

## THE PLACE AND METAPHORICAL MEANINGS OF THE WELL CONCEPT IN ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS

### *O LUGAR E OS SIGNIFICADOS METAFÓRICOS DO CONCEITO DE POÇO NAS RELIGIÕES ABRAÂMICAS*

Article received on: 10/23/2025

Article accepted on: 1/23/2026

**Aziz Karabulut\***

\*Akdeniz University, Antalya, Türkiye

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3670-6860>

[aziz.karabulut0758@gmail.com](mailto:aziz.karabulut0758@gmail.com)

**Mehmet Şahin\***

\*Akdeniz University, Antalya, Türkiye

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2548-211X>

[mentelisahin@gmail.com](mailto:mentelisahin@gmail.com)

**Encümen Bayram\***

\*Akdeniz University, Antalya, Türkiye

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6891-3680>

[encbayram@hotmail.com](mailto:encbayram@hotmail.com)

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest

#### **Abstract**

This study examines the interpretation and metaphorical meanings of the well metaphor in the three Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). Through an analysis of Prophet Joseph's experience with the well, it is observed that the well is treated not merely as a physical place but as a symbol of spiritual journey, trials, and divine wisdom. In the Jewish tradition, the well is interpreted as a symbol of exile and redemption; in the Christian tradition as a prefiguration of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, and in the Islamic tradition as a stage of self-discipline and spiritual development. Employing comparative textual analysis and semiotic methods, the study explores the multi-layered structure of the well metaphor by examining sacred texts, exegeses, and modern interpretations. Consequently, the well metaphor emerges not only as an element of religious narrative but also as a universal symbol that describes humanity's existential journey, its falls and rises, and its oscillations between hope and despair. It serves as a guide for modern individuals in coping with life's challenges, discovering themselves, and achieving spiritual maturity.

**Keywords:** Well Metaphor. Story of Prophet Joseph. Metaphorical Expression in Abrahamic

#### **Resumo**

*Este estudo examina a interpretação e os significados metafóricos da metáfora do poço nas três religiões abraâmicas (judaísmo, cristianismo e islamismo). Através de uma análise da experiência do Profeta José com o poço, observa-se que o poço é tratado não apenas como um lugar físico, mas como um símbolo de jornada espiritual, provações e sabedoria divina. Na tradição judaica, o poço é interpretado como um símbolo de exílio e redenção; na tradição cristã, como uma prefiguração da Paixão e Ressurreição de Cristo; e na tradição islâmica, como um estágio de autodisciplina e desenvolvimento espiritual. Empregando análise textual comparativa e métodos semióticos, o estudo explora a estrutura multifacetada da metáfora do poço, examinando textos sagrados, exegeses e interpretações modernas. Consequentemente, a metáfora do poço surge não apenas como um elemento da narrativa religiosa, mas também como um símbolo universal que descreve a jornada existencial da humanidade, suas quedas e ascensões, e suas oscilações entre a esperança e o desespero. Ela serve como um guia para os indivíduos modernos lidarem com os desafios da vida, descobrirem a si mesmos e alcançarem a maturidade espiritual.*



Religions. Spiritual Transformation. Divine Trial.

*Palavras-chave: Metáfora do poço. História do Profeta José. Expressão metafórica nas religiões abraâmicas. Transformação espiritual. Provação divina.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Humans are thinking and speaking beings. The ability to convey emotions, thoughts, perceptions, and feelings through language is one of the most fundamental characteristics of humanity. Language is also a tool that distinguishes humans from other living beings and makes them superior. Over time, human beings have succeeded in putting language into writing and have contributed to the preservation and development of the knowledge of humanity by transferring their feelings, thoughts, beliefs, cultures, important events they have experienced, and the information they have obtained to the next generation. With the transition of language into writing, people have produced unique concepts and symbols while expressing their emotions, opinions, and the external world they perceive concretely. Thus, they have gained the opportunity to recreate in their minds what they grasp through these concepts and symbols.

A language consists of basic components such as phonemes, morphemes, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Phonemes are the smallest structural units and sounds of a language. Phonemes combine to form morphemes. For example, each letter in the structure w/e/l/l is a phoneme. The combination of phonemes in this structure creates the meaningful word “well”, which is a morpheme. Sentences are formed by uttering words in a specific order to achieve meaningful expressions. Semantics is formed by arranging morphemes according to a certain syntactic measure. Semantics refers to ordering words according to their meanings, that is, syntaxing them. For example, the sentences "dig a well for others, and you will fall into it first" and "a madman throws a stone into a well, and forty wise men cannot get it out" reflect semantic features. The use of language in different social environments and daily affairs to communicate is related to its pragmatic aspect. However, language is not limited to these basic structures. Metaphors, which are the basis of everyday life and language, are the basic elements that expand it and turn it into miraculous. Because language, as the primary tool of our effort to understand and

express the external world, both makes it visible and hides it. This seemingly contradictory feature is made possible by metaphors. Metaphors are the most powerful elements that shape the explanatory and covering nature of language. Sometimes they cover the meaning with their sparkles and hide it behind a veil of secrecy, and sometimes they make the meaning they carry clearer and more distinct with the same light. Metaphors are therefore not merely literary devices; they are fundamental structures that constitute the essence of language. A language is not just a set of signs, but also a world of meaning woven with metaphors. In this sense, metaphors are keys that reveal the creative and transformative power of language. Without them, the reality we call the world can neither be fully understood nor fully explained (Demir, 2018, p. 128). Knowing metaphors, which are meaning events, is important in terms of understanding the richness of a language, drawing the concept map of a work, recognizing the cultural codes of a nation, and revealing its intellectual infrastructure.

Different definitions have been made about metaphors, which are among the most complex elements of a language. The concept of metaphor has been used basically in the sense of transferring meaning and creating transformation (Sheehan, 1999, p. 47). Ahmet Cevat Emre, M. Kaya Bilgegil, F. Abdullah Tansel, and Doğan Aksan defined metaphor more in this sense through examples. In the twenty-first chapter of the *Poetics*, Aristotle divided words into three as common words, foreign words and metaphorical words and defined metaphors as words that have a different meaning other than their special meaning. He describes metaphors as “they will save the language from platitudes and dullness” and shows that he sees them as structures that save the language from clichés and dryness (Aristotle, 1993, pp. 59-60; Aristotle, 2017, p. 66). Ricoeur, on the other hand, stated that “Metaphor is related to sentence semantics before word semantics” (Ricoeur, 2019, p. 64) and handled metaphor holistically. Those who established and popularized metaphor in the modern sense are George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. According to Lakoff and Johnson, metaphor is “not just a matter of language. It is also a matter of conceptual structure. Moreover, conceptual structure is not just a matter of the mind – it includes all natural dimensions of our experience, including the dimensions of our emotional experience (color, shape, texture, sound, etc.). These dimensions structure not only everyday experience, but also aesthetic experience” (Lakoff-Johnson, 2015, p. 21).

