Editor’s Note

The purpose of this quarterly newsletter, Self Awakening, is to inform Sadhaks (seekers of self-realization) about Maha Yoga, a very simple, no cost and effective method of self-realization.

P. P. Shri Narayan Kaka Maharaj of Nashik, India is 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 tens of thousands of Sadhaks in the Maha Yoga tradition all over the world, this e-newsletter is intended to provide virtual Satsang. It is intended to help keep Sadhaks 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 P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj.

Editor: Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to conduct this interview for the e-newsletter. It will be very helpful to the Sadhaks and others who read the newsletter. Should we get started?

Gurudev: Yes, let us begin.

Editor: How did you get interested in Maha Yoga? What got you interested?

Gurudev: Ever since my childhood I had a desire to become a Yogi. I don’t know why, but I just wanted to become a Yogi. This was fortified and reinforced by some movies (pictures) I saw when I was a child - Sant Dhnyaneshwar, Tukaram Maharaj and others. After seeing the movies I would have a tendency to chant “Vithal-Vithal” and even when I sat somewhere I would think “Vithal-Vithal”. I would also recite Dhnyaneshwar’s sayings and verses.
Discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj (continued)

Editor: What did you do next?
Gurudev: Around that time the RSS was organizing bicycle tours of various forts around Maharashtra such as Sinhagad, Purandar, etc. So I went to 5 or 6 forts on a bicycle.

Editor: You must have been in very good shape in those years to do all that climbing on a bicycle.
Gurudev: Yes. I used to practice Yoga Asanas daily in those days. I used to practice even Poorna Matsendryasana, which, by the way, is a very difficult Asana. I have lost my physical abilities now, but in those days I was very slim so I could even do that difficult Asana.

Around that time, in 1952, someone told me that if you are so interested in Yoga, there is a Sage, a saintly person, who has come to the area you might want to go meet and salute. So I went to see the Sage and when I got there I just bowed to him. The Sage was P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj. When I looked up from having bowed to him, his first sentence in Hindi was, “If you have feelings of respect for your Guru then you should do a Sashtanga Dandavat (prostration with 8 points of the body touching the ground)”. So I did a Sashtanga Dandavat and said, “Of course, you are my Guru”. That led to my meeting with him everyday. In those days I was mostly interested in practicing Yoga Asanas.

Editor: Which town were you living in then? Where was this going on?
Gurudev: Right here in Pune. Actually very near to where we are now in Vasudev Niwas. At that time when I would go to see P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj, P. P. Gulgani Maharaj used to also be around. When I would do Yoga Asanas, he noticed that I was also doing Poorna Matsendryasana, a very difficult Asana.

Editor: Yes, P. P. Gulgani Maharaj was also very interested in Yoga Asanas.
Gurudev: Yes, he had a great interest in Yoga Asanas and he was very good at doing them. There are some famous photographs of him doing very difficult Asanas. When he saw me doing the Poorna Matsendryasana he came to me and said in Marathi, “You do that Asana very well and very beautifully”. This was around 1951, when Shri Balasaheb Wakde was around. He was a leader in the RSS and he would also encourage me in my Yoga Asana practice. One day he said to me, “Why are you just doing Asanas? You should ask Swamiji for Deksha”. I said to him, “What is this Deksha?” So Shri Balasaheb told me about Deksha and I decided it...
Discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj (continued)

would be a good idea to ask Swamiji for Deeksha. So I went to see Swamiji on a Thursday and asked him if it might be possible for him to give me Deeksha. Swamiji replied, “You are still a student and you have your studies to deal with, Deeksha will not be appropriate at this time”. I was quite disappointed to hear that. The following Saturday when I went to see Swamiji he announced to me, “Tomorrow you will get Deeksha”.

Editor: That must have been a pleasant surprise for you.

Gurudev: Yes, also because the next day was the day celebrating my Kula Dev (Family God), Jejuri cha Khandoba (form of Shiva from the town of Jejuri); and a Sunday, which happens to be the day of the week I was born on. So I felt very fortunate.

Editor: Did Swamiji know about the importance of that day to you?

Gurudev: No, nothing like that. He just decided that it would be the day. One day he told me I was not ready for Deeksha and two days later he announced that he would give me Deeksha the next day! I had no idea what went into Swamiji’s calculations. I was very glad that he had decided to grant me Deeksha and the next morning I went to see him to receive the Deeksha. He put his hand on my head and the Deeksha started right away. Following that I would go see Swamiji every day and do Sadhana. He was a very loving person. Not long after my Deeksha someone who was able to converse with Swamiji very freely (unlike me, who was in awe of him) asked him, “How come you gave Narayan Deeksha only a few days after you had told him that he wasn’t ready”. Swamiji replied, “After I said no to him that day, I could not proceed with my Sadhana. He and I are in some way indebted to each other (Hrunanubandha), so Shakti (Mother Energy) has told me that he should be given Deeksha”. I suppose it was a matter of Destiny.

Editor: How was your relationship with Swamiji after that?

Gurudev: It was very close. I used to see him everyday while he was here in Pune. When he left Pune to go to Varanasi I stayed in touch with him through back and forth correspondence, right until his departure from this world in February 1955. Swamiji told me to always remember my Guru, so he is always in my heart. Thanks to his blessings I have had a successful career and a successful spiritual life. Without his guidance and blessings none of this would have been possible.

Editor: I understand that you were also very close to my Gurudev, P. P. Gulvani Maharaj.

Gurudev: Following Swamiji’s departure in February 1955, I stayed in very close touch with P. P. Gulvani Maharaj.

Editor: He was in a way your Gurubandhu (brother in the Guru family), you and he having had Swamiji as your common Guru.

Gurudev: Yes, he was my Gurubandhu, but he was much more senior to me. I was in a way, a very, very junior brother to him, the one with the lowest rank, so to speak. When P. P. Gulvani Maharaj left this earth in 1974, I sought the guidance of P. P. Datta Maharaj Kavishwar, who he had named as his successor. P. P. Datta Maharaj took good care of me spiritually, thinking perhaps that even though I might have behaved at times like a mischievous child I had good intentions. He guided me for 25 years, from 1974 till his departure from this earth in 1999. In 1985 he invited me to join the trust in Pune established by P. P. Gulvani Maharaj. I had retired from my job in the Maharashtra Government by then so I agreed.

Meanwhile I had also established the P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Trust in Nashik, and I had begun going to various places around Maharashtra and India to spread the message of Maha Yoga and to give Deeksha to Sadhaks who agreed to live by the standards established by P. P. Gulvani Maharaj. After P. P. Datta Maharaj Kavishwar’s departure from this earth in 1999, I reluctantly agreed to assume the responsibility of becoming the chief trustee of the Pune Ashram.

