

A Comparative Study of the Meaning of “Halū’” from the Viewpoints of Martyr Muṭahharī and Ayatullāh Jawādī Āmulī

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Abstract

The human is a creature whose being is filled with instinctive and innate qualities. One of these qualities is the “Halū’iyyat” which is noted in the Qur’ān 70:19 and discusses the sensitivity of the human to the good and the evil. There is a disagreement among the exegetes with regard to the interpretation of this verse. This article has adopted a descriptive-analytical method to examine the opinions of two contemporary exegetes, i.e. martyr Murtaḍā Muṭahharī and Ayatullāh Jawādī Āmulī in this regard. The results reveal that although the stances of both exegetes is in line with the viewpoint of those exegetes who consider the verse as a description of the human nature, Martyr Muṭahharī takes the human nature based on “Halū’iyyat” per se as his perfection, while Ayatullāh Jawādī Āmulī believes that the perfection recognized by Islam and its jurisprudence is in the vicinity to God and the manifestation of the most sacred Divine Essence in the human. Nonetheless, the opinions of these two exegetes are not conflicting, because martyr Muṭahharī’s intention of this type of perfection is the primordial and organic perfection, while Ayatullāh Jawādī Āmulī refers to the true perfection.

Keywords

Halū’, Human perfection, Good and evil, Jawādī Āmulī, Martyr Muṭahharī.

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Introduction

The word Halū‘ is one of the controversial terms in the Qur’ān which has given rise to different viewpoints. This term means the human sensitivity and reaction to the affliction of damages and disadvantages or the achievement of benefits and advantages, and has been mentioned once in the Qur’ān 70:19. There is a disagreement among exegetes on the point that if this verse is to reproach the human, to praise him, or something else. This article aims at analyzing and inspecting the opinions of the two contemporary exegetes, i.e. martyr Muṭahharī and Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī, and to answer the question on the viewpoints of martyr Muṭahharī and Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī toward the Qur’ān 70:10. Although various exegetes have presented lengthy discussions on the foregoing verse in their commentaries, no separate study has been found in the literature to comprehensively collect and examine the opinions of the two foregoing exegetes in this regard. Therefore, it is necessary for this descriptive-analytical study to first present the viewpoints of both these exegetes and then to use the various verses and narrations in order to evaluate the two opinions.

The concept of Halū‘

The word “Halū‘” is taken from the root “ha.la.‘a”, which is used within the hyperbolic principle framework (fayūmī, 1993, vol. 2: 639) to connote several meanings: greed (Ṭurayḥī, 1996, vol. 4: 411; Ibn Manzūr, 1993, vol. 1: 114), the intensity of greed and the scarcity of patience (Ṣāḥib, 1993, vol. 1: 114; Mūsā, 1989, vol. 1: 167), complaint (Farāhīdī, 1988, vol. 10: 107), the intensity of worriedness and complaint (Zamakhsharī, 1986: 705; id., 1996, vol. 3: 406), complaint and the lack of patience (Ḥusaynī Zabīdī, 1993, vol. 11: 546), and complaint and hunger (Qurashī, 1992, vol. 7: 159). *Mu‘jam maqā’īs al-luḡha* expresses that “h.l.” in the word “Halū‘” implies speed and intensity. For instance, the phrase “Nāqat halwā’” means an ostrich that walks fast (Ibn Fāris, 1984, vol. 6: 62). Moreover, Muṣṭafawī in his *al-Taḥqīqī kalimāt al-Qur’ān* has taken the common meaning in the verb form “hala‘a” as the tendency to being blissful and having pleasures, and has enumerated complaint, greed, fear, the lack of patience, etc. as its negative consequences (Muṣṭafawī, 2009, vol. 11: 294).

