

The Quran's real status restored by the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement (3)

Friday Khutba by Dr Zahid Aziz, for Lahore Ahmadiyya UK, 16 October 2020

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۗ

“The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to people and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion.” (2:185)

وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تَبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

“And We have revealed the Book to you explaining all things, and a guidance and mercy and good news for those who submit.” (16:89)

وَلَا يَأْتُونَكَ بِمَثَلٍ إِلَّا جِئْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيرًا ﴿٥٠﴾

“And they cannot bring you a question, but We have brought you the truth and the best explanation.” (25:33)

I am continuing with the subject of the last two *khutbas*. In these verses the Quran claims that it is not only a guidance but that it contains “clear proofs” to prove that guidance to be true. It explains all the things that it deals with. And whatever question people raise against it, whatever objection or argument against it they may put forward, the Quran answers it with truth and the best reply.

On the basis of such verses, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, pointed out and emphasised another unique characteristic of the Quran. It is that the Quran *itself* puts forward all its own claims and supports them by arguments which it *itself* provides. It does not leave it up to its followers to make claims on its behalf nor does it just make claims and rely on its followers to provide arguments and proofs for them. This principle may sound very obvious, but when it is applied to the scriptures of the world you realize that the beliefs and claims of various

religions are not always to be found in their scriptures; and even if they are, or they are not supported by any arguments given in those scriptures.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrote his first book, *Barahin Ahmadiyya*, to prove the truth of the Holy Quran and the truth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad to the world — that the Quran was indeed a revelation from God and that the one who brought it into the world was a true Prophet of God. Near the beginning of this book, he writes:

“...all the arguments and evidence that I have put forward in this book as to the Divine origin of the Holy Quran and the truthfulness of the Holy Prophet’s Divine mission ... or any other claim which we have made for it, have all been taken from the same sacred scripture, the Holy Quran. I have neither given any argument based on my own speculation nor made any claim not contained in the Book. Accordingly I have taken care to quote exactly all the verses from which I have derived and deduced those arguments and claims. It will, in the same way, be incumbent on those who, in reply to my book, might wish to make a claim in respect of their sacred scripture, that they should put forward and advance only such a claim — with the arguments supporting it — that actually exists in their sacred books.” (*Barahin Ahmadiyya, Ruhani Khaza’in*, v. 1, p. 88)

Then he goes on to add:

“Any reasonable person can understand that it is the duty of a sacred scripture itself to put forward whatever claim it seeks to make regarding its status as a revealed book and to support that with convincing arguments; in the same way, the book itself should provide clear and compelling proof of the validity of its principles. It should not be that the revealed book stays silent and speechless when it comes to the advancement and proof of its claim and the establishment of its principles by sound reasoning, and that someone else has to come forward to plead and promote its cause.” (*Ibid.*, p. 89)

There is a verse in the Quran supporting what he has said here to the scholars of other religions. The verse says: “Then bring your Book, if you are truthful” (37:157). Show from your holy book that it teaches the doctrines that you are ascribing to it, and show from your book the arguments that it gives to prove its teachings to be true.

The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement always followed this principle, of presenting from the Quran what are the teachings of Islam and what arguments are there in support of those teachings. In 1896 a Hindu gentleman organised a multi-faith conference in Lahore which was held in December. Hazrat Mirza was also invited to present a lecture at this conference, known as the Great Religious Conference. A condition that the organisers imposed for the participants was that they should only talk about the good points of their own religions and not criticise other religions. This condition pleased Hazrat Mirza sahib and it suited his way of thinking because he himself had long expressed the desire that in religious discussions between representatives of different religions, each one should concentrate on the good points of his own religion, and not find fault with others.

In fact, a year earlier Hazrat Mirza sahib had himself proposed that he would hold a multi-faith conference in Qadian. He offered that the speakers of the conference would stay as his guests. He proposed that there should be one leading scholar from each religion, and he listed the religions as follows: Jewish, Christian, Arya Hindu, Zoroastrian, Brahma Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, and Sanatan Dharm Hindus, and he added to this list: a philosopher of the atheists. All these should present their views and a condition to be applied to each of the speakers was that:

“...he shall not at all mention other religions, but only put forward the good points of his religion and its principles. However, he must reply politely and in a civil manner to the objections against his religion which followers of other religions have made.”

This proposed conference could not take place. So Hazrat Mirza sahib was delighted when, only a little time later, this Hindu gentleman made his own proposal

for a conference in Lahore with a similar condition. Hazrat Mirza sahib supported his proposal and accepted the invitation to give a lecture. The conference organisers selected five topics on which each speaker would present the teachings of his religion. The topics included: The physical, moral and spiritual conditions of man, life after death, and the object of a human being's life. There were six moderators: three Hindus, two Muslims (one of them Maulana Nur-ud-Din), and one Sikh. Two of the moderators were judges of courts of law. Hazrat Mirza sahib wrote his lecture, of course in Urdu, and it was read out at the conference by one of his leading followers, Maulvi Abdul Karim, who was good at oratory. He begins the lecture as follows:

“In this auspicious meeting, which has been convened with the object that the advocates of the different religious systems should ... set forth the beauties of their respective religions, I, as an advocate of the faith of Islam, will dwell upon its beauties. ... all my claims and arguments shall be based upon and drawn from the Holy Quran. It is a matter of the first importance that everyone who believes in any sacred scripture as the revealed word of God should not go out of his holy book or depend upon arguments other than those provided in that book. Otherwise, he is making and advancing a new book and not the one he is claiming to support. As it is my object to show the beauties of the Quran I shall bind myself by this rule and depend only upon the Quran for every claim and argument. As other speakers are expected to follow this same rule, this will be a good opportunity for fair-minded people to make a comparative judgment about the different books which are claiming to be the revealed word of God. I shall avoid all reference to the reported words of the Holy Prophet and not go outside the Word of God as found in the Quran.”

His lecture proved highly popular. Those attending it have said this, newspapers reported the same, and the conference report made the same observation. The President of the Conference wrote that, due to the fame of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the ground was “jam-packed” during the half hour interval before his speech. Seven to eight thousand people were present, and hundreds of people had to remain standing

after all the seats were filled. They ranged from the ordinary people to high officials, religious leaders, and professionals such as lawyers, doctors and professors. The time allowed for his speech was two hours on the afternoon of 28 December 1896. But as it wasn't finished in that time, the audience demanded that more time should be given and the moderators were happy to allow it. The lecture went on and on, and the next lecturer gave up his time to accommodate this speech. After four hours, the day was over and it was the end of the conference itself, but the speech still wasn't over. Due to popular and overwhelming demand, the organisers extended the conference to the next day, 29 December, to allow his speech to be finished. The speech went on for about three and a half hours on the extra day. The President noted:

“The paper was listened to with continued interest and appreciation right from the beginning to the end.”

About six years later, Maulana Muhammad Ali translated it into English for the Ahmadiyya monthly the *Review of Religions*, and it was serialised in this magazine. Some eight years later, in 1910, Maulana Muhammad Ali revised the translation for publication in book form under the title *The Teachings of Islam*. It was published in London by a British publisher of oriental books, Luzac & Co. It has been re-published since then several times, up to the present day.

The important point I wanted to make is that in this lecture Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has presented the teachings of Islam purely from the Quran on the fundamental subjects of religion that he was addressing.