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Investigation into Conceptual Metaphors of Death in the Quran Based on Cognitive Semantics

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Abstract

This article has as its purpose the enumeration of various conceptual metaphors of death from the viewpoint of cognitive linguistics. It used library research based on linguistics and semantics methodologies. The main theory used here is Lakoff and Johnson's conceptual metaphors and the system used is that of source and target domains. After citing the Quranic verses (Ayas) on the subject of death and pointing out theories related to conceptual metaphor in cognitive linguistics, it has been concluded that to define the abstract concept of death the Quran has adopted image schemas like path, trajectory and landmark, and has employed some conceptual metaphors for death as a living, dynamic and tastable entity, and for the world as a receptacle through which man departs when dying. Also, death, in its metaphorical sense of time within place, is presented as the point of returning to the Creator. The educational function of this view on death, in terms of cognitive linguistics, is to create an awareness of the true meaning of it as far as it could lead to better mental and behavioral capacities.

Keywords: Conceptual Metaphors, Death, Cognitive Semantics, Image Schemas, Quran

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1. Introduction

Language, according to a good number of researchers, reflects thought patterns that through conceptualizing with linguistic signs allows us to express delicate and complex concepts. (Langacker,1987, p.11) Some of these complexities force language users to transfer their meanings with the variety of tools existing in the structure of language. Among the tools one can refer to building images with words that could bring the speakers' concepts close to the ones in their interlocutors' minds. According to cognitive linguists, especially the advocates of conceptual metaphor theory (that will be explained later), language and its various tools are not merely for uttering words but when it comes to thinking about a certain abstract and intangible concept one needs those tools and above all conceptual metaphors. In fact, one must build images with concrete concepts when thinking about abstract things, so that one could manage to think better about them. This is exactly the function of conceptual metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson,1980).

Prohibition against a recourse to equivalence in Quranic diction and attention to philologists' saying about ascribing synonyms to the Quranic words together with the Infallible Imams' insistence on narrating Quranic words individually (contrary to Traditions that can be paraphrased) bring this notion to the mind that every word in the Quran has its specific meaning that cannot be substituted by others. The originality of Quranic definitions and the impossibility of substituting them with other expressions in translation and interpretation forces the scholar to look at the text as it is, not in a manipulated form (Ghaemina,2021, p.130).

On the other hand, introducing itself as a book of guidance for all people, the Quran tries to form and modify the attitudes of man about critical conceptions of life. So, using metaphors for transferring ideas, making or changing attitudes and organizing the behaviors, as Landau shows, plays an important role in social psychology (Landau,2017, pp. 21- 44).

In addition, the universality of the Quran versus a culture-specific explains why this holy Book applies metaphors to make a permanent and not temporal message. "Since the human body and the brain are predominantly universal, the metaphorical structures that are based on

them will also be predominantly universal” (Kövecses,2020, p. 11). Even Researchers of cognitive functionalism showed “the relationship between diachronic forms and their synchronic counterparts, and the influence of historical cultural models on the process of cognitive conceptualization in synchronic language use” (Mischler, 2013, p. 41).

Death is among the mysteries of creation and an inevitable event for every living thing. We usually understand it metaphorically as departure, loss, sleep, and so on (Howe, 2006, p. 358). Religion’s emphasis on resurrection accentuates the significance of death as the closing of one’s life and opening of a new chapter. Due to the abstraction of the concept of death and its lack of being given any material shape, the language user is bound to resort to some other forms of definition such as conceptual metaphors. Metaphors played a key role as “the essential link between the archetypical levels and the media which communicates them” (Gola & Ervas, 2013, p.9). In English poetry, metaphors like warrior, beast, and opponent in footrace used for death (Charteris-Black, 2004, p. 6). The permanence of Quranic revelation in regard to death makes us realize the scope of pertinent conceptual metaphors to understand its salient features. We are hopeful that this will contribute to our deeper consideration of a desirable human life and getting awakened to the reality of death.

1-1.Review of literature

The novelty of conceptual metaphor theories with the ensuing conflicts among linguists has opened the arena for research leading to the publication of many articles and books. The most significant one is authored by American cognitive linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson entitled, “Metaphors We live by”.(Lakoff & Johnson,1980) This has been followed up by some important articles about adapting the theory to various words and expressions used in language, among which we could mention “Literary Metaphor and Conceptual Metaphor” (Hasanzadeh Niri & Hamidfar,2020). Another which is concerned with our research topic is “The Conceptual Metaphor of the Aya ‘Nur’ in the Quran” (Hejazi, 2016) While appreciating this article, we reserve our right to criticize it since she assumes the metaphor to be an extension of the literary to the general domain of the language, whereas in the view of the main proponents of the theory the literary

and public domains of language are not to be separated. Also, she takes the metaphor as a literary and miraculous dimension of the Quran, but we, in the present article, take it as a linguistic aspect of language, and the Quran, which uses language as Its medium, is not to be excepted.

