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://mahayoga.org/selfawakening.htm.
Churning of the Heart - Excerpts

These excerpts are from P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj’s trilogy, “Churning of the Heart”. P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj (left) was from the same Shaktipat lineage as P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj, a lineage which can be traced in recent times to P. P. Swami Gangadhara Tirth Maharaj who lived in the 19th century. In these excerpts, P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj describes his experiences and interactions with his Guru, P. P. Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj, who he refers to as Maharajshri or Maharajji. They are published here with the kind permission of Swami Shivom Tirth Ashram, Inc.

The Answer for Freedom from Vices

Churning the heart is a subject that most people try to avoid. Humans are most frightened of their own limitations. People are not interested in studying their own selves because when they look within they discover a jungle of vices and perversions. When one looks into one’s own mind, ego rises up and stands in the way and immediately attention shifts outward, while our own bad qualities remain unchanged. In fact, they may even get stronger due to ego. The main reason why the sense of individuality remains in this world is the inability to examine one’s own self.

I had many defects but, by the grace of the Guru, it became my nature to continually examine myself. When I tried to search within and shake my mind I would find an army of vices and faults ready to do battle. For the previous few years I had been trying to somehow get rid of my faults, but sadly, I had no success in defeating even a single warrior from this army. Ravana (the demon king in Ramayana) was not even talking about dying. If Rama chopped off one head another would grow in no time. This was the condition of Ravana in the form of my aberrations and faults. Sometimes I would feel that certain weaknesses were gone but in no time they would reappear. After being totally disappointed because of this I surrendered at the Guru’s feet. I had heard and read about the glory of the Guru for some time but never took it seriously. So far I had more faith in my own efforts. I was tired of my own efforts. Now I was disappointed and sad and realized the need for a Guru’s grace.

Once when Guruji came to Nangal, during a discourse, he said that many people read the scriptures but do not receive their grace. When the desire for finding a Guru arises, then it may be known that the scriptures are benevolent. The grace of scriptures turns you toward the grace of a Guru. My condition was similar. I was studying scriptures a lot but had not yet attained their grace. Finally, when I was disappointed with my own efforts, the grace of the
scripts manifested. I landed in Dewas (in central India, where Maharajshri’s ashram was located).

I expressed my grief to Maharajshri. “I know I have many faults. There must be many more that I am not even aware of. I have been making colossal efforts to fight these faults but I have not succeeded in removing a single weakness. What should I do?”

Maharajshri replied, “The defects will not go away that easily. The basic reason for all these weaknesses, defects, vices and tendencies are samskaras, accumulated impressions. These weaknesses will not leave you until impressions are struck down. If you rid your mind of one defect the samskaras will revive it and bring it back. People mostly fight with their faults and leave the accumulated impressions untouched. You are probably making the same mistake and, as a result, you have not yet succeeded.

“It is also true that a person makes efforts and does not succeed because his efforts are made with ego, thus he cannot free himself from weaknesses. Because of the presence of ego, he can fill the mind with defects but he cannot free it. One needs God’s grace for this. Freedom from weaknesses depends upon grace. By the grace of the Divine the fire of knowledge and the fire of yoga are ignited within. This is known as the awakening of the Kundalini, Allhadini or Pratyak chetana. This is the experience of prajnana described in Vedanta. Along with the weaknesses and tendencies, this fire also burns the root cause of these weaknesses, the accumulated impressions. Efforts by the individual are of no help. The more effort one makes the stronger the ego becomes.

“This does not mean that one should not make efforts. One must. Then when nothing is attained by effort the person will accept defeat and decide from experience that nothing can be done. He will surrender to God and pray and be eager to receive the grace of a Guru. A sense of surrender will develop within him naturally. By the mercy of God and the Guru he will experience the power of grace. It does not mean that after receiving grace the aspirant does not have any responsibility. As long as there is even a trace of ego how can responsibility be finished? But his responsibility is to make efforts to merge his ego in the awakened Shakti, to retain a sense of surrender, and to take refuge only under Guru-Shakti.”

With these thoughts in mind, I asked, “Maharajji, usually people of the world do not even want to imagine that they have faults. They believe that they are virtuous, intelligent, knowledgeable and capable. According to them, others have all the faults. What will happen to them?”

Maharajshri replied, “This is their ego. There is no one who does not have virtues as well as vices. Mostly there are vices. Is it not a vice to look for faults in others? Isn’t it a vice to overlook one’s own faults? Isn’t it a vice to have pride about one’s virtues? Are not attachments and aversions, jealousy and vengeance vices? You asked what would happen to them. As long as they are not aware they will continue to be crushed between the grinding
Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

stones of Maya, the grand illusion. Until the habit of introspection develops, vices will not be apparent.”

Question: “Is it enough to see one’s faults in order to eliminate them?”

Answer: “No. To see faults, to understand their causes, is only the beginning of their destruction. Next comes the feeling of disgust towards these faults, and efforts to be free from them. But it is not enough to free one’s self from them, because freedom is not dependent on one’s efforts but on the kriyas of the Shakti [the spontaneous activities of awakened Shakti]. It is the duty of an aspirant to be very alert when such kriyas happen. Under the influence of such kriyas he must not make the mistake of accumulating new impressions. A feeling of hatred toward faults helps maintain purity in practical life, which is directly related to destiny.”

Question: “Worldly activities today depend on human weaknesses. If everyone is free of them then how will these worldly activities occur?”

