



An Inquiry into Mystical Interpretation of Chapter 12 of Holy Quran Based on a Comparison of Book of Bahr al-Mahabah fi Asrar al-Mavadah and the Book of Al-Settin al-Jameh Leltaef al-Basatin

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Abstract: The second half of fifth century and the whole of sixth century are regarded as the most important cultural and scientific eras of Iranian history. In this era, numerous effective works have been authored in the fields of Quranic exegesis, mysticism, and sufism. Two books entitled Bahr al-Mahabah fi Asrar al-Mavadah [The Sea of Love: Concerning the Mysteries of Friendship] that is allegedly written by Ahmad Ghazali and Al-Settin al-Jameh Leltaef al-Basatin [Comprehensive Sixty] authored by Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Tusi are among the mystical exegetical works on the interpretation of Chapter 12 of Holy Quran, i.e. Joseph, that have been published about the same historical era one in Arabic and the other in Persian.

Having taken the definitional, descriptive and historical aspects of the question of interpretation and mysticism, this seeks to make a comparison between these two books as commentaries of mystical, sapiential and moral points of Quran using a descriptive-historical-analytic method. A study of these two works along with a comparative and contrastive criticism of them which are criticizable from various perspectives, seem very broad and extensive. This shows the necessity of conducting an independent research in this regard.

Key Words: Comparison, Comparative and Contrastive Criticism, Quranic Exegesis, Mysticism and Sufism, Chapter 12 of Holy Quran (Joseph), Stylistics, Structural Analysis

INTRODUCTION

The second half of the fifth century and sixth century of Hijra that were the witness to the domination of Seljuq dynasty in Iran are counted as the most important historical eras of Iran due to cultural and scientific transformations and creations. Among various sciences, specially those sciences that are in direct relation with religious teachings, the science of scriptural exegesis experienced its golden and fruitful years in this period. In these years, numerous exegetical works in Arabic and Persian were published with various approaches.

Mysticism and sufism as a branch of Islamic beliefs and schools of thought was like a newly born infant from second to fourth centuries and its infrastructural foundations, requirements and standards were all grounded during these two centuries. These struggles yielded in the fifth and sixth centuries. It was also in this era that the permeation of sufist doctrines of mystics into Persian literature cultivated what had been created in Persian and Arabic languages in previous centuries in a more sophisticated and effective fashion.

The poetic and prosaic works that were created in fifth and sixth centuries, have established the basis of our golden literary age. Two books of Bahr al-Mahabah fi Asrar al-Mavadah allegedly by Abu al-Fath Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ghazali and Al-Settin al-Jameh Leltaef al-Basatin by Abubakr Ahmad Ibn Muhammad al-Tusi are among the interpretative and mystical works on the Chapter 12 – Joseph – of

Holy Quran that have been authored in this era. Chapter 12 of Holy Quran contains the story of the Prophet Joseph that has had a comprehensive influence on our literature. The story of Joseph particularly his romantic affair with the wife of Potiphar Egypt's Aziz (the Captain of guards of Pharo's palace) has inspired numerous literary creations in Persia. Moreover, many themes and motifs of this story have permeated into the literary works.

This essay seeks to contrast and compare the abovementioned books based on a historical and mystical interpretation of the literary narrative of the story of Joseph. There are considerable similarities and convergences between the exegetical ideas and sapiential, moral and mystical delicacies. The objective of this research is recognition of two prominent and valuable exegeses of the Chapter 12 of Holy Quran and comparing their similarities and differences. The assessments that have been conducted of the style, context, mystical lietmotives, major traditional sources and the like, tile the ground for a better understanding of the mystical delicacies of revealed words of God as well as more comprehensive researches and studies on such issues as Quranic exegesis, hagiology, literary works, translation of ancient manuscripts and so on and so forth.

1-1. Hypotheses and Research Questions

The basic hypothesis of this research is that this study can be helpful for better understanding of mystical notions of Quran.

With a thorough assessment of the structure, form and content of two works not only the structural qualities and mystical delicacies of the text are clarified the place of these exegetical works is also known among the other mystical exegeses found in the mystical heritage of the country.

