

# A Study of Two Qur'anic Counterfactuals: An Application of a Model of Conceptual Projection and Integration

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## Abstract

This paper examines two Qur'anic counterfactuals from the perspective of the Combined Input Hypothesis. This is a model of figurative meaning construction developed by Ruiz de Mendoza and others between 1999 and 2003 as an alternative model to Conceptual Blending Theory (see Fauconnier & Turner 2002, 2003). The purpose of the study is twofold: 1) to demonstrate the adequacy of the Combined Input Hypothesis for studying Qur'anic counterfactuals and 2) to draw attention to the need to approach non-literal Qur'anic language from a perspective that is broader than Conceptual Metaphor Theory (c.f. Lakoff & Johnson 1980) or Conceptual Blending Theory; namely, one that offers a psychologically realistic account of conceptual mapping and integration by taking into account content and formal cognitive operations involved in the processes.

**Keywords:** Qur'anic counterfactuals, Conceptual metaphor, Conceptual blending, Conceptual projection and integration

## 1. Introduction

The field of Qur'anic language studies has witnessed the emergence of work approaching Qur'anic metaphors from the perspective of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (see Lakoff & Johnson 1980) for the purpose of exploring the encoding of religious reasoning. CMT is based on the view that metaphor is not only a rhetorical device, but also an important part of the way we think and express our thoughts. In this way, the metaphorical expressions we use reflect the metaphorical structuring of our conceptual system, or our regular conceptualisation of more abstract concepts in terms of more concrete ones. For instance, an expression like *It is time to get on with your life* may be explained as motivated by the LIFE AS A JOURNEY conceptual metaphor. This metaphor is a stable knowledge structure, in the sense that we regularly think and talk about life as a journey (see Lakoff 1993). Studying Qur'anic metaphors from this cognitive perspective is a step in the right direction because it represents a departure from the traditional Arabic linguistics approaches based on 'Ilm al-Bayan - the study of figures of speech - which was established by Abdul Qahir al-Jurjani in the ninth century, and which is still playing an influential role in Arabic language studies (see Abu Libdeh 2011).

However, not enough steps seem to have been taken to study Qur'anic language in terms of more recent cognitive approaches that focus on the construction of discourse-bound meaning. A case in point is Fauconnier and Turner's Conceptual Blending Theory (CBT) (see, e.g., Fauconnier & Turner 2002). CBT adds a dynamic aspect to CMT, showing that the construction of a discourse-bound model of a metaphor does not rest on mapping one concept onto another, but on mapping partial source and target concepts (i.e. concepts containing elements related to the situated meaning) and selectively blending structure from these concepts which gives rise to a novel structure. There is work in the literature exploring conceptual blending in the Qur'an. An example (examined below) is Newby's (2003) study of the binding of subjects that underlies the Qur'anic narratives creating the Islamic apocalyptic discourse. However, no analysis has been provided for conceptual blending involved in the understanding of metaphorical language or other types of figurative language in the Qur'an. That is, work in the field is still focused on examining non-literality in the Qur'an in terms of CMT.

This paper aims at making a contribution to the field by studying the construction of two Qur'anic counterfactuals, verse 109 of chapter 18, Surah AlKahf (The Cave'), and verse 21 of chapter 59, Surah AlHashr (Exile, Banishment), in terms of a model of conceptual integration known as the Combined Input Hypothesis (CIH). This hypothesis, which is considered as an alternative model to CBT, was developed in Ruiz de Mendoza ([1999] 2002), Ruiz de Mendoza & Peña Cervel (2002) and Ruiz de Mendoza & Pérez (2003), and elaborated on in Ruiz de Mendoza & Santibáñez Sáenz (2003). The main point that makes CIH and CBT different approaches to conceptual integration is that in CIH there is no novel structure (or a blend). The uniqueness of the integrated structure is only apparent because it receives its elements from composite concepts integrating partial source and target concepts. CIH identifies a number of cognitive operations related to the activity of explicature and implicature generation (c.f. Sperber & Wilson 1986) that take place before the actual

integration between the composite source and target can happen; and this is another point that distinguishes CIH and CBT as approaches to conceptual integration. The reason why CIH was adopted in this study is that it was found to be more adequate than CBT for analysing the above-mentioned Qur'anic counterfactuals. However, some insights offered by CBT were incorporated into the analysis where appropriate.

The study begins with theoretical backgrounds, bringing into focus the main principles of CMT as well as its limitations with regards to studying Qur'anic metaphors in order to highlight the need for examining such discourse-bound models from a perspective based on conceptual integration. The subsection that follows demonstrates the point by introducing CBT and the potential it has for studying conceptual blending that characterises the Qur'anic discourse. CIH is then introduced as a more adequate approach for analysing this feature in Qur'anic language because it is psychologically more realistic in that it takes into account various content and formal cognitive operations involved in conceptual integration as a mechanism for meaning construction, being rooted in Sperber and Wilson's theory of relevance. The last section provides an analysis of the above-mentioned Qur'anic counterfactuals in terms of CIH.

