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RESEARCH ARTICLE

WELLBEING FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE AL-QURAN

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Abstract

Wellbeing is a value commonly shared by all humans. Various issues that can disrupt the aspect of wellbeing require this discourse to re-examine it from the al-Quran's perspective. This study used the text-based study methodology and thematic analysis to collect and analyse the data. The findings indicate that there are four essential elements in human interaction, namely taaruf (mutual acquaintance), tafahum (mutual understanding), taawun (mutual cooperation), and tadamun (mutual solidarity). Meanwhile, the five themes of humanity identified were al-'ilm (knowledge), al-shura (consultation), al-'adalah (justice), al-mas'uliyah (responsibility) and al-hurriyah (freedom), as well as al-musawah (equality). The implementation of these elements requires an educational system that focuses on cultivating good character amongst humans. Ultimately, all parties should return to the guidance of the al-Quran in order to sustain the welfare of humanity as a whole.

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Introduction:-

All humans share a common value, which is 'wellbeing', and it should be the primary focus of all humans. In this regard, the al-Quran provides inclusive and comprehensive guidance to help humanity achieve and maintain this wellbeing. Contemporary issues have led to various factors that threaten the wellbeing of human life. Therefore, a re-evaluation of the elements of wellbeing is necessary to promote collective awareness. This qualitative study reviewed the contents of the al-Quran as the fundamentals for building and preserving wellbeing in life. Humans, by nature, are social beings who live in a community. One notable element of human nature is that the weaknesses present in each individual need to be complemented by the strengths of others. Therefore, the al-Quran has outlined key fundamentals to help humans build harmonious relationships with one another, even when their backgrounds differ.

Wellbeing in Human Interactions

1. al-Taaruf (Introduction)

This is the most fundamental principle that all humans need to be aware of Allah SWT's exhorted in Surah al-Hujurat, verse 13, meaning: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples

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and tribes so that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allāh is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allāh is Knowing and Aware”. This verse highlights the purpose of human diversity as a way to build connections, respect, and understanding across communities, rather than to create division. The formation of mutual acquaintances, which is deemed to be an ongoing process, leads to the emergence of a spirit of mutual respect and togetherness as one navigates life’s challenges (al-Zuhayli 1418H, 26:248). When any party begins to disregard the process of building connections, then the sparks of discord begin to appear, eventually erasing the wellbeing that is shared among humankind.

2. al-Tafahum (Mutual Understanding)

The continuous process of mutual acquaintance will lead to mutual understanding. This is based on Surah Ali Imran verse 64: “Say (O Muhammad), O People of the Book! Come to a word that is equitable between us and you -that we will worship none but Allah, and that we will associate none with Him, and that none of us will take others as lords besides Allah. Then if they turn away, say, Bear witness that we are Muslims (those who submit to Allah)”. Indeed, Muslims are encouraged to take the initiative to invite and build mutual understanding with various groups. However, when faced with obstacles, the next step would be to hold discussions in the best possible manner, as outlined in Surah al-‘Ankabut verse 46: “And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them, and say, We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God are One; and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him”. These verses emphasize the importance of respectful dialogue and a shared commitment to harmony while recognizing that ultimate submission belongs to Allah alone.

3. al-Taawun (Mutual Help)

Islam recognizes mutual help only when it leads to wellbeing, whether in the realm of human life or in fulfilling religious duties in al-Deen. Allah SWT exhorted in Surah al-Ma’idah, verse 2: “And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in penalty (for those who disobey His commands)”. Helping each other in goodness brings contentment to the human heart, while helping each other in piety earns Allah SWT’s approval. Moreover, Allah SWT prohibits collaboration in sinful or aggressive acts, as such actions would disrupt peace and the happiness of human life (al-Qurtubi 1964, 6:36).

4. al-Tadamun (Unity)

The al-Quran signals the importance of unity through Allah SWT’s exhortations in Surah al-Saff, verse 4: “Indeed, Allāh loves those who fight in His cause in a row as though they are a [single] structure joined firmly”. Qutb (1971, 7:193) explained in his tafsir that this verse illustrates a form of unity built on individual responsibility but carried out collectively, as a group. In a diverse society, such unity can still be achieved by fostering mutual respect for human values inherent in each person.

