

Can we see Allaah?

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

The human mind is a true marvel, but in certain areas it is limited. Allaah is different from anything the human mind can think of or imagine. Therefore, if the mind tries to picture Allaah, certain aspects will be ambiguous and open to indefinite interpretation. Nevertheless, it is possible to understand the attributes of Allaah which do not require making any mental pictures. For example, one of Allaah's names is al-Ghaffar, which means 'Oft-Forgiver'. Everyone can understand this easily because that is how the human mind can clearly think of Allaah. Jewish and Christian teachings on God are confused partly because of their incorrect understanding of this issue. The Jewish Torah teaches God is like man:

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...so God made man in His own image.'¹

Moreover, certain Christians put statues or images of an old white bearded man depicting God in their churches. Some of these were produced by the likes of Michelangelo, who depicted the Face and Hand 'of God' – a tough looking old man - in paintings.

Rendering images of God in Islaam is an impossibility, and amounts to disbelief, as Allaah tells us in the Qur'aan that nothing resembles Him:

["There is nothing like Him, but He is All-Hearing, All-Seeing."]²

["There is nothing comparable to Him."]³

The request of Moses to see Allaah

Eyes cannot grasp Allaah, He tells us in the Qur'aan:

["Vision cannot grasp Him, but He his grasp is over all vision."]⁴

¹ Genesis 1:26-27

² Qur'aan [42:11]

³ Qur'aan [112:4]

⁴ Qur'aan [6:103]

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Moses, to whom God spoke and gave great miracles, was chosen by Allaah to be His Prophet. It is said, that Moses thought that, since Allaah used to speak to him, he might be able to actually see Allaah if he asked. The story is in the Qur'aan, where Allaah tells us what happened:

[“And when Moses arrived at Our appointed time and his Lord spoke to him, he said, ‘My Lord, show me (Yourself) that I may look at You.’ (Allaah) said, ‘You will not see Me, but look at the mountain; if it should remain in place, then you will see Me.’ But when his Lord appeared to the mountain, He rendered it level, and Moses fell unconscious. And when he awoke, he said, ‘Exalted are You! I have repented to You, and I am the first of the believers.”]”⁵

Allaah made it clear that no one, including the great prophet Moses, can bear the sight of the divine, for Allaah is too great to be grasped by human eyes in this life. According to the Qur'aan, Moses realised his request was in error; therefore, he sought forgiveness from Allaah for having even thought to ask.

The Prophet Muhammad did not see Allaah in this life

Prophet Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*), travelled in a miraculous journey through the heavens to meet Allaah. People thought that since Prophet Muhammad, (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*), spoke to Allaah in that journey, he probably saw Allaah too. One of the companions, Aboo Dharr, asked him about it. The Prophet, (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*), replied:

“There was only light, how could I see Him?”⁶

What was the light he saw? The Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) explained:

“Surely, Allaah does not sleep nor is it befitting for Him to sleep. He is the one who lowers the scales and raises them. The deeds of the night go up to Him before the deeds of the day and those of the day before those of the night, and His veil is the light.”⁷

Vision of God in spiritual experiences

Some people, including some who claim to be Muslims, report spiritual experiences where they have claimed to have seen God. Common reported experiences also include seeing lights, or a magnificent being seated on a throne. Such an experience is usually accompanied by dropping basic Islaamic practices like Salaah and fasting, under the mistaken opinion that such practices are only for common people who had not had their type of experience.

⁵ Qur'aan [7:143]

⁶ Saheeh Muslim

⁷ Saheeh Muslim

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One of the fundamental foundations of Islaam is that the law revealed to Prophet Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) cannot be changed or cancelled. God neither makes lawful for some what He has made unlawful for others, nor does He communicate His Law through such experiences to people. Rather, divine Law is revealed through the proper channel of revelation to the prophets a channel that was closed after the advent of the prophet Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*), the last of God's prophets. It is Satan who pretends to be Allaah to deceive ignorant people who believe in such experiences and go astray.

Seeing Allaah in Afterlife

In this life Allaah cannot be seen, but the believers will see Allaah in the next life, this is stated clearly in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. The Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) said,

“The Day of Resurrection is the first day any eye will look at Allaah, the Mighty and Exalted.”⁸

Describing the events of Resurrection Day, Allaah states in the Qur'aan:

[“On that day some faces will be bright, looking at their Lord.”]⁹

The Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) was asked if we will see Allaah on the Day of resurrection. He replied,

“Are you harmed by looking at the moon when it is full?”¹⁰

‘No,’ they replied. Then he said,

“Surely, you will see Him likewise.”

In another hadeeth the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) said,

“Surely, each of you will see Allaah on the day when you shall meet Him, and there will be no veil or translator between Him and you.”¹¹

Seeing Allaah will be a favour that is additional to Paradise on the Muslims who will dwell therein. As a matter of fact, the joy of seeing Allaah for a believer will be greater than the joys of Paradise combined together. The unbelievers, on the other hand, will be deprived of seeing Allaah and this will be greater punishment for them than all the pain and suffering of Hell combined together.

⁸ Daraqutnee, Darimi

⁹ Qur'aan [75:22-23]

¹⁰ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree and Saheeh Muslim

¹¹ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree