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.
Now there were discussions regarding my sanyas diksha [initiation into the monastic order]. One day Maharajshri said that he had never initiated anyone into sanyas. He was wondering who should give me sanyas. I was startled to hear this. I said, “Maharajshri, my faith, my sentiments, my surrender is all at your feet. I cannot even think of another place. Please grace me by not showing me another home. I am happy at your feet.”

Maharajshri said, “You are making the same mistake. You are not at all willing to give up your prejudice. The one who sticks to his prejudice is not even a sadhak. Prejudice means that memories are too deep in the mind. A person cannot get out of those memories even if he wishes to. You are speaking under the influence of your feelings and intellect. You are trying to undermine the Guru’s wish by giving unnecessary arguments.”

I became silent. Truly, my respect for the Guru’s wish had disappeared. Yet, timidly, I asked a question. “I have heard that the voice of the inner Guru is of greater importance then the external Guru.”

Maharajshri said, “Definitely. But only if it is the voice of the inner Guru. Often what is believed to be the voice of the inner Guru comes from the impurities, feelings and prejudices of the sadhak. Do not talk about the inner Guru now. That state is too distant. I have thought that you should take sanyas diksha from my Guru brother, Swami Narayan Tirth of Kashi [Varanasi].”
I was very familiar with Swami Narayan Tirth Maharaj. I had been in his service for two or
three months in Uttarkashi. His smiling, affectionate face is in front of my eyes even today.
His simplicity and gentleness had captivated my mind. I was satisfied to hear his name. He
also was gracious to me. It was decided that we make our request through a letter. A letter
was sent and his approval came. We decided to go to Kashi to discuss everything and finalize
the arrangements.

Our plan was to go to Jagannathpuri, Calcutta, Gaya, Vaidyanath and Kashi. After making
the arrangements there we were to proceed to Rishikesh. The program was such that I would
be away from Dewas for quite a long time. Maharajshri and I went to Bhopal, Sagar,
Jabalpur, Bilaspur and Raipur. One day we went to see the steel plant in Bhopal. A couple
from Raipur joined us, and then we went to Jagannathpuri. On the way, during our railway
journey, Maharajshri talked about pilgrimage and said that it was a good sadhana for people
with an unstable mind. “If one must wander, it is better to wander for God. During the
pilgrimage one must face many hardships, which develops the habit of endurance. At times
you have to patiently tolerate insults, as well. This is a form of austerity. If rules of the
scriptures such as truth, forgiveness, control over the senses, compassion, honesty, and so
forth, are followed during the pilgrimage then they may become a part of one's nature
during regular life.”

Question: “What is the need for a pilgrimage if these virtues can be practiced in regular life?”

Answer: “There is no need. But if the virtues are not natural then it is very hard to develop
them in the routine activities of life. This is why scriptures recommend a pilgrimage, so that
people can go away for some time, develop the habit of enduring hardships, and take vows
of virtue and practice them.

“Right now we, too, are pilgrims, but remember that just by immersing ourselves in the
river one does not become holy. Such a bath is merely an external one. You take such a bath
every day. The mind should be pure while taking a bath at a holy place. Under the pretext of
a pilgrimage sadhaks have an opportunity to practice a few things. Today we do not see any
effect of pilgrimage on many people because they do not follow the rules given in scriptures.
If a bath is important then the aquatic creatures should be the first ones to be blessed,
those who are born and die in the water and spend every moment of their life bathing in this
water. Attachment to pleasures is called excreta and detachment from them is called
cleanliness.

“If there are impurities in the mind they are not cleansed by mere baths in holy places. If a
pot is filled with poison and it is immersed in holy water several times, the poison inside will
not be washed away. Yes, if the pot is opened before it is submerged in the water then the
water will wash away the poison. Following the rules is like opening the pot. If the feelings
in the mind are not pure when you go to a pilgrimage site then all the donations you give,
the fire ceremony you perform, and the prayer you recite are all wasted. The visit to holy
places is a pretext for filling the mind with sacred feelings, and these spiritual feelings are
what purify the mind. In reality, the feeling is the holy entity.

“A person who has control over his senses, harbors truth, contentment, compassion and
dharma in his heart, and is without attachment, hatred, anger or sins, and is always
Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

engrossed in serving God – his master, the country where he lives, becomes his holy sanctuary or place of pilgrimage. The greatest is manas-tirtha, the pilgrimage of the mind. If the mind is filled with the water of knowledge, love and devotion, bathing in these will wash away the impurities of the mind. A pilgrimage provides the opportunity to look within our own mind."

Question: “Very often the main goal of a pilgrimage is the sight of a deity such as Badrinarayan, the temple of Jagannatha, Rameshwaram or Somnath, or a place devoted to Bhagawati, Ganesh or Dattatreya, but you are talking simply about a holy bath?”

Answer: “Tirtha means holy waters. By drinking this water, by taking a bath in this water or by seeing it, the mind is cleansed and purified.

To please the eyes people build temples of deities. These also have elements of a tirtha. To gratify the ears people have developed spiritual singing, discourses, bells, and so forth. All these are like tirthas. They all can be a source of purification. But only that person whose mind is devoted may attain this purity. True tirthas, deities, discourses, bells, and so forth, are within.”

We arrived at Jagannathpuri. A gentleman had made arrangements for our lodgings very close to Govardhan Math, which was established by Adi Shankaracharya. The following day we went to Swargadwara and bathed in the ocean, then went to the temple of Jagannatha for darshan. The temple must have been about a mile and a half from the sea. Beggars were sitting on both sides of the road. I had never before seen so many beggars in one place. The road was so crowded that it was hard to walk. The temple was swarming with pandas [pilgrimage guides].

Maharajshri spoke about the temple of Jagannatha. “Once upon a time King Indradyuma ruled over the land of Malwa. He heard that in Utkal Pradesh there was a statue of Neel Madhava [Krishna] that was worshipped even by heavenly beings. He began to search for the place and eventually found it. Before he could go there heavenly beings took the statue to heaven. Then the King heard a voice from the sky telling him, and also felt in his heart, that he would see the same God in wooden form.

“King Indradyuma started to live near Nilanchala Mountain, where the statue of Neel Madhava had been installed. He liked the place very much. One day he saw that a huge piece of wood had been washed up on the shore of the ocean. He decided to have it carved into a wooden statue. A wood carver agreed to do the work, but he demanded that, until he had finished the statue and informed him of its completion, no one could open his door or enter his house. The wood carver took the wood and closed himself up in the building. After a few days there was no news about the craftsman, so the queen became worried. She went to the king and said insistently, ‘Who knows whether the craftsman is okay or not? How can anyone survive for so long without food and water?’

“At the King’s order the door was broken. They went in and saw that there were unfinished statues of Lord Jagannath, Balrama and Subhadra. The craftsman was nowhere to be seen.

