

# The Concept of Happiness in the Household: Al-Ghazali's Sufistic Perspective

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## Abstract

**Problem statement:** The concept of domestic happiness embodies the value of idealism. Idealism underscores the significance of the superiority of the mind, soul, or spirit over material possessions. **Objective:** This article aims to analyse the notion of happiness in Al-Ghazali's thought and the ways in which its implementation can foster harmony and well-being within domestic life. **Methods:** The methodology employed in this study is an analytical approach, utilising a literature review to examine Al-Ghazali's perspectives on happiness and the application of this concept in households, which is understood as the integration of Sufi values. **Results:** The findings indicate that, according to Al-Ghazali, happiness is achieved through self-awareness, followed by the knowledge of Allah SWT, attained through both knowledge and action, the cultivation of faith, the purification of the soul, and the perfection of one's spirit. **Conclusion:** The implementation of Sufistic materialism, as articulated by Al-Ghazali, posits that happiness within the household is realised when the home becomes a sanctuary for worship, facilitating closeness to Allah.

**Keywords:** Al Ghazali's Perspective, Happiness, Household.

## Abstrak

Bentuk kebahagiaan dalam kehidupan rumah tangga mengandung nilai-nilai idealisme. Idealisme menekankan pentingnya keunggulan pikiran, jiwa, atau roh dibandingkan dengan hal-hal material. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis konsep kebahagiaan dalam pemikiran Al-Ghazali dan bagaimana implementasinya dapat diterapkan dalam kehidupan rumah tangga untuk menciptakan harmoni dan kesejahteraan. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode analitis dengan pendekatan studi literatur yang mengkaji pandangan Al-Ghazali tentang kebahagiaan dan penerapan konsep ini dalam rumah tangga dipahami sebagai integrasi nilai-nilai Sufi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kebahagiaan menurut Al-Ghazali adalah dengan mengenal diri sendiri dan kemudian mengenal Allah SWT melalui ilmu dan amal, memiliki keyakinan, membersihkan jiwa, dan menyempurnakan jiwa. Penerapan konsep materialisme Sufi menurut Al-Ghazali akan menciptakan kebahagiaan dalam rumah tangga, ketika rumah tangga menjadi tempat ibadah untuk mendekatkan diri kepada Allah.

**Kata Kunci:** Kebahagiaan, Rumah Tangga, Keluarga



## Introduction

Marriage is a significant social institution that plays a crucial role in establishing a civil societal order. It is regarded as a sacred institution with the objective of forming a happy and enduring family, in accordance with Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage. The institution of marriage is held in high esteem and occupies an honourable position within both Islamic law and Indonesian National Law, as evidenced by the existence of specific regulations pertaining to marriage, namely Law Number 1 of 1974.

One manifestation of the greatness of God Almighty in His creation is the pairing of human beings as men and women. Humans are provided the opportunity to procreate and engage in worship through the institution of marriage, guided by religious principles. Marriage serves as the primary means to establish an everlasting and joyful household, rooted in the belief in the Almighty God. The purpose of marriage is articulated by Allah SWT in Surah Ar-Ruum [20] 21:

"And among the signs of His power is that He created for you wives from among yourselves, so that you would be inclined and feel at ease with them, and He made between you feelings of love and affection. Indeed, in that there are truly signs for a people who think." (Surah Ar-Ruum [20]: 21).

The interpretation of this verse underscores that the aim of marriage is to create a joyful and eternal family. To this end, it is essential for husband and wife to assist and complement one another, thereby enabling each partner to develop their personality and attain both spiritual and material prosperity (Ahmad Rafiq, 2000: 56).

Marriage is recognised as a collaborative endeavour between spouses, encompassing the shared burdens of life. It constitutes a contract of love and mutual support between families, thereby reinforcing familial relationships. Through marriage, the diverse benefits of society can be fully realised (Wahbah al-Zuhaili, 2011: 41).

According to the Marriage Law, the objective of marriage is "to form a happy and eternal family (household) based on belief in the Almighty God" (Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage). Furthermore, the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI), which elaborates on the purpose of marriage in Article 3, provides additional insights into the ritual values associated with marriage, stating: "to obey Allah's commands and carrying them out is worship" (Compilation of Islamic Law Article 2). This definition of marriage highlights the prominence of worship, encompassing sacred values within the institution of marriage (Muhammad Amin Summa, 2005: 46).

