

## The Goodly Life as the Ultimate Desirable Human Lifestyle According to Ṭabāṭabā'ī in *al-Mīzān*

Muḥammad Raṣṣāfi\*

Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Philosophy, Usul al-Din College, Qom, Iran

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### Abstract

“Life” and “death” are among the most frequent words that have grabbed the attention of people during the history. The minds of many scholars, philosophers, and religious thinkers had been engaged for long with exploring and explaining the meanings of these words. The Arabic forms of these terms (*ḥayāt* and *mamāt*) are also used in the Noble Qur'ān frequently in various forms with different meanings. In this paper, an attempt is made to give a clear picture of the Qur'ānic plan for the ultimate desirable human life, called “the goodly life” (*ḥayāt ṭayyiba*), as the best form of human lifestyle according to the viewpoints of ‘Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī in *al-Mīzān*. After introducing the basis of his novel interpretive methodology, we proceed to examine the hidden layers of his idea on the goodly life based on his method. He, as the great contemporary Shī'a exegete, finally concludes that those who have reached this level of life are a completely different type of human beings with their special properties different from the public.

**Keywords:** ‘Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Goodly life, Human life, Islamic morality, Qur'ānic anthropology.

### Introduction

Life and death are among the most frequent words that have grabbed the attention of people along the history. The analysis of these words is very difficult; from long time ago, the mind of many scholars, philosophers, and religious thinkers had been engaged with exploring and explaining their meanings. These terms *ḥayāt* and *mamāt* and their various derivations are also used in the Qur'ān frequently with different meanings. Life (*Ḥayāt* in Arabic language) is not limited, according to the Qur'ān, to human beings, animals, and planets; rather all beings are regarded alive, praising Allāh the Almighty<sup>1</sup>. Human beings, however, take a special position among the other creatures as they can promote their lives and get a new lifestyle.

Studying the verses<sup>2</sup> containing these words and other related ones suggests, at least, four points about life and death.

1. All beings are living.
2. Life and death have different levels.
3. Human beings have various levels of life, that is, human beings in this world possess a kind of normal life very akin to the life of the other animals, but as they grow and acquire certain qualities, they may enter other levels of life, either better or worse ones.
4. Each level of life is regarded death in comparison with the higher level of life; however, it can be taken as life in regard to the lower ones.

\* Email: Moh.rassafi@gmail.com.

1. q.v. Qur'ān 17:44; 24:41; 62:1; 64:1.

2. See for example the Qur'ān 2:154; 7:179; 16:21; 25:44; 29:64; 57:1; 62:1.

These points will be illustrated in our later discussions.

### Different levels of life

Spirit, as observed by Ṭabāṭabā'ī, is the origin and source of life. Under the Qur'ān 58:22<sup>1</sup>, he says, "What can be achieved from the initial meaning of spirit in this verse is the origination of life. 'Spirit' is the origin of life from which power and intelligence is resulted." (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1991, vol. 19: 196-197)

As a consequence, all types of life in the world, including human life, are in the first place charged by God because He is the One who breathed into Adam a spirit of His presence (Qur'ān 15:29). Second, the more a being enjoys greater portion of spirit, the more he enjoys a higher and richer level of life. Finally we can get, by taking some other verses (e.g., Qur'ān 17:85; 97:4) into consideration, a third result, which states that all beings possess life and so they are living and praising Allāh, hence the divine spirit is present in all over the world and the level of their life is determined by the measure of the spirit each of them possess. Inanimate things, as agreed by our common sense, are not alive but the Qur'ān regards them to be alive and intelligent beings that are permanently praising God. (Qur'ān 62:1; 64:1). Therefore, the Divine Spirit has an illuminate presence in them and hence they are alive (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1991, vol. 13: 110; 15: 135).

