# Metaphorization of Space in Biblical Psalms: Spiritual Motion of the Living and the Dead

**Danijel Berković,**
The Biblical Institute, Zagreb
dberkovic@bizg.hr

**Boris Beck,**
The Faculty of Political Science, Zagreb
boris.beck@fpzg.hr

UDK: 27-243.63:2-187
Review paper
https://doi.org/10.32862/k.16.1.2

## Abstract

*This work examines conceptual metaphors of space in biblical Psalms and in relation to the psalmist's personal emotive and theological message which the psalmodic text intends to convey. Language of space and motion is in so many ways crucial for human existential as well as a religious experience. The psalmist reveals and presents his complex existential as well as his theological challenges through a set of conceptual metaphors of space. Orientational metaphors form a specific mental space where the antipodes of up/down and left/right enable the psalmist to express himself in spiritual terms as well. For the biblical psalmist situations of his disorientation are fairly frequent, whether caused by feelings of his sins or social injustices. After all, he yearns for a moral and spiritual re-orientation. While the Euclidean space is homogeneous, in that space biblical psalmist experiences discontinuity for certain parts of this imaginary space is qualitatively different. Namely, the divisions of such non-Euclidean space rest qualitatively on the division between the sacred and the profane. For the psalmist, such division of space rests on some*

*key terms, such as Temple, Heaven, and Underworld. This is followed by the orientational metaphors as up/down. God is up (heavens), man is down below (earth). In eschatological terms, it is the sovereign heavenly judge who will act upon the dividing between the good and the evil ones, between the left and the right, on the horizontal plane. Since that which is above is better than that which is below and underneath, so is the right side better than that which is on the left.*

Keywords: *psalms, conceptual metaphor, space, orientation, sacred, profane*

## 1. Metaphorization and Conceptualization of Spatial Experience

This work will discuss modes of the psalmist's experience of space, with a special emphasis on his perception of the up-down and left-right antipodes, and will attempt to show the way they are connected both to his emotions and to the theological message he wishes to convey. Numerous examples in the book of Psalms talk about spatial relations that are not understood as real but transferred, or metaphorical. A metaphor is traditionally defined as a "figure of speech that transfers meaning, or an unusual use of a word" (Živković 1985, 422), a way of expression wherein one says one thing, but implies another. Aristotle (2005, 40) considers discourse to be a "compound, significant utterance some of whose parts do have independent significance," and defines metaphor as the "application of a word that belongs to another thing" (2005, 43). In the age of romanticism, there emerged an understanding that the world does not exist outside of language, but only through it, which is why metaphor is not only a "cognitive decoration but a basic structure of language and consciousness" (*Metafora. Hrvatska enciklopedija*). This is where modern understanding of language derives from, postulating that words have no predetermined meanings but form their meanings through use (Wittgenstein 2007, 10).[1] Based on this, it can be concluded that metaphors actually create similarities and that consequently, the metamorphosis of language changes the meaning of discourse. In other words, a departure from the correct use of language reveals connections between phenomena and things that were not observed before. As a result, metaphors expand and change the meanings of words and thus shape the human experience of the world, from which we derive metaphor's cognitive value.

Such metaphors that "interpret metaphorical linguistic expressions as utterances of a cognitive connection between two domains" (Stanojević 2014, 14) are called conceptual metaphors. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2015, 10), meta-

1 "The meaning of the word is its use in the language" – that is, some other use gives new meaning to the word.

phors do not only represent a stylistic or poetic use of language but are a common part of everyday language, thereby pointing to the systematic nature of metaphorical concepts. Metaphorical concepts allow us to "comprehend one aspect of a concept in terms of another," and one very important group of concepts is the orientational metaphors. Authors list the pairs up-down, in-out, front-back, on-off, deep-shallow, central-peripheral with an important remark that "such metaphorical orientations are not arbitrary" because they "have a basis in our physical and cultural experience" (2015, 15). Therefore, orientational metaphors are essential for expressing motion and spatial orientation, where man's physical space is interwoven with the construct of virtual space. Spatial orientation is necessary because people have bodies that move inside a three-dimensional Euclidean space, but orientational metaphors are conceptual both in their nature and in their interrelationship with spatial orientation as it is reflected in our mental space. Spatial language and its conceptualization hold a special place in our mental spaces which are "mental constructs in which alternative representations of states of affairs are held" (Cruse 2004, 331).[2]

