

# Gulzar

Poet

**'God is either illiterate or doesn't listen'**

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**Gulzar, Poet, Writer, Lyricist and Director.**

**What does spirituality mean to you?**

It simply is the quest for the self, and for an understanding of life. It is the search for the self because no matter how small we are, we want to belong – we may be stardust in the cosmos, but we want to feel part of it. We wish to know the journeys, the thousands of generations, the accidents that led to who we are here and now. We travel in time till we get to the first humans, and then to the beginning of the earth, which leads us to the question of the creator of it all. People say it is God, but isn't that a thought? And the only way to prove it also is a thought? There never was a tangible proof of it. And scientific explanations may bring the answer one day. A few centuries ago, flying on a carpet was simply a fantasy, a legend. Today it is the most common thing to sit on a plane and sip a cup of tea. What we call supernatural today may be natural tomorrow. But constantly questioning is what matters. Without questions, there is no search, and without search, there is no growth, there is no finding the truth. Of course one does not find final answers, but that is the way evolution and growth keep happening.

**Do you believe you are guided and protected by a superior force?**

I would say yes. But how much of this belief is actually like a genetic inheritance, embedded in our thoughts? If there is such a thing as God which created all of us, maybe it was like a video game, for Him to have some fun. But then He should visit us sometimes, He has not paid us a visit in millions of years! On the other hand, as I wrote in a poem, if the time for a heart bypass comes, and I would be in the hospital with all the machines and doctors taking care of me, I should not be afraid, experts are

there! Yet, I would talk to God and say "if You happen to have a bit of spare time, would You mind coming and sitting next to me?"

Then there is the question of coincidences, isn't that all a question of vantage point? Let us say we can see from a distance a car speeding in a certain direction and another one coming in the opposite direction, and we can calculate and predict that an accident will occur. They can't. But we see everything. So it is all a question of vantage point. The only things we call coincidences are those odd occurrences that we cannot explain. But maybe one day, science will be able to predict and explain them.

### **Do you believe you have a special mission or purpose in this life?**

Well, at the core, I always loved music, painting and books. I was surrounded by an older and a younger group of siblings. I was alone, lost in the middle. And I had to find an identity for myself, I had to attract some attention. I was very fond of singing, by my father –from a business family– forbade me to sing, seeing it as a waste of time. I could not paint, because he could find it out. So the only creative expression left was poetry, which I could hide. And I was dreaming of being one day the centre of attention at one of those poets' gatherings I would attend. As time went by though, I wanted less and less attention, and on the contrary, I was craving for seclusion and solitude. Writing poetry is a quite lonely affair and medium of expression, though one is never alone with a book.

### **What is spirituality for you in your day to day life?**

It is certainly not a meditation to God! I have tried to talk to Him in every language possible. I thought He may not know Hindi, so I tried Urdu, and English, and Latin, and Greek... But nothing doing! There was never a nod indicating that He is hearing something. I think that God is either illiterate, or He speaks a language we do not know, or He just does not listen. So basically, it is always a one-sided conversation. And that can be tiresome and boring. Which explains my yawning at times.

### **What is the role of spirituality in your work?**

The quest for meaning and for truth manifests in my films, my documentaries, my music, my short stories, my poems. It is everywhere in all my work. The process of creation is a way of trying to find the answers. It is completely interlinked and synonymous to spirituality. When I make a film about the partition for instance, it is my way of trying to understand those tragic events and therefore it is also a search for life and truth.

### **Can you share a unique experience that changed or shaped your spiritual beliefs?**

I would think of the time I accidentally discovered the translation of Rabindranath Tagore's poetry. I was nine or ten years old, and it was a fundamental turning point. I subsequently decided to be a poet and that shaped my entire exploration of life, my quest for meaning and the way I would go about it.

### **What are your spiritual inspirations?**

The brush of life. It teaches me all the time, I just need to keep my antennas open. For instance people, I love the human species – not that I love birds or animals less, but I am not that bright, so with humans it is easier to communicate.

**If you were to be reincarnated, what would you like to be reincarnated as?**

I am very fond of space and the cosmos. In this life, I keep traveling the earth. So in the next one, I would like to travel the cosmos, as simply as a spark of energy. And every time I would visit a planet, I would put on different clothes, a different "body", according to the requirements of the place.

**If there was one question you could ask God, what would it be?**

If You are there, appear! No use hiding.

**What is your idea of happiness?**

Just meeting you! Isn't that a very happy moment? Happiness is about little moments like that, from one fragment of eternity to another. And so at this moment, I am happy having my tea and talking to you.