



A study about place of happiness in Islam

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(Received 01 October, 2015, Accepted 18 November, 2015)

(Published by Research Trend, Website: www.researchtrend.net)

ABSTRACT: Since the need for happiness and joyfulness is the human's most important spiritual and innate features, Islam looks with special attention to this issue. The term happiness has come totally 25 times in Quran with different words (Farah and Sorur mean joy and cheerfulness) which imply special emphasis of Quran on this issue. According to the Quran's verses, obey and remembrance of God, a positive attitude to the world, beautiful interpretation of death and hereafter are determining elements of happiness. The approach of happiness in Islam is these two cases: Bad happiness which contains some inappropriate jokes that destroys human values and happiness comes from egotism and boasting; and the other is the praised happiness to which is referred them in chapters of Najm (The Star), Yunus (The Jonah), etc. Studying Imams' narrations clarifies the importance of gaining experience of pleasure and happiness in life. The issue of happiness has been paid attention in psychology too that are rooted in excitement and positive emotions. Excitement also had its three categories, divided past, present and future. In Islam happiness should be purposeful and it shouldn't conflict with intellectual development; real happiness is when people find success to obey God and stay away from sin. Therefore, this article prepared for a closer look and recognition of the status of happiness in Islam and Quran and psychologists' viewpoints and various resources and books have been used in this way.

Keywords: happiness and joyfulness, Islam, Quran, psychology, life style

INTRODUCTION

Some writers and speakers are introduced Islam as a grief-stricken and cry-demanding religion and they are drawing an ambiguous image of Islam in the making of happiness in that way. Is it correct that there is no happiness in Islam? If there is, what is the definition of happiness in Islam? And why human beings mainly seek happiness? And finally, does happiness have any moral value? The majority of articles that is about happiness are looked with non-Islamic perspective and mostly refers to the strategies for rejoice whereas Islamic views does not expressed in that researches. Therefore, in this short article we are looking for the role of happiness in teachings of Islam in order to clarify the viewpoints and orders of founders of Islam. And researching in this field is because of that reason (Mostafavi, happiness and joyfulness Islam).

The necessity of discussion about happiness

The almighty God has created the human spirit with different modes and status. The need of happiness is one of the most important spiritual and innate features of him. So people are looking for ways to respond to this need.

In today's world considering that the technological and industrial advancement has alienated humans from his nature, and plights of mechanical life especially in big cities bored the human beings, and the upward resultings of mental and psychological diseases to the humankind, the human need for happiness is getting more than ever. People meet this need, divided into several types: Some who are not bound to religious regulations have resorted to every way to be happy which resulted to the use of happiness-inducing pills, narcotics, psychotropics, etc. that has caught western societies and some Islamic communities. Islam has given to this issue which is the most complete religion and it has been discussed in the verses, narrations and lifestyle of Imams. For example God in verse 58 of chapter Yunus (Jonah) says: Say: 'in the bounty of Allah and his mercy let them rejoice, it (the Quran) is better than that which they hoard.'

And it comes in the Hadiths of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) that he was joking humorously with people. For instance, his joke with an old woman who came to him and he said old women do not go to heaven. The old woman got upset and cried. Then the Prophet said: the old woman gets young and then goes to the heaven.

And the Prophet's date eating with Imam Ali (AS) and several narrations which come for the desirability of happiness and mentioned happiness as characteristics of believers. For example in Wasael-Alshia cited from Kafi has come: "There is no believer unless he jokes." (Hurr Ameli, 1988, vol 12, p.112)

Another example is narration of Adkhal Sorur in the heart of believers that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) says: "Anyone who makes a believer happy in fact makes me happy, and anyone makes me happy, in fact makes the almighty Allah happy." (Hurr Ameli, 1988, v 16, p349)

The definition of happiness

In Dekhoda Dictionary 'happiness' defined gaiety, gladness, joyance, exhilaration and cheerfulness. Happiness is a positive feeling that comes from a sense of satisfaction and achievement. Imam Ali (AS) says: "Anyone who has little happiness, his relief will be with his death. In another narration, Imam Ali (AS) said: "Happiness time is a kind of trophy."

