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 is 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.

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 P. P. Shri Kaka Maharaj and other Maha Yoga leaders.

The success of this e-newsletter will depend upon Sadhak participation and through their contribution of content. Sadhaks are therefore encouraged to contribute news about Maha Yoga-related events in their parts of the world, thoughtful articles and life experiences (not experiences during Sadhan), and questions about Maha Yoga and their Sadhan (practice) they would like addressed. Comments and suggestions regarding this e-newsletter are also most welcome. Many readers have contributed questions on various aspects of Maha Yoga, and we would like to encourage such continued enthusiasm in that regards. However, we would also like our readers to contribute thoughtful articles, interesting life experiences related to Maha Yoga and news about Maha Yoga-related events. We look forward to receiving such content from those who want to contribute. Please send any content, comments, or questions you would like to submit to self.awakening@gmail.com.
Discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj

On December 16th, 2011, the editor of this e-newsletter had the good fortune to spend several hours with P. P. Kaka Maharaj at his home in Nashik, India and to engage him in a discussion on Maha Yoga. We were joined by P. P. Prabhune Maharaj and Shri Nikhil Prabhune, both from Nashik, India. Despite his advancing age, P. P. Kaka Maharaj continues to remain as enthusiastic as ever about communicating with Sadhaks and in spreading the message of Maha Yoga to everyone on this earth. Following are translated and edited excerpts from that discussion.

Editor: Thank you Dear Gurudev for this opportunity to talk to you about Maha Yoga on behalf of the readers of Self Awakening, our quarterly e-newsletter. We have now had similar discussions three times before in which you spoke about your own life experiences, your advice to Sadhaks on Maha Yoga, Shaktipat Deeksha and Sadhan, and how Sadhaks can better integrate Maha Yoga in their day-to-day lives. Those discussions were very well received by readers of the e-newsletter who found inspiration and guidance from you on many of the questions they have on those topics. This time I would like to talk to you about your aspiration to make Maha Yoga relevant not just to individuals but also to families, communities, nations and to the entire world.

Gurudev: I am glad that the discussions thus far have been helpful to Sadhaks. The topic you are suggesting, which is to make Maha Yoga relevant on a global scale is one which I have been interested in for a very long time. And it is particularly timely, given the Mahayoga Global Meet we have planned for May 1st to 3rd of 2012 to be held in Pune, India. Dr. Vijay Bhatkar, a Maha Yoga Sadhak who is also an eminent computer scientist and founder and Executive Director of the Center for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) in India, has kindly agreed to lead the Global Meet. (Editor: CDAC is the force behind the PARAM family of supercomputers in India). So we are indeed fortunate to have such an eminent person be in charge of leading this effort. I hope Sadhaks from all over the world will attend.

Editor: I hope so as well. But I was wondering what prompted you to convene such a Global Meet in the first place.

Gurudev: Well, ever since I began the study of Maha Yoga many, many years ago, I have been influenced by the writings of Dnyaneshwar Maharaj (13th century Yogi) who wanted to bring the science of Maha Yoga to everyone, including the common man. For a long time, however, Maha Yoga was introduced only to people who were considered to be “deserving”, i.e. righteous, knowledgeable about the scriptures, wise, etc. But, what about the common
man, doesn’t he deserve to be informed about Maha Yoga as well? What I found was that it
did not matter much whether I thought a person was “deserving”, whether he was
knowledgeable about the scriptures, what religion or caste he belonged to or anything else.
The key question to me was whether or not Maha Yoga practice worked for everyone
regardless of gender, age, caste, creed, religion, race, status in life, education, etc. And I
found that it worked just fine for everyone, regardless of any of the apparent differences
that we humans tend to focus on so much. So, I have been working on, for quite some time
now, to introduce Maha Yoga to the entire world.

Editor: I suppose that is what prompted you to go on a tour of the UK and the US in 2007.

Gurudev: Yes, but I began this effort in my own small way over 25 - 30 years ago. I think it
was in the early 1980s that I sent out a letter to the heads of state of 80 nations of the
world, briefly introducing them to Maha Yoga and urging them to take it to their citizens. It
was somewhat crazy in retrospect, since I did not get a response from anyone, but I felt it
was my duty to try regardless.

Editor: Well, it seems like you have been motivated to make Maha Yoga global for a very
long time.

Gurudev: Yes, what has motivated me is the fact that Maha Yoga is extremely simple, even
a little child can understand it and experience it and so can an elderly person. Anyone can
practice it because the basis of Maha Yoga is the Prana Shakti, the Universal Life Energy,
which pervades us all. The air we all breathe is a gross manifestation of this very same Prana
Shakti. Nobody can deny the fact that we all need air, and the air we breathe is the same
for each and every one of us, regardless of where we live. As Dnyaneshwar Maharaj said,
“He Vishvachi maze ghar”, or “This world is my home”, and we are all members of one
family. That is what I believe, and that is what Dr. Bhatkar has emphasized in his invitation
to all seekers around the world in the invitation announcing the first Mahayoga Global Meet.

Editor: I was wondering what your intent is behind making Maha Yoga global. Is it to make
the world a better place?

Gurudev: I don’t really have such grand aspirations. All I am concerned about is the fact
that since each and everyone on this earth is eligible to practice Maha Yoga; I simply want
them all to become aware that this treasure is available to all of them. I can inform
everyone what Maha Yoga is all about and the peace and happiness it can bring to all, and I
can request everyone to practice it. It is up to them to practice it or not, but all I can do is
to just inform them about it. So that is what I have been doing all these years, and now
there are thousands of people all over the world who have practiced it and have actually
experienced the sense of oneness, the calm and bliss it creates within the Sadhak (aspirant).

Whenever I get an opportunity to be with people interested in seeking peace of mind, I don’t
like to give them long talks on Maha Yoga. Instead, I just ask them to sit in a relaxed
posture, close their eyes and observe their breath. When they do that, Maha Yoga simply
“happens”. It does not get “done”. As soon as they close their eyes, the Prana Shakti within them automatically begins to rise and go towards the top of their heads. They actually begin to experience the Prana Shakti that pervades us all.

And the second thing is that since we all depend on the air around us, which is a gross manifestation of the Prana Shakti, we can think of it as if it were our common Mother. The air all over the world is the same; there are no national boundaries that separate the air in one country from another. We breathe in and out the very same molecules that others all over the world breathe. So it is with the Prana Shakti that pervades us all. She is the one Mother of us all. So, if all of us around the world have the same Mother, we are all brothers and sisters. That is why the invitation to the Mahayoga Global Meet emphasizes that we are all members of one family. And that is why I want everyone on this earth to realize that we are children of the same mother, the Chaitanya Shakti, or the Universal Life Energy which brings us all into existence.

So after closing their eyes, I tell Sadhaks to observe their breath and surrender to the Prana Shakti within them, which their breath represents. This is not surrendering to some stranger, but it is the same as surrendering to one’s own mother, the Mother Energy which keeps us all alive. And which person on this earth will not want to surrender to his/her mother and have her lead him? We know our mothers always have our interest at heart; therefore we trust them and are willing to do anything for them. Sometimes our earthly mothers may not be aware of what is best for us, but Mother Prana Shakti is in fact one better. She knows exactly what we need for spiritual progress. So I tell Sadhaks that after they close their eyes and begin to observe their breath, they should surrender everything to the Mother Prana Shakti, their bodies and their minds. I tell them to surrender their bodies by being as relaxed as possible; to surrender their breath by letting the Mother Prana Shakti control the inhalation and exhalation of breath; and all their thoughts, so the mind begins to calm down. When a Sadhak has such an attitude of surrender to the Prana Shakti, Sadhan “happens”! It is not “done” by the Sadhak.

People all over the world are entirely capable of experiencing this type of Sadhan. Therefore, I think if we can make people around the world become aware of Maha Yoga, I am convinced that the entire world will want to embrace it. Of course people will continue to have differences among themselves related to material issues and will likely continue to fight with each other. But I think such discord is similar to the fights that children have within families. Two children of the same Mother might fight with each other but the Mother will love them both. And because of the love they get from their Mother they will eventually realize that such fights are meaningless. Better to live in peace and harmony with each other.

