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Investigating Metaphor Used in *Surah* Al-Hadid to Convey Abstract Meaning

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ABSTRACT

Apprehension of abstract concepts is a hurdle for laymen people. Some abstract meanings in the holy Quran cannot be perceived clearly because they handle unseen issues. Concepts like those related to hereafter, Day of Judgment and the unseen are more difficult to apprehend; that is why the holy Quran employed metaphor to simplify these concepts. These concepts were made apprehensible by every person through the employing of metaphor. This study investigated metaphor employed in *surah* al-Hadid in the holy Quran, and which is rich with metaphors. Metaphor is utilized in this holy *surah* to convey the abstract meaning. Literature shows very few studies which investigate such type of metaphor in the holy Quran. Hence, this study aimed shedding light on this important feature of the Quranic language. This qualitative descriptive study revealed how far conceptual metaphor is used in this *Surah* to convey the abstract meaning.

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INTRODUCTION

Metaphor has long been considered as a literary device that is exclusive of everyday language usage. It has been categorized as "an expression, which pronounces an individual or item in a literary way' and is the 'outcome of some operation implemented upon the exact meaning of the utterance" (Eweida, 2006). Meanwhile, in the field of schooling metaphor has been viewed as the most powerful form of figurative language use; it has been widely accepted that our thought processes are highly metaphorical. In other words, metaphor constitutes and constructs human thoughts. In this field, as far back as Plato, metaphors have been a public means with which to express an understanding of multipart concepts. Metaphors have filled our language, literature, and art with scholarly descriptions of society, relationships, spirituality, and culture. El-Sharif(2012) points out that metaphor is one of the most familiar kinds of association between meanings where a word looks to have both a 'literal' meaning and one or more 'transferred' meanings, for example the leg of a chair or table, the eye of a needle or a potato. Simply put, metaphor can make meaning clearer and easier to be understood.

In relation to the Holy Quran, it is full with metaphors which clarify and convey the abstract meaning in an amazing way. Ullmann (1978:242) argues that one type of metaphors is abstract metaphor which is employed to clarify abstract concepts. This type of metaphor is higly used to convey the unseen issues in the holy Quran, and make them understandable by even laymen.

In relation to this study, itpoints out how metaphor is used in the Holy Quran to simplify and convey the abstract meaning. Pickthall's translation was used as a model of translation to look into the meaning and metaphors.

Objectives:

This study aims to:

1. Identify the conceptual metaphor utilized in *Surah* al-Hadid to convey abstract meaning.
2. Identifythe source domains and how they convey abstract meaning (target domains).

Statement of the Problem:

The Holy Quran is the eternal book revealed to our Prophet (PBUH), and it is the words of Allah (Subhanahuwatala). It's miraculous book in every aspect. One of its remarkable miracles is the

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language used. Metaphor is employed in the holy Quran in a way which serves to make people understand this great book. Metaphor utilized in the Holy Quran is distinctive from the one used in every day writing; it addresses all people; the simple people and the sophisticated people. Yet the language of this undying book has not been looked at deeply to see how it is used. The Holy Quran is full with metaphors which clarify and convey the abstract meaning in an amazing way.

Therefore, this study identifies the metaphor used in *Surah* Al Hadid, and how it conveys the abstract meaning as there is not much study about the metaphor used in it.

Literature review:

Conceptual metaphor, or cognitive metaphor as it is sometimes called or implied, is the understanding of an idea or domain in relationship to another. This idea with detailed consideration of the process was first studied significantly by George Lakoff& Johnson Mark (1980), in their work "the metaphor we live by". In their study, they showed how our everyday language is filled with metaphors.

Further discussions of the theory and recent developments on it within the field of cognitive linguistics attempts to describe the central point of conceptual metaphor were carried out by scholars like, Gibbs (1994); Kövecses(2002, 2005); Evans & Green (2006); Lakoff& Turner (1989); they asserted that an idea is a concrete object which can be metaphorically grasped and then held. This shows a familiar aspect of understanding new ideas but hides the important point that sometimes understanding comes slowly, with some efforts, and that, each individual reinterprets ideas. Thus, the basic principle of conceptual theory is that metaphor functions at the level of thinking.

