

# A Comparative Study of Intrinsic Good in Mill's Utilitarianism and Maslaha in the Baghdad Theological School

Amir Hossein Pashaei\* | Hossein Zare\*\* | Saeed Kazemi\*\*\*



9

Abstracts

## Abstract

For consequentialists in normative ethics, the realization of "good" and the outcomes of moral actions are of primary importance. The "good" here refers to intrinsic rather than instrumental good. However, consequentialists differ in determining what constitutes intrinsic good. In John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism, intrinsic good is defined as "pleasure" and freedom from pain, with morally right actions maximizing pleasure for the greatest number. The concept of "maslaha" (public interest or welfare) in Islamic tradition can be compared to intrinsic good in utilitarianism. Maslaha serves as a principle for determining the moral value of actions and, within the rationalist Baghdad theological school, shows both divergences and overlaps with utilitarian theory. Using a descriptive-analytical method, this study finds that intrinsic good and maslaha are both rooted in "pleasure" and "pain." However, the conceptualization of maslaha—particularly its criteria, methods of assessment, and realization—avoids many critiques of Mill's hedonistic utilitarianism.

## Keywords

Intrinsic Good, Utilitarianism, John Stuart Mill, Maslaha, Baghdad School.

---

\* Adjunct Professor, Al-Mustafa International Virtual University, Qom, Iran (Corresponding Author) | pashaei61@gmail.com.

\*\* Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, Faculty of Medicine, Hamadan University of Medical Sciences, Iran. | h.zare@umsha.ac.ir

\*\*\* Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, Faculty of Medicine, Hamadan University of Medical Sciences, Iran | s.kazemi@umsha.ac.ir