

More on *Lailat-ul-Qadr* and Quran as a guide

Friday Khutba by Dr Zahid Aziz, for Lahore Ahmadiyya UK, 6 May 2022

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ﴿١﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿٢﴾ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ۗ حَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿٣﴾
تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَكِ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٤﴾ سَلَامٌ ۖ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿٥﴾

“¹Surely We revealed it on the Night of Majesty — ²And what will make you comprehend what the Night of Majesty is? ³The Night of Majesty is better than a thousand months. ⁴The angels and the Spirit descend in it by the permission of their Lord — for every affair — ⁵Peace! it is till the rising of the morning.”
— ch. 97

In my last Ramadan *khutba* last Friday about *Lailat-ul-Qadr*, I omitted one point so as not to prolong the *khutba*. I mention it now. This relates to the actual experience of *Lailat-ul-Qadr* as described by some of the prominent members of our Lahore Ahmadiyya Jama‘at. Saints and holy people see illumination on this night with their spiritual eyes. Lesser people find their hearts attracted to prayer and to concentration in devotion. The angels act on the heart and bring about peace in it. In the biography of Maulana Muhammad Ali, Mr Nasir Ahmad Faruqi relates that once he asked the Maulana if he had ever experienced *Lailat-ul-Qadr*. The Maulana said:

“Yes. Once in Dalhousie I was saying *tahajjud* prayers during the last ten days of Ramadan. When I was reciting *At-tahiyyat*, suddenly a very bright light appeared in the window. At first I thought that on the road below some people were passing carrying gas lamps, but then I realized that no one would be out in these back-woods at 3 a.m. Then I looked through the window to see what the light was, and saw that it was illuminating even the trees on the mountain far ahead. That scene disappeared as I watched it. Then it occurred to me that it was the illuminations of *Lailat-ul-Qadr* that Allah had shown me.”

(Note: Dalhousie is a mountainous town in India where people from the Punjab, including Maulana Muhammad Ali, along with some other members of the *Jama'at*, and their families, used to spend the summer months until the partition of India in 1947.)

Mr Faruqi further relates:

“Once in Karachi in 1950, again during the last ten days of Ramadan, it was the night of the 29th. During *tahajjud* prayer I found myself deeply engrossed and felt as if my soul was melting away at Allah’s threshold. I was in the state that I did not want to rise up from *sajdah*. During the pre-dawn meal, where the Hazrat Maulana was also present, I said to him that I thought this night had been the *Lailat-ul-Qadr*. He replied:

“I think so as well. Last night when I was saying the *Isha* prayer, after reciting the *Fatiha* the verse *إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ* came again and again to the tip of my tongue but I recited some other verses. During *tahajjud* just now, when I was reciting the *darood*, suddenly a light spread in front of my eyes. I looked up and saw that the sky and the clouds were illuminated by this light. After a short while this scene disappeared.” (A *Mighty Striving*, pages 520–521)

Remember, however, that this is a man who was regular in saying *Tahajjud* prayers everyday all his life. Once a guest staying in his house saw him saying *tahajjud* prayers in another room. The guest stood outside and watched him through the partly open door. The Maulana took so long even just in his *rakū'* and *sajdah* that the guest got tired and had to sit down! It is also recorded in his biography:

“Whenever anyone in his house woke at night, they would hear a melodious, wonderful sound of the Maulana’s heart-felt crying and supplicating, which included glorification, praise and sanctification of the Almighty. It is God alone Who knows if at that time he was in this world or in another world, but his voice was like that of one who is cut off from this world and all its trappings, and was elsewhere, having lost himself in the Divine Being, and expressing before Him the pain and concern in his heart.”

In my *Eid-ul-Fitr khutba* on Monday, I curtailed the discussion of a certain point, and I cover it further now. I had recited the verse which begins:

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۚ فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ
الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ ...

“The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance to mankind and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion.” ch. 2, v. 185.

I mentioned that the Quran is called here a guidance for mankind, هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ , rather than a guidance only for believers or Muslims. However, in the beginning of ch. 2 the Quran says that this Book is “a guide to those who keep their duty” or هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ . The word *muttaqī* is generally taken to mean a person who is very careful and particular in observing the commandments of religion, about whom we cannot imagine that he could commit an act which is prohibited in Islam. Does this mean that the Quran is a guide **only for Muslims**, and indeed for **only** those Muslims who are already thorough and meticulous in following the religion of Islam? The answer, on the one hand, is that certainly the Quran always remains a source of guidance to a person no matter how righteous and dutiful he may be. No one can ever cease to need the guidance of the Quran because he has reached such a high stage of righteousness that he no longer needs more guidance. A person’s progress is without any limits, and the further he rises the more he wishes to rise. There is a prayer in the Quran, “Our Lord, make perfect for us our light” (66:8), which is said by those who have entered paradise. This means that no matter how much light a person has received, and in which he is walking on the right path, there is yet more light that he will ask for.

I said above that this is the answer *on the one hand*. On the other hand, there is a vast and overwhelming majority of people who are considered to be, and who actually consider themselves to be, far, very far from being *muttaqī*. As the Quran is “a guide to those who keep their duty”, those who are *muttaqī*, does this verse mean that the

Quran cannot guide them? The answer to this is that we are misunderstanding what is meant by a *muttaqī*? The Quran tells us: “So keep your duty to Allah *as much as you can*, and hear and obey and spend (on good works); it is better for your souls” (64:16). The words at the beginning of this verse are as follows in Arabic: *fa-ttaqu-allāha ma-staṭa ‘tum*. So being a *muttiqī* is a matter of how much you can try to be *muttaqī*. A novice who makes a serious effort to find guidance is a *muttaqī* at his own level. But if he is not serious about it, then he is himself preventing the Quran from acting as his guide. If the learner doesn’t care, then the teacher cannot benefit him. So the Quran is in fact a guide to all mankind, Muslims and non-Muslims, the good ones and the less good ones. This makes it our duty to take it to all mankind. But whoever it reaches, it is also that person’s responsibility to apply himself as much as he can to learn from it.

After saying that the Quran is a guidance for all mankind, the above verse tells us that the Quran is “clear proofs of the guidance”. In other words, the Quran provides arguments and reasons for all its teachings. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, has laid much stress on this quality of the Quran. When he wrote his first book, *Barahin Ahmadiyya*, he stated at the beginning: “all the arguments and evidence that I have put forward in this book to show that the Holy Quran is from God and that the Holy Prophet’s mission was true and was from God ... 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. ... 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 proof of its claims and the establishment of its principles by sound reasoning, but that someone else has to come forward to plead and promote its cause.”

The Quran has pointed to evidence of various kinds to show that God exists and He is One, and why there cannot be several gods, and to show that the Quran itself has been revealed by God and that the Holy Prophet Muhammad was true in his claim to

be His Messenger. Once when Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was invited to write a lecture about Islam for a multi-faith conference, he wrote at the beginning of his paper: “all my claims and arguments [in this paper] 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 to be 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.”

May Allah enable us to find more and more knowledge from the Quran, act upon it and present it to others, *ameen*.

بَارِكْ اللَّهُ لَنَا وَكُنْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيمِ، وَنَفَعْنَا وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِالآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ، إِنَّهُ تَعَالَى جَوَادٌ كَرِيمٌ
مَلِكٌ بَرٌّ رَوْفٌ رَحِيمٌ-
