

REACH

NEWSLETTER OF VEDANTA CENTRES OF AUSTRALIA

85 Bland Street, Ashfield, Sydney 2131, NSW



Sri Ramakrishna Temple at Belur Math, Howrah (W.B.) India; Headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission.

SELECTED SAYINGS AND TEACHINGS

Little children play with dolls in the outer room just as they like, without any care or fear or restraint; but as soon as their mother comes in, they throw aside their dolls and run to her crying, "Mamma. Mamma!" You too, O Men, are now infatuated with the dolls of wealth, honour, fame etc and do not feel any fear or anxiety. If, however, you once see your Divine Mother, you will not afterwards find pleasure in all these things, you will run to Her.

Sri Ramakrishna

(Source: Sri Ramakrishna: Life and Teachings by Swami Tapasyananda).

"Education is not the amount of information that is put into the brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas."

Swami Vivekananda

Srimat Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj

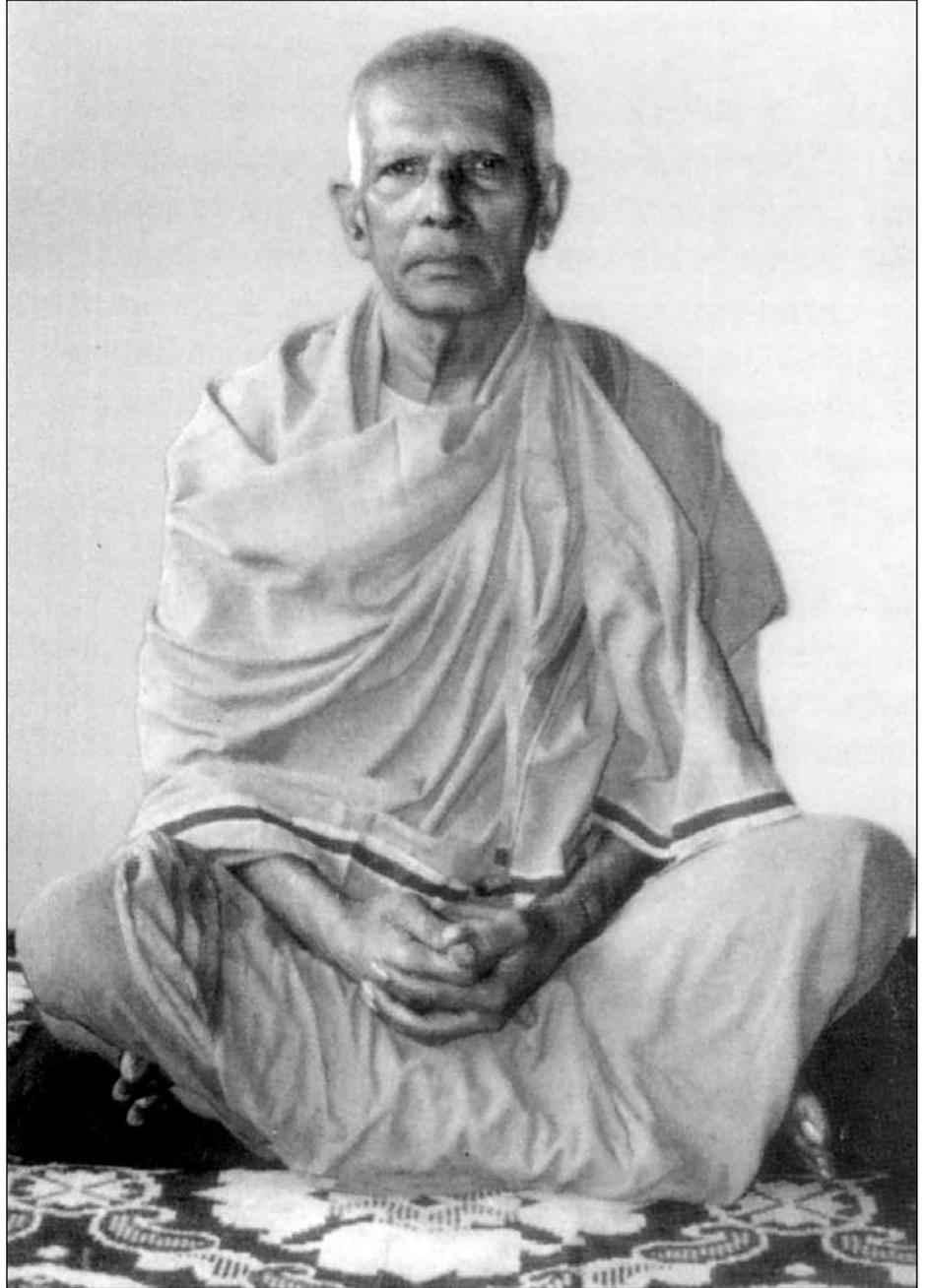
(1908- 2005)

