Metaphor and Action Embodiment in the Glorious Quran

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Abstract

This paper investigates how man is metaphorically conceptualized in the Quran, and how metaphor embodies his actions. The main aim is to arrive at a better understanding of the Quranic discourse, see how metaphor gives structure to human actions which bring him either salvation or damnation on Doomsday. Embodiment refers to all man's biological capacities and his physical and social experiences that he lives in his environment and which are executed by his different organs and senses. The article presents a brief contrast between the pious body and the secular body, an overview of the development of metaphorical thought and the dialectical relationship between language, man and nature. I have collected all man-related metaphoric verses from the Quran by referring to every single organ of man's body; and these organs were addressed top-to-bottom and front-to-back in terms of order and then analyzed in terms of the action/s each one of them embodies. To tie analysis down to our life as we experience it and accord it credit and value, it has been boiled down into a number of social and cultural schematic categories. Data analysis yields five social and cultural schemata: (i) Up is dignified. Down is not. (ii) Front is dignified. Back disgraced. (iii) Private should remain private. This is more polite, (iv) Intimacy means closeness. Closeness generates warmth and (v) Physical closeness gives strength.

Key Words: action embodiment, human body, metaphor, Quran, schemata,

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1- Introduction

This paper investigates the human body actions as metaphorically embodied in the Quran; though a number of traditions by the Prophet are occasionally cited. It exhaustively examines how man (used generically), and how the actions of his diverse body organs are conceptualized in the Quran via metaphor. This will enable us to better understand the Quranic discourse, see how metaphor gives expression to human actions and which of these worldly actions make of him a winner or a loser on Doomsday. The paper can be considered a study of both metaphor and religion.

“Embodiment” is of growing importance in Cognitive Linguistics especially since the 1980s (Lakoff 1980, Lakoff and Johnson 2003, Lakoff and Turner 1989, Johnson 1990, Kövecses 2007), and has to do with the organism interaction with the social and cultural environment and with the physiological and neurophysiological influences on his mind. Lakoff (1987:267) defines embodiment as “our collective biological capacities and our physical and social experiences as beings functioning in our environment.” This means that parts of our conceptual system and therefore some aspects of our language are structured by the features, parts and functions of our bodies in everyday life. Our conceptual system is mirrored in language patterns such as the systematic use of metaphor.

The study is almost wholly based on George Lakoff's theory of Cognitive Linguistics which means that the individual's life is influenced to a great extent by the central metaphors he uses to interpret complex phenomenon. In Metaphors We Live By (1980), Lakoff started using applications to his theory in politics, literature, philosophy and other disciplines. Among many other things, he addressed the Conservatives and the Liberals and how they were influenced by certain metaphorical models (e.g. strict father model vs. nutrient father model.) According to him, man's experience is influenced by and framed in certain linguistic constructions. His theory is known as embodied mind. Lakoff successfully argues that metaphor is a conceptual construction and is indeed central to the development of thought. He believes that our conceptual system is basically metaphorical in nature. Metaphor, on the other hand, is generally seen as a linguistic construction in the Western rhetoric.

Embodiment, as we have seen, refers to all the experiences, perceptions and practices that the human body organs intentionally engage in. Intentionality entails human body accountability for what it does and ruling out the biological perception of the body as a mere object that can be acted upon or as a mere experiencer (of pain, for example.) This is not the kind of body we are interested in; we are interested in that kind of body that members of a culture endow themselves with in order to come into relation with Allah, the Creator, to whom they posit themselves.

This brings into play a contrast, albeit indirectly, between the pious body as exemplified in the Quran and the secular body as is “lived” nowadays in many parts of the world. Any study of contemporary religious traditions necessitates some engagement with their dialectical partner, the secular. “Secular” is closely attached nowadays to what many people call modernity and its defining forms of knowledge and practice. According to Hirschkind, C. (2011), the religious emphasizes the pious sensorium or the embodied aptitudes and affects necessary for the achievement of a virtuous life. Pious people usually reshape their wills, desires and emotions in accord with religion; the secular emphasize the secular sensorium or sensibilities that give shape to a secular life based on a system of moral truth and founded on rationalist, utilitarian and materialist principles.
The human body has assumed a lively presence on the anthropological scene and on the stage of interdisciplinary cultural studies (e.g. Feminism, religions, etc.). Until very recently, it was seen as a constant, subject to biological rules existing prior to the mutability and flux of cultural change. But nowadays it is no longer a brute fact of nature, to quote Csordas (1994:1); nor should it be understood as a constant amidst flux but as an epitome of that flux. (Ibid. p. 2). The consumer culture (e.g. companies of fabrics, perfumes, movies, etc.) has changed it into a performing self of appearance and display focusing primarily on the mental image of the body as it appears to others, on the outer appearance. And Technology has made the merger of the biological with the technological possible so much that the technological man has become a familiar figuration of the subject of postmodernity, according to Balsam (1995).