Shahid Motahari in terminological definition of happiness said: "Cheerfulness is a kind of fun and enjoyable mode that comes to the feeling of human when he/she knows any aim or wish carried out or will be carry out". Generally it can be said: Cheerfulness is a case of enjoyment and pleasure that causes removal of pain and discomfort from human body. This internal affair sometimes has signs on the outside of it. Like laugh or cry for joy, such as cry of a mother who found her lost child.

"Keep your heart happy the more you can...in order to enhance your life due to the happiness..."

Feelings like being cheerful and exhilaration are the signs of happiness. Non-verbal indicators of happiness are: smile, open and non-defensive position of body, optimism and cheerfulness in tone of voice. A happy person is full of passion of life and is person like this: Dynamic, hardworking, hopeful, positive and innovative, committed, social and fertile.

The characteristics of a healthy personality are as follows; Manages the life consciously and dominates it; Finds the life purposeful and meaningful; He/she isn't slave of environmental forces; Although lives at present, he/she is careful of future; He/she is free in selection of his behaviors and actions; He/she can honestly love and open to others' love; He/she is responsible for conducting life; He/she is hopeful for the future and feels prosperity.

Different meanings of happiness in Quran

The term happiness has come totally 25 times in Quran with different words (Farah and sorur). "Farah" mentioned 22 times with words like farah, farahu, tafrahu, yafrahu, tafrahan, yafrahan, yafreho, tafreho, farehun and farehin and "Sorur" mentioned in Quran 3 times with words like sorur and masrur. Farah means the pleasure of heart and soul to achieve what tends to and the opposite meaning of it is grief. In another statement said: Farah is broadmindedness.

Due to ephemeral pleasure which mostly applies for sensory and worldly pleasures, Farah means false happiness or illusion of happiness. Some philologists believe that Farah is used in three different meaning:

1. Farah- Indulge in happiness; the happiness that comes out of moderation and it is along with falsehood, injustice, and arrogance and for hypocrisy and showing-off.

Allah does not love the boastful. AL-Qasas (The Story) 76

2. Pleasure and satisfaction;

Those who have divided their religion and become sects, each rejoicing in what they have. AL-Room (The Romans) 32

3. Sorur-True happiness;

Rejoicing in the bounty that Allah has given to them and having glad tidings in those who remain behind and have not joined them, for no fear shall be on them neither shall they sorrow. AL-E-IMRAN (THE FAMILY OF 'IMRAN) 170 (Mazuchi, Arani, Asgari; 2012)

Determinant elements of happiness

The followings are determinant factors of happiness:

1. Obedience to God (faith).

'Go down, all together, ' we said, 'so if a guidance shall come to you from me, whosoever follows my guidance no fear shall be on them, neither shall they be saddened. AL-BAQARA (THE COW) 38

Those who say: 'our lord is Allah, ' and follow the straight path shall have nothing to fear nor shall they sorrow. AL-AHQAF (THE WIND-CURVED SANDHILLS) 13

Happiness is when people find success to obey God and stay away from sin. As Imam Ali (AS) said: The joy of believer is the obedience to his Lord and his resentment and rebellion is sin.

2. Remembrance of God

Those who believe, and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Is it not with the remembrance of Allah that hearts are satisfied? AL-RAD (THE THUNDER) 28

In the Qur'an, caution and contemplation go ahead head to head with different stages. Sometimes caution is introduction of contemplation and sometimes contemplation underlies caution. People with mental health, always remember God and never forget their responsibility and servitude to Almighty God. The happiness and pleasure of world is achieved from heart and the heart will never be in tranquility without remembering Allah. (Nouri, 2005, cited from Mazuchi, Arani, Asgari, 2012)

3. Positive attitude to the world

He is who perfected everything he created. He originated the creation of the human from clay. AS-SAJDA (THE PROSTRATION) 7

The world and all its particles have a good creation. The world which Islam is introducing is very beautiful. Because it is an excellent system. Quran introduces the world purposeful and full of signs to guide the cogitators to God who have a valuable place. The beautiful interpretation of Islam from the world that mentioned it as a fertile land and a passage to the hereafter is pleasant and calming. So, correction of attitude toward life is the most important factor in satisfaction and happiness. (Khodaei, 2011, cited from Mazuchi, Arani, Asgari, 2012).

