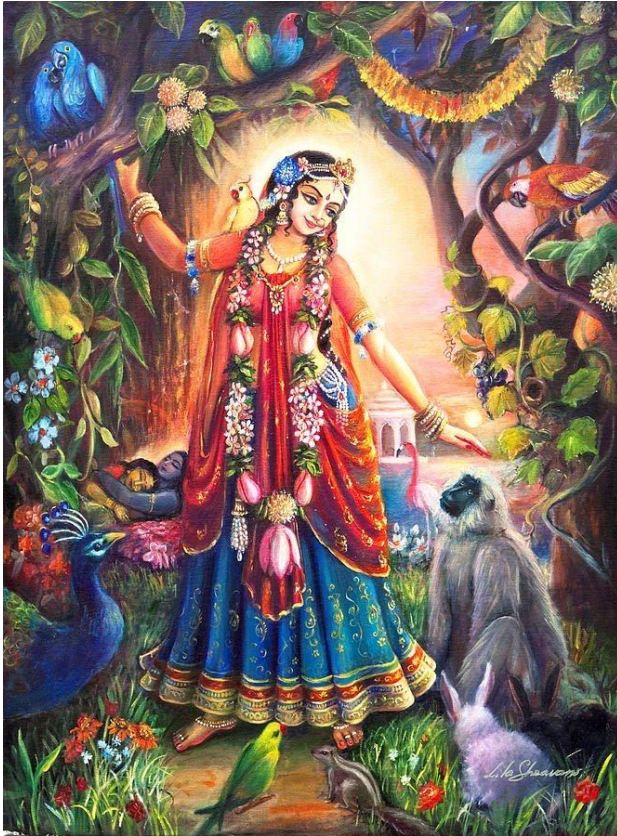


Tulasi: The Dearest to The Divine



By Gauranga Darshan Das

The most adorable and transcendently fragrant tulasi is endowed with transformative potency and has a special significance in the worship of Lord Krishna.

What kind of offerings please God? Gorgeous, expensive, elaborate...? Not necessarily! If one can afford, one may make magnificent offerings to God, but what the Supreme Lord is looking for behind any offering is love and devotion. In a nutshell, attitude behind an offering is greater than the magnitude of the offering.

Lord Krsna says in Bhagavad-gita, “patram puspam phalam toyam yo me bhaktya prayacchati,” If one offers to

Krsna, with sincerity and devotion, either a leaf, or a flower, or fruit, or a little water—Krsna is fully satisfied. Thus, even the poorest man can serve the Supreme Lord Krsna as completely as the richest. Worshiping and pleasing Lord Krsna is that simple for simple-hearted devotees.

The leaf mentioned above especially refers to the tulasi. By watering, worshiping and circumambulating the tulasi plant, and offering her leaves and flowers (manjaris) to Lord Krsna, one makes tremendous spiritual advancement. In fact, tulasi leaves are offered to Krsna or Visnu along with all the other offerings too, because tulasi is extremely dear to the Lord (tulasya priyaya prabhum).

THE MOST ADORABLE PLANT

Tulasi has special significance even amongst the divine plants that bear the most colorful, fragrant and beautiful flowers of different shapes in the spiritual world. Vrndavana is the forest where Srimati Vrndadevi (tulasi) grows profusely. Vaikuntha is the place where tulasi gets special respect from all the other beautiful plants.

Tulasi in Vaikuntha: The plants in Vaikuntha have flowers with the sweetest divine perfume, but when these plants smell the fragrance of tulasi from the tulasi ornaments adorning the Lord, as He performs pastimes in the forest, they offer respect to tulasi for her austerities to achieve that position. They do not envy tulasi, because she has a pure heart (sumanasah).

