

Conceptual Metaphors of 'Faith' in the Quran

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Abstract: Cognitive science holds that the mind grasps abstract concepts through concrete, everyday experience, metaphor being a mode of thought, not mere ornament. The Quran relies heavily on this resource: faith (*īmān*) is conveyed less through doctrinal statements than through recurring embodied imagery—a face that whitens, a heart that is guided, a trade that is struck—but no study has classified this imagery systematically across its domains. Addressing this gap, the study offers a qualitative, descriptive-analytical reading of twenty-three Quranic verses on the effects of faith, drawing on Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive metaphor framework and classical and contemporary *tafsīr* to identify and classify the conceptual metaphors through which these effects become intelligible. The analysis identifies metaphors such as "Faith is a White Face", "Faith is the Guidance of the Heart", "Faith is Salvation from Fire", "Faith is a Profitable Trade", "Faith is a Light Ahead and to the Right of Believers Leading to Paradise", "Faith is Guidance to the Straight Path", and "Faith is the Exit from Darkness Into Light", alongside space and container schemas depicting how believers obtain divine mercy. These findings give Quranic exegesis a systematic cognitive vantage point on the relevant verses.

Keywords: *Conceptual Metaphor, Effects of Faith, Faith, Quranic Interpretation*

ملخص

يذهب علم اللغة المعرفي إلى أن العقل يدرك المفاهيم المجردة عبر التجربة الحسية اليومية، وأن الاستعارة نمط من التفكير لا مجرد زخرف بلاغي. ويعتمد القرآن الكريم على هذا المورد اعتماداً كبيراً، إذ يُصوّر الإيمان لا من خلال العبارة العقديّة المجردة، بل عبر صور حسّيّة متكرّرة: وجهٌ يبيض، وقلبٌ يهدى، وتجارةٌ تُعقد. غير أن هذه الصور لم تُصنّف حتى الآن تصنيفاً منهجياً وفق الحقول المعرفيّة التي تستمدّ منها. ولسدّ هذه الفجوة، تقدّم هذه الدراسة قراءةً نوعيّةً وصفيّةً تحليليّةً لثلاث وعشرين آيةً قرآنيّةً تتناول آثار الإيمان، مستندةً إلى نظريّة الاستعارة المفهوميّة عند لاكوف وجونسون وإلى التفاسير القديمة والحديثة، بغيةً استخلاص الاستعارات المفهوميّة التي تجعل هذه الآثار مُدرّكةً وتصنيفيّةً. وقد كشف التحليل عن استعاراتٍ من قبيل: الإيمان وجهٌ أبيض، الإيمان هدايةٌ القلب، الإيمان نجاةٌ من النار، الإيمان تجارةٌ رابحة، الإيمان نورٌ أمام المؤمنين وعن أيمانهم يقودهم إلى الجنّة، الإيمان هدايةٌ إلى الصراط المستقيم، والإيمان خروجٌ من الظلمات إلى النور، إضافةً إلى مخطّطات المكان والوعاء المصوّرة لكيفيّة نيل المؤمنين الرحمة الإلهيّة. وتمنح هذه النتائج التفسير القرآنيّ منظوراً معرفيّاً منهجياً لفهم الآيات المعنيّة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: آثار الإيمان، الاستعارة المفهوميّة، الإيمان، التفسير القرآني



Introduction

According to recent findings in cognitive science, the human mind represents abstract concepts through concrete ones based on everyday sensory experiences.¹ Although metaphor is often considered a feature specific to language, it actually originates from human thought: the ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical, even though we are not usually aware of it. Since communication draws on this conceptual system, language serves as a credible witness for uncovering its underlying structure.²

The cognitive metaphor framework offers an appropriate tool for analyzing such models, one well suited to the creative language of the Quran.³ Metaphors present in religious texts reflect the underlying conceptual system of those traditions, and the Quran employs a particularly rich metaphorical structure to reshape its audience's thinking: rather than coining new words, it reinvests existing ones with new meanings, thereby altering the worldview of pre-Islamic Arabs and generating a novel semantic world.⁴

A closer look at existing scholarship reveals a gap between expectations and reality in Quranic studies' approach to faith. The prevailing expectation (*Das Sollen*) among exegetes and readers is that faith, as a theological category, is best explained through doctrinal exposition—defining its pillars, conditions, and legal consequences in propositional terms. Yet the reality (*Das Sein*) of the Quranic text tells a different story: across dozens of verses, the effects of faith are conveyed through dense, recurring concrete imagery - a face that whitens, a heart that is guided, a trade that is struck, a light that walks ahead of the believer. This discrepancy between how faith is conventionally studied and how it is actually communicated in the text constitutes a social fact that motivates the present inquiry: if the Quran itself favors embodied imagery over doctrinal statement, an adequate account of faith's effects cannot rest on propositional exegesis alone but must engage the cognitive-linguistic mechanisms by which such imagery does its work.

Previous scholarship on Quranic metaphor can be classified into two broad patterns. The earliest independent work in this field, Sharif Radi's (359–406 AH) *Talkhis al-Bayan fi Majazat al-Quran*, confined itself to the literary and rhetorical dimensions of Quranic figures of speech. Such works ranked metaphors solely by eloquence, treated them in isolation, and did not examine how embedded metaphors interact with one another or shape the Quran's overarching worldview.⁵ More recent studies, informed by cognitive linguistics, have moved beyond this rhetorical approach but remain confined to isolated conceptual domains, such as Abdulmoneim's treatment of the Quranic journey domain⁶, studies of light as a source domain more broadly,⁷ or

¹ George Lakoff and Rafael Núñez, *Where Mathematics Comes From* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 4.

² George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 3.

³ Mohamed Shokr Abdulmoneim, "The Metaphorical Concept 'Life Is a Journey' in the Quran: A Cognitive-Semantic Analysis," *metaphorik.de*, no. 10 (2006): 97.

⁴ Alireza Ghaemi-Nia, *Biology of the Text* (Tehran: Institute for Cultural and Intellectual Studies, 2010), 537.

⁵ Sharif al-Radi and Muhammad Husayn, *Talkhis al-Bayan fi Majazat al-Quran*, ed. Hasan Muhammad Abd al-Ghani (Beirut: Dar al-Adwa', 1406), 18.

⁶ George Lakoff and Mark Turner, *More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 3–4.

⁷ Zoltán Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 40.

Ghaemi-Nia's account of spatial concepts in the Quran,⁸ without addressing how these domains converge specifically around the effects of faith. Although individual source domains employed by the Quran have been documented, to the best of the present authors' knowledge, no previous study has systematically classified and analyzed the full range of conceptual metaphors through which the Quran renders the effects of faith comprehensible.

The novelty of the present study lies precisely in this gap: rather than examining a single metaphorical domain in isolation, this research identifies and classifies the entire set of source domains – body parts, war, trade, travel, light, personification, and the container and space schemas – that the Quran draws upon to conceptualize the effects of faith, and demonstrates how these domains operate together, and sometimes within one another, to construct a coherent cognitive picture of what faith accomplishes for the believer.

