

Part 06 | Experiences with Swami | Prof K Anil Kumar

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8v5hOPDUAw8>

Swami came and asked, "Anil Kumar, did you finish cooking?" Why is He asking me about cooking? As if I did anything!?

He will scold someone in front of you. "That guy is not right. Why is he not doing it properly?" Then, what should I do? Don't care about it.

"Will there be a Principal for the bathroom, a Principal for the verandah, and a Principal for the rooms? You need to look after everything."

"Do you understand?" "Yes, Swami." So I saw pleasure on one side, and I also experienced rain on the other side. Tasted both ice cream and hot hot.

There is a national highway alongside the railway station. If you go straight down that road, you will see the bungalow that Swami gave me.

You can see it from the road. If you go further, there is Trayee Brindavan, the building that Swami stays in.

That building looks really beautiful. You must see it. Trayee Brindavan looks like a lotus. It looks like a bloomed lotus. What beauty!

These buildings are not possible for any architects or engineers or doctorates. Swami is the architect.

When you come to it, He is the architect for all of Swami's buildings. All of them. He is the architect for all of the buildings in Puttaparthi.

But in the transactional world, they say that person is the engineer, or this person is the engineer.

He gives them awards, cars, and gifts. But ask them, "Sir, how fortunate you are!" They will say, "What did we do? Swami changed everything."

"We did it but Swami changed everything," they will say. He is the architect. What is there that He does not know?

After that building, if you go further, there is the hostel building. After the hostel building is a large playground.

That is the sports ground for the students. Next to it is the college building. All these buildings are in a row.

Meaning, most of the area is unpopulated. The number of students is less than 300. Right opposite is the road.

Next to the road is a steel factory that was shut down, and a couple of pawn shops. That's it, nothing else.

Back then, there were not even streetlights. There were not that many houses. That's when I moved into that house.

She helped me move in, and said she was leaving. As someone sings, "Lonely then, lonely now, Krishna, how sweet Thy name."

Like that, I thought I became alone again. I said she could leave. Because she had many responsibilities, including our four children.

Mother, father, mother-in-law, father-in-law. She has to carry the burden of them all. So she left. I stayed. Evening Bhajan was over. Swami was about to leave for Puttaparthi.

He had come to leave me there properly. You probably heard about the Amaralingeswara temple in Amaravati.

The Linga in this temple was growing very tall, and when a nail was hammered in, He stopped growing.

So you will see two streaks of blood. Maybe because I was close to Amaravati, Swami brought me to Bengaluru and nailed me down.

I thought it was alright. Once Swami leaves Bengaluru it becomes like a desert. Just a forest, nothing else.

There is a watchman at the gate. He is sometimes there and sometimes disappears. No one else.

I was the only one in the building. My God, how will I live here? I came from a crowded place.

If the neighbours talked, I could hear them in my house. I could hear the sounds of lottery ticket sales and movie advertisements from the road.

Here I could not hear any of those sounds. Do I need to stay in this desolate place? Why do I need this bungalow?

I don't know how to cook. I only know how to make instant coffee. What is this that Swami gave me? I thought.

It was getting dark. I was starting to get scared. On top of that it was windy in Bengaluru.

There were no buildings then. The wind was cold. There were a lot of trees. When the wind came through the trees, it howled.

That was the wind through the trees. Back then, I used to watch horror movies, like Bees Saal Baad (Twenty Years Later).

I could see all those ghosts in front of my eyes. This was the first night I had to spend there.

My God, what a test, I thought. I thought I would have my meal first and went to the canteen.

The canteen was a bit further away. It was on the other side of the road. If the college buildings are on this side, it was on the other side of the road.

There was a State Bank building, and next to it was the canteen. I went to that canteen.

There were two managers in the canteen. One of them was Madhavan. He is the father of a Higher Secondary School student Sai Surendranath's father.

The second person's name was Subramanyam garu. Both of them invited me very cordially, as the new Principal.

My soles were still wet. They came and welcomed me nicely. They asked me to sit and it was fine.

Both of them stood on either side of me, serving me, asking me to eat. I came from a very spicy area.

Guntur spice is very hot. Guntur summer is also like that. The people in Karnataka are very gentle.

What they eat is also a Sattvic diet. We doubt whether there is any salt or chilli powder in it.

The hunger is not satisfied, and the weakness is not gone. That's how their food is.

I was looking at my food. They served me. I could not recognise whether it was a curry, a Dal, or a pickle.

I talk about the philosophy of Advaita (non-duality), but I never had Advaitic food. It was all Advaitic food.

