

[The Dreadful Curse Of Verbal Abuse](#)

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The Dreadful Curse Of Verbal Abuse

Many have stopped beating their children, but few realize that abusive language can hurt even more

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It's one thing to hurt yourself through swearing, but it's a double hurt of yourself if you hurt another person. We wrote quite extensively on the widespread problem of corporal punishment and child abuse in 1998 and 1999 in HINDUISM TODAY. We explained that those who abuse their children, their spouse even husbands get abused and hit and scratched are hurting themselves five to ten times worse than if they simply hit themselves once instead of hitting their child. We find that in some homes the advice to stop was taken very seriously. Scaring children by threatening them has also ceased, at least in the homes that I am aware of in the broad Hindu community. But verbal abuse of children has increased, calling children bad names in order to put them down, expressing anger by viciously badgering them: "You're stupid!" "You're worthless!" There's a long list that apparently nearly every mother and every father has memorized. It goes on and on and on, this constant downgrading and demeaning, expressed in the name of discipline, starting at five or six years of age and continuing until youths are old enough to leave home on

their own.

The verbally abused child's self-image is terrible, but the pain and humiliation is locked away in his subconscious. He covers it up and forgets it, but it continues festering there, and one day bursts forth. If he is a kind-hearted child, he will protect his own future children from verbal abuse. If he is a mean-spirited child, he will release what his parents put upon him and into his mind, all of that hatred, upon his children. So, the verbal abuse continues, generation after generation. Its pain and hurt long outlasts that of a slap or a beating.

In some parts of the Hindu community we hear a lot about curses. The more intellectual, Western-educated Hindu doesn't believe in curses at all. But what is a curse? A curse is negative energy gathered together and pointed at someone you don't like. Those priests who are able to conjure up a curse and are often paid for it take careful precautions to protect themselves from being cursed by their own curse! Sometimes that protection doesn't work, and they become ill, occasionally even die, or become tremendously confused as long as the curse is working.

To freely hurl mental harassment and abuse at a child who can't talk back lest he be slapped down, dragged across the floor and slammed against the wall is cursing the child as well as oneself. It is also cursing the home, as well as the entire family, because this tremendous force of negative, angry energy that has been suppressed leaches out and fills the room and the entire house. Call a child one bad name and you are calling yourself ten bad names. And that goes into your

subconscious mind, because the perpetrator of the crime also hears what he has said.

Many people verbally abuse children in order to motivate them, to make them courageous, to make them stand up straight, to make them do better in school. Any psychiatrist or psychologist will tell you that to tell a child he's stupid is no motivation to do better in school! To tell him that he's a pig, he's a dog and then there are the four-letter words, the "f" word and the "b" word is no motivation whatsoever. But the children have to take it, because they are dependent for housing, clothing and food. The verbal abuse goes on and on until finally the whole family has cursed itself, become filled with the hatred, the scorn and the filthy meanings of the words they have spoken to one another a thousand times.

Will that family be successful? Never. Will that family enjoy vacations? No way. Will they be totally frustrated on the inside? Yes. Will disease come to that family? Of course! They are creating disease by the disease they are putting into their own subconscious mind, and the harm to the astral body will eventually affect the physical body.

What is the prayaschitta, what is the penance, for foul or abusive language for language that hurts? If you call a child stupid, or call him a little bastard, counteract it by telling him he is intelligent, wanted in the family, loved. Counteract the abuse by saying five good words for every bad word. Otherwise, the parents will have a bad birth. What is a bad birth? Being born diseased or

without parents. A bad birth is being born in a land that has no room for children. There are lots of suffering kids these days who abused their children in a past life without mercy, taking out their frustrations on them. Which is worse, beating the child physically or berating him with words? The pain of the beating will go away, even the memory. But the words will ring deep in the mind of the child throughout his lifetime.

In many homes parents are not beating their children anymore, but they still raise their hand in the threat to hit them! The child knows that if he persists, he's going to get it right in the head. Physical threats and verbal abuse turn a child into a person who is weak, discouraged, without courage without courage enough to have a conversation with his mother, without courage enough to have a conversation with his father, without courage enough to have a conversation with himself, to develop any initiative, to stand on his own two feet, to be a leader. If your kids cannot or will not talk to you and have a conversation with you, you have probably hurt those kids and scared those kids so much that they don't want to be hurt by you anymore. It's as simple as that.

There are awful stories we hear about how slaves were brought to America, Europe and all over the world, beaten and whipped to bring them down to abject

servitude so they wouldn't cause any problems lest they be beaten without mercy for the slightest thing beaten even if they did nothing wrong, just to keep them in their place. That's what verbal beating does, too. It keeps kids "in their place" so they become useless slaves in the family, earning money to give to parents who still curse them, and then feigning love toward the parents lest they get more verbal abuse. We see this happening all the time. I hear and receive by e-mail desperate testimonies from children and young adults on how they have been abused, physically and with words, in their own home. From the many experiences I know about, I can assure you that words can hurt a child as much or more than a bamboo switch, a belt or a fist.

We want to talk to the next generation that's coming up. Fourteen-year-olds, eighteen-year-olds, twenty-year-olds, stand on your own two feet! Make your decisions according to dharma. If your parents are verbally abusing you, don't let their words affect you. Try to have compassion by appreciating what led them to the point where they could say these cruel things to you; but realize that they can offer you nothing but more abuse, because they are in the process of cursing themselves. The message is to "stand on your own two feet, take your life in your own hands, claim your independence," once you realize that life at home is not going to get any better.

In certain shops in Asian cities, parents can buy bamboo switches, belts and other instruments of torture made just for punishing kids. Few realize that their mean words can cause just as much hurt, if not more. Parents have developed long lists of words used to demean and belittle. It has become an unspoken rulebook of how to bring their child down to feeling like he's a big nothing, willing to do anything you say, because he inwardly begs: "Don't hurt me anymore. Don't hit me with your words. Don't hurt me with your long silences and by turning your head away from me. Don't hurt me that way anymore. I'll do anything. I'll get a dumb job and work at it fourteen hours a day to give you some money, to pay you for not hurting me anymore." That's what we have in the Hindu community around the world. And that's what we don't want to have in the Hindu community around the world.

What can a child of eight, ten or twelve do who is being verbally and physically beaten at home and in school? Nothing. It's a sad situation. I've received lists of abuses from children of that age, just exactly what their mothers have said and what their fathers have said. It's a tremendous pain in their mind. We've given young people the prayaschitta, the remedy, of putting a flower in front of their parents' picture for thirty-one days. Most can't do it. They just can't do it. We ask them to say each day, "I forgive you for playing my karma back to me," but they just can't do it. The hate, the mistrust,

the disappointment, the hurt, is so great, they've been put down so low, that they just cannot do it.

My advice to verbally abusive parents: stop tearing kids down by telling them they're stupid, that they're too small, too fat, too lazy, too ugly or too naughty. If you constantly tell a child he is naughty, he will become naughtier. If you constantly tell a child he's nice, he will be nicer. It just works like that. All the psychiatrists agree with this approach, to be sure, as do mothers and fathers who really love their children and take an interest in their children, hug them, encourage them and use positive forms of discipline when needed.

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