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CONCEPTUALIZING HAPPINESS: HAMKA'S PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

Happiness remains a subject of significant scholarly interest, with varying definitions across different societies. This article seeks to clarify Hamka's conceptualization of happiness and outlines his perspective on the means of achieving it. Research methodology employs two primary approaches. The first examines Hamka's central message concerning happiness, while the second investigates the phenomenological concept, specifically how phenomenological encounter can lead to religious experience and thereby contribute to happiness. Additionally, the article explores the relevance of Hamka's work within the multidisciplinary field of happiness studies. The analysis revealed that Hamka's concept of happiness is distinct from many prevailing ideas, as he incorporated the notion of a happy afterlife.

Keyword:

Hamka, Happiness, Islam and Happiness.



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Introduction

Know the beauty
and be willing to express
this beauty to
other people is happiness
(Hamka, n.d., p. 15)

Hamka (Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah) had no idea that happiness would someday become an increasingly important topic when he authored these lovely phrases. Hamka was a very prolific writer. He wrote both fictional and non-fictional books that are popular to this day. The author's writings encompassed a broad range of topics, such as the interpretation of the Qur'an and the pursuit of an exemplary lifestyle.

For centuries, experts in the Islamic sciences have been interested in the subject of happiness. So, it is not surprising that Hamka also thematized this topic, but not as a major theme. This study centers on Hamka and his interpretation of the means by which happiness can be attained. Hamka differentiates between two levels. A person can achieve happiness in this world by adopting a way of life that pleases Allah. Nevertheless, Hamka puts great emphasis on the hereafter, underscoring that an individual's existence goes beyond the confines of the present world.

Interest in happiness is increasing, with some universities now offering programs in happiness studies (Drozdowski, 2022). Positive thinking and positive psychology have achieved considerable popularity, mostly attributed to the success of renowned authors such as Dale Carnegie (1990) and the Islamic scholar Aidh Abdullah al Qarni (2018).

Happiness is a subject of universal relevance, encompassing both subjective and objective dimensions (Bartram, 2012). Social scientists identify economic prosperity, physical health, and political rights as objective indicators of happiness. Conversely, subjective elements shape individuals' self-perceptions of happiness, complicating empirical research in this field. Despite the existence of large-scale studies, uncertainty persists regarding measurement validity. As Bartram notes, "The pre-dominance of survey data in happiness studies inevitably raises questions of validity" (Bartram, 2012, p. 646).

Scientists who deal with happiness studies differentiate between the 'sciences of happiness' and 'classical happiness' (Ahmad, 2007). The first group includes disciplines like economics and social policy, whereas the second group includes philosophy and literature. Many researchers were unaware of the contributions made by Islamic thinkers to the field of happiness studies. The reason is that many Islamic scholars focused on the classical fields of Islamic studies, like jurisprudence or hadith studies. Abu Hamid Al Ghazali (sometimes written as Al Ghazzali) (1058 -1111) was one of the few exceptions, with his famous work, *The Alchemy of Happiness* (Al Ghazzali, 1910). Nevertheless, other Islamic scholars have also contributed to the debate on happiness. One of them is Hamka. He was an esteemed author, politician, and intellectual in Indonesia, the world's largest Islamic country. In this paper, the contribution of Hamka in the field of happiness studies will be discussed.

According to the researchers, Hamka's perspective encompasses both theoretical and practical dimensions, rendering it highly significant. The initial segment presents a perspective that differs from the prevailing scholarly consensus, as it incorporates considerations of the afterlife.

Biographical Information

Hamka was born on February 17th, 1908. His birthplace was the small village of Sungai Batang, situated on Maninjau Lake. This village is in the interior of West Sumatra, the native land of the Minangkabau people. The Minangkabau, widely recognized as one of the most notable matrilineal cultures globally, has gained fame for its successful coexistence with an Islamic cultural framework (Stark, 2013).