The word “Halū‘” has been used in the Qur’ān only once (Qur’ān 70:19). Similar to the philologists, the exegetes have disagreements over the meaning of this term. Some exegetes have taken it to mean greedy (Baḥrānī, 1995, vol. 5: 448; Ṭūsī, n.d., vol. 10: 121; Qumī, 1984, vol. 2: 386; Abū al-Futūḥ Rāzī, 1987, vol. 19: 409), some others have interpreted it as impatient (Farrā’, 1980, vol. 3: 185), and still others have adopted both meanings

(Ṭabrisī, 1993, vol. 10: 535; Ṭabarī, 1991, vol. 29: 49; Bayḍāwī, 1997, vol. 5: 246; Fayḍ Kāshānī, 1994, vol. 5: 226). There are also some other exegetes who have added other meanings to these two ones. For instance, the word has been defined in *al-Tafsīr al-wasīṭ* as “grief, intense greed, and the lack of patience” (Zuḥaylī, 2001, vol. 3: 2735) and in *al-Furqān fī tafsīr al-Qur’ān bil-Qur’ān* as “complaining, greedy, fearful, weak, and impatient” (Ṣādiqī Tihirānī, 1986, vol. 29: 126). Some others have added the sixth and seventh meanings to it as parsimony and overeating (Māwirdī, n.d., vol. 6: 94; Ibn Jawzī, 2001, vol. 4: 338).

Meanwhile, many exegetes have reminded their readers that the two verses after the Qur’ān 70:19 interpret the term “Halū” (Ṭabāṭabā’ī, 1996, vol. 20: 13; Makārim Shīrāzī, 2012, vol. 25: 28; Ālūsī, 1994, vol. 15: 69; Zamakhsharī, 1986, vol. 4: 612). Based on this viewpoint, it seems that the word “Halū” means being sensitive at the times of benefit and damage.

Most exegetes have taken the Qur’ān 70:19 as reprimanding and reproaching the human. An example is Ibn ‘Arabī who takes the human as the source of vices and the place of impurities which – in this exegete’s opinion – is necessitated by his creation and the nature of his self. He also believes that the humans belong to the world of darkness, with the exception of worshippers and those who really undertake things for the sake of God (Ibn ‘Arabī, 2001, vol. 2: 370).

The consideration of “Halū’iyyat” as a negative quality and consequently the reproaching of the human by the foregoing verse is the view adopted by numerous exegetes. Here a list of sources that have taken this view is given with no further explanation due to the space considerations: Tustarī, 2002, vol. 1: 177; Ṭayyib, 1999, vol. 13: 189; Ḥusaynī Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīmī, 1984, vol. 13: 312; Marāghī, n.d., vol. 29: 71; Ibn Kathīr, 1998, vol. 8: 240; Ḥaqqī Bursūsawī, n.d., vol. 10: 163; Ibn Jazī, 1995, vol. 2: 411; Khaṭīb, n.d., vol. 15: 1173; Ṭabarī, 1991, vol. 29: 49-50; Tha‘ālibī, 1997, vol. 5: 484; Ibn Abī Zamnīn, 2003, vol. 2: 48; Fakhr Rāzī, 1999, vol. 30: 644; Zamakhsharī, 1986, vol. 4: 612; Abū Ḥayyān Andalusī, 1999, vol. 10: 275; Kashānī, 1957, vol. 10: 10.

Nonetheless, the opinions of these exegetes are incongruent with other verses of the Qur’ān. In some verses of the Qur’ān, God has called the creation of the human as “the best stature” (Qur’ān 95:4) and Himself as “the Best of creators” (Qur’ān 23:14). It is evident that the phrase “the best stature” about the creation of the human regards his whole creation, including his outward, inward, body, and soul. Is it imaginable that God has created something with a given quality and then reproaches him because he has that very quality?

Considering the phrase “Khuliq” (was created) in the verse, it seems that the mistake made by many of these exegetes is that instead on emphasizing the creation itself, they have taken it to mean the human ingratitude, forgetfulness, and whims of soul. However, creation is an act of genesis and, and the humans at the time of their creation do not have the volition and free will to be used as the criterion for their deeds.

