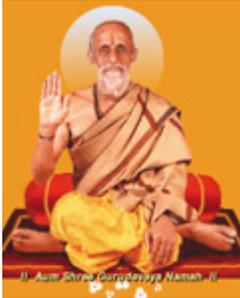


Self Awakening

Maha Yoga - Simplest, no-cost and highest method of self-realization

February 1, 2010
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Editor's note

Dear Readers:

The purpose of this quarterly newsletter, Self Awakening, is to inform Sadhaks (seekers of self-realization) and other readers about Maha Yoga, 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 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 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 and other Maha Yoga leaders.

As I have mentioned in previous issues of Self Awakening, the success of this e-newsletter will depend upon Sadhak participation through their contribution of content. Sadhaks are therefore encouraged to contribute news about Maha Yoga-related events in their parts of the world, thoughtful articles and life experiences (not experiences during Sadhan), questions about Maha Yoga and their Sadhan (practice) they would like addressed, and any comments and suggestions regarding this e-newsletter. Many readers have contributed questions on various aspects of Maha Yoga, and we would like to encourage such continued enthusiasm in that regards. However, we would also like our readers to contribute thoughtful articles, interesting life experiences related to Maha Yoga and news about Maha Yoga-related events. We look forward to receiving such content from those who want to contribute. Please send any content, comments, or questions you would like to submit to self.awakening@gmail.com.

Our Maha Yoga Lineage

Editor's note: Many of our readers have asked us to shed light on our Maha Yoga and Shaktipat lineage. This is the first of a short series of articles on our lineage. It begins with a short description of Maha Yoga and the importance of the Guru and his/her lineage, and describes our lineage as we currently know it. Subsequent articles will describe the lives of many of the luminaries in our tradition.

The Path of Siddha Maha Yoga

By Kurt Keutzer

From <http://www.eecs.berkeley.edu/~keutzer/kundalini/shivom-tradition.html>

There are numerous ways to awaken Kundalini but generally these approaches may be divided into two groups. In the first group are paths such as Mantra Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Laya Yoga or Raja Yoga. In these paths the Kundalini is awakened through the effort of the individual. In the second group is the path that is variously called Sahaja Yoga, Kundalini Yoga or Siddha Maha Yoga. In this path the Kundalini is spontaneously awakened by the grace of the Siddha Guru in a process that is called *Shaktipat*. This path is called Siddha Maha Yoga because the processes of Mantra Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Laya Yoga and Raja Yoga all take place spontaneously after being initiated through the grace of a Siddha. This path of Siddha Yoga can be briefly described as follows: The Siddha Guru conveys Shaktipat initiation to the disciple by means of touch, word, sight (glance), or intention. Upon initiation, the various practices of Mantra Yoga and Hatha Yoga occur spontaneously due to the activation of Kundalini. After some time the mind becomes concentrated, the Prana becomes steady, and with this Laya Yoga is said to be accomplished. Finally, through the steadiness of Prana, the union of the individual soul with the supreme Self is achieved and the goal of Raja Yoga is accomplished. As P. P. Swami Narayan Tirth Maharaj has said:

Mantra, Hatha, Laya and Raja Yogas are not separate from one another. They are merely the divisions of categories of a single yoga. Through practicing these four in their respective order and attaining competency is called Maha Yoga. Knowledge will not be attained by depending on only one of the four, and only by attending wholly to all four will natural yoga, that is the union of the individual soul with the supreme Self, be perfected.

The path of Siddha Mahayoga is not a modern invention but in fact it has a history of at least one thousand years. References to initiation through Shaktipat can be found in classical works such as the Yoga Vashishta, Shiva Purana, the Kularnava Tantra, and in the works of the great scholar and yogi, Abhinavagupta. In many works the role of the guru is emphasized, but in no work is it better epitomized than in the Shiva Sutras which states in Chapter 2, Verse 6:

Gururupayah

Our Maha Yoga Lineage (continued)

In translation, this verse states that: "The guru is the means (to liberation)."

If one is intrigued by the promise of the path of Siddha Mahayoga it is natural to seek out a teacher who can offer Shaktipat initiation. Traditional sources on the path of Siddha Maha Yoga encourage a careful review of the prospective disciple by the Siddha Guru as well as a review of the qualities of the Guru by the disciple. The qualities of a Guru are described in classical works of the path of Siddha Maha Yoga, and the Thirteenth Chapter of the Kularnava Tantra gives an extensive list of the qualities. First and foremost, a Guru is expected to have a high degree of self-realization. Secondly a Guru is expected to have the knowledge and the capacity for conveying (Shaktipat) initiation. Thirdly the Guru is expected to have knowledge of all aspects of the path. Finally a Guru's behavior is expected to reflect his state of realization.

Even the literature of one thousand years ago discusses the difficulty of finding a Guru who embodies all these characteristics, and in the selection of a Guru the classical works are quite pragmatic. They encourage a critical attitude in the beginning and only after the Guru has met one's criteria should one take initiation from him. From this point onwards they encourage unwavering devotion to the Guru. Unfortunately these days many students choose the opposite approach. They quickly adopt a devoted attitude toward a teacher and take initiation but over time some students become more and more critical of the teacher. This approach is generally ill-advised and is especially disastrous in the path of Siddha Maha Yoga. Once one's Kundalini is awakened through Guru's grace a variety of experiences may occur, some of these potentially terrifying. At these times a total confidence in the Siddha Guru is absolutely necessary to calm the anxiety. If, on the other hand, at these moments one has residual doubts regarding the Guru then one's anxiety and discomfort can become even more amplified. The literature of Siddha Yoga does acknowledge that a student may progress from one teacher to another but in doing so the student should never doubt or criticize prior teachers.

P. P. Narayan Kaka Maharaj's Lineage

By Dilip Kamat

Given the pre-eminence of the Guru in the Maha Yoga tradition, it becomes important to understand the Guru's lineage. P. P. Narayan Kaka Maharaj's Shaktipat lineage derives from the Tirth tradition, his Shaktipat Guru having been P. P. Swami Loknath Tirth Maharaj, a Sannyasi (renunciate) of the Tirth order. The Shaktipat tradition is said to have originated with Lord Shiva, with the earliest known leading figure in the Tirth lineage being P. P. Swami Paramananda Tirth Maharaj who was born in the thirteenth century. Swami Paramananda Tirth Maharaj is a long lived Siddha who continues to exist even in contemporary times, having revealed his existence to P. P. Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj over many years in the 20th century, as documented by P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj in his final book, Antim Rachna (published in Hindi in 2008). Swami Paramananda Tirth initiated only two individuals, P. P. Swami Mukund Tirth Maharaj and the 14th century Maha Yogini, Lal Ded of Kashmir. Very little is known about Swami Paramananda Tirth Maharaj

Our Maha Yoga Lineage (continued)

