

Tridandiswami Sri Srimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Maharaja
 THE GLORIES OF SRIMATI TULASI DEVI
 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

[In Kuala Lumpur both and this year and last year, (1999), Srila Narayana Maharaja spoke about the glories of Srimati Vrnda Devi in the form of Tulasi. He also spoke about the various rules for worshipping her properly.]

February 1999:

All Vaisnavas, and even non-vaisnavas, pray to Tulasi. If there is anything to offer to Krsna, they offer it with tulasi leaves. And, before beginning to do bhajana and sadhana, they do pranama to Vrnda devi and then beg her mercy. In all auspicious activities, such as arcana etc., Tulasi devi is kept. Even those who are not Vaisnavas offer her water and circumambulate her. The question may be posed as to why this is so.

Even those persons who have no relation with transcendental devotion and transcendental moods, whether in India or elsewhere, worship Tulasi. For instance, in America, people are planting Tulasi everywhere—in their gardens, rooftops and so on. They have discovered that if Tulasi is planted somewhere, then, by her influence, any dangerous germs in that vicinity are automatically killed. Also, by wearing tulasi beads around the neck, blood pressure is automatically controlled. Nowadays there is no medicine for cancer. However, they are now researching and finding out, that if one takes Tulasi with Ganges water, and touches it to a salagram sila, it manifests a potency that can reduce the effects of cancer. In fact, it has even been stated in scripture that all types of diseases can be eradicated just by the aroma of Tulasi. These are all worldly things, but nevertheless they are extremely helpful for the body.

If anyone is wearing Tulasi around his neck, various diseases will automatically be checked. Not only that, even on the subtle platform so much benefit can be derived by wearing Tulasi. For instance, one may have many problems that would normally cause so much mental agitation. However, by the potency and grace of Tulasi devi, these problems become inconsequential. Again, these are all material considerations, but nevertheless Tulasi is so helpful in these matters.

As for transcendental matters, Tulasi gives so much knowledge. She purifies our heart and words. If Tulasi is present, she also imbues in one the tendency to chant Krsna's names and remember His pastimes, along with the tendency to serve Him. Why? Because Vrnda devi is one of the dearest sakhis of Krsna in Vrndavana. She is so powerful that she manages to keep Vrndavana very beautiful. Therefore, the name of that forest where Radha and Krsna play has been named after Vrnda devi.

Tulasi is so sweet and fragrant that even the bees don't go to any other flowers—including the lotus flower. Rather, they always go to the tulasi manjaris and leaves, because there is so much madhu, honey, there. That honey helps our heart, body, mind and soul. That honey is beneficial

on all levels, and that is why Krsna doesn't accept any foodstuffs without tulasi leaves or manjaris. If there is nothing to offer Krsna, you can offer tulasi manjaris with a glass of water. That is why Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu ordered Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, "You are renounced, and therefore you have nothing to give. You eat rotten, rejected rice, and so you can't offer that to Salagrama or Giriraja. But you can give very fresh tulasi leaves with soft manjaris, and Krsna will happily accept that above anything else." Advaita Acarya desired Krsna to descend into this world and He discovered a way. What was that? He offered tulasi leaves, manjaris, and Ganga jal (water) to Salagrama. He then began weeping to Krsna. With loud crying He said, "You should please be merciful. If You don't come by My worshipping You, then I will destroy the whole world." By this offering, Krsna became so pleased that He descended in the form of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. The appearance of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was the result of worshipping Krsna with tulasi. But we do not know all these things.

If anyone wants to serve Krsna, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu, and wants to chant harinama, then he should surely wear tulasi. Our neck beads should be pure tulasi. Don't put any pearls in between the tulasi beads. Only use tulasi. And they should not be too small. Ladies prefer small beads, but they should be the proper size, and then it will be powerful. Sometimes I see devotees put Ganges water and ghee on the beads; but Tulasi is as sacred as Ganges and Yamuna water. There is no need to purify the beads with water or ghee.

Therefore, if anyone wants Krsna bhakti, then—tulasi dekhiya jurao prana, madhava tosani jani. Have you heard this before? Tulasi, or Vrnda, is always serving Radha and Krsna Conjugal in Goloka Vrndavana. Vrndavana is named after Vrnda. All of Vrndavana was the property of Vrnda, and she offered it to the lotus feet of Srimati Radhika. So, if anyone wants to have pure bhakti, then they should certainly keep tulasi plants, wear tulasi beads, chant on tulasi, do parikrama of her at least four times [daily], and water her as needed. If you put too much water while watering her, then you are committing an offense. Don't water her on dvadasi, and don't pick her leaves on dvadasi. We should not touch her in the night-time, because she sleeps at night. She wakes up in the brahma-muhurta, at about 3:00 or 4:00 a.m. From that time on one can touch her, but in the evening from about 8:00 p.m. or 9:00 p.m., one should not touch her. We should quickly develop so much honor and sraddha for Tulasi.

February 12th 2000, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

[On Sri Advaita Acarya's avirbhava tithi, because Advaita Acarya called for the appearance of Lord Caitanya by offering Tulasi and water, Srila Narayana Maharaja spoke on the glories of Tulasi.]

[Prema-prayojana brahmacari (now Pujapada Aranya Maharaja):] We have heard how, seeing the terrible condition of the world, Sri Advaita Acarya's heart was melting, feeling compassion

for all the jivas. So He wanted to call Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu into this world. While He was thinking of how to do it, a verse from Srimad Gautamiya Tantra came into His mind.

tulasi-dala-matrena
jalasya culukena va
vikrinite svam atmanam
bhaktebhya bhakta-vatsalah

In this verse the Supreme Lord is saying, "If someone worships Me with only the leaves of Tulasi and water, then 'svam atmanam', he purchases Me, My very self." Svam atmanam—my atma. Who is the atma of Sri Krsna? Srimati Radhika.

