

I offer this at the lotus feet of my Guru, Durga Swami.

Over the years, I and many devotees have thought (and some may still think) that Maharaj is a greater Guru than Swami. I thought that there was more knowledge in his words and writings than the wealth of Swami's teaching. Those of us that think that are deluded fools!

I and other devotees have had the Grace and blessing to have met Maharaj in person at his ashram in Barsana. This is my experience.

I was very excited at the thought of going to India and meeting Swami's Guru, Maharaj, believing that meeting him was the way to enlightenment. I thought that because Swami always spoke highly of him with great respect and humility, then he must be more knowledgeable and more spiritually advanced than she.

Maharaj met us at the airport with Swami's friends. We were bowed to and given garlands of marigolds – such respect to all of us, I thought! I later found out that Swami had organized the treat for us.

The first words that Maharaj spoke directly to me were – “why have you come? you should have stayed home with your family”. Obviously, he did not really want me. He did not like westerners and was polite because we were Swami's students.

Later we journeyed to Maharaj's ashram in Barsana. I was asked to help Maharaj fetch the bedding and glimpsed Maharaj's power when he clearly read my mind which I reacted to with shock and fear. Although fearful, I waited for enlightenment to come. Surely with 2 Gurus it would happen soon!

Maharaj was a gracious and charming host, funny and thoughtful but his accent and his lectures were difficult to understand. Swami was constantly explaining what he meant. Swami was also bearing the brunt of the group being there. She suffered Maharaj's anger on the mental and, occasionally on the physical level, at things we said and did.

Slowly I realized that Swami was my only way to enlightenment (something that another chela in the group had known from the beginning of the trip) and that there would be no shortcut on this journey to enlightenment.

I have been blessed with the opportunity of staying with Swami in Barsana on subsequent occasions. I have been able to watch the interactions between Swami and Maharaj and to see the strong bond of love between a supreme chela and her Guru.

I realized that Maharaj cared for no one but his beloved 'Nova'. We could not have a relationship with Maharaj, we could not understand his words, spoken or written, without Swami's intervention as she has given verbally during his talks and more recently with purports to the new edition of his book, *Samata Yoga*.

Now I realize that the same applies to the Masters and to God in whatever form: Shiva, Vishnu or Krishna. Shiva is not interested in us, we cannot offer Shiva love except by offering Swami love; we cannot experience Shiva's love, we can only experience Swami's love as God's love flows through her to the world. We have to become one with Swami before we are able to glimpse what it may be like to bow before Shiva, offering and receiving love.