It is noteworthy that Hamka did not obtain any official educational certification. Steenbrink (1994) writes about his educational background:

He [Hamka] learned some Arabic, but he used it only to read romantic novels from the library of Zainuddin Labai el-Junusy, one of his father's most gifted pupils. For a few years, he was also sent to a secular government school, but he did not finish the formal program either. (Steenbrink, 1994, p. 129)

Hamka, the son of Dr. Abdul Karim Amrullah, a renowned Islamic reformist, experienced a strained connection with his father as a result of their parents' divorce in 1922 (Steenbrink, 1994). After that, Hamka intended to be more 'independent.' He performed the pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca and resided there for some months. After his pilgrimage, he returned to Indonesia. His father was impressed and decided that he should marry. Hamka wrote and published his first novel, *Si Sabariah*. Later, while residing in Medan, he authored several books, including *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck*, and *Di Bawah Lindungan Ka'bah*.

After independence, Hamka also became active as a politician for the Islamic reformist party *Masyumi*. During the 1950s and 1960s, Hamka faced allegations of plagiarism: specifically, he was accused of plagiarizing the novel *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck*, which was said to resemble Al Manfaluti's work, *Majdulin* (Al Manfaluti, 2020). However, these accusations were refuted by literary critics. Nonetheless, Hamka faced allegations of prioritizing the interests of Malaysia over those of Indonesia. As a consequence, he was imprisoned. His masterpiece, *Tafsir Al Azhar*, an exegesis of the Qur'an, was written during this period.

After his prison sentence, Hamka gained prominence within the Muslim Scholars' Council (MUI). He became its head. However, he resigned from this position due to a controversy regarding the permissibility of Muslim attendance at Christmas celebrations. Hamka passed away on 24 July 1981.

Literature Review

Distinguishing between primary and secondary publications in the literature review is essential. Primary sources include works authored by Hamka, whereas secondary sources encompass scholarly analyses that examine Hamka's perspective on happiness. This clear differentiation facilitates the identification of the article's original contribution. Furthermore, the contributions

of other Islamic scholars who have addressed the concept of happiness should be examined to contextualize Hamka's work within broader Islamic discourse

Literature of Hamka

The primary literature consists of Hamka's publications. In two books, Hamka outlines his concept of happiness: *Falsafah Hidup* (Hamka, 2020) and *Tasawuf Modern* (Hamka, 2018). Many of the chapters in the second book, in particular, are devoted to the idea of happiness. Hamka mentioned in one of the forewords of the 12th print that he himself was distressed when he was imprisoned. Even suicidal thoughts crossed his mind (Hamka, 2018). However, he emphasizes that his book *Tasawuf Modern* could serve as a kind of remedy, as it encourages readers to be patient and face difficulties.

Not only did the two books mentioned by Hamka deal with happiness. In his other books, he also addresses this topic, as it is interrelated. For example, Hamka stresses that happiness is not only a matter for the individual but also for society as a whole. Therefore, individuals ought to exhibit virtuous conduct. Consequently, he wrote a book like *Lembaga Budi* (Hamka, 2019c) that encourages readers to improve their character.

Other writings by Hamka focus on happiness, albeit not as their primary focus. The work *Peribadi* (Hamka, 2023) examines personality and what constitutes a strong one. Sometimes a character is bound to happiness and inner constitution to be successful. Another book that must be mentioned is *Pandangan Hidup Muslim* (Hamka, 2010). It contains several articles that cover various topics. Some of them are associated with the concept of happiness.

Islamic Scholars and Happiness

When Annemarie Schimmel wrote a preface to the German translation of Al Ghazali's *Alchemy of Happiness*, she wrote that the quintessence of this work would be the following:

What is bliss? Knowledge of God which is synonymous with love of God; Love of God that is manifested in love for fellow human beings; and it is the wisdom of the heart, that heart, which is the regent of the body and has direct access to the spiritual world. (Schimmel, 1996, p. 6)

The summary of Annemarie Schimmel is quite concise. The book *Alchemy of Happiness* is intended to be precise and uses language that many people can understand. Al Ghazali mentions certain levels of knowledge that must be understood to achieve happiness. A crucial aspect of human development is the comprehension of one's inner self. Understanding inherent human nature is considered essential for attaining knowledge of the divine. According to classical thought, a human being comprises two principal components: the physical body and the inner heart, the latter referring to the spiritual essence rather than the anatomical organ. Each component contains further subdivisions. Ghazali utilizes metaphorical language, describing the heart as a governing entity and assigning specific emotions to its various aspects. For example, wrath is likened to the police force. To achieve prosperity, individuals must regulate destructive elements such as wrath and desire.

