Yugambeh Nation

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AGES 11 TO 15 · HEALTH, SCIENCE AND LANGUAGE

Gijeri: Sorry Is Felt in the Gijara



On National Sorry Day, we reflect on the healing needed for the Stolen Generations. But what does it actually mean to be sorry? In Yugambeh culture, "sorry" isn't just something you say—it’s something you feel in your very center.

The Seat of Emotion: The Gijara

In Yugambeh language, many of our deepest emotions are tied to the body. While Western culture often points to the heart as the home of feelings, for us, sorrow and regret live in the Gijara (the stomach).

This is why the word for sorry is Gijeri. When we say we are sorry, we are acknowledging a heaviness or a "sickness" in the gut caused by our actions or the pain of others.

The Old People always knew what modern science is only just "discovering." You’ve probably heard people talk about having a "gut feeling" or an action "not sitting right in their stomach."

Science now backs this up through the study of the Enteric Nervous System (ENS). The ENS is a vast network of roughly 100 million neurons lining your gastrointestinal tract. While it doesn't write poetry or solve math problems, it communicates constantly with the brain. Scientists literally call it the "Second Brain" because it can operate independently and significantly influences our moods and emotions.

When we recognise the connection between the Gijara and Gijeri, an apology changes:

- It’s Physical: Real regret should "twinge" in your gut.
- It’s Intuitive: If something feels wrong in your stomach, it usually is.
- It’s Grounded: A gut-level apology isn’t just words; it’s a commitment to change so that the "sickness" in the stomach can be healed.

Today, we acknowledge the pain of the past and look toward a future where we listen to our "second brains"—ensuring our actions always "sit right" with our spirits and our Gijara.

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GIJERI

Questions

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1. Where do Yugambeh people feel sorrow and regret? Where does Western culture usually point to?

2. How is the Yugambeh word for sorry connected to the word for stomach?

3. What is the Enteric Nervous System, and about how many neurons does it have?

4. Why do scientists call the gut the “second brain”?

5. The Reading lists three ways an apology changes. Explain one in your own words.

6. Write a “gut-level” apology: what would you commit to changing?

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