It seems that one of the most important related articles is “Conceptual Metaphors in the Quran from the Perspective of Cognitive Linguistics” (Hooshangi & Seifi Pargoo, 2009) which is very inspiring for researchers, though some critical comments are to be made about it. First, it contains some weak and irrelevant references, whether to the Quran or other sources. Second, it involves some conspicuous mistakes when taking ‘Quranic comparisons and examples’ as ‘conceptual metaphors’. But as regards providing good knowledge about the fundamentals and concepts of conceptual metaphor theory, it has its merits. There is only a single mentioning of death in one section of the table, which we still believe not to be a conceptual metaphor but a comparison between life-death and the growing and withering vegetation.

Among other articles that have appropriately discussed cognitive metaphors is “A Cognitive Analysis of Conceptual Metaphors of Movement in the Holy Quran” (Hejazi, Baharzadeh & Afrashi, 2018) which has devoted more special attention to understanding conceptual metaphors. Here, one can recognize a series of the most important source domains of the conceptual metaphor of death with a complex movement schema. As a result, this article can complement our own for a better understanding of some target domains in the conceptual metaphors of death in the Quran.

Other useful articles that contribute to our discussion here are ‘Name-Mappings of Life in the Hereafter in the Holy Quran Based on the Theory of Conceptual Metaphor (Far`eshirazi, Feyzi & Mohtadi, 2021) “The Conceptual Metaphor of God’s Grace in the Quran” (Ghaemini & Hosseini, 2017), and ‘Directional Metaphors of the Quran with Cognitive Approach’ (Hajian & Kurdza’feranloo, 2010)

We should also mention the following research discussing the conceptual metaphors of death but not the Quranic ones: Conceptual Metaphors of Death in Teaching Latin Language (Sarkauskiene & Seredziute, 2022)

There are some papers that try to find out death metaphors in a specific culture or language and vocabularies connoting death, which though not relating directly to our research, they are worth being mentioned (He, He, Ip, Shen, Yin, & Zhang, 2020; Chau, Cheung, & Ho, 2018; Tian, 2014)

The valuable work of Jonathan Charteris Black has devoted one chapter to “metaphor in the Quran”, though not mentioning its metaphors of death (Charteris-Black, 2004)

Finally, we should claim that in the matter of death metaphors and the mentioning of all related *Ayas* followed by their involved schemas, our endeavor here is unprecedented.

1-2. Research Questions

The main research question is the Quranic stance towards death as an abstract concept and the image schemas it has used to define it with conceptual metaphors. In fact, one should ask about the source domains of death in the framework of conceptual metaphors. The secondary question relates to the reasons behind using conceptual metaphors and image schemata when referring to death.

1-3. Method

The research method is based on the theory presented by Lakoff & Johnson in *Metaphors We Live by* (1980). According to this theory, contrary to formalist linguists' ideas, metaphor is not the literary component of language. In fact, language users, when discussing abstract ideas devoid of physical reference, use image schemas which are mostly based on their physical experience of the world around.

Our scientific system here is source and target domains. This means that according to the Quranic *Ayas* on death, the source domain of death has been determined in its conceptual metaphor and is placed as much as possible in more general categories.

1-4. Overview

Conceptual metaphor was initiated by George Lakoff and Mark Jonson in 1980. According to this theory, metaphor is not restricted to the literary side of the language but is very much current and effective in our daily utterances. In fact, our mind comprehends abstract notions in more concrete and palpable forms (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). These

writers maintain that the formation of a conceptual metaphor is in fact a mapping in which a source domain tracks into the target domain. In other words, the target domain features are comprehended with the source domain ones. The target domain, usually the main topic of the speaker's discussion, is more abstract and needs to be comprehended by the more concrete source domain. (Lakoff & Johnson,1999). To give an example, we can refer to the conceptual metaphor "marriage is a journey" that leads to the following metaphorical group:

- We are accompanying each other.
- The wheels of our shared life are stuck in the mud.
- We should choose separate ways.
- We have been stagnating in the last 20 years.

Lakoff and Mark Turner brought forward the unidirectionality problem in the sense that target domain features are explained through source target features and one cannot change the direction of the metaphor to offer the same features except when these are changed (Lakoff & Turner,1989). Lakoff refers to this in an article saying that we can use image schemas as source domain in conceptual metaphors. (Lakoff,1990). These image schemas are abstract representations and the result of our daily observations and materialized experiences that play a part in our conceptual organization (Rasekh Mahand,2018,55). As an example, to express a person's depth of sorrow we may say "He is sinking into grief." Here, the image schemas of object and volume have been used to create the conceptual metaphor, "grief is an object that has a volume". Our preconception is that the target domain of all the metaphorical statements are 'death'. The language user must adopt various conceptual metaphors to talk about death as a complicated abstract concept and, therefore, express different features of death in his mapping from the target domain of death to (an) other source domain(s).

