

Section 5: Allah is Light

Sura An-Nur – Verse 35

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِثْلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي
زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا
غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَيَّ نُورٌ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ
يَشَاءُ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

35. “Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a glittering star, lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it. Light upon light, Allah guides unto His Light whom He pleases, and Allah sets forth similitudes for mankind, and Allah is All-Aware of all things.”

‘Light’ is something that is itself bright and causes the brightness of other things. In Islamic culture, several things have been mentioned as ‘light’, including: The Holy Qur’an, tradition, knowledge, wisdom, faith, guidance, Islam, the holy Prophet (S), and the Infallible Imams (as).

Imam Ali (as) said:

“Nothing I saw unless I saw Allah before it, after it, and along with it.”¹

Concerning the Pure Essence of Allah a famous Persian poet says:

When I look at desert,

I see You.

When I look at sea,

I see You.

Whatever I look at, mountain and plain,

I see a sign of Your elegant stature.

For commenting on the above verse, there have been said many words, and commentators, philosophers, and Islamic mystics have discussed a lot.

The relation of this verse with the previous verses is in this way that in the former holy verses the discussion focused on chastity, struggling against indecency by means of various ways, and since what guarantees the execution of all Divine ordinances, especially controlling unrestrained instincts, more importantly sexual instinct, which is the most powerful one, can not be done without having 'faith' as support, finally the discussion is led to 'faith' and its powerful influence, when the verse begins saying:

“Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth...”

What a nice, interesting, and valuable sentence! Yes Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. He is the brightness and illuminator of all of them.

Some commentators have interpreted the word 'Light' here as guider and leader²; and some of them have interpreted it as 'lighter' and some as 'beautifying'.

All these meanings are true, but the concept of the verse is still more inclusive.

In the Qur'an and Islamic Narrations some entities are called as 'light':

1. The Glorious Qur'an:

As Sura Al-Ma'idah, No. 5, verse 15 is recited:

“...indeed there has come to you light, from Allah, a Light and a clear Book.”

Also recite in Sura Al-'A'raf, No. 7, verse 157:

“...Then those who... and follow the light which has been sent down with him: these are they that are the prosperous ones.”

2. Faith:

We read in Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 257:

“Allah is the Guardian of those who have faith; He brings them out of darkness into the light...”

3. Divine Guidance and clear-sightedness:

As it is mentioned in Sura Al-An'am, No. 6, verse 122:

“Is he who was dead (with ignorance and polytheism) and We gave him life (by Our guidance), and provided him with a light by which he walks among the people, as one whose likeness is in the utter darkness (of ignorance and polytheism) whence he cannot come forth from them?...”

4. Islam Religion:

It is said in Sura At-Taubah, No. 9, verse 32:

“...and Allah refuses but to perfect His Light, though the infidels detest it.”

5. The Prophet (S):

In Sura Al-Ahzab, No. 33, verse 46 we read about the Prophet (S):

“And as a summoner unto Allah by His permission, and as a light-giving torch.”

6. Imams and the Infallible Leaders:

As we read in Ziyarat-i-Jami'ah:

“Allah created you (as) lights, then He set you encircled (His Throne).”

In the same Ziyarat we read:

“You are the light for the good ones and guiders of those who do good deeds.”

7. Science and Knowledge:

This is also mentioned as light, as we read in a famous tradition:

“Knowledge is a light that Allah casts in any heart that He wills.”³

The above mentioned matters are on one side and, on the other side, we must study carefully the special characteristics of light some of its properties and qualities are as follows:

a. Light is the most beautiful and delicate entity in the world of material. It is the source of all beauties and delicacies.

b. As scientists say, light has got the highest velocity in the world; 300, 000 kilometers per second. Light can circulate the earth 7 times in less than a second (in a wink), therefore, extraordinarily great astronomical distances are only measured by the speed of light per year. It means the extent that light, with its extraordinary speed, can go in a year.

c. Light is a means for making things comprehensible and for viewing different creatures of the world. Without it we cannot see anything, therefore, it is both visible and making visible.

d. The light of the sun, which is the most important light of our world, grows flowers and plants. It is in fact the secret of all living creatures' survival, and it is impossible for any one or any creature to continue to live without light (directly or indirectly).

e. Today, it has been proven that all the colours that we see are the result of sunlight or other similar lights, otherwise, creatures have no colour in absolute darkness.

f. All existing energies in our environment, except atomic energy, are resulted from sunlight. The movement of Winds, falling of rain, movement of rivers, floods, and waterfalls and, finally, the movement of all living creatures are derived from sunlight.

