

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.

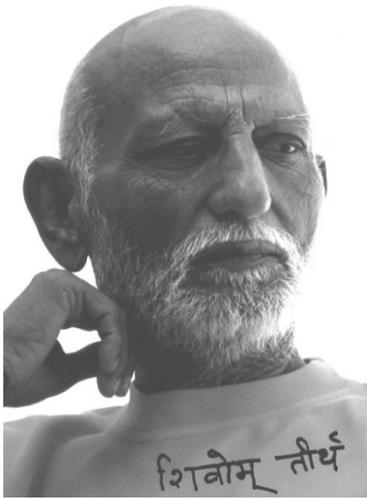
To the thousands of Sadhaks in the Maha Yoga tradition all over the world and other interested readers, this e-newsletter is intended to provide virtual Satsang. It is intended to encourage Sadhaks to remain engaged in Maha Yoga, be informed about Maha Yoga-related events around the world, and to provide 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.

In the following excerpt, Maharajshri addresses many of the issues that a Maha Yoga Sadhak has to face, especially the role of Prarabdha (destiny) versus Purushartha (also called Prayatna or self-effort).

The Slippery World

One day Maharajshri said, "With age one gets experience of life, and by experience caution develops. If someone slips and falls down once then the next time he sees a slippery spot he is cautious. For progress in life, being cautious is as important as enthusiasm and patience. Some people become cautious by seeing someone else fall; others become cautious if they fall once. Most do not become cautious even after seeing someone else fall, or after they themselves fall.

"Some people not only become happy on seeing someone else fall, but they also instigate others so that they can enjoy seeing them fall, too. Some people warn others who are likely to fall.

"Some people slip and then save others from falling. Some make others fall while trying to save themselves. Some can neither save themselves from falling, nor do they let others save themselves. And there are some people who let themselves fall so that others do not.

"Some fall before they can get up. Others get up before they fall again. There are some who rise and keep on rising up. Others fall and keep on falling. Some people balance themselves while falling, and others fall while rising. Some people pull others down before they can get up. Some lift others before they can get up themselves. There are some that get up but do not let others get up. There are others who will rise only with their companions. There are some that try to get up but cannot, whereas there are others who try and succeed in getting up. Some never try to rise. They keep on looking at the summit from down below. Some people spend their life in lifting others up, and some waste their life in pulling others down.

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

Some get up cautiously, some are cautious after they get up. Some fall to bring others down, and some rise up so that they can help others rise.

“The essence is that this world is multi-colored. Many different thoughts, perspectives and feelings exist. The entire world is neither someone’s ally, nor someone’s opponent. Some walk with you, some leave you, some go contrary to you, and some stand in your way to stop you. Therefore an aspirant has to be very careful in his spiritual journey. As such the path of spirituality is against the flow of the world. It is very difficult to stay in the world and be indifferent to the world. The world is incapable of understanding the feelings and thoughts of an aspirant and, on top of that, this is a very difficult journey. An aspirant has to battle on two fronts at the same time, to cope with the world, and to fight against inner desires and faults. For a long time, in the beginning, both problems exist and often the aspirant has to deal with both.”

Question: “Isn’t it possible to give up worldly affairs completely, retire totally, and be fully engaged in spiritual practices so that an aspirant does not have to fight the spiritual war on two fronts? Even the scriptures praise solitude very highly.”

Answer: “First of all, this is not at all possible for an ordinary aspirant. The fickleness of his mind and his inner desires will not let him remain in solitude. Solitude cannot be forced. Solitude emerges in the mind first. Only after that one can live in solitude physically. As long as the mind is on the run solitude is not possible. Yes, in between, as and when time permits, the aspirant may go into seclusion. Yet in this state, too, one is not free from the world. On returning from seclusion immediately the world regains its place. Then both fronts will be present before the aspirant.”

Question: “This is a very complex problem. Neither is it possible to be in the world, nor is it easy to give it up’

Answer: “This problem only exists for a spiritual seeker. Worldly people are flowing with the worldly current. Whether they are happy or unhappy, they do not want to leave the world. The aspirant wants go against the worldly flow but he cannot. The world mortifies him but he is compelled to love it. The world insults him but he respects it. He does not do harm to anyone but the world does not let him rest. He wants to show them the path to welfare but the selfish world does not understand his feelings. This brings difficulties for the aspirant.

“This does not imply that the whole world is engaged in placing obstacles before the aspirant. Some may be favorable toward him. The challenge for the aspirant is to love all alike. He wishes well for all, whether the person is favorable, a troublemaker or his critic. Even if favorable people understand him, the troublemakers remain busy with their pursuits. There is no other path in front of the aspirant but to tolerate this. An aspirant must understand these things very clearly in his mind:”

(1) “The world will go on the way it has been going on. One must try to correct it but it is not going to improve. The desire to improve the world is very crucial for

Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

improving one's own self. If we wish good for the world, it will be beneficial to ourselves.”

(2) “The world is full of good and bad people, but selfishness prevails almost everywhere. Even good people are eclipsed by ego and selfishness to some extent. Hidden feelings in them can throw them onto the bad path at any time. Those who appear bad now also have good thoughts hidden in them. Those good values may turn them into a good person at any time. Thus, everyone is good as well as bad. All this is within the realm of individuality. The soul, which is the real form of every human being, is beyond good and bad.”