Editor: That is correct; if everyone realizes that they are the children of the same Mother Energy, Prana Shakti, the world would be better off. But how can we get people from different nations, sometimes from nations that are at war with each other, to realize this important truth?
Gurudev: Well, we have to ask people whether or not it is possible for them to live without air; the air we all share, the air that is a gross form of the Universal Life Energy which keeps us all alive. Can anyone claim they can survive without air; can they even utter a single word without using the air which is common to us all? That’s it!

Editor: But we find that some people of different nationalities and religions are often not quite open to even listening to what we have to say about Maha Yoga and its implications for universal brotherhood. What can we do in such situations?

Gurudev: Maha Yoga is not at all about religion. It does not matter what religion one was brought up in or what one follows, everyone can practice Maha Yoga. And they can do so without changing their religious beliefs.

Of course, if someone does not even want to listen to what Maha Yoga is all about, then there is nothing we can do. We cannot force people to listen to us. All we can do is to try to make those who are interested in spiritual progress and are not closed-minded, become aware that this very easy and straightforward path exists and is available to all.

And if they are open to sit quietly for a short time, say ten minutes, and follow the simple instructions I outlined earlier, they will be able to actually experience Maha Yoga Sadhan. It does not matter what nationality they are or what religion they follow. They will all be able to experience it. They do not have to do anything other than to sit quietly, close their eyes, observe their breathing, surrender to the Mother Energy, and simply observe what happens. Once they become aware of Maha Yoga and have experienced it, it is entirely up to them to practice it or to ignore it. All we can do is to try to make them aware that such a miraculous path exists and that we are all capable of experiencing its benefits.

(Editor’s note: At this point, P. P. Prabhune Maharaj joined the conversation.)

Editor: Welcome to the conversation, Prabhune Maharaj. We have been talking about how important it is to make the world aware of Maha Yoga, but sometimes we encounter people with closed minds who are not even willing to listen to what we have to say. We have been discussing what can be done in such situations.

Gurudev: As I said earlier, if people don’t even want to listen to us, there is nothing we can do. We must try to bring this great gift to everyone, but if some people do not want to receive it we have to leave it at that. It will take time. As some people become open to actually trying Maha Yoga, the word about the actual experiences of Sadhaks might spread and gradually, even those who are currently unwilling to listen might become open to listening, and perhaps even trying it out.

Prabhune Maharaj: What he (the editor) says is right. A couple of days ago when I had gone to give a talk on Maha Yoga at the Engineering College here in Nashik, I met a professor there. He had come to the talk somewhat intrigued by my engineering background. After my talk he came to me and said that designing software and teaching his students software
design and the mathematics that underlies it, is his meditation and he doesn’t need to sit for any other type of meditation. He asked me what I thought of his situation. I told him that he should keep doing what he enjoys and if he thinks that sitting for Maha Yoga meditation is a waste of his time he should not bother with it.

There are many people in this world with closed minds, so there is nothing we can do about that. Maha Yoga meditation does not happen unless one has an open mind. We cannot force closed minds to open.

Gurudev: That is correct. All we can do is inform those who are willing to listen to us that such an easy and effective path to inner peace and joy is available to them at no cost. It is up to them to try it and actually experience it. This path is not an intellectual exercise; it has to be actually experienced. Without that internal experience, it is not possible to understand it on a purely intellectual level.

Editor: That brings me to a related issue; why is Maha Yoga Prasar (spreading the word about Maha Yoga) so important? If some people do not even want to listen to what it is about, and some of those who do, might not even want to try it, then why bother with Prasar?

Gurudev: Because we want as many people as possible to become aware of the oneness of us all. That is the basis of the Advaita philosophy, and we would like as many people as possible to actually experience it. Maha Yoga is an easy way to experience this oneness, but we also accept all other religions and schools of thought that teach the oneness of all of us on this earth.

Editor: That is clearly an excellent reason for Prasar, the goal of having everyone on this earth experience a sense of universal brotherhood/sisterhood. But even in our Maha Yoga tradition, (which can be traced in recent times to P. P. Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj in the mid-19th century), there have been some stalwarts who have not focused much on Prasar. They have had the attitude that there is no point in trying to get everyone to understand Maha Yoga and to experience it; whoever is fit for Maha Yoga will find out about it, and will meet the right Siddha Guru to get initiated into it. They did not want to develop large followership; they were content just to initiate those who sought them.

Prabhune Maharaj: That is correct. Some have had the attitude: “Hame dal nahi badhana hai” (“we do not want to increase the ranks” in Hindi).

Gurudev: Yes, that was true to a certain extent; P. P. Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj is known to have had only one disciple, P. P. Swami Narayan Tirth Dev, and there have been others in the past who were not engaged in Prasar.

Prabhune Maharaj: But even P. P. Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj told his only disciple, P. P. Swami Narayan Tirth Dev that he has been given the amazing gift of Maha Yoga and that he expects it to spread all over the world. So even though P. P. Swami Gangadhar Tirth
Discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj (continued)

Maharaj himself did not conduct Prasar, he made it happen through the efforts of his
disciple P. P. Swami Narayan Tirth Dev.

Gurudev: And further, my Guru, P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj was instructed by his
Guru, P. P. Swami Shankar Purushottam Tirth Maharaj to go from Kashi in north India to the
southern parts of India. Why was he so instructed? Only to spread the word about Maha
Yoga to those regions. Once he arrived there he met Shri Vaman Gulvani who became one of
his disciples and who we know as P. P. Gulvani Maharaj. As you know, P. P. Gulvani Maharaj
was instrumental in spreading the message of Maha Yoga all over the southwest part of India
and beyond.

Editor: I suppose Prasar has been the intent of all Siddha Gurus in our tradition, but some
seem to have emphasized it more than others. On a related matter, some Maha Yoga
stalwarts have given Shaktipat Deeksha (Maha Yoga initiation with the transfer of energy
from Guru to disciple) only to those Sadhaks they consider as deserving, while others have
given such Deeksha to most of those who have asked. Is there any concern that as we
attempt to bring Maha Yoga to every one on this earth, even “undeserving” Sadhaks might
get initiated?

Gurudev: Our answer is that everybody who is mature enough to think for himself is eligible
for receiving Shaktipat Deeksha. When a Sadhak asks for Deeksha and accepts the conditions
for receiving it, the Deeksha process gets started. What happens after that is in the hands of
God, i.e. the Chaitanya Shakti (Universal Life Energy). I just tell Sadhaks to sit for Deeksha
and whether Deeksha happens or not and what types of Kriyas (automatic physical and
mental activities) happen is entirely in the hands of God (Ishwari Shakti). Who am I to
decide whether one Sadhak deserves to receive Deeksha but another one doesn’t? It is
between the Sadhak and the Ishwari Shakti. We do not ask or urge Sadhaks to receive
Deeksha at all. We simply want to inform everyone what Maha Yoga is all about, and that it
is available to all regardless of the superficial differences of religion, class, creed, gender,
social status, caste, etc. that divide us. It is up to the individual to do with that information
whatever he wants. We have no interest in increasing followership at all. We are just the
messengers. It is the Ishwari Shakti which is the doer.

Prabhune Maharaj: Our principle for Prasar is very simple. We think we have found
something good, something that brings calmness and bliss to all practitioners. And it does
not require anything external for a Sadhak to practice it. It does not cost anything, nor does
one need to forsake one’s religion, career, family, etc. All we want to do is to share with
everyone that this gift is available to all for the asking.

Editor: And you have to do this sharing without your ego getting involved, without any desire
to build a followership. I think that aspect of Prasar is very important.

Prabhune Maharaj: That’s exactly correct. One should not get involved in Prasar to boost
followership or to boost one’s ego. That is completely counter to the teachings of Maha
Yoga.
Discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj (continued)

It is interesting though, that over the past few years, the Mother Energy seems to have become more active and seems to want to increase the ranks of those who have had their Prana Shakti become activated. Even a Maha Yoga stalwart such as P. P. Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj (who departed from this world a couple of years ago - Editor), who was quite selective in granting Deeksha throughout his tenure as a Shaktipat Guru, urged his disciples when he was bedridden to share the gift of Maha Yoga generously with Sadhaks.

**Gurudev:** It is as if someone has brought me several boxes of Pedhas (Indian sweets) and I want to share them with others. Is that a wrong thing to do? I don’t think so.