The source of warmness, heat and what warms creatures is the very sunlight. Even the heat of fire that is gained from wood of trees or coal or petroleum and its derivatives are from the heat of sun, because all of them go back, according to scientific researches, to plants and animals that have acquired heat from sun and have stored it in themselves.

Therefore, the movement of engines is because of it, too.

g. The light of sun kills kinds of microbes and harmful insects. And if there were not the shining of this blissful light, the earth would turn into a great hospital whose inhabitants would be coming to grips with death.

Shortly, as we look more and closely at this strange phenomenon of the world (light), its valuable benefits and blessings will be more obvious.

Now, with these two introductions, if we want to choose a parallel or comparison from among sensible creatures of this world for Allah's Pure Essence (although He, the Almighty, is higher than any comparison), can we select any word other than 'light'?

He is the same Lord Who is the Creator of all universe. He is the Lighter of the world of creation, all living creatures are alive because of His command, and all creatures are sustained by Him, so that if for a second He stops His blissful looking at creatures, all will be nonexistent.

It is interesting that as much as any being is related to Him, it acquires luminousness with respect to it:

The Holy Qur'an is light, because it is His words.

Islam is light, because it is His religion.

The prophets are light, because they are His messengers.

Infallible Imams (as) are Divine lights, because they are guardians of His religion after the prophets.

Faith is light, because it is the secret of relationship with Him.

Knowledge is light, because it brings familiarity with Him. Therefore,

“Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth...”

If we consider a wider meaning for light, that is: ‘anything whose essence is obvious and apparent and clears other things’, in this case applying the word ‘light’ to His Pure Essence is not likening, because nothing in the world of creation is more apparent and obvious than Him, and all other things than Him are apparent because of Him.

In the book named: Tauhid we read a tradition by Imam Ali Ibn Mus–ar–Rida (as).

That Imam was questioned about the interpretation of the verse,

“Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth...”,

and he said:

“He guides both the inhabitants of the earth and the inhabitants of the heavens.”

In fact, this is one of the qualities of the Divine Light, but it is certainly not limited to it. Thus, all the mentioned commentaries of this verse can be included in what was said. Each of them refers to one of the dimensions of this unique Light.

It is interesting that in the 47th part of Jushan Kabir supplication, which is a collection of Allah’s attributes, we read:

“...Oh Light of lights! Oh Lighter of lights! Oh Creator of lights! Oh Administrator of light! Oh Measurer of light! Oh Light of all lights! Oh Light before any light! Oh Light after any light! Oh Light that is superior to any light! Oh Light that has no parallel!”

Therefore, all lights of universe come from His Light and return to the Light of His Pure Essence.

Mentioning the above fact, the holy Qur’an specifies the manner and the way of Divine Light by means of an exact and nice similitude.

It says:

“...The similitude of His light is as a niche wherein is a lamp. The lamp is in a glass. The glass is as it were a glittering star, lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither of the East nor of the West, whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it. Light upon light, Allah guides unto His Light whom He pleases, and Allah sets forth similitudes for mankind, and Allah is All-Aware of all things.”

To explain this example, paying attention to some matters is necessary:

The Arabic word /miškat/ is, in fact, a hole and a tiny place which was used to be created in a wall and old common lanterns were kept in it in order to be protected from wind and storm.

And sometimes a ledge was made in the room and the side of that part of the wall, toward the yard, was covered with glass. Thus, both inside of the room and the yard were lighted, meanwhile the lantern was saved from any wind and storm.

Again '**Mishkat**' was also applied to the glass cases that were made in the form of cubic rectangle, which had a lid and on the top of it there was an opening for letting air out and it was used for putting light in it.

In short, '**Mishkat**' is a case for protecting light against wind and storm and, since it was often made in wall, the light was focused and reflected.

The Arabic word /Zujajah/ means glass. In fact, it is applied to transparent stones and since glass is made of stone materials and it is transparent, it is also called /zujajah/. Here it means a bulb that is put on the lamp to protect its flame and to lead the movement of air from bottom to the top and to increase the lightness of the torch.

The Arabic word /misbah/ means a lamp that usually has a wick and a flammable oil material and the wick is burned.

