



Institute of Sathya Sai Education Australia

National Education Conference 2011

HAPPINESS AMIDST ADVERSITIES

Hislop: Swami, You say that it is man's duty to be happy.

Sai: Happiness is one of the major gateways to Divinity.

To be unhappy is a serious act of sacrilege. It is a barrier to God Realisation.

Human beings have always been searching for ways to live well and happily through peace, wealth, fame, accomplishment. We all wish to be happy without having to undergo too many or too serious difficulties. How can we prosper and flourish? Is this possible?

Happiness has different meanings for us as well as at different times.

There is a difference between happiness and bliss. Usually, happiness is temporary and related to material objects or events. Bliss is something that wells up from within. It emerges from the heart, as a result of one's close relationship with God.

WHAT IS HAPPINESS? "ABSENCE OF SORROW IS HAPPINESS" - Baba.

"Happiness is of three kinds.

1. One type is of the nature of poison in the beginning but turns into nectar later. This happiness is secured through the awareness of the *Atma*; it is *Sathwic* happiness.
2. There is another type of happiness: On account of the impact of external objects on the senses of perception, pleasure mistaken as nectareous is aroused. But in time, the pleasure turns into bitter and unpleasant poison. This is *Rajasic* happiness.
3. The third type of happiness is *Thamasic*. It dulls the intellect from the beginning to the end. It finds satisfaction in sleep, slothfulness and faults."

Sathya Sai Baba, Vidya Vahini Chapter 11.

WHY ARE WE NOT HAPPY?

"LIFE IS A BATTLEFIELD BETWEEN DUTIES AND DESIRES" -Baba

"IT IS NOT A SIGN OF TRUE *BHAKTI* (DEVOTION) THAT LIFE SHOULD BE ONE UNBROKEN CHAIN OF HAPPINESS AND COMFORT." –Baba.

JOY AND GRIEF, PAIN AND PLEASURE, DAY AND NIGHT, ARE TWO SIDES OF THE COIN. IT IS TIME THAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE.

“There is an inverse ratio between Happiness and Desires.” – Baba.

- We have expectations of others and events which do not always turn out according to our liking.
- When our desires are not fulfilled, we are not satisfied, or angry.
- Our attachments are also a great source of our unhappiness.
- We are unhappy when we lose whatever we are attached.
- We are told that our past actions (karmas) are the cause of our difficulties.
- We are under the illusion that happiness lies in money, wealth and material comforts only.

BE WORTHY FIRST

“Before desiring anything, a person must make themselves worthy. Character makes them fit to enjoy happiness.

Character is the root cause of all happiness for man. Hence, to get happiness, or go to Heaven or earn a good name, one must acquire the requisite worthiness.”
SSS Volume 31 Chapter 2, 14 January 1998.

Qualities in a Good Character: truthful, honest, integrity, responsible, reliable, honourable, trustworthy, disciplined, self-controlled.

- In all that man does with a view to love himself, it is not possible for him to ignore loving others (unselfishness).
- Any happiness that you can give to others will result in happiness for yourself in the end.
- The happiness we enjoy in the external world is only a reaction, reflection and resound of the happiness within.
- Sorrows and difficulties are like passing clouds; they will pass.
- Use difficulties as stepping stones and learn from our mistakes.
- When in difficulty, pray for guidance before making a decision. Have patience and wait prayerfully. Prayer can bring about the impossible.
- If you must be happy, one of two things must happen. All your desires must be fulfilled, or you should not have any desire. Of these, the reduction of desire is the easier path (Ceiling on Desires).
- Take the troubles that come to you as tests and opportunities to learn **non-attachment**, and develop **discrimination**.

“Gauthama Buddha's father was so overcome with grief when he saw his son with a begging bowl in the street that he told him thus: "Every one of my ancestors was a King: what misfortune is this that a beggar was born in this line?"

Buddha replied, "Every one of my ancestors had a beggar's bowl; I know of no king in my line." The father and the son walked different paths, travelled along divergent routes. The blood of the son when transfused may prove fatal to the father.

