

MIRZA BASHIR AHMAD M.A.

Truth About Khatm-e-Nabuwat

**An exposition of the concept
of Khatm-e-Nabuwat
in Islam.**

1. The first part of the text discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for financial transparency and accountability, particularly in the context of public institutions or organizations. The text suggests that clear documentation helps in identifying trends, detecting anomalies, and ensuring compliance with relevant regulations and standards.

Mirza Bashir Ahmad

Truth About Khatm-e-Nabuwat

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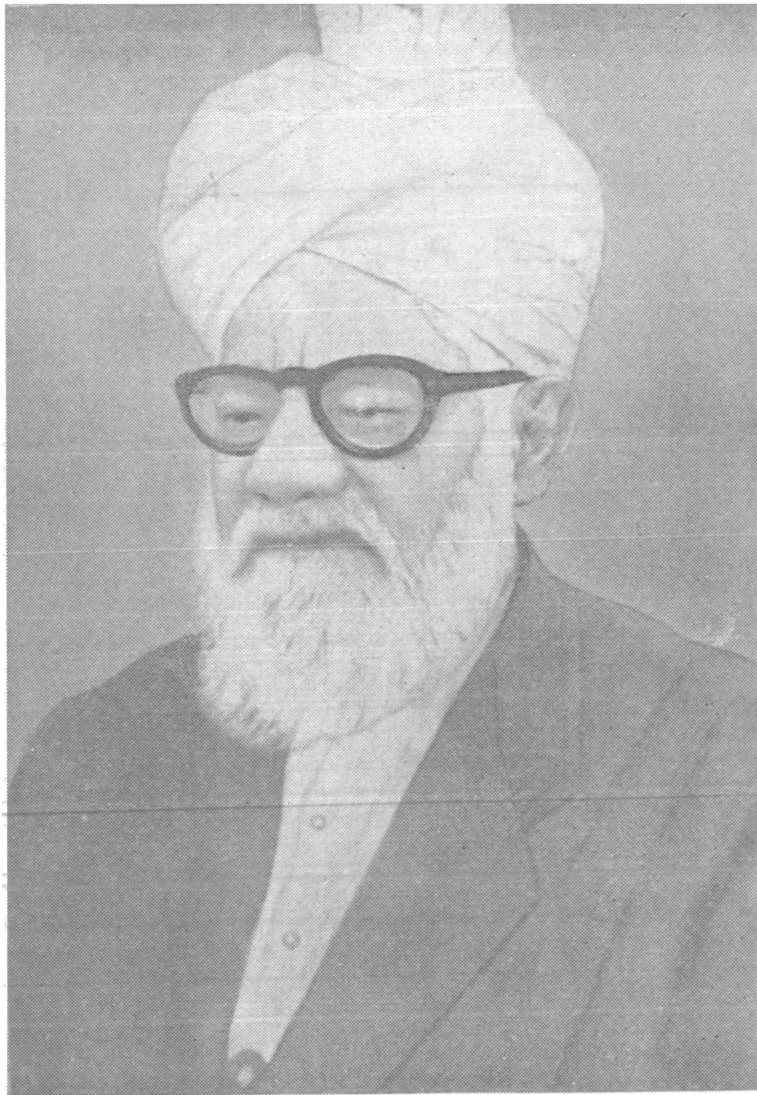
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نَحْمَدُكَ وَيُطِيعُكَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ

THE HOLY PROPHET'S UNIQUE STATUS

All praise and eulogy is due to the Supreme Lord, Who, by assigning to man, the central role in the cosmos, exalted him above the entire creation; He then initiated for our guidance the prophetic dispensation, perfecting all the excellences of prophethood in the august person of our Guide, the Glory of apostles, Chief of mankind, Hazrat Muhammad, the Chosen, (Allah bless him), in their highest degree, unattained by those who preceded him and unattainable by those who were to follow him. He is the world-illuminating lantern in which the cumulative heavenly lights reached their utmost brightness; and God ordained the light of this brilliant sun as the guiding media for all mankind till eternity.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَبَارِكْ وَسَلِّمْ وَابْعَثْهُ مَقَامًا مَخْمُودًا
إِلَىٰ ذِي وَعْدَتِهِ -

May Allah bless Muhammad evermore and exalt him to the praised point of excellence He has been

pleased to promise for him.

But since every light is accompanied by darkness, so much so that Allah the Knowing, the Wise, has appointed the black shadow of *Iblis* with the light-giving persons of angels, and as night shadows day, so has the Lord God appointed, in accordance with His eternal law of guidance, that while the illumining sun our Master, the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) has dawned to bestow light on all ages and nations, even so, owing to the misdeeds of people, periods of darkness and ignorance, should intercept this eternal term. The Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) had accordingly apprised his followers that during these cycles of darkness, Allah will not forsake them and that, through the reflected light of his guiding sun, He shall produce, spiritual moons adequate for the exigencies of the period, of these, one will be like the first moon, another bigger, one still bigger and so on and one even as big as the full moon and equally bright; and that all these moons, small and big shall radiate his (the Prophet's) light and shall revolve round his sun.

So says the Holy Quran :

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ
مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى
لَهُمْ وَلَيَسَدِّ لَّهُم مِّن بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي
لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا وَمَن كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ٥ (سورة نور آیت ٥٤)

“Allah has promised the believers among you and the doers of righteous deeds that He shall certainly make them vicegerents in the earth as He did before them and shall establish for them the faith He has chosen for them and shall establish for them the conditions of peace after those of insecurity: they should therefore serve Me and not associate aught with Me and those who rebel thereafter they are the covenant-breakers”.¹

In amplification of the above Quranic verse, our Holy Prophet, (Allah bless him), said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْعَثُ لِهَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ عَلَى رَأْسِ كُلِّ مِائَةٍ
سَنَةٍ مَنْ يُجَدِّدُ لَهَا دِينَهَا - (أبو داود جلد ۲ باب الملاحم)

“Verily Allah will appoint for my people at the head of every century, one who will reform for them their faith.”²

In addition to the reformers of the *Mujjaddad* status, the Holy Prophet had foretold the advent of a grand-reformer, the Promised Messiah, to deal with external evils during a period of great darkness when the prevalence of degeneration, attending the period of anti-Christ, was ordained. The Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) says :

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1. *Sura Nur, Verse 56.*
 2. *Abu Daood, Vol 2, Ch : Babulmalaham.*

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَيُوشِكَنَّ أَنْ يَنْزِلَ فِيكُمْ ابْنٌ مَرْيَمَ
 حَكَمًا عَدْلًا فَيَكْسِرَ الصَّلِيبَ وَيَقْتُلَ الْخِزْيِيرَ وَيُبْضِعَ
 الْحِزْيَةَ..... كيف انتم اذا انزل ابن مريم فيكم و
 اِمَامِكُمْ مِنْكُمْ- ربيع بخاري كتاب بدو الخلق باب نزول عيسى بن مريم،

“I swear by the Lord Who holds my life in His hands, the Messiah, son of Mary, shall certainly rise among you as Justice and Judge and will break the cross and kill the swine and abolish *Jazia*How will ye be when son of Mary appears among you and he will be your Imam, from among you”.¹

Dealing with another aspect of this prophecy the Holy Quran says:

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو
 عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
 وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ هُوَ الْآخِرِينَ مِنْهُمْ
 لَمَّا يَأْتِ الْحَقُّ بِهِمْ- (سورة جمعة آيت ٣، ٤)

“Allah raised among the illiterate a prophet, from among them, who reads to them His verses, and purifies them and teaches them the Book and wisdom and verily they were before it in manifest error and among the other

1. (Sahih Bukhari Book Badul Khalaq, Ch. Nazule Isa ibn Mariam)

group of them who have not yet joined them".¹

According to a tradition of the Sahih Bukhari, when the above verses of sura Juma were revealed, a companion asked the Prophet, "O Apostle of Allah, who are these other group—آخرين" Laying his hand on Hazrat Salman Farsi, a favourite companion, said the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him)

لَوْ كَانَ إِلَّا إِيْمَانٌ عِنْدَ الثَّرِيَاءِ لَنَالَهُ رَجُلٌ مِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ -

بخاری کتاب التفسیر باب تفسیر سوره جمعه

"If faith ascended to the Nadir a man from among these shall bring it down".²

And on another occasion said the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him):

سلمانٌ مِنَّا أهل البيت رطرائی کبیر و مستدرک حاکم سجموال جامع الصغیر

"Salman is one of us, one of the House"³.
(اهل بیت) here means of the family of the house of the Holy Prophet. (peace be on him)

This *Hadis* points out that the Promised Messiah and Mahdi shall be from among the Persians: this further compliments the prophecy about the Mahdi being one of the House.

The above Quranic verses and traditions are decisive evidence of the eternal ordination regarding the appearance of spiritual vicegerents in the Muhammadan Dispensation. These vicegerents were to radiate the light of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him), to illuminate the world as the moon in the world of matter radiating the light of the sun,

1. (Sura Juma Verses 3-4)

2. (Bukhari Book Al-Tafsir-Bab Tafsir Sura Juma)

3. (Tabrani Kabir va Mustadrak Hakim quoting Jama Al-ssaghir)

illuminates the globe. And as the moons of different nights radiate lights of varying powers so were varying powers assigned in the world of spirit, to the moons radiating the light of and revolving round the exalted Prophet. And we firmly believe that while, all the vicegerents of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and all the reformers are, by the grace of God, like unto spiritual moons, and while we hold them all in high esteem and venerate them whole heartedly and in a devotional spirit, the moon that has arisen in the 14th century, is the bright full moon, which, assuming the shape of its sun, has been invested by it with reflex-Prophethood and here lies the point where difference arises between us and our opponents.

The truth about this difference is simply this. According to the Maulvies of today who are lined up against us, there may appear the first moon radiating the light of our Holy Prophet (Allah bless him), and the moon of the second and the third night and the succeeding nights and even of the thirteenth night but the one of the fourteenth night; cannot appear for, because of its fulness, it assumes the shape of the sun and the appearance of such a moon is derogatory to the Divine sun! It is ridiculous indeed to have such a distorted outlook as presents a good quality as a drawback, light as darkness and honour as derogation. May Allah guide our these friends aright. In this material universe, the full moon is in no way a slur on the sun; how then do our friends feel persuaded to characterise a similar phenomena in the spiritual world as a derogatory one.

At this point they must pause and consider that, so long as the moon serves the sun, revolves round it and radiates its light, it reflects only the beauty of the sun and not its own, as it is but the reflector and not the original source, and not independent. They should further ponder whether

the excellence of the sun is reflected better in the crescent or in the full moon which but radiates the light of the sun, assumes its roundness and illumines the worlds through its brilliant glow.

This is in short the crux of the question around which centre the differences of views between Ahmadis and other Muslims. Our opponents aver that the door to all categories of prophets, law-giving, non-law-giving, reflector, independent, subordinate has been finally bolted after the appearance of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him). They, however, contrary to their own view, persist in the descent of the Messiah Hazrat Isa from heavens and his installation in the pedestal of Prophethood. We, on the other hand, hold that undoubtedly the law given by the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) is final and that there shall be no law-bearing or independent prophet after him and this door is closed till the Day of Judgement but, that, by receiving light from his light, being his reflection and a servant of his law, one can attain to the excellences of prophethood in the same manner as does the full moon receive light from the light of the sun in subservience thereto so much so that it appears indissolubly linked to it. The appearance of such a moon can in no way be characterized as derogatory to the sun; on the contrary, it reflects the perfectness of the sun itself, as, it is its radiator and not the original source of light, deriving light therefrom and in no way independent thereof.

Three Categories of Prophethood :

After the above introductory remarks, I would now resume discussion of the point at issue—an exposition of the concept of *khatm-e-Nabuwat*. According to the Ahmadiyya belief which finds support in

the Quranic text as well as in history, there are three categories of prophets. Firstly those who bring a new Divine Law such as Moses who brought the Torah or our Holy prophet (Allah bless him) who was commissioned with the Holy Quran. Such prophets are categorized as law-bearing or legislating prophets. Secondly, the prophets who bear no new law but serve the existing law, their Prophethood, however, being an independent grace, which they attain not through subservience to another prophet but directly, such as David, Solomon, Zakariya, Yahya and Isa (Allah bless them) who made their advent after Moses (peace of Allah be on him). All these prophets were followers of the Mosaic law and were appointed to uphold it as is borne out by the Holy Quran, the Torah and the New Testament, but they were independent prophets, owing the gift not to their subordination to Moses but as a direct grace of God on their own merits and were after initiation assigned service to Mosaic Dispensation. Such prophets are categorized as independent though they are not law-givers. This is why, it must be noted, that in spite of subordination to their predecessor law-giving prophet, they cherish no special personal devotion to him. As for instance we fail to notice any personal devotion and affection for Moses in the heart of Messiah in spite of the latter being subordinate to the law of the former; he rather seems to be emotionally concerned as little as is the magistrate of one District, on transfer in ordinary course to another District, under a new Collector of a new District. In the third category comes the prophet who is neither a law-giver nor has been graced directly with prophethood independently of allegiance to the former prophet but his Prophetic attribute is a reflection of his preceptor Prophet and a gift bestowed on him through his grace and is a glimmer of his light. As for example, if a gardener engages, for the maintenance of his garden, his own son as a

caretaker instead of an outsider the latter cannot be reasonably expected to entertain that warmth, sincerity and devotional spirit in his feelings towards his master and his property as the former who is inspired by a deep sense of filial love. It is precisely due to this reason that we seek in vain, among the prophets of Israel, that devotional affection and warmth of faith and personal loyalty towards Moses as we find and feel in the Promised Messiah's heart towards the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him). The explanation is self-evident. While the Prophets of Israel were more or less outsiders, engaged to look after the garden of Moses (peace be on him), the Promised Messiah was, by the grace of God and through His mercy, the spiritual son and disciple and reflection of the Holy Prophet: the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Community was therefore inspired with a burning love for the Holy Prophet hardly to be found elsewhere. A comparative study of his works and of references of the Messiah to Moses in the New Testament will confirm our statement beyond dispute. As an example we quote below a few couplets of the Promised Messiah (peace of Allah on him) which express his devotional love for the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him):

نام اس کا ہے محمدؐ دلبر مرا یہی ہے	وہ پیشوا ہمارا جس کے نور سارا
لیک ان خدائے بزرخیر اور ہی یہی ہے	سب پاک ہیں پیمبر اکؐ دوسرے بہتر
وہ ہے میں چیز کیا ہوں بس فیصلہ یہی ہے	اس نور پر خدا ہوں اسکا ہی میں تو اہوں
وہ جس نے حق دکھایا وہ مرغا یہی ہے	مہم نے اس سے پایا شاہد ہے تو خدا یا
قرآن کے گرد گھوموں کبہ مرا یہی ہے	دل میں یہی ہے ہر دم تیرا صحیفہ چوموں

“That blessed and great
Leader, from whom proceeds
All the light—his name
Is Muhammad, and he alone
Is my friend, my dearest
Well Beloved!
All the Prophets
Are faultless and holy,
Each better than the other:
But coming from the Lord God
The highest, and the best:
Among them all, without doubt,
Is Muhammad himself!
Indeed I am sold,
Entirely,
On this light:
Wholly, and completely,
Am I devoted to it:
In my mind, in this respect,
There are no reservations!
He alone is the one
That counts; while I,
In myself, amount,
Absolutely, to nothing:
This alone is the basic
Truth; this alone
The final verdict!
The only urge that
Moves me; the only desire
That dominates my heart,
That dominates my being,
Is that every moment
Of my life, I stand
Reverently kissing
Thy sacred book:
In a transport of joy,
And devotion, that I dance
Round it, since it is,

In truth my Ka'ba—
The most vital pivot
Of all my hopes,
Of all my aspirations!

In short, prophethood is classified in three categories, as Allah says in the Holy Quran, prophets differ in their status, so do they differ according as the category, to which they individually belong:

1. Firstly, law-bearing prophethood is such prophethood as reveals a new code like that of Hazrat Moses (peace be on him) or of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him), such prophethood is also termed as "Real prophethood" because all prophetic dispensations commence with a law-bearing prophethood and the two other categories of prophethood follow it. Law-bearing prophethood alone is in fact real prophethood in the true sense of the word.

2. In the second category comes the non-law-bearing prophethood which carries no new law but is independent and a direct divine gift, allegiance to a former Prophet being in no way a condition precedent to its grant, such as the Prophethood of Hazrat David and Hazrat Isa who served the Mosaic law but did not owe the favour to Moses, having been graced directly on their personal merit: This prophethood is characterized as independent prophethood, as it does not accrue as a favour due to any outside influence but is self-sustained.

3. In the third category comes reflex-prophethood. This is attained through allegiance to a former prophet, by seeking light from him and losing oneself in him and by becoming a reflex-action manifestation of his excellences, such as the prophethood of the Promised Messiah (peace of Allah be on him), Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, which he acquired in the disciple-ship of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless

him). This is called reflex-prophethood and the person gifted with it is a prophet on the one hand and simultaneously a follower on the other. Our opponents, it must be noted, are, however, of the view that the door to all the three categories of prophethood has been finally closed after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and that no prophet of any category shall appear till the Doomsday. In other words even an eminently perfect follower of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) cannot be heir to the excellences of prophethood as a reflector and yet, they in direct contradiction of their above view, believe in the second advent of Hazrat Isa [who came as a steward of the Mosaic dispensation some 600 years before the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) for the reformation of the *Ummate Muhammadiyya* retaining his former office of Prophethood.

In contra-distinction to it, the Ahmadiyya Community holds that whereas the door to the first two categories of prophethood has been finally closed after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) i.e. there shall neither come a law-giving prophet as the law of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) is perfect; nor shall appear a non-law-giving prophet claiming to having received the favour independently of the prophethood of the Holy prophet (Allah bless him); as, such belief is derogatory to the complete and perfect prophethood of our Holy Prophet (Allah bless him); but that the appearance of a prophet of the third category who has been termed as the disciple-cum-reflex-prophet, one who has received the favour in the service and through the grace of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and has been enlightened through his glow, is within the range of possibility; for, his appearance does in no way detract from the glory of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him). On the contrary, it demonstrates the perfection of his prophetic excellence, in that his bright sun could, through the effulgence of

its brilliance, produce a full moon reflecting its proportions and rotating around it. According to our belief, this category of prophethood does not violate the Seal of Prophethood nor does it breach the finality of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) in any sense, for, being the ideal, the sovereign and source of grace, the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) remains the last Prophet; as the dominion of sun does not terminate with the appearance of moon; on the contrary his reign is asserted with greater prominence. In the light of this approach, we regard the second advent of the self-same Hazrat Isa (peace be on him) as violation of the Seal of Prophethood and derogatory to the dignity of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him), for he received his office of prophethood before the appointment of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) directly and the appointment of a person who does not owe his prophethood to the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him), for the reformation of the followers of the Holy Prophet, (Allah bless him) is a slur on the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and violates the Seal of Prophethood.

Before listing arguments in support of the Ahmadiyya belief, it appears germane to the matter to reproduce here in his own words, the belief of the Promised Messiah, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement (Allah bless him), so that a clear version of his claim is fully comprehended and readers are acquainted with the original statement of the claimant and lest some mischief-monger should mislead people, by ascribing to us baseless assertions. Hazrat Promised Messiah, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, (peace be on him), says:

“I swear by the glory of God and His Majesty that I am of the faithful, a Muslim and I believe in Allah, the High, in His Books, and in His messengers and in His angels and in life after death. And I believe that our Prophet

Muhammad, the Elect of God (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings) is the most eminent of the prophets and the Seal of Apostles".¹

He again says:

"The charge made against me and my community that we do not believe the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him and His blessings) to be the Seal of Prophets is a big falsehood. The faith, the conviction, certitude and the utterness that characterize our belief in the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings) as the Seal of Prophets, are markedly absent in the belief of these people (those who level this charge at us)".²

Elaborating this solemn affirmation, the Promised Messiah (peace be on him) says:

"We believe that the Quran is the last book and the last law and after it there is no prophet till Doomsday in the sense of a law-giver or recipient of the Word of God independent of subordination to the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings). To be more explicit, as God Almighty has promised that the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) is the Seal of Prophets, He has been further pleased to impliedly say that the Exalted One is, because of his spiritual eminence, like father unto the pious whose inner perfection is undertaken through subordination to him and who are honoured with the favour of Divine word and revelation. In accord therewith says the Lord of All Honour:

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ

وَعَهَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ - (سورة الاحزاب)

1. *Hamamatulbushra*, Page 8.

2. *Al-Hakam*, 19th March, 1905.

“Muhammad (the blessed Prophet of Allah) is father unto none of your males but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets”.¹

It is evident that the word **لكن** in the Arabic language, stands for an alternate to what has been negatived. In the first part of this verse what has been negatived is the physical fatherhood of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) in relation to males. With the interjectory word **لكن** the Holy Prophet's (Allah bless him) office of Seal of Prophets has been announced, as an alternate position. It means that after him independent grant of the blessings of prophethood has ended and now the perfectness of prophethood shall be granted only to the person bearing the seal of his prophethood for his subservience to the Holy Prophet. And such a one will thus become spiritually a son and an heir to the Holy Apostle (Allah bless him).

“In short, in this verse, while in a way the fatherhood of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) has been denied (in relation to males), yet in another (the spiritual) form, his fatherhood has been confirmed so that the taunt of the enemies referred to in the verse **ان شانك هو الابر** “Surely it is thy enemy who is without issue” be, at the same time, disposed of. In brief, it means that prophethood even un-accompanied by law, though embargoed as a direct attainment, is nevertheless attainable, if received as a favour and reward, through the light of Muhammad (Allah bless him).”²

And yet again he says:

“Khatamannabiyyeen means that (Muhammad the Messenger of Allah is the Seal of Prophets)

Sura Ahzab, V. 41.

Review on Mubahise Chakralvi ve Ahlhadis page 6 & 7.

no prophethood can be bonafide without the certificate of his Seal. When a seal is stamped on a paper, it becomes certified and is treated as authentic (attested); similarly a prophethood not bearing the seal and attestation of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) is not genuine".¹

He further says:

"Allah made the Prophet (peace be on him and His blessings) the Lord of the Seal and granted him, for communication of excellence, the Seal that He gave to no other prophet.

"Therefore was he styled, the Seal of Prophets, i.e. subservience to him imparts the excellences of prophethood and that his spiritual indulgence has prophet-raising quality and that such holy proportions were not granted unto any other apostle".²

Elaborating his own claim, says the Promised Messiah (Allah bless him):

"I received this honour only through subservience to the Holy Prophet (peace be on him and His blessings). Had I not been of the Ummat of the Prophet (Allah bless him) and had I not followed him, I would never have been graced with Divine word and address even if my efforts and deeds matched the grandeur and height of all the mountains of the world, for, all prophethood except the Muhammadan Prophethood, has ended. No law-giving prophet shall ever come and a prophet without law may but only such as is primarily a follower of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him). I am both a follower and a Prophet".³

1. (*Alhakam Oct. 17, 1902*).

2. (*Haqiqatul Wahi page 96-97*).

3. (*Tajalliyate Ilahiyya, Pages 24 - 25*)

After stating the difference between the views of the Ahmadiyya Community and of other Muslims on *Khatm-e-Nabuwai*, I would now deal with the methods of resolving these differences and of judging which of the two view-points, that of the Ahmadiyya Community or that of the other Muslims, is correct. It must be borne in mind that there are only four possible methods of resolving religious differences, open to a Muslim. The first and foremost is by a reference to the Holy Quran which is the most reliable and paramount authority for discriminating truth from falsehood and about which Allah the Supreme Himself says :

فَمَا يَ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَ اللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝

And what evidence shall ye believe in preference to Allah and His verses".¹

The second place of reliability is held by the *Hadith* which, though not as authoritative and highly placed as the Word of Allah, nor even a tradition can be said to have been handed down as a word to word version of the Holy Prophet's speech, nevertheless, after the Holy Quran, it is a fairly accurate judge of the differences of opinion in respect of Islamic postulates, notwithstanding the standards we must necessarily observe in classifying the authentic traditions as distinct from the doubtful ones.

The third place of precedence must go to the past reformers and Imams, for even though being subject to human errors, this august body, is deserving of a position of reliability far greater than that held by the general body of Muslims. Also because the views of these worthies have been expressed much earlier in point of time than the present differences and current controversies and are definitely free from the bias

1. *Al-Quran Sura Jasia* verse 7.

that has unfortunately coloured the beliefs of the present-day Musalmans. Besides, they enjoy decidedly a far greater eminence in erudition and piety than our contemporary Maulvies.

The fourth place of pride goes to human reason which, in spite of possible errors is a Divine beacon of inner light and is, the means of deciding most of the human affairs. And there is little doubt that with no screen of darkness intervening; human reason is an instrument of great value in knowing the genuine from the fake.

By the grace of God, His this humble servant now proposes to deal with the *Khatm-e-Nābuwat* question in the light of these four sources so that our readers may be enabled to reach satisfactory conclusion in respect of this issue.

KHATM-E-NABUWAT IN THE LIGHT OF THE HOLY QURAN

As stated already, the Holy Quran holds pre-eminently the highest position of authoritativeness. We therefore initiate our discussion of the subject in hand in the light of this august source. It must be noted at the very outset that there is not even a single word or a fraction of a verse in the Holy Quran supporting an embargo on prophethood after the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings). On the contrary, rivers of divine grace and bounty flow in all directions and the Holy Quran is replete both with lucid pronouncements as well as subtle hints emphasizing greater volume in the current of the Divine spring of bounties following the advent of Muhammad, the Prophet of Allah (peace of God on him and His blessings). All that the group holding the view that prophethood has ceased after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) have in support of their case is the verse :

وَلَكِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ -

This verse is in itself a moot one and cannot therefore be advanced as an adequate evidence in a controversy centring around its very concept ; for on no occasion do we find the Holy Quran contenting itself with a solitary verse in dealing with an important truth ; on the contrary the Word of God amplifies it with various verses in different places and in different forms, so much so, that it brings forth a veritable sun of arguments and evidence to illuminate and reinforce a particular truth.

