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An Integrated Model of Happiness: Bridging Epistemology, Psychology, and Ethics

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Abstract

Contemporary discussions on happiness are often dominated by materialist and secular paradigms that emphasise subjective well-being and emotional satisfaction. In contrast, the Islamic intellectual tradition presents a holistic and teleological conception of happiness (*sa'adah* and *falāh*) grounded in knowledge, virtue, and spiritual realisation. Drawing upon the insights of both Muslim and Western scholars, this study proposes an integrated model of happiness that bridges epistemology, psychology, and ethics. It argues that genuine happiness cannot be reduced to temporary emotional states or material prosperity; rather, it emerges from the harmonious integration of sound knowledge, inner transformation, and ethical conduct. The study examines how epistemological orientation shapes psychological well-being and ethical behaviour, thereby producing a coherent framework for holistic human flourishing. It further contends that the fragmentation of knowledge and the secular separation between morality and spirituality contribute significantly to contemporary experiences of anxiety, alienation, and existential dissatisfaction. In response, the paper proposes an integrated worldview that unites the intellectual, spiritual, moral, and social dimensions of human existence. A pilot qualitative application of the proposed framework indicates broad support for its relevance and feasibility, while also highlighting the need for contextual flexibility and further empirical refinement.

Keywords: Happiness, Islamic epistemology; Virtue ethics; Holistic well-being, Spiritual psychology.

Abstrak

Diskusi kontemporer tentang kebahagiaan sering didominasi oleh paradigma materialistik dan sekuler yang menekankan kesejahteraan subjektif dan kepuasan emosional. Sebaliknya, tradisi intelektual Islam menyajikan konsepsi kebahagiaan yang holistik dan teleologis (*sa'ah* dan *falāh*) yang berlandaskan pengetahuan, kebajikan, dan realisasi spiritual. Dengan memanfaatkan wawasan dari para sarjana Muslim dan Barat, studi ini mengusulkan model kebahagiaan terintegrasi yang menjembatani epistemologi, psikologi, dan etika. Studi ini berpendapat bahwa kebahagiaan sejati tidak dapat direduksi menjadi keadaan emosional sementara atau kemakmuran materi; melainkan, kebahagiaan muncul dari integrasi harmonis antara pengetahuan yang baik, transformasi batin, dan perilaku etis. Studi ini meneliti bagaimana orientasi epistemologis membentuk kesejahteraan psikologis dan perilaku etis, sehingga menghasilkan kerangka kerja yang koheren untuk perkembangan manusia secara holistik. Lebih lanjut, studi ini berpendapat bahwa fragmentasi pengetahuan dan pemisahan sekuler antara moralitas dan spiritualitas berkontribusi secara signifikan terhadap pengalaman kecemasan, keterasingan, dan ketidakpuasan eksistensial di masa kini. Sebagai tanggapan, makalah ini mengusulkan pandangan dunia terintegrasi yang menyatukan dimensi intelektual, spiritual, moral, dan sosial dari eksistensi manusia. Penerapan kualitatif percontohan dari kerangka kerja yang diusulkan menunjukkan dukungan luas terhadap relevansi dan kelayakannya, sekaligus menyoroti perlunya fleksibilitas kontekstual dan penyempurnaan empiris lebih lanjut.

Katakunci: Happiness, Islamic epistemology; Virtue ethics; Holistic well-being, Spiritual psychology.

Introduction

The pursuit of happiness and emotional stability has remained a central concern of human civilisation across religious, philosophical, and psychological traditions. Contemporary

societies, despite unprecedented technological and material advancement, continue to experience increasing levels of anxiety, depression, loneliness, and emotional dissatisfaction. This condition has prompted renewed scholarly interest in frameworks that address the deeper spiritual, ethical, and psychological dimensions of human well-being.