For example, the Hebrew verb בּוֹא (*bô'*), meaning *go* (*come*), refers to general motion, but semantically it can also point to a direction (*come in*, *go out*), as in everyday life, so in biblical discourse, temporally or spatially.[3] For example, Hebrew בּוֹא implies entering (*go into the ark*, Gen 7:1) and can be understood as a general or directed (horizontal) motion. Sometimes the meaning of בּוֹא can overlap with other directional verbs, such as יצא (*yṣa*) *exit* or directional verbs of vertical motion, such as ירד (*yrd*) *descend*. In Psalm 69, the psalmist despairs over his life because he has "come into the deep waters" (69:2), i.e., he sank into the depths, although here we see a use of the horizontal motion verb (בּוֹא).[4]

Psalmist's physical and mental orientation (or disorientation) in the context of motion and space is often connected to orientational metaphors. Spatial orientation, motion, and posture make up a linguistic-conceptual package, and the frequency, distribution, and interconnection of the verbs of motion, living and/or dying, are evident throughout the entire text of the biblical Psalter.

2 For more on mental space see Gilles Fauconnier (1994).

3 This indicates a semantic shift from spatial to temporal domain and creates a conceptual merging of the two domains. In some languages, such as English, the transference from (fictive) movement to the sphere of time is well portrayed in the use of the verb "go" as a structural part of Future Tense. In the sentence 'I am going to do something', the subject is not going anywhere (although it can move), because 'I am going' here does not denote spatiality but is a temporal marker of a future event (cf. Langacker 2002, 149). There occurred a transfer from spatial relations to temporal, and spatial understanding of motion was transferred to the motion toward the future.

4 באתי במעמקי-מים (Ps 69:2)

## 2. Orientation and Disorientation of the Biblical Psalmist

According to Beck and Berković (2019, 114), "in a physical space that is geometrically and geographically determined, man can be oriented, disoriented or reoriented." Analogically, the psalmist's typical situations are those of disorientation, in which he attempts to orient or reorient, himself. Psalmist's inner drama, typically related to the suffering of the just, experience of sin and doubt, as well as reinforcement of faith, is told through spatial metaphors. His crisis of faith progresses through stages, beginning with the initial reliable orientation towards God, which is then followed by a sense of disorientation and ends in reorientation. In this manner, life experience, theology, and sense of space are brought into connection, while the spiritual journey is conceptualized as physical motion.

The psalmist's orientation and disorientation also depend on the separation between the sacred and profane space. Namely, he occupies a real space in a historical and physical land, the sacred space of the Temple, as well as the fictive heaven and underworld. His theology of space is coherent but non-homogenous. The psalmist is well acquainted with the *heights* and *depths* and the places of God in both environments, so that the divine omnipresence is shown through spatial expressions, such as:[5]

> If I ascend to heaven (סלק) (*slq*), you are there,
> If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
> (Ps 139:8)[6]

In this concept God is seen as omnipresent, emphasizing his distinction from creatures – while no being or thing cannot be in two places at the same time, this is not impossible to God and based on this we comprehend that space in Psalms does not only have material characteristics but spiritual as well.

In connection to orientational metaphors and the theology of space, as well as in connection to the psalmist's experience, one comes across the question of God's whereabouts. Sometimes this question is asked of the psalmist: "Where is your God?" (איה אלהיך, Ps 42:3-10), or to the people in general: "Where is their God?" (איה אלהיהם, Ps 79:10). Questions regarding the exact location of God are eternal and have to do with his hiddenness – has he withdrawn from his creation (*Deus absconditus*) or is he involved in the creation powerfully, but invis-

5 The prophet Amos portrays divine omnipresence talking about those who wish to run away from God: "If they dig into Sheol, from there shall my hand take them (לקח)" (Am 9:2). Also, divine knowledge is higher than the heavens and deeper than Sheol (cf. Job 11:7-8). There is a balance between divine immanence and transcendence.