There are many views on metaphor that has been discussed widely or broadly by numerous scholars of linguistics and philosophy. For example, the comparison view by Gentner (1983);andthe conceptual metaphor view by Lakoff& Johnson (1980). All of these views or approaches have the same idea thatinterconceptual mapping underlies the production of metaphorical expression. In other words, metaphor always involves two concepts or conceptual domains, the target domain or topic and the source domain. For example, 'he shot down all my arguments', or 'he attacked all every weak point in my argument' (Lakoff& Johnson 1980).

According to Lakoff, conceptual metaphor helps in understanding the abstract concept by contrasting it with the physical reality. For example, we have metaphors where abstract concepts are related to physical experiences like time, which has been compared with motion, container, and money (Kovecse, 2002; Lakoff& Johnson, 1980). Conceptual metaphor refers to understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain; namely, a source domain which can be defined as the domain which we draw metaphorical expressions from to understand another conceptual domain, while the other domain which is understood this way is the target domain. (kovecses, 2002).

Methodology:

This study is a qualitative one which reviewed the Holy Quran corpus, heritage books, exegesis references, and related articles. The ayahs in *Surah* Al-Hadid which carry metaphorical meanings were analyzed according to the source domain and the target domain. Hence, content analysis, as a qualitative approach, was employed for this study.

Findings and Discussion:

Surah Al-Hadid is a Madani*Surah* which means it has been revealed in Madinah. It starts with talking about the attributes of Allah (*Subhanahuwatala*); it also urges believers to spend money seeking the hereafter. The *surah* gives a pictorial view of what is going to happen on the Day of Judgment, and how believers will be separated from hypocrites, and how these hypocrites are left in complete darkness. It also addresses believers with very touchy wording, asking rhetorically if the time for believers to have hearts which obey Allah has come. The *surah* also refers to the people of the book, and how they rejected the light of faith and how their hearts became hard due to their misdeeds. Allah(*Subhanahuwatala*) gives us a real pictorial image of this earthly life, and how it is worth nothing. The *surah* puts this earthly life in the balance of truth, and urges Muslim to seek the forgiveness of Allah (*Subhanahuwatala*) and a great *Jannah* whose width is like the width of heavens and earths. The *surah* also reflects the complete control of Allah (*Subhanahuwatala*) on this universe, and that nothing can happen without His will (Qutb;IbnKathir; *Attabri*). The following examples (samples) show how metaphor was employed in this holy *Surah* to convey abstract meanings.

Table 1: Ayahs which employ metaphor.

Sample #	*Ayahs*	Transliteration	Translation
1	هُوَ ٱلَّذِى يُنَزِّلُ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِۦٓ ءَايَٰتٍۭ بَيِّنَٰتٍ لِّيُخْرِجَكُم مِّنَ ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ إِلَى ٱلنُّورِ ۚ وَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ(أيه 10)	HuwaallatheeyunazziluAAalaAAabdihiayatinbayyinatinliyukhrijakumminaaththulumatiilaannooriwa-innaAllahabikumlaraoofunraheem	He it is Who sendeth down clear revelations unto His slave, that He may bring you forth from darkness unto light; and lo! For you, Allah is Full of Pity, Merciful. (*ayah* 10; Pickthall)

