Editor’s note

Dear Readers:

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

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

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

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

Past issues of Self Awakening are archived at http://www.mahayoga.org/selfawakening.aspx.
Love and Hate

Two aspirants were arguing about love and hate. One was saying that love is essential for sadhan, while the other was of the opinion that there is no relationship between love and sadhan. Finally, the subject was presented to Maharajshri. This is what Maharajshri had to say:

“Love is spirituality, whereas hate is the world. Love is harmony, whereas hate is discord. Love is fragrance, whereas hate is foul odor. Love teaches tolerance; hate teaches revenge. Love and hate are opposite poles. Love is the way to put an end to individuality, and hate is the way to solidify individuality. There is no place for hate in the mind that is filled with love. Where there is hate, love cannot even enter.

“What is love? In the hands of spiritual people love is a weapon that cuts the feelings of attachment and aversion. In love there is no attachment or aversion. You fall in love with all living beings. All belong to you, and all are the same to you. No one is your opponent or enemy. The lover imagines his Lord in one and all. If he is slightly advanced, he sees the divine power active within everyone. If he is even more advanced, he sees the Absolute Self in everyone. When his beloved is dwelling in everyone, who is a stranger?

“The lover does not ask anything of his beloved Lord. To ask is to doubt his all-knowing nature. Love is the path of giving and sacrificing, not of asking. It is the path in which you offer everything you have at the feet of the Lord. Finally the lover even merges his ego and himself in God. If the lover thinks he can merge himself in God, he thinks it is his own ego. How can he do that? God himself showers grace and merges his devotee within himself. The lover does not own anything. Everything belongs to God. The Lord can give him fame or
insult; he experiences God’s grace in everything. The devotee constantly remains intoxicated with God.

“The lover has generosity, a forgiving nature and tolerance. There is no trace of attachment and aversions. Love is another name for austerity. The element of love is the essence of existence. Love is the best medicine for those suffering from the disease of birth, death and rebirth. It is the cool shade of a banyan tree for those burning in the heat of miseries and afflictions. It is a stream of cool water; it is a wave of soothing breeze; it is the sweet fragrant scent of a flower garden for those tired and thirsty on the journey through the world.

“The end of bhavarog [the cycle of birth and death] starts with the sprouting of love in the heart. The awakened Shakti, or power, can be called “Love-Shakti,” and latent Shakti can be called “Hate-Shakti.” In the Shiva Sutra it is called apashu Shakti [non-animal force] and pashu Shakti [animal force]. In love, the animal force is destroyed and in hate, animal force persists. Love-Shakti is the cause of depletion of the impression of the animal nature, while hate causes its accumulation. The observation of the activities of Love-Shakti is sadhan itself. In love a sadhak laughs and cries, he dances when filled with love, and sometimes he is absorbed in love and meditation. When love grows he rises above his body because love is energy and hate is inertia.

“What is hate? It is air filled with the odor of filth accumulated in the mind. Hate is caused by attachments in the world, and it is due to aversion. It is like a corpse that no one wants to face, yet everyone embraces it. If hate is a sign of aversion then somewhere feelings of attachment must exist. Aversion cannot exist without attachment on the opposite pole. Thus hate consists of attachment and aversion. The greater the hate in the mind, the more the world will appear full of faults. The fault-finding tendency grows stronger with hate. Faults are imagined where there are none. Straight things appear twisted.

“What more is there to say? Hate is like a great ocean filled with filth. Hate is like an owl that cannot see in the day and flies in the darkness of night. Hate squeezes out all the joy from life and adds poison to it. Hate sows seeds in the mind that cannot be weeded for many lifetimes. It robs one of joy and happiness and also makes others miserable. The one who sinks in hate forgets the Self, and his original color is stained.

“Only the sadhak who enjoys watching blissful activities of the Shakti after its awakening can be a real lover. When awakened Shakti starts to dig and throw up impressions, all the animal instincts and vasanas [mental tendencies] are tossed from the mind. The natural loving nature of the sadhak comes to light. This is the gift of the awakened Shakti.”

Question: “It often appears that sadhaks have more attachment, aversions, hate, jealousy, and so forth, than average people. How and when will love manifest? When will they become true lovers?”
Churning of the Heart - Excerpts (continued)

Answer: “When active Shakti brings out vices and vasanas at a fast pace, that affects the mind of the aspirant. It should not be allowed to affect one’s mind, but generally it is harder for the aspirant to be successful at that. Consequently this wave, after affecting the mind of the aspirant, influences his behavior as well. This slows down the progress of the sadhak. But these defects are transient. The process of purification of the mind continues, but due to lack of caution, distractions take place that cause delay. One thing is certain though: Once Shakti is awakened, it does not leave until the chitta is totally purified, no matter how much delay takes place.”

Question: “True, hate is the dark side of life. But if someone turns around and uses hate and anger to get rid of faults and vices, does not that make hate a virtue?”

Answer: “Vice will always remain a vice, but its use may be good. For example, someone is in the habit of taking opium and goes around keeping packets of it in his pocket. Now he begins to make good use of it by giving it to people as a medicine. Still, his old habit can arise at any time and he may start using the opium himself. The same situation exists with vices. After making good use of it in getting rid of vices hate itself must be thrown out. Otherwise it can start acting up again in the world.”

Question: “Should one dispense with love after finding God?”

Answer: “You do not have to get rid of love. It dissolves by itself. This is the difference between good and bad vasanas [tendencies]. Bad tendencies never leave, even after numerous exploits. Good tendencies, on the contrary, leave after achieving their goal. When God is found, then the sense of individuality, along with feelings of love, will merge in God. A devotee is freed from the cycle of birth and death, and the feeling is also gone.”

Illusion in Kriyas

A couple came to visit Maharajshri and, during a conversation, said, “My wife’s Guru Maharaj appears in her meditation and misbehaves with her.”

Maharajshri asked how long it had been since she had met her Guru. The reply was that she hadn’t met him since her wedding. Now he had left his mortal body, too.

Then Maharajshri said, “It is your illusion that you believe Guru Maharaj appears before her during meditation. Who knows what impressions of which lifetime are coming up in meditation? Some memories are dug up and come alive like a picture. Many different samskaras are mixed together and create a confusing picture inside. This is part of the Shakti’s purification process. Therefore an aspirant need not be afraid. A time will come when the samskaras giving such experiences will lose their power, and this type of
experience will end. If you are afraid of these experiences then there will be a delay in clearing the samskaras and the experiences will continue to occur. Hence, do not worry; watch the experiences as a witness.”

The woman said, “My Guru Maharaj was extremely compassionate. He considered us to be his children. He was always active for our spiritual progress. Therefore it is impossible to imagine that he could behave this way. How come I am having such experiences?”

