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## Connection between happiness and spirituality

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### Abstract

It is essential for a civilized society that it must be mentally and spiritually healthy and be responding to all positive aspects of life. The main purpose of this paper is to enlighten the main cause for happiness and how it relates to spirituality, if we relate to some supernatural power then we are free from fear and life becomes purposeful, happiness is a state of mind that leads to contentment but real happiness lies when it is true and long lasting and this can only be achieved with the help of spirituality. Spirituality can help some people feel happier and more engaged which leads to many benefits.

**Keywords:** Spirituality, mental health, well-being, contentment, satisfaction

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### Introduction

Happiness is a type of state that you may attain through joy, excitement, gratitude, optimism, contentment and love. Perfect happiness is not possible in this era, according to Freud when the child comes to life his/her behavior is operated by 'Id' that highly reflects happiness but as he grows the Id comes under the control of ego. When he faces the real world, the perception of happiness gets completely changed for him.

Happiness is a sense of well-being, joy, and cheerfulness; when someone is successful and granted with abundant luck can sense happiness. People feel happiness in different ways. In positive psychology, this word is often known by another name such as subjective well-being or SWB. It means an emotional state characterized by feelings of joy, satisfaction, contentment and fulfillment.

Aristotle, an ancient philosopher, defined that happiness is the only human desire and all the other human desires exist in a way to obtain happiness. He defines four levels of happiness.

### Two key points of happiness

1. **Balance of emotions:** Everyone experiences both negative as well as positive emotions, feelings and moods.
2. **Life satisfaction:** This relates to how satisfied you can feel with different areas of your life.
  - Happiness from immediate gratification.
  - Happiness from comparison and achievement making positive contribution, achieving Fulfillment.

### Types of happiness

1. **Hedonic Happiness:** promoted by Greek philosopher Epicurus, Hedonic happiness is the exact opposite of suffering. It means absence from any form of pain. In modern society, this type of happiness is associated with instant gratification and pleasure. Excited by doing what you feel as good. For example: Doing activities that directly relate to positive emotions such as self-care, watching favorite TV show.
2. **Eudaimonia:** The concept of this type of happiness comes from the fourth century B.C. It has its origin in Aristotle's first work Nicomachean Ethics. According to Aristotle, to achieve true happiness a person must live a life of morals and ethics. He proposed that when people constantly strive to be a better version of themselves, they tend to achieve a higher purpose and greater level of happiness. That's why Maslow's in his Need Hierarchy put self-actualization at the top. Self-actualization is the fulfilment of one's talent, and potential is the highest level of happiness.

### Impact of happiness

- Positive emotions increase satisfaction with life
- Increase coping skills
- Better health and longevity
- Positive feeling increases resilience. Resilience helps people in managing stress, happy people have low levels of stress hormone Cortisol
- Happy people have a positive state of mind and involves a healthy eating behavior
- Happiness also increases performance and output
- Better social relationships

**Impact of connections of nervous system on happiness:**

When it comes to a situation and responding to that, Neurotransmitters and Hormones help the brain in evaluation or response to that. When the situation is of happiness, the primary transmitter includes:

1. **Serotonin:** Balance, mood and promote feeling of well-being.
2. **Dopamine:** Feeling good, playing a role in feeling pleasure.
3. **Enorphins:** Body Nature painkiller.
4. **Oxytocin:** Plays a role in promoting social reward intersection that causes emotions. These hormones are called happy hormones.

**How to pamper these chemicals?**

A healthy diet and at least 20 minutes exercise can stimulate Serotonin and Endorphins.

Simple meditation can help to boost serotonin. There are ways to achieve this even without physical activity. Self-confidence plays a vital role in stimulating serotonin.

The simple impact of even approaching a reward stimulates these neurotransmitters which shows that just seeing the finish line at the end of a race activates dopamine.

**Diet**

In fact, 95% Serotonin production comes from gastrointestinal tract. Good bacteria of the gut help neurons to produce serotonin. That's why during stress, the intestine gets affected. Probiotics can help to make the brain healthy. Omega 3, potassium, vitamins, green leafy Vegetables (broccoli and cauliflower) boost many of these upper said nutrients.

**Spirituality**

Involves a feeling or sense of belief that there is some supernatural power which controls the human being. It means different things to different people. For some, it's primarily about a belief in God and active participation in religious institutes. For others, it's about non-religious experiences within oneself through connection with nature, prayer or meditation, or about stimulating chakras. Some may be religious but not spiritual, while others may be spiritual but not religious. Sharma and Sharma, (2016) <sup>[9]</sup> who explained spirituality as a feeling of connectedness with something bigger than an individual and usually involves the search for meaning in life. Experiencing spirituality, such as connectedness with a greater reality, being a comprehensive individual, engaging with social communities or something like a holy world.