The Qur'anic sentence:

"...lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither of the East nor of the West..."

refers to an energetic material which is particularly suitable for this lamp, because olive oil is pressed from a blissful and fruitful tree. It is one of the best oils for burning.

It comes from a tree that all its branches and stems must be equally exposed to sunlight and it must be neither located in the eastern part of the garden near wall nor in the western part of it, where one side of it is in expose of sunlight, otherwise, its fruits will be half ripe and half unripe nor its oil will be pure.

Now we realize that for having a full light of this lamp, we must have 4 factors: a lantern which protects the lamp completely, and focuses light without decreasing its light. A bulb that regulates the movement of air and it must be so transparent that does never prevent lighting.

A lamp that produces light by using wick. And, finally, an energetic material that is pure and clean and must be so flammable that as though it is going to be burnt without touch of fire.

All of these, on one side, show the reality of material and its appearance. On the other side, great Islamic commentators have different opinions about the concept of this likening; or, in other words, to what Divine Light it is likened:

Some say that its purpose is that guiding light that Allah casts in the heart of the believers; in other words, its purpose is 'faith' that is placed in the hearts of the believers.

Some say that it is the holy Qur'an that casts light in the heart of man.

Some say that the similitude refers to the noble Prophet (S).

Some say that it refers to the reasons of monotheism and Allah's justice.

Some commentators have interpreted it as the spirit of piety and obedience, which is the cause of goodness and prosperity.

In fact, all the extensions that are for the spiritual light in the holy Qur'an and Islamic narrations are mentioned here as commentary. The spirit and concept of all of them is, in fact, one thing and that is the light of 'guidance', which comes from the holy Qur'an, revelation, and prophets, and it develops by reasons of monotheism and its result is submitting to Allah's command and piety.

Note: The light of faith that is in the heart of the believers has all these 4 factors which exist in a lighting lamp.

"Misbah" is those very flames of faith that appear in the heart of the believer wherefrom the light of guidance comes.

"Zujajah" and bulb is the heart of the believer that controls faith in his entity. And **"ieshkat"** is the chest of the believer or, in another word, it is the collection of his personality, knowledge, sciences, and thoughts that saves his faith from mishaps.

The meaning of the Qur'anic phrase which says:

"...a blessed olive-tree..."

is the very Divine revelation whose essence is fully pure and sincere and the believers' faith is fruitful and flaming by it.

In fact, this is the Light of Allah, the light which illuminates the heavens and the earth, and it comes from the center of the believers' heart and lights all their entity and being.

The reasons that are gained through wisdom and intellect are mixed with the light of revelation and will be the extension of **'light upon light'**.

And it is by this that the receptive hearts are guided to the Divine light, and the concept of

"...Allah guides unto His Light whom He pleases..."

is applied to them.

Therefore, for saving this Divine Light (the light of faith and guidance), a collection of Islamic teachings, knowledge, self-edification, and ethic is necessary to protect this “**Misbah**” as a “**Mishkat**” does.

It also needs an apt and receptive heart to regulate this program like ‘zujajah’. And help through revelation is needed to give energy to it, like the blessed olive tree.

And this light of revelation must be free from deviating money-oriented tendencies that are western and eastern and cause decay, evilness and darkness.

It must be so pure, and clear, free from deviation that it mobilizes all man’s powers without help of anything and becomes the extension of:

“...whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself) though no fire touched it...”

Any kind of interpretation by personal opinion, incorrect prejudice, personal tastes, imposed ideas, inclination to west and east, and any superstitions that defile the fruit of this blessed tree will decrease the luminosity of this lamp and sometimes put out the light.

This is the example that Allah has stated for His Light in this verse and He is All-Aware of all things.

We understand from the above matters that if we see in narrations by the infallible Imams that ‘**Mishkat**’ is interpreted as the heart of the Prophet (S), ‘Misbah’ as the light of knowledge, ‘**Zujajah**’ as Imam Ali (as), his successors, and ‘**Shajaratin Mubarakah**’ (***the blessed tree***) as ‘Ibrahim Khalil who is the root of this family, and the Qur’anic sentence:

“neither of the East nor of the West”

as negation of inclination to Judaism and Christianity, these are in fact the other face of that light of guidance and faith and are the statement of a clear extension of them, but it is not limited to them only.

And also if some commentators have interpreted this Divine Light as the holy Qur’an or intellectual reasons, or the holy Prophet (S), it has a root in common with the commentary of the above verse, too.