The more you know your body, the better you know your God: “He who knows himself, knows Allah”iv- by contemplation, the Prophet says. Thus man comes to know God's existence from his own creation, from the wonders of his bodily frame Allah's power and wisdom, and from the ample provision made for his various needs His love. In this way the knowledge of oneself becomes a key to the knowledge of his Creator.

In the Quran, the human body is a sacred object that cannot and must not be tampered with. Describing His creation of man Allah says that it is He “Who created you, proportioned you, and balanced you.”vii He also says “We have certainly created man in the best of stature”iv; this best stature includes both frame or body and brain. The body is the object that carries out what the brain or the subject tells it to do. It incorporates the engine and the embedded technology that distinguishes it from all other creations: the human body is created in such a way, as is the case with all divine creations, that each of its organs does its assigned function in the best unmatched way. Allah, therefore, invites man to meditate how miraculously he has been created. Therefore, any interference in the creation of Allah (i.e. man's body) such as tattooing or cosmetic surgeries is sinful, given that Allah is the best of all creators.vi Interference in one's body implies dissatisfaction on part of the manipulator.

2- A Metaphorical Overview: Man, Language and Nature

The relation between metaphor and the human body is not new. According to Johnson (1990), there is abundant evidence that the world of the body and the body of the world have something in common: people speak of angry sky, social ills, economic recovery; they also describe the human mind as computer. In these cases, where an object is named through its resemblance to a certain part of the human body, or the human mind in terms of a machine, a permanent metaphorical transfer occurs.

Traditionally, metaphor, simile and analogy are based on similarity; Metonymy and synecdoche' on contiguity. Metaphor emphasizes that "A is B", simile emphasizes both A and B. Contiguity-based metaphoric expressions reify objects limiting them to the concrete.

Rueckert et al (1982) claim that the essential value of metaphor resides in its creative capacity to discover new ways of thinking. They cross and join different kinds of categories which, in reality, cannot be joined. They transfer reality: when someone says, for example, "John is a wolf", he transfers John, the human being, into a certain kind of animal, with neither category retaining its original characteristics. The result is a new entity which neither belongs to mankind nor to that certain predator. All salient properties of the vehicle are applied to the tenor (Kirmayer, 1992). What we get in fact is a "Jolf", a term coined from "John" and "wolf"; though
the traits of the wolf are more dominating. This is new concept, a new experience. Black claims that it creates a new perspective in reality; while Johnson (1990:70) suggests that it creates a new referent. Metaphors, therefore, transcend nature creating new relationships and new realities. They are, therefore, assertive, whereas similes are hypothetical. This means that metaphor externalizes thinking, facilitates learning, labels new concepts and provides frameworks for ideas. Ortony (1975) goes one step further as he claims that the acquisition of new knowledge is not possible without the use of metaphor (Cited in Chuang, 2012: 262).

The most important twist in the handling of metaphor, however, was made by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) as they showed that metaphor is characteristic of thought and action. Many abstract concepts such as time, purpose and causality have metaphorical underpinnings. Lakoff (1991) claims that metaphor gives structure to, and organizes action. Lakoff (1992) uses "cross-domain mappings" (instead of the traditional terms tenor and vehicle) to refer to the interaction between different worlds. However, Lakoff's primary contribution to the metaphor theory is probably the multifaceted "conceptual metaphor" which he takes as a systematic mode of thought.

Johnson (1990, p. xix) observes that human bodily movement involves "recurring patterns…without which our experience would be chaotic and incomprehensible". Johnson calls these patterns "image schemata"; these image schemata are organized, unified, repeatable, irreducible, and function as abstract structures of images (ibid, p. 44). These patterns emerge as meaning structures primarily at the level of bodily movements and help us make sense of the world around us. Johnson also distinguishes between image schema and mental image which he describes as a static concept in the collective brain relating to a certain idea (e.g. capitalism.)

Thus we are before different picturing modes which give expression to our experience: the traditional figures of speech, the conceptual metaphor, the mental image and the schemata. And though lakoff and Johnson overstretched the role of embodied experience to include all kinds of experience and overlooked the factors of, inter alia, language evolution, gender, individual physical ability and culture diversity, yet no one can deny their effort in showing how bodily experience generates schemata.

Elaborating further on Lakoff’s work on metaphor, Grady (1997) distinguishes between two kinds of metaphor: primary metaphors and complex metaphors (cited in Kövecses, 2010: 202). Primary metaphors function at a fairly local and specific level of conceptualization and hence in the brain (e.g. HAPPY IS UP. SAD IS DOWN.) Complex metaphors, on the other hand, are composed of primary metaphors in addition to our cultural belief relating to them (e, g, A PURPOSEFUL LIFE IS A JOURNEY.)

Gibbs et al (2012) explain how certain metaphorical patterns evolve and claim that they self-organize. They claim, for example, that zebras self-organize their skin lines and spots, and that snowflakes can evolve via the exchange of thermal energy from one water molecule to another. Thus the emergence of new shapes is unintentional; so is the creation of new metaphors. By saying this, I believe, Gibbs et al deny that there is an external force (i.e. the Creator) that gives shape to, and organizes the certain pattern of zebra skin stripes via genes and snowflakes shape through strict thermal scientific rules that He has put in advance in everything He created.
Al-Masieri (2002) rightly notes that figures of speech change as the community changes; its concepts and cognition frames, therefore, can be studied through the study of the types and evolution of metaphor.