2. Quranic Ayas (Verses) about Death

There are about 250 *ayas* in the Quran that deal in some form or other with the concept of death. Sometimes, these *ayas* appear in combinations with approximate definitions of death. The Quran, in general, uses two distinct methods for speaking about death; direct and

conceptual metaphors. It has not restricted its reference to “*maut*” (death) to mere metaphors, and though this concept is totally abstract, its surface components, i.e. starting and ending processes, have always been manifest to mankind, so a single term suffices for the language user to convey a relatively clear meaning to the interlocutors, but it happens that at times a more detailed understanding of the concept is required due to the deficiency of literal interpretation of the term. This necessitates another way for increasing the interlocutors’ awareness of the concept, and the Quran reveals the meaning by going beyond the literal rendering of it. Clearly, these *ayas* have used conceptual metaphors and image schemas to convey the message, but it should be noticed that the concept of death in conceptual metaphors sometimes belongs to the target and sometimes to the source domains. For example, God names those who do not take heed of the Truth as “the dead” (al-Naml/ 80) or those who worship but Allah as the dead who have never been alive (al-Nahl / 21). In cases when death appears in the form of a conceptual metaphor in the source domain, one can also resort to the radial network theory and deal with death apart from its main denotation.

In the following section we mention those *ayas* that contain death as the target domain and benefit from the image schemas for expressing its abstract meaning. [All translations of Quranic Ayas (Verses) are from *The Quran, with a Phrase-by-Phrase English Translation, by Ali Quli Qara’I, (1995)*]

The table below illustrates the conceptual mapping of death metaphor.

Table 1: Conceptual Mapping of Death Metaphors in the Quran

	Ayas(Quran , 1995)	Source Domain	Target	Key Statement(s)
1	3: 185 21: 35 29: 57 44: 56	TASTEABLE	DEATH	DEATH IS TASTEABLE
2	2: 133 2: 180 4: 18 5: 106 6: 60	Journey MOVABLE. HUMAN.	DEATH	DEATH IS MOVABLE DEATH IS HUMAN

	7: 34 10: 49 14: 17 15: 99 23: 99 29: 5 35: 45 50: 19 63: 10 63: 11 71: 4 74: 47			
3	3: 143 62: 8	MEETABLE HUMAN	DEATH	DEATH IS MEETABLE DEATH IS HUMAN
4	33: 16 62: 8	PURSUER HUMAN WILD ANIMAL	DEATH	DEATH IS PURSUER DEATH IS HUMAN DEATH IS WILD ANIMAL
5	4: 78 4: 100	REACHER HUMAN MOVER	DEATH	DEATH IS REACHER DEATH IS HUMAN DEATH IS MOVER
6	2: 234 2: 240 3: 55 3: 193 4: 15 4: 97 6: 60 6: 61 7: 37 7: 126 8: 50 10: 104 12: 101 13: 40 16: 28 16: 32	EXIT EXPELLER	DEATH	DEATH IS EXIT. Death IS EXPELLER.

	16: 70 22: 5 32: 11 39: 42 40: 67 40: 77 47: 27			
7	4: 133 6: 133 14: 19 35: 16 43: 41	DEPARTURE	DEATH	DEATH IS DEPARTURE
8	2: 46 2: 156 6: 60 6: 108 10: 4 10: 23 10: 56 11: 34 31: 23 39: 7 40: 3 50: 43 75: 30 88: 25 96: 8	RETURN POINT OF RETURN	DEATH	DEATH IS RETURN DEATH IS POINT OF RETURN

2-1. Death is Tastable

The clause ‘Every person will surely taste death.’ appears in at least three *ayas*:

“The Quran 3: 185 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Every soul shall taste death, and you will indeed be paid your full rewards on the Day of Resurrection.”

“The Quran 21: 35 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Every soul shall taste death, and We will taste you with good and ill by way of test, and to Us you will be brought back.”

“The Quran 29: 57 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Every soul shall taste death. Then you shall be brought back to Us.”

Elsewhere, we have this fact that the residents of paradise won’t taste death except the one they experienced in the world:

“*The Quran 44: 56 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) There they will not taste death, except the first death.*”

Khalil ibn Ahmad Farahidi (1988, pp.201-205) defines the root ‘*zowq*’ as taste and ‘*za’iqa*’ as taster and believes the word also signifies abhorrence. Raghīb Isfahani takes ‘*zowq*’ as what is tasted in mouth and believes it also signifies eating little, and ‘*za’iqa*’ signifies being aware. (1991, p. 333). The metaphorical meaning has sometimes been considered to be ‘catching news’ because one’s awareness of taste is near to that condition.

