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.
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 Gangadhar 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 following two excerpts shed light on Bhakti Yoga (Yoga of Devotion) and how it relates to Maha Yoga.

Discourses on the Gita: Chapter Twelve

Maharajshri began to take me out with him occasionally. Other celibates, Bramhacharis who were senior to me, would usually go with Maharajshri in his service. Sometimes, if they were not available, I would have an opportunity to go. Every year, in Ujjain, a meditation retreat used to be arranged where Maharajshri was invited. This time I was in attendance. In this three-day program, Maharajshri would give a discourse at five o’clock in the morning. In the evening program he rarely spoke. The subject of the discourse was the twelfth chapter of the Gita. The essence of the discourse was as follows:

(1) All those who praise God believe that they are devotees. But there is a big difference between a devotee and a favorite devotee, a devotee who is dear to God. A devotee walks holding God’s hand and sometimes his hand can slip. God holds the hands of his favorite devotee. A devotee tries to climb the wall of devotion through self-effort. God extends his hands and pulls his favorite devotee over it. A devotee takes pride in his devotion, but a devotee dear to God has a sense of surrender. A devotee walks the path of life carefully. God carries his favorite devotee in his own arms.

(2) A beloved devotee experiences the grace of God within him, which is known as the activation of Allhadini (Kundalini Shakti) in the path of bhakti, or devotion. Direct support is available to the devotee only after this. Until such time he takes the help of some symbol or another and continues to speculate on an emotional plane. A devotee can become a beloved devotee only after the experience of active Allhadini. Active Allhadini is Saguna bhakti [devotion with awareness of the qualities of God]. That which is commonly propagated as Saguna bhakti is actually idol worship.
Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

(3) God is omnipresent. In some places he is Saguna, with attributes, and in others he is Nirguna, without any attributes or qualities. In the chitta of devotees the nature of God is qualitative because it manifests depending upon their samskaras. This revelation of God’s Shakti takes place within the realm of the gunas, or qualities. True Saguna bhakti occurs only after the awakening and activation of the Allhadini Shakti.

(4) Those aspirants who start a spiritual practice without understanding its relevance are wasting their time. Meditation starts by renouncing the fruits of action. Jnana, or spiritual knowledge, comes with meditation, and spiritual practice is conducted with that spiritual knowledge. This implies that spiritual practice includes meditation, knowledge and detachment from the fruits of action. How can the spiritual practices of a person who does not give up attachment to the fruits of action bear fruit? Also, efforts are wasted if practices are done without meditation and spiritual knowledge.

(5) Bhakti, or devotion, as described by Lord Krishna, develops the mind, intellect and heart, and keeps one untouched by the negative influences of the world. It holds the mind and senses in restraint. It includes Karma Yoga [the yoga of action] and knowledge. It also teaches us to remain joyful in this world. This bhakti starts with action and extinguishes the effects of that action. It gives rise to a balanced state of mind.

(6) If a person attains authority, wealth or fame he becomes egoistic. Ego is the root cause of all defects. Where there is ego; lust, anger, greed, hatred, jealousy and vengeance follow one after the other. A living being does not understand that and keeps on accumulating bad impressions. But a devotee knows this and even if he attains some authority, etc., he does not become conceited. This is the natural state of his mind. Hence a devotee always remains balanced whether he is in the middle of loss or gain, fame or defamation, praise or insult.

(7) It is extremely important that the mind of a devotee, or spiritual aspirant, not be perturbed by the good or bad behavior of the world. A devotee is tested in favorable, as well as in unfavorable, conditions. Neither should ego arise, nor should his mind get agitated. Besides, his behavior must be so kind, gentle and sweet that nobody should have any excuse to be troubled by him. This is an important aspect of spiritual practice, but it is unfortunate that most remain indifferent towards this. Consequently their minds become restless and they cause distress to others.

(8) In the twelfth chapter of the Gita, on Bhakti Yoga, the state of mind of a real devotee is described, in which he is neither affected by the events of the world, nor by the behavior of others towards him. This is elaborated at length as the characteristics of a devotee. This is a distinct state of the mind of a devotee. This is called devotion. If someone prays a lot or recites the sacred texts but his state of mind is not so, then he cannot be considered a devotee.

(9) There is no mention of prayers, recitations, spiritual practices or devotional songs in the path of Bhakti Yoga described by Lord Krishna for attaining the mental state of a devotee.
However he emphasizes action without attachment. According to the Lord, the progressive stages in action are as follows:

(a) Only Bhakti Yoga is the highest state, in which a devotee remains absorbed in devotion and meditates on God all the time with a steady mind. As a result of this he attains a place in the abode of the Lord. In this state he does not need to perform any action. In states lower than that, action is essential to varying degrees. It must be remembered that when the Lord refers to action, he implies action that is free from desires, or action compelled by a sense of service and duty.