(3) “The cause of the good and bad behavior of the world is prarabdha [destiny formed by one's past actions]. Whatever happiness and unhappiness one has to experience is due to prarabdha. The entire world is bound by prarabdha. We are compelled to act according to prarabdha. No one inflicts pain or gives happiness to others. No one can respect or insult anyone. Prarabdha instigates all these things. No one is at fault in this. Our own prarabdha is at fault. If the aspirant understands this then he can be saved from the mistake of thinking that the world is the cause of happiness and miseries. The world is merely a stage for the prarabdha of the individual to play itself out. If the aspirant wants to get rid of miseries and joy from the world, he will have to get rid of his prarabdha. No one can stop the play of prarabdha on the stage of the world.”

(4) “Mother and father, brother and sister, friend and enemy – all are relations due to prarabdha. Only due to prarabdha are people bound to each other in the world. All our relations of attachment, hate and infatuation depend on prarabdha. According to prarabdha, relations improve and deteriorate. The wheel of relations will go on turning as long as prarabdha exists.”

(5) “The whole life of an aspirant depends upon prarabdha. The effort to put an end to this dependence is called sadhana. This dependence is finished when there is no residual prarabdha left. Even if one is able to gain control over the mind and does not feel joy and misery, happy and sad situations will keep coming depending on one's prarabdha. When there is no more prarabdha residue left, then only will its fruits stop maturing. It is unknown when prarabdha was created, but it very clear that we are in its grip right now.”

(6) “Just as the aspirant is under the control of prarabdha, the whole world suffers in its fire. We are all going up and down in the ocean of prarabdha. Compelled by prarabdha, we meet and separate, fight and love, and try to enter the world or escape it. In reality, spirituality also rests on prarabdha.”

(7) “The reason for prarabdha is ego, because ego gives rise to attachment and aversion and the sense of doership. Ego accumulates impressions that create

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prarabdha, destiny. Ego rotates the wheel of prarabdha. The ego [sense of I-ness] goes through joy and miseries and also accumulates impressions. Ego gives rise to impurities and desires in the mind and engages in new karma. The lowest form of I-ness is egoism, which is fully in error and turned towards the world. This ego makes one lazy when afflicted with tamo guna, makes one restless when influenced by rajo guna, and makes a person a holy being when affected by sattva guna. Thus life goes up and down among the three qualities depending on prarabdha.”

(8) “The individual does not have any Shakti of his own. He only has the ego of having Shakti. First of all, an aspirant needs to experience that the Shakti [power] in which he takes pride is not his own power. The depletion of samskaras, ego and prarabdha is directly related to this experience. This experience gives a sadhak a real knowledge of the separate individual soul that he has become. He starts to feel God’s active energy after this experience. Only subsequent to this experience does the path to annihilation of both desires and the mind open up. Only this experience lifts the sadhak out of worldliness and takes him into spirituality.”

(9) “When the individual soul does not have any power of its own, how can he do anything? Who is the doer? When one has this experience, one’s sense of doership is shaken. The one who was a doer until yesterday is only a witness today. The senses that did things yesterday remain only as a medium of action for the doer. One’s experience of activity after awakening opens a field of spirituality that, so far, was hidden. Similar to the world, his body now appears to him as a part of the world. Even after the awakening and [spontaneous] experience of the activity of Shakti, prarabdha [destiny], mental tendencies and ego do not leave the sadhak alone. They are still solidly rooted on the firm ground of samskaras [accumulated impressions]. For this reason, the sadhak needs to do sadhana and service for a long time. He needs the grace of the Guru, and needs to look within himself continuously.”

(10) “Now the final point: Sadhan is not merely for showing off. It needs total honesty and seriousness – honesty towards one’s self, towards the sadhan and the Guru, and towards the goal. Sadhan is not done to earn the applause of the world. Whether the world accepts you as a virtuous soul or not does not matter. You are what you are. Someone calling you good or bad does not make you so. You must drive out the faults from your chitta with the fullest sincerity. You must arouse love for God and your Guru. You must develop a sense of surrender to God. If all this is happening within you then you are making progress on the spiritual path. To get rid of your faults you will have to weep before God with an open heart, to obtain love you will need to implore at the Gurus feet. You will have to try to follow the path of duty according to your own conscience. Do not stray from your path by listening to the world. Be ready to offer yourself as a sacrifice. Only by destroying yourself [ego-self] can you find the real Self. Those who have attained the Self have attained it in this way only. No one has attained anything comfortably, without losing anything. So be ready to get

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robbed. Only then will the darkness dispel, the light shine; only then will everlasting joy and bliss be yours.”

Question: “Maharajshri, this sounds very good but it is very difficult to implement, not only for an average person, but also for great spiritual aspirants and ascetics. Do ego and anger spare anyone?”

Answer: “I never said that it is easy. I told you only those things to which an aspirant needs to pay attention. Everyone knows that walking on the spiritual path is not child’s play. For this you need to ‘keep your head on your palm’ [be ready even to give up life]. Such love must fill the heart that there should be no place for likes or dislikes, and everything should be offered to God. Sadhan should be such that nothing but sadhan should come to mind. Surrender should be such that nothing should be left to call one’s own. Service should be such that ego and anger are crushed. Only then can something be achieved. There is no other way.”

Question: “You said a great deal about prarabdha, but you did not refer to self-effort [purushartha]. Is that because self-effort has no place in sadhan?”

Answer: “Yes, self-effort is important, but I referred to it using some other words. What you consider self-effort is not so from the point of view of spirituality. Effort toward [finding] the soul is real self- effort in spirituality, and such an effort can be nothing other than surrender. Any effort done with desire can only be the cause of downfall from the real Self. Surrender is the means to attain a steady state within the Self.”

Question: “Please, elaborate on this.”

