

Tulasi - Shaligram Vivaha - 26th November 2020



This is the celebration of the marriage ceremony of Srimati Tulsi Devi and Lord Sri Krishna in a stone (shila) form. For those enthusiastic to perform the wedding ceremony on Srimati Tulsi Devi and Her Lord (to be performed upon the Shaligram Shila) one can follow the following simple procedure(s).

Tulsi Vivah or Marriage: This is perhaps the most sentimental but not the least important festival which falls on the 11th day of the bright half of Kartik. This katha is from the Padma Purana which revolves around Tulsi devi, the plant *Ocimum Sanctum* which in her former birth was Vrinda, the daughter of a giant named Nemi, and the faithful wife of demon Jalandhar. Being born in water Jalandhar claims sovereignty over the ocean and demands the 14 treasures churned out of the ocean in Lord Vishnu's second incarnation. He declares war and becomes a cause of danger to the devas. More so because of a boon that he would be free from death till his wife Vrinda was chaste. As a last resort to kill Jalandhar, Lord Vishnu beguiles Vrinda by assuming her husband's form. Vrinda in her wrath curses and turns Lord Vishnu into a Black stone (Salagram) for His deceit. Lord Vishnu too retaliates but in admiration of her impeccable chastity and piety, He transfers her into the sacred Tulsi plant and promises to marry her annually on this day of Kartik. The origin of the ammonite black stone or Salagram found on the bed of the river Gandaki (in modern day Nepal) is attributed to their lila.

As a consequence, all devout Hindu women worship the Tulsi plant with flowers and milk assuming Lord Krishna to be present on it on this auspicious day. Literally a marriage is performed between the Tulsi and the Salagram. The belief is that one who performs this ceremony of giving away Tulsi considering them to be one's own daughters, gets the credit as making a Kanyadan which is regarded as an extremely

meritorious act in pur religion. This sacred ceremonial day marks the auspicious opening of the annual marriage season of the Hindus.

Simple Vivaha Prayog (procedure)

One can dress Her pot in a nice Red skirt. One can adorn her branches with red bangles, red kum kum, and red bindhis. As a mangal sutra one can use a fresh or dried Haldi (tumeric) root and garland her with red garlands. If you have a Shaligram you can perform the Vivaha for them as you would for any yajman who would undergo it.

Here we have a very simplified form of that.

Kanya Sampradanam - Giving of the bride:

The bride is given away by her father or guardian after reciting of her lineage and pedigree together with that of the groom.

Honouring of the groom. The groom is given a seat and is honoured. Tie the kankabandanam (red thread) to each of Them. Symbolically His right wrist Her left wrist. Meditate upon anointing Their wrists with oils and chandan, and just touch it to Their bodies.

Mala Dharanam - exchange of garlands:

Place a nice garland on the Tulsi plant and the Swayamvyakta Shaligram. Exchange the garlands three times. She garlands Him and then He garlands Her, like that. Tulasi first to garland her Lord, claiming her swayamvarya rite.

Sindhur Danam - anointing the bride with sindhur:

On His behalf mark her leaves and upper trunk with sindhur three times, His claiming her as His own.

OM SINDHUR IVA PRADHVANE SUGHANASO
VATA PRAMIYAH PATAYANTI YAHVAH
GHRTASYA DHARA ARUSO NAH VAJI
KASTHA BHINDAN URMIBHIH PINVAMANAH

Mangal Sutra Dharanam - Placing of the sacred Thali:

The sacred thread and ornament (mangal sutra) are sanctified and then tied around the bride's neck as a symbol of her marital status, the sister of the groom helps him with this and is given a present by the bride's family. A girdle symbolizing chastity is tied around her waist (can be tied around the pot or laid on the soil as if her waist.

mangal yatantunanena bhartr jiva ahetunaa
kanthe bandhnami subhage saa jiva saradah shatam

Vastra Bandhanam - Tying their cloth, making their bond strong:

Trying the upper clothes. Granthi banadhanam - binding their marriage bond. The Shaligram will need an angavaastra specially for this which can be tied to the upper part of the vaastra that Tulsi is wearing - keep these bound for seven nights from now. Sprinkle the bonded cloth with waster from the samanya arghya.

Laja Homa - Offering of Puffed Rice for the longevity of the husband, and fertility of wife.

This ritual is done to pray for the well-being of the bride and her future offspring as well as prosperity and happiness for all the family. You may have to meditate upon this only.

OM IDAM ASMANAM AROHA
ASMEVA TVAM STHIRA BHAVA
DVISANTAM APAVADHASYA
MA CA TVAM DVISATAM ADHAH

"Mount this stone, and like a stone be steadfast in devotion at the feet of the Lord. Annihilate those who would dare harm you. May you never fall under their influence."