Al Ghazali's significant contributions are widely recognized within Western intellectual circles. He is frequently regarded as the primary authority on Islam and happiness, despite the substantial input of other scholars. For instance, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas (2002) provides an in-depth analysis of happiness in relation to the heart, or soul, positing that belief leads to inner peace. Al-Attas identifies various stages of the soul, including the soul inclined to evil, known as *nafsul ammarah* (Qur'an 12:53). In contrast, individuals may attain a higher stage, such as the righteous soul, *nafsul muthmainna* (Qur'an 89:27), which is characterized by tranquility and adherence to the commandments of Allah. Al-Attas's work offers a comprehensive and detailed examination of these concepts.

An interesting book that examines the concept of happiness from a 'modern' perspective was written by Haidar Bagir (2012). He differentiates between intrinsic and extrinsic ways of pursuing happiness. A pure pursuit of pleasure, for example, in our career, is not sufficient, as new needs will appear. Consequently, he stresses an internal way that trains patience and thankfulness. This can only be achieved through training.

The concept of happiness has long been addressed by both traditional and modern-oriented Islamic authors. Hamka contributes to this discourse within the Southeast Asian context.

Literature about Hamka and Happiness

This section will focus on scientific publications that examine Hamka's contribution to the topic of happiness. In his analysis, Abdul Rahman Abdul Aziz (2009) examines two literary works authored by Hamka, namely *Tasawuf Moden* and *Tuan Direktur*. It was discovered that Hamka advocates for a modest lifestyle and rejects materialistic values.

Mohd Annas Shafiq Ayob (2020) made a significant contribution to scholarship on Hamka's conception of happiness, drawing a comparison between Hamka and Aristotle. According to Hamka, human beings possess intellect (*akal*), which enables them to contemplate and understand specific situations. When individuals recognize the nature of a situation, they may experience happiness upon achieving their goals. Hamka also emphasizes the importance of avoiding engagement with imaginary worlds. Furthermore, he asserts that it is essential to acknowledge human mortality, and thus, it is important for individuals to attain happiness after death.

Rosnani Hasyim (2010) identifies several factors relevant to Hamka, emphasizing methods for strengthening personality. She asserts that having a clear aim and the determination to pursue it, along with a sense of responsibility, are essential. Furthermore, the practice of faith and religious observance, such as prayer, contributes to the development of a strong personality.

A significant essay on the connection between happiness and Hamka's *Tasawuf Moden* was published by Arrasyid (2019). According to his findings, Hamka emphasizes the 'internal element' of a human being and argues that happiness depends on the development of these elements, such as religion, reason, and mind. Additionally, according to Arrasyid, Hamka talked about specific ways to find contentment, including *zuhud* (an ascetic way of life), truthfulness, *qana'ah* (accepting the way things are), and trusting in Allah. The article by Arrasyid is significant and interesting. However, the researchers will also consider other works of Hamka in order to get a complete understanding of Hamka's concept of happiness.

Furthermore, the subject of happiness studies will also be discussed, along with Hamka's role in it.

Nur Hadi Ihsan and Iqbal Maulana Alfiansyah (2021) also examine Hamka's *Tasawuf Modern*, contributing an analysis of factors that lead to misfortune. They identify three negative elements: misuse of intellect, hate, and pessimism. These components, according to the authors, should be avoided. Achieving happiness requires the proper use of intellect, which ultimately guides individuals toward the recognition of God.

This literature review demonstrates that numerous studies have explored Hamka's concept of happiness. Many authors have focused on his work *Tasawuf Modern* and neglected some of his other works, particularly his novels. In this article, the researchers examine both Hamka's fictional and non-fictional works. However, it also reveals that his conceptualization has not yet been situated within the broader framework of happiness studies. By employing a phenomenological approach, the researchers aim to address this gap in the literature. The literature review also shows that classical scholars like Al Ghazali wrote about happiness. Hamka was aware of this and referred to his work too. Interestingly, Hamka also refers to 'modern philosophers', making an important contribution to the field of happiness studies by considering both the Western and Islamic perspectives. In this article, the researchers will illustrate his perspective on happiness.