By critical comparison of the similarities and differences of these two books, the common sources that have been used by both authors as well as the shared points and discrepancies are known.

The current research struggles to answer the following questions:

- How much helpful is conducting a comparative study of the exegeses that are given by the two books regarding the Chapter 12 of Holy Quran in better understanding of mystical notions of Divine Word?
- How much influential have been the ideas of the authors of these books in the creation of mystical works – particularly mystical exegeses?
- What is the scientific and literary status of these two books among the similar Persian and Arabic mystical works in Iran?
- Since there are some doubts concerning the validity of attribution of Bahr al-Mahabah to Ahmad Ghazali and no information is available on the life of the author of Al-Jameh al-Settin, can we use the style and content similarities as a basis to demonstrate that the two works have been written by the same author?

2- Theoretical Foundations of Research

2-1- Mysticism and Sufism

There are various and sometimes opposing views regarding the terms mysticism and sufism. Many scholars have taken the two as different expressions of the same notion. Dr. Shafei Kadkani considers the two terms one and understands them as “artistic vision of theology and religion” (Shafei Kadkani, 2001: 12-13).

Mysticism is nothing but an artistic and aesthetic vision of theology and religion. From this perspective, there is no religion void of mystical vision (Shafei Kadkani, 2005: 15). Professor Mutahari interprets mysticism as a sociocultural phenomenon. Accordingly, its cultural aspect reveals itself in mysticism while the social aspect has to be sought for in sufism (Mutahari, 2005: 76).

2-2- *Quranic Exegesis*

Tafsir – the Arabic word for exegesis – is built from the rootword *fassara*. Ibn Manzoor interprets *fassara* as uncovering what is covered and likewise construes *tafsir* as uncovering the hidden meaning of the problem (Ibn Manzoor, 1993). This word has been clearly used in Quran.

They do not bring to you any parable but that which We bring to you is the truth and better in explanation (exegesis) (Holy Quran, Chapter 25: 33).

Most of the exegets believe that *tafsir* in this context is referring to the explanation of the argument (Razi, 1988; Tabatabaei, 1996). The philologists and linguists are also unanimously endorsing the exegets' view in this regard and interpret *tafsir* as taking the covers off the meaning and making it clear.

Scholars and exegets have provided various definitions of the term tafsir (exegesis) in Quranic sciences. Zahabi says: exegesis is a science that discusses human understanding of the Divine Words and it covers all issues that are somehow related with uncovering the meanings (Zahabi, 1976).

According to Abu al-Fath, in an exegesis the revelation reason of a verse and its meaning are uncovered (Razi, 1988). In Sheikh al-Islam Tabari's view, exegesis concerns the meanings of Quranic words and the objective of this science is acquiring knowledge of Divine Words and Judgements (Tabarsi, d. vol. 1: 3).

2-3- *Chapter 12 of Holy Quran (known as Joseph)*

Joseph as one of the chapters of Holy Quran that contains a whole body of a story has always attracted the attention of the exegets, commentators and storytellers. In most of Islamic exegetical works such as Tafsir-e Tabari, Kashf al-Asrar Meibodi, Roz al-Jinan and the like, this story and its side events have been discussed. Such works as Al-Jameh al-Settin or Hadaeq al-Haqaeq and Bahr al-Mahabah, have been exclusively authored as an exegesis of this story. Most of the hagiological works like the works by Thalabi, Abu Eshaq Neishaburi, Esameel Ibn Kathir and Ravandi, the story of Joseph has been discussed and analysed (Shojapooran, 2013, 116). The poets and literary thinkers – both in Persian and Arabic – have created brilliant lyric and allegorical works inspired by the story of Joseph.

Nihayah al-Ert by Al-Naviri is an interesting Arabic narrative of the story of Joseph and Zuleikha (Kazemi, 2012: 136). Accordingly, numerous articles and essays have been published on this story in contemporary times. However, two exegetical works that consist the focal point of the present study have been sorely neglected and less discussed by the scholars and researchers.