Answer: “The meaning of the word ‘self-effort’ [purushartha] has changed a great deal in literary contexts. Effort in any way, in any sense, is called self-effort. This same meaning is also applied in a religious context, but that is not acceptable in spirituality. Only the effort for attaining the soul [purusha] is self-effort. If action is performed with attachment then it causes the accumulation of new impressions, which will be the cause of a fall from the Self. What is commonly understood to be self-effort is not, in fact, self-effort. Surrender is the only state that, if formed in the heart, will destroy accumulated impressions and tendencies, hence surrender is self-effort in spirituality. I have mentioned self-effort in the form of surrender. Now the question is how should one surrender? As long as the deity is not present before you, surrender will only be sentimental and not real. After awakening, when Shakti is directly present before you, this problem is solved.”

Question: “Do you mean to say that one’s endeavor is not a matter of self-effort, but a specific level of sadhan once the deity being worshipped is realized?”

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Answer: “Yes, it is a level. But to remain at that level the aspirant has to work at it. Thus self-effort is a level of sadhan, as well as one’s endeavor. When surrender becomes natural, endeavor is gone and sadhan is filled with self-effort [surrender].

“Debates about self-effort and prarabdha go on, but this debate is in reference to one’s desires. The subject of the debate is whether self- effort or prarabdha play the main role in obtaining one’s goal. Spirituality is the path to rise above both – the desire to obtain, as well as prarabdha. Consequently this debate becomes irrelevant.”

Now it was my turn to introspect. Maharajshri had explained that, as surrender grows, ego will diminish. But so far my ego was at a high point. How can surrender develop in such an impure mind? Even after starting on the path to omniscience I was still lost. The path was correct, but due to darkness nothing was visible. Despite having a cane in my hand for support I was stumbling and falling. Life was passing by very fast and I was still sitting in the dark, hoping for a ray of light. It cannot even be said that I was on the right path as long as surrender had not awakened in my mind. The ferociousness of ego had gripped me from all the four directions. If the grace of the Guru is there then nothing is impossible. Sometime or the other the path will become visible, the ray of light will be seen, and clouds of misery will disperse.

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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The Importance of Acceptance and Patience

This is a reprint of an article that first appeared in the November 2012 issue of Self Awakening. We are reprinting it here because it addresses many of the issues we keep hearing from Sadhaks on an ongoing basis. Perhaps it will catch the attention of new subscribers and reinforce the understanding of Maha Yoga for those Sadhaks who have read it before. - Editor

We sometimes hear from Sadhaks that they don't think they are making rapid enough progress on the Maha Yoga path. They claim they diligently follow the rules and restrictions, sit for Sadhan regularly, and that they experience various Kriyas (involuntary activities; physical, mental or Pranic) during their Sadhan (meditation) sessions. But, despite all this, they seem to have an expectation that they should be experiencing more exciting and vigorous Kriyas and that their progress ought to be occurring at a faster pace.

Some wonder if their progress could be speeded up by sitting for Sadhan for longer durations, or more often than once a day. Others wonder if they should practice Brahmacharya (celibacy), or give up the life of a householder and move into an Ashram and become a Sannyasi (renunciate). Still others want to know what they should do, so they too can become Maha Yoga Gurus. A common theme seems to be a desire for more and "better" Sadhan experiences and a certain amount of impatience with what they perceive is their slow pace of progress. All these concerns arise from some common misunderstandings about Maha Yoga and a lack of understanding of the importance of acceptance and patience in the practice of Maha Yoga.

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 and other signs of progress the Prana Shakti makes happen.

It is important to keep in mind that the Sadhak's role during 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 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 get rid of them and reach the final goal of self-enlightenment.

The elimination of the accumulated Samskaras is the key process by which a Sadhak achieves self-enlightenment. The accumulated Samskaras are what cause attachments and aversions in a person's mind and keep his Chitta (mind stuff) continually active and disturbed, and

The Importance of Acceptance and Patience (continued)

externally focused, thus making him unable to go within and **experientially realize** his true self. The externally focused Chitta causes a person to act with intent that is often driven by the expected fruits that are likely to come from his actions. This in turn causes new Samskaras to be created with new attachments and aversions, which further activate and disturb the Chitta.

The purpose of Maha Yoga is to stop this cycle by beginning the process of gradually eliminating a Sadhak's accumulated Samskaras. This happens during Sadhan when the awakened Prana Shakti brings up individual Samskaras into the Sadhak's awareness; and when the Sadhak simply observes them and lets them go, those Samskaras get eliminated from his Chitta. The Kriyas that happen are the result of these accumulated impressions being brought up by the awakened Prana Shakti into the Sadhak's awareness and then being eliminated from his Chitta. If a Sadhak has a preponderance of Tamasik (indolence and ignorance promoting) tendencies, the Kriyas he experiences during Sadhan will be Tamasik in nature, causing him to feel groggy or fall asleep, feel fear, anger, jealousy, etc. If he has a preponderance of Rajasik (action/activity promoting) tendencies, the Kriyas will likely be physical movements, Asanas, Mudras, Pranayam, etc. If he has a preponderance of Sattvik (spiritually enhancing) tendencies, he might experience hearing Divine music, seeing "God" in whatever form he has been brought up to believe, or Saints, or simply experience a feeling of intense or subtle joy. Most Sadhaks have a mix of the three types of tendencies (Gunas) and as a result the Kriyas they experience will likely be a mix of all three types. The role of Sadhan is to eliminate all three types of Samskaras, eventually resulting in the elimination of the disturbances and fluctuations (Vrutteis) of our Chitta (mind stuff) and turning it inwards.

