

Message 408

Paris 13 February 2021

Anecdotes from the Life of Lahiri Mahasaya

This has been presented by an ardent devotee who desires to remain anonymous. An excellent message indeed.

This entire message is a compendium of teachings based on some events from the daily life of the great householder yogi Lahiri Mahasaya for kriyavans to imbibe and incorporate them in their lives.

Kashi Baba: - On worship of the Divinity in forms.

The true essence of the ancient, timeless and hallowed land of Kashi (also known as Varanasi or Benares) consists of a totally theistic fervor with temples, divine idols, religious debates & sermons, ecstatic dances etc entwined with the totally non-theistic ways of worship by saints and sages meditating in Silence along the banks (ghats) of the Holy Ganga river. This timeless spirit, in spite of constantly being subjected to all destructive endeavours by other monotheistic religions and invaders, has been protected, preserved and revived by sages from eons till date.

One such attempt to destroy this timeless spirit of Kashi by the Arya Samaj leader Swami Dayanand Saraswati, a staunch believer and propagandist of worship of Divinity in formlessness, was effectively quelled by Lahiri Mahasaya.

Swami Dayanand was against idolatry and in an attempt to propagate his ideologies, he organized a debate challenging pundits of Kashi to prove the validity of the worship of divinity in multiple forms as idols.

When the pundits were defeated, a devotee of Lahiri Mahasaya who was a witness to this entire drama came and informed Lahiri Baba about the event with sadness. Lahiri Mahasaya consoled the devotee and told him that he would go to the debate and try to put an end to this situation.

Lahiri Baba went the next day and took part in the debate.

He asked the Swamiji – We all know that water, when cooled becomes solid ice, which has a definite form, while at normal temperature water takes the shape of the container in which it is kept and when heated, it evaporates and becomes formless.

When this is possible in case of simple water, then why can't the same be true in case of the all-pervading supreme divinity. Why can't Divinity be in forms and idols in spite of being formless?

This precise and apt response from a local person, who looked so modest and simple left the Swami dumbstruck. But his companion disciples seeing the inability of their leader to respond, started ridiculing and laughing at Lahiri Baba.

But their laughter was suddenly silenced and they were left with their mouths wide open due to locked jaws. This terrified them and when on enquiry they learnt that Lahiri Mahasaya was a yogi, they apologized. Thus Lahiri Mahasaya succeeded to make Swami Dayanandaji to agree to maintain tradition of worshipping Divinity in various forms.

The Swami humbly asked Lahiri Mahasaya to forgive them and requested him to suggest a remedy for relief from their locked jaws.

Lahiri Baba humbly replied that if some drops of sacred Ganga water are put in their mouths, it may relieve them from this ordeal.

This event made Lahiri Mahasaya well known amongst the people and they lovingly started calling him - Kashi Baba.

Art of Renouncing – Staying with ‘What is’ – not persuing ‘What should be’.

Once during his silent walks along the Ganges, Lahiri Baba was approached by a man — a spiritual seeker bubbling with questions. This original conversation in Hindi is presented below in English.

He asked Lahiri Baba: - I have heard that you teach Yoga,

Q)” Please tell me what does this word YOGA mean?”

A) Baba replied – “YOGA means Uniting – Connecting with the Divine”.

Q) “How does this YOGA / Connection happen?”

A) Baba answered - “By Renouncing”.

Q) He asked, ”What all are the things which one should renounce?”.

A) Lahiri Baba smiled and replied – “Renounce that which you do not have.”

The man was stunned by this succinct reply and asked again.

“How can one renounce that which one does not have?”

To this Lahiri Baba smiled and replied: - “No one is grateful to Divinity for what he has, everyone is running after wanting and getting that which he does not have — this constant pursuit of desire, is making his living quality of life a hell and is the root cause of his endless sorrow.

On Conquering The Sexual Instinct.

Once Lahiri Mahasaya was sitting in front of a sacrificial pit in which some ritualistic fire sacrifice had just been completed and was talking with his devotees.

A man approached him and asked –“How and when can one conquer the sexual instinct?”

Lahiri Mahasaya looked at him and then took a handful of ashes from the pit and said – **“Only When the body is reduced to ashes like this.”**

The man was stunned on hearing this but Lahiri Baba then explained that sexual energy is the very essence of Life itself, but sexuality is a problem of the mind - the subtle body. As long as the body is connected with Life, it will throb with the procreative instinct of Life. This Life Instinct which is there in all living forms degenerates into sexuality in humans due to existence of too much mind and the ego. Mahamudra of Kriya Yoga prevents the degeneration of sexual energy of Life into the sexuality of

mind thus a sort of celibacy may circulate within the body without allowing the vital liquid to get wasted outside the body. In Kriya Yoga terminology, this is called: balancing the ‘Vyan-Udan Vayus’.

On doing What is correct, not just doing that which is convenient.

One day when Lahiri Mahasaya was informed about the arrival of a certain disciple, he got up and went out in front of his room and pretended to search for something. On enquiry from the disciple, he replied that he has misplaced a key inside his room, but is searching for it here outside as it is well lit and thus is easy to look for.

The devotee was surprised by this action of his Guru and requested him to explain. Lahiri Mahasaya smiled and said that this is what you do day in and day out. You visit temples after temples to pray for fulfillment of your various desires, but do not try to understand the teachings and practices of Kriya Yoga. You do what is convenient — not what is correct.

On Ishta Devata.

Among Hindus, it is customary to have one’s own particular favorite Deity, depending on his desires, heritage and conditionings. Once a group of Priests invited Lahiri Mahasaya to enquire about his Ishta Devata (favorite Deity). Lahiri Mahasaya said his Ishta Devata is Silence-Stillness in the Psyche-I. Priests were baffled — looking at each other, and then retorted that there is no mention of this Ishta Devata in the religious scriptures. Lahiri Mahasaya respectfully saluted the Priests and returned to his residence.

Inner Emptiness in a disciple for the flowering of blessings from the Guru.

Once Lahiri Mahasaya was offered Kheer (Milk Pudding) by a devotee who used to be constantly around him seeking blessings. Lahiri Baba was returning after his morning bath in the Ganges along with a small bucket filled with cow-dung, which he daily collected for drying and making fuels for cooking in those days.

He asked the devotee to put the Kheer in the bucket filled with the cow-dung! The devotee refused, saying that the cow-dung inside the bucket will spoil the Kheer. He then took the bucket from Lahiri Mahasaya, emptied and cleaned it thoroughly and then poured the Kheer in it and gave it to him.

Lahiri Mahasaya then revealed the purpose of his action to the devotee, by saying that the blessings flowing from Guru works well for a disciple, when he is clean and empty inside by virtue of Swadhyay, Tapas and Iswara Pranidhan of Kriya Yoga teachings.

The last 3 anecdotes are explained more elaborately in earlier messages 339 and 355 respectively, for kriyavans to refer to.

Jai Lahiri Mahasaya.