

**Paramahansa Yogananda Birthday
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.

Paramahansa Yogananda Birthday

Reading

Volume II

Born in Gorakhpur, India, January 5, 1893, our guru came to the west to bring the timeless teachings of India to America. The last of a line of enlightened gurus, Yogananda was the product of India's time-honored guru-disciple relationship. In her book *God Alone*, Sister Gyanamata, the longtime disciple of Paramahansa Yogananda, reveals a deep understanding of this relationship, as the following demonstrates:

Of all the advice given by Sri Gyanamata to those she counseled, some of the most valuable had to do with the proper attitude that a disciple should have toward the guru. Although the devotion, respect, and veneration inherent in the guru-disciple relationship has been a long-standing tradition in India, the concept was foreign to Westerners in the mid-1900s. Gyanamata was one of the first who clearly grasped the spiritual importance, value, and intimacy of this sacred bond.

She realized that far from being personality worship, the obedience and reverence given by the disciple toward the guru is born of the highest wisdom, for a true guru is a vehicle of God for the emancipation of souls. Gyanamata understood that the guru-disciple relationship is rooted in divine law; that only through the teachings and blessings of a true guru — through attunement with his enlightened consciousness —

can a soul ascend the path to union with God. Even though Gyanamata was not often in her Guru's physical presence, she attained the divine consciousness about which he taught, demonstrating that inner attunement and receptivity to the guru is far more important than outer association with him....

One may have many teachers but only one guru. He appears when the hunger for God is so strong that it will take no denial. His object, his purpose in the life of the disciple is not only loving kindness, but also firmness. He does not hesitate to give what we call "pain," if by that pain the disciple will draw closer to God. It is like a painful operation that has as its object the benefit of the patient.

The greatest thing in the life of the disciple is to be able to look in the face of the guru and say, "I will accept anything. Treat me in any way that seems best to you in order that in the end I may be what you are."
(PP. 96, 97)

She expands on this point in a letter written to Master in 1942:

I believe any ordinarily good teacher can discipline a student by some process of rewards and punishments. What I refer to is much more subtle. God often uses the guru as His vehicle without any conscious cooperation from the guru; and God that was flowing through you to me in the way I most needed. That is the answer to my whole life for years: God and His will for me flowing to me through you.

The spiritual training you have given me has been, and is, perfect. The guru cannot be judged, if he is to be judged at all, by the rules that apply to a friendship between equals. I have always known this. So beginning at the very first, if anything happened that disappointed me or

caused me pain, instantly my soul said, "What did you come here for? Was it honor, distinction, favors, or pleasure?" As promptly the answer came: "No. For God. For God alone." (P. 109)

Guruji wrote a beautiful poem expressing the idea of God alone. As the poem is read, look with attention at the picture of Paramahansaji as though you yourself are addressing the prayer to our guru. The selection is one of his best known and most beloved poems: "God! God! God!"

From the depths of slumber,
As I ascend the spiral stairways of wakefulness,
I will whisper:
God! God! God!

Thou art the food, and when I break my fast
Of nightly separation from Thee,
I will taste Thee, and mentally say:
God! God! God!

No matter where I go, the spotlight of my mind
Will ever keep turning on Thee;
And in the battle din of activity, my silent war-cry will be:
God! God! God!

When boisterous storms of trials shriek,
And when worries howl at me,
I will drown their clamor, loudly chanting:

God! God! God!

When my mind weaves dreams
With threads of memories,
Then on that magic cloth will I emboss:
God! God! God!

Every night, in time of deepest sleep,
My peace dreams and calls, Joy! Joy! Joy!
And my joy comes singing evermore:
God! God! God!

In waking, eating, working, dreaming, sleeping,
Serving, meditating, chanting, divinely loving,
My soul wil constantly hum, unheard by any:
God! God! God! (*Whispers from Eternity* PP. 199, 200)