*mandara-kunda-kurabotpala-campakarna-
punnaga-naga-bakulambuja-parijatah*

*gandhe 'rcite tulasikabharanena tasya
yasmims tapah sumanaso bahu manayanti*

“Although flowering plants like the mandara, kunda, kurabaka, utpala, campaka, arna, punnaga, nagakesara, bakula, lily and parijata are full of transcendental fragrance, they are still conscious of the austerities performed by tulasi, for tulasi is given special preference by the Lord, who garlands Himself with tulasi leaves.” (SB 3.15.19)

Tulasi in Vrndavana: Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti glorifies Tulasi-devi or Vrnda-devi as the ruling monarch of Vrndavana in Sri Vrndadevy-astaka (3)

*samasta-vaikuntha-siromanau sri-
krsnasya vrndavana-dhanya-dhamni
dattadhikare vrsabhanu-putrya
vrnde namas te caranaravindam*

“O Vrnda Devi, I offer my respectful obeisances to your lotus feet. Srimati Radharani, the daughter of King Vrsabhanu, has made you the ruling monarch of Lord Krsna’s opulent and auspicious abode of Vrndavana, which is the crest jewel of all the Vaikuntha planets.”

The Gopis praise Tulasi: Searching for Lord Krsna, overwhelmed with feelings of separation, the gopis of Vrndavana, the topmost devotees of Lord Krsna, spoke to the chief of all plants tulasi, expecting her sympathy:

*kaccit tulasi kalyani govinda-carana-priye
saha tvali-kulair bibhrad drstas te 'ti-priyo 'cyutah*

“O most kind tulasi, to whom the feet of Govinda are so dear, have you seen that infallible one walk by, wearing you and encircled by swarms of bees?” (SB 10.30.7)

The gopis say that Lord Sri Govinda is very affectionate to tulasi and cannot leave her (acyuta), even if the tulasi garland that He wears is surrounded by humming bees.

RECIPIENT OF LORD KRISHNA’S DUST

Devotees of Lord Krsna offer tulasi leaves and flowers at His lotus feet. Upon being placed the Lord’s feet, tulasi is beautified, attains all divine qualities and receives the Lord’s foot dust, which is aspired for by great devotees, yogis and even Laksmi.

Laksmi and Tulasi: Tulasi is dearer to Krsna than even Mahalaksmi. Laksmi aspires for the dust from Lord Govinda’s feet with great endeavor. But tulasi naturally receives that dust, being so dear to His feet (govinda-carana-priye). Srila Prabhupada writes, “The goddess of fortune, Laksmi, is sometimes envious of the tulasi leaves which are placed at the lotus feet of the Lord, for they remain fixed there and do not move, whereas Laksmiji, although stationed by the chest of the Lord, sometimes has to please other devotees who pray for her favor. Laksmiji sometimes has to go to satisfy her numerous devotees, but tulasi leaves never forsake their position, and the Lord therefore appreciates the service of the tulasi more than the service of Laksmi.” (3.16.21 Purport)

Srila Prabhupada writes, “Lord Krsna’s lotus feet are always besmeared with the tulasi leaves,

and thus as soon as His lotus feet contact the water of the Ganges and the Yamuna, the rivers become at once sanctified.” (SB 1.19.6 Purport)

Ganga and Tulasi: The water that emanates from the lotus feet of the Lord or the water that washed His feet becomes the greatest of all rivers – the Ganges that purifies the three worlds. Thus the water of the Ganges always carries the dust of Krsna’s lotus feet along with the divine fragrance of the tulasi leaves that are always adorning them (*ya vai lasac-chri-tulasi-vimisra-krsnanghri-renv-abhyadhikambu-netri*, SB 1.19.6).

Yamuna and Tulasi: Along with river Ganga, river Yamuna is also sanctified by the touch of the lotus feet of Lord Krsna who performed various transcendental pastimes in her waters right from His childhood. For instance, while Vasudeva was crossing the Yamuna with baby Krsna to keep Him at Nanda Maharaja’s house in Gokula, Lord Krsna fell down in the river, and the river at once became sanctified by the dust of His lotus feet, mixed with tulasi leaves.

Tulasi’s Transcendental Fragrance

Appreciated only by devotees: Tulasi, although exalted in many ways, is generally not considered an especially fragrant plant. However, early in the morning tulasi emits a transcendental fragrance that ordinary people cannot perceive but spiritually advanced personalities fully appreciate, even more than the fragrance of a lotus. The privileged bees that swarm about the fragrant forest flower garlands on the neck of Lord Govinda specifically appreciate the fragrance of tulasi manjaris, more than even the spiritually advanced persons. Even Krsna’s nostrils relish this most sublime of fragrances. By the covering of yogamaya, these fragrances cannot be perceived commonly by the spiritually unadvanced.

