

## Morality: Truth and the Meaning of Life in Every Moment

<sup>1</sup>Nafise Sate and <sup>2</sup>Sayyed Hossain Vaezi

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Islamic Philosophy, Qom University,

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Human Science and Law, Islamic Azad University of Isfahan, Khorasgan, Iran

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**Abstract:** Human life is moral, as much as individuals share the degree of existence. The main hypothesis of this research is that all the moments of life have a moral meaning and truth. The consequence of moral act and its attached decision depends to goodness or evilness of moral act. If their moral act of people is good, therefore they become good and achieve higher degree of existence. However if their moral act is evil, they make themselves bad and bring down the degree of their existence. In addition, people have to choose an option in all the moments of their life. The every choice and every act which it is freely chosen are a moral decision and act. The earlier mentioned hypothesis is based on these main principles: The existence is hierarchical and the creatures dignity is determined according to their closeness and separation to the origin and ultimatum of the existence, the dignity of the human is determined from the beginning of his creation but human can change the dignity in the ascending path toward the highest dignity. This dignity can be placed between a wide range of extreme beauty and goodness to the extreme evilness and inelegance, human is a free existent and being able to freely choose an act means the human being can choose his own identity and dignity. As result, if those made decisions and acts which chosen by the human being have following conditions, they will be morally good and lead individuals to the higher degree of existence. These conditions are: The nature of act should be considered as good act and the intention of person for doing this act should considered helping them to achieve perfection. Mutually, the lack of these two criteria make human being get farther from the absolute goodness and lead to less degree of existence.

**Key words:** Morality, freedom, internal dignity, meaning and truth of life, Iran

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### INTRODUCTION

Human has 2 animalistic and humanistic inclinations which each of these inclinations invites individuals to a different path the ascending humanistic path or the descending animalistic path. If the ego obeys the wisdom, human will be guided to the direct path of perfection. On the other hand, if the ego dominates the wisdom, he will end in misfortune and calamity. Because of his specific creation, he can pace these both paths. Besides his internal dilemma, Prophets and Imams have been sent to invite him to the humanistic path. Therefore, they clarify the perfection path for the human. The devils are also very eager to make the animalistic aspect of human dominate his humanistic aspect, so they invite him to evilness by presenting a good view of injustice and immorality.

The main point is that these two paths predispose the human movement and do not oblige him to choose one. These antonym and bidirectional attractions provide a specific kind a freedom in the effect of which human will

choose one of the paths. The saints have been released from the void temptations and are freely moving toward to the right path and the void entourage are dealing with the ignorance and do not pay attention to the right path and are falling to the lower most.

Religion, using morality as one of its basic principles has helped humanity to freely choose goodness and truth and be perfected. This bidirectional movement will be created in this hierarchical existence in the path to God and from God and eventually, human will be placed in a rank of this hierarchy and will determine his felicity and infelicity based on his closeness and separation.

### MORALITY AS AN OBJECTIVE

There are three kinds of relation between God and human being according Imam Ali's (SWT) speech at the beginning of Motaghin (Homam) sermon: The first is the guardianship and sovereignty relation, as Imam Ali says:

The great and glorious God created the creatures while He did not need their obedience

According to this relation, all the humans are in an equal relation to God and are equal creatures while God does not need to worship and secured against His creatures sins.

The second relation explains the aliment, God is provider and supplier of aliment and has divided subsistence among the creatures. God has divided subsistence among people and has put all the creatures in their specific place. In this relation, people are not in an equal position and enjoy a special life according to their heredity, training, environment and other factors. This difference shows that people do not enjoy equal aliment and the aliment relation of God to people is different.

The third relation states a different relation compared to other two previous relations. Those who keep their duty up to God are righteous. This relation is created by people to God and will be discussed in this study. This relation is formed under the effect of piety and excellency and will lead to the spiritual closeness of human to God. Truly, Allah is with those who fear Him (keep their duty up to Him) and those who are Muhsinoon (Good doers) (Alnahl, 128). In this relation, some of the creatures are spiritually closer to God while some of the creatures are spiritually farther to God. This spiritually closeness and separation is achieved by the human choices, lifestyle and his choice of truth or void path. The human choice depends on his free acts which are affected by his ideology opinions and cognition.

The main hypothesis of this research is that goodness and evilness, morally right and wrong acts refer to this fact that all the human acts may be coordinated or uncoordinated with the existence, existential system of creation and the invariable traditions of creation. Besides, the outcome of human moral life is achievement of a higher dignity towards God dignity or a lower dignity to the lower most. One of the most prominent results of these two earlier mentioned hypotheses is the lack of any kind of gap between existence and the moral values. It means that the goodness and evilness are exactly congruous and incongruous with existence and in existence, respectively.

