

Pursuit of Spiritual Happiness: Abu Hamid al-Ghazali on The Theory of Human Nature

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<p>Article History</p> <p>Received: September 15, 2023</p> <p>Revised: October 24, 2023</p> <p>Accepted: December 22, 2023</p> <p>Published: December 28, 2023</p> <p>Keyword: Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, Human Nature, Islamic Philosophy, Pursuit of Happiness, Spiritual Aspect</p> <p>Copyright (c) 2023 Jarman Arroisi, Hamid Fahmy Zarkasyi, Iwan Aminur Rokhman, Fahrudin Mukhlis</p> 	<p>This article explores the philosophical and spiritual perspectives of Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, focusing on his views on the nature of humanity, the spiritual and material aspects of existence, and the pursuit of happiness. Al-Ghazali's philosophy is deeply rooted in Islamic thought and draws upon the Quranic and Prophetic teachings. Al-Ghazali posits that humans are composed of both a physical, ephemeral dimension (the material aspect) and an intellectual-transcendental dimension (the spiritual aspect). The article delves into al-Ghazali's classification of existence into two realms: the realm of decrees ('<i>ālam al-amr</i>) and the realm of creation ('<i>ālam al-khalq</i>). Human beings, according to al-Ghazali, embody both of these realms, with their physicality falling under the realm of creation and their spirituality under the realm of decree. Al-Ghazali introduces various terms to describe the spiritual entity within humans, such as al-'<i>aql</i> (intellect), al-'<i>nafs</i> (soul), al-'<i>qalb</i> (heart), and al-'<i>rūh</i> (spirit). He argues that while the body is material and earthly, the spirit is divine in origin and immortal. The soul, as God's creation, reflects this governance by ruling over the body without being located in any specific physical part. It emphasizes that the spirit belongs to the realm of Divine decrees, making it distinct from material entities. Al-Ghazali identifies different qualities within the human spirit, ranging from animalistic to angelic. He argues that the angelic quality, associated with the worship of God and the pursuit of Divine Beauty, represents the true essence of humanity. To attain happiness, individuals must purify themselves from worldly desires and base instincts. The article underscores the importance of knowledge in al-Ghazali's philosophy, with knowledge being derived from God and serving as the criterion that separates humans from other creations. Knowledge enables individuals to understand their purpose, responsibilities, and the path to happiness. The article explores al-Ghazali's perspective on happiness, highlighting his belief that it is primarily a spiritual and intellectual state. It emphasizes the significance of attaining knowledge of God for true happiness, as well as the importance of spiritual discipline and self-purification.</p>
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Introduction

Happiness is a lifetime process which experiencing life through constructive attitudes, meaning, and spirituality (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2009). People naturally need to be whole emotionally. To ignore feelings and emotional needs is overlooking the basic requirement of wholesome wellbeing. Happiness is the emotional currency that helps people to reach other desired objectives. Through positive feelings, it is easier to improve our lives, generating new ideas, maintaining health and seeking the meanings in life. Without those feelings to buttress and support the challenges met along the way, everyday life would feel difficult and might cause problems.

Mental health is conceptualized as a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his potentials to be able to cope with the normal stresses of life, to work productively, hence able to make a contribution to the community ("Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013-2030," n.d.). Mental health facilitates people to reach their potentials and cope with the challenges in life ("Mental health," n.d.). However, mental health could be challenged by unfavorable social-economic situations. As mental health is the biggest predictor of individual happiness (Clark, Flèche, Layard, & Powdthavee, 2019), we intend to observe the relation between mental health and happiness, particularly, the spiritual happiness. In this study, we instigate to address the spiritual-ontological aspect of human soul. Studies show the relation of religion and spirituality, although the connection between two may vary (Kao, Peteet, & Cook, 2020), spiritual aspect of human being is undeniably significant factor to provide a profound solution for the mental health problems. The spirituality dimension should be involved within discussions regarding mental health, hence it is simply impossible to ignore its significance (Paloudian, 2005). The abandonment of spiritual dimension in the present time would yield to spiritual crisis which eventually cause disadvantages to the individual –what actually could have been prevented.