Maharajshri said, “Listen, daughter. It is beyond the capacity of an individual soul to understand the secret ways of the workings of Shakti. Only Shakti knows how many samskaras are mixed, how they manifest in the form of kriya, what their purpose is, and when the experiences will be transformed. When and how Shakti will display within is beyond the understanding of an individual soul. The jiva, individual soul, knows very little and Shakti knows everything. Shakti knows what a sadhak is filled with, and what vasanas or tendencies are deep-rooted. Shakti also knows who needs what type of strong kriyas. It is the duty of the sadhak not to interfere in Shakti’s work.”

The woman said, “I am only trying to understand, not interfere in the kriyas.”

Answer: “To be afraid and wish not to experience these kriyas - isn’t that interference? As far as knowing the reason is concerned, if the Shakti feels it is essential for you to understand, it will let you understand even without your asking. Both processes, explaining and understanding, are internal. External understanding is only an intellectual lecture. I can only tell you that there is nothing to worry about. Shakti will give you experiences according to requirements that are based on samskaras in the chitta. As soon as the samskaras are destroyed the experiences will also change. Your duty is to keep watching with surrender.”

After they left Maharajshri said, “I have had many bizarre, misleading, strange experiences that shook my chitta. Often I would experience an illusion, but with the Guru’s grace I was saved. An aspirant must maintain great caution. We do believe in ghosts, and I did have some such experiences, but our mind is the greatest ghost. The mind is expert in taking many different forms - threatening, scolding, and sometimes even wishing us well. The spoiled mind is a person’s greatest enemy. All the tricks of the mind are taught by vasanas [tendencies]. A simple and innocent jiva is influenced and misled. When the mind returns to its natural state, then there is no other friend like the mind.”

I said, “Maharajshri, I recall an event from my life, I had just entered my youth and was working in an office. My colleagues proposed going to a movie after work and everyone agreed happily. But I said my family would be worried because it would be 10:00 PM by the time we returned home. I tried calling my father at his office but he had left. Since they insisted, I went with them.”

“When I reached home it was 10:00. I was afraid that I would be scolded. I extended my hand several times to knock on the door, but I did not dare to knock. I could hear the angry
voice of my father, which I completely discouraged me. I drew back. I stood at the street corner, thinking that there was no way to escape his anger. I was very afraid of my father but there was no alternative but to go home. The problem worsened the longer I waited. I returned home. I extended my hand to knock on the door but found it open. I went in and saw that my father was smiling. He said, ‘He has come back. Quickly serve him food.’ Then he turned towards me and said, ‘Give up this job. If you work so hard your health will suffer. There must be a reasonable time for returning home.’ I became like a statue and began to reflect. Father was shouting with anger a few minutes ago, and now there was no trace of anger. I ate my dinner without any joy.

“Later, I asked mother whether father was upset with me. She said, ‘No. He said we should make you leave the job since you had to work so late at the office. It would not be good for your health.’ I told my father the real reason for returning late. He was pleased to hear the truth and said, ‘It is good that you are aware of your mistake. That is sufficient.’

“Thus I had imagined a fierce form of my father in my mind, but his true state at that time was quite the opposite. There was an immediate reason for this, but there must have been some past impressions that played a role in my fear.”

Maharajshri said, “Certainly samskaras play a primary role in the events that take place in our lives. Current happenings are present before us, while samskaras are invisible. They are like a river flowing under the Earth that can surface at any point. We only see the flow on the surface and do not see the river constantly flowing beneath.”

Presented here with kind permission from Swami Shivom Tirth Ashram, Inc. Thanks to Mrs. Alison Kamat for transcribing the excerpts.

“Churning of the Heart” trilogy by P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj is available from: Devatma Shakti Society 92-93, Navali Gav Post Dahisar, via Mumbra, Thane 400612, India Tel. No.: (+91) 22-65148183
Many of us wonder why we were created in the first place, why we go through the cycle of birth followed by death and being reborn again, and what can be done to end this seemingly endless cycle. This article attempts to address these questions and describes how Maha Yoga can help end the cycle of birth - death - rebirth by enabling Sadhaks to actually experience Self-Realization in their lifetimes. - Editor.

According to our scriptures, the Paramatma (Universal Soul - God - Pure Consciousness), which is the underlying energy and consciousness that powers the entire universe has three aspects/roles: creation of matter and energy, maintenance of the matter and energy that was created, and dissolution of the matter and energy. The creation aspect is called Brahma, the maintenance aspect Vishnu and the dissolution aspect Shiva. Not only do these three principles of creation, maintenance and dissolution apply to the external universe, they also apply to the creation, maintenance and the eventual dissolution of each individual Atma (soul).

Creation

The Paramatma is all pervasive; it underlies all matter, animate or inanimate. Inanimate objects, such as rocks, sand, paper, metallic objects, etc. do not have consciousness or sentience, but the Paramatma resides in them as well. And because inanimate objects do not have consciousness, sentience or awareness, they do not have an Atma (soul). (Those of us who have not reached the state of Self Realization are unable to see and experience the presence of the Paramatma in such inanimate objects but Yogis who have reached that state see the Paramatma in all things, be they inanimate or animate.)

The Paramatma pervades animate (living) beings as well, from the lowest life forms all the way to humans. Clearly, lower life forms that do not even have a sense of being self-aware are of course unaware of the Paramatma within, but even higher forms of life such as us humans who are self-aware, are generally not aware of the Paramatma within us. In fact, our bodies, the Prana Shakti (life energy) that animates our bodies, and our minds, constitute three of the five Koshas (layers or sheaths) that cover the ParamAtma that resides in each and every one of us, and hide its presence from our awareness.

Our body itself is called the Annamaya Kosha, or the Body Kosha, the layer/sheath that is supported by the food (Anna) we eat. The life energy (Prana) that animates our inanimate body is called the Pranamaya Kosha, or the Energy Kosha and our mind (Mana) which is made up of thoughts and which gives us the intent to act is called the Manomaya Kosha, or the Mind Kosha. Within these three Koshas reside two other Koshas. The first of these is the Vignyanamaya Kosha also called the Intellect Kosha or the Discernment Kosha; it is the “hard disk” that stores the accumulated impressions (Samskaras) from our current and past lives. The innermost Kosha is the Anandmaya Kosha, or the Bliss Kosha, which separates our Atma from the ParamAtma of which it is a part. These five Koshas separate us from the ParamAtma thus creating for us our Atma (individual soul) from the ParamAtma. So, even
though our Atma is Pure Consciousness as is the ParamAtma that pervades the universe, the five Koshas (layers/sheaths) help create the Bhram (deception) that we are separate individuals unconnected from each other and separate from the ParamAtma and the universe around us. This process of Atma creation is played by the Brahma aspect of the ParamAtma, the creator of the Bhram that our Atma is separate from the ParamAtma. There is no specific reason that Atmas get created. Their creation is in the very nature of our universe and the ParamAtma.
Maintenance - The endless cycle of birth-death-rebirth

Once the Atma (soul) gets created residing in a body animated by the Prana Shakti, with a mind of its own, a storage device (Vignyanamaya Kosha) ready to store and accumulate impressions, and separated from the ParamAtma, the being as represented by the Atma surrounded by the five Koshas begins the process of self-deception. As it lives its life with its awareness limited to thinking of itself as a separate being, identifying itself primarily with its body, and only being aware of the world outside, it develops attachments and aversions related to the external world, thus beginning the process of accumulating impressions (Samskaras) and strengthening the ego, all of which reside in the Vignyanamaya Kosha, the storage layer.

