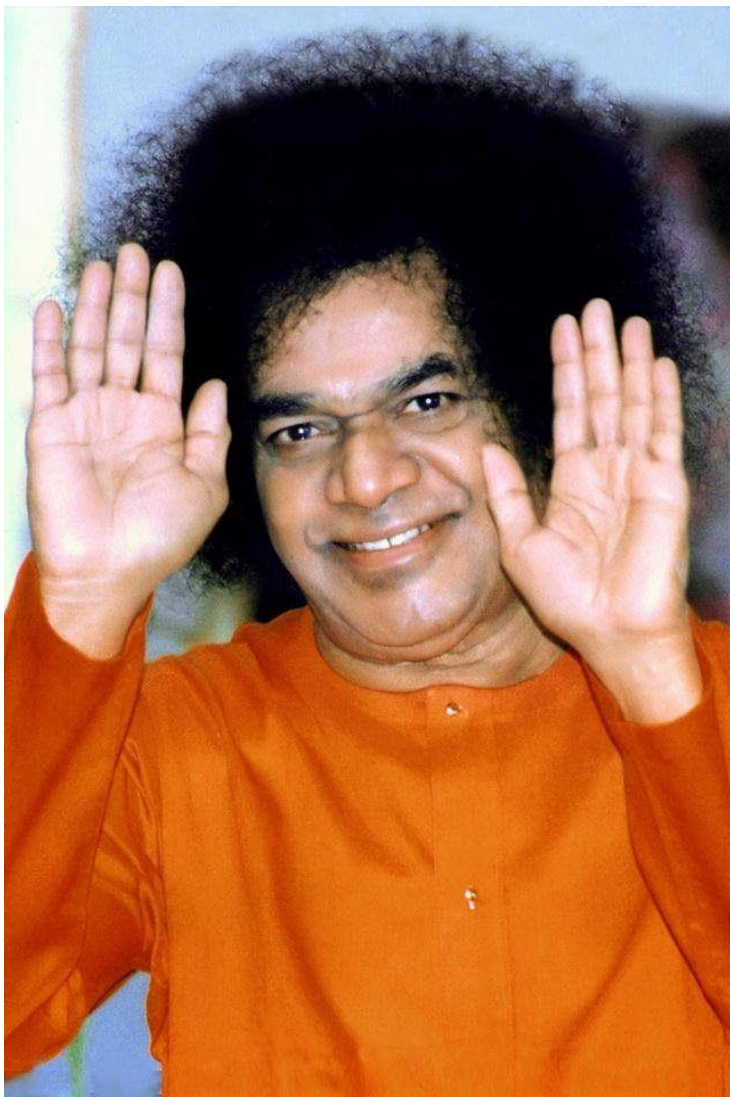


MODEL TO ROLE MODEL

Swami
Vasudevananda



Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

DEDICAT

BHAGAWAN SRI SATHYA SAI BABA

DEDICATION



SADGURU SRI MADHUSUDHAN SAI

I dedicate this book at the divine lotus feet
of Sadguru
Sri Madhusudhan Sai who is the very
embodiment of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai
Baba.

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AUM SRI SAI RAM

FOREWORD

‘Model to Role Model’ by Swami Sri Vasudevananda is a very interesting account of his spiritual journey from the *brahmacarya* to the *gr̥hastha aśrama* and then from the *gr̥hastha* to the *sanyāsa aśrama* through the stage of a long stint of selfless service to society, which can be compared to the *vānaprastha aśrama* in modern times. It is his good fortune that he is the first person to be initiated into regular *sanyāsa* by Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai without even asking for it on his part! For a spiritually inclined person, I should say, the book is ‘unputdownable’! I completed reading it in one sitting. Subtle humour that pervades the serious content of the book, makes it very enjoyable. Absolute sincerity that marks the whole narrative cannot be missed, and it reflects the author’s inner purity.

Anyone who reads this book will be struck by the author’s complete faith in Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and after the latter’s physical exit, in Sadguru Sri Madhusudan Sai, who today embodies within himself the Great Master. The progression of Swami Vasudevananda’s faith from Sri

Sathya Sai Baba to Sri Madhusudan Sai is as smooth as the progression of his life from the *brahmacarya* to the *sanyāsa* through the *gr̥hastha* and the *vanaprastha aśramas*. This clearly indicates his laudable capacity for spiritual insights, which can see the ‘substance’ without depending on the ‘external’. Not many can do what he has done with his implicit obedience to the words of his Master.

Taking up a life of complete renunciation within a month of passing of one’s life partner is an amazing act of total spiritual maturity. In strict adherence to his Master’s command, the author gave away all his wealth to his kith and kin, and the needy and donned the robes of a *sanyāsi* without a second thought. His sense of detachment and deep aspiration to attain the supreme goal of life is worthy of emulation by any serious spiritual seeker.

The essence of the book is captured graphically in the final narrative of his journey to Rishikesh and his month-long stay there, which is replete with the agonies and ecstasies of a pilgrim of life. His external and internal troubles and travails at Rishikesh coupled with his inner joy and fulfilment make this book very fascinating for any seeker.

Swami Vasudevananda is, no doubt, a *dhīrah* in the language of the *uṇiṣads*. *kaṭhōṇiṣad* (2. 1. 1.) proclaims:

ṇarāṇcīkḥāṇi vyatīṇat svayambhūḥ

tasmāt ṇarāṇ ṇāsyati nāntarātman |

kaścit dhīrah ṇratyagātṇāṇamaikṣat

āvṛtta cakṣuḥ amṛtatvamīcchan ||

“God has created the senses in such a way that they instinctively look only outward. Therefore, they see only outside and not the Self or God who resides within. But only a *dhīrah* or a hero, who aspires for immortality, turns his mind inward and sees the indwelling Self.”

Dr Hiramalini Seshadri, the well-known writer, has written a very apt and detailed preface for the book.

My dear readers, you have a spiritual treat in your hands!

29th May 2020

B. N. Narasimha Murthy

(Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence, Gulbarga)

AUM SRI SAI RAM

PREFACE

It was in his *Poorvashram* days that I first ran into Revered Swami Vasudevanandaji; at the IAS-SAI Study Circle Meetings of Tamilnadu, to be precise. My late father, Sri KC Sankaranarayanan, had been one of its senior most members. Swamiji, then known as ‘Brother Sapthaaham Vasudevan’, was the speaker; unlike the lofty philosophical talks usually rendered at this august gathering, his talk was simple and straight from the heart.

With innocence and great joy, he simply narrated what he directly experienced or witnessed in the hallowed precincts of Prasanthi Nilayam. I felt verily transported to Puttaparthi; to the Lord Himself! Thereafter I made it a point not to miss any Study Circle meet where he spoke. I remember hearing another electrifying talk by Swamiji, at the residence of fellow Sai devotee, Justice Karpagavinayagam.

My husband, Dr Seshadri and I had to make a trip to Higginbothams in the year 2000/ 2001 in connection with the distribution of the book, ‘God in our midst - Poornavathar Sri Sathya Sai Baba’, which Swami had Released. I was a bit nervous as to how a secular Western oriented book company would receive the book. So you can imagine how thrilled and relieved I was to find that the

Purchase Manager whom we were to meet, turned out to be – Brother Vasudevan! The Lord's *Sankalpa* doubtless! Needless to mention, the book received a warm welcome at Higginbothams; and my husband, and I became good friends with Brother Vasudevan.

I remember Swamiji of *Poorvashram* days, as an ideal householder Sai devotee; always impeccably dressed in crisp *Darshan* whites, ever smiling, ever ready to help; forever brimming with infectious enthusiasm. Both he and his lovely wife were totally immersed in Sai activities while their son was under Swami's direct care in the school in Prasanthi Nilayam; an ideal Sai family, one could say.

Two decades rolled by. In 2015, like sparrows whose legs were tied to a string, the Lord drew our family to Sathya Sai Grama. Brother Vasudevan was then, a pillar of the Sai organization in Tamilnadu. I was therefore, most pleasantly surprised, to see Brother Vasudevan, a few years later, up on the stage at Premamrutham! Both he and his devout wife were honoured by the Lord. Introduced as 'Sapthaaham Vasudevan', he was asked to talk. Dressed in immaculate whites as usual, his countenance radiating with joy at having 'found' his Master again, he gave a scintillating talk.

The fascinating story of a Westerner in the South Indian Canteen at Prasanthi Nilayam, that he narrated, really impacted me. Brother Vasudevan, who was doing *Seva* in

the canteen, had been dismayed when he saw the man bravely chomping his way through drumsticks, chillies, curry leaves and all! He thought the man did not know that only the soft innards needed to be consumed; and so he went up to the gentleman and told him that it was okay to leave uneaten, curry leaves, chillies and the tough rind of drumsticks. But the man just smiled his advice away. He said that Swami had Commanded him to eat EVERYTHING that was served; not to waste anything; and he was determined to obey Swami implicitly!

One sees reflections of this same implicit obedience to Swami, and total surrender, throughout this book, ‘Model to Role Model’; indeed that is the single most valuable take away for all of us who read this wondrous tale.

In October 2019 our family was blessed to be at Sathya Sai Grama for Dussehra. We were astounded then, to see Brother Vasudevan in a mendicant’s ochre robes! He recognized my husband, Dr.Seshadri, rightaway; and we got talking. He then told us about the passing away of his dear *Poorvashram* life partner, Aruna; and of his having received *Deeksha* from Swami. What struck us most was the stoic detachment in his demeanour. It was just a few months after bereavement; but by Swami’s *Sankalpa* he had conquered grief. Here was one who had lost all; and yet he was full of cheer and his eyes glowed with *Bhakti* and *Prema* when he spoke of the Lord and Sadguru Madhusudan Sai.

My husband and I were in awe as we took his blessings and took leave. In the eyes of the world he had been just another ‘regular’ person. Yet by surrendering to the Lord, he now personified Viveka and *Vairagya*. We felt blessed to meet one such as him, who was patently on the path to Ascension. The secret to that was his total surrender to the Lord.

We subsequently heard him talk of his wondrous experiences; of how he had sought from the Lord one boon - ‘Make me another Madhusudan!’; and of his divine adventure to Vasishta *Gufa* and back. Little did I imagine then, that the Lord would use me as an instrument to edit and pen a Foreword for that wondrous story which unfolds in this book! I just feel most honoured and humbled; the Lord the Sole Doer - that is the Truth.

In this book Swamiji describes his rather chequered life journey which oscillated between the spiritual and the worldly. He writes of a childhood immersed in spirituality; a colourful youth when he had a brush with the world of modelling and even doing a movie role, to the great consternation of his parents, till Bhagawan Sathya Sai Baba put an end to it! He reveals his fortuitous initiation into the mystic and spiritual by Revered Mata Amritananda Mayi; only to be pushed back into the world to lead a householder’s life under the watchful gaze of his dearest Master, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He narrates how when finally life was chugging along smoothly, agony struck

with the Master unexpectedly leaving the physical before time; and how ecstasy followed when he re-connected with his beloved Master in the subtle, in Muddenahalli. Thereafter he describes how again agony and ecstasy alternated as life took tumultuous turns and threw him headlong into the mystical and spiritual once more. You just have to read this most wondrous tale!

Inwardly guided by Swami, the text was revamped and restructured; and Swami got some new content added by inwardly prompting me to jog Swami Vasudevanandaji's memory. But as far as possible, vis a vis language and style, editing has been minimized. Swami Vasudevanandaji's typical, quaint, Tamilnadu style English, has been maintained as it is, as far as possible. This was consciously done, to enable the reader enjoy the authentic flavor of the author's style of narration. Editing it to present it in proper Queen's English would take the soul out of the narrative. Bhagawan Baba has always said- it is better to be 'heartificial' than artificial; and His words were my guiding light!

Being part of this book has been a shower of Grace; gratitude beyond words to my Divine Father, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Who walks the earth as Sadguru Madhusudan Sai, for working through me! Most humble *Pranams* to Swami Vasudevanandaji too!

As it says in Shirdi Sai Baba's Satcharita, I pray dear Reader, that you and I too, in God's time, walk the steps that the great Nathas spoke of; and holding on to the Sadguru's Feet, may we too be blessed to realize and live life from our true, divine *Atmic* identity; just as Swami Vasudevanandaji is doing.

Godspeed and God Bless!

Jai Sairam!

Dr Hiramalini Seshadri MD

Singapore, May 2nd, 2020.

AUM SRI SAI RAM

REFLECTIONS

Here is the story of a genuine devotee of our Lord Sathya Sai - Swami Vasudevananda. He has given himself to sing the glory of our Lord and spread the message of His Love and mercy; like the celestial sage Narada.

As the iron filings are attracted to a Magnet, so also genuine devotee are drawn to divine beings. For a handsome and well educated young man to take to Sannyasa in an instant to serve the divine mother Mata Amritanandamayi in her Ashram, speaks volumes of his Viveka & Vairagya and of his past Samskaras with which he has been born.

It is amazing to know that Swamiji underwent an operation using Meditation as Anesthesia.

What pleases the Lord most is Implicit obedience to His word. Not many practice this noble quality of surrender; and so remain ordinary. Swamiji took to Baba's word and entered into wedlock and fulfilled the duties of a householder, without forgetting the goal human life.

Swami Vasudevananda, as an active member of the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organization, took up several service projects. The most unique among those activities was being an inspiring speaker; and he delivered around 250 week long discourses. This kind of service by any single

individual is unheard of, anywhere in the world in the Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organization. His talks inspired young and old alike and attracted thousands of people into our Lord's fold.

This unique service of sharing the Lord's glory helped him to develop right discrimination and devotion. So Swamiji could recognize the continuation of the mission of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, through His able and noble instrument Sadguru Sri Madhusudhan Sai after shedding the mortal coil.

He is the only one to receive the Sannyasa directly from Sadguru Sri Madhusudhan Sai till date. When commanded by His master, Swamiji spent month long blissful days of Sadhana in the famous Vasishtha caves in Rishikesh.

Model to Role Model is an interesting and inspiring autobiography for all devotees and seekers of Truth.

I consider it a great honour to write my reflections on this wonderful book and I express my loving gratitude to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai and sincere thanks to Swami Vasudevananda for this opportunity.

With sincere Pranams to Swamiji and praying to our Divine Master to shower His choicest blessings on Swamiji to realise the purpose of this life by spreading His message all through the globe.

In His service

Sri Venkateswarlu Vanka

(Administrator & Warden, Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Kendra,
Muddenahalli)

Sathya Sai Grama , Muddenahalli Date : 30-05-2020

AUM SRI SAI RAM

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sairam!

