

# Part 02 | Experiences with Swami | Prof K Anil Kumar

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUhfNvdIW-E>

Because I'm not on their list, inviting me would have been tricky. But if I'm not invited He would be troubled.

So not seeming to invite me, He called me to serve them. That is divine diplomacy.

The car was proceeding towards Godavari. Godavari here, and Swami's car this way, on the road hugging Godavari.

Mother Godavari was overflowing, "My Swami has come, I must see Him." As they were both doing Pada Seva, I too wanted to do it. How?

As they were doing Pada Seva for Swami, I signalled, "What about me, Swami?" He noticed.

Bhagawan Baba, with His infinite compassion, visited some areas of Andhra Pradesh.

Those days were when I was still working at the college in Guntur. Swami came to Guntur as well.

In those days, I used to be the Convenor of the Sathya Sai organisations in the Andhra and Rayalaseema regions.

Swami was coming, there was a lot of commotion. Where did He visit? He inaugurated the Shanti Sudha Mandir in Guntur.

He inaugurated the Mandir in Vijayawada. Swami gave a discourse in Eluru. He proceeded up to Rajahmundry.

He stopped at other places along the way. This was His tour programme. I didn't know all this.

I hadn't yet come close to Swami. I was still on the outskirts. I got ready because Swami was coming to Guntur, my hometown.

They put up pandals. The Lord came during summer. No one comes to Guntur during summer.

Only Swami braved it. He came in the afternoon, between 11:30 and 12. The heat was at its highest.

All the pandals were full, and many were anticipating the Lord's visit. Come into the seat of our hearts, O Lord of the Universe!

He came into the full assembly, stand up and see Him. The entire district came to see Him.

As humans, we have our foibles. Whoever was the most helpful financially during the construction of the Mandir,

they received white slips. They were able to sit in the front. I was used to being at the back, so I stayed back.

Even being the Convenor, I didn't have the white card. So I sat at the back. All the devotees were gathered.

I thought we must engage them somehow. Swami was to come from Vijayawada. It would take some time.

I thought we must excite them, and started singing Bhajans with them. Everyone was enjoying doing Bhajans.

That became the centre of attraction. Swami came straight to us. There was a platform around there.

They call them Macherla slabs. The heat of the summer was very hot. If you pour batter on it, it will cook into a Dosa.

It was that hot. Think about how divine the Lord is, that without any footwear, without an umbrella,

Swami did 3 circumambulations around the Mandir. And then He went in, and inaugurated it.

Wow, what an amazing thing! How much love He must have that Swami walked in this way? We were so surprised.

They built a high dais for Him. Swami came straight onto the dais. He was to begin speaking.

Swami was pacing up and down, looking at all the devotees. It was beautiful to watch.

The dais was very high, so everyone could see. As He walked up and down, He said, "Where is Anil Kumar?"

He asked the District President. He said, "He is over there, Swami." Swami said, "Call him."

They called me and I came running. He said, "Come here. Speak a few words. Not too much Vedanta."

Many people came from the villages. Talk about ordinary things. I said, "Your grace, Swami."

I spoke for 10 minutes. After that, Swami's discourse was exceptional. What would be equivalent to moonlight?

What can equal the radiance of the full glory of Lord Sun? What can we compare the expansiveness of the ocean with?

What can we compare Swami's discourse with? Only itself. He gave the discourse and all the devotees were happy.

He slowly came into the Mandir. Meals were arranged inside the Mandir. When? After the inauguration.

I didn't have the white card. I stayed outside. All the elders were sitting in the hall. I know them too.

Two places were set up next to Swami's chair. In front of one was Papayya Sastry garu, and the other one was Madhavaraya Sarma garu.

Swami came and saw and said, "Very good. Anil?" They had no choice. They came outside and said, "Swami is calling you."

He said, "Come here. Do one thing. They are both your Gurus, so serve them." I said, "Very happy, Swami."

Because I'm not on their list, inviting me would have been tricky. But if I'm not invited He would be troubled.

So not seeming to invite me, He called me to serve them. That is divine diplomacy.

I went in and served them, and after that, Swami went upstairs to rest for some time.

They had arranged a Jhoola for Him, and then He was about to leave. I only had a pair of pants and a shirt.

I felt how nice it would be if I could go with Him. How would I go? I didn't think it through. I just felt like going.

I did not know how. I was looking around. A woman came and said, "Babu, I'm Ramabhadri Raju garu's wife."

"He is the Director of Agro Industries. I'm going with Swami. My car is empty. Will you come?" She asked.

I ran like a deer as soon as it wakes up, and sat in the car. That's it, no clothes, no place to stay at night, no thought about it.

She asked me to go with Swami, and I got in the car. Who is she? Why did she ask me to come?

That car was going through West Godavari and East Godavari. There was a place called Singanna Muppavaram in West Godavari.

They had arranged a meeting for Swami there. The stage was built about 20 feet high or more. There were crowds of people below, maybe around a lakh people. It was crowded to the gills, even in the village.

There were floodlights there too. Swami came and walked a few paces. Then He signalled me to come.

So I got up. Just in front of me was HJ Dora, the Director General of Police. Him and I studied together.

We were roommates in Andhra University. He said, "Anil, sit down. Swami will get angry. You shouldn't go."

If He gets angry and scolds me, it's only to me, not him. I said that was fine. I'll go and come back if He says, "Not you."

He said, "Up to you," and I went. Swami said, "Come," and I climbed up. "Speak for a few minutes. All the villagers should understand."

"No Vedanta. Speak for a little while," He said. I said, "Alright Swami, Your Grace!" I spoke something. After that Swami came down. 1 lakh people. Even in a village, the crowds were so thick that sand couldn't fall through.

In that flood of people, in that throng of people, we couldn't even hear a baby cry. Not even a baby cried.

Perfect silence. As Swami was going, I had a car ready, so I went and sat in it. We were going towards Godavari.

The car was proceeding towards Godavari. Godavari here, and Swami's car this way, on the road hugging Godavari.

Mother Godavari was overflowing, "My Swami has come, I must see Him."

He was also overjoyed seeing Godavari's overflowing waves. He was watching them with joy.

It was a moonlit night in the autumn season. On one side was the Godavari. We were going on the bridge.

Even the bridge over the Godavari is very graceful. It's like a dancer in itself. You must see and enjoy its beauty and grace.

That's how beautiful it was. There were 200 cars behind Swami's. As Swami would go from village to village,

there were about 20 motorcyclists going ahead, like pilots. Then Swami's car. Who were the pilots? Farmers, no less.

Especially farmers from the Godavari districts are very strong. They were motoring along.

The Prasanthi flag was waving in the wind. Godavari on one side, the bridge on the other side, moonlight on top, and here the Sevadal.

I didn't know where to look. Swami gave us so many views, but only two eyes to see, what to do?

I was looking everywhere. From there, Swami slowly reached Rajahmundry. So we went to Rajahmundry.

It was 9 PM at night by the time we went to Rajahmundry. Swami took Arati and went upstairs.

Where should I stay? What about the woman who came with me? Where would she stay?

She brought me here with love, and now she has to go through this? What a mistake I made.

Kunti Kumari had grieved, Why should I do penance? Why should Durvasa appear? Why should he give me these boons? Why was this son born to me?"