**Prabhune Maharaj:** One other thing I would like to emphasize; we never urge or suggest to people that they receive Deeksha (initiation). In fact whenever I give talks on Maha Yoga I never talk about Deeksha. I only explain what Maha Yoga is all about and ask people to sit and try out the Introductory Approach to Maha Yoga ([http://mahayoga.org/introductorypractice.htm](http://mahayoga.org/introductorypractice.htm)). After the talk is over and the attendees have actually experienced the calmness that comes from having sat for the Introductory Approach, sometimes people gather around me and ask about what there is beyond the Introductory Approach. Only then do I let them know about Deeksha. But even then I simply let them know that such a thing as Deeksha is available. I never suggest that they should sign up for it or urge them in any way to seek it.

**Gurudev:** In fact, some people even show signs of the Prana Shakti having become activated even when they sit for practicing the Introductory Approach! The Introductory Approach is not formal Deeksha, but when a Sadhak practices it, often the Mother Energy becomes automatically activated. This has nothing to do with me. It is entirely between the Sadhak and the Prana Shakti.

There are also cases where Deeksha happens automatically. For example, we had a gatekeeper here who asked for and received Deeksha one day. When he returned home that day he had with him a piece of paper which began with the traditional note of reverence and respect for the Guru “Shri, Shri Gurave Namaha”. When his wife saw the paper and simply read the salutation to the Guru she immediately began to have Kriyas (involuntary actions) and Deeksha happened. I did not have anything to do with it. It was between her and the Prana Shakti. The Prana Shakti within her had gotten activated automatically and the Deeksha just happened. Ishwari Shakti, or the Divine Power, is the only authority which decides who gets initiated and who doesn’t. Maha Yoga Deeksha is really an Ishwari Deeksha (Divine Deeksha); it is the Almighty’s Deeksha, not mine. P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj used to refer to it as Bhagwati Deeksha (Lord’s Deeksha); P. P. Gulvani Maharaj used to call it Devachi Deeksha (God’s Deeksha). I have no idea what causes Deeksha to happen, all I know is that it happens. It “happens”, it is not “done”. My hope is that at some point everyone on this earth will be able to experience it.

**Editor:** In an earlier discussion you had described your role as that of a postman, simply delivering the mail that was sent to the Sadhak.
Gurudev: That is correct, I see myself as a postman, or someone who is delivering newspapers. I hope the person for whom the newspaper was intended to be delivered reads it; but if some others also read it and get something out of it, so much the better! I have absolutely no idea who reads the newspaper once it is delivered. It is between the reader and the newspaper.

Prabhune Maharaj: If P. P. Kaka Maharaj wouldn’t mind, I would like to go back to the issue that was raised earlier about whether a Sadhak should be evaluated for being deserving or not before being granted Deeksha.

As Sant Tukaram Maharaj (17th century Indian saint) has said, “Loha Parisachi Na Sahe Upma, Sadguru Mahima Agadhachi”. This means: the analogy of a Paris (touch-stone) turning iron (Loha) into gold falls far short of what happens between a Guru and a Sadhak; compared to a touch-stone, the true Guru’s greatness is infinite.

It is one thing for the touchstone to turn iron into gold, but what if the material is copper instead of iron. A Sadguru (true Guru) not only turns iron into gold but he can also turn anything, even copper, into gold. There are Gurus who will wait for the copper to somehow turn into iron before they turn it into gold. But, P. P. Kaka Maharaj’s approach is, “Why wait? I will let Deeksha happen even to copper or anything else. Regular Sadhan (Maha Yoga meditation) will convert anyone into iron, and when that conversion happens, the Sadhak will right away turn into gold!” His issue is, “Who am I to decide who is deserving of Deeksha and who is not; if someone comes to me and earnestly requests Deeksha I will grant it to him, and with regular Sadhan, when the time is right he will achieve self-realization”.

Gurudev: That is why Tukaram Maharaj said “Yare, yare sare jan” (Come everyone). He did not say, “Only you come, not others”. He asked the world to come with him. The whole world is “Deva-swaroop” (Godly form), because the Prana Shakti is in everyone.

Editor: Going back to the issue of Prasar. As Prabhune Maharaj had said earlier, we do Prasar but it has to be done without the involvement of our egos. But it often becomes difficult for Sadhaks to keep their egos out of the picture. For example, if a Sadhak gives a short speech on Maha Yoga and has the audience sit for a few minutes to practice the Introductory Approach Sadhan, and a few people in the audience begin to experience automatic Kriyas. Even without realizing it explicitly, the Sadhak might get the sense that “Wow, it is because of me that these people are actually experiencing Maha Yoga”. Or a Sadhak gets questions from others about issues related to Maha Yoga and he gives answers to those questions that result in helping others spiritually and they thank the Sadhak for his advice. This might make the Sadhak feel, “Wow, I am actually helping others on their spiritual journey”. This sense of “Me” and “I” often arises in the minds of Sadhaks involved in Prasar. I can tell you that it happens from my personal experience as well. So, do you have any advice for those of us in the Sadhak community who are involved in Prasar on how we can minimize the involvement of our egos in this activity?
Discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj (continued)

Gurudev: What you say is correct, but there is no easy cure for it. There are two ways to think about what happens in such situations. The first is “I am the doer” and the second is “the awakened Shakti (Mother Energy) is the doer”. If a Sadhak believes that he is the doer, there is no doubt that Prasar will only result in boosting his ego. But, if the Sadhak keeps the perspective that the Shakti is the doer; that his own actions as well as the Kriyas (actions) that the audience experiences are all the work of the Shakti and not his own, then his ego will not grow. If he begins to realize that Prasar is itself a form of Sadhan; that it “happens” because of the Shakti, and does not get “done” by him, his spiritual growth will not be negatively affected, in fact it will get accelerated.

But you are correct, it is difficult for many Sadhaks to realize that Kriyas happen not only when they sit for Sadhan but also in what happens outside of Sadhan. The awakened Prana Shakti can make all your actions seem like Kriyas if you have the right attitude and let her be the doer. It is very difficult to let go of one’s ego, but we should always try to remember that it is the Almighty’s power that is getting things done; we are simply the tools being used. It is the Shakti doing these things; not you, not you, not you!

Prabhune Maharaj: One thing we also have to keep in mind is the fact that the Shakti is not ours; it has been handed down over the millennia within our Parampara (Maha Yoga tradition and lineage). It is not the Shakti of an individual, but it is the Shakti that arises from Shiva. She is the doer, not any individual, nor even any of the stalwarts and Siddha Gurus in our or in any other Maha Yoga tradition and lineage.

Editor: Thank you both for that illuminating discussion on Prasar in the context of Sadhan itself. It should be clear to all Sadhaks that one’s surrendering to the awakened Prana Shakti need not be limited to the time when one sits for Sadhan, but should extend even to our day-to-day lives, including Prasar. When we are able to develop a sense that the awakened Shakti is the doer, not just during Sadhan but at all times, do we begin to lose our egos and progress toward self-realization.

Now I would like to get your thoughts on a different topic; that of how Maha Yoga has evolved over time and how it might evolve further.

As we are all aware, Maha Yoga was kept hidden for many centuries when India was under less tolerant rule. It was practiced by the chosen few and passed down from Siddha Guru to his disciples, who were also very limited in numbers. When it resurfaced in the middle of the 19th century with P. P. Swami Gangadhar Tirth Maharaj, he asked his disciple P. P. Swami Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj to make it available to a broader set of Sadhaks. Over the years Maha Yoga has evolved to where it is no longer limited to renunciates (Sannyasis) but is also available to householders. And with P. P. Gulvani Maharaj’s use of Sankalpa Deeksha (Deeksha by thought) to grant Deeksha to thousands of Sadhaks who requested it by mail, Maha Yoga has indeed become available to much larger audiences. In addition, Gurudev’s (P. P. Kaka Maharaj’s) initiative to make Deeksha available through internet-based requests, and the innovation of making the Introductory Approach to Maha Yoga available to Sadhaks
Discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj (continued)

without requiring the commitments associated with Deeksha have further expanded the availability of Maha Yoga to one and all.

