

**A Grammar of Religion:
Metaphorical Understanding of
Religious Discourse**

by

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Abstract

This thesis addresses the need for a metaphoric understanding of religious language. The task to distinguish metaphoric meanings from literal ones, however, is not always easy because all linguistic meaning, metaphoric or not, is expressed through the literal. While there has been some research that has shed light on the problem of metaphoric language and religion, no academic work has been done regarding this problem with respect to the religion of Islam. This thesis is an attempt to fill that gap. Since accounting for the comprehension of meaning is a complex endeavor, the study of metaphor lends itself naturally to philosophy. Therefore, I review two philosophical accounts, those of Paul Grice and Josef Stern before I discuss the two linguistic views of metaphor that I embrace, those being Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Relevance Theory (RT).

In adopting Conceptual Metaphor Theory, I build on George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's cognitive linguistics work (1980), which changed what we know about language and cognition. In terms of Relevance Theory, I draw from Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson's work (1986; 2008) and Carston's (2002; 2010) to make my argument that relevance is a pre-requisite for metaphorical understanding of religious language. Both theories proved helpful in providing a harmonious analysis. Using both these theories, I analyze an underlying Quranic metaphor, LIFE IS A TEST. I clarify that it is not directly stated in the Qur'an, yet Muslims use it in everyday discourse, and take it as if were literal. I argue that the concept has to be essentially metaphoric for it to be consistent with the Islamic belief of God as All-Knowing and I discuss its inferences and entailments. Since this underlying metaphor reveals the Islamic view of life and its purpose, I further examine the metaphorical nature of religious discourse, by analyzing part of a relevant religious lecture given by the spiritual consultant of Az Zahraa Islamic Centre in Richmond, British Columbia. One of the examples I analyse in this lecture utilizes the Journey domain, while another reveals the Container schema.

Although both theories seem to be able to account for this Quranic metaphor, yielding the same cognitive result (CMT through domain mapping and RT through lexical adjustment), Relevance Theory was especially useful in providing the terminology to describe how I arrive at the metaphoric realization, that being "the search for relevance." This suggests that RT has more explanatory power for understanding problematic concepts which might not seem to make sense, while CMT is well-suited for analyzing non-problematic metaphors. In the LIFE AS TEST metaphor, a conceptual metaphoric analysis was not even possible without the cognitive maximisation of relevance. I agree, therefore, with the scholars who argue that the two theories are not contradictory and hence should be integrated. The thesis also includes a transcription of other excerpts that are rich in poetic metaphors, with a discussion of how religious discourse contains some metaphorical expressions that stem from our embodiment and others that are merely "loosely" used.

Keywords: metaphor; religion; Islam; theological concern; semantics-pragmatics; conceptual metaphor theory; relevance theory

To my source of inspiration, Sheikh Murtaza Bachoo

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Table of Contents

Approval	ii
Abstract	iii
Dedication	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Table of Contents	x
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
1.1. Metaphor in religion: a theological concern?	4
1.2. The significance of metaphor in religious language	9
Chapter 2. Metaphor in Philosophy and Linguistics	13
2.1. Metaphor and the expression of truth in philosophy: Grice vs. Stern	13
2.2. Metaphor and polysemy: a close relation	19
2.2.1. Metaphor in Relevance Theory	20
2.2.1.1. Metaphor and implicatures.....	22
2.2.1.2. Relevance theory and individual differences	23
2.2.2. Metaphor according to Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT).....	25
2.3. Integrating Relevance Theory with Conceptual Metaphor Theory	30
Chapter 3. Metaphor in real discourse – a reflection	34
3.1. “Life is a test”: metaphor or polysemy?	35
3.2. Why Do We Supplicate? - Sheikh Murtaza Bachoo	36
3.3. “Life as a Test”: Relevance Theory and Conceptual Metaphor Theory	50
Chapter 4. More cases of metaphor	53
4.1. Analyzing parts of Khalil Jaffer’s religious talks	53
4.2. Explaining the lack of coherence in the concept of Trinity: an outsider view	69
4.3. Sky as a metaphorical location for God	71
Chapter 5. Conclusion.....	74
References	79

Chapter 1.

Introduction

Cognitive linguistics with its theories of metaphor and figurative language seems to present challenges to both religious studies and theology (Masson, 2014). Masson (2014) asserts that contemporary theology has addressed the problem of metaphor in religion. For example, the Society of Biblical Literature has discussions on the implications of metaphor and cognition showing that knowledge of metaphor can actually change theology (Martin, 2014). Studying Conceptual Metaphor Theory (which is a theory of embodied cognition) and applying it in the study of religion can, therefore, offer great insight, allowing us to make more sense of religion by enabling us to see the metaphors as metaphors. That is, metaphor is part of our cognitive apparatus, and therefore, language becomes metaphoric as a result.

However, extensive work still needs to be done in order to establish an understanding of the actual influence metaphor research will have in religion. The present thesis is one attempt by which I hope to raise awareness of the problem of metaphorical meanings in religious language. That is, to solve any problem, we must first realize that a problem exists. Moreover, through this research I hope it becomes clear why it is necessary for religion to speak in metaphorical language and how the use of metaphor in scriptures does not weaken religion but strengthens it.

Many who assume that all metaphors are literally false (see the discussion in Stern 2008), or those who focus on the distinction between the literal and the metaphorical regarding truth, are unaware of the fact that our cognition is “inherently metaphorical” and that religions should not be criticized as speaking falsehood (Masson, 2014). To clarify, the problem of metaphor stems from the fact that human cognition is embodied and hence is very much shaped by our biology to the extent that our bodies manipulate our thought.

That is to say, much of our thought is anything but objective because it is created as a result of how we are situated in the world. Therefore, it is not always useful to focus on literal truth. In fact, truth can sometimes only be described or grasped through metaphor. Ultimate Truth is not and cannot be grasped fully and this makes metaphor more suitable for the expression of truth in general.

Using Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), this thesis aims to explore and analyse metaphor in religious discourse in order to show the importance and significance of meanings that can only be expressed through the use of metaphor. This research also emphasizes that the ability to understand metaphor entails an ability to make sense of things that do not seem to make sense, which suggests that to interpret (religious) text metaphorically is a step forward to being logical. This should be clear as the thesis discusses the cognitive linguistic view – the Conceptual Metaphor Theory about thought and cognition. That is, assuming that “our thought is inherently metaphorical” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980) indicates that we often have no means to think but metaphorically and hence our logic itself is metaphorical. The thesis also discusses the relevance-theoretic account of metaphor which attributes the use of metaphor to the pressure of communicative purposes.

In terms of religion, for believers, this means that God, who created humans and gave them the ability to think and reason, chose to facilitate thought and reason for us, humans, through metaphor. This suggests that, since God designed human cognition in this way, He already knows the things that we can understand only through metaphor and hence speaks to us about them metaphorically. It then follows that different religions share common conceptual metaphors despite their differences because, cognitively speaking, all human beings share the same cognitive capacity and limitations. Interestingly, cognitive scientists should be able to shed light on the similarities among differing religions, if, in their research, they utilize Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Martin, 2013).

The structure of this thesis is as follows: The first introductory chapter outlines the main idea of this research, which is born out of integrating cognitive linguistics and religion, showing that understanding human cognition gears us to understanding religious language. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the problem posed by the idea that truth

claims in religion are metaphorical, and it calls for a better understanding of metaphors for God in the Bible. The second chapter starts with Paul Grice's classification of metaphor, who claimed that the understanding of utterances is governed by a set of rules and that metaphor understanding results from the violation to one or some of the rules (1975). The chapter then shifts to linguistic theories of metaphor according to Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson 1985; 1986/95; 2008; Wilson & Sperber 2002; Wilson 2011) and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson 1980/2003, 1999; Lakoff 1987, 1993, 1996; Kovecses 2010, 2015, Dancygier & Sweetser, 2014; Dancygier, 2016; Howe & Sweetser, 2013, Dancygier, 2017). It ends with the argument that the two theories (Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Relevance Theory) should complement one another as neither theory alone can account for all the different types of metaphor.

The third chapter discusses the religious metaphor LIFE IS A TEST, which is motivated from verses of the Holy Qur'an, and it captures my personal struggle to understand its meaning, which culminated in my interacting with Sheikh Murtaza Bachoo in the attempt to find an answer. One of Sheikh Bachoo's greatest lectures, which seemed relevant to this research, is transcribed and analysed in light of Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The chapter also includes a discussion of a few metaphors that are not specifically religious in order to further illustrate the pervasiveness of metaphor even in ordinary language and hence driving home the point that religious language uses the same apparatus used in everyday language.

Chapter 4 presents more instances of metaphor in religious discourse by providing an analysis of extended excerpts from a Muslim speaker named Khalil Jaffer. Titles of excerpts are as follows: "The philosophy of Ramadan," "Esoteric meaning in daily life" and "Why did Allah create us." The metaphorical expressions in the excerpts include "loose" uses as well as deliberate creative ones, showing that even loose uses can be problematic if taken literally when talking about God. Towards the end of the chapter, I discuss the GOD AS PARENT metaphor, and I try to explain the lack of coherence in the Trinitarian view of God through treating it as a frame which is defined as knowledge structure. Additionally, I argue that the GOD AS PERSON metaphor is a conceptual rather than a grammatical metaphor and emphasize therefore that the pronoun that should be used for God in English is 'It' rather than 'He.'

To conclude this thesis on metaphor and religion, chapter five ends with a short summary of the discussion presented in this research. It also suggests ideas for further study and investigation.

1.1. Metaphor in religion: a theological concern?

For reasons of time and space, I am going to limit the discussion of the literature on metaphor and religion to few articles that are sufficient enough in serving the goal of this thesis, which is not a thesis in religion. Because what the scriptures say is usually taken for granted by adherents, metaphorical statements have always posed problems in the eyes of theologians, for religion talks about so many abstract notions that there is no way to know whether these notions are true or not (Tracy, 1978). Tracy believes that the theology of all the three Abrahamic religions— Christianity, Judaism and Islam – faces this difficulty with metaphor.

For the most part, however, metaphor does not seem to be of great importance to religious scholars and therefore they do not investigate it thoroughly (Tracy, 1978). If Tracy is right about the little attention paid to metaphor, it might be due to the fact that metaphor is not always recognized as metaphor and when it is, it is sometimes regarded merely as a decorative device, which explains why it is not taken seriously. However, it is important to realize that metaphor plays a significant role in every religion (Tracy, 1978). Interestingly, Tracy acknowledges that although the same metaphors might exist in many different religions, such as Christianity, Islam and Judaism, they might still seem different on the surface, but that is only because the linguistic expressions used to express them are different. This difference in linguistic expression is due to the differences that exist between different language systems, but on the deep cognitive level, the thought that underlies these expressions might be the same (see also Kovecses, 2015). However, as Tracy states that the understanding of scriptures is usually controlled by, for example, religious authorities (Tracy, 1978), these underlying similarities can easily go unnoticed because the interpretation of scripture becomes a given.

Theology strives to connect certain specified meanings and truths in our human experience and language to the interpretations of meanings and truths as specified in

religious tradition (Tracy, 1978). This should be exemplified in the Quranic metaphor LIFE IS A TEST, which is going to be discussed in Chapter 3. It is important, therefore, to apply different theories of meaning and truth in interpreting religious texts so that the meanings and claims to truth in any theological interpretation fit the cultural interpretation of present-day language and experience (Tracy, 1978). To that end, I am not going to limit the discussion to Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Relevance Theory which I use in my analysis, but I am also going to review metaphor in two philosophical perspectives.

Although religious language has unique characteristics that might make it seem “odd”, a number of analytical philosophies do not consider this to be the case. Rather, they explain that what makes religious language seem odd is the fact that language is limited and thus it cannot adequately express all there is in reality (Tracy, 1978). So, because language is in fact limited, a lot of things are expressed metaphorically (Tracy, 1978). Tracy believes, however, that the human experience and everyday language reflect an “implicit religious dimension”.

I concur that our ordinary language, which captures our ordinary experience, exhibits a “religious dimension.” At the lexical level, I see that words such as ‘hope’ and ‘hopefully’ convey our unconscious attachment to a supernatural agency. To me that agency shows the religious dimension Tracy (1978: 94) is talking about, for religion interprets this agency as God, whom humans (unconsciously) pin all their hopes in, i.e. even without them realizing it. To illustrate, we hope for something to “happen,” even though it might lack volition, the intention to happen or not to happen. So, the underlying question here is how is it going to happen then? Syntactically speaking, I believe that this is reflected in our implicit knowledge of the difference between ‘grammatical subject’ and ‘agent.’ It seems to me that our very knowledge that the grammatical subject of a sentence describing a non-volitional event lacks volition, while an agentive subject is a volitional subject, capable of doing things, indicates our believing that without volition nothing can really happen. This can be captured by considering the difference between the following sentences: “something hit me” and “Peter hit John” Cognitively speaking, we implicitly know that in the first sentence no intentional hitting took place as ‘something’ is not an agent but merely a grammatical subject. However, we know that this is different for the second sentence as we assume that, Peter being an agent, he intentionally hit John.

To me, this shows that even for non-volitional events, we assume that there must be a real agent. For example, when someone says “a car hit me,” we know that a car cannot move by itself and hence cannot perform any movement without an agent or at least a cause or some sort of force. It seems, therefore, that our cognition requires an agent for all actions and events; this agent, I assume, is what the cognitive science of religion (Martin, 2013) calls ‘supernatural agency.’ For example, if we say “the sun will rise,” the sun does not choose to rise or not to rise and hence it is not an agent, but perhaps we understand implicitly that there is a supernatural agency which many religions call ‘God’ that makes the sun rise. One sub-metaphor which might be involved in this as well is CAUSES ARE FORCES, which in a way explains that Force is the causer of the Cause and that without Force there cannot be any Cause. At the deep level, this Force might be regarded as God.

The religious dimension of our ordinary experience and language has been observed not only by theologians but by philosophers as well (Tracy, 1978). As an illustration of this, Tracy (1978: 94) says that in addition to our daily concerns, there exists “an ultimate concern” in our life that usually makes us feel helpless, such as the experiences of “death,” “guilt” and “anxiety,” which he describes as “limit situations.” He also mentions how “creativity” and “joy” are analyzed as “positive limit experiences” indicative of a religious dimension in our everyday experience. He continues by saying that based on this analysis, a description of the unique religious dimension shows that there is a specifiable limit to our language and ordinary experience, clearly seen in the “negative limit” of anxiety and the “positive limit” of our “[f]undamental trust in the very worthwhileness of our existence” (p. 95). I think Tracy means that when we talk about such limiting experiences, our language reflects this limitation. Some examples that occur to me as instances of the recognition of such limitation in our speech are “don’t worry, *things will work out*”, “I am *thankful* for the good things that *happened* in my life” or even like when somebody advises us saying “just have *faith*.”

Tracy mentions that in Judaism and Christianity, God is metaphorically described as “father,” “shepherd,” and “king” as well as “light,” “truth,” “love,” and “wisdom,” and I will add that all these metaphors are present in Islam, too. However, I think the ‘shepherd’ is not linguistically explicitly expressed, but it is implicitly conceptualized as a human

responsibility to be a good shepherd and by that mirroring one of God's attributes towards His people. Also, I am only aware of one prophetic tradition in Islam that conceptualizes human beings as children of God, yet, we could argue that it is there at the level of thought. In relevance-theoretic terms, the thought is complex and only stands in a resemblance relation to the linguistic utterance that expresses it. If I translate correctly, the tradition says: "All creatures are God's children, and the most beloved to Him is he who is most helpful to His children" [Shi'ite Jurisprudence]. Arguably, however, the existence of thought, no matter how complex, is not dependent on its being linguistically expressed. It appears that in Christianity, the expression "father" is taken literally one way or the other. That is, despite the Christian belief in the Virgin Birth, most Christians believe that Jesus is the son of God in a way that seemingly has to be quite literal, evident in how some admittedly find it baffling. So, for a more logical understanding of any religion, two things strike me as necessary: the first is the recognition of metaphors as such and the second is an understanding of what these metaphors mean.

Given that religious language is limited and that theology as a result cannot capture the theological and religious issues without relying on metaphor, it becomes clear why metaphor is especially problematic in the realm of theology, as it remains unclear whether there is something different about metaphor in religion that distinguishes it from literal language so that the theologian can recognize it (Tracy, 1978). Tracy believes that the attempt to solve this problem should begin by investigating "[t]he actual religious and theological uses of metaphor in particular religions" (p. 95).

Because metaphor is always used when we discuss something abstract, it follows that any type of philosophy is heavily dependent on metaphor. Harrison (2015), therefore, utilizes the conceptual theory of metaphor (explained in the next chapter), which proves a useful tool for contemplating traditions of different philosophies in order to explore the role metaphor plays in shaping the ways of thinking about the knowledge domain not only in the West, but also in Indian and East Asian traditions. Harrison emphasizes that the differences between philosophies stem from a difference in the conceptual metaphors each philosophy adopts. However, she agrees with Lakoff and Johnson that human beings share similar physical characteristics, environments and world experience, and this triggers similar primary conceptual metaphors. For example, our shared visual experience,

as metaphor theorists argue, gives rise to a number of metaphors regarding 'sight' (Harrison, 2015). Sight relates importantly to knowledge, as the discussion in the following sections will reveal.

It is important to discuss how the concept of knowledge is structured through metaphor in the human mind. Such discussion should demonstrate that the very concept of knowledge has a reality of its own even though our expressions of it are metaphorical. Hence, it is often irrelevant to try to assign an expression a truth value that assumes truth to be literal. Harrison (2015) discusses three metaphors that structure the domain of knowledge: KNOWING IS SEEING, KNOWING THE WAY, and SEEING THE DAO. She provides examples that reveal how the primary metaphor KNOWING IS SEEING is a metaphor in thought evident by the way we talk about Knowing, and how we make it analogous to Seeing. Some examples of the relationship between knowledge and sight that she mentions include: 'I see what you are saying,' 'shed light on,' and 'clear ideas.' Additionally, Harrison mentions that there was a time in India in which the concept of veil, which has to do with how we see reality, was constantly used in philosophy. She adds that this metaphor is manifested in the discussions of how our perception of truth covers or uncovers aspects of reality. 'Ignorance,' for example, is regarded as a major problem in most Indian philosophical traditions and it is often described as "illusions" (Harrison, 2015). Harrison clarifies that describing ignorance as a mental illusion requires that mental illusions be mapped to something more readily describable; something physical. The underlying metaphor that gives rise to the following expressions 'veil,' 'light' and 'darkness' when talking about the domain of Knowledge or Ignorance is KNOWING IS SEEING.