Martyr Muṭahharī’s viewpoint

In his explanation of the verse, martyr Muṭahharī first translates it as “Verily the human has been created as Halū‘. The word Halū‘ means greedy. That is to say, [the verse says] the human has been created greedy (Qur’ān 70:19). In other words, he has been created this way, and if a mishap afflicts him, he will complain a lot and will get extremely worried. He makes a fuss when a bad thing afflicts him (Qur’ān 70:21). On the other hand, when he receives something beneficial, he gets manū‘, i.e. he grasps it firmly, does not let it go, and does not give it to anyone else” (Muṭahharī, 2011, vol. 27: 713). Then, he sets out to differentiate Halū‘ and ḥarīṣ (greedy) by referring to the two sensitivities mentioned in the verse, and interprets Halū‘ as the human’s sensitiveness to the good and the bad (ibid.). According to this definition, he rejects the stance taken by the majority of the exegetes – who interpret the verse as reproaching the human. To justify his opinion, he presents the human freedom and notes that this freedom requires a capital such as intellectual talent, physical talent, or financial capital. Having such things brings about perfection for him, but getting stuck in this stage is a shortcoming for him (ibid.: 712-719).

The capital intended by master Muṭahharī is the same Halū‘iyyat quality which has been installed in the human by God. After presenting some examples, he writes: “So what causes praise and what brings about reproach? The basis of this creation – that is, this natural desire, this sensitivity to the good, this unplanned tolerance of the vice in some cases for the sake of a larger good – is perfection, and the basic form of this state should exist in the human. The very creation of this state for the human is perfection. If a human is created but is indifferent to the good and the bad, he is in fact a defective creature. He is like a mother-born disabled person. He is created with a disable spirit. Such a person is not a complete human and is not at all a healthy one” (ibid.: 719).

In martyr Muṭahharī’s opinion, the shortcoming for a human is to continue to stay in his initially defective form, while he should choose that second state because he is a free creature, but he should go through the second state by his own free will and volition. Martyr Muṭahharī gives in another interpretation and says: “The second state is when he evaluates these

goods and vices against the criteria of reason and Islamic Law" (ibid.). From the viewpoint of martyr Muṭahharī, it is this freedom that might take the human to the highest levels that even cannot be achieved by the angels, and at the same time, it is this very freedom that might lead the human to be meaner than the animals (Qur'ān 76:3). If the free human wants to move beyond the limits of the angels, he should use this Halū'iyat tool, but if he uses it wrongly, he will become meaner than the animals (Muṭahharī, 2011, vol. 27: 703).

Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī's viewpoint

In his interpretation of the foregoing verse, Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī starts his discussion with a focus on the innate disposition and the nature. He relates the complaints made by the suffering human to his nature and his patience as stemming from his innate disposition (Jawādī Āmulī, 1997, vol. 7: 77-78). He further describes that "The human has both a muddy [natural] aspect and a divine aspect (pp. 71-72). Since his muddy aspect is exclusivist, it does not allow others to receive the blessing he has received, and because he has not achieved the ability to tolerate the difficulties, he complains when a vice afflicts him; that is to say, he loses his patience in both cases. However, his innate disposition (i.e. the divine aspect) tries to deliver to others any goodness that he has received, because it knows that the lack of need to "something" is better than needlessness "due to that thing"; therefore, such a person tries become an epitome of needlessness, rather than merely becoming needless. If he is afflicted by the damages, he tries to refrain from complaining and remains patient, because he knows that the positive aspect of an affliction is detachment as well as the establishment of monotheism, attention, and trust" (Jawādī Āmulī, 1997, vol. 7: 78-79).

The viewpoint of this exegete about the attribution of the Halū'iyat attribute to the prophets (a) – as humans – is that since the prophets (a) have grown based on the foregoing pure and divine innate disposition and have purified themselves through worshipping, they have become immune to overreliance on their natural aspect. They are not manū' or jazū', as they are immune to being Halū' and they pray tolerantly when they receive a blessing, and they never complain. Similarly, their generosity, continence, tolerance, and trust in God – as their outstanding qualities – are incongruent with being manū' (ibid.).

