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A Standard for the Evaluation of Voluntary Actions and Its Conditions from the Standpoint of the Quran and Hadith

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Abstract

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There are two old important questions in ethics: what standard should a voluntary action meet to be moral or valuable? And by what standard can one determine the positive or negative moral worth of an action according to the religious texts? Indicating what standards make voluntary actions valuable, this paper classifies the valuable actions into two types: actions the rewards for which can be gained in this world and actions the rewards for which cannot be gained in this world (they are beyond the capacity of this world). This study shows that according to the religious texts, the criterion for the positive value of human voluntary actions is to please God, and an action has to satisfy two conditions, if it is to please God: (a) it must be considered as serving God; (b) it must reinforce or protect human dignity. Since if a deed lacks any of these conditions, it will not be valuable and will not lead to divine pleasure.

Keywords

Moral actions, the value of actions, standard for the evaluation of moral actions, voluntary actions, God's pleasure, human dignity.

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