The 13th President of Ramakrishna Order attains Mahasamadhi

Early Life

Shankaran was born on 15th December 1908, in Trikkur, a quiet village near Trichur (or Thrissur) in Kerala, on the bank of the river Manalipuzha. His parents, Neelakantha Shastri and Lakshmi Kutty Amma, fondly called Shankaran, their second son, Kochappan. During his boyhood Shankaran accompanied his mother to the nearby Shiva temple. He loved to pick flowers and collect bilva leaves for his mother's worship. He once said that, as a young boy, he had a vivid dream that a bright light came out of the Shiva temple near his house and engulfed him.

Growing up on the bank of a river, he was a good swimmer. Later, when at Belur Math, he used to spend a lot of time in the Ganga. Mahapurush Maharaj, Swami Shivanandaji noticed this once and said, "tell the fellow, this is not Kerala; he will catch a cold if he stays too long in the water." Water sports seemed to fascinate him throughout his life. Once, during his Karachi days, while going by boat with several companions, he jumped into the Sindhu River and disappeared! He later surfaced and swam back to the boat. He repeated this feat a few years later in USA at Lake Tahoe, a deep lake with temperatures near freezing point.



Education and early influences

Shankar completed high school education in a neighbouring village of Ollur. During this period he somehow succeeded in cultivating a broad outlook. He broke rules of untouchability and caste superiority and did not hesitate to eat fruit from the hands of a pariah tenant couple. He also said that though born and bred in Kerala his feelings of identification was never confined to that one state but became national and international. Since the village school

One of the unique features of the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission is that they trace their origin to the Avatar of the present age-Sri Ramakrishna. His power and messages are preserved by an unbroken Guru-parampara (succession of teachers). This is the holy tradition that sustains the succession of Presidents of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj was the 13th link in the unbroken chain of Presidents of the twin institutions.

had classes only up to class 3, Shankar had to study in class 3 itself for 3 years. In class 8 he was introduced to an English version of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* through a friend. Of his initial reading he said, "The appeal of Sri Ramakrishna to my heart was simply instantaneous and tremendous." He then received access to three or four volumes of *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* and Sister Nivedita's memoir *The Master as I Saw Him*. Around this period he also memorised Swami Abhedanandaji's immortal hymn to holy Mother beginning with *Prakritimparamamahayamvaradam*. The seeds for his guiding philosophy of life "God-ward passion transmuted into manward love" (which he coined) seem to have been sown around this time.

Joining the Ramakrishna Order

It did not take long for the urge to renounce all for the sake of Sri Ramakrishna to dawn in the heart of Shankar; it took place in 1924 at fifteen and a half years of age. In 1926, after finishing school final examination and completing a course in typing and shorthand he wrote to the Ramakrishna Math in Madras about joining the Order. He was advised to join the newly started Ashrama in Mysore. However he needed fare for the journey from Thrissur to Mysore. He went to Sri Ramakrishna shrine in Thrissur Vivekodayam high School to pray for Thakur's Grace. In his own words he said of this moment, "With tears in my eyes I prayed to Thakur to arrange for my renunciation and departure to Mysore with Swami Siddheshwaranandaji, the memory of the event in that shrine stirs me." On 30 June 1926 he received his mantra diksha from Mahapurush Maharaj Swami Shivanandaji, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. The ceremony was reminiscent of several dreams that he had during his growing-up years of a venerable-looking person recognised as Shiva. In the dream he was asked to sit to the left of lord Shiva and then given some spiritual instruction. The final instruction that Mahapurush

Maharaj gave him was, "Serve Gopal," meaning Swami Siddheshwaranandaji. He thus served the Swami at Mysore for nine years until the Swami left India to begin a new centre in France.