Research Methodology

This research examines Hamka's contribution to the field of happiness studies. It is assumed that scholars from Islamic countries are often neglected. An exception is the book *The Alchemy of Happiness* by Imam al Ghazali. This book is influential and considered a 'standard' work on happiness studies. Nevertheless, up until now, the works of renowned Indonesian scholars have sometimes been disregarded within Western academia. One reason is that many of Hamka's nonfiction books were not translated. Therefore, the major research objectives are the following:

- A) To illustrate the statements and comments of Hamka regarding happiness.
- B) To embed the contribution of Hamka in the field of happiness studies.

The research objectives guided the methodological approach throughout the study. The primary texts of Hamka were systematically examined to identify key assertions regarding the concept of happiness and methods for its attainment. Subsequently, the content was subjected to detailed analysis. An interdisciplinary strategy was employed, integrating perspectives from multiple domains. Religious studies and phenomenology were identified as the principal areas of relevance. In the context of Islamic studies, phenomenological concepts are frequently applied (Mujiburrahman, 2001). The researchers adopted a phenomenological approach analogous to that of Annemarie Schimmel (1994), who emphasized the individual's experience of religion, which may influence perceived happiness. Schimmel conceptualizes understanding as a circular process leading to deeper insight. In contrast, the researchers present this understanding in Figure 1 using a linear model.

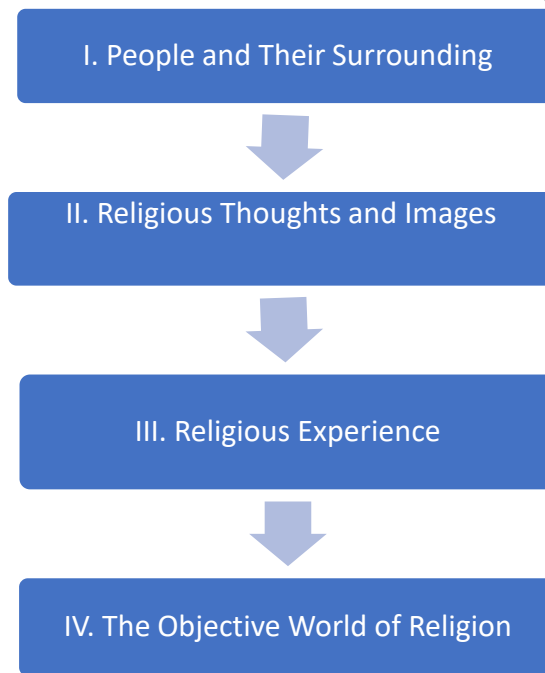


Figure 1: A Phenomenological Approach of Religious Experience.

Part I is the environment. A person grows up in a lifeworld that shapes his or her thinking (Schutz & Luckmann, 1974). Numerous factors influence our subjective experience of the world. Certain objects may have a significant impact.

Part II is the knowledge that is directly related to religion. Engaging in activities such as reading books and praying can contribute to the development of a comprehensive understanding of religion.

Part III is the religious experience. This pertains to the concept of the soul and its internal emotional experiences. A person gains trust in God, faith, and so on.

Part IV refers to the divine reality. A person who has progressed through the other stages may be able to see God's attributes without distraction from the outside world. It might be difficult to express this stage with words.

Figure 1 presents a simplified version of the concept described by Annemarie Schimmel. This adaptation is instrumental in analyzing Hamka's perspective on happiness.

Data collection for this study was conducted through library research (George, 2008; Zed, 2008). Relevant literature was identified and subsequently analyzed to extract significant components. Specific ideas were detected, such as Hamka's concept of modesty. The findings were then integrated into the phenomenological framework described above.

Findings

Hamka differentiates between two levels of happiness: a) happiness in this life and b) happiness in the hereafter. The following discussion will explain how Hamka describes the way to achieve happiness.

Hamka recognizes that defining happiness is inherently complex because it is subjective. Individuals may prioritize material possessions, intellectual pursuits, or religious devotion to varying degrees. The subsequent chapters will provide a concise overview of Hamka's conceptualization of happiness.

