

# Does Allah possess Hand, Face, Body and Eyes?

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## A. Introduction

“Quran is the word of God”, is the claim of Muslims. Similarly, Christians and Hindus claim about Bible and Veda respectively that they are God’s words.

What do we mean by God's word? Is Almighty God bound to any particular language?

The word of God is available to us in "**language**". Language is invented by human beings. Human being invented Aramaic, Hebrew, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian and the revelations of God were in these languages. Ponder over the chronological order:

- In the beginning ONLY God existed. There was no Arabic, no Sanskrit, no Hebrew and no Aramaic.
- Then creation took place. Human being started living on the earth.
- As a result of the intellectual evolution, human being started using / inventing languages. Sanskrit, Hebrew, Arabic, English came into existence gradually.
- God revealed his scripture in these languages and **detailed about himself using human-languages.**

The last point has the crux of the article. God describes about himself / his actions / his doings using the language that was invented by human beings. It’s not the case that God reveals his message in a language that is not understandable for human beings. Important questions are:

How EXACTLY GOD is?

How God DOES anything?

How God performs any action?

How exactly God does creation so that we call him The CREATOR?

How exactly God sustains his creatures so that we call him The SUSTAINER?

How exactly God sees so that we call him THE SEER?

... and so on.

Any honest person will say that "I do not know exactly HOW".

Our mind perceives and understands things about which we have some experience of seeing / feeling OR at least there exists something similar to that.

## B. There is no example of likeness of Allah

Imagine a hypothetical scenario. A 7 month old unborn baby is in the womb of mother. Imagine that someone from outer world can communicate to him. The baby is told that as of present he is residing within the "body" of a "human being". One day he will "come out". Then he can see lot of "man", "woman", "boy", "girl", "animals", "plants". He can sit in "car". He can see huge

"mountain", he can go to "lake" which is full of water. He can see "computers", "robots", "washing machine that washes clothes", "TV that shows videos".....

Do you think that above words will make any sense to the unborn baby? Can he comprehend any of these things? NO! All these are beyond his perception, beyond his small "world", beyond his imagination. You can only make a little effort in indicating nature of these things to the baby. You will use things that are within his domain to tell about out-of-womb things.

Similarly, everything that is beyond our material / physical world viz: God, paradise-hell, life of grave etc. will be understood better when we cease to exist in this physical world, when we leave this material body. Until then we can hardly comprehend exact nature of these things.

Now the question is how God makes us understand these things? How God tells about Himself? Answer is by **using the language human beings understand.**

That is why the Quran describes beautifully about God in simple words:

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ “...There is no example of his likeness...”. Quran 42:11

Not only “there exists nothing that can be compared to God”, but also “there exists nothing that can be compared with any likeness of Allah”. There is double layer of abstraction for Allah.

*Say: He is Allah (Almighty God), the One and Only;  
Allah, the Eternal, Absolute;  
He begets not, nor is He begotten;  
And there is none like unto Him. Quran; Quran 112:1-4*

### **C. Characteristics of a language / literature: Metaphor**

Metaphor, simile, imagery, personification etc are some of important characteristics of language. They are used to add beauty to a literature. They convey far more meaning in effective ways in lesser words. One can quote hundreds of such statements in his native language.

Some popular English metaphors:

1. She was *frozen with fear*.
2. Can you *throw some light* on this topic?
3. He is a *book worm*.
4. He had *heart of lion*.
5. *Hands of law* are very long.
6. Things are *going out of hand*.
7. Life is not *bed of roses*.
8. Her *heart sinks* whenever she sees photograph of her dead son.

Taking literal meaning of metaphor would be a disaster. People will consider me **mad** if I think that:

She was frozen with fear **means** ‘she became ice and heat was required to melt her’.

Can you throw some light on this topic means ‘you need to somehow get light, hold and then throw’.

He is a book worm means ‘he is not human being but a species of worm’.

He had heart of lion means ‘he had undergone heart transplantation; a lion’s heart was put in his body’.

Hands of law are very long means ‘law is something like human being or animal or a machine whose hands are very long’.

Hand of local politician is over them means ‘politician hand is cut from his body and put over head of these hooligans’.

Life is not bed of roses means ‘life is not a bed which is made up of roses, may be it’s made up of wood, nails and steel’.

The popular phrase “son of God” has been used as metaphor in Bible numerous times. KJV bible uses 46 times “son of God”. When people took its literal meaning then religion of Jesus ended and Christianity started.

