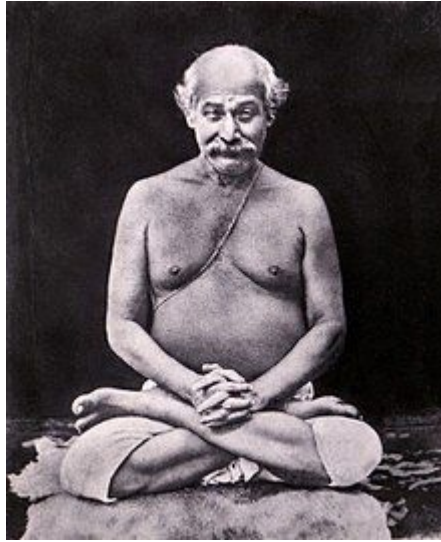


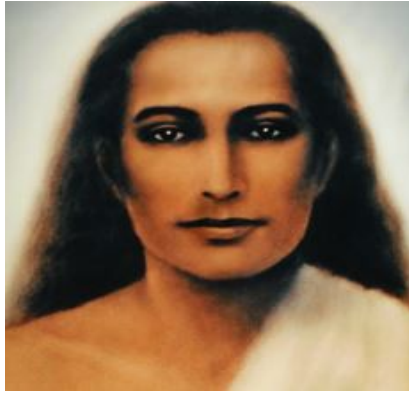
Lahiri Mahasaya



Lahiri Mahasaya

Shyama Charan Lahiri (Bengali: [*Shêmā Chôron Lahiri*]) (30 September 1828 – 26 September 1895), best known as **Lahiri Mahasaya**, was an Indian yogi and a disciple of Mahavatar Babaji. He was also popularly known as *Yogiraj* and *Kashi Baba*. He revived the yogic science of Kriya Yoga when he learned it from Mahavatar Babaji in 1861. Lahiri Mahasaya was also the guru of Yuktswar Giri. *Mahasaya* is a Sanskrit, spiritual title translated as 'large-minded'.^[1] He was unusual among Indian holy people in that he was a householder — marrying, raising a family, and working as an accountant for the Military Engineering Department of the British Indian government. Lahiri lived with his family in Varanasi rather than in a temple

or monastery. He achieved a substantial reputation among 19th century Hindu religionists.



Babaji

He became known in the West through Paramahansa Yogananda, a disciple of Yukteswar Giri, and through Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*. Yogananda wrote that Lahiri was chosen by Mahavatar Babaji to reintroduce the lost practice of Kriya Yoga to the world. Lahiri's disciples included both of Yogananda's parents as well as Yogananda's own guru. Lahiri Mahasaya prophesied that the infant Yogananda would become a yogi, and "As a spiritual engine, he will carry many souls to God's kingdom."^[2]

Biography

Early life

Lahiri was born into a Brahmin family in the Ghurni village (presently a neighbourhood of Krishnanagar town) in Nadia district of Bengal Province. He was the youngest son of Muktakashi, wife of Gaur Mohan Lahiri. His mother died when he was a child — there is very little known about her, except

that she was a devotee of Lord Shiva. At the age of three or four, he was often seen sitting in meditation, with his body buried in the sand up to his neck. When Lahiri was five, the family's ancestral home was lost in a flood, so the family moved to Varanasi, where he would spend most of his life.^[2]

As a child, he studied Urdu and Hindi, gradually moving on to Bengali, Sanskrit, Persian, French and English at the Government Sanskrit College, along with study of the Vedas. Reciting the Vedas, bathing in the Ganges, and worship were part of his daily routine.^[3]

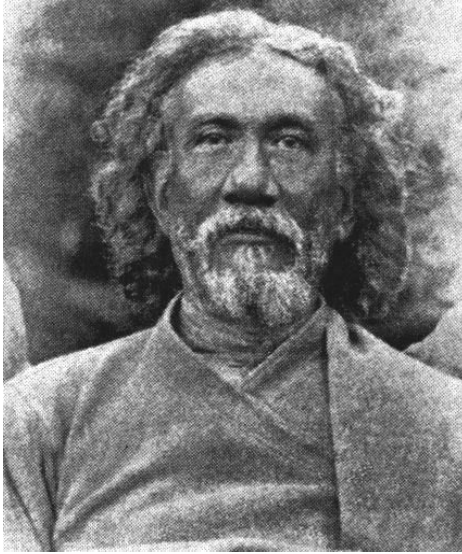
In 1846, he was married to Srimati Kashi Moni.^[4] They had two sons, Tincouri and Ducouri, and three daughters, Harimoti, Harikamini and Harimohini. His two sons were considered saints. His wife became his disciple and was affectionately called by Guru Ma. His work as an accountant in the Military Engineering Department of the English government took him all over India. After the death of his father, he took on the role of supporting the entire family in Varanasi.^[2]

Teacher of Kriya Yoga

In 1861, Lahiri was transferred to Ranikhet, in the foothills of the Himalayas. One day, while walking in the hills, he heard a voice calling to him. After climbing further, he met his Guru

Mahavatar Babaji, who initiated him into the techniques of Kriya Yoga. Babaji told Lahiri that the rest of his life was to be given to spreading the Kriya message.^[2]

Soon after, Lahiri Mahasaya returned to Varanasi, where he began initiating sincere seekers into the path of Kriya Yoga. Over time, more and more people flocked to receive the



Yukteswar Giri
disciple of Lahiri Mahasaya

teachings of Kriya from Lahiri. He organized many study groups and gave regular discourses on the Bhagavad Gita at his "Gita Assemblies." He freely gave Kriya initiation to those of every faith, including Hindus, Muslims, and Christians, at a time when caste bigotry was very strong. He encouraged his students to adhere to the tenets of their own faith, adding the Kriya techniques to what they already were practicing.^[2]

He continued his dual role of accountant and supporter to his family, and a teacher of Kriya Yoga, until 1886, when he was able to retire on a pension. More and more visitors came to see him at this time. He seldom left his sitting room, available to all who sought his *darshan*. He often exhibited the breathless state of superconscious *samādhī*.

Over the years he gave initiation to gardeners, postmen, kings, maharajas, sannyasis, householders, people considered to be lower caste, Christians, and Muslims.^[3] At that time, it was unusual for a strict Brahmin to associate so closely with people from all castes.

Some of his notable disciples included Panchanan Bhattacharya, Yuktswar Giri, Pranabananda, Keshavananda Brahmachari, Bhupendranath Sanyal, and the parents of Paramahansa Yogananda. Others who received initiation into Kriya Yoga from Lahiri included Bhaskarananda Saraswati of Benares, Balananda Brahmachari of Deogarh, Maharaja Iswari Narayan Sinha Bahadur of Benares and his son.^{[2][5]}

Biographer and Yogacharya Dr. Ashoke Kumar Chatterjee, in his book "Purana Purusha" depicts that Lahiri initiated Sai Baba of Shirdi into Kriya Yoga, based on a passage in Lahiri's 26 secret diary.^[6] He gave permission to one disciple, Panchanan Bhattacharya, to start an institution in Kolkata to spread the teachings of Kriya Yoga. The Arya Mission Institution published commentaries by Lahiri on the Bhagavad Gita, along with other spiritual books, including a Bengali translation of the Gita. Lahiri himself had printed thousands of small books with excerpted passages from the Gita, in Bengali and Hindi, and distributed them for free, an unusual idea at that time.^[3]

In 1895 he began gathering his disciples, letting some of them know that he would soon be leaving the body. Moments before his passing, he said simply, "I am going home. Be comforted; I shall rise again." He then turned his body around three times, faced north, and consciously left his body, entering mahasamadhi. Lahiri Mahasaya died on 26 September 1895.^[2]

Teachings

Kriya Yoga

The central spiritual practice which he taught to his disciples was Kriya Yoga, a series of inner pranayama practices that quickly hasten the spiritual growth of the practitioner. He taught this technique to all sincere seekers, regardless of their religious background. In response to many types of problems that disciples would bring him, his advice would be the same — to practice more Kriya Yoga.^[2] Regarding Kriya Yoga, he said:

Always remember that you belong to no one, and no one belongs to you. Reflect that some day you will suddenly have to leave everything in this world—so make the acquaintanceship of God now. Prepare yourself for the coming astral journey of death by daily riding in the balloon of God-perception. Through delusion you are perceiving yourself as a bundle of flesh and bones, which at best is a nest of troubles. Meditate unceasingly, that you may quickly behold yourself as the Infinite Essence, free from every form of misery. Cease being a prisoner of the body; using the secret key of Kriya, learn to escape into Spirit.^[2]

He taught that Kriya practice would give the yogi direct experience of truth, unlike mere theoretical discussion of the scriptures, and to:

Solve all your problems through meditation. Exchange unprofitable religious speculations for actual God-contact. Clear your mind of dogmatic theological debris; let in the fresh, healing waters of direct perception. Attune yourself to the active inner Guidance; the Divine Voice has the answer to every dilemma of life. Though man's ingenuity for getting

himself into trouble appears to be endless, the Infinite Succor is no less resourceful.^[2]

Guru-disciple relationship

Lahiri often spoke of the Guru-disciple relationship in the context of Kriya Yoga. He always gave the Kriya technique as an initiation,^[2] and taught that the technique was only properly learned as part of the Guru-disciple relationship.^{[2][5]} Frequently he referred to the realization that comes through practicing Kriya as taught by the Guru, and the grace that comes through the 'transmission' of the Guru.^[7] He also taught that the grace of the Guru comes automatically if his instructions are followed.^[5] He suggested contacting the Guru during meditation, counseling that it wasn't always necessary to see his physical form.^[5]

Regarding the necessity of the help of a Guru to deep yoga practice, he said:

It is absolutely necessary for all devotees to totally surrender to their Guru. The more one can surrender to the Guru, the more he can ascertain the subtlest of the subtle techniques of yoga from his Guru. Without surrender, nothing can be derived from the Guru.^[5]

The relationship Lahiri Mahasaya had with his own disciples was very individual. He even varied the way he taught the Kriya Yoga practice to each disciple, depending on their individual spiritual needs.^[8]

Other teachings

Lahiri taught that if one is earning an honest living and

practicing honesty, then there was no need to alter one's external life in any significant way in order to become aware of God's presence. If a student neglected his worldly duties, he would correct him.^[2] It was extremely rare for him to advise *sannyas*, or complete worldly renunciation by becoming a swami. Instead, he advised marriage for most of his disciples along with Kriya Yoga practice.^[5]

He generally eschewed organized religion, but he allowed at least one advanced disciple, Panchanan Bhattacharya, to open the "Arya Mission Institution" in Kolkata to spread Kriya teachings.^{[2][3]} Other disciples of Lahiri also started organizations to spread the Kriya Yoga message, including Yuktswar Giri with his *Satsanga Sabha*.^[3] Generally, he preferred Kriya to spread naturally.^[5]

Lahiri frequently taught the *Bhagavad Gita*. His regular Gita assemblies, called *Gita Sabha*, attracted many disciples.^[3] He asked several of his close disciples to write interpretations of the Gita by tuning in to his own realization.^[2] Lahiri taught that the Battle of Kurukshetra was really an inner psychological battle, and that the different characters in the battle were actually psychological traits within the struggling yogi.^[2] This understanding would later become the foundation of Paramahansa Yogananda's commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gita*.^[9] He also taught that the epic story of the *Mahabharata* showed the soul's descent into matter, and its challenges in retracing its way back to spirit.^[10]

Endnotes

1. Yogananda, Paramahansa (1997). *Autobiography of a Yogi*, 1997 Anniversary Edition. Self-Realization Fellowship (Founded by Yogananda) <http://www.yogananda-srf.org/>.

ISBN 0-87612-086-9.

2. Yogananda, Paramahansa, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, 2005. ISBN 978-1-56589-212-5.

3. Satyananda Giri, Yogiraj Shyama Charan Lahiri Mahasay, from A Collection of Biographies of 4 Kriya Yoga Gurus, iUniverse Inc. 2006. ISBN 978-0-595-38675-8.

4. "An Interview with the Sacred Mother (Kashi Moni Lahiri)".

5. Chatterjee, Ashoke Kumar, *Purana Purusha: Yogiraj Sri Shama Churn Lahiri*. Yogiraj Publications, 2004. ISBN 81-87563-01-X.

6. Lahiri's diary referred to a "Saidasbaba" who he initiated into Kriya Yoga. The author of the biography says that "during Lahiri Mahasaya's lifetime, Saidasbaba of Shirdi's name finds mention, and not any other Saibaba." Chatterjee, Ashoke Kumar, *Purana Purusha: Yogiraj Sri Shama Churn Lahiri*. Yogiraj Publications, 2004. ISBN 81-87563-01-X.

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9. Yogananda, Paramahansa: *God Talks with Arjuna, The Bhagavad Gita, Royal Science of God-Realization, Self-Realization Fellowship 2001, ISBN 0-87612-031-1 (paperback) ISBN 0-87612-030-3 (hardcover) Introduction.*

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Autobiography Of A Yogi

Chapter 35: The Christlike Life of Lahiri Mahasaya

"Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness."^[1] In these words to John the Baptist, and in asking John to baptize him, Jesus was acknowledging the divine rights of his guru.

