

FIFTY 'GEMS' FROM THE DISCOURSES OF LORD SAI

[Source: Thought for the Day, a collection of Swami's Quotations published from Prashanthi Nilayam]

Goodness, compassion and tolerance: through these three paths, one can see the divinity in oneself and in others. Softness of heart is condemned by people today as weakness, cowardice and want of intelligence. The heart has to be hardened, they say, against pity and charity. But that way lies war, destruction and downfall. Love confers lasting happiness and peace. Sharing can reduce grief and multiply joy. Man is born to share, to serve, to give and not to grab. When you have faith in God as a precious truth in the altar of your heart, you will welcome, with equal alacrity, the blows and blossoms of fortune.

The Ramayana is a guidebook, a sacred text, an inspiring scripture, for every man in all lands, whatever his creed or condition might be. It imparts poise, balance, equanimity, inner strength and peace. Peace is the best treasure without which power; authority, fame and fortune are all dry and burdensome. Thyagaraja has sung that there can be no happiness without inner peace.

Why is it that the world reveres Rama and revolts at Ravana? Rama is not the uncle's son or Ravana the stepmother's child! It is the kinship of the spirit, innate goodness, responding lovingly, adoringly to the goodness in Rama; and reacting revoltingly to the wickedness of Ravana. It is not enough, nor is it essential that you should repeat the name of Rama loudly; respect it in the fullness of love and admiration. If you have no spring of love in you, dig into your heart with external instruments like *Puja*, *Stotra*, etc. and it will start to flow.

Vibhishana, Ravana's own brother, chastised him for his willfulness and lust and urged him to save himself, his kingdom and his kith and kin by restoring Sita unharmed to her Lord. When Vibhishana went over to Rama, Rama knew that he had a pure heart and that he could not survive the poisonous atmosphere of Lanka. So He took him and saved him. The Lord likes to be called *Aartha-traana-paarayana* - more than any other name, for He is most happy when He rescues those in agony.

You talk glibly of Rama Rajya, but how can it be established, if you do not emulate Rama? He was *Vignahavaan Dharmah*, the very embodiment of *Dharma*. He never deviated from it. Dasaratha means one who is master of the ten senses, the five *Karmendriyas* and the five *Jnanedriyas*; that is to say the successful *Sadhaka*. Such a person can have the holy progeny of the four *Purusharthas*- *Dharma* (Rama), *Artha* (Lakshmana), *Kama* (Bharatha) and *Moksha* (Satrugna). Become a Dasaratha and save that holy progeny as a gift from God.

Hanuman succeeded in coordinating his thought, word and act. Therefore he had the unique distinction of being great in physical strength, mental stability and virtuous character. He shines as an invaluable gem among the personalities of the Ramayana. He was also a great scholar, who had mastered, of all things, the six schools of grammar. He knew the four Vedas and the six Sastras. The Gita says that a scholar is one who sees the same Divine force motivating everyone. *Pandithaha Samadarshinaha*. Hanuman was a good example of this outlook.

The *vanaras* while building the bridge across the ocean, carried huge boulders on their heads, repeating *Rama-nama* all the while; and that made the rocks weigh less. It is said that they even wrote the Name on the stones and that made them float. Each time they handled or lifted a stone, they sang *Rama Nama* in unison and so they were a happy lot, doing *Puja* not work, which is unpleasant. Take the Name and make your work light: That is my advice to you.

Insist on your seeking and remaining in good company, *satsangha*. Being in the midst of such spiritual heroes, you can fight against evil with a greater chance of success. Once when Garuda the sworn enemy of snakes went to Kailasa, he saw the snakes that Siva wore around His neck, His arms, His waist, His Feet. The snakes were safe now and they hissed with their puffed hoods at the celestial bird, which could do them no harm since they were in such Divine Company. Garuda said " Well! Glide down from the body and I shall kill every one of you!" That is the value of the *Sath* one has reached. *Sath Sangha* is valuable, for it is like keeping a pot of water inside a tank of water. There will not be any loss through evaporation.

