

**مفهمة العالم في كلام الإمام علي (عليه السلام) وفق نظرية  
الإستعارة المفهومية : دراسة الإستعارات المفهومة وفق المأكولات**

**الدكتورة أفارين زارع**

**أستاذ مشارك ، قسم اللغة العربية وآدابها ، كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية ، جامعة شيراز ، إيران**

**[dr.afarin.zare@hotmail.com](mailto:dr.afarin.zare@hotmail.com)**

**Conceptualizing The World In The Words Of Imam Ali According  
to The Theory Of Conceptual Metaphor : An Investigation Of  
Metaphors Conceptualized Based On Comestibles**

**Dr. Afarin Zare**

**Associate Professor , Department of Arabic Language and Literature ,  
Faculty of Literature and Humanities , Shiraz University , Iran**

**[dr.afarin.zare@hotmail.c](mailto:dr.afarin.zare@hotmail.c)**

## المستخلص Abstract

الاستعارة مفهوم يوصل مجالين أو مفهومين بعيدين بعضهما إلى بعض آخر، وبساعد علي التعرف علي المفهوم الذهني من خلال المفهوم الملموس. إنها إحدى الآليات المعرفية التي تلعب دورا في تنظيم العقل البشري وإدراك المفاهيم المجردة.

تسعي الدراسة الحالية إلى اكتشاف المفاهيم التي تم القيام بها في سفر ثمين يسمى نهج البلاغة. لإنجاز ذلك درست المقالة الاستعارات المفاهيمية المفهومة وفق المأكولات في موضوع العالم من خلال مقارنة معرفية واستخدام نظرية الاستعارة التصورية لتكشف عن دور هذه الآلية المعرفية في مفهومة مفهوم العالم المجرد وإدراكه في خطاب أمير المؤمنين الإمام علي (عليه السلام).

أهم ما استنتجت الدراسة هي :

1. أن التحليلات تقدم أبعادا جديدة لخطاب نهج البلاغة وتبين أن الاستعارة التصورية تلعب دورا مهما في مفهومة العالم في هذا الخطاب، وهيكله مفهوم الدنيا دونها تكون صعبا للغاية.
2. تنوع المجالات المصدر (المأكولات) في مفهومة العالم في الخطاب العلوي يظهر مدى اتساع جوانب المجال الهدف من ناحية، ويؤدي إمام الإمام علي عليه السلام بكل هذه الجوانب وبراعته في بنائها وتصويرها من ناحية أخرى.

**الكلمات المفتاحية :** الاستعارة المفاهيمية ، العالم ، نهج البلاغة ، المجال المصدر، المجال الهدف .

Metaphor is a concept that connects two distant domains or concepts and helps with the recognition of a subjective concept from an objective and tangible one. It is one of the cognitive mechanisms of the cognitive semantics which plays a role in the organization of the human mind and perception of abstract concepts .

The current study is aimed to discover the conceptualizations made in a precious work named 'Nahj al-Balaghah.' To do so, with the cognitive approach and utilization of the theory of conceptual metaphor, investigated the conceptual metaphors of the world conceptualized based on comestibles, so that the role of this cognitive mechanism in conceptualization and perception of the abstract concept of the world in Amir Al-Momeneen Ali's discourse (PBUH) would be revealed .

The most important results of the current study are:

Analysis introduce new dimensions of Alavi's discourse in Nahj al-Balaghah, and indicate that conceptual metaphor plays an important role in the conceptualization of the world in Nahj al-Balaghah; without it, structuring of the concept of the world is very difficult. In this conceptualization, diversity of the source domains (Comestibles) in Alavi's discourse conveys the extensiveness of the target domain aspects on the one hand and, on the other hand, indicates the mastery of Imam Ali (PBUH) in all these aspects and his mastery in forming them .

**Key words :** Conceptual metaphor , world , Nahj al-Balaghah , source domain , target domain .

### 1- Introduction:

Nahj al-Balaghah, which consists of three sections of sermons, letters, and epigrams (Hikmah), is also known as the “Brother of Quran,” and after the Holy Quran and speech of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), is at the peak of eloquence (Fisahah) and rhetoric.

In this regard, it is worth reviewing examples of the sayings of the paramounds of Arabic literature in this regard: Abdul Hamid Katib, who was famous for his writing says: “I memorized 70 sermons of Imam Ali (PBUH) sermons. After that my mind thrived and thrived”.(Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Vol. 1, p.16)

Jahiz also, who is a well-known orator and one of the geniuses of Arabic literature, and his ‘Al-Bayan va Al-Tabyin’ book is one of the four bases of the Arabic literature, has praised Imam Ali’s sayings repeatedly, and has expressed his surprise about it. For example, on Page 83 of the first volume, he cites the famous saying of Imam Ali (PBUH): “قيمة كل امرئ ما يحسنه” (The value of everybody is the good things they do), and praises this saying, asserting that: “if this saying was the only statement in this book, not only I’d have found it enough, but more than enough, and it has done its best in fulfillment of its objective. The best speech is the one that is concise and makes you needless of many. The one whose meaning is evident in its words”. Then, he describes the narrator of this saying: “It seems that God Almighty, based on the intention [purity] and piety of the speaker, has covered the narrator with a garment of glory and wisdom.”

Even the enemy of Imam Ali (PBUH) has admitted the unrivaled eloquence and rhetoric of his speech. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, the poet, belletrist, and author of the greatest explanation of Nahj al-Balaghah, quotes the conversation between Mehfan ibn Abi Mehfan and Mu’awiya: “When Mehfan ibn Abi Mehfan turned his back on Ali (PBUH), and turned to Mu’awiya, to rejoice his heart, which was boiling with hatred of Imam Ali (PBUH), said: I have come from the most tongueless people; But Mu’awiyah was provoked by this flattery and shouted at him: Woe to you! How is Ali the most tongueless of people?! I swear by God that the Quraysh did not know eloquence before Ali, and it was Ali who taught the Quraysh eloquence” (Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, Vol. 1, p.16).