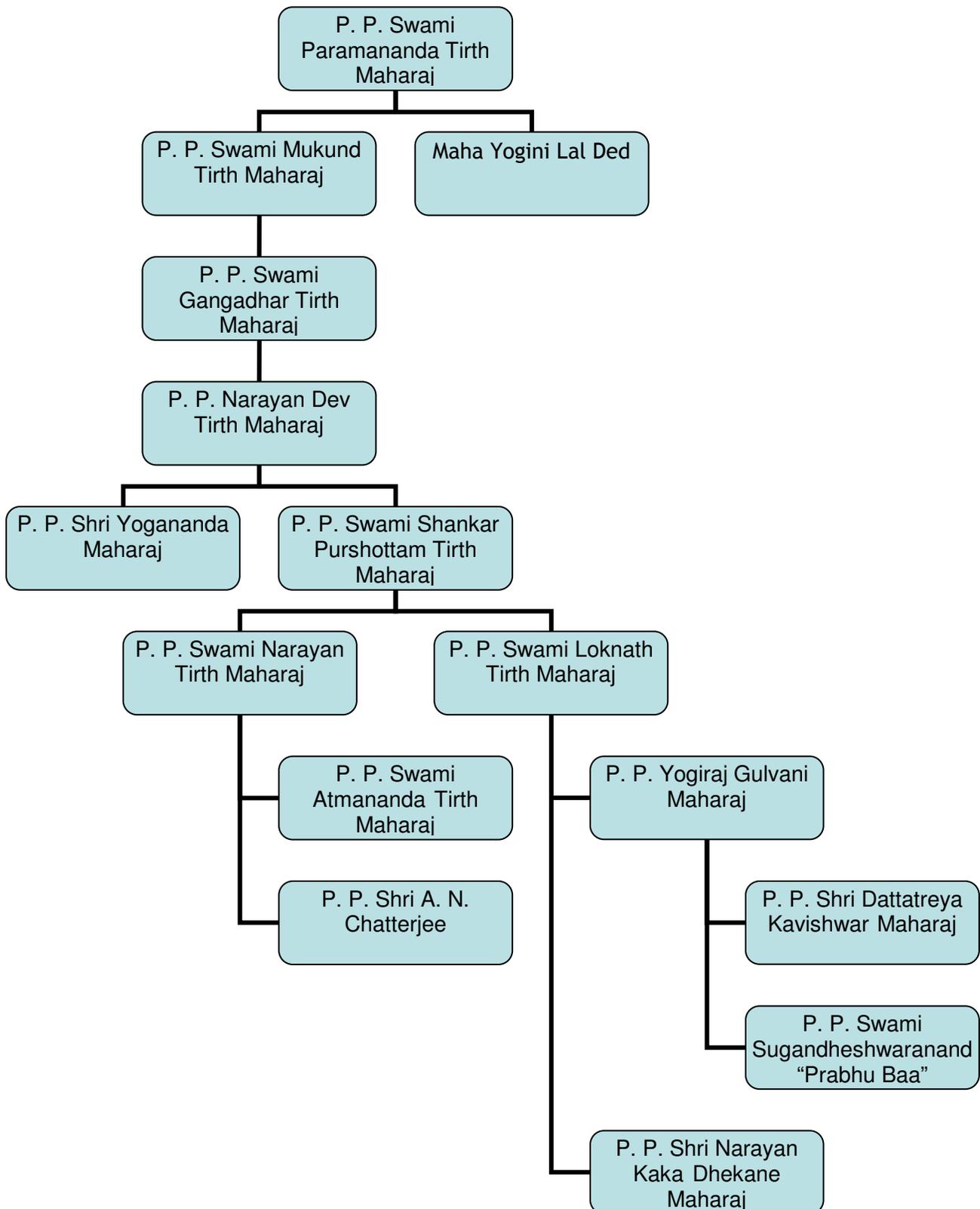
and Swami Mukund Tirth Maharaj beyond what is described in the book “Antim Rachna”, an English translation of which is under preparation and is expected to become available shortly.

The documented tradition of the Tirth Shaktipat lineage begins with P. P. Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj who lived in Jagannath Puri in Eastern India in the second half of the 19th century. From there it continued with P. P. Swami Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj who was initiated in 1889 and who lived in East Bengal, in what is now Bangladesh. Swami Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj passed the tradition of Siddha Mahayoga to P. P. Swami Shankar Purushottam Tirth Maharaj and to P. P. Shri Yogananda Maharaj, both of whom lived in their earthly forms well into the 1950s.

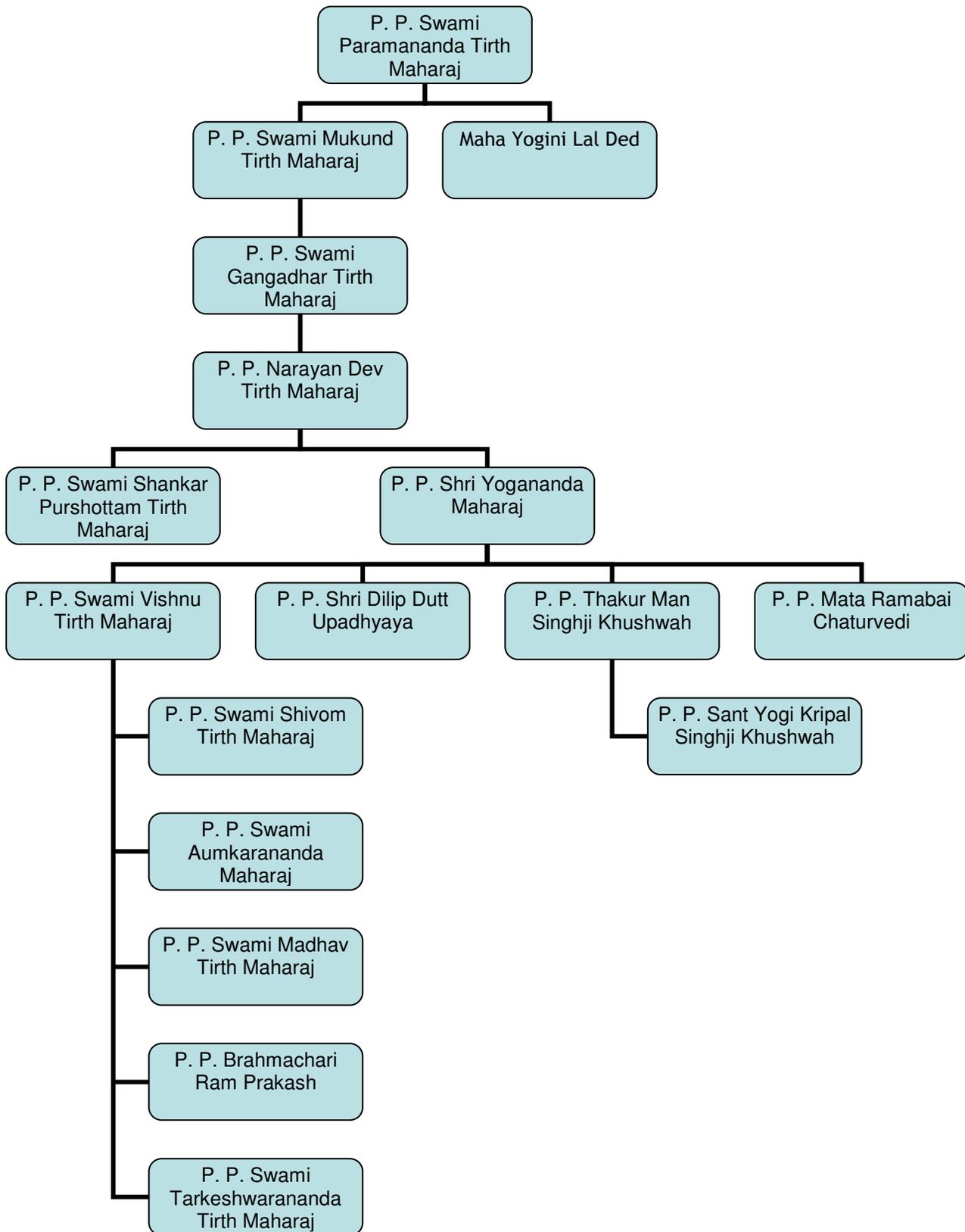
Figure 1 shows how the Swami Shankar Purushottam Tirth Maharaj’s branch of the lineage grew further with his initiation of P. P. Swami Loknath Tirth Maharaj (in 1912) and P. P. Swami Narayan Tirth Maharaj (in 1939). Swami Narayan Tirth Maharaj continued the tradition at Siddhayogashram in Varanasi well toward the end of the 20th century until his departure from this earth in 2001. Swami Loknath Tirth Maharaj brought the Shaktipat tradition to western and southern India with the initiation of P. P. Shri Gulvani Maharaj of Pune (in 1922) and P. P. Shri Narayan Kaka Maharaj (in 1951). Shri Gulvani Maharaj was instrumental in spreading awareness of this tradition all over western and southern India during the second and third quarters of the 20th century and initiated tens of thousands of Sadhaks through Shaktipat. Shri Narayan Kaka Maharaj continues this tradition to this day having taken it beyond the shores of India to seekers all over the world.

