

Self Awakening

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



Editor's note

Dear Readers:

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

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

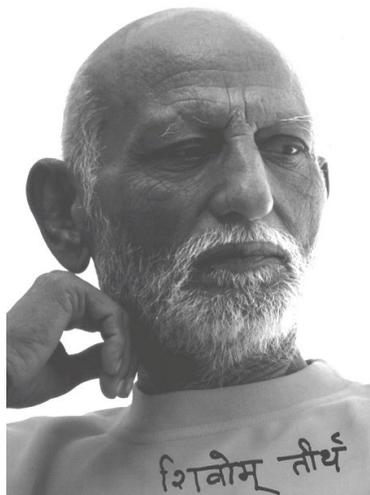
To the thousands of Sadhaks in the Maha Yoga tradition all over the world and other interested readers, this e-newsletter is intended to provide virtual Satsang. It is intended to encourage Sadhaks to remain engaged in Maha Yoga, be informed about Maha Yoga-related events around the world, and to provide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

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

Contents

Editor's note	1
Churning of the Heart	2
Remembering Kaka Maharaj	9
Rangoli of Kaka Maharaj	14
Answers to questions	15
Book announcement	22
Upcoming events	23
Website updates	23
How to contribute content	24

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts



The following 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. These excerpts are published here with the kind permission of Swami Shivom Tirth Ashram, Inc. For those Sadhaks who are interested, copies of the trilogy are available at Amazon.com

The Tea Predicament

While sleeping, the mind is strongly pulled towards the past. Sometimes it visualizes beautiful dreams about the future. Occasionally it worries. But most of the times it drifts off into the past. Today, while sleeping, my mind recalled a strange incident from the past. When I lived in Nangal, whenever I had time, I would visit Himachal Pradesh. The mountains of Himachal Pradesh are a mile away from Nangal. Once I was staying in a cave in the Bilaspur district of Himachal Pradesh. It was surrounded by forest. There were five or six houses at some distance. I would get two meals a day from one house and about one litre of milk from the other. I used to consume a lot of tea then. I decided that as long as I was living in this cave, I would not go anywhere to have tea. The bazaar was only four or five miles away. It wasn't a nuisance to go, have tea and come back, but I made a resolve not to go.

After five or six days had passed without tea, the memory of tea began to trouble me. My mind became restless, but I forcibly suppressed its desire. My mind would continuously remind me of tea, and I would suppress it. Generally it has become the nature of the mind to jump up and change the subject when asked to do a certain thing. It repeatedly brings forth things that it has been told not to. This arrogance of mind was harassing me. Out of the blue a cup of tea would appear in my mind. I would shrug it off. I would try to engage my mind with chanting. Sometimes I would read something, sometimes go for a walk. Tea did not leave me alone.

A fortnight passed by, and the craving for tea became very intense. Spiritual practices, devotional songs were swept aside. Now my head started to feel heavy. The mind was continuing in its own rut. A picture of Bhairavji was carved on a wall in the cave. As Bhairavji did not have any place in my worship, I had not paid much attention to it. I was pacing in the cave and my mind was focused on the thought of tea. My resolve to not go

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

anywhere to have tea began to weaken. I lowered my defense against the mind. I imagined going to the bazaar early in the morning and having tea. I was pacing and thinking at the same time.

My seat was on one side and Bhairavji was on the other. As I paced in one direction my seat would be in front of me and as I returned, I would be facing Bhairavji. That day, for the first time, I saw that on the chest of Bhairavji a niche had been made in the wall. I could see a whitish paper kept inside it. Initially I did not pay much attention to it. Then inadvertently my hand went into the niche. It was a small packet containing some jaggery, tea leaves and one anna. My happiness knew no bounds on seeing the tea leaves. My problem of tea had been resolved. I cannot describe the joy I experienced at that moment. I thought some devotee must have offered it. I had been living here for the last fifteen days, and no devotee had come. Perhaps someone had come prior to that. Whatever it was, for me this was a gift from Bhairavji.

The next day morning, I narrated this incident to Maharajshri and requested him to express his viewpoint. The essence of what Maharajshri said is as follows:

(i) “The first thing that is clear from this is how the mind plays mischief with a man. The mind repeatedly attacks him in different ways. Sometimes by posing as a friend, sometimes by cajoling him, sometimes by disillusioning him, sometimes by making him angry and sometimes by attracting him. All these are the tricks of the mind. The mind never gets discouraged. It will keep on playing its tricks until a man refuses to accept defeat. The task of attaining victory over the mind is a very difficult one. The mind derives its strength from impressions. If the mind has to be defeated, impressions have to be destroyed, desires have to be wiped out, and defects have to be put an end to.”

(ii) “Until impressions are destroyed, there is a need for strong determination to maintain restraint. The mind is bound to play mischief. Only strong determination can keep it under control. A slight relaxation and the mind will be out of control. You became weak and your entire restraint was wasted. If the lord hadn’t helped you in the form of a gift, you would have collapsed.”

(iii) “To maintain a strong resolve is very difficult for an aspirant. Upon becoming weak the mind is discouraged, thus along with strong determination, surrender is also a must. In that way, even if the resolve fails, the mind does not feel dejected. From this point of view, strong determination is needed to strengthen the feeling of surrender. What would have been the impact on your mind if you had gone to the bazaar to have tea?”

(iv) “If one has the opportunity and the convenience, one should periodically go into solitude and do sadhan for some days. In isolation the negative sentiments of the mind take a radical form and cause disturbances. An aspirant has an opportunity to understand his state of mind. Power is accumulated due to sadhan. Then, having returned to society, while performing his tasks he watches his mind. Sadhan is the never-ending act of watching the mind. An aspirant is never careless with his mind.”

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

I asked, “Maharajji, it is difficult for worldly people to find an opportunity to go into solitude. What should they do?”

Maharajshri said, “They can find a little time daily, sit in a particular corner of the house and enjoy solitude. Solitude is said to be half-meditation [samadhi]. While going through their daily routine, they can watch the mind. They can try to surrender to God and do their work with a sense of service. Whenever possible, they can chant while working.”

I observed, “It is possible that this happened as a result of some contamination or impurity from one of the houses from which I received my food and milk during my stay at the cave.”

Maharajshri said, “Yes. That could have been the immediate cause, but not the major cause. The accumulated impressions are the major cause that keeps the mind continuously active. If you observe your mind, you will see that before and after this incident it experienced other upheavals. Thus there should be a reason that is predominant other than the immediate cause, and that can only be accumulated impressions.”

