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Sri Nithyakalyani Amman Thunai

MAAVILAKKU PRAARTHANAI DEEPAM



An Attempt to take forward the traditional spiritual practices of Thappalampuliyur village not only for this generation but also for future generations...



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PREFACE

I am fortunate to be one of the Thappalampuliyur daughters-in-law, thereby responsible for continuing our village traditions and spiritual cultures not only by myself but also facilitate for future generation. In that respect, I am continuing for so many years, in my place, the Maavilakku Praarhanai for Sri Nithyakalyani amman following Thappalampuliyur tradition.

As the name suggests, Maavilakku is a lamp made out of rice flour and is pure ghee. This Maavilakku Praarhanai is not a tradition just for this village temple but is common throughout Tamilnadu. It's just that, each village tradition might have a slight variation in doing it. In fact this praarhanai is being practiced by other communities also, in Thappalampuliyur village in Kulundaalamman and Maariamman Kovil during festivals.

It takes about an hour from start to finish as you can set up the pooja area and arrange your Pooja articles, while the rice is drying. It gives immense satisfaction to do these little praarhanais and feel closer to home, wherever you may be outside Thappalampuliyur. Please remember that performing this praarhanai with full faith is more important than finding all items for performing this praarhanai. If an item is not available where you live, it is ok. For example, coconuts are not easily



available where I live in USA. Even if I get it, there is no assurance of getting a good one. So, I skip it rather than feeling sorry that it is bad. Ambaal will accept whole heartedly, whatever you give with full faith and bhakthi.

Couple of photos are attached for reference.

In this article, I have managed to provide max information and the tradition we have been practicing over years with the advice of the elder generations in our family as per the village tradition. In case of revision/omission of information, the devotees are requested to take the guidance of elder members of their family and follow the same.

Sri Nithyakalyani Amman is all pervading and is right there in your home with you.

***Compiled and Presented
By Mrs. Meenakshi Venkataramani, USA)***



INTRODUCTION:

Maavilakku prarathanai is usually done for Ambal by married women. Traditionally the daughter(s) and daughter(s)-in-law of everyone who hails from our village as well as Devotees of Sri Nithyakalyani Amman from other parts of the world do it at Nithyakalyani Amman koil at Thappalampuliyur. When it is done in our temple, some families have the practice of doing this praarthanai both in Kalyani Amman sannathi as well as Durgai Amman sannathi. In that case all the items are to be doubled.

It is usually done for the well-being of the entire family, thanking Her for all She has given. It is also done as part of a venduthal (when someone is not doing well and you pray that you will do Maavilakku when they get better or something similar). It has been a tradition for our ancestors and we carry on that tradition.

Over period, some devotees perform this in their homes also, in case they are unable to visit the temple and perform in Ambal's Sannathi in the temple.

Days/Months to Perform Mavilakku Deepam Prarathanai:

Traditional practice is that this praarthanai is done twice a year. Also in some cases additional praarthanai is done as part of some specific family functions /venduthal. This can be done any-time in the year, but it is more auspicious to do it in the months of Aadi and Thai and during Navarathri. If you are planning to do it for the first time, it is better to start in Aadi or Thai months.

Fridays are especially most auspicious day. But it is important to do this in the morning in "Madi" condition. The months to avoid this praarhanai are Purattasi (During MahalayaPaksham) and Maar-gazhi. The days to avoid are Amavasya, Prathamai, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Nakshatrams to avoid are Bharani, Karthigai. If the yogam is not good, it is better to do it on another day.

Important Things to do that Morning:

1. Rinse saree and clothes and hang to dry – madi or wear brand new clothes.
2. You can drink coffee or tea but it is done on an empty stomach.
3. If you know how to wear 9 yards, you can wear it when you do this. If not, let it not stop you from doing it. Wear some madi or new saree as She is all forgiving.

Things you will need for this Activity:

✓ Sri Nithyakalyani Amman Picture decorated with chandanam,(sandal paste), kumkum and a flower/ garland. (If you need one, you can contact SNASS).Or else you can have any other ambal picture or Vighram. { Not required for those who are performing this praarthanai in Thappalampuliyur temple in Ambal sannathi)

- ✓ Rice flour for kolam
- ✓ Banana leaf (nuni ilai) or a brass plate.
- ✓ Rice , Grated Jaggery/Cane sugar, Honey and Cardamom Powder for preparing Maavilakku (Recipe follows)