This classification carries a direct implication for Quranic exegesis. By exposing the concrete source domains underlying the Quran's abstract statements about faith, the study offers a novel approach toward a more precise understanding of the relevant verses and strengthens existing exegetical frameworks; such interdisciplinary analysis can help confirm or refine interpretations, reveal similarities and differences among interpretive viewpoints, and better contextualize scholarly readings of the text.⁹ Interpreters and researchers can thereby understand the practical necessity of incorporating modern linguistic tools into the study of Quranic meaning.

This is a qualitative, descriptive-analytical study whose material object is the set of Quranic verses that describe the effects of faith—its benefits, signs, and the rewards granted to believers by God—including instances in which one metaphor is constructed within another.¹⁰ The data were drawn directly from the Quranic text together with major exegetical (*tafsīr*) sources, including Tabataba'i's *al-Mizan*, Tabarsi's *Majma' al-Bayan*, and Zamakhshari's *al-Kashshaf*, as well as relevant contemporary exegetical works. The data were selected through a purposive search that yielded a corpus of twenty-three verses in which faith and its consequences are expressed through concrete, embodied imagery rather than literal doctrinal statements.

The analytical process followed the cognitive metaphor framework of Lakoff and Johnson:¹¹ each verse was first examined to identify its source domain and the target domain (the effect of faith being conveyed); the systematic correspondences, or "mappings," between the two domains were then extracted to show how elements of the concrete domain project onto the abstract target;¹² and finally, each mapping was interpreted in light of the historical and cultural context of the Quran's revelation—since, as the Diachrony Hypothesis suggests, the conceptual domains selected by a text are shaped by the common experiences of its era¹³—before being read against relevant classical and contemporary *tafsīr* to confirm or refine the resulting interpretation.

⁸ Alireza Ghaemi-Nia, *Conceptual Metaphors and Spaces in the Quran* (Tehran: Institute for Cultural and Intellectual Studies Publications Organization, 2020), 71.

⁹ Jonathan Charteris-Black, *Tahlil-e Enteqadi-ye Este'areh: Roykard-e Shenakhti-Peykareh'i [Corpus Approaches to Critical Metaphor Analysis]*, trans. Yekta Panahpour (Qom: Logos, 2019), 290.

¹⁰ Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 14.

¹¹ Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 21.

¹² Andrew Ortony, ed., *Metaphor and Thought*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 206–7.

¹³ Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), xix.

Results and Discussion

Each aspect of the conceptualization of faith in the Quran is discussed individually, building the argument through original textual evidence and analysis rather than mere citation. Across the eight domains examined below – the body, war, trade, travel, light, personification, and the container and space schemas – a consistent pattern emerges: the Quran renders the abstract effects of faith (guidance, salvation, elevation of status, and tranquility) intelligible by grounding them in the concrete, embodied experience of seventh-century Hijazi life. The following discussion is organized into two main parts: a general overview of the issue (Setting or Overview) and a verse-by-verse analysis of the identified conceptual metaphors.

General Overview

Faith (*īmān*) constitutes one of the most central theological concepts in the Quran and Islamic thought. The term and its cognates occur 811 times throughout the text, and the recurring narrations in which the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is questioned about the nature of faith attest to its enduring salience for the early Muslim community.¹⁴ Beyond its doctrinal weight, faith is consistently framed in the Quran as an experiential and consequential reality: it is said to produce concrete effects—guidance, tranquility, salvation, and elevation of status—that believers are promised both in this world and the hereafter. It is precisely this experiential dimension, rather than faith as a purely doctrinal proposition, that constitutes the material object of the present study: the conceptual metaphors through which the Quran renders the abstract effects of faith cognitively accessible to its audience.

The relevant context for this conceptualization is twofold. On one level, it is textual: the corpus under examination comprises the Quranic verses—spanning both the Meccan and Medinan periods—that explicitly link faith, or the act of believing (*āmanū*), to a subsequent effect, benefit, or reward. On another level, it is socio-historical: the source domains recruited by these metaphors (the human body, tribal warfare, caravan trade, desert travel, and light versus darkness) reflect the lived experience of seventh-century Hijazi Arabia, a milieu in which kinship and the body, inter-tribal conflict, long-distance commerce, and journeys across an often dark and unmarked landscape were part of everyday cognitive and cultural reality. Locating the metaphors within this historical setting is essential for understanding why these particular domains were selected to render the effects of faith intelligible.

From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, a metaphor is defined as the understanding of one conceptual domain in terms of another. The "source domain" is the realm of literal meaning that forms the basis for metaphorical expressions, allowing us to comprehend another conceptual domain. The "target domain" is the realm of metaphorical meaning that is understood through this process.¹⁵ The idea that the target domain is understood in terms of the source domain implies systematic correspondences between the conceptual elements of the source and target domains, mapping elements from the source domain onto the target domain. These conceptual correspondences, expressed as structured mappings, are referred to as "mappings."¹⁶ These mappings are highly structured, and to facilitate the recall of correspondences within the conceptual system, a strategy known as "name-mapping" is employed. This

¹⁴ Muhammad ibn Ya'qub Al-Kafi Kulayni, *Al-Kafi* (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah, 1407), 2:2.

¹⁵ Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 14.

¹⁶ Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 21.

naming, expressed as a phrase that incorporates both the source and target domains, signals a conceptual metaphor.¹⁷

Lakoff and Johnson claim that a significant portion of the human conceptual system is constructed metaphorically, meaning that most concepts are understood through other concepts. Primary concepts that can be directly understood consist of simple notions, such as up–down, in–out, and object–substance. The spatial concept of "up" is derived directly from human spatial experience. Because humans possess physical bodies and stand upright, our physical activities on the ground—even when lying down—continuously involve the vertical directions of up and down. Consequently, we comprehend these spatial concepts directly through embodied personal experience.

Understanding fundamental concepts is not solely dependent on physiology; rather, every human experience is shaped within a broad framework of cultural notions. All experiences are imbued with cultural assumptions. However, a clear distinction can be drawn between experiences that are primarily physical, such as standing, and those that are more cultural, such as attending a wedding. Physical experiences are not fundamentally more basic than emotional, mental, or cultural experiences; each of these non-physical experiences can feel just as fundamental as bodily experiences. Nevertheless, in most cases, we conceptualize non-material phenomena through material things. In other words, conceptual metaphors typically select a more concrete and tangible concept as the source domain and project it onto a more abstract concept as the target domain.¹⁸ This principle explains why the source and target domains are not interchangeable. In conceptual metaphor theory, this directional constraint is known as the "principle of unidirectionality."¹⁹