Accordingly it says :

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ لِيَذَّكَّرُوا - (سورة بنى اسرائيل آيت ٢٧)

“We have verily expounded it in the Quran

repeatedly so that they may learn".¹

It stands to reason, therefore, to conclude that the utter silence of the Holy Quran on the subject after the solitary verse :

وَلَكِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ.

without following it up with any further reference, elsewhere, in the sense which our opponents wish to impart to this verse and on the other hand refuting their contention and presenting the grace of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings) as far more extensive in comprehensiveness, transcending in eminence and excelling in degree those of all the other prophets, clearly and conclusively militate against our misguided friends' concept of the verse under reference limiting and restricting the grace and blessings of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings) and terminating the Lord's boanties after his advent.

In short, this is our contention and claim that there is not a single verse of the Holy Quran not even the verse :

ولكن رسول الله و خاتم النبيين

(wich is the subject-matter of discussion and which, as we shall presently prove, is not susceptible of the meaning our opponents would have us believe), in fact there is not a word in the Holy Book to countenance the view that the door to all categories of prophethood is closed after our Master Prophet Muhammad (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings); on the contrary there is immense evidence in the Holy Quran upholding the view that with the advent of the Holy Prophet, the Chief of Mankind, the Elect of all creation, the Seal of Prophets (peace be on him and Allah's blessings) the gates of Divine grace, mercy and bounty have been thrown wide open.

So far as the verse :

1. Sura Bani Israel, verse 42

is concerned, as we shall presently show, it does not admit of the sense our opponents so unjustly force upon it; on the other hand like the rest of the various verses it declares open the door of the Holy Prophet's unparalleled grace and unequalled bounty, which our kind friends are not disposed to see and appreciate due to their lack of insight.

According to the criterion provided by the Word of God, our foremost argument is that there is not a single verse of the Holy Quran which closes the door of prophethood in Islam or which supports the line of interpretation of the Quranic verse خاتم النبيين as adopted by our opponents. Had it been so, the Holy Quran would have thrown a flood of light on the subject. But the case is quite different. As a matter of fact, the door of the blessings of God has more widely been opened *after* the advent of the Holy Prophet than before. Would that our brethren in Islam understand this point.

Sura Fatiha and Khatam-e-Nabuwat

Now I take the verse from the Opening Chapter of the Holy Quran viz.

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

“Guide us in the right path—the path of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy blessings.”¹

This verse which is recited at least 80 times a day by all Muslims in their prayers brings good tidings to the followers of the Holy Prophet of Islam. In this verse God Almighty exhorts the Muslims to pray for the bestowal of those very rewards which He

1. Sura Fatiha.

had bestowed on previous *Ummats*. It is evident that the verse does not ask the Muslims only to seek bare guidance. Had it been so, the portion of the verse, viz., 'guide us in the right path' would have served the purpose, the addition of the words *صراط الذين انعمت عليهم* would have been quite unnecessary. But the addition of the words shows that the aim is to create a passion in the hearts of Muslims for the attainment of those rewards which were bestowed on the followers of previous prophets and to draw the attention of the Muslims to the fact, that the blessings and rewards which were individually bestowed on previous followers are to be collectively and consummately reserved for the Muslims. Accordingly the Holy Quran further explains this point :

وَمَنْ يَطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ
وَالصَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَٰئِكَ رَفِيقًا (سورة نساء آيت ٤٠)

“And whoso obeys Allah and this messenger of His shall be among those on whom Allah has bestowed His blessings, namely, the Prophets, the Truthful, the Martyrs and the Righteous. And excellent companions are these.”¹

In this verse God Almighty classifies the recipients of rewards into four groups viz :

- (a) The Prophets.
- (b) The Truthful.
- (c) The Martyrs.
- (d) The Righteous.

In other words, a certain person attains to

1. Sura Nisa, verse 70.

the status of prophethood on the basis of his personal capability, beauty of character and the need of the hour, and having attained communion with God is sent as a prophet to guide the people of the world. Another person attains to the status of *Siddiqiyat* whose beliefs and actions become the very personification of right and truth and there is no disagreement between his words and deeds.

Yet another gets the rank of Witness (Martyr), his life and death being a living testimony to the Faith. And still another becomes of the Pious whose life is dedicated to virtuous activity so that he is constant in the true path.

Lo, here Allah the Supreme, enjoins on us through the Sura Fatiha the prayer thus "O ye Muslims seek ye the way of the favoured ones who preceded you in receiving those bounties; nay gather ye in you all the bounties granted severally to those who were before you". He has been at the same time pleased to explain to us that these favoured ones are the Prophets, the Righteous, the Witnesses and the Pious. Both these clear-cut verses read together, conclusively establish the fact that the door to the favour of Prophethood is wide open to the Prophet Muhammad's people, the best of all the peoples. It is inconceivable that while, on the one hand, Allah, the Supreme, should teach us the prayer "O Lord enlist us among the favoured ones" and after explaining further that "by the favoured ones we mean the Prophets, the Righteous, the Witnesses and the Pious" and on the other hand should simultaneously shut the gate of these favours on the followers of His Chosen Prophet.

We sincerely commend it to a dispassionate and cool consideration of our readers with an open mind. When Allah the Supreme enjoins on us a prayer for enrolment among his favoured ones simultaneously categorizing these favoured groups as the Prophets,

the righteous, the Witnesses and the Pious, does the cumulative sense of the two verses dealing with this subject, mean anything but that the door to the grace of prophethood is as much open to this people who are by the grace of God, His elect, as are the doors to righteousness, martyrdom and piousness. Any other interpretation would expose the honour of the Holy God to the slur that while on the one hand He induces His servants to supplicate for a particular favour, on the other hand, He withdraws His extended hand forthwith, refusing to bestow the said blessing. Allah the High is too exalted and holy to be made fun of.

It is, however, a matter of indescribable pleasure (and it is truly a miracle of the Holy Quran) that even if the two verses quoted above are not taken together as we have done in the foregoing lines, severally too, they (the above-quoted verses of the Sura Fatiha and Sura Nisa) clearly and unequivocally stand for continuation of prophethood in the Muhammadan dispensation. The relevant words of the Sura Fatiha are reproduced below :

إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ

“Lead us along the right way, the way of those whom Thou hast favoured”.¹

Now it is clear that, even in the absence of the verse of the Sura Nisa, the above quoted verse of Sura Fatiha is in itself a conclusive and sure testimony of the fact that Muslims are eligible to all the favours granted severally heretofore to the preceding dispensations. For, when Allah himself teaches a prayer to seek His favours in general terms and without any qualification or reservation, it would logically mean that doors to all the favours are open to the petitioner,

1. Sura Fatiha.

as otherwise, the teaching of such a prayer would not only be ridiculous but also definitely useless. Therefore even if the verse of Sura Nisa which enumerates the categories of the favoured, is not taken into account, the very act of enjoining on us the prayer to seek favours granted to preceding peoples, is sufficient proof of the doors to all these favours being open to the followers of the Holy prophet Muhammad (Allah bless him ever and evermore).

A question may arise here that the favours granted to the former *Ummats* also comprised the law-bearing prophethood and the independent prophethood and that doors to these have now been closed; the answer is that the point at issue concerns abstract prophethood and not a particular category thereof, and the door to general prophethood is still open. As far as (the termination of) law-bearing prophethood and independent prophethood are concerned, it is easily comprehended when it is realized that the category aspect of Prophethood is one of administrative necessity having no bearing on the grace angle of it. Since before the advent of Hazrat Muhammad the Prophet of Allah (peace of Allah be on him and His mercy) different nations needed different laws suited to their respective genius, Allah accordingly revealed different codes to various prophets. When, however, world conditions changed, and with the appointment of the Chief of the World, the Seal of Prophets (Allah's blessings be on him and His mercy) a final and global law was revealed for all mankind and for all times, naturally the need for the revelation of a new law ceased. Likewise since the advent of our Holy Prophet (blessings of Allah be on him and His peace) who was the perfect and the perfected messenger and had been raised with mighty purifying properties through the grace whereof a follower could be eligible to the station of Prophethood, the door to independent prophethood, was closed thereafter. But so far as general prophethood

is concerned it remains open after him in the form of reflex-prophethood. The point at issue therefore is not a particular brand of Prophethood but abstract prophethood; the category aspect being irrelevant here and really related to the needs, and conditions of time. And as we have explained, the need for law-bearing prophethood and independent prophethood having been satisfied with the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings), as his law is complete and abiding and no new code is called for thereafter and because he is perfect and possesses extraordinary sublimary powers, there remains no occasion for independent prophethood. In short, the issue relates to absolute prophethood and not to a particular category. Absolute prophethood is still in currency and not under a bar.

Again a question arises here that since according

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ

to the Quranic verse 'you are the best people raised for mankind' the Muslims excel all other *Ummats*, then how is it that while prophets like Solomon, Zachariya, John and Christ appeared in the Mosaic dispensation, so far only one prophet has been raised in the Muammanan dispensation; if prophethood is a favour and if the Muslim *Ummat* excels others, there should have been more prophets in this *Ummat* than in the Mosaic dispensation. The answer to this question is that while undoubtedly many prophets appeared in the Mosaic dispensation, they received the favour directly from God who commissioned them to serve the Mosaic law and people; they owed it not to their allegiance to Moses nor to his personal beneficence and therefore their advent in no way redounds to the superiority of the Mosaic dispensation. On the other hand, the prophet who has appeared in the Muhammadan dispensation, is a spiritual heir to the Holy Prophet (Allah's blessings on him and His peace), and his

beneficiary, having received grace through subservience to him and in his disciple-ship. His advent is thus, even as a single case, to the credit of the excellence of the Muhammadan *Ummat*. Answering the same objection, the Promised Messiah (peace of Allah be on him) said :

“Naturally the question arises here that in the *Ummat* of Hazrat Moses many prophets appeared and in the *Ummat-e-Muhammadiyya* only one prophet has come so far, thus in the circumstances Moses holds the palm is an inevitable conclusion. The answer thereto being that the prophets coming among the *Umma* of Hazrat Moses were all chosen by God directly without Hazrat Moses having any reference thereto. But in this *Ummat* there have been thousands who became saints through the grace attending their subservience to the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings) and also one who is both a follower and a prophet. This is grace abounding and not to be found in any other Prophet. Leaving aside the Prophets of Israel, majority of the people of Mosaic dispensation were imperfect. Their prophets, as already stated, received nothing from Hazrat Moses and were on the contrary, chosen directly. But in the *Ummat-e-Muhammadiyya* thousands were made saints only because of having followed the Holy Prophet and also one became a prophet while at the same time remaining a follower.”¹

The above-quoted explanation by Hazrat Promised Messiah is self-evident. Here I would digress a little for the benefit of those who are not conversant with spiritual truths. The above-stated explanation of the Promised Messiah (peace of Allah be on him) is a truth which cannot be explained in terms of historical fact or even rational theory but pertains to the sphere of personal experience and initiation in the spiritual realm.

1. *Vide Haqiqatul Wahi.*

A deeper consideration would reveal that it really impliedly touches upon Promised Messiah's high spiritual station but it is relished only by those who are initiated in the spiritual realm and enjoy a status of nearness to the Holy God and are acquainted with the precedence of others situated similarly in the Divine presence. Matters of spiritual realm are little known to those who have had no personal experience of such phenomena. Such secrets are known only to Allah to whom nothing is hidden or to such as have access to the Holy Presence, for, outsiders see nothing of the inner secrets nor are these matters within their purview. We praise our God for having granted us such a high-placed Imam who received, through the grace of his Holy Master, all the favours that were granted to the former people directly. In reference to this Divine grace says the Promised Messiah (peace of Allah be on him):

آہنچہ داداوست ہرنبی راجام	داداں جام را مراتبم
دل من برد و لغت خود داد	خود مرشد بوحی خود استاد
من خدا را بدوشناختہ ام	دل بدیں آتشم گداختہ ام
نامحان را خبر ز حالم نیست	گذرے سوتے آں زلام نیست
	(نزول مسیح)

“The Lord who gave the cup to the prophets gave me also the same cup brimful. He captured my heart and gave me His love.

“He became my teacher, through His revelation I have recognised God, through it I have melted my heart with this fire.

“The admonishers know not my condition

They haven't access to my elixir".¹

I have so far confined myself to the exposition of the Sura Fatiha inasmuch as, it, by itself, distinctly opens the way to all the favours granted to preceding *Ummats*, for the *Ummat-e Muhammadiyya*.

Now I will adduce supporting evidence from the relevant verse of the Sura Nisa which, in a likewise manner, keeps that way open. The verse under reference, as quoted in the foregoing discussion, is as follows :

وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ
وَالضَّالِحِينَ وَحَسُنَ أُولَئِكَ رَفِيقًا (سورة نساء آيت ٤٠)

“And those who obey Allah and the Prophet are among those whom Allah has favoured, among the Prophets, the Righteous, the Witnesses and the Pious and a good company are these”.²

This verse, it is noteworthy, clearly points out that the door of all the Divine favours is open to the true followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Allah's blessing and peace be on him) i.e. they can, according to their respective merits, join Prophets, Righteous, Witnesses and Pious and the companionship of these is a blissful and holy boon. In other words, according to this verse, the station of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings) is so exalted and so eminent that true allegiance to him can make a follower heir to the greatest spiritual favour and that there is no grace which is not within the reach of a faithful servant of his. In contra-distinction to this,

1. *Nazulul Masih*.

2. *Sura Nisa, verse 70*.

while referring to the other Prophets, Allah the Great omits the word prophets and suffixes only with "righteous and the witnesses".

He says:

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللهِ وَرُسُلِهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصِّدِّيقُونَ
وَالشُّهَدَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ - (سورة حدید آیت ۱۰)

"Those who truly believe in Allah and His Prophets are righteous and witnesses unto their Lord".¹

The clear distinction between the respective meaning of the two verses under reference is too strong an evidence to leave any room for doubt in any mind as to the fact that, while the followers of the earlier prophets could become righteous and witnesses, they could not, by virtue of allegiance to them, be eligible to the grace of Prophethood, but that, on the other hand, the followers of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings) have within their reach, the opportunity to attain to prophethood through obedience to the Prophet, in addition to the opportunity to become righteous and witnesses, according to their respective merits.

If a question arises here as to the use of the word 'مع' in the above quoted verse of Sura Nisa, in the sense of 'with' and that it means that the followers of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him and His blessings) cannot become prophets but are only eligible to their company, this would be a narrow-minded construction because, actually the word 'مع' has not been used in respect of prophets alone, but has been used in respect of "those whom Allah has favoured", which term comprises all, prophets, righteous, witnesses and pious

1. Sura Al-Hadid, verse 20.

alike. If therefore the word 'مع' is construed as 'with' and thus the verse is rendered to mean that a Muslim cannot attain to the favour of Prophethood through obedience and allegiance to the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings) but that he becomes eligible only to the company of prophets, then it must also be as a necessary corollary accepted, that (God forbid) no Muslim can enter the group of 'those whom Allah has favoured'..... he cannot be among the righteous, nor among the witnesses and nor even among the pious. This, every Muslim will agree, is evidently wrong. Besides, the word 'مع' as the Arabic idiom shows, has been used in the sense of 'مع' (among) on many occasions. Says the Holy Quran :

رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا

مَعَ الْآبِرَارِ (سورة آل عمران آیت ۱۹۴)

“O our Lord, forgive us our sins, cover our faults and gather us together ‘مع’ (among) the virtuous”,¹

The word ‘مع’ in the above context has not been used in the sense of ‘with’; as, it would, in that case, mean “grant it O Lord that our death takes place simultaneously with that of the virtuous.” Here ‘مع’ stands for ‘among’ undoubtedly: the verse thus means “List us among the virtuous when we die and grant that we do not die sinning”. An instance in point is a reference to Iblis in the Holy Quran which uses the word ‘مع’ when it says :

لَمْ يَكُنْ مِنَ السَّاجِدِينَ (سورة اعراف آیت ۱۷)

“And he was not (among) those who prostrated”²

1. Sura Al-Imran, verse 194.

2. Sura Araf, verse 12.

In another place referring to the same incident the Holy Quran uses the word 'مع' and says :

“He refused to be 'مع' (with) those who prostrated.

The Quran has thus, so to say, confirmed through its own judgement that the word 'مع' can at times express the meaning of 'among'. In short, the use of the expression 'مع' in the sense of 'among' is a common place idiom, extensive use of which in the Arabic language is a matter of elementary knowledge.

Strictly speaking similar expressions are copiously found in all languages. As an instance, in Urdu, the expression “So and so is with the Muslim League” does not convey the sense that the person under reference is actually a non-member and only outwardly keeping a physical personal contact with that body. It in fact means that he is a member of the League and one of the leaguers. It is a great pity that the Maulvies of our times little ponder on the verse of the Holy Quran and have been lost in the mazes of traditional fiction. Had they but reflected a little, they would not have been so obstinate about their interpretation of the word 'مع' as it could not be much of a stumbling-block. In fact, the intention in the use of the word 'مع' here instead of 'من' is to express a double-meaning composite of the sense of both the expressions simultaneously. In elaboration of the point a *Hadith* will be very relevant. As the Holy Prophet (Allah's peace and blessings be on him) has said, “the souls are grouped in classes” i.e. there are different categories of souls; souls having common affinities are attracted toward each other and are attached to one another in close unity. It is evident therefore that the use of the word مع instead of 'من' is intended to point to the elevating truth that the favoured ones shall, apart from joining

1. *Sura Hajr, verse 32.*

the ranks of Prophets, the Righteous and the witnesses, have in them the spirit of oneness; their community or affinity shall be expressed in terms of complete unity, mutual attraction and oneness, so much so, that they will be presenting a spectacle of distinct homogeneous classes. It is with this object that the verse ends with the expression 'a good company shall they be', so as to point out to their *esprit de corps* homogeneity and sense of spiritual oneness that permeates the mass of every 'favoured group.' It is in pointed reference to it that the Holy Prophet (peace be on him and His blessings) says:

الانبياء اخوة من عمّلات امهاتهم شتى ودينهم واحد.

رسم باب فضائل عيسى،

“The Prophets are like unto brethren, their mothers are different but their father is one and their faith is one”.¹

In the verse under reference also the word 'مع' has been employed in the composite sense of the terms مع and من to indicate this underlying spiritual affinity. It is a great matter of regret that the Maulvies of today who are utterly ignorant of the Quranic beauty of expression and its inner realities, instead of diving in its depths, to discover pearls are content with the flotsam and jetsam of their own creation. They could see a wealth of wisdom and a depth of meaning in every letter and word of the Holy Book and its reason for preference of one term to another would have unfolded itself to them with the full weight of its significance.

1. Muslim: Chap. Fozail Isa.

I will now cite a Quranic verse clearly promising the advent of Prophets among the followers of Islam :

يُبَيِّنُ آدَمَ إِمَامَاتِيَّتِكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْكُمْ يَقْصُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ فَمَنْ أَتَّقَىٰ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُونَ ۝ (سورة اعراف آیت ۳۶)

“O ye children of Adam if Prophets come to you from among you reading my verses to you, then whosoever turns to piety and mends his ways, they shall neither fear nor shall they grieve”.¹

In the above verse, Allah, addressing all mankind through the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings), says, “If at any time in future Prophets appear among you (since appointment of Prophets from among non-Muslim nations has ceased) reject them not; but fearing God mend your ways as this is the only way to save yourselves from pain and grief”. How clearly and unequivocally this verse, in a forceful language, opens the door to the coming of prophets, among the followers of the Holy Apostle Muhammad (Allah bless him) is evident. Would that people pondered on these truths.

If a question is raised by someone that the verse under discussion refers to past nations and not to future ages, he is invited to study the entire context of the subject and satisfy himself that the reference, in no way, relates to preceding periods. And when it clearly establishes

1. *Sura Araf, verse 36.*

the fact that it relates to future period of time and is not concerned with the past, it is the duty of a fair-minded person to ponder if there is not herein the greatest argument in favour of continuation of prophethood—the Holy Quran emphatically sending forth the call in so many words ‘O ye the seed of Adam, give your ears and hear, there will appear among you prophets at a future period of time and they will be from amongst you and shall be subservient to and beneficiaries of your prophet’. Friends and brethren! I entreat you, weigh and consider seriously. This is a religious matter and no plaything. It requires a most serious and responsible attitude of mind. Deliberate well this verse of the Holy Quran and judge for yourselves whether it pertains to past ages or to a future period. If it relates to the future, then does it not hold forth a promise of the appearance of Prophets? If it is clearly established that the verse holds forth such a promise then do accept it for the sake of truth and fairness, as there is no greater guidance than the Quran and no greater misfortune than its disregard.

Now I propose to deal with the verse which forms the crux of the entire problem and which according to the wrong construction put upon it by our opponents, is supposed to bolt the door on prophethood. On the contrary, as it will be presently evident, this verse elevates him to the eminent station of prophet-maker (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings). Says the Holy Quran :

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ
وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ - (سورة احزاب آیت ۴۱)

“Muhammad is not a father to any of your males but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of

prophets”.¹

Before expounding the meaning of the above verse, it seems necessary to go into the circumstances surrounding its revelation so that the grounds for and the historic background against which the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) has been designated ‘the Seal of prophets’ are taken into account. It must be recalled in this connection, that as Heaven would have it, all the Holy Prophet’s male children born of Hazrat Khadija the Pure, (may Allah be pleased with her) died while he was, still in Mecca. This gave an occasion to the evil-minded unbelievers to taunt him and say that he was a fruitless tree and without issue and that after his death his chapter will be finally closed. In reference to it Allah revealed the following verses :

إِنَّا آَعَطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ قَصِيْرًا لِرَبِّكَ وَإِنْحَزَرَ إِنَّا
شَانِيْنَاكَ هُوَ الْآَبْتَرُ (سُوْرَةُ الْكُوْثَرِ)

“We have granted thee abundance : pray therefore to thy Lord and sacrifice, verily thy enemy is fruitless (without issue)”.²

When later the Holy Prophet migrated to Medina, here he disowned Zaid as his son on the ground that in accordance with Divine Commandment an adopted son could no more be treated as son. This again gave occasion to the accursed infidels to repeat the taunt saying that the repudiation of his adopted son had advanced a stage further still his aberrativeness, which had been completed after the demise of his son earlier. On this occasion was revealed the verse under reference which announced that while, Allah had in His wisdom so willed it that the Prophet should have no male issue, but as the Messenger of Allah he was the

1. Sura Al-Ahzab, Verse 41.

2. Sura Al-Kausar.

spiritual father of countless children and among Apostles the Seal of Prophets under whose wings Prophets and apostles shall receive tuition: he therefore is not without issue and is on the contrary the founder of a glorious spiritual dispensation and chief among the forerunners and succeeding generations.

This is the historic background against which the verse, under reference was revealed, with the word 'Seal of Prophets' as its greatest highlight. It is deeply to be regretted that the expression which is so eloquent of the illustrious status of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings) has been misconstrued as "the terminator of Divine grace". It is interpreted as drying up the stream of prophethood after him and that irrespective of the fact whether a person be his disciple, follower, and servant, there is no more any one worthy of being a prophet. But we will presently prove this as wholly incorrect, as both according to Arabic idiom and the background against which it was revealed, it is susceptible of only two interpretations:

Firstly, "Muhammad is not the father of any of your males but as the Messenger of Allah he is the spiritual father of all the faithful, even Seal of Prophets and as such a father to them, (Prophets) as well and there shall not be a prophet henceforth as does not bear his certifying seal." *Secondly*, "Muhammad is father of none of your males but as the "Messenger of Allah" he is the spiritual father of all the faithful and as a Prophet he holds a position of such eminence as is unexcelled and in virtuous station he stands unique, at the last point of the pinnacle of excellence."

According to Arabic idiom both the above constructions are correct, but, the former is far more so, in view of the content-matter of the verse and its

back-ground. Whichever of the two meanings is preferred, the conclusion is obvious that the verse is not susceptible of the sense of termination of every category of Prophethood after the Holy Prophet (peace be on him and blessings of Allah) which the non-Ahmadi Ulema wish to impart to it.

The internal evidence consists of the combined content of the two words 'لاكن' and 'خاتم' of this verse and without a reasonable interpretation of the combined sense of these two expressions, the meaning of the verse becomes incomprehensible. According to Arabic usage the expression 'لاكن' is employed invariably to convey an import which is opposite to the intent expressed in the preceding part of speech, or to remove a doubt created by an earlier statement. For instance, if the preceding part of a sentence is of a negative character, the expression 'لاكن' is employed to emphasize a positive aspect in contradistinction to the preceding import and vice versa. This usage is termed 'adversative conjunction' in Arabic and all lexicons agree on its employment being limited to the sense of clarifying any possible doubt that an earlier statement may prompt. In the light of this exposition it will be clear that the expression خاتم (Seal of Prophets) if understood as bearing the import preferred by the opposite part, would render the expression 'لاكن' as altogether meaningless, thus making the verse equally meaningless. Taken in this sense the verse will be capable of the following rendering :

“Muhammad is not the father of any of your males but a terminator of Prophets.”

Leaving alone God, the Knowing, the Wise, no man of an average level of commonsense, can be capable of such meaningless speech wherein the preceding interjection 'لاكن' as well as the one following it, carry the same import and instead of removing an earlier doubt only confirm it. As an instance in

point the following sentence would make an apt illustration :

“All the persons got up but Saeed too got up”.

Can any sensible person talk such nonsense ! Can a perfect and eloquent book like the Holy Quran carry such a meaningless expression ? Reflect in the name of God and say whether, in fairness, the interjection ‘لاکن’ is susceptible of the meaning that our opponents seek to impart to it ? On the contrary, the construction that we advance accords an appropriate sense to interjection ‘لاکن’ leaving little room for any complexity. Our interpretation is hereunder :

“Muhammad is not the father of any of your males but spiritual father of all the faithful, even of the prophets”.

In the above construction the interjection ‘لاکن’ carries a most appropriate import.

