Maha Yoga in fact makes the balancing of Prapanch with spiritual growth very easy, because it gradually helps the Sadhak develop the attitude of a true Karma Yogi. This enables him to deal with the ups and downs of Prapanch with equanimity, thus leading to greater success in his Prapanch as well as strong spiritual growth. The article "Maha Yoga - A Key to Success" which appeared in the June 2012 issue of Self Awakening (archived at

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<http://mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self%20Awakening%20Vol%204%20Issue%204.pdf>) sheds more light on how that can happen. But again, I want to caution you that reading all this material is fine just to become acquainted with Maha Yoga, but true spiritual growth will only come through its practice. **Knowledge acquired through reading is no substitute for the knowledge one gains as a result of spiritual growth through diligent Sadhan.**

Question: I have been a follower of Maharshi Mahesh Yogi for many years and have been doing Yoga Sadhana daily for 45 years. I have even received Shaktipat Deeksha recently from your Maha Yoga Parampara (lineage). I retired from work 8 years ago and have been spending more time since my retirement on the re-recognition of Self. My Sadhana includes meditations for development and expansion two to three times a day for up to 90 minutes at a stretch. I feel blessed to have come in contact with this wisdom.

The purpose of my note is that there are probably many other Sadhaks like me who may be considered “ripe”, but have not fallen off the branch, i.e. they have not yet achieved the loss of ego and fully blossomed awareness. The experience of Self, or of transcendence happens at times, but it comes and goes. Sometimes it happens when I have my eyes closed and sometimes when they are open, but the experience is fleeting and unstable; it does not persist for long. So, for Sadhaks such as me who have experienced, if only fleetingly, our true Selves, is there an additional intensity of Shaktipat available to get us to the next level?

Answer: Your devotion to Yoga and spiritual practices is deeply appreciated. We are very glad to read that Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha happened for you recently.

Maha Yoga, unlike other Yoga practices, does not involve the Sadhak doing anything other than to surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within him and to simply play the role of an observer (Sakshi). He should allow the awakened Prana Shakti (Kundalini/Divine Mother Energy, etc.) to be the “doer” (Karta). By simply observing the process of Kriyas (physical, mental and Pranic) that the awakened Prana Shakti makes happen during Sadhan and even in his day-to-day life, with detachment, i.e. without getting attached to or fearful of the Kriya process, the Sadhak will have enabled the Prana Shakti to gradually eliminate the Samskaras he has accumulated in all his prior lives and in the current one. The key here is to have all the Samskaras, be they Tamasik, Rajasik or even Sattvik, get eliminated through regular Sadhan, without adding to the trove of accumulated Samskaras through intent based activities. In that regards, even Sattvik activities such as intent-based Yoga practices, tend to create new Samskaras or strengthen existing ones. If such Yoga practices “happen” during Maha Yoga Sadhan without any intent on part of the Sadhak, he should let them happen while simply observing them, but without developing any attachments to or aversion from such Kriyas.

Regular Maha Yoga Sadhan over an extended period of time is the key to Self-Realization. The purpose of Maha Yoga Sadhan is to eliminate accumulated Samskaras, but in our day-to-day lives and even in the practice of intent-based Yoga forms, we are continually adding to our trove of accumulated Samskaras. So, diligent Maha Yoga Sadhan is

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the key to offset the accumulation and strengthening of Samskaras on a daily basis. Only when the rate of elimination of Samskaras through Sadhan is greater than the rate of accumulation of new ones or the strengthening of existing ones, will the trove of Samskaras in the Sadhak's Chitta begin to get reduced. This is when the Sadhak will begin to experience the diminishing of his ego and feel the spiritual lightness that presages Self-Enlightenment.