He, whose ‘Ayniyah’ ode in praise of Imam Ali (PBUH) was written all around his shrine in gold, also introduced him as the leader of the eloquent and the master of eloquence and said: People learned from him

to aesthetically speak and write (Ibid). According to what has been said, Nahj al-Balaghah is not a religious book or just a literary masterpiece, contrary to what some people think. Rather, it is a book that presents a comprehensive and noble human culture to all people at any time and any place; living according to this culture causes the growth and development of individuals and societies. This book also conveys pure monotheistic and Islamic teachings to its audience accurately and with an eloquent, beautiful and artistic language.

**1-1 Significance of the Study :**

Yes, the linguistic, literary, and innovative skills of this unparalleled work are known to the literatis. Undoubtedly, understanding the literary and artistic values of the discourse, which “is inferior to the speech of the Creator and superior to the words of the creatures,”(Ibid) owes to the aesthetics of this discourse, which will not be possible without the perception of its linguistic and literary subtleties.

That is why the investigation of Nahj al-Balaghah’s language, besides dealing with its themes, has been the subject of several studies and research from past to present.

However, in terms of the importance of investigation of world conceptualization in this valuable book, it should be said that among the abstract concepts that are conceptualized in an indescribable beautiful way conceptualized in Nahj al-Balaghah is the concept of the world. Recognition of the world as a living place for the man, where he had descended to from another world, and also moves from it to another world, contributes much to the man’s attitude at any time and place, his attitude towards the world, and the way to live in it, from the viewpoint of Imam Ali as the successor of the Prophet of God and such a scholar, pious, wise and littérateur figure. In the light of this knowledge and following it, all can live with peace, health, and success and become prosperous. But since the world is an abstract concept and it is very difficult for humans to understand abstract facts and spiritual matters, Amir al-Momenin has used cognitive linguistics and specifically the theory of conceptual metaphor to simplify the understanding of intangible concepts. Conceptual metaphor is a concept that has nothing to do with the meanings of the words, but is kind of mental activity and is related to conceptualization, has unique capabilities that penetrate into the hidden layers of the abstract concept and makes it understandable.

For this reason, the current research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the role of the theory of conceptual metaphor in the conceptualization of the world in Imam Ali's discourse?
2. Which comestibles are used as source domain in the conceptualization of the world in Nahj al-Balagha?

1-2- Review of Related Literature:

Among the related literature to the cognitive metaphor in Nahj al-Balaghah, the "Brother of Quran," the following can be noted:

- Imanian and Naderi (2013), besides defining the metaphor and expression differences between the traditional and modern views of it, have investigated some examples of metaphors in Nahj al-Balaghah. One of the results they have obtained is that the cognitive approach to the metaphors in Nahj al-Balaghah leads to a better understanding of the narrator's intention and his thoughts.

- Davoodi and Baharzadeh (2018), after comparing the traditional and cognitive metaphors, investigated the concept of "paradise" as an abstract concept in Nahj al-Balaghah sermons and extracted the most frequent metaphoric name-mapping and the source domains of the otherworldly paradise by the use of conceptual metaphor theory. The results of the study indicate that "the place" and "the green garden" have been more used for the description of the abstract concept of paradise than other source domains.

- Rastgoo (2019), first, with the provision of an introduction about the traditional eloquence and cognitive linguistics, has defined the cognitive metaphor and the concept of "sedition" and then investigated this abstract concept based on cognitive metaphor. She has concluded that the living-based megametaphor, sense-based cognitive metaphors, and the structure-based comprehensive metaphor are the base and foundation of conceptualization of sedition in Alavi discourse that has been used to explain the atmosphere mixed with doubt at the time of "sedition," insecurity and conflicts caused by "sedition."

- Kazemi Najafabadi (2020), based on cognitive metaphor, has investigated the concept of 'heart in Nahj al-Balaghah and described its cognitive aspects and ontological structures. Conceptualization of this abstract category has been done by personalification and its analogy to a container.

It should be noted that some studies have also been conducted in terms of the concept are introduced in the previous article (refer to Zare (2022), 213-214).

However, in terms of the concept of the world in Nahj al-Balaghah, whose repetition has been avoided since th

of the difference between the current study and the previous ones, it should be noted that despite the extensive investigations, no comprehensive research that has dealt with the study of all conceptualizations relevant to the domain of the world in the Nahj al-Balaghah language was found, and regarding the importance of this domain in the human life, and the special attention paid by Imam Ali (PBUH) to this important domain, the researcher intended to deal with this important subject; Therefore, by avoiding dealing with examples of different concepts or even selecting examples of the same concept (i.e. the world), which makes the research framework and as a result, its results not have enough depth and accuracy, only one abstract concept as the target domain was chosen from among all the abstract domains in Nahj al-Balaghah and a specific source domain (Comestibles) was also considered in its conceptualization. May it take a small step in serving the scientific communities.

(God grants success).

## 2- Theoretical Framework :

Metaphor, which has long been considered by scholars and literary figures, has come to the attention of linguists in recent years. However, the linguistic view of the metaphor is different from the traditional one. In the traditional view, the basis of metaphor is similarity, and it belongs to the word in a way that the meaning of the word is changed, and it is used with a meaning other than its conventional and original meaning. In fact, the traditional view sees the metaphor as a purely linguistic ornament of speech to embellish the words and create aesthetics ( Taftazani, N.D, p. 245) but the second view believes that metaphor occurs in the human mind, and the human mind actually has a metaphorical structure. Therefore, they do not confine the application of metaphor to poetry and a special literary tool. This view was formed with the rise of the cognitive sciences, especially cognitive linguistics, and emerged with the book “Metaphors We Live By” by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson.

Based on cognitive linguistics, conceptual metaphors connect two distant domains or concepts. The first domain (source domain) is more objective and among the tangible human experiences; however, the second (target domain) is subjective and far from the tangible human experiences. The correspondence is also done to understand the more abstract domain through the more concrete. For example, ‘boiling’ with ‘anger’ is a linguistic example of a very creative (prolific) conceptual metaphor of “ANGER IS A HOT FLUID” (Kövecses, 2004, p. 4).

