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## INTRODUCTION

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, and His eternal abode are described by Lord Brahma in Brahma-saṁhitā:

*cintāmaṇi-prakara-sadmasu kalpa-vṛkṣa*

*lakṣāvṛteṣu surabhīr abhipālayantam*

*lakṣmi-sahasra-śata-sambhrama-sevyamānaṁ*

*govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*

“I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, the first progenitor, who is tending the cows, yielding all desires, in abodes built with spiritual gems and surrounded by millions of purpose trees. He is always served with great reverence and affection by hundreds of thousands of *lakṣmīs*, or *gopīs*”. [Bs. 5.29]

Vṛndāvana-dhāma on this earth is a replica of that same abode. As stated in Bhagavad-gītā (8.20), in the spiritual sky there is another, eternal nature, transcendental to manifested and unmanifested matter. The manifested world can be seen in the form of many stars and planets such as the sun and moon, but beyond this is the unmanifested, which is imperceptible to those who are embodied. And beyond this unmanifested matter is the spiritual kingdom, which is described in Bhagavad-gītā as supreme and eternal. That kingdom is never annihilated. Although material nature is subject to repeated creation and annihilation, that spiritual nature remains as it is eternally. In the Tenth Canto of *Srīmad-Bhāgavatam*, that spiritual nature, the spiritual world, is described as Vṛndāvana, Goloka or Vraja dhāma.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His eternal associates reside in the transcendental realm of Goloka, which is nondifferent from Vṛndāvana. There the Lord enjoys His eternal pastimes. The forest of Vṛndāvana is protected by śrīmatī Vṛndā Devī, the presiding Deity of Vraja dhāma.

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī personally appointed Vṛndā Devī to be protectress of Vṛndāvana. This forest is known as Vṛndāvana because it is named after Vṛndā Devī. The word vana means ‘forest’. Vṛndāvana is the name given to the forest where Vṛndā Devī (Tulasī Devī) grows profusely. Actually it is not a forest as we ordinarily consider a forest because it is very thick with green vegetation. Filled with a great flood of love and decorating the ever-blossoming groves of Vṛndāvana with many fragrant flowers, Vṛndā Devī creates a festive atmosphere for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa to enjoy transcendental pastimes with their dear friends.

Vṛndā Devī is also the most important amongst Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's gopī messengers. The gopī messengers expertly know the geography of Vṛndāvana and they intimately know each grove and garden there. They are learned in the science of gardening. These exalted gopī messengers are filled with pure love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. They are fair complexioned and they dress in colorful garments. Appointed by Vṛndā Devī, they have the flowering trees of Vṛndāvana under their jurisdiction. Vṛndā Devī is expert at arranging the meeting of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. She is fully conversant with the geography of Vṛndāvana and knows the best places for the divine couple to meet.

Vṛndā Devī has a beautiful complexion the color of molten gold. She wears garments the colour of the banduka flower and is decorated with pearls and flowers. Her father is Candrabhanu and her mother is Phullara-Devī. Her husband is Mahīpāla and her sister is Mañjarī-devī. She always remains in Vṛndāvana, immersed in love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa yearning to arrange for Their meeting and taste the nectar of assisting in their transcendental pastimes. Vṛndā Devī and her followers assist the divine couple in their pastimes in the various forests of Vṛndāvana,

Śrīla Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura has praised Śrīmatī Vṛndā Devī in Sankalpa Kalpadrumaha, Text 102:

*Vṛndāvana-sthira-caran paripalayitri  
vṛnde tayo rasikayor ati-saubhagena  
adhyasi tat kuru kṛpam ganaṇa yathaiva  
Śrī-rādhikā-parijaneṣu mamāpi siddhet*

Vṛndā Devī, protectress of the moving and non-moving living entities in Vṛndāvana, you are wealthy in the mercy of the divine couple who enjoy pastimes in Vraja. Please be merciful to me. Please place me among Śrī Rādhā's associates.

In Vraja-riti Cintāmani, Text 85, he states:

*sarvatra kuñjottama-mandiresu  
Vṛndādayaḥ praty-aham eva sāram  
śayyadikaṁ ya racayanti citraṁ  
citraṁ sa kṛṣṇo 'pi yad-īkṣaṇe syāt*

Every evening Vṛndā Devī and the other gopis make elaborate arrangements for Śrī Kṛṣṇa to take rest in the beautiful forest palaces of Vraja. When He sees this He becomes struck with wonder.

Vṛndā Devī is eternally engaged in the loving service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world. She appears in the material world as Śrīmatī Tulasī Devī wherever there is devotion to the Supreme Lord.

In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the importance of Śrīmatī Tulasī Devī is described.

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.8.55*

*salilaiḥ śucibhir mālyair  
vanyair mūla-phalādibhih  
śastāṅkurāṁśukaiś cārcet  
tulasyā priyaya prabhum*

One should worship the Lord by offering pure water, pure flower garlands, fruits, flowers and vegetables, which are available in the forest or by collecting newly grown grasses, small buds of flowers or even the skins of trees, and if possible, by offering Tulasī leaves, which are very dear to the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

PURPORT

It is specifically mentioned herein that Tulasī leaves are very dear to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and devotees should particular care to have Tulasī leaves in every temple and centre of worship. In the Western countries, while engaged in propagating the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, we were brought great unhappiness because we could not find Tulasī leaves. We are very much obliged therefore, to our disciple Śrīmatī Govinda dāsi

because she has taken much care to grow Tulasī plants from seeds, and she has been successful by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. Now Tulasī plants are growing in almost every centre of our movement.

Tulasī leaves are very important in the method of worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this verse the word salilaiḥ means "by the water." Of course, Dhruva Mahārāja was worshiping on the bank of the Yamunā. The Yamunā and the Ganges is sacred, and sometimes devotees in India insist that the Deity must be worshiped with water of the Ganges or Yamunā. But here we understand deśa-kāla to mean "according to time and country." In the Western countries the no River Yamunā and Ganges-water from such sacred rivers is not available. Does this mean that the arcā worship should for that reason be stopped? No. Salilaiḥ refers to any water-whatever is available-but it must be very clear and collected purely. That water can be used. The other paraphernalia, such as flower garlands, fruits and vegetables should be collected according to the country and according to their availability. Tulasī leaves are very important for satisfying the Lord, so as far as possible an arrangement should be made for growing Tulasī leaves. Dhruva Mahārāja was advised to worship the Lord with the fruits and flowers available in the forest. In the Bhagavad-gītā, Kṛṣṇa frankly says that He accepts vegetables, fruits, flowers, etc. One should not offer Lord Vāsudeva anything other than what is prescribed herein by the great authority Nārada Muni. One cannot offer to the Deity according to one's whims; since these fruits and vegetables are available anywhere in the universe, we should observe this small point very attentively.

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.15.19*

*mandāra-kunda-kurabotpala-campakārṇa  
punnāga-nāga-bakulāmbuja-pārijātāḥ  
gandhe 'rcite Tulasikābharaṇena tasyā  
yasmims tapaḥ sumanasa bahu mānayanti*

TRANSLATION

Although flowering plants like the mandāra, kunda, kurabaka, utpala, campaka, arṇa, punnāga, nāgakeśara, bakula, lily and pārijāta are full of transcendental fragrance, they are still conscious of the austerities performed by Tulasī, for Tulasī is given special preference by the Lord, who garlands Himself with Tulasī leaves.

## PURPORT

The importance of Tulasī leaves is very clearly mentioned here. Tulasī plants and their leaves are very important in devotional service. Devotees are recommended to water the Tulasī tree every day and collect the leaves to worship the Lord. One time an atheistic swami remarked, "What is the use of watering the Tulasī plant? It is better to water eggplant. By watering the eggplant one can get some fruits, but what is the use of watering the Tulasī? These foolish creatures, unacquainted with devotional service, sometimes play havoc with the education of people in general.

The most important thing about the spiritual world is that there is no envy among the devotees there. This is true even among the flowers, which are all conscious of the greatness of Tulasī. In the Vaikuntha world entered by the four Kumāras, even the birds and flowers are conscious of service to the Lord.

The four sages known as the Kumāras became pure devotees by smelling the aroma of the Tulasī leaves offered at the lotus feet of the Lord. The great devotee Haridāsa Ṭhākura, an associate of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, changed the life of a prostitute by having her chant the holy name and offer obeisances to the Tulasī plant. And Lord Krishna descended to earth five hundred years ago as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu because His devotee Advaita ācārya invited Him by offering Him Tulasī leaves mixed with Ganges water.

'Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto the Tulasī tree, which can immediately vanquish volumes of sinful activities. Simply by seeing or touching this tree, one can become relieved from all distresses and diseases. Simply by offering obeisances to and pouring water on the Tulasī tree, one can become freed from the fear of being sent to the court of Yamarāja (the king of death, who punishes the sinful). If someone sows a Tulasī tree somewhere, certainly he becomes devoted to Lord Kṛṣṇa. And when the Tulasī leaves are offered in devotion at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, there is the full development of love of Godhead.'

(Skanda Purāṇa, quoted in The Nectar of Devotion, Chapter 11)

# THE GLORIES OF ŚRĪMATI TULASĪ DEVĪ

## Introducing the worship of Tulasī Devi Worldwide

Los Angeles  
7 April, 1970  
Honolulu

My Dear Daughter Govinda Dasi,

Please accept my blessings. I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 2nd April, 1970, and I am very much pleased for the nice sentiments you have expressed therein. But you should always remember that whatever we are doing, it is in the parampara system beginning from Lord Kṛṣṇa, down to us. Therefore, our loving spirit should be more upon the message than the physical representation. When we love the message and serve Him, automatically our devotional love for the physique is done.

