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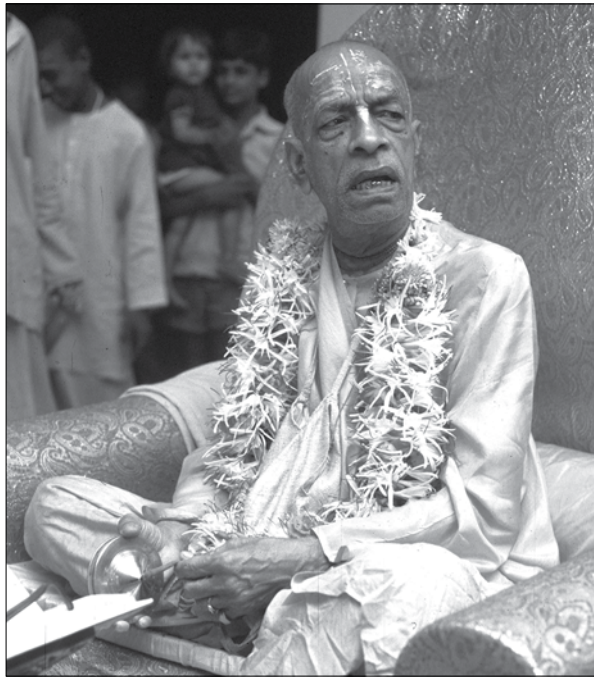
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NO UGLY GOPIS, PLEASE

His Divine Grace

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

I don't know who has given you this idea of shaving your head and wearing white garments. In India only the widows are allowed to shave their head. I have never suggested to your husband to take *sannyāsa*. We can discuss this matter further when we shall meet again in London for *Ratha-yātrā*.

You remain the beautiful maidservant of Krishna. That is your business, and you should dress yourself always very nicely so that by seeing you Krishna will be pleased. Don't try to be ugly before Krishna.

Krishna does not like ugly *gopīs*. We are transcendental artists, musicians, writers, so everything should be beautiful for Krishna. After all we are members of Krishna's family, just like Krishna had 16,000 wives and each wife had thousands of servants and maidservants, and all of them were very beautiful for serving Krishna and his queens. So the servants of the *gopīs* and queens cannot be ugly; they are as beautiful as the queens. In the Vaikuntha world there is no need of serving anything because everything is already clean and beautiful. It is so clean that just like a mirror when the maidservants would sweep the floor they could see the reflections of their bodies. So remain always in Vaikuntha *yajña*, simply by thinking of the glories of the Lord. Don't try to do anything artificially. That is *sahajiyā*, which means a class of men that take everything very cheap. You want to perform sacrifice so continuously read our Vedic scriptures and perform the Vaikuntha *yajña*. ❀

— Letter to Himavati. 15 June 1972.

AUSTERITY OF SPEECH

Various Commentaries on Bhagavad-gītā (17.15)

*anudvega-karaṁ vākyam satyam priya-hitam ca yat
svādhyāyābhyasanam caiva vān-mayam tapa ucyate*

Austerity of speech consists in speaking words that are truthful, pleasing, beneficial, and not agitating to others, and also in regularly reciting Vedic literature.

Srila Sridhar Swami (Subodhini): Speech that does not generate any anxiety is known as *anudvega-karaṁ vākyam*. Speech should also be *satyam*, true. At the same time it should be *priyam*, pleasing to the listener, and *hitam*,



Nimai Pandit speaks to his students in Mayapur

it should bestow a favourable result upon the listener. Such speech, along with *svādhyāyābhyasanam*, regular self-study of the Vedas, is considered to be *vān-mayaṁ tapa*, austerity that is fit to be followed in one's speech.

Srila Vishwanath Chakravarti Thakur (Sārārtha-varśiṇī): *Anudvega-karam* is speech that also does not agitate people other than the ones directly addressed by the speech.

[**Translator's Note:** In other words, such speech should not only avoid disturbing those who are directly addressed in the speech, but it should also avoid disturbing those who are not directly addressed.]

Srila Baladev Vidyabhushan (Gītā-bhūṣaṇa): *Anudvega-karam* indicates speech that does not generate *udvega*, anxiety, in anyone. Speech should also be *satyam*, bona-fide. It should be *priyam*, pleasing to the listener. In the end, it should also bestow *hitam*, favorable results. Speech endowed with these four characteristics as well as regular self-study of the Vedas is considered to be *vān-mayaṁ tapa*, austerity fit to be followed in one's speech.

Sri Adi Shankaracharya (Advaita-bhāṣya): *Anudvega-karam* is speech that doesn't generate distress in living entities. Moreover, it should be *satyam*, true, *priya*, pleasing, and *hitam*, bestowing benefit in this world as well as the next.