Monists transformed: From the Srimad Bhagavatam we come to know that once the sons of Lord Brahma, the four Kumaras, went to Vaikuntha. At this stage they were still attached to the impersonal aspect of the Lord. They were protagonists of the philosophy of monism, becoming one with the Lord. But as soon as they saw Lord Visnu’s beautiful features in Vaikuntha and smelled the fragrance of tulasi offered to His lotus feet, their minds changed.

*tasyaravinda-nayanasya padaravinda-
kinjalka-misra-tulasi-makaranda-vayuh
antar-gatah sva-vivarena cakara tesam
sanksobham aksara-jusam api citta-tanvoh*

“When the breeze carrying the aroma of tulasi leaves from the toes of the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead entered the nostrils of those sages, they experienced a change both in body and in mind, even though they were attached to the impersonal Brahman understanding.” (SB 3.15.43)

Srila ViSvanatha Cakravarti Thakura writes, “When the sweetness of the Lord’s body produced in them a level of astonishment much higher than the bliss of Brahman, it penetrated within them. Their mind and bodies became agitated. First the mind became very strongly agitated by the changes arising from bliss. Then the body became agitated with tears, hairs standing on end, and perspiration... Even though they had been practicing contact with the Brahman, the bliss of Bhagavan was more powerful because of its sweetness.” (SB 3.15.43 Commentary)

Transformative Potency of Tulasi

Just as the four Kumaras, many others were also transformed by the divine potency of tulasi. Srila Prabhupada emphasizes that the process of chanting the Hare Krsna maha-mantra before the tulasi plant has immense spiritual potency.

A prostitute elevated: Srila Haridasa Thakura, a great devotee of Lord Krsna, used to chant 300,000 holy names of the Lord in front of tulasi every day. Once a professional prostitute attempted to distract and defame him. She would daily come to Haridasa's place, offer respects to tulasi plant, and sit in front of him as he chanted. Gradually she also started chanting along with him. She felt shameful of her sinful mentality and accepted Haridasa Thakura her guru. Haridasa instructed her to give up her profession and property, and chant Hare Krsna in front of tulasi and worship tulasi. By doing so, she was purified and became a great Vaisnavi.

A hunter transformed: Once Narada Muni met a cruel hunter named Mrgari who was accustomed to half killing animals and taking sadistic pleasure in their pain. Narada asked Mrgari to give up killing and promised that he would arrange for the daily food the hunter needed. Narada mercifully instructed Mrgari to distribute his riches and live in a small cottage, grow a tulasi plant before his house, and daily circumambulate and serve her by offering water and other things (tulasi-parikrama kara, tulasi-sevana), and continuously chant the Hare Krsna (*nirantara krsna-nama kariha kirtana*). The hunter followed this sincerely and was soon elevated in his consciousness so much so that he wouldn't even harm an ant.

Tulasi's Significance in Krsna's Worship

In the Gautamiya-tantra it is stated as follows:

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

“Sri Krsna, who is very affectionate toward His devotees, sells Himself to a devotee who offers Him merely a tulasi leaf and a palmful of water.”

Lord Caitanya's descent: Considering the meaning of the above verse, Advaita Acarya Prabhu worshiped Lord Krsna with tulasi leaves and Ganges water. He appealed to Lord Sri Krsna with loud calls with a desire to make Him descend on this earth. Thus Lord Krsna appeared as Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu to spread the chanting of the holy names and deliver the people of Kali-yuga.

Srila Prabhupada emphasizes the importance of offering tulasi to the Lord, “Tulasi leaves are very important for satisfying the Lord, so as far as possible an arrangement should be made for growing tulasi leaves... In the Western countries, while engaged in propagating the Krsna consciousness movement, we were brought great unhappiness because we could not find tulasi leaves. We are very much obliged, therefore, to our disciple Srimati Govinda dasi because she has taken much care to grow tulasi plants from seeds, and she has been successful by the grace of Krsna. Now tulasi plants are growing in almost every center of our movement.” (SB 4.8.55 Purport)

The devotees of Krsna respect and adore tulasi so much that they wear tulasi beads around

their necks. They make all the food offerings to their beloved Lord Krsna along with tulasi, because any aspect of worship of Krsna or Visnu is incomplete without offering tulasi. Devotees water, worship, circumambulate, smell and taste tulasi every day. Therefore, one should never consider tulasi plant to be ordinary, but recognize her great significance for our spiritual progress and our attempts to please the Supreme Lord Krsna. By taking shelter of tulasi, one can hope to receive Lord Krsna's mercy.

