Editor’s note

Dear Readers:

The purpose of this quarterly newsletter, Self Awakening, is to inform Sadhaks (seekers of self-realization) and other readers about Maha Yoga, an effortless, joyful and no cost path to Self-Realization.

P. P. Shri Narayan Kaka Maharaj of Nashik, India was a leading teacher and exponent of Maha Yoga, a centuries old tradition, whereby a realized Guru (Siddha Guru) awakens the Universal Life Energy (Kundalini) within the Sadhak, eventually leading him/her to self-realization. This ancient tradition (Parampara) continues under the leadership of several Siddha Gurus, including the fourteen designated by P. P. Kaka Maharaj as Deekshadhikaris (those authorized to initiate Sadhaks into Maha Yoga). Additional details about Maha Yoga are available at www.mahayoga.org.

To the thousands of Sadhaks in the Maha Yoga tradition all over the world and other interested readers, this e-newsletter is intended to provide virtual Satsang. It is intended to encourage Sadhaks to remain engaged in Maha Yoga, be informed about Maha Yoga-related events around the world, and to provide a forum for getting guidance about Maha Yoga from leaders from P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj’s lineage.

Readers are urged to contribute questions, thoughtful articles, interesting life experiences related to Maha Yoga and news about Maha Yoga-related events to this e-newsletter. Reminiscences of P. P. Kaka Maharaj are also most welcome. We will be glad to include them in future issues. Please send any content, comments, or questions you would like to submit to self.awakening@gmail.com.

Past issues of Self Awakening are archived at http://www.mahayoga.org/selfawakening.aspx.
Kama-Kala: The Art of Procreation

The subject of kama-kala [the art of procreation] is a very mysterious one. People have given a wrong meaning to these words because of their convoluted thinking. One day Maharajshri was speaking on this subject.

“The secret of kama-kala is known to God only. He created the universes in conjunction with Shakti, and thus Shakti became known as the mother of universe. But neither God nor Shakti has any sense organs, hence there was no question of sensual pleasure or desire involved in the creation of this child: the universe. This act of procreation was at a pure spiritual level, but the extroverted jiva [individual soul] brought it down to the level of sensuality. Kama [procreation or union] was reduced to nothing but the union of two bodies, and it became an instrument for the gratification of the sense of touch. Kama took the form of desire. What a downfall of Kama!

“All the arts are included in kama-kala because an artist gives birth to artistic creations. The greatest artist is God, who created a unique, exceptional and most beautiful world without any marble or hammer, without any colors and canvas, without any instrument. This is the artistry of God’s creation.

“The essence of Kala [art] is an effect, which, by virtue of uniting more than one thing, gives birth to a new form. The universe was created by God through the vibrations of Shakti. This displays the artistry of Shakti, this is kama-kala, the art of procreation, and this is the creative aspect of God. But this act of procreation is free from expectations and desires; there is no trace of attraction and attachment. There is not even an ounce of pride involved
in the physical development of their child. An individual soul cannot even imagine this sport of creation. So long as he fails to rise above his senses, he will be absolutely incapable of understanding this fact. As soon as we talk about Kama, procreation, he starts to visualize sensual gratification. How can he comprehend that creation can take place without the senses?

“However, the ecstasy, happiness and work of God are all beyond the senses. Still the creation of the universe is taking place. This is the artistry of God’s creation.

“God does not need a person separate from him for the sport of creation. He manifests, within himself, the Shakti that is already latent within him. He acts like two while being one within. He gives birth to the universe through the procreative sport within. These actions, sports and effects are merely the Lila [divine sport] of the Lord. On the contrary, the procreative desire of a living being is hunger for physical gratification. There are attachments for, and expectations of, the children. For God all this is a divine sport, but for an individual soul all this appears to be reality. He needs another person who is separate from him to unite with in sexual excitement, but this cannot be. For a moment he forgets his existence, his personality, but very soon he realizes his separateness. This is the kama-kala of an individual soul.

“When a living being has children, they have aspects of both parents. Often the love of a mother is compared to Bhagawati, the mother of the universe. This comparison is totally incomplete. In this world the child is separate from the mother, and the mother has attachment to the child. However the world is not separate from its mother. Just as her beloved is not separate from her, her child — the world — also is not separate from her. It is impossible for a worldly person to understand this difference, but such is the Lila of the Lord. This is why God’s Lila is called Mahamaya [the Grand Illusion]. It has covered the psyche of the individual soul with Maya, and reduced the pure form of Kama down to a level of sensual pleasure. Both parties wish to get lost in the other’s body. This is the kama-kala of an individual soul.

“A man and woman become separate after procreative sexual play, but God is always united with Shakti — before, during and after the sport. He is the basis of Shakti. Shakti cannot be imagined without God. When the foundation of union is the physical senses, a separation is bound to take place. But God and his Shakti are beyond senses. How can they separate? An individual soul unites as well as separates, and is restless when separated. This is the kama-kala of the individual soul.

“The impressions of the procreative sport of the Lord are not accumulated. There are no senses. There is no chitta. How and where can impressions be accumulated? But the individual soul has senses, a chitta, desires and attachments in the chitta. Memories and impressions of the pleasure experienced through the senses are imprinted on the chitta. Thus prarabdha is generated and, accordingly, the individual soul has to wander through lower or higher life forms to fulfil his sensual desires. In this way the procreative play of the
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individual soul is the cause of his cycle of birth and death. This is the kama-kala of an individual soul.