I am so very glad to learn that Śrīmatī Tulasī Devi has favored you so much. If you can actually grow this Tulasī plant, and I am sure you will do it, then you must know it for certain that your devotion for Kṛṣṇa is testified. I was very much anxious to introduce this worship of Tulasī plant amongst our Society members, but it has not become successful till now; therefore, when I hear that you have got this opportunity, my pleasure does not have any bounds.

Please take care of the Tulasī plants in the following way. This is the best season for growing Tulasī plants. From 15th April to 15th June is the best season for growing this plant. Now I understand that the seedlings are coming out, so the whole spot it possible may be covered by some net because the seedling stage creepers being very delicate are sometimes eaten up by the sparrows, so we have to give a little protection from attack of the sparrows. All the devotees should pour water at least once in the morning before taking prasādam. The watering should not be very much large in quantity, but it should be poured to keep the ground soft and moist. Sunlight also should be allowed. When the creepers are grown at least seven inches high, then you take them out from the planting soil and transplant them in a row in a different place. Then go on watering and they will grow like anything. I think this

plant cannot grow in cold countries, but if the plants are dispatched from your place and if the devotees take care of the plant with a little care in a flower pot, then it may grow.

Tulasī leaf is very, very dear to Viṣṇu. All Viṣṇu-tattva Deities require profusely Tulasī leaves. Lord Viṣṇu likes garland of Tulasī leaves. Tulasī leaves mixed with sandalwood pulp and placed on the lotus feet of the Lord is the topmost worship. But we must be very careful that Tulasī leaves cannot be placed on the feet of anyone else except Lord Vishnu and His different forms. Tulasī leaves cannot be placed even on the lotus feet of Rādhārāni or on the lotus feet of the spiritual master. It is entirely reserved for being placed on the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. We can place, however, Tulasī leaves in the hands of Radhārāni for being placed on the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, as you have seen on the Govinda Album.

I am giving you here with three mantras for Tulasī Devī as follows:

*vrndāyai Tulasī-Devyai  
Priyāyai keśavasya ca  
viṣṇu-bhakti-prade Devī  
satyavati namo namaḥ*

This is offering obeisances, bowing down (pañcāṅga-praṇāma). And when collecting leaves from the plant the following mantra should be chanted:

*tulasy amṛta-janmāsi  
sada tvam̐ kesava-priyā  
keśavārtham̐ cinomi tvam̐  
varadā bhava śobhane*

Then the mantra for circumambulating the Tulasī tree:

*yāni kāni ca papani  
brahma-hatyādikāni ca  
tāni tāni pranaśyanti  
pradakṣiṇaḥ pade pade*

So there are three mantras, one for bowing down, one for circumambulating,\* and one for collecting the leaves. The collecting of leaves should be done once in the morning for worshiping and putting on the plates of foodstuff to be offered. On each bowl or plate there should be at least one leaf. So you follow and practice these Tulasī affairs and you try to distribute your experience to all the other centres, that will be a new chapter in the history of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness Movement.

Regarding installation of the Deities for which you are preparing, I wish to go there as soon as there are many Tulasī leaves grown. You are trying to grow mango very soon, but it will be better if you can grow soon the Tulasī leaves. This is more important than growing mangoes. So, you give your best attention for this purpose and as soon as you inform me that there is a regular bush of Tulasī plants, then I shall immediately start for Hawaii and install your Deities. I think this will satisfy you.

Your ever well-wisher,  
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

\*3 times round the plant both morning and evening,

## Mantra Translations

### Mantra for offering obeisances

*vrndāyai tulasī-devyai  
priyāyai keśavasya ca  
viṣṇu-bhakti-prade devī  
satyavatyai namo namaḥ*

"I offer my repeated obeisances unto Vṛndā, Śrīmatī Tulasī Devī, who is very dear to Lord Keśava [Kṛṣṇa]. O goddess, you bestow devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa and possess the highest truth."

### Mantra for picking leaves and mañjarīs

*tulasy amṛta-janmāsi  
sada tvam keśava-priyā  
keśavārtham cinomi tvām  
varadā bhava śobhane*

"O Tulasī, you were born from nectar. You are always very dear to Lord Keśava. Now, in order to worship Lord Keśava, I am collecting your leaves and mañjarīs. Please bestow your benediction on me."

### Mantra for circumambulating Tulasī Devī

*yāni kāni ca pāpāni  
brahma-hatyādikāni ca  
tāni tāni pranaśyanti  
pradakṣiṇaḥ pade pade*

"By the circumambulation of Śrīmatī Tulasī Devī all the sins one may have committed are destroyed at every step, even the sin of killing a brāhmana."

## Śrī Tulasī Kirtana

*namo namah Tulasī! Kṛṣṇa-preyasī  
Rādhā- Kṛṣṇa, -sevā pābo ei abhilāṣī  
je tomāra śaraṇa loy, tāra vancha pūrṇa hoy  
kṛpā kori' koro tāre bṛndāvana-bāsī  
mor ei abhilāṣ, bilās kuñje dio vās  
nayane heribo sadā jugala-rūpa-rasi  
ei nivedana dharo, sakhīr anugata koro  
sevā-adhikāra diye koro nija dāsī  
dīna Kṛṣṇa-dāse koy, ei jena mora hoy  
śrī-Rādhā-govinda-preme sadā jena bhāsi*

O Tulasī, beloved of Kṛṣṇa, I bow before you again and again. My desire is to obtain the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Whoever takes shelter of you has his wishes fulfilled. Bestowing your mercy on him, you make him a resident of Vṛndāvana.

My desire is that you will also grant me a residence in the pleasure groves of Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma. Thus, within my vision I will always behold the beautiful pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

I beg you to make me a follower of the cowherd damsels of Vraja. Please give me the privilege of devotional service and make me your own maidservant.

This very fallen and lowly servant of Kṛṣṇa prays, 'May I always swim in the love of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Govinda.'

### Eight Names of Vṛndā Devī

**Vṛndā Devī:** She has thousands of sakhis (associate maidservants).

**Vṛndāvanī:** She never leaves Vṛndāvana.

**Viśvapūjitā:** The whole world worships her.

**Viśvapāvanī:** She is the sanctifier of the whole world

**Puṣpasāra:** She is the essence of all flowers.

**Nandinī:** She gives happiness to everyone.

Tulasī Devī: She has an incomparable form.

Kṛṣṇa-jīvanī: She is the life and soul of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

[The principal reason for Śrī Caitanya's descent](#)  
Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, *Adi-lilā*, Chapter 3, Texts 103-110

103. While He [Advaita Ācārya] was thinking about how to propitiate Kṛṣṇa by worship, the following verse came to mind.

104. “Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is very affectionate toward His devotees, sells Himself to a devotee who merely offers a Tulasī leaf and a palmful of water.” [This is a verse from the Gautamīya-tantra.]

105-106. Advaita Ācārya considered the meaning of the verse in this way: Not finding any way to repay the debt He owes to one who offers Him a Tulasī leaf and water, Lord Kṛṣṇa thinks, “There is no wealth in my possession that is equal to a Tulasī leaf and water.”

107. Thus the Lord liquidates the debt by offering His own self to the devotee. Considering this, the ācārya began worshiping the Lord.

#### PURPORT

Through devotional service one can easily please Lord Kṛṣṇa with a leaf of the Tulasī plant and a little water. As the Lord says in Bhagavad gītā (9.26), a leaf, a flower, a fruit or some water (*patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam*), when offered with devotion, very much pleases Him. He universally accepts the services of His devotees. Even the poorest of devotees in any part of the world can secure a small flower, fruit or leaf and a little water, and if these offerings, and especially Tulasī leaves and Ganges water, are offered to Kṛṣṇa with devotion, He is very satisfied. It is said that Kṛṣṇa is so pleased by such devotional service that He offers Himself to His devotee in exchange for it. Śrī Advaita Ācārya knew this fact, and therefore He decided to call for the Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa to descend by worshiping the Lord with Tulasī leaves and the water of the Ganges.

108. Thinking of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He constantly offered Tulasī buds in water from the Ganges.

109. He appealed to Śrī Kṛṣṇa with loud calls and thus made it possible for Kṛṣṇa to appear.

110. Therefore the principal reason for Śrī Caitanya's descent is this appeal by Advaita Ācārya. The Lord, the protector of religion, appears by the desire of His devotee.

Tulasī cleanses all material contamination  
*Śrī Caitanya-caritamṛta, Antya-līlā, Chapter 3*

100. Haridāsa Ṭhākura constructed a cottage in a solitary forest. There, he planted a Tulasī plant, and in front of the Tulasī he would chant the holy name of the lord 3,00,000 times daily. He chanted throughout the entire day and night.

**PURPORT**

Haridāsa Ṭhākura, being the ācārya of chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa maha-mantra, is called Nāmācārya Haridāsa Ṭhākura. From his personal example we can understand that chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and becoming highly elevated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is very simple. Without difficulty one can sit down anywhere, especially on the bank of the Ganges, Yamuna or any other sacred river, devise a sitting place or cottage, plant a Tulasī tree, and before the Tulasī chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *maha-mantra* undisturbed.

Haridāsa Ṭhākura used to chant the holy name on his beads 3,00,000 times daily. Throughout the entire day and night, he would chant the sixteen names of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. One should not, however, imitate Haridasa Ṭhākura, for no one else can chant the holy name 3,00,000 times a day. Such chanting is for the *mukta-puruṣa* or liberated soul. We can follow his example, however, by chanting sixteen rounds of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* on beads every day and offering respect to the Tulasī plant. This is not at all difficult for any one, the process of chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* with a vow before the Tulasī plant has such great spiritual potency that simply doing this one can become spiritually strong. Therefore we request members of the Hare Krishna movement to follow Haridāsa Ṭhākura's example rigidly. Chanting sixteen rounds does not take much time, nor is offering respects to the Tulasī plant difficult. The process has immense spiritual potency. One should not miss this opportunity.

