




morsel of food from somewhere. But it is too inadequate to appease the hunger of everyone. In such a situation, what will the parents do? They will willingly forget their own hunger and give the food to their starving children. Seeing the children eat, their hearts and stomachs will become full.

It is such a feeling of 'oneness', such a bond of love, a bond of obligation, that we should have towards the world. Then our cup of joy will always be full to the brim.

Therefore, children, awaken from your slumber. Arise and be ever wakeful. 







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IN THE SERVICE OF LOVE, Part XVIII

## A BATTLE WITH JEALOUSY BEGINS

*Bri. Gayatri*

Amma teaches that for most spiritual aspirants, attachment to the Guru's form is a beneficial, and even necessary component to their sadhana, especially in the initial stages. This intense attraction to the Guru's physical presence keeps the heart and mind of the disciple ever tuned to the Divine. This attachment

should be balanced, however with an understanding of the omnipresent nature of the Guru, and the practice of seeing the Divine Self within everyone. Otherwise, our initial attraction may eventually deteriorate into small-minded possessiveness, competitiveness or jealousy, qualities which will ultimately keep our hearts closed, and prevent us from embracing the fullness of God.

In the early days, I had what might be called a super-abundance of attachment to the Guru's form. Amma had become my one and only Love; She had captured my heart completely. In many ways, of course, this attachment was good, for it helped me to keep my mind ever focused on Amma, even while

working. And yet, I also sensed that this attachment of mine had a selfish side. I could sometimes be rather possessive of Amma and competitive for Her attention, in a way that was clearly not beneficial. It was not long before Amma, the Divine destroyer of the ego, created circumstances which brought these qualities to



the surface, so that She could then help free me from their clutches.

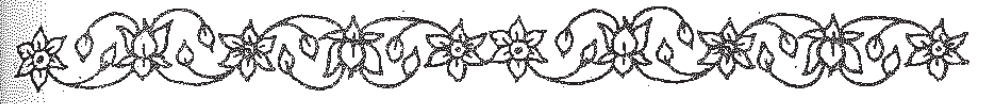
The drama began on a Krishna Bhava evening at the Ashram, where I was blessed to be attending on Amma, as She entered into the mood of the enchanting Lord of Vrindavan. About an hour after the darshan had begun, She leaned over to me and whispered, rather mysteriously, "One of your friends has just arrived." A couple of minutes later, I was surprised to see Madhu, the young sadhu I had met in Tiruvannamalai, offering pranams outside the temple. Madhu (now known as Swami Premananda) was accompanied by a teenaged girl, whom he introduced to me later that evening as his sister, Rukmini. Little did I know that this young girl was going to be the instrument with which Amma would remove a great deal of the negative tendencies which were so deeply rooted within my mind.

Rukmini was about 16 years of age, very slender and pretty, with long, silky black hair. Observing her first darshan with Amma, I was amazed at the innocence which radiated from her.

Although it was her very first meeting with Amma, she was overflowing with sincere devotion. Amma showered her with special attention and affection. I began to feel a little bit jealous.

While Devi Bhava was going on that night, I made arrangements for Madhu and Rukmini to sleep in the family house. My intentions were primarily to be hospitable, but I confess I also had an inner desire that Rukmini should not sleep in the hut with Amma and myself. One of the most precious times for me was at night, when I could finally be close to Amma. During the daytime, I did not often get to see Her, as I was always occupied with the various chores and duties that needed to be done in the Ashram. At night, however, Amma would often allow me to sleep with my head on Her shoulder. It was a wonderfully intimate time, and the only time when I had Amma all to myself. The last thing I wanted was to share that space with another devotee.

I was quite relieved then, when Amma did not invite Rukmini to sleep in the hut that night; and when several days had gone by with Rukmini still sleeping in the



family house, I quietly relished my victory. On the fifth day of their stay, however, Amma suddenly asked, "Why isn't Rukmini sleeping in the hut with us?" Of course, I had no words to answer Her. So, that night Amma invited Rukmini to join us in the hut. I was inwardly furious, but did my best to keep my feelings hidden. Part of the difficulty for me was that for nearly a year I had spent the nights with Amma all to myself. It was not so easy for me to suddenly accept the idea that I was going to have to share that precious time with another devotee!

I did my best to remain calm during those first few nights with Rukmini in the hut. She and I lay on either side of Amma, my head resting on one Divine shoulder, Rukmini's head resting on the other. This seemed like a situation I could probably tolerate for a while, but nonetheless, I was feeling a growing inner torment about sharing Amma with this new girl.

A few days after Rukmini had joined us, I got my monthly period. In accordance with the Hindu tradition, where a lady is considered to be going through a purification during this period, for those three days I could not do any

service for Amma, and had to find separate accommodation. Since at the time, there was no suitable space in the Ashram, I would go to a neighbouring home and stay there for three days.

