Last week, my dear godsister, Mondakini came to the Manor for a few days so she could go to Rathaytra. When I joined the Bury Place Temple in ‘71, she was already worshipping Sri Sri Radhalondoniswara. I think many devotees will remember her blissful smile as she turned towards the devotees to offer an article that had just been offered to the Deities in the arotik ceremony. I also remember that we were out all day on harinama, returning for lunch and then just having time to have a shower, get changed into fresh cloth, have evening prasadam, then zoom upstairs to 7 o’clock arotik. Everyone went, of course, and in those days we didn’t really have men on one side or women on the other, what to speak of one gender at the front and another at the back! I would sometimes sit near the front of the temple close to the altar to sing the enchanting ‘old tune’ of “kiba jayo jaya gaurachander” for sundar arotik, playing harmonium as best I could. Sometimes there would be brahmacaris leaping up and down right next to me in our blissful company of devotees. It was a real family at Bury Place and somehow that mood has pervaded the London Temple throughout the years for most of the time. Sri Sri Radhalondoniswara have situated Themselves so that the devotees have to pass the temple room every time they enter or exit the building and they usually can’t resist going to see Their Lordships before going out or coming back. They are the centre of the devotees lives in heart and physical accessibility!

I thought the brahmacarinis at the Manor might like to meet Mondakini so we arranged to get together in Srila Prabhupada’s quarters. It was a very relishable occasion and I’d like to share something that really touched me very much.

Mondakini was saying that she felt she had not become very expert in cooking or any particular service back in those early days in Bury Place. She read somewhere that it is a very nice thing if the spiritual master asks you something and you can say, “Yes” right away. So she made a wonderful prayer to Sri Sri Radhalondoniswara. She prayed that Srila Prabupada would ask her to do some service and that she would be able to answer “yes” immediately. This became a meditation for her.

A little while later Srila Prabhupada came to Bury Place on a visit. He had been to Russia and had met a professor at the university but it had not been possible to preach to the students there, as he would have liked. By Krishna’s grace, Shyamsundara had met the young Russian boy, Anatoly who was later to preach to many people singlehandedly about Krishna Consciousness in Russia. At this stage, he had come into contact with Prabhupada and was very taken with that meeting and the philosophy that he heard. Now Prabhupada was again in London and Mondakini had the opportunity to serve him. She took some flower vases into his room and then he asked her a question which she now tells us he posed in quite a casual way, as if he were asking her to go to the shops and buy some milk, she says. “So Mondakini,” Srila Prabhupada said, “Would you like to go to Russia and marry this nice boy Anatoly?” Mondakini says she was quite stunned by this question as marriage was the furthest thing from her mind anyway, what to speak of how Prabhupada seemed to just say it from out of the blue. Then she remembered her prayer. Prabhupada was asking her to do something. She immediately answered, “Yes, Srila Prabhupada.”

Hold on for just a second to digest that.. …………how do you feel about that?!

I just cried when she told this story as I remember when I joined the temple she was just learning Russian from a record on some old gramophone someone had donated in the sewing room. That’s how she prepared herself for going to Russia and she did! At that time, no devotees were going there and her visits were the only association for Anatoly who knew nothing except for what he had heard in his brief time with Srila Prabhupada on that historic visit. At first she went with a tourist group, then later the marriage ceremony with Anatoly allowed her a special visa to visit her “husband” and teach him the philosophy of Krishna Consciousness. Somehow she was never arrested by the KGB; most places were bugged and it was very dangerous to talk about “religion” at that time. Over time, Anatoly became initiated and became a great preacher and forerunner of the movement behind the Iron Curtain. He made unbelievable sacrifices and underwent terrible torture at the hands of the officials there. His service was astounding.

It was no longer necessary for Mondakini to continue visiting Russia as other devotees began to follow up on what she had started and Krishna made other arrangements for her service in London and France. She is certainly a great example of surrender and faith. She told me that she always felt protected when she went there alone………….somehow Krishna kept her safe and free from fear. All glories to her service and to Sri Sri Radha Londoniswara for answering her wonderful prayer in such a glorious way.

WONDERFULLY SIMPLE! May I just be able to say “yes” immediately………..

Of course, she was saying “yes” to Srila Prabhupada in whom she had complete trust. All Glories to Srila Prabhupada.

Mondakini now lives in Paris with her “true” husband of many years, Madhavendra Puri prabhu who is an artist and poet, amongst other other qualities that have endeared him to us, not the least of which is an amazing sense of humour. We hope to visit them soon.

[by Sarva Mangala d.d. at July 09, 2009 03:25 PM](http://www.simplywonderful.cc/?p=328)