At Mysore Ashrama

Someone questioned him as to how with very little formal education, he could pick up Sanskrit and master the scriptures. He said that at Mysore Ashrama he would keep rice, vegetables etc for boiling and would stand near the room where Vedanta classes were being held by Professor Subramanya Iyer. He also spoke about how he memorised the Gita. "Whatever Swami Vivekananda said is law to me. Since Swamiji said that the Gita should be memorised I started to commit the Gita to memory, one chapter every month. In this way I could memorise 18 chapters in 18 months." Sometimes 5-6 shlokas would remain on the 30th or 31st of a month but he would not sleep until the shlokas were memorised.

Other interests

Wrestling seemed to be a popular sport with him. At Mysore and later at Belur Math too he would visit the *akhadas* for wrestling. He remembered that Swami Apurvanandaji (Mahapurush Maharaj's sevak, attendant) was a good wrestler. Sometime later, volleyball too captured his imagination. Even when he was a trustee of the Ramakrishna order, he would play volleyball with the *brahmacharis* of the Training Centre at Belur Math. A senior monk recalled that once, when Maharaj saw a volleyball match in progress, he immediately adjusted his dhoti and joined the players!

Brahmacharya Vows

On Guru Purnima, 23 May 1929, at Belur Math Mahapurush Maharaj gave him the *brahmacharya* vows and the name *Yati Chaitanya*. He spent four months at Belur Math on this occasion. He was assigned various tasks during this sojourn: sweeping the spacious front courtyard of the Math, washing puja vessels, serving tea, serving monks in the dining hall, bringing water from

a tube-well in Liluah, a nearby locality, for Mahapurush Maharaj's bath and so on. He would also exercise on the parallel bars in the Math compound. Though he had a ravenous appetite in his youth, in later years he developed stomach ailments owing to frequent travels worldwide, irregular meals and taking of unsuitable food.

Sannyasa Vows

Swami Vivekananda's birthday in 1933 (January 23) was the day on which Mahapurush Maharaj gave *sannyasa* vows to *Yati Chaitanya* at Belur Math and the name Ranganathananda. Owing to ill-health, Mahapurush Maharaj could not come to the (old) shrine for the ceremony proper. The guru, however, gave the *sannyasa* mantras, the *gerua*, (ochre) cloth and the monastic names to the new monks in his room. However, Shankar had been permitted to wear the *gerua* cloth from 1927, just about four or five months after joining the Order. *Sannyasa* was therefore a matter of inner transformation for him.

After *sannyasa*, with his Guru's blessings, Maharaj went to Sargacchi to pay his respects to Swami Akhandanandaji Maharaj. He said to the Swami, "Bless me that I become an instrument of Swamiji for inspiring young people with Swamiji's ideas. I have not seen Swamiji, but I have met you and he loved you very much." At this Akhandanandaji, placing both his palms on Maharaj's head said, "I bless you. I bless you." And Maharaj felt a tremendous feeling of elevation within, a new power arising within.

Maharaj had the good fortune of coming into close contact with Khoka Maharaj, Swami Subodhananda. Khoka Maharaj used to lie on the verandah of Swamiji's bed-room block facing the Ganga and enjoy the hookah like a child. He was also blessed with a brief association with Swami Vijnananandaji Maharaj and Swami Abhedanandaji Maharaj. He went to Allahabad seeking the blessings of Swami Vijnananandaji Maharaj. Apart from meeting Swami Abhedanandaji in his Calcutta Ashrama, Maharaj

attended his town Hall lecture during Sri Ramakrishna's Birth Centenary Celebrations in 1937. He also heard the noble laureate Rabindranath Tagore's lecture at the Calcutta University Institute.

