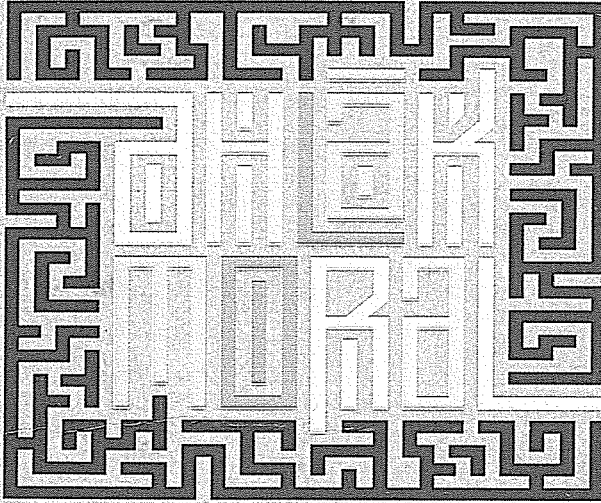


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VII

ETHICS AND HAPPINESS IN ISLAM

Muhammad Zainiy UTHMAN*

One person's disregard of common standard practice of morality is, more often than not, viewed with askance, at the least, or punishable by law and chastised by society, on the other hand. When the majority decides to relax the standards of morality, that aberration becomes acceptable. Does undoing traditional standards of morality lead to greater happiness of the many if not all, and does it translate into enhancing life as a whole or is the matter quite the reverse?

The use of drugs, the lowering of the age of consensual sex, drinking, to name a few, seems to make those concerned happy but the resultant quality of life of that society is debatable. The aberration of moral standards is not new. Infanticide is not only recorded in Quran (by way of declaring it illegal) but it is a common fact in the Roman Empire. Same sex relation is rampant if not fashionable even then. Substance abuse, a relatively modern menace, yet glorified, nonetheless in that greater than life yet fictitious character of Sherlock Holmes, and of recent television fictitious *persona* – House. In fact, the attack on traditional values grounded on religion is so rampant that it is the fashion and to live a religiously directed life is seen as retrogressive.

This paper provides a brief discussion on the definition of happiness in Islam as defined by al-Attas and followed by a look at western society's experience as written by Richard Layard in his work entitled *Happiness*.¹

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¹ Richard Layard, *Happiness* (London: Penguin Books, 2005),

Happiness (Sa'adah) in Islam

In his short but definitive work entitled *Islām: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality*, Profesör al-Attas mentioned briefly concerning the meaning and the experience of happiness in Islam in relation to the concept of religion (*dīn*) and its connection with the moral and ethical life and happiness of an individual. He says:

'Happiness' refers not to the physical entity in man, not to the animal soul and body of man; nor is it a state of mind – it has to do with certainty of the ultimate Truth and fulfillment of action in conformity with that certainty; and certainty is a permanent condition referring to what is permanent in man and perceived by his spiritual organ known as the heart (*al-qalb*). It is peace and security and tranquility of the heart; it is knowledge, and knowledge is true belief; it is knowing one's rightful, and hence proper, place in the realm of Creation and one's proper relation with the Creator; it is a condition known as *'adl* or justice.²

He later developed the idea in a small book entitled *The Meaning and Experience of Happiness in Islam*,³ by going deeper into the finer details discussing the meaning of happiness as understood and experienced by those who believe and live their lives according to the teachings and practices of Islam. The main ideas of that book were presented earlier at a symposium on *The State of Happiness* organized by the International Institute for Advanced Studies based in Kyoto, Japan, from 29-32 March 1993. His paper was highly praised because of the contribution he made to the discussion on the subject matter at hand. Upon his return from Japan, Profesör al-Attas continued to explain further on the topic of happiness in Islam based on that book in his weekly seminars at ISTAC and during his talks to senior government officers in Malaysia. It was during these series of lectures that those who attended realized the importance of al-Attas's talk, and as a result, the small monograph on *Happiness* was later translated into several languages, namely Arabic, German, and Italian. When he was presenting his paper on *Islam and the Challenge of Modernity* at the Eighth East-West Philosophers Conference) in the year 2000 in Hawaii he put forward these ideas and the importance of happiness to be discussed.

² *Islam and Secularism* (ISTAC: Kuala Lumpur, 1993, reprint), 75.