Maharajshri’s understanding and analysis were unique. It was accurate. Each and every word had strength. It was supported by continuous sadhan. As a result every word would directly enter the heart. His style of explaining was matchless. But he generally did not open his chest of knowledge until questioned. Once the window of knowledge was opened, knowledge would flow out in bursts.

Now I put forth a strange question, for which I was embarrassed later. But Maharajshri was neither offended by it, nor did he refuse to answer it. I said, “This era is not fit for great men like you. Why did you come to this world?”

Suddenly Maharajshri became serious. He said, “It is a separate question whether I am great or not, but one thing is sure: that no one can come into this world or leave it at will. When he is sent, he comes into the world. When he is recalled, he leaves. All this is in the hands of the one who sends and recalls. As long as God wishes, a being stays in this world and experiences joys and sorrows. No one can remain in this world even for an instant by his own wish.

It is a different story that, once they have been born into this world, no one wants to leave. A living being undergoes suffering in this world, is insulted and gets angry, but he doesn’t feel like giving up this world. He does not realize that, since the decision to come and go is not in his hands, he has no hand in deciding the duration of his stay. Yet living beings do not want to think about leaving this place. Even the animals, birds and insects wish to hold on to their lives. But has anyone been able to live in this world forever? Time comes along and takes us away in one sweep. Near and dear ones are left wailing behind.

“If we wish to invite someone into this world, we cannot do so. There are so many couples who yearn to see the face of a son, but coming and going is in the hands of God. How long

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

one should be in this world is also God's decision. Joys and sorrows depend upon God. When he decides to send someone, that being cannot refuse. If he wants to take someone back, likewise the being cannot refuse. A living being is a mere puppet in his hands. If God says, 'Sit,' he sits down. If God asks him to speak, the being speaks. If he is asked to be quiet, he is quiet. A sinner, a good soul, man, woman, animals, birds – all are under his control. Let me ask: Have you come because of your wish and will you leave when you wish? People want to commit suicide, but all attempts are not successful. Only the person whom God calls can commit suicide. God creates some excuse or the other to call. He, being invisible, doesn't approach from the front. He pushes us – it could be through sickness, an accident or suicide. The truth is, it is God who calls you back.”

There Is Only One Dharma

During his walks, Maharajshri would say many good things. At that time his mood would be excellent. In the first place the time was early morning. Second, he would have just got up after doing sadhan. And thirdly, no one else would be present to interrupt us. I, too, would introduce topics, usually in order to avoid a discussion about politics, construction or some other social issue.

One day I asked, “Maharajji, what is dharma? In some places in the Gita, karma is called dharma, in some places yajna [religious sacrifice] is called dharma, and in some places duty. Generally aren't Hinduism, Islam and other religions considered dharma?”

He said, “There is only one dharma: to realize God. That is, to clear the misconception that God is not realized, which means to establish oneself in dharma through dharma. Everything else is a display of words. Understand the essential meaning of karma as dharma. Karma full of attachment is not dharma. Detached karma is called dharma because it purifies the mind and is instrumental in clearing misconceptions. Where yajna is called dharma, remember that japa [chanting] is the most superior amongst all yajnas. Doing japa to attain something is not yajna. Yajna with the sole intention of realizing God and not for obtaining anything else is dharma because it destroys misconceptions. Performing one's duties is called dharma because achieving results is treated as secondary in this. Performing one's duty without desiring any fruits is dharma because it removes desires and destroys misconceptions. This issue is present in all types of spiritual practices. The goal of attaining God is identical in all paths. Wherever realization of God is not the goal, it is not dharma. Dharma is a devotee worshipping, a karma yogi performing his duties without any attachments, the knowledge arising in an intellectual from within, and a yogi performing meditation to realize God. A householder living in accordance with the scriptures to achieve detachment, the sacrifice of sense objects by an elder, and acquisition of knowledge by a celibate [brahmachari] is dharma. All these are helpful in leading towards God.

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

“Hinduism, Islam and other religions are not only dharma, but also doctrines which suggest the means of moving towards dharma. Some are action-oriented, some japa-oriented, some sentiment-oriented, some worship-oriented, some prayer-oriented and some service-oriented. The distinction of Hinduism is that it is not based on the means but on the state of the chitta. The state of the chitta is not the same for all beings. Everyone’s accumulated impressions, sentiments, faith and tendency are different, and thus one doctrine or spiritual practice is not appropriate for all. The doctrine of Hinduism acknowledges all ways and grants one the right to practice what is suitable for him.”

I asked, “If all doctrines lead to the same God, then why this mutual animosity and argument?”

His answer was, “Attachment has become the nature of man. However unnatural it is, nevertheless, a human is helpless in the face of it. He gets attached to his school of spiritual practice and its doctrine and starts considering his way of thinking superior. He wants to forcibly impose it on others. If one is broad-minded and understands the true essence of dharma, then the fight comes to an end. The work of dharma is to destroy misconceptions while purifying the mind, and to establish a person in dharma by giving a direct experience of the immortal, pure, intelligent, *satchitanand* [harmonious, conscious and blissful] qualities of the Supreme Being. Only through dharma can one get established in dharma.”

I asked, “What place does Shaktipat have in dharma?”

“Shaktipat is a pragmatic school of spiritual practice, devoid of ego. Correctly speaking, it is not even an independent school of thought. It is the science of advancement of all schools. Just as devotion is the dharma of a devotee and contemplation the dharma of a jnani, surrender is the dharma in Shaktipat. It is a way of advancing internally in a natural way and becoming established in one’s own self. In all other spiritual practices, effort and the ego of doership on the part of the aspirant are involved. But Shaktipat is self-proven, accompanied by the sense of an observer. In fact, this dharma is easier than egoistic dharmas.”

I mentioned that some people believe that Shaktipat is tantrik, and thus they are afraid of it. Maharajshri replied, “In the first place, such people have a wrong notion about tantra. They consider only tantra involving sacrifice of animals as tantra. However the actual nature of tantra is spiritual. At one time the practice of tantra involving sacrifice of animals became dominant. It was widespread and, as a result, many great souls criticized the tantriks [those who practice tantra]. By reading and rereading their writings, many people have nurtured negative opinions about tantra. Shaktipat is, indeed, a tantrik art, but it is not just tantrik. It is also Vedic [in accordance with the *Vedas*], pauranik [in accordance with the *Puranas*], yogic and devotional in content. It can be explained in the context of all philosophies. An aspirant can explore the theories of Shaktipat according to his interests.

