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HUMILITY “NAMRATA (नम्रता)” IN HINDUISM

*A Mini Pravachan
Based on Hindu Scriptures &
Historical Records*

*By
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Sunday, July 28, 2019



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A FAMOUS SUBHASHITA ON HUMILITY FROM SCRIPTURES

नमन्ति फलिनो वृक्षाः नमन्ति गुणिनो जनाः ।
शुष्क काष्ठस्य मूर्खश्च न नमन्ति कदाचन ॥

Trees laden with fruits bow down with their weight in order to benefit others. So are noble and virtuous people, who always remain humble and help others. On the other hand, a dry wood or a dried tree never bends down, so are the foolish people who always remain rigid and never bow down to others.

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FAMOUS QUOTES ON HUMILITY FROM FAMOUS PEOPLE

“Humility is an essential and foremost virtue in a human being before his other virtues can emerge. Unlike other human qualities, such as truth and love, humility cannot be cultivated. It has to be the starting point. A true humble person is never aware of his own humility!”

- Mahatma Gandhi

“Humility taught in Hindu Dharma is a non-judgmental state of mind, when one is best able to learn, contemplate, and understand everyone and everything else.”

- Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

The great philosopher and the 2nd President of India

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WHAT DOES BHAGAVADGITA SAY ABOUT HUMILITY?

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहोनातिमानिता ।
भवन्ति सम्पर्दे दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥३॥

-Shrimad Bhagavadgita, Ch 16, V3

*One of the most important qualities of the one born with divine nature is the **Absence of Vanity**, in addition to other good qualities such as vigor, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, and absence of enmity. **Self-praise, boastfulness, ostentation (show-off), etc. all stem from false pride. Saintly personalities refrain from self-aggrandizement.***

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HUMILITY IS A VIRTUE NOT MEEKNESS NOR WEAKNESS!

Humility in Hinduism means lack of importance given to self:

- *“I am neither more important nor special than any others.”*
- *“I crave for no special honors nor recognition, no labels nor tags, no power nor authority. I do everything for the glorification of God!”*
- *“I feel no shame nor humiliation in bowing down and touching the feet of another individual, irrespective of age, whom I consider a person of honor, knowledge, and virtue.”*

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HUMILITY OF HINDUS IS OFTEN MISTAKEN FOR MEEKNESS BY WESTERN COMMUNITIES

- *Prostrating before elders, before pious people, before Jnani's (People of knowledge & wisdom), and before Gods, are the true marks of humility in Hinduism.*
- *This intrinsic and exclusive nature of humility taught and nurtured from childhood in traditional Hindu homes is often mistaken for meekness by Western communities.*
- *Many Hindu children, grown up in Western culture, often fail to understand why their parents and grand parents practice such "extreme humility".*

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HUMILITY COMES BEFORE ALL OTHER QUALITIES OF A NOBLE INDIVIDUAL

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।
आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥८॥

-Shrimad Bhagavadgita, Ch 13, V8

“Humility, lack of false pride, non-violence, forgiveness, simplicity, service of Guru, purity of mind & body, steadfastness, and self-control”

“A humble man will never be impressed by words of praise nor hurt by words of abuse. He will not be moved or led astray by praise, scold or flattery.”

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EXAMPLES OF HUMILITY

A Little Girl On The Beach and CPR



- A little girl drowns and remains unconscious on the beach. An old man approaches to resuscitate the child by CPR.
- A stout young man suddenly showed up and yells: “No one shall touch the child since I am the CPR expert!”
- He performs CPR and revives the child.
- The old man thanks him wholeheartedly.
- A few days later, the young man was gasping for breath, and became unconscious, and was immediately transported to a nearby hospital.
- When he woke up, he was shocked to see the same old man as a Doctor, who had performed CPR on him.
- The Young man was humbled, and thanked the Doctor.



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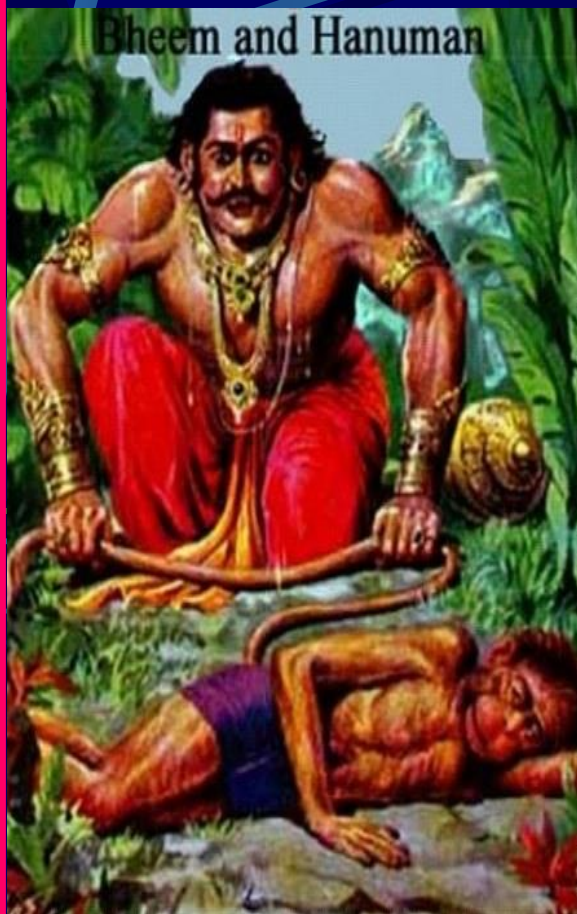


