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# Comparing Immanuel Kant's and Allamah Tabatabai's Approach to Money and Wealth

Abbas Bakhshandeh Bali 

Associate Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, University of Mazandaran, Iran. Email: [a.bakhshandehbali@umz.ac.ir](mailto:a.bakhshandehbali@umz.ac.ir)

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### ABSTRACT

Humans and human societies have different attitudes about the role and position of money and wealth. Some of them use all their efforts to earn money and wealth. In acquiring money and wealth, some make efforts in the right way and others in the wrong way. Some of the harms of the present age, such as war, are rooted in the wrong way of acquiring wealth and money. One of the thinkers who addressed this issue in some of his works is Immanuel Kant. According to Kant, wealth in individual and social life is strongly influenced by his material foundations. This research compares his view on money and wealth with Allamah Tabatabai's view using descriptive-analytical method and using library resources. The findings of the research indicate the existence of commonalities and differences. Paying attention to money and wealth and staying away from poverty are common concerns of these two thinkers. But the macro view and the small view of these two have fundamental differences with each other. Allamah Tabatabai explains a more comprehensive policy about money and wealth with a religious perspective, which can be a model for the present age.

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## **Introduction**

Money and wealth play an important role in the lives of people and societies. A person or a society that does not have enough money will suffer from poverty. People and societies have different attitudes about money and wealth. Some of them only think about money and wealth and use every right and wrong way to get it. On the other hand, some others care about money and wealth, but use correct and logical ways to acquire it. These two attitudes are observed among people, tribes and different societies of the world.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was born in an average and Christian family of the holy Lutheran religion. He was greatly influenced by Hume, Rousseau and Leibniz, and had a great influence on later philosophers such as Hegel, and the flow of German idealism (Durant, 2007, 236). Considering his influence in the world, his view on this matter is examined. Some questions of this research are: What is Kant's view on money and wealth? What bases did he use for this issue? Can his view be examined and criticized? How can you criticize Allamah Tabatabai's point of view?

No works have been observed about the adaptation of Kant's and Allamah Tabatabai's (1904-1981) views on the subject of money and wealth. Some of the similar writings on the subject are: The article "Money in Islamic Economy from the perspective of Allamah Tabatabai's credits" written by Sobhani and Ghaeminia was published in the Islamic Economy Magazine. The authors in this research emphasized that credit perception of money has significant implications for Islamic economy. Money has situational, contractual, hypothetical and credit aspects; Therefore, it is not a commodity. Also, money is subject to vital needs and special factors of the environment and changes with their change. The article "Analysis of existential approaches to money based on the theories of Allamah Tabatabai and Simmel" written by Rahimi and colleagues was published in the Journal of Islamic Financial Research.

In this research, the authors emphasized that in the school of idealism, and specifically from Simmel's point of view, the initial creation of money begins with the subjective creation of value and relative means, but it evolves and becomes absolute value and end. In the school of realism and specifically from Allamah Tabatabai's point of view, the initial credit identity of money is temporary, changeable, relative and unnecessary, but with the change of credit, it acquires a real identity which indicates durability, stability, applicability and necessity. The article "Purpose and Functions of Islamic Economy in the Qur'an with Emphasis on the Opinions of Allamah Tabatabai" written by Karimi and Ghafoorzadeh was published in the Journal of Islamic Banking Economics. The findings of this research show that, firstly, according to Allamah's opinions on credit sciences and real sciences, it can be said that Islamic economics does not completely fit any of the two categories and it has a relationship between the public and the private. Secondly, based on Allamah's opinions, the desired goals of Islamic economics can be drawn in three levels: final, intermediate, and preliminary goals.

## **Kant's View**

One of the topics that Kant paid attention to in some of his works is dealing with money and wealth. He explained these topics to mankind according to his philosophical principles. In this section, we discuss some basics and discussions about money and wealth.

## **Some Philosophical Foundations**

In the books on the history of philosophy, some things were discussed about Kant's distinctive features, including honesty in speech, practical discipline, moral conscientiousness, and good deeds (Copleston, 2008, Vol. 6, 204). By rejecting the possibility of identifying the soul, he ended the metaphysical tradition of the West and put a new path in front of human eyes with the "Copernican Revolution". He believes: "Until now, it is thought that everything we know must correspond to objects. But all the efforts in the direction of expanding the objects through establishing concepts related to them have remained fruitless. Therefore, it should be tested that if the objects are in accordance with our knowledge, will metaphysics not be more successful in its role?" (Kant, 1965, 22).

