

# Swami Kamalanandaji Maharaj

(Life and Spiritual Journey of Swami Kamalanandaji Maharaj  
of the Ramakrishna Order)



**July 1943 - February 2022**



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The assembly of sadhus at Ramakrishna Math, Halasuru on Aug 7, 2016

## FOREWORD

One wonders how a person can transform himself as well as others who come to him as noble and spiritual aspirants. These are almost a very easy handiwork of a blessed soul like Srimat Swami Kamalanandaji Maharaj. We were either born in his family or came into his intimate circle and got elevated by his magic touch. Our lives and several others got blossomed by Swami Kamalananda's cheerful lotus blooming face and smile.

Hence, we feel it is necessary to record this spiritual journey of our beloved Swami so that whomsoever come across this small booklet and reads his life may also get inspired and get their life richer and nobler thereby moving themselves nearer to the Divine Aura of Sri Ramakrishna, Ma Sarada and Sri Swamiji.

Yours ever in the Seva of Sri Ramakrishna,

VIVEKAHAMSA, Bengaluru



We dedicate this booklet in fond memory of and reverence to our beloved Swami Kamalanandaji Maharaj.

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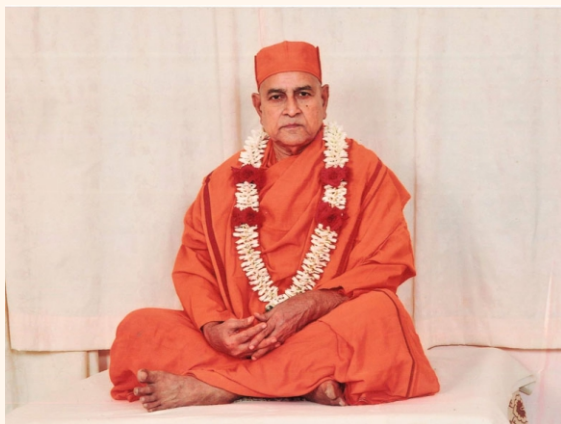
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## 2. A Blessed Soul Swami Kamalananda

**Srimat Swami Gautamanandaji Maharaj**

Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Order



In today's memorial meeting of Swami Kamalananda who has attained to Ramakrishna Loka on 4 February 2022, I venture to convey a few words regarding my reminiscences of him. He was one of my very intimate monastic brothers.

I first met him perhaps as an inmate of Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata and later as the Manager of the same Advaita Ashrama. During 1976-89, I was in Arunachal and would come to Calcutta for our Centre's work. I used to stay in Advaita Ashrama for some days every year. Swami Kamalananda would be very hospitable to me and to every visiting sadhu. He would prepare special items of food like Dosa, Idly, Sambar etc. He was full of wit and always ready to cut innocent jokes and make the hearers roll with laughter.

Later on, during the period 1992-95 I met him again as the same jovial Swami at Advaita Ashrama. Being the Manager of the publication centre of Prabuddha Bharata as well as Ramakrishna Vedanta literature, he was much wanted by the then revered President Maharaj, Swami Vireswaranandaji, the Belur Math Manager Maharaj, General Secretary etc. He would therefore spend much time with them in Belur Math. I would also meet him at those times.

Later when I took charge of Chennai Math in 1995, I met him again as the head of T Nagar Mission Centre. He did extensive renovation and

rebuilding in that ashrama. In a wonderful way he changed the main entrance gate to the rear of the existence building which gave the Ashrama a grand frontage. Similarly, he rebuilt a good lecture hall, the students' prayer hall etc.

To introduce me who was a new comer to Tamilnadu, he would join me along with another two senior swamis, Raghaveshananda and Veetabhayananda in visiting one after the other the private centres in Tamilnadu. The devotees who saw us four always travelling together nick-named us as G4. I don't know what it meant.

I should also mention here his great contribution in the development of our centre at Ponnampet in Karnataka and also of our centre at Salem. He gave a wonderful facelift to the dispensary that many doctors were amazed and came and joined as honorary doctors at the radical changes in the dispensary and its equipments. I also remember how grandly he conducted the All-Tamil Nādu Bhakta Sammelan (Tamil Nādu Bhava Prachar Parishad annual retreat) in the year 2007 when he was the head of the Salem centre.

While in the T Nagar centre, unfortunately, Kamalananda gradually developed diabetes, blood pressure etc. On one day he suddenly decided to retire and go over to Varanasi once and for all. It was my good fortune to talk to the head of Varanasi centre for him to stay there. That was in the year 2004. I accompanied him on his journey to Varanasi up to Belur Math. He halted at Belur Math for a short time but in the meanwhile Belur Math took up the treatment for his ailments by the best doctors of Calcutta. His recovery was remarkable. But in the meanwhile he had to visit Bangalore because of his brother (also a sannyasin) who passed away.

His health improved and he was made the head of the Salem Centre. However, he succeeded at last in his resolve to join the Varanasi centre as a retired Swami after being in Salem for a short period. I met him twice in Varanasi in the years 2018 and 2019. I found him as jovial and happy as when he was at Chennai.

Swami Kamalananda is remembered for his great generous heart in helping everyone, keen intelligence in tackling problems of the ashrama he headed, and of course his unique sense of humour and innocent jokes. May Sri Ramakrishna ever keep him in his abode of eternal joy, is my earnest prayer to our Master.

\* \* \*

### 3. Journey of Shivu / Shivananda to Kamalananda

by Swami Kamalananda

#### *Sannyasis should bury earlier life*

After completion of B.Sc. degree in 1961 I moved from Hassan to your house at Bangalore (Sister Vishala's house). Many people thought that I was the first son of Vishala (elder sister of Swamiji)

By coincidence or by divine arrangement, in your house, we met a divine lady **Smt. H. K. Lalithamma** whom we called **Amma**. I used to be present more in your house than in my parent's house. Then we also came to know that Amma was related to us. When we came in contact with her, talked so much about spiritual life. Chanting *Lalitha Sahasranaama* and attending *Sahasranaama puja*; that is how I went to their house and in the process, I became her family member. Amma also gave one *Mantra* for my spiritual development. Consequently, I was treating her like my Guru.



I had great attachment to my mother. If a person has to take to monastic life, he has to leave everyone. She was talking ill of Amma, my Guru and was a stumbling block in my spiritual pursuit. If the guru is insulted either you should react or simply leave the place. So, this is the dictum which I came to know later. I thought I should not stay there and left the house. This became a very good point for me to develop detachment from my mother. After some time in 1968, I told Amma of going to Divine Life Society and take sannyasa.

I was not knowing Ramakrishna Math then. Amma said, "Don't go now. If you go now there is danger, I will tell you at the right time." So, I was staying away in a room nearer to Basavanagudi Ashrama, but coming to Vishaalu's and Amma's house at Rajajinagar.

One day, I was staying in a room, sometime 26<sup>th</sup> or 27<sup>th</sup> July 1969 in the early morning, I got a dream. In that dream, some sannyasi looking very

virtuous, looking like God, spirituality was exuberating from him appeared and he said *you go to Ramakrishna Ashrama*. At that time, I did not respond. Next day he repeated at the same time, I did not respond. Third day, at the same time when I heard, I thought this is not a dream. I straight away went to Ramakrishna Ashrama, at Basvanagudi and met Swami Prabuddhanandaji, I did not tell him about this dream.

I gave a brief introduction about myself and said, “I want to join the Order.” Earlier, I did not know about joining the Ashrama, like this, though I had visited the ashrama on a few occasions. Sometime earlier Amma had given “The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna” which I never read. Prabuddhananda ji said “alright you can join but apply leave and come; don’t resign from your job. That is the normal thing we tell because a person can study himself for some time, so that he can follow this life or not.” Immediately I went, applied for leave starting from 1<sup>st</sup> Aug 1969.

I went and spent 2-3 days with Guptha, who is my close friend but I did not give any hint. I came back and did not tell anything in your house or Amma’s house as it may create problem.

You (Harish) or your brother (Suresha), I don’t remember, we went to purchase coffee powder. There, I saw a photo and I was stunned to find the same Swami who had come in my dreams. I saw closely what was written. **Sri Chandrashekar Bharati, Sringeri Mutt**. Then, I understood, this is the swami who came in my dream. He was Amma’s guru also. Then on 1<sup>st</sup> Aug (1969) I went to join the Ashrama. After a day or two I informed all of you and also my parents. Then immediately Vishwa (Amma’s son) came to the Ashrama. Vishwa said Amma is calling. Then I took permission and came.

Amma was in your house, Vishaala was very much upset. Amma said “let us not talk here” and took me to Rama mandira (of Rajaji Nagara of 4<sup>th</sup> block). There we sat and Amma put some questions to me and I answered whatever I can tell.

She said, “there is no problem, for the last few days I was struggling how to tell you to get out of the house? I was worried. Now the problem has been solved by Mother’s grace. Now you go ahead but resign the job. If you have not resigned, some people will drag you back. Don’t leave the Order at any cost and for any reason. You have to live there and die there.” These are the two instructions.

Then we came to your house. Vishaala was profusely weeping. She clasped me and weeping. Then Amma scolded Vishala like anything,



saying that *he is going for higher life, why do you want to disturb him?* You keep quiet. Let him go.”

Then things got cleared. Then, my parents also had come asking me to get back. Then I asked only one small question. “*The duty of the parents is to see that the children go in the right path. If you tell me I am going in the wrong path, I will come back with you.*”

They said “how can we tell?” Then, “you cannot ask me to come back.”