The ontological and epistemological principles which are the base of this hypothesis interpretation will be discussed in order to prove and explain the hypothesis and then the meaning and function of voluntary acts and freedom are explained to find the relation of existence and morality, moral choice and moral felicity.

#### **THE ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTEMOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES**

The gentility and integration of the universe is of the most basic rational philosophical principle. Existence

and inexistence are two contrary concepts which are necessarily obeyed by the human and the whole universe. Also, they cannot be referred to as a unit subject. In other words, these two paradoxical concepts cannot be acknowledged or denied together (Tabatabaei, 1993; Kein, 2002).

On the other hand, these two concepts are among the self-explained and obvious concepts and everybody easily understand that inexistence is nullity and loss and existence is being. Therefore, the truth of the universe is formed by a non-restrictive and pervasive principle which explains the existence; a general union dominates the universe and that is the existence.

Although, the universe has been based on a unit truth (according to the first principle), multiplicity of the phenomenon is undeniable which refers to difference. Regarding the fact that nothing except existence is realized, the created difference and multiplicity cannot refer to anything except existence. On the other hand, nothing except existence exists to be considered as a distinction factor.

As result, if the existence that is a comprehensive unit and creates unity, the first principle is going to be considered as a distinctive factor. Distinction should be interpreted in a way that is put in a general unity. Multiplicity-created by unity is only possible in those acts which have been augmented by that general truth. Therefore, existence is a hierarchical and unit truth and creatures multiplicity is their various enjoyment of existence. Existence forms the nature and the origin of all entities and their enjoyment of existence determines their personal identity which distinct them from each other.

Existence is the highest dignity of being whose enjoyment of existence is absolute, perfect and unconditioned. The highest dignity is so objective and has nothing to do with inexistence and it will be taken for granted. Mullah Sadra gives these verses as examples:

Allah bears witness that La ilahaila Huwa  
(none has the right to be worshipped except He)  
(Quarn, Ale Emran, 18), Is it not sufficient in  
regard to your Lord that he is a witness over all  
things?

Quran, Alfoselat (53) to show that God is His own reason of being because his existence is pure and does not involve inexistence (Shirazi, 1981a).

The highest dignity who is an eternal, comprehensive, needless and aware of all truths is the most perfect, consistent and prior to all entities, the distinction that exists among other creatures imply their deficient enjoyment of absolute existence. In fact, other

creatures enjoy a limited part of existence and this makes them separate from the highest dignity. They enjoy a small share of existence in which the absolute existence does not exist.

That entity that enjoys a part of existence is not the absolute existence, otherwise no limitation is considered for him. Each entity that is not the absolute existent may not be created from the beginning although, he is not his own creator can be asked about his existence and the answers cannot be anything except absolute existence. Regarding the existence hierarchy from the highest dignity who is the absolute and needless being to the limited and needful being and also regarding the fact that a needful and limited entity cannot create himself. Therefore, the only logical inference is that the absolute existent, the highest dignity is the creator of the lower dignities.

The existent may be an absolute being who is needless or is needful to other entities. Those other entities should not be dependent on others, except the fact that at the top of this hierarchy is the highest dignity who is independent and makes others exist (Shirazi, 1981b).

All creatures are considered in two kinds of longitudinal communication. One of these communications stems from the eternal dignity of God and moves in a descending path and the other kind of communication stems from the ultimate dignity of God and moves in an ascending path. Quran states that:

The universe is moving toward the extreme perfection and toward God. A day will come in which this progress is stopped and loses its dependence and security against the almighty God (Tabatabaei, 2008)

As the existent moves closer to the highest dignity, he will enjoy the existence more and will be more perfect compared to his lower entities. God has put his creatures in a hierarchical system in a way that each creature has been set in a special place in the universe and this place has been determined for him genetically and involuntarily and will be arranged according to God's invariable traditions and rules. It seems that, as the creatures have enjoyed a specific part of existence in the descending path and come to existence in a specific place, every creature's dignity is also involuntarily and necessarily determined in the ascending path, unless his creation enjoys a special state.

Among all creatures, human is the one who has been created in the ascending path, as a materialistic-spiritual entity in the whole universe. He is considered as a materialistic entity because he needs to communicate with

the outside world and possesses and pays attention to the needs of body and he is considered as a spiritual and perfect existent because he can pass the perfection path, after the comprehension of the universe in a way that he can think about his nature and creation (Shirazi, 2004).

