

# VANI

THE ART OF SPEECH





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# **VANI – THE ART OF SPEECH**

## **(English Edition)**

By Sahitya Lekhan Vibhag

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# **Divine Blessings of HDH Swamishri**

It is essential for every member of the Karan Satsang to have discretion in their speech. Shriji Maharaj has graciously granted us the exalted title of Anadimukta . To uphold the dignity of this status, our speech must be humble, gentle, and polite.

Before stepping into the state of an Anadimukta, it is crucial that every member of the Karan Satsang imbibes humility, divinity, and discipline in their communication. This booklet will serve as a guide for everyone in this regard.

Therefore, I humbly request you to regularly read and reflect on at least one page of this booklet and strive to live a divine life accordingly. By doing so, you will receive abundant blessings of Lord Swaminarayan, Bapashri, and HDH Bapji and will also be immensely pleased with you.

With utmost humility,

Saint Satyasankalpdasji's (HDH Swamishri)

**Jay Swaminarayan!**

# Preface

*"Blind lead the blind"* — this phrase once caused a war in ancient India, whereas *"Brothers and sisters"* phrase made Indian culture known across the globe. Both of these are examples of speech and yet, while one brings everyone together, the other sets them apart. Speech is a powerful tool which can either cause injury or can become a remedy. That's why Sadguru Muktanand Swami said:

***"Samji vichari bolo amrut ven jo"***

**"Speak thoughtfully and let your words be like nectar"**

In the present times, the lack of discretion in speech is a major cause of conflicts between individuals, communities, and nations. This indiscretion tarnishes our personal, work and spiritual lives. Hence, having discretion in speech is imperative. It brings peace and joy to our lives.

As ideal citizens, devotees, and true followers of Karan Satsang, how should we conduct ourselves verbally in our home, temples, and public spaces? Through the gracious words of Guruji (HDH Swamishri), divine incidents from the lives of Maharaj (Lord Swaminarayan), Motapurush, and other eminent personalities, this booklet aims to explain the significance, benefits, drawbacks, and remedies related to discretion in speech.

A key insight for personal introspection is also provided at the end of each example. This booklet has been designed with such meticulous attention. We hope that it will inspire civility, devotion, and divinity in our speech and bring refinement to our lives.

— ***Sahitya Lekhan Vibhag (SLV)***

# Speech: A Code of Conduct

In our lives, 80% of our interactions happen through speech. While everyone is free to speak, but they are not free from the consequences of what they say. Just as water is filtered before use, words should also be filtered before getting spoken. Speech is a precious gift bestowed upon humanity by the Lord, and how we use it matters greatly. Words are free but it is how we use them that may cost us. Happiness and sorrow are the outcomes of how we use this gift of speech.

Shriji Maharaj emphasized the importance of speech, saying, *"Harsh words are the greatest poison. Even if spoken once, they inflict immeasurable pain. Those who repeatedly speak harsh words, We (Shriji Maharaj) never care for them. Moreover, a person who speaks harshly does not receive honor even after death; instead, people disdain them. Anyone who hear bitter words die inside. The die poorly of distress, and others die by harsh speech. Bitter words are a form of death without dying. If one feels there is any benefit in speaking cruelly, it is a deceptive gain."*

— Shri Haricharitrarnrutsagar: 5/66

When speaking we must remember, as famously said, *"We are masters of the unsaid words, but slaves of those we let slip out"*. Words once spoken, an arrow once shot, an opportunity once ignored, and a moment once passed — none of these can ever return. For this reason, it is said, *"Think twice before you speak."* Speaking affectionate and respectful words to children, peers, and to elders, fosters harmony among not just our family members but everyone in our life.

Speech acts as an unbreakable bridge of affection. Therefore, if we desire a peaceful, joyous, and divine atmosphere in our homes, the first step is to bring discretion into our speech, beginning with ourselves. For this, we must be willing to change our mindset and beliefs wherever necessary.

Speech reflects a person's inner values and character. It is through speech that one's personality is measured. In any field—business or profession, climbing to a high position makes you more responsible for humility, decency, and sweetness that must shine in one's speech. If our speech becomes rude or sarcastic, the status one holds may not be sustained, and it might seem at a certain

point that undeserved authority has been granted. This affects not only the individual but also the environment and everyone in it.