Shamanna (elder brother) had come. He said “I wanted to join the Ramkrishna Ashrama, but I could not. I am happy that you are joining.” I asked him one question. See one thing, you should take care of our parents till their last. Then, I requested him for making arrangements so that I can relinquish all my rights against property etc.

Shama Rao (a friend) had shifted to Bangalore. One day I had to go to court and sign; with that all my rights were relinquished. Some pressures that I come back were dissipated by the grace of the Lord.

Then by Dec 15 or 16, 1969 Swami Vireswaranandaji, the tenth President of the Order had come. Prabuddhananda told me “you have to take initiation.”

In the form, they had asked whether I had taken initiation from anybody?

Yes, from Smt. H. K. Lalithamma, 2493 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage, Rajajinagar, Bangalore-560010.

When initiation is given in a group, they ask “whether anybody is given initiation earlier and have that been informed?”

In my case, I was given Mantra diksha one to one and not in a group. Next day, I took interview and went to my Guru (Swami Vireswaranandaji) and asked, “You have given this mantra but I was already initiated by some body and mantra is different. Now what should I do?”

He became a little serious and said “why did you not tell me earlier?”

“Swami, I had written in the form and so I kept quiet.”

He called his Secretary and asked what this boy is telling like this. Then he(secretary) verified where I had clearly written. Secretary said “He has written and I do not know how I missed it.” On this, conflict was going on in me. Then suddenly whole vision got blurred. I could not see anything clearly. Then from one side Sri Ramakrishna came and got into the photo and from other side Amma came and got into the photo. On that day the conflict ended as between **Devi and Sri Ramakrishna**, no difference. From that day onwards there is no conflict.

Then I stayed in Bangalore for eight months. This was of great help for the foundation of spiritual life. Swami Prabuddhanandaji was very simple and looking as an ordinary person when I became close with him, my respect for him increased. He depended totally on Sri Guru Maharaj.

Even in case of Amma also, she was looking like an ordinary housewife but she was a person of eminence which I could understand. What great sacrifices she had done which no human lady can do it; she did such a sacrifice for me for coming into this life. Her sacrifice shows her spiritual eminence.

It corroborates the statement of Swami Vireswaranandaji, “sat for two minutes and that mantra you have got and the person who has given are both very powerful.” Eight months in Bangalore ashrama gave me the foundation for my spiritual journey.

### **At Basvanagudi Ramakrishna Ashrama Bangalore (Aug 1969 to April 31, 1970)**

My getting into the Sri Ramakrishna order, so many people were involved and they have contributed some positively and some negatively, but they have done it not knowing that it is all for my good!

I stayed for a short period in Bangalore. I joined on Aug1,1969 and on April 31<sup>st</sup>,1970, I left for New Delhi. I will tell you one incident.

Then there were 15 sadhus at Bangalore Ashrama. Our expenses were Rs.75/- person for a month coming to Rs.1200 /- for a month. One day, I was sitting in the main office, in-charge of that account section said there was no money but money was there in the book section. Went to Maharaj (Swami Prabuddhanandaji) and said, there is no money for buying provisions for the next week. Prabuddhanandaji said “*why do you worry, who is maintaining the ashram we or Guru Maharaj?*” See the dependence on Guru Maharaj.

He was undisturbed, not even an iota of what we are feeling. why do you worry about it? Then, postman came and he (Prabuddhanandaji) was seeing the post. One cover was there from France, from an unknown person. He opened it, there was a cheque for Rs.4000/- and he had written that for the maintenance of sadhus in the ashrama where late Swami Yatiswaranandaji lived.

So, we don't know this man who has sent the money. “Do you understand who is taking care of us. It is only Sri Ramakrishna.” This was the biggest Lesson, I learnt it there. So don't bother about anything depend upon Sri Ramakrishna, whatever is to happen according to His will. It is just like

writing an article with the pen and pen says I don't know this, I don't know that, where to write and what to write. Pen has no right to say that. Like that we are only pens. This is the biggest lesson I learnt and it had the greatest impact in my life. Even to this day, I cannot forget this incident. I have tried to implement this in my life. If you don't run after money, money will run after you. It is not only in respect of money, but anything in life. This is the biggest lesson rather rock-foundation for my spiritual and monastic life. This was one incident.

The second which I learnt was how to interact with monastic members. It was never formal, always informal. Particularly with youngsters like, “come here, how are you? are you doing practices properly? have you got any difficulty? which are the books you are reading, try to read this book.” I have to take care but everything was informal.

It was informal, no question of distance. Respectable way we use to address. This is another lesson I learnt. Not only with monastics and with devotees too, very informal.

He (Swami Prabuddhanandaji) was not a scholar, he was not a great speaker, but people used to flock to him. He took his classes well. This is another characteristic of Maharaj which impressed me very much.

[Voice recording of Swami Kamalanandaji sent to Prof. M. S. Harish, Dr. M. S. Suresh, (Maharaj's Sister Vishala's sons) and. Prof. B. S. Thandaveswara by mail.]

**ஆசிரமத்தைப் பராமரிப்பது யார்?**

1969-ஆம் வருடம் பெங்களூர் ஆசிரமத்தில் ஒருநாள்... சுவாமி பிரபுத்தானந்தர் ஸ்ரீரங்க மகராஜ் இருக்கைக்கு முன்பாக வந்து அமர்ந்தார். அப்போது ஸ்ரீரங்க மகராஜ் பிரபுத்தானந்தரிடம், “மகராஜ் அடுத்தவாரம் மலிகை சாமான்கள் வாங்குவதற்கு நம்மிடம் பணம் ஏதும் இல்லை” என்று கூறினார்.

அப்போது ஆசிரமத்தில் சாதுக்களும் பிரம்மசாகிகளுமாக 15 பேர் இருந்தனர். வேறு யாராவது இருந்தால், ‘ஓ கவலைப்பட வேண்டாம். இந்த நயரி.மோ அல்லது அந்த நயரி.மோ நன்கொடை பெறலாம். நான் அவர்களிடம் பேசுகிறேன்’ என்று சொல்லியிருப்பார்கள்.

ஆனால் சுவாமிகள், “என்ன ஸ்ரீரங்கா? இந்த ஆசிரமத்தைப் பராமரிப்பது சுவாமி கமலானந்தர்? நாமா அல்லது ஸ்ரீராமகிருஷ்ணரா? அவர் பார்த்துக் கொள்வார். நீ ஏன் கவலைப்படுகிறாய்?” என்று கேட்டுவிட்டு அங்கு அமைதியாக அமர்ந்திருந்தார்.

ஐந்து நிமிடம் சென்றிருக்கும். தபால்காரர் ஒருவர் பிரான்ஸ் நாட்டிலிருந்து வந்த அஞ்சலையைக் கொடுத்துவிட்டுச் சென்றார். அதில் 4000 ரூபாய்க்கான காசோலை இருந்தது. அதை அனுப்பிய நபர் இவ்விதம் எழுதியிருந்தார்: “எனது பெருமதிப்பிற்குரிய குருவான சுவாமி யதீஸ்வரானந்தர் வாழ்ந்த ஆசிரமத்து சாதுக்களின் பராமரிப்புக்காக இந்தப் பணத்தை அனுப்புகிறேன்”.

நெருக்கடியான நேரங்களிலும் சுவாமி பிரபுத்தானந்தர் குருதேவரை எந்தவிதும் சார்ந்திருந்தார். எந்தளவுக்கு அவர் கிணனவில் மூழ்கியிருந்தார் என்பதை இந்த நிகழ்வு காட்டுகிறது. - சுவாமி கமலானந்தர்

குறிப்பு : சுவாமி கமலானந்தர் (வயது 89) 4.1.2022 அன்று காசி சேவால்ஸ்ரமத்தில் ஸ்ரீகுருதேவரிடம் திருவடிகளை அடைந்தார். சுவாமிகள் சென்னை திருநகர், சேலம் ஆசிரமங்களில் செயலாளராகவும் கர்நாடகா பொன்னம்பேட்டை மட்டத்தின் தலைவராகவும் பணியாற்றியவர். மேலும் பல்வேறு நிவாரணப் பணிகளை மேற்கொண்டவர். அவருக்கு ஸ்ரீராமகிருஷ்ண விஜயம் சிரத்தாஞ்சலி செப்கிறது. - ஆசிரியர்

12 ஸ்ரீராமகிருஷ்ண விஜயம் - பங்குனி-மாச 2022

## 4. A Profile of Spiritual Journey of Swami Kamalananda

<i>Date of birth</i>	<i>2.7.1943, Shivu Maharaj @ Shivananda</i>
<i>Mantra diksha</i>	<i>Revered Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj in 1969 at Bengaluru</i>

Name of the Centre	Date / Period	No. of Years/Months
Ramakrishna Mission, Delhi – Joined the Order	3.5.1970 – 31.3.1974	4 Years
Belur Math Training Centre	1.4.1974 – 31.3.1976	2 Years
Brahmacharya Diksha – Bhakti Chaitanya	4.3.1976	
Belur Math Hqtrs A/cs	1.4.1976 – 23.4.1977	1 Year
Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama Kalady, Kerala	May 1977 – Feb 1978	9 Months
Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Chennai	Mar 1978 – Mar1981	3 Years
Sannyasa	1981	
Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata	Apr 1981 – 2.6.1990	9 Years
Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Ranchi Morabadi, Jharkhand	2.6.1990 – 10.12.1990	6 Months
Relief Service near Vizag	10.12.1990 – 24.9.1991	9 Months
Ramakrishna Saradashrama, Ponnampet	16.10.1991 – 9.7.1993	1 Year 9 Months
Head – Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, T. Nagar, Chennai	9.7.1993 – Sep 2004	11 Years, Head
Belur Math Arogya Bhavan Rest and Medical Care	31.8.2004 – 7.5.2005	8 Months
Ramakrishna Math, Halasuru Rest and Medical Care	7.5.2005 – 14.4.2006	11 Months
Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Salem	14.4.2006 – 29.3.2008	2 Years, Head
Halasuru Math – Retirement	29.3.2008 – 20.5.2017	9 Years
Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Varanasi – Retirement	20.5.2017 – 4.2.2022	4 Years 8 Months

# 5. Life and Spiritual Journey of Swami Kamalanandaji (1943-2022)

## Introduction

Sri Ramakrishna came down, lived and demonstrated to us all that spiritual life is all but renunciation, yearning for God realisation etc but it did not make Him morose and sad and he was full of humour and mirth. Taught His disciples, both monastic and lay to look upon life as divine play of Mother though ever rooted in realisation of the Ultimate Brahman.

