



## Metaphors of 'Worldly Life' and 'Hereafter' in the Holy Quran: A Conceptual Approach

Lect. Aziz Khalaf Abid Saleh (Ph.D.)

Wasit Education Directorate

[aziz.zrejy.hum58@student.uobabylon.edu.iq](mailto:aziz.zrejy.hum58@student.uobabylon.edu.iq)

<https://orcid.org/0009-0003-4297-7637>

Assist. Lect. Malak Hassan Hussein Khader

[malak.hussein@alkutcollege.edu.iq](mailto:malak.hussein@alkutcollege.edu.iq)

<https://orcid.org/0009-0004-5495-8465>

Al-Kut University College

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### Abstract

The present study investigates the cognitive metaphorical uses of some expressions related to 'Worldly Life' (الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا) and the 'Hereafter' (الْآخِرَةُ) in the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran uses expressions associated with concrete images to depict abstract and more complex concepts of 'Worldly Life' and the 'Hereafter.' Utilizing a qualitative method, the study highlights the relationship between language, thought and Quran in terms of ontological, orientational and structural metaphors. Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) model of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) is used for the analysis of the Quranic verses. The findings reveal a tendency by the Holy Quran to make a conceptual mapping between the concept of 'Worldly Life' and the concepts of being 'worldly,' 'trivial,' 'temporary,' 'short-living,' etc., and between the concept of the 'Hereafter' and the concepts of being 'heavenly,' 'precious,' 'constant,' 'ever-lasting,' etc. The study concludes that metaphor functions as a means for facilitating the interpretation and comprehension of religious discourse.

**Keywords:** Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Mapping, Worldly Life, the Hereafter,

Cognitive Approach

## الاستعارات المتعلقة بـ"الحياة الدنيا" و"الآخرة" في القرآن الكريم:

### دراسة مفاهيمية

م.م. ملاك حسن حسين خضير  
جامعة الكوت/ كلية التربية

م.د. عزيز خلف عبد صالح  
وزارة التربية/ المديرية العامة لتربية واسط

### الملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة عن الاستعمالات المجازية المعرفية لبعض التعبيرات المتعلقة بـ"الحياة الدنيا" و"الآخرة" في القرآن الكريم. يستخدم القرآن الكريم تعبيرات مرتبطة بصور ملموسة لتصوير مفاهيم مجردة وأكثر تعقيداً عن "الحياة الدنيا" و"الآخرة". تستعمل الدراسة منهج نوعي لتسليط الضوء على العلاقة بين اللغة والفكر والقرآن من حيث الاستعارات الوجودية والاتجاهية والبنوية. استخدمت الدراسة نموذج لأكوف وجونسون (CMT) (١٩٨٠) لنظرية الاستعارة المفاهيمية لتحليل الآيات القرآنية. توصلت الدراسة عن وجود ميل قرآني لربط مفهوم "الحياة الدنيا" ومفاهيم أخرى مثل: "دنيوية" و"تافهة" و"مؤقتة" و"قصيرة العمر" وما إلى ذلك. في حين هنالك ربط بين مفهوم "الآخرة" ومفاهيم أخرى مثل "سماوية" و"ثمينة" و"ثابتة" و"دائمة" وما إلى ذلك. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن الاستعارة المفاهيمية تعمل كوسيلة لتسهيل تفسير وفهم الخطاب الديني.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نظرية الاستعارة المفاهيمية، التطابق، الحياة الدنيا، الآخرة، دراسة ذهنية

## I. Introduction

The rationale of the use of conceptual metaphorical discourse in the Holy Quran may be to introduce unfamiliar abstract entities through complete or partial analogies with concrete ones. The Holy Quran creates two distinct images of Worldly Life (الحياة الدنيا) and the Hereafter (الآخرة) by mapping them to concrete objects or images. One fundamental principle in Islam, upon which other religious beliefs may be based, is that the concept of 'Worldly Life' is associated with *temporary enjoyment*, and that of the 'Hereafter' with the *permanent home of settlement*, as observed in the following Quranic verse:

[39 غافر ﴿يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ﴾]

*"O my people, this worldly life is only [temporary] enjoyment, and indeed, the Hereafter-that is the home of [permanent] settlement."* (Sura 40:39)

The two conceptual images that Worldly Life is a temporary enjoyment and that the Hereafter is the (permanent Home) of the settlement are what the Holy Quran propagated to the 7th Century Muslims. These concepts stand as key terms to all other related concepts, and these are also the keys to several metaphorical schemas in the Holy Quran.

The interaction between the salient properties of the abstract and the concrete domains forms the basis of the conceptual process referred as 'mapping'. The basic dictionary meaning of a lexical item and its contextual meaning is what is referred by Group (2007, p. 39) as 'Metaphor Procedure.' Conceptual metaphors are useful for comprehending complex ideas in simple terms and therefore are frequently used to give abstract ideas and images. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that metaphors are not merely stylistic, but they are cognitively important.

