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Rethinking the Crisis of Meaning, in Light of the Connection between Robert Solomon's Theory of the Meaning of Life and Lakoff and Johnson's Theory of Conceptual Metaphors

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Abstract: The crisis of meaning in the present era is considered one of the most important challenges of human and social life, and paying attention to it from various angles can make a significant contribution to solving many of the individual and social problems of today's humanity. Therefore, in this article, with an interdisciplinary approach in philosophy and cognitive linguistics, and with a descriptive-analytical method, we examine and rethink the issue of the crisis of meaning. From Solomon's perspective in philosophy, the question of the meaning of life requires a metaphor, in which man sees himself as having a specific role, this perspective is the determining factor of human life. On the other hand, Lakoff and Johnson believe that conceptual metaphors, beyond a linguistic tool, shape the structure of thought, perception, and action. The connection of these two theories caused us to examine and review the issue of the crisis of meaning from the perspective of the crisis in the dominant metaphors in life. From this perspective, the crisis of meaning is the inability of dominant metaphors to organize the experience of the world, when previous metaphors are unable to make sense of suffering, death, hope, the future, or moral action. Therefore, overcoming the crisis requires the creation or revival of new metaphors that can make new experiences understandable. This requires examining the context of the crisis of meaning in dominant metaphors, and the prevalence of dark metaphors, and then considering the requirements for overcoming this crisis with new metaphors.

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Introduction:

In this article, the meaning of life is examined with an interdisciplinary approach, philosophy and cognitive linguistics, and then, considering the connection between the discussions on this subject in both disciplines, the problem of the crisis of meaning is reflected and revised from a new perspective with regard to the theories of cognitive linguistics. It seems that the theory of conceptual metaphors can open a clear path in solving the problem of the crisis of meaning. The main philosophical theory that we emphasize in this research is the theory of Robert Solomon Robert. C Solomon (1942-2007) about the meaning of life. In cognitive linguistics, we emphasize the theory of conceptual metaphors of George Lakoff (1941) and Mark Johnson (1949) in the book "Metaphors We Live By".

On the one hand, the question of the meaning of life, in addition to being a philosophical question that requires analysis and reasoning, is also a very practical question; a poor understanding of the issues related to it can weaken the quality of our lives, while having a deep understanding can enhance the quality of our lives. The combination of these two philosophical and practical features makes this a very interesting topic to study. "What is the meaning of life?", while a great question, is the most difficult and ambiguous question in human life; so that most thinkers who are more cautious avoid answering it; because in their view the question is ambiguous and the answers are not always literal truths that can be defended with argument and reason.

The background of this issue is very old in the history of human thought and many and varied theories have been presented about it. These theories can be generally divided into two topics: “the meaning of the meaning of life” and “what is the meaning of life”. Thaddeus Metz (2015 & 2003) divides the theories of “the meaning of the meaning of life” into three main theories: “meaninglessness of meaningful life”, “meaning as purpose” and “meaning as value”. He also considers the

theories of "what is the meaning of life" to be divided into three main theories: "supernaturalism", "naturalism" and "nihilism"[1] Despite the plethora of theories concerning the question 'What is the meaning of life?', this inquiry remains unanswered. In fact, as Kolak and Martin (2009:145) say, our problem is not that the question "What is the meaning of life?" has not been adequately answered; our problem is that our lives are full of struggles, but these answers do not end the struggles.

But on the other hand, regarding metaphor, it should be said that today, scholars' attitude towards this category has gone beyond a purely decorative and verbal category and it is viewed as an effective tool in shaping our thoughts and behavior. Consequently, the function of metaphor in various spheres of human life, such as ethics (see: Sadeghi, 2020), empirical science (see: Sheikh Rezaei, 2009), culture (see: Kövecses, 2015, politics (see: Ghorbani Sheikhneshin, 2012), etc., has been examined and researched. "The new outlook on metaphors and their role in shaping our lives, behaviors, and thoughts—alongside the premise that understanding the world is impossible without them—on the one hand, and Robert Solomon's perspective on the question of 'the meaning of life' and his theory that this inquiry requires a metaphor or a vision above all else, on the other, have prompted us to rethink the crisis of meaning in light of the synthesis of these two theories." Emphasizing the metaphorical nature of the meaning of life has the benefit of making us aware that we should henceforth analyze and examine life-related metaphors as the basis of our work and even strive to reform them. Similarly, according to Lakoff and Johnson, metaphors are an inseparable part of life, and without them, the world cannot be understood. Metaphors are not merely linguistic tools; we live by them. They shape the structure of our perception and determine how we navigate the world and what relationships we have with others.