122. After offering her obeisances to the Tulasī plant and Haridasa Ṭhākura, she (the prostitute) sat down at the door. Hearing Haridāsa Ṭhākura chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, she also chanted, "O my Lord Hari, O my Lord Hari."

## PURPORT

Herein one can clearly see how a Vaiṣṇava delivers a fallen soul by a transcendental trick. The prostitute came to pollute Haridāsa Ṭhākura, but he took it as his duty to deliver the prostitute. As clearly demonstrated here, the process of deliverance is very simple. With faith and reverence the prostitute associated with Haridāsa Ṭhākura, who personally treated her material disease by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *maha-mantra*. Although the prostitute had an ulterior motive, somehow or other she got the association of a Vaiṣṇava and satisfied him by occasionally chanting in imitation, “O my Lord Hari, O my Lord Hari.” The conclusion is that associating with a Vaiṣṇava, chanting the holy name of the Lord and offering obeisances to the Tulasī plant or a Vaiṣṇava all lead one to become a transcendental devotee who is completely cleansed of all material contamination.

137. “Chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra continuously and render service to the Tulasī plant by watering her and offering prayers to her. In this way you will very soon get the opportunity to be sheltered at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.”

### Worship in complete goodness

*Śrī Caitanya-caritamṛta*, *Antya-lilā*, Chapter 6, Text 295-297

295. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu continued (to Raghunātha dāsa)

“Worship this stone in the mode of goodness like a perfect brāhmaṇa, for by such worship you will surely attain ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa without delay.”

296. “For such worship, one needs a jug of water and a few flowers from a Tulasī tree. This is worship in complete goodness when performed in purity.”

297. “With faith and love, you should offer eight soft Tulasī flowers, each with two Tulasī leaves, one on each side of each flower.”

## The gopīs appeal to Tulasī

### Śrī Caitanya-caritamṛta, Antya-līlā, Chapter 15

33. The gopīs said: “O all-auspicious Tulasī plant, you are very dear to Govinda's lotus feet, and He is very dear to you. Have you seen Kṛṣṇa walking here wearing a garland of your leaves, surrounded by a swarm of bumblebees?” (SB 10.30.7)

#### PURPORT

The bees humming around the garland worn by Śrī Govinda were attracted by the fragrance of the Tulasī mañjarīs offered to Him. The gopīs felt that the trees had not replied because they were male, but that Tulasī, being female, would sympathize with their plight.

39. “They will certainly tell us where Kṛṣṇa has gone, since they have seen Him personally.” Guessing in this way. The gopīs inquired from the plants and creepers, headed by Tulasī.

40. “O Tulasī! O mālatī! O yūthi, mādHAVI and mallikā! Kṛṣṇa is very dear to you. Therefore, He must have come near you.”

41. "You are just like dear friends to us. Kindly tell us what way Kṛṣṇa has gone and save our lives."

## Information in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa

### Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, Chapter 1, Text 35

#### PURPORT

35. The subject matter of *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* by Śrī Sanātana Goswāmi was collected by Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa and is known as *vaiṣṇava-smṛti*. This *vaiṣṇava-smṛti* -*grantha* was finished in twenty chapters, known as *vilāsas*. In the ninth *vilāsa*, there are descriptions about collecting Tulasī leaves, offering oblations to forefathers according to Vaiṣṇava rituals and offering food.

## Different ways to offer Tulasī

*Śrī Caitanya-caritamṛta, Madhya-līlā, Chapter 3, Text 103*

103. Śrī Advāita Ācārya fed the two Lords cloves and cardamom mixed with Tulasī flowers. Thus there was a good flavour within their mouths.

*Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, Chapter 15, Texts 9-10*

9. Śrī Advāita Prabhu would also place a flower garland around the Lord's neck and Tulasī flowers (mañjarīs) on His head. Then, with the folded hands, Advāita Ācārya would offer obeisance and prayers unto the Lord.

10. After being worshiped by Advaita Ācārya, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu would take the dish containing flowers and Tulasī and with whatever paraphernalia remained, would also worship Advāita Ācārya.

*Śrī Caitanya-caritamṛta, Madhya-līlā, Chapter 15, Texts 254*

254. After Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu finished eating, Bhaṭṭācārya washed His mouth, hands and legs and offered Him flavoured spices, Tulasī mañjarī, cloves and cardamom.

## Cure for Impersonalism

*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, Chapter 17, Texts 141-142*

141. In the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Sūta Gosvāmī says: “Apart from the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa, when Tulasī leaves are offered at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, even the aroma of the leaves attracts the minds of self realized persons.”

142. Sūta Gosvāmī states what Śrī Maitreya said to Vidura in the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (3.15.43): “When the breeze carrying the aroma of Tulasī leaves and saffron from the lotus feet of the lotus-eyed Personality of Godhead entered through the nostrils into the hearts of those sages [The Kumāras], they experienced a change in both body and mind, even though they were attached to impersonal Brahman understanding.”

### PURPORT

Simply by seeing the Lord and smelling the aroma of Tulasī and saffron from His lotus feet, the Kumāras became devotees and abandoned their long-cherished impersonalism. Thus the

four Kumāras were turned into Vaiṣṇavas simply by smelling the aromatic Tulasī mixed with saffron. Those who are actually on the platform of Brahman realization and who have not offended the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa can immediately become Vaiṣṇavas simply by smelling the aroma of the Lord's lotus feet. However, those who are offenders or demons are never attracted to the Lord's personal feature.

### Vṛndāvana is the forest of Śrīmatī Vṛndā Devī

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is called Vṛndā-vipina-nivāsi because He resides in the forest of Vṛndā Devī.

*Śrī Caitanya-caritamṛta, Madhya-līlā, Chapter 17, Text 193*

193. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu visited the different forests, including Madhuvana, Talāvana, Kumudavana and Bahulāvana. Wherever He went, He took His bath with great ecstatic love.

#### PURPORT

The word vana means “forest.” Vṛndāvana is the name given to the forest where Śrīmatī Vṛndā Devī grows profusely.

*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, Canto 4, Chapter 8, Verse 2*

The instruction of Dhruva Mahārāja's mother, Sunīti, was actually meant for fulfilling his desired objective. Therefore, after deliberate consideration and with intelligence and fixed determination, he left his father's house.

#### PURPORT

Both the mother and the son were lamenting Dhruva Mahārāja's having been insulted by his stepmother and his father's not having taken any step on this issue. But mere lamentation is useless-one should find out the means to mitigate one's lamentation. Thus, both mother and son decided to take shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord because that is the only solution to all material problems. It is indicated in this connection that Dhruva Mahārāja left his father's capital city to go to a secluded place to search out the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is the instruction of Prahlāda Mahārāja also that if one is seeking peace of mind he should free himself from all contamination of family life and take shelter of the Supreme Godhead by going to the forest. To the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava this forest is the forest of Vṛndā, or Vṛndāvana.

If one takes shelter of Vṛndāvana under Vṛndāvaneśvari, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, certainly all the problems of his life are solved very easily.

### Worship of Tulasī Devī is recommended

**Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, Chapter 22, Texts 124-125**

124. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said: “One should (23) attend arati and festivals, (24) see the Deity, (25) present what is very dear to oneself to the Deity, (26) meditate, and (27) serve those related to the Lord (tadīya).

125. *Tadīya* means the Tulasī leaves, the devotees of Kṛṣṇa, the birthplace of Krishna, Mathurā, and the Vedic literature *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. Kṛṣṇa is very eager to see his devotee serve Tulasī, Vaiṣṇavas, Mathurā and Bhāgavatam.

#### PURPORT

After item twenty-six (meditation), the twenty-seventh is to serve Tulasī.

**Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, Chapter 24, Texts 260-261**

260. Lord Chaitanya Mahāprabhu said: Nārada Muni continued, “Leave your home and go to the river. There you should construct a small cottage, and in front of the cottage you should grow a Tulasī plant on a raised platform.”

261. “After planting the Tulasī tree before your house, you should daily circumambulate that Tulasī plant, serve her by giving her water and other things, and continuously chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa maha-mantra.”

#### PURPORT

This is the beginning of spiritual life. After leaving householder life, one may go to a holy place, such as the bank of the Ganges or Yamunā, and erect a small cottage. A small cottage can be constructed without any expenditure. Four logs serving as pillars can be secured by any man from the forest. The roof can be covered with leaves, and one can cleanse the inside. Thus, one can live very peacefully. In any condition, any man can live in a small cottage, plant a Tulasī tree, water it in the morning, offer it prayers, and continuously chant the Hare

Krishna *mahā-mantra*. Thus, one can make vigorous spiritual advancement. This is not at all difficult. One simply has to follow the instructions of the spiritual master strictly. Then everything will be successful in due course of time. As far as eating is concerned, there is no problem. If Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, supplies everyone with eatables, why should He not supply His devotee? Sometimes a devotee will not even bother to construct a cottage. He will simply go to live in a mountain cave. One may live in a cave, in a cottage beside a river, in a palace or in a big city like New York or London. In any case, a devotee can follow the instructions of his spiritual master and engage in devotional service by watering the Tulasī plant and chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. Taking the advice of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and our spiritual master, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, one can go to any part of the world and instruct people to become devotees of the Lord by following the regulative principles, worshiping the Tulasī plant and continuously chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.

