



The Way To *Happiness*



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طريق السعادة

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إنجليزي

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THE WAY TO HAPPINESS

based on "Happiness between Illusion
and Reality " by Dr. Nasser Al-Omar
and "Causes of Happiness" by Sheikh
Abdur-Rahman Al-Sa'adi.

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Cooperative Office for Call and Guidance in al-Batha, 1995

**King Fahd National Library Cataloging-in Publication Data
Masri, Ghalib Ahmad**

The Way of happiness/Ghalib Ahmad Masri, Nathif Jama
Adam.- Riyadh.

112 P., 12X17 Cm

ISBN: 9960-798-22-4

1- Faith (Islamic creeds)

2- Happiness

I- Adm,

Nathif Jama (J.a.)

240 dc

II- Title

1619/16

Legal Deposit no. 1619/16

ISBN: 9960-798-22-4

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The present work has been written jointly by the two co-authors. Nathif Jama Adam has contributed the section on "Sources of Happiness." Ghalib Ahmad Masri has written the other sections of the book.

The authors gratefully acknowledge the efforts that contributed to the production of this booklet in its present form, especially the valuable comments of Dr. Mohamed Lotfi Zlitni and other helpful comments on the content of this work.

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In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

INTRODUCTION

To my surprise, he returned from the rich dinner very unhappy. I wanted to know the reason. He explained to me: "If only you had seen the luxury they are living in - a splendid villa, rich food, luxurious furniture, servants and a fleet of cars! It makes me feel extremely miserable".

"But, is he enjoying his life?" I asked, "Is he really happy?"

"As far as I know", he replied, a little pacified," he is not enjoying the luxuries of his life. He wishes he could eat ordinary food, even bread, even though he loses all his wealth."

"So you are much richer and happier than he is", I said. "Your health is a greater wealth than those luxuries which have made you so depressed. Wealth alone does not give happiness. You will not sell one finger or eye of yours or your appetite for all his riches or cars!"

I saw the tears of satisfaction and gratefulness

shine in his eyes.

"Thank Allah! Thank Allah!", He said.

Very often man meets with incidents and situations in his life that make him unhappy. Later, when he recovers his consciousness and reflects on such incidents and situations, he finds that his unhappiness was simply a reaction, and that man can react differently, achieving thereby a higher a degree of stability and tolerance if he is able to cope with the situation.

A neighbour of the well-known German Philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) had a cock whose crowing annoyed him and distracted him from his work. When he got fed up with the cock, he sent his servant to buy it and slaughter it for his meal. He invited a friend of his to the meal and both of them sat waiting for lunch. He talked to his friend about the cock and the annoyance it used to cause and described the peace and happiness he was enjoying after he had got rid of the cock's crowing. When the servant brought in the food he explained that their neighbour refused to sell his cock and so he purchased one from the market. Kant became suddenly conscious of the fact the the cock was still crowing.

Thinking of this well-known philosopher, I

found that he felt miserable because of the cock's cry, and he also felt happy although the cock was still crowing. Nothing had changed; the change was inside himself. It was the inner man, not the cock, that made him happy or unhappy!

I sleep in my house, not disturbed by the rolling noise of cars and their horns in the street nor by salesmen's loud voices. Yet, the sound of a footstep or a whisper inside my bedroom would wake me. If I sleep in the train, even the talk of those sitting next to me will not disturb my sleep. What makes me endure the rumbling noises of cars and salesmen, or the train, though a whisper or footstep would rouse me from my sleep?

It is because sensation is like a light which, when on, makes things around you visible whether they are pleasing or displeasing to you, and when it is off you fail to hear the noises in the street though they are louder. In fact, you heard the low whisper in your bedroom because you directed your sensation and attention to it; while you missed other sounds because you kept them out of your perception despite their loudness, so they disappear as do big things in darkness.

Why not divert your attention and sensation from all discomforts of life? Not all discomforts penetrate into your heart. Only what YOU allow

into your heart willingly will enter, like a king who allows the enemy into his fortress by leaving a hole in its walls. So why not strengthen and fortify ourselves against pains and discomforts?

Two men of equal physical strength may carry the same load: the first may complain as if he carried double weight; while the other may laugh and sing as if he carried nothing.

Two men of similar physique may suffer from the same illness: one may react pessimistically and always imagine death, thereby increasing illness: while the other may endure patiently, feel optimistic and expect sooner recovery, thereby expediting good health.

Bismark, the man of iron and blood, genius of war and peace, could not give up smoking for one moment; he used to light one cigarette from another all the day. Without smoking, he was not able to think, plan or take appropriate action. Once, while in war, he found only one cigarette in his pocket, so he put off smoking it to the time hardship. He waited for a full week without smoking, entertaining the hope of using this cigarette in time. He realized that he was able to do without smoking all this time. He decided to stop smoking for good because he did not want his happiness to be dependent on a single cigarette.

Imagine a man whose body was exhausted with illness, and that suddenly he noticed a snake crawling towards him and at once jumped out of his bed as if he were full of health and vigour... or a man who returned home exhausted with hunger and looking only for a chair to rest on when he received a call from a dear person saying he was coming, or an urgent letter from the Minister calling him with the news of promotion, he would feel light-hearted and full up and would hurry up to the station in the former or to the Minister's office in the latter.

Such powers are the source of happiness!

Dear readers! You are rich, but you do not realize how wealthy you are. Some may suffer from headache, toothache or colic, which makes them feel that life is dark. Why did they not see the bright side of life when they were healthy? If someone goes on a diet, he will long for a mouthful of bread or meat and envy those who enjoy various foods. Why did he not value the pleasures of food before his illness? Why does man recognize the value of boons and bounties only when he loses them? Why does an old man lament the passing of his youth, while the young man fails to smile at his youth?

Why are we aware of happiness only when it is far from us?

Almost everybody is lamenting and yearning to his past! Why not think about the present before it becomes part of the past?

* * *

We may think that richness can be attained by possession of money alone. What can money alone give to man? You may have heard of the sick king who was brought the most delicious meals, but he was unable to eat any of them. Once, he was looking through a window of his palace, when his eyes caught a farmer eating brown bread with black olives: pushing one mouthful into his mouth, taking a second in his hand, and setting his eyes on a third. The king wished he had been a farmer and enjoyed such an appetite.

Why don't you recognize the value of health? Is there no value for health? Who would agree to give up his sight for a hundred thousand dollars, or part of his nose for the riches of a millionaire? Gold and money cannot give life and happiness to every man. Rothschild entered his large safe, and while he was inside, its door banged and he died in a sea of gold. Why are we seeking gold

anxiously though we possess ample gold? Isn't sight as precious as gold? And health.... and time... and the human mind, too,....all these are treasures. Why don't we make the best of our time?.... Why don't we recognize the value of life? Why don't we make the best use of our minds? Health, time and mind are an invaluable wealth that may lead man to happiness if he takes the right way.

* * *

But what is the right way to that goal which is pursued by man everywhere and at all times throughout history?

*There are several trends that describe the reality of happiness and the way leading to its attainment by man. The major trends can be summed up as follows:

1. Spiritualistic School, in which philosophers and theosophists believe that real happiness consists essentially in spiritual life.
2. Materialistic School or theory, which upholds that real happiness lies in materialism.
3. Rationalistic School, in which rationalists believe that happiness can be attained only by reason and logic.

4. Islamic Trend, which states that the three types of life: the spiritual, the material and the rational are together essential elements of happy life if they are ruled by the Islamic belief, practice and values. That is because man is a combination of those very three ingredients: the body, mind and spirit: the body is nourished by food and drink, the mind by knowledge and experiments, and the spirit by faith and goodness....But it is sound faith that builds up a healthy spirit and gives a realistic and truthful explanation of man's position in this universe, Divine Reality and the basic concept of the Oneness and Perfect Attributes of God, and here we are going to use the name "Allah" for God as it is not associated with any distortions added by upholders of idolatry, polytheism, trinity and other worshippers of false gods.

Let us consider the crimes and evils of modern societies: murders, suicides, rapes, drug abuse, robberies, thefts, and sexual, neurological, psychological, juvenile and many other abnormalities and disorders... the void man suffers because of the absence of true faith that springs from human nature and does not conflict with logic, reason and established facts of science....the lack of awareness of the real aim behind man's existence in this

universe, i.e., to build and establish an ideal and sound society controlled by the instructions and injunctions of his Merciful and Wise Creator so as to free man from destructive drives and inclinations, and the world from injustice and tyranny....

In fact, Islam, and only Islam, is the true Saviour of humanity and the answer to all problems and questions faced by man.

* * *

The happiness Islam achieves for man has two major domains:

1. This wordly life, both on the individual and collective levels. It seeks to give man a happy life free of cares and evils, characterized by sound faith. It is a life in which every thing should be placed at the service of man:

"And He (Allah) has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on earth: behold, in that are Signs indeed for those who reflect." (Qur'an 45:13)

Everything in nature is made available by Allah for the use of man through the genius and faculties Allah has given to man.

Yet, many people behave adversely as if they were created to serve wealth and be slaves to the pleasures and luxuries of life, losing thereby their freedom of will and becoming servants of

transient trivialities instead of being servants of their Beneficent Sustainer and Cherisher, the Eternal and Almighty Allah.

As for the Collective aspect, Islam embraces all rules and principles contributing to a happy society, whether a family, a nation or on larger scale, i.e., on the international level.

2. The Eternal Life after Death:

The Life after death is a demonstration of Divine Justice. That day is a must for the achievement of retributive justice and settlement of all injustices and outstanding accounts, and at the same time for the generous reward of good acts. Since we believe that Allah is the One and Only God with perfect attributes, it would be illogical to entertain the notion that He will leave justice unfulfilled. This life - so full of wrongs, crimes, inconveniences, good deeds unrewarded, and many human affairs unsettled - is in fact just an introductory chapter which prepares for the book of eternal life in which justice is restored and a person meets with his (or her) just deserts. The wrong-doers who have persisted in their sins and wrong-doing and failed to repent and give up sound conduct will go to endless punishment in Hell. While those with good records and

righteous deeds will receive generous reward and attain real and eternal happiness in the Heaven of Allah, in Paradise or the Garden of Eden. That is the abode of perfect bliss, which deserves to be sincerely and industriously sought by man. There may be some difficulties and handicaps on the road to this exalted goal of wise and faithful people, as stated by the Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) that "Hell is surrounded with whims and waton desires, while the Garden is surrounded with hardships." Such hardships will serve as a test of man's goodly nature and of his truthful insistence on the attainment of Allah's pleasure and reward. A trader may spend sleepless nights and put up with arduous efforts in order to win a gainful deal. However, the eternal life in the abode of happiness is the biggest deal which man has ever competed or striven to attain. But what is Paradise like? The answer can only be found in the word of Allah in His Glorious Qur'an or in the words of His Gracious Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him), who is the genuine Authority on the affairs of the seen and unseen in general and the Hereafter in particular, as he learnt about such realities through Revelation received from the All-knowing, All-aware, Absolute Allah. The

righteous soul of a good believer returns to its

Lord "well pleased and well pleasing":

"(To the righteous soul will be said:)

"O (thou) soul, in (complete) rest and satisfaction!

