

Jai Sathguru Maharaj

Radhe Krishna !!!

“Dhyayan Kruthey yajan yagnyai : Threthayam Dhwaparey archayan |

Yadhapnothi thadhapnothi **Kalau Sankeerthya Kesavam** || “

In this materialistic, commercial, and individualist world, it is very difficult to attain the lotus feet of God through means followed in other yugas like Dhyanam (meditation), Yagnam (rituals), and Pujas alone. Namasankeerthanam or chanting the name of God was envisaged as the simplest means to attain His lotus feet by Sri Shukabrahmam in Srimad Bhagavatham. Another important necessity to reaching enlightenment is to have a proper Guru, without which a person, however learned he might be, cannot obtain the divine blessings. Our elders rightly stated in Tamil:

“Pannarum vedhangal padithu unarndhalum Guru arul illayel Thiruvaryl Illai.”

The word “Guru” simply means “enlightened one.” He is the one who relieves us of Agnyana or Darkness and directs us in the path of enlightenment. Sathguru Gnanananda Giri Swamigal was one such Guru who graced this earth with his wisdom and Kaarunyam and blessed countless souls across the world.

Swami, as we, the members of Gnanananda Seva Samajam across the world, fondly refer to Him, was born in Mangalapuri (Mangalore) in present day Karnataka. As a child, He was detached and disinterested in worldly affairs much to the despair of his parents and was always focused on the inner wisdom and the purpose of his life. Later, He was directed by a bright light that guided him to Pandaripuram where he met His Guru Sri Sivarathna Giri Swamigal of Jyothir Mutt, Kashmir. Jyothir Mutt is one of the 4 Aamnya (Principle) Mutts established by Sri Adhi Shankara. Swami later received Maha Upadesham from Sri Sivarathna Giri Swamigal and was instantiated into the Giri *paramapara*. He was christened as Sathguru Gnanananda Giri Swamigal and began serving his Guru, making that his principle goal and purpose. When Sivarathna Giri Swamigal attained Maha Samadhi, Swami had to take over as the 6th peetathipadhi of Jyothir Mutt. However, Swami could not bear the grief of separation from his Guru so He renounced the peetam and wandered around the world by foot as a Paramahansa Parivrajaacharya. He travelled widely to Ceylon, Burma, Malaysia, India, and present day Indonesia by foot and spread the importance of Guru Bhakthi and Namasankeerthanam around the world. Swami himself said that he had performed rigorous thapas under the cold waters of the Manasarovar lake in the Himalayas . He finally set up an ashram near Thirukovilur and stayed in Sithilinga Madam for several years, choosing Thapovanam as his final abode.

He named the ashram “Gnanananda Thapovanam” where he propagated the thoughts of inclusiveness and peace.

Swami stressed the importance of Guru Paadha Puja as the means to relieve a person of his egos and karmas. He led by example and showed his devotees the methods to perform the Guru Paadha Pooja, which is one of the various important activities at Thapovanam. He initiated our Guruji Swami Haridhos

Giri as his principle disciple, blessed him with his Padhukas, and ordered him to take the Padhukas around the world to spread the importance of Guru Bhakthi and Namasankeerthanam. Swami Gnanananda Giri attained Maha Samadhi on Arudhra Pournami day in 1974 and continues to bless us all in his omnipotent form. In his words, Swami has subtly told his disciples many times that his Samadhi exists in six different places across the globe. He was such a Jeevan Muktha that no one could guess his actual age. Swami's ideals were propagated ably by Swami Haridhos Giri (Guruji).

Guruji was a true example of what simple, selfless, total surrender to the Guru Padhukas can achieve. True to the words of Adhi Shankara:

"Guror angr padhmey thatha kim?"- What is more powerful and potent than the lotus feet of the Guru?

With his Guru's Padhukas as his only means of guidance, Swami Haridhos Giri travelled across the globe to spread Nama Sankeerthanam and built a grand temple for Vittal and Rakumayee in Dhakshina Halasyam, Thennangur, near Kanchipuram in Southern India. He established "Sri Gnanananda Giri Peetam" in honor of this Guru and decorated the Peetam as its first Peetadhipathi. It is to be noted that it is due to the efforts of Swami Haridhos Giri that Namasankeerthanam has spread to every nook and corner of this world. During 1994, Guruji attained Jala Samadhi in Koteeshwar near Rudra Prayag in the Himalayas. His principle disciple Swami Namananda Giri continued with his work. Swami's principles are currently being ably carried forward by Swami Niranjanananda Giri, the current Peetadhipathi of Dhakshina Halasyam in Thennangur.

Guru Padhukas and Guru Bhakthi are clearly of high importance to the Hindu community. Our epics, Vedas, and scriptures have enough references to the importance of Sri Padhukas and Guru Padhukas - Baratha ruling Ayodhya as a surrogate of the Padhukas of Sri Rama and Ahalya being relieved of her sins by the grace of Rama's Padhukas, to name a few.

Gnanananda Seva Samajam Inc., Maryland has been blessed with the opportunity to facilitate the Padhuka Pooja of great saints of the 20th century during the very first Namasankeerthana Mela held in the US on October 6 & 7, 2012 in Maryland. It was incidental that Swami decided to stay permanently at Sri Ravi and Smt. Daya's home and bless Maryland and USA in its totality with His divine grace. Our Samajam, as always, wishes to share this happiness and make the Padhuka's presence felt in every home in the community and therefore has decided to conduct the Second Sunday Bhajans at different venues/homes followed by Namasankeerthanam - true to the tenet of our Gurus.

Below is the new agenda for Second Sunday Sampradaya Bhajans. We request all members of this community to participate and be blessed with His divine Grace.

Radhe Krishna!!!

Agenda (Every Second Sunday)

Before 2 PM: Poorna Kumbham and receiving the Padhukas singing "Deepa Jyothiyai Varuvaai"

2:00 PM: Padhuka Pooja Sankalpam

2:10 PM -2:40 PM- Padhuka Abhishegam – Prayer songs from the Thapovanam Dinasari Vazhipaadu followed by Rudram & Chamakam (or Purusha Shooktham)

2:40 PM -2: 50 PM Archanai

2:50 PM -2:55 PM Harathi

2.55 PM – 3:00 PM Break

3:00 PM- 5:30 PM Dhakshina Bharatha Sampradaya Nama Sankeerthanam