## 1.1 Theoretical Backgrounds

### 1.1.1 Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Qur'anic Metaphors

The major insights of CMT rest on its examination of the systematic way in which physical experience provides the grounding for non-physical experience. One crucial insight, referred to as the *embodiment hypothesis*, states that metaphorical cognition is built on the basis of a small number of image-schematic (skeletal) concepts, such as CONTAINER; FULL-EMPTY; OBJECT; UP-DOWN; NEAR-FAR; PART-WHOLE; LINK; RESISTANCE; and SOURCE-PATH-GOAL, that emerge in the mind out of pre-conceptual bodily experience. That is, it is on the basis of these embodied knowledge structures, which develop “in a significant way prior to, and independent of, any concepts” (Lakoff 1987:271), that metaphorical cognition and metaphorical networks of meaning are built. For example, “We experience ourselves as entities, separate from the rest of the world – as containers with an inside and an outside” (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:58): our physical and emotional states are entities within us (e.g. He hasn't got an honest bone in his body) (Lakoff & Johnson 1980:50). The language of containers (whether conventional or novel) is meaningful to people by virtue of their pre-conceptual bodily experience. Thus, the basic logic of containers (i.e. If X is in container A and container A is in container B, then X is in container B) can be seen as following from CONTAINER schemas rather than vice versa (Lakoff 1987:273, 1993:213). Relevant to the embodiment hypothesis is the *invariance hypothesis*. It states that in a metaphorical mapping, the logic of any image schema structuring the source concept, or conceptual domain<sup>1</sup>, is preserved in a way which is consistent with the inherent structure of

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<sup>1</sup> In Langacker's definition, a *conceptual domain* (an *Idealized Cognitive Model* in Lakovian terminology and a *frame* in Fillmorean) is “[a]ny coherent area of conceptualization relative to which semantic structures can be characterised (including any kind of experience, concept or knowledge system)” (1991:547).

the target domain (Lakoff 1993:215). All these are points demonstrating the systematicity of cross-domain mappings.

The fact that CMT studies the systematic conceptualisation of abstract/less familiar experiences in terms of concrete/more familiar ones has contributed to viewing it as a necessary tool for studying the domain of the religious which is basically dependent on metaphorical conceptualisation, as Jäkel (2002) noted<sup>2</sup>:

... the domain of the religious should be largely if not completely dependent on metaphorical conceptualisation. It is not only a highly abstract domain quite removed from sensual experience, but its central issues of God, the soul, the hereafter, and the freedom of moral choice have traditionally been regarded as the metaphysical ideas par excellence.

Berrada (e.g. 2007) demonstrated, on the basis of a large corpus of Qur'anic metaphors, that "the Qur'an resorts to reific metaphors – using concepts pertaining to some domains that were very familiar to the people who first received the Qur'anic revelations in order to delineate the less accessible notions of faith and the eschaton" (Berrada 2007:19). For example, familiar domains related to physical and cultural experiences, such as trade, food and light and darkness, are regularly used in the Qur'an as source domains via which many aspects of Islamic faith and other target domains will be non-literally experienced. Table (1) is based on Berrada's findings. It demonstrates his point that what appear to be unrelated linguistic metaphors disconnectedly scattered throughout the Qur'anic text can be classified into themes or sets of related metaphors motivated by general conceptual mappings (Berrada 2007: 34).

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<sup>2</sup> The pages are not numbered in the online version of the paper.

Table 1. Qur'anic metaphors (after Berrada 2007)

| Source                                | Target                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Metaphors & Examples from the Qur'an <sup>3</sup>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| trade                                 | belief and reward<br><br>disbelief and chastisement<br><br>deeds                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>FAITH IN ISLAM IS A PROFITABLE TRADE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>O you who have believed, shall I guide you to a transaction that will save you from a painful punishment? (61:10)</li> </ul> <b>EXCHANGING FAITH FOR DISBELIEF IS AN UNPROFITABLE TRADE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Those are the ones who have purchased error [in exchange] for guidance, so their transaction has brought no profit, nor were they guided. (2:16)</li> </ul> <b>PEOPLE'S DEEDS ARE RECORDED IN A LEDGER<br/>PEOPLE RECEIVE THEIR ACCOUNTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>So how will it be when we assemble them for a Day about which there is no doubt? And each soul will be compensated [in full for] what it earned, and they will not be wronged. (3:25)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| food                                  | chastisement<br><br>revelling                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>UNDERGOING CHASTISEMENT IS TASTING IT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>But We will surely cause those who disbelieve to taste a severe punishment ... (41:27)</li> </ul> <b>REVELLING IS TASTING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>And when We let the people taste mercy, they rejoice therein, ... (30:36)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| light<br><br><br><br><br><br>darkness | Allah and His guidance<br>the Prophet and His guidance<br>the Holy Scriptures<br><br><br>faith, the truth, knowledge,<br>conviction, peace of mind<br>tranquility and blessing<br><i>disbelief and heresy</i><br><i>falsehood, ignorance,</i><br><i>hesitation, doubt,</i><br><i>apprehension, damnation</i><br><i>and curse</i> | <b>GOD IS LIGHT<br/>GIVING KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IS GIVING LIGHT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth ... Allah doth guide whom He will to His Light ... (24:35)</li> <li>And one who invites to Allah, by His permission, and an illuminating lamp. (33:46)</li> <li>Then if they deny you, [O Muhammad] – so were messengers denied before you, who brought clear proofs and written ordinances and the enlightening Scripture. (3:184)</li> </ul> <b>FOLLOWING GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS/BELIEVING IN ALLAH IS LIVING IN LIGHT<br/>LIGHT IS KNOWLEDGE AND BLESSING<br/>DISBELIEVING IN GOD IS LIVING IN DARKNESS<br/>DARKNESS IS IGNORANCE AND CURSE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allah is the ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darkneses into the light. And those who disbelieve – their allies are Taghut. They take them out of the light into darkneses. Those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein. (2:257)</li> </ul> |

