

**Swami Sri Yukteswar 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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Swami Sri Yukteswar Birthday

Reading

Volume I

Swami Sri Yukteswar was born May 10, 1855 in Serampore, near Calcutta. His family name was Priya Nath Karar. As a boy he was known for his keen intellect. A brilliant mathematician, he took a deep interest in all his studies. He was multilingual, fluent in English, Bengali, Hindi and French. In addition he had a fair knowledge of Sanskrit. He had a great regard for the Indian philosophies and other scriptures and was conversant with the various religions of the world.

Priya Nath, who was an intimate friend of the reputed Goswami family of Serampore, became aware that the family practiced some form of sadhana. Despite his intimacy with the family, they kept the name of their guru a guarded secret. One day during a chance conversation, he gathered that they were disciples of Sri Sri Lahiri Mahasaya, a great yogi guru of Banaras. This aroused Priya Nath's interest. He experienced a great yearning to meet the yogi. He proceeded immediately to Banaras and met this great yogi guru in 1883. Priya Nath was initiated by Lahiri Mahasaya into Kriya Yoga that same year. (*Sri Sri Swami Sri Yukteswar The Prophet and His Mission P. 3*)

Thereafter he applied himself diligently to the teachings of his guru. Whenever he faced any obstacle in his spiritual path, he turned to his

guru for guidance. Combining his rational nature with deep spirituality and following the teachings of his guru, he attained the higher states of consciousness.

Priya Nath Karar met Mahavatar Babaji at a Kumbha Mela. At the behest of the Mahavatar he became a member of the Swami Order, taking the name Sri Yukteswar Giri. He began accepting disciples for spiritual training. And in 1910 Mukunda Lal Ghosh, later Paramahansa Yogananda, entered his ashram for spiritual training.

Sri Yukteswar's path was one of wisdom. As Master states in the *Autobiography of a Yogi*, "Sri Yukteswar may be justly be called a Jnanavatar or Incarnation of Wisdom." (P. 328)

At first this was disconcerting for Master, quoting again from the *Autobiography of the Yogi*:

My own temperament is principally devotional. It was disconcerting at first to find that my guru, saturated with Jnana (wisdom) but seemingly dry of bhakti (devotion), expressed himself chiefly in terms of cold spiritual mathematics. But, as I attuned myself to his nature, I discovered no diminution but rather an increase in my devotional approach to God. A Self-realized master is fully able to guide his various disciples along the natural lines of their essential bias. (P. 122)

In fact Master tells us in *The Second Coming of Christ* how the wisdom of our paramguru guided him to his final freedom:

My Guru Sri Yukteswar said to me, when he accepted me for training: "Allow me to discipline you; for freedom of will does not consist in doing things according to the dictates of prenatal or postnatal habits or of mental whim, but in acting according to the suggestions of wisdom and free choice. If you tune in your will with mine, you will find freedom."

In attunement with his God-guided, wisdom-guided will, I did find freedom. (P. 192)

Master goes on to say that the end result of Sri Yukteswar's wisdom was love itself:

Baptized in a radiance as of a thousand suns, my whole being was blissfully enwrapped in God's love and secured in the care of Guru's wisdom. (Ibid. P. 115)

This is not surprising for love was never a foreign concept to Swami Sri Yukteswar. He states in his book *The Holy Science*:

The heart's natural love is the principal requisite to attain a holy life.... When this love becomes developed in man, it makes him able to understand the real position of his own Self as well as of others surrounding him.... The culture of this love, the heavenly gift, is the principal requisite for the attainment of holy salvation; it is impossible for man to advance a step toward the same without it. (PP. 56-57)

Master pays this tribute to his guru:

“Though born a mortal like all other, Sri Yukteswar achieved identity with the Ruler of time and space. Master found no insuperable obstacle to the mergence of human and Divine. No such barrier exists, I came to understand, save in man’s spiritual unadventurousness. “
(*Autobiography of a Yogi*, P. 115)

Master wrote a poem entitled "Salutation to the Great Preceptor." As this is read as a prayer, look with attention at Sri Yukteswarji’s picture as though you yourself are addressing the great master and expressing gratitude for the spiritual richness he has bestowed upon you.

Bearing the bliss of Brahma, happiness supreme, wearing the image of wisdom; beyond the dispute of quality; free as the soaring sky;

Knower of all there is to be known; The perennial, taintless one; Witness of all happenings; beyond all conceptions' boundaries; uncolored by good, bad and active qualities; my ever-awake Preceptor — I bow to Thee. (*Whispers from Eternity* P. 33)