In the verse under reference the other important word is ‘خاتم’ which occurs with fatah of ‘ت’ in the versions of the Holy Quran currently accepted by both Ahmadis and non-Ahmadis. It is, however, true that it occurs in one version with ‘کسره’ on ‘ت’. Whichever of the two readings, is accepted the verse is not susceptible of the sense of cessation of prophethood in either case. The use of ‘خاتم’ with fatah on ‘ت’ in the sense of Seal, as noted in lexicons, further elaborates this point. According to *Tajulurus* ‘خاتم’ (Khatam) is the seal that is stamped on wax, earth or paper. As an instance a reference to *Hadith* will show that our Holy Prophet (peace be on him and blessings of Allah) used to affix his seal to the evangelistic despatches he addressed to the Emperors of Byzantine and Iran. In this sense the verse would mean :

“Muhammad is not, in physical relationship, the father of any of your males but in the

spiritual sense, as a Messenger of Allah, father of all the faithful and the Seal of Prophets and only one bearing his certifying seal shall henceforth be an accredited Prophet”.

The above meaning is too plain to need any uncommon ability to appreciate. Besides, this meaning highlights the exalted rank of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him and blessings of Allah) and shows that he is not only a prophet in the popular conception of the term but a prophet maker as well, unreserved allegiance to him meriting his spiritual care can lead one to the position of a prophet, thus making him the spiritual father of apostles. In short, if in the verse under discussion, his male progeny forms a negative quantity, on the other hand the adversative interjection of 'لاكن' confirms an alternate spiritual progeny, over and above he has been granted the Seal of prophethood and thus made the spiritual father of the Apostles. Besides we should bear in mind that since, symbolically the word khatam stands for a ring, an article of ornamentation, Khatamannabiyeen would mean a person who is an ornament of all Prophets i.e. one who adds lustre to their office. This meaning in itself constitutes a very delightful conception of the Holy Prophet's rank.

Even the rendering of the word 'خاتم' with 'كسره' under 'خاتم' does not mean cessation of prophethood. According to this, in simple and straight language, the verse would signify that all the excellences of prophethood reached their perfection in the person of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him and blessings of Allah) and that he is the Prophet-in-Chief, far from being the terminator of the grace called prophethood and not one who dried up a running stream.

According to the great lexicon, *Aqrabul Mavarid*, when it is said :

“Allah caused all excellence to end with him it means that all excellence found greatest expression in him”.

When it is said of an artist that a particular art ended with him, even a schoolboy knows that the person under reference attained the utmost perfection in his art and not that there would henceforth be no artist after him. Such expressions are common in every language. Anyway its meaning even with کسرہ under ت is clear and too plain to present any difficulty. It is in this sense that Hazrat Maulana Rumi (died in A.H. 672) said in his Masnavi :

بہر این خاتم شد است او کہ بجود

مثل اوئے بودنے خواہند بود

(مثنوی رومی دفتر ششم صفحہ ۶)

“He is Khatam for the reason of his being without a peer in bounty, both before and after (his time).”¹

Briefly speaking, the word خاتم read in either rendering with فتح on ت or with کسرہ under ت (as it is found in the former form in all the copies of the Holy Book in Pakistan, India and other countries and in the latter form in some of the works embodying commentaries), does not carry the meaning of termination of prophethood. In the former rendering the expression means ‘the Seal of Prophets’, thus signifying that there shall henceforth be no prophet but one bearing the certifying seal of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him and Allah’s blessings), his disciple, servant and spiritual beneficiary, With کسرہ under ت the expression indicates perfection in excellences of Prophethood,

1. Masnavi Rumi, Vol. vi, p. 6.

thus elevating him to the top rank among Prophets, an eminence inaccessible to others of the class. What have our opponents to offer against this clear exposition? The answer to this question is evident from the construction they put on the verse under reference. Their interpretation is as follows :

“Muhammad is not physically the father of any of your male members but is a messenger of Allah and such a prophet as has put a period on prophethood after him”.

Does this cheap and worthless construction compare in any degree with the rendering advocated by us in the foregoing lines? Leaving aside unreasonable intransigence, a just minded person will feel in the heart of his heart that, on its own merits, our construction is by far the most appropriate compliment to the dignity of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings).

In short the verse خاتم النبيين which is the foundation-stone of the view-point of opposition, endorses our stand as, instead of closing the door to prophethood, it proves that due to the exalted office of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings) even his servants and disciples can, through his spiritual grace and with his certifying seal, attain to the excellences of prophethood. This is so, because he is the Supreme Prophet and with his emergence as the Chief all others automatically take the back seat. Moreover he is not without progeny but he is the possessor of abundance and the spring of every spiritual grace issues forth from his august person and all the former generations and the latter ones bow their heads to him in obeisance. It is therefore that he says :

اناسيد ولد ادم و لافخر و انا اكرم الاولين والآخرين

ولافخر-

“I am the chief among all the progeny of Adam
and I pride not thereon”.

And he again says :

تَوَكَّلْنَا مُوسَى وَعِيسَى ابْنِي مَرْيَمَ إِذِ اتَّبَعُوا
رَبَّهُمْ قُلْ إِنِّي خَشِيتُ الْمَظَالَاتِ

(الحيوات والجماله مرتبه امام شعراني جلد ۲ ص ۲۰)

“If Moses and Jesus were alive they would have
no alternative but to follow me”.

How exalted is his eminence and how elevated his
rank—not only his predecessor-prophets even the
Messiah of our days at whose hands Islam is destined
to achieve its renaissance in its second cycle, are lined
up with his servants and his holy seal is certifying the
bonafides of those who have been and those who shall
follow.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى أَزْوَاجِهِمْ

وَبَارِكْ وَسَلِّمْ

Bless the Prophet O Lord and his generations
and grant him peace. Amen !

1. *Al-ywaqeeet wal jwahar* compiled by *Imam Shaarani*, vol. 2 p. 20.

THE KHATME NABUWAT POSTULATE IN THE LIGHT OF TRADITIONS

After a brief but by the grace of God, comprehensive examination of the Khatme nabuwat issue in the light of the Holy Quran, I propose to turn here to *Hadith*. As stated at the outset, the traditions, however highly placed, hold only a secondary position in the order of reliability, in comparison to the Holy Quran. Since however, I have to satisfy the opposite camp, and also because considerations of space hardly admit of a detailed discussion in this short brochure, I would not go into the question of authenticity or inconclusiveness of the relevant traditions but would, for the sake of argument, accept all the *Hadith* referred to here under as correct and would only confine myself to an elucidation thereof.

I would at the first instance pick up the traditions having, in our opinion a bearing on the continuity of reflect-prophethood after the Exalted Apostle Muhammad (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings). Such Traditions as close the door to the appearance of a law-giving Prophet after the advent of our Holy Master and similarly rule out the appointment of a non-law-giving but independent prophet—one who claims to have been invested with the honour of prophethood directly and independent of the favour of our Exalted Apostle Hazrat Muhammad (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings),—but such ones as declare the appearance of a subservient-prophet to be open—one who receives the favour through the grace of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and radiates his light. We of the Ahmadiyya Community regard the founder of our Movement Hazrat Promised Messiah (peace of Allah be on him) as a member of the latter category i. e., a reflector and subservient prophet

who received the robe of prophetic honour in service to and discipleship of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings). In brief we propose to deal here with the positive traditions first and later, Allah willing, shall deal with the traditions of the negative category which according to the notions of our opponents, impose a total embargo on all categories of prophets after the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings).

After this introductory note, the first tradition I would like to quote in this connection, is the one relating to Ibrahim, the loved son of our Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings). Ibrahim was born to Hazrat Maria Kibtia in the 8th year of Hijri (Tabri, Zurqani and Tarikhe Khamis). Since during his term of prophethood, he was the first son of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings), all his sons from his wife Hazrat Khadija (Allah be pleased with her) having died prematurely, the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings) loved him very much. But, as Allah decreed, this child died when he was hardly a year and a half old. Naturally his death grieved the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings) deeply and tears welled up in his eyes. His only observation however was:

“O Ibrahim we are deeply grieved over your separation”, adding at the same time,

لَوْ عَاشَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَبِيًّا.

“Had Ibrahim lived he would have certainly been a righteous Prophet.”¹

1. *Ibn-e-Maja, Kitab al-Janaiz.*

In this tradition, the use of the composite term 'Righteous Prophet' points to the high status of the child Ibrahim. It means that had Ibrahim lived he would have combined in himself the twin grace-excellences of prophethood as well as of righteousness. The Holy Quran, speaking highly of Hazrat Idris, (there is only Hazrat Idris in reference to whom this composite term has been used, besides Hazrat Ibrahim of course) used the composite term 'righteous Prophet' in respect of him, at the same time adding.

رَفَعْنَاهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا - (سورة مريم آيت ٥٨)

“And we elevated him to a high position.”¹

The Holy Prophet's (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings) observation similarly hinted at the high position Ibrahim would have occupied had he lived, gifted with inherent qualities of the first-rate order. Besides, by the use of the composite term 'righteous prophet' the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings) pointed out that "as a *Siddique* 'righteous' is subordinate in rank to a prophet, so Ibrahim, notwithstanding his elevated position as a prophet, would have been a follower of my law and recipient of divine favours through me". In other words he would be a reflector and subordinate prophet and not a law-giving or an independent prophet. In short, in this tradition, which, finds mention in *ibne Maja*, the famous authority of the Six Authentic Series (صحيح سنه), our Master the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore) has in very clear words and plain language asserted that 'Had Ibrahim lived he would have been a Prophet. "After this clear verdict only two courses are now open to our opponents.

1. *Sura Maryam, verse 58.*

Firstly that they should advance the plea that Allah caused Ibrahim to die so that he should not live to become a prophet. This plea would be treated by any right-minded person as an insane argument and utterly absurd, for it admits of the assumption that Allah had originally erred in sending Ibrahim into the world and, as soon as He realized that He had made His apostle Muhammad a "terminator of Prophets" (خاتم النبيين), He caused Ibrahim to die and thus put a finale to this story. One can hardly think of a more absurd exposition of the tradition under reference. Secondly, that our opponents, in fear of God, give their intransigence and accord their agreement to the view that in spite of the verse relating to 'خاتم النبيين', a prophet may appear from among the followers of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings for ever and evermore) and that the 'خاتم النبيين' verse bans law-bearing prophethood as well as independent apostleship and is in no way an embargo on non-law-giving reflex-prophethood.

It should be remembered in this connection that the verse relating to 'خاتم النبيين' was revealed in the 5th year of the Hijri (vide Ibne Hisham, Tabri and Tarikhe Khamis) while Ibrahim died in the year 9 or 10 of the era, that is some five years after the revelation (vide Tabri and zurqani). It clearly means that the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings for ever and evermore) made the observation "Had Ibrahim lived he would have become a righteous prophet"; some five years after the revelation to him of the Khatamannabiyyeen verse. That the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings), knowing fully well and notwithstanding the divine decision regarding Khatmenabuwat, made the statement "Had Ibrahim lived he would have been a righteous prophet" conclusively and

finally clinches the argument in favour of the view that, in his own mind, the Khatmenabuwat verse was in no manner a bar to Ibrahim becoming a prophet.

How clearly and unequivocally this tradition opens to the Muslims the door to prophethood inspite of the Khatme-nabuwat. Would that our friends care to deliberate and seriously take into account the fact that the Khatamannabiyyeen verse had been revealed and our Master the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings for ever and evermore) had been invested with the insignia of the seal of prophethood, when quite a few years later on the death of his son Ibrahim, he observes: "Had Ibrahim lived he would certainly have been a righteous prophet."

What does it amount to in final analysis? If our observation is unpalatable to you, then we invite you to hear what Hazrat Mulla Ali Bin Muhammad Sultanal Qari (died in 1014 A. H.) a towering divine of the Hanafi section, has to say:

لو عاش ابراهيم وصار نبياً لكان من اتباعه.....

فلا يناقض قوله تعالى خاتم النبيين إذا المعنى أنه لا يأتي

نبي بعده ينسخ ملته ولم يكن في أمته..

(موضوعات كبرى صفحہ ۶۶، ۶۷)

"Had Ibrahim lived and become a prophet, he would be among the followers of the Holy Prophet. It would not contradict the Divine word Khatamannabiyyin which means that there shall not be a prophet abrogating his law and being

from outside his followers.”¹

A hasty-minded person might raise the point that Hazrat Mulla Ali Qari at heart personally subscribed to the view that there would be no prophet after the Holy Prophet, (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings) and that the above view is a purely hypothetic one. It must be primarily borne in mind in this connection, that the expression and language employed by Hazrat Mulla Ali Qari are so clear and conclusive, that it is incomprehensible to attribute to him a duality of opinion and belief, without a decisive supporting evidence. The truth of the matter is that his personal belief was identical with his above-quoted opinion, as would be evident from the content-matter of the words he has prefixed to the above observation. The full text of his statement is as under:

كَلْتُ وَمَعَ هَذَا لَوْ عَاشَ اِبْرَاهِيْمُ وَصَارَتْ بَيِّنًا لَعَانَ مَنْ
اتَّبَعَهُ..... فَلَا يَنَاقِضُ قَوْلَهُ تَعَالَى خَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ اَلْا
(موضوعات كبرى صفحہ ۶۷)

“I say (the words “I say”) are noteworthy that in spite of all this had Ibrahim lived and become a prophet he would be of the followers of the Holy Prophet. It does not contradict the divine word ‘Khatamannabiyyeen (which means that there shall not be a prophet abrogating his law nor one who was not of his followers.”²

Who would now dispute the personal belief of Hazrat Mulla Ali Qari in face of his own affirmation? Assuming, however, that Hazrat Mullah Ali Qari’s above view was a purely hypothetical one,

1. *Mauzuat*, page 27.
2. *Mauzuat*, page 67.

our afore-mentioned argument remains unaffected. For, here the personal belief of Hazrat Mulla Ali Qari, in respect of the actual advent of a prophet, is not the point at issue; what is really germane to the matter is his interpretation of the Hadith (لوعاش ابراهيم لكان صديقانبيا) and his view about the appearance of a non-law-giving disciple-prophet in face of the verse (خاتم النبيين). In other words, here the point at issue is not the advent or non-appearance of a prophet but of the possibility of such an eventuality. In this respect the above-quoted observation of Hazrat Mulla Ali Qari is so manifestly clear and self-evident that it is hardly susceptible of any explanation other than the obvious one. He has in plain words observed that if according to the Holy Prophet's tradition (لوعاش ابراهيم لكان صديقانبيا) Ibrahim had become a prophet, it would have in no way constituted a breach of the verse (خاتم النبيين). For, in his opinion, the verse in question means no more than that there can be no law-giving nor an independent prophet after the Holy Apostle Muhammad (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings) and not that there cannot come one who is both a non-law-giving prophet and a follower of the Holy Apostle Muhammad (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings for ever and evermore). Supposing however that Hazrat Mulla Ali Qari held the personal belief that there would appear no prophet after the Holy Apostle (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings), it would in no way materially affect our argument; for, in his elucidation of the Hadith (لوعاش ابراهيم لكان صديقانبيا) he affirms the possibility of the emergence of a non-law-giving subordinate prophet among the followers of the Faith, notwithstanding the verse (خاتم النبيين). Obviously, the point at issue here is the possibility of the phenomena and not the actual incidence of the phenomena which is altogether a separate issue. I

strongly hope our readers will appreciate this vital difference and avoid the traps laid in their way by some clever twisters and the doubts raised by superficial observers. They would be well-advised observing this basic appreciation in regard to the views of other divines whose observations are likewise subject to misinterpretations by self-seekers. The other tradition that I would like to quote here carries a well-known statement of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings for ever and evermore) made in respect of Hazrat Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him). Says our Master, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings for ever and evermore) :

أَبُو بَكْرٍ أَفْضَلُ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ نَبِيًّا -

(دیلی بحرال کنوز الحقائق مرتبہ امام منادی طبع مصر صفحہ ۷)

“Abu Bakr is the best of this people except that there should rise a prophet.”¹

And again he says :

أَبُو بَكْرٍ خَيْرِ النَّاسِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ نَبِيًّا -

(طبرانی کبیر و کمال ابن عدی بحرال جامع الصغیر مرتبہ امام سیوطی طبع مصر صفحہ ۵)

“Abu Bakr is the best of people except that there be a prophet.”²

Both the above-quoted traditions have identical meaning and occur in three different works on *Hadith*

1. *Dailmy* quoted by *Kanuzul Haqaiq of Imam Munadi Page 7, published in Egypt.*
2. *Tabrani Kabir ve Kamil Ibne Adi* quoted by *Jamiasaagir of Inam Suynti, page 5 published in Egypt.*

and are too clear to need any elaboration. According to these, the Holy Prophet (Peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings) is reported to have praised Hazrat Abu Bakr as the foremost figure in Islam, except in case a prophet appeared at a later stage, for a Prophet is in any case higher in status to a non-prophet. These traditions are clear in their wordings and self-evident in their meaning and admit of no dispute. Besides, these are not of our making and have been widely known and accepted in the Muslim world for hundreds of years. They have been handed down by two top-divines of Islam Imam Maunavi and Imam Suyuti. Their above rendering into Urdu by us has been scrupulously done in strict accord to the rules of Arabic grammar, which can be readily checked up by any scholar of Arabic. Had, however, the word "Nabiyyun" been used in the form 'Nabiyyan', in that case the meaning of course would be :

"Abu Bakr is the best of the people except if he becomes a prophet (at a later date)."
 In this case the entire construction would become senseless and meaningless, for, it is evident that Hazrat Abu Bakr would still retain his position of pre-eminence. Thus the interjectory 'except (إلا)' would become not only redundant but incorrect. To cut it short, as we have already explained (and the authenticity of our quotations can be verified by a reference to the original works), the word Nabiyyun (نبي) and not Nabiyyan (نبي) has been used in the tradition under discussion. Its correct interpretation is as under:-

Abu Bakar is the best among this people except that a prophet appears later".

This tradition speaks for itself. But every call is wasted on deaf ears when a people heed not the call : How can one make a person hear who is not disposed to

listen and how can one make one understand when he is not willing to understand? In how aggrieved a tone says the Holy Book :

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا وَإِنَّا لَنَرُّوهُ
وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ .

“Do they not reflect over the Quran or have they locks over their ears ? ”

Now I will quote a tradition of the Holy Prophet (Peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings) which relates to the different periods of Islamic history; therein the Holy Prophet has elaborated that as Islam started with prophethood which was followed by the Caliphate based on the Prophetic standard of values, so shall, in the latter days of Islam, re-emerge Caliphate, likewise based on the prophetic standard of values with however a long period intervening between the two cycles. Says the Holy Prophet (Peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings) :

تكون النبوة فيكم ما شاء الله ان تكون ثم يرفعها
الله تعالى ثم تكون خلافة على منهاج النبوة ما شاء
الله ان تكون ثم يرفعها الله تعالى ثم تكون ملكاً
عاضاً فتكون ما شاء الله ان تكون ثم يرفعها الله
تعالى - ثم تكون ملكاً جبرية فتكون ما شاء الله
ان تكون ثم يرفعها الله تعالى - ثم تكون خلافة
على منهاج النبوة ثم سكت - (مسند احمد جلد ٤ صفحہ ٢٠٢)

“Prophetic period will remain with you as long as Allah wills that it remain, then Allah the Supreme will lift it; then will emerge Caliphate based on the prophetic standard of values and remain as long as Allah wills that it remain; then Allah will lift it; then will start absolute monarchy and remain so long as Allah wills that it remain: then Allah will lift it; then will start absolute monarchy and remain so long as Allah wills that it remain; then Allah will lift it; then will emerge the Caliphate based on the prophetic standard of values”.¹

This tradition of exquisite beauty is an interesting and complete epitome of the undulating history of Islam. Our Holy Master, Muhammad (Peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings) has used choice language which describes the whole story in a nutshell, covering, in a graphic manner, every epoch of the Muslim era. He places foremost the period of prophethood which is, so to say, the pivotal point of the entire organism; it is succeeded by the Caliphate, not the commonly understood Caliphate when at times even tyrants shared the honorific title but Caliphate which had its roots in the standard of values defined and determined by Prophethood, a Caliphate that succeeds a true Prophet under Divine direction for the implementation of the scheme laid down by the presiding Prophet of the dispensation. In a manner of speaking the Caliphate of this pattern is a complementary adjunct of prophethood as was the Caliphate of Hazrat Abu Bakr, Hazrat Omar, Hazrat Osman and Hazrat Ali (Allah be pleased with them all) in succession to our Holy Prophet Muhammad

¹ *Musnad Ahmad, Volume V. Page 404.*

(Peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings for ever and evermore). This term, says the Holy Prophet, shall be followed by that of tyrannical imperialism, a period of hacking and harrying. This description is exactly applicable to the period which begins with the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Husain (Allah be pleased with him) and heartless persecution of the members of the Prophet's family. Also Hazrat Abu Bakr's worthy grandson Hazrat Abdullah Bin Zubair fell a martyr during these days. It was during these days when the fiery sword of Hajjaj bin yusuf played havoc with the lives of thousands of innocent Muslims. This period undoubtedly presents a true spectacle of the tyrannical imperialism foretold by our Holy Master (Peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore); blood-smearred fangs of the savage beasts were no doubt engaged in tearing the righteous from limb to limb. The *Hadith* under review then makes mention of the period of absolute monarchy an imperialism which, though not as tyrannical as its preceding epoch but, nevertheless, far removed from the Islamic conception of popular government and to all intents and purposes a despotic and oppressive rule when monarchs held power not delegated to them through a people's referendum but acquired by them through brute force or as heirs in lineal succession. This period of Islam is spread over hundreds of years and though was not as bloody as that of yazid bin Muaviya and Hujjaj bin yusuf, was nevertheless, on the whole, a despotic and oppressive one during the course of which the conception of Islamic standard of administration was totally non-existent. This, observes, the Holy Prophet (Peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore) will be followed by

the re-emergence of Caliphate with its foundation firmly laid on the Prophetic conception of moral values. In other words, Allah the High, will then raise a servant of the threshold of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings) with the honorific insignia of reflex-prophethood and shall, through him, initiate the era of true Islamic Caliphate.

This tradition is self-evident in that, besides its panoramic beauty, it declares in clear, plain and unambiguous words that as Islam began with the Caliphate founded on the prophethood bastion, so shall it re-emerge in the latter days through a similarly constituted Caliphate. Its significance unfolds itself in the appointment of a servant of the Holy Prophet (Peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore) as a reflex-Prophet in whose footsteps shall rise the second cycle of Caliphate. According to the narrator of this tradition, after making this observation, the Holy Prophet became silent. It was a very significant pause indeed, in that, it hinted that, with the commencement of this second cycle of caliphate, the old order will end bringing in the new. This renaissance has found its emergence, by the grace of God, with the appearance of the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. In *Mishkat*, the famous work on Hadith, the following words occur in between the lines of the above-tradition :

الظاهران المراد به زمن عيسى والمهدى-

(مشکوٰۃ طبع اصح المطابع کراچی صفحہ ۴۶۱)

“Evidently this in truth means the Caliphate of the period Isa and Mahdi.”¹

1. *Mushkat* published by *Ashah al Matabi*, Karachi page 461.

This is the testimony of those whose children are today bent destroying us root and branch. May Allah guide them aright!

A point may arise here that, according to some people, the above reference to the second cycle of Caliphate is applicable to the term of Hazrat Omar bin Abdul Aziz of the Umwite dynasty. That would indeed be too far-fetched an interpretation of the tradition, for, the Caliphate based on prophetic values presumes the existence of an appropriate organisation and implies a regular epoch in terms of time. The Caliphate of Hazrat Omar bin Abdul Aziz was confined to one individual's term which again was too shortlived (lasting a little over 2 years) to have been the subject of the Holy Prophet's (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings for ever and evermore) prediction of a cycle of renaissance on the pattern of the early Caliphate of the Holy companions. It is known to all students of history that the caliphate of Hazrat Omar bin Abdal Aziz was sandwiched between tyrannical imperialism and oppressive rule and not an independent epoch. Oppressive despotism long continued after the brief rule of Hazrat Omar bin Abdul Aziz. The tradition under discussion foretells the emergence of the term of oppressive despotism rule. Clearly therefore the Caliphate of Hazrat Omar bin Abdul Aziz could not have been the subject of the prophecy. Besides the last words of the tradition "then the Prophet was silent" definitely indicate that the reference here was to the cycle of caliphate which was destined to initiate a new chapter in the history of Islam, by the foundation of a new revolutionary epoch. The Caliphate of Hazrat Omar bin Abdul Aziz is in no way a milestone on the road to a new era. From whatever angle we examine the subject, it would be sheer obstinacy to force this

Hadith on the caliphate of Hazrat Omar bin Abdul Aziz. Those who insist on taking this line are victims of a grave error of judgement. In brief, the hadith under reference holds out to the Muslims, the promise of a full-fledged caliphate based on the prophetic standard, and it presumes the advent of a subordinate reflect-prophet to lay the foundations of its edifice.

