

Swami Swarupanandaji

Born to a very wealthy and respected zamindar family of Bengal in the year 1919.

Father used to practice stringent sadhana, while his mother was a very religious lady. Swamijee was spiritually inclined from very childhood.

After the death of his mother Swamijee renounced all the wealth and comfort of his family in quest of spiritual satisfaction.

Being dissatisfied after meeting various sages and saints and experimenting with various paths including Tantra, Swamijee reached Varanasi in the fifties. While at the Sankatmochan temple, Swamijee heard the name of Ma Anandamayee from some Devotees. Although it was late in the evening and the ashram at that time was rather far from the city centre, Swamijee was inspired to have Ma's darshan immediately. He reached the Ashram between 8.45 p.m. and 9.00 p.m. which is traditionally the 'Maun' time at all the Ma's ashrams. Swamijee along with his very close friend who later on became Swami Prakashanandajee had the darshan of Sri Ma only for a few minutes and returned even before the 'Maun' was over. Swamijee could immediately fathom that this was the 'Universal Mother' and his search was finally over.

The very next morning Swamijee came to Ma and sought her permission to stay in the Ashram. It was within the first few days of his stay that Ma permitted him to take Sanyasa Diksha. This was very rare as normally new entrants have to stay in the ashram for several years before they qualify for sanyas.

Under the instructions of Sri Ma, Swamijee practiced stringent sadhana for several years at Uttar Kashi and also on the bank of the holy Narmada. Swamijee was also deputed as the 'Sadhu-In charge' of several important ashrams of the Sangha, Ashrams in Delhi, Vrindavan. Agarpara developed tremendously under Swamijee's magnetic personality and control. He attracted hundreds of devotees everywhere and spreading message of Sri Ma.

Swamijee was selected as the General Secretary of the Shree Shree Anandamoyee Sangha, the all India organisation, in the year 1984 and held this position till the very end.

The 'Anada Jyoti Mandir', the 'Vidyapeeth', the 'Matri Smriti Museum' and the 'Sarvadharm Granthagar' at Kankhal are only some of his many achievements.

Swamijee who had not been keeping good health for some time past was diagnosed as suffering from advanced stage of throat cancer. He was admitted to a hospital in Delhi for treatment and attained 'Mahasamadhi' on the evening of 14th September, 2002. The day happened to be the very auspicious day of 'Sri Radha Asthami'. **It is very significant to note that exactly twenty years ago Sri Ma also attained 'Mahasamadhi' on the very same day and almost at about the same time.**

Although hospitalised and in intense pain, Swamijee appeared to be in a state of constant meditation for a few days before his Mahasamadhi. The serenity and the peace on his face was noticed by all the devotees and visitors. Even the doctors, nurses and attendants serving Swamijee had become his admirers in a very short time.

His last moments were very peaceful. He was constantly reciting his 'Mantra', which was perceptible by the frail and regular movement of his lips. He was given Sri Ma's 'Charanamrit' and breathed his last among the recitation of 'Sri Ma Jai Ma, Jai Jai Ma' by the devotees present.

After midnight Swamiji's body was taken to Hardwar in a special convoy of cars wrapped in saffron clothes and seated in the 'Padmasana'. With Bhasma applied on his forehead, Swamiji looked devine.

At Kankhal, eager and anxious devotees were awaiting the arrival of Swamiji's holy remains. The convoy arrived just around sunrise at Kankhal ashram where he was received by devotees, sadhus and ashramites.

Among the recitation of Veda Mantras, Swamijee was bathed with

the holy water of the Ganga and Panchamrit in the presence of Mahants from different ashrams. The whole ceremony was conducted by Mahant Shree Girdhar Narain Puri Maharaj of the Mahanirvani Akhda as has been the tradition in Ma's ashram.

After the holy bath Swamiji was wrapped in a new set of saffron robes, worn by Swami Muktananda Giriji (Didima), from whom he had received mantra diksha. Swamijee was then seated in front of his room in the main verandah of the ashram. Young boys of the vidyapeeth was continuously singing 'Shree Ma Jai Ma, Jai Jai Ma' while in the another corner of the verandah 'Geeta Path' was being done by the female ascetics of the ashram. A group of poor people, who had been regularly receiving alms from the Sree Annapurna sthal had come of their own and were singing Ram Dhun out of their respect and affection for Swamijee. The long verandah of the ashram was full with devotees, sadhus and mahants from various akhadas. Aroop, a longtime devotee of Ma, rushed all the way from Mumbai to pay his last respects to Swamijee and was just in time.

Around 2 p.m. Swamijee's body was placed in a covered truck, left open from the rear of the last glimpse of Swamijee. The procession started from the Kankhal ashram. All the sadhus and devotees accompanied the procession on foot singing Ma Dhoon. After about an hour the procession reached Nildhara of the holy river Ganga. A number of devotees had already gathered there to have darshan of Swamijee. Swamijee's body was then placed on a kushasan inside an wooden box. The ritual arati was performed by Swami Jyotirmayanandjee of the ashram. With the sun still shining in the foreground, Swamijee was given Jal Samadhi at about 3 p.m.

With the Mahasamadhi on Swami Swarupanandji Maharaj a long and eventful chapter in the history of the Sangha has come to an end. He will always be remembered with great respect and affection by devotees of Ma as a Karmayogi of high order and a saint full of compassion and love for one and all.