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.
The Ephemeral World

In those days Maharajshri used to go up the hill on his morning walk. The hill was very different then. There were no paths, no trees and no electricity. Dewas was the only city in India that had been ruled by two kings. The city had been divided into two sections, namely, Badi Pati [Old Dewas] and Choti Pati [New Dewas]. The hill was equally divided between the two sections. The temple of the Mother Goddess of Old Dewas was in New Dewas and the temple for the Mother Goddess of New Dewas was in Old Dewas. A pathway with steps to climb the hill was in Old Dewas, and there was a walkway to New Dewas. However these divisions did not exist after the recent abolition of the princely states in India when Dewas became a district. The city was now like one big village with a population of 12-14,000 people.

We had reached the top of the hill. Maharajshri was facing the city of Dewas. He said, “This world is so mutable. At one time there were two kingdoms and now there is one district. Newer boundaries are formed and broken. There are no borders in the world; they are all imaginary. The borders change with changes in imagination. New countries come into existence and disappear. New organizations are created and come to an end. New
principles, traditions and languages are created, and with the passage of time they exist only in the pages of history. A line is drawn; a country’s formation is announced. It is considered holy and people are ready to die for it in the name of patriotism. One principle is formed, some rules are made, an organization is made, a new religion is named, and people grow attached to it and are ready to die for it. Then a time comes when that country, that language and that culture all come to an end. The wheel of time keeps moving and new countries, languages, religions, traditions, systems of thought, art forms and cultures rise and fall. People create divisions in their country, language and religion. They even segregate scriptures and great personalities. The wheel of time continues to move, and neither are the people alive any longer, nor are their faiths and beliefs. Everything changes. Perhaps, therefore, the world is said to be a play. New actors come, show their skills, and then go backstage. The only thing that remains is the thundering sound of applause. That, too, is momentary, and eventually is lost in the skies.

“When small kingdoms existed here the royal families were in power. Their language was the official language. Their culture was the culture of the society. Their food habits, way of dressing, and so forth, influenced their citizens. They had authority; they were special. Today they stand in the same line as a common citizen. There was an age of Hitler. The whole world shivered at the sound of his name. If he lifted his finger toward a country, it would surrender. A day followed when it was hard even to find his corpse. People, countries, languages and artists keep on changing. The world goes on. There was a time when the sun never set on the British Empire.

“It is said that once upon a time the entire Earth was one single land mass. Slowly it broke up into Asia, Africa, America and other continents. Many islands emerged from the ocean beds. It is also said that where the Himalayas are standing high today, there once was the deepest ocean in the world. Sometimes ice from the North Pole melts away, and at other times ice from the South Pole. Once upon a time the Ganges River used to meet the ocean near Panipat [a city in North India]. Rajasthan [a western state in India with many deserts] was a sea. The world is changeable. If some great change takes place suddenly then people take notice, but change is going on at every moment, all the time.

“Change is an intrinsic quality of nature. Just like the world, changes take place in the body, too. First of all, we see many different colors, shapes, sizes and languages among humans. Some are accustomed to living in icy, cold weather and cannot stand heat. Some live in hot places and cannot stand cold. Even within the human body itself changes go on. A child comes into existence from who knows where, and does not attain youth in a moment. The process moves slowly. The process of daily change goes unnoticed. The young man does not become old in one day. Yes, death can come anytime, just as someone completes his performance and leaves the stage at once. Death itself is a major change; it is like a curtain falling on the ever-changing life. Besides, the body also sometimes feels more energetic and sometimes weak; sometimes it is healthy and sometimes sick; sometimes hungry, sleepy, lazy and refreshed. Thus the body also does not remain the same.
“The chitta [psyche], just like the body and the world, is also a part of nature. The body is a miniature form of the world. The chitta spreads out and manifests in the form of the physical body. The only difference is that the body and the world are physical and visible, whereas the chitta, being subtle, cannot be seen. As far as change is concerned, it takes place in the chitta also. The state of the chitta changes constantly. Sometimes the influence of tamo guna [inertial tendencies] becomes overwhelming and the onslaught of deficiency, laziness, sluggishness, indulgence, anger, sleep, and so forth, increases. Sometimes it is under the influence of rajo guna [quality of activity] and it runs around in the world. Sometimes it is ruled by sattva guna [harmonious tendencies] and it does good deeds, prays and meditates. Then the chitta manifests good qualities such as calmness, compassion, tolerance, generosity, sobriety, and so forth. Just as the world and body keep changing, so does the predominance of the gunas [the three qualities mentioned above]. They are never in balance. If a perfect balance of the gunas occurs then the body, the world and the chitta will cease to exist.