Based on what was said, In this article, after presenting

[1] See: Naseri (2018).

Robert Solomon's theory on the meaning of life and Lakoff and Johnson's theory of conceptual metaphors, we will explain the link between these two theories regarding the role of metaphors in providing meaning to life. Solomon's theory of the meaning of life as a metaphor on the one hand, and the structuring of experience and action by conceptual metaphors and their non-linguistic manifestations in Lakoff and Johnson's theory on the other, reflect the connection between these two theories. After elucidating the link between Robert Solomon's theory on the meaning of life and Lakoff and Johnson's theory, the issue of the crisis of meaning will be re-examined in light of this connection. It will be demonstrated that the crisis of meaning in society is, in fact, a crisis in the dominant metaphors of that society; therefore, to mitigate and resolve the crisis of meaning, the prevailing life metaphors must be addressed, analyzed, and scrutinized from this perspective.

Solomon's theory on the role of metaphors in the meaning of life

From Solomon's perspective (2013), the question of the meaning of life is one of the greatest human inquiries, alongside questions such as 'the self,' 'truth,' 'freedom,' and so forth. Yet, in his view, this question is 'the most difficult to answer, the most urgent, and simultaneously the most obscure.' Careful thinkers often avoid it, recognizing that the question is vague, that the very word 'meaning' is ambiguous, and that the answers are not always literal truths that can be defended by argument and logic. Nevertheless, it is 'reason' that makes an answer possible, and it is 'reason' that renders the asking of this question necessary.

Before explaining his theory about "metaphors" and "the meaning of life," Solomon (2013: 44) examines and analyzes the "meaning of meaning" in the question What is the meaning of life? In his opinion, if we conceive of meaning in this way that the meaning of a thing (a sign or a word) is what it refers to; that is, if we see meaning as a

"reference," for example, a reference to those around us (family, friends, colleagues); or a reference to a wider society, to the nation, or to the whole of humanity, or a reference to our Creator, that is, the meaning of life is God, then the concept of "reference" here becomes too broad and it can easily be objected that life does not refer to anything at all; it just "is." However, this view seems to leave us without an answer to the question of the meaning of life, which, from Solomon's perspective, appears to be the problem with the view that sees "meaning" as "sign." (Ibid: 44-47)

Yet when people ask about the meaning of life, they often have in mind precisely such a reference to something beyond themselves and outside their own lives. These references may be very important; they may even be the most important things in life. For example, people see children, God, and the afterlife as the meaning of their lives, or sometimes they see life hopelessly meaningless. Solomon evaluates these four meanings and concludes that none of them fully answers the question, but only postpones it. In fact, these noble answers leave our question unanswered, because they merely take the question a step further. For example: What is the meaning of our children's lives? Or what exactly does it mean to live in the service of God? We need an answer "within" our lives, not just "beyond" them. The same can be said about the answer that "life has no meaning and everything is absurd." Camus sometimes takes this position on the basis of his atheism; that if there is no external meaning, then there can be no meaning at all. But external meanings are not necessarily the same as "the meaning of life," and the absence of God (if he does not exist) does not necessarily mean that life is meaningless (ibid, 44-49).

"After evaluating the existing answers to the question of the meaning of life and their insufficiency in making life meaningful, Solomon turns to the role of metaphors in giving meaning to life. From his perspective, the question of the meaning of life, more than anything else, requires a 'metaphor.' In other words, from Solomon's point of view, "The question of the meaning of life

is not one of those questions that require or allow for a specific answer. Indeed, it is more of a metaphor that is required, an image, a vision of life in which you can see yourself as having a definite role, a set of reasonable expectations, and—what makes this so important—your vision in many ways determines the life you will lead" (ibid: 51). In fact, from Solomon's perspective, humans understand their lives not simply through abstract concepts, but through metaphors, images, narratives, and normative imaginative patterns; such as: "Life is a game," "Life is art," "Life is suffering", "Life is relationships", etc. These metaphors/images give meaning, direction, and value to life, shape emotions, choices, and moral responsibility, and are rooted in culture, history, and lived experience.

