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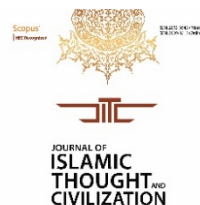|	
Title:	**The Concept of Well-being in Arab-Muslim Thought: Some Literature Review from the Africa to Southeast Asia**
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Concept of Well-Being in the Arab-Muslim Thought:
Reviewing Related Literature, from Africa to Southeast Asia

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Abstract

The concept of well-being *"Ar-rafahiya"* has been addressed by the Holy Qur'ān, the *Sunnah* and several Arab-Muslim thinkers in the previous centuries through the idea of 'happiness,' *"As-sâada."* With this backdrop, this article aims to highlight how the Arab-Muslim thought has defined, developed and used the concept of well-being over time. Additionally, it seeks to underscore the contributions of the Holy Qur'ān, the *Sunnah* and the Arab Muslim thinkers and philosophers regarding ethical principles that aim to foster human well-being through a balanced subsistence that is free of both excess and deficiency. To elaborate on this subject, we analyze some literature reviews by authors from the Muslim countries in Africa, the Middle East and the Southeast Asia as well as other countries. Finally, we conclude that the definitions of the concept of well-being and its realization have always been demarcated in the Arab-Muslim thought by the recognition of Allah Almighty by a human and the satisfaction of Allah Almighty with human acts. Moreover, we clarify how the contemporary Arab-Muslim thought considers the principles of Islamic economic theory. This clarification therefore enables us to understand how contemporary Arab-Muslim thinkers, especially in Southeast Asia, envision the concept of social well-being. Finally, we show that the general concept of well-being in the Western thought stems from a specific influence of the Arab-Muslim thought.

Keywords: Well-being, Happiness, Subsistence, Ethical Principles, Arab-Muslim Thought

Introduction

Undoubtedly, our well-being affects all aspects of our daily lives (physical health and psychological balance, social inclusion, education, safety and life satisfaction, environment, civic engagement, etc.). This explains why this concept is still very common in news reports. Indeed, well-being and the welfare state have been widely discussed in contemporary Western thought. Well-being has been the subject of a great international debate about the issues related to it including its definitions, dimensions, differentiations from other similar concepts, etc.

The "Welfare state is a term that came into general use during the Second World War coalition government in Britain, largely as a result of the influential Beveridge report of 1944. This set up a plan for a comprehensive set of services financed largely out of national insurance contributions levied both on workers and employees. The scheme was to ensure not only the previously acquired right to an old age pension, but to put unemployment pay, sickness and inquiry benefit, and a variety of other financial protections against hardship on a regularized basis."[1]

However, the origins of the concept of well-being extend to antiquity. It was approached by Chinese (Confucius, Lao-tzu) and Greek philosophers (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Zeno of Kition). The Arab-Muslim philosophers and thinkers of the Middle Ages (Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Ibn-

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[1] David Robertson, *A Dictionary of Modern Politics*, Third edition (New York: Europa Publications, 2002), 509-510. ISBN 9781857430936.

e-Sina, etc.) also approached it. Finally, this concept was also among the concerns of Western philosophers and thinkers from the Renaissance till the contemporary period. During all these centuries, the terminology, meaning and content of the concept of well-being have evolved.

When cited in the scientific literature, the concept of well-being has usually been identified as related to happiness, positive experiences or ideas, life satisfaction, pleasure and prosperity. Well-being refers to both subjective feelings and experiences and living conditions. It is also related to the satisfaction of desires, the balance between pain and pleasure, and the opportunity for personal development and fulfillment.[2]

Thus, the aim of this study is not to review all the meanings and contributions of all these philosophers and thinkers but to highlight the impacts of Arab-Islamic thought to properly define and situate the concept of well-being in the international scientific and cultural literature.

To address this topic, we have selected a methodology that explores the available studies in this field. This literature consists mainly of books and articles by the Arab-Muslim authors from sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, the Middle East and Asia and from the selected Western regions. We used several search engines with keywords revolving around the concept of well-being and its various synonyms in Arabic, French and English. Additionally, we restricted our research to the publications that have dealt with the evolution of this concept in the Arab-Muslim thought to facilitate situating it in relation to other thoughts and philosophies.

Accordingly, we have focused our research on three periods: the medieval era, the Renaissance and the contemporary era. However, before approaching to these periods, it is essential to first define the meaning of well-being in the Arabic language, in the Holy Qur'ān and in the *Sunnah*.

This paper has been structured as follows: In Section 2, we study the concept of well-being in the Arabic language. We then discuss how this concept has been defined in the Holy Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* in Sections 3 and 4. Finally, in Section 5, we show how some contemporary Arab and Muslim philosophers and thinkers explain the concept of well-being.

2. The Concept of Well-being in the Arabic Language

In Arabic, the term "welfare" is referred to as "*ar-rafahiya.*" According to Ibn Manzûr,[3] it means comfort and a great life. However, this term, despite its existence in the Arabic language for centuries, was not used in the Holy Qur'ān and the *Sunna* or in the works of ancient Arab-Muslim thinkers and philosophers. Rather, these references preferred the term "*as-sâada*" (happiness). The term "*ar-rafahiya*" did not appear in the studies of the Arab-Muslim writers and thinkers until the 20th century.

3. The Concept of Well-being in the Holy Qur'ān

Islam has allowed, on the one hand, well-being, but at the same time, it has appreciated the ascetic "*az-zuhd*" and rejected greed "*al-bohkl*" in the context of one's family, relatives and other needy people (poor, miserable, beggars, etc.). These concepts are not contradictory in the sense that one can reconcile the two by adopting a median "*al-wassatiya*" and moderate "*al-iîtidal*" attitude.

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[2]Asher Ben-Arieh, Ferran Casas, Ivar Frønes, Jill E. Korbin, "Multifaceted Concept of Child Well-Being". In A. Ben-Arieh et al. (Éds.), *Handbook of Child Well-Being* (Netherlands: Springer, 2014), 1.