In German philosophy, Kant can be considered one of the founders of the idealism movement. One of the neo-Kantians who wrote a work entitled "*Philosophy of Money*" is Simmel. Money is in circulation between the two dimensions of mind and reality. He believes that the phenomena of the world are placed next to each other in an orderly manner, but man does not desire the order that prevails in nature. Man wants to design his value system and sometimes he will be against the ruling order (Simmel, 1990, 59).

He considers the nature of all human beings to be a single inherent humanity. This single nature is transformed by some factors such as environmental factors and will follow the correct or incorrect path (Wilson, 2006, 29). He believes that humans are ready to transform into four states: readiness to be animals, technical readiness, pragmatic readiness and moral readiness (Kant, 2018, 60). He considers animal readiness to be the root of unpleasant events in human nature, and his examples are things like gluttony, lust, and the desire to break the law. He believes that in technical preparation, we will encounter human wisdom, which differentiates humans from animals (Kant, 2006, 226).

Pragmatic preparation will be formed by the expansion of social interactions, and culture and education are important in this field (Kant, 2006, 227). And finally, in moral preparation, humans always have duty and moral sense (Kant, 2006, 229). Kant believes in education in reaching the proper preparation of human beings. He believes that a person will become a person through upbringing and education (Wood, 2009, 41).

Therefore, regarding the issue of money and wealth, according to his point of view, attention should be paid to the education of people and even governments. According to his point of view,

if a person cannot be educated and behave well in this matter, he will remain at his animal level and his moral preparation will not be realized.

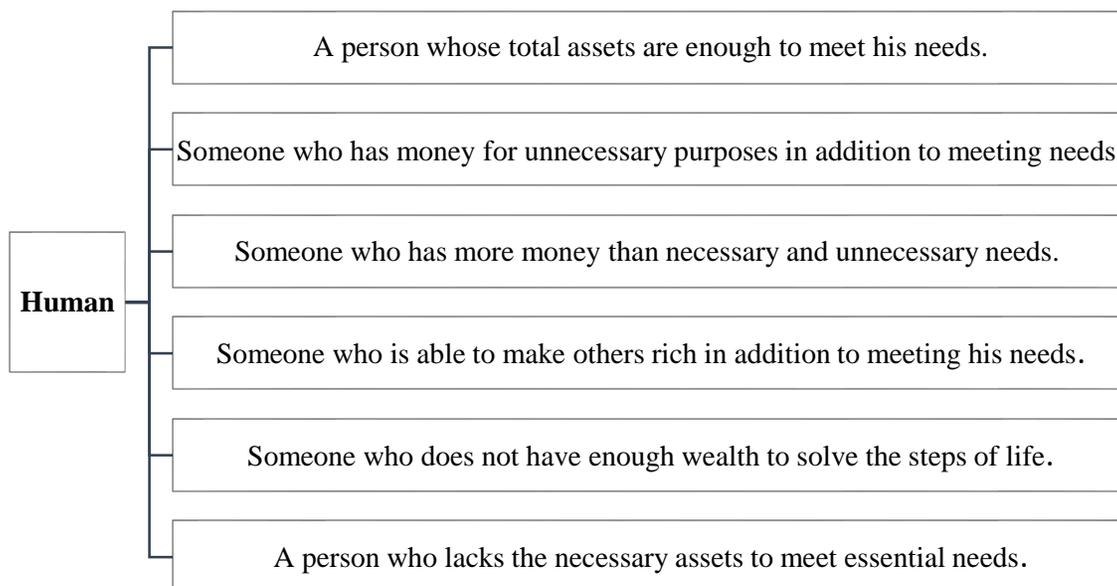
### Invitation to Get Money and Wealth

Kant believes that man is free and responsible for the evolution of his nature. This responsibility is his duty and it means obeying the moral law (Sullivan, 2010, 51). Although he had financial means, he raised discussions about the philosophy of money and wealth in life for the salvation and equality of humans (Reiss, 1970, 74), which deserves recognition.