Sura An-Nur – Verse 36

فِي بُيُوتٍ أَذِنَ اللَّهُ أَنْ تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ

36. “ (This lamp of guidance is found) in houses which Allah has allowed to be exalted and that His name be mentioned therein. There glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings, ”

Up to now we behold the characteristics of this Divine Light, the light of guidance and faith, through

likening it to a very luminous lamp, now we must see that where this lamp is located and how its place is. By specifying its place, all the things that are necessary for this will be clear.

Therefore, this verse implies that this lamp is found in the houses which Allah hath allowed its walls to be exalted so that enemies, devils, and the promiscuous ones can not reach it. They are houses that His name shall be remembered therein and the verses of the Qur'an and the facts of revelation are read in them.

The verse says:

“(This lamp of guidance is found) in houses which Allah has allowed to be exalted and that His name be mentioned therein...”

Many commentators consider the above verse to be related to the pervious verse, as we have commented on it; but some say that it is related to the next sentence, the relation which does not seem very correct.

But that some say what effect the existence of such lamp in the houses whose characteristics are stated has, we must say that a house, whose walls are exalted and decisive alert men guard it, guarantees the protection of this luminous lamp. Moreover those who seek such source of light will be aware of its place and hasten to enjoy it.

But what is the purpose of the Qur'anic word /buyut/ (Houses)? Its answer will be clear in the characteristics mentioned in the rest of the verse, where it says:

“...There glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings, ”

Some Points

1. We read in Ziyarat Jami'ah, when we address the Imams (as) of Sh'iite:

“...and Allah has placed you in houses that Allah (s.w.t.) has permitted to be exalted...”

Therefore, the sanctuaries of the infallible Imams (as) are counted as one of the extensions of the Qur'anic phrase /fi buyutin/ (in houses) mentioned in this holy verse.

2. The Arabic word /turfa'/in the verse means the height of a place, too, such as the verse which says:

‘And (remember) when Abraham and Ishmael raised up the foundations of the House...’⁴

3. Imam Baqir (as) said:

“Those houses are the houses of prophets, sages and the infallible Imams.”⁵

Tha'labi says in his commentary that one day the Prophet (S) was reciting this verse when then Abubakr

said:

“Is the house of Ali (as) and Fatimah (as) the extension of this verse?”

The Prophet (S) said:

*“Yes, it is the best extension of this verse.”*⁶

4. Imam Kazim (as) said:

“The purpose of the phrase

‘...in the mornings and the evenings’,

*mentioned in the verse, is the punctual ritual prayers.”*⁷

5. In the Holy Qur’an, there are many cases in which ‘glorification’ is used instead of ‘ritual prayer’. Sura ‘Al-i-‘Imran, No. 3, verse 41:

“...and glorify (Him) in the evening and early morning.”

Sura Ta-Ha, No. 20, verse 130:

“...and glorify your Lord by praising Him before the rising of the sun and before its setting...”

Sura An-Nur – Verse 37

رَجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ
يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ

37. “Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and paying the poor-rate; they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes will be overturned;”

Men of Allah try their best for their worldly life while they are not ignorant of the Hereafter, because abandoning business is not a value, but if business is done along with remembrance of Allah, praying and giving alms-tax, then it will be respected high.

Therefore in this noble verse it is implied that those men who are not prevented from remembering of Allah, performing ritual prayer and paying alms-tax by neither business nor selling and buying, fear the day in which hearts and eyes will be capsized.

The verse says:

“Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and paying the poor-rate; they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes will be overturned;”

These characteristics show that the aforementioned houses are the very centers that are fortified by Allah’s commandment and Allah is remembered in them. In these centers Islam facts and Allah’s ordinances are circulated.

In this extensive and comprehensive meaning, mosques are the houses of prophets and saints; especially the house of the Prophet (S) and the house of AM (as) are included.

There is no reason for the matter that some commentators in their commentaries have limited it only to the mosque or houses of prophets and such like.

And there are some narrations in which its clear extensions are mentioned:

Imam Baqir (as) said:

*“This verse refers to the houses of prophets and the house of Imam Ali (as) is included in it, too.”*⁸

Another tradition indicates that when the Prophet (S) was reciting this verse he was asked:

“What is the purpose of/buyut/ (houses)?”

The Prophet said:

“The houses of prophets”

Again Abubakr asked:

“Is this house (pointing to the house of Fatimah (as) and Ali (as)) included in it, too?”

