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What Can the Prophet Muhammad's Metaphors Do?

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ABSTRACT

The current article approaches the issue of the persuasiveness of metaphors in The Prophet Muhammad's Tradition. The main concern of the article is to show that the Prophetic metaphors are discursively practiced by the Prophet for the function of persuading his audience to accept Islamic laws, and introduce rites and rituals, and to prohibit the unlawful. Through a survey of instances of metaphoric scenarios and images, and in reference to the contemporary cognitive theory of metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), the article demonstrates that the persuasiveness of the prophetic metaphors is primarily evoked by disambiguation, arousing the emotions, and implicit threat.

INTRODUCTION

One of the established conceptions about the Prophet Muhammad's Tradition that it involves a large bulk of Sayings with their main objective is to establish a discourse that calls for the full submission and allegiance to a faith that calls for the worship of one God. Furthermore, this Tradition proposes a matching discourse that regulates the inter-communal relations between members of Islamic society and the neighbouring non-Muslim societies. On the one hand, delivering such parallel discourses necessitated a body of edifying, moral, and legislative principles which encompass and delineate the purposes of Islamic faith, and the Prophetic Tradition encompasses the largest portion of these principles (Forte, 1978). As well, the Prophetic message has laid down a discourse that has reproduced a new society which adores an original faith with agreeable norms, standards, and values. This discourse is the product of a language tailored in terms of form and content by means of discursive practices; communicative practices based on rules that define and construct their referents (Buchanan, 2010: 'discursive practice'), and one of these most salient practices is the Prophet's purposeful employment of metaphors.

This article argues that metaphorical language is used in the Prophetic tradition to address a variety of functions and purposes. These 'Prophetic metaphors' are used within a procedural framework that represents and recapitulates a set of ideologies and social practices which distinguish the Muslim society and Islamic doctrine based on early Arabs' beliefs and experiential knowledge (El-Sharif, 2012). For instance the prophetic metaphors present Islam as a faith, introduce Muslims and non-Muslims and their characteristics, implement Islamic laws and legislation, define the nature of faith, and introduce the path of Islam in terms of beliefs and rites and rituals, and prohibited practices. However, several social practices which are dictated by the Prophet Muhammad involve an unquestionable sense of duty and obligation. A Muslim is compulsorily required to adhere to these practices and observe them, and lenience in observing them might be recognised as deviating from Islam. Still, a substantial argument on the use of the Prophetic metaphors is their primary use for the purpose of persuading the Prophet's followers about the message of adhering to Islam and embracing it as the only sound faith.

Islam, as a word, is originated from the Arabic triadic consonantal root *s-l-m* that makes the verb '*aslama*'[1], which means 'to accept, surrender or submit' (Gardet, 2017: 'Islam'). Islam means the complete obedience and submission to the commands of one omnipotent and omnipresent god, *Allah*. Hence, Muslims, who embrace Islam as a faith, express this obedience by worshiping *Allah*, following His commands and recanting what He declare prohibited, especially polytheism ('*sherk*'). The principles of this faith are

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presented according to diverse themes which are mostly dictated via Holy Qur'an and elaborately by the Prophet Muhammad's Tradition.

To name a principle, the Prophet Muhammad's Tradition accentuates the *universality* of the message of Islam and that it targets all mankind. The Prophet's Tradition goes further radically on arguing that that all mankind are innately endowed with a tendency to embrace and accept Islam as a faith even if they are born by non-Muslim parents. Such proposition may not simply find its way to the recipient's mind and heart, and the Prophet discursively postulates that Islam shall not be regarded as a special privilege which God has favoured to one class of people (i.e. ethnicity, origin, or nation) and disregard the other ones. In fact, Islam is metaphorically depicted as the *native* faith; the Prophet says:

1. Everyone is born a Muslim (*ᶜalaa alfeeṭra*), but his parents make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian; just as a beast[2] (*albaheymah*) is *born whole*. Do you find some among them [*born*] maimed?. (*Miškat*[3], 90, p.26)

The proposition of the *innateness* of Islam sounds eccentric to the non-Muslim; however, the metaphoric analogy is employed here to make accepting the proposition feasible. The Saying recipient is provoked to make an analogy between faith and his experiential knowledge of the real world, especially from the domains of *animals* and *beasts.* By this analogy, the Prophet postulates that believing in *Allah*, and Islam, is the natural disposition of a man, because anyone is born with an innate *inclination* and disposition to be a monotheist; a believer of one God, *Allah* (Boz, 2011: 130). This inclination is idiomatically identified in Islam as *'alfeṭra',* an instinctual innate knowledge that a person is endowed with, and which makes him/her properly distinguish good from evil (*See* Izzati, 2002; 93ff). Naturally, the individual acquires faith and religion by family and education; nevertheless, the Prophet proposes that deviating from monotheism is against what Allah decree. Here, the Prophet overtly acknowledges the parents' instinctual intervention in *deforming* that inclination in their children. In addition, the 'beast' (*albaheymah*) metaphor develops the recipient's own interpretation on faith by making an analogy that conceptualises *spiritual qualities* in terms of *animals' innate qualities.* This analogy is fore-grounded by the Prophet's rhetorical question "Do you find some among them [*born*] maimed?" that incites the recipient to call his experiential knowledge about nature and that animals are naturally born with whole limbs. Accordingly, the one's aptitude to embrace Islam as faith is recognised as a sign of intactness and wholeness, and that its absence epitomizes an undesirable deficiency that undervalues the quality of the beast (*albaheymah*), and implicitly the person. Herein, I argue in favour of the proposition that an association between faith innateness and the positive evaluation of the intactness of the beast's limbs make the metaphoric image adequately persuasive. That means changing attitudes or behaviours or both without using coercion or deception (Fogg, 2003: 15).