In the Holy Quran, Allah Almighty, describes Worldly Life in terms of lexical items such as 'متاع الغرور' 'illusory enjoyment' (Sura 3:85), which activates within believers trivial conceptual images of life. This metaphor is not strictly linguistic, rather, it is a kind of cognitive understanding that implies the following abstract ideas:

1. The belief that after this Worldly Life there is an everlasting life (permanent) settlement.
2. The belief that this Worldly Life is only a temporary enjoyment.
3. This life is a deliberate introduction to the Hereafter.
4. This is the belief in which believers should think (Tabataba'i, 1979)



5. Worldly Life is associated with hell, and the Hereafter with Paradise (Ibn-Kathir, 2003)
6. Worldly Life is associated with injustice and killing the innocent, whereas the Hereafter is associated with death and tomb (Shirazi, 1926).
7. Worldly Life lasts for few days, whereas the Hereafter forever (Al-Razi, 2000).

These conceptual ideas are for the most part formulated by the aids of religious context. Religious context means how Muslims grasp the Holy Quran, or strictly speaking, how the famous Muslim interpreters explain the Quranic verses. This is why it has become a necessity to consult some well-known Quranic interpreters to know what is the hermeneutic explanations of Worldly Life and the Hereafter verses.

## 2. Conceptual Metaphor Theory

Crystal (2008) states that “a conceptual metaphor is viewed as performing an essential role in human language and cognition, encoding world-views in all forms of linguistic activity, including everyday conversation” (p. 80). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggest that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language, but in thought and action. The conceptual system in terms of which people think and act is basically metaphorical in nature. Conceptual metaphor, thus, plays a central role in defining people’s everyday realities. If people are right in suggesting that their conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way they think, what they experience, and what they do every day is very much a matter of metaphor.

The Romantic view of language, as argued by Saeed (2003), views metaphor as an integral part to thought and as a way of experiencing the world. The Romanticists make no distinction between literal and figurative language, considering all language as metaphorical. Though CMT is considered as an extension to the Romantic view of language, it pull back a little from the strong view that all language is metaphorical, suggesting that “metaphors allow us to understand one domain of experience in terms of another” (Lakoff & Turner, 1989, p. 135).

Kövecses (2005) makes a distinction between linguistic and conceptual metaphor. This distinction rests mainly on ‘mapping,’ a term employed by cognitivists to distinguish the latter. The relationship between linguistic and conceptual metaphor is more of complementary rather than contrastive in nature. Lakoff and Johnson



(1980) put it more concisely, "what emerged as conceptual mapping naturally and crucially depends on linguistic evidence" (p. 4). For example, in the conceptual metaphor: LIFE IS A JOURNEY, we go from A to Z; where *Life* and *Journey* are analogous. The *journey* is a given idea that presupposes the involvement of *travelers*, a *road*, a *vehicle*, *provisions*, and a *destination*. We are all travelers whether we know it or not. So every course we take in life is a *journey* within another bigger journey. Life can also be perceived in terms of a *fight* or a *game* depending on several matching spots recognized by the speaker/hearer. Life can be a *fight* for some, a *game* for others, each depending on those matched salient spots (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

## 2.1 Conceptual Mapping

What characterizes CMT is what Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 246) refer to as conceptual (metaphorical) mapping. Conceptual mapping refers to one abstract object or domain in terms of another. The previous example, "LIFE IS A JOURNEY" involves mapping between *fight*, or *game* (life), and directionality. The Conceptual Mapping is a model which is designed to operationally define a method to determine the mapping of the Source-Target Domain pairings of a conceptual metaphor (Ahrens, 2016, p. 6). This pairing between several basic elements takes place on both domains of the *analogous* entities. The domain of the source of analogy provides the concrete features of the 'source' entity that the listener/reader is familiar with to account for the abstract features of the entity, *targeted* by the speaker/writer. The interaction between them is regarded as a mapping process by which each element of the given set (the Source Domain) is associated with one element of the second set (the Target Domain).

## 2.2 Types of Conceptual Metaphor

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) classify conceptual metaphors into three types, structural, ontological, and orientational. Structural metaphors: this type of metaphor forms the largest of all conceptual metaphors. If, for example, the source domain is A, the target domain is B, then the trajectory A IS B is called a structural metaphor. The example: "TIME IS MONEY" entails that time (the abstract target) can be *saved*, *spent*, *wasted*, *given*, *invested*, *bought* in the same way money (the concrete source) is. Other examples are: "LIFE IS A JOURNEY," "SURGEONS ARE



BUTCHERS,” “ARGUMENT IS WAR,” “ARGUMENT IS A GAME,” and so on. In these examples, there is a direct relationship between the two domains, which justifies the ubiquity of this type of metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 5).

**Ontological metaphors:** this type of metaphor identifies our experiences generally ‘onto’ objects, substances, and containers. For example, “LIFE TASTES GOOD” (Coca cola) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 5).