“Tantra does not contradict any Vedic or pauranik texts. It explains their principles in a different manner. The tantras are called the supplements of all other texts. ‘Whatever the nature of the tantrik practice, external or internal, it requires detachment, control over the

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

mind and control over the senses. Tantrik sadhana also removes the extroverted character of tendencies and turns them inward. The important thing is inner awakening rather than philosophies, paths, doctrines or feelings.”

Your True Self Has Awakened Now

Today when Maharajshri started his morning walk, two gentlemen from outside joined him. Today was my day to remain silent and listen. On most occasions, in fact, I would talk less and listen more. Maharajshri used to say that the less one talks, the more one acquires. He who talks a lot has very little capacity to receive.

One gentleman placed his issue before Maharajshri in the following manner: “I am unable to do my prayers and recitations. I used to serve God daily in the morning. I would bathe him, adorn him, worship him, and later sit in front of him and recite the Gita. But now when I sit down to do this I just sit. I go into a kind of meditation. I experience joy in simply sitting there. I wonder what has happened to me? Is God upset with me that he does not accept my services? When I sit down to recite the Gita, the book just remains open in front of me. I even forget the shlokas [stanzas] of the Gita that are on the tip of my tongue. The situation with chanting is similar: I forget the mantra. Even if I try to remember it, I cannot do so. It seems as if all the activities of the mind have stopped – no thoughts, no feelings, no resolve. It is as if I have died while still alive.”

Maharajshri listened very seriously and then said, “It is very strange that you are worried about this state. Ascetics perform penance, intellectuals seek knowledge and devotees cry and sing in front of God to achieve this state. Only a rare person attains this state beyond feelings. This state is not the state of total restraint of the chitta, but is quite close to it. In this state, the mind becomes free from resolutions and uncertainties, no sentiments arise in the heart, tendencies are silenced, the samskaras are pushed to one side and the chitta, in this state of beyond feelings sees only Chaitanya [conscious-self]. In the *Narada Bhakti Sutras* this very state is called atmaram [resting in the self]. This is the samprajnat state [conscious concentration] in Yoga. After this comes the asamprajnat state [seedless and without support].

“You bathe and decorate God only through your senses. When all the sense organs become introverted and cease all interactions, how can they serve God? When the sense organs have given up all efforts and become inactive, then how can they chant? When speech has become silent, how can you recite? Your efforts are possible only so long as the sense organs and the mind are active. In the state you describe the Chaitanya [conscious-self], which, on giving life to the sense organs, is called chetan [consciousness], withdraws its activity, which is dependent on the sense organs. But its vibrations are still there in the innermost recesses of the chitta. Thus the chitta is not fully restrained but its external activity comes to an end. This is samprajnat.”

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

Then the gentleman said, “But Maharajji, if our external activity has come to a halt, if there is no ego, what is the use of this life?”

Maharajshri said, “You think in this way because you are attached to your life and ego. But if you think about it, your real life and your true self has awakened now. Now the time to enjoy life is near. The dark night is about to end. The closed door that you have been knocking on so long is about to open.”

“Until now you have been attached to a world that is meaningless and has no stability. Now you are advancing one level after another and moving toward a bliss that is lasting and eternal, in which there is no sign of sorrow. What you consider life is just momentary. No one knows when the lamp will be extinguished. It is only a mirage. There is movement, walking and everything else, but no power of one’s own. This life is surely going to slip from your hands. Why not move towards that life which is eternal and filled with bliss?”

The gentleman again spoke. “Whatever the case, Maharajji, my mind only wishes to serve God and chant. What do I have to gain from the direct knowledge of Chaitanya [conscious-self]? I derive joy from singing devotional songs.”

Maharajshri said, “If you eat food your hunger will be satisfied. When you sing devotional songs various states are its fruits. Whether you like it or not, you will inevitably attain them.”

While talking about these matters we reached the ashram and the conversation stopped. For me this discussion was very interesting and inspiring. It forced me to think and understand many things.

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

“Churning of the Heart” trilogy by P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj is available from Amazon.com, or in India from:

Devatma Shakti Society

92-93, Navali Gav

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Remembering P. P. Kaka Maharaj

Three Sadhaks from outside of India share their experiences encountering P. P. Kaka Maharaj and/or Maha Yoga. These write-ups were published in the Gaurav Granth (commemorative publication) honoring P. P. Kaka Maharaj on the occasion of the first anniversary of his departure from this world. - Editor

At the feet of the Master

I begin by prostrating to the Holy Feet of His Divine Lordship, Param Pujya Shri Shri Jagadguru Narayan Kaka Maharaja. Om Shri Gurudevaya Namah.

India has always been seen as a land of great spirituality that even the most horrific and destructive of invading forces could not vanquish, and so spiritual seekers have always come to the shores of this blessed land to seek spirituality and to realise the Divine.

Like many before and after me, I also travelled to the land of India in the hope of meeting a spiritual master and to find the Divine. The Guru dispels darkness, and it is said that without a bona fide Guru, one can never achieve even a small degree of success. Look how even Bhagvan Shri Ram himself could not achieve anything without a Guru. However, I was very surprised that despite attending so many Holy sites, and meeting so many sadhus, ascetics and faqeers, and despite my very best efforts to travel anywhere to meet such a holy person, during my travels I did not meet even one single accomplished Guru.

I visited temples - with great many-thousand year histories and legacies - but inside them I only saw priests reciting prayers without feeling or connection, and collecting donations from innocent masses. Charlatans were everywhere, and those seeking Western followers to acquire prestige and great wealth were never lacking, but I did not cross the path of even one truly genuine person.

I gave up believing that India had any spirituality left at all.

It was my luck that one native Indian friend told me about His Lordship P. P. Narayan Kaka Dhekane Maharaj. I first heard of my Gurudev whilst in my own country, Ireland, and before leaving for India I had already gained first-hand experience of the results of prayers to this Great Saint. So, despite being weary of false Gurus, when I travelled to Nashik I pushed my friend to assist me in attending Gurudev's ashram.

At this time, Maharaj's human body had become increasingly weak, and so on the first few occasions that we attended the ashram we were unable to obtain the physical Darshan of Gurudevji, but eventually we were fortunate enough to attend the ashram when Maharaj was well. From His endless mercy Maharaj gave us an opportunity to sit in His presence.