Following the common sense, many Muslim scholars interpret these kinds of verses figuratively and say that the meaning of "declares the glory of Allāh" in the verse "Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth declares the glory of Allāh" (Qur'ān 62:1), is in fact something else. According to them, they are not actually praising God, but since their mode of existence denotes the existence and perfection of God, they are seemingly praising God (Fakhr Rāzī, 1999, vol. 20: 347; Zamakhsharī, 1986, vol. 2: 669 & vol. 3: 245). This problem makes some troubles in the interpretation of the verses pertaining to human life as well.

Accordingly, before going deeper into our main subject, it is necessary to have a glance at the interpretive methodology of 'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī in *al-Mizān* which paves the way for entering into his idea about human life in general and goodly life in particular.

#### *Interpretive methodology of Ṭabāṭabā'ī in al-Mizān*

In the early years of Islam, two methods of understanding and interpreting the Qur'ān appeared.

The first one can be labeled as "exoterism" that follows only the literal meanings. The most eminent representatives of this attitude were the adherents of Ḥadīth (*ahl al-Ḥadīth*), with the directorship of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal. Using a strict approach to the qur'ānic words and rejecting any rational mechanism, they regard the superficial meanings of the Qur'ān the most authentic ones. Therefore, in many cases, they were led to anthropomorphism (humanization of God) or corporealism (*Tajsīm*). Under this method, which is reported in various interpretative and theological texts (Ash'arī, 1980: 31; Shahrastānī, 1986, vol. 1: 105 & 184), they ascribe attributes to God that imply His corporeality (Qur'ān 2:115; 20:5; 48:10; 89:22). To distinguish God from the human being, they just said that the quality of these attributes is unknown, an idea followed later by Ash'arites as well (Ash'arī, 1980: 211 & 217).

Against this approach, Mu'tazila movement took place. Getting familiar with Greek philosophical schools and adopting an entirely rational approach, Mu'tazila established a method completely opposite to that of the adherents of Ḥadīth and then they made the Holy

1. "These are whom he has strengthened with an inspiration (spirit) from him." Qur'ān

Qur'ān a function of their thinking order. That is, they accepted those verses that were compatible with their rational order, but as for the verses that were not in harmony with their rational ideas, they refused to accept their literal meaning and took them as ambiguous verses. To remove the ambiguity of these verses, they quickly resorted to the symbolic meanings. (Badawī, 1971, vol. 1: 415-416)

According to them, rational data are clear and explicit because the products of the reason are not apt to undergo any ambiguity. However, revelatory teachings, due to being expressed in the form of human language, are inevitably exposed to intricacy, analogy, equivocality, metaphor, allegory, and therefore to ambiguity (Abū Zayd, 1998: 182). Thus, there appeared a kind of paradoxical conflict among them. Aiming to resolve this seeming conflict, Mu'tazila went towards metaphorical meanings. They regarded their rational system as a stable foundation and then upon it interpreted the verses that seemed to be against it. For example, they interpreted the hand of God to mean metaphorically the power of God (Zamakhsharī, 1966, vol. 3: 408) and this was a method used in all similar verses (Qāḍī 'Abd al-Jabbār, 1960, vol. 4: 174-175 & vol. 16: 381, 395; Zamakhsharī, 1966, vol. 1: 44-45 & vol. 2: 154 & 508), either the verses about diving attributes or other verses.

Both methods are subject to question. Inadequacy of exoterism in understanding the Qur'ān is more stressed when it denies any cognitive role of reason in understanding and interpretation of the Qur'ān. On the other hand, the main problem with the Mu'tazila system is that they rely on self-centered reason, which is at most a mundane reason used as a means to support our normal life and improve our livelihood and hence the Qur'ānic transcendental implications are far greater than to be caught in its feeble net. Because of this, they are necessarily compelled to interpret many of the verses opposed to their self-sufficient reason metaphorically, and many of the noble teachings of the Qur'ān, accordingly, are sacrificed in this process (Suyūṭī, 1984, vol. 2: 120).