Happiness has also long occupied a central place within Western philosophy. Thinkers across different historical periods sought to explain its nature and the means through which it may be attained. Human beings naturally aspire to happiness, and many of their efforts and struggles are directed towards achieving a fulfilling and meaningful life. Important reflections on happiness were produced by both religious and secular scholars, including Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Immanuel Kant, and John Stuart Mill.

Among the classical Greek philosophers, Aristotle offered one of the most influential theories of happiness. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he connected happiness (*eudaimonia*) with human perfection and virtuous living, arguing that the highest human good is achieved through the cultivation of moral and intellectual virtues. Aristotle defined happiness not as a passing emotional state or bodily pleasure, but as “an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue” carried out over a complete life. He maintained that happiness is the ultimate end of all human action because it is desired for its own sake and is self-sufficient, lacking nothing essential to a fulfilled life (Aristotle 2009, 1097b1–1097b21, pp. 9–10; 1098a16–1098a20, pp. 16–17). Furthermore, Aristotle distinguished genuine happiness from wealth, honour, and sensual enjoyment, insisting that external goods are merely supportive conditions, whereas virtue remains the essence of human flourishing. In his ethical framework, reason occupies a central role because the fulfilment of the rational soul constitutes the distinctive excellence of human beings (Aristotle 2009, 1098a1–1098a17, pp. 15–16).

During the modern period, John Stuart Mill addressed happiness from a utilitarian perspective. In *Utilitarianism*, Mill famously defined happiness as “pleasure and the absence of pain,” maintaining that pleasure alone is intrinsically desirable because human beings seek it for its own sake (Mill 2001, chap. 2, pp. 7–10). Nevertheless, Mill’s conception of happiness was more sophisticated than crude hedonism centred merely upon physical gratification. He introduced a qualitative distinction between “higher” and “lower” pleasures, arguing that intellectual, moral, and aesthetic pleasures are superior to purely bodily pleasures. His famous assertion that “it is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied” reflects his conviction that human dignity and rational capacities elevate certain forms of happiness above others (Mill 2001, p. 10). Scholars such as Fred R. Berger therefore argue that Mill’s theory integrates moral development and intellectual excellence into the pursuit of happiness rather than reducing happiness to sensual enjoyment alone (Berger 1984, pp. 81–95). Mill further emphasised that happiness possesses both individual and social dimensions, since the

utilitarian principle seeks “the greatest happiness of the greatest number,” thereby linking personal well-being with collective welfare.

Another major Enlightenment philosopher, Immanuel Kant, developed a more morally complex conception of happiness. In the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant understood happiness as the fulfilment of an individual’s inclinations, desires, and life goals. He described happiness as “the condition of a rational being in the world, to whom everything goes according to wish and will” (Kant 1997, p. 25). However, unlike Aristotle, Kant did not regard morality as constitutive of happiness itself. Instead, he maintained that moral worth arises only when actions are performed from duty and reverence for the moral law rather than from the pursuit of pleasure or personal satisfaction. Consequently, moral duty and happiness may stand in tension because human inclinations frequently conflict with rational moral obligations. Although Kant acknowledged that happiness is a natural human desire, he argued that morality cannot be grounded upon subjective feelings of well-being. Ethical action must instead be guided by universal rational principles expressed through the categorical imperative (Kant 1997, pp. 11–18). For Kant, therefore, happiness occupies a secondary place within ethics, subordinate to the supremacy of moral duty and rational autonomy.