**Gurudev:** That is all correct in terms of how Maha Yoga has evolved, but all these changes have happened not because P. P. Swami Narayan Tirth Dev Maharaj or P. P. Gulvani Maharaj or I made them happen. They happened because the Almighty wanted them to happen and we all are just vehicles for enabling the evolution.

**Editor:** That is a great example of what we had been discussing earlier; keeping the perspective that we are not the doers, but the Almighty Shakti is the real doer.

But regardless, we can all agree that Maha Yoga has evolved over the ages. Now, in the next step of its evolution, as we work as instruments of the Almighty to make Maha Yoga become more global and universal, we are beginning to encounter issues that many Sadhaks bring up in the context of living in these modern times. Not just in western countries such as the US and the countries in Europe, but also in Indian cities and towns, Middle Eastern countries, everywhere. And most of these issues are related to the difficulties Sadhaks have in observing the restrictions we impose as conditions for receiving Deeksha.

**Gurudev:** Yes, I am aware of this. The restrictions by themselves have no inherent value per se. They can be relaxed. The most important thing is the experience of connecting with the Almighty through the practice of Maha Yoga. The restrictions are there only to make the traversing of the Maha Yoga path easier for Sadhaks. That’s all.

**Prabhune Maharaj:** In a way, by making available the Introductory Approach to Maha Yoga, we have already relaxed the restrictions. Practicing the Introductory Approach does not require a Sadhak to follow any restriction, and yet he is able to experience the blessing of Maha Yoga. In a way, the Introductory Approach can be considered as a “Deeksha in disguise”.

**Editor:** That is correct, but we constantly hear Sadhaks complaining that they would like to receive Deeksha but are unable to commit to following the restrictions. And often we get questions from Sadhaks, who have received Deeksha and would like to follow the restrictions, but their living situation does not allow them to be strict adherents, and they feel guilty about it.

**Prabhune Maharaj:** Yes, we have heard of many situations when Sadhaks have great difficulty following the restrictions. P. P. Kaka Maharaj’s advice to them is to try following the restrictions if possible, but if you can’t that is okay. No reason to feel guilty about it. Sadhaks can consider following the restrictions as “desirable” rather than “essential”.

**Gurudev:** Yes, if Sadhaks follow the restrictions, their progress will likely be accelerated. But if they cannot follow the restrictions then they need not dwell on it as there is no point in their feeling guilty. I agree that the restrictions can be considered as “desirable” rather than “essential”. Those who are able to follow the restrictions should follow them because
they will benefit from doing so. The restrictions are not “essential” to Maha Yoga happening; they are “desirable” for progress along this path.

Editor: That is indeed an important concept. I suppose it means that if more people are exposed to Maha Yoga, regardless of their ability to follow the restrictions, the better it is for their spiritual growth. So, why limit the number of people who can get access to this wonderful path by imposing strict restrictions which may be impossible for most people on this earth to follow in this day and age. Is there a chance that as a Sadhak goes down this path he might find it easier to follow the restrictions? Might such a change be possible?

Prabhune Maharaj: Yes, there have been instances when Sadhaks who couldn’t live without the use of onion and garlic prior to Deeksha, now cannot even stand the smells. So sitting for Sadhan regularly is the most important thing a Sadhak can do. Everything else will be taken care of by the awakened Prana Shakti.

Editor: That’s encouraging. I am sure many Sadhaks will benefit from this evolutionary step, and more will likely be willing to try Maha Yoga since they won’t have to make commitments they would find difficult or impossible to follow. Now, going back to the Maha Yoga Global Meet which has been scheduled for May 1st to 3rd, 2012 in Pune; you had mentioned earlier that your intent was to spread the word of Maha Yoga to a global audience so everyone on this earth can become aware of its benefits and that it is available to all at no cost at all. But I was wondering, why bring people from all over the world to Pune to attend this event? Why not simply spread the word globally by other means such as the internet, etc.?

Gurudev: Well, we are spreading the word globally through the internet and by other means. But it occurred to me that instead of having our lunch all by ourselves why not come together and have lunch together? Don’t you think there is some enjoyment in all of us in the Maha Yoga community coming together? I thought we would get more of a community feeling if we had Sadhaks from different countries gather together, listen to stalwarts talk about various aspects of Maha Yoga, exchange ideas, share experiences, and sit for Sadhan together as citizens of one world.

I see the world as one community; the world as one family: “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam”. “Vasudha” means the world and “Kutumba” means family. The world is really just one nation. The ocean may define one type of boundaries, but if one considers the fact that all of us on this planet share the same air and the air defines the boundary, then we all are citizens of one nation, members of one family, and children of one mother - the air which represents the Mother Energy or Prana Shakti. I hope the attendees will be able to experience this feeling when they participate in the Global Meet.

In addition, I hope participants from different parts of the world will be able to take their experiences and what they have learned at the Meet, to their respective countries and local communities and be able to spread the message of Maha Yoga to others. That way the number of people who have been informed about Maha Yoga will multiply several folds.
Discussion with P. P. Kaka Maharaj (continued)

Prabhune Maharaj: Also, Sadhaks will have an opportunity to sit for Sadhan in the presence of P. P. Kaka Maharaj

Gurudev: That is not so important. The main point is that even though we all have our differences we are all really one; and an approach like Maha Yoga exists which can enable us to actually experience that oneness. We have no interest in creating a following; all we want to do is to have everyone experience the common energy which is the underlying principle on which the world and the universe exist. This has nothing to do with religion. In fact we dissuade Sadhaks to change their religion. The practice of Maha Yoga will only enhance the Sadhak’s understanding of his own religion by enabling him to actually experience the Divinity he worships.

Editor: Thank you so much Dear Gurudev and Shri Prabhune Maharaj for your time and your patience in discussing these issues. I am sure readers of Self Awakening will greatly appreciate your guidance on Prasar and the importance of informing everyone on this earth about the Divine gift of Maha Yoga. It has been a personally rewarding experience for me to be in your presence and listen to your inspiring message.

Gurudev: I pray to my Gurudev for the uplift of everyone on earth, brothers and sisters of our common Mother!
Tolerance: The Means to Mental Peace

In this excerpt, Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj discusses how he learnt the importance of maintaining an attitude of tolerance, not just towards others, but also towards the pain and distress that we experience in life at various times. It is only by tolerating and accepting the negative aspects of life with patience does a Sadhak overcome the effects of Prarabdha (destiny). – Editor

I am very grateful to sciatica for destroying a number of my attachments. It crushed to bits my pride about a number of things. Some whose friendship I was extremely proud of did not come to my help. I saw those whom I thought were dear to me turn away. In 1960 I had very severe sciatica. Standing, sitting, walking -- everything became arduous. I couldn’t find a position in which to hold my leg in order to stop the pain. I would scream throughout the night. Many times Maharajshri would come during the night and try to pacify me. I almost stopped eating and drinking. Even going to the bathroom was a problem. There was a person who would lift me and take me to the bathroom, but he wasn’t always around. I wondered, “Who will sweep my room? Who will change my bed and give me a bath?” On Sundays a gentleman from Mahu would come. That day my room would be swept, the bed would be changed, my clothes would be laundered, I would get a bath, and so forth. When I went out people were probably thinking, “Who would serve such a sick person? He should go back to his house.” But once I had left my house, what was the point of returning? In the first place visitors would hardly enter my room. Those who did so would observe how painful it was and go away. The people whom I had treated lovingly, whom I had respected, for whom I had made tea -- not one of them even peeked inside to have a look. I was no longer of importance to the ashram. According to many, it seems, I had never been more than an attendant.
I have no grievances or complaints about anyone. In fact, I am grateful to everyone for helping me see the true nature of the world. I saw how nearsighted and forgetful the world is. I would lie in my room groaning and people, hearing it from outside, would go away. Many people from those days are no longer in this world. I have good relations with those who are. I have never complained to anyone. I just convinced my mind that this is the way the world is. What was my status in the ashram anyway? I was neither a sanyasi, nor a bramhachari. People thought I was a servant. Then with whom was I to be upset? What authority do I have over others? This is, in fact, an opportunity for the mental state of a sevak to be judged. He doesn’t serve in order that he be served in return. He serves because it is his duty, without any expectation or intention. The more anguish he suffers the more his mind rises. At last someone’s dutiful sight fell upon my pitiable state. He took me from Dewas to Indore, and there he looked after me. I underwent treatment and, on recovering slightly, returned to Dewas.

