

Willingness and Humility

When we contemplate the life of Gurudev Swāmī Śivānandajī, we can be overwhelmed by his greatness, by the austerities he did, by the goodness that he manifested, by the number of books he wrote, and the organization he built. We also recognize Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī as a great saint. We think of his compassion, his humility, his service of the lepers, and we can be awe struck at what he accomplished.

We can see them as human beings like ourselves, who have, with God's grace, accomplished great things; and we can then feel quite inferior, feel it is not possible for us. That may be true if we are judging from a human point of view, but perhaps our approach is wrong. It is the nature of our mind to see individual human beings who have accomplished great things, but actually, the great thing that they accomplished was to work on themselves—not to make themselves greater, but to make themselves less.

As Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī once said, “Every day rub away the ego a little bit.” In other words, who they thought they were became less and less each day, which allowed what they really are to shine through. And each one of us has that same ability and opportunity. If we want to take who we think we are and make it into something great, then we are perhaps justified in being overawed and feeling that it is impossible. But if our task is to rid ourselves of this idea of who we think we are, so that what we truly are can shine through naturally, then we stand on the same ground as anyone else—no one is greater and no one is lesser.

Indeed, that is a demand that the great ones make upon us. None of them tell us that we are any lesser. Instead they constantly declare: You are Divine, know this truth and live in its light. The whole message of Gurudev and Pūjya Swāmī Chidānandajī was to tell us that we are the Self, which simply means that we have to get rid of the idea that we are not.

Each one of us can do this if we have the will for it, if we are prepared to sacrifice the false so that the true can shine forth. It simply doesn't matter what outward talents we bring to the task. It is willingness and humility that make the difference.