

“Happiness” as an Idea Presented by Media and the Criteria given by Islam (An Overview under the light of Quran and Hadith)

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ABSTRACT

Happiness is perhaps one of the most important things in life, especially nowadays everyone is in search of a happy and satisfying life. Conceptually, happiness itself is an idea, emotion, virtue, philosophy, ideal, or is it just programmed in the genes? Hence no definition for it, yet still everyone seems to be selling or buying happiness including drug dealers, pharmaceutical companies, Hollywood, toy companies, self-help gurus, and, of course, Disney, creator of the Happiest Place on Earth. Can happiness be selling or buy or achieved by maximizing wealth, fame, and fortune? This article will briefly explore the idea of happiness is presented and promoted by the media because in the current times' technological advancement media has a vital role in making and reshaping the thought and ideology of individuals and society. This article will discuss the idea of happy and successful life given by the media. Finally, the meaning and a few means of attaining happiness in Islam will be discussed. The first part of the article will discuss the role of media in ideology making, and then what is the criteria of happiness promoted by media. Later there is a description idea of happiness in Islam and what is criteria and approaches to sustain happiness in life. Lastly findings and conclusion of discussion have been given to open a choice which idea is more impactful and practical in long run for both in this world and hereafter.

KEYWORDS:

Happiness, Media, idea, Success, pleasure.

Introduction:

Happiness now a days is the only goal that every one of us strives to achieve and try for it throughout the life. Hence it a natural desire, especially the modern age human being agree that happiness is the final end, with difference to what this end is and how it should be achieved. Happiness by it

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meaning can be, tranquility, serenity, peace of mind, contentment and freedom from worries and anxiety is what each of us is malicious to achieve. Happiness mostly taken in terms of living a good life and state of well-being, characterized by emotions satisfaction, contentment and joy.¹ Happiness commonly defined as the sustained or state feeling of enchantment, serenity, pleasure, and satisfaction, bounty, arising from one's self, life and belief that they will have a blissful destiny.²

We as Muslims believe that we are servants of All Mighty Allah and have been brought to this world to worship him. Our happiness and pleasure or satisfaction is attained only with our relationship with our creator. This is the age of media and technology which has great impact and playing a massive role in deviating Muslims from the idea of true happiness. Media has promoted idea of happiness to become rich, powerful, or popular. Following trends of media we want to be that popular and search pop idol, dream of winning the jackpot, try to get maximum views for our social media profile and status, try to make friends on social media as much as we can, join social media groups created for chatting and sharing ideas no matter what so ever it is. Seeking happiness by removing all stress, sadness, and irritations. Sometimes, happiness lies in mood-altering therapies.³

Impact of Media in ideology making process:

The effect of media on our lives and our psychology is greater than we can imagine. We want to do things not for ourselves but impress people and gain fame and attention. Due to the global change of technology and advancement, Social media is one of the most powerful tools to spread the word with at least cost and minimal effort. Internet has made the aptitude of human life just as alcohol. Hence easily accessible and cheap usage of internet has become Satan's worshiper's tool of spreading the free and inexpensive illegal content. Also, social websites are being used by less mentality than the same mentality. In many cases, online communities and groups have become free only for milling, where girls and boys are easily fooled. No matter how popular they are, they will have some negative aspects! And if the users are not careful about those aspects, then the popular media can push life to the threats very easily, and can also be destroyed by their own life.⁴

Most of us already know that the most popular social media apps belong to the non-Muslims e.g., Facebook, an application which includes sharing pictures, ideas, comments to a certain event, or post shared by user or admin.⁵ Having said that, social media has many things which is out of the Islamic perspective and with this, it has become easy for the non-Muslims to control and re-shape the Muslim ideas. From children shows to beauty standards and the concept of seeking happiness through money have changed how we Muslims are living compared to how we are expected, by Allah, to live in this world.⁶ Our primary purpose should be to please Allah by worshipping

him. God’s worship does not only contain praying, reading the Quran, paying Zakat and fasting but is related to the little things we contribute to our society or that we do to improve ourselves. The examples of worship are removing unwanted objects from a street, drinking water while sitting according to the way of our Holy Prophet ﷺ, speaking to elders with respect and some thing as little as smiling at people. Muslims should remember that worship to Allah is not a burden as it consists of small acts. We should not let the non-Muslim goals change our primary purpose in life.

