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STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH RELIGIOUS PROVERBS

Asst. Teacher Alaa Mortada Jassem

College of Agricultural Engineering- University of Baghdad

alaa.m@ircoedu.uobaghdad.edu.iq

ABSTRACT

Religious proverbs often exhibit unique stylistic and rhetorical devices which serve various purposes and functions (e.g. influencing attention, meeting aesthetic standards, displaying a means of adorning and embellishing the pattern of communication and diversity of expressions). Thus, the present paper aims at identifying stylistic devices as used in The Biblical proverbs in terms of their and eliciting the functions of behind the use of these devices. A sample of thirty Biblical proverbs is selected to be the data of the study. Data analysis of the use of the stylistic devices in these proverbs is made, focusing on the purposes of these devices. The study concludes that Biblical proverbs show several rhetorical devices such as simile, metaphor, parallelism, personification, repetition, hyperbole, metonymy and antithesis, used to evince or emphasize religious perspectives associated with social life; they furthermore display literary and aesthetic effects which help to ensure the memorability of these proverbs

Keywords : *Proverbs, Religious Proverbs, Stylistics, Rhetorical Devices*

المستخلص

غالبًا ما تُظهر الأمثال الدينية أساليب بلاغية فريدة تخدم أغراضًا ووظائف متنوعة (مثل التأثير على الانتباه، وتلبية المعايير الجمالية، وعرض وسيلة لترزين نمط التواصل وإضفاء مزيد من التنوع على التعبير). لذا، تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى تحديد الأساليب البلاغية المستخدمة في الأمثال التوراتية، واستكشاف وظائفها الكامنة. وقد تم اختيار عينة من ثلاثين مثالًا توراتيًا لتكون بيانات الدراسة. وتم تحليل استخدام الأساليب البلاغية في هذه الأمثال، مع التركيز على أغراضها. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن الأمثال التوراتية تُظهر العديد من الأساليب البلاغية، مثل التشبيه، والاستعارة، والتوازي، والتجسيد، والتكرار، والمبالغة، والمجاز المرسل، والتضاد، والتي تُستخدم لإظهار أو تأكيد المنظورات الدينية المرتبطة بالحياة الاجتماعية. كما أنها تُظهر تأثيرات أدبية وجمالية تُسهم في ضمان سهولة حفظ هذه الأمثال

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأمثال، الأمثال الدينية، الأسلوبية، الأساليب البلاغية

1.Introduction

A proverb is a simple and concrete [saying](#), popularly known and repeated, that expresses a truth based on common sense or experience. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2000 s.v. proverb) defines a proverb as "a short pithy saying in common and recognized use". It is most often a phrase or saying that gives advice in an indirect manner. The phrase usually has a metaphorical type of message behind that when first heard may appear a little odd. Usually a proverb is very well known because of its current use in colloquial language. Naturally, religious proverbs are employed to emphasize the external religious and communal life. They teach how to practice religion and overcome the daily temptations. They express a belief in God and His rule over the universe, and therefore, seek to make His religion the controlling motive in life and demeanor. They blow an insightful religious spirit and a lofty religious conception, but put most stress upon the doing of religion in all the relations of life. To account for the functions proverbs perform in any society, consider the following religious proverbs:

- Nature teaches us to love our friends, but religion our enemies.
- Religion must be taught, not forced.
- Men who have no religion, no honour.

In the literature available, a great number of studies have been conducted to account for the various behaviors of proverbs in general, yet very few studies are devoted to the stylistic behavior of the Biblical proverbs. Hence is

essential to give an account of religious proverbs and definition of stylistics and the main methodology followed to analyze the data.