It was all liquid-like. What could I do? They were both standing next to me. I should not show myself in front of them.

Somehow I ate it and came outside. Do I have to come to this college? Do I have to stay in this college?

"Swami, what kind of betrayal did I commit?" I had read poems of Kunti Kumari in 1957.

It says, "Why should the sage confer a boon? When he conferred it, why wish for the Sun God? Why make a wish? Why was it conferred?"

Meaning, Kunti Kumari's father told her, "Daughter, Sage Durvasa is coming to our house. You must give hospitality to him."

"So she came, princess Kunti Kumari, one who was born graceful." Look at that poem, written in '57.

"That is a beautiful flower forest. In the forest is a building. And from the corner room she opened the door and came down the stairs slowly."

"We liken her, Kuntibhoja's daughter, the reincarnation of Goddess Siddhi, graceful as she is, Kunti Kumari." It is a poem written by Karunasri garu.

He was our teacher in '57. Since he was a poet, as he was teaching the class, he said, "Papayya Sastry hid behind trees and took a photo of Kunti Kumari."

He used to teach very well. If he was teaching, the other class students came running. Even the peons would sit and listen.

He would forget to ring the bell, until someone from the next class came to remind them.

His attendance taking was the same way. If there were 150 students in our class, he was roll call 20, 50, 80, 100, and he was done.

He was very witty. He said, "Kunti Kumari is coming and she says, 'It must be my bad Karma that Durvasa should come'."

'Why did I have to pray to the Sun God? Why did Durvasa ask me to wish for a boon? Why did I ask for a son that was like him?'

'Why should the sage confer a boon? When he conferred it, why wish for the Sun God?'

'Why should he come? And why was it conferred? And why was this child born?' Kunti Kumari cried.

I remembered those poems. "Swami, why did you make me a State President? And when You did, why did I gain victory?"

"So I achieved victory, but why did You call me to Bengaluru? So You called me, but why this food and place?"

In that way, I changed Kunti's son of grief to Anil Kumar's song of grief. That was my condition.

I had my dinner, and then went to bed. Through the windows, I could hear the lorries going on the road. No streetlights.

Sometimes there are some mad dogs barking. As the lorries passed by, their lights came through the windows and made shadows on the wall.

The movies I had watched were horror movies. Seeing these lights coming in while I was alone, I was terrified.

This is all a forest. There is no one here. All the houses are far away. The hostels were somewhere else.

Even if I scream no one would hear it. I found the watchman and called him over.

I asked him about his life history, his occupation, his family history and everything, in order to pass time.

He was bored and said, "Sir, my time is up. I must go." I said, "Yes, yes, please go. You are a good man."

Because I need him to be back if I need him again tomorrow. He left. I lay down on the bed and thought, "Swami!"

"If I can sleep through the night, I will stay here. Otherwise, I'm going to pack up my bags tomorrow morning."

"This is not possible for me. I cannot stay. I can't eat this food. I can't look at these ghostly shadows. I cannot live this lonely life."

"I'm scared of these noises," I thought. Is He any less? He already had His eye on me. I fell asleep immediately.

He knew I would try to run away at any minute. And I wanted to run away whenever I could.

In the end, He won. I slept well, and woke up. "Swami, You won! I won't leave," I thought.

In that way, eventually I got used to that place. In the meantime, my wife came from Guntur to Bengaluru to see how I was doing.

There are two buses to come from Guntur to Bengaluru. One that goes straight from Guntur to Bengaluru.

The other one that goes from Guntur to Bengaluru, via Hindupur. She had to take a bus.

The journey was about 18 hours long. In these 18 hours, we can go to London, brush our teeth, have breakfast, and come back to India.

In the time it takes to reach Bengaluru. It was such a long journey in those buses.

She would bring bags of supplies, including pulses, lentils, salt, and everything. Every month.

She would cook while she was here, and then slowly leave. She couldn't stay here. I didn't know how to cook.

She would cook again when she came back. What can I do? While I was thinking that, Swami came.

I think He wanted to personally check on me. He came. All the students and everyone was there.

There is an opportunity in Trayee Brindavan. Students and special guests had the opportunity to be part of Swami's conversation every evening.

Swami's conversations in Brindavan were very sweet. Ever memorable. He would be talking to the students and the speakers at the same time.

Each conversation was not related to the other. I will tell you about those too. They were very witty. Because most people would not have the opportunity to know these things. Because I heard them, and I'm still alive, I have the desire to share with you.

He was saying something, and after everything was done, the teachers had the opportunity to give Arati to Swami.

They were giving Arati. Swami asked, "Anil Kumar, did you finish cooking?" Why is He asking me about cooking?

