

Your Thoughts Are Responsible For Your Happiness And Sorrow

Prasanthi Nilayam

6 July 1996

Editor's note. This discourse does not appear in the *Sathya Sai Speaks* series. It appeared in *Sanathana Sarathi*, April 2011.

One who entertains evil thoughts comes to grief.
One who develops noble thoughts becomes a
noble person.
Only the one who attains the state of thought-
lessness can attain peace,
Do not forget this good counsel.

(Telugu poem)

The face is the index of the mind. All your thoughts and feelings, whether positive or negative—like happiness, sorrow, anxiety, anger, and hatred—are reflected on your face.

Evil thoughts cause sorrow

One should not harbour evil thoughts because they lead to sorrow. The evil thoughts of harming or hurting others may not cause as much harm to others as they may do to the one who entertains them.

When you throw a small stone in a well, the ripples caused by it spread to the entire surface of water. Similarly, any thought arising in your mind causes ripples in it, the effect of which spreads to all the limbs of the body.

For example, if there is an evil thought in your mind, your eyes will see evil, your ears will hear evil, and your tongue will speak evil. Consequently, your organs of action, like the hands and feet, will also perform evil deeds.

What is the root cause of sorrow? It is nothing but evil thoughts. All sorts of miseries afflict a person only because of their evil thoughts. Therefore, as soon as a thought arises in your mind, enquire whether it is good or bad. If it is a bad thought, try to keep it away as far as possible. On the other hand, good thoughts will make a person noble (*sadhu*).

All good thoughts for the good of others and welfare of society at large will make a person

noble. A *sadhu* does not mean a person wearing an ochre robe. It is the noble qualities that make one noble and saintly.

As declared by Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*, God incarnates on earth to protect the virtuous and to destroy the wicked. Every person is endowed with virtues. In order to protect these virtues, you have to entertain only good thoughts.

Where do you get peace? Peace is not in the outside world. It is neither in the worldly objects and materials nor in worldly education and endeavours. It has to be manifested from within. When can you have peace? You can have peace only when you make your mind still and focus all your thoughts on God.

All your good thoughts originate from the heart, which is the altar of God. The good or bad that you experience in life is not caused by others. Your thoughts are responsible for your good or bad and nothing else. Only a person who is free from all thoughts can attain peace. Therefore, entertain only good thoughts and thereby ultimately achieve a state of total thoughtlessness.

As are the feelings, so is the result (*Yad bhavam tad bhavathi*). Everything is the reflection of the inner being.

Develop good thoughts

Once, Krishna thought of testing the nature of Yudhishtira and Duryodhana. First, He called Yudhishtira and said, "I have a task to perform. For that, I need a very mean-minded person who is given to untruthful and evil ways. Can you bring such a person?"

Afterward, Krishna called Duryodhana and said to him, "Duryodhana! A great task is to be per-

formed. For that, a noble person is required who is pure, kind-hearted and virtuous.”

Both of them agreed to perform the tasks assigned to them by Krishna. Yudhishtira went in one direction and Duryodhana in another direction in search of the persons asked for by Krishna.

After some time, Yudhishtira came back, and said most humbly to Krishna, “Oh Lord! There is no wicked person in our kingdom. I am the only one who has some wickedness or the other. Please make use of me.”

Some time after this, Duryodhana also came back and said to Krishna, “Krishna! A thoroughly noble person is nowhere to be seen in this kingdom. I think, I am the only such person. If You tell me the task, I will surely perform it.”

In the egoistic outlook of Duryodhana, all appeared to be wicked. In the humble nature of Yudhishtira, all appeared to be good. Hence, whatever the colour of the glasses that you wear, everything will appear to you of that colour. If your vision is evil, everything will appear evil to you.

Duryodhana was extremely wicked and evil-minded. On the other hand, Yudhishtira was the epitome of virtues. He was the very embodiment of truth and righteousness (*sathya* and *dharma*). Therefore, everyone appeared noble and good to him.

In conclusion, we can say that both for the wickedness of Duryodhana and the nobility of Yudhishtira, their thoughts were responsible.

One considers some people as wicked and some others as noble based on one’s own feelings. In fact, there are no good or bad people in the outside world. Whatever good or bad that you see in this world is merely the reaction, reflection, and resound of your own thoughts. Therefore, for everything good or bad, you yourself are responsible and none else. Even for your good or bad thoughts, only you are responsible, not others.

Your mind is a bundle of thoughts. All your actions are directed by your mind. Your actions are responsible for your happiness or sorrow. Therefore, if your thoughts are good, your mind also becomes good, and when your mind becomes good, your conduct becomes good.

But today man is taking to evil ways. The ancient sages said: The mind is the cause of bondage and liberation (*Manah eva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayo*). The mind is responsible for everything. Therefore, first and foremost, develop good thoughts.

