

Happiness from the Viewpoint of Ibn Kathīr (1300-1374): Some Notes by a Middle Eastern Muslim Scholar

Kebahagiaan dalam Pandangan Ibn Kathīr (1300-1374): Beberapa Catatan daripada Cendekiawan Muslim Timur Tengah

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ABSTRACT

In early philosophically oriented societies, happiness was a prominent theme in literature. This article discusses the concept of happiness according to Ibn Kathīr (d. 1374), who was an eminent scholar of Islam. The idea of happiness and how to achieve it is something that has occupied researchers for millennia. They consider happiness to be temporal, conditional and existing outside the human body. According to this view, there is no lasting happiness in the human soul. In contrast, Ibn Kathīr referred to happiness as having a heart filled with faith and behaving in a way that follows religious teachings. By applying qualitative methods, the study found that Ibn Kathīr discusses happiness from the perspective of temporary worldly wealth, for the decline of belief in revelation, and eternal happiness in the hereafter. This paper concludes that the key to being happy in this world and the next is seeking the pleasure of God, and worshipping only Him.

Keywords: Happiness; Ibn Kathīr; satisfaction with life; religion

ABSTRAK

Dalam masyarakat awal yang berorientasikan falsafah, kebahagiaan adalah tema yang menonjol dalam kesusasteraan. Artikel ini membincangkan konsep kebahagiaan menurut Ibn Kathīr (w. 1374), yang merupakan seorang sarjana Islam terkemuka. Idea kebahagiaan dan cara mencapainya adalah sesuatu yang telah ditelusuri oleh penyelidik selama ribuan tahun. Mereka menganggap kebahagiaan sebagai sementara, bersyarat dan wujud di luar tubuh manusia. Menurut pandangan ini, tidak ada kebahagiaan yang kekal dalam jiwa manusia. Sebaliknya, Ibn Kathīr merujuk kepada kebahagiaan sebagai mempunyai hati yang dipenuhi dengan keimanan dan berkelakuan mengikut kepercayaan agama. Dengan menggunakan kaedah kualitatif, kajian mendapati bahawa Ibn Kathīr membincangkan kebahagiaan dari sudut kekayaan dunia yang sementara, untuk penurunan wahyu, dan kebahagiaan abadi wujud di akhirat. Artikel ini menyimpulkan bahawa kunci untuk mencapai bahagia di dunia dan akhirat adalah dengan mencari keredaan Allah SWT serta beribadah hanya kepada-Nya.

Kata kunci: Kebahagiaan; Ibn Kathīr; kepuasan dengan kehidupan; agama

INTRODUCTION

Islamic teachings related to the concept of happiness are in contrast with the ideas of the West (Joshnloo 2013). Researchers have presented various ideas in empirical studies related to achieving happiness (Haybron 2000). Moreover, much of the research to date is rooted in western experiences (Devine, Hinks & Naveed 2017). From here, the results of

the scientific experiments conducted in the West cannot offer a guaranteed solution to happiness. It is necessary to take the best and most beneficial aspects of Western technology, but also maintain a firm Islamic foundation and perspective. In this way, the West's error of prioritising material progress at the expense of social development can be avoided. There is no reason why we cannot have the best of both (Razaeitalarposthy & Razaeitalarposthy 2013).

In the Islamic perspective, the competitive nature of man is directed from the vertical plane in terms of righteousness and not from the horizontal plane. Negative emotions are, in the realisation of happiness, directed towards morality and not the fulfilment of desires. In the Islamic understanding, in opposition to the fulfilment of desires and fitness, true happiness is viewed in terms of moral consciousness (Abde & Salih 2015). According to Islam, worshipping and serving Allah is humanity's ultimate function, the fulfilment of which constitutes well-being (Khairulnazrin 2021). In other words, well-being is living a life in which all one's actions and intentions are organised around the principle of Allah's absolute sovereignty. This view requires complete submission to the will of Allah in every aspect of life, no matter how small (Joshnloo 2017; Usman et al. 2020). The level of a person's involvement is measured by the ability to stand by one's word, beliefs, and principles (covenant - focus on pre-bodily existence, morality). It is not measured by the success in gathering the faculties needed to achieve fitness (focus on bodily presence). The level at which the fulfilment of desires is realised in today's society is connected to wealth (Hizri et al. 2021). Since the overall majority of the western population earns his or her living by trading labour for a salary and lives in a consumer society, it means that needs and desires are fulfilled to the degree of income (Altiner 2015).