“Vasanas [psychic tendencies] and samskaras [accumulated impressions] play a vital role in the changes within the state of the chitta. Shakti always vibrates on the basis of the chitta, but strengthening these vibrations and changing their direction is the work of vasanas. These vibrations of Shakti ultimately manifest in the form of modifications of the mind. There are innumerable variations, forms and levels of mental modifications. Desire, anger, greed, jealousy, hatred, and so forth, are different types of modifications. These modifications take place when true knowledge has arisen, when there are false assumptions or when baseless illusions fill up the mind. When a specific feeling arises in the mind, then others subside. The mind is considered fickle when it rapidly jumps from one subject to another and displays different feelings. Fickle-mindedness is defined as an effort to focus attention on the mutable. The body and the world are manifested forms of the vibrations of Shakti. The greater the focus on these, the greater the inconstancy of the chitta.

“When anger arises in the chitta, the signs and symptoms of anger generally show in the face. Some people suppress anger inside; nevertheless there is a change in the chitta. This is true for other feelings, mental modifications and mental events. Events within the chitta [psyche] affect the world, and the sense organs act in the world according to the effects on the body. Sometimes the chitta affects the world, and sometimes the world influences the chitta by bringing the mental tendencies to the surface. This body is the link between the world and the chitta.

“The world, the body and the chitta are like waves. A wave rises, takes form, and then disappears. The body takes form in the world. It goes through childhood, youth and old age and then disappears. In the chitta, feelings, thoughts and resolves arise and then disappear. Spirituality is the name of that force which detaches you from these effects, changes and waves. An individual soul caught in a wave goes up and down with the tide and takes a form in accordance with the wave. When one wave subsides a new one takes its place and the being becomes involved in that. The world is the result of the vibration of Shakti and the imbalance in the three gunas, but the main problem for a being is not the world, but the
vibration and imbalance in the chitta. The jiva has grabbed the world because of that. For the same reason one is entangled in the waves of the world and has fallen from his real state.

“The Ramayana has an episode related to Kak Bhushundi. [Kak Bhushundi is an immortal being living in the form of a crow since the beginning of all manifestation.] He was detached from the world and watched the activities and changes in the world as a divine sport of God. He was not affected by Maya, the grand illusion, or in other words, was not influenced by these changes. Kak Bhushundi is an ideal to follow in spirituality. There were others before him who were also ideals, but for a common person he is the greatest ideal. It is not easy to attain this goal. We have established oneness with the waves of the world. Kak Bhushundi did not attain his detached state in just one lifetime. He fell many times and got up every time. For many births he remained firm on the path of spirituality. And eventually, with the grace of God, he attained this state.

“Shakti does the same thing after Awakening. For a short time it makes the individual soul like Kak Bhushundi. It makes him stand on the side and watch the play of Shakti. This state does not last forever, as is the case with Kak Bhushundi, and is only an example. The sadhak goes beyond Maya for a short period of time and watches the play of Shakti on the stage of his chitta [psyche], independent of himself. He understands what he has to do and where he has to go in the future. The samskaras that were the cause of his happiness and misery so far now become the basis for the workings of Shakti. The chitta, which was colored by vasanas until then, now appears before the individual soul, the observer, in the form of the activities of the Shakti. If a sadhak thinks about it he recognizes this as a great attainment. It is a powerful ray of hope for a being wandering in the dark. It is a support for the unsupported. It is a guide post for a lost soul. This is a rope by which the individual can reach the Self.

“It is the duty of the individual to take this from the level of practice to the level of natural behavior. If the aspirant is honest and committed then Shakti will definitely help to the fullest extent. The state of an observer that is attained during meditation should be brought to physical and worldly levels. This is not just a matter of the aspirant’s efforts. The role of Shakti is very important, and the effort and surrender of the aspirant are also important. It is the responsibility of the aspirant to maintain a balance between effort and surrender.

“When Shakti turns accumulated impressions [samskaras] into kriyas before they become mental tendencies [vasanas], at that time the basis of kriyas is samskaras and not vasanas. Kriyas may be in accordance with the vasanas or samskaras. Samskaras do not have an opportunity to transform into action through the mind and senses. This is what is called “burning samskaras in the fire of yoga.” Here samskaras lose the potential of sprouting in the future. Burned samskaras cannot develop, even while performing actions. Thus the process of purification of the chitta continues further. Eventually a state of mind develops in which, just like Kak Bhushundi, an aspirant becomes a witness and observes the changes in the body and mind like a movie, separate from the Self.
“Generally an aspirant is unable to maintain such awareness even during Sadhan. His ego, attachment and selfishness do not let him settle into a state of surrender. He feels a sense of ego and attachment towards his kriyas. Consequently the samskaras, instead of becoming like burnt seeds, begin to sprout and the sequence of progress is stalled.”