2. Definition of Proverbs

Many attempts have been formulated to define the term 'proverb', yet no one definition can be labeled as all-inclusive and complete. In fact, it is too difficult to offer a comprehensive definition for this term unless such a definition covers all the essential characteristic elements required for this purpose (Moon, 1997: 2). The shortest definition is introduced in Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (2000, s.v. proverb). A proverb then is "a short pithy saying in common and recognized use". However, this definition appears to be partial since a proverb need neither be "a short pithy saying" nor "in common and recognized use". In certain cases it would be long and its use is not identified. Given the notion of popularity and function a proverb has in a society, O. Nagy (1979: 645 quoted in Paczolay, 2003, p.2) defines a proverb as: a popular set phrase having no author, known mostly in different languages, expressing in one sentence a principle, advice, a genuine or assumed truth in a general, concise form; its basic idea being of general validity or at least its user considers it as such. The difficulty of establishing a comprehensive definition is ascribed to Kuusi's (1998:1) vision that "the field of research of proverb is bounded, on the one hand, by the vocabulary and phraseology of language and, on the other, by the many forms of folklore". However, there is an overall agreement as to the chief characteristics of proverbs as a type of folk sayings. Based on the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic interpretation of proverbs which stresses the acquisition of proverbs by the members of a community, Fair (2003:1) gives a more detailed definition. She expounds that: Proverbs are tightly, pithy folk idioms; they can be considered, with some exception, a fixed-form genre. Proverbs are brief wise folk sayings – they are distilled pieces of verbal folk-wisdom, sometimes cynical in nature. They are delivered orally and dispatched into folk lexicon until they become so obsolete that the form no longer applies to the time or the meaning is completely lost. In trying times, people turn to proverbs for answers and find them clear and comforting. Finally, a more elaborate and representative definition is given by Meider (1999: 3), while admitting the difficulty of providing all-inclusive definition, affirms that a proverb is "a short generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, moral and traditional views in a metaphorical and memorisable form and which is handed from generation to generation". This definition, however, seems to be the most satisfactory one since it takes into consideration the most characteristic features by which proverbs are identified.

3. History and Origin of Proverbs

The English word "proverb" was historically in-built in both Greek and Latin. It strikingly derives from the Latin term proverbium with the meaning of an "old saying" "adage" or "proverb" (Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, 1914, p.412). Etymologically, the term proverbium consists of Pro (=pro+) - Verbum (=word) + -ium (=collective suffix), indicating a (known) set of words put forth, or more broadly a word uttered in public. The term proverbium has been taken over, after being modified, into the English language to mean a "short pithy saying embodying a general truth". [See The Oxford English Dictionary, 1989, s.v. proverb] The use of proverbs by rhetoricians to embellish their speech flourished during the Hellenistic period, particularly in the works of Lucian and Libanius, and the collections of proverbial sayings by Aristophanes of Byzantium. The use of English proverbial sayings, on the other hand, goes back to the first half of the eighth century, where the proverbs are found in the correspondence of Wynfrith, and the collections of Gnostic verses of the Anglo-Saxon literature (Karagiorgos, 2001:1). It is not easy to trace the origin and history of a proverb in particular language because once a saying has to be taken up and assimilated by the common people, its origin is forgotten and the user is no longer interested in the origin (Ridout and Witting, 1983: 9). Nevertheless, numerous scholars trace their origins as far back as the beginnings of human society and consider them as one of the first fields of science of humanity, containing its wisdom. Proverbs have been used by a great number of people in different parts of the world and at different periods in time, being deeply rooted in a wide variety of cultures worldwide (Brădeanu, 2007: 22). Generally, in most cases, the origin of a proverb is not known because it is not often ascribed to any particular author. Perhaps, people are more interested in what a proverb denotes than who creates it. Or proverbs originally come from different sources and have therefore been invented in various ways. Yet, some proverbs are undeniably known to have been attributed to specific authors in history (Fair, 2003: 2). Further, proverbs can be found in the oldest literary works in Sanskrit, Hebrew, Greek, and Roman literature, in The Bible, in the works of Aristophanes, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Erasmus, Cervantes, Ben Jonson, Alexander Pope, Sir Walter Scott, Benjamin Franklin, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Robert Frost. It is apparent that English proverbs are of different sources.

