

Interview with Gurleen Singh Part 2 of 2

00:00:02**SPEAKER_SB**

All right, and we're live.

00:00:04**SPEAKER_GS**

And we're live.

00:00:30**SPEAKER_SB**

So we're gonna conclude this second part of the interview with a conversation about desire and intimacy and dreaming. So just for context, the way that we're thinking about this section is: one way that people understand themselves is by thinking about what they desire in life and kind of orienting their goals and dreams around that. So these can be about the type— these desires can be about the types of relationships people want to build, or who they are close with and what types of futures they see for themselves and for their communities. So I guess we can just kind of start off. I'm curious to know, what do you— how do you define or describe desire to yourself? And do you think this is different than intimacy, or even dreaming?

00:01:38**SPEAKER_GS**

Ooh, okay. Deep, deep words. Desire. I guess. Let's see. Maybe if I scratch my head, the thought will come up. There's like, initially when I thought desire is like, oh, are you guys talking about sexual desire? I just wasn't sure if that's what you all meant. But if I put that to the side, then I would think about like, yeah, like visioning for the future a little bit and thinking about, for me, I always go to purpose, life purpose. I did a lot of like— everyday, soul seeking or heart seeking, you know, seeking of the heart of like, why exist? Like why be here on earth? Like, not in a dark way, but like, what's going on? You know? And, and trying to ascribe like meaning to that, which I think in the first part, I'm sure, came through, of whatever traumas I had, I needed to work through them by offering service to someone else and like hosting the event to like make sense of my own queerness. So yeah I think that desire and dreaming feel very, go very hand-in-hand in this kind of definition of like more like how to use this like single beautiful life that we are given. And intimacy? I mean, I think, I'm thinking of that much more relationally, like person to person, you know, and so, and not necessarily romantic, but like there's physical intimacy, which the first thing that came to my mind was me backpacking with my friends and sharing a tent and being gross together. There's that kind of intimacy. There's the being with your parents and being a child and being a gross pooping and peeing person intimacy, like having relationships that like know that side of you, you know. There's like emotional intimacy, someone you may feel more comfortable sharing about what's going on and on the inside. And then like a spiritual intimacy, someone who kind of gets your path or your worldview a little bit more. And I think sometimes emotional and spiritual can connect, but sometimes I feel like you can kind of see the world in a certain way and not like go into the like nitty gritty of the heart. Yeah, those are some definitions we can start with.

00:04:52**SPEAKER_SB**

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I love it. And I guess, do you think that these kind of angles of approaching these definitions, do you think it's evolved over time for you? Like was there a time back in the day where you thought about each of these forms of, yeah, desire, intimacy, and dreaming in very different ways or slightly different ways?

00:05:25**SPEAKER_GS**

Yeah, that's a good question. I definitely, like constantly, have to break the idea that there's only one life purpose. It's multiple. Because personally, I feel like I'm building towards something. But when I get too stuck in that mindset, I discount everything that I'm building towards in each moment. So that's something, maybe that, it's not like I ever was like, oh yeah, like that person's meant to be a chef and that's their one purpose. And that person's, you know, I don't think it was that simplistic. But I know that's like an inner narrative that I kind of like always like rocking back and forth in between. I'll come back to that. Yeah, I'll see if there's anything else pops up but around dreaming. I definitely feel a lot more gratitude for life, like life in general. I started to learn— over COVID, I started learning to love cats, and then my roommate taught me to love plants and sunshine. And, I know, sweet things and just there's a really good audio clip by Ram Dass, who's like this white spiritual person, meditation person, and he said, "Start with anything that you can love and move to the next

thing”. And you'll just see that if you keep building to love everything around you— and it can be as simple as sunshine it can be simple as cats and I, I like kind of found myself doing that like loving this kind of animal made me more excited about this kind of animal and it's not that I like ever was closed off to that but maybe a little like “blinders on” like if I'm taking a walk I'm taking a walk to move the feet or smell the air. Now, like if I take a walk, I'm there to see the dogs. And like, I'll say hi. I'll say hi to everything now. I'll say hi to the dog. I'll say hi to the flower. I'll say hi to the tree. Then I'll say hi to every tree. And that's an issue I have. But yeah, so anyways, but yeah, there's— so because of this learning to love everything around me. Lately, I've been trying to think about stones. I was listening to a podcast about stones, like the life within stones. Anyway, yeah, so there's just a lot more gratitude for the struggle and the beauty. And trying to increase the beauty. The struggle is there, but just like: see more of the beauty every day.