**Oriental metaphors:** the defining feature of orientational metaphors is the use of the basic human spatial orientations mapped onto non-spatial objects. The concept of quantity, for example, involves at least two metaphors, ‘up’ and ‘down.’ “PRICES PLUMMET” (down), or “ROCKET” (up), “OUR RELATIONSHIP WENT DOWNHILL,” “WE ARE ON CLOUD NINE,” “HAPPINESS IS UP” are a few examples. *Moving forward or backward, beyond, and ahead* of something serve as metaphorical expressions that offer a solution to abstract linear scales and paths schemas (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 5).

### 2.3 Metaphor and Religious Discourse

In her *Metaphor and Religious Language*, Soskice (1988) emphasizes that CMT plays a role in increasing our ability to understand the religious discourse. Soskice’s assumption is that the new CMT has modified the way people experience life. She argues that considering the whole context of an utterance is crucial for the understanding and interpretation of meanings of words. For her, a metaphor in religious contexts has primarily cognitive as well as explanatory function. Soskice (1988) draws attention to the metaphorical reference to God in all three religions (including Islam), concluding that metaphorical uses in these religions are complementary, may be overlapping, but not contradictory.

### 2.4 Culture and CMT

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggest that conceptualizing abstract entities and ideas is subject to the conceptual systems of cultures and religions which are metaphorical in nature. Thus, the process of conceptualization is achieved via embodied experience which correlates with cultural background and influence metaphorical interpretation. Gibbs (1999, p. 146) states that the study of metaphor is “culture-cognitive.” Embodied experience is correlated with cultural background (Kövecses, 2005). Cultural background is viewed as mental representations structured by



cultural models and "[w] hat is conceptual about metaphor involves the significant aspects of cultural experience, some of which is even intimately related to our embodied behaviors" (Gibbs, 1999, p. 146).

### 2.5 Studies on CMT in the Holy Quran

Quran is well-known as the foundation of Islamic faith, viewed by Muslims as the most glorious book, from which they take guidance for this life and the hereafter. The language of the Holy Quran is the source of knowledge of Arabic language, religious knowledge, and moral lessons. Muslims believe that Quran is a miraculous book that contains incomparably eloquent rhetorical language that cannot and will never be matched by humans. Furthermore, it tells Muslims news from the past, the present, and the future (Salamah, 2002), helping people to get more knowledge about what they might encounter in their lives.

While Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) CMT remains foundational, recent studies (e.g., Berrada, 2006; Sani and Ruma, 2014; Kövecses, 2015; and Ahrens, 2016) have expanded the application of metaphor analysis to religious discourse. This study builds upon their findings by applying modern cognitive semantics to Quranic metaphorical structures. Berrada (2006), for example, examines the metaphorical meanings of LIGHT and DARKNESS in the Quran using the conceptual metaphorical explanation, relating LIGHT to positive qualities and DARKNESS to negative ones. He emphasizes that the Quran (like any other discourse) must be interpreted using a conceptual theoretical approach to show how metaphors assist the process of interpreting complex concepts and ideas. Sani and Ruma (2014) adopt Lakoff and Johnson's CMT to investigate the use of conceptual metaphors in the Quran. The authors focus on the concepts of LIFE and DEATH as target domains, and how these are concretized in the source domains such as the life cycle of plants, which germinate, bloom, and wither.

### 3. Methodology and Data Analysis

The study employs a qualitative research method, describing the metaphors of 'Worldly Life' and the 'Hereafter' conceptually and linguistically. Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) model of CMT is employed to analyze the data in terms of ontological, orientational and structural metaphors. The data consist of 28 verses from the Holy Quran, allocated equally to the concepts 'Worldly Life' and the 'Hereafter,' with 14 verses dedicated to each. The procedure followed in selecting

the data is by conducting comprehensive research on the Quranic verses that contain the concepts of 'Worldly Life' and the 'Hereafter.' Arranging the Holy texts for the purpose of analysis mainly depends on the themes or concepts these texts broadly share or present.

Since the interpretation of the Holy Quran is subject to the religious or cultural contexts (i.e., how Muslims understand the Quran), the explanations of its verses are dependent upon some well-known Quranic Interpretations such as those by Tabataba'i, 1979; Al-Razi, 2000; and Ibn-Kathir, 2003.

## 'Worldly Life'

### Life Is a Temporary Enjoyment

رُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ ۗ ۱. (آل عمران ١٤)

*"Life is the love of that which they desire-of women and sons, heaped-up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle and tilled land. That's the enjoyment of worldly life, but Allah has with Him the best return." (Sura 3:14)*

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُمْ زِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْعُرُورِ [الحديد ٢٠]

*"Know that the life of this world is only a sport and a pastime, and an adornment, and a source of boasting among yourselves, and of rivalry in multiplying riches and children. This life is like the rain the vegetation produced whereby rejoices the tillers. Then it dries up and thou seest it turn yellow; then it becomes broken pieces of straw. And in the Hereafter there is severe punishment, and also forgiveness from Allah, and His pleasure. And the life of this world is nothing but temporary enjoyment of deceitful things." (Sura 57:20)*

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ أَلْفَىٰ إِلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامَ لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا تَتَّبِعُونَ ۗ 3. (النساء ٩٤)