All monks lead a life of renunciation and seva, no doubt, but here is a monk who took a leaf out of Sri Thakur's Lila and lived life in which he made all devotees who came to him to mould their life after Sri Thakur, at the same time live happily in their respective roles.

## Early life and Youth of Shivananda<sup>1</sup>

The monk to be later in life, Shivu / Shivananda, was born on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1943, as the sixth child of Sri Narasimhamurthy and Smt Seshamma of Hassan (Karnataka). The youth had his schooling, pre-university (1958) and graduation (1958-61) all at Hassan itself.

Young Shivu moved to Bangalore in 1961, stayed at his sister Vishala's house at Rajaji Nagar and even taught the children at a school nearby for a few months. His meritorious study and success in Physical Sciences in B.Sc., fetched him a job of an Audit Assistant at Reserve Bank of India, Bangalore, which he pursued until he joined the Ramakrishna Order.

## Call of the Divine

Shivananda was charmed by divine Life of one lady Lalitamma who lived nearby and joined her in chanting Lalita Sahasranama and Lalita puja. He called her reverentially as Amma and also got mantra diksha on Devi mantra. Amma herself was disciple of His Holiness Swami Chandrasekara Bharathi of Sringeri. Till his last days in Varanasi, he used to chant Lalita Sahasranama almost daily. Seems he had a vision of Mother Raja Rajeswari at Polali. Shivananda stayed in a room very near Ramakrishna Ashrama, Basavangudi, but never entered its precincts nor opened the book 'Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna' given to him by his Guru Amma.

## **Sri Ramakrishna's Call**

Way back in July 1969, he had a dream for three consecutive days in which a Swami appeared and told him, "Join the Ramakrishna Math." Couldn't believe it to be a dream as it was almost real. Later on when he visited a shop at Rajaji Nagar, he identified this Swami as Chandrasekara Bharathi from a photo hung there.

On 29<sup>th</sup> July 1969, Shivananda entered Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama at Basavangudi, made prostrations to Swami Prabuddhananda Maharaj, who was the then President and conveyed his decision to join the Order, but never did he tell him about the dream. Swami Prabuddhanandaji welcomed him, but advised him to apply for leave and not resign the RBI job till he gets firm in his decision to renounce. There were 15 members at the Ashrama and life at the Ashrama was not rosy, yet the President's classes and care enabled Shivu to love the monastic life. Amma, on knowing about Shivananda's entering the Ashrama, summoned him, questioned him to test his stubbornness and later advised him never to leave the Order but to live and die in the Ramakrishna Order itself. Soon, Shivananda resigned his RBI job, gave up his right to property executing it legally through Shama Rao, his friend.

## **Mantra disksha in December 1969**

On the visit of Parama Pujya Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj in December 1969, say on 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> December, Shivu got the blessings of Spiritual Initiation at the hands of one who touched the feet of Holy Mother.

Doubt arose in Shivu's mind about the mantra to be adhered to and asked his Guru. The issue was settled for him when he had a vision of both Sri Thakur, Lalitamma from the same picture. 8 months have passed by and when Swami Prabuddhanandaji was to leave for America, Shivu sought a change of centre.

## **Basavanagudi to New Delhi**

Leaving behind Basavangudi, Shivu travelled in April 1970 and reached New Delhi on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1970, only to find his fellow brothers Aravind, Vasanth and others already there to receive him. The dynamic and yet compassionate Swami Vandanananda Maharaj being the Secretary of the

Ashrama entrusted the work at the Kitchen and then in the Reading room. He showed his large heart to Shivu by ignoring the missing cash of Rs.300 and allowing him to purchase a comfortable chair he needed. Four years of tutelage under this Swami (1970 to 1974) took him to the Probationers' Training Centre at Belur Math.

*(1. Compiled from autobiographical voice message of Shivananda as transcribed by Prof. M. S. Harish, Dr. M. S. Suresh and Prof. B. S. Thandaveswara.)*

### **Training and after**

After these 2 fruitful years Shivananda was absorbed in the Accounts dept of the HQ's and he had occasion to interact with Srimat Swami Gambhiranandaji, the then General Secretary. Had a few occasions then to do seva to his guru Sri Prabhu Maharaj.

### **Off to Kalady and Chennai Students' Home (1977 to 1981)**

When he was permitted to visit his ailing mother at St. Martha's Hospital, Bangalore in March 1977, he was also directed to join Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama, Kalady (Kerala). He was doing worship of the Lord in the shrine. Then in 1978 February, Shivananda, as Brahmachari Bhakti Chaitanya was posted to Chennai Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home where he had soothing hands of Swami Kirtidanandaji Maharaj. He worked as Warden in the Hostel and then in the Accounts dept. of the office. Till his sannyasa in 1981, Swami Kirtidanandaji retained him at Students' Home itself. At the Student's Home, he was a darling of the young students and their love for him continued till his last days.

### **Shivananda became Swami Kamalananda**

Br. Bhakti Chaitanya was ordained with the ochre robe in 1981 and his guru who gave the mantra also initiated him to Brahmacharya as well as Sannyasa. The new monk named Swami Kamalananda had his service for 9 long years at the Publication dept. of Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata. He learnt the art and technique of printing, sales etc. came in touch with Swami Ananyanandaji who was then the President of Advaita Ashrama. Spreading the message of Swami Vivekananda, by subsidized edition of his work will reach the large number of devotees was his dream. Hence, Maharaj pleaded with the authorities even if incurring a huge loss of fund.

### **As Manager of Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta**

- Publication of ‘Selection from Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda (Subsidised edition)’ @ Rs.10/-
- Publication of ‘Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda’ in 8 volumes highly subsidised edition @ Rs.100/- during 125<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.
- C.D. on Swami Vivekananda: His life, works and research.

Transfer of book titles on Swami Vivekananda from Madras Math to Advaita Ashrama

- 1) *Four Yogas of Swami Vivekananda retold by Swami Tapasyananda.*
- 2) *Philosophical lectures of Swami Vivekananda retold by Swami Tapasyananda.*
- 3) *Nationalistic and Philosophical lectures of Swami Vivekananda retold by Swami Tapasyananda.*

### **Morabadi and Cyclone near Vizag (1990-91)<sup>2</sup>**

On June 1990, Swami Kamalananda was posted as Assistant Secretary to Ranchi Morabadi Centre where the tribal work was the heart's delight for our Vice-President Swami Vishuddhanandaji Maharaj. As the Secretary Swami Atmavidanandaji had to take additional charge of cyclone relief work of Nampalli near Visakapatnam, Swami Kamalananda had to manage the affairs of Morabadi. Later Maharaj himself was posted to cyclone relief work (Dec 1990 - Sep 1991) and independently looked after construction of over 200 houses for the affected. Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh offered the entire relief work expenses to be done by the Ramakrishna Mission.

*(2. Reminiscences of Swami Atmavidananda)*

### **Adhyaksha, Ramakrishna Saradashrama, Ponnampet (Oct 1991 - July 1993)**

Swami Kamalananda held this office a year and more and in that period prepared a draft design for renovation and construction of the Ashrama but he could only hand them over to his successor Swami Purushottamananda.



## **Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, T. Nagar, Chennai (July 1993 - Sept 2004)<sup>3</sup>**

Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, T. Nagar, Chennai with Three Higher Secondary schools and two primary schools heartily welcomed the Swami in 1993. Here he found a fertile ground for all his activities. Maharaj's achievements are many –

Facelift to the prayer hall, shifting the front entrance of the Ashrama, construction of auditorium (Infosys) at RKM Matriculation School, made the then Mambalam Hostel into T. Nagar Ashrama by conducting Holy Trio Jayantis, conduct of one day Teachers' Convention, Weekly lectures, Release of an authentic book on "Education Total Development of Personality" with Swamis Satyapriyananda and Vidyanathananda as Co-authors, conducted Personality Development Courses and contests with Swami Bodhamayananda's assistance, assisted in CD on Swami Vivekananda for Advaita Ashrama, Kolkata, introduced Computer centres in every school, provided Accounts software for 15 centres and above all handled the teachers' strike at the merger of Ramakrishna Mission Schools with utmost grit and strong will thereby provided a safe haven for all the teachers. However, indifferent health made him bid farewell to T. Nagar in 2004.