In literary works, metaphor can be in a sentence or can cover the entire work. Through the metaphors in the work, the feelings and thoughts of a poet/writer, and the historical, sociological, cultural, and geographical features of a nation are revealed. Because, without analysing the metaphors used as an object of expression, the concept map of a text cannot be drawn accurately. As Özcan states, "trying to analyse a text without analysing the metaphor is like fishing in muddy water" (Özcan, 2022, p. 51). However, metaphors are the linguistic expressions of those who use them as well as those who interpret them. Because interpreters cannot construe independently of their own experiences and beliefs (Sheehan, 1999, p. 47).

Having outlined the theoretical framework of metaphor, it is appropriate to address the experience of Prophet Joseph in the well, one of the most profound metaphorical narratives found in the sacred texts. This metaphor, beyond being a mere conveyance of a historical event, offers a rich symbolic narrative representing the existential journey of humanity, the process of overcoming challenges, and spiritual maturation. This reading through the well metaphor will serve as an important example in demonstrating the metaphorical power of language and its layers of meaning.

## 2 WELL

The word "well" means "a hole, usually cylindrical in shape, dug to a depth up to the water table, walled around and utilised for its water; a deep hole dug in the ground; an inextricable situation or place" (TDK, 2005, p. 1275). In Turkish literature, it has also been expressed with words such as "kuduğ" (Kaşgarlı Mahmud, 1999, p. 373), "çat" (Kaşgarlı Mahmud, 1999, p.137), "çâh/çeh" (Pala, 2002, p. 106), "bîr/bi'r" (Devellioğlu, 2007, p. 151). In the classical Turkish poetry tradition, the use of "çâh" was preferred. Concepts such as Çâh-ı Bâbil, Çâh-ı Yûsuf, çâh-ı Bîjen, çâh-ı Zemzem, çâh-ı zenehdân, and çâh-ı rasad were frequently used. Elements such as wells, dungeons, and caves in poems attract attention with their features such as closure, darkness, and depth (Mevlânâ, 2010, pp. 79-80). These elements have a key role in the understanding of texts with both their concrete and symbolic meanings. Wells, which are created by digging deep into the ground and contain or do not contain water, especially the well metaphor, are considered as the place of secrets, wisdom, and trials in Turkish epics and folk beliefs. For example,

in the Book of Dede Korkut, Salur Kazan is tested by being imprisoned in a well, and his rescue from this well constitutes an important turning point in the narrative. The well also functions as a place where secrets are hidden. In this context, the stories attributed to King Midas and Hadhrat ‘Ali about telling secrets point to the deep connection between the well and mystery. Similarly, the narrative that Prophet Daniel extracted wisdom from a well in Babylon emphasizes that the well is a symbol associated with knowledge and wisdom. In folk beliefs, wells are seen as places to apply for divination and healing. Especially çah-ı Yusuf is considered as an important metaphor in the story of Joseph; çah-ı zenehdan expresses the beauty of the beloved and the depth of love. With this richness of meaning, the well is not only a physical structure but also a deep metaphorical meaning associated with love, wisdom, secrets, difficulties, and trials. These examples show that the concept of well is not just an element of nature but also functions as a multi-layered symbol in cultural and literary contexts. (Koncu, 2012: 306-307) After a brief introduction to the word well, it is appropriate to focus on the story of Joseph, one of the most important well metaphors in Abrahamic religions. The story of Joseph, which is included in the Book of Genesis in Judaism, the Old Testament in Christianity, and the Quran in Islam, is a story that carries deep metaphorical meanings in all three religions. This narrative, shaped around the motif of the well, has been enriched with various interpretations in different religious traditions and has turned into a universal metaphor representing the spiritual journey and ripening process of humanity over time. Now, let's try to examine the metaphorical interpretations of Joseph's well experience in these three Abrahamic religions.

## **2.1 The well metaphor and prophet Joseph in the Jewish tradition**

The story of Jacob and his son Joseph, narrated in the Book of Genesis of the Torah, is a rich narrative that includes themes of family relations, jealousy, divine destiny, and ultimately salvation. This narrative begins with the chain of events following the death of Abraham at the age of one hundred and seventy-five. According to the Lord's covenant, the lineage will continue with Isaac among Abraham's sons Isaac and Ishmael (Genesis, 25/1-11). However, Isaac's wife Rebekah is barren. As a result of Isaac's prayers

to the Lord, Rebekah becomes pregnant with twin boys named Esau and Jacob (Genesis, 25/21-34).

Jacob comes into the world holding the heel of his twin brother Esau during birth. This symbolic act can be interpreted as a sign of his desire to be the firstborn (*behor*) and a sign of future competition. Also, the fact that Jacob was born circumcised is considered an indication of the covenant made with God (Zakovitch, 2012, p. 17). The right of the firstborn (*behor*) and the divine blessing (*beraha*) are given to Jacob, which initiates an eternal rivalry between him and Esau and their descendants. When Esau sets out to wait for his father's death to kill Jacob, Isaac and Rebekah send Jacob to his uncle Laban in Harran (Genesis, 27/35-43).

Jacob serves his uncle Laban in Harran for seven years and marries his daughter Leah and then serves another seven years and marries his other daughter Rachel, whom he loves (Genesis, 29/18-30). From these marriages, twelve sons named Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher and a daughter named Dinah are born (Genesis, 29/31; 30/1-24).

Among Jacob's twelve sons, his favorite is Joseph. There are multiple reasons for this love. First, it is Jacob's deep love for Joseph's mother, Rachel. Secondly, Rachel's long-term infertility and the constant humiliation by her older sister Leah during this process make Joseph's birth even more valuable. Some linguists compare the etymology of Joseph's name to the fertile rain that falls towards the morning after a cloudy night following a long drought, based on the names of Rachel and Jacob (Josephus, I. XIX/8, 64; *The Interpreter's Bible*, I, 706). The name Joseph, meaning "rising and increasing again" (Dukstra, 1999, p. 476), reflects Rachel's longing for a child. Thirdly, Joseph was born in Jacob's old age. Fourthly, after Rachel's untimely death, Jacob has a special affection for Joseph and Benjamin (Genesis, 35/18).