"Come back thou to thy Lord, well-pleased (thyself), and well-pleasing unto Him!

"Enter thou, then, among my Devotees!

"Yea, enter thou My Heaven!"

(Qur'an, 89:27-30)

The above passage refers to the state of freedom and ease, to the final and everlasting stage of human bliss, when the righteous soul of the righteous believer, at peace with its Lord, certain of its way and fate, is welcomed among those servants of Allah chosen to enjoy this Divine grace and to receive Allah's mercy and protection.

"Every soul shall have a taste of death: and only on the Day of Judgment shall you be paid your full recompense. Only he who is saved far from the Fire and admitted to the Garden will have succeeded: for the life of this world is but goods and chattels of deception."(Holy Qur'an, 3:185)

The blessings of Paradise cannot be conceived

in this life, and are not, therefore, things of this world:

"Now no person knows what delights of the eye are kept hidden (in reserve) for them as a reward for their (good) Deeds."
(Qur'an, 32:17)

An explanation of this is given in the Prophet's (Peace and blessings be upon him) tradition mentioned in Imam Bukhari's compilation of Hadith:

"Allah says: I have prepared for my righteous servants that which no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard, and no man's mind has ever conceived."

We read in the Glorious Qur'an about the Garden or Gardens of everlasting bliss passages the meaning of which runs as follows:

"Allah hath promised to Believers, men and women, Gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein, and beautiful mansions in Gardens of everlasting stay. But the greatest bliss is the Good Pleasure of God:

That is the supreme felicity." (Qur'an, 9:72)

"My devotees! No fear shall be on you today nor shall ye grieve"

"Those who have believed in our Signs and submitted (to Us)."

"Enter ye the Garden, ye and your wives, in (beauty and) rejoicing.

"To them will be passed round, dishes and goblets of gold: there will be there all that the souls could desire, all that the eyes could delight in: and ye shall abide therein (for aye).

"Such will be the Garden of which ye are made heirs for your (good) deeds (in life).

"Ye shall have therein abundance of fruit, from which ye shall eat." (Qur'an, 43:68-73)

What for sinners and disobedient criminals?

"The Sinners will in the Punishment of Hell, to dwell therein (for aye):

"Nowise will the (punishment) be lightened for them, and in despair will they be there overwhelmed.

"Nowise shall We be unjust to them: but it is they who have been unjust themselves."

(Qur'an, 43:74-76)

The need to discuss this subject of "happiness" has arisen as a result of various reasons some of which may be summed as follows :

(1) People could belong to different religious denominations, or schools of thought, could have different feelings, wishes and aspirations, yet they are apparently in total agreement about the pursuit of one goal in their life : that is happiness.

This is true of all persons - believers and non-believers, rulers and ruled, rich and poor, they all toil to achieve happiness.

(2) Notwithstanding the consensus of all human beings on seeking happiness, it is however, surprising how different individuals and different groups of people have chosen and defined for themselves differing ways and avenues to achieve this common goal. And in so doing a large number of them seem to have missed the proper avenues to this goal and have consequently failed to achieve any happiness throughout their lives but only have succeeded in attaining what can be termed as "illusory" and "transitory" happiness as

opposed to "real" and "permanent" happiness.

Hence, the attempt in this book to re-direct these people to the proper course of action to be able to achieve the sought-after happiness.

The above,as well as many other reasons, have led to our discussion of this important subject with a sincere hope that this treatise would prove of help to many who are earnestly searching for real happiness.

DEFINITION OF HAPPINESS

WHAT IS HAPPINESS?

According to 'Webster's Third New International Dictionary', happiness is a state of well-being characterized by relative permanence, by dominantly agreeable emotion ranging in value from mere contentment to deep and intense joy in living, and by a natural desire for its continuation.

"In the distinction between this term and its synonyms (i.e., felicity, beatitude, blessedness, bliss), it defines HAPPINESS" as the general term denoting enjoyment of or pleasureable satisfaction in well-being, security, or fulfillment of wishes. FELICITY, a more bookish or elevated word, may denote a higher, more lasting, or more perfect happiness. BEATITUDE refers in this sense to the highest happiness, the felicity of the blessed. BLESSEDNESS suggests the deep joy of pure affection or of acceptance by God.

BLISS may apply to a complete and assured felicity."

Some students of education and psychology define HAPPINESS as the continued feeling or state of delight, contentment, and joy emanating from the

permanent sense of self-goodness, goodness of life and goodness of man's destiny.

SOURCES OF HAPPINESS

Different individuals and groups of people may have different ideas with regard to the best ways of achieving happiness. However, there are several theories and speculations which many a people share as constituting the main sources of happiness. These may be classified as follows :

- (1) Wealth
- (2) Rank and position.
- (3) Educational achievements
(Academic and Honorary Degrees).
- (4) Fame (i.e., in politics, arts, sports, science, etc.).

(1) HAPPINESS IN WEALTH

Wealth is, probably, the element mostly associated, if not synonymous, with happiness as many people think. This understanding so deep-rooted in the hearts of so many, to the extent that almost everywhere people are engrossed in the acquisition of wealth. They look towards wealth as the primal constituent of happiness to the point that for them the two are entwined.

How happy are those men and women who own business empires, wide expanses of land and estates, large bank deposits, etc?

Many indeed are those people who own millions or even billions but are suffering from an almost permanent lack of peace of mind as a result of the fear they have over their wealth the fear of, say, political turmoils, market movements, wars, plunders, theft, etc. And not only does such fear lead to sleepless nights for these people but even tensions, mental anguish, heart attacks and deaths. Very often one comes across reports in the media such as the following :

- * Fortunes lost and lives follow in financial market crash.....!
- * A Tokyo trader shot himself after apparently losing money in the stock market..!
- * Australia's richest man was rushed to hospital in serious condition, Sunday, after suffering a heart attack....!

Understanding and accepting that happiness has nothing to do with amassment of wealth is perhaps the most liberating realization we can ever come to.

Ample material is readily available from the lives

of many people to prove our dictum "wealth is not equal to happiness".

QAARUN

Qarun's (Kora) story serves as a typical example of opulent people whose wealth infused them with pride and arrogance and made them forget the role of wealth in man's life.

Wealth should be used for the achievement of the welfare of man and his society in accordance with the will and commandments of Almighty Allah, Who has granted man his existence, faculties, powers, sustenance and resources.

His story is told in the Holy Qur'an:

".....Such were the treasure We had bestowed on him, that their very keys would have been a burden to a body of strong men. Behold, his people said to him: Exult not, for Allah loveth not those who exult (in riches)." (Qur'an, 28:76)

Then,

"So he went forth among his people in the (pride of his worldly) glitter". (Qur'an, 28:79)

When he was in the hey-day of his glory, worldly people envied him and thought how happy they would be if only they were in his place.

But wise people were not dazzled by Qaarun's fabulous wealth, because they realized the transient nature of worldly treasures and they were certain that the true wealth is the reward of Allah (in the Hereafter) for those who believe and work righteousness. (Vide the Qur'an, 28:80)

Qaarun lived ostentatiously and appeared to many of his people "a lord of mighty good fortune." They admired his glorious appearance but forgot his reality. All this was 'illusory happiness' or, at least, transient happiness, just like a dream or a movie.

What was the end? What happened to all that pomp, wealth, pride and arrogance?

"Then, We caused the earth to swallow up him and his house; and he had not (the least little) party to help him against Allah, nor could he defend himself." (Qur'an 28:81)

CHRISTINA ONASSIS

Here lies another eventful story which proved beyond doubt that wealth, whatever the amount one holds, cannot by itself be the basis for the achievement of real happiness! Here is the story which for years dominated the minds of

writers, reporters and newsmen, as well as the pages of newspapers, books and magazines! This is the story of Christina Onassis - daughter of the famous Greek tycoon, Aristotle Onassis, who owned fleets of ships and aeroplanes, lakes and islands, real estates, huge bank deposits, etc. Following the death of her father, Christina was the only one left behind as the legal heiress to the vast resources of her father besides her late father's second wife Jacqueline Kennedy. The enormous liquid inheritances were to the tune of billions of dollars besides the immovable properties, the fleet of ships and aeroplanes, lakes and islands, real estates, large bank deposits, etc. What an inheritance that was! Certainly, to the judgment, reasoning, feelings and standards of most people, someone inheriting such a huge fortune should be the happiest person on earth - but was this true for Christina? The answer to this question can only be arrived at after going through the following pages which briefly explain the known course of her life.

Christina got married to an American during her father's lifetime; but only a few months thereafter the marriage broke up and ended up in divorce. After the death of her father, she got

married to a Greek for the second time but their marriage lasted only a few months, if not weeks, before it was all over!

Christina stayed out of marriage for quite some time apparently looking for a happy life outside the marriage bond. However, that happiness did not materialize and, after a few years had elapsed, she felt like trying to find a life of happiness under the marriage bond once again. This time her choice for a husband was from a completely different camp from communist Russia! To many who knew her free style western life, this step, indeed, became an interesting, if not perturbing or excruciating experience. And when once asked by a pressman of this move, she had a ready answer which was simple, short, but frank: "I am searching for happiness."

Of course, her two previous marriages were with men from the West; and since they both failed, she thought that she could "discover" some happiness in the East. But here too she was only trying out her luck with no guarantees. When pressmen interviewed her for a second time her unchanged reply was: "I am searching for happiness..!"

But was she really happy about her marriage in Russia? Never! She hardly remained with the

Russian for more than a year before she eventually divorced him!

Apparently, that was not the end of the marriage "dilemma". Back in Europe she decided to give it one more final try this time with a French industrialist, the fourth husband from a fourth different country in hardly a period of two years! What a miserable and unsecured life it has been. It was during one of those occasions at a party relating to this last marriage that a pressman asked her whether she was the richest woman and her frank reply went as follows: "Yes! I am the richest woman but the unhappiest...."