Answer: On hearing this question Maharajshri laughed loudly and said, “Why do you worry about the activities of the world? First of all, everyone’s chitta [psyche] is not going to be purified. It is more than enough if even a few people become pure. Did all have a pure mind in the kingdom of Lord Rama? If that were the case why did Sita have to suffer exile in the jungle? If we assume that someday all will be free of weaknesses, the world and the activities of the world will still go on. Yes, in that world there will be no place for deceit, cheating selfishness or falsehood.”

Question: “Maharajji, what most of us call virtues are defects from the point of view of spirituality. But you are talking about removing defects and not about removing virtues.”

Answer: “‘Defects’ means rajo guna [disturbing qualities] and tamo guna [the quality of inertia or inactivity]. ‘Virtues’ means sattva guna [harmonious qualities]. All these are within Maya and they should all be abandoned. However defects are unholy tendencies and virtues are holy tendencies. Unholy tendencies never subside; even if they are silenced, they arise again. But holy tendencies subside spontaneously after self-realization. This is the reason why we have reiterated the subject of eliminating defects or vices. Vices are always for worldly affairs. If virtues are dominated by ego then they are also vices, even if they are harmonious in nature. Virtues that are free from ego are real virtues. These real virtues are inclined towards the soul. These are the holy tendencies that subside upon attainment of the Self.”
The Way to Retreat from Action

It was now a year and a half since I had come to the ashram. Initially I had thought of staying and serving at the ashram for only one year. That time was over. I was concerned about what people might be thinking. Perhaps some were gossiping. It is true that I had been able to adjust myself, to some extent, to circumstances. Perhaps I was also feeling a desire to be in solitude. Whatever it was, I was yearning for solitude. But I was not able to muster enough courage to talk about this to Maharajshri. Much of the ashram responsibility had come to rest on my shoulders. This, in my belief, was the grace of Maharajshri — that he considered me to be worthy and accepted my services. By now I had also succeeded in suppressing my ego to quite an extent. Occasionally problems emerged, but by the grace of the Guru they would be resolved. There was no problem due to the ashram; rather it was mainly due to my state of mind. Even while serving in the ashram my mental development was not suitable for the ashram, I had come to live the life of an ascetic, thinking about renunciation and total solitude. This thought would not leave my mind. Often the banks of the Sutlej River and the attractive ranges of the lush, green mountains of Himachal Pradesh would float in front of my eyes. Memories of the time spent amid that beauty would come alive in my heart. But how could I talk about this to Guru Maharaj?

One afternoon Maharajshri was sitting alone in his room. Thinking that the time was appropriate, I started the conversation. “Maharajji, the last time I spoke of going away you told me to stay for a few more days. I decided then to reap the benefits of staying at your feet for one year. Now the year is over. Therefore I request your permission to go. Whenever I am needed, I will return.”

Maharajshri sat quietly for some time and then said, “The Guru should not be selfish. To stop you from going because you are serving me would be selfish. I have no problem if you want to go somewhere for spiritual benefit, but in my opinion it is beneficial for you now to stay here. You will go from here and build a hut on the banks of the Sutlej River and live there in solitude. Your detachment is not ripe yet. Neither do you have the experience of this life, nor do you have complete spiritual discrimination. If you remain in solitude with unripe detachment, you will not be able to survive for long. Therefore it is best for you to get personal and practical experience of the selfish and illusory nature of the world. The world is sweet on the surface and very bitter inside. People have one thing in their heart and they say something else. When you experience the futility of the world, then your detachment will be firmly grounded. Then you will learn about its futility with certainty. Mere intellectual detachment is not sufficient. It must be accompanied by experience. You will not get this experience in the solitude of Himachal Pradesh. Without indisputable detachment, spiritual attainment is like a daydream. For this reason it is best that you stay here. Do not have a time limit. Along with meditation, experience Maya [illusion] and the futility of the world. However, I will not force you into anything.”
I was in a dilemma after listening to Maharajshri’s viewpoint. His point was logical, and besides it was from a pure heart and for my benefit. Thus, for me, Maharajshri’s wish was my command. All these factors forced me to reconsider. For me it was improper to even ask for time to think it over. That would mean that I had the power to make a decision. It would be contrary to a disciple’s duty, as well as that of a servant. Thus I ought to have said immediately, “Very well, Maharajji. I will do as you say.” But instead my mouth remained shut due to ego. I became absorbed in my thoughts. Maharajji also became quiet after saying what he had wanted to say. I did not say anything and went out and sat in the verandah.

As I sat on the verandah I was jolted as if by a strong electric shock. I suddenly became very conscious, as if awakened from a deep sleep. What had I done? When Maharajshri gave his clear opinion what right did I have to think it over? “You are guilty of disrespecting Guru Maharajshri by leaving him without giving an answer. You are good for nothing. Your desire to serve is worthless.” I berated myself.

I got up at once and went straight inside, grabbed Maharajshri’s feet, placed my head on them and started weeping heavily. Maharajshri asked, “What is the matter? I did not say anything to upset you. If you want to go then go merrily. I am happy if you are happy.”

On hearing these words I began to cry even more and said, “I will not go anywhere. I made a big mistake -- even after knowing your views clearly. I took so long to say, ‘All right.’ What is the value of my thought against your views?”

Generally Maharajshri was not affected by such events. Many disciples came and went. He never asked anyone to come or go, nor did he stop anyone from leaving. Had I left, it would not have affected his mind in any way. He simply said whatever was good for me. Listening to me, his jovial nature came alive. He said, “Good. Make me a cup of coffee. I will have a cup of coffee now.”