*Śrī Chaitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, Chapter 24, Text 336*

336 The Śālagrāma-śilā should be worshiped with Tulasī where a sufficient quantity of Tulasī leaves are available. Worship of Śālagrāma-śilā should be introduced in all ISKCON temples.

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Canto 3, Chapter 15. Text 49*

[The Kumāras said:] O Lord, we pray that you let us be born in any hellish condition of life, just as long as our hearts and minds are always engaged in the service of Your lotus feet, our words are made beautiful [by speaking of Your activities] just as Tulasī leaves are beautiful when offered unto Your lotus feet, and as long as our ears are always filled with the chanting of Your transcendental qualities.

#### PURPORT

Here the sages pray that their words may always be engaged in glorifying the Supreme Lord. One may speak very nicely with ornamental language or one may be expert at controlled grammatical presentation, but if one's words are not engaged in the service of the Lord, they have no flavor and no actual use. The example given here is that of Tulasī leaves. The Tulasī leaf is very useful even from the medicinal or antiseptic point of view. It is considered sacred and is offered to the lotus feet of the Lord. The Tulasī leaf has numerous good qualities, but if it were not offered to the lotus feet of the Lord, Tulasī could not be of much value or importance.

## The Lord appreciates the service of Tulasī

*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Canto 3. Chapter 16, Text 20-21

[The four Kumaras said:] The goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, the dust of whose feet is worn on the head by others, waits upon You appointed, for she is anxious to secure a place in the abode of the king of bees, who hovers on the fresh wreath of Tulasī leaves offered at Your feet by some blessed devotee.

### PURPORT

As previously described, Tulasī has attained all superior qualities due to being placed at the lotus feet of the Lord. The comparison made here is very nice. As the king of bees hovers over the Tulasī leaves offered to the lotus feet of the Lord, so Lakṣmi, the goddess who is sought by the demigods, brāhmaṇas, Vaiṣṇavas and everyone else, always engages in rendering service to the lotus feet of the Lord. The conclusion is that no one can be the benefactor of the Lord; everyone is actually the servant of the Lord. The goddess of fortune, Lakṣmī, is sometimes envious of the Tulasī leaves which are placed at the lotus feet of the Lord, for they remain fixed there and do not move, whereas Lakṣmījī although stationed by the chest of the Lord, sometimes has to please other devotees who pray for her favor. Lakṣmījī sometimes has to go to satisfy her numerous devotees, but Tulasī leaves never forsake their position, and the Lord therefore appreciates the service of the Tulasī more than the service of Lakṣmī.

*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, Canto 5, Chapter 3, Text 6

Supreme Lord, you are full in every respect. You are certainly very satisfied when your devotees offer you prayers with faltering voices and in ecstasy bring you Tulasī leaves, water, twigs bearing new leaves and newly grown grass. This surely makes You satisfied.

### PURPORT

Quoting from the *Gautamīya-tantra*, the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* states “Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is very affectionate toward His devotees, sells Himself devotee who offers merely a Tulasī leaf and a palmful of water” The Supreme Lord is causelessly merciful upon His devotee, so much so that even the poorest of men can offer Him a little water and a flower in devotion and thus please Him. This is due to His affectionate dealing with his devotees.

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto 5, Chapter 25, Text 7

Appearing as white as the heavenly king Indra, He wears a golden belt around His waist and a vaijayantī garland of ever-fresh Tulasī blossoms around His neck. Bees intoxicated by the honey-like fragrance of the Tulasī flowers hum very sweetly around the garland, which thus becomes more and more beautiful. In this way the Lord enjoys His very magnanimous pastimes.

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto 7, Chapter 5, Texts 23-24

#### PURPORT

Service to the Vaiṣṇava, Tulasī, Ganges and Yamunā are included in *pāda-sevanam*. All these processes of *pāda-sevanam* help one advance in spiritual life very quickly. In the *Skanda-Purāṇa*, *Reva Kāṇḍa*, it is said that one who recites prayers to Tulasī or sows a Tulasī seed is also freed from all offenses. Similarly, one who worships the Śālagrāma-sila can also be relieved of offenses.

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto 9, Chapter 4, Texts 18-20

Mahārāja Ambariṣa always engaged his mind in meditating upon the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, his words in describing the glories of the Lord, his hands in cleansing the Lord's temple, and his ears in hearing the words spoken by Kṛṣṇa or about Kṛṣṇa. He engaged his eyes in seeing the Deity of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa's temples and Kṛṣṇa's places like Mathurā and Vṛndāvana, he engaged his sense of touch in touching the bodies of the Lord's devotees, he engaged his sense of smell in smelling the fragrance of Tulasī offered to the Lord, and he engaged his tongue in tasting the Lord's prasāda.

#### PURPORT

If one wants to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead in completeness, one must follow the prescriptions given by Kṛṣṇa by following in the footsteps of Mahārāja Ambariṣa.

*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto 2, Chapter 3, Text 23

The person who has not at any time received the dust of the feet of the Lord's pure devotee upon his head is certainly a dead body. And the person who has never experienced the aroma of the Tulasī leaves from the lotus feet of the Lord is also a dead body, although breathing.

### PURPORT

According to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, the breathing dead body is a ghost. When a man dies, he is called dead, but when he again appears in a subtle form not visible to our present vision and yet acts, such a dead body is called a ghost. Ghosts are always very bad elements, always creating a fearful situation for others. Similarly, the ghostlike non-devotees who have no respect for the pure devotees nor for the Viṣṇu Deity in the temples, create a fearful situation for the devotees at all times. The Lord never accepts any offering by such impure ghosts. There is a common saying that one should first love the dog of the beloved before one shows any loving sentiments for the beloved. The stage of pure devotion is attained by sincerely serving a pure devotee of the Lord. The first condition of devotional service to the Lord is therefore to be a servant of a pure devotee, and this condition is fulfilled by the statement “reception of the dust of the lotus feet of a pure devotee who has also served another pure devotee.” That is the way of pure disciplic succession, or devotional *paramparā*. Mahārāja Rahūgaṇa inquired from the great saint Jaḍa Bharata as to how he had attained such a liberated stage of *paramahansa* and in answer the great saint replied as follows (SB 5.12.12):

*rahūgaṇaitat tapasā na yāti  
na cejyayā nirvapaṇād gṛhād vā  
na cchandasā naiva jalāgni-sūryair  
vinā mahat-pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekam*

“O King Rahūgaṇa, the perfectional stage of devotional service, or the *paramahansa* stage of life, cannot be attained unless one is blessed by the dust of the feet of great devotees. It is never attained by *tapasya*(austerity), the Vedic worshiping process, acceptance of the renounced order of life, the discharge of the duties of household life, the chanting of the Vedic hymns, or the performance of penances in the hot sun, within cold water or before the blazing fire.”

In other words, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the property of his pure unconditional devotees, and as such only the devotees can deliver Kṛṣṇa to another devotee; Kṛṣṇa is never obtainable directly.

Lord Caitanya therefore designated Himself as *gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayoḥ dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ* [Cc. Madhya 13.80], or “the most obedient servant of the servants of the lord, who maintains the *gopī* damsels at *Vṛndāvana*.” A pure devotee therefore never approaches the lord directly, but tries to please the servant of the lord’s servants and thus the lord become pleased, and only then can the devotee relish the taste of the *Tulasī* leaves stuck to his lotus feet. In the *Brahma – Samhitā* it is said that lord never to be found by becoming a great scholar of the vedic literatures, but he is very easy approachable through his pure devotee. In *Vṛndāvana* all the pure devotees pray for the mercy of *Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī*, the pleasure potency of lord *Kṛṣṇa*. *Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī* is a tenderhearted feminine counterpart of the supreme whole, resembling the perfectional stage of the worldly feminine nature. Therefore, the mercy of *Rādhārāṇī* is available very readily to the sincere devotees, and once She recommends such a devotee to Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, the Lord at once accepts the devotee’s admittance into His association. The conclusion is, therefore, that one should be more serious about seeking the mercy of the devotee than that of the Lord directly, and by one’s doing so (by the good will of the devotee) the natural attraction for the service of the Lord will be revived.

Letter dated May 28,1971, from Calcutta, to Govinda dāsī, Honolulu

I always speak to many gentlemen how strenuously hard you have worked to introduce Tulasī in the Western countries, and I am hearing from everywhere that Tulasī is growing very luxuriantly. May Tulasī be kind upon you and introduce you to Kṛṣṇa, to be one of the assistant maidservant gopīs in Vṛndāvana.

### The Significance of Tulasī Neckbeads

December 19, 1970, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Class, Surat

Prabhupāda: Somebody asked me, “Swamiji, why are these Tulasī beads on your neck or on your devotee's neck?” I replied, “Just as a pet dog has got a collar, similarly we are pet dogs of God. We have got this collar, And Yamarāja, the Lord of Death will understand that he-the devotee-is God's dog; he should not be shot down.”

Letter dated November 20, 1971, to Govinda dāsī, Honolulu

All should wear Tulasī kañṭhi beads, not less than two strands; or three or four strands; my Guru Mahārāja had five strands.

### Why has Tulasī Devī appeared as a plant?

Feb. 22, 1973, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Class, Auckland, New Zealand

Devotee: How is it possible that Tulasī Devī is a pure devotee, what we might call a plant?

Prabhupāda: That you cannot know in your impure state. You just become pure. You will understand. When you become a devotee, you will understand what kind of devotee Tulasī is. So long as you are not a devotee, you cannot understand. Don't expect to. Therefore, we have to accept the authority. That is the beginning. The śāstra says, “Tulasī is the greatest devotee of Kṛṣṇa.” We have to accept, that's all. Authority. How she is so great a devotee, that you will understand when you become a devotee. You come to that platform; then you will understand; not before. Now chant.