6 This is the only occurrence of the verb סלק, which is a loan word from Aramaic, cf. Dan 6:24.

ibly, through his omnipresent influence (*Deus revelatus*)?[7] In the context of the psalmist's thanatophobic anxiety, these questions deserve certain attention. One can trace two traditions of God's presence. One is manifested in texts where he is absent from the underworld:[8]

> Like one set loose among the dead,
> like the slain that lies in the grave,
> like those whom you remember no more,
> for they are cut off from your hand.
>
> (Ps 88:5)[9]

Therefore, the underworld is manifested as a space without God, in a spiritual sense. Another tradition, seen in texts such as Psalm 139, claims that God's presence can be found even in the spaces of death. God holds "the depths of the earth," and Sheol is "naked" before him.[10] The psalmist's experiences of God are frequently mutually contradictory. When the psalmist fears death, God is absent (*Deus absconditus*): "He made darkness his covering" (Ps 18:11). Then there is "the unfathomable mystery of distress" and separation from God, which represents death and annihilation (Kraus 1988, 259). In his powerful theophanic majesty, God is no longer hidden. When the psalmist's cry "reached [God's] ears" and when he was freed from a strong enemy, the forces of death and chaos withdrew, and God revealed himself (*Deus revelatus*) (Ps 18:14-15).

Such dynamics and the phenomenon of a disoriented psalmist's mood, Otto calls "contrastive harmony."[11] On the other hand, Kraus assumes that the event in

7 Such questions have troubled great men of faith throughout history, from Aquinas to Luther. Blaise Pascal particularly struggled with this. "This is what I see and what troubles me. I look on all sides, and I see only darkness everywhere. Nature presents to me nothing which is not a matter of doubt and concern. If I saw nothing there which revealed Divinity, I would come to a negative conclusion, if I saw everywhere the signs of a Creator, I would remain peacefully in faith. But, seeing too much to deny and too little to be sure, I am in a state to be pitied" (Pascal 1991, 110).

8 Cf. Ps 6:5; 30:9, etc.

9 Cf. Jon 2:5.

10 Cf. Ps 95:4: "In his hand are the depths of the earth;" Am 9:2: "If they dig into Sheol, from there shall my hand take them; if they climb up to heaven, from there I will bring them down;" Job 26:6: "Sheol is naked before God, and Abaddon has no covering."

11 The Old Testament "numinous," awe inspiring experience of God as the mysterium tremendum, is described in the sadly neglected work of Rudolf Otto (2004), *Das Heilige - über das Irrationale in der Idee des Göttlichen und sein Verhältnis zum Rationale* (Verlag C. H. Beck, Munchen). Otto describes the motion of the numinous and the dreadful as a trembling before the divine, astonishing, majestic, powerful, absolute (and incomparable) Other – and the psalmist faces this experience regularly. Otto calls it "contrastive harmony," which we are afraid of, but simultaneously attracted to (Otto 2006, 51).

Psalm 18 is "supra-individual," following Schmidt's impression that "the subject was not at all a human king who suffers and is rescued but rather a god" (Kraus 1998, 259).