A) Kitab al-Settin al-Jameh Lelataef al-Basatin (knowns as Al-Jameh al-Settin)

This book is authored by Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Tusi. He was one of the distinguished Sufis of Khurasan. He shared the common belief and regarded voyeurism and pederasty as normal actions that cherish the beauties of Divinity as revealed on earth. Even he considered loving a creature an expression of one's love of the Creator. He was very dexterous in making similes and metaphors. The key notions of his literary thought consist of beauty, sleep, mystery, well, love, passion, reign, famine and allegory. He aligns the words of great figures of Sufism with the Divine Words of Quran and prophetic traditions.

There are five manuscripts of this book (Tusi, 2005) and one edited version that has been published by Muhammad Roshan.

B) Bahr al-Mahabah fi Asrar al-Mavadah

This work has been attributed to Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ghazali who was a renowned theologian, jurisprudent and mystic from Khurasan in the second half of the fifth century. He is of a high stature in sufism.

There are ten manuscripts of this work as well as two published versions. It has also been translated into Persian twice (cf. Chapter four, Bahr al-Mahabah).

Regardless of the allusions that have been made to the name of this book under the works of Ghazali no independent research is available on it neither in a thesis form nor in article form. Only Nasrullah

Purjavadi has alluded to the similarities of these two exegetical works in a cursory fashion (Purjavadi, 1980: 297).

3- Methodology

3-1- Method

This research is focused on the mystical interpretation of Chapter 12 of Holy Quran that is commonly known as Joseph, based on a critical comparison of two books entitled *Bahr al-Mahabah fi Asrar al-Mavadah* and *Al-Settin al-Jameh Lelataef al-Basatin*. It also critically assays the mystical and exegetical methods of the two authors.

Then since,

- a) This research subject-matter has its roots in historical-literary-mystical past.
- b) It deals with the literary structures of both Arabic and Persian languages.
- c) It is concerned with the context of Divine Word and their interpretation.
- d) The form of these two works are studied from structural and comparative points of view.
- e) The exegetical-mystical content of these books are critically compared and assayed.

Accordingly, we have chosen the descriptive-historic-analytic method for this research. Of course, this analysis is conducted based on an intertextual and comparative basis.

3-2- Data Collection Method

The necessary sources for this research that are all in written form, can be divided into three categories:

- a) Original texts of the two books (*Bahr al-Mahabah* and *Al-Settin al-Jameh*)
- b) Related books.
- c) Papers collected through two major websites of Comprehensive Portal of Humanities and Noor bank of papers.

3-3- Data Analysi Method

The research data have been analysed based on the comparison of the original texts of the two books.

4- Comparison of *Bahr al-Mahbah fi Asrar al-Mavadah* and *Al-Settin al-Jameh Lelataef al-Basatin* from an Exegetical Point of View

4-1- The Verses of Chapter 12 of Holy Quran

Since both works are focused on the explanation and interpretation of the adventures of Joseph the Prophet, the authors are struggling to determine the revelation reason of this holy chapter of Quran and they both finish their interpretations at the end of the hundredth verse of the chapter.

4-2- Revelation Reason or Occasion

In *Bahr al-Mahabah*, Ahmad Ghazali argues that the twelfth chapter of Holy Quran has been revealed due to the Lord's extreme love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him);

And he revealed this chapter upon his extreme love for him (Muhammad) (Ghazali, 1876: 3).

He has also mentioned that this chapter has been revealed following the questions that were raised by the Jewish chiefs;

... and the Jews asked the chiefs of pagans to inquire Muhammad as to why the sons of Jacob have moved to Egypt as well as the story of Joseph...

In *Jameh al-Settin* a specific chapter has been written regarding the revelation reason of the Chapter 12 of Holy Quran. The author turns to a narration by Sa'd Ibn Abi Vaqqas according to which once the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was inviting the pagans to Islam and urging them to purify themselves of evils and vices... They asked the prophet to relate the stories of the past people so as to serve them as an example. Then Gabriel came and brought the following verse: *We will narrate to you (Prophet Muhammad) the best of narratives.*

4-3- Verses with Similar Exegeses

We will narrate to you (Prophet Muhammad) the best of narratives (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 3).

In both exegeses, it has been mentioned that one of the reasons for using the word *best* in this verse is the beauty of Joseph.