00:08:39**SPEAKER_SB**

Yeah. Yeah. Have you read *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer?

00:08:47**SPEAKER_GS**

It's like, too, it was like, I couldn't get through all of it because I could only get through like three pages at a time because it was tense and like so good.

00:08:57**SPEAKER_SB**

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay, firstly, I would recommend the audiobook.

SPEAKER_GS

Oh!

SPEAKER_SB

Because the author actually reads the audiobook. And I actually, that's the only way I've engaged with that book actually, but I've listened to it two or three times and this year I need to re-listen to it, like I've realized I'm like oh I want to make this like an annual thing. But there's a section probably towards like the middle towards the latter part of the book where Kimmerer talks about like the tribe that she is from, there is a practice of gratitude that they go through where they list and thank everything around them. And I think you're saying hello to everything around you is, yeah, such like— I think it's a very powerful thing because it like forces you to pay attention and recognize, yeah, like the life and everything around you, which is, yeah. So anyway, that's what I was reminded of.

00:10:04**SPEAKER_GS**

Thank you for the reminder, yeah. Was that the section on like the school, like the school?

00:10:14**SPEAKER_SB**

Yes, like the school assembly or something?

00:10:17**SPEAKER_GS**

Yes, like not the pledge of allegiance, but that was the pledge that they did.

00:10:22**SPEAKER_SB**

Yeah, yeah. Like the, yeah, welcoming, opening, whatever.

SPEAKER_GS

Something, yeah.

SPEAKER_SB

Not those words, But yeah.

00:10:33**SPEAKER_GS**

I will take a look at the audio book when I'm ready to. It's like, it hits really well, you know, all that.

00:10:42**SPEAKER_SB**

It is so good. Yeah. I love the strawberry section as well, like the gift economy and how strawberries are always meant to be given as a gift. You can't— there's no way to sell a strawberry because it's not allowed. It doesn't work that way. But anyway, yeah, lots of good lessons in that book.

00:11:11**SPEAKER_GS**

Yeah, thank you for that.

00:11:14**SPEAKER_SB**

Yeah, a lot of lessons about like intimacy, I think, now that I'm looking at these questions. Yeah, cool. Okay. I guess kind of building off of this, do you think there was like a phase in your life, or a certain relationship or relationships that deepened your understanding of desire, intimacy in your life? However, yeah, whatever form you want to approach it from.

00:11:57**SPEAKER_GS**

A relationship, you said?

00:11:59**SPEAKER_SB**

Yeah, and it doesn't necessarily have to be romantic... or any form of relationship, I suppose.

00:12:13**SPEAKER_GS**

I mean, the first thing that came to mind was each of the people that I've held romantically in some capacity have given love in very different ways. And so I think I'm kind of like an odd noodle sometimes and I'm like, I don't know, like how to engage with another person, you know. But like the way someone will like even hold your hand, like partner to partner will be kind of different. And so I'm like, oh, this is nice. I'll take that for the next one. Maybe that's weird, but like something to like, *Oh, I can use this like tool to then show love to the next person*, you know? So yeah, I feel like there's, through relationship, there's been a teaching, a little bit of that. But the, I don't know, they haven't been all positive experiences, so they're kind of hard. I feel like there's a lot of like, learning to love myself and honor what doesn't feel good, you know, that comes from those relationships. A lot, yeah. Yeah, I don't know if you— I think this was either on a TV or it came up a couple years ago, like the desire to have like an ideal celebrity couple or like, not celebrity couple, couple role model, to like be like, oh, this is what healthy love or whatever to sort of like strive towards, but sometimes it's hard to figure out what's like reasonable and what's, what you're working towards, you know? It's really interesting because the first thought that always comes to mind is like Michelle and Barack Obama. And I watched her most recent— did you watch her Netflix thing that came out? I'm not sure if you're into her.

00:14:36**SPEAKER_SB**

I do. I am. Yeah. Into— I don't know. I guess I don't keep up with them as much. But is it like an interview show?