“Anger” as the target domain is abstract and complex and understood by the source domain (hot fluid), which has a simpler structure and is tangible and experimental. In this way, in order to understand the unfamiliar domain of “anger”, the mind moves towards the familiar domain of “hot fluid” and takes help from its concepts; in this regard, it uses the words of the familiar domain to talk about the unfamiliar domain (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 52). In more technical terms, metaphor can be considered as a structured mapping from a source domain unto a target domain; there are ontological correspondences based on which entities in the target domain correspond to the entities of the source domain in a systematic way (Lakoff, 1993, p. 5).

The conceptual metaphor theory states that:

Metaphor is an attribute of the concepts, not the words. It is intended for a better understanding of the concepts and not the aesthetic objectives and embellishment of the words. It is usually not based on similarity. It is used by ordinary people in daily life and not specific to scholars and the belletrist. In fact, the metaphor is an inevitable process of human thinking and reasoning (Kövecses, 2010, x; Poor Ebrahim, 1394, p.p 29-30).

### 3- Data Analysis :

In this part, the metaphors “THE WORLD IS SWEET,” “THE SWEETNESS OF THE WORLD IS BITTER,” “A PART OF THE WORLD IS SWEET”, “A PART OF THE WORLD IS BITTER,” “THE WORLD IS WATER,” “THE ASSETS OF THE WORLD ARE WATER,” “THE WORLD IS DRINKING WATER,” “THE PLEASURES OF THE WORLD ARE BITTER AND SALTY WATER,” “THE WORLD OF THE FRIENDS OF GOD IS RAW WATER,” and “THE WORLD IS EDIBLE” are investigated. To do so, the Alavi expressions that include the metaphors of the ‘world’ with the concept of ‘edible’ are extracted from the whole Nahj al-Balaghah, and the inter-conceptual mappings in each metaphor are shown. In these

## Conceptualizing The World In The Words Of Imam Ali..... (538)

metaphors, the world is the target domain, and each of the source domains:sweet, bitter, water, drinking water, bitterly salty, raw water, and edible, reveal one or more aspects of the concept of the world.

### 1- THE WORLD IS SWEET:

وَهِيَ حُلُوَّةٌ خَضِرَاءُ (الخطبة ٤٥). أَمَا بَعْدُ، فَإِنِّي أَحَدَّرْتُكُمْ الدُّنْيَا فَإِنَّهَا حُلُوَّةٌ خَضِرَاءُ (الخطبة ١١٠).

Imam Ali (PBUH) describes some interesting but deceptive characteristics of the world. He asserts that the world is sweet and green. From the analogy of the world to sweetness, the conceptual metaphor of 'WORLD IS SWEET is obtained.

Source domain: Sweet	Target domain: The world
Making sweet food	Making
Eating/drinking sweet food	Perceiving
Digesting	Understanding
Being sweet And pleasant	Enjoying

The perceived structural similarities between the subjective concept of the world and the objective concept of sweetness indicate that as we make sweet food such as syrups, cookies, cakes, candies, or jellies, we make the world with our selections and performance. Through eating/drinking sweet food, we feel its taste, and through living in the world, we perceive it. We digest sweet food. We also experience the world and perceive it. Sweet food is pleasant for us. The world, its nature, its manifestations and splendors such as family, spouse, children, fame, wealth, power, welfare, comfort, and the like are also enjoyable and sweet for us; We crave and strive for them and strive to achieve them.

The reason Imam Ali (PBUH) uses the two senses of taste and sight among all senses is that the taste is related to the stomach and the sight is related to the eye, and the people interested in the world pay most attention to their stomach and eyes. The eye sees, and the heart strives. It is due to this seeing and striving that the whole life is spent to obtain what is seen and strived. Other senses also follow these two. That is why we see most people love to eat delicious food without ensuring it is Halal or Haram. Also, seeing what they take pleasure in is enough for them without ensuring it is allowable or banned and what its effects will be



## Conceptualizing The World In The Words Of Imam Ali..... (539)

(Naghavi, N.D., Vol. 6, p.p 474- 475). For this reason, the Imam (PBUH) warns the audience against the world.

### 2- THE SWEETNESS OF THE WORLD IS BITTER:

Indeed, it should be noted that the sweetness and pleasure of the world are not real and lasting. This reality is perceived in other parts of Imam Ali's (PBUH) speech:

وَحَلُّوْهَا صَبِيْرٌ (الخطبة ١١٠)

i.e., the Sweetness of the world is bitter.

### 3- A Part of the World is Sweet, and the other Part of it is Bitter:

وَإِنْ جَانِبٌ مِنْهَا اِعْذُوْبٌ وَّاحْلُوْلِي، أَمْرٌ مِنْهَا جَانِبٌ فَأُوْبِي (a)  
i.e., if a part of the world is sweet and pleasant, the other is bitter and cholera-inflicted (sick).

Source domain: bitter

Target domain: a part of the world

Not to be delectable

Hardships, sufferings, pains

It tastes bad

Not a bed of roses

Regarding the conceptual mapping between the source and target domains, we come to this perception that there is no complete pleasure and sweetness in this world. If the man is prosperous in some aspects and enjoys the sweetness of the world, he would taste the bitterness of the world in some other aspects. For example, if he is healthy but not rich, or if he has good children but is harassed by bad relatives or neighbors, or despite a wealthy life, he has a spouse or children that embarrass him, or even cannot enjoy his wealth due to sickness... all these issues make the man taste the bitterness of the world and know that the worldly pleasures are not pure. The sweetness and bitterness and the pleasure and pain are mixed. The world is ever-changing, and man would be inflicted with what is not pleasurable to him (Mousavi, 1376, Vol. 2, p. 270; Dakhil, 1366, Vol. 9-10, p. 92). "Efa'u'al" (افعوعل) gerund is used for exaggeration

(Shoushtari, 1366, Vol. 11, p. 455). "A'azuzab" (اعذوذب) and "Ehlula" (احلولي) mean exaggeratedly became sweet and delectable. In this regard, Imam Ali (PBUH) indicates the exaggeration of the tastiness and sweetness of the world and its pleasures in the eye of a human and conveys this concept to him that contrary to his supposition, the world and its pleasures are not much sweet and delectable.