One of the important concerns in Kant's thoughts was calling people to work and effort. In some of his works, like the lessons of moral philosophy, he discussed the importance and role of work in the life of every human being and considered unemployment to be equal to vice and fraud. He believes that an unemployed person is diverted to the wrong path of life and sometimes evil. He states: "Man must be disciplined, and the greatest disciplinary principle is to accustom himself to work." Work is a factor of piety and virtue; If a person is engaged in work, he does not have the opportunity to think about vices, and this is the benefit he gets from work, because an unemployed person naturally engages in vices and cheating" (Kant, 2008, 238-239).

### All Kinds of People

He believes that people are divided into rich, wealthy, rich, wealthy, poor and destitute in the matter of wealth and money.



The division of people in the issue of money and wealth, which was done carefully, shows the importance of this issue for this thinker. In other words, it shows Kant's indifference towards human issues, which is admirable.

### **A Few Notes and Warnings**

He believes that wealth and money are valuable for people and have two important benefits: First, a person with money and wealth gains independence and does not need the help of others. Second, a person has a special power. The empowerment of a person increases the popularity and respect of others towards him and increases his influence on others (Kant, 2008, 241).

Another important thing is that Kant is not satisfied with these things and addresses the rich with phrases. He considers money and wealth as a means, not a goal. A means to meet the needs of life and achieve the desired goal in life. He clarifies: "In the past, it was right to say that: wealth is not a noble thing, but it is the humiliation of wealth that is a noble thing... a rich person is an influential being in the society and among the people, he holds the hand of many people and He uses them. This does not lead to the honor and superiority of man, but it degrades the wealth of the wave of human honor. Wealth only elevates the status of a person, not himself" (Kant, 2008, 242).

He believes that poverty is one of the disasters that people reach by neglecting this important thing. In other words, not trying to get money and wealth will lead to the impoverishment of people and societies. Therefore, one should find a suitable way to get money and wealth, and of course he believes that people should not use any way or work or at any cost to get money. He believes: "Man does not surrender to servitude. Do not allow others to violate your right and not be punished. Do not take responsibility that you cannot guarantee. Don't accept kindness that you can do without and don't be a parasite or a flatterer or a beggar. So be frugal so you don't become a beggar. Glory and lamentation, even crying due to the severity of physical pain, cause the degradation of human value" (Kant 2016, 102-103). Therefore, Kant tried to invite people and societies to work and strive and earn money and wealth, so that they don't suffer from poverty and damages caused by it.

#### **Allameh Tabatabai's point of view**

One of the topics that Allameh Tabatabai paid attention to in some of his works is dealing with wealth. He explained these topics according to his theological and philosophical foundations. In this section, we discuss some of his basics and discussions about money and wealth.

### **Some Philosophical Foundations**

In his works, following Islam and the Qur'an, Allama considers man to be God's creation. One of the most important parts of human existence is being divine. Nature is a model for human happiness and an immaterial and infallible path to the prosperity of both worlds. He believes that "so, a person who has a healthy nature has faith in a being absent from his senses whether he likes it or not: a being who is his own existence and the existence of the whole universe is the documenter of

existence." (Tabatabai, 1995, Vol. 1, 71) He believes that if people's beliefs and actions are coordinated according to reason and nature, the right path will be followed.

"Indeed, the perfection of man is the same as his three annihilations, and in other words, reaching the status of "actual monotheism", "nominal monotheism" and "essential monotheism", and you also know that the closeness of every creature to God is equal to the inherent limitations and non-existence. its features; Therefore, the mediators between the physical stage of man and God are based on the order of their inherent limits; Therefore, in his journey towards God, man must pass through the ranks of God's deeds, names, and essence, in order to finally reach the three positions of monotheism, actual, nominal, and essential monotheism" (Tabatabaei, 2002, 113).

### **Credit Matters**

In his works, Allameh deals with the distinction between real and creditable entities and perceptions. He believes in the principles of philosophy and the method of realism that "credential perceptions are opposite to real perceptions." Real perceptions are mental reflections and reflections of reality and self. However, credit perceptions are assumptions that the mind made in order to meet vital needs, and they have a situational, contractual, hypothetical, and credit aspect, and have nothing to do with reality and nature. Real perceptions can be placed in philosophical or scientific, natural or mathematical proofs and a scientific or philosophical result can be obtained. Also, a true understanding can be learned from a philosophical or scientific argument, but this cannot be used in the case of credits" (Tabatabaei, 1985, Vol. 2, 138).