## Why do we worship Tulasī Devī?

April 28, 1973, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Class, Los Angeles

Prabhupāda: We come under the influence of the three modes of material nature, and by the current of such nature, we are being washed away. For one who has learned how to see Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet and offer a little Tulasī and sandalwood pulp, this current will stop.

June 28, 1974, Room Conversation, Melbourne

Prabhupāda: Just like we worship Tulasī. Why? Because it is very dear to Viṣṇu. *Tadiyanam*. Viṣṇu likes it, Kṛṣṇa likes it. When the Tulasī leaf is offered to Kṛṣṇa, He becomes very pleased. Therefore we love Tulasī because He likes her.

January 3, 1975, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Class, Bombay

Prabhupāda: The devotee begins offering Tulasī leaves with sandalwood pulp and offering them to the lotus feet of the Lord. That is his *vilāsa*, enjoyment. *Yad-pāda-pankaja-palāśa-vilāsa*. They enjoy. That is transcendental bliss-offering a little sandalwood pulp and leaves on the lotus feet of the Lord.

February 4, 1975, Morning Walk, Hawaii

Siddha-svarūpānanda: Tulasī grows profusely in Hawaii.

Prabhupāda: That's a good sign.

Siddha- svarūpānanda: Yes, many people, hundreds of people, are worshiping Tulasī. Even people we don't know, they, somehow or other, have gotten Tulasī and they are worshiping.

Prabhupāda: Very good. They will become devotees. Without fail, they will become devotees. If they chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and worship the Tulasī leaf, they will be liberated without fail and they will become devotees.

August 1, 1975, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Class, New Orleans

Prabhupāda: Unless there is *bhakti*, this Tulasī plant will not grow. Worshiping the Deity and watering the Tulasī plants, chanting at least sixteen rounds, and observing the rules and regulations-the regulative principles-will make your life successful. Don't neglect these. Continue them very seriously. And in this one life you will go back home, back to Godhead.

**June 11, 1976, Morning Walk, Los Angeles**

Prabhupāda: We are worshiping the Tulasī plant. Why? Because Tulasī is liked by Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, it is better to worship anything that is connected with Viṣṇu [Kṛṣṇa], than to worship Viṣṇu Himself.

**Letter dated March 26, 1968, to Balai dāsī, New York**

Yes, Śrī Tulasī is the eternal consort of Kṛṣṇa and the most pure devotee, and therefore the Tulasī plant is worshiped by Vaiṣṇavas.

**Letter dated November 5, 1970, to Govinda dāsī**

I know that both you and Gaurasundara are sincere devotees and you have done your best in Hawaii in accordance with my desire, and the luxurious growing Tulasī Devī is giving evidence of your sincere devotion. Kindly take care of Guru-Gaurāṅga, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Tulasī Devī and be happy. Try to make others also happy by spreading this Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

**Letter dated December 29, 1970, to Jagadīśa dāsa, Toronto.**

The presence of Tulasī is proof of a true devotional atmosphere there. Please offer her all respects and carefully tend [her], and Śrīmatī Tulasī will be pleased with you in gaining the auspicious favour of the Lord.

**Letter dated February 17, 1973, to Govinda dāsī**

I can understand that proportionately as your Tulasī plants are growing, your devotion and love is also growing. Please continue in this way.

**Letter dated December 6, 1973, to Kīrtidā Kanyakā dāsī**

Thank you very much for the Tulasī leaves offered to Lord Caitanya's lotus feet. If one is fortunate enough to receive such holy *prasādam* then all sinful reactions are immediately purified within the heart and pure devotional service is very easily obtained. The more you devote yourself to her service, the more you will understand and relish Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

**Nectar of Devotion**

In India all Hindus, even those not belonging to the Vaisnava group take special care of the Tulasī tree. Even in great cities where it is very difficult to keep a Tulasī tree, people are to be found very carefully keeping this plant. They water it and offer obeisances to it, because worship of the Tulasī tree is very important in devotional service.

## Instructions for worshipping Tulasī Devī

### Letter dated August 9, 1971, to Indirā dāsī, St. Louis

So you should induce other centres to cultivate Tulasī . One circular should be sent to every centre that they should import Tulasī Devī either St. Louis or Hawaii, and as soon as possible each centre should arrange to care for Tulasī Devī nicely according to instruction of you or Govinda Dāsī, who have become expert.

### August 28, 1975, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Class, Vrndāvana, India

Prabhupāda: Flowers and Tulasī leaves are not offered on the face of Kṛṣṇa; they are offered on the feet.

### March 16, 1976, Morning Walk, Mayāpur, India

Prabhupāda: (summarized) It is an offense to use a lota that has been or is being used for one's personal cleansing for the purpose of watering the Tulasī plant.

### Letter dated November 30, 1970, to Karandhara dasa, Los Angeles

Simply all the devotees offer a little water every morning, and in the evening offer obeisances and ghee lamp (one wick) and circumambulate three times repeating the mantras that I have given you. The plant may remain in the garden.

### Letter dated April 11, 1971, from Bombay to Kṛṣṇakānti dāsa

Tend Tulasī very nicely and your devotion towards Kṛṣṇa will increase. In the evening a lamp should be offered to the Tulasī plant, and in the morning each devotee should offer a little water and offer obeisances.

### Letter dated January 6, 1972, from Bombay to Rādhāvallabha Dāsa

Tulasī Devī is a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa and she should be treated with the same respect given to all Kṛṣṇa's pure devotees. Simply by worshipping her faithfully a devotee can get himself free from all material miseries. In the *Nectar of Devotion* I have given two verses from the *Skanda Purāna*: “Tulasī is auspicious in all respects. Simply by seeing, simply by touching, simply by remembering, simply by praying to, simply by bowing before, simply by hearing about, or simply by sowing the tree, there is always auspiciousness. Anyone who comes in touch with the Tulasī tree in the above mentioned ways lives eternally in the Vaikuṅṭha

world.” So from this verse we can understand how pure is the service which Tulasī offers to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. So we should always endeavour to become the servant of Tulasī Devī.

I do not know who has taught you that part of a Tulasī plant may be cut off and then replanted. From the Tulasī plant you can cut off leaves only for offering them to Kṛṣṇa, never for cutting and planting. That is an offense. The *mañjarīs* may be offered in water and it makes the water fragrant and tasteful. And the *mañjarīs* can be planted for growing new Tulasī plants. Tulasī Devī never goes back to Godhead; she is always with Godhead. She is a pure devotee and thus she has appeared on this planet to render service to Kṛṣṇa by being offered in all temples throughout the world to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.

**Letter dated October 25, 1976, to Vidyā dāsī, Los Angeles**

If it is not possible for the Tulasī plant to survive the winters when planted in the ground, then a suitable house should be provided for her. Even the Canadian temples which are in a much colder climate are keeping Tulasī nicely. Why should there be so much difficulty in Los Angeles, which has such a nice climate. Just do everything very carefully. Tulasī flourishes where there is love and devotion.

The following questions were asked by Vidyā Dāsī in her letter dated September 27, 1976 to Śrīla Prabhupāda and answered by him:

1. Vidyā dāsī: Is each Tulasī plant a separate jiva soul or an expansion of one pure devotee?

Prabhupāda: Tulasī is one devotee who appears wherever there is devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

2. Vidyā dāsī: Where does her spirit soul go when she leaves this body?

Prabhupāda: Tulasī's body is spiritual.

3. Vidyā dāsī: May we place jewelry in her soil or just moon stones?

Prabhupāda: Yes, jewelry is all right.

4. Vidyā dāsī: When Tulasī is being cared for by householders in their home, must two *āratis* still be offered?

Prabhupāda: If possible.

5 Vidyā dāsī: When Tulasī is being cared for by householders in their home may they use her leaves and *mañjarīs* on their home offerings or should they take them to the temple?

Prabhupāda: Tulasī leaves should be offered to the Deity.

6. Vidyā dasī: When Tulasī is being offered *ārati* by the householders must she have a ghee lamp?

Prabhupāda: If possible.

7. Vidyā dasī: Is it offensive to turn the baby Tulasī back into soil when they appear?

Prabhupāda: Yes.

8. Vidyā dasī: There have been questions concerning Tulasī's *āratis*. We have always offered her incense, ghee lamp and flower. Is this correct?

Prabhupāda: Yes.

9. Vidyā dāsī: In the manual, it states that Tulasī should not be pruned. Does this also mean trimming the branches which no longer have leaves or life fluids flowing through them?

Prabhupāda: You may cut the dead branches but what is the necessity?

10. Vidyā dāsī: We were told you once spoke the "4 regulative principles of Tulasī care" which will keep her from getting sick: a) keep her moist; b) keep her clean; c) give her morning sunlight (at least); d) give her two *āratis* a day. Is this bona fide?

Prabhupāda: I never said that.

11. Vidyā dāsī: May Tulasī be made into a tea after she has been offererd?

Prabhupāda: No.

12. Vidyā dāsī: May devotees carve Tulasī wood for Deity paraphernalia?

Prabhupāda: Yes.

13. Vidyā dāsī: When Tulasī leaves her body and the body is too soft for carving beads, how should she be used? Should a small fire sacrifice be performed?

Prabhupāda: Use the wood for beads as far as possible, the balance may be placed within the earth.

14. Vidyā dāsī: We have a letter from you requesting that no sprays be used on Tulasī Devī. May we use a spray of buttermilk and whole wheat flour dissolved in water which coats her leaves to keep spider mites from causing Tulasī to leave her body?