“This is the popular story about the history of the temple, but I see messages for the world in those incomplete statues.
Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

(1) First of all, a sadhak runs out of patience. He worries about so many different things. He
is in a hurry to see God, and the result is an incomplete vision.

(2) All the idols in all other temples may be very beautiful, but they are incomplete because
no artist can ever depict the real form and qualities of God in a statue. All the instruments
in the world are short-lived. How can they give form to the image of the eternal God?
However high one may fly with their mind and intellect they cannot reach God. Yes, a statue
can certainly be the basis for efforts to find God. That basis can be anything — an image,
book, statue, mountain, river, moon, sun."

After seeing and worshipping we went back to our room. Maharajshri stayed in Puri for
fifteen days. It was our daily routine to take a bath in the sea and visit Jagannatha. Once we
visited Govardhan Math [monastery] also. Swami Niranjana Tirth Dev Maharaj was the
Shankaracharya there in those days. Swami Shankar Purushottam Tirth Maharaj had taken
sanyas diksha there from Shankaracharya Swami Bharati Krishna Tirth Maharaj.
Shankaracharya gave Maharajshri a gift of a compilation of lectures given by Swami Bharati
Krishna Tirth Maharaj in the United States.

A couple of Sun temples have been built in India recently. However during those times I was
not aware of any other Sun temple; possibly the only one was situated at about fifty-five
miles from Jagannathpuri, the famous temple of Konark. We went to Konark by car. The
temple there is surrounded by four walls and is built on slightly lower ground. There is a
huge temple of the Sun god in the center, shaped like a chariot. The chariot has wheels and
there are places for the horses and the charioteer. The temple had been quite high in the
past but its pinnacle had broken and fallen. The original temple does not exist anymore;
only portions of the front canopy are still standing.

When we went there the temple was filled with stones; the doors were locked to protect the
statues carved into the walls. When I went a second time, after Maharajshri attained
oneness with God, the stones were being removed. The temple has deteriorated badly, but
what remains is impressive.

One thing I could not understand was why the temple was so full of indecent statues, as if
indecency were merely dancing. I saw a few similar statues in other temples as well. What is
the use of this in a temple? This is seen not only in Orissa, but all over India, especially in
the ancient temples of the East. I have not been to Nepal, but I have heard this is true
there, as well. I asked Maharajshri about this in order to hear his thoughts on the subject.

Answer: “In different ages, ideologies and the ways of doing sadhana change. It is said that
this was done for protection from unexpected natural calamities, but I do not understand
how it is related to natural calamities. It appears that when Tantra sadhana [the practice of
Tantra] was devalued, and practices of vaam-marg [a school of thought in Tantra that
professes the consumption of liquor, meat and other things] were popular, such temples
were built, and such statues were built in the existing temples. In its original form vaam-
marg was spiritual, but with the passage of time it became perverse. The indecent statues in
the temple can also mean that spirituality is surrounded with attractions, desires and hopes,
but that one has to cross those to reach God. When a devotee goes into the temple, many
different attractions and vasanas are scattered around, but he must focus on the central
statue of worship. I have heard that in some places indecent statues exist all the way up to the innermost sanctuary of the temple. Even here indecent statues are all the way up to the pinnacle of the temple. This implies that worldly desires chase a devotee over a long way and he must ignore them.”

From Konark our car left for Saakshi Gopal temple. After reaching the temple and seeing the deity Maharajshri said, “I will not go into the details of the folklore about this temple. I will only say that a devotee needed a witness and there was no witness around. At that time Gopal [Lord Krishna] manifested and became the witness for the devotee. Since then he has been worshipped here as Saakshi [witness] Gopal.

“When I look at this from a spiritual perspective, ‘Go’ means the senses. The Shakti makes the senses active. It makes one talk, walk, stay and leave. It makes the mind think good and bad thoughts, and it is also the witness of all good and bad actions. This Shakti is Saakshi Gopal. The Gopal who gives Shakti and Saakshi [witness] is worshipped here through the statue. This Shakti deserves respect, and is worthy of worship and attainment. This is why it is named Saakshi Gopal.”

We returned to Jagannathpuri. It is a great place for a pilgrimage but for us it was of the highest importance because the founder of our tradition of Shaktipat, Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj, did his sadhana here. On the shore of Chandan Talab [lake] he lived in a small cottage. He lived a quiet peaceful life. He did not meet anyone, or go anywhere. He continuously did his sadhana. He laid the foundation of this lineage by giving Shaktipat initiation to Swami Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj. One day we went to see Chandan Talab.

There had been great change in the landscape of Chandan Talab since the time of Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj. At that time there was a jungle all around with huts of renunciate sadhus [ascetics]. Maharajshri began to walk around the area where Gangadhar Tirth Maharajji’s cottage used to be. Maharajshri was walking in front with his cane, and we were behind him. He went along one small street, and then a second, and then a third. His face changed as soon as he entered the third street. He walked a little distance and stopped. He stood there for a little while and then said, “Gangadhar Tirth Maharajji’s cottage was right here.”

There was a wood and charcoal vendor’s stall there. Maharajshri kept on saying, “It was here. It was right here. Spiritual rays of his sadhana are still vibrating here. The poor people selling wood and coal here do not know that they are doing their business in such a sacred place.”

We returned to our lodgings. We had come to know some local people by now. Some of them had started to come regularly in the evening. The couple from Raipur that had accompanied us left after a week. Only Maharajshri and I remained. The schedule continued as before. First, a morning bath in the sea, after that the darshan of Jagannatha. We went out in the evening, after which we hosted visitors. Dinner came from the temple Prasad (food offered to God in the temple).

Maharajshri addressed the visitors. “The first man in our lineage, Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj, used to live in this city, seventy or eighty years ago, on the shore of the Chandan Talab.”
Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

After inquiring about directions and understanding exactly where the location was, he said, “I have a feeling that his cottage used to be where a stall of wood and coal is now located. Can any of you go and check the old records in the municipal office to find out what was there?”

The next day a gentleman said, “Maharajshri, there used to be a cottage of a Bramhachari named Karali.”

Maharajshri jumped up. “Okay, okay. That’s it! The cottage was in the name of Bramhachari Karali. He was Swamiji’s bramhachari, and he gave it to Swamiji to live in while he went and lived at a dharmashala [a free lodging place for pilgrims]. The bramhachari used to bring alms for Swamiji Maharaj.”

Now Maharajshri began to wonder if, somehow, that place could be made available. Then a holy place could be established and an ascetic could reside there. Maharajshri talked to a few people, but no one was ready. I requested, “If you instruct me, I would be happy to stay here.”

Maharajshri said, “First we will have to try to acquire the place through local people. This is not a task for you.” Consequently this idea of Maharajshri ended without any result.