I would add that mapping ignorance, which is conceptualized as a mental illusion, to a "physical illusion", appears to exist in Arabic discourse, including the Qur'an. That is because physical illusion, which has to do with sight or vision, whose faculty is physical, interferes with one's ability to 'see.' Hence, mental illusions are better understood in terms of DARKNESS because physical darkness is the absence of physical light, and physical light physically helps us to see and usually to know that which we are seeing. The frequent correlation between seeing and knowing has, therefore, been argued to motivate the conceptual metaphor KNOWING IS SEEING, which entails that 'not knowing' is analogous to 'not seeing.' To illustrate how the Arabic language provides evidence of such structure in

our thought, let us look at the following translated examples. The first is a proverb: “knowledge is light and ignorance is darkness” and the second is a verse from the Qur’an: “Their parable is that of one who *kindled* a fire, and when it *lit up* what was around him, God took away their *light*, and left them in *darkness, unseeing*” (Chapter 2, verse, 17.) [Translation: Seyyed Hossein Nasr]. Similarly, the English language also has metaphorical expressions like ‘to be in the dark’ which means being uninformed or ignorant.

It should be clear now that metaphorical similarities that exist in different languages and different cultures reveal that human cognitive capacities are very similar, and that is why it is not a coincidence that different languages share a great number of metaphorical expressions or cognitive metaphors. We have looked at ‘ignorance’ in both the Indian tradition and the Qur’an. In the Indian tradition Ignorance is conceptualized as an ‘illusion’ and in the Qur’an it is conceptualized as Darkness. Both are licensed by the primary metaphor KNOWING IS SEEING.

1.2. The significance of metaphor in religious language

Metaphor is not necessarily linguistic; sometimes the mind engages in a process of analogizing without even using language. This fact about metaphor being cognitive is evident in how different languages can still have the same metaphors even if the metaphorical expressions that describe them are different; i.e. meaning is one and the same, yet its linguistic expressions are different and many. It follows, therefore, that religious language, no matter the religion, can consist of a great many metaphors that are similar at the level of thought. In fact, it should not be surprising that religions are only seemingly different because such a claim, Martin states, is a cognitive one and is supported by the cognitive science of religion. However, for a thorough comparison of religion to be possible at all, we need not only the Cognitive Science of Religion (CSR) but crucially its interdisciplinary fields as well, such as philosophy, psychology and linguistics (Martin, 2013). For example, metaphors that convey the relationship between the human and the divine are found to be similar across different religions as revealed by cognitive linguistic theories that are adapted in the study of comparative religions (Martin, 2013).

To demonstrate how metaphor is an essential cognitive activity in the general process of understanding, reviewing Martin's 2013 article comes in handy. Particularly, Martin states in regard to the process of understanding, comparison, even from a historical point of view, has been proved to be a major cognitive function, which supports the assumption of the analogical nature of thought and hence the occurrence of metaphor. In many cases, metaphor can be viewed as a cognitive simile. The literature on metaphor acknowledges, however, that it is not always similarity or likeness across domains that motivates the use of metaphor (Hills, 2016). Yet, when metaphorical expressions invite us to attend to some imagined similarity, they reveal something about our cognition; the fact that our cognitive processes function through comparing and analogizing, which are inherent in many cases of metaphor. Interestingly, Martin citing (Smith 1990, 51; cf. 115) suggests that similarities and differences are not out there in the world, but our brains are tempted to organize whatever they process by classifying or categorizing in which analogizing becomes inevitable. We see similarities and differences between things only when we engage in such cognitive activity (Martin, 2013). He claims that applying Conceptual Metaphor Theory shows that the seemingly different ways of understanding or approaching God are actually similar.

Basing his argument on the new advancements provided by the research in metaphor, Martin (2013, p.938) maintains that the diverse claims about the essence of God can all be considered valid. Through examining metaphors across different religions, he hopes to show that all religions are cognitively equal and in that sense no religion is better than the others. This very much reminds me of how in the field of linguistics, different languages despite their differing surface structures, are assumed to be similar in their deep structures, and that no language is more privileged than the others. Clearly, Martin's argument suggests the metaphoricity of all these claims about the nature of God, which might explain how we can accept them and why we can consider them to be valid rather than contradictory. To be clear, while Muslims reject the idea that Jesus is the Son of God, there should be no problem in considering the statement to be metaphorical, and in that sense not only Jesus but all prophets are sons/children of God (more discussion in Chapter 4 (4.4)). In fact, all human beings can be thought of as children of God. This is also in contrary to the Jewish tradition which limits the idea of children of God only to themselves.

With my interest in language and cognition, I find that the idea that religions are cognitively similar is appealing and is akin to how different languages within the field of linguistics are considered to be underlyingly the same, as I mentioned earlier. That is, just like how we see grammatical structures in different languages to differ only at the surface level, many religions share their similarities at a more abstract level which we might as well call their “deep structure.” Therefore, one could argue that the goal that is shared by all religious outlooks is “[t]he realization and recognition of the place of being or becoming with God or Ultimate Reality” (p. 946) (Martin, 2013). It is only for cultural and historical reasons, however, that different religions choose to spotlight on certain entailments or metaphoric inferences (Martin, 2013). So, I believe we can conclude that, whether it is language or religion, the cognitive capacity for humans is the same, but culture and the passage of time play a role that results in the variation we see in these two phenomena.

In addition, Martin and colleagues (Smith 2009; Geertz 2010, 2011; Jensen 2011) see religion as a “[d]ynamic, embodied sociocultural discourse, which constitutes a world of **meaning** [my emphasis], a shared narrative that is constructed upon, but not terminated by, cognitive processes and products” (p. 938). It becomes very interesting, therefore, to look at how this non-linguistic meaning is linguistically expressed. In this thesis, I am going to affirm that many linguistic expressions in religion are metaphoric and that ‘form’ in itself has nothing to do with ‘truth’ because ‘truth’ is one thing and its expression is something else; yet, the meaning of an expression can be either literal or metaphorical, which means that being a true expression is not dependent on its being literal or metaphorical because truth does not have to be literal. In fact, in modern religious studies, there is a common belief that every major religion is grounded in a number of basic metaphors (Tracy, 1978). “The status of the cognitive claims” of religious metaphors, however, has been always problematic to the theories of “meaning and truth” as non-traditional theologians, whether they follow Islam, Christianity or Judaism would confirm (Tracy, 1978). Nevertheless, it remains necessary to recognize that metaphorical claims are central to the phenomenon of religion, and therefore investigating metaphor becomes essential to the study of religion (Tracy, 1978).

This chapter demonstrated the role of metaphor in religious and theological studies, and it showed that such research has the potential to change religious views in

the theology of any religion. The next chapter talks about metaphor in philosophy and linguistics and it states the approach I utilize in my analysis, which is mainly based on the framework of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), in addition to the account of metaphor in Relevance Theory (Wilson & Sperber, 1986; Carston 2002, 2010, Wilson, 2011), as I agree with Tendahl and Gibbs (2008) that the two theories should be integrated.

Chapter 2.

Metaphor in Philosophy and Linguistics

This chapter discusses metaphor understanding in both philosophy and linguistics. It starts by presenting the view of philosopher Paul Grice, who considered that metaphor belongs to pragmatics. The chapter also includes the view of a contemporary philosopher, Josef Stern, who argues that metaphor is semantic. In his review of the literature, Stern cites the phenomenon of twice-true metaphor, which shows that metaphorical understanding is not necessarily the result of a failure of literal interpretation; i.e., it does not arise due to the literal interpretation being false. However, if we agree that successful communication requires us to say only what is true, we should first question the assumption that true expressions must be literal. It is necessary, therefore, to review linguistic theories that do not assume literalness to be required for the expression of truth or the description of a state of affairs. Two linguistic theories that do not equate truth with literalness are discussed here: Relevance Theory (RT) and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). The integration of these two theories, while not yet well-established, seems to be the best way to account for the religious metaphors discussed in this thesis, as I will show in the following chapters, some metaphors seem to be rooted in thought, while others are merely loosely used.

2.1. Metaphor and the expression of truth in philosophy: Grice vs. Stern

Metaphor theory has been a topic of interest in different fields of study such as poetry, philosophy, linguistics and others, but the mid twentieth century witnessed a joint effort between these different fields. As a result of those efforts, different accounts of metaphor have developed; some are pragmatic and others semantic (Hills, 2016). The discussion of metaphor understanding within philosophy focuses on there being two meanings in a metaphor: a literal meaning and a non-literal meaning. Because the literal meaning is the surface meaning, different traditions try to explain how people go from the surface literal meaning to the deeper metaphorical meaning. In fact, almost any (linguistic)

definition of metaphor requires a comparison between the metaphorical meaning and the literal. Therefore, it is often argued that any metaphorical expression has two interpretations: a literal interpretation which, most likely, renders the metaphorical expression literally false (an example of an exception to literal falsehood is a 'twice-true' metaphor – a definition I will follow when discussing Stern's view), and a metaphorical interpretation which most likely differs from the literal. A definition of metaphor that does not rely on contrasting metaphor with the literal appears in the preface of Mark Johnson's book *The Body in the Mind* (1949, p. xiv-xv) in which metaphor is defined as: "a pervasive mode of understanding by which we project patterns from one domain of experience in order to structure another domain of a different kind."

Philosophers since ancient times have observed that the use of metaphor involves a change in the usage of words without creating problems for understanding (Hills, 2016). To them, metaphor does not cause comprehension problems because there exists a relation between the literal meaning and its metaphorical use (Hills, 2016, p.7). From the point of view of Aristotle, there are different types of metaphor, with the analogical type being the most intriguing (Hills, 2016). Reading David Hills, it becomes clear that metaphor according to Aristotle is a cognitive phenomenon. "[T]he understanding of a simple metaphor [is seen by Aristotle] as a stimulating exercise in analogical equation solving" (Hills, 2016, p. 8). That is, the mapping between domains in metaphorical expressions occurs as we equate different domains with each other. And so figuring out the ground that makes the domains equal is like solving mathematical equations with unknown variables that are assigned values or expressions in order to make one side of the equation equal the other side.

One of the oldest pragmatic accounts that is concerned with how metaphor is understood is built around the Cooperative Principle (CP), laid out by Paul Grice (1975). Through this principle, Grice explained how speakers and listeners cooperate in the conversational exchange to maintain clarity in order to understand and be understood. For the principle to apply, a number of standards that Grice called 'maxims' must be observed. Specifically, Grice called these 'conversational maxims', which according to him govern our understanding of utterances. In his view, these maxims serve as a guideline for

understanding conversation that both speaker and listener follow and implicitly recognize without much attention. Such universal maxims are paraphrased below:

Quality: Do not say something you know is false or lacks evidence.

Quantity: Do not give too little or too much information when it is your turn to participate or contribute to the conversation.

Relation / Relevance: Do not say something unless it is relevant to the topic of discussion or is interesting enough to grab my attention.

Manner: Choose your words carefully to help me understand exactly what you mean.

The first of these maxims, as we see above, is called Quality, and it requires any cooperative speaker to be honest and to state only what they believe is true. In fact, the Quality maxim can also be referred to as the maxim of Truthfulness. But what does this maxim have to do with literalness? In his *Logic and Conversation* article (1975), Grice defined conversation as an informative communication between participants who know that the information they share need not be strictly literal. Each participant is expected to benefit from and contribute to the talk. And listeners often understand unstated affairs. In fact, listeners even hold the speaker responsible for that which is not stated but nevertheless inferred and they expect that inference to be true. This belief is justified because it is normally taken for granted that speakers are “cooperative,” “rational,” and “unconfused.” However, Grice clarified that, although the words a person uses might make others reach some conclusion, the speaker still has the right to deny that the conclusion reached by the listener is what they mean. That is, what is implicated is not in the speaker’s words per se and hence the speaker might mean something totally different from what the listener takes for granted.

According to Grice, listeners understand metaphorical expressions due to the realization that the Quality maxim is violated by the speaker, but since speakers are assumed to be cooperative, they are taken to communicate something beyond the literal meaning of the expression. However, to assume that listeners recognize a violation to such a maxim requires that we take literal meaning to always be processed first, and that it is subsequently the default position and this is in contrast with the cognitive linguistics

view of meaning and cognition. That is, in cognitive linguistics it is assumed that we produce and understand metaphors because our thought is inherently metaphorical. And psycholinguistic experiments have shown that literal meaning is not necessarily processed first (check e.g. the work of Raymond W. Gibbs). In fact, the claim that literal meaning is not always processed prior to a metaphorical understanding has been pointed out by Relevance Theory since 1985[86]. See the discussion in section (2.2.1).

Can the truth of an expression be both literal and metaphorical at the same time?

Many accounts of metaphor are influenced by Grice, as he keenly analyzed how understanding takes place in conversation. According to Grice, the understanding of metaphor is an implicature that only arises due to the reader/hearer's realization that the speaker's meaning is different from the literal semantic meaning, because he regarded metaphor to be literally false. However, not all metaphors are literally false. Some metaphors are true even when interpreted literally (Cohen, 1976; Stern, 2008). These are called twice-true metaphors, and their literal truth shows that it is not always a matter of violating the Quality maxim that results in metaphorical understanding. An example of a twice-true metaphor is 'no man is an island', which is true metaphorically because people cannot be isolated like an island due to their need to socialize with others. It is also true literally because human beings are human beings and not islands.

Although twice-true metaphors seemed to be problematic for the Gricean pragmatic accounts at first, they actually led theorists to reconsider those accounts in attempt to explain the unacceptability of the literal interpretation (Stern, 2008). That is, theorists realized that even when a metaphor is literally true (and thereby satisfies the Quality maxim), it still violates the Quantity maxim. So, metaphor violates the maxim of Quantity if it is uninformative when taken literally, or the maxim of Relevance if the literal meaning of the metaphor is not relevant to the context in which it appears (Stern, 2008).

The observation that a metaphor can be twice-true (Cohen, 1976) was cited by Josef Stern (2008), a contemporary philosopher, in order to confirm that metaphor could actually belong to semantics. This makes Stern's view of metaphor, radically different from that of Grice as he considers metaphor to be a semantic rather than pragmatic phenomenon. He clarifies that the fact that metaphor needs a context-dependent

interpretation made it seem like it is a pragmatic phenomenon, but he argues that this aspect of metaphor does not make it pragmatic. He bases his argument on the fact that the interpretation of other exclusively semantic expressions like indexicals also depends on context. Stern (2006, 2008) discusses Kaplan's account of the context-dependent semantics of indexicals, demonstratives and definite descriptions. Inspired by him, Stern extends the semantic context-dependency account to metaphor. Knowledge of who or what an indexical refers to is not possible without context because indexicals, by their very nature, change their reference variably in context. Kaplan argues that there is semantic variability in the interpretation of indexicals due to the fact that their non-constant 'character' allows them to have different 'contents' in different contexts. He calls the semantic contextual variability 'content' and the semantic non-constant function 'character'. The 'content' of an indexical is the actual reference in a context, and its 'character' is its semantic, or independent, meaning prior to its reference in context. It is the context-independent meaning, or what he calls 'character,' that allows for the content – the contextual reference – to differ in different contexts. Hence, both contents and character for indexicals are non-constant. This non-constancy is what makes the distinction between 'Character' and 'Content' a useful analogy to make in constructing a semantic theory of metaphor for Stern.

To demonstrate, let's first have a look at the 'character' and 'content' of the indexical 'I', which refers to different persons in different contexts. The semantic knowledge of the meaning of the pronoun "I" is one's formal semantic knowledge that it refers to the speaker, whoever that is. The meaning aspect of the actual speaker in a context is 'content'. When 'I' is used in a context, it gains its contextual meaning from the context, and so it is context that gives character its meaning/content since content is only contextually determined.

The truth-conditions of a sentence that contains an indexical such as 'I' depends on the contextual content which, means that truth-conditions depend on context. This knowledge is what Kaplan calls 'content'. That is, 'content' is what is being referred to using 'character', while 'character' is the formal non-contextual meaning. So, while this referential knowledge is semantic, it also depends on extra-linguistic context, i.e. the same sentence might be true or false depending on who is uttering it. To clarify Kaplan's point, let's consider the non-metaphorical sentence that Stern uses in clarifying his argument.

Stern uses the example “I am happy” to show that the sentence is true when said by a speaker who is happy, and false when another speaker, who is not happy, says it. Therefore, while the semantic meaning of “I am happy” does not necessarily change when uttered by a happy or a non-happy person when the context changes, its truth-conditions do change. Again, it is the semantic meaning (character) of the indexical ‘I’, which cannot be specified independent of context, that allows for different ‘contents’ to be specified in different contexts. To be clear, when ‘I’ is used in different contexts, what changes is not that the pronoun ‘I’ is first-person singular; what changes is, of course, the person – the actual referent – it refers to. The context is what determines the content that the indexical ‘I’ contributes to the truth conditions of a sentence like ‘I am happy’.

In Stern’s extension of the semantics of indexicals to the semantics of metaphors, he argues that metaphor is also a matter of different semantic ‘content’ of the same expression ‘character’ in different contexts. Like the non-constant character of indexicals, Stern considers the character of metaphors to be non-constant. Metaphor, he argues, is inherently context-sensitive because of its non-constant character which allows for the variability of contents in different contexts. To illustrate, Stern demonstrates how the content of the word ‘sun’ changes when used metaphorically in different contexts. The different metaphoric meanings of the word ‘sun’ that Stern (2008, p. 271-272) cites from poetry to support his claim include “peerless”, “glory and authority”, and “radiance.” Importantly for Stern, the fact that all of these meanings belong to one constrained set of possible meanings that our world knowledge of what the word ‘sun’ can refer to makes it possible to pick out different but constrained contents of ‘sun’ in different contexts. So, this variability is constrained, and that is why we can still understand the different contextual contents of the same metaphors in different contexts.

Stern’s view of metaphor having a non-constant character that allows it to have different contents in different contexts is similar to how Relevance Theory explains this sensitivity to context in metaphor by permitting lexical adjustments to occur so that a word expresses different concepts in different contexts. This is going to be clearer as we move to the discussion of Relevance Theory, particularly to its ad-hoc concept view of metaphor. Stern’s approach to metaphor seems to be broadly consistent with the two linguistic approaches discussed in the following section. It is consistent with Relevance Theory

inasmuch as it focuses on lexical meanings and assumes that metaphorical interpretations enter into truth-conditions, and with Conceptual Metaphor Theory in assuming that metaphor is essentially a semantic phenomenon.