³ (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1993)

More often than not, happiness is sought after, and this inadvertently informs our minds that happiness is something elusive, ever changing, ever shifting. Such a concept informs the mind that happiness, that ever important and most desired of all, is something outside man, and furthermore different from himself that he has to seek after it. The Oxford Dictionary defines *happiness* as:

1. Good fortune or luck in life or in a particular affair; success, prosperity
2. The state of pleasurable content of mind, which is considered good, which results from success or the attainment of what is considered good
3. Successful or felicitous aptitude, fitness, suitability, or appropriateness; felicity.

Luck and fortunes are often thought of as fortuitous, insofar as they relate to the physical aspect of man and not spiritual; moreover they are beyond the control of man to attain, planned or otherwise. Similarly, the state of mind being contented as a result of attaining that which is considered good, because that attainment is not specified; what is good; and what brings felicity; what is meant by appropriateness, fitness, suitability – all these are beyond man's control. The lexical definitions in the Oxford Dictionary are based on Western philosophy, and provide only a glimpse of what can be described as attaining happiness but not the *meaning* of happiness. What is obvious and yet perplexing is there is not a relation between happiness and faith (*imân*), certainty (*yaqîn*), and virtues (*fadâ'il*).⁴ Since luck and fortune are ever transient, ephemeral, at one time good, the other bad, it is no surprise that one has to seek for and pursue them, and those who are "lucky" in that pursuit and attain that which is referred as good are said to be happy. As soon as that happiness is attained, it passes and fleets away since luck and fortune are beyond one's control. Such a concept of luck and fortune as understood in the Western psyche is not in the teachings of Islam.

There are three main elements that come into the picture as far as the meaning and experience of happiness in Islam in the quotation from al-Attas above. The self, our physical body, and what is around

⁴ For a discussion on modern interpretation of Western virtues, see Andre Comte-Sponville, *Petite Traite des Grand Vertus* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996), transl. into English by Catherine Temerson, *A Small Treatise on the Great Virtues* (New York: Metropolitan/Owl Book, 2001)

us are the three main elements. By taking into account these three elements Profesör al-Attas affirms the external as well as the internal elements of man in the meaning and experience of happiness. There is neither the element of luck nor fortune since, happiness in Islam or *sa'ādah*, as mentioned in the Qur'an relates to (1) the self of the individual, especially that aspect of the self which is the intellect because certainty (*yaqin*), a state of the soul that is reached by the intellect, resides in the heart (*qalb*); and certainty directly affects (2) the carrying out of obligations which involve the physical body in daily life based on knowledge of this World, or (3) that which is around us, namely all other than the self and the physical body. Since man is a creature of two aspects - he is an individual made of two aspects, the soul and the body - Profesör al-Attas neither separates nor differentiates, or degrades one aspect of human being over the other. On the contrary, he affirms the relation between them, being inseparable in the meaning and experience of happiness in Islam.

Certainty, which he refers to above, is not one merely derived from knowledge based on sense perception of this visible world. More than that, because certainty that he refers to is based on the knowledge of Tawhid (*ma'rifat al-tawhīd*) which projects a worldview as the Qur'an and the Sunnah project in the mind's eye concerning the meaning of existence of the Universe, encompassing the World Seen as well as the Unseen.

The perceptible world is a sign of God's beauty and majesty. These signs (*ayat*) indicate the existence of a Creator, and the certainty that one achieves is through scientific knowledge. The sensibles perceived by the senses are turned into intelligibles (*maqulat*); bringing forth what is understood (*mafhum*) which in turn becomes a certain object of knowledge producing certainty. Profesör al-Attas elaborates further the relationship between sense perception and the internal senses of man with the internal faculties in man. He shows that that relation between the two in thought that brings about concept and meaning in the quest for true knowledge and established certainty. Certainty arrived at via scientific knowledge (*'ilm al-yaqin*) is further augmented by witnessing (*'ayn al-yaqin*) Certainty that resides in the heart, he says, refers to *iman*, which involves the Primordial Covenant between man and his Creator sealed on the *Day of Alastu* mentioned in the