Pride is one of the worst sins in the spiritual field. If you feel that you are a *bhakta* of Hare, He will *hare* (destroy, in Telugu) you. Remember *saranagathi* should be like the attitude of Lakshmana. Rama said "Take Sita and leave her in the forest" Implicit obedience! There is no other way. That is Lakshmana. That is *Saranagathi*; the rest are deserving only of *Saranagathi*, the arrow of Rama.

Hanuman was ordered to discover the whereabouts of Sita and he implicitly without question obeyed and succeeded. He did not calculate the dangers of the journey and hesitate; and he did not feel proud that he was chosen for the high adventure. He listened; he understood; he obeyed; and he won. The name *Ramadhuta*, messenger and servant of Rama that he earned thereby, has made him immortal. You must earn that name, *Sai Rama Dootha*. Have fortitude and self control; use good and sweet words; and examine each act of yours on the touchstone of My preference.

The toughest fiber is anger. It is the stickiest dirt. When you get angry, you forget mother, father and teacher; you descend to the lowest depths. You lose all discrimination in the excitement; even Hanuman set fire to the whole of Lanka when he was incensed by the Rakshasas who set fire to the tip of his tail; and he lost sight of the fact that Sita was in the Ashoka Vana. It was only after he had exulted in achievement for a little while that he remembered it and then he started condemning himself for his anger.

Do not ask God for anything. Let him deal with you as He wills. Did Jatayu ask that Rama should come to him and perform his last rites? Did Shabari plead with Rama? Earn the qualifications - holiness, purity, faith, and universal love; then He will approach you on foot, to console, comfort and save. If you have purity of heart and mastery over the senses, His Grace is your right.

Ego plays all sorts of tricks, in order to get unholy pleasure. During the construction of the bridge to Lanka to take the army across, Hanuman heaved a boulder across the raging waves of the sea, as part of the bridge! it floated. Rama heaved another; it sank. Hanuman's ego was tickled, naturally. He laughed in derision; at that very moment his boulder sank! And, the boulder, that Rama had thrown, rose from the bottom of the sea and floated! Hanuman's ego was pricked to nothing. That was the purpose for which Rama had willed that His boulder should sink.

The Lord will be the guide of whoever installs Him as his *Sarathi*. He will not consider that position inferior. He is the *Sanathana Sarathi*, come to be the *Sarathi* of all. He is the Lord for all who seek a Master, a support. The *Atma* is the Master in every one; and Krishna is the universal *Atma* personified.

The genuine Bharatiya vision is to life into a pilgrimage towards the God resident in oneself; a steady march along the straight path to Bliss. There is no such steadiness now. Fancy and Fantasy rule the mind of man. You desire one thing in the morning; at noon you change over to something else. That desire will not persist until evening. If your desire is fulfilled, you praise God and parade your devotion. But, if it does not prevail, you throw God overboard and parade your disbelief.

Detachment is a plant of slow growth. If you pluck the tender plant to look for the pods, you will be disappointed. So, too, long constant practice alone is rewarded by the peace that God offers. Grace is acquired by surrender, as Krishna has declared in the Gita.

When the Gita directs you to give up all *Dharma* (Set codes of morality) it does not ask you to give up *Karma*, and, when you do it for God, through God and by God, the *Dharma* of it does not matter; it has to be acceptable; and it is bound to benefit you. The statement is not an invitation to licentiousness or complete inactivity. It is a call for dedication and surrender to the highest in man, namely God.

Perform all acts with as much love as you would offer God. In Truth, you eat for the satisfaction of the "I" in you and dress up to please the self-same "I". The husband loves the wife for the sake of the "I". And who is this "I," that is persistent in everyone? It is God himself. "*Eswarah Sarva Bhoothanam*" says the Gita: The Lord resides in the heart of every being. He is the *Atman* in every being. He is the *Atman* in everyone, the *Paramatman*.