Philosophically, happiness is derived from *weltanschauung* –the worldview of Islam. In Islam, the ultimate happiness is attained through achievement of actualization of human primordial purpose, i.e. worship God Almighty. In the context of happiness, the intellectual-spiritual aspect of life is valued more than the material-transient aspect, with the former as the main objective, and the latter as the indispensable element supporting the former. Al-Qur'ān deploys the concept *sa'ādah* (happiness or felicity) as the central expression to happiness which encompasses both the earthly life and the hereafter (Surah Hūd 105 and 108). Other expressions being *surūr* (gladness), *riḍā* (contentment) and *farḥ* (rejoicing), which express the happiness in respective contexts, with the ground of submission of self before God Almighty as the main objective. It is importance to address the intellectual-spiritual aspect of man in Islam. This aspect encompasses psychology of man, not merely its emotional-mental being, but also its origin, development and its eventuality –i.e. the continuity of life after this to the Hereafter. Happiness hence happens in this world and the next.

The Muslim scholars have established studies regarding happiness, with the earliest being Abu Naṣr al-Fārābī in his work *Taḥsīl al-Sa'ādah* (Attainment of Happiness), followed by Ibn Miskawayh in *Tartīb al-Sa'adah* (Order of Happiness), and al-Ghazālī reached the culmination of study in his *Kīmīyā' al-Sa'ādah* (Alchemy of Happiness). Abu Hamid al-Ghazālī is scholar whose works in psychology blending religion, human wellbeing, logic and philosophy into epistemological-spiritual structure which compels the readers to instigate their spiritual journey while preparing for the life hereafter. In

his *Iḥyā' Ulūm al-Dīn* and other works, al-Ghazali brings the intersecting aspects of the mental-spiritual dimension and daily life, into unity that is encompassed under religion. The ultimate purpose of self, according to Imam al-Ghazali is the knowledge of God (*Ma'rifatu-Llah*). In this purpose, his ultimate happiness resides (Al-Ghazālī, 2004b).

Research Method

This research employed a qualitative methodology, gathering data in the form of narratives and then systematically analyzing them to derive conclusions. In particular, this study employed a literature review approach, which involves an exploration of pertinent literature concerning the research subject. Additionally, it can be categorized as philosophical research, wherein abstraction techniques were applied to identify essential concepts. Furthermore, the research uncovered the structural connections among these concepts, offering a comprehensive insight into the philosophical framework of the research subject.

The primary sources of data were acquired from books or written materials authored by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazali. The book that is the key reference is *Revival of Religious Sciences* (Al-Ghazālī, 2004b) and *The Alchemy of Happiness* (Al-Ghazālī, 1991). In addition to primary data sources, secondary data sources, such as references from research or works addressing topics like happiness and human nature, were also integrated.

Result and Discussion

Al-Ghazali on the Nature of Man

To understand Abu Hamid al-Ghazālī's concept of happiness, it is imperative to present his views on the nature of man. Al-Ghazali bases those views which on the ontological foundations deduced from Al-Qur'an and Prophetic teachings, while incorporating the Kalām-philosophical approach to discern the reality of man. Man is an entity of spiritual and material aspect. The material aspect of life is its physical, ephemeral dimension, while the spiritual is the intellectual-transcendental dimension. Man is created by God, it is in his nature to be in the need of Divine guidance perpetually, for he may not guide himself. This guide manifests in Islam. Islam establishes definitions and rules for man on both individual and social spheres, based on the reality of each. What we mean by the reality here, is the quintessential truth (*al-ḥaqīqah*), which represents the quiddity (*māhiyyah*) of entities involved. In the quiddity of existence, al-Ghazali states that all created things are of two kinds: one is of the realm of decrees (*'ālam al-amr*), and the other is of the realm of creation (*'ālam al-khalq*) (Al-Ghazālī, 2004b). This resonates the Qur'ānic verse "*To Him belongs creation and decree*" (Al-A 'rāf 54). The entities which belong to the world of decrees are those which have not superficialities, quantity, or form. While those belong to the world of creation are which do have both quantity and form. Man has these two realms within him: his physicality falls under the realm of creation, and his spirituality is under the realm of decree.

Man is thus of two aspects, one is his visible physicality, and the other is spiritual, which could only be perceived by the mind. al-Ghazali names this spiritual entity (*al-laṭīfah al-rūḥāniyyah*), which has its respective names based the states it is in. Within its involvement with apprehension and understanding, it is *al-'aql* (intellect); in its governance of physical body it is *al-nafs* (soul); under the Divine illumination it is *al-qalb* (heart) and referring to its spiritual origin, it is *al-rūḥ* (spirit) (Al-Ghazālī, 2010). Thus we

refer to the heart or the spirit interchangeably as this entity. Al-Ghazali contends that man and his soul, is created, not eternal (*qadim*), yet he would survive this world to the Hereafter. Although his body is crude and earthly, his spirit is lofty and Divine-origin. The physical aspect of man requires constant nourishment in order to survive, without basic requirements one may perish.

