21371 - Meaning of Allaah’s words in the hadeeth qudsi, “I am his hearing with which he hears…”

the question

Can you please explain a hadith for me ...
Allah Most High says: "He who is hostile to a friend of Mine I declare war against. My slave approaches Me with nothing more beloved to Me than what I have made obligatory upon him, and My slave keeps drawing nearer to Me with voluntary works until I love him. And when I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he seizes, and his foot with which he walks. If he asks me, I will surely give to him, and if he seeks refuge in Me, I will surely protect him" (Fath al-Bari, 11.34041, hadith 6502); This hadith was related by Imam Bukhari, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, al-Bayhaqi, and others with multiple contiguous chains of transmission, and is sahih.
The part that I need explaining in, or rather getting confused in is, "I am his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his hand with which he seizes, and his foot with which he walks."

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The meaning of this part of the hadeeth is that when the believing slave strives to draw closer to Allaah by doing obligatory acts of worship, then naafil acts, Allaah will bring him closer to Him, and will raise him from the level of eemaan (faith, belief) to the level of ihsaan, so he will start to worship Allaah as if he can see Him, and his heart will be filled with knowledge of his Lord, love and awe for Him, fear of Him, and glorification and veneration of Him. When his heart is filled in this manner, any attachment to anything other than Allaah will disappear, and the person will not longer be attached to any of his whims or desires, and he will have no wish for anything except

that which his Lord and Master wants. At that point the person will not speak except to remember Allaah, he will not move except to obey His command. So when he speaks, he speaks for the sake of Allaah; when he hears he hears for the sake of Allaah; when he looks, he looks for the sake of Allaah; i.e., he acts with the help and guidance of Allaah and for the sake of Allaah in these matters. So he only listens to that which Allaah loves; he only looks at that with which Allaah is pleased; he only strikes with his hands and walks with his feet for purposes with which his Lord and Master is pleased. It does not mean that Allaah is his hearing and his sight, and Allaah is his hand and his foot. Exalted be Allaah above that, for Allaah is above the Throne and He is Exalted above all His creation. Rather what is meant is that He guides him with regard to his hearing, seeing, walking and striking. Hence it was narrated in another version that Allaah says: “In Me he hears, in Me he sees, in Me he strikes and in Me he walks,” meaning that Allaah guides him in his actions, words, hearing and seeing. This is what it means according to Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah. At the same time Allaah answers his prayers, so if he asks Him, He will give; if he seeks His help, He will help him; if he seeks refuge with Him, He will grant him refuge.
Adapted from Jaami’ al-‘Uloom wa’l-Hukam, 2/347; Fataawa Noor ‘ala’l-Darb, tape 10, by Shaykh Ibn Baaz, may Allaah have mercy on him.

Whoever suggests a meaning other than this is wrong and is transgressing the limits and showing disrespect towards Allaah, and he is going against the Arabs’ own understanding of their language and what they understand by such words. Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen said in Majmoo’ al-Fataawa, 1/145 9: You see that Allaah has mentioned one who worships and One Who is worshipped, one who draws close and the One to Whom he draws close, one who loves and the One Who is loved, one who asks and One Who is asked, One Who gives and one to whom it is given, one who seeks refuge and One Whose refuge is sought. The hadeeth refers to two who are distinct from one another, one of whom is not the other. If that is the case, than the apparent meaning of the words “I am his hearing, his sight, his hand and his foot” cannot be that the Creator is a part or an attribute of the created being. Exalted be Allaah far above that. Rather the apparent and true meaning is that Allaah guides this slave with regard to his hearing, sight and striking, so he hears purely for the sake of Allaah, by the help of Allaah, following the commands of Allaah. The same applies to his seeing, his striking and his walking.