

Paramahansa Yogananda Birthday

Commemorative Service Reading

Volume III

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

Volume III

Our Master, Paramahansa Yogananda, was born in Gorakhpur in northeastern India on January 5, 1893. He was the second son and fourth child in a family of eight children. Even as a very young child, Yogananda's life was set on a spiritual path. While sitting on his bed one morning, he fell into a deep reverie and had a vision of the Himalayan yogis. The vision vanished, but the silvery beams expanded in ever-widening circles to infinity. Yogananda writes:

“What is this wonderful glow?”

“ I am Ishwara. I am Light.” The Voice was as murmuring clouds.

Out of the slow dwindling of divine ecstasy, he salvaged a permanent legacy of inspiration to seek God.” (*Autobiography of a Yogi*, P. 11)

The last of a line of enlightened gurus, Yogananda was the product of India's time honored guru-disciple relationship. Yogananda writes:

“Only through the guru-disciple relationship may a truant human soul retrace its footsteps to God. It is a perfect relationship of true unconditional friendship between one who makes a conscious effort to know God (the disciple) and one who actually knows God (the guru).

In the beginning of one's spiritual search it is wise to compare

various spiritual paths and teachers; but when you find the real guru destined for you, the one whose teachings can lead you to the Divine Goal, then restless searching should cease. In India we seek in many places until we find the right master and the right path for us; once the guru has been found, we remain loyal to him through death and eternity, until we become one with him and attain final emancipation. (Reference?)

The idea of the importance of attunement to a living guru is reinforced by Rajarsi Janakananda in his message at the 1954 convocation:

Divine fellowship is necessary before men can know true brotherhood and its natural sequel — peace on earth. The blessed Master was sent to the world to help mankind to understand how to live in fellowship with God and thereby in human brotherhood and true happiness.

You have only to follow the way that Master has shown, with steadfast zeal and devotion, and you will find God. You will realize then, as I do now, that Master is here at this very moment, with you, and with me. Attune yourself that you may know in your soul that Master is here. When Master comes to you, you will realize that nothing exists for you except the love of God; that nothing else is so important to you as His love. Master has melted my soul with his into God. Receive his blessing! Perceive the light of God, and, in it, Master's greatness." (*Rajarsi Janakananda A great Western Yogi*, P. 61)

In a letter to a disciple, who was asking for spiritual guidance, Sister Gynamata wrote:

“If you look closely, I think you will see that the worst of your troubles are caused by your doing what *you* think ought to be done, instead of what the guru wants you to do. What is the sense of calling him the guru-preceptor if we do not really believe in his superior wisdom?

It all boils down to this: We incarnate here on this plane in order to learn certain lessons, gain necessary experience, do work we are fitted to do. We take up our appointed positions, and we cannot have what belong to another. We get our own — neither more nor less. It is only by cooperating with our karma that we find the path of peace and blessedness.” (*God Alone*, P. 100)

This prayer, a selection from *Whispers from Eternity* by Paramahansa Yogananda, entitled "Divine Love" reflects the love of guru and disciple. As a portion of the poem is read, look with devotion at Yoganandaji's picture as though you yourself are addressing our guru, expressing gratitude for the spiritual richness he has bestowed.

O Love, thou art the mystic echo from the caverns of heart.
And the inaudible voice of feeling.
Thou art the mother of all affections,
And in Thy breast throbs the heart of God.
Love is the silent conversation between two hearts.
Love is born in the garden of soul progress,
And it sleeps behind the darkness of outer attachments.
It is the oldest and the sweetest nectar,
Preserved in the bottles of hearts.
Love is the light that dissolves all walls
Between souls, families, and nations.

Love is the unfading blossom of pure friendship
In the garden of both young and mature souls.
Love is the door to heaven, the completed songs of souls.