[3]Ibn Manzûr, *Lisân al-'Arab* [The Language of the Arabs]*,* (Cairo, Egypt: Dar Al Mâarif, 1330 AH) 5006, 1698.

On the other hand, the Holy Qur'ān advocates sobriety "*ar-razana*" and rejects opulence "*at-taraf,*" extravagance "*al-isrāf*", and waste "*at-tabdīr.*"[4]

There are many examples of these attitudes in the Holy Qur'ān. Here are a few of them:

- Say: Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah, which He has produced for His servants, and the good food? Say: They are for those who have faith, in this life, and exclusively for them on the Day of Resurrection. Thus, do We make the verses clear for the people who know".[5]

- "And when We want to destroy a city, We order its wealthy people to obey Our commandments, but they indulge in perversity. Then the Word spoken against it is fulfilled, and We destroy it completely."[6]

- It is He Who created the gardens, trellised and untrellised; and the palm trees and the crop of various kinds; [as well as] the olive and the pomegranate, of similar and different kinds. Eat of their fruits when they produce them, and pay for them on the day of harvest. And waste not, for He loves not the wasters.[7]

The Holy Qur'ān has provided teachings for bringing happiness, peace and tranquility to human beings on the earth in all aspects of their daily lives. However, the happiness encountered in this present life is only temporary compared to the eternal happiness of the afterlife. Therefore, Islam, while being a divine religion, is distinguished by its character as an exemplary way-of-life manager for the whole of humanity. It has established laws, regulations, norms and principles to organize the daily lives of human beings to guarantee them a better life below and above. In other words, faith in Allah Almighty, fulfilling the duties of the *Sharī'ah* and obeying His commandments through noble deeds, such as good conduct, indulgence, charity, generosity, and kindness, will produce happiness and enjoyment in a human being in the earthly life and in the life to come.

On the one hand, it has been observed that the verses of the Holy Qur'ān relating to morals, relationships and transactions "*al-muamalat*" far exceed those governing worship "*al-ibadat.*" Moreover, several contemporary Arab-Muslim and Western studies have dealt with the moral vision of the Holy Qur'ān and have made worthy contributions to the theory and method on this subject: *La morale du Koran*, A. Daraz, 1951; *God of justice*, D. Rahbar, 1953; *The Structure of the Ethical Terms in the Koran*, T. Izutsu, 1959; and *Ethical presuppositions of the Holy Qurʾān*, G. F. Hourani, 1980.[8]

On the other hand, happiness in the Holy Qur'ān has been essentially linked to the fate of a human being after his or her death as a result of his or her good deeds and moral virtues on the earth. This is totally different from happiness in worldly life. However, it arises through belief in Allah Almighty, love of Allah Almighty and choosing the right path of guidance. In other words, it is the right and proper fulfillment by a human being of his or her duties related to worship, namely, "*ach-chahada*," "*as-salāat*," "*az-zakât*," "*as-sawmo*" and "*hajj*." In addition, it is the ideal behavior and the performance of good deeds (kindness to parents, almsgiving, chastity, honesty, faithfulness,

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[4]Hamdi Khalid Abdul Karim, *Wassatiwato al Islam Bayna Rafahiyati al-Aichi wa azZzouhdi fi ad-Dounya* (The Mediation of Islam between the Luxury of living and Asceticism in this world). *Majalat Jamiâat Al Madina Al Alamiya* (Moujamâa), no. 17, (Malaysia, 2016): 299.

[5]Al-A'rāf 7:32. Translations of Qur'ānic verses are from https://quran.com.

[6]Ibid., Hūd 11:16.

[7]Ibid., Al-An'ām 6:141.

[8]Rashwani Samer, "Addarsso Al Akhlaqi lil-Qurâan: Qirâaton fi Bâadi Al Moukarabati Al Hadithah" [The Moral Lesson of the Qur'ān: A Reading of Some Modern Approaches]. *Journal of Islamic Ethics,* Vol. 1, (2017): 158.

patience, forgiveness, etc.). His or her reward is the entrance to Paradise and enjoying all the sensual pleasures. However, the great reward is that Allah Almighty is pleased enough with him or her to appear before him or her and to be in the company of the Prophet Muhammad (*SAW*) and the *Sahaba*.[9]

Examples of happiness in the Holy Qur'ān abound. Here are a few examples:

- O you who believe! What is the matter with you? When it was said to you, "Go forth in the way of Allah! Have you grown weary of the earth? Do you like the present life more than the Hereafter? —But the enjoyment of the present life will be but little compared to the Hereafter![10]

- "On the day when it will happen, no soul will speak except with His (Allah's) permission. There will be the damned and the blessed."[11]

- "And as for the blessed, they will be in Paradise, to dwell there in forever as long as the heavens and the earth last—unless your Lord decides otherwise—this is a gift that is never interrupted."[12]

- "Whoever, male or female, does a good deed while being a believer, then We will make him live a good life and We will certainly reward them, according to the best of their deeds."[13]
- And seek through what Allah has given you, the Final Abode. And do not forget your portion in this life. And do good as Allah has done to you. And seek not corruption on earth, for Allah loves not the corrupters.[14]

The concept of well-being in Islam "can hence be neither exclusively 'other-worldly' nor purely 'this-worldly'". While urging the Muslims to gain mastery over nature and to utilize the resources provided by Allah Almighty for the service and betterment of humankind, Islam also warns the Muslims against single-minded concentration on material acquisition as the highest measure of human achievement while ignoring the indispensable spiritual content of the human self."[15]

4. The Concept of Well-being in the *Sunnah*

Initially, the Holy Qur'ān indicated that the Prophet Muhammad (*SAW*) was sent by Allah Almighty to be a merciful blessing "*Rahmah*" for all humanity: "and We have not sent you (O Mohamed), except as a mercy to the worlds."[16] This merciful blessing included "the fostering of good life '*hayat tayyibah*' and welfare '*falah*', provision of ease and alleviation of hardship, generation of prosperity". Additionally, the Prophet Muhammad (*SAW*) emphasized role of good governance in

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[9]Kabil Abdul Hay Mohammed, *Al Madahibo al-Akhlaqiyah fi al-Islam (al wajibo – as-sâada)* [Moral Doctrines in Islam: Duty – Happiness]. (Cairo, Egypt: Dar at-taqafa li annashri wa at-tawziâa, 1984), 340, 173.