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] Why is She the atma of Sri Krsna?

[Aranya Maharaja:] Because she is the life and soul of Krsna.

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] We should satisfy Krsna, He gives Himself—as a property.

[Aranya Maharaja:] He can be purchased by those jivas who serve Vrnda Devi, and He can give to them the service of Srimati Radhika. Our Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura has written so beautifully:

tvad ajnaya pallava-puspa-bhrnga
mrgadibhir madhava-keli-kunjah
madhivadibhir bhanti vibhusyamana
vrnde! numaste caranaravindam

We should know that all the pastimes of Krsna in Vraja are arranged by Yogamaya, Paurnamasi. But she has one special department, and her manifestation for that department is Vrnda. Vrnda Devi is a very dear sakhi, and she is in charge of one special department of Krsna's lila—nikunja-lila—the very sweet, amorous and confidential pastimes of Radha and Krsna in the groves of Vrndavana.

Tvad ajnaya pallava-puspa bhrnga: "By the order of Vrnda Devi, Vrndavana looks beautiful, as if decorated with all the qualities of the spring season. By her order the flowers blossom and spread their fragrance everywhere, the wind blows, the bumblebees are maddened and intoxicated by the sweet honey of the lotus flowers, and they are buzzing here and there. The peacocks are dancing, and deer are also dancing here and there. So, by the grace of Vrnda Devi, on her order, Vrndavana becomes so very beautiful, and provides the most wonderful playground and setting for Radha and Krsna's lilas."

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] Krsna always sees Himself indebted to Vrnda. She serves in such a way, with all paraphernalia, that Krsna always thinks that He cannot repay her. So if anyone

gives Tulasi to Krsna, He becomes shy; and He thinks that, "He has purchased Me." You can also make an experiment and test whether this is true or false. You should give water to Tulasi and offer her leaves at the lotus feet of Krsna. And if you offer anything, you should put tulasi leaves on each preparation. Then Krsna surely accepts and is happy, and then He will try and please that devotee. He will say, "What do you want? What do you want?" So you should all try and worship Tulasi. Daily you should give water and offer a ghee lamp. Especially ladies should offer a lamp. You should circumambulate four times and sing the tulasi arati.

[Aranya Maharaja:] Krsna is always eager to meet with Srimati Radhika. Srila Visvanatha Cakravati Thakura has written:

tvadiya-dutyena nikunja-yunor
 atyutkayoh keli-vilasa-siddhih
 tvat-saubhagam kena nirucyatam tad
 vrnde! numaste caranaravindam

Who can enumerate the glories and good fortune of Vrnda Devi? It is by her acting as a messenger that Radha and Krsna are able to meet. Krsna is so indebted to her. Therefore if anyone worships Srimati Vrnda Devi, Krsna will think, "How can I repay them?" He says to them, "You have purchased Me by your service to Vrnda Devi." So Advaita Acarya has established this siddhanta and this very wonderful rapid progress in bhakti to the service of Sri Radha and Krsna.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] If anyone wants to have love and service to Radha-Krsna conjugal, they must worship Tulasi, and very easily they can be benefited. If one does not have prema but he is offering Tulasi, will Krsna accept his offering or not? If Tulasi is given, it means everything has been given—and Krsna must accept.

[Aranya Maharaja:] If he is offering Tulasi and he has no guru, Krsna will still accept?

[Syamarani:] Krsna will be pleased and send a guru.

[Srila Narayana Maharaja:] If Tulasi is given then Krsna will have to accept—guru or no guru. You will have to reconcile it. Krsna will take the person's sraddha, so it will be beneficial; it will not go in vain. You will have to reconcile it. Whether there is a guru or no guru, if you are chanting the holy name, will there be any effect or not? There will be so many results. You can go to Svarga; you can have a very elevated position in this world, or you can go to Vaikuntha—you can attain so many things. If there is no sadhu sanga and you are chanting, what will be the result?

[Aranya Maharaja:] From that chanting sadhu sanga will come.

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] Yes. It will be beneficial in so many ways. It will not go in vain. If you are offering anything along with Tulasi, even if there is no guru, as long as there is sraddha, then because of that sraddha, Krsna will gradually bring that person in line [in the line of disciplic succession]. You cannot say that if one is offering Tulasi, but there is no prema, Krsna will not accept. Otherwise all sastra will be useless. If anyone is not chanting the holy name with love and affection, will there be any effect or not?

[Radhanatha brahmacari:] Yes, he will get sukrti.

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] Not only sukrti.

[Radhanatha:] With that sukrti he will get sadhu sanga.

[Srla Narayana Maharaja:] The birth of sukrti.

jayati jayati namananda-rupam murare-
viramita-nija-dharma-dhyana-pujadiyatnam
katham api sakrdattam muktidam praninam yat
paramamrtam ekam jivanam bhusanam me
(Sri Brhad-Bhagavatamrtam 1.9, Sanatana Gosvami)

"All glories, all glories to Krsna-Murari's name, the embodiment of divine bliss! It halts the cycle of birth and death, and relieves one of all painful endeavors in practicing religion, meditation, charity, deity worship, and austerity. It awards liberation to one who utters it even once. Krsna-nama stands alone as the supreme nectar and sole treasure of my life."

The following are related to Krsna: Tulasi, Yamuna, Ganges, mahaprasadam, nama and so on. If somehow anyone comes in contact with them, even if they are like Jagai and Madhai, they become purified. So Srimati Tulasi devi is so glorious.