

What is the Hindu view of The Good Life.

By Acharya Sri Ram Ramanujachari

The Sanskrit term *svarga* is usually translated as “heaven” — it is composed of two roots:— *su* = good, and *varga* = category. So it means everything under the category of “good.”

ārogyam dṛḍha-gātratvaṃ anṛṇyam agha-mocanam |
apāravaśyaṃ naiścintyam āstikyam svargam eva saḥ ||

Good health, sound body, freedom from debts, freedom from sin, independence, lack of anxiety, and belief in the Vedas — if these are present, it is heaven itself.
(Nitya-nīti 157)

1. *ārogyam* — physical and mental health
2. *dṛḍha-gātratvaṃ* — firm body, a body that is whole and sound.
3. *anṛṇyam* — freedom from debts
4. *agha-mocanam* — it refers both to sinful activities and bad habits which cause suffering to others.
5. *apāravaśyaṃ* — independence from the dominion and control of others.
6. *naiścintyam* — freedom from worry and anxiety.
7. *āstikyam* — belief in the Vedas, in their teachings and principles and living according to their ethical teachings (Dharma).

If these 7 are present then one lives on earth as if in heaven itself.

Another framework for the good life is the practice of **Tri-hita karana**

1. Living in harmony with all beings – both humans and animals.
2. Living in harmony with the environment and nature, living a sustainable life.
3. Living in harmony with the gods (spiritual forces) through ceremonies and offerings.