

5. The Five D's

The universe itself is a university in which every human being is a student. Every student pursues one subject and acquires a degree. Each one chooses a subject he likes. But whatever different subjects they may study, there is one thing common to all of them, one common pursuit and goal: to obtain the degree of Divine love.

In the cosmic university, though there are scientific, political, economic and other studies, what is fundamental to all of them is the spiritual knowledge.

Even in the spiritual field there are special subjects. There is one group which may be described as the five D's: Dedication, Devotion, Discipline, Discrimination and Determination. Those who have mastered the five D's are qualified to receive God's love.

Dedication should be free from ego and envy

Dedication means offering. As soon as Swami arrived, teachers and students made offerings of flowers and offered their salutations. The flower symbolises the heart. When you offer the flower of your heart to the Lord, it should be free from the pest of desire, hatred, envy, greed and the like. Only flowers are offered to the Lord or those whom you revere. The flower of the heart is subject to infestation by two evil creatures: One is *ahamkara* (self-conceit); the other is *asooya* (envy). Self-conceit is based on eight different factors: wealth, physical prowess, birth, scholarship, beauty, power and penance. Of these, the arrogance born of wealth is to be despised most. As long as this *ahamkara* (self-conceit) is predominant, it is impossible to recognise the Divine or one's spiritual reality. Self-conceit is a great barrier between the individual and God. It has to be utterly demolished.

Pride of wealth is another human failing, which causes the downfall of man. All forms of pride, based on birth, wealth, power or scholarship have to be given up totally. Only when egoistic pride is offered as a sacrifice at the altar of the Divine can man discover his true nature. This is the Dedication that is called for as the first step in the spiritual journey.

Next comes Devotion. This is the highest form of love. "Service to Hrishikesa is known as *Bhakti*," says the *Sutra*. Devotion means constant contemplation of God. The term *Bhakti* is derived from the root *Bhaj* (to worship). Devotion means loving contemplation of God, repetition of His name, worshipping Him and doing penance for Him. Service to the Lord is the highest expression of devotion. There is nothing which is not attainable through loving service to the Divine.

Devotion does not mean merely doing *bhajans* or performing *puja*. These forms of devotion at present are based on some kind of self-interest and self-seeking. True devotion should be free from selfishness of any kind. Devotion is not something to be proclaimed or demonstrated. Exhibitionistic devotion may result in disaster. True devotion should be an expression of love both internally and externally.

Discipline should be strictly followed in daily life

Next comes Discipline. This is most essential for students. From the moment you wake up, you have to carry out your morning ablutions, meditate on God and then do your prescribed duties in an orderly manner without deviating from the regular routine. Variations in the routine from day to day are undesirable. You should not wake up at one hour on one day and at a different time on

another day. The day's activities should be regulated by the same schedule. Immediately after finishing the morning chores, one should devote, in the calm and serene atmosphere of the morning, at least for a few minutes to loving meditation on God. The human estate is based upon regulation and self-control. These have to be strictly adhered to in daily life.

Then comes Discrimination. The world is a mixture of good and bad, of joy and sorrow, right and wrong, victory and defeat. In a world replete with such opposites, man has to make constantly the choice between what is right and proper and what is wrong and undesirable. Man should not let himself be guided by the mind. He should follow the directions of the *Buddhi* (Intelligence). As long as you follow the mind, you cannot obtain *Madhava* (Divinity).

Students must learn to use discrimination

Young people in their tender years tend to follow the inclinations of the mind. They do not rise to the level of their intelligence. Consequently, they are subject to various agitations and frustrations. They have, therefore, to learn to use their powers of discrimination. "I am a human being. In this condition how should I conduct myself so that I may win the respect and regard of others?" These are the questions which each student must ask himself. He should enquire on every occasion as to what is the right course and what is to be avoided. He should decide on what he should do and where he should go after due enquiry. Having acquired knowledge, he should not behave like an illiterate, uneducated person. His conduct should be in keeping with his learning. Humility is the index of true education. Without humility, scholarship will lack lustre. Discrimination is essential for every student and educated man.

Determination is the fifth D. It is like the reins of a horse. When you want to achieve something, you must have the determination and persistence to secure it by all your efforts. No room should be given for doubts and hesitations. There is nothing on earth which cannot be achieved with firm determination.

Starting with Dedication, you end with Determination. There is no use relying solely on book knowledge or mere intellectual cleverness. There must be firm faith in God as the basis of everything.

There is one kind of pest which affects the leaves and branches of a tree. There is another which destroys the root of a tree. Likewise, a hypocrite is a human pest which can spoil a good man. The hypocrite is not merely an actor. He poses as a devotee externally, but is really evil-minded. He leads a double life. It is dangerous to associate with such persons. Many good men in the world have come to grief because of the association with such pretenders.

Worldly and Divine Love

Love is of two kinds: One related to the physical and the other related to the Divine. All the fears and delusions afflicting the world, all the chaos and violence prevalent today, are due primarily to physical attachments. These are also responsible for the falsehood, corruption and other evils rampant in society. Divine love knows no differences among individuals and nations. Egoistic attachments and selfishness are at the root of all human troubles and conflicts. Physical love should be confined to strict limits. If the Divine consciousness were not present within, of what use would the body be? It would be as useless as a school without teachers, a farm without water, a temple without a deity.

You must develop Divine love. You must be resolute in striving to achieve what you aim at. Only then will your devotion and discipline bear fruit. There is no meaning in parading one's devotion. The external human form has no significance. You must be human in your actions and feelings. By reforming your conduct and purifying your thoughts and actions, sanctify your lives. That alone is true education, which will lead to Self-realisation.

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Man is Divine, take it from Me; he is really here on a holy mission for a Divine purpose. To consider him as mean or weak or sinful is a great mistake. This is itself a great sin. Man must earn his birthright, namely Shanthi. Ashanthi is for him an unnatural state. His real nature is Shanthi. To recover his heritage of Shanthi, man tries various methods: Accumulation of riches, maintenance of health, mastery of knowledge and cultivation of the arts, though these are not fundamental. Three basic wants still remain after all these methods have been tried: the need for reality, for light and for immortality.

Sathya Sai Baba