Editor: How have things gone since then?

Gurudev: Things have gone very well. We are gradually spreading the Maha Yoga message, as you know. We have given a large number of Deekshas and people are having wonderful experiences in their Sadhana. You might have heard of Dr. Vijay Bhatkar, who is a famous Computer Scientist in India. He too has received Deeksha. He came to see me some time back, right here in Pune, and we got into talking about atoms and physics. I told him that the science of Maha Yoga is somewhat different from our knowledge of the physical sciences at this time. Maha Yoga is very simple. One need not analyze the approach; one just has to experience it. It is very simple because one just has to sit without doing anything to experience it. He said, “Is that so?” I said, “Yes” and I asked him to sit with his eyes closed. He did that, and within a short time he just fell back in a trance. Following that I gave him a date for his formal Deeksha, but the Deeksha happened to him 8 days earlier. I said to him that Shakti (Mother Energy) must have been in a hurry! Many such situations happen all the time and I often wonder how such things happen and what is causing such a great flow of Energy.
Discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj (continued)

A few years ago the Shankaracharya of Shirshi Math had come to see me with his younger disciple. We welcomed him to the Ashram, did his Pooja, etc. He said he wanted to talk to me about something. I said okay, I would be glad to listen to him. He said he wanted me to give him Deeksha. I said to him, “How can I do that. You are a Shankaracharya, so we see you as Shri Datta Guru himself. So how can I give you Deeksha? Why are you asking me to do such a thing? I will not be able to give you Deeksha.” But then I told him that he could sign the Deeksha request form letter we have and I will put the letter in front of Swamiji’s (P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj’s) photograph and then it is between Swamiji and him whether he receives Deeksha or not. It is not in my hands. The Shankaracharya did as I had suggested and lo and behold, he received Deeksha! He being a follower of a different Yoga Marg (tradition) got some very different experiences. Be that as it may, two other Shankaracharyas have also asked for and received Deeksha since then.

Editor: So it seems Maha Yoga prachar (spreading the Maha Yoga message) is going quite well.

Gurudev: Yes, it is going very well. We had decided some time back to create 4 centers of Maha Yoga in 4 different locations in India - in the holy city of Kashi (Varanasi); in Rameshwaram, where Swamiji had directed us to do Maha Yoga prachar in Southern India; in Pithapur in the state of Andhra Pradesh, a sacred location for followers of Shri Datta Guru and the birthplace of Shripad Shri Vallabha, one of the incarnations of Shri Datta Guru; and finally in Narsobachi Wadi (also referred to as Wadi), a place sanctified by Shri Narsimha Saraswati (who is considered to be the second incarnation of Shri Datta Guru) and by Shri Vasudevanand Saraswati (P. P. Shri Tembe Swami Maharaj). We intend to organize two Saptahas (weeks of intense spiritual activities) at each of these locations where Sadhaks and others can participate in Maha Yoga related activities. We have thus far conducted such Saptahas in Kashi, Pithapur and as you are aware, we just returned from one such week at Rameshwaram. And of course, we have been organizing such events in Wadi since many years. This Prachar is very consistent with P. P. Gulvani Maharaj’s message in the only public speech he gave in 1957 when he urged everyone to practice Maha Yoga for the uplift of India and for the entire world. It is also consistent with P. P. Swami Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj’s blessings to P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj to spread the teachings and the practice of Maha Yoga wherever he went. As you are aware, P. P. Swami Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj, who was P. P. Swami Loknath Tirth Maharaj’s Guru’s Guru, was the key Guru in our lineage who began the spread of Maha Yoga in recent times during the late19th and early 20th century. So I feel that I am just carrying on this tradition of Prachar passed down from P. P. Swami Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj to P. P. Swami Loknath Tirth Maharaj down to P. P. Gulvani Maharaj down to me. I had no idea I would become involved so much in Maha Yoga Prachar. I had never thought of travelling so much, not only in India but also abroad. I had never imagined travelling to London and to some of the major cities in the US for Maha Yoga Prachar, leave aside going to the Middle East locations of Bahrain and Kuwait.

Editor: What did you think of all the foreign locations you visited?

Gurudev: It is thanks to all the Sadhaks in those places who organized opportunities for people in those locations to get some exposure to Maha Yoga that those visits even became possible. As you know, not only did we talk about Maha Yoga but also gave attendees an opportunity to actually experience Maha Yoga meditation. For example, at the September 11th, 2007 peace event that we participated in California, we didn’t have much time to give a long lecture. So in contrast to the other presenters who gave speeches, we guided the attendees through a practical Maha Yoga meditation. For that we received a great response from the attendees and from the organizers who sent us a glowing letter thanking us for actually giving audience members a true feeling of peace instead of just talking about it.

In Bahrain we were invited to give a talk at a beautiful 150 year old Krishna temple. The organizers had told me that the attendees would be Krishna devotees who were studying the Bhagwad Geeta. When I began the talk I told the audience, “You all know how to recite the Geeta, but today I am going to tell you how to practice the teachings of the Geeta”. With that introduction, and drawing upon the Sixth Chapter of the Geeta which describes the essence of Maha Yoga, I instructed the audience of about 150 to 200 people to close their eyes and guided them through a 10 minute Maha Yoga meditation. It had the same effect as we have seen at all the other locations where we have conducted such events, with the audience becoming completely absorbed in the experience of meditation. I had simply instructed them to relax their bodies, observe their natural breathing, and observe what happens. This way, audience members were able to forget their bodies, attach their minds to their breath, which is the physical representation of Prana Shakti, or the Mother Energy, and in that process actually experience the Prana Shakti which resides in all of us.
and upon which our bodies and minds are so dependent. It just shows that Maha Yoga is the simplest, no cost and highest form of Yoga available to all human beings around the world. So I feel with all that travel we have sowed the seeds of Maha Yoga in all these locations. I am sure the people there, who have attended and experienced Maha Yoga meditation, will one day reap the benefits.

Editor: That’s great. Now, I would like to hear you talk a little bit about a common issue many Sadhaks have, and that is how to integrate the practice of Maha Yoga in their day-to-day lives of work, family, etc. You had a very successful career as a Superintending Civil Engineer with the Government of Maharashtra. How did you prioritize your very important and interesting work with the priorities of being a Maha Yoga Sadhak?