From a reverent study of the Bible from an Oriental viewpoint,^[2] and from intuitional perception, I am convinced that John the Baptist was, in past lives, the guru of Christ. There are numerous passages in the Bible which infer that John and Jesus in their last incarnations were, respectively, Elijah and his disciple Elisha. (These are the spellings in the Old Testament. The Greek translators spelled the names as Elias and Eliseus; they reappear in the New Testament in these changed forms.)

The very end of the Old Testament is a prediction of the reincarnation of Elijah and Elisha: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."^[3] Thus John (Elijah), sent "before the coming . . . of the Lord," was born slightly earlier to serve as a herald for Christ. An angel appeared to Zacharias the father to testify that his coming son John would be no other than Elijah (Elias).

"But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. . . . And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him ^[4] IN THE SPIRIT AND POWER OF ELIAS, to turn

the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." [5] Jesus twice unequivocally identified Elijah (Elias) as John: "Elias is come already, and they knew him not. . . . Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist." [6] Again, Christ says: "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come." [7] When John denied that he was Elias (Elijah), [8] he meant that in the humble garb of John he came no longer in the outward elevation of Elijah the great guru.

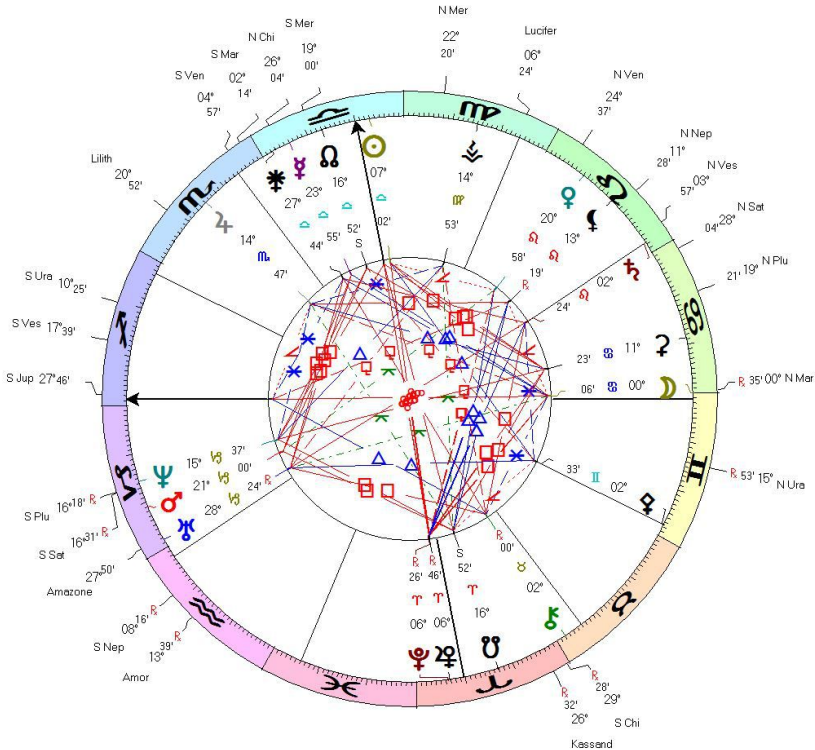
In his former incarnation he had given the "mantle" of his glory and his spiritual wealth to his disciple Elisha. "And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee. . . . And he took the MANTLE of Elijah that fell from him." {FN35-9}

The roles became reversed, because Elijah-John was no longer needed to be the ostensible guru of Elisha-Jesus, now perfected in divine realization.

When Christ was transfigured on the mountain {FN35-10} it was his guru Elias, with Moses, whom he saw. Again, in his hour of extremity on the cross, Jesus cried out the divine name: "ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias. . . . Let us see whether Elias will come to save him." {FN35-11}

The eternal bond of guru and disciple that existed between John and Jesus was present also for Babaji and Lahiri Mahasaya.

Lahiri Mahasaya



Lahiri Birthchart

With tender solicitude the deathless guru swam the Lethean waters that swirled between the last two lives of his chela, and guided the successive steps taken by the child and then by the man Lahiri Mahasaya. It was not until the disciple had reached his thirty-third year that Babaji deemed the time to be ripe to openly reestablish the never-severed link. Then, after their brief meeting near Ranikhet, the selfless master banished his dearly-beloved disciple from the little mountain group, releasing him for an outward world mission. "My son, I shall come whenever you need me." What mortal lover can bestow that infinite promise?

Unknown to society in general, a great spiritual renaissance

began to flow from a remote corner of Benares. Just as the fragrance of flowers cannot be suppressed, so Lahiri Mahasaya, quietly living as an ideal householder, could not hide his innate glory. Slowly, from every part of India, the devotee-bees sought the divine nectar of the liberated master.

The English office superintendent was one of the first to notice a strange transcendental change in his employee, whom he endearingly called "Ecstatic Babu." "Sir, you seem sad. What is the trouble?" Lahiri Mahasaya made this sympathetic inquiry one morning to his employer.

"My wife in England is critically ill. I am torn by anxiety."

"I shall get you some word about her." Lahiri Mahasaya left the room and sat for a short time in a secluded spot. On his return he smiled consolingly.

"Your wife is improving; she is now writing you a letter." The omniscient yogi quoted some parts of the missive.

"Ecstatic Babu, I already know that you are no ordinary man. Yet I am unable to believe that, at will, you can banish time and space!"

The promised letter finally arrived. The astounded superintendent found that it contained not only the good news of his wife's recovery, but also the same phrases which, weeks earlier, Lahiri Mahasaya had repeated.

The wife came to India some months later. She visited the office, where Lahiri Mahasaya was quietly sitting at his desk. The woman approached him reverently.

"Sir," she said, "it was your form, haloed in glorious light, that I beheld months ago by my sickbed in London. At that moment I was completely healed! Soon after, I was able to undertake the long ocean voyage to India."

Day after day, one or two devotees besought the sublime guru for KRIYA initiation. In addition to these spiritual duties, and to those of his business and family life, the great master took an enthusiastic interest in education. He organized many study groups, and played an active part in the growth of a large high school in the Bengalitola section of Benares. His regular discourses on the scriptures came to be called his "GITA Assembly," eagerly attended by many truth-seekers.

By these manifold activities, Lahiri Mahasaya sought to answer the common challenge: "After performing one's business and social duties, where is the time for devotional meditation?" The harmoniously balanced life of the great householder-guru became the silent inspiration of thousands of questioning hearts. Earning only a modest salary, thrifty, unostentatious, accessible to all, the master carried on naturally and happily in the path of worldly life.

Though ensconced in the seat of the Supreme One, Lahiri Mahasaya showed reverence to all men, irrespective of their differing merits. When his devotees saluted him, he bowed in turn to them. With a childlike humility, the master often touched the feet of others, but seldom allowed them to pay him similar honor, even though such obeisance toward the guru is an ancient Oriental custom.

A significant feature of Lahiri Mahasaya's life was his gift of KRIYA initiation to those of every faith. Not Hindus only, but

Moslems and Christians were among his foremost disciples. Monists and dualists, those of all faiths or of no established faith, were impartially received and instructed by the universal guru. One of his highly advanced chelas was Abdul Gufoor Khan, a Mohammedan. It shows great courage on the part of Lahiri Mahasaya that, although a high-caste Brahmin, he tried his utmost to dissolve the rigid caste bigotry of his time. Those from every walk of life found shelter under the master's omnipresent wings. Like all God-inspired prophets, Lahiri Mahasaya gave new hope to the outcastes and down-trodden of society.

"Always remember that you belong to no one, and no one belongs to you. Reflect that some day you will suddenly have to leave everything in this world-so make the acquaintanceship of God now," the great guru told his disciples. "Prepare yourself for the coming astral journey of death by daily riding in the balloon of God-perception. Through delusion you are perceiving yourself as a bundle of flesh and bones, which at best is a nest of troubles. {FN35-12} Meditate unceasingly, that you may quickly behold yourself as the Infinite Essence, free from every form of misery. Cease being a prisoner of the body; using the secret key of KRIYA, learn to escape into Spirit."

The great guru encouraged his various students to adhere to the good traditional discipline of their own faith. Stressing the all-inclusive nature of KRIYA as a practical technique of liberation, Lahiri Mahasaya then gave his chelas liberty to express their lives in conformance with environment and up bringing.

"A Moslem should perform his NAMAJ {FN35-13} worship four times daily," the master pointed out. "Four times daily a Hindu

should sit in meditation. A Christian should go down on his knees four times daily, praying to God and then reading the Bible."

With wise discernment the guru guided his followers into the paths of BHAKTI (devotion), KARMA (action), JNANA (wisdom), or RAJA (royal or complete) YOGAS, according to each man's natural tendencies. The master, who was slow to give his permission to devotees wishing to enter the formal path of monkhood, always cautioned them to first reflect well on the austerities of the monastic life.

The great guru taught his disciples to avoid theoretical discussion of the scriptures. "He only is wise who devotes himself to realizing, not reading only, the ancient revelations," he said. "Solve all your problems through meditation. {FN35-14} Exchange unprofitable religious speculations for actual God-contact. Clear your mind of dogmatic theological debris; let in the fresh, healing waters of direct perception. Attune yourself to the active inner Guidance; the Divine Voice has the answer to every dilemma of life. Though man's ingenuity for getting himself into trouble appears to be endless, the Infinite Succor is no less resourceful."

(LAHIRI MAHASAYA, Disciple of Babaji and Guru of Sri Yukteswar.) The master's omnipresence was demonstrated one day before a group of disciples who were listening to his exposition of the BHAGAVAD GITA. As he was explaining the meaning of KUTASTHA CHAITANYA or the Christ Consciousness in all vibratory creation, Lahiri Mahasaya suddenly gasped and cried out:

"I am drowning in the bodies of many souls off the coast of

Japan!"

The next morning the chelas read a newspaper account of the death of many people whose ship had foundered the preceding day near Japan.

The distant disciples of Lahiri Mahasaya were often made aware of his enfolding presence. "I am ever with those who practice KRIYA," he said consolingly to chelas who could not remain near him. "I will guide you to the Cosmic Home through your enlarging perceptions."

Swami Satyananda was told by a devotee that, unable to go to Benares, the man had nevertheless received precise KRIYA initiation in a dream. Lahiri Mahasaya had appeared to instruct the chela in answer to his prayers.

If a disciple neglected any of his worldly obligations, the master would gently correct and discipline him.

"Lahiri Mahasaya's words were mild and healing, even when he was forced to speak openly of a chela's faults," Sri Yukteswar once told me. He added ruefully, "No disciple ever fled from our master's barbs." I could not help laughing, but I truthfully assured Sri Yukteswar that, sharp or not, his every word was music to my ears.

Lahiri Mahasaya carefully graded KRIYA into four progressive initiations. {FN35-15} He bestowed the three higher techniques only after the devotee had manifested definite spiritual progress. One day a certain chela, convinced that his worth was not being duly evaluated, gave voice to his discontent.

"Master," he said, "surely I am ready now for the second initiation."

At this moment the door opened to admit a humble disciple, Brinda Bhagat. He was a Benares postman.

"Brinda, sit by me here." The great guru smiled at him affectionately. "Tell me, are you ready for the second technique of KRIYA?"

The little postman folded his hands in supplication. "Gurudeva," he said in alarm, "no more initiations, please! How can I assimilate any higher teachings? I have come today to ask your blessings, because the first divine KRIYA has filled me with such intoxication that I cannot deliver my letters!"

"Already Brinda swims in the sea of Spirit." At these words from Lahiri Mahasaya, his other disciple hung his head.

"Master," he said, "I see I have been a poor workman, finding fault with my tools."

The postman, who was an uneducated man, later developed his insight through KRIYA to such an extent that scholars occasionally sought his interpretation on involved scriptural points. Innocent alike of sin and syntax, little Brinda won renown in the domain of learned pundits.

Besides the numerous Benares disciples of Lahiri Mahasaya, hundreds came to him from distant parts of India. He himself traveled to Bengal on several occasions, visiting at the homes of the fathers-in-law of his two sons. Thus blessed by his presence, Bengal became honeycombed with small KRIYA groups. Particularly in the districts of Krishnagar and

Bishnupur, many silent devotees to this day have kept the invisible current of spiritual meditation flowing.

Among many saints who received KRIYA from Lahiri Mahasaya may be mentioned the illustrious Swami Vhaskarananda Saraswati of Benares, and the Deogarh ascetic of high stature, Balananda Brahmachari. For a time Lahiri Mahasaya served as private tutor to the son of Maharaja Iswari Narayan Sinha Bahadur of Benares. Recognizing the master's spiritual attainment, the maharaja, as well as his son, sought KRIYA initiation, as did the Maharaja Jotindra Mohan Thakur.

A number of Lahiri Mahasaya's disciples with influential worldly position were desirous of expanding the KRIYA circle by publicity. The guru refused his permission. One chela, the royal physician to the Lord of Benares, started an organized effort to spread the master's name as "Kashi Baba" (Exalted One of Benares). {FN35-16} Again the guru forbade it.

"Let the fragrance of the KRIYA flower be wafted naturally, without any display," he said. "Its seeds will take root in the soil of spiritually fertile hearts."