Metaphors have also shaped our understanding of the body as a whole and of the organs of the body. A man of an erect build is a man of good health; that of a bowed back is sickly. Wrinkles, baldness and white hair make a schema of an aging human being; a soft, wrinkles-free face and black hair create a schema of a youthful human being. Martin (1992) observes that "cultural gender norms are ‘written’ on male and female through behavior, make-up and dress". Males are disgraced in case they walk, talk, or sit like females. The same applies to females. But these gender distinctions are disappearing: there are unisex clothes; feminine talk and masculine talk are not as distinct as they used to be because of, among other things, coeducation and unrestricted mixing at work. Even natural sex has been tampered with by lesbians and homosexuals. Man is trying to make the two gender metaphors into one. He is fighting against himself. Martin observes that we are witnessing the end of one kind of body and the beginning of another. Should this happen, a new kind of experience would be replacing an already existing one.

Martin (1992) notes that virtually everybody cell carries distinctive molecules that identifies it as "self"; everybody is a special "trade mark" and has a special fingerprint and special eye print, special DNA and an immunity system which, on its own, makes a big metaphor: with white cells functioning as warriors which fight invaders, kill them and clean the scene by devouring the dead bodies of the invading enemy. This is a schema of war as the human body is taken as a castle which has defenders and enemies.

Man, however, has got nothing to do with his uniqueness or even with the automatic internal functioning of his systems. These are operated in a way that has never changed or evolved, and therefore they are given blesses by the Creator. Human agency in this concern is absolutely absent. Man is not accountable for them, but only for his conscious, intentional daily life actions.

The relationship between the human body and language is dialectic and circular: bodily experience is communicated and elaborated in language; and language, in turn, is grounded in bodily experiences and provides the lexicon necessary to make reference to the organization of bodily action (Kirmayer: 1992). Meaning resides not only in the relationships between concepts but also in their connection to the body skills and practices. This is because metaphor expresses something that the body knows well how to do. It provides ways of acting on our representations, or making presentation to others that transform the conventional representations and unpack new meanings.

While dealing with body metaphors, we observe that there is correspondence between particular parts of the body and particular action: hand with work or charity; eyes with espionage; head with obstinacy; face with social standing, specific personal/corporal identity; nose with excessive curiosity, and so on.
According to Al-Masieri (2002), Man is a Godly, natural creature who comes out of his mother's womb and who is part of nature but is not attributable to it. He lives in a certain "world" and in a certain "time" that define him but has inside him some divine elements that can by no means ascribed to time and/or to nature systems. He has been created for a worthy reason and, therefore, his life in this world is meaningful; and his life is not "repeated cycles" in the world of the material.

Al-Masieri states that man is an organic world (vs. mechanic) driven by an embedded organic mechanism; therefore, he is accountable for what he does whether good or bad. As an organic entity, he is bigger than the total sum of his organs which function collectively to salvage or otherwise bring torture to the whole body on Doomsday. He is the only creature who is accorded a will to do or refrain from doing a certain action. In this world, he is given full control over all his organs. On Doomsday, he loses control over his organs. His tongue, hands, legs and skin turn into eye witnesses that give testimony against him in case he is doomed. The relationship between his organs in this life is one of interdependence and cohesion; and they all acquiesce to his commands.

In the Quran, the human body functions according to principles of centralized control; this command and control center is located in man's naṣiyā (or forelock which is located in the central front part of the forehead. It is this decision-taking part of the brain which issues orders to the other organs to do their respective actions: the hand to slap or otherwise give charity, the legs to go to a pub or to a mosque, and so on. Thus we are before a full-fledged schema: a commander who issues orders and a slave who obeys. The scene for these actors is the world within reach. Everything man does is registered: the good and the bad.

Man's sins, however, can be forgiven via a mechanism called tawbah (i.e. repentance) which remains effective as long as he is alive and conscious. The mechanism is similar to that of the immunity system: while the latter repeatedly cleanses the body from invaders, the former repeatedly cleanses his sins irrespective of quantity and quality provided that he remains monotheistic. This can be said in light of certain names of Allah such as Ghafūr and Ghaffār each of which means "All-forgiving", with the former meaning forgiving sins irrespective of the quality or nature of sins and the latter meaning forgiving all sins irrespective of quantity. The names 'Affuw (i.e. Ever pardoning) and Tawwāb (i.e. Accepting of repentance) have the same effect. In this regard, I am inclined to see each of the former four names of Allah (i.e. Ghafūr and Ghaffār, 'Affuw and Tawwāb) as a mental image as each depicts a certain attribute of Allah who keeps forgiving, pardoning and/or accepting repentance as long as His servants pray for that. Thus we are before a mechanism by which man can cleanse his soul from sins; one that is not different from that by which he can defend and cleanse his body from germs and bacteria.