00:14:46**SPEAKER_GS**

She wrote. Yeah. Yeah. She wrote a second book.

00:14:50**SPEAKER_SB**

Okay.

00:14:51 **SPEAKER_GS**

And called *The Light We Carry*.

00:14:53 **SPEAKER_SB**

Okay, I've heard of that.

00:14:55 **SPEAKER_GS**

Yeah, and then did like a Netflix, like a one hour talk with her and Oprah.

00:15:01 **SPEAKER_SB**

Okay, I've probably seen like snippets of this on social media.

00:15:06 **SPEAKER_GS**

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Well, she said, she said, like, "I love Barack, and we've been together for 30 years. And for 10 of those years, I couldn't stand him. But I would take those odds any day." and I feel like the internet exploded.

00:15:28 **SPEAKER_SB**

I know what scene you're talking about because that was, I think they had just had one of their daughters or it was like around like the time they had become new parents or something.

00:15:40 **SPEAKER_GS**

That was it.

00:15:41 **SPEAKER_SB**

I also find that super fascinating. It's like... 10 years? You know, whoa, okay. Alright. Yeah. It's enticing, you know. Yeah. Ten years. Yeah, yeah yeah yeah

00:15:52 **SPEAKER_GS**

I don't remember exactly what the question was, but that was just some stuff that came to mind.

00:16:06 **SPEAKER_SB**

Yeah. You mentioned, yeah, like kind of like these role model kind of public figure couples that kind of role model love and what that, and intimacy, what that means. And I'm curious, who did you look up to when you were growing up and like modeling those things? Like, I think to some extent, our parents are always somebody that are like people that we look up to, and I'm curious like was— that form of like love or intimacy something, I guess how did you wrap your head around that? And I think especially as like, Punjabi-Sikhs, like, I think we have such weird, complicated relationships to like, yeah, PDA and like, just even saying "I love you". And I'm curious what sort of love you witnessed or observed when you were younger.

00:17:16 **SPEAKER_GS**

Well, they're definitely, my parents aren't the ideal relationship in all ways. I guess they're like some type of soulmate, you know, they work together. They have worked together for, I don't know, like 15 or 20 years or something. Which I think that not every couple can do that depending on levels of independence and wanting to have a separate work life or whatever, but they both just grind. And they love to grind, and they love to learn new things, and they both are just nerds about whatever it is that is new. They've just switched careers and they're like in their 50s, so and they're like doing it both, you know, so I think there's something, there's

something like really cool and actually I wonder if that does shape me because whenever I think about a future partner, like what I want, I always think about building, I think more in like a social way, but I always think about like, it'd be really nice to build not only our world, but like build for the world, you know, like, do all the good things if possible. So yeah, maybe that comes— I mean, especially because my parents when we were young started like a Sikh camp. It was just once a week, once a year, for a weekend, but it was very formative. Maybe I talked about it last time. A little bit, yeah, yeah. Very formative. The more positive stuff, I think, in addition to that is the way they held onto community. Very, very, very fortunate. We kind of have this family-friend circle of like five other families and we've all known each other for, since I was seven years old. So, 22 years. And like, whenever someone's parent dies, or whenever someone is sick, or whenever someone's got a wedding, like everyone shows up. And my God, there is drama upon drama upon drama, like gossip against gossip and all of that, you know, in this like, so- social circle, but they just like show up and we all live within like a mile of each other, almost like the majority of the families. So we can walk to each other's houses or be there in like three minutes. So I just know like, that didn't happen by accident. And there's definitely, it'd be so cool. I don't know if I aspire to it cause it feels like too perfect. You know what I mean? Too like— I have friends who kind of look back at that, look at that circle and they're like, oh yeah, we don't have that. Even the kids, it's not like we're all very similar. It's not like I would say they meet levels of deep, deep friendship by any means, but we show up and respect and love each other, even if it's at a high level. So there's definitely desire for that. And when I, I'll say when I was a kid, I remember saying to myself, I think my like cousin or brothers would ask me like, what type of like man person do you want? You know? And I'd say like, I want someone who, we re-imagine everything that goes into a relationship and decide what we want for ourselves. Like there are no rules, like we decide the rules. And they were like, good luck with that. That's no man that I know. I'm like, whatever. But yeah, just a lot of reimagining and like, and building, I think is like at the core of what I see for the future.