*"ye who believe! when you go forth in the cause of Allah, make proper investigation and say not to anyone who greets you with the greeting of peace, 'Thou art not a believer.' You seek the goods of this life, but with Allah are good things in plenty.*



*Such were you before this, but Allah conferred His special favor on you; so do make proper investigation. Surely, Allah is well aware of what you do" (Sura 4:94)*

[ القصص ٦٠ ] ( وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتُهَا وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ 4. )

*"And whatever thing you have been given-it is [only for you] the enjoyment of worldly life and its adornment. And what is with Allah is better and more lasting; so will you not use reason?" (Sura 28:60)*

[ فَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ 5. ] [ الشورى ٣٦ ]

*"And whatever you have been given is only a temporary provision of this life, but that which is with Allah is better and more lasting for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord" (Sura 42:36)*

[ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ انْفِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ اتَّقَلْتُمْ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ أَرَضِيتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ فَمَا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ ] [ التوبة ٣٨ ]

*"O you who have believed, what is (the matter) with you that, when you are told to go forth in the cause of Allah, you adhere heavily to the earth? But you satisfied with the life of this world rather than the Hereafter? But what is the enjoyment of worldly life compared to the Hereafter except a (very) little" (Sura 9:38)*

In the Quranic verse (1), Worldly Life is associated with loving women and sons, heaped- up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle ( horses, camels, etc.) and tilled land. In verse (2), the concept of 'life' is associated with "a sport and a pastime, and an adornment, and a source of boasting among yourselves, and of rivalry in multiplying riches and children." The image added in this sense, as argued by Ibn-Kathir (2003), is that life is likened to rain, of which vegetation is liked by disbelievers, and then this vegetation gets yellow, a color which symbolizes withering. The conclusive image drawn here is that disbelievers like the withered life in the same way they like the withered vegetation. Verse (3) summarizes all the things mentioned in verses (1) and (2) through using the word 'goods' which is, as stated by Tabataba'i (1979), an illusory enjoyment tempting the believers to say to those who greet them "you are not a believer." The Quranic verses (4) and (5) are complementary to what is mentioned above, whatever you have been given (e.g., women and sons, heaped- up sums of gold and silver, fine branded horses, and cattle)-it is [but] for the enjoyment of Worldly Life. In the last verse, a more general image is depicted, that is, Worldly Life is but the enjoyment of delusion. Though it is temporary and short-living, the enjoyment of Worldly Life is still tempting and

seductive. The Holy Quran tells us that this enjoyment of Worldly Life is (very) little, if compared to the Hereafter (Tabataba'i, 1979).

All the above Holy texts are formulated into an abstract concept of *temporary enjoyment* which Muslims make sense of as something worthless, if contrasted with that of the Hereafter. The source domain is associated with the physical properties as money, gold, silver, women, sons, horses, etc. which provide a metaphor for the abstract idea of temporary enjoyment. Verses (1), (3), (4), (5) and (6) are ontological conceptual metaphors. In Verse (1), the metaphor of Worldly Life is identified via people's experiencing some worldly amusements such as loving their sons, money, gold, silver, etc. In Verse (3), life is being conceptualized as seeking for the worldly amusements, which, if compared with those offered by Allah Almighty, are too little. Verses (4), (5) and (6), on the other hand, depict life as anything (amusing) has been given to people, or anything that people possess. All the above texts are put under the rubric of ontological metaphor, because they make an approximate connection between the concept of 'Worldly Life' and the seductive things people have. Verse (2) is an exception in that the metaphor identified is structural; conceptualizing life as being associated with a pastime and an adornment is achieved via the copula (is).

### Life Is Associated With Belief and Patience

وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْعَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنَاكَ عَنْهُمْ تُرِيدُ زِينَةَ الْحَيَاةِ ( 7 .  
[ الكهف ٢٨ ] (الدُّنْيَا وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ أَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهُ عَن ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرْطًا

*"And keep yourself patient with those who call upon their Lord in the morning and evening, seeking His countenance. And let not your eyes pass beyond them., desiring adornment of the worldly life, and do not obey one whose heart. We have made heedless of Our remembrance and who follows his desire and whose affair is even neglect."* (Sura 18:28)

[الانعام ٣٢ ] (وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوَ وَاللَّادِرُ الْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ 8 .)

*"And the worldly life is not but amusement and diversion; but the home of the Hereafter is best for those who fear Allah, so will you not reason?"* (Sura 6:32)

[محمد ٣٦ ] (إِنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوَ وَإِنْ تَوَمَّنُوا وَإِنْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا يُؤْتِكُمْ أَجْرَكُمْ وَلَا يَسْأَلُكُمْ أَمْوَالَكُمْ 9 .)

*"(This) worldly life is only amusement and diversion. And if you believe and fear Allah, He will give you your rewards and not ask you for your properties."* (Sura 47:36)

In all the above Holy Quranic verses, Worldly Life is associated with adornments. These adornments include *women, gold, horses and everything* that people may

enjoy in their everyday lives. The Holy Quran presents schemas of Worldly Life by creating prototypical images that may formulate fixed principles that the life is nothing but one of these things: AMUSEMENT, DIVERSION and ADORNMENT. Kashani (1975) mentions that describing Worldly life as nothing but amusement and diversion is to remind people that these amusements may drive them away from the home of the Hereafter, which is best for those who fear Allah Almighty. The last Holy Quranic verse tells people that if they believe in and fear Allah Almighty, He will give them their rewards and will not ask them for their properties (Ibn-Kathir, 2003).