The story of Joseph was the best of all narratives because he was himself the best man on the planet and one can say that this story is not only the best of all narratives rather it is the story of all stories (Ghazali, 1876: 3).

Tusi offers other reasons for this expression,

A group of people have argued: the best of all stories means the most astonishing of all narratives. And some others understood this superficially and said that the best of all narratives in this context refers to its literary qualities. Since Joseph was the most beautiful man both inwardly and outwardly and he was indeed the embodiment of all beauties and delicacies that one can have due to his relation with the Divine Presence, the story of Joseph was the best of all narratives (Tusi, 2005: 39).

...of which you were previously unaware (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 3).

In both works, the authors have used a narration quoted by Ibn Abbas to argue that unawareness here does not imply negligence rather it is referring to the Prophet's inacquaintance with the details of the narrative before listening to it as God has stated:

...you did not know what the Book was, nor belief (Holy Quran, Chapter 42: 52).

According to the author of *Jameh al-Settin*:

Ibn Abbas (May God Bless his Soul) argues, in view of what story relates and the whole body of the mysteries that are revealed by way of allusion and also considering the Divine Word "*you did not know what the Book was, nor belief*" we are not allowed to declare the prophet an ignorant man as ignorance veils the heart and the whoever has veiled heart is denied from the Divine Court. Then the Great Prophet of Islam was an enlightened soul and informed man and this is why he would say, *my eyes on my head sleep but my heart's eyes are always open.* Then ignorance and negligence is only for the criminals (Tusi, 2005: 53).

We can see the same account of ignorance and negligence in *Bahr al-Mahbah*:

Some scholars have argued that whoever is ignorant is veiled and whoever is veiled is denied and in the same way that the earth's womb is crowded with bugs human heart is full of negligences and the Prophet is purified of all these negligences (Ghazali, 1876: 3).

When Joseph said to his father (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 4).

In both books Joseph's dream has been interpreted as an expression of Jacob's wonder of his child's beauty.

Ghazali has stated,

Joseph was asleep while he had put his head on Jacob's leg and Jacob was thinking of his face and asking himself: if you find this face beautiful or the sun and moon. Suddenly Joseph woke up and told his father: O' father! Moon and Sun are of no value as compared to my face as I saw them prostrating before me. Because the moon and sun are inanimate but I am alive thanks to the Beneficent God (Ghazali, 1876: 5).

And it is said that this dream happened while Joseph was sleeping beside his father in the middle of the day. Jacob was looking at the sun and then turned to Joseph and looked at his face and said: I do not know if the sun is beautiful or this bright face that is the embodiment of all perfections. Joseph woke up and said: father! This face is more beautiful and if it was not so the sun and moon and the stars on the sky would have never been prostrating before me (Tusi, 2005: 60).

Both exegets believe that by moon, sun and the stars Joseph was referring to his father, aunt and brothers (Ghazali, 1876: 6). Tusi has also mentioned the names of brothers under his comments on a prophetic traditions quoted by Jaberan Ibn Abdullah in *Jameh al-Settin* (Tusi, 2005: 67).

...I fear lest the wolf should devour him when you are not paying attention to him (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 13).

Some allusions have been made to negligence in both exegeses that are as follows:

Negligence of the father's affection for his child, forgetting the Divine Presence, negligence of jealousy and hatred, Joseph's negligence of his political and divine stature (Tusi, 2005: 115 cf. Ghazali, 1876: 14).

...and afterwards you will be a righteous nation (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 11).

In both books, righteous nation is interpreted as the nation who repents and makes a peace with his Lord and follows the orders of God and his apostles. Tusi writes,

Righteousness is hinged upon true repentance that prepares the man for meeting his Lord. And it is said that righteous is the man whose inside and outside and word and action are all the same. The righteous is the man who has made a peace with his Lord and follows the orders issued by the Lord and his apostle and keeps himself distant from the vices (Tusi, 2005: 105).

Ghazali has construed this as an indication of the brothers' opportunity for repenting and regaining their position by the father (Ghazali, 1876: 16).

...cast him into a dark pit (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 10).

In both exegeses, similar narrations have been quoted regarding the exact location of the dark pit as mentioned in the above holy verse of Quran (Ghazali, 1876: 19).

