

Rebirth

by Kamal Ravikant

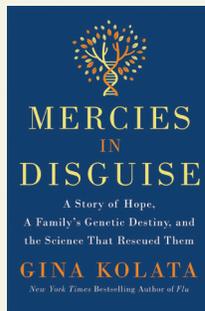
After the death of his estranged father, Amit is led by fate to the Camino de Santiago, an ancient 550-mile pilgrimage route across northern Spain. His month-long journey forces Amit to face life's big questions and causes him to grow and embrace a new sense of purpose and being.

1. "How do you find peace?" (xviii)
2. What do you think of the old monk's answer to the question above? ("To all that happens, I say 'yes.'")
3. Throughout the story pay attention to the people Amit encounters. How do they show hospitality? What do they teach Amit? Consider what it means that Amit begins his journey alone but doesn't stay that way.
4. As you are absorbing the characters, take note of why they became pilgrims. What does it mean to be a pilgrim? What unites each person's story?
5. Do any of Amit's travel companions, and those he passes on his way, especially speak to you? Who? How? Why?
6. "The tragedy of life is not living what you know to be true." (6) What do you know to be true? Are you living it? Discuss.
7. "Beginnings are the most exciting moments. They're also the scariest." (16) Fear can be present in the beginning, middle, or end of anything. When was the last time you felt afraid? What do you think of the legend the Italian backpacker told Amit back in India? Might this be a way to manage fear? Are there better ways you have found on your own journey?
8. Amit wrestles with faith throughout the story. How does Amit approach faith and God? Does it change as he walks? How does he interact with the church – and leaders of the church – throughout his journey? How has your faith evolved over your journey?
9. Consider the people who offer refuge for the pilgrims. What does it mean to care for strangers? Who has cared for you along your own pilgrimage through life? For whom have you cared?
10. On Day Two Amit reflects on his father, grandfather, and their violence. Do you think it is possible for Amit to choose a different path? Why or why not? To what extent might he?
11. On Day Four a French woman shares a question with Amit, "If I loved myself, what would I do?" If you loved yourself, what would you do?
12. On Day Seven Loic congratulates Amit on hitting rock bottom, saying that the greatest people he's known spent time there and discovered themselves. Have you, or someone you love, been at bottom? What was it like? Where was God? How did you (or they) make it through? Who were you (or they) before, during, and after?
13. Consider the pilgrims encounter with the cross sculptor, the artist. What is Amit's reaction when he hears about it? Why did he miss out? As you read on, consider this: did Amit actually miss out on meeting the artist?
14. Early in the book Amit talks about soaking in experiences while he travels because he may never be in that place again. What would it mean to apply such a commitment to presence every day, not just in new and out of the ordinary places?
15. On Day Thirteen Amit takes communion and shares a pot of soup with his companions. Reflect on the short chapter. Who is included? How does the experience make Amit feel?

- Are there wounds healed? What have been your experiences with communion and sharing a table and sustenance?
16. On Day Eighteen Loic says, “It is not your wound that makes you special...It is the light that shines through that does.” (96) What do you think the light is? Do you agree with Loic?
 17. On Day Twenty-one consider the arrows that lead the pilgrims. No one seems to be using a map, they simply move from arrow to arrow and share stories from pilgrims that went ahead of them. In what ways is this like living a life of faith? What are the arrows in your life?
 18. One of the things Amit is searching for is his calling, his vocation, how might the arrows be his guide?
 19. Love follows Amit. On Day Twenty-five, as he talks with Kat, he reflects on all of the especially significant people who have journeyed with him so far and the way they have all spoken of love as the key. Kat says, “Love, it’s got to come from within. We must love ourselves first.” (125) Do you agree? Can you love someone else if you don’t love yourself? How do you love yourself? If you loved yourself, what would you do?
 20. Day Twenty-six, “Hey, Kat... If nothing lasts, what is there?... Love.” (142) If you believe this to be true, how might it affect the way you live?
 21. Read John 13:1-17 alongside Day Twenty-nine. What are the parallels? How does each account of feet washing speak to you? How have your feet been washed by Jesus? How have you washed other’s feet?
 22. You must die before you can be reborn. How does this theme weave throughout the novel?
 23. What is the relationship between love and freedom in the novel? In your life?
 24. “We must be vulnerable. In life and in love. It’s by being vulnerable that we learn. It’s our vulnerabilities that move us forward, not our strengths.” (198) Where have you found this to be true in your own life? In other’s?
 25. Think back on the whole novel, is there anything Amit or his companions offered within its pages that you will carry with you? Have you been changed by meeting these characters and joining in their journey? Where are you in your pilgrimage: life, death, rebirth or somewhere else?

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NEXT MONTH



Mercies in Disguise

by Gina Kolata

Kolata, a science journalist for the *New York Times*, shares the gripping story of how one South Carolina family has dealt with a deadly and untreatable genetic illness. The book considers a number of ethical issues as well as the way faith and medical science intersect for the family.