In the same way, Anila Kumara also grieved, "Why should I come? Why should I have wanted to go with Swami?"

"Why am I here like this?" I realised then. I'm telling you what happened there. You can ask anyone in East Godavari.

There was a person called Krishna Murthy, the Correspondent of Sathya Sai Gurukulam, a very active man.

I didn't know him before, I only knew who he was after going there. He went upstairs, got instructions from Swami, and came downstairs.

He asked, "Sir, are you Anil Kumar?" I said yes. He said, "Swami said that you came and to arrange a room for you."

"He asked me to arrange a toothpaste, a toothbrush and everything. Swami said you didn't bring anything."

"Please come," he said. Just because he gave me a room, I can't leave. What about her?

I was looking pitifully, but I couldn't speak. I myself didn't have anything, how could I take care of her?

As I was wondering, he said, "I heard there is another lady who came with you. We are to take her to stay at the hostel."

I thanked Swami. She stayed at the hostel, and I stayed in Krishna Murthy's house.

I came and was somewhat helpful to Him. But How did He know I was in Rajahmundry?

How did He know about this woman coming? How about arranging these rooms? How about Him knowing I didn't have toothpaste and a towel?

The wisdom within me was slowly blooming. You can think of it as a fragrant spiritual flower blossoming.

It was blooming. I thought, wow, Swami knows everything. I became ready. I have a habit that I had until recently.

I had a habit of drinking coffee at 5 in the morning. Very early in the morning. I woke up and brushed my teeth early in the morning.

I came downstairs. The Godavari Railway Station is close to the Gurukulam. I went to the Godavari Railway Station.

There is a tea stall that's open 24 hours a day. All the trains stop in Godavari Station at midnight.

So there's always tea there. I went there and had coffee, and slowly came back.

I came to my room and laid down for a while. Swami was to come downstairs at 7 AM.

But even if Swami comes downstairs, how am I affected? I came by myself, by His grace He called me, I spoke, and it's over.

What should I do now? I didn't know. As I sat I got word, "Swami is calling you." Very good, I went running.

In the dining hall were seated Ramana Rao garu, Sathya Murthy garu, Venugopala Rao garu, Pattabhi Sitaramayya garu, Sathyanarayana garu, the then Agricultural Minister, Thanneeru Bullayya garu, the Principal and Founder of the Gurukulam, and such others were seated. The great devotee, Nidamarthi Sathyam garu brought Pesarattus for breakfast.

Godavari district specialises in Pesarattus. The taste of those Pesarattus is distinct.

He was bringing them. I could see it. I have an eager palate. I figured I would get my turn.

He brought them, and started serving everyone. "Hey Sathyam, come here. Did you serve Anil Kumar?"

He said, "Yes, Swami." "What did you give him? Give him 2 more, he eats well. He is fond of Pesarattus. Give him more," He said.

After that, breakfast was over, and Swami stood in the middle and asked Venugopala Rao garu, "Do you know this person?" He asked pointing to me. It is best to be as silent as possible with Swami.

If you slip by mistake, that's it. It is very difficult to talk to Him. An impossible task.

If they say they know me, He might say, "Oh, so you came to meet other people."

If they say they didn't know me, He might say, "What happened to your eyes? He's been coming for so many years." They can't say they don't know me, and they can't say they know me. They just smiled an awkward smile.

Then He said, "Do you know his name? Nil Kumar. There's nothing in his bank account. Everything is nil."

"But He came to Swami, so Anil. He has an abundance of Swami's blessings. So now he became Anil."

"Before that, he was nil. After he came to Swami, he became Anil," He said. "Your grace, Swami," I said. Everyone was happy. The language, the words and the Goddess Saraswati are on His tongue.

She is waiting to see when she can come out. Then we can see His sense of humour, and the beauty in His literature.

After the introductions He said, "Let's go." There were meetings in the morning and evening, and He spoke.

Because it is Telugu soil, there was no necessity for my translation. At that time, I was not even a translator.

I was only permitted to give a speech in the Poornachandra Auditorium each year.

After that, Swami came to where lunch was being served. Talk about food, and every other place pales in comparison to the Godavari districts.

The number of items, the taste, wow, the dishes, the pickles, the jackfruit curry, wow, it was the royal banquet.

It was like a royal banquet arranged for the kings. I thought this was very good. I was about to go.

He said, "Come here, Anil. Why did you wake up at 5 O'clock?" What could I do? "Swami, I have a habit of coffee in the morning."

"That's why I woke up," I said. He said, "Oh, I would have called you. You could have waited for a little while."

"Did you have to go to the station and get coffee in the meantime?" He asked. I died right there. "Swami, please forgive me," I said. "Good. Let us go," He said, and then His speeches in the auditorium were amazing.

After afternoon lunch, we napped and at 3 PM, we went and sat down for snacks. At the table were Bullayya garu,

Ramana Rao, Dora, myself and Swami, just the 5 of us. They served us cashew Pakoras.

I cannot talk anymore about it, because then I would have to run to see where I can find it.

It was that tasty. There was also Gulab Jamun. We cannot even describe the combination of those two. Wow, it was amazing. He was also saying, "Eat a little more, eat a little more."

We ate it well. And then He said as everyone was listening, "Anil Kumar, I don't like your ways." He dropped a bomb on me. I was cheerful until then. When He said, "I don't like your ways," I was shocked.

But I still had the arrogance and spiciness of Guntur. I had not yet come close to Swami.

I immediately got up from my chair and said, "Swami, please give me leave so I can go back home."

"Why? What did I say? You got angry? Shut up and sit down," He said. I said, "Not that Swami, You said you don't like my ways."

"What can I stay and do? Why trouble You Swami?" I said. He said, "Didn't I have you speak at so many meetings?"

"You spoke in Guntur. You spoke in Eluru. You spoke in Muppavaram. You spoke in Rajahmundry."

"You go and say Swami, Swami, Baba, Baba everywhere. I did not like that. Why? Because this is all a new region."

"All of these are new areas. Won't they think I brought you for propaganda? Won't people think I brought you as a trumpet?"

"That's why I did not like it," He said. I said, "Alright Swami, please give me leave. Please forgive me."

He said, "Sit down. Shut up first and sit down." I said, "Not that Swami, I read many spiritual books."

"I listened to many spiritual discourses. I know many elders. But, after being introduced to You, I don't need anyone else."

"After hearing You speak, I don't feel like hearing anyone else's speeches. After reading Your writings, I don't have a taste for any other writings."

"That's why I will only speak about You. I'm not talking about anything else. Because You said You don't like it, I will take Your leave," I said.

"What a foolish person you are. You will only speak about Me. You only speak about My words. These people should know."

"That is why I asked. They don't know. That's why I said that," He said. "I'm grateful Swami," I said.

In the evening there was a drama performance, then dinner, then I was to leave. University examinations were going on.

If I don't go back, my job would be flapping in the wind. I was wondering how to leave.

Swami asked, "Did you finish dinner? You have university examinations, isn't it? Come upstairs."

I went up to Swami's room. There, two people were doing Pada Seva. On one side was Karunyananda,

on the other side was Dandamudi Ramarao garu, District President. They are all great devotees.

Swami went to their house as well. They were doing Pada Seva. What should I do?