(b) To remain steady in this highest state is possible only for a rare and fortunate person. Otherwise the mind is fickle. It is the duty of those who are unable to stay in this state to relinquish the fruits of their actions, and gain the support of knowledge through study, thinking and contemplation. The support of meditation and abhyasa is also necessary in this process. According to Yoga Darshan, the effort to stabilize the mind in a steady state is called abhyasa, or practice. This effort to steady the mind should go on while doing worldly activities as well as while meditating. Then only will mental tendencies and accumulated impressions become weak, and a state of constant steadfastness be achieved.

(c) On the surface this solution looks very easy, but it is extremely difficult to accomplish. Hence, the Lord steps one level lower and depicts another state. If someone finds himself incapable of following the path of abhyasa yoga then that person should perform all actions for God and for pleasing God, and continue to offer the fruits of his actions to God. At the time of doing work the only goal should be to gain the grace and love of God. This way the person will remain free from the bondage of action while performing the action. Over time he will attain a steady state of Bhakti Yoga by keeping God’s love as his goal.

(d) For an average person even this is difficult. His ego makes him involved and attached to the outcome of every action. Instead of offering the fruit of his action to God he becomes happy or unhappy due to the results of his actions. Therefore the Lord recommends that the aspirant make efforts to keep the mind in control and to try and remain unaffected by the outcome of action. Consequently your mind will gradually become inclined towards spirituality.

This view can also be understood in another simple way. In the Gita, the way to perform action is presented in a descending order. First of all, the highest state is described, and then, one after another, gradually lower states are presented. We will now climb the opposite way. We will describe the lowest state first.

An average person is full of attachment. Not only is he definitely attached to the body, but he is also attached to the actions that can be performed with the body and their results. He gives rise to a false ego of doership by maintaining a sense of ownership towards the
Shakti active within him. The ego identity within the individual takes the form of pride and spreads throughout the world and attachment escalates. An individual has to start on the spiritual path from this state. The progressive states are as follows:

(i) The power, action and fruits of the actions of an individual soul belong to him. He is the doer, but whenever his actions bear fruit he offers them to God. When his intellect tells him that only good actions should be offered to God, at that time the results of bad actions remain with him to endure. Hence, gradually, he stops performing bad actions.

(ii) Actions belong to an individual; the doer is the individual and the fruits of his actions belong to him, but God is the giver of these fruits. Hence, it is his duty to endure peacefully whatever God deems appropriate by treating it as his divine grace.

(iii) He thinks that the energy is his but all the work belongs to God. It is his duty to carry out his work. The results of his actions are not in his control but in God’s, but he is not concerned about this. Whatever the outcome may be — that belongs to God. He is simply the performer of his duties.

(iv) Thus far the aspirant has been walking on a path with personal feelings, but once Shakti awakens, he is made to realize that he is separate from the Shakti. When the aspirant finds out that his belief that the Shakti, or power, belonged to him was false, at that time his attitude begins to change. Shakti belongs to God. All his responsibilities also belong to God. It is his duty to use the divine power to perform the work of God.

This way the aspirant progresses in the direction of action without expectations. All the events that occur in the world and all the actions of all beings are the activities of the divine Shakti, but due to his ego, an individual soul considers them as his own. Thus he gets entangled in his own web. This sense of doership is not eliminated until he has experienced prajnana, or Chaitanya, [the state where one realizes it is the Shakti that gives consciousness to the sense organs]. Only after this awareness will his destiny and accumulated impressions start thinning out. Prior to this an individual remains sunk in ego.

**My First Lecture**

Today was the last day of the meditation camp at Ujjain. This evening Maharajshri was scheduled to give a speech. During the day Maharajshri said to the organizer, “Doctor Saheb, kindly give our Bramhachari an opportunity to speak.” The organizer told Maharajshri that it would be arranged.
Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

I went and met Doctor Saheb separately and told him, “I have no experience in public speaking, so please do not take Maharajshri’s request seriously. I do not know in what mood he asked you.” Doctor Saheb asked me not to worry.

In his evening sermon Maharajshri said, “Think a thousand times before stepping on the path of spiritual practice and devotion. This path is full of thorns and steep slopes and slippery all over. Those teachers who say that the path of devotion is easy are doing so only to establish your faith. On the contrary, there are obstacles at every step. The ego must be given up on this path, for which the mind is not ready. On this path detachment is essential but the individual soul does not wish to give up attachment. It is a must to be compassionate, whereas a common man continues to burn in the fire of revenge. On this path one needs to love his enemies and opponents, and also to wish them well. The world is unable to understand these beliefs of a devotee and keeps on opposing him. The expression of love is considered a weakness, a trick or ostentation. A devotee has to swallow many insults. The mind jumps outward but one has to control it. All of these are not easy tasks. Hence I tell you to weigh the idea in your mind thoroughly before embarking on this Journey.

“It is said that spiritual practice becomes very easy after Shaktipat because an aspirant does not have to do anything of his own accord after that. I do not agree with that. The kind of surrender that is required after Shaktipat is not observed in any aspirant. Practical difficulties remain the same in this path as in others, but because of the fast depletion of samskaras more difficulties are encountered. After Shaktipat there is a greater need for tolerance, generosity and compassion. Can you say this is easy?