Ponder over your *sthithi* (present condition), *gathi* (direction of movement), *Shakthi* (capabilities) and *mathi* (inclination). Then, enter upon the path of *sadhana* step by step, so that you faster every day, every hour, every minute. Arjuna became entitled to the Gita Upadesh from the Lord

Himself, because he evinced the *Vishada*, the *Vairagya* the *Saranagathi* and the *Ekagratha* essential to assimilate the great message. When the yearning for liberation has become intense, beyond expression, man can set aside all social conventions, worldly norms and codes of conduct that do not subserve that high purpose.

The Gita says that, if you give up all *Dharma*, and take refuge in Him, then he will save you from sin and wipe your tears. Giving up *Dharma* does not mean that you can bid farewell to virtue and righteous action.; it means, you have to give up egoism that you are the doer. Be confirmed in the faith that He is the *doer* of every deed, that is the genuine 'giving up'

Krishna was known to all as Almighty - All - Knowing, All - Encompassing and All - fulfilling. Yet the enthusiasm to do *seva* prompted Him to approach Dharmaraja, the eldest of the Pandava brothers, on the eve of the magnificent Rajasuya Yaga he had planned to perform and offered to take up *seva* of any kind. He suggested that He be given the task of cleaning the dining hall after the guests had partaken of the feast! Krishna insisted on outer cleanliness and inner cleansing. Clean clothes and clean minds are an ideal combination.

During the battle of Kurukshetra, which climaxed as the Mahabharata story, Krishna served as the *driver* of the chariot of Arjuna throughout the day on the field and till dusk caused the adjournment of the fight. He led the horses to the river, gave them a refreshing bath and applied healing balms to the wounds suffered by them during the fierce fray. He mended the reins and the harness and rendered the chariot battle-worthy for another day. The Lord sets the example for the devotees to follow. He teaches that service done to any living being is offered to Him and is accepted by Him most joyfully. Service rendered to cattle, to beasts and to men is laudable *sadhana*.

The world today is in deep distress because the common man and his leaders are all distracted by lower desires and motives, which require only the lower skills and meaner impulses of man. This is what I call 'devaluation.' Though man is inherently divine, he lives only at the animal level. Very few live even in the native human level.

Bhishma, for example, has to be revered and accepted as an inspiration even more potent than Rama so far as homage to the father is concerned. In order to cater to the carnal cravings, which he would have ordinarily condemned, he denied himself gladly, spontaneously, without demur and for the entire period of his life, both wedded life and royal status. The Vedic injunction *Pithr Devobhava* was honored by him in the fullest manner.

This created Universe has two aspects; one is impermanence (*Anithyam*). The second is unhappiness (*Asukham*). In the Gita, Krishna has said, "*Anithya, Asukha Lokam Imam Prapya Bhajaseva Maam*". Nothing in the world can give happiness that is true and everlasting. Mistaking the world as 'All' and forgetting the *Atman*, which alone is eternal and the only refuge, is the greatest folly of man today; man is pinning all his hopes on the slippery work and is madly running after amassing and hoarding wealth. Of course material needs are to be taken care of but within limits and not at the cost of spiritual values. Money and mansions are not at the only wealth. Hoard the wealth of the spirit. Character is wealth; Good conduct is wealth; and spiritual wisdom is wealth.

Egoism is the most dangerous illusion that has to be exploded and destroyed. Bhima had it, but when he could not lift and lay aside the tail of a monkey, who was really Anjaneya himself, that the bubble was exploded. Arjuna had it, one day, after the battle; when Krishna brought the chariot back to camp, he wanted that, like all charioteers, Krishna should get down first; The Master must get down later, after the charioteer opens the door for him. Krishna refused and insisted that Arjuna should alight before He Himself should. At last Krishna won. Arjuna got down and then, as soon as Krishna left His seat and touched the ground, the chariot went up in flames. If only Krishna got down first, the fact was the various fire arrows that had the power of burning the chariot would hit the target, but, due to the presence of Krishna, their igniferous powers could not manifest themselves. After knowing this, Arjuna was humbled and his egoism had a powerful shock. He realized that every action of Krishna was full of significance.