My humble salutations at the divine Lotus Feet of our most beloved Sadguru Sri Madhusudhan Sai who is the very embodiment of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

It was on His divine command that this book took birth in the precincts of Sri Sathya Sai Grama, Muddenahalli. It is a blessing for me to author this book. I pray that it re-connects millions of devotees to the Lord; that the divine experiences shared attract all to the Divine Magnet. May all enjoy the Lord; the thrill of proximity to the divine and experiencing His unconditional divine love! May this book connect all readers to our Lord!

It is my privilege to now thank and acknowledge all the persons involved in this divine endeavour.

Above all I thank Sri B. N. Narasimha Murthy Sir , affectionately addressed as “Anna” by everybody here in the Sai circle at Muddenahalli Ashram. The Chancellor of Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence , Gulbarga, whom I term as the “Walking encyclopedia”, he is one who is engrossed in Swami’s work round the clock . My heart

melted when he agreed to give the Foreword for this divine book in spite of his most busy schedule.

I feel short of words to thank Dr. Hiramalini Seshadri , a very close family friend who gave this book great quality by editing it. She took such a personal interest in the book and did her work with total *Shraddha*; to make Swami happy. Heartfelt gratitude to her for writing the Preface for the book as well, on the Lord's command. I know her for long. I had met her many years ago, in Higginbothams in Chennai, when she approached the company to market her first book on Swami. Her dedication is simply awesome and mind blowing; She is always ahead of the timeline; whenever I mailed a draft of the book, she would edit it with such devotion and dedication; and revert so very fast! May Swami bless her with a long and most blissful life. Although I am the author of the book, I must say this book is verily her own child.

My loving gratitude to Sri Venkateswarlu Vanka Sir who is the Administrator & Warden of Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Kendra , Muddenahalli. I know him from my Puttaparthi days. He is devoted to the core; and just by seeing him we feel Swami's presence. He is the most humble person I have ever met; who always mesmerises everyone with his divine smile. I feel all Swami's devotees should be like him. When I requested him to pen down few words about this

book, he graciously agreed; and has penned a soul stirring message titled, 'Reflections' for this book.

My gratitude to Smt. Aruna Vasudevan's son Sri T.E. Aditya who added some light to this book.

One day when I was wondering how to pen down my experiences of Vashisita *Gufa* I recollected Swami's command. Swami had made me deliver a talk on the same topic in Premamrutam auditorium in Muddenahalli, When I was wondering how to go forward, I met Vinay Hooli a faculty member from Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Kendra Muddenahalli. I had tremendous confidence after talking to him for he bubbled with enthusiasm; I felt really overwhelmed and encouraged. Vinay gave me all assistance in putting down my thoughts; he served in so many ways to bring out this book. Regarding the work he did for this book, he always mentioned that it was Swami's blessing; a blessed opportunity to serve the Lord. He helped me a lot in this endeavour. May Swami bless him with all good things in life.

My heartfelt thanks to the students of Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Kendra , Muddenahalli; to Yogeeshwaran, Omprakash Shabadi, Saishankar Narayanan, Aryanrajesh Vychal, AnandvardhanSai and others who volunteered and dedicated their valuable time despite their classes, for the book.

My sincere gratitude to a very devoted soul, Srividya Karthik a Sai sister from Bengaluru, and her parents Smt. S. Saroja and Sri S. Sivakumar. They were instrumental in getting me started; jotting my thoughts down in words as I began the book. The first half of the book got done with their help. They had attended my *Sapthahams* in Tamil Nadu and were very eager to do this work.

I whole heartedly thank each and everyone involved in making this book a great grand success. May Swami bless them with all the good things in life.

But for Sri Sadguru Sri Madhusudhan Sai's Grace and guidance this book would not have seen the light of the day .

Offering this book at His Divine Lotus Feet.

Sairam !

Swami Vasudevananda ,

(Sathya Sai Grama , Muddenahalli)

30th May 2020

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AUM SRI SAIRAM

MODEL TO ROLE MODEL

My humble *Pranams* at the Divine Lotus Feet of Sadguru Sri Madhusudhan Sai, who is the very embodiment of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. As per His divine command, and by His Grace, I herewith narrate the amazing story of my pilgrimage to Vasishtha *Gufa* in the Himalayas.

My Childhood:

In retrospect, I realise that actually the journey began as this lifetime began. I was extremely fortunate; as I was born into a very spiritual family. My father was an ardent devotee of Sri Ramana *Maharishi*. Likewise, my mother was a devotee of Shirdi Sai Baba from a young age. I was their second child. Right from childhood, I was drawn to spiritual matters. I loved singing *Bhajans* and reciting *Slokas*. As a child I attended the *Bala Vihar* of the Chinmaya Mission in Chennai.

As a five year old, I remember participating in a recitation competition organised by the Chinmaya Mission, in Chennai. Swami Chinmayananda himself happened to preside over it. I recited the *Thotakashtakam* on Lord Siva as well as the 15th Chapter of *Bhagavad Geetha*. Pleased with my performance, I remember Swami Chinmayananda called me on the stage and embraced me. He blessed me saying I would become a good speaker. He also presented me with an *Agarbathi* stand made of sandalwood. Perhaps it is the power of that blessing; later in life I became a speaker on spiritual topics! And His prophecies came true.

During my childhood days, my parents took me to many temples including Karneshwarar temple in Saidapet , Chennai, to listen to discourses by Shri. Kripananda Varriar, Santhanagopalacharya, Pulavar Keeran and many others. Listening to them I developed a desire to emulate them in future. I had God-sent opportunity to have *Darshan* of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. I had his first *Darshan* in 1969 at Guindy Sai Baba temple in Chennai and Swami blessed me with His Divine *Abhayabastha*. Even though I

was only a small boy at that time, I strongly felt that I have met my God. Thus, began my spiritual journey.

Initiation into Spirituality:

After studies I began to work as a sales executive. But my heart was in spirituality. I wanted to live a life of *Sannyasi*. I was posted as a sales executive of M/S Sen & Pandit Ltd. a company headquartered at Calcutta. I was selling cycles and their spare parts in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. While I was in Alleppey in Kerala on business, I went to a firm named M/S. S. Rama Iyer and company. The owner observed that I spoke more about the spiritual than about sales! He noticed that I had deep reverence for Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He suggested that I visit one Amma at Vallikaavu *Ashram* nearby. Amma was none other than the great saint, Mata Amritanandamayi.

Meeting Beloved Amma:

During those early days Amma used to give *Darshan* in *Kali Bhavam* and *Krishna Bhavam*. In the first *Darshan* itself, Amma embraced me and told me that she used to hear the

Sri Sathya Sai Baba *Bhajans* which I usually sang. She asked whether I would sing for her, the *Bhajans* ‘*Govinda Krishna Jai, Gopala Krishna Jai*’ and ‘*Namah Parvati Pataye Hara*’. When I sang those *Bhajans* she shed tears of joy and asked me if I would be happy to stay in her *Asbham* permanently as a *Brahmachari*.

Since my dream was that of leading the life of a *Brahmachari* and eventually becoming a *Sadhu*, I was delighted to get such an opportunity. She told me however, that first, I had to get my parents’ permission to join the *Asbham*. In our family I was very free, frank and jovial always. I casually informed my mother that I was going to become a *Sannyasi* and wanted her blessings. My mother thought that I was not really serious; she took it as a normal conversation and agreed. With the satisfaction of getting permission from my mother, I went and joined the *Asbham* at Kozhikode(Kerala) . Amma asked me whether I had informed my parents to which I replied in the affirmative. She then permitted me to stay with Her.

At that time, I was actually supposed to be working in a company in Bengaluru. But there I was, happily ensconced in what I loved most- *Ashram* life; most youngsters would have found it uncomfortable, restrictive and tough; but for me it was heaven! After nine months when I did not go home, my parents had a doubt. They called the company and asked them about my whereabouts. My parents were informed that I had left the company nine months back. After inquiries, my parents came to know my whereabouts and came to Vallikaavu in Kerala to take me back home.

***Ashram* Days with Beloved Amma:**

But let me share some of the events of those blissful, unforgettable, divine nine months. During those nine months, I was instructed by Amma not to speak to anybody else other than Amma and to observe complete silence. I just acted as if I was dumb. People in the *Ashram* perhaps thought that I was unable to speak! Amma had given me *Mantra Deeksha* also. I used to chant the *Mantras* and do meditation continuously for even up to 8 hours. An

amazing mystical experience was that when I craved Her Presence if I chanted the *Mantra* with *Shraddha*, She would physically appear and grant me *Darshan*.

Lost in meditation, often I would forget to eat. Amma would then feed me with her own hand. During evening *Darshan* I was blessed to be the personal assistant of Amma. She was verily the Divine Mother; and during the intense *Bhava Darshan*, I would wipe the beads of perspiration on her brow and attend to Her personal needs. I also managed the entry of people for *Darshan*. Every night I used to sing the two *Bhajans* for Amma before She retired for the day. Sometimes the *Darshan* stretched up to 3.00am or 4:00am depending on the devotees. Only after seeing everyone, Amma returned to Her room. My duties would end when she finally retired for the day.

I meditated intensively along with my roommate, a humble fellow seeker and a devotee of Lord Krishna, named Venu. Our accommodation was a hut. It was near the Arabian Sea and there were many types of snakes around. They

even climbed on us as they moved. But Amma had told us not to bother and they would not harm us. We implicitly believed her. The snakes often slithered on us; but never scared us. Even now I feel it was a miracle!

Meditation as Anaesthesia:

There was another thing that happened during the seventh month of my stay in Ammas' *Ashram* . I had something like a big cyst in my neck and it started growing more. Amma asked me to go and get it operated. But when insisted that I did not want to be operated, she said that she would not manifest *Vibhuti* like Sathya Sai Baba. She said in a lighter vein that if she made a *Sankalpa* it could be cured. But she said that it was *Karmic* in nature and that it was better to finish with the *Karma* by an operation. She then sent me to the Government Hospital in Alleppey, Kerala, along with a *Brahmachari* as a caretaker .

The operation took place in the Government Hospital at Alleppey. On reaching the hospital the doctor told me that the operation had to be done immediately. I consented but

there was a problem; the doctor said that there was no stock of anaesthetic. I told the doctor that I would sit in meditation and that the doctor could operate on me without anaesthesia. After initial scepticism, he proceeded to conduct the operation. I went into deep meditation and did not feel even a mosquito bite of pain! After the operation, the doctor shook me awake. He wondered whether I 'had the skin of a buffalo', since I did not stir during the operation and even when four stitches were made! He also showed me the cyst he had removed.

Even Amma was surprised to know that my surgery was done without anaesthesia. I had followed the *Jyoti* meditation taught by Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

Mystic Experiences:

After two days at the hospital, I returned to Alleppey camp where Amma was staying. Amma came running and embraced me and fed me *idlis* with her hand. To this date, I have not forgotten her kindness and love. She enquired repeatedly whether there was any pain. My simple response

was that since both Amma and Sri Sathya Sai Baba were there with me how could there be any pain! She took care of me lovingly. Even before all this, we used to tour many places in Kerala singing *Bhajans*. She would address me as ‘Madhavan Kutty’. She revealed that she was addressing me thus, as in a previous lifetime that was the name I bore; and in that lifetime I had been in Kerala looking after temples of Kerala!

Strangely, whenever we visited any devotees residence, Amma asked the host to do *Pada Puja* to me first and then only to her! During those visits, many devotees took the *Shri Padam* water and then went to Amma for the *Pada Puja*. I was somehow never conscious of all the attention. As I was in the state of meditation and never spoke to anybody. Once in a way I was aware of it and wondered what was happening; but soon would lapse back into meditation.

Back to the World:

Suddenly one day, after nine months at the *Ashtam*, I was called and informed that my parents were coming. Amma then commanded me to break my *Mouna* (silence). She said that I had to talk normally to my parents and return home. As you can imagine, I was really upset. I asked her the reason for this ‘unfortunate’ turn of events. She replied that I had to return home because Amma’s elder brother, Sri Sathya Sai Baba, (Amma used to refer to Sri Sathya Sai Baba as Her elder brother) refused to part with Vasudevan; as he was destined to be an instrument in spreading Sri Sathya Sai Baba’s Messages in future.!

I wept as I was very attached to her. Amma also wept. I asked her what I should do. The All-Knowing Saint, Mata Amritananda Mayi, who was literally Amma to me, told me that I should not only go back but also get married to a girl who had been my wife for the last six lifetimes.. If I did not marry her in this birth, I would have to take another birth to work out the *Karma*. As a householder, I could still play a

role in Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Mission. "Your bride will come soon. You must get married and finish your *Karma*." Saying so Amma blessed me.

It was all a bit too much for me. I was not ready to go back into the world. Somehow, after much coercion I agreed to go back; but on the condition that I would be permitted to return back to (Amma's) *Ashram*. Amma saw me off to Chennai with a heavy heart . She even gave me some money. After returning to Chennai I confined myself to my room.

My parents realised that one could get Vasudevan out of the *Ashram* but not get the *Ashram* out of Vasudevan! I made my room my '*Ashram*' and spent all my time in *Sadhana*. Food would be brought to me to my room from time to time. I kept silent; not conversing with anyone. I grew a beard and *Jatamudi*(long hair) and was engrossed in deep meditation. I was very thin as I was taking just a glass of porridge in the '*Ashram*' and a coffee or tea in the

evening. But my eyes were glowing, and I felt divine; as if I was Lord Parameshwara (Shiva) himself.

Slowly however, I realised that I ought to support myself. Slowly, doubtless by Baba's *Sankalpa* and with the Blessings of Amma, I took baby steps back into the world. I applied for jobs; and resumed work once more, as a sales executive; this time, in a company called Anubhuthi Commercial located in Bengaluru dealing with PVC products. Unknown to me, my parents were busy with plans to tie me down in wedlock; they had begun 'bride hunting' for me! I was happy to be in Bangalore as I could go to Baba's *Ashram* in Whitefield and get His *Darshan* whenever He was there. His smile would make me feel like I had attained *Nirvana*!

Marriage:

One day, I received a telegram from my father informing me that he found a suitable match for me. He wanted me to go to Chennai immediately to formally 'see the bride'. I was aghast; as I certainly did NOT want to get married! So I spoke to my mother and made it very clear to her that I

did not want to marry. I felt it would hamper my *Brahmachari* dreams. My parents were very upset. In fact my mother was so upset that she told me she would end her life if I refused to get married! That only made me more furious and in a fit of anger I told her to go ahead and do whatever she wanted to.

To this day I regret having spoken so harshly to my mother. The fact was that I had mentally decided that my life was dedicated to Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and that was it. My parents had already thwarted my spiritual dreams when they took me away from Vallikkavu; and I was determined not to allow it to happen again. I wanted only Baba; not marriage. But all this parental pressure was getting a bit too much for me. Who else did I have, to turn to for help, other than my dear Bhagawan!