He considers the property as credit. One of its credits is the permission to occupy it in any way. Of course, some possessions will have limitations that will be contractual and statutory. He considers money to be one of the examples of credits established by humans:

As a result of the imbalance of the relationship between the exchanged materials, there is a need for the credit of "money" to use one of the desired materials as a scale unit for measuring the other materials, and of course this credit also requires a series of related sub-credits. that the apparatus of issuing money, gold, silver, banknotes, checks and other securities, etc., are their representatives with their rules and works (Tabatabaei, 1985, Vol. 2, 222).

He believes that in credit matters, the relationship between the two sides of the case and the creditor is aimed at achieving the purpose and expediency, and he gives credit in any way that best brings him to the goal and expediency he means. He goes on to say: "The only rational scale that is used in credits is the literalness and lack of literalness of the credit, and of course, in this regard, the characteristic of the creditor should be considered." For example, if the credibility is imaginary and illusory, the interests and goals of that faculty should be considered, and if the credibility is intellectual credibility, the interests and goals of that faculty should be considered" (Tabatabaei,

1985, Vol. 2, 168). According to the view of Allameh Tabatabaei Malek, including money, is a state credit among humans and has no truth. Of course, these credits are related to the outside world.

One of the basic principles of human capital is the innate tendency to hire. "Each human being, according to his innate instinct and natural desire, always wants to use the powers of others for his own benefit, and since no one is willing to give his powers to other people for free, the result is that everyone He has left some of his forces at the disposal of others in order to benefit from the results of others' forces, so the principle of "employment" leads to the formation of a "cooperative society" (Tabatabaei, 2009, Vol. 1, 253). Therefore, wealth, property, and money are employed by the social nature of human beings and are established and valued.

### **Deterrence Limits**

One of the most important topics in the Islamic field is the study of human desires for wealth. Some people take an unbalanced path in this matter. Unbalanced tendencies cause leaving the true path and entering the deviant path. A path whose true end is unclear, ambiguous and full of problems. "He has not yet recovered from the injuries of that wave, a more dangerous wave that originates from the interest in money and wealth, women and children, repeatedly slaps him in the face and sinks him into the bottom of the roaring waves of this fearful sea. so that his moans and cries disappear in the waves. Wherever he looks, he sees that longing, which is one of the effects and accessories of matter, threatens him" (Hosseini Tehrani, 2009, 38).

Although wealth opens the way in many material fields and some spiritual fields, sometimes it cannot be used. For example, if there is no way to treat a patient, money cannot be a solution. Another example in spiritual matters, if a person performs Qada prayer and has the ability to read, he cannot compensate with wealth and money.

In this context, Allameh Tabatabai pays attention to the limitation of deterrence of money and wealth. In continuation of the above Quranic story, he believes that if wealth and money could open the way, people like Qaroon could also justify themselves with their knowledge. While he died.

He says: "So if the only reason that provides wealth and preserves it and makes him enjoy it was knowledge, then this knowledge made him proud, and at all by God's grace and favor." If it was not, those past tribes should not have been destroyed, and that knowledge and skill should have saved them from destruction, and they should have enjoyed their property, and they should have warded off the calamity with their strength, and their people were also their helpers. have done, and now that neither their knowledge was useful to them, nor their property, nor their community" (Hosseini Tehrani, 2009, 114).

### **Related to spirituality**

Another subject that Allameh Tabatabai emphasizes using religious principles is considering God and his help in money and wealth. A rich person should not attribute it all to his cleverness, but rather to God's grace. In Tafsir al-Mizan, he devotes a section to this topic with the title "Qarun's

arrogant answer: My property is the result of my own work and skill, and no one has the right to interfere in it if he has not participated in it".

After quoting a part of the Qur'anic verses, "قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيْنُهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عُنْدِي" (Qasas, 78), which was quoted by Qarun, he states:

Qarun, in their answer, made a mistake on this basis and said that what I believe that the favor of God is not, and it did not come to me without merit, and he claimed that all this was accumulated due to my own knowledge and skill, so I have deserved it among all people, because I knew the way to accumulate wealth, and Others did not know, and when what I got was due to my own merit, then I myself am independent in owning and occupying it, I can do whatever I want, I can use it like Rick in all kinds of pleasures and expanding influence and reign, and to gain status and achieve any other desire, and I don't deserve anyone to interfere in my work (Tabatabai, 1995, Vol. 16, 112).

