



SWAMI SMARANANANDAJI
16TH PRESIDENT OF
RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND RAMAKRISHNA MISSION
PASSES AWAY



With deep sorrow we announce the passing away of Swami Smarananandaji, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, on Tuesday, 26 March 2024 at 8:14 pm at Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan hospital, Kolkata. He was 94.

He was admitted to Peerless Hospital in Kolkata on 18 January 2024 owing to fever and other complications. Subsequently, he was shifted to Seva Pratishthan on 29 January. Despite the best available medical treatment, his condition gradually deteriorated and he finally succumbed.

The cremation will take place at Belur Math on Wednesday, 27 March 2024 at about 9.00 pm. The gates of Belur Math will remain open all through the night of the 26th and through the 27th till the last rites are completed.

Swami Smarananandaji was born at village Andami in the district of Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, in 1929. He came in contact with the Mumbai branch of the Ramakrishna Order when he was about 20 years old. Inspired by the ideals of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, he joined Mumbai Ashrama in 1952 at the age of 22 and embraced monastic life. Swami Shankaranandaji Maharaj, the seventh President of the Ramakrishna Order, gave him mantra diksha (spiritual initiation) in the same year. He also received from Swami Shankaranandaji Maharaj, brahmacharya vows in 1956 and sannyasa vows and the name 'Swami Smaranananda' in 1960.

From Mumbai centre, he was transferred in 1958 to the Kolkata branch of Advaita Ashrama, the well-known publication centre of the Ramakrishna Math. He served at both Mayavati and Kolkata centres of the Advaita Ashrama for 18 long years. For a few years he was the Assistant Editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*, the English journal of the Ramakrishna Order started by Swami Vivekananda. He also enthusiastically worked to improve the standard of publications of the Advaita Ashrama.

He was posted to Ramakrishna Mission Saradapitha, an educational complex near Belur Math, as its Secretary in 1976. During his long tenure of about 15 years there, educational and rural welfare work of Saradapitha saw tremendous development. He, along with his monastic assistants, took up extensive relief operations during the devastating flood in West Bengal in 1978. From Saradapitha he was posted to Ramakrishna Math, Chennai, as its Head in December 1991.

He was appointed a Trustee of the Ramakrishna Math and Member of the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission in 1983. In April 1995, he joined the Headquarters as an Assistant Secretary, and after two years, he took charge as the General Secretary of the twin organizations. As the General Secretary, he steered the worldwide Ramakrishna Movement for ten long years until May 2007 when he was elected a Vice-President of the Order. He became the President of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission in July 2017.

He travelled extensively in India and different parts of the world, visiting many branches of the Math and Mission and also unaffiliated centres, spreading the message of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and Vedanta among a vast number of people. He also gave mantra diksha to thousands of spiritual seekers.

Revered Maharaj was a voracious reader and a deep thinker. He has contributed a number of articles to various journals of the Ramakrishna Order. Collating his articles and talks, a few books have been brought out, of which *Smriti-Smaran-Anudhyan* and *Chintan-Manan-Anushilan* are in Bengali, and *Musings of a Monk* in English.

Swami Smarananandaji was loved and respected by all for his spiritual wisdom, simplicity, unassuming nature, sense of humour and spiritual fervour. His *mahasamadhi* has left a huge void that is difficult to fill.

26 March 2024
Belur Math, Howrah

Swami Suvirananda
General Secretary