Tusi quotes Qatadeh to have said: the aforementioned pit is located in Jerusalem; he also quotes Wahab in this regard who has said that the location of this pit is in Jordan; Ka'b states that this pit is located in somewhere between Egypt and Madyan; and finally Maqatel is of the belief that the distance of this pit from Jacob was 19 kilometers (Tusi, 2005: 127).

(Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 17)

In both exegeses a believer is construed as a man who is acknowledger (Ghazali, 1876: 25).

In *Jameh al-Settin* the following verse is quoted: *but you will not believe us, though we speak the truth* (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 17 cf. Tusi, 2005: 153).

In both books we read that God did help Joseph in the pit by sending him food and water by the angels (Tusi, 2005: 171).

Ghazali argues that God would send the angels and Jins to Joseph so as to help him and be a company for him inside the dark pit (Ghazali, 1876: 28).

(Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 20)

Both authors have said that since the brothers did not know Joseph and his divine stature, then they did not appreciate his value (Tusi, 2005: 199).

Ghazali has argued that even among Joseph's brothers there were pious ones but because they did not know him they did not also appreciate his stature (Ghazali, 1876: 38).

(Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 21).

In both books the name of a man is mentioned called Ghatiphur (Ghatiphar) who was Egypt's Aziz whose wife was a woman named Zuleikha, the daughter of Timus the King of West.

In *Jameh al-Settin* we are told that this Zuleikha was the daughter of the King of West named Otimus Ibn Tavoos Ibn Alqam (Tusi, 2005: 239).

The same matter has been repeated in *Bahr al-Mahbah* as quoted by Ibn Abbas (Ghazali, 1876: 63).

... *Make his stay honorable* ... (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 21).

In both exegeses the aforementioned verse has been interpreted as saying treat him nice (Tusi, 2005: 250).

Ghazali believes that making his stay honorable implies giving him good cloths and food (Ghazali, 1876: 76).

(Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 21).

In *Jameh al-Settin* honorability of Joseph's stay is construed as position and wealth (Tusi, 2005: 264).

Ghazali has elaborated on this in more detailed fashion;

There are various interpretations of the verse *We established Joseph*: some have said that this establishing is a matter of endowing him with prophecy; some others have construed it as Joseph's ability of reading the dreams; it has also been said that establishing in this context refers to Joseph's appointment as the Aziz of Egypt; or even this establishing has been understood as the empowerment of the Lord's prophet by divine message; some have said that establishing indicates turning people's hearts towards Joseph who helped him and made him wealthy and supported him in the war and this was how God established his prophet Joseph. It was the Lord who conferred the majesty and kingdom upon him (Ghazali, 1876: 83-84).

And when he reached maturity... (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 22).

In both books maturity has been construed as referring to physical pubescence that occurs when one is between fifteen to thirty.

Tusi quotes some commentators and traditionalists to have said that maturity in this context refers to the time when Joseph was fifteen. Kalbi and Ibn Abbas say that Joseph was between eighteen to thirty two when he was declared mature. This is why the people in paradise are said to be all thirty two years old. Maturity in divine verse denotes the height of power of the youth (Tusi, 2005: 267).

In *Bahr al-Mahabah* we read that maturity in this context refers to the utmost vigority of his youth. Some have said that he was fifteen or fourteen and Ibn Abbas and Kalbi believe that Joseph was seventeen. Exegets have argued that he was thirty two and by maturity God was referring to his rational power (Ghazali, 1876: 85).

And when he reached maturity... (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 22).

Both have interpreted *judgement* as knowledge and the latter is conceived as tantamount to monotheism. Ghazali understands knowledge as one's insight of Halal and Haram (Ghazali, 1876: 86). And Tusi construes knowledge as monotheism and confessing to Divine Oneness (Tusi, 2005: 267).

... *We bestowed on him judgment and knowledge...* (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 22).

In *Jameh al-Settin* the righteousness that is mentioned in the holy verse as the reason for the divine bestowal of judgement and knowledge has been interpreted as monotheism, devotion and prayer; in *Bahr al-Mahabah*, it is understood as prayer, devoted work for the sake of God, prophecy and being loyal to all rituals.

