Happiness

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Abstract*: According to Islam happiness causes lifting the spirit and its joy. Imam Ali (A.S) states that: "Happiness clears up the soul and brings joy." Also, about the role of this element in life he says: Whoever has just a few reasons for happiness, death is a relief for him. According to this, he advised that whenever you had a chance to be happy use it. "Whenever you have a happy day, do not avoid it; because when you have a sad day, sadness does not avoid you." In the rest of the discussion, we will present some causes which bring happiness and joy:*

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Joy of jokes

Joke is a joy in life that plays an important role in human's happiness. Having a sense of humor does not contrast faith. The Prophet knows having a sense of fun as a characteristic of believers: "a believer is sociable and witty and a hypocrite is humpy and angry."[1]

By coming of Islam as a religion to the Hejaz, some believers avoided laughing and telling jokes and they thought that the whole life should spent for praying, fasting, etc. The Prophet stood up against this deviation and advised moderation. He stated: indeed, I am a human being like you and I have a sense of humor.[2]

In another sermon he states:

I pray, sleep, fast, eat, laugh, and cry. Therefore, whoever refuses my life style is not of me.

It was his custom that when he was in a group of people, he laughed with them. Imam Ali (A.S) and other friends also narrated this behavior of him.[3]

Imam Kazem(A.S) states:

Sometimes a nomad Arab man came to the prophet. He brought the prophet a gift. And he said give the cost of my gift. The prophet laughed. Whenever he was sad, he asked where that nomad man is! I wish he came again."

Therefore, one way of reduction of grief is joking and laughing. Remembering funny memories is also helpful.

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[1]- Bihar Al-Anwar, vol 77 p 155.
[2]- Al- Jame –Al- saghir, vol 1, p.394, tradition 2579

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In addition, the prophet's custom was to make others happy and reduce their grief. Imam Ali (A.S), about this subject, states:

When the prophet saw one of his friends sad, it was his custom to make him happy by telling jokes. And he said that: God hates a person frowns to his brother (religious brother).

Younes Sheibani said,

"Once Imam Sadiq asked how much do you tell jokes? I said a little! He stated: do not be like this. Joking is from good behavior and undoubtedly, you make your brother happy by this. The prophet joked with people and wanted to make them happy."[1]

Limitation of joking

Joking has some limitations that should not be exceeded. It is interesting to know that exceeding these limitations has contrary results and it causes grief. Therefore, knowing these limitations helps happiness to be long lasting.

A) Firstly we should notice that jokes should not exceed rightfulness. Jock should not mixed with lies. About this, the prophet stated: no one will reach the whole faithfulness unless he quit laughing. They were surprised. They asked the prophet that you tell us jokes, don't you? He stated but I do not say anything except truth."[2] Another time he stated that although I tell jokes to you, I do not say anything except truth."[3]

It is apparent that if one observes this condition, he will not be blamed. About this, the prophet (A.S) state,

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[1]- Kafi, vol 2,663, tradition 3.
[2]- Makarem –Al- Akhlagh, p21.
[3]-Al- Jame _Al- Saghir,vol 1, p402, tradition 2629.

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Indeed God does not blame a person who tells jokes to other if he is truthful.

B) Next limitation is that you should not make fun of others. Some people take others belonging or horrify them by the excuse of joking. The prophet prevents his followers from these kinds of jokes.

You should not take your companion's things whether as a joke or not. If somebody takes a walking stick of someone, he should return it.

Abdul- Rahman –bin- abi- leily said:

The prophet's companions narrated that one day the prophet was going somewhere with his companions. In the middle of the way, one of them fell asleep. Some of them took his rope. When he woke up, he was uneasy. When prophet was informed, he stated: it is not appropriate for a Muslim to scare another Muslim.

Abul Hassan, who was in Badr battle and was present at Aghabah homage, said:

We were sitting with the prophet, somebody stood up and went out, but he forgot to pick up his shoes. Somebody took it. The owner of the shoes returned and asked where my shoes are? People told him that we did not see them! Quickly the prophet said that they are here. And then he said how could you horrify a Muslim? They said O' prophet we were joking. The prophet answered for two or three times: "how could you horrify a Muslim?"

No'man –ben- Bashir said:

We were with the prophet. Somebody fell asleep on the back of his horse. Somebody took an arrow from him. Suddenly, he woke up fearfully. When the prophet was informed, he said that nobody have the permission to horrify a Muslim.

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C) The third limitation is not to make namahrams laugh. Joking with namahram pays the way of committing sins. Therefore, it should be avoided. If the expense of a joke is committing sins, it does not worth doing it. About this, the prophet said,

Whoever tells jokes with a not intimate female, he will be imprisoned for a thousand years in hell for each word that he said to her in this world. If the female follows him and accompanies him and they end up in an immoral affair, the same sin as the man's sin is for her (is written for her).[1]

D) The fourth limitation is excessive jokes and laughter. Whatever exceeds its limitation will have some unpleasant results and endanger happiness. Therefore, the prophet pointed out to its results and forbid it. Undoubtedly, this is not against happiness. It is cherish of happiness. The prophet said: too much jocks will ruin the credit."

In another tradition, he said:

Whoever does a lot of joke, his awe fades away and his dignity will be ruined.

It is natural for such a person to lose his social position: whoever tells too mush jokes, he will lose his personality in society.

Excessive joking has some other unpleasant results that the prophet mentioned in this tradition:

Avoid too much joke because it ruins the believer's credit and generosity and brings anger.