Marriage is characterised by lofty goals and noble intentions, serving as a space for love, affection, and intimate reciprocal relationships between husband and wife (Santoso, 2016: 426). In Islam, the term for happiness is 'sakinah.' Etymologically, 'sakinah' connotes tranquility and peace, deriving from the root word 'sakana,' which signifies calmness, serenity, independence, and stability (Cyril Glasse, 1991: 351). Yunasril Ali posits that a 'sakinah' family, as interpreted from the Qur'an and hadith, embodies qualities of 'mahabbah,' 'mawaddah,' 'rahmah,' and trust (Yunasril Ali, 2002: 200). According to M. Quraish Shihab, 'sakinah' is an Arabic term composed of the letters sin, kaf, and nun, which conveys the meaning of "calm"

or serves as an antonym for shock and movement. Various forms of words derived from these three letters consistently lead to similar meanings (M. Quraish Shihab, 2006: 136).

With the progression of modernity, many individuals articulate the concept of household happiness through materialism and idealism, a notion that may also be referred to as spiritualism. A study conducted in America and published on tempo.co on 27 September 2016 indicated that "materialism is detrimental to love life." This research revealed that marriages characterised by materialistic values tend to be less happy than those of couples who do not overly prioritise material possessions. Carroll, the study's researcher and a family life lecturer at Brigham Young University in Utah, United States, noted that this phenomenon is evident across all income levels. He stated that the most unsatisfying marriages are those in which spouses are excessively concerned with material possessions.

The notion of household happiness encompasses values of materialism and idealism. Materialism can be defined as an emphasis on, and a strong devotion to, the acquisition, possession, and consumption of worldly objects, often at the expense of spiritual matters (Rizki Setyasri Nugrahani, 2017). In contrast, idealism within the household prioritises thoughts directed towards a happy household, underscoring the importance of intellectual and spiritual superiority over material concerns (Eka Yanuart, 2016: 149).

According to al-Ghazali, true happiness is derived from inner peace, achieved through proximity to God, mastery over one's desires, and moral refinement. Happiness should not be solely measured by material or worldly standards but rather assessed in terms of the soul's balance attained through piety and obedience (Martin & Hambali, 2023: 18). This theoretical framework of happiness is crucial for analysing household happiness, as it asserts that domestic contentment is not solely contingent upon external factors such as wealth or social status, but is primarily rooted in spiritual harmony, effective communication, and emotional management within relationships. By prioritising moral values and fostering a closeness to God, couples can cultivate a peaceful and blessed household environment.

Several studies have contributed to the understanding of household happiness, including: 1) Ahmad Musabbihin, who examined the influence of income, education, and health on household happiness, concluding that these factors significantly impact domestic contentment (Ahmad Musbihin, 2017). 2) Mohamat Hadori & Minhaji, who authored a journal article discussing happiness and harmony from a psychological perspective, published in the journal *Lisanul Hal* (Mohamat Hadori & Minhaji, 2018). 3) Nadia Safitri and Idrus Al-Kaf, who explored the concept of happiness according to al-Ghazali, published in the journal *El-Fikr* (Nadia Safitri & Idrus Al-Kaf, 2021). 4) Ellytahatin Indah Sekar Putri, who investigated factors influencing household happiness using data from the Indonesian Family Life Survey Wave 5 in 2015 (Ellytahatin Indah Sekar Putri, 2021).

## Methods

This study employs library research and descriptive analysis as its primary research methodologies. Descriptive analysis aims to provide a clear depiction of the data sources that are collected and examined. Within this framework, data is gathered, organised, clarified, and interpreted. The data utilised in this study is derived from

primary sources, including books, journal articles, internet resources, and other scientific research pertinent to the theme of this investigation. Secondary data sources encompass various research methods that may be applied within a philosophical context. Subsequently, the data is subjected to descriptive analysis through the stages of data collection, data reduction, and conclusion formulation. This study seeks to explore the concept of happiness as articulated in Al-Ghazali's Sufi philosophy and its application within the domestic sphere.