One of the key components of the cognitive linguistic approach is the concept of the "image schema," which underlies a wide array of metaphors. Johnson argues that bodily movements, the use of objects, and human perceptual interactions involve recurring patterns that render human experience coherent and comprehensible. These patterns are composed of interconnected and integrated structures that organize human experience. Although these structures initially arise from bodily interactions, they extend to more abstract levels of meaning, thereby giving rise to metaphorical concepts.²⁰ Thus, image schemas are distinct from mental images. For instance, when we close our eyes and recall a friend's face, a mental image is evoked, not an image schema. Mental images differ fundamentally from image schemas: mental images result from conscious cognitive processes and exhibit detailed visual features derived from memory recall, whereas image schemas are abstract, general, and originate from continuous embodied experience. Image schemas cannot be recalled simply by closing one's eyes; rather, their identification requires higher-level cognitive reflection.²¹

Finally, engagement with this issue spans two intersecting scholarly traditions. Within cognitive linguistics, the foundational work of Lakoff and Johnson on conceptual metaphor theory, together with subsequent extensions to religious and sacred texts by scholars such as Charteris-Black and Jäkel, supplies the theoretical apparatus applied here. Within the Islamic exegetical tradition, classical commentators—most notably Tabataba'i in *al-Mizan*, Tabarsi in *Majma' al-Bayan*, and

¹⁷ Ortony, *Metaphor and Thought*, 206–7.

¹⁸ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 56–60.

¹⁹ Olaf Jäkel, "Hypotheses Revisited: The Cognitive Theory of Metaphor Applied to Religious Texts," *Metaphorik.De*, no. 2 (2002): 22.

²⁰ Johnson, *The Body in the Mind*, xix.

²¹ Alireza Ghaemi-Nia, *Cognitive Semantics of the Quran* (Tehran: Institute for Cultural and Intellectual Studies, 2011), 658.

Zamakhshari in *al-Kashshaf*—have long attended, if not always systematically, to the figurative and rhetorical dimensions of verses on faith, and their interpretations serve as an indispensable point of reference and verification for the cognitive-linguistic analysis that follows. Below are some verses that metaphorically conceptualize the effects of faith.

Analysis

The following subsections analyze the verses according to the source domain from which each conceptual metaphor of faith is drawn. A verse was assigned to a given source domain when it met two joint criteria: first, its key term or expression belongs lexically to that domain's experiential field (for instance, a verb of purchase or a noun for a transaction, in the case of trade); and second, this lexical item enters into a systematic mapping—rather than a merely incidental co-occurrence—onto an identifiable target-domain element bearing on faith or its effects. For each verse, the discussion proceeds in four steps: identifying the metaphorical linguistic expression, determining the source domain, determining the target domain (invariably an effect of faith), and specifying the mapping between them, before closing with an interpretation of the verse's meaning within the broader Quranic worldview. Of the eight domains treated below, five (the body, war, trade, travel, and light) function as source domains proper, while personification is a conceptual mechanism and the container and space schemas are image schemas—more abstract structural patterns of embodied experience that organize several of these source domains rather than constituting separate source domains themselves.

1. Domain of Body Parts

The human body is an ideal source domain because it is entirely familiar to us. However, this does not mean that we use all aspects of this domain to understand abstract targets metaphorically. Parts such as the face, hands, feet, and heart are specifically used in metaphorical understanding. Several scholars have acknowledged the prominent role of the human body in conceptualization across various cultures and languages.²²

a. Faith is A White Face

يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا
الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ابْيَضَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فَفِي رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

﴿١٠٧﴾

(Al-Imran: 106–107)

On the Day when some faces will turn white and some faces will turn black. As for those whose faces turn black, [it will be said], "Did you disbelieve after your belief? Then taste the punishment for what you used to reject." But as for those whose faces turn white, they will be within the mercy of Allah; they will abide therein eternally.

The word *wajh* (وجه: face) means the part of something that faces and is visible to a person. In humans, the front side of the body is generally called the face, but since parts other than the face are usually covered by clothing, *wajh* typically refers to the

²² Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 35.

face.²³ Ning Yu believes that metaphorical extensions of the human face stem from the biological realities of this organ. The face is at the front of the body and is the focal point of human interaction. When a person wishes to interact with something, they turn their face toward it. Conversely, when they want to avoid something, they turn their face away. Additionally, a person's intentions and emotions, whether consciously or unconsciously, are often reflected on their face. Yu asserts that the unique nature of the face enables the metaphorical understanding of certain abstract concepts and serves as a sign of personal identity.²⁴ The presence of eyes, eyebrows, nose, and mouth distinguishes the face. In fact, a person's face reflects their personality. To illustrate, we smile when we are happy, and we cry when we are sad. Emotional reactions are displayed on the face. The relationship between a person's face and personality is not often considered, but it is distinctly understood in the arts. For instance, a director chooses actors for a film based on whether their faces match the characters. Likewise, a person with a foolish-looking face is expected to act foolishly.²⁵ Moreover, certain colors in general culture significantly influence people's emotions and serve as symbols of specific concepts. For example, white connotes positive concepts, whereas black connotes negative ones. The above verses represent faith as white and disbelief as black. By combining the metaphor of colors and the metaphor of the face as identity, believers are depicted with white faces on the Day of Judgment, while disbelievers are depicted with black faces. In addition, the term "taste" is used for the punishment of disbelievers to evoke the unpleasant experience of tasting spoiled food. Conversely, believers are depicted as enjoying abundant blessings, as if God's mercy is a container in which believers live eternally. What the verse maps, in other words, is a visible bodily sign – the whitening or blackening of the face, the source domain – onto an otherwise hidden verdict on a person's standing before God, the target domain, giving the metaphor "Faith is A White Face".

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ قَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ إِنَّ هَذَا لَسِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢﴾

(Yunus: 2)

And give good news to those who believe that they have good standing with their Lord.

In this verse, the concept of past merits and favor is expressed through the metaphor of a "footstep" (قدم), as effort and precedence are usually achieved by taking steps, just as blessings are often referred to as being given by hand. Additionally, the term *ṣidq* (صدق: truth) indicates a great abundance of virtue and noble deeds.²⁶ Allameh Tabataba'i interprets *qadam* (قدم: footstep) as a metaphor for position, noting that in material experience, a person typically occupies space with their footsteps. Insofar as believers are sincere in their faith, their position is also described as truthful. It is possible to personify truth and consider it to have footsteps, just as falsehood can also have footsteps. In this case, the truthful footstep remains steadfast on the path of righteousness and does not slip, whereas the false footstep deviates from the right path.

²³ Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Quran* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A'lami lil-Matbu'at, 1390), 367.

²⁴ Ning Yu, "What Does Our Face Mean to Us?," *Pragmatics & Cognition* 9, no. 1 (2001): 1–2.

²⁵ Yu, "What Does Our Face Mean to Us?," 4.

²⁶ Mahmud ibn Umar Zamakhshari, *Al-Kashshaf an Haqiq Ghawamid al-Tanzil wa Uyun al-Aqawil fi Wujuh al-Tawil*, ed. Husayn Ahmad Mustafa (Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-Arabi, 1407), 97.