Qur'an (al-A'raf, 7:11).⁵ It is that Primordial Covenant that must be verified, that is to affirm its truth in one's daily life. The true path, by which one must abide in verifying that Covenant in one's daily life by performing all the obligations of Islam, is *al-dîn*.⁶ According to Profesör al-Attas, *al-dîn*, is "the returning of oneself to a state prior to his being in this world, and it involves the process of searching for one's identity and destiny in virtuous life." Al-Attas goes on to say that Islam provides man with the foundation of ethics and morality, guidance, and way of life to go through this worldly existence on a path that is firm and established to achieve happiness in this world and the next. Based on the verses of the Qur'an and their interpretation, the Hadith and the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and the blessing of God be upon him) and their commentaries, by Learned scholars Profesör al-Attas proposes a meaning of happiness that is not individualistic in nature, and one that does not changes from moment to moment and different from one to another individual, and not changing according to individual taste and desire, time and space, but what is meant by happiness is that which is established and affirmed as experienced by the soul, that which is experienced since the early days of Islam until today by those who truly live their lives according to their *imân* without any change to that meaning and experience.

The meaning and experience of happiness in Islam does not change according to al-Attas since the path that Islam lays out does not change. That path of Islam is the worldview of Islam as projected by the Qur'an and Profesör al-Attas coined the term in Arabic as "*ru'yat al-Islâm li'l-wujûd*".⁷ The worldview of Islam, like the rudder of ship

⁵ See S.M.N al-Attas, *Islam: Fahan Agama dan Asas Akhlak* (Kuala Lumpur: ABIM, 1977); for an English version, see *ibid.*, "Islam: The Concept of Religion and the Foundation of Ethics and Morality" in *Islam and Secularism* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1993, reprint), Chapter 3.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Profesör al-Attas does not agree with the term "*nazrat al-Islâm li'l-wujûd*" because in the use of terms by Learned scholars of Islam, *nazrat* refers to ocular vision that surveys only the physical aspect of creation accessible to the physical senses (*alam shahadah*). It is inaccurate to use the term "nazrat" over the world of unseen (*alam al-ghayb*). "Ru'yat" refers to insight or vision that is internal in nature, spiritual, implying the intellect ('aql) or the heart, the organ for spiritual cognition (*qalbu*), that receives true knowledge such that experienced by Prophet Yusuf (*alayhi salam*), and all the Messengers and Prophets alike.

The term *tasawwur Islam* is also inaccurate because the meaning that it contains in *tasawwur* refers to the vision that is envision by the intellect, hence the term *tasawwur Islam* gives the impression that that vision of Islam is one that is made by the intellect

that stays the ship on course, keeps a person steadfast on his path in this life towards heavenly salvation. The worldview of Islam, according to Prof. a-Attas, projects in the mind's eye a "vision of the reality of existence, a metaphysical survey of the visible as well as the invisible world, encompassing life as a whole, that informs man of his place in Creation." The knowledge of God and His Attributes, as made known in His Revelation, namely the Qur'an, with doubt in it, because of the new Arabic,⁸ in conveying meanings that correspond to reality.

about Islam. The same applies for the term *tasawwur Islami*. There some who are of the opinion that the better term is *tasawwur Islami* following the different *madhhab* in Islam on legal matters such as Maliki, Hanafi, Shafi'i and Hanbali. These differences are group together in one field of Islamic science called "al-fiqh al-İslâmi", and not *fiqh al-İslâm*. Since there are many interpretations on the worldview or the meaning of existence according to Islam, it is appropriate, according to them, that *tasawwur Islami* is used. These interpretations are subjective interpretation made by various individuals based on their personal individual understanding of the verses of the Qur'an, the Hadith of the Prophet SAW and the interpretations and commentaries of Learned scholars, hence they are relative, and differ from one to the other; hence the term according to them is *tasawwur İslâmi*. What is meant by personal individual interpretation is an interpretation that is based on natural instinct such as to interpretate the term 'jin'-in the Qur'an as germs (such that adopted by some modernist). This is not *tafsir*.