Remarkably, the Prophetic Tradition frequently employs metaphors of *animals' innate qualities* to illustrate the relationship between the believer and faith; for example, the Prophet says:

2. The believer and faith are like a horse (*faras*) with the stake (*ʔaxeyah*) to which it is tethered, which *moves round and then returns to its stake*, for the believer is negligent and then returns to faith. (*Miškat*, 4250, p.900)

Faith is metaphorically portrayed as a source of opulence and protection to its bearer. Here, the Prophet presents two metaphors: the 'believer' as *a tethered horse* (*faras*), and 'faith' as *a stake* (*ʔaxeyah*). The two metaphors propose resemblance between spiritual qualities and *innate animals' qualities*. The ground of this analogy is pre-Islamic Arabs' familiarity with domesticated animals, and the Saying message emphasizes that faith can restrain the sinning soul, and a true believer is always bound to faith even if he falls into sin.

Islam is also frequently portrayed in the Prophetic Tradition as a *path* that the believer follows to reach a destination along a journey that quest for God's forgiveness and Paradise (El-Sharif, 2012: 5). Such metaphor is conventionally elaborated by images of the Prophet, for example, is resembled to the right *guide* in this *path* (a.k.a *Sunna*). Herein, the Prophet's *path* (*Sunna*) is reinstated as an *ontological metaphor* (*See* Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 25-33) to reconceptualise its abstractness; thus I see the Prophet conceptualising his tradition (*Sunna*) as an *object*; he says:

3. ...You must therefore *follow* my ***Sunna*** and that of the rightly guided Caliphs. *Hold to it* and *stick fast to it*[4]. Avoid novelties, for every novelty is an innovation, and every innovation is error. (*Miškat*, 165, p.44)

Here, the Saying accentuates that the Prophet's own life, in addition to the rightly guided Caliphs[5]' life makes a tradition (*Sunna*) that must be followed. This *Sunna*, or *path*, is reconceptualised as an ontological metaphor as a *valuable object* that a Muslim should adhere to despite of the hardships that a Muslim could face in defending his faith.

WHAT CAN THE PROPHETIC METAPHORS DO?

I see that the Prophetic Tradition resorts to metaphorical language in order to make its argument persuasive. This is attained by regarding the Prophetic metaphors a communication process in which the persuader (the Prophet) sends a persuasive message to a persuadee or audience (the Muslim and non-Muslim recipient) with the intention of changing the recipient's attitudes or behaviour, although always leaving the persuadee with the power of decision (Simons et. al., 2001). Thus, I will present in the following sections that the Prophetic metaphors are discursively practiced by the Prophet for the function of persuading his audience to accept Islamic laws, and introduce rites and rituals, and to prohibit the unlawful. Then, I will discuss, with more elaborated examples, how the Prophetic metaphors establish their persuasiveness.

Introducing Islamic laws

The set of Islamic of laws, also known as *Shari'ah* (meaning 'way' or 'path'), is a large body of legislations and principles believed to be revealed by God. In fact, Islam holds that "God has not revealed Himself and His nature, but rather His

law." (Ruthven, 1997: 75); thus it is argued that "*Shari'ah* itself is considered to be a timeless manifestation of the will of God, subject neither to history nor circumstance." (ibid.). Derived mainly from the Qur'an and Prophetic Tradition, Islamic laws are meant to direct habitual aspects of the Muslim's life including his worships, contracts, economic transactions, marital relationship, among many other aspects. As legislation from the Qur'an and Prophetic Tradition are characterised by their comprehensiveness, these legislation constitute the foundation of other essential guiding principles and purposes (called *Maqasid al-Shari'ah*) which include the protection of human religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property (Khan and Ghifari, 1985).

Moreover, *Shari'ah* classifies the Muslims deeds into obligatory (*farĐ*), recommended (*mustaħabb*), neutral (*mubaaħ*), discouraged (*makruuh*), and forbidden (*ħaraam*). This classification constructs the basis of *Fiqh*, a development of *Shari'ah* and Islamic law that is based directly on the Qur'an and *Sunnah* among other sources of legislation and evolved from the interpretations of early and contemporary Islamic jurists. Human deeds belong to one of these five categories (Horrie and Chippindale, 2007); obligatory actions (*farĐ*) are those required of all Muslims, and they include the five daily prayers, fasting, articles of faith, obligatory charity, and the pilgrimage to Mecca. The recommended (*mustaħabb*) include proper worldly deeds in matters such as marriage, funeral rites and family life. Neutral (*mubaaħ*), or permissible, deeds are those which are neither recommended nor discouraged by Islamic law, and they are not forbidden. Several deeds are not sinful in themselves, but they are considered undesirable among Muslims; these deeds are the discouraged (*makruuh*) ones. The forbidden (*ħaraam*) deeds are explicitly forbidden, and they are both sinful and unlawful as committing them makes a Muslim liable to illicit penalties, and within this category we have murdering, fornication, and drinking wine (ibid).

As the person will be rewarded for the good deeds and accountable for the evil ones, distinguishing between the different levels of lawful and prohibited deeds in Islam might be deemed challenging to the Muslim and his personal judgement. Thus, knowing the differences between the good and evil require the Muslim's *Ijtihad,* diligence and independent reasoning (*See* Rabb, 2009: 'Ijtihād'), with determination and patience, and sometimes sacrifice, and above all, a persuasive argument that convinces the Muslim recipient to embrace what sounds good and avoid what sounds evil. The Prophetic metaphors are used here to sustain the persuasiveness of the divine messages by fore-grounding the common experiential knowledge of Arabic society at the Prophet's time. For example, Islamic law repeatedly refers to the Muslim ruler because rulership in Islam is seen as a sacred indispensible duty by which God's rulership and justice is practiced on earth (Sonn, 2010: 38). In the 'Succession' (*'istexlaaf*) verse in the Qur'an, God emphasises the religious basis of having a Muslim ruler who rules according to His commands:

- 'Allah has promised those among you who believe and do righteous good deeds, that He will certainly grant them succession to (the present rulers) in the land as He granted it to those before them, and that He will grant them the authority to practise their religion which He has chosen for them (i.e. Islam). And He will surely give them in exchange a safe security after their fear (provided) they (believers) worship Me and do not associate anything (in worship) with Me. But whoever disbelieves after this, they are *Fasiqun* (rebellious, disobedient to Allah).' (*Surah An-Nur*, The Light, 24: 55).