A section of the people, little used to serious thought but quick in wanton criticism, are inclined to point out that since the hadith, in its reference to the emergence of caliphate in the latter days, makes no mention of a prophet, therefore it is wrong to build upon it a case for the appearance of a prophet. This is a very thin argument indeed. For, it is readily comprehended that when the very words of the *Hadith* 'خلافت علیٰ منہاج نبوت' i.e. (caliphate founded on the Prophetic bastion) comprise both the elements, caliphate and prophethood, in other words, mean 'Caliphate that follows or succeeds prophethood: a separate reference to prophethood is hardly called for. Caliphate, it must be understood, is a complementary addenda to prophethood and clearly justifies the presumption that one must succeed the other; logical conclusion being that there is no caliphate without prophethood preceding it immediately. Besides, it appears that our opponents have not cared to take into account the basic factor in this controversy, namely that the Promised Messiah '(peace of Allah be on him), founder of the Ahmadiya Movement does not claim an independent prophethood; on the contrary he claims reflex-prophethood which is a part and a reflection of the real prophethood of the Holy Apostle Muhammad (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings for ever and evermore). It will be readily appreciated on all hands that, under the circumstances, a separate mention of the appear-

ance of a prophet was not called for in the hadith under reference. An apt illustration of it may well be pointed out in the Sura Juma of the Holy Quran. Says the Book of Allah :

هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا... وَأَخْرَجَ

مِنْهُمْ لَتَمَّاءِلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ- (سورة جمعة آيت ٢٠٣)

“Allah raised a prophet among the illiterate (the Arabs), from among them,..... and a latter people from among them, who have not yet joined with them.”¹

Herein the *latter people* have been simply treated upon a par with the early companions of the Holy Prophet whose appearance from among them has been clearly hinted at, impliedly in the form of a similitude. In an exactly identical manner, in reference to the latter epoch of Islam, the tradition in hand, omits the mention of prophethood in word only, sufficing with a hint implied in its reference to caliphate founded on the bastion of prophethood, so that the attention of the people may be drawn, as in the above-mentioned Quranic verse, to the subtle truth that the prophet of latter days is not an independent office-bearer but a servant and disciple and a reflection of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore); for, after the advent of the Seal of Prophets there is no room for another in the realm of faith. Truly henceforth, it is through and through the era of Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah and whosoever comes after him, even though he attained to the excellence of prophethood, even

1. Sura Juma, Verses 3 and 4.

so, he shall be a tributary, a servant, and a reflector of Muhammad the Apostle of Allah, and shall, as such, receive of his light and not have an independent entity. How beautiful, bright, pleasing and attractive to the eye appears the full moon. It but reflects and radiates the rays of the sun and is not an independent source of light. Pointing to the same truth, says the Promised Messiah, in the course of his expression of his love and devotion to his Master Hazrat Muhammad, the chosen (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings for ever and evermore)

اُس نور پر خدا ہوں اس کا ہی میں بڑا ہوں
وہ ہے میں چیز کیا ہوں بس فیصلہ یہی ہے

I am devoted to that Light
I am to Him a slave
He it is, I am nothing
This is the Last word¹

In short, this hadith hints at the appearance of a reflex prophet from among the devotees of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings for ever and evermore) in the latter days and the re-establishment of caliphate, inspired by the prophetic standard of moral values, in his feet. Here a veiled reference to the emergence of a prophetic term is intended to imply that the prophethood immediately preceding the emergence of this second cycle of spiritual caliphate is a reflection and a part of the real prophethood of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings for ever and evermore)

1. *Dur-i-Samin.*

and neither independent nor self-sustained. It is a great pity, however, that owing to lack of insight, people are inclined to ignore these truths, paying scant attention to the subtle realities embedded therein.

Now I come to a tradition which explicitly terms the coming Messiah a prophet. Our Master the Holy Prophet has bestowed on him this title. Says the Hadith :

عن ابى هريرة قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم
 وسلم ليس بينى وبينه نبي يعنى عيسى وانه
 نازل فاذا رايتموه فاعرفوه - رجل مربوع الى
 الحرة والبياض..... فيقاتل الناس على
 الاسلام فيدق الصليب ويقتل الخنزير ويضع
 الجزية - (ابوداؤد كتاب الملامم باب خروج الدجال)

“From Abu Huraira. He said the Prophet of Allah (peace of Allah be on him and His blessings) said “there is no prophet between Me and him i.e. Isa, and he will verily descend and therefore as you see him accept him.....he is a middle-statured man of reddish, fair complexion. He will then fight the people for Islam and then break the cross and kill the swine and remit Jizia.”¹

The above tradition is too clearly-worded to need any elaboration and expostulation; for, our

1. Vide Abu Daoud Book Almalaham Ch : Khurujuddajjal.

Master the Holy Prophet (Peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings) has been pleased to term the coming Messiah a prophet, in his own blessed words.

Lest, in the light of the erroneous conception of the verse 'خاتم النبيين' the term 'prophet' used in reference to the coming Messiah be misunderstood to have been employed in a loose and non-technical sense, simply to invest it with a wider significance, the Holy Prophet avoided the usual tenure and tone of conversation and used the following words which contain a world of wisdom :

لَيْسَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَهُ نَبِيٌّ-

“There is between me and him no prophet.”

This form of speech, which is in a class by itself, decidedly intended to point out that “the coming Messiah was not to be treated as a titular Prophet in a non-technical sense but, in so far as, the fact of prophethood was concerned (and not its category or order of precedence) he is as much a prophet of God as I am”. How marvellous is the speech of our Holy Prophet, every word of it is a veritable treasure of wisdom and truth. It deserves to be seriously considered that if he had simply said that the coming Messiah would be a prophet, the mis-conception that has risen in this respect, would have confounded many a doubting mind leading him to regard the use of the term in a non-technical sense and not in the real sense of the term prophethood. But by making this profound observation “there is no prophet between him and me” the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore) confirmed the fact that “the coming

Messiah was as much a prophet of God as am I and though he is my servant, my disciple and my reflection nonetheless, he undoubtedly is a prophet. For, I stand on one end of the dispensation and he stands at the other and there is no prophet in between." This tradition is so manifestly clear that no open minded person will have any hesitation in accepting it without the least shadow of a doubt.

Beside, the observation "there is no prophet between me and him" warns against accepting any claimant to prophethood as genuine before the advent of the Promised Messiah, as, "There is no prophet between him and me". It is a double-edged weapon; on the one hand it confirms the bonafides of the Promised Messiah and on the other warns the Muslims against the claimants rising before his appearance, condemning them as anti-Christ and false.

There may be a tendency in some minds, to apply this hadith to the Messiah of Nazarath (peace of Allah be on him). It would be sheer insanity to do so, for, the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore) says انه نازل "verily he is coming."

In the face of this clear and definite observation, no person, in his senses, would connect it with the Messiah of Nazareth. Moreover, the further observation in this context "he will fight the people for Islam" shows that the coming Messiah will appear in the Islamic dispensation, at a time when Islam will be exposed to the attacks of other faiths and he will then fight other religious in support of Islam; and again the words "He will break the cross" i.e. this Divine reformer will appear at a time when the religion of cross will have reached the summit of its glory and he will then shatter

the Christian doctrine to shreds ; these furnish the additional testimony that here the references are in respect to the coming Messiah of the Muhammiadan dispensation and not to the *past* Messiah of the Mosaic dispensation. We will strongly urge upon our friends to coolly deliberate the two statements of our Master the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings), firstly that he is verily *coming* (i.e. shall appear at a future date), in other words this announcement does not relate to the Messiah of the Mosaic dispensation who has been but to the Messiah of the Muhammadian dispensation" *who will be coming at a later date : and secondly* his pronouncement "there is no prophet between him and me".

In the face of these two decisive and convincing expositions, it would be sheer pig-headedness to question the verdict of our Master and Guide. Muhammad the Chosen (Allah bless him ever and ever more) about the coming Messiah being a prophet of Allah, in the true sense of the term ; and that he has not been given this title in a general and non-technical sense, simply to impart a wider meaning to the term—but is a prophet, true and worthy, about whom it can be claimed that there is not one bearing that insignia between him and the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore).

Briefly speaking the following three facts emerge forth clearly from the above hadith of Abu Daood :

(1) The Messiah of the Muhammadian dispensation, is, according to the observation of the Holy Prophet, an apostle of Allah, detailed to the last tip-end for the protection of the Muslim people as does our Master the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and choicest blessings ever and evermore) grace the first tip.

(2) Appearance of a prophet, to serve Islam in the light of the observation :

يُقَاتِلُ النَّاسَ عَلَى الْإِسْلَامِ-

“He wil fight the people for Islam” is not derogatory to the verse “خاتم النبيين” for, in that capacity he is a spiritual heir to the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore) and is a part of him ; that is why the Holy Prophet calls him a prophet notwithstanding the verse خاتم النبيين

(*) Every claimant to prophethood, during the period intervening between the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore), is to be rejected as impostor, for, the period of ‘فيج اعوج’ has been reserved for false prophets from eternity.

The above tradition of Abu Daood finds support in a similar tradition occuring in Sahih Muslim, in the course of which, the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore) used the term prophet, no less than four times, in reference to the coming Messiah. Said the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings for ever and evermore.)

وَيُحْصِرُنِي اللَّهُ عَيْنِي وَأَصْحَابِهِ..... فَيُرْغِبُ

نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ عَيْنِي وَأَصْحَابِهِ..... ثُمَّ يَهْبِطُنِي اللَّهُ

عَيْنِي وَأَصْحَابِهِ..... فَيُرْغِبُ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ عَيْنِي

وَأَصْحَابِهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ- ۱ (مسلم باب ذكر الرجال)

“Isa the Prophet of Allah and his companions will be besieged... then Isa and the Prophet of Allah and his companions will turn to Allah.....then Isa the Prophet of Allah and his companions will invade the camps of the enemy.....again Isa the Prophet of Allah and his companions will turn to Allah.....”¹

In this lengthy tradition which need not be quoted here in full, because of limited space (which definitely relates to the troublous times of latter days and the coming Messiah as a reference to the original text will convince), the Holy Prophet (Peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings) has mentioned the Promised Messiah four times as the Prophet of Allah. This form of speech is as uncommon as that of the tradition of Abu Daood. It purports clearly to warn that “I am the last Prophet and there is no such prophet after me as would be independent of my grace or repealed my law; but that since the coming Messiah is a spiritual heir to me and my reflection, his advent does not breach the seal of prophethood, since he receives grace from out of my bounty and his prophethood is but an extension of my original prophethood. Therefore doubt him not nor his prophethood, for the offshot is not apart from the tree and the shadow is not independent of the substance.” It was with this object that he called the coming Messiah a prophet, no less than four times, in the course of a single observation. Undoubtedly such speech is not without its significance, its import being a forewarning against the misapprehensions that were likely to arise at a later date, lest the followers of the Faith should mistakenly reject the true claimant, in their

1. *Muslim Chapter Zikruddajjal.*

hastiness. It is clear that there was otherwise, no occasion for this repetition of the term Prophet in respect of the Promised Messiah on four occasions in the course of a single sentence. The Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore) has never made a similar reference in respect of any other prophet on any occasion.

Now I will take up a tradition which our opponents are rather nastily fond of quoting in support of their views, but which as I will presently show, in fact confirms our case. For all the evidence that can be adduced from this *hadith*, supports at best the conclusion that the door to legislative prophethood is closed after the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore) and that the door to non-legislative and subordinate prophethood shall remain wide open till eternity. The Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings) says:-

لَمَ يَبْقَ مِنَ النَّبَوَّةِ إِلَّا الْمُبَشِّرَاتُ قَالُوا وَمَا الْمُبَشِّرَاتُ
 قَالَ الرَّؤْيَا الصَّالِحَةُ - (صحيح بخارى ابواب الرؤيا)

“Naught remains of prophethood but Mubashshirat”. They said, “What is meant by Mubashshirat”. He said, “True visions.”¹

An elaboration of this *Hadith* is to be found in another tradition. It is as under :—

1. *Sahih Bukhari Ch. Arruya.*

ان النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَشَفَ السِّتَارَةَ وَرَأَسَهُ
مَعْصُوبًا فِي مَرَضِهِ الَّذِي مَاتَ فِيهِ وَالنَّاسَ صَفُوفَ
خَلْفِ ابْنِ بَكْرٍ فَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّهُ لَمِيبِقٌ - ١

(صحيح مسلم وابدو اؤدو بحواله فتح الباري جلد ١٢ صفحہ ٣٠٥)

“Verily the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings) had his head tightly wrapped because of illness of which he died subsequently, and he lifted the curtain while the people stood lined up for prayer behind Abu Bakr (and he) the Prophet said “O ye people verily there is naught left of prophethood except mubashshirat (true dreams.)¹

This tradition is put forth by our opponents as barring the door to prophethood of every description after the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore) and it is argued that now all that a Mussalman may be eligible to have is a true dream, as a rare gift. This conclusion is not borne out by the tradition which, a little deliberation will show, only reinforces our interpretation, namely that independent and legislative categories of prophethood have ended with the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore) but that door to subordinate or reflex-prophethood is still open, through allegiance and devotion, to the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore) and that it shall stand ajar till the world lasts.

In respect of this *hadith*, it is of utmost importance to note at the very outset, that the observat-

1. *Sahih Muslim* quoted by *Fathulbari* Vol. 12 page 305,

ions it carries were made by the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings for ever and evermore) at a time when he was at his death-bed and had a feeling of imminent separation from his dear comrades. At such a moment one is naturally moved to lighten the feeling of bereavement and by way of consolation impress the connection that will continue to bind him to those he will be leaving behind. It is evident that the Holy Prophet's (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore) relationship with his companions was that of a law-giving prophet. In this context the content-meaning of the Holy Prophet's observation would naturally be considered as specifically limited to legislative prophethood and not to prophethood in general. In other words, he said "O my dear comrades, I am now about to depart from you. With my death ends the legislative word of God that was being revealed through me. But lose not heart, keep looking to Him. He will not neglect you but will reveal Himself to the believers through *basharat* and happy dreams. "This was particular type of speech related to a particular occasion, on the eve of his death, and in reference to his particular prophethood. He intended to point out to a particular period which was to immediately follow his death and not to a timeless future. This is precisely the sense that leading Divines of Islam have attributed to this tradition. Allama Ibne Hajr (died in 852 A.H.) who is respected as an authority (Imam) on *hadith* says in the course of his commentary on the tradition under reference :—

اللام في النبوة للعهد والمراد نبوته والمعنى لم

يبق بعد النبوة والمختصة بي إلا المبشرات.

فتح الباري جلد ۱۲ صفحہ ۳۰

“The prophethood under reference here is his i.e., the Holy Prophet’s particular prophethood and it means that naught will remain of his particular prophethood except *mubashirat* (true visions)¹

Accordingly our view of this tradition is that the Holy Prophet (Allah’s blessings be on him) had in mind his particular prophethood when he made the observation; this meaning is not only borne out by the context of the *hadith* but also shared by the preceding Divines. And it relates to the period following his death, the imminence of which impelled him to give his companions the consolation that the mercy of God would reveal itself to them in the form of happy visions, even though he himself may no longer be in their midst. Since there was no question of a prophet arising soon after the death of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore), he confined his interpretation of *Mubashshirat* to good dreams only, as the time indeed called for little else

It must be borne in mind in this connection, that it was in the fitness of things that during the life-time of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings) and even for some time after his demise, revelation could not be on an extensive scale lest there should be a mix-up with the basic Quranic revelation in progress during the period. It was precisely in view of this consideration that he confined the extent of *mubashshirat* during his time to mere good dreams. Allama Ibne Hajar says in his notes on this subject:—

1. *Fathulbari Vol. 12 page 305.*

وكان السِّرّ في ندور الالهام في زمنه وكثرت منه
بعده..... لمن اختصّه الله به للامن من

اللبس في ذلك- رفتح البارى جلد ١٢ صفحہ ٣٠٥

‘The secret underlying the scarcity of general revelation during his own time and its abundance after him was that Allah decreed security for the former against a mix-up.’¹

It is an excellent and a most agreeable exposition that should be acceptable to every open-minded person who cares to ponder the full context of the tradition. It will be clear to him that the observations made by the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore) refer to his own period of time and the limitation of *Mubashirat* only to true dreams applied to the same period and was not meant in a general sense. If, however, the limited meaning of the tradition is considered to be of general application, it makes little difference as a multiplicity of cogent interpretations is a well-recognized principle. As we have stated in the course of our introductory remarks, prophethood is classified in three categories :

Firstly, law-bearing prophethood which introduces a new code such as the one granted to our Master the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore).

Secondly, the prophethood which is independent though unaccompanied by any new law and is a gift independent of a former prophet's channel; the recipient of such prophethood obtains the

1. *Fathalbari Vol. 11 page 305*

favour directly without owing allegiance to or being disciple of a preceding prophet. Such prophethood is self-sustained and is not dependent on any other prophet and is a direct gift, such as the prophethood of Hazrat David and Hazrat Isa.

Thirdly, there is the reflex-prophethood which is unaccompanied by any new law. The recipient of this category of prophethood does not obtain the favour independently; it is in fact a reflection and a shadow of the preceding or current legislative prophethood, is dependent thereon and is devoted to its service, such as was decreed for the Promised Messiah, appointed to come after the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings for ever and evermore). If therefore the term *Mubashirat* is taken in a general sense, the purport of the tradition under discussion would crystalize in the postulate that while there shall not be a law-giving prophet after the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings), a prophet gifted with *mubashshirat* and *munzirat* may come as a disciple and devotee of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore).

The truth of the matter is that *Mubashirat* and *munzirt* (*munzirat* are a necessary concomitant of *Mubashirat*) are no ordinary gift; when one receives these in the fullness of perfection, both qualitatively as well quantitatively, he is designated as prophet. We agree that on a lower level the gift is granted to all the believers, more or less. But as the possessor of one rupee cannot be called wealthy, a recipient of an ordinary portion of *munzirat* and *mubashirat* cannot be called a prophet. Only one who receives the gift in an extra-ordinary measure and to the degree of perfectness deserves the title. Really the difference

between the two is one of degree and extent, *mubashirat* and *munzirat* being synonymous with prophethood. Says the Holy Quran on this subject:-

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ فَمَنْ
آمَنَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

(سورة انفصام آیت ۴۹)

“We send not our messengers but as recipients of *Mubashirat* and *munzirat* whoso therefore believe and reform shall neither fear nor grieve.”¹

The above Quranic verse makes it clear in no uncertain terms, that in so far as their content matter is concerned, *mubashirat* and *munzirat* are identical with prophethood and bearing a new law or being recipient of prophethood independently are mere peripheral quantities which some prophets hold as additional qualifications and some do not. The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, the Promised Messiah observes in this connection:-

“This misfortune is due to the error that the true meaning of the term prophet has not been probed. *Nabi* simply means one who receives intelligence from God through revelation and is favoured with the gift of Divine speech and address. It is not necessary that he should also bring a law nor that he should not be the follower of a law-giver prophet.”²

He again says: ‘As the *Mujaddad Sahib*

1. Sura Anam verse 49.

2. Zamima Barahine Ahmadiyya V Page 138.

Sirhindi observes in his *Maktubat* (letters) that though there are among this Ummat (people) some who have been honoured with the word of God and His address and such ones shall continue to be till the doomsday, but only such a one as is graced with Divine word and Address in exceeding generous measure and is given intelligence of hidden things in abundance, is designated as prophet.”

“Even if therefore the tradition under discussion

لم يبق من النبوة إلا المبشرات.

is taken in a general sense, it will simply resolve itself into one basic concept that there can be no law-giver prophet in future and that only subordinate non-law-bearing prophet may appear with a prophethood confined to only *mubashirat* and *Munzirat*.

In connection with this tradition, it must be borne in mind that this specific meaning of the term *mubashirat* relates only to the mass of Muslims. It does not at all mean that the only portion that has been allocated to this, the best people, consists of mere dreams (the personal testimony of thousands of saints and reformers who grace the pages of Islamic history is a confirmatory proof) and that there shall not be one such as receives revelation. Imam Abul Hasan says in his commentary on *Ibne Maja*:-

المراد انهم لم تبق على العموم والآفلالهم

والكشف للاولياء فموجود.

“True dreams are meant here in reference to the mass of Muslims and revelation and Divine word are still there for the righteous (the

saints)¹

In short the hadith under discussion :

(لم يبق من النبوة الا المباشرات)

refers to the particular prophethood of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore) and does not apply to prophethood in general. Even if it is differently construed, it does not negate prophethood in principle and is applicable only to law-bearing and independent prophethood; the purport of the tradition being that the advent of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings) bars the door to law-bearing and independent prophethood and does not so bar the door to *mubashirat* and *munzirat* as this is but a reflection of his own prophethood and not an original gift nor independent of him.

Besides, the above tradition contains a subtle reference to the coming of the Promised Messiah in the latter days. To elaborate this point, suffice it to say, that, as our readers are aware, Hazrat Isa was gifted with *Injil* which literally means *Basharat* (vide *Aqrabulwawarid*). In other words the non-law-bearing prophethood of Hazrat Isa was termed *Basharat* by God; the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore) in his observation under discussion, in a subtle manner pointed out that while he was about to depart, the people should remain on the lookout for a Messiah bearing *Mubashshirat* like the Mosaic Messiah bearing the *Injil* (*Basharat*), this Muhammadan Messiah being a follower in his steps and a recipient of his (the Prophet's) light. What a beautiful expression that fell from the august lips of our Master, the Holy Prophet (peace

Sharah Sunani Ibne Maja edited by Imam Abul Hasan
Page 448.

of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore). In other words he repeated the prophecy relating to the Promised Messiah, namely that as the Messiah of Nazareth who was gifted with *Injil (Basharat)* to serve the Mosaic dispensation, so shall in the latter days come a Muhammadan Messiah with a like *Basharat* to serve the Quranic law. In brief in his explanation of the term *Mubashirat* the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him and His choicest blessings ever and evermore) limited its operation to 'true dreams' in relation to the immediate period of time so that no other revelation gets mixed up with Quranic revelation, but for the distant period of time, in this one expression, he implied a reference to the appearance of the Promised Messiah. Would that our opponents gave up their superficial observations and pondered these profound truths in which the Quran and *Hadith* abound!

AN EXAMINATION OF NEGATIVE TRADITIONS.

After discussing the positive traditions, relating to the finality of prophethood, I now propose to take up negative traditions. By these I mean the traditions that are apparently understood to close the door of prophethood after the Holy Apostle. These traditions are of different categories and in their reported versions, words of varying meaning have been used by the Holy Prophet. For instance, in some, the expression used is

لَأَنْبِيَّ بَعْدِي

“There is no prophet after me”.

In others it has been said,

لَوْ كَانَ بَعْدِي نَبِيٌّ لَكَانَ عَمْرًا.

“Had there been a prophet after me, he would be Omar”.

Yet in some, words used are,

إِنِّي آخِرُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ

“I am the last of the prophet”.

Again in others the following words have been used.

مثلي ومثل الانبياء من قبلي. #

“I and prophets preceding me are like a house with a stone missing. My advent befittingly marks to the emplacement of this brick.”

And still in some other reports the expressions used are :

ان الرسالة والنبوة قد انقطعت

“Verily Messengership and Prophethood has ceased”.

And :

ثلاثون دجالون كذابون كلهم يزعم انه نبي-

“There will appear thirty impostors after me, each of them claiming to be a prophet”.

This represents a summary of the traditions which are, in their apparent meaning, understood to bolt the door on prophethood. I would not here go into the authenticity or unreliability of these traditions as considerations of space do not admit of a detailed criticism. However (as I will by the grace of God presently prove it) it is not correct to adduce from these traditions the evidence that our opponents seek to draw. A careful examination will, on the contrary, reveal that while legislative prophethood and independent apostleship ceased with the advent of the Holy Prophet, subordinate prophethood which is a reflex projection and in point of fact part and parcel of Muhammadan prophethood, has certainly not so ceased. Not one of the foregoing traditions put a period to subordinate prophethood of the type above described. Before I take up these traditions, piece by piece, I would like to draw attention in a general manner, to a basic point which will lead to a clearer understanding of this question.

In relevance to the question of the finality of Prophethood, we cite a number of traditions which prove the continuity of prophethood; our opponents similarly put forth some traditions which apparent-

ly close the door of prophethood. This apparent conflict is a basic point and it has to be recognized that if it is not resolved, it leads to the unfortunate criticism that the Holy Prophet made statements which were contradictory in terms, that he said at times that "there will be no prophet after me, and at others that "there could be a prophet after me"; and again "I am the last prophet" and yet again that "after me will appear among my followers a Messiah who will be a prophet". This apparent conflict must be resolved. It is as much our duty as that of the other Musalmans to give it the most serious consideration and honestly lend ourselves to a sincere effort to reconcile or resolve this apparent contradiction (as in our sincere view the conflict is only a superficial one and there can be no material contradiction in the statements of the Holy Prophet).

We have as it will be agreed on all hands, only two alternatives before us, to dispose of this apparent conflict :

Firstly that the contradictions in these conflicting traditions be referred to the arbitration of the word of the Holy Quran. The tradition receiving Quranic support should be accepted and the other rejected as unauthentic. This is the course to which Quran has guided us. It says

فَبِآيَاتِ حَدِيثِ بَعْدَ اللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝ (سورة جاثية آيت ٤)

"Which tradition shall they accept beside Allah and his verses."¹

If, however, our opponents are not agreeable to this simple and straight course, then there is the other alternative. We must hit upon a way to reconcile the traditions of both the categories, the

1. *Sura Jasia Verse 7.*

positive and the negative. A conclusion must be reached elucidating the category of prophethood, continuance of which is supported by the relevant group of traditions and similarly specifying the type of prophethood, cessation of which has been pronounced by the relevant mass of negative traditions. It will save us from an unnecessarily unending controversy and at the same time open the way to the acceptance of traditions of both the categories.

Quran's Verdict is in our Favour.

The above are the only two courses whereby this seeming conflict can be resolved. It is the duty of every true Muslim to give this question which involves fundamentals of faith, his most sensible and honest consideration, to seek a solution of this problem. The method of reference to the Quran is a clear one. As I have said in the opening chapter of this treatise, there is not a single verse, or even a part of a verse of the Holy Quran that puts a period to Prophethood after the advent of the Holy Prophet. On the other hand, the entire narrative of the Holy Quran highlights the theme that the gates of the bounties and mercies of Heaven have been opened wider than ever before since the advent of our Master (may peace be on him). Our opponents have nothing to put forth except the verse relating to 'Khatamannabiyyin' which, as we have already proved, far from closing the door of prophethood, only confirms the pre-eminent status and grace-bearing character of the Holy Prophet whose seal must henceforth be the hall-mark of his devoted and devout followers who shall, through him, be worthy of Divine graces granted directly heretofore to prophets of yore. This is precisely the view that we propound.

Briefly speaking, not a single verse of the Quran

lends colour to the theory of cessation of prophethood after the Holy Prophet. It is with consummate wisdom that Allah, in the opening chapter of the Quran, pointedly starts with the grand theme that the bounties granted to preceding dispensations severally shall henceforth, without exception, be granted in their fullest measure and perfected form to the followers of the Holy Prophet. Can a book that starts with such an all-embracing outlook lend support to narrow perspective of the prophet's mission ending up in the anti-climax of drying up the flow of Divine grace and bounty and arresting at once the current hitherto pursuing its normal course.