While many of the Kriyas can be pleasurable, a Sadhak should think of the process of Kriyas as being similar to "garbage removal". A Sadhak should simply observe this process and not get attached to any Kriyas, because once the Kriya happens, i.e. the "garbage" of that specific Samskar has been removed; there is no need for that Kriya to recur. In fact, if a Sadhak gets attached to specific Kriyas, he develops new impressions which add to his accumulated Samskaras, thus counteracting the whole point of Sadhan, which is to eliminate the accumulated Samskaras. So an attitude of acceptance and detachment towards the Kriyas he experiences during Sadhan is critical for progress on the Maha Yoga path.

Once a Sadhak is able to **experientially** understand this core principle of Maha Yoga, it becomes easy for him to realize that he is there just for the ride; the awakened Prana Shakti is the driver and he is just the passenger. So, it is best for him to leave everything in Her capable hands and not try to second guess where exactly he is on the path on any given day, or how long it will take for him to get to his destination. Doing so only puts the Sadhak in the role of a back-seat driver instead of a trusting passenger; and those of us who have experienced back-seat driving know that such second guessing does not bode well for the journey and in fact becomes counter-productive. It usually makes the journey less pleasant, more frustrating, and might also cause the driver to miss an important turn, thus making the journey longer than necessary.

The Importance of Acceptance and Patience (continued)

It follows from this that in addition to being diligent about sitting for Sadhan on a regular basis, it is important for the Sadhak to accept what happens during Sadhan without having prior expectations or attachments to any specific Kriyas or other signs of progress, and being patient with one's progress. We all would like to have the best experiences during our journey and to get to our destination as soon as possible. But each of us comes into our lives with unique baggage in the form of accumulated Samskaras, which makes each of our paths unique, which results in a unique set of experiences along the way, as the Samskaras get eliminated.

The path and the pace of our Maha Yoga journey depends on the nature and the amount of accumulated Samskaras, the new Samskaras we create in our day to day lives, and the diligence with which we sit for Sadhan in order to allow the awakened Prana Shakti to get rid of the Samskaras through Kriyas. Thus, the path and the pace of the journey will be different for each of us because we come to our current lives with different sets of accumulated Samskaras; we sit for Sadhan with different degrees of diligence and attitudes of surrender, which results in differences in how quickly the Samskaras get eliminated; and we add new and different Samskaras in our day-to-day lives at different rates. So, while the destination of Chitta Vrutti Nirodhaha (the elimination of the disturbances of the Chitta) is the same, the paths each of us takes will naturally be different.

Some Sadhaks who have come into their current lives with fewer Samskaras and the resulting attachments and aversions, might find themselves making rapid progress, while others might progress at a slower pace. But these initial conditions do not guarantee the nature and pace of progress. The attitude of a Sadhak as he goes through his day-to-day life also affects the nature and pace of his progress. A Sadhak, who is a householder and conducts his day-to-day life doing even the meanest of jobs, but with an attitude of duty and detachment from the fruits of his action, i.e. being a true Karma Yogi, does not accumulate new Samskaras. He does not develop new attachments and aversions, and his Chitta remains untarnished by his day-to-day actions. On the other hand, a Sadhak who moves to an Ashram to become a Brahmachari or a Sannyasi with an express desire, arising out of impatience, to speed up his progress, or so he too can become a Guru, is unlikely to experience much progress. His actions will have resulted in new Samskaras with the concomitant attachments and aversions, which will likely retard his progress.

First, it is important for Sadhaks to keep in mind that the purpose of Maha Yoga is for them to achieve Self Realization, not to become Gurus. If a Sadhak practices Maha Yoga with the intent of becoming a Maha Yoga Guru, rest assured that it will become impossible for him to achieve Self Realization, leave alone the likelihood of becoming a true Siddha Guru. The Maha Yoga path is not a goal-oriented path at all. If a Sadhak approaches it with specific goals, he will automatically get himself sucked into the world of ego and spiritual progress will simply not happen.

The Maha Yoga path is the path of surrendering to the awakened Mother Energy and letting her do what is needed. If a Sadhak's spiritual progress needs for him to be in the role of a

The Importance of Acceptance and Patience (continued)

Guru, it will happen. If not, it won't. And, while someone who is not self-realized or anywhere near self-realized might think, "Wow, being a Guru seems wonderful, having all these Sadhaks following you, hanging on to your every word, etc.", the Siddha Guru in fact is completely beyond all that. He has absolutely no attachment at all to being a Guru, the role of being a Guru has "happened" upon him; he has not desired it nor sought it. As a self-realized soul whose only remaining Sankalpa (resolution) is to help others reach Self-Realization, he is only doing the job of a "postman" delivering the "mail" of Maha Yoga to Sadhaks who are interested.

P. P. Kaka Maharaj saw himself in exactly this role (the May 2009, May 2010, February 2011 and the February 2012 issues of Self Awakening available at <http://mahayoga.org/selfawakening.htm> have Discussions with P. P. Kaka Maharaj on this and other topics). He did not consider himself the "doer" even during Deeksha. He simply prayed to his Guru (and thus the entire lineage) and to the Mother Energy to bless all those who sought Deeksha and let the Mother Energy do what was needed. Thus Deeksha "happens", it is not "done" by the Guru. The reason it happens when a Siddha Guru prays for it to happen, is because the Guru being in a realized state is very close to the Mother Energy, and his Sankalpa for Deeksha to happen is done without any sense of ego or self at all. If a Sadhak explicitly desires to become a Guru, his ego will clearly be in the picture and it will keep him from being a true Guru. He might call himself a Guru and even have some Sadhaks follow him, but the role of his ego will keep him from being a true Guru.

