

# Part 07 | Experiences with Swami | Prof K Anil Kumar

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-UkuyRuTug>

It was the month of May in Kodaikanal. I went because Swami asked me to come. My intention is not to say that I went to Kodaikanal. You will see Baba, the manager. He asked me to come to Kodaikanal. I had not yet reached Bengaluru. I was to arrive at Bengaluru on the 1st of June. It was the month of April in Kodaikanal. I went because Swami asked me to come. In the same batch, lecturers were also included. Many important people like Mayur Pandya, Sundar Iyer, Sudheer Bhaskar and Dr. Lakshmi Narasimhan were part of that batch. I didn't know them at that time, I found out their names later. What I want to tell you is that it is not my intention to say that I went to Kodaikanal. You will see Baba, the manager, the most efficient planner. We must learn from Baba how to plan and manage. What is that planning? As soon as the Sports Meet is completed in January, He starts planning who to bring along. If He wants to bring you along, He says, "Get ready to go to Kodaikanal. Don't tell anyone." After He says not to tell anyone, would you tell anyone? If you do, it is like the story of the princess who beheads her suitors. We'd never tell. Whoever He selects, He tells each of them not to tell anyone else. Who does He select? We must even learn selection from Swami. Who came first in sports? Who came first in music and playing instruments? Who was the singer? Who came first in his subjects? Who came first in discipline? Who performs the best service in the hostel? These are the people He chooses. Who is the best speaker? Each one He selects is best in something. Since He watches them all, He selects them. We must learn selection from Swami. We select people basing our own considerations. Very silly being favouritism and partiality. We select them based on our partiality and preferences. He doesn't do that. It is completely based on merit. Why is he here? You probably saw him playing excellent Tabla in Kulwant Hall. Why was he called? Probably because he was the Sports Meet champion. He calls those who have merit. We must learn selection from Swami. It should be based on talent. Secondly, he starts His selection in January itself, after Sports Meet. No third person would know. He conducts Narayana Seva in Kodaikanal. About a thousand people attend it. He starts gathering the rice, provisions and everything else. No human soul knows about it. Among the teachers, He selects them and tells them not to tell anyone else.

He selects talented teachers, and those who help in the hostel, those who are reputable, and those who can speak well.

Sanjay Sahani also belongs to that batch. He was also selected.

He gathers together all the provisions without anyone else knowing about it. Once the Kodaikanal tests are completed, the next step is to go to Kodaikanal.

Then He sends a list to the hostel warden, "I selected these people. Have them be ready by 5 O'clock in the morning."

5 O'clock early in the morning. They would all be ready. No one else would know why they're getting ready.

They only disclose it right before they leave, "Swami told me to come to Kodaikanal."

That's how everyone is informed. That's His organisation. Getting ready with provisions, all the stuff that is necessary, preparation for Narayana Seva,

Swami plans everything. Additionally, He gives clothes to the poor there, for both men and women.

Because Kodaikanal is a chilly region, He also gives them woollen shawls.

He also gives gifts to the students. He plans all of it Himself. No one knows.

For the students and teachers who go with Him, we go with one suitcase and come back with two suitcases.

He gives us the second suitcase and it is filled with gifts, including shirts and pants.

He plans and gathers everything. All of them arrive exactly at 5 O'clock in the morning.

The students load up all the luggage, tie them all down, and then comes the message, "Let them be ready for breakfast."

They go for breakfast. Then there is a bus for students and staff.

At the back of the bus there are several boxes of Laddus, Jahangirs, other sweets and snacks.

The students can finish them on the way. Not just one box, several. Several stalks of bananas.

Swami is a bachelor, so why is He preparing all these, like a woman?

Swami is a bachelor? Who said so? He is the universal householder.

The entire universe is His family. If someone is not a bachelor, he may have one family.

For the universal householder, He is the head of the entire family. He plans incredibly well. After everyone sits down and settles in, Swami comes.

Swami has 2 or 3 cars of His own, and He uses them according to the occasion.

Behind His car, there would be at the very least, 50 or 60 cars.

All the foreigners follow Him. They come for Him, so if He goes to Kodaikanal what will they do in Bengaluru?