So far as the apparent contradictions in the various traditions are concerned, its resolution does hardly present any insuperable difficulty, as the conflict is one of a superficial nature and in no way a real one. On the one hand, we cite a number of traditions which conclusively establish the fact that after the Holy Prophet a follower of his, seeking the grace of his light and bearing his reflex, can attain to the pedestal of prophethood. On the other hand, the other party comes forth with a few traditions which countenance the view that there is no prophet after the Holy Prophet who is the last of the line. At the surface, a major contradiction confronts us. But cannot this conflict be resolved with the simple stroke of reason that the expression لاني بعدى "There is no prophet after me" and (2) اني آخر الانبياء "I am the last prophet" used by the Holy Prophet ban the advent of a prophet independent of him, nullifying his dispensation and otherwise detached, in respect of his status, vis-a-vis the prophethood of the Holy Prophet. Viewed in this sense a new significance thus becomes manifest in the aforementioned traditions. In respect of the other group of traditions of the Holy Prophet, relating to the appearance of a prophet after him and pertaining

to the Promised Messiah whose advent as a prophet has been foretold by him, the Holy Prophet clearly meant that a spiritual son of the Prophet can, in the service of his religion, seeking light from his light as does the moon from the sun, attain prophethood. The prophethood of such a person is thus in no way derogatory to the status of the Holy Prophet and the significance of the tradition لا نبي بعدى "there is no prophet after me" is not belittled in any way, for, a branch is but an offshoot of the tree nor is the shadow apart from the substance.

It will be appreciated that the view propounded above is a simple and straight answer to the superficial conflict in the traditions which is thus disposed of in a word by a slight change in our angle. Every tradition of the Holy Prophet thus turns into a balm for the heart and a source of inner satisfaction. Controversy is cut short. I am fully aware of the fact that the authenticity of these traditions has been the subject of unending argument and there is plenty of room for polemics in this field; but I do not want to enter into this controversy and am prepared, for the sake of argument, to accept all the traditions under reference. I do believe that the Holy Prophet claimed that "there is no prophet after me," I also believe that the Holy Prophet claimed to be the last Prophet. But I am not prepared to put such construction on these traditions as tend to contradict other traditions. I cannot interpret these traditions in a sense derogatory to the dignity of the Holy Prophet. In short, when accepting one category of traditions, I do equally credit the other group of traditions which confirm that a disciple-prophet can appear after the Holy Prophet following his footsteps and that the Promised Messiah is a spiritual heir to the Holy Prophet and thus elevated to the dignity of Prophethood. I accept the traditions of

both categories as, the resolution of their superficial conflict, in the light of the foregoing interpretation, reveals the great glory of the Prophet whereby his servants may, through his bounty, attain to prophethood. Truly did say the Holy Prophet,

لو كان موسى وعيسى حيين لما وسعهما إلا اتباعي -

(البواقيت والجمواهر من تبه امام شعراني جلد ۲ منصفه ۲۰)

“Had Moses and Jesus been alive they would not but follow my lead.”¹

A non-Muslim could very well characterize it as a tall order lacking testimony. But by choosing one of his servants for the office of Promised Messiah and granting him the honour of prophethood, God has implemented the truth of the Prophet's claim and facts have affixed the seal of veracity. Are our opponents prepared to mind this evidence of hard facts? Are they prepared, like us to accept all the relevant traditions to resolve this conflict? If they cannot then let them ponder well, for, they reject the Quran totally and turn their back on what is better than half of the relevant traditions. Their's is a losing bargain, for in final analysis, they only detract from the dignity of the Holy Prophet and dry up the stream of Divine grace.

Now I will briefly deal with the negative traditions, severally. In this category the foremost tradition that we are up against is “there is no prophet after me”. This tradition is often repeated by our opponents in support of their claim that the Holy Prophet has clearly laid down that there

1. *Al-Ywaqit waljawahar compiled by Imam Sharani, Vol.II.P.20.*

shall be no prophet after him. They have quoted this tradition in their writings and in their speeches ad infinitum and have with their erroneous exposition considerably influenced the heads and hearts of the people. But God willing this magic will dissipate itself before long.

This is true that literally لا نبي بعدى bears undoubtedly the meaning "there is no prophet after me." But it requires no uncommon learning to see that at times, the word 'لا' (No) negatives a particular contingency and does not necessarily signify a general negation but only a restricted one which, according to Arabic grammar, is termed as "specific negative". In Urdu language too a parallel example will be found in the case of an eminently successful and able Headmaster of a school said to "have topped in merit the rest of his category in the area". An expression like this "Lo that is a headmaster and there is no other than him," would certainly not mean, literally that there is no Headmaster other than him in the whole area; all that it will signify is that there is none of his ability and eminence in the region. No sensible person will dispute the fact that such expressions occur in every language and are in common use and in wide currency. In this connection we indeed hardly need seek parallels in other languages, for, the Holy Prophet himself has illustrated an example of this idiom giving the whole of this controversy the final quietus. Said the Holy Prophet,

اذا هلك قيصر فلا يقربعدى واذا هلك كسرى

فلا كسرى بعدى - (بخاری کتاب الایمان والذکر)

"There shall not be another Caesar after the
cath of the present Caesar nor another

Xerxes after the death of the present Xerxes.”¹

In the above tradition the expressions Caesar and Xerxes have been used in a general sense apparently and no qualification of a restrictive nature have been affixed. For, the Caesar and Xerxes under reference were after their death succeeded by others ; in fact the Caesars continued to rule for a period of over five to six hundred years. Scholars are agreed that when the Holy Prophet made the statement that there will be no Caesar nor Xerxes after the death of the ones ruling at the time he only meant that there will not be one equal to them in greatness and grandeur or in vastness of dominion. It was precisely in the same sense that the Holy Prophet said “there will be no prophet after me” ; he simply meant that there shall not be a prophet after him with a new law or recipient of office independent of him. He did not mean to say that there would be absolutely no prophet after him. In a manner of speaking he elaborated the meaning of his statement “لا نبي بعدى” (“there is no prophet after me”). Thus, as the latter statement meant that there shall be no greater Caesar after the death of the present one, “so shall there be no prophet bearing a law and holding office independent of me after my commission”. This is too evident to leave any room for doubt. Besides, the word (بعدي) commonly translated as “after me” deserves to be particularly examined. It must be noted in this connection that the expression (بعد) (after) is used in Arabic language in the following three different senses :

(1) *Indicative of place.* In one sense ‘بعد’ (after) would mean behind, as for instance, in respect of a house being behind (بعد) another house.

(2) In another sense, used idiomatically, the word

1. Bukhari Kitab Al-Iman wa Al-Nazoor.

(بعد) (after) will convey the meaning of 'opposite' as, for instance, accepting one thing as against or besides (leaving aside) the other, which may be thus said to be behind it. Says the Quran for instance

قِيَامِي حَدِيثٌ بَعْدَ اللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ - (سُورَةُ جَاثِيَةِ آيَاتٍ ٤٠)

“What statement will they believe besides (بعد) Allah and his verses.”¹

(3) *Indicative of period of time*, as for instance after (بعد) the passing away of something or the expiry of its period, something else follows. There is no gainsaying the fact that the word is definitely used in the above three senses according to Arabic syntax and idiom.

We need not indulge in a discussion of the meaning referred to in (1) above. For, insofar as the subject matter of our present discussion is concerned, this meaning is specific to the particular tradition which contains the statement the Holy Prophet made to Ali on the eve of his departure for the battle of Tabuk, “you are to me like Aaron to Moses” (i. e. as Moses left Aaron behind during his absence on a journey, so am I leaving you behind in my absence on a journey) “except that a prophet officiated Moses in his absence and there is no prophet in my absence”. In this tradition the word (بعد) (after or behind) has been used as a ظرف مَكَانِي passive participle. It is unequivocally clear that Hazrat Ali who officiated the Holy Prophet in Medina during his absence, has been declared as a non-prophet in status. Since however this tradition is a singular one in that it relates to a specific event and the words لا نَبِيَّ بَعْدِي (There is no prophet after me) have been used in certain other traditions as

1. Sura Jasia, Verse 7.

well without reference to any particular context, I do not feel inclined to go into it and seek refuge behind it. I admit that the words (There is no prophet after me) or similar expressions have been used on other occasions as well and the crux of the argument consists in these general references rather than in the specific incident relating to Hazrat Ali.

The word بعد also means besides which carries with it a sense of preference as, for instance, says the Quran :

فَمَا يَحَدِيثُ بَعْدَ اللَّهِ وَإِيَّتِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ (سورة جاثية آيت ٤)

“What will the people believe after (leaving aside or besides) Allah and his verses?”¹

In the light of this meaning, the import of the tradition لا نبي بعدى (there is no prophet after me) becomes quite clear. It will in this sense, mean that there shall be no prophet after me who bears a law besides my Law and declaring it void; whosoever comes shall walk in my steps and serve my law and bear my flag.

The third meaning which relates to the passage of time signifies succession of one by the other, after one has run the due course, in a certain period of time. In point of time one comes after the other. In this sense the tradition لا نبي بعدى (there is no prophet after me) will mean “There is no prophet after the expiry of my period.” The meaning in this light is too unambiguous and manifest to call for any comment. It makes it clear that after the Holy Prophet shall come none who may initiate a new dispensation declaring his (the prophet's) period at an end. This meaning is certainly not

1. Sura Jasia, Verse 7.

susceptible of any objection as, it is admitted on all hands, that the Holy Prophet was commissioned with a final and ever-lasting code and his period extends till the Doomsday. The Holy Prophet declared so very often. On one occasion raising his hand, he joined his two fingers and emphasized:

بعثت انا والساعة كهاتين

“I and the Doomsday are adjacent to each other as are these two fingers of my hand”.¹ (i.e. there is no gap between the two.)—

Since the term of the Prophet's dispensation extends to eternity, لا نبي بعدى (There is no prophet after me) shall, in the sense of ظرف زمانى necessarily mean that there is no such prophet after him as would put a period to his term which extends to the Doomsday. It is a pity that, due to their myopic conception, our opponents limit the meaning of بعدى (after me) to the physical life-time of the Holy Prophet, while the Prophet meant (and truly in consonance with his lofty station) that his term was ever-lasting and that there could not be a prophet who will cut across his jurisdiction and his term. The word بعدى (after), it must be carefully noted, is thus capable of expressing only one sense, that of termination of the Prophet's period and suspension of his Law and appearance of a new prophet. That has been expressly negated as the Prophet's term extends to the Day of Judgment and shall not come to an end. The tradition لا نبي بعدى points to this subtle and learned interpretation. It is painful to observe how the materialistic-minded shallow thinkers have limited its significance to his physical life-time thus lowering the loftiness of its conception.

1. *Bakhari Kitab Al-Tafsir.*

In a word, we believe in the tradition (there is no Prophet after me) in the fullness of faith and declare openly that there is no prophet after our Master the Holy Prophet. But we do not subscribe to the view that the water of his fountain has run dry (God forbid!); on the contrary we believe that his prophethood is co-extensive with eternity and whosoever shall come henceforth, must come enwrapped in the mantle of His prophethood and that his apostleship would thus be subordinate to and not independent of the Holy Prophet. For, there shall not be one, be he the Messiah of Nazareth or any other, who dare encroach upon the Holy Prophet's term of office and put his foot on the pedestal of apostleship, in contravention of the Holy Prophet's seal of Prophethood till The Doomsday. Our Master is verily pre-eminent among all his predecessors and successors and the chief among the tribes of men. Those who preceded him prepared the ground for his advent as says he,

كُنْتُ نَبِيًّا وَأَدْرَبِينَ الْمَاءَ وَالطَّيْنَ.

And those who succeed him shall do so as his servants seeking his light and as his reflection. This is the true significance of the verse خَاتَمُ النَّبِيِّينَ and the tradition لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدِي What a pity therefore that the materialist thinkers of today prefer the superficial sense of the term to the lofty truths embodied therein.

In recapitulation, we reiterate our faith in the tradition (لَا نَبِيَّ بَعْدِي) and verify its truth and authenticity except that it means that (1) There shall not be a prophet, such as can declare the Law of Muhammad as abrogated, for, his Law is eternal and shall not be replaced with another dispensation. (2) There shall not be a prophet who

can cut across the term of the Muhammadan Prophethood, and initiate a new dispensation putting a period on Muhammadan dispensation. On the contrary whoever comes shall be to the Prophet like a branch to the tree and shall seek his light from the apostle's and thus his prophethood shall subsist in Muhammadan Prophethood and not be extraneous thereto.

The great reformers and Divines of Islam have time and again upheld this sublime truth. Even the Holy Prophet's favourite wife Hazrat Aysha (Allah be pleased with her) said,

قَوْلُوا إِنَّهُ خَاتَمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ، وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِأَنْبِيٍّ بَعْدَهُ-

(تكملة مجمع البحار ص ٥٥٠ و در منشور جلد ٥)

“Say that he is the seal of Prophets but say not that there is no prophet after him”.¹

The Maulvi of today is certainly hugging the low earth and dare not reach out to our kind mother's loftiness of thought. She is clearly elaborating the tradition (لا نبي بعدى) which she fears lest hasty-minded people, failing to realize its true meaning, should fall in the error of construing as finally bolting the door on prophethood after the Holy Prophet and warning in a revealing manner against this obvious mistake, enjoins reading the tradition (لا نبي بعدى) in the light of the verse (خاتم النبيين) as the latter contains the essence of reality.

Clearly the tradition (لا نبي بعدى) is capable only of two possible inter-pretations : one which our opponents put forth, namely, that the door of every type of prophethood has been finally sealed

1. *Takmila Majma Ul-Bihar* p 85 and *Dur-i-Manthur Vol. V.*

after the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace of Allah on him); and the other interpretation advanced by us, that no such prophet as would cut short the term of the Holy Prophet, shall appear after him; but a subordinate reflector-Prophet, bearing the seal of his certificate, may appear as his disciple and follower. This is precisely what the verse (خاتم النبيين) purports to convey as explained above. It is noteworthy how clearly our affectionate mother Hazrat Ayesha (peace of Allah be on her) supported our foregoing interpretation when she hinted a note of caution against the likelihood of a wrong construction and directed attention towards the general sense of the verse (خاتم النبيين) which, she stressed, stood for "Seal of the Prophets". There shall be no *prophet with a law nor a prophet* independent of him henceforth as such a phenomena violates the sanctity of the Seal of Prophethood. But on the other hand, a disciple-prophet reflecting the Holy Prophet, radiating his light and receiving his grace, will be in order, since his prophethood is under his Law and in fact, a projection of the Holy Prophets' own prophethood.

I am lost in my admiration of the surprising intuition of this eminent lady and affectionate mother who could, so unerringly, foresee 1400 years ahead, the coming dangers and warn against such construction of the tradition (لا نبي بعدى) as were against the spirit of the verse (خاتم النبيين) and advised a construction that was compatible with it. She thus, indirectly, expounded the meaning of the verse (خاتم النبيين) "that the verse does not end prophethood and on the other hand it promises continued flow of Divine grace through the Prophet and under his Seal."

May Allah, bless the Prophet, his people and his spouses!

I feel that this discussion has taken much longer space than I had mentally reserved for it. I will now therefore conclude it with only one more reference and then take up other traditions. Hazrat Imam Shirani (died in A. H. 927) says:

قوله صلى الله عليه وسلم فلان نبى بعدى ولا رسول

المراد به لا مشرع بعدى - (البراهيت والجمهر جلد ۲ صفحہ ۲۷)

“The statement of the Prophet that there shall be no prophet after him simply means that there shall be no such prophet after him as bears a new law”.¹

The above explanation by Hazrat Imam Shirani is clear and unambiguous. No sensible person can entertain the least doubt about it even for a moment. It will be silly if not dishonest to raise, in this connection, a question with regard to the personal belief held by Imam Shirani in this matter as we have disposed of this irrelevant issue in respect of Mullah Ali Qari's reference bearing on the tradition.

لَوْعَاشَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَكَانَ صِدْقًا نَبِيًّا - (ابن ماجه كتاب الجنائز)

Only an unreasonable person would trot out such an irrelevant point. As we have already clearly pointed out in our discussion of Mullah Ali Qari's reference, we are not concerned here with the personal belief of Imam Shirani about the appearance of a prophet. The subject under discussion is the interpretation of the tradition (لا نبى بعدى) as put forth by Imam Shirani and this interpretation undoubtedly takes cognizance of the only fact that there is no law-giving prophet after him.

1. *Al-Yuwajit Wal-jawahar Vol. II p. 27.*

Therefore it is imperative that you should be actuated by a God-fearing sense of honesty and abstain from confusing the issue. For, we are not concerned here with the beliefs of Imam Shirani. The subject under discussion is limited only to the construction he put upon the tradition (لا نبي بعدى) It is evident from his above-quoted reference that his interpretation conveys the one and only meaning, namely that there is no law-giving Prophet after the Holy Prophet.

If, however, (I am qualifying this statement with a big 'if') Imam Shirani held the personal belief that a Prophet invariably brought a new law, his view is in no way a correct one. For, says the Quran,

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنْ أَعْيُنِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ

“And verily we gave Moses the Book and followed him up with Prophets”

And again,

إِنَّمَا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا
النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ آسَلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا-

(سورة بقره آيت ٨٨ و سورة مائده آيت ٤٥)

“We granted the Torah wherein was guidance and light, thereby the Prophets who conformed thereto, did adjudicate for the Jews.”¹

This is too clear and evident a verse to admit of any doubt. Many other verses of the Quran further confirm this and so do the traditions. As, for instance, a tradition states that there have been 1,24,000

1. *Al-Baqara, V. 88 and Al-Majda, V. 45.*

prophets of whom 815 were law-givers (*Musnad Ahmad*). Factual evidence furnishes further confirmation. In history we find a large number of prophets without a new law: they were appointed to serve the preceding law and reform the faith and practice of the people. Such prophets were David, Solomon, Zakaria and Yahya who were commissioned after Moses. Even commonsense would confirm this view, since, after all the divine object in raising prophets is public reformation which is sought through either a new law or through regeneration of a previous law. In face of this conclusive evidence which has the cumulative support of Quran, tradition, history and reason, it is unthinkable that Imam Shirani or any other responsible authority could entertain the belief that all prophets must necessarily bring a new law. It is however probable that, in coincidence with our own terminology enunciated in the foregoing pages (و لكل ان يصطلح), the Imam Sahib shared the belief that in reality real prophethood comprised only the law-giving content, as truly every prophetic dispensation originates with it and other categories of prophethood flow therefrom and follow it and not that other categories of Prophethood are not entitled to be termed as Prophethood in any sense of the word. In short, the tradition (لا نبي بعدى) "There is no prophet after me" is authentic and we accept it whole-heartedly. But it does not finally bolt the door of prophethood after the Holy Prophet. On the contrary it simply means that since the Holy Prophet's term extends to the Day of Judgment, therefore there shall not appear a prophet who will abrogate his law or who may not be from among his following: only such a prophet shall henceforth appear as comes through the way kept open by the verse (خاتم النبيين) (according to the view of the Lady of Paradise our mother Hazrat

Aysha, May Allah be pleased with her) i.e. a disciple and a reflector-prophet. who, bearing the seal of the Holy Prophet, attains to prophethood. The other tradition that our opponents advance is the one based on the saying of the Holy Prophet **انى آخرا الانبياء** ("I am the last of the Prophets") This tradition is cited as the Holy Prophet's personal decision that he is the last prophet and that after his judgment, the matter must be treated as closed. In this connection it must be borne in mind that as, we believe that there is no prophet after the Holy Prophet's term of Prophethood, similarly do we whole-heartedly subscribe our faith to the belief that he is in the true sense of the word the last Prophet. It is indeed very painful to note that our opponents at times without caring to understand our viewpoint and at others, unfortunately deliberately attribute to us the totally erroneous view that we do not accept the Holy Prophet as the final Prophet. The truth of the matter is that we do believe the Holy Prophet to be the last prophet in the sense in which he has so declared himself to be.

This misunderstanding has originated, in fact, with the failure on the part of our opponents, to ponder over the nature of prophethood we claim for the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. The mere word 'prophet', used in respect of his claim, causes such an uproar that a hue and cry is raised, 'Lo, here the prophet's seal has been violated, another one has been assigned the place of the prophet and declared to be the last of the line' Would that our misguided friends gave a moment's cool and patient consideration and try to understand the question in a dispassionate manner. What is prophethood? Which stream has the Holy Prophet stopped and which one has he caused to flow? To refresh the memory of our readers, I will here

like to repeat that according to the Holy Quran, the traditions and history, prophethood is divided into three categories :—

(1) Law-bearing prophethood which initiates a new law and a new prophetic dispensation. Instances in point are the prophethood of Hazrat Moses which brought the law of Tora and the perfect and mature prophethood of our Master the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah and his blessings be on him) who was graced with the ever-lasting code of the Quran. Such prophethood is both law-giving as well as independent; law-giving in the sense that it bears a new code of laws and independent in the sense that it is granted directly without allegiance or obedience to a preceding prophet and therefore it is occasionally termed as “Real Prophethood.”

(2) Non-law-giving independent prophethood which is unaccompanied by a new law and is granted by heaven directly, without allegiance or obedience to a preceding Prophet and is therefore termed “independent” prophethood as such, prophethood is not sustained by a preceding prophethood but stands on its own feet. Instances in point are the prophethood of David, Solomon, Yahya and Christ. These sublime prophets were no doubt subject to the law of Moses, but they were not graced with prophethood because of following Moses: they were favoured independently and directly and were only subsequently charged with serving the Mosaic code.

(3) Non-law-bearing and non-independent prophethood which, in other words, is called reflex-prophethood, such prophethood neither bears a new law nor is granted independent of allegiance to a preceding law-giving prophethood. It is, in fact, granted only through allegiance and in subservience to a preceding prophet and through his grace as a reflex-beneficence. Since shadow is, in a sense, a

reflex-action of the original, such prophethood is in fact a part of the real (preceding prophet's prophethood) and not something apart. Such prophethood has started with the advent of our Holy Prophet, for, no prophet before him attained that height nor any previous law such point of perfection, as allegiance and subsdrviene thereto could qualify a follower for the grace of prophetic gift.

In the light of the foregoing exposition, it will be clear that insofar as the two categories of Prophethood, namely law-giving prophethood and independent prophethood are concerned, the Holy Prophet is clearly the most outstanding and thus the Final Prophet. For, here both the parties are agreed that nor there shall be a law-bearing prophet after the Holy Prophet nor one attaining to Prophethood independently and without the obligation to owe allegiance to him. In these respects the Holy Prophet is evidently the Final Prophet. Insofar as the third category of prophethood (reflex-prophethood) is concerned, after a little reflection, it will be clear to everybody that in this respect too the Holy Prophet alone remains the Final Prophet, as one who is favoured with prophethood through allegiance to him and through the grace of his prophethood, is but his own offshoot and part of him and not a foreign element; his person is but a mirror which like the full moon radiates only the light of the sun and no more. Thus in this respect too, the Holy Prophet, to all intents and purposes, shall be called the Last Prophet and not the other one who radiates his light, for the latter is but a mirror or a shadow and not the real.

A parable may well illustrate the point. A man planted an orchard wherein he raised a large variety of trees and as a finishing touch planted the last tree which was best in quality, in beauty, in stature and in yield and in lusciousness of fruit. After a period

of time, from the root of this last tree sprang forth an off-shoot, which formed but part of the main and was an offspring. Will this last tree then cease to be the last because of this off-shoot? Not so, on the contrary the original tree remains the last tree, inspite of the offshoot, which forms only a part of the original tree and draws its sustenance from it. I am sure if our opponents were to reflect a little, they will readily appreciate this distinction and this question which has become a puzzle, shall emerge clear like daylight before us, presenting no problem whatever.

In respect of the tradition under discussion, we, in fact, need hardly have to say anything on our own. For, our Holy master the Prophet has preferred an explanation which should stand as the last word. The tradition containing the words *انى آخرا لانبيا* appears in its fullest and completest context in the *Sahih Muslim*. According to the *Sahih Muslim* version, the Holy Prophet is stated to have said.....

انى آخرا لانبيا وان مسجدي آخرا للمساجد

(صحيح مسلم باب فضل الصلوة في مسجد المدينة)

“I am the last Prophet and my this mosque is the last mosque.”¹

May the blessings of Allah be on the Prophet thousand fold, verily he has placed for our guidance, a candle of light in every dark nook and saved us from pitfalls by leading us safely along a clear path. Now this very tradition *انى آخرا لانبيا* (I am the last prophet) was such as could lead hasty and short-sighted persons to the erroneous interpretation that there could be

1. *Sahih Muslim*.

no prophet of whatever category after him whether from among his servants and devotees one with him in spirit. Against this one possible misconception the Holy Prophet placed a bright candle of warning pointing out to his followers so to say in so many words: Here **انى آخر الانبياء** means that I am the last prophet in the same sense as my this mosque (of Medina) is the last mosque." If the words **وان مسجدى آخر المساجد** that this my mosque is the last mosque do not mean that there shall not be built in the world another mosque in future and these words only mean that there shall be no mosque in place of mine and that no mosque shall henceforth be built except as a copy of my mosque which will only serve and reflect it, for, my law is everlasting and there is no law after it; **انى آخر الانبياء** similarly therefore means that there is no prophet after me claiming to have received grace independently of me. Only my followers and disciples radiating my light shall be eligible to this favour." How admirably eloquent are these words and how penetrating is the glance of our Holy Prophet that he so clearly foresaw the possibility of erroneous interpretation that lay in the words **انى آخر الانبياء** and at once disposed of it by the words 'I am the last prophet in the same sense as my this mosque is the last mosque.'

Dear friends! May God open your eyes, should you care to reflect and ponder that when inspite of lacs and crores of mosques having been built in Muslim countries after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) the sense of the tradition:

ان مسجدى آخر المساجد

"My this mosque is the last mosque"

Remains intact and breachproof, then how the grant

of prophethood to one who appears as his disciple and servant and gathers the fruits of Divine favour in his servitude and as his tributary and reflection, can be said to repudiate the sense of the tradition **انى اخر الانبياء**. Believe it or not, the unvarnished truth is this: our Master the Holy Prophet is, to all intents and purposes, the last, for every category of prophethood (Law-bearing prophethood, independent prophethood) continuation of which could militate against his status of finality has terminated. And instead the door of prophethood that remains open admits of only subordinate Prophethood which hardly detracts from his office of finality. Would that the other Muslims but grasp this point.

