

**THE INFLUENCE of REFLECTIVE LIFE in  
THE SYBLIME ETHICS**  
**Yansıtıcı Yaşamın Syblime Etiklerdeki Etkisi**

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**Özet**

*This study, to begin with, examines the natural and reflective life, makes a distinction between them and sets a demarcation between natural and reflective ethics. Second, it sets out to investigate how reflective life affects sublime ethics which goes beyond natural life. Here it is believed that a perfect familiarity with key terms can play a crucial role in the way the whole study will be realized. Hence, a reference will be made to the purpose and significance of the study and a detailed definition of important terms provided. Here, life has been defined literally as the state of living whereas technically speaking the reality of life, like the reality of existence, is far from being uncovered. In fact different scholars and philosophers have unfolded it differently. However what is evident is that human beings enjoy two kinds of life: one is the natural and deterministic life which is identical to animal life, and the other is the reflective life which, once acquired, contributes to the formation of human personality and helps him enter the sublime objective of life. This objective is but joining the flow of life which is in turn dependent on sublime perfection. Two types of ethics can be conceived of for human beings: natural deterministic ethics and sublime ethics the latter one being possible only in reflective life. It is to be aware of human-making necessities and merits. This awareness is intended to prepare him to continue his way of being greatly interested in perfection and contrasting the action, saying, intention, thoughts, and being determined towards those necessities and merits.*

*Through making integration between reflective life and sublime ethics, this research is intending to pave the way for ethical development and flourishing targeted by Islam. And to the writer, this is what distinguishes the present research from the previous ones*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Reflective life, Human Being, Ethics, Sublime Ethics, Deterministic Ethics*

**Abstract**

*Bu çalışma, başlangıçta doğal ve yansıtıcı yaşamı örnelemektedir ve ikisi arasında bir ayrım yapmakta ve doğal-yansıtıcı etikler arasındaki bir ayrım oluşturmaktadır. İkincisi, doğal yaşamın ötesinde yansıtıcı yaşamın sublim etkileri nasıl etkilediğini açıklamaktadır. Burada inanılmaktadır ki anahtar terimlerle mükemmel yakınlığı bütün çalışma düşünüldüğünde kritik bir role*

*sahiptir. Öte yandan, çalışmanın amacı ve önemine göre bir referans verilebilir ve önemli terimlerin ayrıntılı tanımları verilmektedir. Burada, yaşam tam olarak tanımlanmasına karşın teknik olarak yaşam gerçeğine ve var oluş gerçeği gibi açıklanamamaktadır. Gerçekte farklı filozof ve bilginler tarafından açıklanmıştır. Buna karşın açık olan şudur ki; insanoğlu iki çeşit yaşam tarzından hoşlanır. Birincisi hayvansal yaşama yakın olan doğal ve deterministic yaşamdır. Diğeri ise; elde edildiğinde insan karakterine katkıda bulunur ve hayatın ama amacını anlamaya dönüktür. İnsanoğlu için iki çeşit etik tanımlanabilir: Doğal deterministic etikleri ve sublim etiklerinin yansıtıcı yaşamda yeri vardır. İnsanoğlunun gereklilikleri ve faydalarının farkında olmasıdır bu. Bu farkındalık insanın mükemmelliği yakalamasında ve kendini hazırlamasına dönüktür. Yansıtıcı yaşam ve sublime etik arasındaki birleşim yapmak esnasında, bu araştırma etik olarak gelişme yolunu ve islamla yükseliş hedefleri ele almaktadır. Ve bu amaç bu çalışmanın daha önceki çalışmalarından farklılaştırmaktadır*

**Keyword:** Yansıtıcı Yaşam-İnsanoğlu-Etik- Süblim Etik- Deterministik Etik.

### **Introduction**

Human life and its quality have long engaged anthropologists and scholars. Basically, leading mankind to the elevated form of life has been the principal goal of sublime ethics. The necessity of making an appropriate interpretation and justification of human life as well as coordinating two realms of this life in its totality is equal and identical to the necessity of human existence. The need for a transition from natural and deterministic life to reflective life as well as a movement to the elevated purpose of life is thought of as the main rationale behind human life. What is more, although favorite human ethics has been widely discussed in the literature, what is of significance is making a distinction between natural and deterministic ethics on the one hand and sublime ethics on the other, which is the focus of studies in reflective life and without this distinction no favorite result will be gained from ethics.