Maharajshri and I went to Calcutta from Jagannathpuri. An arrangement was made to stay with a Marwari family. Their house was very big, and many families were living in it. They lived on the third floor and we were given a room on the ground floor. The street was very filthy. The sewer was blocked and, as a result, it was stinking everywhere. We stayed there for three days. Our idea of Hell became a reality. We visited Dakshineshwar, Belur Math, Kali temple, and the botanical garden.

Dakshineshwar — the world famous Ramkrishna Paramhansa used to live here once upon a time. Queen Rasmani built this place on the banks of the Ganges River. Along the river there are temples of eleven Shivalingas. Right in the middle of them is a temple of Kali Mata. On one side of it is the room in which Paramhansa used to live. There is a verandah near the Ganges. Often Ramkrishna Paramhansa used to sit on a khatiya [a wooden bed frame woven with jute], look at the Ganges and meet his devotees. In his room, his bed and other memorabilia are preserved. Samadhis [tombs] of his wife, Sharda Devi, and Queen Rasmani are outside the temple. The banyan tree under which he used to meditate is still there.

Maharajshri said, “Spiritual rays attract seekers for a long time to the place where a highly-evolved spiritual being once lived. The residence of Paramhansa has made this place a holy place. While sitting here he spread the light of spirituality with which the world is gleaming today. We believe that Ramkrishna Paramhansa was a Shaktipat Acharya [master]. The experience he gave to Vivekananda and his other disciples was nothing other than Shaktipat. He gave an experiential message of generosity and clemency. He was devotion, jnana [knowledge] and yoga personified.”

The following day we went to see Belur Math, established by Vivekananda on the banks of the Ganges. It is a majestic temple, with the shrines of Ramkrishna Paramhansa and Vivekananda. This is the main center of the Ramkrishna mission.
Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

I asked what the difference was between Ramkrishna Paramhansa and Vivekananda. Maharajshri said, “It is not appropriate to compare them. Both Guru and disciple were great. Vivekananda has said, ‘while I stood on the shore of the ocean counting the waves, my Gurudev Paramhansa was diving deep in the ocean’”

Next we went to see the botanical garden, which has a collection of all kinds of trees and plants. That was not our area of interest. Our interest was limited to seeing one particular banyan tree. That one tree was like a jungle in itself. At that time it had more than 1,350 trunks. Its roots, referred to as “the beard of the banyan tree,” were hanging from its branches. They would go into the ground and take the form of a new tree. All the trees are connected with each other. I do not know how many trunks the tree has now. We went to the Kali Mata temple afterwards.

From Calcutta we went to Gaya. On the way we crossed a rail bridge many miles long named Deri Aan Sone. After reaching Gaya we stayed at a dharmashala [guest house] belonging to Bharat Sevak Samaj. Maharajshri brought me here because he wanted me to do pindadana [the tradition of making offerings to departed ancestors] to all my ancestors. The master of the dharmashala contacted a Brahmin priest and made all the arrangements. It was a day-long event. I arranged for a bath, bed and lunch for Maharajshri because he would be alone all day. I then went with the Brahmin and returned in the evening.

The next day we went to see Bodh Gaya. It was about seven miles from Gaya. It is a very large temple of Buddha. In the back of the building there is the Bodhi tree with a platform around its trunk. While meditating, sitting on that platform, Lord Buddha achieved enlightenment. How could the Bodhi tree still be there? A new tree must have been planted in its place.

Many revolving drums were there in the temple. People were turning them. I expressed my curiosity about their purpose. Maharajshri explained, “This is their rosary. They keep turning it and repeating and chanting their mantra. Perhaps they believe that by doing mantra while turning the drum they will free themselves from the ever-turning wheel of reincarnation. Everyone has his or her own belief about the tradition of sadhana. We must respect all traditions.”

We went to Vaidyanath from Gaya. On the way Maharajshri said, “Vaidyanath temples are in three places. All of them claim to be Jyotirlingas: Vaidyanath in Bihar, Parali Vaidyanath in Maharashtra, and Vaidyanath in Kangada, Himachal. This is the intellectual exercise of the temple priests and spiritual teachers. Devotees care only about Lord Shankar.”

We wanted now to go to Kashi [Varanasi], where the head of the Siddha Yoga Ashram, Swami Narayan Tirth Maharaj, lived. This was my first visit to Kashi. Now I do not remember how long we stayed there, but it must have been about ten days. Of the places we traveled during the pilgrimage Maharajshri was happiest here. Bathing in the holy river Ganga and a visit to Kashi Vishwanath became a daily routine.

With the passage of time, the process of destruction and reconstruction of temples goes on. It is said that Shankaracharya himself reestablished this temple after it was destroyed. It was destroyed again, and Maharani Ahalyabai of Indore had it reconstructed. This is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas. Kashi is a city of temples. Among them, Dundiraj Ganesh,
Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

Annapurna, Kala Bhairava, and Bindu Madhav are the main temples. The Ganges is always there.

Maharajshri said that it is believed that Kashi could never be destroyed because it rests on the trident of Lord Shiva. Another belief system regards Kashi as a special, inner spiritual state. The mind is fickle. Modifications of the mind keep changing, hopes and feelings change, but the Kashi-state remains the same all the time. The tradition that one attains liberation if one dies in Kashi means, if someone dies in this particular Kashi-state, he does not take another birth. Kashi has always been the center of India’s spiritual convictions and learning. There are hundreds of temples, ashrams and religious schools in Kashi. An average resident of Kashi is the best of pundits in other places. We made our arrangements with Swami Narayan Tirth Maharaj. Swamiji agreed to come to Rishikesh in April and to give me sanyas diksha in May. With Maharajshri I went to Allahabad, where the three rivers come together. It is a great tirth and every twelve years the Kumbha Mela (Kumbha Fair) takes place here. Millions of people go to the Kumbha Mela. During this time the city blooms with satsang [spiritual discourses]. The ancient culture of India develops, is controlled and grows through its mela (fairs). In this mela, religious meetings are held, satsang and holy baths take place, religious organizations meet, and decisions taken here reach millions of devotees in every corner of India. Kumbha Mela is the largest of fairs. A foreigner who saw so many people at the Kumbha Mela once asked, “Who sent invitations to all these people?”

We arrived in Rishikesh. The Ganges is in Kashi and Allahabad, but Maharajshri was not as happy seeing the Ganges there as he was to see her in Rishikesh. I do not know what relationship he perceived between the Ganges and Rishikesh. This time we stayed in a vacant building of a devotee at Triveni Ghat. There were two rooms on the ground floor and two rooms on the second floor. We stayed for six months in this building.

Presented here with kind permission from Swami Shivom Tirth Ashram, Inc.

Thanks to Mrs. Alison Kamat for transcribing the excerpts.

