

Lahiri Mahasaya Birthday
Commemorative Service Reading
Volume II

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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Reading

Volume II

Lahiri Mahasaya was born on September 30, 1828 into a pious Brahmin family. His birthplace was the village of Ghurni in the Nadia district near Krishnanagar, Bengal. (*Autobiography of a Yogi* P. 292)

Lahiri Mahasaya was a Yogavatar — one who came to earth to reintroduce Kriya yoga. Kriya enables students to accomplish by their own effort the scientific union or yoga of soul and spirit. He was a seminal figure in the renaissance of Yoga in modern India, giving instructions and blessings to countless seekers who came to him, without regard to caste or creed. No prophet before him, Paramahansa Yogananda pointed out, had distilled the entire Raja Yoga system of Patanjali and yoga teaching of Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita into a number of uncomplicated techniques capable of producing the greatest Self-realization. (*Self-Realization* Fall 1995 P. 25)

And Master writes in his translation of the Bhagavad Gita:

“The Kriya Yoga technique, taught by Krishna to Arjuna, is the supreme spiritual science of yoga meditation. It was secreted during the materialistic ages.” (*God Talks With Arjuna*, P. 1103)

Babaji chose Lahiri Mahasaya to bring the science of Kriya Yoga to the world in this current age. Babaji told him: “You have been chosen to

bring spiritual solace through Kriya Yoga to numerous earnest seekers.”
(*Autobiography of a Yogi* P. 312)

Master records in Lahiri Mahasaya's own words the story of his paramguru's meeting with Babaji. The story illustrates the deathless love of a guru for his disciple not for just one lifetime, but through many incarnations.

My first meeting with Babaji took place in my thirty-third year. In the autumn of 1861. I was stationed in Danapur as an accountant in the Military Engineering Department of the Government. One morning the office manager summoned me.

"Lahiri," he said, "a telegram has just come from our main office. You are to be transferred to Ranikhet, where an army post is now being established."

With one servant , I set out on the 500-mile trip. Traveling by horse and buggy, we arrived in thirty days at the Himalayan site of Ranikhet.

My office duties were not onerous; I was able to spend many hours roaming in the magnificent hills. A rumor reached me that great saints blessed the region with their presence. I felt a strong desire to see them. During a ramble one early afternoon, I was astounded to hear a distant voice calling my name. I continued my vigorous upward climb on Drongiri Mountain. A slight uneasiness beset me at the thought that I might not be able to retrace my steps before darkness descended over the jungle.

I finally reached a small clearing whose sides were dotted with caves. On one of the rocky ledges stood a smiling young man, extending his hand in welcome. I notice with astonishment that, except for his copper-colored hair, he bore a remarkable resemblance to myself.

"Lahiri, you have come!" The addressed me affectionately in Hindi. "Rest here in this cave. It was I who called you."

I entered a neat little grotto that contained several woolen blankets and a few *kamandalus* (water pots).

"Lahiri, do you remember that seat?" The yogi pointed to a folded blanket in one corner.

"No sir." Somewhat dazed at the strangeness of my adventure, I added, "I must leave now, before nightfall. I have business in the morning at my office."

The mysterious saint replied in English, "The office was brought for you, and not you for the office."

I was dumfounded that this forest ascetic should not only speak English but also paraphrase the words of Christ.

"I see my telegram took effect." The yogi's remark was incomprehensible to me; I asked its meaning.

"I refer to the telegram that summoned you to these isolated parts. It was I who silently suggested to the mind of your superior officer that you be transferred to Ranikhet. When one feels his unity with mankind, all minds become transmitting stations through which he can work at will. He added, "Lahiri, surely this cave seems familiar to you?"

As I maintained a bewildered silence, the saint approached and struck me gently on the forehead. At his magnetic touch, a wondrous current swept through my brain, releasing the sweet seed memories of my previous life.

"I remember!" My voice was half choked with joyous sobs. "You are my guru Babaji, who has belonged to me always! Scenes of the past arise vividly in my mind; here in this cave I spent many years of my last

incarnation." As ineffable recollections overwhelmed me, I tearfully embraced my master's feet.

"For more than three decades I have waited for you to return to me." Babaji's voice rang with celestial love.

"You slipped away and disappeared into the tumultuous waves of the life beyond death. The magic wand of your karma touched you, and you were gone! Though you lost sight of me, never did I lose sight of you! I pursued you over the luminescent astral sea where the glorious angles sail. Through gloom, storm, upheaval, and light I followed you, like a mother bird guarding her young. As you lived out your human term of womb life, and emerged a babe, my eye was ever on you. When you covered your tiny form in the lotus posture under the Ghurni sands in childhood, I was invisibly present. Patiently, month after month, year after year, I have watched over you, waiting for this perfect day. Now you are with me! Here is your cave, loved of your; I have kept it ever clean and ready for you. Here is your hallowed *asana* blanket, where daily you sat to fill your expanding heart with God. Here is your bowl, from which you often drank the nectar prepared by me. See how I have kept the brass cup brightly polished, that someday you might drink again from it. My own, do you now understand?"

"My guru, what can I say?" I murmured brokenly. "Where has one ever heard of such deathless love!" I gazed long and ecstatically at my eternal treasure, my guru in life and death. (Ibid. P. 305 ff.)

Lahiri Mahasaya is also guiding us on our spiritual journey. For he said:

I am ever with those who practice Kriya.... I will guide you to the Cosmic home through your ever enlarging spiritual perceptions. The

yogic key will not lose its efficiency when I am no longer present in the body to guide you. The technique of Kriya Yoga 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. (*Self-Realization* Fall 1995 P. 28)

The following prayer is from *Whispers from Eternity* and is entitled "Demand for the opening of the Spiritual Eye, the Eastern Star of Wisdom." As it is read, look with attention at Lahiri Mahasaya's picture as though you yourself are addressing the prayer to this great master.

Bless me ... that I may behold the Eastern star of wisdom. May it gleam before my human eyes, alike in daylight and in gloom. My eyes were long blinded by the tinsel-glitter of material things. Always seeing such things outwardly, I saw not the spirit within their bosom. I looked at the mustard-seed of matter but spied not the oil of Spirit hidden within it. The third eye of my wisdom is now being opened. Keep it, Thou, always open. (P. 122)