Gurudev: My priorities were always Maha Yoga and Sadhan first, my career second. But that does not mean I neglected my career. I always followed my Maha Yoga requirements without having to compromise my career. Let me give you some examples. I had to travel quite a bit all around visiting the villages of Maharashtra as well as going by airplane to New Delhi. Often I would have executives from companies sit next to me on airplanes and when we got to talking they would be very surprised to know that I, a person dressed in the traditional outfit of Topi (cap), coat and Dhoti, was a Civil Engineer for the State of Maharashtra. And not only that, but I was doing and managing research on 53 different civil engineering issues related to water and hydrology. In fact, I was awarded Certificates of Recognition by the Maharashtra Government for solving major problems, including the development of a special low-cost grout to replace the very expensive imported grout that was being used to repair cracks in hydro dams. So I never let what some would perceive as being important for my work interfere with my needs of living a Sadhak’s life.

Since I was quite interested in research, in 1962 I was asked by the Government to get my Master’s degree in Civil Engineering, even though I had completed my B.E. several years earlier in 1952. I went back to college, this time to the University of Calcutta to get my Master of Engineering in Public Health. So I was in Calcutta for two years in 1962-63. During my stay in the hostel there I realized that I would not be able to observe my dietary restriction if I had to eat in the hostel’s dining facilities. So I asked for permission to make other dining arrangements for myself. The authorities refused to grant me such permission. So instead of eating my meals at the hostel, I would register my attendance at the dining facility by eating a banana or a fruit and then proceed to eat my main meal outside the hostel where I had made some arrangements for cooking food that would meet my dietary restrictions. I also would diligently sit for Sadhan over all these years, regardless of my life circumstances. So Maha Yoga has always had the highest priority in my life. And I have always found ways to keep my priorities as a Sadhak from being affected by any attachments to my pursuing a career. My attachment has only been to the practice of Maha Yoga. Sadhan is the key to making progress on this path. Sadhaks should do Sadhan every day. The Sadhan that happens to Sadhaks on this path is beyond words.

Editor: Tell us more about Sadhan and Maha Yoga. I am sure Sadhaks will be very interested in what you have to say.

Gurudev: Okay, you know all about this, but in the interest of documenting my thoughts on Maha Yoga I will talk a little bit about it. As you know, our bodies are not permanent, neither are our minds. But the Prana Shakti (Mother Energy) which is present in all of us is eternal. During the Tsunami a few years ago, tens of thousands of people perished, but their Prana Shakti did not go away, it remains permanent.

Maha Yoga is a way to connect our consciousness directly to the Prana Shakti. Our bodies are alive only as long as the Prana Shakti resides in them. As you know, the mind is more important than the body. But the mind, although it is subtle, is also not permanent. Nor is it steady. Sometimes we have very high thoughts, but sometimes our thoughts become very base. So we should not take the mind as a standard. What is the mind after all? It is nothing but a sequence of thoughts. Sometimes there can be an interval between two thoughts. But we still continue to live during such intervals, we don’t die! In that interval between thoughts, when there is no mind activity, what keeps us alive? It is the presence of Prana Shakti within us that keeps us alive and functioning. Maha Yoga helps us to connect with the Prana Shakti which is the permanent and eternal part of our existence.

When we sit relaxed and close our eyes with faith and devotion, a subtle surge of Energy goes up along our spine and resides in our brains. When that happens, for an instant, we actually experience an interval between our thoughts. That is what we call “Na-Mana” or “No Mana (Mind)”. When our mind is active, all our senses are functioning. When our mind is silent for an instant we become unaware of our senses during that instant. It is this experience during the interval between thoughts that is the key to our understanding and experiencing Maha Yoga. This can be practiced by anyone, as you have seen happen during our lecture.
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demonstrations.

People often ask the question, “How do we all come into being on this world?” Each one of us is here on this earth because of the desires of our parents. Without such desires (Vasanas) on their part, none of us would have been born. Vasanas, or desires, not only bring us all into existence, but they continue to keep us in this cycle of birth and rebirth. It is very important to understand this concept, because it is our Vasanas that bring about our impermanent world. It is the objective of Maha Yoga to wipe out all the effects of our Vasanas and to get us out of the cycle of birth and rebirth. That is what regular Sadhan will do for Sadhaks.

An important point about Maha Yoga is that Sadhan is not to be “done” by the Sadhak. The Sadhak has to just sit relaxed in order to eliminate his awareness of his body. The Sadhak should also not use his mind to concentrate or focus on anything, because our objective is to get the mind disengaged. It is not the Sadhak’s mind that can do the Sadhan, but it is the Prana Shakti that does the Sadhan. So the Sadhak should just sit relaxed and let go of any conscious control over his body or mind and just let the Prana Shakti do its course. The Sadhak should just observe his breathing, and if any thoughts arise he should not become engaged in them, but should just play the role of observing his breathing, which is the physical manifestation of the Prana Shakti. Hand over yourself, i.e. your body and your mind, both, to the Prana Shakti and let her do the Sadhan.

Editor: Thank you for that excellent summary of Maha Yoga and Sadhan. I am sure Sadhaks will very much appreciate the important points you have made. There are a couple of other areas I want to get your insight for our readers and others. The first is the issue of whether or not you consider all who ask you for Deeksha as being worthy of it, or do you have any criteria for granting Deeksha to some and not to others. 

Gurudev: No, I do not have any such criteria. If a person has a desire to receive Deeksha I consider him/her as deserving to receive it. For example, there are many shops in a marketplace. Someone who has a desire to buy a particular product will go to the shop that sells it. Everyone in the marketplace will not go to that particular shop. Only those who are interested in what the shop is selling will go to check out the products for sale in that shop. So my approach is that whosoever desires to receive Deeksha has some basis for having that desire, so he can have it. Our past impressions, from this life and our past lives, lead to the creation of our desires. So if a person has a desire to receive Deeksha, to me it is an indication that the person has an interest in Maha Yoga because of his past impressions, and is therefore worthy of receiving it.

There might be a group of friends who are wondering about what to do in the evening. Some want to go to one movie, others want to go to another movie, but one feels an urge to go attend a lecture on spirituality! Why is that? It is something within that person which makes him want to go to the spirituality lecture and not to one of the movies. We don’t know what specifically is making that person want to attend the lecture, but we do know that something is compelling him to do so, even though his friends want to go to the movies. I believe it is the Sadhan and the impressions that the person has accumulated from his past births that make him attracted to spirituality in the first place. Eventually, regular Sadhan will eliminate all impressions of this and previous lives and lead to a desire-free state where one has no desires, material or spiritual, eliminating the need for rebirth and leading to the ultimate goal of Maha Yoga.

I will give you an example of one person who came to see me. He said to me, “Why do you want everyone to do Yoga? I have done all kinds of bad deeds and committed all different kinds of sins. Why would you want someone like me to get involved with Yoga?” I told him, “I am not at all concerned about your misdeeds and sins, or even interested in the good deeds you might have done. If you have an interest in Yoga I will be glad to talk to you. If not that is fine too, you can leave”. He said, “Let me see”. That comment of his, “Let me see” indicated to me that he was already on the path. It showed that his wickedness was immaterial and that the desire for spirituality was developing. He did not even know this to be the case, but to me he was on his way to becoming a Yogi. It was his desire in the first place to come see me. No one forced him to do that. He himself is the cause for his moving in this direction. It was his desire that was driving him. We want everyone on the face of this Earth to have such desire!