Although the above analysis demonstrates that the systematicity of Qur'anic metaphors is cognitively motivated, yet, it does not go deep enough into the basic principles of CMT so as to uncover the shortcomings of the theory with regards to studying the Qur'anic models of conceptual metaphors. Shokr (2006) conducted such a thorough study of the Qur'anic model of LIFE AS A JOURNEY, drawing on Jäkel's (2002) work in which he pinpoints the inapplicability of the invariance hypothesis to the study of the Biblical model of this conceptual metaphor (as an example of discourse-bound models). Shokr showed that the Qur'anic model of LIFE AS A JOURNEY has an image-schematic basis. That is, "the structures mapped from the source domain "journey" to the target domain "life" should be

<sup>3</sup> Unless stated otherwise, the translated verses in this study are quoted from Sahih International and they are all available from Quran.com.

that of the “path” schema which is at the heart of the “journey” domain” (Shokr 2006:128). Lakoff (1989:119) describes the basic logic of this schema as the understanding that going from a source to a destination along a path involves moving forward (in space and time), crossing distance, passing through intermediate points on the path, and facing obstacles. Shokr (2006) noted that not all aspects of the PATH schema are preserved in the Qur’anic model of LIFE AS A JOURNEY, as suggested by the invariance hypothesis. It is similar to the Biblical model of the metaphor examined in Jäkel (2002), in the sense that central aspects of the PATH schema, such as “spatial distance” and “stages”, are lacking. The lack of such aspects of the PATH image schema in the Qur’anic model is due to the fact that the purpose of the journey of life in the Islamic faith is the afterlife (the end of the path, which can be either Heaven or Hell). Any intermediate destination, including “death”, is out of focus. The following specific metaphors that Berrada (2007) identifies on the basis of his study of the linguistic instances of the general, or source, metaphor in question make the point: BELIEVERS ARE ON THE RIGHT PATH, DISBELIEVERS FOLLOW THE CROOKED PATH, BELIEVERS ARE HEADING TOWARDS THE ETERNAL ABODE OF PEACE, and DISBELIEVERS ARE HEADING TOWARDS HELLFIRE. The verse below<sup>4</sup> demonstrates the applications of the majority of these specific metaphors.

If anyone contends with the Messenger even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him, and follows a path other than that becoming to men of Faith, We shall leave him in the path he has chosen, and land him in Hell,- what an evil refuge! (Qur’an 4:115)

Two further observations concerning the inappropriateness of CMT as a framework for studying conceptual metaphor in the Qur’anic discourse can be made here:

- 1) Clearly, as stated in Shokr (2006), the Qur’anic model of LIFE AS A JOURNEY has an element of moral choice underlying its dichotomous portrayal of two ways of life: the good, moral life represented by the straight path taken by righteous travelers, and the bad, immoral life represented by the curved path taken by wicked travelers. This element forms an integral part of the structure of the religious model. Put differently, it constitutes a third, discourse-bound, element of meaning that cannot be accounted for in terms of a two-domain (source-target) model.
- 2) The metaphor is not structured in terms of the PATH image schema in the simple way presented above. There is an interaction between this schema and two subsidiary schemas: VERTICALITY and CONTAINER. These two schemas are dependent on the structure of the PATH schema in that there is an UP-DOWN orientation and a bounded destination (rising to an abode in Heaven or falling in the pit of Hell) embedded in the structure of the PATH schema (see Peña Cervel 1999). Studying such a pattern of interaction between conceptual items which can be involved in a metaphorical mapping is beyond the scope of CMT.

All this shows that the construction of a discourse-bound model of a conceptual metaphor such as the Qur’anic model of LIFE AS A JOURNEY does not rest on mapping one domain onto

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<sup>4</sup> Translation by Ali Yussuf. Quran.com/4.

another, as claimed by CMT, but on partial mappings between domains characterised by integration and interaction between conceptual items. Accordingly, a more adequate approach to Qur'anic metaphors would be one that accounts for all aspects of the process. Both CBT and CIH have the potential of exploring conceptual integration based on partial conceptual mapping. Conceptual interaction, however, was introduced by Gossens (1995), but received attention as an aspect of conceptual integration within CIH.

### 1.1.2 CBT, CIH and Qur'anic Language

CBT emerged in the mid nineties out of Fauconnier's ([1985] 1994) work on *mental spaces* which complements CMT by focusing on the construction of discourse-bound metaphors. The theory of mental spaces depicts the basic form of the process as a matter of establishing connections between two mental spaces that have a smaller structure than the source and target domains. Fauconnier (1997:11) defines mental spaces as temporary "packets" of knowledge constructed on-line, or as "partial structures that proliferate when we think and talk, allowing a fine-grained partitioning of our discourse and knowledge structures". That is, mental spaces only contain structure prompted for as one constructs an utterance. CBT goes further and describes the construction of discourse-bound metaphors as involving conceptual projection and blending (Fauconnier & Turner 2002). Adding more mental spaces, the theory shows that the process typically activates four mental spaces: *source* and *target* spaces that function as inputs to a *blended space*, and a *generic space* whose function is to capture structure that is conceptualised as shared by the input spaces by means of contrasting (or metaphorically mapping) them. The structure in the blended space is unique and is derived via three processes: *composition*, *completion*, and *elaboration*. The composition of the blend involves the selective projection of elements from the input spaces into the blended space as well as the compression of the *vital relation(s)* (or the outer-space relation(s) such as Time and Space) holding between elements in the input spaces into an inner-space relation in the blend. An example of vital relations compression is compression by *syncopation*, which is defined as follows:

Some vital relations bring with them an interval, expanse, or chain that we call a "string." Those vital relations are Time, Space, Cause-Effect, Change, Part-Whole, and Intentionality. (...) [The] partial activation of points on a string we call "syncopation". (Fauconnier & Turner 2002:114)

As for the completion of the blend, the process refers to the recruitment of an additional, pre-existing familiar knowledge structure into the blended space. The additional structure only exists in the blend and it supplies the central inference. Finally, the elaboration of the blend, which involves "mental or physical simulation of the event in the blend" (Coulson & Oakley 2000: 180), gives the blended space its unique structure.