The Prophet said:

*“Yes, it is the best of them.”*⁹

All of these denote the clear examples.

In another tradition upon the commentary of this verse by Imam Sadiq (as), recorded in the book Raudah Kafi, he has said:

*“Verily **Mishkat** is the heart of Muhammad (S), and **Misbah** is the very light of knowledge (and guidance), and **Zujajah** is the heart of Ali (as) or his self, (in which Misbah was placed after departure of*

the Prophet (S)).”¹⁰

Also in the book *Tauhid*, by Saduq, we read a tradition by Imam Baqir (as) who said:

*“Verily **Mishkat** is the light of knowledge in the heart of the Prophet (S) and **Zujajah** is the heart of Ali (as)... And **Inurun ‘ala nur**! is Imams who are from the family of the Prophet (S) and they come one after the other.*

These Imams are assisted by the light of knowledge and wisdom. And this trend has been since the creation of Adam and will continue to the end of the world. These are the very testamentary guardians who are appointed as caliphs by Allah in the earth.

There is not and there will be not any age or time that the earth can be empty of one of them. They are Allah’s Authorities over His servants.”¹¹

In another tradition by Imam Sadiq (as), ‘Mishkat’ has been interpreted as Fatimah (as), ‘Misbah’ as Hassan (as), and ‘Zujajah’ as Hussayn (as).¹²

There is another authentic tradition by Imam Baqir (as), in which Ghattadah, a famous Islamic jurist from Basrah, had a conversation with Imam (as) and he expressed his heartily amazement concerning Imam’s peculiar grandeur. Imam said to him whether he knew that where he was sitting; in front of those about whom Allah has said:

‘(This lamp of guidance is found) in houses which Allah has. allowed to be exalted and that His name be mentioned therein. There glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings, ’

‘Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of in prayer and paying the poor-rate...’.

Then Imam said:

“You are what you said (a jurist from Basrah), and we are what the holy Qur’an says.”

In answer, Ghattadah said:

*“You are true, may Allah make me your sacrifice! By Allah that the purpose is not stone and clay houses (but its purpose is the houses of revelation, faith, and guidance).”*¹³

In another tradition it has been narrated about this group of Divine men who guard revelation and guidance:

*“They are businessmen who are not ignorant of Allah’s remembrance because of trading or doing business. When it is the time of prayer, they pay its due unto Allah therein (perform prayer).”*¹⁴

This refers to the matter that while they are carrying out economic good activities, all of their actions are overshadowed by Allah's name and they consider nothing preceding it.

Yes, any place or center which is set by Allah's command and Allah's name is mentioned in it and every morning and evening some believing men, who do not forget Allah's remembrance because of worldly life, praise Allah and perform prayer, is the center of Divine lights (Mishkat), faith and guidance.

In fact, this kind of house has some characteristics:

First, it is set by Allah's command.

Second, its bases and walls are so exalted and fortified that they protect it from the penetration of Satan.

Third, it is the center for remembering Allah.

Fourth, some men guard it who praise Allah every morning and every evening, and the worldly beguiling attractions do not make them ignore the Truth.

These houses with such characteristics are the sources of guidance and faith.

It is also important to mention the matter that in this verse both the Arabic word /tijarat/ (merchandise) and the word /bay'/ (sale) have been used. Although it seems that both of them mean one thing, the difference between them may be that /tijarat/ refers to a continuous job and /bay'/ refers to an impermanent action which is done for one time.

It is also necessary to pay attention to the matter that it does not say that 'they are men who do not do business or sale', but it says:

"Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and paying the poor-rate..."

They always fear the day of Hereafter and Allah's justice court, in which hearts and eyes will be captized because of its awe.

(The Arabic verb /yaxafun/ is a form of verb which in the Arabic language indicates the continuity of their fear of the resurrection day. It is a sort of fear that compels them to their duties and missions.)

Moreover, great commentators have different opinions about the Qur'anic phrase /nurun 'ala nur/

('Light upon light'):

In Majma'-ul-Bayan, the deceased Tabarsi says: it refers to prophets who come one after another from one root and continue the path of guidance.

Fakhr-i-Razi says: it refers to gathering of light rays and their concentration, as it is said about

believers:

'A believer has 4 positions. If he receives a favour or blessing, he thanks Allah. If he receives a disaster, he is patient and withstands it. If he says a word, he tells the truth. If he judges, he seeks justice. He is like a living man among the dead when he is among ignorant people.'