Should I stay or should I go? I paced back and forth across the doorway. If I'm asked to come in, I would come in, and if asked to leave, I would go.

I was walking back and forth. He saw me and nodded this way. I went in and stood there.

As they were both doing Pada Seva, I too wanted to do it. How? I signalled, "What about me, Swami?"

He noticed. He signed, "You go this way, and you go that way," all through signals. They moved away.

I did Pada Seva. "Do you need to go? Certainly go. You came even during university examinations."

"Very happy. By the way, how did you come here?" He asked. I said, "I came in a car." He said, "You came in a car?"

"Oh, do you have a car? Only a bicycle, right? How did you come in a car?" He said. I said, "A lady brought me in a car."

"Oh, really? Do you know her?" He asked. I said, "I don't know Swami. She came and said she was going, and asked me to go along."

"So I came along, Swami," I said. He said, "Is that so? Foolish man, I sent her. I sent her. Alright, let us go downstairs."

"Tell her I would give her a Padanamaskaram," He said. He gave a Padanamaskaram to her as well.

Very happily, we returned to Guntur. This was during our trip to the Godavari districts.

Those are unforgettable incidents, examples, that we cannot forget in this lifetime.

That's how great the Godavari districts were. After that, I continued to come and go.

Gradually, '80 came, and then the years '84-'85 were approaching. 1984 and 1985.

During that time, they were not paying our salaries properly in our AC College.

We all sat in a hunger strike. As I sat there, I got a telegram. Who from? From Baba garu.

"Appointed as the Vice President of Sathya Sai Organization, Andhra Pradesh," it said.

What? Swami appointed me? Very good. I thought it was the order of the President.

I left the tent and came back. I went straight to Swami. He said, "Why, why did you come?"

I said, "Swami, they said Vice President, that's why." He asked, "Who said that?" "I don't know, Swami," I said. He said, "Shut your mouth. I said it. Understand?" I said, "Very happy, Swami."

"Do it carefully, Bangaru." I took Padanamaskar of Swami, and came back.

I came back and started doing Swami's activities with great fervour. I added a double engine.

Just like the train that goes to the Nilgiri Hills, but much faster. It's something about Swami, once it goes high, it won't come down.

No one can bring it down. It keeps climbing up. I continued doing those activities.

As I was doing them, I suddenly received a telegram after 6 months, "You are appointed as the State President of Andhra Pradesh."

We don't normally have promotions in 6 months. I thought why was I getting this promotion, is it for my good?

Or is this a test for me? I thought this in my heart, and came to Puttaparthi.

"Yes?" I said, "Swami, I got a telegram from Indulal Shah. He said, "You are appointed as State President""

"Who? Indulal Shah? Who is he?" He said. At that time he was the World Council Chairman.

"Who is he? I was the one who appointed you. Not him. Do you understand? You simply talk. Don't you know it's all Swami's will?"

"Your grace, Swami. Please bless me," I said. I took His blessings. I was still not announced as the State President.

I went and came back for Swami's Birthday. It was 1985. Swami's Birthday was going to be celebrated in the Hill View Stadium.

I sat in the crowds. Next to me was Sathya Murthy garu, from Hyderabad, State Trust Convenor, and a great devotee.

I must say that he was like the eldest brother, like the Pandavas. We sat next to each other.

The new State Presidents were being announced on the stage. Because Andhra Pradesh starts with an A, it was called first.

"Andhra Pradesh - Anil Kumar," they said. Me? I looked around me to see if there was another Anil Kumar.

Who would make me a State President? I'm simply a college teacher. What is this?

Sathya Murthy garu said, "Anil Kumar garu, you're being called." I said, "Is that so?" and continued to sit.

The function was over in the morning, and in the evening, there was a music programme in the Hill View Stadium.

Then Ramana Rao garu came and said, "Anil Kumar, come with me," and took me to Indulal Shah.

"Sir, did you not find anyone else that you made Anil Kumar a State President? Would he not be done injustice?"

"He has children. With the salaries he gets, can he manage these travels and trips? He will be taken in."

"Why did you do this, Sir?" He said right in front of me. Indulal Shah smiled and said, "What Ramana Rao, you're a senior,"

"If you ask me this, what can I say? I went upstairs to Swami's room this morning in Prasanthi Nilayam.

"We must finalise the State President list. As soon as we said Andhra Pradesh, Swami wrote, 'Anil Kumar'"

"What can I do? But I'm going to tell you, listen. You all were there. Did you not help them?"

"Why do you think he is alone and can't bear it? What will you do? Do it," He said. So I came, and then in the evening Ramana Rao said, "Sit near Swami. We'll see what He will say."

Everyone fears and also loves Ramana Rao. He made me sit next to Swami. He said, "What Anil Kumar? State President!"

"State President - did you accept it?" He asked. I said, "Swami, who am I to accept or reject?"

"It's Your grace. What should I do?" I asked. He said, "Look Anil Kumar, I'm telling you, I have you locked like in iron shackles."



"No one can do anything to you. You will get the reputation of the best President. Swami will be here. No worry," He said.

I came with that satisfaction. The next afternoon, Ramana Rao held a meeting in his room for the District Presidents.

"Swami personally made a decision, so we should all help Anil Kumar. If any of you does not want to help,"

"leave immediately. We will find someone else," He gave a strict warning. He also arranged a small snack.

That's how my position of State President started. I was still working at my job in Guntur.

At one level, there is a great building in Visakhapatnam, a Swami's school. It is very difficult to get a seat in it today.

They have very high standards. It is a beautiful school. Swami's Mandir is also there that's also very nice.

Thirdly, there is also Swami's hospital. All three of them were built in the same complex. They are very beautiful. Prabhat Kumar, a resident of Visakhapatnam, and a devotee of Swami, was the builder for all of them.

His father, Bolisetty Sitaramayya garu who was the President of the Guntur Sathya Sai organisation.

His son is this Prabhat Kumar, who built them that beautifully. They all came to invite Swami.

"Swami, please come to Visakhapatnam and inaugurate our buildings," and showed Him all their photos.

He looked at all of them. He asked their District President, "Will you do what I say?"

He said, "Swami, what else would we do other than what You say?" He said, "I will send Anil Kumar. You take him." In that way, Bhagawan Baba made me do the inauguration for that group of buildings with my hands.

Who am I, after all? It's His greatness. He does not see whether someone is low or high or young.

If He wills it, it happens. I went. Since He sent me, I am like the ambassador of this country.

The spiritual emissary. I went and came back. Swami asked, "Did everything go well? Very happy."

I will narrate another incident that happened before that. In Guntur District, near Repalle, there is a village called Adavuladeevi.

Once a large flood came in and all the villages drowned under water. Many people died.

There was no electricity. Houses collapsed. We had to walk over corpses. It was the time of Baba garu's Birthday.

Swami sat there looking irritated. He said in His discourse, "You go to Adavuladeevi and do Seva for Swami."

"The Seva you do for the orphans, the grieving, the sick and the oppressed is Swami's Seva."

"You must do it," Swami said. So people came to help. Would they stop when Swami said so? Rama's army.

What did Swami do? He sent with us several lorries filled with rice, lentils, oil and supplies including cooking utensils and clothes.

I was still new and my body was still not used to doing Seva. I thought, let them do it.

