

Section 1: Religious Foundations of Happiness

Cognition of the word

We should know the world as it is. An easy life is the result of the cognition of the world. The Prophet of Islam said that if you knew of the world what I know, your souls would feel complacency from it. He also said in his prayers, “O God! Show the being and universe to me as it is.”

Also, Imam Ali said that everyone who knows the world, will not grieve from it. He does not say the world is full of pleasures; rather, he says that if your knowledge and cognition of the world is real, despite its hardships and in spite of confessing to them, we will not sorrow. Imam Husayn, in the hardest moments of Ashura, said, “O my lord I forbear on Your Decree,” and the more he became closer to death (martyrdom), the more he became happy. Thus, grief and stress due to hardships are rooted in unawareness.

Unawareness causes dissatisfaction, and dissatisfaction causes sorrow and grief. The Prophet of Islam said that God has verily placed, through his wisdom and bounty, welfare and happiness in certitude and satisfaction, and grief in doubt and dissatisfaction. In addition, Imam Ali said that certitude is the best remover of sorrow^{[1](#)}.

A great part of life’s hardship is because of our own stringency, and not for real problems of life. Therefore, we should search for tranquility of life in ourselves and search for it in internal factors. Imam Kadhimi says to take life easy, because God made life pleasant for those people who take it easy. Also, Imam Ali says in this regard, “I investigated and searched through life, and I did not see it save in leaving carnal desires. Therefore, leave these desires so that your life might become delightful”^{[2](#)}.

The Prophet of Islam says that wisdom comes down from the sky, but it does not come down to the hearths where the tomorrow’s grief is. The Prophet of Islam says that God has placed, because of his wisdom and bounty, welfare and happiness in certitude and satisfaction, and sorrow and grief in doubt and anger.

Philosophy and wisdom sprung from the cognition of the world can bring humans to an admirable position in which they see the universe and its events as they are. They see as beautiful only those things that are beautiful, and they see as ugly only those things that are ugly. They enjoy the good and hate the bad. Therefore, they see no obscenity in what God has created and has brought up because God is:

الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ

“Who has created all things well” (Holy Quran, 32: 7).

There are three essential concepts, each of which is the prerequisite of the next; these are knowledge, attitude, and behavior. The improvement in knowledge should lead to an improvement in attitude, and improvement in attitude should lead to an improvement in behavior. Therefore, a person who has a comprehensive personality and has the above concepts in himself or herself will be more likely to achieve happiness.

Knowledge

The Prophet of Islam said that (real and spiritual) knowledge is a light that God places in the hearts of those He likes. It is evident that it is a heart that deserves such knowledge.

The Prophet of Islam says that if I spend a day in which I do not learn something that makes me nearer to God, may the sunrise of that day not be blessed to me. He also says, “If one person is guided by you, it would be better for you than all the world.

Knowledge, beatitude, and goodness can bring humans to happiness; i.e., if we plan to increase our knowledge and cognition, to get more attached to art and beautiful nature, and to try to be more helpful with people, it will be possible for us to live more happily. There is also an interaction and interrelationship between the above three important key words; an increase in any of them causes an increase in the others.

According to Imam Ali, “thought” (a correct thinking) leads to happiness: “People! Think well, and observe with insight and take lessons and accept admonitions and take the necessary supplies for the hereafter so that you might attain happiness.” In addition, Imam Hasan introduces “thought” as the root of all virtues or goodness.

The Prophet of Islam believes that knowledge or cognition is a way to Paradise, and Imam Ali introduces knowledge as the peak of all virtues³.

The following statement is the expressive language of aware, good, and pious persons: “O God! How can I thank you that Thou taught me not to pass indifferently and unresponsively by the side of the

beauty of a flower, freshness of a bloom, flourish of a bud and tenderness of a breeze.”

According to the Prophet of Islam, if the friends of God are silent, their silence is spent thinking, and if they speak, their talk is remembrance (of God and spirituality).

There are many Islamic traditions and Qur’anic verses that indicate the importance of due silence, thought, night, and tears. There are many spiritual positions and tranquilities that are attained only through the understanding of the above factors.

