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## **Happiness in the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia according to Nicomachean Ethics**

**Alfredo S. Lodo**

Widya Mandala Catholic University, Surabaya, Indonesia

[alfredo.yakobus@gmail.com](mailto:alfredo.yakobus@gmail.com)

**Abstract.** The Covid-19 pandemic, which has started to go global since 2020, has changed the order in almost all areas of life: socio-social, economic, political, religious, and so on. Difficult situations like this will certainly bring big changes, anxiety, worry, adversity, frustration, and so on. In a difficult situation like this, people will tend to start to lose direction and purpose in life. On the other hand, some parties still have optimism in the midst of the difficult situation of the Covid-19 pandemic. They have an expectation that this pandemic will end soon. Inevitably some of them still have happiness in the midst of this difficult situation. Given the pandemic situation that is still ongoing and still has an impact today as well as the various attitudes of the community in responding to it, the writer through this paper is interested in studying this phenomenon according to the Nicomachean Ethics. What is the happiness that is meant by the Nicomachean Ethics? What are the implications of this happiness during the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia?

**Keywords.** Philosophy, Ethics, Pandemic, COVID-19, Indonesia

### **Introduction**

The starting point of philosophy is curiosity, which is manifested in the act of questioning something. The fundamental question that is often asked by every philosopher is an existential question, namely about existence. At the beginning of the birth of philosophy, namely the pre-Socratic era, the philosophers of that era questioned the existence of nature and its origins: what was the basic substance that made up nature and was contained by it?

Subsequent Greek philosophers often asked questions of a similar nature, namely, existentialist questions. Plato, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Leucippus, Democritus also often asked existentialist questions and tried to find answers. Aristotle, along with some of these philosophers, also asked a question of a similar nature: "Why do I exist? Why do I have an obligation? What exactly am I always looking for in this life?"

In an effort to answer these questions, Aristotle finally found the results of his deep contemplation. The most basic answer to all of them is that everything humans do during their life is to achieve one goal, namely to achieve happiness. According to Aristotle, happiness is the goal of every human life.

The Covid-19 pandemic, which has started to go global since 2020, has changed the order in almost all areas of life: socio-social, economic, political, religious, and so on. Difficult situations like this will certainly bring big changes, anxiety, worry, adversity, frustration, and

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### **Happiness according to the Nicomachean Ethics**

Why am I do? This is the basic question of the existence of every human being. Why are we born, growing, developing, studying, working, loving, making friends, and so on? Aristotle also thought about and pondered deeply on these questions. He then came to the conclusion that human life and existence in every action and choice actually have a purpose and that goal is to achieve happiness / fullness (*eudaimonia /well-being*), or a good life/virtue. The word "good life" means a quality or meaningful life, a life that feels full and reassuring. A good life here is sublime and final<sup>1</sup>.

So, what is a good life like? According to the Nikomakea Ethics, a good life is manifested by virtuous activities. Virtue is a basic and permanent tendency or disposition which characterizes a person so that he can always choose the right and right course of action. The virtuous person has a character or personality with a basic tendency to be able to do good morally. Virtue enables a person throughout his entire life, even in difficult and urgent situations, to consistently do good, because he has a strong mind, an unwavering will, is courageous and selfless.

Happiness will be more attainable if we are more able to realize as much of our potential as human beings. The unique potential of humans that can be empowered to achieve happiness is the rational element and the soul. The proper utilization of human potential to achieve happiness is when the soul wills or acts according to rational principles. It can also be said that what is good about man is the action of the soul in harmony with virtue or virtue<sup>2</sup>.

Even though it has rational and spiritual potentials as a way to achieve happiness, if that potential is not actualized it will gradually become blurred and even do nothing. Therefore, it can be said that happiness is not only obtained from the process of learning and gaining knowledge but also obtained through habit and virtue<sup>3</sup>.

### **Implications of Happiness during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Indonesia**

The situation of the Covid-19 pandemic which is still ongoing today has a major impact on the tendency of each person to worry, worry, *stress*, and even have their mental health disturbed and lose their direction and purpose in life. But it is undeniable that some people also have optimism during this pandemic. In the midst of this hostile situation some people still remember other people and do things that are friendly and beneficial to all of them.