Otherwise they would have to stay like me, in the jungles of Kadugodi. So they follow Him in their cars. As they were all going to Kodaikanal, on the way, around 8:30 or 9...

If He says 6, He will start exactly at 6. The hands on the clock may be wrong, but not Swami.

Swami's car in the front, then the bus, and all the Sevadals from Brindavan follow as escorts.

They follow until the border of Hoskote, then give Arati to Swami and Swami continues on in His procession.

What a trip! I'm talking about my first trip. I wouldn't say that the same thing applies to all trips.

I will tell you later about what happened in the other trips. In one car, Swami sat with Joga Rao garu. Radhakrishna was driving Swami's car.

He was a very handsome fellow. I have seen only one devotee by the name Radhakrishna. I have seen only one God by the name, Sathya Sai Baba.

There is no other devotee like him. And there is no other God like Him. In the second car, Swami told me, Lakshmi Narasimhan garu, and Rathnakar to follow along.

Our car also had those snacks, Gulab Jamuns and Jahangirs, so that we wouldn't cry that others have them.

We could also have them. Because Rathnakar already knew these procedures, he kept giving them for us to eat.

I knew him since then. When I came to Swami, he was studying in Easwaramma school.

I knew him, but I was not familiar with him. In this way, we followed Swami.

When it was 8:30 or 9, it was time for breakfast, but we didn't have room for breakfast.

Who were all the boxes for? These students were no less, they opened them all.

There were several boxes, endless supply, never less. Depending on the route, we might stop at Salem or Madurai.

He would stop for breakfast for everyone. First class tables. He would say, "Hey boys!" and they would sit.

Just because He called they can't simply go and sit. Only when He calls, they can get off the bus and sit.

If there is anything amiss, they will return by the next bus. When He says, "Hey boys," they will come and sit.

When He calls us to come too, we go and sit. There is Idli, Dosa, or Upma for breakfast.

Because it is for Swami, they prepare a sumptuous breakfast.

After it is done He says, "Get back in." From then on, the bus and cars stop at a minimum of 7 or 8 places.

Because the local people would have heard about Swami coming, they set up a tent, place Swami's photograph, and sing Bhajans. Swami stops, gives them Darshan, takes Arati, and gets back on.

Then the next halt. What does it mean to say we went on a Kodaikanal trip?

Is it because we didn't have food to eat here? There is a lot to learn.

Whatever the Avatar does, or gives, or hits, or scolds, we must recognise that it is for our own good.

We understand that after we have these experiences. We would not know ahead of time.

Only when we go through those experiences will we learn. Would iron rods bend? They don't bend unless they are heated up in fire.

And so we went. There is a place called Palani near the foothills of Kodaikanal.

There is a Subramanya Swami temple there. Kodaikanal is located on the mountaintop. As we near Palani, Swami's car picks up speed. We go at a normal speed.

By the time we get to Kodaikanal, because Swami is the manager, what do we learn from Swami?

Swami the leader, Swami the manager, Swami the eternal charioteer.

We can learn many of the aspects from Him, from His personality, and from His daily routine.

We may have an opportunity to evolve, just by observing Him. By the time our bus reaches there, Swami is standing at the door, to welcome us. That is Baba!

The doorway and the whole building is decorated with flowers because of Swami's arrival.

He says, "Come on, boys," and all of them get down and go inside. There is a large room upstairs, like a big hall or a dormitory. All the students are asked to go there.

Each person takes his bags and goes there. Then He asks us to get down. The guests on our trip were Joga Rao garu, Janaki Ramayya garu, Narasimhan garu, and myself.

The least among them all was me. All of them are very close to Swami. We must be very careful about what we speak with them. Silence is the best jewel for stupid people. It is best to stay silent near Him.

They are those kind of people. Among them, my roommate was Joga Rao garu. It was excellent. He gave us rooms to stay. We set down our bags there. Everyone came out. There was still an hour and a half to go before dinner. We all came out and sat in the hall. It is very nice. Swami sits on a sofa. There is a small coffee table there, and a calendar on it. On the wall, there is a photo of Swami wearing a garland.

