

Spiritual Significance of Tulsi Vivah

A. About Tulsi Vivah

We attend many marriages in our lives but none like this one. This marriage is one that is believed to have happened eons ago and is celebrated to this day by a large percentage of the Indian population. This is a marriage that is celebrated by Hindus for the union of *Srimati Tulsi Devi* and Lord *Sri Krishna*.

The story behind this ritual is ancient and it is believed that *Lord Brahma*, the creator himself, recited this story to *Shri Vasishthaji*. *Shri Vasishthaj* wrote this story in the *Padma Puran* so that common man could know about the events that led to this marriage and its yearly celebration.

It revolves around *Tulsi*, the plant *Ocimum Sanctum* which in her former birth was *Vrinda*, the daughter of a giant named *Kaalnemi* who was the king of Mathura. She was the faithful wife of demon Jalandhar. Being born in water Jalandhar, claimed sovereignty over the ocean and demanded the fourteen treasures churned out of the ocean in *Vishnu's* second incarnation, *Mohini*. But the Gods refused and *Jalandhar* declared war and became a danger to the gods. The danger was even greater because of a boon (*vardaan/wish*) that he would be free from death till his wife *Vrinda* was chaste.

As a last resort to protect the treasures *Vishnu* decided to kill *Jalandhar*. For this *Vishnu* beguiles *Vrinda* by assuming her husband's form so as to break the wish. But *Vrinda* realizes *Vishnu's* deceit and in her wrath cruses Lord *Vishnu* into a Black stone (*Salagram*). *Vishnu* too retaliates but in admiration of her impeachable chastity and piety, he transfers her into the sacred Tulsi plant and promises to marry her annually on this day of *Kartik*. This promise of Lord *Vishnu* is fulfilled to this day by the Hindus.

The marriage of *Tulsi* and *Salagram* is performed every year on the 11th day of the bright half of *Kartik*. In this marriage all the rituals of Hindu marriages are performed, *Tulsi* is dressed in a red shirt and the pot of the plant in a red skirt. Also her branches are adorned with red bangles, red *kum-kum*, and red *bindis*. The *mangalsutra* is made of dried turmeric root. Then literally a mock marriage is performed between the *Tulsi* and the *Salagram*.

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. 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 our religion. This sacred ceremonial day marks the auspicious opening of the annual marriage season of the Hindus.

This is not one of major Hindu rituals or festivals but it is more sentimental than any other festival. This festival is really a unique one and one should experience it first hand to get a real feel of it.

B. Background History

1. Introduction

This is a ritual of the marriage of Shri Vishnu (idol of Balkrushna) with the Holy basil (*tulsi*) plant. This ritual is performed on any of the days between the eleventh day of the bright fortnight of the Hindu lunar month *Kārtik* to the full moon day (*Pournimā*) of *Kartik*.

A day prior to the marriage, the *tulsi-vrundāvan* (a special structure in which the Holy basil plant is grown) is painted and decorated. Sugarcane and marigold flowers are offered on the *vrundavan*; tamarind and Indian gooseberry (*amla*) are kept at its base.

The marriage ritual (*vivāh*) is performed in the evening. The vowed religious observances (*vrat*) which are observed during the consecutive Hindu lunar months of *Āshādhā*, *Shrāvan*, *Bhādrapad*, *Āshwin* and *Kartik* (*Chaturmas*), are fulfilled on twelfth day of bright fortnight of *Kartik* when the *tulsi* marriage is done. Then the food items which were restricted during the previous months, are first donated to a *Brāhmin* and then eaten.

2. The spiritual significance of the marriage of *tulsi* with Shrikrushna *

Holy basil (*tulsi*) is the symbol of spiritual purity (*sāttviktā*). The marriage of *tulsi* with Shri Krushna means that 'God likes purity as a quality.' The symbol of this is Shri Krushna wearing the necklace of *Vaijayanti* beads.

The meaning of the word marriage is the merging and oneness of the embodied soul (*jīva*) and God (Shiva).

Importance: From this day the auspicious days begin. It is said that, this marriage is the symbol of the perfect marriage in Indian culture.

Method of celebration: All around the courtyard of the house, cow dung water is sprinkled. If the *tulsi* plant is in a pot then the pot should be painted white. White colour attracts the Divine frequencies coming from God. Draw a *sāttvik rangoli* around the *tulsi* plant and then do its ritualistic worship (*pūja*) with spiritual emotion (*bhāvpurna*). While worshipping, one should sit facing westward.

Prayer to be made: 'Hey Shri Krushna, Hey *tulsi Dēvī*, the energy that I imbibe from you today, let it be used for the protection of *Dharma* and nation. Let my

warrior attitude (*kshatravrutti*) be activated all the time. Let me not be depressed during bad times and let my faith and devotion unto God be consistent.'

Chanting: On this day Shri Krushna's principle is activated on Earth to a greater extent. The principle is also more active around the *tulsi* plant. On this day one should chant Shri Krushna's name. After the *puja* (ritualistic worship), the surrounding becomes very *sattvik* (spiritually pure). One should also do Shri Krushna's chant at that time.

Uses of *tulsi*: *Tulsi* being more spiritually pure (*sattvik*) God's energy is attracted to it to a greater extent. Putting *tulsi* leaves in drinking water makes it spiritually pure (*sattvik*) and Energy (Shakti) is released into it. Through this water God's Energy becomes active in every part of the *jiva* (embodied soul).

3. Divine knowledge received related to '*Tulsi's* marriage'

On the eve of *tulsi* marriage the subtle frequencies of Shri Vishnu and Goddess Lakshmi arrive in the Universe from the universal vacuum. Due to this, the central channel (*sushumnānādi*) of the entire Universe gets activated. This meeting is termed as the 'marriage of *tulsi*' or '*Tulsi Vivah*.'

On this day Goddess Lakshmi in the form of *tulsi* and Shri Vishnu in the form of Shri Krushna are worshipped. To welcome them and to imbibe the maximum benefit from their frequencies, a marriage ritual is performed in the evening. Since Shri Krushna is the actual energy of action of Shri Vishnu, the frequencies of Shri Krushna get activated on these days. These frequencies are related to the absolute water (*aap*) and absolute fire (*tēj*) principles so on these days one sees the spread of the light of hope in the evenings, feels enthusiastic and experiences a coolness on the skin.

On the day of *tulsi Vivah*, the auspicious time (*muhūrt*) of the marriage is given. During this given time only, the force of activation of Shri Vishnu and Goddess Lakshmi principle increase and they merge with each other. So to get the maximum benefit from the spiritually pure (*Sattva*) component in the atmosphere it is recommended to perform the marriage during this given time.

The Shri Vishnu-Goddess Lakshmi frequencies coming from the Universal vacuum sprinkle the colours of the rainbow in the atmosphere and for a second, appear in the form of a striped crescent. That is the reason a *rangoli* in the form of a half moon is drawn on that day.

* Based on Divine knowledge received by some seekers doing *sāadhanā* per *Gurukrupāyoga*.