IBN KATHĪR'S LIFE AND WORK

His full name was Ismā'īl ibn 'Umar, although he is usually known as Ibn Kathīr, which was also the name of his grandfather and great grandfather. Ibn Kathīr was born in 700/1301 at Majdal, a town to the east of Busra in Syria, during the reign of King al-Nasir Muḥammad ibn Qalawūn II (d. 741 AH) (Arain 1970).

An analysis of the achievements of Ibn Kathir shows that he was an expert in many branches of religious science. The first area that he focused on was *Tajwīd*, which is concerned with the rules that govern the pronunciation of the Quran when it is recited. In his writings, Ibn Kathīr deals with vowel points, case ending orthographical signs, signs of doubling, pronunciation, and spelling, and takes an interest in discussing them in his *Tafsīr* called *al-Qur'ān al-'Azīm* (The Glorious Qur'an) (Jaffer 2007). He relied more on examples than on theory, and he has not written a comprehensive book on these subjects. Instead, he allocated a few pages in his book *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān* to express

the superiority of intonation to aid recitation over other methods outlined in religious sciences (Arain 1970). Sources frequently note that Ibn Kathīr was a historian before he was an exegete. However, once Ibn Kathīr's exegesis was abridged and was made a standard part of many Islamic seminary curriculums, its popularity increased and its influence was impossible to ignore (Mirza 2012).

He has a good knowledge of historical facts. To him, history meant the knowledge of people, prophets, saints, scholars, wise men, poets, kings, especially the descriptions of their genesis, rites, customs, their cities, their birth, and death. He believed that the purpose of examining past experiences was to take heed of the warnings, lessons, and examples that they offer. Ibn Kathīr's most important work on universal history is *al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya*. This book provides a Sunni view on a generally 'Alid-legitimizing corpus of early historical Islamic accounts (Hagler 2015).

Ibn Kathīr was well versed in Arabic grammar. He tried to explain the meaning of different Arabic words through the use of grammar by quoting similar examples from the Quran, Islamic poetry, and other literary works to help readers understand the Quran. Although he does not always mention the derivation of words and their roots, he was recognised as a scholarly grammarian by his contemporaries, and by later grammarians and scholars alike (Arain 1970, 48). Ibn Kathīr lost his eyesight at the age of 73 and died in the month of *Sha'abān* in 774 AH. He was buried near his teacher Ibn Taymiyyah in the tomb of Sufi, which is outside Bab al-Nasr in Damascus (Arain 1970).

QURANIC VIEWS ON HAPPINESS

Islam has the answer to all the problems that afflict humankind (Parrinder 1959) and knowing this leads to happiness because it allows Muslim to look beyond the need for self-gratification and the need to acquire possessions. Following the teachings of Islam (El Azayem & Hedayat-Diba 1994) and striving to please God is a constant reminder that life is but a momentary pause on the way to life everlasting (Ṭaha verse 124). The key to happiness is gratitude (Emmons 2007; Al-Seheel & Noor 2016), knowing and worshipping God. When Muslims worship and remember the Creator as He should be revered and remembered, happiness can be observed all around (Karasu 2006). These things can make a person's heart truly happy as a manifestation of God's mercy and love.

Perfect happiness is only available to those who spend life and everlasting in paradise. The term ‘paradise’ indicates the eternal condition of happiness and perfection (Scafi 2014); a place, situation, or condition in which somebody finds perfect happiness (Hanquart-Turner 2011). It is only there that man will find total peace, tranquillity, and security. 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 the world, and they are fundamentally based on social relationships (Graham & Haidt 2010). Surveys in Islamic jurisprudence, however, show that happiness - in its contemporary conception - is absent from religion-legal considerations. Happiness is seemingly overlooked in legal *ijtihād*, despite many references to aspects

of happiness in the Quran and Islamic philosophical and mystical traditions under terms such as *farḥah*, *falāḥ*, *sa’ādah*, *mutma’innah*, *ḥayātan ṭayyibah*, *masrūrah*, and *sakīnah*. Although happiness is not a specific determining factor in Islamic law and jurisprudence, it is deeply embedded in the primary sources; the Quran and hadith (Abdullah & Naim 2016). It is a wider concept than happiness that comprehends all aspects of life. That is why other Quranic terms that convey the significant meaning of *al-Sa’āda* such as *al-Falāḥ* (prosperity), *al-Fawz* (success), *al-Salāmah* (safety), *al-Najāḥ* (salvation), *al-Ni’mah* (blessing), *al-Raḥmah* (mercy) and their like are used as synonyms of the term happiness (Mohd Nasir 2012). From this point, there are eight terms in the Quran that are associated with the term happiness as seen in Figure 1.