CMT's linguistic interpretation centers around two extremes. The first is the physical realm, where 'Worldly Life' is linked to 'ENJOYMENT,' 'ADORNMENT,' and 'DIVERSION.' The second is the abstract realm, where these material pleasures contrast with belief in Allah. The Quran emphasizes patience in resisting these temptations. The metaphor recognized in Verse (7) is ontological. It can be noticed that the Holy Quran attempts to present 'life' as inherently worthless by making a fixed expression (collocation) of ( الحياة الدنيا ), (Worldly-Life). Presenting life as worthless is also noticed in Verses (8) and (9), but this time via a structural conceptual metaphor. The target domain (LIFE) in these verses is interconnected to the source domain (AMUSEMENT and DIVERSION) through the verb copula (is).

### Life Is Associated With Carefulness

اعلموا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مَصْفُورًا ثُمَّ يُكُونُ خُطَامًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ [الحديد] ٢٠

*"Know that the life of this world is only a sport and a pastime, and an adornment, and a source of boasting among yourselves, and of rivalry in multiplying riches and children. This life is like the rain the vegetation produced whereby rejoices the tillers. Then it dries up and thou seest it turn yellow; then it becomes broken pieces of straw. And in the Hereafter there is severe punishment, and also forgiveness from Allah, and His pleasure. And the life of this world is nothing but temporary enjoyment of deceitful things."* (Sura57:20)

(كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّقُونَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَنْ رُحِزَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْجِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا ۱۱  
[ال عمران ١٨٥] الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ)

*"Every soul shall taste of death. And you shall be paid in full your rewards only on the Day of Resurrection. So whosoever is removed away from the Fire and is made*



*to enter Heaven has indeed attained his goal. And the life of this world is nothing but an illusory enjoyment."* (Sura 3:185)

الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَهْوًا وَلَعِبًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فَالْيَوْمَ نَنْسَاهُمْ كَمَا نَسُوا لِقَاءَ يَوْمِهِمْ هَذَا وَمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا ۗ (الاعراف ٥١) [يَجْحَدُونَ

*"Those who took their religion for a pastime and a sport, and whom the life of the world beguiled.' This day, then, shall We forget them as they forgot the meeting of this day of theirs, and as they used to deny Our Signs" (Sura 7:51)*

In the above verses, Worldly Life is described as deceitful, an image which is created in the Holy Quran to warn people not to be deceived by it. In verse (10), life, as explained by Ibn- Kathir (2003), is similar to rain, of which vegetation is liked by people, then this vegetation passes away. Similarly, Worldly Life is dramatically depicted as an illusory enjoyment. As for verse (11), Ibn- Kathir (2003) argues that since this life ends with death, and that people are rewarded on the Day of Resurrection, either to Fire or to Paradise, then people must be aware of this fact and not be deceived by life anyway. Verse (12) depicts dramatically the tragic situation unbelievers find themselves in. So after they are warned and advised not to be tempted by life, the Holy Quran describes them as being forgotten on the Day of Resurrection. The word *forgotten* is used metaphorically to mean, as explained by Al-Kashani (1975), that they are not rewarded as other believers. The reason for that is when they were alive they forgot Allah (i.e. they don't follow His signs), and, as a punishment, Allah Almighty forgets them (i.e. He does not reward them).

In the above Holy texts, CMT provides Muslims with two concepts, the first one describes life as deceitful since its enjoyment is illusory (the source domain), and the second one which formulates in Muslims the concept of 'carefulness,' that is, they must not be deceived by worthless adornments of life. Such concept are achieved via various conceptual metaphors, Verses (10) and (11) are structural since the target domain (e.g. A PASTIME and AN ADORNMENT, and AN ILLUSORY ENJOYMENT) is structurally connected to the source domain (e.g. LIFE in both texts). The metaphor in Verse (12) is ontological. The target meaning (e.g. A PASTIME and A SPORT) is contained or included within that of the source meaning (e.g. Worldly-Life).

