

KNOWING THE BELIEFS OF OTHERS HELPS CREATE MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, HARMONY AND TOLERANCE.

(Khalid Saifullah Khan)

Ignorance concerning the beliefs of others is often the cause of intolerance and hatred which culminates into violence and religious terrorism. The print and electronic Media carries the responsibility of creating better understanding of the beliefs held by various schools of thought. However, it is possible only if the presenters and writers attain themselves an unbiased knowledge from the original writings of the leaders of various faiths, and refrain from accepting the half truths, out of context quotations and intentional disinformation spread by the sect's opponents. It is only just and fair that a believer himself should be asked to state and explain his beliefs, rather than attributing beliefs to him by others.

I am saddened to see that the Muslim Media often charges the Ahmadis for not believing the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw), as the '*Khataman-Nabiyyin*' (Seal of Prophethood). While doing so, they deny Ahmadis the right to defend themselves. I have presented the Ahmadiyya point of view in the words of the founder Ahmadiyya community himself, in the form of questions and answers. Allah commands to do justice even with the enemies. I expect you to follow this command and hope that whenever the so-called denial of '*Khatm-e-Nubuwwat*' (Finality of Prophethood) by Ahmadis is mentioned, the Ahmadiyya point of view stated in the ensuing paragraphs should also be stated. The correctness of the translation may be checked by comparing with the original Urdu books (available on the site: www.alislam.org).

Major contentious issue:

The interpretation of '*Khatamun-Nabiyyin*' is the most contentious issue between Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis. In actual fact, the controversy relates to the definition of term '*Nabi*' only. Answers to a few questions in this respect would help elucidate the point.

Q1. Who is '*Nabi*' and '*Rasul*' according to the definition current among the non-Ahmadi Muslims?

A. According to mainstream Muslims, a *Nabi* or *Rasul* is one who (1) brings a complete new 'Shariah' or revives or alters any of the ordinances of the previous 'Shariah' and (2) is not the follower of a previous *Nabi*, but acquires the status of '*Nubuwwat*' independently, on his own merit.

Explaining it, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, India (1835-1908) (the founder of Ahmadiyya Jamaat) writes:

"Since according to the definition, *Nabi* and *Rasul* in Islam means one who brings a new 'Shariah', or abrogates some of the ordinances in the previous 'Shariah', and since the '*Anbiya*' are not known as the followers of a previous *Nabi* and instead attain relationship with God without the inter-mediation of any other *Nabi*, therefore, let everyone be aware lest the same meaning is applied here also. I have no book other than the Holy Quran and have no *Rasul* other than the Holy Prophet (saw). And I believe that our Holy Prophet (saw) is '*Khatam-ul-Anbiya* (Seal of the Prophets) and the Quran is '*Khatam-ul-Kutub*' (final religious book)" (Letter of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, dated August 17, 1899, published in

al-Hakam, vol3, p29; taken from '*Nubuwwat & Khilafat*', Islam International Publications, p 68)

Therefore, now that the '*Deen*' (religion) has been perfected in the form of Holy Quran and protected from being corrupted and since till the Day of Judgement no spiritual rank can be received by anyone, without following the Holy Prophet, no new or old *Nabi*, complying with the definition of term '*Nabi*', current among the Muslims, can ever appear, till the Day of Judgement.

Q2. How the term '*Nabi*' is defined by the Ahmadiyya Jamaat?

A. The founder of the Jamaat wrote: "In my view, a *Nabi* is one upon whom the words of God descend in a manner that is unambiguous, definite, in abundance, and contains knowledge of the unseen. That is why God has granted me the title of *Nabi*." (Tajalliat-e-Ilahiyah, Roohani Khzain, vol 20, p 412, taken from *Nubuwwat* and *Khilafat*, p 70)
He was favoured with converse of God only because he was an '*Ummat*' (follower of the Holy Prophet (saw)). Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) said:

"Had I not been a follower of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, then even if my good deeds had reached the tops of mountains, I would not have been honoured with the converse of God; inasmuch as all prophethoods except the Muhammadi prophethood have come to an end." (Tajalliat-e-Ilahiyyah p 24)

He announced on oath:

"God has commissioned me to prove to the world that the Living Book is the Holy Quran and the living religion is Islam and the living Prophet is the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw). Lo! I offer the earth and the sky as my witness and I tell you the truth: God is that One God Who has been presented in the declaration of faith: '*La ilaha il=lallah Muhammadur-Rasoolullah*' (i.e. There is none worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger); and the living Prophet is only that particular Prophet who is giving life to the dead by their following in his footsteps. Signs are being shown, blessings are being vouchsafed and the Fountainheads of the Unseen are being made to flow." (Al-Hakam, May 31, 1900)

Q3. Is it then true to say that the controversy between Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis on the issue of '*Khatm-e-Nubuwwat*' is on the definition of *Nabi* only?

A. Yes it is true to say that the controversy on the issue of *Nubuwwat* relates to the definition of '*Nabi*' only.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) said:

"By *Nubuwwat* I only mean frequency of converse with God, which is granted as a consequence of following the Holy Prophet (saw). You also believe in converse with God; so the disagreement is on the terminology only. What you call converse with God, I call its frequency as '*Nubuwwat*', in accordance with the command of God." (Haqiqat-ul-Wahi, Roohani Khazain vol 22, p503; taken from '*Nubuwwat* and *Khilafat* p 70)

Q4. Is the Ahmadiyya definition of *Nubuwwat* a new one and adopted by the command of God?

A. Yes it is a new definition adopted by God. Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) wrote:

“In His revelation, Almighty Allah has used the term *Nubuwwat* and *Risalat* with reference to me hundreds of times. But it refers to the converse with God, which is frequent and contains knowledge of the unseen, nothing more. **Everyone has a right to adopt an idiom, and this is the definition adopted by God that He has given the title of *Nubuwwat* to the frequent converse with Him.**” (Chashma-e-Maarifat, Roohani Khazain, vol23, p341; *Nubuwwat* and Khilafat p 70)

Q5. Is the new definition of *Nubuwwat* based on the Holy Quran?

A. Yes; according to the Holy Quran, a *Nabi* is one who manifests knowledge of the unseen from God.

Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) wrote:

“He who manifests the knowledge of the unseen from God will, by definition, be truly called a *Nabi* in accordance with the following verse:

“...He does not grant anyone ascendancy over His domain of the unseen, except him whom he chooses as His Messenger.” (al-Jinn 72:27)

(Eik Ghalati Ka Izala, Roohani Khazain, vol18, p208)

He further says:

“In Islamic terminology, a *Nabi* is one who receives converse from God which contains knowledge of the unseen, mighty prophecies, and conveys them to Allah’s creatures.” (Speech of the Promised Messiah (as), al-Hakm May 6, 1908; *Nubuwwat* & Khilafat p 71)

Q6. How does the *Nubuwwat* of the founder of the Ahmadiyya community differ from the *Nubuwwat* of the earlier *Nabis*, (from Adam to Muhammad, peace be upon them)?

A. All the earlier *Nabis* were independent, raised to the status of ‘*Nubuwwat*’ in their own right, and not being a follower (*Ummati*) of a previous *Nabi*. After the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) only an ‘*Ummati Nabi*’ can appear, who attains the spiritual station of *Nubuwwat* by following the Holy Prophet, only through his intermediation and as a consequence of his spiritual influence.

Mirza Sahib announced:

“Remember that some people are mistaken by my claim to be a *Nabi*. **They imagine that I have claimed the type of *Nubuwwat* which was granted to earlier *Anbiya* on their own. They are wrong in this notion. I have made no such claim.** Rather, the Will and Divine Wisdom of Almighty Allah decreed to honour me with this status in order to prove the perfection of the spiritual grace of the Holy Prophet (saw). The blessings of spiritual grace have led me to the status of *Nubuwwat*. **Therefore, I cannot be just called a *Nabi*, rather a *Nabi* from one aspect and an ‘*Ummati*’ from another aspect.**” (Haqiqatul-Wahi Roohani Khazain Vol 22, p154, *Nubuwwat* & Khilafat p74))

Q7. Why did no ‘*Ummati Nabi*’ ever appear among the previous ‘*Ummas*’ (followers)?