[10]At-Tawbah 29:38. Translations of Qur'ānic verses are from https://quran.com

[11]Ibid., Hud 11:105.

[12]Ibid., Hud 11:108.

[13]Ibid., An-Nahl 16:97.

[14]Ibid., Al-Qasas 28:77.

[15]Chapra Muhammad Umar, *The Islamic Welfare State and its Role in the Economy*. (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1979), 4-5.

[16]Al-Anbiya 21:107. Translations of Qur'ānic verses are from https://quran.com

well-being: "Any ruler who is responsible for the affairs of the Muslims but does not strive sincerely for their wellbeing will not enter Paradise with them."[17]

The Prophet Muhammad (*SAW*) said, "Allah Almighty loves to see the impact of his grace on his servant."[18] This ḥadīth confirms the legitimacy of welfare by Islam as long as it is not extravagant or arrogant. Although some of the Prophet Muhammad's (*SAW*) companions were very wealthy and lived in a very comfortable state, such as Othman Ibn Aaffan, Abderrahman Ibn Aouf and Al Abbas Ibn Abdelmutaleb, this did not prevent them from being very grateful to Allah Almighty and being among the great benefactors, warriors and servants of Islam.

The Prophet Muhammad (*SAW*) also said, "Four things are part of happiness: a righteous spouse, a spacious dwelling, a righteous neighbor, and a comfortable mount."[19]

5. The Arab and Muslim Philosophers or Thinkers

On the one hand, the Arab-Islamic thought undeniably drawn from Hellenic and Hellenistic thought (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle). On the other hand, the Arab-Islamic thought subsequently contributed to the development of Western and Jewish thought (Hobbes, Locke, Maimonides, Spinoza, Hegel, Berkeley, Marx, Voltaire, Newton, Albalag, Gersonides, etc.). However, the Arab-Muslim thought differed from these two schools in that it approached new subjects, such as the questions of unification "*at-tawḥīd*" and divine revelation "*al-wahy Al-Ilahi.*"

The Arab-Muslim thought had the goal of happiness, bliss or blissfulness. Thus, the question of happiness has been the subject of many studies in the fields of morality and ethics. However, it differed from the Greek philosophy in that it was interested in the search for the Self without consideration of Existence, which was the focus of Greek philosophy. This was because the Arab and Muslim philosophers unquestionably believed in the existence of Allah Almighty "*woujoud Allah*" and the resurrection "*al-bâath.*"[20]

Additionally, happiness has been treated differently according to the affiliation of the Arab Muslim thinkers and philosophers, namely, Aristotelians, Neoplatonists, *Malikites*, *Hanbalites*, *Hanafites*, *Shafiites*, *Ascharites*, *Sufis*, *Mutazilites*, *Mutakallimūn*, etc. There are many examples that demonstrate these trends, but we will avoid the divergence of philosophical doctrines and schools of *Fiqh.* Nevertheless, we will evaluate some of the most prominent thinkers or philosophers in these schools chronologically.

5.1 The Medieval Period

5.1.1 The Thinkers or Philosophers of the Middle East

Al-Hasan al-Basri's concept of happiness was related to his objective of being among the beneficiaries of paradise on the one hand and his fear of being in hell on the other. Therefore, he called for the adoption of a lifestyle based on poverty, asceticism and austerity to achieve supreme

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[17]Abu al-Husayn Muslim al-Nisaburi.*Sahih Muslim,* Vol. I, (Cairo: 'Isa al-Babi al-Halabi,1955), 126.

[18]Narrated by Abū ʿĪsā al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī,* 5/123, ḥadīth no. 2819 (Cairo: Matba'at Mustafā al-Bābī al-Halabī, 1975).

[19]Narrated by Ibn Hibban, *Sahih Ibn Hibban*, The Book of Marriage, ḥadīth no. 4032, Chapter 9 (Beirut: Dar Ibn Hazm, 2012), 340.

[20] Abou Zaid and Mouna Ahmed, "Nadariato "as-sâada" wa Wassaîlo Tahqiqiha fi al-Falsafatayni al-Younania wa al-Islamiya" [The Theory of Happiness and the means to achieve it in Greek and Islamic philosophy]. *Al-Tafahom*, Vol. 12, no. 43, (2014): 148.

happiness. According to him, "any happiness outside of heaven is but a contemptible pleasure and any affliction outside of hell is easy."[21]

Al-Kindi dedicated a book to happiness entitled *Fi Al Hila Lidafii Al Ahzan* (The way to chase away sorrows). According to him, happiness was the purification of the soul, knowing the right world, eliminating sorrow and becoming immune to pain. It was the extreme happiness that rose above earthly happiness.[22]

Al-Farabi devoted two books to happiness: *Tahssilo assâada* (On the attainment of happiness) and *Rissalato Attanbih ala sabili assâada* (Warning letter for the attainment of happiness). According to him, happiness was the supreme good in the context of a utopia that needed theoretical and moral virtues. This definition has been built on, therefore, in another way, the thoughts of Aristotle and Plato, which were based on the indispensable relationship between happiness and the acquisitions of wisdom and knowledge. Work could only be secondary and its performance was very short.[23]