Secondly, the practice of Maha Yoga does not require a Sadhak to become a Brahmachari or a Sannyasi. Most Maha Yoga Sadhaks are neither Brahmacharis nor are they Sannyasis; they are householders (Grihastas). Progress on this path does not depend on being a Brahmachari or a Sannyasi. In our Maha Yoga lineage (Parampara) some Gurus have been Sannyasis, others such as P. P. Kaka Maharaj and P. P. Gulvani Maharaj have been Brahmacharis, while still others have been householders as well.

As a Sadhak progresses along the Maha Yoga path he will gradually develop a sense of Vairagya, which is a state of dispassion and detachment from worldly life. This is the key because it begins to put him on the path of being a true Karma Yogi. Thus, even though he might not be a Brahmachari or a Sannyasi in the formal sense, his sense of detachment allows him to function as a Grihasta without developing new attachments and aversions, while the practice of Maha Yoga Sadhan keeps eliminating the attachments and aversions that arise from his accumulated impressions (Sanchit Samskaras), thus bringing him closer and closer to Self-Realization. If a Sadhak who has a huge stock of attachments and aversions related to the material world thinks that accepting Sannyas will free him from that burden, he is sadly mistaken. He will simply be taking all those attachments and aversions with him into Sannyas or Brahmacharya, and will find himself with the added burden of dealing with the frustration of not being able to fulfill the related desires, which will keep arising because the Samskaras which cause them will not have been eliminated. If Brahmacharya or Sannyas "happens", i.e. a Sadhak truly realizes that he has no attachments/aversions and desires he wants fulfilled in those regards, he may in effect live

The Importance of Acceptance and Patience (continued)

like a Brahmachari or a Sannyasi by being truly detached while remaining a Grihasta, or he may take the formal vows of Brahmacharya or Sannyas and follow those precepts. But it is important for Sadhaks to not think of becoming Brahmacharis or Sannyasis under the belief that it will speed up their spiritual progress or is essential for becoming a Maha Yoga Guru. A Sadhak should sit regularly and diligently for Sadhan, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within, observe what happens, and patiently accept what happens without judgment. Gradually, his Chitta will become calm and become free of its Vruttis (disturbances), he will increasingly find himself becoming detached but contented (Vairagya) and he will begin to experience the true bliss of Maha Yoga, not just the thrill of Kriyas. As he becomes more of a Karma Yogi, when his actions arise out of a sense of duty rather than with specific goals in mind, and he truly believes he does not have to fulfill any duties as a householder (Grihasta), might he think about becoming a Sannyasi. Sannyas or Brahmacharya should “happen” for them to be effective; they should not be taken on without the necessary sense of detachment.

By: Dilip Kamat

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks

Question: I received initiation in Jan-2009 and I sat for Sadhan for few days following the initiation. But, because of upheavals in my life soon after my initiation I couldn't motivate myself to sit for Sadhan at all until recently when I began to sit for Sadhan on an occasional basis. But even now, my resolution to sit for Sadhan gets shaken due to external things such as problems at job, lack of job security, quarrels in family, and my internal problems such as laziness, anger, ego, procrastination, and so on.

Overall, as my age approaches 50 years, I feel that my bad karmas are surfacing and troubling me, pushing me away from spirituality and Sadhan. As evidence of this, whenever I sit for Sadhan, my mind keeps wandering all over the place and I find myself unable to concentrate.

I have two questions in this regards:

1) Maha Yoga Sadhan requires one to sit without any activity whatsoever - such as chanting mantra or doing yogic Asanas. As I feel my past Karmas tend to destabilize my Sadhan, how can I get to the level of Maha Yoga Sadhan where I am able to surrender fully to Ma Shakti? In other words, how can I burn these bad karmas without being affected by them or at least be able to get past them to perform daily Sadhan?

2) Since, I did not sit for Sadhan for many years after the initiation; do I need to be re-initiated to renew the Guru's Sankalpa (intent) for the first initiation?

Please help.

Answer: Let me address your second question first. Once Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha has happened for a Sadhak, the Prana Shakti within him turns inward and the process of cleaning up the Sadhak's Chitta (mind stuff) of all Samskaras (accumulated impressions) and Vrutis (tendencies) from his current and past lives begins. The Sadhak's responsibility is to sit for Sadhan on a regular basis, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within him, and to observe what happens without having any expectations; and fear of or attachment to any of the physical, mental or Pranic Kriyas (involuntary activities) that may happen. That is all there is to it! And once the Prana Shakti within the Sadhak has turned inward, i.e. Deeksha (initiation) has happened; there is no need for him to receive Deeksha once again. Shaktipat Deeksha, once it has happened, will be effective in the Sadhak's current life as well as in future lives, until he reaches the state of Self Enlightenment. So, there is no need for you to receive Shaktipat Deeksha again if it had already happened in 2009. Incidentally, here's an excerpt from a discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj in February, 2009 which was published in the May, 2009 issue of our Self Awakening e-newsletter, archived at <http://www.mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self%20Awakening%20Vol%201%20Issue%204.pdf> which is quite relevant in your case:

Editor: *That's great, but what about Sadhaks who ask for and receive Deeksha, but don't sit for Sadhan?*