It was a Telugu calendar. Swami puts down His letters on top of it. I had a question if Swami checks the calendar.

No, it is because we still follow those things, He has it there for our sake. It is for our sake that He kept it. There is a carved clock on the wall, and there is a cuckoo inside it.

At 10 O'clock, the cuckoo comes out and calls. That too is amusing. It is very nice. There He sits and says, "Hey, come on!" and someone comes out. He brings out leather kits and gives them to everyone, including teachers, students, drivers and cooks.

That is Sathya Sai Baba's equality in love. We don't have that. We can never improve, I tell you. Bairagi Sastry used to say, "Anil Kumar, do you think we would ever improve?" "Unless we're burnt down into ashes, we will never improve," he would say. When we see the Avatar in front of us, if we don't learn His equality in love, or His efficacy in organisation, or His managerial powers, and say, "He rescued me from falling under a train or a lorry, or I was about to die, but I'm standing in front of you," for those of us who listen, we might think, "It would have been better if he had died." Swami's love is different. He gives everyone the same kit. It includes a toothbrush, toothpaste, razor, blades, cream, after shaving lotion. Also soaps. Everything is in there. Who would give those things? Wouldn't they say, "Bring them from home?"

Even when we go to our hometowns, we bring our own things. Nobody sets them out for us to take. How long would they give us? And for how many years? We have 4 or 5 of those kinds of bags in our house.

He gave them to me each time I went. He says, "Next," and another person comes out. They give out woollen blankets to everyone since it gets chilly there. "Hey, did you give to everyone? Next!" Another person comes out with sleeping bags. It's like a large bag and there is a zipper all around it. It is open on the top, and we slip inside.

We can zip up around ourselves. He gives out those sleeping bags to all the students.

"Boys, go keep them in your rooms and come for dinner," He tells them.

The dining hall is very charming. There is Swami's table in the front, and the other tables are in 3 rows.

Since they are seated opposite to Swami, He can see everyone seated in the two rows there.

At each table there are people seated on both sides. He says, "Boys, sit down," and they come and sit.

Whoever comes first cannot occupy the first seats, like they might reserve seats on a bus with a towel.

Elders must sit in the front. Then the guests who come with Him. Which means, leaving the first two tables empty is best.

If we want to keep our life insurance policy intact, we must be very careful.

When we are with Him, we will be smiling, but we will also be worrying where we might get burnt.

So the front rows are given to the guests. Then Swami sits down. There is a sink to wash hands.

"Hey boys, are you all seated?" They say yes. They start serving everyone. The ones who are serving are again the students.

Some of the students organise the luggage. Those who are serving here are also students.

Kodaikanal trip is a training centre for all the boys, an intensive coaching centre.

How to eat, dining hall manners, how to treat a guest, how to behave like a host, we must learn from Baba!

"We got Kumkum from our photos, we got Vibhuti from our photos..." if so, what happened? Tomorrow you will also turn into ashes. Everyone turns into ashes. It's not that I'm taking it lightly.

It is His grace, His blessings. It is not for you to advertise on the road.

How to behave as a guest? How to behave as a host? We must learn it from Him.

They come around and serve us. Swami sits down and says, "Boys, you can start."

Just because He said so, we cannot gobble everything up. We must first start with a prayer.

He observes whether they say it. They all came fully trained at the hostel.

They studied here since their childhood, so they are a hundred times more careful than us.

They say their prayer, and then start eating. Swami's table is in the centre, and there is a silver plate.

They serve in it. There is a silver bowl and some Turkish towels. You should see His style of eating.

We must learn everything from Him, not just one or two things. We are constantly worried about when will He take my letter, or my flower.

Or who to complain about. I wonder when people with these cheap tactics would improve.

How delicately He eats! He mixes His food with the tips of His fingers, and eats like this.

There are no sticky rice grains around the lips, or Sambar dripping down the chin.

And then He washes His hands very delicately. I observed every aspect in Swami.

To tell you honestly, every aspect, including His dining habits, His social habits, as a manager, as a leader, what Swami is.

Because an Avatar has come down on earth to teach us the different aspects of life.

He took the form of an Avatar in order to teach through His life, not to give you rings and things. Those are given to you by Swami to attract you, and then to teach you.