“The essence of this is that God’s kama-kala is beyond Maya. It is invisible, and takes place at a level subtler than subtle. Kama-kala of an individual soul is within Maya, and takes place at the most gross and visible level. God remains free after the sport of procreation, whereas a living being falls into bondage.

“For spiritual growth one must understand and experience the procreative sport of the Lord. It is like a river that must be crossed to go to the other side. It is like an insurmountable pass that must be crossed to climb the high mountains of spirituality. The job for the individual soul is very difficult. He must not only change the basis and the form of his procreative play, but he will have to understand and know the form and secret of God’s procreative sport. For this he will have to change his life completely. He will have to rise above the body, the mind and the chitta and establish a relationship with the cosmic consciousness.”

The Circle of Aura

I was going for a morning walk with Maharajshri. There was not a single building near the railway station in those days. It used to be a deserted road. Once in a while a railway traveler or a horse carriage would appear. There were very few trees on either side of the road. As it was fall, the leaves, too, had fallen, and hence the birds had migrated elsewhere. Even the shadows of the trees had given up their company. What could be done? The world is such. The world leaves you alone as soon as clouds of adversity start to form over your head. But so what? We were only going for a walk. We were interested in our spiritual discussion, and Maharajshri was telling a story from his life.

“I was travelling to Gujarat with a Swamiji [an ascetic]. He had taken sanyas [the vow of renunciation] one or two years earlier. Swamiji got upset with me for something and said, “I will never see your ugly face ever again.” He left after saying that. I was very sad. Am I really so bad that people would not want to see my face again? I remained dispirited for three or four days. I did not feel like eating anything. I regained my normal self after five or six days. I pacified my mind thinking this must be a play of prarabdha.

“Subsequently, I went south and reached the ashram of Shri Ramana Maharshi after wandering here and there. Ramana Maharshi was alive then. The atmosphere of his ashram was very peaceful and pleasant. There was peace all around. Maharshi ji was very diligent about his morning walk. When he returned from his walk people stood on both sides of the road to see him. I did not have a particular question I only wanted to have the privilege of his company.

“Afterwards I went to see a nearby temple. I had a very strange experience there. While walking around the temple my mind became absolutely quiet at a particular spot. During the
second round my mind again reached the same state at the same spot. My mind would become totally thoughtless and free from any emotions. I noticed that my mind would get filled with a peculiar kind of ecstasy as it was being pulled deeper and deeper within. I looked around and saw that a gentleman was meditating. Perhaps he was in samadhi. The atmosphere was peaceful due to the effect of his state.”

Question: “Was everyone’s mind overwhelmed with peacefulness when they came to this spot, just like yours?”

Answer: “No. Not everyone. When someone is established in such a high inner state, then a sphere of influence develops by virtue of that state, in which the spiritual vibrations of the meditating person spread out. Only that person can have such an experience whose mind is capable of receiving these subtle vibrations. Everyone is affected to some degree, whether they like it or not.

“You must have read in the Ramayana that, when Garuda became deluded, Lord Shiva sent him to Kak Bhushundi to dispel it. From a distance, when he saw the peak of the mountain under which Kak Bhushundi had his ashram, Garuda’s mindset was transformed and his delusion was cleared. Garuda’s mind was pure. Only a wave of delusion had come up. Therefore, as soon as he entered the circle of the aura of Kak Bhushundi he could receive its power and be healed.”

Question: “You could feel the tranquility of the mind only at one point while circling the temple, whereas Garuda’s mind was affected just by seeing the peak of the mountain.”

Answer: “Everyone’s circle of influence has its own range and everyone has his own capacity for grasping that power. The deeper a sadhak goes within himself, the greater is his circle of influence. The spiritual vibrations spread more widely. One person’s circle may be smaller and another’s may be bigger. Our scriptures present Kak Bhushundi as the highest spiritual personality therefore his circle of influence is great. Garuda’s delusion was removed just by seeing the peak from a distance.”

Question: “Do only sattvic [harmonious or pious] people have a circle of influence? What about tamasic [inertial] and rajasic [with disturbing qualities] people?”

Answer: “Everyone has an aura. A sattvic person spreads sattvic qualities within a certain area and people dominated by tamasic and rajasic qualities spread those. Only rare people are dominated by sattvic qualities. The whole world is busy spreading the effects of tamas and rajas everywhere. One can distribute only what they have. An unhappy mind will distribute unhappiness, a fickle mind fickleness, a joyous mind joy, and an indulgent mind spreads indulgence. Just as a fickle mind cannot grasp the effects of sattvic qualities, so does a sattvic mind reject the effects of rajasic and tamasic qualities.”
Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

Question: “Does this mean that one must have a predisposition for a quality to grasp its effect?”

Answer: “First of all, most people try to avoid contact with a sattvic aura. The whole world is miserable, but how many people could actually reach the ashram of Kak Bhushundi? If a holy person lives near a town, how many people from the town come in contact with that holy man? The majority continue to struggle with their own miseries. The population of Dewas must be twelve to fourteen thousand. From that number, perhaps fifty come to the ashram regularly. If someone comes only occasionally, he cannot receive the effects of the peace of the ashram. His mindset is not appropriate. If the mind is receptive, then only will it be able to receive. The psyche will grasp the effect only of that quality which is predominant in itself. The miserable world does not want to find happiness. It avoids the place where happiness may be found.”