4. Stylistics

Generally, Abrams (1999:302) describes style as a 'linguistic expression' which formulates a kind of interpretation manners, and each text creation creates all the objective characteristics of this text collectively with the intention of both the speaker and the audience/ hearer, and basing on dynamic factors such as the compactness of tropes, "word choices, specific structure, sound and rhythm patterns", etc Since the 1950s the term stylistics has been ascribed to critical processes which originate to replace what is said to be the subjectivity and impressionism of standard analyses with an "objective" or "scientific" analysis of the style of literary texts. Much of the motivation towards these analytic methods, as well as models for their practical presentation, was given by the writings of Roman Jakobson and other Russian formalists, as well as by European structuralists (Abrams, 1999: s.v. Stylistics)As a branch of linguistics, stylistics studies "the features of situational distinctive uses" (varieties) of language (Crystal, 2008: 440). It is often observed that many disciplines other than linguistics are concerned with language. Then, it is not surprising that several interdisciplinary areas should have been recognized within macro linguistics and assumed a distinctive name: sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, ethno-linguistics, stylistics, etc. (Lyons, 1981: 36). In this way, stylistics is concerned with the use of the methodology of linguistics to study the concept of 'style' in language.Finch (2005: 187) confirms that every time "we use language we necessarily adopt a style of some sort: we make a selection from a range of syntactic and lexical possibilities according to the purpose of communication". Stylistics begins with the text (spoken or written) that is illustrative of the putative variety and investigates features according to the descriptive linguistic and stylistic categories of the analytical framework. The stylistic analytical framework and the proposed processing model of communicative competence are therefore bound to be different since different things are being done. 'Stylistics' is fundamentally a method of studying, yet it can be differently presented. This is the reason why stylistics resulted in many different approaches (Wales, 2014: 399).Traditionally, stylistics and literary critics were confused together, so stylisticians desire to escape indefinite and impressionistic assumption manipulated by the literary critics, and the formal use of language, focusing in their work on objective interpretation. So, stylisticians examine the whole text as a unit not as mass of sentences connected together (Fowler, 1991: 68).In the same vein, Crystal (2008: 440) offers a more obvious definition of stylistics stating that it is: a branch of linguistics which studies the features of situationally distinctive uses (varieties) of language, and tries to establish principles capable of accounting for the particular choices made by individual and social groups in their use of language.

5.Methodology

A research design involves the scheme and processes that a researcher takes from the first step of initiating a problem and setting up assumptions to the constructions of findings. Creswell (2009: 3) clarifies that research designs comprise:the plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. The overall decision involves the assumptions the researcher brings to the study, procedures of inquiry [strategies] and specific methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. The researcher puts forward his plan concerning the investigation of the use of rhetorical devices beginning with the assumptions he sets out from coming up to the application of the qualitative method to verify his assumptions.Creswell (ibid: 4) also adds that "the selection of a research design is also based on the nature of the research problem or issue being addressed, the researcher's personal experience and the audience of the study". In our case of study, religious proverbs are selected to be analyzed stylistically and rhetorically; therefore, qualitative method seems to be more applicable and more workable as the researcher intends to arrive at eliciting the congruent interpretation for the purposes and functions of employing rhetorical devices in religious proverbs.After making a survey of the Biblical proverbs, the researcher selects the most representative ones. Thirty Religious proverbs are selected from the Bible (both the Old Testament and the New Testament) to be the data for the study. In other words, these religious proverbs are purposefully selected and this will help the researcher better understands the problem and research questions. The data collection, as mentioned, involves proverbs of Divine or Sacred sources of the Bible, it is important to give a brief account of the definition of these proverbs, what they imply, supplemented by a number of illustrative examples. As for religious proverbs, this group of sayings is taken from the sacred writings of the religions of world; they have gained widespread currency and popularity and become international expressions of wisdom. They are not only used in religious contexts but also in everyday activities and events. As they become proverbs, they are pervasive and used by people in different settings. Strikingly important, the Bible is the chief source of religious proverbs as they date back to traditional ancient times and early wisdom literature (Meider, 2004:12). As the Bible is indispensable for British culture, it influences every aspect of the British culture. Subsequently, a lot of utterances and sayings in the Bible have been enormously engrained among people and people express their ideas without paying any attention to their origins any more. These sayings are no longer restricted to religion and they have become common proverbs that are used in daily communication (ibid). However, good many

English proverbs instigated straightforwardly from the Authorized versions (New International Version and Kings James). Consider these Biblical proverbs:

A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband. (Proverbs, xii:4)

A soft answer turns away wrath. (Proverbs, xv:1)

Apparently, Biblical proverbs are deemed as a specific type of borrowing as the Bible is a translation from the Hebrew, and its prudent maxims were Hebrew knowledge. Those of them that were entirely original and they have been but few, owed something at least to a Hebrew oral tradition, but the majority were directly from the Hebrew people or were close reflections of their traditional wisdom (Ridout and Witting, 1983: 2):