As if I did anything. I started thinking. What had happened was that my wife, before going back to Guntur, she wrote on the back of the calendar how to cook. Take a cooker. Wash it well. Wash rice and place it inside.

Then turn the nozzle. After 5 minutes there will be 3 whistles. After that turn it off. And so on, she wrote.

She hung it on the wall. She left. I experimented with cooking. I had the notes when I was cooking.

There was no whistle, nothing. I was infuriated and I wanted to throw the cooker down to the floor.

It was almost time for Swami to come. There were no whistles from the cooker. I was very angry.

I immediately turned it off and went. That's why Swami was asking, "Is your cooking done?"

"What cooking, Swami, stupid cooking! No whistle, nothing! She said there would be a whistle in 15 minutes but it didn't come, Swami."

"Crazy man, how is she living with you? Don't you have to add water? You didn't add water inside."

"If you don't add water, how would the whistle come? Is this cooking?" He scolded me and then laughed out loud.

"You don't know how to cook?" He asked. I said, "No, Swami." He stood at the stairs and said, "Tsk. Hmm. Hey," He called to Sanjiv, an attender.

"Sanjiv," He called. Why is He showing two fingers? Two bottles came. One was Gongura and the other was mango pickle.

"Eat these two. Get rice from the canteen. You can't learn at this age. You won't be able to do it. It's dangerous, so stop it."

"Eat this," He said. "But Brahmins usually know how to cook. How do you not know?" He said.

"I'm not a Brahmin, Swami," I said. "Then, what are you?" He asked. "I'm Brahmo, Swami." I said. "Oho," He laughed.

"You're playing a new drama. Brahmo? Alright. Whichever Brahmo, but were you able to eat? Keep these carefully," He said.

After that Swami came back to Puttaparthi. This is how I started. I went to the college. It was beautiful.

A wide campus. I don't think even universities have such beautiful buildings. In the front, there is a statue of Saraswati up high.

There are steps below. The building was above the steps. Because it is set higher, it looks very beautiful.

It was three floors. It is a beautiful building. We come in, pray to Saraswati, and then go up the steps.

There is a large verandah, and there are staircases on either side. It is a 3-storey building. In the centre is an open quadrangle.

Above the quadrangle is a statue of Ganesha, up high. I thought it was very nice. Yours is the institution! Yours is the architecture!

I heard recently, "You are the stone, and You are the sculptor, and You are the sculpture too, in this creation"

You are the stone, You are the sculpture, You are also the sculptor, O Lord, in this creation, I heard.

That applies to our Swami completely. All the buildings are Swami. Their architect is also Bhagawan.

I looked around at the quadrangle and thought how beautiful it was. It was set up for Swami to stand and give Darshan there.

On one side is the Chemistry department. On the other side is the Physics department. Across them is the Natural Sciences department.

Here is the office, and in the centre was the quadrangle. You can imagine how beautiful it is. On the top is the clock tower with a clock on it. Owing to being in Bengaluru, in front of the building are wonderful gardens.

Wonderful gardens, really beautiful, in a wide open space. There was a gardener named Narayanan or someone.

He was an excellent fellow. He would trim the plants neatly, some like peacocks, some like camels, some even like elephants.

They were beautiful. "Swami, am I eligible for this? Do I have the eligibility to be the Principal for these beautiful buildings?"

"Why did You bring me here, Swami? I would have stayed back there doing Your Seva." I thought that, but I was also scared.

I had fear, and I had doubt, and eventually it changed into fright. I wondered what was going on. In this way the daily activities were going on. Sathya Sai students and teachers are special, different.

They are not like those in our colleges. I had worked there for 26 years and then came here. I wondered if they were even students here.

All of them are dressed in white. Everyone had closely trimmed hair. I was used to people having long locks of hair.

They would wear colourful clothes. Swami would joke, "Even buffaloes would get scared of your outfits."

I was used to those kinds of students dressed in that way, about 4,000 of them.

I came here and saw these young men in white, with trimmed hair, coming in rows to sit in the classrooms and doing prayer, not one of them speaking.

Even the teachers would come in, had their heads bent, signed, and went to their departments, and taught their classes.

After college is done at 4 O'clock, they play sports. By 5 O'clock they go back to the hostel.

Then there is no one left. You can imagine my plight. From 5 O'clock on, I remember songs about delusion and loneliness.

"Swami, You must make me strong. You brought me here. You helped me sleep. You gave me pickles to eat and to live."

"That's alright, but please help me to get used to this environment too," I prayed in my heart.

Then I remembered the song, "The One who rules over the entire universe, would He not take care of you?"

