



VOL No. 2. Issue No. 7 VIVA NEWSLETTER (ENGLISH MONTHLY)

Vivekananda Institute of Values (VIVA)

Practical Spirituality for All

“In this world everything depends upon one’s words.”

Swami Vivekananda



LOOKING INWARDS (“The power of our words”)

It is through words that we primarily communicate with the world outside. People seek to understand us and we understand them through their words. Our foremost expressions though are spoken with ourselves in our mental chatter forming impressions, judgements, and opinions. Our words also reflect our own nature when we interact with others. Our words can show the depth of our understanding and the sentiments in our heart. Swami Vivekananda told Nivedita that just as the tusks of an elephant cannot be withdrawn, a verbal promise cannot be taken back. Our words make us credible. Further, the more we thoughtfully choose genuine, loving and kind words, we can help create a feeling of oneness. Words can wound as much as weapons can – words can also heal and soothe – let us choose our words with care.

- The Editorial Team

Swami Vivekananda – The Great Indian Orator (by Harish Dhyani, from Mumbai)

Great orators have been known to change the course of history. Swami Vivekananda was one such - an orator by divine right. In the world parliament of religions held in Chicago when he began his speech with the words “sisters and brothers of America” the 4000 thousand strong gathering in Columbus Hall went into a frenzy and could not stop clapping. At one stroke, he embraced the whole of humanity, **since his few words came out from the depth of his realization of universal oneness.** Words of Swami ji appealed to the intellect as well as the heart. In him we find the rare combination of keen intellect of Adi Shankaracharya and the heart of Buddha. The charm was simply irresistible.

He was always clear on what he thought and meant. His words galvanized men into action. As a fellow traveller on a ship from Japan to Chicago he inspired Jamshetji Tata to establish the Indian Institute of Science - one of India’s well known research universities. He roused millions of Indians from their deep slumber by saying “The longest night seems to be passing away, the sorest trouble seems to be coming to an end at last, the seeming corpse appears to be awaking. She is awakening, this motherland of ours, from her deep long sleep. None can resist her anymore; never is she going to sleep anymore; no outward powers can hold her back anymore; for the infinite giant is rising to her feet.”

Nobel Laureate Romain Rolland, who wrote the biography of Swami Vivekananda has paid great homage by saying “**His words are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms like the march of Handel choruses. I cannot touch these sayings of his, scattered as they are through the pages of books, at thirty years’ distance, without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock. And what shocks, what transports, must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero!**”



Photo of Swami Vivekananda in Chicago in 1893 with the handwritten words “one infinite pure and holy—beyond thought beyond qualities I bow down to thee” (Photo and caption credit: <https://www.artic.edu/swami-vivekananda-and-his-1893-speech>)



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Understanding Swami Vivekananda's Words

We requested a few of our resource persons to let us know what they made of the quote of Swami Vivekananda, "In this world everything depends upon one's words."

Words are in essence manifestation of our thoughts. Words are effect while thoughts are the causes. Swami Vivekananda said "We are what our thoughts made us. Words are secondary." Words are expression of our inside out. Words, written or spoken, are powerful enough to impact our paradigm. Words are like an arrow shot from a bow. Once spoken cannot be taken back. So, watch your words.

By Parthapratim Das

Swamiji's profound quote reminds me of the following doha by Kabir:

मधुर वचन है औषधि, कटुक वचन है तीर.
श्रवन द्वार वह संचरे,
साले सकल शरीर

"Sweet words are like a medicine and our harsh words are like an arrow; the arrows of harsh words enter through the ears of the listener and burn the entire body". We can use this wisdom to speak sweet words so that they work as medicines that cure both us and the listeners and our relationships therefore can be peaceful and happy.

By Ramesh Dwivedee

First come thoughts then words; before we say we think. Thoughts and words are interrelated. If we think right, we speak right. In my view, words along with right thinking connects us to people. Harsh words said in an agitated mood have a lasting impression on the person listening. Those impressions stay with the listener and they will be hesitant to deal with the speaker. Whereas, if the speaker uses the right words in a constructive manner, whether in praise or criticism, the listener will not mind as they too will take it in a constructive manner. Harsh words have a lasting negative impression and make one difficult to get along with.

By Nishantesh

There is a quote by the Polish poet Stainlaw Jerzy Lec, that says "Value Your Words. Each one may be the last."

Indian poet, Majrooh Sultanpuri too has echoed a similar sentiment in his poem

इक दिन बिक जाएगा, माटी के मोल,
जग में रह जाएँगे, प्यारे तेरे बोल

(There'll come a day when we'll be worth only dust and all that would remain of us would be our spoken words).