00:21:28**SPEAKER_SB**

You mentioned like, in relation to your life purpose, like you envision, you see it as something that you're building towards. What are you currently building towards?

00:21:44**SPEAKER_GS**

I don't know. And if I tell you my actual like dreams and aspirations, you'll like laugh at me. But I just...

00:21:59**SPEAKER_SB**

Tell meee. I find that stuff so, cheesy, but very inspiring. I don't even care if it's to open up a bookstore. I don't know, it could be anything, but I love it.

00:22:10**SPEAKER_GS**

No, you know, it's I kind of just, one, want to be Oprah, which— I see myself on stage and I see myself talking to people about life and love. And like sometimes it's an overwhelming feeling. It was one of the more silly thoughts is I went to go see Coldplay at Santa Clara Stadium, like the Levi's Stadium. And I just kept looking at the stage, like, why am I not on stage? It's not like I had anything to say. Clearly, like they were doing a really lovely concert, but I was like, that's where I should be. So, yeah, I don't know. I've like, wanted to write a book for a long time, but I can't find the words. And I don't know what it's about. And I've had like, different ideas, but I just don't know if I'm there yet. So it might be a 50 year goal to get to that thing. But I just feel like I could, you know, I could speak.

00:23:28**SPEAKER_SB**

Yeah.

00:23:28**SPEAKER_GS**

I could, I could share love. But it's a weird thing because I'm like, well, it's not like my life's been the most inspiring or I don't know, not that it has to be. It's making, sometimes like inspiration is making meaning from the mundane and it seems like not magical and like turning a light to it, you know, but, but why me and why, why, is it all ego? What is it? You know, but it's just a deep feeling. And then I find myself at my job fighting white men and being confused what's happening... wishing to get to— gosh do I desperately wish to get to the

end of this story, fairy tale. Always, always, that's me.

00:24:18**SPEAKER_SB**

I mean, yeah, I'm a writer, well, I'm a writer who spends a lot of time not writing, I guess. And I think I relate to that feeling of like, it's adding up to something, like this life experience is adding up to something. And, you know, you're gonna have, I don't know, yeah, your experiences right now at work, I think you're gonna be able to like turn into something that other people find relatable and maybe even you guys can laugh together about it but I know in the moment it's like really shitty. Yeah. I think it's really— you said like you just feel like called to do that and I, yeah, I really just love hearing that because I think so often we don't listen to what we're feeling called to do and, and sometimes it's not clear on how to take the next steps to follow what you're being called towards and I think that's like, I don't know. I noticed as part of my research, I was like kind of scrolling through your Instagram and I noticed you have, I think probably during COVID like have done a lot of like speaker events and things like that. I guess, how did those feel for you while you were doing them? Did they feel as like fulfilling and what you hoped to get out of those, like sharing with like the queer-Sikh community?

00:26:11**SPEAKER_GS**

Yeah, well, now I'm just more curious about your writing and what you write about. But we can talk about that later.

00:26:24**SPEAKER_SB**

Yeah, we can definitely talk about it later.

00:26:26**SPEAKER_GS**

I'm like, it probably is a lot—

00:26:27**SPEAKER_SB**

Happy to talk, probably not worth putting it in the transcript, but...

00:26:33**SPEAKER_GS**

All right, I'll let you slide on that. Yeah there are a couple things in life where I feel like the most natural and most like joyful and like I shine. And it's facilitating conversations. And this is something we haven't talked about, but doing energy work, which is like a more recent phenomenon in my life. And it's like a feeling of being at like complete peace with myself and like, like full of life at the same time. So yeah, not all those events I got to speak at and whatever, but I love working a room. I love hearing other people's thoughts. I love making people laugh. I used to start all my presentations on sexual violence with like, "I'm really here to test out my comedy set".

00:27:54**SPEAKER_SB**

I love it.

00:27:55**SPEAKER_GS**

Which I really was. But I'm too scared. I thought about doing standup before, but I'm too scared, terrified.

00:28:06**SPEAKER_SB**

Who are some of your favorite comedians?