Although the great master did not adopt the system of preaching through the modern medium of an organization, or through the printing press, he knew that the power of his message would rise like a resistless flood, inundating by its own force the banks of human minds. The changed and purified lives of devotees were the simple guarantees of the deathless vitality of KRIYA.

In 1886, twenty-five years after his Ranikhet initiation, Lahiri Mahasaya was retired on a pension. {FN35-17} With his availability in the daytime, disciples sought him out in ever-

increasing numbers. The great guru now sat in silence most of the time, locked in the tranquil lotus posture. He seldom left his little parlor, even for a walk or to visit other parts of the house. A quiet stream of chelas arrived, almost ceaselessly, for a DARSHAN (holy sight) of the guru.

To the awe of all beholders, Lahiri Mahasaya's habitual physiological state exhibited the superhuman features of breathlessness, sleeplessness, cessation of pulse and heartbeat, calm eyes unblinking for hours, and a profound aura of peace. No visitors departed without upliftment of spirit; all knew they had received the silent blessing of a true man of God.

The master now permitted his disciple, Panchanon Bhattacharya, to open an "Arya Mission Institution" in Calcutta. Here the saintly disciple spread the message of KRIYA YOGA, and prepared for public benefit certain yogic herbal {FN35-18} medicines. In accordance with ancient custom, the master gave to people in general a NEEM {FN35-19} oil for the cure of various diseases. When the guru requested a disciple to distil the oil, he could easily accomplish the task. If anyone else tried, he would encounter strange difficulties, finding that the medicinal oil had almost evaporated after going through the required distilling processes. Evidently the master's blessing was a necessary ingredient.

Lahiri Mahasaya's handwriting and signature, in Bengali script, are shown above. The lines occur in a letter to a chela; the great master interprets a Sanskrit verse as follows: "He who has attained a state of calmness wherein his eyelids do not blink, has achieved SAMBHABI MUDRA."

(SIGNED) "SRI SHYAMA CHARAN DEVA SHARMAN"

The Arya Mission Institution undertook the publication of many of the guru's scriptural commentaries. Like Jesus and other great prophets, Lahiri Mahasaya himself wrote no books, but his penetrating interpretations were recorded and arranged by various disciples. Some of these voluntary amanuenses were more discerning than others in correctly conveying the profound insight of the guru; yet, on the whole, their efforts were successful. Through their zeal, the world possesses unparalleled commentaries by Lahiri Mahasaya on twenty-six ancient scriptures.

Sri Ananda Mohan Lahiri, a grandson of the master, has written an interesting booklet on KRIYA. "The text of the BHAGAVAD GITA is a part of the great epic, the MAHABHARATA, which possesses several knot-points (VYAS-KUTAS)," Sri Ananda wrote. "Keep those knot-points unquestioned, and we find nothing but mythical stories of a peculiar and easily-misunderstood type. Keep those knot-points unexplained, and we have lost a science which the East has preserved with superhuman patience after a quest of thousands of years of experiment. {FN35-20} It was the commentaries of Lahiri Mahasaya which brought to light, clear of allegories, the very science of religion that had been so cleverly put out of sight in the riddle of scriptural letters and imagery. No longer a mere unintelligible jugglery of words, the otherwise unmeaning formulas of Vedic worship have been proved by the master to be full of scientific significance. . . .

"We know that man is usually helpless against the insurgent sway of evil passions, but these are rendered powerless and man finds no motive in their indulgence when there dawns on him a consciousness of superior and lasting bliss through KRIYA. Here the give-up, the negation of the lower passions,

synchronizes with a take-up, the assertion of a beatitude. Without such a course, hundreds of moral maxims which run in mere negatives are useless to us.

"Our eagerness for worldly activity kills in us the sense of spiritual awe. We cannot comprehend the Great Life behind all names and forms, just because science brings home to us how we can use the powers of nature; this familiarity has bred a contempt for her ultimate secrets. Our relation with nature is one of practical business. We tease her, so to speak, to know how she can be used to serve our purposes; we make use of her energies, whose Source yet remains unknown. In science our relation with nature is one that exists between a man and his servant, or in a philosophical sense she is like a captive in the witness box. We cross-examine her, challenge her, and minutely weigh her evidence in human scales which cannot measure her hidden values. On the other hand, when the self is in communion with a higher power, nature automatically obeys, without stress or strain, the will of man. This effortless command over nature is called 'miraculous' by the uncomprehending materialist.

"The life of Lahiri Mahasaya set an example which changed the erroneous notion that yoga is a mysterious practice. Every man may find a way through KRIYA to understand his proper relation with nature, and to feel spiritual reverence for all phenomena, whether mystical or of everyday occurrence, in spite of the matter-of-factness of physical science. {FN35-21} We must bear in mind that what was mystical a thousand years ago is no longer so, and what is mysterious now may become lawfully intelligible a hundred years hence. It is the Infinite, the Ocean of Power, that is at the back of all manifestations.

"The law of KRIYA YOGA is eternal. It is true like mathematics; like the simple rules of addition and subtraction, the law of KRIYA can never be destroyed. Burn to ashes all the books on mathematics, the logically-minded will always rediscover such truths; destroy all the sacred books on yoga, its fundamental laws will come out whenever there appears a true yogi who comprises within himself pure devotion and consequently pure knowledge."

Just as Babaji is among the greatest of avatars, a MAHAVATAR, and Sri Yukteswar a JNANAVATAR or Incarnation of Wisdom, so Lahiri Mahasaya may justly be called YOGAVATAR, or Incarnation of Yoga. By the standards of both qualitative and quantitative good, he 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. Apart from the miracles of his own life, surely the YOGAVATAR reached the zenith of all wonders in reducing the ancient complexities of yoga to an effective simplicity not beyond the ordinary grasp.

In reference to miracles, Lahiri Mahasaya often said, "The operation of subtle laws which are unknown to people in general should not be publicly discussed or published without due discrimination." If in these pages I have appeared to flout his cautionary words, it is because he has given me an inward reassurance. Also, in recording the lives of Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, and Sri Yukteswar, I have thought it advisable to omit many true miraculous stories, which could hardly have

been included without writing, also, an explanatory volume of abstruse philosophy.

New hope for new men! "Divine union," the YOGAVATAR proclaimed, "is possible through self-effort, and is not dependent on theological beliefs or on the arbitrary will of a Cosmic Dictator."

Through use of the KRIYA key, persons who cannot bring themselves to believe in the divinity of any man will behold at last the full divinity of their own selves.

Endnotes

- MATTHEW 3:15.
- Many Biblical passages reveal that the law of reincarnation was understood and accepted. Reincarnational cycles are a more reasonable explanation for the different states of evolution in which mankind is found, than the common Western theory which assumes that something (consciousness of egoity) came out of nothing, existed with varying degrees of lustihood for thirty or ninety years, and then returned to the original void. The inconceivable nature of such a void is a problem to delight the heart of a medieval Schoolman.
- MALACHI 4:5.
- "Before him," i.e., "before the Lord."
- LUKE 1:13-17.
- MATTHEW 17:12-13.
- MATTHEW 11:13-14.
- JOHN 1:21.

{FN35-1} MATTHEW 3:15.

{FN35-2} Many Biblical passages reveal that the law of reincarnation was understood and accepted. Reincarnational cycles are a more reasonable explanation for the different states of evolution in which mankind is found, than the common Western theory which assumes that something (consciousness of egoity) came out of nothing, existed with varying degrees of lustihood for thirty or ninety years, and then returned to the original void. The inconceivable nature of such a void is a problem to delight the heart of a medieval Schoolman.

{FN35-3} MALACHI 4:5.

{FN35-4} "Before him," i.e., "before the Lord."

{FN35-5} LUKE 1:13-17.

{FN35-6} MATTHEW 17:12-13.

{FN35-7} MATTHEW 11:13-14.

{FN35-8} JOHN 1:21.

{FN35-9} II KINGS 2:9-14.

{FN35-10} MATTHEW 17:3.

{FN35-11} MATTHEW 27:46-49.

{FN35-12} "How many sorts of death are in our bodies! Nothing is therein but death."-MARTIN LUTHER, IN "TABLE-TALK."

{FN35-13} The chief prayer of the Mohammedans, usually repeated four or five times daily.

{FN35-14} "Seek truth in meditation, not in moldy books. Look in the sky to find the moon, not in the pond."-PERSIAN PROVERB.

{FN35-15} As KRIYA YOGA is capable of many subdivisions, Lahiri Mahasaya wisely sifted out four steps which he discerned to be those which contained the essential marrow, and which were of the highest value in actual practice.

{FN35-16} Other titles bestowed on Lahiri Mahasaya by his

disciples were YOGIBAR (greatest of yogis), YOGIRAJ (king of yogis), and MUNIBAR (greatest of saints), to which I have added YOGAVATAR (incarnation of yoga).

{FN35-17} He had given, altogether, thirty-five years of service in one department of the government.

{FN35-18} Vast herbal knowledge is found in ancient Sanskrit treatises. Himalayan herbs were employed in a rejuvenation treatment which aroused the attention of the world in 1938 when the method was used on Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya, 77-year-old Vice-Chancellor of Benares Hindu University.

To a remarkable extent, the noted scholar regained in 45 days his health, strength, memory, normal eyesight; indications of a third set of teeth appeared, while all wrinkles vanished. The herbal treatment, known as KAYA KALPA, is one of 80 rejuvenation methods outlined in Hindu AYURVEDA or medical science. Pundit Malaviya underwent the treatment at the hands of Sri Kalpacharya Swami Beshundasji, who claims 1766 as his birth year. He possesses documents proving him to be more than 100 years old; ASSOCIATED PRESS reporters remarked that he looked about 40.

Ancient Hindu treatises divided medical science into 8 branches: SALYA (surgery); SALAKYA (diseases above the neck); KAYACHIKITSA (medicine proper); BHUTAVIDYA (mental diseases); KAUMARA (care of infancy); AGADA (toxicology); RASAYANA (longevity); VAGIKARANA (tonics). Vedic physicians used delicate surgical instruments, employed plastic surgery, understood medical methods to counteract the effects of poison gas, performed Caesarean sections and brain operations, were skilled in dynamization of drugs. Hippocrates, famous physician of the 5th century B.C., borrowed much of his materia medica from Hindu sources.

{FN35-19} The East Indian margosa tree. Its medicinal values have now become recognized in the West, where the bitter NEEM bark is used as a tonic, and the oil from seeds and fruit has been found of utmost worth in the treatment of leprosy and other diseases.

{FN35-20} "A number of seals recently excavated from archaeological sites of the Indus valley, datable in the third millennium B.C., show figures seated in meditative postures now used in the system of Yoga, and warrant the inference that even at that time some of the rudiments of Yoga were already known.

We may not unreasonably draw the conclusion that systematic introspection with the aid of studied methods has been practiced in India for five thousand years. . . . India has developed certain valuable religious attitudes of mind and ethical notions which are unique, at least in the wideness of their application to life.

One of these has been a tolerance in questions of intellectual belief-doctrine-that is amazing to the West, where for many centuries heresy-hunting was common, and bloody wars between nations over sectarian rivalries were frequent."- Extracts from an article by Professor W. Norman Brown in the May, 1939 issue of the BULLETIN of the American Council of Learned Societies, Washington, D.C.

{FN35-21} One thinks here of Carlyle's observation in SARTOR RESARTUS: "The man who cannot wonder, who does not habitually wonder (and worship), were he president of innumerable Royal Societies and carried . . . the epitome of all laboratories and observatories, with their results, in his single head,-is but a pair of spectacles behind which there is no eye."

Autobiography Of A Yogi

Chapter 31: An Interview with the Sacred Mother (Kashi Moni Lahiri)

"Reverend Mother, I was baptized in infancy by your prophet-husband. He was the guru of my parents and of my own guru Sri Yukteswarji. Will you therefore give me the privilege of hearing a few incidents in your sacred life?"



Kashi Moni Lahiri

I was addressing Srimati Kashi Moni, the life-companion of [Lahiri Mahasaya](#). Finding myself in Benares for a short period, I was fulfilling a long-felt desire to visit the venerable lady. She received me graciously at the old Lahiri homestead in the Garudeswar Mohulla section of Benares. Although aged, she was blooming like a lotus, silently emanating a spiritual fragrance. She was of medium build, with a slender neck and fair skin. Large, lustrous eyes softened her motherly face.

"Son, you are welcome here. Come upstairs."

Kashi Moni led the way to a very small room where, for a time, she had lived with her husband. I felt honored to witness the shrine in which the peerless master had condescended to play the human drama of matrimony. The gentle lady motioned me to a pillow seat by her side.

"It was years before I came to realize the divine stature of my husband," she began. "One night, in this very room, I had a vivid dream. Glorious angels floated in unimaginable grace above me. So realistic was the sight that I awoke at once; the room was strangely enveloped in dazzling light.

"My husband, in lotus posture, was levitated in the center of the room, surrounded by angels who were worshipping him with the supplicating dignity of palm-folded hands. Astonished beyond measure, I was convinced that I was still dreaming.

"'Woman,' Lahiri Mahasaya said, 'you are not dreaming. Forsake your sleep forever and forever.' As he slowly descended to the floor, I prostrated myself at his feet.