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:
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Discourse given by Jagadguru Shankaracharya Shri Vidhushekhara Bharati Mahaswamiji

Adi Shankaracharya, one of the key exponents of Advaita (non-dual) Vedanta, established the Sringeri Peeth in the 8th century AD in what is now the state of Karnataka in India. It is one of the four Advaita Vedanta monasteries (Mathas) he established around India, the others being Dwarka (Gujarat), Govardhana (Odisha) and Jyotirmath (Uttarakhand). P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj had a close relationship with the current Shankaracharya of Sringeri Peeth, Jagadguru Shri Bharati Tirth Mahaswamiji. His successor-designate, Jagadguru Shri Vidhushekhara Bharati Mahaswamiji visited the Nashik Ashram on January 13th, 2019 and was welcomed there with the honor deserving a Shankaracharya. The following is an edited translation of the discourse he gave in Hindi at the Ashram. (Editor)

Since time immemorial we have all wanted to be free from the sorrows of our day-to-day lives; the sorrows that arise due to our lack of knowledge of our true selves. Therefore it is essential that we all gain an understanding of our true selves and eliminate the delusion we all live under. When we develop such an understanding of our true selves we attain Moksha (freedom from the endless cycle of births and deaths).

Now let me explain what Moksha is.

Our bodies, our sense organs, etc. are inanimate. Yet, we identify ourselves primarily with our bodies and our sense organs and think that’s all that we are. This kind of thinking is the delusion (Avidya) we live under in our day-to-day lives, and as long as we are so deluded we can never truly find happiness. We think of ourselves as being 10 years old or 25 years old or 50 years old, etc. But that is not really how old we are. That is how old our bodies are. The Atma (soul) within us does not have any age, because it is eternal. In our day-to-day lives we say, “This person was born on this date and that person died on that date”. But it is only the body of the person that was born this date and the body of the person that died on that date, the Atma itself does not get born and neither does it die. When the body of a person was given birth to, we say the person was born and when the body dies, we say the person died. Thus births and deaths are not the births and deaths of the Atma, they are simply events when a body gets born and when a body dies. As long as we are attached to our physical bodies and identify with them, we think, “I am going to die”, “I was born on this date”, “I am this old”, etc. This is the delusion we live with – the attachment to and identification of ourselves as our bodies. When we get out from under this delusion do we become free of the attachment to our bodies and our sense organs and thus attain Moksha.
Discourse given by Jagadguru Shankaracharya Shri Vidhushekhara Bharati Mahaswamiji (continued)

Even right now, our true selves are eternal, but we have not actually experienced our true selves, which is why we don’t see ourselves as being eternal. Our delusion of identifying ourselves with our bodies and our sense organs keeps us from actually experiencing our true and eternal nature. Only when we get rid of our delusion (Avidya) will we automatically experience our true selves and experience the Para Brahma (Universal Soul) within us. So we need to get rid of the delusion we live under, and in order to do that we need to do Sadhana. That is the only way we can get rid of the delusion. I cannot tell you how long it will take for you to get rid of the delusion, but you should do Sadhana for as long as it takes. It is our duty to do Sadhana and the fruit of the Sadhana will come from the grace of God and the Guru. That is why we need to sit for Sadhana with a deep and binding faith, and stronger our faith the quicker will we get rid of the delusion we live under.

When we sit for Sadhana, we should leave aside our day-to-day lives and focus our attention on our Yoga practice. There is an episode in the Upanishads about a disciple who goes to his Guru and earnestly asks him for advice on experiencing the Atma. The Guru says okay and asks the disciple to sit in front of him. The Guru just sat silent without saying anything, and after a while the disciple began to get restless and started wondering why the Guru had not said anything to him other than asking him to sit. Quite some time passed and still the Guru just sat silent in front of the disciple. The disciple began to feel frustrated, and he finally gathered the courage to ask the Guru to please advise him. The Guru didn’t say anything in response and just continued to sit silently. The disciple again asked the Guru to advise him a couple of times and the Guru’s only response was to continue to sit silently. This continued for a while until finally the Guru said, “What I have been doing all along is exactly the advice I want to give you on what you need to do to experience the Atma within you.” “There is nothing I can say to advise you on what you should do other than to sit quietly and rid yourself of all thoughts. Only when your mind has become quiet will you automatically experience the Atma within you. You don’t see this as advice, but that is exactly what it is and it is exactly what you need to do. The Chaitanya within you is eternally calm; it does not get affected by anything, which is why you need to calm your mind to actually experience it.”

In our day-to-day lives we come across things, people, and places that are always changing. They are never the same even from one day to the next. There is only one thing that is eternal and unchanging, and that is the Atma within us. And it is eternally calm.
We all think we have a sense of what and who we are, i.e. we all think we have a good sense of our Atma. We all have a sense of “Who I am”, “Where I am going”, “What I am looking at”. So we think we have a good sense of who we truly are. But what we have a good sense of is our body and our sense organs and we mistake these material things as our Atma, i.e. our true self. So if someone respects our embodied self, we develop good feelings towards such a person, while on the other hand if someone hurts our body or our feelings we feel animosity towards him/her. This happens because we only identify ourselves as our bodies and our sense organs. When we stop identifying ourselves as our bodies and our sense organs and experience the Atma within us with the practice of Sadhan, we will no longer get upset if someone hurts our bodies or our feelings, nor will we feel happy if someone pleases our bodies and our sense organs. We will have a sense of equanimity in either of those situations.