As God governs the entire creation through His Knowledge and Will; the human soul reflects the governance over his body. The soul rules the body and its members, being itself invisible, indivisible, nor located in any physical part of human flesh. This spirit is created, immortal, subsists in itself and not an accident, for accident subsists within something else. It is also not material, for matter can be divided, and spirit is not subject of any division. It is impossible to know further regarding the true reality of spirit. (Al-Ghazālī, 2004b) The spirit belongs to the realm of Divine decrees, hence an exact philosophical knowledge is not necessary to discern. al-Ghazali states that those who strive to self-discipline and perseverance within Islam would be guided to know (Al-Ghazālī, 1991).

However, it is possible to identify the qualities of soul. al-Ghazali contends that the spiritual qualities of man are distributed into: (1) animalistic, which its nature is to eat and drink; (2) ferocious, that its nature is to injure and destroy; (3) demonical, which has leanings to evil machinations, deceit and delusion; and (4) the highest quality, that is angelic, whose nature is to worship God in sincerity and continually to await the vision of His Divine Majesty. al-Ghazālī argues that since man has been created with other qualities than angelic, how to know which quality is his real essence, is that the essence of each creature is to be sought in which is the noblest of it and peculiar to (Al-Ghazālī, 1991). Hence the real essence of man is his angelic quality, which he must strive to reach its manifestation. Man must purge himself from carnal and worldly drives to attain to the knowledge of God.

Instead of being slave to lust and anger, no longer driven by baser worldly delights, man manifests his angelic qualities, which eventually finds his bliss in the contemplation of Divine Beauty. al-Ghazali points out the resemblance of human body to a kingdom (Al-Ghazālī, 2004b). In this kingdom of man, soul is the designated ruler commanding the entire physical and spiritual, while reason is the prime minister for the soul to consult. al-Ghazali states that man is a microcosm, the miniature duplicate of world, that man is made a king with his own realm to govern. (Al-Ghazālī, 1991). In the kingdom of man, the Throne (*al-'Arsh*) is represented by the soul; the Footstool (*al-Kursiy*) by the intellect; the Archangel by the heart; the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawḥ al-Mahfūz*) by the treasure chamber of thought. The soul governs the body as God governs the universe. Hence each of human being is entrusted with an infinitesimal realm, and charged with authority over it. In order to govern the realm which is himself, man is granted willpower that reflects Divine Will.

Within the spirit of man, knowledge resides. Knowledge is the criterion that separates man from the rest of creation, the distinguishing feature which is related to the spirit which is Divine-granted (Al-Ghazālī, 2004b). Knowledge is ontologically derived from God, for Divine Knowledge is the source of all knowledge. Man is revered with the knowledge bestowed from God. Through knowledge, man knows his God, his essence, his responsibility before God, the purpose of his existence and everything he needs to understand himself and his surroundings. Without knowledge, it would be impossible for man to recognize anything, moreover to attain happiness. Hence it is said in Prophetic

hadith that seeking knowledge is necessary for every Muslim (Sunan Ibn Mājah, 224). Even so, al-Ghazali gives warning regarding perilous knowledge, which nothing comes from it except danger and perdition (Al-Ghazālī, 2004b). Hence knowledge is one of human nature that is one quality which is distinct for him. Through knowledge as well, man recognizes what is good and bad, and what is the best for his life both in this world and hereafter.

The knowledge is essential feature in attaining happiness, it could not exaggeration if one concurs that attainment of knowledge regarding to al-Ghazali equals achievement of true happiness. Lack of knowledge could lead to improper understanding of religion; hence one may resort to mere dogmatic perspective and absence of spirituality; or, on the other side, such excess which may yield to false religious extremism. Spiritual happiness, the one that is intellectual, transcends dogmatic stigma which may be enforced by the lack of knowledge (Kao et al., 2020). Happiness based on knowledge is balanced, judicious yet brings the sense of blessings from Divine Mercy.