Besides the word (بعدي) 'last' as an adjective, conveys in Arabic language, the sense of perfection of a person, in an accomplishment, to the last degree. Examples of this are to be found in abundance in both Arabic and Persian. Since this discussion has already grown in volume, we do not want to go into it in any length. It will suffice here to quote an example from the Urdu poems of Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal, in the hope that our readers, bulk of whom are expected to be fond of Dr. Iqbal's poetry and philosophy, shall feel enlightend. Says the learned Doctor:

جل بسا دآخ آه ميت اسكى زيب دوش ہے

آخرى شاعر جہاں آباد کا خاموش ہے (بانگ درا)

“Gone is Dagh, his dead body adores yesterday,
the Last Poet of Jehanabad lies silent.”

Evidently the expression 'آخرى' 'last poet' is not used here in the literal sense: for poets

1. *Bang-e Dara.*

continued to appear after Dagh and shall go on appearing in future. Besides, our literary circles regard Doctor Iqbal himself as by far a greater poet than Dagh. What Dr. Iqbal meant however was that Dagh was at the height of eminence as a classical poet. Similarly آخر الأنبياء will mean that our Holy Prophet was at the height of eminence in the excellences of prophethood and that meaning is, in itself, a very correct and a happy one indeed.

The third tradition that our opponents put forward is لو كان بعدى نبي لكان عمر (Had there been a prophet after me it would have been Omar). From this tradition the evidence adduced is that there can be no prophet after the Holy Prophet since he said that had there been one it would have been Omar and since Omar was not a prophet therefore the door of prophethood is closed after the Holy Prophet (may peace of Allah be on him). On serious reflection it would appear that this conclusion is far from the correct one. After careful examination and close investigation our readers will recall that while explaining the tradition لا نبي بعدى we had explained that the word بعدى (after) ظرف مكانى means preference of one thing to another, as says the Quran "And then what story will they believe besides (بعد) Allah and His verses"? The use of word بعد (after) in Arabic in this particular sense is too common and well-recognized to leave any ground for debate. In truth no further argument is called for after the conclusive evidence of the Holy Quran. This tradition لو كان بعدى نبي لكان عمر "that had there been a prophet after me it would be Omar" means therefore that "If I had not been made prophet Omar would have been in my place." This is surely the correct and true interpretation. As a corroborative evidence we may again refer

to the Holy Prophet who, as was his wont, used to dispel doubts likely to be created in respect of one tradition by citing another. In another context the Holy Prophet, made the same statement :

لَوْلَا بُعِثَ فِيكُمْ لَبُعِثَ عُمَرُ - (ابن عدی کبریا کنوز الحقائق جلد ۲ صفحہ ۱۵۱)

“Had I not been raised among you, Omar would have been raised instead.”¹

Read together, the two traditions present a clear picture. The Holy Prophet (may peace of Allah be on him) has furnished a clarification in effect, in these words: that when I said that had there been a prophet after me, it would have been Omar, I meant that, if there had been a prophet someone other than me, it would have been Omar.”

The Holy Prophet's foregoing words embody great truths. On the one hand he was himself a law-giving Prophet who had brought a new Divine code. On the other hand we have the evidence of history and tradition that Hazrat Omar was gifted with a singularly judicious mind. Not only his whole term of Caliphate but his life during the period of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him) furnish ample evidence of the fact that Hazrat Omar was a legislator of great eminence. According to the evidence of traditions, it so happened on many occasions that Omar offered one opinion in a matter of importance and the other companions offered another view, the word of God subsequently coincided with Omar's view (see Bokhari, Muslim and Zurqani). When the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) said that if there had been a prophet other than himself it would have been Omar;

1. *Ibn-e-Adee quoted from kanuzul Haqaiq Vol.2. p.151.*

he was merely pointing out to this distinguishing merit of Hazrat Omar and he meant that since the times called for a new law and if he had not been raised Omar would have been appointed, Hazrat Omar possessed such an highly developed sense of judiciousness as to compel the admiration of several noted European historians. Not only therefore the Holy Prophet's tradition means 'Had I not been raised, Omar would have been', even Hazrat Omar's own life points to the fact that the Holy Prophet's statement under reference, of a certainty emphasized this distinguishing feature of Hazrat Omar who stood head and shoulders above the other companions in this field.

What lends further support to our stand is the fact that in general terms Hazrat Abu Bakr was considered to be by consensus of opinion as the most eminent companion. Even the words of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) confirm the view that Hazrat Abu Bakr was the top most companion. A tradition has already been quoted in this connection which embodies the Holy Prophet's (Allah bless him) statement: "Abu Bakr holds the highest rank in my followers except if there be a prophet later on." Notwithstanding this when the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) leaves Abu Bakr out when he says that "Had there been a prophet instead of him, it would have been Omar", it clearly constitutes decisively conclusive evidence of the fact that the object here was an emphasis on a particular trait of Hazrat Omar in which specifically he exceeded even Hazrat Abu Bakr and it was no other qualification than his legal-mindedness. He had furnished ample evidence of this during the life of the Holy Prophet and during the term of his caliphate this particular ability manifested itself with still greater prominence. Viewed from any angle, the tradition under discussion is capable of only one

construction that the word 'بعد, (after) has not been used here in term of period and it means that if there were to be a prophet other than the Holy Prophet it would have been Omar, for, he had in him the spirit of a law-maker.

Briefly speaking, the tradition does not relate to the question of appointment in terms of time but in terms of replacement of the Holy Prophet (peace be on him). There is four-fold conclusive evidence which supports this construction :—

(1) The word 'بعد' (after) is very commonly used in Arabic in the sense of 'instead' and here the word 'بعد' carries this meaning. 'If there had been another Prophet instead of me it would have been Omar''

(2) Another tradition of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) furnishes the same explanation. It clearly says 'Had I not been appointed, Omar would have been instead.'

(3) Hazrat Omar's own life shows that he was an eminently gifted law-maker. And since our Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) was a law-giving Prophet in the tradition under reference he merely pointed out that the time called for a Divine Law and that 'if I had not been appointed Omar would have been.'

(4) According to the consensus of opinion as well as the statement of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) Hazrat Abu Bakr held the position of eminence in the holy order of companions. If there had been a question of absolute prophet-hood then surely Hazrat Abu Bakr deserved the honour and not Hazrat Omar. This further confirms the view that in this tradition an emphasis has been laid on the legal acumen of Hazrat Omar who excelled Hazrat Abu Bakr in this particular field.

Since this discussion has become fairly lengthy I will now confine myself to brief references in my

treatment of other traditions. I however hope that the foregoing discussion in terms of principles must satisfy (if God willing) a balanced and honest mind. This discussion of a general nature can help to solve all the traditions, that are cited by our opponents in this behalf. Undoubtedly the foregoing exposition of the Quranic verses and traditions of the Holy Prophet has furnished a master-key which can be applied, by the grace of God, to open any lock that we may have to come across in this field. I propose therefore to confine myself to brief points and cover rest of this subject in a few pages.

It must be noted in this connection that the further tradition which our opponents bring forth is worded as below: —

إِنَّ الرِّسَالَةَ وَالنَّبِيَّةَ قَدْ انْقَطَعَتْ فَلَا رَسُولَ بَعْدِي

ولانبيى-

“Prophethood and apostleship are closed henceforth and there shall neither be an apostle nor a prophet after me.”

It is argued on the basis of this tradition that the Holy Prophet has declared the door of prophethood closed and said that ‘there is no prophet after me.’ But every sensible person can comprehend that this tradition bears no new point and re-iterates only the points enumerated in the different preceding traditions. The explanation given in respect of the traditions ‘انى آخر الانبياء’ ‘لا نبى بعدى’ equally befittingly applies to this tradition and therefore no new point seems to have been made for any further scrutiny.

In fact the word ‘الرسالة’ and ‘النبوة’ used in this tradition with the emphasis on the letters

‘الفلان’ the law-bearing Prophethood peculiar to the Holy Prophet has been specifically particularized and not prophethood in general as borne out by the exposition made by Allama Ibne Hajar, the pre-eminent authority on traditions (see Fathalbari vol. 12 page 305). The closing words of this tradition, ‘فلا رسول بعدى ولا نبي’ point out as an added factor, to the similarity of diction in the early tradition about ‘لا نبي بعدى’. In any case there has been raised in this tradition no issue in addition to the points covered by the preceding traditions. The points that it raises are the same as have been raised in the traditions ‘لأنبي بعدى’ and ‘انى آخر الانبياء’ namely that in the appearance of the Holy Prophet the door of law-bearing and of independent prophethood has been closed and not that of reflex-prophethood which is but a part of the Holy Prophet’s prophethood and its reflection and not something extraneous to it.

This is the self-same construction which all the eminent divines and reformers of Islam have been advocating. Hazrat Shaikh Akbar Muhayyuddin Ibne Arabi (died in A. H. 688) says :—

ان النبوة الذى انقطعت بوجود رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم انما هي النبوة التشريعية لا مقامها..... وهذا معنى قوله صلى الله عليه وسلم ان الرسالة والنبوة قد انقطعت فلا رسول بعدى ولا نبي اى لا نبي بعدى يكون على شرعى بل اذا كان يكون تحت حكم شريعتى -
(فتوحات مكية جلد ٢ باب ٣ مطبوعه مصر)

“The prophethood that terminated with the person of the Prophet of Allah (peace be on him and His blessings) was no other than the law-bearing prophethood not prophethood itself and this is the meaning of his (peace be on him and His blessings) words ‘verily Apostleship and Prophethood ceased with me therefore there shall be after me neither an

apostle nor a prophet i.e. there shall not be after me a prophet with a law other than mine but that he shall be subject to my law.”¹

How clear and explicit is the above-quoted reference which dates as far back as 700 years. It is the opinion of a high-placed authority commanding as much respect as an Imam. Should doubts of the kind referred to in respect of the opinion of Hazrat Mulla Ali Qari and Hazrat Imam Shirani quoted in a foregoing chapter, arise in the mind of any reader he is directed to consult my note dealing with such objections in respect of the traditions ‘لا نبي بعدى’ and ‘لوعاش ابراهيم لكان صديقاً نبياً’. Should any doubts still persist, I shall leave such cases to the pleasure of God as He guides whomsoever He pleases.

Now I will take up the tradition in respect of the Holy Prophet’s statement :

ان مثلى ومثل الانبياء من قبلى كمثل رجلٍ يبنى بيتاً فاحسنه

واجمله الا موضع لبنة من زاوية فجعل الناس يطوفون

به ويعجبون له ويقولون هلا وضعت هذه اللبنة فقال

انا اللبنة وانا خاتم النبيين -

“I and the Prophets preceding me may be compared to a house a man built with symmetry in every proportion and decorated it artistically but left a gap in a corner for one stone. People went around the house and asked in wonderment why this one stone had not been placed I say I am the self-same stone and I am the seal of Prophets.”

1. *Futuhate Makkiyya Vol. 2, P.73*

On the basis of this tradition our opponents contend that in the edifice of prophethood one stone had been left out and the advent of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him) has filled the gap ; now therefore there is no more room for any one else. What a pity that our misguided brethren, in their zeal to oppose, little mind the sublime position of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and in putting a wrong construction on this tradition only detract from his dignity. The tradition under reference does not, in point of fact, illustrate the position of the Holy Prophet's apostleship ; it merely points to the perfection of Law. The tradition simply means that many law-giver prophets appeared and every new Law was one more brick added towards the construction of the edifice of prophethood till the appearance of the Holy Prophet (Peace of Allah be on him) marked the emplacement of the last brick, thus completing the Mansion of Law which comprised all the preceding fundamental truths in addition to new basic values, thereby perfecting a universal and eternal House of canons.

This tradition clearly underlines the complementary role of the Holy Prophet and is not relevant to other aspects of the question of prophethood. The Ulema of early times have taken a similar view of this tradition. Allama Ibne Hajar (died in A. H. 852), the author of Sharha Fathulbari, who is considered to be a leading light in traditions says, in his comments on this tradition :

المراد هنا النظر الى الاعمال بالنسبة الى الشريعة

المحمدية مع ماضى من الشرائع الكاملة -

(فتح الباري جلد ٧ صفحہ ٣٦١)

“It means that the Law of Muhammad is most perfect as compared to preceding laws which were perfect in themselves.”¹

It is only fair that this tradition should be confined in its implications to the perfection of Law. If, however, it is stretched to a comparison on a personal level, than it is definitely derogatory to the Holy Prophet (may Allah bless him) reducing him in rank to a mere brick in the entire edifice of Prophethood. Says the Prophet:

كنت نبياً وادم منجدلاً بين الماء والطين -

“I was Prophet when Adam was yet in (the transitional stages) between water and mud.”

The tradition under reference is in fact a subtle expression of the Divine scheme that the preceding prophets came to pave for the perfect prophethood of the Holy Prophet as he was the Central figure in the scheme of apostleship and the Divine law had to receive its perfect shape through him. To say of him who holds such a position of eminence and singular sublimity and who has been honoured as chief among men and has been graced with the

Divine favour :

لولاك لما خلقت الافلاك -

“Hadst thou not been, there would not have been created the heavens”

that he is but one brick in the vast edifice of Prophethood, is a very rotten and far from acceptable interpretation of the tradition under discussion. The truth of the matter is that the tradition confines itself only to the perfection of Law and

1. *Fath-al-Bari Vol.6. p.361.*

to nothing besides it.

Borrowing a current phrase from political terminology, the tradition described every prophet as representing a single unit and thus if all law-giver prophets represent a unit each, the Holy Prophet in his august person, is as a unit, the stone that was affixed in the fulness of time, in its proper place, thus completing the mansion of Law for all times. The words

“why has not the corner-stone yet been affixed”

represents in a beautiful way, a question and a thirst that human nature was feeling—the time had come for an everlasting and global law so as to perfect the edifice of values. Had it been a matter of prophethood in the absolute sense, this reference to a natural want and a natural thirst was uncalled for. This is unquestionable therefore that the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) has been compared here to a unit among the other law-giver prophets and as is well-known, as units all unit-members have equal figure value, whether big or small. This example further makes it clear that as units, only law-giver and independent prophets are to be taken into account as the subordinate and reflex-prophet is but like a branch and not an independent tree and therefore out of the question. Moreover our Master the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) has by adding the words *خاتم النبيين* at the end, disposed of the entire controversy. He has warned the Muslims against construing this tradition in a sense contrary to the spirit of the Quranic term *خاتم النبيين*. In a manner of speaking the Holy Prophet has said that “compared to preceding Prophets I am no doubt the last brick in the mansion of law but in the future scheme as *خاتم النبيين* I am the foundation stone and henceforward my currency and my seal are the legal tender and right label.”

In recapitulation, it appears from this significant wording of the tradition that the reference is not to the prophethood of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) but to his law-giving role as a unit. The object is to emphasize the fact that human nature, under pressure of existing environments, called for an eternal and global law and the Holy Prophet's message satisfied this natural demand for all times. This is the only explanation that befits the high rank of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and is also in consonance with the loftiness of the Quranic code. Any other explanation would only tend to reduce the Prophet to a mere brick in the entire mansion.

Thirty Dajjals. Now I come to the last tradition in the category of negative reports, which in fact contains nothing contrary to our belief but has been made a weapon of ridicule and derision in the hands of the ill-advised:

سيكون في امتي ثلاثون كذابون (وفي رواية ثلاثون دجالون)

كلهم يزعم انه نبي وانا خاتم النبيين لا نبي بعدي-

“There will shortly rise among my followers thirty impostors (in one tradition “Thirty dajjals” each claiming to be prophet but I am the seal of Prophets and there is none after me.”

“Our opponent Maulvis argue on the strength of this tradition that every claimant to prophethood after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) is a Dajjal (anti-Christ) and impostor and by applying this tradition to the Hazrat Promised Messiah, the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, this makes him the target of their ridicule and abuse. But, as will be presently evident, their objections originate in ignorance and are born of hastiness and lack of

insight. This tradition is in point of fact totally irrelevant to the claims of the Hazrat Promised Messiah.

It must be borne in mind, in the first instance, in this connection, that, as the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) has by suffixing the expression **اني خاتم الانبياء** clearly pointed out that this warning relates to only such claimants to prophethood as annul the Muhammadan Law and cut through the term of Muhammad in dispensation and claim to have brought a new Law and a new religion. This tradition is clearly in no way applicable to the case of the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement.

Another point that must be noted is that in this tradition the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) confines himself to the statement that there will appear thirty impostors and liars who will claim to be prophets, he did not say that whoever claimed to be a prophet must be an impostor and a liar. There is a world of difference in these two assertions and no sensible person will declare these to be as synonymous. When the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) said that there shall rise among his followers thirty impostors and liars who will claim to be prophets, could he not in one brief sentence warn that whosoever from among his followers claimed to be a prophet shall be an impostor and anti-Christ. It is a great pity indeed that visions have become so blurred that a simple and plain statement is being so unjustly twisted and misconstrued. The Holy Prophet declares simply this "There shall appear thirty false prophets from among my followers." But these words are being so gilded as to represent the statement that "whosoever claims to be a prophet shall be a liar and an impostor." This is a most brazen-faced distortion of a very clearly-worded tradition. One can only com-

pare such people to the thief who makes bold to commit burglary holding candle in one hand.

The figure thirty mentioned in this tradition is itself an evidence of the intention to delimit the number of impostors to a specific figure and not to extend it to every claimant. A little reflection will show that this specific figure in reality contains a covert warning against rejecting all and sundry who might also include the genuine claimants. Brethren, reflect a little, if the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) had meant that every claimant shall be a liar, he would have certainly not limited their number to thirty but would have clearly declared that whosoever claimed to be a prophet after him shall be an impostor. He did not say so and on the contrary limited the number of impostors to thirty. It embodies a clear hint that there will be true claimants apart from these impostors. This is exactly the position which has been explained in the tradition quoted by us from *Sunani Abu Daud* in the foregoing pages. This tradition consists of the following statement of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) :

ليس بيني وبينه نبي وَاِنَّهٗ نازلٌ - (ابوداؤد كتاب الملاحم)

“There is no prophet in between me and him (the Promised Messiah) and he shall undoubtedly appear.”¹

The above tradition throws an illuminating flood of light on the inner content-matter of the tradition relating to thirty impostors and expounds the fact that while, undoubtedly, there will rise thirty impostors among the prophet's followers, there will all the same, appear a true Prophet and he will be the Messiah, of the latter days. In other words.

1. *Abu Daud. Ketabal-Mlaham.*

these two traditions, read together, reveal that, before the advent of the Promised Messiah, false prophets will arise, but their hash will be settled eventually and the advent of the true claimant shall be heralded forth. According to historical evidence, the number of impostors had decidedly reached the given figure of thirty, long before the appearance of the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. Allama Qastalani says in his famous book : *Mowahib-illaddunia*

قال القاضي عياض هذا الحديث قد ظهر صدقته فلو
 عدّ من تنبأ من زمن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم
 الى الآن ممن اشتهر بذلك لوجد هذا العدد و
 من طالع كتب التاريخ عرف صحة هذا

(مواهب اللدنيہ جلد ۲ صفحہ ۱۹۸)

“Qazi Ayaz says that the truth of this tradition has become manifest. A count of the known false prophets from the time of Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) to our day will show that the given number has been reached and a student of history will recognize the truth of this statement”¹.

Similar evidence will be found in other works, like *Ikmalulikamal. Sharhi Muslim* and *Hujjajul Kirmah* edited by Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan, Chief of the *Ahlihadis*. When, inspite of repeated remonstrances, the Maulvies persisted in dubbing him as one of the impostors predicted to appear by the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him), the Promised Messiah

1. Vol. 2 p. 198.

felt impelled by a righteous sense of conviction, and said in the glory of his faith :—

“Some half-learned persons, deriding at me, point out that our Holy Prophet (May blessings of Allah be on him) has predicted the advent of thirty impostors who will all claim to be prophets. O ye ignorant unfortunates. Were thirty impostors only to be destined for you and no true reformer was ordained? A quarter of the 14th century has well nigh passed, and the moon of Caliphate has covered the fourteen stages of its perfection, as hints the verse ‘ و القمر قدرنا منازل ’ (and we have fixed stages for the moon) and the cycle of the world is nearing the end, but your impostors do not end. Perhaps they will stick to you till your demise. O ye ill-informed, the impostor who is termed satan resides within you and so you know not the times and see not the signs of heaven. But I blame you not, for the one, who came like me in the 14th century after Moses, was called “Impostor” by the impious Jews. ‘ فالقلوب تتشابهت ’
اللهم ارحم
Hearts have certainly become alike.
Have mercy O Lord !”

What pathos and sincerity underlies these utterances. The long-suppressed feelings of pain over the misfortune of his people have suddenly burst forth. It is a pity indeed that those who made light of (his weighty claims) did not turn sober. Those who had rejected did not turn believers. Those who slumbered stirred not out of their sleep and the bark of the nation, floundered, from one whirlpool to another.

Briefly speaking, the tradition relating to thirty impostors predicts the appearance of thirty false claimants and does not preclude the advent of a

true CLAIMANT. We have already shown that the number of impostors did reach the said limit of thirty in the course of time and also a true reformer made his advent in fulfilment of the other prophecy of our Master the Holy Prophet (May Allah bless him) namely "there is no prophet between him and me and verily he will appear." If still our brethren are expecting more impostors from among their people, then we only content ourselves with repeating what the Promised Messiah has said : —

امروز قوم من نه شناسد مقام من
روزے بگریه یاد کند وقت خوشترم

Today my people recognize not my station
A day will come when they will grieve for
having missed my happy time.

By the grace of God and through his merciful help, I have dealt with the traditions having a bearing on the question of prophethood. It is a happy coincidence that of these traditions six were of a positive category and six of a negative category. The foregoing review of these traditions is by the grace of God, convincing enough to any fair-minded person. During the course of this discussion, a body of principles has emerged which can serve as guides in the elucidation of other traditions that relate to the subject, dealt with in the traditions under reference. Such traditions have not been included in this discussion separately owing to considerations of space. The guidance of the Quran which transcends every other evidence is an added factor. But only a clear mind, gifted with the light of truth-seeking search, can

avail of the light of Quran and Hadith, for, the light of the sun is of little use to the blind in the eye. Before I resume the thread, I will request my readers once more to deliberate the arguments of the Quran and the Hadith, with a god-fearing sense of piety and, as seekers of truth, whether such truth be against or in conformity to their existing beliefs. The question of faith, it must be realized, is an issue of the highest delicacy ; a little lapse is liable to render one an object of God's displeasure. Dear brethren, take not into account your existing beliefs nor what you heard from your fore-fathers, nor what your Maulvies say. On the contrary attend to what the Quran enjoins, what the Hadith commands and what your own inner light certifies. As far as our inner feelings are concerned, Heaven knows, we are consumed with a burning desire to sincerely serve, in love and faith, the truth of God. We proclaim with our Imam :

ہمیں کچھ کہیں نہیں بھائیو نصیحت ہے غریبانہ

کوئی جو پاک دل ہو سے دل و جاں اس پر قربان ہے

We have naught of ill-will, ye brethren
 This is but a humble advice
 Whoever is pure of heart
 We are devoted to serve him heart and soul.

LEADING LIGHTS OF ISLAM ON FINALITY OF PROPHETHOOD.

After concluding the treatment of the traditions I would now quote the authoritative pronouncements of the dignitaries of Islam, which coincide with the views professed today by the Ahmadiyya community, on the question of prophethood. I do not cite these views, with the object that all the pronouncements of the dignitaries must be accepted by us or by our opponents as the last word on any given subject, that authority vests only in Allah and in His prophet. I am citing their views simply as an argument that our beliefs in this regard are not an innovation and are, more or less, shared by the early dignitaries of different periods. The Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) predicted that as of yore, the beliefs and deeds of his followers would, with the passage of time, grow corrupt, they would not however, degenerate en masse but that a section shall hold on to truth and justice. Thus runs a relevant tradition.

لا تزال طائفة من امتي على الحق لا يضرتهم من

خالفهم حتى ياتي امر الله - (ابوداؤد كتاب الفتن)

“A group of my people shall adhere to the truth: their opponents shall not succeed in harming them until Allah comes with His decree.”¹

In quoting below the views of the preceding dignitaries, the writer is actuated by a two-fold objective:—

Firstly, that since, on the one hand, the views held by the Ahmadiyya community on the question

1. *Abu Daud, Kitabal-Fitn.*

of the finality of prophethood, more or less, coincide with those held by the early dignitaries of Islam, the Ahmadiyya community cannot therefore be declared Kafir and outside the pale of Islam. If, on the other hand, the Ahmadiis have to be subject to the anathema of excommunication because of their views, what is the verdict about these luminaries for their having expressed similar beliefs. Secondly, that these specific beliefs in respect of a specific question, represent in fulfilment of the Holy Prophet's (Allah bless him) prophecy "a group of my followers shall adhere to the truth" by the grace and mercy of Allah, in the person of the Ahmadiyya community which has been chosen for the simultaneous promise of triumph embodied in the latter part of the same tradition :

لَا يَضْرَهُمْ مَنْ خَالَفَهُمْ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ.

"Their opponents shall never succeed in harming them until Allah comes with His Decree."

The Origin of Misconception

Before reproducing individual views it appears necessary to answer the question how and when a misconception about the meaning of the 'Seal of Prophethood' arose among the mass of Muslims. While answering this question it must be clearly borne in mind that as explicitly laid down in the Quran and the Hadith, our Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) is the Central point in the prophetic dispensation. The Holy Prophet claimed :

كُنْتُ نَبِيًّا وَأَدَمُ مِنْ جَدَلٍ بَيْنَ الْمَاءِ وَالطِّينِ.

"I was a prophet when Adam was yet in (the transitional stage) between water and mud."

This significant utterance meant that Allah had so designed the dispensation of prophethood and apostleship and evolved it in such a manner as to ultimately lead to the perfection-point of the Holy Prophet mature, complete and full prophethood. According to a tradition Allah spoke to the Prophet thus :

لولاك لما خلقت الافلاك .

“Had I not created thee I would have created neither heaven nor earth.”

It manifestly means that the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) was the ultimate objective and final aim of prophetic dispensation as well as of the spiritual realm. It is therefore that the Holy Prophet, time and again repeated :

انا سيد ولد ادم ولا فخر و انا اكرم الاولين
والاخرين و لا فخر

“I am the Chief of the generation of man but I pride not thereon and I am eminent among all predecessors and successors but I pride not thereon.”