The footprint itself supplies the source domain – a mark left by occupying ground – and the target domain is the believer's standing before God. Thus, the firmness of a footstep is mapped onto the reliability of one's faith.²⁷

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ أَنْ يَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ
عَنْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١﴾

(Al-Ma'idah: 11)

O you who have believed, remember the favor of Allah upon you when a people determined to extend their hands against you, but He withheld their hands from you.

The word *bast* (بسط; extend) literally means to stretch out, but when associated with "hand" (يد) or "tongue" (لسان), it conveys a metaphorical meaning. *Bast yad* (بسط يد; extending the hand) is a metaphor for attacking, just as *bast lisān* (بسط لسان; extending the tongue) means to mock or taunt.²⁸ It appears that since most attacks are carried out by the hand and involve extending it toward an opponent, this experience has broadened to include any form of assault, hence the term "hand extension" for any attack. In this verse, the divine blessing in repelling evil is described as if someone is about to extend their hand to attack, but God prevents them from doing so. Here, the bodily gesture of an extended, attacking hand serves as the source domain, mapped onto hostile intent against believers as the target domain, so that divine protection is rendered not as an abstract deterrence but as a physically checked hand.

b. Faith is The Guidance of The Heart

وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾

(At-Taghabun: 11)

And whoever believes in Allah, He will guide his heart.

The word *qalb* (قلب; heart) in humans is derived from *taqallub* (تقلب; transformation) and is called *qalb* because it is constantly changing and transforming.²⁹ The heart is the source of many conceptual metaphors about faith. In the Quran, the heart is considered the center of perception and the conveyance of emotions and feelings. Thus, it can sometimes be frightened (Al-Anfal: 2), but God can instill compassion and mercy in it (Al-Hadid: 27), and it can become disgusted by hearing something (Az-Zumar: 45). In modern language, the heart is sometimes seen as a container for emotions. In this view, the heart is a vessel that holds and controls its contents, such as pride. However, when this vessel becomes full, controlling its contents becomes more difficult, making the emotion seem uncontrollable. Therefore, an excess of pride can have a negative impact on an individual, preventing them from using common sense.³⁰ Moreover, the Quran considers the heart an instrument for reasoning (Al-Hajj: 46) and attributes understanding to it (Al-A'raf: 179). In this regard, the heart is mentioned alongside the ears and eyes as human organs of perception. This religious conceptualization

²⁷ Tabataba'i, *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Quran*, 8–9.

²⁸ Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, *Al-Tafsir al-Wasit lil-Quran al-Karim* (Cairo: Nahdat Misr, 1997), 76.

²⁹ Husayn bin Muhammad Raghīb Isfahani, *Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran*, ed. Edited by Safwan 'Adnan Dawoodi. (Beirut: Dar al-Shamiyyah, 1412), 681.

³⁰ Olga Isabel Díez Velasco, "Metaphor, Metonymy and Image-Schemas: An Analysis of Conceptual Interaction Patterns," *Journal of English Studies* 3 (2001): 59.

fundamentally differs from the philosophical dualism that separates the faculties of reason and emotion, placing the heart in opposition to the intellect.³¹

The above verse personifies the heart of someone who believes in God, granting it an independent character and guiding it to the right path by providing tranquility and dispelling anxiety. Here, the heart supplies the source domain—an organ capable of being led or led astray—and the target domain is the believer's inner orientation toward God. The resulting metaphor, "Faith is The Guidance of The Heart", maps physical guidance onto spiritual steadiness. This personification of the heart and the attribution of guidance to it imply that this guidance takes both cognitive and emotional aspects into account.

وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

(Al-Imran: 103)

And remember the favor of Allah upon you when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became brothers by His favor. And you were on the edge of a pit of Fire, and He saved you from it.

The above verse reminds believers of their salvation from afflictions. In the metaphor "Salvation from disbelief is salvation from the edge of a pit of Fire," believers are depicted at the edge of a pit of fire. If they had remained in their disbelief, they would have fallen into it and, on the Day of Judgment, would have been engulfed by the Fire of Hell. Therefore, God, because of their faith, saved them from falling into the fire. The physical danger of a pit of fire at whose edge the tribes once stood is the source domain, and deliverance from disbelief through faith is the target domain. Thus, the passage instantiates the metaphor "Faith is Salvation from Fire".³² One can infer the metaphor "Disbelief is Fire" from the content of the verse. The term *ilf* (إلف; affection) in lexicography means gathering with desire or, in other words, bonding.³³ Since the Quran considers the heart to be the center of reason and emotions, the affection and bond among believers are attributed to the heart. For years, conflict and animosity existed between the two tribes of *Aws* and *Khazraj* in *Yathrib*. Even the efforts of some elders through speeches and poetry to reconcile them were fruitless until the advent of Islam, when the people of *Yathrib* embraced the faith. The enmity turned into friendship and love, making them as close as brothers, as if their hearts had been bonded together.³⁴ This bond, which could not have been achieved even with vast wealth, is described in the verse:

وَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مَا أَلَّفْتَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ أَلَّفَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾

(Al-Anfal: 63)

³¹ Ning Yu, "The Chinese Heart as the Central Faculty of Cognition," in *Culture, Body, and Language: Conceptualizations of Internal Body Organs across Cultures and Languages*, ed. Farzad Sharifian et al. (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2008), 68.

³² Tantawi, *Al-Tafsir al-Wasit lil-Quran al-Karim*, 200.

³³ Ali Akbar Qorashi, *Qamus-e Quran* (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah, 1371), 92.

³⁴ Muhammad al-Tahir Ibn Ashur, *Tafsir Al-Tahrir Wa al-Tanwir* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Tarikh al-Arabi, 1420), 3:175.

And brought together their hearts. If you had spent all that is in the Earth, you could not have brought their hearts together; but Allah brought them together. Indeed, He is Exalted in Might and Wise.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ إِيمَانِهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ جُنُودُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٤﴾

(Al-Fath: 4)

It is He who sent down tranquility into the hearts of the believers that they would increase in faith along with their [present] faith.

The term *sakīnah* (سكينة; tranquility) is derived from the root *sukūn* (سكون; calmness), meaning the stability of something after movement,³⁵ and the term *nuzūl* (نزول; descent or revelation) in lexicography means coming down.³⁶ Allameh Tabataba'i interprets *nuzūl* (descent) in some verses (Az-Zumar: 6; Al-Hadid: 25; Al-Hijr: 21; Al-Fath: 4) to mean creation and bringing into being.³⁷ Similarly, Tabarsi, in the verse Al-Imran: 154, interprets "descent" as a bestowal.³⁸ One can consider the metaphysical realm superior to and higher than the material world, and the specific connection from the metaphysical to the material world is metaphorically described as descending. Therefore, in the above verse, since the heart is considered a vessel for human emotions, tranquility from the unseen world descends into the hearts of believers. As a result of this inner tranquility, faith is metaphorically added to believers' existing faith. Movement from a higher to a lower plane is the source domain, and the target domain is the believer's growing inner steadiness, with the downward motion of descent mapped onto tranquility settling in the heart.

