

STORY #30

On this beautiful morning you have reminded me of my beloved Gurudev. I thank you for that. Beloved Gurudev is my whole life. I'm alive on this earth only by His grace. My life would be meaningless without His love. I can't describe in words to you the nature of my Gurudev, who He was, what He was about. An artist may paint a picture of the sun, but no matter how good the picture is, that sun can't give light. No matter how I describe my Gurudev to you, you can only know Him through your imagination, which will never be the true picture of Him.

HOW I MET MY GURUDEV

I WAS YOUNG, ONLY 19 years old. I was extremely ambitious, but unable to attain what I really wanted, so I was disillusioned with life. From childhood I had been attracted to the feet of the Lord. The Lord was my solace, my support, and my life. I didn't know anything about sadhana at that time, so I used to worship God according to the tradition of my family.

After the death of my father, our family was thrown into poverty. I couldn't bear this pain, even though I was only 7 years old, so I made a firm vow that I would give my whole life to God and bring happiness to my suffering family.

I had to drop out of school even though I was a bright, motivated student. I loved to read, but our family needed money and I tried to do what I could.

When I was 19, I left for Bombay to try to find work, but my heart was full of darkness. Finally, I decided it was better to commit suicide and go home to the Lord. I planned the whole thing; I was going to throw myself under a train.

Our family worshipped the Lord in the form of the Divine Mother, so I went into a nearby temple to worship the Divine Mother for the last time before I killed myself.

It was about 9:00 o'clock at night. I entered the temple in total despair and my heart melted and tears rolled down my cheeks. I went to the altar and bowed down and burst into even more tears. I had come simply to say good-bye. I was going to kill myself at midnight. The statue of the Divine Mother didn't look like stone to me; She looked alive. Her eyes were full of love and I was there to ask permission for what I was about to do.

The caretaker of the temple knew me and he tried to console me, but he couldn't. I just kept crying. And at that auspicious moment, my Gurudev entered the temple. I was thirsty for knowledge. I had been to many different saints. I had read books about mantra and tantra and magic and had visited all the saints, but I had never trusted any of them. For me a guru had to be someone I could give my whole life to, nothing less, so I had given up trying to find a guru. I had totally stopped thinking about it.

Gurudev entered the temple and he said just one word, "Son."

I can't describe to you the sweetness of that word, no matter how hard I try. He lovingly placed his hand on my head and then he hugged me.

"Come with me," he said.

He was a total stranger and yet His love was so profound that I immediately yielded to Him. We walked outside the temple and then he sat down on the steps of one of the shops.

"My son," he said. "Are you going to commit suicide? Suicide isn't good."

"Oh, no!" I said. "No! No! No! I would never do that!"

I wasn't a dishonest person or a liar. I was just in shock that someone knew my deepest thoughts.

"You're a sadhak," he said. "And you must speak the truth. Tonight you were going to throw yourself under a train." And then he described my whole scheme.

When he was finished, I bowed down to him and touched his feet.

"Please forgive this child," I said.

"Come and see me next Thursday," he said, and he gave me an address.

Thursday is the day of the guru in India and I discovered that he always gave darshan on that day. But I arrived late. I tried hard to be on time, but I failed to do so. I bought a garland of flowers for five rupees with great love. I had little money and you could buy a nice garland for one rupee, but I selected a beautiful garland for five rupees with great love.

I placed the garland around his neck and then gave him a dandwood pranam, lying down completely flat on my stomach. He looked at me and the nectar of love flowed from his pure, beautiful eyes.

“My son, swami, you have come,” he said, stroking my head.

The word, swami, surprised me.

“I’m not a swami,” I said.

“My son, I’ve called you swami because you’re going to be a swami in the future.”

“Me?” I gasped. “Oh, no! I don’t think so! I can’t do all that begging!”

“It’s true that swamis beg for food,” he said. “But they aren’t beggars as you understand it. They’re beggars of love. You’re going to give your love to the world and you’re going to receive love from the world.”

I was crying now and even though I was crying, I was happy.

Gurudev had known that I would be late that day and he had instructed the gatekeeper to keep the gate open for me, even though he normally ended darshan promptly.

“One child will come,” he had told them, “and he will be late, but let him in.”

Then he had saved a spot next to him for me to sit, while all the other disciples had to sit at a distance. But there was great joy on their faces.

“I’ve come here for one young disciple who will come to us today,” he had told them. “I’ll initiate him into swamihood and then I’ll leave. He’ll become a great yogi.”

Gurudev attracted me to his feet when I was 19. I stayed with him for a year and a quarter. It’s by his grace that I’ve been able to maintain this sadhana for so many years. There’s only one thing that I want to do with my life, and that’s to do sadhana for as far as

FROM THE HEART OF THE LOTUS

it will take me. I have no attraction left for money, fame, or name.
My only desire is to remember the name of God.