When someone makes a mistake, if we become angry without understanding the situation, our speech might get uncontrollable. In such moments, if the person on the receiving end maintains composure, the situation can be managed. However, if both parties lose control, the environment would immediately become tense. Later, when these emotions subside, regret often follows. Words spoken impulsively during moments of anger can lead to a series of problems for which no solution may be found. Which is why it is said,

*"An animal suffers by not being able to speak, while a human suffers by saying what should not be spoken."*

Improper speech is the root of sorrow. Conversely, when our speech undergoes a transformation, it becomes a source of happiness. When one recognizes their mistakes and strives to change their speech, they earn respect. However, if someone refuses to accept their fault and continues to speak indiscreetly, they will inevitably face the consequences of their actions. Even though of having perfectly normal physical senses, a person blinded by one's ego becomes mentally blind and deaf.

Such individuals lose awareness of what they are saying or to whom they are speaking. They might be addressing a person of high reputation, an elder in the family, or even a saint, yet they remain oblivious. Even if a *Motapurush* tries to guide them, they fail to comprehend in that moment. This is why Shriji Maharaj, emphasizing the importance of discretion, stated in the *Shikshapatri*,

*"Never insult a Guru, a highly virtuous person, someone of social prestige, a scholar, or an armed individual."*

Criticism, condemnation, and negativity are like mud. If we throw stones into it, the mud will inevitably splash back onto us. Therefore, we must always remain cautious and speak words filled with glory and dignity. As often said,

*"By speaking kind words, all living beings are satisfied. Therefore, only such words should be spoken. Why should there be any poverty in speaking sweet and loving words?"*

For transforming our speech, our manner of speaking will remain the same, our voice will remain the same, what needs to change are the words we choose to speak. We must learn to exercise discretion in our speech. Whenever we communicate with someone, they naturally expect us to address them with love, speak to them respectfully, and acknowledge their dignity. If that alone satisfies them and makes them happy, shouldn't we speak such sweet, kind, and simple words? Shouldn't we act with more respect and grace?

Let us come together today and take a firm resolution,

*'I will eliminate the flaws and shortcomings in my speech and strive to speak in a way that pleases Maharaj, Bapa, Gurudev and Guruji, and help us lead a divine life.'*



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## **The Power of Speech**

### **Words of Wisdom**

Speech holds immense power. If it is used in arguments, it loses its strength. However, when used for clarification, it has a magical impact.

### **Incident**

During a trip to America, Swami Vivekanand was once traveling by a train. Seated next to him were two young Americans. Observing Swami Vivekanand's appearance and attire, they began mocking him and using insulting words in English. Swami Vivekanand, however, remained focused on reading his book, paying no attention to them.

When the train arrived at a station, Swami Vivekanand instructed a porter in fluent English to carry his luggage. Hearing Swami, speaking in English, the young men were astonished and exclaimed, "Oh! Do you know English? Despite our mocking and insults, you didn't respond?"

Swami Vivekanand, with great composure, replied, "I heard and understood everything you said. The words you spoke were a waste of speech. By responding, I didn't want to waste my words and diminish my power of speech." Hearing Swami Vivekanand's profound reply, the two young men fell at his feet in repentance. Avoiding using speech for arguments and instead using it for meaningful clarification makes our speech impactful.

### **Action Step**

I will refrain from using speech for unnecessary arguments.

## The Flaws of Speech

### Words of Wisdom

A person who speaks without restraint drives others away. Not just people, but even God distances Himself from such an individual. Perhaps we may think we don't need anyone, but do we not need God as well?

### Incident

“What is this commotion about?” asked Shri Hari from Akshar Ordi (Maharaj's place of stay).

“Maharaj, today is *Dagda Choth* (a local tradition). It seems someone must have thrown a stone on Soma Ba's shed, and now she is uttering abuses,” replied Naja Jogiya.

“Soma Ba is hurling abuses? Even after receiving so much guidance from us, has she not changed her behavior? We cannot stay here anymore. The person who speaks profane language and the one who listens to it, both incur sin,” Maharaj said and left for Harji Thakkar's house.

Soma Ba followed Maharaj to apologize and begged for forgiveness. However, Maharaj said, “We were unaware that even after receiving so much of our guidance, our words have not illuminated your heart. The flaw in your speech will plant the seeds of sin in the hearts of those who hear it.” Saying this, Shri Hari turned His face away. This incident from the virtuous life of Shri Hari, who emphasized to fill speech with discretion, inspires us never to utter harsh, bitter, or unworthy words that are inappropriate for any person.

### Action Step

I will ensure that my speech remains controlled and refrain from being careless in the usage my words

## Thoughtful Speech

### Words of Wisdom

An arrow released from a bow and a bullet fired from a gun cannot be retrieved, just as words spoken from the mouth cannot be taken back. One must think a hundred times before speaking.