The God who rules over the 14 worlds, would He not look after you? "He is the witness of everything, would He not know you?"

The Lord who is the embodiment of everyone's Atma, the witness, would He not know about me?

Does He not know how scared I am? I remembered that song. It is true that He is the eternal witness.

One who rules over the world. Back in those days, in the '60s and '70s, there used to be Pundits in Amalapuram.

He was a Vedic scholar. Because of circumstances and bad luck, he became poor.

He sold off everything. At that time, Swami wrote him a letter, "I'm the One who rules over so many worlds."

"Do you think it is difficult for Me to feed you? I gave you these difficulties in order for you to learn a lesson," He said.

So there must be a lesson in it for me. That's why He brought me here. "The Protector of all life, would He not protect you?"

The One who protects everyone, would He not protect me? "The Lord of the Earth, would He not guide you?"

The One who is ruling over the 14 planets, can He not guide me? Am I an extra? "Upon surrendering everything to Him, would He not draw you close?"

Swami, it is all Your grace, You must look after me. When I have surrendered everything to Him, would He not draw you close?

"When everything is His grace, would you have any sorrow?" If everything is Your grace, O Lord, would I have any sorrow?

I thought of Swami and prayed, "O Lord, You take care of all the worlds, can You not take care of me?"

"You know so many people, do You not know me? Swami! whether it is pain or pleasure, it is all Your grace."

Pleasure or pain, it is Your grace, Swami. For 25 years before coming here, I praised You thus in Sathya Sai organisations.

If I cannot learn even a little bit of it, would that not be my bad luck? So I had Him in my thoughts, in order to gain courage. And thus I spent my time.

But that environment still felt new to me. Everyone is really obedient. I used to teach some Botany classes.

I had 4 periods or so. While teaching those classes, I observed something. The students in the Sathya Sai institutes never say "Enough!"

However long you teach, even if you teach beyond the syllabus, he doesn't say "Enough."

My old students used to wait for the bell, but here no one waits for the bell. This is new to me.

Number two, no one asks me to tell them the important questions for the upcoming exams.

That was also new to me. Whatever we teach them, they take it as a sacred offering.

They don't say whether it's wonderful or that it's horrible. Just like a colourless, odourless, tasteless gas.

Their faces are expressionless. You doubt yourself whether you taught well or not.

You cannot gauge from them. Even if you look in a mirror, you can't see your face - that's how these mirrors are.

Maybe a chemical was applied on both sides. I did not know how to take it. Perhaps we cannot get praise or censure from them.

Perhaps Swami gave them that sort of training. Perhaps Swami, with His distant vision, taught them such culture in order to avoid highs and lows, differences, dissimilarities and disagreements with their words.

Thus I resolved it within myself. There is a room in front of the Principal's room, and the Principal's room is behind it.

In the front room, there are 3 chairs. In the Principal's room, there is a desk, 4 chairs, and bookshelves. That's it, nothing else.

This college was established 25 years ago. What about the old Principals? Where are their names?

Who thinks about them? At that time, my eldest daughter and her family were in the city. Through them, I had someone sent over from the city.

"Do one thing. On a red paper, framed in gold, have all the old Principals' names written in gold metallic font."

I wanted to hang them on the wall. I had the list of all the old Principals' names sent from Puttaparthi.

There used to be a Sundar Rao garu, who was the first Principal. I heard that he was a resident of Madanapalle.

He used to work in the Annie Besant college. The next Principal was a Kannada person, named Kulkarni.

He worked there as well. After that, Principal Narendra worked there for 17 years. I was the one who followed Narendra garu.

In the time before I came, a person called Parthasaradhi garu from Hyderabad worked as the Principal for a year.

I had their names sent to me and had them printed in gold letters, on a red velvet sheet, framed in gold.

I was pleased with it myself. This is how a Principal should be treated. Otherwise they would have been left anonymous.

That would not have been appropriate. Next, what about their photos? What did Sundar Rao look like?

What did Kulkarni look like, I thought. In Brindavan, across from the hostel was the Sai Ram shed.

There was a large tree. Under it was Swami's throne where He sat. Bhajans were conducted around it. They used to happen every Thursday and Sunday. I went and asked the Sevalal there. "Sundar Rao garu? His son-in-law sings Bhajans here."

They said his name was Kubera or something. So I asked him for a photo of his father-in-law.

He asked, "Why, Sir?" I said, "I want to hang it in the college. I heard that he was the first Principal."

"What size do you want, Sir?" He asked. I told him on Thursday, and he brought it on Sunday.