This is the nature of those who are Self Enlightened. They are beyond the realm of feeling hurt or feeling joy because of the actions of others. This is the state of equanimity that we all should strive to attain. In the Bhagvad Geeta Lord Krishna has said:

सुहन्मित्रायुदासीनमध्यस्थद्वैष्णवन्धुः।
साधुष्पिच्चपापेषु समुद्धिविशिष्यते॥ 6.9॥

He who has the same attitude towards others whether, they are good-hearted, friends, enemies, the indifferent, the neutral, the hateful, relatives, the righteous and the unrighteous, he excels. This is followed in the next shloka:

योगी युज्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः।
एकाकी यत्चित्तत्मा निराशीरपरियह॥ 6.10॥

Here the Lord describes how the Yogi should try constantly to keep the mind steady, remaining in solitude, alone, with the mind and body controlled, free from hope and greed: The Lord follows in the next two shlokas by describing where and how to sit for Sadhan:

शुचो देश सतिभास्मात्मानमातमः।
नात्युच्छिर्न नातिनीच चौलाजिनकुशोशोतरम॥ 6.11॥

Having in a clean spot, established a firm seat of his own, neither too high nor too low, made of cloth, a skin and Kusa grass, one over the other -----
There, having made the mind one-pointed, with the actions of the mind and the senses controlled, let him, seated on the seat practice Yoga for the purification of the self.

In order to experience the Chaitanya (bliss) of the Atma it is very important for us to keep our mind and our senses under control. This is why we need to quit dwelling on things and topics that do not contribute to our spiritual advancement and keep our minds calm and remain focused on our spiritual uplift.

The Lord also says:

Which means: Let a man lift himself by his own Self alone, and let him not lower himself; for, this Self alone is the friend of oneself, and this Self is also the enemy of oneself.

So, we ourselves have to be responsible for our own uplift. Of course, the grace of God and the Guru’s guidance are essential. Once we receive the grace of God and the Guru and we remain diligent in our Sadhana, we will surely attain Self Realization. Our diligence will surely be rewarded; the fruit of our Sadhana is never lost. In fact in the Bhagvad Geeta, Arjun asks Lord Krishna, “What happens when a person who has been doing his Sadhana diligently, but dies before he has attained Self Realization?” To which the Lord replied, “He will get reborn in a different body, and the Samskaras (impressions) that he had accumulated in his previous life will remain with him in his new incarnation and his Sadhana will continue from where he left off when he passed from his previous life.” The fruit of Sadhana is never lost. Diligent Sadhana is essential for spiritual growth. Therefore, it is very essential for Sadhaks to get into the habit of doing Sadhana in a diligent manner. With the grace of God and the Guru, the rewards of Sadhan are guaranteed. We are all very busy in our day-to-day lives, going to school or going to work or taking care of our children, etc., but we must devote some time every day for Sadhana. Our day-to-day activities are for our material benefit but we should also remember that daily Sadhana is also essential - for our Atma and for our spiritual benefit.

When we sit for Sadhana, our minds often get occupied by thoughts related to our day-to-day lives. Such thoughts might not come up at other times when we are busy with work or similar activities, but when we sit for Sadhana our minds get inundated with such thoughts. Thoughts that don’t arise at other times keep cropping up. When we are busy with our day-to-day work, do we think of Sadhana and of God? No! Then why should we be thinking about what happened at work, or I need to go meet somebody, when we sit for Sadhana?
Discourse given by Jagadguru Shankaracharya Shri Vidhushekhara Bharati Mahaswamiji (continued)

And that causes us to get distracted and end our Sadhana. This is why we need to assign a specific time for Sadhana and become diligent about sitting for Sadhana so it becomes a habit. Just as we have assigned times for work or school or play, we should also have an assigned time for Sadhana every day. It is only with diligent Sadhana that we can achieve Moksha. Regular Sadhana on this Yoga path is essential for us to experience the pure Atma that resides in all of us. This is why Lord Krishna has prescribed the Yoga path in the Bhagvad Geeta as have others in various scriptures.

Adi Shankaracharya in his expositions on Yoga has emphasized Advaita (non-dual) as the basis of the Yoga path (Editor’s note: Yoga means union - the union of one’s Atma with the ParamAtma or the Universal Soul). In his discourses with others, Adi Shankaracharya would never put another person down, but to the extent others were preaching philosophies that were not consistent with Advaita philosophy, he would not accept them. Those that were consistent with the Advaita philosophy and Sadhana, he would willingly accept them. Even in Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras, we do not accept the principles that are related to Dvaita (duality) philosophies (Editor’s note: Dvaita approaches see God - Paramatma - as a separate entity from us whereas Advaita approaches suggest that the Atma within us is the same as the ParamAtma and the purpose of Yoga is to unite our Atma with the ParamAtma), but we readily accept those that describe Yoga Sadhana (that will enable our Atma to unite with the ParamAtma).