Among all the creatures, human is the only truth because he is qualified with all the dignities of the hierarchy (Shirazi, 1981a) and he is a comprehensive truth who skillfully manages the whole universe (Ben Arabi, 1985). Although, a human is a unit entity, he is considered as a natural entity in the testimonial dignity, a purgatorial entity in the illusion dignity and an abstract entity in the intellectual dignity. Thus, the human being is the extract of the universe; he also eternally represents a small picture of this great world (Ardebili, 2006), he represents God's divinity (Ben Arabi, 1991). So, according to the earlier mentioned facts, knowing human to be more exact, knowing one is considered as an important issue in human life.

It can be easily understood that what differentiate the human being from other creatures is his special creation. This special creation refers to the free acts of human beings which provide him with free choice of actions and intentional behavior and the ability to change and move toward a better position. Although, some scientists believe that animals can freely choose, it should be noted that animals' acts are done for pleasure while human acts are done thoughtfully (Tabatabaei, 1996).

When human entity avoids doing a beneficial act which there is no obstacle to do it. On the contrary, he may freely choose to do an act which will be harmful for him. This point is the significant differentiation between the free choice of human and animal. In fact, this is the distinctive characteristic between human and animal.

Accompanying with other creatures, human has been continuously moving toward his own creator. He is like a passenger who is eagerly travelling and his travel will end in meeting God. Several verses have been given as examples in Quran for instance:

O man! Verily, you are returning towards your Lord with your deeds and actions (good or bad), a sure returning, so you will meet (i.e., the results of your deeds which you did) (Quran, Ensheqaq, 6)

In another verse comes:

Unto your Lord (Alone) will be the place of rest that Day (Quran, Alqame, 12)

Or on this verse says:

Surely! Unto your Lord is the return (Quran, Alalaq, 8)

Spiritually moving toward God has been referred to as *Seirurat* in Quran which means changing, transforming to a more perfect entity from a lower dignity to a higher dignity and moving to a better dignity (Amoli, 1997a).

The ideology which discussed in the earlier mention paragraphs and the importance of *Seirorat* in the human schools have been emphasized frequently in the existentialism school. Referring to human as an existent implies the excellency and enthusiastic feature of the human. He is always moving toward a better place and a higher dignity rather than his previous dignity. Human entity is a progressive existent (MacQuarie, 2003). Heidegger also points out that human nature has been hidden in his existence and he will be perfect when he accepts God's invitation toward himself (p.67). Jaspers (1967) believes, there is no existence without excellency.

#### **HUMAN FREE CHOICE AND HIS EXISTENT IDENTITY**

The essential role of human free choice which refers to the determination of the human dignity in the ascending path toward God has been the most important point in this study. This statement means that human has been created in a specific dignity but his genetic return to God which is God's absolute tradition in the universe and He is done freely. This genetic return is in a way that human can move closer or farther to the highest dignity. The following principles have to be paid attention in order to better understand the claim which discussed earlier.

The human free choice is the last condition to make an act realized or unrealized. A free act is an act which is firstly the human internal inclination and will and is the last direct condition to realize an act. It is secondly no external condition obliges him to do that act. Thirdly, the doer has been free to do the act in another way (Peterson, 2004). Therefore, other conditions such as social, economic and cultural situation, as well as lifestyle and human characteristics cannot deprive him from choosing freely. Although, there are some involuntary and unwilling factors which impress human authority to choose his acts freely, choosing freely to do something strictly affects in human destiny.

Human authority and liberty has been emphasized in the anthropology schools. Kierkegaard on the Nasri (1993)'s words, believes that being free to choose is an absolute prerequisite to be an existent, he also says that liberty is the sign of human magnificence and the human should always to be replete with wish of freedom. Sartre

considers liberty and human authority as the source of values. He believes that human consciously releases from this existence and this release results in the creation of a free human, he finally concludes that this freedom is the prerequisite of his existence (Radakrishnan, 2003).

Human being is always freely choosing an act. Every act is a choice and nothing will happen in his life unless he chooses an act. Therefore, every act would be a free choice and every free choice would be an act. The consequence of a choice may end in doing or leaving an act, thus the human being is choosing something even when he avoids doing an action. On the other hand, the human being is always doing or leaving an act. As result, he is always choosing an option and none of the moments of his life his behavior and acts done of left and also his characteristic features can be considered out of his own authority.