Apart from these methods, a third approach was appeared in Muslim world that is less known than the others. This method appeared at first in the works of al-Ghazālī (Al-Ghazālī, 2008: 20-25) and Ibn al-'Arabi.<sup>1</sup> Then, observing its roots in a more exalted way among the interpretative narrations of the immaculate Imāms (a), Shī'a scholars followed and supported it. Mullā Ṣadrā, the prominent Shī'a philosopher and exegete, adopted and developed this method (Mullā Ṣadrā, 1993, vol. 4: 156-158). Later on, the Late 'Allāma Ṭabāṭabā'ī in his commentary on the Qur'ān, *al-Mīzān*, greatly profited from that and developed it to some extent.

Superficial meanings are vigorously authentic in the interpretative school of infallible Imāms (a), but it does not mean that we must halt at the level of exoteric meanings, thinking that there is no way to penetrate the inner levels. Therefore, exoterism, the way agreed by *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* and then Ash'arites, cannot be approved by the Infallible Imāms (a).

Contrary to these, the third approach, as approved by Ṭabāṭabā'ī moderately, has a proper confrontation with the Qur'ān through a dialectical process. In this process, purified intellect raises itself to the high origins of revelation and takes the color of revelation without using any personal dictation or resorting to uncommon figurative meanings.

By this method, the interpreter reaches the esoteric meanings that are surprisingly in harmony with those exoteric meanings, i.e., esoteric and exoteric meanings are compatible with each other (Ālūsī, 1993, vol. 1: 11; Ghazālī, 1964: 21; Jawādī Āmulī, 2008, vol. 13: 171-172 & 212). In other words, the esoteric meanings are supported by literal meaning and hence there is no gap between esoteric and exoteric meanings. Rather, there is a firm relation between them such that the Qur'ānic verses hint at these esoteric meanings and their objective

1. A full description of the interpretative methodology of Ibn 'Arabī is reported in: Pierre Lory, *Les Commentaires Esoteriques du Coran selon 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī*, Paris, Les Deux Océans, 1980.

origins (Ghazālī, 1993: 6-7; Jawādī Āmulī, 2008, vol. 13: 171; Lory, 2004: 54-55). Therefore, in this method, no verse is conveyed to the metaphorical meaning save some few cases that are completely prevalent in Arabic language (Ibn ‘Arabī, 2010, vol. 1: 20).

Finding esoteric meanings is not possible for everyone. Mystics and divine philosophers believe that when a person succeeds to achieve the position of mystical intuition, he can see those exalted meanings hidden behind the upper levels. Ṭabāṭabā’ī followed this method in *al-Mizān*, but beside intuition, he introduces another way for acquiring esoteric truths. According to him, reaching these truths is not limited to intuition. Instead, he uses the method of interpretation of the Qur’ān with the Qur’ān. In this method, as he described, by pondering over the qur’ānic verses and comparing them with each other, the enlightened reason can reach some levels of the inner meanings of the Qur’ān. Interpreting the Qur’ān by the Qur’ān means that by putting related verses together and contemplating them and taking into consideration the various sides of them, the esoteric meanings show gradually themselves. Ṭabāṭabā’ī has worked out many esoteric meanings of the Qur’ān by this method.<sup>1</sup> This method is not merely a mechanical and formal method; rather it may be compared with the Platonic dialectic. The exegete will participate in dialogue and cooperation with the Qur’ān. Reason, in this process, will raise itself to the exalted and transcendental truths (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1991, vol. 3: 63-64). Based on this method, he refuses figurative meanings in various places of his commentary on the Qur’ān, believing that there is no need to this attitude (e.g., Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1991, vol. 12: 343; vol. 11: 324; vol. 7: 337).

As for the relation between the qur’ānic words and the esoteric meanings, he offers a new explanation. He describes this relation as the relation between Mathal (proverb) and its Mumathal (the general sense it refers to) (Ibid, 3, 37). In this kind of relation, the proverb presents its literal meaning, but at the same time, in a higher level, it conveys its general meaning for those who are familiar with its application. In another instance he says, “The verses don’t indicate directly the objective transcendent realities that are the sources of the esoteric meanings but they somehow narrate them” (Ibid, 59).