In the Quran, the umbrella of 'brotherhood' subsumes all mankind. There are three kinds of brotherhood: biological brotherhood, faith brotherhood, and homeland brotherhood. The strongest of these bonds is the second. Each kind of brotherhood entails different rights and obligations. "Indeed, the believers are brothers", the Quran states. It is interesting to note in this concern that akh (i.e. brother) in Islam has two plurals: ekhwa and ekhwān with the former referring generally to blood relationship and the latter to faith relationship.
In times of war, Allah likes Muslims who fight for His cause to be like the strongly built construction. Muslims are a strongly-built construction is a conceptual metaphor. All these verses and Traditions evoke the as-self schema of Muslims in relation to each other. Non-Muslims are brothers in humanity and accorded the schema of 'other-self' with 'self' joining both Muslims and non-Muslims and tracing them back to their common father: Adam.

The second schema is the "shepherd" concept. This metaphor entails the presence of cattle which should be taken care of, and a supreme authority before which the shepherd is accountable for. The cattle is made up of Muslims (and their homeland brothers), while the authority is Allah. A relevant analogy in this concern is the Tradition which states that "The believers in their mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy are just like one body, when one of the limbs is afflicted, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever".

Man, as an intact unit, is characterized (through metonymy) as having five integral traits: (a) Man has certainly been created in the best of stature, (b) he is always in a rush to achieve his goals as if he is made of haste, (c) he is also in an ongoing time-loss as every second or fraction of a second of his life passes is irretrievable, (d) he has been created into toil and struggle, and (e) he has been created in a state of weakness. Of course, man lives these social experiences every moment of his life when he sees by himself how exalted he is in terms of his physique and stature, the rush he lives in his daily life, the sorrow he feels as he sees wrinkles on his face and white hair on his head, the toil he experiences as he goes through test after test and through ongoing dilemmas in this life and how weak he is in both his childhood and old age. All these metaphors are cases of different types of simple or compound metonymy; but we need not elaborate this further.

4- Man’s organs and their respective embodied experiences
I shall now examine how metaphor gives expression to the actions executed by his various organs. I shall start with the high-to-low organs of the front longitudinal section of the human body and later with the back longitudinal section. Where necessary, a meronymic partitioning will be done.

Head or Ra’s is the upper part of everything and includes, inter alia, the brain and the face. The main features of the face are the forehead, mouth, eyes, nose, and ears; the first has a cultural value (e.g. dignity) whereas the rest have the sensory functions of smell, sight, hearing and taste respectively.

The head is the most obvious icon of dignity: people who raise their heads are dignified; those who hang them are humiliated. This is a socio-cultural value. It also signifies old age when it is covered with white hair: praying to His Lord to grant him a successor before he perishes Prophet Zakariya says "...and my head has glistened with white hair" (vs. the hair of my head doth glisten with grey). This makes of the utterance a case of a figure of intellect, a synecdoche’ and a hyperbole at the same time. Old age here is conceptualized as a change in physiology that can be visually seen and lived.

Face or wajh is used as a synecdoche' of man. It is also the place which reflects happiness and/or misery. Happy faces will lit up with white out of happiness; miserable faces which lived a
sinful life will be black out of humiliation. xxvii This is a cultural model using psychology as a support for the conceptualization of salvation and/or damnation and is captured in this conceptual causative metonymy. xxviii Happiness is conceptualized as a change in physiology that can be seen in the flesh. Damned people will have their eyes made blue (with terror) on Doomsday. xxix Again this is a psychological experience that the sinful experience on that day.

**Mouths** or Afwāh is used vis-à-vis hearts and/or chests. This is probably due to the fact that hearts and chests are more sincere than the tongue as they are containers of real intentions. xxx “Mouths” is used once as a container containing hatred, xxxi or as an instrument to extinguish the light of Allah. xxxii Mouths, however, will be sealed off on Doomsday; xxxiii an experience which takes effect only on that day as man will not be living in his normal social and physical environment.

**Tongue** or lisān is used as an instrument standing for language, xxxiv fluency or lack of fluency, xxxv as an instrument of slander xxxvi or otherwise of modest behavior xxxvii. It is also uniquely used to capture body language xxxviii. All these functions are socio-cultural concepts. On Doomsday, however, the tongue will stand as an eye witness. xxxix

**Voice** or şawt is a (causative) metonymy of the tongue and is socially and culturally used as a sign of mannerly behavior. xl

**Eye** or ‘ain is used to cover a myriad of conceptual experiences in the Qur’anic discourse: evaluation and assessment, xli passing judgment, xlii showing care and affection, xliii observation, xlv coveting, xlvii publicity, xlviii chastity, xlvii treachery, xlviii humiliation, xlix punishment, lx tranquility, l xi excessiveness, lxii pleasure, lxiii negligence lxi and extreme horror lv. None of these 15 experiences is concrete. There are also two instances where we have a combination of hyperbole and Kīnāya depicting the state of the companions of the Prophet: (their) eyes overflowing with tears (vis-à-vis tears overflowing from their eyes) lvi. This accords the experience unmatched uniqueness and calls to mind Eyes Are Rivers schema. A similar unique hybrid metaphor of metonymy and hyperbole obtains when the unbelievers Put Their Eyes In A Cover to avoid remembering Allah; in thus doing, they make of the cover a container and their eyes something contained. lvii This is reminiscent of The Arabic analogy X PUTS HIS HEAD IN THE SAND to avoid being seen.

