

## *Loving Our Children*

*By Urmila Devi Dasi*

HERE IN THE material world it's easy to become absorbed in attachment and love for our family, especially our children, and forget about loving God, Krsna. We often see a child's photo or shoes or artwork given a prominent place within a home, almost as if the child were the worshipable deity of the household. Though the Vedic scriptures advise us to detach ourselves from such affection, Srila Prabhupada also comments that these feelings are natural. Are there ways our attachment to our children can bring us closer to Krsna? There are.

Parents may sacrifice for their children in ways they wouldn't for themselves. For example, a father may take a second job to send a son through college, or a mother may spend seemingly endless hours driving her children to clubs and lessons. This same tendency to sacrifice can be used in the Lord's service.

Parents not concerned enough about their own spiritual well-being to regularly worship Krsna and chant His names may still train their children to do so, thus helping themselves as well.

When a mother teaches her children the importance of offering food to Krsna, she naturally has to offer Krsna the food in her home. A father who wants to teach his children to stay clear of time-wasting materialistic activities won't spend his free time in front of the television.

So in countless ways our love and concern for our children can motivate us to do what is most beneficial not only for them but for ourselves. Vedic culture is so perfect, in fact, that even speaking to our children with affection can purify the whole family.

Generally, followers of Vedic culture name their children after Krsna or His great devotees. So every time a mother calls "Govinda Dasa, it's time for your meals!" "Govinda! You left your shoes out in the rain." "Where is Govinda?" she is chanting the holy name of the Lord.

Such chanting, even to call one's son or daughter, can bring parents the highest benefit of love of God. Indeed, thousands of years ago this happened when Ajamila named his son "Narayana," which is a name of Krsna.

Though religious as a boy, Ajamila did not become a spiritually minded father. He left his wife for a prostitute and made his living through cheating and crime. Absorbed in attachment to his family by the prostitute, he was still having children in old age. So even at eighty-eight he was cultivating his affection not for Krsna but for his little son Narayana.

Ajamila's fatherly attachment was intense to the point that while dying he called for his son—"Narayana!" At once the servants of Narayana, Lord Krsna, came to save him from the hell he would have gone to for his degraded life. They granted him more years, which he used to worship Lord Krsna. Finally he attained to the spiritual world.

Of course, we shouldn't purposely try to cheat Krsna, thinking we can live a low life and still find perfection simply through the names we give our children. But from this story we can learn the potency of Krsna's names and know that if we mold our lives to train our children as saints, we just might end up becoming saints ourselves.

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