On April 1, 2020, Tung Desem Waringin, a well-known speaker and motivator in Indonesia, tested positive for Covid-19 and had to undergo treatment at the hospital. He had

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Aristoteles, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Jakarta : Teraju, 2004, p. 11

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 4

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 19

experienced a critical period and was quite torturous because of the effects of the drugs he was taking and the effect of the corona virus infection. However, while undergoing treatment he even made an Instagram post to provide clarification and even motivation for the community to face the pandemic with optimism. He stated that the ab best remedy is a happy heart. When happy, worry and fear disappear. A happy heart nourishes body and soul. He also thanked all health workers who during this pandemic made many sacrifices and became the frontline<sup>4</sup>.

During the pandemic, in several regions in Indonesia various parties, both individually and in groups / communities, carried out various movements to help people affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. One form of this action was in Surabaya. In Surabaya there is a movement "Pawon'e Arek-arek". This movement was initiated by several youths who contributed to open soup kitchens that provided free food for the lower middle class<sup>5</sup>.

From Tung Desem Waringin and the "Pawon'e Arek-arek" movement, we can see how in every event and action there are various motivations and goals that lead to happiness. From Tung Desem Waringin, it is indicated that the decision to achieve and be happy or not is in the hands of each individual<sup>6</sup>. The direction to happiness also depends on how we respond to situations and everything that happens in life, how we process rationally and actualize. Tung Desem also actualizes the virtue of empathizing with others through the testimony, comfort and motivation he provides.

Meanwhile, from the "Pawon'e Arek-arek" movement we can learn that happiness can also be achieved together and can be widely felt. Stuart Cloete said that happiness can be achieved by making other people happy<sup>7</sup>. The movement "Pawon'e Arek-arek" also actualizes the virtue of doing good by fostering empathy, sacrificing to setting aside sustenance and sharing with those who need more.

### **Conclusion**

Every human's life has a purpose. *Eudaimonia* or happiness is the goal of life for every human being. Happiness can be achieved only through actualization in the habituation of virtuous behavior.

Pandemic period Covid-19, tends to make people feel fear, worry, and fuzzy will the purpose of life. Even though this pandemic situation is quite difficult, humans are actually still focused on happiness. Through examples like Tung Desem Waringin and "Pawon'e Arek-Arek" movement, it can be concluded that the decision to achieve and be happy or not, is in the hands of each individual, and can form a joint movement and even a universal effect. They become examples of people consistently doing good to achieve happiness in the midst of difficult situations.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Jawahir Gustav Rizal, "Tung Desem Waringin Positive Covid-19, Believing Happy Heart is a Powerful Medicine", April 7, 2020, <https://www.kompas.com/tren/read/2020/04/07/150900065/tung-desem-waringin-positive-covid-19-sure-happy-happy-is-the-drug?page=all>, accessed on March 20, 2021, at 20.11 WIB

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Ariski Prasetyo Hadi, "Pawon 'e Arek-arek Action for Food for People Affected by Covid-19", July 30, 2020, <https://www.jawapos.com/surabaya/30/07/2020/aksi-pawone-arek-arek-food-sharing-for-residents-affected-covid-19/>, accessed on March 20, 2021, at 20.12 WIB

<sup>6</sup> Lusiana Kus Anna, "Sharing with Others Makes a Greater Happiness", March 20, 2021, <https://lifestyle.kompas.com/read/2021/03/20/150209720/berbagi-dengan-sesama-bikin-feeling-happier-greater>, accessed on March 20, 2021, at 20:20 WIB

<sup>7</sup> Asep Totoh, "Pandemi: Berbagi Kebaikan dan Kebahagiaan", October 13, 2020, <https://kumparan.com/asep-totoh/pandemi-berbagi-kebaikan-dan-kebahagiaan-1uNUyeLWx4n>, accessed on 16 March 2021, at 20:12 WIB

### **Closing**

Every human being lives with the aim of achieving happiness. That happiness can only be attained by doing good and virtuous deeds. The choice to want to work on and achieve happiness or not depends on the decisions and intentions of each person. Difficult situations like this pandemic are a way of purification for every human being to consistently do good to achieve happiness in his life.

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