*bhaktya vihina aparadha-laksaih
ksiptas ca kamadi-taranga-madhya
krpamayi tvam saranam prapanna
vrnde namas te caranaravindam*

“O Vrnda Devi, I offer my respectful obeisances to your lotus feet. Those who are devoid of devotion to Lord Hari, and who are thrown by their offenses into the waves of lust and other inauspicious qualities, may take shelter of you.” (Sri Vrndadevy-astaka 8)

Fuente: <http://www.dandavats.com/?p=79651>

Srimati Vrindadevi's Appearance Day

Posted by [ISKCON Desire Tree](#) on November 27, 2023 at 10:00am

According to Vrinda-kunda Baba,
Srimati Vrindadevi appeared on the full-moon night at the end of Kartik, or Damodara.

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, in Sri Vrndadevi-astaka (6-8), glorifies her:

rasabhilaso vasatis ca vrnda-
vane tvad-isanghri-saroja-seva
labhya ca pumsam krpaya tavaiva
vrnde namas te caranaravindam

“By your mercy, people attain residence in Vrindavan, the desire to serve your masters’
lotus feet, and the desire to assist in the rasa dance. O Vrinda, I bow to your lotus feet.

tvam kirtyase satvata-tantra-vidbhir
lilabhidhana kila krsna-saktih
tavaiva murtis tulasi nr-loke
vrnde namas te caranaravindam

“They who are learned in the Satvata-tantra glorify you. You are Krishna’s pastime-
potency. The tulasi plant is your form in the world of men. O Vrinda, I bow to you lotus
feet.

bhaktya vihina aparadha-laksaih
ksiptas ca kamadi-taranga-madhye
krpamayi tvam saranam prapanna
vrnde namas te caranaravindam

“O merciful one, I am devoid of devotion, and millions of offenses have thrown me into
the turbulent waves of lust, anger, greed, and other faults. O Vrinda, I take shelter of
your lotus feet.”

May Srimati Vrindadevi—and Sri Sri Radha-Damodara—bestow their mercy upon us
all.

Hare Krishna.

Yours in service,
Giriraj Swami

Fuente: <https://iskcondesiretree.com/profiles/blogs/srimati-vrindadevi-s-appearance-day>

Según Vrinda-kunda Baba, Srimati Vrindadevi apareció en la noche de luna llena al final de
Kartik o Damodara.

Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, en Sri Vrindadevi-astaka (6-8), la glorifica:

rasabhilaso vasatis ca vrnda-
vane tvad-isanghri-saroja-seva
labhya ca pumsam krpaya tavaiva
vrnde namas te caranaravindam

“Por tu misericordia, la gente obtiene la residencia en Vrindavan, el deseo de servir a los pies de loto de tus maestros y el deseo de ayudar en la danza rasa. Oh Vrinda, me inclino ante tus pies de loto.

tvam kirtyase satvata-tantra-vidbhir
lilabhidhana kila krsna-saktih
tavaiva murtis tulasi nr-loke
vrnde namas te caranaravindam

“Aquellos que son instruidos en el Satvata-tantra te glorifican. Eres la potencia del pasatiempo de Krishna. La planta de tulasi es tu forma en el mundo de los hombres. Oh Vrinda, me inclino ante tus pies de loto.

bhaktya vihina aparadha-laksaih
ksiptas ca kamadi-taranga-madhye
krpamayi tvam saranam prapanna
vrnde namas te caranaravindam

“Oh misericordioso, estoy desprovisto de devoción y millones de ofensas me han arrojado a las turbulentas olas de la lujuria, la ira, la codicia y otras faltas. Oh Vrinda, me refugio en tus pies de loto”.

Que Srimati Vrindadevi—y Sri Sri Radha-Damodara—concedan su misericordia a todos nosotros.

Hare Krishna.

Tuyo en servicio,

Giriraj Swami

Fuente: <https://iskcondesiretree.com/profiles/blogs/srimati-vrindadevi-s-appearance-day>