When we sit for Sadhan in a short while at this venue, please follow my suggestion to empty your minds of any thoughts that relate to your day-to-day lives and simply direct your attention to the Chaitanya energy that resides within each of us. Diligent Sadhan along these lines will enable you to actually experience the Chaitanya within yourself, an experience that is indescribable. I convey Lord Narayan’s blessings to all Sadhaks, those who have been doing Sadhana and even those who would like to do Sadhana. I pray to my Guru, Shrimad Bharati Tirth Mahaswami, to provide his grace to all Sadhaks to make their Sadhana successful and for them to experience Self Realization. I also pray to my Guru for the Sadhana to continue at this venue forever, because once the Sadhana has been initiated here it should take on a life of its own and become eternally available to all Sadhaks. I also ask God to provide His...
Discourse given by Jagadguru Shankaracharya Shri Vidhushekhara Bharati Mahaswamiji (continued)

grace and to bless you all in your Sadhana. The grace of God and the Guru and the diligent Sadhana on the part of the Sadhak are both essential for achieving Self Realization.

This Ashram and the Sringeri Samsthan have had close relations for quite some time. My Gurudev had visited the Ashram a few years ago and had enjoyed your hospitality, and today I am very happy to be here as well. I offer my blessings to you all and to the Ashram. My Gurudev and P. P. Dhekane Kaka Maharaj had a very special and close spiritual relationship. P. P. Dhekane Kaka Maharaj had also visited Sringeri and we had very much enjoyed having him visit us. It is because of this special relationship over many years that I have come here and I am very happy to see you all. In this context I would like to convey Lord Narayan’s blessings to P. P. Prabhune Maharaj and to all Sadhaks who have gathered here; and with that I end my discourse.

Translated and edited by Mr. Dilip Kamat

A video of the discourse given in Hindi by the Shankaracharya can be found at: https://www.youtube.com/user/SiddhayogaMahayoga/
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks

**Question:** My heartfelt thanks to you for accepting me for receiving Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha on the next Deeksha Day. I am a student studying Computer Science in the United States. I have only recently become interested in spirituality so I have several questions regarding Deeksha and Maha Yoga.

1. I am scheduled to receive Deeksha on the next Deeksha Day. Is it possible for the Deeksha to happen before then? I am getting very anxious to receive Deeksha.
2. I have already begun the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga ([http://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-introductory-practice.aspx](http://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-introductory-practice.aspx)). I sit for one hour in the morning and for another hour in the evening. However, my mind never becomes steady and I find myself thinking of all kinds of random things. I am not able to make my mind steady, so I am unable to experience the Prana Shakti moving up.
3. I am somewhat overweight, so if I relax my body when I sit for the Introductory Practice, I find myself in a slouch. So, in order to keep myself from slouching, I try to sit with my back straight and erect, which makes my back hurt after some time. What should I do about this?
4. I have reduced my food intake. I eat almonds and drink milk in the morning and have a light dinner with some rice. I have quit eating onions and garlic.
5. I am sincerely looking forward to receiving Deeksha and the Guru’s Grace. I intend to follow the Maha Yoga path in a diligent manner, but sometimes I wonder if I am doing things the right way to get the most spiritual benefit. Please guide me.

**Answer:** Glad to read that you have developed an interest in spirituality and have been accepted for receiving Maha Yoga Deeksha on the next Deeksha Day. And you also seem to be very eager to get started on this path. Welcome to the Maha Yoga community.

Here are the responses to your questions and concerns:

1. Yes, sometimes Deeksha can happen even before the scheduled Deeksha Day and time. It depends entirely on how ready a Sadhak is for it to happen. It does not happen just because a Sadhak wants it to happen and is getting impatient for it to happen. The key to it happening is for the Sadhak to have an attitude of surrender to the Prana Shakti within him, so she can make it happen for him. It can also happen if the Sadhak sits for the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga with an attitude of surrender rather than one of impatience.

2. It is good that you are sitting for the Introductory Practice twice a day. When you do so please just sit comfortably and not try to do anything other than to surrender to the Prana Shakti within you and simply observe what happens. Please do not try to “make your mind steady” with intent or try to get the Prana Shakti to move within you with intent. The Sadhak’s role during Maha Yoga Sadhan should be simply that of an observer (Sakshi), not the doer (Karta). Just allow the Prana Shakti within you to be the doer. Just surrender to her and observe what happens. Please understand that one cannot “do” Dhyan (meditation). Dhyan has to happen; the Sadhak’s role is
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

to allow it to happen. Also do not try to control your thoughts or get frustrated when random thoughts arise. It is just about impossible for anyone to control his thoughts with intent. Just observe the fact that some thought has arisen in your Chitta (mind stuff) and instead of focusing on that thought, redirect your attention to your normal and automatic breathing. You can consider the random thoughts that arise as mental Kriyas which you can observe, and by redirecting your attention to your normal breathing you will enable that mental Kriya (thought) to go away automatically. If another thought arises, or the same thought comes up again, just redirect your attention to your normal breathing again. If you experience any involuntary physical movements (physical Kriyas), simply observe them. Do not “do” them or enhance them in any way, just observe them in a dispassionate manner and let them happen. If you don’t experience any physical Kriyas, just observe your normal breathing. That is a physical Kriya we all experience as long as we are alive. If you feel the movement of Prana Shakti within you (Pranic Kriyas), simply observe that it is happening. Do not get frustrated if it doesn’t happen, or get elated if it happens. If it happens, it happens. Maha Yoga is not a Yoga of doing, it is a Yoga of happening. A Maha Yoga Sadhak’s role is to simply allow it to happen.

