

HR Bhardwa

Union Cabinet Minister of Law and Justice

'Moksha is Our Purpose'

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HR Bhardwaj, Union Cabinet Minister of Law and Justice.

What does spirituality mean to you?

Spirituality to me is man's relation to god, nothing else. It is not about religion, it is not dogma. There is one divine force pervading the entire universe and a direct relation to that supreme being is what it is all about, beyond any duality.

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

There is a saying: 'Things that are impossible for man, are possible with god'. I have no doubt about it. And even though I never see god, I know it always is with me. I come from a poor family in a village, my father died early on and I had to take on family responsibilities at a young age. I completed the bar among 10,000 lawyers, then reached High Court and Supreme Court, before serving thrice as Law Minister. Of course, nothing would have happened without Indira Gandhi bringing me into politics and to Parliament. Then, Rajiv Gandhi trusted me enough to have me as his Minister of Justice.

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

Well, I had never envisioned I would do or be anything that I have done and become. I never thought I would be a politician or a minister. And things happened. So there must be something behind it all. But in a larger sense, our purpose is to attain liberation, or moksha. And I am working on it...

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

There are several levels for me. Every morning, I get up at 4, meditate and take a walk for an hour, after which I write, specifically on matters of spirituality. Every day. Then, there are things I do for society, trying to give back since I have received so much. I am now very much involved with my wife in developing a school for poor children and a hospital in a distant rural area. I want to be remembered as a good person.

What is the role of spirituality in the world of politics?

Well for me it has played a role at several levels. Personally, spirituality has given me two things: detachment from the importance that some give to the kind of position I am in, awareness that it shall pass no matter what and the necessary inner strength to deal with the tremendous pressure of politics. Instances like the sealing, however, pose a difficult question but as Law Minister, I cannot allow lawlessness. Time was given to prepare contingency plans but nothing was done...People do suffer from the law but a balance has to be found and will be found to alleviate it.

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

I am basically a self-made man. Growing up in the challenging circumstances that were mine, I was focused on succeeding professionally and in society. Politics were then at the centre of my preoccupations, obstinately. And I became Law Minister. But once that position was no longer mine, I began to understand that there are things beyond power and politics. And I began exploring spiritual realms. Also, when my daughter died – my first child – crushed by a speeding bus when she was 21... it was a huge test for me but I had to find the inner strength to face it.

What are your spiritual inspirations?

I basically taught myself, over time, by reading countless books on all religions and philosophies of the world. 'A wise person should glean knowledge from all scriptures, just like a honey bee collects nectar from all flowers, big or small'. I am that bee.

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

To me, reincarnation is a fact of life...It could be anywhere, as long as it is as a human being and not as an insect! I would love to be a university teacher, imparting knowledge to others.

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

I ask it every single day – give me strength and peace to all.

What is your idea of happiness?

There is no such thing as permanent happiness. Joy and sorrow are part of my day-to-day life and are so intertwined. So I am just trying to find some middle path in between it all. And I try to think in moments of deep sadness that spring comes after winter, necessarily.