The marriage with the French industrialist went ahead as planned but it took only a few months to exist before it was all gone!

Having failed to achieve happiness under marriage life, Christina vowed not to marry again and endeavoured to achieve happiness "on her own". However, happiness was impossible for her even on her own and she spent the rest of her life in a desperate manner full of frustrations and disappointments and of frenzy travels between the world's major cities until, finally, she was found lying dead inside a hotel in Argentina. Who killed her? She committed suicide! What an unhappy ending for a very, very wealthy lady!

Was her wealth able to buy her happiness?

NEVER, INDEED!!!!!!

(2) HAPPINESS IN RANK AND POSITION

Could real happiness be attained through the acquirement of high rank or position in society?

To many the answer is in the affirmative. This is apparently due to lack of deep insight in the nature of rank or position and the responsibilities which they involve. In Islam, holding any position, rank or office is first and foremost regarded as a trust and, therefore, constitutes an obligation, and a legal as well as moral responsibility. Therefore, those to be entrusted with such roles could only be citizens who are possessed of unquestionable competence, integrity and virtue. Only a righteous and competent person can shoulder responsibility and use his position or office for public welfare.

Such a person would be able to dispense justice based on moral value and promote sound administration. He would promote and enhance the well-being of his people by handling their affairs in a manner that is in accordance with public interest. In return, he would earn his people's obedience, support, loyalty and cooperation. Thus, he would love doing his job

because ultimately he would be blessed with joy, happiness, contentment and satisfaction.

However, any person who is entrusted with authority over others and does not conduct his affairs on the basis of justice and moral standards, would definitely be responsible for maladministration. His position would only be a source of misery and corruption with issues such as the following:

- *Loss of public confidence.
- *Rift between the ruler and the ruled.
- *Tension, fear and insecurity of life and position on the part of the ruler.
- *The ruler's internal restlessness and agonies of conscience.
- *Upsurge of enemies and oppositions from amongst the ruled.
- *Ruler going to great lengths to protect his position - at times at any cost, even if that may mean the shedding of blood.
- *Public revolt.
- *Coups d'etat.
- *Assassinations.

Hardly does a year pass by around the world without closing with the news of miserable falls, overthrows and/or assassinations of unwanted

rulers, kings, emperors, premiers, presidents, etc. Recent cases include the following:

The Shah of Iran

The Shah of Iran who once organized an international ceremony to commemorate the passing of 2500 years since the birth of the "Persian state"! But when the end came it was heavy. He was "chased" out of his country by a massive public revolt and spent the rest of his life "wandering" from one country to another until he eventually died a miserable death in Egypt as a result of a chronic cancer.

Ferdinand Marcos

The man who for 20 years literally "owned" the Philippines and ruled it as if it were a "family enterprise", came to a terrible end. He was "thrown" out of his country by the masses and spent several years thereafter in exile in various "hide-outs" under tight security for fear of being murdered.

Jean Bedel Bokassa, the self-proclaimed "Emperor" of the Republic of Central Africa.

Here was a man who spent for his coronation more than his country's total gross national

product. He was later toppled by his countrymen and at present he is serving a life-imprisonment sentence.

Nicolae Ceausescu

The man dwelt in a palace built in "pure gold" for a period of more than 20 years as the "owner" of Romania! To suppress a public revolt he used tanks and artillery so that by the end of the revolution 64,000 people were reported to have been killed in the cities. He was later caught while trying to escape out of his country and was "slaughtered" before the eyes of the public!

Rajiv Gandhi

He was assassinated in public and closed the chapter of an unpopular dynasty.

The list is inexhaustive. It is a wonder, however, how all evil men have much in common - but the sure end of all evil is evil!

(3) EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS (ACADEMIC AND HONORARY DEGREES)

Then, where is happiness? Is it in obtaining the highest level of education and in earning doctorate degrees?

It is true that Islam not only encourages but also requires man to seek knowledge and live in the light of learning. Islam is a way of life based on knowledge and not on superstition. Prophets are the sources of divine knowledge, and the first divine revelation to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) begins with the word "IQRA" meaning "READ". In that same revelation, Allah, (Glory be to Him) tells mankind that He (Allah) taught man "with the pen" and taught man "what he did not know".

Much emphasis is placed in Islam on the need for excellent learning, that in the Holy Qur'an, Allah, Glory be to Him, teaches mankind the following supplications:

".....and say O my Lord, advance me in knowledge". (Qur'an, 22:114)

In another verse of the holy Qur'an, Allah tells mankind:

".....those truly fear Allah among His servants who have knowledge." (Qur'an, 35:28)

Yet, in another verse of the Holy Qur'an, Allah questions mankind:

".....are they equal, those who know and those who do not know? (Qur'an, 39:9)

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also left behind many authentic sayings and teachings in this regard emphasizing the importance and superiority of knowledge. In one of these sayings, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said that seeking knowledge is every Muslim's duty.

Such is the concept of Islam with regard to learning that it leaves wide open all fields of thought before the human intellect to penetrate as far as it could reach. It frees, and lays down no restrictions against, the free-thinker who seeks knowledge to widen his vision and broaden his mind. However, such intellectual development is not and could not be pursued as an absolute objective in itself. It could not be independent but would remain throughout on the plane of faith with the moral values based on the true religion of Allah, that is Islam.

It is only by doing so that a person's intellect gets a complete "nourishment" and his intellectual life becomes enriched so as to be constructive and useful. It is only by such integration of the

intellectual and the spiritual values that the person's internal nature becomes sound, healthy and happy. However, if knowledge and scientific research are taken as an end in themselves at the cost of faith, moral and spiritual values, then even the most learned man would "unhappily" be regressed to "the lowest of the low" despite any qualifications, degrees, credentials and honours he may have possessed. While advancement in knowledge and science alone may work well when it comes to the treatment of matter, yet, it could not be taken as conclusive.

Very frequently one comes across press reports such as the following :

"A college PROFESSOR was jailed after he was accused of kidnapping a woman and holding her in a closet for two weeks for his pleasure.....the charge carries a 10 to 99 year prison sentence.....he admitted to the charge...."

"A Standard University LECTURER fired for carrying drugs on campus, yet he said that he will fight his dismissal but would not change his ways. He added; "that is my right as long as I do not hurt anybody else...."

"A male top Washington LAWYER and his businessman lover filed a potential land-mark lawsuit, trying to become the first

homosexuals to get married legally in the United States...."

"Stanford Medical School President has brought disciplinary charges of sexual harassment and professional misconduct against a male cardiology PROFESSOR. The charges are based on complaints of two female medical students there...."

"Two DOCTORS were fined and given prison sentences yesterday for performing a sex-change operation on a patient.....He (the sex-change victim) filed a complaint in 1984 asserting that the operation had not been successful and that he was in constant pain. Four years later he committed suicide....."

A WOMAN DOCTOR cries out saying:
"Take away my certificate and give me a husband". Let us read what that poor woman doctor writes in her own words: "Every morning at 7:00 o'clock, I shed tears behind the chauffeur who drove me in my car to my medical clinic 'prison cell' or 'grave'." She goes on saying: "Every time I reached my destination, I found women and children waiting for me. They looked at me with admiration and regarded my white coat as if it were a luxurious kind of clothes made of Persian silk, yet it was to my view - the 'mourner's

clothes'. And every time I reached my clinic, I fixed the stethoscope, as if it were a hangman's rope tied around my neck.

Now, I am in my thirties and I am very pessimistic about the future." Then, she cries out! "Take away my certificate, my coats and my money and let me hear the word MUM". Then she writes a few lines describing her inner feelings: "People would call me a doctor, but what benefit do I get from hearing it? So, tell those people who considered me as a good example, that now I am to be pitied. All I want and hope for is to have my own child to hug and caress. But, can I buy it with all my Money?"

Just look at what happens to the woman doctor. How she describes her everyday agony and how she thinks of her medical as a prison cell and a grave. In short, does she enjoy her profession? Does she get any level of satisfaction and contentment in life? The answer is left to the reader...

(4) HAPPINESS IN FAME

There are two activities with which fame is usually associated:

- * Sporting
- * Acting

How much happiness do the "famous" men and women in activities enjoy? Let us take a brief look at each of these two activities in turn.

Sporting

It is gratifying to note that most of the Islamic forms of worship, e.g. prayers, fasting and pilgrimage, display some sporting characteristics, although they are basically by nature meant for spiritual purposes. But who would deny the constant interaction between the physique and morale of man? Yet, that is not all that Islam has to say on the subject of sports and physical exercises. Any sporting activity that promotes sound thinking or refreshes the mind and revitalizes the body to keep man in healthy shape is encouraged by Islam. The general Islamic precept in this matter is the statement in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) says:

"The strong believer is better than the weak one." (Reported by Imam Ahmad, Muslim and Ibn Majah on the authority of Abu Huraira)

Physical exercises and sporting activities are valuable things in themselves, but they should

only be taken for what they are worth, i.e., to prepare our minds and bodies for the more serious matters of life. They should not be taken as an end in themselves or be allowed to deflect away our minds or blur our visions to appreciate the more serious requirements of our inner lives .

Sporting has almost become a sort of a "religion" for sportsmen, "it runs in their blood"!

Therefore, if sports are carried to such an extreme, one could not fail to realize the kind of "suffering" to which such men and women lead their lives. Thus:

*The internal feelings and pressures to win over, say, a particular game - and at times at any cost, even that may mean taking prohibited drugs.

* The "big blow" upon losing a game; the despair, the embarrassment, the agony, the shame and the ridicule from the "fans".

* The loss of job, quitting from the team after losing a game or, worse, being fired!

Therefore, we need to ask the question whether or not a life exposed to such physical danger, ordeal and shortcomings is a happy one? The answer is left to you, the reader....!

The sports media is full of stories such as the following:

"Sports activities proved dangerous with basketball injuries alone accounting for more than 640,000 hospital visits last year, new U.S. safety figures show...."

"Three football playing veterans died of heart attacks during an international golden oldies...."

"Liverpool's McMahon broke his leg in a tackle during the F.A. cup clash yesterday..."

"Cuban running star, Ana Quirot, says she plans to quit from sports after the 1992 Barcelona Olympics because she wants to become a mother.....I've been running for 15 years and.....I want to be a mother now....."

"Canadian sprinter, Ben Johnson, was stripped of the Olympic 100-meter title and world record in Seoul after testing positive for Steroid drugs...."

"U.S. shot-putter, Jim Doehring, ranked third in the world, has been suspended for two years from the field after failing a drug test....."

