



"There is no god but Allah: Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah."

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Finality of Prophethood

**According to the teachings of Holy Prophet Muhammad
and the writings of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad**

"Muhammad is not the father of any man from among you, but he is the Messenger of God and the last (Khātām) of the Prophets. And God is the Knower of all things" (The Quran, 33:40).

According to Arabic lexicon, *khātām* means *a seal or the last part of a thing*, and the latter of these is the primary meaning of the word *khātīm*. The expressions *khātām al-qaum* and *khātīm al-qaum* both mean *the last of a people* (see *Tāj al-'Arūs*). Hence *Khātām an-nabiyyin* (*Khātām* of the Prophets) in the above verse means *the Last of the Prophets*. In support of this, we quote hadith in which the Holy Prophet Muhammad has explained *Khātām an-nabiyyin* as meaning 'Last of the Prophets', and has clearly taught that no prophet at all is to appear after him. These sayings of the Holy Prophet are recorded in the most sound and highest ranking books of Hadith, such as *Bukhari* and *Muslim*, and can be reliably traced back to numerous of the Holy Prophet's Companions who reported them from him.

1. "My example and the example of the prophets before me is the example of a man who built a house, and he made it very good and beautiful, except for a stone in the corner. So people began to go round it and wonder at it, and say: 'why has not this stone been placed?' I am this stone and I am the *Khātām* (last) of the prophets" (*Bukhari*, book 61, ch. 18; also in *Muslim* and *Tirmidhi*).

The Holy Prophet thus explained his being the *Khātam an-nabiyyin* as meaning the last stone which completed the house of prophethood.

2. “The Israelites used to be led by prophets; whenever a prophet died, another came after him. Surely after me there is no prophet, but there will be *khalifas*” (*Bukhari*, book 60, ch. 50).

3. The Holy Prophet said to Ali: “Are you not pleased that you stand in the same relation to me as Aaron did to Moses, except that there is no prophet after me” (*Bukhari*, book 64, ch. 78).

4. “Among my people there shall arise thirty liars, every one of them asserting that he is a prophet. But I am the *Khātam an-nabiyyin*, and there is no prophet after me” (*Mishkat, Kitab al-Fitn*, sec. 3).

5. “There are six points in which I have been granted superiority over other prophets . . . and (the sixth is that) prophets have come to an end with me” (*Muslim*; see *Mishkat*, ch. ‘Excellences of the Holy Prophet’).

By using the root *khatam* in a different grammatical form, i.e., *khutima biy an-nabiyyin* which can only mean “prophets have come to an end with me”, the Holy Prophet has made it clear here that the term *khātam an-nabiyyin* means *Last of the Prophets*.

6. “Messengership and prophethood has been terminated. So there is no prophet after me” (*Tirmidhi*, Book of Dreams).

7. “If there could have been a prophet after me, it would have been Umar” (*Tirmidhi*, ch. ‘Qualities of Umar’).

8. “I have many names: I am Muhammad, I am Ahmad . . . and I am *al-‘āqib*, after whom there is no prophet” (*Mishkat*, ch. ‘Names and Qualities of Holy Prophet’, sec. 1).

9. “I am the last (*ākhir*) of the prophets, and you are the last of the *Ummahs*” (*Ibn Maja*, ch. ‘Mischief of Dajjāl’).

10. On the occasion of the ‘Farewell Pilgrimage’, the Holy Prophet said in his address: “O people, surely there is no prophet after me, and no *Ummah* after you” (*Musnad Ahmad*, vol. ii, p. 391).

These and other well-established and authentic sayings of the Holy Prophet prove conclusively that according to Islamic teachings the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the last Prophet, after whom no prophet can arise. Many of these hadith contain his famous, clear-cut words *Lā nabiyya ba’dī*, “there is no prophet after me”.

Against such overwhelming evidence, one or two doubtful and ambiguous reports are sometimes cited to argue that the Holy Prophet was not the last Prophet. Apart from lacking authenticity, none of these reports actually says

that the institution of prophethood continues after the Holy Prophet, or that prophets will continue to appear as a matter of principle, as they appeared before the Holy Prophet. Hence these weak reports cannot disprove the basic and well-established principle of the finality of prophethood.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's Views

Below we quote extracts from the writings of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad in which he has given his own views on the meaning of the term *Khātam an-nabiyyin* (or the synonymous term *Khātam al-anbiyā'*) and the Holy Prophet's Saying *Lā nabiyya ba'dī*: "There is no prophet after me". It will be seen that he has made his beliefs clear beyond all doubt.