The aim of spiritual discipline is the purification of soul from the control of passion and resentment, until it resembles a clear mirror which reflects the Divine illumination. al-Ghazali states that the heart possesses a spiritual channel towards intuitions in conditions approaching what of prophetic inspiration (Al-Ghazālī, 1991). The more a man purifies his soul from worldly passions and focusing his mind on God, the more conscious he will be of those intuitions. al-Ghazālī argues that those intuitions are not confined only to the prophets. By the metaphor of iron which through ample polishing can turn into mirror, any soul going through spiritual discipline can be made receptive of such intuitions (Al-Ghazālī, 1991). This resonates to the Prophetic tradition which mentions every child is born with innate predisposition towards Islam (Sunan Abū Dāwud, 4716). The innate predisposition is the *fiṭrah* which each soul is initially good and obedient towards God. Al-Qur'ān mentions how God questions Adam and his progeny, “Am I not your Lord?” (Al-A'rāf:172), which each answered ‘yea, we bear witness’. This statement comes with the responsibility which man should carry: to acknowledge God as The Lord and The Creator, and to worship Him in various forms of ‘*Ibādah*. This forms the covenant which man has taken with God, that eventually becomes the *fiṭrah* of human soul: to worship God. To find this notion is the very key to happiness. However, Al-Qur'ān and Prophetic tradition also warns situation of life which may cause man to forget the covenant, hence compromising his *fiṭrah*, and eventually his happiness. To return to God means to purify his soul and fulfill his purpose of existence, i.e. ‘*Ibādah*. Without purification of the soul, man is prone to fell to his negative traits.

The major problem for the spiritual state is derived from the negative traits that man possesses. al-Ghazali lists the characters such as pride, jealousy, hypocrisy, hatred, and deceit, which directly or indirectly stem from the excessive longing of the world. This would later become one’s own spiritual hell (Al-Ghazālī, 1991). Out of his own folly, man intentionally chooses the worldly entanglement over devotion to God, which leads him to his own suffering. al-Ghazali would remind that man is a unique creation due to his nature that is of spiritual and physical realm, by stating that man is the reflection of the universe. Hence man is to balance the two aspects of him and to free himself from the obedience of anything other than God.

Man possesses willpower which is granted by God for him to fulfill his purpose in the world. This will reflect the Divine Will, although both are incomparable. al-Ghazali emphasizes on the firmness of Divine Will. What God wills be, what he does not shall

not be. Hence, everything that happens in the universe and beyond is under His Will, and happening through His Power and Knowledge (Al-Ghazālī, 2004a). These Divine Attributes would be the foundational notion in dealing with the creation. One may argue that human will is almost non-existent in al-Ghazali's framework, yet it is there ontologically, for God creates man with will for him to perform his role, and for God has bestowed man attributes which reflects of His Divine Attributes. How willpower could affect happiness is that man being granted capability for the intentionality in his actions and deeds. Man is given the ability to choose, which its proper term is Arabic expression *ikhtiyār*, which is derived from *khayr* –the best. Thus man is obliged, naturally, to choose and decide for the best for his life.

Knowing that his life is created for a purpose, man would decide to take action over his life, subjugating negative traits and qualities, manifesting the angelic attributes which are his real essence and attain happiness. A true believer could not sit inertia waiting for things to happen to him; or being passively –even though painfully– patient from suffering from calamities surrounding. Knowing that God is his Creator, he realizes that his creation should have a meaning, and that it has to manifest in actions and deeds, not by mere inaction.

Al-Ghazali on Happiness

It is observable that al-Ghazālī differentiates between the notion of happiness and its attainment. We shall discuss in the former in this section and the latter in the following. al-Ghazali contends that every soul is made for the knowledge of God, and that is its quest of happiness. (Al-Ghazālī, 2004b) Knowledge of God is every soul's aim and source of happiness; hence it would not rest until it attains the promised bliss. It could only be attained through knowledge, and according to al-Ghazālī, there is no knowledge truer and nobler than knowledge of God. One must make this knowledge a priority within his life, a cornerstone foundation for his happiness and prosperity both in this world and the hereafter.

Hence happiness in al-Ghazali's thought is within the spiritual-intellectual aspect. al-Ghazali declares that man's happiness is through knowledge, and knowledge is the greatest thing granted to him, for it paves him the bliss in the world and the Hereafter. (Al-Ghazālī, 2004b) Material worldly delights and pleasures are recognized in their proper significance, although they are not essential to the happiness. They must also be scrutinized, because excessive endeavor in seeking and attaining them could lead one's soul to perdition. Excessive emotional attachment toward those ephemeral amusements would cause burden within one's soul, hence hindering its growth to reach the highest dimension that is the angelic qualities imprinted within him.