Prabhupāda: I said no chemical sprays.

15. Vidyā dāsī: Does Tulasī sleep? Should she be left undisturbed after nightfall?

Prabhupāda: Undisturbed means what?

16. Vidyā dāsī: Is it permissible to use scissors to cut her *mañjarīs*, and when transplanting, to use knives to loosen her from her pot?

Prabhupāda: Use common sense, and if you have none, then consult with others.

17. Vidyā dāsī: Is it an offense to step on or across her shadow (or the shadow of any pure devotee)?

Prabhupāda: No

18. For two years we have been waiting permission to use the following two prayers plus translations and a translation of the already existing prayer. Please tell us if these are bona fide (mantras are given):

Prabhupāda: Don't try to introduce something new. The most important thing is the love and devotion.

**Letter dated July 26, 1975, from Los Angeles, to Vṛndā dāsī, Winnipeg**

Regarding the booklet, "A Guide to the Care of Sṛīmatī Tulasī Devī," yes, the book is very nice. It is approved. But one thing is that no sprays can be used, not at all. Tulasī is a worshipable plant so there is no question of using any sprays. The best thing is to simply daily water Tulasī Devī and keep her clean. Nothing else is required.

**Letter dated December 9, 1973, from Los Angeles, to Babhru**

That Gaurasundara and Siddha-svarūpa have sold the temple in Hawaii and abandoned the beautiful Tulasī plants there is a great fall-down on their parts. Yes, you may return to Hawaii with Sudāmā Mahārāja and take charge of caring for Tulasī Devī there. I cannot understand how Govinda Dāsī could abandon Tulasī Devī. Kindly try to induce her to return.

**Letter dated May 31, 1975 to Kīrtanānanda, New Vṛndāvana**

I think you can close the doors to the Deity room during Tulasī puja and then open them again afterwards.

Letter from Bombay dated May 5, 1977, to Lalananami, Los Angeles

In reply to your question, “Should Tulasī Devī be given to families who visit the temple”, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “No, let them come and offer respects to Tulasī Devī instead. But if they still want to have Tulasī Devī you can give them seeds and let the guests grow the plants from seed.” You may inform any other Tulasī pujārīs who write you of this instruction of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your servant,

Tamal Krishna Gosvami

Secretary to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

## Serving Śrīmatī Tulasī Devī

### General Instructions

Tulasī’s body is spiritual. Although Tulasī appears as many individual trees, she is one person, and she comes wherever she sees devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

Every morning devotees should water and pray to Tulasī Devī and circumambulate her three times.

Protect the delicate Tulasī seedlings from birds and insects. Do not turn the seedlings back into the soil.

In places where Tulasī cannot survive the winters when planted in the ground, provide a suitable house for her.

Every day provide Tulasī with fresh air, water, and sunshine (or plant lights). Be careful not to water too much.

Neglecting to care for or water Tulasī properly is an offense. Do everything carefully.

When picking Tulasī leaves, pick only the leaves that grow next to the *mañjarīs* (flowers) and the leaves that are ready to drop -they will turn a pale color-not the new, green Ones. Pick the *mañjarīs* as soon as they blossom. Avoid letting them go to seed, which takes much energy from the plant that can be used to make more leaves and flowers for Kṛṣṇa's service. Pick the *mañjarīs* (with two leaves) one at a time with your fingertips. Don't shake or stroke

the branch and damage healthy leaves. Pick with care and attention. Avoid using cutting tools.

Never cut or prune Tulasī Devī. Remove dead branches if absolutely necessary. If branches obstruct a passageway, tie them back, but don't cut them.

Never use chemical sprays on Tulasī.

Collect leaves once in the morning for worshipping Kṛṣṇa and for putting on the plates of food to be offered to Him. Put at least one leaf on each plate or preparation if possible. Never pick Tulasī leaves for any other purpose than to offer to the Lord.

Lord Kṛṣṇa likes garlands of Tulasī leaves. Tulasī leaves mixed with sandalwood pulp and placed on the lotus feet of the Lord is the topmost worship. Do not place Tulasī leaves on the feet of anyone other than Lord Viṣṇu in His various forms. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī can be given Tulasī in Her hand for offering to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa accepts even dry Tulasī leaves.

Tulasī wood (taken after a plant has fully dried naturally) can be used to carve worship paraphernalia, such as beads. Place leftover Tulasī wood within the earth.

Never use Tulasī leaves or flowers to make teas or juices, even after they've been offered to Kṛṣṇa. It is an offense to cook or heat Tulasī, or to use her for mundane purposes, such as medicines and ointments.

Never cut down or pull up living Tulasī plants. They may be tied back.

Tulasī Devī is very dear to the Lord. Therefore, the most important principle is to serve her with love and devotion.

Do not pluck Tulasī leaves in the morning before daylight or in the evening after dark, nor at any time on Dvādasī -tīthi, the day following Ekādasī. Even if the Tulasī leaves have become dry, they may still be used in Deity worship.

A stock of dry leaves may be kept in case of emergency when fresh leaves are not available.

One should be clean before touching or plucking Tulasī.

One should pluck the leaves with the right hand, holding the branch in the left hand, being careful not to break the branches.

## Starting a Tulasī Plant from Seed

In the Western countries, get a seed-starter kit from a garden nursery, or if you use your own soil, mix one part of potting soil with one-part sand. In India, mix one part fully dried cow dung with one-part soil.

Place this soil into planting cups or into flat containers at least two inches deep.

Remove the four Tulasī seeds from the dried seed pod of a *mañjarī* by shaking them gently or pushing them out with the blunt eye of a needle. Place the seeds individually on top of the soil.

Sprinkle soil finely over them, an amount equal to the width of the seed. The seeds should be able to receive light. If planted too deeply, they will not be able to sprout.

Each seed will germinate into a Tulasī plant, so use only an amount of seeds that you are able to care for.

Do not water the seeds from above as the water could move them.

Water the containers from below by placing them in a tray of lukewarm water until moist spots appear on the surface of the soil. Let the containers drain completely.

Place a net or sheet of glass over the containers or place them in a clear plastic bag to increase their humidity.

Keep them in a warm place with bright light, but not direct sunlight.

Everyday wipe the glass or plastic bag dry and let fresh air circulate around the containers.

Most Tulasī seeds germinate in three to five days, but some take longer, especially in cold weather.

When a sprout appears, remove the glass or bag. Still keep the seedlings in a humid place, but do not let the soil become soggy.

For a number of days, as the roots begin developing, the young seedlings will have only two seed leaves.

If at this stage Tulasī turns purple, she is probably receiving too much light, so the light should be filtered.

If Tulasī is bent over at the soil line and her stem there is brown and pinched, she has been attacked by a fungus. To overcome this:

- a. Increase the circulation of air.
- b. Reduce the amount of humidity.
- c. Sprinkle fine, hot sand onto the soil surface.

When the Tulasī seedling sends up a shoot with two additional leaves, and then another two, she is ready to be transplanted.

To prepare a bed for transplanting Tulasī outdoors in full sunlight, construct a wind protection box and screen for keeping out birds and flying insects. Tulasī likes light, fertile, well-drained soil, slightly alkaline, and deeply cultivated. Mix in good quantities of dry cow dung, compost, leaf mold or peat moss. In the late afternoon, dig 4.6” holes, spacing them 12” apart in rows 15” to 18” apart. Fill the holes with water and let them drain. Carefully remove the Tulasīs from the smaller seedling containers, and set them down into the hole, pressing firmly and watering again and again. There should be no problem for the plants so long as you don’t disturb the roots in any way. Keep the plants in partial shade several days and gradually expose them to full sun. Cultivate the soil every week or so, keeping it free from weeds. Water them regularly each morning, and they’ll grow bigger.

If the seedling is in a peat-moss planting cup, it is time to transplant her when roots begin to come out of the bottom and the sides of the cup. Transfer the cup to a clay pot that is slightly larger and contains the proper amount of potting soil. The new soil line should be the same as the line in the cup.

If two Tulasīs are in the same cup and you want to transplant each in a separate pot, gently divide the cup and separate the soil until the Tulasīs separate.

If two Tulasīs refuse to separate, soak them in room temperature water, and then they can be separated. Make sure each has as much soil as possible around the roots. Re-plant at once and water them completely.

For several days, keep the replanted seedlings in mild shade. Then gradually increase the light. From this point on, the seedling should grow quickly.

Tulasī will grow higher and higher till a *mañjarī* will appear. If you pluck this *mañjarī* with the two leaves beneath it, the plant will then expand into two branches.

Sometimes Tulasī becomes fairly tall when she is still young and her stem is not yet strong. For support you can put a stick in her pot. Bamboo sticks are best because they don't rot. Put the stick at the edge of the inside of the pot, not near Tulasī's stem, which may injure her roots. Tie it to her stem with a clean cloth or string. Do not use wire. Use as many sticks as necessary to keep her straight.

If Tulasī is growing too tall and thin, continue to pluck her *mañjarīs* and she will start to branch out fully. Never cut her branches to shape her.

The total length of a *mañjarī* may grow to ten inches. She can flower throughout the year, but she develops the most flowers during spring and summer months. The more sunlight, the more *mañjarīs* she will yield. She generally produces seeds in late spring through summer if you let the *mañjarīs* go to seed.

To collect Tulasī 's seeds, let the seeds turn brown but cut the *mañjarīs* before the seeds start falling from the seed pods. Store these mature *mañjarīs* with their seeds in a cool, dry, airtight container.

As a Tulasī plant matures, her new leaves may be smaller, and her stem will become thicker and woody. Most Tulasīs reach an adult height of three to four feet; however, some grow to nine feet.