In his viewpoint, one who sees only himself does not see his perfection path, and when he does not see the perfection path, he cannot move, because movement is the primordial perfection compared to the goal, and goal is the upcoming perfection, and when one is deprived of the primordial perfection, he can never achieve the next perfection level. In Jawādī Āmulī's opinion,

the perfection of the wayfarer is to be patient himself and to advise others to be patient (ibid.: 79).

The comparative analysis and investigation of the question

Several aspects of the two exegetes' opinions about Halū'yyat attribute can be analyzed and examined based on the Qur'ān 70:19.

1. It seems that the viewpoints adopted by martyr Muṭahharī and Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī are in line with the viewpoints of those exegetes who believe that this verse is to "describe the human creation" rather than reproaching him (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1996, vol. 20: 13; Burūjirdī, 1987, vol. 7: 243; Abū al-Futūḥ Rāzī, 1987, vol. 19: 409; Ibn 'Āshūr, n.d., vol. 29: 156). From the viewpoint of these exegetes, "Halū'yyat" attribute is part of *Amour-propre*, and if it is used for the sake of God, it will lead the human to salvation. However, if it is used in deviating paths, it will take the human toward unbledness and misery due to traits such as parsimony, envy, egotism, exclusivism, etc. Therefore, the human greed and Halū'yyat is not innately wicked; rather, it is a kind of perfection. For instance, being greedy with regard to knowledge or self-purification and servitude to God is a moving force for the person who owns this trait.

2. Another outstanding point in martyr Muṭahharī's words is the use of the term "madḥ" (praise) against the term "dhamm" (blame). Despite the exploration of the related literature, we did not find any commentary which interprets this verse as praising the human. Martyr Muṭahharī has been the only figure in this regard who has used this term in his words. It seems that his intention of the word madḥ is when the verse is related to the human volitional acts, i.e. the human is praised when he – using his own free will – gauges the good and bad affairs against the intellectual and religious criteria; otherwise, he is blameworthy. However, it will be questionable to think that his intention of the foregoing assertion has been to say that the mere possession of this attribute by the human (without doing any volitional act) is his perfection and so the human is principally praiseworthy. The reason for this can be found in what Ayatullāh Miṣbāḥ Yazdī has stated: "If there is not volition, there is no ethical value, and before doing any good or bad action, there is no room for praise or blame" (Miṣbāḥ Yazdī, 2010: 364).

3. Although one of the common points in the discussions of the two foregoing noble exegetes about the respective verse is the human perfection, there is a difference in their approach to this discussion. From the viewpoint of martyr Muṭahharī, the very nature of the human is a perfection for the human because he has been created as sensitive to good and bad (Muṭahharī, 2011, vol. 27; 719). However, Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī pays attention to a

type of perfection which is achieved through patience and action (Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī, 1997, vol. 7: 79; id., 2005, vol. 11: 61).

Now, concerning martyr Muṭahharī's assertion, it might be asked that when this Halū'iyat attribute has been put in the human by the Sublime God, how can it be used to praise the human before the human has not put it into practice and has not made any volitional act based on it? To answer this question, it is necessary to first provide a definition of "kamāl" (perfection). The word kamāl has been defined as "An existential attribute by which a creature is described; however, when we gauge an existential matter using various things, it will be perfection compared to some of them, while with regard to other, not only it is not perfection, but also it reduces the existential value of that being and will make it faulty. Moreover, some beings essentially do not have the capability to receive some types of perfection. For example, getting sweet is perfection for some fruit such as pear and melon, while perfection for some other fruit is in being sour or having other tastes. The point here is that every being has a certain essential limit, and if it transgresses that limit, it will turn to something else ... (Miṣbāḥ Yazdī, n.d.: 9).