Happiness in This Life

Hamka cites the viewpoints of numerous scholars, including Socrates and Al Ghazali. There are some driving forces that distract and have an influence on the well-being of a person. These elements are the force of anger, the force of lust (*syahwat*), and the power of knowledge (Hamka, 2018).

Human beings possess fundamental needs, such as food and sleep, that must be satisfied. Beyond these, there are additional dimensions, including the capacity to recognize God (Allah) and to contemplate the purpose of human existence. In his book *Tasawuf Modern*, Hamka refers to other scholars, notably Imam Ghazali. Al Ghazali, in his renowned treatise *Alchemy of Happiness*, distinguishes various approaches to structuring one's life. Some individuals may focus solely on basic physical desires, such as eating, sleeping, and procreation. This raises the question of whether genuine happiness can be attained through such a lifestyle. On the other hand, individuals are also capable of pursuing higher knowledge and adhering to the principles of Islam. Hamka builds upon this argument, emphasizing that humans possess *akal* (intellect), which enables them to reflect on diverse aspects of human life. He concludes:

The wider the mind, the wider the life, the more happiness comes. The narrower the mind, the narrower the life, the more woe comes. (Hamka, 2018, p. 21)

This citation illustrates Hamka's perspective. He mentions numerous intellectuals from various regions and emphasizes their argumentative approaches. While these figures serve as sources of inspiration, Hamka formulates his own concepts of happiness. According to Hamka, an individual seeking happiness must possess an intrinsic determination to achieve it. Although this assertion may appear unconventional, he maintains that an internal desire is essential. Without such a conscious or subconscious wish, an individual cannot attain happiness. Hamka draws an analogy between this condition and that of a patient:

If the patient himself feels in his wish (heart) that the doctor who treats him is capable, then he will recover quickly; the disease will soon disappear. However, if he is less confident, even if he is worried, no matter what type of medicine he takes, there is little hope that it will be effective. (Hamka, 2018, p.25)

The mentioned example of Hamka helps to clarify the significance of one's internal disposition.

There is a strong correlation between happiness and behavior. If someone behaves in a mean way towards another person, it is reasonable to anticipate that their counterpart will behave in a similar way. Consequently, a person should act in a good way.

Hamka emphasizes that adhering to an ideal code of conduct is conducive to attaining happiness on two levels: on the individual level and on the societal level. One of the central ideas is Hamka's concept of being moderate (*sederhana*) in all circumstances.

The *hukama* (Islamic scholars) said happiness lies not in the possession of a tremendous wealth but in calmness and contentment. In the meantime, as a living person, work is continued, the effort is not stopped in the middle; when God gives him (her) sustenance, he (she) is grateful and if he (she) does not get (sustenance), he (she) is patient. (Hamka, 2020, p.192).

Hamka refers to Islamic scholars, and by looking at the citation, it is evident that Hamka refers to a well-known Islamic concept, namely the two elements of patience and gratitude (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 1998). Patience can be applied to a variety of situations. It can refer to circumstances in which someone faces difficulties such as disease or poverty. Even highly successful people should exercise patience. Sometimes wealth and influence can lead to rudeness and cruelty toward others. Therefore, Hamka stresses that a moderate way of living helps to attain happiness. He writes that a rich person is not necessarily happy due to his or her wealth. Consequently, it is crucial to implement a moderate way of life.

Hamka recognizes that the pursuit of happiness is a universal human desire. Individuals seek happiness through various means, such as attending nightclubs, cinemas, or casinos (Hamka, 2020). According to Hamka, these activities share a commonality: the search for happiness is directed outward, rather than inward. However, Hamka also notes that such pursuits can lead to adverse outcomes. For instance, a person who gambles at night may experience financial loss. Even intellectuals may adopt this lifestyle, seeking happiness externally. Hamka concludes:

There is no need for us to join all the clubs of educated people and play Domino or chess to be called intellectual. All of this is not a means how to achieve happiness. All that is needed is self-esteem, moderation in thinking and working. (Hamka, 2020, p. 200)

In this citation, it is evident that happiness can be found only in a way of life in which we respect ourselves. Interestingly, Hamka does not mention Islamic aspects such as invoking Allah for help in daily life. This was probably self-evident to Hamka, as he addresses an Indonesian readership. He even stresses that there should be an "Indonesian way of life" (Hamka, 2020, p. 200). Such a way of life will not imitate the 'American way of life.'