From Ṭabāṭabā’ī’s point of view, the esoteric meanings of the Qur’ān are beyond the words and utterances. They are in fact transcendental objective truths that are taken as the origin of the qur’ānic verses and are settled in *Umm al-Kitāb* (Ibid, 44 & 49; also Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1986: 51). Following the method elaborated and developed by Ṭabāṭabā’ī, many metaphysical facts about God, the world, the hereafter, the nature of human being, etc. that are related to the realm of theology, cosmology, ontology, and epistemology, etc. will be uncovered. The advantage of these facts is that they are directly connected to and understood from the Qur’ān itself and hence they will possess a firm validity among Muslims because they are not merely some philosophical or mystical ideas that may be subjected to many questions; instead, they come out from midst of the Qur’ān.

In the following lines, we examine and pursue one of the bearings of his method about the human life and show that the result is completely new among exegetic works, which in turn shows the competence of this method in finding and uncovering some realities concerning the human being and other realms as well.

### *The goodly life, the highest stage in the human life*

Different verses have spoken about the goodly life and have explained its meaning, results, and conditions. We examine separately three basic verses related to our subject, and some other relevant verses will be discussed under them.

The first verse is as follows,

1. For example about the “Names of Allāh” in the Qur’ān 2:31.

“Whoever acts righteously, whether male or female, provided that he is a believer, We shall revive him with a new life and pay them their reward by the best of what they used to do” (Qur’ān 16:97). This is the only verse that directly has offered the idea of the goodly life and introduced the term “*ḥayāt ṭayyiba*” (the goodly life) into Muslim society.

The first important point explicitly mentioned in this verse is that there is no difference between man and woman in human and spiritual affairs. The Qur’ān clearly announces that there is no difference between men and women in spiritual and moral atmosphere (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, vol. 12: 341). Accordingly, both man and woman can be elevated to the level of the goodly life.

The second point is that this verse is offering a general rule, not a specific case. Thus, there is no doubt in its generality and hence it includes every person (Ibid).

The third point and the main idea of the verse is that God will grant anybody who does righteous deeds while he is a believer a new life other than the previous one, and this is the ultimate level of human life for a believer to reach (Ibid, vol. 6: 188).

### *The meaning of the goodly life*

When we face accidentally with an old friend and notice that he is completely changed from the first day of friendship, we would normally say that he has completely turned into another person. However, it is obvious that our utterance has a figurative meaning. We certainly believe that he is still the same one that we knew, save that his manner of life is completely changed from the day we first met because he has acquired new characteristics.

Nevertheless, the question is that if this is the case with the verse we mentioned, too. It says that God will grant whoever practices righteous deeds – provided that he is a believer – a new life and he will reborn in a new level of life. Ṭabāṭabā’ī believes that if we contemplate exactly in this verse and the similar ones, we realize that it is wrong to interpret this verse figuratively (Ibid, vol. 12: 342). A believer who does righteous deeds will truly become another person, different from the other ordinary people, and he will be radically turned into another elevated kind of life, higher than the normal life of people. This new life, however, is not separated numerically from the previous one; the person who is elevated to the level of goodly life is the same as the previous one in shape and other external properties. Therefore, we do not have two persons, yet this new man transformed into new life is really different from the previous one.

Ṭabāṭabā’ī, according to the method mentioned and under another relevant verse, states that we should not interpret this verse metaphorically, as done by some other exegetes saying differently that it refers to a healthy life or living with contentment or the life in hereafter (Ibid, vol. 12: 343). According to such interpretations, a true believer lives differently from the other people, “as if” he has enjoyed a new life. Ṭabāṭabā’ī thinks differently and says that we must follow the literal meaning of the verse and say, “he ‘really’ enjoys a New life” (Ibid, 342; vol. 19: 197). Thus, avoiding any kind of metaphorical mode of speech, we must say that a pious believer, beside his common life shared by the others, will possess a particular spirit with which he will reach another new life with the novel results (Ibid). In fact, he will experience a completely new world.