Additionally, in two other books *Arâa ahl al-madïna al-fadila* (The Opinions of the People of the Righteous City) and *Kitabo attamara al mordiya* (Book of the Satisfying Fruit), Al Farabi has suggested that happiness for all beings consisted in their attaining such a perfection that they no longer needed matter to survive and continue their evolution. However, in order to attain supreme happiness, one must acquire the speculative virtues, *fadâ 'il nazàriyya,* the virtues of thought *fadâ 'il fikriyya,* the moral virtues *fadâ 'il khuluqiyya* and the practical arts *sanâ 'il 'amaliyya.* Al-Farabi's virtuous city, whose aim was to enable its citizens to achieve happiness, thus opposed corrupt cities. The end of a corrupt city was not true happiness but false happiness: health, pleasure, money, honors, power, etc.[24]

Ibn-e-Sina (Avicenna) also wrote a book dedicated to happiness entitled *Risalat as-sâada wa al-houjaj al-ashr* (The message of happiness and the ten arguments). He has distinguished between two types of happiness: the worldly or inferior life and the future life or the hereafter, i.e., true happiness. According to him, true happiness was not achieved with the senses and evidence but by first freeing oneself from the grip of the body. Then, the sacred and luminous world could be reached through the heart and the mind through purifying the soul. He flatly denied the relationship of happiness with sensual and ephemeral pleasure.[25]

Ibn Miskawayh addressed, in turn, the concept of happiness in his two books "*Kitabo fi assâada*" (Book on Happiness) and *Tahdhîb al-Akhlâq wa tathîr al-a'raq* (Refinement of Morals and Purification of Races). He adopted the same reasoning, suggesting that the true happiness will not be achieved with the body by sensual pleasures and physical desires but with the spirit that overcomes the body. Additionally, happiness was only possible with the cooperation and participation of human

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[21]Kabil Abdul Hay Mohammed, "*Al Madahibo al-Akhlaqiyah fi al-Islam (al wajibo – as-sâada)"* [Moral Doctrines in Islam: Duty – Happiness], (Cairo, Egypt: Dar at-Thaqafa li An-nashri wa at-Tawziâa, 1984), 200.

[22] Abou Zaid and Mouna Ahmed, "*Nadariato "as-sâada" wa Wassaîlo Tahqiqiha fi al-falsafatayni al-Younania wa al-Islamiya"* (The Theory of Happiness and the Means to Achieve it in Greek and Islamic philosophy). *Al-Tafahom*, Vol. 12, no. 43, (2014): 136.

[23]Awida Kamil Mohammed, *Al-Falssafah al-Islamiah* (The Islamic Philosophy) – *Silssilat aâlam al-Falssafah*, Part 36 (Beirut, Lebanon: Dar al-Kotob al-Ilmiya, 1995), 119.

[24] Diane Steigerwald, "La Pensée d'al-Fârâbî (259/872-339/950): Son Rapport avec la Philosophie Ismaélienne"[The Thought of Al-Farabi: its Relationship with Ismaili Philosophy]. *Laval Théologique et Philosophique*, Vol. 55, no. 3, (1999): 467-474.

[25]Kabil Abdul Hay Mohammed, "*Al Madahibo al-Akhlaqiyah fi al Islam (al wajibo – as-sâada)"* (Moral Doctrines in Islam: Duty – Happiness). (Cairo, Egypt: Dar At-Thaqafa li An-nashri wa At-Tawziâa, 1984), 255-259.

beings in building their society. Thus, Ibn Miskawayh distinguished between two kinds of happiness: 1) the lowest happiness, not an end in itself but only a means to achieve a higher goal; 2) the extreme happiness, absolute goodness, which was higher than the previous one and remained the intentional goal and the top aim to be achieved amid many other internal and external conditions.[26]

Fakhr-eddine Al-Razi has suggested, in his book entitled *Kitabo an-nafs wa ar-rouh* (The soul and the spirit), that true happiness was that of the spirit, which offers a human being its distinction and its complementarity to raise him or her to the higher ranks of virtue and the supreme good. Such acts distinguish him or her from animals, who only aspire to satisfy their bodily or physical desires. In other words, the human knowledge of Allah Almighty and his uniqueness as well as his love causes the human spiritual pleasure and extreme happiness, which differ from any other pleasure or happiness because Allah Almighty is the source of all happiness for both lives, the one below and the one above.[27]

Al Ghazali stated in his book, *Al mounqid mina ad-dalal* (deliverance from error), that the pleasure of the future life can only be achieved with solitude, isolation, piety and the use of the heart to perceive the divine truths. In other words, pleasure and happiness in man or woman is the knowledge of Allah Almighty.[28] Along with the term happiness "*as-sâada,*" he consistently uses the term enjoyment "*laddha,*" which often has a worldly, carnal meaning in English and in Arabic.[29] In his letter entitled "*Kimyao Assâada*" (The Alchemy of Happiness), he cited the three forces that control happiness: anger, lust and science. He advised human beings to balance these powers to be happy.[30]

Ibn Taymiyyah indicated that religion and legislation in Islam were indispensable tools for achieving happiness. He demonstrated this argument by focusing on the eternal pleasure of the life above, which was none other than the great pleasure "*ladha al kobra*" of seeing Allah Almighty. Indeed, for him, pleasure was based on three pillars: instinct, "*sharia"* and spirit. He also distinguished between three kinds of pleasure: 1) sensual pleasure "*ladha hissiya*" (food, drink, clothes, sex, etc.); 2) delirious pleasure "*ladha wahmiya*" (praise, veneration, obedience, etc.); and 3) mental pleasure "*ladha aqliya*" (knowledge of Allah Almighty, his glorification, knowledge of the truth, etc.). However, unlike the other thinkers and philosophers before him who saw truth only in mental pleasure, he incorporated all three pleasures to arrive at this truth.[31]

5.1.2 Maghrebi and the Andalusian Thinkers or Philosophers

The school of *Maghrebi* and the *Andalusian* philosophers, best represented by Ibn Hazm, Ibn Arabi, Ibn Bajja, Ibn Tofail and Ibn Rushd, differed from the above-mentioned Eastern school, despite the latter's noticeable influence, in two respects. First, the former's reasonable philosophy was based on the sciences and not on controversy; second, it distinguished between philosophy and religion in its search for and use of the mind or reason. In other words, they reconciled, in an

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[26]Ibid., 259-263.