There are many verses in the Quran which urge man to activate the act of seeing into a deliberate act of contemplation. lxiii This is equivalent to SEEING IS UNDERSTANDING schema-an experience specific to Muslims, nonexistent in disbelievers who do not contemplate issues relating to the real reason of their being in this life.

There are also sight-related terms derived from abṣara (i.e. He saw) such as "enlightenment", "insight" and "visible" (i.e. baṣāer, bašeera, and mubšera) that are used figuratively; with the first (a causative metonymy) meaning that “Our signs (the signs of Allah) are easily discernible landmarks,”lxiv the second (locative metonymy) expressing the Muslim’s complete certainty in his faith lx while the third (causative metonymy) is used as a personifying instrument meaning that “Our signs are so clear and visible that they themselves can see.”lxv

**Ear** or ’udhun is ordinarily used as an organ of hearing. In the Qur’anic discourse, however, this organ/instrument is surprisingly used by unbelievers for not hearing faith-related matters, lxvi they, therefore, have their ears deafened by Allah for not using them. This is a bizarre socio-
cultural experience equivalent to *HEARING IS UNDERSTANDING*. Hearing here entails a bad consequence: liability. To avoid liability, let's not hear, the disbelievers say to themselves. Sometimes, unbelievers put their whole fingers (vs. fingertips) in their ears so as not to hear the word of truth.⁵¹ "Ears" also functions as a container/bottle that can be sealed and as an instrument for exploring the news of the enemy.⁵²

**Neck** or *raqaba* metonymically stands for slaves and the act of enslavement to make an appeal to free them.⁵³

**Hand** or *yad* is used as an instrument which executes, or refrains from executing, action whether good or bad;⁵⁶ it forges things,⁵⁷ and/or it could be closed in case it belongs to a miser.⁵⁸ This brings in the schema of a prisoner whose hand is tied to neck.

**Chest** or *şadr* is the safe in which the heart is kept;⁵⁹ it is a container which could be expanded in case of happiness and tranquility or otherwise constrained in case of depression and disbelief.⁶⁰ It is also used as a place which hides secrets and real intentions.⁶¹ The schema that emerges here is *Valuable Things Should Be Kept In A Safe Place*; or else. It entails bad consequences. It could also be used as a transparent container which transpires resentment,⁶² pride,⁶³ distress,⁶⁴ fear;⁶⁵ satisfaction.⁶⁶ It is also the place in which Satan whispers evil.⁶⁷

**Heart** or *qalb* stands for man in a part-to-whole relationship,⁶⁸ and is used as the container of true intentions,⁶⁹ tranquility,⁷⁰ stability and strength,⁷¹ sin,⁷² cruelty⁷³ and negligence.⁷⁴ Heart, like chest, holds all the characteristics of a container: it could be sound⁷⁵ and therefore receptive to faith, or sealed⁷⁶ thus rendering its owner totally unreceptive to guidance. It could be impenetrably thick⁷⁷ (thus making its owner rude or only partially receptive to faith) or repentant,⁷⁸ i.e. capable and willing to go back to the right path. Hearts could also be tools for understanding,⁷⁹ reasoning,⁸⁰ earning,⁸¹ or they could be wrapped,⁸² incapable of understanding anything.

**Under-the-waist area.** Almost in the midst part of the human body there exist the most male and female sensitive parts. The only legitimate sexual relationship between male and female in Islam is that between husband and wife. This relation is referred to euphemistically via two complex metaphors:

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١ُّ(٢٢٣)

YOUR WIVES ARE A PLACE OF SOWING OF SEED FOR YOU

٢ُّ(٢٨٧)

THEY ARE CLOTHING FOR YOU AND YOU ARE CLOTHING FOR THEM

In the first metaphor two remote domains are presented: husband and wife engaged in intercourse on one hand, and a farmer engaged in sowing seeds in his field on the other. Sexual intercourse is quite similar to a farmer ploughing his field in the manner both activities are executed, in terms of the result both parties hope to achieve and in terms of pleasure the relevant
parties reap. This conceptual metaphor conceptualizes a psycho-physical, cultural and social human experience as each spouse needs, satisfies, and literally unites with, the other “half”. The second metaphor provides two domains: the domain of clothing and wearer, and that of husband and wife. It depicts the close relationship between the two spouses as that existing between clothes and their wearer. Both need one another: the elegance and beauty of the garment remains meaningless unless it is worn by somebody, and this “somebody” remains socially rejected if he is not “suitably” dressed. Garments give warmth, cover defects and accords social acceptability to man. Man, on the other hand, accords meaningfulness and recognition to clothes.

