

The Real and Metaphorical Source of Mental allegory and Applied Research in the Holy Qur'an

Falah Hassan Kata
Mustansiriya University

Introduction

The subject of mental allegory was not agreed upon by the rhetoricians; it was rejected by their most prominent ones including Al-Skaky(died in 626 A.H) and Al-Alwy(died in 749 A.H).This may be resulted from its philosophical bases; considering the fact that it reflects the utmost power of Allah.¹ Therefore, all the doers – except for Allah- are metaphoric , and accordingly this became the rule that made the mental allegory not to be used in the fields of art and literature. The use of the mental allegory has affected on understanding the Quran discourse, the ideas of its verses and the explanation of its meanings. It is worthy to be reviewed to attribute each example to its real source so as to achieve the artistic experience of the Quran – without philosophical or word limitations- and this research is dedicated to investigate this matter.

1- The Real Source for the Mental Allegory

A-The relationship of Place: the problem over place comes second in regard to its use in the Holy Quran; and that is why it is worthy of investigation. It is achieved in two types of attribution:

First: the attribution of water flowing and emergence to the rivers. And the water flowing came first in its use. in addition to the attribution of water streaming to the valleys and the attribution of water flowing and floods to the water sources.

Second: The attribution of security, belief, vanity, peace, oppression, and tyranny to the village or villages. It is believed that such attribution is not mental, because the uses of rivers, villages and water sources are wide common in relation to (water) and they are familiar to the extent that the meaning of (place) does not cross one`s mind. We can depend on the moral evidence as a base in this argument, because allegories affect the feelings and cause amazement and surprise; metaphors engage the reader (or listener), a matter which is not found in the expressions of rivers, countries, villages and water sources. The reader can distinguish between the features of the Meccan surahs (verses) and Medinan surahs in this regard, since the Medinan verses included the flowing of water to rivers more than the Meccan , and the reason may be attributed to the fact that the Medinan community believes in Allah and it, therefore, deserves to be praised , encouraged and rewarded with Heaven (Paradise) as a reward to this community`s support to prophet Muhammed and Islam. It is important to mention that the period which followedHijrah was the period of religious wars (Jihad), that`s why Heaven and its flowing waters were mentioned in accordance with this specific period of time in addition to enriching the Muslims with moral and spiritual power. These specific verses were written with bright and delicate style filled with the expressions of belief, good work, forgiveness, honesty, God-fearing, good food, gold, pearls, light, immortality, obedience, and winning.

Allah the Highest said (And give glad tidings to those who believe and do righteous deeds, that for them will be Gardens under which rivers flow (paradise) Al-Baqara: The Cow \ 25). Allah the Highest also said (For such, the reward is Forgiveness from their Lord, and Gardens with rivers flowing underneath (Paradise), wherein they shall abide forever. How excellent is this reward for the doers (who do righteous deeds according to Allah Orders) Aal-Imraan: The Family of Imran\136). Allah said (And the first to embrace Islam of the Muhajrun (those who migrated from Makkah to Al-Madinah) and the Ansar (the citizens of Al- Madinah who helped and gave aid to the Muhajrun) and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith).

¹ The belief in the utmost power of Allah is an obligation but it does not contradict with the philosophical and logical discussion of the linguistic and literary research.

Allah is well pleased with them as they are well- pleased with him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success) (At-Tawba : The Repentance 100). Allah said (Truly, Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous good deeds to Gardens under which rivers flow (in Paradise), wherein they will be adorned with bracelets of gold and pearls and their garments therein will be of silk) (Al-Hajj: The Pilgrimage 23). This type of discourse is quite familiar and repeated in the Medinan verses even those which talked about the oppressing village, and they were less insolent than the Meccan verses.

Allah the Highest said (And many a township have we destroyed while it was given to wrong-doing, so that it lies in ruins (up to this day), and (many) a deserted well and lofty castles!) (Al-Hajj: The Pilgrimage 45). We can notice in the Meccan verses the attribution of security , peace, belief , vanity , and oppression to the village. It might be better to use these adjectives (features) to describe the village because what is really meant is the people of the village , although the dictionary may attribute the metaphor to the village itself. Allah the Highest said (Have they not seen how many a generation before them we have destroyed whom we had established on the earth such as we have not established you ? And we poured out on them rain from the sky in abundance, and made the rivers flow under them. Yet we destroyed them for their sins, and created after them other generations.) (Al-An`aam: The Cattle 6).