"'Master,' I cried, 'again and again I bow before you! Will you pardon me for having considered you as my husband? I die with shame to realize that I have remained asleep in ignorance by the side of one who is divinely awakened. From this night, you are no longer my husband, but my guru. Will you accept my insignificant self as your disciple?' {FN31-1}

"The master touched me gently. 'Sacred soul, arise. You are accepted.' He motioned toward the angels. 'Please bow in turn to each of these holy saints.'

"When I had finished my humble genuflections, the angelic voices sounded together, like a chorus from an ancient scripture.

"'Consort of the Divine One, thou art blessed. We salute thee.' They bowed at my feet and lo! their refulgent forms vanished. The room darkened.

"My guru asked me to receive initiation into KRIYA YOGA.

"'Of course,' I responded. 'I am sorry not to have had its blessing earlier in my life.'

"'The time was not ripe.' Lahiri Mahasaya smiled consolingly. 'Much of your karma I have silently helped you to work out. Now you are willing and ready.'

"He touched my forehead. Masses of whirling light appeared; the radiance gradually formed itself into the opal-blue spiritual eye, ringed in gold and centered with a white pentagonal star.

"'Penetrate your consciousness through the star into the kingdom of the Infinite.' My guru's voice had a new note, soft like distant music.

"Vision after vision broke as oceanic surf on the shores of my soul. The panoramic spheres finally melted in a sea of bliss. I lost myself in ever-surging blessedness. When I returned hours later to awareness of this world, the master gave me the technique of KRIYA YOGA.

"From that night on, Lahiri Mahasaya never slept in my room again. Nor, thereafter, did he ever sleep. He remained in the front room downstairs, in the company of his disciples both by

day and by night."

The illustrious lady fell into silence. Realizing the uniqueness of her relationship with the sublime yogi, I finally ventured to ask for further reminiscences.

"Son, you are greedy. Nevertheless you shall have one more story." She smiled shyly. "I will confess a sin which I committed against my guru-husband. Some months after my initiation, I began to feel forlorn and neglected. One morning Lahiri Mahasaya entered this little room to fetch an article; I quickly followed him. Overcome by violent delusion, I addressed him scathingly.

"You spend all your time with the disciples. What about your responsibilities for your wife and children? I regret that you do not interest yourself in providing more money for the family.'

"The master glanced at me for a moment, then lo! he was gone. Awed and frightened, I heard a voice resounding from every part of the room:

"It is all nothing, don't you see? How could a nothing like me produce riches for you?'

"Guruji,' I cried, 'I implore pardon a million times! My sinful eyes can see you no more; please appear in your sacred form.'

"I am here.' This reply came from above me. I looked up and saw the master materialize in the air, his head touching the ceiling. His eyes were like blinding flames. Beside myself with fear, I lay sobbing at his feet after he had quietly descended to the floor.

"'Woman,' he said, 'seek divine wealth, not the paltry tinsel of earth. After acquiring inward treasure, you will find that outward supply is always forthcoming.' He added, 'One of my spiritual sons will make provision for you.'

"My guru's words naturally came true; a disciple did leave a considerable sum for our family."

I thanked Kashi Moni for sharing with me her wondrous experiences. {FN31-2} On the following day I returned to her home and enjoyed several hours of philosophical discussion with Tincouri and Ducouri Lahiri. These two saintly sons of India's great yogi followed closely in his ideal footsteps. Both men were fair, tall, stalwart, and heavily bearded, with soft voices and an old-fashioned charm of manner.

His wife was not the only woman disciple of Lahiri Mahasaya; there were hundreds of others, including my mother. A woman chela once asked the guru for his photograph. He handed her a print, remarking, "If you deem it a protection, then it is so; otherwise it is only a picture."

A few days later this woman and Lahiri Mahasaya's daughter-in-law happened to be studying the BHAGAVAD GITA at a table behind which hung the guru's photograph. An electrical storm broke out with great fury.

"Lahiri Mahasaya, protect us!" The women bowed before the picture. Lightning struck the book which they had been reading, but the two devotees were unhurt.

"I felt as though a sheet of ice had been placed around me to ward off the scorching heat," the chela explained.

Lahiri Mahasaya performed two miracles in connection with a woman disciple, Abhoya. She and her husband, a Calcutta lawyer, started one day for Benares to visit the guru. Their carriage was delayed by heavy traffic; they reached the Howrah main station only to hear the Benares train whistling for departure.

Abhoya, near the ticket office, stood quietly.

"Lahiri Mahasaya, I beseech thee to stop the train!" she silently prayed. "I cannot suffer the pangs of delay in waiting another day to see thee."

The wheels of the snorting train continued to move round and round, but there was no onward progress. The engineer and passengers descended to the platform to view the phenomenon. An English railroad guard approached Abhoya and her husband. Contrary to all precedent, he volunteered his services.

"Babu," he said, "give me the money. I will buy your tickets while you get aboard."

As soon as the couple was seated and had received the tickets, the train slowly moved forward. In panic, the engineer and passengers clambered again to their places, knowing neither how the train started, nor why it had stopped in the first place.

Arriving at the home of Lahiri Mahasaya in Benares, Abhoya silently prostrated herself before the master, and tried to touch his feet.

"Compose yourself, Abhoya," he remarked. "How you love to bother me! As if you could not have come here by the next

train!"

Abhoya visited Lahiri Mahasaya on another memorable occasion. This time she wanted his intercession, not with a train, but with the stork.

"I pray you to bless me that my ninth child may live," she said. "Eight babies have been born to me; all died soon after birth."

The master smiled sympathetically. "Your coming child will live. Please follow my instructions carefully. The baby, a girl, will be born at night. See that the oil lamp is kept burning until dawn. Do not fall asleep and thus allow the light to become extinguished."

Abhoya's child was a daughter, born at night, exactly as foreseen by the omniscient guru. The mother instructed her nurse to keep the lamp filled with oil. Both women kept the urgent vigil far into the early morning hours, but finally fell asleep. The lamp oil was almost gone; the light flickered feebly.

The bedroom door unlatched and flew open with a violent sound. The startled women awoke. Their astonished eyes beheld the form of Lahiri Mahasaya.

"Abhoya, behold, the light is almost gone!" He pointed to the lamp, which the nurse hastened to refill. As soon as it burned again brightly, the master vanished. The door closed; the latch was affixed without visible agency.

Abhoya's ninth child survived; in 1935, when I made inquiry, she was still living.

One of Lahiri Mahasaya's disciples, the venerable Kali Kumar

Roy, related to me many fascinating details of his life with the master.

"I was often a guest at his Benares home for weeks at a time," Roy told me. "I observed that many saintly figures, DANDA {FN31-3} swamis, arrived in the quiet of night to sit at the guru's feet. Sometimes they would engage in discussion of meditational and philosophical points. At dawn the exalted guests would depart. I found during my visits that Lahiri Mahasaya did not once lie down to sleep.

"During an early period of my association with the master, I had to contend with the opposition of my employer," Roy went on. "He was steeped in materialism.

"'I don't want religious fanatics on my staff,' he would sneer. 'If I ever meet your charlatan guru, I shall give him some words to remember.'

"This alarming threat failed to interrupt my regular program; I spent nearly every evening in my guru's presence. One night my employer followed me and rushed rudely into the parlor. He was doubtless fully bent on uttering the pulverizing remarks he had promised. No sooner had the man seated himself than Lahiri Mahasaya addressed the little group of about twelve disciples.

"'Would you all like to see a picture?'

"'When we nodded, he asked us to darken the room. 'Sit behind one another in a circle,' he said, 'and place your hands over the eyes of the man in front of you.'

"I was not surprised to see that my employer also was

following, albeit unwillingly, the master's directions. In a few minutes Lahiri Mahasaya asked us what we were seeing.

"'Sir,' I replied, 'a beautiful woman appears. She wears a red-bordered SARI, and stands near an elephant-ear plant.' All the other disciples gave the same description. The master turned to my employer. 'Do you recognize that woman?'

"'Yes.' The man was evidently struggling with emotions new to his nature. 'I have been foolishly spending my money on her, though I have a good wife. I am ashamed of the motives which brought me here. Will you forgive me, and receive me as a disciple?'

"'If you lead a good moral life for six months, I shall accept you.' The master enigmatically added, 'Otherwise I won't have to initiate you.'

"For three months my employer refrained from temptation; then he resumed his former relationship with the woman. Two months later he died. Thus I came to understand my guru's veiled prophecy about the improbability of the man's initiation."

Lahiri Mahasaya had a very famous friend, Swami Trailanga, who was reputed to be over three hundred years old. The two yogis often sat together in meditation. Trailanga's fame is so widespread that few Hindus would deny the possibility of truth in any story of his astounding miracles. If Christ returned to earth and walked the streets of New York, displaying his divine powers, it would cause the same excitement that was created by Trailanga decades ago as he passed through the crowded lanes of Benares.

On many occasions the swami was seen to drink, with no ill effect, the most deadly poisons. Thousands of people, including a few who are still living, have seen Trailanga floating on the Ganges. For days together he would sit on top of the water, or remain hidden for very long periods under the waves. A common sight at the Benares bathing GHATS was the swami's motionless body on the blistering stone slabs, wholly exposed to the merciless Indian sun. By these feats Trailanga sought to teach men that a yogi's life does not depend upon oxygen or ordinary conditions and precautions. Whether he were above water or under it, and whether or not his body lay exposed to the fierce solar rays, the master proved that he lived by divine consciousness: death could not touch him.

The yogi was great not only spiritually, but physically. His weight exceeded three hundred pounds: a pound for each year of his life! As he ate very seldom, the mystery is increased. A master, however, easily ignores all usual rules of health, when he desires to do so for some special reason, often a subtle one known only to himself. Great saints who have awakened from the cosmic mayic dream and realized this world as an idea in the Divine Mind, can do as they wish with the body, knowing it to be only a manipulatable form of condensed or frozen energy. Though physical scientists now understand that matter is nothing but congealed energy, fully-illumined masters have long passed from theory to practice in the field of matter-control.

Trailanga always remained completely nude. The harassed police of Benares came to regard him as a baffling problem child. The natural swami, like the early Adam in the garden of Eden, was utterly unconscious of his nakedness. The police were quite conscious of it, however, and unceremoniously

committed him to jail. General embarrassment ensued; the enormous body of Trailanga was soon seen, in its usual entirety, on the prison roof. His cell, still securely locked, offered no clue to his mode of escape.

The discouraged officers of the law once more performed their duty. This time a guard was posted before the swami's cell. Might again retired before right. Trailanga was soon observed in his nonchalant stroll over the roof. Justice is blind; the outwitted police decided to follow her example.

The great yogi preserved a habitual silence. {FN31-4} In spite of his round face and huge, barrel-like stomach, Trailanga ate only occasionally. After weeks without food, he would break his fast with potfuls of clabbered milk offered to him by devotees. A skeptic once determined to expose Trailanga as a charlatan. A large bucket of calcium-lime mixture, used in whitewashing walls, was placed before the swami.

"Master," the materialist said, in mock reverence, "I have brought you some clabbered milk. Please drink it."

Trailanga unhesitatingly drained, to the last drop, the containerful of burning lime. In a few minutes the evildoer fell to the ground in agony.

"Help, swami, help!" he cried. "I am on fire! Forgive my wicked test!"

The great yogi broke his habitual silence. "Scoffer," he said, "you did not realize when you offered me poison that my life is one with your own. Except for my knowledge that God is present in my stomach, as in every atom of creation, the lime would have killed me. Now that you know the divine meaning

of boomerang, never again play tricks on anyone."

The well-purged sinner, healed by Trailanga's words, slunk feebly away.

The reversal of pain was not due to any volition of the master, but came about through unerring application of the law of justice which upholds creation's farthest swinging orb. Men of God-realization like Trailanga allow the divine law to operate instantaneously; they have banished forever all thwarting crosscurrents of ego.

The automatic adjustments of righteousness, often paid in an unexpected coin as in the case of Trailanga and his would be murderer, assuage our hasty indignance at human injustice. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." {FN31-5} What need for man's brief resources? the universe duly conspires for retribution. Dull minds discredit the possibility of divine justice, love, omniscience, immortality. "Airy scriptural conjectures!" This insensitive viewpoint, aweless before the cosmic spectacle, arouses a train of events which brings its own awakening.

The omnipotence of spiritual law was referred to by Christ on the occasion of his triumphant entry into Jerusalem. As the disciples and the multitude shouted for joy, and cried, "Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest," certain Pharisees complained of the undignified spectacle. "Master," they protested, "rebuke thy disciples."

"I tell you," Jesus replied, "that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." {FN31-6}

In this reprimand to the Pharisees, Christ was pointing out that

divine justice is no figurative abstraction, and that a man of peace, though his tongue be torn from its roots, will yet find his speech and his defense in the bedrock of creation, the universal order itself.

"Think you," Jesus was saying, "to silence men of peace? As well may you hope to throttle the voice of God, whose very stones sing His glory and His omnipresence. Will you demand that men not celebrate in honor of the peace in heaven, but should only gather together in multitudes to shout for war on earth? Then make your preparations, O Pharisees, to overtopple the foundations of the world; for it is not gentle men alone, but stones or earth, and water and fire and air that will rise up against you, to bear witness of His ordered harmony."