“Before starting to climb the slope of spirituality, understand that you can be free only after enduring your destiny. Instead of enduring our destiny we are still busy creating a new destiny. In order to wipe out destiny through endurance, a specific state of the chitta is necessary. First and foremost it must be clearly understood that the cause of happiness and misery is not the world but your own destiny. Due to a lack of this understanding the cause of insult, loss and misery is thought to be a specific person or circumstance and man is motivated towards revenge. He continues to burn with anger within and keeps on strengthening his samskaras. The destiny of a person who is full of revenge can never be thinned out. A traveler on the path of spirituality or devotion considers the world to be only the medium, not the cause. By presenting miseries and difficulties in front of the aspirant, the world does him a great favor; it opens up the path to reduce destiny. A devotee or an aspirant is neither afraid of miseries, nor shaken by them. If you can do this then march in the direction of devotion, otherwise go with the flow of the current era.

“The present era is an era dominated by intellect. The thinking prowess of a human has evolved along with the advancement of science, but this development is progressing in a reverse direction. Deceit, fraud, ostentation, secrecy, devious means of getting work done — these are the directions followed in today’s world. Coercion is not used in spirituality but is used for getting work done. The dominance of intelligence has pushed the heart to a secondary place. Today an attempt is made to understand even the emotion of the heart
with logic, whereas devotion is mainly related to the heart. I am not against intellectual advancement, but for spirituality you need both – discerning intellect as well as devotion. An emotion without discretion and prudence without emotion are both useless. An aspirant, a devotee, has to give proper direction to his intellectual discrimination while kindling devotion for God in his heart. This is not an easy task.

“In the present era the circumstances are adverse for performing spiritual practices but spirituality blossoms best in adverse circumstances. Actual sadhan is possible when there is not even a single grain available to eat. In a life endowed with all kinds of amenities there is a lot of ostentation, and pride continues to increase. Was there a shortage of poverty for Kabir? Was there a lack of dearth for Tukaram and Jnaneshwar? What comforts and wealth did Nanak have in his pocket? Didn’t Meera give up all kinds of royal comforts? It is not possible to do sadhan while having a bank balance and relying upon the interest. Dependence on any persons a bank balance, or any other such arrangement, does not allow one to fully depend on God. Without dependence on God one cannot have total surrender and without surrender sadhan is not possible. Do not sit and wait for suitable circumstances. Whatever circumstance God has given is certainly suitable for sadhan. The feeling of favorable and unfavorable is only from a worldly perspective, not a spiritual one.

“Performing spiritual practice is like walking bare-footed on the edge of a sword. The path leading to God is very narrow. It is not possible to take any person or any worldly belonging with you. Even subtle elements like the mind, intellect, tendencies and samskaras cannot go along. This is a path of renunciation, not accumulation. The more you are able to give up the farther you will be able to go. Renunciation is a subject of the mind. A life devoid of attachment is true renunciation.”

Now I do not remember what else Maharajshri said in his one-hour sermon, but his speech was very logical, based on experience and filled with concern. I do not know how others were influenced, but I listened to the discourse, steadfast like a statue. Who knows where all my thoughts of the world disappeared to? Maharajshri spoke with an uninterrupted flow; it seemed as if words and feelings were spontaneously flowing through his voice. At that time his face had a strange divine glow.

After completing his sermon Maharajshri stepped down from the stage and sat down in the audience. The atmosphere was still and solemn. In the meantime the voice of Doctor Saheb resonated on the loud speaker. He had announced my name. On the one hand I was out of sorts due to the influence of Maharajshri’s discourse, and on the other I had never given a talk. How could I talk in such a situation? There was no subject before me to talk about. My condition was similar to a person who did not know how to swim but had been thrown into the water. I was helpless because it seemed improper to say, “No,” in front of the audience. I took a seat on the stage. The stage was very small, just enough to seat the speaker. Maharajshri was sitting in front of me, down among the audience. I was feeling very ashamed that I was settled on the stage. I was accustomed to sitting at the feet of Guru Maharajshri and today it was reversed. I had been staying in the shelter of his feet, and I had
always been around him with my head bowed. Today I was sitting higher than that very image of my honorable Guru. For three to four minutes not a single word came out of my mouth. My mind was in a state of shock. My mind wished to step down from the stage at once, run somewhere and hide my face. But that would be a spectacle. Somehow I managed to gather my wits. I was glad that there was a stand in front of me so people could not see that my legs were trembling.