2	مَّن ذَا ٱلَّذِى يُقۡرِضُ ٱللَّهَ قَرۡضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَـٰعِفَهُۥ لَهُۥ وَلَهُۥٓ أَجۡرٌ كَرِيمٌ(اية 11)	Man thaallatheeyuqriduAllahaqardanhasananfayudaAAifahulah uwalahuajrunkareem	Who is he that will lend unto Allah a goodly loan, that He may double it for him and his may be a rich reward?(*ayah* 11;Pickthall).
3	يَوۡمَ تَرَى ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ وَٱلۡمُؤۡمِنَـٰتِ يَسۡعَىٰ نُورُهُم بَيۡنَ أَيۡدِيهِمۡ وَبِأَيۡمَـٰنِهِم بُشۡرَىٰكُمُ ٱلۡيَوۡمَ جَنَّـٰتٌ تَجۡرِى مِن تَحۡتِهَا ٱلۡأَنۡهَـٰرُ خَـٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ ٱلۡفَوۡزُ ٱلۡعَظِيمُ (اية 12)	Yawmataraalmu/mineenawalmu/minatiyasAAanooruhumb aynaaydeehimwabi-aymanihimbushrakumualyawmajannatuntajree min tahtiha al-anharukhalideenafeehathalikahuwaalfawzualAAatheem	On the day when thou (Muhammad) will see the believers, men and women, their light shining forth before them and on their right hands, (and wilt hear it said unto them): Glad news for you this day: Gardens underneath which rivers flow, wherein ye are immortal. That is the supreme triumph. (Ayah 12'Pickthall).
4	أَلَمۡ يَأۡنِ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَن تَخۡشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمۡ لِذِكۡرِ ٱللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ ٱلۡحَقِّ وَلَا يَكُونُواْ كَٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلۡكِتَـٰبَ مِن قَبۡلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيۡهِمُ ٱلۡأَمَدُ فَقَسَتۡ قُلُوبُهُمۡ ۖ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنۡهُمۡ فَـٰسِقُونَ (اية 16)	Alamya/nilillatheenaamanooantakhshaAAaquloobuhumlith ikriAllahiwamanazala mina alhaqqiwalayakoonookallatheenaootooalkitaba min qablufatalaAAalayhimu al-amadufaqasatquloobuhumwakatheerunminhumfasiqoon	Is not the time ripe for the hearts of those who believe to submit to Allah's reminder and to the truth which is revealed, that they become not as those who received the scripture of old but the term was prolonged for them and so their hearts were hardened, and many of them are evil-livers. (Ayah 16; Pickthall).
5	ٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُحۡىِ ٱلۡأَرۡضَ بَعۡدَ مَوۡتِهَا ۚ قَدۡ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ ٱلۡأٓيَـٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَعۡقِلُونَ (اية 17)	IAAlamooannaAllahayuhyeeal-ardabaAAdamawtihaqadbayyannalakumual-ayatilaAAallakumtaAAqiloon	Know that Allah quickeneth the earth after its death. We have made clear Our revelations for you, that haply ye may understand. (Ayah17; Pickthall)
6	ٱعۡلَمُوٓاْ أَنَّمَا ٱلۡحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنۡيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهۡوٌ وَزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌۢ بَيۡنَكُمۡ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِى ٱلۡأَمۡوَٰلِ وَٱلۡأَوۡلَـٰدِ ۖ كَمَثَلِ غَيۡثٍ أَعۡجَبَ ٱلۡكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُۥ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَىٰهُ مُصۡفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَـٰمًا ۖ وَفِى ٱلۡأٓخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغۡفِرَةٌ مِّنَ ٱللَّهِ وَرِضۡوَٰنٌ ۚ وَمَا ٱلۡحَيَوٰةُ ٱلدُّنۡيَآ إِلَّا مَتَـٰعُ ٱلۡغُرُورِ (اية 20)	IAAlamooannamaalhayatuaddunyalaAAibunwalahwunwaz eenatunwatafakhurunbaynakumwatakathurun fee al-amwaliwal-awladikamathalighaythinaAAjabaalkuffaranabatuhuthumm ayaheejufatarahumusfarranthummayakoonuhutamanwafee al-akhiratiAAathabunshadeedunwamaghfiratunminaAllahiwar idwanunwamaalhayatuaddunyaillamataAAualghuroor	Know that the life of the world is only play, and idle talk, and pageantry, and boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children; as the likeness of vegetation after rain, whereof the growth is pleasing to the husbandman, but afterward it drieth up and thou seest it turning yellow, then it becometh straw. And in the Hereafter there is grievous punishment, and (also) forgiveness from Allah and His good pleasure, whereas the life of the world is but matter of illusion. (Ayah 20; Pickthall)
7	سَابِقُوٓاْ إِلَىٰ مَغۡفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمۡ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرۡضُهَا كَعَرۡضِ ٱلسَّمَآءِ وَٱلۡأَرۡضِ أُعِدَّتۡ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ بِٱللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِۦ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ فَضۡلُ ٱللَّهِ يُؤۡتِيهِ مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ ذُو ٱلۡفَضۡلِ ٱلۡعَظِيمِ (اية 21)	SabiqooilamaghfiratinminrabbikumwajannatinAAarduhaka AAardiassama-iwal-ardioAAiddatlillatheenaamanoobillahiwarusulihithalikafadl uAllahiyu/teehi man yashaowallahuthooalfadlialAAatheem	Race one with another for forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whereof the breadth is as the breadth of the heavens and the earth, which is in store for those who believe in Allah and His messengers. Such is the bounty of Allah, which He bestoweth upon whom He will, and Allah is of Infinite Bounty. (Ayah 21; Pickthall).
8	لَقَدۡ أَرۡسَلۡنَا رُسُلَنَا بِٱلۡبَيِّنَـٰتِ وَأَنزَلۡنَا مَعَهُمُ ٱلۡكِتَـٰبَ وَٱلۡمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ ٱلنَّاسُ بِٱلۡقِسۡطِ ۖ وَأَنزَلۡنَا ٱلۡحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأۡسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنَـٰفِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعۡلَمَ ٱللَّهُ مَن يَنصُرُهُۥ وَرُسُلَهُۥ بِٱلۡغَيۡبِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ قَوِىٌّ عَزِيزٌ (اية 25)	LaqadarsalnarusulanabilbayyinatiwaanzalnamaAAahumual kitabawalmeezanaliyaqoomaannasubilqistiwaanzalnaalhad eedafeehiba/sun shadeedunwamanafiAAulinnasiwaliyaAAlamaAllahu man yansuruhuwarusulahubilghaybiinnaAllahaqawiyyunAAaze ez	We verily sent Our messengers with clear proofs, and revealed with them the Scripture and the Balance, that mankind may observe right measure; and He revealed iron, wherein is mighty power and (many) uses for mankind, and that Allah may know him who helpeth Him and His messengers, though unseen. Lo! Allah is