Figure 2 shows how Shri Yogananda Maharaj’s branch of the lineage grew further with him passing on the Shaktipat tradition to P. P. Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj who also received his initiation into the Sannyas (renunciate) tradition of the Tirth order from Swami Shankar Purushottam Tirth. Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj, a contemporary of Shri Gulvani Maharaj, brought this tradition to a broader public all over northern and central India. For over forty years Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj’s book *Devatma Shakti* has been one of the most reliable references on the path of Siddha Maha Yoga. Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj passed on this tradition to his most favored disciple, P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj, who wrote several books on Maha Yoga and Shaktipat and contributed immensely toward increasing awareness of this path all over India and the world during the second half of the 20th century, until his departure from this earth in 2008.

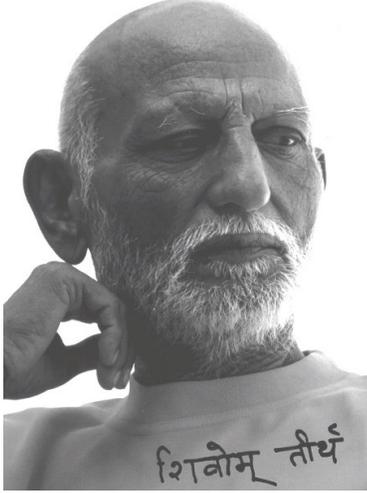
Our Maha Yoga Lineage (continued) - Figure 1



Our Maha Yoga Lineage (continued) - Figure 2



Churning of the Heart - Excerpt



The following is a chapter from P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj's trilogy, "Churning of the Heart". P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj (left) was from the same Shaktipat lineage as P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj, a lineage which can be traced in recent times to P. P. Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj who lived in the 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 or Maharajji. These excerpts are published here with the kind permission of Swami Shivom Tirth Ashram, Inc. For those Sadhaks who are interested, copies of the trilogy are available at Amazon.com

What is Required for Sadhan?

In this excerpt, Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj gets Maharajshri (his Guru, Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj) to further clarify important differences between Sadhan and Sadhana, the obstacles that come in the way of Sadhan, and the importance of surrendering ones ego. It is a long chapter, but it helps clarify many of the doubts that we Sadhaks often encounter. I would urge you all to read it very carefully. - Editor.

Today I had decided what to ask even before we started the stroll. "Maharajji, what is required for this sadhan?"

Maharajshri said, "Nothing. That is the difference between sadhana and sadhan. That which needs the help of external tools is sadhana. Ours is sadhan, an internal sadhan. The kriyas happen within us; the power is awakened within us; the attention is kept inwards. The samskaras, too, are within, and they are eroded by internal kriyas. It is within that sentiments arise, the conscious-self [Chaitanya] is within, too.

"The external world and our awareness of it are obstacles in self-knowledge. The chitta [mind-stuff], a product of the fundamental creative energy, works within. It acquires knowledge from the world but it is within that this knowledge is dissolved. All external things are a part of this world. The state of one's mind, introspection and surrender are the instruments of this sadhan, and they have no association with the world. Just as we remove our footwear before entering a temple, before entering the state of inner sadhan external things get left behind.

"As long as there are external spiritual devices, the focus of your attention is external and its impressions will continue to accumulate. In spirituality one has to purify one's self of all impressions and not accumulate them. When external objects are given up, not only does the accumulation of their impressions stop, but the erosion of past impressions also

Churning of the Heart - Excerpt (continued)

begins, through the medium of kriyas. When one has obtained the supremely powerful support of the grace of the divine power in the form of kriyas, why is there need for any external support?

“When one gets habituated to using external objects, it becomes difficult to leave them behind. The writings of saints have repeatedly mentioned that the alley of love is extremely narrow. Even crossing it alone is very difficult. Hence, while entering the path, external objects have to be discarded outside. But what can be done about habits? They stand in front of us in the form of obstacles. Rosaries, musical instruments, material needed for prayers, books, and for that matter even the body and mind, too. One has to rise above all these. Here the question is not of accumulating, but of emptying.

“These external objects are undoubtedly of value in practices involving conscious effort [sadhana]. To practice holding the mind steadfast, one needs a reference, a focus. But your question was in the context of our school of thought. I have answered your question accordingly.”

Another question arose in my mind, “Maharajji, while giving Shaktipat initiation you did not do anything but place your hand on the head. Anyone can place his hand on the head, but kriyas are not initiated by that. Why is there such a big difference in the placing of a hand?”

Maharajshri said, “Anyone can extend his hand, but the subtle action behind it is missing. Merely holding the hand on the head is not important. It must be supported by a resolve. Behind that resolve should be the strength of the awakened power and behind that the blessings of the Guru. Initiation can take place even without placing the hand on the head. Initiation can be given simply by a glance, by a mantra, or even without these. People often throw glances, they speak, they also touch, but the effect is not the same. When there is darkness within us, how can we brighten the lives of others?

“Shaktipat, the descent of power, is a very subtle process. All its media are invisible, all its happenings secret. Everything takes place on the plane of the conscious-self [Chaitanya]. Actions of the conscious-self also occur, without a doubt, on the basis of the chitta, which as expected, is gross. The state of the chitta and the kriyas also focus on subtle images. But why does one consider only these impressions, which occupy a place in the mind?

“Only the one who is affected by Shaktipat can experience it. At the time of initiation the power of introspection of many aspirants is not fully developed. As a result, even though they experience the inner effects, they are unable to understand them. The union of two conscious powers, their influence on each other, the introversion of the disciples power, the return of the Guru’s power, all this happens in a secret invisible form on a very subtle plane. The gross world, which cannot even understand the nature of the conscious-self, how can it understand its activities and its knowledge?” “Okay, Maharajji,” I said, “The mind is the main problem of a human, isn’t it?”

Churning of the Heart - Excerpt (continued)

Maharajshri said, “No, the mind is not the problem. Defects of the mind are the problem. When the mind is referred to as a problem, this always means the defects of the mind. When there are no defects, the mind is still there, but at that time it does not create problems. In reality, the mind is simply a purposeful or uncertain activity of the conscious-self, acting on the basis of the chitta. If there are any defects, it is this action that embodies the defects. If there are no defects, then this action is free from defects. The root cause of defects is desire and the root cause of desire is our accumulated impressions. As long as there are accumulated impressions there will be desires. As long as there are desires there will be defects, and until they are released the mind will remain a problem. A mind full of defects is bondage, whereas a mind free of defects is moksha [liberation]. Generally the mind is wrapped with defects; hence this has become accepted as the nature of the mind. Saints and devotees are determined to speak ill of it. Someone talks of destroying it, while another talks of suppressing it. Some try to please it, while others try to reason with it. In fact, a mind full of defects places a lot of importance on the world. It believes the world to be eternal and desires to live forever, but not a mind free of defects.

“When the mind is said to be very strong it means that the defects in the mind are very strong. They turn the mind in any direction they wish and can force the mind to do whatever work they want. But from a spiritual point of view this is a weakness of the mind. The result is it does what it shouldn't do. It thinks about issues that it shouldn't think about. This weakness forces a being to pursue worldly things. A living being has become so weak that he has no control over the actions of a defective mind. He dances like a puppet to the tune of the defective mind. His helplessness comes to him solely through his own actions. By surrendering to desires, attachment, anger and indulgence he stops considering right and wrong and accumulates the impressions of his undesirable actions. Those very impressions now take the form of desires and become the cause of further defects in the mind. This living being has accumulated such impressions within him that there is no opportunity for a good or auspicious desire to arise. The life of a living being has been reduced to one full of indulgence. Such a life, characterized by a defective, flirtatious and desirous mind, has obtained popularity in this world.

“But in fact, even good actions happen through the mind. Spiritual practices and devotional songs are done by the mind, and the love for God is also born in the mind. So how can the mind itself be the problem? It is the fault of those who have helplessly surrendered themselves to the defective mind. They shy away from the path of spirituality, and then they blame the mind.”