“Churning of the Heart” trilogy by P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj is available from:
Devatma Shakti Society
92-93, Navali Gav
Post Dahisar, via Mumbra, Thane 400612, India

Tel. No.: (+91) 22-65148183
The Gospel of His Holiness P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj - Excerpts

These edited excerpts are from the book, The Gospel of His Holiness P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj. P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj (hereafter referred to as Swamiji) was the Siddha Guru who initiated P. P. Shri Gulawani Maharaj and P. P. Shri Narayan Kaka Dhekane Maharaj into Maha/Siddha Yoga. The following excerpts describe how Swami Chinmayanand Saraswati (Swamiji) became P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj and how he convinced his Guru, P. P. Shri Purushottam Tirth Swami Maharaj, to not have him be designated as his successor for running the Ashram in Varanasi. One of the excerpts also describes the rare meeting of three generations of Maha Yoga Spiritual Masters; the Grand Guru P. P. Shri Shankar Purushottam Tirth Maharaj, his disciple, P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj (Swamiji), and his disciple, P. P. Shri Gulawani Maharaj.

Swami Chinmayanand becomes Swami Loknath Tirth

On the twelfth day of Pausha (tenth month of Hindu calendar) on Sunday, January 30th, 1927, Swami Chinmayanand became a Danda-dhari (staff carrying) Sanyasi (renunciate) and was renamed as ‘Loknath Tirth’. The relevant religious rites were performed by his own guru, P. P. Shri Shankar Purushottam Tirth Swami Maharaj, at Gaya, a holy place in the state of Bihar in eastern India. Upon completion of the religious rites, the spiritual master P. P. Shri Shankar Purushottam Tirth Swami Maharaj continued his stay at Gaya for some more time, while the newly minted Danda-dhari Sanyasi, P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj, proceeded to Varanasi (also known as the holy city of Benares) where he spent the Chaturmas, a holy period of four months of penance, austerities, fasting and other religious observances.

-----------------------------

Shaktipat Deeksha (initiation), by an able Spiritual Master, provides an aspirant with such a powerful spiritual means (Sadhan), that it takes care of the spiritual welfare of the disciple continually, all throughout the days and nights of his entire life following initiation. Swamiji (P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj) used to say that, the Sadhan does not stop even after death of the physical body of the disciple, but continues until the subtle body (Sukshma Deha) of the disciple gets purified and totally vanishes.
Swamiji’s decision on being asked to be in charge of Siddhayogashram

P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj (Swamiji) was spending almost all of his time in Spiritual Sadhan enjoying ‘Self-Bliss’! He generally avoided people coming close to him. As a renunciate of the highest order, he had cast off all of his desires and sensual pleasures. As a ‘Paramahansa’ he always clung to the Supreme Reality or ‘Brahman’, rejecting the entire passing show presented by the world. Such pure souls seeing the unique non-dual Brahman everywhere are very rare and therefore worshiped by all concerned. These are the truly liberated souls enjoying ‘Self-Bliss’ forever.

In modern times, the first center propagating ‘Shaktipat Yoga’ was established at Madaripur, Bengal by H. H. Shri Narayandeo Tirth Swami Maharaj, who named it as Dnyan Sadhan Math’ in the year 1913. Later in 1932 a second such center was established by his direct disciple P. P. Shri Shankar Purushottam Tirth Swami Maharaj at ‘Shankar Math’ in the city of Uttarkashi.

This center at Uttarkashi was a little far away and difficult to be reached by a commoner. As P. P. Shri Shankar Purushottam Tirth Swami Maharaj was more or less staying regularly at Varanasi and the number of disciples there was rapidly increasing, many of them felt that an Ashram or a center for the propagation of the ‘Shaktipat Yoga’ be established at Varanasi too. When P. P. Shri Shankar Purushottam Tirth Swami Maharaj went to pay his respects to his Gurudev H. H. Shri Narayandeo Tirth Swami Maharaj at Madaripur in 1934, he conveyed the wishes of his disciples to his Gurudev. H.H. Shri Narayandeo Tirth Swami Maharaj immediately acceded to the request and gave his blessings. As a result of these blessings and efforts by the disciples, an Ashram was built at Chhoti Gaibi in Varanasi in less than a year's time.

This Ashram is very near to the temple of Goddess Kamar Devi in Chhoti Gaibi. A single storied building was built for the Ashram. On an auspicious day, all the necessary religious rituals were performed and after worship of the Mother Kali, the inaugural ceremony of the Ashram was completed. Hundreds of disciples participated, 'Prasad’ food was distributed in abundance, and a number of Sanyasis were also felicitated for their work. This Ashram was named as 'Siddhayogashram'. The famous treatise ‘Yogawani’ was completed by P. P. Shri Shankar Purushottam Tirth Swami Maharaj at this Ashram, from where thousands of aspirants procured its copies to get themselves informed on the 'Shaktipat Yoga-Rahasya' (secret knowledge of Shaktipat Yoga).

In India, this ‘Shaktipat Yoga’ tradition has been around since times immemorial. Sometimes it found expression very significantly and sometimes it became dormant; depending upon its number of followers in a given time period as well as the then prevailing socio-religious conditions. Yet, ‘Shaktipat Yoga’ being a very live and powerful tradition, it could not become extinct. This tradition has come to us through its Masters transmitting their spiritual energy to their disciples and these disciples in turn kindling the spiritual fire, in the next
The generation of disciples after having acquired proficiency to become Spiritual Masters themselves. And this tradition is sure to continue all throughout the life of this planet as it provides the easiest, cheapest and an excellent spiritual pathway for the humanity at large to attain perfection through Self-Realization. It is the easiest path for attaining Self-Realization, since after initiation the disciple has not to do anything, he has to perform only his 'Spiritual Sittings' regularly for one to two hours every day and witness various 'Kriyas' (involuntary activities) happening to him, through the power of his own awakened Kundalini Shakti. It is the cheapest method, as it involves only the faith of the disciple and grace of his Master and does not require any money. This effortless pathway excels all other effort-based spiritual paths, because the effort-based paths usually take quite a long period of strenuous effort and time on part of the aspirant to have their Kundalini Shakti awakened, whereas in 'Shaktipat Yoga' the Kundalini Shakti is readily awakened instantly simply by the dint of positive will power implanted in the aspirant by his Spiritual Master during the initiation. The awakened Serpent Power in the disciple cleanses and clears all the latencies (imprints and seeds of past actions) in him making him more and more pure and holy, until he attains complete 'Self-Realization' and the resultant 'Perfection, Peace and Bliss.'

