

Abhishek Manu Singhvi

Congress MP

'I have never doubted God's existence'

Sun May 20 2007



Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Congress MP and Spokesperson.

What does spirituality mean to you?

First it is the belief in God's existence, as a superior invisible being. Second, it is a feeling of fate, refuge, confide into that spiritual being which listens to me unconditionally. Third, that conversation with God is also a dialogue with my conscience, or higher self, to which I am talking as if it was an external being, and in whom I find guidance and opinions about my actions. Given my background, my education, my profession and intellectual approach, I should have simply been agnostic, because nothing can ever be proved. And I am indeed very much governed by my intellect. But thanks to an early experience of the divine, I have never been agnostic and have never doubted that higher being.

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

Absolutely. In times of deep insecurity or trouble, I always feel there is someone guiding me through that difficult patch. Also lately, I have consciously tried to complain less and be more grateful for what I have. I do feel blessed.

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

I do not believe in a deterministic interpretation of life, as if everything was decided as we are born. But I practice karam, with the idea of dharma as one's prescribed activity and the duty to do it to the fullest, without cribbing about the outcome. In my case, it is about several activities in public life: as a parliamentarian, spokesman, lawyer and columnist. And I try to do them with Kipling's line in mind that you should make every 60 seconds of the minute count.

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

First of all, it is totally ant-ritualistic. Second, I say a prayer during my shower (which saves time!) then I put on the agarbatti and light the candle before going off to work. The prayer is a combination of four things: a few lines Hanuman and Vishnu prayers, one Namokar Mantra and a secular prayer for happiness coined by my father. When I feel like it, I also go sometimes to Tirupati or some other famous temple.

What is the role of spirituality in your public life?

First of all, at times I feel so disillusioned when I see a large class of people prospering more and more while they behave most inappropriately. I try to console myself with the spiritual idea that there shall be justice on the long run. Also, spirituality is about trying to be conscious, not harming or hurting people around. And it means stepping back, in the way described by the Gita, especially in times of turmoil: trying to take distance and let go. Actually, in times of trouble, my anchor, my solace come first and foremost from the Gita.

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

At the age of three, I had a key experience which shaped my entire life and in particular my relationship to spirituality. I became extremely ill, with many in the family believing I would soon die. Then suddenly, a person stood out of me in the form of Krishna, talking to me, reassuring me for hours, with so much love and compassion. At some point, after chasing him into a cupboard, I came back to consciousness and was alright. So at a very young age, I had a most vivid and personal encounter with the divine, which defined everything else subsequently.

What are your spiritual inspirations?

The most important influence was my paternal grand-mother: the sounds, the stories, the anecdotes, the visible figures of gods, the rice, the marking of auspicious days, the hours of stories from the Mahabharata – it was all her.

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

Reincarnation is not one of my convictions, but had I to chose, I would want to come back as my own wife – Abhishek Singhvi's wife, because life would be so good!

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

I believe in You and I know there is cosmic justice, yet why do You permit so many people behaving wrongly to prosper, and injustice to go unpunished?

What is your idea of happiness?

It is a short term idea: relaxing at home, with family and close friends; and a long term one: being totally at peace with myself, being fearless the way Gandhi was, and being satisfied with where I am, with no restlessness inside. Those are unattainable ideals of course, but at least I strive towards them.