Old, deep-rooted tendencies [samskaras] also do not give up the chase easily. Before coming to Dewas, I lived with an altogether different ideology. I hardly understood Vedanta, but would claim to be a vedanti; without understanding the tenets of love, I would mix with the Sufis; without even having entered the field of yoga I considered myself a yogi. I would roam around in my own ego-filled mental world. My feet were trapped in the quicksand of my ego but my mind was flying in the sky. Even though the principles of Vedanta and Sufism are similar, what are the differences between these two schools? This question never occurred to me. Then I began to regard all the paths, the Yogas, the principles and schools as different from one another and to compare. My

Churning of the Heart - Excerpt (continued)

viewpoint was totally comparative, and filled with pride. What more was needed? This is an example of the proverb, “One bitter gourd on top of a neem.” [The fruits of both the plants have a very bitter taste.] My pride about my intelligence knew no bounds. Even without having a regular schedule of spiritual practices, I claimed to be a spiritual aspirant. In spite of being full of desires, I portrayed myself as totally detached. What was inside me was totally different from what I portrayed. I was proud of my good qualities and unaware of my handicaps.

At that time, my tendency to compare was becoming stronger. To see all spiritual practices as different, to judge good and bad, to be attached to my opinions and disrespect others - this was my nature. But when I came to Dewas at the lotus feet of the Lord, I could see that all my ways of thinking had begun to weaken. I could see a new road open up ahead of me, a path that integrates all the other paths, views and principles within itself. It did not dislike bhaktas [devotees] nor did it hate jnanis [seekers of knowledge]. It was like the Sun, which gives light not only to the high mountains, but also to the deep valleys. It does not dislike anyone. In the same way, this path is so liberal that, from all viewpoints - conceptual, humane and practical - it respects all paths. It regards them as the same. However, my impressions of comparing various spiritual practices were so strong that they urged me, still, to accept the awakening of Shakti due to Shaktipat as a separate path. I felt as if this new path, even though it brightened all other spiritual practices and principles, was different from them. If it were different from them, wouldn't it be an addition to the number of spiritual practices?

Other similar thoughts were tossing in my mind. In fact, this wasn't such a serious matter, but the mind is sure to do some mischief. I reflected that old, deep-rooted impressions do not go away easily. I was in a strange confusion. Sometimes the mind would say that Shaktipat was a different sadhan. On other occasions it would say, “What difference does it make to you? Do your sadhan!” On one side were Maharajshri's strong arguments; on another side was direct experience; and thirdly, there were these old emotions, thoughts and impressions. Just as someone caught in a whirlpool keeps spinning at one place, I was unable to come out of this tangle. I had faith in Maharajshri; his talks would touch my heart; there was no choice but to believe in them. But memories of the past were blocking my way. I tried hard to convince my mind that the debate over whether this path were different or not was meaningless, but my mind wouldn't agree. Finally I decided to present the problem to Maharajshri. Maharajshri's way of explaining, I knew, was very scientific, logical and one which directly pierced the heart. His aim was perfect. He understood the problems and difficulties of the questioner very well.

The next day, while strolling, I presented the issue weighing on my mind to Maharajshri in the following manner, “Until now I have seen the jnanis mock the bhakta. The devotees consider the learned devoid of love and believe they acquire knowledge by mere reading. The yogis claim that yoga is the only solution, whereas the karma yogis consider performing their duties to be prayer to God. All of them argue amongst themselves, praising their own path and contradicting the others. Spirituality seems to be a large arena for debates. I, too, have considered my opinion and thought it to be of the highest order, befitting and logical. I cannot say that my thinking is fully developed, but its roots are quite mature. Now, you have placed on top of all other sadhanas this new sadhan of

Churning of the Heart - Excerpt (continued)

awakening the power. Is this sadhan totally different and separate from other spiritual practices? I am unable to understand this matter. There is no reason to doubt your statement, but my past continues to hold me.”

Maharajshri smiled and said, “This means that you have not yet understood the difference between sadhana and sadhan. I did not call any sadhana wrong, small or insignificant, nor have I compared one path with another. I have only talked about the level or quality of sadhana. Different spiritual aspirants practicing the same sadhana may do so at different levels. There can be a level where the sadhana [spiritual practice involving conscious effort] gives up its current form and becomes sadhan [effortless spiritual practice]. Then it becomes natural. This is not possible without the awakening of Shakti, because only then will the support of the sadhana rise above effort and manifest in accordance with the state of the chitta. This natural way of manifestation is called kriya. This is sadhan. Effort is replaced by naturalness; this is the only difference that arises. When the state of the chitta becomes the support, then in accordance to its nature, the kriyas of other sadhanas start manifesting themselves. As a result of this the debate of sadhanas and paths comes to an end.

“Most of the time the people who consider themselves to be spiritual aspirants aren’t really aspirants. This is because they have no respect for other spiritual practices. Without becoming broad-minded and without acceptance, a spiritual aspirant can never advance towards destroying attachment. If there is a liking for one subject, then there will be for others, too, and there is sure to be dislike for still other subjects. In this way the aspirants mentioned above, due to their attachment to their own style of spiritual practice, get entangled in arguments, propose it as the only solution and, by living by it, continue to strengthen their attachment.

“The practice of awakening the Shakti is not a separate and distinct practice. The kriyas of devotion, knowledge and yoga are included in it, the same feelings and ideas, too; only the level of experience is different. The act of walking is the same, but one person may be going away from the house, another returning to the house, while a third person walks inside the house. The ego sitting within the person does not let go of him in any of these states. Superficially the person behaves as if he were ego-less, but this is just a façade. After the awakening of the Shakti, the process of melting the ego begins.

“Just as one person starts from Bombay, another from Madras and another from Calcutta; one person goes by bullock-cart, another by train and another by aircraft; one person proceeds by stopping along the way, and another keeps going straight down the road without halting, nevertheless all of them have to go to Delhi. In the same way, whichever path it is, wherever be the starting point, whether the rate of progress be very fast, average or slow, the goal is only one - the awakening of Shakti. On attaining this goal, the aspirant’s state of sadhana transforms into sadhan. He doesn’t receive any new sadhana, only its natural form becomes visible. Yes, the aspirant begins to have new experiences that give him a false feeling of newness in his sadhan. Ego, the doer, has changed into the seer. Because of this, too, sadhan seems to be new. But there is only one sadhan, a journey towards self-realization. All aspirants are pedestrians on this same path, moving towards this same goal, but the experiences of the journey are their very own. The task of

Churning of the Heart - Excerpt (continued)

intellectuals has been to propose various schools of thought on the basis of the differences in these experiences, and their followers have become attached to these ideologies and continue to argue among themselves. A spiritual aspirant doesn't have time for such arguments. He considers them an unnecessary intellectual exercise, in which nothing is achieved except a waste of time.

“The awakening of Shakti is also one stop along the way, not the final destination. It is the means not the end. It is the start not the finish. If there is no awakening, realize that sadhan has not yet begun. We are still roaming outside. The door of the house hasn't opened yet. Entry hasn't been made yet. If an aspirant believes sadhana to be the beginning of his journey, then this is his pride. Without entering the house, how can one sit inside the house? The awaking of Shakti gives naturalness to sadhana, which transforms it into sadhan. One begins to enjoy it, and as the accumulated impressions erode, new sadhanas take place. These are experiences or visions.

“Sadhana and sadhan are like the stairs needed to climb a mountain. While going up the stairs of sadhana, all of a sudden the awakening of Shakti comes before you. Sadhana becomes sadhan and the level changes. The mountain is the same, the stairs are the same and the traveler is the same, but the nature of the medium has changed. As the climber keeps going up, the view around him keeps changing. The places that seemed very high now seem low. Earlier he could only see the scenery around him; now he sees over a long distance. This experience is the change. Has the path changed or the climber? Neither has. Only the level has changed.”

I raised a new doubt. “Is sadhan impossible without the awakening of the Shakti?”

Maharajshri answered, “If there is no movement towards the house, how will you enter it? And once you enter the house, how will you reach the other side?”