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

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
Discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj (continued)

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.

Editor: That is indeed good news for all Sadhaks. I am sure it will motivate us all to sit regularly for Sadhan. I have a couple of questions about the process of how a Guru gives Deeksha. First, what exactly does the Guru do when he gives Deeksha to a person? And secondly, why give Deeksha only twice a year?

Gurudev: Our approach to giving Deeksha is very simple. We give Sankalpa Deeksha, i.e. we just wish that the Deeksha be granted to those seeking it. Some Gurus give Deeksha by sight, i.e. by looking at someone desirous of receiving Deeksha. Others do it by giving a mantra. Still others do it by touch. But behind all these different methods, the Guru has to have the Sankalpa, or wish, that the seeker receive Deeksha. So Sankalpa is the key ingredient, not the look or the mantra or the touch.

The reason we give Deeksha twice a year is somewhat arbitrary, but there is some thought given to it as well. We look for a couple of auspicious times during the year somewhat evenly spaced with about a six month gap between them. This results in some people having to wait for even a few months before they get Deeksha, but during that time they can always do the Introductory Approach. The wait also gives them an opportunity to think at length about their commitment to receiving Deeksha. They can reflect on their willingness to observe the restrictions that we ask them to follow, and either accept them and go ahead with the Deeksha, or simply continue following the Introductory Approach. They can get mentally ready during that time. When the Deeksha eventually happens, some get interesting experiences, others do not. But that’s okay. The Deeksha will eventually lead each Sadhak through all the unique experiences and Kriyas needed for his progress. The Guru Tatwa (Guru’s Essence) will always be with him and will guide him through his Sadhan and spiritual journey.

Editor: Thank you Gurudev for that wonderful discussion. Do you have any closing remarks?

Gurudev: I just want to emphasize how easy and useful our Maha Yoga approach is. People have all different kinds of religions. Maha Yoga is beyond all religions or creeds. It is based on our strong conviction, that Prana Shakti, the physical representation of which is the air we all breathe, is the Mother Energy that supports us all. Just as the air we breathe here in India is the same as the air people breathe in the US, or for that matter, anywhere else in the world, so is the Prana Shakti, the Mother Energy, which supports us all. So we all have a common mother, and that makes us all brothers. We have our fights, but if we all realize that we are all children of the same mother who is always with us, and actually begin to experience it and see ourselves in that way the world will become a better place. That is my only wish.

I would like to thank Shri Gurudev from the bottom of my heart for the wonderful opportunity to be in his uplifting presence and to hear his inspiring words during the discussion. I hope these excerpts help readers to better understand Maha Yoga and inspire them to be diligent in their Sadhana, and to make as many people around the world as possible aware of this incredible gift available to all of humanity.

Editor
Article on Maha Yoga - Part 4

In previous sections of the article on Maha Yoga, which appeared in the first three issues of this newsletter, we described what Maha Yoga is, how to get started on this path and what happens during Initiation (Deeksha). In this final section, we discuss what one can expect to have happen as one progresses on this path.

What will I Experience as a Maha Yogi?

Once a person is initiated into Maha/Siddha Yoga by a Siddha Guru, he/she will begin a process of spiritual purification which will eventually lead to Self Realization. The initiate’s dormant Kundalini Shakti will have been awakened by the Siddha Guru during the initiation (Deeksha), and depending on the accumulated impressions of his past deeds (his Karma) and the diligence with which he practices meditation (Sadhana) he will likely have amazing spiritual experiences on his way to Self Realization.

Throughout this journey, although the Siddha Guru will always be there for specific guidance, the initiate will be guided automatically by his own awakened Kundalini energy, especially during the conduct of his Sadhana. Diligent practice of Sadhana will gradually result in the opening and cleansing of the spiritual pathways needed for the Kundalini to eventually find its way to the spiritual center in the brain (Sahasrara Chakra) resulting in the aspirant’s Awareness merging with the Chaitanya, i.e. the aspirant achieving Self-Realization, and eventually, liberation.

While no two initiates will have the same set of spiritual experiences on the road to Self Realization, most aspirants will go through four stages. While each stage has unique characteristics that define it, the transitions between consecutive stages are not distinct or abrupt, with one stage gradually blending into the next:

1) The Initial Stage (Arambha-avastha):

Arambha-avastha means the beginning state. In this Initial Stage, the Kundalini energy begins her work with physical movements and sensations, which an aspirant will experience involuntarily during his Sadhana. These might include Yogic Asanas (physical postures), Bandhas (locking of limbs/abdomen to prevent the movement of breath), Pranayam (breath-control/rhythmic breathing), etc., which help to regularize flow of the Universal Life Energy (Chaitanya/Prana) throughout the body. Yogic Asanas will bring the needed steadiness to the body while the Bandhas and Pranayam will bring on a feeling of lightness in the body.

During this stage the initiate is also likely to experience during Sadhana some of the characteristic symptoms of the awakened Kundalini. These might include, but not be limited to, these illustrative experiences (kriyas):

a) Sensations of throbbing at the base of the spine (Mooladhara chakra), the Universal Life Energy (Prana) rising from the Mooladhara to the cerebrum (Sahasrara) and movement of Prana in different parts of the body, leading to a feeling of ecstasy.

b) Posture becoming steady resulting in a loss of body-awareness and an immersion into a trance-like state.

c) Feeling that the Kundalini Shakti has taken control of the body and is making the initiate perform various Asanas, Bandhas and Pranayams.

d) Seeing divine visions, hearing divine sounds, experiencing divine tastes, touch, etc.

e) Sight getting attracted to the space between the eyebrows during meditation, breathing stops temporarily and it becomes difficult to open one’s eyes, while feeling a sense of bliss.

f) Body begins to shake as soon as the initiate sits for meditation, followed by a sense of happiness.

g) Feeling a sensation of intoxication (without having taken any intoxicant) like being drunk on Divinity.