After Tulasī leaves her body, her wood can be carved into chanting beads or used in fire sacrifices and cremation ceremonies.

For more detailed information about how to properly grow Tulasī , refer to *The Art of Caring for Śrīmatī Tulasī Devī* by Isanah devī dāsī.

## Keeping Tulasī Devī Healthy

Along with a devotional attitude while caring for Śrīmatī Tulasī Devī, her physical health depends on proper light, water, temperature, humidity, soil, nutrients, pot size, and absence of pests and diseases.

### *Light*

Tulasī Devī grows best in natural sunlight. She should have three to five hours of direct sunlight in the morning to early afternoon daily

The results of insufficient light are:

- a. Thin and weak stems.
- b. Long-stemmed branches between the leaves.
- c. Large pale green leaves, and few or no flowers.
- d. Leaves may fall and branches may die.

Tulasī Devī can grow indoors when placed at a window that gets enough sunlight. She will grow in the direction of the sunlight; therefore, rotate her pot 90° daily so she grows straight and her leaves are symmetrical.

If there is not enough sunlight:

- a. Use daylight tubes with “gro-lux” or “gro-lite” tubes.
- b. She should be encircled by light.
- c. In three separate lighting fixtures, hang two forty watt tubes above, to the left, and the right of her. Place them very close, but without touching her.
- d. Leave these lights on fourteen to sixteen hours daily, but less if she is getting some sun.

When Tulasī Devī has been indoors all winter and the weather becomes warm enough to take her outside for direct sunlight, make the transition gradually:

- a. At first, allow her to be in sunlight about one hour daily
- b. Increase the length of sunlight gradually.
- c. Too much sun too fast will shock her. Her leaves may turn pale or white and then die. Sometimes her lower leaves suddenly fall off.

## *Water*

The ideal time to water Tulasī Devī is in the early morning. Water her gently without upsetting her soil. Otherwise, root disease and soil aeration problems could arise.

To avoid city water chemicals, use purified or distilled (bottled) water.

If this is not possible, allow your city water to stand overnight in a non-corrosive container. This will permit the chlorine and possibly other chemicals to disperse. Then pour the water from one container to another to aerate it.

Do not use “hard” water to which chemicals have been added to make it “soft”.

At least once a week, water Tulasī Devī completely. Some of the water should flow out of the drainage hole in the bottom of the pot. Whenever her topsoil feels dry, she should again be watered with enough water to keep her moist all day but not drenched.

She should never be so wet that when more water is added, it immediately flows out of the bottom of the pot. Water-logging can cause fungal disease and death of the roots. The leaves will be affected, turning pale or brown before dropping.

Soil that is too dry can harm the roots. This may cause Tulasī’s leaves to become gray, bronze or pale green, slowing down her growth. It may also cause the soil to pull away from the sides of the pot, resulting in the water not pervading the soil. If this happens:

- a. Submerge the pot in a bucket of water so the soil may absorb the water, or
- b. Add small amounts of water to the soil surface. Let it soak in and then slowly add more water till the soil has absorbed sufficient water.
- c. If Tulasī begins wilting from insufficient water, take her out from the sunlight or heat and water her. However, this shock could cause her to drop her lower leaves.
- d. If Tulasī’s soil is too dry, her pot will feel “light” when you lift her. Then you need to water her.

## *Temperature*

During Tulasī’s growing season, she does best in temperatures ranging from 80 degrees F (27 degrees C) in the day to about 65 degrees F (18 degrees C) during the night. She can withstand temperatures over 100 degrees F (37 degrees C) and even in the low 50s (12 degrees C); but these can cause her stress and will slow her growth.

Tulasī can overheat and wilt in extremely warm weather because of inadequate amount of soil water. If this happens:

- a. Don't water her immediately. This will drench her soil.
- b. Take her out of the sun and into filtered light.
- c. Reduce her temperature by spraying a fine mist of water over her.
- d. When the humidity is very low, increase it around her by spraying a mist around her. This will lessen the amount of water she loses from her leaves.
- e. When the humidity is very high and water cannot evaporate from her, heat doesn't dissipate very well. Try to improve the circulation of air around her.

Tulasī Devī is very sensitive to cold weather. When night temperatures are low, she may have difficulty surviving. To protect her from the cold, bring her indoors. If that isn't possible, and your area isn't harshly cold build a simple greenhouse around her. It must be ventilated to avoid build up of heat in the sun. If you keep Tulasī in a heated area, make sure she is in a spot free from cold and hot drafts.

In a very cold climate, remove her from the window area at night. The coldness from the window could shock her enough to make her give up those leaves and branches that are close to the window.

Do not place her near direct heat from a heater or cold from an air conditioner. Hot drafts could cause her leaves to drop, shrivel up and turn black overnight. Overheating could destroy complete branches or the entire Tulasī plant. In homes, heated air is often dry, so make certain that Tulasī Devī is not affected.

Extreme temperature changes between day and night, or any sudden temperature change, causes her stress and she may wilt. On such mornings, expose her to the sun gradually, let her warm up slowly, and keep a high level of humidity around her.

### *Humidity*

Dry air may cause Tulasī's leaves to evaporate water faster than she can absorb water through her roots. This results in her leaves curling or the edges of her leaves becoming brown and dry. Her flower buds may dry up and drop off without opening. She may become shriveled up even if there is enough water in her soil. If this happens, increase the humidity around her by any or all of the following:

- a. In a greenhouse or porch, spray the floor with water. As the water evaporates, it will moisten her leaves.
- b. Place her in a waterproof tray that can hold a layer of gravel sponge rock (perlite) and water. Place the bottom of Tulasī's pot on the gravel but above the level of the water. Or raise the pot on slats above the gravel so that air can circulate freely under the pot.
- c. Spray her gently with a mist of water.
- d. Place two or more Tulasīs near each other. Each will benefit from the water vapour emitted from their leaves.
- e. Create a miniature greenhouse over her by placing a clear plastic bag over a wire frame. If Tulasī is in direct sunlight, partially remove the bag or she will be harmed by too much heat. If there is steam in the bag, it is too hot for her. In this case, only put the bag over her at night.

### *Soil*

To remain healthy, plant roots need oxygen, and they receive it from the air spaces in the soil. In over-watered soil, the soil spaces fill up with water and deprive the roots of oxygen. The roots may begin to die, and the leaves turn yellow or form brown margins.

For rich soil with excellent drainage, make your own soil mix as follows:

- a. To two parts potting soil, add one part compost, leaf mold, earthworm castings or other decomposed organic matter, and one part clean coarse sand, such as masons' sand. You may substitute perlite or sponge rock for coarse sand. Do not use ocean beach sand, as it has too much salt.
- b. Add one tablespoon of pulverized phosphate rock and one tablespoon of potash rock (granite dust or green sand).
- c. When compost is unavailable, use vermiculite; however, be prepared to give Tulasī more nutrients, as mentioned in the next section.

It is not a good idea to use soil straight from a garden because the soil may contain disease organisms.

Do not place earthworms in Tulasī's pot because they might damage her roots.

Occasionally, the force of watering may compact the soil. This will make it difficult for water and air to penetrate the soil. To avoid this, each month turn over the top inch of soil with a small tool (such as a fork), but be careful not to disturb her roots.

### *Nutrition*

It is necessary to add nutrients to the soil in potted plants. Nitrogen is the first nutrient that needs replacement. Nitrogen evaporates from soil, especially in hot weather while Tulasī is growing. When Tulasī doesn't have enough nitrogen, her lower leaves turn yellow and fall off. To replace nitrogen and most other important elements, add a one-inch layer of dried cow dung to the top layer of her soil.

Another option is to water Tulasī every two weeks with a solution made by soaking overnight one part dried cow dung in three parts water. Never use fresh cow dung as this will burn her. After doing this, Tulasī's leaves should become green in two to three days.

In very hot weather, cow dung alone does not always provide enough nitrogen. Therefore, use fertilizers such as Miracle Gro, whose nutrients come from natural sources. Avoid fertilizers with slaughterhouse or sewer-treatment facility by-products. Tulasī may still need extra iron treatments several times a year, especially when her upper leaves and *mañjarīs* are pale yellow-green instead of deep green.

Do not over-fertilize a potted Tulasī. If the concentration of nutrients is too high, she gets “fertilizer burn” and she will wilt. This is because the excess salts prevent her from absorbing water from the soil. The branch tips will turn black and die, and black patches will appear at both edges of her young leaves before they fall. If this happens:

- a. Flush Tulasī with lots of fresh water to wash the extra salts from the soil.
- b. Do this for at least fifteen minutes, so the water flows out.
- c. This should stop the spread of the black areas, but the black tissue cannot be saved.

To prevent fertilizer burn, water Tulasī once weekly so that the water runs out of her drainage hole. Also, carefully follow the instructions on packaged soil supplement products.

Give Tulasī extra nutrients only when she is growing and can use them. Reduce or stop in the autumn and winter when she is not growing.

### *Transplanting*

When Tulasī outgrows her pot, you can see her roots are pushing out of the drainage hole. It is now time to transplant her either into a larger pot or into the soil. Water her and allow her

to drain completely. Then, with her stem between your index and middle fingers, and your palm on the soil at the base of the stem, turn her pot upside down. Tap the rim of the pot on the edge of a table. The entire Tulasī plant should come out of the pot. Be careful to hold her securely. If the roots have not filled the pot, so that the root ball is in the shape of the pot, put her back in the same pot. If the roots fill the pot, she should be transplanted. If Tulasī looks too big for her pot or she wilts between regular waterings, it is definitely time to transplant her. You might need a knife to loosen the soil from the sides of the pot.