Intellect has been the criterion that distinguishes man from the rest of creation. For its nature is of the realm of decree, and not of this realm of creation (Al-Ghazālī, 2004b). Thus man must deploy his intellect as the master of his body, and attempting to subdue the desires and baser qualities which could put himself in disadvantage. al-Ghazali considers the happiness as the drive that become the *raison d'être* of every living soul, hence each is attempting to attain the happiness. For him, happiness is spiritual-intellectual rather physical-materialistic, and the highest level of happiness could only be attained through knowledge of God.

The *raison d'être* of every soul is to worship God, and that is to attain the knowledge of God. It is that man was created to be at the service of God, which is the

purpose of his creation. Fulfilling this purpose would bring his creation into completion; hence this would lead him to the ultimate bliss of happiness. Meanwhile, the soul which intentionally commits violation of God's law denies the purpose of his creation, and would suffer from spiritual alienation and estrangement from God. So far from the happiness would this soul be. Negative qualities that man innately possesses would also bring him far from the bliss.

The lack of control over anger could lead to violence and destruction, and when the anger is lacking, it would affect sense of honor and enthusiasm in the religion and making the best of his life; when it is in balance, it would yield patience, courage and wisdom. The lack of control over desire would lead to immorality and obscenity, when it weakens to the point of non-existence, it shall yield to weakness and tepidity. When the balance is reached, it would bring to modesty and gratitude. This balance brings the meaning of life for man. Once the meaning is fulfilled, hence his happiness is attained.

There are occasions where man tends to ignore this control and instead letting these qualities to win over our response towards events happening in life. Letting anger and desire free would only lead to perdition of the soul. However, al-Ghazali states that without anger one would not defend himself against danger or peril coming to his way. (Al-Ghazālī, 2008) In the definite absence of desire, one would not instigate himself to seek for the better worth of life through the goodness provided by God for him. Hence it is the balance and moderation that is upon those negative qualities that should be the golden mean of how one's conduct could lead him to his happiness.

Other Muslim philosophers have different argument than al-Ghazali. Take al-Farabi for example. Al-Farabi agreed with Plato and Aristotle that a happy life was possible only within society (Cotesta, 2021) His view on happiness is connected with the notion of man as the member of society. In order to achieve happiness, man needs to connect with spirituality and celestial entities, ascending to God as the First. However, this must be a collective effort. Human individual must come to coexist with other fellow humans, and could not do this alone (Al-Fārābī, 1985).

Ibn Sina derives the theory of happiness from his cosmological structure. God and the celestial entities are unchangeably pure and perfect, for they are spiritual beings. Evil and imperfection could only exist in the sublunary world where generation and corruption take place. For Ibn Sina, the notion of evil has its origin in the matter, hence suffering as its consequence also finds its origin from the similar source (ibn Sina, 2004). Happiness is thus the liberation of soul from the material influence. God and the spheres of fixed stars were considered pure and perfect, hence for the sublunary souls to be pure and good, it is returning to the spiritual purity, and freeing them from the imperfection of matter.

For Ibn Bajja, the happiness has priority over state or society (Rosenthal, 2009). The attainment of happiness could be through the societal sphere, or when the society does not accommodate due to imperfections, the virtuous person has to win individually his own way to the happiness. By necessity man must separate himself from society and focusing on the self-knowledge which will guide him to the knowledge of God, independently from the society or the guidance of prophetic law.

al-Ghazali has different stance from these philosophers. He does not establish the society as the pivotal requirement for one to attain happiness. Anyone could attain happiness, only that circumstances surrounding him may hinder the achievement. This also leads to the possibility of collective happiness, in the form of a society composed by

virtuous souls who purify themselves from negative qualities within. Also for al-Ghazali, happiness has nothing to do with the celestial beings or influence of lunar sphere. Like Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali states the one could only achieve happiness through spiritual purification, but says nothing about the matter which evil is originated from. This reflects his own version of causality which other entities than God could hold no efficacy upon anything. al-Ghazali also emphasizes heavily on the adherence to Al-Qur'an, Prophetic Tradition and the sciences of religion as the cornerstone for attainment of happiness and felicity, and not mere relying on the mental-intellectual prowess alone (Al-Ghazālī, 2004b). The latter could pave to road to the quest for happiness, but happiness must contain truth, and truth could only come forth from the revelation. This is what sets him apart from the philosophers.