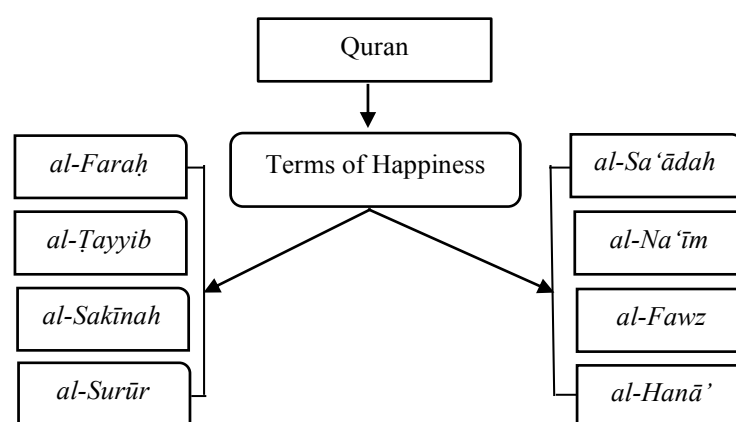


FIGURE 1. Quranic terms on happiness

AL-FARAH

The word *al-farah* comes from the derivation of the letters *fā-ra-ḥa*, a condition, and feeling that is free from a burden. Its opposite is *al-ḥuzn* (sadness) (Ibn Manzūr 2003). In the Quran, *al-farah* with various derivations repeated 22 times (‘Abd al-Bāqī 1992; Alon 2005) to describe the condition of human psychology when he felt pleasure in material or sensory factors. Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥussayn ibn Mufaḍḍal ibn Muḥammad, better known as al-Raghīb al-Asfahānī (d. 1108), an eleventh-century Muslim scholar of Quranic exegesis and the Arabic language, defines *al-farah* as a condition of the spaciousness of the chest caused by momentary pleasure. Therefore, things that are categorised as joyful are related to material or sensory pleasures (Al-Asfahānī nd.). Contextually, *al-farah* does not

refer to something, but the condition itself. Thus, when the Quran instructs to feel joyful, it indicates things that are worthy of happiness, such as the grace of God (Āli ‘Imrān verse 170). Sometimes the Quran forbids rejoicing (al-Qaṣaṣ verse 76) which naturally tends to activities that cause grief. Hence, the word *al-farah* can be contextualised in two ways, either to that instructed or prohibited by the Quran.

AL-ṬAYYIB

The word *al-ṭayyib* comes from the derivation of the letters *ṭā-yā-bā’*. In the verb form, *ṭaba* means clean and improved. In the noun form, *ṭayyib* or *ṭib* means goodness, beauty, comfort, and freedom from things that may injure. From here, linguistically, it changes to the word *ṭubā*, or goodness in life which leads to conditions of salvation, pleasure, and happiness (Ibn Manzūr 2003). The word of *ṭubā* is mentioned once in the Quran, but its derivations are repeated

50 times ('Abd al-Bāqī 1992). *al-tayyib* expresses in several contexts, but broadly in the context of life. Such as the context of wealth and consumption (al-Baqarah verse 57), marriage, family, and ancestry (Āli 'Imrān verse 38; al-Nisā' verse 3), the place of life, nature of the environment, and social system (al-Baqarah verse 267; Āli 'Imrān verse 179).