**Back** or *dhahr* is the opposite of the chest. These are opposite in place and in significance: When someone shows his back to the enemy or receives a bullet in his back he is considered a coward. He fails his army and therefore deserves the wrath of Allah. This is a Kināya. It is also used to express neglect: when someone neglects something he puts it behind his back. It is also the part which, if overburdened, the entire human body breaks down. These are socio-cultural values.

**Shin** or *sāq* is idiomatically used to refer to serious events or calamities.

**Leg** or *rijl* is used by way of personification as an eye witness who will testify against its possessor on the Doomsday in case he is a wrongdoer.

**Foot** or *qadam* is the tool that accords man with firmness while walking and the tool with which to execute humiliating punishment.

**Skin** or *jild* is used as a responsive autonomous part which shivers from fear of Allah and then relaxes at His remembrance in case it belongs to a Muslim. It will also stand as an eyewitness in the Doomsday testifying against its possessor in case he is sinful.

5- Results
Five socio-cultural schemata emerge from the data above.

**Schema One: UP IS DIGNIFIED. DOWN IS NOT.**

In the Quranic discourse, Allah is the most High; He has the highest attribute. The believers are the highest or the most superior. Recognizing this attribute, Pharaoh described himself as the most exalted lord. The Paradise is high; the record of the believers is in ‘illiyiin which is in the seventh/highest sky; whereas that of the wicked is in sijjeen, down in Hell.

Hypocrites on Doomsday are in the lowest depths of Fire; the weaker residents of Hell will ask Allah to let them see those evil jinn and people who misled them astray so that they (i.e. the weaker) would put them under their feet to make them among the lowest.

The face is equally held with honor and dignity: slapping the face is prohibited in Islam, the Tradition states. In the Afterlife, the disbelievers’ faces and backs will be beaten to disgrace them.

The eyes are also held with respect and dignity as they signify extreme care and affection.
The leg and the foot are the lowest organs of man, and therefore the nearest to earth. They stand just opposite the noblest parts of the human body, and therefore, are the least dignified.

**Schema Two: FRONT IS DIGNIFIED. BACK DISGRACED.**

The face is the most dignified part of the head. It accredits the individual with the most distinguishing, discrete and identifying features, and therefore, stands in a part-to-whole metonymic relationship to man. Pious people do righteous deeds for His face. These have their faces white and will be in the mercy of Allah, whereas the faces of the disbelievers will turn black.

The chest is held with honor and dignity as well. Brave people receive bullets in their chests, coward people show/turn their backs. For humiliation, condemned people are beaten on their backs (and faces).

**Schema Three: PRIVATE SHOULD REMAIN PRIVATE. THIS IS MORE POLITE.**

It is rude and vulgar to mention or refer publicly and explicitly to man’s or women’s private organs or to intercourse. Therefore, Euphemism suits most what is private. The garment metaphor mentioned above is the best example in this regard. So is the tilth metaphor. Both metaphors elegantly, comprehensively and economically tackle the private, intimate husband-wife relationship without raising any measure of embarrassment. On other occasions, the Quran is less open, less explicit and uses expressions such as bāshirūhunna (i.e. “put your skin on their skin”, literally speaking); or massa (i.e. “he touched”); idiomatically “he had sex”.

**Schema Four: INTIMACY MEANS CLOSENESS. CLOSENESS GENERATES WARMTH.**

The former two metaphors express, among other things, intimacy or physical closeness: there is nothing closer to man than his clothes and nothing closer to husband than his wife and vice versa. Distance between spouses engaged in sexual intercourse is zero. And warmth is maximum.

Allah describes Himself as the closest to those who believe. He also describes Himself as their wallīy which means, among other things, ally, lover, supporter and is derived from the verb waliya meaning “he came nearer”.

In another Quranic verse, Allah addresses his believing servants by way of assurance:

“And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me – indeed I am near. I respond to the invocation of the supplicant when he calls upon Me”.

This will be better understood when we recall that all other (six) verses starting with

“They ask you...” are followed by “say”; this verse is not. This say is, in all these verses, followed by Allah’s instructions to the believers through the Prophet. Therefore, it functions as a mediating, distancing tool that stands between Allah and the
believers. The above example shows that there are no mediators between Allah and His servants when they turn to Him in supplication.

It is worth mentioning in this concern that Arabic has two plural forms for ‘ābd (i.e. slave): ‘abīd meaning slaves and ‘ibād meaning servants (in the Quranic discourse.) ‘Abeed has the “ee” (i.e. ِي) of humiliation as it lies horizontally linear, whereas ‘ibād has the ā (i.e. the long vowel ِ) of dignity as it stands vertically tall. The first form distances disobedient people from Allah; the latter brings them closer to Him.

**Schema Five: PHYSICAL CLOSENESS GIVES STRENGTH.**

This can be demonstrated by the brotherhood schema and by the construction schema discussed above.