This point is differently explained by the idea of “substantial motion” of Mullā Ṣadrā (1572-1635 CE), the most celebrated Iranian Shī‘a philosopher. As a philosophical rule, this idea is applied to everything in the world including human beings. According to it, any change occurred in the level of the accidents is related to a change happened within the essence; therefore, any accidental change, physical or spiritual, is due to a basic substantial change (Mullā Ṣadrā, 1990, vol. 3: 75-105).

The application of this idea in the realm of spirituality will end in this point that all human qualities, good or bad, are rooted in some substantial evolutions. Put simply, good characters are the manifestations of an elevated soul and bad ones show a degenerated soul. Normally we believe that all people are the same in substance, possessing some different outward qualities, like a man who wears the best and beautiful dresses and a man who wears dirty ones; without dresses, they are the same. However, according to Mullā Ṣadrā and his followers, the human in his progressive way is united with virtues or vices he gains and they become a part of his essence. This process causes the human to be derived out of his initial existential position and gradually transform to another level of life and personality, although the reality of his new personality is revealed only in hereafter. Mullā Ṣadrā has explained this idea in several occasions in his works (q.v. Mullā Ṣadrā, 1990, vol. 9: 19-20).

To illustrate this point, we can benefit from an example. When some rennet of cheese is added to milk, this milk is not the previous one soon after and it changes to another thing, i.e., cheese. Likewise, if a germ enters milk, the milk will grow to be molded and polluted. As a philosophical principle, Mullā Ṣadrā argues that everything, including human beings, gains its identity and reality from its last difference. When applied to human beings, it reveals that human beings have possessed no fixed difference and accordingly no fixed quiddity; thus, they are able to make themselves by their thoughts and deeds (Mullā Ṣadrā, 1990, vol. 2: 32-36 & 189).<sup>1</sup> This philosophical idea shows us that the identity and personality of human beings is affected by what they think and what they do. Due to their thoughts and deeds, they gradually turn into different kinds of beings, although they are the same in apparent form. In hereafter, when the vials are removed, the real personality of everyone will reveal; thus, according to some traditions, some people are appeared as the brilliant beings and some of them in the form of some animals (Majlisī, 1983, vol. 46: 261).

The second verse is as follows:

“Is he who was lifeless, then We gave him life and provided him with a light by which he walks among the people, like one who dwells in a manifold darkness which he cannot leave? To the faithless is thus presented as decorous what they have been doing” (Qur’ān 6:122).

This verse offers a proverb depicting the state of the believer and the non-believer. Before the enjoyment of the divine guidance, the human is like a dead person without any sense and movement. Nevertheless, after he gains success to embrace faith with God’s satisfaction, he is like a person whom God has revived and has given a light by which he can realize the right from the wrong and hence go safely everywhere he pleases. The unbeliever, however, is within the darkness and the gloom of ignorance, and has no way of rescuing and escaping.

Therefore, this verse is offering some facts under the guise of an allegory, wherein perdition and deviation is likened to death. Faith and guidance are likened to the life, to be guided towards the faith is compared to reviving, and ignorance is related to the darkness. Therefore, it seems that the words “light” and “revive” are intended to have their figurative meanings. What can be said about this verse? Is there any evidence to show that “light” and “revive” in this verse have their real senses? One may say that the first verse must be also interpreted like this verse in a figurative manner. However, Ṭabāṭabā’ī believes that the first verse is offering a decisive principle and hence has a fixed meaning, so we must interpret the second one on the basis of the first one (Tabatabai, 1991, vol. 7: 337). He states,

It is hard for common people to believe that a person could have a kind of life other than the animal life that is the source of sense, pleasure, and willing movements. An ordinary person is living in material atmosphere and thus knows and comprehends everything materialistically. In his eyes, there is no fundamental

1. Some comparative studies have been made between Mullā Ṣadrā and Existentialism in this regard. (q.v. Ḥasanzāda, 2006: 60-74).

and substantial difference between a believer and an infidel, and both of them are enjoying the same life. Therefore, if you want to say that an infidel is really dead in comparison to a true believer, you must put it under an allegory to take this point closer to the horizon of his understanding. However, we must notice that the life and the light in this verse have their real meaning as objective facts implanted in the essence of the believers. The life of believers deserves to be called life more than that of ordinary people, as human life deserves more to be called life than that of the animal life (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1991, vol. 7: 336-338).