2. Domain of War

Before Islam, the Arabian Peninsula lacked a central government in the common sense of the term at that time. Tribal affiliation determined an individual's identity in society. The tribe-based system not only influenced its members' economic life but also shaped their personalities, dictating their choices in marriage, places of residence, war and peace, love and hatred, and all personal and social interactions according to tribal norms.³⁹ War among Arab tribes was not understood as it is today. By and large, pre-Islamic Arab wars can be classified into three categories. The first category includes conflicts between the *Adnānī* and *Qaḥṭānī* tribes. The second category involves battles between Arab tribes and the empires of Iran and Rome. The third category consists of wars between various tribes to secure their own interests. In such wars, two or more tribes sometimes formed alliances based on the tradition of *ḥilf* (covenant) and attacked their opponents.⁴⁰ To prevent the spread of Islam, the *Quraysh* tribe resorted to various measures, including the persecution of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) companions⁴¹

³⁵ Isfahani, *Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran*, 417.

³⁶ Ibn Faris, *Ahmad ibn Faris. Mu'jam Maqayis al-Lughah*, ed. Abd Muhammad Harun (Qom: Maktab al-I'lam al-Islami, 1404), 417.

³⁷ Tabataba'i, *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Quran*, 18:258.

³⁸ Fadl ibn Hasan Tabrisi, *Majma' al-Bayan fi Tafsir al-Quran*, ed. Hashim Rasuli and Fadlullah Yazdi Tabataba'i (Tehran: Naser Khosrow, 1372), 2:862.

³⁹ Zargari-Nejad, *Gholam Hossein. Tarikh-e Sadr-e Islam: 'Asr-e Nobavvat* (Tehran: Samt, 2008), 161.

⁴⁰ Sajjad Dadfar, "Pre-Islamic Arab Warfare," *Motala'at-e Tarikhi-ye Jang*, no. 1 (2016): 26.

⁴¹ Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, *Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1410), 173.

and boycotts.⁴² When these efforts failed, they resorted to the sword in the second year of the Hijra, initiating the Battle of *Badr*.⁴³ Following this, many other wars were imposed on Muslims. Given the prevalence of war during that era, the Quran used the conceptual domain of war to conceptualize faith.

إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ ﴿٥١﴾

(Ghafir: 51)

Indeed, We will support Our messengers and those who believe during the life of this world and on the Day when the witnesses will stand.

The term *naṣr* (نصر; victory) linguistically means providing assistance⁴⁴ and evokes the context of war. God's support for His messengers and believers depicts a battle scene in life, where God's unwavering support leads to their victory in various fields, including logic and reasoning, warfare, and life's challenges. Furthermore, in the court of the Day of Judgment, when all witnesses stand, believers will emerge victorious with God's support. Martial victory is the source domain here, and the target domain is the believer's success both in this world's trials and before the witnesses of Judgment Day, so that triumph on a battlefield is mapped onto triumph secured by faith.⁴⁵

وَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤١﴾

(An-Nisa: 141)

And never will Allah give the disbelievers over the believers a way [to overcome them].

The metaphorical expression here is "a way to overcome" (*sabīlā*), drawn from the source domain of warfare, in which an attacking force seeks an open route or breach through which to defeat its opponent. The target domain is faith: so long as believers remain steadfast, God denies disbelievers any such route.⁴⁶ The mapping thus projects the absence of a breach in a besieged position onto the absence of any means by which disbelief can prevail over a steadfast believer. Accordingly, this verse instantiates the metaphor "Faith is Salvation from Defeat", a specific instance of the broader domain of war: in the battle of life, God has not given disbelievers any means to attack and dominate believers.

3. Domain of Trade

Trade was one of the most important means of earning a living during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The trade caravans of *Quraysh* would migrate to specific regions for commerce with the changing seasons.⁴⁷ Various caravans were frequently present during the *Hajj* pilgrimage for commercial purposes.⁴⁸ Among the people of Mecca, the *Quraysh* tribe was particularly renowned for its trade,⁴⁹ to the extent that some have attributed the tribe's name, *Quraysh*, to their engagement in

⁴² Ya'qubi, *Ahmad ibn Ishaq. Tarikh al-Ya'qubi* (Beirut: Dar Sadir, XXXX), 2:31.

⁴³ Abdullah Ibn Muslim Ibn Qutaybah, *Al-Ma'arif* (Cairo: Al-Hay'ah al-Misriyyah al-'Ammah lil-Kutub, 1992), 158.

⁴⁴ Isfahani, *Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Quran*, 808.

⁴⁵ Naser Makarem Shirazi, *Tafsir-e Nemuneh* (Tehran: Dar al-Kutub al-Islamiyyah, 1992), 20:127.

⁴⁶ Muhammad Rashid Rida, *Tafsir al-Manar* (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1414), 5:466.

⁴⁷ Fadl ibn Hasan Tabrisi, *Tafsir Jawami al-Jami*, ed. Abu Gurji (Qom: Hawzah-ye Ilmiyyah-ye Qom, 1412), 4:542.

⁴⁸ Tabrisi, *Tafsir Jawami al-Jami*, 4:542.

⁴⁹ Ibn Abi al-Hadid, "Abdul Hamid ibn Hibat Allah. Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah," in *Qom: Maktabat Ayatollah al-'Uzma al-Mar'ashi al-Najafi*, 1404 AH, ed. Muhammad Abu Ibrahim (n.d.), 15:211.

trade.⁵⁰ Historical and *hadith* texts contain numerous reports regarding the trade journeys of several ancestors of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the *Banu Hashim* family, including *Hāshim ibn 'Abd Manāf* and *Abū Ṭālib*.⁵¹ Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself participated in several trade journeys before his prophethood, including those conducted on behalf of Lady *Khadījah* (AS).⁵² Additionally, many Jews in Medina during the Prophet's era were engaged in trade, and the *Qaynuqā* market was one of the major, permanent Jewish markets in Medina.⁵³ Consequently, the familiarity of the people of that era with trade led the Quran to employ the conceptual domain of trade to conceptualize faith in numerous verses.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةُ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَعَدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١١١﴾

(At-Tawbah: 111)

Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Quran.

The reward for the faith and striving of believers for the sake of Allah⁵⁴ is likened to a trade in which Allah, as the buyer, purchases the lives and properties of the believers in exchange for Paradise, with the document of this transaction being the Torah, the Gospel, and the Quran.⁵⁵ Based on the content of the verse, the following mappings are established within the metaphor "Faith is A Profitable Trade": the target domain throughout is faith, not life in general, and it is this consistent target that the remaining mappings in this section develop.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿١٠﴾ تُوْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

(As-Saff: 10–11)

O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? [It is that] you believe in Allah and His Messenger and strive in the cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives.