6- **Conclusions**

In this article, we have been introduced to an extensive wealth of metaphors of different types each embodying a certain action, perception or experience (or more) performed by one sense or organ of the human body. A great number of these metaphors went for "eyes", "chest" and "heart"; the thing which attest to their importance to the process of belief. We have also come to know the concept of body as metaphorically visualized in the Quran and as conceived in the secular discourse as well.

These metaphors divide the world into two: the world of believers and that of disbelievers; the former are winners and the latter losers- with each party going through different experiences. These metaphors dictate what should and what should not be done. They, to re-quote lakoff (1991), *give structure to, and organize action*. A group of schemata depict the relationships that should be existing among Muslims and between Muslims and non-Muslims. Thus metaphor presents a mode of thought.

A different unique category of experience arises in the Quranic discourse: that of the unbelievers losing control over their tongues, hands and legs, and these testifying against their possessors on Doomsday. This will not be experienced in our life.

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Under notes

To do this, I have collected all man-related metaphorical verses from the Quran and taken their translations from http://quran.ksu.edu.sa/ website; and, in few cases, have cited a number of the Prophet's traditions and put them in undernotes to smoothen readability. Nevertheless, I have used some metaphor examples in the body of the text. Naturally, we have to bear in mind that some translations are not necessarily metaphorical. Reference to the Quranic verses will be as follows: the number of the chapter will come first and the verse number will follow, with a colon in between. The relevant Arabic and English terms/parts will be underlined.

Who *created* you, *proportioned* you, and *balanced* you.

من عرف نفسه فقد عرف ربه
الذي خلقك فسأواك فعدلك (7:82)
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Metaphor and Action Embodiment in the Glorious Quran

Abu Libdeh

We have certainly created man in the best of stature. (4:95)

And in yourselves. Then will you not see? (21:52)

So blessed is Allah, the best of creators (14:37)

On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their feet will bear witness against them as to their actions. (15:96)

No! If he does not desist, We will surely drag him by the forelock. (50:18)

Man does not utter any word except that with him is an observer prepared [to record] (30:31)

And remember the favor of Allah upon you – when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers. (26:106)

O you who have believed, do not take your fathers or your brothers as allies if they have preferred disbelief over belief.

Indeed, the believers are brothers. (4:10)

Indeed, Allah loves those who fight in His cause in a row as though they are a [single] structure joined firmly. (4:1)

Each one of you is a shepherd and each one is accountable for his cattle.

The believers in their mutual love, mercy and compassion are like the body: if one of its organs complains, the rest of the body organs show solidarity by sleeplessness and fever.

We have certainly created man in the best of stature.

Man was created of haste.

Indeed, mankind is in loss.

We have certainly created man into hardship

Allah is the one who created you in a state of (helpless) weakness.

To know more about metonymy in Arabic rhetoric, see al-Jarem (1971).
If you could but see when the criminals are hanging their heads before their Lord.

My Lord, indeed my bones have weakened, and my head has filled with white.

This figure of speech obtains (in Arabic) when agency is ascribed to other than its original subject. Agency, here, is ascribed to "head" rather than to "hair" which usually glistens.

And if they dispute with thee, say (to them) I have submitted my face to Allah.

On the Day when some faces will be (lit up with) white, and some faces will be (in the gloom of) black.

Metonymy is of 10 kinds in Arabic Rhetoric; but we do not need to elaborate on them. See 22 above.

That day, We will gather the criminals blear-eyed (with terror.)

They … saying with their mouths what was not in their heart.

They satisfy you with their mouths, but their hearts refuse compliance.

That Day, We will seal over their mouths, and their hands will speak to Us…

So, [O Muhammad], We have only made Qur’an easy in the Arabic language.

And untie the knot from my tongue.

But when fear departs, they lash you with sharp tongues.

Indeed, those who lower their voices before the Messenger of Allah – they are the ones whose hearts Allah has tested for righteousness.

And indeed, there is among them a party who alter the Scripture with their tongues …

On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their feet will bear witness against them as to their actions.

See 37 above.
And [remember] when He showed them to you, when you met, as few in your eyes, and He made you [appear] as few in their eyes.

...nor do I say of those upon whom your eyes look down that Allah will never grant them any good.

And be patient, [O Muhammad], for the decision of your Lord, for indeed, you are in Our eyes.

...a [construction of] planks and nails, Sailing under Our observation as reward for he who had been denied.

Do not extend your eyes toward that by which We have given enjoyment to [certain] categories of the disbelievers...

They said, “Then bring him before the eyes of the people that they may testify.”

And with them will be women limiting [their] glances...

He knows that which deceives the eyes...

And you will see them being exposed to the Fire, humbled from humiliation, looking from behind a covert glance.

And if We willed, We could have obliterated their eyes...

And the wife of Pharaoh said, “[He will be] a comfort of the eye for me and for you... and their hearts are void.

And therein is whatever the souls desire and [what] delights the eyes.

Those whose eyes had been within a cover [removed] from My remembrance.

Racing ahead, their heads raised up, their glance does not come back to them, and their hearts are void.

And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears...
And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears.

Those whose eyes had been within a cover [removed] from My remembrance.