(b) مَرَارَةُ الدُّنْيَا حَلَاوَةٌ وَّحَلَاوَةُ الدُّنْيَا مَرَارَةُ الْآخِرَةِ (الحكمة ٢٤٣):

## Conceptualizing The World In The Words Of Imam Ali..... (540)

Following the taste of the world, Imam Ali (PBUH) states that the bitterness of the world is the sweetness of the hereafter and the sweetness of the world is the bitterness of the hereafter. From these metaphorical phrases, two primary metaphors are resulted:

1- Hardships are bitter, 2- Comfort is sweet. In this regard, the tolerance of hardships, entanglements, illnesses, pains, sufferings, and generally, the adversities in the short and transient world leads to lasting comfort, peace, convenience, welfare, happiness and delight in the hereafter. The opposite is also true, i.e., the comfort, repose, and welfare of the world would lead to hardship, pain, and suffering in the hereafter. As the world and the hereafter do not come together, collecting the worldly and the hereafter ease and comfort and the suffering and pains of both together is impossible. In other words, the comfort of one is the suffering in the other, and the suffering of one is the comfort in the other.

In the Alavi speech, we have dealt with so far, the audience is the public; however, in the same speech, and regarding the subject of the study, we can see that Imam Ali's audience is a special group, and he has depicted the world for them in another form.

4- The world is some Drops of Honey:

بَلْ هِيَ مَجَّةٌ مِنْ لَذِيذِ الْعَيْشِ يَنْطَعَمُونَهَا بِرَهَةٍ ثُمَّ يَلْفُظُونَهَا جُمْلَةً (الخطبة ٨٦)

Imam Ali (PBUH) informs about the Umayyad Dynasty in this sermon that will rule and come to power and earn wealth. However, their reign would not last long, and their share of the sweet life of the world would be only some drops of honey they taste for a while and then bring it up. They lose power and wealth ( Abduh, N.D, Vol. 1, p. 154; Ibn Maitham, 1362, Vol. 2, p.p 304, 305).

Source domain: Honey drops

Target domain: The world

Sweetness

Being enjoyable

Being little

Shortness

To conceptualize the world, Imam Ali (PBUH) has used the source domain of “some drops of honey.” As seen, in the domain of ‘some drops of honey, the sweetness and insignificance are mapped in the target domain ‘world,’ and categories such as the way the honey is made, the honey maker, the type of the flowers from which the honey is made, the ingredients of honey, etc. are not important in conveying the intended message. In fact, in the conceptualization of the target domain, only a specific framework of the source domain is considered, in a way that

only specific and objective attributes of the target domain are highlighted ( Evans & Green, 2006, p.p 303- 304) .

In the following, in another sermon of Nahj al-Balaghah, we can see that Imam Ali (PBUH) has explained how the world became sweet to the Umayyad Dynasty. Because the reason and the way it becomes sweet is not relevant to the current study, we have avoided dealing with it, and only the section of the sermon that speaks of the sweetness of the world is mentioned:

فَمَا احْلَوْلْتُ لَكُمْ الدُّنْيَا فِي لَدَّتِهَا ... (الخطبة ١٠٤).

5- THE WORLD IS WATER/ WORLD ASSETS ARE WATER:

وَلَوْ صَبَّيْتُ الدُّنْيَا بِجَمَّاتِهَا عَلَى الْمُنَافِقِ عَلَى أَنْ يُحِبَّنِي مَا أَحَبَّنِي (الحكمة ٤٢)

‘Jammah’ is the place in which water is collected, which is here a metaphor for all assets in the world, both invaluable and valuable ones (Ibn Maitham, 1362, Vol. 5, p. 267). The verb ‘Sabba’ is also used for water and the like ( Anis & et al., 1367).

In fact, Imam Ali (PBUH) states: If I give all the possession in the world to the hypocrite to make him like me, he won’t.

In this Hikmah, we face two conceptual metaphors. One is ‘WORLD IS WATER,’ and the other is ‘ASSETS OF THE WORLD ARE WATER.’ In both metaphors, the source domain is water. However, the target domain in the first metaphor is the ‘world,’ and in the second one, is the ‘assets of the world.’ In both metaphors, in addition to the normal mappings, we can see a type of creative modeling. It can be said that the most important case in confirmation of this creativity is that Imam Ali (PBUH) has described the world as water and its possessions as pouring the water. As the water is the essence of the life, and living is not possible without it, the world also, as a place of living for the man, and its onesassets as tools to meet his needs, play an important role in human life, and the living is not possible without these two. As we make the container the virtually the owner of the water we pour it in, by giving the world possessions to the hypocrite also, we make him virtually the owner of them. As the man does not use the water except for when he is thirsty, or for washing and the like, the hypocrisy of the hypocrites is also contrary to the faith, love, and friendship of God, so even with granting a lot of wealth, he sees no need to love the Hujjah of God.

The discussion of faith, infidelity, and hypocrisy that is raised and manifested in the religious texts, It leads to the emergence of a new viewpoint to the world, which is different from the non-religious texts.

## Conceptualizing The World In The Words Of Imam Ali..... (542)

The analyzed conceptual metaphor in the 44<sup>th</sup> Hikmah of Nahj al-Balaghah is an example of this difference.

### 6- THE WORLD IS DRINKING WATER:

(a) قَلَمَ بَيِّقَ مِنْهَا إِلَّا صُبَابَةٌ كَصُبَابَةِ الْإِنَاءِ اصْطَبَّتْهَا صَابُهَا (الخطبة ٤٢):.

From the world, there is a small amount left for each person, like the little water left at the bottom of the container that the keeper has kept for himself.

The water left in the container → the little remnant of the world

Two concepts come to mind from this expression from Imam Ali (PBUH).

First, he has warned the people about following their vagaries and having too many wishes since the world is passing so fast, and human life also ends rapidly. So, there is no time for unattainable wishes and following the sensual desires (Ibn Maitham, 1362, Vol. 2, pp. 107- 108; Mousavi, 1376, Vol. 1, p. 320).

To completely explain the intended meaning (the domain of the world and shortness of the worldly life) as an abstract concept, Imam Ali (PBUH) uses the water, which is tangible, as the source domain.

