

Research Paper

Analysis of Allameh Tabatabaei's Approach to Two Common Characteristics of Judaism and Western Civilization: Sensationalism and MaterialismNosrat Nilsaz*¹  Mohammad Javad Rahmatian², ¹ Associate Professor, Department of Quran and Hadith Sciences, Tarbiat Modares University.² M. A. in Quran and Hadith Sciences, Tarbiat Modares University.

10.22080/qhs.2025.28759.1189

Received:

January 29, 2024

Accepted:

July 13, 2024

Available online:

March 10, 2025

Extended Abstract**1. Introduction**

In different periods, various approaches to Quranic exegesis have emerged. Certainly, the needs of the Muslim community in each era, whether more or less, have played a role in the development and flourishing of these approaches. Human scientific advancements and industrial achievements in the past two centuries have grown remarkably, and various fields of knowledge and technologies have brought about profound changes in daily life. Alongside this development and evolution, the growth of rationality, intellectualism, and the posing of new questions, concerns, and complex needs in different societies have been witnessed. These

transformations have also fundamentally impacted the tradition of exegesis, leading to the emergence of a rational-social approach. Exegetes, with the idea that the Quran is "a clarification for all things" (An-Nahl 16:89) and that answers suitable for new questions can be found in the Quran, have endeavored to articulate the Quran's stance on various issues by engaging with the text using a new language and style that is convincing to the new generation. These exegetes certainly encountered different responses from Western thinkers to these questions and sometimes included Western perspectives in their evaluations and critiques.

The Al-Mizan Exegesis, apart from its prominence and importance in various aspects, is also a turning point in the social

*Corresponding Author: Corresponding Author

Address: Tarbiat Modares University.

Email: nilsaz@modares.ac.ir

approach not only in Shia exegesis but in the exegesis of the entire Islamic world. Allameh Tabatabaei, repeatedly, either in the context of critiquing Western views regarding Islamic teachings, rules, and laws, or in independent discussions relevant to the subjects presented in the verses, has critiqued the theoretical foundations, practical methods, and individual and social laws of Western civilization. One of these significant subjects is the theory of sensationalism and materialism in Western civilization. A subtle point is that Allameh considers Western civilization to share these two characteristics with the Jewish people. Many verses of the Quran are dedicated to the invitation of Prophet Moses (PBUH) and the stories of the Israelites and Pharaoh, as well as the confrontations of Jews with the invitation of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). These verses mention some characteristics of the Jews, such as arrogance and egotism (Al-Baqarah 2:80, 111; Al-Ma'idah 5:71), breaking covenants (Al-Baqarah 2:83, 100), seeking excuses (Al-Baqarah 2:61; An-Nisa' 4:153), pride and disobedience (Al-Baqarah 2:87, 247), and envy (Al-Baqarah 2:89-90). Through his unparalleled subtle thinking and precision, Allameh Tabatabaei has also inferred the two fundamental characteristics of sensationalism and materialism from the Quranic verses and considers Western civilization to be the inheritor of these two traits from the Jews.

This research elucidates and analyzes Allameh Tabatabaei's views on the two concepts of sensationalism and materialism among the Jews and Western civilization, the relationship between these two characteristics, and their consequences. It also explains the valid ways of acquiring knowledge from the perspective of the Quran in response to the critique of sensationalism.

2. Methods

In this study, a library-based method was used for data collection, and the research methodology follows a descriptive-analytical approach.

3. Results

One of the most important and perhaps unparalleled features of the Al-Mizan Exegesis is that, in addition to the sequential interpretation of the verses, it includes a kind of thematic exegesis as well as various scientific, philosophical, historical, social, and ethical discussions. In this research, Allameh Tabatabaei's perspective on sensationalism and materialism as two significant characteristics of Judaism, and the shared characteristics of Western civilization with the Jewish people in these two traits, has been analyzed and explained.

Allameh Tabatabaei refers to the reflections of these two traits of the Jews in Quranic verses that recount events such as the Israelites' request to see God or their peculiar questions about the slaughter of the cow. He explains the presence of these same characteristics in today's materialistic Western civilization. Additionally, Allameh critiques the theory of sensationalism with rational arguments such as the fact that the premises of the theory of sensationalism are themselves rational, that recognizing errors in sensory and rational sciences relies on rational principles and rules, and that general results in any science, even empirical sensory sciences, are not proven. He also elucidates the Quran's theory on the ways of acquiring knowledge and the domains of each method.

According to Allameh, sensationalism and materialism among the Jews have led to undesirable traits such as refusal and disobedience to divine commands, and in Western civilization, it has resulted in the prevalence of numerous superstitions.

4. Conclusion

Reflection on various Quranic verses that recount the stories of Jews or the Israelites shows that their two significant characteristics were sensationalism and materialism. They refused to follow divine commands, believing they were not bound by imitation, while they accepted without reason anything that aligned with their desires. According to Allameh Tabatabaei, these two characteristics are the common ground between Western civilization and the Jews. In Western civilization, with the prevalence of sensationalism, any non-material existence was denied, and adherence to religion was considered imitation, which science discouraged. This led to the spread of various social superstitions in the West.

Allameh Tabatabaei, by critiquing the arguments of sensationalism proponents, based on Quranic verses, demonstrates that all human knowledge comes from divine teaching, although the role of causes cannot be denied. The three domains of theoretical sciences, general and intellectual sciences, and practical sciences are

References

Adib Soltani, Mir Shamsuddin, *The Vienna Treatise*, Technical Editor: Morteza Karimi, Typed by Iranian Center for Cultural Studies, First Edition, 1980, Printed by Argy Tehran Press.

Babaei, Parviz, *Philosophical Schools from Ancient Times to Today*, Negah Publications, Tehran, Third Edition, 2013.

Bashirieh, Hossein, *An Introduction to New Theories in Political Science*, New Sciences Publications, Tehran, First Edition, 1999.

Copleston, Frederick, *A History of Philosophy, From Descartes to Leibniz*,

closely interconnected. Therefore, the Quran rejects sensationalism because the first and foremost issue in the Quran is the oneness of the Almighty God, from which all other knowledge originates. It is evident that monotheism is separate from material matters and is linked to pure rational principles. The Quran also rejects the use of experience for determining legislative rulings, and considers piety and transgression as two inspired sciences, with their details and specifics obtained through revelation. Furthermore, the Quran forbids thinking without piety and, whenever discussing religious laws and ordinances, reminds people of moral virtues and good qualities.

Funding

There is no funding support.

Authors' contribution

The responsibility for this article rests with the two research authors.

Conflict of interest

This research has no conflicts of interest.

translated by Gholamreza Aavani, Soroush Publications, Scientific and Cultural Publications Company (Education of the Islamic Revolution), 2007.

Foster, John Bellamy, *Marx's Ecology, Materialism and Nature*, translated by Ali Akbar Masoumi Beigi, Negah Publications, Tehran, 2021.

Foroutan, Gholam Hossein, *Islamic Realism and Marxist Philosophy*, Tebyan Cultural and Information Institute, Qom, 2016.

Tabatabaei, Mohammad Hossein, *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Quran*, 20 volumes,

Al-Alami Institution for Publications - Lebanon - Beirut, 2nd Edition, 1411 AH.