The Prophet of Islam introduces “silence” as the first worship⁴. Imam Ali introduces talking for a long time as a calamity and states that a long speech really makes listeners tired⁵. According to Imam Ali, “thinking” grows and is increased in the light of such silence, and silence is the garden and cultivation place of man’s thinking. The Qur’an says regarding the silence sprung from cognition,

وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ تَرَىٰ أَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۚ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ

“When they hear what has been sent down to the messenger, thou seest their eyes overflow with tears because of truth they recognize. They say our Lord, we believe; so do Thou write us down among the witnesses” (Holy Quran, 5: 83)

Night is one of the best opportunities for silence, thinking, and spiritual tears. The Qur’an says in this regard,

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ عَسَىٰ أَن يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا

“As for the night, keep vigil a part of it, as a work of supererogation for thee; it may be that thy Lord will raise thee up to a laudable station” (Holy Quran, 17: 79)

Thus, the Prophet of Islam is commanded from God to:

قُمِ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا نِّصْفَهُ أَوْ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْئًا وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا

“Keep vigil the night, except a little, a half of it, or diminish a little, or add a little, and chant the Koran very distinctly. Behold, we shall cast upon thee a weighty word. Surely the first part of the night is heavier in tread, more upright in speech” (Holy Quran, 73: 2-6)

Pain and Endurance

It is of the most basic and fundamental religious beliefs that the world flows on the basis of divine wisdom, and there is not even one phenomenon or event that has no reason. Thus, it is important for us to know wisdom and expediencies of events. A good life is not a life that is full of pleasures and without pain; rather, a good life is a meaningful life. Therefore, meaningful pain cannot make the aware persons annoyed. The Prophet of Islam said, “No prophet was annoyed like me,” and he still endured and saw the good results of his endurance and patience. These are some of the reasons why the Qur’an says:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ

“Indeed, We created man in trouble” (Holy Quran, 90: 4)

And:

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفُورُ

“who created death and life, that he might try you which of you is fairest in works, and he is the All-mighty, the All-forgiving” (Holy Quran, 67:2)

Another verse says:

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ ۚ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ

“Surely We will try you with something of fear and hunger, and diminution of goods and lives and fruits, yet give thou good tidings unto the patient” (Holy Quran,2: 155)[6](#)

We will surely face pain and difficulties. According to Imam Ali, the world “is a house surrounded by calamities and well-known for deceitfulness. Its conditions do not last and those who inhabit it do not remain safe”[7](#).

If we know these facts and come to know that all these difficulties and pains can surely lead to our perfection, we will not suffer from such problems but the problems will lead to our happiness. If we believe that we will definitely face such problems as fear, hunger, decline in wealth, etc., in this world, then we will surely suffer less from stress, and we will enjoy more mental health. Therefore, we must change our attitudes toward the world and its problems so that we might attain a position in which we see no pain and difficulty, and all that we want will be done because in such a position we only want what God wants, and what God wants will be done.

A believer in one God knows that all the events of the world are meaningful and goal-oriented, not accidental. The Qur'an teaches us that:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَبْشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ
نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَائُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ ۖ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِي أَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدْعُونَ ۚ نَزَّلًا مِنْ غَفُورٍ رَحِيمٍ

“those who have said our Lord is God then have gone straight, upon them the angles descend, saying, Fear not, neither sorrow; rejoice in Paradise that you were promised. We are your friends in the present life and in the world to come; therein you shall have all that your souls desire, all that you call for, as hospitality from one All-forgiving, All-compassionate” (Holy Quran, 41: 30–32)

And the Qur'an also emphasizes the fact that:

أَلَا إِنَّ أَوْلِيََاءَ اللَّهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

“surely, God's friends—no fear shall be on them, nor shall they sorrow. Those who believe, and are god fearing, for them is good tidings in the present life and in the world to come” (Holy Quran, 10: 62)

It adds:

وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ ۖ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

“Yet it may happen that you will hate a thing which is better for you, and it may happen that you will love a thing which is worse for you. God knows, and you know not” (Holy Quran, 2: 216)

And:

فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا

“it is possible you may be averse to a thing, and God set in it much good” (Holy Quran, 4: 19)

The first symptom of spiritual disorders is to grieve for those things that do not deserve grief.