It needs to be noted here that he used to drink coffee only once a day, at three in the morning.

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 Amazon.com, or in India from:
Devatma Shakti Society
92-93, Naval Gav
Post Dahisar, via Mumbra, Thane 400612
Tel. No.: 22-65148183
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks

Question: I am a fifty-nine year old man living in the United States, in Washington State. I have been interested in spirituality from a very early age and have been meditating on my own for a long time. I have never known a guru but have gained my spiritual knowledge from reading and living a good and honorable life. I would love to travel to India to seek a guru, but I cannot travel as it is very expensive. Living a simple spiritual life, for me at least, has resulted in a modest but happy lifestyle, leaving little money for foreign travel. This is why I was delighted to discover your website and your offer to initiate devotees at a distance. I have several questions.

• At your website (www.mahayoga.org) on the page entitled, “Roles and Responsibilities following P. P. Kaka Maharaj’s Departure,” where it is mentioned that P. P. Dr. Shamsundar Deshpande Maharaj is responsible for countries outside of India. I assume this means he would be the person giving Deeksha to Deeksha applicants outside India? If not, may I ask who this will be? The reason I want to know is so that I might find a photograph of him on the internet and put it in a place of honor in my home, as people traditionally do for their guru. Is this appropriate for Shaktipat?

• With many gurus, a student is given a new name. Is this true for seekers who receive Shaktipat as well?

• When one has received Deeksha does one then become a Sadhak?

• If a student is diligent in his practice and wishes to devote his life to Shaktipat, is there an additional level he might attain, over time, where he might be trained to become a Deekshadhikari (someone who is capable of initiating others)?

• May I write and describe my spiritual progress and ask questions?

Thank you for taking the time to read this and in answering my questions. I would very much like to be included in the next Deeksha event.

Answer: First, I am glad to read that you have been interested in spirituality and have been living a life conducive to spirituality that has resulted in your having a modest but happy lifestyle. That in itself is a very good basis for the next step you are about to take on your spiritual journey. And since a Sadhak does not have to be in the presence of a Deeksha Guru to receive Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha, it should perfectly suit your need. As regards your specific questions about Maha Yoga and Shaktipat Deeksha, here goes:

• Maha Yoga Deeksha is not a Deeksha given by an individual. It is the Deeksha of the Maha Yoga Parampara (lineage). The Deeksha “happens” because it is the Prasad (gift) of our Parampara which, in its modern form, can be traced to P. P. Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj in the mid-19th century, but originates from Lord Shiva. The Gurus of our lineage, such as P. P. Kaka Maharaj, have always considered themselves merely the “postmen” who deliver the Prasad on behalf of Lord Shiva, and not the originators of the
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)


But they are special “postmen”, who because of their highly spiritual lifestyles have the ability to pray to God (the originator of the Prana Shakti that pervades the universe), their own Guru and to the Parampara, to awaken the Prana Shakti within a seeker (Sadhak) who has earnestly requested it. This prayer of intent by the Deeksha Guru is called Sankalpa, or intent, and it is this intent that underlies all forms of Shaktipat Deeksha, whether it happens by touch, sight, or by the granting of a mantra. Since the Guru’s intent is the key, it does not matter if the Sadhak is in the Guru’s presence or all the way on the other side of the globe, for Deeksha to happen.

Prior to the day of Deeksha, the 14 Deekshadhikaris (those authorized by P. P. Kaka Maharaj to grant Deeksha) pray to God, their Guru and the Parampara to grant Deeksha to those sincerely seeking it. As did P. P. Kaka Maharaj and the Deeksha Gurus before him, they consider themselves as only the "postmen", conveying the Prasad of Deeksha on behalf of Lord Shiva, their Guru, and the Parampara. Please understand that no Siddha Guru thinks of himself/herself as the ultimate "grantor" of Deeksha. If he does, then his ego gets involved in the process and the Deeksha is likely to be flawed.

So while each of the Deekshadhikaris has been given responsibilities for Maha Yoga Prasar (spreading the word), with P. P. Prabhune Maharaj responsible for the Maha Yoga worldwide headquarters and P. P. Dr. Deshpande Maharaj responsible for Prasar outside of India, they simply consider themselves as delivery men. You may consider them both as your Guru or, as they would rather if you asked them, you may consider P. P. Kaka Maharaj himself, and his Guru, P. P. Loknath Tirth Maharaj, as your Gurus. In short, you can consider the entire Parampara as the chain of Gurus who have made Shaktipat Deeksha a possibility for countless seekers. In fact, once your Prana Shakti gets awakened, she becomes your internal Guru who is always there with you. When you sit for Sadhan, simply surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within and simply observe how she guides you through physical, mental and Pranic Kriyas all designed to eliminate the accumulated Samskaras (impressions) from your current and prior lives.

While having photographs of Gurus at your place of Sadhan can be helpful in bringing about a sense of surrender to the Guru(s), it is more important to develop a sense of surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within, the formless inner Guru who is the pure energy that animates us all. But regardless, I will suggest to the Maha Yoga leadership to post photographs of the Deekshadhikaris at the Maha Yoga website, so those interested can download them. I have to tell you though, that it might take some time for it to happen because it won’t be considered as much of a priority by the leadership.