Finally, the third related verse is as follows:

“[O, Messenger!] You will not find any people who believe in Allāh and the Day of Resurrection yet establish Friendship with those who oppose Allāh and His Messenger, even if they be their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their relatives. Allāh has Written Faith in their hearts and has fortified them with a spirit from His presence. And He will admit them to the gardens in which streams flow to dwell therein forever. Allāh will be well pleased with them; and they will be grateful and well pleased with Him: They are the members of the Party of Allāh; know that the party of Allāh shall surely succeed” (Qur’ān 58:22).

Spirit, according to Ṭabāṭabā'ī, is the source of life from which the power and awareness are issued. God states that He will strengthen the believers with a spirit of himself. It means that He will grant them a new life; believers, beyond the spirit shared by the unbelievers, have another spirit by which they have an elevated level of life with new power and new learning and knowledge (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1991, vol. 19: 197). By saying this, he rejects all the figurative meanings presented by the other interpreters (Ibid).

### *Awareness of the goodly life*

Those who reach the level of the goodly life realize that they are experiencing a new world. An important point here is that there is a great distance between the goodly life and the life of normal people, as the common human life is greatly different from the animal life (Ibid, vol. 7: 338). We as human beings see a big distance and gap between our life and animals, and even we probably characterize this distance as infinite. Then, we must notice that the distance between a prophet, an infallible Imām, or whoever has reached the level of the goodly life and the other people is not imaginable, although we are ignorant about this fact.

An important question here regards the reason for this claim that a believer who reaches this level of life is aware of its new condition in this very world. In response, Ṭabāṭabā'ī says,

One of the strong reasons for this claim is that this new life has some real results.

If a man, after faith and righties actions, gains certain high qualities and sees himself to have some new abilities that the others lack them, it means that he has reached the level of the goodly life. (Ibid)

Therefore, the goodly life is open to be verified by a kind of spiritual experience.

### **Semantic relations**

One of the most important advantages of *al-Mīzān* is the establishment of some relations between the concepts related to the topic under discussion. The goodly life, as developed by Ṭabāṭabā'ī, is related to light, openness of heart, right pass, the peace, the party of God, God's pleasant, and *Wilāya*.

“Insightful light” is one of the concepts connected to the goodly life as its result (Ibid). In the Qur’ān 6:122, God mentions the word “light” after “life and revive.” Ṭabāṭabā'ī says that the word “light” refers to the knowledge derived from faith. One of the results of interpreting

this light as knowledge is that the believer will find the right path during his social life, which is like a dark way and dangerous crag, so that during his lifetime he recognizes the nature of actions. Therefore, he follows the actions which help him in the way of salvation and avoid those that are harmful for his faith<sup>1</sup> (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1991, vol. 7: 339).

God then says, “Whomever Allāh desires to guide, He opens his chest to Islam” (Qur’ān 6:125). This verse and the verses after it are in fact explaining the concepts related to the goodly life and interpreting the previous verses in other words. In this explanation, God introduces “openness of heart” (*Sharḥi ṣadr*) as the first entrance to the goodly life. If God wants someone to be guided and led to the goodly life, He will develop, as the first step, his existential capacity and strengthen his feeling in seeking the truth until he submits his will to God and he does not refuse to worship God at all. Then he will be able to accept any true saying presented to him and do any righteous actions he faces (Ibid, 342), a procedure that lead him to the goodly life.