When we were seated at His feet, Maharaj spoke so lovingly to us and was so kind. He was so humble that when I requested that He might grant me His mercy he simply replied "How

Remembering P. P. Kaka Maharaj (continued)

could I help you in any way? We can't even speak the same language!” (*Personal Note- It was funny for me when I later saw his eloquent English speeches while in America; as when I was in His presence he gave me the impression he could neither speak nor understand English at all. How different this True Guru was from all the celebrity-gurus that sought more and more western disciples to acquire wealth and fame!*)

I requested again for Maharaj's mercy; and that if He did not grant it then who would? Maharaj relented and agreed, at which point some of my new Guru Brothers then started to hand me forms to be signed and informed me of the next distance Shaktipat Deeksha event that would be taking place in approximately one month. The formalities that I was informed of slightly confused me, because they had nothing to do with spirituality and I was sitting in front of Guruji at that minute. I started to become a bit disheartened that I had not actually found a true Guru.

At this time, Maharaj was engaged in a conversation in the Marathi language with some other Sadhaks, and I could not understand. During this conversation, and whilst He was giving full concentration to the other parties to the conversation, Maharaj momentarily turned to me and smiled. As I looked into the Lords' eyes, His Endless Grace suddenly descended upon me. Details of the after-effects of this experience are unimportant, but one funny result was that I thought I should immediately go to a Doctor as I had a strange feeling afterwards in my body. Thankfully, another disciple mentioned to me afterwards that if later on I got that strange feeling again I should not worry.

I never had an opportunity to meet my Master in person again; I returned to my own country and have not yet returned to India, and He left his mortal form in November 2012.

Some were fortunate enough to have had the continuing Darshan of Gurudev throughout their lives, whilst others (such as me) were not. But the Amrit left by even one second in the presence of my Master was enough to leave an eternal mark on the soul of any true seeker. My Master was so humble that He used to say “I am just the postman, once you have received what my Gurudev gave me to pass on then you do not need me anymore”. The very beauty of the Grace of the Sadguru is that once the Kundalini has been ignited, the Guru-Shishya connection can never be broken- even if one never meets his Guru in the flesh again or after the Guruji returns to His Primordial Form (i.e. Maha-Samadhi).

Now that Prabhu has returned to His Eternal Form (Satsvarup) we must not become confused or forget that Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma refers to our Gurudev himself. The gift that He would bestow in person in Nashik, India, has now become infinitely multiplied. Guruji is literally the omnipresent Brahma, and nothing is outside of the Hand of God. Our job is just to continue in our Sadhana, the Lord will take care of the rest.

My Master's Dada Guru, P. P. Shri Shri Swami Shankar Purshottam Tirthaji Maharaj, once said: “Who are you? This human body or something else? Then when people die, why do others cry? The lifeless body lies before you, but you are really grieving for the Soul. In the same way, your Self is not this body- it is the Soul. Sadguru is your very Self. He is in your

Remembering P. P. Kaka Maharaj (continued)

body but you do not know Him. He is in your mind, deciding for you; but you do not know Him. He is controlling all your senses, but you do not know Him. He is everywhere in the vast sky, water, air and earth. He is the power behind everything. He causes me to breathe; He is my very own. Persons should strive to know this “very own”, who is within themselves. Once one knows Him, they need to know nothing else.”

May the disciples of Gurudev take inspiration from His Presence within them, and may all beings be at Peace.

Sarvam Khalvidam Narayana

By: Sadhak Adam
Ireland

My Experience of Maha Yoga

I became interested in Yoga when I was quite young; the first time I heard about Siddha Maha Yoga was through the books and writings of P. P. Swami Muktananda. Over the years I gained a lot of information on the various systems of Yoga and came to the realization Maha Yoga was probably the most powerful Yoga approach. I decided then that I needed to find a true Siddha Guru who could initiate me into Maha Yoga. However, this was a problem for me since there were no Siddha Gurus in Iran where I live, and travel to India would have been extremely difficult.

Years passed, but one day while I was on the web, I came across the Maha Yoga website www.mahayoga.org. It was like a miracle for me to find out that P. P. Shri Narayan Kaka Maharaj, a Siddha Guru, was willing to bestow the bliss of Maha Yoga to everyone on earth, wherever they were located, even in distant lands! I registered for receiving Deeksha right away and was eagerly waiting to hear back from P. P. Kaka Maharaj. One day I got the initiation letter from the Maha Yoga Ashram and right away my heart was full of bliss upon reading it!

On the day of the initiation I went up a mountain nearby and sat for meditation to receive Deeksha. The Deeksha itself was a peaceful experience, but I did not have any special experiences like Kriyas, etc. I continued to meditate daily and I sent a note to P. P. Guruji letting him know that I didn't have any specific experiences yet of Kundalini awakening. P. P. Guruji sent me a wonderful and wise reply. His note said:

Namaskar Dear Isaac:

Pleased to hear from you. Please note that:

Remembering P. P. Kaka Maharaj (continued)

1. *You have definitely received the wonderful Siddha Yoga Deeksha*
2. *Specific experiences such as Kriyas do not define Deeksha*
3. *This Deeksha can change your life*
4. *Continue to sit for Sadhan daily for a minimum of one hour, any time, but only after three hours following a meal*
5. *Prana Shakti/Life Force/Mother Energy is undoubtedly the common basis for all human beings*

I had faith in P. P. Guruji's advice and I continued my daily Sadhan. Within a few months I began to experience automatic breathing Kriyas (Pranayam) and body movements, including Asanas such as Shirshasana! I then remembered P. P. Guruji's words of advice!

I have received many spiritual initiations in my life thus far and experienced many spiritual Sadhanas, but in truth, it was Maha Yoga Deeksha that changed my whole life and has enabled me to progress rapidly in the spiritual realm.

P. P. Shri Narayan Kaka Maharaj is always present within Maha Yoga devotees; every time I think about him I feel he is right beside me. I would urge all Sadhaks to have absolute faith, surrender to Mother Energy, and sit for Sadhan every day and they will be rewarded with bliss!

I am eternally grateful to P. P. Guruji's Grace, to his Guru Parampara, and to the Divine Mother Shakti.