### **Life Is Too Short**

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ ۗ (الكهف ٤٥) [الرِّيحُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُقْتَدِرًا



*And present to them the example of the life of this world, (its being) like rain which We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it and (then) it becomes dry remnants, scattered by the winds. And Allah is ever, over all things, Perfect in Ability." (Sura18:45)*

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ حَتَّى إِذَا ( 14 ) أَخَذَتِ الْأَرْضُ زُخْرُفَهَا وَازَّيَّنَتْ وَظَنَّ أَهْلُهَا أَنَّهُمْ قَادِرُونَ عَلَيْهَا أَتَاهَا أَمْرُنَا لَيْلًا أَوْ نَهَارًا فَجَعَلْنَاهَا حَصِيدًا كَأَنْ [يونس ٢٤ ] لَمْ تَعْنِ بِالْأَمْسِ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

*"The example of [this] worldly life is but like rain which We have sent down from the sky that the plants of the earth absorb- [those] from which men and livestock eat- until, when the earth has taken on its adornment and is beautified and its people suppose that they have capability over it, there comes to it Our command by night or by day, and We make it as a harvest, as if it had not flourished yesterday. Thus do we explain in detail the signs for a people who give thought." (Sura10:24)*

As for the Quranic verse (13), Tabataba'i (1979) argues that the word *rain* in this verse refers metaphorically to people's possessions, such as *money, sons*, which will vanish quickly. Humans believe erroneously that what they possess in their hands belong to them and that they have control upon their possessions, but, in fact, everything they have belongs to Allah Almighty. Verse (14) in more detail indicates that the *rain* in question, which represents Worldly Life, is intermingled with plants from which men and livestock eat, until, when the earth forms its adornment, and people believe that they have control over it, Allah's order comes and everything beautiful is devastated (Ibn-Kathir, 2003).

As far as the linguistic interpretation is concerned, Allah Almighty describes the DOWNSIDE MOVEMENT of Worldly Life. It is like *rain*, which Allah sends from the sky (the first place) to the earth (the second place). This movement, according to Lakoff and Jonson (1980), is from high (which is goodness) to low (which is badness). There is another movement, which is the mingling of rain and vegetation. The word *mingling* has a connotation of badness. In the sacred verse (14), the same DOWNSIDE MOVEMENT occurs to the rain (Worldly Life). So when it (Worldly Life) takes its adornment and beauty, and its people suppose that they have the ability to overcome it, Allah's command comes by night or by day and turns it as into harvest. Verses (13) and (14) contain structural metaphors in which the target domain (e.g., Worldly-Life) is connected to the source domain (e.g., RAINWATER) via the preposition 'like'.

## ‘The Hereafter’

### The Hereafter Is a Great Punishment (of Fire)

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَى فِي خَرَابِهَا أُولَئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا ۝١. [البقرة ١١٤ ] (خَائِفِينَ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

*"And who are more unjust than those who prevent the name of Allāh from being mentioned [i.e., praised] in His mosques and strive toward their destruction. It is not for them to enter them except in fear. For them in this world is disgrace, and they will have in the Hereafter a great punishment" (Sura2:114)*

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُمْ زِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَوْلَادِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْغُرُورِ [الحديد ٢٠ ]

*"Know that the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting to one another and competition in increase of wealth and children - like the example of a rain whose (resulting) plant growth pleases the tillers; then it dries and you see it turned yellow; then it becomes (scattered) debris. And in the Hereafter is severe punishment and forgiveness from Allah and approval. And what is the worldly life except the enjoyment of delusion." (Sura 57:20)*

[الاسراء ١٠ ] (وَأَنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا) 3.

*"And 'it warns' those who do not believe in the Hereafter 'that' We have prepared for them a painful punishment." (Sura 17:10)*

[البقرة ٨٦ ] (أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ) 4.

*"These are the ones who trade the Hereafter for the life of this world. So their punishment will not be reduced, nor will they be helped." (Sura 2:86)*

[البقرة ٢٠١ ] (وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ) 5.

*"But among them is he who says, "Our Lord, give us in this world [that which is] good and in the Hereafter [that which is] good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire." (Sura 2:201)*

In the Quranic verses (1), (2) and (3), the Hereafter is described as a (great), (severe) and (painful) *punishment*, respectively. The image that the Holy Quran contextualizes in the above three verses is Fire, which is associated with *heat, thirst, pain*, etc. These minor images, which are perceptions, activate a kind of *pain* in disbelievers when they imagine themselves tortured in the Fire. The Holy Quran

guides disbelievers toward some concepts by using some conceptual metaphors that draw on some images taken from real life. One of these images is Fire, which people know as *hurting*, *destructing* and *intolerable*. The torture, as depicted in verse (4), is not reduced, and those who suffer its heat and pain cannot be helped. The believers, as shown in verse (5), fear this punishment of Fire, and they ask Allah Almighty to protect them from it.

Linguistically speaking, the Holy Quran employs two kinds of concepts: physical images, which are associated with disbelievers preventing Muslims from mentioning Allah Almighty in His mosques, their view of life as mere amusement, diversion and enjoyment, their disbelief in the Hereafter, etc. Such physical representations are closely connected to the more abstract concepts like HEAT, THIRST and PAIN. These concepts are achieved via various conceptual metaphors. In Verses (1), (3), (4) and (5), it is the ontological conceptual metaphor that connects the concept of the Hereafter to the abstract image of the GREAT PUNISHMENT, PAINFUL PUNISHMENT or the PUNISHMENT OF THE FIRE. In Verse (2), the meaning is achieved through the structural conceptual metaphor, in which the abstract concept of SEVERE PUNISHMENT is linked to that of the Hereafter via 'the preposition in'.