Day by day, the being (the pure Atma, a fragment of the ParamAtma, surrounded by the five Koshas) accumulates more and more impressions and reinforces the impressions that have already been accumulated, thus building long-lasting Vrittis (tendencies and predispositions to act or think) that cause it to behave in certain specific ways. The buildup of Samskaras in the Vignyanamaya Kosha of a living “being” can happen in two ways. It can happen with the being’s body reacting to an external stimulus it receives through one or more of the senses and the being either experiencing positive or negative feelings from it thus creating new impressions (Samskaras) or reinforcing existing ones. Another way it can happen is when the Samskaras and Vrittis residing in the Vignyanamaya Kosha cause thoughts to pop up in the being’s mind (Manomaya Kosha). The mind in turn directs the Prana Shakti to animate the body to react to a specific thought in a specific way, leading to pleasure/joy or disappointment/fear. These impressions of joy or disappointment create new Samskaras or reinforce already existing ones.

As a living being repeatedly behaves in ways that favor inaction, laziness, greed and fear, and in higher life forms, negative tendencies like jealousy, vengefulness, anger, avarice, etc., it builds a trove of what are called Tamasik (negative/dark) Samskaras and Vrittis. As it repeatedly behaves in a manner that favors activity for the sake of activity, and in higher life-forms, tendencies that support self-centeredness, egotism, passion, etc., it builds an accumulation of Rajasik (activity favoring) Samskaras and Vrittis. On the other hand, if the being (primarily in higher life-forms) behaves in a manner that emphasizes goodness, purity, harmony, serenity, peacefulness, etc., it builds an accumulation of Sattvik (good, pure) Samskaras and Vrittis.

In this manner, the being, with the pure Atma, residing in a body and with the Prana Shakti that is externally focused, sees itself as separate from the ParamAtma, sees itself as the doer of all its actions, be they Tamasik, Rajasik or Sattvik (in higher life forms), develops attachments and aversions related to the external world it lives in, and accumulates Tamasik, Rajasik and Sattvik Samskaras, with all these Samskaras being stored in the Vignyanamaya Kosha. As the accumulation of Samskaras keeps on increasing, especially the Tamasik and the Rajasik types, the being’s sense of ego and separateness get reinforced. It goes through its life being completely unaware that it is in fact a part of the ParamAtma.
Maha Yoga - the Key to Self-Realization (continued)

It sees itself as a separate entity and as the doer of everything that matters to it. It identifies itself primarily with its body, the outermost Kosha; often being completely unaware of the Prana Shakti within it or even its mind, leave aside becoming aware of the other Koshas or the Atma within. Since the living being identifies itself primarily with its body, it develops a great fear of death, thinking that once the body dies, that is the end of it all.

But death is not the end of it all. Upon death, the Prana Shakti separates from the body and the body becomes inanimate. This happens as the Pranamaya Kosha (Energy Kosha) collapses into the Manomaya Kosha (Mind Kosha), and as the mind ceases to function the Manomaya Kosha collapses into the Vignyanamaya Kosha (Discernment/Intellect Kosha). At this point the Atma surrounded by the inner two Koshas, the Vignyanamaya Kosha into which are stored the accumulated Samskaras from the current and previous lives, and the Anandmaya Kosha which separates the Atma from the ParamAtma, departs from the dead body and eventually moves into another body, i.e. gets born again as another living being. The specific new birth it goes through, depends on that birth’s potential for fulfilling the Atma’s needs given its accumulated Samskaras, balanced by the potential for fulfillment of the needs of all other Atmas affected by the new birth. Here the Atma surrounded by the two Koshas occupies the new body, and the Samskaras that were accumulated during past lives, stored in the Vignyanamaya Kosha, are ready to provide intent and motivation to create thoughts and shape the mind in the new body and to fulfill the needs that were left unfulfilled in the previous life.

This combination of the Atma taking birth in the new body defines the Prarabdha (destiny) - the initial conditions and the future potential for the Atma’s progress in the new body, given the circumstances that are likely to come from that birth. The Prarabdha defines the new-born being’s potential; the new-born being’s efforts (Prayatna) shape the outcomes that happen as the Atma progresses in its new life. This explains why some people are born with specific talents or tendencies at birth. What a person does with those talents and tendencies shapes his life after that birth, as well as his future births.

This process of an Atma’s birth, the accumulation of new Samskaras and the reinforcing of existing Samskaras during its life as a living being, the being’s death, followed by the Atma’s rebirth in order to fulfill its unfulfilled needs keeps on repeating itself in an endless cycle of birth - death - rebirth ---. This is the “maintenance” aspect of the Paramatma. As long as the Prana Shakti animating a being is directed towards the outside world, the being keeps on accumulating new Samskaras and reinforcing existing Samskaras, constantly looking for fulfillment in the external world and keeps getting reborn after each death, over and over again.
Maha Yoga - the Key to Self-Realization (continued)

**Dissolution**

The only way to stop this cycle is to wait for the end of the universe (Pralaya), or if we are interested in ending the cycle before Pralaya to not have any unfulfilled needs and actually experience the presence of the ParamAtma within us in this very life. Of course, waiting for Pralaya to happen will be a very, very, very long wait, having to go through a seemingly endless cycle of births, deaths and rebirths. The other option that we, who are lucky to have been born as human beings, have is to experience Atma Sakshatkar, i.e. actually experience the presence of the ParamAtma within us, so upon our passing from this life there will be no need for us to be born again and our Atma, free of the Koshas covering it, can merge with the ParamAtma. This is the process of complete dissolution of the ego, the Shiva aspect of the Paramatma. It is represented in the image of the Nataraja, a serene Lord Shiva dancing on the ego (represented by a baby) to dissolve it completely.
So, how can we reach this state? Some of us might think that since the Atma is present within us all we need to do is just look for it by directing our Prana Shakti inward so we can use it to penetrate through the inner Koshas and find it. But lower forms of life and even most human beings are incapable of directing their Prana Shakti inwards because they aren’t even aware of the separate existence of the Prana Shakti within them. We think of ourselves as our bodies and see the energy that animates our bodies, the Prana Shakti, as being completely in our control. And with our Prana Shakti being directed outwards, to the external world, we see the external world as real and look for pleasure and joy in that world and fear the loss of that world and our current lives, giving in to the Bhram (deception) that separates our Atmas from the ParamAtma. So, even though the Atma, a fragment of the ParamAtma, resides in all living beings, most of us are incapable of actually experiencing it, because even though it is within us, we don’t have the key to unlock it.