*(3. Reminiscences by Swami Padmasthananda and Sri Kesavan.)*

**Rest and Recuperation:** stayed at Halasuru till March – April 2005. Though he wanted to have his ultimate rest at Varanasi, he went to Belur Math in May 2005.

## **Salem Chalo<sup>4</sup>**

His stay at Belurmath and treatment by doctors recouped his health remarkably and when in April 2006 HQ requested him to resume work at Salem, he could not refuse. He yielded to the order of General Secretary Maharaj and took charge as Secretary to stay there till March 2008. This short stint of 2 years proved to be a boon to devotees, well-wishers and the Salem Ashrama.

As directed by Swami Gautamanandaji, Swami Kamalanandaji decided to stage the Devotees Conference (Maanadu) in 2007 at Salem. This brought forth his usual managerial skill and human relationship as well

as his saranagati to Sri Ramakrishna. He could bring in a large number of devotees closer to the Ashrama and Sri Ramakrishna. His contribution to Salem Ashrama are:

- Renovation of Charitable Dispensary at a cost of 40 lakhs and addition of X-Ray plant.
- Renovation of Monks Quarters and the dining hall.
- Computer study at Pudur Tuition Centre.
- Allotment of car parking space inside the Ashrama.

All these were done in spite of his indifferent health due to sugar level, demand for oxygen etc. His bubbling energy amidst all these ailments, drew the devotees closer to Ashrama and Holy Trimurthy. He made a deep impact in the hearts and minds of the devotees and volunteers. He transformed the lives of a few devotees.

*(4. Reminiscences of Salem devotees)*

### **Back at Halasuru<sup>5</sup>**

From April 2008 to May 2017 his stay at Halasuru took care of his health and made him go around counselling, motivating and inspiring the large number devotees who came to Halasuru Math. They found a friend, philosopher and guide in Sri Maharaj. Many youth joined the Order and many others were grounded well in their total surrender to the Order. Once he decided to go to Varanasi, everyone was taken aback and they gave soul stirring warm send off, of course with tearful eyes. But Maharaj cheered them, gave a lovely feast for 400 persons, and left an indelible mark of service to Sri Ramakrishna in all their minds.

People from all walks of life used to find shelter in Maharaj as he was very approachable and accommodative, another unique aspect of Maharaj was that, whatever be the temperament of the person, he had the ability to make them happy.

*(5. Reminiscences of Swamis Satyavidananda, Dayasagarananda and Devotees.)*

### **Come to Varanasi my child<sup>6</sup>**

Lord Shiva's abode on his trishul with a lovely uttaravahini of Ma Ganga welcomed Maharaj and fulfilled his dream of staying at the feet of Lord Vishwanath, who is none other than Sri Ramakrishna. He came to Varanasi in May 2017 and enlivened the atmosphere, Sevashrama and Advaita Ashrama by his lively presence. Excellent medical care was

provided by doctors at Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, care by volunteers, all Swamis etc. so that he could manage all his ailments.

Swami Brahmeshananda the Acharya was the centre of his scriptural study in the last five years. He drew many sadhus into the fold of Satsangh.

He had online Upanishad classes with Pravak Maharaj (Mumbai), offline classes with fellow sadhus in English, Kannada and Bengali.

It was on Swamiji Jayanti on Jan 25, 2022, he came to mangala Arati, went up to the Sanctum Sanctorum prayed to Sri Thakur, Ma, Swamiji, had Baba Vishwanathji Prasad and Charanamirtam and in the next 10 days on Feb 4<sup>th</sup> evening he had got merged in the Divine Light of Holy Triveni. He entered the Sevashrama Hospital on 1<sup>st</sup> Feb evening and by 4<sup>th</sup> evening, he has reached his beloved Lord Sri Ramakrishna.

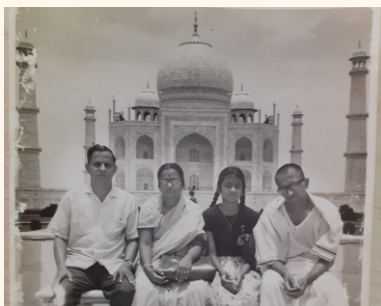
*(6. Reminiscences of Swami Tatpurushananda) – Compiled by a Monk.*



Shivananda (Swami Kamalanandaji) Sister Leelavathi and her child Prasanna, Pandarish (son of sister Rajamma)



Vishalakshi (elder sister) Shankara Narayana Rao (brother-in-law), Shivananda, Harish, Shailaja and Suresh



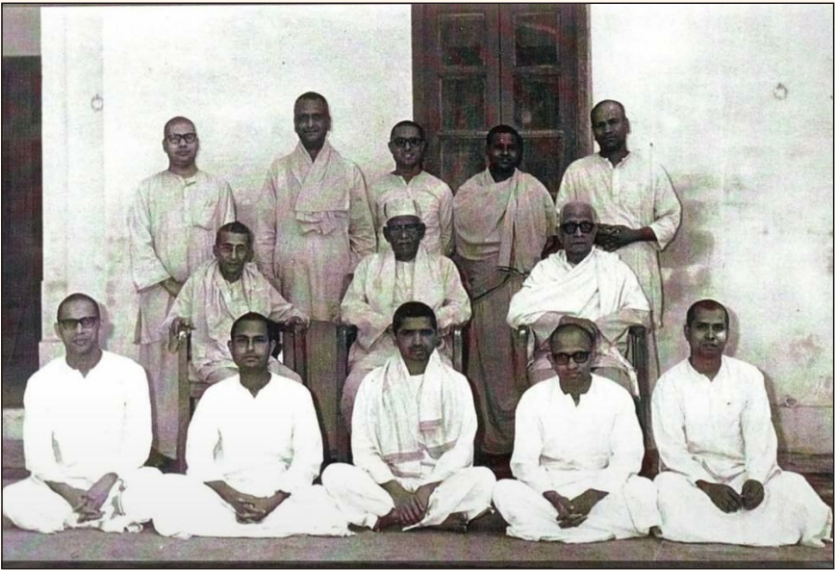
Anna (brother-in-law), Vishaala (sister) and Shailaja, their daughter, Shivananda, 1970



Sri Narasimhamurthy and Smt. Sheshamma  
– Parents

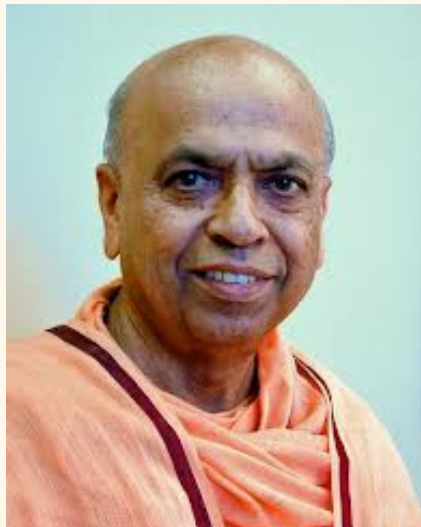


Brother Shamanna before and after sannyasa



Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, 1975 – Revered Swami Vireswaranandaji with Swamis Abhayananda, Dayananda, Vandanananda, Prameyananda, Satyavratananda, Br. Gour (Devavratananda), Br. Vasant (Muktirupananda), Br. Shiva (Kamalananda), Br. Balai (Bhuvananda) and other monks

## **6. Reminiscences of 7 senior Swamis** **by Swami Kamalananda** **Swami Prabuddhanandaji**



In 1969, August 1, I entered the portals of the Order of Sri Ramakrishna, when he gracefully accepted me to enter into the Order. After watching for about a month, I got into the Ashrama, there my first impression was that Swami Prabuddhanandaji was an ordinary Sadhu. But as I lived with him for about eight months, my respect towards him grew very much. The two-three incidents which happened gave a turn to my life, and that was my guiding factor. He was never formal about anything. He'd just informally meet us, sometimes even after breakfast, walking down from the dining hall, he might even put his hand on our shoulders and inquire about our welfare and spiritual progress.

Apart from this, I was asked to assist Shriranga Maharaj, who was in charge of the office. One day, when I was in the office, as was his routine, he came, because he had no separate office, he used to sit in front of Shriranga Maharaj's table and do whatever little work is necessary, and attend to the post if it comes by that time.

One day, Shrirang Maharaj told: “Maharaj, there are no funds for purchasing provisions for the next week.” You know how disturbed any head of a centre can be if such a statement is made by the person in charge of the office, but he was quite calm, and was saying: “What Shriranga! who is maintaining the Ashrama? Are we, or Guru Maharaj? He will take care.” By that time, the postman came, and gave a number of letters, among which there was an envelope from Germany\*\*, from an unknown devotee. When he opened it, there was a cheque for four thousand rupees, and he had enclosed a letter saying that this is for the maintenance of the Sadhus of the Ashrama where my late, revered Guru, Swami Yatiswaranandaji lived. Then immediately he said: “See, Shriranga! Who is maintaining? We don’t know this person, and at this juncture, this money has come!” This was really an eye-opener for me, to show that, if we depend upon Guru Maharaj, things will go on smoothly. This was one incident.