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
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks

Question: I have been practicing the Introductory Approach to Maha Yoga for quite some time now. These days when I sit for Sadhan (meditation) most of the time my body experiences trembling and shaking and I feel like an electric current is moving inside my body. Sometimes I also experience divine smells and feel elated. I have applied for Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha and I am very eager to experience enlightenment with the divine grace of the Guru, but I would like to know the meaning of what I have been experiencing lately during Sadhan.

Answer: If you have been practicing the Introductory Approach to Maha Yoga for quite some time, it is quite likely that your Prana Shakti has already been awakened. The Introductory Practice has the blessings of P. P. Kaka Maharaj behind it, so it is in a way a mini Deeksha. So, there is nothing to worry about if you are already experiencing the Kriyas (involuntary activities) you have described, such as the shaking of your body, the feeling of energy flow within your body and the sensing of divine smells. These are indications that the Prana Shakti within you has already become awakened.

The Deeksha will hopefully further enhance the awakening that has already happened and will give direction to the awakened Prana Shakti. Please sit for Deeksha and subsequent Sadhan with a sense of surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you; allowing Her to be the doer while you put yourself in the role of an observer; without any expectations, anticipation or fear of any specific Kriyas; and with an open mind for accepting whatever happens with patience and surrender.

Question: I took Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha a few months ago having done Sadhana for many years as a follower of an effort-based Yoga practice. While I feel like my nature has changed and I have become calmer since Deeksha and I feel some tingling sensations during Maha Yoga Sadhan, I do not feel like I had any divine experiences or Kriyas (involuntary activities) during the Deeksha or during the Sadhan since then.

More recently, after having received guidance on Maha Yoga from senior Sadhaks and having read some of the material at the Maha Yoga website (www.mahayoga.org) and in past issues of the Self Awakening e-newsletter (archived at http://mahayoga.org/selfawakening.aspx), I have now a much better understanding of Maha Yoga than I had when I received Deeksha. I feel now, that perhaps I did not experience the Kriyas, etc. during Deeksha because I had not understood what Maha Yoga was all about, that it is an effortless Yoga practice, quite different from the effort-based Yoga practice I had been practicing prior to Deeksha. I was also quite skeptical about Maha Yoga then, although following discussions with senior Sadhaks I am now convinced that Maha Yoga is for real. I feel unfortunate that I was unprepared and skeptical when I was scheduled to receive Deeksha the last time, so I am now wondering if the Deeksha actually happened then, and whether I should apply for Deeksha once again now that I understand what Maha Yoga is all about and I am no longer skeptical about it. Please advise me on this.
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Answer: You do not need to feel unfortunate or consider yourself as less fortunate than others because you think you did not experience Kriyas during or after Maha Yoga Deeksha. The experiences of Deeksha and Sadhan are very different for each Sadhak. You may or may not have experienced any physical Kriyas, but it does not mean that you were not initiated. If you sat for initiation on the designated day and were ready to get initiated, then you certainly have been initiated, no matter what.

Please understand that different Sadhaks get different experiences, or some may not get any experiences at all. Experiencing Kriyas, etc. is not the objective of Maha Yoga Sadhan. The objective is gradual Self Enlightenment and the approach is to sit sincerely for Maha Yoga Sadhan with an attitude of surrendering to the awakened Prana Shakti within you and just be an observer of things that happen to you while you sit for Sadhan. Also, please note that some Kriyas are so subtle that our human body may not become aware that they are in fact happening.

Having said all that, I understand your skepticism about whether or not Deeksha actually happened to you on the day you were scheduled to receive it. But Deeksha clearly happened to you on that day. The key indicator is not just the tingling sensations that you feel/felt during Deeksha and Sadhan, but the fact that your “nature has changed” and you have “become calmer” in your day-to-day life. The feeling of actual change for the better in your nature is a clear indication of the Deeksha having happened.

So, instead of worrying about it and getting concerned about whether or not you were “worthy” of having received Deeksha on account of any doubts/skepticism or the limited knowledge you might have had about Maha Yoga, please be assured that Deeksha has already happened and sit for Sadhan without any concerns about your “worthiness”. The average human being is not as fortunate as you are to even become aware of Maha Yoga, let aside having a desire to receive Maha Yoga Deeksha and to have it happen. Clearly, it is only due to the good Karma from your past lives.