The second reason for the psalmist's confusion, disorientation, and emotional instability is that he already lives in a topsy-turvy world (*mundus inversus*), where things are upside down concerning the normal, expected world (Kruger 2006, 115–116). In such a place, situation or experience everything stands inverted to the normal state. This can refer to behavior that inverts the usual cultural codes, opposes them, abolishes them, or pushes for their alternatives. The psalmist's mood swings within the same Psalm can be ascribed to that, as well as numerous statements expressing a utopian view of the world, e.g. "Let the weak say, 'I am a warrior'" (Joel 4:10) or "The meek shall inherit the land" (Ps 37:11).[12] The biblical *mundus inversus* was foreshadowed in ancient Near Eastern religions and myths, in Egyptian and Sumerian literature (Kruger 2006, 115). In his visions, the Egyptian prophet Nefertiti sees a parallel alternative world: "I show thee the land topsy-turvy. The weak of arm is [now] the possessor of an arm. Men salute [respectfully] him who [formerly] saluted. I show thee the undermost on top..."[13] The same is discussed by Levy-Bruhl in Kruger (2006, 115):

> The world of the dead is the exact reverse of that of the living. Everything there is just the opposite... There, for instance, the sun and the moon travel from west to east... when the dead go downstairs, they go head first... they go to market, but the market takes place at night... They speak the same language as the living but every word has exactly the opposite meaning: ... *sweet* means *bitter* and *bittersweet*. There, to *stand up* means to *lie down*.

Inversion of common conduct was recorded by Herodotus in his *History* (V/3) when he was describing the Thracian Trausi tribe, who cried at childbirth but celebrated and danced when someone would die. The psalmist often finds himself in an inverted situation or he imagines an ideal world where usual logic and socio-economic order do not apply. It is no wonder that this often takes the form of social or economic crises and includes the socially vulnerable (the poor, widows, children) or outcasts (e.g., barren women, cf. Job 24:21, Isa 54:1-5).

Alec Basson analyses Psalms 74 and 113 in light of the *mundus inversus* experience of the psalmist. In Psalm 113, "the Lord our God" (יהוה אלהינו) creates a new world order as he "raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the

12 Joel's words find their echo in apostle Paul's thinking: "I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor 12:10). This topsy-turvy world is perhaps best reflected in the principle taught by Jesus of Nazareth: "But many who are first will be last, and the last first" (Mt 19:30).

13 In Kruger 2006, 115. *The Prophecy of Neferti* is a text usually ascribed to the 4th Egyptian dynasty, but actually written during the 12th dynasty and represents the typical royal propaganda of that age.

ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of his people" (Ps 113:7-8) (Basson 2009, 6). Similarly, in Psalm 75:7, "it is God who executes judgment, putting down one and lifting up another."

## 3. Holy Geography – Homogenous and Nonhomogeneous Space

Mircea Eliade discusses the perception of sacred and profane space, which can help explain the idea of holy geography and the psalmist's experiences and emotions when he is faced with death. Regarding homogeneity and nonhomogeneity of space, Eliade (2009, 20) says that "for religious man, space is not homogeneous" because he "experiences interruptions, breaks in it; some parts of space are qualitatively different from others." The physical Euclidean space is homogenous and geometrically uninterrupted, but conceptually it can also be cut. The profane spatial description and orientation always reveal the need for fixed reference points, which is one of the fundamental axioms of physics and physical space. Sacred space is divided (interrupted) between the sacred and the profane. Regarding this, Eliade (2009, 21) concludes the following: "The manifestation of the sacred ontologically founds the world. In the homogeneous and infinite expanse, in which no point of reference is possible and hence no orientation can be established, the hierophany reveals an absolute fixed point, a center."[14]

Nonhomogeneous, sacred space is not just a break in the homogeneity, but a revelation of absolute reality because "some parts of space are qualitatively different from others" (Eliade 2009, 20). Unlike the profane space, which is a homogenous amorphic spatial amalgam, in the heterogeneous space, a person can be careless and inconsiderate because to him or her, as we are fond of saying, "nothing is sacred." Sometimes even a thoroughly legitimate emphasis on the personal experience of God (*numen personale*) can wipe out any sense of the sacredness of space (*numen locale*) and be followed by a process of profanation. The psalmist finds this to be strange because he longs for an experience that is both personal (*numen personale*) and spatial (*numen locale*). Eliade (2009, 23) successfully demonstrates that no one can "completely do away with religious behavior," especially concerning spatial orientation.[15] Eliade (2009, 23) then concludes that

14 Eliade prefers the term "hierophany" to the more popular term 'theophany' because he considers the latter to be limiting.