AL-SAKĪNAH

The word *al-sakīnah* comes from the derivation of the letters *sīn-kāf-nūn* which means quiet. Knives are called *sikkīn* because it is believed that animals slaughtered with a knife will calm down again after the blood has flown from them. A place of residence is called *maskan*. People who occupy the area of their homeland are called *sukkān*. People who are unable to address life independently due to weakness are called poor (*miskīn*) (Fāris 1994). *Al-sakīnah* is categorised as part of the terminology of happiness, because the happiest person tends to be calm, either personally or mentally. From this, serenity can be found, and happiness will come. In the Quran *al-sakīnah*, the various derivations are repeated 70 times ('Abd al-Bāqī 1992). Again, contextually *al-sakīnah* refers to happiness based on calmness. The peace of mind and attitude are based on the totality of belief and commitment to the instructions and teachings that must be followed.

AL-SURŪR

The *al-surūr* derives from the word *sirr*, which comes from a collection of letters *sīn-rā'-rā'*, which means to hide something in depth. Its opponent is bright, open, and announced (*i'lān*) (al-Baqarah verse 235). When the letters *sīn-rā'-rā'* transform to *sarra* means pleasant or happy. In the Quran, a derivation of the word *sarra* is repeated six times ('Abd al-Bāqī 1992). One time in the form of the verb, *tasurru* that associated with beauty, and five times in the form of the noun; three times it is related to the word *infāq* and feeding the hungry, and twice it is associated with the reward of charity.

AL-SA'ĀDAH

The word *al-sa'ādah* comes from the letters *sīn-'ayn-dāl*, which refers to goodness and pleasure. In this context, happiness is indicated by two things, the virtue of material life and the readiness of the soul to appreciate the material of life. The collaboration between these two could produce perfect value called happiness (Fāris 1994). Al-Rāghib (n.d.)

defines *al-sa'ādah* as help from God for a human to obtain or gain a virtue. In other words, happiness which is referred to the term *al-sa'ādah* is related to goodness that needs God's intervention to achieve. Hence, the Quran twice refers to happiness with this term (Sura Hūd verses 105 & 108). The verses as references to the results that will be achieved by a human afterlife in this world (M. Quraish 2010).

AL-NA'ĪM

The term of *al-na'īm* comes from the letters *nūn-'ayn-mīm* which means prosperity, abundance, and comfort. These letters could be derived from the word *ni'mah* means what God gives to a human in materials or in life itself (Fāris 1994). According to al-Rāghib (n.d.), *ni'mah* is a complete condition felt by humans in life. In this case, favours are not always related to materials, but they are psychological. Its opponent is *bi'sa* which is used to indicate conditions that are uncomfortable or not good.

AL-FAWZ

The word *al-fawz* comes from the derivation of the letters *fā'-waw-zā'*, which has two contradictory meanings. The first means luck, success, and victory, while the second refers to loss and destruction. People who succeed are called *fā'iz* (Fāris 1994). In the Quran, *al-fawz* is repeated 29 times ('Abd al-Bāqī 1992).

AL-HANĀ'

The word *al-hanā'* is the achievement of virtue without significant hardship (Fāris 1994), barriers, or obstacles (Al-Rāghib n.d.). When the word is in the form of *hani'* it refers to the solution of a problem without any trouble. In the Quran, the derivation of this word is repeated four times (al-Nisā' verse 4; al-Tūr verse 19; al-Hqqah verse 24; al-Mursalat verse 43) and is associated with the order to eat as in sura al-Hāqqah verse 24.

A DISCOURSE ON PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS: IBN KATHĪR PERSPECTIVE

True happiness is eternal joy, everlasting love, and perpetual tranquillity achieved through a process of self-realisation, and not affected by external events and objects (Walls 2002). It is the nature of every person to seek happiness (Thompson 2004). Some people strive to find material happiness away from religion, thinking that this is true happiness.

However, this kind of happiness will be succeeded by pain and sorrow on the Day of Judgement, and its people will know that their striving led them only to misery and not to happiness, while others know that the true way to happiness is to obey God and follow His religion (Graham 2017). For them, the pleasures and riches of the world are of little consequence. When happiness penetrates and fills the heart of the believer, he does live in this world as if he were in paradise. The ultimate purpose of Islamic philosophy in its ability to lead man towards happiness. A familiar concept of joy as a contemplative ideal of human perfection, refers primarily to an otherworldly state of the soul's ascent to the spiritual world (Mattila 2011).