So, there is no need for you to request Deeksha on the next Deeksha Day. But I would suggest that you sit for Sadhan on that day at 6:00 am, as we urge all Sadhaks do on every Deeksha Day. And please sit for Sadhan every day with an attitude of surrendering to the awakened Prana Shakti within you, allowing her to be the “doer” (Karta), without having any desire or expectation for specific Kriyas to happen or not happen, and simply observe what happens by putting yourself in the role of a Sakshi (observer). If the Kriyas that may be happening are too subtle for you to notice, simply observe your normal and automatic breathing as it happens, without exerting any effort on your part. That is the one effortless Kriya that we all can observe as long as we are alive.

Question: Is Mahayoga Deeksha the number one path to experience enlightenment? What about other paths and Gurus? I have been doing Upasana (Yoga practice) suggested by a Gurudev belonging to Narasimha Saraswati Guru Parampara for some time now. However I
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

have received Mahayoga Deeksha from P. P. Niturkar Maharaj a few months ago, hence I am a bit confused as to whom I should regard as the Guru. Also, should I continue my other Upasana in parallel to Mahayoga Sadhan? Please guide me since I am somewhat confused.

Answer: Maha Yoga Deeksha is the easiest, simplest and the most effortless path to experience self-enlightenment. When Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha happens, the Prana Shakti within a Sadhak gets effortlessly and instantly awakened, i.e. the normally externally-directed Prana Shakti becomes inward-directed in an instant. Other effort-based Yoga paths can also result in the awakening of the Prana Shakti within a Sadhak, but they require years of effort under the guidance of a competent Guru, just to have the awakening happen, not to mention the subsequent time and effort needed to actually attain self-enlightenment. Please read the Article on Maha Yoga, Parts 1, 2, 3 and 4, which appeared in the August 2008, November 2008, February 2009 and May 2009 issues of our Self Awakening e-newsletter (archived at http://mahayoga.org/selfawakening.aspx). That article clearly describes how and why the Maha Yoga path is the best path to put a Sadhak on the road to self-enlightenment.

As for other Gurus, there are several branches of the Maha Yoga Parampara (lineage), and if the Guru in the Parampara that a Sadhak is following is a Maha Yoga Siddha Guru, i.e. a Guru capable of bestowing the gift of Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha on a Sadhak, and the Deeksha actually happens, then it is fine for the Sadhak to consider that Siddha Guru as his Guru. But Gurus in effort-based Yoga practices are not capable of directly awakening the Prana Shakti within a Sadhak, so, while it is fine for the Sadhak to also consider such guides as his Gurus and continue with such effort-based practices, he should not do such practices when he is sitting for Maha Yoga Sadhan. When he sits for Maha Yoga Sadhan, the Sadhak should not make any effort of any sort; he should simply surrender himself to the awakened Prana Shakti, the Guru Tattva (the spiritual essence of the Guru and the lineage) within him, and allow her to be the “doer” (Karta), with the Sadhak simply observing what happens, essentially playing the role of an observer (Sakshi).

When a Sadhak is not sitting for Maha Yoga Sadhan, it is fine for him to do the practices of effort-based Yoga paths, provided he does those practices only for the sake of performing a “duty”, i.e. without developing any attachments to such practices. I am not sure what Upasana you are doing following the instructions of your Guru from the Narasimha Saraswati Parampara, but I think it would be fine for you to continue that Upasana as long as you don’t do it with intent when you sit for Maha Yoga Sadhan. And when you do such Upasana, please do it with a sense of duty rather than with a sense of attachment to the Upasana itself. Incidentally, recent stalwarts in our Maha Yoga Parampara, such as P. P. Gulvani Maharaj and P. P. Kaka Maharaj were also followers of Datta Sampradaya, which the Narasimha Saraswati Parampara is a part of.

Since you were initiated by P. P. Niturkar Maharaj you may consider him as your Deeksha Guru. It is important to keep in mind, though, that Maha Yoga Deeksha is a Deeksha that
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

comes from the Deeksha Guru’s Parampara (lineage), not just from the Deeksha Guru himself/herself. So, all Deeksha Gurus in our Parampara ask Sadhaks to consider the stalwarts of our Parampara as their Gurus. P. P. Niturkar Maharaj comes from the same Parampara as P. P. Kaka Maharaj and P. P. Prabhune Maharaj, a Parampara that can be traced in relatively recent history to P. P. Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj in the mid-1800s, but goes back much further, all the way to Lord Shiva. If you are interested in details about our Parampara you can find them in the February 2010, August 2010, November 2010, and May 2011 issues of our Self Awakening e-newsletter archived at http://mahayoga.org/selfawakening.aspx. By the way, there is nothing wrong in having multiple Gurus. Lord Dattatreya himself had 24 Gurus.