The decisions made by the human whether they are of his private life or of the social and general life whether they are about customary affairs or about very significant decisions. They may be coordinated with the traditions of the creation or they may be uncoordinated and against the tradition of the existence.

Those acts which coordinate with the existence make the human beings more perfect and intensive while choice of uncoordinated acts makes the human incomplete and poor because passing the ascending path of existence provides us with good result that is existence. When the human being moves toward the highest dignity, it is completely evident and natural that he will enjoy of the existence more and more. On the contrary when a human being moves in the descending path and is gradually getting farther of the highest dignity, the result will be nothing more than void and inexistence. Therefore, the inexistence of this entity will grow more and more and will degrade him to a lower dignity.

Completely interpreting the changes and what was called *Seirorat*, it can be concluded that the word existence get a new meaning for the human being. This is the same as changing and moving toward a higher dignity. Among the modern philosopher, it was only Kierkegaard who could successfully understand this meaning and also he could deeply investigate this subject in a way that is not comparable with other philosophers (Jaspers and Erle, 1997). Therefore, the nature of the human is itself the source and origin of freedom of thought and act and human can himself determine his own existence (Hoffman, 1957).

Existence is meaningless without transcendence and is the original being which is related to transcendence. Real existence refers to a movement from the universe to God and from self-consciousness to existence. This movement is always free and takes place during a period of time (Holm and Jaspers, 1957).

How to understand the coordination or incoordination of the chosen act with the existence is beyond the purpose of the study and needs another research. Briefly, it can be said that existence is related with light and wisdom and those acts which are done to achieve more rationality and will be put against darkness and ignorance. The free choice of rational acts is nothing except adoring the absolute truth and absolute goodness that is the highest dignity in the whole universe, as result when human being greatly adores his God, his whole body will be replete with his God's love and there will be no place for others love which is the origin of moral ignobility and everything except existence will be of no value for him. Sheikh Eshragh says:

That all entities that are in lower dignity tend to be more perfect and because of this incline toward the higher dignity and those who are in high dignity will ignore the lower dignity because they do not need them (Sohrevardi, 2001)

Imam Baqer said that is the nature of the religion something except adoring? (Majlesi, 1983). Religion is the same as adoring and vice versa (Arousi Hoveizi, 2004). Love is a kind of attraction and is considered to be weak or strong like truth, the strongest one is not worldly and is one of God's specific features (Amoli, 1997b). Therefore, adoring which is the origin of all the moral virtues will guide the human being to move toward the highest dignity and because this passing is of the same class as existence, it will never guide human being to a void path.

Interpreting the meaning of love and adore, it can be said that love is something which can be called the essential truth of ontology. Love is something rather than libido and is against it and is somehow dependent on the whole truth and facts of its existence. On the other side of love, there is a beloved who is considered to be superior by the lover, the lover has fully understood the beloved and is faded in beloved in a way that he finds his existence in beloved. Human being has forgotten himself by moving in the same direction as existence that is light and wisdom. The lover is faded in the beloved through absolute faithfulness to the beloved (Marcel, 1949):

- While in the school of truth thou stay from master love to learn
- Endeavor, though a son to day, the father's grade to earn
- Wash from the dross of life thy hands, as the path's men of old
- And winning love's alchemic power, transmute thyself to gold

- If with the rays of love of truth thy heart and soul be clear
- By God! Thy beauty shall outshine the sun which lights the sphere

### **THE MORAL PROVISIONS END IN A VOLUNTARY ACT**

As discussed before, the human and the existence pace the descending path from the highest dignity toward the lowermost dignity and he can existentially return to the highest dignity in the ascending path. The existence degrades from the spiritual world to the materialistic world in the creation process. In the degradation, the limitations, veils and the determined dignities increase to the point that it falls to the lowermost dignity. As the ascending path starts from the materialistic world, the opportunity to reach the most perfect dignity is provided.

Human being is like a spiritual sperm that has been put in this world to get free of all of the veils and descending dignities and then trying to modify his power to skip all the materialistic features remained in his soul. This act is done by the human free choice. Human free choice has been formed in the natural world which is changing continuously and providing the human to make himself perfect and change his ignobility to wisdom and determine his path. The human being can freely choose the goodness path and move toward the highest dignity: Then he (Gabriel) approached and came closer and was at a distance of two bows length or (even) nearer (Quran, Alnajm, 8-9) or he may choose the devil path and gets farther from the highest dignity and lose his all humanistic inclination and existence enjoyment. They are like cattle, nay even more astray; those! They are the heedless ones (Quran, Al'araf, 179).

