

Naveen Jindal

Industrialist and Politician

'I can't say that I've managed to take it easy'

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Naveen Jindal is an industrialist and politician.

What does spirituality mean to you?

It is about knowing oneself, and what the real meaning of my life is. It is then about trying to achieve that objective, separating the wheat from the chaff, focusing on what is the point of my being here. In the end, it is about being at peace with myself.

Do you believe you are guided and protected by a superior force?

There is definitely such a protection, whether one calls it luck, or destiny, or force, or God. But to me it is a combination of my own work and the help of that divine force. The harder and wiser I work, the luckier I will get. Once I do my bit and work really hard, there is that extra something that makes things happen. So I am very grateful to God for it, but I know it is not only about Its help, I also need to deliver my part of the job.

Do you believe you have a special mission or purpose in this life?

When I was a kid, I mostly dreamt of being a sports person, or joining the army. I thought that people in uniform are handsome, adventurous, patriotic, they ride horses and shoot, and I had a very

romantic view of war. Over time I realized I could carry on those passions no matter what, even without joining the military. And life as an industrialist seemed to be one where I could have an impact, contributing to the development of the country. At first I was still in the fun and enjoying life mode, my father was wondering how to get me interested in work. Then I got involved in a hugely money-losing business and got going. And thank god, things have been good since then. Over time, I also felt that in order to contribute more, politics would be a good medium. So I contested elections from the constituency of Kurukshetra, a historical, religious and spiritual landmark as it is the place where the Mahabharata was fought, and where Lord Krishna gave the sermon of the Gita. I am trying my best in Parliament and in my constituency to improve things, while keeping my business activities in parallel – living off an MP salary would certainly be difficult to sustain – and my participation to the Indian shooting team. That means very packed and intense days. And although I know that in order to excel at one thing, one should focus on it solely, we live life once only, and I want to experience it all. I want to live a full life and do as many things as possible. So on the overall, I feel pretty clear about my life's purpose. When I can have an impact, and there is a need for it, I try my best, and for the rest, I am happy to have fun and enjoy life.

What is spirituality for you in your day to day life?

It is simply about trying to do my job well, with a sense of purpose, and not hurt others in the process. Of course I need to be pushy at times to get my things done, but I would hope it somehow is for a larger good. And also, I obviously make mistakes, but I keep trying to do the right thing. I used to read the Vedanta a lot, and even do meditation. But I find it is not quite the right thing for me. The way I see it, meditation should not be only for one's own betterment, so my meditation is my devotion to fellow humans.

What is the role of spirituality in your work?

Honestly I would not know how to answer this question. And I would not claim to be a spiritual person. But I would say that my work is my worship. And I try to keep things simple in my life – do my best, make the most out of it. And when the time comes, I will go. Of course at times of difficulties, when bad things happen and one feels really helpless, I would turn to God and pray for help, before coming to terms with it.

On the overall, my life is really intense. And I cannot say that I have managed to take distance with things, and somehow stop the race. Very often I feel that once I achieve a certain thing, I will take it easier. And then I realize that the set objective has been achieved a while back, but yet I have not slowed down. So I should get a bit more choosy. But things keep adding up, there is so much happening!

What have been your main spiritual inspirations?

I am quite a favorite with many Swamijees in India, because I am truly interested. I like to hear them. In particular, a lot of inspiration and clarity has come from the Vedanta, and from my guru Swami Parthasarathyjee, one of the greatest exponents of Vedanta in the world. His views and approach have been very significant in shaping my priorities and path. It would be easy to get pulled into an endless pursuit of achievements, but his advice has helped me remain clear about what really matters in life.

If you were to be reincarnated, what would you like to be reincarnated as?

I would not wish to be someone or something else. I am quite happy the way I am. I am not all that I'd want to be, but I feel I am in the process of becoming so. So I am simply grateful for it and do not think much of what is to happen after this life.

If there was one question you could ask God, what would it be?

On the one hand, I would have so many questions, but on the other, I would strive to find the answers on my own, to develop my intellect and wisdom enough to understand life and the way things function.

What is your idea of happiness?

It is a state of mind, in a large variety of moments, when nothing else matters, and some need or desire is being satisfied. Even when I work for others, or for the country and so on, at the end of the day it is also about my own need, my own satisfaction.