I hung it on the wall on one side. Next, how to catch hold of this Kulkarni, the second Principal?

I asked the same person, "Sir, where can I find Kulkarni garu, the second Principal?" They gave me his address and phone number.

I contacted him and said, "Sir, can I have a photo of you? I want to hang it in the office." I had his photo sent to me.

In this way, I asked around. Narendra garu's wife stayed there for some time, even after he passed away.

I asked her. "You want his photo? Very happy," she said and gave it to me. I hung all the photos in a row.

The Lord came to Bengaluru. He will come into my room. He came straight in. And He looked up.

"You had their names printed." I had the board with all the names of the old Principals. "Look at the spelling of Parthasaradhi," He said.

"There is no H there. Parthasaradi? It's not 'di,' it should be 'dhi', have it corrected" He said. I said, "Yes, Swami."

"Who gave you these photos? Where did you get them from? How do you know them?" He started interrogating me.

"That is not difficult for me Swami, I went for Bhajans and asked the Sevalal about the Principal."

"They came and hung it themselves," I said. "Oh, that's how you did it? Very good."

"So where is your photo?" He asked. "After I get Your permission, I was going to hang it, with Your blessings," I said.

"Go ahead, quickly," He said. Then He looked at all the names. They are all Principals who He personally selected.

"Very nice," He said. Then He slowly came inside. There are bathrooms and toilets attached to the Principal's room.

At that time, there was some construction going on in the college. It was my bad luck that one of the workers used the bathroom.

He forgot to flush. Swami suddenly opened the door. "Come here. Not even pigs will come here, you know?"

"Is this how you look after this place?" He said. I was still new. What to do? I still had my old habits.

"Would a Principal take care of the bathrooms, Swami?" I asked.

"Oh, will there be a Principal for the bathroom, a Principal for the verandah, and a Principal for the rooms? You need to look after everything, understand?"

"Yes, Swami," I said. So I saw pleasure on one side, and I also experienced rain on the other side. Tasted both ice cream and hot hot.

I looked at everything and thought, I suppose I should look after everything. He looked at everything and said, "Let's go to the auditorium."

I went to the auditorium. We had the auditorium swept and cleaned. One of the ceiling tiles made of thermocol had cracked.

It did not break, it was only slightly cracked. There was the whole hall, but did He have to look at that one cracked tile?

It was such a large hall that could hold about a thousand people. But He only saw this. "Come here, what is that?"

"Swami, did You have to look at that alone? It's my bad luck. What to do?" I said. "You must look after everything, understand?" He said.

That's how Swami trained me. We must look after everything. With that in mind, we had the gardens developed,

had sculptures installed inside, had seating set up in the front, had a board made up for the playground, 'Sri Sathya Sai Sports Pavilion.'

We had seating arranged there as well. The first floor was not used much. There were only 300 students, not many.

So I called it 'Sathya Sai Art Gallery,' and had photos of Swami exhibited there. It is just for our satisfaction.

He asked me to come with a majestic intention. We must follow it. I thought it would be nice if there was a Ganesh statue.

I wrote a letter to Nellore and a statue of Ganesh came in a lorry from a place called Kota.

I had it installed in the entrance of the college. Even to this day, all the students circumambulate around Him and pray to Him.

I feel very happy. I thought we should also have a statue of Shirdi Baba, because it wasn't there.

I wrote a letter to Kavali and I had the marble statue of Shirdi Baba installed in the assembly hall.

Swami came. Look at how we are tested. He came inside and looked. He looked at the tall idols.

Krishnarjuna, and Hanuman on either side. There are large spaces in the college verandah.

I had nature scenes painted on the walls, with the help of Sai organisations. Even today, I can still have anything done there.

Swami looked at all of them. Prof. Sampath, who was the Vice Chancellor then, was next to Him.

Swami blessed me and went and sat in the car. Sampath sat next to Him. He said, "Anil Kumar, come here."

"Where did you get all these from? These statues, sculptures, paintings, where did you get them from?" He asked.

I was dead. It was like Mother Sita's trial by fire. If there was the slightest mistake, I would have to go to the station immediately.

Sevadai members will be ready to shift our luggage there. No one will bring us from the station, but to toss us out to the station, they will be ready.

At that time, some people had come from Nellore, for Swami's Darshan. When they saw Swami's car, they came running.

I put my hand behind me and waved at them to come. They came running. I fell at Swami's feet.

"Swami, please let me go this time. You can do it later, please let me go for now," I said.

"Alright, alright," He said.

They came for Padanamaskar, and Swami gave them Padanamaskar, and left smiling. So I was granted pardon, they got their Padanamaskar, everyone was happy. In that way, Brindavan decorations came in.