'He moves among 5 lights: his saying is light. His deed is light. His place of arrival is light. His place of exit is light. His aim is the light of Allah in the Day of Hereafter.'

It is also probable that the first light in the verse refers to the light of Divine guidance through revelation, and the second light refers to His guidance by means of intellect. Or the first light is the light of religious guidance, and the second light is Divine guidance, therefore, it is

'light upon light'.

Thus, this holy phrase is sometimes interpreted as different sources of light (prophets), and sometimes as various kinds of light, and sometimes as its various phases, while all of them are possible and can be included in the meaning of the verse and, therefore, its concept is vast. 15

Some Notes to Be Studied

1. Some traditions indicate that the objective of the persons mentioned in this noble verse is those businessmen who stop working and get prepared to perform ritual prayer when they hear the call to prayer. 16
 2. Business is not the only factor that entertains man and prevents him from remembering Allah, but there are also other factors mentioned in the Qur'an, such as: multiplication of wealth, desires, bad friend and offspring.
 3. Olive tree has been described as 'blessed tree' in the above verses. And if in that age the importance of this phrase was not clear when the Qur'an was descended, now we know it fully, for great scientists have spent many years to study the different properties of plants and they tell us that this tree produces a blessed fruit which contains one of the most useful and valuable oils and it plays an important role in the health of body.
- Ibn 'Abbas says that all parts of this tree is valuable and good, even its ash has also got property and benefit. It is the first tree that after the Flood of Noah (as) grew, and prophets have uttered invocation prayed for it to be a blessed tree.

Sura An-Nur – Verse 38

لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَيَزِيدَهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ
حِسَابٍ

38. “That Allah may reward them with the best of what they have done, and increase for them out of His grace. And Allah gives sustenance to whom He pleases without stint.”

Allah compensates all shortages of Allah’s men’s deeds and gives them full reward. This noble verse points to the great reward of these guardians of the light of guidance who are the lovers of truth and reality.

It says:

“That Allah may reward them with the best of what they have done, and increase for them out of His grace...”

There is nothing to get surprised at, because Allah’s grace is not limited for those who deserve His Grace;

“...And Allah gives sustenance to whom He pleases without stint.”

Upon the purpose of the Qur’anic phrase:

***lahsana ma ‘amilul* (‘the best of what they did’),**

mentioned in the verse, some say it refers to all good deeds, including recommended duties and compulsory ones, great or small.

Some others say it refers to the fact that Allah rewards a person who does a good deed tenfold, or sometimes 700 times or even more, as we read in Sura Al-’An‘am, No.6, verse 160:

“Whoever brings a good (deed), he shall have ten times its like...”

And in Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 261, we read:

“The likeness of those who spend their wealth in Allah’s way is as the likeness of a grain (of corn) that grows seven ears, with) a hundred grains in every ear. And Allah multiplies (in abundance) for whom He wills...”

Upon the commentary of the above-mentioned phrase, there is also this probability that the purpose of it is that Allah will reward them all of their deeds according to the measure of their best deeds. Even their insignificant and middle deeds will be rewarded in the row of their best deeds.

This manner is not beyond the grace of Allah, because when justice and punishment are in

contemplation, equality is necessary, but when grace and generosity come in, bounties and remittal are without stint, since His Pure Essence is infinite and His bless is unlimited and His generosity is endless.

Sura An-Nur – Verse 39

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيَعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمَانُ مَاءً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ
شَيْئًا وَوَجَدَ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ فَوَفَّاهُ حِسَابَهُ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

39. “And (for) those who disbelieve, their deeds are as a mirage in a desert, which the thirsty one supposes to be water until when he comes unto it he finds it naught, and finds Allah with him Who pays him his reckoning in full; and Allah is swift in taking account.”

Since the previous verses spoke about Allah’s light, the light of faith and guidance, the above verse speaks about obscurity of disbelief, ignorance, , faithlessness, dark-hearted pagans and hypocrites in order to complete the discussion and to make their position clear, and compare their status with others’.

The verse speaks about those whose entity is:

‘layer upon layer of darkness’;

in contrary to the believers whose life and thoughts are:

‘light upon light’.

Here the word is about individuals who are after mirage instead of water in the dry and hot desert of life and then lose their life because of thirst, while the believers have found the clear spring of guidance under the auspices of faith and have settled beside it.

At first, the verse says:

“And (for) those who disbelieve, their deeds are as a mirage in a desert, ...”