### The Hereafter Is Associated With Losing

6. (وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ) (ال عمران ٨٥)

"And whoever desires other than Islam as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers." (Sura3:85)

الْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَلَّلَ لَكُمْ وَطَعَامُكُمْ حَلَّلَ لَهُمْ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ 7. ( وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسَافِحِينَ وَلَا مُتَّخِذِي [5] الْمَائِدَةِ ] ) (أَحْدَانٍ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

"Today all good, pure foods have been made lawful for you. Similarly, the food of the People of the Book<sup>1</sup> is permissible for you and yours is permissible for them. And 'permissible for you in marriage' are chaste believing women as well as chaste women of those given the Scripture before you—as long as you pay them their dowries in wedlock, neither fornicating nor taking them as mistresses. And whoever rejects the faith, all their good deeds will be void 'in this life' and in the Hereafter they will be among the losers." (Sura5:5)

Verse (6) states that whoever desires other than Islam (monotheism) as a religion, it will never be accepted from him, and he will be among the losers (Al-Kashani,

1975). Verse (7) argues that Believers are permitted to have all goods and pure foods, including the food of the People of the Book (Jews and Christians). Believers are also permitted to get married to believing women, as well as the Jewish and Christian women, provided they give them their due dowries. These instructions are revealed to people by Allah Almighty, and whoever denies His revelation will be among the losers (Al-Tabarani, 2008).

The linguistic analysis of Verses (6) and (7) is based on the conceptual idea that the Hereafter is associated with LOSING (the target domain). The source domain is related to two evil deeds, which people must know what they are in order to avoid them, first, whoever accepts a religion other than Islam, as shown in verse (6), and second, whoever denies Allah's orders and instruction, as can be understood from verse (7). This interconnection that holds between the Hereafter and LOSING is achieved via the ontological conceptual metaphor, that is, such a terrible loss is inherently institutionalized within the Hereafter.

### **The Hereafter Is Associated With Reward of the Hereafter**

[ال عمران ١٤٨] (فَاتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحُسْنَ ثَوَابِ الْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ) 8.

*"So Allah gave them the reward of this world and the good reward of the Hereafter. And Allah loves the doers of good." (Sura3:148)*

The Holy Quran creates a conceptual image in the minds of believers that they receive two rewards, one in life, such as the reward of this world, and the other in the Hereafter, such as the good reward of the Hereafter. Al-Kashani (1975) explains that the rewards given to believers in this life include victory, good mention and wealth, while in the Hereafter the reward is Paradise.

The Holy Quranic text of (8) attempts to create an image in the minds of believers, that is, Allah will reward them (the target domain) if they obediently follow His revelation (the source domain). This image is accomplished via an ontological conceptual metaphor, since the idea of REWARDING believers is expressed via institutionalizing it within that of the Hereafter.

### **The Hereafter Is Better than Worldly Life**

[الانعام ٣٢] (وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ) 9.

*"And the worldly life is not but amusement and diversion; but the home of the Hereafter is best for those who fear Allah, so will you not reason?" (Sura 6:32)*



The above verse, as argued by Tabataba'i (1979), draws comparison between Worldly Life, which is nothing but false amusement and diversion, and the Hereafter, which is better for those who fear Allah Almighty. The preference of the Hereafter to Worldly Life lies in the fact that it is the eternal Home where believers will reside. This Quranic verse comes as a reaction to what the disbelievers are saying, in Sura45: 24, that there is no life other than this Worldly Life in which they die or are born, and nothing can destroy them but "the passage of time" (Tabataba'i, 1979).

The Holy text presents two domains: one is physical (the source) represented by Worldly Life, which is mere amusement and diversion, and the other is abstract (the target) envisaged by the Hereafter, which is comparatively better. This idea is conveyed structurally, presenting the Hereafter as the BEST of all that humans may be living for.

### The Hereafter Is Associated With Much Enjoyment

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ انزُرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَتَأْتَلْتُمْ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ أَرْضِيئُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنْ ( 10).  
الْآخِرَةِ فَمَا مَتَاعٌ

[التوبة ٣٨] ( ) الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ

*"O you who have believed, what is [the matter] with you that, when you are told to go forth in the cause of Allah, you adhere heavily to the earth? Are you satisfied with the life of this world rather than the Hereafter? But what is the enjoyment of worldly life compared to the Hereafter except a [very] little." (Sura9:38)*

Verse (10) presents two contrasting images or schemas. The first represents the fleeting enjoyment of Worldly Life. The second represents the Hereafter, which is vast and ever-lasting, promised as a reward for believers (Al-Kashani, 1975).

The above Holy text presents two opposing concepts, one is associated with worldly enjoyment (source), which is described as TOO LITTLE, and the other with the Hereafter (the target), which is SO MUCH MORE and requires believers to strive for. This comparison of how much enjoyment believers may obtain in Paradise, and conceptualizing the enjoyment of the Hereafter as comparatively so much more is achieved structurally via the preposition 'to'.

### The Hereafter Is Associated With the [Eternal] Life

[العنكبوت ٦٤] ( ) وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهُمْ وَلَعِبٌ وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ( 11).