Maha Yoga – the Key to Dissolution of the Ego and Self-Realization

One way to get the key to unlock the Koshas, the sheaths/layers that hide from our awareness the Atma/ParamAtma that is within us, is to have the Prana Shakti become inward-directed by years of effort-based Yoga practices like Hatha, Laya, Japa, Raja, etc. guided by Guru’s who are experts in those practices. Or it can become inward-directed in an instant through the grace of a Siddha (capable) Guru, i.e. through Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha (initiation). The Deeksha instantly makes the Sadhak aware of the Prana Shakti within him, and that it is a separate entity that is capable of animating the body regardless of his trying to control it. As it is, the Prana Shakti animates various processes in our bodies (e.g. the digestive, circulatory, renal, respiratory, etc.) without us even being aware of it or the processes it animates. However, when the Prana Shakti gets directed inwards during Maha Yoga Deeksha, Kriyas (involuntary activities that can be physical, mental or related to energy flow within the body) begin to happen automatically, and the Sadhak becomes experientially aware of the Prana Shakti’s presence and its capabilities.

Once the Prana Shakti has become inward-directed, either through years of effort-based Yoga practices or instantly through Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha, the Sadhak has the “key” to eventually unlock the locks to the Koshas that cover up the Atma within. When the Prana Shakti was outward-directed, the thoughts arising in a Sadhak’s mind caused either by external stimuli or arising from the Samskaras within, would have only served to create new Samskaras or reinforce existing ones. But when the Prana Shakti gets inward-directed (also referred to as being “awakened”), when a Sadhak sits for Sadhan and surrenders to the awakened Prana Shakti within him, the Prana Shakti enters the Vignyanamaya Kosha and causes the Samskaras that have been accumulated there to get expressed into the Sadhak’s awareness as Kriyas.

Some Samskaras get expressed as movements of the body (physical Kriyas), others get expressed as movements of Prana within (Pranic Kriyas), and still others get expressed as thoughts and emotions (mental Kriyas). These expressions/Kriyas happen without the Sadhak’s intent; they are the work of the awakened Prana Shakti as she begins the process
of eliminating the accumulated Samskaras from the Sadhak’s Vignyanamaya Kosha. This process of the inward-directed Prana Shakti causing the expression of Samskaras in the form of Kriyas is the process whereby the Kriyas get eliminated from the Sadhak’s Chitta. Having surrendered to the awakened Prana Shakti within him all a Sadhak need do during Sadhan is to simply observe the Kriyas as they happen, not develop attachments to them or get afraid of them, but to just let them happen and let them go. He should not think of himself as the “doer” (Karta) during Sadhan, but simply the “observer” (Sakshi). By surrendering to the awakened Prana Shakti within him the Sadhak should let her be the “doer” and allow her to do what is right for his spiritual growth. With this process of observing the Kriyas that happen during Sadhan, not developing any attachments to them or fear of them, and by simply letting them go, the Sadhak’s Chitta gets cleansed of the Samskaras that underlie the Kriyas.

When a specific Samskara has been eliminated, the Kriya that would happen as it got expressed by the awakened Prana Shakti will not happen any longer. That is good news indeed. Many Sadhaks get attached to Kriyas they find pleasurable or develop aversions to Kriyas that they find troubling for some reason. But doing so only creates new attachments and aversions and therefore adds to the trove of Samskaras instead of eliminating them. Maha Yoga Sadhaks who have recently been initiated usually experience Kriyas related to Tamasik and Rajasik tendencies. For example they might experience a preponderance of physical Kriyas such as bodily movements, the automatic occurrences of Asanas, Mudras, Bandhas, Pranayam, etc. Or they may experience strong emotions such as anger, jealousy, grief, etc. or even falling asleep or feeling fatigued, that occur without any cause or explicit intent on part of the Sadhaks. While some of the physical and emotional Kriyas might make a Sadhak feel good that his Sadhan is progressing well, it is important to note that as a Sadhak advances and the accumulation of the Samskaras that underlie such Kriyas gets thinned out, those Kriyas will stop happening. The nature of the Kriyas that happen will get more and more subtle. This is a sign of progress, rather that the continued recurrence of the same physical Kriyas that the Sadhak might have felt was indicative of progress. Sadhaks should think of the Kriyas happening as a process of cleansing of their Chitta (mind-stuff), the removal of the “garbage” of accumulated Samskaras, the thinning out of the Vignyanamaya Kosha, the elimination of the Vrittis from the Sadhak’s Chitta. It is the manifestation of Patanjali’s definition of Yoga: Chitta Vritti Nirodhah – the elimination of all Vrittis from the Chitta. Incidentally, all Samskaras need to get eliminated eventually, whether they are Tamasik, Rajasik or even Sattvik, so the Chitta is free of all Vrittis.

With regular Sadhan, gradually the Sadhak’s accumulation of Samskaras will get reduced, the Kriyas that happen will become subtle and calming, and the Sadhak will begin to develop the detached attitude of a Karma Yogi. He may continue to participate in worldly affairs, but with a sense of having a right to action but not to the fruits of the action. This attitude will enable him to continue with his day-to-day life without accumulating new Samskaras or reinforcing ones he already had. Developing the attitude of a Karma Yogi combined with regular Sadhan will eventually result in the elimination of all Samskaras from the Sadhak’s
Vignyanamaya Kosha and his awareness will then move to the Anandmaya Kosha also known as the “bliss” Kosha or the “illumined” layer.

This is when the Sadhak begins to experience the bliss of the Samadhi state, i.e. he begins to actually experience the Atma within him. But the Samadhi he experiences at this stage is called Savikalpa Samadhi, because even though he is experiencing the presence of the Atma within, his awareness has not merged with the ParamAtma. His mind while calm is still somewhat active; not seeking external stimuli, but still capable of being affected by the external world; and even though he experiences the blissful presence of the Atma within, he is still aware of himself as a consciousness separate from the ParamAtma. Experiencing Savikalpa Samadhi is like getting a glimpse of the ParamAtma within, a blissful experience but not true Atma Sakshatkar.