Contemporary positive psychology has likewise expanded modern understandings of happiness. Mark Seligman came up with what is termed a new understanding of happiness and well-being. The components of happiness, according to Seligman [16], are a set of several factors, including the meaning each person gives to it. He has created a model built upon five basic pillars: positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Positive emotions are composed of emotions that make life more enjoyable. Fredrickson [4], studying the emotional experiences of hundreds of people, identified the ten most common positive emotions: joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, fun, inspiration, admiration, and love. Engagement includes character strengths. These, according to Seligman [16], are fundamental for a “good, rewarding, and happy life, both at work and in relationships”. Meaning, deals with the construction and search for meanings that are in line with the individual’s life purpose, and that end up being a source of intrinsic motivation for the actions he or she performs. According to Steger, the meaning of life arises through the understanding of an individual’s existence, in the same way as the achievement of goals that aim to fulfill one’s life. Sources of meaning can be built in many different ways, and religiosity/spirituality is not only one of these sources, but also a source of many different meanings for different contexts. Positive relationships empathize actions that can promote good contact between people, as well as the importance of relationships as a source of support in difficult times. The fifth element is fulfilment, a factor linked to internal gratification felt by the individual when he or she perceives achievements and victories gained over time. Optimism and hope are important elements for achievement, which are often present in many

different spiritual philosophies and religions. These five elements together constitute flourishing rather than mere temporary pleasure. In sum, Seligman's central claim is that true well-being is multidimensional. A flourishing person is not simply someone who feels good, but someone who: lives meaningfully, develops virtues and strengths, builds healthy relationships, engages deeply in life, and achieves worthwhile goals.

Islamic Perspectives on Happiness

Islamic intellectual tradition presents a holistic understanding of human well-being that integrates the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social dimensions of life. Happiness in Islam is not understood merely as sensory pleasure or worldly success, but as a state of inner tranquillity grounded in faith, moral discipline, and spiritual consciousness. The Qur'an consistently links peace of mind with remembrance of Allah (SWT), righteous conduct, gratitude, and trust in divine wisdom: "Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest" (Al-Qur'ān 13:28).

Classical Muslim scholars emphasised that emotional suffering often originates from spiritual imbalance, excessive attachment to worldly concerns, and neglect of the heart's relationship with its Creator. Muslim scholars generally distinguish between temporary worldly pleasure and enduring spiritual happiness grounded in faith, virtue, and nearness to Allah (SWT). Classical Muslim thinkers interpreted the Qur'ānic concept of *ḥayāt ṭayyibah* (the good life) as a condition characterised by inner peace, lawful sustenance, moral integrity, and spiritual contentment. Among the most influential Muslim scholars, Abu Hamid al-Ghazālī argued that genuine happiness can only be attained through purification of the soul and knowledge of Allah. In *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* and *Kīmīyā' al-Sa'ādah* (*The Alchemy of Happiness*), al-Ghazālī maintained that the human heart naturally seeks divine truth, but becomes corrupted by spiritual diseases such as envy, greed, arrogance, ostentation, and excessive attachment to worldly desires. According to him, worldly pleasures provide only temporary satisfaction, whereas lasting happiness emerges from spiritual discipline, worship, self-knowledge, and obedience to divine guidance (al-Ghazālī 1995, pp. 35–42). He viewed harmony between the soul and divine revelation as the foundation of emotional and spiritual well-being. For al-Ghazālī, happiness ultimately culminates in closeness to Allah and preparation for the eternal life of the Hereafter.

Similarly, Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah emphasised the spiritual dimensions of happiness and emotional peace. In works such as *Madārij al-Sālikīn* and *al-Wābil al-Ṣayyib*, Ibn al-Qayyim argued that remembrance of Allah (*dhikr*), sincerity (*ikhlaṣ*), gratitude, patience, and trust in divine decree (*tawakkul*) are among the greatest means of attaining tranquillity and psychological stability. He maintained that emotional suffering often arises from spiritual emptiness, heedlessness, and attachment to worldly anxieties rather than from material deprivation itself (Ibn al-Qayyim 2003, vol. 1, pp. 69–85). According to Ibn al-Qayyim, the

believer who maintains a strong relationship with Allah possesses an inner resilience that protects the heart from despair and anxiety even amid hardship.