Just imagine: You have no experience, there is no context in front of you, and you have to give a speech! That too, in the presence of Guru Maharaj. I started to talk. I do not know what I said or how I spoke. I was speaking with anxiety. I was embarrassed to see Maharajshri sitting below in the front. But at the same time I was getting inspiration from him. As I stepped down from the stage I was drenched with perspiration. This was the first lecture of my life. I do not know what came over Maharajshri so that he put me through this. A few days earlier he had opened my door for writing in the same way. When I came back to his room and tried to say something to Maharajshri he said, “This is how you learn. Who is born learned? As you have accepted the life of an ascetic, people will be eager to listen to you. How will you react at that 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 Amazon.com, or in India from:
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My Deeksha Experience

In this short note a Sadhak underscores the point that Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) need not be an event. It is in fact a process that begins when a Sadhak makes an internal commitment with an attitude of surrender and earnestly requests Deeksha. For many Sadhaks, the Prana Shakti begins to turn inward right at that time, and subtle and sometimes not-so-subtle changes begin to happen even before Deeksha Day. The key here is to develop an attitude of surrender and to begin to play the role of an observer (Sakshi) right from the start.

Deeksha day (August 17\textsuperscript{th}, 2014) came and I was ready early, and as instructed, I sat for Sadhan at the appointed time of 6am. It was not a good time for me as we keep ducks and chickens and I knew they would want to come out of their houses at about 6:20am (I do not eat them or their eggs). Deeksha time came and went and nothing happened. I was only able to sit for thirty minutes because of the birds and was disappointed that I didn’t “feel” anything. I had read on the Maha Yoga website (www.mahayoga.org) that Sadhaks should not become attached to the Kriyas (involuntary activity) that happen during Sadhan and while for some Sadhaks they can vigorous for others they can be very subtle. But after several days of feeling no difference at all during Sadhan my disappointment grew deeper. Unfortunately this had a negative effect for me, as I had looked forward a great deal to my new spiritual life and the unfolding of Shakti in me. I started to lose faith, thinking that the activation of Kundalini energy (Shaktipat) may not be possible from a distance, and perhaps it had not worked for me at all. I admit losing some interest in regular Sadhan and I was at a loss as to what to do next.

But I persisted and tried to stay committed to regular Sadhan. This morning I was up before dawn and while sitting for Sadhan I observed that my mind settled down much quicker than previously and I actually experienced some moments of calmness when thoughts were absent. I was also surprised to notice that I had been in Sadhan for much longer than in the past.

Today is a fasting day for me and I decided to take a long walk, as is my custom. I practice Mantra Yoga during walks and have been doing this for many years. I walked about twelve miles. At about the halfway point during my walk, my thoughts drifted toward Deeksha and how disappointed I had been feeling, when all of a sudden I was blessed by a remarkable insight. I suddenly realized that Deeksha did not happen to me on Deeksha Day, but had happened to me earlier, upon my receipt of the Initiation Letter. I remember reading on the Maha Yoga website that activation can occur spontaneously, and I now believe this happened to me just after I received the Initiation Letter. The positive changes I was experiencing then; my easy adoption of a vegetarian diet when previous attempts had failed, my ease in getting projects completed during my time off in the summer when in the past I had wasted such off-times, the feeling of inner calm I had begun to experience, and also a sense of spiritual “rightness” I had begun to feel, were, I believe, indications that Deeksha had already happened. At that time I thought these changes might have been a neophyte's zeal, but they were very strong changes and have not dissipated since then. Also while on the walk this morning I began to experience some sort of compression of the
My Deeksha Experience (continued)

diaphragm muscles, something I have never done in my life or happened to me before. When I came home I looked it up and I found that what I experienced is called Agni Sara, a Hatha Yoga Kriya.

Foolishly, I had expected changes to occur on Deeksha Day itself in the form of subtle or vigorous Kriyas. However, because of my preoccupation with that event and the expected changes not happening on that Day, I completely missed 'the elephant in the room'. My life had profoundly changed weeks earlier from just having requested Deeksha and receiving the Initiation Letter.

So now I am humbled and very grateful for the precious gift given to me by the P.P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Mahayoga Trust Gurus and cannot express easily my thanks. But thank you all.

By: Richard Stein
September 1, 2014
USA
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks

**Question:** I am considering requesting Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha but I wanted to ask a couple of question first. I have already received distance Shaktipat from a Kundalini teacher and for the past year I have had Kriyas (muscle twitching/tremors in different parts of my body) happen but I don't feel energy rising up my spine. Therefore, I am not sure if I am making progress. Will receiving Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha be helpful in speeding up my progress? In particular will I be able to feel Kundalini energy rising up my spine?

**Answer:** If you had asked to receive Shaktipat Deeksha and the Deeksha had happened, then there is no need to ask for receiving Shaktipat Deeksha once again. During Shaktipat Deeksha a Sadhak’s Prana Shakti gets redirected inward by the grace of the Guru, and once it does so all a Sadhak need do going forward is to sit for Sadhan, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within, let her do what is needed and simply observe what happens without judgment. By simply observing the Kriyas as they happen and letting them happen without judgment, the accumulated Samskaras within a Sadhak’s Chitta (mind stuff) gradually get eliminated, following which he attains self-enlightenment as the fog of accumulated Samskaras disappears and the Sadhak becomes experientially aware of the presence of the Atma within. The entire purpose of Maha Yoga Sadhan is therefore to get rid of the accumulated Samskaras by surrendering to the awakened Prana Shakti and by letting her do what is needed to clear out the “garbage” of accumulated Samskaras.