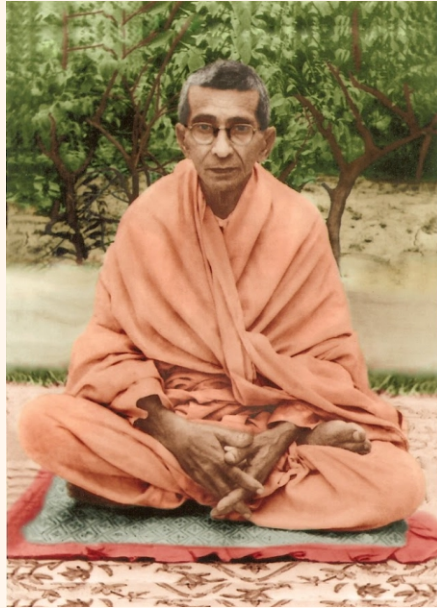
Another incident was: He had been to Belur Math. After coming back, in the night class, he said: “See, in the meeting some of the people said that we must build up a good band of devotees so that they can take care of the Ashrama. I don’t know who is taking care – the devotees, or Guru Maharaj.”

These two incidents made a complete turn and throughout my life, it helped me in many of the projects and other matters I had taken up in the course of the activities assigned to me. So, this is a great thing, and till today, this point is always ringing in my ears to say: “Depend on Guru Maharaj, depend on Guru Maharaj, depend on Guru Maharaj.”

*\*\*Talk on Swami Prabuddananda by Kamalananda pp 30-32 (mentions the letter was from France, where as in his communication through voice record mentions it as Germany) Ref: [http://www/vedanta\\_society\\_of\\_Northern\\_California\\_Publication\\_on\\_Reminiscences\\_of\\_Swami\\_Prabuddananda](http://www/vedanta_society_of_Northern_California_Publication_on_Reminiscences_of_Swami_Prabuddananda)).*

### **Parama Pujania Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj**

Next is revered Swami Vireshwaranandaji Maharaj, the tenth President of the Order, who blessed me by giving Mantra diksha, Brahmacharya diksha, and Sannyasa diksha. So, I was thrice-blessed in that way. Though I never had much close contact, some two-three incidents had an impact on me.



I was in Delhi. Maharaj had come, and I had the privilege of serving him a little. Harlal Maharaj asked me to bring the hookah from Maharaj's room, because he had finished taking the hubble-bubble. I went. It was the first time I saw a hookah, and I just tried to hold it in a way that wasn't perhaps conventional. Immediately he said: "Oh, you are from the South. You don't know how to handle it" and he himself showed me how to hold the hookah, and how it was to be carried. Any other person would have said: "What is it you're doing?" but the way Maharaj taught me shows his greatness.

When I was in the Training Centre, I had the privilege of typing Maharaj's English letters; I was his typist. So, I used to spend much time in Maharaj's quarters, and once I had an operation for appendicitis done, and I had gone to do pranam to him. The moment I said 'Shivu' (my name), he said: "Oh, Ay, don't bend! How are you? No, you must do pranam standing. No bending!" Immediately, he called Ramgopal Maharaj and said: "See, he has undergone an operation and might need some extra nourishment. Whatever is necessary, you give it from here." This showed his great concern and feeling towards me, and it was one of the great blessings I received from him.

## Srimat Swami Vandananandaji Maharaj



When I went to Delhi in 1970, Swami Vandananandaji was in charge of the centre, and he had returned from Hollywood just then and taken charge. He was a thorough gentleman. What I observed was that he was a keen observer of all his monastic assistants, and others and knew who is capable of what work, and how to control one if he didn't use the freedom given to him. After some time, around one and a half years or so (I was there for about four years 1970-1974), I was asked to take charge of the office. I said: "I don't like this chair." He immediately said: "No problem; I will give you an open cheque. You may buy whatever chair you want." See how he gave a twist to the whole thing, and made me take that responsibility.

Once, I was carrying cash, and there was a shortage of three hundred rupees. I told him about it, and confessed that I didn't know what to do. Anyone else would have scolded, that I was careless. He did not utter a single word. Instead, "Don't worry; I will give that money", and he went into his room, brought three hundred rupees out and gave it to me. This was Swami Vandananandaji.

He was a very good speaker. But he never sat quietly even for five minutes before the lecture. Whichever day he sat quietly for even five minutes before going to the dais, his talk would be worth listening to. He was not an orator, but his talks used to go directly to the heart of the listener. This was his greatness. He later became the General Secretary.



## Parama Pujania Srimat Swami Gambhiranandaji Maharaj



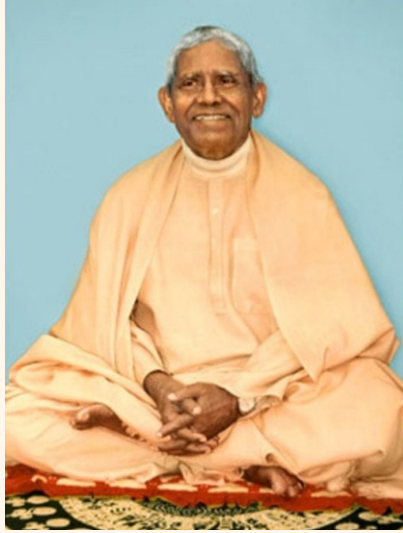
After the Training Centre, I was posted to the Headquarters' office, which gave me an opportunity to work under Swami Gambhiranandaji Maharaj, who was then the General Secretary. He was a very quiet man; we never heard him talk in a loud voice. But, whenever I went to his room for work, he used to generally be sitting in a deck chair, with a book in his hand. When I said: "Maharaj", he used to close the book immediately, keep it aside, and say "Ay, ki Bolo!." Then, whatever it was – letter to be signed, draft to be shown, ... "Theek ha che? Dekhedau? Bas." Then immediately, even standing, he'd take the book and go on reading. That shows he was always in a particular level of thought, but at the same time, he could switch over to the work, give it a proper direction, and get back to it. This was a unique thing I found in him.

A wonderful thing:

Even though he was the General Secretary, he used to be holding a mug and walking outside his room, for the 3 o' clock tea, and he'd partake of it. One day, I heard that a Swami who prepared tea for him had put salt into it instead of sugar, and Swami Gambhiranandaji took it. Later, this Swami realized that he had put salt into it, and told him it had happened thus; "What does it matter? It is just a change of taste." So he was not bothered about its taste: salty, sweet, ...

Later, when he was the President of the Order, I had the small privilege of being associated with him as I was in the Advaita Ashrama, and our proposal to bring out a subsidized edition of the Complete Works was rejected twice as it was not commercially viable. In the third meeting, when I put it forth again, saying: “Maharaj! All these years, we have been able to eat by selling Swamiji; what does it matter even if we lose two lakhs for spreading his message”, he said: “Go ahead! Karo! Kareno Bas!” With his blessings, we started and instead of 10,000 sets, we sold 40,000 sets; instead of two lakh deficit, we incurred an eight lakh loss; we had appealed to the public, and they contributed sixteen lakhs. So, we absorbed that loss, and made a permanent fund for subsidizing subsequent editions.

### **Parama Pujania Srimat Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj**



I was not closely associated with Swami Bhuteshanandaji Maharaj, but one or two incidents during our meeting has some value. I was in Advaita Ashrama, and Maharaj was at Kankurgachi as Vice-President of the Order. We used to put up a bookstall there on special occasions. Once, I went to him and told him that we wanted to put up a stall. Immediately, Maharaj inquired: “Ki, tumivyavoshaykorteeshhecho?” Then I said: “Not for business, Maharaj, but to spread the message of Thakur, Ma,

Swamiji.” “Thaletheek ache, esho, esho.” The one thing I found in this was the attitude with which we have to work was given a direction.

I was transferred from Ponnampet to T. Nagar. I had been to Belur Math, and Maharaj was the President at that time. I went and did pranam to him. Putting his hand on my head, he said smilingly: “Tumikothaieli?” “Where were you?” Then I understood the spirit in which he asked it, and he said: “Coffee nagarenchilam, T. Nagar e esheche.” You know, Ponnampet is a place of Coffee, and T. Nagar has T(Tea) in it. Once, when he came to Chennai, he visited T. Nagar. I was taking him around and showing him the whole Ashrama. He was looking around. In one place, the gully traps cap was broken? He said: “See that? Get it changed.” It showed his keen observation of things, and alertness towards perfection.

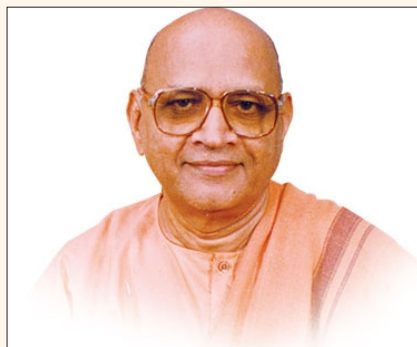


### **Parama Pujania Srimat Swami Tapasyanandaji Maharaj**

I was in Advaita Ashrama, and at one time, there was some difference of opinion on certain publications (parallel publications) between the two centres (Madras being the other). I had given a letter to the General Secretary, and the matter was taken to the Trustees’ meeting. In that meeting, all the Trustees supported me because of certain facts being

mentioned, and Swami Tapasyanandaji was very angry with me. On the same day, I had been to Belur Math to hand over the subsidized edition of Selections from the Complete Works to Swami Ranganathanandaji, as he had arranged for the funds. But, all the Trustees and others told me not to go to Swami Tapasyanandaji then. I did not go, and returned to Advaita Ashrama. The next morning, I went to Belur Math, and went straight to Swami Tapasyanandaji. He was walking in the corridor veranda. The moment he saw me, he said: “Oh, you are that manager!” He was so angry. I made sashatanga pranam, and said: “Maharaj, you are the Vice-President of the Order. What is Advaita Ashrama, and what is Madras Math to you?” Immediately, he said: “Yes, yes, yes, yes. I am the Vice-President. All are same to me, all are same to me”, and his anger completely vanished. He received the books, and I told him to visit Advaita Ashrama. He said: “Talk to Viswanath, and fix the date (Tanmayanandaji was at the Institute of Culture at that time).” So, we fixed the time, and I took Maharaj to Advaita Ashrama and put him back where he wanted to go. This shows that one great proverb: “Sadhuder rag jaleruparer dag?” This became personified and I was simply thrilled. Though he was so angry, with one word he changed and came to Advaita Ashrama and blessed us. I used to meet him for several little things when at Chennai.