But I felt like going, so I too went. Then I understood what Seva means. My hands cracked.

My head was hurting from carrying those baskets. It was very difficult. But it was Swami's Seva, so I participated.

At that time the Sevadal Convenor of Andhra Pradesh Sathya Sai Organisation was a person by name GVG Krishna Murthy.

He had worked in the Tobacco Board. A big disciplinarian. I understood the Godavari language from him.

After 3-5 days, I felt like going home. I thought I would go and come back, since I'm from the same district.

After a week I said, "Krishna Murthy garu, if you give me leave, I will go and come back."

Krishna Murthy garu was the camp officer here. I should let him know. So I said, "Krishna Murthy garu?"

"What do you need, Anil Kumar garu?" he said. "Sir, Rava Laddus are coming. Everyone is here, they will grant forgiveness."

"So it would be good to do justice to them," I said. He laughed and said, "Anil Kumar garu, can I say something to you?"

"This is a typhoon relief centre. Everyone here is distressed by the typhoon. How would it look if we eat Rava Laddus and Jahangir sweets?"

"Let's do one thing. In the evening when we serve all these people, we will include it then," he said.

I wanted to eat it but he wanted to serve it to them. I said, "Alright sir, your wish, Krishna Murthy garu."

In that way, I obtained training from the people of the Godavari districts. What is Seva? How to do Seva?

I understood. There are very well trained Sevadal in the Godavari districts. Mine is not Godavari, but Guntur district.

Nobody would think that is self propaganda. No one who knows me would imagine me being partial.

I'm very much sure about it. I stayed there and looked around at the camp. It was going well.

Food was difficult, and morning coffee even more difficult. Then I made friends with the village accountant.

That village accountant knew my grandfather. I latched on to that and used to have my first cup of coffee there.

In that way, I spent my time there. After the camp was completed, we were coming back.

What did all the leaders do? There were stacks of photos of giving people clothes, serving them food, and other Seva activities.

They brought them to Swami and were showing them to Him, "Swami..." Is he any less?

"Take all of these out. Only you all are visible, where are they? Whoever was receiving the clothes, their photos were not there."

"Whoever was getting served food, their photos were not there. Only your photos are visible everywhere."

"What is this? At the bottom is Kasturi's photo, going into a thatched hut and giving them Saris and Dhotis."

"Bring out that photo." Nobody knew that such a photo was there of Kasturi garu. Swami said to bring it out.

He looked at it and said, "This is Seva. He went into the hut, gave them and came out. Very good."

He talked to the district presidents and said, "You did Seva well. Swami is satisfied," and then He said,

"By the way, why were you all shouting in the hotel? You were shouting very loudly in the hotel. What would the other people think?"

"That Swami ate all the money and these people are fighting for quotas? Do you have no sense?"

"You are shouting about spending too much, and to spend less. You are wasting Swami's money."

"Why not save it? That's what you were talking about. You are all Swami's devotees. But the people around don't like it."

"Swami, please forgive us." He said, "You should be careful. You must notice what the others would think? What's their opinion?"

He gave clothes to everyone, and blessed everyone. The Seva activities that were conducted when Diviseema was affected by typhoon

still stands in front of my eyes. I believe that was my laboratory. I was in that camp for one whole month.

I participated with everyone. I was introduced to many people who had come from all parts of the state.

There was a person named Raman in Anantapur. There was a student by name Ashok in Brindavan College, whose father was Raman.

Starting from Raman garu, I was introduced to everyone there. We spent our time happily there. In the camp conducted in a typhoon affected area, by Swami's grace, it became a temple of compassion and a temple of generosity.

It became a house of Seva, a marriage hall, a divine, holy temple of Sri Sathya Sai.

It was that wonderful. Everyone was smiling. Everyone was serving. By the time everyone was served dinner, it was 2 in the night.

Because everyone needed to be served. As we served rows of people, there were about 20,000 people who ate.

By the time everyone's dinner was served, it would be very late. One batch would be ready, while another batch is being served.

I asked one person to come and asked him to hold a cement basin upside down. He held it that way.

I drummed on it with two sticks and started doing Bhajans. Everyone started singing along. So no one knew the passing of time.

It all passed wonderfully. I remember that at this moment. In later years, in Brahmapur in the state of Odisha,

they invited Swami to inaugurate their Mandir. The State President of Odisha then was Brahmananda Panda.

"Look Brahman, I will send Anil Kumar to do the inauguration," Swami said. I took Swami's Padanamaskar and went to Brahmapur.

All along the way were meetings for Swami. In Lakshmipur, Paralakhemundi, Sunabeda, Rayagada, I gave speeches about Swami.

Eventually I reached Brahmapur. Brahmananda Panda was there. He called and scolded the administrators.

"You all arranged ten meetings for him from the time he started. Is he some Rajiv Gandhi?"

"Is this politics? What will happen to his health?" He scolded them. "That's enough. Let him get rest tonight."

Crossing valleys and climbing the hills, at a distance from Brahmapur, in the middle of forests and an abundance of trees,

there is a place called Taptapani. It is a hot springs area. Brahmananda Panda said, "Babu, you go there."

"Take rest for the night. Stay happily. We will make all the arrangements," he said. Along with me was Prahlad Patnaik, IAS officer.

They sent him with me, so he came along. I went to Taptapani. There were two engineers there, to supply whatever I needed.

There was also a cook ready. I was to spend the night there. There were fruits and everything ready.

As I was going through the hills of Taptapani, He is the One who is in the hills, the king of the lake. Our Swami who is that beautiful is here.

Swami who gave us a feast for the eyes by creating this piece of earth, like a beautiful mansion, how can we praise You?

I thought, how can we praise You? The magnificence of nature is so beautiful here.

I had the food that they arranged for me and went to bed. In the morning, the engineers took me into a big room.

It extends from this end to that end, a very big room. It is filled with water. What is that water? Hot water.

Hot water comes down, which is why it is named Taptapani, hot water springs. It is connected directly to the hot water. They said, "Anil Kumar garu, you can bathe in those waters for as long as you want."

"You can take a bath happily for however long you want. No one will disturb you. Brahmananda Panda garu told us that you need rest."

How comfortable it was. Where did all these come from? Who is this secretary? What is this lodging in the hills?

They also told me, "Sivananda stayed here, Indira Gandhi stayed here, Swami Chinmayananda was here, now you are here."

Swami, if I had to hold them, I must hold Your feet. I don't need to hold the feet of lesser people. I need Your feet. I don't need anyone else. I came to a firm decision there. I enjoyed Taptapani very much.

I came down from there. In that way, I saw almost all the towns in Odisha. I went to their state conferences.

I can tell you very decidedly, that although there may have been some consequences recently, but in those days, the best administration of Sathya Sai Organisation was in Odisha.

Swami is very fond of Odisha. Why? Whether he is an IAS officer, or an IPS officer, or a District Collector,

he will still take a broom and sweep Prasanthi Nilayam. He will wash the bathrooms and toilets, whether he is an IAS officer or an IPS officer.

That is the kind of Seva efficacy they have. Odisha devotees are the great people of Seva, having complete faith and devotion.

Swami is also very fond of them that they all come and do Seva here. When a train starts in Bhubaneswar,

it reaches Puttaparthi two days later. They start singing Bhajans when the train starts, and do not stop until they reach here.