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Gurudev: It doesn't matter! Once the Prana Shakti is awakened it will not stop until it has eventually cleansed the Sadhak of all his past impressions and made him free of Vasanas. There was one Sadhak who had received Deeksha several years ago and had good experiences during Sadhan at that time. However, as he grew up and got married and into the workaday life he quit doing Sadhan for many years. One fine day he remembered that he had come to see me many years ago and had received Deeksha, and before he knew it he got into Sadhan, and Kriyas (or involuntary movements and actions caused by the Prana Shakti) began to happen to him. So the awakened Prana Shakti will not quit until the Sadhak is cleansed of all Vasanas, if not in this life then in the next one. This is why the Introductory Approach we have developed is so important. It will eventually lead all those who have participated in it to achieve the benefits of Maha Yoga. Of course, it will take time. It won't happen overnight, but happen it will. Once a Sadhak's Prana Shakti is awakened, even if the Sadhak does not sit for Sadhan, Sadhan will be done by the power that has been activated in him. The more a Sadhak lets the Prana Shakti cleanse him through Sadhan, the faster his progress, but regardless, eventually every Sadhak will be cleansed of all his Vasanas.

Regarding your first question; it is very important to understand and to remember that a Maha Yoga Sadhak should not “do” anything with intent during Sadhan. His role is to surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within him, to let her “do” what is needed for his spiritual growth, and to simply observe what happens without fear or attachment to the physical, mental or Pranic Kriyas that may happen. During Sadhan, the awakened Prana Shakti within the Sadhak is the “doer” (Karta) and the Sadhak is only a dispassionate observer (Sakshi) of what happens. The Kriyas that happen during Sadhan are the byproduct of the process of cleansing of the Sadhak's Chitta, i.e. the process whereby the Samskaras accumulated during the Sadhak's current and past lives get brought up into his Chitta, and by him observing the Kriyas in a dispassionate manner, the Samskaras that underlie the Kriyas get gradually eliminated. So, please do not consider yourself the “doer” with the power to “burn bad karmas”. The awakened Prana Shakti within you will do the job of burning bad Karmas, the Kachra (garbage) removal of all Samskaras, good as well as bad, from your Chitta. You simply need to let her do her job by sitting for Sadhan on a daily basis and by surrendering to her. If negative thoughts arise during Sadhan, simply observe the fact that this is happening and shift your attention to your normal involuntary breathing. If some other negative thought crops up, once again observe the fact that such a thought has arisen without getting frustrated, and direct your attention to your normal and automatic breathing.

The thoughts that arise during Sadhan are themselves a form of mental Kriyas. And by observing them and not fearing them or getting frustrated by them, but by simply letting them go by redirecting your attention to your normal breathing, you will be allowing the awakened Prana Shakti to cleanse your Chitta from the Samskaras that underlie such thoughts. Gradually (it might take several sessions of daily Sadhan), you will find that your mind will get calmer than it has been and it will take you lesser and lesser time to reach a calmer state during Sadhan. You will also find, with regular Sadhan, that as one thought

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

goes away it will take a little longer for another thought to arise. This interval/gap between two thoughts is when the mind has become quiet. Gradually, this gap will also begin to increase and that is when you will begin to experience the spiritual calm that happens during Sadhan.

So, my advice to you is to let bygones be bygones and not fret about the fact that you have not been sitting for Sadhan over the past several years, but to make a strong resolve that from now on you will sit for Sadhan every day for an hour, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you, and to let her do what is needed for your spiritual progress. Doing so will not only benefit you spiritually but it will also benefit you in your day-to-day life. It will allow you to deal with the ups and downs of day-to-day life with a sense of equanimity, bring more creativity in your work, and help you perform your duties more diligently. The best way to deal with the effects of “bad Karmas” is regular Sadhan! So, get on with it and quit making excuses.

Question: Lately I have been hearing a continuous beep-like sound in my ears, nothing like the sound of Aum (ॐ), just a beep sound. Sometimes its volume rises and declines. Is this the Anahat sound I am hearing or is it a delusion created by my own Chitta (mind)?

Answer: There can be three types of explanations for what you are experiencing. The most common one for a continuous beeping or ringing sound is physiological in nature. So, please consult a doctor first to check if what you are experiencing is caused by some physiological issue.

If the doctor is unable to find a physiological explanation, it could be a result of self-delusion or it could even be the experience of Anahat Naad. Sometimes if a Sadhak has a strong desire to experience a Kriya, e.g. Anahat Naad in your case, he begins to experience what he thinks is Anahat Naad, but it can be entirely a result of self-delusion, i.e. experiencing what he would like to experience. On the other hand, if such an experience happens without the Sadhak wanting it to happen and there is no physiological reason for why it is happening, then it might well be the experience of Anahat Naad. Incidentally, the experiencing of Anahat Naad is a joyful experience; it usually happens during Sadhan.

You did not mention in your e-mail if you have received Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha. If you have, then as a Maha Yoga Sadhak you should sit for Sadhan without having any expectations or desire or intent to experience a specific Kriya. And if you do experience the Anahat Naad, or any other physical, mental or Pranic Kriya for that matter, please do not develop any attachment to it despite it being a joyful experience. Enjoy it while it lasts but do not sit for Sadhan with the intent or desire to experience it, nor get disappointed if the Kriya does not happen.