The grace of the Christlike yogi, Trailanga, was once bestowed on my SAJO MAMA (maternal uncle). One morning Uncle saw the master surrounded by a crowd of devotees at a Benares ghat. He managed to edge his way close to Trailanga, whose feet he touched humbly. Uncle was astonished to find himself instantly freed from a painful chronic disease. {FN31-7}

The only known living disciple of the great yogi is a woman, Shankari Mai Jiew. Daughter of one of Trailanga's disciples, she received the swami's training from her early childhood. She lived for forty years in a series of lonely Himalayan caves near Badrinath, Kedarnath, Amarnath, and Pasupatinath. The BRAHMACHARINI (woman ascetic), born in 1826, is now well over the century mark. Not aged in appearance, however, she has retained her black hair, sparkling teeth, and amazing energy. She comes out of her seclusion every few years to attend the periodical MELAS or religious fairs.

This woman saint often visited Lahiri Mahasaya. She has related that one day, in the Barackpur section near Calcutta, while she was sitting by Lahiri Mahasaya's side, his great guru Babaji quietly entered the room and held converse with them both.

On one occasion her master Trailanga, forsaking his usual silence, honored Lahiri Mahasaya very pointedly in public. A Benares disciple objected.

"Sir," he said, "why do you, a swami and a renunciate, show such respect to a householder?"

"My son," Trailanga replied, "Lahiri Mahasaya is like a divine kitten, remaining wherever the Cosmic Mother has placed him. While dutifully playing the part of a worldly man, he has received that perfect self-realization for which I have renounced even my loincloth!"

Endnotes

{FN31-1} One is reminded here of Milton's line: "He for God only, she for God in him."

{FN31-2} The venerable mother passed on at Benares in 1930.

{FN31-3} Staff, symbolizing the spinal cord, carried ritually by certain orders of monks.

{FN31-4} He was a MUNI, a monk who observes MAUNA, spiritual silence. The Sanskrit root MUNI is akin to Greek MONOS, "alone, single," from which are derived the English words MONK, MONISM, etc.

{FN31-5} ROMANS 12:19.

{FN31-6} LUKE 19:37-40.

{FN31-7} The lives of Trailanga and other great masters

remind us of Jesus' words: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name (the Christ consciousness) they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."-MARK 16:17-18.

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Chapter 26: The Science of Kriya Yoga

The science of KRIYA YOGA, mentioned so often in these pages, became widely known in modern India through the instrumentality of Lahiri Mahasaya, my guru's guru. The Sanskrit root of KRIYA is KRI, to do, to act and react; the same root is found in the word KARMA, the natural principle of cause and effect. KRIYA YOGA is thus "union (yoga) with the Infinite through a certain action or rite." A yogi who faithfully follows its technique is gradually freed from karma or the universal chain of causation.

Because of certain ancient yogic injunctions, I cannot give a full explanation of KRIYA YOGA in the pages of a book intended for the general public. The actual technique must be learned from a KRIYABAN or KRIYA YOGI; here a broad reference must suffice.

KRIYA YOGA is a simple, psychophysiological method by which the human blood is decarbonized and recharged with oxygen. The atoms of this extra oxygen are transmuted into life current to rejuvenate the brain and spinal centers. {FN26-1} By stopping the accumulation of venous blood, the yogi is able to lessen or prevent the decay of tissues; the advanced yogi transmutes his cells into pure energy. Elijah, Jesus, Kabir and

other prophets were past masters in the use of KRIYA or a similar technique, by which they caused their bodies to dematerialize at will.

KRIYA is an ancient science. Lahiri Mahasaya received it from his guru, Babaji, who rediscovered and clarified the technique after it had been lost in the Dark Ages.

"The KRIYA YOGA which I am giving to the world through you in this nineteenth century," Babaji told Lahiri Mahasaya, "is a revival of the same science which Krishna gave, millenniums ago, to Arjuna, and which was later known to Patanjali, and to Christ, St. John, St. Paul, and other disciples."

KRIYA YOGA is referred to by Krishna, India's greatest prophet, in a stanza of the BHAGAVAD GITA: "Offering inhaling breath into the outgoing breath, and offering the outgoing breath into the inhaling breath, the yogi neutralizes both these breaths; he thus releases the life force from the heart and brings it under his control." {FN26-2} The interpretation is: "The yogi arrests decay in the body by an addition of life force, and arrests the mutations of growth in the body by APAN (eliminating current). Thus neutralizing decay and growth, by quieting the heart, the yogi learns life control."

Krishna also relates {FN26-3} that it was he, in a former incarnation, who communicated the indestructible yoga to an ancient illuminato, Vivasvat, who gave it to Manu, the great legislator. {FN26-4} He, in turn, instructed Ikshwaku, the father of India's solar warrior dynasty. Passing thus from one to another, the royal yoga was guarded by the rishis until the coming of the materialistic ages. {FN26-5} Then, due to priestly secrecy and man's indifference, the sacred knowledge

gradually became inaccessible.

KRIYA YOGA is mentioned twice by the ancient sage Patanjali, foremost exponent of yoga, who wrote: "KRIYA YOGA consists of body discipline, mental control, and meditating on AUM." {FN26-6} Patanjali speaks of God as the actual Cosmic Sound of AUM heard in meditation. {FN26-7} AUM is the Creative Word, {FN26-8} the sound of the Vibratory Motor. Even the yoga-beginner soon inwardly hears the wondrous sound of AUM. Receiving this blissful spiritual encouragement, the devotee becomes assured that he is in actual touch with divine realms.

Patanjali refers a second time to the life-control or KRIYA technique thus: "Liberation can be accomplished by that PRANAYAMA which is attained by disjoining the course of inspiration and expiration." {FN26-9}

St. Paul knew KRIYA YOGA, or a technique very similar to it, by which he could switch life currents to and from the senses. He was therefore able to say: "Verily, I protest by our rejoicing which I have in Christ, I DIE DAILY." {FN26-10} By daily withdrawing his bodily life force, he united it by yoga union with the rejoicing (eternal bliss) of the Christ consciousness. In that felicitous state, he was consciously aware of being dead to the delusive sensory world of MAYA.

In the initial states of God-contact (SABIKALPA SAMADHI) the devotee's consciousness merges with the Cosmic Spirit; his life force is withdrawn from the body, which appears "dead," or motionless and rigid. The yogi is fully aware of his bodily condition of suspended animation. As he progresses to higher spiritual states (NIRBIKALPA SAMADHI), however, he communes with God without bodily fixation, and in his

ordinary waking consciousness, even in the midst of exacting worldly duties. {FN26-11}

"KRIYA YOGA is an instrument through which human evolution can be quickened," Sri Yukteswar explained to his students. "The ancient yogis discovered that the secret of cosmic consciousness is intimately linked with breath mastery. This is India's unique and deathless contribution to the world's treasury of knowledge. The life force, which is ordinarily absorbed in maintaining the heart-pump, must be freed for higher activities by a method of calming and stilling the ceaseless demands of the breath."

The KRIYA YOGI mentally directs his life energy to revolve, upward and downward, around the six spinal centers (medullary, cervical, dorsal, lumbar, sacral, and coccygeal plexuses) which correspond to the twelve astral signs of the zodiac, the symbolic Cosmic Man. One-half minute of revolution of energy around the sensitive spinal cord of man effects subtle progress in his evolution; that half-minute of KRIYA equals one year of natural spiritual unfoldment.

The astral system of a human being, with six (twelve by polarity) inner constellations revolving around the sun of the omniscient spiritual eye, is interrelated with the physical sun and the twelve zodiacal signs. All men are thus affected by an inner and an outer universe. The ancient rishis discovered that man's earthly and heavenly environment, in twelve-year cycles, push him forward on his natural path. The scriptures aver that man requires a million years of normal, diseaseless evolution to perfect his human brain sufficiently to express cosmic consciousness.

One thousand KRIYA practiced in eight hours gives the yogi, in one day, the equivalent of one thousand years of natural evolution: 365,000 years of evolution in one year. In three years, a KRIYA YOGI can thus accomplish by intelligent self-effort the same result which nature brings to pass in a million years. The KRIYA short cut, of course, can be taken only by deeply developed yogis. With the guidance of a guru, such yogis have carefully prepared their bodies and brains to receive the power created by intensive practice.

The KRIYA beginner employs his yogic exercise only fourteen to twenty-eight times, twice daily. A number of yogis achieve emancipation in six or twelve or twenty-four or forty-eight years. A yogi who dies before achieving full realization carries with him the good karma of his past KRIYA effort; in his new life he is harmoniously propelled toward his Infinite Goal.

The body of the average man is like a fifty-watt lamp, which cannot accommodate the billion watts of power roused by an excessive practice of KRIYA. Through gradual and regular increase of the simple and "foolproof" methods of KRIYA, man's body becomes astrally transformed day by day, and is finally fitted to express the infinite potentials of cosmic energy—the first materially active expression of Spirit.

KRIYA YOGA has nothing in common with the unscientific breathing exercises taught by a number of misguided zealots. Their attempts to forcibly hold breath in the lungs is not only unnatural but decidedly unpleasant. KRIYA, on the other hand, is accompanied from the very beginning by an accession of peace, and by soothing sensations of regenerative effect in the spine.

The ancient yogic technique converts the breath into mind. By spiritual advancement, one is able to cognize the breath as an act of mind—a dream-breath.

Many illustrations could be given of the mathematical relationship between man's respiratory rate and the variations in his states of consciousness. A person whose attention is wholly engrossed, as in following some closely knit intellectual argument, or in attempting some delicate or difficult physical feat, automatically breathes very slowly. Fixity of attention depends on slow breathing; quick or uneven breaths are an inevitable accompaniment of harmful emotional states: fear, lust, anger. The restless monkey breathes at the rate of 32 times a minute, in contrast to man's average of 18 times. The elephant, tortoise, snake and other animals noted for their longevity have a respiratory rate which is less than man's. The tortoise, for instance, who may attain the age of 300 years, {FN26-12} breathes only 4 times per minute.

The rejuvenating effects of sleep are due to man's temporary unawareness of body and breathing. The sleeping man becomes a yogi; each night he unconsciously performs the yogic rite of releasing himself from bodily identification, and of merging the life force with healing currents in the main brain region and the six sub-dynamos of his spinal centers. The sleeper thus dips unknowingly into the reservoir of cosmic energy which sustains all life.

The voluntary yogi performs a simple, natural process consciously, not unconsciously like the slow-paced sleeper. The KRIYA YOGI uses his technique to saturate and feed all his physical cells with undecaying light and keep them in a magnetized state. He scientifically makes breath unnecessary,

without producing the states of subconscious sleep or unconsciousness.

By KRIYA, the outgoing life force is not wasted and abused in the senses, but constrained to reunite with subtler spinal energies. By such reinforcement of life, the yogi's body and brain cells are electrified with the spiritual elixir. Thus he removes himself from studied observance of natural laws, which can only take him-by circuitous means as given by proper food, sunlight, and harmonious thoughts-to a million-year Goal. It needs twelve years of normal healthful living to effect even slight perceptible change in brain structure, and a million solar returns are exacted to sufficiently refine the cerebral tenement for manifestation of cosmic consciousness.

Untying the cord of breath which binds the soul to the body, KRIYA serves to prolong life and enlarge the consciousness to infinity. The yoga method overcomes the tug of war between the mind and the matter-bound senses, and frees the devotee to reinherit his eternal kingdom. He knows his real nature is bound neither by physical encasement nor by breath, symbol of the mortal enslavement to air, to nature's elemental compulsions.

Introspection, or "sitting in the silence," is an unscientific way of trying to force apart the mind and senses, tied together by the life force. The contemplative mind, attempting its return to divinity, is constantly dragged back toward the senses by the life currents. KRIYA, controlling the mind DIRECTLY through the life force, is the easiest, most effective, and most scientific avenue of approach to the Infinite. In contrast to the slow, uncertain "bullock cart" theological path to God, KRIYA may justly be called the "airplane" route.

The yogic science is based on an empirical consideration of all forms of concentration and meditation exercises. Yoga enables the devotee to switch off or on, at will, life current from the five sense telephones of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Attaining this power of sense-disconnection, the yogi finds it simple to unite his mind at will with divine realms or with the world of matter. No longer is he unwillingly brought back by the life force to the mundane sphere of rowdy sensations and restless thoughts. Master of his body and mind, the KRIYA YOGI ultimately achieves victory over the "last enemy," death.

So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men: And Death once dead, there's no more dying then. {FN26-13}

The life of an advanced KRIYA YOGI is influenced, not by effects of past actions, but solely by directions from the soul. The devotee thus avoids the slow, evolutionary monitors of egoistic actions, good and bad, of common life, cumbrous and snail-like to the eagle hearts.

The superior method of soul living frees the yogi who, shorn of his ego-prison, tastes the deep air of omnipresence. The thralldom of natural living is, in contrast, set in a pace humiliating. Conforming his life to the evolutionary order, a man can command no concessionary haste from nature but, living without error against the laws of his physical and mental endowment, still requires about a million years of incarnating masquerades to know final emancipation.

The telescopic methods of yogis, disengaging themselves from physical and mental identifications in favor of soul-individuality, thus commend themselves to those who eye with revolt a thousand thousand years. This numerical periphery is

enlarged for the ordinary man, who lives in harmony not even with nature, let alone his soul, but pursues instead unnatural complexities, thus offending in his body and thoughts the sweet sanities of nature. For him, two times a million years can scarce suffice for liberation.

