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PEOPLE

Sachin: "God is With Me"

In a rare interview, the cricket legend shares his beliefs on religion, reincarnation and more

In August of 1999 cricket star Sachin Tendulkar spoke on religion with Aparna Srinivasan of the Times of India. Below is the complete published text of his statements.

God is an important part of my life. In fact, I believe that God's hand is present in everything we do, and we are very small in front of Him. I do worship gurus and Deities such as Sai Baba and Ganapati, among others, but I have not seen 'God.' My parents are very dear to me and I see God in them. They play a major role in my life. In which better form can I see God than in my own parents? I also feel God dwells in little babies. They are unaware of the twists and turns of life. They know nothing of the big bad world and are truly divine. As we grow, we lose this innocence.

I visit temples quite often, mostly at night when it is not crowded and is peaceful. And especially before an important tournament, my feet carry me to the temple. We celebrate Chaturthi at home. It is indeed a nice thing since it is more of a family get-together. It is an occasion on which I take time off to

spend the day with my folks.

I am of the opinion that festivals knit people closer. I am a religious person, but do not adhere to strict rules, such as fasting or avoiding certain foods on particular days. Religion to me is what my parents have inculcated in me--my upbringing and my way of life.

My prayers are not really scheduled, but I do thank Him for all that I have. Also, they are neither formal nor verbose, but just simple, more of a communication and a way to reach out to Him. Whenever I pass a temple, I mentally mutter a quick prayer. I am of the view that sincere prayers work. Prayers give one the strength to take the right decisions even during trying times in one's life. Also, they create a sense of satisfaction. There are times when one feels a lack of fulfillment in life, but it is best to accept what has happened in an ungrudging manner. And during such times, prayers definitely are a source of strength. In fact, to me, God is Himself an epitome of strength. Destiny is what has already been chalked out, and what is destined is inevitable. Not just that, but most important of all, it all happens for the best.

I feel that God is always present with me and takes care of every little thing which occurs each day. But if I were to think of a special occasion, what comes to my mind spontaneously is the Sharjah Cup which we won in April last year. Such events are not just memorable, but also reassure one of His presence. It was a fantastic feeling, and I was absolutely happy.

It is rather difficult for me to perceive as to how I would react if God were to appear before me. I would probably be too stunned to say anything. And if I do happen to ask for something, then, without doubt, it would be good health for all.

All that I am, I honestly feel, is due to God's grace. And I can, without giving a second thought, say that I owe every inch of my success to God.

The concept of rebirth is something I believe in, as also the existence of heaven and hell. One could either take it that both heaven and hell exist after life on this planet, or on Earth itself. Either way, it boils down to the fact that one has to reap what one has sown.