The occurrence of metaphorical expressions itself serves as linguistic evidence of metaphor. So, because such evidence is, at the concrete level, linguistic in nature, the need for linguistic theories of metaphor is unavoidable. However, the relation between metaphor and thought in human language is a relation between the concrete and the abstract. This makes cognitive linguistics the most appropriate science for metaphoric investigation. In section 2.2.1, I review two linguistic views on which I ground my thesis, the view of Relevance Theory (RT) and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). Before we move on, it is important to note two things. First, Relevance Theory adopts a theory of mind that is quite rejected by the set of theories usually taken to represent the field of cognitive linguistics. However, Relevance Theory is still both “cognitive” and “linguistic” in its approach. Hence, unless otherwise contrasted, I use the term “cognitive linguistics” to refer to both theories. Second, the terms “metaphor” and “metaphorical expressions” usually refer to two different things in Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). In CMT, metaphor is used to refer to the underlying thought and in that sense, it is not pronounced or vocalized, while “metaphorical expression” is the linguistic manifestation of the metaphoric thought. Usually, when they are not contrasted or used together, the term “metaphor” is used interchangeably.

2.2. Metaphor and polysemy: a close relation

Metaphor appears not only in complex constructions but is evident even at the level of a single word. The fact that there is a close relation between metaphor and polysemy further enhances the notion that metaphor is a ubiquitous aspect of thought and language because polysemous words are often historically the result of a metaphorical thought. But, they are currently single words with multiple, sometimes not consciously metaphoric meanings (senses), which shows that many word senses in a language may in themselves be originally metaphoric without there currently being any cross-domain mappings.

A question arises from the ubiquity of polysemy as to how is it possible to recognize which of the related meanings in a given instance is the intended meaning. Gibbs and Tendahl (2008) argue that the pragmatic context makes it possible to determine which of the related meanings is specifically the intended meaning. This seems to suggest that the recognition is based on relevance.

The fact that many words have various related meanings, including conventional metaphorical meanings, serves as evidence for the relation between metaphor and polysemy. Interestingly, the cognitive linguistics view of polysemy (Lakoff, 1987; Taylor, 1995) attributes the relation between the meanings of polysemous words to a number of cognitive principles of which, one is metaphor (Tendahl & Gibbs, 2008). Tendahl and Gibbs state that there are “image-schemas” underlying the meanings of many senses of polysemous words” (p. 1852).

2.2.1. Metaphor in Relevance Theory

Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson developed different views of metaphor over the different stages of their Relevance Theory. In the first stage (1986), their view of metaphor was basically Gricean in the sense that metaphor gives rise to a number of plausible interpretive probabilities which they called “weak implicatures.” However, Sperber and Wilson differentiated themselves from Grice by rejecting the notion of conversational maxims entirely. For Sperber and Wilson, there is no such assumption, and hearers do not expect speakers to follow the maxims because for them there are no maxims and no expectation of literal truth or anything other than relevance.

As the theory developed into a second stage (Wilson & Sperber, 2002; Sperber & Wilson, 2008), metaphors were viewed as ad hoc concepts that are adjusted in context (similar to Stern’s explanation of the non-constant character of metaphor) in order to be understood. In this ad-hoc concept view, the process of semantic adjustment is lexical because the adjustment involves the literal meaning of the metaphorical expression which might seem at odds with the context as it stands. Similarly, the changing character of metaphor for Stern depends on the lexical aspect of the metaphorical expression. In other words, metaphorical interpretations involve a process of adjustment that targets the literal

or lexical word in an attempt at a relevant understanding. These adjustments “loosen” or “narrow” the lexical meaning of the word used metaphorically. In Stern’s view, every word has both content and character and, although the character of metaphor is not fixed, it is still dependent on the lexical or literal word and hence he considers the literal / lexical aspect of any linguistic interpretation to be an integral part of any non-literal interpretation.

Interestingly, in the ad-hoc concept view, Sperber and Wilson (2008) emphasize that what makes verbal communication distinct is the fact that it relies on our ability to infer the intended meaning based on what the speaker says. Inferential cognition explains how we understand metaphor and how we even go way beyond lexical meaning in the case of creative ones, which suggests that metaphor, like non-metaphorical utterances, is understood based on an inferential procedure and in that sense, metaphor is not unique.

In the first two stages, the concern was with relatively conventional metaphors -- with expressions that are loosely used as opposed to ones deliberately crafted. However, in a third stage, Wilson’s notable student, Robyn Carston (2010) took the theory further so that it is capable of handling not only conventional metaphors but also poetic metaphors. To account for both types of metaphors, Carston brought back the weak implicature view which had been developed in the very first stage of Relevance Theory. Back then, the view dealt mainly with conventional metaphors that are loosely used, but Carston demonstrated that all metaphors, including creative ones, are understood based on contextual effects that give rise to weak implicatures. Interestingly, in her account of poetic metaphor, Carston notes that the literal meaning plays a significant role in the non-literal meaning we derive from a metaphor. She stresses that there are poetic effects for any type of metaphor and so the term “poetic effect” applies quite generally to both conventional and poetic metaphor. However, as this was an iteration of what Sperber and Wilson have argued in other places, Carston’s special emphasis was in explaining the lingering of the literal in the understanding of metaphors. She proposed that there are two routes available to any given metaphor: one is long and slow, and the other is short and quick. Of course, conventional metaphors follow the short and quick route because they are highly frequent, while creative ones follow the route that is long and slow, allowing whatever time is needed for processing.

2.2.1.1. Metaphor and implicatures

It is widely acknowledged that metaphor has a cognitive component that tends to be lost when paraphrased. However, in their “Loose talk” article, Sperber and Wilson (1985[86]) attribute this loss to the fact that metaphor has “poetic effects,” and they claim that these poetic effects are impossible to paraphrase without loss. This, in fact, explains the cognitive component of figurative language, that is, although all language is essentially cognitive, figurative or poetic language, by virtue of being poetic yields an extra cognitive effect.

Although Sperber and Wilson adopt the Gricean view of figurative meaning as ‘implicature,’ they stress that there exist varying degrees of strength to implicatures: some implicatures are strong yet others are weak. Strong implicatures strongly arise, e.g. in clear expressions; while weak implicatures weakly arise, e.g. in metaphor. Also, they see no reason to assume that ‘literal meaning’ is usually understood as the speaker’s intended meaning. Hence, Sperber and Wilson (1986) differentiated their relevance theoretic account of metaphor comprehension from both classical rhetoric and Grice, who considered literalness to be a general characteristic of linguistic discourse. Since metaphors give rise to implicatures and implicatures vary in strength, noting that the implicatures that arise from metaphors are weak is important. The distinction between strong and weak implicatures has to do with our inferential cognition; we automatically and readily derive implicatures when they are strong implicatures because strong implicatures are immediately derived since those are not so many. However, when there are many possible implicatures, it is because such implicatures require time and effort to be derived. Hence, they are called “weak implicatures.” What makes these implicatures weak is the fact that they are infinite and thus we cannot be strongly confident regarding their derivation. Weak implicatures have more poetic effects and require more cognitive effort. Therefore, although they are not limited to metaphors, their availability in metaphor is much higher, especially in the highly creative cases. Put differently, strong implicatures are implicatures that arise from clear expressions, but weak implicatures are implicatures that arise when the expression is not very clear and hence may require some creativity to be derived.

However, not all metaphors are processed in the same way; some require more effort than others. For example, some metaphors are easy to process because they occur quite frequently in the language, to the extent that their meaning becomes conventionalized, hence they are called “conventional metaphors.” Many people do not even consider certain conventional metaphors to be metaphoric because for some, they may be the only way to express what they want to say. ‘Do you see what I mean?’ is one example. Other types of conventional metaphors are built into our grammar because they involve concepts that are inherently metaphorical in the ways we talk about them, such as ‘time’ and ‘space.’ Some metaphors, however, might require more cognitive effort than others, depending on their level of creativity. Creative metaphors, therefore, are metaphors that require a certain level of cognitive effort. Interestingly, it is argued that the reader, in the case of highly creative metaphors, has to think hard in order to contextualize the metaphor and infer, possibly, a great many implicatures (Sperber & Wilson, 1986: 168). That is, there are an infinite number of implications that can be derived from extraordinarily creative metaphors. Therefore, it is claimed that different readers might derive different implicatures, which also means that re-reading allows us to derive more and more implicatures and reading the metaphor again and again can potentially lead different people to derive the same implicatures.

2.2.1.2. Relevance theory and individual differences

As much as the Relevance Theoretic account of metaphor is a generalizable account, it also accounts for individual differences, and this makes sense because different people have different experiences, different backgrounds, different interests, and different cognitive abilities. All of these aspects play a significant role in creating relevance that looks different for different people, and this is one thing that makes the account particularly realistic. In fact, the ways this account allows for individual differences supports my own analyses of the metaphors that appear in this thesis because no matter how differently other readers would interpret the metaphors I discuss in the following chapters, something will unify my analysis and theirs, which is their plausibility or the fact that they cannot be ruled out. In fact, Sperber and Wilson’s words (1986: 168) capture such individuality or originality in interpretation very clearly:

... in the richest and most successful cases, the hearer can go beyond just exploring the immediate context and the background knowledge directly invoked, accessing a wider area of knowledge, entertaining ad hoc assumptions which may themselves be metaphorical, and getting more and more very weak implicatures, with suggestions for still further processing.

I also find my interpretations to be compatible with Carston's account (2010), which she discusses extensively in her article, "Metaphor, ad hoc concepts, literal meaning and mental images." That is, Carston applies Relevance Theory but goes further in attempting to include not only conventional metaphors but poetic metaphors as well, in one single analysis that accounts for "the full range of cases". I find her account consistent with my own gradual understanding and analysis of the LIFE AS A TEST metaphor, which is going to be discussed in Chapter 3. Her account is also consistent with the other metaphors I discuss in the following chapters. This account not only makes available a wide array of implicatures but it also allows for individual differences in deriving plausible implicatures, as it always permits further processing for any given metaphor.

Under this account there are generally two routes for metaphor processing. The first route is a route in which metaphor is processed in accordance with the ad-hoc concept construction given by Sperber and Wilson (1985, 2008), where the literal meaning of the metaphorical expression is adjusted locally and quickly through pragmatics. The second route is Carston's contribution to understanding the process of metaphor comprehension, where she grants the literal meaning of the metaphor a bigger role to play in the process of interpretation. While the first route is short and quick, the second one is long and slow. According to Carston, metaphors can differ in which processing route they take, but the second route is selected for poetic or literary metaphors because it allows for deep reflection and contemplation by admitting long and slow processing. However, she claims that this long route is not restricted to poetic metaphors, but the extended poetic cases necessarily follow this route because the adjustment to literal meaning is too demanding in the case of extended metaphors. Interestingly, she argues that the literal meaning of a poetic metaphor is preserved rather than adjusted because it is through the literal meaning that more and more weak implicatures are derived and observations realized. This I think, also, captures my realization that there seems to be a close relation between metaphor and polysemy in the poetic metaphor LIFE IS A TEST (see chapter 3) because it all shows

how important the literal meaning is in processing the non-literal meaning. To be clear, the Arabic word for 'test' also means 'hardship,' as discussed in the next chapter.

In fact, Carston's emphasis on the lasting role of the literal in metaphoric understanding is not the first in the literature. For example, Stern (2008) argues that metaphorical meaning depends on the literal. Not only that, but the whole idea of the ad hoc concept is actually similar to how he explains the realization of a non-literal meaning. In Relevance Theory, for example, the adjustment is indicated by an asterisk shown on the literal concept to notify that the meaning is not literal, yet it is still an asterisk on the literal concept, which actually suggests that the literal does not disappear entirely, but it is what initiates the process. To illustrate, adjusting the literal meaning of the word 'test' in 'life is a test' can be represented with an asterisk as in 'TEST*.' So, while the asterisk is used to indicate that 'test' here is not literally a test, the word 'test' is still literally there, and the asterisk does not make it disappear; it is just meant to adjust its contextual meaning, with its literal meaning in mind. However, as Relevance Theory concerns itself mostly with the understanding aspect of metaphor rather than the production aspect of it, it does not tell us where metaphors come from, because it does not assume that they come from anywhere. Instead, it claims that they occur to the speaker in the moment of speaking for relevance purposes. The theory that takes care of where metaphors are coming from is known as Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which was developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson six years before Relevance Theory was born.

2.2.2. Metaphor according to Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) belongs to the broader field of cognitive linguistics (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff, 1993; Lakoff 1996; Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, Fauconnier & Mark, 2002, Dancygier & Sweetser, 2014, Dancygier, 2016, Howe & Sweetser, 2013). The history of cognitive linguistics goes back to the 1970s when Michael Reddy wrote his Conduit metaphor article (1979), which attracted linguists intrigued by how linguistic meaning comes about as a product of our world experience and biology. Such linguists see the formal approaches to language like that of Chomsky as incapable of explaining what, in their view, constitutes the base of language: the meaning. That is, cognitive linguistics sees 'meaning' as primary to form in the sense that non-

linguistic meaning gives rise to linguistic meaning. One of the main scholars of the field is George Lakoff, who is deemed the father of cognitive linguistics. In 1980, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson wrote up their observations of how meaning is embodied and how the kinds of bodies we have affect our feelings and perceptions in the *Metaphors We Live by* (updated in 2003). Interested in how the mind attempts to organize things in the world in a subjective process of understanding, Lakoff (1987) also established a theory of categorization (an inherent aspect of analogical thought) in his influential book *Women Fire and Dangerous Things*. Lakoff in his 1993 “The Contemporary Theory of Metaphor” article expands on the discussion of certain metaphors providing a deeper level of analysis. For example, he adds specifiable levels to the analysis of LIFE AS A JOURNEY. This metaphor seems to relate closely to the underlying Quranic metaphor LIFE IS A TEST that I analyze in the next chapter. In 1999, Lakoff and Johnson wrote extensively about how our cognition is influenced by our biology in a book whose title captures their theory: *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*.

The explanation that Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) provides for the existence of metaphorical utterances is the assumption that metaphors exist in thought; i.e. our metaphorically used language stems from our metaphorical cognition, and so “we speak metaphorically because we think metaphorically” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In their work, Lakoff and Johnson claim that there are two different domains of thought involved in any particular metaphor. These domains, they call the “source domain” and the “target domain.” The source domain is the domain that is easier to understand because it is concrete, or because it has a solid experiential basis. The target domain is usually (but not always) abstract. The target domain is the main thing the speaker tries to talk about. For example, in the metaphor LIFE IS A JOURNEY, the source domain is Journey and the target domain is Life. So, in the metaphors that take the form A is B, ‘A,’ which is the entity that comes first, is the target domain because it is the thing we are “metaphorizing” about, or the thing we are trying to express by drawing from another domain that serves as a source and appears here as ‘B’. In other words, ‘B,’ or the source domain, is the domain that we use as a means to talk about ‘A’. However, it is important to emphasize that it is not necessarily the case that one domain has to be abstract and one concrete and that the mapping or that the directionality of the metaphor goes from concrete to abstract, as has also been noted by Dancygier and Sweetser (2014). Dancygier’s 2016 paper

“Figurativeness, conceptual metaphor and blending,” provides a useful definition of metaphor after the insightful work of Lakoff and Johnson. That is, since then, metaphor has been defined as “[a] conceptual mapping, connecting two conceptual domains and allowing speakers to talk about abstract phenomena or emotions in terms of more concrete experiences” (p.29).

One major metaphor for religious thought to be possible at all is the GOD AS PERSON metaphor. Our personification of God stems from the need to make complex entities “human scale,” and that is why we speak about God as person, i.e. personification being an ontological metaphor, makes us understand abstract entities the way we understand ourselves. (For a discussion of ontological metaphor in general, see e.g. Kovecses 2015; Dancygier & Sweetser 2014, p. 71).

Among the types of metaphor that Lakoff and Johnson discuss in 1980, there are two distinct metaphorical types that influence our speech and action: structural and orientational metaphors. They describe structural metaphors as metaphors that structure our thought about a given phenomenon, in certain ways, and hence organize our activity based on that structure. In other words, this type of metaphor is manifested in a number of related linguistic expressions. An example of a structural metaphor is A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY and this structure yields a number of entailments such as: we are travelers, there is a destination that we are travelling towards, we need to have knowledge of directions to decide which is the best way to take, we might need to change where we are heading at any point, we might get lost, and we might need to seek guidance. How this metaphor and its entailments structure our thought and action can be seen in expressions like: ‘I have to *keep going* and never give up,’ ‘I feel *lost* if I do not plan *ahead*,’ or ‘Always search for *landmarks!*’ and ‘Now as she graduated, she is looking *forward* to the next *step*.’

Such structural metaphors were investigated further in a Ph.D. dissertation by Joe Grady in 1997. Grady recognizes that structural metaphors are complex metaphors that break down into primary metaphors, and each primary metaphor serves as an “atom” for the complex metaphor. The atomic nature and primary role of primary metaphors, he notes, make such metaphors automatically and consistently conceptualized in the same

way by different individuals since an early age, almost universally, because they are motivated by our bodily experiences (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Lakoff and Johnson state that Grady's theory of primary metaphor also explains that the creation of complex metaphors occurs through the process of conceptual blending. Another example of structural metaphor, or primary metaphor so called, is the CONTAINER metaphor – examples will follow in the next chapter.

Oriental metaphors are metaphors that have to do with how we conceive of objects or things in the world based on our physical orientations compared to these things. That is, our directional understanding comes from how our bodies are oriented in the world, which essentially shapes our sense of what is physically on our right or left, or what is above us and below us, or even what is ahead of us or behind us; and also the way our vision works to determine how we see things the way we see them. An example of an orientational metaphor is MORE IS UP. So, in addition to the physical basis that motivates such a metaphor, there is also an experiential basis. When it comes to MORE IS UP, the experiential motivation is explained by the idea of how we, for example, usually see that the more liquid there is in a container, the more the liquid goes up. I think that due to their experiential basis, which strongly influences our thought and action, it is hard not to agree that such metaphors are part of our thinking. That is, it cannot be the case that it is only a matter of communication or being relevant that we come to think of quantity in terms of a location or of verticality. We could argue then that not only is relevance in comprehension a cognitive force, but also that part of what constitutes relevance in comprehension is our bodily experience.