### **Domestic Happiness in Islam**

Happiness in Greek is referred to as eudaimonia, which translates to happiness. This term comprises two syllables: "eu" (good) and "daimon" (spirit, god, inner power). However, the term happiness in Indonesian does not adequately capture the original meaning of the Greek word (Ali Mudhofir, 1996: 67).

Eudaimonia literally signifies "having a good guardian spirit." For the Greeks, eudaimonia denotes perfection, or more precisely, it refers to "having a good daimon," where daimon represents the soul (K. Bartens, 1999: 108). A philosophical perspective associated with this term is Eudaimonism, which posits that happiness is the ultimate goal of all human actions. In the framework of eudaimonism, the pursuit of happiness constitutes the most fundamental principle. The happiness in question extends beyond subjective feelings such as joy or pleasure as mere emotional responses; instead, it encompasses a more profound and objective understanding of the development of all dimensions of an individual's humanity, including moral, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects.

The concept of happiness also derives from the Sanskrit word *bahagya*, which signifies a pleasant portion. Happiness is often interpreted as a form of luck. Consequently, happiness can be understood as a state of well-being characterised by a relatively stable condition, accompanied by a generally positive emotional state, ranging from mere contentment to joy in living, along with a natural desire to maintain this state. From this perspective, happiness fundamentally relates to the mental condition of an individual (Simon Petrus L. Tjahjadi, n.d.: 41). Happiness embodies a state of joy and tranquility, even amidst life's challenges. Thus, it is an enduring state rather than a fleeting feeling or emotion.

Happiness is frequently defined as a combination of pleasure and tranquility in life (both internal and external), as well as good fortune, in both physical and mental dimensions (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1990: 65). Other terms that encapsulate the essence of happiness include enjoyment, satisfaction, and pleasure. Enjoyment is characterised as a pleasant state, which often connotes aspects such as food and shelter. Satisfaction refers to a feeling of contentment, relief, or joy that arises when one's desires are fulfilled. Pleasure denotes a state of happiness derived from achieving something that is often challenging to attain, resulting from a sense of comfort and satisfaction (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1990: 615).

Determining the precise meaning of happiness involves various interpretative approaches. Happiness is a multifaceted concept encompassing positive emotions or pleasurable experiences, low levels of negative moods, and high life satisfaction (R.E. Lucas, Diener & S. Oishi, 2005: 63-73). Experts identify several terms associated with happiness, including happiness, life satisfaction,

subjective well-being, and flourishing (Adam B. Cohen & Kathryn A. Johnson, n.d.: 1-24).

### **Happiness in Sufism**

Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani, as cited by Sulaiman al-Kumayi, posits that happiness is characterised by five signs: a soft heart, frequent weeping due to remembrance of sins, asceticism from worldly desires, minimal daydreaming, and a profound sense of shame. Sheikh Abdul Qadir al-Jilani asserts that “if there is more goodness, one is classified as a happy person. Conversely, if there are more negative attributes, one is classified as a miserable person” (Saihu and Umar 2022: 163). However, he further contends that if an individual repents and engages in good deeds, Allah SWT will transform their misery into happiness. He remarks, “As for those whose happiness and misery have been predetermined since eternity, they shall live according to the destiny that has been ordained” (Sulaiman al-Kumayi, 2014: 199-200).

Al-Farabi, a Muslim philosopher and expert in Sufism, also addresses the concept of happiness. Although this is not the central focus of his philosophy, he expresses considerable enthusiasm for the topic. Al-Farabi authored two works on happiness, namely *Tahshi al-Sa'adah* (Searching for Happiness) and *al-Tanbih al-Sa'adah* (Building Happiness). He defines happiness as the perfection of the human soul in a manner that it no longer requires material possessions for its existence (Ibrahim Madkour, 1996: 32). According to Al-Farabi, a nation and its citizens can attain happiness—both in this life and the hereafter—by fulfilling various criteria, including theoretical virtues, intellectual virtues, moral virtues, and noble virtues (Abu Nashr al-Farabi, 1995: 25).