Gross man seldom or never realizes that his body is a kingdom, governed by Emperor Soul on the throne of the cranium, with subsidiary regents in the six spinal centers or spheres of consciousness. This theocracy extends over a throng of obedient subjects: twenty-seven thousand billion cells-endowed with a sure if automatic intelligence by which they perform all duties of bodily growths, transformations, and dissolutions-and fifty million substratal thoughts, emotions, and variations of alternating phases in man's consciousness in an average life of sixty years. Any apparent insurrection of bodily or cerebral cells toward Emperor Soul, manifesting as disease or depression, is due to no disloyalty among the humble citizens, but to past or present misuse by man of his individuality or free will, given to him simultaneous with a soul, and revocable never.

Identifying himself with a shallow ego, man takes for granted that it is he who thinks, wills, feels, digests meals, and keeps himself alive, never admitting through reflection (only a little would suffice!) that in his ordinary life he is naught but a puppet of past actions (karma) and of nature or environment. Each man's intellectual reactions, feelings, moods, and habits are circumscribed by effects of past causes, whether of this or a prior life. Lofty above such influences, however, is his regal soul. Spurning the transitory truths and freedoms, the KRIYA YOGI passes beyond all disillusionment into his unfettered Being. All scriptures declare man to be not a corruptible body,

but a living soul; by KRIYA he is given a method to prove the scriptural truth.

"Outward ritual cannot destroy ignorance, because they are not mutually contradictory," wrote Shankara in his famous CENTURY OF VERSES. "Realized knowledge alone destroys ignorance. . . . Knowledge cannot spring up by any other means than inquiry. 'Who am I? How was this universe born? Who is its maker? What is its material cause?' This is the kind of inquiry referred to." The intellect has no answer for these questions; hence the rishis evolved yoga as the technique of spiritual inquiry.

KRIYA YOGA is the real "fire rite" often extolled in the BHAGAVAD GITA. The purifying fires of yoga bring eternal illumination, and thus differ much from outward and little-effective religious fire ceremonies, where perception of truth is oft burnt, to solemn chanted accompaniment, along with the incense!

The advanced yogi, withholding all his mind, will, and feeling from false identification with bodily desires, uniting his mind with superconscious forces in the spinal shrines, thus lives in this world as God hath planned, not impelled by impulses from the past nor by new witlessnesses of fresh human motivations. Such a yogi receives fulfillment of his Supreme Desire, safe in the final haven of inexhaustibly blissful Spirit.

The yogi offers his labyrinthine human longings to a monotheistic bonfire dedicated to the unparalleled God. This is indeed the true yogic fire ceremony, in which all past and present desires are fuel consumed by love divine. The Ultimate Flame receives the sacrifice of all human madness, and man is

pure of dross. His bones stripped of all desirous flesh, his karmic skeleton bleached in the antiseptic suns of wisdom, he is clean at last, inoffensive before man and Maker.

Referring to yoga's sure and methodical efficacy, Lord Krishna praises the technological yogi in the following words: "The yogi is greater than body-disciplining ascetics, greater even than the followers of the path of wisdom (JNANA YOGA), or of the path of action (KARMA YOGA); be thou, O disciple Arjuna, a yogi!" {FN26-14}

Endnotes

{FN26-1} The noted scientist, Dr. George W. Crile of Cleveland, explained before a 1940 meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science the experiments by which he had proved that all bodily tissues are electrically negative, except the brain and nervous system tissues which remain electrically positive because they take up revivifying oxygen at a more rapid rate.

{FN26-2} BHAGAVAD GITA, IV:29.

{FN26-3} BHAGAVAD GITA IV:1-2.

{FN26-4}

The author of MANAVA DHARMA SHASTRAS. These institutes of canonized common law are effective in India to this day. The French scholar, Louis Jacolliot, writes that the date of Manu "is lost in the night of the ante-historical period of India; and no scholar has dared to refuse him the title of the most ancient lawgiver in the world." In LA BIBLE DANS L'INDE, pages 33-37, Jacolliot reproduces parallel textual references to prove that the Roman CODE OF JUSTINIAN follows closely the LAWS OF MANU.

{FN26-5} The start of the materialistic ages, according to Hindu scriptural reckonings, was 3102 B.C. This was the beginning of the Descending Dwapara Age (see page 174). Modern scholars, blithely believing that 10,000 years ago all men were sunk in a barbarous Stone Age, summarily dismiss as "myths" all records and traditions of very ancient civilizations in India, China, Egypt, and other lands.

{FN26-6} Patanjali's APHORISMS, II:1. In using the words KRIYA YOGA, Patanjali was referring to either the exact technique taught by Babaji, or one very similar to it. That it was a definite technique of life control is proved by Patanjali's APHORISM II:49.

{FN26-7} Patanjali's APHORISMS, I:27.

{FN26-8} "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."- JOHN 1:1-3. AUM (OM) of the VEDAS became the sacred word AMIN of the Moslems, HUM of the Tibetans, and AMEN of the Christians (its meaning in Hebrew being SURE, FAITHFUL). "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."-REVELATIONS 3:14.

{FN26-9} APHORISMS II:49..

{FN26-10} I CORINTHIANS 15:31. "Our rejoicing" is the correct translation; not, as usually given, "your rejoicing." St. Paul was referring to the OMNIPRESENCE of the Christ consciousness..

{FN26-11} KALPA means time or aeon. SABIKALPA means subject to time or change; some link with PRAKRITI or matter remains. NIRBIKALPA means timeless, changeless; this is the highest state of SAMADHI.

{FN26-12} According to the LINCOLN LIBRARY OF ESSENTIAL INFORMATION, p. 1030, the giant tortoise lives between 200 and 300 years.

{FN26-13} Shakespeare: SONNET #146.

{FN26-14} BHAGAVAD GITA, VI:46.

Autobiography Of A Yogi

Chapter 34: Materializing a Palace in the Himalayas

"Babaji's first meeting with Lahiri Mahasaya is an enthralling story, and one of the few which gives us a detailed glimpse of the deathless guru."

These words were Swami Kebalananda's preamble to a wondrous tale. The first time he recounted it I was literally spellbound. On many other occasions I coaxed my gentle Sanskrit tutor to repeat the story, which was later told me in substantially the same words by Sri Yuktswar. Both these Lahiri Mahasaya disciples had heard the awesome tale direct from the lips of their guru.

"My first meeting with Babaji took place in my thirty-third year," Lahiri Mahasaya had said. "In the autumn of 1861 I was stationed in Danapur as a government accountant in the Military Engineering Department. 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 {FN34-1} 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. {FN34-2}

"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 had 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 noticed with astonishment that, except for his copper-colored hair, he bore a remarkable resemblance to myself.

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

"I entered a neat little grotto which contained several woolen blankets and a few KAMANDULUS (begging bowls).

"'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 dumbfounded that this forest ascetic should not only speak English but also paraphrase the words of Christ. {FN34-3}

"'I see my telegram took effect.' The yogi's remark was incomprehensible to me; I inquired his 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 gently, '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 here-waited for you to return to me!' Babaji's voice rang with celestial love. 'You slipped away and vanished 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 angels 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 Nadia sands in your childhood, I was invisibly present!

Patience, month after month, year after year, I have watched

over you, waiting for this perfect day. Now you are with me! Lo, here is your cave, loved of yore! I have kept it ever clean and ready for you. Here is your hallowed ASANA-blanket, where you daily sat to fill your expanding heart with God! Behold there your bowl, from which you often drank the nectar prepared by me! See how I have kept the brass cup brightly polished, that you might drink again therefrom! 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 on my eternal treasure, my guru in life and death.

"Lahiri, you need purification. Drink the oil in this bowl and lie down by the river.' Babaji's practical wisdom, I reflected with a quick, reminiscent smile, was ever to the fore.

"I obeyed his directions. Though the icy Himalayan night was descending, a comforting warmth, an inner radiation, began to pulsate in every cell of my body. I marveled. Was the unknown oil endued with a cosmical heat?

"Bitter winds whipped around me in the darkness, shrieking a fierce challenge. The chill wavelets of the Gogash River lapped now and then over my body, outstretched on the rocky bank. Tigers howled near-by, but my heart was free of fear; the radiant force newly generated within me conveyed an assurance of unassailable protection. Several hours passed swiftly; faded memories of another life wove themselves into the present brilliant pattern of reunion with my divine guru.

"My solitary musings were interrupted by the sound of approaching footsteps. In the darkness, a man's hand gently helped me to my feet, and gave me some dry clothing.

"Come, brother,' my companion said. 'The master awaits you.'

He led the way through the forest. The somber night was suddenly lit by a steady luminosity in the distance.

"Can that be the sunrise?' I inquired. 'Surely the whole night has not passed?'

"The hour is midnight.' My guide laughed softly. 'Yonder light is the glow of a golden palace, materialized here tonight by the peerless Babaji. In the dim past, you once expressed a desire to enjoy the beauties of a palace. Our master is now satisfying your wish, thus freeing you from the bonds of karma.' {FN34-4} He added, 'The magnificent palace will be the scene of your initiation tonight into KRIYA YOGA. All your brothers here join in a paean of welcome, rejoicing at the end of your long exile. Behold!'

"A vast palace of dazzling gold stood before us. Studded with countless jewels, and set amidst landscaped gardens, it presented a spectacle of unparalleled grandeur. Saints of angelic countenance were stationed by resplendent gates, half-reddened by the glitter of rubies. Diamonds, pearls, sapphires, and emeralds of great size and luster were imbedded in the decorative arches.

"I followed my companion into a spacious reception hall. The odor of incense and of roses wafted through the air; dim lamps shed a multicolored glow. Small groups of devotees, some fair, some dark-skinned, chanted musically, or sat in the meditative posture, immersed in an inner peace. A vibrant joy pervaded the atmosphere.

"Feast your eyes; enjoy the artistic splendors of this palace, for

it has been brought into being solely in your honor.' My guide smiled sympathetically as I uttered a few ejaculations of wonderment.

"'Brother,' I said, 'the beauty of this structure surpasses the bounds of human imagination. Please tell me the mystery of its origin.'

"'I will gladly enlighten you.' My companion's dark eyes sparkled with wisdom. 'In reality there is nothing inexplicable about this materialization. The whole cosmos is a materialized thought of the Creator. This heavy, earthly clod, floating in space, is a dream of God. He made all things out of His consciousness, even as man in his dream consciousness reproduces and vivifies a creation with its creatures.

"'God first created the earth as an idea. Then He quickened it; energy atoms came into being. He coordinated the atoms into this solid sphere. All its molecules are held together by the will of God. When He withdraws His will, the earth again will disintegrate into energy. Energy will dissolve into consciousness; the earth-idea will disappear from objectivity.

"'The substance of a dream is held in materialization by the subconscious thought of the dreamer. When that cohesive thought is withdrawn in wakefulness, the dream and its elements dissolve. A man closes his eyes and erects a dream-creation which, on awakening, he effortlessly dematerializes. He follows the divine archetypal pattern. Similarly, when he awakens in cosmic consciousness, he will effortlessly dematerialize the illusions of the cosmic dream.

"'Being one with the infinite all-accomplishing Will, Babaji can summon the elemental atoms to combine and manifest

themselves in any form. This golden palace, instantaneously created, is real, even as this earth is real. Babaji created this palatial mansion out of his mind and is holding its atoms together by the power of his will, even as God created this earth and is maintaining it intact.' He added, 'When this structure has served its purpose, Babaji will dematerialize it.'

"As I remained silent in awe, my guide made a sweeping gesture. 'This shimmering palace, superbly embellished with jewels, has not been built by human effort or with laboriously mined gold and gems. It stands solidly, a monumental challenge to man. {FN34-5} Whoever realizes himself as a son of God, even as Babaji has done, can reach any goal by the infinite powers hidden within him. A common stone locks within itself the secret of stupendous atomic energy; {FN34-6} even so, a mortal is yet a powerhouse of divinity.'

"The sage picked up from a near-by table a graceful vase whose handle was blazing with diamonds. 'Our great guru created this palace by solidifying myriads of free cosmic rays,' he went on. 'Touch this vase and its diamonds; they will satisfy all the tests of sensory experience.'

"I examined the vase, and passed my hand over the smooth room-walls, thick with glistening gold. Each of the jewels scattered lavishly about was worthy of a king's collection. Deep satisfaction spread over my mind. A submerged desire, hidden in my subconsciousness from lives now gone, seemed simultaneously gratified and extinguished.

"My stately companion led me through ornate arches and corridors into a series of chambers richly furnished in the style of an emperor's palace. We entered an immense hall. In the

center stood a golden throne, encrusted with jewels shedding a dazzling medley of colors. There, in lotus posture, sat the supreme Babaji. I knelt on the shining floor at his feet.

"Lahiri, are you still feasting on your dream desires for a golden palace?' My guru's eyes were twinkling like his own sapphires. 'Wake! All your earthly thirsts are about to be quenched forever.' He murmured some mystic words of blessing. 'My son, arise. Receive your initiation into the kingdom of God through KRIYA YOGA.'

"Babaji stretched out his hand; a HOMA (sacrificial) fire appeared, surrounded by fruits and flowers. I received the liberating yogic technique before this flaming altar.

"The rites were completed in the early dawn. I felt no need for sleep in my ecstatic state, and wandered around the palace, filled on all sides with treasures and priceless OBJETS D'ART. Descending to the gorgeous gardens, I noticed, near-by, the same caves and barren mountain ledges which yesterday had boasted no adjacency to palace or flowered terrace.

"Reentering the palace, fabulously glistening in the cold Himalayan sunlight, I sought the presence of my master. He was still enthroned, surrounded by many quiet disciples.

"Lahiri, you are hungry.' Babaji added, 'Close your eyes.'

"When I reopened them, the enchanting palace and its picturesque gardens had disappeared. My own body and the forms of Babaji and the cluster of chelas were all now seated on the bare ground at the exact site of the vanished palace, not far from the sunlit entrances of the rocky grottos. I recalled that my guide had remarked that the palace would be

dematerialized, its captive atoms released into the thought-essence from which it had sprung. Although stunned, I looked trustingly at my guru. I knew not what to expect next on this day of miracles.

"The purpose for which the palace was created has now been served,' Babaji explained. He lifted an earthen vessel from the ground. 'Put your hand there and receive whatever food you desire.'

"As soon as I touched the broad, empty bowl, it became heaped with hot butter-fried LUCHIS, curry, and rare sweetmeats. I helped myself, observing that the vessel was ever-filled. At the end of my meal I looked around for water. My guru pointed to the bowl before me. Lo! the food had vanished; in its place was water, clear as from a mountain stream.

"Few mortals know that the kingdom of God includes the kingdom of mundane fulfillments,' Babaji observed. 'The divine realm extends to the earthly, but the latter, being illusory, cannot include the essence of reality.'

"Beloved guru, last night you demonstrated for me the link of beauty in heaven and earth!' I smiled at memories of the vanished palace; surely no simple yogi had ever received initiation into the august mysteries of Spirit amidst surroundings of more impressive luxury! I gazed tranquilly at the stark contrast of the present scene. The gaunt ground, the skyey roof, the caves offering primitive shelter-all seemed a gracious natural setting for the seraphic saints around me.

"I sat that afternoon on my blanket, hallowed by associations of past-life realizations. My divine guru approached and passed his hand over my head. I entered the NIRBIKALPA SAMADHI

state, remaining unbrokenly in its bliss for seven days. Crossing the successive strata of self-knowledge, I penetrated the deathless realms of reality. All delusive limitations dropped away; my soul was fully established on the eternal altar of the Cosmic Spirit. On the eighth day I fell at my guru's feet and implored him to keep me always near him in this sacred wilderness.

"My son,' Babaji said, embracing me, 'your role in this incarnation must be played on an outward stage. Prenatally blessed by many lives of lonely meditation, you must now mingle in the world of men.

"A deep purpose underlay the fact that you did not meet me this time until you were already a married man, with modest business responsibilities. You must put aside your thoughts of joining our secret band in the Himalayas; your life lies in the crowded marts, serving as an example of the ideal yogi-householder.

"The cries of many bewildered worldly men and women have not fallen unheard on the ears of the Great Ones,' he went on. 'You have been chosen to bring spiritual solace through KRIYA YOGA to numerous earnest seekers. The millions who are encumbered by family ties and heavy worldly duties will take new heart from you, a householder like themselves. You must guide them to see that the highest yogic attainments are not barred to the family man. Even in the world, the yogi who faithfully discharges his responsibilities, without personal motive or attachment, treads the sure path of enlightenment.

"No necessity compels you to leave the world, for inwardly you have already sundered its every karmic tie. Not of this

world, you must yet be in it. Many years still remain during which you must conscientiously fulfill your family, business, civic, and spiritual duties. A sweet new breath of divine hope will penetrate the arid hearts of worldly men. From your balanced life, they will understand that liberation is dependent on inner, rather than outer, renunciations.'

"How remote seemed my family, the office, the world, as I listened to my guru in the high Himalayan solitudes. Yet adamant truth rang in his words; I submissively agreed to leave this blessed haven of peace. Babaji instructed me in the ancient rigid rules which govern the transmission of the yogic art from guru to disciple.

"'Bestow the KRIYA key only on qualified chelas,' Babaji said. 'He who vows to sacrifice all in the quest of the Divine is fit to unravel the final mysteries of life through the science of meditation.'

"'Angelic guru, as you have already favored mankind by resurrecting the lost KRIYA art, will you not increase that benefit by relaxing the strict requirements for discipleship?' I gazed beseechingly at Babaji. 'I pray that you permit me to communicate KRIYA to all seekers, even though at first they cannot vow themselves to complete inner renunciation. The tortured men and women of the world, pursued by the threefold suffering, {FN34-7} need special encouragement. They may never attempt the road to freedom if KRIYA initiation be withheld from them.'

"'Be it so. The divine wish has been expressed through you.' With these simple words, the merciful guru banished the rigorous safeguards that for ages had hidden KRIYA from the

world. 'Give KRIYA freely to all who humbly ask for help.'

"After a silence, Babaji added, 'Repeat to each of your disciples this majestic promise from the BHAGAVAD GITA: "SWALPAMASYA DHARMASYA, TRAYATA MAHATO BHOYAT"-
-"Even a little bit of the practice of this religion will save you from dire fears and colossal sufferings."' {FN34-8}

"As I knelt the next morning at my guru's feet for his farewell blessing, he sensed my deep reluctance to leave him.

"'There is no separation for us, my beloved child.' He touched my shoulder affectionately. 'Wherever you are, whenever you call me, I shall be with you instantly.'

"Consoled by his wondrous promise, and rich with the newly found gold of God-wisdom, I wended my way down the mountain. At the office I was welcomed by my fellow employees, who for ten days had thought me lost in the Himalayan jungles. A letter soon arrived from the head office.

"'Lahiri should return to the Danapur {FN34-9} office,' it read. 'His transfer to Ranikhet occurred by error. Another man should have been sent to assume the Ranikhet duties.'

"I smiled, reflecting on the hidden crosscurrents in the events which had led me to this furthestmost spot of India.

"Before returning to Danapur, I spent a few days with a Bengali family at Moradabad. A party of six friends gathered to greet me. As I turned the conversation to spiritual subjects, my host observed gloomily:

"'Oh, in these days India is destitute of saints!'

"'Babu,' I protested warmly, 'of course there are still great masters in this land!'

"In a mood of exalted fervor, I felt impelled to relate my miraculous experiences in the Himalayas. The little company was politely incredulous.

"'Lahiri,' one man said soothingly, 'your mind has been under a strain in those rarefied mountain airs. This is some daydream you have recounted.'

"Burning with the enthusiasm of truth, I spoke without due thought. 'If I call him, my guru will appear right in this house.'

"Interest gleamed in every eye; it was no wonder that the group was eager to behold a saint materialized in such a strange way. Half-reluctantly, I asked for a quiet room and two new woolen blankets.

"'The master will materialize from the ether,' I said. 'Remain silently outside the door; I shall soon call you.'

"I sank into the meditative state, humbly summoning my guru. The darkened room soon filled with a dim aural moonlight; the luminous figure of Babaji emerged.

"'Lahiri, do you call me for a trifle?' The master's gaze was stern. 'Truth is for earnest seekers, not for those of idle curiosity. It is easy to believe when one sees; there is nothing then to deny. Supersensual truth is deserved and discovered by those who overcome their natural materialistic skepticism.' He added gravely, 'Let me go!'

"I fell entreatingly at his feet. 'Holy guru, I realize my serious

error; I humbly ask pardon. It was to create faith in these spiritually blinded minds that I ventured to call you. Because you have graciously appeared at my prayer, please do not depart without bestowing a blessing on my friends. Unbelievers though they be, at least they were willing to investigate the truth of my strange assertions.'

"Very well; I will stay awhile. I do not wish your word discredited before your friends.' Babaji's face had softened, but he added gently, 'Henceforth, my son, I shall come when you need me, and not always when you call me. {FN34-10}'

"Tense silence reigned in the little group when I opened the door. As if mistrusting their senses, my friends stared at the lustrous figure on the blanket seat.

"This is mass-hypnotism!' One man laughed blatantly. 'No one could possibly have entered this room without our knowledge!'

"Babaji advanced smilingly and motioned to each one to touch the warm, solid flesh of his body. Doubts dispelled, my friends prostrated themselves on the floor in awed repentance.

"Let HALUA {FN34-11} be prepared.' Babaji made this request, I knew, to further assure the group of his physical reality. While the porridge was boiling, the divine guru chatted affably. Great was the metamorphosis of these doubting Thomases into devout St. Pauls. After we had eaten, Babaji blessed each of us in turn. There was a sudden flash; we witnessed the instantaneous dechemicalization of the electronic elements of Babaji's body into a spreading vaporous light. The God-tuned will power of the master had loosened its grasp of the ether atoms held together as his body; forthwith the trillions of tiny lifetronic sparks faded into the infinite reservoir.

"'With my own eyes I have seen the conqueror of death.' Maitra, {FN34-12} one of the group, spoke reverently. His face was transfigured with the joy of his recent awakening. 'The supreme guru played with time and space, as a child plays with bubbles. I have beheld one with the keys of heaven and earth.'

"I soon returned to Danapur. Firmly anchored in the Spirit, again I assumed the manifold business and family obligations of a householder."

Lahiri Mahasaya also related to Swami Kebalananda and Sri Yukteswar the story of another meeting with Babaji, under circumstances which recalled the guru's promise: "I shall come whenever you need me."

"The scene was a KUMBHA MELA at Allahabad," Lahiri Mahasaya told his disciples. "I had gone there during a short vacation from my office duties. As I wandered amidst the throng of monks and sadhus who had come from great distances to attend the holy festival, I noticed an ash-smeared ascetic who was holding a begging bowl. The thought arose in my mind that the man was hypocritical, wearing the outward symbols of renunciation without a corresponding inward grace.

"No sooner had I passed the ascetic than my astounded eye fell on Babaji. He was kneeling in front of a matted-haired anchorite.

"'Guruji!' I hastened to his side. 'Sir, what are you doing here?'

"'I am washing the feet of this renunciate, and then I shall clean his cooking utensils.' Babaji smiled at me like a little child; I knew he was intimating that he wanted me to criticize no one, but to see the Lord as residing equally in all body-temples,

whether of superior or inferior men. The great guru added, 'By serving wise and ignorant sadhus, I am learning the greatest of virtues, pleasing to God above all others-humility.'

Endnotes

{FN34-1} Now a military sanatorium. By 1861 the British Government had already established certain telegraphic communications.

{FN34-2} Ranikhet, in the Almora district of United Provinces, is situated at the foot of Nanda Devi, the highest Himalayan peak (25,661 feet) in British India.

{FN34-3} "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath."--MARK 2:27.

{FN34-4} The karmic law requires that every human wish find ultimate fulfillment. Desire is thus the chain which binds man to the reincarnational wheel.

{FN34-5} "What is a miracle?-'Tis a reproach, 'Tis an implicit satire on mankind." --Edward Young, in NIGHT THOUGHTS.

{FN34-6} The theory of the atomic structure of matter was expounded in the ancient Indian VAISESIKA and NYAYA treatises. "There are vast worlds all placed away within the hollows of each atom, multifarious as the motes in a sunbeam."--YOGA VASISHTHA.

{FN34-7} Physical, mental, and spiritual suffering; manifested, respectively, in disease, in psychological inadequacies or "complexes," and in soul-ignorance.

{FN34-8} Chapter II:40.

{FN34-9} A town near Benares.

{FN34-10} In the path to the Infinite, even illumined masters like Lahiri Mahasaya may suffer from an excess of zeal, and be

subject to discipline. In the BHAGAVAD GITA, we read many passages where the divine guru Krishna gives chastisement to the prince of devotees, Arjuna.

{FN34-11} A porridge made of cream of wheat fried in butter, and boiled with milk.

{FN34-12} The man, Maitra, to whom Lahiri Mahasaya is here referring, afterward became highly advanced in self-realization. I met Maitra shortly after my graduation from high school; he visited the Mahamandal hermitage in Benares while I was a resident. He told me then of Babaji's materialization before the group in Moradabad. "As a result of the miracle," Maitra explained to me, "I became a lifelong disciple of Lahiri Mahasaya."

The Teaching Style of Lahiri Mahasaya

By Swami Kebalananda

Rarely fortunate, I was able to remain near Lahiri Mahasaya for ten years. His Benares 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.

Lahiri Mahasaya was no bookish interpreter of the scriptures. Effortlessly he dipped into the 'divine library.' Foam of words and spray of thoughts gushed from the fountain of his omniscience. He had the wondrous clavis which unlocked the



**Swami Kebalananda, Paramhansa Yogananda's tutor,
meditating with a young Paramhansa Yogananda.**

profound philosophical science embedded ages ago in the Vedas.⁶ If asked to explain the different planes of

consciousness mentioned in the ancient texts, he would smilingly assent.

“I will undergo those states, and presently tell you what I perceive.” He was thus diametrically unlike the teachers who commit scripture to memory and then give forth unrealized abstractions.

“Please expound the holy stanzas as the meaning occurs to you.” The taciturn guru often gave this instruction to a near-by disciple. “I will guide your thoughts, that the right interpretation be uttered.” In this way many of Lahiri Mahasaya’s perceptions came to be recorded, with voluminous commentaries by various students.

