

# Navjot Singh Sidhu

Member of Parliament

'You make your own destiny through your work'

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**Navjot Singh Sidhu Member of Parliament, commentator and former cricketer.**

**What does spirituality mean to you?**

The word spirituality means that God lives in His creation and those who serve His creation understand it. God is not a separate entity from us. Everything is interwoven. It's one thread that goes to so many of the beads of life. Those who experience religion are the ones who experience spirituality.

**So religion and spirituality are synonymous for you?**

I would say that spirituality is understanding that God lives within you.

**What is God?**

It is an interconnected force in the universe. It is prana, it is an interconnected endless energy. It is one thread going through the universe. Most people don't understand and see themselves as separate entities. But those who become one with this light know what God is. God will never come to those who talk or read books but to those who experience Him.

One way of experiencing Him is when you recite mantras and close your eyes, disconnecting from your senses - because they make you delirious and create so many illusions. That is maya. I have always believed it's women and gold that take you away from God.

### **But women are creations of God as well?**

Well yes, but the problem is that women are looked at from a different perspective. They are looked at as a tool of sensual pleasure by almost 90% of people.

There are two spheres of creation, men and women. All those physical attractions are meant for procreation. But there is a hidden treasure that most people don't understand, and that is the power of meditation. The power of knowing your own latent power. Those who meditate understand what health and rest are. What the real universe is.

### **Why?**

Suppose there is someone dumb and you give him a chocolate brownie, he won't be able to understand what it is or how it is made. Anybody who experiences God in the meditative trance is like that dumb man. He knows one thing - he knows it is bliss, and that the bliss he experiences then is a million times above the one he can get through intimacy with a woman. I know it. I experience it every day.

I wake up around 3 o'clock in the morning and I meditate for about five or six hours.

You cannot really meditate for only fifteen minutes or half an hour. You cannot reach that state of bliss. But when you do, you forget about the world, you forget about your body, you experience something which takes you to another world, the world of bliss, the world of light.

### **Why would you want to come back to this earthly reality if you can experience such bliss?**

Ultimately if I have a choice, after 50 years' old I would rather go full time in that reality. Because there is nothing more that I need to achieve in my life. I have played cricket for India for twenty years, I have been a commentator of acclaim and credibility for six years, I am a three times Member of Parliament, I have ruled the rust on television for the last ten or twelve years, I have made a movie. And there are three things that govern lives in India - one is films, the other is cricket, and the third one is politics. I have done the three. And I have a great family. I have the best of cars. Everything that a man can dream of. But I never got the contentment that a man seeks.

It actually only started in 1999 when I first read Vivekananda. I would read those books and my hair would stand, I would get tears in my eyes. Something was telling me that this man cannot be wrong. This man is what I was seeking. So I should experience what he said. Religion cannot be read or talked about, it has to be experienced. Then I started chanting the Gayatri mantra - asking the Lord to give me directions, and wash away my sins. The inner world then opened to me.

I was a very skinny person, battling all sorts of health problems that would not go and were hampering everything in my life. Once I started meditating, they disappeared. My face changed. I was such a shy individual before then. I would avoid any public experience, going in front of a crowd especially. But today, I am a public speaker and I speak before lakhs of people, I speak as a corporate speaker, I

speak on public television. What a change! A man who when he became prefect of his school, and had to give a speech on the first day, fainted and fell down. What a different man.

What brought that change was a different perspective thanks to Vivekananda. You are what you think. And my perspective changed thanks to meditation.

**Including on your perspective on your life's purpose?**

Yes. I would say that the sole purpose of my life is to serve God's creation in a selfless way. All the rivers run to the sea yet the sea is never full. You may be a Christian, a Sikh, a Hindu, a Muslim but ultimately you are searching that one God, no matter how you call it. It's the same, it's one force.

**Is the Sikh religion more important for you though?**

Of course, it's very important, because it's the root of my identity.

**But you could be aware of that cosmic energy beyond any religion?**

Absolutely.