Now, about your question regarding a more intense Shaktipat for Sadhaks such as yourself, P. P. Kaka Maharaj has explained that there is no fast track to achieve the ultimate goal once Shaktipat has happened, as in your case. The activities (Kriyas) that happen during Maha Yoga Sadhan are a part of the purification process and the awakened Prana Shakti will make this process happen at a pace that is most suitable for the Sadhak's spiritual progress. The Sadhak needs to sit for Sadhan diligently, as you have been, but he needs to surrender completely to the Prana Shakti within him and give her complete freedom to get done what is needed. A very important part of Maha Yoga Sadhan is the acceptance by the Sadhak that the "doer" is the awakened Prana Shakti, not the Sadhak; and if he truly accepts this fact, he needs to develop an attitude of patience. He should let the Prana Shakti decide the pace of his spiritual progress. Just as one could use a wire-brush to wash clothes to get them clean in a hurry, but doing so would also harm the clothes one is washing, similarly, undue haste is harmful to a Maha Yoga Sadhak. He should sit for Sadhan diligently, but with immense patience.

Question: I received Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha recently. On Deeksha Day, I woke up early and sat for meditation at 6:00 am as instructed. However, I fell asleep for a few minutes because the previous day had been a very busy day for me and I was unable to get sufficient sleep that night. Since then, I have been practicing Sadhana regularly but I have not noticed any difference and meditation remains difficult for me. It seems to require great effort and my thoughts during meditation remain chaotic. I am wondering if I may not have received Deeksha on Deeksha Day because I fell asleep for a short while then, and whether I should apply to receive Deeksha once again so it can happen correctly next time.

Answer: If you had received notification from the Maha Yoga headquarters that your Deeksha application had been accepted for Deeksha Day, then you can rest assured that Deeksha has happened. If you did not receive any such notification then Deeksha may not have happened and you may apply again for Deeksha for the next Deeksha Day. But there is no need to apply again if your Deeksha application had been accepted earlier.

Your concern is not uncommon for Sadhaks who have recently received Deeksha. For some Sadhaks, the Deeksha event can be very energetic with all sorts of Kriyas (involuntary physical, mental or Pranic activities) happening, but for others it can be a very subtle experience. The experience depends on the nature of the accumulated Samskaras (impressions on the Sadhak's Chitta - mind stuff - of past actions from current and prior

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

lives) the Sadhak has and whether or not the Sadhak sits for Sadhan with an attitude of surrender to the Guru and to the Prana Shakti within the Sadhak himself.

The attitude of surrender is extremely important to have not only during Deeksha but also during one's daily Sadhan. Unlike other forms of Yoga such as Hatha, Japa, Laya and Raja, which are effort-based, i.e. the Sadhak is the "doer"; the practice of Maha Yoga requires that the Sadhak not consider himself the "doer" at all during Sadhan. He should simply put himself in the role of an "observer" (Sakshi), allowing the awakened Prana Shakti "do" what is needed for his spiritual growth. This requires the Sadhak to surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within him and to give her complete freedom to do what is needed. If certain physical actions happen involuntarily, the Sadhak should allow them to happen without having any sense of "doership". If he finds his mind wandering from one thought to another, he should simply observe the thoughts as they come and go and as they get replaced by new thoughts. He should not try to control them or get impatient with the fact that his mind does not become calm right away. If he finds it difficult to observe the thoughts as they arise and get replaced by new ones, he should direct his attention to observe his normal and automatic breathing, once again crediting the Prana Shakti within him as the "doer" of the automatic breathing process that is happening to him. If he experiences movement of energy within him he should simply observe that it is happening, not get scared by it or get excited that it is happening. His entire attitude should be that of an observer who has surrendered himself to the awakened Prana Shakti within him.