Throughout human history, different metaphors of life have been presented by thinkers, artists, religious people and other segments of society. Solomon has pointed to some of these metaphors in support of his theory. For example, Pythagoras in the sixth century BC considered life to be similar to the Olympic Games; in which some people strain their muscles to win a prize, while others sell ornaments to the crowd for profit. Some just come to watch and see how everything is done. Samuel Butler (1835-1902), an English writer and critic, considered life to be similar to playing the violin alone in front of a crowd and having to learn to use this instrument while playing and while everyone is watching you practice (ibid: 50). There have been and are many views of life throughout human history; what is important is that everyone determines the role they should play in life according to the image they have of life in their mind. In fact, everyone's attitude towards life will guide their life. Religious, philosophical and moral beliefs and opinions of individuals are influential in guiding their lives according to the overall role they have to play in life. For example, if someone has this view of life that life is like a game, then he believes that: life should not be taken seriously, the rules of the game must be followed, life as a game is an activity whose only important content, the importance of life,

like a game, is only in the playing itself, life as a game is not about winning and losing, it is about how to play, and finally, there is nothing that adds value to the game outside the game.

Based on these characteristics, the main focus in the game is to play well, enjoy the game, and win as much as possible. But what is important in considering life as a game is to ask ourselves what kind of game life is. This is where the beliefs, intellectual opinions, and religious views of individuals play a central role. For example, in the image of life as a game, one can ask what kind of game life is? Is it for fun? Is it to hurt others? Is it to generate stress?, etc. Some play just for fun. Some games, such as wrist-tossing, are played to prove human superiority; some play to kill time. Some play with the aim of helping others (such as who can collect the most donations) (Solomon, 2013: 50-51). Or if your metaphor/image of life is "dog eat dog" and you go into business or school with this attitude of "dog eat dog" and everyone is thinking of themselves, then you will greet everyone as a threat and a competitor; you will not be completely honest and, in any case, you will not generally enjoy the company of others. Then, people will begin to sense your competitive hostility and distrust you, perhaps even testing your intentions with small provocative actions. Soon you will find yourself in a "dog eat dog" atmosphere – an atmosphere that you have largely created (Ibid: 51).

Each of these metaphors/ images we use to talk about life, even if our response is playful or poetic, illuminates our views on life. For example, if we say that "life is a gift from God to be used wisely", then we are saying that we think that life is really serious, with a more or less definite mission (which we must discern) and a relatively clear sense of success and failure. On the other hand, if we say that "life is a game", then we are saying that we think that life should not be taken too seriously (whether we take it seriously ourselves or not), that it ultimately leads to nothing, and that the best way to live is to enjoy it (Ibid: 51).

Finally, Solomon concludes that the question of the meaning of life is not only a matter of

discovery, but also an important act of creation. For him, our philosophy is only partly an expression and explanation of the view we already have of the world, because the philosophy we formulate will also be a means of shaping that view. Thus, some philosophers who have had a gloomy or pessimistic temperament have consciously formulated relatively cheerful and optimistic philosophies, not to deceive others (Ibid,: 51).

Following the elaboration of Solomon's theory on the role of metaphors in giving meaning to life, we will proceed to explain the Theory of Conceptual Metaphors from the perspective of Lakoff and Johnson. We believe that this theory provides a deeper insight into understanding Solomon's perspective on the meaning of life and the function of metaphors within it.

Theory of Conceptual Metaphors

Robert Solomon's theory about the meaning of life and that what the meaning of life is does not require an answer but rather a metaphor, image and perspective, prompted us to reflect more on the subject of the meaning of life and meaninglessness in the contemporary era, through the close connection of this theory with Lakoff and Johnson's theory of conceptual metaphors. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2015), metaphors are not just linguistic tools, but also shape the structure of our thought, perception and action. From their point of view, the concepts that govern our thought are not limited to the intellect. These concepts control and guide our daily actions down to the most ordinary details. Our concepts shape the structure of what we understand and determine how we move in the world and our relationships with others. Therefore, our conceptual system plays a fundamental role in determining everyday realities. In fact, we live with metaphors, they are current and pervasive not only in language but also in our daily lives, in our thoughts and actions. In fact, our usual conceptual system within which we think and act is metaphorical in nature. If Lakoff and Johnson's suggestion that the conceptual system is highly metaphorical is correct, then the

way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is also highly metaphorical (۲۰۱۵:13-14).