### **Swami Ananyanandaji Maharaj**



Swami Ananyanandaji was the President of Advaita Ashrama, looked very dignified and was a thorough gentleman. But his eye for perfection was something entirely different, and the way he taught it was also unique. You know, all our Sadhus, when we go to the dining hall, we leave our chappals outside; and all used to be kept in a haphazard way. When

he came, he used to arrange all of them in a proper order, come inside, take food, and go away without telling anything. After one or two days, we came to know that Maharaj did that, from that day onwards, all of us started keeping our chappals in a proper way. This was the method he taught us.

Secondly, he was a very good editor. Sister Gargi's six volumes have come, at that time the work was taken up. Sister Gargi used to send the manuscript earlier, later come and stay for a month or so in India, and both of them used to work on it together. Gargi mentioned at one time: "When Swami Ananyanandaji has seen it, nobody can even add or remove a comma or a full-stop. He is such a thorough editor." This is a uniqueness I found in him.

A very loving soul. He would come everyday to all of us in the office, talk to everyone, and keep such an atmosphere up that none of us felt he was the President. He was just like our personal Grandfather at home.

I met Ananyanandaji in T. Nagar. I was going from Bangalore to Delhi, and I had heard of him. He was the warden of T. Nagar at that time. I went from Mylapore Math, did pranam to him and returned.

### **Swami Damodarananda Maharaj**



Swami Damodaranandaji was at Ulsoor Ashrama for some time; At that time, I was also in Ulsoor, as a retired monk. He always used to be in a different mood as such. Even at the age of ninety, he used to get up at about 3:30 and do Japa etc. This was the one thing I found. But he was

always reluctant to take help from anybody. This was another thing; we had to force ourselves upon him and do a little seva whenever possible. But above all, what impressed me was his walking. When he walked, putting one step, two steps,... Jaya Ramakrishna, Shree Ramakrishna was the refrain ... Thakur's name was uttered with every step. From there, he went to Belur Math, and entered into the Ganges, and left the world.



## OBITUARY

**Swami Kamalanandaji** (Shivu / Shivananda Maharaj) passed away at our hospital in Varanasi on 4 February at 6.15 pm. He was 79 and had been suffering from diabetes and kidney disease. Initiated by Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj, he joined the order in 1970 at Delhi centre and received sannyasa diksha from his guru in 1981. He served the Order at the Headquarters Office and at Delhi, Kalady, Chennai Students' Home, Advaita Ashrama (Kolkata) and Ranchi Morabadi centres as an assistant and Ponnampet, Chennai Mission Ashrama and Salem centres as the head. He participated in relief and rehabilitation work in Andhra Pradesh in 1990-91. Since 2008, he had been living a retired life, staying mainly at Halasuru Math and Varanasi Home of Service. Though afflicted by several ailments for a number of years, he retained his beaming face till the very end. He was known for his affectionate nature and witty remarks.



## **7. Gems from Reminiscences on the Solitaire Diamond – Swami Kamalanandaji**

### **MONKS**

#### **1. Swami Atmavidananda**

Senior Monk, Ramakrishna Math, Bengaluru

My contact with Swami Kamalanandaji (K) goes back to our Joining the Holy Order. Swami Kamalanandaji always had a smiling face and also ready to help in any work.

Later in 1990 when I was in Ranchi Morabadi center as its head, additional work at Flood relief was given to me. Then, Swami Kamalanandaji was posted as an assistant secretary to Ranchi Morabadi during my absence. Thus, he worked as an assistant secretary in charge of the relief centre for about 6 months. I moved between Ranchi and Vizag during that period. Even in that short period some important projects were completed by Swami Kamalanandaji at Ranchi. Then Swami Kamalanandaji himself was made the relief camp in charge. Swami Kamalanandaji efficiently handled the work and completed the project of constructing 200 relief houses in NINE months.

Wherever he was posted, Swami Kamalanandaji brought about important changes in the buildings, orientation, utilization etc. It is a great loss to lose a friend like Swami Kamalananda

#### **2. Swami Padmasthananda**

Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, T. Nagar, Chennai

Revered Swami Kamalanandaji Maharaj did marvelous changes/developments to this Centre. Before he took up the charge, our Ashrama's main entrance was through Duraisamy Road. When Duraisamy Road became busy with traffic, Maharaj changed the entrance to Maharajapuram Santhanam Salai and the ambience of the Ashrama changed drastically.

Revered Maharaj was a multifaceted personality – good architect, accountant, clear understanding of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda and Vedanta philosophy, good administrator, good command over English and Sanskrit languages, spontaneously cutting meaningful jokes etc.





Swamis Uddhavananda, Brahmurpananda, Kamalananda, Veetabhayananda



Swamis Uddhavananda, Kamalananda relaxing



Swamis Gautamanandaji, Kamalanandaji, Suhitanandaji, Padmasthanandaji and Sri Ramana Reddy



Swamis Smaranandaji and Kamalanandaji with Sri Sarada Math Mataji and devotees



Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, T.Nagar, Chennai 60017

**Visit of Srmat Swami Prabuddhanandaji Maharaj on 28-Aug-2002**

*Siting (Floor): Br. Kalaiselvan, Br. Anuj, Br. Yogasthachaitanya, Br. Girijashankar, Prof. Thandaveswara, Br. Sriram, Br. Thamal, Br. Kumarachaitanya, Br. Nihsangachaitanya*

*Sitting (Chair): Swami Sukhatmanandaji, Swami Veetabhayanandaji, Swami Gautamanandaji, Swami Prabuddhanandaji, Swami Somenandaji, Swami Virupakshanandaji, Swami Pratyaganandaji,*

*Standing: Swami Ekavidanandaji, Swami Sivaadhyayanandaji, Br. Swatiprabhu, Swami Padmasthanandaji, Swami Bodhamayanandaji, Swami Jnanamayyanandaji, Swami Kamalanandaji, Swami Bhaktikamanandaji, Swami Sandaranandaji, Br. Balamurali Swami Baneshanandaji, Swami Satyapriyanandaji, Swami Paravidyanandaji, Swami Dyutimayyanandaji, Sri Ramana Reddy, Sri R.K Mohan Rao*

Major works he has done during his Secretaryship was that construction of our Higher Secondary South School building (ground and first floor) in commemoration of Ramakrishna Mission Centenary (1897-1997), merging of two higher secondary aided schools into one, starting of Matric High School in the North School premises, construction of Sarada Sabha Bhavan (Infosys Hall), celebration of Holy Mother's 150th Birth Anniversary in a grand manner, starting of Alumni Association etc. Really, in him, we have lost a great soul and multifaceted personality.

### **3. Swami Satyavidananda**

Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Malliankarani, Tamilnadu

“One who finds joy in the Lotus.” The name aptly describes the finest qualities of Swami Kamalanandaji Maharaj. Like Lotus he signified divinity, purity, and detachment. Performing every work meticulously and with great efficiency is the mark of Swami Kamalananda. He was an excellent administrator who could cope with any emergency or tensed situation admirably.

Maharaj in his life, mingled freely with everyone, young and old, and was able to communicate at their level. This ability endeared him with everyone, and he was able to counsel and resolve people's worries and troubles effortlessly. Like a lotus, his heart was open to love everyone and feel deeply for others.

His face was always beaming with laughter and smile. Never even in physical pain, he was seen being morose.

His wit, English puns, and jokes are always a delight to those who speak to him. Conversing with him, even on heavy topics, could be lighter with his ability to add humour to release the tension.

### **4. Swami Dayasagaranda**

Ramakrishna Math, Kanchipuram

“Despondency is not religion, whatever else it may be. By being pleasant always and smiling, it takes you nearer to God...” says Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Kamalanandaji Maharaj was practising this trait till the end of his life. He seemed cheerful even amidst various bodily ailments. In spite of

the excruciating pain, he will enquire about the welfare of the monks, doctors and workers. This trait endeared all those who had been serving him. He treated the sevaks with utmost respect thus valuing their self-dignity.

In Halasuru Math, he used to make others read out the Shastras and would listen to them. This, he was continuing in Varanasi also, till the end of his life. His loving nature endeared those who came in close contact with him.

Maharaj liked this sloka from Vivekachudamani which reads:

Sahanam sarvadukhaanaam aprateekaara poorvakam |  
Chintaavilaa parahitam saatitikshaani gadyate ||

How beautifully it expounds, forbearance, one of the traits of Sri Maharaj. He used to give immense freedom, nay – he did not interfere in the freedom of others. Maharaj exhibited generosity even during exercising power.

