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PrasAdam Preparation & Madi (physical sanctity/purity)

As we all know, one of the important aspects of rendering service to PerumAL is to maintain physical purity or madi (in tamil). While it is impossible to fully maintain the rigorous madi as recommended in granthAs authored by and meticulously followed by our illustrious AchAryAs, we try to follow aspects of it to the extent possible in USA.

It is important that each of us maintain madi where necessary and help ensure that others who may be maintaining madi can do so effectively despite the crowded situation where we will be typically operating in. **While we recommend that you be consciously aware of madi, please do not let that stop you from fully enjoying the anubhavam of having perumAL at your home.** One of the names for perumAL is Pundarikakshan and when HE sees anything with His Lotus eyes it becomes pure. So, with that spirit, lets try to do our best to be pure to the extent possible, with the primary goal of enjoying every moment that HE is present in your home.

What follows is a set of recommended guidelines for the hosts of Sri Navaneetha Krishna of Sri Ahobila Muth USA. Madi essentially involves the following four steps:

- Prepare Madi Vasthram
- Take Head Bath
- Wear Madi Vasthram
- Maintain Madi

Madi Vasthram preparation

- All clothes: (towel, under garments, veshti, anga vasthram/ madisaar (9 yds necessary for madi) need to be drenched, squeezed and hung out to dry. (Typically done earlier day)
- Tip: Hang the towel close to where you will take bath the next day (turkey towels won't dry easily, so use thinner/malayAlatthu towels)
- It is also acceptable for you to put them in a washer/dryer (but note that most dryers will mess up your veshti/saree)
- If you use dryer, note that you can only contact the dry cloth when in madi after bath (see below) next morning, or, you have to take it with a stick and put it in a plastic bag without touching it.
- A suggestion is to use cloth hanger. These are very good in not wrinkling the clothes.
- To transfer a dried madi cloth (to the bathroom), use a glove or cover your hands in plastic bag and safely move the vasthram.
- Pattu (silk) cloth if not worn while having eating (breakfast/lunch/dinner) is madi. In addition it should be new and should not have been washed.
- Brand new outfits or unwashed silk outfits are recommended for small kids so that they can stay with madi parents who may need to take care of them.

Head Bath

- Taking a full bath is a necessary step towards madi.
- Do not step on any bath mats, or contact other non-madi cloth/hand towels (permanent floor carpets OK)
- It is acceptable to take additional madi vastrams (entire sets) and fold them and store them in plastic bags so you can use at a later date.
- OK to carry the plastic bag into bathrooms and use madi towel and madi vastrams inside the bag after you take bath

PrasAdam Preparation & Maintaining madi in Kitchen

- After wearing Madi clothes, you have to make sure you can remain in madi during the entire process.
- It is really important that Thaligai (cooking) be performed by persons who have had their samAshrayanam with any Sri Vaishnava AchAryA.