Asceticism

One of the ways in which humans can achieve happiness is asceticism. The real meaning of asceticism

is “not wanting,” not “not having”; real asceticism does not want worldly things to the extent that one becomes so attached to them that he becomes somewhat indifferent to God. Imam Ali says that all asceticism from the viewpoint of the Qur’an has been summarized in this verse:

﴿لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ﴾

“that you may not grieve for what escapes you, nor rejoice in what has come to you” (Holy Quran, 57: 23)

Imam Ali says that the fruit of asceticism is peace of mind; he also introduces asceticism as the great comfort. The Prophet of Islam deems asceticism as the cause of comfort of spirit and body⁸.

The Prophet of Islam introduces the affluence of the soul as the real affluence and enrichment. Some people think they should get more possibilities, facilities, and income for their lives to be happier. Such an attitude causes them to try to get more of such things. This state, in turn, makes them become greedy and avaricious. The greedier people become, the more they distance themselves from happiness and tranquility. A greedy person is considered a deprived one. Imam Sadiq says that a greedy person is deprived of contentment, and then he is affected with inconvenience; deprived of satisfaction, he then loses his certitude. Imam Ali says that a greedy person is never seen resting, and Imam Ali also orders people to act with dignity in acquisition of sustenance.

On the other hand, a miserly person, according to Imam Ali, increases his stress, and according to the Prophet of Islam, a stingy person has the least comfort⁹.

As for wealth and worldly things, Imam Sajjad says that there is no one who required a little of the worldly, unless he or she becomes greedy for it. Everyone who obtains more from the world becomes needier. There is no tranquility and comfort in the wealth of the world, but Satan tempts human beings that their restfulness is in gathering wealth and through this leads them to more pain¹⁰. The Prophet of Islam says that whosoever doesn’t desist from staring at people’s wealth will experience lasting grief¹¹. According to the Prophet of Islam, extreme interest in this world increases one’s grief, and piety and asceticism, causes tranquility of health and body.

The Prophet of Islam says that for one who is satisfied with the livelihood (sufficiency) level in life, the least level of life will be sufficient for him. He also says that extreme interest in the world increases grief, and asceticism to the world causes tranquility of the body and heart. The Prophet of Islam believes that those staring at other people’s wealth will always be annoyed, and the fire of anger will never abate from their hearts.

The Qur’an complains of some people and says:

أَتَبْنُونَ بِكُلِّ رِيعٍ آيَةً تَعْبَثُونَ وَتَتَّخِذُونَ مَصَانِعَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَخْلُدُونَ

“What, do you build on every prominence a sign, sporting, and do you take to you castles, haply to dwell forever?” (Holy Quran, 26: 128–129)

In addition, the Prophet of Islam says that some people build that which they do not inhabit and gather that which they do not eat¹².

If someone compares himself with those whose worldly things such as money, etc., are better than his, this will cause grief and sorrow in him. The Qur'an says:

فَخَرَجَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ فِي زِينَتِهِ ۖ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا يَا لَيْتَ لَنَا مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ قَارُونُ إِنَّهُ لَذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ

“so he (Korah) went unto his people in his adornment. Those who desired the present life said, ‘Would that we possessed the like of that Korah has been given: surely he is a man of mighty fortune.’” (Holy Quran, 28: 79)

Therefore, God orders his prophet:

وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ ۚ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ

“Stretch not thin eyes to that we have given pairs of them to enjoy—the flower of the present life, that We may try them therein, and thy Lord’s provision is better, and more enduring” (Holy Quran, 20: 131)

Imam Sadiq says in this regard that everyone who stares at whatever is in the hands of the worldly persons will have lasting grief, and the Prophet of Islam says that the sorrow of such a person will increase¹³.

Faith and Belief in God

Faith and belief in God can be considered as one of the causes of happiness. The Qur'an says in this regard:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

“Those who believe, and have not confounded their belief with evildoing—to them belongs the true security; they are rightly guided” (Holy Quran, 6: 82)¹⁴.

Imam Ali emphasizes that real believers receive happiness when guided. The word “faith” in Islam (Iman) is taken from “Amn,” which means “secure, safe, tranquility” All of these words denote the close relationship between “faith” and “happiness.” But it should be noted that a kind of faith can lead to happiness that is based on knowledge and cognition of God and all human beings, the world, death, and hereafter. Therefore, the belief of those believers can be acceptable when it is founded on a great insight. That is the reason that the Prophet of Islam orders us to fear God and enlighten our hearts with the light of “faith” so that we might fear no one and nothing save the One God.