Om Namah Shivaya

By: Shri Isaac Sian
Iran

Lord Shiva's gift: My Deeksha from P. P. Kaka Maharaj

One day during my lunch break from work in December, 2000 I went to the local Hindu temple and prayed to Lord Shiva for a Guru to guide me in my Sadhana. I closed my eyes and saw an image of a dancing elephant. It looked almost as if I was seeing a white line drawing and the elephant was dancing around and around in circles.

When I returned to the library where I worked, I spoke with an Indian boy who said "That's Ganesh, the elephant-headed God!" Immediately we decided to look on the Internet for information about Ganesh. I was new to Hinduism and I knew nothing about Ganesh. But when I typed in "Ganesh" the website for P. P. Kaka Maharaj appeared. I felt a wave of bliss, Anand, as I viewed the site and saw that I could be given an initiation by a Siddha Guru and all I had to do was write a letter or send him an e-mail. I did not realize until later that it is

Remembering P. P. Kaka Maharaj (continued)

scientifically impossible for P. P. Kaka Maharaj's internet site to come up using the keyword search, "Ganesh." There are no pictures of Ganesh at the website and none of the text uses the Deity's name. It was truly a miracle! Lord Shiva had given me my Guru!

I immediately wrote an e-mail, following the instructions given on this site. I was excited by the possibility of Deeksha and every day I checked my email for a response. You cannot imagine my excitement when I saw that my e-mail was answered within a few days. I again experienced Anand when I opened the email from P. P. Kaka Maharaj. I was told I would receive Deeksha on April 21, 2001 and when I read that I began to cry. My tears were both from joy and also because it was only December and I did not want to wait until April. But once I read this e-mail my focus became fixed on P. P. Kaka Maharaj and I thought of him every minute of the day. This resulted in a constant state of bliss. It seemed as if I had already received the Deeksha and was enjoying Anand. On the day of my initiation I sat facing North on an Asana made of cotton. Nothing happened. The next day I went shopping with my husband and suddenly I began experiencing Kriyas. My husband got worried and took me home right away. I realized then that my Deeksha had already happened.

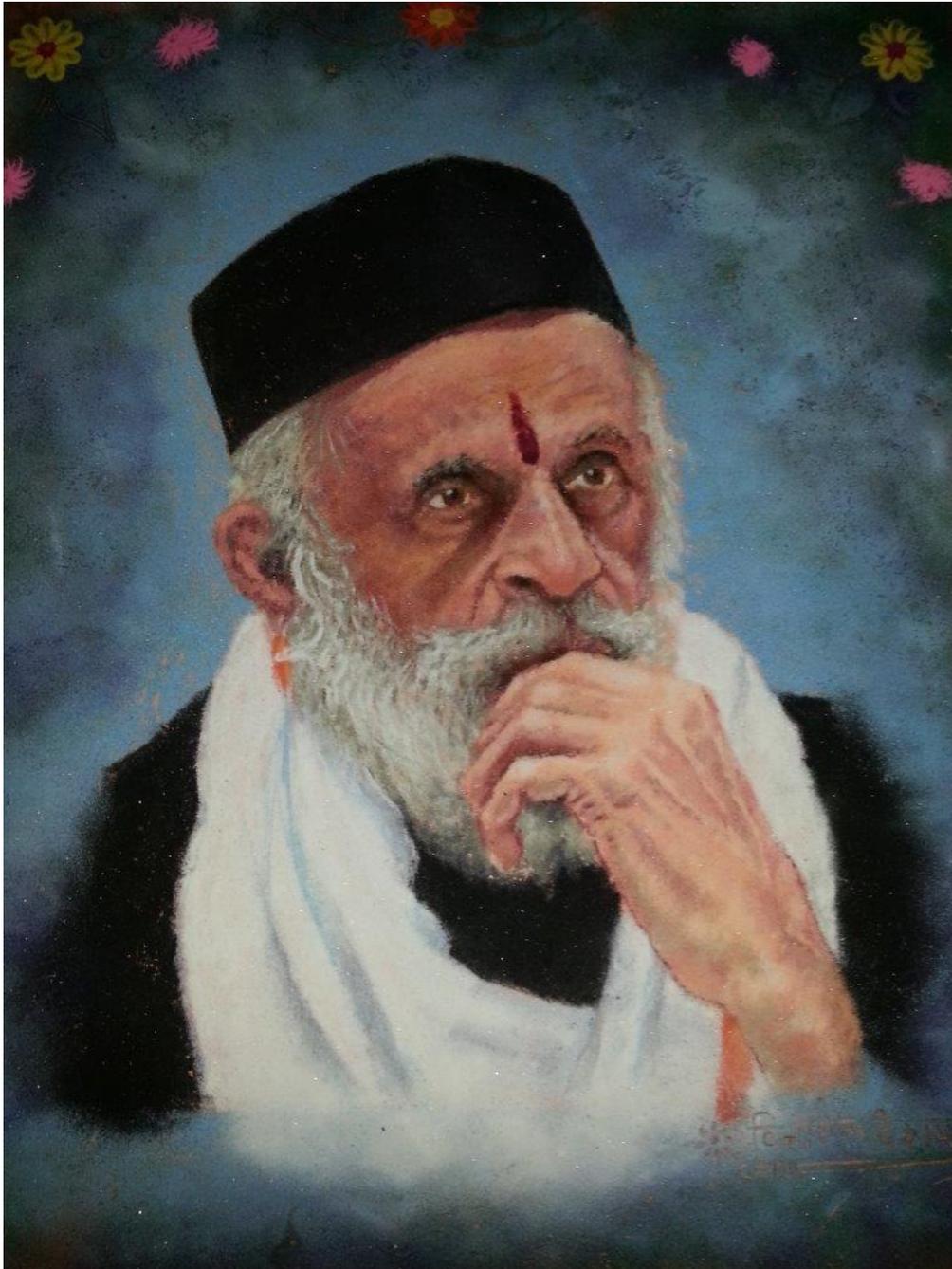
Since my Deeksha I have been sitting for Sadhan (meditation) every day and sometimes twice a day, once at dawn and again in the evening. I thank P. P. Kaka Maharaj every day for his wonderful gift of Maha Yoga.

By: Mrs. Victoria Truver
USA

Editor's note: Sadhaks who are interested in sharing their remembrances of P. P. Kaka Maharaj are welcome to submit them for publication in future issues of this e-newsletter. Please send your submissions to self.awakening@gmail.com.