There is a bicycle shed in the entrance. Why is there a need for a shed when there are no bicycles?

There are no bicycles because everyone stayed in the hostel. Who would come in a bicycle? So I had it named 'Sathya Sai Nursery,' and had flower pots placed there. I didn't have family or obligations there.

I was a celibate householder. There was not that much food there that I could not wake up early.

I was comfortable, with no exercise needed, no fasting needed, it was all a single diet, so it was fine.

If we're hungry inside, we work more. And so time went on. Slowly, I got to know the students and the lecturers there.

There was Warden Narasimha Murthy at that time. He also became familiar to me. He too came from the organisation.

He knew very well how I worked with Swami. He gave me a lot of respect. He would talk to me in his room.

By then, I had slightly settled down. During that time, a couple had come into my room in the evening.

I had never seen them before. I asked them, "Sir, what is your name?" He said, "Madhusudan Rao."

"Who is she?" I asked. He said, "This is my wife. We got married recently. Our family asked us to go to Bengaluru."

"As we were planning to go to Bengaluru, we went to our Guru, Aduri Srinivasa Rao, an Economics lecturer in the Kavali college."

"He told us to go and visit Swami's college. My friend Anil Kumar is there. Visit him as well. He will talk to you nicely," he said.

"We already visited Lal Bagh, Cubbon Park, Lalitha Palace and others. But our Guru won't let us go if we didn't visit this college."

"So we came to visit the college. How beautiful your college is, Sir!" he said. Who is this Madhusudan Rao?

He is a lecturer in the MBA department, from Jawahar Bharati College, Kavali. These topics are from a long time ago.

Both of them sat in front of me. "Did you see the buildings?" I asked. "Yes, Sir, we saw them."

"They are very beautiful, Sir," he said. In the meantime, the peon brought two plates of Gulab Jamun sweets and savoury Bajjis.

Where did he get them from? I didn't ask him to bring them from the canteen. I didn't give him any money.

Where did they come from? It would not be appropriate to ask him in front of them. So I let them eat.

They ate and then we took photos. Later, I opened the armoire to see if I could give them something, and there were 2 bags Swami had given.

There were Vibhuti and Kumkum packets in them. I gave them to both of them. I had in my mind the teachings Swami gives newlyweds.

I told them those as well. I came out to send them off. A taxi had arrived who said he would take them into the city.

I sent them off. Later I found out the the taxi driver did not take the fare from them. I never saw the taxi driver again.

I asked the peon, "Why did you buy that Gulab Jamun without asking me?" He said, "I don't know. The canteen sent it and I brought it."

"We didn't say anything Sir," they said. So who did this? Who sent the snacks? Who arranged the free taxi?

How to explain Swami's glory? How can we describe it? "The One who knows everything, witnesses everything."

He is the witness of everything. "Would He not know you?" Does He not know you? Swami watches over you.

So as the time went on, and I started to think it was nice in Bengaluru, I had some thoughts in my mind.

They say an empty mind is a devil's workshop. Since I had a lot of free time, I had a lot of thoughts in my brain.

Why did I leave my hometown, Guntur? I had worked there for so long. What is this, I thought.

Then later I had an idea. Because I came to Bengaluru, I am able to get closer to Swami.

Because I'm in Bengaluru, Swami would ask me to speak everyday. For the 6 years I was there, whenever He came, everyday He said, "Anil, get up."

I would speak. In this way, to get a thought, and then to process the thought, and then to gain experience,

to receive courage, perhaps Swami was giving me some kind of training, I thought.

If I didn't come to Bengaluru and stayed behind in Guntur, what would I get? I might have earned more money.

By teaching tutorial classes and medical entrance classes, I would definitely have earned more.

I had a great star value in those days. I might have lost that. But in front of what I have now, what is the value of that money?

When I left all my colleagues thought I was a big crackpot. While earning this much, why does he want to go to Bengaluru?

On top of that, there is salary, torment and conflict. Can I withstand the torment and conflict of salary?

What about my responsibilities there? How to manage these two establishments? I would suffer a lot.

But Swami just managed it all lightly. There was no need to ask anyone anything, no need for loans.

By His hands raised in assurance. All for me, all for me. By His divine vision and by His hand raised in assurance.

For me, Swami is coming. So I felt joy and bliss. During that time while I was there, I had the longing to go to Puttaparthi.

I came to Puttaparthi to have Darshan of Swami, not to remain in the jungles of Bengaluru, no.

I came one Sunday. The inauguration for the Higher Secondary School stadium was set for that time.