What is semantically obtained from the definition of the word is that the source domain (death or dying) is compared to the target domain (some undesirable tasting). The image schema of eating is a complex one that offers a variety of meanings. For example, in a statement like “He bites his tongue.”, though the image schema of eating is used, the existing complexity of the image can make it signify ‘hiding something’. The stated Quranic *aya*, if it signifies ‘little eating of death as an undesirable thing’, could not be construed as ‘hiding something’ or leaving something incomplete.

Using the theories of ‘hiding’ and ‘highlighting’ (Rasikh Mahand, 2018, p. 66), one could say that the Quranic *aya* has employed the image schema of tasting to express a special dimension of death. The *aya* seemingly implies that every individual’s death is his own and he must take a gulp of this everlasting drink. By relying on the two previously-mentioned authors (Farahidi, 1988; Raghīb, 1991.), it could be deduced that the reason behind the Quranic conceptual metaphor is the undesirability of death to the general humans. If we consider the hidden taste of death, another sense derived from the metaphor is that no person can understand it before his doom.

The use of the word ‘*za’iqa*’ (agency) instead of ‘*tazooq*’ (progressive tense of the verb), compared to summary scanning instead of sequential scanning, brings this to the mind that tasting death is an attribute for every soul and not an act. In other words, the function of attribute instead of act in the classical linguistics and instant and successive shots in cognitive semantics proves the inevitability of it in the future.

2-2. Death is Alive

A good part of the Quran's metaphors implies the liveliness and dynamic nature of death. The pertinent *ayas* can be categorized under four titles: 1) death is imminent, 2) death is present, 3) death will meet us, 4) escaping death. To clarify these, they are discussed separately as follows.

2-2-1. Death is Imminent

Ayas discussing the approach of death are of three groups. The first use death next to '*ajal*' (specified term).

"The Quran 7: 34 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) There is a [preordained] time for every nation: when their time comes, they shall not defer it by a single hour nor shall they advance it."

"The Quran 10: 49 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) There is a time for every nation: when their time comes, they shall not defer it by a single hour nor shall they advance it."

"The Quran 16: 61(Translated by A.Q. Qara,I)So, when their time comes they shall not defer it by a single hour nor shall they advance it."

"The Quran 29: 5(Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Whoever expects to encounter Allah [should know that] Allah's [appointed] time will indeed come and He is the All-hearing, the All-knowing."

The summary (and not sequential) scanning function of the last *aya* emphasizes the imminence of the event.

"The Quran 35; 45 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) And when their time comes, Allah indeed sees best His servants."

"The Quran 63: 11 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) But Allah shall never respite a soul when its time has come, and Allah is well aware of what you do."

"The Quran 71: 4 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) And respite you until a specified time. Indeed, when Allah's [appointed] time comes, it cannot be deferred, should you know."

Ayas discussing death as '*Maut*':

"The Quran 6: 61 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) And He sends guards to [protect] you. When death approaches anyone of you, our messengers take him away and they do not neglect."

“The Quran 14/ 17 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Gulping it down, but hardly swallowing it: death will assail him from every side, but he will not die.”

“The Quran23: 99 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) When death comes to one of them, he says, ‘My Lord!’ take me back.”

The above three *ayas* and the two *ayas* that follow attribute ‘approach’ to ‘*Maut*’ and define it as something that comes to every person individually. Here, the image schema of road and movement included in the verb approach is accompanied with the destination. Death according to the holy Quran is a no return journey which interrupts the journey of this world suddenly. The same conception of death, Hecke found in his research about Job's self-description (Hecke, 2009, p. 7). Death actually approaches a person, and that person is the destination and this latter is the center of attention.

“The Quran 50: 19 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Then the agony of death brings the truth: ‘This is what you used to shun.’”

In the above *aya* we see the intoxication of death. Death, being considered a complex process including some natural preliminary stages, contains the intoxication as well. Another conceptual metaphor existing here is that ‘death is an intoxicating phenomenon’, but this metaphor is apart from the intention that puts the *aya* under the ones discussing the approach of death, though it draws us closer to the divine intention of the general meaning of death in the Quran.

“The Quran 63: 10 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Spend from what We have provided you before death comes to any one of you”

In this *aya* we have again the idea of approaching death and the destination is also mentioned in the image schema of road. Death comes up to the person and the person asks God for his coming back to life but faces God’s negative response.