The “opening heart” is also mentioned in some traditions as the doorway to good, which is a necessary stage in gaining the goodly life. It is quoted from Imām al-Ṣādiq (a) as saying,,

If God, honored and glorified, decides to make one of his servants good [lead him to the happy life], He will drive a share of light into his heart and open his ears of heart and appoint an angel to lead him to righteous deeds and prevent him from bad actions ... then Imām (a) recited the verse we mentioned above. (Kulaynī, 2009, vol. 1: 166)

Following to the openness of heart, God says, “This is the straight path of your Lord” (Qur’ān 6:126).

The “right path” is another related concept to the goodly life. Then He says, “For them shall be the abode of peace near their Lord and He will be their guardian because of what they used to do” (Qur’ān 6:127).

This is expressive of another character of true believers. “Salām” here means both inward and outward health. It happens when a true believer arrives at a level of life that is far from internal and external plagues and afflictions. The house of health is a place devoid of death, disease, poverty, stress, want, worry, and sadness, and this place is the promised paradise that these believers sense it in this world, too. It is noteworthy that the level of their paradise is very exalted and higher than that of the other believers (Ṭabāṭabā'ī 1991, vol. 7: 345).

God continues that their place is by God and they choose God as their guardian. Those who possess the goodly life are in the stage of God’s Guardianship (*wilāya*) (Ibid).

“Divine friends,” those who has reached the state of *wilāya*, feel even in this world the promise of paradise and the house of peace. They do not fear anybody and they are not worried about losing anything, property, or their family and relatives (ibid).

“The party of God” is one of the other related concepts to the goodly life. In the end of the third verse mentioned above, God says that the true believers are the party of God, “They are Allāh's party. Look! The party of Allāh is indeed felicitous!” (Qur’ān 58:22).

### *The state of wilāya as the sign of reaching the goodly life*

We can understand from the points mentioned by Ṭabāṭabā'ī about the goodly life that a believer will arrive at this kind of life when he reaches the state of *wilāya* (Ibid, 337 & 345).

In the previous verse we read, “They shall have the abode of peace with their lord, and He is their guardian because of what they did” (Qur’ān 6:127).

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1. This point is referred to in the Qur’ān 57:28. He says, “The light in the verse is a kind of knowledge that comes from the faith and helps the believer to live safely and preserve his faith during his lifetime. In the next part, the relation between knowledge and light will be explained more” (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1991, vol. 19: 174).

It shows that those who have arrived at the level of the goodly life are under God's guardianship and friendship, i.e., the state of *wilāya*. In this state, engaging deeply with the requirements of monotheism, the human does not see any effective agent in the world save God and hence he does not fear anybody or anything (Ibid, vol. 10: 90).

Explaining the Qur'ān 10:62-64, Ṭabāṭabā'ī says,

Different meanings are offered for "*wilāya*," but it means originally the removal of veils between two things so that there is no differentiation between them because all the veils have been removed. Then this meaning was used for any kind of closeness and nearness between two things, either spatial or spiritual. (Ibid, 88)

In Islamic spiritual wayfaring, the state of *wilāya* is ranked among the higher levels and states of wayfaring. The number of the level of *wilāya* in *Sad Maydān*, written by Khāja 'Abdullāh Anṣārī, is 78 of 100. The meaning of *wilāya* in Islamic spiritual books is limited to a particular spiritual state but it is clearly categorized among the final levels. In another division, spiritual states are divided to three general levels: *Islam*, *'Imān*, and *Iḥsān*. The last level is the highest level (Fannary, n.d.; 65). Those who prosper to arrive at the level of *Iḥsān*, in fact, enter the realm of *wilāya* and gain real certitude (*Ḥaqq al-Yaqīn*).

### *The outcomes of the goodly life*

Since a new spirit and accordingly a new life are granted to the believer who arrived at the level of goodly life, it must be followed by some results.