Thus, with more and more aspirants becoming disciples of the great Spiritual Masters of 'Shaktipat Yoga' the 'Siddhayoga Ashram' at Chhoti Gaibi flourished and was converted into a two-storied building, along with a small beautiful temple of Adi Shankaracharya, a well-equipped library etc. The Ashram used to be always full of devotees. Since before the establishment of this Siddhayoga Ashram, P. P. Shri Shankar Purushottam Tirth Swami Maharaj had its developmental plans in his mind. He always sincerely thought that his first disciple Swami Shri Loknath Tirth should take charge of this Ashram after him. He had broached this topic with his disciple but Swami Shri Loknath Tirth had so far always declined the offer very humbly, as he never intended to get tied up with any worldly matter whatsoever. He had always kept himself away from popularity and money matters as well. No woman could ever attract, even his attention. He was totally bereft of all the worldly attractions.

P. P. Swami Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj (Swamiji) was fully aware of his Guru’s intention. He had been pondering deeply about his Guru's wishes. Yet, he had read in scriptures that holding a place or position of honour creates obstacles even for a great Yogi, bringing him down from his divine status. Instead, if a Yogi gets contempt or disrespect from society, it is easier for him to maintain his Perfection. So a Sanyasi or a great soul, while living in society, well within the limits laid down by the scriptures, should always attempt to stay aloof from it. Swamiji had also realized that desires bind a man, whereas a totally desire-less man
stands emancipated. On a more subtle level he understood that to say 'Yes' to the offer made by his Guru was in itself a desire and negating it was also another desire. He was caught in a dilemma and he hoped he did not have to continue with the dilemma for too long.

Swamiji tried to imagine the entire picture of running the Ashram efficiently. He realized that as the person in charge he would have to deal with the problems that arose which would have to be resolved while paying adequate attention to details. He felt that his ego might get tied up if he acceded to his Guru’s wishes. Meanwhile, due to the mission he was charged with by the Supreme Mother Kali to “Go South” he felt a commitment to his disciples in Maharashtra and the southern part of India. So, he thought that being in charge of the Ashram at Chhoti Gaibi would create problems and headaches for many. Based on this thinking, the spirit of total renunciation in him became firmer and he decided to decline the offer. Yet, the main problem he faced was how to say 'No' to his Guru’s commands and wishes.

One day Swamiji and his Guru were chatting at ‘Siddhayogashram’ (in Chhoti Gaibi, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh) and the topic of who should take over charge from P. P. Shri Shankar Purushottam Tirth Swami Maharaj came up for discussion. The Master said, “Then, you must be ready to accept the responsibility”.

Swamiji replied, “Gurudev, it would not be proper on my part to negate your offer, rather it would be a crime on my part. However, if your Holiness strongly feels so and orders me to take the charge of the Ashram, I will definitely accept the same. I will never say no. Yet, I humbly request you to kindly give sympathetic considerations to my views in the matter and release me from the proposed responsibilities in case your kind self finds my views proper and agreeable. You are my Guruji and therefore I cannot afford leave you nor your kind self may afford to leave me. You may kindly give a second thought to the matter keeping in view my attitude and my say”.

Gurudev, P. P. Shri Shankar Purushottam Tirth Swami Maharaj, became gravely serious over the reply from Swamiji and said, “Okay, then tell me what you want to convey.”

Swamiji too became more serious and answered in a decisive tone, “Gurudev, from the abundant intuition and knowledge I have gained by your kind grace, I can say that, I am going to leave this body earlier than you. Also, it would be most unbecoming on my part to assume your position while you are alive. Kindly forgive me for my frankness.”
Gurudev had not anticipated such a reply from his disciple, yet he was highly pleased with
his clear, selfless and straightforward reply and decided to leave the things to the wishes of
Goddess Mother Kali.

‘Shri Gulawani is our Grand-Disciple’- P. P. Shri Shankar
Purushottam Tirth Swami Maharaj

Though Shri Gulawani Maharaj was an active follower and promoter of ‘Shaktipat Yoga’
during the first twenty-two years following his initiation, he had never met his Grand Guru
(the Guru of his Guru), P. P. Shri Shankar Purushottam Tirth Swami Maharaj. Some years
earlier, he had expressed his desire to Swamiji that he would like to meet his Grand Guru.
But Swamiji had then replied, “We shall see in due course.”

Shri Gulawani Maharaj was gladly serving Swamiji every day while on a visit to Varanasi in
1944. Once Swamiji said, “During this visit of yours to Varanasi, I would take you to my
Spiritual Master, P. P. Shri Shankar Purushottam Tirth Swami Maharaj. I will let you know
when to go to meet him.” Shri Gulawani Maharaj felt very happy that, without a reminder,
Swamiji was going to fulfil his long-cherished desire.

Shri Gulawani Maharaj had read the book ‘Yogawani’ written by P. P. Shri Shankar
Purushottam Tirth Swami Maharaj and he had advised aspirants coming to him to read that
book before they came to him for initiation. If they wanted to receive Shaktipat Deeksha
and were willing to follow certain restrictions on behaviour as specified in the book; only
then they were initiated by him. Therefore, most of the aspirants who had come to P. P.
Shri Gulawani Maharaj for initiation, had procured a copy of the said book from
‘Siddhayogashram, Chhoti Gaibi, Varanasi’ by post. Thus, the demand for ‘Yogawani’ was
coming increasingly from Maharashtra and this raised curiosity in the mind of the Grand
Guru, about the reasons behind it. He came to know that a disciple of his own disciple P. P.
Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj was systematically and methodically promoting ‘Shaktipat
Yoga’ among aspirants from Maharashtra, in particular. Therefore, he felt attracted towards
P. P. Shri Gulawani Maharaj. Even during P. P. Gulawani Maharaj’s 1944 visit to Varanasi,
every day the Ashram would get requests from a few aspirants to purchase the book
‘Yogawani’.

One day, when an aspirant came to purchase the book the Grand Guru asked him who had
told him to purchase the book ‘Yogawani’. The person replied that it was P. P. Shri Gulawani
Maharaj from Pune. On further enquiry the Grand Guru, P. P. Shri Shankar Purushottam Tirth
Swami Maharaj came to know that Shri Gulawani, his grand disciple was in Varanasi during
those days. He immediately sent a word with another of his disciples that, “Tell Loknath
that I want to see his disciple Shri Gulawaniji and therefore he should come to meet me at
this Ashram along with his disciple.”
When the above message was received, Swamiji and Shri Gulawani Maharaj were sitting together. Swamiji sent a return message with the messenger, "We, both of us, will come to meet Swami Maharaj this afternoon itself." Then Swamiji said to P. P. Shri Gulawani Maharaj, "It is always best to meet your Spiritual Master, only when he remembers you of his own accord and desires to meet you. Because, on such an occasion the Master feels highly pleased, the moment he sees his disciple. Waman (P. P. Shri Gulawani Maharaj), I had stopped you from meeting my Guru so far, as I was awaiting this opportunity. Now, this afternoon we are going to meet him. Look Waman! We are going to meet my Master and therefore make arrangements to offer him the choicest fruits, flowers and sweets during 'Guru-Puja' (Guru Worship).