The train is filled with devotees from Odisha. I have a lot of fondness for them. They do a lot more Seva than what I can say.

Every time they come, Swami gives them clothes, blessings and Padanamaskar.

In that way, I toured the state of Odisha, inaugurated the Mandir in Brahmapur, inaugurated the Mandir in Visakhapatnam.

Swami made me do all of these, as an instrument of His. For the inauguration of Brahmapur Mandir, they made a garland this thick.

They placed it on Swami's photo. I was to cut the ribbon. My legs started shivering. How can I inaugurate something Swami was supposed to?

I thought, "Swami, You gave me a big test." I stood up and said, "I don't think I'm performing this inauguration."

"I believe that Baba garu is inaugurating it with His own hands. I pray for His blessings."

"I pray that He protects you all with complete health, wealth and happiness," I said.

Believe it or not, even till today, they talk about it in Brahmapur, that the garland swung to a rhythm.

It swung back and forth in tune with the 3rd beat of the Bhajan, and then fell with a thud. They applauded until their hands stung.

Until their applause touched the sky. Many such experiences continued to happen.

In 1988, it was the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Sathya Sai Organisation. As the State President, I would go to as many places as I could.

I will tell you some of the important incidents that happened during the Silver Jubilee celebrations.

That year, NT Rama Rao was in position, and then lost his position, and Nadendla Bhaskara Rao came in as the temporary Chief Minister.

As a reaction to that, the state of Andhra Pradesh was outraged, trains were stopped, buses were stopped,

transportation facilities were stopped, and I was to go to Palakollu the next morning, near Bhimavaram, West Godavari District.

I thought, "Swami, how big a test You gave me. There are no buses or anything. How can I go?"

As I was thinking that, the Sathya Sai Seva Samithi of Guntur provided a van for us.

In that van was the District President, Narayana Rao garu, who is the son of Ramabrahmam garu in Bengaluru.

Narayana Rao garu, myself, and Dr. Partheswara Rao started travelling. They stopped us everywhere.

In the same way that Ganesha's wedding had a lot of hurdles, wherever we went, they stopped us.

There was a strike. "Hey, stop. Do you not know that there is a strike going on?" As I said, our language in Guntur and Vijayawada is rough.

They talk as if they are about to hit us. We said, "Sir, we are going to Sai Baba meetings. We have no other agenda."

He bent in, saw Swami's photo and said, "Alright, go." We went. We came to Benz Circle.

There was a really big Communist flag flying in the wind. A person came on a motorcycle.

"Hey, stop. Why did you come? Didn't you know?" he said. We said we knew. "Then why are you going?"

We said, "There is a Baba meeting being conducted. They had announced it earlier, so we are travelling there."

"What is it?" He said and peeked inside. He saw the photo of Swami in the van. "Sai Baba garu? Then go. No one will stop you, go."

What can we say? That is Swami. The great poet, Adipudi Somanatharao garu sings,

All along the way, with courage and strength as our support and our inseparable friend, that is Swami.

He comes along with us, He provides us courage and strength. I'm describing to you a direct experience of it.

I thought it was wonderful and went to Palakollu. If the person who was supposed to come in the afternoon arrives in the evening, who will wait?

There was no one there. I thought I could at least go and pray. As soon as Sai Bhajans were heard from our van,

all the women, men and children ran again into the meeting place. That's how their devotion is, in the Godavari districts.

Everyone gathered. The marriage hall was full. I thought I did not need any rest or coffee, and went up on stage.

I don't know why, but I still have it. Whether you think it a boon or a blessing or a weakness, it is up to you.

When I talk about Swami, my excitement does not diminish, nor do I know the passing of time.

This is my condition. Even in Swami's presence, He says, "That's enough. I will have you talk again tomorrow."

Unless He turns off my switch, I do not turn it off. That is the kind of effect that subject has on me.

At one time, I even said it to Him, "Swami, it is not my fault. Your subject is like that. How sweet it is, where can I stop? When to stop?"

"Alright, I will have you talk tomorrow, sit down," He said. In that way, I kept on speaking in Palakollu.

Then I received a note from one of the members, "Sir, there is a wedding here. You are speaking without stopping."

"We need to make arrangements for the wedding. Kindly have mercy on us and finish quickly, so we can make our arrangements."

I read the note out loud on the stage requesting me to stop. Someone stood up and spoke in Godavari dialect, "What do you mean, stop?"

"Who is asking you to stop? Is it their wish? This is Swami's Satsang, talking about Swami."

"Let the wedding people make their arrangements elsewhere. We don't mind it. They will have Swami's blessings too."

"Why stop? Please go on," he said. What would you do? So I continued speaking. There too, I received the positive vibrations of Godavari devotion.

It is amazing. In this way, many different experiences happened during this journey.

There are the areas of Nizamabad and Adilabad here in Telangana. I was the President of the combined state.

As I was called, I went to those areas. I went to Karimnagar. By the time I went there, it was late at night.

It was midnight. At that time, there were Naxalites roaming the streets. The Communists found that out and stopped our car everywhere.

They would peek in. Even if he shot us, there was nothing we could do. I am a father of children. I thought, "What is happening here?" But they let me go. Later when I came to Swami, He said, "You have no sense, Anil Kumar, how many ever times I told you. Did I not tell you not to travel at midnight?"

"You went. What would have happened if they shot you down? Do I need to watch your car all night long?"

"I could not even sleep. You have no sense. You should not do that," He said.

Wow! You are filled with the nectar of compassion, O Lord. Swami, having a Darshan of Your form, we are sanctified as we see it.

Offering You Seva with attention, we receive permanent happiness, O Lord, filled with the nectar of compassion!

How merciful, Swami, in order to protect me, You lost sleep and followed my car.

I said, "Swami, I will never do that again. Please forgive me." In another instance, I was invited by people from Nagpur.

So I went to Nagpur. People from Nagpur City, as well as the University, came. And also people from the Pollution Centre.

They were all dressed well. I was also in a good suit. I think I used to look alright back then.

I went to that meeting, and after the meeting, as I was coming back, the connecting train called Dakshin Express was delayed.

So by the time I got back to Guntur, if the college was at 10 O'clock, I reached at 11:15.

Which means they would remove me from my job immediately. Swami, I leave it up to Your grace.

I started remembering many Bhajans. Dayasagara, Karunakara (Ocean of mercy, Embodiment of compassion)

I understood the meaning of those songs then, when I was about to lose my job.

I went straight from the station to the college. The gates of the college were closed.

I asked the watchman why the gates were closed. He said, "Sir, today one of the college lecturers is getting married."

"So it's a holiday. Everybody went there," he said. I prayed, "Swami, whenever I have meetings, see that all the bachelors get married."

"As their weddings are performed, my activities get accomplished. Both of us will be blessed," I thought in my mind.

That happened in Karimnagar. In this way, these journeys continued. Then I was invited to Adilabad.

There was a person named Subramanya Sarma garu, Principal, Mrs. AVN College, Visakhapatnam.

Sanskrit Pundit, and Divakarula Venkatavadhani garu's student. A great man.

He was proficient in Bhagavatam. I said, "Sir, please come with me to Adilabad. You too can speak."

"Everyone will be happy." He agreed and came with me excitedly. We had the meeting in Adilabad.