The Gita advises *Karmasanyasa*, that is to say, *karma* without attachment to the fruit thereof. There are *Karmas*, which have to be done as duties, related to the status in *Samsara*, and, if these are done in the proper spirit, they will not bind at all. Do all *karma* as actors in a play, keeping your

identity separate and not attaching yourself too much to your role. Remember that the whole thing is just a play and the Lord has assigned you a part; act well your part; there all duty ends. He has designed the play and He enjoys it.

It is when are in a desperate situation that you call upon the Lord, forgetting your pride and your egoism. The Pandavas were so full of misery in a worldly sense that they always had an attitude of prayer. If I had given you all the comforts and opportunities, you would not have come to Puttaparthi. Trouble is the bait with which the fish is handled out of the water. Kunti asked that Krishna should continue giving her and her sons all kinds of misery so that He may grant them His Grace continuously

The Mahabharata for example, is basically the story of the five vital airs of man (the *Pancha Pranas*) overcoming the hundred obstacles in the path of upward progress. The eldest of the five Pandava brothers is Dharmaraja (Morality, Righteousness); he is ably supported by Bhima (Physical strength devoted to Divine Service and charged with devotion), Arjuna (steady pure faith in God) and Nakula and Sahadeva, who represent steadfastness and equanimity. When these five are exiled, the Hastinapura (body) is inundated with *Adharma* (unrighteousness)

In the *Manasa - Sarovar* (the deep, placid mind lake) of every man, there lurks a poisonous cobra, with six hoods: lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride and hate, infesting the air and destroying all who are near it. The name of the Lord, when it dives into the depths, forces it to come up to the surface so that it may be destroyed. So, allow the Divine in you, the Krishna, Lord of the mind, let him trample on the hissing hoods and take out the vicious viper; let it vomit the venom and become *sathvic* and sweet.

Like all *Avatars*, Krishna announced His Advent to the world, bit-by-bit, step-by-step, testing how far the Reality will be accepted by the masses. The signs and miracles were intended then as now, to proclaim the *Avatar*.

The mystery and splendor of God can be only grasped by a pure mind and a clear vision. That is why the Lord granted a new eye to Arjuna in order that he might not be confounded by His Glory. A resolution adopted by the mind is like a stone thrown into a Sarovar or lake. It produces ripples that affect the entire face and unsettles equanimity. A good resolution or *Sankalpa* sets up a series of such thoughts, each contributing its quota to the process of purification and strengthening.

The One is comprehensive of all this. So, it has no wants, no desires and no activity to realize anything. Sri Krishna tells Arjuna: "*Name Partha asthi Karthavyam, Thrishu Lokeshu Kinchava Partha*" (There is nothing I have to do in any of the three worlds). He has willed the world as his sport, He has laid down that every deed must have its consequence. He is the dispenser of the consequences but is not involved in the deeds.

One can also be rid of *Maya* if one can discard the three *Gunas* from one's makeup. The *Sathyaguna* too has to be transcended, why? The Gita directs that even the eagerness to be liberated is a bond. One is fundamentally free. Bondage is only an illusion. So the desire to make close the bond is the result of ignorance. Krishna says, "Arjuna, become free from the three *Gunas*." In truth, the word *Guna* means the rope, for all the three *Gunas* bind the *Jiva* with the rope of desire. Liberation means liberation from elusive attachment or *Moha*, "*Mohakshaya* - decline in the desire caused by attachment to sensory pleasure."

Consider for a moment how long worldly triumphs last. They are but the play of the scintillating name and form of the Divine, which is the core of every being. Earn the vision that sees the Divine inherent in all. We are not troubled when something is good; only when something is bad. This is because the goodness in us is natural. In our evil aberration, we are worried and alarmed when we slide into wrong or pain or sorrow. This is because nature plans us to be right, to be happy and ever in a state of joy. It is a pity that man has lost his understanding of this basic Truth.