Only with continued Sadhan and a complete immersion of his consciousness into the ParamAtma, eventually the Bliss Kosha will also dissolve and he will experience the Nirvikalpa Samadhi state - the true Atma Sakshatkar or Self-Realization. At that stage, even as he is alive in his body, he will have experienced oneness with the Paramatma, eventually reaching the Nishpatti or Avdhoot state when he becomes completely indifferent to his body, his mind and to the world around him. He will be in a state of Sahaja Samadhi, entering into Samadhi effortlessly, existing in his body with complete indifference to it and after his body dies, even the physical sheath that others might have seen as keeping him separate from the Paramatma will have dissolved and he will have become one with the Paramatma. All the Koshas that separate his Atma from the ParamAtma will have dissolved and his ego and the Vrittis and Samskaras that kept him from Atma Sakshatkar will have been eliminated, freeing his Atma from the seemingly endless cycle of birth, death and rebirth.

This gift of Maha Yoga is available to us all at no cost, regardless of the external differences that separate us, such as religion, race, creed, caste, gender, status, age, nationality, etc. We hope all human beings partake of this gift that holds the key to freedom from the seemingly endless cycle of birth, death and rebirth, and puts them on a path to Self-Realization.

By: Dilip Kamat
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks

Question: Thank you very much for accepting my request to receive Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation), it is much appreciated! I have a few questions after reading the Deeksha letter to help me prepare for the day, and I was hoping I’d be able to clarify these with you:

• It was mentioned in the Deeksha letter about offering a coconut or fruit. Is this the case when you are in a group? Do I need to do this since I will be receiving Deeksha by myself?

• When I meditate I like to play meditation music as it helps quiet my mind. Is it ok if I play my usual meditation music or is it best to receive Deeksha in silence?

• Can I rest my back against a wall to keep my spine straight during Deeksha?

• What is the reason for making an Asana (seat) by placing a thick cloth and a white cloth on top of it in the middle of the room?

Many thanks and Namaste!

Answer: Glad to read that you will be receiving Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha shortly. Before I address your specific questions regarding Deeksha I would like to provide some context for what Maha Yoga is in contrast to other Yoga practices. Yoga practices like Hatha, Laya, Raja, Japa etc. are all “effort-based”, i.e. the Sadhak tries to control her body, her mind and the flow of Prana within her with her own effort and intent. The purpose of these Yoga practices is to awaken the Prana (Kundalini) Shakti, the Universal Life Energy within her. Such practices require years of effort on the part of the Sadhak with close guidance from a Guru, just to get her Prana Shakti awakened. In contrast to these effort-based Yoga practices, Maha Yoga is an “effortless” Yoga. A Sadhak receiving Maha Yoga Deeksha from a Siddha (capable) Guru, instantly has her Prana Shakti become awakened, i.e. the normally outward-directed Prana Shakti within her becomes inward-directed. This happens due to the Grace and Intent of the Guru during Deeksha, requiring absolutely no effort on the Sadhak’s part other than having an attitude of surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within her.

Once her Prana Shakti gets awakened during Deeksha, all a Sadhak need do is to sit for Sadhan on a regular basis, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within, allow the Prana Shakti to be the “doer” and simply play the role of an observer. The awakened Prana Shakti will, without any effort on part of the Sadhak, cause some Kriyas (involuntary activities) to happen. These activities may be physical (Asanas, Mudras, etc.), Pranic (the flow of Prana Energy within the Sadhak) and/or mental (thoughts that arise without any intent on part of the Sadhak). All a Sadhak need do when Kriyas happen is to simply observe them, not expect any specific Kriya to happen, not get scared by them or get attached to them. She should simply observe them and let them happen.
The Kriyas that happen during Deeksha and during Sadhan following Deeksha are the process whereby the inward-directed Prana Shakti brings up impressions (attachments and aversions) from the Sadhak’s current and past lives into her Chitta (mind-stuff). By simply observing these Kriyas and by letting them happen without developing new attachments or aversions, the Sadhak’s Chitta gets gradually cleansed of all the accumulated impressions, eventually leading to an intimate awareness of the Atma within her and becoming experientially aware that her Atma is the same as the Param-Atma which resides in all of us. This is called Self Enlightenment, the goal of all Yoga practices. For most Maha Yoga Sadhaks this won’t happen right after Deeksha, but will likely take a few years of diligent Maha Yoga Sadhan, but the Deeksha will have given them a head start by having awaked the Prana Shakti within them.

So, with this context, let me address your specific questions.

- The offering of a coconut/fruit is a traditional way to make an “offering” to the Guru in anticipation of receiving Deeksha. In a setting where many Sadhaks are receiving Deeksha it can be done in a group, but in your case, since you will be receiving Deeksha in the privacy of your own home, you should do it by yourself. This is the first step of developing an attitude of surrender to the Siddha Guru, so his/her Chitta can merge with yours during Deeksha, resulting in the awakening of the Prana Shakti within you.

- It is best to sit for Deeksha, and for Sadhan following Deeksha, without having any external music or sounds that might distract you from simply playing the role of an observer.

- When you sit for Deeksha it is very important to relax your body, so as to become unaware of your body. This will allow physical Kriyas, if they happen, to happen without any constraints. So, please do not try to keep your spine straight by resting your back against a wall, especially during Deeksha. If you find your body swaying back and forth or side to side, or rotating, allow it to happen without any restraint. That is why we suggest not having any constraining things like a wall or a chair-back behind you or near you. You have to allow physical Kriyas, if they happen, to happen without any constraints.

- Sadhaks are asked to sit on a thick cloth (folded up blankets or a carpet will also work well) with a white cloth (bedsheet will do) on top to be comfortable sitting on the floor, and not having any distractions caused by physical discomfort or colorful seats. Sitting in the middle of a room is suggested so as to keep you from hitting your head or other parts of your body from hitting a wall in case physical Kriyas happen.

Hope the above addresses your questions.
**Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)**

**Question:** I would like to know why we are asked to not apply for Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) if we have already received it. I would like to receive it again, even though I have received it before, because I have heard that it can further purify me.

Since I have already been initiated what else can I do on a daily basis as sadhana for kundalini awakening? When I have sat for Sadhan recently I no longer feel any sensations or vibrations in my body, which is why I wonder if I should apply for Deeksha again.

**Answer:** Before I address your specific questions about Maha Yoga Deeksha etc., let me explain to you briefly what Maha Yoga Deeksha and Sadhan are all about.

The entire purpose of Maha Yoga, beginning with Maha Yoga Deeksha and regular Maha Yoga Sadhan thereafter, is to have the awakened Prana Shakti (Universal Life Energy) within the Sadhak eliminate all of the accumulated Samskaras (impressions from his current and past lives) from the Sadhak’s Chitta (mind-stuff), so eventually the Sadhak can actually experience the Atma (soul) within himself as being the one and the same ParamAtma (Universal soul/consciousness) that resides in all of us. This is what is referred to as Atma Sakshatkar (Self Realization).