But what does it mean for concepts to be metaphorical? And how does such a concept structure an everyday activity? The essence of metaphor is to understand and experience "something" in terms of "something else". For example, the metaphor "the debate is a war", which is a metaphor prevalent in many cultures, organizes what we do and how we understand it (at least to some extent) when we discuss it. It is not that discussion is a kind of war; discussion and war are two different things, verbal discourse and armed conflict, and the actions that occur are different actions. But discussion is organized, understood, and talked about in part through the concept of war. This concept is metaphorically structured. Metaphor is present not only in the words we use, but also in our very concept of discussion. The language of discussion is not poetic, imaginative, or literary, but literal. We talk about arguments in this way. Lakoff and Johnson (۲۰۱۵:15-16) explain this metaphor by saying, "We are not just talking about arguments in terms of war; we can actually win or lose arguments. We see the person we are arguing with as our adversary, we attack their positions and defend our own, we seize and lose, We devise and implement strategies. Thus, much of what we do in debates is shaped to some extent by the concept of war. Although this battle is not physical, it is verbal and depicts the structure of a debate, including single, defense, attack and battle. This is why the metaphor "debate is war" is one of the metaphors that we live with in our culture. This metaphor determines our performance in debate". Of course, this way of performing in debate is specific to a culture that considers debate to be war; but if in a culture debate is not linked to the concept of war, where there is no loser or winner, where attacking or defending, capturing or losing has no meaning, it is like in a culture that views debate as a dance; the participants are dancers and the purpose of the debate is to dance in a rhythmic manner. In such a culture, people's attitude towards

debates is different. Their experience of debates is different. They argue differently and talk about arguments differently. But we might not call their conversation a debate at all, because what they do is different, and even if we call what they do a debate, it would seem strange. Perhaps the most neutral way to describe the difference between their culture and ours is to say that our discourse structure is shaped by the concept of battle and theirs by the concept of dance.

Thus, a conceptual metaphor is a conduit for understanding one conceptual domain (the target) by means of a more concrete conceptual domain (the source). Every conceptual metaphor consists of two components: the source domain and the target domain. The target domain is the concept that we attempt to better understand by utilizing the source domain. For example, when we say "life is a game" or "life is a journey," we are actually using two concrete and comprehensible concepts—game and journey (source domains)—to better understand the more abstract concept of life (target domain) (Khademzadeh, 2021, citing Lakoff, 1993: 203; Sadeghi, 2020, citing Kövecses, 2010: 132).

As mentioned, metaphors are inherently conceptual. Conceptual metaphors have linguistic forms or manifestations called metaphorical linguistic expressions, but metaphors, since they are conceptual, also manifest in the form of non-linguistic forms. That is, if the conceptual system governing our experiences, our way of thinking, and our behavior is to some extent metaphorical, then conceptual metaphors must appear not only in language, but also in other areas of human experience. We call these manifestations non-linguistic forms of conceptual metaphors. These non-linguistic methods include film, acting, cartoons, paintings, sculptures, buildings, advertisements, myths, dream interpretation, interpretation of history, cultural symbols, politics and foreign policy, ethics, moral policy, social institutions, social behaviors, non-linguistic structures of literary genres, and sign language. Thus, metaphor has a strong presence in our social, artistic, intellectual, and cultural

life; it is present not only in our conversations, but also plays a role in the non-linguistic realities of our lives. This makes the cognitive linguistic approach to metaphor valuable even for non-linguists (Kovecses, 2014:114,98).

The strong presence of metaphors in our lives gives Solomon's theory a deeper connection to Lakoff and Johnson's theory and makes the role of metaphors in the meaningfulness of life more prominent. Below, we will explain the connection between these two theories in more detail.

