

# **A COGNITIVE STUDY OF EMBODIMENT: THE USE OF HUMAN ORGANS IN QUR'ANIC VERSES**

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**Abstract:** Many people face difficulties in understanding Holy Qur'anic expressions, especially those of body organs asking about the purpose of using such words in a specific context where they are said. The study examines the usage of human body parts as a source domain in which they have been bodily metaphorized or embodied metaphorically to facilitate our mental processes in comprehending the glorious Qur'anic conceptual meanings (the target domain). These parts are separated into internal body parts, such as the heart and vein, and external body parts, such as the head parts, hands, and feet. Each linguistic word might be mapped on more than one conceptual meaning according to the context where the verse is been said. The data were collected utilizing observation. It was analyzed cognitively using Lakoff and Johnson's embodiment as a model of analysis. Finally, the study revealed the significance of using body metaphors in perceiving body parts expressions used in Quranic verses.

**Key words:** Body Metaphor, Embodiment, Lakoff and Johnson's Embodiment, Metaphorized Body, Source Domain. The Holy Qur'an, Target Domain.

## **Introduction: Embodiment Hypothesis and Body Metaphor**

Since the mid-1980s there has been an intensified interest in notions of embodiment; in which the interest is synchronized with so many changes occurring in modern society. Geerearts and Cuycons (2007) defined the hypothesis of embodiment as Lakoff and Johnson claimed that the human physical, cognitive, and social embodiment ground our conceptual and linguistic systems. Moreover, Lakoff and Johnson defined embodiment in a very comprehensive way in which it is the fact that the mind is fundamentally embodied. To sum up, the study is focused on the bodily parts that are embodied in the world where cultural factors dominate the way this world is perceived and commenced to be meaningful for us, (2007, p.27).

Lakoff and Johnson (1999) explain the term "embodied mind" as follows :

“Reason is not disembodied, as the tradition has largely held, but arises from the nature of our brains, bodies, and bodily experience. This is not just the innocuous and obvious claim that we need a body to reason; rather, it is the striking claim that the very structure of reason itself comes from the details of our embodiment. The same neural and cognitive mechanisms that allow us to perceive and move around also create our conceptual systems and modes of reason. Thus, to understand reason we must understand the details of our visual system, our motor system, and the general mechanisms of neural binding. In summary, reason is not, in any way, a transcendent feature of the universe or a disembodied mind. Instead, it is shaped crucially by the peculiarities of our human bodies, by the remarkable details of the neural structure of our brains, and the specifics of our everyday functioning in the world”, (Lakoff and Johnson 1999:4).

According to Lakoff and Johnson's above extract, the embodied mind is the way of functioning in which our body parts function as a means for translating our conceptual system. They add that our conceptual system is mirrored in linguistic patterns by using a metaphor systematically. It is behavior-based in which every kind of behavior is seen as an interaction of the body in an environment. The terms embodiment and body metaphor are the experiential gestalt that is just like a ground for the term conceptual metaphors. This idea is developed later on by Johnson (1987) into "image schemata" or "embodied schemata", (Johnson 1987: 23). Therefore, people create and conceptualize metaphors based on their body part schemas. The study examines how using body metaphors will facilitate our understanding of such words in the Holy Quran.

### **The Importance of Human Image schemas for Body Metaphor**

The image schema theory has been established from the theory of conceptual metaphor that was coined by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Johnson (1987) develops the theory of image schemas and defines it as "a recurrent pattern, shape, or regularity in, or of, our actions, perceptions, and conceptions". By these recurrent patterns, he argues meaningful structures that emerge for human beings as a result of their bodily interaction and movements through space, (Geeraerts and Cuyckens, 2007, p. 35).

Image schema is just like a redescription of the emotional experience to map concrete structure onto a conceptual structure. Geeraerts and Cuyckens (2007) mention that image schema is derived from the bodily experience that exists in the physical world and conceptual metaphors linking different domains of experience. By these domains, they mean source and target domains. Simply, the source domain is derived from the bodily experience that surrounds the human and conceptual metaphors to be mapped on the target domain and the latter means the abstract things that need to have an image in the mind to achieve the purpose of communication. In their work on conceptual metaphor, Lakoff and Johnson claim that image schemas provide the basis for abstract thought by serving as a source domain in metaphorical mappings.

### **The Source and Target domains**

The notion of "a domain" is established in the earliest study on "metaphor" in which there are two kinds of domain: Source domain and target domain. Sweetser (1990:19) states that "metaphor operates between domains. It operates so pervasively that speakers find an inter-domain connection between knowledge and vision, or between time and space, to be as natural as the intra-domain connection between finger and hand or between man and woman".