So finally, armed with my father's telegram, I went to Bhagawan. I was determined to do ONLY Swami's bidding, I set out for the Whitefield *Asbaram*. On March 1st,

1988 I went to have a *Darshan* of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba in Whitefield.

Swami being all knowing, knew what had transpired between me and my parents. He came close to me and gave me a very stern look. That was the first time I had experienced His anger. Even today, when I recollect the tough look He gave me, I get shivers down my spine and my eyes fill up. With all the yearning I could muster I tried to explain from the heart- “Swami! I did all this only for You! So that I can be with you. I don’t want marriage! I want You!”.

I had kept the telegram given by my father in my pocket with a mental prayer, or rather challenge to the Lord, that I would marry ONLY if He personally, directly, told me to do so. However, before I could take that telegram out, Swami came near me. And He SMILED!! I was overjoyed; I thought He was in agreement with my plan. But He had different plans! He bent low and whispered ever so sweetly into my ear, “She is waiting for you. Go and marry.”

A Couple Wedded to Swami:

I came out of the *Asbham* in a daze. It did not matter who the girl was. Swami had commanded me to enter into *Grabasta Asbham*, ie, a householder's life. I phoned my father and told him to go ahead with the alliance he had fixed for me. Swami got us married on June 16, 1988. We were soon blessed with a baby boy and Swami named him Sainath. We fondly called him Adithya as I loved Surya, the Sun God, from childhood. In fact right from a very young age, I used to constantly chant the *Adithya Hrudhayam*.

Together, as husband and wife we joined the local Sathya Sai Samithi and became regular at *Bhajans* and in doing *Seva*. As I was spiritually inclined, invariably spiritual duties at the *Samithi* were often entrusted to me. Going to Puttaparthi was the high point of life.

When Adithya was five and half years old, I put him in Swami's school in Puttaparthi and he continued as Swami's student for 15 years. As our son was studying in

Puttaparthi, on the pretext of meeting our son, we used to visit Puttaparthi twice a month. My real reason was that I longed to have the Lord's *Darshan* and bask in His Grace. Swami showered His Love on us every time. Only those who have experienced Swami's Love will be able to understand my feelings.

Whenever I had *Darshan* of Baba in Puttaparthi, He would lovingly asked me in Tamil, '*Ennamma edhukku vandhe?*' . It means, "My dear what is the reason for your visit?"

I would always reply, 'Swami We have not come here on our own but your love has brought us here!.'

To that, He always responded with great love, exclaiming softly, 'Oh!'

He used to pronounce that 'Oh', just like a Malayali; a Keralite; with the typical inflexions with which Malayalis uttered it! My spiritual initiation was in Kerala with Amma. So it was doubly lovable- hearing Bhagawan Say, 'Oh!', as Keralites did. He must have said this to me countless times.

I used to think that it must have been due to the merits of countless births!

Life in Swami's Organisation:

Simultaneously, my journey in Swami's organisation progressed steadily. I had been spiritual coordinator in Ice-House Sathya Sai Samithi in Tamilnadu and I served as a spiritual co-ordinator and later became the convenor too. I loved narrating Swami's *Leelas*; and soon by Swami's *Sankalpa*, I was given the wondrous task of conducting week long talks on the Lord and His story- *Sapthahams*, at various places in and around Tamil Nadu.

Life went on like that, enjoying a happy householder's life. I was blessed with an ideal wife and son; and Swami's proximity and attention whenever we went for His *Darshan*. Swami-related work at the *Samithi* which I simply loved to be part of filled my time after office hours. My wife Smt. Aruna supported me cent percent. Together we travelled the length and breadth of Tamilnadu at our own cost, conducting week long programs called *Sapthahams*. We were

blessed to represent Swami's organisation, delivering *Sapthabams* on Swami's life; His *Leelas*, His Mission. Life was one happy divine sojourn.

2011- A Rude Shock:

It was a rude shock for all of us, when Swami left His physical form on 24th April 2011. We wept like children.. On that fateful day, I was doing a *Sapthabam* in Tiruchengode (Namakal Dist. of Tamil Nadu) . There were many questions about why Swami Who had assured us that He would be around till the age of 96, left us well before that.

Only Swami's Grace enabled me answer those questions. I told them that Swami is / was / will be always there; His body will come and go as He pleases. What comes and goes is the body. God is always with us. Was there no God before Baba was born? Can He not take care of us from *Vaikuntam*? He has just given us the experience and gone. We should keep ruminating about the experience much like a cow chewing the cud, I said.

I was asked by the organization not to come to Puttaparthi for the obsequies but to stay in the field and counsel devotees; to advise people not to mourn as they do for a normal human being. The organization believed that my words would carry weight with devotees. It was indeed a tough time. Only I know the difficulties I faced in Tiruchengode! By Swami's Grace I could overcome everything. Work in the Sai organisation continued; and accompanied by my devout wife, I stoically carried on with the *Sapthahams*.

Once, a friend, Mr Bala from Mumbai asked me if I could go over to Mumbai and do the program. But as per Organization rules, I was to conduct these programs only in Tamil Nadu. When I asked them whether I could go to Mumbai, I was told that if not through the organization, I could do that program in my individual capacity. So, I went to Mumbai and conducted programs in Chembur Murugan temple, Rama temple, Tamil Samajam.

God Beckons:

I stayed with Mr Bala in his residence. He kept requesting me to visit Muddenahalli and talked at length about Brother Madhusudan. Bala said Brother Madhusudan was a divine soul and that Swami communicated through him. He also showed me a chain and bracelet materialized by Brother Madhusudan. But I was not convinced about (Swami) entering and talking through someone else's body. Besides I had been in the organization for a long period of 27 years and my loyalty lay there.

The organisation did not accept Brother Madhusudan. I knew that. I had delivered many lectures representing the organisation in Tamilnadu. Spending my own money, which I believed was Swami's money I had so far conducted 247 programs, throughout Tamil Nadu. Each program was for seven days. The *Sapthahams* were very popular; and inspired by Swami's story, many people became devotees and joined *Samithis*.

It inspired many volunteers to volunteer for *Prasanthi seva*, and Swamis' literature sold like hot cakes particularly *Rama Kathaa Rasa Vahini*. The *Sapthahams* also helped increase the circulation on *Sanathana Sarathi*, the monthly Tamil publication of the organization. If I went to Muddenahalli the organisation would be up against me; and the resultant confusion could adversely affect the organisation. I was very much an 'organisation man'; and so I was hesitant to accept the subtle form of the Lord.

Mr Bala however, by Swami's *Sankalpa* doubtless, in hindsight, would not give up. He gave me Brother Madhusudhans' number and suggested that I talk to him. I did not want to talk to Brother Madhusudan. I sent him a WhatsApp message mentioning that "Mr Bala was telling me that you, (ie Brother Madhusudhan), were God to him; that my Lord, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, is verily expressing Himself through you. But I am not sure. If that is so , please call me."

Almost immediately (the very next second) I got a response from Brother Madhusudan saying “Swami likes you. Swami wants to speak to you. Come immediately.!” I was asked to visit Muddenahalli on the 9th of May 2018. I responded by messaging him that 6th May was Eswaramma day and that would be an ideal date. I got the response, "SAI RAM". I could not decipher what that meant.

I was also confused, as my mind came into play. Having spent so much time in the organization and earning a good name, do you want to lose it all?- my monkey mind confused me. If someone visited Muddenahalli, one could not continue in the organization as the rules were strict. I did not know what to do and kept thinking. The more I thought, the more confused I became! It was my wife Smt. Aruna who gave me clarity. She told me, “You challenged God; and you got an immediate answer. Now you need to accept the opportunity to meet Swami!” That was it. We went back to Chennai from Mumbai.

In Hindsight:

Actually, even before Mr Bala mentioned about Brother Madhusudan and urged me to go to Muddenahalli, another Sai brother had briefed me about Muddenahalli; One Mr Kalyanaraman who was the convenor of Mahalakshmi Nagar Samithi in Chennai. He, in fact had given me several books about the post Mahasamadhi Mission, and I had read them. I was also given the monthly publication '*Amruta Vahini*'. But I continued to sit on the fence. Obviously my time had not come!

During that period many people asked me about Brother Madhusudhan; and seek my opinion on whether they should visit Muddenahalli. My tactful, diplomatic response used to be that God is everywhere and Swami had always said that everyone is God. When Swami said that you and me are divine then why not in a Brother Madhusudhan.?!

Going to meet God:

It was finally with brother Kalyanaraman that we were destined to go to Muddenahalli. On the 6th of May 2018, we

set out by car with Mr Kalyanaraman and his family. It was my first visit to Muddenahalli and there was a buzz going around that Swami was about to arrive in a helicopter. Just when we entered the entrance gate, for some strange reason, Mr Kalyanaraman asked me the meaning of the word, *Avatar*. I told him that it referred to God coming down – not to be taken as someone coming down from a higher position from above but much like a mother bending down to lift her child out of love.

An *Avatar* was God coming down to uplift us all. We were all very lucky to be born in this century and not earlier or later. Just being a contemporary of Baba itself is enough for our liberation and we need not do anything else, I began pontificating. We call Lord Krishna a *Poorna Avatar*. Swami is *Paripoorna Avatar* and *Brahmanda Nayaka*. He can do anything. He had proved many times that He was God. There was no need to prove it again. Personally, also He had proved to me many times that He was God. Some people used to say that He is God because He manifested *Vibhuti* and other articles. It is not so. It is His power to

transform us that makes Him God; the transformation of the hearts and minds of people – like changing a dandy or even an utterly spoilt brat into a saint..

Rewind to ‘Model’ and ‘Role”Days:

While on the topic of spoilt brats and dandies, perhaps it would be in context to confess that thanks to destiny, I did have a rather ‘dandy’ stint in my youth. I was blessed with good looks and therefore, in my younger days, ie well before marriage, (in fact well before my initiation into spirituality by Revered Amma), I was a model for lungis manufactured by Abubacker & Company, Erode. I was called through M/s Chari Advertisers, Chennai for the project. The scene involved some cinema actresses tugging at my lungi and some other similar scenes; quite out of step with my later life as a pure *Sannyassi*

I was also a model for a moped manufactured by our company M/s Sen & Pandit Ltd. There were even life size cut outs of this in Thirunelveli bus stand! All this just goes to show that spirituality can ‘happen’ to anyone! I used to

dress well as a youngster; in fact I used to take great pride in being well turned out. So much so, I was invited to be a model for a well known tailor shop (boutique in modern terms!) in Trichy, Tamil Nadu; and was the ‘dapper cool guy’ in a Bank of Madura ad! In youthful flights of fancy, I even seriously contemplated a career, or at least a parallel career in modelling!

Modelling is invariably a stepping stone to movies; and presently, one of our neighbours in Ashok Nagar, Chennai, one Mr P. A. Backer an award-winning director of Malayalam movies approached me with a ‘Role’ in a film! He was making a movie titled ‘*Suvanna Vithukkal*’, which was about the red-light area of Mumbai. He used to tell me that I had good looks and invited me to act in films. In my maiden debut, I even acted in some scenes of the movie. But behind the scenes, in retrospect, I realise, that Swami was the Real Movie Director!

In one of the scenes, while the character who played my father in the movie, (the womaniser bad guy) was seen

chasing women, I, playing the goody goody son, was shown singing '*Govinda Krishna Jai*'! In another scene, while the 'father' was shown downing Chivas Regal and singing bawdy tunes, yours truly, playing the role of 'dutiful son', was asked to do "*Achamaneeyam*" (routine worship with water) as done in *Sandhya Vandanam* on the sets! In yet another scene, the Bohemian 'father' was shown smoking cigarettes and opium while I had to act as an ascetic performing a *Yagna* with *Agni* in front of the camera! Swami was making me play the roles that would become my real life roles later on. As a youngster, I had thought that it was alright to accept the movie role; after all, I had the opportunity to sing the *Bhajan* '*Govinda Krishna Jai*'! But my parents were mortified; and they castigated me; no way did they want their son to become a film star; and they put an end to my budding acting career.

Swami Decides my Role in Life:

I felt they were stifling me! So I went to Puttaparthi. I wanted direction from Swami; nothing less. I got token no:

seven and was sitting in row three. Swami came directly to me and asked me to show my hand. He appeared to write something on my hand. Then He put His tongue out and wagging His index finger, He reprimanded me and cautioned me never again to venture into the world of cinema,.

To my dismay and astonishment, after that, I lost all my interest in cinema and could not even bear to watch a movie! I used to feel nausea if I ever sat down to see a movie! My liking for cinema was gone. I am eternally grateful to Swami for taking me out of the *Maya* of showbiz. Except for listening to some movie songs, I completely lost interest in movies. My role as a model and acting roles in movies thus came to an end; little did I realise that Swami had a totally different role planned for me. Now let us revert to that most auspicious day when I was blessed to set foot in Muddenahalli.

Setting Foot In God's Own Land:

As destined by the Lord, along with Sri Kalyanaraman, we reached Muddenahalli *Ashram*. As soon as we entered, Mr Srikanth who is in charge of book shop came running to us and asked us not to worry about accommodation; but to run as Swami was just arriving by helicopter. I could see Swami even when the helicopter was airborne. It was the first time that I was seeing Brother Madhusudan and I was very happy. I rued the fact that I had lost such opportunities for so long.

Brother Madhusudan then got into a car and the car began moving slowly between rows of devotees who had come running to receive the Lord. I was standing along with my wife and the security guard on one side with brother Kalyanaraman. He blessed me from the car and I could catch His lip movement saying, '*Vaango*' in Tamil, which means, 'Please come'.

My wife was looking for Swami in the front seat. After the car passed by, and I told her what had transpired between

me and Brother Madhusudan, she was disappointed as she had missed seeing Brother Madhusudhan. As Swami's communicator, those days, he would sit in the rear seat along with Shri Narasimha Murthy. As if to pacify Smt. Aruna, Swami's car came again our way! Swami then, rolled down the windows and blessed my wife and said '*Undandi, Undandi*'(wait wait) in Telugu. In a sense Swami coming down in a helicopter from the skies to us, His *Darshan*, was very much like my definition of the term '*Avatar*', during the impromptu chat we had, just a while ago, as we neared the *Ashram*. In real life too, He literally coming down from above in His helicopter!

“Ennamma Edhukku Vandhe”?

On the 6th May, we were seated among VIPs in Premamrutham Hall which is like the royal court of Lord Indra. When Brother Madhusudan came, I must confess that I was still a doubting Thomas. I just didn't have the feeling that it was 'my Swami'; and was even thinking that he was just imitating Swami by throwing chocolates. I even

apologized in my mind to ‘my real Swami’ for going over to Muddenahalli. I felt I had made a mistake; and for this act of commission, kept repeatedly apologizing to Swami. As Swami neared, Mr Bala said, 'I have brought *Sapthaham* Vasudevan'. Swami replied, ‘Yes. I know.’