The Attainment of Happiness

al-Ghazali compares this process of soul purification as the alchemy. Alchemy is the ancient science that predates the modern chemistry, which its purpose to transmute base metals into nobler ones, e.g. lead to gold. In the alchemy of happiness, the transmutation is spiritual, from base soul into the noble one, i.e. from the worldly-driven to the angelic soul (Al-Ghazālī, 1991). This transmutation is as simple as turning away from the worldly matters to God. This transmutation is spiritual-intellectual, for it constitutes of four types of knowledge which are (1) knowledge of Self; (2) knowledge of God; (3) knowledge of the nature of the world and (4) knowledge of Hereafter. The transmutation based on the knowledge helps man reaching the highest degree, which is manifestation of his angelic qualities. Through the alchemy of happiness, man rises from the rank of beasts to that of angels.

Al-Ghazali connects happiness to the truth. Al-Ghazali mentions the hindrances to the attainment of truth which of this is the acquired knowledge. al-Ghazali deploys the metaphor of well to illustrate the heart (Al-Ghazālī, 1991). The five senses are the streams which perpetually convey the well. In order to discover the real contents within the well, those five streams must be halted of a time, and the dirt and any impurity they bring over must also be cleaned. This way, the well that is the heart could reach its purity. Those impure notions and ideas brought by the external process that have polluted the well cause the heart to harden, to be contaminated and yield to self-conceit individuality, one may not even be realized by the soul. For al-Ghazali, the void of truth means the essential deficiency of happiness. Happiness must be based on the truth, which is provided by the revelation; hence it could not be a standalone feature. The attainment of happiness has to go through the way of religion, not opposes nor deviates from the truth.

The most compelling merit in happiness regarding al-Ghazali is the tranquility of soul as the outcome of the spiritual alchemy. The tranquil soul, after going through the spiritual purification and cleansing the negative traits, becomes more resilient and content. The tranquility of soul is its essence, for its anxiety and other kinds of disturbance, i.e. the spiritual diseases of heart, are caused by external factors found in the progressing life (Al-Ghazālī, 2004b). al-Ghazali states that the spiritual diseases of heart are derived to the overt attachment to the worldly life. We argue that these spiritual diseases are what we also recognize in the mental health problems. These diseases could be cured through *tazkiyatu al-nafs*, i.e. purification and conditioning of the self to mental health problems could be solved through cognitive-behavioral conditioning.

For him, the human behavior could be changed, for one is capable of change just as how change is possible in animals (Al-Ghazālī, 2004b). Al-Ghazālī outlines six stages of *tazkiyatu al-nafs* in *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn*, (1) *mushāratah* (initiating self-commitment); (2) *murāqabah* (monitoring); (3) *muḥāsabah* (reflection) (4) *mujāhadah* (self-struggle against negative inclinations); (5) *mu'āqabah* (chastisement of self for breaking self-commitment) ; and (6) *mu'ātabah* (self-admonition) (Keshavarzi & Haque, 2013). These stages in fact are the process of returning the self to the purity of its soul, hence to renew the commitment enacted in the covenant in the creation of soul.

The soul that is going through *tazkiyatu al-nafs* would attain the alchemy of happiness. Al-Ghazālī also emphasizes to the resilience of soul in order to preserve and, eventually, to attain the happiness. In the *Ihyā'*, the stature of both patience (*sabr*) and gratitude (*shukr*) is quintessential for the believer (Al-Ghazālī, 2004b). The resilience of soul is manifested in patience, acceptance and reliance towards God. Without resilience, man is feeble against every challenge and difficulty met in life. Contentment of soul emerges in positive attitudes and actions under the life satisfaction, which lead to overall mental health and well-being. Further, it would bring man to generosity and compassion, towards himself or his fellow human beings. There are moments where man feels helpless in front the challenges he finds before his eyes. al-Ghazali accomodates this feeling of helplessness, through the contextual perspective of Tawhid that it is only Allah who may help him surviving his ordeals.

Happiness is not merely about the constant flow of adrenalines, as the culture of modern life would have suggested, it is the constant balancing of spiritual tranquility. We do not require a perpetual stream of entertainment to distract ourselves from misery, but in essence we require fulfillment of meaning in life. And that quintessential meaning of life, as al-Ghazali mentioned, is to know God, to attain His Mercy and to devote life in worship (Al-Ghazālī, 2004b).