Belief in God and life after death is modestly correlated with happiness (Stark and Maier 2008). Many studies find a positive and significant relation between religion and happiness or health (Steiner, Leinert & Frey 2010). In lieu of this, Winzer & Gray (2019) pointed out that religion benefits self-perceived health mediated by how much an individual

engages in religious practices and the extent to which those practices nurture human virtues. By regulating negative emotions, promoting family and community connections, and strengthening positive feelings, religion has an indirect impact on health. From here, what kind of happiness could be more significant than someone who humbles himself to God, worships Him, strives for His pleasure to enter Paradise, and to have salvation from hellfire? These people find true happiness in this world. El Fadl (2014) argues that a crucial issue in considering the happiness and the failure of happiness is how one understands submission to God, and that submission to God is not merely obedience or servitude. Instead, submission to God means aspiring to and seeking the goodness of God and liberating one's soul from ignorance to attain a state of Godliness because God's love is the epitome of fulfilment, goodness, and happiness. Therefore, this article discusses Ibn Kathir's views on the concept of happiness resulting from the interpretation of the holy verses of the Quran as summarised in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Ibn Kathir's views on the concept of happiness

No.	Term	Quranic Verses
1	The false happiness of the world	al-Ra'd [13] verse 26, al-Qaṣaṣ [28] verse 76, al-Insān verse 11
2	The happiness of scripture revelation	al-Ra'd [13] verse 36, Yūnus [10] verses 57 & 58
3	The changing of man's attitude in happiness and hardship	Hūd [11] verse 10, Yūnus [10] verse 22, Ghāfir [40] verse 75
4	Exposing hypocrites	al-Tawbah [9] verses 50 & 81, Āli 'Imrān [3] verses 120 & 188
5	The gift-giving and happiness	al-Naml [27] verse 36
6	Caesar defeated Chosroes (Kisra)	Āli 'Imran [3] verse 170, al-Rūm [30] verse 4
7	Splitting into sects and the saved sects	al-Rūm [30] verse 32, al-Mu'minūn [23] verse 53
8	Ordering patience and gratitude	al-Ḥadīd [57] verse 23, al-Shūrā [42] verse 75, al-Rūm [30] verse 36, Hūd [11] verse 10

THE FALSE HAPPINESS OF THE WORLD

The disbelievers rejoice in this world's life (Goldstein 1973), and this world's life is nothing but a temporary enjoyment compared with the hereafter, as Allah stated in *sura al-Ra'd* verse 26. Ibn Kathīr (2002) said that He alone increases the provisions for whom. He wills and decreases it for whom He wills according to His wisdom and perfect justice. So, when the disbelievers rejoice in the life of the present world that was given to them, they do not know that they are being tested and tried. Allah belittled the life of the current world in comparison to what He has prepared for His believing servants in the Hereafter.

Ibn Kathīr (2002) quoted Imam Aḥmad who recorded that Al-Mustawrid said that the Prophet Muhammad said:

"The life of the present world, compared to the Hereafter, is just like when one of you inserts his finger in the sea, so let him contemplate how much of it will carry," and the Prophet pointed with the index finger (Ḥanbal 1993).

Hence, Allah remains on Qarun and his people's exhortation as stated in Sura al-Qaṣaṣ verse 76. Ibn Kathīr (2002) says the righteous ones among Qarun's people exhorted him by way of guidance stating not to be arrogant and proud of his wealth. Verily, Allah likes those who do not exult. Mujāhid said:

“It means those who are insolent and reckless, and do not thank Allah for what he has given them.” (Al-Ṭabarī 2001).

In contrary to the idea that real happiness is in the Hereafter. Real spiritual happiness is also mentioned, and Muslims can ask God for happiness in this life as well as in the next (Nasr 2014). Also, they placed absolute faith in the Prophet and his religion at the top of a hierarchy that included all that was necessary for happiness (Dabashi 1996). From here, the level of happiness among people increases with the increasing level of religiousness (Hossain & Rizvi 2016). Some details concerning the reward of the righteous in paradise and what it contains delights, as Allah said in Sura al-Insān verse 11. This is used as a way of eloquence in stating similarity (i.e., two similar things). He protects them from that which they fear and gives them *nadrah* (a light of beauty) in their faces, and joy in their hearts (Ibn Kathīr 2002). This is similar to Allah’s statement:

“Some faces that day will be bright, laughing, rejoicing at good news.”

