

Sri Swami Mukundananda Saraswati

Sri Swami Mukundananda Saraswati (known as T.K. Govindakrishna Iyer prior to his initiation into sannyasa) was born in 1895 in Palghat to a pious Brahmin couple, Sri T.A. Krishna Iyer and Smt. Seetalakshmi Ammal.

He served as an engineer in Public Works Department of the State Government of Madras Presidency. He was a keen devotee of Lord Krishna. After retirement in 1950, he undertook pilgrimage to Badrinath. At Rishikesh, he had darsan of Sri Swami Sivananda Saraswati and was drawn to Him. He again returned to Him in 1953, when on Vyasa Poornima Day during Lunar eclipse, he was blessed with *sannyasa diksha* by Swami Sivananda on the banks of the river Ganges. The climate of the Himalayan foothills did not suit his health and he was advised by his guru to go over to Thapovanam in Tirokovilur in South Arcot district and pursue his spiritual sadhana in the ashram, Sri Gnananada Thapovanam. Sadguru Gnanananda was pleased to accept him as His disciple. He showered his grace on him and made arrangements for his study of Geeta and Upanishads under Swami Vidyananda Giri.

Swami Mukundananda took active interest in the development of the ashram. It was he who introduced Sadguru Gnanananda to many people in Kerala who became His ardent devotees. In fact, the invitation for the first Kumbhabhisheka, which was performed in 1966, was issued in his name as desired by the Sage.

Later, when Sri Gnanananda founded a special retreat centre for Sannyasins in Yercaud Hills in Salem district, He named it Pranava Nilayam and sent Swami Mukundananda and Swami Dasa Giri to stay there.

Swami Mukundananda was often called to Thapovanam. After the Mahasamadhi of Sadguru Gnanananda in January 1974, he constituted a Religious Trust to continue all the religious activities of the ashram and construct the Samadhi Shrine of Grace of Sadguru Gnanananda.

Swami Mukundananda attained Mahasamadhi on 18th April 1977 at the ripe age of eighty two years. It was Solar eclipse day when he was all the time in a meditative mood with Narayanasmriti.