00:28:09**SPEAKER_GS**

Oh my god. I love Mike Birbiglia. I don't think he's top-of-the-line famous but his whole thing is storytelling he just story tells and like makes fun of himself and the situation at the same time it's like the full hour special. It's crazy. He like leans in like if, like me and my brother are kind of comedy nerds so like one will dissect the like

comedian after we watch. It's like about the jokes. It's about the delivery. It's about the tone. Like it's about the callbacks. Like, I don't know all the technical terms, but anytime I go to an event where I'm seeing someone speaking, I'm watching them on the content, but also their delivery and their flow. I can't unsee that. And I've always done that. When I was a kid, I used to write speeches in my head. Anyways, there's a long history of it. The COVID stuff was like, especially the event I spoke about, was definitely the highlight of all of the ones. And the queer, there was a queer kirtan thing once and that was another lovely one, but mostly because I was crying at the kirtan. So yeah, do you have a thing?

00:29:38**SPEAKER_SB**

That's so beautiful. I love that.

00:29:43**SPEAKER_GS**

Yeah, I know.

00:29:43**SPEAKER_SB**

Do I have? Do I have what?

00:29:45**SPEAKER_GS**

Yeah, do you have a space where you experience that moment? It's kind of intangible to describe, but it's like both full of life, brimming with life? And full, yet peace.

00:30:03**SPEAKER_SB**

I think lately when I meditate, I like am in that headspace. I've really been trying to carve out more time to write because I think, I don't know, that's kind of like the deep calling feeling that I've always had for a very long time. And yeah, sometimes the act of writing is very painful, or like it feels very painful, but like once I start, it's just like, it just feels really good. And it's interesting because it's like something I can't really share with another person. It's just like me and like whatever is in front of me. But I think I also feel like really deep joy just having like one-on-one conversations with people. But that's a good question. I want to think about that more because— and I also always say like just being outside. Like I am— I don't say hello to every rose and petal I see, but I definitely am so absorbed and mystified and in awe of like everything on this planet. And like, I just always, yeah. And I mostly write poetry and I think poetry requires such like attention to detail and just observation and I think those two like go together so well and so yeah bring me outside anytime, or like give me a good poem or yeah, I feel like those are the spaces where I continually just find so much joy in. But yeah.

00:32:02**SPEAKER_GS**

You have a favorite, like do you have favorite poets that you follow?

00:32:08**SPEAKER_SB**

Yeah, I have a few, I guess, modern-day poets. And actually, I've been getting a little bit— I've been more interested in performance lately and I think it kind of connects to your obsession with analyzing comedians and just any sort of performer. And so Aja Monet is a poet I really love and yeah, Black woman poet from the Bronx, and she just released an audio album, I don't even know what you would call it, but just like an album of poems. And so her whole thing is performing poetry and the like very audio aspect of it, not just like reading it on a page. And I think, and she overlays her, her performances with like jazz music and it's just so cool and so good. So you should, yeah, it's funny to say like “look up an artist on Spotify,” but look up Aja Monet on Spotify.

00:33:19**SPEAKER_GS**

I will.

00:33:20**SPEAKER_SB**

Or on YouTube or whatever. Yeah, her stuff is really good.

00:33:23**SPEAKER_GS**

Wow. That's awesome.

00:33:29**SPEAKER_SB**

That would be one recommendation.

00:33:31**SPEAKER_GS**

Thank you. And I have to say I relate to the “it's painful to write sometimes”. Anytime, because I've been doing a lot of journaling lately. I get like three sentences in and then I get on Instagram because it's like too hard and then I go back and I'm like I know I just have to stick with it, but I like and it, it made me— uh oh yeah did you have a thought about that?

00:33:58**SPEAKER_SB**

No, I yeah, definitely agreeing with what you're saying.

00:34:04**SPEAKER_GS**

Yes. Well, I haven't really described this very well to anyone, but I've kind of just finally named it for myself. I also find that there are things in this world that are like, mmm, medicine for the soul, I guess, kind of. And so when you relax into them, they can do you a lot of good. Gosh, darn, it's hard to relax. So writing is one example. I find that like, if I haven't listened to kirtan in a while or like recited an Gurbani in a while, it's like, I don't wanna touch it. Which is like, I always feel like, why do I feel that way? But I think, cause like these medicines are so powerful and then they like literally work on your heart, and like open you up, and if you're like a little closed turtle shell, this thing's like knock knock. So anyways.