### Incident

There was a cloth merchant who had a dispute with his neighbor. In anger, the merchant spoke harsh words and insulted the neighbor. That night, the merchant couldn't sleep, overwhelmed with regret, thinking, "I shouldn't have spoken to him like that."

The next day, the merchant went to a saint in the village, seeking forgiveness while weeping. The saint instructed, "Brother, bring a bag full of feathers." The merchant complied, filling a bag with feathers and bringing it to the saint. The saint then said, "Now go to the village square and scatter these feathers."

The merchant followed the instructions and scattered the feathers at the village square. When he returned, the saint said, "Now go back and collect all the feathers and put them back in the bag."

The merchant returned to the square and saw that while some feathers were still there, others had flown away with the wind. He gathered what he could and returned to the saint. The saint explained, "Brother, the words you speak are like these feathers. It is easy to let words escape from the mouth, but retrieving them is impossible."

### Action Step

I will speak thoughtfully and say words that are pleasant.

## **The Fruits of Satsang**

### **Words of Wisdom**

After attending or listening a spiritual discourse, what is considered a result? Merely listening to the discourse, performing service, or giving charity is not the true result. The true result is when there is a transformation in our speech and behavior. Further, when we move from materialistic perspective to a divine perspective is a part of an actual result. Thus, our words and action both should radiate divinity.

### **Incident**

Once, Somchandbapa visited his sister Diwaliba's home. While Diwaliba was scolding her son, she unknowingly uttered a harsh word. Somchandbapa overheard this and became deeply saddened.

When they invited him to eat, Somchandbapa refused. When asked why, He explained that He could not eat as a penance for the harsh words spoken by His sister.

Diwaliba, upon hearing this, became very regretful and apologized profusely to Somchandbapa, asking for forgiveness and from her son as well. She vowed never to speak such harsh words again, and only then did Somchandbapa agree to eat. After engaging in satsang, a devotee should speak words that reflect divine qualities.

### **Action Step**

In satsang and daily life, I will avoid speaking harsh words or using hurtful language.



## **Positive Speech**

### **Words of Wisdom**

Think Positive, Speak Positive, and Do Positive. Always speak positive words. Positive speech leads to an incline, while negative speech invites decline.

### **Incident**

This story is from the childhood of the great scientist Thomas Alva Edison. When he was a student, his teacher noticed his lack of attention to studies and said, “It seems like your brain is filled with hay instead of intellect!”

Upon hearing this, young Edison became upset and started crying. He ran home to his mother and shared what had happened. His mother, instead of reprimanding him, decided to stop sending him to school and began teaching him herself. After a few days, she told him, “My dear, it takes a lot of knowledge to teach a bright child like you! Poor teacher, where could he have gotten that knowledge?”

Her positive words lead Edison to be a great inventor. Encouraged by his mother, Edison developed new ideas and became a great scientist. Thus, positive speech leads to progress and growth.

### **Action Step**

I will always speak positively.

## Speaking with Respect

### Words of Wisdom

When talking to elders, peers or even if someone is younger to us in age, rank, or position, we should never address them using inappropriate informal language or slangs. This does include members of our family as well. In the context of spiritual gatherings, when we maintain the understanding that Maharaj resides in everyone, we will not lose the sense of respect for everyone around us.

### Incident

On June 17, 2018, in the evening, revered HDH Gurudev Bapji was doing a pradakshina (circumambulation) in a wheelchair at Vasna. Two young boys from Ghanshyamnagar had come to seek the blessings of Gurudev. After paying their respects, they prayed saying, “O Bapji! Always remain pleased with us. May you make us divine saints like yourself. Always stay with us.”

While the boys stood outside, praying and seeking blessings, a servant sent them closer to Guruji. One of the boys, while approaching, told the other hurriedly, “Hey! Bapa has arrived. *Tara Haath Jod!*” (Join your hands!) The second boy folded his hands in reverence. Upon hearing this conversation, Gurudev Bapji said to the boy, “Muktaraj, always speak to someone with respect and avoid using informal language.”

This incident highlights Guruji’s insistence on teaching even young children the importance of addressing others with respect.

### Action Step

I will never use slangs or use inappropriate informal language or slangs in my speech.