### **Definition of Important Terms**

Strict and correct research in the effect of reflective life in sublime ethics, depends on the full understanding of the words and expressions used in that research, and because of this, the present research is to define and explore each of them briefly.

### **Ethic:**

Mohammad Taghi Rahbar and Mohammad Hosein Rahimian (1998) define *ethic* as 'inner feature and unshakable bodily appearance, through which good and bad volitional deeds take place by human being without trouble and deliberation' (p. 6).

Mohammad Ali Sadat (1987) believes it to be 'a series of bodily habits and spiritual qualities and characteristics; "ethics" in this sense is not

only one of the results of training, but the most important one.' (p. 22).

Mojtaba Mesbah (2003) defines ethic as 'the permanent and constant quality i.e. habit, and technically it is all bodily qualities that are origins for good or bad deeds, be they permanent and constant or unstable and transient. Sometimes the word "ethics" is only used about good and admirable qualities and deeds (pp. 15-16).

Ahmad Deilami and Masood Azarbaijani (2004): "Ethics" is the plural form of the word "ethic" meaning the inner force and nature of human being recognizable only through insight and non-visible eyes (p. 15).

Abuali Moskooyeh (1996): "ethics" is a bodily state that causes the man to move towards action without a need for thinking and deliberating (pp. 57-8).

#### **Ethics:**

Ahmad Ali Sharifi (2006): it is possessing knowledge about "what kind of ethic can the essence of human being acquires in order for all states and deeds that are consciously issued from him to be beautiful and likeable (p 20).

Jacks (1977): ethics is doing research in one's behavior in the way it supposed to be (p. 9).

Mohammad Mehdi Naraghi (2004): ethics is the science that together with introducing and presenting different kinds of merits and defects, teaches us how to acquire merits and push away the defects from ourselves (p. 15).

Reza Eslami (1997): ethics discusses the qualities that constitute human being's character, as well as the qualities that push him away from humanity (p. 33)

Ethics in philosophy is defined as "the study and evaluation of human conduct in the light of moral principles. Moral principles may be viewed either as the standard of conduct that individuals have constructed for themselves or as the body of obligations and duties that a particular society requires of its members." (The Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition, 2008)

#### **Life**

The American Heritage Dictionary defines life as "The properties or qualities that distinguish living plants and organisms from dead or inanimate matter, including the capacity to grow, metabolize nutrients, respond to stimuli, reproduce, and adapt to the environment. The definitive beginning and end of human life are complex concepts informed by medical, legal, sociological, and religious considerations."

Generally speaking life means to be alive, but technically there is no agreement about its definition and it seems, similar to the essence of

existence, the essence of life is among the unknown realities. Philosophers, theosophists, and biologists have differently viewed its aspects. But it can be said that, in fact, this definition points out to some effects and results of the life rather than the reality of life.

For instance the following can be pointed out in this regard:

Sadroddin Mohammad Shirazi considers the life as the origin for the effects. He says” life is a form of something’s existence that issues some effects that are issued by the course of life (p. 417)

Shahaboddin Sohravardi (2001), “life is the thing that the visible existence possesses and alive is the intelligent and doer” (p. 117)

Mohammad Hossein Tabatabaee (1983), “we consider alive the thing that is conceiver and doer; therefore, life is the origin of perception and action is the origin of science and power” (p. 169)

Akhvanossafa (1957): life is of two kinds: the first is related to the body and the second to the essence (p. 57)

Biologists have also defined life in different ways. They have mostly been engaged in the effects of life (feeding, development, and reproduction).