Each aspirant’s experience during this stage will be unique, and will depend to a large extent on his Karma and the diligence with which he conducts his Sadhana. There is a tendency at this initial stage for aspirants to dwell on what experiences they are receiving and which ones they aren’t, and being concerned that they are not making appropriate progress if they are not experiencing all the ones they have read about or have heard their co-aspirants talk about. This is a very counter-productive exercise because it is not at all necessary for an initiate to get all or any of the experiences stated above. These experiences are not ends in themselves but are only the means to achieve the specific type of spiritual purification needed by each aspirant at this stage. So the initiate will only experience those activities/feelings/sensations that are uniquely essential to his spiritual progress. Focusing on the experiences themselves will only lead to enhancing one’s ego or to an unnecessary feeling of despair, both of which will detract from making further spiritual progress. It is important at this stage to be aware of what one is experiencing, enjoy those
experiences that are pleasant or blissful, but not dwell too much on the experiences per se. Rest assured that if the aspirant (Sadhak) is diligent in conducting his Sadhana regularly, the awakened Kundalini Shakti will also be doing its job of spiritual purification with great diligence. When the Universal Life Energy (Prana/Chaitanya) moves freely and regularly throughout the Sadhak’s body and he begins to feel its divine presence in him, the Kundalini Shakti will have helped him achieve the results of the Arambha-avadha.

2) The Second Stage (Ghata-avadha):

In this second stage, which usually overlaps with the first, the aspirant gradually begins to lose interest in material desires and begins to develop a sense of detachment from worldly attractions. This does not mean that he has to, or will, give up on all things material. He may continue to live in the material world, if he so chooses, but he will begin to develop a sense of non-attachment to material things.

As his sense of non-attachment to the material world begins to develop, the aspirant will gradually find himself becoming more and more immersed in the Universal Life Energy (Prana/Chaitanya). He will begin to observe Prana/Chaitanya in everything he sees with his eyes. He will feel Prana/Chaitanya in everything he touches with his skin. He will get a whiff of Prana/Chaitanya in everything he smells with his nose. He will sense Prana/Chaitanya in everything he tastes with his tongue. And he will hear the sound of Prana/Chaitanya in everything he hears with his ears. In other words, he will begin to sense the entire material universe as manifestations of Prana/Chaitanya. While the First Stage results in the aspirant feeling Prana/Chaitanya within himself, the Second Stage leads the aspirant to sense Prana/Chaitanya in everything. It is at this stage that he truly experiences the all-pervading universality of Prana/Chaitanya.

It is important for the aspirant to continue to practice meditation (Sadhana) during the Second Stage. As the first two stages overlap to some extent, the aspirant may continue to experience during Sadhana some of the kriyas described in the First Stage. However, by this time, many of the physical experiences will have been attenuated/diminished and the aspirant will find himself sensing Prana/Chaitanya within and outside himself, not just during Sadhana but at all times. The spiritual path for the Kundalini Shakti to find its way toward the spiritual center in the brain (Sahasrara Chakra) will have been opened and cleansed, and as a result it will be able to move freely along this path. This will result in the aspirant gaining control over the flow of Prana within himself and achieving a certain stability of mind.

3) The Third Stage (Parichaya-avadha):

Having opened and cleansed the spiritual pathways during the Second Stage for the Kundalini energy to move freely within the aspirant, during the Third Stage the Kundalini Shakti moves to his Sahasrara Chakra (spiritual center in the brain) and merges with it. This results in the aspirant’s Awareness merging with the Chaitanya, or the Universal Life Energy, and the aspirant begins to achieve complete serenity of mind. His perspective of the universe changes to where he constantly sees the universe as nothing but a manifestation of Prana/Chaitanya. He sees that oneness in everyone and everything.

At this stage not only does the aspirant experience the universality of Prana/Chaitanya but he is also able to begin to exert control over it. He develops an ability to exhaust all the accumulated Karma of his previous lives without having the necessity to be reborn again and again. As a result he reaches the status of Siddha which enables him to gain extraordinary powers including the ability to awaken the dormant Kundalini Shakti in others. He achieves his goal of Self-Realization, and having done so, can choose to continue to live in this world as long as he desires or to liberate himself from it at will. He is no longer an “aspirant” but is now a true “yogi”. Some yogis choose to dwell in this state for extended periods with the goal of helping others achieve Self-Realization. Others move on to the next stage of Liberation.

4) The Fourth Stage (Nishpatti-avadha):

This is the final stage, where the yogi, having achieved Self-Realization liberates himself from the cycle of birth and death. He achieves a state of bliss (Samadhi) where he is completely beyond the physical confines of this universe. He feels neither hunger nor thirst, nor heat nor cold. His Awareness no longer dwells in the material, but constantly resides in Prana/Chaitanya. When he chooses to depart from his body he does not need to be reborn and his Spirit/Awareness stays merged with the Chaitanya forever.
Churning of the Heart - Excerpt

With the previous issue of the e-newsletter we began presenting to readers excerpts from P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj’s trilogy, “Churning of the Heart”. P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj 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 second half of 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. 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

Surrender to Kriya-Shakti

I don’t know why, but my mind was sad today. I was in no mood to talk to anyone or to listen to anyone. All I wanted to do was pull the blanket over my head and remain in bed. However, I was helpless; there was a lot of ashram work. Somehow I completed my chores. When I was finished, I went to Maharajshri to pay my respects. My face was drawn. Maharajshri asked, “What is it? You are looking very sad today.”

I replied, “Even I don’t know the reason, but my mind is very sad.”

Maharajshri asked, “Did anyone say anything to you or are you missing your home?”

I replied, “Neither is the case.”

During the morning walk Maharajshri again mentioned the incident. “Sometimes we do not see the reason but our mind is very pleased. Sometimes we become sad without cause. The reason for this is not in the outside world, it is inside the chitta. In fact, the world that diverts the mind is only within the chitta, which may be regarded as a reservoir of accumulated impressions. These accumulated impressions make up the state of the chitta. It is fine to say that an incident in the world influences the mind, but the root cause of the incident is our accumulated impressions. These impressions inside the chitta, while changing their own state, change the state of the chitta at the same time. When impressions of joy are awakened and exalted, they give rise to tendencies and bring them to the surface. As a result the mind is filled with happiness for no apparent reason. Contrary to this, when impressions of sadness arise one feels sad but is unaware of the reason”.

“Your condition may be somewhat similar to this. People in general pass through this state, but it occurs more often among aspirants of Shaktipat as the Kriya-Shakti brings accumulated impressions to the surface. Sometimes one gets angry at minor things. Sometimes foul and vulgar thoughts arise. Sometimes a feeling of forgiveness comes, and at times pride increases greatly. An aspirant has to bear all this with a calm chitta. It is not the case that these kriyas of Shaktipat happen only during sadhan. The Kriya-Shakti is always active. Kriyas during sadhan are clearly manifest, whereas at other times they are not. Even during social interactions, when the attention of the aspirant is not on his sadhan, the kriyas continue internally. Under such circumstances, it is not surprising when sadness arises in a kriya, affects the mind and is expressed in the face.”

I said, “Even when kriyas happen in this fashion, are samskaras still destroyed?”