The level of happiness among people increases with the increasing level of religiousness. This is because if the heart is happy, then the face will be enlightened (Ibn Kathīr 2002).

THE HAPPINESS OF SCRIPTURE REVELATION

The truthful ones from among the people of the Scriptures rejoice at what Allah revealed to the Prophet (PBUH), the rules that lead to happiness (Titus 1994), as Allah said in Sura al-Ra’d verse 36. Ibn Kathīr (2002) explains the evidence in affirming the truth of the Quran and conveying the good news of its imminent revelation, but there are those among the sects who disbelieve in some of what was revealed to the Prophet. They reject a part of the truth that came down to him. In other words, the Quran is an admonition, a cure, mercy, and guidance. This meaning of happiness is similar to Allah’s words in Sura Yūnus verses 57 and 58 that Allah confers a great favour on His creatures in what He has sent down of the Gracious Quran to His Noble Messenger. Rejoice in what has come from Allah, and let them rejoice in the guidance and the religion of the truth (Cornell 2014). It is better than anything they might rejoice in. From the ruins of the world and its vanishing bloom undoubtedly (Ibn Kathīr 2002). Surely, detailed guidelines on how to live a proper life are provided in the *sharī‘ah*, which

is God’s law that governs individual and social life. This notion of well-being underlies all concepts of well-being formulated in all Islamic schools of thought (e.g., Islamic philosophy and Sufism) throughout Islamic history including contemporary Islamic conceptualisations of well-being (Joshnloo 2017).

THE CHANGING OF MAN’S ATTITUDE IN HAPPINESS AND HARDSHIP

Happiness can be regarded as a trait if it meets three criteria; temporal stability, cross-situational consistency, and inner causation. Happiness is not an immutable trait, and there is still a sense in striving for happiness (Veenhoven 2005). Hardship and suffering are seen as blessings and gifts from God (Joshnloo 2014). Allah informs mankind and the blameworthy characteristics that He possesses, except for those believing servants upon whom Allah has bestowed His mercy. Allah explains that when any hardship befalls a man he is disheartened and despairs of good in the future. He denies and rejects (the bounties of) his previous condition. Thus, he behaves as if he has never seen any good and he loses all hope for relief (from his situation), likewise, if a blessing befalls him after displeasure. Allah said in Sura Hūd verse 10:

“He is sure to say, “ills have departed from me.”

This means that he will claim that no harm or calamity will afflict him after this (blessing) and:

“Surely, he is exultant and boastful (ungrateful to Allah).”

This means that he is pleased with what he has in his hand and ungrateful (to Allah). At the same time, he is boastful towards others (Ibn Kathīr 2002).

Again, in Sura Yūnus verse 22 shows that man changes when he receives mercy in times of distress. Allah further states,

“It is He who enables you to travel through land and sea,”

which means that He preserves you and maintains you with His care and watching.

“Till you are in the ships, and they sail with a favourable wind, they are glad therein,”

meaning smoothly and calmly (Ibn Kathīr 2002). Hence, those who dispute and deny the signs of Allah, as Allah says in Sura Ghāfir verse 75:

“That was because you had been exulting in the earth without any right and that you used to rejoice extremely,”

and the angels will say to them,

“What you are suffering now is your recompense for your exultation on earth without the right, and for your extravagance.” (Ibn Kathīr 2002).

EXPOSING HYPOCRITES

Ibn Kathīr (2002) comments on Allah’s word in Sura al-Tawbah verse 50 that Allah emphasises the enmity that the hypocrites have for the Prophet. If a blessing, such as victory or triumph over enemies is given to the Prophet, thus pleasing him and his companions, it grieves the hypocrites. They say, we took precautions when we did not join him, and they turn away rejoicing. Also, hypocrites rejoice because they remained behind from Tabuk (Skovgaard-Petersen 2018; Hashmi 2003) as Allah said in Sura al-Tawbah verse 81. In this verse according to Ibn Kathīr (2002), Allah admonishes the hypocrites who lagged from the battle of Tabuk with the Companions of the Prophet, rejoicing that they remained behind after the Prophet departed for the battle.