Hence, the source domain is considered as a conceptual domain that is associated with concrete things and it always serves as a physical and embodied experience for any abstract ideas to facilitate our communication. The target domain is considered our target and always needs to be facilitated.

### **The Body as a Source Domain**

The body metaphors in this perspective serve to support the following claim that of what is nowadays known as "conceptual metaphor theory" in which "the body is mapped on more abstract things such as machines and computers i.e. Sie möchten sich (...) über den Gesundheitszustand von Windows informieren..." (Hänke 2004: 79) which is translated into ("You want to inform yourself about the state of health of Windows..."). This is one instance of this type of mapping the bodily qualities on technological things.

There is another example provided by Musolff (2004) to clarify the idea that body organs can also be mapping on the nations such as "Britain may be advised that it can't be at the heart of Europe if it is detached from its arteries", (Musolff 2004: 66). The word heart is one organ of the human body, but here, it means centre.

Another example in which the body works as a source domain that to describe metaphors for linguistic action such as "*thrust something down someone's throat, chew the fat, eat one's words or waste one's breath*", (Pauwel & Simon-Vandenbergen 1995: 36- 37). Hence, the actions of eating and breathing

can obviously be used as a source domain to involve communicative expressions that serve as a target domain. The later is going to be the focus of the current study.

### The Body as a Target Domain

Some bodily functions like diseases, illnesses, and brain processes may come to serve as a target domain or as abstract things. They certainly need to be facilitated and manifested, to so, another kind of metaphor is offered to be used hence. For instance, "...a powerful enemy ... (whose) foot soldiers are beyond number and its capacity for harm beyond imagination", (Stibbe 2001: 2). It is obvious that the 'foot' which is body metaphor is used to denote 'war', 'power', and 'victory' which are the abstract terms (target domain).

### The Use of Body Metaphor in the Holly Quran

#### {In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful}

(لَوْ أَنزَلْنَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى جَبَلٍ لَّرَأَيْنَاهُ خَاشِعًا مُّتَصَدِّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ (21)) (الحشر)

Alhamdulillah, we are Muslim and we believe in the Quran. The Most Glorious Quran is the prophet Mohammad's Miracle from "Allah (subhana wa ta'ala)" to Muslims through the angel who is Gabriel for 23 years when the prophet Mohammad peace be upon him was at 40 years old. There is 114 surah in Qur'an. Every letter, word, the verse contains a beautiful message for us from Allah (subhana wa ta'ala).

"Allah (subhana wa ta'ala)" uses so many Quranic words and expressions that show the human body organs as examples to the body metaphor in which the body organs act as a source domain to understand the conceptual things, such as "القصاص" in Arabic which is translated into "retribution" in English. So many empirical examples will be shown in the present research.

### Eternal Body Parts

#### Head Parts

Allah subhana wa ta'ala has set limits and retribution in order to preserve the human soul and his properties, so no one assaulted one another, so the limits were to reduce the crime rate as in Al Maida sura\ 45th verse:

قال تعالى: ("وَكَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا أَنَّ النَّفْسَ بِالنَّفْسِ وَالْعَيْنَ بِالْعَيْنِ وَالْأَنْفَ بِالْأَنْفِ وَالْأُذُنَ بِالْأُذُنِ وَالسِّنَّ بِالسِّنِّ وَالْجُرُوحَ قِصَاصٌ ۚ فَمَن تَصَدَّقَ بِهِ فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَهُ ۚ وَمَن لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ") الآية 45 من سورة المائدة.

Allah subhana wa ta'ala uses the body organs such as the 'self', 'eye', 'nose', 'ear', and 'tooth' in order to clarify the image of the abstract notion of "retribution" in which there will be equality to reduce crimes. The "السن بالسن" and "العين بالعين", "الأنف بالأنف", "الأذن بالأذن", "القصاص" are mapped on the abstract notion of retribution.

قال تعالى: ("أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ\* وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ\* وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ") الآية 8 و 10 من سورة البلد.

"Allah (subhana wa ta'ala)" uses in the above verse words that are denoted the body organs such as "شفتين", "عينين", "لساناً", "شفتين". These words are mapped on the abstract words such as beauty, pronunciation or utterance and vision in which they are benefactions from "Allah (subhana wa ta'ala)" for us ("شفتين و لساناً" tongue and lips) is a body metaphor for the abstract word which is pronunciation or utterance. ("عينين", eyes) is also a body metaphor for the abstract word (vision).