The need for studying Qur'anic language from a perspective that explores conceptual integration, such as CBT, is not only due to its dependence on metaphorical conceptualisation, but also to its multiple textures in which disparate subjects are bound together. The point can be demonstrated by Newby's (2003) study of the binding of time and moral choice that underlies the Qur'anic narratives, creating an apocalyptic discourse. For example, his study

of the structure of the tenth chapter of the Qur'an, Surah Yunus (Jonah), shows that it is built on juxtaposing the two subjects of Creation and God's Judgment (focusing on punishment and reward) through a number of temporally-linked narratives. Newby notes that behind the literal interpretation of these narratives, there lies an "underlying compression of Creation-time and Judgment-Time bearing on the undefined present. The immediacy of the temporal collapse focuses our attention on time's end" (Newby 2003:340), or the end of the journey of life which could happen at any moment. Applying CBT, the subjects of Creation and God's Judgment may be considered as input spaces linked by the outer-space relation "Time". The input spaces form the two ends of the time spectrum. The compression of this outer-space relation holding between the inputs as well as the projection of the compressed structure into the blended space triggers for a sense of urgent, apocalyptic time, or "a sense of time collapsed from its two ends onto the present middle, transforming the act of choosing the right path into an immediate necessity" (Newby 2003:333). The elaboration of the blend figures in its unique structure in which the universe is transformed into a "hyperintensified moral space" (in Robin's (1999) terminology); that is to say, a space where moral choice bears "on every moment and every act" (Newby 2003:335). The moral choice perspective is an emergent structure that only exists in the blend.

Clearly, a model based on conceptual blending is more appropriate than CMT for studying Qur'anic language because it can account for the bound perspectives creating its discourses. It should be noted that CBT adopts a bottom-up model of meaning construction in which the default interpretation of an utterance is shown to take place through a process referred to as *decompression*. This process results in the disintegration and backward projection of the blended elements onto the input spaces, yielding a certain perspective that can lead to the reconstruction of the input spaces. For example, the decompression of the properties of the above-mentioned blend creates tension between the time-bound Qur'anic narratives in the inputs and the message abstracted from them, which transforms the narratives into timeless guides for choosing a moral path. However, according to Ruiz de Mendoza & Santibáñez Sáenz (2003:303), "something is missing from Turner & Fauconnier's account. There are some cognitive operations that take place before actual integration can happen". Accordingly, CIH can be described as a top-bottom model of conceptual integration as a mechanism for meaning construction. This is not only more logical, but also psychologically more realistic because the process involves exploring how premises lead to conclusions with the assistance of linguistic or contextual cues.

An important point about CIH is that it brings together insights from CBT and Sperber & Wilson's (1986) Relevance Theory within a framework that may be described as a modified version of both traditions. It integrates the distinction between explicature (understanding contextual meaning) and implicature (understanding implicitly conveyed meaning which requires drawing a conclusion from premises, or calling upon supplementary contextual information) made in the relevance-theoretic framework, showing that the construction of a context-bound figurative meaning involving conceptual integration is an implicature-derivation process initiated by an explicature-derivation activity obeying a number of low-level and high-level cognitive operations. The former kind of operations is

related to content, whereas the latter is of formal properties. The following are the low-level cognitive operations explored in Ruiz de Mendoza & Santibáñez S áenz (2003). Note that CIH considers metaphor and metonymy, which are dealt with as implicature-derivation operations by Sperber and Wilson, as explicature-derivation operations on the ground that they are both “forms of adjusting the meaning of utterances to contextual requirements” (Ruiz de Mendoza & Santibáñez S áenz 2003:297). For metaphor, CIH views correlation, and not only contrast as proposed by CBT, as an operation sanctioning the mapping between the metaphorical source and target. In addition, CIH considers mitigation, strengthening and counterfactual reasoning as explicature-derivation operations, thus endowing “the notion of explicature with a more prominent role than it had in the canonical relevance-theoretic framework” (Ruiz de Mendoza & Santibáñez S áenz 2003:294). These explicature-derivation operations work in conjunction with one another according to regular patterns of interaction at a stage prior to the construction of a *projection space*. This space contains structure projected from the input spaces and integrated into one space referred to as input 3. The integrated structure, or input 3, gives rise to further implicature-derivation activities.

- 1) Correlation and contrast, which are usually associated with the interpretation of metaphorical expressions, the former operation refers to mapping concepts that co-occur in our experience (e.g. height and quantity) and the latter to mapping concepts by comparison (e.g. *John is a bulldozer*);
- 2) domain expansion and domain reduction, which are converse metonymic operations behind part-for-whole and whole-for-part metonymies such as face-for-person and bottle-for-drink (container-for-content);
- 3) mitigation (hyperbole) and the converse operation strengthening, which work to produce non-literal interpretations of scalar concepts;
- 4) counterfactual reasoning, which may be considered a subcase of mitigation in cases of impossible events.

However, within CIH, these low-level operations are insufficient to explain how the meaning of a figurative expression is constructed. The following higher-level operations act as prerequisites for low-level cognitive operations to be possible at all: cueing, abstraction, integration and projection.