If a person does not follow a modest way of life, this leads to many obstacles and to so-called diseases of the heart. There are many such diseases, like stinginess or being envious. Therefore, Hamka stresses that it is of utmost importance to find inner happiness, as happiness is not tied to material wealth.

To achieve happiness, it is also important to be surrounded by good and religious people. Hamka mentions, for instance, the Prophet Muhammad's advice that the best feature in a prospective wife is religiosity.

Factors beyond individual behavior influence happiness. Human beings are dependent on God and are encouraged to seek His assistance. Allah grants *hidayah*, or guidance, to those He chooses. This concept is closely linked to belief and has implications for the afterlife. Individuals are advised to reconsider their perspectives, as situations that appear beneficial may, in reality, be harmful, and vice versa. Therefore, believers are encouraged to strengthen their faith.

Happiness in the Hereafter

As a religious scholar, Hamka highlights that there are various stages in a person's existence (Hamka, 2004).

- a. Dunia (this world): Life in this world is only for a limited time period during which the individual must demonstrate good character and behavior.
- b. Life in the grave: According to Islamic teachings, after death, individuals reside in the grave. Hamka emphasizes that death represents the 'small doomsday' (apocalypse), during which the soul separates from the body. In the grave, the deceased are questioned by two angels, *Munkar* and *Nakir*, regarding their religious beliefs. Islamic doctrine holds that Muslims who have performed righteous deeds will be rewarded by witnessing their future place in paradise.
- c. Life in the hereafter: This part comprises life in hell or paradise. For our topic, it is important to mention that life in paradise is one of happiness, while life in hell is miserable. The greatest favor a person can receive is to see Allah. It is also important to note that life in the hereafter is eternal in the Islamic understanding. Therefore, it is not surprising that Hamka considers this part of life to be crucial to attaining happiness.

It must be added that some Islamic scholars stress that there are stages of human life before birth, such as life in the realm of the souls and life in the womb of the mother (Al Haddad, 2025; Nurcahyo, 2021). However, in relation to happiness, Hamka focuses on the three mentioned phases.

Concrete Steps to Achieve Happiness

Hamka did not describe in a schematic way how a person can achieve happiness. The steps must be derived from different publications. The explanations that follow demonstrate Hamka's point of view:

- i. Understanding the true meaning of life: Understanding the purpose of life and the fact that it will end is the most crucial prerequisite for finding happiness. Consequently, the Sufis advise going to cemeteries to have a deeper understanding of what death means (Hamka, 2018). A person has to know what might happen. Death and age belong to the spheres that will come to everyone for sure (Hamka, 2018). As a consequence, life in this world and its wealth will not last forever:

Such is the person who feels lucky with something that is only small, compared to the greatest luck, eternal happiness, which is obeying God. (Hamka, 2018, p. 228).

Many people are happy about 'small' things. Even if they receive a nice gift or job, true happiness lies in their obedience to Allah. An individual will follow his duties only if he or she knows that there is a great reward. Therefore, we can conclude that the first step to happiness is to understand the meaning of life. Only such people will realize that a truly rich person is a person who does not need many things. Such a person will be content with what she or he gets and start to be happy.

The next step is to recognize the distinction between the outer body and the inner body. The physical body is sustained by food and drink, whereas the inner body requires remembrance of

Allah (*zikrullah*). The light of knowledge (*nur ilmu*) is regarded as essential for the well-being of the heart.

For Hamka, preserving the soul's psychological well-being is crucial. Therefore, he mentions some steps that help to maintain an inner equilibrium. In a way that is widespread in the Islamic world, he mentions that there are 'diseases of the heart' that must be treated. It is obvious what he meant when we examine this subject from a different perspective. For example, there might be a believer who is often angry. Anger is not negative per se. Hamka mentions two points that allow anger: a) to maintain honor and b) to protect the religion (Hamka, 2018). The element of anger in these two points is allowed as it protects society. However, anger in other circumstances is harmful and can disrupt society.