That is why he was favoured with the eternal and global law which transcends all other codes and shall not be replaced with another till the Day of Judgment. When his status is so exalted and his law so transcendent it was only befitting that to stress and inculcate the dignity of this God-granted office, such choice and impressive language should be employed as would demonstrate to the world that all the former lines of Prophethood have ended up in him and all the future lines will hence-forth emanate from his person. All the pronouncements of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) made in respect

of his prophethood converge on the point of his central position in the spiritual realm. All the early excellences terminated in his person and all the lights shall henceforward issue forth through him. His person may be compared to a transformer to which one current of electricity passes and is radiated forth another, in a sense a different one.

In order to define the character of His singular and grand station, the Quran has used the comprehensive term "the Seal of Prophets". The traditions reveal this incomparable loftiness through the employment of various parables and terms. The Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him) at time claimed 'I am the last prophet' at others 'There is no prophet after me'; on some occasions he said "prophethood and apostleship ended with me" and on another he said, "I am the last brick in the Palace of Prophethood." In fact all these expressions carried one meaning and demonstrated one reality which was none other than that expressed by the Holy Quran in the comprehensive term "خاتم النبيين" which meant that the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) was the central point in the spiritual realm. All the former lines terminated in his person and henceforward every line shall issue forth from his person in new form.

The holy group of the honoured companions of the blessed Prophet (peace of Allah be on him), being direct disciples of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him), generally comprehended this rare truth and were too well-informed about its underlying philosophy to entertain any misconceptions in this respect. But when after the death of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) people from the far-flung parts of Arabia and from foreign countries joined Islam in growing numbers, and the era of

يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا.

“They shall enter Islam, hosts of them” set in, a section of the converts, being little acquainted with the true concept of these terms, began to express divergent views in the exposition of these expressions. They used to hear these significant expressions ‘لا نبي بعدى’ and ‘انى آخر الانبياء’ and some of them used to ponder their meaning. They had not yet become acquainted with the basic truth of the profound spiritual philosophy that underlay the concept in which the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) has indicated his person as the central junction of the former and succeeding lines of spiritual communication. Since the central point of Islamic faith is the Holy Kalima ‘There is no God but Allah and Mohammad is His Prophet’ and it does not contain any reference to ‘ختم نبوت’ nor does the Hadith relating to five pillars of faith mention anything about ‘ختم نبوت’ they therefore looked at it as an academic question.

It must be borne in mind, in this connection, that the outward criteria of faith in Islam as the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) emphasized on many occasions, is merely pronouncement of the Holy Kalima

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُولُ اللَّهِ -

“There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet.”

Whoever therefore believes in the Kalima, and in the Oneness of God and the prophethood of Muhammad the Apostle of Allah (May peace be on him) according to the formula concept of Islam, becomes entitled to be termed as a Muslim and a member of the following of the Prophet (Allah bless him). Other matters concern

perfection in faith and inner virtue and are not related to the formal concept of Islam. A reciter of the Kalima, whoever he may be and with whichever sect he may be connected, shall be considered to be a Muslim in so far as his civic and political rights are concerned, even though, due to some shortcomings and failure to come up to the standard of faithfulness, he may not be regarded as a robust Muslim. This truth is borne out both by the Quran and the Hadith and the entire outward and political structure of Islam has been so shaped as to take full account of this fact. The early Muslims, as also the scholars of all ages, recognised Holy Kalima as the outward criteria of faith and did not go in to the discussion of 'ختم نبوت' in this connection nor did they recognize it as a question applicable to this fundamental issue. The Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) has, time and again declared the holy Kalima as the central concept of faith when expounding the outward concept of Islam. As further details, he has mentioned angels of God, divine books, the Prophets, life after death and ordination of good and evil but has made no reference to 'ختم نبوت'; though undoubtedly every true Muslim sincerely believes in 'ختم نبوت' as enjoined by the Quran. This is an important point which our friends should always bear in mind.

After this marginal note, I resume discussion of the subject in hand. As I have already stated a little confusion had started to grow in the minds of a section of the new converts about the concept of and the meaning of the tradition 'لا نبي بعدى' in the early days, during the period of the companions. Since this confusion was not widespread nor very vocal and only limited to a nebulous form and to a very small section of the converts, it was sensed by only a few companions who tried to clear it up in their own way. The reports, which

we will quote below, are decisive evidence of the efforts made by Hazrat Ali (Allah bless him) and Hazrat Ayesha (Allah be pleased with her) to reform this wrong tendency and inculcate correct views. Since this wrong tendency was then in the form of a tiny seed and was limited to a small section of the new converts who were probably far off from the centre of Islam, it was not considered as serious; nor could adequate attention be paid to it under the circumstances then prevailing. The result was that, with the passage of time, the wrong notion that every grace has terminated with the Holy Prophet (peace be on him) and that no one can be favoured with any form of prophethood after him became confirmed in the minds of a section till these notions became more deep-rooted and wide-spread as the early period of the Prophet (Allah bless him) receded in terms of time.

A group of Muslim divines and reformers in every period, as we will, by the grace of God, prove, have been drawing the attention of the Muslim masses towards this conception and this conflict of views has continued throughout to the darkest period about which the warning that

عُلَمَاءُ هُمْ شَرٌّ مِنْ تَحْتِ اِدِيمِ السَّمَاءِ -

“the learned among them will be worst of all under the canopy of heaven”

had gone forth till this erroneous conception took hold of the entire mass of Muslims and with the exception of the enlightened elect, the bulk of the people adhered to the view that all the former as well as, future dispensations had ended up with the person of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and that the doors of all categories of prophethood had been closed henceforward. This is the true picture of the process which led from a small beginning in the form of a seed, of

this wrong concept, to its gradual growth in the shape of a nation-wide creed, obsessing the heads and hearts of all the sundry and because of ever-growing distance in time from the Holy Prophet's days, the Muslim masses began to believe that it was in no way creditable to the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) to be one who starts a new spiritual stream but that his greatness lay in being the terminator of all the former currents. I am confident that on a dispassionate examination of this issue, anybody with detached mind, will most certainly find himself at one with us in the conclusion that the whole of this misconception has been due to a lack of appreciation of the true status of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him). Would that our opponents cared to grasp this point.

Now I will briefly touch upon individual opinions. The first pronouncement that we come across in this connection, is that of Hazrat Ali (May Allah be pleased with him). He was a cousin of our Holy Prophet, husband of the Blessed Prophet's dear daughter Hazrat Fatima (may Allah be pleased with her) and the fourth Khalifa of Islam. His high station is well-expressed in the words of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) "I am the city of knowledge and Ali is its gate". This luminary, it is stated, employed one Abu Abdur Rahman bin Salma to coach his two sons, Hazrat Hassan and Hussain. Allah be pleased with them). Says Abu Abdur Rahman :

كنت اقرئ الحسن والحسين رضى الله عنهما فمربى

علي بن ابي طالب رضى الله عنه وانا اقرتهما وقال لي

اقرتهما وخاتم النبئين بفتح التاء

(درمشور مرتبه امام سيوطى زير آيت خاتم النبئين)

“I was coaching Hassan and Hussain (Allah be pleased with them) and Ali bin Abu Talib (Allah be pleased with him) passed by while I taught, he said to me, teach them the expression خاتم النبيين with فتح on the ت.”

Our readers are well aware that the word خاتم (component letters خ-الف-ت-م) is read in the Arabic language in two forms—one with ت having فتح over it as خاتم which means seal or ring and the other with زير under ت as خاتم which generally stands for the last and may also mean the seal. Since however in the latter form there was the likelihood of an erroneous construction of the term, Hazrat Ali in the perfectness of his wisdom, foreseeing this danger warned Abu Abdur Rahman against teaching his sons the word خاتم with زير under ت and advised him to teach the word with فتح on ت so that its meaning “the Seal of the Prophets” becomes manifest and no room is left for any misconstruction. This marvellous tradition furnishes a clue to the fact that in early days a tendency to conceive the expression خاتم with زير under ت and interpret it as the “terminator of prophets” had started gaining ground among some converts. Hazrat Ali (Allah be pleased with him) at once cautioned Abu Abdur Rahman and led him to the straight approach.

If both the forms of خاتم and خاتم (one with فتح on ت and the other with زير under ت) are synonymous and have not the least shade of variation in their meaning, then why did Hazrat Ali (Allah be pleased with him) warn Abu, Abdur Rahman against reading the word in the latter form and advised him to read it in the former form. This point is certainly deserving of consideration. The underlying idea definitely was that the two holy pupils, as well as their teacher, should conceive of the expression as “the Seal of the Prophets” in their minds and they should be discour-

aged to construe it as the last prophet and in this respect no room for doubt should be left. But it is a pity that, in spite of this affectionate warning of Hazrat Ali (Allah be pleased with him), the Musalmans of today insist that the expression 'خاتم النبيين' stands for "the last Prophet" and that the door to every category of prophethood is closed after the Prophet (Allah bless him). However, this is the first evidence to be found, in Islamic history, which is in full accord with our belief. This evidence is unquestionably highly trustworthy coming as it does from no less a person than the cousin and son-in-law of our Holy Prophet (Allah bless him), fourth of the Guided Khalifas who was likened to "a gateway of the city of knowledge", to whom Sunnies and Shias both bow their heads in deference.

Now we come to the statement of the affectionate mother of the Faithfuls, Hazrat Ayesha (Allah be pleased with her) who was the most favourite and exceedingly learned spouse of the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah be on him) and about whom it is said that whenever the companions referred to her any point for clarification, they were never disappointed. She says :

قولوا إنه خاتم النبيين ولا تقولوا لا نبي بعدك -

(رد مشور جلدہ وکلمہ معجم البحار صفحہ ۸۵)

"Say that he verily is the خاتم الانبياء
but say not that there is no prophet
after him".

According to period of time this pronouncement seems to have been made sometime after the statement of Hazrat Ali (Allah be pleased with him) when probably an erroneous conception of prophethood

hood had gained some ground; for, it is more explicit and expansive than the statement of Hazrat Ali (Allah be pleased with him). It seems Hazrat Ayesha the righteous (Allah be pleased with her) got wind of the wrong tendency among some converts who had not been fully initiated in the realities of faith, to interpret the tradition 'لا نبي بعدى' as finally barring the appearance of any type of Prophet after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and bolting for good the door of apostleship. Like a conscientious teacher she was prompt in taking notice of this tendency and remonstrated that since there was apparently a lack of realization of the full significance of the tradition 'لا نبي بعدى' she drew attention to the expression 'خاتم الانبياء' which stood for 'the Seal of the Prophets'. The entire concept of the station of the Holy Prophet is fully covered by this simple expression and the misunderstanding which 'لا نبي بعدى' gives rise to, in certain immature minds, is at once disposed of. So explicit and illuminating is the warning of Hazrat Ayesha the righteous (Allah be pleased with her) that little room is left for any doubt or hesitation. Since this pronouncement of Hazrat Ayesha (Allah be pleased with her) has been dealt with at length in the foregoing pages, we need not add anything further to it. It is clear that during the early days Hazrat Ayesha the righteous (Allah be pleased with her) noticed a wrong tendency in respect of the significance of 'لا نبي بعدى' and promptly attended to its rectification.

After quoting the statements of Hazrat Ali (Allah grace his face with honour) and Hazrat Ayesha the righteous (Allah be pleased with her), I would now refer to the pronouncement of Hazrat Shaikh-i-Akbar Mohayyuddin Ibne Arabi (died in A.H. 638) who was a great luminary of the middle ages of Islam. In his pronouncement he is very

explicit and reiterates that only the door to Law-bearing prophethood and not to general prophethood has been closed. He says :

إِنَّ النَّبِيَّةَ الَّتِي انْقَطَعَتْ بِوَجُودِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَمَّا هِيَ النَّبِيَّةُ التَّشْرِيعِيَّةُ لِأَقَامَتِهَا.....
 وَهَذَا مَعْنَى قَوْلِهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَنَّ الرِّسَالَةَ حُكْمًا آخَرَ وَهَذَا مَعْنَى قَوْلِهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِنَّ الرِّسَالَةَ وَالتَّبَوُّةَ قَدْ انْقَطَعَتْ فَلَا رَسُولَ بَعْدِي وَلَا نَبِيَّ إِلَّا لَنْبِيَّ بَعْدِي يَكُونُ عَلَى شَرْعٍ يَخَالِفُ شَرْعِي بَلْ إِذَا كَانَ يَكُونُ تَحْتَ حُكْمِ شَرِيعَتِي.

(فتوحات مكيّة جلد ۲ صفحہ ۳ طبع مصر)

“The prophethood that terminated with the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) is verily the law-bearing prophethood since there remains no need in this field; therefore there is no further law to abrogate his law nor to add to his law any new ordinance and this is the meaning of his statement that ‘verily apostleship and prophethood ceased’ and therefore there shall not be another apostle after him nor such a prophet as ‘would follow a law other than mine but he shall be subject to my law’.”¹

And again on the same subject he says :

1. *Futahate Mukkia* No 2, p.3, printed in Egypt.

التبوة سارية الى يوم القيامة في الخلق وان كان
التشريع قد انقطع فالتشريع جزءاً من اجزاء التبوة.

(فتوحات مكية جلد ٢ صفحہ ١٠٠ طبع مصر)

“Prophethood is open to people till the Day of Judgement and while only law-making has stopped and law-making is but one of the parts of Prophethood.”¹

And yet in another book, Hazrat Ibne Arabi says :

إمّا نبوة التشريع والرسالة فنقطعة وفي مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللهُ

عليه وسلم قد انقطعت فلا نبي بعده مشرعاً.....

إلا أن الله لطف بعباده فابق لهم التبوة العامة

لا تشريع فيها - (فصوص الحکم صفحہ ١٣٠، ١٣١)

“In so far as the law-bearing prophethood is concerned, it has verily ceased and terminated in Muhammad (Allah bless him) and therefore there is no law-giving prophet after him but Allah has in His graciousness to His servants, continued general prophethood without the law-bearing elements.”²

The above three pronouncements of a leading luminary and eminent scholar of Islam, made some 700 years ago, decisively establish the four cardinal principles :

(1) That according to Hazrat Shaikh Muhayud-

1. *Futahate Mukkia* 2, p.100 printed in Egypt.

2. *Fusulul-Hikam* Pages 140-161

din Ibne Arabi, only the door of law-bearing Prophethood has been closed after the appointment of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and not of every category of prophethood.

(2) That according to Hazrat Shaikh, the door to non-law-bearing prophethood is kept open after the advent of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and shall remain open till the Day of Judgement and such type of prophethood has been termed as "general prophethood" by him.

(3) That whosoever comes after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) shall follow his law and be subject to his command.

(4) That Prophethood is composed of several elements, and law-giving is but one of the components of prophethood.

These are four important postulates that the above-quoted references conclusively establish. If however any doubts were to arise in the mind of any person as to the veracity of our translation he may refer the same to the Maulvi of his choice for his satisfaction in this behalf. These references as would be readily conceded, are indisputable, clear-cut and explicit. Hazrat Shaikh-i-Akbar more or less, shares the view with us that only the door to law-bearing prophethood has been closed with the advent of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and that since law-bearing prophethood is but a part and not the whole of prophethood, the door to general prophethood has been left open and shall never be bolted.

As is the wont of some persons, who are shy of accepting anything contrary to their firmly established beliefs and are given to nagging criticism of every new point, a question has been raised by them that Hazrat Shaikh Muhyyuddin Ibne Arabi perhaps regarded mere Wilayat (saintliness) as synonymous with

prophethood and that his own personal view was that every prophet must necessarily bring a new law and since there is no new law to replace the one brought by the Holy prophet (Allah bless him) till the Day of judgement, there can therefore be no prophet after him in a true sense of the term. In this regard, it must, at the outset, be noted, as a point of guiding principle, that we do not stipulate, unqualified agreement with the views of Hazrat Shaikh-i-Akbar in all matters. According to us authoritativeness vests only in Allah and in His Prophet as their commands and verdicts are obligatory in every respect and without the slightest deviation, qualification or reserve and none other commands that finality of authority. The views of all others will be subject to scrutiny in the light of the Quran and Hadith with due regard to their status, the principle **خذ ما صفا ودع ما كدر** "accept what is correct and reject what is incongruous" being the determining rule. We have not cited here the evidence of Hazrat Shaikh Muhyyuddin Ibne Arabi in respect of all his views and beliefs collectively but as strictly limited to his stand on a specific issue, to show that the Shaikh shares our belief that only the door of law-bearing prophethood is closed after the advent of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and not of all categories of prophethood. His evidence in this particular question is quite clear and explicit, leaving little room for doubt. Even if Hazrat Shaikh Ibne Arabi held the belief (supposing it only for the sake of argument) that every prophet must bring a new law, our conclusion is hardly affected, as firstly this is irrelevant to the issue in hand, secondly because, we have already dealt with this aspect of the question when discussing our reference of Imam Shirani and proved with the cumulative force of evidence adduced from the Quran, the Hadith, history and reason that it is not necessary for every prophet to bring a new law. Hazrat Shaikh-i-Akbar however divides prophethood in

two categories, the law-bearing which he terms as special prophethood and declares as totally banned and the other he terms 'genral prophethood' which he declares, to be open for all times.

In point of fact, Hazrat Shaikh Muhayyuddin Ibn Arabi has never expressed the view that it is necessary for every prophet to bring a new law. On the contrary he says in very clear terms :

التشريع جزءٌ من اجزاء النبوة (تتمت كتيبه جلد ٢ صفحہ ١٠٠)

“Law-bearing attribute is one of the elements of prophethood”.¹

According to the Shaikh, when law-bearing is not a necessary accompaniment of prophethood, the view that every prophet must necessarily have a new law, cannot be justly attributed to him. If therefore he has on any occasion characterized 'general prophethood' (non-law-bearing prophethood) as Wilayat (saintliness), it must be as a simile, employed for the purpose of explaining non-law-bearing prophethood to the common man in his own way ; his object obviously was to impress that every prophet was primarily a Wali (saint) and that 'general Prophethood' was only a graduated form of Wilayat (saintliness). Hazrat Shaikh Muhayyuddin Ibne Arabi has, accordingly, accepted Hazrat Harun (peace be on him) as prophet in the light of the Quranic verdict'.

“And we granted him Haroon, Prophet”, at the same time agreeing that he brought no law but was subject to the law of Moses (Allah be pleased with him).

Maulana Rumi's evidence.

Evidence number two is to be found in the works of Muvlana Jalaluddin Rumi who belongs to the

Futahate Makkia Book, 2 Page 100.

Middle period of Islam (died in A. H. 672). It should be remembered that I am not reproducing here all the references but only quoting a few to serve as examples, to show that the views of the Ahmadiyya Community on 'ختم نبوت' are, in no way novel ones and that, on the contrary, these have been, at large, shared by leading scholars, reformers, and Divines in every period of Islamic era. With this object in view, some opinions have been quoted above and a few more are being reproduced in the following pages. Hazrat Maulana Rumi, whose Masnavi is widely popular among Muslims and is accepted as a repository of spiritual truths and lofty wisdom, says :

بہر ایں خاتم شدامت او کہ سجود : مثل اونے بودنے خواہند بود
 چونکہ در صنعت برو استاد دست : نے نوگوئی پنجم صنعت بر تو هست
 (مشہوری مولانا روم دفتر ششم صفحہ ۸)

“He (the Holy Prophet) has been declared the seal, for he had no peer in generosity before him, nor shall there be one after him.

When an artist excels others in art, you say not ‘The art has ended with thee’.”¹

This is a very clear and lucid exposition indeed. Hazrat Maulana Rumi (May Allah have mercy on him) warns against interpreting Khatamannabiyeen in the sense that the Holy Prophet had thereby discontinued the current of Allah's favours ; on the contrary he (Allah bless him) is exalted among prophets and epitomizes in his person all the perfection of prophets in their highest degree and most proportionate form. As an example, he says, as no one says of a matchless artist that art had ended with him so does the ending of

1. Musnavi Section 6 Page 8.

prophethood with the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) means that the excellences of prophethood had culminated in perfection in his august person. Our friends who find us Kafir on account of our construction of the expression 'ختم نبوت' should ponder well and seriously reflect whether our interpretation materially differs from the above-mentioned exposition. They should further ponder whether our construction is in conformity to the exalted station of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) or their interpretation which virtually amounts to cutting short the flow of running streams. We would prefer to refrain from comment and leave it to their own conscience to judge and answer in the witness of God.

I now come to the supporting evidence of another leading divine of the Middle ages of Islam, Hazrat Imam Mohammad Tahir (died in A. H. 986); he has been accepted as Imam by some and his work *Majmaalbahar*, is considered to be a masterpiece on the subject of *Hadith*. The Imam says :

عن عائشة رضى الله عنها تولوا الله خاتم الانبياء ولا تقولوا

لانبيي بعده؛ وهذا ناظر الى نزول عيسى وهذا ايضا

لاينا في حديث لانبيي بعدى لانه اراد لانبيي ينسخ

شرعه - (ردّ منشور و تكملة مجمع البحار صفحہ ۵۸)

“The statement of Ayesha (Allah be pleased with her) that ‘say that he verily is the seal of prophets but say not that there is no prophet after him’ is in view of the advent of Messiah and this does not cancel the Holy Prophet’s statement ‘there is no prophet after me’ as he verily meant that there shall be no such prophet

after him as would nullify his law.”¹

This exquisite pronouncement of Imam Mohammad Tahir further elucidates the point that (1) the door of law-bearing prophethood alone is closed after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and not of every form of prophethood, and (2) that the Messiah whose advent has been promised in Islam will be a prophet of God and since, he will be subject to the law of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him), his appearance in no way infringes the spirit of the tradition “there is no prophet after me”.

The self-same two postulates are advanced by the Ahmadiyya Community in respect of the doctrine of ‘ختم نبوت’ (Seal of Prophethood). But it is a tragedy that in spite of the clear testimony of such leading dignitaries of Islam, we are being declared outside the pale of Islam. If it were said that the above quotation refers to Hazrat Isa (peace be on him) who was raised among the Israelites 600 years before the advent of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) it will be nothing short of adding insult to injury. For, it amounts to hailing as prophet one who has never been listed as a servant, disciple and spiritual heir of the Holy Apostle (Allah bless him) and was, instead, subject to the law of prophet Moses (Allah be pleased with him), this involves a virtual denial of this honour to any of the pupils, favourites and spiritual sons of the exalted Apostle (Allah bless him).

It is well worth considering that if, after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him), a past prophet of the Israelites, who does not owe his prophethood to the grace of the Holy Prophet, can, while retaining his former station of apostleship, still become the Imam (leader) of Islam and continue to be called prophet, then wherefore a servant and pupil of the Holy Prophet the Chief among men (Allah bless him) and one who

1. *Duree Manthur wa Takmila Majmaal-Bahar*, p. 85

receives grace through his graciousness and light cannot attain to this office? It is painful indeed to note that our misguided brethren have so miserably failed to appreciate the exalted station of their Master, the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and have chosen to place him under the obligation of Moses (Allah be pleased with him) and the Isrealites, barring a servant and disciple of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) from attainment to the exalted office of apostleship, through the blessings of his grace and the favour of his light. Someone has aptly said :

من از بیگانگان هرگز نه نالم
که بامن هرچه کرد آن آشنا کرد

I bemoan not the hands of others.
For whatever woe befell me came through
my own friends.

Views of Hazrat Imam Shirani (died in A. H. 976) and Hazrat Imam Ali bin Mohammad Sultan Alqari (died in A.H. 1041) have been quoted above and need not be reproduced here as it would unnecessarily overburden the discussion. If the readers wish to refresh their memories they are referred back to the treatment of the subject-matter, in reference to the traditions ' لا نبی بعدی ' and
لو عاش ابراهیم لکان صدیقاً نبیاً .

After quoting opinions held during the Middle Ages of Islam, we now enter upon the threshold of the modern era of Islam which commences practically with the 11th century A.H. The most eminent personailty of this century is Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi, the Mujjaddad Alaf Sani (Allah have mercy on him) who is venerated by a large number of Muslims as the greatest reformer ordained to appear before the advent of the Promised Messiah. Hazrat Mujjaddad Alif Sani (died A.H. 1084) says :

“Attainment to the excellences of prophethood by his followers in the way of allegiance and as legacy after the advent of the Seal of Prophets (salam and salutations to him and to all the Prophets) does not contravene his finality. Therefore be not of the doubting ones in this matter.”¹

Does not the above view correspond with the one held by the Ahmadiyya Community? Do we say anything other than this that the door to law-bearing prophethood and independent apostleship has been undoubtedly closed after the advent of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) but that the prophethood attainable through the discipleship of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and as a spiritual heritage by virtue of the grace of subordination to him has not been banned; that on the contrary this gift of prophethood testifies to the glorious station and exalted position of our Master (Allah bless him) being, as it is, within the reach of his pupils and devotees. Therefore we say with Hazrat Mujjaddad Alif Sani to every Muslim, “This is the truth so be not of those who doubt”.

The period of Hazrat Ahmad is followed by the times of Hazrat Shah Waliullah Muhaddis of Delhi (died in A.H. 1176). Hazrat Shah Sahib has been acclaimed as the reformer of the 12th century Ahijri and Muslims of Pakistan and India, all and sundry, pay homage to his wide learning and great erudition. Says Hazrat Shah Sahib :

ختم به النبيون اے لا يوجد بعده ما يأمره الله سبحانه

بالتشريع على الناس - (تفہیمات النبیین ۵۳)

“Prophets ended with him i.e. there shall not be after him one whom Allah the Holy invests

with law to exercise it over man.”¹

The above pronouncement of Hazrat Shah Waliullah (Allah have mercy on him) is self-explanatory. Hazrat Shah Sahib is at one with us when he declares the door of law-bearing prophethood only to have been closed after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him). We have already proved that every prophet need not necessarily bear a new law, for, as Hazrat Muhayyuddin Ibne Arabi says, law is but a part of prophethood and not the whole prophethood. The Quran, the Hadith and history bear testimony to the fact that many a prophet came to the world without a new law and were enjoined to serve the former laws. This verdict of Hazrat Shah Waliullah Dehlavi is a decisive finding for those Muslims who respect his authority. Not only Hazrat Shah Waliullah but his entire family is held in high esteem in the Indo-Pak sub-continent because of their learning and erudition. It is therefore up to you to accept this testimony.