Cueing refers to the lexical and grammatical cues provided by linguistic expressions. These cues serve as guides on what cognitive operation should be used. Consider, for example, the different interpretations of *rabbit* in *She loves her little rabbit* and *He wears rabbit regularly*. The first example refers to the animal and the second to the fur of the animal. The former example would provide a central non-metonymic characterization, whereas the latter would require a metonymic shift from the main domain “animal” to the subdomain “fur” as cued by the lexical and constructional features of the expression. “Wear” activates the subdomain of the “fur of the animal”. In this metonymy, an object is metonymically conceived of as material and therefore grammatically treated as a mass noun (Ruiz de Mendoza & Santibáñez S áenz 2003:306).

Abstraction refers to the construction of the generic space. Abstraction operations are preconditions for low-level metaphorical operations of correlation and contrast in the sense that they license the mapping.

As for integration and projection, they need to be discussed together. “Integration should not be confused with blending, as discussed by Turner and Fauconnier. First, blending is described by these authors as the end-result of cognitive activity, while integration ... happens at previous stages. Second, a blended space may contain emergent structure not found in any of the input spaces. In integration there is no such thing as independent emergent structure: all relevant structure is derived from the input spaces” (Ruiz de Mendoza & Santibáñez Sáenz 2003:307). Ruiz de Mendoza (1996, 1998), Ruiz de Mendoza & Déz (2002), and Ruiz de Mendoza & Peña (2002) show that these spaces are the result of the activation of multiple input spaces which are combined and integrated in a constrained fashion before they are mapped onto one another and before the projection space is constructed. Integration in the input spaces is of two kinds: integration by *schematic enrichment* (in which basic and subsidiary image schemas interact, as shown above) and integration by *combination* (in which additional structures are called upon for the integration operation to be possible). Figure (1) summarises the meaning derivation process showing the cognitive operations involved (Ruiz de Mendoza & Santibáñez Sáenz 2003:310).

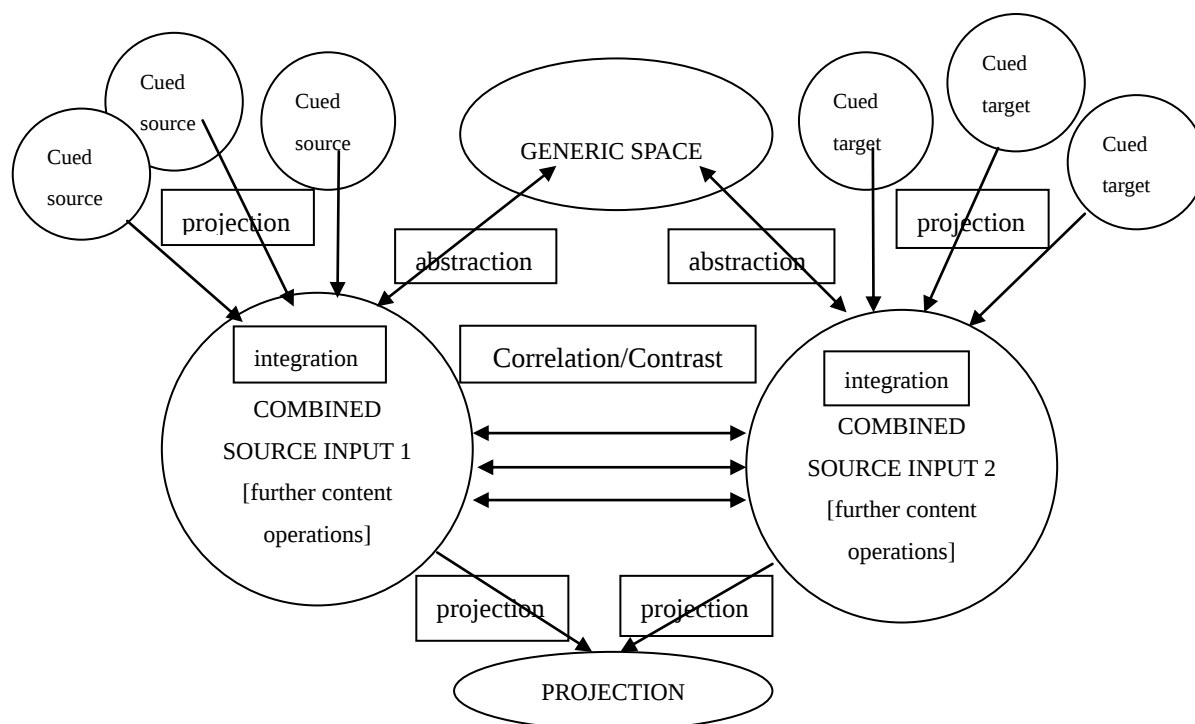


Figure 1. Meaning derivation from the perspective of CIH

## 2. The Construction of Two Qur'anic Counterfactuals from the Perspective of CIH

### 2.1 Verse 109 of Surah AlKahf

This verse, based on Alwahidi's interpretation<sup>5</sup>, was descended in response to a claim that the book of Judaism gives abundant knowledge about God's laws and marvels. The claim was made as a comment on God's saying in verse 85 of chapter 17, Surah AlIsra' (The Night Journey), that "... mankind have not been given of knowledge except a little". The defectiveness of this claim is shown through a counterfactual as follows:

Say, "If the sea were ink for [writing] the words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like of it as a supplement." (Qur'an 18:109)

This is a counterfactual of the form 'if *antecedent* then *consequent*'. According to Fauconnier (1997), such a form constructs a mental space within which the counterfactual is reasoned about. This involves assuming the antecedent to be true, verifying it by the consequent, and then drawing a conclusion from its verification. As mentioned above, drawing a conclusion from premises within CIH is an implicature-derivation activity that involves calling upon supplementary contextual information. Qur'anic counterfactuals, however, are different from human constructed counterfactuals in that they create an impossible world and, at the same time, instil a certainty in the reader that this impossible world can come true if God wills. That is, they have an implication additional to the effect they are intended to create through a counterfactual scenario that may be summarized by the following verse: God "... increases in creation what He wills. Indeed, Allah is over all things competent" (Qur'an 35:1). Clearly, the Qur'anic verse in question evokes a scenario whereby if the antecedent (If the sea were ink for the words of my Lord) was indeed true then the consequent would follow if God wills (the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like of it as a supplement). The conclusion to be drawn from this is that the words of God are inexhaustible, in the sense that the understanding of their full meanings is beyond the capacity of the human mind. Whether or not the reader has background knowledge about the purpose of this verse, they can still arrive at the conclusion that the words of God are inexhaustible for humans, as shown below.