[27]Hamdaoui Jamil, "Mafhoum as-sâadah fi al-Fikr al-Isslami" [The Concept of Happiness in Islamic thought]. *Dounya Al-Watan* (Palestinian Electronic Newspaper, 2017), 5.

[28]Ibid., 11.

[29]https://consciencesoufie.com/le-bonheur-ghazali-et-le-soufisme/

[30]Al Ghazali Abou hamed, *Kimyao Assâada* (The Alchemy of Happiness), Tahqiq Abou Sahl Najah Awad Siam (Ed.), (Cairo, Egypt: Dar El Mokattam, 2010), 31.

[31]Al-Bassam Madawi bint Soleiman, "Nadariato al-laddah inda Ibn Taymia" [Ibn Taymiyyah's Theory of Pleasure]. *Hawliat Kuliat Addirassat Al Islamia wa Al Arabia*, , 34ᵗʰ Edition, Vol. 4 (Alexandria, Egypt, 2018), 150-155.

unprecedented way, philosophy, science and free thinking, which led to the saying that the Arab-Muslim philosophy reached its peak during this period.[32]

Ibn Hazm addressed the concept of happiness in his book "*Al Akhlaqo wa Assyaro*" (Morals and Conduct) and in his famous message "*Moudawato annoufous wa tahdib al akhlaq wa azouhdo fi arradaîil*" (Healing souls, refining morals and renouncing vices). According to him, happiness is the highest good that could be attained by humans. Thus, an individual can achieve happiness by eliminating worries, sorrows and sadness and replacing them with material and moral pleasures.[33]

Ibn Arabi discussed the theme of happiness in three books: *Kitab Al Foutouhat Al Mecquia* (Book of the Spiritual Conquests of Mecca), *Dorro Addorar, Kimyao Assâada li Ahli Al Iradah, Mafatiho al ghaib, Safiro al ilham* (The Pearl of Pearls, the Alchemy of Happiness for People of Will, the Keys to the Invisible, the Ambassador of Inspiration) and *Fossousso al Hokm* (Lobes of Governance). He observed that happiness was not perceived by sense and reason but with the heart and conscience of the knower and divine disclosure. In other words, supreme happiness came through the Sufi experience of the human being who tried to fight the troubles of his or her soul according to the stipulations of the *Holy Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*. Then, he or she realized, through his or her heart, the existence of Allah Almighty, the truthfulness of creation and the greatness of existence. Finally, he or she would attain the emotional and spiritual pleasure that surpasses the apparent and reaches inner intuition.[34]

Ibn Bâjja (Avempace) thought, in his two books *Tadbir At-tawahod* (The Conduct of the Isolated) and *Risâlat al-wadâ* (Letter of Farewell), that following the path of virtue leads to happiness, although he distinguishes between that of the life of this world and that of the life of the hereafter. Thus, he classified worldly human actions into three categories. The first related to the physical image of a human being, which did not differ much from other creatures and mainly concerned his or her food, drink, shelter, clothing, bedding, etc. The people in this category did not reach the goal of happiness. The second class was the spiritual image of the human being and his or her formal virtues, which was concerned with his or her qualities that combated all instinctive or animal behaviors with the help of his or her spirit. This class was the first step on the path to happiness. The third category referred to the intellectual virtues and perfections of a being, essentially embodied by the wise, allowing them, by using their mind, to obtain true knowledge of Allah Almighty. This category reached extreme happiness. Regarding happiness in the life beyond, he argued that it resulted from the above-mentioned extreme happiness of the worldly life, and entailed a state of continuous pleasure/happiness.[35]

Ibn Tofail tried to show, in his famous mystical novel *Hayy Ibn* Yaqhdan (Living Son of the Awakened One), that the happiness or unhappiness of a human being depended on his or her proximity to Allah Almighty. Additionally, a consideration and meditation on the globe was the way to grasp this proximity and reach the world of Light and Angels. According to him, true happiness

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[32]Citot Vincent, "L'apogée de la Libre Pensée en Islam," *Le Philosophoire*, Vol. 1, no. 1, (2017): 70-73.

[33]Abdessalam Saad, "Sobol Bolough as-sâada fi Nadari Ibn Hazm Zahiri," [The Means to Happiness according to Ibn Hazm Al-Zahiri]. *Majalat Attadwin*, Vol. 10, Issue 1, (2018): 47-48.

[34]Hamdaoui Jamil, "Mafhoum as-Sâadah fi al-Fikr al-Isslami" [The Concept of Happiness in Islamic thought]. *Dounya Al-Watan* [Palestinian Electronic Newspaper, 2017], 9-10.

[35]Kabil Abdul Hay Mohammed, *Al Madahibo al-Akhlaqiyah fî al Islam (al wajibo – as-sâada)* [Moral Doctrines in Islam: Duty – Happiness]. (Cairo: Egypt: Dar At-taqafa li Annashri wa At-tawziâa, 1984), 264-265, 340.

or extreme happiness is achieved only by people who have a super-instinct or distinguished minds compared to their company of believers in various heavenly messages.[36]

In contrast to Christian thought, where true happiness exists only in Paradise, Ibn Rushed (Averroes) advocated that true happiness was also possible on Earth. "This is different from the existing but relative happiness that exists in Judaism and Islam. For in Averroes, it is a true beatitude that is possible and even the beatitude that is the only one possible for humans."[37] Ibn Rushed suggests that knowledge or science is the only path to reach bliss and contact the world of spirituality and spirits. Furthermore, he confirmed the coherence of faith and science with one simple but fabulous sentence: "Truth cannot contradict truth, it agrees with it and testifies in its favor."[38] This confirmation was a response to Al Ghazali, who, as has been mentioned above, downgraded science with religion.