#### D. Some metaphors in Quran

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ

1. “Perish the hands of the Father of Flame! Perish he!” 111:1

Let us look at above ayah. Talking about *Abu-Lahab* Quran says that his hands were destroyed and he too was ruined. We know from the history that in actual sense his hands were not destroyed.

Hand is a symbol of skill, capability, earning, and achievement. *Abu-lahab* rejected teachings of Islam in spite of all clear signs but none of his worldly gains were of any use for him.

Next ayah further clarifies – “No profit to him from all his wealth, and all his gains!”

So, ‘perishing of hand’ is a metaphor that indicates uselessness / waste of skills and gains.

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

2. “God is the light of the heavens and the earth. The likeness of divine light is as of a niche with a lamp inside; ...and God gives people examples....” 24:35

Another beautiful ayah [24:35] of Quran describes Allah as the light of heavens and the earth. What type of light? Light coming from sun, fire or any source? NO!

Allah is the ultimate light of guidance, the ultimate truth. Word “light” is used as metaphor to indicate the source of all truth and guidance. This ayah mentions that this “light” is used as “example / parable / metaphor” when it says –“**The example of his light is.....And Allah presents examples / parables for the people..**”

With above two examples it’s clear that Quran uses metaphors and there is no likeness of Almighty God.

### **E. Allegation: The Quran Gives Allah A Face.**

*"Everyone upon it will disappear while **your Lord's face** will remain full of majesty and splendor." S. 55:26-27 (T. B. Irving - The First American Version of the Quran).*

**Response:** "Only face of your lord will remain", if we take this statement LITERALLY and not metaphorically and we assume that God has a body; then one has to agree that hand, leg etc of God will be destroyed. Do you really think so?

This ayah is talking about the time when everything will perish except almighty God. Allah is *Al-Hayy* and *Al-Qayyum*. He is ever living. So, the Quran uses the metaphor that only face of your Lord will remain. Everything will perish except the existence of God. Face is used as metaphor to point **existence of that personality**.

### **F. Allegation: The Quran Gives Allah A Hand.**

*"The ones who swear allegiance to you merely swear allegiance to God. **God's hand rests above their hands...**" S. 48:10*

**Response:** To have a 'hand of someone over', is a very popular metaphor. Where is the need of taking it literally? "Those hooligans don't fear the law because the **hand of local politician** is over them"; which sane person will think that the hand of local politician is physically placed over the heads of hooligans? Hand here indicates full support, closeness etc. In statements like 'The long arm of the law' finally caught killers OR We should work 'shoulder to shoulder' cannot be taken literally.

### **G. Allegation: The Quran Gives Allah An Eye**

*"Allah said: "Granted is thy prayer, O Moses! And indeed We conferred a favour on thee another time [before]. Behold! We sent to thy mother, by inspiration, the message: 'Throw [the child] into the chest, and throw [the chest] into the river: The river will cast him up on the bank, and he will be taken up by one who is an enemy to Me and an enemy to him: But I endued thee with love from Me: And [this] in order that thou mayest be reared under **Mine eye**.'" S. 20:36-39 - King Fahd Holy Quran."*

**Response:** To be 'under eye of someone' means under his close watch or under his knowledge. 'Under God's eye' means God was aware, God knew.

God revealed to Moses' mother to put her son in a box and put the box into river. There was no need to worry because God was taking care of the little Moses. Even though box was picked up by enemy, yet Moses grew up with lot of love and comfort. God is saying that God was aware of and taking care of Moses. There was no need to worry. Moses was growing under the eye of God.

**Turning a blind eye** is an idiom describing the ignoring of undesirable information.

**H. Allegation:** Quran says that Allah has shin. "*The Day that **THE SHIN SHALL BE LAID BARE**, and they shall be summoned to prostrate, but they shall not be able*" S. 68:42

**Response:** Its author's fancy. Where Quran is saying what author claims? Nowhere Ayah talks about Shin of Allah.

يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَن سَاقٍ....

“The Day that the shin shall be laid bare and they shall be summoned to bow in adoration...”