Ibn Rush aligns with the views of Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, asserting that knowledge is the pathway to achieving spiritual happiness. The highest degree of perfection is attained when an individual penetrates the veil and perceives themselves in the presence of reality. Ibn Rush rejects simplicity and minimalism as means to solitude and communion with God, asserting instead that happiness is achievable through actual reason and knowledge. The intellect that reaches the stage of receiving the illumination of inspiration represents the highest form of perfection (Juwaini, 2013: 249).

Contemporary Muslim thinker Aidh al-Qarni describes happiness as a lightness of heart resulting from living in accordance with truth, guided by principles, and experiencing peace of mind due to the goodness surrounding an individual (Aidh Abdullah al-Qarni, 2005: 13). He identifies four sources of happiness: beneficial books, dutiful children, a beloved spouse, and pious friends. Al-Qarni emphasises that it is Allah who compensates for all things. Faith, health, wealth, freedom, comfort, and knowledge constitute the essence of what an astute individual strives to achieve, although few can attain all these simultaneously (Aidh Abdullah al-Qarni, 2005: 30).

Ahmad Asy-Syarbashi asserts that happiness represents the most beautiful aspiration in life, one that individuals consistently pursue. While some do find it, those who experience true happiness are few and far between. Others may be misled by prejudice or overwhelmed by anxiety (Ahmad Asy-Syhabashi, 2001: 334).

### The Concept of Domestic Happiness According to Al-Ghazali

Al-Ghazali posits that happiness arises from an individual's ability to subdue their animalistic desires. In essence, humans are inherently weak and flawed beings in this world. They achieve their highest value by self-discipline through the means of *kimiya' al-sa'adah*, which elevates them from a base level to that of angels. Without happiness, human existence is diminished, as it lacks the awareness of being a creature dependent on the Most Perfect substance. Humans must recognise their own helplessness, as knowledge serves as a crucial key to understanding Allah SWT (Al-Ghazali, 2001: 2627).

The experience of happiness is intrinsically linked to one's attitude towards life rather than external factors such as wealth, power, or popularity. A positive life attitude entails feeling content and grateful for what one possesses, exercising patience, and maintaining optimism, even in less fortunate circumstances. In challenging times, such as economic crises, individuals are advised to remain patient to prevent further deterioration of their circumstances, which could lead to unhappiness (Sudirman Tebba, 2003: 41-42).

In Al-Ghazali's view, the pursuit of happiness requires steadfastness for the intelligent, while a lack of appreciation for happiness signifies negligence for the foolish. He delineates four pathways to happiness: knowledge and charity, belief, purification of the soul, and perfection of the soul. Thus, a servant may attain the highest happiness (*ma'rifatullah*) (Al-Ghazali, 2010: 23).

Happiness is a spiritual condition connected to the soul, arising from knowledge and charitable actions. The soul is shaped by divine essence and becomes unified with it, leading to a state of soulfulness. This spiritual happiness can be realised by purging the soul of base qualities and desires, such as lust and anger, through good deeds. Therefore, performing good deeds serves to purify the soul, and such purity is essential for achieving perfection (Al-Ghazali, 2010: 57).

Al-Ghazali asserts that true happiness resides in all forms of knowledge that benefit humanity, encompassing both theoretical knowledge and charitable acts. Theoretical knowledge pertains to the understanding of God. He contends that the knowledge of Allah SWT (*ma'rifatullah*) is the key to happiness, with true happiness and refinement manifesting in the remembrance of Allah SWT. Conversely, the science of charity involves practices in daily actions and social interactions. Happiness is realised when theoretical knowledge and charitable actions are combined, as both domains contribute to the goodness and joy of human existence (Al-Ghazali, 1988: 338-339). Additionally, Al-Ghazali provides methodologies for attaining happiness, including spiritual knowledge of God, cultivated through noble morals and virtuous deeds (Al-Ghazali, 1970: 185).

Factors that can awaken love for Allah SWT are as follows:

1. Love Yourself

Loving oneself leads directly to love for Allah, for human existence and its characteristics are ultimately a gift from Allah. Without God, humans would neither exist nor possess their attributes. In al-Ghazali's perspective, self-knowledge is the key to knowing God, as articulated in the hadith: "Who knows himself, knows his God." This notion is also echoed in Al-Qur'an, Surah Fushshilat, verse 53:



"We will show them Our signs (of greatness) in all corners and in themselves so that it will be clear to them that (the Qur'an) is true. Is it not enough (for you) that your Lord is truly a witness to everything?" (QS. Fussilat [41]: 53)

Human characteristics are a reflection of God's attributes; the existence of the human spirit can also lead to an understanding of God's existence. Therefore, it can be asserted that God and the human spirit transcend the limitations of space and time. By contemplating the essence and characteristics of both God and the spirit, humans can grasp God's methods, arrangements, and power over the forces of malakut by observing how they govern the small kingdom within themselves (al-Ghazali, 2001: 33).