Sciatica clarified the insignificance of the world to me. It opened my eyes. Sciatica made me experience what is not understood even after reading the scriptures and listening to spiritual discourses. No one is for anyone in this world. All relations are based on selfishness. Do not trust anyone. All these things became clear to me. Now, for me the world was only a place for performing my duties, performing service, for the suppression of Rajo guna [disturbing qualities] — only a medium for removing impressions.

I actually would have preferred not to talk about this matter, but I couldn’t remain silent. I talked to Maharajshri. He understood my state of mind. He said, “This world is like the waves of an ocean. It keeps changing its form. One wave is tall while another is small. One wave goes over your head but you remain dry, whereas another drenches you. One wave returns after washing your feet, while another turns back at a distance. Similar to the waves of the ocean, changes continually take place in the mind and waves of lust, anger, greed, indifference, pride, selfishness, and so forth keep on rising. When these feelings arise in an intense form, the waves rise very high. The crest and the trough of the wave can be measured by comparing feelings. You see a wave rise in the distance just as another engulfs you. In this way you sometimes feel honored, sometimes insulted, sometimes happy and sometimes sad. Sometimes it impacts you more and sometimes less. The impact of these waves is related to one’s destiny. The indifference and neglect that you had to face must surely have been in your destiny. Therefore it is meaningless to blame others. In themselves they are nothing but statues of false pride in whose inner mind, too, waves are rising and urging. Every action related to you is carried out by your own destiny, through that person.”

I said, “Maharajshri, when someone behaves in an insulting manner for no reason, then one naturally gets angry.”

Maharajshri said, “There is a reason but it is not visible to you. The reason is your destiny. That person has simply become the medium of your destiny, bringing it to the surface and, by behaving in accordance with it, doing the groundwork for clearing your destiny. You should be grateful to him. If you bear it with patience then that portion of your destiny will
be cleared. If out of anger you end up behaving improperly, then it will develop into a more intense form. Accept this negligent behavior of people with a pleasant state of the chitta, considering it to be the result of your own actions.”

I asked, “Can sciatica also be related to my destiny?”

Maharajshri answered, “It might be and it might not be. It could be the destiny of this birth due to improper eating and drinking, or it could be due to accumulated impressions of past lives. Be it sciatica or any other disease, honor or disgrace, happiness or sorrow you must bear it with delight. In this way you will be protected from the instability of the chitta, and impressions will not be accumulated for the future.”

I said, “Maharajshri, it is very easy to say this but very difficult to achieve. Isn’t there another way to clear one’s destiny?”

At this Maharajshri got slightly irritated and said, “You talk like this in spite of being a sadhak. There is no other way than to endure it. It is indeed difficult, but not impossible. What great man has risen without enduring his destiny?”

Then I said, “Isn’t there any role of the awakened Shakti in all this?”

He replied, “There is. The awakened Shakti increases your rate of bearing fruits, but it is still you who must endure. As you do so, your tolerance will increase. Tolerance is a state of sattva guna [harmonious qualities] that destroys tama and raja. Tolerance is the road to destroying your destiny. Tolerance is the solution to mental peace.”

**Tolerance**

In this excerpt, Swami Vishnu Tirth Maharaj (Maharajshri) explains to Swami Shivom Tirth Maharaj that while the awakened Prana Shakti gets rid of accumulated impressions (Samskaras) through the Kriyas (actions) that happen during Sadhan, Prarabdha (destiny) can only be ended by living through it with equanimity and tolerance. If one has an intolerant attitude towards what life has to offer, it only results in the further accumulation of Samskaras. - Editor

On finding a suitable occasion, I made a request to Maharajshri. “Yesterday during the evening discourse, when you were talking about titiksha [tolerance] by quoting examples from Shri Shankaracharya’s book, *Vivek Chudamani*, the tendencies of my memory urged my mind in such a fashion that I became engrossed in previous experiences. As a result I could not listen and understand properly that part of your sermon that dealt specifically with titiksha [tolerance]. Bhagwan Shankaracharya said, ‘Sahanam sarva dukhanaam apratikar purvakam.’ Could you please oblige me by explaining the meaning of this?”
Maharajshri said, “Tolerance is the life of spiritual practice. Control of the sense organs and control of the mind are related to tolerance. Cleaning out accumulated impressions [samskaras] and the tendencies of past lives [vasanas] also have a very close relationship with tolerance. Physical tolerance is important, but mental tolerance is more important and much more difficult. One must bear psychological turmoil, anger, insult, failure, and so forth without reacting. Even great ascetics get frightened and move away from tolerance.

“Physical tolerance involves the control of sense organs but it cannot be totally separated from control of the mind. For physical tolerance a strong mental resolve is required, the absence of which can lead to the undermining of the will. When happiness and sorrow, enjoyment and consumption take control, the objects of the world attack the sense organs. When natural calamities cause sorrow, bearing them without getting upset, without surrendering to the attractions of sense objects and without reacting to them is physical tolerance.

“Mental tolerance requires an even more determined resolve. If the aspirant is ever honored, he must resist pride. If he is insulted then he must not let his mind go astray. He should not get attached to friends. He should not have aversion towards those who consider themselves his enemies, and if he runs into such people, he should give them respect and love. One has to endure a great deal for all this. The mind must be suppressed often. An enemy shows indifference and you still love him. Someone insults you and you endure it without offering a reply or clarification. This is not an easy task.

“A tolerant person undergoes suffering for the benefit of others and this purifies his own mind. A tolerant person fully understands that honor, insults, success, failure, joy, sorrows - all are the fruits of his own karma. The world can neither give success, nor failure. The world is only a support on which our destiny is displayed. An individual feels pride, but for everything he does he is merely the medium. Every incident that takes place through him is a kriya of the active Shakti, which a person, under the control of pride, transforms into karma. He believes that others are the cause of honor and insult. The only solution is to endure it, live it and thus end it.”

I asked a question. “If the active Shakti clears accumulated impressions through the medium of kriyas, then what is the need for tolerance?”

Maharajshri responded, “The active energy transforms accumulated impressions [samskaras] into kriya. Destiny [prarabdha] can be ended only by living it. If prarabdha is not borne with tolerance, then it continues to accumulate impressions. Then the prarabdha never comes to an end.

“Titiksha [tolerance] is such a unique word. It has very wide implications in the field of spiritual practice. It lifts one from individuality and establishes one in the Atma Tattva -- the ultimate reality. Externally it is the cause of purification of conduct and internally it is the provider of a sense of observation in kriya sadhan. But nurturing it is an extremely
difficult task. People are able to carry out difficult spiritual practices, but not tolerance. Sadhan cannot progress without tolerance.

“There are many kinds of tolerance, but it can be divided into two main levels: deliberate and natural. On the deliberate level the aspirant has to keep the mind disciplined. Repeatedly the mind refuses to tolerate. It gets restless, gets agitated, but the aspirant keeps the mind suppressed. In natural tolerance, forbearance becomes the aspirant’s nature. He endures adverse situations with simplicity. A third level is higher than these two that, in fact, it is not really tolerance. When you reach that level, tolerance is ended. At that time the natural qualities of the soul are manifest.

“Tolerance can be achieved in two ways: through one’s own power and through God’s power. Yogis and jnanis have confidence in their own power, whereas a devotee is under God’s shelter. Tolerance is achieved, on the one hand, through effort and, on the other, through surrender. The only difference between the two is the sentiment.”

I asked, “Why do tolerant devotees have to undergo so much suffering? People with a worldly perspective enjoy themselves, but the one who has embraced tolerance must suppress his rage.”

Maharajshri said, “He does not suppress his rage. It is the worldly person pursued by various types of fears who must suppress his fury. A devotee does not react, nor is he worried about anything. He always remains blissful. Others might think that he is sad, but his mind is always joyous. One should learn from devotees how to remain happy during times of sorrow.”

I said, “Maharajji, this is very difficult. The world inflicts sufferings upon sufferings, launches one attack after another. To bear everything with a calm mind, not let a sigh escape the lips, love everyone and keep the mind pleased — a common man cannot do this.”

Maharajshri said, “When did I say that this is an easy task? This is an extremely difficult task. To behave like this in the world is most difficult. Only a brave warrior can do this. He falls down a number of times, but stands up again. He balances himself and proceeds ahead.”

