

"Geeta Padoh" – The Secret Recipe
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Anyone who has known Swamiji will know that his "mantra" to one and all; child or adult, in adversity or in joy was "*Geeta Padoh*". This simple recipe always bewildered me in my early days, and I remember saying to Swamiji: "But I don't understand what I am chanting". He would smile in his whimsical way and say: "*totay jaise padoh*" (recite it like a parrot).

Whenever Swamiji was in town he used to receive a stream of visitors and devotees – all eager to share with him their hopes, joys, and quite often their trials and tribulations. Most of us were looking for some magic bullet to solve our problems – and Swamiji gave it to us – by repeating his secret recipe of "*Geeta padoh*". I was always struck by the look on the face of some of the visitors who were looking for something more "concrete" and instead were told "*Geeta padoh*". While some took it seriously, others felt short changed. They would come up with a host of reasons why this was not possible, and Swamiji would offer an instant solution. I remember some people saying to Swamiji "I don't know Sanskrit". And Swamiji would say "Break it down by syllable – there is nothing more to it. Syllable by syllable – just like a child – and you get the wonderful sound of cosmic vibrations – uttered by the Lord himself!" Some others would say: "I don't have the time". To which Swamiji would say "Read one chapter – the shortest in the Bhagavad Geeta (Chapter 12), or "Read one verse". Often when having fun with his devotees, Swamiji would time us speed-chanting Chapter 12; and proved that it could be done in under 2 minutes. A small investment of time in a day with 1440 minutes!

I have seen and witnessed how the life of those who read the Geeta with devotion has been touched. Geeta may not resolve your problems the way you may wish them be, but it sure gives you divine strength to go through them. The wonders and miracles of this simple but powerful recipe of "*Geeta Padoh*" have played out in many forms over the years – both for me and my family. Nevertheless, one incident among the many made a deep impression on me. It took place 20 years ago.

It was during one of these memorable visits that Swamiji made to my parents' place. At this time, my grandfather, whom we all adored as our champion, was bed-ridden and also suffering from Alzheimer's. During this particular visit, my parents asked Swamiji what they could do to relieve my grandfather's physical suffering. Swamiji's response "*Geeta padoh*" (of course!). But this time, it went one step further and he added "*Puri Geeta Padoh*" (recite the full Geeta). I remember the ensuing discussion, amidst suggestions from relatives and friends, on how this should be done, i.e should we have a live reading, a tape, etc. Swamiji interjected to say "*Puri Geeta Padoh*" and that this should be done directly to my grandfather. Next question posed to Swamiji was "How many times should we read the full Geeta?" I recall vividly, how Swamiji did not answer this question, and he said "just start reading". But upon further insistence – Swamiji said "O.K. 11 times!"

There was even a remark by someone that it may be pointless as my grandfather was not able to really hear it being in the physical state that he was. To this Swamiji reminded us of Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna, who as an unborn child in his mother Subadhra's womb, learnt the knowledge of entering the deadly and virtually impenetrable Chakravyuha army formation as it was being explained by Sri Krishna to Subadhra. This knowledge he could then rightly use during the Great War.

Swamiji left, and that first Sunday, several in my family and some relatives, including my parents and myself, sat together and read the full Geeta – a first time for me! Next day, on Monday, my grandfather passed away – peacefully. It dawned upon me (us) why

Swamiji has said “just start reading” and had been reluctant to give the number of times we needed to do this. And I also recalled Swamiji saying that my grandfather’s soul was “trapped” in the body, and the best deliverance would be for the soul to hear the Geeta. The miracle and power of the Geeta (and the guidance of the Guru) to cleanse and relieve the soul had just played out before our very eyes.

“Geeta padoh” is the “true” secret recipe – that constitutes Swamiji’s heritage to all of us. When all is silent, I still hear Swamiji’s deep lilting voice uttering these two magical words “Geeta padoh” – and all else becomes irrelevant.