Maharajshri said, “Distraction of samskaras is not due to kriyas. The job of a kriya is to bring the samskaras to the surface and exalt them. It depends on how you react to this exalted samskar. If you are provoked, there is no destruction of samskaras. They gain more strength. If you bear it with tolerance without getting provoked or angry, then the samskar will show its strength and become feeble.”

Then I asked, “When a samskar arises, if our reaction is in our own hands, then what is the meaning of surrender?”

Maharajshri answered, “You have asked a very good question. It is a matter of understanding. When the samskar is exalted, the Kriya-Shakti does not motivate our reaction, the samskaras do. Acting according to the motivation of the samskaras can never be called surrender to the Kriya-Shakti. Some people say, incorrectly, that they have acted according to the orders of the Kriya-Shakti. They do not acknowledge that the Kriya-Shakti exalted the samskaras but that they acted under the influence of those samskaras. This is a very important matter and must be understood. A normal aspirant forgets this and under the name of Kriya-Shakti ends up surrendering to his samskaras. Thinking about surrender in a chronological manner will clarify the matter.”

- “After awakening, the goal of Kriya-Shakti and the sense of surrender towards it should always be maintained. Kriya-Shakti is divine power, all-knowing and beneficial. Every kriya of Kriya-Shakti is in the interest of the being. Thus it is in the interest of a living being that more and more of his kriyas are manifest. The more resolutions a being makes, the more the kriya of the Kriya-Shakti becomes subject to the control of those resolutions. The meaning of kriya is independent movement based on Samskaras. One must
surrender to the independent power of Kriya-Shakti by leaving all kinds of resolutions and efforts aside. A being is bound by hopes and desires and is incapable of considering benefit and loss. So why not surrender to that Shakti, which is always beneficial? Even if one surrenders to someone in the world, one should experience the Shakti in that."

- “If there is welfare in the kriyas of the Shakti, then why not let them happen with uninterrupted immediacy? Mental resolve is an obstacle in a kriya. When a kriya comes under the influence of resolve, it is reduced to a karma and an impression is accumulated. Thus the mind should not be allowed to hinder the kriya. In other words, one should not interfere in kriyas. As the Shakti is all-knowing, it is aware of everything and knows when and which kriya you require. All decisions about kriyas should be left to the Shakti and one must surrender to it.”

- “Kriya-Shakti brings both types of samskaras - sanchit [accumulated] and prarabdha [ripened] - to the surface. The force of the sanchit samskaras is within the chitta. If an aspirant is influenced by that force, his behavior in the world is affected and he accumulates new samskaras. If he endures the force and does not allow his chitta to be influenced, then the samskar to which the force belongs becomes feeble. Now remains the issue of prarabdha. When the Shakti brings it to the surface, joy and sorrow are expressed externally as well as internally. Though this joy and sorrow are definitely expressed by Shakti, prarabdha is their cause. There is no other solution but to endure the fruit that has ripened. An aspirant’s surrender is towards the Kriya-Shakti and not towards prarabdha. His reaction, on the other hand, is not toward the Shakti. It is towards prarabdha. An aspirant can have only one reaction towards his prarabdha, and that is to endure its effects with a calm chitta. The surrender towards the Shakti does not interfere in this. Even if one listens to the Kriya-Shakti, just as sadhan without the mind being affected is one’s duty, in the same way enduring the fruits of prarabdha without the mind being affected is also one’s duty. It is sadhan. It is surrender towards the Shakti. It is the quality of Kriya-Shakti that in spite of coming in contact with your samskaras, it remains unaffected by them.
Answers to questions of Sadhaks

- **Question:** I have been practicing Kundalini Yoga, as taught by Yogi Bhajan, and participating in White Tantric Yoga on Winter Solstice. Do I have to give up my old yoga path if I decide to follow Maha Yoga? Should I be concerned that there is no Maha Yoga center in the town in the US where I live?

**Answer:** If you are a follower of a particular Yoga path or a practitioner of a particular approach to Sadhana, following the Introductory Approach to Maha Yoga (see page 15) will not create any problems or obstructions on your chosen path. In fact, doing so will further activate and accelerate your progress on your chosen path. Mahayoga is a study of Prana, which is the underlying Universal Mother Energy which supports and enhances all worldly and spiritual activities of an individual. Therefore, the study of Maha Yoga will only serve to increase the intensity of whatever other Sadhana or Yoga path you are following.

However, if you want to get initiated into Maha Yoga, but have already been initiated into another spiritual Yoga path by a Guru/Master, as an ethical and spiritual norm of Yoga, you must ask for permission from your current Guru (if he/she is alive) prior to getting initiated into the path of Maha Yoga. This rule exists to confirm the acceptance by Sadhaks of the spiritual superiority of one’s Guru, regardless of the specific Yoga/spiritual path one is currently pursuing. If your current Guru/Master is not alive, you may look into your consciousness to decide on the matter. Of course, as mentioned above, one may practice the introductory path to Maha Yoga, without getting formally initiated into it.

Maha Yoga encompasses all forms of Yoga, including Kundalini Yoga as described in Yoga scriptures. All Sadhaks need to do after formal initiation into Maha Yoga is to regularly sit for Sadhana and surrender to the activated Mother Energy. They are not to do anything specific. Whatever forms of Yoga a Sadhak needs will automatically happen to the Sadhak as Kriyas (physical and spiritual activities) during Sadhana. The Sadhak’s only active role is to just observe what happens. We are not very familiar with the “Kundalini Yoga” path taught by Yogi Bhajan, so we are not in any position to comment on it. All we can tell you is that Maha Yoga is very simple and depending on the Sadhak’s spiritual situation and his/her diligence in its practice, will lead to spiritual progress at an unmatched rate. Please refer to our website www.mahayoga.org for further details about Maha Yoga.

We do not have a Maha Yoga center in your area at this time. However, the initiation and practice of Maha Yoga does not require you to be in the physical presence of the Guru. Initiation can happen anywhere in the world, in the privacy of your own home, and once initiated you can practice Sadhana at home as well. We have an active community of Sadhaks in the US and around the world as well as an e-newsletter. You can also stay in contact by e-mail or by phone. The next initiation day is on September 20th, 2009. Please visit the website for details.

- **Question:** Is it permissible for an initiated person to cook and serve food prepared with onion and garlic to other members of the family/ friends/ relations, etc. who are not initiated into Shaktipat? (Of course, the initiated person does not eat onion and garlic).

**Answer:** Restriction on eating onions, garlic and non-vegetarian food apply only to Sadhaks (initiates). As members of families and members of society, Sadhaks will of course have ongoing interactions with others who are not initiated into Maha Yoga. So there are no restrictions on Sadhaks cooking and serving food containing onion, garlic and/or non-vegetarian ingredients to others who have not been initiated.