Dhyana is not mere sitting erect and being silent. Nor is it the absence of any movement. It is the merging of all your thoughts and feelings to God. Without the mind becoming dissolved in God, *Dhyana* cannot succeed. The Gita declares genuine *Dhyana* as *Ananyaschinthayanthomaam Ye Janah Paryapasthi* (Those persons who adore me without any other thought or feeling). Krishna has assured such persons that He would Himself carry their burden and be by their side, guiding

and guarding them. Persons adept in this *Dhyana* are very rare; most people go through the external exercises only. So they are unable to win Grace.

Life is a song, sing it. That is what Krishna taught through his life. Arjuna heard that song in the battlefield where tensions were at their highest and the fate of millions was to be decided by the sword. Krishna sang the Gita for Arjuna to listen. Gita means 'Song' and He sang because He was *Ananda*, wherever He might be - in Gokulam, on the banks of the Yamuna or at Kurukshetra between the warring armies.

Why does He attract all to His Presence? To plough the heart, prepare it for receiving the shower of Grace, to grow the seeds of Love, weed it of all evil thoughts, which smother the crops of joy and to enable it to gather the harvest of wisdom. That wisdom finds its fulfillment in Krishna Himself, for Krishna also means pure essence, the Supreme Principle, the *Sat-Chit-Ananda*

When Dharmaraja, the eldest of the five Pandavas, came to know after the death of Karna, which they effected successfully, that Karna was his brother, his agony knew no bounds; he was struck disconsolate and was torn by despair. If only he had known the truth, all that grief would have been avoided. So, too, until you know that all are altars where the Name of God is installed, all are moved and motivated by the Grace of the self same God, you are afflicted by hate and pride; Once you know it and experience it, you are full of Love and reverence to all.

The question on the battle-field was not who was the kin of whom, but who was right and who was wrong; fight for justice, fight for truth, fight for these as a *kshatriya* is duty bound, and leave the result to the dispenser of all. Krishna told Arjuna "I am surprised that you should weep so, for you are Gudakesha, the conqueror of sleep, of ignorance. You do not kill; don't be conceited at all that, nor do 'they' die; 'They' have many more things to do; and in the real, they are deathless" "The sentence of Death has already been pronounced on their bodies by Me and you have but to carry out My orders" Krishna said.

When the righteous Pandavas were harassed by wicked Kauravas, the beautiful Krishna appeared and saved them. The Lord can never deign violence and bloodshed. Love is His Instrument, Non-violence His Message. He achieves the correction of evil-minded through education and example. But, it may be asked, why did Kurukshetra happen? It was a surgical operation and therefore cannot be described as an act of violence. The Surgeon saves life through the beneficial use of His Knife.

Consider the name Krishna that the Avatar bore; what a significant Name? Krishna is derived from the root *krish*, which means

1. To Attract
2. To plough and cultivate
3. The Divine Principle beyond time, space and Causation.

Krishna like all Avatars attracts not only seekers, saints and sages, but the simple, the innocent and the good. He draws also the curious, the critics the skeptics and those who suffer from atheism. He draws them towards Himself by the irresistible charm of His person, by his invincible Look, His Voice, His Flute, His counsel and His undaunted heroism! He is ever in a state of Bliss, spreading harmony, melody and beauty around Him; He sings everywhere in the peaceful pasture lands of Brindavan and in the blood soaked battlefield of Kurukshetra.

Bhishma was a *bhakta* and by winning the Lord's Grace he was clothed with more Majesty and splendor than any early emperor. What majesty have these scepter holders? They cannot claim to have inner peace, inner joy, they know not the joy of sharing love with all. Bhishma surrendered, to the Lord when He challenged Him with the *sudarshana* that is to say, when He offers *su* (good) *darshana* (vision) one must be wise enough to surrender, give up all that is what Bhishma did.