Idea of happiness promoted by Media:

It is common to see non-Muslims and even Muslims sharing posts on social media that have something to do with “chasing happiness” or successful life is related to worldly luxuries and material benefits and objectives. From this ideology of success whatever materially satisfies

this world can offer, and that often creates a lot of stress in their lives.⁷ The concept of *YOLO (You Only Live Once)* has also become widespread which is not true in the Islamic perspective as according to Islam, there are stages to life. ‘YOLO’ is usually used to encourage one to struggle in order to achieve happiness, in the form of money, in this temporary world. So much so that richness is associated with happiness thought it is only an illusion as money cannot buy peace and love. Social media networks like Instagram have created a huge gap between rich and poor people which has made many people go through depression as the poor feel like they are plying an unwinnable game of life.⁸ On Instagram, people who travel frequently, have expensive cars and live lavish lives are considered to be

happy and such people have become role models for many viewers especially the youth and for that, they are called influencers.⁹

Social media ideology of "freedom of speech", the uniqueness of the community, is in a wide range of people, only the ideology of aggressive nature, there is no freedom of speech situations. Misuse of social sites are not only harmful to family and personal level, but has also created problems at working productivity too. In recent years, questionnaire festival is going on in the social sites! All types of public examinations are being questioned in these mediums, which have resulted social and moral chaos among people.¹⁰

Most dangerously while using social media frequently users and especially children stay in the house, with no physical activity because for social media addicted people entertainment means online chatting and discussion which resulted severely damage of communication and mental strength. In addition to mental and physical health damages, girlfriends, boyfriend’s culture is becoming a part of social life style because of social media.¹¹ But we still face trouble in attaining happiness is that we have no idea about what it is. Consequently, we make poor verdicts in life. An Islamic tale illustrates the relationship of finding with happiness.

Idea of happiness in Islam:

Happiness in Islamic verdict refers to satisfied life in this world and the hereafter. And true happiness is the success in hereafter, or everlasting felicity, is the ultimate goal of the believer. All the worldly delights that humans experience are a means to ultimate happiness in the next world, with acknowledgment to God with gratitude for the blessings granted. As said in Quran:

“And as for those who are happy, they will be in Paradise, abiding there so long as the heavens and the earth endure, unless your Lord wills, as uninterrupted giving”.¹²

From this view of Quran that happiness comes from uninterrupted giving from Allah Almighty, but it does not exclude the happiness from the giving of humans. True and eternal happiness is gift of Allah and giving is a result of human giving, when humans share divine happiness freely, they will become the recipients of divine happiness. As said in the Quran:

“And give good tidings to those who believe and perform righteous deeds that theirs shall be Gardens underneath which rivers run; whenever they are with fruits therefrom, they shall say, ‘This is the provision we received before’; and they were given a likeness of it....¹³

From Islamic standpoint, the happiness is a lifelong process aiming primarily at bringing eternal happiness, peace of mind, tranquility of heart, contentment in this world and everlasting bliss in the Hereafter. In Islam, according to the Quran and Sunnah, happiness can be achieved by nourishment of things:

Our Relationship with Allah.

Our Relationship with our family.

Our Relationship with our society.

1. Happiness in Relationship with Allah:

Islamic ides of happiness is given by the Allah Almighty to find peace by saying in the Holy Quran:

“Verily in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find peace.”¹⁴

This is true as some people who seem happy and successful because of all the money that they have are not actually happy because they have forgotten Allah and are not thankful for what they have to the one who provided them everything.

In another place, Allah says:

“I have not created mankind or jinn kind except that they worship me.”¹⁵

This tells us that our only purpose in this world is to worship Allah and other unnecessary deeds will only drain us.

2. Happiness in Relationship with Family:

Family is a gift from Allah. There is great blessing in treating our family with love, care and respect. But we have to be very careful when it comes to crossing the limits of religious boundaries in order to show our family that we love them. Our families can also be dangerous for us if we do not stick to the commandments of Allah by allowing them to do what pleases them but displeases Allah. Allah says in the Holy Quran:

“Even out of your spouses and children there are enemies for you then look out for them.”

“Your wealth and your children are but a trail, and God has with Him a great reward.”¹⁶

This is a reminder that being blessed with a family is also a test from Allah. Warning them from doing bad deeds is better than allowing them to do bad deeds, out of what we call ‘love.’ About parents, the Quran says:

“And your Lord had decreed that you do not worship except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], “uff,” and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word.”¹⁷

This signifies the importance of well treatment of our parents in Islam and also to other relatives.

We are not allowed to complain about having to take care of our parents as they are the ones who have been there for us in every walk of life.

Happiness in Relationship with our society:

Being part of Islamic society which is called “Ummah” in Islam, we have to be kind passionate sincere to each other which may established a peaceful environment and society. For the reason, we must take care of the needy and help each other out. Being too selfish will not do any good for individual as well as society.

Abu Hurairah reported: the messenger of Allah, Muhammad ﷺ, said:

“Whoever relieves the hardship of a believer in this world, Allah will relieve his hardship on the Day of Resurrection. Whoever help ease one in difficulty, Allah will make it easy for him in this world and in the Hereafter”¹⁸

This is a proof for us that we have to make sure the well-being of our society by helping them when they need in order to stay happy. Being selfish and self-centered cannot create healthy and happy environment. Worldly material possessions like wealth, property, house, cars, and other luxuries are not the criteria of success and happiness in Islam.