In different parts of *al-Mīzān*, Ṭabāṭabā'ī refers to the results and outcomes of the goodly life. In one occasion, he depicts the conditions of their life as follows,

There is no fatigue, meanness, and misery in that life. The possessors of the goodly life are drowned in the divine love and satisfied with its closeness. They receive nothing but good and face nothing save happiness. They live in security and peace without any fear and worry. They also see what the others cannot see and hear what the others cannot hear. Their reasons reach the points that the others have no way to them and their will and intention is different from the others as well, although their actions are similar to the others. Therefore, they must have a kind of knowledge and will beyond the knowledge and the will of others. (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1991, vol. 7: 337-338)

He also states, "They possess a light that gives them insight" (Ibid, 338). He also asserts,

"Their new life is in company with tranquility and spiritual pleasure. They feel in themselves a kind of unlimited and indescribable elegance, perfection, power, honor, joy, and pleasure. In this new life, they enjoy the divine blessings constantly and do not see any discomfort and displeasure. (Ibid, 12: 342)

In the third verse that was mentioned above, God, after saying that "We strengthen the faithful with an inspiration from our part and so grant them a new life," states that these people will enter paradise in the hereafter but this paradise is in company with the "divine satisfaction," which is not achieved by everyone. As He says, "He will cause them to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow, abiding therein; Allāh is well-pleased with them and they are well-pleased with him" (Qur'ān 58:22). Therefore, they enter the paradise of pleasure.

They also may gain some new abilities. As they have a kind of superior knowledge and thus they can distinguish between right and wrong, they also have a greater power in reviving the side of right and rendering the side of wrong futile (Ibid, 12:342).

When reflected deeply, these results show us that the arrival of any believer to the level of the goodly life must be regarded as an auspicious event in the world. The existence of such persons with those high characters is regarded as a golden opportunity for the society.

Those who have granted the goodly life see everything belonging to God but this idea does not drive them to be unemployed or leisured. Rather, they are the most active people. If they acquire wealth, however, they will spend it in the way of God. Likewise, if they lose their wealth or position, they do not get upset or feel sad. This fact is evident by observing the lifestyle of the infallible Imāms (a) or some other true believers.

They do not fear anything and anybody; they just seek God's satisfaction. On the other hand, they have the power of knowing the right from the wrong. Therefore, they are the only ones who can properly face any social deviations.

Since they have a kind of elevated and promoted knowledge and power, their feelings and affections are very intense; they cannot see and endure others' hunger, starvation, tyranny, violence, immoral actions, discrimination, etc.

They do not make any difference between the people, because they see all the people as God's Servants who deserve to be honored. They can regulate the social orders in such a manner that everyone reach his ultimate happiness.

In sum, if you put those excellent characters together, you can infer many benefits and advantages that they can provide for the people in various social and personal realms.

## Conclusion

Regarding the points offered in this paper, some remarkable results are as follows.

First, the interpretative method articulated by Ṭabāṭabā'ī is properly deserved to be noticed. Taking advantage of this method may reveal so many profound qur'ānic hidden teachings and unknown realities concerning moral and social problems and solve our increasing problems.

Second, the goodly life, as elaborated on in *al-Mīzān*, is a new qur'ānic idea inferred by his new approach in interpretation. It was stated, however, by Mullā Ṣadrā in his philosophical works, but as a qur'ānic teaching and a more elaborated approach, it is brand new.

Third, the idea of the goodly life opens a limitless way in front of us and shows that every believer can persist on his faith and righteous deeds until he prospers to gain God's satisfaction and enter a new infinite pleasant and goodly life with astonishing results and outcomes.

Forth, the existence of the possessors of the goodly life is very useful in society.

Finally, by a deep study of the goodly life, we can realize the prominent position of the Prophets and Imāms (a) and – following them – the elite and the saints. Prophets, due to the Holy Spirit granted to them by God, are really different from the others. The Holy Spirit does not make Prophets to be numerically two persons, but a prophet is exposed to such alteration that he turns completely into a new person and takes a new personality.

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