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.
Consecration of an Idol: Shaktipat

A new temple of Bhagawati was built in Indore. A big celebration was held at the time. Maharajshri was invited to preside. After seeing the idol Maharajshri said, “The idol has received Shaktipat. Now this place is alive.” Shaktipat of an idol! It sounded strange. Finally I had to ask, “Maharajshri, devotees consider the idol to be a representation of a goddess. Shaktipat on God? I cannot understand this.”

Maharajshri said, “Understand this now: The idol is first a piece of stone. Then the artist gives it a beautiful form with his art. The piece of stone does not become worthy of worship just because it has been shaped into an idol until prana pratishtha [the ritual of invoking life; consecration] is performed. This means that the idol is not revered, but the prana [life-force] is revered. The idol is worthy of worship only after the life-force, or prana, is invoked in it. If prana is not poured into the idol then it is not venerable. This means that the idol is only a medium, a symbol, a vehicle. Some saints have criticized idol worship because people consider the symbol to be God. The medium itself is worshipped. As a result of this the basis of worshipping the life-force through the medium of the idol has been totally shaken. No one can criticize if the symbol is considered as a symbol and, through the medium of the symbol, God is worshipped. The Upanishads mention symbolic worship, but there is no mention of idol worship.

“These days consecration has become a mere show. Recitation of mantras from the Vedas, the bathing of the idol with water and grains, a fire ceremony, the worship of the nine planets, and so forth, are performed, and the attention of the brahmin is on the donation he will receive rather than on invoking prana. Organizers of the temple are more concerned
with their reputation than with prana. Consequently consecration becomes secondary. In other eras the learned, ascetics and seers who were detached and had renounced the world, who had no expectations, were invited to perform the consecration. They had experience of the kriyas of prana and had control over prana as well. Earning money was secondary for them; invoking prana into the idol was the primary goal. They were capable of extending their own prana-Shakti into the idol.

“However the nature of rituals has undergone a change. The purpose used to be to invoke prana in the idol. Now, instead, it has been restricted to a ritual only. Even the form of the rituals has changed significantly. Now it includes showmanship, greed and the desire for fame. Often idols in the temple lack prana, the life-force, in spite of the ritual of consecration. Devotees only see the statue and not the prana. Many saints have criticized this form of idol worship.

“Meera, Surdas and Tukaram loved the idols of their deities to the point of being obsessed by them because they were able to experience prana, the sound of prana, and other kriyas in the idol. The best idol is the human body that is filled by God with his own prana. The human body is the best and highest creation of the divine art of God. In every cell and every limb of the human body prana-Shakti is active and shining.”

Question: “What is the need for Shaktipat when God himself has put prana into humans?”

Answer: “Shaktipat is not done for bringing prana into human beings because it is already there. It is done to change the direction of the flow of prana inwards, away from the world and toward the atma [soul].”

Question: “But in an idol, prana does not flow inwards or outwards. Then why Shaktipat?”

Answer: “Shaktipat is done to invoke prana in the statue. A statue is worthy of worship only after consecration.”

Question: “But an idol made of stone is passive in the process of receiving prana or not receiving prana. How can it receive the effect?”

Answer: “Shaktipat on a stone is like writing something on it. It neither invites someone to write, nor does it prohibit writing on it.”

Question: “Did you feel the effect of Shaktipat on the idol?”

Answer: “I did not say that the idol has received Shaktipat for no reason. The work that could not be accomplished by priests even after an extensive show of chanting Vedic hymns, bathing and rituals happened in just a moment. The atmosphere around the idol has been transformed.”
Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

Question: “What do you think about people who worship an idol without doing the ceremony of consecration?”

Answer: “If the devotion is strong, faith unshakable and worship continuous then, after a long time, an idol can come alive, but this happens very rarely. A devotee may worship, but he cannot maintain his devotion. Consequently his worship is also merely a show. The beginning of our lineage took place with Shaktipat on an idol. Swami Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj was building a cottage on a cremation ground. He was intoxicated with sadhan. Kriya was going on spontaneously. One day, in a devotional upsurge, he started to wash the idol of Goddess Kali in the cottage. The statue became so luminous that no one could look directly at the light coming out of it. This was the first Shaktipat of the Guru of Shaktipat of this age. In those days I was a traveler, and I stayed for a short time among the ruins of a temple in the district of Muraina. It was a run-down temple of Hanuman. It was deserted and quiet all around. Weeds had grown up around it. Sometimes shepherds used to come to rest there. The temple statue was totally ignored. There was neither water, nor anything else for worship. Shaktipat took place as soon as the idol came into my sight. The statue came alive. It started to shine with divine luster. I had an opportunity to go there one year later, and in the place of the ruin was a big temple. A few shops were there, also. A priest had been appointed to conduct prayers. A residence was built for him, and the flow of devotees was constant.”