Now we enter upon what may be rightly termed as our own times, on account of the close proximity of this period with our early days, which are possibly for many people the days of their living memory. The testimony now I am about to cite should have a special significance for the spiritually conscientious, as, it is of comparatively early times and to be more exact, was placed on record hardly a few years before the Hazrat Promised Messiah, Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement (peace of Allah be on him) announced his claims. This testimony was given by Hazrat Maulvi Muhammad Qasim Nanotvi, the renowned founder of the Madrasatululum, Deoband (died in 1889 A.D.). Says the Maulvi Sahib :

“In the conception of the masses the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) was Khatam in the

1. *Tafhimat-i-Ilahiyya Tafhim*. 53.

not preclude the possibility of the advent of a prophet after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him). The point at issue here, it will be appreciated, is not that of the advent of anyone but that of the possibility of the advent of one. The quotation under reference is quite clear on the point.

With the help of God, I have been able to deal with the quotations (ten in number) which I had proposed to cite by way of illustration, in connection with the treatment of Khatam-e-Nabuwat. As will be remarked, the references relate to every period of Islamic era and comprise quotations of opinions held by the dignitaries of the early, the middle and the modern periods. The foremost reference is of Hazrat Ali (Allah grant him grace) which relates to the early period, the era of the Blessed Companions, and the last relates to the days when the Founder of our Community, Hazrat Promised Messiah (peace of Allah be on him) laid the foundation of the Ahmadiyya Movement, under Divine Command. I do not at all claim that from the age of Blessed Companions down to our times all the Muslims have unanimously held the view that the door to non-law-bearing prophethood is open after the assumption of office by the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him). In that event there will be no controversy. But I do claim and I have established this contention beyond any shadow of doubt with the supporting evidence of the foregoing quotations, that in every period of Islamic era, invariably one or the other leading Divine has been openly of the view that the Khatm-e-Nabuwat of our Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) is in no way a bar to the advent of non-law-giving prophet; in fact the projection of the light of prophethood had become further expanded since the advent of Hazrat Khatamannabiyeen, the Chief of mankind (Allah bless him).

So far I have dealt with the pronouncements of selected Divines. Now I propose, by the grace of God, to relate how, in a way, every member of the Muslim community, has been subscribing to the belief that notwithstanding the khatm-e-nabuwat of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him), one non-law-giving prophet, must, at any rate, appear among the Muslims. In amplification of this brief statement, I refer to the widely known prophecy in Islam, about the coming of the Messiah (peace be on him) in the latter days and that Islam will gain through him extra-ordinary power, the Faith of Muhammad (Allah bless him) shall dominate all other religions, that the Dajjal (anti-Christ) will be annihilated, the cross will be broken into bits, the infidels, will be overpowered and punished and that all the internal differences among Muslims will be justly settled and so on and so forth. This prophecy has been briefly touched upon in the Holy Quran and its detailed narrative is to be found in every book of Hadith. The Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) laid such emphasis on it, repeating it so often that it tops the list of Islamic prophecies; so much so that every Muslim is acquainted with it; in short, its widespread knowledge surpasses all comprehension. The Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) himself had such tremendous faith in it that he stressed its importance with the added weight of solemn affirmation in the name of God. The most authentic book of Hadith, Bokhari quotes the following version of his (Allah bless him) statement:

والذي نفسى بيده ليوشكن ان ينزل فيكم ابن مريم حكماً عادلاً
 فيكسر الصليب ويقتل الخنزير ويضع الجزية
 (صحيح بخارى كتاب بدء الخلق باب نزول عيسى بن مريم)

“And I swear by the Lord who holds my life in His hands that the son of Mary shall surely appear among you as just arbiter and shall break the cross, annihilate the swine and abolish jazia”¹

This is the great prophecy in Islam relating to the coming of the Messiah. Though the Ahmad-iyya Community does not share the view that it relates to the coming of the self-same Messiah, son of Mary, but it holds the belief that it foretells about the appearance of a Messiah in the likeness of the son of Mary (peace be on him); all the other sects of Islam believe in the coming of the self-same Messiah of Nazareth who appeared 600 years before the advent of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) in the Mosaic dispensation. They, at the same time, believe that this Messiah shall retain his status of prophethood and shall not be divested of this dignity. Says Imam Jalaluddin Suyyuti:

من قال بسلب نبوته كفر حقاً فانه نبي لا يذهب عنه

وصف النبوة - (بحوال: حج الكرامه صفحہ ۴۳۱)

“One who said that he will be divested of prophethood is a true heretic, for, verily he is a prophet and shall not be relieved of the property of prophethood.”²

Since therefore all the Muslims unanimously believe in the appointed appearance of Messiah in the latter days and further agree that he shall hold the exalted rank of prophet, there can therefore be no escape from the logical and necessary

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1. *Sahih Bokhari Book Badul khalq chapter Nazuli isa bin Maryam.*
 2. *Hujjajul kirama Page 431.*

corollary that the mass of Muslims have subscribed to the view that a prophet shall appear after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him).

It is thus evident that not only the elect of Islam but even the mass of Muslims testify to the fact that the door to prophethood is in a manner, still open after the appearance of our Holy Prophet (Allah bless him). Will our friends pause and reflect that when the Muslims believe that the coming Messiah shall not be divested of his prophethood but that he shall appear as a prophet, do not the twin beliefs add up to the conclusion that the Muslims as a whole do concede one prophet after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him)?

It may be said here that the Muslims do agree on the appearance of a Prophet after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) who was exalted to prophethood six centuries before the advent of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and that the appearance of such a prophet does not infringe the Khatm-e-Nabuwat, the finality of prophethood in the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Allah bless him), while the advent of a new prophet does amount to a breach. May God guide our ill-advised brethren aright! The point of precedence or subsequence in advent is in no way relevant to the issue. It is a simple matter of appearing as a prophet and functioning as such after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) that forms the crux of the matter. The Messiah of Nazareth, though an earlier prophet, will, all the same, according to the belief of Muslims, come to the world after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and function as a prophet. If the door of prophethood is absolutely sealed, his appearance, in any case, constitutes a violation of the Seal Of prophethood (Khatm-e-Nabuwat), only if you care to realize. In fact the appearance of such a prophet as is

not of the Holy Prophet's (Allah bless him) following and has not received the rank of prophethood through his grace and as a result of owing allegiance to him, in the spirit of a disciple, is a smashing challenge to the very organization of Islamic dispensation, leaving intact neither the Seal of Prophethood nor the finality of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him). In contra-distinction to the above belief, the elevation to the rank of prophethood of a pupil and spiritual son of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him), through the favour of his grace and with a light from his light, constitutes no breach but redounds to the eminence of his glory as a testimony of the fact that the sun of his spiritual effulgence is capable of producing a moon of spiritual reflection for the illumination of the world in a period of darkness. May Allah bless the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his people!

A Rational Treatment of the Question

After dealing with the testimony furnished by the early Divines and the mass of Muslims I now come to the closing part of my discussion. As I said at the outset, human reason, in spite of its possible lapses which are sometimes prompted by environmental darkness is the natural light par excellence, granted to man by Heaven, to help him discriminate truth from falsehood. Most of the questions confronting man in life are decided in the light of reason. In this connection, it must therefore be borne in mind, as a basic fact, corroborated by the evidence of history, that it is an eternal law of God that He invariably raises chosen men of holy nature for the guidance and reformation of mankind whenever degenerate views and vicious deeds hold the field in the world. This eformatoryr action is determined by the prevalent

conditions; if, for instance, conditions warrant the necessity of a new law, reformatory process is initiated through a new code. But if a new law is not called for, a prophet without a fresh law, is raised to initiate reform. This principle has been operative from eternity and has never been suspended. The appointment of 1,24,000 prophets, of whom nearly 315 were law-bearing apostles, bears decisive testimony to this eternal truth. Since it is an eternal Divine law that whenever evils of great magnitude appear, Allah raises reformers. There is no reason why that law should be regarded as inoperative in our times.

It cannot be urged that since the appearance of the *Khatamannabiyyeen* this law which no doubt held good has been suspended. For, we have already established in our exposition of the term, that *Khatamannabiyyeen* does not spell an end of the prophetic circle, but that it only means that a current that flowed independently has now been diverted into one channel, namely the Holy Prophet (Allah be pleased with him). Besides, we are not treating the subject here in the light of the Quran and Hadith (that ground has already been covered) but our approach is from a purely rational angle. According to the rational viewpoint, it is manifestly clear that the Divine *modus operandi* in respect of human moral reformation, effective from eternity, was confined to the appointment of Prophets, could not have been dropped in our age. What rational argument can justify the damming of this ancient stream. The question why the eternally established Divine procedure of irrigating the spirit of man through an eternal stream should be considered as abandoned in our age, deserves serious consideration. This is a clear-cut rational argument that has a direct appeal to unbiased minds, endowed with clear vision. No amount of ingenious reasoning can dislodge it.

There is yet another aspect of the question. Those who claim that the eternal Divine Law of raising a prophet to reform mankind in every dark period has now become inoperative, carry the onus of substantiating their contention with evidence. Our claim is self-sustained, as, it is in line with an eternally operative Divine Law. Those who claim a new departure from this Divine Law, must cite relative evidence in support of their contention. If they cannot and by the grace of God they surely cannot, then the logically correct position, confirms our stand that we cannot be called upon to cite any evidence; and when our opponents who bear the onus cannot produce supporting evidence to their claim, the controversy must be treated as closed.

In the field of rational approach, the argument that extraordinary deterioration in religious persuasion and deeds in general is evident during the present era, the dominance of materialistic views and prevalence of irreligiosity and fraudulence, against which all prophets, have, according to the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) been fore-warning, resulting in general in the inner degeneration of races and nations, call for a prophet who should radiate the light of the spiritual sun of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) to illuminate the world, as an heir and votary of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him). No doubt the preceding centuries have had their share of darkness but the cimmerian darkness of the present age and the degeneration in faith and practice that has set in during these days, are indescribably great and without parallel in history. If therefore reformers of the Mujjaddad level were needed to attend to the evils of the past ages, present times call for a master-reformer gifted with prophetic properties through the favour of the Holy Prophet's (Allah bless him) grace. That is why the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him), in

view of the extreme darkness and deterioration of the present age, while foretelling the appearance of reformers in every century, predicted the appointment of a person of a calibre adequate for meeting the anti-Christ plague and spoke of him in these words :

لیس بینہی و بینہ نبی

“There is no prophet between me and him.”

It is precisely this age in reference to which the national poet of Pakistan Allama Iqbal says :

ہاتھ بے زور ہیں الحاد سے دل خوگر ہیں : امتی باعث رسوائیِ پیغمبر ہیں
 بُت شکن اٹھ گئے باقی جو ہیں بُت گر ہیں : نصابِ اہم پدرا در پسر آذر ہیں
 شور ہے ہو گئے دنیا سے سماں نابود : ہم یہ کہتے ہیں کہ تم سے بھی کہیں مسلم موجود
 وضع میں تم ہو نصاریٰ تو تمدن میں منور : یہ مسلمان ہیں جنہیں دیکھ کے شرما میں ہو
 (جواب شکوہ)

“Hands are feeble and hearts are seized of heresy. Idol-breakers are gone—the rest are idol-makers. The Father was Abraham but sons are Azars”.

“There is an outcry : Muslims have become extinct in the world. We ask ‘were there Muslims anywhere at all’ ?

“In stile you are Christian, in culture Hindus Such are these Muslims, even Jews will be scandalized at their sight.”¹

In these lines Allama Iqbal has certainly used rather harsh language in the excess of excitement. But one should pass it over as bitter words have

1. *Jawab Shikwa.*

to be employed at times as a corrective. Our readers should therefore set aside the harshness of tone and see the underlying spirit and the good motive behind them. However, whether people in this age of darkness which has affected Muslims and non-Muslims alike, are vocal in their demand for or their pitiable condition is sending forth an appeal, they all join in the call of times for a reformer from Heaven, a Master-reformer gifted with prophetic wisdom. Even Maulana Abulala Maududi who is at present leading the opposition front against us, observes :

“Most people are in search of such a perfect man for the rehabilitation of faith as would be an embodiment of the idealistic perfectness of all and sundry and should be sound in all respects. Though they orally reiterate faith in ختم نبوت (Khatim-e-nabuwat) and if anybody hints at continuation of prophethood, they would at once pull his tongue out of its root, but in their heart of hearts, they demand a prophet and would not accept anything short of a prophet.¹

Leaving aside therefore the evidence of the Quran, the Hadith and the pronouncements of early Divines, the times and the inner voice of mankind, call for a prophet in our age. Hazrat Promised Messiah (Allah bless him) said so aptly

بشنوید اے طالبان کہ غیب بکنند این ندرا

مصلحے باید کہ در ہر جا مفسد زادہ اند

1. *Tarjamanul Quran*, Dec. and Jan. 42-43 P 40.6

آسماں بارد نشان الوقت میگویدزین

ایں دو شاہد از پئے تصدیق من استادہ اند

را آئینہ کمالات اسلام صفحہ ۱۱۲

“Hear ye yearners, a call has come from the Unseen. A reformer is needed, for everywhere evil multiplies.”¹

Heaven rains signs. “The hour has struck” says the earth. These two witnesses stand upright in testifying form for me.”¹

“O ye people who yearn for truth, listen with your ears open, the cry coming forth from the Unseen that the times call for a great Divine reformer for everywhere faith and religion have deteriorated. Look ye to the signs that heaven hath rained and the earth from underneath cries forth, ‘The hour of a Divine reformer has come’, These two witnesses, the Heaven and earth, stand to attention to testify to my truth.”

Then referring to his specific claim, he says :

وقت تھا وقتِ مسیحانہ کسی اور کا وقت

میں نہ آتا تو کوئی اور ہی آیا ہوتا!

(دورِ ثانی)

“It was the time of Messiah and not of any other. Had I not come, another would have come.”³

“The irreligious materialism and fraudulence

1. *Aynai Kamalate Islam P.112.*

2. *Durre-Samin.*

that dominate this period and the attacks to which Islam has been exposed, call for a person no less than a vicegerent of the Prophet whom God raised in the likeness of Messiah, for the service of faith, one who would follow the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) as Messiah followed Moses. Such a Messiah is the call of times and if I had not come another would have been raised."

In brief, the call of the hour and the testimony of the time, underline the need for a reformer who should receive light from the light of our Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and with the favour of his grace initiate world reformation. This description is applicable to a reflex-prophet or disciple-prophet for, such a one is the spiritual son of our Holy Prophet (Allah bless him), a branch of his holy tree and part and parcel of him. Would that our brethren appreciate this point.

I now take up the last argument in this connection; which of the two views about the 'ختم نبوت' is endorsed by human reason and which is more in consonance with the exalted station of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) — the view advanced by the Ahmadiyya Community or the one advocated by the non-Ahmadi Maulvies. In order to make an appraisal of these views, we need hardly here enter into any detailed examination. It will be enough for our purpose to place both the views together and subject them to a comparative examination. A comparative statement of the two views is hence recorded in the following table. Readers can consult their clear conscience in finding out the truth. It is however important to study the table with a God-fearing sense of honesty as it is a matter of faith and must be treated with utmost seriousness.

The Belief of non-Ahmadi Muslims of today.

The Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) is 'خاتم النبيين' i.e., he is the terminator of all prophets, that the door to prophethood of every category is finally closed after him and nobody can attain to prophethood henceforward. The prophets who had to appear have already appeared before him and there is no prophet after him, neither from among his followers, nor from outside of their membership; for, all the streams of Prophethood have ceased to flow after his advent. Therefore none of his servants and votaries shall henceforward attain to prophethood.

The belief of the Ahmadi Community.

The Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) is the 'خاتم النبيين' i.e., the Seal of Prophets. In him the excellences of Prophethood have reached their perfection and therefore the door to receiving prophethood independently is closed since his appointment to this office, for henceforward every kind of grace is attainable only through his service. His advent has thus not closed the stream of Divine grace but its course has been channelized through his person which is now, so to say, the new Headwork. A prophet, henceforth, shall appear only through allegiance to him by receiving light from his light and as his shadow and reflection and not otherwise.

The above is a comparative statement representing on the one hand the view of the non-Ahmadis who believe the door to every kind of prophethood to have been bolted. They, in other words, mean that before the advent of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) the chances of becoming prophets, *Siddiq*, *Shaheed* and *Salih* were open to mankind but since his (Allah bless him) advent, while the chances of becoming *Siddiq*, *Shaheed* and *Salih* continue to remain open, the chances of becoming prophets have been terminated.

The other view is that of the Ahmadiyya Community according to which the doors to every category of Divine grace are not only still open as before but that they have been opened wider and that because of the exalted station and glorious position of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) the springs of Divine favour and spiritual light are flowing in full stream, that the graces that flowed independently before have now been aligned to allegiance to him (Allah bless him).

The Promised Messiah, in an address, to shi sovereign master the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) says :

ہم ہوئے خیراً تم تجھ سے ہی اسے خیراً
 تیرے بڑھنے سے قدم آگے بڑھایا ہم نے
 (راہِ مینہ کمالاتِ اسلام)

“We became the best of the people because of thee O best of Prophets! We marched forward as thou went ahead.”

Now which of the two views is in conformity with the eminent status of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) will be clear after a dispassionate comparative appraisal of the two statements. Whether it is to his (Allah bless him) credit that his advent should result in the termination of prophethood of every form and that the drying up of a current should be attributed to him or that his elevated rank makes his holy person the fountain-head of prophethood and that the grace that was granted before him independently shall henceforth be attainable through subordination to him, through devotion to him and

1. *Ayinai Kamalati-Islam*.

through his grace and his certifying seal. Give your testimony therefore, being honest to God, in whose hands lie the lives of us all and before whom we must one day appear and answer for our deeds. Does the greatness of the Holy prophet (Allah bless him) lie in the cessation of every kind of prophethood after him or in its denial to others than his followers and its grant being made contingent on allegiance to him? I am sure every Muslim who has true love for the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) who is conscious of comparative height of his rank, will, with true conviction, and heartfelt faith, endorse the view that it is inherent in the exalted position of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) that the door to reflex-prophethood should remain open to his followers and votaries. Moses was followed by a host of prophets. Though they did not receive this grace through allegiance to him they were nevertheless commissioned to serve his law and were under him. It is a pity indeed that you cannot bear up with one devotee of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) being graced with the rank of prophethood—his claim rankles so in your sides.

Since unfortunately a great misunderstanding persists among non-Ahmadi Muslims in respect of the sense in which the Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement (peace be on him) claimed or in the sense, we believe him, to be a prophet, it is well worthwhile adding here by way of further clarification, that it is certainly not at all in the sense generally held by the Muslims. According to the erroneous concept of Prophethood persisting among them, every prophet must bring a new law, or modify the preceding law, or must be independent of the preceding prophet, should initiate a new creed of his own or found a new faith. When they come across the Ahmadiyya literature or learn from Ahmadis of references to the Promised Messiah's (Allah bless him) claim to

prophethood, they at once ascribe to him a prophetic status in terms of their own concept and accordingly believe that he has initiated a new creed, has founded a new faith and is therefore in no way related to Islam any more. Nothing is further from the truth. We solemnly affirm that the Promised Messiah made no such claim; we do not believe him to be a prophet in the above sense. On the contrary we believe him to have been commissioned, as he has repeatedly explained in his Works, to serve Islam in subordinate devotion to the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and to have brought no new religion nor a new creed; his creed and that of his followers being the one and eternal creed that Muhammad the Apostle of Allah (Allah bless him) was granted, namely:

لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله

“There is no God except Allah and Muhammad is His Apostle.”

O ye earth and O ye heavens, O ye genii and O men, be witnesses therefore that we testify this on solemn affirmation and Allah willing we shall so depart from this world that “Islam is our religion, the Quran is our book and Muhammad the blessed who is the Seal of Prophets, is our apostle; and he is the chief of messengers exalted above all his predecessors and his followers and we are his (UMMAT) people.” Whosoever attributes to us a belief other than this, is guilty of falsehood and commits a wrong for which he must answer God. We do not ascribe to the Promised Messiah (peace be on him) the prophethood of the non-Ahmadiyya concept; his station in spiritual eminence is so granted him by virtue of allegiance, devotion and subordination to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Allah bless him), to demonstrate his glory and in simple terms it is the

favour of "Frequent communion with God and communication of intelligence concerning coming events" and nothing besides this. And as we have said before this, in fact, is, in its essence, prophethood which does not necessarily consist in the revelation of a new law as law is only an adjunct. Would that our friends pondered this truth!

A Concluding Note

I have, by the grace of God, dealt with all the aspects of this subject. In the opening chapter the question of Khatm-e-nabuwat has been disposed of in the light of Quranic verses. This has been followed up with a treatment in reference to the traditions. The third part relates to the views of leading Divines of preceding ages in support of our viewpoint. In the end, it has been proved in the light of human reason that, not only a reflex-prophet can appear among the followers of the Holy Apostle (Allah bless him), owing allegiance to him and as his pupil but that it is the clarion call of times that a reformer of the prophetic level should appear in this age. These are the four possible approaches to the treatment of an Islamic question coming up for discussion. All the four criteria. Allah be praised, support our view. The Holy Quran is emphatically of the view that for the Holy Prophet's followers, the doors to Divine grace have been thrown wide open—wider than ever as they are best of people (UMMAT): for, in the preceding dispensation, the grant of prophethood was not contingent, on allegiance to the preceding prophet and the recipient was favoured directly but now, due to the grace attending the Holy Prophet's seal of Prophethood, the gate of this favour has been thrown open to the followers of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him), through subordination to him and in his disciple-ship.

So far as the Hadith is concerned, several traditions confirm the view that a non-law-giving prophet can appear after the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him). Even the traditions considered as doubtful, show on scrutiny that while the door to law-bearing and independent prophethood is closed, the door to reflex prophethood has not been closed. The term reflex prophethood is synonymous with elevation to prophethood of a servant and devotee of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) through the favour of his grace and the radiation of the light of his reflection. The prophethood as is so granted, along the path of *fana firasul*. (self-obliteration in the love of the Holy Prophet), is truly a part of his own prophetic properties and not something extraneous thereto and therefore in spite of it the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) remains the last prophet.

After tradition come the pronouncements of the Leading Divines—in strict order of precedence. We have shown in the foregoing pages that from the era of the Blessed companions to date there is no such period to be found when someone or the other leading Divine did not express views approximating our beliefs. This sacred chain of evidence begins with the initial links furnished by the views of Hazrat Ali (Allah bless him) and Hazrat Ayesha (Allah bless her), is followed up by those of Hazrat Shaikh Mohayyuddin Ibne Arabi, Hazrat Shaikh Ahmad Sirhandi Mujjaddad *alfe sani* and Hazrat Shah Waliullah, till it ends up with the last link, the opinion of Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanotvi founder of the Deobad school. If therefore we are liable to be declared Kafirs, heretics, and outside the pale of Islam then what verdict have our opponents reserved for these eminent luminaries who have expressed identical views.

Last of all comes the approach of human reason. We have shown in this connection that our beliefs

are in line with the eternal Divine law and the call of times and the thirst in the minds of men further reinforces the argument in our favour; this cumulative evidence has been still further supported by the unambiguous word of Allama Iqbal and Maulve Abulala Maududi. After this formidable four-fold evidence, every part of which is a lofty tower of truth, it is a glaring falsehood, an unmitigated injustice and unreasonable aggressiveness to say that we have no faith in the 'ختم نبوت' of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) that we, God forbid, insult him, have abandoned Islam, have founded a new faith and coined a new creed. With what deep feelings did our Imam Hazrat Promised Messiah (peace be on him) said :

تم تو رکھتے ہیں مسلمانوں کا دین
 دل سے ہیں خدام ختم المرسلین
 شرک اور بدعت سے ہم بینا رہیں
 خاکِ راہِ احمدِ مختار ہیں
 سارے حکموں پر ہمیں ایمان ہے
 جان و دل اس راہ پر قربان ہے
 دے چکے دل اب نینِ خاک کی رہا
 ہے یہی خواہش کہ ہو وہ بھی فدا

تم ہمیں دیتے ہو کا فر کا خطاب
 کیوں نہیں لوگو تمہیں خوفِ عقاب

We profess the faith of Muslims
 We are devoted servants of the Khatmal-
 mursaleen

We shun shirk and innovation
 We are mere dust in the passage trodden by
 Ahmad the chosen

We believe in all commandments
 We are devoted heart and soul to this way
 We have given away the heart already only the
 earthen frame now remains

It is our sincere desire that this too be sacrific-
 ed in His cause

O ye people, you call us Kafir, wherefore you
 fear not consequences thereof.

The above-quoted lines are from the pen of the
 Founder of Our Movement, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam
 Ahmad Sahib of Qadian, the Promised Messiah. We
 believe in every word of it and We invoke the wrath
 of Heaven on those who perjure. Whether the world
 shall believe me or not, truth shall, *Insha Allah*
 ultimately prevail. Those who are today condemned
 as enemies of faith and detractors of the Holy Prophet,
 shall in the end, prove in the right, and the bugle
 of Islam's victory shall sound in their honour. The
 world today is at a critical crossing whence roads
 branch off to different directions. The eternal decree
 of God has ordained that the Ahmadiyya Communi-
 ty shall take to the right path that leads to con-
 quest and victory. The time is not far off when
 the world will acknowledge and the children of our
 denouncers will testify to the fact that the eminence
 of the Holy Prophet (Allah bless him) and the

excellences of Islam lay not in the beliefs of the opposition camp but in those professed by us. The concept of Khatm-e-nabuwat is the last ditch intervening between us and the other Muslims. Once this ditch has been crossed, through the grace and mercy of Allah, the entire field will have been cleared. May that day draw nearer. May our misguided brethren also see the light that we have seen and may they too taste of the elixir of life that we have tasted. May they appreciate the eminence and true status of the Seal of Prophets, the Chief of Apostles and the Leader of mankind, Muhammad the Holy? May they then lend us a hand in the service of faith so that Islam regains its glory in the world and that as there is One God of the World, so there be One Book and One Prophet for all men who may come all under one flag—his flag. This is the ordination of the Powerful, the Wise Lord and our last appeal is unto Him, the Lord of the Universe who is altogether praiseworthy.

Humble Servant of the Millat
MIRZA BASHIR AHMAD