

True Humility

from Siksastaka Commentary (by Sri Ananta das Babaji) Vers 3

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"One should build a strong wall of humility and giving honour to others around one's vine-of-devotion to protect it, and sprinkle the vine with the water of hearing and chanting." (Sri Caitanya Caritamrta) 'Humility' meaning naturally always considering oneself to be very unqualified.

Srimat Sanatana Gosvami defined humility as follows in, his Brhad Bhagavatamrta:

"The wise men call 'humility' that feeling which makes the most qualified person consider oneself to be low and unqualified. Intelligent aspirants should follow in the footsteps of those in whose hearts this humility is fixed, with their words, activities and intelligence, and they should never act contrary to this."

The abovementioned humility, which makes the most qualified person consider oneself to be low and unworthy, is not ordinary humility. It is the natural condition of a surrendered soul who has illuminated his spiritual self by returning to his constitutional position.

When a fortunate person, who has surrendered to the Lord's lotusfeet by the mercy of a bonafide teacher, advances on the path of devotion, he will experience the authority of God more and more as the dense darkness of his false bodily consciousness vanishes and his real identification as God's servant awakens. The aspirant will ultimately give up all his own false authority, throwing it into the ocean of God's authority by means of full surrender to the Lord's feet, and thus becoming a liberated soul. As long as he is in his material body he will have to deal and speak with people of the world, but as soon as he senses even the slightest feeling of personal authority coming up in him, he feels greatly upset. An urge of humility will arise in his heart and he will at once give up his false feeling of authority. That is the natural humility of a devotee. That is the valuable treasure of a devotee's sadhana (spiritual practise).

Srimat Sanatana Gosvami says that there is not much difference between humility and devotion.

Both are impetuses for each other.

The holy name will be pleased with such humility of the devotee and in this way all offenses to the Vaisnavas will vanish. Thus humility attracts the mercy of the holy name. Our eyes are very tender, yet they are the most important of the knowledge-acquiring senses, and because even the slightest thing can cause great damage to them, the Lord has created our eyelids to always protect them. If, by chance, a speck of dust falls on the eye, the nerves in the eye immediately produce water to drive the dust out of the eye's realm. In the same way, humility drives out the offenses that hamper our devotion and make our hearts free from them. With this verse *trinad api sunicena*, Sriman Mahaprabhu teaches the practising devotees how to observe the limit of humility. Humility is the very life-force of the chanting of the holy name.

Chanting without humility is lifeless, therefore the chanter must become specially acquainted with these great words of Sriman Mahaprabhu.

The Lord said: *TRINAD API SUNICENA* "The aspirant should feel as humble as a blade of grass." A blade of grass is a very insignificant thing, but it is still very important since it serves the cows as foodstuff and through that the cows give milk with which the Lord can be served. Roofs of houses and temples can also be made with grass.

"But", the devotee should think, "no service has ever been done through me". In this way he considers himself to be even lower than a blade of grass.

The devotee should humbly think: "When someone steps on a blade of grass, the grass will rise again after the foot has gone off him, but I never get up so unharmed and unoffended if someone kicks me with the foot." Certainly these feelings of humility must be developed by the aspirant devotee. As long as one does not realize one's lowness with one's heart and mind, and only feign humility on the outside, verbally for instance, the perfection of this *trinad api sunicena*-mood is not attained. Real humility is mental humility. There is no greater deceit than to feign humility through one's gestures and words and being actually filled with false pride within one's mind. Such false humility will never purify anyone's heart.

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