After Shaktipat has happened, Sadhaks experience various types of Kriyas (involuntary activities); they can be physical (body movements, Asanas, Mudras, etc.), Pranic (energy flows), or mental (thoughts), and their occurrence depends on the type of Samskaras (impressions) that a Sadhak has accumulated over his current and past lives. So, having expectations of specific Kriyas, such as the feeling of Prana Shakti rising up the spine, etc. is not appropriate. It results in new attachments to those Kriyas being created and new Samskaras getting accumulated, which becomes counterproductive to the entire purpose of Maha Yoga Sadhan which is to get rid of accumulated Samskaras.

From your e-mail it seems like Shaktipat has happened for you, given the physical Kriyas you have experienced. It is important to make sure that you have not intentionally caused the body movements, tremors, etc. to happen, i.e. the Kriyas have to be entirely involuntary and without any intent on your part. If that is in fact the case, rest assured that Shaktipat Deeksha has happened. In that case you do not need to get re-initiated; simply sit for Sadhan on a regular basis with an attitude of surrender and observe what happens without judgment or with attachment to any specific Kriya or Kriyas. As various types of Kriyas happen, the Samskaras that underlie them will get eliminated and as those Samskaras get eliminated the specific Kriyas associated with them will stop happening and new ones will happen reflecting other Samskaras as they get eliminated. So do not develop any attachments or aversions to any of the Kriyas that happen or ones you would like to see happen. The Kriyas that happen are unique to the accumulation of Samskaras you come with when you sit for Sadhan.
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

On the other hand, if you have a sense that the Kriyas you think you have experienced might have been intentional and not involuntary, then Shaktipat might not have happened. In that case you may apply for Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha at http://www.mahayoga.org/mahayoga-initiation.aspx.

Question: I would be most obliged if you could answer a query of mine. I have sometimes found meditating on a single point keeping my eyes open to be an effective form of meditation. I initially tried this when I was very tired and I did not want to fall asleep while meditating (please note that I mean regular sleep rather than yogic sleep). Does this method inhibit the effort and effectiveness of Ma Shakti, or is it as effective as Kundalini sadhana with eyes closed?

Answer: If you find yourself falling asleep during Maha Yoga Sadhan, so be it. Do not try to stop it from happening with any intentional activity along the lines you described. Any type of Yoga Sadhana, including the type of meditation that you described, that requires a Sadhak to make an intentional effort, i.e. the Sadhak is the “doer”, is not the same as Maha Yoga Sadhan. The beauty of Maha Yoga Sadhan is that it does not involve any effort on part of the Sadhak. All a Sadhak need do is to close his eyes and surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within and simply observe the physical, mental or Pranic Kriyas that happen, including that of falling asleep (only that he will have observed he was asleep when he wakes up, not during the time he is asleep). The Maha Yoga Sadhak’s role should only be that of an observer, not the “doer” of any intended activity during Sadhan, whether that activity is physical, mental or Pranic.

In fact, if a Sadhak makes any effort at all during Maha Yoga Sadhan to do something with intent instead of surrendering to the awakened Prana Shakti within and allowing her to “do” what is needed, the Sadhan becomes ineffective in eliminating the accumulated Samskaras, which is the primary purpose of Maha Yoga Sadhan. Such intentional activity only adds to the Sadhak’s accumulated Samskaras. Most Yogic “Sadhana” such as Hatha Yoga, etc., including the one you described, are done by the Sadhak, whereas Maha Yoga “Sadhan” is done by the awakened Prana Shakti. This is a key difference. If the Kriya you described, i.e. meditating on a single point with open eyes, happens automatically and without any intent on your part, while you are sitting for Maha Yoga Sadhan, then that is fine. Simply observe it as a Kriya and let it go without developing any attachment to it. But please don’t worry too much about falling asleep during Maha Yoga Sadhan. If sleep happens, let it happen.

Having said that, you are of course welcome to practice other Yoga approaches and practices when you are not sitting for Maha Yoga Sadhan. But please understand that such practices can create new Samskaras and are not substitutes for Maha Yoga Sadhan.
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Question: I am an army officer and need to survive anywhere I am assigned. Would it be possible for me to receive Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha (initiation) especially given the food-related restrictions on Sadhaks seeking Deeksha? I am a vegetarian and do not consume alcohol, but I may not be able to follow rigorously the avoidance of onion and garlic. Also, I would like to know if I can receive Deeksha in person at the Ashram in Pune.

Answer: Given your situation, it would be best if you tried out the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga as described at [http://www.mahayoga.org/mahayoga-introductory-practice.aspx](http://www.mahayoga.org/mahayoga-introductory-practice.aspx). This Practice has P. P. Kaka Maharaj’s Sankalpa (intent) behind it, so it is a form of Deeksha, but without the rules and restrictions that are asked of Sadhaks who seek the more formal Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha. Many Sadhaks who try out the Introductory Practice get their Prana Shakti awakened and also get Maha Yoga experiences similar to those experienced by Sadhaks who have received formal Deeksha. At some point down the road, when your living conditions allow you to observe the rules and restrictions, you may ask for formal Deeksha.