4. Beautiful interpretation of death and the hereafter

Say: 'are you waiting for anything to befall us except one of the two excellent things (victory or martyrdom)? We are waiting for the punishment of Allah to smite you, either from him or at our hands. Wait if you will, we are waiting. ' AL-TAWBA, BARA'AH (REPENTANCE) 52

One of the teachings of religious education is acceptance and belief in the afterlife eternal universe. The crisis of death and destruction always preoccupied the human mind. Fear of death is a daunting psychological phenomenon. Islam with a beautiful interpretation of death and the hereafter made the human life purposeful and introduces his/her end bright. In religious view; the other world is a world that faithful and worthy people appreciated and the tyrant people tried in court. Such an interpretation of the death brings calm to the human beings and makes them happy and healthy. (Rezae Esfahani, 2005, cited from Mazuchi, Arani, Asgari, 2012)

The nature of happiness in psychology

In recent decades, many writers interested in pleasure, happiness and life satisfaction. Since 1960 researches related to happiness increased and various organizations investigated happiness. Three fundamental directions can be identified in these researches. In some of them the main objective was measuring happiness and provides tools to measure happiness. In some studies that mostly focused on, affecting factors of happiness is considered and in another group methods to increasing the level of happiness evaluated. Researches on affecting factors of happiness went so far as that Costa and McCrae claimed they were discovered the gene of happiness. (Keshavarz and Vafaeian, 2006, p51, 52)

In psychology, we should look for the root of happiness in excitement and positive emotions. It should be noted that in the psychology there is a discussion as emotion which there are controversies among psychologists for its concept. It is come in the book psychology of motivation and excitement: It seems that there are definitions for the emotion in the number of authors who have written about it. In a study, about 92 definitions obtained and undoubtedly it will be more definitions. The cause for these numerous definitions is

that emotions have several aspects for writers and there is many things together in an emotion. (Mohi-Din BONAB, SB 1996: 97) Again, this emotion divided into two categories: positive and negative emotions and it has detailed and separate discussion. Even books written as positive psychology and happiness is discussed in the following of positive emotions which we defined a brief definition of emotion.

Emotion means the overall intensive and short reaction of organism to an unexpected position with a pleasant or unpleasant emotional state. In terms of root, emotion means the factor that moves the organism. For example, anger is a factor that makes the person ravish. Happiness, sadness, fear and anxiety can be good examples of emotion. (Ganji, 2002: 197) And Seligman in his book noble Happiness classified positive emotions into three categories: Those linked with past, present and future. Positive emotions related to the future include optimism, hope and faith. Satisfaction, happiness, fulfillment, pride and peace of mind are the major positive emotions linked with the past. There are two distinct classes in present positive emotions; Instant pleasure and more sustainable satisfaction. The pleasures included physical happiness and superior pleasures. (KhoshKonesh and Keshavarz Afshar, 2008: 42)

Happiness in the Holy Quran

In some of these verses, the believers have been invited to happiness. The term happiness has come totally 25 times in Quran with different words like Farah, farahu, tafrahu, yafrahu, tafrahun, yafrahun, yafreho, tafreho, farehun and farehin. Quran as the best and strongest Islamic source, stated life with happiness as blessings and mercy of God. And living with the cry, moan and groan known against the God's mercy and blessings. Life with happiness is blessing and mercy of God and life accompanied always by crying is contrary to God's mercy and blessings. The evidence confirms with Qur'anic verse that says: They shall laugh but little and shed many tears. So shall they be recompensed for their earnings? AL-TAWBA,(REPENTANCE) 82

Cause of revelation of this verse is that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had ordered all able forces should fight against the infidels and polytheists who had invaded the land of Islam. Some people do not participated in this military expedition with various excuses and had violated the command of Allah and his Messenger. Allah promised them punishment in Quran and then says: This rebellious group laughs less and cries more from now on. It is clear that curse as punishment and retribution that makes man suffering. That God desires fewer laughs and more cry for disobedients, shows the truth that laughter as one of the causes of happiness is normal and natural and God as a punishment of the disobedient, deprive them of it.