Developing into a leader

Although he appeared to be jolly outwardly, he was also growing inwardly in stature. Along with keen intelligence and scholarship he was also developing leadership qualities that did not escape the attention of the senior monks at Belur Math. At 31 years he was chosen to be the head of the Mission's Rangoon (now Yangon) Society. He went there in 1933 doubling as secretary of the centre and its Library. It was here that he blossomed forth as an eloquent speaker. His weekly classes on the Gita and Upanishads, as well as occasional lectures in philosophy, cultural and educational topics started attracting record audiences. Here perhaps were put together the chemicals for evolving *Vedantic Thought Bombs* (his words) which he was to throw to an unsuspecting audiences the world over, regardless of religion or caste, or nationality, civilian or military, young or old.

He organised food relief operations in Rangoon in 1939. A 200-bed hospital also started functioning there. Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru visited him in Rangoon. Gandhiji wrote in the visitors' book, "I see here the successful combination of dexterity in work and service."

In 1942, during Second World War two when Japan bombed Burma (now Myanmar) and the centre had to be wound up, Maharaj came back to Dhaka preferring the adventurous land route trekking along with thousands of refugees, although more comfortable alternatives were available. When he reached Dhaka he had become a mere skeleton weighing just 80 pounds. He was later sent to Kankhal centre for rest and recuperation. Thereafter he was ordered to take charge of Karachi centre.

Head of Karachi Math

He became the head of Karachi Math from 9 August 1942. Apart from various philanthropic activities, Maharaj collected substantial donations and shipped over 1250 tons of rice by a steamer to Calcutta during the gruesome Bengal famine of 1943. The Sunday lectures by Maharaj were very popular there. The partitioning of India on 15 August 1947 led to the Math finally winding up its work in Karachi on 9 August 1948.

Some Special Attributes

It was not just through organised relief camps, dispensaries etc that Maharaj applied his doctrine of *Godward passion and manward love*; there were instances in his personal life which showed how he followed this integral principle. For instance, he wanted that at least in Jayrambati, no woman should suffer for want of toilet facilities as Holy Mother had during her lifetime. He provided funds for the construction of eighty low-cost toilets in Jayrambati. In another instance a well-wisher in Andhra Pradesh once gifted approximately eighty thousand rupees to Maharaj. He gave away the amount immediately to the Rajahmundry centre for their tribal activities.

Maharaj was also gifted with a keen sense of humour. Maharaj did most of his travelling (including air travel) with just a cotton sling-bag. Once his *sevak* showed him a new leather bag (like the ones commonly used) and requested Maharaj to use the new one thenceforth. To this Maharaj replied, "This fellow has travelled with me for many years, but has never asked me for food or water. I cannot leave it." Simplicity is one of the hall-marks of greatness. Maharaj's life was an object lesson in simplicity. He never cared for his personal appearance. An ordinary dhoti, a shirt, a chaddar and a pair of sandals were all that he ever wore. In winter, he put on a cotton cap with ear flaps which was, however, seldom found properly positioned! Before he became President, he never allowed anything in his bedroom, other than

a simple bed and a small stool, on which was a small picture of Sri Ramakrishna.

One great sentence in *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* helped him immensely to shape his life and character. Maharaj said, "Can you combine seriousness with childlike naiveté?" And he would remark, 'naiveté' means *saralata* in Sanskrit. This *saralata* endeared him to children wherever he went. Once he gave a particular name to the child of a devotee. The child grew up and by the time it was 3 years old, could sing *arati* hymns. When Maharaj met the child next he asked its name as he forgot it. The child replied – "what is this? You have given me this name and you have forgotten it yourself? Indeed, children found a playmate in Maharaj.

It is well known that the main thrust of Maharaj's speeches and discourses was the message of Swami Vivekananda, and the exposition of Swamiji's ideas was the chief mission and passion of his life. His devotion to *Thakur* Sri Ramakrishna is also well known. But not many people are aware of his intense devotion to Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi, the divine consort of Sri Ramakrishna. On the *Ashtami* day of *Durga puja* in 2003 at Belur Math he chose to go to Holy Mother's temple and said that "She is the living Durga." It was his love for Holy Mother that made him a staunch supporter of Sri Sarada Math and its social service wing, the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission. Out of his personal pranami fund he extended financial support to several of these institutions on several occasions. Maharaj also loved to listen to music. He would ask the newly-ordained *sannyasins* generally to sing Ramprasad's songs and he would keep time by happily clapping.