The Prophetic Tradition accentuates the need of a ruler to enact the commands of God on earth; the Prophet says:

4. The sultan is God's shade (*Zellu*) on the earth *to which each one of His servants who is wronged repairs*. When he is just he will have a reward, and it is the duty of the common people to be grateful; but when he acts tyrannically the burden rests on him, and it is the duty of the common people to show endurance. (*Miškat*, 3718, p.789)

Having a Muslim just ruler is regarded fundamental because it assures the temporal means to enact Islamic laws on earth. Herein, the Muslim just ruler is depicted as the *shade* (*Zellu*) of God on earth. The Saying addresses as *God's Shade* all those who are recruited of enacting the prevalence of God's justice, and those can be a *Sultan* (a Muslim ruler), a judge, or even an army officer. The *shade* metaphor is derived from the domain of *natural phenomena,* and it is culturally based on the ecological features of pre-Islamic society of the Arab lands which were characterised by aridity and heat. Both aridity and sun heat are negatively depicted in the Saying by virtue of the metaphoric keyword *repairs* (*ya?wy*), and the metaphoric image of the *repairs* evokes a negative evaluation of oppression; justice, on the other hand, is positively evaluated by the *shade* metaphor. Thus, the metaphor emphasizes the role of the Muslim just ruler as a representative of God on earth, and the persuasiveness of the *shade* metaphor is evoked by the contrast between the negative evaluation of *aridity* and *heat* on the one hand, and the positive evaluation of the *shade* on the other in addition to the empathetic image of the 'repairing' (*ya?wy*) of the wronged to the *shade*; or the ruler. This empathetic image is discursively significant because it arouses the recipients' emotions and reinforces the persuasiveness of *the ruler as a shade* metaphor; especially as the Prophet interprets and elaborates the metaphor in the surroundings of the Saying.

In another matter, Islam admits differences in wealth distribution in society. Nevertheless, *Shari'ah*, or Islamic law, proposes that it is the duty of the rich to share their wealth with the poor. Islamic law reinforces an annual obligatory charity, or tax, called *zakaat*, on the rich for the poor (*See* Hallaq, 2013: 123). In order to encourage those who abstain from paying it, the Prophet introduced this obligatory charity tax metaphorically by depicting it as *purification* and *cleanliness* to the property; a Prophetic Saying says:

5. Ibn 'Abbas told how, when this verse was revealed, "And those who hoard gold and silver..."[6] the Muslims were grieved about it and 'Umar told them he would dispel their care. He therefore went and told God's Prophet that his companions were grieved by this verse, and received

the reply, "God has made the *zakat* obligatory simply *to purify* (*le'yutayeba*) your remaining property, and He made inheritances obligatory (mentioning a word) that they might come to those who survive you. .." (*Miškat*, 1781, p.374)

The *purification* and *cleanliness* ontological metaphor challenges the person's desire to abstain from paying this charity tax because it evokes a positive evaluation of the person's natural disposition to prefer cleanliness over dirtiness. So, the persuasiveness of *purification* and *cleanliness* metaphor is evoked by contemplating the essence of the *purified* substance, money. Still, Islam accentuates that a person's property should be gained by lawful permissible means like trading and inheritance. Purification conveys the message that if a Muslim's property is 'polluted' by a doubtful financial practice, such as usury (which is prohibited in Islam (*See* Khan, 2013: 134-35)), and then the obligatory charity (*zakaat*) is the means to purify it. Remarkably, the Saying mentions the effect of the saying, and its metaphor, on 'Umar, the Prophet's companion, who instantly agreed with the Prophet's message.

When it comes to defending Islam, the Muslim is asked to be vigilant and prepared to defend his faith and religion with soul and property against all sorts of enemies. The concept of holy strife (*jihad*) is frequently emphasised by Islamic law. In classical Islamic jurisprudence *jihad* consists of warfare with the aim of expansion and extending Islam, and for the defence of Islamic territory against its enemies (Sir Hamilton et. al., 1960: '*Djehad'*), and many Muslim scholars refer to this duty as the sixth Pillar of Islam, though it occupies no such official status (Esposito, 2005). *Jihad* requires Muslims to "struggle in the way of God" or "to struggle to improve one's self and/or society." (Humphreys, 2005). In Islamic discourse, it is argued that *jihad* comes in several forms: it can be directed against Satan's inducements, aspects of one's own self, or against a visible enemy. Accordingly, *jihad* is categorised into four major categories which includes *jihad* against one's self (*jihad al-nafs*), *jihad* of the tongue (*jihad al-lisaan*), *jihad* of the hand (*jihad al-yad*), and *jihad* of the sword (*jihad as-sayf*). Nevertheless, it is *jihad* of the sword which is most difficult as it involves physical confrontation with the enemy and the risk of injury or death. To encourage the believers to *jihad,* the Prophet required a convincing justification that motivates the Muslims to willingly go for it, and he did this by associating *jihad* with goodness and spoils; a Saying narrates:

6. Jarir b. 'Abdallah told that he saw God's messenger twisting his finger in a *horse's forelock* and saying, "The horses (*alxaylu*) have good tied in their forelocks (*nawaaSeyhaa*) till the day of resurrection, i.e. reward (*al'ajru*) and spoil (*ɣanymah)*". (*Miškat*, 3867, p.822)