Source domain: The water at the bottom of the container Target domain: The world

Source of All Life	The necessity of the existence of the world
Being little	Shortness of world
The pace of drinking	The pace of world passage
Being valuable	Being a prize

As water is the essence of life, living in the world is also necessary for man, and he cannot move to the hereafter without it, and he should prepare his luggage for eternal life.

As the amount of water at the bottom of a container is small, the opportunity of living in this world is also very short for the man compared to his eternal life in the hereafter

(Dakhil,1366, Vol. 4, p. 3 of footnote).

As the act of drinking the water is fast since it is a liquid, the human life in this world is also passing fast.

As the man knows the value of the small amount of water left at the bottom of the container and tries not to waste it, it is necessary that the

human beings also take advantage of the short opportunity of living in the world and make the best of every moment of it to prepare appropriate luggage for the eternal life.

And the second concept: As the water is the Source of All Life , the consolidation of the world is also due to the presence of the righteous. God Almighty has told his messenger Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in a Hadith Qudsi that: If it were not for you, I would not have created the heavens, and just as the drinker of water drank all of it and left nothing but a little, the saints and the virtuous also migrated from the world, leaving just Imam Ali (PBUH) and a few of his pious follower (Naghavi, Vol. 6, p. 344). For a better understanding of this metaphor, it is necessary to investigate the attributes of the water, which is considered the source domain:

Pure water is transparent. Pious people are also limpid. The small amount of water is colorless, and too much of it looks blue. A few people in the world are limpid and colorless (they do not have many faces). Because water is liquid and needs no chewing, drinking it is done fast. Human life, especially that of the righteous, also passes rapidly.

The water left at the bottom of the container is precious for the man who has just this little amount, and he knows its value. In this regard, the few pious left in the world are valuable to others, and they should value their existence. In fact, Imam Ali (PBUH) tells the people of his time to appreciate the value of the short time he is among them and to use this in the best way possible.

(b) وكثير منها ما كان صفوًا، فلم يبقَ منها إلا سَمَلَةٌ كَسَمَلَةِ الإداوَةِ أو جُرْعَةٌ كَجُرْعَةِ المَقَلَةِ لو تَمَرَزَّها الصَّدِيانُ لم يَنفَعِ (الخطبة ٥٢).

In this section of the sermon, Imam Ali (PBUH) addresses the changes and evolutions in the states of the world, the shortness of it, and the shortness of its opportunities, following the description of the impermanence of the world: What was limpid in the world became dark, so nothing is left from it but a small amount at the bottom of the container that is given to people at the time of water shortage and rationing. If this amount of water is given to the thirsty person, his thirst will never be quenched.

Since the world is among the fundamental concepts in Nahj al-Balaghah, the first Imam of the Muslims still tries to describe it in a way that provides the audience with a comprehensive recognition of it. As we know, “limpidity” is among the attributes of water. Therefore, regarding

## Conceptualizing The World In The Words Of Imam Ali..... (544)

this section of Sermon 52 of Nahj al-Balaghah, “WORLD IS WATER,” which is a mega-structural metaphor is obtained. In this mega-metaphor, we face two subjective and objective concepts: “World” is a subjective concept, and “water” is an objective one. To understand this metaphor, we have used the metaphoric focal points or lexical signs of the language of the “Brother of the Holy Quran”, which are based on the change and reduction. In this metaphor, also, like other conceptual metaphors, the mapping from the source domain (water) to the target domain (world) is done. The following mappings have been created based on the same modeling.

Source domain: Water	Target domain: The world
Becoming dark	Impermanence of the states
Unpleasant	Vanishing of the joy and pleasure
What is left at the bottom of the container	Passage of most of the time in the world and a little time being left
A sip	The triviality of worldly life and opportunities
Not thirst-quenching	The world-seeker dissatisfaction with the worldly pleasures

As seen in the metaphor “WORLD IS WATER,” some aspects of the concept of the world, i.e., the transformation and instability of the states, being transient, shortness of the opportunities, and endless attachment to the world, are understood by the source domain (water):

As the limpid water darkens over time, the states of the world are also impermanent . The youth, beauty, happiness, health, wealth, power, strength, dignity, comfort, life, etc., are turned into oldness, ugliness, sorrow, disease, deprivation, weakness, hardship, death, etc.

As water is unpleasant after darkening, the transformation of the pleasures is also not pleasant for the man.

As a small amount of water is left in a container full of water, and a sip that, if drunk by a thirsty person, would not quench his thirst, the worldly life is short, and there is nothing left from this very short opportunity.

Imam Ali (PBUH) describes the insignificance of water left at the bottom of the container as the very small amount given to people at the time of rationing, and this way, emphasizes the pace of world time

## Conceptualizing The World In The Words Of Imam Ali..... (545)

passage and the little time left. In fact, he asks the people to know the value of life and divine blessings and use them well before they are gone.

Another interesting point that can be received from the words of Nahj al-Balaghah is that as one sip of water does not quench the thirst of a thirsty person, the world, with all its splendor and sweetness, does not satisfy man to the extent that he is attached to the world until the end of his life and wants to enjoy its pleasures.

7- Worldly Pleasures ARE Salty Bitter Water:

عَذْبُهَا أَجَاجٌ... (الخطبة ١١٠)

Imam Ali (PBUH) depicts the pleasures and joys of the world in this section of the sermon. “Adhb,” meaning delectable, is used for both water and food, and here, is a metaphor for the “pleasures.” “Ojaj” means a saltiness that is bitter and used for water. For example, God Almighty states in Holy Quran that:

(وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخًا وَحِجْرًا مَحْجُورًا) (الفرقان/٢٥)

“Sarwar: It is He who has joined the two seas; one palatable and sweet, the other bitterly salty and has established a barrier between them as a partition” (Al-Furqan, 53).