Head of New Delhi Centre

In 1949 Maharaj was made head of the centre in New Delhi where he remained till 1962. At the centre he built a spacious public library, a large university students' textbook library and an auditorium. Throughout his

life Maharaj attended to the needs of students by providing them with books and by starting libraries. Study was indeed a passion for him. The beautiful Sri Ramakrishna Temple at New Delhi was built during his tenure. He organised bands of dedicated workers for social service and medical service including service to leprosy patients. His Sunday morning discourses at the Delhi University and the Sunday evening discourses in the Mission premises, which attracted large audiences, became outstanding features of the cultural and intellectual life of India's capital. He became one of the most admired speakers, attracting high officials of the Government, bureaucrats, businessmen and embassy staff. During his stay in Delhi he undertook repeated lecture tours within India, addressing universities, colleges, schools, cultural institutions and administrative training academics. At the request of the Ministry of Education he also undertook extensive lecture tours of foreign countries from 1946 to 1972 covering Asian countries and 17 European countries.

Trustee of the Math

In 1961 Maharaj was elected a trustee of the Ramakrishna Math and a member of the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission. In 1962 he was transferred to Calcutta to head the Institute of Culture at Gole Park. Here he continued with his discourses on the Gita and the Upanishads. For the first time a monk of the Ramakrishna Order was invited by the University of Calcutta to give the convocation address on *India's Educational Vision* in February 1966. Another convocation address followed at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay in June 1967, the topic being *The Indian Philosophy of Social Work*.

After undertaking extensive lecture tours from 1946 to 1972 covering 50 countries, he visited annually Australia, USA, Holland and Germany from 1973 to 1986. After his extensive travel abroad Maharaj simply remarked, "One important thing which life has taught me is that India's Vedanta and Sri Ramakrishna appeal directly to many

thinking minds in the West through books, without the intervention of any Indian teacher."

Head of Hyderabad Centre

Between 1973 and 1993 Maharaj was President of the newly affiliated Math at Hyderabad. During his stewardship the Universal temple of Sri Ramakrishna was constructed among other memorable additions.

The innumerable lectures given by Maharaj have been brought out in the form of several books. The major ones are: *The Message of the Upanishads*; *Eternal Values for a Changing Society*; *A Pilgrim Looks at the World* and *Universal Message of the Bhagavad Gita*. There are also several smaller books. There are also 600 audio tapes and 50 video tapes which contain Maharaj's talks on a variety of topics.

Vice President and President of the Order

On 1st April 1989 Maharaj was elected Vice-President of the Order and the

board of Trustees in their meeting held on 7 September 1998 unanimously elected him the President of the Order.

Mahasamadhi

Maharaj attained Mahasamadhi on Monday, 25th April 2005 at 3.51PM. He was fully alert till the end. He was 96 years, 4 months and 11 days. His last words were, "Lift me up. I want to sit up. Lift me up." Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj was a nationally and internationally well known personality who made significant contributions to human welfare and progress. But he considered himself first and foremost a member of the Ramakrishna Order. His unwavering faith in, and undivided love for Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda was the real power that freed him from all bondage and sustained him in all his noble endeavours.

(Source: Swami Ranganathananda: *Ramakrishna Math, Belur Math, Howrah.*)

Selected sayings and teachings

Dive Deep within

"What will you gain by floating on the surface? Dive a little under the water. The gems lie deep under the water; so what is the good of throwing your arms and legs about on the surface? A real gem is heavy. It doesn't float; It sinks to the bottom. To get the real gem you must dive deep."

Sri Ramakrishna

(Source: *Selections from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*)

Difficulties - passing phase of life

"You see, my son, it is not a fact that you will never face dangers. Difficulties always come but they do not last forever. You will see that they pass away like water under a bridge."

Sri Sarada Devi

(Source: *Sri Sarada Devi, The Holy Mother: Life and Teachings by Swami Tapasyananda*)

On Atman or the Self

"The background, the reality, of everyone is that same Eternal, Ever Blessed, Ever Pure and Ever Perfect One. It is the Atman, the Soul, in the saint and the sinner, in the happy and the miserable, in the beautiful and the ugly, in men and in animal; it is the same throughout. It is the Shining One."

