

Paramahansa Yogananda Mahasamadhi

Commemorative Service Reading

Volume II

Commemorative Service Readings

Please use the reading from the volume appropriate for the year in which you are reading. The volume number of the commemorative service readings must match the volume number of the Sunday service readings.

There are two colors of font — black and blue. Black indicates a section created by the reader as an introduction, transition, or summary. These may be altered to suit your reading style. Blue indicates material taken from an SRF sources, such as *Autobiography of a Yogi*, *Mejda*, *Self-Realization Magazine*, etc. These are not to be changed. If you find an error, please notify the chairperson of the readers' committee for correction.

At the end of quoted material there is usually the source and page number from which the material is taken. This is for your information only and is not to be read.

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Reading

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Paramahansaji gave a number of close disciples hints that he would pass on. They did not understand the full implication of his words. It seemed impossible that, for them, a morning was fast approaching when the sun would not rise in the East.

The following excerpts from *Paramahansa Yogananda, In Memoriam* and from *Only Love*, by Sri Daya Mata reveal Master's life drawing to a close:

Mr. Cuaron, leader of the SRF Center in Mexico City, wrote after Yoganandaji's passing: "Master said to me in various conversations: 'I am living on borrowed time. Divine Mother has asked me more than once to withdraw from this earth, as my time is up; and if I do not do it willingly, She will drag me away.' Master added that he was very grateful to Her, as several times She had granted Her consent to a continuation of his stay on earth in order to finish some important work." (*Paramahansa Yogananda In Memoriam* PP. 11,12)

After Master conducted the funeral services for Sister Gynamata, one of his most advanced disciples, who passed on November 17, 195, he told a disciple, "Now that Sister is gone, there is nothing that holds me here." In 1940 Yoganandaji had said, "I shall not long outlive Sister."

(Ibid. P.12)

Paramahansaji's last days were literally and symbolically bound up with the visit to Los Angeles of the Ambassador of India, Mr. Binay Ranjan Sen. The great guru could not go to India, so India - in the person of her highest foreign representative - came to the guru.

A disciple wrote of Master's last visit to Lake Shrine on March 6: Master sat before the organ and played several of his chants and other Indian music. Over and over he sang the ancient Bengali chant Light the Lamp of Thy Love-for which Tagore wrote these words:

In my house, with Thy own hand, light the lamp of Thy love....

Change my darkness to Thy light, change my darkness to Thy light.

He and the disciples chanted this repeatedly, and our hearts were filled with rapture. A real devotee of God was singing to the Divine Mother, and we felt his love and devotion and the bliss flowing from his hallowed temple. He played the organ for at least one hour, perhaps longer. Perspiration was streaming down his face; his eyes were radiant with joy."

"...We drove back to the headquarters, where a number of the monks, just finished with their period of exercise on the tennis court, were waiting to greet Master. He gave a wonderful talk about the spiritual path, and how to keep steadfast on it, even after he would depart."

"...He touched on many topics, and counseled us to be more grave, but cheerful. 'Don't waste time,' he said. 'No one else can give you the desire for God; you must cultivate that yourself. The Lord Himself can't give that to you. Learn to want Him. Don't intellectualize or rationalize, and never doubt that God will come to you. When duties are done, give

your time to meditation and to experiencing inwardly the Divine Power."(Ibid. PP. 38-40)

On March 6, the night before his Mahasamadhi, Paramahansa Yogananda said to Sri Daya Mata:

"Do you realize that it is just a matter of hours before I leave this body?" A great pain of sadness went through my heart. Not long before, when Gurudeva had spoken of leaving his body soon, I had said to him, "Master, what will we do without you? You are the diamond in the ring of our hearts and of your society. Of what value is the setting without the beauty of the diamond?" Then came the answer: "Remember this: When I am gone, only love can take my place. Be absorbed night and day in the love of God, and give that love to all."

"....On the last day (March 7), when I came into Master's room he was sitting very quietly in lotus position on his reclining chair. When I went over to him, he put his finger to his lips, indicating he wished silence to be observed. His mind was very much withdrawn, absorbed in God. The room emanated a powerful divine vibration of peace and love. In the evening he went to the Biltmore Hotel where the reception for the Ambassador was to be held. That night Guruji spoke with such quiet fervor of love for God that the whole audience was lifted to another plane of consciousness. Surely they had never before heard anyone speak so intimately of the presence of the Lord." (*Only Love* PP. 175, 176)

Yogananda's talk was short. He spoke more slowly, more measuredly, than was his wont. The attentive audience was seemingly caught in his magnetic web of love and harmony. In the last part of his speech he said: "I am proud that I was born in India. I am proud that we

have a great ambassador representing my spiritual India. I am very proud today. I often say:

Mortal fires may raze all her homes and golden paddy fields;

Yet to sleep on her ashes and dream immortality,

O India, I will be there!

God made the earth, and man made confining countries

And their fancy-frozen boundaries.

Where Ganges, woods, Himalayan caves, and men dream God —

I am hollowed; my body touched that sod.

With these last words, from his poem, "My India", Paramahansaji slid to the floor, a beatific smile on his face. He had often said: "I do not wish to die in bed, but with my boots on, speaking of God and India." (*Paramahansa Yogananda In Memoriam* PP. 57, 69)

Rajarsi Janakananda conducted the last rites for Paramahansa Yogananda on March 11, 1952. At the start of the services a rainbow appeared in the skies. In a beautiful spe, Rajarsi said: "Master gave us His love as father, mother, and friend. His whole life, his whole expression, his whole satisfaction was in giving of that great love. How outstandingly great, outstandingly gracious, outstandingly kind he was!"

(*Rajarsi Janakananda A Great Western Yogi* P. 63)

Paramahansa Yogananda wrote a poem, entitled Save me from Shipwreck on the Ocean of my Dreams, which illustrates the aid and comfort a guru offers to his devotees. As the poem is read as a prayer, look with attention at the picture of Master as though you yourself are addressing these words to him.

My comfortable boat of earthly happiness foundered;

I was shipwrecked on the ocean of life.

I struggled amid the dreary waters of deceptive worldly dreams.

Sent by by the winds of Thy mercy, a little raft of spiritual hope floated near me.

I grasped it – I held fast!

Little by little I moved onward and reached a spacious island of infinite charm.

Nymphs of Thy blessings silently gathered to take me to Thee.

In Thy safe presence all hurt from my hardships vanished. (*Whispers from Eternity* P. 73)