قال تعالى: ("وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ") الآية 22 من سورة الروم.

Allah (subhana wa ta'ala), in the above verse, uses the expression "و اختلاف ألسنتكم" that is mapped on expression such as language variation (the abstract expression) existed in our cognition. Once may think of this expression and try to give it a concrete image. The body metaphor in which the body parts are mapped on such abstract expressions is revealed here. "Allah (subhana wa ta'ala)" uses "اختلاف"

that serve as a body metaphor to the variation of language in societies such Arabs, Persians, and others. All of that are miracles to the humanity .

### Hands

قال تعالى: ("يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ أَنْ يَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ") الآية 11 من سورة المائدة

("إِنْ يَتَقَفَّوْكُمْ يَكُونُوا لَكُمْ أَعْدَاءً وَيَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ وَأَلْسِنَتُهُمْ بِالسُّوءِ وَوَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ") الآية 2 من سورة الممتحنة.

("لَنْ يَسُطَ إِلَيَّ يَدُكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِي مَا أَنَا بِبَاسِطٍ يَدِي إِلَيْكَ لِأَقْتُلَكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ") الآية 28 من سورة المائدة

The abstract words such as force and assault have no embodied images in the mind until being metaphorized by using some body parts or bodily functions that denote nonverbal communication. "Allah (subhana wa ta'ala)" uses verses in Qur'an that involve using bodily functions such as "بسطة" "بساط يدي" and "يدك", "يبسطوا إليكم أيديهم", that are mapped on the meaning of power and assault to denote the nonverbal communication.

قال تعالى: ("قَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلُعِنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ") الآية 64 من سورة المائدة.

Ibn Katheer says that Allah here in this verse tells us about Jews and how they describe him (subhana wa ta'ala) and give him the aspect of stinginess, and how they also describe him as if he is poor and they are rich. Moreover, the body of metaphor is revealed here in which "Allah (subhana wa ta'ala)" uses the body part- "يد الله مغلوله"- hand- to reveal the aspect of STINGINESS that the Jews describe Allah with. The word "يد" is mapped on the abstract aspect of stinginess during which it has no real or concrete body or shape but it is metaphorized by one of the body parts. In fact, the situation of the chained hand shows the bodily function that indicates or embodies the aspect of stinginess. The stinginess, in this verse, indicates the target domain and the hand is the source domain. The second image of this verse, "Allah (subhana wa ta'ala)" uses the hand to mean 'generous' in his saying "بل يده ميسورتان". The word hand, in the situation of being unfolded, indicates generosity and the latter has no embodied image unless being metaphorized by one of the body parts such as hand or "يد" in terms on the body metaphor .

قال تعالى: ("وَلَمَّا سَفِطَ فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ وَرَأَوْا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ ضَلُّوا قَالُوا لَنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبَّنَا وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا لَنَكُونَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ") الآية 149 من سورة الاعراف.

Abu Ja'fer says that "Allah (subhana wa ta'ala)" in this verse wants to reveal the situation of Jews when they repent or regret as a result of worshiping the calf instead of Allah. The term of repentance has no concrete image until it is being metaphorized and that is why Allah wants to simplify the image of their repentance by using one of the body parts which is "أيديهم"-hands. The bodily function of smotting their hands indicate as nonverbal communication in which it means repentance for Arabs. The repentance is a target domain and cannot be understood until being metaphorized by the source domain concerning the body parts.

The following table clarifies how the body organs serve as a source domain to clarify the target domain for the people who "Allah (subhana wa ta'ala)" addresses in the Quranic verses. The term body metaphor will be highlighted henceforth:

### Feet

"إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ النُّعَاسَ أَمَنَةً مِنْهُ وَيُنَزِّلُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ بِهِ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمْ رِجْزَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ" الآية 11 من سورة الانفال.

Axiomatically, all know that feet are responsible for body balance and mobility. The firm feet as they are described in the verse above denote to steadiness and strength of the human body.

conceptually, "planting firmly the feet"- (وَيُثَبِّتُ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ)-refers to spiritual loyalty, bravery, and stability in battle or facing challenges against disbelievers. Allah subhahh wa ta'ala facilitates the language of Quran to his believers by mapping the physical entity such as firm feet on the abstract meaning of

spiritual and emotional stability contrasting the weak or slipping feet that denote fear and hesitation. Through physical experience, the metaphor aids believers in conceptualizing faith and inner strength—strong faith averts spiritual failure, just as firm feet avert falls.