Swami Vivekananda

(Source: *Teachings of Swami Vivekananda - Advaita Ashrama.*)

The New President of the Ramakrishna order

Srimat Swami Gahananandaji Maharaj

Elected as President

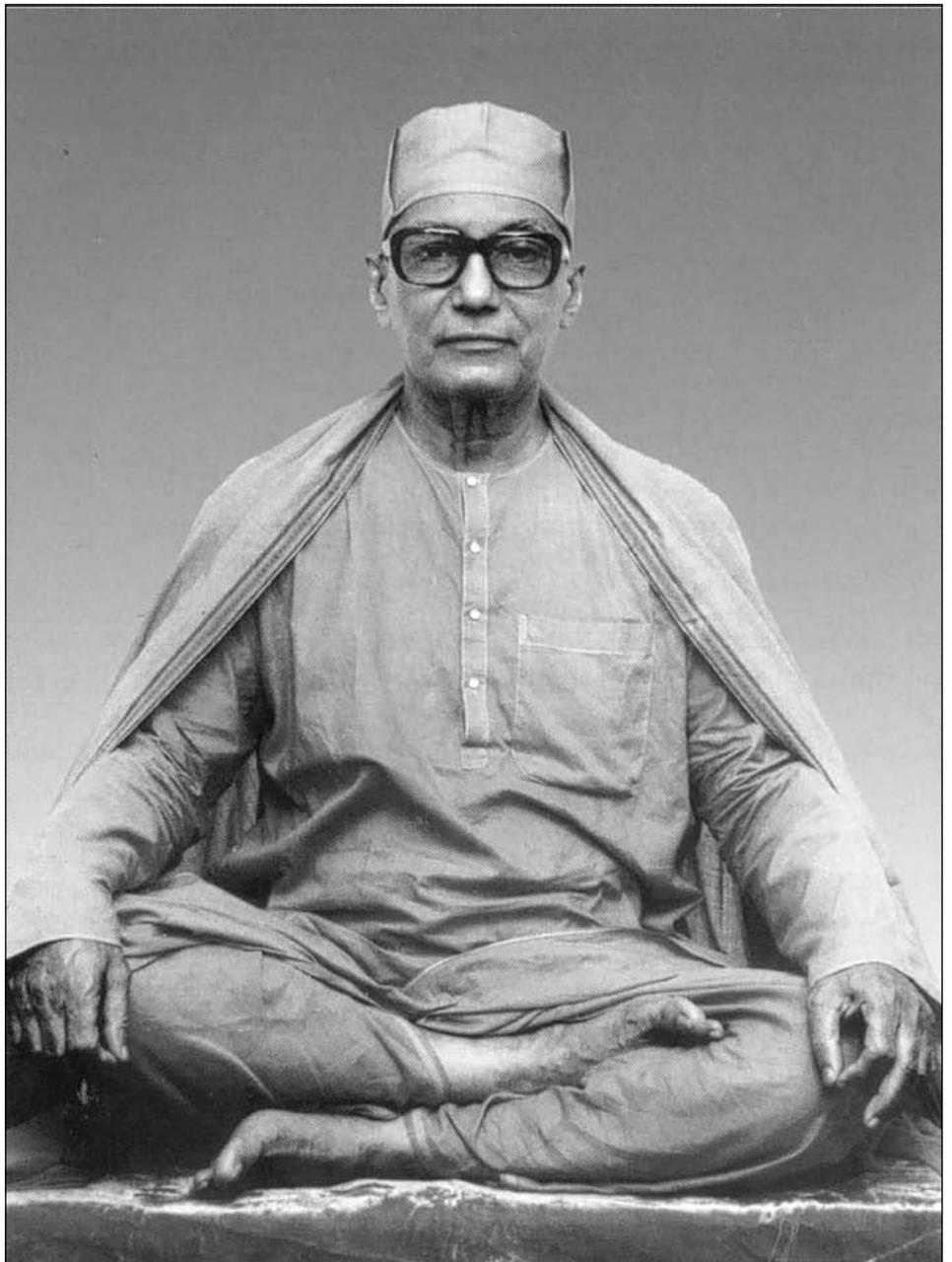
Srimat Swami Gahananandaji Maharaj was elected President of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission at a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Math and the Governing Body of the Mission held on 25 May 2005. He is the 14th President of the Order. Swami Gahananandaji has been one of the Vice-Presidents of the Math and Mission since 14 April 1992, and succeeds Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj who attained *mahasamadhi* on 25 April 2005.