We were to return from Adilabad. We got off at Kazipet. We were supposed to change trains in Kazipet.

When we got off there, the Station Master General came out. He said, "Sir, my name is Reddy. I'm on duty."

"I was unable to go there. Please tell me a few words about Swami," he said. Immediately, I got the buzz.

I went on speaking, on and on without end. He suddenly checked the time and said, "Sir, your train may have arrived."

We both came on the platform. The train had come and gone already. Subramanya Sarma garu said,

"I got spoilt because of you, and you got spoilt because of me. We came here unnecessarily, Anil Kumar."

"I'm a college Principal. You sunk me. I'm supposed to go to college tomorrow. How? I should never come with you," he said.

Very good. Swami, only You can save us now. I started praying to Him again. The train had left. We were both on the station platform.

We stood there. Believe me, and even today you can verify. What all I'm telling are subject to verification.

They're all on record, narrated in front of Bhagawan. They're all available in print, in my books.

So there is no need for any concoction, or management, or manipulation either.

All of these are in my books, and I also narrated them in front of Swami. The train had left and the signal changed.

That train came back again. Does a train ever come back? It may fall down, but would it come back?

That train came back. We were surprised. "Sir, you won't lose your job, I won't lose my job either. Let's sit happily," and we both went.

Whether Swami stopped trains for me, or buses, how many troubles Swami took. He made me go on so many journeys.

Although I was the State President, I travelled in a bullock cart, tractors, lorries, slept on platforms,

as well as in bus stations. Because it is for Swami's Seva. What does it matter where I sleep?

Sleeping on the floor in one place, and sleeping on flowers in another place, eating vegetables in one place,

eating exceptional food in another place, so if we have His grace, both exist.

I would go and come many times, but my excitement never diminished. I would sleep in bus stands.



In Gudivada, I slept in the train station. In that context, there is a place called Sathupalli, near Khammam.

They invited me to Sathupalli and I agreed. None of them had ever seen me, nor had I seen them.

The people from Khammam said, "Sir, we will come to the station and pick you up to go to Sathupalli."

I reached Khammam but no one came there. So I happily slept on the platform, in the bus stand.

The day broke with a bang. I took the first bus to Sathupalli. They didn't know me. No one invited me.

They were still hanging welcome garlands. There was my name on the list too. How could I tell them that was me?

So I sat there while they decorated everything. I had not even brushed my teeth yet.

I was wondering what this was. In a little while, the Khammam people came, "Sir, please forgive us."

"We just missed you." The rest of them said, "Oh, we didn't know. He has been sitting here for a while."

In that way, the Sathupalli meeting happened. In this way, Swami gave me volumes and volumes of experiences.

They invited me to Kurnool and I agreed. But it was raining that night. A torrential downpour.

I thought what has happened here? It slowed down by the next morning, and I went to Kurnool.

I spoke how I was able to. And then I returned. In later times, I was invited to Giddalur.

Prakasam District. I said I would go, and I set off for Giddalur. That night there was a strike. There was a bandh for all trains.

Bandh for all buses. They threw trees onto the road. How could I go? It was 6:30 in the morning. I teach tuition lessons at home in Botany. One person came from Giddalur. His name was Sathyam, Vivekananda College, Giddalur.

The reason why I'm telling you the names is because there will be those who are suspicious. But what does Bhagavad Gita say? "If you doubt, you will be destroyed," says Bhagavad Gita. Because we would still want to live for a few more days, and because there will be those who would be suspicious,

for those people, I'm including all the names as well. Sathyam came and said, "Anil Kumar garu, let's go."

"To where?" "Giddalur." "How?" "Come with me, I will take you." "There are no lorries or buses, how would we go?" "You come," he said.

Rayalaseema dialect is like that. My mother called me inside and said, "Son, do I ever say 'No' to you? I did not."

"I'm telling you now. Don't go. You will suffer." I said, "Mother, a collector has come to take me with him. What can I do?"

I thought Swami would look after me. Sathyam and I sat in the train. That train was going as slow as a snail. Anyone could stop it anytime.

It was going very, very slowly. Sathyam garu gets down at every place and calls the people at Giddalur.

We reached Giddalur in the evening at 4:30 or 5. The train station was full. I cannot tell you how many people there were.

They were all holding garlands. Who am I? Where is my God? What is this welcome? Which minister gets it?

I went to the stadium where I gave the speech. After that speech, I came straight to Swami.

"What, Anil Kumar? You wanted to skip it, isn't it? There were 10,000 people waiting for you."

"Wouldn't they think that Swami's programmes tend to get postponed? That will bring a bad name to Swami."

"So I dragged you there," He said. "True Swami, it felt like I was dragged. I too went crying. Everything was on Bandh."

"But did you see how many people were happy?" He said, and I said, "Your grace, Swami." In that way, the Giddalur meeting happened. The same thing happened in Kurnool. They invited me to Kurnool.

I went there and then came to Prasanthi Nilayam. Swami said, "Anil Kumar, since you're coming from Kurnool,"

"Dr. Krishna Rao called you. Dr. Krishna Rao was the first Sevadal volunteer in Prasanthi Nilayam."

"He would have been disappointed. That's why I had you called there," He said. From there, it was a remote operation.

I don't know how they operated Chandrayaan in Sriharikota, but this is how Swami operated me.

Where to go, where to stay, where to come. I don't know what past good Karma I had done.

What good Karma, what good fortune, to have been born on this piece of heaven.

If we are successful here, it is because of Swami's compassion. Rayaprolu Subbarao garu's writing,

a national song, because of Swami's compassion, it is going on in this way.

I'm travelling in Swami's path. Being a State President, I was afraid I would not have enough time, and stopped tutoring.

I stopped medical entrances. I stopped conducting examinations. I stopped invigilation.

Teaching lessons and attending Swami's activities, that is all I did. During this time of doing these activities,

My wife was upset. "He is sitting like this. We have three young daughters. When will he get them married?"

"He keeps going to all these places. How?" she kept worrying. We both came to Puttaparthi.

Swami came to her and said, "Amma, why do you worry? He is doing My work. Doing his work is My duty."

"Because he is doing my work, doing his work is My duty. All your children will settle well."

"Don't be anxious," Swami gave her His word. In that way, all these journeys went on.

All the activities went on. I will talk to you about an incident that happened before this.

During this time, Swami graced me with many miracles that were very surprising and incredulous.

In 1975, I was teaching a lesson in Ravi Tutorial College. It was 10 O'clock at night.

I used to work very hard in those days. I was in Samsara, so that's inevitable.

A man came in, "Sir, the Rotary Club wants to send 5 people to America. Please come for an interview."

It was 10 at night. I had chalk piece powder all over my hands. Some of it might have spread over my head too.

They asked me to come for an interview. I said, "Why do I need to go to America? I have relatives there."

"Why do I want to take this trouble?" The Principal at that time was CVN Dhan. He said, "I'm cancelling the class, you go."

So I went. At 10 O'clock at night. I was the last candidate. The people who interviewed me said in conversation,

"Anil Kumar garu, how can we interview you? You know everything, very happy. You are selected. You may go."

Very good. The day after I went home, they said, "Now you apply." Usually the interview happens after the application.

The selection happens after the interview. Mine was reversed. The selection happened first, and later the application.