Presented here with kind permission from Swami Shivom Tirth Ashram, Inc. Thanks to Mrs. Alison Kamat for transcribing this and all previous excerpts from “Churning of the Heart”.

“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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Answers to questions from Sadhaks

**Question:** Since P. P. Kaka Maharaj grants Deeksha (initiation) even to Sadhaks he has not met in person, how does he know whether the person is a gentleman or a criminal and whether or not that person is likely to follow the rules and restrictions following Deeksha? Does he have some type of super power to be able to judge applicants for Deeksha?

**Answer:** There are two things to keep in mind regarding the eligibility/deservedness of a person asking P. P. Kaka Maharaj or another Maha Yoga Siddha Guru for Deeksha:

First, as Shri Bhagwant says in Chapter IX Stanza 30 of the Bhagwad Geeta:

\[
\text{Api chetsuduracharo bhajate mamananyabhak}
\]
\[
\text{Sadhureva sa mantavyaha samyagwyavasiti hi saha}
\]

This means: Whosoever surrenders to Bhagwan (or the awakened Prana Shakti/Mother Energy or Siddha Gurus like P. P. Kaka Maharaj who represent her) should be regarded as a saint at the moment of surrender, even though he might have committed the worst of sins in his past. True surrender has the effect of washing away all the negative effects of past Karma and automatically brings the person on the righteous path. His unbound faith and surrender to the Prana Shakti which resides within the Sadhak himself and is awakened by P. P. Gurudev at the time of Deeksha, lifts him up and brings him close to the Almighty and to P. P. Gurudev who, as he says quite often, is simply the postman carrying the Almighty’s message.

Of course, the Sadhak’s faith and the extent of his surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti is the Sadhak’s responsibility. He cannot hold the Almighty, or P. P. Gurudev, who is only representing Him, as being responsible. P. P. Kaka Maharaj is not responsible for whether or not a Sadhak observes the rules and restrictions after Deeksha, the Sadhak is. If an individual does not follow the rules, his progress along the path will be impeded, since the rules and restrictions are only meant to reduce the obstructions that come in the way of progress on this path. That will be the Sadhak’s loss; the Almighty will not be affected by it nor will His postman, P. P. Gurudev. The Grace of GuruKrupa (Shaktipat Deeksha) is not a half-hearted benediction, it represents the Grace of the Almighty and it does not discriminate across Sadhaks who come with an attitude of faith and surrender.

Most of us come to our current lives with the deep effects of Samskaras and Vasanas experienced over multiple past lifetimes with vastly different levels of preparedness and surrender. P. P. Kaka Maharaj considers all those who ask him for Deeksha as coming to him with faith and an attitude of surrender to the Prana Shakti within themselves. He prefers to see them all as saints, and therefore eligible for Deeksha as dictated by Shri Bhagwant in the Stanza above. It is up to the Sadhak what he does with the Grace bestowed upon him during and after Deeksha. As a corollary, P. P. Gulvani Maharaj used to say that as a Siddha Guru he was only bestowing Grace (Shaktipat Deeksha) on Papis
Answers to questions from Sadhaks (continued)

(sinful people), because the Satvaguni (saintly) people already had the Almighty’s Grace and didn’t need it bestowed upon them by anyone!

Second, about whether or not P. P. Kaka Maharaj knows beforehand about the worldly nature of the person being initiated, you can be confident that he has that ability. However, to do so he needs to have a desire to bring his consciousness down to the level that enables him to perceive such worldly things. Dhyanis (realized souls) are usually in a state of Brahma and do not come into the worldly state unless it is extremely necessary. In the normal course of events, P. P. Kaka Maharaj follows Shri Bhagwant’s advice and treats all who ask him for Deeksha with professed faith and surrender, as deserving it. Since P. P. Kaka Maharaj does not consider a Sadhak’s qualifications, other than his willingness to surrender himself to the Almighty, as being important, he sees developing such an understanding of a Sadhak as a prerequisite to Deeksha as a trifling matter and gives it no importance. To him the Grace of the Almighty/Prana Shakti is of utmost importance, and as the postman/delivery-man, that is exactly what he provides the Sadhak.

**Question:** I have tried a couple of times to get Shaktipat initiation from P. P. Kaka Maharaj, but I have failed miserably to stick to the stipulated time and get initiated due to my family circumstances. I do not have much experience of sadhana other than the little bit of meditation I do while practicing Inner Engineering as prescribed by the Coimbatore, India - based Isha Foundation. My wife’s poor health, my full-time work and the irresponsible behavior of one of my children has shattered my mental peace as well as whatever peace I used to feel within. An astrologer I know, who is also a well-wisher has told me that I will be able to get peace only after my death. I very much want to do sadhana, but I am not sure if I will be able to achieve peace in this life. Please advise me on whether or not I should apply for Deeksha.

**Answer:** The Maha Yoga path is independent of your earlier practices and prior Samskaras, whether sinful or otherwise. What is important is your total surrender to the Almighty, to the awakened Prana Shakti within you and to the Siddha Guru who awakens the Prana Shakti. A casual approach, as indicated by not sticking to the stipulated time of Deeksha will not be conducive to receiving Deeksha. Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha has the potential to grace a Sadhak with inner peace and an everlasting solution to all of life’s problems and should therefore be accepted with great reverence. Sadhaks who surrender their egos to the awakened Prana Shakti experience in full the presence of Divinity, while those who take a casual approach have no such experiences. A glass full of dirty water (ego) has no room to receive clean water (Guru’s Grace) unless it is partly or fully emptied. Surrendering one’s ego to the Almighty and to P. P. Gurudev who represents His Grace makes it possible to receive that Grace.

Inner peace is certainly possible in their current lifetimes for all humans who are serious about following the Maha Yoga path, regardless of their status in life and worldly circumstances. The notion that one can get peace only after one’s death is completely
erroneous. Vedic scriptures specifically confirm that Self Realization/Enlightenment is possible only in Manav Yoni (human form) and given your birth in this life as a human being you should not waste it but make the most of it in achieving Moksha/Enlightenment. One can never say in what form one may return in one’s next life. Human existence is the only type of existence on this earth which enables a soul to become self-aware and hence experience the Self Awakening that leads to Moksha/Enlightenment. Most human beings go through their lives completely unaware of the spiritual opportunity their human existence provides them. So as someone who is aware of the importance of spiritual growth and is interested in achieving inner peace and Enlightenment, please use the opportunity your current incarnation as a human being provides you for pursuing the inner peace you cherish. There is no separate heaven or hell waiting for us after this life. This human form is a gift to us for achieving Self Realization in this life itself. Surrender to the Almighty/awakened Prana Shakti and free yourself from the Samskaras and Vasanas from this life and prior lives and you will be well on your way to Moksha.

Your ability to sit for Maha Yoga Sadhan, either following the Introductory Approach to Maha Yoga (http://mahayoga.org/introductorypractice.htm) or after Shaktipat Deeksha, should be unaffected by your worldly circumstances. In fact, sitting for Sadhan on a regular basis, will help you remain calm and experience inner peace, regardless of your family and worldly situation. It will help you better deal with the ups and downs of worldly life. It is also important to keep in mind that we should not run away from the situations we face in our day-to-day lives in order to pursue the path of Maha Yoga. As Lord Krishna conveyed to Arjuna in the Bhagwad Geeta, one should face life’s problems with courage and inner calm. At a gross level one can deal with such problems with careful planning and creative but cautious solutions, and at a finer (Sukshma) level through Upasana (spiritual practices) such as Japa, pilgrimages and being in the company of saintly people. But ultimately it is one’s Prarabdha (destiny) that one has to deal with, and with diligent Sadhan you will be able to develop a perspective where you will begin to see all of life’s happenings as steps towards achieving spiritual progress rather than as obstacles. With regular Sadhan, the effects of the Samskaras you have inherited from previous births and those which arise from the attachments and aversions you have developed in this life will gradually get reduced, and as they get eliminated you will begin to experience true inner peace.

Incidentally, unlike many other Yoga paths, Sadhaks following the Maha Yoga Path do not “do sadhana”. They just sit for Sadhan, surrender to the awakened Prana Shakti within, and simply observe as Sadhan “happens”. The awakened Prana Shakti is the “doer” of the Sadhan; the Sadhak’s role is simply to observe what she does.