Of course, the naturalness of an issue is not an absolute license for it but the situation will be permitted. Like other natural desires it is allowed with some qualifications for human. So according to Islamic vision, eternal life is fundamental and the life of the world is introduction. If something prevents hereafter pleasure and causes punishment of the Hereafter, it has gotten negative value and is completely forbidden. So the joy that prevents other-worldly happiness has no value from Islamic point of view and is prohibited.

At first sight we confronted with two very different approaches for happiness in Islam. On one hand, happiness is bad and on the other hand it praised. Now we bring both criticised and praised verses and narrations for happiness, and then we wrap them up.

A: bad happiness

God says in the Holy Qur'an:

You don't strike any disaster, neither in the earth nor in yourselves, unless it's not that we created before it. It is reserved and protected in the tablet. This is easy for Allah; to not to grieve for what you have been lost, not to be happy for what have given to you. God does not love arrogant and boastful people. The last part of verse 18 of chapter LUQMAN shows that Islam is against to happiness arose from egotism and boasting, not all happinesses. Also in some narrations, some of the happinesses prohibited like joke. In some narrations, laughing and joke were known as cause of unkindness, perishment, destruction of human values, the annihilation of the heart, failure to achieve a clear faith, hatred, annihilation of wisdom, cowardice, hatred, loss of light of faith, chivalry and manhood fading, loss of awesomeness of man, daring others to insult and a sign of ignorance and unreason. (Allameh Majlisi, 1983, Vol. 83: 185)

It has been narrated: The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), said to Imam Ali (AS): Ali, do not joke because it destroys your worth. (Ibid., Vol 77, p 48) The last part of this narration shows that that Islam is opposed to the jokes that destroys the value of people, not all jokes.

B: praised happiness

Allah says in the Quran in verse 43 of chapter AN-NAJM (THE STAR): That it is he who causes to laugh and causes to weep.

And says in verse 58 of chapter YUNUS (JONAH): Say: 'in the bounty of Allah and his mercy let them rejoice, it (the Quran) is better than that which they hoard.'

And says in verse 11 of chapter AL-INSAN (MAN): So Allah will save them from the evil of that day and has secured for them radiance and joyfulness.

And says in verse 11 of chapter AL-INSHIQAQ (THE SUNDERING): And will return rejoicing to his family.

Happiness in narrations:

Imam Ali (AS) says: Happiness brings broadening of mind and exhilaration and destroys sorrow in mind and

dismal from human. He also said: "Anyone who has little happiness, his relief will be with his death. In Islam happiness should be purposeful and it shouldn't conflict with intellectual development. Hence, Imam Reza (AS) says: Use worldly pleasures to benefit and prosperity and use legal ways to meet your heart's wishes. Be careful not to harm your manhood and honor in this issue and do not squander and don't be an extremist. Enjoyable entertainments and happinesses help you in managing your lives and with their help you can do your world affairs better. In somewhere else Imam Ali (AS) states in the value of continuity work and vitality of it: Little action that has continuance is better than action that is most boresome and tedious. (Nahj, wisdom 444) And elsewhere Imam Ali (AS) says: Sorrow corrupts body and who has much grief his grief gets much longer. (Ghorar-al-hekam, vol. 1, p. 454) He also mentioned about hygiene and observing it and it's relation with sadness and happiness: Washing clothes makes you away from sadness. And said: Grief is half of the aging. (Nahj, wisdom 143)

Islam is the religion of happiness, exhilaration and mobility: Islam has commands that we can smell the scent of happiness from it and performing these commands causes mobility and exhilaration. Happiness makes people more mobile and make them more active and help them do their work efficiently either physical activity or emotional and intellectual. Also there are many Eid festivals in Islam like Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adwa and Eid Grader and birthdays of Imams that in these days it is recommended meeting and greeting and in some of them prayer etc. all of which is a sign of happiness and celebration and that Islam agrees the happiness and celebration. Greeting with relatives and family and neighbors and paying attention to them and their rights causes happiness and affection and love, and effects of this happiness to the society that all feel happy living in a society that is full of love and happiness. Also people who are more social participate in community and social activities are more successful and happier than the people who are unsociable and do not participate in social activities. Islam is a religion that loathes laziness and sloth and will be satisfied for mobility and exhilaration.