Early life and influences

Born in the village of Paharpur in Sylhet district (now in Bangladesh) in October 1916, Swami Gahananandaji studied the lives and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda during his student life, and was deeply attracted towards them. He was also greatly influenced by the dedicated lives of some of the monks of the Ramakrishna Order, especially the late Swami Prabhanandaji (Ketaki Maharaj), who was his cousin in his pre-monastic life. He had also once met Swami Abhedanandaji Maharaj, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.

Swami Gahananandaji joined the Ramakrishna order at its centre in Bhubaneswar in January 1939 at the age of 22 and received *mantra-diksha* from Swami Virajanandaji Maharaj, the then President of the Order, after two months. In 1944 Swami Virajanandaji Maharaj gave him *Bramacharya* vows and the name *Amrita-chaitanya*, and in 1948, *Sannyasa* vows and the name Swami Gahanananda.

At Bhubaneswar, he worked under the inspiring guidance of Swami Nirvananandaji Maharaj - later a Vice-President of the Order. He also



got an opportunity to serve Swami Shankaranandaji Maharaj - later the 7th President of the Order and Swami Achalanandaji Maharaj, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda and Vice-President of the Order, when they visited Bhubaneswar and Puri. From 1942 to 1952 he served at the Kolkata branch of Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. In the course of those 10 years, he went to Mayavati Ashrama in the Himalayas a couple of times to stay and spend time in reading, meditation etc, in solitude.

At the Shillong Centre

From 1953 to 1958, he was in the Shillong Center, where he worked under the guidance of Swami Saumyanandaji Maharaj, a disciple of Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj. During this period he also organised flood relief operations in Assam a couple of times. Keenly interested in serving the sick and the suffering humanity, Swami Gahananandaji was posted to the Mission's hospital centre, Ramakrishna Mission Seva Pratishthan, Kolkata, in 1958. For 27 long years, he was deeply

involved in all its activities, during the first five years as an Assistant Secretary under the inspiring guidance of its founder secretary, Swami Dayanandaji Maharaj, and then onwards as its head for 22 years, till 1985.

The Seva Pratishthan was originally started, and was known for several years, only as a model maternity and child welfare centre. The vast and multi-faceted shape of this centre that it assumed in later years was largely achieved under the stewardship of Swami Gahananandaji Maharaj. He worked tirelessly to develop and expand its services to cater to the medical needs of more and more people belonging to poor and low-income sections of the society. During his stay there, he also started health care activities at 33 remote villages through mobile medical units, and also free eye operation camps in nearby villages, medical relief for Ganga Sagar Mela pilgrims every year and for the refugees during Bangladesh liberation war.

He was elected a Trustee of the Ramakrishna Math and Member of the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission in 1965. In 1979, he was appointed an Assistant Secretary of the twin organisations. Even after that, he continued to shoulder the responsibilities of the Seva Pratishthan as its Secretary till March 1985. Thereafter he came to the headquarters at Belur Math to function as a full-time Assistant Secretary. He became the General Secretary of the Math and mission in 1989 and continued in that post for three years till 1992 when he became Vice-President of the Order. From that time on he was also simultaneously the head of Ramakrishna Math -Yogodyan at Kankurgachhi, Kolkata.

Vice – President of the Ramakrishna Order

As a vice-President of the Math and Mission, Swami Gahananandaji travelled extensively in various parts of the country and visited many

branches of the Order and also a number of unaffiliated centres. In 1993, he represented the Ramakrishna Order at the commemorative function organised by the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago (attended by 6500 people from all parts of the world) to celebrate the centenary of Swami Vivekananda's historic appearance at the World Parliament of Religions. During that time he also visited, at different times, various places in England, France, Switzerland, Holland, Russia, Australia, Japan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Singapore, Malaysia and Mauritius.