00:35:12**SPEAKER_SB**

Yeah.

00:35:13**SPEAKER_GS**

It's taken me years to figure this out, why I don't want to listen to Gurbani sometimes and like, or what— I knew the writing piece a little bit, but to me, they kind of all kind of connect. Yeah.

00:35:26**SPEAKER_SB**

Yeah, it's like, how do you listen to that resistance in yourself and like, and somehow turn it around to give you the energy to do that because you know that when you do, it's going to like help that resistance, you know? Yeah. Because like that's when you need it the most. Yeah. Interesting. Yeah. Yeah, there are some days where I'm like, I want to journal, but the physical act of like reaching to my nightstand and picking up a pen and opening it up, it's like, how do I like just bridge? Because yeah, once I like get started, it's like, oh, this is easy. Why didn't I do this ages ago? But once, yeah.

SPEAKER_GS

Right.

SPEAKER_SB

It's just like, it's ridiculous. I don't know. And I think our brains are moving more and more away from, in terms of like the speed and the way we think, away from like what writing or reading does. Like it feels harder to do that after you've been on social media, or after you've been in like the swirl of whatever we're in, our days, doing. Yeah. Anyway.

00:36:44**SPEAKER_GS**

Completely, yeah.

00:36:45**SPEAKER_SB**

I'm really curious about like the energy work that you said you're getting into. I'm really curious if you want to talk more about that and what that's been doing for you.

00:36:59**SPEAKER_GS**

It's hard to describe. It's been a kind of weird journey, much, much, much longer. That's like its own 10 hour conversation. But let's see, what feels like, what feels like something that feels tangible to share? And that like, makes sense.

00:37:16**SPEAKER_SB**

And I guess maybe like a question that can go in tandem with that is like, how have you found healing and nourishment in respect to your different identities?

00:37:31**SPEAKER_GS**

Yeah.

00:37:32**SPEAKER_SB**

And like, just kind of thinking about maybe energy work, like is it something that is, yeah, do you find it nourishing and how?

00:37:44**SPEAKER_GS**

Yeah. Yeah, I would say, okay... I feel like I have a couple of thoughts. Well, okay, I'll start with this, which is my, like I said, I wanna be Oprah. One of the best things she said that always sticks with me is, I don't know if it was from Maya Angelou, but it was either her, or Maya, or someone else, because she had so many people of wisdom she would interact with all the time. She was the best. She was the best. Anyways. So she said, like, "You got to listen out for life's whispers". Because life is constantly whispering to you. Like we were talking about people who know they maybe aren't listening to that calling, right? And then she added to it, and she said, "When you don't listen to the whisper, life will like come up..." Do you know this?

00:38:51**SPEAKER_SB**

I'm sorry, I'm getting distracted by this. Let me—

00:38:54**SPEAKER_GS**

What is that?

00:38:57**SPEAKER_SB**

I just noticed...

00:38:58**SPEAKER_GS**

Do you have a UFO?

00:38:59**SPEAKER_SB**

It's life whispering at me. No, it's like a fan thing that's on. Let me, it keeps like swiveling. And so let me like stop it at one spot because it's really distracting.

SPEAKER_GS

Yeah. Yeah.

SPEAKER_SB

Okay. All right. Okay, sorry to interrupt. So.

SPEAKER_GS

It's okay.

SPEAKER_SB

Life whispering.