If materialistic things like mobile phones, cars, big houses etc. were of any importance to Allah and if he considered these items to be able to bring

happiness in one's lives, he would have given these to the Muslims he loved the most especially the Prophets and their companions. In Islamic history there are many examples of sacrifice, cooperation, forbearance, brotherhood and forgiveness among Muslims in order to have a peaceful and happy life in society.¹⁹

Approaches to achieve happiness in Islam:

From Islamic perspective and teachings there are few things which can be add to have a happy and satisfies life, these few things are on the other part have become an essential part of happy life presented on the media which includes the followings:

1. Avoid Comparison:

Under the influence of modern cultures and requirements presented on the media, we started ourselves with other and never satisfied with what Allah Almighty has blessed us.

"Do not strain your eyes in longing for the things that we have given to some groups of them to enjoy, the splendor of the life of this world through which we test them. The provision of your Lord is better and more lasting."²⁰

From this teaching of Quran we should focus on our own personal achievement instead of comparing ourselves to others, and be thankful for Allah has given us, there are millions who wish for what we have in our lives.

2. Be thankful for Allah's blessings:

According to Robert Emmons People who keep gratitude with what they have are healthier, more optimistic, and more likely to make progress toward achieving personal goals.²¹

According to Islam is the idea of happiness is to be grateful to Allah, not just for what we perceive to be blessings but in trials and tribulations as well. As said in the Quran:

"Therefore, remember Me (God) and I will remember you, and be grateful to Me (for My countless Favors on you) and never be ungrateful to Me."²²

And (remember) when God proclaimed: 'If you are grateful, I will give you more (of My Blessings); but if you are ungrateful verily, My punishment is indeed severe.'²³

3. Give Charity or spend in the way of Allah:

According to Researcher Stephen Post Make altruism, and giving in charity, part of your life, and be resolute about it because helping a neighbor, volunteering, or donating goods and services results in a "helper's high," and you get more health benefits than you would from exercise or quitting

smoking. Islam encourages people to be generous and spend out of what Allah Almighty has given. As said in the Quran:

"Say: "Truly, my Lord blesses the provision for whom He wills of His slaves, and also restricts it for him, and whatsoever you spend of anything (in God's Cause), He will replace it. And He is the Best of providers." ²⁴

Money should be lower in our priority list because those who put money high on their priority list are more at risk for depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said:

"Be happy, and hope for what will please you. By God, I am not afraid that you will be poor, but I fear that worldly wealth will be bestowed upon you as it was bestowed upon those who lived before you. So you will compete amongst yourselves for it, as they competed for it and it will destroy you as it did them." ²⁵

4. Have strong faith and do good deeds:

Belief plays a vital role in a believer's life specially to have a happy life because faith is thought which make believer feel content with things that have been preordained. It is through this that one can enjoy the blessings of this life and everlasting bless in the world to come. As said in the Quran:

“Whoever works righteousness — whether male or female — while he (or she) is a true believer (of Islamic Monotheism) 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”²⁶

With acknowledging the power of Allah, trusting His plan and acceptance of His will is key approach to accept trials and tribulations as test from Allah and blessings as bounty of Allah.

Findings of the discussion:

Followings are the findings of this whole research discussion:

- Living in global environment with advancement of technology media communication our ideology of happy life is influenced by the trends of media which is one of the most powerful tools to spread the word with at least cost and minimal effort.
- Media that have something to do with “chasing happiness” or successful life is related to worldly luxuries and material benefits and objectives.
- All trends of happy and success life presented and promoted on media are moving around money, fame, deviation from self-liability of right and wrong.

- Media is creating some opportunities in facilitating our lives, however mostly media and especially social media is promoting laziness, lust and greed among users especially the children.
- Happiness in Islamic verdict refers to satisfied life in this world and the hereafter. In Islamic approach true happiness is the success in hereafter, or everlasting felicity, is the ultimate goal of the believer.
- Happiness in Islam can be attained through strong, positive and healthy relationship with Allah, Family and society.
- Happiness from Islamic approach can be strengthen through avoidance of comparing you blessings with others, Gratitude to Allah's blessings, and charity in the way of Allah.

Conclusion:

In light of the above discussion and findings conclusion of this research is that idea of happiness given by the trends on electronic or social media are mostly fake, temporary fabricated, and far away from reality. Happiness is the felling of our own self-satisfaction and contentment which is purely in our own our approach and decision. We have choose to be happy with fake or fabricated ideas or with eternal satisfaction given by Islamic through our strong relationship with our creator, and being good and positive to our worldly possession of family and society.

Today every one today is looking for peaceful, content and happy life and try to find it out from the ideas and trends presented on the media which has vital impact in our lives .But rather than attaining and sustaining happiness we are becoming stressed and depressed with our lives with all facilities, luxuries and slogans promoted by media. The remedy of true happiness to have strong faith and practices given by Allah Almighty who is our creator and sustainer. Happiness is what has been provided by last Divine message, the Quran. It is high time to reach to humanity reeling from the illness of body and soul, and convey the sole message of almighty guaranteeing the peace of mind, tranquility, eternal happiness and contentment in this life and everlasting bliss in the Hereafter.

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