Applying CIH, the interpretation of this counterfactual is an implicature-derivation task that starts by explicating the information in the antecedent, using linguistic and contextual cues. This, as shown below, requires the metonymic operation of domain expansion to interact with the metaphorical structure in which the sea maps onto ink for the words of God. Clearly, this structure contains three elements: the sea, ink and the words of God [X, Y and Z]. Based on Turner (1991), two of these elements, [Y] and [Z], form one construction connected by the preposition *for*. [Z] is the object of the preposition in a propositional phrase with an elided gerund – *writing* – as shown below.

If the sea were [ink for the words of God]  
[X] [Y] [Z]

<sup>5</sup><http://www.altafsir.com/AsbabAlnuzol.asp?SoraName=18&Ayah=109&search=yes&img=A>.

The metaphorical mapping in this construction triggers for an image in which the sea water is replaced by ink for writing the words of God. The mapping involves the projection and integration of three partial source inputs into a single composite input. The activated elements in the input spaces are: “the sea as a body of water” from the SEA domain, “ink = a fluid used for writing” from the WRITING domain and “the Holy Books” from the domain of DIVINE RELIGIONS. The activation of the sea as a body of water is cued by the metaphorical target INK. That is, knowing that ink is a writing fluid, the reader would draw upon the similarity between the SEA and INK in terms of their liquid substance. At the same time, the reader would access the WRITING domain (the elided part of the construction) through the element INK. Hence, INK is the metaphorical target as well as the metonymic source. This is a metonymy-within-metaphor (c.f. Goossens 1995), a pattern of interaction that Ruiz de Mendoza & D éz (2002) refer to as a source-in-target metonymy. The metonymic mapping involves a part standing for the whole. This is because INK is a subdomain of the WRITING domain, a fluid used in the activity of writing standing for the activity. Highlighting a subdomain in this context is a case of domain expansion that serves two functions: first, as the metaphorical target, it becomes the central part of the metaphor in that it triggers for the relevant correspondence between the sea and ink and, second, as the metonymic source, it maps onto the expanded notion of writing which is important for constructing a conceptual relation between ink and the words of God. However, the explication of this image requires the projection of an additional attribute of the sea (not only its being a body of water); namely, its size. This is a missing element that Turner (1991) refers to as [W]. This element, which is cued by the context, is necessary for the interpretation of this construction. Without it there is no basis for viewing the sea as ink for writing the words of God. Replacing the sea water with ink leaves the reader with the sense that writing the words of God is a continuous process.

The antecedent is verified by the consequent through mapping the sea onto structure projected from the CONTAINER image schema. The mapping is metonymic since the sea in this input is a container standing for its content (ink), as cued by the word *exhausted*. This metonymic mapping is further verified by showing the content of the sea to be exhaustible (even if it were to be replenished) as compared with the contents of the words of God: “the sea would be exhausted before the words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like of it as a supplement”. This activates a metaphorical understanding of THE SEA AS A REFILLABLE CONTAINER OF INK FOR THE WORDS OF GOD. The metaphorical understanding is an extra meaning effect provided by the metonymic mapping structuring this input space. The interactional pattern involved here is referred to in Goossens (1995) as metaphor-within-metonymy. The metonymic part of the mapping is a case of domain reduction (Ruiz de Mendoza & D éz 2002) which serves the following function: it triggers for a contrast between the antecedent and the consequent. That is, a sea of ink (or a continuous body of writing fluid) is contrasted with a bounded, exhaustible and refillable container of ink for writing the words of God. Placing the combined source input and the target input in contrast in the projection space gives rise to the implication that the words of God are inexhaustible for humans. This is consistent with what God says about mankind as having only been given little knowledge. Figure (2) is a partial representation of the construction of the counterfactual in question.

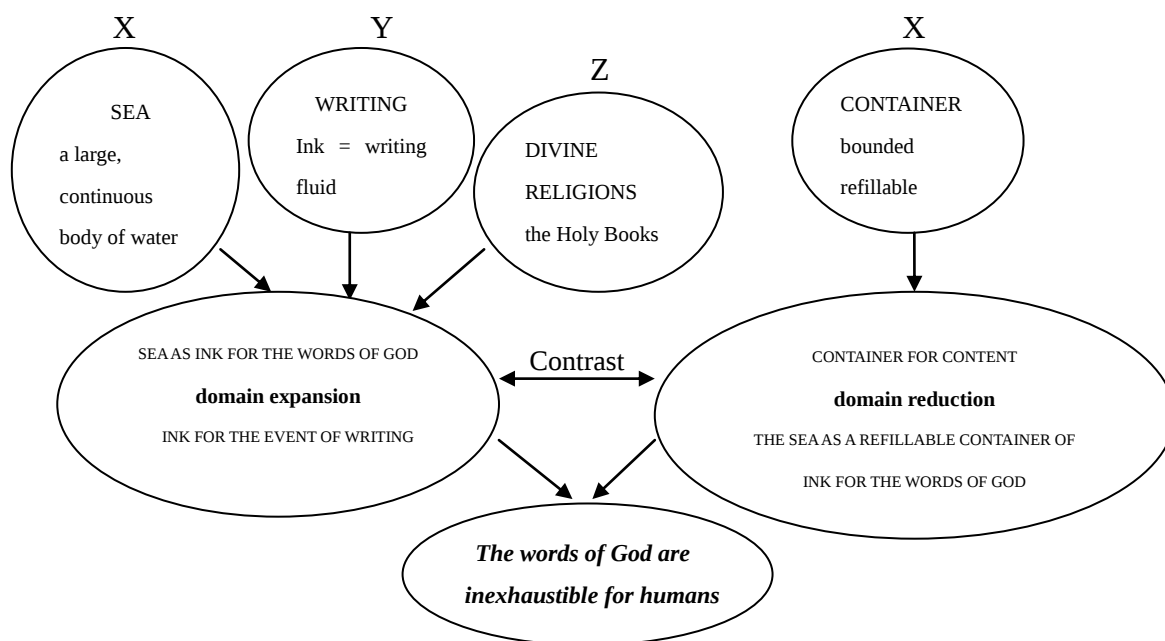


Figure 2. A partial representation of the construction of Verse 109 of Surah AlKahf

Clearly, as claimed by CIH, the structure in the projection space is not emergent or unique. Rather, it contains the following: 1) an integrated structure projected from explicated and mapped input spaces and 2) an implicature generated on the basis of the integrated structure. The Qur'anic counterfactual examined below is a further example demonstrating the adequacy of CIH for studying such complex images as Qur'anic counterfactuals.

## 2.2 Verse 21 of Surah Alhashr

This verse, also a counterfactual of the form 'if *antecedent* then *consequent*', is an example that God strikes to tell those people who professed to believe in God, but were devoid of the true spirit of faith, that they need to give thought to the words of God (Tafsir Maududi)<sup>6</sup>. Consider this verse below.

If We had sent down this Qur'an upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and coming apart [cracking] from fear of Allah. And these examples We present to the people that perhaps they will give thought (Qur'an 59: 21).

The construction of the antecedent requires projecting into the combined space the event of the descent of the Qur'an upon man from the domain of ISLAMIC FAITH and mapping it onto a counterfactual event where it would be descended upon a mountain. The use of the word mountain in this context is metonymic. It activates the mountain attributes from the MOUNTAIN domain. This is a case of whole-for-part metonymy, or a domain reduction, in which the mountain stands for its attributes (an inanimate (non-discerning), massive, and indestructible stony entity). In addition, the replacement of man with a mountain in the impossible event triggers for an implicit comparison between the attributes of man (a discerning, weak and destructible entity) and those of the mountain. Calling for the attributes of

<sup>6</sup> This tafsir is available from <http://www.englishtafsir.com/Quran/59/index.html>.

man is necessary for the replacement of man with a mountain to be explicated. Hence, the explication of this input space involves a metaphor-within-metonymy in which MOUNTAIN is the metonymic source standing for its attributes (the metonymic target) as well as the metaphorical target onto which the attributes of man are mapped (a case of source-in target metonymy). Finally, the imaginary event of descending the Qur'an upon a mountain raises in the reader the question of how the mountain would respond to the Qur'an.

The consequent answers this question by a scenario in which the mountain would show the emotion of humbleness and the behaviour of falling apart as signs of fear from God. What the consequent does is that it explicates the following metonymies which contain structure projected from the FEAR domain: HUMBLING FOR FEAR and FALLING APART FOR FEAR. Constructing this input requires calling upon the concept of FAITH and mapping it onto fear. In fact, it is this concept that establishes the link between the antecedent and the consequent on the basis of the correlation between the concept of faith (associated with the descent of the Qur'an) and fear of God. However, FAITH AS FEAR is an extra meaning effect triggered for by the metonymic mappings HUMBLING FOR FEAR (AS FAITH) and FALLING APART FOR FEAR (AS FAITH), which is a case of metaphor-within-metonymy. The importance of the mapping between faith and fear arises from the fact that fear is depicted in the Qur'an as the highest degree of faith that only people with knowledge can reach, as is clear from God's saying that "... Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge. ..." (Qur'an 35:28). Humbleness as an emotion is also a sign of faith that only people with knowledge, who truly fear God, can feel, as is clear from the following verse:

Believe in it or do not believe. Indeed, those who were given knowledge before it<sup>7</sup> - when it is recited to them, they fall upon their faces in prostration. And they say, "Exalted is our Lord! Indeed, the promise of our Lord has been fulfilled." And they fall upon their faces weeping, and the Qur'an increases them in humble submission. (Qur'an 17:107-109)

The manifestation of faith as fear, a degree of faith that only people with knowledge can reach, by an inanimate, massive, stony and indestructible entity, which God describes in Surah Al-Hadid (The Iron) as being the pegs of the earth, activates an implicit comparison between the response of some people to the descent of the Qur'an in reality and that of a mountain as depicted in the consequent. Placing the combined source input and the target input in correlation and contrast in the projection space results in a number of inferences that may be summarised as follows: man is more worthy than a mountain to fear God, being weak/destructible and discerning. This is a clear implication of the ignorance of non-believers, the effect the counterfactual is intended to achieve. Figure (3) represents the construction of the counterfactual of the verse in question.

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<sup>7</sup> Those who were given knowledge before the revelation of the Qur'an; namely, the believers from among the People of the Scripture (Tafsir al-Jalalayn by Jalal al-Din al-Mahalli and Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti (Available: [altafsir.com](http://altafsir.com))).