Question: Is there any difference in the transmission of the Guru Tattva (the spiritual essence of the Guru and the lineage) when a sadhak is initiated into Maha Yoga Deeksha by filling an online form (Prarthana Patra), or receives Deeksha directly at the Maha Yoga Ashrams in Nashik, Pune, or elsewhere in India in the physical presence of a Siddha Guru? How is it that through an online initiation request (Prarthana Patra) does a Sadhak’s Kundalini Shakti get automatically activated at the designated date and time in the comfort of one’s own home, without actually being in the presence of the Siddha Guru? (Questions from a Sadhak in the U. K.)

Answer: There is no difference between the Maha Yoga Deeksha that happens for a Sadhak who has applied online compared to a Sadhak who gets initiated in the personal presence of a Siddha Guru. Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha is a Sankalpa (intent-based) Deeksha that happens as a result of the Shaktipat-capable (Siddha) Guru praying to his Guru and to the Guru Parampara (lineage) before him, going all the way to the energy (God, if you want to call it) that created the universe, to awaken the Prana Shakti (Universal Life Energy) in all Sadhaks who have earnestly requested it. Because the Deeksha is caused by the Guru’s Sankalpa (intent), the Sadhak’s physical location is not at all important. She just needs to be in a private place where she will not get disturbed by what is happening around her or disturb others by what happens to her during Deeksha. Incidentally, all the other forms of Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha that require the Sadhak to be in the Guru’s presence, such as Deeksha by touch, sight or through the conveyance of a Mantra by the Guru to the Sadhak, only happen because of the Sankalpa, i.e. the Guru’s intent that lies behind each of these Deeksha forms. If the Guru does not have his/her intent backing up the touch/sight/Mantra, the Deeksha just won’t happen.

In order to understand why Sankalpa Deeksha happens when it is intended to happen for a Sadhak by a Siddha Guru, let us take help of an analogy. A radio station keeps playing various programs 24 hours a day, but in order to listen to a certain channel, you have to tune in to a specific frequency and then you can listen to the programs being broadcast on that channel. Your location does not matter as long as you stay within the range of the radio station.
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

In the case of Mahayoga Deeksha, the ‘range of the radio station’ is the entire world. The Sadhak can be anywhere in the world, she will still get initiated at the designated date and time because of the Guru’s intent. All of us, as human beings, have the same Chaitanya (Universal Life Energy/Prana Shakti), irrespective of the differences related to language, religion, gender, etc. A Deeksha-capable Guru, i.e. a Siddha Guru, has the ability to merge his/her Prana Shakti with the Prana Shakti within the Sadhak at the time of Deeksha, if the Sadhak allows it to happen. And when this happens, the normally externally-directed Prana Shakti within the Sadhak becomes internally-directed, i.e. the Prana Shakti within the Sadhak becomes “awakened”, i.e. the Deeksha happens. For the Deeksha to happen, therefore, two things have to be present. First, a Siddha Guru needs to make a Sankalpa (intent/thought) and pray to the ultimate power to initiate those who are eager to get initiated (at the designated date and time). Second, the Sadhak has to have a strong desire to get initiated and be willing to make a commitment to sit for Sadhan every day and to follow certain rules and restrictions (mentioned on our website www.mahayoga.org), i.e. the Sadhak’s Chitta (mind stuff) has to be open to get initiated. When these two things are present, the Deeksha happens. That’s all there is to it.

**Question:** I have recently received Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) and I have a question regarding the Maha Yoga Sadhan method. I generally tend to think a lot by nature and hence face some difficulty during Sadhan. Specifically, while observing my breathing in and out I often tend to think about other things and hence lose track of observing my breathing. When I realize it I again begin observing my breathing but because of these distractions, which happen quiet often, I get disturbed and don't get the required flow in Sadhan. Also, I often tend to interrupt myself periodically during Sadhan by observing the time elapsed. Therefore, although I sit for Sadhan for the suggested time of one hour, I don't do it at one stretch and hence don't derive the maximum enjoyment. This happens due to poor concentration on my part and perhaps a lack of determination. Please suggest a way to overcome this and perhaps improve my ability to concentrate? Also I would like to know whether having a good ability to concentrate is a prerequisite for good Maha Yoga Sadhan.