I did not have the inclination to do *Pada Namaskar*; my thought process was, “How can I, touch the feet of a student?”!! Because of the turmoil in my mind, I was in a dilemma and was avoiding eye contact with Brother Madhusudan, The all Knowing One, through Brother Madhusudan, touched me on my shoulder and asked, '*Ennamma, edhukku vandhe?*' in Tamil! I was stunned! It was Swami’s Voice; no doubt about it! I could see only Brother Madhusudan; but He asked me this in Swami's voice!

Then I said 'Swami' and looked Him in His eyes. He said, "*Adhe Swamithaan.*(It is the same Swami) You come to Sri Sathya Sai Anandam tomorrow. Swami will give you an interview at 11 a.m.”

All doubts vanished! I KNEW that instant that it was verily my Swami!! My joy knew no bounds!. I took *Pada Namaskar*, and I felt the Presence of the same Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba who had been my life and soul. He had not left us! I felt He was verily in front of me in Muddenahalli! How fortunate we are, said my heart!

The First Inner View:

We were eagerly waiting for the interview, rather, Inner View, the next day, much like someone waiting to be married. This was indeed a divine romance. We had taken a lot of dry fruits, etc to the interview as it's a custom when you visit a divine personality. He asked in Tamil, 'Oh! *Sampradayama?*(is it a custom). He said, very good that you are following everything as per the custom. Swami had given an interview about 20 years back to my wife Smt. Aruna in Puttaparthi. The beauty of this interview was that He picked up from where He stopped in that earlier interview! Swami then started telling some information that

was known to me and my wife only. We could not bear it and started crying in extreme joy.!

He then asked if we still had doubt and said He was the same Swami. He said that not many knew about *Sookshma Sai* (Subtle form) “I only invite those whom I want to Sri Sathya Sai Anandam”, He declared; and He then blessed me. He manifested a chain made of *Navaratnas*, ie, (9 gems) with Swami's pendant and gave it to me. He assured that He would take care of me. He said that he would take me to all places, like the USA, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Dubai. “You will spread my glory in all these places and through you, many people will come to Muddenahalli”, He said.

He added that my talks would be good since I had the blessings of Goddess Saraswathi. He encouraged me by saying that wherever I spoke He would be sitting nearby and listening. We fell at His Lotus feet and said, 'I rue for having not come to You earlier! We missed this opportunity till today'. He told me that the time had come

only now for me and that I was His own. My wife Smt. Aruna immediately asked, 'why him only?!' He assured her that it included her too. He then gave me a silk dhoti and a lovely green silk saree to my wife. He asked her to wear it for our 30th wedding anniversary (16th June 2018).

Second Honeymoon with The Lord:

True to His Word, Swami so arranged events that we were sent to Malaysia and Penang to give talks on the Lord. Sai brother Jullius from Malaysia arranged all our 23 talks in 20 days. We returned back to Chennai and proceeded immediately to the *Bhumi Pooja* ceremony for the school coming up at Madurai. He also invited us accompany Him to Kodaikanal. He gave us a *Pada Namaskar* in the dining hall in Kodaikanal . That was the last *Pada Namaskar* that we had together.

We came back to Chennai and then went to Dharapuram to speak for three days Of course with the permission from Swami. Back in Chennai, we were planning our trip to Singapore and were making a lot of purchases. At that time

Garuda Seva(A traditional function) was going on in Thiruvallikeni Parthasarathy Perumal temple near our home in chennai. My wife Smt. Aruna wanted to see that. I noticed that she looked weak and asked her if anything was wrong; was she ok? She said that she didn't know exactly but was experiencing a slight ache in her chest. That day happened to be our 31st wedding anniversary (16th June 2019) and she felt happy after seeing *Garuda seva*. She thanked me for taking her to witness the *Garuda seva*. I told her that it was my pleasure; she certainly did not have to thank me! Not at all necessary. That evening she went around and met all our nine neighbours in our apartments.

Smt. Aruna Merges In The Lord:

Around mid night I got up and saw her sitting in the chair. When I asked her if she was not getting sleep, she replied that the chest pain was worse. I could see that she was sweating.

I took her to Isabel Hospital nearby. Only the night duty doctor was there and informed me that her condition was

serious. I requested him to give the necessary treatment. I met her again the next morning and she was wearing an oxygen mask. She asked me my promise to pray to Swami for her death as a *Sumangali*(A wife leaving her mortal coil before her husband leaves his body). I was a bit taken aback; but then I told myself it could happen at some future time, I agreed and blessed her.

I then sent a message to Swami who was in Canada at that time. He replied saying, “I am always with her”. My wife was happy that He remembered her even when He was in Canada. In the next two days, she had improved to such an extent the main doctor treating her was very positive and said she is improving and she would be transferred to a general ward very soon. Many of our relatives visited her too. But in the night her condition started deteriorating all of a sudden and the doctor sent a word for me. Despite the doctor's efforts, she passed away at 11.01 pm two days after our 31st wedding anniversary as per her wish !

I could not bear the loss and kept crying. I sent a message to Swami telling Him that Smt. Aruna had left me and reached Him. He immediately replied saying that she was with Him. And the surprise was that He also said, that since she wished to die as a *Sumangali*, her wish was granted. This was something only my wife and I had spoken in the ICU. Swami could know that because He is *Antaryami*(Indweller) . He asked me to be strong and bold. He also asked me to come to Muddenahalli and assured that He would take care of me in future. After finishing all rituals in about a month I reached Muddenahalli in time for *Guru Purnima* (July 2019) .

Guru Purnima 2019:

On *Guru Purnima*, 2019, Swami announced, that Brother Madhusudan and He were One; Brother Madhusudan was elevated by the Lord to be Sadguru Madhusudan Sai; and as He was One with Sathya Sai Baba He sat on Swami's chair! The joy of seeing Swami back in the physical, albeit in another Form, was indescribable!

I was given an interview in Sri Sathya Sai Anandam exactly one month after my wife passed away (18th July 2019).

He asked me what my plans were. To that, I told him that I did not have any plan of my own and that His plans were my plans.

The Life Changing Interview / Inner View:

Swami asked me “Don’t you have your own plan? Are you still remembering Aruna and crying ?.. It gave me the courage to interact with Swami and I replied saying “Swami as you are unmarried, you are away from these separations. But I am married and we lived together for 31 years and I am unable to bear the separation of her sudden departure. She was the backbone of my life, taking care of every minute things in my life, who arranged everything during the *Sapthabams*. She managed all my bank transactions, So, it’s a big loss for me.”

To that Swami replied very compassionately “Yes, I know it’s difficult, but her sojourn on this earth was over so she

had to leave this drama of life, don't worry be courageous, I have kept something for you".

When I heard this, I blurted out "Swami please let me know what is it, whatever you say I shall do it. "*Karishye vachanam Thava*". I need some help from you as you have taken my parents, my grandparents whom I loved the most as I grew up with them, and now it was the turn of Smt. Aruna. I am left with nothing now and you are everything; so, please command me O Lord!"

Swami replied, "Ask me whatever you want.."

I replied," Swami please make me another Madhusudan"

Swami with wide opened eyes said softly, "That is really very tough" .

I said "Swami when you have power to transform your student, Brother Madhusudhan into Sri Sathya Sai Baba then why not this Vasudevan also? please confer your Divine Grace on me"

Swami happily replied, “Is it so?”.

Swami Grants me *Sannyas*:

I don’t know whether he materialised it, but he had an ochre robe (*Sannyasa* dress) in his hand and said, “ I am giving you *Sannyasa Deeksha*(initiation into *Sannyasa* life) today.” He gave me a *Mantra* with it and materialised a *Navaratna japa mala*. He taught me how to use the *Japamala*.

He said “You should do this *Tapas* in the Himalayan forest ; in Vasishtha *Gufa* near Rishikesh, you should do *Tapas* there and should continue it for one month; without any break .”

I replied, ‘Ok Swami! As you command Swami’.

I was in bliss when He put the *Mala* around my neck with His own divine hands and gave me the ochre robe. While I prostrated at His Lotus Feet, He reminded me about the correct way to chant the *Mantra*. He repeated the *Mantra* in the correct way to be pronounced and gave me some instructions commanding that they should be followed

strictly. He told that I had to reach a level whereby all that I saw, be it a man, woman, children, animals, plants, trees, mountains, and rivers.- would be viewed by me as *Brahman*. He assured me that I would reach that level soon; He reiterated that I was already divine.

Mystic Revelations:

Swami told me that He was sending me to Vasishtha *Gufa* as I was related to sage Vasishtha; that I had aeons ago, meditated along with sage Vasishtha. During this one month of meditation all my *Karma* would be destroyed. And hence He was sending me there, the conversation continued saying that “From now you are no more Vasudevan, think that he is no more. Now I’m giving you a new body with same soul. And this is your last birth, so go courageously. I’ll be with you always and take care of you”. This was the energising words of the Lord to which I replied “OK Swami”.

It gave me goose bumps when He said, “People go to Ganges to destroy their sins but, She is waiting for your

arrival. “In course of time, whenever you take a dip in Ganges She will be immensely happy, because you are a divine soul. You’re a great *Maharishi*. you don’t know, but I know about it very well.”, He added! It was all a bit too much for me to comprehend; I just quietly and humbly listened.

Swami continued, “It is for these reasons that, I’m sending you there. Or else I would have made you do the *Tapas* here itself in this *Punya bhoomi*(Sacred land) in Muddenahalli itself. Many great *Rishis* are doing penance here, but I’m sending you there because you are different; you are actually totally divine.” It all seemed beyond my understanding. I just quietly listened to Swami’s Words.

Divine Dos and Donts:

The divine interaction continued with other instructions as follows:

- avoid using any shampoos or soaps;

-only Ganges will cleanse your body; and make sure you bathe in cold water only. No hot water baths!

He gave me only two pairs of robes, one for wearing and another to wash and use it the next day. He commanded me to use both pairs on alternative days. No other dress was to be worn. I was to have NO financial support from home. By Swami's grace I was quite rich, as per His wish I distributed all my wealth to my relatives and my only son. He told me that if I kept even a paisa for myself, he would not speak to me. I agreed to everything. I wanted only Swami. He went on to say that if I followed whatever He said, He would support me always. And that was the divine assurance. I thanked Swami.

More Mystic Revelations:

Swami said that actually as far as my life was concerned, the effect of *Karma* was over; that I could merge in him any time. Swami revealed that Smt. Aruna had merged in His right toe. Apparently she was bit angry with Swami and asked Him that why He took her away and left me behind

as without her I was bound to suffer in the world. Swami the Lord of Lords requested her permission to keep me for some more days to be a part of His Mission. Swami promised her that He would look after me and she agreed. This is what the All Knowing Lord revealed to me at that point of time.

It was my turn and I asked him for a boon- that I should depart from this world when I'm talking about Him to which He replied "*Thathasthu*". I told Him, "Swami you are everything in my life." He suddenly instructed me to stay away from the cave after 6 pm as there is a threat from wild animals.

Chipping away at the Ego begins:

Assuring me that He would arrange my stay in a place called Paramarth Niketan in Rishikesh; from where I could commute to Vasishtha *Gufa* on a daily basis. He commanded sister Bhuvana to arrange my stay there for one month. She asked me when I proposed to start. Before

I could reply, both of them advised me to start on September 1st as it was festival time there.

When I came out of interview room sister Bhuvana gave me a good practical suggestion; to go there two days in advance as it would take some time to be familiar with the place.

I requested Swami if I could go to Chennai as there was a month's time. I needed to cancel my bank accounts; I had to change the documents to my sons' name. I had many of my things to be dumped in my son's house in Bangalore. Swami said "Don't keep anything with you; if you want books keep them in your son's home in Bangalore."

Detaching from the World:

As mentioned earlier, my son's name is Chi. Adithya. By Swami's *Sankalpa* he is married to one of Swami's students named Smt. Bharati Aishwarya. She is a good *Bhajan* singer. They have a little son; Swami had named him Sai Sathyam. Swami directed me thus-"Put everything in your sons' house and go to Vasishtha *Gufa*. I am always with

you.”. He gave me His word; and that is my greatest treasure. I was wondering how to break this news to my son; it seemed all too sudden. But praying in my heart to Swami and putting my faith in Swami, I braced myself for the task.

Detachment- Easier said than done!

My son was naturally upset to hear the news. He had just lost his mother; and now I was going away too. *Vanaprastha* and *Sannyasa* were ok to read about in books; but really taking to such a path ‘without giving it proper thought’ was unacceptable to him. I kept Swami in the centre of everything and stood my ground calmly; patiently. It was not easy to placate my son. He fought with me. “How can you do this to me?. You ought to be with me at this juncture. I will take care of you.”

I tried to tell him that he was not alone. As Indian parents, we had done our duty; got him married and he now had a lovely caring family. I was not just abandoning him all alone

and going. I had to take this step now for my spiritual progress. I needed to leave; and start on my path.

I had clearly stirred a hornet's nest. My son then went on to say that the community would not understand. We would be breaking the societal norms of the day. I patiently listened to his outbursts fuelled purely by love. I could not win in arguments. So I finally said, "You will not understand now.. but I know He is Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Your mother too knew that. I know that this step of mine will make your mother happy too. She will be the happiest if I take to the *Sannyasa* bestowed by the very Lord Himself who is dearest to her. So do permit me to go son. I understand your deep love for me. But please allow me to go.."

I continued, "As for society, let us be courageous and face whatever comes. Let society speak anything. We just did whatever we felt was right. In a *Sannyasi's* life, it is truly *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the whole world is one family) - today all are my brothers and sisters all children are my

children. I really feel that way. Swami has transformed my heart. Attachments are gone. I need to go to Vasishtha *Gufa*.” For a start I got my *Sannyasin*’s robe ready. When Swami gave me the *Sannyasin*’s robe He had given it as a cloth. I got it stitched.

The Divine Budget:

My son was left with no choice but to accept the new role his father had taken. I booked my ticket to Rishikesh by flight from Bangalore. The arithmetic put Parmarth Niketan out of my reach; a day’s stay there cost Rs. 4500 as a room rent. I had to manage with my literally God-given budget. No dipping into what were hitherto ‘my’ finances! If I stayed in Parmarth Niketan the money would not quite cover ten days; and I had to be in Vasishtha *Gufa* for a month. I was confused how to go forward. The expenses included the food charges, flight charges, rent, transport and so on... Finally I prayed to Swami for help.