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- ✓ Sandalwood Powder
 - ✓ Kumkum
 - ✓ Coconut broken into two
 - ✓ Lemon -2
 - ✓ Bananas -4
 - ✓ Flowers in a string (Thodutha poo) – to place as a garland
 - ✓ A few loose flowers (udiri poo)
 - ✓ Betel leaves and betel nuts
 - ✓ Incense sticks
 - ✓ Lighted lamp
 - ✓ Karpooram
 - ✓ Cotton for making wicks
 - ✓ Ghee
 - ✓ Panchapaatram/uddharini with water



Recipe for Maavilakku:

- 🌸 Rice 1 Cup
- 🌸 Grated Jaggery or cane sugar - $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup
- 🌸 Honey (if your family adds it only) 2 tbsp
- 🌸 Cardamom powder to taste

PROCEDURE:

Rinse and soak the rice for a maximum of half hour. Remove all water and spread & dry on a clean (madi) towel. When it is



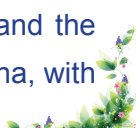



partially dry (you can feel the wetness but it doesn't wet your hand), grind it to as fine a powder as you can in the mixie*. It is easier to keep sifting and grinding the leftover grains. Once it is ground, add the grated jiggery to it for one last pulse in the mixie so it mixes well. {Ancient "aachaara" tradition is to use "Granite Mortar" (kal ural) and iron plunger (Irumbu ulakkai) instead of Mixie}.

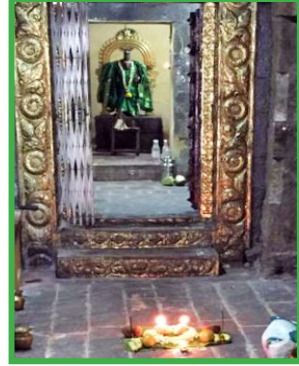
Take it out and add the honey (as required), cardamom powder etc. and make it into 2 balls. You can sprinkle water if the balls don't come together easily. Thappalampuliyur tradition is to have two lamps. With your thumb, make a dent on the top of each ball for pouring some ghee. With some pure cotton, make a couple of wicks and let it soak in the ghee.

Procedure for performing Maavilakku Praarthana in sannathi of Sri Nithyakalayani Amman

Place the banana leaf on top of a kolam drawn in front of Ambal. Make sure the cut face of the leaf is on the right hand side of Ambal. Place the two balls right in the middle of the leaf (on the nambu) and pour ghee in the dent provided for lighting lamp. Place each coconut half, 2 bananas and 1 lemon on either side of it. Place the betel leaves and betel nuts on one side and garland it with the flower string. Place Chandanam and kumkum on both the vilakku balls and light them.



Once they are lit, you can show the incense sticks and the lighted lamp to the vilakku and Ambal. Then do an archana, with



the loose flowers pronouncing 11 or 16 names of Ambal that you know of or can read from any Ashtothra. Some names are given below but you can do it with any names you are familiar with.

- 👉 Om Kamakshyai Namaha
- 👉 Om Kalmashagnai Namaha
- 👉 Om Vidyaapradhaayinyai Namaha
- 👉 Om KarunaamruthaSaagaraayai Namaha
- 👉 Om Varadhayai Namaha
- 👉 Om KandharpaJananyai Namaha
- 👉 Om MahaGnaanadayinyai Namaha
- 👉 Om LokaMaathre Namaha
- 👉 Om MadhuraveniSahodaryai Namaha
- 👉 Om Ekaamranaathaayai Namaha
- 👉 Om Kameswaryai Namaha

Circle with water 3 times around the banana leaf and do neivedyam of the Maavilakku. Then show the karpooram to both the vilakku and Ambal and do a namaskaram. You have to wait for burning out of the lamps which may

take a while. Singing divine songs or chanting slokas can be done while the lamps are still burning.

A little before they burn out, take burning wick out of the lamp out with a spoon and put them out with a flower. Take both the balls of maavu out and mix them together with a little bit of grat-



ed coconut (from the one you just offered) and distribute to a few sumangalis with manjal and fruit. Enjoy the rest with your family as prasadam.

If for some reason you are not able to go to Thappalampuliyur temple and perform Maavilakku Praarthanai in Sri Nithyakalyani amman sannathi, you can perform praarthanai as mentioned above in your house itself in front of Sri Nithyakalyani amman picture.(or any other ambaal picture/idol). Sri Nithyakalyani amman is always in your house.



Let us all follow the spiritual tradition of elders of Thappalampuliyur village, perform such praarthanaas to get the grace and blessings of Ambaal and have a healthy, happy and prosperous life for us and our family.