**Answer:** First, let me address your question about the Sadhan “method”. It is important to understand that Maha Yoga Sadhan is not an effort-based “Sadhana” as is common for effort-based Yoga practices. One does not “do” Maha Yoga Sadhan. Maha Yoga Sadhan “happens”, it is not “done”. So, there is no “method” to “doing” Maha Yoga Sadhan.

Secondly, there is no standard for what is the “required flow in Sadhan”. The Sadhan that happens when you sit for Sadhan will be very different from the Sadhan that happens when another Sadhak sits for Sadhan. The Sadhan that happens when you sit for Sadhan is exactly what you need given the Samskaras (impressions) your Chitta has accumulated over your current and past lives, and where you are on your Maha Yoga path. So, there is absolutely no need to get disturbed and be unduly concerned about how your Sadhan is progressing.
relative to how you think it should be progressing. Just the fact that you are beginning to realize that perhaps your mind is somewhat overactive is an important first step.

Having said all that, here are some things to consider when you sit for Sadhan, especially given that you are a recently initiated Sadhak.

First, please do not time yourself during Sadhan. Just sit for Sadhan without being concerned about exactly how long you will be sitting. Just note the time when you sit. If you find yourself feeling that your Sadhan is finished and realize that it has only been 15 minutes since you began, simply close your eyes and observe your normal breathing and the Sadhan will resume. Do not get distressed about having felt that your Sadhan finished early; just close your eyes and allow Sadhan to continue. And when you do so, simply surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you; don’t anticipate whether you might feel once again that your Sadhan is done, only to find that another 15 minutes have elapsed and get worried about that happening. If it does happen, once again just close your eyes and direct your attention to your normal breathing and your Sadhan will resume automatically.

What you are experiencing can be called “performance anxiety”, a fairly common situation for new Sadhaks. Please understand that there are no “performance standards” for Maha Yoga Sadhan. Maha Yoga Sadhan is not a performance by you, since you are not the “doer”, simply the observer. The awakened Prana Shakti within you is the doer (Karta), so simply allow her to do what is needed by closing your eyes and allowing her to resume Sadhan. Gradually, with regular daily Sadhan, you will find that the one hour of Sadhan will pass without you even noticing it, and you may find yourself sitting for Sadhan for much longer duration. Be sure to let us know your concerns when that happens 😊.

Second, it is quite common for thoughts to arise as one is observing one’s breathing. When that happens, please do not get distressed; just note that it happened and redirect your attention to your normal breathing. The fact that you become aware that you are thinking about other things and not observing your breathing indicates that you are beginning to put yourself in the “observer” (Sakshi) role. Otherwise you would have simply followed the train of thoughts and might not even have noticed that you are no longer observing your breathing. Please do not try to suppress the thoughts when they arise. Just observe the fact that the thoughts have arisen and redirect your attention to your breathing. The random arising of thoughts is itself a type of Kriya. Gradually, as you gain Sadhan experience, instead of redirecting your attention to your normal breathing (thus observing your breathing - a physical Kriya), you might find yourself “observing” your thoughts as they arise (mental Kriyas) and also the “gap” between two thoughts. It is in the experience of the “gap” between thoughts that one begins to get a glimmer of self-enlightenment.

As for your question regarding whether “good concentration” is required for Maha Yoga and what one can “do” to improve concentration; good concentration is not a requisite for Maha Yoga practice - it is in fact a byproduct. As we go along the Maha Yoga path, especially as we find ourselves in the Sakshi role observing our thoughts, improved concentration becomes
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

a byproduct of Maha Yoga Sadhan. So, even though you consider yourself to perhaps have an overactive mind, please note that the very fact that you have begun to observe during Maha Yoga Sadhan that you strayed from observing your breath to observing that your mind was pursuing a train of thoughts, suggests that your concentration will improve with Maha Yoga Sadhan. You don’t need to make any effort in this regard, it will just gradually happen. Sit for Sadhan daily with a sense of surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you, observe what happens without having any attachments to or aversion for any specific Kriyas, and accept what happens with patience and detachment.

Editor’s note: Please send your questions regarding Maha Yoga and Shaktipat to: self.awakening@gmail.com.
Parmahans Parivrajakacharya (P. P.) 1008 Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj was one of the pioneers of the Vedic tradition of Kundalini Shaktipat Yoga in modern times (see “Our Maha Yoga lineage - Part 4” in the May 2011 issue of Self Awakening archived at https://tinyurl.com/ybm598qe for a short biography). His disciples, Param Pujya (P. P.) Shri Yogiraj Gulavani Maharaj and Param Pujya Shri Narayan Dhekan Kaka Maharaj propagated this Yogic tradition all over India and the world, benefitting tens of thousands of seekers (Sadhaks) of all races, religions and creeds.

