

Lahiri Mahasaya Mahasamadhi
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.

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 Mahasamadhi

Reading

Volume I

Swami Keshabananda, one of Lahiri Mahasaya's foremost disciples, recounted the passing of his guru. Master recorded his words in the *Autobiography of a Yogi*:

"A few days before my guru relinquished his body," Keshabananda told me, "he materialized himself before me as I sat in my hermitage in Hardwar.

" 'Come at once to Banaras.' With these words Lahiri Mahashaya vanished.

"I entrained immediately for Banaras. At my guru's home I found many disciples assembled. For hours that day the master expounded the Gita; then he addressed us simply.

" 'I am going home.'

"Our sobs of anguish broke out like an irresistible torrent.

" 'Be comforted; I shall rise again.' After this utterance Lahiri Mahasaya rose from his seat, thrice turned his body around in a circle, assumed the lotus posture while facing the north, and gloriously entered *mahasamadhi*.

"Lahiri Mahasaya's beautiful body, so dear to the devotees, was cremated with solemn householder rites at Manikarnika Ghat by the holy

Ganges....

"The following day, at ten o'clock in the morning, while I was still in Banara, my room was suffused with a great light. Lo! before me stood the flesh and blood form of Lahiri Mahasaya. It looked exactly like his older body, except that it appeared younger and more radiant. My divine Guru spoke to me:

" 'Keshabananda,' he said, 'it is I. From the disintegrated atoms of my cremated body, I have resurrected a remodeled form. My householder work in the world is done; but I do not leave the earth entirely. Henceforth I shall spend some time with Babaji in the Himalayas, and with Babaji in the cosmos.'

"With a few words of blessing to me, the transcendent master vanished. Wondrous inspiration filled my heart; I was uplifted in Spirit even as were the disciples of Christ and Kabir who beheld their living guru after his physical death." (PP. 338, 339)

Several other of Lahiri Mahasaya's disciples were blessed with the appearance of their guru after his mahasamadhi. Eleven years after the passing of the great master, in 1906, Paramahansaji, along with his younger brother, Sananda Lal Ghosh, had occasion to meet Lahiri Mahasaya. The events are related in *Medja*, the biography of Master written by his younger brother. In the account Master is referred to as Mukunda and Mejda. He and his brother are walking down a road near their home:

The road to the mouth of the river followed several low hills. Fruit hung in abundance in the trees along our way. One day Mejda said, "Listen, when we return this evening we'll pick some *lichis*. No one will

see us in the twilight."

So said, so done! Mejda was picking some of the luscious, sweet *lichis* which when he heard someone call his name. Startled, Mejda stood stock still. All sense of adventure ended abruptly! Cautiously we moved in the direction from which the voice had come. The twilight was fast fading and we could not see far ahead in the shadows, but we soon discerned a man dressed in white. Seeing that we were somewhat afraid, he beckoned us closer in a friendly manner. If he were the watchman here, would he have known Mejda's name?

Slowly we advanced toward the gently smiling person. His form seemed lustrous with a wonderful light. I looked around to see where the light was coming from. Suddenly Mejda bowed before the saint and touched his feet. The saint embraced Mejda and kissed him on the head. I also bowed before the saintly figure. With a gesture of blessing, he said to us, "Jaiastu! (Victory be with you!)" And then he spoke to Mejda:

"Mukunda, it is God's wish that I come to you today. Remember what I say to you. You have come on earth as God's representative to fulfill His wishes. Your body is His temple, sanctified by prayer and meditation. Do not run after material pleasures or satisfaction. You will show the way that leads to true happiness; and by your spiritual knowledge you will deliver those who are suffering in ignorance. Never forget that you are one with *Maha Purusha* (The Great Soul), attained only by those who are supremely successful in meditation. Your body, mind, and life must never deviate from the thought of God, even for a moment. The blessings of the Infinite Father are upon you. Your faith in

Him must be absolute. He will protect you from all dangers. In this world, only He is eternal; all else is transient and unreliable. One day your ideals of Yoga will inspire all mankind. Mukunda, march onward!"

I was fidgeting, for time was passing and darkness was upon us. We had a long way to go to reach home. A scolding by Father and a beating from Ananta were inevitable. The saint perceived my thought and said, "Do not be troubled. Go home freely; no one will notice that you are late."

We started for home. After walking a short distance, we looked back and saw the saint blessing us with upraised hands. Then he vanished. I turned to Mejda and spoke, but he wasn't listening. He was walking, head down, in a thoughtful mood. When we reached home, Mejda went directly to his prayer room. I inquired where Father and Ananta were. I learned that Barda (Ananta) had been invited to a friend's home, and that Father had not yet returned from an important meeting at the office. What joy! they did not know of our belated return. I ran to the prayer room to tell Mejda.

But Mejda was coming to get me. He took hold of my hand and led me to a photograph that hung on the wall. We stood a moment before it, then he said, "Do you recognize him? Was it not he who spoke to us?"

I was astonished. It was he — that very smile. But he had died long ago. How could he have come to us now? How could we have talked with someone who had been dead all these years? He had blessed us, embraced Mejda and kissed his head. I was choked with awe, unable to speak. I simply looked at Mejda. There was no doubt that Mejda and I had seen and talked with the great Lahiri Mahasaya! (P. 81 ff.)

Paramahansaji wrote a poem illustrating the love that brings a master back again and again for the benefit of all. The poem, "God's Boatman," is taken from *Whispers from Eternity*. As a portion of this poem is read, look with attention at the picture of Lahiri Mahasaya as though you yourself are addressing the prayer to this great master.

I want to ply my boat, many times,
Across the gulf-after death,
And return to earth's shores
From my home in heaven.
I want to load my boat
With those waiting, thirsty ones
Who are left behind:
And carry them by the opal pool
Of iridescent joy —
Where my Father distributes
His all-desire-quenching liquid peace. (P. 202)