Question: “You called Swami Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj the founder of Shaktipat, whereas this knowledge existed even before him.”

Answer: “Yes, it did exist before him. But it was hidden. Until then this knowledge was flowing internally. Knowledge is never lost completely. At some time or the other an exceptional sadhak would follow this path. The general population was totally ignorant of it. This hidden Ganga was brought to light by Swami Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj. Its auspicious beginning was through the Shaktipat on an idol. This is why he is called the founder.”

The Value of Time in Sadhan

I was accompanying Maharajshri on a morning walk toward the railway station. The morning train was two hours late. Here came the train, blowing smoke as it entered the platform, and over there people ran down the road to catch it. I started to think, “Why are people running to catch the train when the train is already two hours late? They should have been waiting at the platform.”

Possibly Maharajshri was thinking the same thing. He said, “Such is the condition of us Indians when it comes to punctuality. We do not value time at all. People should have arrived at the station to wait for the train. While waiting, they could have made good use of their time by reading or doing japa, but they are running now. The train stops here only for two minutes. Most of the people will not be able to catch the train.”
“This is the situation in life, also. No one does sadhan in the prime of life, when it is the proper time. They wait for the train to arrive [old age], and remain involved in worldly pleasures. When old age comes the train has been missed. The opportunity to do sadhan has been missed. The body becomes weak by then. The train has already left the platform. Desires in the mind are still young, but the body is old. How can one do sadhan then? In old age the mind is even more restless.

“There is no greater wealth than time. There is no greater sadhan than good use of time. There could be no worse luck than missing the train of time. No one is more intelligent than the person who understands the importance of the speed of time. No one is more brave than the person who runs against time. There is no greater stupidity than disrespecting time. There is no greater foolishness than waiting for the right time.

“An aspirant does not wait for a conducive time. His train of sadhan is at the platform in every situation. He knows how to make the best use of the given circumstances. He accepts every situation as God's grace, and lives the life of sadhan as far as possible. For him every circumstance is a test, and he passes every test.

“Sadhan is such a priceless and effective herb. If used properly, over time, it will cure the disease of life and death at its root. With the passage of time, an adverse time becomes the propitious time. Rest, taken at the proper time, releases tension, bringing renewed freshness. Only over time can a real friend or enemy be recognized. Once the serpent of time has passed by there is no point in striking at its tail. The haste of these people to catch the train is like striking the tail.

“The one who is not aware at the right time does not attain anything. As time passes the one who sees death approaching will always be cautious. The one who does not waste any time always gains. The one who takes advantage of a suitable time, and hides his limbs like a turtle when time is against him, is always saved from calamities. The one who spends every moment remembering God and sadhan, burns all his accumulated sins. This is why time is said to be the greatest wealth of all.

“A wilted flower cannot bloom again. A leaf torn from the tree cannot be attached again. A dead person cannot come to life again. And time that has gone by cannot come back. Time has a flow like water. The flow of time never stops; it never pauses. It has been flowing forever and it will keep on flowing forever. Day and night are in the boundaries of time. Birth and death are in the boundaries of time. The activities of life are within the boundaries of time. The entire play of Maya is also bound by time. Time is Maya's strongest medium. All objects change their appearances, qualities and functions over time. At the place of a high mountain a deep ocean may roar. Lush farms may turn into deserts. The body declines and the state of mind changes.”

Question: "Is it true that the flow of time stops during meditation?"
Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

Answer: “The flow of time does not stop. Attention is diverted from time and one is not aware of time. If you turn your face you will not be able to see behind your back, but what may be seen there remains the same. When the attention of a yogi is focused on an object, it becomes totally one-pointed and merges with it. Then nothing else is in awareness, neither time, nor anything else. The world is destroyed for those who attain the ultimate spiritual goal, whereas it goes on as before for all others."

Question: “On the one hand you say that time is the greatest wealth, and on the other hand you are asking us to go beyond time. Which of these is the truth?”