Due to your wrong food, wrong habits, and wrong tendencies, your thoughts get vitiated. Your thoughts are responsible for your merits as well as demerits. Therefore, as soon as a thought arises in your mind, take time to enquire, “Is it good or bad? Is it right or wrong?”

Haste is not at all good. Haste makes waste, waste makes worry. So, do not be in a hurry. Always remain calm and composed and never do anything in hurry. That is what is meant by patience. When you remain calm and composed, you can experience all types of happiness.

A person is the master of their destiny

Your destiny is related to your deservedness. I have already explained the meaning of destiny (*adrishta*). *Adrishta* is that which cannot be seen by *drishti* (physical eye).

Sow a thought, reap a tendency.
Sow a tendency, reap a habit.
Sow a habit, reap character.
Sow character, reap destiny.

Therefore, your destiny depends on your qualities. Your qualities depend on your way of thinking. Your actions are decided by your thoughts. Therefore, your thoughts are responsible for your happiness and sorrow. As are the thoughts, so is the human nature. Therefore, first and foremost, try to channelize your thoughts in the right direction.

People blame others for their suffering. You think others are responsible for your misery and misfortune. This is a great mistake. Others are not the cause of your good fortune and misfortune. Your own thoughts are responsible for both.

The type of actions that you perform depend on the nature of your feelings. You pass the examination when you make the right effort. On the other hand, lack of proper effort results in your failure. When you make an effort sincerely and wholeheartedly, you will surely pass. But when you fail, the defect lies in your effort. The same is true in

all fields of human endeavour. If you want to be successful in all your endeavours, develop good thoughts bereft of selfishness and self-interest.

Your thoughts and feelings should reflect your true nature. Human nature is termed as *swabhava*. *Swa* means *Atma*. Therefore, the feelings that are rooted in the *Atma* denote your true nature.

In the same way, *swadharma* is related to the *Atma* and *paradharma* to the physical body and senses. *Swabhava* means innate nature and *prabhava* denotes worldly nature. *Swadharma* and *swabhava* manifest from spiritual heart. They cannot be acquired from outside.

A heart suffused with spiritual feelings experiences infinite bliss and divine ecstasy. It leads to divine intoxication and makes one forget oneself. That is why Sage Narada said: Having attained that, one gets total satisfaction, fulfillment, ecstasy, and bliss (*Yallabdhwa puman, ichchharamo bhavati, trupto bhavati, matto bhavati, Atmaramo bhavati*).

One's thoughts are responsible for everything. One should realise, "I am responsible for everything, my thoughts are responsible, and none other is the cause of my happiness or sorrow." Such a person becomes noble and one of fruitful resolve. That one alone manifests their innate nature and realises that the *Atma* is the source of everything.

It is the power of the *Atma* that makes the tongue speak, the ears hear, and the eyes see. When one realises that the source of everything is the *Atma*, one attains the state of thoughtlessness and supreme peace.

What is peace? Even those people who march forward in life facing all types of difficulties and sufferings do not necessarily experience peace. One should remain equal-minded in happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat (*Sukhadukhe samekruthwa labhalabhau jayajayau*). Only those who treat happiness and sorrow alike can experience peace.

Both happiness and sorrow are temporary and transient like day and night. Both are like passing clouds. None of them is permanent. If today you are feeling the happiness of the full moon day, tomorrow you will be facing the sorrow of the dark night. Both are temporary and impermanent.

That is why Lord Krishna said: Because the world is temporary and full of misery, contemplate on Me constantly (*Anityam asukham lokam imam prapya bhajasva maam*).

Who in this world is experiencing eternal happiness and everlasting bliss? None. One moment you experience happiness and the next moment you are engulfed in sorrow. Therefore, peace and happiness have to be manifested from within. These cannot be acquired from outside.

Everybody desires peace and says, "I want peace, I want peace, I want peace..." When I ask the overseas devotees who come here, "What do you want?" they usually say, "I want peace." How many words are there in this sentence? There are three words. If you remove two words, *I* and *want*, meaning ego and desire, you get peace ready-made.

Peace is always in you, with you and around you. You cannot have peace from the world. In the world, you have only pieces, pieces and pieces! Peace is within you. You are the embodiment of peace. You are the embodiment of truth. You are the embodiment of love. You are the embodiment of Divinity. You can experience peace only when you realise this truth.

World: the manifestation of cosmic consciousness

People are a combination of body, mind, and the *Atma*. On that basis only, it is said that you are not one person but three: The one you think you are, the one others think you are, and the one you really are.

The one you think you are is related to your physical body. The one others think you are is related to your mind. The one you really are is related to the *Atma*.

You are not the body or the mind. You are the embodiment of *Atma*.

You can attain the knowledge of the *Atma* (Self) by self-sacrifice and experience divine bliss, which is your real innate nature (*swabhava*). *Swa* symbolises *swan* (*hamsa*), which is said to have the ability to separate milk from water. The *Hamsa Gayatri* or *Soham Mantra* gives one the disc-

rimination to distinguish between the Self and the non-self.