Here, *jihad* is regarded as one of the Muslim's duties to God and religion, and this is why it is called 'striving in the path of Allah' (*al-jihad fi sabyl Allah*). The Saying appeals for participating in *jihad* and highlights the profits and reward that a participant Muslim (*mujahid*) might gain in this strife which could be God's blessings, forgiveness, and Paradise and/or the spoils gained from the defeated enemy. The Saying links between the two by the image of the *horse*, which is *metonymically* associated with *jihad* in Islamic discourse. The metaphor of *reward* (*?ajr*) and *spoils*[7] (*ɣanymah*) involves an ontological portrayal of the two as material valuable *objects* or *substances* tied to the forelock of a horse. This portrayal conveys a message that the *mujahid* will be rewarded in abundance regardless of the outcome of his strife; either gaining martyrdom and Paradise or triumphing over the enemy and win the spoils; or even gaining both. Thus, both reward and spoils are close to the *mujahid* and within his hands literally and figuratively. Moreover, the metaphor draws attention also to the elevated status of reward and spoils which are associated with the forelock of the horse. This idea can be entailed from the evaluative function of spatial metaphors that associate what is being in a *high* position (the *head*) with *being good* and *significant* (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Accordingly, portraying spoils and reward as valuable objects and associating them with the *high* forelock of the horse aims to emphasize their significance and elevated status. As the importance, and the status, an object, or person, is determined by the space it occupies.

Introducing Rites and Rituals

The Prophetic Metaphors are employed to introduce rites and rituals (*ʿibadaat*) and underline their significance and meaning. For example, Islam involves obligatory and recommended rituals which are recognised as the *pillars* which distinguish the Muslim from the non-Muslim; the Prophet says:

7. Islam *is based* (*buneya*) on five things [pillars]: the testimony that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger, the observance of the prayer, the payment of *zakat*, the pilgrimage, and the fast during Ramadan. (*Miškat*, 4, p.6)

Here, the Muslim's adherence to Islam is distinguished by his commitment in *performing* five obligatory Islamic rituals, known as 'the pillars of Islam'. These rituals are introduced in terms of *building* metaphors to mean that Muslims are accountable to do them in their life, and they might be exempted from them by justified reasons. In addition, the Saying message emphasises that a Muslim's Islam is deemed incomplete if these rituals are not observed in their timely basis (*See* Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, 2018: 'Pillars of Islam'). The metaphor of *Islam as a building* evokes the proposition of completion as performing these rituals is elaborated in terms of a process of *building*. Building metaphors is an elaboration of a generic metaphoric schema that conventionally represents abstract complex systems as well-established structures, or buildings; and creating and developing ideas and thoughts is portrayed a *building* process (*See* Kövecses, 2002: 131). Thus, the structure of an abstract system is perceived as *the physical structure of a building*, and that an enduring abstract system, like religion, is represented in terms of *a strong structure* or *building,* and *what is spiritual is understood in terms of a physical* (Kövecses, 2002). Accordingly, the persuasiveness of the Saying is evoked in contemplating the metaphor of *building* conveyed by the keyword *buneya* ('based'[8]) which involves

a positive evaluation. This evaluation reflects the positive qualities of the portrayed building; its beauty, value, and persistence, and which in turn enhance the positive reception of the significance and meaning of rites and rituals in Islam.

Performing the daily five prayers (*alSalaat*) is one of the 'Five Pillars of Islam' by which the Muslim constantly communicates with God (*Allah*) and thanks Him daily for His graces at prescribed times. These five prayers are obligatory on the adult Muslim, and their observance is considered a perceptible reflection of faith, piety, and adherence to Islam; the Prophet emphasizes that:

8. The covenant (*ᶜahd*) between us and them [the disbelievers or hypocrites] is prayer, so if anyone *abandons* (*tarakahaa*) it he has become an infidel. (*Miškat*, 574, p.115)

The Prophet accentuates the importance of the five daily prayers as a reflection of the person's adherence to Islam in the same sense that one adheres to *covenant* (*ᶜahd*), though with God. The purpose of this *covenant* is to be rewarded an eternal paradise and be spared from God's punishment which is understood in terms of a *conflict*. Remarkably, the identity of the ones who do not observe the prayers is not overtly articulated, but they are alienated by refereeing to them as '*them'* in contrast of '*us'*. This polarisation of *us* versus *them*, without an explicit reference to the identity of the meant party, accentuates the universality the Saying's message and that it addresses all who do not observe the prayers; even unobservant Muslims. However, what we know of those *them* is that they deserved God's wrath, and being fought, because they have abandoned Islam by not observing its obligatory rituals; namely, the five obligatory prayers. This 'implicit threat' is invoked by the *covenant* metaphor strengthens the negative evaluation of the metaphoric act of *abandoning a covenant* and lays emphasis on the Saying message and its persuasiveness.

In another respect, fasting (*aS-Seyaam*) is the fourth of the Five Pillars of Islam, and it involves the obligatory abandoning of eating and drinking and sexual intercourse from the dawn (*alfajr*) until the dusk (*mayreb*) of the days of the month of *Ramadan* (in the Islamic *Hijri* calendar) (Farah, 1994: 144-145). While fasting *Ramadan,* the Muslim is encouraged to endeavour on other sorts of worships; such as giving alms, visiting the siblings and relatives, and reciting the Holy Qur'an. The Prophet frequently promotes the recitation of the Holy Qur'an while fasting is considered; he says:

9. Fasting and the Qur'an ***intercede*** (*yašafaᶜaan*) for a man. Fasting ***says*** (*yaquulu*): 'O my Lord, I have kept him away from his food and his passion by day, so accept my intercession for him.' The Qur'an ***says*** (*yaquulu*): 'I have kept him away from sleep by night, so accept my intercession for him.' Then their ***intercession*** is accepted. (*Miškat*, 1963, p.418)

The Saying involves the *personification* of both fasting and the Qur'an as the companions of the Muslim in his life journey, and as advocates on the Hereafter. Personification is an eminent discursive practice in the language of the Prophet Muhammad, and it is frequently used for ontological purposes to portray and conceptualise non-human entities such as abstract concepts, body parts, and human deeds (*See* El-Sharif, 2015).