Al-Imam al-Ghazali stated, *"Know that no one is closer to you than yourself. If you do not know yourself, how can you know others?"* Knowledge of oneself, derived from external attributes such as physical appearance, will not lead to an understanding of God. Similarly, knowledge of physical characteristics—such as eating when hungry or crying when sad—does not constitute the foundation for divine knowledge (al-Ghazali, 2001: 10). It is crucial for individuals to comprehend their personalities as a manifestation of their understanding of God. Self-knowledge is the first step towards achieving true happiness, cultivating an individual who consistently feels God's pleasure in all circumstances, whether difficult or joyful, bitter or sweet. Through self-awareness, individuals can discern what actions are required as servants of God.

Self-understanding necessitates introspection, prompting inquiries such as: Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going? What is the purpose of my existence in this world, and where can true happiness be found? Recognise that three natures coexist within you: the animal, the demon, and the angel. It is imperative to identify which of these is accidental and which is essential. Without uncovering this secret, true happiness will remain elusive.

Happiness is a spiritual condition related to the soul, originating from knowledge and charitable acts. The soul is shaped through the essence of the divine and becomes united with Him, leading to a profound sense of fulfilment. The happiness of the soul can be attained by purifying it from base qualities and desires driven by lust and anger. This purification is achieved through good deeds. Thus, performing good deeds serves to cleanse the soul, and the purity of the soul is essential for attaining perfection (al-Ghazali, 2010: 57).

Al-Ghazali posited that happiness is contingent upon all knowledge that is beneficial to humanity, which encompasses both theoretical knowledge and charitable acts. Theoretical knowledge pertains to the understanding of God. Al-Ghazali asserted that the knowledge of Allah SWT (ma'rifatullah) is the key to happiness, as true happiness and contentment arise from the remembrance of Allah SWT. Conversely, charitable science pertains to the actions and deeds practised in daily life, particularly within social contexts. Happiness is realised when both theoretical knowledge and charitable actions are harmonised, as both domains contribute to human goodness and enjoyment (al-Ghazali, 1988, 338-339). Al-Ghazali also provides pathways to attaining happiness, namely through spiritual knowledge of God, acquired externally through noble morals and good deeds (al-Ghazali, 1970: 185).

One such pathway is the pursuit of external achievements. The human heart may be likened to a well, while the five senses represent five streams flowing into it. To discern the true contents of the heart, one must halt these currents and cleanse the impurities they carry. In essence, to attain pure spiritual truth, one must discard knowledge derived from sensory experiences that have often solidified into dogmatic biases. Anyone examining this matter will recognise that true happiness cannot be divorced from the knowledge of God (al-Ghazali, 2001: 22).

## 2. Knowing God

An additional method involves self-reflection. If an individual contemplates their existence, they will recognise that they once did not exist, as stated in the Qur'an:

"Did there ever come to man a time when there was nothing that could be called?" (QS. Al-Insan [76]:1)

This understanding reveals that humans are created from a drop of water devoid of intellect, hearing, or physical faculties. Thus, it is evident that regardless of one's level of perfection, one does not create oneself and lacks the power to even produce a single strand of hair (al-Ghazali, 2001: 29).

Every individual can reflect on the remarkable structure of their body, leading to an appreciation of Allah's power and wisdom. Furthermore, by contemplating the abundant blessings bestowed upon them to fulfil their various needs, individuals can recognise God's love. Hence, al-Ghazali maintained that self-knowledge serves as the key to knowing Allah (al-Ghazali, 2001: 32).