- There is no need to change one’s name following Deeksha. Those who take Sannyas (renunciate) Deeksha usually take new names to cast aside their past in a symbolic manner, but Shaktipat Deeksha is not Sannyas Deeksha. While some Maha Yoga Sadhaks
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

and Gurus have been Sannyasis, most Sadhaks and many Gurus in the Parampara have been householders.

- **Sadhak** means “seeker”. Any person seeking to be on a spiritual path can be considered to be a Sadhak. Once Maha Yoga Deeksha happens one can refer to the person as a Maha Yoga Sadhak or a Maha Yoga Dixit (someone who has received Deeksha).

- Devoting one’s life to Maha Yoga means sitting for Sadhan on a regular basis and leading a life of a Karma Yogi on an ongoing path toward Self-Enlightenment. (A Karma Yogi is one who lives his day-to-day life with the understanding that he has the right to action but not to the fruits of his action). The key here is to rid oneself of the accumulated Samskaras, those impressions that result from attachments and aversions developed over one’s current and past lives, while avoiding the creation of new Samskaras. The process of Sadhan whereby a Sadhak observes, in a detached manner, the Kriyas (physical, mental and Pranic) that happen, helps to get those accumulated Samskaras eliminated from his Chitta (mind stuff), whereas the attachments and aversions he develops in his day-to-day life work to build up the accumulation of new Samskaras. This is why it is very important for Sadhaks to develop an attitude of a Karma Yogi as much as possible.

A Sadhak should never aspire to become a Deekshadhikari, because even having such an aspiration creates an attachment, feeds his ego and adds to the cache of Samskaras, which only retards his spiritual progress. Please read the article, *The Importance of Acceptance and Patience* in the November 2012 issue of Self Awakening (archived at [http://mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self%20Awakening%20Vol%205%20Issue%202.pdf](http://mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self%20Awakening%20Vol%205%20Issue%202.pdf)) to understand this point better. When a Sadhak reaches a very high level of spirituality and has purified his Chitta through regular Sadhan and is living a pure life as a Karma Yogi, he might find those around him having their Prana Shakti becoming awakened while in his presence or even through his Sankalpa (intent). Or he might be contacted by his Guru/Parampara, either through material means or through a very intense spiritual experience or a dream that he can pass on the gift of Shaktipat Deeksha to others. But this is something that “happens”. It is not necessary at all for attaining Self-Enlightenment, nor is it something that Sadhaks should aspire for.

- You are by all means welcome to share your experiences and to ask questions about Maha Yoga and related matters.

I would like to suggest that prior to receiving Deeksha you may try out the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga as described here: [http://mahayoga.org/introductorypractice.htm](http://mahayoga.org/introductorypractice.htm) on a daily basis. It has P. P. Kaka Maharaj’s Sankalpa (intent) behind it, so you can consider it as a type of Deeksha as well. You might also find interesting the four Discussions with P. P. Kaka Maharaj published in the May 2009, May 2010, February 2011 and the February 2012 issues of our Self Awakening e-newsletter archived at the site [http://mahayoga.org/selfawakening.htm](http://mahayoga.org/selfawakening.htm).
Question: Is God Sakar (having form) or Nirakar (without form)? Does God take a human form, and if he does then why are such manifestations of God limited to some geographic regions or countries such as India? Are such forms of God capable of performing miracles, i.e. do they have Siddhis (miraculous powers), and should Sadhaks try to get Siddhis? We hear a lot these days about many ways such as Ashtanga Yoga, etc. to gain Atma Gyan (self-realization). Are these claims true and if not what is the true way to get Atma-Gyan?

Answer: God is both Nirakar and Sakar all at the same time. He resides in all of us and pervades the entire universe. Many of us are raised with the idea that God pervades everything so we believe that it is so, but this belief is only at an intellectual level. Only Yogis who have reached the Nirvikalpa Samadhi (Avadhoot) state continually understand this in an experiential manner. They are able to actually and experientially “see” God in everything and in every one. They alone truly and continually experience the all-pervading nature of God, i.e. the Nirakar but all-pervasive God all the time. They continually live in that state. Some advanced Sadhaks who have not yet reached this final state of self-realization do get glimpses of it during Sadhan, but not at all times. They can experientially tell all of us that such a state exists, but they have not reached the stage where they continually live in that state.

Those Yogis who have reached the Avadhoot state do not typically have any worldly or material desires. They can leave their lives at will and not get reborn. Some of them choose to continue living in this world, and in some cases such as Lord Shri Rama and Lord Shri Krishna, they are reborn in this world out of their own choice despite having reached the Avadhoot state. Having reached the God state, they are the Sakar manifestations of God and they come to this earth for the uplift of others.

By the way such manifestations are not limited to one region or another. They have appeared to various extents in many regions of the world, but because the Hindu religion has historically understood and explicitly developed the science of spirituality, such manifestations of God are accepted and recognized more easily in the Indian culture. I would suggest that Buddha, Christ and perhaps Muhammad were manifestations of the same phenomenon to some extent. And there have probably been many such manifestations of self-realized souls at various degrees of self-awareness in India and in other parts of the world, where their impact on others has been just as significant, but probably on a smaller scale in terms of the people they have affected. Therefore they might not be as well-known as those like Shri Rama, Shri Krishna, Jesus Christ, Buddha and others. So, to generalize this further, we are all Sakar manifestations of the Nirakar God, but some Sakar manifestations are more clearly apparent than others. And those Sakar manifestations that are close to the Avadhoot stage, or are born as Avadhoots, are what we refer to as Avatars.