“I know some people ask, ‘What is this awakening of Shakti?’ To know the answer you first need to understand one thing: When does the world exist for you? When your inner power starts flowing outward through your sense organs. They come in contact with the world and they obtain knowledge about the world. A living being becomes so engrossed in this knowledge of the world that he forgets his own self. That is why the knowledge of the world is said to be a cause for bondage. Now if someone seeks the dissolution of the knowledge of the world, then the Shakti, the inner power, will have to gather its spread and return back. The beginning of the return of the Shakti is called “awakening.” It is possible that for some time an aspirant may not be able to experience it, but the awakening is definite.”

“Agitation in the Shakti [latent power] is this world and its state devoid of agitation is the dissolution of this world. Similarly, on an individual level, the more agitated the mind is, the stronger is the reality and importance of this world. The starting point towards the agitation-free state of Shakti is awakening. Without this, how can one enter the realm of spirituality?”

Churning of the Heart - Excerpt (continued)

My next question was, “Will there ever be a time when the Shakti will be absolutely free of agitation?”

Maharajshri said, “This question of yours is clearly an intellectual one. Your mental state is not yet ready for it. In spiritual practice, such a question is regarded as ‘a right.’ Nowadays neither does the person asking such a question reflect upon this right, nor does the respondent evaluate the inquirer’s right. The person asking such a question wants to know everything as quickly as possible without performing any spiritual practices and the respondent, for his part, wants to create an impression of his knowledge. As you have asked this question, I will try and answer it, but you do not have a right to it. All these are just your flights of imagination. I also know that you will not understand and everything I say will be beyond your comprehension.

“Only God knows the correct answer to this question, but from whatever I have understood from the scriptures and the writings of saints, I will say that the expanse of the universe is boundless. There are many, many solar systems like ours, in which the agitations of the conscious-self remain constantly active. Just as the stars keep twinkling at night, similarly the creation and dissolution of universes keeps happening continuously. At the rise of every agitation, many universes are created and at the end of every agitation many universes are dissolved. In a fraction of a second, many agitations are generated and many agitations are dissolved. It is difficult to say whether there will be a time when all agitations have subsided and no new agitation is being created. At that time, no universe will exist anywhere. Great men have experienced these things in the state of meditation and have been amazed at seeing the creation of innumerable universes. The creation and destruction of universes seems to be incessant like a river-flow. Anyone who has seen that incomparable play of God finds this visible world extremely insignificant and of no importance. The hollowness of his ego becomes clear to him.

“If all universes are considered as a single unit, then one cannot say whether the Shakti ever becomes free from agitation. No one has an instrument to see when and where an agitation takes place or ends. Even for a fraction of a second, if we agree that there is a specific instance when all the agitations in the conscious-self have stopped, who is going to see it? Because at that time all universes will cease to exist. That is the reason it is said that God alone knows his secrets. A human does not accept this logic because of his ego and tries to know the secret, imagining things and trying to guess, but who has unraveled the Lord’s secrets?

“If you take one universe as a single unit, then surely an answer can be imagined. The scriptures and writings of saints are the only support for people who are not capable of a direct experience. Through their medium, one can imagine some answer or make a guess. Our universe at some time reaches a state of dissolution. One after the other, in reverse order, all the elements start dissolving and finally nature dissolves into its source. When the universe has ceased to exist, how will living beings survive? Their bodies are also a part of the universe. Then there is no one to be seen and no observer, thereby indicating that one agitation in the conscious-self has dissolved completely. But the property of agitation never goes away. Again an agitation occurs; again a universe comes into

Churning of the Heart - Excerpt (continued)

existence or seems to exist. Very few have direct experience of this; the majority of us proceed with the help of deduction.

“Then there is the living being, who represents a small universe within himself. This is called the individual level. The union of the gross and the conscious takes place within a person’s body. He has ego, which refuses to admit that it is small. In the person, in the form of his inner self, there exists an inner universe, in which the memories of good and bad actions are accumulated. His body is created and destroyed. According to his memories, sometimes he is visible and sometimes not. In this way, in one life span of a universe, he is born and dies many times. If, at some point in time, good sense prevails over him and he takes up service and spiritual practices, then he can be free from birth and death and merge with the conscious-self. The union of the gross and the conscious is broken and the agitation of the conscious-self dissolves or contracts into a point. The goal of a living being is to remove the agitation in the conscious-self on an individual and personal level, not on a universal level. He cannot do anything at the universal level. He does not have the right to interfere in the activities of God.”

I said, “Maharajji, this is an absolutely new way of thinking for me. Until now, I have only read the doctrines of Vedanta, and had begun to consider myself to be an intellectual. With your grace, secrets of the various spiritual practices are being revealed to me. It had never occurred to me how to incorporate nondualism [advaita] into my spiritual practices. Acknowledging nondualism and experiencing it are definitely two different things. Generally people only read sections dealing with the doctrines. The result of that is, they move around on the earth but fly in the skies.”

Only a few days had passed since I had come here. But my thinking had started to change. Maharajshri’s personality was right in front of me. In the past I had never felt the need of a Guru and now I began to consider a Guru indispensable. This is the grace of a Guru. I remembered those days in Nangal (where Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj spent some time before coming to Dewas to be with Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj), when curiosity about a Guru arose in my mind for the first time, after hearing what the babaji had said. At that time I had been to the doorsteps of many Mahatmas [great souls], but all were merely vocal proponents, displaying pride every now and then, ever ready to get angry, without any modesty, nor kindness, nor a perception that noticed subtle things. Once, a particular Mahatma appealed to my heart. His personality and his learning had a shade of spiritual practice. On thinking about it at night, the thought came to my mind repeatedly, “This Mahatma is good, but he is not your Guru.” Today I was in the proximity of a great man, at whose feet I had complete satisfaction.

I couldn’t sleep at night. I was lost in memories of the past. In Nangal I considered myself a much greater devotee than other people believed me to be. If people called me to sing devotional songs, how eagerly I would wait for the opportunity to sing. I would feel very happy within on listening to their praises. My intoxication disappeared on seeing Guru Maharaj’s (Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj’s) personality. In my lifetime I had not seen such humility, simplicity, lack of ostentation and kindness in anyone. On top of that, he elucidated such intricacies of sadhan and experience, and was, again, so knowledgeable.

Churning of the Heart - Excerpt (continued)

There is no perfect being in this world except God. Even so, there was no one else in sight as close to perfection as I found Maharajshri to be.

Then I remembered that day in Nangal when I was sitting on the banks of the Sutlej in my hut and reading. I drifted off into slumber. In my dream, I saw a saint wearing a saffron robe. I was sitting near him when a person came with a glass of milk. The great soul drank half of it and then told me to drink the rest. I drank the milk. In the evening, a gentleman came along with *Devatma Shakti*, a book written by Maharajshri. The book had a picture of Maharajshri in it. The moment I looked at the picture, I realized that I had seen him in my dream.

I have heard that dreams are related to impressions accumulated in the past. These impressions arise from images in the chitta and create the world of dreams. I had accumulated some impressions associated with Maharajshri. Had he been my Guru in a previous birth, too? “Even after being blessed by the grace of such a great person,” I had wondered, “why haven’t my thoughts calmed down? Even now my mind troubles me a lot.” I hadn’t seen Maharajshri anywhere else except in my dream. Yet my mind was already attracted to him. It was at that point that I first began to correspond with him.

Now I was feeling remorse about my defects. My thoughts were racing on; my mind had become uneasy. The root cause of all defects is ego. It has to be crushed. For this it is necessary that the world hate you, ill-treat you, insult you. Your failure becomes known to the world - only then will your ego receive a jolt. This requires great tolerance. Whenever somebody’s ego is hurt, how agitated he gets! It is said that when Kabir’s fame spread, his ego was awakened, but he quickly composed himself and walked through the market place holding the hands of a prostitute. People were shocked and started abusing him. His misfortune spread everywhere. Kabir’s ego was vanquished. Spirituality is not achieved by mere talk. One has to be ready to give up one’s life with a smile on his face and even a sigh should not escape from the lips. One should wish everyone’s well-being and love everyone, respect everyone. This is the path of lovers.