In Tasawuf Moden, as well as in works such as *Penuntun Jiwa* and *Pandangan Hidup Muslim*, Hamka identifies several key factors essential for achieving happiness, all of which are closely linked to religious belief. Ideally, an individual attains happiness by being content with their current circumstances, a concept referred to as *qana'ah*. This term signifies acceptance of one's situation as it is. Hamka provides his own definition of this concept:

The meaning of *qana'ah* is very broad. It tells us to truly believe in our power, to be patient in accepting what Allah has decided if this decree is not pleasing for us, and to be grateful if He gives us His favor, because when the soul is contained in the body, the obligation has not ended. (Hamka, 2018, p. 276)

An appropriate inner attitude requires internalizing the belief that Allah intends the best for His creatures. Consequently, individuals are encouraged to transform their internal convictions. Hamka provides numerous practical examples, including in his novels, which often convey Islamic perspectives and illustrate appropriate conduct during challenging circumstances. Hamka also acknowledges human fallibility. Within Islam, the concept of destiny is central: while individuals strive to achieve their goals, ultimately, it is Allah who determines the outcome.

Avoid *kedukaan* (sadness). We can only be happy if we know how sadness appears. Hamka writes:

And what is it that causes the heart to be struck by sorrow, afflicted with grief and melancholy? It is because one feels that something is missing. What is sought cannot be obtained; what is not sought, that is what is obtained. What is desired is too far away, while what is not desired is too near. Those who have already gone are still waited for. Meanwhile, those who have not yet come are hastened. The reason sorrow comes is because of "*salah pasang*" [meaning putting things in the wrong place] (Hamka, 2020, p. 6)

Hamka emphasizes the importance of cultivating an appropriate inner attitude. He asserts that individuals must properly arrange their souls. For example, Hamka explains that if a person experiences loneliness or lacks companionship, he or she should recognize that God (Allah) is the ultimate 'companion.' Additionally, angels (*malaikat*) can serve as friends. Internalizing such Islamic teachings, according to Hamka, can alleviate feelings of isolation.

Hamka is aware that everyone aspires to happiness. Happiness is also an essential part of society. If people are unhappy, this could endanger a harmonious way of living together. One of the most important contributions is Hamka's introduction of the religious dimension to the field of happiness studies. Many psychologists refer to techniques that are not related to religion. Some refer to techniques that change the inner attitude. However, Hamka goes beyond these techniques. As an Islamic scholar, he also sees that this world will not last forever. He is deeply convinced that there is life in the hereafter. The life after death can be miserable or wonderful. Consequently, he outlines the Islamic point of view that is closely related to Islamic belief.

- 1) Consider the feelings of others: Hamka highlights the fact that individuals engage with one another and live in a social environment. Therefore, a person must behave well and consider the feelings of others. This will be reciprocated by others. For example, if we feel happy, this feeling becomes even greater when others are happy with us (Hamka, 2023). If a person is humble, it is likely to become popular.
- 2) Live according to Islam: Islam is not only a religion of theory. It also stresses that a person must behave in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah. A person should pray five times a day. He or she should fast in the month of Ramadan and so on. Such acts will bring a believer close to Allah and make the inner state tranquil.
- 3) Spending time in nature and reflecting on its harmonious creation can provide solace to those experiencing distress. The sounds of animals and the freshness of the air serve as reminders to believers of Allah's greatness and mercy. As a result, individuals are less likely to succumb to despair; instead, their faith may be strengthened. Ultimately, true richness and happiness are found in inner calmness.

Pak Yasin and Tuan Direktur: Hamka's Fictional Works

Hamka published both fictional and non-fictional books. In both types of publications, happiness is a topic. A good example of a fictional work is the novel *Tuan Direktur* (Hamka, 2019a). Jazuli is the director of a jewelry store. He is successful and wants to increase his company. He must thus purchase some land. Pak Yasin does not want to sell his land. He is satisfied with his life, even though he is not rich. He lives according to Islam and prays regularly in the small prayer house (*langgar*). He takes care of the community. When someone buys a nice shirt, he instructs the owner to sell it again and buy three or four instead, allowing many people to enjoy a nice shirt. The people follow his advice because they know that Pak Yasin acts unselfishly.