Saptapadi Grahanam - The symbolic taking of seven steps representing seven great sacrifices of Vivaha:

The couple take seven steps together symbolic of the journey of life which they are beginning and in which they will be inseparable companions. Each step is sanctified with a blessing.

1. OM EKAM ISE VISNUH TVA NAYATU

"One: May Lord Visnu lead you to strength."

2. OM DVE URJE VISNUH TVA NAYATU

"Two: May Lord Visnu lead you to power."

3. OM TRINI VRATAYA VISNUH TVA NYATU

"Three: May Lord Visnu lead you to uphold your vows."

4. OM CATVARI MAYOBHAVAYA VISNUH TVA NAYATU

"Four: May Lord Visnu lead you to happiness."

5. OM PANCA PASUBHYO VISNUH TVA NAYATU

"Five: May Lord Visnu lead you to plenty of cows."

6. OM SAD RAYAS POSAYA VISNUH TVA NAYATU

"Six: May Lord Visnu lead you to multiplying spiritual wealth."

7. OM SAPTA SAPRABHYO HOTRABHYO VISNUH TVA NAYATU

"Seven: May Lord Visnu lead you to maintain these seven sacrifices."

Pani Grahanam - Joining Them in wedlock:

Taking of the Hand. The groom formally accepts the bride and takes her hand while reciting ritual formulae. Meditate upon Their holding hands and recite the following.

"For good fortune I join your hands so that you may attain old age in the company of your husband. The four Kumaras have given you to him for performance of household duties.

"Be gentle-eyed, protecting your husband. Be kind to the animals, be good minded, beautiful. Be the mother of heroes, mother of life, and dear to Lord Krsna, bringing the highest happiness. In this way be good to us all, both man and beast.

"May Vishnu generate progeny for you. May Lord Krsna keep you together until old age. Enter now your husband's house, with auspiciousness. In this way be good to us, both man and beast.

"Oh Vishnu, impregnate her, make fine, strong sons in her. Put ten sons in her, make eleven men in their house.

"Be the ruler of your husband's father. Be the ruler of your husband's mother. Be the ruler of your husband's sisters. Be the ruler of your husband's brothers.

"May your heart be fixed on life's higher goals. May your mind follow after that of your husband. With body and soul be devoted to his words. May the Lord join you together."

Shower them with akshata (dry uncooked rice coloured with tumeric).

OM ASMIN VIVAHA KARMANI
ANGA HINAM KRIYAN HINAM
VIDHI HINAM CA YAD BHAVET
ASTU TAT SARVA ACCHIDRAM
KRSNA KARSNA PRASADATAH
YAT KINCIT CAIGUNYAM JATAM
TAD DOSA PRASAMANAYA
SRI VISNU SMARANAM KAROMI

"May all deficiencies in rules and activities of the vivaha ceremony be absolved by the mercy of Lord Sri Krsna and His devotees. I now remember that Supreme Lord Vishnu in order to nullify whatever faults there may be there in the proceedings."

Sri Sriyuts Tulasi & Shaligram Vivaha ki jaya

The katha of Tulasi Devi in short

Srimati Tulasi devi is one of the most exalted devotees of the Sri Krishna. All scriptures stress on the importance of getting the mercy of Tulasi devi if one has to make progress in the path of devotion. In the Skanda Purana it is said: "Tulasi 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 this tree, there is always auspiciousness. Anyone who comes in touch with the Tulasi tree in the above-mentioned ways lives eternally in the Vaikuntha world."

Vrinda devi:- Above this material world is the eternal spiritual world comprised of millions of Vaikuntha planets. The topmost planet in Vaikuntha is Goloka which is presided by Sri Krishna in His original form. Here resides Vrinda devi, an intimate associate of and an expansion of Srimati Radharani. Her partial expansion is Tulasi devi in the Vaikuntha planets and they are all considered non-different from her.

As the embodiment of the lila-sakti (pastime potency), Vrinda devi is the organizer of all the transcendental pastimes between Sri Krishna and Srimati Radharani. In Goloka every thing is animate (cit) and only for the pleasure of Sri Krishna. Vrinda devi makes this happen. She is assisted by many confidential associates (which include two parrots) and with their help she makes sure that every thing is pleasing to Sri Krishna. She controls how the wind blows, when and where it rains, how the trees bend, and so many other things for the pleasure of the Divine Couple.

Manifest Vrindavana:- Five thousand years ago when Sri Krishna descended on Earth to do His pastimes, Vrinda devi created the proper environment for His pastimes in Vrindavana. Millions of years before the descent of Sri Krishna, Vrinda devi had appeared as the daughter of the pious Emperor Kudara. Then she performed penances for sixty thousand years. Pleased by her penances, Lord Vishnu gave the benediction that any austerities performed in Vrindavana would be very potent. Thus Vrinda devi sanctified the place and it got the name Vrindavana. Later Vrinda devi once again descended here as Tulasi devi, the daughter of King Kushadvaja to perform penances and attain perfection here.

