

Farooq Abdullah

Union minister of new and renewable energy

'I don't believe in Darwin's theory'

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Farooq Abdullah is the Union minister of new and renewable energy.

What does spirituality mean to you?

It is the union between human beings and the Lord almighty. It is the contact with the one who has created everything. Every religion has another name for it.

How do you feel that contact?

Through people He has created, by prayers to thank for the blessings He has showered over me.

How do you know there is a Lord?

As a doctor, looking at human beings, I have to acknowledge that someone has created us.

It could simply be the evolution of species as described by Darwin?

I don't believe in Darwin's theory. I believe there is a force that created this earth, and on this earth it created a most superior creation, human beings. No matter where you are born, everything is in the same place inside the body. We then became different, we began worshipping different things. First

what we could see, the fire, the sun, the earth and so on. Then when preachers came, other truths emerged, including what will happen before the world comes to an end. And it is already happening.

Like what?

People losing respect for each other, family unity disappearing, evil surpassing good, events that will completely destroy the earth. And resurrection will then take place, people will rise and face the Lord.

Why would the Lord want the earth to go through all this?

I cannot answer that. It is beyond me.

Did you have a religious upbringing?

Growing up, I was taught the Quran, how to pray etc. My mother was praying five times a day and reciting the Quran all the time. My father was so busy, and besides, he was in and out of jail, so she had to raise us single-handedly for long periods of time. What gave us strength was the belief in God.

When there are difficulties in your life, where do you find the energy?

I have gone through a lot of ups and times and God is the only strength I have held onto. Everybody can leave, your own can disown you, but He won't.

Yet, I should not remember the Lord only in difficult times. Otherwise it would mean I am selfish and only remember Him when needed.

You never revolt against Him, when there is too much hardship?

Well, that would equate to a feeling of defeat. And if you feel defeated, it means you don't trust God. Precisely in those challenges you must say, "I know you are there Lord, and I need the strength"!

When you see the suffering in Kashmir for instance, so many people dying etc. how can it be justified as God's doing?

When seeing all this suffering, we realize we must have done something wrong. Because otherwise He is benevolent and forgiving. Somewhere we must have gone wrong that He puts us through such tests.

People associate you with secular views though?

I believe every religion teaches you about unity between all. How does it matter to which God one prays? The source is the same, the strength is the same. This sun is as much for you or me, for a Buddhist, a Sikh, a Muslim, a Hindu etc. And when He brings disaster, He doesn't differentiate between the faithful ones and the others.

Is that fair?

It is not a question of fair or unfair. It reminds me of Moses' story, when he asked God: a ship sank in the sea, both believers and non-believers died all the same, how come? God told Moses to go and

rest. When he woke up, he saw some dead ants next to him. He realized one ant had bitten him and when his hand moved, all those ants had been killed. He had gotten his answer...

If it is a universal force and every religion carries the same message, why do we need religion at all?

Today the world is globalized and we all know about each other. But for so long we lived isolated and didn't know about each other, we didn't know what was happening beyond this wall. So every place had its own religious ways.

But today, why do we still need religions, if they so often are a divisive factor between people?

Religions are not divisive. Religious leaders and politicians are those who use religions to divide people for their own interests. We could be united in diversity but we are not, because of these people. Because of their hunger for power, we got divided.

But I actually think that things are changing. Compared to 50 years ago, no longer are the temple or the mosque so strong today. Education has changed things. The outlook and vision have changed.

What about politicians using religion – have you tried to do something about it?

I don't preach. How can you prevent them from manipulating people? They have their own ways to win elections. At the time of elections, to create hatred, you will always find people taking some cow into a temple, or a pig into a mosque. That is what politicians do.

Is the Lord planning everything, are things preordained?

The Lord is not planning. He has given you the book about the path, and the brains to use it. Up to you to follow it or not. At the end of times, when you face Him again, you will have to answer for all that you have done. The doors of heaven will open for those who have done good.

So there is no such thing as destiny?

Destiny will be good if you have done good.

What about your own life?

In my life, I have found there is too much manipulation. A lot of people manipulate, without understanding human beings. Many want you to prostrate in front of them, because they supposedly hold the power, not realizing they only have temporary power and the real power is up there. There is no statue today for King George V, Queen Victoria etc. They have all disappeared. It will be the same for their equivalents today.

But by being born to Sheikh Abdullallah, destiny put you in a very special place, didn't it?

It did indeed. You come to certain places. It is up to you to see what to make with it. I was born in terrible times. My father was a political leader in and out of jail – which as a child, I must say I used to love, because I could then play for longer times; my mother was very soft and I could tell her anything. My father was very tough. Out of all the five children, I got the maximum beating.

Why?

Because I used to do wrong. For instance, he found out one day that I was smoking and he gave me such a hell of a beating. He was himself smoking 50 cigarettes a day, but he didn't want me to take this bad habit. And I never smoked thereafter... He was a tough man, a very tough man.

Then what did you do with what destiny gave you and where it put you?

Well, certain things you do because your heart says so, even though your brain may say the contrary. And I suffered for it. But I fought through. Others would have probably given up. When power was taken away by some maneuvering in the Governor's house, B. K. Nehru later told me he had thought I would have tried to burn Kashmir. But I told him, Farooq Abdullah won't burn Kashmir for power. It is not my way of life. Do I have to sacrifice people just to sit on a chair? And I did get back to that chair in the end.

When back, the troubles in Kashmir expanded, how did you then feel?

I didn't divert from my thinking. I kept telling people that guns are not the way. But they didn't listen. They took to guns and the results are what you see today –thousands of young men died, countless others ran away from home, the honor of so many women was lost. It took us 22 years to come back to a semblance of normalcy. They brought on to themselves and to others so much misery. I could see it so clearly and kept on telling them, but they wouldn't listen. I feel happy today when I see that they realize I was right and they were wrong.

Destiny put you in that particular position – do you think you have done justice to it?

I am glad I was able to do whatever I did. I am glad I am still there. I am glad I can do things on a much larger scale now. I was earlier only in a small State. Now I am on a national scale, trying to make sure the next generations get to breathe a better air than us.

Well, destiny definitely put you again in a crucial spot – being the Minister for Renewable Energies is actually a very critical post and can create a real difference, isn't it?

Yes, it is amazing how He does it. One can't understand His ways of life, but that's how He moves - in the most mysterious ways.

What do you think about the fact that humans are actively destroying the planet?

They have forgotten over time that they should live and let live. They decided to live and let others die. A new realization has to come and become action.

What is your objective in this?

To make sure that on the long run, India does not use fuels causing the earth's death. If I am able to succeed, I will have done my job.

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

You made human beings and gave them everything, why did You stop mid-way in making them good people?

If there were such a thing as reincarnation, what would you choose for the next round?

Islam doesn't believe in it. But if there were such a thing, I would like to come back as a very beautiful woman, very attractive, very seductive, very powerful.

Why would you choose that?

Because of the ills and sufferings women have gone through in life without being able to fight it.

So if a woman is more beautiful, she can fight more?

Yes, I think she would attract far more, and in that attraction of hers, she can do a lot and change a lot of things.

What is your idea of happiness?

It is something internal. You can't show it. I am happy if I can make someone else happy.

What about contentment?

Man is never content. Man is always vying for more. Never does he feel enough is enough. That's what drives him. Because with contentment, he would never do anything.

So you cannot be content?

No, I can't. I want to go on and on and on, until I sleep for good.