P. P. Shri Gulawani Maharaj was indeed very joyful that day as he was going to meet the Swamiji’s Guru. With great devotion and enthusiasm he went to the market near the famous Shri Kashivishveshwara temple to purchase the required material. He purchased one beautiful and long garland of fresh fragrant flowers, one coconut, a variety of fruits and got them packed well in a basket decorated with coloured papers. He also purchased some sweets and ‘Pedhas’ (small sweet balls prepared using fresh cottage cheese and sugar) in more than adequate quantity and got them packed in a nice clean colourful box. He also purchased an excellent perfume, ‘Asthagandha’, fragrant incense sticks and a high quality shawl. He wanted to make sure he purchased the best of the materials needed for conducting “Guru-Puja’. When he felt happy about all the purchases made, he was about to return. And suddenly a thought crossed his mind that he had not purchased anything for worship of his own Guru, Swamiji. Therefore, he went back to the market to purchase one more beautiful garland of flowers, one more coconut, some more fruits and sweets etc., got these also well packed and returned to see Swamiji.

Swamiji felt pleased when he saw the material brought by P. P. Shri Gulawani Maharaj for his Grand Guru's Puja. P. P. Shri Gulawani Maharaj also explained the way he was going to perform the 'Puja' (worship) of his Grand Spiritual Master. Swamiji remarked, "Today my Master's Puja is to be performed with great honor and grandeur. You are doing wonderfully well, Waman." It was lunchtime by then, so they finished with their lunch, and took a little rest. P. P. Shri Gulawani Maharaj then hired a rickshaw to go to 'Chhoti Gaibi'. Before leaving, he requested Swamiji to sit on his seat in the room, for just some time. He performed Swamiji's Puja in the first instance by applying 'Tilak’ (vermilion applied using the ring finger of the right hand) to his forehead, garlanded him, and offered in reverence, all the fruits, sweets, coconut, Pedhas brought separately for the purpose and some money in the form of ‘Dakshina’ to Swamiji. He prostrated before Swamiji. Thus, Shri Gulawani Maharaj completed the Puja of his own Master first. Now Swamiji removed the garland etc. from his neck, took his Staff (of an ascetic) in his hand and left the room, for going to ‘Chhoti-Gaibi’ by rickshaw.

They reached the ‘Siddhayogashram’ at Chhoti-Gaibi in Varanasi. Swamiji was walking ahead and P. P. Shri Gulawani Maharaj was following him with the Puja material in his hand.
Swamiji first prostrated before his Spiritual Master, touching the Lotus feet of the Master. P. P. Shri Gulawani Maharaj was witnessing such a rare scene for the first time in his life. He now came forward, kept the Puja material aside and he too prostrated on the lotus feet of P. P. Shri Shankar Purushottam Tirth Swami Maharaj, his grand Guru, for the first time. When he saw his Grand Master with large lotus eyes, fair complexion, large forehead and good build, seated on a tiger-skin, spread over a spacious and slightly elevated platform with silk pillows on sides he felt great joy. He took the Puja-material and started his worship (Puja).

Saying the holy name of the Lord 'Shri Gurudev Datta', he applied 'Ashtagandha' to the forehead of his grand Guru Shri Shankar Purushottam Tirth Swami Maharaj, garlanded him, applied the perfumes to his body and offered all the fruits and sweets brought by him, after opening the baskets and boxes. He lit the scented sticks (agarbattis) and the holy and spiritual climate in the Ashram became mildly and sweetly fragrant. Then he offered a coconut and some money (Guru-Dakshina) to the great Grand Guru, prostrated before him once again and prayed "Oh Shri Gurudev! Kindly continue to bestow your kind grace on me."

Gurudev P. P. Shri Shankar Purushottam Tirth Swami Maharaj was highly pleased with the holy feelings behind the methodical Puja offered by Shri Gulawani Maharaj. He was highly impressed by the calm and polite nature, piety and neatness in his grand-disciple. Shri Gurudev expressed his warmth feelings and affection in a single sentence. He said, “Today my Grand-Disciple has come. Lord Narayana shall bless him with spiritual prosperity and Kalyana (well-being)."

Out of the offerings made by P. P. Shri Gulawani Maharaj, the Grand Guru took the coconut, some fruits and sweets and handed them over to him as ‘Prasad' (fruits or food items handed over by a deity or Guru along with his grace). He made P. P. Shri Gulawani Maharaj sit near him. They talked freely for quite some time. Everyone felt very happy. After some time, P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj said, “Now, we may leave.” And once again prostrating before the Grand-Guru, both of them left the room.

Thus was the grand meeting of three generations of Great Spiritual Masters of the 'Shaktipat Maha Yoga' tradition.
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks

**Question:** I am very much interested in Maha Yoga and I have received Shaktipat Deeksha as well. I was wondering how astrology affects Sadhaks in their desire to attain Self-Realization (Moksha). Is it possible for a Sadhak to attain Self-Realization if he is not destined to do so in his astrological charts?

**Answer:** The interpretation of astrological charts is based on planetary aspects, planetary positions, the role of the ascendant sign, etc., etc., etc. The various positions and planetary aspects are interpreted in many different ways, with often contradictory assessments of a person’s tendencies and likely future events. This is why the mechanical interpretation of astrological charts by using computer programs always results in a mish-mash of contradictory predictions.

Having said that, there are some individuals, mostly Siddhas or those who have certain Siddhis, who can intuitively interpret astrological charts to give guidance to people who consult with them. They rely on planetary positions, etc. only to leverage their Siddhis to guide people. They will never tell you anything as being inevitable, just tendencies and likely situations based on a person’s Prarabdha (destiny), which is based on the accumulation of all past Karma from a person’s current and past lives. However, some people conclude from this that it is Prarabdha alone that determines what will happen in a person’s life. Nothing is further from the truth.

P. P. Kaka Maharaj was very clear that Prarabdha only provides the initial conditions that drive our tendencies and likely outcomes that could arise from those tendencies. But our Prayatna (effort) ultimately determines what actually happens. We all have agency in what we do at every point in time, i.e. we are not automatons who are following highly specified programs that make us do what we do. Prarabdha only provides the initial conditions for each of our situations, but as free agents, our actions and our efforts determine what actually happens. So, a person may have a Moksha Karak Yoga (planetary configuration suggesting that the person has a likelihood of attaining Self-Realization) in his astrological chart; however he might also have other planetary configurations that might indicate that he will be highly involved in material issues. What actually happens to the person will eventually depend on the efforts the person makes to enable the Moksha Karak Yoga to work by sitting for Sadhan, or if he just allows himself to be trapped into pursuing material things.

