

## Definition

The Head Pūjārī is a member of ISKCON who is appointed by the Temple President and/or temple board, and is responsible for the overall care and ongoing service of the temple deities.

The Head Pūjārī is adept in all functions of deity worship and trains the temple *pūjārīs* how to properly execute the functions of deity worship.

## Principles

The Head Pūjārī is directly answerable to the Temple President and/or temple board, and the local GBC(s) as stated by Śrīla Prabhupāda in the following letter:

Pujari should operate entirely under the supervision of temple president and GBC, not independently. Letter to: Dhruvananda -- Bombay 4 January, 1973

The instructions of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda are guiding principles for the deity worship in ISKCON. The Head Pūjārī establishes and/or maintains worship standards based on these instructions, the Pañcarātra Pradīpa (ISKCON's deity worship book) and the guidance and direction of the ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry.

The Head Pūjārī is a strict *sādhaka* who regularly, if not daily, attends maṅgala āratī and Śrīmad Bhāgavatam class, and also gives class regularly. They follow the four regulative principles and chant at least 16 rounds of japa daily.

## Duties

### ***Worship standards***

To oversee the daily worship in the temple and ensure that it is conducted according to ISKCON standards, as presented by ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry. This includes:

### **Worship on the altar**

The Head Pūjārī:

- Ensures that the deity worship is done according to the directions of *guru*, *sādhū* and *śāstra* as given in ISKCON's deity worship manual, *Pañcarātra Pradīpa*.
- Establishes and maintains appropriate standards of cleanliness
- Ensures that all functions are conducted at the proper times

- Monitors quality of and preparation of deity offerings
- Coordinates the proper functioning of daily services and festivals.
- Ensures that the worship is conducted within the temple's means.
- Ensures there are adequate resources, fruit, vegetables, etc. for offerings, and flowers, garlands, paraphernalia etc. for the worship.
- Ensures that the Deities are offered four new sets of clothes each year

### **Care of Śrīla Prabhupāda's deity in the temple room**

The Head Pūjārī:

- Ensures the care of Śrīla Prabhupāda's deity in the temple room
- Is responsible for the care of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Vyāsāsana and surrounding area
- Ensures that there is a garland and flowers to offer Śrīla Prabhupāda every day.
- Sees that Śrīla Prabhupāda's clothes and other paraphernalia are maintained in good condition.
- Sees that Śrīla Prabhupāda is offered new clothes every year.

### **Tulasi**

To see that Tulasi is cared for properly, including:

- That she is healthy and free from disease
- That she is housed properly in a clean protective environment.
- That she is cared for by a suitably qualified devotee/s

### **Festivals**

Festivals are an important part of the Deity worship, therefore the Head Pūjārī is responsible:

- To plan, coordinate and develop the festivals for the pleasure of the deities and the community of devotees and guests
- To inspire and engage devotees and visiting guests to assist in the festivals, cook additional offerings, bring gifts, do additional services etc.

### **Roster:**

The Head Pūjārī:

- Maintains a regular presence on the altar
- Oversees the smooth functioning of the Deities' service roster.

### **Protection of the Deities**

- The Head Pūjārī is responsible for the protection of the deities and their property

## **Maintain deities**

- Responsible to ensure deities are maintained, paint regularly touched up and that the appearance of the deities is not changed.

## **Personal**

The Head Pūjārī:

- Maintains Kṛṣṇa conscious standards of behaviour, including following the four regulative principles and chanting a minimum of sixteen rounds of japa per day.
- Adheres to ISKCON Law and the regulations of the temple.
- Makes no claim of ownership over property that has been allocated for use in their service or that has come as a result of their service via fund-raising, gifts or any other means. All such items are considered to be the property of ISKCON and the Deities and the Head Pūjārī must return such property when requested by the temple authorities or local GBC(s) or when one has decided to leave the service.

## **Finances:**

The Head Pūjārī:

- Will explore ways and means of generating income for the deities
- May receive donations on behalf of the deities and encourage donations by different means.
- Will establish a budget for each festival

## ***Training and Education***

As the Head Pūjārī is responsible for the standards of worship offered to the Temple Deities it is also the Head Pūjārī's responsibility to train pūjārīs in the knowledge, skills and values of deity worship. This includes:

- Holding regular courses to educate devotees in deity worship standards.
- Evaluating devotee's worship of the Deities in order to assess what training is required.
- Making worship manuals available
- Hold regular refresher courses
- Encouraging devotees to be responsible for either performing or covering their service
- Personal guidance to *pūjārīs* where appropriate

## ***Additionally***

- To encourage the devotees and friends of Kṛṣṇa to serve the Deities as much as possible.

- Overseeing and arranging for maintenance work, electrical, plumbing, etc.
- To conduct monthly *pūjārī* meetings and submit reports of these meetings to the Temple President.
- Facilitates the devotees service of the deities

***Responsibilities (to delegate):***

- Ensure that deity paraphernalia is kept clean and orderly
- Ensure that laundry is being done and cupboards are neat, clean and tidy.
- Ensure that all deities' clothes and jewelry are put away and cared for appropriately.