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## Learn the Virtue of Silence

Speech is a worldly activity, but silence is a spiritual one. We get what we want in this material world through the power of our speech, but we get to know God only through silence. Speech is not bad, for it is through speech that we undertake our various activities in life. But silence is an uplifting factor; it elevates us to a higher plane. Silence is a potent weapon in the armoury of the wise to vanquish a recalcitrant adversary. If speech is silver, silence is golden. Too much babbling and prattling undermines one's personality and may lead to the erosion of something very valuable in life—wisdom, conviction, faith and above all, a balanced approach to life. One who maintains a judicious balance between speech and silence turns the corner of success in life and may rise to the highest pedestal of humanity. It was not in vain that our great rishis advocated observance of silence. Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave observed silence for days together before embarking on world-shaking movements. Try practicing meditation and silence before undertaking important tasks and you will see a world of achievements and accomplishments unfolding itself before you. It is therefore always advisable to learn the virtue of silence if you want to be a stuff of worth and value, a person of essence and substance, and an aspirant to an ennobling existence.

There are two ears on our face which give a symmetrical shape to it and also do all the hearing for us. And, then there is a tongue in our mouth to balance the hearing function. If we look at them with a keen eye and try to listen to the message, they give the arithmetical equation that speaks volumes of their purposeful existence, since the tongue performs two functions of taste and speech and the ears, though double in number, perform only one function *i.e.*, of hearing only.

Therefore, nature ordains us to speak just one-fourth the amount of what we hear. That is why silence is much more valuable than speaking—'If speech is silver, silence is gold', as the proverb goes.

During silence, the chattering of the mind is at the lowest ebb and we hear the inner voice, which is called the voice of the silence. It is the peculiar sound which the saints, the yogis call 'Anhad Nad'—"a sound without sound." It is sound because it has something to tell and it is not a sound, because it is not audible to the physical or the outer ears. Fredrice Von Hugel has written that 'Be silent about great things, let them grow inside you. Never discuss them, discussion is so limiting and distracting; it makes things so smaller.

The great seers of ancient India are known as Munis because they had their intuitive flashes of wisdom in deep silence.

KEN upanishad says more than once—"An intelligent man should suppress his speech and his mind." Seekers after truth have always preached to be silent, as during silence our creative forces are conserved. The great mathematician, Pythagoras trained his disciples in the discipline of silence. They were not allowed to speak in the class for the first three years of their studies—even when they did not understand or follow a thing and had a genuine enquiry. In case, any of the pupils tried to open his mouth for some enquiry, he was expelled immediately from the class and the school. Likewise the Jain teachers, followers of Shri Mahavir Swami, maintained the Order of Hearers—the Order of the shravaks. In this order of shravaks the same rule of hearing and keeping silent was observed. In the modern time, Mahatma Gandhi—the father of the Indian nation, observed complete silence once a week. He often said—"Silence is a great help to a seeker after truth, silence is essential for one whose life is an incessant search for truth. The secret of silence is to be able to listen to the still small voice which is always speaking within us."