Rangoli of P. P. Kaka Maharaj

The first anniversary of P. P. Kaka Maharaj's departure from this world, according to the Hindu calendar, was observed with a series of events from October 18th to October 26th, 2013 at the Nashik, India Ashram. At that occasion, Shri Vinayak Deshpande, a Sadhak from Pune, India commemorated P. P. Kaka Maharaj with the Rangoli (sand painting) below. - Editor



Answers to Questions from Sadhaks

- **Question:** I have had the good fortune to have received Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha three years ago, although I won't call myself a Sadhak as I still don't follow all the instructions of P. P. Shri Guru Maharaj in their entirety. I have a couple of queries related to Maha Yoga.
 1. Following Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) what is the influence of Shakti (Mother Energy) on a Sadhak's life path and destiny? Will a Sadhak's destiny (Prarabdha) be overridden by the Deeksha? Can a Siddha Guru influence a Sadhak's Prarabdha if he so desires?
 2. I also do not quite understand why Sadhaks are asked to sit for Sadhan for an hour every day. In my case, Sadhan typically lasts for about an hour and a half on average. It is sometimes quite short, especially if I have some domestic duties to attend to, but it often lasts for much longer times, and when that happens I cannot get up even a minute before the Shakti allows me to. Fortunately, I have an understanding and supportive family. I have tried to make a mental assertion to end Sadhan in an hour but I just cannot do so. I feel that the Shakti is very much a living, all-knowing awareness that knows better than I do about how long I can sit for Sadhan on a given day given the circumstances. Is the duration of Sadhan driven by the awakened Shakti or is my mind playing a trick on me?

Answer: Glad to read that you received Deeksha three years ago. The very fact that Deeksha happened indicates that you are a Sadhak, a seeker, just like the rest of us. If you sit for Sadhan regularly, that too makes you a Sadhak. So there is no need for you to not call yourself a Sadhak. Referring to yourself as a Sadhak - a seeker - does not put you in an elevated position. You are one of many seekers (Sadhaks), who see some value in spiritual uplift as distinct from many others who limit themselves to seeking only material uplift. Your attitude of not wanting to see yourself in an elevated position (i.e. humility) is a good one; very important for all Sadhaks/seekers to have.

Now, about your questions:

1. When Shaktipat happens, the Guru and the Sadhak's Chitta become one during that moment. At such times, some of the ills (Doshas) of the disciple can get transferred to the Guru, who because of the purity of his own Chitta, the blessings of his Parampara (lineage) and the strength of the Shakti within him, is able to withstand the ill-effects of the transfer. However, this does not mean that the Sadhak is freed from his/her Prarabdha; a Sadhak's Prarabdha does not get materially affected or accelerated by Shaktipat Deeksha and Maha Yoga Sadhan. Any changes to a Sadhak's Prarabdha are only marginal at best.

Incidentally, our Prarabdha is what we come into life with, our Prayatna/Purushartha (effort) is what shapes our life and creates and defines the Prarabdha for our next life. Every action we do with intent creates new Samskaras, which get accumulated

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

in our Chitta, and through the complex network of interactions we have with others, results in the Prarabdha for future lives. The way to get out of this Chakra (wheel) is to rid ourselves of our accumulated Samskaras by sitting regularly for Maha Yoga Sadhan, and to reduce/avoid the accumulation of new Samskaras by conducting our day-to-day lives as Karma Yogis; i.e. conducting dutiful actions without expectations for the fruits of such actions and enduring the results of our Prarabdha (Prarabdha-phal) with equanimity and grace. Of course, Prayatna is very important, but it should be done without getting attached to the results of the Prayatna, otherwise the Prayatna will, in turn, result in the creation of new Prarabdha.

Siddha Gurus indeed have the power to change a Sadhak's Prarabdha, but that is something they rarely do. For most of us, in addition to sitting regularly for Sadhan, our enduring of the Prarabdha-phal with equanimity and grace, i.e. without creating new Samskaras, is the only way to progress spiritually.

2. Sadhaks are asked to sit for Sadhan for at least an hour every day. If Sadhan "happens" for a longer period than that, so be it! Since you have an understanding and supportive family environment, if Sadhan lasts longer than the suggested time, there is nothing wrong in enjoying it. The best time for Sadhan is Brahma Muhurta or about an hour and a half before sunrise. So, if you can sit for Sadhan at that time you can avoid the chance of your Sadhan getting interrupted. Shakti is all knowing awareness which works through your intuition to guide you during Sadhan as well as when you are not sitting for Sadhan but have an attitude of surrender nonetheless. Put your faith in Mother Shakti and let her work through you during Sadhan to determine how long you sit for Sadhan, either as your intuition working to limit your Sadhan time in anticipation of an interruption, or in a more explicit manner when you seem to be unable to get out of Sadhan. You are indeed blessed (your Prarabdha, I am sure) that you are compelled to sit for Sadhan for extended periods. Most Sadhaks complain about not being able to sit for even half an hour without having the urge to get up. Incidentally, the time you spend in Sadhan can be even more "restful" than sleep. So if sitting for Sadhan cuts into your sleeping time don't worry about it unless the Sadhan time involves very active and stressful physical or mental Kriyas.

- **Question:** I have been accepted to receive Maha Yoga Shaktipat initiation (Deeksha) and I was wondering if the Guru who will initiate me can do me a favor. I have been suffering for many years from a fear of sudden death. Can the Guru cure me of this fear?

Answer: As a general rule, receiving Shaktipat Deeksha and practicing Maha Yoga with the explicit intent of seeking cures for physical or mental maladies or for acquiring Siddhis (powers) is strongly discouraged because such intents run completely counter to the objective of Maha Yoga which is experientially realizing our true self, the Paramatma (Universal Consciousness) within us all. The realization of the Paramatma within can only happen when we quit identifying ourselves with our bodies or our minds. Maha Yoga Deeksha and regular Sadhan following Deeksha may result in a Sadhak overcoming

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

physical and mental ailments as a by-product, but such worldly outcomes should not be the reason for a Sadhak to seek Maha Yoga Deeksha.

Having said that, on your fear of “sudden death”, please understand that almost all humans have the fear of death. This fear is called Abhinivesh in Sanskrit and it comes from the fact that most of us humans identify ourselves with our bodies (the Annamaya Kosha) and develop a very strong attachment to it and fear that if we lose it at death, it will be the end of us. Please read “Revealing the Paramatma Within” available at <http://www.mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self%20Awakening%20Vol%205%20Issue%204.pdf> to get a better understanding of the five Koshas and the importance of directing our awareness inward (through Maha Yoga Sadhan) from each of the five Koshas to the Paramatma within that the five Koshas hide so successfully from our awareness.

In fact Maha Yoga Deeksha and subsequent Sadhan is the key to a Sadhak experientially realizing that he is not the Annamaya Kosha or any of the four other Koshas within, but that he is the Paramatma that the five Koshas have been covering up all this time. So, while a Sadhak should not expect Maha Yoga Deeksha and Sadhan to cure him of his mental and physical maladies, the Sadhak can rest assured that it will cure him of his attachment to his body (Annamaya Kosha) as a first order of business. With regular Sadhan a Sadhak will begin to experientially realize that he is not the body, nor the energy that animates the body (Pranamaya Kosha), nor the mind that feels bodily sensations and makes his body act (Manomaya Kosha), nor the trove of Samskaras that shape his mind (Vignyanamaya Kosha), nor the separation his Atma feels from the Paramatma (created by the Anandmaya Kosha); but that he is the pure Paramatma within. With regular Sadhan, as you begin to realize experientially that you are not your body, or the energy that activates it, or your mind, you will begin to lose your fear of death automatically.

- **Question:** The icon of the Sadhak in the Sadhan pose at the home page of the Maha Yoga website at <http://www.mahayoga.org/> shows him wearing his hair in a top-knot. This style of wearing one’s hair is typical of Sadhus, Dharmic characters such as the Buddha, Lord Dattatreya, and deities such as Lord Shiva and Lord Krishna. I am curious why this icon was selected as a representation of a Maha Yoga Sadhak when many of the Gurus of this Parampara (lineage) were clean shaven men.

Answer: The symbol on the Maha Yoga web page is simply a representation of a Maha Yogi. There wasn’t any special significance given to selecting it as a symbol/icon beyond the fact that it is often used to symbolize a Yogi.

Of course, as you correctly mentioned, many of the recent Gurus in the Maha Yoga Parampara were clean-shaven Sannyasis or Brahmacharis or even householders. But there were others such as P. P. Swami Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj, P. P. Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj and P. P. Kaka Maharaj who were not clean shaven, had beards and long hair. Even the usually clean-shaven P. P. Gulvani Maharaj is known to have sported a

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

beard during periods of intense Sadhan. P. P. Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj, who was the earliest documented Guru in the lineage, is also shown in renditions as having long hair and a beard. And ultimately, the Maha Yoga Parampara is said to have originated from Lord Shiva, who is also shown with a top knot.

But regardless, the meditating Yogi is just a symbol, a mere representation of a Maha Yogi. Following initiation, with diligent Sadhan, a Maha Yoga Sadhak's awareness moves inward. His emphasis on the Annamaya Kosha (physical body) and appearance gradually give way to an increased and experiential awareness of his true self, the Atma within - a manifestation of the Paramatma who resides in us all.

You should be commended for asking the question, but as Maha Yoga Sadhaks we all need to go beyond physical appearances (Annamaya Kosha), and with diligent Sadhan cast aside the other Koshas (Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vignyanamaya and Anandmaya) until we experientially see ourselves as the Atma, our true self.

- **Question:** I think I am a very weak-minded person. I feel quite insecure when I interact with other people because I become concerned that they do not think I am worthy of their attention. I am afraid my lack of confidence is also affecting my work as a branch manager at a bank. I have received Maha Yoga Deeksha and I know that as a Sadhak I am Chaitanya itself. But my Samskaras (past impressions) seem to get the better of me and I tend to lack the confidence I should have. Please guide me.

Answer: A lot of people have the very same fears about interacting with others, and a general lack of self-confidence. This affects their day-to-day work and their life as householders and members of society. Maha Yoga does not have any specific prescriptions for dealing with such issues related to the material world. But, as you are aware, these tendencies are the result of past Samskaras, not just from your current life but from prior lives as well. And Maha Yoga **does** specifically address Sanchit Samskaras and provides a sure-fire way to gradually free yourself from them through; you guessed it, regular and diligent Sadhan.

When you sit for Sadhan and surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within, the Prana Shakti pulls out the Sanchit Samskaras from within yourself and through the Kriyas she makes happen, gets you released from the effects of the Sanchit Samskaras. So, sit for Sadhan regularly and let the awakened Prana Shakti do her job. She will gradually get you freed from the effects of the Sanchit Samskaras and as a byproduct you might find yourself having more self-confidence. As you discover your true nature you will begin to see other people as children of the same Mother Energy, the Chaitanya Shakti which pervades us all. This will automatically help your interactions with others, not just in a superficial and worldly way but also on the spiritual plane.

- **Question:** I am not a Maha Yoga Sadhak but over the years I have followed several Yoga approaches including Japa Yoga and Tibetan Buddhism. I have also received Shaktipat twice from the Avatar Mother Meera. I want to know how I can manage the Shakti Energy

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

when it becomes intense. Every two months or so the energy within me seems to get very strong, especially around the Crown Chakra and I do not know how to control it. Can you tell me what this all means and guide me on the path I am?

Answer: Thanks for your short synopsis of your exposure to Yoga and related practices. I am not very knowledgeable about the specifics of Avatar Mother Meera's practices or teachings, but from what I could access on the internet, she claims to be able to awaken the Kundalini Shakti in a Sadhak through touch and sight and by having the Sadhak practice Japa Yoga by chanting a Mantra. In that sense, if she has such capabilities, her approach is not very different from Maha Yoga or Siddha Yoga as it is also known. But there is an important difference that might be relevant, especially given your current yoga practices.

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

The Sadhak's role during Maha Yoga Sadhan is not that of a "doer" (Karta) but is simply that of an observer. Once Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) happens, the Sadhak's Prana Shakti gets awakened, and during Sadhan the awakened Prana Shakti becomes the "doer" and is therefore responsible for all that happens. The Sadhak's responsibility is simply to sit for Sadhan diligently and to let the Prana Shakti do what is needed. The awakened Prana Shakti is fully aware of the Sadhak's accumulated Samskaras (impressions from current and past lives) and knows exactly what is needed for him to be rid of them and reach the final goal of self-enlightenment. In a sense, once the Sadhak's Prana Shakti has been awakened appropriately by a Siddha Guru, the awakened Prana Shakti plays the role of his internal Guru and guides him throughout his spiritual journey. The Kriyas that "happen" during Maha Yoga Sadhan are the process by which the accumulated Samskaras are brought up one by one into the Sadhak's ken, and with the Sadhak simply observing them without any attachments or aversions, they get eliminated from his Chitta (mind stuff). This is, in short, the cleansing process of Maha Yoga Sadhan whereby the Sadhak's Chitta gets purified and gets him ready for eventually experiencing the state of Samadhi.

A key corollary of this approach is that since the Sadhak is not the "doer" but the awakened Shakti within him is the doer, the Sadhak does not need to be concerned about actively "doing" anything during Maha Yoga Sadhan. He should not be trying to "manage" the awakened energy within him but he should simply surrender to her and let her do what is needed for his progress. He need not be concerned about which Chakra

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

the energy is residing in and which Chakras she has penetrated. In fact, the Sadhak needs to completely shed his sense of doership during Sadhan for him to actually experience the Divinity within. This is a key factor, because as long as the Sadhak considers himself as the doer/manager, he will be unable to shed his ego, without which it is impossible to actually experience the common Divine which resides in each and every one of us. And not only will it make progress well-nigh impossible, it will also result in an increased level of anxiety within the Sadhak on whether or not he is “doing” Sadhan the right way. So progress will be very difficult and the Sadhak will be miserable.

In your specific situation, it seems that the Shakti within you has been activated, but it may not be getting channeled appropriately, perhaps due to an inadequate level of awakening during Shaktipat or because of the active role you have been attempting to play in trying to manage and channel it since Shaktipat. My suggestion to you would be to try the “surrender” approach during Sadhan and see if that helps. But please do not get caught up in trying to determine where the Prana Shakti within you resides and how strongly she manifests herself. The surges you feel occasionally during Sadhan might be due to the blockages caused by your active attempts to manage her movements. P. P. Kaka Maharaj designed an Introductory Approach to Maha Yoga (<http://mahayoga.org/introductorypractice.htm>) which you might want to try, especially because it might help you follow an approach to begin to surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you. I know it is easier said than done, but an attitude of surrender is the key to progress on this path.

By the way, in their advanced stages, all the other yoga paths also require the Sadhak to surrender to the Divinity within in order to eliminate the ego, without which it is impossible to experience the Divine! As a rule we do not push Sadhaks to ask for Maha Yoga Deeksha; we believe that the urge for receiving Deeksha needs to come from within the Sadhak himself, but once you are well along in your practice of the Introductory Approach and feel that a formal Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha would help your spiritual progress, you can request it at <http://www.mahayoga.org/DeekshaApply.htm> . In your case, receiving Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha might result in a more open clearing of your nadis (channels for the flow of Pranic energy) than might have happened in your prior Shaktipat events.

- **Question:** Recently I had a divine experience after Sadhan when I was falling asleep - it felt like I was seeing the face of God. What should I make of this experience?

Answer: Sadhaks sometimes have similar experiences during the deeper stages of Sadhan. When the mind becomes calm, i.e. the thought stream dwindles down to nothing; the Sadhak experiences a state when his true self comes into his awareness. Since the Sadhak’s mind is not functioning during that time, he is unable to articulate to himself exactly what he experienced at that time. Only when he comes out of that state, i.e. when his mind begins to function again, does he begin to articulate to himself

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

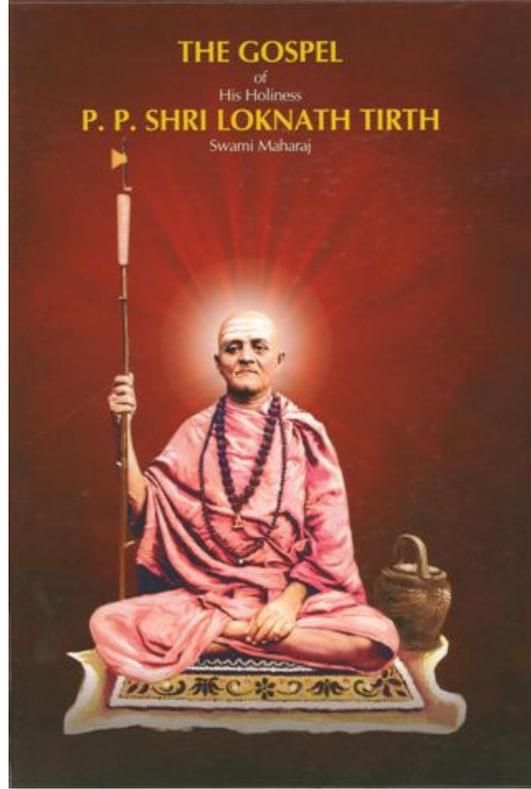
what he just experienced. And depending on his Samskaras he interprets that experience, after it has happened, in one of many ways.

If the Sadhak had a religious upbringing, either in his current or prior lives and the accumulated impressions (Samskaras) of that upbringing are still strong, he will interpret what he just experienced as having seen God or having been in the presence of God. A person with strong Christian Samskaras will feel like he saw Christ or the Father, a Hindu might feel like he was in the presence of Shri Krishna or Shri Ram. A non-religious person might interpret it as being in the presence of Divine Light or having a feeling of the Infinite. A person raised in the Buddhist tradition might interpret his experience as having been in the presence of the Buddha or even have experienced “nothingness” (Shunyata).

All these are interpretations of the same experience seen through different lenses. It is the experience of getting a glimpse of your true self, which is the common Divinity which pervades us all and pervades the universe we live in. It is the Prana Shakti within you which came into your ken. Cherish it, and await it with patience. Do not get attached to it, because if it does not happen on command you will only get frustrated. The key is to surrender to the Prana Shakti within, observe what she does without creating new attachments or aversions, let her guide you on the spiritual path with patience, and sit for Sadhan diligently on a daily basis.

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

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



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

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

Phone: +91-253-2311616

Upcoming Events:

Deeksha Day (Initiation Day) on March 27th, 2014

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

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

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

The Thane Ashram is located at:

A/9 Sector # 7, Behind Omega Apartments
Vasant Bungalow, Shree Nagar, Wagle Estate, Thane 400604

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

Website Updates:

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

The Maha Yoga videos website at <http://www.mahayogavideos.org/> has available videos of various Maha Yoga related events and speeches by P. P. Kaka Maharaj.

We also have an active discussion group at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kundalinishaktipatayoga/>

Please feel free to post messages there about Maha Yoga, the website, or this e-newsletter. You will need to join the group to read or post messages.



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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!