There are other stories similar to these which we could reproduce here in support of our argument, but for the sake of time and space let us have a look at just one more case without which I could not have done justice to a subject discussing

men, sports, fame and happiness. This was the story of Diego Maradona! For a time his name was everywhere; in all media and literally on all commercial products and advertisements.

Football earned him "wealth" and "pride". His luxury cars were estimated to the tune of \$1 million, including a Ferrari F-40 worth \$323,000 besides the Rolls Royces and the BMW's.

He was in all that and even more! But hardly did he complete 4 years in that "fame", "wealth" and "prominence" when the world had to read a much more different kind of story about him! He used cocaine for an Italian league match! What were the consequences? He was wanted in Italian courts for a related case of "cocaine possession": and a few weeks after returning to his native homeland of Argentina, he was arrested for another round of cocaine possession and for supplying the drug free to others and his treasure, including the luxury cars, were put to auction! What else? Blame, ridicule, shame, disappointment and resentment from people of all walks, but largely, from his "loyal fans" and particularly so, those in Italy whose anger and dismay was loud enough. In one newspaper report which according to a public opinion poll,

Maradona was voted Italy's most hated man and similarly in another report, a banner headline went as follows: "Italians hate Maradona" claiming that he sets a bad example for the young people. Did Diego Maradona achieve any real happiness from his foofall "profession"? The answer to this question could, of course, best be given by none other than himself and he did so. During his "career" days he frequently used to say "Soccer is in my blood and I want kids there (Argentina) to get Soccer running in their blood". However, months after his debacle he had some different confessions to the world which went as follows:

"I will not play soccer professionally again. It is an irrevocable decision...the Argentine national team is also a closed chapter for me. I want to quit because I am sick of the pressure and the discipline....I am not blaming soccer but everything that sorrounds soccer and I am scared of having to face a situation of that kind....I am not hiding my problems with drugs....there is something deeper here than simply having taken cocaine....I find I don't ENJOY myself anymore...."

He made mention of joy, but do these confessions portray him as having experienced joy? If so, then, that is the subject of our discussion in this treatise and that is what we are calling "illusory",

"artificial" or "fake" joy as opposed to any "abiding", "real" and "lasting" happiness which could not be earned by "devotion" to soccer or otherwise. Rather, it is by the understanding of the purpose of life as prescribed by Allah for us to make it the ideal basis in pursuit of our objectives in this world which is the inculcation and development of internal nourishment that would embody and infuse together the spiritual, moral and other virtues, required of man. Allah (Glory be to Him) said:

"Leave alone those who take their way of life to be mere play and amusement and are deceived by the life of this world. But proclaim (to them) this (truth): that every soul delivers itself to ruin by its own acts: it will find for itself no protector or intercessor except Allah." (Qur'an, 6:70)

Acting

Here we specifically refer to those persons directly engaged in the field of entertainment namely, film and stage actors, singers, dancers, etc. Is the world of entertainment a source of true happiness?

Far from the common man, it is surprising how many people still equate happiness with fun. The truth of the matter, however, is that fun and

happiness have little or nothing in common. The correct and logical conclusion would be that fun is what we experience during an act, while happiness is what we experience after an act. It is a deeper, more enduring, more meaningful and more abiding emotion. Going to an amusement park or to a ball game, watching a movie or television are fun activities that "may" help someone to relax. One may temporarily forget his problems and even may laugh. But these are things which do not and could not definitely bring any real happiness to the person because their positive effects usually last only as long as the fun lasts.

A much deeper analysis into the matter is achieved when we envisage and look into fun and entertainment around us. I could not help the thought that if these movie, TV, music and theatre "stars" had anything to demonstrate, it is that happiness has nothing to do with fun. It is a fact that these individuals have constant access to abundant wealth, glamorous parties, fancy cars, expensive homes and everything that "seems to spell happiness". However, memoir after memoir with so much information is exposed about these "celebrities" unveiling the sorrow hidden beneath

all their fun e.g., depression, alcoholism, drug addiction, children out of wedlock, broken marriages, troubled children, illicit relations, loneliness, mental anguish, ignominy, etc. Could there be a way to deny all these facts? Hardly does a day pass by without coming across some stories in the media such as the following:

"Elizabeth Taylor, who was once considered to be one of the legends of film makers and film viewers, again at the age of 59 got married for the seventh time to Larry Fortensky, 39 years old, a construction worker. She said after the marriage ceremony 'I hope this is for life'. Like most celebrities, she is apparently still looking for happiness which her fame failed to provide for her during the peak of her career. But now she wants to evade her "fame" which deprived her of true happiness. She added: 'I've done everything I can to give me up'....

"A pathologist who helped perform the autopsy on Elvis Presly says the king of rock 'n' roll died of DRUGS and not heart disease....'it was a deadly mix of drugs that killed him...."

"Twice-divorced Dyan Cannon says: 'I'll keep on

trying marriage until I get it right'.

The 54-year-old actress said in the March 10 issue of Parade magazine that her first divorce from the late, Cary Grant, was not amicable..."

"Soul legend, James Brown, was granted parole, Wednesday, after being imprisoned for more than two years for assault and drug use...."

"Screen siren, Kim Basinger, says she can be wild without drugs and alcohol. The 37 years old actress admits in the February issue of Cosmopolitan magazine in New York that she's done a lot of wild things, including drugs and plenty of partying. 'When I came to Los Angeles, I said I want to take every thing; I want to try it all'...(Basinger) said she would like to marry again.. She was married for eight years to make-up artist Ron Briton. They were divorced in 1989."

"TV comedian, Jamie Lee Curtis, says she doesn't like the kind of personal demand placed on some women actresses in the acting career. Many of them have no children. I wouldn't want those kinds of demands placed on my life...."

"Cheyenne Brando, the 20-year old daughter of

actor Marlon Brando arrived in Paris on Tuesday for mental treatment following two suicide attempts last year after the highly publicized killing of her father...."

"Actor-singer, Larry Kert, died Wednesday night of AIDS...."

"Pop singer, Billy Preston, was arrested at his Malibu home Sunday after a 16-year old boy complained that he had been sexually assaulted by the singer...."

The list is inexhaustible and that is the life rampant in the entertainment and fun industry. Do these cases, therefore, portray the lives of men and women enjoying any sort of real happiness? NEVER! INDEED.

Yet, people continue to believe that the next, more glamorous party, more expensive car, more luxurious vacation, fancier home would do what all the other parties, cars, vacations and homes have not been able to do. The way people are inclined to believe that a fun-filled, pain-free and care-free life is equal to happiness actually diminishes their chances of ever attaining true happiness.

While discussing fun and entertainment, a subject matter which, we feel, must not go unmentioned is the product which these men and women of stage and screen have for their "fans" and "viewers" the substance, the quality, the values and the effects on popular culture and standards. And in this regard, we have reproduced, herebelow, some excerpts from two thought-provoking articles from some international U.S. Publications discussing different aspects of the problem.

The writers of the reports were, of course, discussing the extent and seriousness of the matter with reference to and in the context of the U.S., but the problem is global and all over.

ARTICLE ONE - BY: Michael Medved

The value of self-discipline so essential to normal family life is portrayed only rarely in the popular culture. Nearly two-thirds of all American adults are married, but movies today focus overwhelmingly on single people. And those few films that do show a family most often depict a marriage that is radically dysfunctional (completely abnormal) with a husband accused of attempting to murder his wife (as in *Reversal of Fortune*) or a wife sleeping with her husband's female friend (as in *Henry & June*) or the married pair killing

each other (as in *The War of the Roses*). When I complained about the destructive product of the entertainment industry, colleagues urged me to stop worrying; it's a simple matter to tune out. An incident last spring reminded me it was not so easy to do that. My family and I went on an outing to a public park on a mountain lake near Santa Barbara, California. Our daughters, ages one and three, went toddling off toward the ducks. The one-year old was saying, "Duckie! Duckie!" one of her first words - and reaching out to the birds with her chubby arms. My wife and I looked on with satisfaction.

But soon a group of teen-agers carrying a "boom box" arrived at the lake shore.

Coming out of their shiny chrome machine was a rape song full of four-letter words describing rape and feces and oral volume. Our girls had never heard those particular words before.

They were frightened by the noise and started to cry. I suppose we could have stayed and made a scene, but I don't carry assault weapons in my trunk. Instead we abandoned the beautiful scene to those brutish kids.

The point is that you can't just tune out the popular culture today. The messages, the images, are everywhere. Is it a coincidence that the

war on standards in art, music, television and film corresponds with increasingly destructive behaviour on the part of the young people who are the most devoted consumers of these media? Is there no connection between the media's obsession with crime and violence and the fact that the number of kids under 19 who are arrested has increased by 120 percent since 1963? Is there no connection between the sex-crazed popular culture and the fact that out-of-wedlock births have increased 350 percent since 1960?

Ironically, media moguls downplay the significance of their work, insisting that sex and violence on screen do not encourage sex and violence in real life. But the same industry then turns around and asks advertisers to pay tens of thousands of dollars for 30 seconds of air-time in the hope that this fleeting exposure would directly alter the public's buying behaviour.

The war on standards in the popular culture would be the issue on the 1990s. Expanded censorship is not the way to win it. However, attempts to move in that direction would only prove to be counter-productive. Boycotts of sponsors, direct protests, letter-writing campaigns and

other forms of private-sector pressures are far more effective than new government regulations.

While we are working to prevent the further pollution of our culture, we should do more than protest the bad. We should also remember to promote the good which is indubitably beneficial to us.

ARTICLE TWO: - By: Bob Grene

Millions of families sat down in their living rooms one evening last August to watch a live Madonna concert from France, telecasted on the cable network Home Box Office (HBO).

Since Madonna is such a huge international star, and since the telecast was heavily promoted and aired in prime time on a weekend, millions of children certainly watched with their parents.

What happened on all those screens was that Madonna repeatedly used the one obscene word that has been routinely barred from the public airways. Later in the show she writhed on a bed and simulated masturbation. She also laughingly used common street terms for male genitals.

We live in an anything-goes-age, so that shows witless, and purposely vulgar content was not

surprising. The language itself was nothing that has not been heard in movies or on cable-TV comedy specials. The surprising thing was that so few parents called HBO to object. A spokesperson for the network said the complaints "were not by any stretch of the imagination overwhelming" and that the Madonna concert was the highest-rated original entertainment program in the network's history. Apparently, America's parents have totally given up hope that they could control what their children are exposed to on TV.

