

A Glimpse into Śrīla Prabhupāda's Very Human and Caring Nature

Arundhati Devi Dasi : When my son, Aniruddha, was one-and-a-half or two years old, we lived in Coconut Grove, Florida, and I started doing full-time Deity service while some other devotees took care of Aniruddha. I thought, “Here’s my chance to do a really important service.” In a letter I mentioned my service to Śrīla Prabhupada. Prabhupada wrote back, “Taking care of the children is just as important as doing Deity worship. One service is not more important than another. These children aren’t ordinary children. They are Vaikuntha children. They have been sent by Krishna Himself.” He told me to stop doing Deity worship and to take care of Aniruddha.

Kanka Devi Dasi : When Krishna Kumar, my first child, was six months old, we were at the old Laguna Beach temple that overlooked the ocean. The devotees had decided that during the lecture, small children should leave the temple room with their mothers. It was a very small temple room, and to leave you had to walk in front of the *vyāsasana*. Śrīla Prabhupāda was sitting there when Tulasi das, who was the president of the Los Angeles temple, asked all of the mothers with children to go out. I was hiding in the corner because I really wanted to hear the lecture. Tulasi das said, “Kanka, you have to take your baby out,” so I was the last mother to leave, and as I walked in front of the *vyāsasana*, Śrīla Prabhupāda said to me, “Where are you going?” Tulasi was sitting in front of the *vyāsasana*, and I looked at Tulasi with a snarl in my eye and said, “He said I had to go out.” Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “No, go sit down.” I sat down, and Krishna Kumar was very good during the entire lecture. After the lecture I was sitting outside on the wall when Śrīla Prabhupāda was walking to his quarters. He stopped in front of Krishna Kumar and me, smiled, and patted Krishna Kumar on the head, as if to say that he knew that he wouldn’t make any noise during the lecture.

Srutakirti Prabhu: On the afternoon of October 8, I received an exciting telegram. My wife had delivered a baby boy on October 6, 1974, at 4:15 am. I considered it to be especially auspicious because *maṅgala-ārāti* started at 4:15 am in Mayapur. I immediately ran to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s room and offered my obeisances. “Śrīla Prabhupāda,” I said smiling, “My wife just gave birth to a son!” “Very nice,” he said, returning my smile. “So, you can call him Māyāpurcandra. Māyāpurcandra! You will not find that name anywhere in the *sāstra*. I have invented it. You will find Navadvipacandra and Nadia Nimai. But, you will not find this name anywhere. So, I will give you some money. You can get one of the local boys to go to Navadvipa to purchase a set of silver ankle and wrist bracelets for him.” Still overcome, I did not consider refusing his generous offer.*

Malati Devi Dasi: Once we were getting ready for the first Radhastami at Bury Place. There was a big pot of the famous chutney, Radha Red, on the kitchen floor. My daughter ran into the kitchen and fell into this chutney which was hot off the stove. Some of the devotees were upset because they thought that we couldn’t offer the

chutney. They thought that the whole pot was destroyed. Prabhupāda heard about it, immediately called me, and said, “Take her to the doctor.” Prabhupāda was immediately concerned and practical. Others were thinking, “What do we do about the chutney?” But Prabhupāda’s thought was, “What do we do about the child?”

Srutakirti Prabhu: On February 9, 1975, Śrīla Prabhupāda stopped in New Dvaraka for two days on his way to Mexico City. After his afternoon nap, he called for me. “Go find Nanda Kumar,” he instructed. Fortunately, he was across the street. I told him Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to see him. Nanda asked me why and I responded, “I have no idea. He just told me to get you.” We both raced back to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s quarters and offered our obeisances. When I looked up, Śrīla Prabhupāda handed me the keys to his metal cabinet in the bedroom and said, “Bring me my white bag.” I gave him the bag and we both sat before him having no clue what was about to happen next. He took two fifty-dollar bills out of his bag and gave one to me. “Here, you can get something for your son,” he said. Whenever Śrīla Prabhupāda showered his love upon me by giving me something, I became overwhelmed with affection for him. I could not refuse such a beautiful display of love. Overjoyed, I took the bill and heartily thanked him. He then turned to Nanda Kumar, who had been his personal servant before me, and tried to give him the other fifty-dollar bill. Nanda Kumar refused it.