			Strong, Almighty. (Ayah 25; Pickthall).
9	يَـٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ ٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَءَامِنُوا۟ بِرَسُولِهِۦ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِن رَّحْمَتِهِۦ وَيَجْعَل لَّكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِۦ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ (اية 28)	YaayyuhaallatheenaamanooittaqooAllahawaaminoobirasoolihiyu/tikumkiflayni min rahmatihiwayajAAallakumnoorantamshoonabihiwayaghfirlakumwallahughafoorunraheem	O ye who believe! Be mindful of your duty to Allah and put faith in His messenger. He will give you twofold of His mercy and will appoint for you a light wherein ye shall walk, and will forgive you. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (Ayah 28; Pickthall).

As seen from the table above, metaphor is quite clear in the ayahs. For example, in ayah 10 (sample 1),which reads,"He may bring you from darkness to light". Here the real darkness or light we see at night and daytime respectively are not the real meanings of ayah. Darkness refers to being a disbeliever while light refers to faith and strong belief in Allah. Hence, the source domain here is the darkness we experience every night, and the light we see every daytime, while the target domains are disbelief and belief. Those who disbelieve in Allah (*Subhanahuwatala*) live in spiritual darkness; on the other hand, those who believe in Allah (*Subhanahuwatala*) live in spiritual light and self-tranquility. Therefore, the metaphor used in this *ayah* conveyed the abstract meaning of belief and disbelief.

Similarly, in ayah 11 (sample 2), Allah (*Subhanahuwatala*) urges people to spend money for His cause, but Allah Almighty expressed it by saying "who is he that will lend unto Allah a goodly loan". Lend here is used metaphorically because nobody can physically lend Allah (*Subhanahuwatala*), but Allah wanted to convey the abstract meaning of giving money and alms to the needy and the poor; it also, according to Al-Qurtibi, conveys all the good deeds. The source domain here is real loaning, but the target domain is doing good deeds including spending for Allah's cause.

Likewise, *ayah* 12 (sample 3) conveys the abstract meaning of light which according to *Attabri* refers to the reward of good deeds. Consequently, the source domain, which is the light,is given the tributes of a human being conveys the target domain which is the reward of such good deeds. But to be honest some Islamic scholars say that the light here is real light and I agree with this view.; adopting this view it can be said that the metaphor in the *ayah* is employed by giving tributes of a human being to a nonliving entity; namely, light, to make us imagine how light of believers will be preceding and guiding them to *Jannah*.

Ayah 16 (sample 4), as well, talks about the people of the book, and how their hearts became hard. Hard which is a source domain here is something we can feel and touch, but it is utilized in the *ayah* to convey the abstract meaning of disbelief and lack of submission to Allah. Their hearts became as hard as rock as it is mentioned in other *surah*s such as *Surah* al-Baqra. Accordingly, the source domain here, hardness, is used to convey the abstract target domain, which is being a disbeliever and disobedient to Allah (Subhanahuwatala).