It is also important for the Sadhak to develop an attitude of patience. Sadhaks get frustrated that the vigorous physical Kriyas that they might have read happen to some Sadhaks are not happening to them. Or they are unable to calm their minds right away. Or they don't feel the flow of energy (Prana) that they have heard some other Sadhaks have experienced. Getting frustrated in this manner can be quite counter-productive for a Sadhak's spiritual progress. The Kriyas that happen are part of the process of having the accumulated Samskaras that are in the Sadhak's Chitta (mind stuff) get eliminated by the awakened Prana Shakti within the Sadhak. If a Sadhak has a preponderance of Tamasik (indolence and ignorance producing) Samskaras, the Kriyas that happen will likely cause him to get groggy or fall asleep, feel anger, fear, jealousy, etc. If a Sadhak has a preponderance of Rajasik (action/activity producing) Samskaras, the Kriyas he experiences will likely be physical movements, Asanas, etc. If he has a preponderance of Sattvik (spiritually enhancing) Samskaras, he might experience a feeling of devotion to God, subtle joy, a sense of calm, etc. Most Sadhaks have a blend of all these three Gunas (tendencies caused by the accumulated Samskaras) and it is only by observing the Kriyas that happen in a dispassionate manner, as the awakened Prana Shakti brings up these Samskaras into the Sadhak's awareness in the form of Kriyas during Sadhan, can the Samskaras underlying the Kriyas get eliminated from the Sadhak's Chitta.

So, my advice to you is that if your application for Deeksha was accepted, Deeksha has surely happened to you. The fact that you fell asleep for a while during Deeksha was itself a Kriya. The thoughts that arise in a chaotic manner are also a form of mental Kriyas that are

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

happening. Please do not get frustrated with this. Please try to develop an attitude of surrender, acceptance and patience and simply observe what happens during Sadhan in a dispassionate and patient manner. Only when the accumulation of Samskaras in your Chitta gets reduced will you begin to experience inner calm during Sadhan. Please allow the awakened Prana Shakti to do her job of cleansing your Chitta by getting rid of your accumulated Samskaras. Gradually, as your Chitta gets cleared up, you will get the experience of the inner calm you are seeking. One just has to be patient.

Question: I am a Maha Yoga Sadhak and I have been following this practice for two years. I think I am making progress on my spiritual journey since I have developed an increased interest in spiritual books and videos and an intense desire to experiencing the ultimate truth.

However, I have begun to lose interest in doing anything, feel a reduction in my desires and I have become very sensitive and weepy. I am well-educated and well qualified, my husband is doing very well in his career, but over the past couple of months I seem to have lost interest in my job and I feel like doing nothing. But at the same time I feel I cannot just sit at home and do nothing; I want to earn money and have a career for my self-respect and satisfaction, but I can't seem to find that fire inside me anymore. I feel like I am getting depressed. Please guide me.

Answer: Glad to read that you have been a Maha Yoga Sadhak for the past two years. I assume that you have either received Maha Yoga Deeksha or have been following the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga. It doesn't matter which, but the fact that you are increasingly getting drawn inwards, towards spirituality and a desire to know the ultimate truth, suggest that you are well on your way towards making progress on the spiritual path. The feelings you have of a "reduction in your desires" and "can't find the fire inside me" suggest that you are developing a sense of Virakti, or detachment towards the material world. This is not necessarily a bad thing; in fact developing such a sense of detachment is quite common for Sadhaks who have been practicing Maha Yoga for a while. It is in fact the first step towards becoming a Karma Yogi in a Sahaja (automatic) manner.

However, as you have recently begun to experience, the sense of Virakti can also lead to the Tamasik Vrutti (tendency) of indolence (doing nothing, inaction), feeling overly sensitive and feeling depressed, especially if the Sadhak does not understand that this is the first step towards becoming a true Karma Yogi. And the key to Karma Yoga is not for the Sadhak to become inactive and give up participating in the material world, but to be active and participate in the material world, feeling bound with a sense of duty to engage in Karma (action) with a sense of detachment towards the fruit of the action. Lord Shri Krishna says in the 47th Sloka of Chapter II of the Bhagvad Geeta:

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन

मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोस्त्वकर्मणि

(One only has a right to work/action, but never to its fruits; let not the fruit of action be your motive, nor let your inclination be to inaction).

The Lord's message in the second part of the Sloka, "nor let your inclination be to inaction" is very applicable in your case!

Also, in Sloka 4 of Chapter III of the Bhagvad Geeta the Lord says:

न कर्मणा मनारम्भा नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुशोष्णुते

न च संन्यासनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति

(Not by non-performance of actions does man reach "actionlessness"; nor by mere renunciation does he attain "perfection").