Imam Ali says, “Opportunity passes away like the cloud; therefore, make use of good opportunities¹⁵. Thus, losing such a valuable opportunity will cause sorrow and loss. The Qur’an says,

وَالْعَصْرِ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

“By the afternoon! Surely Man is in the way of loss, save those who believe, and do righteous deeds, and counsel each other unto the truth, and counsel each to be steadfast” (Holy Quran, 103: 1-3)

The Prophet of Islam says that the one whose intimate is God will not fear. And Imam Ali says, “Who is there to go towards God like the thirsty going to the water?”¹⁶.

Supplication and prayer of good bondsmen of God remove grief from them. We should put our trust in God, i.e., consign all of our works and life to Him, and then we should do our duty and make efforts as far as is possible for us or consistent with those powers and abilities that God has given us, and finally we should be quite satisfied with those things that occur. These three golden key words can actually lead us to happiness: trust in God, effort, and satisfaction.

Remembrance of God and His Verses

One of the original needs of all human beings is to be with God. God blew His spirit into man; thus, if man is not connected to God, he will not enjoy a happy life. The Qur’an says:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۖ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“Those who believe, their hearts being at rest in God’s remembrance, in God’s remembrance are at rest the hearts” (Holy Quran, 13: 28)

And:

وَمَنْ أَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُ مَعِيشَةً ضَنْكًا وَنَحْشُرُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ أَعْمَى

“Whosoever turns away from My remembrance, his shall be a life of narrowness” (Holy Quran, 20: 124) [17](#).

The Prophet of Islam emphasizes and tells us to associate with someone whose visit causes remembrance of God: his tongue should increase your knowledge, and his morality and deeds should make you anxious and interested in the hereafter.

It should be remembered here that the remembrance of God, according to the Qur'an, causes the rest and tranquility of man's hearts. According to Imam Ali, the happiest persons are those whose hearts and souls wish to worship and obey God [18](#).

One of the factors of happiness is the remembrance of God. According to the Prophet of Islam, the delight of believers in the world is the remembrance of God, their affection for Him, and acquiring His satisfaction. According to Imam Sajjad, “Through Thy remembrance, is alive my heart” [19](#).

The Prophet of Islam says that remembrance of death, reading the Qur'an, remembrance of God, and wisdom cause the inner happiness of humans.

God describes the Qur'an as “cure and mercy”:

وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۚ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا

“And we send down, of the Koran, that which is a healing and a mercy to the believers; and the unbelievers it increases not, except in loss” (Holy Quran, 17: 82)

And according to Imam Ali, one should “learn the Qur'an for it is the fairest of discourse and understand it thoroughly for it is the best blossoming of hearts. Seek cure with its light for it is the cure for hearts. Recite it beautifully for it is the most beautiful narration” [20](#).

He adds in another part of Nahjul Balagah, “Know that this Qur'an is an adviser who never deceives, a leader who never misleads and a narrator who never speaks a lie. No one will sit beside this Qur'an but that when he rises he will achieve one addition or one diminution—addition in his guidance and elimination in his (spiritual) blindness [21](#).

And the Prophet of Islam introduced God as a (spiritual) physician. Imam Ali calls the prophet a physician. Imam Ali, in the pray of Kumail, considers God as the source whose Name is healing and His remembrance is treatment.

Worshipping God

Prayer and worship of God can remove sorrow and cause happiness. Imam Sadiq recommends that

when a worldly grief overcomes someone, he should perform ablution, go into a mosque, and pray to God²².

The ultimate goal of man's creation is submission to God:

مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُطْعَمُوا

“I have not created Jinn and mankind except to serve me” (Holy Quran, 51: 57)

But those who can achieve such a position as to obtain the necessary knowledge for cognition of God. Because it is impossible to worship God without knowing Him. On the other hand, how is it possible that a person knows God as deserves and does not love Him? In such a case, for the one who knows and loves God, God's remembrance will cause a sacred tranquility and happiness in him, as the Qur'an says:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۖ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

“In God's remembrance are at rest the hearts” (Holy Quran, 13: 28)

It is regarding such a status that Imam Sajjad says, “My God, who can have tasted the sweetness of Thy love, then wanted another in place of Thee? Who can have become intimate with Thy nearness, then sought removal from Thee?” (The Whispered prayer of the Lovers).