As it was seen before, in each one of the mentioned definitions a single dimension from among different dimensions of the life have been paid attention to, and a comprehensive definition that includes different kinds of life among existents (either of material nature such as plants, animals, and human beings or of the nature of non-material such as God, and the angels) has not been offered. However, in any form the life is defined, it is something that all people agree on its existence and that, there are some effects and characteristics such as essence, feeding, development, procreation, being targeted, and ability among all living things. The most important of these are science and power which mostly appear in human beings.

Common points of all these forms and manifestations are: (1) the presence of order, organizing, suitability, and harmony concerning all living things, and (2) the existence of a defined goal and destination for biologic actions. “Materialists (including Aparin) inevitably accept these two common points (Shakiba, p. 10).

#### **Reflective Life**

“Mohammad Taghi Jafari, 1980”: Reflective life is the conscious life that regulates compulsory and semi-compulsory forces and actions of natural life, taking the advantages of development of flowering freedom, in the same direction as relative sublime aims, and in this way humanely characteristics that are being shaped through this passage, enter into the highest goal of the life. This highest aim is taking part in the general harmony of the existence

that is dependent on the highest wish (p. 188).

Being aware of the life means being aware of its main goals and laws, principles and values of the life. Being aware of the life is to feel aliveness and this feeling proves human being's superiority to other beings of the world, otherwise the man encounters self-estrangement and in case of not being aware of the nature of life, its basic rules will also encounter unawareness. That, which goals the life should follow and what the values of life are, will be remained far away from the range of awareness and such a life such as lives of inanimate objects and plants will encounter the instant factors and will not be capable of being commented upon through any philosophy.

#### **Method**

The present research is to briefly study the role of ethics in reflective life, and since studying in this field requires referring to the best known and authentic books, it is of the kind of review-related and library study. And also, since the present research is to prove the teaching and training in reflective life, inference is employed as its technical analysis plan.

#### **Separating and Comparing The Sublime Ethics and Compulsory Natural Ethics:**

To begin with, it is necessary to make a comparison between natural and sublime ethics for each one to be elaborated characterized enough. Through an in-depth research, we find out that from the perspective of deterministic ethics what is conceived of as a favorite ethic is:

1. Human's flexibility to accept what happens in the society, his sociability with other people, preventing the conflict and trouble, preventing conflicting and troubling them (it makes no difference whether the people of the society are pious, self-taught, and believers in God or corrupt). Such people will adopt values of the society in which they choose to live.

2. Good ethics is to follow and obey a few principles resulted from the quality of life in a society and it is the outcome of hereditary, historic, racial, economical and cultural factors specific to the said society that is not in conformity with human principles.

3. Good Ethics is that acts as the feelings and affections of other people demand, and it will make no difference this act is advisable for them or not.

4. Highest ethics is oneness concerning the juridical laws and reducing the infraction and crime, and a means for social peaceful coexistence.

While, sublime ethics which is highly valued is:

1. "To feel being a part of a whole of humanely life that God's breath

has been blown into it" (Jafari, 1985, p. 7) and "accept the fact that being in contact with all human beings is the relationship between a spirit and its sum. Sublime ethics with its two basic elements of awareness and action, that have been mentioned in its definition, causes one's spirit to reach to such a level of flowering that he understands the divine formula of "1= the whole" and " the whole" = 1.

"Anyone who kills a human being who has not committed a manslaughter or corruption on the world, it is as if he has killed all human beings and anyone who saves a man's life it is as if he has given life to all human beings." (Quran, Maedeh, verse 32).

Such a person, upon accepting the mentioned basic principle, will favor for himself what he favors for others and won't prefer for others what he doesn't prefer for himself – in this case he will really be able to taste the real and sweet flavor of "reflective life" and reach to his final happiness and flowering due to the love for highest perfection.

It is clear that such a movement and understanding and feeling, will be impossible without getting rid of pure natural life in order to arrive into the "reflective life" and since this behavior is objective and dynamic, it will not present flexibility to everything in the society and will not lose its essence.

2. This ethics, along with evaluating the humanely feelings and affections, and accepting the necessity for their saturation within the reflective limits strengthens its foundations upon the feelings elevated by humanely permanent principles.