The worldview of Islam is not a subjective or personal interpretation of the world, hence it is not relative. As we mentioned above, the worldview of Islam is based on the fundamentals of beliefs of Islam (*'aqidah*) which do not change and vary: hence it is obvious that it not subjective and relative in nature, regardless of time and space. This is entirely different from the differences in the legal schools of Islam which do differ according to time, place and situation; the worldview of Islam is based on on the fundamentals of belief in Islam such as belief in God and His Names and Attributes, Revelation (al-Qur'an), Creation, the nature of man and the psychology of the human soul, knowledge, religion, the meaning of freedom, virtues, and happiness all of which are mentioned in the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet SAW which neither change nor vary according to space and time. It does not go through different thought process such as that in the legal school of thought (*madhhab*). The Islamic worldview is neither relative nor subjective because in the tradition of interpreting the Qur'an, the Learned scholars of Islam never regard an interpretation of the Qur'an (*tafsir*) subjective or relative although they were carried out by different individual scholar. The whole body of literature on *tafsir* is referred to as *tafsir al-qur'an* and not *al-tafsir al-qur'ani*; the same goes for commentaries on books of Hadith such as *Kitab Irshad al-Sari fi Sharh al-Bukhari* by al-Qastalani. Commentaries on Hadith are referred to not as *sharh hadithi*. The differences in *tafsir* or commentaries on Hadith are so because of differences in the level of intellectual acumen of each scholar, and not the reality of that which were interpreted or commented upon.

⁸ It is important to consider Profesör al-Attas's discussion on the language of Arabic of the Quran as a new language although its words are based on pre-İslâmic Arabic. He says:

Thus al-Qur'an conveys true and real knowledge leading to certainty (yaqîn), the root of Islamic aqîdah. Hence the recognition and acknowledgement of all existents in Creation: all that He created are originated, recreated in the same form, and of all His creation, mankind is the best. Mankind's excellence is enhanced with knowledge; with it mankind can surpass the excellence of the angels, because with knowledge mankind is able to make decision to choose good over evil with sound intellect in their willing submission and servitude to God Almighty. This is the meaning of *dn* the path of life for those choose to live life of a Muslim. Life that is based on a true path is true submission and it is the highest form of excellent life since, it is attained by making the right choice (ikhtiyar) that is to choose the better for one's own sake. This is true and real freedom, true and real choice – a consideration and thought process which aligns the soul towards performing deeds that manifest ethical and moral conduct that leads to virtuous acts. This is what is meant by Profesör al-Attas when he says, "it has to do with certainty of the ultimate Truth and fulfillment of action in conformity with that certainty; and certainty is a permanent condition referring to what is permanent in man and perceived by his spiritual organ known as the heart (*al-qalb*)" which we have cited above. It is not true and real freedom if the self/soul is left to its wild unbridled desires uncontrolled by regulation that would regulate its instinct and animalistic tendencies. Profesör al-Attas continues by saying that whosoever has fallen to evils ways he is no longer a human being; he is merely human in form but lower than the lowest of the low of animals.

We mean by it [Revelation] the speech of God concerning Himself, His creation, the relation between them, and the way to salvation communicated to His chosen Prophet and Messenger, not by sound or letter, yet comprising all that He has represented in words, then conveyed by the Prophet to mankind in a linguistic form *new in nature* yet comprehensible, without confusion with the Prophet's own subjectivity and cognitive imagination. This Revelation is final, and it not only confirms the truth of preceding revelations in their original forms, but includes their substance, separating truth from cultural creations and ethnic inventions.

Since we affirm the Qur'an to be the speech of God revealed in a new form of Arabic, the description of His nature therein is therefore the description of Himself by Himself in His own words according to that linguistic form. It follows from this that the Arabic of the Qur'an, its interpretation in the Tradition, and its authentic and authoritative usage throughout the ages establishes the validity of that language to a degree of eminence in serving to describe reality and truth.

See S.M.N. al-Attas, *Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam: An Exposition of the Fundamental Elements of Worldview of Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1995), pp.5-6.

The meaning of happiness will be an empty one if it is not rooted to a worldview projected by the Qur'an and established by intellectual contemplation based on firm and true belief that does not change with place and time as shown by the Learned scholars of Islam. Just as a strong tree which stood firm and tall because its roots are strongly held to the ground and its branches reach the sky, so is the life of a man whose path of life is based on strong and firm belief in true and real belief (*'aqidah*). Man shall be truly free in the real sense of the word because regardless of incitation and drive he would be able to withstand and hold firm onto his certainty unconfounded by doubt and vacillation that would lead him to the pit of destruction – extremism, astray and unbelief. This is what Profesör al-Attas means when he says, "It is peace and security and tranquility of the heart." The journey of life is left undisturbed and unperturbed because he has chosen a way of life that is based on certain truth.