Perhaps many of the religious metaphors that talk about our relationships with God are metaphors in thought, and this is evident in the metaphor GOD IS UP. Orientation metaphors like this one, which are governed by primary metaphors like POWER IS UP and MORE IS UP, are the results of how we are physically situated in the world, regardless of language or linguistic context per se; and hence relevance is not what motivates embodied metaphor unless we say it is physically relevant, which it is, but that is not within the claims of Relevance Theory. Lakoff and Johnson in their book *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (1999) argue that for us to be able to talk about God, we have no means but to locate Him. I would also say that the religious

metaphor that LIFE IS A JOURNEY TO / TOWARDS GOD also inherently involves a metaphorical location for the divine. This explains how there is no contradiction between GOD IS UP being a metaphor and the belief that God is everywhere. In fact, the metaphor GOD IS UP involves mapping Higher Beings to High Place or Status, licensed by the metaphor AUTHORITY IS UP; while the belief that God is everywhere, which is shared by all the Abrahamic religions, does not seem to involve mapping God to any specific place or location; and this perhaps has to do with the semantics of 'everywhere,' which does not seem to be specified for a particular location. However, we could, perhaps, explain it schematically rather than through mapping; i.e. by assuming that God is a Container, or more precisely is the Container of the Universe and hence "everywhere." Since this God metaphor is not standard, I would say that this is an instance of how we use metaphor to reason. However, if we compare 'everywhere' and 'up', we could see that 'up,' in addition to its experiential correlation, is also more "human scale." Therefore, we could conceptualize 'up' better.

Interestingly, even beyond the Abrahamic religions, one can find evidence for THE DIVINE IS UP metaphor. Let's have a look at the following quote from the Shen Yun website (2018) which advertises for the annual event of Chinese Classical Dance, "IN ANCIENT TIMES, China was heralded as the Land of the Divine. So majestic was its culture that it was thought to be a gift from above." The use of the word 'above' here entails the metaphor DIVINE IS UP. The claims that Conceptual Metaphor Theory makes about thought and cognition find parallels to a little newer, yet more general, theory of thinking and learning known as "Conceptual Blending Theory" (CBT), or simply "Blending Theory." (For sources, see Fauconnier & Turner 1996, 1998, 2002; Grady, Oakley and Coulson 1999; Coulson 2001.) Cognitive linguists consider any metaphor to be an instance of blending; and Dancygier and Sweester's (2014) book shows that to consider metaphor as a case of blending is inspiring, and that a lot of progress has resulted from so viewing it.

One point of this chapter so far is that the tendency of maximizing relevance in order to obtain understanding does not in itself disapprove the existence of metaphor in thought. Hence, the observation that CMT and RT are complementary (Gibbs & Tendahl, 2008; Wilson, 2011) seems to be exactly right. To clarify, the different types of metaphor that exist in language need both of these theories simply because metaphors are of different types, and hence some instances are consistent with one theory and some are

consistent with the other. Perhaps, then combining the two theories is necessary for any account of metaphor to be complete or encompassing. For example, to say something like 'I feel down' or 'my spirits are up' and 'do you see what I mean?' would be better accounted for in Conceptual Metaphor Theory because Conceptual Metaphor Theory accounts for physical correlations.

2.3. Integrating Relevance Theory with Conceptual Metaphor Theory

I am of the opinion that not all metaphors originate in thought. In fact, the way that I see many cases of metaphor is very much like Wilson's assumption here: "[t]he repeated use of linguistic metaphors linking items from distinct cognitive domains might set up patterns of conceptual activation similar to those that cognitive linguists see as characteristic of conceptual metaphors" (Wilson, 2011) (p. 179). She argues that: "[m]etaphor arises naturally in linguistic communication, as language is loosely used in an attempt to convey complex thoughts that may be vague, but need not themselves be metaphorical" (p. 178). However, as we said before, metaphors are not all the same, so perspectives of both RT and CMT are important, as some metaphors are merely loosely used while others are rooted in thought.

The observation that the two theories could benefit from each other made researchers of metaphor request relevance theorists and cognitive linguists to collaborate and integrate their theories so that they provide an account of metaphor that is more encompassing. Wilson (2011) responds to the suggestion by arguing, following Tendahl and Gibbs (2008) that the two theories focus on different types of metaphors, which make it important to figure out whether the same method of analysis can apply to both types: loosely used expressions and conceptual metaphors. That is, we should examine whether a metaphor like "Robert is a *computer*" being a loose use, and "He *destroyed my defenses*" being a realization of a conceptual metaphor (ARGUMENTS ARE FIGHTS), can be analyzed in the same way.

Dancygier and Sweetser's (2014) *Figurative Language* book provides insights into this discussion. They explain the difference between conceptual metaphors and similes

that are not part of the conceptual system. A simile usually has an overt 'like' or 'as'. Reading their work emphasizes that there are parallel insights to be found in the integration of CMT and RT. For example, Dancygier and Sweetser, who are cognitive linguists, make exactly the same points made by Wilson about the fact that conventional metaphors could arise first in discourse and then become established in thought over time. Those parallels, which are in perfect agreement, further support that the two theories are complementary. Citing Casasanto (2013), Dancygier and Sweetser clarify that correlation itself does not always have an experiential basis, as some correlations are usage-based. For example, similes or conventional analogical patterns apparent in many cases of copula constructions in English such as "X is a lion," are not originally metaphors in thought, but their linguistic correlation over time establishes a conceptual link for them. It seems that the metaphor 'life is a test', which I analyse in the next chapter, can be analysed as an entrenched thought and hence my argument for the need of both Relevance Theory and Conceptual Metaphor Theory, with Relevance Theory being a prerequisite for its conceptual metaphoric analysis.

Through their discussion of simile, which includes some review of the distinction between the different types of similes (e.g. relational vs. attributive or comparative vs. category-inclusive), Dancygier and Sweetser (2014) propose that these different types might also apply to the different types of metaphors. Like Wilson (2011), they acknowledge that the general research on metaphor has mostly focused on types of metaphor that are different from the types of metaphor studied in Conceptual Metaphor Theory. They suggest that metaphors expressed by predicative constructions (e.g., "my job is a jail") function differently from metaphors arising from conceptual metaphors (e.g., "they shot down all my arguments"). Predicative metaphors typically *establish* a mapping between two domains rather than relying on a pre-existing mapping in the way that conceptual metaphors do.

As we can see, Dancygier and Sweetser's views are in agreement with Wilson's, which in fact shows the need for both theories. That is, the two theories specialize on two different types of metaphors, so why not integrate the two theories in one account that can account for both types of metaphor? Some argue that both Relevance Theory and cognitive linguistics face challenges when attempting to account for how lexical-pragmatic

interpretations depend on context. That is, how can Relevance Theory explain how hearers understand the intended meaning, how the lexical meaning of the expression should be narrowed or broadened (Wilson, 2011)? A similar issue, Wilson adds, faces cognitive linguistics: how is the intended meaning ever recognized if it involves “mental mapping” and “blending.” However, if we agree that our cognition is geared towards the maximization of relevance, then relevance should be the answer to both questions.

After Wilson (2011), in her response to Gibbs and Tendahl’s (2008) suggestion of integrating RT with CMT, argued that many metaphors that arise in communication do not involve a cross-domain mapping, Gibbs and Tendahl (2011) responded back by presenting the other types of metaphors that do involve cross-domain mappings, such as GOOD IS UP, GOOD IS WHITE, BAD IS DOWN or BAD IS DIRTY. Their point is to show that not all metaphors are only used for communicative purposes, as some are also part of the conceptual system, which is shown by experimental evidence even outside the linguistic domain, for example in gesture. They emphasize that integrating the two theories will require that both relevance theorists and conceptual metaphor theorists realize that “[m]etaphoric cognition and communication are coupled in the adaptive service of humans thinking alone and interacting with others” (Gibbs & Tendahl, 2011. p. 607). The claim here indicates that metaphorical thought is evident even at the individual level where no communication is taking place.

To summarize, this chapter mainly discussed the phenomenon of metaphor in both philosophy and linguistics in order to give a broader view of what metaphor is. Two opposing views of different philosophers Paul Grice and Josef Stern were discussed. While the explanation given by Grice for metaphoric understanding attributes metaphor to pragmatics, Josef Stern argues that metaphor belongs to semantics. He does that through extending Kaplan’s analysis of indexicals as having two components in order to account for the need of context in metaphor interpretation. These two components are ‘content’ and ‘character’. The former varies in context while the latter has to do with the abstract grammatical knowledge of that content. Stern’s semantic view of metaphor matches the view of meaning and truth in linguistics for which the thesis is going to adopt two of its frameworks: Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Relevance Theory (RT). The link

that I see between Stern, CMT and RT lies in the fact that all three approaches view metaphor as a semantic matter.

Chapter 3.

Metaphor in real discourse – a reflection

In this chapter I present a reflection on the notion of life being a Test, which is derived from verses of the Holy Qur'an, and I apply both Relevance Theory (RT) and Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) to support my argument that the notion is necessarily metaphoric. My application of both theories also supports the idea that the two theories are not contradictory. I will show that the two theories yield a harmonious analysis. I apply Relevance Theory first because without it a metaphoric realization does not seem to be possible. Also, in Relevance Theory, the idea that all linguistic expressions are 'loose' is very beneficial because the same expression is analyzed as loosely conveying different concepts that contribute to each explicature in context, but this looseness is conveyed through the similarly useful convention of CAPITALIZED CONCEPTS in Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), through which CMT indicates a metaphor in thought rather than an expression in the language. However, in Relevance Theory the emphasis is that the expression is not the thought; i.e. RT argues that metaphor originates in the expression, which is the communication of the thought but not the thought itself.

While LIFE IS A TEST is not pronounced in the Qur'an, it surfaces as an utterance or it gets pronounced (vocalized) by Muslims in everyday language. In Conceptual Metaphor Theory, there is a difference between the linguistic expression and the metaphor that underlies it; i.e. a metaphor is not pronounced by itself but it motivates certain linguistic expressions. In Relevance Theory, metaphorical expressions are not assumed to arise from underlying metaphors, and hence RT analysis allows for 'life as a test' to be a surface utterance that gets adjusted by the hearer/reader based on relevance. Although the implicatures of 'life as a test' in Relevance Theory correspond to the entailments of LIFE IS A TEST in Conceptual Metaphor Theory, those entailments cannot be reached without the search for relevance. However, it seems that Conceptual Metaphor Theory is concerned with how and why the speaker/writer uses metaphorical expressions while Relevance Theory is concerned more with how the hearer / reader succeeds in interpreting those expressions. Since the implicature LIFE IS A TEST arises from certain verses of the Qur'an, which is believed to be the revealed word of God, what is needed is a theory of metaphoric

interpretation rather than a theory of metaphoric production because the concern for humans is to understand it. However, knowledge of metaphoric production helps in providing metaphoric interpretation, as knowing the mechanisms of how metaphors work results in knowledge of their meaning.

3.1. “Life is a test”: metaphor or polysemy?

When it comes to religion one can find many metaphors relating to life, faith and God and this might be attributed to the fact that religion aims to shape our views about many things, among which are life and death. Also, a lot of it is very abstract, and we can only strive to understand through analogical thought (Kovecses, 2010). One of the concepts I had trouble understanding was manifested in expressions like “Life is a test,” which seems to have stemmed from some verses of the Holy Qur’an from which it is firstly inferred. According to the Islamic faith, however, God is All-Knowing, so He knows everything even before it happens. Therefore, it did not quite make sense to me that God would let us go through tests in life when He already knows the result of the test.

After some reflection, I came to think that it is all about how we view things, and that in order to understand, we might have to change our views as also pointed out by Islamic thinkers. It occurred to me then that the notion of life as a test is, perhaps, metaphorical and not literal, and so I began to realize that there is something more going on in the meaning of what is actually a metaphor. I started to comprehend that we might have to consider a different interpretation for the word ‘test’. Simultaneously, I thought that the issue might not be exactly a metaphor but a polysemy. I remembered particular verses of the Qur’an in which derivations of the word ‘test’ occurred. Below is one of the verses I recalled in that regard:

Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allah- they are the ones whose hearts Allah has **tested** for righteousness. For them is forgiveness and great reward. (Alhujurat, 49:3)- Sahih International translation.

However, another verse was consistently in my mind. The verse contains in it a synonym for the word ‘test,’ and hence it has always been understood as such, and it even

shows up in the translations as 'test'. As a matter of fact, the word 'test' in Arabic shares the same root with the word 'ordeal', which is also synonymous with 'hardship'. To clarify, the word for 'test' is transliterated as 'imtihaan,' and the word for ordeal is transliterated as 'mihnah,' so the root is (m-h-n). Following is the verse that has me thinking: "He who created death and life to **test** you [as to] which of you is best in deed – and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving." (AlMulk, 67:2)

Therefore, it seemed to me that it is because of the lexical occurrence of 'test' or 'hardship' in the Qur'an (the two words are derivationally related in Arabic), we formed a view about life resulting in metaphors such as LIFE IS A TEST or LIFE IS HARSHIP. As I struggled to understand, I thought that these expressions might be inaccurate or problematic at times. Then, as I began to ponder more, I thought it could be that the meaning lies in an analogy that we should establish in our minds for the sake of our seeking perfection. So, it is not the case that God is going to know more about us through testing us. Instead, the meaning of the metaphor might be something that we should get going in our heads so that we constantly endeavour to do our best. The idea is that a test needs a lot of preparation and hard work, and it also makes you spend most of your time on things that matter, things that have value for your test.

3.2. Why Do We Supplicate? - Sheikh Murtaza Bachoo

All of the discussion above was stimulated when I asked the question of how it is possible that God tests us when He already knows how we are going to perform in the test to Sheikh Murtaza Bachoo, the spiritual consultant for the Shia Muslim community in Vancouver, who happened to answer my question with another question during a lengthy discussion. He asked me why do we have to pray to God for our needs when He knows our needs? What the Sheikh said was so inspiring that I emailed him asking if he could repeat his response about the reason of why we supplicate. Before moving on, let's have a look at how the word 'supplication' is defined. The website al-islam.org provides various types of definitions for 'supplication'. Its based-on-meaning definition comes from a dictionary called *Mo'jam Maqaiis al-Logha* by Ibin Faris, which defines it as "attracting one's attention by using words." (al-islam.org). The website also quotes Raghib's definition under the section of *Mufradat* meaning lexical items in the above-mentioned dictionary:

“Supplication is the same as vocative speech except that in vocative speech we use vocative articles (Ya or Aya).” It might be important to note that supplication in Islam is what the word ‘prayer’ refers to in English. However, in Islam, prayer is not necessarily the same as ‘supplication’. ‘Prayer’ in Islam, sometimes refers to the daily five prayers, and in that sense it is a structured act of worship.

In his emailed response, Sheikh Bachoo provided a link in which he appeared lecturing a group of Muslims about the issue he brought into the discussion. (M. Bachoo, personal communication, May 16, 2016). A transcription of his talk is below:

One of the questions that we get asked is: “why do we make supplications? And why do we call out to Allah Subhanahu wa ta’ala¹? Is it because God is not aware of our needs? You will say obviously not! God is Alaleem²! He knows all of our needs. In fact, He knows our needs better than we ourselves know our needs. Is it because God needs convincing? I need to convince God to be generous towards me? Of course not! God is known as Al-Jawad³; He is the source of generosity. God does not need any convincing! Then the question is: Then why am I making Duaa⁴ to Allah Subhanahu wa ta’ala?

There is a scholar in Qum by the name of Aayto Allah Tahriri. He is the student of the student of AaytoAllah Tabatbai. He’s written a commentary on the Munajat of Shaabaniyah⁵, in there he says something **beautiful**. He says the purpose of making Duaa is not to convince Allah subhanahu wa ta’ala. God is not moved by our supplications; there are no changes that happen within God because these changes are not possible in the Holy essence of God. Rather he says: it is the supplicant who in account of making Duaa to God creates within himself the existential capability to receive the Mercy of God. Let me put it in easier terms for us: We are not trying to convince Allah Subhanahu wa ta’ala that He needs to have Mercy upon us. We are trying to convince ourselves that we need Allah Subhanahu wa ta’ala. And the moment that realization comes about to be, that’s when we get that existential capability and that makes us deserving of the Mercy of Allah

¹ *Subhanahu wa ta’ala* is a glorifying expression referring exclusively to God and it means ‘Glorified and Exalted be He’.

² *Alaleem* means The All Knowledgeable; The Omniscient.

³ *Aljawad*: The Most Generous.

⁴ *Duaa* is the Arabic word for supplication, which basically means asking God for something you need.

⁵ *Munajat of Shaabanyiah*: a name for a Duaa recited in the month of Shaaban, the eighth month of the Arabic calendar. The meaning of ‘munajat’ is ‘intimate talk’.

Subhanahu wa ta'ala. Therefore, when we recite the Duaa of Kumail⁶, remember my brothers and sisters, **the dua is a journey of realizations**. It is very important that we understand the supplications that we recite because it is through reciting the supplication that realizations come about within us, not only mental realizations but experiential realizations; not only do we know that we need God we begin to experience and feel in our hearts that indeed we need Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala.

The examples that our scholars give is, they say when a person goes to the ocean and he takes with him a bucket that can carry 4 liters of water, he should not blame the ocean that the ocean only gave him 4 liters of water; the ocean is infinite. Inasmuch as your vessel is large, that is the amount of water that the ocean will give you. And therefore, our goal is to expand our capacity. Rumi has a very beautiful poem, and it's a poem that illustrates the point I am making: (The poem is said in Persian and restated in English, only the English translation is reproduced here)

Wherever there is pain...that is where you will find the
medicine to go to.
Wherever there is poverty...there is where the wealth will
go...
Wherever there is a problem... there is where the answer
will come
Wherever there is a vessel ...wherever there is an ark, that
is where water will come.

And then he comes to the Peak of his poem and he says:

Don't go seeking for water, instead create the thirst within
you
so that the water may burst forth from above and from
below you."
Instead of asking Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala, create that
capacity within you
Bring about that realization within you ... experience that
realization that you need God and the Mercy of God will
come to you.