- Do as you would be done by. (Hebrew)

- You see a mole in another's eye but fail to see a beam in your own. (Talmud)

Yet, religious Biblical proverbs in the present study point to the proverbs derived from the Bible; those that initially carry religious and sacred meaning and intention; which direct people towards following the righteous path of God. But, when placed in social contexts, they become common and popular sayings and entail various types of meaning associated with the social situations in which they are used. In general, religious proverbs tend to employ figurative language to strengthen the impact of ideas they communicate. Being the quintessence of human experience, proverbs make a wide use of figures of speech, such as metaphors, similes, personifications, etc. Religious proverbs display various figures of speech which give them their effectiveness in our speech. Conceivably, the impressiveness and rhetoric of proverbs are due to the employment of those figures, namely; simile, personification, metaphor, repetition, parallelism, etc.

6.Data Analysis

A stylistic analysis focusing on the identification of the figures of speech in thirty religious proverbs drawn from the Bible has been made. The aim of the descriptive qualitative analysis is to detect the function and purpose behind the use of such devices, as they are often employed to assert certain meaning, to focus on a certain idea linked to the proposition of the religious proverb or to ensure the musicality of this proverb. It is true that these rhetorical devices are exploited as embellishing devices, yet they are used to enunciate other functions associated with the intended meaning of this proverb in respect to the context in which it is used. The following sections are mainly devoted to the presentation of the identification of rhetorical proverbs in the selected Biblical proverbs.

6.1 Simile

The principle of similarity can be observed in English religious proverbs. Biblical proverbs (containing the two main tools of simile, like and as) are selected to explain how simile is exploited in this group of proverbs , and what is the function of the use this simile as far as the religious divine message is concerned. For the sake of illustration, the following proverb is selected as an example:

4. His head and hair were white like wool, as white a snow, and his eyes were like burning fire.

(Revelations, i:14)

Whiteness in this saying is believed by people to be the symbol of the transfiguration in respect to the overestimated person of the Savior as stated in (Revelations, i: 14) "It is the glorious white which is the color and livery of heaven." Metaphorically speaking, whiteness is taken to be the color and livery of heaven. White heads and hairs are often likened to wool and white snow to give the token of decay. It is apparent that, here, there is a reference to age, whiteness is compared to age. It is argued that the white hair of age is a demonstration of decay, and that no such token would have place here; but surely this is a straining point, and making a mere emblem an argument (Boxall, 2006).Indirectly, this proverb wants to disclose the idea that Jesus (PBUH) is a man of wisdom and intelligence (as symbolized by wool and white snow) and at the same time he is a man of energy and strength (his eyes are likened to burning fire). In this example, three types of simile are used to clarify the idea of white head and hair being likened to wool and white snow. Like, as and like are respectively employed in this Biblical proverb to clarify three similarity relations, they are as follows: (1) head and hair are likened to wool, (2) head and hair are likened to white snow and (3) eyes are likened to burning fire.

6.2 Metaphor

Metaphors are often used in proverbs, particularly in religious proverbs, to attain various functions in which comparison between two entities are concerned. Biblical proverbs are observed to contain the use of metaphor in religious proverbs. One example is chosen to illustrate how metaphor is used in Biblical proverbs.

The law of the wise is a fountain of life. (Proverbs xiii:14)

Here, teaching (i.e. wisdom) is compared to a fountain of life (living water). It is a popular metaphor that proposes a "continuing source of sustenance and life". This metaphor is intended to brighten a plenty of significant aspects

of spiritual belief and experience. It emphasizes "the fear of the Lord" which gives release from death to life, evoking this new life as stemming from a divine spring (Morris, 2012). Nonetheless, this fountain is still available for all who will come and endeavor to drink. The reason is that this fountain often gives "a pure river of water of life... proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb And let him that is thirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (ibid). Metaphorically, the proverb's message reflects the idea that teaching (the law of the wise) is made equivalent to a fountain (unending spring of nourishment and life). Here, metaphor is exploited to aver that the route of wisdom is endless, and this indirectly helps convince the hearer or reader to accept this view.