And here, it is a metaphor for being unpleasant. Imam Ali (PBUH) describes worldly pleasures to be salty and unpleasant. To understand this concept, we should see how is the systematic mapping between the two conceptual domains of the source (salty water) and target:

Source domain: Bitterly salty water	Target domain: Pleasures/Joys
Does not quench the thirst	The tendency is endless
Increases the thirst	Increases the tendency
Tastes bad and unpleasant	Is associated with suffering

As the bitterly salty water not only does not quench the thirst but also increases it, the man’s tendency and love for worldly pleasures are also endless, and the more he enjoys them, the more he desires to benefit more. Just as water - This Source of All Life - turns bitter and burns the throat in case of high salinity, so the pleasures are not pure but are mixed with pains and sufferings and make the human palate bitter.

Therefore, what Imam Ali (PBUH) intends to say is that any “pleasure” is accompanied by a “displeasure”, and there is no pure joy. For example, for an athlete to get the Olympics gold medal, he should

## Conceptualizing The World In The Words Of Imam Ali..... (546)

exercise for years ceaselessly, reduce his food, sleep, rest, leisure, and ... even be away from his family for months to get prepared for the competition. He should struggle with the hardships to finally get the medal. As seen, obtaining what is desired, while enjoyable, is painful. As a result, we should not be seduced by the pleasures and joys of the world and not be attached to them. This fact is expressed by God Almighty in Verse 4 of Surah AL-Balad, centuries ago: “that We have created the human being to face a great deal of hardship without a doubt.” So, the nature of the world is hardship, difficulties and also discomforts and its pleasures are not pure.

A delicate and thought-provoking point about this metaphor is that Imam Ali (PBUH) has described the pleasure of the world to be bitterly salty water and not salty or salt. It can be said the reason is that as the water is essential for human and all creatures' lives, the presence of worldly pleasures is also necessary, and one cannot live in a world without pleasures. However, as the bitterly salty water is also a type of water existing in nature, and it is useful and even necessary for nature and human life, the presence of suffering beside the pleasures is also necessary for the man, and it makes him grow and excel.

### 8- THE WORLD IS RAW WATER:

لم يُصَفِّهَا اللهُ تَعَالَى لِأَوْلِيَائِهِ وَلَمْ يَضُنَّ بِهَا عَلَى أَعْدَائِهِ (الخطبة ١١٢)

Continuing the description of the world, the King of Speech, Imam Ali (PBUH), still explains this subjective domain (world) through the objective domain of “water.” The water that God Almighty has not purified for his friends. Purification means refining and filtering. Water purification is also any process that improves the quality and makes it usable for a specific end-use such as drinking, irrigation, industrial use, etc. Now, let us see what is meant by this concept:

Source domain: Raw water  
friends of God

Target domain: The world of

- Infected with a variety of pathogens.
- Contains harmful minerals and organic substances.
- Contains toxins and chemicals.

It is full of calamity, tribulation, pain, and suffering.



The metaphorical imagery is obtained by a combination of these two concepts and depicts the connection of the world to God's friends and untreated water. As untreated water contains impurities that are harmful and pathogenic, and drinking such water causes human suffering, the world is also full of all kinds of calamities, hardships, entanglement and sufferings for the friends of God, that makes them uncomfortable; According to the history of the prophets and imams lives, their lives were full of persecution and torment they endured from the people of their time, and this is while they have spent their lives and property in the way of guiding these people and have not saved anything for themselves; For example, the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) whose evident attributes were eating little, shortness of sleep, and inattention to the adornment of the world, after spending all the property of his kind and devoted wife, Hazrat Khadijeh Kobra (God bless her) in the service of the religion of God, spent three years in the Shi'b Abi Talib, starving to death, and contenting themselves with a little food to keep them alive; Of course, it was God's will that the world not be purged of suffering for His friends, because He has honored them and made it worthless compared to the Hereafter (Mousavi,1376, Vol. 2, p. 282; Hashemi Khoei, 1358, vol. 8, p. 44)

9. THE WORLD IS EDIBLE:

a) فَنَأْسَ بِنَبِيِّكَ الْأَطْيَبِ الْأَطْهَرِ... قَضَمَ الدُّنْيَا قَضْمًا ... (الخطبة ١٥٩)

“Qadhm” means biting with the side of the teeth. Eating dry food. On the contrary, “Khadhm” means eating something with all teeth and eating wet food; It also means eating in general and eating by filling the whole mouth (Ibn Manzur, 2005).

Imam Ali (PBUH) invites the audience to follow the Holy Prophet (PBUH), who is the most beloved servant of God and the best role model for all mankind. Among the prominent attributes of this role model was that he ate the world like a dry food with the side of his teeth and not with all his mouth. The metaphor: “WORLD IS EDIBLE.” is depicted in the words of Imam Ali (PBUH). The mapping between the source domain (edible) and target domain (the world) indicates that as eating dry food is more difficult than eating wet food, the abandonment of the world and its deceptive splendours and glamour behind is also difficult, and as filling the mouth with a food indicates the man's interest in that food, the efforts to enjoy more of the world, manifest his fascination with the world and its pleasures. But the Holy Prophet and the guide of human

## Conceptualizing The World In The Words Of Imam Ali..... (548)

beings towards eternal happiness, due to his recognition of the world and its nature, not only did he not have a heart for the world and was not fascinated by it, but even he ate only the nourishment of the world as much as he needed, and never made his stomach full of it. That is why Imam Ali (PBUH) describes him as such: “he had the thinnest flank and the emptiest and thinnest belly among the people.”

(B) وَقَدْ أَخْبَرَكَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُنَافِقِينَ... بَقُوا بَعْدَهُ فَتَقَرَّبُوا إِلَى أَيْمَةِ الضَّلَالَةِ... وَجَعَلُوهُمْ حُكَّامًا عَلَى رِقَابِ النَّاسِ فَأَكَلُوا بِهِمُ الدُّنْيَا... (الخطبة ٢٠١).

This section of the sermon describes the hypocrites who were among the companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). But after him they approached the leaders of aberration and, with their support, made them the rulers of the people; then, they ate the world with the help of these rulers ...