So, please stop worrying about whether or not there is Moksha for you in this life or the next, or never. Just sit for Sadhan on a regular basis, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you and let her take you on the path of Moksha. On the other hand, if you don’t want to sit for Sadhan, quit worrying about whether or not you have Moksha Karak Yoga in your astrological chart and just go ahead and pursue a material life. The fact that you are interested in Maha Yoga and received Maha Yoga Deeksha as well, suggests that your Prarabdha (initial conditions) supports you being on the path to Moksha. It is up to you to stay on that path or get off it. The choice is yours.
Questions:

1. Is it okay for women to sit for Maha Yoga Sadhan during their monthly cycles or should they abstain from Sadhan during those periods?

2. Since more and more people live in cities these days it is very difficult to completely abstain from onion, garlic, etc. We can only try to abstain from such foods to the fullest extent we can. Is it okay for Sadhaks in such situations to receive Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha (initiation)?

Answers:

1. Women are asked not to sit for Maha Yoga Sadhan during their monthly cycles. This is because the upward flow of Prana Shakti during Sadhan can interfere with the downward flow of Pranic energy during menses.

2. A Sadhak who wants to receive Deeksha is asked to abstain from onion, garlic, etc. because consuming them can retard his progress on the Maha Yoga path. By abstaining from such food the Sadhak will be doing himself the favor of avoiding hindrances to his spiritual progress, not for the sake of the Guru. So, he should try to the utmost extent he can for his own sake. Please read the Discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj (and P. P. Prabhune Maharaj) from December 2011 (http://mahayoga.org/library/P.%20Kaka%20Maharaj%20Interview%20December%202011.pdf) for their thoughts on this topic.

Here is the part of that discussion relevant to the rules and restrictions:

Editor: That is a great example of what we had been discussing earlier; keeping the perspective that we are not the doers, but the Almighty Shakti is the real doer. But regardless, we can all agree that Maha Yoga has evolved over the ages. Now, in the next step of its evolution, as we work as instruments of the Almighty to make Maha Yoga become more global and universal, we are beginning to encounter issues that many Sadhaks bring up in the context of living in these modern times. Not just in western countries such as the US and the countries in Europe, but also in Indian cities and towns, Middle Eastern countries, everywhere. And most of these issues are related to the difficulties Sadhaks have in observing the restrictions we impose as conditions for receiving Deeksha.
Gurudev: Yes, I am aware of this. The restrictions by themselves have no inherent value per se. They can be relaxed. The most important thing is the experience of connecting with the Almighty through the practice of Maha Yoga. The restrictions are there only to make the traversing of the Maha Yoga path easier for Sadhaks. That’s all.

Prabhune Maharaj: In a way, by making available the Introductory Approach to Maha Yoga, we have already relaxed the restrictions. Practicing the Introductory Approach does not require a Sadhak to follow any restriction, and yet he is able to experience the blessing of Maha Yoga. In a way, the Introductory Approach can be considered as a “Deeksha in disguise”.

Editor: That is correct, but we constantly hear Sadhaks complaining that they would like to receive Deeksha but are unable to commit to following the restrictions. And often we get questions from Sadhaks, who have received Deeksha and would like to follow the restrictions, but their living situation does not allow them to be strict adherents, and they feel guilty about it.

Prabhune Maharaj: Yes, we have heard of many situations when Sadhaks have great difficulty following the restrictions. P. P. Kaka Maharaj’s advice to them is to try following the restrictions if possible, but if you can’t that is okay. No reason to feel guilty about it. Sadhaks can consider following the restrictions as “desirable” rather than “essential”.

Gurudev: Yes, if Sadhaks follow the restrictions, their progress will likely be accelerated. But if they cannot follow the restrictions then they need not dwell on it as there is no point in their feeling guilty. I agree that the restrictions can be considered as “desirable” rather than “essential”. Those who are able to follow the restrictions should follow them because they will benefit from doing so. The restrictions are not “essential” to Maha Yoga happening; they are “desirable” for progress along this path.

If you feel you will be unable to follow the rules and restrictions or do not want to make a commitment to do so at this time, as P. P. Prabhune Maharaj mentioned above, you can try out the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga as described here: [https://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-introductory-practice.aspx](https://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-introductory-practice.aspx). Sitting for the Introductory Practice does not require a Sadhak to make any commitment to follow the rules and restrictions and often Sadhaks get experiences somewhat similar to Maha Yoga Sadhan.

**Question:** I live in the United States and I would like my kundalini awakened fully. Is it possible for me to receive remote Shaktipat Deeksha?
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

**Answer:** Glad to read that you are interested in receiving Shaktipat Deeksha (initiation). Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha is the highest and easiest path to attain Self Enlightenment. A Maha Yoga Sadhak who has received Shaktipat Deeksha from a Siddha Guru and sits for Maha Yoga Sadhan diligently on a daily basis can expect to experience Self Enlightenment in his current or next life.

P. P. Prakash Prabhune Maharaj is such a Siddha Guru who is capable of awakening the Kundalini Shakti within a Sadhak regardless of where he is located in this world. He represents our lineage (Parampara) which originates from Lord Shiva and which can be directly traced in historical times to the middle of the 19th century to P. P. Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj. Yes, P. P. Prabhune Maharaj can grant you remote Shaktipat Deeksha (initiation) if you would earnestly like to receive it and are willing to make the commitment to follow the rules and restrictions ([https://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-initiation-rules.aspx](https://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-initiation-rules.aspx)) he will suggest you follow.

The next Deeksha Day is on December 25th, 2020 and if you are interested in receiving Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha you can apply for it online at [http://mahayoga.org/](http://mahayoga.org/). You will get a response to your request shortly thereafter. While you wait for Deeksha to happen on Deeksha Day, you are welcome to try out the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga as described here [https://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-initiation-rules.aspx](https://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-initiation-rules.aspx). It will give you a taste of what Maha Yoga is all about.

If you are interested in learning more about Maha Yoga, we would suggest the following reading list:

- The four Discussions with P. P. Kaka Maharaj that can be found in the Article Library at our Maha Yoga webpage ([http://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-library.aspx](http://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-library.aspx)).
- **A Short Description of Maha Yoga** ([http://mahayoga.org/library/Short%20description%20of%20Maha%20Yoga.pdf](http://mahayoga.org/library/Short%20description%20of%20Maha%20Yoga.pdf)),
- **Maha Yoga - the Key to Self-Realization** ([http://mahayoga.org/library/Maha%20Yoga%20the%20Key%20to%20Self-Realization.pdf](http://mahayoga.org/library/Maha%20Yoga%20the%20Key%20to%20Self-Realization.pdf)),
- **The Importance of Acceptance and Patience** ([http://mahayoga.org/library/The%20Importance%20of%20Acceptance%20and%20Patience.pdf](http://mahayoga.org/library/The%20Importance%20of%20Acceptance%20and%20Patience.pdf))

**Question:** I received Maha Yoga Deeksha recently and I was wondering if I could teach myself to do Pooja and if I will be receiving any Mantra. Incidentally, I come from a Christian background.