Also, happiness in the view of Ibn Kathīr shows the prohibition of taking advice from disbelievers, as Allah says in Sura Āli ‘Imrān verse 120. This idea emphasises the severity of the hostility that the hypocrites feel against the believers. If the believers enjoy productive years, victories, support, and their numbers and the following increases, the hypocrites become displeased. When the Muslims suffer a drought, or their enemies gain the upper hand against them, by Allah’s decree, just as occurred during the battle of Uhud, the hypocrites are pleased. Allah directs the believers to safety from the wickedness of evil people and the plots of the sinners, by recommending them to be patient, to have a fear of Allah, and to trust in Him. Allah encompasses the enemies of the believers, all the while the believers have no power or strength except not will, does not occur. Nothing happens in His Kingdom except His decisions made according to His decree. Verily, whoever relies on Allah, Allah shall suffice for him (Ibn Kathīr 2002).

Happiness is also described as chastising those who love to be praised for what they have not done, as Allah says in Sura Āli ‘Imrān verse 188. This verse refers to those who show off, rejoice in what they do, and claim to do what they have not done.

About this, al-Bukhārī recorded that Abū Sa’īd Al-Khudrī said,

“During the time of the Messenger of Allah, when the Messenger would go to battle, some hypocrite men would remain behind and rejoice because they did not accompany the Prophet in battle. When the Messenger would come back, they would ask him to excuse them swearing to have some excuse and wanting to be praised for that which they did not do. So, Allah revealed this verse.” (Ibn Kathīr 2002).

THE GIFT-GIVING AND HAPPINESS

Research conducted by Delle Fave et al. (2011) showed that happiness was primarily defined as a condition of psychological balance and harmony. Among the different life domains, family and social relations were prominently associated with happiness and meaningfulness. From this point of view, gift-giving as a simple act of social relation can also increase happiness (Park 1998). In Islamic history, The Queen of Sheba, Bilqis sent the Prophet Solomon a significant gift of gold, jewels, pearls, and other items and waited to see what his response would be. It was unsure whether he would accept the gift and leave them alone, or if he would impose an annual tax so that he would not wage war against them. It is apparent that Prophet Solomon did not even look at what they brought and paid no attention to the gift. Instead, he turned away and rebuked them as in Sura al-Naml verse 36. The prince responded by accusing the queen of flattery and said,

“What Allah has given to me of power, wealth, and troops, is better than that which you have. You are the ones who are influenced by gifts and presents; we will accept nothing from you except Islam or the sword.” (Ibn Kathīr 2002).

In other words, gift-giving has a good effect on people (Qian, Abdur Razzaque & Ah Keng 2007).

CAESAR DEFEATED CHOSROES (KISRA)

The Persians defeated the Roman Empire, but Allah had said that even after the defeat of Rome, they would eventually become victorious again. It was only nine years later in 622 CE that the Romans were victorious at the battle of Issus. They went on to conquer Persia two years later in 624 CE (Umar 2008). In Sura al-Rūm verse 4 indicates that the believers will rejoice on this (Ibn Kathīr 2002). According to many scholars like Ibn ‘Abbās, al-Thawrī, al-Suddī, and others, the victory of the Romans over

the Persians happened on the same day as the battle of Badr, and Allah revealed Sura al-Rūm verses 4 and 5 (Al-Ṭabarī 2001). In this regard, Allah says in Sura Āli ‘Imrān verse 170 about the virtues of the martyrs. This verse indicates that martyrs killed in the name of Allah are alive with Him and that they are delighted because of the bounty and happiness they are enjoying. They are also awaiting their brethren, who will die in Allah’s cause after them, for they will be meeting them soon. These martyrs do not have fear about the future or sorrow for what they leave behind (Ibn Kathīr 2002).

SPLITTING INTO SECTS AND THE SAVED SECTS

In Islam, early followers of the religion had differences of opinions with more modern followers, and they split into false sects, each group claiming to be following the truth. Currently, Islam has divided into factions, all of which are misguided apart from one, which is *Ahl al-Sunnah Wa al-Jamā‘ah*. This term means those who adhere to the Quran and the Prophetic practices (sunnah) of Muhammad and what followed from his Companions, their followers, and Muslim leaders. In his *al-Mustadrak*, al-Hākim recorded that the Prophet was asked which of the sects was the saved sect, and he said:

“What I and my Companions are upon.” (Al-Ṭabarī 2001).