6.3 Parallelism

The idea of arranging words and expressions with syntactically structure can be exploited in religious proverbs. Or put simply, making sentences have the same, or parallel, structure is so common in proverbs. One example containing the employment of parallelism seems to be necessary.

Sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. (Hosea, viii: 7)

This proverb reflects the illumination gathered from the farming process of 'sowing and reaping'. A farmer sows seed. Actually, the kind of seed he plants determines the type of plant that will grow and be reaped. Symbolically, this saying is pertinent to the people of Israel who behave erroneously, a matter which leads Hosea to criticize Israel's worship. Their silly chase of false gods would reap a severe judgment from the Lord. Additionally, in practice in the saying is the principle of duplication: "a farmer may plant one kernel of corn, but he will reap much more than that—a whole ear". In the same way, Israel's sin of worship would bring forth an augmented significance that would swing them all away (Got Questions, 2002). More elaborately, because the people of Israel have broken his agreement and protested against his law, the Prophet Hosea decides to desert them. He also shows his contempt for the way they have lived (cursing, lying, murdering, stealing and committing adultery). This is why he claims "for they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind". His words embrace the point that since "they have sown iniquity, they will undoubtedly reap vanity, for ill-gotten gains will never thrive. If a person only strives for self-interest, he will certainly be deceived and vilified". Nowadays, we can see the truth of Hosea's proverb in many ways. Those who live in unrepentant sin can expect to suffer the consequences of their sin—consequences that both "fit the crime" and exhibit a stunning intensity. Also, this statement by Hosea is a cautious call to Israelis to avoid idolatry. Anything that steals their trust in the Lord lessens their devotion to Him, or controls them can be considered an idol and should be abolished from their lives (ibid). This proverb predicts warning emphasized by the employment of the parallel structures (Sow the wind) and (reap the whirlwind). This function is created by the use of the figure of speech of parallelism in which two or more clauses are related to each other through the lines of a proverb structure in order to make a larger point.

6.4 Repetition

Repetition as an influential means is heavily deployed in most religious proverbs to evince stress and emphasis and to provide a sense of emotion. Repetition in proverbs can come in all linguistic levels (phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic). In certain respect, repetition in a proverb is used to show connection between the constituents of this proverb (i.e. ensuring cohesion).

Eye for Eye, Tooth for Tooth (Matthew v: 38) (Exodus, xxi: 24)

Literally, the proverb "eye for an eye" is taken from second part of the Biblical saying "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth', to indicate that one can rebuke, or even take vengeance upon someone else in the same way he/she is harmed and impaired. In contrast, this saying gives a religious principle concerning the application of scheme of justice which states that an individual relies exclusively on his/ her own authority. This Biblical saying is not an authorization for one to take vengeance upon others who have wronged him/her. Precisely, this principle urges the people of Israel (or any government) to undergo justice for its people as a whole, simply because, "Israel was God's chosen people, and God intended them to live according to His standards" (Driskell, 2010). This Biblical phrase 'eye for an eye' is uttered to place God's punishment for those who injure others in a corporeal manner. These rules for punishment are also intended to be implemented by the people of Israel, as well as by individuals. God wants to evince the appropriate justice, (not basically taking revenge) to all people. Generally, Jesus (PBUH) wants to teach his people through this saying that one must avoid looking for revenge on his/her enemy, but he/she is to show them love. He exactly wants to inform them that "this vengeful attitude is not the attitude of His followers". In essence, literal interpretation of this saying might lead to involvement in guilt; "not more, for that would open a fresh score of wrong" (ibid). The idea of emphasizing and applying justice (against taking revenge) is executed through the utilization of repetition of the lexical items (eye

and tooth). Further, the equation of "an eye for an eye" and "a tooth for a tooth" is made through the repetitive technique of these items.

6.5 Personification

The use of personification in religious proverbs is not simply an ornamental device but to serve the purpose of providing profounder meanings to these proverbial texts. In fact, it gives lifetime and brightness to words or concepts being looked at in terms of the world from the viewpoints of human beings. Proverb creators resort to this figure of speech to bring inanimate objects and generalization to life, with the purpose of their intentions and activities are better recognized, simply because it is easier to link things to human beings. Four examples of Biblical proverbs implying the utilization of personification have been chosen to clarify the purpose behind the use of this rhetorical device in religious proverbs.