Human happiness is intrinsically linked to the degree of love one has for God. This love can be fostered and developed through worship. Continuous worship and remembrance exemplify a commitment to restraining bodily desires. It is unnecessary to eradicate all bodily desires, as doing so would lead to the extinction of the human race. When death occurs and all bodily organs, which typically fulfil desires, cease to function, all bodily drives and desires are extinguished; however, the human soul persists, retaining all its knowledge of God, which continues to grow. The human soul is designed to absorb truth, and truth is closely aligned with the pinnacle of happiness (al-Ghazali, 2001: 22-23).

Nature represents a manifestation of Allah's love for His servants. The Messenger of Allah once stated that Allah's love is more tender than a mother's love for her nursing child. By recognising their own creation, humans can come to know the existence of God. Through contemplation of the wonders that captivate the eyes and heart, individuals can acknowledge Allah's power and wisdom (al-Ghazali, 2001: 30-32).

In relation to God's orchestration of the universe, human knowledge can be categorised into several levels. First, at the physicist level, one might be likened to an ant traversing a sheet of paper, observing the black letters printed upon it, and understanding only that the ink is the cause. Second, astronomers possess a broader perspective, akin to an ant that can see the fingers guiding the pen. They understand that various elements of the universe are influenced by the power of the stars, yet they do not comprehend that the stars themselves are under the dominion of angels (al-Ghazali, 2001: 36).



This world serves as a stage or marketplace where travellers pause en route to another realm. Here, they equip themselves with various provisions. With the aid of their sensory organs, humans must strive to gain knowledge of God's creation, and through contemplation of all His creations, they will come to know God. An individual's perception of God will ultimately shape their destiny. It is for this knowledge that the human spirit is sent into the world of land and water. While their senses remain functional, they will reside in this world. When all that is transient has disappeared and only essential qualities remain, it signifies a transition to "another world" (al-Ghazali, 2001: 48-49).

In this world, humans require two fundamental necessities: the protection and sustenance of their souls and the maintenance of their bodies. Proper care for the soul encompasses the knowledge and love of Allah. Affection for anything other than Allah signifies the deterioration of the soul. The body may be viewed merely as a vessel for the soul and is perishable, whereas the soul is eternal (Haidar Baghir, 2012: 195-196).

Domestic happiness is characterised by a family established on the foundation of Islamic teachings, with inspiration drawn from the verses of the Qur'an. This aligns with the Qur'an's significance for those who embrace Islam, as it is a revelation from God, who is the most truthful and perfect (Achmad Mubarak, 2016: 116).

### **Happiness in Marriage from the Perspective of Al-Ghazali**

Apart from the term "sakinah family," another term frequently employed is "maslahah family." A maslahah family is characterised as one whose fundamental needs are adequately met. These needs encompass physical, material, and spiritual moral requirements (Agus Muh. Najib, 2006: 81). This understanding is rooted in the ideals of Muslims concerning the maslahah of the individual, family, and community, as maslahah refers to the preservation of basic human needs, including religion, soul, property, lineage, and spiritual fulfilment (Agus Muh. Najib, 2006: 80).

A harmonious household is the aspiration of all who seek it, as there exist numerous pathways to achieve such happiness. Among the determinants of happiness within a household are economic and social conditions. In the contemporary era, social conditions are deemed essential, as individuals believe there is a guarantee associated with their social circumstances. Positive social conditions typically result in favourable outcomes and vice versa; hence, favourable social conditions can lead to happiness. A harmonious household is indicative of good social conditions, effective professional engagement, communication within society, and a fulfilling family life.

The realisation of a sakinah family in domestic life involves the selection of a suitable life partner—one who possesses piety (religiosity), good morals, physical attractiveness, a modest dowry, the capability to bear children, virginity, and commendable character, as well as not being a close relative (al-Ghazali, n.d.: 32).

According to al-Ghazali, the concept of a sakinah family is predicated on the spirituality that must be inherent in family members. This spirituality is manifested through worship of Allah SWT, the exhibition of patience and gratitude in domestic matters, and a continual devotion to Allah SWT (al-Ghazali, n.d.: 25).

Possessing a spiritual foundation among family members guides the household towards becoming a good family. Such families tend to adhere to religious principles, ensuring that the activities undertaken by family members align with righteousness and the path of Allah. These activities are not solely oriented towards material gain in this world; they also carry significance for the afterlife. The world is viewed as a venue for accruing rewards in the hereafter (al-Ghazali, n.d.: 26).