However, after having communicated this to you, if you still feel an inner urge to receive formal Deeksha and are willing to do your utmost to follow the rules and restrictions, you may ask for formal Deeksha. But please understand that the commitment you will be making is not to anyone else but it is only to the awakened Prana Shakti within you. If your commitment is honest, the Deeksha will happen and you will continue to make spiritual progress. But if you only have a lackluster level of commitment, your progress will be limited and slow. We would suggest you read the fourth Discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj which appeared in the February 2012 issue of our Self Awakening e-newsletter (archived at [http://mahayoga.org/selfawakening.aspx](http://mahayoga.org/selfawakening.aspx)). Beginning on page 10, P. P. Kaka Maharaj himself discusses the role of the rules and restrictions for progress along this path. You can let yourself be guided by the discussion if you so decide.

If you do decide to ask for Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha, there is no need to go to any Ashram to receive it. Maha Yoga Deeksha is a Sankalpa Deeksha that can as easily happen in the privacy of your own home as anywhere else. So, it is much better to follow the instructions for Deeksha preparations in the privacy of your own home rather than at an Ashram. But various Ashrams do have Samuhik (Communal) Sadhan events which you can attend following Deeksha.

Question: Are Sadhaks likely to experience any physical changes in their bodies after having performed Maha Yoga Sadhan for a few years, and if so, what kind of changes might they experience? Might such physical changes be related to a Sadhak’s state of mind during Sadhan? Are the unusual experiences or miracles that long term Sadhaks might experience, caused by the change in a Sadhak’s state of mind, or is there something else that causes them?
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Answer: It is quite clear that Sadhaks experience significant changes in their mental attitudes after years of Maha Yoga Sadhan. There might also be physical changes but it is difficult to attribute them definitively and scientifically to Maha Yoga Sadhan. Having said that, there have been scientific studies done on the topic of physical changes caused by meditation, where the subjects were long term practitioners of Zen and Tibetan Buddhist meditation, where they found that the brains of such individuals generate a greater degree of Alpha waves relative to non-meditators. The researchers also found that human brains are quite plastic and certain sub-regions of the brains of long term meditators are significantly greater in size relative to non-meditators. So, one could extend that finding to Maha Yoga meditation as well, because at its core, the Maha Yoga Introductory Practice of observing ones breath is identical to the Zen and Tibetan Buddhist meditation techniques.

But, it is important to keep in mind that while such topics are of great interest to those of us who have engineering/scientific backgrounds or are trying to put what we Sadhaks experience in a rational physical/mental/Pranic (nervous energy) framework, Maha Yoga takes a Sadhak beyond physical, Pranic and mental experiences. The experience of the meditative state lies beyond these three Koshas. (For a description of the five Koshas that cover up the Atma within us please read “Revealing the Paramatma within” beginning page 6 of the May 2013 issue of Self Awakening archived at http://www.mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self%20Awakening%20Vol%205%20Issue%204.pdf.) In advanced meditative states, the Sadhak’s awareness goes further within himself; in fact the Sadhak loses awareness of his body, the Prana within him and the mind as well. With even the mind being stilled, the role of observer (Sakshi) gets taken over by the Atma, but without the mind being active during such experiences the Sadhak has no ability to understand and articulate what he is experiencing during that state. Only when he comes out of that state, i.e. when his mind becomes active once again does he begin to explain to himself and to articulate what happened. This is where his Samskaras shape the narrative, so he interprets what happened as having been in the presence of God if he is a believer (which God will depend on his past Samskaras), experienced the infinite, Shunyata, etc., etc. So, while there can be some Siddhis (miraculous powers) a Sadhak might experience that are related to the three outer Koshas (body, Prana and mind), the actual Yoga experience that arises from the mind etc. having become quiet, is even beyond the mind. The mind simply interprets what happened after the fact. So the Sadhak’s mind does come into play in interpreting what happened, but not during the experience itself. The experience is not mental, it is beyond the mind.

Question: I recently tried out the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga and had a very interesting experience. At first nothing happened beyond an undefined and vague sensation in the middle of my back. But gradually, as my attention moved to observing my breath as instructed, I began to experience what I thought was some kind of a hallucination. Although I think my physical body was still, I felt a sensation of moving in a circular motion. Later I began to get a sensation of “seeing” some unknown scenes and I felt like I was in them. This was followed by some tightening in my throat and chest, as if I was being gripped by some
A **Answer:** You experienced what for all practical purposes is a form of Maha Yoga Deeksha. P. P. Kaka Maharaj devised the Introductory Practice of Maha Yoga ([http://www.mahayoga.org/mahayoga-introductory-practice.aspx](http://www.mahayoga.org/mahayoga-introductory-practice.aspx)) as a pre-cursor to formal Deeksha, but he also had his Deeksha Sankalpa (intention) behind it. (Please read the Discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj in the May 2010 issue of the Self Awakening e-newsletter archived at [http://www.mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self%20Awakening%20Vol%202%20Issue%204.pdf](http://www.mahayoga.org/newsletter/Self%20Awakening%20Vol%202%20Issue%204.pdf). As a result, many Sadhaks who sit for Sadhan following the instructions for the Introductory Practice actually experience what for all practical purposes is a form of Maha Yoga Deeksha. So there is no reason for you to be surprised by it, nor is there any reason to be concerned about it. You are indeed fortunate to have had this intense an experience while following instructions for the Introductory Practice.