Allah said (Was there any town that believed, and its Faith saved it ? (the answer is none) except the people of Yunus (Jonah); when they believed, we moved them from the torment of disgrace in the life of the present world and permitted them to enjoy for a while) (Yunus: Jonas 98). Allah said (And Allah puts forward the example of a township (Makkah), that dwelt secure and well content: its provision coming to it in abundance from every place, but it (its people) denied the favours of Allah (with ungratefulness) . So Allah made it taste the extreme of hunger and fear, because of that (evil; i.e denying Prophet Muhammad) which they (its people) used to do) (An-Nahl : The Bee 112). Allah also said (And how many a town (population) have we destroyed which were thankless for its means of livelihood (disobeyed Allah, and His messenger, by doing evil deeds and crimes) and those are their dwellings, which have not been inhabited after them except a little. And verily! We have been the inheritors)(Al-Qasas: The Stories 58).

Meccan verses set examples of unnamed villages warning the people of Mecca of doom and destruction as a punishment for their disobedience and unfaithfulness. The duality of both Mecca and Medina is shown whenever Mecca is used to reflect the meaning of religious and political decline and shrinkage, in contrast to Medina which is the center of transformation. As an example to this duality is when Allah the Highest said (And created after them other generations) (Al-An`aam: The Cattle 6).

2-The Relationship of Infinitive

Many researchers previously and even nowadays mentioned different verses to reflect the mental allegory, like for example (In their heart is a disease (of doubt and hypocrisy) and Allah has increased their disease. A painful torment is theirs because they used to tell lies) (Al- Baqara: The Cow 10). And there are other similar examples where verses used the infinitive or masdar in Arabic (torture) in the meaning of (painful) or any other description, in the form of relationship of source. What they mean is that the word (painful) is the description of the (torturer). Al-Zamachshary(died in 538 A.H) explained this by saying :“ if we say (to cause pain) it means (painful) similar to (to cause ache) and (aching).It is similar to (become serious) ; pain is related to the source of pain and seriousness is not separated from the serious one”². This can be considered as a base or a rule to understand the construction of (verb and subject); what is meant is the completion of the action: (seriousness has been achieved) ,and (the right has been shown) , (the meaning is clear and obvious). It is also similar to when we say (Arabs speech reached its maximum as far as eloquence is concerned), what is meant is that the Arab speakers are the eloquent ones .Just like when we say (writing has finished) and we actually mean (writers have done and completed the writing).

The use of the source as a means of expression depends on the general concept or understanding. It is the result of the action that we seek. That’s why we describe the (torture or hell) as painful because this is what happen to those who are punished by being in hell; they get tortured; they feel pain, this is the only possible reaction: (to be in pain).

²Al-Kashaf: 1\68-69

And since the (subject or doer of the action) is Allah, this means that Allah is the cause of pain (painful) and this is impossible because Allah is (the torturer) and pain is only (a reaction). To clarify this more, we can take the example of a speaker; when he (the speaker) talks to the audience, there are two possible reactions towards his speech: amusement or resentment. But this does not mean that the speaker is the amuser or the opposite, because (amusement and resentment) are the audience's reaction. Such attitudes or feelings are the effects or the final results. According to this. An example of this is the infinitive (straying) in An-Nisaa: The Women 167 when Allah said (Verily, those who disbelieve and prevent (mankind) from the path of Allah, they have certainly strayed far away), Al-Zamachshary explained (straying) as an example of metaphorical attribution because (the person who strays) is the one who is being far away from the path³. This attitude may be resulted from the sensual tendency since (straying) is an abstract meaning that indicates being lost.⁴ This meaning is derived from the Arabs life in the desert and because getting lost in the desert is constant and familiar, the meaning expanded and it also meant the sensual loss. The Jahili poet Oday Bin Ra'ala Al-Ghassani⁵ described the meaning of getting lost (straying) in the desert by saying that straying in the desert is inevitable; it's an illness that has no cure. Abu Zaid Al-Ta'ae⁶ talked about the spiritual straying or loss by saying that it's useless to live a long life; we will get nothing but being lost (strayed) if we hope to be immortal. The place in which we get lost is usually far away, and the result (of being far away) is related and attached to (straying and loss) because it happens in a faraway place and this also includes the subject (the doer of the action). We can find that the sensual elements are common because the Arabic taste tends to illustrate the abstract meanings to make them understandable. The relation between (straying) and (faraway place) is real and this can include other abstract ideas that are described in the same way (i.e. using common features), Allah the Highest said (Verily, we shall send down to you a weighty word (i.e. obligation, legal laws, etc). (Al-Muzzammil: The Enshrouded One 5).

