

Belief in revelation from God

Friday Khutba by Dr Zahid Aziz, for Lahore Ahmadiyya UK, 19 February 2021

ذٰلِكَ الْكِتٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِمَا اُنزِلَ اِلَيْكَ وَمَا اُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۗ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾

“This Book, in which there is no doubt, is a guide to those who keep their duty, who believe in the Unseen and keep up prayer and spend (on good works) out of what We have given them, and who believe in what has been revealed to you (O Prophet) and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are sure.” (The Quran, 2:2–4)

I am reverting to the subject that I was dealing with in the *Khutba* of two weeks ago. Here it is first stated that there is no doubt within the Quran or no doubt regarding the Quran. One meaning of this is that there is no doubt or mystery about the origin of the Quran, how it came into the world and how it reached the people of later generations like us. Even those scholars of religious history who don't believe the Quran to be the word of God acknowledge that it originated with the Prophet Muhammad and that he claimed that it was revealed to him by God. Further they agree that what the Prophet Muhammad called as his book, the same was passed down in history to reach the present day.

In case of all other scriptures, no one is sure of who wrote them, whether they were written by the people mentioned in them or by their followers many centuries later. There are different versions of the same scripture accepted by the different sects of that religion. The same scripture may have a standard version which is widely accepted by its followers as authentic but there may be other books which have been excluded from that standard version. It is not clear how and why certain books were included in the standard version but certain others left out. The priests of the religions also added their own interpretations into the texts of the scriptures. Then there is the problem that these scriptures don't exist in their original languages. In many cases,

even when they were first written it was not in the original language spoken by, for example, Jesus or Buddha, but in another language. Also, these languages in which they were written became obsolete and fell out of use with the passage of time. This makes it difficult now to know exactly the meaning of certain words and expressions used in them.

When the Quran was revealed it declared that all these previous scriptures of various nations had been revealed by God, in the same way as He was now revealing the Quran. It says to the Holy Prophet Muhammad: “Surely We have revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him, and We revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and We gave to David a scripture. And (We sent) messengers We have mentioned to you before and messengers We have not mentioned to you. And to Moses Allah addressed His word, speaking (to him) ...” (4:163–164) And one of the purposes of the Holy Prophet’s revelation was to verify the truth of earlier revelation, as it says, again to the Holy Prophet: “And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is (already) before it of the Book and a guardian over it, so judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their low desires, (turning away) from the truth that has come to you” (5:48). In fact, repeatedly the Quran says that it has come “verifying what is before it”.

As the Quran says here, it verifies the previous books by being “a guardian” over them. That means that the Quran has safeguarded the true and real teachings of the past scriptures. It corrected the wrong ideas and stories that had found their way into these books, so that a reasonable person would accept that they were revealed books. The Quran disclosed that the great personalities, holy teachers and heroes mentioned in those scriptures were mortal human beings who worshipped the One God, and by their actions and deeds they set an example of goodness for people to follow. Their real miracles were not the supernatural wonders and incredible feats that they are reported to have performed but it was the high moral qualities they displayed and the

reformation of their people which they brought about, while facing insurmountable opposition. The Quran exonerated them from all kinds of misdeeds attributed to them in their own scriptures in salacious stories. The way in which the Quran has presented the earlier prophets and their teachings facilitates people to accept that they were sent by God with His revelation. If someone evaluates those scriptures by what they themselves contain, it is difficult to believe that they were revealed by God because they portray God as having the weaknesses which human mortals have, such as lacking knowledge and acting according to low personal desires. And there is no evidence provided by history that they were Divine revelations. It is the Quran which provides the strongest evidence that the earlier scriptures were, in their origin, revealed by God.

Most of all, the Quran perfected the concept of God from how it appears in the books before it. As Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, wrote: “The fact is that except the Quran there is no book at present on the face of the earth, believed to be revealed, which considers God to possess all the perfect attributes and to be free from every shortcoming and defect” (*Chashma Ma'rifa*, pp. 107–108).

This is why the verse at the beginning of ch. 2 of the Quran mentions belief in the Quran first and then in the earlier books in this order: “and who believe in what has been revealed to you (O Prophet) and what was revealed before you”. One might think that the more logical order, in order of time, should be: “believe in what was revealed before you and in what has been revealed to you (O Prophet)”. But in fact it is as a result of believing in what was revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad that a person can come to believe that previously also all other nations had received revelation. Before the Quran came into the world, people of various nations, whether Jews, Christians, Hindus, or others, believed that revelation from God had only been granted to their particular nation or land, and to no one outside it. That kind of belief cannot lead a person to accept that revelation could come to the Holy Prophet Muhammad, as

he was not from their nation or land. On the other hand, belief in the Quran as a revelation from God definitely leads a person to believe that revelation had previously come among all nations, because that is what the Quran teaches in clear words. This is why it says here in this order: “believe in what has been revealed to you (O Prophet Muhammad) and what was revealed before you”.

It is relevant to note that, regarding Jesus and the Gospels, the Quran says that they verified what was before them “of the Torah”. They could only verify and declare the truth of the revelation and the book that had previously come to their own people. But what the Quran says about itself is, as I quoted above, that it verifies “what came before it”, which means all revelation before it.

The requirement of believing in the revelation to the Holy Prophet and the revelation which came before him also shows the finality of prophethood of the Holy Prophet because there is no mention here of believing in a revelation to someone after the Holy Prophet. If, supposing, a prophet had to come after him, then Muslims would not have been limited, as they are in this verse, to believing in revelations only up to and including the Quran. It is true that according to the Quran and Hadith someone who is not a prophet can receive revelation, whether before or after the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. But that is a lower form of revelation known as *wahy-i wilayat* as opposed to what is called *wahy-i nubuwwat*, the revelation that can only be received by a prophet and forms what is called his book. *Wahy-i wilayat* is a personal guidance, comfort and consolation for the recipient himself or herself. It shows him the existence of God as a matter of his personal experience. But whatever the *wahy-i wilayat* of a saint in Islam tells him, it needs to be confirmed by the teachings of the Quran and Islam. As the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement wrote:

“Which evidence is greater than the evidence of the Book of Allah, upon which falsehood cannot come from in front or behind? It is the most appropriate and the highest thing that the non-Quranic sources be judged on the basis of the Quran,

whether it is a hadith of the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu alaihi wa sallam*, the vision of a holy man (*wali*) or the revelation of a saint (*qutb*), for the Quran is a book whose authenticity is guarded by Allah and He said: ‘We have revealed the Quran and We are surely its guardian’. It does not change with the changing times and with the passing of many centuries” (*Hamamat-ul-Bushra*, p. 32). He went on to add in the same book: “I do not confirm any of my revelations but only after testing it by the Book of Allah, for I know that anything opposed to the Quran is false and heretical” (p. 79).

He also wrote in another book in Arabic: “There is no prophet for us to follow except the *Mustafa* (Holy Prophet Muhammad) and no book for us to obey except the *Furqan* (the Quran) which is a guardian over the previous scriptures. ... The revelation of the true inspired saints (of Islam) cannot go against it. ... Whatever revelation I have received from Allah, if, for the sake of argument, it went against the Quran, I would throw it away with my own hands like trash and a worthless thing.” (*Ainah Kamalat Islam*, p. 21)

بَارَكَ اللهُ لَنَا وَنَاوَكُمُ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعَنَا وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِالْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ، إِنَّهُ تَعَالَى جَوَادٌ كَرِيمٌ
مَلِكٌ بَرٌّ رَوْوْفٌ رَحِيمٌ-