As for Siddhis, they can arise automatically on the path to self-realization and many realized souls have possessed such powers. But they are traps, and a Sadhak should avoid using them if they arise. The key for spiritual progress is to have one’s Sanchit Samskaras get eliminated through Sadhan and to not accumulate new ones. When Siddhis arise the Sadhak
might get tempted to use them, thus developing attachments to the Siddhis themselves and/or to what the Siddhis can do for himself or for others; in that process boosting his ego and creating new attachments and new Samskaras. A Sadhak should therefore diligently avoid using any Siddhis that may arise, either for his own gain or for others.

As for your comment about ways to reach atma-gyan: there are many ways that can take you there, but Maha Yoga is the easiest and most direct way to get there. It relies on the grace of the Guru and the Maha Yoga Parampara for getting the Sadhak’s Prana Shakti being awakened and it avoids the pitfalls of other Yoga practices that rely on the “doership” (Karta Bhava) and effort on part of the Sadhak. In Maha Yoga practice, the Sadhak surrenders the role of the Karta (doer) to the awakened Prana Shakti within him and simply plays the role of an observer (Sakshi). This makes progress very easy, and since Sakshi Bhava is emphasized right from the start he does not have to face the difficulty encountered in other Yoga practices of having to give up his Karta role and taking on the Sakshi role at advanced stages.

**Question:** I have been on a spiritual path for 5 years now but lately I find it difficult to meditate. I have been trying really hard and asking for spiritual healing and guidance. Recently I had a very strange dream, very weird, but I want to know its meaning as I feel it means something important. I was floating in a circle of children and they were chanting. I do not know what they were saying nor could I see their faces but I knew I was in presence of children. After a while a child looked over at me and threw a pink lotus flower, perfect pink petals all around a white center as she dropped it in me from above. As she was doing this I think she clearly said “Deeksha”. I then woke up immediately. What does this mean and can you help?

**Answer:** Glad to read about your dream and the fact that you have been on a spiritual journey for the past 5 years. I am no expert on dream interpretation, but it seems quite likely that your dream is urging you to request Deeksha. (I am assuming here that you are somewhat familiar with what Maha Yoga and Maha Yoga Deeksha are about.) It seems that while you have progressed on the spiritual path over the years, you might have hit a blockage of some sort, which has made it difficult for you to sit for Sadhan (meditation), and the dream may be your inner self suggesting that by receiving Deeksha your spiritual block could be removed.

As a rule we do not push Sadhaks to ask for Deeksha; we believe that the urge for receiving Deeksha needs to come from within the Sadhak herself. It seems that this has happened in your case in the form of a dream. If you think it makes sense for you to receive Deeksha you can request it from the website: [http://mahayoga.org/](http://mahayoga.org/). Until that time you might sit for the Introductory Practice as described here: [http://mahayoga.org/introductorypractice.htm](http://mahayoga.org/introductorypractice.htm). The Introductory Practice, while not a formal Shaktipat/Maha Yoga Deeksha, it has P. P. Kaka Maharaj’s Sankalpa (strong intent) behind it, and for many Sadhaks it results in a state
similar to formal Deeksha. So please try it on a regular basis, sitting for Sadhan at each session for as long as your inner self allows you to.

Prior to Deeksha I would also urge you to become quite familiar with Maha Yoga. Unlike other Yoga forms, it is not a Yoga of “doing”, but it is a yoga of “surrender”, it is a yoga of “happening”. All a Sadhak need do is to sit for Sadhan (meditation) regularly and surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti (Universal Life Energy) within herself and let the Prana Shakti do what is needed for her spiritual progress. The beauty of this approach is that once Deeksha happens and the blockages to the free flow of Prana Shakti within the Sadhak get removed, the Sadhak has no “performance anxiety”; her spiritual progress is in the hands of the Prana Shakti within.

This takes the Sadhak’s ego completely out of the picture and spiritual progress becomes much easier compared to other effort-based practices where the Sadhak is the “doer”. All a Sadhak need do after Deeksha is to sit for Sadhan regularly, surrender to the Prana Shakti within, and simply observe what happens; without a sense of doership or attachment/aversion to what happens, or with expectations of what should or should not happen. There is a lot of material on Maha Yoga at the website I mentioned above, which you might want to become familiar with as you go down the Maha Yoga Path.

**Question:** I was blessed with Shaktipat recently and I wish to share with you my experiences that I have had so far and seek your guidance on certain issues.

To begin with, I’ve been meditating or rather trying to meditate for four years prior to receiving Shaktipat, although I must admit that during the past year I had become a bit irregular for various reasons, but particularly because of the severe pain I used to experience exactly behind my heart chakra both inside my spine and in the surrounding area. This pain would begin 15 to 20 minutes into my meditation and once the pain started, it was almost impossible for me to continue sitting. The pain would disappear after about an hour or so after discontinuing my sadhana for the day. I did not experience any pain throughout the day. It was only while meditating that the pain used to resurface.

On Deeksha Day at the scheduled time I sat for meditation at 6:00 am as instructed. Initially the pain resurfaced although the severity was less. Then through your grace I suddenly felt my spine elongate, I felt as if someone had stretched my spine. As the spine stretched I could actually hear a crackling sound. After that the pain disappeared and has not resurfaced since. Since I had taken leave from work on Deeksha Day I sat for meditation at various times during rest of the day, once from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm and again from 8:00 pm to 9:00pm. The pain never came back.