Answer: “Both. Only by making the right use of time can you go beyond time. Time is the greatest wealth for a sadhak, but a siddha [a perfected master] gives up this wealth of time. Just as you have to make use of the mountain to climb the mountain, but once you are on the other side the mountain is left behind, similarly time is also left behind. A sadhak never ignores time because he wants to go beyond time. He uses each and every moment.”

Question: “Is Shakti also within the boundaries of time?”

Answer: “No. Shakti is divine and beyond Maya. Maya and time are like parallel rivers. When one flows the other also flows. When one dries up the other also dries up. All this is a play of God. Yes, the kriyas, the activities, of Shakti do come within the boundaries of time. We even talk about experiencing certain kriyas for a certain length of time.

“As long as the basis for kriya is physical or gross in any sense of the term, time will be involved. Kriya cannot manifest without a base, therefore kriyas come within time. However, Shakti remains beyond the limits of time.”

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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Bringing Maha Yoga to the World

Shri Nikhil Prabhune, who is a nephew of P. P. Shri Prakash Prabhune Maharaj, had the good fortune to have been initiated by P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj at a very early age. And he was doubly blessed by having had the opportunity to play the role of a key assistant to him, spending time with him on a daily basis and travelling with him all over India. Shri Nikhil continues to play a very active role in spreading the message of Maha Yoga all over India. He is also a Trustee of the P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Mahayoga Trust in Nashik, India. In this short article he shows how we all can participate in Guru Seva (service to the Guru) by spreading the message of Maha Yoga to the world. - Editor

I am very glad to be writing this short article for our Self Awakening e-newsletter. And I want to congratulate Shri Dilip Kamat for his Guru Seva of editing and publishing this e-newsletter since its inception in August 2008.

In this article I want to inform you all about the activities of the P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Mahayoga Trust world headquarters that was established by P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj in Nashik, India, and what each of you can do as Guru Seva in helping fulfill P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj’s intent.

Maha Yoga (Siddha Yoga) Sadhan is a unique gift to humankind, one that causes positive spiritual changes in each and every one who practices it diligently. The primary goal of our institution, therefore, is to spread the word of its availability to all those who are interested in spiritual growth, and to motivate Sadhaks to be diligent in sitting for Sadhan by helping them understand its importance, guiding them in its practice, and addressing their questions and doubts related to it.

To accomplish this goal, in addition to our world headquarters in Nashik, India, we have 54 centers at various places in India, and we have a presence, through our Sadhaks, in about 90 countries around the world. Throughout the year we have several spiritual and social events at the world headquarters in Nashik to spread the word about Maha Yoga and to help Sadhaks in its practice. Similar programs and events are also held at various other centers throughout the year. Sadhaks also routinely seek guidance by going in person to meet with Deekshadhikaris (those authorized to grant Maha Yoga Deeksha) and senior Sadhaks at the centers as well as through e-mails and video conferences. Senior Sadhaks such as Shri Dilip Kamat, Shri Milind Joshi and others are very active in helping provide guidance through e-mails to Sadhaks all over the world. P. P. Shri Prakash Prabhune Maharaj leads the work of the world headquarters in Nashik supported by six other trustees.

Our Maha Yoga institution is different in some ways compared to other social and spiritual organizations. The people who run it are very conscientious in following the precepts, the measures and the ideals that were set by P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj when he created our institution many years ago. Whether it is an activity related to spiritual objectives or in managing the finances of the institution, they are very diligent in following the guidelines and being true to the ideals that were set by P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj. The diligence with
Bringing Maha Yoga to the World (continued)

which each and every one of those involved in the day to day running of our institution conducts his/her work reflects the devotion and the faith they have in their Guru, P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj. It is one thing to serve one’s Guru when he is alive, but to continue to serve the Guru with the same devotion, the faith and the diligence even after he has departed from our world is indeed a true reflection of the Guru’s Grace. In addition to the world headquarters in Nashik, the five other Ashrams that P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj established in the name of his Guru; in Varanasi in the Northern India, in Rameshwaram in the South, in Pithapuram in Andhra Pradesh in the East, in Narasimha Wadi in Maharashtra in the West, and in Hoshangabad in Madhya Pradesh in Central India; are all run with the same devotion and diligence to the ideals and precepts that he embodied.