The third group contains two instances of past tense of the verb ‘come’ next to the subject ‘certain’:

“The Quran 15: 99 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) And worship your Lord until certainty comes to you.”

“The Quran 74: 47 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Until death comes to us.”

In major exegeses, the word ‘*yaqin*’ is taken figuratively as death, since it is certain. (Tabatabaee, 1996, 20: 97; Tabresi, 1993, 10: 592). For the concept of ‘approach’ there are two verbs mentioned in the Quran: ‘*ja’a*’ and ‘*ya’ti*’. In Arabic, these two are synonymous and mean approaching. (Ibn Manzoor, 1993, 1: 51)

To explain the conceptual metaphor used in the *ayas*, our key statement is “Time is place.” In fact, the source domain here is place and the target domain is time. Since the verb ‘*ja’a*’ in these *ayas* is used intransitively, we can consider the approach of death as a movement on the axis of time, here understood with the image schema of place. Hence, to describe the image schema of road, which expresses death movement, we should essentially take the destination as the time of the annihilation of the tribe, and the approach of death as the coming of death towards its destination- i.e. the termination of a community’s life- and not the approach towards those who must die.

In the above *ayas* the perspective used by God to announce the time of death approach is the past and it has been placed after the death time. Thus, God as the Conceptualizer, uses, in the words of Ronald Langacker, an epistemic grounding for announcing the certainty and immanence of death for humankind. (Ghaeminina, 2021, p. 210.)

The type of image schema used by the Quran in these metaphors is ‘motion’. Due to the complexity of this image, we can see two close image schemas within it: ‘journey’ and ‘being alive’. This implies that death next to being alive is movable and treads a path and reaches a destination. Besides, according to the *ayas* mentioned, God puts Himself at the nearest perspective to the dying person and talks of the approach of death to him. According to Langacker’s third principle in cognitive semantics (Langacker, 1987, p. 498) in every perspective there is a stage metaphor, and the mis-en-scene contributes to both the speaker’s conceptualizing and the audience’s understanding. Here also, God is accentuating the reality of the scene and His closeness to it, thus defining Himself as Conceptualizer in the totality of the domain.

2-2-2. Death Approaches

In four Quranic *ayas*, the verb ‘*hazara*’ (it was present) has been added to ‘*al-Maut*’ (death) and there is an object in between:

“The Quran 2: 133 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Were you witnesses when death approached Jacob, when he said to his children, ‘What will you worship after me?’”

“The Quran 2: 180 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Prescribed for you, when death approaches any of you and he leaves behind any property, is that he make a bequest for his parents and relatives.”

“The Quran : 18 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) But [acceptance of] repentance is not for those who go on committing misdeeds: when death approaches any of them, he says, ‘I repent now’.”

“The Quran 5: 106 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) O you who have faith! The witness between you, when death approaches any of you, while making a bequest, shall be two fair men.”

In Arabic, the base form of the verb ‘*hozur*’ (be present) is the opposite of ‘*Ghiab*’ (be absent) and ‘*Ghaybah*’ (absence) and takes both the transitive and intransitive forms to be meaningful. (Ibn Manzoor, 1993, 4: 196.) According to what follows the *ayas*, it is implied that death presence is before the soul of the dying person leaves this world, in other words, death is a pre-dying presence. Here also, the image schemas of ‘movement’ and ‘path’ have been used in the conceptual metaphor given. In the complex image schema of ‘path’ there is only a reference to death destination and the perspective used by God for giving the metaphor does not permit our claiming that God is either in the whole or the immediate domain, (Ghaeminia, 2021, p.116) but what is prominent in this metaphor is that God intended something when giving the death destination a central place with the metaphor of ‘path’. What this may imply is that death for the dying person, wherever he is, is present and there is no escape from that and no person could be inaccessible to death.

2-2-3. Death Meets us or It Is Met

One of the other factors that adds to the personification of death in Quranic verses is the concept of meeting death or being met by it:

“The Quran 3: 143 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Certainly, you were longing for death before you had encountered it.”

“The Quran 62: 8 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Say, ‘Indeed the death that you flee will indeed encounter you. Then you will be returned to the Knower of the sensible and the Unseen.’”

The Quran refers to people's escape from death in at least two *ayas* and in *Sura al- Jumu'ah* it announces the end of this escape as meeting death:

"The Quran 33: 16 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Say, 'Flight will not avail you should you flee from death or from being killed, and then you will be let to enjoy only for a little while.'"

"The Quran 62: 8 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Say, 'Indeed the death that you flee will indeed encounter you.'"

Fayoumi takes the act of 'meeting' as confrontation between two things (1993, p. 558) Ibn Fares, also believes that the word root means when two things come face to face while connecting at the same time (1984, 5: 260). A mere focus on the term and *ayas*' phrases brings this to the mind that God says an escape from death is in fact approaching it since there is no difference between one who does and one who does not escape.