We are used to say (a wise opinion), (improbable thing), (breathhtaking beauty) and other examples. The description here is based on picturing the event or action, and I believe such relation is more logical than explaining it according to attribution and (verb- subject relation). The picture of the action is based on imagining the idea of straying in the Arab environment. The reader (or listener) will imagine the bitter feelings of loss, fear and despair which the straying person actually feels. When we describe (loss or straying) as (far away) which actually a common feature with sensual roots, we are combining the sensual with the abstract and – in the verses where evil and ill omen were attributed to the time- we are encouraging the truth or reality rather than metaphor. Allah the Highest said (verily, we sent against them a furious wind of harsh voice on a day of evil omen and continuous calamity) (Al-Qamar: The Moon 19). (So Allah saved them from the evil of that Day, and gave them Nadratan (a light of beauty) and joy) (Al-Insaan: Man 11), (And touch her not with harm, least the torment of a Great Day seize you) (Ash-Shu'raa: The Poets 156). In addition to other Quran examples and verses which are characterized with reason (cause) misunderstanding⁷. Allah said (And my brother Harun (Aaron) he is more eloquent in speech than me so send him with me as a helper to confirm me. Verily! I fear that they will belie me) (Al-Qasas: The Stories 34). In this verse, the attribution of confirmation or belief to Harun is true and considering Harun to be the reason behind believing in Moses is also true, because he is the one who confirms that Moses is saying the truth.⁸ He continued in giving the examples of attributing the flowing of water to the rivers and the adjectives related to the village because what happened is the change in the place (the meaning of place changes with the passing of time without restricting the symbol to a specific meaning; even metaphor can have a new meaning)⁹.

This opinion was embraced by Abdul-Qahir Jurjani (died in 471 A.H) when he identified the metaphor as (a word is considered a metaphor whenever there is another meaning intended rather than its basic one)¹⁰. Dr. Muhammas Abdul-Muttalib clarified Al-Jurjani's definition by explaining that a word may be used out of its metaphorical meaning and return to its basic, literal and real one.¹¹

³Al-Kashaf:2\517

⁴ Al-Qamus Al-Muhit 4\5

⁵Asha'ar Al-Arab (Assmayaat):1\5

⁶al-shi'ra al-shu'ara' ("Book of Poetry and Poets") 1\303

⁷Al-Kashaf 3\396

⁸ Al-Mezan 16\34-35

⁹BalaghaArabi (Arabic Rhetoric) – another reading : 162

¹⁰Asrar Al-Balagha (Secrets of Rhetoric) 325-326

¹¹BalaghaArabi (Arabic Rhetoric) – another reading :162

Second: The Metaphorical Source of the Mental Allegory

When books on rhetoric are reviewed; one can find four divisions of mental allegory; using examples to clarify such divisions: (The youth of time gave life to the earth) in which we have two examples of mental metaphor. And (the earth was revived by Spring) , (the secret of Kaaba lies in the flowing sea) and other examples which are believed to be metaphors because of the resemblance and comparison between (life) and (giving life to earth) which is based on humanization i.e. the resemblance to human action. As for attributing the verbs, it is considered real after the purpose of comparison and metaphor is achieved. We name a man (a sea) because he is so generous and we say (the sea came).So what really happened is that the man (not the sea) came.

There are verses which were considered as examples of mental allegory although they are more close to being examples of metaphor, Allah the Highest said (See they not that we have made the night for them to rest therein, and the day sight- giving ?Verily, in this are Ayat (proofs, evidences, lessons) for the people who believe) (An-Naml: The Ant 86).It was believed that (sight- giving) meant (illuminating) based on the common knowledge that Muslim Arabs usually pray during night and feast during the day in Ramadhan¹²; and it became a cause (reason) relation because we usually see during the day unlike the situation during the night.¹³ I believe it is much more related to metaphor because when we describe the day time as (sight – giving) is based on humanization (comparing it to a human being), and that the element of resemblance lies in the ability to move and walk with ease during the day time. , Allah the Highest said (And by the night when it departs) (Al-Fajr: The Dawn 4). And (And by the night when it is still) (Ad-Duhaa: The Morning Hours 2). The attribution of (depart) and (being still) to the night is based on humanization and metaphor , Allah said (Verily , we fear from our Lord a Day , hard and distressful , that will make the faces look horrible (from extreme dislikeness to it).(Al-Insaan :Man 10), In this verse , it is clear that the metaphorical image is based on picturing a man with a depressed face¹⁴ which is – in my opinion- is much more convincing that relating it to the relationship of cause (reason) or expansion of meaning. Mental allegory deserves further investigation because the careful examination of its examples means it`s either reality or metaphor.

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¹² AlJameAhkam Al-Quran 8\360

¹³ Al-Kashaf 3\373

¹⁴Majma` Al-Bayan 10\216