Likewise, Ibn Taymiyyah regarded servitude to Allah as the essence of freedom and happiness. He famously declared: "What can my enemies do to me? My paradise and garden are in my heart." This statement reflects his conviction that spiritual contentment does not depend upon external circumstances but upon faith and reliance upon Allah. In his theological and ethical writings, Ibn Taymiyyah argued that true happiness arises from complete devotion to Allah, detachment from excessive dependence upon creation, and confidence in divine wisdom (Ibn Taymiyyah 1998, pp. 45–47). He considered contentment (*riḍā*) and trust in Allah essential for emotional balance and psychological well-being, maintaining that inner peace emerges when the human soul aligns itself with divine purpose.

Among the contemporary philosophers, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas conceives happiness (*sa'ādah*) as a holistic and spiritual condition rooted in true knowledge, faith, and proper conduct rather than material pleasure or emotional satisfaction alone. He rejects the secular Western understanding of happiness that limits fulfilment to material or temporal satisfaction. He argues that modern secularisation has stripped life of spiritual meaning, leading to moral and social crises. According to al-Attas, human beings attain genuine happiness when the soul recognises its true relationship with Allah (SWT) and lives in harmony with the divinely ordained order of existence. Happiness is therefore closely connected with knowledge (*ʿilm*), wisdom, and justice within the self. In his view, ignorance and confusion concerning the purpose of life lead to spiritual unrest, while correct knowledge produces tranquillity and inner balance (al-Attas, 1995).

A central aspect of al-Attas' philosophy is the concept of *adab*, which refers to proper discipline, ethical refinement, and recognition of the proper place of things. He argues that the loss of *adab* in modern secular civilisation has resulted in confusion, moral disorder, and the pursuit of superficial forms of happiness based on materialism and worldly success. True happiness, according to al-Attas (1980), is achieved when reason governs desire, ethical virtues are cultivated, and the individual acts in accordance with divine guidance. Thus, education in Islam should aim not merely at producing skilled individuals but morally and spiritually balanced persons who attain inner harmony and closeness to God.

Al-Attas further distinguishes between temporary worldly happiness and ultimate eternal happiness. While worldly well-being such as health, family, and social stability are important, they remain incomplete without spiritual fulfilment and preparation for the Hereafter. His conception of happiness reflects the broader Islamic worldview, which integrates intellectual, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of human existence. Influenced by scholars such as Abu Hamid al-Ghazali and Al-Farabi, al-Attas presents happiness as the culmination of faith,

knowledge, virtue, and nearness to Allah, thereby offering a profound critique of secular understandings of well-being (Wan Daud, 1998).

Evidently, Islamic teachings present a holistic understanding of human well-being that integrates the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social dimensions of life. Rather than defining happiness through material accumulation or worldly status, the Qur'ānic worldview associates true success with tranquillity of the heart and obedience to Allah. The Qur'ān declares: "Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while being a believer — We will surely grant him a good life" (Qur'ān 16:97).

A Framework for a Happy Life

Based upon Qur'ānic teachings, Prophetic guidance, and the broader Islamic intellectual tradition, it is possible to formulate a thematic framework of happiness consisting of four interconnected dimensions: (1) *tawḥīd* and faith, (2) emotional discipline and psychological balance, (3) ethical character and moral excellence, and (4) stewardship and purposeful action. These dimensions collectively provide a holistic conception of well-being that integrates spiritual, psychological, moral, and social aspects of human existence. Faith gives meaning and inner peace; emotional discipline nurtures resilience and balance; noble character strengthens dignity and trust; and purposeful action generates fulfilment and positive social impact.

The first dimension concerns the role of *īmān* (faith) and *tawḥīd* (affirmation of divine unity) in establishing emotional stability and existential meaning. The Qur'ān repeatedly links faith with tranquillity and inner peace. Faith enables believers to interpret suffering, uncertainty, and hardship within a meaningful spiritual framework governed by divine wisdom. Consequently, qualities such as patience (*ṣabr*), trust in Allah (*tawakkul*), and hope (*rajā'*) become sources of resilience and emotional endurance.