During the morning walk, I initiated the topic, “Spirituality is very difficult. One must bear many things and the ego is very troublesome. People wish to achieve it while sitting in an armchair, with a fat bank balance, with all kinds of facilities and luxuries. To the extent that spirituality is to be practiced by discussion, they will take interest in it. But they cannot bear even a small injury to their ego.”

Maharajshri agreed. “This is the state of spirituality in this era. Everyone is full of anger and pride. They want tasty food to eat and desire all kinds of luxuries and services. First and foremost, they do not want to serve. Even if they accomplish something, they end up inflating their ego. “We are serving; we must be respected!” If someone else offers service, like and dislikes are the result. They seek the help of intellectual arguments and resort to slyness. How can spirituality bear fruit under these circumstances? Spirituality is synonymous with burning one’s self - burning desires and passions, burning defects and bad habits, burning attachments and aversions to the extent of even burning down the ego, becoming nothing. Only then will the light spread, only then will the fragrance spread. How can the mind become pure, without being scrubbed?

Churning of the Heart - Excerpt (continued)

“But what can be done? The era is such. People are helpless against the influence of the mind. Not everyone is an opponent of spirituality and religion. There are many who understand everything and wish to act on this knowledge, but are unable to do so. Defects shackle them. The attraction of worldly things is very intense; slipperiness is all over the world. They walk carefully, yet they invariably slip. But there is no reason for spiritual aspirants to worry. It is only under such circumstances that good spiritual practice can happen. As the world pulls from all sides the aspirant remains engrossed in his spiritual practice. This is bliss. Such a spiritual practice is fruitful.”

Then I said, “But the proponents of the path of devotion [Bhakti Marg] propound devotion by saying it is very easy. Even the saints have said that devotion is easy.”

Maharajshri said, “They say this in order to generate faith in devotion. Ask Tukaram, Namdev, Jnaneshwar, Narsi Mehta, Kabir or Meerabai, who took devotion seriously. They had to face so many difficulties. So many obstacles and difficulties they had to surmount! So many mouthfuls of insults they had to swallow! Yet a word of complaint was never uttered by these great personalities. Even though the world had strewn their path with so many thorns, they never said an insulting word about anyone. They respected and loved their enemies and their detractors. Can this task be called easy? Be it devotion or the path of knowledge [Jnana yoga], detachment is necessary for all of them, and to acquire detachment is not an easy task.

“There is one more thing. Atheists did not cause them grief. They suffered at the hands of those who prayed, read religious books, knew scriptures, meditated, and those with braided hair and smeared foreheads. Who troubled Emperor Harishchandra? The great ascetic Maharshi Vishwamitra [Vishwamitra means “a friend of the world”]. What kind of a world friendship is this? But the great personalities did not even utter a sigh. How much they must have had to bear within themselves! Whatever the branch of spirituality, whatever its principles and discipline, whatever the spiritual practice it prescribes, to pursue it is not easy. At every step difficulties, problems and pain come forth to block the way. This is because all have one thing in common: to purify the interior, to avoid the collection of filth within and to proceed in accordance with the Lord’s wish. This flow is against the flow of the world. Nothing is to be collected; it is to be given up. We are not to be filled with likes and dislikes, but to spread love. To live in this world and proceed against it, can it be called easy?”

I asked with trepidation, “Maharajshri, I shouldn’t be asking this, but the question is at the tip of my tongue. Did you have to face obstacles, too?”

Maharajshri said, “Yes. I, too, have faced many obstacles and difficulties. I have encountered many impediments. Worldly obstacles definitely exist, but the obstacles created by the deities are much more dreadful. The average aspirant is not evolved to such a level, thus the hindrances of the gods do not confront him. The beauty of the world holds no importance in comparison to the obstacles created by the gods, but the average aspirant is enthralled by the beauty of the world. If he attempts to understand all the obstacles in detail, an aspirant will learn a great deal. But the community of disciples

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does not want to consider the possibility that even their Guru Maharaj can be confronted by obstacles. This is not to their benefit. If they see the way in which we have overcome these obstacles, they might be inspired. Tolerance is extremely important for overcoming obstacles. There is a need for surrender to the Guru and a need for unceasing spiritual practice.

“There are obstacles in every walk of life, but a spiritual aspirant confronts more of them. Such are the rules on the path of spiritual practice. An aspirant does not enjoy many comforts, and on the other hand experiences poverty, suffering and calamities. An aspirant humbly rejects fame and receives insults. After the awakening of Shakti, the accumulated impressions begin to rise and come to the surface quickly, due to which pleasure and pain also come quickly. The pain has to be endured. The aspirant does not enjoy the pleasure.

“An aspirant also has to live his life in this world. His feelings, thoughts and point of view have nothing in common with the world. Every act of the aspirant is interpreted by the world from its own perspective. The whole world comes together and finds faults with him, but he does not see defects in anyone. Even if he notices them, he ignores them; he does not spread them. In this way an aspirant tolerates the insulting behavior of the world. He treats these ups and downs as a game and keeps smiling, even as he continues to be kicked by the world. To bear the pains inflicted by the world, its insulting behavior, its accusations, is a part of spiritual practice that removes all the trash from the mind. No one knows the accumulated impressions that rise and bear fruit, or from what birth they come. An aspirant, too, does not lose his composure because of obstacles and difficulties; he welcomes them. “Come, perform your act and go away.” A worldly being avoids pain and seeks the support of charms and incantations. This is the difference between an aspirant and a worldly person.

“This was about worldly obstacles; now let us consider internal obstacles. External obstacles are, in reality, external manifestations of inner obstacles. Internally, on the basis of accumulated impressions, many desires begin to bloom, drawing a man towards pleasure. These urges are nothing but internal obstacles. They are products of indulgence, anger, jealousy, hatred, greed. Desires confuse the being; they make him dance; they take him for a ride. Spurred by desires, a person becomes blind, disillusioned and wicked. He forsakes the path of well-being and runs after worldly pleasures. Even if someone suggests that he consider his own welfare, desires prevent his heart from accepting it. These desires are the obstacle, in whose fire the whole world is burning. They arise in the mind in different forms, and sometimes allure and at times ensnare. The desires of common people are impure. Because of this the word “desire” is often interpreted as “impure desire.” Desire is a fire that burns but cannot be seen. Desire is a tide from which no one can escape. Desire is an unfathomable ocean in which innumerable violent creatures do their mischief. Desire is a forest that seems to be extremely beautiful, but in which life is in peril. What more is there to say? Desire is a maze in which, if you get lost just once, you cannot come out. A spiritual aspirant always remains alert for this inner-obstacle-raising desire. His discretion gives him an early warning about its approach. He observes the desire and its activities from a distance, just as the audience remains separate from the play. The onslaught comes, shows its strength, and

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goes away. The aspirant keeps watching in the form of an observer. He who cannot do this is not a spiritual aspirant.”

I asked, “It seems that in spirituality and the path of spiritual practice, there is nothing other than accumulated impressions [samskaras] and conduct.”

Maharajshri said, “Actually purification of accumulated impressions and conduct are the most difficult problems of spirituality. Ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion and fear of death are the five afflictions that add to the accumulation of impressions, and the impressions, in turn, strengthen them. But the moment an aspirant turns towards the path of spiritual practice, he confronts the accumulated impressions. Samskaras are the cause of lustful tendencies. They create prarabdha [fateful action] and give life a direction, a reference. They also influence our conduct. Spirituality is the process of extracting one’s self from the quicksand of accumulated impressions.

“The goal of spirituality is self-knowledge, but when we talk about spiritual practice, samskaras take precedence. Impressions have accumulated and masked the self. The removal of impressions illuminates the soul. Accumulated impressions are the shackles of the world and their destruction results in liberation. Impressions take the form of the mind and make a person dance around. They become desires and generate wishes. They transform into worldly pleasures and disillusion the living being. Sometimes they make the being laugh and sometimes cry. If you remove the accumulated impressions and hold them aside, then there is no need to carry out spiritual practices. Thus if one’s spiritual practice is based on accumulated impressions, these impressions will need spiritual practices for their destruction. For accumulation they will need karma [action]. In this way karma, impressions and spiritual practice affect each other. Karma, impressions, desires, tendencies and the mind - this cycle continues on. The goal of spiritual practice is to break it. Spiritual practice [sadhan] works continuously to break the cycle of karma and the same cycle of karma is ever ready to break the cycle of sadhan.