1. Quoting the *Khātam an-nabiyyin* verse in Arabic, he explains: "That is to say, Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of God, and the one to end the prophets. This verse is also clearly showing that, after our Holy Prophet, no messenger (*rasūl*) shall come into the world" (*Izāla Auhām*, p. 614).

Note that in this extract Hazrat Mirza has translated *Khātam an-nabiyyin* into Urdu as *the one to end the prophets*.

2. "Our Holy Prophet's being the *Khātam an-nabiyyin* rules out the coming of any other prophet" (Ibid., p. 575).

3. "If God is true to His promise, and the promise which has been given in the *Khātam an-nabiyyin* verse, and explained clearly in Hadīth, namely, that after the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad the angel Jibra'īl has been prevented forever from bringing prophethood-type revelation — if all these things are true and correct then there certainly cannot come any person as a messenger after our Holy Prophet" (Ibid., p. 577).

4. "The Holy Quran does not allow the coming of any messenger after the *Khātam an-nabiyyin*, whether a new messenger or a former one" (Ibid., p. 761).

5. "I firmly believe that our Holy Prophet is the *Khātam al-anbiyā'*, and after him there shall not arise for this *Ummat* any prophet, new or old" (*Nishān Āsmānī*, p. 28).

6. "It does not befit God that He should send a prophet after the *Khātam an-nabiyyin*, nor that He should re-start the system of prophethood after having terminated it" (*Ā'ina Kamālāt Islām*, p. 377).

7. "Do you not know that the Merciful God has declared our Holy Prophet to be *Khātam an-nabiyyin* unconditionally? And in commenting on this verse our Holy Prophet has said: There is no prophet after me (*Lā nabiyya ba'dī*), which is a clear statement for the seekers of truth . . . How can a prophet come

after our Holy Prophet, when revelation has been stopped after his death and God has ended the prophets with him?" (*Hamāmat al-Bushrā*, p. 20).

8. "As our Leader and Apostle, the Holy Prophet, is the *Khātam al-anbiyā'*, and no prophet can come after him, so in this *sharī'ah* the *muhaddath* (inspired saints) have been substituted in place of the prophets" (*Shahādat al-Qur'ān*, p. 27).

9. "It has been disclosed to me (by God) that the doors of real prophethood are fully closed after the *Khātam an-nabiyyin*. No new prophet can now come in the real sense of the word, nor can a former prophet" (*Sirāj Munūr*, p. 3).

10. "Can a man who believes in the Holy Quran, and believes the verse 'but he is the Messenger of God and the *Khātam an-nabiyyin*' to be the word of God, say that he too is a messenger and a prophet after the Holy Prophet Muhammad? . . . How can there be a prophet after the *Khātam al-anbiyā'?*" (*Anjām Ātham*, pp. 27,28 footnote).

11. "The actual fact, to which I testify, is that our Holy Prophet is the *Khātam al-anbiyā'*, and no prophet shall come after him, neither an old one nor a new one" (Ibid.)

12. "The Holy Prophet had repeatedly said that no prophet would come after him, and the hadith *Lā nabiyya ba'dī* was so famous that no one had any doubts regarding its authenticity. And the Holy Quran, every single word of which is binding, had confirmed in its verse 'but he is the Messenger of God and the *Khātam an-nabiyyin*' that prophethood has in fact come to an end with the Holy Prophet Muhammad" (*Kitāb al-Bariyya*, p. 184, footnote).

13. "In brief, God by naming the Holy Prophet Muhammad as *Khātam an-nabiyyin* in the Quran, and the Holy Prophet himself by saying 'There is no prophet after me' in Hadith, had settled the point that no prophet can come after the Holy Prophet, in terms of the real meaning of prophethood" (Ibid., p. 185).

14. "God says: 'But he is the Messenger of God and the *Khātam an-nabiyyin*'. And it is in the Hadith: 'There is no prophet after me' . . . if another prophet came, new or old, how could our Holy Prophet be the *Khātam al-anbiyā'?*" (*Ayyām al-Sulh*, p. 74).

15. "If another prophet comes after the Holy Prophet, he cannot remain the *Khātam al-anbiyā'*. . . To make a distinction between (the coming of) a former and a new prophet is mischievous. Neither the Hadith nor the Quran makes such a distinction. The hadith 'There is no prophet after me' contains a comprehensive negation. What audacity, boldness and insolence it is to deliberately leave the clear meaning of the Quran, in pursuit of shallow

conjectures, and to believe in the coming of a prophet after the *Khātam al-anbiyā*” (Ibid., p. 146).

16. “Similarly, by saying ‘There is no prophet after me’, he absolutely closed the door to any new prophet or a returning prophet” (Ibid., p. 152).