00:39:42**SPEAKER_GS**

Life whispering, yeah. Yeah, and so she said, “When life whispers and you don't listen, you'll come and get a, you know, a thunk on the head. When you don't listen to the thunk on the head, you'll get knocked down”. And that's the more like drastic version of it. But like, I think throughout my life, I've sort of had like different obsessions or different like really intensely like engaged into something. And I found myself doing that with like, people who are mediums, like who would talk to people who passed over or had some sort of like beyond this world, kind of connection to spirit or something like that. Like I watched all of, what was it? I didn't watch all of the Long Island Medium, but I've watched a lot of, I went to go see her in person. She came to Sacramento. Tyler Henry, the celebrity, the, yeah, celebrity medium in LA. Just like found myself reading book after book after book. And there were a couple moments and like things started to connect and started, I guess, to like lean into that. So that's like the, I guess, short story. And there's something extremely validating there for me that as I've like talked to other people who've been trying to help me unfold the world of beyond what we can see here and touch with our physical senses. Like it's just been very validating, whether it's like liking someone, why am I being drawn to them? Why am I physically even being drawn to a random stranger that maybe is in a large group? Why that person? Or why that thing? And just giving validation to, well, everyone, not everyone's being drawn to that. So there must be some reason by design that I'm being guided to engage with that person or engage with that topic, you know? But so, there is some part that's nurturing and healing, but with me, cause I feel things so deeply, there's always so much longing. And like I said, I like to get to the end of the story. So there's a lot of pain, I think, and imposter syndrome-ing that is associated with this journey. So in the moments that like I've done some energy work on people, I'm like, oh! This. Is. It. And then there are other moments when I see where other people are and where I want to be, not just where they are, but where I wanna be, where I deeply long to be, then I think there's like a pain that I draw back to myself. So it's something I'm working on, but it's that reframing I think of like, okay, the longing is there for a reason and just like hearing that, you know? But it's, yeah.

00:43:08**SPEAKER_SB**

When I see where they are right now and where I want to be, are you saying longing in relation to that person or longing just for yourself and like where you want to be?

00:43:22**SPEAKER_GS**

Yeah, it's usually more, like if I take a class and we're all working on kind of intuitive development and yeah, that's probably the context, or like actually, you know, because the world works in this way, we are guide— I have a lot of friends who are, who also are in this world, but they're, you know, at a place that I'm not at. It's not like intimate longing to be with people. It's more like, oh man, you did this thing so easily that I have been doing— trying to meditate every day for months and it's not working or whatever. Does that make sense? Yeah. More simply put, it's like if someone was really good at soccer and you're like, dang it, I can never kick the ball without hitting myself in the face. It's that feeling.

00:44:22**SPEAKER_SB**

Yeah. Oh, that's interesting to think about. I mean, like, intuition. I guess I'm more most familiar with energy work in terms of like, I don't know, like, using energy to like heal people, not so much in terms of like medium sort of stuff, or in terms of like energy work in terms of, yeah, building that intuition. But it's interesting to think of it as a skill that you develop. It like transports me to like some sort of fantasy world where like people are using their magic powers, but they require, it requires skill and practice and all that.

00:45:10**SPEAKER_GS**

Well, no, I can add to that if it's okay. I think part of what I, part of what I grew up with, and this connects back to Sikh things. I mean, there's so much, this is like such an expansive topic. So it's probably too much for this interview. But like, I grew up with hearing about Sants, and Sants who were revered and sometimes could make miracles happen, you know, or new things. And I, and so there was a difference growing up from my mom, but like my family of like revering other people. And I think what I'm learning in these spiritual development classes is like, that's within all— like that power. And it's not even power. It's like.

00:46:02**SPEAKER_SB**

Right.

00:46:02**SPEAKER_GS**

This is you as a human being, as you understand it, but you're actually this big, let me just like show you that. Why don't you show yourself that, like who you really are is this much. And it's not just those five people, that were held up on the pedestal, but it's like you have that power within you. So.

00:46:24**SPEAKER_SB**

Yeah. Yeah. And that's... cause in a way, like, I don't know, I've been trying to do like kind of more intuition meditations lately and the more I practice it, the more it, it feels kind of supernatural at first, but then the more you do it, it's like, this just feels the most natural, but to describe it feels so weird, like it's very hard to describe, and so it makes the logical side of our brain maybe... the only way we can understand it is by describing it in these magical terms. But to experience it, it feels quite natural.

SPEAKER_GS

Yes.

SPEAKER_SB

So, interesting.

00:47:17**SPEAKER_GS**

Can I say one more thing?

00:47:17**SPEAKER_SB**

Yeah.

00:47:19**SPEAKER_GS**

Well, it's funny because when this all was unfolding for me, I was talking to a spiritual mentor. And it was very early on, but I remember sort of like in angst being like, *No, like I don't want this*. I already came out as queer, like I can't come out as like a spiritual woo-woo now. Like I just I did enough, you know. But there is some deep things. It's gonna happen. Yeah, slowly but surely. But it's also becoming increasingly normal. I mean, within minutes, you were able to connect. And I don't think that's by accident, I don't think that's uncommon. It's like, people are all, I think a lot of us are seeking and connecting.