**So why do you still wear a turban?**

Because it is something I have grown with. It makes me very proud. It's my race. It's my mother, it's my father. There are people who expect a lot from me. If I chop my hair today, it will give a lot of sadness to people who treat me as a hero, as an icon, who follow me.

**If you were to leave all your activities and only meditate...**

I would be the happiest person!

**... but would you still be serving those people?**

You don't need power to serve people. There are so many ways of doing it.

**How did you choose to get into cricket in the first place?**

My father.

**He pushed you?**

He pushed me. It was a dream I had to realize for him. He wanted me to be the cricketer whereas at times cricket definitely was a burden. Any undertaking you don't enjoy will be a burden, and anything that would be a burden would never be a success! But for me it was a dream I had to realize for my father, even after his death. So I played for 19 years even though it was a burden at times.

But since I started meditating in 1999 when I first laid my hands on the works of Vivekananda, everything changed.

**Very often it is a crisis that leads people to a turning point in their lives. Was it your case?**

What transformed me as a cricketer definitely was a crisis. In 1983 I was dropped from the Indian cricket team. An Indian Express article called me a "strokeless wonder". I fear three newspapers more than 3,000 swords, because the press can infuse life in a corpse as much as it can send someone very alive into his grave. That one article put me into my grave and wrote me off as a cricketer.

So that day I took a secret vow and started waking up at 4am, going to the ground, wearing only white, hitting 300 sixes every day till the evening, till my hands would bleed. After six or seven months my hands were like steel. At night I would bring youngsters and with the halogen lamps I would have them bowl at me. In the middle of the night, at one o'clock, food would be laid, I would sleep with my clothes on and wake up to start all over again.

There is only one road to success – you get hold of an idea, you sleep that idea, you drink that idea, you breathe that idea, you get obsessed by it. In four years I transformed myself and became a cricketer who could hit the cricket ball. Then I was selected for the World Cup. I scored five fifties in a row, and forty-two sixes, a world record that stands till date.

It had taken me four years to erase all that shame. There is nothing easy in life. There is an odor of perspiration to every successful man. You have to work hard. And adversity is the best teacher. God brings you in deep waters to cleanse you, not to drown you.

And I always say that an optimist sees an opportunity in every calamity.

**Like that case when you were accused of murder?**

Yes, it was a pot-boiler. Softheads can do so much harm. But at the end of the day I am only accountable to myself and to God in myself, not to others. My conscience is what I am accountable to. And a good one is the best tranquilizer.

**In all that, is there such a thing as preordained destiny?**

You make your own destiny through your work, and through your tenacity. I have never looked for sympathy. Sympathy is for the weak. And weaks go to the cooking pot.

**So at times of huge challenge, where do you find your anchor?**

Within. And within the belief in the almighty. I draw all my inspiration from the Great One. Because I have experienced Him.

**He never failed you?**

Never.

To the man in the street, the age of miracles has passed. Whereas for me every day is full of them.

It is beyond books, beyond imagination.

**What do you do during those five or six hours of meditation?**

I recite mantras. And do breathing exercises.

**When you look at your life, what is next?**

I never plan. I live in the moment.

**But any politician must think of the future and at least have a vision?**

Nobody made his future by thinking of tomorrow. But you can have goals.

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

I would never ask a question. Because He has answered all of them. The man who sits alone and is one with the light of the spirit has no unanswered questions. He has unraveled the mystery of life. That path is more important than a Mercedes, than name, than fame, than what people say about me.

**If there were such a thing as reincarnation, what would you choose for your next birth?**

Of course there is such a thing as reincarnation. I know a bit about some of my past births. For the next round, I would just choose what God chooses.

**But you said that God is in you?**

Absolutely.

**So then, what would you choose?**

I would just tell God that if He feels I still need to come back, put me anywhere you feel is right, just somewhere where I can serve. Not necessarily with the same power, or as a member of Parliament with 15 people to guard me and a red beacon on my car. It's definitely not about that.

**What is your idea of happiness?**

If I can feed someone hungry. If I can put a smile on the face of someone crying. If I can remove an obstacle from someone's way. If I can do something for someone needy. And doing it for the sake of doing it. Not for bragging or announcing it to the world.