Looking at this speech given by Sheikh Bachoo, it becomes clear that metaphor is very essential to religious understanding. Not only that, but in order for one to develop spiritually and strengthen their faith in God a lot of metaphorical understanding has to take place. This becomes clear when Sheikh Bachoo says: "the Duaa is a journey of realizations." It seems to me that two metaphors are simultaneously involved here; the

⁶ *Duaa of Kumail*: a very famous dua in Shia traditions, which is known to be recited by the Prophet's successor, *Imam Ali*.

first being the whole phrase, which is of the form A is B, and the second is the embedded phrase “journey of realizations” itself, because this means that the realization per se is a journey or is like a journey. Making such analogy between journeys and realizations means that

- Realizations are a long process; they don't happen overnight
- Realizations have a starting point and a destination
- Realizations are paths for more realizations; other journeys
- Realizations happen with wilful engagements
- Realizations, similar to journeys, take you from one mental state/place to another

Considering that metaphors are of different levels of specificity, it seems that a metaphor that is hard to notice because it is high-level, appears in the Sheikh's description of mercy: the mercy of God will come to you, where it is licensed by the metaphor ACTION IS MOTION. The speech also shows that supplications themselves seem to be conceptually metaphorical in nature, and this is apparent in the Sheikh's words: “it is very important that we understand the supplications that we recite.” It seems that supplications, though recited, might not always be understood, and this is perhaps due to their containing of metaphor. Also, when he says, “...it is through supplications that realizations come about within us...”, it sounds as if he is saying that there is a conceptual component to those recitations, and this fits well with the cognitive view of metaphor. At the end of this speech Sheikh Bachoo discusses a common example given by Muslim scholars in the context of supplications and calling out to God, which also means that giving examples that are metaphorical in nature are key to faith as they enhance understanding. The example used is an extended metaphor which relies on imagination, and hence many of the examples are established metaphors rather than pre-existing ones. Interestingly, imagination plays a significant role in understanding because it facilitates blending processes which take place as a result of our naturally analogical thought. (For a reference on the importance of imagination to thought and understanding see Johnson's 1949 [2013] book *The Body in the Mind*.) Through the process of imagination, we cognitively blend time, place and character, giving us the power of ontological metaphors. To demonstrate, let's have a look at the following imaginative instance: “When a person goes to the ocean and he takes with him a bucket that can carry four liters of water, he should not blame the ocean that the

ocean only gave him four liters of water; the ocean is infinite inasmuch as your vessel is large, that is the amount of water that the ocean will give you.” Here, the semantics of the word ‘person’ shares with the pronoun ‘he’ the semantics of indexicals in that the referent changes depending on context but it seems that we understand the aforementioned scenario because a character blend allows us to imagine that person to be us.

Usually in a clearly imaginative discourse, lots of metaphorical extensions occur. Those that are highly imaginative are not part of the conceptual system itself, but we are invited to conceptualize them as they occur. Since metaphoric extensions are creative instances of metaphor, they are not by themselves rooted in thought and hence their entailments are also not part of the conceptual system. Given that thought itself is metaphorical, we are able to understand novel metaphors and to derive from them metaphorical entailments. Those entailments are viewed as ‘implications’ in Relevance Theory, as discussed in Chapter 2, but the fact that they call them different things does not mean RT and CMT are contradictory. Below I show the metaphorical entailments that can be derived from the extended metaphor above which is an imaginative instance of one’s going to the ocean. The poem relies on the Container schema:

- God is an ocean
- Supplications are buckets = supplications are containers (at the high level: PURPOSES ARE OBJECTS)
- Water is mercy (mercy is a container)
- Water is a fulfillment of our need (need is a container)
- The amount of water that fits into your vessel is the amount of supplications being answered; the amount of mercy you could receive
- One’s own capacity is a vessel or a bucket; CAPACITY IS CONTAINER
- Buckets/ vessels are choices or decisions; one could choose a large bucket or a small bucket (choices and decisions are containers)

Implicit in this example is the idea that it is left up to the individual to choose to go to the ocean or not, and to bring what size of vessels to fill. In other words, God has left the decision completely up to the person regarding the size of the vessel the person brings to His Ocean of mercy. Inviting us to conceptualize Duaa/supplication as a Journey is possible through mapping Purposive Action to Motion which explains how the Journey domain comes into place. That is, it seems that the underlying religious metaphor that

licenses such conceptualizing is DUAA/SUPPLICATION IS PURPOSIVE ACTION. Since Duaa is a specific instance of worship, it seems that all worship could be conceptualized as a Journey. That is, WORSHIP IS A PURPOSIVE ACTION and hence, DUAA IS A PURPOSIVE ACTION is an exemplification metaphor; one example among many others.

In order to analyze the Sheikh's translation of Rumi's poem I repeat it here:

Wherever there is pain...that is where you will find the
medicine to go to.
Wherever there is poverty...there is where the wealth will
go.
Wherever there is a problem, there is where the answer
will come
Wherever there is a vessel, wherever there is an ark, that
is where water will come.

If we look at this part of the poem we see that the first three lines contain unpleasant situations followed by situations where the unpleasantness could be overcome, and hence they are (somewhat) antonymous: [pain-medicine], [poverty-wealth] and [problem-answer]. It also seems that some lexical broadening/narrowing is involved in the word 'medicine', which has been used to stand for 'healing'. The last line, however, is different, and it contains the main point. The key words are 'vessel'/'ark' and 'water,' which show that Rumi is relying on the Container and Contained schemata, where the good entity being contained is shown to fill the Need Container. More generally, it seems that a theological underlying metaphor might be DEFICIENCIES ARE CONTAINERS FOR FULFILMENT, where the specific entailments follow: PAIN IS A CONTAINER FOR MEDICINE, POVERTY IS A CONTAINER FOR WEALTH, and PROBLEMS ARE CONTAINERS FOR ANSWERS (vessel and ark are synonymous so the same metaphors apply):

Conceptualizing Water as Mercy also reveals:

- Water is medicine
- Water is health
- Water is answers

Now it becomes clear that in these lines our pain is conceptualized as a vessel for our medicine, our poverty a vessel for our wealth, and our problem a vessel for the answers we find or get. In order to continue my research on this particular analysis of PAIN-

CONTAINER, I looked into more pieces of poetry by Rumi and I was able to find an explicit description of my assumption. I provide the lines below:

The cure for pain is **in** the pain
Good and bad are mixed. If you don't have both,
you don't belong to us.
When one of us gets lost, is not here, he must be **inside**
us

(Mirdal, 2012)

Those lines make it clear that PAIN IS A CONTAINER FOR CURE and that is why Rumi says in the line that follows: *Good and bad are mixed* because the Bad which is Pain, contains in it the Good which is Cure, and although Good and Bad are pictured here as two different substances, Rumi says they are mixed to indicate that they are one substance or one mixture. This also reveals the mapping GOOD/BAD IS PHYSICAL OBJECT. It seems that Rumi believes that everything and everyone is connected, in the sense that we ourselves are Containers of others, so that even when they die, they are still Contained inside us, as apparent in the last line above. Mirdal, in his 2012 article, also provides a longer piece of poetry by Rumi, which conveys the idea that feelings, emotions and states are Contained but this time the House is conceptualized as a Container, which also reveals some metaphoric blending of PLACE IS CONTAINER and THE HUMAN BODY/MIND IS A CONTAINER:

This being human is a guest house
every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still treat each guest honourably.
He may be **clearing you out** for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them **in**.
Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

That being said, to continue the discussion of the metaphor PAIN IS A CONTAINER FOR CURE, it is important to note that there is a common factor between our unavoidable or inevitable pains:

- Poverty is pain
- Problem is pain

Yet, there is something completely different about the notion VESSEL and PAIN. Unlike pain, vessel is not something inevitable. When it comes to vessels, then we get to choose whether we are going to carry one or not, and we get to choose, too, how big we want our vessels to be.

The Sheikh continues with this great piece of Rumi's literary work by saying the following very common metaphorical statement: "*And then he comes to the **peak** of his poem*". Since the writer or the poet's goal in delivering their message is to reach to the reader who, presumably, is going to appreciate the aesthetic pleasure of the poem, we see that we express their goal by saying expressions such as "coming to the peak of a poem" which has its meaning from MORE IS UP. Also, there is metaphor not only in the nominal phrase "peak of a poem" but also the verb 'comes' in this context is metaphoric. That is, conceptually coming is reaching, arriving or achieving, which also closely relates to the Journey domain that entails a Destination. The Journey metaphor in that sense is always a Purposive Action, which also has to do with MOTION IS A PURPOSIVE ACTION. Our correlational experience of having feet by which we can move, come and go, provides us with a bodily basis for all of these metaphors: PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS, MOTION IS A PURPOSIVE ACTION and hence LIFE IS A PURPOSEFUL JOURNEY. All these metaphors give the word 'come' its metaphorical meaning. Below I explicate the metaphor in 'Peak of the Poem':

- Poems are journeys
- Poems have different destinations
- The peak of the poem is the destination for the poet
- Poems are objects; poems have physical space, or are space
- The physical space of the poem is multidimensional; having various heights
- The peak is an outreach spot (entailed from the experiential correlation of UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING)

It is possible that this metaphorical expression “the peak of the poem” has an even deeper meaning; we might say that a poet comes to the peak of their poem because if we imagine that the poetic work is at a peak of, for example, a mountain then it can be seen, that is, it reaches our sight or it becomes more visible and this brings us to one of the recognized mappings in Conceptual Metaphor Theory: UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING which also has to do with another mapping: KNOWLEDGE IS VISION. So, it is through the Peak of the poem that the poet reaches to the audience and the audiences therefore SEE the meaning, so to speak, from off the peak.

However, there exist a number of expressions in language that conceptualize the senses as a means through which we obtain understanding. For example, there is this expression: ‘out of sight, out of reach’ which involves two of the senses ‘sight’ and ‘touch’ indicating that through our senses we become to understand. This might explain the metaphor in PEAK of the poem as the PEAK can ‘reach’ to the audience because given that a peak is a very high point, it can be within the hearer/reader’s sight. As a matter of fact, the idiomatic expression ‘out of sight out of reach’, seems to reveal the same mapping SEEING (sight) IS UNDERSTANDING (reaching). Also, there exists another expression which utilizes the senses but seems to stem from the MIND AS A CONTAINER metaphor, that being ‘out of sight, out of mind’.

To clarify the discussion, the Peak part of the poem is repeated below:

Don’t go seeking for water, instead create the thirst within
you
so that the water may burst forth from above and from
below you.

It is clear that the poem does not only aim to make us conceptualize NEED AS THIRST, which is usually the case, but also the reverse THIRST AS NEED, in addition to MERCY as WATER. The call to create the thirst within us means that the poem wants us to conceptualize THIRST as our actual NEED, which means that our need is, in fact, not just to drink water but to feel and experience the thirst that makes us realize our need for water, which only happens as a result of one’s realization of thirst, and this refers back to the metaphoric mapping of GOD IS WATER. Therefore, our need is to become aware that we do

need WATER/GOD. It seems, therefore, that our THIRST can be viewed as a realization of the need for God.

Also, it seems that water can be viewed as a bursting or internal ENERGY that has the potential to blow all around us. Therefore, the schematic underlying metaphor is WATER IS A CONTAINER, given that this Container is metaphor for God – God contains us. That is, the bursting water is going to contain us; in other words, we are going to be **in** water or **inside** water, as when something bursts it goes in all directions or at least we imagine it that way. So now the metaphor GOD IS WATER seems to be very coherent. To further clarify, real water is what our bodies need, but metaphorical water is what our souls need, and hence, GOD IS WATER FOR THE SOUL. This mapping also manifests itself in the notion of water being everywhere around us in the bursting scenario, which is the ultimate goal that we have to realize. Subsequently, another mapping emerges if we reverse the metaphor, and then we begin to see that we ourselves are CONTAINERS of God. That is, THE HUMAN SOUL IS A CONTAINER FOR GOD, which by analogy entails that God is inside us or God is within us.

In fact, this intriguing thought and discussion seem to relate closely to what Prophet Mohammad said about Duaa (again Duaa is the Arabic word for ‘supplication’). He said, *“Duaa is the brain of worship”*. Given that the brain is part of the body, the metonymic reference of brain here suggests the common mapping A COMPLEX SYSTEM IS A BODY, which is also coherent with conceptualizing Worship as a System:

- Worship is a whole body
- Different acts of worship are different parts of the body
- Duaa is the most important organ in the body; the most significant type of worship
- Duaa is the part where understanding of worship takes place
- Duaa is the comprehension of worship
- Duaa facilitates cognition

After analyzing the Sheikh’s speech, the meaning of this metaphor used by the Prophet becomes clearer, and that is because as Sheik Bachoo puts it “the dua is a journey of realizations.” That is, it is only through the brain that realizations become

possible. Even experiential realizations, are concurrently realized by the brain. Mohammad Mahdi Al-Asifi in his article 'Supplication in the Eyes of the Ahl al-Bayt' mentions this prophetic saying under a section titled: Prayer: The Essence of Worship. He says, "The Holy Prophet (S) is related to have said, "Supplication is the essence (mukkh) of worship", (al-islam.org). Al-Asifi inserts the Arabic transliteration of the word for brain, which is shown as (mukkh) in the middle of the saying.

Duaa is a linguistic type of worship

Taking into consideration that supplication is "attracting one's attention by using words", (al-islam.org); it becomes very clear that the use of words in the supplication or the Duaa "extend[s] our cognitive capacities in ways that facilitate abstraction" (Dove, 2014, p 372). Guy Dove states that our cognition is enhanced in sensorimotor activities when those activities are accompanied by language, and language, in turn, serves as a cognitive channel. This might offer an explanation to why we have the saying "duaa is the **brain** of worship" in the Arabic language, when worship does not necessarily take the form of bodily actions, as the faith part of it remains to be mainly abstract. Even our concepts are physically motivated because our cognition is embodied; and our concepts are established based on how our body moves, so how we move also affects how we perceive things (Dove, 2014).

It seems, therefore, that through the articulating and the hearing of one's own words in the performance of Duaa, one becomes better able to understand and be aware of things that are not perceptible otherwise. Dove citing Glenberg (2010, p. 586) mentions that our bodily gestures have an effect on our psychology. Given that thought is a psychological process and Duaa is a sensory activity, we can begin to see how duaa influences thought, and whatever influences thought would inherently take a thought format, which further illustrates the meaning of the brain-of-worship metaphor. According to Dove, our world experience is borne out of "stimulation" or "action schema," as both take part in shaping our understanding. Interestingly, Dove mentions that "metaphorical extensions" have been a notable attempt to solving the problem of abstract concepts and embodied cognition, as he believes that the solution to the problem of abstract concepts lies in the linguistic manifestations that are accompanied by embodied representations.

This research provided me with insight that allowed me to overcome one of the problems I was constantly struggling with whenever I thought deeply about Duaa. I realized that the difficulty I had might get resolved if I deliberately think using metaphor. The problem has to do with the fact that the answer to our Duaas is conditional, i.e. contingent upon the condition that we make or initiate Duaa in order for our needs to get fulfilled. This was difficult for me to grasp because again I thought that God already knows who is going to meet the condition and make Duaa, so why would much of people's destiny be determined by the Duaas they make, if God already knows and has predetermined everybody's destiny? Put differently, how and why would God predetermine something He already knows might change? Or more accurately, if somebody's destiny is going to actually change, God knows that, so what is the point of predetermining something God previously knows, is going to change? That is, for anything that happens or changes, God has precedent knowledge of its taking place. Not to mention that the concept of change in such context is, in itself, problematic for the very same reason.

Amongst these moments of thought, I started to see the solution in a metaphorical light. I imagined that the Duaa in its essence is very powerful and the situation of how Duaa works is analogous to there being a Door for which the Key to open is Duaa. This allowed me to see that there is actually no contradiction between "the opening of the door" and the knowledge God has of whether or not the Door is going to open. Later, I remembered that some traditional Duaas that are known to be recited in order to improve one's livelihood such as wealth, health, and intellect, are called [mafatih ar-riziq] which can be translated literally as "keys of sustenance" or "keys of livelihood". The figurative use of the word "keys" here, shows the very analogy I was trying to construct in my attempt to philosophize the coherence between Duaa, Destiny and Allah's knowledge.

It is nicely put by Dove (2014, p. 373) that "natural language may provide a means of extending our cognitive powers by giving us access to a new type of representational format." This seems consistent with the fact that Duaa begins as a linguistic engagement, as is apparent from the definition of supplication that we discussed earlier. Through the symbolic nature of words or language in general, we are capable of building a deeper level of cognition (Dove, 2014). That is, although in Conceptual Metaphor Theory language is generally a product of thought, yet metaphorically speaking IDEAS ARE OBJECTS and

WORDS ARE CONTAINERS FOR IDEAS, and so to have certain Containers is to have certain ideas.

It might help if we think of this containment as “recursion”, with ideas being Containers of other ideas, etc. In his review of Michael Corballis book: *The Recursive Mind: The Origins of Human Thought and Civilization*, Robert K. Logan expresses his own view on the relationship between human thought and language by saying that they “[b]ootstrap each other into existence in a recursive manner.” Similarly, Dove says that novel ideas may originate because words can, advantageously, be arranged into different syntactic structures, allowing us to connect ideas in an innovative manner. Also, he claims that the language faculty per se equips us with an extra mechanism that enables us to stretch out our mental abilities. This also seems to fit with the ‘ad hoc concept’ account of metaphor within Relevance Theory. According to Walaszewska (2015), this account sees that metaphor, with its nature of loose use, permits lexical adjustment, which enables us to describe abstract concepts that cannot be described literally.

One can conclude, then, that the adjustment of content applies to the LIFE IS A TEST metaphor because given that God’s knowledge of the result of the test is encyclopaedic knowledge for Muslims, it becomes clear that it is only through the adjusting of content that we can make sense of the metaphor, i.e. the metaphor remains coherent and does not bring a contradiction to the Islamic understanding of God’s ultimate knowledge. This is because a Test is usually conducted for the purpose of gaining information or gathering a piece of evidence about the thing being tested, so given that God’s knowledge is all-inclusive, nothing God does is for the purpose of searching for evidence or gaining more information. Thus, through searching for relevance, I was able to adjust this aspect of Test and provide a relevant interpretation, as I show in the following section. Although, the idea that LIFE IS A TEST is embedded in the Qur’an, there are verses that emphasize that we are the ones who need evidence of our deeds, and therefore God provides the evidence to us not to Himself. In fact, the argument that we are the ones who need evidence for our deeds is an established argument in Islamic theology. So technically speaking, the content of the whole metaphor LIFE IS A TEST should be adjusted in a way that makes us comprehend the expression as a piece of advice that we have to follow, rather than a fact that we should accept about life.

Perhaps, the aim of conceptualizing LIFE AS A TEST is to “awaken” in us a sense of responsibility; that we are, in fact, responsible for our actions. This awakening aspect of the LIFE AS A TEST metaphor, relates closely to Martin’s discussion of how Life is purposefully conceptualized as a Journey and how we should be ‘alert’ and ‘conscious.’ He discusses how religion modifies the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor as LIFE IS A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY from which more conceptualizations follow, such as ‘life is an inspiring journey’ or ‘life is a mystical journey.’ I see that being awake is important in a Test as it is important in an actual journey, and hence the need for alertness in metaphorical journeys. Test itself can be conceptualized as a Journey. “[A]s far as the voyage presumes a transformative trip of consciousness, it can be navigated by conceptual metaphor, where the imagination gives figurative ‘symbolic’ expression to an ontological state” (Martin, 2013: 950).