- **Question:** I want to get Siddhi powers. What would be your advice on how I could get Siddhi powers?

**Answer:** In India there are a lot of learned people who are experts in Tantra Vidya and the Shastras who can advise you on how to achieve Siddhis through great discipline, will power and the observance of rules. There are books on this topic, including some written by non-Indian authors such as Paul Brunton and others who describe hundreds of Siddhis, etc. You can pursue those sources if you wish.

Our approach to Maha Yoga and Siddha Yoga is not focused on such objectives at all. Adi Shankaracharya, in his famous treatise, “Vivek Chudamani” says that true seekers and others deserving of Atma Vidya (Spirituality) have a strong conviction and confirmation that only the Atma (Spirit/Pranashakti/Chaitanya) is the
Answers to questions of Sadhaks (continued)

ultimate and permanent truth, and that worldly matters are Anatma (Avidya) and are therefore impermanent, just a mirage and therefore, not relevant to true seekers. Hence the question of how to seek Siddhi powers just does not arise for those following the path of Maha Yoga. Those who want to achieve Siddhi powers should lead a worldly life of Anatma and Avidya and satisfy whatever desires they have, and only then think about entering the field of Maha Yoga which is based on Atma Vidya.

Of course, Patanjali Yoga Sutras and other literature refer to the achievement of Siddhis as an automatic byproduct of the practice of Yoga. However, true Sadhaks should ignore these powers and never use them for achieving worldly desires. Such Siddhis are traps that keep a Sadhak attached to Anatma/Avidya and to one’s ego. They are to be avoided if one wants to make spiritual progress. Getting attached to them always leads to one’s spiritual downfall.

**Question:** Since receiving Deeksha recently I have been doing Sadhana daily and have devotedly followed all restraints and rules. However, I have not yet had any feeling of rising currents of energy or other such extra-ordinary experiences. I know you will think I am being too impatient, but I was wondering how long it would take for such feelings and experiences to begin. I request your constant blessing and prayer to Mother Kundalini to give me speedy progress in my spiritual journey.

**Answer:** Experiences during Sadhana will vary from Sadhak to Sadhak depending on the individual’s accumulated Samskars from this and previous lives. A Sadhak should sit for Sadhana without any expectations of specific or general experiences or Kriyas. Having such expectations will, in fact, obstruct the free flow of Prana (energy) and retard progress. One must be patient and be thankful to the Gurudev who has bestowed the gift of Shaktipat Deeksha out of compassion, without any consideration of whether the seeker is deserving of the Deeksha or not. As you allow the Shakti to do her work by surrendering to her completely and without judgment, you will gradually begin to see progress.

**Question:** If humans are Mukta (free) to begin with, then why do they become Baddha (bound)? Why should we try to become Mukta given our Baddha state?

**Answer:** Humans are Mukta (free) to begin with, as you say, but over multiple lifetimes we develop worldly and material attachments and aversions. It is these accumulated attachments and aversions that make us feel bound to the material world, define our egos and create the separateness we feel from others. This does not mean that we are actually bound in any real way to the material world, but without ever having experienced a true state of Mukti (freedom), we come to believe that our material experiences are all real and are all that matter, and that the material world is all there is. This is when we become virtually Baddha (bound). This does not mean that we are actually Baddha; each of us is equally free to realize at any instant that that we are truly Mukta.

Those of us who feel that we are in a Baddha state of course have a choice to remain feeling as if we are in that state, or figure out ways to realize that we are in fact Mukta (free). Most human beings have never even been exposed to concepts such as Mukta and Baddha, and many of those who have been exposed to these concepts have such strong worldly attachments and aversions that they choose to continue to remain in the virtual Baddha state. And it is perfectly alright if that is their choice. But, for those of us who want to come out from under this delusion of being in a Baddha state and wish to realize and actually experience that we are truly Mukta, Maha Yoga is a very easy and effective way to get there. It is not something to be achieved through external efforts on the Sadhak’s part but it is a realization that will come from within. Once a Sadhak experiences his true Mukta nature within himself, worldly attachments and aversions gradually disappear and the veil of Baddha (feeling bound) parts to reveal his true Mukta nature.
Answers to questions of Sadhaks (continued)

- **Question:** Is it very beneficial to do Sadhana at Brahma Muhurta (about one and a half hours before sunrise, for example beginning at around 5:00 am if the sunrise is at 6:30 am)?

**Answer:** Sitting for Sadhana at any workable time, based on a Sadhak’s choice, is fine. But of course, one should not sit for Sadhana within four hours after a meal. Brahma Muhurta is a particularly auspicious and favorable time to sit for Sadhana. At that time, having just woken from sleep, our bodies are well-rested and fresh, and we have been removed for several hours from our day-to-day worldly affairs. This makes it somewhat easier for our minds to become calm and enables us to get into a meditative state somewhat quicker. But, any workable time, other than within four hours after a meal, is fine. Incidentally, we should never “do” Sadhana. We should just “sit” for Sadhan/Sadhana and let the Prana Shakti (Mother Energy) do what it needs to do. Our role during Sadhana is to just sit and to observe.

- **Question:** Will Naam Japa (chanting of the name of God) help me meet my Aaradhya Daivat (favorite form of God)?

**Answer:** Naam Japa of Aaradhya Daivat or any Japa (chanting) is helpful in calming ones mind. Any Japa without any specific Pranav (Aum) can be performed anywhere and at any time. However, Japa of specific Mantras, or those with Pranav in them, should not be done at any random place without following the purification norms specified. For example, “Digambara, Digambara Shripad Vallabha Digambara” or “Hare Ram, Hare Ram, Ram Ram, Hare Hare” can be chanted anywhere because these Mantras do not include the Pranav sound. It is important to remember here also that when sitting for Sadhana, Sadhaks should never “do” Naam Japa or anything else. If Naam Japa “happens” automatically during Sadhana, that’s fine, but please refrain from being the “doer” during Sadhana.
Introductory approach to Maha Yoga

For those readers interested in Maha Yoga, but for whatever reason are not yet desirous of getting formally initiated (Deeksha), P. P. Kaka Maharaj has recommended an introductory approach (precursor) to experience the benefits of Maha Yoga. This approach can be performed by anyone desirous of getting a taste for what Maha Yoga can help them achieve without making the commitments needed for a formal initiation. It is as follows:

- Sit comfortably, preferably on a padded/carpeted floor or yoga-mat, with your eyes closed
- Feel a subtle surge of energy (Prana) rise up from the base of your spine and move upward toward your head
- Keep the body completely relaxed
- Breathe normally and keep the mind engaged in observing your normal involuntary breathing
- Think that you are not the body but only the pure air which is the gross manifestation of Prana (Universal Life Energy)
- Let your body be relaxed and free to do whatever happens, just observe your normal involuntary breathing
- Try this daily for 3 to 18 minutes or longer. Do not open your eyes unless you feel a strong urge to do so.