The conceptual metaphor used in these *ayas* is "death is alive", a key statement that enables distinguishing death and making it move. In the image schema of 'path', man escapes from death and the destination is but death itself! This delicate description signifies the inevitable ending of man's movement and no matter which direction one goes, or in its more exact sense, as depicted in the *aya*, any person's escape, will eventually end up meeting it. In the literal sense of the term, there is no news of a quick meeting but rather a sort of tranquil stepping to the threshold or at most a sudden confrontation. This exactitude in employing the words implies that escape is to no avail. In other words, the certainty of death does not permit one's hasty escape to postpone the event, since whoever intends to get farther will meet it the soonest.

2-2-4. Death Comes and Encompasses

We read in the Holy Quran:

"The Quran 4: 78 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Wherever you may be, death shall overtake you, even if you were in fortified towers."

"The Quran 4: 100 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) And whoever leaves his home migrating toward Allah and His Apostle, and is then overtaken by death, his reward shall certainly fall on Allah."

Our understanding of the Arabic 'dark' can help us comprehend the *aya* and the existence of any conceptual metaphor therein.

Some philologists take the word ‘dark’ as ‘encompassing’ something whether material or spiritual (Mustafavi, 2009, 3: 222) Since, according to cognitive linguists, human mind comprehends abstract ideas with material experience and image schemas, we can say that death approach has been brought into focus with the image of path and destination. Meanwhile, some philologists have taken the notion of ‘dark’ as asking for something together with reaching it. This may imply reaching something from above or from the back or in succession (Farahidi, 1988, 4: 328; Ibn Manzoor, 1993, 10: 422). Here also we can see the image schema of path and movement and the key statements “Death is alive, death follows, death arrives” in the existing conceptual metaphor of the *aya*. The *aya* actually says that wherever you are death follows you and reaches you.

All the above *ayas* discussed separately as parts of image schemas used with cognitive metaphor method are actually referring to this notion that death is a living and movable entity, hence inescapable, its presence independent from the person’s location. The reason behind all this is to awaken the listener to his being in the company of death and recognize its terminating the worldly life so that one endeavors to live on while not feeling to have lost everything.

2-3. *Death is an Exit*

In more than fifteen *ayas*, God employs the verb ‘*tawaffa*’ (taking the soul away). In some, He introduces Himself as the Agent of that:

“The Quran 6: 60 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) It is He who takes your soul by night, and He knows what you do by day, then He reanimates you therein.”

“The Quran (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Rather I worship only Allah, who causes you to die, and I have been commanded to be among the faithful. (Quran, 10: 104)

“The Quran 13: 40 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Whether We show you a part of what We promise them, or take you away [before that], your duty is only to communicate, and it is for Us to do the reckoning.”

“The Quran 16: 70 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) And there are some among you who are relegated to the nethermost age so that he knows nothing after [having possessed] some knowledge. Indeed, Allah is all-knowing, all-powerful.”

“The Quran 39: 42 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Allah takes the souls at the time of their death, and those who have not died in their sleep.”

“The Quran 40: 77 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) So be patient! Allah’s promise is indeed true. Whether we show you a part of what We promise them, or take you away [before that], [in any case] they will be brought back to Us.”

In some *ayas*, God mentions the angels as agents of death:

“The Quran 4: 97 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Indeed, those whom the angels take away while they are wronging themselves, they ask, ‘What state were you in?’ They reply, ‘We were abased in the land.”

“The Quran 6: 61 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) And He sends guards to [protect] you, our messengers take him away and they do not neglect [their duty].”

“The Quran 7: 37 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) When Our messengers come to take them away, they will say, ‘Where is that which you used to invoke beside Allah? They will say, ‘They have forsaken us.”

“The Quran 16: 28 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Those whom the angels take away while they are wronging themselves, Thereat they submit: ‘We were not doing any evil!”

“The Quran 16: 32 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Those whom the angels take away while they are pure. They say [to them], ‘Peace be to you! Enter paradise because of what you used to do.”

“The Quran 47: 27 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) But how will it be [with them] when the angels take them away, striking their faces and their backs?!

In one instance God names the agent of ‘*towaffa*’ as ‘*Malak-ul-Maut*’ (Angel of Death)

“The Quran 32: 11 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Say, ‘You will be taken away by the angel of death, who has been charged with you. Then you will be brought back to your Lord.”

Elsewhere, this notion has been used as an intransitive and transitive passive verb:

“The Quran 2: 234 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) As for those of you who die leaving wives, they shall wait by themselves four months and ten days”

“The Quran 2: 240 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Those of you who die leaving wives shall bequeath for their wives providing for a year, without turning them out.”

