



Home Deity Worship Course

Letter to Vidyā dāsī



ISKCON Deity Worship Ministry

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Letter dated October 25, 1976, from Vṛndāvana, 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 in 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 September 27, 1976 letter to Śrīla Prabhupāda and answered by him as follows:-

1. *Vidyā dāsī*: Is each Tulasī plant a separate jīva 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 arotikas 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 dāśī:** When Tulasī is being offered arotika by the householders must she have a ghee lamp?

Prabhupāda: If possible.

7. **Vidyā dāśī:** Is it offensive to turn the baby Tulasīs back into soil when they appear?

Prabhupāda: Yes.

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

Prabhupāda: Yes.

9. **Vidyā dāśī:** 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 dāśī:** 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 arotikas a day. Is this bona fide?

Prabhupāda: I never said that.

11. **Vidyā dāśī:** May Tulasī be made into a tea after she has been offered?

Prabhupāda: No.

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

Prabhupāda: Yes.



13. **Vidyā dāśī:** 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 dāśī:** We have a letter from you requesting that no sprays be used on Tulasī Devī. May we use a spray of buttermilk, 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 dāśī:** Does Tulasī sleep? Should she be left undisturbed after nightfall?

Prabhupāda: Undisturbed means what?

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

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