The relationship between Solomon's view and the theory of conceptual metaphors

From what we have said so far, we have seen that Solomon's theory of the meaning of life is closely related to Lakoff and Johnson's theory of metaphors. For Solomon, the meaning of life requires a metaphor and an image in which a person sees a specific role for himself, a set of reasonable expectations, a perspective that in many ways determines the life that a person will have. For Lakoff and Johnson, metaphors in life do what Solomon expects of the meaning of life. For them, we live with metaphors; the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is metaphorical.

In the connection between the two theories, metaphors go beyond mere cognitive structure and shape human meaning, emotion, morality, and identity as "pictures of life". For example, "Life is a journey", in Lakoff and Johnson's theory, organizes the way we think and speak as follows:

- Origin = Birth
- Destination = Life Goals
- Path = Life Process
- Obstacles = Life Problems
- Companions = Human Relationships

In Solomon's theory, these metaphors make life "moving", "meaningful" and "directed" and determines what failure means? What success means? What is the value of patience, hope, commitment?

The prominent presence of metaphors in our lives establishes a deeper connection between Solomon's theory and the theory of Lakoff and

Johnson, further highlighting the role of metaphors in the meaningfulness of life. As previously stated, metaphors are inherently conceptual and are also manifested in non-linguistic forms or expressions such as film, acting, cartoons, painting, sculpture, architecture, advertising, myths, dream interpretation, historical interpretation, cultural symbols, politics and foreign policy, ethics, moral politics, social institutions, social behaviors, the non-linguistic structures of literary genres, and language (Kövecses, 2014: 114, 98). Therefore, the conceptual nature of metaphors allows them to manifest in non-linguistic forms and other domains of human experience, leading us to observe their prominent presence not only in our conversations but also in our social, artistic, intellectual, and cultural lives. This fact inevitably creates a deeper connection between Solomon's theory and the theory of Lakoff and Johnson, further highlighting the role of metaphors in the meaningfulness of life.

Metaphors have three main characteristics, understanding these characteristics helps us understand the relationship between the theory of conceptual metaphors and Robert Solomon's theory of the meaning of life. Therefore, before addressing this relationship, it is necessary to explain these three characteristics of metaphor:

- universality
- Conceptual nature
- Systematic nature

The universal meaning implies that metaphors are abundantly observed in all dialogues, discussions, and writings across various cultures. Furthermore, the systematic structure of metaphors signifies that a shared and mutual understanding of a single metaphor can lead to the emergence of countless other metaphors or concepts (Sadeghi, 2020, as cited in: Fan, 2018, 926). For example, the metaphors of tired government, old government, fat government, agile government, etc. all have a network relationship with each other in such a way that the emergence and understanding of each can be considered the product of another. The inherent conceptualization of metaphor

means that metaphor is concerned with meanings and concepts, so that when vocabulary and metaphors change, it actually leads to changes in concepts. For example, when the phenomenon of elections is formulated in the form of metaphors such as an election campaign, other side concepts are extracted from it that are consistent with the concept of the campaign, concepts and terms such as conflict, battle, winner, loser, etc., but when elections are viewed in the form of a metaphor of allegiance to ideals or a rallying cry to arrogance, it also changes or affects its surrounding concepts. This indicates that these metaphors are not simply different word forms for a single meaning, but rather they cultivate a concept within themselves that is inherent and specific to them and they also change other subsidiary and dependent concepts to suit themselves (Sadeghi, 2020).

Thus, in Solomon's theory of the meaning of life as a metaphor on the one hand, and the structuring of experience and action by conceptual metaphors and non-linguistic manifestations of metaphors in Lakoff and Johnson's theory on the other hand, the connection between these two theories becomes clearer. and it can be concluded that Solomon's view is actually a "value and existential interpretation" of Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive theory. If Lakoff and Johnson explained the "mechanism" of metaphorical thinking, Solomon has used this mechanism to explain "how to create meaning in life."

The crisis of meaning as a crisis in dominant metaphors

Today, the meaning of life is no longer considered a luxury and non-practical issue, and its close connection with values and quality of life has attracted the attention of thinkers. According to Solomon (2013:43-44), when people talk about the meaning of life, they are referring to the most important and valuable thing in their lives, to what gives direction and value to their lives, shapes their feelings, choices, and moral responsibility. Their answer reveals how they see themselves, what their ultimate goals are, what their

expectations, hopes, and fears are.