“The Quran 8: 50 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Were you to see when the angels take away the faithless, striking their faces and their backs.”

“The Quran 22: 5 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) [Then] there are some of you who are taken away, and there are some of you who are relegated to the nethermost age, so that he knows nothing after [having possessed] some knowledge.”

“The Quran 40: 67 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Though there are some of you who die earlier and that, you may complete a specified term, and so that you may apply reason.”

In one instance, death itself is introduced as the agent of ‘*tawaffa*’:

“The Quran 4: 15 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) And if they testify, detain them in [their] houses until death finishes them, or Allah decrees a course for them.

Finally, in three instances, God mentions ‘*tawaffi*’ from the mouth of the faithful in the form of prayer for themselves, in the sense that they implore God to bring them death while they are Muslims and accompanied by the virtuous:

“The Quran 3: 193 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Our Lord, forgive us our sins and absolve us of our misdeeds, and make us die with the pious.”

“The Quran 7: 126 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Our Lord! Pour patience upon us, and grant us to die as Muslims.”

“The Quran 12: 101 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) You are my Guardian in this world and the Hereafter! Let my death be in submission [to You], and unite me with the Righteous.

In two instances, the *ayas* imply that ‘*tawaffa*’ is not merely referring to death, since it is also used for Jesus Christ’s Ascension and humans’ falling asleep:

“The Quran 3: 55 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) When Allah said, ‘O Jesus, I shall take you[r soul], and I shall raise you up toward Myself, and I shall clear you of [the calumnies of] the faithless.’”

“The Quran 39: 42 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Allah takes the souls at the time of their death, and those who have not died in their sleep.”

Among the meanings of verb root ‘*tafa’ol*’ is to take and to request. Now, if we take the root ‘*wafa*’ in the words of some philologists as fulfilling one’s commitment, we do not get the sense of death. In some lexicons, there are some senses of the term that are remarkable.

Zobaydi defines ‘*towaffa*’ as finishing up and leaving nothing behind. (1993, 20: 301) According to Raghīb Isfahani, one meaning of the word is complete acquisition of something (Raghīb. 1991, p. 878) Ibn Manzoor explains it in two ways, one is the fact that the soul leaves the body totally and second is the termination of one’s life span. (Mohanna, 1992, 2: 751) If we accept the total departure of soul from the body in the concept of ‘*towaffa*’, we can point out a conceptual metaphor in the source domain of which the image schema of trajector-landmark plays a fundamental part (Ghaeminiā, 2021, p. 71). The key statement in this metaphor, if we take death as the target domain, is “death is the total departure”, but if we take body and worldly existence as the target domain, we should say “man is the trajector”, and his body, or worldly existence, the landmark.

With the assumption of the literal interpretation of ‘*towaffa*’, as mentioned above, we can assert that man is essentially ‘otherworldly’ and his body and the world are mere containers for his presence here, with death as the event through which he departs.

2-4. Death is Departure

In five Quranic *ayas* the transitive verb from the root ‘*zahaba*’ is used about the Prophet and his people:

“The Quran 4: 133 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) If He wishes, He will take you away, O mankind, and bring others [in your place]; Allah has the power to do that.”

“The Quran 6: 133 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) If He wishes, He will take you away, and make whoever He wishes succeed you, just as He produced you from the descendants of another people.”

“The Quran 14: 19 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Have you not regarded that Allah created the heavens and the earth with reasons? If He wishes, He will take you away, and bring about a new creation.”

“The Quran 35: 16 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) If He wishes, He will take you away, and bring about a new creation.”

“The Quran 43: 41 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) For We will indeed take vengeance on them or We will show you what We have promised them, for indeed We hold them in our power.

The word ‘*zahab*’ means traverse (Jowhari, 1956, 1: 130) and is sometimes taken as a synonym of circulate (Zobaydi, 1993, 1: 505). Thus, we could consider the Persian ‘*raftan*’ (go) as an equivalent of ‘*Zahab*’. Obviously, there should not be any difference, except in its epistemological context, between ‘*izhab*’ of the Prophet and that of his *ummah* because both terms are equal and signify death.

Next to the *ayas* mentioned in this category, we can also refer to *aya* 99 of *sura ‘al-Mu’minun’* saying that when death appears, the targeted person implores God to ‘send him back’. The notion of ‘going’ seemingly exists in this *aya* and in the request for being sent back, the notion of ‘taking’ is also apparent.

The key statement in the existing conceptual metaphor is “death means departure” containing the image schema of ‘path and direction’ and only the origin of departure is under focus. It can be deduced that the *aya*’s purpose is to say that man must not consider his stay in this world as permanent and must get conscious of his sometime departure, and that death does not signify annihilation but a movement from the worldly existence to another type of existence. Death, therefore, looks to be a vehicle and man its rider, with God as the Driver.