The first step in this process is the Maha Yoga Deeksha. When Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha happens, the normally outward-directed Prana Shakti within the Sadhak becomes inward-directed. This is also referred to as the awakening of the Prana Shakti. Once the Prana Shakti is awakened, i.e. Deeksha has happened, all a Sadhak need do is to allow the awakened Prana Shakti to cleanse the Sadhak’s Chitta every day by gradually eliminating the Samskaras the Sadhak has accumulated over his current and past lives. This cleansing process happens during Maha Yoga Sadhan when the Sadhak surrenders to the awakened Prana Shakti within him and allows the Kriyas (automatic and involuntary activities) to happen without developing new attachments to the Kriyas or fear of them.

The Kriyas that happen during Sadhan are a direct expression of the Samskaras that get brought up by the awakened Prana Shakti into the Sadhak’s Chitta, and by simply observing the Kriyas and letting them go, the Samskaras that underlie the Kriyas get eliminated from the Sadhak’s Chitta.

If a Sadhak has a preponderance of Tamasik (negativity inducing) Samskaras, the Kriyas that happen during Sadhan will express those Tamasik tendencies; i.e. the Sadhak may become angry, feel envious of others, get feelings of frustration, feel lethargic, etc. If the Sadhak has a preponderance of Rajasik (activity inducing) Samskaras he may find himself involuntarily going through vigorous physical activities, like Asanas, Mudras, rotational motion of the body, vigorous Pranayam, etc. during Sadhan. If the Sadhak has a preponderance of Sattvik (pure, good) Samskaras he may experience feeling peaceful, joyous, generous towards others, Bhakti (devotion) towards God or his Guru, etc.
So, the Kriyas that happen during Sadhan are entirely dependent on the Chitta of the individual Sadhak and the nature of the Samskaras accumulated in his Chitta over his current and past lives. And since we all come to our current lives with a unique set of Samskaras and continue accumulating new Samskaras every day during our current lives, the Kriyas each of us experience are bound to be different. Most new Maha Yoga Sadhaks typically have more Tamasik and Rajasik Samskaras and Vruttis accumulated in their Chitta as compared to Sattvik ones, especially in the early months/years following Deeksha. This is the reason the Kriyas they experience in the early months/years are mostly physical or are associated with negative emotions. Only with regular Sadhan, as the Tamasik and Rajasik Samskaras get expressed through Kriyas and thus get gradually eliminated, will the Sadhak begin to experience the calmness and joy that comes from the Sattvik Samskaras getting expressed during Sadhan. But eventually, even the Sattvik Samskaras get eliminated and that is when Atma Sakshatkar or Self Enlightenment happens, which is the ultimate goal of Maha Yoga.

With the above explanation of Maha Yoga Deeksha and Sadhan, the responses to your questions become quite evident. There is no need to receive Deeksha multiple times because once Deeksha has happened and the Prana Shakti has been awakened, it will stay awakened throughout your life and even in subsequent lives until all the accumulated Samskaras and Vruttis (tendencies) within you have been eliminated and Self Enlightenment has happened. You can of course sit for Sadhan on Deeksha Day(s) at the designated time, and that is a very good thing to do, but there is no need to “apply” for Deeksha ever again.

If Maha Yoga Deeksha has happened to you, your Kundalini (Prana Shakti) has been awakened and is awake, so there is no need to wake her up again and again. But it is very important to allow her to do her job of cleansing your Chitta, i.e. the elimination of accumulated Samskaras within your Chitta by regularly sitting for Sadhan on a daily basis. That is all you need to do.

And when you sit for Maha Yoga Sadhan, do so with an attitude of surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you. Do not have any specific expectations of Kriyas, and if Kriyas happen just observe them with detachment and please do not try to control them in any way. Do not try to stop Kriyas that might make you feel uncomfortable or enhance those that you feel good about. Having expectations of specific Kriyas or fearing them or getting attached to them will only result in the creation of new Samskaras; so instead of eliminating accumulated Samskaras you will only be adding to their accumulation. The doer (Karta) during Maha Yoga Sadhan is the awakened Prana Shakti; the Sadhak should only play the role of an observer (Sakshi). Often the Kriyas that happen are quite subtle and beginning Sadhaks might fail to notice them. If you are unable to observe these subtle Kriyas it would be best if you just observe the Kriya that happens to all of us as long as we are alive, the Kriya of normal and involuntary breathing.

With regular Sadhan you will begin to observe Kriyas both subtle and even the not-so-subtle ones. Again, please do not get attached to any of them. Think of the Kriyas as a process of
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

Kachra (garbage) removal; so once a specific Samskara has been removed from your Chitta, the Kriya that used to get expressed during Sadhan by that specific Samskara does not need to happen again. So there is no point in getting attached to any specific Kriyas because they only are outward expressions of the Chitta being cleansed.

The sensations and vibrations you used to feel during Sadhan were expressions of specific Samskaras getting eliminated from your Chitta. The fact that they are not occurring any more means that the Samskaras underlying those Kriyas have likely been eliminated from your Chitta.

Eventually as the Tamasik and Rajasik Samskaras get eliminated the Kriyas will become more and more subtle, peaceful and joyous. Here again do not get attached to even such Kriyas, because even they will need to get eliminated by the Prana Shakti within you. So, sit for Sadhan on a regular basis and surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within you so she can take you where you need to go.

Question: I live in Los Angeles, California and I am looking for a non-duality teacher to learn about enlightenment. I also understand it might be possible to reach enlightenment via a transmission of energy (Shaktipat) from a teacher. I don't know if this has to be done in person. If so, can you recommend a non-duality teacher from whom I can receive Shaktipat? Thank you.

Answer: Our Maha Yoga lineage is one whereby a Siddha (capable) Guru awakens a Sadhak’s (seeker’s) Kundalini Shakti (Universal Life Energy) through Shaktipat, or the transmission of spiritual power from the Siddha Guru to the Sadhak during Deeksha (initiation). Here’s a link to an article describing Shaktipat, written in 1940 by P. P. Gulavani Maharaj, one of the leading Siddha Guru’s from our lineage http://mahayoga.org/library/Transmission_of_Spiritual_Power.pdf. Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha is available to anyone who wants to receive it and applies for it with the sincerity and commitment needed to receive it. It is available to all, at no cost, regardless of their race, religion, caste, creed, gender, age, nationality, etc. You can apply for Shaktipat Deeksha on-line at http://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-initiation.aspx if you are so inclined.

