



## **Spirituality and Mysticism: Doris Lessing's Quest for Deeper Meaning of Life**

***Dr. Geetika Patni***

Assistant Professor, Dept of English, Swami Keshwanand of Institute of Technology, Management & Gramothan

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### **ABSTRACT**

Doris Lessing was born in Kermanshah, Persia (now Iran), to British parents. Her family moved to Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) when she was five years old, and it was there that she spent most of her childhood and young adulthood. Lessing left school at the age of 14 and went to work as a nursemaid and then as a clerk. She continued to educate herself through voracious reading, and began writing at a young age, publishing her first novel, *The Grass Is Singing*, in 1950. She was a British novelist, poet, and short-story writer who was born in Iran in 1919 and died in London in 2013. She was one of the most important and influential writers of the 20th century, known for her challenging and innovative work, which tackled issues such as feminism, politics, race, and colonialism. Throughout her long and varied career, Lessing published more than 50 novels, as well as numerous collections of short stories, essays, and poetry. She was awarded many prestigious literary awards, including the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2007, and her work continues to be widely read and studied today. Lessing's writing was characterized by her deep insight into human nature, her commitment to social justice, and her willingness to explore complex and often controversial themes with honesty and courage. Lessing's early work was often associated with the "*Angry Young Men*" movement of British literature in the 1950s and 1960s, but she quickly established herself as a unique and independent voice. Her writing spanned a wide range of genres and styles, including realist novels, science fiction, and experimental fiction. Some of her most famous works include *The Golden Notebook*, *The Summer Before the Dark*, and *Memoirs of a Survivor*.

**Keywords:** Mysticism, Spirituality, Activist, Controversial, Seeker etc

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### **Introduction**

Doris Lessing was a writer who explored a variety of themes and topics throughout her life and career. She was a committed feminist and political activist, and her work often reflected her concerns about gender inequality, social justice, and the impact of colonialism. She was a member of the Communist Party for a time, but later became disillusioned with communism and turned to more individualistic forms of political activism. Throughout her life, Lessing was also deeply interested in spirituality and mysticism, and she wrote extensively about these subjects in her later work. She was a lifelong advocate for human rights and social justice, and her writing continues to inspire and challenge readers today.

One of the areas that she was particularly interested in was spirituality and mysticism. Lessing was a lifelong seeker, always exploring and searching for deeper meaning and understanding in the world around her. In her writing, she often explored the spiritual realm, delving into subjects like religion, mysticism, and the occult. In this essay, we will explore Lessing's interest in spirituality and mysticism, and the ways in which she explored these themes in her writing.

One of the most important aspects of Lessing's interest in spirituality was her fascination with the occult. She was particularly interested in the practice of witchcraft, and she explored this subject in several of her novels, including *The Four-Gated City* and *The Memoirs of a Survivor*. In these books, she explored the idea of magic as a means of personal and social transformation, and she examined the role that women played in the practice of witchcraft throughout history.

Lessing's interest in the occult extended beyond just the practice of witchcraft, however. She was also interested in the Tarot, and she wrote extensively about this subject in her book *The Sirian Experiments*. In this book, she explored the Tarot as a tool for spiritual growth and self-discovery, and she argued that it could be used to access deeper levels of consciousness and understanding.

Lessing was also deeply interested in spirituality and religion. Throughout her life, she explored a variety of religious traditions, including Buddhism, Sufism, and Christian mysticism. In her writing, she often explored the idea of spirituality as a means of personal transformation and transcendence, and she examined the role that religion plays in shaping our understanding of the world and our place in it.

One of the most important works in which Lessing explored these themes was her novel *The Golden Notebook*. In this book, she explored the experience of a woman named Anna Wulf, who struggles to find meaning and purpose in her life as a writer and political activist. Throughout the book, Anna turns to various spiritual practices and traditions in an attempt to find a sense of connection and purpose. She explores Sufism, Buddhism, and

various forms of mysticism, and she ultimately comes to the realization that true spiritual growth requires a willingness to embrace uncertainty and change.

Another important work in which Lessing explored spirituality and mysticism was *The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four, and Five*. This book is set in a futuristic world in which human beings have colonized other planets, and it explores the idea of spirituality as a means of bridging the gap between different worlds and cultures. Lessing used this book to examine the role that spirituality plays in shaping our understanding of the world and our relationships with others, and she argued that a deeper understanding of spirituality could help us to overcome the divisions that separate us from one another.

Lessing was also interested in the role that mysticism played in shaping our understanding of the natural world. In her book *The Summer Before the Dark*, she explored the experience of a woman named Kate Brown, who embarks on a journey of self-discovery and exploration after her children have grown up and left home. Throughout the book, Kate turns to the natural world as a means of finding peace and connection, and she explores the idea of nature as a source of spiritual insight and understanding.

Throughout her life and career, Lessing was a seeker, always exploring and searching for deeper meaning and understanding in the world around her. She was interested in spirituality and mysticism not as abstract concepts, but as practical tools for personal and social transformation. In her writing, she used these themes to explore the nature of the human experience, and to examine the ways in which we can find meaning and purpose in a world that can often seem chaotic and confusing.