00:48:14**SPEAKER_SB**

Yes, yes. And it's very cool. Like I think we're all, yeah. I think the pandemic was definitely a catalyst for so many people just finally pausing, but also like, whether they were able to pause or not, just like looking internally because all of a sudden, there's just so much pressure from all directions. So like, yeah, I don't know. Yeah, so I think that's one good thing or really cool thing that's come out. Yeah.

00:48:55 **SPEAKER_GS**

Oh, yeah.

00:48:55 **SPEAKER_SB**

Intense, like, struggle across so many people. So my last question for you is, what does healing feel like to you in your own mind, spirit, and body?

00:49:13 **SPEAKER_GS**

Yeah, that's a great question to end on. I mean, really, it's like, it connects really closely to that first conversation that we started off with of like having identities that feel like they are your everything. And then being like, oh yeah, that is— you know, and like kind of forgetting, because it no longer holds that importance because we've gone through that journey. And it's not linear, and it's not, you know, but like different moments at a time, it's like it doesn't hold the same weight because we've like moved through some large chunk of it. There's always more chunks, in my experience and understanding, but then to carry the weight for so long and then be like, oh, actually I'm okay now. And like in that okayness that unfolds, and this is a bit abstract, but in the okayness that unfolds, I think then we can look towards the light more and love cats and plants and sunshine. Like those things happen tangentially, I think, of like letting go, like holding, holding, holding, doing deep work, reflection, prayer, paat, you know, the whole thing, friendship, like everything, and then releasing and creating space to see more light and then doing it all over again for different parts of ourselves. And I guess in like, trying to bring the conversation back to queerness, like in healing queerness and Sikhi. I mean, I think I've said it before, like my desire is so deeply that people know that there's no conflict between these two identities at all. And it's like, I don't like to use the word, but like birthright to have both, you know, to be able to hold both and whatever, you know, whatever else on top of that, whether that's, I don't know, like polyamory, or not partnering at all. When it, whatever feels non-normative within the Sikh context like it's normative. It's okay, like it is your life path, but you know for me like practicing. I always find that I'm like practicing multiple faith things at the same time. Like, it's okay. It's okay. There's like you can hold more than one. Like, so I got lost, but that's something I wanted to say. In the context of Sikhi and queerness, I think that really sums it up.

00:52:44 **SPEAKER_SB**

That was great.

SPEAKER_GS

Yeah

SPEAKER_SB

Sweet. Yeah. Any concluding thoughts about, yeah, maybe what you hope this interview does for the community or contributes to, or just any final thoughts about anything we've talked about?

00:53:05 **SPEAKER_GS**

Oh, well, just immense gratitude for you and prabh, and I mean, you took a lot of time. I feel like you said you got to take a lot more time now— let me know if I can help. I mean, I spoke.

00:53:21 **SPEAKER_SB**

Okay, we're all getting paid to do this. So it's not like, yeah, it's, yeah. But the, there is a lot of labor that goes into putting together an archive, that is for sure.

00:53:37 **SPEAKER_GS**

I can't wait to hear about it. Yeah, no, just a lot of gratitude and I can't wait to see what comes of it. But I think whatever it is already and whatever it will be is gonna be so beautiful because each person is so unique. And so the diversity of thoughts and experiences that will be displayed will just speak to so many people, you know, and that's just what's needed. So, I can't have hopes for something that already exists and it's doing the thing, you know. It's already just, it's a great idea. And I hope it reaches wide. And I hope that, I don't know at what stage you guys are sharing. I looked at the website and I think I saw some of the other transcripts. So, but it'd be great to, I don't know how you guys were planning on sharing them and we can talk about this offline, but we can definitely use the Queer Sikh Network Instagram and just, you know, we don't have any content. We can flood, we can just flood quotes as content and, you know, I'm sure probably has a million really great ideas as well. But just, just throwing that out there.

00:54:59**SPEAKER_SB**

Yeah, I'll jot it down because, yeah, yeah, we can talk also after, I guess, yeah. Any final words? All right.

00:55:11**SPEAKER_GS**

You're good.

00:55:11**SPEAKER_SB**

[I'll] stop the recording. Okay.

00:55:13**SPEAKER_GS**

Stop that recording. Okay.