In contrast to Pak Yasin, Jazuli is conceited and thinks he has control over his environment. His friends want Pak Yasin and his group to be imprisoned. They filed a police report, claiming that he and his crew are involved in some sort of plot. When Jazuli goes to Pak Yasin's house to persuade him to sell his property, he is unaware of this police report. Consequently, everyone within Pak Yasin's home is taken into custody. In prison, Pak Yasin has the opportunity to talk to Jazuli:

I can see three things that are wrong in what you do. First, arrogance towards fellow human beings, especially towards your subordinates. Second, greed for wealth and honor, but [your]greed for honor is greater. Third, even though you live in modern times, you still believe in superstitions. (Hamka, 2019a, p. 89)

In this citation, Pak Yasin gave some practical advice that refers to wrong behavior. Such inappropriate behavior might have severe consequences. This can be seen in the novel. Jazuli did not have any real friends. He evaluated life only from a materialistic perspective, which led to his disaster.

In his other works, Hamka argues that materialism cannot bring true happiness. His novel *Tuan Direktur* shows that values beyond material wealth matter more. Hamka believes that life on earth is temporary, but the afterlife lasts forever, so success there is just as important.

Analytical Remarks: A Phenomenological Perspective

This chapter looks at the phenomenological perspective. People are influenced by the world around them, which shapes how they interpret and see things. Several factors affect how someone understands their situation. Some scientists refer to this as the lifeworld (Schutz & Luckmann, 1974). These factors include social status, time, and the broader social and cultural context. Hamka is a good example. He grew up in a village near Lake Maninjau, but as he got older, he moved to places like Medan and Jakarta, where he encountered new ideas. These experiences helped him see the world differently.

The concept of happiness is closely linked to individual perception of the world. Consequently, it is important for us to recognize the beauty present in our surroundings. Since each person possesses a unique personality, individuals may perceive beauty through contemplation of knowledge and science or through engagement with the arts.

Hamka's thinking on how to achieve happiness is similar to the system of Annemarie Schimmel. A believer sees the beauty of nature, the stars, and so on. This first level of seeing the greatness of God will affect how someone behaves. In Hamka's concept, a person will internalize certain Islamic values. The believer will understand that life on this earth will come to an end. Therefore, he or she will accept the situation as it is, and the heart will become tranquil.

Hamka is quite detailed about what the personality should look like. Personality is composed of various factors, such as knowledge, health, character, and so on (Hamka, 2023). All of these characteristics must be nurtured on the path to recognizing God. Annemarie Schimmel focuses on the religious experience itself, whereas Hamka emphasizes the importance of a decent character. A good believer will try to please Allah and behave in an exemplary way. Finally, inner calmness will lead to happiness.

Conclusion

Happiness is a field that is becoming increasingly significant. There is a growing number of publications. However, the consideration of an Islamic perspective is still neglected. Hamka, as a well-known Indonesian Islamic scholar, made substantial contributions in this field. He stressed that happiness is detached from material values. True happiness is achieved when the

inner feeling becomes calm. Hamka provides concrete steps for achieving happiness. Of course, he stresses that the inner acceptance of Islamic values is of utmost importance. A good believer knows that Allah created everything in perfect order. Consequently, the believer has to improve his or her understanding of Islam.

In this article, the researchers offered a different perspective that considers other aspects, including Hamka's biography. Hamka was a scholar who faced many trials. He was imprisoned, accused of plagiarism, and so on. These difficulties led to a deeper understanding of what can be considered 'true' happiness. As a consequence, he wrote books that should help readers develop an inner belief and get an Islamic understanding of trials and tests.

This article has shown that a phenomenological perspective is useful in happiness studies. This research method considers emotions and helps understand how positive feelings develop. In Hamka's case, it was shown that he emphasized the emergence of positive feelings through observation and understanding of religion. This belief leads to proper behavior. The surroundings respond positively. Happiness results from all this. In Islamic understanding, the hereafter must be considered, and righteous belief and behavior lead to eternal bliss. Further research could examine other Islamic scholars of the Malay-speaking world to identify similarities or differences. It could also help better understand the local worldview.

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