At the World Headquarters in Nashik, we have the good fortune of periodic visits by holy personages, such as those in recent months by two Jagadguru Shankaracharyas and throughout the year by various other eminences. During such times, the love and respect these eminences from diverse spheres have for P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj and for Maha Yoga become evident in their interactions with Sadhaks at the Ashram and in their speeches and presentations.

During his lifetime, P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj had an intense desire to bring Maha Yoga to Sadhaks from all over the world. To that end he travelled abroad to several countries, and through the medium of video conferencing, he was able to interact with and advise Sadhaks all over the world. This tradition has continued, with P. P. Shri Prakash Prabhune Maharaj regularly holding video conferences with Sadhaks from the United States, England, Japan, etc.

As we all know, “The Sadguru is not just a person, it is a Tattva (principle/truth/reality)”. The Guru Tattva resides in all of us Sadhaks who have experienced Maha Yoga Deeksha or have had their Prana Shakti become awakened by the intent of a Sadguru. P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj was an embodiment of the Chaitanya Shakti (Universal Life Energy), and even though he has left his physical form, his intent continues to illuminate the path for all of us Sadhaks who continue to make his vision a reality.

For those Sadhaks who want to continue to participate in Guru Seva, they can do so by spreading the message of Maha Yoga and Maha Yoga Sadhan, especially the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga (http://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-introductory-practice.aspx) which has the potential to help the spiritual growth of each and every one on earth. I humbly request that we all participate in this Guru Seva by informing our friends, relatives and others we meet in our day-to-day lives of the amazing gift that the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga can bring to each and every one of them, and urge them to try it out.

The important thing about Maha Yoga and the Introductory Practice is that the Sadhak does not have to do anything with his/her own intent. The Dharana (concentration) and the Dhyan (meditative state) are not to be “done” by the Sadhak with intent, they simply “happen”. This is consistent with the Yoga Sutras of Yoga Muni Patanjali who urges प्रयत्न
Bringing Maha Yoga to the World (continued)

शैथिल्य (Prayatna Shaithilya - Effortlessness). Please make sure you tell those you inform about the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga that they are not to do anything with intent. They should simply sit in a relaxed manner and observe their normal and automatic breathing, and surrender themselves to the Prana Shakti within them. That is all. If they have been doing Yoga Asanas, Pranayam, Omkar Sadhana (the chanting of Om), etc., they should do those practices at other times, not when they are sitting for the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga. It is important for Sadhaks to understand that the practices of Yoga Asanas etc. with intent are exercises for the body, while the Sadhan that happens automatically during the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga or during Maha Yoga Sadhan, is an exercise for the mind.

The various experiences and the thoughts that arise during Maha Yoga Sadhan, whether they cause good feelings or bad, are the result of Samskaras that a Sadhak has accumulated over his current and past lives; and they will be different for different Sadhaks. They are not obstacles to spiritual growth; they are instead the result of the spiritual cleansing that happens as the Samskaras that underlie those thoughts and experiences get eliminated from the Sadhak’s Chitta (mind stuff). So, please keep this in mind and communicate it to those you have introduced to Maha Yoga, so they see this cleansing process as a positive step in their spiritual development.

I want to thank Shri Dilip Kamat for giving me the opportunity to communicate with you all through this Self Awakening e-newsletter, on behalf of the Maha Yoga World Headquarters in Nashik. I pray that you all remain diligent in your Maha Yoga Sadhan, continue to experience progress on your spiritual paths, and feel motivated to participate in Guru Seva by spreading the message of this divine path of Maha Yoga all over the world.

By: Shri Nikhil Prabhune  
Translated by: Dilip Kamat
I would like to talk to you about a few things today, because when we talk about something, our thinking about that topic becomes much clearer; when we articulate our thoughts into words, our thoughts also become clearer. If we have questions about our on thinking on any topic, when we put our thoughts into words, it forces clarity in our thinking as well. That is why I will try to convert my thoughts into words for you, so my thinking also becomes clearer.

The greatest treatise on the science of Yoga is the Bhagvad Geeta. It describes all the various forms of Yoga that have been practiced all over India. Some might think that one or another form of Yoga might be missing from the Bhagvad Geeta, but upon studying it carefully, it becomes clear that it provides knowledge about all the various types of Yoga approaches that have been followed. Most importantly, the sixth chapter of the Bhagvad Geeta describes the true meaning of what Yoga is all about. In one verse of the sixth chapter, Lord Krishna says:

यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेडङ्गते सोप्यो स्मृता।
योगिनं यत्चितिस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः।।6.19।।

(As a lamp placed in a windless spot does not flicker, to such is compared the Yogi of subdued mind, absorbed in the Yoga of the Self).