From the viewpoint of Islamic philosophy, if a phenomenon moves from potentiality to actuality, it is said to have evolved. Mullā Ṣadrā's Substantial Movement theory relies on this definition to express the existence of evolution in the phenomena, because in the substantial movement, in which movement is part of the substance and essence of the phenomenon, the talents and capabilities of a given phenomenon is actualized in its every existential stage. Philosophers' definition of movement also regards this same meaning (Naṣrī, 2011: 100). Therefore, martyr Muṭahharī takes the movement itself as a contingent accident and a kind of perfection (Muṭahharī, *Asfār lessons*, 1995, vol. 11: 374). He says: "Whatever God creates, His creation is [in fact] moving that creature to its proper perfection" (Id., *An introduction to the Qur'ān*, 1995, vol. 26:644). This indicates that perfection is a relative matter and every being has a talent based on which it becomes capable of perfection. Consequently, martyr Muṭahharī suggests that the human's sensitivity to the good and the bad is his perfection, in the same way that knowledge is a kind of perfection for him, while perfection of a plant is something else (Id., 2001, vol. 27: 713). In his opinion, even the human abilities, such as the ability to obey or disobey, are kinds of perfection (Id., 2008: 317).

Another important point is that every material being that has a higher level of existence possesses inferior faculties, too, that it can use in its perfection path. The inferior existential attributes can be considered as the primordial and organic perfections for a phenomenon that are essential for

the attainment of the superior and true perfection. The true perfection of every being is, therefore, what its highest actuality necessitates it to achieve (Miṣbāḥ Yazdī, n.d.: 12-13). In view of that, the Halū‘iyyat attribute in the human should be ruled as a primordial and organic perfection which paves the way for him to achieve his true perfection. Therefore, martyr Muṭahharī believes that all humans, even the believers and worshippers, have been created as Halū‘. However, this state – which is at the beginning a kind of perfection but later should turn into a more complete humane state – remains in some humans and they remain this way until the end of their lives, while the worshipper group are not like this [and move to the higher state] because they worship God (Muṭahharī, 2011, vol. 27: 715). Similarly, a human whose perfection – based on his primordial innate disposition – is to be jazū‘ (complaining) about the bad and to be manū‘ (exclusivist) about the good should get to a stage in which he not only is not manu‘ toward properties and riches, but also considers part of his own property as belonging to the needy. This is the higher perfection (ibid.).

Therefore, the discussions made by martyr Muṭahharī do not contradict with what Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī has suggested in his interpretation of the foregoing verse. The only difference is in that martyr Muṭahharī has taken the discussion from the organic and non-volitional perfection of the human to his real and volitional perfection, but Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī pays attention to a kind of perfection which is attained in the light of the human’s volitional movement. The latter says, “Perfection is in the human sight and possessions. The human should understand the divine knowledge well and act based on it, that is, he should put into practice what he has learned. In the same way that the good acts accompany the good worshipping, the vices coexist with the faulty worshipping. In other words, if a person succeeds in doing some good deeds, he will succeed in saying good prayers, and those good prayers set the ground for him to do other good acts after saying those prayers” (Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī, 2005, vol. 11: 56). Therefore, he emphasizes: “The perfection recognized by Islam and its jurisprudence is in the vicinity to God and the manifestation of the most sacred Divine Essence in the human, because there is no shortcoming in God and He is the absolute existence, knowledge, power, life, and perfection. The servant of God receives a share of these qualities, benefits from them, and gets complete to the extent he goes near God. The only obstacle that prevents him from going toward the Beloved is “the haze on the path”, which can be removed through self-purification.

Martyr Muṭahharī’s viewpoint is congruent with Jawādī Āmulī’s stance. In his book *The complete human*, martyr Muṭahharī says: “The Qur’ān tells that

human to love God because it considers God as the absolute perfection and the ultimate Goal of the human movement, and regards the human path to be toward God. Therefore, the human's attention to God is like the attention paid by a particle to its ultimate perfection" (Muṭahharī, 2008: 301).