Imam Ali (AS) said: Happiness makes the soul expanded. In another narration he said: Believer divided each day of his life into three parts: Part for the worship of God, part for legit business and part for legit and worthy pleasure. (Nahj, Fail-up-Islam, wisdom 382) *The effect of Prayer on happiness of spirit*

Any factor that makes mankind happy, in fact helps to his physical and mental health. But today the important point that medicine has taught to the human is that human happiness and depression isn't under control, and it is involuntary because the command of chemical changes in the human body is at central nervous system.

For example, increasing a chemical called "dopamine" in the body causes human to be upset without willing and its reduction leads the body to be happy involuntarily. Other chemical that involuntarily causes happiness in the human body and makes him happy is a substance called "Cortisol" that its rate rises sharply inside of the human body during the hours of early morning and in case of being awake in the morning an ecstatic pleasure and delight arrives to the human that undoubtedly effects on his daylife. Increasing Cortisol in the early hours of the morning and its relationship with morning euphoria which it is a fact today, considerably justifies all themes in literature and culture and mysticism about the "Secrets of dawn". (Soleimani sarvestani, Bazrgar, 2013)

Imam Ali (AS) said: perfume, honey, horse riding and looking brunette causes happiness and destroys sorrow and grief. (Ameli, Sheikh Horr, Wasael)

Benefits of happiness

Psychological effects: Happiness causes of the physical and mental broadening and relaxation of human.

Physical effects: Happiness not only cures many diseases that caused troubles in the present century, but also can stop the growth of cancer which is also dormant.

Social and behavioral effects: Happiness causes rising up of man's self-esteem and getting to be in equilibrium.

Factors and ways to create happiness:

- Faith
- Satisfaction and tolerance
- Trust in God and rely on him
- Abstain from sin
- Struggle with worry
- Smile and laugh
- Humor
- Exercise
- Life expectancy
- Work and effort
- Reading Quran
- Almsgiving

Tips on creating tranquility and happiness

- Communicate with calm and joyful people.
- Move a few minutes earlier wherever you want to go; now you have not been in hurry and you don't get stress.
- Do not think about small and insignificant issues.
- Drink tea with orange flower blossom or mint.
- Wear proper shoes because proper shoes are comfortable.
- Satisfy with what you are, so you will feel more relaxed.
- Do not think about the past because the past no longer exists.
- Arrange the mess to relax.
- Forgive others' faults as soon as possible for your own tranquility.

- Use clear and clean clothes and natural fiber fabrics.
- Take it easy your life in order to be less stressful.
- Write your beautiful moments of your life and then remember them all again.
- Pray because prayer is the way to relax.
- Try to wake up before dawn to be an early bird.
- Sit in religious places, because religious places such as mosques and shrines make you relaxed.
- Do not forget the sports and ecotourism.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned, one of the basic human needs is happiness because a balanced man makes himself in the society in the light of it. So everyone is looking for happiness. If we look around us, we will see scenes of sadness and happiness obviously that each one is necessary in human life. God composed human soul with happiness. And people always and at all times are in search of the happy and fun spirit. Several verses mentioned about happiness in the revelation of God, all of which emphasize the necessity and special attention to happy spirit by God and prophets to manifestation and they recommend it for continuation of human life. Completely we can say happiness has a special pleasure, of course it appears in various ways, such as laughing and crying. A poet describes necessity of happiness and says:

"Keep your heart happy the more you can...in order to enhance your life due to the happiness..."

It is not permitted to neglect the remembrance of God in happiness and sorrow. Happiness should not exceed moderation and should not be with arrogance and showing-off. Obedience to God, remembrance of Allah, positive attitude to the world and beautiful interpretation of death and hereafter are determining elements of happiness. In recent decades, many writers interested in pleasure, happiness and life satisfaction. Quran mentioned happiness as blessing and mercy of God. In many Islamic narrations, especially narrations of first Imam, Imam Ali (AS) happiness has been quoted as the reason for the broadening of spirit. The person that isn't happy, it is better for him to die. Doing orders of Islam such as prayer, faith, satisfaction and tolerance, sport and almsgiving influences in creating happiness. Communicate with calm people, wearing white dress, pray, ecotourism, etc. can be refreshing and exhilarating. So use of these factors can be helpful to achieve happiness.

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