3. When you sit for Sadhan, just sit comfortably and relax your body. The key is for the Sadhak to become completely unaware of his body. There is no need to try to keep your spine straight or anything like that. If during Sadhan you automatically find yourself in a specific physical Yogasana, let it happen, but do not do anything with intent to make it happen.

4. Good that you are already following the dietary restrictions. And it is good to somewhat limit one’s food consumption, especially if one is overweight. But please don’t starve yourself. Make sure you have a nutritionally balanced diet with the needed quantities of carbohydrates, proteins and other important nutrients.

5. Sadguru Kripa (Guru’s Grace) will of course happen. Glad to read that you are committed to this path. Please don’t be concerned about whether or not you are “doing” things right when you sit for Sadhan. Surrender to the Prana Shakti within you and simply allow her to do what is needed for you. So there is no real question of whether or not you are “doing” the right things. Just sit for Sadhan on a regular basis so the Prana Shakti can “do” what is needed for your spiritual progress.

Since Maha Yoga is a Yoga of experience rather than an intellectual exercise, we do not encourage Sadhaks to intellectualize it by focusing too much on reading about it rather than actually practicing it. However, given where you are on your spiritual path, we think it would be useful for you to develop a good understanding of Maha Yoga, especially given that you will soon be receiving Deeksha. The Article Library at our Maha Yoga webpage (http://mahayoga.org/article-library.aspx) has four Discussions with P. P. Kaka Maharaj that you might find helpful. We would also suggest that you read some of the articles listed there. The following articles can be quite helpful for new Sadhaks to get a better
understanding of Maha Yoga, especially the role of Sadhan and the Kriyas that happen during Sadhan:

- **A Short Description of Maha Yoga** ([http://mahayoga.org/library/Short%20description%20of%20Maha%20Yoga.pdf](http://mahayoga.org/library/Short%20description%20of%20Maha%20Yoga.pdf)),
- **Maha Yoga - the Key to Self-Realization** ([http://mahayoga.org/library/Maha20Yoga%20the%20Key%20to%20Self-Realization.pdf](http://mahayoga.org/library/Maha20Yoga%20the%20Key%20to%20Self-Realization.pdf)) and

**Question:** I have the following queries about Maha Yoga and Maha Yoga Deeksha:

1. I have taken Sahaj Samadhi meditation Deeksha in Art of Living and I have received Guru Mantra from Ramakant Maharaj of Inchegiri Sampradaya. Despite that I am interested in Maha Yoga Deeksha because I have not had any significant experiences like those I have read in books during meditation using either of those other practices. A lot of random thoughts come up during those meditation practices and I find it very difficult to stop them. I heard about Maha Yoga and I would like to follow that path in order to progress spiritually. Will I be able to receive Maha Yoga Deeksha?

2. I have hypertension and diabetes. Are there any issues I might face in receiving Deeksha and with the Kriyas that might happen during Maha Yoga Sadhan?

3. I tried the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga; however I have not received any different experiences.

4. What is the relation of Maha Yoga with Datta or Datta Sampradaya?

5. I work for a corporation and I may not be able to follow the dietary restrictions on a regular basis. Will that be okay? Also, occasionally at corporate parties I need to take alcoholic drinks. Is that allowed?

Kindly guide me about the above queries.

**Answer:** Here are our responses to your specific questions:

1. Any Sadhak who is interested in receiving Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha and is willing to follow the rules and restrictions as prescribed by our Parampara can apply for it on-line at [http://mahayoga.org/](http://mahayoga.org/). The prescribed rules and restrictions can be found here [http://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-initiation-rules.aspx](http://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-initiation-rules.aspx). Given that you have received Deeksha from some other lineages, you will need to obtain written
permission from the Guru who previously initiated you. A Maha Yoga Sadhak may follow other Yoga practices if he so desires, but not while he is sitting for Maha Yoga Sadhan. During Maha Yoga Sadhan, a Sadhak should not do anything with his own intent. He should simply surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within him and allow her to do what is needed for his spiritual progress. The Sadhak’s role during Maha Yoga Sadhan should only be that of a detached observer (Sakshi). It is very common for new Sadhaks to get distracted by thoughts that come up during Sadhan. When that happens, Sadhaks should direct their attention to their normal and automatic breathing. By sitting for Sadhan on a regular basis, the Sadhak’s mind will gradually become calmer and the random coming up of thoughts will diminish. It will take patience and diligence in sitting for Sadhan on a daily basis for the mind to become calm.

2. Sadhaks who have hypertension and diabetes should not have any issue with Maha Yoga Deeksha or with the Kriyas that happen during Sadhan.