As we practice our Yoga Sadhana, our mind, which is usually quite unsteady, should become calm. This is what every Sadhak would like to experience - the calming of his mind. He thinks, “I have been practicing Yoga Sadhana for all these years, but despite that my mind continues to flit from one thought to the next.
What should I do to make my mind calm?” I am quite sure every Sadhak has posed this question to himself.

To answer this question we need to understand what it is like to have a calm mind. This is answered in the verse above by giving an example of what a calm mind is like. It is like the unflickering flame of a lamp in a windless spot. For example, when I arrived at the Ashram I was welcomed by having an Aarti done in front of me where an oil lamp was waved in front of me as a sign of welcome. You might have noticed that the lamp was protected by a glass encasing. Without the glass encasing the flame of the lamp would have flickered with the wind and the lamp would have gone out. The glass encasing kept the flame of the lamp from flickering and going out. In fact, when the flame becomes calm it points straight up, as if it points towards God.

In a similar manner, when the mind becomes calm, it becomes inward-directed (उद्धर्ममुख), directed towards God, towards the Antar-Atma (the sliver of the Universal Soul) within us. This is the objective of all Yogis. But until that happens, we just need to keep on doing Sadhana.

There are many reasons why our mind remains unsteady, but there is one important reason why this happens. This is the presence of Vasanas (desires) that are the result of some of the Samskaras (impressions from our current and past lives) that we have accumulated over lifetimes. The thoughts that arise in our minds when we sit for Sadhana make the mind unsteady and they are the result of these Samskaras. The fewer these thought-causing Samskaras we have within us, the calmer will our minds be during Sadhana. And the more we have of the Samskaras that help calm the mind the better will our Sadhana become. So what can we do about this? In the sixth chapter of the Bhagavad Geeta Shri Arjun asks Lord Krishna how he can control his mind when it is very difficult to control:

चन्द्रलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाधि बलवद्मरदम्।
तस्यां निग्रं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम्।।6.34।।

(The mind verily is, O Krishna, restless, turbulent, strong and unyielding; I deem it quite as difficult to control as the wind.)

This is exactly the question Sadhaks ask to this day.
Discourse given by Shrimad Jagadguru Shankaracharya Shri Gangadharendra Saraswati Swami Maharaj (continued)

To which, the Lord replies:

अंशशं महाभाषो मनो दुर्लिङ्ग हं चलं।
अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येन च गृह्यते॥ 6.35॥

(Undoubtedly, O mighty-armed one, the mind is difficult to control and is restless; but, by practice, O son of Kunti, and by dispassion, it is restrained.)

The enthusiastic practice (Abhyas) of Sadhana is therefore the key.

The thoughts that come into our minds such as, “I wish this happened”, or “I wish that happened”, or “I wish I had this”, or “I wish I had that”; these come from desires and wants. The less we desire and/or want, the fewer will such thoughts arise in our minds and our minds will become calmer. So we should try to reduce our desires and wants.

The question now arises, what can we do to reduce our wants and desires? There are many answers to this question. But an event in Lord Rama’s life gives us a good answer. At the end of Lord Rama’s studies, he decided to visit holy places all over India. After he returned from his tour he developed a sense of detachment from material life. His detachment grew so strong that he quit getting involved with the administration of his father’s kingdom. He quit worrying about what was happening in the kingdom, the plight of his people, concern for King Dashrath his father, etc. He would just sit alone in a room.

One day the sage Vishwamitra arrived at the palace. The King Dashrath welcomed him and told him about his concern for Lord Rama. He told the sage, “Rama does not talk to me, does not respond to my questions and concerns, he does not seem to get hungry, I don’t know what has happened to him”. He asked the sage, “Why is this happening to my son?” Sage Vishwamitra went to see Lord Rama and upon seeing him he quickly realized that Lord Rama had developed a strong sense of detachment (Vairagya), and it was only because of that was he behaving as he did. So, the sage told King Dashrath that he knew exactly what had happened to Lord Rama, what was in Lord Rama’s mind and he understood who Lord Rama really was> He advised the King to not worry about Lord Rama, but the King kept asking him what he should do about Lord Rama’s condition. The sage responded by suggesting that the King introduce Lord Rama to Maharishi Vashishta, a renowned Guru.