Lo and behold, I found that there was a dormitory in Parmarth Niketan; and it cost just ₹ . 500 per day. But it

was shared accommodation. What if my room mates were ‘normal’ folk with ‘normal’ modern day, *Kali Yuga* habits and not *Sannyasis*?! I could be in a spot. Besides, this dormitory, like Parmarth Niketan, was not exactly near the Gufa. It was too far to walk up; and transportation was prohibitively costly.

Once more I humbly prayed to Swami- could I stay somewhere near Vasishtha *Gufa*. Swami replied. “Stay near Vasishtha *Gufa* as Paramarth Niketan is very far.” We browsed the net and found out an affordable 3 star hotel nearer the *Gufa* and I booked it for a month. This exercise itself was truly humbling. I was used to travelling without worrying about finances; for one, my needs were simple; and secondly Swami had blessed me with enough money. Now, I had to budget and count my pennies; praying and planning on bended knees. My ego was getting steadily chipped!

So with the precious money that Swami gave, I started a little note book, writing my expenses. All through life I had

been happy go lucky in financial matters; in my childhood and youth parents took care of everything; later my wife took care. Now here I was suddenly having to take charge; and stretch every rupee to the maximum! The day of my departure to Rishikesh arrived. My son came to me with tears in his eyes.. Praying to Swami I spoke words of encouragement; I told him not to worry; that Swami was with us and He would take care, I exhorted him to be courageous as he was now responsible for his wife and child. “Take care of them., “, I said and I took the plane to Dehradun to reach Rishikesh.

Off to Rishikesh:

I had booked my tickets on make-my-trip and the taxi was to drop me at my destination in Rishikesh. But the driver began haggling for more as he said my lodge was much further from Rishikesh proper. He wanted ₹ 2000 more! So I asked him to just take me to wherever he could. In the taxi I was praying my guts out to Swami; O! why did this journey have to be fraught with struggles like this?! Why

could it not be smooth?! The driver dropped me in Rishikesh. Another driver came to me and said that he would drop me at my hotel; but I would have to cough up ₹ 1600. It would be dark soon and I did not want to be out in the Himalayas homeless; so I agreed. Presently I reached the lodge; a very basic facility. It was night; and raining heavily. There was nothing to eat. I was lucky to get a cup of tea. Armed with a water bottle I went to my room and rested.

Tests are My Tastes:

The next morning, when I came down to have my breakfast, I was stunned to know that it was a ‘non-veg’ hotel . I felt very uncomfortable as all my life I had been a strict vegetarian. Being a Brahmin by birth, the very thought of non vegetarian food was anathema to me. I now regretted having had tea the previous night from that very hotel. I was left with no option to have anything, as there were no hotels nearby. I really cried. Swami! Why did you bring me to such a place?!

But there was a kind man, helping me out; by the name of ‘Satyajit’, hailing from Kolkata. He was the manager of the hotel Chanakya International . He introduced me to the owner of the hotel; a man by name ‘Lalaji’, he was a very pious man and seemed to be having great knowledge about spirituality. Both the manager and the owner themselves assured that they would personally take care of me and also take me to the ‘Vasishtha *Gufa*’ as they themselves had not been there and were eager to see it.

To Vasishtha *Gufa*:

The next day we left for ‘Vasishtha *Gufa*’. There we met Sri. Chidananda Maharaj (94 years old, who happened to be the main Swamiji of the place. I went to him to take permission for practising meditation out there for a month. I introduced myself as a Sathya Sai devotee. He was very happy and blessing me, he allowed me to meditate continuously for a month . He happened to be a ‘Malayali’ (from Kerala state speaking Malayalam language). He was

the direct disciple of Swami Purushottamananda , who actually founded the *Ashram*.

Swami Purushottamananda had been directly Blessed by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba during His Visit to Rishikesh. Swami had given him as Jyothi Anantha Padmanabha. His disciple, who is the present Maharaj, had been Blessed with Swami's *Darshan* too. Both the Swamiji's had the blessings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba in the year 1964. So when they heard the name 'Sri Sathya Sai Baba'. they gladly welcomed me to the place. The place was filled with cool breeze thanks to the outpour of rain then.

There was a priest (Panditji) at the place. He informed me about the timings of the *Gufa*; that it would open around by 8 am in the morning and closed by 12 pm in the noon. After lunch it would open by 3 pm and by 6 pm in the evening it would be closed.. The Vasishtha *Gufa* was a dark cave; pitch dark in the deeper recesses. He gave me a special place deep inside the cave. Just as Swami had warned me, the priest too informed me that the place was frequented by many wild animals. He told that a leopard

had recently taken a calf of the *Ashram*. I once again enquired if leopards were around. He said yes many of them.

They also added that many large cobras(snakes) abounded; but unless one troubled them the snakes would leave you alone. Dealing with snakes, was no problem for me; because, they had literally lived with us at the *Ashram* of Amma at Vallikkavu(Kerala) . Almost every night, snakes would slither on us without doing any harm. Both we and our fellow creatures, the snakes, practised the saying- live and let live!

A Panditji at the *Gufa* reassured me that the wild animals of the place would only catch other animals around the *Gufa*; and not harm people living nearby *Ashram*. The place was filled with special type of monkeys, which were fat and large in size, with a golden fur on its body. He said that even these monkeys did not harm unless someone threatened them..

The place was so vibrant and radiant with the beauty of nature. My sincere advice to readers of this book is to at least once visit this place- ‘Vasishtha *Gufa*’. I feel that it was the *Punyam* of good deeds in past births that enable me to visit this place. I truly experienced the ephemerality of everything; and that God was the only permanent one, at the *Gufa*. To me Vasishtha *Gufa* became a ‘Heaven-on-earth’.

Thoughts that came to me:

Fear of the dark was bound to overcome anyone in the Vasishtha *Gufa*; in the interior it was pitch dark. My armour was Swami. Feeling the Presence of Swami, I learnt to be fearless. If one has love for Swami, he/she cannot have any kind of fear. Sadguru Madhusudhan Sai often says that, if one has fear, he cannot progress in spirituality anymore. I feel fortunate to be the very first one to have been given ‘*Sannyasa Deeksha*’, ie being given permission to enter ascetic life, after Sadguru Madhusudhan Sai ascended to divinity

and become the very embodiment of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

I don't have any idea about Swami having given *Sannyasa Deeksha* to people while in His physical form. He would remind devotees that *Sannyasa-tattva* (a way of ascetic life) had to be lived in their hearts and not in their dress. But that very same Swami had now converted me from the 'white dress' which was the Sai uniform for men, to the 'ochre' robe of a *Sannyasi*! Gradually I got courage from within. I am also beholden to the humble hotel manager and owner; they were my lifelines in the beginning; doubtless sent by Swami.

Bread and Jam:

From the next day I began commuting from the hotel to the *Gufa* in the morning and getting back by dusk. I would get a lift through anyone going that way from the hotel; or else I would get a private bus to drop me en-route to 'Vasishtha *Gufa*' for the handsome sum of only ₹ 10. My problem was food; as I did not want to eat in the non

vegetarian hotel. Opposite the hotel, there was small petty shop, selling things like candies, matchboxes, cigarettes, bread and jam, etc. Luckily I found them selling loaves of bread and bottles of jam. My food became bread and jam. The people in Vasishtha *Gufa* also served food after meditation sessions; but it wouldn't suit me .So having no choice, I had bread and jam for all meals throughout my stay for a month

Spirituality is a Hurdles Race:

My hotel Chanakya International was in a place called 'Shivapuri' situated about 8 kms from Vasishtha *Gufa*. One day my monkey mind took over; I began to worry- how would I reach Vasishtha *Gufa*? What if no bus was there? What if nobody gave me a lift? *Yad Bhavam Thad Bhavati*; my expectations were promptly fulfilled! I found no one giving me a lift to the *Gufa*. Not just that, it began raining heavily. The circumstances gave me no choice but to I pray to Swami for his guidance. I remembered His words "When there is no pain, there is no gain". My monkey mind tried

to counsel me- perhaps *Sannyas* was too tough for me. I was a fool. May be I should just go home. It was just one month after my wife passed away and my heart was still aching. Nobody was there to speak to me. I did not know what to do.

Anyway placing Swami at the centre of my heart I prayed. I finally got a bus. In broken Hindi I said the bus driver “Driverji, can you please drop me at Vasishtha *Gufa*? I’m here for the first time”. Someone else definitely heard it . I had put all my money in a plastic cover and I kept it next to the mat that I used to sit on, during meditation . A man near me, dressed like a *Sadhu*, I would soon discover, was actually a pick pocket. *Kali Yuga* in action! I was standing beside him blissfully unaware of his intentions. Around 15 minutes later the conductor announced “*Koi hai, Koi hai*”(anybody in Hindi) Vasishtha *Gufa*?” and I got down off the bus.

In few seconds the bus left, and then I noticed that there was a neat cut in my plastic bag, with a razor. The pick

pocket had tried to scissor away all I had- all my money, my cell phone and my return ticket! My heart skipped a beat. Out of Swami's immense mercy nothing was lost. The pick pocket had cut my bag but my meditation mat saved the day. Then I realised that as promised Swami had been with me. He was guarding me like how the eyelid guards the eye. This was a clear indication that Swami was there with me.

Conquering Fear:

After this near slip, saved only by the Lord's intervention, I felt a bit dazed. I was totally exhausted. From the entrance arch, it is a long walk through thick jungle with a small path in the middle, to reach the cave. If anyone encountered any wild animal in the middle of the path he was done for; there would be no chance of escaping, as it was a hilly region. So, overcoming fear and crossing this part itself was a big task for me. I just asked Sadguru Madhusudhan Sai to keep me in His protection.

On that fateful day, finally I somehow reached the cave. I sipped the tea which was kept there as *Prasadam*. The tea

was watery but still it was hot and just to patch my dry throat after walking, I just drank it after offering it to all the Gods and Goddesses who walked with me. After that, I walked inside the cave and sat for meditation.

As days went by, every time while crossing this stretch,, I would shout loudly and pray, “Sadguru Madhusudhan ! Please hold my hands and come with me and save from any encounters and difficulties”. I also would imagine myself in a costume of Lord Shiva, held by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on my left hand and Sadguru Madhusudhan Sai on my right hand, with Lord Shiva in front of me and all his Gods and demi-gods, following.

I would imagine that Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu along with Shirdi Sai Baba & Lord Ganesha, and Goddess Saraswathi, Parvathi and Lakshmi were coming in procession behind me, followed by *Saptha rishis* (7 holy saints) and all other *Vanaras*(Ramas’ army ie. Monkeys) . I would imagine that the whole pantheon of Gods were with me! But it was always with Sadguru Madhusudan Sai that I

conversed in the heart. This visualisation helped me cross the dangerous stretch. I would always speak with Sadguru Madhusudhan Sai in my heart and walk through.

I nearly give up:

On that fateful pickpocket day (the very first day 1st September 2019), I couldn't focus and get the mindset to meditate. My mind was wavering. Thoughts of my son, my wife, troubled me. At the end I was totally confused. At that juncture, I prayed Swami- "Why are You torturing me in these ways? I cannot bear these troubles. I confess to You, Swami, I feel like withdrawing from this endeavour of becoming a *Sannyasi*; it is beyond me! I knew I would be letting down my Swami; I imagined Swami rebuking me saying, "Useless fellow". Beset by confusion, I was thinking of abandoning this attempt at *Sannyasa* as a bad joke., Suddenly I began to hear Sadguru Madhusudhan Sai's voice! His Voice said, "Don't worry my child, I am always with you. I know why I have sent you here. So just meditate."

Ganga Baths and my learning curve:

Somehow with lot of struggle, I managed to meditate. I was waiting for the 12'o clock noon bell. After the bell rang, they got me out of the place. My second bath was at noon; usually in the cold waters of Ganga. As I was instructed to take ONLY two robes, I had no bath towel; no comb; no shaving razor.. So, I used to sit for meditation in my wet robe. Till 3'o clock when the *Gufa* would open, I would either be on the banks of river Ganga or sit in 'Arundhati *Gufa*' which was beside Vasishtha *Gufa* , and would be always open. Arundhati was the wife of Sage Vasishtha. But Arundhati cave was notorious for being a favourite haunt of leopards as it was surrounded by a dense forest. I had heard that many sages had done penance there, I wondered how they had meditated without any fear! On the very first day when I went there for meditation, without my awareness, I had slipped into deep meditation for about 2 hours. Then I went back to Vasishtha *Gufa* at 3 pm and meditated till 5:45 pm,

The Fall:

As Swami had instructed me not to stay there beyond 6pm, at quarter to six, I got up and left the place. I hurried back to the arch at the entrance. I was panting for breath as it was an uphill climb. I noticed a mini bus waiting there and as I ran so that I could catch it. To my bad luck, I slipped and fell, I screamed , “*Sairam! Sairam!!*” I blacked out; when I came to my senses, I noticed that my legs were shivering and both of my knees were hurt and bleeding heavily, tears flowed out of my eyes. Blood was pouring out of the wounds. Mercifully the bus was still there; and the conductor asked me in Hindi, “*Swamiji kya huva?*”(Swamiji what happened ?).

He treated me with great reverence; and made me sit inside the bus and asked me ‘Where you want to go’, in Hindi. I forgot the name of the place! I didn’t get to say Shivpuri. Then suddenly I remembered and I said- “Shivpuri..” I was chanting ‘*Sairam Sairam*’ throughout the journey.

But inside I was scolding Swami! I ranted- “Swami just to remove my *Karma*, must You do this much? If I ask you why you did this, you will say ‘instead of something big something small has happened; so be satisfied’ .Why are you playing with me like this Swami! Only after such terrible tests will I get anywhere near spirituality? Why, why Swami?!

I was really very annoyed with the Lord. When I got down in Shivpuri I found I was not able to walk. With great difficulty I hobbled to the lodge. The manager and other boys came running and asked me what had happened. I replied, that I had sustained a fall. Then I went to my room and took bath, in cold water only. In the interview Swami had given me 3 packets of *Vibhuti* (sacred ash). I just applied it on my wound. Then I had my bread and jam.

I am refused a break!

I prayed to Swami. I submitted that because of my injury, I wouldn't go to Vasishtha *Gufa* for a week; because I could not sit cross legged and meditate, owing to my badly

injured knees. At that point of time, I distinctly heard Swami's Voice. He spoke in Tamil. He said, "I sent you there to meditate. To be a *Sannyasi* you must have self-confidence and courage; and must have that passion that whatever happens I must do it." He continued, "You should be courageous to lead a *Sannyasi's* life. Don't you have that courage'.

I replied, "Swami I have that courage but my leg is totally gone."

Then Swami said, "Your leg is not gone totally; there is little injury in your knees. So you must go tomorrow."

