

# About Lahiri Mahasaya



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### **Autobiography of a Yogi (1946 Original Version)**

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,

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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. 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 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. 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."

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. 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). 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. 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.

From Autobiography of a Yogi by [Paramahansa Yogananda](#)