So, King Dashrath introduced his son to Maharishi Vashishta. The Maharishi asked Lord Rama what had happened and what was in his mind. To which Lord Rama replied with a long and
beautiful discourse on Vairagya (detachment), its meaning and importance to us all. In Yoga Vashishta, which is a treatise written by Maharishi Vashishta; there is a major chapter on Vairagya called Vairagya Prakaranam, which is based on the discourse on Vairagya that Lord Rama gave to the Maharishi. In it he describes how the tour of holy places that Lord Rama went on created in his mind the sense of detachment that he developed upon returning home.

Such detachment can also come from other methods like the chanting of japas, etc. And only when we develop a sense of detachment do we begin to experience the quietude that comes from a calm mind. This results in the elimination of the Samskaras that cause the mind to become unsteady. And when this calming of the mind is accompanied by regular Sadhana do we get together the ingredients that over time will result in spiritual growth.

Developing detachment and the resulting calming of the mind is just the beginning. This causes the mind to become inward-directed, which then gets followed by the other steps like Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and eventually Samadhi. But all these next steps depend on the important step of getting the mind to become calm.

This is all I want to say about Yoga. Thank you for allowing me to speak a few words on this topic.

I also want to thank you all for the excellent arrangements that were made for my visit. I have a long history of having a strong relationship with this institution. That is why I was glad to receive the invitation from P. P. Prakashrao (Prabhune Maharaj) and I accepted it right away. I got to know P. P. Narayanrao (Kaka Maharaj) many years ago and he visited us a few times in Shirshi. He even gave a discourse there at our Matha. Many of us have received Siddha Yoga Deeksha from him and other Siddha Yoga Gurus. I urge you all to follow Siddha Yoga under the leadership of P. P. Prakashrao Prabhune (Maharaj). Thank you all.

Translated and edited by Mr. Dilip Kamat
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks

Question: I was initiated into Maha Yoga a year ago, perhaps a little longer. I have allowed my Sadhan to slip, going sometimes 2-3 months without practicing. I have recently made the determination that I will sit for Sadhan every day regardless of the circumstances. Do I need to be initiated again? Is it possible to be reinstated? Or am I able to continue where I left off? Also are there any teachings that will help with humility and walking the path? I recently had my 40th birthday and had a huge realization that I have been distracted by the world’s “shiny” things and not focusing on what is truly important. I thank you for your time.

Answer: Glad to read that you were initiated into Maha Yoga a year ago. It is not uncommon for Sadhaks to slip on this path. But please understand that a Sadhak who slips on this path has no need to get re-initiated. Once the Mother Energy (Prana Shakti) within you has taken hold of your hand, she will not let you go.

It is good to read that you have come to realize on the event of your 40th birthday of what is truly important for you and have resolved to sit for Maha Yoga Sadhan every day. Regular Maha Yoga Sadhan is the key to spiritual progress on this path. When you sit for Sadhan regularly, and after surrendering to the awakened Prana Shakti within you, you actually begin to experience her doings by simply observing the physical, mental or Pranic Kriyas that happen, you will automatically begin to feel the humility that comes from realizing that we are only observers on this path - the awakened Prana Shakti is the “doer”. No need for any teachings, humility will come from the experience of Maha Yoga Sadhan.

Question: I received Deeksha this morning. And I had a very good experience. It felt like my Muladhara chakra has been opened. Now I feel very confident about myself. But I am unable to sit for meditation for more than 20 minutes because my body starts to vibrate. What should I do?

Answer: Congratulations on your Deeksha having happened! The Kriyas you have experienced clearly indicate that the Deeksha did indeed happen.