If the metaphor LIFE IS A TEST is interpreted in the broader context of the Qur’an, giving particular attention to the belief Muslims have about the All Knowledgeable God, the metaphor gains more sense, supported by perhaps very weak implicatures of wide scope, as seen in the previous discussion. It is interesting how Walaszewska (2015) explains the relation between poetic effects and relevance. She states that poetic effects arise due to the search for relevance, which is met through accessing a wide scope of varying degrees of weak implicatures. While she gives the definition of a poetic effect following Sperber and Wilson (2015), who define it as “the peculiar effect of an utterance that achieves most of its relevance through an array of weak implicatures,” she illustrates that the term ‘poetic effect’ generally refers to certain effects that are intended by not only authors of literary texts or poetry, but also by speakers of ordinary discourse.

In their 1998 article “Metaphor Theories and Religious Language Understanding,” Przemyslaw Jablonski, Jan van der Lans and Chris Hermans claim that religious language has a metaphorical nature; hence; if it were to be investigated, different aspects have to be considered and the investigation has to take place in light of the theories of metaphor. Due to the metaphoricity of religious language, the process of interpretation should utilize non-traditional approaches. In their article, these researchers emphasize that, like the case in music, religious language has an emotional component that can make you feel moved not just momentarily but in a long-term fashion (Przemyslaw, Van Der Lans & Hermans, 1998).

3.3. “Life as a Test”: Relevance Theory and Conceptual Metaphor Theory

To illustrate that RT and CMT are not contradictory, as discussed in chapter 2, let us now have a look at the LIFE IS A TEST metaphor under both accounts. I will first start with Relevance theory because without relevance, it is hard to see how a follower of Islam, being so immersed in the tradition, will come to understand “life is a test” when it is deeply embedded in the Qur’an and frequently uttered by Muslims in daily conversations:

Under RT:

Utterance: Life is a test.

Explicature: LIFE IS A TEST*

Implicatures: LIFE IS A PLACE TO EXERCISE ONE’S POTENTIAL, AN OPPORTUNITY GIVEN TO SEEK PERFECTION, A CHALLENGE THAT WE HAVE TO RISE UP TO, A STRUGGLE THAT SHOULD BRING THE BEST IN US; IT REQUIRES A LOT OF PREPARATION AND HARD WORK; THERE IS NO TIME TO BE WASTED IF WE ARE TO OBTAIN GOOD RESULTS; BEING A TEST, LIFE SETS YOU UP FOR THE SEEKING OF KNOWLEDGE; THE SEEKING OF KNOWLEDGE IS THE PURPOSE OF LIFE;...etc.

One thing to note about Relevance Theory before we move to the CMT analysis is the fact that the implicatures that are shown to be derived from one utterance are only a few out of possibly many other ones. Hills (2016) conveys this meaning by stating that the “etc.” that follows the list of possible implicatures is crucial. Now let’s turn back to the second analysis:

Under CMT

Underlying metaphor: LIFE IS A TEST

Linguistic manifestations: see the Qur’anic verses in (3.1)

General entailments:

TEST IS A PURPOSIVE ACTION, A PURPOSIVE ACTION IS A JOURNEY; both entail:

TEST IS A JOURNEY and hence LIFE IS A JOURNEY – A PURPOSEFUL JOURNEY

Specific Metaphoric entailments:

- There is a tester and a test-taker; God is the tester and His people are the test-takers
- Test-takers cannot have knowledge of the tasks that come up in the test prior to the test
- The lifespan of an individual is the time they have to perform the test
- There is invigilation going on all the way throughout the test
- Cheating is not allowed and is certainly caught
- A test is mandatory
- A test is hard
- There is possibility for success and possibility for failure
- Good performance requires good preparation
- Knowledge, learning, hard work and patience are essential for success
- There is reward for good results

From this particular metaphor that aims to shape one's view of Life being a Test, it follows that learning and the seeking of knowledge become the purpose of life from the point of view of Islam, as this is one main goal of tests in real life. Not only that but since LIFE IS A TEST is a sub-metaphor of A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY and of PURPOSES ARE DESTINATIONS, we can infer that seeking knowledge is a continuous, never-ending journey. This is, in fact, consistent with the significance that Islam places in 'reading' and the 'intellect' evident from many verses in the Qur'an. Theologically speaking, if God wants us to approach life as if it were a Test, He must have equipped us with a Tool for success or for achieving this goal of acquiring knowledge. This Tool is the intellect, THE INTELLECT IS A TOOL FOR LEARNING or THE MIND IS A LEARNING TOOL. This in fact reveals the Islamic view towards science as being essential along the journey because A JOURNEY TOWARDS SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE IS A JOURNEY TOWARDS KNOWLEDGE and hence A JOURNEY TOWARDS GOD.

Now we can see that the analyses under both theories are not contradictory, but for our example, as I have argued, Relevance Theory complements Conceptual Metaphor Theory in the sense that a metaphoric analysis was not possible without realizing the need for relevance or without searching for it, which in turn facilitates a conceptual metaphoric analysis. I also think that Relevance Theory is a very powerful interpretive tool, as it allows for the endless process of creative interpreting through its admitting of different degrees of weak implicatures that are not necessarily easily or directly entailed.

In the following chapter, I analyze different sections of Brother Khalil Jaffer's talks to show how creative metaphor is used for more than just cool reason. I also analyze loosely used expressions in God talk to show that they also pose problems if taken literally. I close with three brief sections: first, a discussion on the GOD AS PERSON metaphor, in which I propose that the pronoun for God in English should be 'It'; second, an argument that the Trinitarian view of God in Christianity is incoherent even at the metaphorical level; and third, a discussion of how God is conceptualized to be Up even in Islam.

Chapter 4.

More cases of metaphor

This chapter analyzes some transcribed excerpts of modern-day mystical lectures given by a highly-eloquent Muslim speaker by the name of Khalil Jaffer, who earned his degree in computer science, but found himself in public-speaking. These extracts appear in YouTube with titles different from the metaphorical titles of the original lectures. The Philosophy of Ramadan came from “The root cause of negative suffering lecture 1,” Esoteric meaning in daily life came from “The origin and the return,” and Why did Allah create us came from “Freeing the butterfly within.” After I provide a commentary for each, I discuss the idea that the linguistic personification of God does not entail that God is a person in the literal sense. I propose that the pronoun for God in English should be “It” rather than “He,” especially but not only in Islamic discourse. I clarify that personification is a conceptual metaphor, which does not affect grammar and hence does not require a “person” pronoun. One thing that becomes obvious from the outset of the excerpt in (4.1) is that translators should work hand in hand with cognitive semanticists and metaphor theorists. Towards the end of the chapter, I try to demonstrate that the concept of the Trinity lacks metaphorical coherence when taken as a frame yet considering each single metaphor to be a separate metaphor can yield a different yet acceptable interpretation. Additionally, I show how God, even though believed to be everywhere, is conceptualized to be Up even in Islam.

4.1. Analyzing parts of Khalil Jaffer’s religious talks

The Philosophy of Ramadan: Khalil Jaffer

...And so the translators then looked at the word again and said what really is Taqwa?⁷ Taqwa then is not so much a mental condition or an emotional state of being in fear, but rather it is a state of being, where one is constantly conscious of the fact that Allah is watching me, and

⁷ *Taqwa*: Taqwa in Arabic means piety but as mentioned by Khalil a better translation is God consciousness

because of that you'll find that the translations will translate Taqwa either as guarding against evil, or a better translation you will see is God consciousness, and if you keep this translation in mind, now when you read the Qur'an look at how it **fits** perfectly in every verse: "Inna Akramakom Indallahi Atqakum," "Surely the most honourable amongst you in the **eyes** of Allah is the one who is most conscious of God." In other words, the one who is most present and aware of Allah, he is the most honourable, because he is the most **connected** to Allah. For the month of Ramadan, we have the verse: "Koutiba `Alaikum asiyam, kama Koutiba `ala alatheen min qablikum." "fasting has been prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you..." why? "la'alakum tatakoun;" "so that you may become God conscious," so that you may **wake up!**

You **see** sometimes when we talk about Ramadan, we **look** at it from one **dimension** only. We say Ramadan has physical benefits; it helps us **purge our body and our stomachs**. That, may be true but if that was the only reason, then those who are eating extremely healthy would not have to fast. Or for example, we look at it from the social aspect, we say Ramadan is so that we may feel the pangs of hunger and how the poor man feels when he does not know where his next meal is coming from, that may be true but then there should be no Ramadan for the poor man who does not know where his next meal is coming from. But the issue is that the poor man also is **haunted by an ego** and he also needs to **wake up**, and therefore, if we translate then taqwa as God consciousness, as awakening then Ramadan becomes the month of awakening, the purpose of life becomes to **awaken** and we will clarify what we mean by awakening shortly inshallah.

The other thing about the month of Ramadan, is that you will notice that in all the other ibadat⁸ you are doing something but in Ramadan you are not doing. In salat⁹, you do something, you pray. In Hajj¹⁰ you go and perform something, in Khums¹¹ you give something but in fasting what do you do? Can you show me at any point and time right now I'm doing something called fasting? No. In fasting you are not doing something, you are not eating you are not drinking you are not lying, you are not indulging in physical pleasure and therefore Ramadan then becomes a month in which we **peel off layers of attachment and layers of distractions that obscure us and veil us from Allah**. That is the philosophy of Ramadan.

⁸ *ibadat*: a plural form of ibada, and it means a worship service

⁹ *salat*: obligatory prayer

¹⁰ *Hajj*: pilgrimage to the Holy City of Makah

¹¹ *Khums*: Islamic tax paid annually for the poor

From this section, entitled “the philosophy of Ramadan,” we see that Khalil Jaffer uses metaphors that describe the purpose of life from an Islamic perspective. He quotes a verse from the Qur’an that explains the moral of fasting in Ramadan. Then he emphasises the moral by asking “why”; meaning why is fasting required? And he answers the question metaphorically by saying “so that you may wake up”. This suggests the existence of a conceptual metaphor such as GOD CONSCIOUSNESS IS WAKING UP FROM SLEEP/ THE STATE OF BEING GOD-CONSCIOUS IS A STATE OF BEING AWAKE. Moreover, because when somebody is asleep they cannot see, it seems that there is this primary metaphor KNOWLEDGE IS VISION OR KNOWING IS SEEING, which also means that to WAKE UP is to understand.

Perhaps we can refer to Consciousness as a frame because given that a frame is a knowledge structure, we can see that both our knowledge of waking and our knowledge of sleep belong to one body of knowledge and hence to one structure (see Dancygier & Sweester, 2014 for a discussion on frames). For example, Khalil Jaffer likens God consciousness, which he defines as being aware that God is always watching you, to being awake and that is because a sleeping person cannot be conscious of anything. Since the opposite of ‘wake up’ is ‘sleep’, the opposite mapping of the conceptual metaphor GOD CONSCIOUSNESS IS WAKING UP FROM SLEEP is automatically present; the mapping is GOD UNCONSCIOUSNESS IS SLEEP. This suggests the existing of a frame that holds both of our concepts of sleeping and waking up, because our knowledge of either entails our knowledge of the other. Based on the primary metaphor of understanding, this also means that LACK OF GOD CONSCIOUSNESS IS A LACK OF UNDERSTANDING because the lack of God consciousness is A STATE OF BEING ASLEEP and hence not being able to SEE.

Khalil Jaffer’s lectures also contain every-day metaphorical expressions. For example, in his talk about Ramadan, he explains that even our view of the purpose of this Holy month is limited. To express his point, he utilizes the common metaphorical expression: “we *look* at it from one *dimension* only”. Before I analyse the metaphor of Dimension, it is important to note that UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING is also involved here because Ramadan is not a concrete object that we can look at or see, but rather is a timeframe, and hence cannot be physically seen or looked at. This evidently means that LOOKING AT SOMETHING FROM ONE DIMENSION IS UNDERSTANDING ONE ASPECT OF IT. As for

the metaphor in 'dimension', it seems that Ramadan, which is being objectified, is conceptualized as a Multi-Dimensional Object in Islam, suggesting that Ramadan or more particularly fasting in Ramadan has many purposes. The different Dimensions of Ramadan are discussed further in the lecture. Also, this shows that like the metaphor IDEAS ARE OBJECTS, we can say that CONCEPTS ARE OBJECTS, as it is this metaphor that allows us to speak of concepts/ideas as having dimensions.

Another conceptual metaphor that arises only upon reflection surfaces in the metaphorical expression "a poor man is also haunted by an ego". Such metaphor is EGO IS A GHOST. However, creative metaphors are only possible because they rely on more underlying thought. Although both domains Ghost and Ego seem abstract, the abstraction of Ghost is made physical through storytelling and childhood storybooks, as well as the media. In that sense, we are still reasoning about something abstract, which is Ego, in terms of something (made) concrete, which is Ghost. Here, it is helpful to look at the definition of ego in order to be able to untangle the cognitive connection that licenses our assumptions about it.

If we take 'ego' to mean the self, when contrasted with another self or the world, we begin to see its relation to another metaphor, The Divided Self (See Lakoff, 1996), which splits the person into a subject and a self. This metaphoric division is what licenses grammatical constructions in which the agent speaks as both the subject and object of the sentence. For example, 'I told myself everything is possible', 'I don't see myself in this position', 'I put myself in your situation'...etc. So, since division, theoretically, entails an exterior, most apparent in the creation of categories, the Divided Self metaphor suggests the Container schema, which gives rise to our conceptualizing SELF AS A CONTAINER.

Also, the fact that much of our cognition functions through analogy explains how this indicates that like Ghosts, Ego is merely an illusion which does not have a reality of its own in the real world. This also means that human beings can be prisoned or captivated in an imaginary world, which prevents them from seeing the real world. More concretely, this closely relates to the two schematic metaphors: THE HUMAN BODY IS A CONTAINER and THE MIND IS A CONTAINER, allowing us to see how The Self Container is conceptualized to be *inside* The Body Container and maybe outside THE MIND CONTAINER. Now if something

is thought to be haunted it is usually a house or a place and since we can be *in* a house or *in* a place, houses and places are conceptualized as Containers. In fact, anything that has an interior and an exterior is conceptualized as a Container. For a brief discussion on the image schema of Container see (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2014, p.23).

When Khalil Jaffer says, “peel off layers of attachment,” it is a bit harder to get at what the source domain is because it seems the two domains are abstract, but through the metonymic use of “layer”, the abstraction is being objectified. For example, we could argue that being a layer is being a physical object, and hence ATTACHMENT IS A PHYSICAL BODY/OBJECT or a THICK MASS. Since one cannot see through a thick mass, it seems that the primary metaphor UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING, from which it follows that NOT UNDERSTANDING IS NOT SEEING, is also at work here.

In fact, this becomes apparent when looking at the rest of the metaphorical expression in which Khalil says, “peel off layers of distraction that *obscure* us and *veil* us from Allah”. This means that TO BE DISTRACTED IS TO BE BLINDED / DISTRACTION IS A VEIL THAT PREVENTS YOU FROM SEEING THE TRUTH. Again, this shows that the same primary metaphor SEEING IS KNOWING/UNDERSTANDING is also involved here suggesting that this root metaphor is very much present in Islamic thought. One thing that becomes clear is that as Masson (2014) says there is neither philosophy nor theology without metaphor.

Esoteric meaning in daily life: Khalil Jaffer

... I said as well that find an esoteric meaning in the most mundane of activities. What I mean is, there is a lot of things we do already with nature but our minds are **wandering** like for example mowing the lawn. Sometimes when you are mowing the lawn you could do something that you might be able to **see** a sort of esoteric meaning to it. I'll give you a personal example.

Now my back yard has more weeds than grass or flowers but couple of years back when I was mowing the grass rather than mowing the weeds, I still had weeds and here I was just mowing and going around. And, and, and I was doing that right in the middle of the lawn there was this one daisy just **looking at** me there, just one pretty flower right there in the middle, and I am just going around in circular cuts and as I was going around and going second round, and third circle, and as I was going around I'm thinking, should I mow this? Should I not? How will I cut the grass around it, and still spare the daisy? Right! And I kept going

round and round, and when I came really close, I said, you know what! This is too beautiful to just mow down, I'm not going to do that so I left it, and my backyard was all nicely trim except in the middle there is a clump of grass and from there, there was just one flower **popping out** of it, which looked a bit odd but then [I just]... the thought **crossed** my mind; that when something is beautiful it is against our nature to mow it down, and if we can have integrity and beauty **within** us then even if we live in a society that is predominantly **weeds**, perhaps **the hand of God** will not mow us down as well, and then another thought **crossed** my mind: I said maybe if I uproot this plant and I replant it; transplant it, somewhere else it might propagate and spread!

So now I'm thinking of how I can preserve this beauty so I can have more of such serendipity or accident, beautiful accident in my backyard? And sure enough! I have them popping all over now! But then when I dug it out, I thought it is so delicate! It must have been so traumatic for this flower to be dug up and replanted! But then I thought perhaps this is what suffering is! That sometimes we are **uprooted** from what is familiar to us because Allah is **trying** to replant us somewhere else so that we can propagate and spread that to others. Right! So, it is a simple example, but **find** something esoteric to whatever you do! And it begins to come ... I had a brother here who is not here tonight, but he told me when he does weeding in his backyard, he thinks of **weeding...**, you know, what, whatever he **sees** as wrong traits in his heart! That as he is weeding that is what... the thought in his mind! And it starts happening natural to you. I once gave an example in a smaller gathering, that sometimes I'm sitting in the car and I see a fly coming to the windshield. Now, that fly is buzzing in that windshield, trying to get out; because the glass is transparent so as far as it can see, that's where the world is. I'm trying to help it come out but it keeps resisting and trying to run away from my hand. Right! What is it that I want for it? Freedom! I'm trying to take it to where it is trying to go, but it's resisting because it is afraid, it thinks I'm trying to kill it!

Sometimes we refuse to surrender to Allah *Sub7anh-u wa t3al-a*¹², perhaps for the same idea that Allah is **trying** to guide us towards freedom, towards something greater, towards that **opening** that will take us to **the real world**. But we are constantly second-guessing Allah's decision because we are thinking He is **trying** to **kill** us. Right! So, you know there is little examples like this, but what appeals to me or what resonates with me as having an esoteric meaning does not necessarily resonate with you, you'll have to **find** it yourself in what you are doing.

