

Jyotiraditya Scindia

MP

'You find your way through the maze'

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Jyotiraditya Scindia, MP.

What does spirituality mean to you?

It may sound simplistic, but to me it is really about the essence of being, about delving into myself and understanding why I am here, what is my calling, am I doing the right thing. It is about looking beyond the materialistic and visual planes. The race of life, the endless chores and activities I am involved in do not necessarily leave much time for it but sometimes you must sit back and introspect.

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

I used to believe so, but a lot of things changed in me in 2001, when my father passed away. Now I do not necessarily believe there is a great force out there protecting me from a great ill that has to happen, or to propel me into my own destiny. I do believe though in a greater force one is accountable to. If I delve inside, and stand responsible for what I am and what I do, I can in a way sense what that force has to say.

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

I do not believe people are born with a specific purpose or destiny. Each one of us gradually finds his way through the maze, thanks to an active or inactive quest which can be called spiritual. Then more concretely, as far as I am concerned, things obviously dramatically changed with my father's death, when I entered public life. Before then, I was a banker in the United States. That experience gave me a lot as it taught me survival in a cut-throat environment. Maybe I was a bit too laid back before, so I learnt there the ability to deliver, to drive, to achieve things. But my life was quite materialistic. After 2001, a lot of things suddenly made more sense, especially about my father and his sense of responsibility, his calling, the desire to serve, and I would feel the same. If I can make even a small difference in anyone's life, then I am moving ahead on my path in the right way. Politics though were never my calling, public service is, so the former is merely a means to achieve the latter.

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

I do not start my day without my puja. I would feel incomplete without it. It is the same prayer every day but it is not only about reciting it, it can be called meditation, concentration, identification, accountability... Those are my seven minutes with my force, with myself.

What is the role of spirituality in your public life?

My determination comes from within and from the understanding of what my life is about. And although it sounds like a cliché, I am very ambitious and aggressive about things I can do to change the way things are. This is what propels me every day. And this is why I believe in really hard work, I love rolling up my sleeves, seeing what the issue is and tackling it. Sometimes I even push myself too hard. But at the end of the day, I have to live with myself, and if I do not feel I tried my best, I really could not stand it.

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

Of course 2001 changed my life, but I would not mention one particular moment. As life progresses, decisions you take and experiences you go through mould and shape you.

What have been your main spiritual inspirations?

It is an accumulation of events and emotions I have been through. Readings cannot transform the core in the same way. Also, it is not about religious inspirations, it is not something one can learn or imbibe, it rests deeply within me. I would mention though a very deep secular bend to my family. Of course we are Hindus, but when my ancestor left Bir, in the Aurangabad district of Maharashtra for Madhya Pradesh, his Muslim guru Mansoorba gave him his head-dress and arm amulet which are still in our temple in Gwalior. Every year I perform the urs for him, or day of dedication.

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

I firmly believe that this journey is one out of many that the soul takes. But its whole meaning is not to be born again, so why would I wish for some form of reincarnation?

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

Am I a good human being? I have to live with my own reflection in the mirror until the last day, so this is the most fundamental question.

What is your idea of happiness?

It is very simple: making sure that the people I care about and those who care about me are happy.