Wisdom calls aloud outside. (Proverbs, i: 20)

This religious proverb is originally taken from Biblical Proverbs 1:20-21 which says "Wisdom calls a loud outside; She raises her voice in the open squares. She cries out in the chief concourses at the openings of the gates in the city she speaks her words." Mostly, wisdom is used to mean "common sense" or "shrewdness." Actually, it is fundamentally good as long as we recognize that it does not involve moral section. Right, Divinity is never disconnected from morality; conversely, it is permanently "guided by morality, the commands of God, and the way of God" (Ritenbaugh, 1992).

In this Biblical saying, Solomon (PBUH) describes wisdom as a person, a woman who offers her leadership and assistance to the world. Her cry is loudly but often overlooked. Here, wisdom is personified as a woman "where nothing is meant but the teachings given to man, either by Divine revelation or the voice of the Holy Spirit in the heart. And this voice of wisdom is opposed to the seducing language of the wicked". Her voice could be heard in public, in the streets and at homes. It is a universal experience, and the commandment of righteousness written on the heart, beside the commandment of God, attest against rapine and wrong deeds of people (Bames, 1997).

In other words, Solomon (PBUH) is signifying that wisdom can be made accessible to anyone who essentially seeks for it. The use of personification in this saying helps to assert the meaning that wisdom should cry loudly (i.e. spread widely) and raises her voice (spread with strength) in public. Personification is not only presented as a rhetorical device but also serves as an assertion to fix the meaning of respecting wisdom which comes in the image of a woman who cries and raises her voice to declare knowledge and shrewdness.

6.6 Hyperbole

Although the use of hyperbole is frequent in the Bible, in certain cases, it presents difficulty for many Bible readers. This is owing to the idea of exaggeration which is associated with vagueness and misrepresentation. Hyperbole is often considered as one of the most interesting techniques which are utilized in proverbs for emphasizing an important issue and viewpoint. In addition, it may help readers to memorize the proverbial saying. Consider the following example:

The cities are great, and walled up to heaven. (Deuteronomy i: 28)

This proverb is extracted from the Biblical saying "Whither shall we go up? our brethren have discouraged our heart, saying, The people is greater and taller than we; the cities are great and walled up to heaven; and moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakims there." These words are uttered by Moses (PBUH) and directed to Israelite people on the side of Jordan, in "the plain of over against the Red sea, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab" (Wordproject, 2018). He shows his dissatisfaction concerning the height of the walls around their houses in this Arabian place as they think that these walls are considered an appropriate protection for them.

Moses (PBUH) expounds that "the monastery on Mount Sinai is surrounded with very high walls without any gate; in the upper part of the wall there is a sort of window, or opening, from which a basket is suspended by a pulley, by which both persons and goods are received into and sent from the place". Feeling uncomfortable, He uses honest and uncompromising language (Anakim) in retelling the Israelites of their obstinate behavior and offensive revolt at the announcement of the unfaithful and cowardly spies (StudyLight.org, 2001). The spies inform Moses (PBUH) that they dejected the hearts of the Israelite people, stating that their "cities are great, and walled up to heaven". The height of the walls of the Eastern houses is so great that they reach up to heaven. "By means of such their walls, these places are impregnable to the Arabs: the Israelites thought the cities of Canaan must be impregnable to them; for they forgot the divine power of their leader"(ibid).

A robust interesting hyperbole is employed in this Biblical proverb to reflect the height and power and strength of their enemies' walls. The use of this rhetorical device consolidates the intention of this message, i.e. the walls are so high that they reach up heaven. Indirectly, it displays the speaker's, Moses (PBUH) contempt of the way Israelites built their houses, something which is not in the interest of God.

6.7 Antithesis

The contrast between concepts and ideas realized in parallel structures are often noticed in Biblical proverbs. Antithesis brings certain tightness to the conveyed message which helps to draw the readers' attention towards accepting this message. Placed another way, it intends to convince the audience or readers to feel and behave in a certain way.

