

Allāh and the name An-Nūr (The Light)

source: silsilat ul-hudā wa nnūr ~ the series of guidance and light ~ tape no. 514

Question #4: “Some of the students of knowledge found it strange that you explained Allāh’s saying, the Most High – ‘Allāh is the Light of the heavens and the earth’[1] – to be that He illuminates them[2] and that He does not have the name ‘An-Nūr’ (The Light); so we would like a detailed explanation about this.”

Shaykh al-Albānī answers:

“I don’t have any detailed explanation except that I don’t know of An-Nūr being one of the names of Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, in an authentic hadīth. Rather, (the Prophet) (صلى الله عليه وسلم) had said that ‘His Veil is light’ – when he was asked ‘Did you see your Lord?’, he had said: ‘A light,[3] how could I see Him?’[4] [5] [6] And (also) in the narration of Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī in Sahīh Muslim, he said ‘His Veil is light...’[7] [1] Sūrat un-Nūr; 24:35

[2] Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr and Tafsīr as-Sa’dī mention similar statements, with both literal meanings and also metaphorical ones such as ‘Allāh is the One who guides those in the heavens and the earth,’ ‘His Book is a light,’ ‘His legislation is a light’ etc.

[3] it was not clearly heard that the Shaykh said ‘A light’ due to a problem with the tape recording, but it is part of the hadīth

[4] Sahīh Muslim #178; it was also narrated in this same chapter with the wording: ‘I saw a light’

[5] what is meant by ‘A light, how could I see Him?’ is the light of the Veil, which is mentioned in another hadīth: ‘His Veil is light,’ and it is also mentioned in another hadīth: ‘I saw a light’

– so its meaning is that ‘how could I see Him while the light of the Veil had prevented me from seeing Him?’; refer to Shaykh ‘Abdul Muhsin al-‘Abbād in Sharh Sunan at-Tirmithī, tape #361

[6] the meaning of ‘A light, how could I see Him?’ is: ‘His Veil is a light, so how could I see Him?’; refer to Imām an-Nawawī in his explanation of Sahīh Muslim, part 3, p. 12

[7] Sahīh Muslim #179