3. Ethics in reflective life is not being completely surrendered to compulsory laws of social life that are the effect of inheritance, race, etc., but bearing free conscience, that is reflective of perfections and charities and stimulates the man towards them, it interacts with its society.

4. Sublime ethics is beyond the thought that to be considered as a server for social rights and a means for reducing the offense and crime. Although this is among the ethic-making results in reflective life, ethics in its rational state is the ratio of spirit to the body, and the holy prophet of Islam introduces it as the objective of his prophetic mission.

"Indeed I have been appointed to complete the generousities of the ethic" (Nouri, 1987, p. 187).

The great scholar Jafari (God's mercy befalls him) concludes from the above noble Hadith :

"Reflective life that deserves documentation to the one God and can be called the unpolluted life, is based on the highest humanely ethics that the holy prophet (peace be upon him) has been appointed to complete and

conclude it." "(Jafari, 1980, p. 241)

#### **Some Descriptions About Sublime Ethics:**

Once we have elaborated upon supremacy of the sublime ethics over deterministic ethics, it is necessary to provide some brief descriptions on it which is related to the reflective life:

1. Ethics is the prosperity of reality in human's soul.
2. Ethics reflects safe life and conscience of human being, and the conscience is as the compass of existence ship of the people in the ocean of existence.
3. Ethics is the interpreter of "reflective life" of human beings.
4. Ethics is the cause of human beings victory against their animal-like qualities.
5. No happiness or joy can be equal to the happiness which comes into existence into the minds of moral human beings.
6. The intention and decision which come into the existence due to the one's highest humanely characters, don't lead to regret.
7. Feeling duty based upon the highest moral perfections is the best feeling that blossoms into the minds of human beings.
8. No nation or people, lacking the highest moral perfections, is worthy of being studied through the pages of the large book of history.
9. There is no sign and denotation to be like ethics for understanding of the human being.
10. If the highest character of human being is eliminated from his life, there will remain a complex and dangerous being that calls itself human being.

"According to the above descriptions, the elimination of the highest moral perfections from the people's lives is just equal to their needlessness for personality and / or it is to make the reality to be destroyed, the reality which has separated them from other animals." (Jafari, 1988, p. 92)

#### **Necessities of Sublime Ethics:**

Reflective life is of particular significance to humanity. Similarly, sublime ethics is of great importance for mankind. To end our discussion we will provide some reasons to justify the existence of sublime ethics.

The first reason:

According to the history, any society in which the compass of conscience of sublime ethics has worked better and more correct, the ship of individual and social life of that society has passed over the surface of the sea of its history without encountering any difficulties.

The second reason:

Not any proper humanely civilization in history direction has been

revealed and reached to the highest point of exaltation without forgiveness and sincere, conscious, and elective devotion of its original founders.

"When the God awakens a nation to stand on its own feet and reach to the highest points of development, He, at first, establishes its ethics." (Jafari, 1985, p. 197)

The third reason:

Lack of sublime ethics concerning any individual or any society that has not been cautioned and some states and changes have not taken place in the main elements of his mind, has caused different agitations, temptations, and distresses such as:

1. The unspoiled and constructive loves in the minds of human beings to be disappeared.
2. Feeling aimlessness in life that prescribes committing all of the ugliness and vulgarities.
3. Feeling the self as an aim and the others as a means, that will cause all human being's lives to become worthless.
4. Feeling the necessity for being in relation with other people because of the need, and for parting from them because of the personal benefits.

**Conclusion:**

Human beings have some potential abilities which can be activated through practice. But in sublime dimensions the major ground for ethics is considered to include the flourishing of human personality in the course of reflective life. Ethics, in this sense, comprises activation of positive potentials and the most elevated inner realities of mankind on the way to achieve perfection and the highest objective of life. Ethics is conceived to serve as a tool to subject oneself to the attractions of sublimity and rise thereafter to the real ego. This elevation is but gaining what is termed reflective life. Therefore, in this elevation sublime ethics has a role to play only when there is in mankind a feeling of being a part of the whole human life which has been blown a divine life and only when he has accepted the existence of a relationship between a soul and its totality. It is this ethics which is mainly focused upon in reflective life.

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