There are other experiences that I would now like to share.

Since receiving Shaktipat Deeksha I have noticed that after sometime into meditation my upper body starts swinging very gently. The swinging motion is very subtle, sometimes in the
left-right direction, sometimes front-back and sometimes circular in a counter clockwise manner. I have also noticed that sometimes my breathing is very shallow for a few moments then all of a sudden I start taking deep breaths for a while again followed by shallow breathing. This process continues throughout, till the end of my sitting.

All of the above experiences have so far happened every time I sit for meditation. While meditating my mind keeps wandering quite frequently, I find it a bit annoying at times. Then I tell myself it is all right and if I am persistent, it will slowly reduce.

Gurudev, I need your guidance and help. I leave early for work and come home late. At 9:00 pm I put my daughter to bed and I sit for meditation for about an hour. Then I have my dinner and do my chores. By the time I go to bed it is usually midnight. I get up at 6:00-6:30 am to get my daughter ready for school. In the past I have tried getting up early at 4:00 am to sit for meditation, but I used to fall asleep while meditating and I used to get really upset about it.

I am really very interested in giving more time for Sadhan; I really want to progress spiritually as much as I can in this life. Getting up early and sitting for meditation seems to be the only option. I request you to please help me overcome my sleep problem. God has given me excess sleep. Is there any way I can sleep less and still feel fresh when I wake up at around 4:00 am so that I can sit for Sadhan from 4:00 am-6:30 am in the morning without falling asleep during Sadhan. If I am able to overcome my sleep, I have no issues getting up and sitting for Sadhan even at 3:00 am daily. Until now my case has been like "The Spirit is willing but the Flesh is weak". I really want to overcome all my weaknesses and devote myself to the Almighty. Please help me and guide me on this path.

Answer: Congratulations on the Deeksha having happened on Deeksha Day and the affliction that bothered you prior to Deeksha having automatically been cleared. When Deeksha happens, it awakens the Prana Shakti within the Sadhak which results in the clearing of pathways for it to flow as needed for the Sadhak’s spiritual progress. That seems to be exactly what has happened in your case.

The other experiences you have described, such as the subtle swaying of your body and the automatic Pranayams that happen during Sadhan, are all forms of Kriyas. These Kriyas (involuntary activities) can be physical, Pranic (nervous energy-related) or mental/emotional. The specific Kriyas that happen depend upon the Sadhak’s unique situation and the preponderance of the accumulated impressions (Sanchit Samskaras) from the Sadhak’s current and prior lives. The role of Sadhan is to bring up these Sanchit Samskaras one by one into the Sadhak’s awareness, thereby eliminating them from the Sadhak’s Chitta (mind-stuff).

The Sadhak’s role during Sadhan is to simply surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti (Mother Energy) and let her be the “doer” of whatever happens during Sadhan. The Sadhak’s role should simply be that of an “observer”. If a Sadhak’s spiritual progress
requires him to be doing some type of Asana (physical posture) or any other physical activity, the Prana Shakti will make that activity happen automatically. If, as in your case, some sort of Pranayam (structured breathing) is needed, the Sadhak will find himself doing it without any specific intent on his part. The Prana Shakti will make that Kriya happen. If a Sadhak’s spiritual progress requires him to develop some form of devotion to whatever deity he has faith in, he will experience intense emotions along those lines. The key here is that after Shaktipat Deeksha (initiation) when the Siddha Guru has awakened the Prana Shakti within the Sadhak, the Prana Shakti is the “doer” and the Sadhak is simply the observer. The Sadhak’s role going forward is to sit for Sadhan every day for an hour or longer, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within him, let her do what is needed, not have any specific expectations of what should happen (or not happen) during Sadhan, not develop any attachments to or aversions from any Kriyas that happen, and simply play the role of an observer, not the doer, during Sadhan. The awakened Prana Shakti will play the role of the Guru within and she knows you inside and out, and she, in the role of the Guru Tattva, will automatically guide you on the Maha Yoga path.

Regarding your question of when to sit for Sadhan, the best time is during Brahma Muhurta, which is the period a couple of hours prior to sunrise. So, since you come home late from work and have chores to do when you get home, my advice to you would be to not sit for Sadhan when you return from work, but instead do so early in the morning, say from 5 am to 6 am or 6:30 am. That way you can go to sleep before 11 pm and get 6 hours of sleep. While too much sleep is not good, we all need a certain amount of sleep for us to function well in our day to day work. And while Sadhan can substitute for sleep when a Sadhak is able to experience Ekagrata or Dhyān (advanced meditative states) during Sadhan, new Dixits (initiates) are not likely to be at that stage right away. So I would like to suggest that you not try to substitute Sadhan time for the same amount of sleep time, at least in the early stages of your Maha Yoga practice.