The final interview was in Hotel Ritz, in Hyderabad. Hotel Ritz at one time was a prestigious hotel there.

It was a very prestigious hotel. I set off. Medical entrance is very challenging. There was a lot of competition.

There was competition between the teachers, and also between the students. If I gave 5 points, if the next teacher gave 6,

one of my periods would get cut. If one period gets cut, 100 Rupees are gone.

They gave us 100 Rupees per period. So I worked very hard to be ready. That was the rate back in those days.

It may have gone up much higher now. I was very busy preparing for the medical entrance.

So how could I go to the interview? I did not prepare anything. For fun, I sat in the train and went to Hyderabad.

There were a few boys lying down on the top berths. I was singing Swami's Bhajans.

One of them said, "There is a book called 'Manorama' which has tips on how to prepare for interviews."

There are books like Manorama, India's Who is Who, Competition Master, and so on.

People study those before interviews. One of the boys gave it to me and asked me to study it. I understood. He is not interested in my study. His intention was for me to shut up so they could study.

I noticed that and thought I understood him. In the same train was PV Narasimha Rao, who had worked as the Principal of Guntur Hindu College and retired.

He was also on the same train and he was also coming for the selection. I knew him. He said, "You said you didn't prepare,"

"then why are you going? You're wasting train charges," he said. I said, "Sir, a small correction."

"I'm not wasting train charges. My sister's family built a house. I had not gone for their housewarming."

"Because of this, I will go and see the house. No loss. If I'm not selected, I didn't even study. If I'm selected, that would be a nice surprise."

So I went to the interview which was at Hotel Ritz. All the Rotary governors sat there. They were calling in each person for the interview.

This is Rotary Club's Region 315, something everyone knows about even today. Those who finished their interview were talking outside.

Those who didn't have their interviews were asking them, "What did they ask you? What did they ask you?"

I did not ask anyone. I didn't know anything anyway. I did not prepare for anything.

But I could hear what they were talking. India had journeyed to space in Aryabhata.

There were some questions about Aryabhata. Indo-Soviet treaty of friendship was signed that year.

There were some questions about that. They were talking about these things. Then came my turn.

I went inside. By then, my wedding suit was still in good condition. I brushed it down, went in and sat with style.

If someone prepared for it, they would be afraid. Since I didn't prepare, why fear? I sat comfortably, like I was going for a matchmaking meeting.

Swami is listening. I also chose a photo where He is smiling. Maybe Swami is saying, "You're saying this as if I don't know."

I'm telling this for our listeners. Every question they asked me was regarding Sathya Sai literature.

That is my connection, and that is what I promote. I did not study anything else. One man asked, a Rotary Governor, "Sir, if you now go to America, and they ask you a question..." This was in 1975.

I visited the state of Indiana, to Terre Haute, Bloomington, Corydon, Perdue, and all these places.

They said, "You can answer if you know. If not, don't worry." I said, "Why should I worry? Ask what you would like."

"Why are there so many gods in India? There are as many gods as the population. This would seem strange to Americans."

"What would you say to them?" he asked. Is there anything Swami had not talked about?

Is there really anything Swami did not talk about? What did He say in one of His discourses?

Every person has an inspiration. Every person has a culture. Because of his culture and inspiration, a form evolves.

Wow, what words, I thought. Then Swami explained, "Your primary God is based on your inclination."

"For example, Ganesh is very short. Lord Sri Rama was very tall. One person likes the tall form of Lord Rama,

another person likes the short form of Ganesha. For that person's inclination, he worships that, and for this person's inclination, he worships this.

What harmony! I remembered what Swami had said in His discourse in Sivam.

Then Swami shared another example. "Would the same shirt fit everyone? It must be according to his measurements."

"One God, one ritual, one idol would not suit everyone," He said. Only He can speak in a way that makes sense.

They all applauded. For who? For me? That response is His. Later they will understand my true strength.

They praised me. Another man said, "Very nice. But, what if they say God is one? Why would you need so many gods?"

They are all Rotary Governors. Swami said in a discourse, "In Andhra, you may call it 'Neeru,' in Hindi, you may call it 'Paani',"

"you may call it 'Tanni' in Tamil, you can say 'Water' in English. Water, Tanni, Paani, Neeru, all refer to the same H<sub>2</sub>O, water."

"Therefore, there can be several words for the same thing. That is the Sanatana Dharma of the country of Bharat.

I told them this. No one spoke for a while. They just applauded. Then another person asked, "Why is there black-marketing in such a spiritual land as India? Why is there corruption?" he asked.

Tough question. I immediately remembered what Swami had said, "Where there are patients, that's where the doctor is."

"Where there is decline of Dharma, that is where God is. That is why, because the country of India needs God,"

"God took birth in this country," I said. Another man asked, "Very good, but I have a question. God could have been born in America?"

"Or in Australia? It would have been convenient for flights. Why should He be born in India, with its bullock carts?"

Swami had responded to that as, "Gold is obtained in Kolar mines. Coal is obtained in Kothagudem."

"We can observe that we find a different mineral in different places. In the same way, India is a famous ancient land."

"A land of action, mother land, a blessed land, a land of sacrifice, which is why an Avatar was born in India."

"The West chose material knowledge. India chose selfless knowledge. The West chose texts, while India chose the perfumed essence of texts."

"They performed many penances for God, studied many texts, conducted several Yajnas and Yagas,"

"and pined for God, therefore He took birth in the country of India," He said.

It was extraordinary, and I told them that. They liked it a lot. Later they asked, "Sir, why are there no divorces in India?"

Tough question. Because in America, they have divorces every minute. There is a place called Las Vegas, in Nevada, in America.

You can get married there in the morning, and say Goodbye in the evening. They provide that convenience. "Why are there no divorces in India?" they asked. I remembered what Swami had said,

"A river flows between two banks. One bank is the land we live on, and the other is a distant, higher land."

"This is here and now, while that is there and supreme. Between the two flows the river of Samsara, constantly."

"The wife and husband must travel along this path of Samsara together. They must live together."

"They must decide together. Therefore married life is not just related to the husband and wife."

"It is a united spiritual bond. That is the system of marriage in India. Samsara alone is not primary."

"Getting close to God is primary. We must travel from here and now to reach the distant supreme."

That is what I remembered from what Swami spoke about married life, so I gave that response. They thought if they asked me more, I would continue to speak like this. They said, "You may go."

I came out happily, like high school children running out after the school bell. I was happy it was over. I had not prepared.

I don't know what would happen to my reputation. I thought Swami saved me, and came out. I came back to Guntur and my mother said, "Ask the Rotary Club President if you got selected."

I said I won't ask. Why? If I didn't get selected where's the surprise, since I didn't prepare?

If I got selected, why do I need to ask? I said I won't ask. So I didn't ask. After 15 days, it came out in all the newspapers.

They selected 5 people. Out of the 5, mine was the first rank, Kamaraju Anil Kumar.

Which means, the one who asked the questions was Swami, the one who made me answer was Swami,

the subject was Swami, so maybe this is what is meant by Triputi. I forgot to mention one thing, please forgive me.

At the end of the interview they asked, "Who is the Prime Minister of Israel?" What happened to all the Vedanta until now?