[ssspeaks/volume02/sss02-52.pdf](https://www.ssspeaks.com/volume02/sss02-52.pdf)

**Swami tells us about the ABC of life: Always Be Cheerful.
Remember the Sai alphabet, ABC DEFG: Always Be Cheerful; Don't Ever Forget God.**

PRACTICE TOLERANCE, FORGIVENES (KSHAMA)

The secret of happiness is not in doing what one likes but in liking what one has to do. Whatever work you have to do, you should do it with pleasure and liking.

DIFFICULTIES ARE 'TESTS' IN LIFE

God knows that you are good, but He tests in order to set an example for others. He tests in order to strengthen our patience, devotion, courage and determination. He also tests to see if we are ready for a 'promotion'.

THE BUDDHIST APPROACH

The Four Noble Truths:

The first truth is that life is suffering.

The second truth is that suffering is caused by craving and aversion.

The third truth is that suffering can be overcome and happiness can be attained.

The fourth truth is that the Noble 8-fold Path is the path which leads to the end of suffering.

The Eightfold Path:

1. Right Knowledge
2. Right Thinking
3. Right Speech
4. Right Conduct
5. Right Livelihood
6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Concentration

Following the Noble Eightfold Path helps a person realize that greed and selfishness cause all earthly suffering. With this new understanding, one's suffering may end.

These are all Human Values applied in life.

HAPPINESS FROM THE "GOOD" LIFE OR THE "PLEASANT" LIFE (SREYAS AND PREYAS)

The happiness from the "pleasant" life is based on satisfying the senses, and biological needs; it is temporary.

The happiness derived from the "good" life is based on good actions; it is internal and permanent.

PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

Psychologists have been seeking the enabling conditions of happiness. Prof. Martin Seligman a leading figure in Positive Psychology wrote a book “Authentic Happiness” in 2002. Not satisfied with the term ‘happiness’, he feels that the topic for Positive Psychology should be “well-being” which is more than just feeling good, and can be measured by the construct “flourishing”, and has just published his latest book “Flourishing” (2011) .

A STATE OF “WELL-BEING” or FLOURISHING

PERMA or PREMA

Flourishing has 5 elements that build resources which are helpful in adversities :

1. **Positive emotions** (joy, hope, enthusiasm, optimism)
2. **Engagement** (eg. Flow)
3. **Relationships** (other people- kindness, help, love)
4. **Meaning** (and purpose of life, spirituality)
5. **Achievement/Accomplishment** (success, mastery, competence).

RESILIENCE

Resilience is the process of adapting or bouncing back from adversities, trauma, stress, illness and difficult experiences. It involves thoughts, behaviours and actions and can be learned by all.

- Having good caring and supportive relationships within the family and outside is probably the most important factor.
- Ability to make realistic plans and carry them out.
- Being optimistic and hopeful that problems can be overcome.
- Accept that some change is inevitable.

CONTROLLING OUR THOUGHTS

“YOU ARE WHAT YOU THINK”
– think good, see good, do good.

THOUGHTS are energy forms

“MOLECULES OF EMOTION” –Candance Pert

“Emotions exist both as energy and matter, in the vibrating receptors on every cell in the body.”

“Anger and blaming others takes a lot of energy away from healing. One of the most powerful emotions that has to be expressed is forgiveness.”

“A feeling sparked in your mind will translate as a peptide being released somewhere. Peptides regulate every aspect of your body, from whether you're going to digest your food properly to whether you're going to destroy a tumor cell.” Candance Pert

“ Her book ‘Everything You Need to Know to Feel Go(o)d’ (Hayhouse, 2007) is a journey into

how mind, body, and spirit are inseparable; we are hard-wired for bliss, which is both physical and divine.”

“UNION WITH GOD IS HAPPINESS” BABA, (in thought, word and deed).

Living a life of spiritual awareness, and Human Values will assure future Prosperity for all.