The second dimension concerns emotional discipline and psychological regulation. Islamic teachings place considerable emphasis upon controlling destructive emotions and cultivating psychological balance. The Qur'ān discourages despair, envy, excessive grief, arrogance, and obsessive attachment to worldly concerns because these undermine spiritual and emotional well-being. Instead, believers are encouraged to cultivate gratitude (*shukr*), optimism, forgiveness, and positive expectation of Allah (*ḥusn al-ẓann bi-Allah*). Al-Ghazālī and Ibn al-Qayyim both regarded emotional discipline as an essential component of spiritual refinement and psychological stability.

The third dimension concerns the relationship between moral conduct and emotional well-being. Islamic teachings consistently associate happiness with virtuous character and harmonious social relations. Ethical virtues such as honesty, compassion, humility, justice, patience, and forgiveness nurture social trust and communal harmony. Conversely, envy, arrogance, resentment, and injustice are regarded as destructive spiritual diseases that

damage both individual well-being and social cohesion. Miskawayh argued that happiness depends upon the cultivation of balanced moral virtues that harmonise the rational, emotional, and appetitive faculties of the soul (Miskawayh 1968, pp. 35–48).

The fourth dimension concerns stewardship, purposeful action, and meaningful engagement with life. Islam discourages idleness, hopelessness, passivity, and emotional withdrawal from society. Human beings are regarded as vicegerents (*khulafāʾ*) entrusted with responsibility toward themselves, their communities, and the natural world. Consequently, beneficial action — including worship, seeking knowledge, productive work, charity, and service to others — is viewed as essential for a balanced and fulfilling life.

Taken together, these four dimensions form an integrated Islamic framework of happiness that harmonises spiritual fulfilment with psychological balance, moral excellence, and social responsibility. Unlike materialist conceptions of happiness centred primarily upon pleasure or consumption, the Islamic perspective situates human well-being within a transcendent moral order grounded in faith, virtue, and accountability before Allah.

Pilot Application of the Framework

A pilot application of the thematic framework was conducted among lecturers at the International Islamic University Malaysia. This study employed purposive sampling to select information-rich participants who were capable of providing rich and meaningful insights into the research topic rather than to measure variables statistically. The research aimed to identify both convergent and divergent viewpoints regarding the proposed framework. A total of 37 “full-time” lecturers of the International Islamic University Malaysia comprising multiple academic faculties and departments. They were familiar with issues related to ethics, education, spirituality, society, or human well-being. To ensure diversity of perspectives, lecturers were selected from different faculties and academic disciplines. Variation was also sought in terms of gender, academic rank, and years of teaching experience. Data were collected primarily through semi-structured interviews.

The findings indicated broad agreement among the lecturers regarding the feasibility and applicability of the framework as a holistic model for cultivating a meaningful and happy life. Most respondents agreed that *tawhīd* and faith provide an important foundation for inner peace, moral orientation, and resilience. They further observed that ethical character and moral excellence are indispensable for fostering integrity, trust, and harmonious interpersonal relations within academic and social environments.

Nevertheless, several areas of disagreement and critical reflection also emerged. Three respondents expressed reservations regarding the explicitly religious grounding of the framework. Two argued that contemporary universities are increasingly pluralistic and secular institutions; consequently, a model centred primarily upon faith may not be universally applicable across diverse religious and philosophical backgrounds. Another respondent

suggested that spiritual well-being could be articulated in broader existential or humanistic terms rather than exclusively through tawhīdic language.

The dimension of ethical character and moral excellence received the highest level of support. Respondents generally viewed honesty, integrity, compassion, and self-discipline as universal values essential to both personal and professional life. However, five lecturers questioned whether moral excellence necessarily guarantees happiness, noting that ethically committed individuals may still experience stress, institutional pressure, and emotional dissatisfaction. Some argued that contemporary academic culture often rewards productivity and competition more than moral virtues, thereby complicating the practical implementation of this dimension. Social responsibility and justice likewise generated broad agreement, particularly regarding the importance of empathy, fairness, and service to society. Many respondents maintained that happiness cannot be reduced to individual satisfaction alone but must include concern for collective welfare and social harmony. However, fourteen respondents expressed concern that excessive emphasis upon social obligation may generate emotional exhaustion or unrealistic expectations for academics already burdened with teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities. Several participants also suggested that concepts such as justice and social responsibility require clearer conceptual and operational definitions because they may be interpreted differently across cultural and ideological contexts.

