

6. Beyond Degrees: God's Love

Students! Your real form is not made up of body, the sense organs, the mind and the intellect. *Sath-chith-ananda--the Atma* who is the Indwelling Witness in you--is your real form. Instead of realising this truth people are wasting their lives by identifying themselves with this body.

The universe is a great university. By pursuing a variety of studies--literary, scientific, political, economic and other studies--knowledge is acquired, but not peace of mind. Succumbing to insatiable desires, people are losing peace and leading meaningless lives. It is essential to practice spiritual discipline along with academic studies.

Specialisation in studies does not help the student to get an integral view of life and its problems. Education should serve to develop a broad outlook and an all-round view of life. It is not enough to acquire degrees. You must learn to acquire God's grace. The means of getting the Divine grace are: *Bhakti* (devotion), *Prapathi* (surrender), *Niyama* (ethical discipline), *Vicharana* (enquiry) and *Deeksha* (determination). When you succeed in these tests, you will experience the grace of the Divine.

Every offering to God is devotion

Devotion should manifest itself in every action. Everything done out of love for God and as an offering to God becomes devotion. The devotee is filled with love and shares the love with all the others. The nine different forms of worship are only means to cultivate devotion. But the goal of all of them is to experience oneness with the Divine.

Prapathi means total surrender, offering everything to the Divine. The sense of ego separates the individual from the Divine. When the individual offers everything to God, this ego barrier is removed. Of all diseases to which man is prone, the disease arising from *Ahamkara* (ego) is the most deadly. The only panacea for this disease is surrender to the Will of the Divine.

Education should be utilised for developing the power of discrimination between right and wrong, good and evil. Without discrimination, a human being is worse than an animal.

You need determination to face the challenges of life, which is filled with ups and downs, successes and failures, joys and sorrows. These challenges have to be faced with faith in God. The mind should not be allowed to waver and hop from one thing to the other. A steady mind is the mark of a truly educated person. Life should be governed by definite regulations. Self-control is essential for leading a righteous life.

Do not get disheartened by failure

Bharath's culture has always laid stress on the well-being of all. "*Lokaah Samasthaah-sukhino bhavanthu.*" (Let all the worlds be happy). You should not be overwhelmed by difficulties that you may encounter in life. They are all transient and they come and go. The source of enduring bliss is within you. Do not give way to weakness of will. The Upanishad declares: "*Na ayam Atma balaheenena labhyah*" (The Spirit is not realised by a weakling). Most students are apt to get disheartened when they fail to obtain high marks in an examination. They should, on the contrary, regard it as a challenge to do better in future. Students must develop courage, self-confidence and determination so that they can face any situation in life. This is the reason for combining spiritual discipline with academic studies.

After you complete your studies, you must become ideal mothers. The mother is the most decisive factor in a child's life. A child's future is moulded by the mother.

You have an obligation to please your parents, who are responsible for all that you are. Give joy and satisfaction to them. Thereby you will be ensuring joy and satisfaction for yourselves from your children in the years to come.

Have high aims in life. Set before yourselves the examples of great men and women who have figured in the history of our country and the world. Take a lesson from their life of sacrifice and heroism. Wherever you go, whatever walk of life you may choose, bear in mind the honour and glory of the Sathya Sai Institute and prove yourselves in action to be worthy alumni of the Institute. Conduct yourselves befittingly before elders and relations and earn their regard and love. Bring credit to the family in which you are born and the family in which your married life may be spent.

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