In order to appreciate the common aspects and differences between the meaning and experience of happiness in Islam and the West, Profesör al-Attas analyzed the meaning and experience of happiness of West in the Classical Age, as summarized by their great philosopher Aristotle, followed by an analysis of the meaning of happiness in the Middle Ages, and the Modern Age. According to Profesör al-Attas, the meaning and experience of happiness in the Classical Age although related to scholars of Islam but that meaning was redirected following the course set by secularization as a philosophical program which aims at disenchantment of the world of nature by divesting spiritual connotations from it, desacralization of politics and human life, and the deconsecration of values from thought and acts. Thus philosophical virtues namely temperance, courage, wisdom, and justice (as Aristotle explains in his works) are inadequate to bringing about in man everlasting happiness independent of time and place. Profesör al-Attas also does not agree with the idea that "virtues and happiness is related to life in this world only unconnected, as they were, to life in the Hereafter, and that it is a state in the soul whose experience is cannot be attained because it is constantly changing and different depending taste from time to time in this world, and that it can only be evaluated after one has gone through life in this world, if it has been one which is virtuous and good fortune, has reached the end." In fact, Prof. Wan

has remarked that virtues are ineffective if they are not rooted to religion.⁹

Profesör al-Attas give us a penetrating analysis on destiny of those who reject life based on religion: those who are swayed by the secularization that regards life in this world is the one and only existence, there is no other. They are the ones who are at loss, who have bartered the life of this world for the life Hereafter everlasting. They are on the path of misery (*shaqawah*) as described in the Qur'an, and they experience tragedy as Aristotle described in his work.

Shaqawah, according to Profesör al-Attas, connotes calamity, which comprise suffering, distress, and disquietude, hopelessness, and difficulty, pain of a serious act. It involves fear, sadness and pain in the soul and mind, inability to think deeply which raises doubt and vacillation. He goes on to say that the feeling of those who rejected God and upon their resurrection realized how they are at a loss. That feeling is further aggravated by constriction of the heart, a fear of an impending disaster, and the pain of suffering because that impending disaster has now taken place; it is an utmost difficulty, distress and insufferable state. It involves a condition that is most painful and regretful because of the loss of something that can never be attained again. In the Day of Judgment, they will have remorse unending.

Profesör al-Attas goes on to say that the concept of *tragedy* - is not merely a theatrical art but it is a true drama of life that is truly experienced by those who reject religion and God - generally shares the same aspects with that of *shaqawah*. The definition of tragedy by Aristotle¹⁰ although differs from his, yet the movements - introduction, a middle part, and an ending - according to al-Attas is the same as that what happened to the father of mankind as described by Revelation. Satan tricked the noble father of mankind, who dwells in a place of dignity. As a result of this incitation the father of mankind suffered a reversal of fortune and was sent to this world because of a character

⁹ See Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, "Sikap Bertanggung-Jawab (Mas'uliah) dari Sudut Agama, Sejarah dan Pendidikan," *Pemikir* (Oktobe-Disember, 2000), p. 9. On the relation between happiness and national development, see his *Pembangunan di Malaysia: KeArah Satu Kefahaman Baru yang Lebih Sempurna* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 2001), p. 41-48

¹⁰ *Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is admirable, complete (composed of an introduction, a middle part and an ending), and possesses magnitude; in language made pleasurable, each of its species separated in different parts; performed by actors, not through narration; effecting through pity and fear the purification of such emotions.*

flaw. In this world, his progeny is involved in the middle part in the ever changing unfolding of events and luck. The final part that will determine the fate of mankind will take place once mankind leave this world and return to face reality. The fall of mankind, in *tragedy*, involves a serious act, and at times opposite to the recommended acts by religion, such as to rebel against God. These are the attributes and attitude of those who are at loss.

The virtues mentioned by Aristotle are taken from religion, but were separated from it and put under the fold of philosophy. These virtues cannot be effectively practiced in society unlike those virtues recommended by Islam. This observation by Profesör al-Attas characterizes the life of those who have turned away from God: tragedy is their path of life and Sisyphus is their model. Furthermore, Profesör al-Attas continues, it is impossible for Aristotle to arrive at a view about life that is based on *tragedy* on his own unaided natural reason without the aid of revelation. That the story of the father of mankind and the reminder concerning virtues is derived from concepts of ethics and morality from revealed religions that were abound among ancient peoples of the Romans and the Greeks. With the passage of time the earlier revelations became corrupted, hence the story of the father of mankind was corrupted with local legends and myths.