“I cannot take that from you, Śrīla Prabhupāda,” he said.

“It is not for you,” Śrīla Prabhupāda told him. “It is for your son.”

Nanda then accepted the bill from his loving spiritual master. After giving us gifts for our sons, Śrīla Prabhupāda nodded kindly and said, “Okay, now you may go.”

We offered our obeisances and left his quarters, discussing how fortunate we were to have such an amazingly generous spiritual master.*

Bhavatarini Devi Dasi: My one-and-a-half-year-old daughter was with me during the forty-five minutes or an hour that we were with Prabhupāda. At one point my daughter started playing with the papers on Śrīla Prabhupāda’s table, and he said, “No, no, no,” so I took her away. Then she started playing with his feet, and I grabbed her. Prabhupāda said to me, “You must learn to instruct this child properly. The papers she should not touch. But my feet, that is all right, they are hers.”

Towards the end of the conversation he held up a cup of water and poured it in his mouth. Then he held it out to my daughter, put it on her lips, and offered it to her. She was getting tired and decided to throw herself backwards, banged her head on the floor, and started screaming. Śrīla Prabhupāda pointed to the floor and said, “Look, you’ve broken the floor. Your head is not broken but the floor—you’ve broken the floor.” My daughter got up without a sound, turned around, and looked at the floor. She rubbed the floor.

Malati Devi Dasi: Prabhupāda was personally instructing Yamuna in Deity worship. One night Yamuna was doing the arati to Prabhupāda’s little Deities. She offered the flower to the Deities and then gave it to Śrīla Prabhupāda. At that time my daughter Sarasvati started to leave the room, and Prabhupāda threw the flower at her, hitting her on the back of her head. She picked it up, marched over to him and popped the flower in his mouth. Prabhupāda smiled at her. Purushottam was also there and later

mentioned that this incident was one of many reasons why he left Prabhupāda's service. He thought that his spiritual master shouldn't behave frivolously with a female during *arati*.

Vidya Devi Dasi: In New Vrindavan in 1976, there were a lot of women with one or two-month-old babies, and we took turns watching them during Prabhupāda's classes. We had them lay in little seats. On my morning, I decided it would be cute to line them up so when Prabhupāda came out he would look at them, and they would have that contact with him. So I got the five or six babies lined up. When Prabhupāda came out of the temple, I stepped aside so that he wouldn't see me. I didn't know what a woman's relationship should be around Śrīla Prabhupāda, and I didn't want to be too close. I could still see him, but he couldn't see me. Prabhupada was shocked.

He turned to Kirtanananda, "Where are the mothers? What is going on?"

Kirtanananda didn't know where they were, but he said, "They must be around. I'm sure they're not far away."

Kirtanananda assured Prabhupāda enough so that he moved on, but Prabhupāda was very concerned that the children were watched and taken care of.

Malati Devi Dasi: Saraswati went to Calcutta when she was four and a half, and Prabhupāda would sometimes tease her, "I am going to put a stamp on your forehead and send you to the *Gurukula*." She would say, "No. No." "Yes. I will put a stamp on your forehead and you will go to *Gurukula*." Eventually she did go to *Gurukula*, but her father took her. A year later she came to visit me in India, and when Śrīla Prabhupāda saw her he said, "Oh, you have come back from *Gurukula*. Recite something." She recited the first verse from the First Canto of the Bhāgavatam." He was pleased with her. "Yes, very good. You must always speak like that." Then he handed me twenty rupees and said, "Here, buy her a dress." I said, "No. I can't take this money from you, Śrīla Prabhupāda." "No. You must buy her a new dress."

Most excerpts are from the transcriptions of video interviews conducted and compiled by Siddhanta Prabhu.

*** Excerpts marked with an asterisk are from Srutakirti Prabhu's "*What Is The Difficulty?*"**