Regarding the duration of Sadhan, P. P. Kaka Maharaj urges Sadhaks to sit for Sadhan for at least one hour every day. The idea here is that doing so allows a Sadhak to gradually eliminate his Sanchit Samskaras (accumulated impressions) from his current and prior lives, and since all of us householders develop new Samskaras every day as we interact with the material world, daily Sadhan also helps clear them out of our Chitta and not accumulate them. But many new Sadhaks think that the longer they sit for Sadhan more rapid will be their progress on the Maha Yoga path, so if sitting for Sadhan for an hour every day is good, sitting for Sadhan for three hours a day will be three times as good, leading to spiritual growth three times as fast. While doing so is commendable, it is not necessarily a good approach to have. This is because, first, the intent behind that action, i.e. to achieve a faster rate of spiritual progress, will only create new Samskaras and keep the Sadhak away from gradually developing the attitude of a Karma Yogi, which is extremely important for true progress. Secondly, if a Sadhak devotes an excessive amount of time to Sadhan, it might keep him from doing his duties as a householder, again taking him away from developing the attitude of a Karma Yogi. Ultimately, the idea is for Sadhaks who are householders to gradually develop the attitude of a Karma Yogi whereby they cease to
accumulate new Samskaras despite living and operating in the material world. This is the stage when Sadhan happens on a 24 hour basis, not just when one sits for Sadhan. My point here is that you may sit for Sadhan every day for an hour or longer if the Prana Shakti makes it happen. But please make sure that you are not shirking your duties as a householder, to your family, to your job/profession, and to yourself. If you can fulfill your duties and still have several hours available every day for Sadhan, then by all means sit for Sadhan as your schedule allows. But please do not overdo it with the intent that the longer you sit for Sadhan the more rapid your spiritual progress, while at the same time not fulfilling your duties as a householder. Eventually, as your Sadhan develops to a stage where an hour spent in Sadhan gives you as much or more mental rest than an hour of sleep, then by all means you may substitute Sadhan for sleep as you deem appropriate. But until you reach that state, make sure you get enough sleep to function well as a householder.

**Question:** I have been a Maha Yoga Sadhak for a couple of years and I recently spoke with a friend of mine about Maha Yoga and what a miraculous path it is for seekers of spirituality. And although I did not share any of my personal experiences with him, he thanked me profusely for having guided him towards Maha Yoga.

Unfortunately, this has created a problem for me. Despite my not wanting to think this way, I keep feeling that I have personally done something wonderful by guiding my friend towards Maha Yoga. I have tried to suppress any feelings of achievement related to this, but the more I try to suppress my feelings the more strongly they arise. I try telling myself that “Shakti (Mother Energy) is doing everything, not me”, but that doesn’t work either. I have become quite uncomfortable with this mental battle. Please guide me.

**Answer:** Glad to read that you had a discussion on Maha Yoga with your friend. I am sure it was in his Prarabdha (destiny) for you to have such a discussion with him, and now it is up to him in terms of what he does with that knowledge. Your role was only to inform him that the simple and straightforward path of Maha Yoga is available for the asking; he can do with it what he thinks is appropriate. Please read the article on Prasar, Bringing Maha Yoga to the World, in the August 2012 issue of Self Awakening archived at http://mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self%20Awakening%20Vol%205%20Issue%201.pdf for additional guidance.

About your frustration on trying to have your mind accept that the Shakti is the doer and not you, I can sympathize with it completely. But you cannot simply “order” or tell your mind to believe it is so, it has to come from within, from the actual experience of seeing the Shakti work through you. Only then will your mind come around to truly realizing that you are not the doer but Shakti is the doer. Here’s a paragraph from the article on Prasar which is relevant to your situation, *“Not getting our egos involved while participating in Prasar, however, is a difficult proposition and requires a Sadhak to develop an attitude of surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti even outside of Maha Yoga Sadhan. It is quite easy for a Sadhak to feel that the talk he gave on Maha Yoga and the Introductory Approach session that he led the audience through, resulted in several audience members*
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

experiencing some of the wondrous effects of Maha Yoga Sadhan. If the Sadhak considers himself the “doer” in such situations, participating in Prasar will undoubtedly result in boosting his ego. But, if he develops an attitude that the awakened Shakti (Mother Energy) within him is the “doer”, and his own actions during Prasar and the impact they have on the audience are all the work of the Mother Energy and not his own, then his ego will not grow. As P. P. Kaka Maharaj has said, “If the Sadhak realizes that Prasar is itself a form of Sadhan; that it “happens” because of the Shakti, and does not get “done” by him, his spiritual growth will not be negatively affected, in fact it will get accelerated”.

When you sit for Sadhan you must have experienced the Shakti as being the doer and you are simply the observer. But when you are not sitting for Sadhan, especially in your worldly activities, you probably see yourself as the doer and not the Shakti. Experiencing the power of the Shakti outside of Sadhan can happen when a Sadhak participates in Prasar with an attitude of surrender to the Prana Shakti, and as P. P. Kaka Maharaj has said, considers Prasar itself as a form of Sadhan. I am telling this to you from my own experience; it was very difficult for me to participate in Prasar without feeling a sense of doership. But I gradually began to develop an attitude of surrender to the Prana Shakti, and when I began to see and experience Prasar as a form of Sadhan, my sense of doership gradually began to diminish. I even do not like to have my name attributed to any of the Prasar-related material I write, but I have been told that all material needs attribution therefore I do so, but with a sense that the Prana Shakti is the doer and I am only the tool she is using to get what she needs done. P. P. Kaka Maharaj had told me to write and participate in Prasar, so I participate in it with a sense of duty to my Guru and with an attitude of surrender.