I thought I could enjoy both and came. Look at Swami's direction. That construction was done by Italians.

Father and daughter came, and all our elders came. I was there, and so was Bengaluru Srinivas.

Swami came and cut it. He did not even look at my face. I'm new. I came because He called me. I came unhappily.

I wanted to run away but I stayed here, alone. Does He not need to greet me? I journeyed to see Him.

I figured this was His way. At that time, Sharaf was the Vice Chancellor. He invited me to his room.

I thought it was about something official. He explained then, "Sir, you cannot come here unless Swami tells you to come."

"Because it's a Sunday Sir..." I started to say. "No Sunday, no festival, you cannot come unless He says so."

"That is why Swami is not looking at you. Don't ever come like this again," he said. So I understood why He did not look at me.

Slowly I made my way back to Brindavan. That was my first lesson. You cannot do anything without His permission.

Without His permission you cannot move. You cannot go anywhere. This was new to me.

That too, I was coming from a life of freedom. My life was like wild life preservation. No one could control me. Here life is like a circus.

I was frightened, but that's how I continued to spend my time. During that time, Swami asked to hold a meeting in the college.

The meeting was to be held in the council chamber with the Vice Chancellor, Registrar, all the elders in Brindavan, Padmanabhan garu, and Gangadhar Chetty garu.

The council chamber in Bengaluru is really beautiful. There are nice thrones, it is very nice.

There is a large, grand table. Everyone came and sat down and started talking. I was new. What would I speak?

I thought I could at least arrange coffees for everyone seated there. When I stepped outside, Ramabrahmam garu had arrived.

Ramabrahmam garu was the caretaker of Brindavan. He was a resident of Krishna District. He was very fair complexioned.

He looks like a Bombayite. He wears a long shirt and a pure white Dhoti. Even the insides of a coconut might be darkened but not his Dhoti.

It is beautifully white. A walking stick in hand. A large personality. I had never seen such a large personality in Andhrites.

He looks like a Bombayite. I already knew him because his son is the President of the Sathya Sai organisation in Guntur.

His name was Narayana Rao. He would come for his son, so I was very familiar with him.

Because I knew Ramabrahmam garu I asked, "Why are you coming this way, Sir?" A trust meeting was going on, so why was he here?

Do you know what he said then? I turned around in circles. He swished his stick. "Son, who do you think I am?"

"From those train tracks until Kannamangala, it is under my authority. This is all mine. No one needs to call me."

"I will come myself. No one needs to call me. What's that meeting?" he said. They all knew about Ramabrahmam garu.

They all said, "Ramabrahmam garu, please come in and sit down." He said, "I didn't come to sit down."

"You all come when Swami comes. When Swami is not here none of you come here. Are you members?"

"Did you come to sip coffee and eat snacks? What is this?" he demanded and walked off.

If he can demand those people, he could probably hit me too. I thought it was best not to mess with him.

Then I had another experience. What does that mean? It was not just a position, but we must also look at his responsibility.

It's not enough to be part of the trust. You must look after what is going on in Bengaluru, I felt Swami said through Ramabrahmam garu.

Ramabrahmam garu used to stay next to my bungalow. I used to go to their house everyday, for courage.

I was afraid, so what could I do? They would also treat me graciously and would give me a cup of coffee everyday. I'm probably thousands of cups of coffee in debt to them. I will repay them some day.

His daughter-in-law Durgamma would give me a coffee as soon as I went there. We knew each other, we were both Telugu people.

So we would talk to each other. One day Ramabrahmam garu came. As I said, he had a solid personality.

He said, "Son, I need to speak about some things." Just like Shirdi Baba's commandments, Ramabrahmam garu's commandments are similar.

He said, "Swami will scold you. Do not run away. Stay here. You will never get an opportunity like this in several lifetimes."

"Swami will scold you loudly. You will want to go and put your head under a running train. Still, don't leave. Stay here."

I asked, "What would I do here after He tells me to leave?" He said, "Swami sent me out 13 times."

"I didn't leave. I would put my luggage outside the gate." There is a wide expanse of space outside the Brindavan gate.

There is a large gate, and behind it is Trayee Brindavan. He would sit in front of that gate. Just sat on the ground.

As Indulal Shah or other elders passed by, they would ask, "Sir, why are you sitting here?" He would signal them to leave.

He would sit there without speaking to anyone. Why? Because he could see Swami's window from where he sat. If Swami looks out the window, he can be seen. He would sit there until 4::30 or 5 O'clock in the evening.

Then Swami would call him back. "You didn't eat lunch?" "No, Swami." "I didn't eat either. I waited for you."