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EXAMPLES OF HUMILITY (CONTD.)

Bheema and Hanuman



- *One day, Draupadi asked Bheema to fetch her the fragrant Saugandhika flowers from a distant mountain.*
- *After reaching the mountain, he saw an old monkey lying with its tail stretched, which was blocking Bheema's way.*
- *Bheema ordered the monkey to move away from the road.*
- *The monkey replied, "I am too old to even lift my tail. Please help me lift my tail so that I can clear your way"*
- *Bheema tried to lift the monkey's tail, but was totally embarrassed to discover that the tail was too heavy for him to lift. Bheema began to feel that the monkey is not ordinary.*
- *When Bheema asked the monkey who he was, the monkey disclosed that he was Hanuman, the ardent devotee of Lord Rama. Upon hearing Bheema was totally humbled.*

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HUMILITY DOES NOT MEAN LACK OF SELF-RESPECT!

- *False Pride (Ahankaar) is an evil while humility is a virtue.*
- *In the Bhagavad Gītā (Ch 16, V3), Lord Krishna says that we should not have atimānitā or excessive pride (Ahankaar).*
- *It is significant to note that Shri Krishna does not ask us to give up all our sense of self-worth. He is merely asking us to avoid thinking that we are very important.*
- *One must distinguish between self-respect and a sense of self-worth on one hand and egocentrism and arrogance on the other.*
- *Self-respect is a good thing to have, arrogance and false pride are not.*

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AN EXAMPLE OF HUMILITY *VERSUS* SELF-RESPECT

Ishvarachandra Vidyāsāgar & Mr Kerr

- *One day, Vidyāsāgara, (1820-1891), a renowned Hindu scholar and reformer, went to see Mr. Kerr, the British Principal of the Hindu College.*

- *The racist and arrogant Mr. Kerr did not offer Vidyāsāgara a chair to sit, instead placed his both feet on his table when Vidyāsāgara arrived.*

- *Vidyasagar showed no emotions about being insulted, but spoke to Mr. Kerr with honor and respect.*

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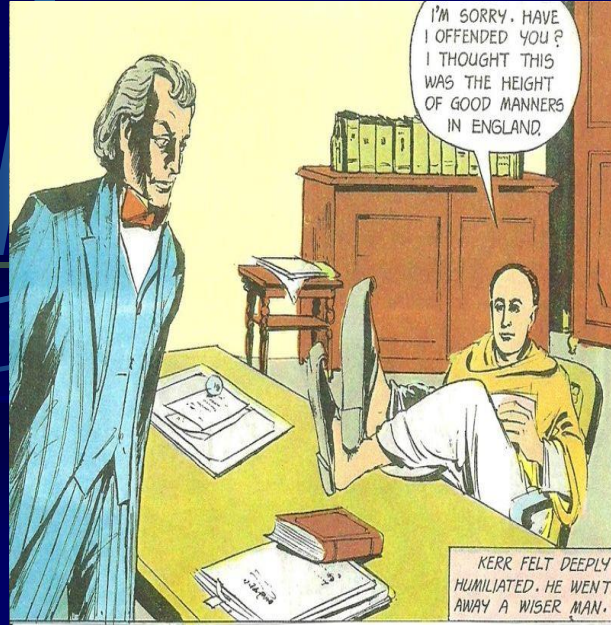
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ISHVARACHANDRA VIDYĀSĀGAR & MR KERR (CONTD.)



- *A few days later, when Vidyāsāgara learned that Kerr is coming to see him in his own office, he quickly had all spare chairs in the office removed.*
- *When Kerr entered Vidyāsāgara's office, he saw the latter sitting on the chair, with his feet on the desk!*
- *Kerr was deeply offended, and said that a "native" should show more respect to a British man.*
- *Vidyāsāgara merely smiled and replied, "I thought that I was only following the good manners and etiquette from Europe." Kerr was humiliated.*

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