It must be clearly understood that there are fundamental differences between Aristotelian virtues and Al-Attas's. According to V.J. McGill,¹¹ Aristotle says that perfect happiness comprises the highest aspect of the soul and best of it. The highest aspect of the soul is theoretical reason and the best form of action for it is contemplation. According to Aristotle, happiness is an activity of the soul and the highest form of activity for the soul is contemplation. It involves that of the soul that intellectual in nature that contemplates on theoretical matters. This is the highest form of happiness because contemplation brings about philosophy and knowledge that perfect the intellect. The highest and perfect form of happiness according to Aristotle is an intellectual activity of the soul for the perfection of the soul.

Profesör al-Attas agrees with this aspect in Aristotle conception of happiness; but Aristotle's conception is merely directed to that aspect of the soul inclined towards contemplation in order to bring about philosophy and knowledge that is meant only for this world alone,

¹¹ *The Idea of Happiness* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), 18.

and does not in anyway involves spiritual or religious obligations of that very aspect as understood in Islam, that recognizes and acknowledge Allah SWT and His Divine Oneness, virtues that are mentioned in Revelation that refers to life in the Hereafter. This is where the major difference between al-Attas and Aristotle lies. It can be said that the virtues that Aristotle propounds are secular virtues. Profesör al-Attas on the other hand argues that with consciousness of God's presence and *tadabbur*, for example, spiritual exercises of such kind that relate to the aspect of the soul that is intellectual in nature while contemplating if done with sincerity and devotion it can rise to the angelic realms and raises one's *taqwa*.

Religious virtues are divided into two: the external and the internal. The external religious virtues comprise obligations done in fulfillment of the requirements made by God such as to perform all the daily prayers including all deeds that involve the relation of man to man. The internal religious virtues comprise the activities of the heart (*qalb*) based on ma'rifat Allah and the knowledge of oneself. One must be true to oneself, to control the incitations of the lowest self with the powers of one's intellect, namely to control the desires of the animal soul with the powers of the rational soul through *muraqabah* and *muhasabah*. Activities that are related to these among them are *tafakkur*, which if done in the right way will lead to virtues such as *sabar*, *tawakkul*, *shukr*, *khawf* (fear of God's displeasure), *raja'* (putting hope in His Mercy), while the internal virtue is love of God. The highest achievement of happiness is *ru'yat Allah fi'l-Akhirah*, that can only be attained by one who in this life have lived it fulfilling all the requirements of Shari'ah.

The Western schools of ethics, on the other hand, are divided into three main philosophical lines. The first school of thought is based on the work of Aristotle. He holds that the virtues (such as justice, charity, and generosity) are dispositions to act in ways that benefit both the person possessing them and that person's society. The second is by Kant whose concept of duty is central to morality: humans as rational beings are bound and must obey the categorical imperative to respect other rational beings. Third, utilitarianism asserts the greatest happiness or benefit of the greatest number should guide conduct.

Here lies the fallacy of Western ethics and morality. It is only the outward, externality of behaviour that is the main concern. Human beings are driven by motives, and more often than not, in the present

world that is aligned to capitalistic driven worldview, fundamentally biased, ever forcing the wedge between different levels of society, optimum gain for minimum capital, it is foolhardy to achieve greatest happiness to all. It is perplexing to say the least that as human beings, apologies to Knat, that categorical imperative just does not take place. Although these schools of thought share some aspects of happiness in common with the Islamic view, Aristotle included, yet there is one fundamental dimension that is missing: that happiness is at once personal, societal and spiritual. In other words, ethics cannot be effective to the individual who is devoid of any religious imperative.

In the conclusion to his book on *Happiness*,¹² Richard Layard writes as a society [the West] is no happier than fifty years ago. Yet every group in society is richer, and are more healthier. He provides twelve truths about happiness.¹³

1. Happiness is an objective dimension of all our experience. It is measureable and can be observed for independent assessment. Although the elements for observations and the activities conforming to that which leads to happiness may differ from Western society to that of Islam, however the Quran outlines the activities by which one may be said as being happy. (Qad aflaha al-mu'minun...)

2. Human beings are programmed to seek happiness. Often conflicting, what makes us happy is good for us and helped to perpetuate the species. Apart from survival necessities, moral behaviour makes a person feel better. Happiness is a central issue in our lives.

3. The self-evident truth that the best society is the happiest. Case in point is the American Declaration of Independence. Private behaviour should aim at producing the greatest overall happiness. (pace utilitarianism)

4. Our society is not likely to become happier unless people agree that this is what we want to happen. Modern society desperately needs a concept of common good that would unite the efforts of its members.