The Prophet of Islam considers the happiness of the believers in meeting with friends, the time of breaking a fast, and worship in the last hours of night.

So much is certain that Adam had a joyful life when he lived in Paradise. But when God ordered him and Eve:

وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

“Draw not nigh this tree, lest you be evildoers” (Holy Quran, 2: 35)

And they did not obey, God commanded them:

أَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ ۖ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ ۖ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ

“Get you all down, each of you an enemy of each; and in earth a sojourn shall be yours and

enjoyment for a time” (Holy Quran, 2: 36)

Therefore, they entered the earth. Man’s grief started in the separation from paradise and God because man did not feel harmony with this world and worldly materials.

We should only grieve when we are not acting towards achieving the goals for which we have been created, e.g., when we are not a good person, when we do not help others, etc. The Qur’an introduces God’s bounty as the cause of happiness and something that is better than worldly things:

قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ

“Say: in the Bounty of God—and His mercy—in that let them rejoice, it is better than that they amass” (Holy Quran, 10: 58)

Friendship

Loneliness makes one annoyed. Man likes to be with others and communicate with them. This is an emotional need. Friends can save man from loneliness and make him happy. The happiness of having friends occurs when one can find a friend who is similar to him or her. Imam Sadiq says that one can find his restfulness in his believer brother. On the other hand, one should find an analogous friend for herself or himself, and she or he should keep away from bad persons as far as possible. According to Imam Ali, having little communication with such persons is the cause of keeping one’s religion and frees man from nearness to the rebels.

One of the factors of human happiness is having a good spouse. According to the Qur’an:

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُبْلِسُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ

“Of his signs is that He created for you, of yourselves, spouses that you might repose in them, and he has set between you love and mercy. Surely in that are signs for people who consider” (Holy Quran, 30: 12)

Also,

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا

“It is He who created you out of one living soul, and made of him his spouse that he might rest in her” (Holy Quran, 7: 189)

Happiness is in spouses when there is friendship (love) and mercy between them. In addition, happiness is in having good children, according to the Prophet of Islam²³. The word “man” or “human being” (Insan) in Arabic is taken from “Ons,” which means “affinity.” Some etymologists believe that the origin of the meaning is that affluence, beauty, and affinity in the earth is possible only in the light of the existence of human beings, while other etymologists say that it is because man’s life is possible without affinity with others. And some say that it is because he is a manifestation of God’s names and these are attuned with him. Some etymologists believe that word is taken from the word “nesyan,” which means “forgetfulness.” As the Qur’an says:

وَلَقَدْ عَهِدْنَا إِلَىٰ آدَمَ مِن قَبْلُ فَنَسِيَ وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهُ عَزْمًا

“And we made covenant with Adam before, but he forgot, and we found in him no constancy” (Holy Quran, 20: 115)

It can be concluded from these facts that man should first be the cause of happiness. Second, man’s happiness is obtained through being with other human beings and through being with God; forgetting God causes grief in him.

The Qur’an says regarding some (bad) people:

تَحْسِبُهُمْ جَمِيعًا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ شَتَّىٰ

“You think of them as a host; but their hearts are scattered” (Holy Quran, 59: 14)

And Imam Ali says in this regard,

“You are brethren in the religion of God. Dirty nature and bad conscience have separated you. Consequently, you do not bear burdens of each other nor advise each other. What is your condition? You feel satisfied with what little you have secured from this world while much of the next world of which you have been deprived does not grieve you. The little of this world which you lose pains you so much so that it becomes apparent in your faces, and in the lack of your endurance over whatever is taken away from you”²⁴.

One of the reasons for this is egoism, while affection causes the selfishness to be removed. According to Imam Ja’far Sadiq, the reason for affection towards others is the selection of and preferring the beloved to others. According to the Prophet of Islam, God is the friend of the one who loves him. According to him, the happiest people are those who have relations with good and great individuals. Imam Ali orders us to be with scholars so that we might achieve happiness²⁵.

The Prophet of Islam believes that visiting religious brothers causes happiness²⁶.

Goodness and Helping Others

The Prophet of Islam says of the one who solves a problem of the believers that God will solve 72 of his problems in the world and in the hereafter. According to Imam Sadiq, “Make your (religious) brother happy, so that God would make you happy”²⁷.

