

Introduction

Happiness is the major concepts of every times and places, and have always been emphasized in different schools by different scholars. It can be investigated from different points of view. Investigation of happiness from the religious, philosophical and psychological viewpoints may be considered as the most important ones; especially the close relationship between religion and philosophy is a very significant matter in this regard.

Paying attention to the factors which have influence on happiness¹ is really considering all virtuous, merits and values and “what’s desirable and worthwhile”.

Those who have recognized these and factors can live happier (Martin, 2006) and this indicates the mighty and magnitude of happiness. It is here that knowledge is truly that cause happiness and so the ways to nurturing it can be discovered.

Happiness is taken from the Greek word ‘Happ’ which means, “Luck or good fortune”². Although there is pleasure in happiness, but happiness is not equal to pleasure, it is much higher than Pleasure; it is a real, stable and original pleasure which is quite consistent with man’s nature. Pleasure is one of the elements of (or subset of) happiness³.

In other words, though there is pleasure in happiness, but happiness is not the same as pleasure. According to Martine (2006) happiness consists of a combination of three distinct elements: pleasure (the emotional sensation of feeling good in the here and now), the absence of displeasure (freedom from unpleasant sensations such as anxiety or pain) and satisfaction (judging, on reflection, that your life is good), thus happiness depends both on feeling (pleasure) and thinking (satisfaction).

Some psychologists and philosophers argue that there is a fourth dimension to happiness, which they variously refer to as ‘meaning’, ‘purpose’ or ‘virtue’. This embodies the sense that for a life to truly happy it must have some deeper purpose or meaning beyond pleasure or satisfaction. For some people, this fourth dimension means religion, though the fourth dimensions can be included in the other dimensions, especially the element of satisfaction.

Nettle (2005) believes that happiness includes three levels, level one (momentary feelings: joy, pleasure, etc.); level two (judgment about feelings (well-being, satisfaction, etc.)); Level three (quality of life: flourishing, fulfilling one's potential, etc.)

Happiness is the overall satisfaction with quality of life⁴. Happiness is being found in, and sometimes identified with, a life of fulfillment – and harmony both within the individual and in that individual's relations with others⁵.

How is it possible for us to reach happiness? It is the most crucial and the important question about happiness which has been put forward regarding happiness through history. If we try to discover the viewpoints in religions and philosophy and psychology, we can achieve a true answer to this question. This causes a common understanding in different societies and among different people which would be much more effective than expressing the differences between different viewpoints.

Researches on psychology of happiness which reveal the similarities between religions, philosophy and psychology, is the other aim of this book. This will probably lead us to this fact that there might be some absolute and true constant standards and criteria for happiness in all times and places, and this also will cause that people not search for happiness from false resources, since all of persons, religions or unreligious because of self-love seek happiness.

Most recent researches concerning happiness and its correlatives have been reported in order that it might be made possible to compare the viewpoints of philosophers and religious Islamic texts with the psychological researches about happiness to reveal and show the similarities of philosophy, religion (Islam), and psychology. This will cause that a general and acceptable framework to be prepared for all people.

Discovering and understanding of the factors that cause happiness can help the people to live happier and therefore better, to be better individually and socially, and to reach nearer to God and to the aim for which they have been created.

What is really happiness based on? The answer to this question will determine the correlatives of happiness or the effective factors which determine the individuals' happiness. This is all that is meant by the word "foundation" in this book. In other words, foundations of happiness answer these questions: what is happiness? What is the difference between happiness and pleasure? What things cause happiness? Is it possible to reach happiness in this world?

It is also meant by the combination "religious, philosophical and psychological foundations of happiness" in this book those answers that religions, e.g. Islam and in this research, philosophers and psychologists give to these questions.

Divine religions can have a philosophical origin. Therefore, many philosophical reasons can be put forward for the interpretation and justification of religious problems. Thus, there is a very close

relationship between philosophy and religion, and then one might expect many similarities between philosophy and religion.

Since these two, in turn, are based upon thinking and cognition, it is quite reasonable that their teachings be consistent with scientific and empirical researches. That's the reason why the main purpose of this research was the extraction of the philosophical and religious foundations of one of the most important philosophical-religious and psychological subjects i.e. happiness.

Although "psychology" can be considered as a sub-set of philosophy, but since it is considered today as a separate and independent discipline, happiness can also be considered as a psychological topic, and many researches have been done regarding happiness in psychology, therefore the main goal of this research is to extract the philosophers, psychologists and religion's (Islam's) view of happiness. Much emphasis is placed on inferring the shared philosophical, religious and psychological foundations.

Non-Muslim and non-Iranian, & Muslim and Iranian, ancient or modern philosophers, were chosen who had some views of happiness and their views and character are reason or proof or all of the worldlings. The major purpose of doing this, was to reach a shared and common model and frame for happiness, or those things that can cause people to reach happiness, which is acceptable for various people of the world today, especially when these philosophical and religious views are compared with the most recent researches.

- [1.](#) White, 2006.
- [2.](#) Martin, 2006.
- [3.](#) Martin, 2006 & Black Burn 2005.
- [4.](#) Veenhoven, 1996; cited from Hartog and Oosterbeek, 1996.
- [5.](#) Mackinnon; quoted from Macquarrie and Chidress , 2001.

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