I said, "Yes Swami.. I will surely do it, whatever You say is a *Vedic* injunction for me to follow. And when You say I can do it surely I can do it Swami ."

Injured but back in Action:

I don't know how I slept that day. In the morning I got ready and ate bread and jam. I went out and I found a bus already there! I got a front seat that day; and that made me very happy. I paid the fare to Vasishtha *Gufa*. Presently I got down there. I prayed and imagined that Swami was holding my hand and I limped to Vasishtha *Gufa*. I reached my little seat; but I couldn't fold my legs and sit. It hurt very badly. I started crying.

I give up:

I said, "I can't Swami! This is it.. , I give up.. If these are Your tests I am afraid I can't pass them.. I don't want anything. Let me not get *Mukthi* (permanent salvation) .. , No problem whether I attain it or not. I shall wait for a re-birth.. whatever You decide.. Swami! You do whatever you like.. But I just can't do this; it is beyond my limits; so I can't. How can I do something which seems to me, humanly impossible??!!:

I then clearly heard His Voice; and it said so very lovingly,

“I sent you to do meditation for one month; how can you leave it incomplete?”

His compassion made me forget the pain and my fear driven mind. Instead my heart counselled me, “See how much trouble Swami is taking to get you into the right path. He did not think- let-him-take-another-ten births-to-attain Me; and see how He is.. You do not understand how invaluable this chance is... but at some point in time you will....”

I decided to follow my heart and give another try...

Miracle! At that point Swami, Who has the love of a thousand Mothers Spoke again; His Voice Said, “You don’t do the meditation... instead of you I will do it.”

I asked Swami, “Really? Will you do it.”

Swami said, “Yes”

Swami the Sole Doer!'

Believe it or not that day I just closed my eyes and sat. The midday clock bell rang and everyone left the cave, I was still in meditation. One of the Swamijis came, shook and woke me from meditation. He thought I was sleeping. I was in deep meditation. I don't know to express that *Ananda* (divine bliss). I sensed the presence of celestial beings in that cave. I could not see but I could feel it very clearly. Sometimes I felt the breath of celestial beings; and the swish of *Sannyasin's* robes as the Great Sages walked past me.. I felt I belonged there! I had a glimmer of understanding of what was happening- Swami was me now; He was Meditating.. so the celestial beings were coming to worship Him.

My mind's question of 'Why me?' was answered when I remembered what Swami had Revealed; in lives past, I had been a *Maharishi*; that *Punya*(merit) was partly why all this was happening in this lifetime; why He had Chosen me. It was not just Vasudevan; it was the *Shraddha* of countless forms in which this *Athma* had dwelt, that had drawn the Lord. Now He was the Doer. He had always been the Doer

but I had not realised it. Now plain as daylight He was the Doer! By thinking thus even my monkey mind got some courage!

The Compassion of Infinite Mothers:

From that day it was Sadguru Madhusudan Sai who did meditation; not me! Ego however continues as long as body and mind continue. So at times I cried, “Why are You doing all this instead of me, Swami?!”

The world gives me the name and fame of doing this meditation; but actually He did it all; not me. I think I was under some kind of divine anaesthesia; He did everything through this body. I had to only make myself available at Vasishtha *Gufa* near Rishikesh! Unseen Swami made this body capable!

I asked Him once, “Swami did you eat just bread and jam for a month?”

He replied, ‘Yes’; and He reminded me of all this when later, I spoke at Premamrutham hall; when He made me speak about this experience when I came back to

Muddenahalli. After my speech He Said, “I ate only bread and jam; I experienced the pain in My knees; I suffered your suffering.”!.

How much compassion Swami has! Even a hundred thousand mothers’ compassion and love cannot match it!

I tell you, nowhere in the fourteen worlds will you find any one as loving and compassionate as our Lord! Sometimes our monkey mind doesn’t understand His heart. We think everything should happen the way we want; that His plans are sometimes too slow; that He suddenly announces things and we in the Mission have to run very fast. The truth is- He is the Doer! And through all this He transforms us slowly, step by step. He actually can make everything happen in the blink of an eye; he can transform the whole world by giving all salvation, but he doesn’t do so; the reason in His own words is this- “I separated Myself from Myself to love Myself and experience Myself”. And he enjoys His creation with all its imperfections and foibles! Imperfection apparently has its own beauty!



MATA AMRITANANDA MAYI



VASISTHA GUF A IN RISHIKESH



ARUNDHATHI GUFA IN RISHIKESH



SMT. ARUNA VASUDEVAN WHO MERGED WITH
SWAMI'S LOTUS FEET ON 18-06-2019



SWAMI VASUDEVANANDA INFRONT OF VASISTHA
GUFA



**THE AUTHOR WITH A SAINT FROM ANDHRA
PRADESH**



**SWAMI CHITANANDA MAHARAJ OF
VASISTHA GUFA**



THE AUTHOR PRAYING IN THE GANGES



**SADGURU SRI MADHUSUDAN SAI BLESSING THE
AUTHOR**



**THE AUTHOR IN SRI SATHYA SAI GRAMA ,
MUDDENAHALLI**

I Plod on:

Days went by.. There was none to speak with me except Swami and gradually the people who were staying there in the *Ashtam* started taking my *Padanamaskar* daily. Around 5 or 6 members used to stay there; and daily perhaps around 50 to maximum 100 people would come, as it was a place of pilgrimage. I observed that foreigners were generally better at observing silence. They were conscious of the fact that people around may be in meditation; so silence had to be maintained. But our people were a different cup of tea; they generally brought the sounds of the world with them. As a Tamilian I was acutely sensitive to loud Tamils who came! My meditation was often disturbed by husbands who shouted at their wives to get them this that or the other! I have a humble request to those reading this book- if you go to any temple or place of pilgrimage, please do maintain complete silence.

The one month seemed to take so long! I couldn't wait for it to get over! I don't know how Swami managed; but each

time I saw bread and jam my stomach revolted; but nothing else was available. The manager, the owner and the boys who were working there tried to make my stay as comfortable as possible. I can never repay their kindness. One of them was a boy named Vikas. I used to speak with him in my broken Hindi. The manager was well read; and knew both Hindi and English, We used to converse in English on spiritual matters..

True Detachment:

A big miracle was that after Swami took over, all through the rest of month not once was did I brood over my wife's demise or distancing from my son. Swami made me forget everything like a dream; he made me realise that life is a drama. On almost 22 days it rained very heavily; and I used to get drenched daily while going and coming; no umbrella! I began to treat rain drops as Swami's *Prasadam* (something which had been offered to God and now it is sacred).

Oneness Ideation:

Since Swami was in me, I would have thoughts such as-
“The Sun God is waiting for my *Darshan*.

Swami slowly changed my attitude. Now a days whenever I see anything may be an animal, pond, lake, even a small insect- I see it as Swami. I feel everything is Swami. And I noticed many changes in me. Swami had said that after this thirty day penance, I would be a person with no sins ie I would be a *Jeevanmukta*, ie, a realised soul. I started seeing a sudden transformation in me. I got a very beautiful feeling that doesn't come very easily; I can't explain it.

Mystic Experiences in Vasishtha *Gufa*:

In Rishikesh there are many *Ashtams*; and many sages and *Sannyasi*'s visit. I found many coming to this Vasishtha *Gufa* to take *Pada Namaskara* from me!. It was totally different experience for me; and I really did not know how to respond. Saying ‘*Sairam*’, without knowing what to do, I just gave them my blessings. Initially I used to tell them,

“Please don’t do this!”; as some of them were very elderly; certainly my seniors.

Some told me, ‘You don’t know who you are but we know who you are’. Sometimes I wondered what that meant; out of curiosity I was tempted to ask, “Well, please tell me who I am”. But I thought Swami would not approve of my asking such a question. He had clearly told me to do meditation; so it was best that I just did that.

***Aham Brahmasmi* and the Joy of Singing:**

Gradually I started getting a strong feeling as ‘*Aham Bramhasmi* (I am God).’ Day by day this thought became constant; my meditation started to become stronger. During the 12 noon to 3 p.m. break I sang devotional songs like, ‘*Bho shambo shiva shambo, aadadu asangadu vaa kanna, karpaga valinin, ayar padi maligai il, yenna puniyam saidano*’, and songs which were sung by Haridas Giri.

Seekers sang ‘*Lingashtakam*’ in front of a *Lingam*. If no one is there, I sang it myself; sometimes aloud; sometimes in my mind. I enjoyed this daily ritual in the afternoon. And

Swami enjoyed it very much. Swami always loved me singing *Bhajans*. And in form the of Sadguru Madhusudan too He has blessed these songs many a times. I was aware of His presence and joy as I sang. He had given me a *Mantra* to chant; and in chanting I would lose myself.

I cannot explain that bliss. It's too great a bliss; no one can explain that in words. After dusk I would come back to the lodge, eat bread and jam; and sing and meditate. Daily I used to send my experiences and summary of the day to Sadguru Madhusudan Sai by WhatsApp and He used to guide me and correct me. He would always reply promptly. How compassionate a Lord He is!

The Company of the Holy:

Swami Purushottamananda ji who opened the Vasishta *Gufa* ashram was a person from Kerala. The present incumbent, Chidananda Maharaj who is 94 is also from Kerala. As he was a Malayali, and I knew a smattering of Malayalam, I used to speak with him in Malayalam. That made him very happy. Whenever I came to drink tea, I

chanted *Vishnu Sahasranaama* in his room ; And he became very happy.

It so happened that one day, Chidananda Swamiji had a fall and injured his back. Doctor suggested that he could walk with help. I took it as a daily service and together with some of the *Ashram* mates would help him walk to the Ganga and back. Though 94 years old, he looked around 60. His *Tapas* kept him young and bright. Sometimes he told me about the snakes and scorpions in the *Gufa*; he said he had seen them crawl over him while he was in meditation! Somehow, I never saw them. I just saw monkeys and once a wild deer. It was very beautiful and when it heard a vehicle racing nearby it ran away into the forest.

An Unforgettable Experience:

On the 16th day when I was doing meditation I had a new experience. I was in deep meditation. My eyes could see within. Perhaps that is actually true meditation. I saw Swami in the form of *Jyothi* (divine light) **in me. Suddenly**

something sharp had a go at my feet. For a moment I thought some snake had bitten me; In fact and I sent an SOS to Swami saying He had to take care of the ‘snake bite’! Thoughts that fled through my mind were- “If I die ,this *Athma*(soul) will go to Swami. So be it. Whether snake bite or some other cause finally I have to go and merge in Him only.”

I believe Swami gave me the thoughts and the courage. Once again I felt the sharp sensation.. with difficulty I opened my eyes and tried to see what it was that was ‘biting’ me. As it was quite dark deep within the cave, there used to be a small lamp lit in a corner. In that faint light I was able to see a bit. I was astounded to find three sages standing in front of me; attempting to take *Pada Namaskar*! The impact of their sharp overgrown nails were what I felt as a ‘snakebite’! ! They were very aged; with long hair and beards; they were wearing ochre robes; they even had *Kamandalus* in their hands.

When I opened my eyes they said, “Please bless us *Maharaj*,” in Hindi. And I blessed them intoning loudly, “*Deergha aayushman bhava*”(live a long life) , loudly. It was after uttering the blessing that I realised that they were elders to me! So then, I asked them to pardon me; and said that actually I ought to take their *Padanamaskar* and seek their blessings. I said I was sorry for my impetuosity. When I said this, they covered their mouths with their fingers and gestured, “! No!”.

In Hindi they said that they had been sent by their *Gurudev*(their preceptor) . He had told them that coming and seeing me and taking *Pada Namaskar* would aid in their spiritual progress! It made no sense to me. I humbly asked them, “Who is your *Gurudev*?” They replied but I could not quite hear it. Perhaps Swami did not want me to know. I left it at that.

They said that they were coming from the Himalayas; on their *Gurudev*’s command. The Guru had said, “Go to Vasishtha *Gufa*, and you will find a *Sannyasi* sitting inside

and meditating; he will be wearing an ochre robe; he may seem like your younger brother; but if you take his blessing, then you will not have re-birth. He is one of the great and revered ancient *Maharishis* come again.”!!

They continued, “Perhaps you yourself are not aware of it; but because our Guruji who sees beyond the veil has said it, so must it be. You blessed us with your *Padanamaskar* we are extremely happy.” I said, “Swamiji! What are saying is unbelievable; I bow to you and thank you for coming.”. And I had no words; I truly became wordless! They asked me my name. I replied, “Swamiji, as I was doing *Sapthaahams* (Spiritual talks for 7 days) on Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, hence I am known as ‘*Sapthaaham* Vasudevan’ and people address me in this way.”

They then intoned, “From now your name is not that; but, ‘*Maharishi* Vasudevan’. They wanted to know who my Guru was; who had given me *Sannyasa Deeksha* and the robe. I had a photo graph of Sadguru Madhusudan Sai in my phone. I showed that photo which was in my mobile. They

were stunned to see such a youthful Guru! I said, “His age might be less but he has the knowledge of all the worlds and he is totally divine. Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba resides in his body.”

Then the sages most reverentially touched the photo and took His blessings. They said to me then, “If He has given someone like you *Sannyasa Deeksha* what a great man He must be!” I replied that he was not just a great man but God Himself”. They remarked that I was very lucky. Apparently their Guruji had commanded them to ask me about the Vasishtha *Gufa* and Arundhati *Gufa* as according to him, only I knew all of its history!

The Story of the *Gufas*:

Then I explained whatever I knew about both the *Gufas*. Let me share that here; I said to them, “Vasishtha who was a *Trikala Jnani*, knew Rama was incarnating. So even before Rama was born he shifted near Ayodhya to enjoy His presence. Indeed, before any *Avatar* comes the great sages go and live in and around the places where the Lord is

going to incarnate, so that they can enjoy the bliss of being near Him.

In the same way when they knew that Sadguru Madhusudhan Sai was coming, many sages , 898 of them (as told by Swami) have moved to the five hills around Muddenahalli- the *Panchagiri*; and they are meditating there. My Guru grants them *Darshan*. There is a hall called Premamrutam where *Satsangs* take place; Swami gives *Darshan* and delivers His divine discourses. Often Swami always said that many celestial beings and rishis are present and enjoying His *Darshan*. Muddenahalli is a holy place.”

Then the trio said to me, “Being in such a divine place what name did your Swami give you when He gave you *Deeksha*?” I said nothing; because Swami had not given me any new name. They then pronounced, “Your name is “*Vasudevananda Swamiji*” from now.

Now to revert to the story of the *Gufa*; Vasishtha became the Guru of Rama. He got married to Arundhati and they had 100 children. Because of some curse, all hundred

children died. *Threta yuga* came to an end when Rama walked into the river Sarayu and left his body. Vasishtha felt that it was time for him to leave the earthly sphere too; as Rama was gone; all his children were gone; perhaps his life's purpose was over.