5. Human are deeply social beings. A late realization that human interaction is not merely a means to an end but an end in itself. Individualism as the leitmotiv of modern individualistic consumerism is

¹² P. 223.

¹³ P.224- 231

no longer in currency, and this seems to be more in agreement with the idea of benefit the many as opposed to the few or the individual.

6. As social beings, we want to trust each other. Layard says there are six key factors that differentiate the level of happiness from one country to another: trustworthiness of people, the proportion of people [who are trustworthy] who belong to social organizations; the divorce rate; the unemployment rate; the quality of government; and religious belief. As far these factors are concerned, in Islam all them fall under the purview of religion and religious life as we have mentioned previously that ethics, values and virtues are embedded in the religion of Islam. Those who are of high standard of trustworthiness must be in key position (ref. the Hadith of the Prophet concerning the characteristics of a *munafiq*); divorce in Islam although allowed but it is the most abhorred in the eyes of God; as for the unemployment, the zakat and sadaqah provide a social safety net or the needy; the quality of government is set by the Prophet and the subsequent Companions of His; and as for religious belief Islam does not admit changes to its fundamentals. Changes in fundamentals of religion can only lead to destruction of one of the cornerstone of society and civilization, unless the breakaway is warranted, case in point the western society with all its unforetold consequences.

7. People are deeply attached to the status quo. This may be so in that people do not want to lose their economic status quo because the present society is economically driven. But Islam encourages changing one's status quo from bad to good, and often from "good" to bad, if it means leaving the trappings of this worldly life for the betterment of the life in Hereafter – leaving the life of immoral and unlawful sources of income, as an example, or even for the maintaining of one's religion.

8. Human beings are also status conscious. Layard agrees with the idea that natural selection makes us all want to do better than other people or at least at the same level with them. In Islam, the competition to do good in the widest sense of the word, personal and societal, is highly encouraged. This is not for status but for the fulfillment of religious obligation to make one day better than the previous one. Win-win situation is attained when one's loss is not really a loss but an enhancement in another mode: giving is not depleting one's wealth and resources in Islam because one gains not only in terms of reward that is psychological (altruism and good feeling) but also the receiving end is better off.

9. Human beings are adaptable. We agree with Layard observation that economic growth has not increased welfare – although people are many times richer now, the number of people dissatisfied with their financial position is still as high as thirty years ago. Capitalistic driven society cannot guarantee happiness because human beings adapt to their status and as we mentioned earlier that as soon as that which brings happiness to one is attained, one's adaptation to that status renders the initial happiness as status quo. One can never be happy in this state.

10. Extra income increases happiness less and less as people get richer. The ever-fleeting base of happiness – just as the minimum income that defines poverty. It is relative.

11. Happiness depends on your inner life as much as your outer circumstances. The inner life is not discussed and we are left to guess what it means. Layard talks about inner strength of character that should be developed through education. In Islam, inner life is outer life – religious belief, religion and life are one and the same – inseparable.

12. Public policy can more easily remove misery than augment happiness. This is a this-worldly conclusion, we agree on this. But the otherworld happiness is not discussed at all.

Conclusion

Ibn Khaldun in his Muqaddimah mentions a poignant fact concerning the corruption of a society that comes about as a result of the corruption of the soul of the individuals of the society concerned. As a society develops from nomadic to urban, the lower civilization adopts the luxurious life of higher society. This he remarks is the cause of corruption. Unbridled caprice can lead to the disastrous consequences. A society must abide by limits to control its quest for that imaginary status called development under the aegis of the so-called progress.

Human beings have added to the body of knowledge well beyond the expectations of past generations yet, we are as it were tightening the noose around our very necks. Fasad, corruption at the global scale is no longer an empty call but its manifestation is experienced daily in our lives today. Moral corruption of a single human being can and has lead to global destruction in all its aspects. The current global financial crisis is aggravated because it is driven by greed that is heedless to what is to come. Happiness that is rooted in religion makes it possible

for one to monitor one's own happiness, unperturbed by other's achievement, standards are set based on values and measurements that are meaningful, life of both the poor and the rich are not as starkly different because the rich will bear the greater responsibility of maintaining wealth in the proper way, and religion far from being the opium of the masses, it is but a panacea to social ills, the manifestation of decaying morality.