You do not need to go to India to meet the Deeksha Guru in order to receive Deeksha; you can receive it in the privacy of your own home. At some point over the next few months/years, if you feel like meeting the Deeksha Guru, currently P. P. Prakash Prabhune Maharaj, you are welcome to go to Nashik, India to meet him. But it is not necessary to be in his physical presence to receive Deeksha. Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha is a Sankalpa (intent-driven) Deeksha, or a Deeksha based purely on the intent of the Deeksha Guru with the backing of the Parampara (lineage) behind him. That is why the intent can be instantly communicated to anyone, anywhere in the world and the Shakti (energy) gets transferred
Answers to Questions from Sadhaks (continued)

from the Guru to the Sadhak without the Sadhak having to be in the physical presence of the Guru.

The above link (http://mahayoga.org/mahayoga-initiation.aspx) has tabs that describe what Deeksha is, what happens during and after initiation, as well as the on-line application form. The Sadhak (aspirant) who wants to receive Deeksha needs to follow certain dietary and other rules and restrictions that are intended to ensure rapid and ongoing spiritual progress. The consumption of mind-altering items such as alcohol, drugs and tobacco and non-vegetarian foods (meat and eggs) and enhancers such as onions and garlic are considered to retard spiritual growth and should therefore be avoided following initiation. The aspirant should also be willing to devote one hour every day for spiritual practice/meditation (Sadhan).

Once Shaktipat happens, the awakened Kundalini/Prana Shakti within the Sadhak becomes his inner Guru. All a Sadhak need do in his daily Sadhan is to sit comfortably, allow the awakened Prana Shakti within him to be the “doer”, and simply observe what happens to him physically, mentally, or to the energy (Prana) flows within him. When he allows the awakened Prana Shakti within him to “do” what is needed during Maha Yoga Sadhan, a Sadhak will experience involuntary activities (Kriyas) at the physical, mental or Pranic levels, depending on the type of Samskaras (impressions) he has accumulated during his current and past lives. By simply observing the Kriyas that happen and “letting them go”, without developing any attachments to them or fear of them, the Sadhak’s Chitta (mind stuff) gradually gets cleansed as the awakened Prana Shakti within him eliminates the accumulated Samskaras from his Chitta.

Eventually, as the layers that define the Sadhak’s ego (sense of self as a separate entity), which separates his Atma (soul) from the Paramatma (Universal soul/consciousness) get eliminated, the Sadhak becomes experientially aware that he (his Atma) and the Paramatma are one and the same; i.e. he reaches Self Enlightenment. So, Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha is the beginning of the spiritual journey that will take a Sadhak to Self Enlightenment provided he allows the awakened Prana Shakti to do what is needed by sitting regularly for Sadhan once Shaktipat has happened. The beauty of the Maha Yoga path is that instead of spending years following other effort-based Yoga practices under the supervision of a Guru just to get the Prana Shakti awakened; Maha Yoga Shaktipat makes it happen instantaneously through the grace of the Siddha Guru. And following Shaktipat, the Sadhak does not have to do anything with his own effort; he only has to allow the awakened Prana Shakti within him, his Inner Guru, to “do” what is needed for his spiritual progress.

About your desire for following a “non-duality” (Advaita) path, Maha Yoga at its core is an Advaita path. Its entire premise is the oneness of us all with the Paramatma, and experiencing that oneness, not just at an intellectual level but actually experiencing it (Self Enlightenment), is its goal. However, depending on the Samskaras that have been accumulated over their current and past lives, some Sadhaks may experience a sense/feeling of Bhakti (devotion) towards what they might consider “God” or to their Guru or some other
revered entity, during parts of their spiritual journey. But eventually, the awakened Prana Shakti will take the Sadhak even beyond that attachment to where he experiences oneness with the Paramatma - the entire basis of Advaita.

If you are interested in the Maha Yoga path, but are not yet ready to make the commitment to receive Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha, you can try out the Introductory Approach as described at [http://www.mahayoga.org/mahayoga-introductory-practice.aspx](http://www.mahayoga.org/mahayoga-introductory-practice.aspx). While it is not a formal Shaktipat Deeksha, it has P. P. Kaka Maharaj’s Sankalpa (intent) behind it, so many Sadhaks who try it experience some of the Kriyas that happen as a part of the cleansing process during Maha Yoga Sadhan and some even experience the calmness that comes from Sadhan. And later, when you are ready to make the needed commitments you can apply for Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha and receive it in the convenience of your own home in Los Angeles.

**Question:** I live in Iran and I am interested in Maha Yoga. Would you please tell me the difference between “God” and “Shiva”? I read at a website that Shiva is “that which is not”. Understanding it was not difficult until I read “Shiva is not light, but is darkness” and that “light is temporary but darkness is eternal”!!! These sentences made me a little confused. I do Reiki and meditation and also I chant the Mantra “Om Namah Shivaya” four Malas a day. I had always thought that my efforts are light-oriented not towards darkness. Would you please guide me to become better aware of what I have been doing thus far? Many Thanks.

**Answer:** Let me provide you some context before I get to your specific concern. As Maha Yoga Sadhaks we do not believe in the Western concept of “God” as a superior being separate from us. We believe that the Universal Consciousness, the Paramatma, which is the underlying energy that powers the universe, is present in all of us as “residual” energy, also referred to as the Kundalini Shakti (energy). We see ourselves as separate entities/souls (Atma), separate from the ParamAtma that we all are a part of, because of the five Koshas (layers - please read the attached article for an explanation of the Koshas) that help create the universal deception (Bhram) we all have that we are separate Atmas distinct from the ParamAtma. The entire purpose of Yoga, and Maha Yoga in particular, is to dispel that deception by enabling the Sadhak, through regular Sadhan, to get rid of the Koshas that keep him from becoming experientially (not just intellectually) aware that he is in fact one and the same as the ParamAtma.

With this context, the ParamAtma, the underlying consciousness that powers the universe, has three aspects/roles: creation of matter and energy, maintaining the matter and energy that was created, and dissolving the matter and energy. This creation, maintenance and dissolution, is a continuous process that keeps the universe going. The creation aspect is called Brahma; the maintenance aspect Vishnu, and the dissolution aspect Shiva. Not only...
do these three principles of creation, maintenance and dissolution apply to the external universe, but they also apply to:

- the creation of each individual Atma caused by the creation of the five Koshas around a bit of the ParamAtma (the Brahma role that creates the Bhram/deception)
- the maintenance of an individual Atma as it go through innumerable births, deaths and rebirths (the Vishnu role), and
- the eventual dissolution of the five Koshas surrounding the Atma and its merging with the ParamAtma (the Shiva role).