We have a choice to leave behind good and kind words. As an example, in our lives we become judgmental towards children as teachers / parents. With our words we 'label' them as 'good for nothing'. These words leave a very bad impact on their lives forever and act as a hindrance for their growth as an individual. Whereas, uplifting words like 'you can do anything', 'you are potentially divine' would always be a source of strength to them and a lasting impact made in their lives by our words.

By Tarun Arora

"Mansa Vacha Karmana" - Thoughts lead to words. Words lead to action. It's a circle of cause and effect going on and shaping our character. Our words and actions are observed and interpreted by the world and thus create a perception of our character in other's minds.

By Nipun Kumar Gupta

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MOVEMENT – VIVA Events and Updates

1. A 3-day course on 'Empathetic and Effective Communication' was held at Vivekananda Institute of Values (VIVA) Ramakrishna Mission, Gurugram on 19th, 20th and 22nd June, 2023 from 1 pm to 4 pm. The participants were equipped with tools to communicate effectively and empathetically so that they live harmoniously with themselves and with others. The participants learned the concepts and tools on Day 1 and Day 2. On Day 3, they made presentations and applied their learnings. Feedback was shared and certificates were distributed. Overall, this course was a great success and paves the way for more such programs for different sections of society. (To know more, please write to us at values.viva@gmail.com)



2. VIVA chief coordinator Dr. Anuradha Balaram was the chief guest at a conference for 350 teachers and educational authorities from Bhavans Vidyashram, Bhimavaram and Guntur Kendra, Andhra Pradesh. A highly interactive session on "Why I am a nation builder" inspired the teachers to feel an even greater commitment towards their work.

3. Trainings for VIVA's flagship and continuously growing, Awakened Citizen Program (ACP), were held in various schools all across India.

Online and offline trainings for ACP were organized for private and defence schools in many cities of the south zone in the early part and mid-June.

Trainings for private and defence schools were conducted in Pune and Nagpur.

A team from VIVA, trained teachers of the Kendriya Vidyalaya School, Jammu for facilitation of the ACP in their schools. It was a 6-day training, two dedicated days for each of the 3 years of the graded program.



Freshly minted facilitators holding their certificates, from the Jammu Training for Years 1, 2 and 3 ACP.

KVS Sangathan has proposed training in 25 zones and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti has proposed training in the coming month across the nation. To know more about the school programs please visit us at <https://theawakenedcitizen.org/>.



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ASK SWAMI SHANTATMANANDA

A reader writes:

Do spiritually evolved souls communicate in a similar manner as ordinary people do or do they follow different approaches?

Swami Shantatmananda replies:

Spiritually advanced people communicate in a genuine and loving manner creating a sense of oneness. Their emotions such as anger, irritation, frustration etc., are usually more controlled and they tend to accept alternate perspectives without prejudice.

ANSWER TO READER'S SECTION FROM PREVIOUS ISSUE

(Previous Issue Question: Do you know of any remarkable dad? Would you like to share why you think he is special?)

Biplove Belwal from Bangalore writes:

My dad holds a special place in my heart for his unique approach to parenting. He empowered me by granting me the freedom to make my own decisions, instilling in me a sense of independence. However, what set him apart was the subtle guidance he provided, ensuring that I developed a solid decision-making framework. He never imposed his choices on me, but rather supported me in finding the right path. His unwavering belief in my abilities and the assurance that I could always return home if things didn't go as planned gave me the confidence to take risks and learn from my mistakes. His influence has shaped me into a self-assured individual, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

Dishna Sikidar from Gurugram writes:

A great dad I know is my own dad! He's not only kind and sensitive but also has a keen eye for details. This is reflected best when he sits down with me to do my taxes which inarguably is the most time-consuming and difficult process a person has to do every year. Despite the many mistakes I make, he patiently guides me through the process.



WISDOM FROM THE PARABLES

One day, a poisonous snake was advised by a brahmachari thus “why do you go about doing harm? Repeat the name of the lord and get rid of your violent nature.” The snake bowed before its guru. Henceforth it showed no anger and stopped doing harm to others. The cowherd boys, who were scared of it earlier, threw stones at it, caught it by its tail and tormented it. The snake could scarcely move. Many days passed. For fear of the boys, it would not leave its hole and slowly grew thin. A year later when the brahmachari met its snake disciple, he was surprised to see it so thin and weak. Hearing the snake's ordeal, the brahmachari exclaimed, “what a shame! You are such a fool! You don't know how to protect yourself. I asked you not to bite, but I didn't forbid you to hiss. Why didn't you scare them away by hissing?” We can protect ourselves without harming others.