Faith itself is described as trade, and believers are invited to a highly profitable transaction—one that will save them from a painful punishment. After drawing attention with a rhetorical question, the verse immediately explains this trade: to believe in Allah and His Messenger and to strive in the cause of Allah with one's wealth and life. In this way, sins will be forgiven, and believers will enter Paradise. The target audience of this invitation consists of believers, indicating that the faith envisioned in this profitable trade goes beyond the faith they already possess.

⁵⁰ Hasan Mustafawi, *Al-Tahqiq Fi Kalimat al-Quran al-Karim [Investigation into the Words of the Quran]* (Tehran: Center for the Publication of the Works of Allameh Mustafawi, 2006), 9:237.

⁵¹ al-Hadid, "Abdul Hamid ibn Hibat Allah. Sharh Nahj al-Balaghah," 15:202; Ibn Shahrashub and Muhammad Ali, *Al-Manaqib* (Qom: Allameh, 1998), 1:35.

⁵² Shahrashub and Ali, *Al-Manaqib*, 1:173.

⁵³ Ahmad Ajaj Kermi, *Administration in the Prophet's Era* (Cairo: Dar al-Salam, 1427), 1:79.

⁵⁴ Rida, *Tafsir al-Manar*, 11:48.

⁵⁵ Tabataba'i, *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Quran*, 9:395.

4. Domain of Travel

a. Faith is Guidance Along A Journey

One of the most pervasive metaphors emphasized by Lakoff and Turner is "Life is a Journey." The structure of this metaphor has led to the consideration of mappings between the source domain of "travel" and the target domain of "life."⁵⁶

When considering the experience of travel during the early Islamic period, a distinct set of concepts comes to mind. Travel involves two points: departure and destination. The distance between these points can be long or short. Sometimes, multiple routes exist to reach the destination, with some being easy and others difficult. Additionally, the path may be straight or winding. Travelers play a pivotal role in this journey; they may be familiar with the route and travel it easily, or they may require a guide to show them the correct path. Along the way, travelers often encounter obstacles that they must overcome or bypass. On long journeys, travelers bring provisions with them. Along the journey, robbers or bandits may seek to steal the traveler's assets and exploit their straying. Having a map, a reliable companion, and a guide ensures a successful journey without straying or getting lost. Sacred texts,⁵⁷ especially the Quran,⁵⁸ also use the conceptual domain of travel, establishing creative correspondences to represent various aspects of religious life. In the religious context of the Quran, a clear distinction is observed between two ways of life: a good, faithful life and a bad, unbelieving life. This duality runs through all the detailed aspects of this metaphorical scheme, depicting two types of journeys on two different paths with two kinds of travelers.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِإِيمَانِهِمْ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٩﴾

(Yunus: 9)

Indeed, those who have believed and done righteous deeds, their Lord will guide them because of their faith. Beneath them rivers will flow in the Gardens of Pleasure.

The verb "guide" (*yahdi*) is the metaphorical expression here; the source domain is travel, in which an unfamiliar path requires a map and a guide to prevent the traveler from straying. The target domain is faith itself, rather than life in general. The mapping runs directly from the unmarked path (a servant without guidance) to the map or guide (faith). Thus, within the metaphor Faith is Guidance Along A Journey, faith is what leads believers to Paradise. Initially, believers are described as possessing both faith and righteous deeds, but subsequently, their guidance by Allah is attributed solely to their faith, for it is faith that guides the servant to Allah, whereas righteous deeds merely support faith.⁵⁹

إِنَّهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ آمَنُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدْنَاهُمْ هُدًى ﴿١٣﴾

(Al-Kahf: 13)

⁵⁶ Lakoff and Turner, *More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*, 3–4.

⁵⁷ Jonathan Charteris-Black, *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 264.

⁵⁸ Abdulmoneim, "The Metaphorical Concept 'Life Is a Journey' in the Quran: A Cognitive-Semantic Analysis," 102.

⁵⁹ Tabataba'i, *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Quran*, 10:16.

They were youths who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in guidance.

During the reign of Decius, when the shadow of disbelief and crime loomed over the people, a group of intelligent youths recognized the corruption of their society's religion and resolved to stand against it. However, when they found that they could not achieve anything in that corrupt environment, they took refuge in a cave and fell into a deep sleep for 309 years.⁶⁰ Allah increased the guidance of the Companions of the Cave in return for their faith, akin to capital or assets that appreciate in value. The source domain here blends travel with trade—guidance treated as a form of capital that yields a return—and the target domain remains an effect of faith. Thus, the verse extends the mapping already established for Faith is Guidance Along A Journey rather than introducing a separate metaphor.

b. Faith is Guidance to The Straight Path

وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهَادِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

(Al-Hajj: 54)

And indeed, Allah is the Guide of those who have believed to a straight path.

In 33 verses, the term *ṣirāṭ mustaqīm* (صراط مستقيم; straight path) is used to describe Allah's path. Since only one straight line can be drawn between two points, the expression of a "straight path" indicates that only one direct way leads people to a specific destination. This ultimate destination for travelers on Allah's path is Paradise, where they will reside eternally (Yunus: 25). The source domain remains that of travel, narrowed here to the uniqueness of the straight line connecting two points, while the target domain is the believer's undivided path to salvation. This yields the metaphor "Faith is Guidance to The Straight Path".

5. Domain of Light

a. Faith is Guidance Along A Journey

Light and darkness are among humanity's earliest experiences and the source of many conceptual metaphors in various cultures.⁶¹ Historically, light has been used as a metaphor to expand perception and knowledge. This may be because sight is one of the primary tools of human cognition, and vision is possible only in the presence of light.⁶² Furthermore, a farmer views light as a source of growth and blessing for crops; a traveler perceives it as a factor ensuring safety, departure, and guidance; a merchant regards it as a symbol of activity and profitability; and a thinker sees it as a reminder of knowledge and awareness. Humans experience light during the day, in states of wakefulness and joy, accompanied by the pleasant warmth of the sun, and consider it a symbol of life and vitality.

يَوْمَ تَرَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَسْعَى نُورُهُمْ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَبِأَيْمَانِهِمْ بُشْرُكُمُ الْيَوْمَ جَنَّتْ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خُلِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾

(Al-Hadid: 12)

On the Day you will see the believing men and believing women, their light proceeding before them and on their right. [It will be said], "Your good tidings today are [of] gardens beneath which rivers flow.

⁶⁰ Shirazi, *Tafsir-e Nemuneh*, 12:362.

⁶¹ Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 40.

⁶² Mina Behnam, "A Conceptual Metaphor Study of 'Light' in Divan-e Shams," *Naqd-e Adabi*, no. 10 (2010): 95.