How did silly Israel come in the middle? Now my stuff will be exposed. Swami probably wanted to say, "Hey, maybe you think you're answering."

"Now see if you can answer that." What to do? I looked confusedly and said, "Sir, there was someone who was in that position until 2 days ago."

"In his position, a woman came. I don't remember that name. Golda Meyer," I said. They said, "Is that right?"

"That's a 50% answer, you can go," they said. The reason why I'm saying this is to show that if I had to respond, this is how my answers would be.

When He responds, they are of that level. Every moment, if we become one with Bhagawan, "You are the one within me."

As they sing, as Atma Rama, He speaks from within us. I thought that went well, and was happy.

But now, He set up another thing. Swami's way is to pinch your thigh and then to lay you in His lap and console you.

We feel the joy of it, but also feel the burn of the pinch. Both happen at the same time.

In the meantime, the final selection training is given in Visakhapatnam. There are some wonderful hotels like the Sun and Sea.

On the seashore of Visakhapatnam, there's the Sun and Sea, where the training was held, so I went.

Who was providing the training? Professors from Andhra University. What did they tell us? How to move about there, how to conduct ourselves, etc. I thought that was good, and returned to Guntur. On the day that I went to Visakhapatnam was our college anniversary. I was the Director of the Dramatic Association. I asked the Principal that I had to go. He said I couldn't go. He said, "It's the anniversary, don't you know?" I said, "Sir, would the anniversary not happen if I'm not here? It has been a 100 years since our college was established." "This is a God-given opportunity Sir, please," I asked. He said, "Nothing doing, you cannot go." I came home and prayed to Swami's photo. That's when the real devotion comes out. Critical times must come. "Swami, You said You selected me then. Today You're saying 'No'. It's Your wish." The next day was supposed to be the anniversary of the 100 year old college. The Principal then was Dr. N. Isaac. Although he was the principal, to me he was like Shishupala. What could I do? At that time, the collector of Guntur district was Chandrayya garu. Chandrayya and Isaac were friends. Chandrayya garu had to urgently go to Hyderabad. He sent a letter to Isaac garu, "Sir, please postpone the anniversary because I'm unable to come." It was a college with a strength of 4,000 people. Their friendship was such that for Chandrayya's sake, Isaac postponed the anniversary. As soon as he postponed it, he came to me and said, "Anil Kumar, you said you needed to go somewhere, you can go." "I don't know what other postponements may happen, you may go," he said. So I went. There were tests at every step of the way. When I got on the plane, the other 5 young men with me were bachelors. I was the only married man. In our families, as soon as one gets a job, he's finished, he'll be married off immediately. The one who was happy until then, once he gets a job, if he's tied down, he'll stay that way. So that's what they did when we were young. I thought that was fine. They asked, "Anil Kumar, do you have the habit?" I said I didn't have it. They asked, "Do you eat meat?" I said I didn't have the habit. They said, "Now 5 of us are going, on our return trip, there will only be 4 of us." I asked what he meant. "You won't find anything there, so you'll die. Your wish," he said. I thought it was fine if I died. I said I didn't want it. Look at Swami now. For those who ate meat, they gave them chicken and mutton in plates. For me, there was a table filled with cashew nuts, groundnuts, apples, batavias, bananas, all for me. For him, he only gets those pieces. I have all these. Have you seen this? If we protect His Dharma, if we walk in His path, we can live even better than everyone else. We do not need to compromise for circumstances. He is right behind me. That's how it happened for me. We had to stay at different houses each day, like a cat moves its kittens.

I'm not used to cats and dogs. There's no American without a dog or a cat. Every American has a dog or a cat or a bird, a camera and a car. There's no American without those. A dog, a car, and a camera are must-haves.

What is this? I escaped one dog, I don't know which dog I will run into next. I was very afraid. In one house a cat was sleeping on a bed looking at me. I nearly died. I checked my entire room before I went to bed.

I'm very scared of them. I sat and thought of Swami, "You alone must protect me. I don't know what other dogs and cats might come."

"Please protect me. Why did you bring me here? I'm dying of fear," I thought in my mind and sang a Swami Bhajan.

The person next to me was a white man, by name Oscar, Governor, Rotary International.

He thought I was going. Because I wasn't eating anything, he was worried I was going to die.

He said, "What are you doing?" I said, "Swami..." He said, "Swami? Who is Swami?"

"What are you doing? What are Bhajans?" he said. I thought I got him, and until we reached the next place, I explained to him.

What are Bhajans and who is Swami? We reached our destination. Indiana state is very great.

We got off at Louisville, Kentucky. All 5 of us were honoured very nicely there. It was part of Rotary International so we had to go to someone else's house.

I was worried I might run into another dog or cat. When I went there, fortunately, they had locked the dog in another room.

Some had already whispered to him that I was afraid of them. He locked it in, so I slept happily.

So wherever I went, there were either no cats and dogs, or they were locked away in another room.

In that way I was saved. When he found out that I was going to America, my father-in-law gave me bottles of pickles.

To give to my sister-in-law. So I had to carry these jars of pickles through all these houses.

There was no rice. Eating pickles by themselves is not good for the body. So I was wondering what to do.

I finally reached Hampton, Virginia. Everyone who had come with me went their own ways.

The tour was over and I had to leave too. How to go? Where to go? The others were young men working in big companies.

One said he was going to Europe, another said Germany, and they left quickly. I just sat there.

The Rotary Governor came and said, "Anil Kumar, we have learned so many things from you."

"What are your plans now? We learned a lot from you." I said, "I need to go to my sister-in-law's house."

"I need to give her this parcel. I heard there is a Greyhound bus service. If you can show me the bus, I will go there," I said.

He said, "No! You cannot go by bus. We'll arrange for you flight tickets." He bought a flight ticket for me.

All the Rotary people came to the airport to send me off. That's the power of Baba's feet.

The feet of Bhagawan Sathya Sai Baba are so prestigious. They confer upon you a crowning success.



His name and His divine feet grant us such success, and at what level! By the time I went to Hampton, Virginia, my co-brother and sister-in-law were shaking. "Brother-in-law, you stayed in some big houses." "What are our houses and who are we?" they said. If I had gone to their house first, what would they have said? "Do you think this is India? Do you think this is Guntur? This is America," they would have told me stories. "What level are you at now?" they said. That is Sai Baba. I completed my trip there. After it was done, I came to Swami. Is He any less? Would He say He sent me? No. Would He say I went myself? No. Would He say He's happy that I went? Not even by mistake. Would He say that I did well? Never. He just stared at me. His gazes are also very romantic. We must look at Him that way. What a gaze. What a gaze, when He looks this way, is so beautiful. Maybe I should not speak of it now, but in my younger years, I remember those songs. "These shy smiles are like blooming flowers," a song from 'Velugu Needalu'. His shy smiles were like that. His gaze is like that when He is looking at me from a distance. He gazed at me like that, and I thought how lovely His gaze was. He came to me and said, "Happy," that's it. Inside He said to Karunyananda garu, "Anil Kumar went there. He did his trip very well." He did not say it to me. That happened in '75. All the incidents that happened until now were before I came to Swami, before joining Swami's Vishwakala Parishat University, or the Institute of Higher Learning. After joining, there is a pleasing, delightful feast coming up. You should listen to those too. Sai Ram.