He further mentions destruction as one of the dangerous results of this kind of desire and thinking about wealth. He believes: "And this wrong idea that was in Qaroun's brain and destroyed his work" (Tabatabai, 1995, Vol. 16, 112).

He criticizes some governments in Islamic history about the use of money and wealth. As an example, during the period of Harun Caliph Abbasi, when the Islamic Empire reached its peak of power and scope, "a singer made Amin Caliph Abbasi lustful by singing two lustful verses. Amin gave him three million silver dirhams, the singer threw himself at the Caliph's feet with joy and said: O Amir al-Mu'minin, will you give me all this money? Khalifa replied, "It doesn't matter, we are taking this money from an unknown area of the country"(Tabatabai, 2009, 54). Allameh believes that, unfortunately, in some Islamic governments, money and wealth were used for whims and the wrong path, which is completely against the right path.

### **Institutionalizing Charity**

One of the solutions that Allameh Tabatabai explains with inspiration from the *Quran* to overcome the harms of wealth is charity. He pays attention to this issue in *Tafsir al-Mizan* with a title called "Speech about giving".

He believes that the spending of wealth by the rich means a balance between the rights of God and the rights of people, which is in matters such as zakat, khums, financial atonements and types of redemption, part of charity and matters such as endowment of housing for someone's lifetime, bequests. And forgiveness is an example (Tabatabai, 1995, vol. 2, 587).

He believes that there are two important fruits in this type of donations; On the one hand, the lower classes, who cannot meet their living needs without financial help from others, have been supported in order to raise their living standards, to bring the life horizons of different classes closer to each other, and to reduce the differences between them in terms of Reduce wealth and material

blessings. And on the other hand, he forbade the wealthy and the prosperous class of the society from pretending to be rich, i.e. from the luxury and embellishment of the manifestations of life, from houses, clothes, cars, etc. He cannot bear to see such expenses; he has prevented them under the title of prohibition of extravagance and the like (Tabatabai, 1995, vol. 2, 587-588).

He continues to criticize the western world with the title "The loss of charity and the prevalence of usury among the people is the biggest cause of social corruption in the western world. He believes: "The biggest cause of this corruption is the loss of charity on the one hand, and the prevalence of usury on the other hand" (Tabatabai, 1995, vol. 2, 589-590).

He believes in the book *Teachings of Islam* that "today it has become clear that the indifference of the wealthy towards the suffering of the needy is the greatest danger that can destroy a society, and the wealthy themselves are the first victims of this danger." are Fourteen centuries ago, taking into account this danger, Islam ordered that the rich should distribute a part of their wealth among the poor and the needy every year, and if their need is removed by this amount, it is recommended that in order to develop the lives of the poor, an amount that They can spend in the way of God" (Tabatabai, 2017, 221).

### **Avoid Usury**

One of the most important risks in the matter of money and wealth is usury. Allameh explains this damage and its consequences in parts of his works.

He believes that "usurers began to collect property and accumulate wealth and competed with each other on the way to gain positions, and this led to world wars, and the world's population was divided into two groups and They stood together, on one side the prosperous rich people, and on the other side the miserable exploited people whose everything was looted, and these world wars became a calamity that moved mountains, and earthquakes on the earth threatened humanity with annihilation, and He turned the world into a ruin" (Tabatabai, 2017, 628-629). Therefore, one of the consequences of usury at the global level, world war and other damage, was the polarization of humanity.

Another harm that he pays attention to in usurpation is the deviation of man from the direct path and the rational system of life. In order to prove this damage, he proposes the verse "الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ" الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ " (Baqarah, 275). He considers the word "khabat" to mean crooked and unnatural walking. He divides humans into two groups; The first group: "Indeed, man has found the right way of life through the power that has been deposited in him (that is, the power with which he can distinguish between good and evil, beneficial and harmful) and we have previously talked about this power. We have spoken. This is a normal human condition" (Tabatabai, 2017, 629).

The second group: "A person who has been possessed by the devil, that is, the devil has contacted him and disturbed his purifying power, cannot separate good and bad, beneficial and harmful, good and evil from one another, and the ruling of each of these cases makes it flow on the

opposite side" (Tabatabai, 2017, 630). The situation of cannibals is the situation of the second group. Usury people are not like the first group who live naturally, but they follow a deviant path. Paying less money and taking more money, which is customary in usury, destroys the rule of nature and the basis of society; "Because on the part of the usurer, it leads to embezzlement and stealing the property of the debtors, and on the part of the debtors, it leads to empty hands and the collection of their property in the hands of the usurer" (Tabatabai, 2017, 631).