Islam teaches that family life should serve as a source of contemplation for every individual. Personal and familial development should be prioritised to attain happiness in both this world and the hereafter. A virtuous individual will typically foster a good family, whereas an immoral individual may lead to a fragmented family (Sirajuddin Zar, 2018).

Marriage serves as a means to enhance worship of Allah SWT. Through worship, individuals experience pleasure and fulfilment as they draw closer to Allah. Additionally, wives are expected to fulfil their responsibilities regarding household matters, such as cooking, making the bed, washing utensils, and other domestic duties (al-Ghazali, n.d.: 32).

According to al-Ghazali, the purpose of marriage encompasses procreation and seeking the love of Allah SWT through the increase of humanity on earth. Allah SWT has created the desires of men and women to facilitate reproduction through their physical attributes. All of this serves as evidence of the divine will of Allah SWT (al-Ghazali, n.d.: 25).

Al-Ghazali's concept of happiness occupies a distinctive position within the Sufi tradition, particularly when juxtaposed with the notions of happiness posited by other Sufi scholars. In general, Sufi scholars concur that authentic happiness is not derived from transient worldly pleasures, but rather from closeness to Allah SWT and the perfection of the soul. However, their perspectives and interpretations of this happiness differ.

Al-Ghazali emphasises knowledge and actions in accordance with Shari'a, as well as the purification and perfection of the soul, as pathways to draw nearer to Allah (Uloom, 2023: 29). In contrast, other Sufi scholars such as Ibn Arabi and Rumi highlight happiness as a mystical union with God or an experience of divine love. Despite their differing approaches, all three scholars agree that genuine happiness emanates from a profound relationship with Allah, rather than from ephemeral worldly possessions.

Al-Ghazali interprets happiness as the state of being in love with Allah, which is attained through self-introspection—a concept he refers to as the chemistry of happiness. This process involves self-awareness, contemplation of one's faculties, and ultimately leads to an understanding of one's identity and purpose.

After attaining self-knowledge, individuals are compelled to reflect on the universe as a means of understanding and loving Allah. According to al-Ghazali, one effective approach to knowing Allah is through marriage and establishing a household aimed at drawing closer to Him and receiving His blessings, as the household serves as a venue for expressing love for Allah.

Al-Ghazali's foundation for happiness comprises knowledge and charity, confidence, the purification of the soul, and the pursuit of perfection. Patience and gratitude are essential qualities for appreciating every experience encountered in life. Implementing these principles within the household is highly efficacious, as

building a household is a divine recommendation from Allah and His Messenger. Establishing a household can elevate an individual's piety, as it involves fulfilling Allah's commands, such as providing for and educating the family through lawful means, while sincerely avoiding any prohibitions outlined in Islamic teachings regarding domestic life.

A household whose every aspect—be it physical, emotional, or spiritual—is conducted with the intention of attaining Allah's pleasure signifies a successful union. The happiness described by Al-Ghazali transcends mere worldly satisfaction; it encompasses joy that contributes to eternal life in the hereafter. From this perspective, the household becomes a space where couples can mutually grow in faith and good deeds, supporting one another in the pursuit of true happiness.

Every action within the household can be perceived as an act of worship if performed with the correct intention, specifically to draw closer to Allah. This encompasses a range of actions that may appear simple but possess significant value in the sight of Allah when executed with sincere intent and an awareness of the ultimate goal.

### Conclusion

Happiness, as articulated by al-Ghazali, is attained through the process of self-knowledge, followed by the recognition of Allah SWT, which is facilitated by the acquisition of knowledge and the performance of righteous deeds. This encompasses the development of self-confidence, the purification of the soul, and the perfection of one's character. Al-Ghazali posits that happiness is cultivated within the household when it is transformed into a space of worship aimed at fostering closeness to Allah. In this framework, every action undertaken in family life should be motivated by a sincere intention to seek His pleasure. This implies that both husband and wife must not only fulfil their respective roles in addressing physical and emotional needs but also maintain a heightened spiritual awareness in all facets of domestic life. Consequently, a household that operates with the intention of worship will engender happiness in both this world and the hereafter, thereby drawing individuals closer to Allah SWT.

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