17. “The Holy Quran, in the verses ‘This day I have perfected for you your religion’ and ‘he is the Messenger of God and the *Khātam an-nabiyyin*’, has ended prophethood with the Holy Prophet Muhammad. And it has said in plain words that the Holy Prophet is *Khātam al-anbiyā*” (*Tuhfa Golarwiya*, p. 83).

18. “The Holy Prophet was the *Khātam al-anbiyā*’ and no prophet was to come after him” (*Tazkira Shahādatin*, p. 43).

19. “Allah is the Being Who . . . created the heavens and the earth in six periods, and made Adam, and sent messengers and scriptures, and last of all sent Muhammad — may peace and the blessings of God be upon him — who is the *Khātam al-anbiyā*’ and the best of messengers” (*Haqīqat al-Wahy*, p. 141).

20. “It should be believed from the heart that prophethood has ended with the Holy Prophet Muhammad, as God says: he is the Messenger of God and the *Khātam an-nabiyyin*. To deny this verse, or to belittle it, is really to separate oneself from Islam” (Letter in *Al-Hakam*, August 1899).

The extracts quoted above show conclusively that Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad considered the term *Khātam an-nabiyyin* as meaning *Last of the prophets*, and he strongly believed that after the Holy Prophet Muhammad *no prophet at all can come, whether a new one or a former one*. There are also other passages in his writings where he has given the above view, without explicitly mentioning the term *Khātam an-nabiyyin*.

Continuity of Divine communication

The Holy Prophet Muhammad also taught that, even though prophethood had ended with his person, God shall still speak to the righteous among the Muslims down the ages. In one hadith he said, “Nothing remains of prophethood except *mubashshirāt*”, and explained *mubashshirāt* as meaning the true dreams and visions of righteous believers. In another he gave the news that there would arise, among the Muslims, “men to whom God will speak, though they will not be prophets,” and he applied the name *muhaddath* to a Divinely-inspired saint of this sort.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who laid particular stress on the continuity of God’s speaking to the righteous, has referred to the two complementary facts of the ending of prophethood and the continuity of sainthood as follows:

“I firmly believe that our Holy Prophet is the last of the Prophets, and after him there shall not come any prophet for this *Ummat*, new or old. Not a jot or tittle of the Quran shall be abrogated. Of course, *muhaddaths* will come, who will be spoken to by God” (*Nishān Āsmānī*, p. 28).

“Our Holy Prophet being the *Khātam an-nabiyyin* rules out the coming of any other prophet. However, a prophet who receives light from the lamp of the prophethood of Muhammad, and does not possess perfect prophethood, who in other words is called a *muhaddath*, is exempt from this restriction because, due to his obedience of and self-annihilation in the Holy Prophet, he is included within the person of the Last of the Apostles” (*Izāla Auhām*, pp. 575 – 579).

Therefore, wherever Hazrat Mirza speaks of the coming of any Divinely-inspired individuals among Muslims after the Holy Prophet, *he is referring to saints (muhaddath), not to prophets*. For example, he writes:

“Surely our Prophet is the *Khātam an-nabiyyin*. There is no prophet after him, but he who is lit by his light, and whose advent is the coming of the Prophet’s image” (*Al-Istiftā’* in *Haqīqat al-Wahy*, p. 22).

Reading this extract in conjunction with the previous one from *Izāla Auhām*, it is absolutely clear that the exception made in the words “but he who is lit by his light” does not refer to prophets, but to the coming of saints after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. In fact, in the same section of *Haqīqat al-Wahy* he later writes:

“Prophethood has indeed been cut off after our Holy Prophet . . . Our Holy Prophet is the *Khātam an-nabiyyin*, and the series of apostles has been terminated with him . . . There remains nothing after him but being spoken to by God in abundant measure, and even that is under the condition of obedience to him” (p. 64).

Did the Holy Prophet speak of a prophet after him?

There are many hadith, widely accepted by Muslims, which appear to prophesy the return of the prophet Jesus to this world in the Last Days. If taken literally, these reports contravene the finality of prophethood because they speak of the coming of a prophet after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had such a strong belief in the finality of prophethood that he protested against the literal interpretation of these hadith as follows:

“God has put an end to prophets with our Holy Prophet Muhammad, and prophethood-type revelation has been stopped. So how can Jesus come, when there is to be no prophet after our Holy Prophet . . .

“As our Holy Prophet is the Last of the Prophets, there is no doubt that the

person who believes in the coming of Jesus, the prophet of the Israelites, denies the finality of prophethood. Woe to those who say that Jesus is to come after the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. How can there be a prophet after him?" (*Tuhfa Baghdād*, pp. 7 & 28).

