

Shobha De

Writer

'I'd like to sit across a table with God and ask him his
gameplan'

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Shobha De, Writer.

What does spirituality mean to you?

It means goodness and honesty, but on a much broader level than just not bribing anyone – honesty as harmony with a larger life principle. Spirituality is not about consciously planning a personal quest and seeking answers. Some people need to look for answers more than others. But I think they mostly do so to console themselves, imagining that there is a reason for everything and that life is explainable. I believe many things ought to remain a mystery and it would be self-defeating to constantly seek answers and get perplexed, because in any case, no one can provide those answers.

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

Anybody who searches for such a force is acknowledging a certain inability to take responsibility for his or her life and decisions. I do not look for such a force. I just feel 100 per cent responsible whichever way my life goes. Of course, coincidences and eerie things do happen. But when they do, I

do not question them. It is part of the mystery of life, and one should accept it without trying to explain why and how.

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

I think it would be very egotistical to elevate oneself to a point of saying one ought to have an impact on society, for instance. I just see myself as a woman with a gift for words, which I have enjoyed very much and I try to make the most of it.

What is spirituality for you in your day-to-day life?

There is one ritual – sitting and watching the sunset from my balcony every day. It is a very important moment for me. I always make time for it. It marks the end of the day, when I evaluate if I have been productive, if I have done things to make me and others happy and thank nature for a certain peace in the universe.

Can you tell us about a unique experience that changed or shaped your spiritual beliefs?

There is one kind of experience which has definitely shaped me over time: one-time encounters with strangers with whom you connect in the moment, regardless of any later reward. You give and receive in that moment and never see the person again. They are spiritual because there is no explanation, you do not know why those people have come into your life and why you have come into theirs. You just know that you have connected to give and receive something special.

What are your spiritual inspirations?

I do not believe in guru cults and things of that style. And if someone were presumptuous enough to say he or she has the answers, I would immediately suspect that person. Besides, the answers are not to be found in a book. Basically, they are to be looked for within us.

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

Not as Shobhaa again! I hate repeat acts. I never go back to things I have left behind. Moving on has been the dynamics of my existence. But though the idea of reincarnation itself intrigues me, I mostly feel it is part of our vulnerable human nature. We try and console ourselves with the idea that there is something beyond death.

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

Who are You? If You do exist, why don't You manifest yourself so that we all get to know You? I would like to sit across a table and talk to You to know what is Your gameplan and strategy.

What is your idea of happiness?

To be in harmony emotionally, physically and spiritually – like in a symphony where all the notes come together and make a beautiful and memorable melody for all times. It is tough to achieve it. But in those daily sunset moments on my balcony, a golden bird comes and sits on one of the branches. The minutes of communion with it are extremely precious, probably more so than anything else I have done

during the day. And they give me a feeling that all is right in the world and with life. I guess that is happiness.