On the other hand, the moral science is about the good and bad characteristic of human because they can be achieved or avoided, they can be done or left undone. Therefore, the subject of moral provision is the voluntary and free act of human which can be achieved, avoided, done or left by the human himself. The purpose of the moral science is to make human reach the last point of humanity (Naraghi, 2002). The last point for a changing and evolving entity is that the only possible in the achievement of a stronger or weaker existence and this is based on the doubting about the whole universe and existence, the existence of the human and different hierarchy of the human ego. Therefore, the purposes of the morality is not apart from making the human reach the last point of the existence and enjoy the extreme closeness to the highest dignity.

The voluntary and free acts of human refer to seven subjects in the morality, they are as follow:

- Good and bad
- Right and wrong
- Authorized and unauthorized
- Duty

The meaning and criteria of these concepts are defined by this three affairs: First, the doer of the voluntary act that is the human which enjoys only a specific part of existence. Second, the purpose of the morality which is making human reach the higher dignity. Third, the class and truth of the universe in which the free acts of human and his choice of good and bad takes place is nothing divided from a part of existence of the highest dignity.

It is completely evident that the truth of all the three factors is existence, so the meaning of moral good and bad is existence. Thus, good right authorized and duty belong to the existence which increases human enjoyment of existence. However, bad wrong and unauthorized belong to void and inexistence that decrease the human enjoyment of existence.

The only going truth in the world is existence which is light, wisdom and love and is put against darkness, ignorance, selfishness and hatred. Existence is the source of grace, simplicity, generosity and peace and is contrary with void and inexistence. The source of prehension is stinginess and conflict. Now that we discovered that the meaning of good and right is coordinated with existence and the meaning of bad and wrong is conflicting with existence, it is the duty to know the existence and contemplate on the existence-based morality and review the moral wisdom and ignobility and the way of achieving them.

### **LAST WORDS**

Based on what has been said, the universe is an integrated and disciplined truth which differentiates the various hierarchies of existence and specific existents. Existents are continuously moving toward their creator that is the highest dignity. Human being is one of the creatures who freely choose the ascending path of returning to the absolute existence. In this research, we are going to state that freedom has so many different meanings and plays a crucial role in the human's movement toward God. Consequently, the following principles can be recommended:

- Although, all the choices end in a specific act seemingly, the free choices of human being will end in determination of his dignity

- The determination of human dignity takes place through all the choices of human and also the outcomes of all the choices
- The choice to do an act may coordinate with existence (good, right) or be against the existence (bad, wrong)
- The choice and carrying out a good act which is coordinated with existence, will be realized in the daily life of the human will help the human being to become a stronger and better entity
- Parallel with the principle four, the choice and carrying out a bad act which is against the existence, will result in the void and inexistence and will bring about more limitation and nullity to the doer of the action and will lead him to a lower dignity

The interpretations presented about the voluntary act and human freedom, also the criteria specified for goodness and badness which were based on the ontological and anthropological principles can have very useful and valuable results in the philosophy of morality. Some of the most important results are as follow:

- Not only the morality is not a relative affair but also it is an act which is coordinated with the existentialism and its results
- The meaning of good is the coordination of the act with the existence and the meaning of bad is coordination of that act with inexistence
- Choosing and doing the good deeds will bring about existence and higher dignity. The result of doing good deeds is sublimating to a higher dignity. On the contrary, doing the evil deeds lead to loss of existence and deficiency of the existence. Therefore, the result of bad deeds is descending to a lower dignity
- The ascending or descending of the human can take place up to the extreme closeness or the extreme separation from the highest dignity. Certainly, the dignity of human is between these ranges and will be chosen by his voluntary acts
- Human is continuously choosing to do an act in his life, so all the moments of his life are morally valuable and he is uninterruptedly changing to a higher or lower dignity
- According to the interpretations represented about good and bad and the result of choosing them, the end of human life is not felicity or infelicity but the lifestyle of the human being determine his felicity or infelicity. How to live is also something that should be chosen in every moments of life. Therefore, the human being can determine his felicity or infelicity in every moment. On the other hand, felicity or infelicity is realized during the path not at the end of his path

- Regarding the fact that the voluntary acts of human beings which are in a range of good and bad contain all the aspects of his life, so morality is general concept which contain all the affairs in life and human communication with God, himself, other humans, society and even animals and nature are morally meaningful and none of the human acts occur out of moral frame

### CONCLUSION

This moral identity encompasses different dimensions of human life such as relationship with God, himself, others and his surrounding environment. Human has to evaluate his acts and decisions according to these two mentioned criteria.

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