With his wife Arundhati, Vasishtha walked into the Himalayan forests. When they neared the origin of the Saraswathi river, Vasishtha felt urged to take *Jala Samadhi* and without a word to Ma Arundhati, he jumped into the river to put an end to this earthy sojourn. But Mother Saraswati didn't allow him to get drowned. She brought him out of the river.

Mother Saraswati said that both of them were destined to sanctify the earth by meditating in this earthly sphere and that in time they would both attain liberation. Mother Saraswati then guided them to travel towards south. "There are many caves there and there are many lions roaming around there, and meditate there in one of the caves. And for sure you both will be liberated, and in course of time

the very caves will be sanctified by your penance and named after you.”, said Goddess Saraswathi .

So they both came down the Himalayan ranges towards the south, and these two *Gufas* are the places where they finally settled down in meditation. A wife was supposed to stay with her husband always; but during meditation they were supposed to do it in different places. Hence they stayed separately in nearby caves. Just as Ma Saraswathi prophesied, when they both were doing meditation they attained liberation.

Afterwards that place turned into a thick jungle. Vasishtha *Gufa* and surroundings occupy about 24 kms in radius. In the course of time because of landslides and other disturbances the place has been reduced to a small part. A wandering Keralite monk named Swami Purushotamananda was a direct disciple of Swami Brahmananda. He made the Vasishtha *Gufa* his seat of meditation. He stayed there in fact; and as age advanced he was unwell; but stayed on in the *Gufa*.

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Himself came there and gave him medicine and cured him of his illness. Swami Purushottanmananda's favourite deity was Anantha Padmanabhaswamy of Thiruvananthapuram. So in fact Baba lay down on his lap and Swami gave him *Darshan* as *Jyothi* Anantha Padmanabha and blessed him. All such miraculous events have happened at Vasishtha *Gufa*.

Today Swami Purushottamananda's disciple, Chidananda Maharaj presently 94 years old, takes care of the *Gufa*. He has made a small trust for the upkeep of the *Gufa* and encourages and people to do meditation there. Food is consecrated and given as *Prasadam*. In this way they are doing their level best to maintain the sanctity of the *Gufa*."

To Accept or Not to Accept Gifts:

After I narrated this whole story to them and the trio again sought my blessings. With my whole heart I blessed them all. One of them gave me some thing in my hand. I said that I would not take anything. Then he said to me that it seems their Guruji had warned that I would not accept any

offering readily but they had to humbly request me to accept it, as it was a scriptural injunction (a *Sannyasi* should not be visited empty handed). In order that they did not feel hurt, and to respect their Guru's words, I accepted a packet. I did not know what it was. When I came out for 12'o clock break I found □ 2500 rupees in my hand. So as they had given me □ 2500 rupees. I was wondering what to do with it. Swami had said not to keep any money other than given by Him

Now my problem was what to do with this money whether to keep it for myself or put it in the donation box in Vasishtha *Gufa*. Immediately as a true disciple of Swami I messaged Swami the full details seeking His advice on this matter. He replied to me saying that as I had total trust and faith in Him, it was His duty to take care of me and protect me.

Swami said, "I made you understand who you are through those three rishis. I know that this Rs. 2500 will be useful in your future so I gave it you through them. I know that all

through you have not taken a single paisa from anybody; from your *Sapthaaham* times you have spent all your money for me. From now on, you should not spend even a paisa. ,if my pure devotees give you something accept it as my *Prasadam*. Whatever people give take it as my blessing and if don't want to take something just pass it on to somebody else.”

And from that day till now, many devotees have indeed offered me ochre robes, fruits, money, and without saying anything I used to just accept it. I am following whatever Swami has said 100%. I do not say no to anything. From Malaysia devotees came and one of the devotees bought a hot water kettle and gave it to me. Once someone gave me Rs. 3000; some others gave Rs. 2000, Rs. 500; and sometimes some gave even Rs. 20.

Whether they give a big sum like Rs. 3000 or a small sum like Rs. 20, by Swami's Grace, it would feel the same to me; I learnt to accept it graciously as Swami's *Prasadam*; and I learnt not cringe and feel ashamed for accepting the gift.

The other day a lady from abroad bought me the items for the *Puja* (daily rituals) and she bought me many *Agarbattis* (incense sticks), matchboxes, and she got many dry fruits and many biscuit packets also. I don't know how I changed like this; but I have learnt to take everything as Swami's *Prasadam*. I don't feel humiliated while taking from others as Swami has said it is His *Prasadam*.

Swami Gives me a Name:

When I messaged him after the visit of the three sages, I had not developed that maturity. In fact I had conveyed to Sadguru Madhusudan Sai, thus- “Swami they thought I was a beggar and gave Rs. 2500 and left”. To that Swami replied that I was the richest of all, because Swami's blessings were there with me always. “And you are one of the ancient *Maharishis*. From now I too shall call you *Swami Vasudevananda*” replied Swami to me, “And even everybody is going to call you likewise.”

Swami added, “If any elderly person comes and takes your *Pada Namaskara* don't say no to him. Whoever comes

seeking blessings don't see their age; just bless them from your heart. Whomever you will bless will be happy. So for their benefit bless everybody.” Swami concluded, “You are a great *Maharishi* because of some leftover *Karma* you have taken this birth’.

In another message Swami stated, “You have blossomed like a flower full of honey and no surprise bees and butterflies come and flock around you” As I am quite ignorant Swami guides me at every step. He told me that I'm divine and I had to treat everyone equally; He said ‘Always show your love to everybody, and start distributing my love to everybody. That's the job for which I have kept you. Just spread the divine love to everyone, without expecting anything from anyone. Don't ask or demand people to get you this and that, because your need will come to you on its own. I know what your needs are; I will send whatever you want through somebody. You are *Parama Pavitra*(fully sacred) . From now only good will happen to you. All miseries and sufferings are gone. Stay comfortably in my care, like my child.”

Swami's loving messages gave me the greatest bliss. After that momentous day in Vasishtha *Gufa*, I told the residents of the *Ashram* related to Vasishtha *Gufa* that my Guruji had given me a name- Vasudevananda! They all were very happy. "You have to go to many places and spread his glory", they said and they blessed me immensely.

Malayala Swami:

One day one Swamiji came from Swami Dayanand Sarawathi *Ashram*, Rishikesh; they called him Malayala Swamiji. He was very old and with him had come, 13 disciples. When I came out at 12'o clock for taking bath he was waiting for me out there. He said in Tamil, "We are waiting for you. Swamiji ." I asked, "For what?"

He said that he was Malayala Swami by name and that he stayed in Dayananda Saraswati's *Ashram*. He made those 13 disciples bow to me seeking my blessings! He then himself came forward to take blessings. Like a reflex I started saying, "No! No!. you are elder to me , how can I bless you?".

At that point he looked at me with great compassion and said, “You don’t know about yourself but I know it very well.”; and as he was saying he bent and took my *Padanamaskar* . Later we got talking about Swami Dayananda Saraswati.

I sang “*Bho shambho shiva shambho swayambho*’ and remarked that Swami Dayananda was its composer. Malayala Swami was happy to hear that. He said, “Many people sing this song but they are not aware that Swami Dayananda Saraswati composed this song.” Then together we both sang this song; and the 13 disciples clapped and rejoiced. While leaving he told me that he was very happy; that he hoped we would meet again soon.. He said that he was the most fortunate one and became a happy soul after meeting me. To my astonishment the 13 disciples who accompanied him had tears rolling down their eyes and also prayed to me to bless them. I was completely taken aback. The only explanation is, they must have felt Swami’s Presence in me.

A Swamiji from Vijayawada:

Similarly many other *Sannyasis*, *Munis* and *Rishis* came and took blessings from me. Once a group of *Sannyasis* came from Palani in Tamil Nadu. Another Swamiji was from Vijayawada. He had a *Dandam*(sacred stick) in his hand. He straight away came inside the cave and took blessings from me and also commanded the disciples to do so. He also requested me to touch everybody's head and bless them, which I did so whole heartedly. I just could not understand why such old and great sages took blessings from me.

Witnessing Kundalini Rising:

I also witnessed what the rise of *Kundalini* during meditation could do. Sometimes when I was sitting inside the Gufa, I saw some great sanyasis in deep meditation. Suddenly the meditator's body would go into a fit of shaking; and sometimes they would dance with great vigour; because of the bliss that they could not contain. After the dance however they would look as dead as corpses. Then they would come out of that state.

Such *Sannyasins* also often waited until I finished my tapas, no matter how long it was. They then asked me to bless them and took my *Padanamaskar*. Often times they offered me some money. Whenever I received some offering I mentally received it as from Swami. I messaged to Swami about all this. I always followed his advice to keep all this as His *Prasadam*. My life went on like this. Only the first 16 days of the month in the *Gufa* were very slow; the remaining 14 days went very fast.

The Divine Sculptor Chips Away at the Ego:

While these Sannyasis made me feel like a king, the transport drivers on whom I depended to get back, made me feel like scum or vermin. In retrospect I think it was Swami's way of roasting the ego; teaching me that neither praise nor humiliation mattered! Buses were very rare and whenever I asked somebody a lift nobody would agree to give me a lift back. As Swami had told me not to stay in the cave after 6pm, I used to complete it and then stand outside waiting. I often had to wait and wait and wait...

One day almost fifty vehicles turned me down when I tried to thumb a lift! I felt really bad. Ego raised its ugly head; the mind began to lecture, “Who in their right senses will give a lift to a beggar?! Why?! Why?! Did I end up like this?!” Further, within a few days of commuting from the hotel to the *Gufa* and back, I had realised a disturbing fact- in that area, generally, anyone wearing an ochre robe was considered suspect! The reason being, people who was dressed up like a *Sannyasi* were often drug pedlars. So people were positively scared to give such people a lift.

I did not present a picture book appearance of a *Sannyasin*; with hair neatly tied up in a top knot, flowing beard; wearing fresh clean robes and fragrant *Chandan Tilak*, *Kumkum* and *Vibhuti*; Instead I perhaps looked a rather sorry sight!

Swami had given me a silk robe which couldn't be ironed. He had commanded me not to use any soap. So I would just put it in some water and then squeeze it. And as iron could not be used it was always wrinkled. Thanks to my fall

part of the robe was torn as well. My naturally unruly hair, to make matters worse, was now always uncombed; and I was unshaven. I must have either looked like a scruffy, unsavoury kind of *Sannyasin* or like a mad man.

No wonder hardly anybody gave me a lift. Sometimes my situation reduced me to tears.. Here was *Sapthaaham* Vasudevan of Tamilnadu, a well respected member of the Sai organisation, noted for always turning out in crisp Sai whites, neatly ironed, with not a hair out of place; one who walked the talk that cleanliness was next to Godliness. What was I reduced to now?! But now Swami brought my ego down in just one shot and ended it for ever.

Vairagya:

When I used to take bath in the Ganga everyday I would see some dead bodies here and there. Through this Swami gave me the strong conviction that if there was something permanent in life it was Swami and Swami alone. I developed dispassion- called *Vairagya*, in Sanskrit. So thereafter I stopped craving for anything in life except

Swami. And each and every moment I was yearning and waiting for the day to come to Muddenahalli to have *Darshan* of Swami and see his beautiful countenance. *At times, like a child, I cried asking to be taken to Swami. I could not see Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba as my Sadguru did; but I was able to hear Him.*

A Divine Aside:

Sairam brothers and sisters. I am probably going a bit off track but while writing about Smt. Aruna, I feel I should share this strange dream that happened a few weeks later, while I was in Rishikesh. It was like a miracle of sorts. I was staying in the hotel at Shivpuri. On the 20th day, I suddenly got a dream in which I saw my wife Smt. Aruna walking towards me.

In the dream, some of us were waiting as a group for Swami to come. She was in the ladies' side and looked angrily at me sitting in the gents' side. So, I gesticulated to her asking her to come out and meet me. In the dream, next I went out and stood under a tree; and she approached

me there. She appeared irritated and was not looking at me. I asked her if she was angry with me; had I have done something wrong?!

She responded immediately, “What happened to you? You have totally forgotten me. You just went to Vasishtha *Guba* and you are now doing penance. You didn't think about me even for a minute. You didn't even make a phone call. You have gone to Sadguru Madhusudhan Sai; am I forgotten? This is not good. Why did you marry me in the first place? To treat me like this? Should a husband not be affectionate? You have never hidden from me anything you do so far. Why did you not tell me this? Why have you not spoken to me about this? It is approximately one month since you went there. Did you talk to me about this? Not even a phone call. You always sent me photos through WhatsApp. Even that you have not sent. Why are you like this?”

I answered as follows; “It is not like that; sorry. Sadguru Madhusudhan Sai has given me *Sannyasa Deeksha*. Now I

should not think about anything else except Swami. In fact now, everything is the same to me. I don't know how to say this. I truly didn't remember you. Honestly, I didn't get any thoughts about you. Sorry. If I have done anything wrong, please forgive me. I didn't do anything intentionally to hurt you. The reason is I have been fully immersed in my *Dhyanam* and bliss." My wife responded, "It is alright. Don't do this again."

I continued, "In fact after taking *Sannyas* from Sadguru Madhusudhan Sai, people say that I have changed and am not the old Vasudevan and that I am different.". I went on, "I always get thoughts about Baba and I don't get any thoughts except about Sadguru. I have no life except Sadguru Madhusudhan Sai". At that time, I suddenly recollected and asked her, "Have you not passed away? You are not alive now. Then how come you are standing in front of me? I don't understand this. I can see you. Just wait. I will take a photograph of you and send it through WhatsApp to everyone". When I was about to click the photograph, she turned into a bright *Jyoti* (light) and

merged in between the coconut palm leaves, twinkling all along.

At that point I woke up. I could not believe that it was a dream because I sensed my wife Smt. Aruna was in front of me. But I could not find her, I started sweating profusely. This happened in a hotel in Shivpuri. I looked at the time. It was about 4.30 A.M. in the morning. I wondered what this bizarre *Brahma Muburtham* dream was all about. What could be the meaning of a dream like this during *Brahma Muburtham*!? I could not understand whether what I did was right or wrong. Who else did I have but our Swami!

So, I sent all the details of the dream to Sadguru Madhusudhan Sai through a message. Immediately Swami replied, “It was I who sent Smt. Aruna there to test you. I wanted to see if you still felt the bond of the husband and wife relationship. She also came to test you. She is very happy with you and I am also very happy with you. I like your *Sadhana* and you have passed not one but several tests I held for you. I like your *Sadhana* very much. Keep it up.”