This was always a difficult time for me, but that particular weekend was especially excruciating, because the whole time I was anxiously thinking, "Now Rukmini and Amma are alone! While I am over here suffering, Rukmini will be giving Amma Her bath, Rukmini will be doing all of Amma's service. Rukmini will have Amma all to herself!" Although I could hardly admit it to myself, I was secretly terrified that I might be losing Amma to Rukmini.

In those days, on the weekends, Amma would often travel to various devotees' houses. Wistfully peering out through the window of the house, I was crushed by the sad sight of Amma and Rukmini leaving the Ashram together, Rukmini carrying a bag with Amma's belongings. This was just too much for me to bear. I lay down and cried, and I continued crying for most of the next two days.

After I arrived back at the



Ashram in the the night, just after Devi Bhava, I hurried over to the temple and was just in time to see Rukmini leaving the shrine, carrying Amma's jewellery box. I was suddenly overcome with such jealousy, that I ran over and yanked the box out of Rukmini's hands. She was, of course, quite upset by this and ran off crying. I felt terrible about hurting her feelings, but I was completely overwhelmed.

That night, in what was clearly a punishment for my actions, Amma lay down in the bed with Her back towards me, hugging Rukmini and ignoring me completely. I was devastated. I lay there next to them in tears, doing my best to muffle my sobs. I was feeling so sad and angry, so alone and abandoned, that after a while I even started pulling the hairs out of my head. I kept torturing myself by peeping over every few minutes, seeing how they were lying, Rukmini's head on Amma's shoulder. Finally the anguish became too much for me. In desperation, I gave a loud, strong kick to the wall of the hut. Dust and leaf particles floated

down upon the three of us.

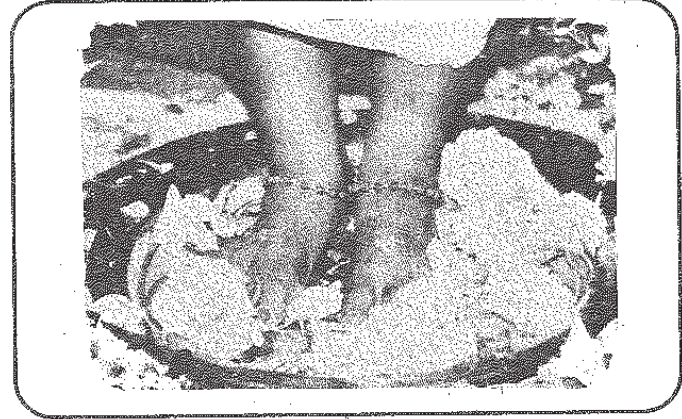
Amma, of course, was not really sleeping, and had been fully aware of my anger and frustration the whole time. She sat up, and with a fiery look in Her eyes said, "What kind of spirituality is this? Rather than sleep next to someone so full of jealousy, I prefer to sleep outside in the sand." With that, She quickly rose and left the hut.

Feeling terribly ashamed, I sheepishly followed Amma outside, finding Her lying down on the bare sand. I felt awful. What a mess I had made of everything. Due to this ugly flaw in my character, I had managed to deprive Amma even of simple shelter. I tremulously knelt down beside Her, at a loss for words. Finally, with tears streaming down my face, I apologised for my foolishness, saying that I would never again let jealousy get the best of me.

Amma slowly turned to me with a look of tender compassion and forgiveness. Then She smiled. "Never again?" She asked, Her eyes twinkling. "My poor daughter, your battle has only just begun!" 🙏

Festival Days

MAHA NAVAMI: Oct. 23 — VIJAYA DASAMI: Oct. 24



## AT YOUR FEET

Br. Unnikrishnan

Mother, You have incarnated umpteen times  
Riding the Chariot of Dharma across the gloomed earth  
I have been with You always, a weeny child,  
Crying, nagging, vexing, yet ever clinging.

Still I am the same little child, Ma, nestling to You,  
Crawling around, lying at Your Feet.  
Your nectarine words of love soothing, wisdom profound  
Are cascades of bliss flooding my heart;  
Your Divine face with its wondrous smile  
Lights up a new dawn, radiant with the Sun of Knowledge.

Your love so unearthly, copious, free  
Pervades my inner being like the cool moonlight,  
And my heart becomes a lamp with a thousand flames  
Which I wave before You in silent adoration.

When you lift the sagging spirit of Your children  
With fondest kisses and tenderest love,  
And shower endless compassion on one and all,  
The world, it seems, stands transfixed in thrill.

(English Translation by Prof. V. Muraleedhara Menon)