A reference to the qur'ānic verses also makes it clear that the tone of some verses about Ādam's children is generally praising. Examples include the Qur'ān 17:70 and 16:7-8. In these verses, the state of the human is deemed as a genetic matter, and the word *kamāl* (perfection) in these cases does not have a value-laden meaning; rather, here the degrees of existence are intended. The purpose of praise in these verses which regard the genetic station of the human is in fact praising the divine act; if the human has any excellence, it is because it belongs to God's dignity (Miṣbāḥ Yazdī, 2010: 362-365).

On the contrary, many qur'ānic verses deem a dignity for the human that is achieved through the undertaking of the volitional acts. An example is the Qur'ān 49:13. This dignity is different from the one noted in the Qur'ān 17:70 or in the verses that emphasize that those who do good actions and have positive moral values are existentially more complete. For instance, God in the Qur'ān 27:97 and 92:5-7 promises that "So he who gives (in charity) and fears (God), and (in all sincerity) testifies to the best, We will indeed make smooth for him the path to Bliss." Therefore, martyr Muṭahharī and Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī both consider monotheism the ultimate perfection of the human soul (Muṭahharī, *Monotheistic worldview*, 1995, vol. 2: 17; Jawādī Āmulī, 2005, vol. 10: 59).

Similarly, the Islamic narrations also pay attention to the perfection that is achieved through the human free will and volition. Imām Ṣādiq (a) says: "The true perfection is in understanding the religion, being patient at the difficult times, and following moderation in costs of living" (Kulaynī, 1986, vol. 1: 32; Ibn Shu'ba Ḥarrānī, 1984: 292; Shaykh Ḥurr 'Āmilī, 1988, vol. 17: 65).

In a narration from Imām 'Alī (a), it is asserted that the human perfection is in being patient at the time of difficulties, showing abstinence in making requests, and helping those who need help (Tamīmī Āmudī, 1989: 95; Laythī Wāsiṭī, 1997: 52). In another narration, Imām 'Alī (a) regards the awareness of the human of his incompleteness as a sign of his perfection and virtuousness (Tamīmī Āmudī, 1989: 681; Laythī Wāsiṭī, 1997: 471).

Nonetheless, there are some narrations that regard the non-volitional (genetic) perfection of the human, such as a narration from Imām Ṣādiq (a) who says: "There are three attributes that if are given to anyone, he will get perfect: wisdom, beauty, and eloquence" (Ibn Shu'ba Ḥarrānī, 1984: 320). It

is evident that the outer beauty of the human is a genetic matter out of the human volition domain, but the human effort has a great role in the inner beauty, wisdom, and eloquence.

Conclusion

The word “Halū’” in the Qur’ān 70:19 regards an attribute in the human nature and expresses his sensitiveness to the good and the bad, and it is needed by any human to live.

The viewpoints of martyr Muṭahharī and Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī to the interpretation of this verse are in line with the viewpoint of those exegetes who believe that this verse describes the human creation rather than blaming him. Therefore, one of the common points of these two exegetes is that the appropriate use of the Halū’iyyat attribute under the control of reason and Islamic Law protects the human against the damages of Halū’iyyat and guides him to his true perfection. However, the difference between the viewpoints of these exegetes is in their approach to the perfection discussion. Martyr Muṭahharī calls Halū’iyyat the organic and primordial perfection, while Āyatullāh Jawādī Āmulī regards Halū’iyyat in this verse as a kind of perfection that is achieved via his volitional efforts and takes him to the vicinity of God. Therefore, it can be said that the two viewpoints are not conflicting.

In the qur’ānic verses and Islamic narrations, both the genetic dignity and the volitional human dignity have been noted, and these two have been used to praise him. It is noteworthy that when the Qur’ān regards the non-volitional (genetic) perfection of the human and praises him in this regard, it is in fact praising the Creator rather than the creature. However, what is considered as the value by the Qur’ān and the narrations and takes the human to true perfection is faith, righteous deeds, and obedience to the divine commands.

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