



GOD AND I: NANDITHA K

The Director of CP Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation says she has profound faith in Lord Balaji of Tirupati ■ PG 4

4 Soulful

GOD AND I

'Bhagavad Gita has been my guide'

Understanding of God

My God is very personal, for I believe that he is always there for me. Sometimes, he is the formless Brahman within me. At other times, he is *Ishwara*, who receives my devotion. I strongly believe in *karma* and rebirth. If things don't go my way, there is a karmic reason for that. But I have found that whatever happened was for the best. Krishna's advice of *nishkama karma* (action without desire) — in fact, the Bhagavad Gita itself — has been my guide, and



I have tried to live my life by it. I derive inner strength by listening to shlokas and devotional music.

Miracles

I have profound faith in Lord Balaji of Tirupati. When I wrote a book about him, plenty of miracles took place. In fact, miracles happen every time I visit Tirupati. I once had spurs on both heels and needed a surgery to be done. I went to Tirumala and prayed intensely — the spurs disappeared by the time

I returned to Chennai. I enjoy visiting temples — the prayers of a million pilgrims reverberate from the *murti*, and I can feel the vibrations.

Grievances and questions on Religion

When I see the sufferings of animals, I get angry with God. Why does an innocent animal have to be hurt so much? Animals are sentient beings. They feel pain and fear, they suffer. An animal is not an object to be utilised and then killed for the pleasure and well-being of humans. Animals are spiritual beings, sacred, with links to ancient knowledge, wisdom and magical power. The animal is an integral part of the cosmos. When the animal has done no wrong, why is he punished? I don't agree that animals were created for man's use, and *karma* is not enough. No religion has given me an answer.

Similarly with Nature, to whom we owe our existence, we use, misuse and abuse her. We pollute the air, cut down forests and trees, mine the earth, exploit water resources, throw non-biodegradable garbage. No other species does this. Why did Nature programme us to behave this way? Again, no religion has given me an answer.

God has not answered my dilemmas, in spite of my faith.

(Nanditha Krishna is the Director, CP Ramaswami Aiyar Foundation in Chennai)

As told to
—Sonali Shenoy