Please do not be afraid of or attached to the Kriyas you are experiencing. If the body vibrations become too intense, just open your eyes and they will stop. Close your eyes again and continue with your Sadhan, and repeat the opening of your eyes if the body vibrations again become too intense. The awakened Prana Shakti within you is bringing up some of the Rajasik Samskaras you have accumulated during your current and past lives into your Chitta and these Samskaras are getting expressed as body vibrations. By observing these Kriyas without fearing them or getting attached to them, and by simply allowing them to happen and observing them in a detached manner, the Samskaras underlying the Kriyas will gradually get eliminated from your Chitta. This is also called Nadi Shuddhi (cleansing of the Prana flow channels). The entire purpose of Maha Yoga Sadhan is Chitta Vrutti Nirodhah, i.e. the elimination of all the Vruttis (tendencies) in a Sadhak’s Chitta (mind stuff). This happens during Maha Yoga Sadhan when the accumulated Samskaras in a Sadhak’s Chitta get expressed as Kriyas, and by simply observing the Kriyas in a dispassionate manner, the Samskaras gradually get eliminated, thereby eliminating the Vruttis in his Chitta, eventually leading to Self-Enlightenment.
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

**Question:** Shaktipat is a very rich science, as is the study of Advaita Vedanta. Are you aware of any Gurus that teach both? I find some that teach one or the other, but not both. The Shaktipat guru may recognize the truth of Vedanta, but not teach the scriptures, and the Vedantin may recognize the validity of Shaktipat, yet teach a different sadhana to sadhaks. Perhaps there is a good reason for this that I do not understand. Thank you for your help. Incidentally, I was initiated into Sahaja Yoga many years ago.

**Answer:** Maha Yoga is indeed a very rich science as is Advaita Vedanta. In fact Maha Yoga is Advaita Vedanta at its core. Advaita Vedanta is a philosophical approach, which means “non-dual”, which is exactly what Maha Yoga (Yoga = union) helps its practitioners realize experientially. Two of the current Shankaracharyas in India, who are considered to be the teachers/preceptors of Advaita Vedanta as taught by the lineage of Adi Shankaracharya over the centuries, have in fact received Shaktipat Deeksha from P. P. Kaka Maharaj so they could actually experience the teachings of Advaita Vedanta, i.e. go beyond it being just an intellectual exercise.

The teachings of Advaita Vedanta are exactly the same as those of Maha Yoga. However, most teachers of Advaita Vedanta teach its scriptures purely at an intellectual level, i.e. the Sadhak can recite the relevant shlokas (stanzas/verses) and understand their meaning at an intellectual level. It is one thing to understand the non-dual nature of our universe and our existence at an intellectual level without actually experiencing it. But it is quite a different level of understanding that Maha Yoga brings to Sadhaks - not just an intellectual understanding of the non-dual nature, but an experiential one. And that is indeed the key.

No amount of intellectual understanding of our non-duality will enable us to actually and experientially understand our non-dual nature. Without the actual experience of non-duality we will believe it only because we have been taught the scriptures that say it is so. And until we actually get a taste of that experience through Maha/Sahaja/Siddha Yoga it will only be an intellectual exercise. One can recite the Soham (That I am) mantra until one is blue in the face and intellectually understand its meaning without getting a taste of our non-dual nature that many Maha/Sahaja/Siddha Yoga Sadhaks experience effortlessly.

Here is a link to an article that we published in our e-newsletter a few years ago that might shed some light on how Maha Yoga enables the experience of non-duality.

[http://mahayoga.org/library/Maha%20Yoga%20the%20Key%20to%20Self-Realization.pdf](http://mahayoga.org/library/Maha%20Yoga%20the%20Key%20to%20Self-Realization.pdf)

Since you were initiated into Sahaja Yoga many years ago, my suggestion to you is to not intellectualize this stuff too much. The key is regular Sadhan. The Guru (Tattva) is within you.

**Question:** Is self-realization simply that we stop identifying ourselves with our body, mind, or intellect or even as the "observer" of all these? I ask this because apart from Mahayoga Sadhan I used to observe what is going on in my mind. I did it for a long time. Suddenly,
one day it occurred to me that why should I even observe it? It's an unnecessary thing for me to do so I stopped observing. The moment I stopped observing -" I" am there...silence. Is this self-realization?

**Answer:** Self-Realization happens when a Sadhak stops identifying himself with his body, mind, intellect or even as the observer/Sakshi. But I am not sure if it can be described simply as “silence”. It is, as the scriptures say, an experience of the Ever Pure Blissful Consciousness. However, it is not very easy to intellectually understand what that state is. It is much easier to understand what the state isn’t, as Adi Shankaracharya says over and over (what it isn’t) in the first five stanzas of his Nirvana Shatakam (see article beginning page 9 of the May 2018 issue of Self Awakening at [http://mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self%20Awakening%20Vol%2010%20Issue%204.pdf](http://mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self%20Awakening%20Vol%2010%20Issue%204.pdf)).