On the Day of Resurrection, faith is embodied as light⁶³ and is conceived as possessing a force that moves rapidly ahead of and to the right of believers to guide them toward Paradise.⁶⁴ This light also possesses personhood and acts as a guide.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the movement of this light forward and to the right evokes the orientational metaphors "happiness is on the right" and "the desirable is on the right." Taken together, a moving, guiding light stands as the source domain and the believer's assured path to Paradise as the target domain, jointly instantiating the metaphor "Faith is a Light Ahead and To the Right of Believers Leading to Paradise."⁶⁶

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَآمِنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ
وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

(Al-Hadid: 28)

O you who have believed, fear Allah and believe in His Messenger; He will [then] give you a double portion of His mercy and make for you a light by which you will walk and [He will] forgive you; and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

The term *wiqāyah* (وقاية) originally means "to protect something from what harms or damages it." If a believer watches over their soul and observes Allah's commands and prohibitions,⁶⁷ they are also safeguarding Allah's sanctity. Therefore, in Quranic verses, the metaphorical expression "protecting Allah" is used instead of "protecting oneself." Those who believe are once again advised to exercise faith and piety, and in return, they will benefit from the light of faith in this world and the Hereafter.⁶⁸ Based on the metaphor "Faith is Guidance Along A Journey", with the light of faith, they will be able to recognize and travel the right path.

أَوْ مَن كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَن مَّثَلَهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ
مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

(Al-An'am: 122)

Is one who was dead and We gave him life and made for him light by which to walk among the people like one who is in darkness, never to emerge therefrom? Thus it has been made pleasing to the disbelievers that which they were doing.

Several metaphors can be identified in this verse: "Disbelief is death," "Faith is life," "Believing is being brought to life," "Faith is light," "Disbelief is darkness," and "The darkness of disbelief is a container." All these metaphors aim to bring the reality of disbelief and faith closer to the comprehension of ordinary people. The general public's understanding is not profound enough to envision a life beyond mere biological existence. Preoccupied with material pleasures within a physical horizon, they perceive no distinction between a believer and a disbeliever, considering both equal in

⁶³ Muhammad Ibn Yusuf Abu Hayyan, *Al-Bahr al-Muhit fi al-Tafsir*, ed. Sidqi Muhammad Jamil (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1420), 10:105.

⁶⁴ Ghaemi-Nia, *Cognitive Semantics of the Quran*, 353–54.

⁶⁵ Tawfiq Sabagh, *Quranic Metaphors: Quranic Veils in the Quran*, trans. Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Mar'ashi (Tehran: Negah-e Mo'aser, 2006), 109.

⁶⁶ Fatemeh Yeganeh and Azita Afrashi, "Oriental Metaphors in Quran: A Cognitive Semantic Approach," *Language Related Research* 7, no. 5 (2016): 204.

⁶⁷ Toshihiko Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concept in the Qur'an* (Selangor: Islamic Book Trust, 2007), 13.

⁶⁸ Tabataba'i, *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Quran*, 19:174.

possessing the gift of life. Presenting faith as life, being alive, and walking with the light of faith along the journey of life—while framing disbelief as death, a state of being dead, and being trapped in darkness—serves to bring the truth closer to their understanding.⁶⁹

b. Faith is The Exit from Darkness into Light

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَائُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٥٧﴾

(Al-Baqarah: 257)

Allah is the ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darknesses into the light. But those who disbelieve—their allies are Tāghūt. They take them out of the light into darknesses. Those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein.

The word *walī* (ولي; ally/guardian) indicates a special existential relationship between Allah and believers. This relationship transcends the spiritual connection shared with other creatures in the universe. As a result of this existential relationship, Allah brings believers out of darkness into light and establishes a higher level of connection with them.⁷⁰ Moving from darkness to light represents guidance, whereas moving from light to darkness signifies misguidance.⁷¹ Therefore, based on the metaphor “Faith is The Exit from Darkness into Light”, faith guides believers from darkness to light along an illuminated path. The verse’s primary contrast is not between faith and *Tāghūt* directly but between two guiding agents, Allah and *Tāghūt*, each leading their respective party along an opposite path: just as Allah, as the believers’ guardian (*walī*), leads believers from darkness to light, so *Tāghūt* (worshiping anything other than God), as the guardian of disbelievers, leads them from light into darkness, aimlessly traversing a dark path and ultimately reaching Hell, where they will reside forever.

In this verse and similar passages, “darkness” is used in the plural form, whereas “light” remains strictly singular throughout the Quran. This indicates that the path of truth is free of fragmentation and duality, whereas the path of disbelief is inherently divided and dispersed. Travelers on the latter path are not united in their falsehood and do not pursue a unified goal. While it might be argued that disbelievers possess no light to be removed from, the expression is justified when considering that the primordial light of faith (*fiṭrah*) is ingrained in human nature. Naturally, Allah does not forcibly bring anyone out of darkness into light, nor does *Tāghūt* possess absolute control over disbelievers. Rather, both function as guides—one pointing to the straight path and the other toward misguidance—while the individual remains free to choose which path to pursue.⁷² Moreover, based on the container schema, darkness and light are conceptualized as bounded domains: after crossing the boundary of darkness, believers enter light, whereas disbelievers, guided by *Tāghūt*, cross the threshold of light into darkness. The contrast between light and darkness is a pivotal feature in the verse’s representation of faith and disbelief.

⁶⁹ Tabataba’i, *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Quran*, 7:336.

⁷⁰ Ghaemi-Nia, *Conceptual Metaphors and Spaces in the Quran*, 500.

⁷¹ Tabataba’i, *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Quran*, 2:346.

⁷² Shirazi, *Tafsir-e Nemuneh*, 2:285-286.

6. Personification

Unlike the preceding sections, personification here does not designate a source domain but a conceptual mechanism: it attributes to an inanimate or collective entity a capability—volition, perception, or, as in the verse below, belief—that properly belongs only to a human agent. Personification allows us to use our knowledge about ourselves to understand other aspects of existence, such as time and will. This mechanism originates from our tendency to perceive certain abstract concepts as active and possessing volition.⁷³

فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ أَمَنَتْ فَتَنَفَعَهَا إِيمَانُهَا إِلَّا قَوْمَ يُونُسَ لَمَّا آمَنُوا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَى حِينٍ ﴿٩٨﴾

(Yunus: 98)

Why was there no city that believed so its faith benefited it except the people of Jonah? When they believed, We removed from them the punishment of disgrace in worldly life and gave them enjoyment for a time.

In the previous verses regarding past nations, particularly Pharaoh's people, it was noted that they refused to believe in God during times of free will, professing faith only when facing death and divine punishment, which was of no avail to them. However, the people of Prophet Jonah (PBUH) believed in time, and divine punishment was lifted from them. Other nations also included groups who believed, but what distinguished the people of Prophet Jonah (PBUH) was their collective faith.⁷⁴ The verse predicates belief (*āmanat*) of "a city" (*qaryatun*). As believing is a capacity that only an entity possessing will and perception can exercise, the city of the people of Jonah is here personified as a single believing agent, with faith attributed to the community as though it were one person. The wording of the verse further supports a second, related metaphor: "We removed from them the punishment of disgrace" (*kashafna 'anhum*) employs a verb of uncovering, casting the punishment as a cover or veil enveloping the city, an instance of the container schema. Thus, once the people of Jonah come to believe, this covering is lifted from their city.