Finally, Ibn Khaldun believed that human beings live to achieve happiness in their two lives, the one below and the one above. However, he was convinced that ordinary people were better able to achieve happiness in both lives than philosophers. Thus, these simple people adapted to all the turmoil of life and tried, more than philosophers, to follow the currents of reality to facilitate their livelihoods and happiness.[39]

5.2 The Period of the Renaissance "*Al-Nahda*"

This period was characterized above all by a political awakening and a cultural and religious renaissance. The reason for this was the deterioration and degradation of political, economic and social conditions in the Arab-Muslim world, which were due to the weakening of the Ottoman Empire and the strong pressure of European expansionist and colonialist ambitions. Among its main actors were the Egyptian nationalists Rifa'a al-Tahtâwî, Jamâl al-Dîn al-Afghâni, Mohamed Abduh, Abbas Mahmoud Al-Akkad, Mustafa Lutfi al-Manfaluti and Qasîm Amîn; Syrian Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi; Lebanese Shakib Arsalane, Pakistani Quaid-i-Azam, Indian Mohamed Iqbal; Algerians Abdelhamid Ben Badis and Mohamed Al Bachir Al Ibrahimi; Tunisian Kheireddine Pacha Ettounsi; and Moroccans Abou Chouaib Addoukali and Moulay Ben Larbi El Alaoui. However, we will restrict our study to those who specifically addressed the concept of happiness in their works.

Thus, when Rifa'a al-Tahtawi discussed the link between freedom and ethics, he admitted that there is a relationship between freedom and happiness. In fact, he argued, in his book "*Al-morshid al-amine lil-banin wa al-banat*" (The Good Guide for Boys and Girls), that the existence of freedom, based on laws and norms guaranteeing good justice and better equity, in addition to work, certainly fosters the comfort and happiness of people.[40]

Kheireddine Pasha Ettounsi, suggested, in his book *Aqwam al-masalik li ma'rifat ahwal al-mamalik* (The surest way to know the state of nations), that it is incumbent upon the people of nations who have gained their freedom to learn knowledge and work in industries related to the fields of

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[36]Awida Kamil Mohammed, *Al-Falssafah al-Islamiah* (The Islamic Philosophy) – *Silssilat Aâlam al-Falssafah*, Part 36 (Beirut, Lebanon Scientific Books House, 1995), 128.

[37]http://lesmaterialistes.com/avicenne-averroes-rejet-soufisme.

[38]Ibn Rushd, *L'Accord de la Religion et de la Philosophie : Traité décisif* [The Accord of Religion and philosophy: Decisive Treatise]. Léon Gauthier (trans.), (Paris, Éditions Sindbad, 1988), 20-21.

[39]Haj Hamad, Alaa Mohamed, "Al Fikr al-Khalduni bayna al-Falsafa wa al-Waqiâ" [Khaldunian thought between Philosophy and reality]. Conference *Ibn Khaldun: allamatou Ac-charq wa Al-gharb*, (An-Najah National University, 8/11/2012), 28.

[40]Ala Eddine Hilal, "Attahtawi wa Tajdidou al-Fikr ed-dini" [Tahtawi and the Renewal of Religious thought], *Jaridatou Al Ahram*, no. 48649. (Egypt: Année, 16/02/2020), 144.

agriculture and trade as well as physical and intellectual works. This would facilitate the educational happiness of a human's personality in earthly life and the completion of freedom based on justice and good governance of society.[41]

Mohamed Abduh, in his book *Al-âamalo Al-kamilah* (The Complete Works), indicated that the means to happiness for all was through the natural or physical law that resided in the instincts of every human being. This concept has also been confirmed in one of his articles, entitled "Ihtiramo qawanin al-houkouma wa awamiroha min sâadat al-ummah" (Respecting the laws of the government and its orders is part of the happiness of the nation). Thus, he concluded that if the application of the law reached its peak in any country, one would expect the proliferation of happiness and the improvement of its state. In other words, law enforcement was the source of all happiness, pleasure, development and progression.[42]

Al Akkad suggested, in an article on "*As-sâada*" (The Happiness) that if one seeks simple happiness relative to sensual pleasures, one will certainly find it. However, if one seeks happiness in life or the unprecedented and continuous happiness in everything, then one would fall into an impossible state because this happiness is one of the dreams that are mostly unattainable.[43]

Additionally, Quaid-i-Azam's concept of a welfare state can be summed up as (1) a people's government that would not allow landholders and capitalists to flourish at the expense of the masses; (2) an economic system based on the Islamic concept of equality and social justice; and (3) a major role of the public sector in the fair distribution of resources between the haves and have-nots.[44]

5.3 The Period of Contemporary Thought

This period, during which most of the Arab and Muslim countries have gained their independence despite the persistence of tensions and conflicts in the Middle East, has been distinguished by four characteristics. The first was the emergence of a category of philosophers and thinkers, especially in the Maghreb, who advocated the critical current of Arab thought. This has encompassed all institutions and programs, including political regimes, parties, religious establishments, and trade unions; educational, scientific and research programs; health and social policies; and economic structures. The second characteristic was the apparent influence of the pillars of Western philosophy, such as Galileo, Spinoza, Hume, Russel, Kant, Descartes and Sartre, on contemporary Arab-Muslim writers and thinkers. Third it has been observed that some authors, especially economists, have started to introduce the term "*ar-rafahiya*" (welfare) into their works and studies. This has applied to philosophical and economic studies as well as to Islamic ethics research. The fourth characteristic was the emergence of the Muslim thinkers from South Asia, specifically, in Indonesia, who have included the term social well-being in their research.

Among the main thinkers of this period are, for example, the Nigerian Umar Muhammad Gummi; Moroccans Mohamed Aziz Lahbabi, Mohamed Abed Al Jabri, Abdelkrim Khatibi, Abdallah

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[41]Atheer Muhammad Ali, "Akwamo al-Massalik fi Mârifati Ahwal al-Mamalik" [The right ways to know the states of the kingdoms], Khair-eddine Al Tounsi *Majallat Al-kalimah*, no. 46, (London: Bab Alamat, 2011).