Based on this, he advises Imam Ali (A.S): "o' Ali! Do not joke too much because it ruins your awe."[2]

2. Joy of the sleep

[1]- Bihar Al-Anwar, vol 7, p 213.
[2]- Man La Yahzoroho –al- Faghih, vol 4, p 355.

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The time has been divided into two parts; days and nights. Days are for searching for a livelihood and nights are for resting. If nights were not set for resting, continuous work and tiredness would wear out human beings. Having a right sleep plays an important role in human's mental tranquility and as a result it will increase people's satisfaction from their life. This affair should not be neglected.[1]

God has introduced sleep as something that brings tranquility: ***"and we made your sleep a rest."****(78:9)*

And another verse of Quran says:

"it is he who has appointed the night a mantle for you and sleep for a rest. the day he has appointed for rising." *(25:47)*

AllameTabatabaiee defines "tranquility" like this:

Tranquility means comfort and becoming free; sleep sets us free from physical tiredness and pain, which we have when we are awake. (This pain and tiredness is because of presence of soul in body.)

In some other verses God has pointed out that night is tranquility:

"***He it is who has made the night for your rest and the day to see. surely, in this there are signs for people who listen.***" *(10:67)*

In all verses, an emphasis had been put on creation of the night as tranquility by the God's permission.

In another verse, God mentions creation of nights as His mercy:

[1]- About the calmness of the sleep and its role in enjoying life, Imam Zein –al-Abedin (A.S) states: "so, he created night for them in order to relax from their job which they did in the day and he set the sleep as tranquility and energy and also setb the night for the to reach joy and passion." –al- sahifah –al- sajjadiiah, Damascas, p 39.

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"***In His mercy He has appointed for you the night and the day, so that you can rest in it, and seek His bounty, in order that you will be thankful."*** *(28:73)*

Indeed if this divine mercy was not applied to humans, what would happen? Life without nights and resting would be full of pain and tiredness. And in such circumstance, talking about peace and satisfaction would be meaningless. God states that:

"say: 'what would you think if Allah should make the day unceasing over you till the day of resurrection, what god, other than Allah, shall bring you the night to sleep in. will you not see?" *(28:72)*

3. Other things that bring happiness

Other aspects of happiness can be seen in some traditions from the Prophet.

The Prophet said,

When human beings eat meat, it brings happiness to their hearts. To be always happy and playful will get the soul rotten, therefore, do not eat it every day.

We have another tradition from the Prophet:

Perfume, honey, looking at grass and riding make heart happy.

From these traditions, it is concluded that other things that bring happiness are:

A) Joy of eating and drinking

Eating and drinking give us pleasure. Of course, it is possible that some foods and drinks give pleasure to all and some other food and drinks give pleasure to some others.

Important point is to obey these rules in order not to exchange happiness with sadness:

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First- eating too much should be avoided because it causes cruelty and idiocy.

Second- foods and drinks should not be illegitimate because it ruins human's soul and future.

Third- the eating etiquette should be followed in order to benefit more and harm less.

B) Joy of sweet fragrance

Sweet fragrance is one element which brings happiness. In our religion, it is advised to wear perfume and have good smelling body. The Prophet said:

"Sweet fragrance strengthens hearth."[1]

The Prophet always used perfume. Imam Ali (A.S) said,

"The Prophet spent more money on perfume than food."[2]

And also he said,

"The Prophet never rejected perfume and sweet."[3]

The important point is to avoid cases that can be resulted in sadness. Therefore, if there is a situation in which sweet fragrance causes sexual stimulation, using perfume should be avoided. About this, the Prophet said,

Any woman who uses perfume and passes by a group (of men) and by her smell provokes them, she is an adulterous.[4]

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[1]- Mizan –al- Hekmah, vol 7, p 3338, tradition 11322.
[2]- Osul Kafi, vol 6, p 512.
[3]- Osul Kafi, vol 6, p 513.
[4]- Mizan –al- Hekmah, vol 7, p3340, tradition 11334.

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And he states another tradition: Whenever any of you (women) attend the congregational prayer, she should not use perfume.[1]

C) Joy of recreation

Another element that brings happiness is to go to a resort, see beautiful green sceneries and ride. These are visual joys which Prophet advised us to acquire. The Prophet said, Have fun and play, I do not want to see harshness and difficulty in your religion.[2]

It is apparent that this happiness should not become revelry. In the religious terminology it is called "Lahv" and "Laeb". We do not discuss it here. The important point is that prohibiting Lahv is because of its negative results which damage human's happiness.

Another point is that this joy is not limited to seeing beautiful sceneries. According to some other traditions there are some other elements that brings happiness. The Prophet said, a believer shouldn't chose any types of entertainment unless three things: training horses, archery and play and tell jokes (have fun time) with his spouse.[3]

In another tradition we read: Whatever which does not include the God's remembrance is a useless entertainment (futile), except for four activities: playing and joking of a man with his wife, training horses, archery and swimming.[4] According to what have been mentioned, any healthy entertainment can be categorized as a joy which is approved by religion.

[1]-Mizan –al- Hekmah, vol 7, p3340, tradition 11335.
[2]- Mizan –al- Hekmah, vol 11, p5360, tradition 18371.
[3]- Osul Kafi, vol 5, p50, tradition 13.
[4]- Kanz –al- Aamal, tradition 40612.

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