In *ayah* 17 (sample 5) Allah (*Subhanahuwatala*) gives the tributes of a human being to the earth as it can be recreated like human being. Allah here refers to His ability if He wills to resurrect the dead hearts. Hearts that are away from Allah will be back to Him if He willed on a condition that these Muslim people supplicate to Allah seeking His forgiveness and help. Hence, the abstract meaning of re-animating hearts is compared and conveyed by giving a seen physical example; that's how the dead land with no plants grow plants when rain is poured unto it. So, the abstract meaning of reanimating hearts (target domain) is conveyed through the metaphor of reanimating the dead land (source domain).

*Ayah*20 (sample 6) puts this life in its real balance; it is no more than temporary enjoyment; people spend their lives away from Allah, distracted with investing in their money or their children although in fact the real and true life is the life in an eternal *Jannah*. To convey the meaning, which is in fact abstract, Allah gives us a physical example we see and watch every day. We see how the plant grows up to be green and lovely in the eyes of people; then it changes to be yellow, and soon it becomes just dry straws. All the lovely green plants have disappeared that soon, and so does this earthly life. It will vanish soon because it is just a kind of illusion or mirage; this is the real value of this earthly life. Therefore, no better metaphor can portray the picture as it is reflected in the ayah. The source domain here is the process of growing plants, which is a physical thing we see every day, this source domain, is used to convey the abstract meaning of the valueless of the earthly life. This use of metaphor makes Muslims remember the valueless of this earthly life every day because they see how plants grow up to become green and eye-catching, and soon it vanishes is if it were not.

Metaphor was employed, correspondingly, in *ayah* 21 (sample 7) as Allah (Subhanahuwatala) urges us to race for His forgiveness and for a great *Jannah* which as wide as the heavens and earth. In fact, the verb "race" is used metaphorically to urge people to work for the everlasting thing. Raceسابقوا here is the source domain which is physical or can be realized easily, and it is used to convey the abstract

meaning of working hard, and doing good deeds seeking high *Jannah*. Almighty Allah, when speaking about the earthly life, says' walk', while when speaking about the hereafter, He uses the words" run" , "race" or "compete". Another metaphor which is used in the ayah (ayah) is comparing the width of the *Jannah* to the width of the heavens and earth. It is real that the *Jannah* is so great but Allah talked in this ayah about the width not the length to make Muslims imagine how great and big is the *Jannah*. No human being except our great prophet (PBUH) has seen *Jannah* while he is alive, so Allah describes such unseen great thing in a way which makes us imagine it. We know the sky we see, and we know the earth we live on, so the meaning of real *Janna* was compared to something we know and see.

In the *ayah*25 (sample 8), the scripture and the balance which are physical things used to convey the abstract meaning which is the history of the previous nations and justice. (Al –Qurtubi). According to *Attabri*, books refer to the deeds people do for the hereafter, while the balance refers to justice people should follow. Anyhow the source domain here is the book and the balance which we see and use, and they are physical. The target domain here is deeds book and justice. Thus, the metaphor was used here to convey the abstract meaning.

The light referred to in the ayah does not convey the real light of daytime, but it refers to the guidance Allah (Subhanahuwatala) bestows upon those believers and pious people who deserve it. In this ayah the source domain is the light we see, and it is used to convey the abstract meaning of guidance.

Conclusion:

The language of the Holy Quran is a distinctive language which has very deep meaning, and at the same time can be understood by even common people who did not receive high levels of education. Conceptual metaphor is one of the tools utilized in this holy book to conveyabstractmeaning and to make it clearer. In *Surah* al Hadid, conceptual metaphor was used to convey abstract meanings in a magnificent way. Light and darkness were used to convey guidance and misleading respectively. The reality of life was conveyed in a touchy way. It visualized the reality of the earthly life in the simplest way.

In spite of all that, nobody can claim that he got the meaning Allah (Subhanahuwatala) wanted because this great book is the book of all ages, the words of Allah, so we pray to Allah to forgive our sins and to forgive us if we unintentionally made misunderstanding of His holy book.

This study recommends further studies to show metaphor in the holy Quran. The prospected studies should focus on complete *surahs* to show the beauty of the holy Quran, and to make nonnative speakers of Arabic understand the holy Quran. It is recommended, as well, that future studies discuss other rhetorical devices in the holy Quran.

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