## **5. Swami Tatpurushanandapuri**

### **At Varanasi**

Maharaj had great rapport with everyone. Always smiling and full of wit and humour but of only few words. Volunteered to prepare dishes like Bisibele bath, puliyogare etc. at Maharaj Bandar for all monks. On completion of 50 years of Monastic life offered a grand bhandara. Taught me dishes like Akkirotti, Maddur vade, Rava idly etc and I was blessed to make them for him frequently. Many devotees from Bangalore and Chennai used to send snacks, sweets and pickles to Maharaj in bulk quantity. Maharaj will distribute them to all the monks and friends.

Maharaj has pet names for some of us – ‘Acharya’ Brahmeshanandaji, – ‘All forms’ – Sarvarupananda – ‘Vadhyaar’ – Tatpurusha – and ‘Sweet boy’ – Tyagiswarananda

### **Unquenchable thirst for study of Scriptures**

Maharaj’s faith in the scriptures and his shraddha in learning them is unparalleled. List of books studied from 2017 to 2022 January is quite long. To mention a few:

Divine life of Swami Vireswaranandaji Maharaj (published in Two volumes in 2014)

Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master in two volumes by Swami Saradananda

They lived with God and God lived with them by Swami Chetanananda, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 1993

Life of Swami Vivekananda and Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda Holy Mother (Tapasyananda)

Jeevanmukti Viveka-Panchadasi-Upanishads (Nikhilananda)

Ashtavakra Gita-Upadesa sahasri-Paramartha Prasanga

Spiritual Heritage of India-Meditation and Spiritual life

Regularly meditated at Latu Maharaj's room in the evening and came down for arati. He could not make it in the last six months.

Swamiji's Jayanthi on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022 was the landmark in Maharaj's life on earth. That day Maharaj attended Mangalaarti at 4.30 am went up to the sanctum sanctorum, prayed intensely, had Viswanath prasada brought by a devotee and returned to his room escorted by me around 5.45 am.

About 3 years back Maharaj thought of reading Bhagavatam. We phoned to Chennai Math Manager Swami Vimurtanandaji and he readily obliged to send the 4 volumes free of cost. Maharaj told me that by the time we complete it my life will be fulfilled and though we are not Shuka – I can go as King Parikshit did!! He meant it casually and yet it was premonition for him or prophetic!! We were in the Tenth Canto, one that tells the Lila of Bhagavan Sri Krishna.

### **Devotees from Bangalore**

**7 and 8. Prof. M. S. Harish, Dr. M. S. Suresh,  
Nephews of Swami Kamalanandaji, Bengaluru**  
(refer Shivananda to Kamalananda)

### **9. Prof B. S. Thandaveswara**

#### **A friend, philosopher and guide**

1. I came to know of Swami Kamalanandaji at Chennai when he was Secretary of T. Nagar Ashrama, He had the tenacity in handling the strike by the teachers of the schools run by the Ashrama thanks to his

total surrender to Sri Ramakrishna. Teachers were having great respect and love.

2. He had taken up several developmental projects at T. Nagar. Once, there was financial constraint in managing the Hostel, and a person came forward to donate Rs 30-35 lakhs with a precondition, but Maharaj rejected it as the condition put was against the basic principles.
3. He initiated Newsletter with the help of Swami Bodhamayananda.
4. He introduced monthly 'half a day retreat' and brought the like-minded devotees together. There was guided meditation. He would discuss Vivekachudamani.
5. He organized 'one day teachers' convention' and had brought out a beautiful book on Education in collaboration with Swamis Satyapriyananda and Vidyanathananda.
6. He would call himself as BE – Breaking Engineer, as he modified the assembly hall at T. Nagar ashrama by removing the columns for having a full view, and noise (sound) proof.
7. Swamiji was not well and he used to lie down and keeping the legs on a vibrator and some time on oxygen support. Even then he used to be smiling, and never exhibited his unwellness. The special design of the watch with Vivekananda was got fabricated at Titan, Hosur with the help of Sri Rajagopal and Sri Pashupathi (who were the residents of Students' Home and were known to Br. Bhakti Chaitanya)
8. Once in a book exhibition in Calcutta, the Advaita Ashrama of Calcutta had put up a bookstall basically to disseminate the messages of Vivekananda. There was a heavy rush. One day there was some shortage of money. Next day morning when exhibition was opened a young man came to Swami Kamalanandaji and said, *I have stolen the books yesterday, I have read the book overnight, I realized the mistake and now I want to pay the money for the books.* Swami Kamalanandaji said the very act of honesty has paid for the book and the purpose is served. His unselfish unconditional love we shared; Yaava janmada punyavo.

## 10. Smt. T. Rukmini Devi

Swami Kamalananda Maharaj was to me a mother, friend, philosopher, teacher, and guide. He used to teach the great values, philosophy through simple examples.

Basically, Swami Kamalanandaji was an embodiment of love, patience and smile. His humour, jokes, puns were spontaneous. And the listener would burst with laughter. Whichever the place (Chennai, Salem, Halasuru, ) he would attract the devotees in large numbers. He was like a father; when rava kesari bhath was taken to him, he tasted and said “the taste is good but you see there are sticks of the raisins and those have not been removed.” When offered to Guru Maharaj it should be perfect.

He was always perfect in doing quality work. He used to say work is worship and spiritualise all the work you do.

Spontaneity of cracking wits and jokes lingers in my mind When asked “How are you?” He would always smilingly say PF and MS (Physically fit and mentally sound) Sometimes, he would joke. I am always made to think and analyse in my mind. Whether it is secular or spiritual it is the worship of Guru Maharaj.

Some points about the spiritual aspects which he had told me are:

1. If you want liberation or mukti go for the tattva rather than intellectual analysis.
2. To have success in work you do, put your heart and soul to the work.
3. Small things need perfection but perfection itself is not a small thing.
4. All sufferings are created by *ego of human* beings, when Ego enters **Lord Vanishes**.
5. He used to tell think of God 24 hours a day.

We have lost our beloved father and spiritual guide. We were very lucky to have had his association for more than 30 years. He demonstrated the Concept of BRAHMA SATYA AND JAGAD MITHYA in his life.

## 11. Smt. Y. Rajeswari Shyam

I knew Swami Kamalanandaji Maharaj from my early school days. He was busy most of the time cracking jokes I got used to his way of talking and I started enjoying his company. To mention one such incident which

happened to be on an Ekadashi day. He asked me, “Today, are you fasting with ‘e’ or without ‘e’.” It took me a while to understand exactly what he meant. By then he was laughing his heart out and explained that whether I was ‘fasting’ or ‘feasting’.

Satyavratandanaji used to treat me as his granddaughter. Whenever, he would come to Chennai from Kolkata, Kamalanandaji used to call me over the phone and say, “Your grandfather is calling you. Come immediately.” After my marriage, Kamalanandaji wanted me to change my perspective about career; encouraged me to resign from the job and join the Ashram’s Matriculation School in Chennai. After the school hours, I used to go to the Ashram and spend some time there. Maharaj used to enquire whether I was enjoying the job and would insist that I should think it as a service to Guru Maharaj. His way of teaching was very unique through fun and laughter. On one such occasion he told us to contemplate on death.

Once Maharaj gave us some cash saying that we must utilise the amount for his Bhandara after his passing away. We were in utter shock to hear these words from him. We tried lots to divert the topic but nothing worked and we had no choice but to comply to what he said. Few months after this, Maharaj decided to shift to Kashi once for all. We visited him almost every year. Later, as Maharaj had instructed us, the Bhandara was arranged on Feb 16<sup>th</sup>. Many senior Swamis mentioned that a good soul is lost. But they also said that Maharaj had gone to where he belonged i.e. to Thakur.

## **12. Swami Kamalanandaji, An ethical GPS – Sowtharya Lakshmi (on behalf of brother Madhusudanan Narasimhan)**

The associations that we had with Swami Kamalanandaji are very vibrant, positive, and influential. He was our father, mentor, and a blessing to our family.

### **Punctuality a Priority**

We sisters and our brother were very blessed to read the life of Swami Vivekananda on every Sunday at 7.30 am (Indian Standard Time) with Swami Kamalanandaji; he has made punctuality a priority. In fact, he demonstrated the virtue of his punctuality in words and actions

## **An ethical GPS**

Swami Kamalanandaji was more than a monk. As an ethical GPS, he has helped us to navigate through our life aspects including but not limited to our work. From our pre-class warmups, he used to quickly spot out if we were experiencing work-related stress and/or undergoing job burn-out exertions. Often times, he used to recollect Rakhhal Maharaj (Swami Brahmadandaji) words, Struggle, Struggle, and Struggle.

## **Mother's Heart**

We always had a joyful experience when we pay our visits to Swami Kamalanandaji after his move to Kashi. His motherly love and kindness cannot be merely explained by words.

### **13. Name matching the reality – Smt. Niranjana**

Swami Kamalanandaji is accustomed to wear a beaming smile that glows like a lotus. He is a stimulating person who can enliven and brighten a place with his witty remarks and fresh ideas.