The al-Quran and Humanity

The al-Quran is the only revealed scripture that places the human element at the core of its teachings. This is evidenced by the first verse revealed in Surah al-‘Alaq, verses 1-5, which mentions the term al-insan (human) twice, while the final chapter is called Surah al-Nas, meaning ‘mankind’. This underscores the al-Quran’s serious focus on humanity and its aspects. Human values portrayed in the al-Qur’an can be understood through five main themes, namely knowledge (al-‘ilm), consultation (al-shura), justice (al-‘adalah), freedom (al-hurriyyah) and responsibility (al-mas’uliyah), as well as equality (al-musawah). These themes form a framework for human dignity and ethical conduct.

1. al-‘Ilm (Knowledge)

All humans need knowledge; hence, in order to acquire knowledge, Allah SWT has granted humans an intellectual capacity, which is further guided by the al-Quran. The principle is that reason and the al-Quran are always aligned. Thus, if a contradiction between reason and the al-Quran arises, then the al-Quran is regarded as the ultimate truth, and it is the reasoning or intellect that must be realigned. This is based on the concept that reason is a creation of Allah SWT, while the al-Quran is the Word of Allah SWT, making contradiction impossible, as both originate from the same source, namely Allah SWT (al-Jurjani 1983: 199).

2. al-Shura (Consultation)

It is generally agreed that humans cannot live in isolation; instead, their lives will be prosperous and happy if they live in a community. The nature of communal life requires joint discussions on every issue that arises so that a

consensus that satisfies all parties, or at least the majority, can be reached. In this regard, Allah SWT exhorted in Surah al-Shura verse 38, which means: “And those who have responded to their Lord and established prayer and whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves, and from what We have provided them, they spend”. The verse above is to be read in conjunction with Surah Ali Imran verse 159, which reads: “So, by mercy from Allāh, [O Muḥammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So, pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allāh. Indeed, Allāh loves those who rely [upon Him]”.

3. al-‘Adalah (Justice)

Al-‘Adalah refers to balance and consistency, while being always inclined towards truth (al-Jurjani 1983: 192). The al-Quran places great emphasis on the al-‘adalah (justice) concept. Imam al-Razi, in his commentary on the first nine verses of Surah al-Rahman, explained that the significance between the al-Quran and al-Mizan in this surah is that the al-Quran contains knowledge that is not found in any other scripture, whereas al-Mizan (balance or the principle of the middle path) contains the elements of justice that is not found in other source (al-Razi 2000, 29:81). This is based on Surah al-Hadid verse 25, which reads: “We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidence and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain [their affairs] in justice. And We sent down iron, wherein is great military might and benefits for the people, and so that Allāh may know those who support Him and His messengers, tough unseen. Indeed, Allāh is Powerful and Exalted in Might”.

4. al-Mas’uliyah (Responsibility) and al-Hurriyah (Freedom)

Al-Mas’uliyah refers to an individual’s willingness to commit to the outcomes of his/her actions, regardless of whether these outcomes are good or otherwise. They are prepared to bear this responsibility before Allah SWT, before society, and to themselves (Badawi 1975: 223). Allah SWT has alluded to the al-mas’uliyah principle through several Surah, such as al-Muddathir, verse 38, which means: “Every soul, for what it has earned, will be retained [for judgment]”. Surah al-Baqarah, verse 282, which means: “He will receive [the reward of] what he has earned, and he is also accountable for what he has committed”, and al-Qiyamah, verse 36, which means: “Does man think that he will be left neglected [without being held accountable and without resurrection]?”. As for al-hurriyah, it refers to an action based on will. However, the al-hurriyah principle, as defined by scholars, is freedom to act according to one’s will but according to the al-mas’uliyah principle. It should not lead to harm, damage, or encroachment upon others’ rights, and it must also be subject to the provisions of Shari’ah and legal system. All humans should understand both principles to ensure harmony and wellbeing in life (al-Wakil 1986: 64-66).

5. al-Musawah (Equality)

The consequence of adhering to the principles mentioned above leads to the final principle, which is al-musawah (equality). This principle alludes that people should be treated equitably based on human dignity and in the context appropriate to each individual. In brief, it is essential to strictly observe these five principles in communal life, especially in a multicultural society with differences across various aspects. Any negligence in this regard could lead to rebellion, opposition, hostility, or other detrimental issues, which could undoubtedly disrupt the harmony that everyone has enjoyed so far.

Analysis and Discussion:-

A sound mind will certainly support the need for all humans to nurture and sustain an appreciable state of wellbeing. Therefore, from a principle and philosophical standpoint, every human must attain the essence of self-dignity and the primary objective of education, which is to nurture well-mannered human beings (Wan Mohd Nor 2019). This is emphasized by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, who exhorted, *إنما بعثت لأتمم صالح الأخلاق* (I was only sent to perfect noble character), hadis is found in Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal (1999), No. 8939, Narrated by Abu Hurayrah RA and is decreed as sahih by Shaykh Shu’ayb Arna’ut. Cultivation of a ‘Good Person’ goes beyond merely transferring information and knowledge from teacher to student, as it must also focus on the appreciation of the values propagated by that knowledge. These values should be internalized to leave a profound effect on the heart and soul. A heart that is influenced by the values of knowledge will guide the body to behave well, thus, forming the ‘Good Person’, as envisioned. Achieving this vision requires a comprehensive culture of knowledge that does not separate information or knowledge from life (Wan Mohd Nor 2003: 98).

Education and its institutions must also strive to address the materialism cult that increasingly grips the contemporary world of modern education. The culture of seeking knowledge solely for worldly gain must be entirely eradicated. Instead, the sole goal should be to seek Allah SWT’s pleasure and piety. The Prophet

Muhammad PBUH warned in his exhortation, “Whoever seeks knowledge that should be sought only for the sake of Allah SWT, but instead seeks it only for worldly gain, will not even smell the fragrance of paradise on the Day of Resurrection” (Hadis found in Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal (1999), No. 8438, Narrated by Abu Hurayrah RA and decreed as hasan by Shaykh Shu‘ayb Arna‘ut). Therefore, from an Islamic perspective, this pedagogy must be rooted in a specific code of ethics (adab). Just as students have their own ethics, so too do teachers; however, there are also ethics that are shared by both teachers and students, whereby both parties must be truly sincere to only Allah SWT, not to anything or anyone else. Practicing these ethics essentially trains humans to meaningfully and comprehensively appreciate others. Initially, this mutual appreciation might develop only in a teacher-student relationship. Over time, it will become ingrained in a student’s soul, leading students to embody a culture of mutual respect throughout their lives. This culture is one of the most crucial aspects of fostering harmony and wellbeing amongst humans. Imam al-Ghazali (1998: 145-151) has listed a majority of these codes of ethics (adab).

Every individual must play a role in ensuring universal wellbeing. This responsibility becomes ever more significant when the individual holds a certain status or position, especially in relation to leadership, policy-making, education, and so on. This means that the individual must avoid actions, such as committing crimes, inciting chaos, spreading slanderous rumours, etc., that could compromise humanity in general. Such actions degrade a human’s dignity, and consequently, one’s humanity is lost, and harmony is disrupted.

Conclusion:-

Wellbeing is something that all humans inherently desire and aspire to achieve; therefore, every human should play their role and contribute towards achieving this goal. This endeavour will become easier if people refer to the most authoritative source, which is the al-Quran, because everything related to wellbeing and the method(s) to achieve it has been elucidated in it. At the same time, the al-Quran itself has been preserved and protected from any form of alteration or modification by humans. Making the al-Quran a fundamental source of reference is not altogether impossible for non-Muslims, as they too have the right to seek guidance from it. Referring to and reflecting on the teachings in the al-Quran does not mean that non-Muslims need to abandon their religions. Initially, it would suffice for them to believe that the al-Quran is an excellent source for establishing harmony and wellbeing among humans.

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