So please go ahead and follow the Introductory Approach to Maha Yoga or, if you are so inclined, apply for Deeksha at www.mahayoga.org.
**Questions:**

I am very interested in doing Maha Yoga sadhana, but because of a few concerns I don’t think I am quite ready to apply for Deeksha yet.

First, I would like to know if after receiving Maha Yoga Deeksha whether or not I will be able to practice the sadhana of another Guru. I have great faith in Akkalkot Swami Samarth so I feel somewhat hesitant to do the sadhana as prescribed by another Guru such as P. P. Kaka Maharaj. I feel like I might be showing some doubt in my faith in my prior Guru.

Secondly, I understand that the Maha Yoga path requires a Sadhak to not consume onion and garlic and food outside one’s home. But since I am an attorney, I need to be eating out quite often, so it will be impossible for me avoid onion and garlic and to follow all the restrictions. Will my inability to follow these restrictions hurt my progress on the Maha Yoga path?

Thirdly, what types of experiences will I likely get after Shaktipat Deeksha?

**Answer:**

It is good to know that you are interested in Maha Yoga. Here are the responses to your three questions:

- Some people consider receiving Deeksha from a second Guru after one has already received Deeksha from a previous Guru as a change of faith in one’s spiritual path and as deserting the previous Guru. This is the reason why P. P. Kaka Maharaj asks Sadhaks who have a prior Deeksha Guru who is still alive, to get permission from him/her prior to receiving Shaktipat Deeksha. However, this does not necessarily apply in your case because it does not seem from your e-mail that you have received Deeksha from anyone in P. P. Akkalkot Swami Maharaj’s tradition. And, more importantly, your reverence for P. P. Akkalkot Swami Maharaj who is considered to be an Avatar of Lord Dattatreya is entirely consistent with P. P. Kaka Maharaj’s tradition whose adherents are often followers of Lord Dattatreya and practitioners of Maha Yoga.

It is said that Lord Dattatreya himself had 24 Gurus. As long as the teachings of a Guru do not contradict the teachings of prior Gurus there is no need to feel like you are deserting the prior Gurus. P. P. Shri Gulvani Maharaj, who is responsible for the spread of Shaktipat Sadhan in Maharashtra and all over India, had received Deeksha from P. P. Shri Vasudevanand Saraswati Maharaj (also known as Tembe Swami Maharaj) prior to receiving Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha from P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj. (Incidentally, P. P. Kaka Maharaj also received Shaktipat Deeksha from P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj). P. P. Shri Gulvani Maharaj continued conducting the basic Sadhana prescribed to him by P. P. Shri Vasudevanand Saraswati Maharaj, fully adhering to his teachings and principles, while at the same time practicing Maha Yoga and propagating it through Shaktipat Deeksha to those Sadhaks.
who asked him for it. Of course, Shaktipat Sadhan was fully consistent with P. P. Shri Gulvani Maharaj’s prior Sadhana and practices and it helped him by accelerating his spiritual development, which greatly benefitted the world as he was able to propagate “Shakti” Sadhan to householders and the common people.

Another thing to keep in mind as you wrestle with this issue is the fact that Shaktipat Sadhan is simply the worship of, or surrender to, Prana Shakti (Universal Life Energy, also referred to as Mother Energy). It does not involve the worship of or surrender to any specific Deity, nor does it require a Sadhak to actively/intentionally do anything during Sadhan other than to sit calmly and to let the Prana Shakti do what is needed. And since Prana Shakti is the basis of everything that is present in the universe, its Sadhan will only augment and accelerate whatever sadhana or practices your prior Guru might have prescribed. This is the reason Maha Yoga and Shaktipat Sadhan is open to all regardless of their religion or creed, and Sadhaks can continue to follow whatever religious practices and traditions they want to as long as they do not prevent the Sadhak from surrendering to the Prana Shakti within himself during Maha Yoga Sadhan.

- The restrictions for those seeking Maha Yoga Shaktipat Deeksha only apply to the consumption of non-vegetarian food, onion, garlic, alcohol and tobacco. There are no restrictions related to eating food prepared outside one’s home as long as the above restrictions are observed to the extent possible. You can check the ingredients of purchased food prior to buying it and where such information is available to avoid violating the restrictions. You may also choose to eat “Jain food” which avoids non-vegetarian ingredients as well as onion and garlic. Jain “thalis” (platters) are available all over India as well as in many other nations. We recommend that Sadhaks follow the rules and restrictions in order to minimize the obstacles that come in the way of spiritual progress. They are there only to help Sadhaks make steady and rapid progress.

- There is a lot of material on Sadhak experiences during Maha Yoga Sadhan at www.mahayoga.org. Please go through the section on Siddhayoga Initiation under the Mahayoga tab to get an account of the classical experiences of Kundalini Awakening after Deeksha (http://mahayoga.org/ch3.htm). Please also read the section on Sadhan under the Frequently Asked Questions tab (http://mahayoga.org/mahayoga_q_and_a.htm). Keep in mind, though, that each Sadhak’s experiences are unique given his specific situation and prior Samskaras. You should not have any preconceived ideas when you sit for Sadhan about what kind of experiences you should have or not have. Just allow the Prana Shakti be the Karta (doer) during Sadhan and simply observe what happens without any judgment or attachment to any experiences or Kriyas. The whole idea is to experience inner peace during Sadhan.

Hope these responses are helpful to you as you decide on whether or not to follow the Maha Yoga path. Incidentally, in case you do not want to receive Shaktipat Deeksha, or
Answers to questions from Sadhaks (continued)

want to get a taste of Maha Yoga prior to Deeksha, you can follow the Introductory Approach to Maha Yoga as described here:  
http://mahayoga.org/introductorypractice.htm. Sitting for Sadhan under the Introductory Approach does not require you to receive Deeksha nor do you need to agree to follow the rules and restrictions. So do give it a try and see what happens.

Editor’s note: Please send your questions regarding Maha Yoga and Shaktipat to: self.awakening@gmail.com.
Visit to Dhakeshwari Devi Mata Temple  
Birthplace of P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj

In late November 2011, with blessings from P. P. Kaka Maharaj, fifteen Maha Yoga Sadhaks from India had the great fortune to visit the Dhakeshwari Devi Mata Temple located in Dhaka in what is now Bangladesh. This is the birthplace of P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj, who initiated both P. P. Gulawani Maharaj and P. P. Kaka Maharaj into Maha Yoga. P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj was born at this temple on May 8th, 1892, and was named Yogeshchandra at birth. His father, Shri Chakravorty Babu was the head priest of this ancient and grand temple dedicated to Shri Dhakeshwari Devi Mata, one of the forms of Shakti, the Universal Life Energy.

The tour was led by P. P. Moreshwar Joshi - Charolikar Maharaj from Pune, India and included Sadhaks from Pune as well as from Nashik, India. The tour began on the morning of November 23rd when we were welcomed with garlands and roses at Dhaka airport by Shri Sudip Chakravorty, a priest at the Dhakeshwari Temple, and two representatives of the Government of Bangladesh. We were taken from the airport directly to the Dhakeshwari Temple. Everyone on the tour was very excited by the thought of being at the birthplace of their Param Guru (Guru’s Guru), and after freshening ourselves quickly after arriving at the temple, we began the Maha Puja (formal worship). P. P. Moreshwar Joshi Maharaj conducted the Puja inside the Gabhara (main part) of the temple assisted by the current head priest of the temple, Shri Pradip Chakravorty. This Puja of Dhakeshwari Devi (Shakti) was performed on behalf of the visitors, P. P. Kaka Maharaj and the global community of Maha Yoga Sadhaks.

Following the Puja, the temple committee invited us for Maha Prasad (ritual lunch) which we thoroughly enjoyed, our hearts overjoyed with the love and devotion we felt at being in such a transcendently spiritual place. Shri Pradip Chakravorty, the head priest of the temple belongs to the 7th generation in the Chakravorty family following P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj. He was very welcoming and took excellent care of us during our time at the temple. Following a short rest at our hotel (Purbani International) we were back at the temple by 6 pm for the evening Puja, Aarti and Kirtan (the singing of devotional songs). The Aarti of P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj was also performed for the occasion, and Shri Pradip Chakravorty was presented with a copy of the biography of P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami.
Visit to Dhakeshwari Devi Mata Temple (continued)

Maharaj. Dakshinas (donations) were made to the temple staff and to the head priest who offered his blessings to all of us, P. P. Kaka Maharaj and to Maha Yoga Sadhaks all over the world. A Bangladeshi style pure vegetarian dinner was also organized for us that night.