The Prophet of Islam said that whosoever wishes his prayer to be heard and his grief to be removed should remove the difficulties of one who has confronted a problem²⁸. One of the factors in removing sorrow and attaining happiness is to pray. The Qur’an says:

وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَىٰ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ ۚ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And Jonah (Dhal-Nun)—when he went forth enraged and thought that we should have no power over him; then he called out in the darkness, ‘There is no god but thou; Glory be to Thee! I have done evil.’ So We answered him, and delivered him out of grief, even so do we deliver the believers” (Holy Quran,21::87-88)²⁹.

Imam Ali recommends that we remove grief and sorrow from ourselves by giving alms³⁰. The Prophet of Islam considers friendship towards the poor as a divine gift, saying to Imam Ali, “God has verily bestowed upon ye the love of the distressed and the poor.” The prophet introduces the best of persons who are more useful for the people.

The Prophet of Islam says that there is a home in the paradise, which is called “house of happiness”; no one enters it except the one who has made the orphans happy. He also says that whosoever causes happiness in a believer has made him happy, and the one who makes him happy has truly made God happy. The Prophet of Islam also says that for whoever removes a disaster from the world from a believer, God will surely remove seventeen disasters from him in the hereafter.

He introduces the best works before God, satisfying a poor man by paying his or her debt or removing a grief from him or her. He also says the best people are the ones we can hope expect and goodness from them and be relieved of their evils. He adds that one who wishes his prayers to be heard and granted and his sorrow to be removed should solve the problems of a poor person. The Prophet of Islam introduces showing kindness toward orphans and paying attention to the poor and distressed as some factors that cause happiness in the hereafter.

We should ask ourselves to what extent we have acted for tranquility of others that we can expect to have tranquility.

The Prophet of Islam asked a person about his feelings toward the believers. He answered that he

knows them as himself; what makes them annoyed makes him annoyed, too; and what makes them happy, makes him happy, too. The Prophet of Islam says, “You are the friend of God; none of creatures benefits as you, unless one who is like you. Your success is higher than those who have capital such as wealth, etc. I announce that you are of the wealthy people.” The Prophet of Islam says that loving others for the sake of God is considered as the firmest hold of “faith.”

The Qur'an considers doing “goodness” as one of the factors of happiness in man's life:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ وَافْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

“O men, bow you down and prostrate yourselves, and serve your Lord, and do good; haply so you shall prosper” (Holy Quran, 22: 77)

The Qur'an even says that inviting other people to “goodness” can lead to happiness:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۚ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“Let there be one nation of you, calling to good, and bidding to honor, and forbidding dishonor; those are the prosperers” (Holy Quran, 3: 104)

The Qur'an also says:

فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ

“Be you forward in good works” (Holy Quran, 2: 148)³¹.

Security

Happiness is impossible without security. Imam Ali says that every happiness needs security. The Qur'an refers to the bounty of security in many of its verses:

فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَٰذَا الْبَيْتِ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ

“So let them serve the Lord of this House, who has fed them against hunger and secured them from fear” (Holy Quran, 106: 3– 4)

God even introduces security as an introduction and background for worship:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا ۚ يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا ۚ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ

“God has promised those of you who believe and do righteous deeds that He will surely make you successors in the land, even as He made those who were before them successors and that He will surely establish their religion for them that He has approved for them, and will give them in exchange, after their fear, security. They shall serve Me, not associating with Me anything. Whoso disbelieves after that, those—they are the ungodly” (Holy Quran, 24: 55)

And it was based on this fact that Abraham when reestablishing Ka’bah, said:

رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا بَلَدًا آمِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ مَنْ آمَنَ مِنْهُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ

“My Lord, make this a land secure, and provide its people with fruits, such of them as believe in God and the last Day” (Holy Quran, 2: 126)[32](#).

