

## My Baby Anna

**My name is Pathmamalar Sivapathasundram.**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to say a few words about my dearest brother, whom we affectionately called Baby Anna. He was the one who was just older to me and the one who spent the most time with me whilst growing up.

We were naturally very close and the ones who did a lot of activities together. My cherished memories of my Baby Anna are extensive, and I am at a loss as to where to start. So, I have resorted to listing just some of those treasured memories.

At a time when it was not expected for girls to be going overseas for their studies, riding bicycles, etc. my Baby Anna kept encouraging me to strive for greater achievements. He did not want his siblings to be limited by the norms of the society. Although my mother was not keen about girls riding bicycles, his persistent efforts of teaching me cycling contributed in a major way to our survival when it was extremely useful at a time when it was the only means of transport during the dark days of the long conflict in Sri Lanka.

His ambitions of wanting both of us to move to the UK to further our studies unfortunately did not eventuate due to the declining health of our mother and the requirement for me to stay and look after her. Although his studies and eventual travel to the UK took him away from me in 1967, he never stopped communicating with me. In recent times he would message me every day.

To his credit, he achieved success through his own efforts. Apart from caring for his cherished family, his mind was always contemplating on how he could help improve the lives of his parents and siblings. The fact that he single-handedly sponsored all his siblings who moved to the UK so that their lives could be enhanced, has to be recognised.

After the loss of our mother, he took our father to London and cared for him till his passing in 1998.

One of my greatest regrets has been my inability to move to UK as per his wishes. My circumstances did not permit me to take the numerous opportunities he gave me.

I believe that one of the greatest gifts he ever received in life was his wife, my sister-in-law, Kaushalya. I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to her as well and say my heartfelt thanks for being a caring and cooperative wife who stood by him and supported his endeavours. She has not been a sister-in-law to me, but more like a close friend and sister.