The term *ca* is used in the verse to denote these four qualities of speech as a united group. It should be understood that out of these four qualities, if any one, two or three are missing in any words spoken to another entity, then such an act of speaking is not to be considered as austerity of speech.

For example, to speak a sentence that is true but is devoid of one, two or three of the other qualities is not considered austerity of speech. Similarly, a pleasing sentence devoid of the remaining one, two or three qualities is not considered as austerity of speech. Similarly, a benefit-bestowing sentence devoid of one, two or three of the other qualities is not considered as austerity of speech.

[Question:] What, then, is austerity of speech?

[Reply:] Those words that are simultaneously true, not generating anxiety in others, pleasing, and beneficial are considered to be the highest austerity of speech. E.g. words like, *śānto bhava vatsa! svādhyāyaṁ yogaṁ ca anutiṣṭha tathā te śreyo bhavati* — “Calm down, son! Be situated in studying the Vedas and executing the process of yoga. This will bestow benefit.”

Besides these, regular personal study of *śāstra* is also considered to be austerity of speech.

Sri Madhusudan Saraswati (Gūdhārtha-dīpikā): *Anudvega-karam* means that such speech does not generate anxiety in others. *Satyam* means that such words are rooted in the truth and are unobstructed by any contradictions. *Priyam* means that such speech gives immediate pleasure to the listener. *Hitam* means that it bestows eventual benefit on the listener. The term *ca* is for denoting all these four qualities as a group. This means that such speech must be endowed with all four qualities and should not be deficient in a single quality.

An example of such a sentence is, *śānto bhava vatsa! svādhyāyam yogaṃ ca anuṣṭhāta tathā te śreyo bhavati* — “Calm down son! Be situated in studying the Vedas and executing the process of yoga. This will bestow benefit.”

This is *vān-mayam tapa* or austerity of speech. Besides this, *svādhyāyābhyasanam*, regular study of the Vedas, is also considered as austerity of speech. The term *eva* emphasizes that all four qualities are to be simultaneously present.

Sri Keshav Kashmiri (Tattva-prakāśikā): Austerity of speech is defined in this verse. *Anudvega-karam* means that such speech does not generate anxiety in others. Such speech is *satyam*, spoken as one has personally realized, *priyam*, pleasing to the listener, and *hitam*, it bestows eventual benefit. Such speech along with the regular personal study of the Vedas and *Vedānta-sūtra* is known by the learned as austerity of speech.

Sri Hanuman (Paiśāca-bhāṣya): *Udvega* means anxiety, but austere speech is without such *udvega*. It is *satyam*, not untrue, it is *priya*, pleasing, and *hitam*, benefit bestowing. *Svādhyāyābhyasanam* is regular self-study of the Vedas. This is *vān-mayam tapa* or austerity to be followed by one’s speech.

Sri Nilakanth (Bhāva-dīpa): Austere speech is *priya*, pleasing, and *hitam*, benefit bestowing. This means that such speech [immediately] bestows pleasure while listening to it and also eventually [when it is followed by others].

Sri Vidyanidhi (Madhva-matānūvartini): *Anudvega-karam* is speech that does not generate fear. While listening to it, such speech is *priyam*, pleasing. *Hitam* means that eventually it generates happiness.

Sri Raghavendra Tirtha (Artha-saṅgraha): *Anudvega-karam* is speech of such a nature that it does not cause any mental anguish to others. *Satyam* means “truth spoken as it is”. This quality of *satyam* is to be applied in all cases. *Priyam* means

that while listening to it, such speech generates the desire to hear it again. *Hitam* means that eventually such speech generates happiness. Besides this, *svādhyāyābhyasanam* or regular personal study of the Vedas is to be included. This is austerity of speech.

Sri Abhinava Gupta (Gītārtha-saṅgraha): Speech should be truthful. This quality of *satyam* is further explained using the term *priya-hitam*. In other words, truth is that which is *priyam* and *hitam*.

[What is the meaning of *priyam* and *hitam*? Answer:] *Priyam* means that which immediately bestows pleasure, and *hitam* means that which eventually bestows pleasure. Such words are to be understood as truth, and not simply those words that describe things as they are.

[Translator’s Note: The intention is to say that truth should be pleasing. This commentator does not consider unpleasant statements as truth.]

Sri Vanamali Mishra (Gītā-gūdhārtha-candrikā): *Anudvega-karam* means that such speech does not generate anxiety in others. *Satyam* means that such words are rooted in the truth and have a straightforward, unambiguous meaning. *Priyam* means that such speech gives immediate pleasure to the listener. *Hitam* means that it bestows eventual benefit on the listener. The term *ca* denotes that all four qualities should be taken as a group. This means that such speech must be endowed with all four qualities and should not be deficient in a single quality. Besides this, *svādhyāyābhyasanam*, regular personal study of the Vedas, is known as austerity of speech.