Sleep

Since working is one of the factors of happiness, while on the other hand continuous working and effort makes one tired, we need enough sleep, which is in itself one of the other factors of happiness. The Qur’an says:

وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا

“We appointed your sleep for a rest” (Holy Quran, 78: 9)

And:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا وَالنَّوْمَ سُبَاتًا وَجَعَلَ النَّهَارَ نُشُورًا

“It is He who appointed the night for you to be a garment and sleep for a rest, and day He appointed for a rising” (Holy Quran, 25: 47)

In some verses of the Qur’an, God refers to night as one of the causes of man’s tranquility:

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا

“It is He who made for you the night to repose in it, and the day, to see” (Holy Quran, 10: 67)

And:

فَالِقُ الْإِصْبَاحِ وَجَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ سَكَنًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ حُسْبَانًا ﴿٩﴾ ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

“He splits the sky into dawn, and has made the night for a repose, and the sun and moon for a reckoning” (Holy Quran, 6: 96)[33](#).

Work

One of the factors of man’s life is to work. Imam Sadiq says that if all humans’ needs were satisfied, life would not be delightful for them, and they would not enjoy it. Then he adds that the best tact for what has been created for human beings is in the fact that there is a place or position for their efforts so that unemployment might not make them annoyed[34](#).

Health

One of the important factors of happiness is health. All pleasures of life are meaningless unless one is healthy. Imam Ali says that there is no goodness in life save with health. He also believes that through health, life pleasures are understandable. According to him, health is the highest bounty, and no other pleasures are more delightful[35](#).

Humor

The other factor of happiness is humor. The Prophet of Islam considers humor as one of the characteristics of the believers, and he himself was on familiar terms with humor and made himself and others happy. According to Imam Ali, man makes his soul restful in the light of humor[36](#).

Travel

According to Imam Ali, travel can remove grief from people[37](#). In addition to this, the Qur’an mentions the following benefits of travel:

﴿٩﴾ أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ

“Have they not journeyed in the land? Have they not beheld how the end of those before them was?” (Holy Quran, 12: 109)

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا

“What have not journeyed in the land so that they have hearts to understand with or ears to hear with?” (Holy Quran,22: 46)

قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ سُنَنٌ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْذِبِينَ

“Diverse institutions have passed away before you; journey in the land, and behold how was the end of those that cried lies” (Holy Quran, 3: 137)

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ

“Say: journey in the land, then behold how the end of the sinners was” (Holy Quran,27: 69)

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ

“Journey in the land, then behold how was the end of those that were before” (Holy Quran, 30: 42)

1. Pasandideh, 2007, p. 23–27.
2. Pasandideh, 2007, p. 137–139.
3. Tayyebi & Moeenoleslam, 2004, p. 67.
4. Cited in Mohammadi Rey Shahri, 1993, vol. 5, p. 433.
5. Aas cited in Barumand, 2001.
6. cited in Pasandideh, 2007, p. 280–290.
7. Nahjul Balagah – sermon 226.
8. Pasandideh, 2007, p. 48–49.
9. Pasandideh, 2007, p. 71–79.
10. Pasandideh, 2007, p. 242.
11. Loqmani, 2006, p. 200.
12. Pasandideh, 2007, p. 167–168.
13. Pasandideh, 2007, p. 100, 107.
14. cited in Akbari, 2006, p. 177.
15. Nahjul Balagah – Saying 21.
16. Nahjul Balagah – sermon 124.
17. cited in Pasandideh, 2007, p. 215– 219.
18. Tayyebi & Moeenoleslam, 2004, p. 144.
19. Akbari, 2006, p. 49.
20. Nahjul Balagah – sermon 110
21. Nahjul Balagah – sermon 176
22. Akbari, 2006, p. 189.
23. Pasandideh, 2007, p. 203–204; 210.
24. Nahjul Balagah – sermon 113

- [25.](#) Tayyebi & Moeenoleslam, 2004, p. 146–147.
- [26.](#) Akbari, 2006, p. 47.
- [27.](#) Akbari, 2006, p. 123– 126.
- [28.](#) Akbari, 2006, p. 189.
- [29.](#) cited in ibid, p. 197.
- [30.](#) Akbari, 2006, p. 201.
- [31.](#) cited in Loqmani, 2006, p. 49.
- [32.](#) cited in Pasandideh, 2007, p. 173–175.
- [33.](#) cited in Pasandideh, 2007, p. 179–180.
- [34.](#) Pasandideh, 2007, p. 150–151.
- [35.](#) Pasandideh, 2007, p. 177–178.
- [36.](#) Pasandideh, 2007, p. 182–184.
- [37.](#) Akbari, 2006, p. 184–185.

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