So please do not get frustrated with yourself. As you begin to think of Prasar as a form of Sadhan and your participation in it as a form of Guru Seva or simply doing your duty without any expectations about the result, and surrender to the Prana Shakti when you do so, you will gradually begin to experience the power of the Shakti during Prasar. It will take time, and you will have to be patient and not get frustrated with yourself if your mind does not buy into the notion right away that you are not the doer, but it is an attitude that will come eventually. At a certain point on your Maha Yoga path you might begin to experience the power of Prana Shakti even in your worldly actions. That is the goal of Sadhaks, when our day-to-day life itself becomes Sadhan and we see the play of Shakti in all that happens. P. P. Kaka Maharaj was already there, which is why he could say with experience-based conviction that he was simply the “postman” making a delivery. We Sadhaks have to be patient, but with the faith that we too will gradually develop such an attitude experientially, when we will not need to convince our skeptical minds that we are indeed not the doers but the Shakti is. So please continue to sit for Sadhan regularly and see if you can extend the attitude of surrender, which you have during Sadhan, to Prasar and even to your worldly activities.

Editor’s note: Please send your questions regarding Maha Yoga and Shaktipat to: self.awakening@gmail.com.
Guru Pournima Event in Nashik, India

Guru Pournima (full moon), also known as Vyas Pournima, honoring the Adhya (original) Guru, Maharishi Vyas Muni is celebrated every year on a full moon day in summer, based on the lunar calendar. On this day, Sadhaks pay their respects to their Gurus, an Indian tradition that has survived and thrived over the millennia. This is all the more true in the case of Maha Yoga Sadhaks who express their gratitude to their Siddha Guru, who by granting them the sublime gift of Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) has set their spiritual lives on a certain path to Self-Enlightenment.

In keeping with the tradition that P. P. Kaka Maharaj had established a few decades ago, the Guru Pournima event this year was held on Saturday, July 12th at the Maha Yoga headquarters at the P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Maha Yoga Trust in Nashik, India, under the guidance of the Chief Trustee, P. P. Prakash Rao Prabhune Maharaj. The day’s events began with Geeta Paath (reading of the Bhagwad Geeta) from 6 am to 8 am. This was followed by Pavaman Abhishek (worship) on the holy feet of P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj, represented by Swamiji’s Paduka (symbolic footwear). The Shri Satya Datta Pooja was performed next in honor of Lord Dattatreya, the embodiment of the Hindu Trinity - Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

Beginning at around 10 am P. P. Prabhune Maharaj performed Guru Poojan by venerating the Paduka representing P. P. Kaka Maharaj, which was followed by a similar veneration conducted by the Sadhaks who attended the event. This process was conducted in a systematic manner with the Sadhaks lining up so each of them had the opportunity to pay his/her respect to the memory of P. P. Kaka Maharaj and to seek the blessings of P. P. Prabhune Maharaj. This process of Sadhaks paying their respect to the Guru lasted well past 3 pm.
Sadhaks were also treated to Maha Prasad (communal lunch) which began around 11 am and continued till 3 pm. Over 1,500 Sadhaks conducted the Guru Poojan and participated in the Maha Prasad events. Following Maha Prasad, Sadhaks participated in Bhajan Seva (devotional singing) for an hour, which was followed by Mantra Jagar (chanting of Vedic Mantras by Purohits) from 5 pm to 6:30 pm and Aarti at 7 pm. The Palkhi (Holy Palanquin) program began at around 7:30 pm and was concluded a little before 10 pm. The day’s program ended with Bhakti Geet Seva (devotional song recitals) which lasted until midnight.

The entire program during this holy day was conducted by Sadhaks with great enthusiasm and devotion, expressing their immense gratitude and love to their Guru and to the Parampara which has granted them the divine gift of Maha Yoga.

Reported by P. P. Shri Rakhe Maharaj
Translated by Dilip Kamat
The English language translation of P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj’s biography is now available in hardcover edition! P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj was the Shaktipat Deeksha Guru of P. P. Narayan Kaka Dhekane Maharaj as well as P. P. Gulvani Maharaj. The original biography was written in the Marathi language by Shri A. S. Potbhare and it was translated into English by Dr. R. V. Urankar.

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

Phone: +91-253-2311616
Upcoming Events:

**Deeksha Day (Initiation Day) on August 17th, 2014**
The next Maha Yoga Deeksha Day will be on August 17th, 2014. Those desirous of receiving Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) may apply by using the online form at [http://www.mahayoga.org/DeekshaApply.htm](http://www.mahayoga.org/DeekshaApply.htm).

**Maha Yoga Sadhan Shibir (workshop) at Nashik Ashram on August 3rd, 2014**
The Nashik Ashram will be holding a Maha Yoga Sadhan Shibir (workshop) on Sunday, August 3rd, 2014 from 8 am to 1 pm. Sadhaks will be able to sit for Samuhik (Communal) Sadhan, which will be followed by a discourse on Yoga. Maha Prasad (lunch) will also be served. Subsequent Shibirs will be held on the first Sunday of every month. About 250 Sadhaks typically attend this monthly event.

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 will be hosting 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:**

The Program Calendar for the Nashik Ashram and for other locations has been updated and is available at [http://mahayoga.org/progcal.htm](http://mahayoga.org/progcal.htm). The [www.mahayoga.org](http://www.mahayoga.org) website is in the process of being updated. The new website is expected to be launched on August 3rd, 2014 on occasion of the Maha Yoga Sadhan Shibir to be held that day at the Nashik Ashram.

We also 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.
How to contribute content to the e-newsletter

The goals of our e-newsletter are:

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

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

self.awakening@gmail.com

We’re on the Web!
http://www.mahayoga.org/

May all desire to follow this nectarous Siddhayoga Path!