

practice of the study of the Vedas च *ca* and एव *eva* also वाङ्मयम् *vāṇmayam* of speech तपः *tapah* austerity उच्यते *ucyate* is called

The speech which causes no excitement, which is truthful, pleasant and beneficial, and also the practice of sacred recitation — these are said to form the austerity of speech. 15

The harm done through speech is often more painful than that caused by physical violence. Words of excitement and words that hurt people should by all means be avoided by the spiritual aspirant.

Truth is in some cases unpleasant to hear and untruth pleasant to hear. The best course is to present truth in as pleasant a way as possible. But there should be no deviation from truth for the sake of pleasantness. If it comes to it, even at the cost of pleasantness, truth alone should be ever upheld.

Flattery is often in tune with truthfulness and very pleasant to hear. May a *sadhaka* employ it in his dealings with people? No, flattery has to be scrupulously avoided. Harsh words have not done so much harm to society as undue compliments have done. Even great men have fallen victims to flattery and gone off their moorings. The words uttered ought to be pleasant and beneficial but never pandering to one's vanity. Beneficial words form a benediction, and they alone ought to be spoken always.

The Vedas are the oldest books known to humanity, and they are held the most sacred because of their dealing with matters spiritual. Chanting them daily with proper intonation is not only a perfect vocal