7. Container Schema

We humans are material beings separated from the surrounding world by our skin, which acts as a boundary between us and the external environment. Each of us is like a container with a specific volume and dimensions of inside and outside. We extend these internal and external directions to other physical objects that possess a surface and a defined boundary, perceiving them as containers with interiors and exteriors. Even when no tangible boundary exists, we project an internal and external space onto them.⁷⁵ The container schema includes at least the interior, boundary, and exterior.⁷⁶

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُدْخِلُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٣٠﴾

(Al-Jathiyah: 30)

But as for those who believed and did righteous deeds, their Lord will admit them into His mercy.

In the above verse, the mercy of the Lord is conceived as a container into which

⁷³ Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 88.

⁷⁴ Shirazi, *Tafsir-e Nemuneh*, 8:386.

⁷⁵ Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 29.

⁷⁶ Vyvyan Evans and Melanie Green, *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 181.

God admits those who believe and perform righteous deeds. Similarly, in the verse, *فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِهِ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِي رَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلٍ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ* ﴿١٧٥﴾

(An-Nisa: 175)

*But as for those who believed in Allah and held fast to Him, He will admit them to mercy from Him and bounty), the mercy and bounty of God are envisioned as containers into which believers enter by adhering to the Quran.*⁷⁷

8. Space Schema

The human mind organizes and conceptualizes certain ideas based on spatial directions such as back, front, up, down, near, and far. The human body is spatially oriented and usually stands upright; thus, the way the body functions in the environment is consistent with its surroundings. Consequently, spatial directions are attributed to concepts.⁷⁸

ثُمَّ كَانَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْمَرْحَمَةِ ﴿١٧٦﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ ﴿١٧٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَايَعْتَنَا هُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ ﴿١٧٨﴾

(Al-Balad: 17–19)

Then they will be among those who believed and advised one another to patience and advised one another to mercy. Those are the companions of the right. But those who disbelieved in Our signs—they are the companions of the left.

The word *maymanah* (ميمنة) means the right side, while *mash'amah* (مشأمة) means the left side.⁷⁹ These verses divide people into two groups on the Day of Judgment: believers are called the companions of the right, and disbelievers are called the companions of the left. The companions of the right enter Paradise, whereas the companions of the left are punished in the Fire of Hell. Therefore, happiness and misery are conceptualized using the directions of right and left. These orientational metaphors align with the metaphors "good and desirable is on the right side" and "bad and ominous is on the left side."⁸⁰

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾

(Al-Mujadilah: 11)

Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees. And Allah is Acquainted with what you do.

Two attributes, faith and knowledge, are considered criteria for elevating one's status with God.⁸¹ However, the scholars mentioned are a group of believers who possess both faith and knowledge.⁸² Therefore, this verse indicates that there are two groups of believers: those who possess only faith and those who possess both faith and knowledge. The elevation of status for the former is by one degree, while for the latter, it is by several degrees. Consequently, based on the spatial schema "higher status is in

⁷⁷ Rida, *Tafsir al-Manar*, 6:102.

⁷⁸ Ghaemi-Nia, *Conceptual Metaphors and Spaces in the Quran*, 71.

⁷⁹ Mustafawi, *Al-Tahqiq Fi Kalimat al-Quran al-Karim [Investigation into the Words of the Quran]*, 6:8.

⁸⁰ Yeganeh and Afrashi, "Orientational Metaphors in Quran: A Cognitive Semantic Approach," 204.

⁸¹ Shirazi, *Tafsir-e Nemuneh*, 23:442.

⁸² Tabataba'i, *Al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Quran*, 19:188.

the upward direction," the status of believers is depicted as high, and the status of knowledgeable believers as higher.

وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

(Al-Anfal: 19)

And Allah is with the believers.

Support and backing often accompany companionship and result in better outcomes. God's companionship signifies special support and guidance that only believers receive. This support provides comfort and strength to believers and indicates that their enemies will not prevail.⁸³

ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ جُنُودًا لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَعَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

(At-Tawbah: 26)

Then Allah sent down His tranquility upon His Messenger and upon the believers and sent down soldiers [angels] whom you did not see.

In the Battle of Hunayn, the Muslim army numbered around twelve thousand, an unprecedented force at that time. However, this large army, which included many new converts, was initially routed, and some fled. At that moment, when the Muslim army was scattered across the valley of Hunayn and only a small group remained with the Prophet (PBUH), Allah sent tranquility like rain upon the Prophet (PBUH) and the believers. He also supported them with angels from the unseen realm. These angels were not visible and did not participate openly in the battle, but because they provided comfort and strength to the believers, they are referred to as soldiers. In the end, some disbelievers were killed or captured, while others fled.⁸⁴ The unseen world can be considered superior to and higher than the material world, and the specific connection from the unseen to the material world is described as descending. Thus, the terms "sending down tranquility" and "sending down angels" are used.

Conclusion

This study examines how the Quran renders the abstract effects of faith cognitively accessible by grounding them in concrete, embodied domains of seventh-century Hijazi experience. The analysis of twenty-three verses identified a recurring set of conceptual metaphors, including "Faith is A White Face", "Faith Is The Guidance of The Heart", "Faith is Salvation from Fire", "Faith is A Profitable Trade", "Faith is A Light Ahead And To The Right of Believers Leading To Paradise", "Faith is Guidance to The Straight Path", and "Faith is The Exit from Darkness into Light", together with the personification of collective faith and the use of container and space schemas to depict divine mercy and elevated status. The same underlying strategy recurs across all eight domains: the Quran consistently draws its source domains – the body, tribal warfare, caravan trade, desert travel, and the play of light and darkness – from precisely those experiences most familiar to its seventh-century Hijazi audience, a pattern consistent with the Diachrony Hypothesis that a text's conceptual domains are shaped by the common experience of its era.

⁸³ Tantawi, *Al-Tafsir al-Wasit lil-Quran al-Karim*, 6:68.

⁸⁴ Shirazi, *Tafsir-e Nemuneh*, 7:337.

Beyond identifying these metaphors, this cognitive-linguistic reading offers a complementary lens on the Quranic text: it can help confirm or refine classical exegetical readings, surface points of convergence and divergence among interpreters, and situate their judgments within a more explicit conceptual framework. It thereby suggests that a systematic engagement with modern linguistic approaches has something concrete to offer contemporary Quranic exegesis.

Finally, this study is subject to a certain limitation that also points toward a direction for future research. Following a qualitative, descriptive-analytical method, the analysis was restricted to verses explicitly addressing the effects of faith; it did not employ corpus-based quantitative techniques that could statistically verify the frequency and distribution of the identified source domains across the entire Quran. Future studies may extend this cognitive-linguistic framework to other central Quranic concepts, such as piety (*taqwā*) or hypocrisy (*nifāq*), or adopt a comparative approach examining how the conceptualization of faith differs across the Quran, the *Hadith* corpus, and other religious scriptures.

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