¹² *Sub7anah-u wa t3al-a*: a glorifying expression used after God has been mentioned

In this part of Khalil Jaffer's lecture, one can identify a number of conventional and novel metaphors. When Brother Jaffer says the common expression "our minds are **wandering**," it seems that this entails the general conceptualization ACTION IS MOTION and the more specific one MOVING IS DISTRACTION and STAYING STILL IS STAYING FOCUSED, which means that Khalil Jaffer intends to convey that we do not pay attention to the esoteric meanings we can find in our daily activities because our minds usually stray; not focusing in what we do, as if they are constantly moving from one place to another. And since motion is a physical activity which can only be exhibited in physical objects, it seems that one possible underlying metaphor is the MIND IS A BODY/ AN OBJECT. The sense of motion might also be evoked by the frame of Travel which includes Journey and Destination and hence to be wandering is to be lost in the Journey.

Again, the metaphor UNDERSTANDING/KNOWING IS SEEING seems to underlie the following expression: "to see a sort of esoteric meaning," i.e. we cannot see meaning, we can understand meaning. This issue is actually exemplified in how Khalil, in the transcribed excerpt above, personifies the daisy by saying "*looking at me* there," yet still uses the pronoun 'it' for reference a couple lines below. It seems that the tendency to personify reveals that our imaginative ability stems from the very fact that we are inclined to assimilate things in the world to our being human and thus to the capabilities humans have. Kovecses (2015) classifies personification as an ontological metaphor that uses ourselves or bodies as a source domain because we do not have knowledge of anything better than the knowledge we have about ourselves/bodies. This explains that any personification of God borrows from the Self domain for that reason as well.

The mapping THE BODY IS A CONTAINER is also present in this part of Jaffer's lecture. It underlies his use of the following expression: "if we can have integrity and beauty **within** us." This might suggest that our souls are contained in our bodies; and that our souls can be Containers of integrity or impurity, and they can also be Containers of beauty or ugliness. When Khalil says, "if we live in a society that is predominantly weeds," he is analogously talking about People as if they are Weeds, which entails that BAD IS UGLY and GOOD IS BEAUTIFUL but is also motivated by THE HUMAN IS A PLANT metaphor. So again, the mapping MIND IS BODY entails that MIND IS A CONTAINER, which itself entails conceptualizing the MIND AS AN OBJECT. This allows us to speak of minds as wandering because wandering

is basically a physical motion, and that is evoked by the Travel frame, which results from our experience of our constant motion.

When it comes to metaphors for God, it seems that a number of metaphors attribute to God human characteristics although the religion of Islam makes it clear that God is nothing like a human. Yet personification or ontological metaphors still occur in the Qur'an because they are part of how we, as humans, conceptualize reality through metaphor. However, Muslims do understand that these are merely metaphorical so they do not confuse these allegoric meanings with their literal interpretations because the Qur'an is explicit about the fact that God does not resemble anything. For example, in the personifying expression "the hands of God will not mow us down" there exists the following conceptualization: HANDS ARE THE MEANS THROUGH WHICH ACTION IS PERFORMED.

It seems that even novel metaphors are influenced in lectures like this by metaphors that have been shown to be productive sources of metaphor in the Qur'an. One domain that Charteris-Black (2004) pointed to its productivity in the Qur'an is the Plant metaphors. In this excerpt, Khalil says, for instance, "sometimes we are uprooted from what is familiar to us," which suggests that HUMANS ARE PLANTS, ROOT IS ORIGIN and DISPLACEMENT/CHANGE IS DISCOMFORT. While the fact that humans are conceptualized as plants does not seem straightforwardly rooted in thought, it still has an experiential basis. For example, we can visually and over a short period of time, attend to the quick growth of plants.

There is also evidence of "language limit;" the fact that language is limited. For an illustration of how language is limited, we can consider the fact that language essentially takes linguistic forms, yet form is limited. This makes our talk about God even more metaphorical than our talk about any other thing. That is, even when our talk about God does not involve mapping between domains, it is still considered metaphorical. This is evident when Khalil says "Allah is trying to replant us somewhere else." The use of the word 'try' here is not compatible with God, as God never tries or attempts anything because according to Islamic belief, anything Allah wills, He does; and hence, there are no attempts but only actions that are successful when it comes to God. Other words that can be used in this context instead of 'try' are 'want' or 'plan.' Importantly, all three of these

verbs are ontological metaphors as they are instances of personification. However, 'try' entails possibility or uncertainty, which might explain why it is being used here. It is probably used just to indicate or emphasize that since Allah gives us free will, there are always two possibilities: to do what Allah *likes* or to do what Allah *dislikes*. Note that even 'like' or 'dislike' are metaphoric in God talk (one linguist who mentioned this is Anna Weirzbicka in her 2001 book).

However, it seems that TO TRY IS TO CREATE POSSIBILITY in such context. This can potentially be explained in relevance-theoretic terms, as a "loose use" which is understood through lexical adjustment as I show below:

Utterance: Allah is trying to replant us somewhere else.

Explicature: ALLAH IS TRYING* TO REPLANT* US SOMEWHERE ELSE

Implicatures: ALLAH PLANS TO PUT US IN A PLACE THAT ALLOWS US TO GROW FURTHER; ALLAH WANTS TO TAKE US FROM PLACE TO PLACE SO THAT WE HAVE MORE KNOWLEDGE AND MORE EXPERIENCE; ALLAH WANTS US TO LEARN; ALLAH WANTS US TO IMPROVE; ALLAH WANTS TO MAKE US DESERVING OF THE BEST PLACE HE PLANS TO TAKE US TO; etc.

Interestingly, when Brother Jaffer says, "find something esoteric to whatever you do", it seems that esoteric meanings are conceptualized to be there; to exist, but they might be lost and hence our job is to find them. Also, if something is lost we cannot see it but when we find it we do see it. This indicates that, underlyingly, the use of the word 'find' entails the conceptualization UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING because TO FIND SOMETHING IS TO BRING IT TO SIGHT.

Again, Khalil uses the word 'try' which we can now represent as TRY* in another expression about God, and that is when he says: "Allah is *trying* to guide us towards freedom, towards something greater, towards that *opening* that will take us to the real world." So, as I mentioned earlier, the use of 'try' might entail a possibility of not achieving the desired results. However, in actuality, it is not the case that God tries to guide us and fails, but rather He FACILITATES the way to guidance for us, as it is part of God's responsibility to do so; but to follow Allah's way is our own responsibility.

Another metaphor occurs when Khalil says, "Allah is trying to guide us towards that opening that will take us to the real world." This seems to suggest that AN OPEN PLACE IS A PLACE FILLED WITH LIGHT, where 'light' indicates 'seeing', 'understanding' and 'guidance', and that A CLOSED PLACE IS A DARK PLACE, which does not have the light that would make you be able to SEE an escape to somewhere else. In fact, it seems that there exists a correlation between 'open' and 'see' because when we open our eyes, we see, but when we close them we obviously do not see. Also, when we open anything, say a container, we see what is inside it: when we open the door, we see who is knocking, and when we open our presents we see them, and so on. This correlation very much supports the assumption that the metaphoric expression of opening is governed by KNOWLEDGE IS VISION or KNOWING/UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING. Also, a personification is involved in describing the opening to be taking us to the real world, which might also participate in licensing our conceptualizing Light as a Guide.

Why Did Allah create us? Khalil Jaffer

When Allah SWT¹³ intended to create insan [human] even angels were confused about this too, if you look at surat al-baqara¹⁴; chapter two of the Qur'an, verse 30, Allah tells us of the time when He wanted to create the first prototype of the human being which was nabi¹⁵ Adam alihi as-salm¹⁶. Before He did that He said to the angels: and remember when your Lord said to the angels: "I have decided that I shall create a representative of Mine on this Earth..." What was the response of the angels? "Oh Allah, are you going to create a species that will create mischief on the Earth and **spill blood**?"

Why did Allah bother? Allah says to them "I know something that you don't know". What is it Allah knows; the angel does not know? I know that they have fitrah¹⁷ **in** them; you the angels, when you look at the world, **you are seeing seven billion caterpillars, I am seeing the one caterpillar that becomes a butterfly**. That one butterfly is so important to me, it is worth creating seven mad insane caterpillars to

¹³ SWT: short for Subhanah-u Wa Ta3ala

¹⁴ Surat al-baqara: the Cow chapter in the Qur'an

¹⁵ nabi: prophet

¹⁶ alih-i al-salam: peace be upon him

¹⁷ Fitrah: instinct, and it has a positive connotation

get that one butterfly. Allah knows the capacity, the potential of this human being.

“Oh angels, when I blow into this creature that you think is just mad and **full of** lust and anger and desire; full of *tabeeah*¹⁸ only, when I blow into him of My Spirit, then you fall into prostration before him, that Spirit that I blow into him will have My Attributes: I am *Ra7man*¹⁹, his *fitrah* will always **call** him towards mercy. I am *Al-Jawad*²⁰, his *fitrah* will always call him towards generosity. Look at your own nature, you will find that all those names that are *Asmaa Al-Hosna*²¹ for Allah, the Beautiful Names of Allah those are the qualities that you like within yourselves. And their opposite is what you dislike, because it is **wired in you**. Even if you don't like studying even if you do not want to go to school, even if you want to remain the way you are, illiterate, if I call you ignorant you do not like it. And if I call you intelligent and wise and knowledgeable, you are happy even if you don't know how to read or write, because it's your nature to love *Al-3alim-u*.²² If I call you strong, you feel good because it is in your nature to love *Al-Gadir-u*²³. If I call you weak, you dislike it because it opposes *Al-Gadir-u*.

So, within you is that potential! **within you is the ability to unleash attributes**, if you can only control your *tabee3ah* with your *fitrah*, **you become a mirror through which Divine attributes shine on the rest of the universe**, that is why *Ameer al-momeneen*²⁴ *alih-i as-salam* says: “Do you think you are a small insignificant life germ in this universe when **within you is contained the entire universe!** You are a microcosm of the macrocosm; **the whole universe is contained within you**. You are so weak compared to other creatures look at the animals around you; they are bigger, they are stronger they are faster; they can devour you in seconds but look at your ability to understand! You can explore the outer limits of the space; you can go to the bottoms of the ocean! You can do amazing surgeries! You can rescue these other massive creatures; they have remained the same for centuries. Look at how you have changed! Your potential.

¹⁸ *Tabeeah*: nature; referring to the human nature here, and it has a negative connotation when compared to *fitrah*; instinct.

¹⁹ *Ra7man*: one of God's Attributes or beautiful names and it means The most Merciful

²⁰ *Al-Jawad*: one of God's Attributes or beautiful names and it means The Most Generous

²¹ *Asmaa Al-Hosna*: The Beautiful Names of Allah

²² *Al-3alim-u*: The All-Knowing

²³ *Al-Gadir-u*: The All-Powerful; The One who is able to do everything

²⁴ *Ameer Al-momeneen*: the leader of the faithful; Ali ibn Abi Talib

In the above passage, the metaphor the BODY IS A CONTAINER seems to be involved in the metaphorical expression ‘spill blood,’ which reveals that blood is usually conceptualized to be in a Container when it is not spilled and outside the Container when it is. Also, since the preposition ‘in’ indicates the presence of the Container schema, it seems that ‘fitrah’ which is the Arabic word for ‘instinct’ is conceptualized to be contained within us. Because the instinct is abstract, maybe its Container is also abstract and not as physically concrete as the body. So maybe the Container for the Instinct is the Soul, which means THE SOUL IS A CONTAINER FOR THE INSTINCT or THE INSTINCT IS CONTAINED IN THE SOUL. In any case, it seems plausible to assume that it is motivated by the metaphor SELF IS A CONTAINER and that such Container contains the instinct. This image schema of Container also underlies Khalil’s description of what the angels might see when they look at human beings. He states that what the angels see is a creature “full of lust and anger and desire.” The use of ‘full of’ also suggests that Body is conceptualized as a Container for all of these emotions: lust, anger and desire.

Another place where the Container schema appears is when Khalil explains that the attributes that we like in ourselves are the Attributes of God, and those that we do not like are the ones that oppose those attributes. The schema is revealed as he says, “it is wired in you”. This expression suggests the following:

THE HUMAN BODY IS A MACHINE/ AN ELECTRICAL DEVICE

- God is the engineer or the designer who created the human
- Good and bad attributes are wires that can be plugged or unplugged
- The human is programmed to love good attributes and hate bad ones

The Container schema also licenses the following expression that Khalil uses: “within you is the ability to unleash attributes,” as it reveals that abilities and capabilities are conceptualized to be contained in us; hence, A HUMAN BEING IS A CONTAINER OF ABILITIES AND CAPABILITIES. Interestingly, after Khalil has already constructed the Wire metaphor discussed above, he states that we are able to ‘unleash attributes’ which again shows that attributes are *inside* us and we have the ability to let them come *out*, probably by using them.

One of the common metaphors that are usually used in mystical discourse is the Mirror metaphor where Muslims are often encouraged to mirror the attributes of God. Have a look at what Khalil says below:

“if you can only control your tabee3ah with your fitrah, **you become a mirror through which Divine attributes shine on the rest of the universe**, that is why Ameer al-momeneen alih-i as-salam says: ‘Do you think you are a small insignificant life germ in this universe when **within you is contained the entire universe!** You are a microcosm of the macrocosm; **the whole universe is contained within you**’.”

Here are the entailments of the Mirror metaphor:

- To become a mirror is to be clear, spotless and reflective
- Resemblance is a reflection in a mirror
- A reflected entity in a mirror is an exact image of an entity that exists outside the mirror
- Human beings are reflections of God or of God existence
- Divine attributes are shining light
- The reflection of the shining light in the mirror results in an abundance of light

Khalil also quotes a metaphor used by Imam Ali²⁵, which entails that A HUMAN BEING IS A UNIVERSE, or even more precisely THE BODY OF THE HUMAN BEING IS A CONTAINER OF THE UNIVERSE. That is, metaphorically speaking, the universe in its entirety is contained inside the human body:

- The inside part of the human body is an entire universe
- The human being in the universe is a universe inside a universe

In an attempt to explain why Allah created us, Khalil Jaffer draws a beautiful picture through his use of novel metaphors. He creatively says as if Allah is addressing the Angels, “When you look at the world, you are seeing seven billion caterpillars, I am seeing the one caterpillar that becomes a butterfly.” From this picture, we can explicate the following entailments:

²⁵ Imam Ali is the rightful Islamic leader alongside and after prophet Mohammad according to Shia Muslims.

INTELLECTUAL/SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS PHYSICAL GROWTH

- Human beings come to the world as caterpillars
- Human beings have the potential to evolve from a caterpillar stage to a butterfly stage
- The caterpillar stage is the ignorance stage
- The butterfly stage is the intellectual stage
- Spiritual beauty is physical beauty
- Human beings are born free and thus have the choice to transform (freedom is a metamorphosis)

As we see, metaphor is very commonly used in religious discourse for different purposes, among which is to influence or to leave a greater impact on the audience; for naturally, metaphorical speech is the type of speech that is compatible with our metaphorical thought.

Now let's have a look at the following examples that come from Khalil's lectures, which are excerpts that come from different parts of a bigger lecture series titled 'Freeing the butterfly within.'

"our fitrah is a compass within all of us that always points to Allah SWT. It is like having a massive ship in which there is a compass, the compass will point to a particular direction, the captain in the ship might decide to ignore the compass, might decide I am going to go in a different direction he might move the whole ship, everything will move in a different direction but the compass will still point to one direction, it will refuse any other way".

"If we can recognize the difference between these two and the importance of fitrah over tabeeh then the potential for change within us is so massive; we can change in such a radical manner that is no less radical than the transformation or the metamorphosis of a caterpillar to a butterfly hence the subject "freeing the butterfly within" in other words, we all come to this world as caterpillars, our mission if we so choose to accept it, is to evolve into that butterfly. And we gave this example because no creature changes so radically, if you look at all the other species, you find that creatures over a period of time, they shed their outer skin, they grow a new skin, human beings as well, they say, every seven years, all the cells in your body have replaced".

Looking at the above excerpts, there is nothing much to say other than how convincing metaphorical discourse is, and Khalil's examples illustrate very clearly how deliberate

metaphorical expressions can be easily grasped without them having to be analyzed, perhaps due to the fact that many such metaphors are part of our common cultural knowledge that are based on our world experience as explained by CMT.

“He” or “It” and the GOD AS PERSON metaphor

Metaphor is not only pervasive in language and thought, but the grammatical system itself is built around metaphor. This further proves that there is no way to talk except through metaphor because our talk adheres to a system which, itself, is largely metaphoric. Our talk about God is no exception. However, some words that are considered grammatical metaphors are used only because there is no word in the language that describes the thing we want to talk about. Instead of inventing a new word, we tend to use a word that already exists.

A good example of this is grammatically gendered pronouns in Arabic. In the Arabic language, there is a grammatical gender that can be referred to as a “nonliteral” or “non-biological” gender, which hence can be considered a metaphoric gender. That is, grammatical gender is used beyond biological gender in Arabic. Such is the pronoun we use for God and many other inanimate things. So, while the pronoun used for God is grammatically masculine, grammatical masculinity does not indicate literal masculinity. It is within the norms of Arabic grammar to use gendered pronouns even for inanimate entities. For example, the pronoun for “knowledge” in Arabic would be a third person feminine while the pronoun for “research” is a third person masculine. There is also an example of this in Khalil’s *Esoteric Meaning in Daily life*, where he personifies the daisy and still refers to it using ‘it’ as discussed earlier.

Therefore, using the masculine pronoun for God in Arabic can be considered a metaphor of the loose type, especially since it is easier to use a word that already exists rather than creating a new word. Since Arabic has grammatical gender, a question recurs as why masculine and not feminine is still grammatically used for God. However, even if it were grammatically feminine the question would still arise: why one instead of the other. In fact, even Christian theologians argue that God has no gender. Masson (2014) clarifies that the pronoun is masculine rather than feminine because women throughout history,

lacked the social power to map into God, so maybe culturally, grammatical masculinity fits the conception of Authority and Power.

When we talk about God, we tend to talk about Him the way we talk about persons or humans. Our personification of God shows that we conceptualize GOD AS PERSON which serves as an ontological metaphor that explains, I think, how we talk about God in terms of human affairs such as Love, Hate, Desire and even Knowledge. That is, when we talk about God, we do so using the same grammar we already use in the language we speak, and not a different one. However, personification does not require that we use animate pronouns for the thing being personified. For example, in our personification of a computer, we still refer to it using the pronoun “it,” as the following sentence shows: ‘my computer is dying, *it* needs to be charged.’ This should show that our metaphoric personification of God does not require using the same pronoun we use for persons.

