

## **SILENCE MADE THEM SOB**

Swāmi Chidānanda

Vinu Kini has been a corporate coach for two decades, and his workshops are highly regarded. He was in Goa recently and a group of 20 senior executives gathered at the beautiful conference hall of a five-star hotel. They were eager to listen to him, pick his brain and take home 'brilliant, practical ideas' for transformational leadership.

All of them were puzzled when Vinu started the session with a warm Good Morning accompanied by a broad smile but then remained silent. He went on looking at them quietly and although he had a pleasant disposition that morning, most of them, if not all, were uncomfortable with this treatment. Some of them wondered what was wrong with Mr Kini, while some others were already agitated that he was not doing justice to the 'money' they had paid.

All the same, the group had a certain confidence in Vinu and so they waited. He continued to stare at them with an occasional smile and a gentle facial expression, indicating some sort of query or inquiry.

Then it happened. One of the executives could not bear his glance, but at the same time was so stirred that he let out a cry. Another senior manager followed suit with an expression of pain. Soon there were several of them literally sobbing.

It was then, after a full 25 to 30 minutes, that Vinu broke his silence and asked them politely, "Why are you so attached to spoken words and prefabricated ideas? Are you empty inside? Why don't you give a fair chance to inner creativity, which can express only when you are silent?"

The feedback of this workshop was unusually good, with many members admitting that it was a turning point in their life.

"Dissolve the spoken word in thought," says the Kathopanishad, "and then dissolve thought too in your own inner dimension of peaceful being."

The Upanishads prompt us to abandon our self-imposed confinement within thought and word, and suggest that we can – once in a while – go to our own hidden depths and operate from the creative silence that is closer our basic existence. Thought and word usually have a mechanical movement. Creative insights emerge when this mechanical movement is suspended in gentle awareness.

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