*Mufradat-Ul-Quran* : very famous dictionary of Quran authored by *Al-Raghib al-Isfahani* explains the meaning of word “*Seen Waaw Qaf*” as “**It is an idiom in Arabic language that denotes intensity of fight or war**” [Mufradat-Ul-Quran , Volume 1, Page 543, urdu version]

The same can be seen in the following link:

<https://ia802706.us.archive.org/14/items/Mufradat-Ul-Quran-jadeedjild1/Mufradat-Ul-Quran-jadeedjild1.pdf>

﴿والتفت الساق بالساق﴾ (۴۵-۲۹) اور پنڈلی سے پنڈلی لپٹ جائے گی۔

میں بعض نے کہا ہے کہ یہاں قبض روح کے وقت پنڈلیوں کا لپٹنا مراد ہے اور بعض نے پنڈلیوں کا کفن میں لپٹنا مراد لیا ہے اور ایک قول یہ بھی ہے کہ اُن کے لپٹنے سے مراد موت ہے کہ زندگی میں وہ اس کے بوجھ کو اٹھا کر چلتی تھیں لیکن موت کے بعد وہ اس بار کی متحمل نہیں ہو سکیں گی۔ بعض نے کہا ہے کہ ایک شدت کا دوسری شدت سے لپٹنا مراد ہے اسی طرح آیت: ﴿يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَنْ سَاقٍ﴾ (۶۸-۳۲) جس دن پنڈلی سے کپڑا اٹھادیا جائے گا۔ میں پنڈلی سے کپڑا اٹھانا صعوبت حال سے کنایہ ہے۔ اور یہ كَشَفَتِ الْحَرْبُ عَنْ سَاقِهَا کے محاورہ سے ماخوذ ہے جس کے معنی لڑائی کے سخت ہو جانے کے ہیں۔ بعض نے اس کی اصل یہ بیان کی ہے کہ جب اونٹنی کے پیٹ میں بچہ مر جاتا ہے تو مُزْمِرٌ (جنوانے والا) اس کے رحم کے اندر ہاتھ ڈالتا ہے اور اسے پنڈلیوں سے پکڑ کر زور سے باہر نکالتا ہے اور یہ كَشَفَ عَنِ السَّاقِ کے اصل معنی ہیں پھر ہر ہولناک امر کے متعلق یہ محاورہ استعمال ہونے لگا ہے تو یہاں بھی شدت حال سے کنایہ ہے اور آیت:

﴿فَاسْتَوَىٰ عَلَىٰ سُوْقِهِ﴾ (۲۸-۲۹) اور پھر اپنی نال پر سیدھی کھڑی ہوئی۔

میں بعض نے کہا ہے کہ سُوْقِ سَاقٍ کی جمع ہے جیسے لَابَةٌ کی جمع لُؤْبٌ اور فَارَةٌ کی جمع فُورٌ آتی ہے اور اسی طرح آیت:

﴿فَطَفِقَ مَسْحًا بِالسُّوقِ وَالْأَعْنَاقِ﴾ (۳۸-۳۳)

جب رہنما بے نشان راستوں پر سوگھ سوگھ کر چلے۔ السُّوْفُ: اونٹوں کے ایک مرض کا نام ہے جس کی وجہ سے وہ مرنے کے قریب ہو جاتے ہیں اور اس سے موت کی بوسوگھ لیتے ہیں یا موت ان کو سوگھ لیتی ہے اور یا اس لئے کہ اس سے جلدی ہی ان کی موت آ جاتی ہے۔

### (س و ق)

سَوْقٌ الْإِبِلِ: کے معنی اونٹ کو ہنکانے اور چلانے کے ہیں یہ سُقَّتُهُ (ن) کا مصدر ہے اور انساق (افعال) کے معنی ہنکانے کے بعد چل پڑنے کے ہیں۔ ان جانوروں کو جو ہنکائے جاتے ہیں، سَبَقَةٌ کہا جاتا ہے۔ اور عورت کو مہر ادا کرنے کے لئے سُقَّتِ الْمَهْرَ إِلَى الْمَرْأَةِ کا محاورہ استعمال ہوتا ہے اس لئے کہ عرب حق مہر میں (عام طور پر) اونٹ دیا کرتے تھے۔ اور آیت: ﴿إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ﴾ (۴۵-۳۰) میں مساق کے معنی پروردگار کی طرف چلنا کے ہیں جیسا کہ آیت:

﴿إِنِّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنتَهَىٰ﴾ (۵۱-۴۲) میں ہے یعنی تمہیں اپنے پروردگار کے پاس پہنچنا ہے۔

اور آیت: ﴿مَعَهَا سَاقٌ وَشَهِيدٌ﴾ (۵۰-۲۱) اس کے ساتھ چلانے والا ہوگا اور ایک (اس کے عملوں کی) گواہی دینے والا۔

میں سائق سے وہ فرشتہ مراد ہے جو اسے چلا کر حساب کے لئے پیش کرے گا اور دوسرا فرشتہ شہید (بطور گواہ) کے اس کے ساتھ ہوگا جو اس کے حق میں یا اس کے خلاف گواہی دے گا بعض نے کہا ہے کہ یہ آیت: ﴿كَانَهَا يُسَاقُونَ إِلَى الْمَوْتِ﴾ (۸-۶) گویا موت کی طرف دھکیلے جاتے ہیں۔ کے ہم معنی ہے اور آیت:

## I. Allegation: The Quran Attributes ‘Movement’ To Allah

“Nay! When the earth is pounded by power, AND YOUR LORD COMES, and His angels, rank upon rank, and Hell, that Day, is brought face to face - On that Day will man remember, but how will that remembrance profit him?” Quran 89:21-23.