What is most disturbing is that products appeared in America's homes during prime time on a Sunday, and people seemed to think it was no big deal. The television, in a way that now seems quaint, was once considered almost sacred ground when it came to certain material - precisely because children were watching. But the country has been so beaten down by a lessening of public standards that obscenities could be telecasted to millions of families without causing even a ripple of protest. What of the argument that parents should just turn off the TV if they don't like the programming?

It's valid but there was no warning before Madonna launched into her first rapid fire round of obscenities. Although the telecast was

promoted as being live, it actually was taped hours before. The network knew what it was sending out. Yet it did so without deletions or an advisory notice at the beginning of the show. This was "a creative decision," HBO says.

HBO, as a cable network, is not bound by the same restrictions placed on the over the air networks. But this nicety is undoubtedly lost on children who have grown up with cable TV in their homes. To them, HBO is just another stop on the dial.

Those children would hear worse in their lifetimes they probably already have. To telecast a concert like Madonna's is no longer considered particularly controversial. But to wonder publicly about the wisdom of it to say that delivering such a performance to the nation's children is wrong that is considered controversial. To say it is wrong is to seem out of step with the rest of the world. But it is wrong. It is dead wrong.

The cry is loud - but are there listeners?

* * * *

So, the men and women of fun and entertainment

industry do not enjoy real happiness, nor do they present valuable things to the society, but most of what they produce are destructive materials.

As mentioned several times during the discussion, happiness is an inner motive and a goal which could not be acquired alone by the mere fulfilment of external or material needs.

Enrichment and nourishment of our inner being make an essential requirement to a morally sound development of ourselves.

The foregoing stories and examples prove one thing in common: that true happiness does not emanate from wealth, fame, academic degrees and titles, high rank or position in society.

What are therefore, those factors that may constitute sources of both physical and spiritual well-being for man? Where does happiness originate? And what are the qualities of those who are truly happy?

Before answering these questions, let us first discuss in brief the barriers to real happiness.

BARRIERS TO REAL HAPPINESS

1. Disbelief In Allah And Lack Of The True Faith.

Since the true faith fills the heart with comfort, security, reassurance and contentment, and makes man feel that he has strong relationship with Almighty Allah, Who alone is the Creator of man and everything visible and invisible and knows best what achieves man's well-being and happiness. Therefore, one of the biggest barriers to real happiness both in this world and the Hereafter is the rejection of Allah's true religion (i.e., Islam).

Those who lack correct belief and stray from Divine Guidance revealed to mankind through the Universal and Last Messenger of Allah, Muhammad, will suffer from spiritual void and deprive themselves from real salvation and mercy:

"Those whom God (in His Plan) willeth to guide, He openeth their breast to Islam; those whom He willeth to leave straying, - He maketh their breast close and constricted, as if they had to climb up to the skies: thus doth Allah lay abomination on

those who refuse to follow His code of life, that is Islam...." (Qur'an, 6:125)

2. Sin and Crime

Man has not realized well the serious consequences of sin as their effects generally have no cure. Sins and crimes are barriers to real happiness. Therefore, a criminal is always more unhappy than his victim, for a criminal who is not punished could be among the most miserable people.

3. Envy and Jealousy

Envy and jealousy are sources of dissatisfaction and self-torture for people. Therefore, we are advised in the Holy Qur'an to seek refuge from the serious effects of such kinds of malignant social evils. In chapter 113 of the Holy Qur'an, we are advised to seek refuge in Allah "from the mischief of the envious one as he practises envy...." Both envy and jealousy, when translated into action, lead to the destruction of happiness and deprive people of the good things they enjoy. The best refuge from evil is trust in Allah along with purity of heart.

4. Ill-will

True believers are described in the Holy

Qur'an, verse 10 of chapter 59, as saying when they pray to Allah:

"..And leave not, in our hearts, rancour (or sense of injury) against those who have believed...."

Ill-will and rancour are barriers to the happiness of man. In fact, ill-will is contrary to happiness; it belongs to a different domain on human feelings. It is like a virus that kills the lofty sentiments and kind feelings of man.

5. Anger

Anger connotes displeasure and hostility. Therefore, it is one of the biggest threats that spoil man's happiness. Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), stressed the importance of self-restraint when he advised one of his companions: "Do not be overpowered by anger..."

6. Injustice

Injustice, no doubt will bring ruin to every-body who practises it. This is proven by many examples that served as warnings and lessons to humanity to shun this dangerous vice and maintain justice and equality. Injustice may signify the trespassing and going beyond limits; it may also signify the misplacement of things or denial of truth.

In this context, incorrect concepts on divinity, such as polytheism, idolatry and false worship, are one of the forms of injustice as it is a distortion of true religion and trespassing against divine commands. The following verse from the Holy Qur'an illustrates this point:

"Behold, Luqman said to his son by way of instruction: 'O my son! Join not in worship (others) with Allah: for false worship is indeed the highest wrong-doing'...." (Qur'an, 31:13)

Many a nation backed up, or refrained from resisting, unjust tyrants and wrong-doers and brought thereby upon themselves devastation and perdition.

The following quotation from the sayings of the Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) testifies to this proven fact very often noticed in human life. Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari, a companion of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), related that the Prophet said (as narrated by Imams Bukhari and Muslim):

"Allah may give a wrong-doing tyrant respite, and thereafter when He punishes him, He never

lets him escape." Then, he recited this Qur'anic Verse:

"Such is the chastisement of thy Lord when He chastises communities in the midst of their wrong: grievous, indeed, and severe is His chastisement."
(Qur'an, 11:102)

In another verse from the Holy Qur'an, it is stated:

"And how many populations did I give respite, which were given to wrong-doing? In the end I punished them. To Me is the destination (of all)." (Qur'an, 22:48)

7. Fear of Wordly Power

Fear of other than Allah is the cause of humility, insecurity and unhappiness. Whereas, fear of Allah produces in man lofty ideals and drives him to develop sound conduct and excellent moral behaviour. It frees him from all fetters of human bondage and safeguards his dignity and freedom of will. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

"It is only the Satan that suggests to you the fear of his votaries: be you not afraid of them, but fear me, if you are true believers." (Qur'an, 3:175)

8. Pessimism

Pessimism is synonymous with misery and trouble. It leads to a stage of inertia and depression. A pessimistic person would hold back from enjoying his normal life or achieving his objectives. Therefore, the Gracious Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) promoted and liked optimism but discouraged and disliked pessimism. A pessimist, due to his defeatist tendencies, incurs several troubles and difficulties the effects of which on his nerves are far heavier than dilemmas and disasters.

9. Suspicion

Allah (Glory be to Him) states in the Holy Qur'an:

"O ye who believe! Shun suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin...."
(Qur'an, 49:12)

Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) also says:

"Shun suspicion, because suspicion is the biggest lie." (Narrated by Imams Bukhari and Muslim)

How can a suspicious person be happy? And how can a society pervaded by suspicion and mistrust prosper or lead a collective life of happiness.

10. Arrogance

An arrogant person leads a life of misery even though he treats other people rudely and boastfully without due regard to established norms of moral conduct. He oppresses them or turns his cheek in scorn toward them but he is definitely haunted with guilty conscience which makes his life miserable.

"Turn not thy cheek in scorn toward folk, nor walk with pertness in the land. Lo! Allah loveth not each braggart boaster." (Qur'an, 31:18)

Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) gave his advice in this regard when he said:

"On the Day of Judgment Allah will not look towards him who trails his lower garment out of pride " (a Hadith narrated by Imams Bukhari and Muslim)

11. Devotion to other than Allah

It is a part of man's character to love and hate, but

carrying the passions of love and hate to extremes is precarious. Take for example the story of Romeo and Juliet in English Literature or Qays and Layla in Arabic Literature. Qays, who was known in the story as Layla's mad lover, had suffered tremendously from this love until he lost his senses and later died in a wretched piteous state.

When your heart is wholly devoted to your Creator (Allah), your love is holy and you thereby enjoy an elevated emotion which fills your heart with peace and happiness.

This kind of emotion is not in contradiction with love for parents, wife or children . In fact, they are harmonious and complementary. But, extreme emotions, when not controlled by reason or logic, are in fact detrimental to our life and happiness.

12. Alcohol, Drugs and Drug Addiction

Many people imagine that happiness can be attained through alcohol or drug addiction. Therefore, they resort to drugs escaping thereby from the troubles and worries of life. In fact, they are like one who escapes from a small fire to a hell.

Drugs may throw one, for a short while, into a

dreamy illusive world of happiness; but in fact they lead both to disintegration and destruction. We nowadays witness many examples of such social disintegration and chaos due to the world-wide surge of drug addiction besides other causes related to corruption and the absence of real religious sanctions and sound creed.

LAND MARKS ON THE WAY TO HAPPY LIFE

(The Factors & Pre-requisites of Happiness)

1. Sound Belief

To build a happy life, you have to first lay a solid foundation for it, otherwise, it will subside. Therefore, we should seek such a solid unshakeable foundation on which we could build our wholesome life. There must be also a scheme by which the course of our life is to be guided and controlled.

Man possesses impulses, drives, feelings, desires and whims which may influence his character and way of life. He is endowed with the ability to think, reason and perceive so that he could be

able to control his will and emotions and direct himself into the course of action he believes to be suitable. However, man's mind and emotions may lapse and lead him away from the right path. He may stray unknowingly from the way to success and happiness and take the course to chaos and misery, thereby bringing suffering and destruction upon himself and upon others.

Hence the necessity for man to achieve a profound understanding of the Divine Guidance which leads his way to the plain truth about his existence in this world, his relation to the universe and to other creatures, the purpose of his creation, how he has come into existence, the Divine Will that controls him and directs his life, and the correct course and way that leads him to salvation and real happiness.

Islam is the last and only universal religion and system or code of life revealed to mankind through the last Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) and the only faith with the Divine Revelation still kept intact in its original form, unlike the earlier revelations which were already lost, adulterated, interpolated, changed and

corrupted. Thus, the Islamic Faith proves to be the only correct foundation for man's character and behaviour and a mode of life necessary for building a sound and progressive society characterized by justice and peace which is in harmony with Allah's will.

If we think of the backwardness of Muslim societies, we will find that the reason for such condition is mainly due to the deviation from this divine way of life. The calamities that caused the downfall of Muslim societies are by no means merely due to lack of scientific knowledge but rather to their deviation from Islam. In fact, when Europe was going through the so-called Dark Ages, the Islamic Nation, covering half of the world, was enjoying the most splendid and glorious civilization the world had ever known.

