

ALI 602: The Light of the Heavens and the Earth

Academy for Learning Islam

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The Context

Q: Why does the verse of light appear in the context of the chapter of light? What is the context of the verses that precede this verse?

The Context

- Surat al-Nur speaks about the laws pertaining to relationships out of marriage.
- The faculty related to this is the faculty of shahwah (desire). It is one of the most powerful forces within a human being.
- This faculty has to be managed and moderated by the power of guidance, knowledge and iman.
- This verse compares guidance, knowledge and iman to light.

The Verse

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth

Q: What is being referenced by “the heavens and the earth”?

Q: Why is Allah (S) analogized to “light”?

The Analogy

- The heavens and the earth is a reference to all of creation. It includes within it the physical and the metaphysical realms.
- We have to be careful when studying analogies.
 - Mushabbah: The object being analogized. (E.g. Book)
 - Mushabbahun bih: The object that it is being analogized to. (E.g. ocean)
 - The reason for the analogy (E.g. depth).
- An analogy brings you closer to the meaning from one perspective, and further from the meaning from other perspectives.

Q: What is light? Provide a definition of light.

The Light

- The meaning of light is not limited to the physical light.
- There are many verses and narrations that speak of light outside of the physical realm.
 - Light in the metaphysical world.
 - Light in the heart.
- Therefore light in anything that is self-evident, and makes other things evident.
 - For example, the Qur'an.
 - For example, Knowledge.

Q: What does it mean that Allah (S) is self-evident and makes “the heavens and the earth” evident?

The One who Manifests

- Since everything is manifest through its existence, then Allah (S) is the one who exists by himself and gives existence to everything else.
- It also means that he is not concealed in a manner that he would become apparent through his creation.
 - Knowing Allah (S) through his creation.
 - Knowing the creation through Allah (S).

The One who Manifests

When have You ever been absent so that You may need something to
point to You?

When have You ever been far-off so that traces may lead to You?
Blind be the eye that cannot see You watching it.

Attributed to Imam al-Husayn (a) in the Dua of Arafah.

Next Week.

The parable of His Light is a niche wherein is a lamp the lamp is in a glass, the glass as it were a glittering star lit from a blessed olive tree, neither eastern nor western, whose oil almost lights up, though fire should not touch it.

Q: Is the light in this segment the same as the light in the previous one?

Q: What are the important qualities of each term in this verse?