“Generally an aspirant wishes to avoid confrontation with his impressions. He would prefer to achieve steadfastness without touching them and let them live. Sometimes, temporarily, he may be successful in doing so. But after a while, when the impressions resurface, his mind becomes unstable again. Everything he has done is reduced to naught. Hence the path of spirituality is not to escape from our impressions but to destroy them. If you tell a worldly person that he is going to face a particular calamity, he will be frightened. He will search for astrologers and tantriks. But for a spiritual aspirant, the complete picture is clear. The ripened karma [prarabdha] must show its influence. What is the benefit in avoiding it and making it more powerful? He does not try to escape from his ripened karma. He does not resist it in any manner. On the contrary he bears it and ends it.

“A being stuck in the quicksand of accumulated impressions is like a mad elephant that keeps sinking deeper but does not wish to escape. He has sought happiness in this sorrow. Death is in front of him, but he doesn’t see it. Spirituality makes him aware of his state, shows him the path of his happiness, and also helps him to free himself. Thus impressions are a subject of spirituality. Detachment, love for God, the practice of yoga, acquisition

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of knowledge, the company of pious men, and devotional songs and stories are for the destruction of samskaras. They are no longer needed once the accumulated impressions are destroyed.

There are two types of impressions: Unripe and ripe, called “accumulated impressions” [sanchit samskaras] and “ripe impressions” [prarabdha], respectively. There is no way to destroy prarabdha other than to bear it with cheer and without agitation - to bear it without affecting the mind, without getting upset, without becoming happy or sad, without opposing it. This is sadhana, this is sadhan, and this is spirituality, too. Vedanta refers to this as titiksha [forbearance]. It applies not only to natural misfortunes, but also to psychological upheaval and to mental and physical joys and sorrows. Upon awakening, the Shakti, at the level of the mind, carries out the task of performing natural actions. At times it seems that, due to the impressions, the actions it inspires are undesirable. On such occasions it is essential for the aspirant to remain alert. If an aspirant loses the perspective of an observer, he surrenders to the desires that have awakened within. If the aspirant is affected, it can be disastrous.

“An aspirant must destroy his accumulated impressions through sadhan and his prarabdha through tolerance, and at the same time prevent the accumulation of new impressions. This is termed Karma Yoga. Only then is there a possibility of the purification of the chitta. As long as accumulated impressions and prarabdha exist inside, they continue to initiate karma [actions which generate further impressions]. As long as they are present, one must be careful. After they have been destroyed it doesn't matter whether you perform actions or not. Performing karmas by considering them as service to God, with a sense of duty, with tolerance, without getting agitated and without thinking of them as favorable or unfavorable, is called inaction or non-action [akarma]. This is the way of performing karma and staying detached from it.”

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Answers to questions from Sadhaks

- **Question:** What is the difference between Shaktipath and Bhaktipath?

Answer: “Bhaktipath” means literally, the “Path of Bhakti” or “Bhakti Marg” or the “Path/Yoga of Devotion”. Seekers on this path get so immersed in the object of their devotion (Lord/God/Goddess) that they eventually lose their ego, self identity and separateness, and become one with the Lord. They follow some or all of the nine Angas (limbs) of Bhakti Marg: Shravanam (listening to holy discourses etc.), Kirtanam (repetition and chanting), Smaranam (remembrance of the lord), Paad-Sevanam (service at the feet of the Lord), Archanam (worship), Vandanam (salutations, praise), Dasyam (unconditional service), Sakhyam (emotional closeness) and finally Atma-Nivedanam (self surrender). It is very difficult for an average person to follow Bhakti Marg. Either a person has an inherent sense of devotion/Bhakti from childhood or he has to have one or more events happen to him in his life that imbue in him a sense of Bhakti toward his object of devotion. Only then will he have the intense longing needed to follow the nine Angas (limbs) of Bhakti Marg.

“Shaktipath” means the “Path of Shakti” or the use of various Yoga approaches to awaken the Kundalini Energy. Most of these approaches such as Hatha Yoga, Laya Yoga, Raja Yoga, etc. require the Sadhak to undertake various difficult practices usually under the guidance of a Guru. However, there is one approach, “Shaktipat” or the “Descent of Shakti/Grace/Mother Energy” whereby a Siddha Guru can directly awaken the Sadhak’s Kundalini Energy or Shakti. (“Pat” in Shaktipat means “descent”, not “path”). This awakening of a Sadhak’s Kundalini by a Siddha Guru is the key element of Maha Yoga or Siddha Yoga.

Once a Sadhak’s Kundalini Shakti (Energy) is awakened through Shaktipat, he will automatically find himself undergoing, during Sadhan and otherwise, whatever practices he needs for his spiritual development, including elements of Hatha, Laya, Raja and Bhakti Yogas. Even though a Sadhak might not have an inherent sense of Bhakti, the practice of Maha Yoga through Kundalini Shaktipat will gradually enhance a Sadhak’s Bhakti, eventually leading him to Atma-Nivedanam (self surrender) and Self Realization. Thus, Maha Yoga and Shaktipat (as distinct from “Shaktipath”) subsume even Bhaktipath or Bhakti Marg.

- **Question:** Is it fine for Sadhaks to meditate while travelling? If so what precautions should a Sadhak take?

Answer: Sadhaks who are in the early stages of Maha Yoga often have physical Kriyas (involuntary body movements and actions) as the Mother Energy is in the process of purifying the physical Koshas (layers surrounding the Sadhak’s Prana Shakti or true self). It would therefore be unwise for Sadhaks in the early stages of Maha Yoga to sit for Sadhan while travelling, because other travelers might not understand what’s going on and some of them might be inconvenienced because of the Sadhak experiencing physical Kriyas.

Answers to questions from Sadhaks (continued)

As a Sadhak progresses on the path of Maha Yoga, he will find that he automatically becomes calm and stable during Sadhan and the physical Kriyas disappear altogether or get markedly more subtle. When he is at this stage, a Sadhak could just close his eyes while travelling and experience and enjoy the blissful and calm inner flow of Prana Shakti (Mother Energy). In case he senses a physical Kriya beginning to happen, he can just open his eyes and come out of Sadhan. So, it is difficult to answer this question on a generalized basis applicable to all Sadhaks. A Sadhak will have to decide for himself based on the nature of his Sadhan whether or not to sit for Sadhan while travelling.

- **Question:** Is it okay to meditate while lying on the floor?

Answer: Sadhan is basically the Puja (worship) of ones true self or Prana Shakti, therefore you should approach it with some devotion, and as far as possible sit for it as prescribed by the Guru. So, when you sit for Sadhan you should begin by sitting in a comfortable and relaxed position, preferably on an Asana (e.g. a thin mat or rug covered with a white sheet) on the floor. This way you can avoid/minimize hurting yourself in case you have physical Kriyas you may not be able to control. (If you cannot sit on the floor, sit in a comfortable chair with arms so as to keep yourself from falling off the chair if uncontrollable physical Kriyas happen.)

Once your Sadhan begins and you find yourself lying on the floor as part of a physical Kriya that is happening to you, by all means allow it to happen. What happens during Maha Yoga Sadhan is autonomous and automatic, so you should let it happen even if you find yourself lying on the floor. Your role during Sadhan should be that of an “observer”, not the “doer”.

- **Question:** Is it possible for Siddha/Maha Yoga Sadhaks to relieve the pain of those who are suffering?

Answer: A Sadhak should not intentionally use Maha Yoga or Sadhan to heal others or attempt to relieve the pain of others, because it will retard the Sadhak’s spiritual progress for two reasons. First, it will dissipate the Sadhak’s Prana Shakti thus negating the purpose of Sadhan itself, which is to enhance the flow of Prana Shakti. And in some situations a Sadhak might even run the risk of attracting the ailment himself from the person he is trying to heal. Second, the role of a Sadhak during Sadhan should not be one of “doer” or “Karta”, because it will keep him from surrendering to the Mother Energy. If he assumes such a role it will only result in the boosting of his own ego, thus further retarding his spiritual progress. If healing happens spontaneously and unintentionally, the Sadhak should not give himself any credit for it or try to replicate it intentionally, because doing so will only lead him think of himself as the Karta (doer), thus hurting his spiritual progress.