**Answer:** Glad to read that you received Maha Yoga Deeksha recently. Our Maha Yoga tradition does not require you to do Pooja nor do we grant Sadhaks any specific Mantra. There are four types of Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha, by the touch of a Siddha Guru, by a glance from the Guru, by the Guru granting a Mantra, or simply by the strong
intent of the Guru. All four types of Deeksha have to have the strong intent of the Guru underlying them. Our Maha Yoga tradition is for Deeksha to happen purely by the strong intent of the Siddha Guru, so it can happen to a Sadhak anywhere in the world regardless of whether or not he is in the Guru’s presence or without having the Sadhak chant a Mantra. So, there is no need for you to receive a Mantra.

There is also no need for you to do Pooja or change your religion, or even believe in an external God. But you are welcome to do Pooja to whatever form of God you believe in when you are not sitting for Maha Yoga Sadhan (meditation). Some Sadhaks do Pooja before they sit for Sadhan. You are also welcome to chant any Mantra of your choice when you are not sitting for Maha Yoga Sadhan.

However, when you sit for Maha Yoga Sadhan, please do not do anything with intent. Just sit in a relaxed manner so you lose awareness of your body, surrender yourself to the awakened Prana Shakti (Universal Life Energy) within you, and let her be the “doer” with you playing the role of an “observer”. Simply observe what happens. Do not chant any Mantra with intent or do Pooja with intent during Sadhan. If you find yourself automatically chanting a Mantra or doing some form of Pooja during Maha Yoga Sadhan without having any intention of doing so, just allow it to happen. Simply observe that it is happening. If Yoga Asanas or Mudras or other type of physical Kriyas (involuntary activities) happen during Siddha/Maha Yoga Sadhan, allow them to happen and simply observe that they are happening, without getting attached to them or being afraid of them. The same goes for Pranic Kriyas, when you might experience the flow of Prana (Universal Life Energy) within you or for mental Kriyas (the flow of thoughts) -simply observe them as they happen and not do anything with intent during Maha Yoga Sadhan. As a new Sadhak it might be difficult for you to observe your thoughts, so when you find yourself getting too distracted by the flow of thoughts that arise during Sadhan, simply direct your attention to your normal breathing process. Our normal breathing process is a Kriya that happens to all of us as long as we are alive, so by observing this Kriya of normal and automatic breathing, we learn how to put ourselves in the role of an observer rather than being the “doer” during Sadhan.

**Question:** I received Deeksha recently and I am continuing to do the Yoga daily. There were two days when I could not do it when I had to go on an office trip where there was no proper place to do Yoga. Wanted to keep you posted my Yoga experience. I usually do Yoga at around 6:00 am for an hour. I sometimes have difficulty in breathing and some hand actions, but I have not observed any Kriyas (involuntary physical, mental or Pranic activities) yet during my meditation but I am continuing to do it. I get various thoughts but I try to suppress them and concentrate on my breathing. One thing I have felt while doing Yoga is hair raising on several occasions. I have a couple of questions:-

1. I get leg pain when I am sitting in Padmasan (cross legged pose). I sit cross legged but towards end of an hour I feel pain in my leg and my leg becomes numb. Is there anything I can do about it?
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

2. I feel that my spine is not straight after a few minutes so should I move my spine and sit straight during yoga?

**Answer:** Glad to read that you are sitting for Maha Yoga Sadhan on a daily basis at 6 am for an hour. Please understand that we do not “do” Yoga when we sit for Maha Yoga Sadhan (meditation). Our role is to simply sit for Sadhan, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within us, allow her to “do” what is needed for our spiritual progress, and simply observe what happens. Our role during Sadhan should merely be that of an observer (Sakshi), not doing anything with our own intent.

You say that you have not observed any Kriyas, but the involuntary hand actions and the feeling of difficulty in breathing you had mentioned in your previous e-mail were clearly Kriyas. Also, please do not try to “suppress” your thoughts during Sadhan. It is impossible to “suppress” one’s thought with intent. All we can do is direct our attention to something other than the thoughts that arise, which is to our normal and automatic breathing. This does not mean that we should “concentrate” on our breathing. We should just direct our attention to it. When you say, “One thing I have felt while doing yoga is hair raising on several occasions”, I assume you have felt your body hair rise. This is in fact a Kriya that is happening. Simply observe it without getting afraid of it or getting attached to it.

Now about your specific questions:

1. Unless you have knee or hip arthritis, the numbness or the pain you feel in your legs could be due to lack of blood circulation or muscle stiffness. If it is due to muscle stiffness, you might consider doing some leg stretches before you sit for Sadhan, and gradually, with practice, you will be able to sit without pain for an hour. If it is numbness caused by lack of sufficient blood circulation, please feel free to straighten your legs while sitting, half way into your Sadhan. You can even stand up to get the blood moving in your legs when you feel them getting numb. Also, if you have a hard time sitting in full Padmasana you can sit cross-legged in half-Padmasana.

2. There is no need for you to intentionally straighten your spine during Maha Yoga Sadhan. Just sit comfortably, preferably in Ardha (Half) Padmasana or Padmasana if you can manage it, take a few deep breaths and relax your body. If your spine does not remain straight please don’t worry about it and intentionally straighten it. The idea is to forget about your body, and to have your mind calm down. Only when a Sadhak loses consciousness of his body and the mind becomes calm by surrendering to the awakened Prana Shakti within him, will the Sadhak experience Maha Yoga Sadhan, eventually leading to Self-Enlightenment.

**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 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 December 25th, 2020
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. Future dates for Deeksha Days are posted on the Maha Yoga program calendar at http://mahayoga.org/progcal.aspx.

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. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, these Shibirs and other communal events at the Nashik Ashram have been suspended indefinitely consistent with the governmental directives. Please check with the Ashram for when such events will resume.

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. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, this and other communal events at the Ashram have been suspended indefinitely consistent with the governmental directives. Please check with the Ashram for when such events will resume.

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 a Facebook page, Mahayoga World at: https://www.facebook.com/SiddhayogaMahayogaGlobal/.

We also have a Twitter feed at https://twitter.com/Mahayoga_Org. Please check it out for photographs of the recent events held at various Maha Yoga Ashrams.
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. 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

Self Awakening is the English language quarterly e-newsletter of the P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Mahayoga Trust.

Editor: Mr. Dilip Kamat

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.

May all desire to follow this nectarous Siddhayoga Path!