2-5. Death is Return

In more than 15 *ayas*, the event of man’s return to God has been mentioned using the verb root ‘*raja’a*’:

“The Quran 2: 46 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Those who are certain that they will encounter their Lord and they will return to Him.”

“The Quran 2: 156 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Those who, when an affliction will visit them, say, ‘Indeed we belong to Allah, and to Him do we indeed return.’”

“The Quran 6: 60 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Then to Him will be your return, whereat He will inform you concerning what you used to do.”

“The Quran 6: 108 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) That is how to every people We have made their conduct seem decorous. Then their return

will be to their Lord and He will inform them concerning what they used to do.”

“The Quran 10: 4 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) To Him will be return of you all. That is Allah’s true promise. Indeed, He originates the creation, then He will bring it back.”

“The Quran 10: 23(Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Then to Us will be your return, whereat We will inform you concerning what you used to do.”

“The Quran 31: 23 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) To Us will be their return, and We will inform them about what they have done. Indeed, Allah knows best what is in the breasts.”

“The Quran 39: 7(Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Then to your Lord will be your return, whereat He will inform you concerning what you used to do. Indeed, He knows best what is in the breasts.”

“The Quran 96: 8 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Indeed, to your lord is the return.”

Discussing the cognitive grammar of these *ayas* is beyond the scope of this article. What is important is that these *ayas* use the image schemas of path and return to man’s source from which he emanated when talking about death. In one of them, before mentioning man’s return to God, the verb ‘cause death’ has been used realistically:

“The Quran 10: 56 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) It is He who gives life and brings death, and to Him you shall be brought back.”

This exactitude makes us understand that God has put death as a point in the axis of man’s immortal life since after that man returns to Him. In other words, death is the beginning of man’s return to God. In some part of these *ayas*, the verb is used in passive voice:

“The Quran 11: 34 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) My exhorting will not benefit you, much as I may seek to exhort you, if Allah desires to consign you to perversity. He is your Lord, and to Him you shall be brought back.”

This edict tells us about our unintentional return to God. Thus, no matter how a person lives, he will surely be brought back to God through death. In some *ayas*, God declares the return of things to Himself:

“The Quran 40: 3 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Forgiver of sins and acceptor of repentance, severe in retribution, [yet] all-bountiful, there is no God except Him, [and] toward Him is the destination.”

“The Quran50: 43 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Indeed, it is We who give life and bring death, and toward Us is the destination.”

Raghib Isfahani defines ‘*masir*’[destination], given in the above *aya* as the movement of something toward its final point. (Raghib. (1992). 499.) In another part, God declares man’s ‘*iyab*’ [return] to himself:

“The Quran 88: 25 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) Indeed, to Us will be their return.”

Raghib takes this term as a synonym of return, with some minor difference (Raghib, 1992, p.97). The same meaning has been given using the verb ‘*masaq*’ [pushed toward] about the time when death occurs. God says man is pushed to Him by death.

“The Quran 75: 30 (Translated by A.Q. Qara,I) That day he shall be driven toward your Lord.”

The key assertion presented by conceptual metaphors in the above *ayas* is that ‘death is the point of return.’ Hence, the metaphor brings to mind man’s eternal life in the form of a place. Worldly life is part of that place and death is the immediate point following our worldly life and before other ensuing places i.e. purgatory, resurrection, Account, and residence in the paradise or hell. We can, therefore, maintain that death cannot be understood independently. It requires to be presented in the form of conceptual metaphors.

it is worth mentioning that like some languages, the holy Quran referred to fear as a near_death or death like condition, (33: 19) which would be inspiring for new researches on conceptual metaphors of the Quran (Kuźniak, Libura & Szawerna ,2014, p. 88).

3. Conclusion

The Quranic notions of death by themselves and with the help of cognitive semantics that define it through conceptual metaphors, provide a sense of its being alive and movable which is inevitable and will finally come face to face with man. Death is shedding our worldly outfit and moving us toward eternity. It is a point in time that is comprehended through image schemas as a physical location, immediately after the worldly life and before purgatory phase. This

turning point is considered by the totality of pertinent *ayas* as return to the origin. Image schemas used in the source domain of conceptual metaphors of death have appropriately depicted it. According to the image, there is no sign of annihilation whatsoever, but rather the liveliness and presence of death. This makes our getting fully awakened to the thought of death. We can sum up all the presented images thus: death is to be compared to an army that is ready to encircle and entrap us. Any attempt to escape from one corner pushes us nearer to another of the same kind. Finally, we will be captured by death and taken to the hereafter eternally and without any return.

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