Pastimes of Radha-Krishna:- Vrindavana is completely under the control of Vrinda devi. Without her mercy it is not possible to even approach the confidential pastimes of Radha-Krishna, even as an audience. Even being allowed into Vrindavana dhama indicates that one has received some mercy from Vrinda devi.

In Krishna lila she appeared as a young gopi friend of Srimati Radharani. Under the instructions of Purnamasya (Yogamaya), she would arrange secret meeting between Krishna and Radha. She would also make all the material arrangements, like saffron, fruits, flowers, music etc. for Radha Krishna. Thus she carried on her eternal service in Goloka Vrindavana in the earthly Vrindavana.

Once Srimati Radharani was so pleased by the service of Vrinda devi that with the help of the other gopis she arranged a magnificent throne and had Krishna and Vrinda devi sit on it. Lalita sakhi acting as the priest recited the mantras and performed the marriage ceremony of Krishna and Vrinda devi. Thus by the mercy of Srimati Radharani, Vrinda devi got Krishna.

In another pastime, Vrinda devi offered all the forests of Vrindavana to Srimati Radharani. Thus Radharani is also known as Vrindavaneshwari or the queen of Vrindavana.

Tulasi devi becomes a plant:- Pastimes involving pure devotees are only for the benefit of conditioned souls in the material world. This pastime, given in the Padma Purana and in the Brahma-vaivarta Purana involving Tulasi devi reveals this clearly.

Once Tulasi devi descended as the daughter of King Kushadvaja. She was married to Jalhandara. It is said that Samudra deva the deity controlling the nether regions had Lakshmi devi as a daughter (since she appeared from him at time of the churning of the ocean) and Jalandara (one who is born from water). Jalandara was married to Tulasi devi and drew strength from her purity and chastity. So firm was her chastity that even Lord Shiva could not defeat Jalandara in battle and all the

devas went to Lord Vishnu for help. At this time, Lord Vishnu went to Tulasi devi assuming the form of her husband, Jalandara. When Tulasi devi greeted Him, thinking Him to be her husband, her chastity was momentarily broken. Taking advantage of this the devas killed Jalandara.

When Tulasi devi understood what happened, Lord Vishnu revealed His original form. An enraged Tulasi devi cursed Lord Vishnu for His stone hearted behavior to become a stone. Honoring His pure devotee, Lord Vishnu accepted this curse and promised to appear as the Saligrama shila in the Gandika river (now in Nepal). He also gave Tulsai devi the benediction that she will eternally reside with Him as His consort in Vaikuntha. He said that for the benefit of every one she will assume the form of a plant which will be most auspicious for anyone performing devotional service.

Thus devotees never offer anything to Krishna without a Tulasi leaf. He always adorns Himself with a Tulasi garland. 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.

Tulasi as the source of bhakti:- The scriptures are full of pastimes that reveal the potency of Tulasi in developing devotion for the Lord. The Srimad Bhagavatam talks about this pastime with the four Kumaras, the sons of Lord Brahma who were very much attached to the impersonal aspect of Godhead.

'When the breeze carrying the aroma of tulasi 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 Kumaras], they experienced a change in both body and mind, even though they were attached to the impersonal Brahman understanding.'

Thus by simply smelling the fragrance of the Tulasi leaves the four Kumaras became pure devotees of the Lord.

In Caitanya lila Srila Advaita Acarya was very much disturbed to see the growth of irreligiosity. Therefore He decided to call for the Personality of Godhead Krsna to descend by worshiping the Lord with tulasi leaves and the water of the Ganges. When Sri Krishna was please by this devotion He descended as Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Haridasa Thakura a great devotee of Caitanya Mahaprabhu purified a prostitute who had come with the intention of seducing him with instructions to chant the holy name and worship Tulasi. She became so elevated by this service that even great Vaishnavas would come to get her mercy.

Glories of Tulasi devi

Quoting from the Gautamiya-tantra, the Hari-bhakti-vilasa states: 'Sri Krsna, who is very affectionate toward His devotees, sells Himself to a devotee who offers merely a tulasi leaf and a palmful of water.'

In the Nectar of Devotion, service to Tulasi is glorified as one of items of devotional service. In the Srimad Bhagavatam (3.15.19) it is said that 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.

In the Skanda Purana there is a statement praising the Tulasi tree as follows: 'Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto the Tulasi 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 tulasi tree, one can become freed from the fear of being sent to the court of Yamaraja [the King of death, who punishes the sinful]. If someone sows a tulasi tree somewhere, certainly he becomes devoted to Lord Krsna. And when the tulasi leaves are offered in devotion at the lotus feet of Krsna, there is the full development of love of Godhead.'

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