

# Raian Karanjawala

Advocate

'If you behave well with the world, it pays you back'

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**Raian Karanjawala, Advocate.**

**What does spirituality mean to you?**

Alongside the day to day path filled with materialistic aspirations, there is a quest to transcend it, to not be completely handcuffed by material life, trying to disconnect from daily routine, to connect with a greater being, and to find a quiet zone. At another level, it is also about the belief that the world is fundamentally a fair place, and that if you behave well with the world, it pays back in similar measure. So it is also about a set of principles and ethical parameters along which I conduct my life.

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

I have always felt very blessed – I always say that I possess the one quality Napoleon looked for in all his generals: luck. Life has come easy to me and in times of challenge, the roadblocks I face gradually melt as I go along. Of course, luck is also what you make of what comes your way and how you behave. You cannot just expect things to happen. But my experience is that when life does not grant me what I wish for, the alternate route I take ends up being far more beneficial. For instance, I initially wanted to be a chartered accountant or an MBA, but my marks did not allow me to become either so I ended up in law school by default. In retrospect, it really looks like the best thing I could have done

careerwise. So what initially looked like a rejection of my efforts, turned out to be beneficiary, reinforcing this feeling of being both protected and blessed.

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

Claiming a specific mission for oneself would sound silly besides being egotistical and self-aggrandizing. But I could best sum up my aspirations by quoting from a speech by Mr. H.M. Seervai, a great lawyer and authority on Constitutional Law, and my friend's father: "if it can be said that because I lived, the lights of a few houses burnt a little brighter, then I feel mine would have been a life well lived."

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

I am not into rituals of any kind and if I do meditation, it is more for relaxation purposes. But there are certain fundamental principles that I try to stick to. Those rules make my daily life very easy. For instance, trying to never tell lies, even about very small things: it un-clutters and un-complicates everything. Second, I consider that life is a circle and that it all comes back as you often get what you give. The world is far more interconnected than most people realize, which means that the general ability of people whom you dismiss as inconsequential to negatively impact you, is far greater than you would ever suspect.

**What is the role of spirituality in the world of law?**

Fundamentally, spirituality is about being honest to what you are and to everything around you – so it is a behavioural pattern which applies as much in my profession as a lawyer as in life.

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

There is no specific experience after which I can say my beliefs changed. But six years ago, I was diagnosed with a tumour in the most fortuitous manner. That episode definitely added for me a further perspective on life. I came out of it with a changed outlook on things, looking less at life in a day to day way and from a greater distance. It also reinforced my belief that I am both blessed and protected.

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

Myself. Just a bit thinner and a little richer! However, I do not believe in reincarnation, I believe you are only once on this earth, and your accounts get settled here.

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

I frankly could not point to one particular question.

**What is your idea of happiness?**

To be both relevant and carefree. It is the desire to matter in whatever one has set out to achieve and aspire for some level of worldly success; but not be completely bogged down in one's daily life. The grind should not take away the joy of the end result. But being completely carefree and floating

around aimlessly would mean creating a void inside which is also not the way one ought to be. So it is about finding a balance between the two.