"And this worldly life is not but diversion and amusement. And indeed, the home of the Hereafter - that is the [eternal] life, if only they knew." (Sura29:64)

[ ٣٩ غافر ] يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا مَتَاعٌ وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ ( ١٢ )  
"O my people, this worldly life is only [temporary] enjoyment, and indeed, the Hereafter - that is the home of [permanent] settlement." (Sura40:39)

In the above Holy verses, two conceptual metaphors are envisaged. The first is that of Worldly Life, which is nothing more than diversion and amusement. The second is that of the Hereafter, which represents true and eternal life, where there is no death, and it is a life of ultimate settlement. Ibn-Kathir's (2003) interpretation of this Quranic verse is that life is too little, fleeting, and will fade away soon. The image that believers cherish most is that of immortality. Humans instinctively fear and dislike death. This Holy text states that the Hereafter, unlike Worldly Life, is eternal; believers never die, rather they live in Paradise forever.

As for the linguistic analysis, a comparison is made explicit between Worldly Life (the source), which Allah Almighty depicts as nothing but short amusement and diversion, and the Hereafter (the target), which is conceptualized as ETERNAL and the HOME OF TRUE SETTLEMENT. This comparison is made clear through the grammatical structure, by which the concept of the Hereafter is linked to the concept of its being ETERNAL, as in Verse (11), and its being the HOME OF [PERMANENT] SETTLEMENT, as in Verse (12).

### **The Hereafter Is Associated With Helplessness**

[ال عمران ٢٢ ] (أَوْلِيكَ الَّذِينَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَلُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ) ١٣ .

"They are the ones whose deeds are wasted in this world and the Hereafter. And they will have no helpers." (Sura 2:22)

[ال عمران ٥٦ ] (فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَأَعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ) ١٤ .

"As for those who disbelieve, I will subject them to a severe punishment in this life and the Hereafter, and they will have no helpers." (Sura2:56)

As for verse (13), Al-Kashani (1975) argues that the deeds of the unbelievers have become worthless, that no rewards have been given to them, and that they have never been praised for what they have done. These deeds have not protected them from divine punishment. Concerning verse (14), the disbelievers are depicted as being tortured in the Fire; they are subject to severe punishment without being helped by anybody.



As for the linguistic analysis, these two verses are centralized on two extreme domains: the first is physical (the source), represented by DISBELIEF in Allah Almighty; the second is abstract (the target), represented by disbelievers' LONELINESS and HELPLESSNESS. The image depicted to people about the Hereafter is that it is the place where no help can be expected to disbelievers, and that they are lonely and tortured in the Fire. Verses (13) and (14) are ontological conceptual metaphors; the Hereafter is conceptualized as being the HOME OF HELPLESSNESS, where disbelievers are left lonely, and they never expect any help whatsoever that might save them from the Fire.

#### 4. Conclusions

This study aims to explore how the expressions of 'Worldly Life' and the 'Hereafter' are conceptualized into more abstract and complex concepts in the Holy Quran. Throughout the Holy Quran, people are told and persuaded that such abstract and complex ideas are best understood within a religious context. One major finding of the study reveals that the language of the Holy Quran is typically metaphorical. In particular, the metaphors of 'Worldly Life' and the 'Hereafter' are so rich and innovative that they depict a wide range of ideas and complex concepts. Moreover, the CMT is typically applicable to the Holy Quran since meaning in the Quranic texts is centralized on two extremes, the linguistic field (the source domain), which is concrete and physical as forms of text, and the abstract meaning (the target domain), which the Holy Quran conceptualizes as images, ideas and principles in the minds of believers. Believers should embrace these abstract ideas, believe in them, and ultimately incorporate them as inherent principles in their lives.

The linguistic significance of the study is that the analysis supports all three types of CMT, structural, ontological and orientational, with the aim of helping people in general and believers in particular, to conceptualize ideas and principles about the WORTHLESSNESS and TEMPORARINESS of Worldly Life, and the value of the Hereafter as the true HOME OF SETTLEMENT. As for ontological metaphors, the schemas and images envisioned by the Holy Quran are diverse and multifaceted. The Holy Quran, for instance, depicts Worldly Life as SHORT and TEMPORARY ENJOYMENT, wherein people are attached to women and sons, and to treasures of gold and silver. Orientational metaphors play a role in shaping conceptual images of Worldly life, such as DOWNWARD MOVEMENT (i.e. badness) and the Hereafter, such as UPWARD MOVEMENT (goodness). The verses support the structural system of the CMT, demonstrating that Arabic is a rich language endowed with various syntactic devices capable of generating diverse and effective schemas and images.

The study demonstrates that CMT is a crucial factor in Quranic interpretation and understanding. This finding aligns with Soskice (1988), who emphasizes that CMT enhances our ability to comprehend religious discourse. For instance, the references to Worldly Life and the Hereafter



carry connotations and additional meanings that differ from their ordinary, everyday usage. It is therefore essential for Arabic linguists to adapt modern linguistic theories, particularly those building on CMT, that deepen and enrich the analysis of both the Arabic language and the Quranic text.

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