This verse demonstrates how emotional and spiritual stability are cognitively anchored by physical stability (feet). This is consistent with the Embodiment Theory of Lakoff and Johnson, which holds that human cognition and perception are structured by bodily experiences.

## Internal Body Part

### Jugular Vein

قال تعالى: ("وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعَلْمَا تَوْسُوسُ بِهِ نَفْسَهُ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ") الآية 16 من سورة ق.

Again, one image of body metaphor is used here in Qaf surah. "Allah (subhana wa ta'ala)" uses حبل "حبل" which is one of the internal bodily parts-jugular vein- to map on the abstract word such as nearness. "Allah (subhana wa ta'ala)" wants to convey that he is the nearest even than jugular vein to show the image of being near and nothing will be hidden from him even the obsessions that occur with ourselves .

The Qura'anic Verse	Body as a Source Domain (Body metaphor)	The target Domain
"وَكَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا أَنْ النَّفْسَ بِالنَّفْسِ وَالْعَيْنَ بِالْعَيْنِ وَالْأَنْفَ بِالْأَنْفِ وَالْأُذُنَ بِالْأُذُنِ وَالسِّنَّ بِالسِّنِّ وَالْجُزُوحَ قِصَاصٌ فَمَنْ تَصَدَّقَ بِهِ فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَهُ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ"	"النفس بالنفس", "العين بالعين", "الأنف بالأنف", "الأذن بالأذن", "السن بالسن". the 'self', 'eye', 'nose', 'ear', and 'tooth'	القصاص "retribution"
"يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ أَنْ يَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ"	"أَنْ يَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ"	القوة و البطش The meaning of 'power' and 'assault' to denote the nonverbal communication.
"إِنْ يَتَفَقَّهُكُمْ يَكُونُوا لَكُمْ أَعْدَاءً وَيَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ وَأَلْسِنَتُهُمْ بِالسَّيِّئِ وَوَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ"	"وَيَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ"	معنى القوة و البطش The meaning of 'power' and 'assault'
"لَنْ يَسْطِيَ إِلَيَّ يَدٌ لِتَقْتُلَنِي مَا أَنَا بِبَاسِطٍ يَدِيَ إِلَيْكَ لِأَقْتُلَكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ"	"ما أَنَا بِبَاسِطٍ يَدِيَ إِلَيْكَ"	القوة و البطش 'power' and 'assault'
"أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ * وَلِسَانًا وَشَفَتَيْنِ * وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ"	"عينين", "لسانا" و "شفتين"	Eyes endicate <b>beauty</b> , and <b>vision</b>  Tonuge and lips indicate <b>pronunciation</b> or <b>utterance</b>
"وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَالْوَأْنِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِلْعَالَمِينَ"	اختِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ Tongues	It indicates the <b>variation of languages</b>
"وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعَلْمَا تَوْسُوسُ بِهِ نَفْسَهُ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ"	حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ	It indicates <b>Nearness</b>
"قَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ وَلُعِنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ"	"يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ"  "يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ"	The bodily state of the hand here reveals the aspect of <b>STINGINESS</b> that the Jews describe Allah (subhana wa ta'la) with. The state of the hands

		indicates <b>generosity</b>
"وَلَمَّا سَقَطَ فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ وَرَأَوْا أَنَّهُمْ قَدْ ضَلُّوا قَالُوا لَئِنْ لَمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ"	"سقط في أيديهم"	Smotting hands indicates <b>repentance</b> for Arabs.
"إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ النُّعَاسُ أَمْنَةً مِنْهُ وَيُنْزِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُم بِهِ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمْ رِجْسَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ"	"وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ"	Firm feet indicate <b>spiritual and emotional stability</b> against challenges

Ultimately, the table above reveals in a very tidy way the source and the target domains, and those explain the image schema that is really happening in the human mind. Using body metaphor sounds obvious in the aforementioned Quranic verses in which the body organs and the bodily states are being mapped on the abstract things and concepts.

### To Conclude

Far from arbitrariness, the body parts are used metaphorically to serve as source domains (image schemas) to perceive the target domains (the messages) that Allah wants to convey to people. As this study has shown, the aforementioned Qur'anic verses reveal that type of metaphor in which the body organs and the bodily states are used accordingly. Structuring the analysis on Lakoff and Johnson's theory of embodiment, the results demonstrate how bodily experiences are translated onto abstract spiritual, moral, and cognitive ideas to increase their effect and accessibility. These results show the body metaphors' cognitive and rhetorical role in Qur'anic discourse.

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