Both Fasting and reciting the Qur'an are hard rituals, and they deprive the Muslim from pleasures of food, passion, and sleep. However, both fasting and the Qur'an will come on the Day of Resurrection as *companions* interceding (*yašafaᶜ*) for the one who observed them while fasting in Ramadan. The metaphoric scenario here involves the believer is accompanied by fasting and the Qur'an, and all are standing before God's throne and both fasting and the Qur'an are interceding for the observant believer. The scenario then evokes feelings of fear of God and gratification for allowing faithful *companions* to intercede for their companion. As a result, an emotional appeal is reflected by the images of fasting and the Qur'an's sincere endeavour to intercede for their observant; fasting beseeches God to accept its intercession because it deprived its companion his food and his passion by day, and the Qur'an, beseeches God to accept its intercession because it deprived its companion from the pleasure of sleep by night. Remarkably, the Prophet explicitly tells that God will accept the intercession; such an affirmation invokes a sense of relief and gratification upon the recipient and makes the Saying message accessible and persuading.

Prohibiting the Unlawful

Metaphors are used in the Prophetic Tradition to warn the believers from approaching the unlawful and prohibited (*ħaraam*) by negatively-evaluating metaphors used to explain the severity and consequences of doing the prohibited. For example, major sins (*al-Kaba'ir*)[9] are portrayed in the Prophetic Tradition as *destruction* and *damage*; the Prophet says:

10. The one who is easygoing about the limits set by God and the one who violates them are like people who cast lots about a ship (*safeynah*), some going below decks and some above. Then when those who were above decks were annoyed by one who was below decks passing them for the sake of water, he took an axe (*fa?s*) and began to make a hole (*θuqb*) in the bottom of the ship. They went to him and asked what was the matter with him, to which he replied that they were annoyed by him but he must have water. Now if they *prevent* him they *will save* him and be safe themselves, but if they *leave him* alone they *will destroy* both him and themselves. (*Miškat*, 5138, p.1065)

The message of this saying is based on the metaphor *God's realm as a ship.* This metaphor is derived from *journey* and *movement* metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), and it represents development of the Islamic society in terms of a political body, or a state, where the Islamic society's compilation of experiences and events is conceptualized as the progress, or voyage, of a ship on the sea (*See* Grady, 2007). The *ship of the state* metaphoric image elaborates and accentuates the society's collective responsibility in protecting Islam from both internal and external dangers, and the *passengers of the ship* metaphor shows how a person's mistake might have destructive consequences on the group; even if it is made for

bad intentions. In addition, the metaphor emphasises the responsibility of the Muslim rulers (the *crew* of the ship) and other members of the Muslim society (the *passengers* of the ship) in preventing what may cause instability to the course of the ship of the Muslim society, or state, by reinforcing God's commands on all members of society.

The *ship of state* metaphor involves several evaluative schemes. First, partnership and the common destiny of members of Muslim society are emphasised. Second, there is the negative of metaphor of damage evoked by the axe (*fa?s*) in making a hole (*θuqb*) in the ship which might cause its sinking. Minor faults can lead to severe consequences, and indifference can be catastrophic on the individual and the group. Herein, the metaphor reinforces the idea of the collective responsibility of Muslims in preventing unlawful practises in society by the authority of the ruler.

In another case, the consumption of wine had been common among Arabs during pre-Islamic and early Islamic period; however, Islam came and prohibited it[10]. This prohibition is justified by the severe consequences of wine and its consumption on the person and society, and this is highlighted by the Prophet Muhammad as he says;

11. …; and do not drink wine, for it is the key *(meftaaħ*) to every evil. *(Miškat*, 580, p.117)

The above Saying strictly prohibits wine because it is associated with evil deeds. This idea is evoked by introducing the *container* metaphor, a case of the conventional conduit metaphor (*See* Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). However, the saying elaborates this metaphoric image by which evil is portrayed as a *substance* contained in the closed container, and there is a padlock that should remain locked because it locks the container of that evil. Wine is portrayed as the key to this *container lock*, and opening it means allowing the access to all sorts of evil deeds and its spread in society. Here, the persuasiveness of the *key* and the *lock of the container* metaphor is evoked by the implicit warning and threat which the metaphor involves.

In another Saying, backbiting, called *ɣeybah* in Arabic, is a prohibited demeanour because it spreads distrust among members of society. It is narrated that the Prophet once warned his wife Aisha when she talked about one of the Prophet's wives (Safiya); the Saying narrates:

12. 'A'isha told that she said to the Prophet, "It is enough for you in Safiya [one of the Prophet's wives) that she is such and such," meaning that she was short; and he replied, "You have said a word (*kalemah*) which would *change the sea* if it were *mixed* (*muzeja*) ***in it***. (*Miškat*, 4853, p.1011)

The Saying warns here that backbiting impure the one's faith and values in the same manner a sea, despite its immenseness, might be polluted by a small amount of dirt. Here, a word is resembled to this amount of dirt that can impure the water of the sea. The hyperbole here makes a discursive practice that aims to draw attention to the seriousness of backbiting and its negative consequences in polluting the one's moral purity.

The forbidden deeds of the tongue cover also the writing and recital of immoral poetry. In one incident, the Prophet compares the poets who compose and recite immoral, and dishonest, poetry to the devil; the Saying narrates:

13. Abu Sa'id al-Khudri told that when they were journeying with God's messenger in al-'Arj [a place] a poet appeared and recited, whereupon God's messenger said, "Seize the devil," or, "Catch the devil[11]. It is better for a man to have his belly *filled with pus* (*qayħan*) than to have it *filled* with poetry." (*Miškat*, 4809, p.1004)

Here, the Saying denounces those who dishonestly recite poetry to praise people for the sake of reward, and the ones who recite hypocritical poetry are compared to the devil that allures man. Furthermore, the metaphor is elaborated to convey a repulsive image of the *pus* that fills the poet's abdomen. This metaphor evokes a negative evaluation to hypocritical and deceitful poetry. Accordingly, the persuasiveness of the Saying in prohibiting reciting dishonest and hypocritical poetry is invoked by the vile metaphors of the *poet as a devil* and *poetry as pus* (*qayħan*).

HOW THE PROPHETIC METAPHORS WORK?

The succinct presentation above demonstrates that the Prophetic metaphors make a discursive practice that is used as persuasive device. These metaphors are introduced within the Prophetic Tradition in several manners in terms of their structure, creativity, and mode of presentation. Remarkably, the choice of metaphors within the Prophetic Tradition is dominated by the Prophet objectives of persuasion. Thus, these metaphors are not merely for decoration and embellishing the language; instead, they are discursively practiced to increase the persuasiveness of the Prophetic messages especially, as we saw, to introduce Islamic laws, rites and rituals, and prohibiting the unlawful.

Herein, the brief survey above demonstrates that persuasiveness of the Prophetic metaphors is evoked by several practices; and I here below discus three of them: *disambiguation*, *arousing the emotions*, and the *implicit threat*. For representativeness and illustration, and to avoid redundancy, I will illustrate these practices by one or two Sayings of each practice.

Disambiguation

First of all, *disambiguation* is one of the main functions of the Prophetic metaphors. It is found that several Prophetic metaphors are used in order to facilitate the comprehension of a Saying message and to make it more appealing and persuading for the Saying recipient. Several Prophetic metaphors construct a complex set of metaphoric associations and scenarios to make a comprehensive image that redefines a concept or an idea. Thus, we saw in the Sayings presented above how Islam is portrayed as a complex system that is 'based on five obligatory pillars' (Saying no.7), and that the Muslim's blood is safe, and should not be shed, as long as he respects the 'covenant' he made with God by observing the obligatory prayers (Saying no.8). And we saw also how fasting Ramadan and reciting the Holy Qur'an will 'intercede' for the observant Muslim (Saying no.9), and how the Prophet demonstrates why wine is prohibited (Saying no.11). And

finally, the Prophet illustrates the reality of backbiting and how harmful it is on the believer (Saying no.12). Remarkably, disambiguation is achieved by the metaphor, and in many cases, by the Prophet by interpreting the metaphoric scenario. For example, in introducing ritual rights, a Saying involves a metaphoric scenario that redefines the difference between what is lawful and what is unlawful by using metaphors from the domain of *pasturalism*; the Prophet says:

14. What is lawful (*ħalaal*) is clear and what is unlawful (*ħaraam*) is clear, but between them are certain doubtful things (*muštabahaat*) which many people do not recognise. He who guards against doubtful things keeps his religion and his honour blameless, but he who *falls* into doubtful things *falls* into what is unlawful, just as a shepherd who *pastures* his animals round a preserve (*alħemaa*) *will soon pasture* [but he's not allowed to do so] them in it. Every king has a preserve, and God's preserve is the things He has declared unlawful." (*Miškat*, 2762, p.592)

The Saying introduces the idea that the aptitude to distinguish the good from evil cannot fail those with true faith. However, the Prophet emphasises that there are several issues in religion which are not easily recognisable (*muštabahaat*) by the unversed believer (Ibn Qutaiba, 1973: 5-6). The Prophet recommends that approaching these doubtful issues must be avoided because the person who guards himself against doubtful things keeps himself, his religion, and his honour from falling into doubt, and may be dragged later to do the unlawful. The role of metaphors in disambiguating the Saying message is perceived by looking at the last part of the Saying because of the ambiguity of the idea of 'falling' (*waqaᶜa*) into what is considered 'unlawful' (*ħaraam*) even if the Muslim is still in the area of the 'safe' *doubtful things*. In this regard, the metaphor of *pasturalism*, a familiar domain of experience to the Arabs at the Prophet's time, facilitates the comprehension of the idea. The Muslim who risks approaching doubtful things is likened to the shepherd who pastures his animals next to the private pasture (*alħemaa*) of a king, and the commoners' are prohibited from pasturing in it. If the shepherd watches his herd and where they pasture, he, and his animals, will remain safe, and they enjoy their pasturing. Nevertheless, breaking into the king's private preserve will be considered a violation on the king's property and might lead to the king's anger and reprimand. Herein, the Saying message is elaborated and its ambiguity is resolved by the Prophet's emphasis that if a believer was easy about approaching the doubtful, then he would, sooner or later, fall into the unlawful.

In another Saying, the Prophetic metaphors are used to redefine worldly concepts which are common in society. The Prophet explains these worldly concepts by metaphors and interprets them to his followers. For example, the Prophet redefines the concept of the *Poor One* (the bankrupt), or *almuflis*, derived from metaphors related to the domains of *business* and *money transactions*. The Saying states:

15. .when God's messenger asked if they knew who the poor one (muflis) was and received the reply that among them the poor one was the person who had neither dirham nor goods he said, "The poor one [bankrupt] (*almufles*) among my people is he who will bring on the day of resurrection prayer, fasting and *zakat*, but will come having *reviled* (*šatam*) this one, *aspersed* (*qaðafa*) that one, *devoured the property* (*?akala maala*) of this one, *shed the blood* (*safaka dama*) of that one and *beaten* (*Ðaraba*) this one. Then this one and that one *will be given some of his good deeds*; but if his good deeds are exhausted before he *pays what he owes* (*yuqÐaa maaᶜaleyhe*), some of their sins will be taken and upon him and he will be cast into hell." (*Miškat*, 5127, p.1062)

The Saying here stresses that a Muslim is characterised by virtuous qualities and adherence to kindness and good manners. The Prophet portrays the aggressive Muslim *as the poor one* or the *bankrupt* whose property is taken from him in order to settle up the debts with those whom they owe. The Prophet explains the reality of the poor person in Islam by elaborating that he is unsympathetic and does not consider the others esteem. So, his fine and righteous deeds will not be counted for him on the Day of Resurrection. In addition, the metaphor of the aggressive person as a *poor person* (*bankrupt*) is associated to the metaphor that defines spiritual wealth in terms of *physical wealth.*

Remarkably, although the metaphor of the *poor person* (or a *bankrupt*), derived from the domain of business and money transactions, is a familiar domain to Muslims, we see that the Prophet elaborates the message and illustrates it in detail. This is chiefly because the metaphor evokes a variety of implications which must be recognised. For instance, the last part of the Saying evokes the scenario of God as the judge who takes from the aggressive person's rewards and gives them to those whom he/she has wronged in the worldly life. Accordingly, the persuasiveness of the message of the Saying is conveyed through the detailed representation of the qualities of some Muslims by the metaphor of the poor or bankrupt person.

Arousing the Emotions

Secondly, classical theories of metaphor emphasize the role of metaphorical language in arousing the emotions. Following the Aristotelian argument, metaphorical language is persuasive because it involves 'pathos', or 'emotional appeal'. This pathos helps identify the discourse maker's point of view, and made the audience feel what he/she feels, and respond emotionally to it (Charteris-Black, 2005: 21-22).

Several Prophetic Sayings involve metaphors which appeal for the recipient's emotions. For instance, we saw above the case of arousing the emotions of seeking refuge against oppression in *the ruler as a shade* metaphor (Saying no.4), and the instance of metaphor by which obligatory charity is depicted *as purification* (Saying no.5). In addition, the Prophet appeals the emotions of pride and courage by linking between *jihad* and *reward* and *spoil* and the *horse* (Saying no.6). And we saw the negative representation of *poetry as a pus*; a metaphor that appeal negative and dreadful emotions (Saying no.13). The evaluative significance of such *emotional* metaphors is emphasised by the broad-spectrum of beliefs in the society which reflect evaluative 'clues' within the Saying. These 'clues' invoke either a favourable

or unfavourable appeal. For example, the Prophet likens the debt that a Muslim owes to *a prison*; the Saying narrates:

16. ...a corpse was brought to the Prophet on a bier for him to pray over it and he asked the people whether their friend owed anything. On being told that he did, he asked whether he had left anything to discharge it, and when they replied that he had not, he told them to pray over him. But ʻAli b. Abu Talib said, "I shall be responsible for his debt, messenger of God," so he went forward and prayed over him. A version has something to the same effect, adding that he said, "May God *redeem* [*set your pledges free*] your *pledges* (*fakka rehaanaka*) from hell as you have *redeemed the pledges* of your brother Muslim! No Muslim will discharge his brother's debt without God *redeeming his pledges* on the day of resurrection." (*Miškat*, 2920, p.624)

And in another Saying the Prophet emphasises that:

17. A debtor is *bound* (*ma?suur*) to his debt and will complain to his Lord of loneliness on the day of resurrection. (*Miškat*, 2916, p.624)

The Sayings emphasise that a believer would not be rewarded with paradise if he died with debt owed to another person. This debt is portrayed as a prison into which the debtor is held imprisoned until the debt is paid or excused. Thus, the last two Sayings involve two images derived from the novel metaphor of *imprisonment*. The persuasiveness of these metaphors is evoked from the negative evaluation of the idea of imprisonment or confinement, and all other metaphoric scenarios which convey the idea of restraining the freedom. These metaphors arouse the emotions of sympathy towards the imprisoned, who is in debt, because of the images of suffering, grief, and humiliation associated with imprisonment. In addition, there is the scenario of God redeeming the pledges of the person who has redeemed the pledges of another Muslim. What is more, there is the association between the image of *brotherhood* in Islam and the idea of setting a brother free from imprisonment which all strengthens solidarity among members of the Muslim society. All these elaborated metaphoric scenarios work on arousing emotions solidarity in the Saying, and make it more persuasive.

One of the most emotion arousing metaphors in the Prophetic Tradition are the ones which involve personification (El-Sharif, 2015). These metaphors are used to conceptualise abstract notions by bestowing them the human capacity of speech[12]. In one Saying, the 'ties of relationship' (*alraħem*) are personified using the human attributes of pleading for justice and beseeching; in one Saying, the Prophet says:

18. ...that when God had finished creating all things, ties of relationship (*alraħem*) arose and seized the loins of the Compassionate One. He said, "Stop!" and they[13] said, "This is the place for him who seeks refuge in Thee from being cut off." He replied, "Are you not satisfied that I should keep connection (*?aSela*) with him who keeps you united and sever connection (*?aqtaᶜa*) with him who severs you? "They said, "Certainly, O Lord," and He replied, "Well, that is how things are." (*Miškat*, 4919, p.1025)

One may ponder of this allegoric scenario, as it is feasible to argue that the Saying may be interpreted literally, since its scenario is taking place on the Day of Resurrection. However, the metaphoric realisation involves an intensely emotional appeal as it presents the kinship relationship (*alraħem*) as a female[14] who beseeches God and under His loins and calling for justice from those who wrongly treated 'her' in the worldly life. The emotional appeal is further strengthened by God's promise to response to *alraħem*'s pleads. This response emphasises the proposition of God's benevolence and justice for those who had been wrongly treated; such as those who do not observe the ties of relationship (*alraħem*).