Mishaps or defects in life happen by the Will of God. God has a concern for the spiritual welfare of man, has commanded His creation, be it the elements, events, conditions to generate certain situation which he would turn away from the world and its concern, towards his Creator. al-Ghazali likens realization of Divine Wisdom as a radiant pearl from the ocean of inspirational knowledge (Al-Ghazālī, 1991). Hence any illness, shortage and defect found in life has purpose to be the signs to remind man of the Creator. The same thing also works in all the beauty and splendor in life; they function as cue for man to return to His remembrance.

People experiencing stressful, intense situations would often have difficult time adapting back to their normal life (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2009). It is the persistence of physiological distress, even after the traumatic event has passed. Eventually, this could lead to health deterioration. Stress could lead to elevation of heart rate, which could put people in the risk of stroke, heart disease, and other possibilities of illness. Stress, unhappiness, anxiety and other psychological problems cause the negative consequences towards health. The overall happiness is beneficial for body.

Another key concept that al-Ghazali advocates in his psychological works is the self-recognition (Al-Ghazālī, 2004b). Self-recognition, *ma'rifa al-nafs*, is when man knows himself, accepts his true nature. It is initially recognizing that God creates man, and that God provides everything in his life. By God's Decree, man would find challenges in his life, for it is the nature of the world –the *locus* of actions and causality, but also by God's Mercy, he would be able to overcome those challenges. Man realizes and accepts that

he is created for the reason to worship God and nothing else; hence he shall not enslave himself to his own desire, lust or even his insecurities. al-Ghazali declares that man possesses the power of free-will, that works as the Divine-granted secondary causality. That means man has choices to make in life including choosing the way of his life.

Man is thusly responsible for his actions. This also signifies that man is granted capacity to overcome the mental blocks that may happen after events of upheaval and disruption. The worldly life provides disillusionment of perpetuity and comfort, a promise of settlement. As one grows, he realizes that this life is never meant to be forever, for challenges and tribulations would always find their way to one's life. It is [a certain kind] of awakening within him (Csikszentmihalyi, 2009). However, the emergence of existential dread is natural within the scope of world. Trying to cure the existential dread with secular meaning and rationalization is a futile attempt. It could only be solved through spirituality, which only religion could provide its answers. In order to overcome this, man needs to find his anchor which is his true nature, his spirituality. To realize and subjugate his baser qualities, it is to accept the higher nature of his creation, to manifest the angelic qualities that God bestows upon him. Once man accepts this, he would experience the bliss that comes from witnessing The Divine Beauty.

Religion for al-Ghazali is not merely means for coping management. Indeed, religious belief advocates a positive worldview that is optimistic and hopeful (Koenig, 2009). Even so, the true purpose of Islam is the return of man to his *fitrah*, the innate nature and meaning of his existence. It is to be the truly servants of God. Here we may highlight the factor of intentionality within al-Ghazali's epistemological structure in psychology. First, there is the requirement of guidance; this part is Divine-arbitrary, although, after the discussion on the nature of human being, we know that man is capable to find the truth (Al-Ghazālī, 2004b). Through his *fitrah* as well man recognizes the significance of knowledge in his life. Afterwards is the intentionality of individual. Through intentionality of his actions, man embarks through the spiritual journey. Starting with his own negative traits, man seeks the tranquility of the soul, which could only be attained after spiritual purification. With the positive reinforcement of the intentionality, *niyyah*, one may go through the transmutation, the alchemy, which turns his worldly-bound animalistic soul to the one that is angelic, that is his ultimate true essence. The soul that has returned to its innate angelic state would have been revealed to him the spiritual bliss that is derived from knowledge of God, which he finally attains his happiness.

Conclusion

Happiness is a worldview-based concept. The happiness is God-derived, for the ultimate happiness is found within the knowledge of God, which would lead to love of God. Not only that every living soul deserves happiness, to know God is the soul's very purpose of existence. al-Ghazali stated that the bliss of something is realized through realization of the purpose of its existence. Hence, the bliss of soul could only be attained through knowledge of God, and only then the soul can obtain its happiness.

There are further issues with mental health which may require medication and therapy; there is no denying about that. Yet, we say those problems could be prevented through spiritual journey, and purification of soul from negative traits and burdening worldly trivia, and starting to envision of life as a transient route which would lead to salvation in the Hereafter, that shall lead to the ultimate happiness, as discussed above.

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