The experiences you described are called Kriyas (involuntary activities), which when they happen to a Sadhak for the first time, give the Sadhak an unambiguous experience of the awakened Prana Shakti (Mother Energy) within him. This is the stage when a Sadhak goes beyond just an intellectual understanding of the Prana Shakti to actually experiencing it within himself. The Kriyas serve the purpose of bringing up Sanchit Samskaras (accumulated impressions of your current and past lives) for you to observe dispassionately, which begins the process of eliminating them from your Chitta (mind-stuff). Since Sanchit Samskaras within us are unique to each one of us, given each of our unique journeys through innumerable past lives and our current one, the specific Kriyas we experience during Maha Yoga Sadhan are also unique. Kriyas can be of three types, physical, Pranic (nervous energy-related) or mental. Most Sadhaks experience various proportions of all three types of Kriyas.

It is very important, though, for Sadhaks to think of the Kriya process as one of "garbage" (Kachra) - removal. The Sadhak's role during Sadhan should simply be that of an observer (Sakshi) and not the doer (Karta). He should simply observe what happens and let the awakened Prana Shakti "do" what is needed to get rid of the Sanchit Samskaras from his Chitta. Please do not get attached to any specific Kriya, because once the Kachra of a specific Samskara has been eliminated, that Kriya does not need to happen again! Eventually, as the heavy-duty Samskaras within a Sadhak's Chitta get removed by sitting for Sadhan diligently and allowing the awakened Prana Shakti to do what is needed, the Kriyas become more and more subtle. At some point when the Sanchit Samskaras have all been
eliminated, the Kriyas become unnecessary and the Sadhak reaches a spiritually elevated state, ultimately leading to Nirvikalpa Samadhi (Enlightenment).

The experiences you had are not hallucinations at all, but are the effects of the awakened Prana Shakti within you. You do not need to change anything. Please continue to sit for Sadhan on a daily basis with an attitude of a Sakshi, not a Karta. Surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within when you sit for Sadhan, do not get attached to any Kriya that happens, and develop an attitude of patience and acceptance. Please also keep in mind that the awakening of the Prana Shakti, whether it happens as a result of the Introductory Practice or formal Maha Yoga Deeksha, while a very important event, is only but the first step of this awakened phase of your spiritual journey. Sitting for Sadhan on a regular basis is a must for getting rid of the vast trove of Samskaras each of us has accumulated over innumerable lifetimes, and without eliminating these accumulated Samskaras it is impossible for us to reach the enlightened state.

Editor’s note: Please send your questions regarding Maha Yoga and Shaktipat to: self.awakening@gmail.com.
A few years ago, P.P. Shri Narayan Kaka Dhekane Maharaj (Kaka Maharaj) had vowed to establish a Maha Yoga Center in Goa, India in honor of his Shaktipat Deeksha Guru, P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj, for meeting the needs of Maha Yoga Sadhaks and for propagating the Maha Yoga path in that region. For the past several years such efforts were being conducted from Shri Vijay Joglekar’s home in Goa, but due to the increasing number of Maha Yoga Sadhaks and others interested in Maha Yoga in the area, it was clear that a larger and dedicated premise was needed to continue to serve the region. The concerted efforts of Sadhaks in the area over the past 4-5 years culminated in a new Maha Yoga Center being set up at an independent location in Pundalik Nagar in Porvorim, Bardez, in Goa.

To inaugurate the opening of the new center and to establish P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj’s symbolic presence there, a three day function was held from May 3rd to 5th, 2014 to install representations of his Holy Padukas (footwear of a renunciate) at the location. This ceremony is referred to as the Charanadhisthan ceremony. The event activities began on the evening of May 3rd, 2014 at 6 pm with a procession of Sadhaks and devotees parading the representation of P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj’s Holy Padukas around the Pundalik Nagar area. P. P. Shri Mukund Kaka Thakar Maharaj (from Pune, India) participated in the procession while rituals were being conducted by others at the Maha Yoga Center. The evening’s activities lasted until 9:30 pm.