**Benefits of spirituality**

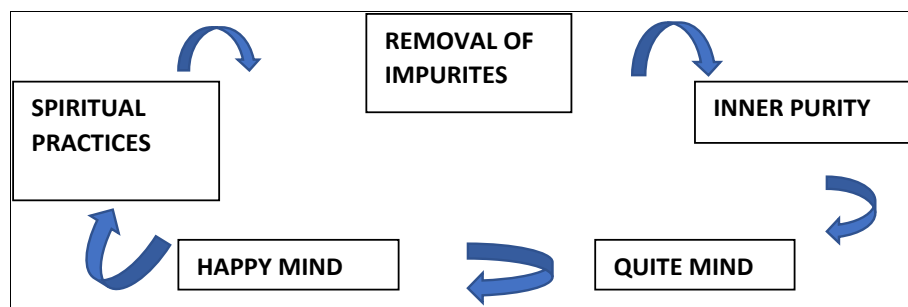
There is a connection between spirituality, mental and physical health which leads to happiness. Spirituality increases immunity, decreases illness or blood pressure and lowers the rate of mortality. Zohar and Marshall (2000) <sup>[10]</sup>, The Royal College of Psychiatrist (2002) acknowledged the beneficial aspect of spirituality in psychiatric care. A new aspect of spirituality training was added to the psychiatric training curriculum. Lyon (2012) <sup>[11]</sup> enumerated several benefits of practicing spirituality; Spirituality provides clarity in the mind of one's overflowing thought process. It cultivates attention required to complete one's task and uplifts the mood. Sehgal (2016) <sup>[12]</sup> conducted a review of literature on spirituality found that spirituality at the workplace was linked to several positive aspects which enhanced the outcome of employees and their quality of life. It provided them with job satisfaction, self-esteem, happiness, honesty, mutual trust, organizational commitment and managerial effectiveness.

**Instincts for spirituality**

An instinct towards spirituality appears to be deeply engraved in humans. Spirituality can be experienced by any human being irrespective of his/her being religious or profane due to that instinct. According to Marc Potenza, a Psychiatry Professor at Yale University, Parietal Cortex in human being is an area associated with spirituality, another area of brain named as frontal lobe process complex information all the time, Spirituality lowers down the activity of these areas which in turn decreases the level of anxiety and stress. The lower activity of these areas is linked with the "feeling of surrendering oneself completely", states Andrew Newberg, neuroscientist and the author of *The Metaphysical Mind: Probing the Biology of Philosophical Thought*. When our egoistic mind submits itself completely to some higher power, it experiences enlightenment. The general perception regarding the attributes that genetically transfer from one generation to the other is a complex task to discuss in the case of spirituality. However, Doctor Dean Hamer, author of the book *The God Gene: How Faith Is Hardwired Into Our Gene* Complements the gene variation, in subjects who experience ecstatic and euphoric movements during spiritual activity. Our brain is designed to recognize God, we have "god neuron" deep in our limbic system states Rhawn Joseph, a neurotheologist. In point of view of prof. Jordan Grafman's there is nothing unique about religious belief in this brain structure, religion doesn't have a god centre, instead it's embedded in a whole range of other belief system in the brain that we use every day. Spirituality enhances this thought processing and removes negative energy.

### Connection between happiness and spirituality

Research shows a strong positive correlation between Spirituality and Happiness. Spiritual people, who spend time considering various spiritual states are happier with their lives overall, this elevated happiness grounds them with better mental and physical health, greater longevity and an increased ability to deal with these stressors. Research has shown that worldwide average human being is happy only 30% of the time, while 40% of the time is unhappy, the remaining 30% of the time a person is in a neutral state where he does not experience happiness or unhappiness because deep within each of us is a soul. The soul is the God within us and one of the qualities of God is perpetual bliss. Bliss is happiness, which is of the highest order, is not dependent on anything else. despite this we make one huge mistake, we look for this happiness outside ourselves instead of trying to tap the bliss within oneself, throughout the process of our spiritual evolution, we acquire the ability of going within and gaining access to bliss from our soul. Every one of us is at a different stage of spiritual evolution. The quality and quantity as well as the duration of experience of bliss are directly proportional to the stage of our spiritual evaluation. When we look in mirror every morning, we are so used to perceiving the image of ourselves but what about our soul? This is an internal image of how a common man in today's world looks like. We clean our home and bodies daily, because it is visible. However, internal spiritual cleanliness is another matter which is rarely undertaken. We can have the brightest of light within us, that is the soul, but even the brightest of light if covered with thick blanket would be hidden from the view. The darkness surrounding our soul is spiritual ignorance of our true state that is bliss. This spiritual ignorance is referred to our ability to see beyond our five senses. When we undertake spiritual practices, then gradually, the darkness reduces, and we can perceive the soul and experience the bliss from it. As we get regular with spiritual practice, we begin to get flashes of the wondrous experiences of the Divine, which are known as Spiritual Experiences. The final stage of it is Shiva Dasha, when the covering has been completely dissolved, and the pure soul can shine. The key to happiness lies in bridging the two worlds; the world within and the world outside. In today's time, it is so important to remember this phrase, 'The body may influence the behavior of your mind, but it is the mind that controls the body'.



It means that spiritual practice removes all impurities like anger, jealousy, attachment, ego and unsatiable desire. Once impurity is clear, the mind becomes very cool and calm. The brain is like computer hardware, its performance depends on the software and the mind is a programmer. So, if you understand, what do you want to become, you will be more focused. Fear and failure causes insecurity but if the mind is fearless? You can feel happy, because expectation is the mother of all frustration and disappointment. When you try to contain your expectations, you become happier. According to Doctor Mark Holder from the University of British Columbia in Canada and his colleagues, Doctor Ben Coleman and Judi Wallace was of the view that, Children who feel that their lives have meaning and who develop deep quality relationship - both measures of spirituality are happier. It would appear, however, that their religious practices have little effect on their happiness but both spirituality and religiousness have been linked to increase happiness in adolescents and adults. Numerous studies have shown that spirituality can help improve quality of life for people even with chronic diseases like cancer. Enhancing personal meaning is a key factor in the relationship between spirituality and happiness. Increasing personal meaning such as expressing kindness toward others and recording those acts of kindness, as well as act of altruism and volunteering may help to make child happier.

Spirituality is the ability to behave with wisdom and compassion, while maintaining inner and outer peace, regardless of circumstances. Happiness is not ready-made; it comes from your own actions. However, religious practices seem to upgrade the level of inner peace and happiness.

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