15 "Revelation of a sacred space makes it possible to obtain a fixed point and hence to acquire orientation in the chaos of homogeneity… The profane experience, on the contrary, maintains the homogeneity and hence the relativity of space. No true orientation is now possible, for the fixed point no longer enjoys a unique ontological status" turning the profane space into an amorphic mass "consisting of an infinite number of more or less neutral places" (Eliade 2009, 23).

the experience of the profane space "still includes values that that to some extent recall the nonhomogeneity peculiar to the religious experience of space."[16]

The descriptive theology of space and orientation (holy geography) focuses on the language which describes the spatial motion of the divine and its localization and relationship to the human (Noppen 1996, 679). Our experience leads us to assume that God is up there (in heaven) and that we are down here (on earth). How did the psalmist and his contemporaries feel this emotional and existential space concerning the Temple and the liturgical spectacle? This was undoubtedly done through their experience and understanding of space, as well as interpretation of divine immanence and transcendence. The language of space and motion is crucially important for human, existential, and religious experiences.[17] In the biblical text of the Old Testament, we find a trifold localization of God. God is up (in heaven, Ps 73:25), but also down (in the Temple, Ps 5:7; 11:4, etc.):

> The Lord is in his holy temple;
> the Lord's throne is in heaven;
> his eyes see, his eyelids test the children of man.
> (Ps 11:4)

However, in biblical texts, God can also be found in the spaces of epiphany (*numen locale*) that are also down. In his ecstatic experience of God's nearness, the biblical psalmist says: "There is nothing on earth that I desire besides you" (Ps 73:25b). In such moments even the space seems to be qualitatively different, and the psalmist becomes a participant in the divine dwelling place (cf. Ps 73:13-17).

In the real Euclidean space, motion is a real physical given, in three dimensions on a vertical and horizontal plane. Along with the experience of motion, one has the experience of space, both real and conceptual. From the religious perspective, heaven is up, while hell is down. In his emotional delight, the psalmist feels he is moving in a fictive space, or he identifies himself with those who move that way. When he dies, he will go down to Sheol (underworld), or be lifted (עלה) up toward heaven. He then lifts up his hands (Ps 63:5) and eyes (Ps 121:1) toward the heavens and even lifts up his soul, that is, himself (Ps 25:1; 86:4).

16 "There are, for example, privileged places, qualitatively different from all others – a man's birthplace, or the scenes of his first love, or certain places in the first foreign city he visited in youth. Even for the most frankly nonreligious man, all these places still retain an exceptional, a unique quality; they are the 'holy places' of his private universe, as if it were in such spots that he had received the revelation of a reality other than that in which he participates through his ordinary daily life" (Eliade 2009, 23).

17 "The language of space offers a concrete metaphorical anchorage for the expression of mental experiences and intellectual conceptions, and thus enables humans to situate themselves with regard to reality by means of those relations and coordinates with which they normally orient and locate themselves in the sphere of physical experience" (Noppen 1996, 680).

Studying the Psalter, we sometimes come to a dead-end unless we take into account both aspects of space and motion – sacred and profane. As in the case of a "localized divinity" (*numen locale*) that is present in the cult of Yahweh and the holy temple, the psalmist's religious experience is undoubtedly deep, personal, and private, beyond the cult. In that sense, his God is very personal (*numen personale*).[18] In Psalm 16, the psalmist claims that God is always with him: "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken" (Ps 16:8). To the psalmist, the holy geography and his personal experience do not always overlap, because human holy geography naturally places God in the heavens, in higher spheres, while man dwells in the lower sphere – creating existential and poetic tensions.