The Kriyas are simply the process whereby the Sadhak's Chitta gets cleansed of the accumulated Samskaras from the Sadhak's current and prior lives. All a Sadhak should do during Sadhan is to allow the awakened Prana Shakti to do what is needed to bring up the

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

accumulated Samskaras expressed as Kriyas that happen; the Kriyas are not done by the Sadhak. He should simply observe the Kriyas that happen without developing any attachment to them or fear of them, and he should let them go. That is how the accumulated Samskaras get erased from his Chitta. If he develops attachments to specific Kriyas, instead of cleansing his Chitta of the accumulated Samskaras he will begin to accumulate new Samskaras which will eventually need to get eliminated for him to experience Self Enlightenment. So please sit for Sadhan regularly but with a sense of detachment towards the Kriyas that happen.

Question: I received Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha a few months ago. Since then, I have been sitting for Sadhan every day for 40 - 45 minutes, but I am not finding any peace. I find my irritation and anger has increased as well. I also do Hare Krishna chanting, but that hasn't helped either. I find myself being hyper and anxious and not very peaceful. Please advise so I can improve my quality of life.

Answer: It is not uncommon for Sadhaks who have received Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) to experience what you are going through in the early months after their Deeksha. The Deeksha process redirects inwards the usually outward-directed Prana Shakti within a Sadhak. During Sadhan (meditation) this results in Kriyas, physical, mental and Pranic, that arise from the accumulated Samskaras being brought up into the Sadhak's Chitta (mind-stuff). If a Sadhak has accumulated a preponderance of Rajasik (action-inducing) Samskaras, she will experience vigorous physical Kriyas. If she has a preponderance of Tamasik (indolence/negative tendencies-inducing) Samskaras, she will experience Tamasik Kriyas such as being overcome by sleep, feeling anger, jealousy, being weepy, etc. If she has a preponderance of Sattvik (spiritually enhancing) Samskaras, she will experience blissful Kriyas such as hearing Divine music, seeing "God", feeling intense joy or a sense of calm. The Kriyas happens because the inward-directed Prana Shakti is doing the job of cleansing the Sadhak's Chitta of all her past Samskaras by bringing them up into the Sadhak's awareness, and by the Sadhak simply observing these Kriyas in a detached manner without fearing them or getting attached to them, the Sadhak's Chitta will gradually free itself of the Samskaras that have been accumulated over her current and past lifetimes. In order to experience Self Enlightenment, the Sadhak's Chitta needs to be cleansed of all these Samskaras, even the Sattvik ones; she has to go beyond the three Gunas.

The Maha Yoga Deeksha is granted to all Sadhaks who sincerely seek it, without any judgment or consideration as to what types of Samskaras are predominant in their individual Chittas. And each one of us comes to Maha Yoga with a unique set of Samskaras accumulated over our current and past lives. So, Sadhaks such as yourself, who might have a preponderance of Tamasik Samskaras, frequently experience the negative emotions you are experiencing as a result of their Prana Shakti being awakened.

This is a good thing, because the awakened Prana Shakti is doing her job of bringing up these Samskaras into your awareness. Please do not fear them, nor get frustrated with them; simply observe that you are becoming angry or frustrated and let it go. Redirect your

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

attention to your normal breathing and if the negative thoughts reappear, again simply observe that you are getting angry/frustrated and redirect your attention to your normal breathing. **Please do not try to “do” anything like trying to control your mind, chanting a mantra etc.** It is nearly impossible to control one’s mind with intent. The key to Maha Yoga practice and Sadhan is to surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you and let her be the “doer”. As a Maha Yoga Sadhak, you should not “do” anything during Sadhan with intent. Your role, especially during Sadhan, is to simply observe what happens; your role should be that of a Sakshi (observer) not the “doer”. Let the awakened Prana Shakti be the “doer”. Just observe the negative emotions as they come up into your awareness and simply let them go without getting frustrated and without any judgment.

Gradually, over time, as these negative Samskaras get brought up into your awareness and you let them go without fear or frustration, they will eventually quit occurring. You will then begin to experience other types of Kriyas that result from other types of Samskaras that get brought up by the awakened Prana Shakti. As long as you continue to observe all such mental, physical and Pranic Kriyas without fear/frustration or attachment, and do not reinforce any of them or create new Samskaras by developing a new set of attachments or aversions, gradually your Chitta will get cleansed of all accumulated Samskaras. This is when you will begin to experience the inner calm that is a precursor to Self Enlightenment. **The key is to sit for Sadhan on a daily basis, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you and let her be the “doer” (Karta), simply observe what happens without fear or attachment and let it go.**

One also has to be very patient. Impatience can also lead to frustration and to the accumulation or strengthening of negative Samskaras.

I would also like to suggest that you develop a good understanding of what Maha Yoga is all about. We do not suggest that Sadhaks intellectualize their understanding of Maha Yoga through excessively reading about it, because ultimately, Maha Yoga is an experiential Yoga. But it is important for Maha Yoga Sadhaks to have a good understanding of what Maha Yoga is and what it isn’t. In that spirit I would suggest that you check out the website <http://www.mahayoga.org/index.aspx>. It has a lot of material you might find useful. You might also want to read some of the past issues of Self Awakening, archived at the site <http://www.mahayoga.org/selfawakening.aspx>. Specifically, the May 2009, May 2010, February 2011 and the February 2012 issues have Discussions with P. P. Kaka Maharaj which you might find interesting and helpful. I urge you to read them all as they will help you internalize what Maha Yoga is really all about.

Question: I am a 19 year old college student living in Mumbai, India, having received Maha Yoga Deeksha four years ago. The Deeksha did change my life, but being a college student, I find myself getting distracted by various things and events. I follow a yogic life for days, but all of a sudden I get tempted by food and other things and I find myself not following some of the restrictions I had signed up for when I received Deeksha. At such times I feel very

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

guilty and I get concerned that my Deeksha will be taken away from me and I will never achieve self-realization. Please guide me on what I should do.