Sri Rajanaka Ramakantha (Sarvatobhadra): This verse speaks of the austerity followed by one’s speech. What is such austerity of speech? It is in speaking words that are naturally sweet in meaning and hence do not generate anxiety in others. Besides this, such words are *satyam*, i.e. not untrue. Such words are dear to saints and pleasing to the mind. Such words are also *hitam*, eventually leading to benefit and meaning in life. Besides this, there is *svādhyāyābhyasanam* or recitation of the books prescribed by ones guru.

Sri Daivajna Pandit (Paramārtha-prapā): Austerity of speech is spoken of in this verse. *Anudvega-karam* means that such speech is not disturbing to others. *Satyam* means speaking things as they are. Speaking in this way should not generate any anxiety in others and therefore such speech should also be *priyam*, pleasing. Besides *priyam* it should also be *hitam* in

that it should eventually bestow a beneficial result. The *Manu-saṁhitā* (4.138) says:

*satyaṁ brūyāt priyaṁ brūyān na brūyāt satyaṁ apriyaṁ
priyaṁ ca nāṅṛtaṁ brūyād eṣa dharmāḥ sanātanaḥ*

Speak the truth. Speak pleasing truth. Do not speak unpleasant truth. Do not speak pleasant lies. This is *sanātana-dharma*, the eternal principle of religiosity.

Sri Purushottam (Amṛta-taraṅgiṇī): Speech-related austerity is described in this verse: It does not generate anxiety in others; it should be *satyaṁ*, spoken frankly without distractions of greed, etc.; *priyaṁ*, beneficial for attaining an auspicious afterlife; and *hitam*, helpful for attaining benefits in this life. The term *ca* used here suggests that even if such speech doesn't help in attaining benefits in this life [but-helps in attaining benefits in the next], then it should be spoken.

Svādhyāyābhyasanam means self-study of the Vedas. The *ca* in the term *caiva* is for including the study of *smṛti* literatures that do not contradict the Vedas. All these are austerities related to speech.

Sri Jnaneshwar (Jñāneśvarī Marathi Commentary): Just as touchstone turns iron into gold without shattering it or mutilating its shape, similarly, [restrained is the person who] speaks without disturbing persons other than the recipient

of one's speech. It should [or will] also please the intended recipient of one's words.

[When watering a tree,] one's intent is to supply water to the root of the tree. But as the water runs down to the root it also ends up nourishing nearby sprouts of grass. Similar is the speech [of a restrained person], as although it may be addressed to a particular hearer it simultaneously benefits others who also hear.

Just like the nectarean flow of Ganges gives immortality to those who taste it; gives relief from sins and distresses to those who bathe in it; and gives a sweet taste in general; similar is the speech [of a restrained person] which bestows immense joy, relieves ignorance, and remains continuously nectarean to the listeners.

When one uses his speech only on being asked a question, or only repeats Vedic literature, turning the mouth into a *brahma-śālā* (Vedic recitation school) of Vedas like *Ṛg-veda*, etc.; or when one continuously keeps repeating the name of one's beloved deity of Lord Vishnu or Lord Shiva, then such behaviour is known as austerity of speech. ❧

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the Sanskrit available at the Gita Supersite (<https://www.gitasupersite.iitk.ac.in/>). *Jñāneśvarī* commentary translated from *Sārtha-jñāneśvarī* by Shri Nana Maharaj Sakhre. Published and printed by Tryambak Hari Apte. Indira Press. Sadashiv Peth. Pune. Saka 1846 (~ 1925 A.D.)

A MOST RELIGIOUS SOUL

Srila Prabodhananda Saraswati's Vṛndāvana-mahimāmṛtam (7.20)

*yaḥ kuryād guru-talpa-koṭi-gamanān hanyāc ca viprārbudaṁ
svarṇaṁ cāpi haret pibec ca madirām saṁsargavān tādrśaiḥ
anyaṁ codbhaṭa-govadhādy-agma-cayaṁ kurvīta so 'py āmṛti
śrī-vṛndāvana-vāsa-niścaya-sunirvāhī mahā-dhārmikāḥ*

One may sleep with their guru's wife millions of times, he may kill billions of Brahmins, steal gold, drink liquor, or stay constantly in the company of those who commit such crimes. He may also commit other heinous crimes such as killing cows. But if he has the desire to stay in Vrindavan till death and is able to carry it out successfully then he is a most religious soul. ❧

— Translated by Hari Parshad Das from the Sanskrit available at Gaudiya Grantha Mandira (www.granthamandira.net)

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