This year (2017) marks the 125th anniversary of P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj’s birth in Dhaka, in what is now Bangladesh. The well-known National Kirtankar (singer of devotional music), P. P. Moreshwar Buwa Joshi (Charholikar), who was authorized by P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj to bestow Shaktipat Deeksha, took it upon himself to lead an effort to re-establish for the first time since the partition of India in 1947, a Maha Yoga center honoring P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj near the location of his birth on the 125th anniversary of his birth.

The origin of this initiative can be traced back to the Birth Centenary celebrations for P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj held in Nashik, India, in 1992, when P. P. Charholikar Maharaj performed 101 Kirtans (performances of devotional songs and stories) on the life of P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj. At that event, P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj, who had organized the celebrations, and the chief guest, P. P. Shri Shivom Tirth Swami Maharaj, urged P. P. Charholikar Maharaj to perform a Kirtan at the birth place of Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj in Dhaka in Bangladesh.

This seemingly impossible assignment (given the limited tolerance of non-Islamic traditions in Bangladesh) looked feasible when nearly 20 years later, in the month of November 2011, P. P. Shri Charholikar Maharaj met Shri Nitin Deshpande who was very familiar with how to get things done in Bangladesh having conducted business in that country for many years. Shri Deshpande readily agreed to provide all necessary help and P. P. Shri Charholikar Maharaj keenly took this opportunity and visited Dhaka in late November 2011 (see report of that visit in the February 2012 issue of Self Awakening archived at https://tinyurl.com/y7f73zcy ). He was received with honor by the priests of the Dhakeshwari temple, the birthplace of P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj, who granted him the rare privilege of entering the sanctum sanctorum to perform the Puja (ritual worship) of the Goddess. While there, P. P. Shri Charholikar Maharaj experienced the strong
P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj’s Padukas installed near his birth site in Bangladesh (continued)

spiritual energy of Dhakeshwari Mata (Mother Goddess) and entered into a trance in which he received a command from the Mother to establish a temple commemorating P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj in Bangladesh. P. P. Shri Charholikar Maharaj immediately offered Puja to Dhakeshwari Mata and offered a coconut as a token of his acceptance of her command.

The ideal site for such a temple would have been on the grounds of the Dhakeshwari temple itself, the birth location of P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj. But since the Dhakeshwari temple is under the control of the Bangladesh Government, it would not have been possible to establish such a temple there. A suitable site was located at the Kalimata temple in Kalibari (Palash district), 30 km from Dhaka, and it was decided that Padukas (wooden clogs) representing P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj, would be consecrated and installed at that location. Accordingly, Shri Mahaganesh Adhishtaan (institution) and the Shaktipat Mahayoga Ashram in Pune, India began collaborating with the Shri Shri Yogamaya Ashram in Kalibari, Bangladesh, under the leadership of P. P. Shri Charholikar Maharaj to make that happen.

On 12th April 2016, wooden Padukas of Shri Swami Maharaj were consecrated and ritually worshipped at the Mayuresh Ganesh temple in Pune. P. P. Shri Charholikar Maharaj also guided the consecration of idols of Shri Ganesh and Shri Hanuman at the same location. Thereafter Shri Nitin Deshpande carried the portable Padukas to Bangladesh where they were ritually worshipped at the Dhakeshwari temple in Dhaka and also at the Kalimata and Shri Krishna temples in Kalibari, where 700 devotees participated in singing Bhajans (devotional songs). The Padukas were also taken to Madaripur and Vinotiya (the sites of the Ashrams of P. P. 1008 Shri Narayan Tirth Swami Maharaj, the Param Guru (Guru’s Guru) of P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj) for worship. The Padukas were brought back to Pune and it was decided to continue the series of Pujans (ritual worship) in various holy places in India, before finally installing them and the idols of Shri Ganesh and Shri Hanuman at the Kalimata temple in Kalibari, Bangladesh from February 6th to the 12th earlier this year, in time for the 125th Birth Anniversary of P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth

Swami Maharaj on May 9th, 2017.

Monday 6th Feb.2017: P .P. Shri Charholikar Maharaj, along with devotees from Pune reached Kalibari, Bangladesh and were enthusiastically and ceremoniously received by local devotees.
Tuesday 7th Feb.2017: P. P. Shri Charholikar Maharaj offered ritual worship to Dhakeshwari Mata and submitted the program for Her blessings. He then went to the Indian High Commission, accompanied by Shri Nitin Deshpande and personally extended invitations to the events to Shri Ramakant Gupta, First Secretary, and to other officers, duly honoring them with shawls and mementoes.