The master never counseled slavish belief. “Words are only shells,” he said. “Win conviction of God’s presence through your own joyous contact in meditation.”

No matter what the disciple’s problem, the guru advised Kriya Yoga for its solution.

“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.”

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 a number of his disciples.

Lahiri Mahasaya Cures Sri Yukteswar

By Swami Sri Yukteswar

Years ago, I too was anxious to put on weight. During convalescence after a severe illness, I visited Lahiri Mahasaya in Benares.

“Sir, I have been very sick and lost many pounds.”

“I see, Yukteswar, you made yourself unwell, and now you think you are thin.”

This reply was far from the one I had expected; my guru, however, added encouragingly: “Let me see; I am sure you ought to feel better tomorrow.”

Taking his words as a gesture of secret healing toward my receptive mind, I was not surprised the next morning at a welcome accession of strength. I sought out my master and exclaimed exultingly, “Sir, I feel much better today.”

“Indeed! Today you invigorate yourself.”

“No, master!” I protested. “It was you who helped me; this is the first time in weeks that I have had any energy.”

“O yes! Your malady has been quite serious. Your body is frail yet; who can say how it will be tomorrow?”

The thought of possible return of my weakness brought me a shudder of cold fear. The following morning I could hardly drag myself to Lahiri Mahasaya’s home.

“Sir, I am ailing again.”

My guru’s glance was quizzical. “So! Once more you indispose yourself.”

“Gurudeva, I realize now that day by day you have been ridiculing me.” My patience was exhausted. “I don’t understand why you disbelieve my truthful reports.”

“Really, it has been your thoughts that have made you feel alternately weak and strong.” My master looked at me affectionately. “You have seen how your health has exactly followed your expectations. Thought is a force, even as electricity or gravitation. The human mind is a spark of the almighty consciousness of God. I could show you that whatever your powerful mind believes very intensely would instantly come to pass.”

Knowing that Lahiri Mahasaya never spoke idly, I addressed him with great awe and gratitude: “Master, if I think I am well and have regained my former weight, shall that happen?”

“It is so, even at this moment.” My guru spoke gravely, his gaze concentrated on my eyes.

Lo! I felt an increase not alone of strength but of weight. Lahiri Mahasaya retreated into silence. After a few hours at his feet, I returned to my mother’s home, where I stayed during my visits to Benares.

“My son! What is the matter? Are you swelling with dropsy?” Mother could hardly believe her eyes. My body was now of the same robust dimensions it had possessed before my illness.

I weighed myself and found that in one day I had gained fifty pounds; they remained with me permanently. Friends and acquaintances who had seen my thin figure were aghast with wonderment. A number of them changed their mode of life and became disciples of Lahiri Mahasaya as a result of this miracle.

My guru, awake in God, knew this world to be nothing but an objectivized dream of the Creator. Because he was completely aware of his unity with the Divine Dreamer, Lahiri Mahasaya could materialize or dematerialize or make any change he wished in the cosmic vision.

Ramu is Cured of Blindness

By Swami Kebalananda

A blind disciple, Ramu, aroused my active pity. Should he have no light in his eyes, when he faithfully served our master, in whom the Divine was fully blazing? One morning I sought to speak to Ramu, but he sat for patient hours fanning the guru with a hand-made palm-leaf punkha. When the devotee finally left the room, I followed him.

“Ramu, how long have you been blind?”

“From my birth, sir! Never have my eyes been blessed with a glimpse of the sun.”

“Our omnipotent guru can help you. Please make a supplication.”

The following day Ramu diffidently approached Lahiri Mahasaya. The disciple felt almost ashamed to ask that physical wealth be added to his spiritual superabundance.

“Master, the Illuminator of the cosmos is in you. I pray you to bring His light into my eyes, that I perceive the sun’s lesser glow.”

“Ramu, someone has connived to put me in a difficult position. I have no healing power.”

“Sir, the Infinite One within you can certainly heal.”

“That is indeed different, Ramu. God’s limit is nowhere! He who ignites the stars and the cells of flesh with mysterious life-effulgence can surely bring luster of vision into your eyes.”

The master touched Ramu’s forehead at the point between the eyebrows.

“Keep your mind concentrated there, and frequently chant the name of the prophet Rama 8 for seven days. The splendor of the sun shall have a special dawn for you.”

Lo! in one week it was so. For the first time, Ramu beheld the fair face of nature. The Omniscient One had unerringly directed his disciple to repeat the name of Rama, adored by him above all other saints. Ramu’s faith was the devotionally ploughed soil in which the guru’s powerful seed of permanent healing sprouted.

It was evident in all miracles performed by Lahiri Mahasaya that he never allowed the ego-principle to consider itself a causative force. By perfection of resistless surrender, the master enabled the Prime Healing Power to flow freely through him.

The numerous bodies which were spectacularly healed

through Lahiri Mahasaya eventually had to feed the flames of cremation. But the silent spiritual awakenings he effected, the Christlike disciples he fashioned, are his imperishable miracles.

Rama is Raised From the Dead

By Swami Sri Yukteswar

My friend Rama and I were inseparable. Because he was shy and reclusive, he chose to visit our guru Lahiri Mahasaya only during the hours of midnight and dawn, when the crowd of daytime disciples was absent. As Rama's closest friend, I served as a spiritual vent through which he let out the wealth of his spiritual perceptions. I found inspiration in his ideal companionship.

Rama was suddenly put to a severe test. He contracted the disease of Asiatic cholera. As our master never objected to the services of physicians at times of serious illness, two specialists were summoned. Amidst the frantic rush of ministering to the stricken man, I was deeply praying to Lahiri Mahasaya for help. I hurried to his home and sobbed out the story.

"The doctors are seeing Rama. He will be well." My guru smiled jovially.

I returned with a light heart to my friend's bedside, only to find him in a dying state.

"He cannot last more than one or two hours," one of the physicians told me with a gesture of despair. Once more I hastened to Lahiri Mahasaya.

"The doctors are conscientious men. I am sure Rama will be

well." The master dismissed me blithely.

At Rama's place I found both doctors gone. One had left me a note: "We have done our best, but his case is hopeless."

My friend was indeed the picture of a dying man. I did not understand how Lahiri Mahasaya's words could fail to come true, yet the sight of Rama's rapidly ebbing life kept suggesting to my mind: "All is over now." Tossing thus on the seas of faith and apprehensive doubt, I ministered to my friend as best I could. He roused himself to cry out:

"Yuktswar, run to Master and tell him I am gone. Ask him to bless my body before its last rites." With these words Rama sighed heavily and gave up the ghost.

"I wept for an hour by his beloved form. Always a lover of quiet, now he had attained the utter stillness of death. Another disciple came in; I asked him to remain in the house until I returned. Half-dazed, I trudged back to my guru.

"How is Rama now?" Lahiri Mahasaya's face was wreathed in smiles.

"Sir, you will soon see how he is," I blurted out emotionally. "In a few hours you will see his body, before it is carried to the crematory grounds." I broke down and moaned openly.

"Yuktswar, control yourself. Sit calmly and meditate." My guru retired into samadhi. The afternoon and night passed in unbroken silence; I struggled unsuccessfully to regain an inner composure.

At dawn Lahiri Mahasaya glanced at me consolingly. "I see you

are still disturbed. Why didn't you explain yesterday that you expected me to give Rama tangible aid in the form of some medicine?" The master pointed to a cup-shaped lamp containing crude castor oil. "Fill a little bottle from the lamp; put seven drops into Rama's mouth."

"Sir," I remonstrated, "he has been dead since yesterday noon. Of what use is the oil now?"

"Never mind; just do as I ask." Lahiri Mahasaya's cheerful mood was incomprehensible; I was still in the unassuaged agony of bereavement. Pouring out a small amount of oil, I departed for Rama's house.

I found my friend's body rigid in the death-clasp. Paying no attention to his ghastly condition, I opened his lips with my right finger and managed, with my left hand and the help of the cork, to put the oil drop by drop over his clenched teeth. As the seventh drop touched his cold lips, Rama shivered violently. His muscles vibrated from head to foot as he sat up wonderingly.

"I saw Lahiri Mahasaya in a blaze of light," he cried. "He shone like the sun. 'Arise; forsake your sleep,' he commanded me. 'Come with Yukteswar to see me.'"

I could scarcely believe my eyes when Rama dressed himself and was strong enough after that fatal sickness to walk to the home of our guru. There he prostrated himself before Lahiri Mahasaya with tears of gratitude. The master was beside himself with mirth. His eyes twinkled at me mischievously.

"Yukteswar," he said, "surely henceforth you will not fail to carry with you a bottle of castor oil! Whenever you see a

corpse, just administer the oil! Why, seven drops of lamp oil must surely foil the power of Yama!”

“Guruji, you are ridiculing me. I don’t understand; please point out the nature of my error.”

“I told you twice that Rama would be well; yet you could not fully believe me,” Lahiri Mahasaya explained. “I did not mean the doctors would be able to cure him; I remarked only that they were in attendance. There was no causal connection between my two statements. I didn’t want to interfere with the physicians; they have to live, too.” In a voice resounding with joy, my guru added, “Always know that the inexhaustible Paramatman can heal anyone, doctor or no doctor.”

“I see my mistake,” I acknowledged remorsefully. “I know now that your simple word is binding on the whole cosmos.”

Lahiri Mahasaya’s Picture Heals Yogananda

by Paramhansa Yogananda

Lahiri Mahasaya’s picture had a surpassing influence over my life. As I grew, the thought of the master grew with me. In meditation I would often see his photographic image emerge from its small frame and, taking a living form, sit before me.

When I attempted to touch the feet of his luminous body, it would change and again become the picture. As childhood slipped into boyhood, I found Lahiri Mahasaya transformed in my mind from a little image, cribbed in a frame, to a living, enlightening presence. I frequently prayed to him in moments

of trial or confusion, finding within me his solacing direction.

At first I grieved because he was no longer physically living. As I began to discover his secret omnipresence, I lamented no more. He had often written to those of his disciples who were over-anxious to see him: “Why come to view my bones and flesh, when I am ever within range of your kutastha (spiritual sight)?”

I was blessed about the age of eight with a wonderful healing through the photograph of Lahiri Mahasaya. This experience gave intensification to my love. While at our family estate in Ichapur, Bengal, I was stricken with Asiatic cholera. My life was despaired of; the doctors could do nothing. At my bedside, Mother frantically motioned me to look at Lahiri Mahasaya’s picture on the wall above my head.

“Bow to him mentally!” She knew I was too feeble even to lift my hands in salutation. “If you really show your devotion and inwardly kneel before him, your life will be spared!”

I gazed at his photograph and saw there a blinding light, enveloping my body and the entire room. My nausea and other uncontrollable symptoms disappeared; I was well. At once I felt strong enough to bend over and touch Mother’s feet in appreciation of her immeasurable faith in her guru. Mother pressed her head repeatedly against the little picture.

“O Omnipresent Master, I thank thee that thy light hath healed my son!”

I realized that she too had witnessed the luminous blaze through which I had instantly recovered from a usually fatal disease.

Swami Pranabananda's Two Pensions

By Swami Pranabananda

I will tell you how priceless is a guru's help. I used to meditate with another disciple for eight hours every night. We had to work at the railroad office during the day. Finding difficulty in carrying on my clerical duties, I desired to devote my whole time to God. For eight years I persevered, meditating half the night.

I had wonderful results; tremendous spiritual perceptions illumined my mind. But a little veil always remained between me and the Infinite. Even with super-human earnestness, I found the final irrevocable union to be denied me. One evening I paid a visit to Lahiri Mahasaya and pleaded for his divine intercession. My importunities continued during the entire night.



Swami Pranabananda, a fully realized disciple of Lahiri Mahasaya.

'Angelic Guru, my spiritual anguish is such that I can no longer bear my life without meeting the Great Beloved face to face!'

'What can I do? You must meditate more profoundly.'

'I am appealing to Thee, O God my Master! I see Thee materialized before me in a physical body; bless me that I may perceive Thee in Thine infinite form!'

Lahiri Mahasaya extended his hand in a benign gesture. 'You may go now and meditate. I have interceded for you with Brahma.'

Immeasurably uplifted, I returned to my home. In meditation that night, the burning Goal of my life was achieved. Now I ceaselessly enjoy the spiritual pension. Never from that day has the Blissful Creator remained hidden from my eyes behind any screen of delusion.

Some months later I returned to Lahiri Mahasaya and tried to thank him for his bestowal of the infinite gift. Then I mentioned another matter.

'Divine Guru, I can no longer work in the office. Please release me. Brahma keeps me continuously intoxicated.'

'Apply for a pension from your company.'

'What reason shall I give, so early in my service?'

'Say what you feel.'

The next day I made my application. The doctor inquired the grounds for my premature request.

'At work, I find an overpowering sensation rising in my spine.⁴ It permeates my whole body, unfitting me for the performance of my duties.'

Without further questioning the physician recommended me highly for a pension, which I soon received. I know the divine will of Lahiri Mahasaya worked through the doctor and the railroad officials, including your father. Automatically they obeyed the great guru's spiritual direction, and freed me for a life of unbroken communion with the Beloved.