

Milind Deora

Congress MP

'Of course there is something called luck'

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Milind Deora, Congress MP.

What does spirituality mean to you?

I see two different yet interlinked things: on the one hand religion, which is like a manual, focused, zeroing on things; on the other there is spirituality which is one step higher, open-ended, with no manual available. It is about experiencing the journey in my own way, connecting to something great out there, finding some sort of contentment.

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

Of course there is something called luck, and in moments of difficulty I often have this inner conviction that somehow there is a protection and things will turn out fine. But luck favours a prepared mind so I need to do my home-work. And also, it may seem for instance that I am lucky to be born in the family I belong to. But so-called fame and fortune also come with issues and challenges, so the answer to this question is far from being obvious.

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

A part of me feels so, and that despite a lot of sacrifice (which people do not see and do not understand), I should stick to politics for the larger good. Another part feels that had I been born in

America for instance, it is likely I would have been a musician – and I could embrace that. So there is a conflict in me about it.

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

Besides over-thinking, which can be quite unproductive, the one substantial thing I do in that respect is music. Playing my guitar can take me to real highs and feelings of freedom.

What has been the role of spirituality in your public life?

Politics can be so frustrating, as your input never equals the output and you do not know what will happen. But I would think that what keeps me going despite all the sacrifices it implies – namely, dealing with some greater good – actually derives from spirituality.

Can you tell us about a unique experience that changed or shaped your spiritual beliefs?

Watching the movie "The Doors" about Jim Morrison, when I was 16 years or so was a huge turning point. Until then I was pretty much a regular kid but seeing it put me on the track of thinking more philosophically and spiritually about life – beyond just sports, cars and women! Among others, it taught me that as I can't live in a perfect world of spiritual bliss, compromising is necessary in a reality where happiness and pain are tightly intertwined.

What have been your main spiritual inspirations?

Two things have always gotten my spiritual hormones go crazy and work hard: music, and injustice. I derive a lot of inspiration from a musician like The Stones' Keith Richards: even though he is a complete bohemian, he can't live out there in the jungle in some "total freedom", he has to compromise with his executives, with a tour logistics and so on. The black civil rights movement in America has also been a huge spiritual inspiration, from slavery to politics to gospel to blues to food...

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

I am not sure I believe in reincarnation and also, if there was something else I would like to be as a human, I'd better try and be that here and now, in this life.

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

This reminds me of a scene in "The Doors", when Andy Warhol gifts Jim Morrison with a phone directly connected to God – because he himself had no use for it. I would actually use it and ask the ultimate question, what is the meaning of life.

What is your idea of happiness?

Last weekend in my constituency, a couple asked my help for a surgery. The man said he would give me blessings if I would help, but would also bless me if I didn't – which is so rare. There was something special in his lack of expectation. And so when I got the thing done, I had this different feeling of contentment, and happiness. So happiness is not something planned and created on purpose – it just happens, as the by product of some selfless thought or deed.