After that, He could sit down, but no. He walks in between the tables.

He comes to me. Just as an example. He could go to anyone. I like pickles but there were none. What to eat? I eat whatever is there. "What? No pickles? Adjust for today. They are all North Indians, and from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka."

"They don't eat hot and spicy foods. But I brought jars of pickles for you. You can eat them tomorrow onwards, don't worry."

Then He said, "You should not waste food. You should eat everything. If we don't, they will think Swami doesn't like it."

"They will think Swami didn't like it because it didn't taste good, that's why no one ate it." "So don't waste anything, eat it." Then He goes to the next person, "Eat carefully."

I want to tell you how He teaches the students. There are all kinds of people. No one is at fault. Each one grows up according to how they were raised at home. One of them had food come up all the way up his fingers. "You're eating like a buffalo, why?"

"It looks like it's going all the way up to your wrist. You must learn how to eat properly."

He goes to another person. When he chews he makes noises that his neighbours can hear. Like he is grazing on grass. "What is that sound?" He says in a way not to hurt him.

He doesn't sit there and say it loudly. He says it softly, so as to not hurt him.

Even our mothers at home might scold us in front of everyone. We feel hurt. But He does not do that. Because they are all MSc and PhD students in their youth.

If He scolds them they would feel hurt. So He tells them softly so they can learn.

Suppose we like something like a potato fry. If we like it, He doesn't speak, but they serve potato fry in our plate.

No need to ask. No word. Everything gets done. After everyone is done, we must wash our hands.

There is no fighting in the queue for washing hands. First, the elders must wash their hands. The elders who sit in the front go all the way to the back and wash their hands first. Then the students go and wash their hands. "Hey boys, you are all tired. We'll talk tomorrow."

"All of you go and rest," He says and leaves. He comes to our room and says, "Anil, you and Joga Rao stay in this room."

"Where is your bed? This is your bed. That is Joga Rao's bed." One in front of the door, and the other across from it.

Joga Rao garu there, and me here. There is a person called Satchidananda, Nilgiri Hills District President, a great devotee.

He is a bachelor. He had some mills which He gave to Swami. He had a hearing problem. He completely surrendered to Swami. He would sit there. "They set it up? Very good."

He then went into the bathroom. "Is the flush working? How many towels did they keep?"

"Did they keep napkins? Did they set up a table to write? Did they keep some pens and papers?"

"Are there extra blankets?" He checks on all of these things.

Swami checks and then leaves. The next morning, we must go down.

In this way, there are a lot of sequences in Kodaikanal. On our first trip, before we went to Kodaikanal, Swami stopped at Ooty.

We went to Ooty as well. There was the Dalhousie building in Ooty. Swami took the Dalhousie building.

We stayed there. What beauty! The Dalhousie building was at the top of a hill.

From below, it looks like our stadium. Swami's school was also there. I was cold. I'm from Guntur, so Ooty and Kodaikanal were cold. "What Sir, are you cold?" He asked.

After dinner, He said, "This is your bedroom. Cover yourself with this blanket."

I covered myself with a blanket, but it wasn't enough, so I was still shivering.

"Hey," He said, and they set up a heater. Even after the set up the heater, I was still shivering.

Then Swami went upstairs and brought a rug and said, "This is my personal one."

"It is very soft. Hold it and see how soft it is. Now lay down," He said and spread it on top of me.

On that shawl, there were pictures of a deer and a tree painted on it.

"Lay down. Is it warm? Good night, Sir," Swami said and left.

In this way, my first trip to Ooty and Kodaikanal happened. There are more of Kodaikanal experiences coming up.

After that, after I joined in Bengaluru, He took me to Kodaikanal 3 or 4 times.

Those experiences are coming up. I think it is my blessing to share them with you.

My hope is that all of this is like a record. Staying with Swami for so long, I reminisce for myself.

Like old women used to say, my digestion is for myself. And so are my experiences are for myself?

No! It is necessary to share these with everyone. Especially because devotees are so anxious to hear them.

If we share even the smallest thing about Swami, they give their lives to hear it. They say, "Is that so? Is that so?" And so let's share those as well.