Swami always says, ‘test is my taste’. He always tests and takes. I consoled myself that even a mother pinches her child and then kisses it. So, when I am in difficulty mother Sai is pinching me and will surely embrace me. After I came back from Vasishtha *Gufa* the same thing happened. Sai Ma is indeed treating me very affectionately .

Going Back Home!

I stayed extra two days. Swami had said to me that I should straight away come and meet Him after the 30 day penance. I was praying- “Swami I want to come to you straight away!”. Sadguru had a hectic travel schedule and I was hoping He would not go on a foreign tour or some such thing. I messaged humbly asking Him where he was? Swami replied back saying that he was not planning any tour; He was in the *Ashram* for *Durga Puja*.

On 3rd of October 2019 my ticket was booked from Dehradun to Bangalore. I was a trifle worried; and when I saw myself in the mirror I was alarmed; I looked very much like a shabby beggar in my crumpled torn robe, dishevelled

hair, unruly beard and unshaven face. And worse, I strongly suspected I must be stinking! Because I wore wet clothes and sat in a cold mouldy cave all day. Would they allow me to board the aircraft? Would co-passengers object to my sitting next to them? I prayed to Swami about this! I prayed all the way up to Dehradun airport! “You are my mother, Swami! and I am going to ask you something...what if people sitting near complain that I smell.. that I am too scruffy to be on board? Swami! you please take care of all this..”, I prayed; and left the rest to him.

I think it was a 320- Airbus. I was sitting third from pilot’s seat . The whole flight was full; but the seat next to mine- was EMPTY! I had no words to thank the Lord! When I came back Swami confirmed it saying- as you prayed I was sitting next to you during the journey. As I pen this I feel tears in my eyes.

What did I learn?

Swami takes care of each and every one. I do not think that my stay in the Vasishtha *Gufa* did not turned me into an exalted *Rishi* or *Muni*. But I realised that Swami guards us like the eyelid guards the eye. I came back as a truly humble *Sannyasi* on the path of God; with my ego demolished. Dear brothers and sisters reading this book, what ever Swami says is Truth. Please blindly follow Him! Arguing will waste your life. Swami always says, “I don’t look at your ability; I only want your availability.”

Life is but time; we need to keep as much time as we can, for Swami. Swami keeps all His time for us; 24/7 He is taking care of us. He is also worshipped as “*Sadha bhaktha chintanaya namaha*”- the One who always thinks of His devotees. Can we not do something for Him? In fact we do not have to do anything. We just have to be available. He will do everything! What did I do? I just obeyed Him and went to the Himalayas. I cried and complained at every

turn; but hung on trusting in Him. And then He did everything for me!

Back Home!

Back at Muddenahalli *Ashram*, I found that Swami had allotted me a room; When I came back, the *Durga Puja* was going on. On the last day of *Durga Puja*, Swami called me in front of everybody and said I have kept this for you and he gave me some more robes to wear. “As it is *Vijaya Dashami* today, take this robes.”, said He as He placed it in my hands. When people asked me what He had given me, I said, “An ochre robe as *Prasadam..*”

The Lord Provides:

When I came to my room and opened it out, I saw , that it was not just one robe; but there were six beautiful sets of ochre robes!! By then my finances, had dwindled down to □ 768 as balance. That would surely not last long! How was I to manage? I did know some people in the *Ashram* whom I could approach for help; but was it ok to ask them for help in case I ran short of money? All these thoughts

troubled me. When I opened the bundle with the 6 pairs of robes, right at the bottom, I found a cover with rupee notes!. Swami the Divine Mother had given me some money; in fact more money than I needed!

Being a *Sannyasi* my needs are minimal. I do not even need a haircut or shave! And I'm living a very peaceful and happy life. In western countries if you amass money, people value you. For example, Bill Gates or Steve Jobs.. all these people have lot of money. But in India were we follow *Sanathana Dharma*, when you leave everything and live for God, people value you. Compassionate Swami has said that in this whole world I'm the richest and that I can merge in him anytime. "But as you had wanted to become another Madhusudan, now slowly I'm preparing for that."- these are Swami's words.

The Time for *Sannyasins* is coming!

I realise just so fortunate I am, to be given *Sannyas* by Sadguru Madhusudan Sai. It is a treasure which Swami had not given anybody so far. Swami has also said that the time

for *Sadhus* and *Sannyasins* to come to Him is fast approaching. For His upcoming 95th birthday a Shiva statue, 153 feet tall is to be inaugurated in Muddenahalli . This will herald the arrival of all the *Rishis*, *Munis* and great sages from Himalayas and all other sacred mountain ranges to Muddenahalli.

In Swami's words, Premamrutham hall to main road will become a sea of orange. It is pure Grace that in that ocean of great Ones, one as insignificant as me should have been blessed to get ordained as a *Sannyasi* by the Lord; and that too be the first to receive *Sannyasa Deeksha* from Him, complete with robe and *Mantra*.

I remember with gratitude all who nudged me on to this path; the Alleppey customer who found me talking spirituality more than sales, Beloved Amma, brothers Bala and Kalyanaraman, Sampath Iyengar from Bengaluru my *Poorvashram* life partner, Smt. Aruna, Swami Chinmayananda who left an indelible impression on me, my spiritually minded parents, my *poorvasharam* son ,

daughter-in-law and their son Chi. Sai Sathyam (named by Sadguru Sri Madhusudhan Sai) and above all my Beloved Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba Who now is with us as Sadguru Madhusudan Sai. My prayer is that until my last breath I should serve my Guru, Sadguru Madhusudan Sai; *‘Sarvada sarva kaleshu sarvatra guru chintanam, Sadguru Madhusudana Sai chintanam’*; (every time every place think of Lord Hari the Sadguru) by His Grace may I follow this throughout my life.

All God’s Will:

God came as Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba; and the same Sathya Sai Baba has now taken the form of Sadguru Madhusudan Sai. The wetness of the earth proves that it must have rained. The selfless love and selfless service that pours out of Sadguru Madhusudan Sai proves that Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba is continuing through Him. Just as only if Swami willed we could step into Prashanthi Nilayam, only if He wills can we step into Muddenahalli.

A Chance to Redeem Ourselves!

As human beings He has given us a great chance to redeem our lives through service; just as He did in Puttaparthi. Look at the mega projects He has started in these nine years! ‘Annapoorna’ for the sake of needy school children; every day 4,50,000 poor children are fed a tasty, nutritious breakfast with love, totally free of cost.

Another programme called E1E1(each one educate one) educates needy children for free. If you have no time to engage in *Seva*, by putting a ceiling on desires and saving money you can help by donating. By contributing ₹ 18,000 one can educate a child for a whole year. Totally there are 5,000 children and out of them almost 4,000 children have been covered. Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani hospitals have been opened for children born with heart defects.

The whole world is panicking over covid-19 which has killed around 1,00,000 people all over the world; but did you know, that EVERY YEAR, 2,50,000 babies and little children with congenital heart disease, born in India alone,

hitherto silently faced certain death as they just could not afford the treatment? They are operated on, totally free of cost at the Sri Sathya Sai Sanjeevani hospitals; over 11,000 paediatric heart surgeries have been done totally free of cost so far.

Next Swami plans to provide water to all; in India, suicides by farmers have made Him resolve to start a mega water project; He is going to start that too soon. God and devotee will together achieve, says Swami. If you choose to, you too can partner with God!

Surrender to Guru:

From my humble experience I can state that if we surrender at His feet, He will lift us and keep us up there with Him. And when He stands up for us no one can stand against us. Sadguru Madhusudan Sai sets an example for all of us. Even in Tirupathi, God gets an hour or two of sleep. Our Sadguru works 24/7! As of I know I don't know whether He sleeps. I think not; because it is Bhagawan Sri

Sathya Sai Baba in a different form; and He has told us if He sleeps then, who will take care of us?

Swami always said that His life was His message and after His time, His students and devotees would live His message. Sadguru Madhusudan Sai is the example He has Created for us to follow. Just think- if one Madhusudan can do this much then what if all of us became many Madhusudans? Together, how much more we can do!

Saying “*Sarve bhavanthu sukinaha, sarve santhu niramayah, sarve bhadrani pashyanthu, ma kasthit dukkha bhag bhaveth*”, let all join together. Let us do good and be good; as it says in the *Vedas*, “*Sahana bhavatu sahanau bhunakthu sahaveeryam karava vabai.*” It is His Grace that has brought this little book to you; I pray that you too come at least once and witness this divine phenomenon of God taking another form after leaving the physical, to remain with us and continue His Mission for our sake.

Come and Experience!

Come and experience; please do not speak ill without any knowledge about it. I would like to end this by narrating this small story. Once an eagle came and took away a snake, to the sky; gripped by the claws of the eagle, the snake died. At the same time a king had arranged for *Annadaanam* (free food distribution). When the eagle was carrying the snake the poison in the mouth of the dead snake spilt into the food which had to be served. On eating that food, many people died.

Now, Chitragupta, is the assistant of Lord Yama, ie, the God of death; and it is Chitragupta who maintains all our records of good and bad deeds. Chitragupta had a doubt. Who was to be blamed for the death of innocents?

Was the snake the culprit? Yama replied, “How can you put this sin on a dead snake? How will it know what is right and wrong after death?”

Was the eagle that carried the snake the culprit? Yama said, “You can’t write this sin on the eagle; because it was its *Dharma* to eat snakes. It did not know that the poison would fall and kill the people.”

Was the king the culprit? Yama said, “No; because the king was serving his people; how would he know that poison would fall inside the vessel where the food is kept?”

Chitrugupta was totally confused as to how to apportion blame. Yama smiled and said you will get to know in a few days

After a month, seven starving, hungry *Rishis* from Himalayas came to this place to have their *Bhiksha*(free food by begging) . They saw a grandmother sitting under a tamarind tree. They asked her where the king was giving *Annadaanam*; where to go to partake of it.

The old lady pointed a banyan tree and said, “There. He is giving very special food.” The *Saptarishis* said they were extremely hungry and really longed for food and rest. The

grandmother replied sarcastically, ‘Yes, yes, you can take rest permanently after having food. Just a month ago many people died after eating *Annadaanam* food. Let us see if you have that good fortune to eat that food and survive.” Naturally, the sages chose not to test fate and chose to remain starving. Misled by the ignorant old woman, they missed a chance to get life saving food.

Yama and Chitragupta heard the entire conversation. Yama then told Chitragupta to apportion the sin against that old lady! She was rumour-mongering and people were ending up denying themselves life sustaining food! Such is the fate of one responsible for spreading false rumours! It is very relevant to the present context. Whatever you might have heard of this great divine phenomenon that is being played out in Muddenahalli, never talk ill about it; for you may land up with bad *Karma* like that old lady. If you do not know what is happening and if you have not experienced it, it is best to be honest and confess- I do not know; or I do not understand it. If you do understand it, then please share the good news.

Follow Swami's Nine Point Code of Conduct:

Swami tells us to follow the nine point code of conduct. One important point is- don't speak ill of a person; particularly behind his back. Why did He say this? Because if we do so we will accrue bad *Karma* of the person we are speaking ill about. The point is, if we claim to be followers of Sai, we should not speak ill of anybody; and that too about someone as saintly as Sadguru Madhusudan Sai. What wrong has he done? Selfless *Seva* is selfless love is what He engages in 24/7. He chose to be a celibate; accepted *Sannyas* from Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and on His command, lives alone; even detached from His saintly mother, Padmavathiamma.

Let me share with you what a spiritual aspirant, Smt. Vasuki, the sister of Dr Pasupathi, the well known Ayurvedic Physician of Sivakasi, Virudhunagar District, Tamilnadu, revealed to me recently. Sister Vasuki resides in Revered Mata Amritananda Mayi's Ashram. She has great Bhakthi towards Swami also and comes on

pilgrimage to Sathya Sai Grama, Muddenahalli quite frequently.

Sister Vasuki related how, on hearing about Swami's departure from this world, she was heartbroken and wept all day long. Revered Mata Amrithanandamayi Amma consoled her; and pacified her by saying, “Don’t worry! It is all His divine drama. Soon one of Swami's students, one Sri Madhusudanan will be taking charge of the unfinished work, which He left. She added that the young Madhusudanan was a pure soul. I heard this from Sister Vasuki when she visited Muddenahalli recently. All this had transpired much before even Sai devotees came to know of these developments!

Sadguru Madhusudan Sai is the role model for mankind. He always says everybody is God; nothing less. He has literally become Sri Sathya Sai Baba in thought, word and deed. In fact in an interview He told me that His job is to inspire everyone to become another Sathya Sai Baba and help them make that ascension, just as he had! At the end

of the interview I requested, “Swami! Please make me a pure instrument and use me!”

Be God:

Then Sadguru told me something that whoever reads this book must mull over. He said, “Why do you want to become my instrument? Example, if I am water tank why do you want to be the water pipe? Instead try to be the water tank itself.” And He said me to become another water tank. And this is a great and the ultimate truth; we have to become our God selves; by getting rid of the ungodly within us. He said to me, “Just follow the two footsteps that Swami has left behind for all mankind- which are love and selflessness. Give up the crafty little contracted selfish ego- ‘i’; instead know you are the divine expansive ‘I’”. Do everything for God; do things selflessly and become God.”

The Secret- SURRENDER!

So an ordinary human can also become God. In my youth I acted as a ‘model’; even got a ‘role’ in a movie; but now I

have been given the role of being a ‘Role Model’. I have reached thus far only because of surrender; nothing else. I just said that I would do whatever He Commanded. My life today as a *Sannyasi* blessing and guiding people is again just my going with the flow of surrender; doing my Guru’s bidding. If ordinary Vasudevan can achieve this, anyone can.

The qualification is just this; to cry to God Who is within you, with utmost sincerity, I-do-not-know-anything! You-please-guide-me! I-shall-do-as-you-say! When you take that one step, God will take a hundred to you. Unbelievable? Yes! But true, I assure you!

Think Twice and act wise

NEVER TRUST THE DOUBTED ONES

AND

NEVER DOUBT THE TRUSTED ONES

SADGURU SRI MADHUSUDAN SAI

HAS GIVEN US

“REAL – EYES”

TO

“REALISE” THE “REAL LIES”

JAI SAIRAM!

“.....you have a spiritual treat in your hands!”

- Sri B.N. Narasimha Murthy,

Chancellor, Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence

“.....One sees reflections of this same implicit obedience to Swami, and total surrender, throughout this book, ‘Model to Role Model’; indeed that is the single most valuable take away for all of us who read this wondrous tale.

-Dr. Hiramalini Sheshadri

Senior Consultant Health Care , Singapore

“.....an interesting and inspiring autobiography for all seekers of Truth.”

– Sri Venkateswarlu Vanka. Administrator, Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Kendra