This divided the religion, and there became seas of every sect rejoicing in what they had with them (Sura al-Rūm verse 32).

Ibn Kathīr (2002) notes that the idolators who split their religion, change it by believing certain parts and rejecting others. The term *Faraq Dīnahum* refers to someone who has neglected or left behind their faith like the Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, idol worshippers, and followers of false faiths other than Islam, as Allah says in Sura al-An‘ām verse 159. Again, Allah warns against splitting into different groups or sects (Rahman 1976), and says in Sura al-Mu‘minūn verse 53:

“But they have broken their religion among them into a sect, the nations to whom prophets were sent. Each group rejoicing in what is with it.”

This verse means they rejoice in their misguidance because they think they are rightly-guided (Ibn Kathīr 2002). Finally, the key to happiness is to follow the *Sunna* (Kobrin 2003).

ORDERING PATIENCE AND GRATITUDE

As quoted by al-Ṭabarī (2001), ‘Ikrimah stressed that every Muslim feels happiness and grief. However, they need to relate their joy with gratitude and endure grief with patience, as Allah said in Sura al-Ḥadīd verse 23. From here, according to Ibn Kathīr (2002), the meaning of Allah’s word,

“And Allah likes not prideful boasters,”

who acts arrogantly with other people. Hence, happiness in Islam has shown the encouragement to obey Allah before the day of resurrection (Safertā 1986), as Allah says in Sura al-Shūrā verse 75:

“And verily, when We cause man to taste of mercy from Us, he rejoices thereat,”

means when a time of ease and comfort comes to them, they are happy about it.

“But when befalls some evil to them,”

means if times of ease come to him, he becomes arrogant and transgresses, but if any difficulty befalls him, he loses hope and is filled with despair (Ibn Kathīr 2002).

Happiness according to Ibn Kathīr also notes how man sways between the oneness of God (tawḥīd) and polytheism (shirk), and between joy and despair according to his circumstances, as Allah said in Sura al-Rūm verse 36. This verse is a denunciation of man, except for those whom Allah protects and helps, for when a man is given blessings, he is proud, and says in Sura Hūd verse 10:

“Ills have departed from me. Surely, he is exultant and boastful.”

He rejoices over himself and boasts to others, but when difficulties befall him, He despairs of ever having anything good again. Allah says:

“Except those who show patience and do righteous and good deeds.”

They are patient during times of difficulty and do good deeds at times of ease (Ibn Kathīr 2002). Also, reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Muslim 2005):

“How wonderful is the affair of the believer. Allah does not decree anything for him, but it is good for him. If good things happen to him, he gives thanks, and that is good for him; and if bad things happen to him, he bears that with patience, and that is good for him.”

Hence, the cumulative Islamic tradition attests to the importance of happiness to faith in God, and to the importance of religion to happiness (Usman et al. 2020). While the themes of knowledge, enlightenment, balance, peace, and knowing the other are central to the Islamic theology of happiness, the failure of happiness is embodied by the idea of *jāhiliyyah* (a state of ignorance) (El Fadl 2014).

CONCLUSION

Islam is a religion that is a complete way of life. Happiness is not only intense joy but also contentment. Every one of God's commandments aims to bring happiness to the individual. To rejoice and be happy, to remain positive and be at peace; these ideas are some of what Islam teaches Muslims through the Quran and Prophet Muhammad. These ideas apply in all aspects of life, worship, economics, and society. As most of us have come to realise, happiness is that ethereal quality that encompasses contentment and peace, 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 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 mankind's happiness in this world and salvation in the next. However, Ibn Kathīr also points out that Islam emphasises 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, to achieve satisfaction, people attempt to follow difficult paths; they fail to see the more straightforward route that is Islam. Happiness is found in the solace that comes from being aware of the truth. It can be achieved by sincere worship, hastening to do virtuous, noble, and beautiful deeds, and by performing acts of kindness or charity. The nature of the human condition means that with happiness, there may be great sorrow and within the pain and despair, there may be a great joy. A believer will accept God's decree for him and lead a happy life free from despair or unbearable pain.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Abur Hamdi Usman contributed to the writing of the article. He designed the research plan, organized

the study, developed the methodology, created the discussion, and corrected references. Muhd. Najib Abdul Kadir contributed to the Malay abstract translation, proofread the English grammatical errors and reviewed the article.

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