Then it continues saying:

“...which the thirsty one supposes to be water until when he comes unto it he finds it naught, and finds Allah with him Who pays him his reckoning in full; and Allah is swift in taking account.”¹⁷

The Arabic word /sarab/ is derived from the word ‘Saraba’, which means: ‘walking in a slope’, and the word ‘Sarab’ means: ‘an inclined way’. Therefore, ‘Sarab’ is applied to a shine that appears from a distance in deserts and slopes and it seems that there is water over there, while it is nothing but a reflection of sunlight.

The Arabic word /qi'ah/ means 'a vast area and ground that has no water and plant', and, in other words, it is applied to arid deserts in which mirage is often seen.

Commentators of the Qur'an and lexicologists consider this word singular and its plural form is /qi'an/ or /qi'at/.¹⁸

Physicists say that when the air gets warm, the layer of air, that is directly above the earth, gets less dense and becomes different than the adjacent layer, then the waves of light are broken and mirage is because of this.

An English dictionary defines a mirage as:

'It is caused by the refraction of light rays from the object through layers of air having different densities as the result of unequal temperature distribution.'

Sura An-Nur – Verse 40

أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لُّجِّيٍّ يَغْشَاهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ سَحَابٌ ظُلُمَاتٌ
بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ إِذَا أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُ لَمْ يَكْدِ يَرَاهَا وَمَن لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُ
مِنْ نُّورٍ

40. “Or (the Unbelievers’ deeds) is like utter darkness in a vast, abysmal sea. There covers him a wave, above which is another wave, above which is a cloud; (with layers of) darkness one over the other. When he holds out his hand, he can hardly see it. And for whomever Allah does not appoint light, for him there is no light.”

Each deed that a believer does is light and each deed that a disbeliever does is darkness. Instead of opening way for them, disbelievers’ deeds mislead them more and it will be veil upon veil.

Therefore, in this noble verse the Qur'an says:

“Or (the Unbelievers’ deeds) is like utter darkness in a vast, abysmal sea. There covers him a wave, above which is another wave, above which is a cloud; (with layers of) darkness one over the other. When he holds out his hand, he can hardly see it...”

Yes, the true light in men's life is only the light of faith, and life will be dark and obscure without it, but this light of faith comes only from Allah.

The verse continues saying:

“...And for whomever Allah does not appoint light, for him there is no light.”

To understand this example fully, it is first necessary to pay attention to the meaning of the Arabic word /lujjiy/. It means: ‘a vast and very deep sea’, and, in fact, it is derived from the Arabic word /lijaj/ which means: ‘to go after or insist on a job, (usually bad ones)’. Then it has been applied to the succession of waves of the sea and to their standing behind each other.

Since if a sea is deeper and vaster, its waves are more, this word is applied to the deep and vast seas.

Now, consider a wavy and rolling sea which is very deep, and we know that sunlight, the strongest light, penetrates into the sea to a certain level and its last ray will disappear in almost a depth of 700 meter, so that in deeper parts continual darkness and eternal night rule, for no light penetrates there.

We know also this fact that if water is clear and calm, light will be reflected better, but wavy water breaks light ray, and a little amount of it can go deep into water.

And if, above a wavy sea, a dark cloud stands, the resulting darkness from it will be very dense.

First the darkness of the depth of sea, second the darkness of wavy sea, and third the darkness of dark cloud are the layers of darkness that are placed on each other. It is obvious that in such a darkness the closest objects can not be seen, and even if man holds his hand close to his eye, he can not see it.

A disbeliever who has not the light of faith is like someone who is involved in such triple darkness. On the contrary, fair-minded believers are the extension of ‘light upon light’.

Some of commentators have said that this triple darkness in which faithless people are involved, is as follows: the darkness of incorrect belief, the darkness of wrong speech, and the darkness of bad behaviour.

In other words, the deeds of faithless people are dark both from the point of fundamental and from the view point of their reflection in their speech, and also because of their full harmony with their other evil deeds.

Some other commentators have said that this triple darkness is the phases of their ignorance: 1) They do not know. 2) They do not know that they do not know. 3) Nevertheless, they think that they do know. And this phase is that compound and multiplied ignorance.

Some other have said since the main factors of cognizance, according to the text of the Qur’an, are 3, that is: heart (in the sense of intellect), eye, and ear, as Sura An-Nahl, No. 16, verse 78 says:

“And Allah has brought you forth from the wombs of your mothers (while) you knew nothing, and He appointed for you hearing and sight and hearts...”