Allegation: Quran talks about physical movement of Allah!

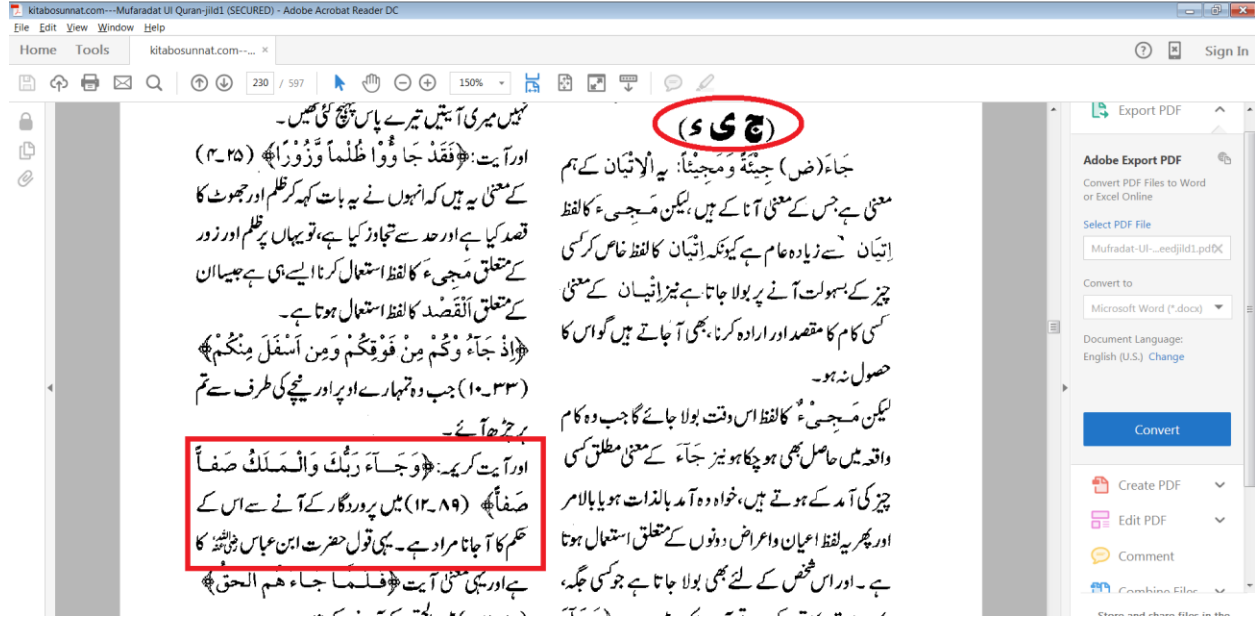
**Response:** Read the complete Surah / chapter. It’s talking about the Day of Judgment.

Quran 89:21 - *Nay! When the earth is pounded to powder* [talks about the judgment day]

Quran 89:22- **وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا** And your Lord comes with the angels in rows.

Word “*JaaA*” – which is translated as “comes” is explained below:

1. *Mufradat-Ul-Quran* : very famous dictionary of Quran authored by *Al-Raghib al-Isfahani* explains the meaning of word (ج ي ا) - “coming of Allah: means coming of command of Allah. This was the understanding of Hazrat Ibn Abbas too. Refer to the snapshot below:



2. The verb's trilateral root is *jīm yā hamza* (ج ي ا) is found 278 times in 262 ayah of Quran.

Almost all of time this word is used in the context of:

“coming of the truth”, “coming of clear signs of God”, “coming of messenger”, “coming of knowledge”, “coming of the hour”, “coming of death”, “coming of guidance”, “coming of victory”, “coming of fixed time”, “coming of instructions from God”, “coming of warning”. None of them indicate “physical movement”.

