

**Lahiri Mahasaya Birthday**  
**Commemorative Service Reading**  
**Volume I**

## Commemorative Service Readings

Please use the reading from the volume appropriate for the year in which you are reading. The volume number of the commemorative service readings must match the volume number of the Sunday service readings.

There are two colors of font — black and blue. Black indicates a section created by the reader as an introduction, transition, or summary. These may be altered to suit your reading style. Blue indicates material taken from an SRF sources, such as *Autobiography of a Yogi*, *Mejda*, *Self-Realization Magazine*, etc. These are not to be changed. If you find an error, please notify the chairperson of the readers' committee for correction.

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# **Lahiri Mahasaya Birthday**

## **Reading**

### **Volume I**

Lahiri Mahasaya may rightly be called a Yogavatar – an incarnation yoga. He was born on this day in 1828 in the village of Ghurni in the Nadia district near Krishnanagar, Bengal.... His father conducted his household along the lines of Vedic discipline, with regular observance of ceremonial worship, acts of charity, and scriptural study....

As a boy Lahiri Mahasaya showed an early predilection for the spiritual life. At the age of three or four he was often observed sitting under the sands in a certain yoga posture, his body completely hidden except for the head.... He was a kind, gentle, and courageous youth, beloved by all his companions. With a well-proportioned, healthy, and powerful body, he excelled in swimming and in many feats of manual skill. .

....In 1846 he was married Srimati Kashi Moni.... Two saintly sons, Tincouri and Ducouri, and two daughters blessed the union. At the age of twenty-three, in 1851, Lahiri Mahasaya took the post of accountant in the Military Engineering Department of the British government. He received many promotions during the time of his service. Thus not only was he a master before God's eyes but also a success in the little human drama in which he played a humble role as an office worker in the world.

(*Autobiography of a Yogi* P. 292 ff.)

It was in 1861, in the avatar's thirty-third year, that Babaji revealed to him, and thus on the world, the sacred science of Kriya Yoga. For it is as Babaji told him: "You have been chosen to bring spiritual solace through Kriya Yoga to numerous earnest seekers." (*Self-Realization* Fall 95 P. 25)

As a householder yogi, Lahiri Mahasaya brought a practical message suited to the needs of today's world. The excellent economic and religious conditions of ancient India no longer obtain. The great master therefore did not encourage the old ideal of a yogi as a wandering ascetic with a begging bowl. He stressed, rather, the advantages to a yogi of earning his own living, of not being dependent on a hard-pressed society for support, and of practicing yoga in the privacy of his home. To this counsel Lahiri Masaya added the heartening force of his own example. He was a 'streamlined' model of a yogi. His way of life, as planned by Babaji, was intended to be a guide for aspiring yogis in all parts of the world." (*Autobiography of a Yogi*, P. 329)

Lahiri Mahasaya brought to light, clear of allegories, the science of religion that had been cleverly put out of sight in a riddle of scriptural imagery. No longer an unintelligible jugglery of words, the formulas of Vedic worship have been proved by the master to be full of scientific significance.... The life of Lahiri Mahasaya set an example which changed the erroneous notion that yoga is a mysterious practice. In spite of the matter-of-factness of physical science, every man may find a way through *Kriya Yoga* to understand his proper relation with Nature and to feel spiritual reverence for all phenomena." (*Ibid.* PP. 327, 328)

Paramahansa Yogananda points out: "The *Yogavatar* reached the zenith of all wonders in reducing the ancient complexities of yoga to an effective simplicity within the ordinary grasp. No prophet before him, had distilled the entire Raja Yoga system of Patanjali and the yoga teachings of Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita into a number of uncomplicated techniques capable of producing the greatest Self-realization." (*Self-Realization* Fall 95 P. 25)

Of kriya and Lahiri Mahasaya, Swami Kebalananda — an exalted disciple of Lahiri Mahasaya and Master's Sanskrit teacher — said:

"I myself consider Kriya the most effective device of salvation through self-effort ever to be evolved in man's search for the Infinite. Through its use, the omnipotent God, hidden in all men, became visibly incarnated in the flesh of Lahiri Mahasaya and of a number of his disciples." (*Self-Realization Magazine* Fall 95 P. 25)

Swami Kebalandanda also gives us an insight into what it was like to sit at the feet of such a master:

Rarely fortunate I was able to remain near Lahiri Mahasaya for ten years. His Banaras home was my nightly goal of pilgrimage. The guru was always present in a small front parlor on the first floor. As he sat in lotus posture on a backless wooden seat, his disciples garlanded him in a semicircle. His eyes sparkled and danced with the joy of the Divine. They were ever half closed, peering through the inner telescopic orb into a sphere of eternal bliss. He seldom spoke at length. Occasionally his gaze would focus on a student in need of help; healing words poured then like an avalanche of light.

An indescribable peace blossomed within me at the master's glance.

I was permeated with his fragrance, as though from a lotus of infinity. To be with him, even without exchanging a word for days, was experience which changed my entire being. If any invisible barrier rose in the path of my concentration, I would meditate at the guru's feet. There the most tenuous states came easily within my grasp. Such perceptions eluded me in the presence of lesser teachers. The master was a living temple of God, whose secret doors were open to all disciples through devotion. (*Self-Realization* Fall 1995 P. 27)

Lahiri Mahasaya said of his own passing and the importance of kriya:

The yogic key will not lose its efficiency when I am no longer present in the body to guide you. This technique cannot be bound, filed, and forgotten, in the manner of theoretical inspirations. Continue ceaselessly on your path to liberation through Kriya, whose power lies in practice. (*Ibid.* P. 28)

God's protecting presence comes to us through masters such as Lahiri Mahasaya. Guruji wrote of this protection in *Metaphysical Meditations*. While the selection is read as a prayer, look with attention at the picture of Lahiri Mahasaya as though you yourself are addressing these words to this great master.

Thy light of goodness and Thy protective power are ever shining through me. I saw them not, because my eyes of wisdom were closed. Now Thy touch of peace has opened my eyes; Thy goodness and unflinching protection are flowing through me. (P. 20)