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- Start cooking after punyahavacahanam water has been sprinkled in the kitchen area and vessels that would be used for cooking. This will be first thing we do after we arrive at the host's residence. So you will have enough time to cook after that.
- Maintain madi/sanctity in kitchen area while cooking prasadam. The cooks need to maintain madi until the prasadam is delivered to the area where aradhanam is performed.
- Deliver prasadam to aradhanam area or a secluded place that no one would touch until it is offered to PerumAL. This could be done as soon as prasadam preparation is completed and need not wait until bhojyasnam when the prasadam will be actually offered to the Lord.
- Do not place prasadam yet to be offered to PerumAL on the dining table or places where there is yecchal/theetu.
- Vegetable cutting and activities like that can be performed before punyahavacahanam water sprinkling. However any cooking activity that involves fire should be done after punyahavacahanam water sprinkling.
- Only people in madi, swaroopam should bring PerumAL prasadam for offering to PerumAL
- Kitchen (including refrigerators) should be clear of any non-sathvic items (onion, garlic, eggs, etc) so madi is not jeopardized.
- PerumAL prasadam should be prepared and transferred only by persons who have had upanayanam (poonal function), still wearing yagnyOpaveetham (poonal) and must have undergone samAshrayaNam at a minimum.
- A spinster cannot cook for PerumAL even if she had undergone samAshrayaNam and bharasamarpanam.
- Some of the **preferred vegetables** that could be used for making prasadam are: okra (Lady's finger), chayote (Banglore Brinjal or chow chow), snakegourd (podalangai), Avarakkai (hyacinth bean), payaththankai (string beans), pumpkin (white and yellow - pooshanikkai and parangikkai), brinjal, yam, cucumber, bell pepper (koda molagai), bitter gourd (pAgarkai), taro root (sEppankazhanghu), Plantain (vazhai kai, vazhai thandhu).
- On **Ekadasi Days**: arisi (rice) upma could be made for morning prasadam during thirumanjanam. For bhojyaasanam (lunch for PerumAL), full normal thatthiaradhanam could be prepared - kozhambu, sathumudhu, karamadhu and thirukannanmudhu etc. Instead of rice, cream of rice (arisi ravai) is used for saadham (Sojji). In the evening Rava kesari, thayir sadham made with cream of rice and sundal is made.
- On **Dwadhasi days**, tamarind (puLi) will be avoided. At matam they make morkozhambu with sundaikai vathal, aathi keerai, nellikai pachadi and poricha sathumudhu. On all dwadasi days none of plantain tree items are used (ie, vazhai kai, vazhai ilai, vazhai thandhu). Brinjal is also to be avoided on Dwadhasi days.

On the other hand, if situation does not permit you to follow the above guidelines, the aradhakars can make small qty of madi prasadam for perumAL and you can make the rest of the food arrangements as usual for all the bhaghavathas.

Maintaining madi as a volunteer

- Be in swaroopam: Veshti, angavastram for PurushAs including 12 thiruman (upon samAshrayanam). Ladies should wear madisar and preferably Srichoornam with small thiruman at the base of srichoornam. Kumkum is an alternative for ladies, but avoid sticker pottu.
- Now that you are in madi, do not contact other people (regardless of your speculation of their madi status), or other vizhuppu clothes, yeccha pAthrams, theethu vishayam etc.
- Please learn to wear your vastram (panchakacham, madisaar) ahead of time.
- If something needs to be in madi (eg. PerumAL prasadam or PerumAL pAtram etc), do not place it in places that could jeopardize its madi
- Do not place PerumAL pAtram in the sink.
- Aaradhakar (person performing aaradhanam) have the strictest guideline since they physically touch perumAL. Please stay a few feet away from the ArAdhakar at all times.
- Only one specifically designated kankaryapara will typically hand something to the ArAdhakar. If this person is you, place things on the table where ArAdhakar will pick up from or drop it in their hands

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General Guidelines

- Do not go too close to Perumal or His ParivAram.
- If you have to go to the bathroom, do mAnasika snAnam (apavithra: pavithrO .. prokshanam) and Achamanam. Of course, the aradhakar and his assistant(s) cannot go to bathroom until PerumAL is in thirupattAram. If they have to go in the middle, then they have to take head bath, get back in swaroopam and do bhutha shuddhi again before they can touch PerumAL or participate in antharanga (close) kankaryams.
- No eating/drinking anything in front of Perumal other than perumAL theertham. Please eat in another room, or only after Perumal is inside the thiruppattaram (box) and the therai is closed.
- If you are visiting someone's house, the best way to get into madi is to take bath in their house and use the madi vastram in the plastic bag that you carried to their house.
- If you are visiting a dolai, place your shoes away from the main door so nobody contacts it accidentally.
- If you want to maintain madi while travelling to another person's house, then wear no shoes. Sprinkle punyahavachanam water in the car before you step into it.
- If you are hosting, pls keep a bathroom available free of any clothes/mats so folks can use it to take bath and get into their madi vastrams as above.
- Madi is lost after you eat with those clothes on.

Let's do our best and trust that if something inadvertently happens Krishna will forgive us.

Shri PundarikAkshAya nama: