

## Research Article

# Child Well-being in Islamic Perspective

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This study aims to reveal the Islamic perspective on the concept of well-being and its relevance and implications for children's lives and parenting practices. It is important to understand the role of the religious value system as a driving force for parenting by paying attention to the various dimensions of children as a whole human being. The conceptual essence of the scope of well-being in an Islamic perspective can be drawn by studying a number of verses in the Qur'an and the Prophet's hadith. By using the results of research and literature review, this conceptual essence was developed into a description of a number of well-being principles as the basis for the implementation of parenting. The approach and method used in this writing is to collect the texts of the verses of the Qur'an and al-Hadith—which are assumed to contain the idea of well-being—then interpret it based on the paradigm and theoretical principles of education, kinship, and psychology to obtain the basic framework of well-being in an Islamic perspective. These paradigms and principles include, the purpose of life to obtain worldly and hereafter happiness; children are holistic human beings in all aspects of their lives; the development of all aspects of children's lives is the responsibility of their parents or families; child care must be in accordance with the child's growth and development; and Islamic spirituality is a fundamental factor that animates the optimization of aspects of children's lives, which include spirituality or religiosity, intellectuality, emotional/mental/psychological, physical, social, and environmental aspects. Well-being, in each of these aspects, is achieved through various treatments of parents toward their children in parenting.

**Keywords:** well-being, parenting, Islamic perspectiveCorresponding Author: Nurul  
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Knowledge E

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Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the 5<sup>th</sup> Sores Conference Committee.

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of life in Islam is to worship Allah (Quran 51:56) through various works and good deeds (Quran 67:2) in the form of true faith (Quran 49:15), sincere and submissive worship (Quran 98:5), commendable characters in socializing (Quran 49:10-14), taking care of personal and family *well-being* (Quran 66:6), and being a useful community member (Quran 4:1) through practicing the system of religious values (Quran 2:208) to achieve happiness in the world and salvation in the hereafter (Quran 2:201-202) [1].

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted SWB in Indonesian children [2]. Children are the link of regeneration of human life (Quran 42:49-50/Quran 2:133). They are born with *fitrah* (nature)—in the form of potential goodness, divinity, and diversity (Quran 30:30)—that distinguish them from other creatures. Children are additionally holistic creatures with complete and integrated potential in various aspects, such as spiritual, intellectual, mental, physical, social and their readiness to develop jointly with the environment (Quran 95:4). The development of these aspects is a necessity and an actualization drive in their growth and development throughout their life (Quran 40: 67) [1].

Parents have an important position and role in the development of all aspects of children's lives in their early years. It is parents who build the foundation of growth and development in children (Quran 66:66). Parents' knowledge, attitude and skills in nurturing and treating their children may affect how children grow and develop in every aspect of their lives (Hadith narrated by Bukhari, Muslim, Baihaqi, ath-Thabarani about children born in the state of *fitrah*). Although, in accordance with the law of individual growth and development, children may experience various stages of life to become independent and responsible human beings for themselves (Quran 2:134/Quran 39:41) [1].

## 2. Well-being in Islamic Perspective

There is a verse in the Holy Quran that states: "*Whoever does good, whether male or female, and is a believer, We will surely bless them with a good life [hayyah thoyyibah], and We will certainly reward them according to the best of their deeds*" (Quran 16:97). Linguists agree that something is defined as *thoyyib* if it is considerably good, feels good to the senses, is in accordance with the common sense and beneficial for the body and soul, is pure and clean, is beneficial and does not violate any provisions, and has a high meaning. In addition to *hayyah thoyyibah*, Quran mentions *sha'idan thoyyiban* (purifying dust) (Quran 5:6), *dzurriyah thoyyibah* (righteous descendants) (Quran 3:38),

*masakin thayyibah* (a good place to live) (Quran 9:72), *bi riihin thayyibah* (with a wind that is not harmful) (Quran 10:22), *kalimah thayyibah* (the noble sentence of monotheism) (Quran 14:24) and *syajarah thayyibah* (the parable of monotheism as a sturdy tree) (Quran 14:24) [1].

The terminological study of *hayyah thayyibah* leads to the conclusion that the concept and essence of the terminology are partially comparable to the concept of *well-being* in human life. The highlighted essence is the notion of the need to create a good life in various aspects and the necessary good efforts to achieve it. This shows that Islam provides a perspective in *well-being*.

*Well-being* refers to a state where one experiences, feels or lives the acquisition of health, happiness, sufficiency, satisfaction or feel, whether in particular aspects or in all aspects of himself [3], [4][3]. The state stems from—mostly controlled— thoughts, actions and experiences [5], [6]. A person who thinks positively tends to have a good emotional *well-being* [7]; he tends to have better social welfare when pursuing a meaningful relationship [8]. This contradicts with a person who hates or loses his job; he is prone to have a lower *well-being* at work [9]. Those examples represent a glimpse of the aspects—or types—of *well-being* inherent in a person.

Human existence fundamentally consists of a number of interconnected aspects influencing each other in creating totality of *well-being* [10]. Humans are *al bashar* with all their physical system; *al insan* with all their spirituality, intellect and emotions; *an naas* with all their dimension of sociality; and *bani Adam* with all their historical dimensions, bound by space and time in the place where they are [11]. These existential aspects provide the fundamental point for Islamic perspective of *well-being* [12], [13] [14] to be applied as the basis for how parents and families should treat their children. Thus, Islamic notion of *well-being* includes: spiritual/religious *well-being* [13], [15]; intellectual *well-being* [16], [17]; emotional/psychological *well-being* [18], [19]; physical *well-being* [11]; social/societal *well-being* [20]; and environmental *well-being* [21].

Child life is human life holistically in the early period [22]. All *al bashar*, *al insan*, *an naas* and *bani Adam* elements adhere in the growth and development process by involving intrinsic elements and the nature of the child himself, as well as extrinsic elements and the nurture he receives [23], [24]. This shows that the quality of *well-being* in various aspects of a child's life depends on factors existing within or outside him. These aspects may be described as high or low, or partially or completely fulfilled [25]–[27]. One of the duties that parents or families are responsible for is to ensure that children grow and develop in a balanced and optimal state of their lives [28].

## 2.1. Spiritual/Ideological/Transcendental Well-being

*Rūh* (spirit or soul) is the main element in human existence (Quran 15:29). It is 'eternal'—by Allah's will—traveling through the spirit realm, the womb, the world, the *barzakh* (realm separating the world and the hereafter) and the afterlife. This raises Islam to place a great attention to spiritual well-being. Allah judges the value of one's life by his spiritual quality—which then becomes the first and main aspect of Islamic *well-being*. This aspect relates to the concept and belief in *rūh*—given by Allah—in humans [29]. This distinguishes humans from other creatures and makes them noble—and trusted—to conduct the mandate as the caliph on Earth (Quran 2:30). In addition, this *rūh* makes humans born in the state of *fitra* (Quran 7:172/Quran 30:30), carrying potentials for goodness—that is *rabbaniyah* (related to God) in nature—a tendency to be religious [30] and living a life of service to God (Quran 51:56).

Humans have spiritual power in their *qalb* (hearts), but they have lusts principled on a number of pleasures by ignoring the norms and the value of goodness (Quran 25:43-44). If a person develops his spiritual power, he may be able to control himself with goodness (Quran 26:88-89); however, if he follows his desire more, the spiritual power may weaken and he may be controlled by evil deeds (Quran 2:10/Quran 22:46).

Spirituality and religiosity are different in some ways [31], but there is a close relationship between them. In Islamic teaching, spirituality relates to faith and spiritual relationship with Allah, while religiosity associates with understanding, appreciation and practice of religious teachings. These dual aspects should be integrated; thereby, a religious person is also a spiritualist in which the values of belief merges with his personality [32].

Parents or families are the first and foremost party to develop potential divine and religious *fitrah* of children and lay the foundation for the realization of divinity and diversity in the future until they become adults [33]. The nurture, care and development of the religious instinct need to be carried out by parents and families in various forms in accordance with children's growth and development in physical, psychological, cognitive and other dimensions [34]. If this is not conducted properly, the *fitrah*—that should be developed well, upright and strong—will stagnate in the future [35].

This leads to the notion that children's good and positive spiritual/religious *well-being* is maintained through the fulfillment of divinity and diversity aspects properly; otherwise, it may decline in quality and tend to be unstable if the development process is not optimal or experiences neglect [36]. This is important as Islamic spirituality and religiosity play a crucial role in obtaining self-meaning, life-meaning and self-existence

in life [37] and build fundamental beliefs for children's relationships with other people, society, environment, culture, social events and life experiences. Spiritual/religious *well-being* promotes a value and ethical system that helps an individual feel happier, have more control, focus more, be stronger in facing various challenges and trials, have better management of his strength and weakness and have energy to achieve productivity and success [38]. The optimization of this *well-being* may result in good mental, emotional, physical and social health—even, in some cases, may be the main source of coping in a recovery and healing. In conclusion, the spiritual/religious *well-being* approach carries out a number of practices aiming for finding the purpose and meaning of life [39], [40].

## 2.2. Intellectual Well-being

Islam promotes religion as a life value system [41] and teaches the notion of 'no religion for people who lacks intellect'. After a baby is born, the first issue raised by Holy Quran—after mentioning *fitrah*—is the development of reasoning and awareness (Quran 16:78), which relates to intellect and intelligence (Quran 67:23/Quran 32:9/Quran 23:78/Quran 76:2-3) [1]. A newborn is labeled as 'know nothing', but he possesses knowledge modalities: hearing (*as sam'a*) and sight (*al abshar*) as the representation of sensory perception; and reasoning and awareness instruments (*al af'idah*) as the integration of cognitive and affective perception. If these intellectual tools are utilized and developed optimally, it may benefit for the good of human life; however, neglect may lead to a negative impact in human life (Quran 7:179). Thus, Islamic teaching involves both dimension of thinking and conscience—the Holy Quran defines the latter as '*aq*' [42].

Positive intellectual *well-being* cultivates from grown, developed and empowered aspects in a meaningful, satisfying and sustainable way throughout life. Intellectual stimulation and challenges encourage the process of intellectual capacity increase necessary for experiencing a learning process, a creative process, communication, critical thinking, problem solving, memory recall, imagination, ideation, deep understanding and wisdom [43]. The desire to be inquisitive and gain intellectual satisfaction is a nature of humans that God does not bestow to animals. Facilitating all the needs and desires stimulates a positive and constructive intellectual *well-being*. The satisfaction of intellectual *well-being* promotes strong internalization of the value system, especially in spiritual and religious values. This strong value system has led Islam to its golden era [44].

Just as exercising enhances muscle capacity and capability, intellectual exercise promotes health and strengthens the reasoning and awareness system. Several important benefits to consider include: (1) deepening critical thinking skills and increasing brain power for complex problem thinking, stronger ability to see a problem from various multiple sides to find a solution, ability to understand other opinions and views, learning skills development, ability to retain new knowledge and meaningful knowledge process; (2) improving time-management skills, self-regulation, clearer and logical thinking; (3) Encouraging the acquisition of new knowledge and affecting the rejuvenation of learning cells; (4) building a higher communication skill and being more open to new ideas and perspectives; and (5) helping to analyze different perspectives, develop opinions, views and ideas and in decision-making process.

### 2.3. Emotional/Psychological/Mental Well-being

One of the *al insan* aspects includes the emotional, mental or psychological dimension. The Holy Quran describes the mental and psychological functions of humans (Quran 89:27/Quran 91:7) and the side of humans that builds behavior (Quran 13:11/Quran 8:5) as *nafs*. There are three states of *nafs*: *nafsul muthmainnah* (the representation of a peaceful soul with protection, satisfaction and fulfillment) (Quran 89:27-30/Quran 13:28); *nafsul lawwamah* (the state of soul that 'blames itself' as a consequence of negligence of the value of virtues) (Quran 75:1-2); and *nafsul ammarah* (the state of soul controlled by instinctive impulses to violate the values of virtue) (Quran 12:53). The Holy Quran continues by mentioning types of human emotions—such as anger (Quran 3:134), hate and love (Quran 2:216), suffering and happiness (Quran 11:105) and sad and worry (Quran 7:35)—as a manifestation of the state of the soul [1]. Peaceful soul is fundamental to humans to connect well with everything. Thus, Islam offers a perspective of the need for psychological *well-being*.

Emotional, psychological or mental *well-being* relates to the positive or negative mental situation felt by a person [45] and the ability to gain preferred situations and deal with unwanted circumstances [46]. Stress, anger, disappointment, failure, sadness, emptiness, and weakness are undesirable situations, whereas comfort, peace, satisfaction, success, joy, meaningfulness and resilience are generally more pursued.

The types of mental situations correlate with the dimensions of attitude and self-regulation skills in accepting and managing internal dynamics and external stimuli related to other people and the environment influencing them—as well as the meaning of existence and growth as an individual. The ability to manage mental situations

determines whether the emotional/psychological well-being is positive, constructive and progressive or low of value and negative—even regressive and destructive [47].

## 2.4. Physical Well-being

The aspect of *al bashar* refers to the physical-biological dimension—which Al-Qur'an and Sunnah designate as *jasad* or *jism*. A healthy, fit and strong body is a condition that Allah favors; thus, the Messenger of Allah (may peace be upon him) said that a strong believer is better than a weak believer. A number of verses in the Holy Quran provide direction regarding the importance of maintaining and improving these physical qualities: preventing to self damage directly or indirectly and doing positive things to maintain the quality of life (Quran 2:195); adjusting the burden in accordance to the physical ability (Quran 2:185); providing *halal* (permissible), good and healthy foods (Quran 5:88); and maintaining personal, clothes and environmental hygiene (Quran 5:6). These examples show that Islam provides a clear and unequivocal perspective on the need for physical *well-being*.

Physical *well-being* is the ability to improve bodily functions through a healthy lifestyle, including good habits, nutritious foods, activities, rest and exercise. Improved physical *well-being* not only promotes a better feeling, health and immune system, it also helps to prevent diseases, cure symptoms, and improve emotional *well-being* and detoxification—or preventing toxins from entering our bodies [48].

Physical *well-being* refers to the ability of the physical state of the body to affect emotional and mental balance without the constraints of physical stress, excessive fatigue and illness and to form a healthy body weight, posture and organs that function properly in order to be able to perform tasks without being constrained by physical conditions [49]. Physical *well-being* involves both doing activities to gain a positive impact on the body and doing the necessary efforts to avoid things that are harmful to the body. In conclusion, maintaining physical health—directly or indirectly—is very important for health and happiness [50].

## 2.5. Social/Societal Well-being

Humans are social creatures, which Holy Quran terms it as *an naas* (Quran 4:1/Quran 2: 21/Quran 114:1-2), *qawm* (Quran 49:11/Quran 13:11), *syu'ub* and *qabilah/qaba'il* (Quran 49:13), *firqah* and *thaifah* (Quran 9: 122 ) and *ummah* (QS. 2 al-Baqarah: 143 / QS. 3 Ali Imran: 10). All of them refer to human groups, communities, communities, ethnic groups,

nations and across nations. In this context, Islamic teachings emphasize that there is no privilege of one group of people compared to another, except with the parameters of faith and piety to Allah (Quran 49:13) [1].

Islam provides a principal framework and foundation for the formation of cohesiveness among others: faith is a special bond of brotherhood among other human bonds (Quran 49:10-12); the good and bad of a society depends on the quality, participation and contribution of the members of the community (Quran 13:11); the community collectively has a role to prevent the emergence of things that may interfere or cause problems that have a social impact (Quran 8:25); the community is responsible for education and social development based on an ethical value system in order to form a good society (Quran 3:104); the relationship between humans is a symbiotic and synergistic relationship in goodness (Quran 103:1-3/Quran 5:2); the community manages various issues and problem through deliberation (Quran 3:159); and developing egalitarianism and the principle of tolerance without questioning primordial differences (Quran 4:1). The results of the study show that Islam provides a perspective on the need for social and community welfare in which each member finds comfort in an atmosphere of togetherness.

Social/societal *well-being* refers to the ability to make meaningful social interactions and interpersonal relationships [51] through social skills, such as communicating, developing relationships, and maintaining networks [52]. Building social *well-being* is one of the best ways to build emotional *well-being*. When a person feels socially connected, he tends to feel better, has more positive emotions, and is able to cope with challenges better [53]. Social welfare consists of five main elements [54]: social acceptance (how to accept and be accepted by others—social tolerance), social actualization (how much potential may be realized), social contribution (how much contribution to the community), social coherence (how much understanding and harmony with the community is formed) and social integration (how much sense of belonging to the community).

## 2.6. Environmental/Ecological Well-being

Islam has a very deep concern for the environment [55], [56]. The Holy Quran refers to the environment in which humans live as *al ardh* and may be broadly interpreted as Earth and caliph (Quran 2:30)—or according to the context of the situation and conditions, such as certain regional or local (Quran 8:26). However, the basic rule about *al ardh* is that humans should not cause damage and disturb the balance that may lead to natural, social and other disasters. The Quran confirms that Allah does not like those who do

mischief on Earth (Quran 2:60, 205/Quran 5:33, 64/Quran 7:56, 74, 85). Humans are obliged to maintain, nurture, preserve and develop the benefits provided by nature and the environment. All the benefits of preserving nature and the environment may affect the welfare of human life; as well as all the damage caused by humans may have a bad impact on humans (Quran 30:41). Thus, Islam promotes a good environment, ecology and ecosystem for the survival of mankind.

Environmental or ecological *well-being* is a holistic approach by combining physical, mental and social aspects of *well-being* to feel goodness, wholeness and harmony in the environment when experiencing life experiences and aligning themselves with the rhythms and cycles of nature. Environmental *well-being* is a way to feel, respect and protect the world [57]. This harmony is achieved through various efforts to live an environmentally friendly life and preserve the natural resources [58]. Environmental *well-being* is important for a number of reasons: protecting the Earth, conserving natural resources, providing the possibility to live a safe and healthy life, the environment influencing mood and physical health, and passing on a comfortable and healthy world to offspring [59].

### 3. The Implementation of Child Well-being

Building *well-being* in children is a complete set of treatments and implementation from the perspective of the Islamic teachings.

**Spiritual/religious well-being:** Islam teaches several approaches and methods to fulfill spiritual/religious *well-being* which include: introducing the existence of Allah with all His great names and attributes; showing the work and how Allah maintains and regulates the universe and humans; teaching the basics of religious teachings so that children know and understand their religious value system and gradually learn to practice them; introducing the prophets through their stories in the Holy Quran in order to encourage children to love them and learn valuable lessons from their struggle to bring salvation to mankind; introducing and training children to behave in accordance with good values towards themselves, others and their environment in everyday life; and—the most important part—instilling an attitude of soul, conscience and pious mentality as moral education and building of a strong and commendable personality [60], [61].

**Intellectual well-being:** Parents or families have several methods and ways to build positive intellectual *well-being*, which include: puzzles and brain teasers to stimulate mental activity; playing with others to create a dialogue of opinions and thoughts and

to increase intellectual health; regular and continuous reading, either for pleasure, acquiring new information or strengthening knowledge; exploring new things and experiences to increase the brain's capacity to evolve and recover itself; learning a foreign language to create changes in brain anatomy, including reshaping functional neural patterns; being creative in positive activities, such as writing, drawing, dancing, cooking, painting, recycling, making art, gardening and raising animals—all of which may provide opportunities for playing; taking time for self-reflection, such as rearranging thoughts and emotions for the better and encouraging inner growth; and maintaining physical fitness through eating nutritious foods, limiting bad habits, getting enough sleep and exercising regularly.

**Emotional/psychological well-being:** To build a good emotional/psychological *well-being*, parents need to teach children to accept things happening to them; build confidence; recognize their potentials and stimulate positive actualization; teach how to accept others and build warm relationships, empathy, sympathy, care and compassion for others; train and familiarize them to control their feelings and regulate their expressions; provide independent space for them to understand a situation and respond to the environment based on their own decisions; provide direction to adapt to the diverse environments—environmental management—to suit their needs; teach according to their cognitive development and the meaning and positive values of what they see, hear and experience; motivate them to learn from various sources and about various things; pave the way for new experiences; and develop their potential—both interests and talents—to grow and develop sustainably.

**Physical well-being:** There are five important areas of physical health for parents to pay attention to: (1) sleep or rest. It is important to promote a healthy and regular sleep routine. Lack of sleep duration and disrupted cycles may cause negative symptoms, such as extreme fatigue, lethargy, memory problems, emotional instability and frequent sickness; (2) food and diet. The body prefers consistency in what and when to eat. Eating healthy foods —on a regular basis and in balanced amounts and variations, such as vegetables, fruits, lean meats and whole grains—may provide nutrients that support vital body functions and balance mental *well-being*. Improper eating may cause metabolic consequences that impair physical and mental health; (3) physical activity. Seeing exercise or physical activity as a burden is not a good thing, as well as if the activity is done excessively. The important key is to find an activity that children prefer to do, progress and live it with joy by remembering the various positive impacts as a motivational awareness; (4) hygiene. Hygiene is all actions taken to live healthy and free from disease through simple daily practices, such as bathing, washing hands, brushing

and flossing, regular check-ups with the dentist, ophthalmologist, ENT doctor or general check-up. In addition to staying healthy, personal hygiene may improve mood, which is helpful for those living with certain levels of stress; (5) relaxation. Relaxation is an attempt to reduce or eliminate mental stress due to excessive activity, tension that causes headaches or backaches and stress hormones that cause bad symptoms in the body. A number of relaxation activities include getting a massage, staying at home with a good book, enjoying leisure activities, playing a favorite sport, going on a family cruise, watching movies and some useful "me time".

**Social/societal well-being:** Parenting practices in developing social/societal *well-being* relates to the children's character building as an individual. Parents need to cultivate a strong personality in their children through: showing affection openly—both through words and actions; not hesitating to hug, chat or do activities together; encouraging them to explore new things to build courage and understand their abilities; providing opportunities for them to express their personality through music, games, artistic activities, and others; showing a sense of pride for them for any success to grow a sense of pride and happiness for their own success; providing opportunities to play with peers to improve their communication skills and social interaction; providing opportunities to explore their world; teaching the values of kindness when communicating with people; showing feelings as parents to children to foster their empathy and teach them to convey their feelings well; doing joint activities to encourage a sense of security, confidence, and the ability to manage time and activities; learning to listen and have a conversation to be able to describe and process their feelings appropriately; and showing appropriate attitudes when they experience negative emotions.

**Environmental/ecological well-being:** There are several ways parents may do and teach to improve children's environmental welfare: recycling; providing a place for sorting and storing waste according to the categories; turning off unused electronic devices; using environmental-friendly products; protecting them in bad weather; and testing for mold and asbestos in the house. In conclusion, parents make efforts to create a safe, comfortable and conducive environment for children's growth and development.

## Acknowledgements

This work was supported and funded by the Institute for Research and Community Service of UNISBA. We thank to Prof Neni for insightful discussions and suggestions.

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