## 4. Horizontal and Vertical: Motion of the Living and the Dead

Descent and ascent (vertical motion) predominate concerning death, while they often represent the fictive motion from a higher to a lower level (*descend*, *sink*, *fall*). This seems to be mainly unidirectional: "He who goes down to Sheol does not come up" (Job 7:9).[19] Dying and death are thus fictive motions closely related to our usual spatial experience and orientation. Conceptual metaphors and everyday linguistic experience generally agree that *up* are better than *down*. There is even talk of *higher* and *lower* states of existence! The *depressed* are *down* and their posture changes from upright to bent or lying down, so this is not only a case of fictive motion. People usually stand upright, and that is considered to be a normal and natural posture. Vertical, and especially downward motion reveals a certain gradation, e.g., from rest to death.[20] Lying can mean sleep or rest but can

18 In his masterful work *Uvod u kršćanstvo,* in part I (ch. 2, para. 2), Joseph Ratzinger (1968) shows that internal assumptions of belief in Yahweh represent the crucial and complementary elements of both aspects of faith (both Jewish and Christian), as well as personal and local experience. Ratzinger correctly warns against the danger for the religious person to identify the place of his or her experience with the divine himself. He points out that localized experiences of the divine can be legitimate, but that they can also lead to a multiplication of local divinities. That is why the biblical Deuteronomist repeatedly insists on the centralization of Yahwistic worship (see Deut 12: one should not seek God and offer sacrifices "at any place" (בכל־מקום), "but at the place that the Lord will choose in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I am commanding you" (Deut 12:14). That will be "the place that the Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there (לשום את־שמו שם Deut 12:5b). However, this must not lead to such a localization of Yahweh that would deprive God of being free to 'move' with his people (cf. 2 Sam 7:5-7).

19 כן יורד שאול לא יעלה

20 The dynamics of motion and posture in language related to death reflect our experiential reality. A certain posture expresses immovability (*sit, stand, lie),* but also contains some motion, change of posture, or a certain degree of sensorimotor control necessary to maintain the pos-

also point to an illness. Illness, whether mental or physical, can precede death, as in Psalm 13, where we find a mention of “the sleep of death” (אִישַׁן הַמָּוֶת) (Ps 13:3). Descending means weakening, either through sleep or illness. It means dwelling among the shadows, and the shadows “will not arise” (בל־יקמו) (Isa 26:14). On the other hand, if a person gets better and recovers, we say that he is *back on his feet,* or she is *up and running*.

Extreme opposites in the spatial category of verticality are often stated through deictic expressions – “up there” and “down here” – even when this does not refer to a physical place in the world. The Hebrew verb עלה = *go up, ascend*, does not have to refer to going up in a physical sense, and the same is true for many other languages.[21] Conceptually, up is mostly experienced as better than that which is down. This is due to the simple physical fact that a (living) man is perceived as standing upright (strong, healthy, and alive), and not lying down (perceived as weak, sick, dead). So, conceptually, what follows is that *upright* and *up* are better than what is *down* and *lying*.[22] Again, conceptually, but also really, one concludes that life is *up* and death is *down*. Just like Jesus, the biblical Lazarus “rose from the dead,” which is conceptually perfectly natural because no one is going to descend from the dead. In terms of spatial metaphors, one cannot go lower than death, because death is the lowest. Thus, in case of sudden death, it might be said that the person “*dropped* dead.”

In the eschatological sorting of the last judgment, the Son of Man, the sovereign judge, will separate the sheep from the goats and *place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left* (Mt 25:33). On the horizontal plane, conceptual metaphors of space differentiate between *left* and *right*. In horizontal conceptual metaphors, the right and the right hand are experienced as stronger, better, and more positive than what is on the left. God’s sovereign power is regularly presented as

ture. There is a gradation of control required for standing (vertical elongation), which requires the highest degree of control, to that necessary for lying (horizontal elongation), which requires minimal physical exertion and control (Newman 2002, 2). Standing is viewed as the most powerful posture, while the horizontal posture of lying is the weakest, and is associated with sickness, weakness and death. Verbs that express posture and position (“place,” “sit,” “put,” “lie,” “rise”) can sometimes mislead us regarding the dimensions of verticality and horizontality in relation to objects in the real world. Ontological dimensions seem to go against the dimensions we intuitively associate with a verb expressing posture. For example, a cup stands on the table, while a building lies on the corner.