So the Islamic belief, when put into practice, leads man to the right direction and channels all his energies and efforts into a constructive scheme of life. To begin with, faith is complementary to reason. Therefore, reason is not the antithesis of faith as is the case in some other human beliefs and religions. Islamic faith helps to develop the human mind and does not impose any kind of illogical concept or undue restrictions on it. It

leads man in the way of truth since he is guided by words and commandments of his Creator, Who knows what is best for him.

A basic Islamic principle of faith is related to harmony in this universe. Many scientists and thinkers believe that there is a conflict between man and nature and that man is struggling to overcome the powers of nature. Islam corrects this short-sighted notion. It states that everything in this world has been created to serve man, and man has been created to serve Allah. Therefore, the relationship between man and the universe is one of harmony and friendliness. This fact imbues man with peace of mind, satisfaction and happiness. It also frees his mind from worries, fears and feeling of hostility. His life would become inspired with love, hope, optimism, contentment and happiness that would enable him to face hardships with confidence and right discretion.

Belief in Allah and in His perfect attributes would deeply influence the Muslim's character and his whole outlook on life. It brings him to acquire good qualities and aim for human perfection. This will undoubtedly achieve, for both the individual and the society, a life of ideal values

and collective happiness.

Belief in the angels of Allah makes man feel that he is not alone in this universe and that it abounds with righteous friendly creatures. This would make life pleasant for him and enable him to achieve success and happiness.

Belief in the Day of Judgment drives man to control his behaviour and life according to the Divine Laws of justice and righteousness.

Without belief in this Day on which everyone will receive his just deserts (when the wrong-doers are justly punished and the righteous are rewarded bountifully), man would lose the impetus to behave fairly towards others and the oppressed would grow hopeless and miserable.

Belief in the Hereafter is an essential element that helps to control human delinquency and establish collective happiness and virtues in society.

Belief in Divine Destiny is a major element of a stable and composed personality. When you submit yourself to the Divine Decree and Will and feel positively certain that "What befalls you would not have missed you and what misses you

would not have befallen you", you would certainly grow stronger in the face of calamities, face them with patience and courage and not succumb to them or be paralyzed with shock or despair.

Lack of such element of faith creates a vacuum in man's heart and life that cannot be filled up with all the riches and pleasures of the world. It is this kind of emptiness that drives many, even the wealthy and the pleasure-seekers of the world to collapse or even commit suicide.

2. Worship and Devotion to Allah

"Not for (idle) sport did We create the heavens and the earth and all that is between"(Qur'an, 21:16)

So creation is not for idle sport or play, Allah has a serious purpose behind it. What is it? Allah has revealed to us His purpose in the Holy Qur'an:

"I have only created Jinns (i.e., genies) and men, that they may serve Me!" (Qur'an, 51:56)

Everything and everyone in the Universe are created by Almighty Allah, and all submit to His

Will. Have a glance at the physical world. You will find everything controlled and directed in accordance with Divine Order and Laws. There are laws that govern every area or domain of nature, such as the laws of gravity, motion, relativity, etc. These prevailing laws testify to the fact that the universe is in total submission to its Creator, Almighty Allah, Who has originated its laws. But man has been endowed with Free Will, a privilege not given to the lower forms of creation, so that his obedience to the laws of his Creator should be more sensible and not a kind of blind obedience like a robot following the commands of the computer operator.

Besides, he is also endowed with the faculty of thinking and reasoning so that he could be able to decide and shoulder responsibility. Therefore, man will be able to achieve full harmony in his life if the intellectual and spiritual side of his character comes to coincide with the physical side which is already ruled by natural or physical laws ordained and fulfilled by Allah Glory be to Him)!

Thus, he would abide by the Divine Law, listen to the commandments of his Lord and respond

willingly, and worship in all humility and reverence the only true deity, Allah, Who alone is worthy of worship.

Obedience and worship of Allah are a major and comprehensive source of contentment and happiness for man. On the personal level, it gives man the feeling that he is close to Allah and such nearness to his Lord, consequently, provides him with guidance, wisdom, strength, confidence, steadfastness, security, joy and satisfaction. Acts of worship have many positive aspects in human life. In prayer, man communicates with his Lord directly and establishes the most exalted relationship that infuses him with satisfaction and peace of mind. He feels that Allah is with him: He hears him, responds to him, accepts his prayers and good deeds and forgives his sins.

This would elevate his spirit to perfection. He would contemplate the verses of the Glorious Qur'an that are recited and realize their implications as well as the general aims of the prayer. He would be moved to comply with their injunctions and commandments. He would feel the power of Allah dominating him as well as the whole universe.

This would make him humble and cause him to abstain from wronging or trespassing against others. When he acquires such traits, he would become the epitome of love, mercy, justice and guidance. He would become a man of good manners and refinement, in full control of his desires and whims. Further, he would be able to channel all his feelings, efforts and actions in the proper constructive way.

Prayer purifies the soul of error and the gloominess of sins as water purifies and refreshes the body. It refines man's character and inculcates in him the excellent virtues of truthfulness, honesty, modesty and humility. It keeps man away from falsehood and from all forbidden actions and evil deeds.

On the collective level, prayer achieves for the community a high degree of perfection and leads it through the way to collective happiness and success, as it has realized for the individual a feeling of happiness as well as consistency, dignity and integrity.

This act of worship contains many elements of success and social welfare. Congregational prayer is, in fact, a school for social upliftment, where man can exercise order and unity, and equality is

fully realized with no traces of discrimination whatsoever. Those who perform prayer in the right way shall find their way to salvation, success and eternal happiness.

What applies to prayer also applies to other acts of worship which, together, contribute to the building of spiritual, social, political, economic welfare and solidarity.

In fact, that is the secret behind the standard of superiority achieved by the Muslim society at the Zenith of its development, power, and prosperity.

A final word on worship as a source of success and happiness is that worship in Islam includes every action a Muslim performs only for the sake of Allah (Glory be to Him) and in accordance with His commandments. This not only covers ritual acts like prayers performed in the Mosque, fasting during the month of Ramadan or the performance of Hajj; it also includes all human activities, such as learning, training, eating, sleeping, working to earn a living for the sustenance of the family and all other constructive activities necessary for the improvement of human life. This provides the Muslim with a treasure of good deeds that contribute to the realization of an integral and righteous character and enhances his chances of

attaining an everlasting blissful life in the Hereafter. The following verse from the Holy Qur'an guides man to the way of prosperity and success:

"O ye who believe! Do your duty to Allah, seek the means of approach unto Him, and strive (with might and main) in His cause: that ye may prosper." (Qur'an, 5:35)

"Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has Faith, verily, to him will We give a new life, a life that is good and pure, and We will bestow on such their reward according to the best of their actions." (Qur'an, 16:97)

Faith, if sincere, means right conduct. When these two confirm each other, Allah's grace transforms our life. Instead of being troubled and worried, we have peace and contentment; instead of being assailed at every turn by false alarms and the assaults of evil, we enjoy calm and attain purity. The transformation is visible in this life itself, but the "reward" in terms of the Hereafter will be far beyond our deserts.

The Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Happiness, all happiness, is long life (full) of obedience to Allah." (Narrated by Quda'i and

Daylami on the authority of Ibn Umar)

It is worth mentioning that obedience must be based on sound knowledge; for ignorance may distort the spirit of godliness and deprive worship of its meaning, and render it fruitless and almost futile.

There is a common saying which runs as follows: "I do not feel that happiness consists in the amassment of a fortune; it is the righteous and godly who are happy!"

3. Closely akin to the above in spiritual and devotional aspect is the remembrance of Allah (Glory be to Him), Lord and Sustainer of the Universe. Associated with it are supplications, prayers, celebration of Allah's praises and recitation of the Glorious Qur'an. Having seen the influence of faith and righteousness on man's character and life, we find it relevant here to cite two Qur'anic verses which combine in the same context the elements of faith and righteousness with that of remembrance of Allah:

"Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allah: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allah do

hearts find satisfaction. For those who believe and work righteousness, is (every) blessedness and a beautiful place of (final) return."(Qur'an,13:28-29)

When man becomes conscious of the bounties and favours bestowed by Allah upon him and feels that his very existence, body, spirit, intellects and faculties are granted to him out of generosity, he will naturally be moved to celebrate his Creator's praises and be grateful to Him. He acquires this satisfaction and blessedness and inward joy which is difficult to describe in words. This blessedness and satisfaction is also felt on reciting or listening to the words of Allah (Glory be to Him). Receiving and reading a letter from a person you love and respect would fill your heart with comfort and happiness which could not compare to the level of comfort, happiness and spiritual bliss that one would feel in the words and name of Allah (Glory be to Him).

Shunning the remembrance of Allah and His revealed message to humanity deprives man of that transcendent joy and satisfaction. It causes constriction in the chest, a feeling of spiritual void and depression, a desolate and desperate life full of worries, and ultimately wrath and eternal punishment in the Hereafter.

"But whosoever turns away from My Message, Verily for him is a life narrowed down, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Judgment."
(Qur'an, 20:124)

4. Goodness and Kindness to Others:

This emanates from the very essence of faith. Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"All creatures are dependants of Allah, and the most favoured among them by Allah is the one who is most helpful to His dependants."
(Narrated by Tabarani, Abu Naeem and Bayhaqi)

Thus, active faith turns man into a mercy to himself and to others.

There are many forms and manifestations of goodness that are based on the Muslim's being a mercy to humanity. This is represented by his natural inclination and keenness to save other people from error and lead them to salvation. However, this can only be achieved if he is a real embodiment of his faith. The tendency towards kindness emanates from human reciprocal relations; for man's delight depends on the delight of others and vice versa, and this reciprocity provides happiness for both the

individual and the society as a whole.

A Muslim's goodness is not only limited to brothers in faith; but, it also extends to cover every being, human or otherwise.

Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) said:

"Every Muslim should do an act of charity."

"Suppose he couldn't afford that? people said.

"Let him work with his hands and give out charity," he answered.

"Suppose he couldn't afford it? they said.

"Let him help the grieved and needy," he answered.

"Suppose he couldn't afford it," they said.

"Let him do good and avoid evil, it is an act of charity for him."

(Narrated by Imam Bukhari)

But such charity must be based on sincerity and be free from any kind of hypocrisy, bad intention or ulterior motives:

"O ye who believe! Cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury."
(Qur'an, 2:264)

5. Renunciation of Too Long-Term Hopes and Griefs of the Past:

Many people spend most of their time worrying about their future life and keep regretting past mishaps. They live in continuous worry and misery.

A good solution to this source of worries is to live within the limits of today. This does not mean to neglect the future and stop planning for it, nor does it involve failure to draw lessons from past experiences. It aims at ridding our life of obsession with futile cares that lead us only to stress and frustrations.