[42]Al-Janabi Mytham, "Mohamed Abduh wa al massir at-tarikhi li al fikra al isslahiya (6): tâassis al fikra as-siyassia wa al hoqoukia li al-isslah" (Muhammad Abdo and the Historical Fate of the Reform Idea (6): A Foundation for the Political and Legal Idea of Reform). *Sahifat Al mothaqaf, dirassat wa bohouth*, no. 4162, (2018).

[43]Al-Akkad Abbas Mahmud, "*As-Sâada*" [The Hapiness]. *Majalat Ar-Rissala*, no. 431 (Egypt: 1941).

[44]Rafique Ahmad, "Democratic Welfare State as Visualised by the Quaid-i-Azam," *The Pakistan Development Review,* Vol. 40, no. 4, (2001): 1140.

Laroui and Taha Abderrahmane; Algerians Abdallah Charit and Arrabîi Mimoun; Tunisian Fathi Triki; and Egyptian Hassan Hanafi. Additionally, some examples of the economists include the Iraqis Jasim Al-Faris and Ahmed Ibrahim Mansoor; Jordanians Majdy Ali Ghait and Mounir Soleiman Al Hakim; Iranian Ahmad Assadzadeh; Turkish Bűnyamin Esen and Kerem Gabriel Öktem; Pakistanis Muhammad Umar Chapra, Akram Ejaz and Hassan Nauman; Malaysian Kartini Aboo Talib Khalid; and Indonesians Abbas Sirojudin and Edi Suharto.

Umar Gummi has stated that "The concept of welfare can neither be exclusively worldly nor purely in the hereafter but rather it combines both to achieve the optimum well-being in this life (material) and the hereafter (spiritual). This is of course a general indication of what is implied by welfare in Islam". He also explained that to finance the Islamic Well-Being State, funds must be mobilized that are authorized by the "*Shari'ah*", such as "*Az-Zakât" (legal almsgiving)*, taxes, "*Kharaj" (*Islamic tax on agricultural land and its produce), loans, "*Sadaqah" (charity)* and "*Ma'adin" (mines).*[45]

In his book "*Ad-din wa at-taharor at-thaqafi*" (religion and cultural liberation), Hassan Hanafi, while trying to reconcile "*Al-assala wa Al-mouâassara*" (authenticity and modernity), called for a moderation between the two concepts to avoid overly clinging to the first one and thus being totally confined by its past and extolling a life of extravagance, luxury and well-being.[46]

Abdallah Laroui, on the back of his book *Istibanah* (questionnaire), suggests "that it's easy to memorize the obvious: patriotism is a feeling, a behavior and an aspiration. The feeling is the esteem of oneself and one's ancestors. The behavior is altruism and sacrifice. Aspiration is the search for freedom, progress and well-being."[47]

Mansoor and Al-Faris criticized Western economic theory, which is based on market mechanisms, economic freedom, monopolies, profits and fierce competitions without any consideration of ethics and values, greatly impacting the economic well-being and thus social well-being of any affected population.

However, the Islamic economy is based on ethical principles and values such as the following:

➢ resources are God's consignments, "*amanah*" in human beings;
➢ benefits from these resources are not contradictory with private property;
➢ private property is not a tool for selfishness and self-interest;
➢ individual well-being is linked to the well-being of society as a whole.

Economic welfare in the Islamic perspective is, on the one hand, the satisfaction of desires, according to the priority in the context of the objectives of the *sharia* '*makasid as-sharia*': necessities, needs and complementary. On the other hand, it's the settlement capacity to provide these needs and all that is related to them as income from work, legal financial burdens, social transfers, aid and subsidies.[48]

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[45]Gummi Muhammad Umar, *The Islamic Welfare State: The Basic Imperatives Toward a Better Society.* (October 24, 2013), 11.

[46]Kadari Fatima Al-Zahra, and Kouadri Ghania, "*Al Assala wa al Mouâassara fi fikr Hassan Hanafî"* [Authenticity and modernity in the thought of Hassan Hanafi]. Master's diss. in Philosophy (Algeria: University of Djilali Bounâama, 2016), 76.

[47]Abdallah Laroui, *Istibanah. Mounamnamat moutamayazah* [Questionnaire - Distinguished Miniatures], (Casablanca (Morocco)/Beirut: Al-marqaz At-taqafi Lil-kitab, 2016).

[48]Al-Faris Jassim and Ahmed Ibrahim Mansour "Al Kafâa al iqtissadiya fi al mandour al iqtissadi al Islami: dirassa moukarana" [Economic efficiency from an Islamic Economic Perspective: a Comparative study], *Tanmiyat Rafîdain*, University of Mosul, no. 98, vol. 32, (2010): 368.

Ghaith believes that in Islam, the material and social well-beings of individuals and societies cannot be fostered without consideration of the following:

- dimensions of belief (money belongs to God; God entrusted human beings with their wealth; human settlement of the Earth is a duty);

- ethical principles (altruism; brotherhood and love; cooperation and mutual aid; honesty; advice).[49]

In fact, this is due, on the one hand, to the characteristics of the Islamic economic system, which has been based on 1) achieving the economic goals of the Muslim society; (2) obtaining the highest possible level of production (productive capacity); (3) using production to satisfy, to the maximum extent possible, the real needs of all members of society (equity); and (4) maintaining these levels without virulent fluctuations (stability). On the other hand, it has also stemmed from the legal modalities and rules that govern economic behaviors in Islamic nations in all economic fields and actions, namely, consumption, production, distribution and exchange.[50]

Assadzadeh and Satya noted that the post-Islamic Iranian government "introduced a taste of economic and social well-being ingredients in the development strategy." However, these actions were subsequently abandoned by the same government immediately after the Iran-Iraq war.[51] Additionally, some authors have indicated that Iran wanted to facilitate well-being of its citizens by means of better work ethics and enterprises, but it has been severely hindered by international sanctions.[52]