## **Praise, Not Flattery**

### **Words of Wisdom**

Praise is a form of appreciation for something good, done selflessly. Who doesn't like praise? Praising people is fine but why should we refrain from flattery? Praise, when expressed with sincerity, enhances the enthusiasm and spirit of the person. On the other hand, flattery is done with an ulterior selfish motive, aiming to gain something in return, and it often reflects the flatterer's insincerity. Flattery is not the same as genuine praise.

### **Incident**

There was a king who was very powerful and wealthy. However, his court was filled with flatterers. These people would praise him for every trivial or inappropriate matter, hoping to win his favor. The king found their flattery pleasing and would often be swayed by their words. One day, the king wore strange clothes that appeared half-naked. Despite the awkward appearance, his flatterers complimented him, saying, "O King, you look wonderful in these clothes!" Believing their words, the king thought to wear them to the court.

However, one wise advisor, noticing the king's predicament, took him to his private chamber. The advisor stood the king in front of a mirror and revealed the truth to him. The king was embarrassed as he saw himself in the mirror, realizing that he looked indecent in those clothes. He understood that his flatterers had only been deceiving him. The king felt ashamed of himself and thanked the wise advisor for his honesty. Flattering words may seem pleasant in the moment, but in the end, they can lead to erosion of trust and loyalty, bad decisions and embarrassment.

### **Action Step**

I will praise others sincerely from the heart, not with selfish motives or flattery.

## **Charity Begins from Home**

### **Words of Wisdom**

The foundation of speech and wisdom begins at home. The way we speak to our parents, children, and other family members at home should be the same as how we speak in public or at a place of worship. The saying "Charity begins at home" applies here too: "Speech and wisdom begin at home."

### **Incident**

Once, two parents came to visit Guruji with their son. One parent was a devotee, and the other was not. The devotee father, while praying to Guruji, said, "Guruji, our driver would like to have your darshan. If you permit, I can call him." Guruji agreed. The devotee father then turned to his son and said, "Go, son, call the uncle here." However, the child showed reluctance and shrugged his shoulders, refusing to go. At this moment, the other non-devotee's son quickly said, "Uncle, I will bring him." The child then went and brought the driver.

Guruji, observing this situation, said to both the parents, "Speech and wisdom are a great discipline. They must begin at home. The way children speak at home is how they will speak outside as well. Therefore, we must teach children wisdom and speech starting at home. Remember, similar to how 'Charity begins at home', 'Speech and wisdom also begins at home.'

### **Action Step**

I will begin the practice of polite speech and wisdom first at home.

## **Criticism**

### **Words of Wisdom**

As the cycle of transferring issues from one to another , is a behavior that fosters division and discord. This tendency to criticize and exaggerate minor issues into major ones, or to spread negativity, is a form of great indecency. On the other hand, praising the virtues of others in front of them, or speaking of someone's good qualities to another, is the highest form of civility and wisdom.

### **Incident**

There was once a devotee who had three sons. He would stay with each son for fifteen days. However, this devotee had a habit of speaking negatively about one son in front of the others. Whenever he visited the first son, he would criticize the second son, and when he visited the second son, he would speak ill of the third son. This habit of gossiping and spreading complaints among the sons created disharmony in the family. The three brothers began to quarrel, and eventually, there remained no communication between them and got divided. The root cause of a discord can be the habit of criticizing and gossiping.

### **Action Step**

Instead of indulging in gossip or criticism, I will focus on praising the virtues of others.

## **Victory**

### **Words of Wisdom**

Sweet speech is a powerful charm. With gentle words, one can win the hearts of everyone. The person who masters this art can win over all.

### **Incident**

Harsh words only bring pain, while soft and humble speech can turn even the most difficult situations into peaceful ones. Once, a group of 200 ascetics arrived in Gadhpur. These ascetics, while showing off their power, started demanding loudly, "Give us sweets and luxurious food; otherwise, we will create a scene."

Understanding the situation, Shriji Maharaj sent Saint Muktanand Swami to handle the matter.

Following Maharaj's instructions, Muktanand Swami went, bowed down, and in a calm and respectful voice, said, "Come, come, O divine devotees! Please come, please come..." The sweetness of Muktanand Swami's words calmed the hearts of the ascetics and cooled their anger. After hearing his soft and wise words, the ascetics were humbled and said, "You are the true ascetics. We are just ordinary people." After having a meal of lentils and bread they then decided to leave, and departed peacefully, taking the virtues of Lord Swaminarayan's saints with them. This is the miracle of Sadhu Muktanand Swami's gentle and sweet speech.

### **Action Step**

I will win over any situation or person speaking sweet speech.



