



Self policing, self reflection, self correction, self talk, being a self teacher and always being a student willing to learn and move on... this is what spirituality means to me. I consider myself attitudinally spiritual.

I am not ritualistic or rigidly conformist. But i feel blessed visiting spiritual and holy places and praying and meditating, be it a church, temple, mosque, or a gurdwara or any quiet place of meditation. I have a very rich personal library of *bhakti bhajans*, audio discourses and spiritual books. These are my true anchors and companions when i take walks, travel or spend time with myself. I have a small temple in the house where i say a quick thank you to the Almighty daily.

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I may not consciously accept whatever happens, for i am human. But subconsciously, i pray for divine protection (specially from those with hidden agendas and who pretend to be friends). I do remind myself that my responsibility is only to make the right effort and not to bother about results. I strongly believe that i will reap only what i sow. Better the gardener in me, more fruit-laden my garden will be. Agreed, the weather or locusts could attempt to destroy my garden. But then all i must do is go back in there and work on it once again.

Have i experienced God? Well, my thoughts in the subconscious often get answered... if i ask for anything for others, i usually get it. I once dreamt of a temple. Then one day i actually saw it, exactly as it was in my dream.

My mother and father are the spiritual guides who taught me to live a life of deeds and not words. Simplicity, hard work, honesty, discipline, love, sacrifice, courage and gratitude were all part of home. In my UPSC form in 1971, against the column 'Religion' i recall i wrote 'Mankind'. Right now i am experiencing a sense of freedom and looking forward to another phase of life.

(As told to S Shanthi)