You yourself are *hamsa*. (supreme spirit typified by the pure white colour of the swan), but when you realise your true Self and develop the knowledge to discriminate between the Self and the non-self, you become *Paramahamsa* (realised soul).

Many sages are given the title *Paramahamsa* because they have the knowledge to discriminate between the Self and the non-self. They are established in the Self and have no body attachment. To distinguish between the Self (*Atma*) and non-self (*anatma*), between the field (*kshetra*) the knower of the field (*kshetrajna*) is the hallmark of a realised soul.

One cannot separate oneself from the world and nature. But one should try to gradually give up physical and worldly outlook.

The world (*jagat*) is the combination of nature and God. God is the cause and nature is the effect. The name *jagat* itself signifies that which comes and goes. *Jagat* is the combination of two syllables: *ja* + *gat*. *Ja* means to come and *gat* means to go. Therefore, it comes and goes. It is only temporary and not permanent.

Nothing comes permanently, nothing goes permanently. What goes, comes back, and what comes, goes back. That is why it is called unreal (*mithya*). There are so many words, like *mithya*, that describe the unreal nature of the world.

It is not possible to give up the world. One should visualise God in it. The world is nothing but the manifestation of cosmic consciousness. This consciousness is God, verily.

One's conscience is an aspect of consciousness. It is the presence of conscience that makes one conscious or aware at the physical and worldly level. Conscience is the witness, and consciousness is awareness. Conscience, consciousness, and awareness are all related to each other. They belong to the same family.

Discard evil qualities and imbibe good qualities

You go to a market and buy an orange, paying some money. You discard the outer skin and seeds in it and drink only the juice.

Just because you have paid money for the entire fruit, do you eat the rind and seeds also? No. If you eat the rind and seeds, your tongue will have to experience bitter taste. Though you have paid money for the entire fruit, you have to discard the rind and seeds and drink only the juice.

Similarly, in life, you have to discard those things that are harmful and accept those that are beneficial. You have to give up bad thoughts, bad qualities, bad feelings, and bad actions, which are like the seeds of a fruit, to be discarded.

Then what do you have to accept and experience? You have to accept all that is sweet (*madhuram*).

God is the embodiment of sweetness. His speech is sweet, His look is sweet; everything about Him is sweet. This sweetness you should imbibe. You have to accept all that is good and sweet and reject all that is bad and bitter.

What leads people along evil path? Their bad qualities and bad thoughts lead them to the path of evil.

Whenever any bad thought arises in your mind, drive it away, thinking, "Evil thoughts are not proper for a human." Remind yourself, "I am a human, I am a human; I am not an animal, I am not an animal." A human being should have human qualities. Hatred, anger, lust, jealousy, etc., are animal qualities.

You should enquire, "What are my natural qualities?" Your natural qualities are truth, righteousness, love, nonviolence, forbearance, and noble conduct. Evil thoughts are not natural to man.

Compassion is the true quality of a human being. One should lead one's life with compassion. Lord Rama was the epitome of compassion. It was the quality of compassion that added to His divine glory.

Every human being should imbibe this quality of compassion. One who imbibes such good qualities will have no room for sorrow because sorrow is the result of evil qualities.

First and foremost, suffuse your heart with love. If you fill your heart with love, only words of love will come out of your mouth, and you will look at everyone with love.

Whatever is the type of water you store in a tank,
the same type of water will come out of the taps.
Therefore,

Start the day with love,
Fill the day with love,
Spend the day with love,
End the day with love,
This is the way to God.

Treasure love in your heart. A person without love
is like a living corpse. You should become the
embodiment of love. If only you fill your heart
with love, it will take care of everything.

If you sow a seed in the soil, it will grow into a
tree with branches, sub-branches, leaves, flowers,
and fruits. You have sown only one seed. From
where did the branches, sub-branches, leaves,
flowers, and fruits come? They all came from the
seed only. Likewise, sow a seed of love; it will
grow into a tree of love. Then all your thoughts
and your entire life will be suffused with love.

As Adi Sankara said, many sorrows afflict hu-
manity:

Birth is a misery,
Old age is a misery,
Family is a misery, and
Death is a terrible misery.
So, be careful! Be careful!

*Janma dukham, jara dukham,
Jaya dukham punah punah,
Antya kale maha dukham,
Thasmat jagratha jagratha.*
(Sanskrit verse)

Worldly sorrows will not afflict you if you take
shelter under the tree of love. But the birds of evil
qualities may sometimes come and sit on this tree.
What should you do to drive away these birds?
When you clap your hands and sing *bhajans* like
“Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Narayana,” these birds
of evil qualities will fly away.

(Bhagavan brought His divine discourse to a close
with the *bhajan*, “*Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi
Nahin ...*”.)

—From Bhagavan’s divine discourse in Sai Kul-
want Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam, on 6 July 1996.