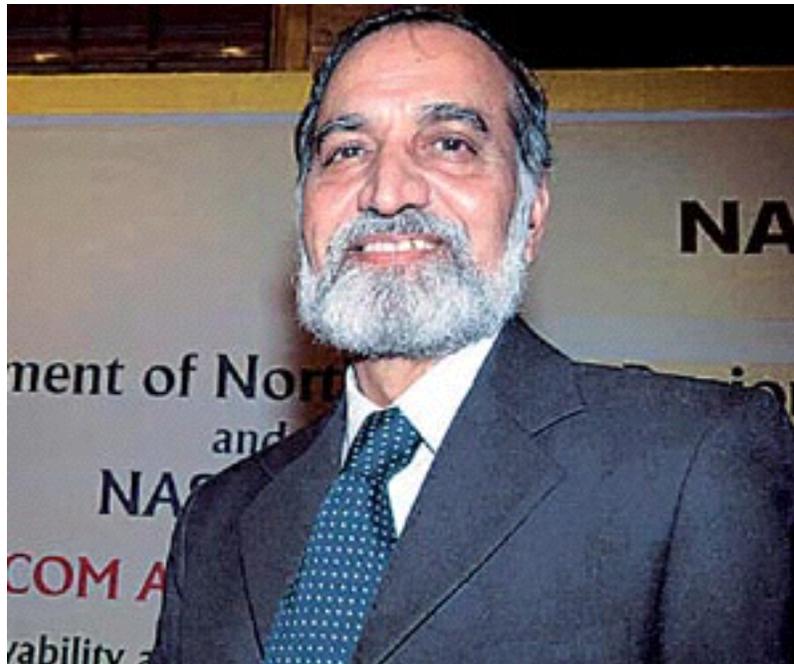


# Kiran Karnik

President of NASSCOM

"I do not believe in a benign God looking after each one of us"

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**Kiran Karnik, President of NASSCOM.**

**What does spirituality mean to you?**

It is a philosophy of life, which points out to a certain connection between all life and objects on earth. It is completely beyond and separate from any religion. And as it indicates the inter-relatedness of all, it also teaches us the fact that every single thing we do has an impact. The whole chaos theory is based on the idea that a butterfly moving its wings in Brazil can create a typhoon in China. It is not religion, it is physics. And observing, understanding all that is what spirituality is about for me.

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

There are of course unexpected things happening in life which make me feel good and that the world is not that bad. But I do not believe in a benign God looking after each one of us. Otherwise there would not be so much suffering. Still, I definitely believe there is a force that interconnects us all, an energy field as physics would say, with a sense of order and set patterns. It also creates in us a sense like altruism. Otherwise why would we care for a little bird falling from a nest? There is no gain in it apart from some satisfaction or happiness. But what makes us feel happy that way? The connection to that bird out there, that bonding is what spirituality is all about.

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

I do not believe in predetermination, or fate, or destiny. And in my life I have gone from one position to another without much planning. But there is an overall thinking which is about contribution. I spent two decades at ISRO where much of the work was focused on how to use technology for education and development. It is a similar theme to what I have been involved in here at Nasscom, and even to what I was doing while with Discovery Channel.

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

It is about the relationship between me and other people and things, with an aspiration for humanity, care, compassion. It is not a separate thing – going to work and then coming back home and having some "spiritual activities". A true sense of spirituality is how you live every moment of your life.

**What has been the role of spirituality in your public life?**

It is this idea of hoping to do things on a bigger plane and for the larger good. It is connected to this outlook on life which one can call spirituality. And it was very much formed by the idealism and urge to re-examine society which spread in the sixties, my formative years.

**What have been your main spiritual inspirations?**

A great deal of my education has come from schools of philosophy like Buddhism or Hinduism, as they tell you to always ask questions and never take anything for granted. This non dogmatic view is very appealing to me as it synchronizes well with the ever questioning scientific approach to things.

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

Recycling is a process that takes place everywhere on our planet, we see it everywhere in nature. So reincarnation would only make sense to me in that context. And then had I to choose, I would want to be in a place like India with so many challenges and issues, but where one can do something about it. It would be so dull and boring to be in a "perfect" country!

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

Do You exist? In science, there is the concept of discontinuity, or what I call a residue: it is what remains when you cannot find an explanation anymore to what you observe. Many invoke God at that point, but I am very wary of doing so. I simply feel it is something we cannot understand at this point.

**What is your idea of happiness?**

It is about being in a non perfect environment, where one has a chance to contribute to the larger good, while deriving personal satisfaction from it.