That is why many Yoga practices pay homage to the role of the Shiva aspect of the ParamAtma which enables the dissolution of the separateness of the Sadhak’s Atma from the ParamAtma itself. This is the Yoga (Union) we all seek.

In this context, once the individual Atma has been created, it goes through recurring cycles of births, deaths and rebirths which, while they might continue for a long time over innumerable lifetimes, will ultimately end with the Atma experientially realizing its true nature (Self Enlightenment) and being one with the ParamAtma, thus freeing itself from the cycle of birth-death and rebirth. This is why the presence of the Atma, while lasting for a very, very long time, is still considered temporary, while once it has merged with the ParamAtma from where it emerged in the first place, it becomes one with the ParamAtma, which is eternal.

The term characterizing “light” for when the Atma sees itself as a separate entity, separate from the ParamAtma, is arbitrary and in fact might suggest that we all think that being under the deception (Bhram) of separateness is “light”, a good thing. But that is the deception, the Bhram, the Maya that gets created by the separateness of the Atma from the ParamAtma. The nature of the ParamAtma is neither “light” nor “darkness”; it just is. The Shiva aspect of the ParamAtma helps us dissolve our separateness, a temporary, but long-lasting occurrence in the scheme of things, and become permanently one with the eternal ParamAtma which we are all a part of. If you have seen images of Shiva as the dancing Nataraj (see page 11) he has under his foot a baby, metaphorically representing our ego, our separateness, which he crushes/dissolves as he dances the cosmic dance. That is why he is considered the Adhya Yogi or the Original Yogi! And that is why some Sadhaks chant “Om Namah Shivaya” praying to the Shiva aspect of ParamAtma to help them dissolve their separateness and becoming one with the ParamAtma.

I hope the above explanation is helpful to you in understanding the nature of the universe as Yogis see it, the purpose of Yoga and especially Maha Yoga in the context of getting each of us to experience Self Enlightenment.

Meanwhile, please do continue to sit for Sadhan (meditation) and when you do so, sit with an attitude of surrendering to your inner Prana Shakti and not do anything with intent,
including chanting a Mantra, etc. during that time. You are of course welcome to chant the Mantra at other times, when you are not sitting for Sadhan.

Editor’s note: Please send your questions regarding Maha Yoga and Shaktipat to: self.awakening@gmail.com.
Chaitanya Melava in Mumbai, India

Twenty three years ago P. P. Kaka Maharaj started a tradition of organizing and holding a Chaitanya Melava event in Mumbai, India every year on December 25th, Christmas Day, to celebrate the spiritual aspect of Christmas. The purpose of the Melava (gathering) has been to provide an opportunity once a year for Maha Yoga Sadhaks in and around Mumbai to get together for Communal Sadhan and Maha Yoga guidance. P. P. Kaka Maharaj used to be personally involved in its planning and leadership until 2006; since then P. P. Prabhune Maharaj and P. P. Shri Rakhe Guruji have been doing the planning for the event and providing leadership and guidance to Sadhaks who have attended the events.

In keeping with this tradition, the last Chaitanya Melava event was held in Mumbai on December 25th, 2016. P. P. Prabhune Maharaj and P. P. Shri Rakhe Guruji organized the event helped by young Sadhaks from the Mumbai area. The guest of honor for the event was Shri Tukaram Kate, a Member of the Legislative Assembly of the state of Maharashtra.

The Melava was attended by over a hundred Sadhaks from the area. The Melava gave them an opportunity to be in the presence of Maha Yoga leaders, seek guidance from them on issues related to their Maha Yoga practice as well as on issues related to their day-to-day lives, and participate in communal Sadhan. P. P. Prabhune Maharaj and P. P. Shri Rakhe Guruji were on hand to provide guidance and to lead the communal Sadhan. The 23rd Chaitanya Melava was characterized by the youthfulness of many of the attendees. If the interest the youngsters showed in spiritual matters, and in Yoga in particular, is representative of what is happening in Mumbai, it does seem to bode well for the spiritual development of the citizens of Mumbai and the surrounding areas.

By: Shri Hemant Petare
Maha Yoga Communal Sadhan Event in Thane, India

Consistent with P. P. Kaka Maharaj’s tradition of holding communal Sadhan events in and around Mumbai, India, to celebrate the spiritual aspect of Christmas, P. P. Dr. Deshpande Maharaj organized a Maha Yoga event that was held on Christmas Day last December. The event which was held at Shrirang Vidyalaya and Junior College in Thane (West), India on December 25th, 2016, was attended by close to 40 Sadhaks from Thane and suburban Mumbai.

The event began on an auspicious note with a communal Sadhan from 8:00 am to 9:30 am, followed by Mantra Japa (the chanting of Mantras) and later breakfast from 9:45 am to 10:30 am. The chief guest for the event, Shri Devakinandan Das Prabhu, the head of ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) - Juhu, arrived at 10:30 am and was welcomed to the event. This was followed by the recital of Bhajans by Sadhaks from ISKCON and a Pravachan (sermon) on “Sukh Shanti Prapti Marg” (The Path to Peace and Happiness) by the chief guest. In his Pravachan, Shri Devakinandan Das Prabhu quoted extensively from the Bhagvad Geeta to open one’s heart to discernment (Viveka), to the understanding of right and wrong and a commitment to doing what is right. Having such an attitude of a Karma Yogi will bring calmness of mind and an “ocean of joy” (Anandasagar) in one’s heart.

The Pravachan was followed by a talk on Maha Yoga given by P. P. Dr. Deshpande Maharaj who explained the principles of Maha Yoga to the Maha Yoga Sadhaks as well as to the guest Sadhaks from ISKCON. At the end of the talk he conducted a 9 minute Maha Yoga Sadhan to share our Maha Yoga approach to Sadhan with the guest Sadhaks who are steeped in the ISKCON way of Bhakti (devotion). It was a nice amalgamation of both approaches for reaching God. A few Maha Yoga Sadhaks shared their experiences and how their Sadhan has helped them, both spiritually as well as in dealing with their day-to-day lives. In concluding the event, P. P. Dr. Deshpande Maharaj expressed his gratitude to P. P. Narayan Kaka Maharaj and to the Maha Yoga Parampara (tradition).

By: Shri Sachin Gadkar
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 Days (Initiation Days) for 2017 have not yet been determined
Those desirous of receiving Maha Yoga Deeksha (initiation) should please monitor the website: www.mahayoga.org for specific dates and instructions. The online application form will be available at the website when the next date is announced.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The goals of our e-newsletter are:

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

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

self.awakening@gmail.com

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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

To Subscribe: Please visit the website http://www.mahayoga.org/, enter your email address in the box that appears on the left-side below the menu and click on 'Subscribe' button.

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

May all desire to follow this nectarous Siddhayoga Path!