## **Arrogant Speech**

### **Words of Wisdom**

Arrogant, harsh, and foolish speech has a negative impact on both our body and mind, while gentle and thoughtful speech keeps our body and mind healthy.

### **Incident**

On a highway in Russia, a military officer was standing when a man, looking like a villager, approached and asked, "Which way is it to Kaluga?" The officer, with arrogance, responded sharply, "Don't you feel ashamed asking anything without saluting me?"

The villager asked, "Who are you?" The officer replied, "I am a major in the Russian army. I command a force of three thousand soldiers. But who are you? What do you do? What is your name?"

The villager calmly replied, "I am a God's devotee and a helper of the community, my name is Alexander."

The officer, realizing his mistake, fell to his knees and said, "Please forgive me."

The king said, "Always be courteous to the people. It is humility that elevates you. If you remain arrogant, you will eventually fall." Arrogant speech leads to downfall.

### **Action Step**

I will avoid using arrogant words.

## **Inappropriate Etiquette**

### **Words of Wisdom**

Shouting loudly, speaking in a raised tone, addressing someone disrespectfully, making sarcastic remarks, or using coarse language, as well as excessive joking and teasing, are all indicators of inappropriate etiquette. True etiquette is reflected in gentle, wise, sweet, humble, and composed speech.

### **Incident**

In 1989, HDH Bapji and HDH Swamishri visited Kutch during their travels. The devotees there were delighted by their arrival and darshan. During a discourse, a saint familiar with Gurudev's virtuous nature requested him to address the gathering. Gurudev humbly directed Guruji Swamishri to speak instead.

While Guruji was addressing the assembly, a person with malicious intent called Gurudev outside with a gesture. As soon as Gurudev stepped out, the person started hurling harsh and insulting words at him. Despite the verbal abuse, Gurudev remained calm and didn't utter a single word in response.

Guruji, noticing the scene from the assembly, quickly concluded the session and followed Gurudev outside. Suspecting that something was wrong, Guruji asked, "Dayalu, what were they saying to you?" Gurudev, maintaining composure, replied, "Oh, they were just asking about our well-being and requesting us to stay for a meal." Despite facing disrespectful and rude behavior, Gurudev didn't speak ill of the person or mention their faults. He endured the insult silently.

### **Action Step**

Never use sarcasm or coarse speech in our interactions. Embrace patience and grace even in challenging situations.

## **Excessive Speech**

### **Words of Wisdom**

Just as remaining silent when one should speak causes problems, speaking excessively or unnecessarily can lead to trouble.

### **Incident**

There was a disciple who often showed off his wit. The Guru frequently advised him, “Don’t display your cleverness everywhere.” One day, this disciple went to a woman’s house to take milk. The buffalo there was large, with huge horns, but the barn door was quite small. After collecting the milk, the disciple asked the woman, “May I ask you something? If this buffalo dies, how would you take it out of here?”

The woman, irritated by the unnecessary question, picked up a stick and said, “You rascal! You talk about the death of the buffalo whose milk you drink?” Frightened, the disciple ran away.

On the way, someone remarked, “Your milk is spilling.” The disciple retorted, “That’s not the milk spilling; but my cleverness overflowing.” Thus, speaking excessively or unnecessarily often brings more trouble. As the hymn says, *“In this world, the clever often suffer because of their cleverness.”*

### **Action Step**

I will avoid using unnecessary or excessive speech and will speak only when necessary and with purpose.

## **Sweet Conduct**

### **Words of Wisdom**

The contribution of small service providers to our society enables us to lead a peaceful life. Like postal workers sorting and moving mail overnight so letters and packages arrive on our doorsteps right on time. Bus drivers, janitors, cashiers, postmen, delivery agents—all of them serve us diligently every day without remaining absent. In gratitude for their contributions, we should always interact with them lovingly, welcoming them with kindness and respect.

### **Incident**

On December 9, 2022, our beloved Guruji Swamishri visited Mahendra Patel's home in Chandkheda for a ceremonial visit. As the car arrived near the flat, a watchman opened the gate. Guruji stepped out of the car, joined his hands humbly, bowed his head, and respectfully greeted the watchman with a gentle "Jay Swaminarayan," accompanied by a warm smile. Guruji then proceeded to the flat for the visit.