Have a look at few such instances:

قَالُوا الْآنَ جِئْتَ بِالْحَقِّ They said: "Now you have **brought** the truth." 2:71

جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ **comes** to you a messenger 2:87

جَاءَهُمْ مَا عَرَفُوا when there **comes** to them that which they (should) have recognized, 2:89

جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ after the knowledge which hath **reached** thee 2:120

مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ When clear signs [of Allah] **come** 2:213,253 3:86,105,184 4:153 5:110  
6:157 7:73,85,105 10:74 11:53 20:72

6:31 السَّاعَةُ جَاءَتْهُمْ The Hour **reaches** them

Additionally, this word “JaaA” is used for:

- Death **COMES** to you [Quran 6:61]
- Moses **brought** a light and guidance to man بِهٖ مُوسَىٰ نُورًا وَهُدًى [Quran 6:91]
- **Coming / reaching** of a fixed time [Quran 7:34]
- **Coming** of victory [Quran 8:19]
- **Coming** of instructions from God [Quran 10:57]

It is clear in above instances that the word under discussion is not related to physical movement, but presence of something.

3. Only a few times it’s used in context of human being or living entities. In those instances it talks about someone whose presence is being described, one who is under discussion, one who is the subject. For example: we say, “here comes Mr XYZ”. That does not mean that Mr. XYZ has walked or travelled or ran and reached.

وَعَرَضُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ صَفًّا لَّقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۗ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَلَّن نَّجْعَلَ لَكُم مَّوْعِدًا

*And they will be **marshaled** before your Lord in ranks, (with the announcement), "Now have ye come to Us (bare) as We created you first: aye, ye thought We shall not fulfil the appointment made to you to meet (Us)!"*: Quran 18: 48

This ayah uses word “JaaA” for human being. Ayah is talking about judgment day. People will be “brought” before Almighty God. This signifies that people will be answerable to Almighty God on the judgment day.

Similarly, at other places where Quran uses this word in context with human beings then other word is used to describe physical movement. For example:

- mīm shīn yā (م ش ي) = **walking** is used along with “JaaA”
- yasA = **running** is used along with “JaaA”

4. Interestingly, there is one Ayah in Quran that has almost similar description as described in the ayah under discussion (89:22).

وَجِيءَ بِالنَّبِيِّينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ “.. prophets and the witnesses will be brought forward ..” 39:69



Ayah 39:69 is talking about the Day of Judgment. It uses the word “*JaaA*” [coming of] for Prophets and witnesses. We don’t say that this ayah means that Prophets and witnesses [witnesses can include non-human beings also] will “physically” move, rather we mean that they will be present, they will be under discussion.

89:22 is the ayah under discussion. It is talking about the Day of Judgment. It uses the word “*JaaA*” [coming of] for Allah and angels. There is no point in thinking that Allah will physically move and then come.

5. Last but not the least: The very next ayah also uses word “*JaaA*” for hell.

Quran 89:23 **وَجِيءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ**

“*And Hell will be brought near that Day. On that Day will man remember, but how will that remembrance (then) avail him?*”

No one understands that hell will be physically moved when it is said that hell will be “brought”. It simply means that hell will, with all its horrors, become evident and clear to view.

## **J. Bible has numerous metaphors in context of God.**

Have a glimpse:

A. Surely the **arm of the LORD** is not too short to save, nor **his ear** too dull to hear. (Isaiah 59:1)

B. After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the **right hand of God**. (Mark 16:19)

C. God does something like human being: In Genesis alone; God creates ( 1:1 ), moves ( 1:2 ), speaks ( 1:3 ), sees ( 1:4 ), divides ( 1:4 ), places ( 1:17 ), blesses ( 1:22 ), plants ( 2:8 ), walks ( 3:8 ), shuts ( 7:16 ), smells ( 8:21 ), descends ( 11:5 ), scatters ( 11:8 ), hears ( 21:17 ), tests ( 22:1 ), and judges ( 30:6 ).

D. God redeems Israel from Egyptian bondage with an **outstretched arm** (Exodus 6:6). Moses and his companions see God, and they **eat and drink with him** (Exodus 24:10-11). Other texts refer to the **back, face, mouth, lips, ears, eyes, hand, and finger of God**. The expression, "the Lord's anger burned" (Exodus 4:14) is interesting. A literal translation of the Hebrew is "the nose of the Lord burned."

The Vedas, the Quran and the Bible all contain lots of metaphors. Refer to our book “*Metaphors in Veda, Bible and Quran*” for details.

## **K. Conclusion**

1. Almighty God or Allah is beyond any likeness, beyond comprehension.

2. Quran uses metaphor in order to convey more meaning in lesser words.
3. When people take metaphorical meaning as literal meaning then they end up thinking that Almighty God has eye, hand, face, body etc.
4. To say that God has hand, face, eye etc is to degrade the status of God.
5. There is no example of likeness of Allah.

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