- \* Taught us the basics like Swamiji refers to Swami Vivekananda, all other Monks of the order need to be addressed as Maharaj.
- \* Presented us the book 'Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda' Spend 10 minutes every day for the Arati (Khandana Bhava Bhandana)
- \* He also told we need to remember on our death day, and act accordingly – to be good, do good.
- \* He was also a good Administrator, used to finding talent and appreciating others. He appreciated the then Dispensary Maharaj of Ulsoor Math stating he is well organised and sincere in his work during Eye Camp preparation.
- \* He organised a get together and when asked what the program was, he jokingly said it was a Programless program. He presented all of us with the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.
- \* He asked us to take care of our health, stating that current day work – people who spend all their Health for Wealth, later have to spend all their Wealth for Health.



#### **14. Dr. Bhanu Murthy, an yoga exponent**

Swami Kamalanandaji name is such a match to Swamiji always in Ananda state, dynamic all-rounder personality with expertise and mastery in so many aspects of life – intellectual with immense knowledge, emotional balance, enriched wisdom, a great sense of humour, practical patience, far-sighted, so well grounded in challenging situations, Visionary, so creative and artistic to bring in happy way of seeing life aspects, So capable to make any one laugh whole heartedly giving wisdom to devotees on challenging subjects.

Swami Kamalanandaji was so Madhura by his sweet nature, all children were very fond of him and Swamiji could communicate with children and child-nature personalities so.

As a medical doctor I am aware any one with such high unbearable pain would have been so moody but Swami Kamalanandaji was always in Smiling mode even with unbearable pain. This capability of Swamiji to face pain is a role model for every Sadhaka to learn to accept life challenges and face life challenges with Smile and not give up until one's last breath. Swami Kamalanandaji's life is an inspiration to every Sadhaka

#### **15. Aarthu Srivatchan**

I had the blessing of meeting Revered Swami Kamalanandaji Maharaj in T. Nagar ashrama, Chennai; frequently during the period 2000 - 2003 and much later in Halasuru, Bangalore. As his name symbolises, he was always so cheerful with bloomed face like a lotus.

He captivates his devotees by his loud laughter, good timing jokes and keeps them totally enchanted with his positive spirit and vibes.

He was a perfect Yogi with a tremendous Will power. Even though, he suffered from physical illness, he never missed the chance of offering his pranaams to Guru Maharaj in the shrine after evening Prayers.

#### **16. Dr. R. K. Mohan Rao (Former Scientist from CLRI, Chennai) and Smt. Aravinda**

Swami Kamalanandaji Maharaj engaged us in various activities like students' convention, teachers' convention, parents' convention,

conducting competitions of school students, teaching bhajans to the school children and teachers, conducting Sunday classes for the children of ashrama locality, proof reading of the parts of Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna for the production of DVD, taking care of guests for the ashrama, training students for the cultural activities etc., etc.

He has the habit of taking short term projects with moderate resources. We are giving two or three sweet memories of him.

- \* On the occasion of the opening day of the bookstores and library at T.Nagar Ashrama, Chennai, he invited us; very seriously told us, “You both go and make some noise at the place of function.” We laughed and he too laughed along with us. (i.e., we had to sing some bhajans.)
- \* One day he called us all of a sudden and uttered, ‘(Ugadi Geetings)’ in Telugu. We were little surprised and said, “Maharaj, today is not Ugadi.” He replied with brim face, “Just now I learnt how to tell in Telugu”, followed by his big laughter.

### **17. Dr. Harshita**

Swami Kamalanandaji Maharaj is a Person who is remembered by everyone for the pure impartial love and a charming smile as beautiful as blooming Kamala (lotus). He was such a great soul who had a power of making any mind into happy mind by his sweet words and smile. We feel blessed for coming in contact with him.

### **Devotees from Salem**

#### **18. Prof. P. V. Karunakaran**

- In his presence, you could never think of a dull moment. He was always beaming with new ideas for the development of the Ashrama.
- As Convenor of Souvenir Committee, all I could do was to admire the Souvenir which was completely planned and executed by Swami Kamalanandaji himself.
- He was a shepherd sent by Sri Ramakrishna to tend His devotees at Salem for a couple of years.

## 19. Sri G. Subash

When there was a shortfall of funds, in the course of renovation, he would say that, it is Sri Gurumaharaj's headache to arrange the balance required for the completion of the work. Such was the confidence. He was very focused on whatever project he undertook. He would call himself a Break Inspector.

## 20. Sri P. Palaniappan

- The plus factor of his assertiveness can't take No for an answer
- Get your strength from Swami Vivekananda  
Fear Everything and run – No  
Face everything and rise – Yes
- Plus factor  
Joy of giving is greater than joy of receiving

My association with Swami Kamalanandaji though for a short duration was memorable.

## 21. Sri S. Perumal

- Though Swami Kamalanandaji was here only for a short while, he had left an indelible mark.
- Man of strong will power, foresight in decision making, he was true to his conscience and never wounded anyone by harsh words.
- He was gentle to the core and treated everyone equally and humane.
- His life was noble and devoted to the humanity.

## 22. Sri A. G. Raamkumar

- Swami Kamalanandaji's salient virtues are: Ever smiling, ever patient, never loses his mental strength, never lost his temper and got angry.
- Very good governance, Administrative skill, versatility in languages, accommodative to all, open to new adventures
- His trust in volunteers and devotees is total:
  - ❖ My volunteering at the computer centre in Pudur Tuition Centre
  - ❖ Providing a responsible role at 3 day devotees Bhakta Sammelan (Maanadu) at Salem in 2007.

- ❖ Made me Assistant Secretary for accommodation, Stage management etc.

### **23. Er. K. B. Chandrasekaran**

Life changed after my coming in contact with Swami Kamalanandaji. He saw the poor as God and treated them with dignity. Maharaj gave me a role in dispensary renovation.

All his service activities were tinged with Bhakti and were the result of powerful thinking and planning. His shining face is a gift of God.

### **24. Smt. Gayathri Shanmugam**

Swami Kamalanandaji has left with us remarkable memories. One such is the Devotees' Conference in Salem, Renovation of Dispensary as well as Ashrama dining hall. Nearly 100 volunteers to interact with at Maanadu and Maharaj gave suggestions to everyone.

### **25. Smt. Suganthi Sivaprakasam**

Swamiji had an unique quality in whatever project / task he had taken – completing it with untiring effort with utmost confidence in Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Thakur is the force behind him to complete it, never had any doubt about it, and would always surrender the credit at His feet.

### **26. Er. Shyamala**

We used to wonder how he is bubbling with energy – in spite of his illness. We could see the mother in him when he fed us. Maharaj would never show his physical sufferings.

Everything is unto Gurumaraj, he used to say. Kindly pray so that I may bear the pain with equanimity. Don't pray to remove my pain.

### **Devotee from Chennai**

### **27. Sri Kesavan, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, T. Nagar**

His magic hands have turned

1. Mambalam Hostel into T. Nagar Ashrama.
2. Prayer hall for students into shrine for devotees.
3. Peaceful atmosphere of Ashrama by shifting the entrance to the then Griffith Road.

Funds crunch for auditorium – if you are ready to serve, He will arrange money. Yes, Sri Gurumaharaj arranged Rs.20 lakhs from Infosys for the auditorium in Ramakrishna Mission School.

To serve the students from risk of traffic hazards, he arranged computers centre at each school. Created C.D's on Swamiji and Hinduism.

Installation of accounts software package at T. Nagar and also at 15 other centres.

My ignorance was removed by him at every stage of my life. Expressing my difficulty to reach him if he went to Varanasi, Maharaj said, "Keshav, only body needs time and travel, not the soul."

## **Contributors to the Life and reminiscences of Swami Kamalanandaji**

### **Monks**

Parama Puja Srimat Swami Gautamanandaji Maharaj, Vice-President

1. Swami Atmavidananda, Senior Monk, Bengaluru
2. Swami Padmasthananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, T. Nagar, Chennai
3. Swami Satyavidananda, Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Malliankaranai, T. N.
4. Swami Dayasagaranda, Ramakrishna Math, Kanchipuram
5. Swami Tatpurushananda, Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Varanasi

### **Devotees from Bangalore**

6. Dr. M. S. Harish, Nephew of Swami Kamalanandaji, Bengaluru
7. Dr. M. S. Suresh, Nephew of Swami Kamalanandaji, Bengaluru
8. Prof. Thandaveswara
9. Smt. T. Rukmini Devi
10. Smt. Rajeswari Shyam
11. Ms. Sowntharya Lakshmi
12. Smt. Niranjana

13. Smt. Arathy Srivatchan
14. Dr. Banu Moorthy, Physician, Yoga Exponent
15. Dr. R. K. Mohan Rao and Smt. Aravinda
16. Dr. Harshitha

### **Devotees from Salem**

17. Prof P. V. Karunakaran, Committee Member
18. Sri G. Subash, Committee Member
19. Sri P. Palaniappan, Vice President, Managing Committee
20. Sri S. Perumal, President, Managing Committee
21. Sri A. G. Raamkumar, Devotee
22. Er. K. B. Chandrasekaran, Committee Member
23. Smt. Gayathri, Devotee
24. Smt. Suganthi Sivaprakasam, Devotee
25. Er. Shyamala, Devotee

### **Devotee from Chennai**

26. Sri Kesavan, Office Staff, Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama,  
T. Nagar, Chennai.





Swamis Bodhasarananda, Br. Shankar, Kamalananda with Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj.



Kamalanandaji with Swami Smaranandaji



Group of purvashram relatives



At Varanasi Oct 2017 with Thandaveswara,  
Rukmini, Natarju, Vatsala



At Varanasi Sevashrama,  
in his room during winter,  
Dec 05, 2019