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## Psychiatry in history

### Happy days

Rafael Euba

Abd al-Rahman III (891–961 AD) was Caliph of Córdoba during much of the 10th century and one of the most powerful men of his time. His reign was very successful from military and political perspectives, but he is also remembered as a tolerant humanist who built palaces and collected books. Abd al-Rahman enjoyed the more earthly pleasures of the world (apparently, he kept two harems) as much as he enjoyed the gratifications of his military and cultural achievements.

Towards the end of his life he decided to count the exact number of days in which he had felt happy. His conclusion provides a valuable insight into the elusive nature of happiness:

'I have now reigned above fifty years in victory or peace; beloved by my subjects, dreaded by my enemies, and respected by my allies. Riches and honours, power and pleasure, have waited on my call, nor does any earthly blessing appear to have been wanting to my felicity. In this situation, I have diligently numbered the days of pure and genuine happiness which have fallen to my lot: they amount to Fourteen: - O man! place not thy confidence in this present world!'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.allaboutphilosophy.org/abd-ar-rahman-iii.htm>