A. Among all the Prophets of God, it was only our Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw), who was granted the ‘Seal of Prophet-hood’, capable of creating the imprints of prophet-hood in his

perfect followers, if and when needed. There being no other '*Khatamun-Nabiyyin*', no '*Ummati Nabi*' (follower prophet) could have appeared in any other 'Ummah'. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) said:

"Allah the Almighty has made the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) the possessor of the 'Seal' ('*Khatam*'), which in other words means that He has given him a seal to pass on the holy excellences. This seal has not been given to any other Prophet. This is why he is known as '*Khatamun-Nabiyyin*'." (Haqiqa-tul-Wahi, p 97, footnote)

In another book, he wrote:

There is no need to follow the prophethoods and the scriptures that were there before the coming of the Holy Prophet (saw) individually or collectively, for, the prophethood of the Holy Prophet (saw) is a compendium of all of them and it encompasses them all. All other avenues are now closed; all the truths that lead a man to God are to be met with in it. No new truth will henceforth be revealed, nor there was any truth in the previous Scriptures which has been left out from this prophethood. That being the case, this prophethood brings all the other prophethoods to an end – and that is how it should have been, for, whatever has a beginning must have an end.

But this prophethood – that of the Holy Prophet (saw) is not devoid of its spiritual influence, rather its spiritual influence is much greater than the influence of all other prophethoods. The followership of this prophethood leads a man to God very easily and it vouchsafes the love of God and makes one recipient of His converse, more than ever before.

But of course, such a person cannot be called a '*Nabi*', for, it is a disgrace for the perfect '*Nubuwwat*' of the Holy Prophet (saw),; **both the words put together – the '*Nabi*' and the '*Ummati*' – can be his title.** That is no disgrace to the prophet-hood of the Holy Prophet (saw). Rather, it can be said that this thing adds to the glow of his '*Nubuwwat*', because it comes into existence through his own blessings." (Al-Wasiyyat, p 12)

Everyone has a right to initiate a new term and the new term of '*Ummati Nabi*' was coined by the founder of the Ahmadiyya community, as desired by God. He wrote:

"Every person can use a term in his conversation, as is said: 'Everyone has a right to make a new term'. It is a term of God that He has named the abundant converse of God containing news of the unseen as '*Nubuwwat*'. And I call down curse upon him who claims to be a '*Nabi*', independent of the favour and following of the Holy Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him." (Roohani Khazain vol 23 p 340-341)

Q 8. Did any of the past saintly divines believe that Prophets without bringing a new 'Shariah' can appear within the Ummat of the Holy Prophet (saw)?

A. Many '*auliya*' (Godly scholars) have written that '*Khataman-Nabiyyin*' means that no Prophet can appear after the Holy Prophet who brings a new 'Sharia' (Law) or is not a follower of the Holy Prophet (saw). They include the greatest doctors and saints of Islam, such as Ummul-Momi-noon Hazrat Aisha (ra), Hadhrat Imam Abu Ja'far Sadiq, Hadhrat Mohiyud-din Ibn-e-Arabi, Hadhrat Imam Muhammad Tahir, Hadhrat Imam Suyuti, Hadhrat Imam Ibn-e-Qateebah, Hazrat Sheikh Ahmad Sarhandi, Hadhrat Shah Waki-ullah Muhaddath Dehlavi, and Hadhrat Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanoatavi founder of *Madrasa Deoband*. For example, Hadhrat Ibn-e-Arabi (d.638 AH/1240 AD) wrote: "The Law-bearing Prophethood and Messengership has now ceased after the Holy Prophet (saw). Therefore, there shall be no Law-bearing prophet after him." (Fususul Hakam pp 140-141) Hadhrat Shah Waliullah says: "There cannot appear an independent prophet after the Holy Prophet (saw) who is not his follower and his adherent." (Al-Khairul-Katheer, p111)

Hadhrat Sheikh Ahmad Sarhandi writes: “The rising of a prophet after the *Khatamar-Rusul* Hazrat Muhammad, the Chosen One, (saw) from among his own followers and as a heritage, does not in any way run counter to his status as the Khatamar-Rusul.” (Maktubat Imam Rabbani Hazrat Mujaddid Alf-e-Thani)