In all these places, he spread the message of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda and also gave *mantra-diksha* to thousands of spiritual seekers. He also responded to the requests for spiritual guidance from all corners of the country, including very remote villages, ignoring his personal difficulties and inconveniences.

(Source: The Vedanta Kesari, July 2005)

How ought we to live in the world?

“Do all your duties, but keep your mind on God. Live with all— with wife and children, father and mother—and serve them. Treat them as if they were very dear to you, but know in your heart of hearts that they do not belong to you.

“A maidservant in the house of a rich man performs all the household duties, but her thoughts are fixed on her own home in her native village. She brings up her master's children as if they were her own. She even speaks of them as ‘my Rama’ or ‘my Hari’. But in her own mind she knows very well that they do not belong to her at all.

“The tortoise moves about in the water. But can you guess where her thoughts are? There on the bank, where her eggs are lying. Do all your duties in the world, but keep your mind on God.

“If you enter the world without first cultivating love for God, you will be entangled more and more. You will be overwhelmed with its danger, its grief, its sorrows. And the more you think of worldly things, the more you will be attached to them.

“First rub your hands with oil and then break open the jack-fruit; otherwise they will be smeared with its sticky milk. First secure the oil of divine love, and then set your hands to the duties of the world.

“But one must go into solitude to attain this divine love. To get butter from milk you must let it set into curd in a secluded spot: if it is too much disturbed, milk won't turn into curd. Next, you must put aside all other duties, sit in a quiet ‘spot, and churn the curd. Only then do you get butter.

“Further, by meditating on God in solitude the mind acquires knowledge, dispassion, and devotion. But the very same mind goes downward if it dwells in the world. ...

Source: The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, Ramakrishna Math, Chennai Page nos. 81 and 82

My Play Is Done

Swami Vivekananda

("My Play is Done" was composed on 16th March 1895 when he was in New York, U.S.A.)

Ever rising, ever falling with the waves of time, still rolling on I go
From fleeting scene to scene ephemeral, with life's currents' ebb and flow.
Oh! I am sick of this unending force; these shows they please no more,
This ever running, never reaching, nor e'en a distant glimpse of shore!
From life to life I'm waiting at the gates, alas, they open not.
Dim are my eyes with vain attempt to catch one ray long sought.

On little life's high, narrow bridge I stand and see below
The struggling, crying, laughing throng. For what? No one can know.
In front yon gates stand frowning dark, and say: 'No farther away,
This is the limit; tempt not Fate, bear it as best you may;
Go, mix with them and drink this cup and be as mad as they.
Who dares to know but comes to grief; stop then, and with them stay.'

Alas for me, I cannot rest. This floating bubble, earth--
Its hollow form, its hollow name, its hollow death and birth--
For me is nothing. How i long to get beyond the crust
Of name and form! Ah, open the gates; to me they open must.
Open the gates of light, O Mother, to me Thy tired son.

I long, oh, long to return home! Mother, my play is done.
You sent me out in the dark to play and wore a frightful mask;
Then hope departed, terror came, and play became a task.
Tossed to and fro, from wave to wave in this seething, surging sea
Of passions strong and sorrows deep, grief is, and joy to be.

Where life is living death, alas! and death-- who knows but 'tis
Another start, another round of this old wheel of grief and bliss?
Where children dream bright, golden dreams, too soon to find them dust,
And aye look back to hope long lost and life a mass of rust!
Too late, the knowledge age doth gain; scare from the wheel we're gone.
When fresh, young lives put their strength to the wheel, which thus goes on
From day to day and year to year. 'Tis but delusion's toy,
False hope its motor; desire, nave; its spokes are grief and joy.
I go adrift and know not whither. Save from this fire!

Rescue me, merciful Mother, from floating with desire!
Turn not to me Thy awful face, 'tis more than I can bear,
Be merciful and kind to me, to chide my faults forbear.
Take me, O Mother, to those shores where strifes for ever cease;
Beyond all sorrows, beyond tears, beyond e'en earthly bliss;
Whose glory neither sun, nor moon, nor stars that twinkle bright,
Nor flash of lightning can express. They but reflect its light.
Let never more delusive dreams veil off Thy face from me.

My play is done; O Mother, break my chains and make me free!

Source: The Complete works of Swami Vivekananda Vol.IV