However, Hazrat Mirza did not reject these well-known hadith, which speak of the return of Jesus, as false and fabricated. He explained that all the descriptions contained in these Sayings can be interpreted metaphorically. Quoting other hadith in which the Holy Prophet had himself taken some of his prophecies metaphorically, Hazrat Mirza wrote:

"It is very clear from these hadith that all the prophecies which the Holy Prophet has given regarding Jesus and the *Ḍajjāl* are, in fact, prophetic visions. And in the hadith quoted above, the Holy Prophet has plainly and clearly indicated that these visions should not be taken in a purely literal manner. They have spiritual interpretations, and are mostly spiritual matters expressed in physical terms. Regrettably, our religious leaders of today do not wish to follow the Holy Prophet's path, and want to take the metaphors of visions in a literal sense" (*Izāla Auhām*, p. 212).

Hazrat Mirza explained that, in particular, by "Jesus, prophet of God" in the prophetical Sayings could only be meant *a saint from among the Muslims*:

"God has promised that no apostle is to be sent after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and the students of Hadith have certainly made a serious error in presuming, by seeing the word 'Jesus' or 'son of Mary', that that very same Jesus, who was an apostle of God, shall descend from heaven . . . In *Sahih Muslim* there is a hadith that the Messiah shall come as a prophet of God. Now if, in a metaphorical sense, by 'Messiah' or 'son of Mary' is meant a Muslim figure who holds the rank of saint (*muhaddath*), then no problem arises" (*Izāla Auhām*, p. 586).

"A characteristic of the coming Messiah which is recorded is that he shall be a prophet of God, i.e., a recipient of revelation from God. But full and perfect prophethood is not meant here, because that has been sealed. Only that prophethood is meant which is limited to the extent of sainthood (being a *muhaddath*)" (*Izāla Auhām*, p. 701).

"The title 'prophet of God' for the coming Messiah, which is to be found in *Sahih Muslim* etc. from the blessed tongue of the Holy Prophet, is in the same metaphorical sense as it is used in the books of Sufis as an accepted, common expression for Divine inspiration. Otherwise, how can there be a prophet after the Last of the Prophets" (*Anjām Ātham*, p. 28).

"Calling the coming Messiah as 'prophet', which occurs in Hadith, is not meant in the true sense" (*Sirāj Munīr*, p. 3).

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has thus rendered a very great service to Islam by showing how these well-known hadith about the coming of Jesus can be interpreted so as to fall in line with belief in the finality of prophethood. By 'Jesus' is not meant the actual Jesus, and by 'prophet' is not meant an actual prophet, but a saint from among the Muslims themselves. Hence, according to the clear writings of Hazrat Mirza, the occurrence of the words 'prophet of God' in these hadith *does not* mean that a prophet can come after Holy Prophet Muhammad.

Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad's original beliefs

The views held by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad on the finality of prophethood have been quoted above, and these are also the views held by the Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishā'at Islam Lahore, the publishers of this leaflet. It may be noted that Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, the well-known leader of the Rabwah Movement (known by them as the 'second khalifa'), also held the same views before he founded this group. In 1910, he wrote an article in his magazine *Tashhīz al-Azhān* in which he explained the *Khātam an-nabiyyin* verse of the Holy Quran as follows:

"In this verse God has said that the Holy Prophet is the *Khātam an-nabiyyin*, and none shall come after him who may be raised to the status of prophethood, and who may abrogate his teachings and establish a new law. Nay, however many saints (*walī*) there are, and righteous persons, they will get all that they get through service to him. Thus God has said that the Holy Prophet's prophethood was meant not only for his times, but that in future too no prophet would come . . .

"His being the *Khātam an-nabiyyin* contains a prophecy. This is that before the Holy Prophet Muhammad there arose hundreds of prophets in the world who had great success . . . But thirteen hundred years have now passed since his claim, and no one has attained success by claiming prophethood. Why has this arrangement stopped? Obviously because of the prophecy that he is the *Khātam an-nabiyyin*. Now we ask the opponents of Islam, what greater sign can there be than the fact that, after the Holy Prophet, no person who claimed prophethood was successful. The words 'God is ever Knower of all things' mean to say: We have made him *Khātam an-nabiyyin* and We know that no prophet would come after him, and any liar making such a claim would be destroyed" (*Tashhīz al-Azhān*, April 1910).

Here the significance of *Khātam an-nabiyyin* has been clearly explained to be that no prophet can come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the status of prophethood cannot be attained after him, and the highest anyone can rise to is the position of *walī* or saint. This is in stark contrast to the mistaken views developed later on by Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad and his followers.