The same authors suggest that the concept of well-being in Islam is very different from that in most modern societies because "Islam stresses welfare and charity and it's applied to the needs and not the wants of people." They concluded that if "the Muslims cannot have a West-like well-being state, it isn't due to Islam but to political reasons." Additionally, "Islamic principles of well-being cannot be realized if our consciousness isn't rooted in ultimate reality, which from the spiritual point of view, is none other than God."[53]

Esen and Öktem et al. affirmed that Turkey has built a distinct model of a well-being state that is different from the Western social well-being model. The former is a hybrid model that has combined social institutions, such as foundations "*vaqfs*" (inalienable charitable endowment), "*zakat,*" "*sadaqah,*" Islamic solidarity and family, which extended from Turkey's Seljuk and Ottoman period, with the well-being state paradigm and World Bank concepts.[54]

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[49]Gaith Majdi Ali Muhammad, "Atar addawafio al akadiah wa al akhlakiah fi tahqiq ar-rafahiya al ijtimâiah wa al iqtissadia fi al iqtissad al-Isslamiyah" [The Impact of Doctrinal and Ethical Motivations in achieving social and Economic Welfare in the Islamic Economy]. *Al majallah Al Ordonia fi Ad-dirassat al-Islamia*, Vol. 12, no. 1, (Al-Bayt University, 2016).

[50]Gaith Majdi Ali Muhammad and Al Hakim Munir Suleiman, "Moutallabato al wadâî al iqtissadi al amtal fi al islam, dirassah mouqaranah" [The Requirements of the Optimal Economic Situation in Islam, a Comparative Study]. *Dirassat, ouloum as-sharia wa al qanoun*, vol. 45, no. 4, (2018): 132.

[51]Assadzadeh Ahmad and Satya Paul, "Poverty, Growth and Redistribution. A Case Study of Iran," *Review of Development Economics*, Vol. 8, no. 4, (2004).

[52]Ejaz Akram, and Nauman Hassan, "Welfare State and Islam: can Pakistan be a Welfare State?" *ISSRA PAPERS*, Vol. IX, Issue II, (2017).

[53]Ibid.

[54]Esen Bűnyamin, "Aligning Turkey's Welfare Model to Changing Social Realities." *Daily Sabah*, OP-ED, Dec. 27, 2017 / Öktem Kerem Gabriel and Erdoğan Cansu, "Between Welfare State

Kartini has articulated that the Social Well-being Department was created in Malaysia in 1946, but the policy was not instituted until 2003. However, according to the legal requirements for social well-being in Malaysia, noncitizens are not considered eligible for well-being services. This shortfall has been reduced by the contributions of nongovernmental organizations.[55]

Sirojudin observes that Islamic well-being based on the "*zakat*" existed in Indonesia long before its colonization. However, it was not well exploited and experienced some problems both during colonization and after the country's independence. The establishment of the "*zakat*" collection system thus took a long time and involved various procedures and decisions before it was achieved with the advent of the 1999 law. Sirojudin thus concluded that social well-being in Indonesia was not influenced by Islamic economic trends, similar to what happened in some other countries, such as Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Malaysia.[56]

Suharto defined social well-being as "an institution or a field of activities involving organized activities carried out by government and private institutions aimed at preventing and addressing social problems as well as at improving the quality of life of individuals, groups, and society" and has identified how social well-being was institutionalized in Indonesia by a 2009 law. He then distinguishes two significances of this law. First, it is an endeavor to satisfy the material, spiritual and social needs of citizens. Second, it is a structured action called "The Development of Social Well-being" that was instantiated in social services: rehabilitation, security, empowerment and protection.[57]

6. Conclusion

This brief review of the Arab-Muslim literature on the concept of well-being has allowed us to explore the term's meaning in the Holy *Qur'ān* and in the *Sunnah*. Therefore, these two sources indicate that Islam has resolutely and elegantly merged the spiritual and material aspects of life, which comprise the basis for mutual force and simultaneously serve as the foundation for proper human well-being and happiness.

Additionally, we have highlighted the important contributions of Arab-Muslim thinkers and philosophers to the development of this concept and have elaborated on their attitudes and positions regarding the quest to realize individual and collective well-being.

Clearly and unquestionably, the Arab-Muslim thought, during all periods of history, has been influenced by the precepts of Islam and its ethical principles, which aims to establish equity between living beings in their distribution and use of the existing resources on the Earth within the limits of a decent life and without exaggeration or deprivation. The main objective of this decent life of a human being is to know Allah Almighty and to make Him satisfied with one's actions so that one will enjoy great happiness in the life hereafter.

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and (State-organised) Charity: How Turkey's Social Assistance Regime Blends Two Competing Policy Paradigms," *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, (August 2019).

[55] Kartini Aboo Talib Khalid, "Social welfare in Malaysia: Provision and Limitation," *Transnational Social Work and Social Welfare: Challenges for the Social Work Profession*, Chap. 11, (Routledge: 2016), 100-106.

[56] Sirojudin Abbas, "The Struggle for Recognition: Embracing the Islamic Welfare Effort in Indonesian Welfare System," *Studia Islamika*, Vol. 12, no. 1, (2005).

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On the other hand, it is also clear that earlier thinkers have been driven by the principles of Muslim economic theory, which forbids, first, excessive profit, illegal competition, monopoly, etc.; second, in the context of social well-being, this economic theory has promoted human fraternity, social and economic justice, and equitable distributions of resources and individual freedom.

The concept of Islamic well-being is very different from that of the Western economic theory, which is based on gain, speculation, maximum production, and other goals without regard to the ethical, economic and social situation of a human being. The Islamic concept is also different from that of socialist states, where well-being is fundamentally amoral and based on the concept of dialectical materialism.

Finally, this study has considered the extensive contributions of contemporary thinkers, particularly in certain Asian and Southeast Asian states, to defining and explaining the concept of the Islamic Well-being State. According to them, the application of this concept is possible in the Muslim societies because they possess environments, based on historical, traditional and religious values that are favorable to its success (*zakat*, *sadaqah*, *vaqfs*, taxes, etc.).

Conflict of Interest

Author(s) declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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