Arjuna exclaimed Krishna as the Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient God, when the foe was defeated day after day. But when his son Abhimanyu was killed in the conflict, he raved in the grief that Krishna had not guided him properly and guarded him efficiently. His mind wavered with every wind as fortune. To many the mind is the master of the intellect also. One must be vigilant and preserve the impartiality of instrument called Reason of Intellect. Clarify reason, then it will

reveal God everywhere, even in you. Once you accept God as the core of the Universe and yourself have that faith strong and steady.

Fill every moment with energy, enthusiasm and effort. The epics teach you how to succeed in this. The Mahabharata describes how when every other of the hundred Kauravas died, the eldest Duryodhana was challenged by Bhima to meet him in a duel. When he at last fell to the ground, Bhima struck his head with his foot in order to add insult to injury. Duryodhana's pride was hurt. A Kshatriya such as he could not pass that insult by. He retorted even when he was dying "Do not exult that you have done some heroic act by trampling on my head! In a few seconds dogs and vultures will be doing that act. It does not require a hero to plant his foot on a dying man. You dared not do this when I was capable of hitting back, you coward!" That kind of awareness of one's potentialities and quick response to all happenings must be present in you too. Heroism gushed out even when he was passing away!

The Krishna whose advent you should celebrate is not the cowherd boy who charmed with His flute, but the Krishna the indefinable Divine principle that is born in the navel of the body (Mathura) as the product of Divine Energy (Devaki) that is then transported to the Mouth (Gokula) and fostered by the Tongue (Yasoda) as its source of sweetness. Krishna is the visualization of the *Atma* that the repetition of the Name grants, the vision was gained by Yasoda; you must foster that Krishna on your tongue. When He dances on it, the poison of the tongue will be ejected completely, without harming anyone as happened when as a child He danced on the hoods of the serpent Kaliya.

Purity of motive is the best guarantee that you will have Peace. An uneasy conscience is a tormenting compassion. Righteous action will have no bad effects, to disturb your sleep or health.

If there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in character;
If there is beauty in character, there will be harmony in the home;
When there is harmony in the house, there will be order in the nation;
When there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the World.

So, be righteous; avoid all prejudices against others on the basis of caste, creed, color, mode of worship, status, or degree of affluence. Do not look down or up on any one; look upon all as Divine as you really are.

All faiths are inter-related and mutually indebted to each other for the principles they teach and the disciplines they recommend. The Vedic religion was the first in time. Buddhism, which appeared about 2500 years ago, was its son; Christianity, which was influenced much by the Orient, was its grandson. And Islam, which has the prophets of Christianity as its base, was the great grandson. All have love as the fundamental discipline of the mind, in order to chasten it and merge man with the Divine.

Vinayaka is called the child of two mothers Gowri and Ganga. You are the pet children of four mothers, each of you; Sathya, Dharma Shanthi and Prema. Do not ridicule them by your act. Honor them and be grateful to them. Do not claim 'Anyaya' (Injustice), 'Akrama' (Indiscipline), 'Asathya' (Falsehood), and 'Anachara' (Evil Behavior) as your mothers. Instead expand your heart, taking in all humanity into the circle of your kin, even the birds, beasts, worms, and insects, trees, and plants. The Vedic Prayer asks that the aspirants heart may be expanded 'Brhathe Koromi'-I make myself vast! The vastest is 'Brahmam'; from which comes the same root, 'brh': to enlarge.

Love must be manifested as service or *seva*. *Seva* must take the form of food for the hungry, solace for the forlorn, consolation of the sick and the suffering. Jesus was himself out in such *seva*. The heart full of compassion is the temple of God. Jesus pleaded at the sight of the poor. Jesus is worshipped but His teachings are neglected. Sai is being worshipped, but His teachings are neglected. Everywhere, pomp, pageantry, hollow exhibitionism and lectures, lectures, lectures! No activity, no Love, no *seva*. Heroes while lecturing are zeros while putting into practice. Develop compassion. Live in Love. Be Good, Do Good, and See Good. This is the way to God.
