



## A LIFETIME IN 40 DAYS

### **Magic happens.**

It is only in passivity that one can see it as clear as day. In those moments when there is no rush to be elsewhere and to do things that seem important, when one is relaxing within, it strikes in a flash - magic is real. How else do poor mortals playing Santa Claus with their baggage of woes get transformed into carefree butterflies?

Silence works its invisible wand. Things happen. Life unfolds itself ever so gracefully. It is clear that the universal law of perfection never fails. Even in the deepest abyss of anger and fear there is an unshakeable trust that Anupam is taken care of by a higher force that is beyond her comprehension.

Everything is magnified - be it pleasure or pain. And there is no urge to escape it. No effort involved in doing things. Life flows smoothly. Meditation happens effortlessly as the sweet strains of music and unconditional love heal the body-mind. Sometimes higher spaces grace the being. There is relaxation and gratitude.

Anupam doesn't know where that gratitude comes from, because she has never recognised it in herself before. Every experience in these 40 days seems PERFECT. No other word can be as accurate.

Sometimes Anupam doesn't exist. There is only a feeling of nothingness.

Sometimes she knows she is but she cannot connect with a face or a name. There is no remembrance of time or space just a deep stillness in the air. Things are just happening by themselves. Nothing matters. It's a miracle for the over-worked mind. The meditation hall has changed. It seems like the energy generated in Gurudev's presence just multiplies itself. It is most obvious at the celebration of devotion every evening. Melting happens.

During the 21-day silence Anupam spends her spare time between meditation sessions lying back in bed and staring at the roof of her bamboo hut. Remaining unfocussed happens sporadically at first. But in Gurudev's presence, witnessing is more than a mental jargon that crowds the mind. "Just be. Remain passive," he reiterates. That is the essence of his teaching. "Remember this much. That is all that is required," he says.

There is no need to understand what is happening or to define it in words.

The mind cannot realise or even experience the depth and beauty of the remaining passive. Gurudev advises, “When we try to understand these things, we reduce them.” This is in response to a letter Anupam writes him about her experience on a surreal night when she realises a distinct connection with Him. It feels like He has settled within Anupam’s body-mind. She has finally found the courage to make space and allow a ray of sunlight into her heart for the bud to bloom.

Experiences of a higher state have happened in these six weeks but Gurudev had once mentioned that any attachment to these ‘experiences’ is a hindrance to meditation. Sometimes when Anupam would jump on an emotional roller coaster, there were repeated thoughts of ‘Life is pointless’ and ‘Why doesn’t death happen?’. Such destructive thoughts have disappeared. Besides, as a wise man said to her, “Death is easy, surrender is difficult.” Anupam is learning to surrender to life.

There is a deep urge to continue on this track of meditation in the world outside. That will remain Anupam’s toughest challenge yet. This ‘good space’ is a blessing showered by the Master and happens only in His presence.

Anupam breathes easy when she is around Gurudev. She feels the need to be in His space. When she cannot bear to stay away. She meanders to His hut with a clear sense of what she is going to say. But she forgets it all when she meets Him. There is nothing in the mind or there is a rush of so many thoughts that she cannot utter a single word. She doesn’t know how or why. It is a fear that she believes is a result of the respect she feels for him. Maybe it’s the ego going berserk as it knows that it cannot control the reins in His presence.

In His presence, one just is. And that is the gift of a Master. He nourishes the Self by simply allowing the body-mind mechanism the freedom to “Just Be.”

**Ma DEVOPAM (Anupama Shenoy)**  
Currently Associate Creative Director  
Formerly Senior Feature Write, ELLE