So, be delighted that you are beginning to develop a sense of Virakti, but please do not infer from it that you have a right to inaction. You, as we all do, have our duties to fulfill, duties towards ourselves, to our families and to society at large. But when you act, as you must, please do so with a sense of detachment towards the fruits of your actions. That will directly and automatically put you on the path to becoming a true Karma Yogi, which is a must for experiencing Self Enlightenment. I would suggest that you read Chapter III of the Bhagvad Geeta which goes more in depth into the concept of Karma Yoga. Also, please sit for Maha Yoga Sadhan regularly. Doing so will allow the awakened Prana Shakti within you to do what is needed for your spiritual progress and as you put yourself in the observer (Sakshi) role during Sadhan it will help you maintain the Sakshi role in your day-to-day life as well. This will help you do your activities very well while staying detached from the fruits of the activities. It will also gradually eliminate negative emotions from your Chitta (mind stuff), especially those that cause you to be weepy and overly sensitive. Please also read the article "Maha Yoga - A Key to Success" which appeared in the June 2012 issue of Self Awakening (archived at <http://mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self%20Awakening%20Vol%204%20Issue%204.pdf>). It explains Karma Yoga in a simplified manner and seems to be quite relevant to your situation.

Question: I am a 17 year old first year pharmacy student from Mumbai with a deep interest in spirituality. I have a book on Kundalini and Shaktipat Deeksha that mentions three indications that suggest that a person's Kundalini might have been awakened because of him having been a Yogi in a prior life, even without him having followed the rigorous path of Yoga Sadhana in his current life. These indications include the trembling of one's body in an

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

uncontrollable manner at spiritual sites or similar situations, the sensation of some energy rising up one's spine and the head becoming heavy, and seeing colorful visions of icons representing God forms or Mother Energy appearing in one's dreams. It is suggested in the book that if a person experiences any of these indications he should contact a Siddha/Maha Yogi at his earliest. I have experienced the first two of these indications and I am wondering if I should apply for Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation), and whether or not I would be eligible to receive such Deeksha.

Answer: Given what you are experiencing, it would make sense for you to receive Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha. Having that happen would result in the awakened Shakti within you get better regulated and put you on the spiritual path to which you seem to be naturally inclined. All Sadhaks are eligible to apply for Shaktipat Deeksha regardless of their level of preparedness, age, religion, caste, creed, gender, etc. You can apply for receiving Deeksha on the web at <http://www.mahayoga.org/mahayoga-initiation.aspx>.

We normally do not urge Sadhaks to apply for Deeksha because such a desire needs to come to them from within. In your case, given the experiences you are having, it would be good to have the awakened Shakti get better regulated by the Deeksha, and with regular Sadhan (sitting for meditation), the uncontrollable physical Kriyas that happen at random times or in spiritual situations, would gradually diminish.

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

P. P. Dr. Prakash Saraf Maharaj Departs from his Earthly Body

P. P. Dr. Prakash Saraf Maharaj, one of the 14 Deekshadhikaris (Maha Yoga Gurus) designated by P. P. Kaka Maharaj to carry forward his Maha Yoga lineage is no more with us. He left his earthly body on December 13th, 2015; he was only 66 years of age. P. P. Dr. Saraf Maharaj had a very successful medical practice and a long track record of social service, including organizing annual blood donation drives, eye care and cataract surgery drives and the provision of free health care to nine Adivasi (indigenous tribal) villages. He was also very active in promoting healthful eating, having given several lectures to diverse audiences on the topic and authoring a book on promoting healthful cookery. In addition to his stellar career in medicine, P. P. Dr. Saraf Maharaj was an expert on the Vedas, Upanishads, the Bhagvad Geeta and other spiritual and Yoga-related scriptures. Following is a condolence message sent by P. P. Prakash Prabhune Maharaj to Dr. Abhijit Saraf, P. P. Dr. Saraf Maharaj's son. - Editor

Condolence Message

December 20th, 2015

To: Dr. Shri Abhijit Saraf,

The trustees of P. P. Swami Loknath Tirth Mahayoga Trust were all immensely saddened by the passing away of your father, P. P. Dr. Prakashrao Vasudev Saraf Maharaj on Sunday, December 13th, 2015 at the age of sixty-three years. We all share your grief.