Diligent daily practice of this approach, even without getting formally initiated, will lead to a diminishing of the normal clutter in one’s brain, providing the practitioner glimpses of Chaitanya (Universal Life Energy). This is the preliminary stage of the path leading to supreme bliss.
Visit to Rameshwaram in Southern India, February 2009

P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj was P. P. Kaka Maharaj’s Guru and was the one who gave Shaktipat Deeksha (initiation) to P. P. Kaka Maharaj. P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj’s Punyatithi (anniversary of his departure) was celebrated this year on February 12th at the holy city of Rameshwaram in Southern India. Over a thousand enthusiastic Sadhaks from all over India participated in various uplifting events held in Rameshwaram over two days on February 11th and the 12th.

P. P. Kaka Maharaj presided over the festivities during the two days and used the occasion to establish a major Maha Yoga center in Rameshwaram under the leadership of P. P. Shri Vitthalrao Barve Maharaj to serve the needs of Sadhaks in Southern India. Similar Maha Yoga centers have been established over the years in Varanasi (North India), Pithapur (South East India) and Hoshangabad (Central India) on the occasions of previous Punyatithis of P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj. With the presence of the two big Ashrams in Nashik and Pune in Maharashtra (Western India) and various smaller Maha Yoga centers in other parts of India, the establishment of the new center in Rameshwaram is expected to provide more uniform coverage of Maha Yoga all over India.

Rameshwaram is a particularly holy site, second perhaps only to Varanasi (Kashi) in terms of its importance to those desirous of achieving salvation. It is also one of the 12 Jyotirlingam sites revered by Yogis and other devotees. It is located on an island between the rest of India and Sri Lanka, and is considered to be the location from which Lord Rama’s army of devoted monkeys built the bridge to Sri Lanka in their campaign to rescue Lord Rama’s wife, Sita, from Ravana the ruler of Sri Lanka who had kidnapped her. The remnants of a land bridge are still evident from satellite images of the area. Rameshwaram is also considered to be blessed by Lord Rama and is therefore an auspicious and holy location.
Visit to Rameshwaram, February 2009 (continued)

The events at Rameshwaram over the two days were designed not only to educate Sadhaks on Maha Yoga but also to enable them to actually experience the bliss of coming in contact with the Chaitanya Shakti (Universal Life Energy). The events included a huge procession (Shobha Yatra) of Sadhaks led by P. P. Kaka Maharaj, visits to various holy sites and temples within Rameshwaram, discourses on various Maha Yoga related topics and of course, communal Sadhana (sitting for meditation). Most of the events were experiential and hence did not need any translation/interpretation into Tamil for the local community, but when such interpretation was needed, P. P. Vitthalrao Barve Maharaj gave discourses on Maha Yoga in Tamil.

February 12th, the day of P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj’s Punyatithi, was a very special day. It began with the recitation of the Bhagwad Geeta and various discourses on Maha Yoga. This was followed by Tirth Raj, when P. P. Kaka Maharaj invoked the spirit of his Guru, P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj, to bless the event and those gathered. Then came Mantrajagar (Awakening of Vedic Mantras) and Maha Prasad (offering of food to God followed by communal lunch).
Visit to Rameshwaram, February 2009 (continued)

In addition to celebrating the Punyatithi of P. P. Loknath Tirth Maharaj and the launching of the Rameshwaram Maha Yoga center, the two day gathering served to increase the awareness across South India of Maha Yoga as an easily accessible and no cost approach to achieving Yogic Bliss. It also enabled Sadhaks already initiated into Maha Yoga to be in the uplifting presence of P. P. Kaka Maharaj, to get an opportunity to learn from him the teachings of the Maha Yoga path and to actually experience the presence of Chaitanya Shakti during Sadhana.

The evening events began with Aarti (worship), followed by Palkhi - the carrying of the photograph representing P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj in procession to symbolize ones surrender to the Guru Tatwa (Guru Principle) - and ended with the singing of Bhakti Geet (devotional compositions).
While P. P. Kaka Maharaj does not believe in proselytizing about Maha Yoga, he wants to make sure that as many people as possible all over the world are aware of Maha Yoga, leaving it up to them to practice it or not. In his open discourses during the two days he urged Sadhaks to take the message and the experience of Maha Yoga to as many people as possible so they may avail themselves of the opportunity to actually experience Yogic Bliss. He referred to this effort of spreading the message as “Loknath Path” or “Path of the Lord of the People”. He would like to see the increased awareness of Maha Yoga bring about a sense of Universal Peace and Brotherhood throughout the world, especially in these trying times, as all those who get exposed to Maha Yoga realize experientially that they are all children of the same Mother – Chaitanya Shakti or Mother Energy - who we all depend upon, physically and spiritually.

Nikhil Prabhune
Upcoming Events:

P.P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj’s 117th Birth Anniversary
May 6th, 6 am to 10 pm at the Nashik Ashram

Activities: Geeta Patha (Geeta reading), Sadhana, Kirtan, Mahaprasad, Mantrajagar, Aarti, Palkhi, and Bhajans after 10.00 pm

Guru Purnima Celebration, July 7th, 6 am to 10 pm at the Nashik Ashram

Activities: Geeta Patha, Sadhana, Guru Puja, Mahaprasad, Mantrajagar, Aarti, Palkhi and Bhajans after 10.00 pm

San Francisco Bay Area, US

Introductory meditation (Purvabhyas) sessions for interested non-Sadhaks and Sadhaks are held each month in the San Francisco Bay area. Sadhaks also meet each month to conduct a Samuhik Sadhana (group meditation). For information about future such events in the Bay Area please contact Mrs. Neha Vishwarupe at (neha.vishwarupe@gmail.com).

Readers’ survey announcement:

With this fourth issue we have completed the first year of our e-newsletter. To continue to be interesting and responsive, we are asking our readers to take to a short survey. Please help us in this regards by going to the following link and taking the survey:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=mglGA4Fi_2bJyb9STZ86mYqg_3d_3d
What’s New

The Ashram website has been updated with lots of new information. Please go to:

http://www.mahayoga.org/

How to contribute content to the e-newsletter

The goals of our e-newsletter are:

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

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

Self.awakening@gmail.com

To Subscribe: Please visit the website (http://www.mahayoga.org/), enter your email address in the box that appears on the left-side below the menu and click on 'Subscribe' button.

To Unsubscribe: Send us an email to (self.awakening@gmail.com) and put 'UNSUBSCRIBE' in the subject line.

We’re on the Web!
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May all desire to follow this nectarous Siddhayoga Path!