

1 Introduction

Every birth has a meaning, a purpose that connects us to this vast universe. I have often read in old poems and sayings that if a person leaves a task unfinished in a previous life, they are born again to complete it. It may sound like a superstition to some, or even sarcastic, but I believe it holds a truth—each of us has a work to do, a role to play in this world.

When I was born, my parents were overjoyed. They were stepping into a new journey, taking on the proud roles of father and mother. I can still imagine the happiness they must have felt, holding me as their child, full of hope for what I might become.

But my childhood was not like that of other children. While most babies begin to stand or walk within their first year, my feet did not find the ground when they were supposed to. My father and mother grew anxious. Something was not right, and they knew it. They took me to the doctor—Dr. Vallal, my childhood doctor, who even today remains a guiding presence whenever my health troubles me. He always treated me with care and confidence, as though he carried a special power within him. Yet, despite his efforts, I still could not walk.

Whispers began to surround my parents. Neighbors and relatives had their own opinions: “Take him to the temple,” some said. “No, to the mosque,” others insisted. “You must go to the church,” a few advised. Everyone spoke from their own faith and beliefs, each trying to give my parents hope in their own way.

My mother, however, chose faith in her own style. She carried me in her arms and knelt before Jesus Christ. She walked around the church, holding me close, praying with all the love and strength only a mother can give. She often tells me this story even today—that moment when she placed all her trust in God, asking only that her child’s feet touch the earth.

And then, one day, they did. At the age of 2, I finally stood and walked. Slowly at first, then with the restless energy of a child who had been waiting too long. My parents, who had once prayed desperately for me to walk, now found themselves chasing after me as I ran to the shop or the market. Life had turned around in such a

surprising way. My father would laugh and say, “What is this? Are you trying to become an athlete already?”

Time had rewritten my story—from the child who could not walk to the one who could not stop running.

2. Childhood & Family Background

My childhood began in a small corner of the world where everything felt larger than life — the streets, the voices, and the dreams we carried. I was born in a small hospital named *Gandigramam*, located in Dindigul district. My mother often reminded me of the story of my birth. When the nurse carried me out of the delivery room and showed me to my grandfather, he was so shocked by my dark complexion that he jokingly questioned whether I was really his grandson. That story still makes me laugh to this day — who wouldn’t find such a moment amusing?

I grew up in a close-knit family with my loving parents. I am their first child, and my mother’s warmth and care always made our home feel alive. My parents often prayed for my well-being, especially when I began to walk — a milestone that filled our home with joy and laughter.

As a child, I was quite mischievous — the kind who could easily test a mother’s patience. Like many kids, I wasn’t fond of eating my meals regularly. Even now, as an adult, that habit continues — I eat properly only when it’s something I truly enjoy. Interestingly, I used to eat enthusiastically only when watching the MGR movie “*Neram Nalla Neram*”, especially the scenes featuring elephants. While others might be frightened by elephants, I found them fascinating!

As the years passed, I grew not only in height and strength but also in understanding and maturity. Those early days, filled with love, laughter, and a touch of mischief, shaped who I am today.

3. School and Early Influences

I was an ordinary student — the kind who scored above average but never the brightest one in class. Before 2nd standard, I studied in a small middle school that went only up to 5th standard. Its name itself felt like a warm hug — “**Mother**

Theresa Middle School.” With all due respect and considering the circumstances, it was a common suggestion that I should move to a better school.

Before joining the new school, there was an entrance test to check whether I was capable of joining. Looking back now, it feels funny — how could a 2nd standard student be tested with 3rd or 4th standard questions? By God’s grace, I passed the exam. Now, when I think about it, that test probably didn’t mean much; maybe it was just a formality.

That’s how I joined my new school, **“E.B.G. Matriculation Higher Secondary School.”** In the beginning, I was too shy and nervous to ask anything from the teachers. But there was one person who stood by me — **Dharmesh** — my friend who was always by my side. I remember counting the minutes, eagerly waiting for the last bell to ring so I could rush home and meet my mom. I was always a *mama’s boy*, telling her everything that happened at school — not to complain, but just to share my day with her.

Days went by, and the best part of life is that it never stands still — we grow, both physically and mentally. When I entered middle school (6th standard), our classes were moved to a separate building. It was dark and quiet, and to my little mind, it felt haunted. I wasn’t scared of studies — I was scared of the shadows. I even pretended to be sick sometimes, just to avoid those gloomy classrooms.

But time has a way of moving us forward. By 7th standard, our classes shifted to another building — the *high school* block. There, among the seniors and the “big boys,” everything felt different again. A new phase of life had just begun.

The phase began with pure excitement — yes, I was stepping into a new chapter of my journey. I started meeting new friends, some who are still in touch with me, others who now exist only as names in my social media followers list. It’s strange how we can see their lives unfold through a screen — knowing where they are, what they do, and how they’ve grown.

Among the many faces I met in my higher school days, there was one who became a part of my life in a special way — Maharifa. I never knew that the person I met then would stay by my side as a true well-wisher. Everyone deserves a loyal best

friend in their life, and she was exactly that. She never failed to encourage me, and she always knew how to bring a smile to my face. Even now, as life has become a race and we're caught up in its speed, we still stay connected — mostly through Instagram. Her parents were quite strict about her talking to boys, so we rarely spoke in person. But our friendship was never about what people thought — it was about understanding, trust, and care.

4. Struggles That Shaped Me

Life isn't always kind, especially when you're young and still learning what pain means. During my 6th standard, my family went through one of its hardest times. My father, who worked as a driver, met with a terrible accident while driving through the hills. It changed everything for us.

Those days were dark. We struggled even to manage a day's meal. I still remember times when my father didn't even have ten rupees to feed us. It was heartbreaking to see him like that — a man who had always stood tall suddenly brought down by fate.

But in those moments of despair, one person stepped forward — my grandfather. With his kind heart and steady hands, he supported us financially and emotionally, helping my family stay afloat. His small acts of help meant the world to us then. That phase taught me more than any classroom ever could — about strength, family, and the quiet hope that carries us through the hardest storms.