But disbelievers have lost both the light of heart, and the light of eye, and the light of ear and they are

plunging in darkness.¹⁹

It is obvious that these 3 comments are in harmony and it is possible that the verse refers to all of them.

Anyway, we conclude from these couple of verses that the deeds of disbelievers are likened a false light that appears like mirage in a dry and hot desert, and not only does not it quench their thirst, but also their thirst increases because of running.

Then, after this false light, which is the faithless hypocrites' specious deeds, there is the inward of these deeds, which is full of darkness and dense horrible obscurity. This awful inward deranges all man's senses and the closest objects will be invisible to him, even he cannot see himself, let alone others.

It is obvious that in such a terrible darkness, man is totally lonely and ignorant. He can neither find the way, nor does he have any fellow traveler, nor does not know his status, and he does not have any means, because he has not enjoyed the source of light, that is Allah, and he has covered with the veil of ignorance and conceit.

If you do not forget, we have said that light is the source of beauties, luminosities, life, and movement, but darkness is the source of the ugliness, death, mortality, immobility and silence. Darkness is the center of fear and hate. It is accompanied with coolness and depression. This is the status of those who lose the light of faith and plunge in the darkness of disbelief.

Some Tradition About 'Light' and 'Darkness'

1. Once Imam Sajjad (as) was asked:

"Why are those who stay awake during the night and make supplication to Allah facially the best?"

He said:

*"Because they have private communion with Allah and Allah covers them with His light."*²⁰

2. Imam Ali (as) said:

*"Since I heard the Prophet (S) said: 'Night prayer is light.', I have not lost one night to perform night prayer."*²¹

3. The Prophet (S) said:

*"Prayer is light."*²²

4. The Prophet (S) said:

"Anyone who testifies rightly in order to restore a Muslim's right by it, his face will be luminous on the day of dooms and his face emit light as far as the eye can see and people know him by his name and

family.”²³

5. Imam Ali (as) said:

*“There is truth with any right matter and there is light with any right thing.”*²⁴

6. A man said to the Prophet (S) that I would like to be mustered on the Day of Hereafter luminously. The Prophet (S) said:

*“Do not commit oppression upon anyone (so that) you will be mustered in light on the Day.”*²⁵

7. The Prophet (S) said:

*“Be in awe of injustice, because it causes darkness in the Day of Hereafter.”*²⁶

8. Sura Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 257:

“Allah is the Guardian of those who believe. He brings them out of the darkness into the light; and those who disbelieve, their guardians are false-deities (taqut). They bring them out of the light into the darkness; they are the inhabitants of the Fire, wherein shall they abide forever.”

1. The Commentary book: ‘Nur’, following of the verse, and for more information, you may refer to Kitab ul-Wafi, Vol. 1, p. 382, and Tauhid-i-Saduq, chapter Ar-ru’yah, p. 107

2. Burhan and Safi commentary, because of this noble tradition by Imam Rida (a.s): “Allah guides all dwellers of the skies and the earth to what is their best”

3. Bihar, Vol. 1, p. 325; and Mizan ul-Hikmah, p. 6016

4. Sura Al- Baqarah, No. 2, verse 127

5. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, the Commentary

6. Ruh ul-Ma’ani, the Commentary

7. Bihar, Vol. 23, p. 326

8. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 607

9. Majma’ ul-Bayan, following the verse

10. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn, Vol. 3, p. 602 & 603

11. Ibid

12. Ibid

13. Ibid, p. 602

14. Ibid, p. 609

15. Take care

16. Nur-uth-Thaqalyn

17. Imam Ali (as) was asked about how Allah reckons all people together. He said:

“As He provides all sustenance in one time.” (Majma’ ul- Bayan)

18. Majma’ ul-Bayan, Ruh ul-Ma’ani, the Commentary by Qurtabi, and Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi

19. Tafsir-i-Fakhr-i-Razi, following the verse

20. ‘Ilal-ush-Sharayi’, Vol. 1, p. 366

21. Bihar, Vol. 41, p. 71, and 'Allhar us-Sadiqin, Vol. 11, p. 91
22. At-Ta'iqib wat-tarhib, Vol. 1, p. 156
23. Bihar, 104/311/9
24. Kafi, 2/54/04
25. Kanz ul-Abraham'mal
26. 'Usul Kafi, Vol. 4, p. 17

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