P. P. Shri Prakashrao Saraf had a smart, lovable and loving personality. He had kept alive the tradition of being a "family doctor", a tradition that seems to be disappearing in recent years. There are several examples of his having treated family members from three generations. His personality was such that it gave confidence to his patients that they would be cured of their maladies.

His unstinting service to health care and cultural causes promoted by organizations such as the Janakalyan Blood Drive, Vanvasi Kalyan (uplift of indigenous tribes), RSS, Sanskar Bharati, Sanskrit Language Samiti, Nashik Education Society, etc. was indeed exemplary. He was truly an Ajatashatru - a victor over the enemies of ignorance and disease.

He was a constant presence at Mahayoga Trust events, especially those related to discussions on the Bhagvad Geeta.

He had the great fortune of receiving Shaktipat Deeksha as well as right to grant Shaktipat Deeksha to others by none other than P. P. Shaktipatacharya Shri Narayankaka Dhekane Maharaj. Daily Sadhan was an integral part of his spiritual practice.

Earlier today a condolence gathering was held at the Mahayoga Ashram in Nashik where several people spoke so warmly about your father. They were unanimous in their feelings of having lost a sincere and loving friend in his passing away.

P. P. Dr. Prakash Saraf Maharaj Departs from his Earthly Body (continued)

You are indeed fortunate to have your uncle Shri Rajendra Saraf as a member of your household who can continue to guide you on an ongoing basis.

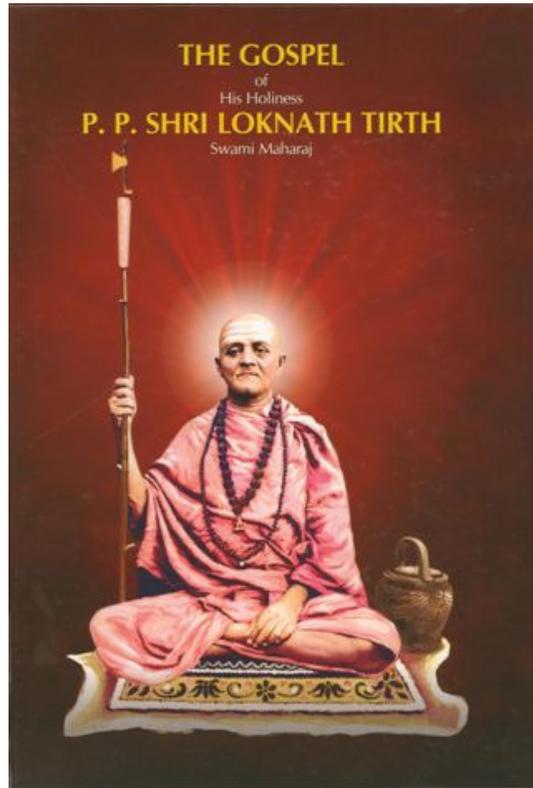
We hope God gives you and your family the strength to bear the grief from the passing away of P. P. Shri Prakashrao Saraf Maharaj, and we pray to God to grant his soul everlasting peace.

Best regards,

Prakash Prabhune
(Chief Trustee)

Translated from the original in Marathi by the Editor

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



The English language translation of P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj's biography is now available in hardcover edition! P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj was the Shaktipat Deeksha Guru of P. P. Narayan Kaka Dhekane Maharaj as well as P. P. Gulvani Maharaj. The original biography was written in the Marathi language by Shri A. S. Potbhare and it was translated into English by Dr. R. V. Urankar.

Copies of the book are available in India for Rs. 299 plus postage at:
P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Mahayoga Trust
P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Chowk,
Shrirang Nagar, Gangapur Road
Nashik, Maharashtra, India 422013

Phone: +91-253-2311616

Upcoming Events:

Deeksha Day (Initiation Day) on August 7th, 2016

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 2 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:

We 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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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!