Only in the sixth stanza does he describe what it is:

अहं निर्विकल्प निराकार: निलोकारं कौं निराकार
विभूतवाच्च सर्व्व सर्वनिर्दिष्टियाणाम्।
न चास्वतं नेव मुक्तिन्त्यं मेयः
विद्वान-दर्पण-शिवोऽहम् शिवोऽहम्।

6.1: I am Without any Variation, and Without any Form,
6.2: I am Present Everywhere as the underlying Substratum of everything, and behind all Sense Organs,
6.3: Neither do I get Attached to anything, nor get Freed from anything,
6.4: I am the Ever Pure Blissful Consciousness; I am Shiva, I am Shiva

However, this realization is not an intellectual one; it has to be actually experienced. A Sadhak cannot simply tell himself that he is not his body, mind, intellect or the Sakshi (observer), and expect Self Realization to happen. Nor can he will himself to become Self Realized. Self-Realization just happens automatically and without any effort on the part of the Sadhak. Perhaps you have reached that state and have already experienced it. If so, my sincerest Pranaams to you.

But if you are not already dwelling in that state, my advice to you would be to not obsess about it too much or try to intellectually understand what it is. When it happens, it will be an unmistakable experience. Obsessing about what Self Realization is and making efforts to try to achieve it will likely be counterproductive because such an approach itself will result in the creation of new Samskaras. Instead, continuing to sit for Sadhan on a regular basis without harboring any expectations of what should or shouldn’t happen will likely be the best way to eventually experience Self-Realization.

**Question:** I took Maha Yoga Deeksha a long time ago and I have been sitting regularly for Sadhan in the morning. But due to a recent change in my work schedule, I am unable to sit for Sadhan in the morning, but can do so in the evening after 6:30 pm. Is there any extra...
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

care I should take for evening Sadhan, e.g. should I change the direction I face when I sit for Sadhan?

Answer: Glad to read that you have received Deeksha a long time ago and have been sitting for Sadhan on a regular basis.

There is no problem at all with you sitting for Maha Yoga Sadhan in the evening, instead of in the morning. Sit as you have usually been doing, facing either the North or the East. No need to take “extra care” or anything like that.

Question: I have been sitting for meditation on regular basis and have taken Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha as well. However, for the past six to seven months I have become very sensitive and I find myself often losing my temper. During this time I have also had one or another health issue. Also my mind has become very restless. Please guide me on what is going on with me and what I should do about it.

Answer: Glad to read that you have received Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha and have been sitting for Sadhan on a regular basis.

The experiences you are having of being overly sensitive, losing your temper, and your mind becoming restless in your day-to-day life are not at all uncommon for Sadhaks who have recently received Deeksha. The awakened Prana Shakti within you is doing its job of bringing up into your Chitta (mind stuff) Samskaras you have accumulated in your current and past lives. Usually these Samskaras get expressed as Kriyas during Sadhan, and by simply observing these Kriyas without getting attached to them or being afraid of them, and letting them go, results in them getting eliminated from a Sadhak’s Chitta. But sometimes they spill over into a Sadhak’s day-to-day life resulting in the Sadhak experiencing anger, restlessness, and other expressions of the Samskaras that have been brought up. The best way to address this type of spillover is to continue to sit for Sadhan on a regular basis, perhaps for a longer time than you have been, or perhaps sitting for Sadhan twice a day rather than just once. This will result in the Samskaras getting expressed as Kriyas during Sadhan, which will reduce the spillover into your day-to-day life.

About the health related issues you have been experiencing, they might simply be health-related issues that we all have as humans. If so, getting them treated by a doctor would be advisable. If however, they are related to the spillover effect I described above, sitting for Sadhan for a longer duration or twice a day would help mitigate those issues as well.

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, if you are interested in developing a good basic understanding of Maha Yoga, especially the role of Sadhan and the Kriyas that happen during Sadhan, I would suggest the following reading list:
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

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

Editor’s note: Please send your questions regarding Maha Yoga and Shaktipat to: 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 September 9th, 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/](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](https://www.facebook.com/groups/mahayogaworld).

We also have a Twitter feed at [https://twitter.com/Mahayoga_Org](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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Editor: Mr. Dilip Kamat

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May all desire to follow this nectarous Siddhayoga Path!