Answer: Glad to read that you received Deeksha four years ago and that it has changed your life. I hope the change has been for the better. The distractions you face are fairly common for Sadhaks who have received Maha Yoga Deeksha at an early age. So, you have to be diligent in following the rules. But perhaps it might be helpful to you if you first understood why Maha Yoga Sadhaks are asked to follow the restrictions in the first place.

Most Sadhaks have a preponderance of Tamasik (indolence and ignorance promoting) tendencies and Rajasik (action/activity promoting) tendencies which have resulted from the Samskaras (impressions) they have accumulated over their past and current lives. The Tamasik tendencies are the cause of negative thoughts, such as indolence, inertia, selfishness, doubt, obstinacy, etc., arising in a Sadhak's mind and the Rajasik tendencies result in thoughts related to acquisitiveness, jealousy, hatred, egoism, anger, etc. If unchecked, these tendencies will block a Sadhak from making any progress on the Maha Yoga path because they will constantly cause such thoughts to arise in his mind, which will drive him to act on them, thus accumulating new Samskaras in the process and negating the whole purpose of Maha Yoga, which is to rid the Sadhak of his Sanchit Samskaras (accumulated impressions).

As a first step, therefore, it is important for a Sadhak to balance these Tamasik and Rajasik tendencies with Sattvik (spiritually enhancing) tendencies which will help a Sadhak begin to develop a sense of detachment from the material world and to overcome some of the negative effects of the Tamasik and Rajasik tendencies. It is for this reason that the Sadhak is urged to follow the restrictions, especially the ones recommending the avoidance of food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco that enhance the Tamasik and Rajasik tendencies, and substitute them with consumables such as vegetarian food that enhances Sattvik tendencies.

With regular Maha Yoga Sadhan, the Tamasik and Rajasik tendencies get gradually eliminated as the related Samskaras get erased and the balance of the three Gunas (tendencies) begins to move towards the Sattvik. The restrictions are therefore suggested only to help a Sadhak achieve unimpeded progress on the Maha Yoga path. Eventually, however, the Sadhak has to go beyond the three Gunas, as even the Samskaras related to the Sattvik tendencies get eliminated with regular Sadhan. At that point all the Vrutteis (disturbances and tendencies) in his Chitta (mind-stuff) disappear; in the Bhagvad Geeta this is referred to as Chitta Vruttei Nirodhaha or the elimination of all tendencies from the Chitta. That is the goal of Maha Yoga. So, if you want to keep making progress on the spiritual path it is very important for you to follow the rules and restrictions as diligently as possible. Please read the Discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj published in the February, 2012 issue of Self Awakening archived at http://www.mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self_Awakening_Vol_4_Issue_3.pdf, especially pages 10 to 12, to understand his perspective on the rules and restrictions that Sadhaks are asked

Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

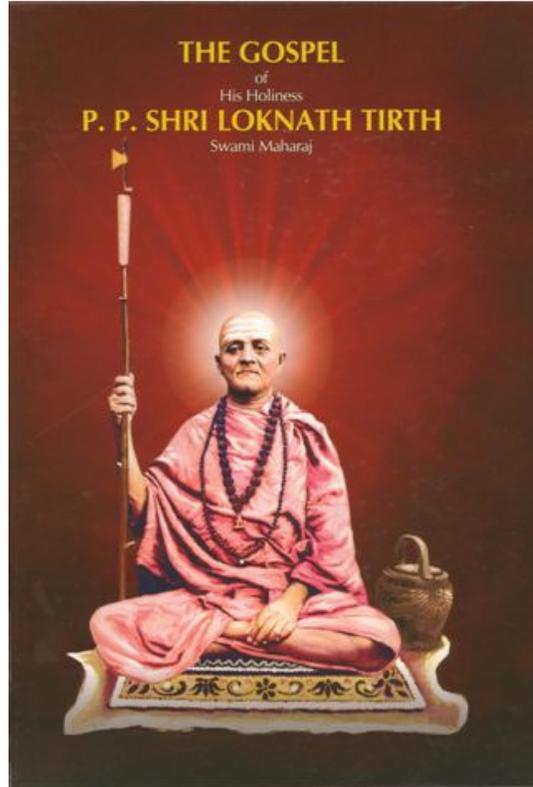
to follow. He also had a comment on rules and restrictions in a previous Discussion published in the February, 2011 issue of Self Awakening (archived at <http://www.mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self%20Awakening%20Vol%203%20Issue%203.pdf>); see page 7 of that issue.

About your feeling guilty when you fail to follow the rules and restrictions: there is no point in feeling guilty. Such feelings only add to a Sadhak's accumulated Samskaras; so it makes sense to be more diligent in the first place. The discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj in the February 2012 issue of Self Awakening also includes comments by him and P. P. Prabhune Maharaj on this topic of guilt. Please read that material carefully.

By the way, once Maha Yoga Deeksha has happened, the awakened Prana Shakti will surely take the Sadhak to Self Enlightenment. The Sadhak only needs to allow her to do so with regular Sadhan, so that the Kachra (garbage) of Samskaras accumulated over lifetimes gets eliminated from his Chitta (mind-stuff). Once his Chitta is cleansed of the garbage, the presence of the ParamAtma within becomes clear. That is all there is to it. So, please do not fear that the Deeksha will be taken away from you or any such thing. Sit for Sadhan diligently, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you, simply observe without attachment to or fear of any Kriya that happens, with patience and acceptance, and follow the rules and restrictions to the best extent you can.

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



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!