Upon leaving, a devotee mentioned to the watchman, "The person who just passed is a great Guru, a truly elevated and spiritually enlightened saint." The watchman replied, "I realized his greatness just by seeing him. People like us, small in stature, are usually ignored. No one greets us or even acknowledges us. But your Guru joined his hands, bowed his head, and greeted me lovingly with 'Jay Swaminarayan.' Such humility and respect for small individuals reflect his greatness and wisdom." Maintaining a loving and respectful attitude towards those who assist us in our daily lives is true etiquette.

### **Action Step**

In daily life, I will treat the people who assist us—no matter how small their role—with respect and kindness.

## **Making the Home a Temple**

### **Words of Wisdom**

A home where harsh words and uncivil behavior prevail feels like a crematory. In contrast, a home where people speak kindly and act with humility feels like a temple. The choice of making our home a crematory or a temple lies in our hands.

### **Incident**

One day, a husband and wife started discussing two matters: preparing a children's room and buying new clothes. Their opinions differed, and soon the discussion escalated into a heated argument.

Loud, harsh words filled the air, almost as if thunder was striking. Neither were willing to accept the other's perspective. The atmosphere became tense, and the situation spiraled out of control. Witnessing this, the children began crying loudly.

Finally, the grandmother intervened, taking the wife aside to diffuse the situation and prevent further escalation. However, the damage had already been done. This single incident shattered the peace of the family. A wall of resentment was built between the couple, leading to silence and lack of communication. Neither were willing to care for the children, leaving the responsibility to the sick and elderly grandmother, who struggled to look after them. Ultimately, the family fell apart. Speak kindly and create a home that resembles a temple, not one that feels like a cremation ground.

### **Action Step**

I will use sweet words and harmonious behavior to turn my home into a temple flowing love and peace.

## Divine Perspective

### Words of Wisdom

Actions originate from thoughts, and thoughts are the root of behavior. To inculcate depth in our words and actions, cultivating thoughts of divinity and adopting a divine perspective is the best and simplest remedy. “Adopting divine perspective and discarding a bodily vision is the key to happiness.”

### Incident

A teenager committed some unpardonable mistakes influenced by youthful impulses. After listening to satsang discourses, he deeply regretted his actions. Gathering courage, he wrote an honest letter to Guruji confessing his mistakes.

Upon reading the letter, Guruji invited him for a one-on-one. The young devotee got anxious at the thought of what might happen but decided to go. With a heavy heart and trembling steps, he entered Guruji's *aasan* (room). As soon as he entered, Guruji warmly exclaimed, "Oh, you've come! Welcome, my son!" He embraced the boy lovingly, showering him with affection and kindness.

He asked, "Dayalu!, did you read my letter?" Guruji replied, "Yes, I read it." The devotee then questioned, "Even after reading it, how can you show me so much love, affection, and acceptance?" Guruji took the letter, tore it up, and threw it into the dustbin, saying, "Avarbhav (physical realm) is like trash. I only see the Parbhav (divine realm) in others. That's why the moment I finished reading your letter, I let go of your mistakes. You should also forget them. If you cultivate a divine perspective, you will surely find happiness." Developing a divine perspective and viewing everyone with divinity is the key to overcoming negativity, Avarbhav and finding peace.

### Action Step

I will inculcate a divine perspective and think of everyone with divinity in my heart.



## Sorry

### Words of Wisdom

The words like "sorry" or "please forgive me" should be integrated into our daily conversations. Such words soften interactions and deepen relationships. Saying "sorry" for any inconvenience caused by us is powerful, but saying "Kindly, forgive me" is immensely more impactful.

### Incident

From April 7 to 9, 2019, beloved Guruji Swamishri was in Rajkot for zonal visits. During this time, on Sunday, April 7, a youth camp was organized in Rajkot. Guruji was speaking on the topic "*The Uniqueness of SMVS*" at the camp.

Toward the end of the session, due to time constraints, Guruji began dictating points a bit quickly. At that moment, a young child seated in the front said, "One minute..." Upon hearing this, Guruji immediately responded, "Sorry, should I slow down?"

From then onwards, Guruji would dictate a point, pause, and ask the child, "Have you written it down, dear? Shall I proceed?" Only after ensuring the child had written everything did Guruji continue. Such humility from Guruji, even while addressing a young child, shows how effortlessly he could say *sorry*.

### Action Step

I will practice humility and use words like "sorry" and "kindly forgive me" sincerely in everyday interactions.

## Parental Influence and Values

### Words of Wisdom

It is often said that "Like parent, like child." The language and behavior of parents' shape those of their children. To nurture the next generation, we must refine our speech and behavior.