The conceptual metaphor of “THE WORLD IS EDIBLE” is obtained from the phrase “they ate the world.” Now, we should see how the hypocrites ate the world. First, it can be said that by ‘world,’ a part of its belongings is meant. Then, the metaphorical imagery is obtained through the combination of these two concepts (eating and the belongings of the world) that depicts the relationship between worldly fame, power, and wealth and the ‘eating.’ As eating is pleasurable for the man, earning worldly power, wealth, and fame is also joyful. However, as the edible is finished up, and eating is not permanent, the wealth, power, and fame also do not last forever, and they are passed to others after a while. As eating badly and eating unhealthy food harms the man’s health, the abuse of the positions, power, wealth, and the like is also harmful to the man and prevents salvation. This is how in Islamic teachings, the hypocrites do not have a happy ending and are even in the worst degrees of hell: “The hypocrites will be in the lowest place of the Fire, you will not find a helper for them” (An-Nisa, 145).

وَأَعْلَمُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ أَنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ... سَكَنُوا الدُّنْيَا بِأَفْضَلِ مَا سَكَنَتْ وَأَكَلُوا بِأَفْضَلِ مَا أَكَلَتْ... (الكتاب ٢٧) C).

According to Imam Ali (PBUH), the pious have resided in the best houses of the world that can be inhabited and eaten the world with the best edible thing. It is extracted from the words of Imam Ali (PBUH) that by ‘eating the world,’ worldly nourishment is meant. Among the attributes of the pious is that they eat the best nourishment in the world, wear the best clothes, and live in the best houses. Indeed, it does not contradict religiosity and piety because they donate the best things that

## Conceptualizing The World In The Words Of Imam Ali..... (549)

God has provided for them in the cause of Him; They avoid extravagance and waste and take care not to be infected with arrogance, pride, and other knaveries and vices. Obviously, 'eating the world' by the pious is way much different from 'eating the world' by the hypocrites. The pious become wealthy by working, not oppressing others and trampling on their rights, and not in ways that are against the Sharia. However, they do not consider themselves to be the owner of what they own. They oblige themselves to spend to please God and use the same wealth to solve the problems of others. However, the hypocrites earn wealth and power by oppressing the oppressed and through the ways banned by Sharia. Then, they use the same power and wealth to impose more power and pressure on the middle and weak strata of society, and this is why they are hated by everyone.

### Results :

1. Since every metaphor has a source domain, a target domain, and mappings from the source to the target domain (Lakoff, 1987, p. 276), and since according to the theory of conceptual metaphor, humans intrinsically perceive one domain as another domain; to put it better, they perceive a subjective unknown concept that is far from their perceptible experience, through a known objective concept that is among their perceptible experiences, and also since these experiences are the result of humans connection with the physical world around them, Imam Ali (PBUH) has exploited the same experiences and basic concepts in the human mind and conceptualized the world and other abstract affairs for them in the best possible way.

The metaphoric language of Nahj al-Balaghah, through forming the structure of the audience's experiences and establishment of a relationship between these experiences and the various intangible concepts like the world, and paves the way for the audience in order to make them able to understand the supreme concepts and abstract facts. In this way, in order to understand the unfamiliar domain (The world), the mind moves towards various familiar domains such as "Water" and talks about corresponding concepts in the metaphorically defined domain (The world) by using the lexicon and also the concepts of those familiar domains (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 52). As we see, it is very difficult to structure

the intangible concept of the world without using the theory of conceptual metaphor.

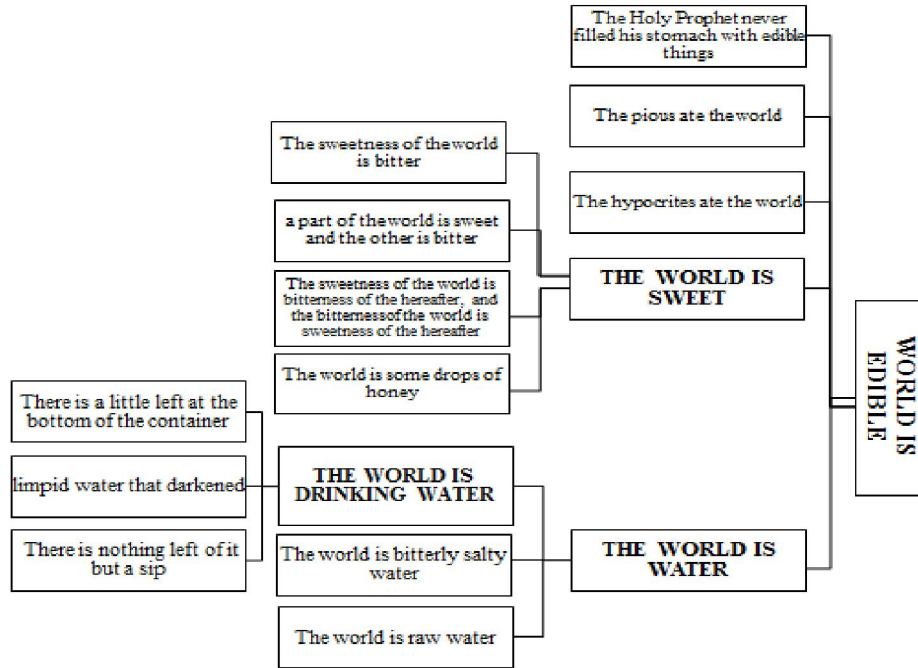
2. In the current study, the conceptualization of the world in Nahj al-Balaghah was investigated based on the theory of conceptual metaphor and on the basis of edibility and, in some cases, non-edibility of the world. The results indicate that the concept of the world has been depicted with the help of drinks with three tastes of sweetness, bitterness, and saltiness (normal saltiness and bitterly saltiness), and in some cases, even without any tastes. Each of these concepts reveals an aspect of the world, and different mappings of these domains lead to understanding some aspects of the world. The remarkable point in this conceptualization is the diversity of a source domains to completely perceive a target domain (here, the world). Reasons for this are firstly: Target domains have a unique attribute: we should inevitably use several source domains to understand them, and secondly: Due to the limitation of metaphorical mappings and their being partial, in each conceptual metaphor, only a part of the source domain is used for understanding the target domain, which is called partial metaphorical utilization (Ibid, pp. 91-103) and Thirdly: The partial structure of the source domain makes a conceptual metaphor to highlight only one or more aspects of the concept of the target domain. As a result, other aspects are left out of the center of focus of metaphor and actually become hidden. This highlighting and hiding are always associated (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003, p. 10). To put it briefly: No source domain can structure all aspects of the target domain, but can structure only some specific aspects of it.