According to one thinker:

"We should not look forward to a goal that looks faint in the distance; in fact, we have to complete the clear works that we have in hand."

Another says:

"Life is short, we must not make it shorter by care and troubles."

Living within the limits of today is consistent with the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him):

"He who is safe (in his home), healthy (in his body), with enough provisions for the day, is like one who possesses everything in the world."

You will possess the basic elements of happy life in this world if you acquire the requirements of safe and happy living such as:

1. Physical (residential, social, political and military) security;
2. Health security; and
3. Food security.

So why worry? If you let yourself be haunted with fears and worries about the future all the time, you will not be able to enjoy the present. Plan for the future, no problem, and draw lessons from the past, but never be too absorbed in worrying about your future life or dwell too much on your past glories or shortcomings.

Some people underestimate the safety and peace they enjoy. They may even scorn these great favours and exaggerate the effects of their misfortunes. This contempt is a denial of reality and a major factor that spoils the life of the individual. Happiness is relative and is not dependent on the degree of wealth. A wealthy man who is deprived of contentment leads a life of misery, while a man of average or low means will lead his life

happily if he is contented and has a realistic view in life. What helps man to get rid of frets and worries is a complete trust in his Bountiful, Almighty Lord.

The Holy Qur'an pointed out the benefits of faith and trust in Allah (Glory be to him).

"And for him who fears Allah (and observes his duty to Allah), He (ever) prepares a way out, and He provides for him from (sources) he never could expect. And whoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him. For Allah will surely accomplish His purpose. Verily for all things has Allah appointed a due proportion." (Qur'an 65:02-3)

It is this kind of trust that, at once, fills one with peace of mind and contentment along with the realization that everything is within the power of Allah (the Creator) and drives one to be more optimistic about life, active and hardworking, not idle or suffering from inertia.

Speaking of short-term hopes and aspirations, let's cite the following invaluable words of the holy Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him):

"When you pass the day and arrive at the evening,

do not expect that you will pass night and hope to reach morning, and when you arrive in the morning do not look forward to the evening. While in health, be ready for illness, and while alive, prepare for death.' (Narrated by Imam Bukhari)

On the transience of human life, the Prophet (Peace and blessing be upon him) said:

"I am in this world like a rider who halts in the shade of a tree for a short time, and after taking some rest resumes his journey and leaves the tree behind." (Narrated by Tirmidhi)

You would appreciate the real meaning of the above words if you meditate on the reality of life and conceive of it as a film that lasts for some time presenting a whole life or episode of life. The similitude of human life is as follows: Days go by like a film and when you grow old and look back on your past life, you review it like watching an exciting movie . Yet , this does not imply that man should be distracted from leading an active life or entertaining legitimate aspirations of life for the future. It simply means that you can always live your life and plan for the future with confidence and persistence, but let

everything be in your hand and do not allow anything in the world to possess your heart and dominate you like a slave. Be a master of yourself by controlling your desires but not the other way round.

Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessing be upon him) was quoted as saying:

"May he perish who is the slave of dinar and dirham* of black and striped sheets of cloth.**
(Reported by Imam Bukhari)

An essential pre-requisite of happiness is the understanding of the role of man in this world and his position and function as a servant of Allah on the one hand, and a trustee of Allah on earth on the other hand. Thus, man would be ruled and guided by divine light and would behave with a sense of responsibility. So a Muslim strives to make the best of his time to produce for himself and other people what is useful for them ,and to prepare himself for the future both in this life

* Dinar and Dirham: currency used during the time of the Prophet (Peace and blessing be upon him), which resembles the 'dollar and cents' or the 'pound and pence.

** Black and and striped sheets of cloth: precious cloth, symbolizing luxury clothes and costumes.

and in the Hereafter. Listen to this golden rule of happiness in the words of Allah's Messenger (Peace and blessing be upon him):

"Take advantage of five before five: your youth before your senility; your health before your sickness; your wealth before your poverty; your leisure before your occupation; and, your life before your death."

(Reported by Imams Ahmad, Baihaqi and Hakim)

Youth, which is the prime of man, should be used in fruitful and constructive competition strife; health, the golden opportunity in life, should be used for the prevention of diseases; wealth, is also an opportunity which must be used for protection from poverty; leisure, which is a major problem of our contemporary world, must be treated with a sense of responsibility and must be used only for activities which are constructive and worthwhile; and, finally, the whole life is the greatest opportunity for man to make provision for the final journey into the future world, in the Hereafter in accordance with the Divine Will.

Preparation for the Day of Judgment and the attainment of eternal happiness does not involve the neglect of this worldly life. It requires the full

exploitation and improvement of our society as well as the building of a lofty civilization based on the Divine Guidance as revealed by Allah unto His Messenger, Muhammad (Peace and blessing be upon him) .

6. A major source of discontent and unhappiness is the feeling of inadequacy and incapability, while opulent people enjoy the pleasures and luxury of life. The most effective solution to such a source of uneasiness and suffering is to forget about people with higher standard of living; for if you compare yourself with such people you will only incur misery. You would find solace when you discover that you are endowed with more blessings by Allah than many others. We have already been guided to this golden rule given by Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him) in the following words:

"Look at those inferior to you, and do not look at those superior to you. Thereby, you would be able to appreciate better the benevolence of Allah bestowed upon you." (Narrated by Imams Bukhari and Muslim)

On another occasion the Messenger of Allah (Peace and blessing be upon him) said:

"When any of you happens to see one on whom Allah has bestowed more riches and a finer physique, he should look at one who is inferior to him (in this respect)." (Narrated by Imam Bukhari)

A Muslim is generally satisfied with his lot from Allah regarding such matters which fall outside and beyond his means and ability. This, however, does not indicate any defeatist attitude or fatalism in its passive denotation; rather, a Muslim exercises his free will actively and enjoys a dynamic personality. As part of his faith, a Muslim believes in the Day of Judgment and in the Divine Justice which gives him relief in cases where he finds no way to the fulfilment of justice. After all, everything in this world is ephemeral and what matters is not the worldly possessions one may hold but the right preparation for the Hereafter, in which the faithful and guided believer enters into the Eternal Abode of Bliss, where there shall be no bitterness or misery. This fact gives him a complete consolation and relieves him of his suffering. For he is conscious of the fact that on that day justice will prevail and everybody will be able to receive his due, and no one will trespass on him, wrong him or boast over him. This awareness helps a lot to protect

man from much anxiety and uneasiness. In matters of religion, piety and acquisition of knowledge, we had better look at those superior to us in good deeds, upright behaviour and in the pursuit of useful knowledge.

7. Building of better understanding of things and getting rid of misconceptions and superstitions deliver man from ignorance, illusions and baseless worries that spoil his tranquility and happiness. On the contrary, ignorance of realities entices people to take wrong avenues and draw them into troubles, ridicules and undue sufferings. Take, for instance, the case of a child who develops fear of certain tame animals, or the case of some women who get scared of harmless creatures or even the case of some men who are haunted by fear of bad omens or by the belief that men are intrinsically evil. Such notions would undoubtedly cause the individual to behave erroneously and lead a very miserable life which may have unwelcome effects on his character and environment. They may lead to the development of such abnormalities as depression, anxiety, hallucination, schizophrenia, neurosis, psychosis, etc.

8. One important step on the way to happiness is

to work towards harmony within oneself and with the outward world: in the family, at school, in the office, in society and more generally, in humanity. The achievement of such harmony requires the building up of one's personality so as to become stable, confident, consistent, flexible and adaptable. Character building could be achieved by adopting the Islamic educational system which helps man to acquire a balanced and sound personality and co-exist and adapt himself easily to other people and things around him so that he could help to create a happy environment.

9. Access to happiness can also be obtained through several factors necessary for a successful and happy life, namely: good health, time, affluence and sound (constructive) reasoning provided, however, that these are supplemented with inner wealth through spiritual guidance without which such elements would be only a source of evil and destruction. Without the inner wealth and contentment, all riches and treasures of this world would not suffice to make a man happy.

Islam takes a positive view of life with virtue lying not in shunning the bounties of Allah but in enjoying them within the framework of

"righteous living" through which Islam seeks to promote human welfare:

"O ye who believe! Make not unlawful the good things which Allah hath made lawful for you, but commit no excess: for Allah loveth not those given to excess.

"Eat of the things which Allah hath provided for you, lawful and good; but fear Allah, in Whom you believe." (Qur'an, 5:87-88)

Islam also lays a lot of stress and emphasis on the need for simultaneous enrichment of both material and spiritual values to be deeply infused into the individual's life.

10. Social solidarity is based on cooperation and the presence of altruism and civil spirit. Such elements were never deep-rooted and in full force anywhere in the world as they were in the early ideal Muslim society. That civilized and lofty society was a living reflection of the active faith of Muslim believers and of the commandments revealed by Allah and preached by His last Prophet to humanity, Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him); the result, of course, was collective prosperity and happiness.

Read with me:

"Help ye one another in righteousness and piety, but help ye not one another in sin and rancour." (Qur'an, 5:3)

"A believer is like a brick for another believer, the one supporting the other."

(Reported by Imams Bukhari and Muslim)

"The similitude of believers in regard to mutual love, affection, and fellow-feeling is that of one body; when any limb of it aches, the whole body aches, because of sleeplessness and fever."

(Reported by Imams Bukhari and Muslim)

"None of you is a perfect believer until he desires for his brother believer that which he desires for himself." (Reported by Imams Bukhari and Muslim)

"A Muslim owes six obligations towards another Muslim, namely:

1. When you meet him, greet him by saying: Peace be on you;
2. When he invites you, you should accept his invitation;
3. When he solicits your advice, advise him sincerely;
4. When he sneezes and praises Allah, respond with supplication: May Allah have mercy on you;

5. When he falls sick, you should visit him; and,
 6. When he dies, join his funeral."
- (Reported by Imam Muslim)

"One who believes in Allah and the Day of Judgment must not cause hardship and inconvenience to his neighbor; and he who believes in Allah and the Last Day must honour his guest, and he who believes in Allah and the Day of Judgment must speak well or keep quiet!"

(Narrated by Imams Bukhari and Muslim)

Omar bin Al-Khattab, the second Caliph after the death of Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings be upon him), refused to eat fat and meat until all people have had enough to eat.

A society with such standards of education and altruistic spirit, with such solidarity and harmonious relations, with such excellent manners and self-sacrifice, such a society is really a very happy one.