The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. (Matthew, xxvi: 41)

This proverb is ascribed to the Biblical saying in which Jesus (PBUH) asks his disciples to "watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak". The command is given after Jesus has prayed to the Father and saw the disciples sleeping instead of praying. He wants them to be wakeful and alert to watch their sins as they go against God's willpower and His laws, simply because committing sins is disobeying God's laws. As a result, they will dwell in hell. Satan is always on the stalk, waiting for a chance, for a breach to get into to turn people from God. By watching and praying, His disciples can resist Satan and fight the evil desires and cravings. The weaponries that Jesus (PBUH) employ to overcome sufferings are prayers and God's steadfastness (McNutt, 1982).

This saying also instructs the disciples to be always alert to watch Satan that often tries to plant loathsome weeds. Then, they need to pray to God to back them and preserve from all evil seeds and preclude them from taking root in their hearts. It is essential to be observant to get away from all malevolent temptations (ibid).

Jesus knew that the disciples wanted to remain wakeful and pray, but "the weakness of the flesh had overpowered the spiritual desire to pray and watch. Spiritual watchfulness is the other weapon we have against the weakness of the flesh". The spirit of a believer is eager to go in the path of God. The flesh yells aloud when it wants a thing, and the cry it emits can easily mask the desires of the spirit. "Even when the spirit is willing to do whatever God asks, the flesh remains weak". Satan has set up the world to call to the weaknesses of the flesh: "lust, greed, gluttony, and other sins are directly related to the demands of the body". Jesus does not reproach his disciples but urges them to be cautious of the weakness of the flesh. The Lord Himself fights the same fight against the flesh and He overcomes it (Swindoll, 2018).

The contrast between the enthusiastic spirit and the weak flesh is brought about through the use of the antithetical paralleled clauses. This rhetorical device of antithesis provides a very effective picture in which the good and evil are placed one against the other.

6.8 Metonymy

Metonymy is a figure of speech which refers to the relation between two things; an item stands for an object or concept. It is a rhetorical device that substitutes the name of a thing with the name of something else with which it is closely associated. It is a relationship between two objects, where the nature of the relationship is generally assumed to be one of contiguity or closeness. An example of Biblical proverb is chosen to be analyzed in terms of the metonymic substitutional relations found in them.

Rise up before the hoary head. (Leviticus, xix:32).

This proverb is extracted from the Biblical saying "Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD". This saying is directed to Israelites as seen as a holy people; it is considered as a teaching lesson to children to respect old people with grey (hoary) hair. It is the law of the Lord and Christ which command children to be obedient to their parents (StudyLight.org, 2008).

It is God who commands such respect of old-aged people, and will surely punish for any signs of disrespect revealed them; and "who is himself to be feared and revered above all, being, from everlasting to everlasting, God, and whose name is holy and reverend" (Biblestudytools, 2016). Ritenbaugh (1997) expounds that the purpose of these Biblical sayings is to serve to certify that there is an appropriate outlook towards God. "God is the Giver of all authority and it is really out of respect for the God-given office that the deference is shown".

The evenhandedness and superiority of this command must touch every person who catches it, and gives a great attitude of the wisdom and goodness of the Lord. Definitely, it is the simplest command of nature to respect the elders in age. It was known that among the Egyptian people, there is a kind of tradition that their young people when they met an old man, "should turn aside to give him the way, and rise up at his approach". That is, "young

men should glory first in obeying the laws; for this is the same as obeying God: and next, in reverencing their superiors in age; those especially who have passed their days honourably". However, making use of a symbol-object relation, the message of this proverb is determined by the employment of the use of metonymic expression 'hoary head' to refer to grey-haired people.

7.Conclusion

The investigation of the use of rhetorical devices in religious proverbs taken from the Bible (New International Version and King James Version) comes to the conclusion that Biblical proverbs are familiar sayings which play a great part in everyday social communication. They are of didactic nature as they are used to guide people towards the righteous deeds and wisdom of past generations. They are concise in form, yet they are condensed in meaning. Because these proverbs are intended to convey various purposes and functions related to didactic tendency, they are described as displaying several rhetorical devices such as simile, metaphor, parallelism, personification, repetition, hyperbole, metonymy and antithesis. These devices are used to evince or emphasize religious perspectives associated with social life. In certain cases these devices are handled to display literary and aesthetic effects which help to ensure the memorizability of these proverbs.

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