Wednesday 8th Feb.2017: Preparatory rituals and religious ceremonies of the idols were performed. One hundred and twenty five virgins were ritually worshipped in honor of Kalimata (Mother Goddess). In the evening, P. P. Shri Krishnadas Maharaj and P. P. Shri Charholikar Maharaj gave religious discourses, followed by a ceremonial procession of devotees carrying the Padukas of P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj in the streets around the temple.

Thursday 9th Feb.2017: On this auspicious day of Gurupushyamrut Yoga, the idols of Shri Mayureshwar Ganesh and Shri Hanuman along with the Padukas of P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj were ceremoniously installed at the Kalimata temple. One hundred and twenty five Suvasinis (married women) were ritually worshipped with offerings of Saris, blouse-pieces and money. This was followed by Satsang and Bengali cultural programs in the evening.

Friday 10th Feb.2017: A public function commemorating the renovation of the temple and idol installations was conducted. It was attended by Hon. First Secretary Shri Ramakant Gupta, Hon. Dibanjan Roy, Hon. Zaiuddin Kabir, Hon. Nitin Deshpande, Hon. Sujit Chakrabarty, Hon. Zahir Samsheri, Hon. Suresh Bhattacharya and others, who expressed their appreciation in their speeches that followed. In the evening the famous violin maestro Mukul Datta gave a scintillating music performance.

Saturday 11th Feb.2017: The devotees from Pune led by P. P. Shri Charholikar Maharaj visited local temples in Kalibari. They honored the devotees in those temples with Dhotis and monetary offerings. They also distributed pictures of stalwarts of the Maha Yoga Guru Parampara (lineage) and copies of the Bhagavad Gita. In the evenings following a Bengali cultural program, Mrs. Smita Deshpande and P. P. Shri Charholikar Maharaj performed Kirtans (devotional singing and storytelling). The evening concluded with Maha Aarati (ritual worship with 125 lamps) of all the deities in the temple.
Throughout these proceedings the enthusiasm of local Bangladeshi brothers and sisters and their love for their Indian counterparts impressed everyone, as also evidenced by the tearful farewell at the India-Bangladesh border. Everyone was convinced that the events of the past few days had strengthened the India-Bangladesh friendship and brotherhood.

In conclusion, it can be said that this historical event was made possible by divine inspiration, the bold initiative of P. P. Shri Charholikar Maharaj and the tireless efforts of Shri Nitin Deshpande and the devotees of Shri Mahaganesh Adhishtaan. For the first time after India’s independence and partition, an Indian Kirtankar visited Bangladesh, was received and honored as a Dharma guru there and performed Naaradiya Kirtan (in the tradition of Naarad Muni, an ancient seer). After returning to India, P. P. Shri Charholikar Maharaj and his party were congratulated and felicitated widely for this historic achievement. We congratulate them once again for this remarkable achievement and wish them success in their future endeavors.

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

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

Phone: +91-253-2311616
Upcoming Events:

Deeksha Day (Initiation Day) on August 24th, 2017
Those desirous of receiving Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) should go to the website: www.mahayoga.org for instructions. The online application form is also available at the website.

Maha Yoga Sadhan Shibirs (workshops) at Nashik Ashram
The Nashik Ashram holds Maha Yoga Sadhan Shibirs on the first Sunday of each month from 8 am to 2 pm. Sadhaks sit for Samuhik (Communal) Sadhan, which is followed by a discourse on Yoga. Maha Prasad (lunch) is also served. About 250 Sadhaks typically attend this monthly event. These and other events at the Nashik Ashram and at other locations are posted at http://www.mahayoga.org/progcal.aspx.

The Nashik Ashram is located at:
P.P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Mahayoga Trust
P.P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Chowk, Shrirang Nagar, Gangapur Road, Nashik 422013, Maharashtra, India.
Tel. no.: +91 - 253 - 2311616

Lecture Series at the Maha Yoga Ashram in Thane, Maharashtra, India
The Thane Ashram hosts a series of lectures/talks on Maha Yoga and Yoga on the first Sunday of every month.

The Thane Ashram is located at:
A/9 Sector # 7, Behind Omega Apartments
Vasant Bungalow, Shree Nagar, Wagle Estate, Thane 400604, India

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

We have an active discussion group at: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kundalinishaktipatayoga/
Please feel free to post messages there about Maha Yoga, the website, or this e-newsletter. You will need to join the group to read or post messages.

We also have a Facebook page, Mahayoga World at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/mahayogaworld.

We also recently began 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

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May all desire to follow this nectarous Siddhayoga Path!