3. Please do not take up the practice of Maha Yoga for getting experiences. The only experience that is ultimately relevant is for the mind to become calmer. The happening of Kriyas (physical, Pranic or mental) are just the process whereby the Samskaras and the Vrittis accumulated by the Sadhak during his current and past lives get eliminated, with the mind becoming calmer and calmer, eventually leading to Self-Enlightenment. So, the Kriya process is not the objective of Maha Yoga Sadhan, it is just the garbage-removal process to get rid of the Samskaras and Vrittis that have accumulated in the Sadhak’s Chitta (mind stuff), paving the way to Self-Enlightenment. The purpose of the Introductory Practice is to give Sadhaks a taste of what Maha Yoga is all about. Some Sadhaks experience Kriyas and their minds become calmer right away, whereas other Sadhaks might need to try out the Introductory Practice for several weeks before they experience Kriyas or calmer minds. It all depends on the nature of the accumulated Samskaras within a Sadhak’s Chitta, the extent to which the Sadhak surrenders to the awakened Prana Shakti, and the level of faith he has in Maha Yoga and the Guru. So, our suggestion to you is to continue to sit for the Introductory Practice on a daily basis without having any expectations of Kriyas or such experiences, surrender as completely as you can to the Prana Shakti within you, and have some faith that the Introductory Practice, which was originated by P. P. Shri Dhekane Kaka Maharaj and has his Sankalpa behind it, will help you on your spiritual path.

4. Our Maha Yoga Parampara has a strong affinity towards Datta Sampradaya because of P. P. Gulvani Maharaj who was a stalwart in our Parampara and one of his Guru’s was P. P. Tembe Swami Maharaj (P. P. Swami Vasudevananda Saraswati) who was a Datta Sampradaya leader. P. P. Dhekane Kaka Maharaj also had an affinity for Datta Sampradaya. But ultimately, Maha Yoga at its core is Nirguni. A Sadhak does not have to be a follower of Datta Sampradaya; he may choose to follow it if he wants
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

to. For that matter, Sadhaks can follow whatever religion or Sampradaya they want to follow.

5. If you are unable to follow the rules and restrictions, it might be best that you continue with the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga, which does not require a Sadhak to commit to following any rules or restrictions. As was mentioned earlier, the Introductory Practice has P. P. Kaka Maharaj’s Sankalpa behind it so it can be considered to be a form of Maha Yoga Deeksha. At a later point in your life when you feel you will be able to observe the rules and restrictions, you are welcome to apply for Deeksha at that time. Alternatively, there are other branches of our Maha Yoga Parampara (such as P. P. Shivom Tirth Maharaj’s branch) that do not require a Sadhak to commit to rules and restrictions. Here is a link to the Ashrams and their contact information http://adhyatmajyoti.org/present_ashrams.html. Sadhaks are not supposed to consume alcoholic drinks.

Question: I have received Deeksha one year ago and I sit for Sadhan regularly. I work in a temple as a priest and receive Dakshina (payments from devotees for conducting certain rites) in addition to a good salary. Since I get the salary for my work as a temple priest, I am confused whether I should accept Dakshina or not. Some devotees might be offering Dakshina to me thinking I am somewhat nearer to God or I have some divinity, and offering me Dakshina will relieve them from their miseries. By accepting Dakshina, will I be acquiring the donor's Karma? Please guide me.

Answer: Since you are a temple priest and are conducting certain rites on behalf of devotees, there are no issues in you accepting their Dakshinas. But, as you correctly mentioned in your email, by accepting Dakshina from others, there are chances of you acquiring some of their Karma as well.

Based on guidance we have received from learned sources on this topic, we would suggest that you perform 'Dhana Shuddhi' in order to eliminate the Karma of donors or to minimize its effect. There are various ways for doing this such as chanting the Gayatri Mantra (minimum 300 times and maximum 1200 times). Also, it is said that you could donate one fourth of the Dakshina amount to learned Brahmins.

However, these are not the only ways; there may be others. Please try to find out more information from other learned persons (especially other priests) about what they do to eliminate or minimize the effects of the Karma of devotees who offer Dakshina. Also, please continue to sit regularly for Maha Yoga Sadhan which will help you eliminate the Samskaras you have accumulated as well as those that might arise from accepting Dakshina from devotees.

Question: I would like to know how spiritual names work in the Siddha tradition and I would like to apply to receive a spiritual name.
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Answer: There is no need to have a spiritual name when you are following the path of Maha Yoga. Spiritual names are relevant only when a Sadhak is renouncing his/her householder life to become a Brahmachari or a Sanyasi. Again, there is no need to become a Sanyasi if you are following the path of Maha Yoga.

Please be assured that without having a spiritual name, one can make great progress and reach the ultimate state. Maha Yoga masters such as P. P. Shri Gulavani Maharaj, P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj, and many others never assumed spiritual names, yet they reached the highest level of spirituality.

Question: I had applied for Deeksha on your website. On Deeksha Day I followed all the instructions according to the email I received in response to my application. I sat for sadhan at 6 am and opened my eyes at 7:42 am. I was surprised I sat for that long without realizing it when I was sitting. However, I had a constant thought process going on and I don’t think I experienced anything other than that. Since then I have been sitting for Sadhan every day for an hour and I am also following the rules and restrictions. But I still wonder whether Deeksha happened for me or not. Please guide me.