Certain women in the city said ... (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 30).

Both books jointly argue that five women revealed the secret of Joseph and Zuleikha.

The wife of chief of the table, wife of the cupbearer and the curtain keeper have been mentioned in both books.

Ghazali has spoken of the wife and sister of the curtain keeper (Ghazali, 1876: 100).

Tusi has mentioned the names of the wife of cupbearer and the wife of ministers (Tusi, 2005: 351).

... *When they saw him, they were so taken with him that they cut their hands...* (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 31).

The two reasons that have been mentioned as to why Zuleikha did not cut her hands, are the same in both books;

First reason is that because Zuleikha had seen Joseph several times and the women were all seeing him for the first time.

The other reason is that since she was in love with Joseph she did not take any knife to her hands (Ghazali, 1876: 105).

Tusi argues that if one asks that why Zuleikha did not cut her hands but the other women did we would say that Zuleikha had already seen Joseph and she was not as surprised as the women who were seeing Joseph and since the time when she fell in love with Joseph she never took any knife at her hands. Her maids asked why she does not take any knife? She answered that knife is a means for cutting but I am looking for union. Whoever looks for union never roams around the means of cutting (Tusi, 2005: 355).

... *Mention me in the presence of your lord...* (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 42).

In both exegeses we read that by *your lord* Joseph is referring to the lord of the cupbearer who was visiting him in the prison and Joseph was trying to send a message of his innocence to his lord via this visitor (Ghazali, 1876: 114).

... *so that he remained in prison for a certain number years* (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 43).

The two exegetes have unanimously argued that this a certain number years is in fact seven years (Ghazali, 1876: 116 cf. Tusi, 2005: 401).

Tusi in other place quotes Vahab Ibn Menbah to have said that Joseph was imprisoned for twelve years (ibid: 412).

I shall never stir from this land until my father gives me leave or Allah makes known to me His judgement... (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 80).

In both exegeses it has been mentioned that Judah sat down and said I shall not leave here until my death (Ghazali, 1876: 148).

In *Jameh al-Settin* we are told that Shimon stayed by Judah in Egypt (Tusi, 2005: 566).

... *I smell the scent of Joseph...* (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 94).

Both exegetes believe that when the convoy left Egypt Divine Will brought the scent of Joseph to Jacob.

Tusi argues that the distance of Joseph's shirt from Jacob was 560 kilometers (Tusi, 2005: 624).

Ghazali has estimated this distance to be a 10 days path ling (Ghazali, 1876: 154).

4-4- Verses with Different Interpretations

Alef Lam Ra (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 1).

Ghazali has interpreted these symbolic letters as O' Muhammad relying on the exegeses of some interpreters (Ghazali, 1876: 3).

Tusi has related two alternative exegeses one from Ibn Abbas and the other from some exegetes.

Ibn Abbas the translator of Quran my God bless him says that these letters means that I am the God who is Omniscient and Ubiquitous. I know whatever you are doing and I see you from the above. I have revealed this book as the treasury of divine mysteries and it is surely not from the monks rather it is the creation of Divine Lord (Tusi, 2005: 6).

We have sent it down, an Arabic Koran... (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 2).

Ghazali believes that by this God intended to say that I have revealed Quran in Arabic so that you can understand it as a whole (Ghazali, 1876: 3). Tusi has repeated the same point but he has also retorted the objections that were raised by the pagans against Muhammad (peace be upon him) (Tusi, 2005: 8).

and closed the doors ... (Quran, Chapter 12: 23).

In *Jameh al-Settin* we are told that these doors were all the seven existing doors (Tusi, 2005: 287).

In *Bahr al-Mahabah* Ghazali quotes Abdullah Ibn Abbas to have said that by closing the doors the Lord refers to closing the door of her heart to everything but Joseph (Ghazali, 1876: 89). He has also quoted Kalbi to have argued that these doors were the four doors of the house. Hassan Basri is of the belief that Zuleikha closed the doors of all fears and was no longer afraid of any scandle (Ibid: 90).

... What is the recompense of one whose intent is evil against your people... (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 25).

Evil in this context, Ghazali argues, refers to adultery (Ghazali, 1876: 96).