The dimension of stewardship and purposeful action also received substantial support. Lecturers generally agreed that human beings attain deeper fulfilment when they perceive themselves as responsible agents entrusted with knowledge, leadership, and constructive contribution to society. Yet several respondents questioned whether a strong sense of purpose always contributes to happiness. Some observed that highly ambitious individuals may experience frustration, burnout, or disappointment when institutional limitations prevent them from realising their aspirations. Others argued that personal happiness may sometimes derive from simplicity, leisure, or emotional balance rather than constant achievement-oriented activity.

Overall, the responses demonstrated that the four-dimensional framework possesses both intellectual coherence and practical relevance. The differing perspectives did not reject the framework outright; rather, they highlighted the need for flexibility, contextual sensitivity, and further empirical refinement. The pilot study therefore suggests that while the framework is broadly meaningful and applicable, its implementation requires engagement with diverse viewpoints and contemporary social realities.

Discussion

The Qur'ānic and Prophetic conception of happiness differs fundamentally from materialistic understandings that equate happiness with wealth, consumption, or unrestricted personal

desire. In Islam, emotional well-being originates from spiritual alignment with divine guidance and moral discipline.

A central principle emerging from the Qur'ān and Sunnah is that faith provides existential meaning during hardship. The believer understands that trials are neither random nor meaningless but form part of divine wisdom and spiritual testing. Allah states: "Perhaps you dislike a thing while it is good for you" (Qur'ān 2:216). This perspective reduces despair and nurtures emotional endurance during suffering. The Qur'ān also emphasises gratitude as a source of emotional well-being: "If you are grateful, I will surely increase you" (Qur'ān 14:7). Gratitude redirects attention away from deprivation and towards divine blessings, thereby cultivating contentment and reducing dissatisfaction.

The role of *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah) is equally significant in the attainment of true happiness and inner peace within the Islamic tradition. The Qur'an emphasises that spiritual tranquillity is not merely emotional satisfaction but a condition rooted in conscious awareness of God. Through regular remembrance, the human soul becomes detached from excessive worldly anxieties and reoriented toward its ultimate purpose. Classical Muslim scholars such as Abu Hamid al-Ghazali viewed *dhikr* as a means of purifying the heart (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) and cultivating closeness to Allah, which ultimately leads to *sa'ādah* (true happiness).

From the perspective of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, remembrance strengthens the soul's recognition of its proper relationship with God and reality. Happiness, in this understanding, is achieved when the intellect and soul are ordered according to divine truth. *Dhikr* nurtures this order by fostering humility, gratitude, patience, and spiritual awareness. It also protects individuals from heedlessness (*ghaflah*), which Islamic scholars often describe as a major source of confusion, anxiety, and moral imbalance. Thus, remembrance is not only an act of worship but also a transformative ethical and psychological practice that integrates faith, knowledge, and inner well-being.

Contemporary psychological studies on spirituality similarly suggest that repetitive contemplative practices, including prayer and meditation, contribute positively to emotional regulation, resilience, and mental calmness. In Islam, however, *dhikr* goes beyond therapeutic benefit; it is fundamentally an act of devotion that connects the servant to the Creator and gives meaning to human existence. Therefore, remembrance functions simultaneously as spiritual nourishment, moral discipline, and a pathway toward holistic happiness (*falāḥ*).