The importance of meaning in life and its direct connection with values and quality of life, inevitably makes the issue of meaninglessness important. The meaninglessness of life is, in a sense, an ambiguous concept and, probably, like the question itself, “What is the meaning of life?” It is interpreted in different ways. The issue of meaninglessness in the present era, with the increase in confusion, depression, anxiety, despair and other mental illnesses on the one hand, and the feeling of lack of happiness and prosperity despite the increasing advances in science and technology on the other, has become a serious, difficult issue that requires an immediate and urgent answer. However, at least, meaninglessness can be interpreted as the absence of meaning, and emptiness and futility can be interpreted as the absence of an appropriate answer to this question. The lack of an appropriate answer to the question "What is the meaning of life?" causes the question to be postponed, or it leads a person to an inappropriate path.

Given the importance of meaning in life, it is essential to examine the issue of the "crisis of meaning" in the contemporary era. In the following sections of the article, we will reconsider this topic in light of the connection between Robert Solomon’s theory on the meaning of life and Lakoff and Johnson’s theory of conceptual metaphors. We will demonstrate that the crisis of meaning is, in fact, a crisis of the dominant metaphors in life.

A crisis of meaning is a phenomenon distinct from a crisis in spirituality, and consequently one might expect a society to have a crisis in spirituality but not a crisis in meaning, and vice versa. The main focus of this article is a crisis in meaning, and the crisis in spirituality, which is a separate issue, will not be addressed. A society is characterized by a crisis in meaning when a significant portion of the society feels that their individual and collective lives lack a clear purpose, a credible horizon, or a compelling narrative; shared values, norms, and beliefs are no longer inspiring or reliable; and finally, the link between

"individual endeavor" and "a meaningful future" has been severed. This situation occurs when a society does not know why it should continue, what to hold on to, and how to imagine the future. At the individual, social, cultural, political, and institutional levels, a crisis of meaning is generally accompanied by warning signs such as increased emigration of elites and youth; decreased voluntary social participation; growth of extreme individualism or collective despair; and a severe generational gap in values and hopes.

The philosophical approach to meaninglessness is closely related to this issue from the perspective of cognitive linguistics. It was previously stated that, according to Lakoff and Johnson, man lives with metaphors. Conceptual metaphors are not decorative linguistic devices, but rather presuppositional frameworks of meaning. Accordingly, it seems that meaninglessness should be sought in the crisis of the metaphors that dominate contemporary life, and subsequently, the important and highly influential metaphors about life and man should be examined and scrutinized with an evaluative look at the past.

In general, if we want to examine meaninglessness according to Lakoff and Johnson's theory from a linguistic perspective, we must say that meaninglessness in the present era means the collapse or inefficiency of narratives and metaphors that gave coherence, direction, and value to life, in a situation where humans are forced to create meaning themselves, but language, images, and conceptual frameworks are not sufficient for this.

In the following discussion, in order to open a window for solving the problem of the crisis of meaning, we will review the concept of the crisis of meaning from the perspective of conceptual metaphors. But before that, it is necessary to recall two points about conceptual metaphors. As we said, from the point of view of Lakoff and Johnson (2015:43-44), the most fundamental values in a culture are consistent with the metaphorical structure of the most fundamental concepts in that culture. Of

course, from their point of view, not all cultural values consistent with a metaphorical system have a real existence, but those cultural values that have a real existence and are strongly established are consistent with the metaphorical system. Another point is that, as we observed earlier in their theory, we do not perceive the social world directly and we understand it through stable metaphors. Therefore, when these metaphors give direction to life, create hope and make suffering bearable, society follows its natural course, despite the suffering and pain that exist more or less in every society, however, bright horizons lie ahead and hope is alive in society. Stable metaphors that are in harmony with these themes include: “Life is a journey”, “Society is the body”, “The state is the father”, “The future is the destination/horizon”.