The next day’s activities began at 8:30 am with rituals to purify the Center followed by Maha Prasad (lunch) which lasted until 2:30 pm. The afternoon’s activities began with the release of a special issue of “Shri Loknath Path” magazine by P. P. Shri Prakashrao Prabhune Maharaj
P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Charanadhishthan Ceremony, Goa, India (continued)

(Chief Trustee, P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Mahayoga Trust, Nashik) who followed the release of the special issue with a spiritual discourse on Maha Yoga practice and Sadhan. This event was graced by the presence of P. P. Shri Thakar Maharaj, Vedmurti P. P. Shri Rakhe Maharaj (from Nashik) and a large number of Maha Yoga Sadhaks and devotees. The discourse was followed by a Samuhik (communal) Sadhan at the meditation center in the new premises in the presence of P. P. Shri Prabhune Maharaj, P. P. Shri Thakar Maharaj and P. P. Shri Rakhe Maharaj. It was indeed a golden opportunity for the attending Maha Yoga Sadhaks to sit for Sadhan in the presence of not one, but three Shaktipat Masters!

On the final day of the event (May 5th, 2014), the Pratisthapana Ceremony (installation) of P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj’s Holy Padukas was held at 7:35 am at the auspicious hands of Yati P. P. Shri Kalikananda Tirth Swami Maharaj of Kolhapur, India. This ceremony was followed by other purification rituals conducted by P. P. Shri Prabhune Maharaj and blessed by the presence of both P. P. Shri Thakar Maharaj and P. P. Shri Rakhe Maharaj. “Padya Pooja” (ritual washing of the feet) of Yati P. P. Shri Kalikananda Tirth Swami Maharaj was performed by Shri Shashikant Joglekar.

Following the installation of the Holy Padukas, the donors and volunteers who had so generously helped make the new Center happen were recognized and felicitated, followed by Aarti and Maha Prasad. In the evening, H. B. P. Shri Sameer Nilkanth Ozebua from Panvel, India conducted a well-attended Kirtan (singing of devotional songs) beginning at 5:30 pm, which was followed by the evening Aarti and Prasad.
The ceremonies and events over the three days were attended by a large number of Maha Yoga Sadhaks and devotees from Goa, Nashik, Pune, Ratnagiri and other neighboring areas who had the good fortune to witness this divine ceremony and to get blessings from being in the spiritual presence of P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj and in the physical presence of the attending Maha Yoga Masters. The Sadhaks and devotees left with a feeling of gratitude towards P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj and P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj, for their spiritual blessings that led to the successful completion and launch of the new Maha Yoga Center in Goa.

Reported by: Shri Vijay V. Joglekar

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Holy Padukas of P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj established at the Goa Center

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

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

Phone: +91-253-2311616
Two years ago, P. P. Narayan Kaka Dhekane Maharaj left his earthly body on November 5th, 2012. With his departure, the world lost one of the leading Maha Yoga masters of our age, and Sadhaks and others who were touched by his gifts of Shaktipat Deeksha and the Introductory Approach to Mahayoga, lost a dearly beloved Guru and spiritual guide.

In order to honor his memory and to continue his lifelong mission of introducing the effortless, joyful and no-cost path of Mahayoga to the world, we will be conducting a Global Maha Yoga Meditation (Sadhana) event on November 5th, 2014 from 6:00 am to 6:21 am local time (Please follow the time at your own location/time zone). Those interested can participate in this meditation event at no cost, from their own homes. All are eligible to participate in this trial regardless of religion, race, gender, age, caste or creed. To register for this event please go to: [http://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-global-meditation.aspx](http://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-global-meditation.aspx)

Here’s how to participate:

- At the designated time, sit comfortably with your eyes closed in a quiet location in your home. Instantly observe a wave of energy along your spinal column. Please follow the clock in your own country/time zone.
- Relax your body completely in order to minimize the awareness of your body.
- Let your mind observe your involuntary breathing.
- Continue to remain seated for the said time duration or longer, if you wish.
- Observe your experiences and share them with us by email at info@mahayoga.org or post them on our Yahoo Group ([https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/kundalinishaktipatyoga/info](https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/kundalinishaktipatyoga/info)) or on our Facebook Group, Mahayoga World ([https://www.facebook.com/groups/mahayogaworld](https://www.facebook.com/groups/mahayogaworld))

Please inform others you know who may be interested in participating in the Maha Yoga Global Meditation event to honor P. P. Kaka Maharaj. All are free to participate.
Upcoming Events:

Deeksha Day (Initiation Day) on December 6th, 2014
The next Maha Yoga Deeksha Day will be on December 6th, 2014. Those desirous of receiving Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) may apply by using the online form at http://www.mahayoga.org/mahayoga-initiation.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 1 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:

The Program Calendar for the Nashik Ashram and for other locations has been updated and is available at http://www.mahayoga.org/progcal.aspx. The www.mahayoga.org website has been updated.

The Maha Yoga videos website at http://www.mahayogavideos.org/ has available videos of various Maha Yoga related events and speeches by P. P. Kaka Maharaj.
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.

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

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

Editor: Mr. Dilip Kamat
Design: Mrs. Neha Vishwarupe

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May all desire to follow this nectarous Siddhayoga Path!