Excerpts: Their Highnesses the Aga Khans III and IV on Ayat al-Nur and the Sura of Light of the Qur'an

"For Muslims there has been a similar personal influence, and in many ways it resembles the position that St. Thomas Aquinas took in the Catholic Church. First of all as regards the idea of the divinity of God: a great deal of the Qur'an is taken up with God's creation, with God's intimate presence in the world, with the importance of each human being's relations with the Creator; but only in one chapter -- the chapter on Light -- is the nature of the divinity referred to in a very clear form. Although of course we do not believe that the person of the Creator is a form of light, either in waves or in the minutest association of myriads of points, yet the consequence of the light, as seen in the universe, is the nearest we can imagine or hope to believe about the person of our Creator."

Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah, Aga Khan III's undated article 'Reincarnation or Companionship On High?'
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/1520/

"To a certain extent I have found that the following verse of the Qur'an, so long as it is understood in a purely non-physical sense, has given assistance and understanding to myself and other Muslims. However, I must warn all who read it not to allow their material critical outlook to break in with literal, verbal explanations of something that is symbolic and allegorical. I appeal to every reader, whether Muslim or not, to accept the spirit of this verse in
its entirety:

"Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth; His light is as a niche in which is a lamp, and the lamp is in a glass, the glass is as though it were a glittering star; it is lit from a blessed tree, an Olive neither of east nor of the west, the oil of which would well-nigh give light though no fire touched it, light upon light; Allah guides to His light whom He pleases; and Allah strikes out parables for men; and Allah all things doth know.' (Qur'an 26:35)"

http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/1225/

"[The Sura of Light from the Qur'an] tells us that the oil of the blessed olive tree lights the lamp of understanding, a light that belongs neither to East nor West. We are to give this light to all. In that spirit, all that we learn will belong to the world -- and that too is part of the vision I share with you."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 1979 Address to the Asia Society (New York, USA)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/2010/

"Islam is fundamentally in its very nature a natural religion. Throughout the Qur'an God's signs (Ayats) are referred to as the natural phenomenon, the law and order of the universe, the exactitudes and consequences of the relations between natural phenomenon in cause and effect. Over and over, the stars, sun, moon, earthquakes, fruits of the earth and trees are mentioned as the signs of Divine power, Divine law and Divine order. Even in the Ayah of Nur, [the] Divine is referred to as the natural phenomenon of light and even references are made to the fruit of the earth.

During the great period of Islam, Muslims did not forget these
principles of their religion."

Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah, Aga Khan III's 1952 letter to H.E. Dr. Zahid Husain, President of Arabiyyah Jamiyyat, 'What have we forgotten in Islam?' (Karachi, Pakistan)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/1253/

"The famous verse of 'light' in the Qur'an, the Ayat al-Nur, whose first line is rendered here in the mural behind me, inspires among Muslims a reflection on the sacred, the transcendent. It hints at a cosmos full of signs and symbols that evoke the perfection of Allah's creation and mercy."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2003 Address to the International Colloquium 'Word of God, Art of Man: The Qur'an and its Creative Expressions' organised by The Institute of Ismaili Studies (London, United Kingdom)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/6815/

"For the Aga Khan Museum, I thought that 'light' might be a concept around which you could design an outstanding museum. The notion of light has transversed nearly all of human history, and has been an inspiration for numerous faiths, going as far back of course to the Zoroastrians and their reverence for the Sun, to the Sura in the Holy Qur'an titled al-Nur. Decades of Western history are referred to as the 'enlightenment' for good reason."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2006 letter to architect Fumihiko Maki setting out notions of Light as the design theme for the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto (Aiglemont)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7636/

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