Answer: It is clear from your description that Deeksha did indeed happen for you on Deeksha Day. The fact that you sat for over an hour and a half without being aware of how long you were sitting clearly indicates that Deeksha definitely happened. There are very few people who can just sit for that long a time without being aware of time and without having an urge to get up after just a few minutes. Your being aware of the thought process that was going on during that time is also an indication of Deeksha having happened. It indicates that while the thought process was going on you were indeed playing the role of an observer, observing the thought process itself. That is the role of a Sakshi, observing the mental Kriyas (thoughts) that are happening in your Chitta (mind stuff). If Deeksha had not happened it would have been highly unlikely that you would have been observing your thought process happening for that long a time.

The Kriyas that happen during Maha Yoga Sadhan are entirely dependent on the Samskaras a Sadhak has accumulated over his current and past lives. So they can be very different for different people. Some Sadhaks have physical Kriyas; other might have mental Kriyas (thoughts) or even Pranic (feel the flow of Prana) Kriyas. The Kriyas that happen are the process whereby the awakened Prana Shakti within a Sadhak brings up into the Sadhak’s awareness the expressions of the Samskaras accumulated in his Chitta. By the Sadhak simply observing these Kriyas in a non-judgmental manner, without getting attached to them or being scared by them, the Kriyas get gradually eliminated from his Chitta, which is the goal of Maha Yoga Sadhan. Therefore the key is for Sadhaks to simply observe the Kriyas and to let them go. You seem to be experiencing mental Kriyas now. As these Kriyas get eliminated, other Kriyas that might be mental or Pranic or physical might also happen, depending upon what type of Samskaras are getting brought up and expressed by the awakened Prana Shakti within you. Sit for Sadhan on a regular basis and surrender to the
awakened Prana Shakti within you; let her be the “doer”, with you playing the role of an observer, just as you have been doing recently. Please be patient.

**Question:** I am a 24 year old man from Himachal Pradesh and I have been meditating off and on since the past four or five years. For the past few weeks, however, I have been sitting for meditation regularly, sometimes for as long as four hours at a stretch. Over the past few days I have had the following experiences:

- Warm feeling in my back
- Something rotating in my neck area, causing some pain
- Feeling of some energy behind my stomach

And right now, as I am typing this e-mail, I am feeling something like blood moving and spreading in my back. Are these experiences an indication that my Kundalini has awakened? And if so, to what stage/Chakra has it progressed? Please advise me on what I should do.

**Answer:** The description of your experiences suggests that you might have had a Kundalini awakening event. Such events can happen to Sadhaks who have been sitting for Sadhan (meditation) on a regular basis. But because such awakenings have not being regulated by a Siddha Guru, they can cause painful experiences to happen or result in haphazard progress on one’s spiritual journey. Therefore my suggestion to you is to seek Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha from a Siddha Guru which will result in the awakened Kundalini/Prana Shakti within you get appropriately regulated and energized. You can apply for such a Deeksha online at this website: [http://mahayoga.org/](http://mahayoga.org/).

The next Deeksha Day is several weeks away so you have time to think about it and apply online if you so desire. Since Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha is a Sankalpa Deeksha, i.e. a Deeksha driven purely by the intent of the Siddha Guru, you do not need to be in the presence of the Siddha Guru in order for the Deeksha to happen. So, if your application for Deeksha gets accepted, you can sit for Deeksha in the privacy of your own home after having followed the simple instructions to get prepared for it.

While you wait for the next Deeksha Day you can try out the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga as described here: [http://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-introductory-practice.aspx](http://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-introductory-practice.aspx). The Introductory Practice has the Sankalpa (intent) of P. P. Kaka Maharaj behind it and many Sadhaks who try it out undergo experiences quite similar to what Sadhaks experience during Maha Yoga Sadhan. I would also suggest that you not get too concerned about what Chakra the Kundalini/Prana Shakti is at within you. What matters is the elimination of all the Samskaras a Sadhak has accumulated over his current and past lives for the Prana Shakti to be able to flow freely to the Sahasrara Chakra and to reside there. Maha Yoga Sadhan is the way to have the accumulation of Samskaras and Vrittis get eliminated from one’s Chitta thus eventually leading to Self Enlightenment.

**Editor’s note:** Please send your questions regarding Maha Yoga and Shaktipat to: [self.awakening@gmail.com](mailto:self.awakening@gmail.com).
The English language translation of P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj’s biography is available in hardcover edition. P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj was the Shaktipat Deeksha Guru of P. P. Narayan Kaka Dhekane Maharaj as well as P. P. 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

A couple of copies of the book are available for Sadhaks in North America. Those interested can send an e-mail including their postal address, to self.awakening@gmail.com. The cost, including shipping, will be $11 for shipment within the US, but about $24 for shipment to other countries.
Upcoming Events:

Deeksha Day (Initiation Day) on March 22nd, 2019
Those desirous of receiving Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) should go to the website: www.mahayoga.org for instructions. The online application form is also available at the website. Future dates for Deeksha Days are posted on the Maha Yoga program calendar at http://mahayoga.org/progcal.aspx.

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

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 have a Twitter feed at https://twitter.com/Mahayoga_Org. Please check it out for photographs of the recent events held at various Maha Yoga Ashrams.
How to contribute content to the e-newsletter

The goals of our e-newsletter are:

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

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

self.awakening@gmail.com

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

Editor: Mr. Dilip Kamat

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

May all desire to follow this nectarous Siddhayoga Path!