### Incident

In the vicinity of Vasna Mandir, there lived a family whose child regularly attended *satsang*. The child also played regularly in the temple's campus. One day, while playing with other children, he said, *"I'll kill you;!"* Guruji overheard these words and called the child closer.

Guruji gently asked, *"Dear child, after coming to satsang, should we use such words?"* The child replied, *"I don't realize what's wrong with what I said. My mom and dad speak like this all the time. But still, dear Guruji, please be pleased with me—I will improve."*

Hearing this, Guruji was pleased with the child's honesty.

Guruji often addresses parents with this teaching: "As the root, So the Fruits" similarly, "Like parent, like child.". *Children learn from their parents' values. Therefore, a household should exhibit behavior, conduct, and language that reflects satsang values."*

Children learn their speech and behavior from their home environment. Therefore, parents should ensure their words and actions instill positive values in their children.

### Action Step

Speak and act in ways that nurture virtuous qualities in the future generation.

## A Mission

### Words of Wisdom

To foster happiness in the family, community, and satsang, we should adopt a mission in life: "*Speak thoughtfully and nectar-like words.*" Before speaking,

1. **Empathize:** Imagine yourself in the other person's place and understand their feelings.
2. **Evaluate Consequences:** Reflect on whether your words will lead to a positive outcome and whether they will please Maharaj and Motapurush.
3. **Choose Positivity:** Avoid negative language and use only positive words.

### Incident

During a visit to Kuwait, beloved Harikrishna Maharaj and Guruji visited a Factory of a wholesale grocery businessman – Amrutbhai who employed about 200 workers. Guruji gave a brief *divyavani* (divine discourse) to the employees.

Afterward, the workers' leader stood up and shared his thoughts about their employer: "We don't call him Amrat 'Seth' (boss); we call him Amrat 'Fua' (uncle). He treats us like family members. He addresses every employee with respect. His words are so gentle and sweet that anyone who comes to work here never wants to leave, even if offered higher pay elsewhere."

He continued with an example: "Once, a new employee was stacking sacks of peanuts. By mistake, one sack fell, spilling the peanuts. Amrat Fua was present and immediately laughed, saying, 'We've seen rain showers, but today we've witnessed a peanut shower! It's no problem, just be careful next time.' He then helped the employee gather the peanuts." Hearing this, Guruji was very pleased. Speaking with empathy and sweetness can create a harmonious and happy environment.

### Action Step

Avoid words that spread poison; speak words that drip with nectar.

# The Power of Tongue

## Words of Wisdom

*"A tongue without a bone has the power to break bones."* Harsh words can lead even the strongest individuals to defeat. It's essential to introspect, *Is my tongue like that?* Rather than being like scissors, the tongue should act like a soothing balm.

## Incident

During Guruji's satsang tour in America, a haribhakt's home visit was organized. The children of the family were well-mannered but did not attend satsang assemblies. Guruji gently encouraged them to participate regularly. Later, one of the sons privately called Guruji aside and explained:

*"Dayalu, the reason we don't attend the assembly is because of my father. Though he participates in satsang, his behavior is very peculiar. Just yesterday, we got news that my cousin's sister got engaged. My father somehow got the number of the groom's family and called them in the morning, saying, 'Be cautious and think twice before proceeding with the relation.' His venomous words broke off the engagement. Guruji, please explain him that this is absolutely inappropriate behavior."* This example illustrates how envy-laden words can destroy lives.

## Action Step

I will use my words to fortify bonds and foster harmony.

# The Way of Karan Satsang

## Words of Wisdom

Before speaking to someone, start with humble phrases like, *“Dayalu, please forgive me; I have a humble request,”* or *“I have a suggestion”* or *“I pray to you.”* Similarly, end the conversation by saying, *“Dayalu, be pleased with me.”* This is the tradition of humility and etiquette in our karan satsang.

## Incident

*‘Anadimukt Vishwam’* is a divine and grand mission of Maharaj, Gurudev, and Guruji. In preparation for this mission, efforts were underway to create spiritual courses and evaluate how effective they could be within the community. Guruji personally participated in one of these courses during its trial phase.

After the course was completed, Guruji gathered the entire team and said, *“By Maharaj and Gurudev's will, the course has been conducted well. However, there are some suggestions regarding the course. Shall I share them?”*

The team's leader, responded, *“Dayalu, your suggestions are not suggestions; they are our commands. Please do not call them suggestions. Whatever improvements are needed, we will make them.”*

Guruji replied with humility, *“It isn't appropriate to command regarding someone else's work. It is better to give suggestions.”* This demonstrates how Guruji, despite being on highest in a position of authority, chooses to act with great humility and respect for others' efforts

## Action Step

I will always speak humbly and with grace, embodying the tradition of Karan satsang etiquette.