Tusi has interpreted it as betraying the trust (Tusi, 2005: 337).

Indeed, the reward of the Everlasting Life is better for those who believe and are cautious (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 57).

In Tusi's view, belief is the otherworldly reward of the one who believes and this is far more better than the paradise (Tusi, 2005: 472).

Put their merchandise in their saddlebags ...(Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 62).

In *Bahr al-Mahabah* Jacob is quoted to have said that this was because of the fact that Joseph did ignore them as they were of no value by him (Ghazali, 1876: 139).

But Tusi has quoted the exegetes. For example, Kalbi says, since he knew that they do not have anything to take for their father he showed pity and gave them the food and he did not want to sell the food to his family in hardship (Tusi, 2005).

And Allah knows well what you describe (Holy Quran, Chapter 12: 77).

Ghazali says that this means God knows that if Benjamin has stolen anything or not? (Ghazali, 1876: 147).

Tusi believes that by this Quran intends to say that God knows what have you done with your brother? (Tusi, 2005: 556)

4-5- Taking Advantage of other Verses of Holy Quran

Both authors have sought to elucidate their intended mystical points by reciting other verses of Holy Quran besides the verses of Chapter twelve.

Moreover, both authors have recited the verses related to the side stories in their books. Here we recite a number of these verses due to the limited scope of this paper:

We answered him and removed his affliction, and We gave his people, and those like them that were with them, mercy from Us, as a reminder to those who worship (Chapter 21: 84).

That is the (Holy) Book, where there is no doubt. It is a guidance for the cautious (of evil and Hell) (Holy Quran, Chapter 2: 2).

Say (Prophet Muhammad): 'If you love Allah, follow me and Allah will love you, and forgive your sins. Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. ' (Chapter 3: 31).

5-Conclusion

With a comparative study of two exegetical works on the mystical interpretation of Chapter 12 of Holy Quran, entitled *Jameh Al-Settin* by Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Tusi and *Bahr al-Mahabah* by Abu al-Fath Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ghazali, we found that the two writers were sunni Sufis from Khurasan. The mystical and religious views of these two authors are very close to each other and this can be shown by comparing these authors ideas regarding moral and mystical issues. We saw that they shared the same view regarding many subjects such as vision, intercession, love, and voyeurism. Even they have discussed numerous common sapiential issues in their exegeses of the stories of Joseph.

The writing style of the two works are very similar in many respects including from the point of view of general setting of the text. They have both recited the verses in a dispersed fashion. They have tried to interpret the verses based on mystical visions instead of referring to traditional sources and narrations. Even many of the narrations that the authors have recited in their works for demonstration of certain points are the same.

If we accept that Bahr al-Mahbah is written by Ahmad Ghazali then it is most likely that the latter book has been authored before Jameh al-Settin because many Arabic poems in Tusi's work have been already recited in Al-Madhash of Abdulrahman Ibn Khoori (Zand Muqaddam, 2014: 150). Since Ibn Khoori did not have good relations with Sufis, it is less likely that he would have quoted some poems from a sufi work in Persian.

The book of Al-Madhash in final years of sixth century. Then if we assume that Tusi has quoted these poems from Ibn Khoori, we have to accept that Jameh al-Settin has been authored several years after 590 of Hijra or even in early seventh century. Accordingly, we can feasibly claim that Tusi had access to Ghazali's work and quoted the narrations and poems from it. However, we see that there are several narrations in Tusi's work that have been driven from other exegetical works for providing better understanding of the story of Joseph.

The differences and discrepancies that are explicitly seen in exegetical ideas of the two books show that the authors of the two works are not the same. The author of Bahr al-Mahabah is very professional in writing Arabic poems; but in Jameh al-Settin, all Arabic verses are driven from other works and the Persian verses are of several defects (Ibid: 39-40).

Contrastive and comparative criticism of the two exegeses of the same chapter of Holy Quran which have been authored in the same century and within the same cultural conditions and with the same sufistic approach and of course in two different languages is as such an innovative enterprise. We hope that the students, professors and researchers who work on Iranian literature, theology, history, interpretation, myths and literary criticism are benefited from the results of this research.

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