11. Stability of the human personality is one of the essential elements of happiness both on the individual and the collective levels. How could we attain a stable, well-balanced personality? Let's

refer to the words of Allah in the Glorious Qur'an and trace some of the important constituents of such character:

* Seeking guidance from the Holy Qur'an:

"Verily this Qur'an doth guide to that which is most right (or stable)...."(Qura'n, 17:9)

* Forbearance and deliberation: Haste is a danger to the stability of human character. Man in his haste may unwittingly mistake evil for good. Haste and impatience, due to failure to attain one's ambitions or desires, may move one to pray for evil instead of good or be contented with the immediate little gain and give up the greater future gain.

* A child is born with an intact nature that grows in a stable upright manner until he/she reaches maturity. Deviation of the character takes place as a result of external factors. Therefore, the Qur'an provides remedial doses for the achievement of character stability and virtuousness, and the treatment of evils of deviation and corruption before they become out of control. It has made clear the straight path of righteousness and warned

against the ways of error. Moreover, it has also pointed out that man is endowed with the faculty of distinguishing right from wrong.

"By the soul, and the proportion and order given to it;"

"And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right;"

"Truly he succeeds that purifies it,"

"And he fails that corrupts it!"(Qur'an 91:7-10)

The above passage draws the attention of man to the role of self-purification and stabilization in the achievement of success and happiness. Man should learn and understand that his success, prosperity and salvation depend on himself, on his keeping his soul as pure as Allah has made it; on the other hand, his failure, decline and perdition depend on his soiling his soul by choosing evil.

* An outstanding feature of a well-balanced personality is moderation in all fields of life in general and in the financial field in particular.

"And render to the kindred their due rights, as (also) to those in want, and to the wayfarer: but squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift." (Qur'an, 17:26)

"Make not thy hand tied (like a niggard's) to thy neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach, so that thou become blameworthy and destitute."
(Ibid, 17:29)

We are not to be so lavish as to make ourselves destitute and incur the just censure of wise men, nor is it becoming to keep back our resources from the just needs of those who have a right to our help.

* A stable character keeps man away from degradation and crimes, such as lying, murder, suicide, adultery, drug addiction, fraud, rape, robbery, theft, usury and other sins which are in contradiction with a stable personality and deprive the society of its stability and peace.

12. The feeling of peace and security or freedom from fear and anxiety.

Happiness springs from inside the human mind and heart. Therefore, peace of the mind and psychological security play a major role in the attainment of happiness. Many wealthy people could not find the way to happiness despite the luxury they enjoy. That is due to their lack of the aforesaid

factor. At the same time, many people who lack the luxury of life enjoy such inner security and through this they experience a great deal of happiness.

Peace of mind and the feeling of security could be achieved by getting rid of fear and anxiety, and observance by people of their duties to their Almighty Lord, moved simultaneously by fear of Allah and love for Him. This would make them keep away from all forms of aggression and harm, thus causing peace and security to prevail in society. The feeling of security is boosted by the awareness that Allah continuously watches over every human act and behaviour.

"Allah ever watches over you."(Qur'an, 4:1)

Security may also be established and strengthened by mutual mercy and sympathy and caring for sectors of society badly in need of protection and patronage such as orphans. Organization of family affairs helps also to remove the causes of anxiety. Read the following verse from the holy Qur'an on the wife-husband relationship:

"...and among His (Allah's) signs is this, that He

created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect." (Qur'an, 30:21)

It is this mutual relationship of love, mercy and affection that gives the sense of security to the whole family, including children who enjoy this sense under the protection of their parents. This relationship is well-organized in Islamic society, including the prescription of rights and obligations for every member of the family so that stability may prevail in their lives.

On a larger scope, Islam laid down the foundations of security and peace in society by establishing comprehensive and fair rules and regulations for all human affairs: moral, social, political, military, economic and other fields of human endeavour.

13. Repentance purifies the soul and relieves the human mind of the burden of sin and guilt. The aim of penitence is twofold: Peace of mind and carefree life in this world and everlasting bliss in the Hereafter. Repentance,

in its Islamic import, does not involve, as in Christianity, any kind of confession of sins to a priest or to any man. Islam teaches that there are no mediators or intercessors in the relationship between Allah and His servants. In fact, anyone could always turn directly to Allah for help and forgiveness, for He is too Generous and Kind to turn you down. The Holy Qur'an explains to us how Merciful is Allah to us:

"When My servants ask thee concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them): I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me: Let them also, with a will, listen to My call, and believe in Me: that they may walk in the right way." (Qur'an, 2:186)

"..., O ye Believers! Turn ye all together toward Allah, that ye may attain Bliss." (Qur'an, 24:31)

14. Learning and Pursuit of Knowledge open for man the gateway to success and happiness. Have a look at human civilization throughout history and see how knowledge improved man's life and introduced many innovations and facilities for the service of man. But knowledge and science are two-edged weapon: they could raise lofty towers but could also destroy. So

knowledge must be channelled into the right way that leads to the happiness and welfare of mankind. Despite of the tremendous advancement in human knowledge, particularly in science and technology, it is sad that their full utilization is generally geared towards oppression, trespassing on human resources, violation and suppression of basic human rights, international terrorism and blackmail, and the like.

Constructive knowledge in general, and the knowledge of Divine Guidance and Law in particular, pave the way for human betterment and happiness.

Guided by such kind of knowledge, Muslims over many centuries, were able to build a civilization that covered every aspect of human advancement (both material and spiritual) rarely attained by any other civilization in history. Nowadays, the Muslim nation is badly in need of a revival in order to lead humanity again to a civilization of justice, peace, prosperity and happiness based on constructive knowledge and Divine Guidance. On the pursuit of knowledge and learning we read in the Holy Qur'an:

"...but say, O my Lord! advance me in

knowledge! " (Qur'an, 20:114)

Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessing be upon him) stressed the importance of the pursuit of knowledge as a way to eternal happiness:

"If a person follows a path for acquiring knowledge, Allah will make easy the passage to paradise for him." (Narrated by Imam Muslim)

Pursuit of knowledge provides man with a feeling of enjoyment and pleasure. If man enjoys having delicious meals for his body, he would also enjoy more delicious meals (of knowledge) for his mind and soul.

15. "Tell me who your friends and companions are, then I can tell you who you are."

To draw the above saying closer to our subject matter, we may say:

"Keep a happy man company, and you will become happy."

It seems like contagious happiness that infects the environment of man and influences other. This is true because a happy man is an optimistic and confident person who enjoys peace and assurance, and tries to transmit his optimism and cheerfulness wherever he goes, thereby

spreading an impression of delight and happiness. Moreover, when you have righteous friends you will acquire good qualities from them and become equally righteous. Righteousness, you know, is an Entry Visa for the abode of happiness and Allah's bounty.

16. Strong will and self-confidence are decisive factors for the attainment of happiness. These factors could develop and direct the life of the individual toward success and happiness. They are also essential to overcome the hardships of life and withstand all odds that obstruct man's way towards the achievement of his goals in life.

17. To form a happy social life, you should be on good and intimate terms with your family, friends and colleagues. The building of a happy house depends on the right choice of your spouse, maintenance of intimate and good relationship and familiarity with the best ways of bringing up the children. Friends should be selected carefully as mentioned earlier. As for your colleagues, you should treat them with tolerance, affection and mutual respect.

"Whoever works any act of righteousness and has

faith - his endeavour will not be rejected and We shall record it in his favour." (Qur'an, 21:94).

CONCLUSION

A timely reminder to every one appeared in a recent issue of the Reader's Digest - sorrowful words as those of a certain top member of the U.S. Republican National Committee. He is now dead, and in his prime, he was blessed with material wealth, power and prestige but not with spiritual wealth. Unfortunately, our message is late for him but for the many still alive who may be undergoing similar conditions, the words of the honourable gentleman of the U.S. would undoubtedly be an eye opener (warning) for those who are still in a quandary. Those last and sorrowful words reveal his true inner feelings, that despite his material success, i.e., power, wealth and prestige, there seems to be absolute EMPTINESS in his whole being which could only be experienced through the knowledge of spiritual reality. In his quest for material things, he forgot to develop his spiritual nourishment. He forgot that all worldly things are but ephemeral and transitory in nature and what matters is our inner wealth which is more meaningful, abiding

and lasting. His last words are herebelow full of frustration and uncertainty.

" I know I acquired more than most. But you can acquire all you want and still feel empty. What power wouldn't I trade for a little more time with my family? What price wouldn't I pay for an evening with friends? It took a deadly illness to put me eye to eye with that truth, but it is a truth the country can learn on my dime.... I was never a religious man. All you have is your time on this earth, I used to say. Confronted with the prospect of my own end, I re-evaluated. I did not even know what I believed. I welcome anyone who could tell me about his faith....!"

His last words were very revealing but it was completely a dismal failure.....full of emptiness without a trace of hope of spiritual fulfilment. It was tragic indeed, without a trace of hope - all his times were spent solely for material wealth and leaving not an iota of spiritual nourishment. Try ISLAM - the only recourse of humanity for a "real" happiness.

Welcome to your own religion!

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"Every child is born in a state of 'Islam', then, his parents make him a Jew, a Christian or a Magian."

REMINDER: ALL THOSE WHO EMBRACE ISLAM ACTUALLY "REVERT" TO THEIR ORIGINAL RELIGION (ISLAM).

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طريق السعادة

« باللغة الإنجليزية »

« مستمد من كتاب »

« السعادة بين الوهم والحقيقة » للدكتور ناصر العمر

وكتاب « الوسائل المفيدة للحياة السعيدة » للشيخ عبدالرحمن السعدي

إعداد / غالب أحمد مصري و نظيف جامع آدم

محتويات هذا الكتاب:

- ١- يناقش هذا الكتاب القضية التي تكاد تشغل بال الناس جميعاً والغاية التي يسعى الإنسان للوصول إليها بشتى الوسائل ويسلك إليها مختلف الطرق وهي السعادة .
- ٢- يبدأ الكتاب بمقدمة تضع يد القارئ على مكان السعادة وحقيقتها وتتطرق إلى السعادة بنوعيتها الدنيوي الزائل والأخروي الخالد .
- ٣- يعرف السعادة تعريفاً علمياً اعتمد فيه على المصادر اللغوية والفكرية .
- ٤- يتكلم عن أمور يتوهم كثير من الناس أنها منبع السعادة ويناقشها ويبين الحقيقة فيها .
- ٥- ثم يعرج إلى موانع السعادة وأخيراً يستفيض في الحديث عن العوامل الموصلة إلى نيل السعادة الحقيقية على ضوء القرآن والسنة ونهج السلف الصالح .

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