

Happiness in Islam (part 3 of 3): Happiness is Found in Sincere Worship

Description: God's commandments are designed to bring about happiness.

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In Part 1, we discussed the evolution of happiness in western thought, and its effect on western culture. In part 2, we re-examined the definitions of happiness and tried to understand the relationship between science and happiness. Now, in part 3, we will learn about happiness in the teachings of Islam.



Islam is the religion that is more than a religion; it is the religion that is a complete way of life. Nothing is too small or too big to be covered by the teachings of Islam. Rejoice and be happy, remain positive and be at peace.^[1] This is what Islam teaches us, through the Quran and the authentic teachings of Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. Every single one of God's commandments aims to bring happiness to the individual. This applies in all aspects of life, worship, economics, and society.

"Whoever works righteousness - whether male or female - while he (or she) is a true believer verily, to him We will give a good life (in this world with respect, contentment and lawful provision), and We shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do (i.e. Paradise in the Hereafter)." (Quran 16:97)

As most of us have come to realise, happiness is that ethereal quality that encompasses contentment and peacefulness; it is the soft joy that causes our lips, faces and hearts to smile. It is determined by faith in God and obedience to Him. Thus happiness embodies the peace security and submission that is Islam. The injunctions and regulations of Islam reinforce the happiness that comes from knowing God and they help to guarantee humankind's happiness during life in this world. However, Islam also emphasizes that the life of this world is nothing more than a means of attaining the Hereafter. By following the guidelines of Islam it is possible to be happy while awaiting our eternal happiness.

Sometimes, in order to achieve happiness, people attempt to follow complicated paths; they fail to see the easier path that is Islam. Happiness can be found in the solace that comes from being upon the truth. It can be achieved by sincere worship, hastening to do

virtuous, noble and beautiful deeds, and by performing acts of kindness or giving charity. These things all have the potential to make us happy, every day, under any circumstances. Even giving the smallest charity, in order to please God, can bring a smile to your face and a feeling of joy to your heart.

"And the likeness of those who spend their wealth seeking God's pleasure while they are sure and certain that God will reward them (for their spending in His Cause), is the likeness of a garden on a height; heavy rain falls on it and it doubles its yield of harvest. And if it does not receive heavy rain, light rain suffices it." (Quran 2:265)

Prophet Muhammad said, "Indeed amazing are the affairs of a believer! They are all for his benefit. If he is granted ease then he is thankful, and this is good for him. And if he is afflicted with a hardship, he perseveres, and this is good for him."^[2] The nature of the human condition means that amongst the happiness there may be great sorrow and within the pain and despair there may be great joy. A believer will accept God's decree for him and lead a happy life free from total despair or unbearable pain.

Islam has the answer to all the problems that afflict humankind, and knowing this leads to happiness, because it allows us to look beyond the need for self-gratification, and the need to acquire possessions. Following the teaching of Islam and striving to please God is a constant reminder that this life is but a transient pause on the way to life everlasting.

"But whosoever turns away from My Reminder (i.e. neither believes in this Qur'an nor acts on its teachings) verily, for him is a life of hardship, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection." (Quran 20: 124)

God says in the Quran, **"Verily! I am Allah! None has the right to be worshipped but I, so worship Me." (20:14)**. The key to happiness is knowing and worshipping God. When one worships and remembers the Creator as He should be worshipped and remembered, happiness can be observed all around us, at any given moment and even on the darkest night. It is there in the smile of a child, in the touch of a comforting hand, in the rain on parched earth, or in the smell of spring. These things can make our hearts truly happy because they are manifestations of God's mercy and love. Happiness can be found in worship.

To find true happiness we must seek to know God, especially through His names and attributes. Seeking beneficial knowledge brings happiness. The angels flutter their wings and keep records of those who seek knowledge; the mere thought of this brings a smile of happiness to the face of a believer. Our righteous predecessors understood the inherent happiness and joy to be found in striving to be close to God.

Outstanding Islamic scholar Ibn Taymiyyah, may God have mercy on him, once said, "I once became ill and the physician told me that reading and giving talks on knowledge would only exacerbate my condition. I told him that I could not abandon these pursuits. I asked him whether the body becomes stronger and sickness is repelled if the soul feels

happy and joyful. He replied in the affirmative, so I said my soul finds joy, comfort and strength in knowledge".

Perfect happiness will only be available to us if we spend life everlasting in Paradise. It is only there that we will find total peace, tranquillity and security. It is only there that we will be free of the fear, anxiety and pain that are part of the human condition. However the guidelines provided by Islam allow us, imperfect humans, to seek happiness in this world. The key to being happy in this world and the next is seeking the pleasure of God, and worshipping Him, without associating partners with Him.

And of them there are some who say: "Our Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and save us from the torment of the Fire!" (Quran 2:201)

Endnotes:

[1] Al Qarni, Aaidh Ibn Abdullah, (2003), *Don't be sad*. International Islamic Publishing House, Saudi Arabia.

[2] *Saheeh Muslim*

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