The crisis of meaning can be examined and examined in society from various perspectives. For example, one is the exhaustion of metaphors in society and their becoming devoid of meaning, and the other is the inconsistency and contradiction of metaphors in society. On the one hand, the starting point of the crisis of meaning can be considered the time when these metaphors no longer have their function in society and become devoid of meaning. In other words, metaphors are still in society and are repeated, but they have lost their ability, have become worn out, and lived experience does not confirm them. For example, “the path of progress”, “a bright future”, “passing through a period of suffering and hardship” no longer exist in reality, and reality indicates that: “the path goes nowhere”, “progress is not felt in everyday life”, and “the transition is endless”. On the other hand, the inconsistency of metaphors also causes a crisis in meaning; For example, when the metaphor "the country is a family" is placed next to "the economy is a field of survival" and "politics is war". In this case, the feeling of intimacy, brotherhood and sympathy between members of society (the country is a family) is incompatible with the behavior of hostility and hostility (politics is war) and the fact that everyone must survive in this economic situation on

their own (the economy is a field of survival). The result of such a situation is confusion and anger in society.

In the above circumstances, when dominant metaphors collapse/become invalid for any reason and have no replacement, society faces a serious semantic crisis. This "metaphorical vacuum" is the lived experience of emptiness. But this situation itself is not devoid of metaphor; the empirical root of conceptual metaphors, the metaphorical nature of abstract thought, and the incompleteness of abstract concepts without metaphors, and our life based on the inferences we draw from metaphors (Hashemi, 2010), pave the way for the production of metaphors that more accurately reflect the experienced reality, even if they are bitter. At this time, negative metaphors begin to spread among members of society not out of pessimism but because of adaptation to empirical reality. It is at this time that dark metaphors seem more truthful and justified. Negative metaphors are not created randomly and have an empirical basis. Naturally, these metaphors, like stable metaphors, will play a pivotal role in the construction of culture and cultural values. Conceptual metaphors can provide a framework for understanding social and cultural realities and even play a role in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of society. For example, specific political or economic metaphors can guide the intellectual model of a society. Thus, as Kovecses (2015:244) emphasizes, conceptual metaphors in interaction with culture are both producers and reflections of cultural patterns; conceptual metaphors both create and reflect cultural patterns; that is, there is a two-way and dynamic relationship between them.

In the present era, due to the existence and abundance of mass media, news agencies and vast and diverse social networks, the issue of the crisis of meaning is more important due to the ability to quickly produce and spread negative and dark metaphors in societies. These mass media can quickly spread negative metaphors in societies through brevity, emotional intensity and rapid repetition, even before stable

metaphors lose their ability in society. In this way, these networks can eliminate complex metaphors and strengthen simple, sharp and dark metaphors such as "dead end", "fall", "suffocation", "locking up". Thus, until new experience allows new metaphors, society remains affected by a crisis of meaning and trapped in dark metaphors.

Therefore, the issue of the crisis of meaning has become a serious and significant issue in the present era. It seems that it is necessary to pay attention to several key points in examining the issue of the crisis of meaning as a crisis in the metaphors with which we live. One is that the negative and dark metaphors that cause confusion and become widespread in times of semantic crisis, like stable metaphors, do not have only a linguistic expression, but are current and spread in all areas of human experience, including our social, artistic, intellectual and cultural life.

Another point is that, as Lakoff and Johnson (Hashemi,2010) emphasize, metaphors are not constructed coincidentally, but are established based on our ongoing interactions with our cultural and physical environments. These ongoing interactions are in fact the empirical foundations from which no metaphor can be understood. Thus, most of the time, a conceptual metaphor is not formed by a single individual, but rather is collective and shared in nature, and therefore, in social change and developments, attention should also be paid to the change of metaphors. In other words, it can be said that the change in some metaphors can be an indicator for evaluating aspects of social and cultural developments, and perhaps the main reason for the slow change in the concept and role of metaphors is related to the fact that they are closely intertwined with our social and daily life and separating them requires a stronger abstract ability. However, after each metaphor is formed due to a necessity in society, it is often brought into language due to the speaker's need for this type of regulation, and the purpose of using it is to create a special space in the listener's mind; a space that has very strong cognitive and emotional aspects and can

create a common ground by bringing the listener's mind closer to the speaker's mind.