In the English language, however, the case is entirely different. Firstly, the pronoun ‘he’ in English is strictly used for male as a biological gender. Secondly, there is already a neutral pronoun ‘it’, which could block the use of ‘he’ as metaphor. Since English has already begun using ‘they’ as a gender-neutral singular, some might suggest “singular ‘they’” to be used for God, so as to be more neutral. However, conceptualizing God as a person explains the metaphoric personification, as we discussed, but such personification does not require the use of animate pronouns for the personified concept, as I argued above.

Although it might seem that changing the pronoun for God from ‘He’ to ‘It’ might only fit the Islamic context, some Christian researchers have discussed the problem of God and gender and have argued that God is not believed to be a male. Through a personal communication with the author of “Without Metaphor, No Saving God,” Robert Masson, who identifies himself in the book as “a Christian and a Catholic,” I had discussed my proposal of ‘It’ instead of ‘He.’ I quote him below:

God is not in any literal sense a he, she or it. But on the other hand, as humans we have no way to speak of God except through the language of creatures, which means we have to use whatever pronoun chosen in a way that tries as best as we can to point beyond the creaturely context of our language to the transcendent Creator. [R. Masson, personal communication, email, January 14, 2018]

There is no reason to disagree with what Masson is saying above, but I would like to emphasize that whatever pronoun we decide to use is going to be a loose use or a metaphor. However, since the pronoun 'he' in English is strictly used for male as a biological gender and we already have 'it', the pronoun 'it' seems to be the most theologically appropriate pronoun to refer to God. In fact, the connotation of 'it' is not restricted to 'thing,' as Masson argued in the email message, because 'it' is the pronoun we use for a great many abstract concepts such as 'love,' 'pain,' 'soul,' 'spirit,' 'life,' 'brain,' 'mind,' 'thought,' 'process,' 'action,' 'motion,' 'sky,' 'earth,' 'heaven,' 'universe,' 'philosophy,' 'ideology,' and 'religion.' None of these concepts is a thing, but we still refer to each as 'it'. In fact, there is nothing more neutral than 'it', which means that even a human or person can be referred to as 'it' if we go one level up to the level of super-category, where a human is referred to as a 'creature' or belongs to the category creature.

One interesting point to mention is that while the Arabic language refers to God using a grammatically masculine pronoun, it refers to the essence of God using a grammatically feminine noun for which the reference is a grammatically feminine pronoun. In fact, an act of translation from one language into another language can bring fascinating insights that transcend literalness, because translation is done in accordance with the grammatical system of the language being translated into. Such grammatical differences that are inherently metaphoric can be a window into other world views. Not only translation, but also knowledge of more than one language, can bring such insights closer to conception. The different understanding of a phenomenon, for example, can teach us that reality might be different from how we view it.

4.2. Explaining the lack of coherence in the concept of Trinity: an outsider view

Since Martin (2013) claims that it is possible that we accept all views about God in different religions due to the metaphoricity of these views, I highlight one main view about God in Christianity in this section to emphasize that its paradoxical nature is problematic to Christians themselves, let alone followers of other religions. Such is the concept of the Trinity. Christians themselves find it difficult to either explain or understand the idea of the Trinity: how God is simultaneously the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Some take

it literally, and some think it is a metaphor. However, I would like to argue that the idea of the Trinity cannot even be taken metaphorically, because a metaphor cannot be just anything. That is, the concept contains absolute contradictions, which cannot be made sense of even if viewed metaphorically. Perhaps the contradiction comes from the fact that the Trinity seems to evoke one single frame, i.e. one knowledge structure about God although this structure is also built around other frames or other knowledge structures. The Trinity might constitute what we might call a “mega-frame,” as it involves three frames within it: the Parent frame, the Son frame and the Holy Spirit frame. If we define frames as pre-existing knowledge structures (Dancygier & Sweetser, 2014), it becomes clear that our conceptual metaphors have to be consistent with what we already know in order for them to make sense. That is, any knowledge structure involves knowledge about basic semantic inheritance or symmetry. To be clear, the Son frame is a sub-frame of the Parent frame. It is the Parent frame that holds together our knowledge of the Son frame, which in other words means, the two frames do not exist independently of each other. To illustrate, Sons or Children (more generally) form an essential part of the Parent frame or of what makes the frame what it is. Also, the Christian theological argument that God the Father is God in the Heaven or the sky, while God the Son is God on earth in the form of Jesus, also indicates a metaphoric location for God. Creating a location for God, however, is a cognitive imperative that does not necessarily reflect reality outside the human brain.

Clearly, to consider God both the Son and the Parent seems semantically contradictory even at the metaphorical level. The two analogies cannot be metaphorically true at the same time. That is, their entailments are completely different due to the intrinsic hierarchy that exists between the two: Father and Son. Theologically as well as linguistically, the GOD AS PARENT metaphor entails the assumption of a metaphorical Son for God. However, more accurately the Parent metaphor does not entail a Son metaphor specifically, but rather a Child metaphor for which Son is one specific instance (one mapping into the Child domain). It is an exemplification metaphor. ‘Child’ could equally refer to female as much as it refers to male. And since Jesus was [+human, +male], we can construct one general metaphor for males and females as both are [+human]. Such metaphor is HUMAN BEINGS ARE CHILDREN OF GOD, which simply means that the instance of Jesus is one mapping instance into the ‘Son of God’ domain, as I just have argued.

In fact, considering Jesus to be metaphorically, rather than literally, the Son of God seems to be compatible not only with the Islamic belief of Jesus as a prophet, but also with Christian researchers who study figurative language or apply metaphor theory in order to make sense of religion. A good case in point is David Tacey, who recently published his insights in a book titled *Religion as Metaphor: Beyond Literal Belief*²⁶. Tacey (2015) explicitly states that he does not doubt the historical existence of Jesus, but he views him as a prophet of God, rather than God. It seems plausible to assume then that there might be an underlying religious metaphor responsible for the Son of God expression which might be PROPHETS ARE SONS/CHILDREN OF GOD. And so, considering Jesus to be God's only son could be reinterpreted as God's only prophet at the time. Yet, metaphorically speaking we are all children of God.

So, although the Trinitarian view of God is completely rejected in Islam, Muslims can potentially accept the Parent metaphor for God, and in consistency with their belief in the prophethood of Jesus, they can accept the metaphor 'Jesus is the Son of God,' given that it is analysed along the lines of what I argued above. The Holy Spirit does not contradict any of the frames, so it can still be considered alongside each frame. Maybe underlyingly, there is a cognitive-religious metaphor responsible for the Holy Spirit frame, which is AGENCY IS SPIRIT. That is, it could be the case that the correlation of Agency with Spirit resulted in a metonymic use of Spirit for Agency. Holy Spirit could also be metaphorically used for both God and Human in the sense that any spirit stands in a metonymic relation to God, and as such every human spirit is holy.

4.3. Sky as a metaphorical location for God

The metaphors POWER IS UP and GOD IS UP, seem to license metaphorical expressions that specify Sky as a location for God even in the Qur'an (see Dancygier & Sweester, 2014, p.209-210 for a discussion on GOD IS UP). This means that underlyingly, we have the metaphor SKY IS PLACE FOR THE DIVINE. Perhaps because in our daily

²⁶ For more additional information about this valuable book of David Tacey's, I suggest watching its launch at the following link
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJkhDj-2Fao>

experience, the Sky seems to be up and it also seems to be everywhere, these two conceptualizations match our conceptualizations of God being both Up and Everywhere which makes sky a perfect conceptual place for God. Also, Sky constitutes an imagistic aspect for the non-imagistic concepts Up and Everywhere; and hence, it gives the concept of “everywhere” an image which is more human-scale.

In fact, the metaphor GOD IS UP can be manifested as a metaphorical gesture that can be observed when Muslims talk to or about God, for example, during Duaa as many raise their heads and look up which might also relate to the mapping of GOOD IS UP. This is not surprising, in fact, as Dancygier and Sweetser (2014) state that the metaphor GOD IS UP exists in most religions. Interestingly, considering Duaa or prayer to be underlyingly Hope matches our conceptual correlation of verticality, showing another particular conceptualization of the metaphor HOPE IS UP that is evident in expressions such as ‘don’t *raise your hopes up*,’ which relates generally to GOOD IS UP.

The locational metaphor for God in language as well as in gesture likely stems from the very nature of our sensory-motor experience of MORE IS UP or AUTHORITY IS UP, and it seems that this metaphor is active in our cognition to such an extent that the metaphor almost receives a literal interpretation maybe because location is fundamental to our theory of knowledge or our human conceptualization. Also, as has been mentioned earlier, in order to be able to talk about God or grasp the idea of God, we have no choice but to locate God, as also has been argued by Lakoff and Johnson (1999).

The metaphor MORE IS UP explains why sky metaphors of this type appear also in the Qur’an, and it also seems to support the claim that human cognition is forced to locate God. This is also evident in how Muslims conceptualize that God’s mercy comes *down* to us from *above* and that our prayers or Duaa(s) go *up*. In fact, there might be another religious conceptualization of God that is also coherent with the sky appearing to us as Up. Such is the conceptualization of Supervision or Knowledge, which also has to do with KNOWING IS SEEING. From our human experience, we notice that the more we go Up, for example, the more things we see, and we see things more fully, which creates for us the sense that SUPERVISION IS WATCHING FROM ABOVE.

In this chapter, I transcribed parts of different lectures given by Brother Khalil Jaffer, and I highlighted the creative aspect of the metaphors he uses in his talks. I also discussed one example of a loosely used expression, which is 'try,' and I pointed out that it is a matter of not having appropriate language to talk about God, showing that like metaphoric expressions, loose uses are problematic if taken literally in our talk about God. Also, I touched on the GOD AS PERSON metaphor and I argued that the theologically correct pronoun for God should be 'It' rather than 'He'. I discussed how the Trinitarian view of God in Christianity does not make sense even metaphorically. Lastly, I touched on the GOD IS UP metaphor and I explained that Muslims believe that God is everywhere, yet they still conceive of God as UP, evident even in their bodily gestures.

Chapter 5.

Conclusion

This thesis has questioned the assumption that the actual truth of our description of the state of the world is limited to the domain of the literal. That is, the literal meaning of an expression is not the only true meaning because meaning is still independent of form, and hence meaning can be literal when literalness is possible and can be metaphorical when it is beyond what can be literally described. The relevance theory view of linguistic “looseness” demonstrates that what we consider to be true is beyond literalness. In fact, even our modifying truth as “literal truth” should show that its being literal is only one type of truth. Yet, that very truth can be expressed differently. For example, to say ‘I am extremely happy’ has the same truth conditions that the metaphoric expression ‘I am over the moon’ has in the same context. Also, if we agree that meaning gives rise to form, we should not focus on form but rather on what gives a certain form its meaning.

This research has also showed that metaphoric understanding can change the religious views that have been taken for granted in religious traditions. This is especially true when it comes to metaphors that might not be easily recognized as metaphors. As many of the religious claims remain abstract, when a religious underlying metaphor reaches the phonological form, i.e. it gets vocalized, it can become entrenched in the language and perhaps interpreted as literal. However, when an expression is clearly metaphoric, like the case in many novel or deliberate metaphors, it is much easier for it to be understood as metaphor because its metaphorical status is clear, and hence there is no confusion about whether or not it is supposed to be taken literally. To illustrate, most of the metaphors used by Sheikh Bachoo or Brother Jaffer and transcribed in this thesis are deliberate metaphors that cause no trouble in terms of comprehension.

In chapter 3, we discussed the LIFE IS A TEST metaphor, and we explained how taking it literally contradicts the Islamic belief regarding God’s absolute knowledge. To further illustrate the metaphorical nature of LIFE IS A TEST, we can look at the two domains Life and Test, and decide if any of them is abstract. Although domain abstractness is not

a condition for the construction of metaphor, the use of an abstract concept in a given utterance/sentence, should still serve as a clue for the metaphorical nature of its linguistic expression. This is because we cannot talk about anything abstract without relying on metaphor.

Surely, Life, in its intellectual sense, is a very abstract concept and it is one of the topics that cannot be talked about without using metaphor, for it requires some philosophising. Sometimes a metaphor is used because there is no word in the language that can describe what we want to say. So, instead of inventing a new word, we can use a word that already exists, but use it differently, i.e., broaden or narrow its meaning and use it metaphorically. This explains why we do not invent a new language to talk about God, but we use the ordinary language that we use when we talk about any other topic, because our ordinary language already exists and hence presents itself as convenient. The discussion of the pronoun for God demonstrated this very clearly.

However, what is considered to be a metaphor in Conceptual Metaphor Theory is an underlying thought that is expressed through the use of linguistic expressions. Hence, a metaphor is not the surface linguistic expression itself. Given this distinction between the two –metaphor and metaphorical expression – it is necessary to clarify that I approached LIFE AS TEST one time as a metaphor and one time as a metaphorical expression. I argued that LIFE IS A TEST is an underlying metaphor in the Qur'an, yet an actual utterance, a “metaphorical expression,” in everyday speech among Muslims.

To clarify, the difference between metaphor and metaphorical expression can be related to the difference between implicatures and explicatures. That is, the more peripheral nuances of metaphorical thoughts can be communicated as implicatures, while the core of such metaphorical thoughts can be bundled into metaphorical concepts that enter into the explicatures. At some point, the implicatures can themselves become explicatures. This is one point that shows the importance of integrating the two theories because what CMT would assume to be an underlying thought can in RT be an actual utterance, and hence an explicature rather than a mere implicature. Thus, LIFE IS A TEST is an idea that arises in the Qur'an, but this very idea is explicated through utterances of daily conversation, and sometimes the idea or the implicatures, along with the utterance

expressing them become one and the same thing. That is, a certain inference can take a linguistic form parallel to its underlying structure, as what I argued to be the case with LIFE AS A TEST being an underlying metaphor in the Qur'an that surfaces exactly like how it, assumingly, exists underlyingly in daily conversations. To clarify, an underlying metaphor is not an utterance. However, sometimes what we assume to be an underlying metaphor becomes an utterance: LIFE IS A TEST becomes 'life is a test.'

From a theoretical point of view, the two theories, RT and CMT, operate at different structural levels. That is, CMT analyzes metaphors at a deep, conceptual level, while RT deals with metaphorical expressions as they appear at the surface level of discourse. To clarify, CMT digs deeper than linguistic expressions or utterances to find the underlying metaphor that governs their linguistic uses; while RT, being a cognitive theory of communication, starts its analysis directly at the surface level because the surface level is the level of verbal communication.

Theoretically, then, only CMT can apply when analysing the metaphor in the Qur'an where LIFE IS A TEST seems to exist underlyingly. However, when 'life is test' is an expression uttered by Muslim speakers in daily life, we are dealing with an actual linguistic utterance. That is, CMT would assume that 'life is a test' as an utterance is a metaphorical expression licenced by a conceptual metaphor underlying it. However, because 'life is a test' is a linguistic expression in its own right, figuring out that this linguistic expression is metaphoric can be accounted for in RT though lexical adjustment. Relevance Theory is the theory that explains how an utterance is adjusted in the search for relevance in an attempt to reveal its specific meanings in particular discourse contexts. Not only that, but from a cognitive point of view, even the underlying metaphor in the Qur'an can only be identified as an underlying metaphor through the process of seeking the relevance of the words for 'test' that appear in the Qur'an.

To realize the metaphoricity of LIFE AS A TEST, there should be a kind of cognitive effort that guarantees that the seemingly irrelevant expressions become relevant. Specifically, the relevance of a metaphoric conceptual analysis for LIFE AS A TEST was reached due to my realization that the concept of "testing" is at odds with the concept of "knowledge" in the context of God, which in turn forced me to engage in further cognitive

processing. Only after further processing, I realized the need for a metaphoric interpretation, at which point my deeper understanding began. Such is the conceptual metaphoric understanding that can be revealed in light of Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

However, only Conceptual Metaphor Theory can account for metaphors that exist in thought such as GOD IS UP, or MORE IS UP. I have argued, following Gibbs and Tendahl (2008) and Wilson (2011), that the two theories should be integrated. Admittedly, in addition to thought and language, which are assumed to constitute the metaphor, an extra element should be considered, which is “communication” (Martin, 2013, p. 945). While this claim might seem to favour Relevance Theory, I think that relevance theorists should also consider the relevance of our human bodies to the process of understanding as well as conceptualizing. Since metaphors still have an internal logic, which explains how their meaning can be inferred, I have attempted to show how the Christian Trinitarian view of God lacks metaphorical coherence by analysing it as a contradictory attempt to combine distinct metaphors within a single “frame” or knowledge structure. Moreover, I have argued that our metaphoric personification of God or the GOD AS PERSON metaphor does not require that we talk about God using an animate pronoun. Therefore, I proposed that the pronoun to use for God in English should be ‘It’, recommending the implementation of this change in English translations of the Qur’an.

Potential future work

As learning and gaining knowledge should always be continuous journeys, I will end with some further directions for future journeys. In this thesis, I have shown that Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Relevance Theory provide a harmonious analysis by demonstrating that they are not contradictory. One direction for future work would be to seek to integrate Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Relevance Theory into one theoretical processing model, perhaps through developing an optimality-theoretic approach such as the one outlined in van Rooy’s (2004) article, “Relevance and Bidirectional Optimality Theory.”

Given that our conceptualizations of God are all metaphoric, it might be interesting to examine some modern ideas about GOD as a metaphor that hypothesize it to underlie thought even when the word for ‘God’ does not directly appear at the surface level of

linguistic discourse. A corpus study could, for example, focus on surface expressions that could be claimed to refer to God the Creator such as “Nature”, “Universe”, “Force”, “First Cause”, “Source of Life”, “Origin”, “Agent”, “Law”, “Being”, “Being Itself”, etc.

Also, a next step toward an appropriate metaphoric understanding of religion and theology would be to reinterpret the parables in the Qur’an. One starting point in this direction could be the parable of creation. Investigating whether Adam and Satan are metaphoric rather than literal in that parable would offer the theology of Islam a great service.

Finally, one problem that Conceptual Metaphor Theory might be able to shed light on is the question of how it is possible for an embodied mind to realize that its embodied perceptions are only perceptions and thus do not reflect the reality outside the human brain. Could such a realization in some sense enable our human minds to step outside our human bodies? It might be worthwhile to investigate whether the Divided Self metaphor or perhaps the Divided Mind, I should say, is, in a way, a twice-true metaphor that can provide us with some answers.

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