

GOD comes when YOU are not there

*He worked as a banker on Wall Street, managed a computer business and drove a BMW. Then one day, he faced his Self! Persian poet and meditation teacher, **Kambiz Naficy**, Iran's answer to Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, was in India recently*

Sssh

*Can you hear the lint tumbling on tiles?
The upside-down beer bottle floating in the canal?
The self-argument of the washing machine?
The gauze of the fly hovering above fruit?
The tick of the cooling iron?
Is it possible to be alone?
Is it only in solitude we can hear the hum of pitch silence?*

— **Kambiz Naficy**

I was born in the mystical land of Persia. When I was a little boy, my father often recited the poetry of Rumi and Hafez; I would listen intently as I loved my father and the wisdom of that poetry. We had a big garden with lots of trees and birds. Throughout my younger days, when I strolled in that garden, there was an invisible Presence speaking to me in whispers. In those days, I called Him 'my invisible friend'. Much later, I found that the Presence was my Soul, The Witness, pure consciousness.

There is a saying, "God only comes when YOU are not there". It means the selfish feeling of 'I' as a solid, visible body is an illusion that stops the seeker from experiencing God. Beyond your solid body, you are surrounded by five other invisible, energy layers, and the sixth is your Soul (*atma*).

Once every two-three years, I experience a morning of "soul sickness". It renders me helpless and I just can't get out of bed. That's the sign that I've been ignoring my soul's call for more personal change, for yet another step into the unknown, toward becoming more of who I really am.

I remember my 20s and 30s, years spent rebelling against my true nature – a poet/philosopher. I was like a missile without a guidance system – changing careers, moving from one city to another, in and out of relationships, dabbling in addictions, all to run away from the most frightening of all encounters – facing my Self.

For many years, I ignored the vital signs of soul sickness – sweaty palms, racing heart, high-anxiety, fear, and depression. Then, one morning my soul just shut down. I couldn't get out of bed, and I broke into a cold sweat. My ego backed against a wall, I yielded to what seemed like total chaos – I had to radically change my life. Numb and robot-like, I witnessed myself dressing, getting on the subway, walking into the vice-president's office and resigning without another job to support me. I didn't know it then, but on that spiritual day, I stopped being my parents' expectations and began shedding layers of false selves. It was a shift from following the outer world to becoming inner-directed.

Ever wondered why the cheetah or tiger is so fascinating? Its eyes are still but aware. That's the state of meditation. It's a state of relaxed awareness. Multi-tasking is not the answer to achieving your goals. A meditative mind focuses on one thing, gets it done and then moves on to another task.

Today, I feel happier, more at peace, and connected with the world.

One's inner self is so profound that I have only experienced layers. Today, if I'm sitting alone, I'm comfortable with myself, I smile around my eyes, and I know the smile comes from my *atma*.

Remember that God is your mirror. There's no God independent of you. Just as in the law of physics, which says "Every action has a reaction", there's a spiritual law too. It says, "Your thoughts today are creating your *karma* for tomorrow". If you observe, on days when you don't like yourself, most people don't like you either...

Observing my own life, I know that all of us will experience moments of truth when we're forced to reconcile with the truth of who we are and what we are ordained to do in this lifetime. At some point, soul-sickness will force us to become radically honest.

(As told to *Indrani Rajkhowa Banerjee*)

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