Unconditional Love vs Being a Doormat.
Where to draw the line?

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Question: Sadhguru, where and how do we draw the line between unconditional love and becoming a doormat?

Sadhguru: We need to understand that what is considered as love is generally a mutual benefit scheme. "You give me this – I give you that. If you don’t give me this, I don’t give you that." This is not said but it is done.

Similarly, we have arrangements to fulfill our physical, emotional, social, and economic needs in a more aesthetic manner. I’m not saying this is right or wrong – this is a fact of life. For domestic purposes – for two people to live together; to fulfill their needs, to produce children, to raise them, a domestic level of love is enough. Not many people are capable or ready to have a kind of love affair that will make two lives into one and bring them to an ultimate union.

Unconditional love – A path to ultimate union

Two actually becoming one in experience needs something more. Most people are competent of using love to fulfill the domestic needs, but they are not ready to go beyond that. Both have to be ready. When one is ready and the other is not, or one is making an effort and the other doesn’t, it may feel like one is becoming a doormat, like one is being exploited. But one who is longing to become love as a way of ultimate union should not be bothered about becoming a doormat or whatever.

We have a culture here in India where by choice, people name themselves as slaves. You know Tulsidas, Krishnadas, or any other kind of “das”? They openly say, “I’m a slave.” They are not afraid of being used as a doormat. They want to be a doormat. This kind of love is for ultimate union and not just for domestic purposes. If you are looking for ultimate union, love is a different affair. If you are looking for a way to conduct domestic affairs, then you must manage with dignity “who gets what.” If anyone uses more than they should, then it is “If you don’t give me this, I don’t give you that.” That’s a social thing. Otherwise, if you’re looking for ultimate union, you should not think of all this. Or in other words, if love crosses a certain level, and even if you just fall in love, you become vulnerable to someone. Without becoming vulnerable, there is no love affair. You have to fall. When you fall, someone may raise you or walk over you.

The experience is beautiful because you fell. Not because they raised you, not because they walked over you – you actually had the sense of abandon in you to fall. The English expression, “falling in love,” is really appropriate and very beautiful. They always talked about falling in love. No one is ever talking about standing up in love or climbing in love or flying in love, because always, when you consider as “myself” falls, a deep experience of love can happen within you. The beauty of your love affair was not in what they gave you or what they did to you. You sat alone and thought you really loved this person so much you were willing to die – that was the most beautiful moment. Not the moment they gave you a big gift, not the moment they gave you a diamond ring, not the moment they said this and that about you – No! You just sat there, willing to die – that was the moment. You were willing to not just be a doormat but the dust on their feet.

The madness of devotion

I’m not saying you should be like that – I’m saying this is how it is when love transforms itself into devotion. If you fall in love, you become vulnerable, but there are still some shades of sanity in love affairs – you can recover. But if you become a devotee, there is no sanity left and you cannot recover. You don’t become a devotee just because you have ascribed yourself to a certain religion, creed or whatever. A devotee cannot ascribe himself to anything, he is just drawn. So, before you troop such a land, you must see whether you are ready for it or not. What are your goals, first of all? If your goal is to make life a quotient, a very measured love affair is good. But if you are not planning to have a good life, if you want to dissolve into the process of life, if you want to become an explosion of life, if you don’t care what you get and what you don’t get, then you become a devotee.

A devotee is not somebody’s devotee. Devotion means a certain single-pointedness – you are constantly focused towards one thing. Once a person has become like this that his thought, emotion, and everything has become in one direction, now Grace will naturally happen to that person. He becomes receptive. Devotion means it is your intention to dissolve into your object of devotion. As a devotee, you don’t think about whether you become a doormat or a crown on someone’s head. Whatever you become is fine with you, as long as you can touch that one’s feet or head or whatever else. That’s a different state of existence. I don’t think someone who is looking for a domestic level of love affair should even ask that question.

Ranked amongst the fifty most influential people in India, Sadhguru is a yogi, mystic, visionary and a New York Times bestselling author. Sadhguru has been conferred the Padma Vibhushan by the Government of India in 2017, the highest annual civilian award, accorded for exceptional and distinguished service. To know more, visit isha.sadhguru.com