Get a pot that is one or two sizes bigger than her present one. If Tulasī has greatly outgrown her pot, use a pot about one third to one half of her plant height. Do not plant in too big of a pot because the extra soil in it will keep more water than her roots can absorb and cause the roots to rot.

An ideal pot is made of unglazed clay that has a drainage hole. The unglazed clay allows ventilation through the sides of the pot. Avoid cement, plastic, or glazed clay pots.

Transplant in the shade, or when the weather is cool and overcast, or in the late afternoon. Also, always protect Tulasī from drying winds.

First, prepare the new pot as follows.

- a. Submerge the new pot in water till it stops bubbling.
- b. Put broken pottery chips over the drainage hole but don't block it completely. Put the broken pot pieces in such a way that water can drain out while the soil remains in the pot. A layer of gravel may be placed on the bottom of large pots.
- c. Place a sufficient amount of soil on the bottom of the new pot.
- d. If possible, carefully separate and straighten any roots that are twisted in circles, then gently lower her into her new pot, keeping her straight and upright.
- e. Add new soil all around her and press it gently.
- f. The soil level should be the same as her previous level so that her roots are not visible and her stem is not covered. Otherwise, the roots or stem will rot.
- g. Between the soil level and the top of the pot, leave a one-half inch to one-inch space for watering. Do not overfill the pot with soil.

h. Water her fully and keep her in the shade for a few days. Then you can place her in the direct sunlight again. Wait till the soil is dry before you water her again because the new pot has reserve water in it.

### *Pests and Diseases*

If Tulasī is getting the proper amount of water and sunlight, in a pot of the correct size and soil, she will flourish. The only necessity is to be sure to protect her from insects and especially red spider mites. The place where Tulasī stays should always be kept clean. Collect all of her fallen leaves regularly and sweep around her pots. She should be examined daily for bugs or diseases. If she is clean and properly nourished, she has a better chance to remain healthy.

Even with all precautions, Tulasī may still be attacked by pests. Such pests should be dealt with immediately to prevent damage to Tulasī. Some pests carry fungal, bacterial, and viral diseases that can cause her extreme danger.

Do not cut Tulasī's branches unless it is an emergency such as when her roots have been attacked, or her life is in danger. Reducing her size sometimes allows the root system to nourish the plant back to good health.

Spray her gently with a hose or spray bottle to remove dust and insects from her leaves. In hot weather bathe her every day.

If she has bugs, give her a bath with vegetable-based (castile) soap made with potassium salts. These salts are deadly to insects. Make sure you rinse the soapy water off of her afterwards so her leaves do not get burnt from the soap. Small Tulasī plants are bathed as follows:

- a. Cover the pot and soil with plastic.
- b. Put your hand on her soil and stem between your index and middle finger for her support.
- c. Tip her upside down, lower her into the soapy water, and swish her gently for five to ten seconds only. Slowly remove her from the soap.
- d. Rinse her in a bucket of clean water or gently with a hose or spray bottle.
- e. Shake off the excess water and slowly turn her over. The water may make her heavy and cause her to droop or break.

Large Tulasī plants that do not fit in a bucket are bathed as follows:

a. Cover her soil with plastic, wrap it tightly around her stem, and spray her with soapy water. Make sure you spray on the underside of the leaves, where most insects hide.

b. When you soap-spray her, wash off the soap so it doesn't burn her leaves.

If, after bathing her, Tulasī is still attacked, you can use certain natural sprays derived from plants that repel or destroy insects. Never use petroleum-based sprays. There are non-toxic and environmentally safe sprays. Here are some of them:

a. Pyrethrum: Derived from chrysanthemum flowers, it fights aphids, whiteflies, and caterpillars. Apply it in late afternoon or evening, never in the sun. Don't use it with soap.

b. Rotenone: Derived from the derris plant root, it acts as a stomach poison on aphids, spider mites, ants, and true bugs

c. Diatomaceous earth: Silica fragments derived from the skeletal remains of small sea animals called diatoms. These lacerate the insect causing it death from dehydration.

d. Hot chili peppers mixed with water: These discourage chewing insects.

e. Neem oil: Derived from the Neem tree, it suppresses appetite and inhibits growth in aphids, mites, mealy bugs, and white flies.

f. SunSpray Oil: A parafin based oil that may be sprayed on Tulasī s leaves without harming them. It acts against mealy bugs, scales, spider mites, and aphids.

There are some helpful bugs that eat harmful insects. These insect-eating insects may be obtained at a local nursery.

a. The ladybug: Both the adults and larvae eat aphids, mealy bugs and scales. They can roam directly on Tulasī or in her area.

b. The green or brown lacewings: These eat aphids, spider mites and mealy bugs

c. The assassin bug, ambush bug, praying mantis, and various spiders are helpful.

Further detailed information about diseases and insects is provided in the book *The Art of Caring for Tulasī Devī*, by Isanah Devī dāsī.

The most important principle when caring for Śrīmatī Tulasī Devī is to keep her clean and properly cared for as described in this book. By her mercy, we can attain devotional service in pure love of Godhead, and all our spiritual aspirations become fulfilled, as described in the following eight verses.

## Śrī Vṛndādevy-aṣṭaka

*Eight Prayers Glorifying Śrīmatī Vṛndā Devī  
by Śrīla Viśvanatha Cakravartī Thakura*

*gāṅgeya-cāmpēya-taḍid-vinindi-  
rociḥ-pravāha-snapitātma-vṛnde  
bandhūka-randu-dyuti-divya-vāso  
vṛnde numas te caraṇāravindam*

O Vṛndā Devī, I offer my respectful obeisances to your lotus feet. You are bathed in your own splendor, which defeats the effulgence of lightning and the golden cam-paka flower. The luster of your transcendental garments is the friend of the leandhilia flower. (1)

*bimbādhāroditvara-manda-hāsya-  
nāsāgra-muktā-dyuti-dīpitāsye  
vicitra-ratnābharana-śrīyādhye  
vṛnde numas te caraṇāravindam*

O Vṛndā Devī, I offer my respectful obeisances to your lotus feet. Your face is illuminated by the splendor of the pearl decorating the tip of your nose, and by the extraordinary gentle smile on the two bimba fruits which are your lips. You are enriched by the beauty of the amazing and colorful jewels and ornaments you wear. (2)

*samasta-vaikuṅṭha-śiromaṇau śrī-  
kṛṣṇasya vṛndavana-dhanya-dhāmnī  
dattādhikāre vṛṣabhānu-putryā  
vṛnde numas te caraṇāravindam*

O Vṛnda Devī, I offer my respectful obeisances to your lotus feet. Śrīmatī Rādhārāni, the daughter of King Vrsabhanu, has made you the ruling monarch of Lord Kṛṣṇa's opulent and auspicious abode of Vṛndāvana, which is the crest jewel of all the Vaikuntha planets. (3)

*tvad-ājśaya pallava-puṣpa-bhr̥ṅga-  
mṛgādibhir mādhava-keli-kuṣjah  
madhv-ādibhir bhānti vibhūṣyamāṇā  
vṛnde numas te caraṇāravindam*

O Vṛndā Devī, I offer my respectful obeisances to your lotus feet. Because of your order, the groves where Lord Madhava perform His pastimes appear very splendid, decorated with blossoming flowers, bumblebees, deer, and other auspicious animals, flowers, and birds. (4)

*tvadīya-dūtyena nikuṣja-yūnor  
atyutkayoḥ keli-vilāsa-siddhiḥ  
tvat-saubhagam kena nirucyatām tad  
vṛnde numas te caraṇāravindam*

O Vṛndā Devī, I offer my respectful obeisances to your lotus feet. Who can describe your good fortune? You were the messenger who brought about the perfection of the amorous pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, the youthful couple, who enthusiastically sport in the groves of Vṛndāvana. (5)

*rāsābhilāṣo vasatiś ca vrndā-  
vane tvad-iśāṅghri-saroja-sevā  
labhyā ca puṁsām kṛpayā tavaiva  
vṛnde numas te caraṇāravindam*

Vṛndā Devī, I offer my respectful obeisances to your lotus feet. The living entities who attain the service of the lotus feet of your Lord reside in Vṛndāvana. And the desire to understand the Lord's amazing pastimes of the rasa dance is only by your mercy. (6)

*tvaṁ kīrtiyase sātвата-tantra-vidbhir  
līlābhidhānā kila kṛṣṇa-śaktiḥ  
tavaiva mūrtis Tulasī nṛ-loke  
vṛnde numas te caraṇāravindam*

Vṛndā Devī, I offer my respectful obeisances to your lotus feet . Those who have studied the Satvata-tantra glorify you. You are Lord kṛṣṇa's potency for performing pastimes, and you are known as Tulasī Devī in the human society. (7)

*Bhaktyā vihīnā aparādha-lakṣaiḥ  
kṣiptāś ca kāmādi-taraṅga-madhye  
krpāmayi tvām śaraṇam prapannā  
vṛnde numas te caraṇāravindam*

O Vṛndā Devī, 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. (8)

*vṛndāṣṭakam yaḥ śṛṇuyat paṭhed vā  
vṛndāvanādhīśa-padābja-bhṛngah  
sa prāpya vṛndāvana-nitya-vāsam  
tat-prema-sevām labhate kṛtārthah*

O Vṛndā Devī, I offer my respectful obeisances to your lotus feet. Let a person who becomes like a bumblebee at the lotus feet of Rādhā Kṛṣṇa, and who reads or hears these eight verses describing the glories of Vṛndā Devī, eternally reside at Goloka Vṛndāvana. He attains devotional service in pure love of Godhead, and all his spiritual aspiration become fulfilled. (9)