The next morning began with Sadhan at 6 am at the temple and the reading of Avatarnika, a short biography of P. P. Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj. This was followed by a pre-planned telephone conversation with P. P. Kaka Maharaj who was then in India. He gave his blessings to the group and it was a thrilling moment for us to hear his voice on the speaker-phone at the birth-place of his Guru. Following this we were given a tour of the temple.

The temple, officially known as the Dhakeshwari National Temple is the most famous Hindu temple in Dhaka, Bangladesh. It is state-owned now, giving it the distinction of Bangladesh's "National Temple". The name "Dhakeshwari" means "Goddess of Dhaka". The temple is located southwest of the Dhaka University. The Dhakeshwari Temple is considered to be the most important Hindu place of worship in Bangladesh.

The Dhakeshwari temple was built in the 12th century by Ballal Sen of the Sena dynasty. Some historians believe that the city Dhaka was named after this temple. This temple is also considered to be one of the Shakti Peethas, where the Shakti is considered to be very active. The original 800-year old statue was destroyed during the War of 1971. Inside the main temple premises, there are four identical structures devoted to Lord Shiva. To the east of these is the main temple, which hosts the statue of the Goddess Dhakeshwari.

Each year, the largest celebration of Durga Puja (an important Hindu festival in honor of Durga, another name for Shakti) in Dhaka is held at the Dhakeshwari National Temple and a stream of dignitaries (such as the Bangladeshi President, Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition, Members of Parliament and media celebrities) come to felicitate the Bangladeshi Hindu community from the temple premises. Several thousand worshippers and onlookers (including Muslims) stream through the premises where they are offered Prasad (food - usually rice and lentils). The temple hosts major blood drives and inoculation programs which are open to all residents of Dhaka city.
Visit to Dhakeshwari Devi Mata Temple (continued)

The courtyard of the temple is quite big, capable of accommodating up to five thousand people. At the left hand side of entrance is a Shiva Temple with a Shivaling representing Shiva. At the back of this temple there is a fresh water lake from where water is drawn for daily Puja. There are four other Shiva temples on site with decorative entrances and ceilings. The courtyard is fully tiled, neat and clean. The landscaping and the greenery are very attractive.

The entrance to the main temple is highly decorative, with marble steps and carpets. The hall in front of main temple has granite flooring and can accommodate about 2,500 devotees. The idol of the main deity, Durgamata - Dhakeswari Devi is very attractive and is made of metallic plate. She has Mata Mahalaxmi and Shri Ganeshji on her right and Mata Saraswati and Shri Kartikeyan on her left. At the feet of Durgamata is Mahishasura the demon (representing the ego), who she has destroyed.

Following the tour, we departed at about 10:30 am with heavy hearts, but with the full satisfaction of having completed an important event in our lives. As we said our goodbyes, Shri Sudip Chakravorty asked us to convey his invitation to Maha Yoga Sadhaks from all over word to visit the temple. He said the temple staff would help Sadhaks arrange for their lodging and boarding during their stay in Dhaka.

This Bangladesh tour report cannot be completed without thanking all those who helped us to make this tour such a success. We would especially like to thank Shri Nitin Deshpande and Shri Zahir Shamsery who were representing the Government of Bangladesh, and Shri Pradip and Shri Sudip Chakravorty, the temple priests.

Reported by Shri Satish B. Patil
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

You are heartily invited to join us at the first ever 'Mahayoga Global Meet 2012' (MGM 2012) being held in Pune, Maharashtra, India from 1st May to 3rd May 2012.

Mahayoga, which is considered to be at the pinnacle of all the yoga sciences, is a unique gift from India to the whole world. It was developed centuries ago and has been carried forward by generations of the learned sages. Respected Spiritual Master Shri Gangadhar Tirth Swami Maharaj is credited with reviving Mahayoga in the 19th Century. It was further propagated by his disciple Shri Narayandev Tirth Swami Maharaj, followed by the spiritual master such as Shri Vishnu Tirth Swami Maharaj, Shri Shivom Tirth Swami Maharaj, Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj, Shri Wamanrao Gulawani Maharaj and Shri Datta Maharaj Kavishwar. The broader domain of Mahayoga, also known as Siddhayoga, is the focus of the global meet.

Mahayoga encompasses a very simple meditation technique that is spreading fast all over the world, being followed by thousands of persons. There is no restriction on the followers as far as the religion, race, nationality etc. is concerned, because the Life Force (Chaitanya) is common to all. This element, the life force, is the basis that can bring the whole world together and create the WORLD AS ONE FAMILY. The followers of Mahayoga are seekers of self realization, walking the path of meditation and are guided by their Spiritual Masters. For more information
on Mahayoga, you may visit http://www.mahayoga.org.

MGM2012 will have various sessions wherein it is planned to bring a 360 degree view, from scientific to spiritual, of the whole Mahayoga spectrum and other encompassing aspects. These are the sessions that will primary be hosted by stalwarts in Mahayoga, Meditation and other allied domains. One of the leading Spiritual Masters in India, PP Shri Narayankaka Dhekane Maharaj, belonging to the lineage of Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj, will personally guide the participants on the key aspects of Mahayoga. There will also be interactive sessions as well as actual meditation sessions too. You will be able to see for yourself, how simple and easy the Mahayoga meditation is. Some of the benefits of Mahayoga include relief from stresses & strains, diminishing of the mental clutter and achieving peace of mind ultimately leading you to Shaktipata Initiation.

I, therefore, request you to please join us at the global meet in sharing the grand vision of WORLD AS ONE FAMILY. Also, join us in celebrating 121st birth anniversary of PP Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj. Participating in MGM2012 is free of cost. For more details, please visit the website http://www.mahayogaglobalmeet.info. You can also register on the website and reserve your seat.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Vijay P. Bhatkar,
President, Mahayoga Global Meet 2012
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 Vasudevanand Saraswati Swami Maharaj &
P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Trust
Vasudev Niwas
41/17 Erandvane,
Pune, India 411004

Phone No. +91-20-25455584

Sadhaks outside of India can send an e-mail indicating their interest, including their postal address, to self.awakening@gmail.com. The price will be determined by the number of orders received from each country and estimated shipping cost, and Sadhaks will be notified accordingly. The price is unlikely to exceed US$20.
Upcoming Events:

**Mahayoga Global Meet 2012, May 1st - 3rd, Pune India**
Maha Yoga Sadhaks and those interested in Maha Yoga from all over the world will be meeting in Pune, India from May 1st to the 3rd to learn more about Maha Yoga, build a global Maha Yoga community, and sit for Sadhan in the presence of P. P. Kaka Maharaj and other Maha Yoga stalwarts. Please see pages 28 and 29 above for the official invitation to the MGM 2012. Please visit the website [http://www.mahayogaglobalmeet.info](http://www.mahayogaglobalmeet.info) for details and registration.

**Lecture Series at the Maha Yoga Ashram in Thane, Maharashtra, India**
The Thane Ashram hosts lectures/talks on Maha Yoga and Yoga on the first Sunday of every month. The next lecture to be held on **February 5th, 2012 at 10:00 am** will have Dr. K. D. Samudra, Professor at Mumbai University talk about Prapanch and Paramartha (Family life and Spirituality). The lecture will be in the Marathi language. The Thane Ashram is located at:

A/9 Sector # 7, Behind Omega Apartments
Vasant Bungalow, Shree Nagar, Wagle Estate, Thane 400604

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.

The Thane Ashram will also conduct the **P. P. Shri Loknath Tirth Swami Maharaj Punyatithi** on February 10th, 2012. Please call at the above number for more information.

**Website Updates:**

The Mahayoga Global Meet 2012 (MGM 2012) website is up and running at [http://www.mahayogaglobalmeet.info](http://www.mahayogaglobalmeet.info). Please visit the site for information and registration.


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

May all desire to follow this nectarous Mahayoga Path!