The third point is attention to the reasons of diversity and change in metaphors. Zoltan kovecses (2015:285) knows that two reasons of diversity and change of metaphors are distinction of the human experiences and the different tastes that we use to create abstract thoughts. Of course, as he emphaszie, the factors that makes the different experiences (and therefore, the metaphors) and different cognitive attitudes which make different metaphors, cannot separate from each other and do adjoining. In other words, different experiences through cognitive Process are produced and the different cognitive Process which produce metaphors always do according to experience themes.

From his perspective (2015:286), the reasons that influence different experiences and metaphors are: awareness of the context/context including ourselves, the physical environment, the social environment, different memories, different concerns and tastes and their various subsets. The physical environment refers to specific geography, sights, flora and fauna, habitat, and other humans. The social environment includes power relations and social pressure. The cultural context refers to all the important and unique (micro)cultural concepts and values that shape specific (micro)cultures along with the principles that govern them. The governing principles and core concepts play an important role in metaphorical conceptualization because they apply general and multiple domains of their experiences to a group of cultures or a specific culture (Kovecses, 2015:277-310).

It should be noted that these empirical bases differ from society to society, and it is this difference that causes the formation of different conceptual metaphors in different cultures. Also, the bases of metaphor affect our behavior and actions in different ways, and in this way, the choice of these metaphors that we "live with," whether consciously or unconsciously, explains our perceptual system.

In fact, these linguistic constructs provide precise meanings for evaluating our basic cultural values and attitudes (Hashemi,2010).

And finally, a final point to note about the absurd. The absurd is the moment when the dominant metaphors no longer work. And this point is made clear by the common linguistic expressions denoting the absurd in different social groups (religious and non-religious). Expressions such as "everything is in disarray", "we are stuck," "the foundations are shaky and weak", "let's get lost", etc. Simultaneously with the onslaught of the absurd, the moment when the dominant metaphors no longer work, one should expect a massive increase in the onslaught of romantics, pseudo-mystics, superstitions, fascists, fanatics, all kinds of idiots, scoundrels, and sorcerers, all of whom take the opportunity and want to fill the existing semantic void (Solomon, 1993:14). However, some thinkers such as Solomon (2013:50) believe that ironically, nihilism – the view that life has no meaning – can also give meaning to life, if the person truly dedicates their life to the proposition that life has no meaning and devotes false, sometimes self-serving and malicious meanings to it. Ultimately, it can be said that nihilism can be a stage in the process of meaning-making, if it does not end in indifference and withdrawal.

Conclusion

The importance of meaning in life and its direct connection with values and quality of individual and social life, doubtless, make the problem of meaningless and the crisis of meaning, importance problem and remarkable thing. In this article, the meaning of life is examined with an interdisciplinary approach, philosophy and cognitive linguistics, and we have seen that Solomon's theory of the meaning of life is closely related to Lakoff and Johnson's theory of metaphors. According to Solomon, the meaning of life requires a metaphor that in which a person sees a specific role for himself. In his view, this is a vision in many ways determines the life that a person will live. Lakoff and Johnson have a similar point about conceptual metaphors.

According to them, our conceptual system that we think and do in its framework is metaphorical. These concepts control and guide our daily actions down to the most ordinary details. metaphors are not constructed coincidentally, but are established based on our ongoing interactions with our cultural and physical environments; and therefore, in social change and developments, attention should also be paid to the change of metaphors. the reasons that influence different experiences and metaphors are: awareness of the context/context including ourselves, the physical environment, the social environment, different memories, different concerns and tastes and their various subsets. It should be noted that the function of this metaphors is to give direction, hope to life and makes suffering bearable. And so can conclude that the crisis of meaning In the present era is the crisis in the metaphors with which we live. The absurd is the moment when the dominant metaphors no longer work. the dominant metaphors become empty of meaning and become dead cliches when they are not bear lived experience. the empirical root of conceptual metaphors makes way for dark and negative metaphors and consequentially these metaphors will be current and spread in all areas of human experience, including our social, artistic, intellectual and cultural life. This matter is more important specifically in this present era because of speed creation and spread of dark metaphors with mass media, and until new experience allows new metaphors, society remains affected by a crisis of meaning and trapped in dark metaphors .

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