21 Cf. Jos 7:4; Jdg 6:35; 2 Sam 2:2.

22 There are several examples for the conceptual orientational metaphors, chiefly in relation to vertically established interrelationship. Lakoff (2015, 14–20) groups them through the following opposites: *happy is up; sad is down / *conscious is up; unconscious is down / *health and life are up; sickness and death are down / *having control is up; being subject is down / *more is up; less is down / *good is up; bad is down / *high status is up; low status is down / *foreseeable future events are up and ahead / *rational is up; emotional is down

God's right hand: "Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power, your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy" (Exod 15:6). Generally speaking, the right side of the right hand is seen as more favorable than the left side and the left hand, so the right hand has connotations of active undertaking, strength, and protection.

The scriptural text differentiates between the left (שמאל) and the right side or right hand (ימין). It is the right that guarantees security, protection, and authority: "I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken" (Ps 16:8). The right hand and the right side are conceptual metaphors accentuating the physical and even geographical advantage concerning the left side or the left hand. The anthropomorphic portrayal of God's right hand as a metaphor points to God's sovereign power and strength: "But let your hand be on the man of your right hand, the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself" (Ps 80:17).

In this conceptualization of motion and awareness of the three-dimensionality of space, we often return to the vertical orientation of *up-down*, where what is up is better than what is down. Here the space is multilayered because the physical sky above our heads is seen as being just below the virtual heavens.[23] In the conceptuality of horizontal motion, there is motion from left to right, and we saw that right is better than left. The right hand is more important, and stronger and it can rely upon more than the left hand. The biblical psalmist has a sure foundation because the Lord is at his *right hand* (Ps 16:8). In this manner, one can achieve reliable orientation through conceptual metaphors.

## Conclusion

This work explores the conceptual metaphors of space in biblical Psalms about the psalmist's feelings and the theological message he wishes to communicate. Metaphorical understanding of space begins with the notion that there is no world outside of language and that words do not possess predetermined meanings. Metaphors of space thus form the human understanding of the world, and at the core of this biblical concept, we find orientational metaphors, especially the up-down and left-right antipodes. These metaphors are derived from physical experience and are not completely arbitrary, and as such, they define our mental space. Psalmist typically finds himself in disorienting situations and yearns to orient, or re-orient himself. His inner drama – the suffering of the just, experience of sin, and reinforcement of faith – is told through spatial metaphors. After the beginning orientation toward God, the psalmist becomes disoriented and seeks reorientation. Furthermore, although the Euclidean space is homogenous,

23 Most religions see heaven as the dwelling place of gods and the future location of life after death.

the psalmist feels it is discontinuous because parts of it are qualitatively different from him. So, orientation and disorientation depend also on the division between sacred and profane space, its key elements being the temple, heaven, and underworld, which are then related to the *heights* and *depths.* In this concept God shows himself as omnipresent and, on that basis, we understand that space in Psalms does not only possess material characteristics but also spiritual.

Descriptive theology of space and orientation focuses on the language that describes spatial motions of the divine and its localization and treatment of the human. God is above (in heaven), and we are down below (on earth). In the eschatological sorting of the last judgment, the Son of Man will separate the good from the evil horizontally: the conceptual metaphor of the space of righteousness is seen in the demarcation between *right* and *left*. Just as up is better than down, so is right better than left. In conclusion, one can remark that the language of space and motion is essential for human, existential, and religious experience and that the psalmist expresses complex existential and theological problems through conceptual metaphors of space; orientational metaphors form a distinct mental space in which the opposites of up-down and left-right enable the psalmist to orient himself spiritually.

## References

Aristotel. 2005. *O pjesničkom umijeću*. Zagreb: Školska knjiga.

Bachelard, Gaston. 2000. *Poetika prostora*. Zagreb: Ceres.

