

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

## 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.

At the end of quoted material there is usually the source and page number from which the material is taken. This is for your information only and is not to be read.

## Lahiri Mahasaya Birthday

### Reading

### Volume III

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)

As a boy Lahiri Mahasaya showed an aptitude for a spiritual life. He was already practicing yoga postures at the age of three or four. His parents were devout and his father conducted his household along the lines of Vedic discipline, with regular observance of ceremonial worship, acts of charity, and scriptural study. Lahiri Mahasaya was said to be a kind and gentle youth, beloved by all his companions. And, we are told, he excelled in swimming and many feats of manual skill.

At the age of eighteen he married -- a union that produced four children. At the age of 23, in 1851, he took the post of accountant in the Military Engineering Department of the British government. During his career with the department, he received many promotions. Paramahansa Yogananda notes this fact in his autobiography, stating: "Thus not only was Lahiri Mahasaya 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." (Ibid. P. 294)

It was in 1861, in the avatar's thirty-third year, that Babaji bestowed

on him the sacred science of Kriya Yoga. Babaji told him: "You have been chosen to bring spiritual solace through Kriya Yoga to numerous earnest seekers." (Ibid. P. 312)

Lahiri Mahasaya was a seminal figure in the renaissance of Yoga in modern India, giving instruction and blessing 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 the yoga teachings of Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita into a number of uncomplicated techniques capable of producing the greatest Self-Realization. "Apart from the miracles of his own life, " Paramahansaji wrote, "surely the *Yogavatar* ('Incarnation of Yoga') reached the zenith of all wonders in reducing the ancient complexities of yoga to an effective simplicity within the ordinary grasp."

(*Self-Realization* Fall 1995 P. 25)

Swami Sri Yukteswar paid the following tribute to his master: "Greater he was as man and yogi, than any other teacher whose life came within range of my investigations." (Ibid. P.24)

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. (Ibid. P. 24)

"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." (Ibid. P. 27)

Paramahansa Yogananda said of Lahiri Mahasaya: "By the standards of both qualitative and quantitative good, the great master elevated the spiritual level of society. In his power to raise his close disciples to Christlike stature and in his wide dissemination of truth among the masses, Lahiri Mahasaya ranks among the saviors of mankind. His uniqueness as a prophet lies in his practical stress on a definite method, Kriya, opening for the first time the doors of yoga freedom to all men. (*Self-Realization* Fall, 1995 P. 24)

Master expressed the love of a guru for his disciples in his *Prayers of a Master for His Disciples*, a love that Lahiri Mahasaya has for each one of us. While a portion of this prayer is read, look with attention at the picture of Lahiri Mahasaya as though you yourself are addressing the prayer to this great master.

As Thou hast given me the will, strength, and power  
To bring other souls back to Thy grace —  
Those who have wandered,  
Brothers and sisters straying on the pathway of incarnations —  
Make me the transparent medium  
Through which Thy light enters their hearts,  
Dispelling darkness forevermore. (PP. 1,2)