Jacob's love for Joseph leads to jealousy among the other brothers. Another reason for this jealousy is a special tunic that Jacob gave to Joseph. It is narrated that this tunic was inherited from Adam to Noah, from there to Abraham and Isaac, and was accepted as a symbol of chosenness. Interestingly, Jacob once deceived his father by wearing Esau's tunic and received his blessing (Zohar: *Toldot*, IV. 17/131-132; Ginzberg, I. 332). Now, Jacob is giving Joseph a tunic different from his other sons.

Another factor fuelling jealousy is the dreams Joseph sees. In his dream, Joseph sees himself and his brothers tying bundles of wheat in a field, his bundle standing upright, and the others bowing around his bundle. In another dream, he sees the Sun, the Moon, and eleven stars prostrating themselves to him. These dreams indicate that Joseph will rule over his brothers in the future and that the covenant of his ancestors will pass to him. His brothers were enraged by these dreams and hated Joseph even more (Genesis, 37/1-11).

One day, Jacob sends Joseph to his brothers who are grazing the flocks. His brothers meet Joseph with jealousy and hatred, take off his clothes and throw him into a dry well. Later, they take him out of the well and sell him to the Ishmaelites going to Egypt for twenty pieces of silver. They tell their father that a wolf ate Joseph and show him the blood-stained tunic (Genesis, 37/1-11).

This incident is reminiscent of an event Jacob experienced in his youth. Jacob had worn his brother Esau's clothes to receive his blessing and had deceived his father Isaac by saying, "I am Esau, your firstborn son" (Genesis, 27/16-27). Now, his sons are deceiving Jacob with a tunic story. This situation, which can be seen as a kind of *deja vu*, can be interpreted as a manifestation of divine justice. The incident of being thrown into the well is a turning point in Joseph's life and marks the beginning of the events he will experience in Egypt in the future. It is also accepted as a sign of the future Egyptian captivity of the Israelites.

The incident of the well, which we consider as a metaphor, is described in detail in the 37th chapter of the Book of Genesis (Bereshit). According to this narrative, Joseph was thrown into a well in Dothan by his brothers. "Now his brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem and Israel said to Joseph, 'As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them.'" "Very well," he replied. So, he said to him, "Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks and bring word back to me." Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron. When Joseph arrived at Shechem, a man found him wandering around in the fields and asked him, "What are you looking for?" He replied, "I'm looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?" "They have moved on from here," the man answered. "I heard them say, 'Let's go to Dothan.'" So, Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. But they saw him in the distance, and before he

reached them, they plotted to kill him. “Here comes that dreamer!” they said to each other. “Come now, let’s kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we’ll see what comes of his dreams.” When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. “Let’s not take his life,” he said. “Don’t shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don’t lay a hand on him.” Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father. So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing—and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it. As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt. Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed. So, when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.” (Bible Gateway, “Genesis, 37/12-28”. Accessed September 1, 2024)

In Midrashic literature, the physical characteristics of the well into which Joseph was thrown are often emphasized. In these narratives, the well is depicted as an empty space without water, filled instead with snakes and scorpions (Midrash Tanhuma, Vayeshev 8; Midrash Rabbah, Genesis, 84/16). This situation has been interpreted as an important symbol pointing to divine protection in the Jewish exegetical tradition. The famous Jewish commentator Rashi also considered the emptiness of the well and the fact that Joseph was not harmed by snakes and scorpions as an indication of divine providence and protective intervention (Rashi, Genesis 37/24). This interpretation of Rashi has been revisited by modern scholars such as Aviva Gottlieb Zornberg, who also emphasised the divine protection in the story of Joseph (Zornberg, 1995, p. 299).

In the Talmudic tradition, the well metaphor is associated with the concept of exile (*galut*), with Joseph's being thrown into the well being inferred as a foreshadowing of the Israelites' exile in Egypt, and in this context, the well emerges as a powerful symbol representing both physical and spiritual exile (Midrash Rabbah, Genesis, 84/16). In Kabbalistic interpretations, the well is treated as a symbol of the cycle of spiritual decline

and ascent, with the depth of the well in the Zohar symbolizing the lowest level of the material world, and the exit from it symbolizing spiritual ascent. In modern Jewish consideration, Joseph's well experience is re-explained in the context of overcoming individual and collective traumas, and the well is evaluated as a metaphor for emerging stronger from difficulties and spiritual maturation. Ultimately, Joseph's being thrown into the well is seen in Judaism as a symbol of both human weaknesses and divine salvation, and the story deeply explores universal values such as jealousy, betrayal, patience, and trust in God's plans, while the well is not only a place where Joseph undergoes a test but also the starting point of God's divine intervention (Ackerman, 2002, pp. 67-68).

## **2.2 The well metaphor and Prophet Joseph in the Christian tradition**

In Christianity, the story of Prophet Joseph, as in Judaism, is found in the same chapter of the Book of Genesis and is narrated within the Old Testament section of the Bible. Joseph's being thrown into a well by his brothers is evaluated in Christianity within a symbolic connection with the passion of Christ and the plan of salvation. The story indicates that the betrayal Joseph experienced was a process that served God's plans and that even evil intentions can produce beneficial results in line with divine providence. In the Book of Genesis, Joseph's story is narrated as follows: Joseph's father, Jacob, loved him more than his other sons and gave him a coat of many colours (Genesis, 37/3). Joseph's dreams, symbolizing his superiority, fuelled the jealousy of his brothers. The brothers decide to kill him; however, Reuben suggests throwing Joseph into a well to protect him: "And Reuben said unto them, shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him." (Genesis, 37/22).

Despite his brothers' evil intentions, Joseph's being thrown into the well paves the way for him to be taken to Egypt and eventually become a great saviour. In Christianity, this story is understood as a typology (prefiguration) in which Joseph symbolizes Christ. The similarities between the events in Joseph's life and the life of Jesus are highlighted. Joseph's rejection by his brothers, being sold as a slave, being unjustly accused, being thrown into prison, and finally rising to a position of saviour parallels Jesus' rejection, crucifixion, and resurrection. This interpretation elevates Joseph's story beyond being just

a historical event, giving it a theological dimension as a precursor to Jesus Christ (Aphrahat, *Demonstrations II*, Vol XIII).

In the writings of the Church Fathers, Joseph's being thrown into the well and subsequently attaining a high position was interpreted as a prefiguration of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For this reason, he became a key figure in allegorical, typological, and moral exegesis in early Christian texts (Feldman, 1998, pp. 359-360). In Patristic literature, the well metaphor was particularly examined by Augustine and Origen. In Augustine's interpretation in his work *De Civitate Dei* (*The City of God*), the well signifies the state into which humanity fell after the fall, while Joseph's rescue (Acts 7.52) represents the promise of salvation (Cullman, 1967, p. 131)

In the text called the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Joseph is depicted as an exemplary figure in terms of morality, who rises to a respected position among his brothers by displaying the virtues of forgiveness, chastity, and wisdom. These testaments combine various elements of stories and legends in Hellenistic Jewish literature, presenting a holistic narrative that highlights Joseph's personality and virtues. In this framework, Joseph is constructed as a character with superior moral qualities both within his family and in the religious-historical context of the period (Hollander, 1998, pp. 257-259).

In the Eastern Church tradition, the image of the well acquires a spiritual meaning as a precursor to the water of baptism, and important figures such as John Chrysostom treated the well as a symbol of spiritual renewal and purification in their sermons. Chrysostom focuses particularly on two key events in Joseph's life: His turbulent relationship with his brothers and his resistance to the seduction attempts of Potiphar's wife. Emphasizing virtues such as patience, endurance, moderation, and chastity displayed by Joseph in these events, Chrysostom presents him as a moral role model. In this interpretation, Joseph is not only a victim who braves difficulties but also a morally strong and virtuous individual. Therefore, in the Eastern Church tradition, the story of Joseph and the well metaphor provide a spiritual and moral teaching to believers, becoming powerful symbols of the new life and purification that come with baptism. (Chrysostom, 1992, *Homilies on Genesis*, 46-67).

In the Christian tradition, Joseph's being thrown into the well carries several important metaphorical meanings: The first of these is betrayal and suffering. Joseph's

being thrown into the well by his brothers parallels the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus Christ by the Jewish leaders and people. The well is interpreted as a symbol of Jesus' passion. Just as Joseph was thrown into the well through betrayal, Jesus was also betrayed, but this situation was part of the plan of salvation (John, 19/11). The second is the beginning of salvation. Although Joseph's being thrown into the well is seemingly a fall and destruction, it is in fact the beginning of God's greater plan of salvation. In Christian theology, this counterpart the idea that Jesus' crucifixion and death are a necessity for the salvation of humanity. Joseph's rise to a high position in Egypt is seen as a harbinger of a divine salvation process. The third is humility and divine exaltation. The well is considered in Christianity as a symbol of humility and patience. Joseph's exit from the well and his rise exemplifies the advice that "God will exalt the humble" (James, 4/10). This is connected to Jesus' humbling himself to serve people and his eventual exaltation. The fourth is darkness and hope. The well also expresses that the moments when a person remains in darkness can be overcome by faith in God. In Christian exegesis, the moment Joseph was thrown into the well is evaluated as a test in which hope, and faith are preserved. Ultimately, in the Christian exegetical tradition, Joseph's story is often associated with Christ. Joseph's being thrown into the well is explained as a test of faith and patience. The well represents a process in which humanity trusts in God in the face of its own mistakes and the evil of others. Joseph stands out as a superior moral example to be followed in Christian communities. The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Clement, Aphrahat, Ephrem, and especially John Chrysostom's writings emphasize Joseph's virtuous attitudes and behaviours, elaborating on the idea that he should be taken as an example by Christians.

### **2.3 The well metaphor and Prophet Joseph in the Islamic tradition**

In the Islamic tradition, this story, referred to as "the most beautiful of stories" (Surah Yusuf, 12/3), is found in the Surah Yusuf of the Quran. The Quran presents the story of Joseph as a series of events directed by divine providence, in which human emotions such as jealousy, hatred, love, lust, the pain of losing a child, and longing are processed, and the suffering of a prophet is depicted in a literary language. Joseph's being thrown into a well by his brothers demonstrates that even the most difficult trials a person

faces are part of a plan within the framework of divine wisdom. In this context, the well is both a physical test and the beginning of a spiritual ascent (Settari, 2000, p.194). The Quran states that Joseph was envied by his brothers and thrown into a well in a planned manner as follows: “Kill Joseph or cast him out to some (unknown) land, so that the favour of your father may be given exclusively to you, and that after that you may become a righteous people.” One from among them said, "Do not kill Joseph, but throw him into the bottom of the well; some travellers will pick him up - if you would do something." They said, "O our father, why do you not entrust us with Joseph, while indeed, we are to him sincere counsellors? Send him with us tomorrow that he may eat well and play. And indeed, we will be his guardians." [Jacob] said, "Indeed, it saddens me that you should take him, and I fear that a wolf would eat him while you are of him unaware." They said, "If a wolf should eat him while we are a [strong] clan, indeed, we would then be losers." So when they took him [out] and agreed to put him into the bottom of the well... But We inspired to him, "You will surely inform them [someday] about this affair of theirs while they do not perceive [your identity]." And they came to their father at night, weeping. They said, "O our father, indeed we went racing each other and left Joseph with our possessions, and a wolf ate him. But you would not believe us, even if we were truthful." And they brought upon his shirt false blood. [Jacob] said, "Rather, your souls have enticed you to something, so patience is most fitting. And Allah is the one sought for help against that which you describe." And there came a company of travellers; then they sent their water drawer, and he let down his bucket. He said, "Good news! Here is a boy." And they concealed him, [taking him] as merchandise; and Allah was knowing of what they did." (Quran, Surah Yusuf 12/9-18, Accessed: September 1, 2024).

Historical records indicate that Prophet Joseph lived during the period when the Hyksos dynasty ruled Egypt (ca. 1720-1580 BCE) (Furat, 1986, p. 441; Köksal, 2004, pp. 271-301). This well, where Prophet Joseph stayed for three days and is known today as the well of Joseph, is located in Jordan (Pala, 1993, p. 186; Mütercim Asım Efendi, 2000, p. 127). His brothers, envious of their father's love for Joseph, wanted to eliminate him. However, with the intervention of one of the brothers, the decision was made to leave him in a well instead of killing him. In the Quran, "the well" appears as a metaphor symbolizing human helplessness; Joseph's being thrown into the well reflects the problems created by jealousy and betrayal throughout history, while also showing the

confrontation with loneliness, fear, and despair. What saved him from this situation (Surah Yusuf, 12/19) is God's mercy and the operation of divine destiny.

The story of Joseph holds an important place in both the Torah and the Quran; and in both sacred texts, Prophet Jacob plays a central role as Joseph's father. However, there are significant differences between the two narratives in terms of Jacob's character and his reactions to events.

### *2.3.1 Interpretation of dreams and father-son communication*

In the Torah, when Joseph tells his dreams to his father and brothers, Jacob rebukes him, saying, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves down to the earth before you?" (Genesis, 37/10). This attitude indicates that Jacob reacted negatively to Joseph's dreams, belittling them. On the other hand, in the Quran, after listening to Joseph's dream, Jacob approaches his son with compassion and understanding, saying, "O my son, do not relate your vision to your brothers, lest they devise against you a plan..." (Yusuf, 12/5). This stance reveals that Jacob understood the importance of Joseph's dream and guided him by trying to protect him from his brothers' jealousy.

### *2.3.2 Sending Joseph to his brothers*

In the Torah, Jacob sends Joseph to his brothers of his own accord (Genesis, 37/13-14). This situation may suggest that Jacob was unaware of the tension between the brothers or that he was not concerned about Joseph's safety. In the Quran, however, it is understood that Jacob was reluctant to send Joseph to his brothers and resisted this for a long time, but eventually had to do so (Yusuf, 12/13-14). This position stems from Jacob's love for Joseph and his instinct to protect him. Jacob is concerned that his brothers might most probably harm Joseph.

### 2.3.3. *Reaction to Joseph's disappearance*

In the Torah, when Jacob sees Joseph's bloody tunic, he goes into deep mourning and completely loses hope in him. "Then Jacob tore his clothes and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days" (Genesis, 37/34). This reaction shows that Jacob is in deep pain and despair. In the Quran, although Jacob experiences deep sadness in the face of Joseph's disappearance, he never loses hope in him. "O my sons, go and find out about Joseph and his brother and despair not of relief from Allah. Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah except the disbelieving people" (Yusuf, 12/87). This attitude shows that Jacob is a prophet with trust, patience, and strong faith in Allah. Therefore, there are significant differences between the figures of Jacob in the Torah and the Quran. While Jacob in the Quran is depicted as a more compassionate, understanding, patient prophetic figure whose faith in Allah is unwavering, Jacob in the Torah appears as a fatherly character who is more prone to protect his son and less prioritizing dreams. These differences reflect the nuances in the perspectives of both sacred texts on events and characters.

## 3 SUFI INTERPRETATIONS OF THE WELL

In the Sufi tradition, the well metaphor has been interpreted as one of the important stages of the journey of spiritual wayfaring (*sayr-u suluk*). The well is considered as a symbolic space that shows that spiritual elevation paradoxically begins with a descent. The well experience has also been evaluated in the context of the purification of the *nafs* (ego). The darkness and depth of the well represent the necessity of confronting the dark aspects of the *nafs* (Kuşeyrî, 2013: II, p. 68; Bursevî, n.d.: IV, p. 225). In Rumi's *Mathnavi*, the well metaphor appears as a symbol emphasizing the transience and trial dimension of worldly life. The exit from the well is depicted as a process in which material and spiritual salvation occur together (Mevlâna, 2010, p. 79).

In Eflaki's work titled *Manağib al-Arifin*, the "well metaphor," used with reference to the story of Joseph, appears as a symbol of both the difficulties faced by Joseph and his submission in the face of these difficulties. In various parts of the work, this important event in Joseph's life is interpreted not only as a material suffering but also as an

expression of a spiritual trial and submission. In particular, the well has been turned into a powerful symbol representing Joseph's trust and loyalty to his Lord. In this context, in Eflaki's narrative, the well metaphor carries a Sufi meaning that emphasizes the relationship between apparent troubles and inner truth (Eflâki, 2006, pp. 439-440).

In Sheikh Galib's masterpiece, the mathnavi *Hüsn ü Aşk*, the well metaphor is addressed within the framework of Sufi symbolism. In the work, in the journey to reach Hüsn, who represents divine beauty, the character of Aşk (Love) falls into a bottomless and dark well in the first stage of spiritual perfection. This well is described as the dwelling place of a terrifying giant. However, the poet emphasizes that falling into the well is actually a step on the way to ascent, alluding to the story of Joseph. Aşk's willingness to die for the desire to meet Hüsn leads to the manifestation of divine grace, and thus he is saved from both the well and the danger of the giant. This allegorical narrative can be considered as a literary manifestation of the concept of "dying before death," which is frequently encountered in the Sufi tradition (Ayvazoğlu, 1995, p. 102).

In the Islamic tradition, the well is a powerful metaphor symbolizing a prophet's test of patience, the consequences of jealousy and betrayal, salvation through divine intervention, and man's journey to his own soul. Joseph was tested both by the betrayal of his brothers and by the helplessness of a dark well, and this process was considered as part of his patience and divine destiny. Imam Tabari interprets Joseph's patience in the well as a preparation for the position of prophethood (Taberî, 1995, pp. 195-196). At the same time, the well represents the struggle against one's own soul because of the brothers' jealousy and attachment to worldly goods (Yazır, 2022, p. 629). In the Quran, Joseph's being taken out of the well by a caravan occurs through divine intervention, and this event shows that what appears to be a fall is the beginning of the path leading to Joseph's great success: "And there came a company of travellers; then they sent their water drawer, and he let down his bucket. He said, 'Good news! Here is a boy.' And they concealed him, [taking him] as merchandise" (Surah Yusuf, 12/19).

In Sufi interpretations, the well is considered as a journey into one's own soul and dark inner world (Kayıklık, 2011, p. 210). Rumi treated the incident of Joseph's being thrown into the well as a multidimensional metaphor. This metaphor represents the process of spiritual perfection, divine love, and the existential journey of man. According to Rumi, the well is primarily a place of maturation and perfection. Just as winter prepares

trees for spring, the well is a place that prepares the soul for greater glory. This experience, which includes darkness and difficulties, is a necessary stage for the elevation of the soul. The well metaphor also symbolizes earthly existence. According to Rumi, the world is like a well, and "Beauty" (Joseph) is hidden within it. According to him, the value of the well is determined by the being within it. If the beloved (*mashuq*) is in the well, that well becomes more valuable than the gardens of paradise. With this interpretation, Rumi measures the value of a place by the spiritual value within it. Rumi uses the words "*çâh*" (well) and "*jah*" (high position) as a pun. This usage is a sign that descent will turn into ascent, difficulties into happiness, and suffering into pleasure. Joseph's rise from the well to the highest position in Egypt is the best example of this transformation. (Mevlâna, II/69b, III/147a; VI/283a; III/129a; VI/315a, VI/316b).

#### 4 METAPHORICAL MEANINGS OF THE WELL CONCEPT

Ferdinand de Saussure, the founder of modern linguistics, made groundbreaking contributions to language studies with his paradigmatic approach that guided 20th-century linguistic studies. According to him, the linguistic sign does not establish a simple connection between a material object and its name; instead, it connects a mental concept with a sound image. The sound image here is not just a physical sound wave; rather, it is a mental reflection of the sound formed in our minds through our senses. This sound image has the quality of a mental design shaped by our sensory perceptions (Saussure, 2001, p. 107). In Saussure's linguistic theory, the linguistic sign is conceptualized as a two-sided mental unit. In this structure, the concept (signified) and the auditory image (signifier) are in a mutual relationship of dependence and necessarily evoke each other. The integrity formed by these two components is called a "sign" in linguistic terminology and functions as a central component of mental associations. In the linguistic system, each word has the quality of a signifier (Saussure, 2001, pp. 108-109).

The word 'well', which is the focal point of this study, is also a fundamental signifier that should be examined within the framework of semiotic analysis. Semiotics is a science that examines how meaning is produced, transmitted, and interpreted. (Kalelioğlu, 2021, p. 189) Semiotics also provides an important tool for analysing symbolic, social, and individual contexts when dealing with the well metaphor. When the

well sign is examined from a linguistic and semiotic perspective, a multi-layered meaning structure emerges. This sign presents seemingly opposite but deeply related semantic patterns. On the existential plane, it represents the duality of life and death; on the psychological plane, the subconscious and self-discovery; and on the spiritual plane, the search for truth and enlightenment. In the archetypal context, it contains the symbolism of the mother's womb and rebirth; while on the ethical plane, it includes the cycle of crime-punishment-purification (Jung, 2015, pp. 21-22; Campbell, 2015, p. 89; Erhat, 2022, pp. 39-40).

This multidimensional structure invites the reader into a deep labyrinth of meaning on the textual plane, while also functioning as a metaphorical representation of the existential journey of humanity. The physical and symbolic meanings of the well can be examined in depth with this method. This examination leads us to a better understanding of the nature of concepts. Indeed, concepts, which are the most basic components of human thought, emerge as a result of the constant interaction of three important elements: language, mind, and reality. These concepts are dynamic and evolving courses rather than being static and unchanging structures. No concept can exist alone; each one gains meaning and develops within a complex network of relationships with other concepts. Although abstraction plays an important role in the formation of concepts, this process is not a purely theoretical exercise. Each concept arises from a practical need and has a functional role in both our intellectual world and physical reality. These structures are the basic tools that shape how we interpret the world and how we relate to it. In this context, the concept of well, which embodies both a physical reality and rich metaphorical meanings, appears as a valuable building block of thought.

The presence of the well in the holy books of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam has turned the concept of well into a universal metaphor. Kövecses' studies occupy an important place in the cross-cultural studies of metaphor. According to Kövecses, bodily experiences lie at the basis of metaphors, and the degree of universality of these experiences determines the universality of metaphors. This approach is called the standard view. Conceptual metaphors are structurally multi-layered and cannot be considered separately from the context in which they are found. This multi-levelness and contextual embeddedness are the main features of conceptual metaphors (Kövecses, 2005: xii-4). Although literally defined as a deep hole dug to extract water from the

underground, the concept of well has transformed into a powerful symbol that describes different aspects of the individual, society, and the human condition. Within a broad narrative tradition ranging from sacred texts to folk tales, from literature to philosophy, the term well has been not only a physical phenomenon but also a metaphor reflecting the spiritual and existential journey of humanity. The well into which Joseph was thrown by his brothers is not just a place, but a whole of meanings intertwined with concepts such as justice, betrayal, hope, and salvation. To better understand the rich layers of meaning that the well metaphor has acquired in different cultures and narratives, it will be useful to examine how this concept plays a role, especially in sacred texts and stories.

#### **4.1 Symbol of betrayal and justice**

In the story of Prophet Joseph, the well represents the betrayal of his brothers and Joseph's unjust abandonment. As a result of their jealousy, the brothers throw Joseph into the well, providing an example of injustice and human weaknesses. In this context, the well appears as a place where justice is temporarily lost. The situation of Joseph, who was thrown into the well, reflects a moment when a person is faced with an existential abyss and is in expectation of help and salvation. However, the well can also be read not only as a symbol of betrayal but also as a symbol of justice and divine plan. Joseph's removal from the well reminds us of the manifestation of justice and the existence of divine help in the face of injustice. In this context, the well symbolizes the transition from injustice to justice and the transformation from despair to salvation. (Öztekin, 2015, 117).

#### **4.2 The well and existential loneliness**

The well metaphor is also frequently used to describe situations of loneliness and isolation. Joseph's being thrown into the well represents an experience in which a person faces loneliness and exclusion. The well, a dark, narrow, and deep space, becomes an area where the individual tests both his physical and spiritual boundaries. This loneliness is a process in which the individual reckons with himself and his surroundings, and at the same time rediscovers the feelings of hope and resistance. In Joseph's story, the well is also a reflection of man's relationship with God. In the depths of the well, man takes

refuge in divine help and never lose hope of salvation. This also makes the well meaningful as an area of inner purification and strengthening as well as loneliness and despair (Jung, 1991, p.184).

### **4.3 Journey into the unknown in the depths of the well**

The well also appears as a metaphor for the unknown and mystery. By looking into the depths of the well, a person finds the courage to explore his own limits and the dark spots of his subconscious. The situation of Prophet Joseph in the well expresses a situation where the individual confronts the unknown and reckons with his fears and hopes. The well is a symbol of the truth that the individual finds in his own depths, a journey into himself. In this context, the well contains both danger and opportunity. A person can get lost in the depths of the well or emerge from this depth with a new understanding and strength. In the story of Joseph, the well is shaped not only as a place of physical confinement but also as an area representing a turning point of fate (Campbell, 2015, p. 119, Spiegelman et al., 1997, p. 54).

### **4.4 The well and social criticism**

The well metaphor has also been used as a powerful tool in social criticism. In the story of Joseph, the betrayal carried out by the brothers due to jealousy is a warning about how justice and fraternal ties can weaken in society. The well, as an indicator of injustice and betrayal, symbolizes the deterioration of social order. At the same time, the moment of being removed from the well expresses the hope of social salvation and renewal. From this point of view, the well contains not only an individual experience but also a reflection of social structures and values. The injustices of society, power struggles, and the weakening of fraternal ties take shape in the darkness of the well, but this darkness also offers an opportunity for transformation and purification (Saylan, 2009, p. 109).

#### **4.5 Universality of the well metaphor**

The well is a powerful metaphor that makes sense of man's existential journey on both an individual and social level. The story of Prophet Joseph shows that the well has become a symbol where betrayal, loneliness, and hope are intertwined as a place. This metaphor reminds us of universal values such as justice, resilience, and salvation, and tells us that a person can keep his hope even in one's darkest moments. The well is not only a physical phenomenon but also a mirror reflecting the depths of the human soul and the contradictions of social values. For this reason, the well metaphor will continue to be a rich source of meaning that can be reinterpreted in different ways in every period of human history (Öztekin, 2015, 130).

#### **4.6 Various layers of meaning of the well metaphor**

The well is a versatile sign that contains many positive and negative meanings. Symbolizing the cycle of life and death, the well can be a journey into the depths of the subconscious, an area where mysteries are discovered, or a symbol of reaching the truth. It also represents inner journey, rebirth, spiritual purification, and transformation. Sometimes it implies the longing of the beloved, and sometimes it implies crime, betrayal, and punishment. In addition, the well is also evaluated as a metaphor symbolizing the individual's effort to discover himself, the search for reaching the inner essence of man, and the reader's identification with the story (Kayıklık, 2011, pp. 99-107; Balkaya, 2014, p. 59).

### **5 CONCLUSION**

The well metaphor, as a powerful symbol that offers deep layers of meaning on both individual and societal levels, has been addressed in a wide range of contexts, from sacred texts to modern literary works. In this study, the different interpretations of the well metaphor in the traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam were examined through the story of Prophet Joseph. The examination revealed that the well metaphor not

only describes a physical space but is also a narrative element that expresses the spiritual journey of humanity, existential inquiries, and the manifestation of divine wisdom.

In the Jewish tradition, the well metaphor holds a significant place, particularly in expressing the relationship between exile and redemption. Joseph's being thrown into the well by his brothers was interpreted as a foreshadowing of the Israelites' exile in Egypt. In this context, the well is a multidimensional symbol that signifies human despair and isolation on one hand and God's redemptive intervention on the other. In the Kabbalistic tradition, the well was considered as a metaphor representing the cycle of spiritual decline and ascent. Joseph's rescue from the well was evaluated as an indicator of the transition between this decline and ascent.

In Christianity, the well was interpreted as a prefiguration of the suffering of Jesus Christ and the plan of salvation. Joseph's being thrown into the well and his subsequent elevation bear a symbolic parallel with the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. In this context, the well functions as a powerful metaphor that reminds us that even the darkest moment of humanity is part of divine salvation. In the Christian tradition, the well was also considered as a symbol of humility, patience, and divine exaltation; it was also evaluated as a representation of individual and societal transformations.

In the Islamic tradition, the well was interpreted as a symbol embodying both Prophet Joseph's patience on the path of prophethood and the process of disciplining the human self. While Joseph's being thrown into the well was an indication of jealousy, betrayal, and human weaknesses, his rescue from the well was seen as part of divine destiny and wisdom. In Sufi interpretations, the well was considered as a stage of the journey of spiritual perfection and was used as a metaphor expressing the confrontation of a person with the dark aspects of his inner world. Sufis such as Rumi and Sheikh Galib evaluated the well metaphor as an occasion for a test and transformation for the individual's spiritual elevation.

In all three traditions, the well metaphor stands out as a universal symbol representing the existential journey of humanity. Both on an individual and societal level, the well expresses the process of coping with difficulties, reaching from darkness to light, and ultimately attaining spiritual sagacity. The metaphor demonstrates that even in the most desperate moments of humanity, it has the capacity to maintain hope and resilience, thus retaining its meaning in the modern world. This study clarifies that the well metaphor

is not only in religious texts but also continues to be interpreted in different cultural contexts as a common narrative element of human history. The well, harbouring multi-layered concepts such as betrayal, loneliness, justice, and divine salvation, sheds light on both individual and collective experiences of humanity.

Consequently, the well metaphor maintains its meaning as a powerful symbol that tells the story of humanity from the past to the present, and in this context, it constitutes a rich source for both literary and philosophical analyses. The comparative and semiotic method used in the study revealed the multidimensional structure of the metaphor, offering a new perspective in the interpretation of such narratives. These findings provide an important contribution to understanding the functionality of metaphors in intercultural interactions and the reflection of universal values in human history.

### **FUNDING**

This research received no external funding.

### **INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD STATEMENT**

Not applicable.

### **INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT**

Not applicable.

### **DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT**

The original contributions presented in this study are included in the article material. Further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

## REFERENCES

- Aphrahat. (1987). Demonstrations XXII.25. In J. Gwynn (Ed.), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series II* (Vol. XIII, pp. 403–412). William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Ackerman, S. (2002). Why is Miriam also among the prophets? (And is Zipporah among the priests?). *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 121(1), 47–80. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3268330>
- Aristotle. (1993). *Poetics* (I. Tunalı, Trans.). Remzi Kitabevi.
- Aristotle. (2017). *Poetics* (A. Çokona & Ö. Aygün, Trans.). Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları.
- Ayvazoğlu, B. (1995). *Sheikh Galib [Şeyh Galib]*. İstanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür İşleri Daire Başkanlığı Yayınları.
- Balkaya, A. (2014). An analysis on the functionality of the well in folk narratives. *Milli Folklor*, 102, 53–64.
- Bar, Y. S., & Ashlag, Y. A. (Eds.). (2003). *The Zohar*. USA: The Kabbalah Centre Int. Inc.
- Bruce, F. F. (1988). *The Book of the Acts* (Rev. ed.). Wm. B. Eerdmans.
- Bursevî, İ. H. (n.d.). *Tafsîr Rûh al-Bayân fi Tafsîr al-Qur'ân* (Vols. 1–10). Lebanon: Dâr İhyâ' al-Turâth al-'Arabî.
- Campbell, J. (2015). *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (S. Gürses, Trans.). İstanbul: İthaki Yayınları.
- Chrysostom, J. (1992). *Homilies on Genesis 46–67* (R. C. Hill, Trans.). Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press.
- Cullmann, O. (1967). *Salvation History*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.
- Demir, G. Y. (2018). *The Uncertainty of Language [Dilin Belirsizliği]*. İstanbul: Pinhan Yayıncılık.
- Devellioğlu, F. (2007). *Ottoman-Turkish Encyclopedic Dictionary* (24th ed.). Ankara: Aydın Kitabevi Yayınları.
- Dukstra, M. (1999a). Jacob. In K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, & P. W. van der Horst (Eds.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (2nd ed., p. 459). Brill.
- Dukstra, M. (1999b). Joseph. In K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, & P. W. van der Horst (Eds.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (2nd ed., p. 476). Brill.

- Eflâki, A. (2006). *Manâqib al-‘Ārifîn [The Deeds/Accounts of the Gnostics]*. Istanbul: Kabalıcı Yayınevi.
- Erhat, A. (2002). *Dictionary of Mythology [Mitoloji Sözlüğü]*. Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi.
- Feldman, L. H. (1998). *Josephus’s Interpretation of the Bible (Hellenistic Culture and Society, 27)*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Fatoohi, L. (2007). *The Prophet Joseph in the Qur’an, the Bible, and History*. Kuala Lumpur: Luna Plena Publishing.
- Furat, A. S. (1986). Yusuf. In *Encyclopaedia of Islam [İslam Ansiklopedisi]* (Vol. 13, pp. 440–446). Istanbul: MEB Yayınları.
- Ginzberg, L. (1998). *The Legends of the Jews* (H. Szold, Trans.). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Hollander, H. W. (1998). The portrayal of Joseph in Hellenistic Jewish and early Christian literature. In M. E. Stone & T. A. Bergren (Eds.), *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible* (pp. 237–263). Harrisburg: Trinity Press International.
- The Holy Bible*. (n.d.). John 19:11.
- The Holy Bible*. (n.d.). James 4:10.
- Jung, C. G. (1991). *The Development of Personality* (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). New York: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C. G. (2015). *Four Archetypes* (Z. A. Yılmaz, Trans.). Istanbul: Metis Yayınları.
- Kalelioğlu, M. (2021). A general evaluation of semiotics theory, its place and importance in Turkey. *Söylem Filoloji Dergisi*, 6(1), 189–200.
- Kaşgarlı Mahmud. (1999). *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* (B. Atalay, Trans., Vol. 4). Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları.
- Kayıklık, H. (2011). *Psychology of Sufism [Tasavvuf Psikolojisi]*. Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları.
- Koncu, H. (2012). Some uses of the well, dungeon and cave in classical Turkish poetry. *İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Dergisi*, 30, 305–329.
- Köksal, A. (2004). *History of the Prophets [Peygamberler Tarihi]* (Vol. 1). Ankara: TDV Yayınları.
- Kövecses, Z. (2005). *Metaphor in Culture: Universality and Variation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Kuşeyrî, A. (2013). *Latâ'if al-Ishârât* (M. Yalar, Trans.). İstanbul: İlk Harf Yayınları.
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (2015). *Metaphors We Live By* (G. Y. Demir, Trans.). İthaki Yayınları.
- Mevlâna, M. C. R. (1993). *Mathnawi* (Vols. 1–6). Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları.
- Mütercim Asım Efendi. (2000). *Burhân-ı Qāṭi'* [*Burhân-ı Katı*] (M. Öztürk & D. Örs, Eds.). TDK Yayınları.
- Özcan, T. (2022). Why does the poet/poetry need metaphor? *Türk Edebiyatı Aylık Fikir ve Sanat Dergisi*, 586, 47–55.
- Öztekin, Ö. (2015). An example of intertextual/intersemiotic transformation: The story of Yusuf. *Milli Folklor*, 27(108), 116–134.
- Pala, İ. (1993). *The Well of Babylon* [Çâh-ı Bâbil]. In *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi* (Vol. 8, pp. 186–187). Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları.
- Pala, İ. (2002). *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Divan Poetry* (9th ed.). L&M Yayınları.
- Ricoeur, P. (2019). *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (G. Y. Demir, Trans.). Pinhan Yayıncılık. (Original work published 1976)
- Saussure, F. (2001). *Course in General Linguistics* (B. Vardar, Trans.). Multilingual Yabancı Dil Yayınları. (Original work published 1916)
- Saylan, N. (2009). *Individual and Social Messages from Surah Yusuf* [Unpublished master's thesis]. Fırat Üniversitesi.
- Settari, C. (2000). *Züleyha's Love Trouble* [*Züleyha'nın Aşk Derdi*]. İnsan Yayınları.
- Sheehan, R. D. J. (1999). Metaphor as hermeneutics. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 29(2), 47–65.
- Spiegelman, J. M., Han, P. V. I., & Fernandez, T. (1997). *Jungian Psychology and Sufism* (K. Yazıcı & R. Kutlu, Trans.). İnsan Yayınları.
- Taberî, M. b. C. (1995). *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wîl Āy al-Qur'ān* (S. C. el-Attâr, Ed., Vol. 12). Dāru'l-Fikr.
- Türk Dil Kurumu. (2005). *Turkish Dictionary* [*Türkçe Sözlük*] (10th ed.). Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları.
- Yazır, E. H. (2022). *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili* [*The True Religion: The Language of the Qur'an*] (Vol. 3). Ankara: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı Yayınları.
- Zakovitch, Y. (2012). *Jacob: Unexpected Patriarch*. Yale University Press.

Zornberg, A. G. (1995). *The Beginning of Desire: Reflections on Genesis*. Jewish Publication Society.

### Electronic Sources

Bible Gateway. (2024). *Genesis 37:12–24*. Retrieved September 1, 2024, from <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis%2037&version=NIV>

The Qur'an (Surah Yusuf). (2024). *Yusuf Suresi*. Retrieved September 1, 2024, from <https://kuran.diyaret.gov.tr/mushaf/kuran-meal-2/yusuf-suresi-12/ayet-1/diyaret-isleri-baskanligi-meali-1>

Midrash Rabbah. (2024). *Bereshit 84:16*. Sefaria. Retrieved August 30, 2024, from [https://www.sefaria.org/Bereshit\\_Rabbah.84.16?lang=bi](https://www.sefaria.org/Bereshit_Rabbah.84.16?lang=bi)

Midrash Tanhuma. (2024). *Vayeshev 8*. Sefaria. Retrieved August 30, 2024, from [https://www.sefaria.org/Midrash\\_Tanchuma%2C\\_Vayeshev.8.1?lang=he](https://www.sefaria.org/Midrash_Tanchuma%2C_Vayeshev.8.1?lang=he)

Rashi. (2024). *Commentary on Genesis 37:24*. Sefaria. Retrieved August 30, 2024, from <https://www.sefaria.org/Genesis.37.24?lang=bi&with=Rashi&lang2=en>

### Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

### Data availability

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

### How to cite this article (APA)

Karabulut, A., Şahin, M., & Bayram, E. THE PLACE AND METAPHORICAL MEANINGS OF THE WELL CONCEPT IN ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS. *Veredas Do Direito*, e234830. <https://doi.org/10.18623/rvd.v23.n4.4830>