Lessing's interest in spirituality and mysticism was not limited to her fiction writing. She also wrote extensively about these subjects in her non-fiction work, particularly in her collection of essays, *The Making of the Representative for Planet 8*. In this book, Lessing explored a wide range of topics related to spirituality and mysticism, including the nature of consciousness, the role of the artist in society, and the relationship between the individual and the collective.

Lessing's exploration of spirituality and mysticism was not without its critics, however. Some reviewers criticized her for being too esoteric and inaccessible, while others accused her of appropriating spiritual traditions and practices from cultures to which she did not belong. Lessing herself acknowledged these criticisms, but argued that her interest in spirituality was genuine and rooted in her own personal experiences and beliefs.

In the end, Lessing's interest in spirituality and mysticism was an integral part of her life and work. She was a writer who was never satisfied with easy answers or simplistic solutions, and her exploration of these complex and often elusive subjects helped to shape her understanding of the world and her place in it. Whether she was writing about the practice of witchcraft, the Tarot, or the nature of consciousness, Lessing was always searching for deeper meaning and understanding, and her writing continues to inspire and challenge readers today.

She was a writer who explored a wide range of themes and topics throughout her life and career. One of the most important aspects of her writing was her commitment to exploring the deeper meanings and complexities of the human experience. Lessing was a writer who was never satisfied with easy answers or simplistic solutions, and her work continues to inspire and challenge readers today. In this essay, we will explore some of the ways in which Lessing's writing continues to resonate with readers, and the lessons that we can learn from her commitment to searching for deeper meaning and understanding.

One of the most important ways in which Lessing's writing continues to inspire and challenge readers is through its exploration of the human psyche. Lessing was a writer who was deeply interested in the workings of the human mind, and she used her writing to explore the complex and often contradictory impulses that drive human behaviour. In her novel *The Golden Notebook*, for example, she explored the experience of a woman named Anna Wulf, who struggles to find meaning and purpose in her life as a writer and political activist. Throughout the book, Anna turns to various spiritual practices and traditions in an attempt to find a sense of connection and purpose, but she ultimately comes to the realization that true spiritual growth requires a willingness to embrace uncertainty and change. Through her exploration of Anna's struggles, Lessing provides a powerful commentary on the complexities of the human psyche, and the challenges that we all face as we navigate the often confusing and contradictory demands of modern life.

Another important way in which Lessing's writing continues to resonate with readers is through its exploration of the relationship between the individual and the collective. Lessing was a writer who was deeply committed to social justice and political activism, and she used her writing to explore the ways in which individual actions and beliefs can have a profound impact on society as a whole. In her novel *The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four, and Five*, for example, she explored the experience of a woman named Ben Ata, who is forced to navigate the complex and often conflicting demands of her own culture and the culture of her husband. Through her exploration of Ben Ata's struggles, Lessing provides a powerful commentary on the challenges of living in a globalized world, and the importance of finding a balance between individual freedom and collective responsibility.

Finally, Lessing's writing continues to inspire and challenge readers through its exploration of the nature of truth and reality. Lessing was a writer who was deeply interested in the ways in which our perceptions of the world are shaped by our experiences and beliefs, and she used her writing to explore the ways in which truth and reality are often elusive and subjective. In her book *The Summer Before the Dark*, for example, she explored the experience of a woman named Kate Brown, who embarks on a journey of self-discovery and exploration after her children have grown up and left home. Throughout the book, Kate turns to the natural world as a means of finding peace and connection, and she explores the idea of nature as a source of spiritual insight and understanding. Through her exploration of Kate's experiences, Lessing provides a powerful commentary on the complex and often elusive nature of truth and reality, and the importance of maintaining an open and questioning mind in the face of the many mysteries of life.

Therefore, she was a writer who was committed to searching for deeper meaning and understanding, and her work continues to inspire and challenge readers today. Whether she was exploring the complexities of the human psyche, the relationship between the individual and the collective, or the nature of truth and reality, Lessing was always willing to ask difficult questions and to explore the many mysteries of life. Her writing serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of remaining open and curious in the face of the many challenges and contradictions of modern life, and her legacy continues to inspire and challenge readers to this day. Through her writing, Lessing encouraged her readers to engage with the world around them, to ask difficult questions, and to search for deeper meaning and understanding in their lives. Her commitment to exploring the complexities of the human experience has made her one of the most important writers of the 20th century, and her influence can be felt in the work of countless writers and thinkers who continue to grapple with the many mysteries of life.

In conclusion, Doris Lessing's commitment to spirituality and mysticism was an integral part of her life and work. She was a writer who was never satisfied with easy answers or simplistic solutions, and her exploration of these complex and often elusive subjects helped to shape her understanding of the world and her place in it. Through her writing, Lessing encouraged her readers to engage with the deeper mysteries of life, and to search for meaning and understanding in a world that can often seem chaotic and confusing. Her legacy continues to inspire and challenge readers to this day, and her writing serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of remaining open and curious in the face of the many challenges and contradictions of modern life.

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