Islamic teachings further emphasise the importance of emotional discipline and moderation as essential elements of spiritual and psychological well-being. Human beings are naturally exposed to fear, uncertainty, and worldly desires; however, Islam teaches that excessive anxiety about the future and unhealthy attachment to material possessions can weaken the stability of the soul. The Qur'an repeatedly reminds believers that worldly life is temporary and that ultimate control belongs to Allah alone. For this reason, Muslims are encouraged to

cultivate balance, contentment (*qanā'ah*), and trust in God rather than becoming overwhelmed by fear or obsession with worldly success.

Central to this teaching is the concept of *tawakkul* (reliance upon Allah). The Prophet ﷺ taught believers to combine sincere effort with trust in divine wisdom and decree. True reliance does not mean passivity or neglect of responsibility; rather, it means exerting one's best effort while recognising that the final outcome rests with Allah. This balanced attitude protects individuals from despair during hardship and arrogance during success. Scholars such as Abu Hamid al-Ghazali explained that excessive dependence upon worldly causes often leads to anxiety and spiritual imbalance, whereas reliance upon Allah nurtures serenity and resilience. In this way, *tawakkul* becomes both a spiritual virtue and a psychological source of emotional strength.

The Qur'an and Sunnah also closely connect emotional health with ethical conduct and social relationships. Virtues such as forgiveness, mercy, patience, compassion, and generosity are not only moral obligations but also means of achieving inner peace and social harmony. Forgiveness removes bitterness from the heart, patience strengthens emotional endurance, and generosity cultivates gratitude and empathy toward others. By contrast, destructive qualities such as envy (*hasad*), hatred, arrogance, greed, and resentment are regarded in the Islamic tradition as diseases of the heart that corrupt both the individual and society. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas emphasises that true happiness emerges when the soul is disciplined according to divine guidance and freed from inner disorder. Thus, Islamic ethics integrates spirituality, emotional regulation, and moral behaviour into a unified framework for attaining holistic well-being and lasting happiness. The Qur'ān and Sunnah also connect emotional health with ethical conduct. Forgiveness, mercy, patience, and generosity strengthen social harmony and reduce internal emotional conflict. By contrast, envy, hatred, arrogance, and resentment are treated as destructive spiritual diseases that undermine inner peace.

Another important principle concerns purposeful engagement with life. Productive activity, worship, learning, and service to humanity protect individuals from excessive rumination and emotional stagnation. Islam therefore promotes a dynamic and balanced life integrating spirituality with constructive worldly engagement.

Overall, the Islamic framework for happiness integrates:

- spiritual consciousness,
- emotional regulation,
- ethical behaviour,
- and purposeful living.

This holistic model remains highly relevant in addressing contemporary emotional and psychological crises.

Conclusion

Clearly, the integrated model of happiness bridges epistemology, psychology, and ethics as mutually reinforcing dimensions of human flourishing. In contrast to reductionist approaches that confine happiness to subjective emotional states or material satisfaction, the model advanced here situates happiness within a broader ontological and teleological framework. Knowledge (epistemology) provides the foundation for right understanding of reality and selfhood; psychological well-being reflects the internalisation of meaning, balance, and emotional stability; while ethics translates understanding into virtuous action and socially responsible conduct. Together, these dimensions form a coherent structure of human flourishing that is both inwardly transformative and outwardly expressive.

The integration of these dimensions highlights that happiness is not merely experienced but cultivated through the alignment of belief, cognition, emotion, and action. From this perspective, ethical character is not an external add-on to psychological well-being, but a constitutive element of it. Likewise, epistemic clarity is not detached intellectualism, but a guiding condition for meaningful and stable happiness. This interdependence suggests that fragmented approaches to well-being are insufficient for addressing the complexity of human life, particularly in contemporary contexts marked by moral uncertainty and psychological fragmentation.

Ultimately, the model affirms that genuine happiness is holistic, dynamic, and purposive. It calls for an educational and societal framework that nurtures sound knowledge, cultivates psychological resilience, and fosters ethical excellence simultaneously. By bridging these domains, the study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of happiness—one that resonates with both classical intellectual traditions and contemporary concerns about human well-being and moral development

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