"Come, let's eat," He would say. Ramabrahmam garu was that kind of a devotee.

Then he told me the second commandment. "Son, if you must be sent away, it is I who would need to do that."

"Don't think you know Ramabrahmam garu and that he would look after you. I would be the one pushing you out by the neck."

"Be very careful. No friendships or relationships here." When a new bridegroom comes, would you tell him the father-in-law drinks and gambles and beats up people?

Are these the things someone would tell a newly joined Principal? "You may be sent out. But don't leave. Sit there."

"He will scold you. But don't bother about that. Stay here." This is what he told me.

Then came the next commandment. "He will scold someone else in front of you. "That guy is not right. Why is he not doing it properly?"

Then, what should I do? "Don't care about it. If you think those are true, the same things will come back to you."

"Whichever scolding sounds like music to you, Swami will let you hear the same music again."

"So ask Baba to pardon him, look sad and pray to Him. Don't think it's good that someone is getting scolded."

"When Swami scolds someone it's not as if He is praising you. If He sends someone away, it's not an invitation to you."

"He may scold someone in front of you. But He might wink at him as He passes by. He will understand."

"Both of them will be fine, while you will look stupid. So if someone is getting scolded don't feel happy."

"You don't know what He might be talking to that same person later. Do not take Swami lightly. He is a hard taskmaster."

"Do not do anything without His permission. Be very careful." He told me all these commandments and left coolly.

But why did he tell me? I came because He called me. If He tells me to leave, I will leave. The One who calls also has the right to send away.

But what to do if someone is saying I should not leave, that I should not move, that I should stay? I started following Ramabrahmam garu's commandments. I believe those are the reason I was trapped in Bengaluru for 6 years.

How did Ramabrahmam garu gain so much devotion? I would go to his house everyday, since it was next to mine.

"Sir, why do you have so much devotion? How come we don't have it? I have been roaming around for 25 years talking about Him, but I don't have as much devotion as you?"

"Those are the kinds of experiences I had," he said. "I earned crores of rupees. I didn't even have time to count my money."

"I would sweep aside stacks of cash with a stick. Then I lost all of my money. I was completely shaven."

"Then I came here. Swami fed me everyday since I came here. So from then on, I never left. I've been doing His Seva since then."

"You are very lucky, Sir," I said. "Yes, I'm a lucky man, but this whole place was a jungle filled with wild vegetation."

"I would walk around with a lantern to have all these trees felled. That's how it used to be," he said.

"It is difficult to move with Swami," and he explained another thing. Swami gave His robe to Ramabrahmam garu.

Ramabrahmam garu is a large person, while Swami is like this. How can he wear His robe?

"Wear it, wear it," He said. As he tried to put it on, and said he could not breathe. "Wear it, it's fine," He said.

As he put it on, it slowly became bigger until it was his size. On his body. Ramabrahmam garu told me himself.

He said another thing. They had another son, named Ram Mohan or something. The couple used to live in Brindavan.

He passed away in his own district. He lost his life. They wanted to go, but they could not go without His permission.

Swami called Ramabrahmam garu and said, "Ramabrahmam, both of you go. You lost one of your sons."

"Don't tell your wife. Go," He said. He must go there without telling his wife. It was his son's death. How difficult it must have been.

Somehow he went crying, but without telling her. By the time he reached home there was the body and people all around.

He took care of all the responsibilities, cried however he wanted, and on the 3rd day, came back to Brindavan.

Ramabrahmam garu's wife's name was Seshamma. She talked roughly, since she was from Krishna District.

From our district the roughness starts. Everyone is rough. Our words are not that polished.

She asked Swami, "Why did You do that to our son, Swami?" He took it sportively. He likes innocence.

Even if we talk disrespectfully, if it is in innocence, He is happy. If we are rotten inside and pretend to be respectful, does He not know?

He is the One who witnesses everything and knows everything. Does He not know? So He let her cry to her heart's content. "Do you want to see your son? Both of you go into the interview room," He said.

By the time both of them went into the interview room, their son was seated there.

They had a conversation with their son. "This happened in my life. A dead person came back and I talked to him."

"I, who have had so many such experiences, how else can I live?" he said. Ramabrahmam garu's friendship, his commandments, his scoldings, allowed me to be careful as long as I worked there.

That's how I spent my time in Bengaluru. In the meantime, summer classes were coming up.

Summer classes were being held in Bengaluru. That was the year I joined, '89. I will now tell you about that phase.

Just before bringing me to Bengaluru, Swami asked me to come to Kodaikanal in the summer of '89.

I went with all of them.