### Compare Views

After examining the most important views of Kant and Allameh Tabatabai, we will compare the two views in this section. In matching the views, the weaknesses and strengths of each side can be identified and the best ones can be chosen. In some of his works, such as *Principles of Philosophy* and the *Method of Realism*, Allameh Tabatabai discusses some of Kant's positions other than the subject of research and sometimes makes criticisms.

One of the most important points of comparison is that Kant's view of various topics is non-religious and secular. "There have been many discussions in the first aspect. In the tradition of Western thought, a deep and effective approach to the dignity of theoretical reason begins with the famous German philosopher Immanuel Kant in his famous work *Critique of Pure Reason*. In this heavy and profound book, he undermined the realism value of pure rational perceptions and thereby made serious attacks on metaphysics and common philosophical thinking" (A group of writers, 2008, 147).

On the other hand, Allameh Tabatabai's view on the issues is a religious view and derived from the Islamic religion. As an example, he did not go beyond the limits of the Sharia in his interpretation of the Qur'an and tries to justify and explain the words and phrases from this angle. Despite the difference between these two thinkers in different schools, there are commonalities between them in the matter of money and wealth, which we will discuss first.

Issue	Kant's view	Allameh Tabatabai's view
The importance of poverty	*	*
The importance of money and wealth	*	*
The way to earn money and wealth	*	*
Correct use of money and wealth	*	*
Warnings to the rich	*	*

Both thinkers, with the importance of poverty and destitution, considered it inappropriate for the society and believe that people should get away from this problem. To get away from this harm, both of them tried to explain the importance of money and wealth. Another thing that both paid attentions to is the way to earn money. Man should find a correct way to earn money and wealth and avoid deviant ways. About the use of wealth, both thinkers paid attention to it and reminded about the correct use. Also, both thinkers gave warnings to the rich and emphasized the harms.

In addition to these similarities that were observed in the works of these two thinkers, there are also differences between them, some of the most important of which are mentioned.

Issue	Kant's view	Allameh Tabatabai's view
Accurate division of people in the matter of wealth	*	—
Religious insight on wealth	-	*
Emphasis on eradicating poverty	-	*
Hereafters in the use of wealth	-	*
Intent in acquiring and consuming wealth	-	*
The use of religious stories in the position of wealth	—	*

One of the most important differences between these two thinkers is their insight into the issues. Allameh Tabatabai's vision is completely formed according to divine and Islamic law, but Kant does not adhere to Christianity in this way. Kant has a secular view on various issues such as wealth. Another thing is that Allameh Tabatabai talks much more and qualitatively about the issue of poverty in the society. He tried to explain the negative appearance of poverty and injury in different parts of his works. In spite of Kant's statements about money and wealth, which is a completely material view, Allameh Tabatabai tried to add an afterlife view to it so that wealth becomes a prelude to the abode of the hereafter. The way to acquire wealth, which exists in both ideas, was proposed by Allameh Tabatabai in a much smaller way.

As an example, usury and increasing wealth in this way is examined in a more detailed way in different parts of his works. Another issue is intention and interiority, which although Kant refers to it in moral discussions, but it is presented in a more complete way by Allameh Tabatabai.

### **Result**

Considering the existence of poverty among a part of the people of the present age, different sciences should be used to eradicate it and ways to use wealth properly should be suggested to mankind, governments and international organizations. Philosophy, with its originality, can be a suitable source among these sciences. Some philosophical thinkers have discussed the issue of money and wealth, and in this research, the works of Kant and Allameh Tabatabai were used. Kant and Allameh Tabatabai have similarities and differences in this matter. Both thinkers considered poverty ugly and tried to encourage people to acquire knowledge. Both thinkers emphasized the right way to acquire wealth and choose the right job. On the other hand, the views of these two are very different. Allameh Tabatabai addressed this issue with a religious perspective, but Kant raised this issue with a secular and maximally moral view. Allameh Tabatabai considers hereafter important in this matter and even explains the spending of wealth in a serious way to provide for the hereafter, but Kant considers the world very important and believes. It is hoped that people, governments and international organizations, considering the importance of this issue, will take a

serious and effective step to eliminate poverty in the world and guide mankind in the correct use of wealth.

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