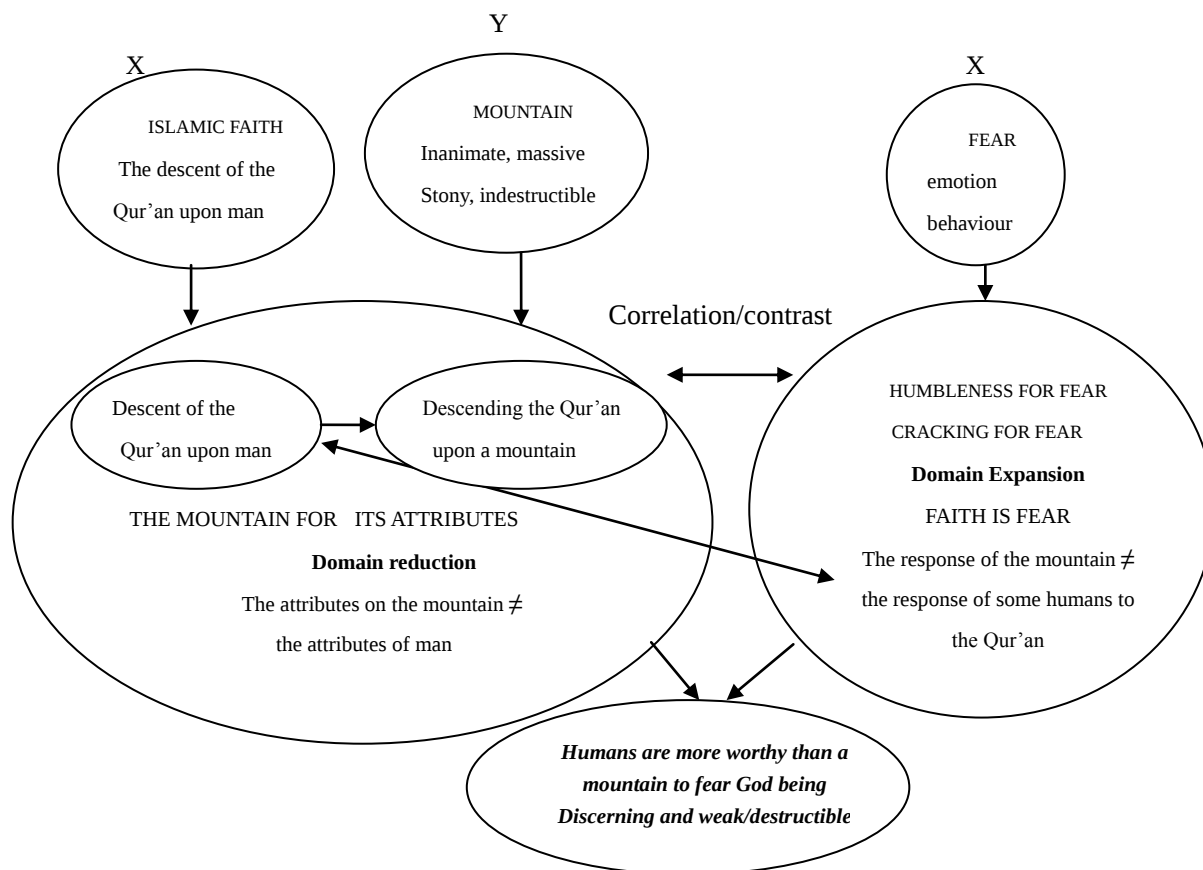


Figure 3. A partial representation of the construction of verse 21 of Surah Alhashr

It is worth mentioning here that the analysis of the counterfactual in questions led to the same understanding that can be obtained from the following explicit comparison between some people's hearts and stones:

Then your hearts became hardened after that, being like stones or even harder. For indeed, there are stones from which rivers burst forth, and there are some of them that split open and water comes out, and there are some of them that fall down for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unaware of what you do (Qur'an 2:74).

This comparison is appropriate for representing both non-believers' rigid hearts as well as their lack of knowledge because understating that leads to knowledge is shown in the Qur'an to be located in the heart: "they have hearts they don't understand with" (Qur'an 7:179). If this piece of information is implied in the verse then the implication is consistent with the comparison.

All this leads to the point that CIH provides insights that can contribute to a better understanding of non-literal Qur'anic language. Its adoption of a top-down model of figurative meaning understanding allows for the exploration of not only the feature of consistency characterising the relationship between premises and conclusions, but also the different cognitive operations and patterns of conceptual interaction underlying this feature. This is due to the depiction of conceptual integration as a matter of implicature derived from the explication of juxtaposed combined inputs. Such a model can adequately account for the

construction of complex images, such as the above Qur'anic counterfactuals.

### 3. Conclusion

This study has examined the construction of two Qur'anic counterfactuals within the Combined Input Hypothesis. This is a theoretical framework put forward by Ruiz de Mendoza and others as an alternative model to Fauconnier and Turner's Conceptual Blending Theory. It has been shown that the hypothesis, which is a top-down model of conceptual integration, is cognitively realistic as it takes into account content and formal cognitive operations as well as patterns of conceptual interaction involved in the understanding of discourse-bound figurative language. The study demonstrates the need for examining conceptual mapping and integration in the Qur'an from a broader perspective than Conceptual Metaphor Theory or Conceptual Blending Theory; namely, one like the Combined Input Hypothesis which can explore complex images and, at the same time, show that premises are consistent with conclusions. The Qur'an is very rich in complex images which can only be adequately analysed if approached from the perspectives of the Combined Input Hypothesis.

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