3. Among conceptual metaphors about the concept of the world in Alavi's fascinating and effective discourse, the conceptual metaphor "THE WORLD IS RAW WATER", is creative and innovative.

The formation of the metaphor "THE WORLD IS EDIBLE", can be considered new according to the different people specified in the table below. It can be said about other conceptual metaphors, even if they are not creative, their linguistic expressions are innovative, which originated from creativity of an unparalleled orator's mind.

Finally, to better understand the conceptual metaphors analyzed in the current study, the following table is also presented :

Adab Al-Kufa Journal No. 54 / P2 First Jumadaa 1444 / Dec 1, 2022	ISSN Print 1994 – 8999 ISSN Online 2664-469X	مجلة آداب الكوفة العدد: ٥٤ / ج ٢ جمادى الأولى ١٤٤٤ هـ / كانون الأول ٢٠٢٢ م
---	---	--



**References**

1. Abduh, M. (n.d.). *Sharh Nahj al-Balagha*. Abdul Hamid, M. M. (Ed.). Cairo: Al-Istiqama Library.
2. Anis, I., Montaser. A. A., Al-Sawahi, A. & Ahmad, M. Kh. A. (1367). Sabba, in *Al-Mújam al-Wasit* (p.505). Tehran: Islamic Culture Publishing Office.
3. Dakhil, A. M. (1987). *Sharh Nahj al-Balagha*. Beirut: Dar al-Balaghah.
4. Davoodi, A. & Baharzadeh, P. (2018). Conceptual metaphors of paradise in Nahj al-Balagha sermons: Case study from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. *Pazhuhesh Ha-ye Nahj al-Balaghah (Nahj al-Balaghah Research) Journal*, 17, (58), pp. 83-106.
5. Evans, V. & Green, M. (2006). *Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction*. Britain: Edinburg University Press.
6. Grady, J., E. (1997). *Foundations of meaning: Primary metaphors and primary science*. A dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in linguistics. Berkeley: University of California.
7. Hashemi Khoei, M. H., Hassanzadeh Amoli, H. & Kamarei, M. B. (1985). *Minhaj al-Baraa'a fi sharh Nahj al-Balagha*. Mianji, I. (Ed.). Tehran: Islamic Library.
8. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid, A. H. (2007). *Sharh Nahj al-Balagha*. Ibrahim, M. (Ed.). Vol. 1, Baghdad, Dar Al-Kitab Al-Arabi.
9. Ibn Maitham al-Bahrani, K. (1983). *Sharh Nahj al-Balagha*. Nashr al-Kitab Office.

## Conceptualizing The World In The Words Of Imam Ali..... (552)

10. Ibn Manzur M. (2005). Qadhm, and Khadhm in Lisan al-Árab. (Vol. 3, p. 3252, Vol. 2, p. 2139). Beirut: AL-Aalami Library.
11. Imanian, H. & Naderi, Z. (۲۰۱۳). Orientational metaphors in Nahj-albalagha: A cognitive perspective. *Pazhuheshnameh Nahj al-Balaghah (Research of Nahj al-Balagha) Journal*, 1, (4), pp. 73-92.
12. Jāhiz, A. (1998). *Al-Bayan wa al-Tābyin*. Haroun, A. S.(Ed.). 1th Volume, 7<sup>th</sup> Edition, Cairo: Al-Khanji Library.
13. Kazemi Najafabadi, S. (2020). Cognitive metaphors of heart in Nahj al-Balagha. *Pazhuhesh nameh-ye Nahj al-Balaghah (Nahj al-Balaghah Research) Journal*, 8, (32), pp. 1-19.
14. Kövecses, Z. (2004). *Metaphor and Emotion: Language, Culture, and Body in Human Feeling*, Cambridge University Press.
15. Kövecses, Z. (2010). *Metaphor: A practical introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
16. Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
17. Lakoff, G. (1987). *Women, fire, and dangerous things what categories reveal about the mind*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
18. Lakoff, G. (1993). The contemporary theory of metaphor. In Andrew Ortony (ed.) *Metaphor and Thought* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) (202- 251). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
19. Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (2003). *Metaphors we live by*. London: The University of Chicago Press.
20. Mousavi, S. A. A. (1997). *Sharh Nahj al-Balagha*, Beirut: Dar al-RRasool al-Akram - Dar al-Muhaja al-Bayda.
21. Naghavi ghaeni Khorasani. (n.d.). *Miftah al-Saádat Fi Sharh Nahj al-Balagha*. Tehran: Al-Mustafawi Library.
22. Poor Ebrahim, SH. (2014). The conceptualizations of life in Quranic Language. *Zaban pazhuhi (Language Research) Journal*, 6, (10), pp. 63-83.
23. Poor Ebrahim, SH. (2015). Cognitive mechanisms and their role in do'a conceptualization. *Zaban Shenakht (Cognitive Language) Journal*, 6, (11), pp. 25-44.
24. Rastgoo, C. (2019). A cognitive study of the metaphorical constructions of the concept of sedition in Nahj al-Balaghah based on Likoff and Johnson theory. *Pazhuhesh nameh-ye Alavi (Alavi Research) Journal*, 10, (20), pp. 1-24.
25. Sharif Radi S. M. (1991). *Nahj al-Balagha*, Faidh al-Islam, A. N. (Trans. & Edit.). Tehran: Faidh al-Islam Publications.
26. Shoushtari, M. N. (1997). *Bahj al-Sabagha fi Sharh Nahj al-Balagha*, Tehran: Amir Kabir Publications.
27. Taftazani, S. A. (n.d.). *Mukhtasar alMaáni*. Qom, Dar Al-Fikr Publication.
28. Zare, A. (2022). The animalification of the world in Nahj al-Balaghah: The cognitive approach. *Alameed Journal*. 11, (42), pp. 212-237.