Answers to questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Compassion is a virtue, and diligent and regular Sadhan will only enhance a Sadhak's compassion for others. But it can also be a trap and when misapplied can retard a Sadhak's spiritual progress.

- **Question:** Is it okay for a Sadhak who has received Deeksha to donate blood?

Answer: Blood donation is fine if a Sadhak's medical condition allows him to do so.

- **Question:** Is it okay for a Siddha/Maha Yoga Sadhak to do Rakta Muksha, or is it forbidden?

Answer: Rakta Muksha is an Ayurvedic practice of blood-letting, usually done by attaching leeches to rid the body of certain types of toxins. Maha Yoga does not have a point of view, either for or against this practice. If a qualified physician or medical authority has prescribed it for a Sadhak's health and it is in conformity with the local laws, then a Sadhak is free to undergo it, if he so desires.

- **Question:** I often get angry, and because it is not a good emotion to have, I get depressed afterwards. How can I convert the negative energy of such emotions into a positive one that enhances my spiritual development?

Answer: Negative emotions such as anger, fear, certain types of aversions as well as some strong attachments, have deep seated roots and are often present in individuals from birth. Such emotions get further amplified by experiences one has in ones current life, but they often tend to get suppressed because of societal mores. That does not mean they disappear, they often lie lurking just below the surface, and unless they are dissipated in a constructive way, they will shape a person's ongoing current life as well as contribute to his Samskaras (accumulated impressions) which will determine his onward journey even beyond this life.

The practice of Sadhan in Maha Yoga works to constructively dissipate such deep-seated negative emotions through automatic physical and pranic Kriyas (movements), but sometimes it results in bringing such emotions as anger and fear to the surface. Please do not get attached to such emotions or get dismayed and depressed because of them. The Sadhan is just bringing them to the surface in order to dissipate them so you can eventually be rid of them. Diligent and sustained Sadhan will get these emotions out of your system for good, thus rendering them incapable of affecting your spiritual journey. So continue to sit for Sadhan regularly and on a sustained basis and you will gradually find yourself losing your anger, fear, aversions and attachments.

Answers to questions from Sadhaks (continued)

- **Question:** I practice Siddha Yoga daily for an hour. Is there anything else I should be concentrating on?

Answer: Regular and diligent Sadhan, as you seem to be practicing, is the key to progress on the path of Maha Yoga. When you sit for Sadhan, you should not be doing anything intentionally, but you should have an attitude of surrender, both of your body and your mind, to the Mother Energy. This is Ishwar Pranidhanatwa, or surrender to the Divinity within you, the most important of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. Having surrendered to the Divinity within yourself, all you have to do is to observe the physical Kriyas (involuntary movements) if they happen and/or the internal surges of Prana Shakti (Mother Energy), the external manifestation of which is your automatic and involuntary breathing. So, there is no need to concentrate on anything, just surrender totally to the Divinity within you and observe what happens. If you find Sadhan pleasurable and blissful you can sit for Sadhan for a longer period than an hour, or sit twice a day for that matter, if time permits.

- **Question:** I am a Reiki master and I have also been initiated into Mahayoga. Is it possible for me to give Reiki Deeksha to others by following Mahayoga?

Answer: As discussed in an answer to a question earlier, on whether or not one should use Maha Yoga to relieve the pain of others, doing so is not a good idea because it has the potential to retard your own spiritual progress. You are free to give Reiki Deeksha, but you might risk dissipating the Prana Shakti which is generated during Sadhan as well as taking on more of a Karta (doer) role. This goes against the whole purpose of Sadhan, which is the eventual surrender of yourself to the Divinity within you.

- **Question:** I understand that we should sit for Sadhan for one hour every day. Should I do this by having an alarm set for one hour? Or should I sit for Sadhan and pray that the Shakti will make Sadhan happen for the required time? Since I usually sit for Sadhan in the morning, following which I have to go work, how can I best time my Sadhan?

Answer: We recommend that Sadhaks sit for Sadhan for at least an hour each time they sit because an hour provides enough time for a Sadhak to let go of his body and his mind, to surrender to the Divine within himself, to observe the subtle internal movements of Prana Shakti as it works on eliminating the Koshas (layers) which keep him from experiencing his true self, and to enjoy the bliss and calm that come from actually experiencing it. We urge Sadhaks to do this daily so they can make rapid spiritual progress and have more prolonged and regular experiences of this bliss. If a Sadhak really begins to enjoy the blissful state, there is nothing to keep him from sitting for Sadhan for longer than an hour and perhaps even more frequently than once a day. With this in mind, we do not recommend using an alarm to time your Sadhan. However, if the time you can devote to Sadhan is restricted due to other

Answers to questions from Sadhaks (continued)

commitments, you may use an alarm, especially if it will make it easier for you to relax and to let yourself surrender to Prana Shakti during Sadhan without worrying about being late for work.

- **Question:** I am a Sadhak and more recently I have found myself not wanting to socialize much, wanting to avoid crowds and such other behavior? Am I becoming anti-social? Should I be concerned about this at all?

Answer: Many Sadhaks experience Virakti (disinterest/non-attachment to worldly things) whereby they begin to see no value in frivolous socializing, engaging in gossip, in uninvited and excessive talking and being in crowded situations. They find that they can enjoy solitude more than they have in the past, which also brings about a sense of calm and equanimity in their day-to-day lives. This indicates that you are making progress on your spiritual path and in your Sadhan. It will help you develop a sense of non-attachment and this is a good thing, nothing to get concerned about.

Being non-attached does not mean that you will become anti-social and avoid any and all interactions with society. It means that you can continue to function in society as a fully-functioning member but without the attachment most members of society have to material and worldly things. In fact, this will enable you to function more efficiently and effectively in society compared to others who are solely driven by material advancement and in some of the superficial things society has to offer. You should not at all be concerned about this. It is indicative of the progress you are making toward achieving a state where your worldly attachments and aversions are gradually getting diminished.

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

Universal Brotherhood Day and Global Maha Yoga Trial - May 16th, 2010 from 6:05 am to 6:26 am local time

P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj would like to invite everyone on this earth to participate in a Universal Brotherhood Day and Global Introductory Trial of Maha Yoga Shaktipat (Siddhayoga) for the uplift of all humankind. This introductory trial will be held on May 16th, 2010, from 6:05 am to 6:26 am local time. Those interested can participate during that time at no cost, from the privacy of their own homes. All are eligible to participate in this trial regardless of religion, race, sex, age, caste or creed. This world-wide trial can be considered to be a “trailer” or a precursor for the awakening of one’s Kundalini Shakti (Universal Life Energy) through Shaktipat (transfer of Energy) from a Siddha Yoga Master. It is a rare opportunity to experience first-hand such a transmission of Energy from a Siddha Guru.

Here’s how to participate:

- At the designated time (on May 16th, 2010, from 6:05 am to 6:26 am local time) sit comfortably with your eyes closed in a quiet location in your home. Instantly observe a wave of energy along your spinal column.
- Relax your body completely in order to minimize the awareness of your body.
- Let your mind observe your involuntary breathing.
- Observe your experiences during the designated time interval and if you wish you may share them by e-mail with P. P. Narayan Kaka Maharaj at (mahayoga_kaka@yahoo.com).

Upcoming Events:

Deeksha Day (Initiation Day) on May 16th, 2010

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

Universal Brotherhood Day/Global Maha Yoga Trial on May 16th, 2010

Please see announcement on the previous page

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).



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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. Seek and provide guidance on Siddha/Maha Yoga
5. Share news about Siddha/Maha Yoga events around the
world

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

self.awakening@gmail.com

We're on the Web!

<http://www.mahayoga.org/>

May all desire to follow this nectarous Siddhayoga Path!