Basson, Alec. 2009. Two instances of Mundus Inversus in Psalm 113. *Verbum et Ecclesia* 30 (1): 1–14.

Beck, Boris, and Danijel Berković. 2019. Narativ i dramatika psalma 73: orijentacija, dezorijentacija i reorijentacija. *Anafora* VI (1): 107–122.

Cruse, Alan. 2004. *Meaning in Language*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Eliade, Mircea. 2009. *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion; the significance of religious myth, symbolism and ritual within life and culture*. New York: Harcourt Brace&World.

Fauconnier, Gilles. 1994. *Mental Spaces: Aspects of Meaning Construction in Natural Language*. Cambridge itd.: Cambridge University Press.

Herodot. 2007. *Povijest.* Zagreb: Matica hrvatska.

Kraus, Hans Joachim. 1988. *Psalm 1-59: A commentary*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.

Kruger, Paul. 2006. The World 'topsy-turvy' and the ANE cultures: a few examples *ASA* 29 (3-4): 115–121.

Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. 2015. *Metafore koje život znače*. Zagreb: Disput.

*Metafora. Hrvatska enciklopedija, mrežno izdanje.* Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža. http://www.enciklopedija.hr/Natuknica.aspx?ID=40344>. (pristupljeno 20. 2. 2022).

Langacker, Ronald W. 1991. *Concept, Image, and Symbol: The Cognitive Basis of Grammar*. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Noppen, Jeane-Pierre van 1996. Language, space and theography: the case of height vs. depth. In: M. Putz and R. Driven, eds. *The Construal of Space in Language and Thought*, 679–690. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Newman, John, ed. 2002. *The Linguistics of Sitting, Standing and Lying*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Otto, Rudolf. 2006. *Sveto, O iracionalnom u ideji božanskoga i njezinu odnosu spram racionalnoga*. Zagreb: Scarabeus-naklada.

Pascal, Blaise. 1991. *Misli*. Budva-Beograd: Mediteran-Kultura.

Ratzinger, Joseph. 1972. *Uvod u kršćanstvo*. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost.

Stanojević, Mateusz-Milan, ed. 2014. *Metafore koje istražujemo. Suvremeni uvidi u konceptualnu metaforu*. Zagreb: Srednja Europa.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 2007. *Filozofijska istraživanja*. Zagreb. Globus.

Živković, Dragiša, ed. 1985. *Rečnik književnih termina*. Beograd: Nolit.

Danijel Berković i Boris Beck

**Metaforizacija prostora u biblijskim Psalmima:**
**duhovno kretanje živih i mrtvih**

Sažetak

U ovom su radu izložene konceptualne metafore prostora u biblijskim Psalmima u vezi s psalmistovim osobnim osjećajima i teološkom porukom koju želi prenijeti. Jezik prostora i kretanja od ključne je važnosti za ljudsko, egzistencijalno i religijsko iskustvo te psalmist složene egzistencijalne i teološke probleme iskazuje kroz konceptualne metafore prostora. Orijentacijske metafore formiraju osebujni mentalni prostor u kojem opreke gore-dolje i lijevo-desno omogućuju psalmistu orijentaciju u duhovnom smislu. Za biblijskog psalmista tipične su situacije dezorijentacije uzrokovane osjećajem njegova vlastita grijeha ili društvenom

nepravdom; nakon koje se on nastoji moralno i duhovno orijentirati. Dok je euklidski prostor homogen, psalmist u tom prostoru osjeća diskontinuitet jer su mu neki dijelovi kvalitativno različiti. Orijentacija ovisi o razdiobi svetog i profanog prostora, za što su ključni pojmovi Hram, Nebo i Podzemlje, s čim su povezane visine i dubine. Bog je gore (na nebesima), a čovjek dolje (na zemlji). U eshatološkom razvrstavanju suvereni Sudac razdjeljivat će dobre od zlih na desno i lijevo. Kao što je gore ipak bolje od onoga što je dolje, tako je i ono što je desno bolje od onog što je lijevo.