The Implicit Threat

Finally, Several Prophetic metaphors evoke threat and warning to make the Saying more persuasive because it makes the recipient wary of some dire consequences. This sort persuasiveness is influenced by *coercion.* Here, the recipient's natural disposition is to avoid what may cause physical or psychological harm and uneasiness to him.

In most instances of the Prophetic metaphors which involve an implicit threat, the Saying warns against actions or deeds which may bring God's wrath or cause afflictions that concern the believers. Herein, God is portrayed as mighty and omnipotent and capable of afflicting the disobedient and sinner in the worldly life and the hereafter, or removing this affliction. Such threats appeared implicitly in the metaphoric image of *God's realm as a ship* (Saying no.10), and when the Prophets warned his wife of backbiting by likening it to *pollution* (Saying no.12). And we saw it also when God considered the five obligatory prayers as a *covenant*, and that not observing this covenant will lead shedding the blood of the Muslim (Saying no.8). We present here an instance that explicitly presents an elaborate threatening metaphoric scenario from the *conflict* and *warfare* domains; the Prophet says:

19. I and the message with which God has entrusted me are just like a man who came to a people and said, 'I have seen the army with my own eyes, and I am a simple [uncovered] Warner (*alnaðyru alcaryaan*), so flee, flee.' A section of his people *obeyed* him, and *setting off at nightfall* (*?adlajuu*), *went away* without hurry and *escaped*. But a section of them did not believe him and *stayed* where they were, and the army *attacked them* at dawn, *destroying* and *extirpating* them. That is a comparison with those who obey me and follow my message, and with those who disobey me and disbelieve the truth I have brought. (*Miškat*, 148, p.40)

Here, we see that the metaphoric scenario evokes an atmosphere of threat and alarm reflected through the metaphor of *God's punishment as a devastating army*. This metaphor invokes a feeling of fear in the heart the recipients because of their awareness of the consequences of invasions by an army. Furthermore, invoking threat is attained by the frightening image of the *simple warner* (*alnaðyru alᶜaryaan*) who runs hastily to warn his people from the army in his torn clothes. Meanwhile, there is the metaphor of some people trying 'setting off at nightfall' (*?adlajuu*) to flee from the devastating army and others not fleeing. These images aim to alarm the believers to comprehend the importance of the Prophet Muhammad as a *Warner* who warn his people of

what afflictions might descend upon the disobedient because of God's wrath.

CONCLUSION

The metaphors in the Prophet Muhammad's Tradition are discursively used to convey the functions and purposes of Islamic doctrine and its ideological foundations. These metaphors are primarily used as a persuasive device, and this in turn, reflects the reality of the Prophetic Tradition as a communication process in which the persuader (the Prophet) sends a persuasive message to a persuadee or audience (the Muslim and non-Muslim recipient) with the intention of changing the recipient's attitudes or behaviour, although always leaving the persuadee with the power of decision (Simons et. al., 2001). Then, the Prophetic metaphors make a 'discursive practice' that is used as persuasive device, and they are introduced within the Prophetic Tradition in several manners, in terms of their structure, creativity, and mode of presentation, with the objectives of persuasion. Accordingly, the Prophet Muhammad 'discursively practiced' metaphors in his Tradition in persuading his audience to accept Islamic laws, and introduce rites and rituals, and to prohibit the unlawful. These discursive practices are intensified and elaborated by means of other three linguistic practices: disambiguation, arousing the emotions, and the implicit threat. All together, the Prophetic metaphors make a 'discursive practice' that explains how the principles and foundations of Islamic creed and faith and practices are enacted and reproduced by the language of the Prophet Muhammad within its social and historical contexts.

END NOTES

1. Transliteration of Arabic words is written in *italic*.
2. Metaphoric noun phrases are highlighted in **bold**; metaphoric verb phrases are highlighted in *italic*.
3. Prophetic Sayings are extracted from *Mishkat Al-Masabih;* translated to English by James Robson (Robson 1965)
4. The literal translation of the expression is: "and bite it firmly between your teeth".
5. The successors of the Prophet.
6. The verse is: "And those who hoard up gold and silver [*Al-Kanz*: the money, the *zakat* of which has not been paid] and spend them not in the Way of Allah, announce unto them a painful torment. On the Day when that (*Al-Kanz*: money, gold and silver the *zakat* of which has not been paid) will be heated in the fire of Hell and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs…."(*Surah At-taubah*, The Repentance, 9: 34).
7. On *spoils* in Islam *see* Iqbal and Lewis, 2009: 99-115.
8. In a more literal sense 'to be constructed by'.
9. See "Oxford Islamic Studies Online". Sin. Oxford University Press.
10. The mentioning of wine in the Holy Quran appears in three different places. At first, it was forbidden for Muslims to attend prayers while intoxicated (*Surah an-nisa'*, the Women, 4:43). The next step in turning people away from wine consumption is achieved by a later verse that was 'revealed' and which said that alcohol contains some good and some evil, but the evil is greater than the good (*Surah al-baqarah*, the Cow, 2: 219). Finally, a verse was 'revealed' stating that "intoxicants and games of chance were some sort of the abominations of Satan's handiwork; so Muslims must avoid them all (*Surah al-ma'edah*, the Table Spread with Food, 5:90-91).
11. It seems that the narrator does not recollect what the Prophet has said precisely.
12. For example, the case of personifying fasting and the Holy Qur'an in Saying no.9.
13. *alraћem* is singular in the Arabic origin.
14 This can be realized from the feminine morphemes *t* and *y* in the Arabic verbs *qalat* (said) and *tarÐyna* (satisfied).

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