So have they not traveled through the earth and observed how the end of those before them was.

This Qur'an is enlightenment for mankind and guidance and mercy for a people who are certain [in faith].

Say, "This is my way; I invite to Allah with insight And We have certainly created for Hell many of the jinn and mankind. They have hearts with which they do not understand, they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear. And among them are those who abuse the Prophet and say, “He is an ear.” And what can make you know what is [breaking through] the difficult pass? It is the freeing of a slave.

But they will never wish for it, ever, because of what their hands have put forth.

So woe to those who write the “scripture” with their own hands…

And the Jews say, “The hand of Allah is chained.”

For indeed, it is not eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts.

So whoever Allah wants to guide – He expands his breast to [contain] Islam; and whoever He wants to misguide – He makes his breast tight and constricted.
And your Lord knows what their breasts conceal and what they declare.

وُلِّدَنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِم مِّنْ غِلٍّ (43:7)

And We will have removed whatever is within their breasts of resentment…

إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ حَرَجٌ مِّنْهُ (13:59)

Indeed, those who dispute concerning the signs of Allah without [any] authority having come to them – there is not within their breasts except pride...

كَتَبَ أَنْزَلَ الْكُلُوكَ فَلَا يَكُن في صُدْرِكَ خَرَجُ مَنْهَةٌ (2:7)

[This is] a Book revealed to you, [O Muhammad] – so let there not be in your breast distress therefrom.

لَأَلْهَمُ أَنْتُ رَحْبَةً في صُدُورِهِم مِّنْ اللهِ (13:59)

You [believers] are more fearful within their breasts than Allah …

قَاتِلُوهُمْ يُعَذِّبُهُمْ اللَّهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ وَيُخْزِهِمْ وَيَنْصُرْكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ (14:9)

Fight them; Allah will punish them by your hands and will disgrace them and give you victory over them and satisfy the breasts of a believing people.

الَّذِي يُوَسِّوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ (5:16)

Who whispers [evil] into the breasts of mankind.

إِلَّا مِنْ أَكْرِمْ وَقَلْبِهِ مَطْمَئِنٌّ بِالِّبَيْنَ (16:106)

...except for one who is forced [to renounce his religion] while his heart is secure in faith…

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهِدُ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ (2:204)

And of the people is he whose speech pleases you in worldly life, and he calls Allah to witness as to what is in his heart.

وَأَصْبَحَ فُؤَادُ أُمِ مُوسَىٰ فَارِغًا ۖ إِن كَادَتْ لَتُبْدِي بِهِ (10:28)

She was about to disclose [the matter concerning] him had We not bound fast her heart that she would be of the believers.

وَلا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ ۖ وَمَن يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ آثِمَ قَلْبُهُ (283:2)

And do not conceal testimony, for whoever conceals it – his heart is indeed sinful.

إِلَّا مِنْ أَنْتَ اللَّهُ يَقْلِلُ سَلِيمَ (89:42)

But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart.

وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ (23:45)

... and [Allah] has set a seal upon his hearing and his heart.
And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disband ed from about you.

Who feared the Most Merciful unseen and came with a heart returning [in repentance] ... They [many of the jinn and mankind] have hearts with which they do not understand.

So have they not traveled through the earth and have hearts by which to reason.

... but He imposes blame upon you for what your hearts have earned.

And they said, “Our hearts are wrapped.”

And whoever turns his back to them on such a day... has certainly returned with anger [upon him] from Allah.

And when a messenger from Allah came to them confirming that which was with them... a party of those who had been given the Scripture threw the Scripture of Allah behind their backs...

...while they bear their burdens on their backs...

This is an expression which metaphorically means calamity will be joined to calamity.

On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their feet will bear witness against them as to their actions.

...they said, "Our Lord, pour upon us patience... and plant firmly our feet.”

And those who disbelieved will [then] say, “Our Lord, show us those who misled us of the jinn and men [so] we may put them under our feet that they will be among the lowest.

Allah has sent down the best statement: a consistent Book wherein is reiteration. The skins shiver therefrom of those who fear their Lord.

And they will say to their skins, "Why have you testified against us'’?
And He is the Most High, the Most Great.

...and for Allah is the highest attribute

...and you will be superior if you are [true] believers.
"And said, "I am your most exalted lord.

In an elevated garden.

No! Indeed, the record of the righteous is in 'illiyyun.

No! Indeed, the record of the wicked is in sijjeen.

Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire.

In case there is need to beat someone, Avoid slapping the face.

They are striking their faces and their backs.

And be patient, [O Muhammad], for the decision of your Lord, for indeed, you are in Our eyes.

And keep yourself patient [by being] with those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His countenance.

But as for those whose faces will turn white, [they will be] within the mercy of Allah.

On the Day [some] faces will turn white and [some] faces will turn black.

Their] assembly will be defeated, and they will turn their backs [in retreat].

Then how [will it be] when the angels take them in death, striking their faces and their backs?

So now, have relations with them

And when My servants ask you, [O Muhammad], concerning Me - indeed I am near.

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