## **Not Disabled, but Divinely Able**

### **Words of Wisdom**

Never refer to a beggar on the road as a beggar. Instead, use respectful terms. Likewise, do not use demeaning terms like "blind," "crippled," or "dumb"; instead, refer to them with dignity. Also, replace casual or disrespectful terms with more respect-centric words.

### **Incident**

Once, Guruji was traveling. When the car stopped at a red light, a beggar approached the car window and began asking for money. The driver, irritated, said, "There are so many beggars like you around here. Go away..."

Guruji, who was sitting in the car, overheard this and was not pleased. As soon as the light turned green, the driver started to move the car forward. However, Guruji asked the driver to stop and reverse the car. They stopped near the signal, and Guruji instructed the driver to get out, find the beggar, and bring him back.

The driver complied and brought the beggar to Guruji. Guruji asked the beggar to forgive him and also apologized to the driver. He then gave a teaching, "Never call a poor person a beggar. Never refer to a blind person as 'blind.' Our speech should always be wise and respectful." Addressing with respect and dignity to those who may be marginalized or less fortunate is true wisdom.

### **Action Step**

I will always refrain from demeaning or disrespecting anyone for their disabilities or circumstances. Instead, I will use human-centric, respectful language.

## **Words of Negativity - Poison**

### **Words of Wisdom**

Averted, and negative speech is like poison. It destroys everything it touches. It's like the saying, "A hundred goldsmiths' efforts can be undone by one blacksmith." It states, a goldsmith shapes gold with hundreds of soft hammering rounds. But, a blacksmith's hammer can flatten a lump of shaped piece flat. Similarly, a single negative, weak word can destroy the power of a thousand strong words in a second.

### **Incident**

At one of our centers, a devotee joined as a volunteer with great enthusiasm. His sole aim was to "please Guruji." On the first day of seva, he had to sit with a devotee who had a negative and unpleasant nature. The negative and degrading words of that devotee drained the new volunteer's enthusiasm. Although both had come to serve with a strong resolve, the volunteer's spirit was crushed, and quietly packed the belongings and left without informing anyone. Thus, weak and negative words can harm both the speaker and the listener. They destroy the energy and resolve of others. We must be cautious in our speech.

### **Action Step**

I will avoid speaking in a way that weakens or discourages others with negative words.

## **Newton's Third Law of Motion**

### **Words of Wisdom**

Just as the law, 'Every action has an equal and opposite reaction', similarly, the negative energy we project onto others through our words and actions will come back to us in the same measure. Harmful speech is a form of violence.

### **Incident**

Guruji was traveling from Mumbai for an international vicharan. At the airport, a devotee brought his brother-in-law to seek Guruji's blessings. The devotee explained, "My brother-in-law has mouth cancer. He follows all rules and religious practices, so why is this happening to him? Please show mercy."

Guruji observed them for a moment and then said, "You have caused harm to many with your words, and this is the result of that. Maharaj is teaching him this lesson. We will pray to Maharaj for him, but you must ensure that harmful words are not used in the future." Thus, Maharaj's lessons can be the result of harmful speech that causes suffering to others.

### **Action Step**

I will not cause harm to anyone through the force of my words or actions.



## **Thank You**

### **Words of Wisdom**

Whenever someone helps us, whether through support, encouragement, or guiding us on the right path, we must always say "Thank you." It is important to express gratitude, acknowledge the kindness shown to us.

### **Incident**

On February 1, 2018, HDH. Swamishri was delivering a lecture on Poonam in Vasna, where he was encouraging the devotees to strengthen their understanding of Sankhya Gyan (knowledge of understanding that the world is materialistic). During the session, he referred to the 22nd Vachanamrut from Gadhada, but a devotee pointed out, "Dayalu, there is no such reference in the 22nd Vachanamrut; it is the 21st one."

This situation highlights HDH Swamishri's humility and openness to correction. He gracefully acknowledged the mistake by joining his hands and said, "Thank you! You have corrected my mistake. It is the 21st Vachanamrut, not the 22nd." This simple and humble response from such a great personality demonstrates how humility and gratitude can be expressed with ease and grace.

### **Action Step**

I will cultivate the habit of saying "Thank you" to those who help me, fostering gratitude and humility in my life.

**JAY SWAMINARAYAN**