Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat has Firm Faith that the Holy Prophet Muhammad was Khataman Nabiyin (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

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The detractors of Jamaat-e-Ahmadiyya persistently claim in their propaganda that Ahmadis deny the Khatme Nabuwat of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him; that Ahmadis believe in a prophethood parallel to that of the Holy Prophet; that Ahmadis elevate Mirza Sahib to a status above the status of the Holy Prophet etc. All these stated beliefs are falsely attributed to Ahmadis. These are manifestly incorrect and concocted in bad faith. A person’s belief is only that which is pronounced by him rather than the one that is alleged to him. The founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement stated in an address: “I firmly believe in the Khatme Nabuwat of the Khatalul Anbiyya and consider anyone who denies Khatme Nabuwat to be one without faith and outside the pale of Islam.” In his book Kashee Nuh he addresses his followers in the following words: “On the face of the Earth there is no guidance for mankind except the Quran, and there is no guide for man other than Muhammad Mustafa, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. So strive to create a bond of true love with this Prophet of majesty and grandeur, and prefer none else above him in any manner.”

Khatme Nabuwat is a philosophically profound concept that not only describes the lofty status of the Holy Prophet but it also makes clear the position of Islam as the final living religion that will serve as the only God-sanctioned guidance for mankind until the Day of Judgement. It is not for a layman to comprehend the full significance of the concept of Khatme Nabuwat. It requires application of thought, knowledge of matters religious, perception of ranks spiritual, and most of all it requires help from the Quran and the Hadith. To insist upon it to merely mean ‘the last prophet’ may be termed intellectual naivety. The Holy Prophet said that he was Khatam even when Adam was being rolled in the primordial mix of his creation. A study of Islamic history would reveal that different scholars and groups have taken different, many a times conflicting positions on the meaning of this word. Given this, it is not possible to treat all interpretations as equally credible. We have to take recourse to the Quran and Hadith and identify those interpretations that find their support in these two venerable sources rather than limit ourselves to the narrow interpretation that finds favour with the present day mullah.

The expression Khataman Nabiyin occurs in the Holy Quran in Sura Ahzab. The verse runs as follows: “Muhammad is not the father of any of your men but he is the Messenger of Allah and Khataman Nabiyin. Allah has the knowledge of every thing.” (Tr.of 33:40). To explain the meaning of Khataman Nabiyin we first give here two sayings of the Holy Prophet himself and then a few quotations from the writings of eminent Muslim divines of different eras and countries.

The Holy Prophet said: “I was Khataman Nabiyin before Adam was born.” (Tafsir Ibn Kaseer on the authority of Musnad Ahmad bin Hambal). When his son Ibrahim died he said, “If Ibrahim had lived he would have been a righteous prophet.” (Ibn Majah, Vol 1, Kitabul Janaiz).

Hadhrat Ayesha (may Allah be pleased with her), wife of the Holy Prophet and the daughter of the first Caliph of Islam, is revered for her intelligence, piety, and learning. She is reported to have said: “Say that he is Khataman Nabiyin but do not say that there is no prophet after him.” The words are pregnant with meaning; they fit in so well with the context of the Quranic verse. She means to say that the word Khatam in this verse does not mean the last in point of time. Maulana Muhammad Shafi Mufti of Deoband says that this saying of Hadhrat Ayesha is also found in Taveelul Ahadith and adds: “The apparent meaning of La Nabi Ba’di is that no prophet, whether old or new, can come after the Holy Prophet. As this meaning adversely affects the universally accepted Islamic doctrine and the unanimous belief of the companions of the Holy Prophet regarding the second advent of the Messiah (peace be upon him), therefore Hazrat Ayesha and Muqheera (may Allah be pleased with them) have given the instruction that such words should not be used as might go in any way against the universally accepted doctrine.” (Khatm-e-Nabuwat fil Quran, p. 67).

In the Shia commentary of the Holy Quran (Majnal Bahrain by Abdul Hasan Ali bin Muhammad – died in 445 A.H.) it is written under the word Khatam that the meaning of Khataman Nabiyin is that Holy Prophet was the ornament of Prophets.

Sheikul Akbar Mubyuddin Ibn Arabi (b. 560 A.H. at Murcia, Spain, and died in 638 A.H. in Damascus), a most learned and eminent divine, also interprets the expression Khataman Nabiyin in the same way. Maulvi Khuda Baksh Khan, President High Court Hyderabad Deccan, quotes Abu Yahya from Asaru Bilad where he writes about Ibn Arabi that “he was a great learned divine, well versed in religious sciences and philosophy ... he has no parallel in his greatness.” (Mububul Albab, p. 312). Explaining the expression, Ibn Arabi says: “If one asks what is the reason of Khatam and its meaning, we will say in reply: Its reason is perfection, and stoppage and cessation is its meaning ... and Allah ended this revelation with the Shariat of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) so he became Khataman Nabiyin.” (Futuhat-i-Makkiya, Vol. II, p. 3). He makes it clearer still: “So the institution of Tashri’eei (law bearing) Nabuwat came to an end with him and Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) became Khataman Nabiyin because he brought perfection.”

In this connection Ibn Arabi also discusses the Hadith (la Nabi Ba’di) in several places. We give here two quotations on the point. (1) “The prophethood which has ceased with the Prophet of God is only the Nabuwat Tashi’eei, and not the status or the rank of prophethood. So there will be no law canceling his law and no other institute can be added to it. And this is the meaning of his words that Risalat and Nabuwat has ceased and there will be no prophet after him who will go against his law.” (Futuhat-i-Makkiya Vol. II, p.3). (2) “So prophethood has not completely disappeared. That is why we say it is only the Nabuwat Tashi’eei that has disappeared. And this is the meaning of La Nabi Ba’di.” (Ibid p.64)
Maulana Jalaluddin Roomi (born at Balkh in 609, died at Koniy in 672 A.H.) is an outstanding Muslim personality. He explains the meaning of Khatam by saying that the like of the Holy Prophet has never been and will never be. It denotes perfection. The original is in Persian. Here is the English translation: “Prophethood reached finality in his person in this way that none so ever has been like him and none shall be like him. Whenever a master craftsmen excels in a craft, does not one say that craftsmanship has reached its end in him?” (Ilahi Manzoor, Daftar 6, compiled by Maulvi Feroz Khan, 1350 A.H; p. 19)

Syed Abdul Karim (b. 767 A.H. and died 811 A.H.) of Djiil in the district of Baghdad “has had great influence in the molding of religious ideas in the greater part of Islam and especially in East India.” (Encyclopedia of Islam). He says: “The institution of Tashri‘eei Nabwawat ceased after him and Muhammad (peace be upon him) became Khataman Nabiyyin.” (Al Insanul Kamil, Cairo, 1304 A.H; Chap. 36, p. 76).

Imam Shaaraani was a very learned Muslim authority. He was born in 898 A.H. and lived in Cairo. He says: “Know that prophethood after Muhammad (peace be upon him) has not ceased absolutely. It is only Tashri‘eei Nabuwat that has ceased.” (Al-Yawaqeto wal Jawahar, Vol II,1304 A.H, p. 43).

Imam Muhammad Tahir Gujrati (b. 914 A.H.) is another eminent Muslim authority. He says: “This also is not against the tradition because what the Holy Prophet intended by these words is that there is no prophet who can cancel his Shariat.” (Takmala Majmaul Bihar, p.85).

Mulla Ali bin Muhammad Sultan Al-Qari (born at Herat and died in 1014 A.H.) was a great Hanafi Faqih. He has written commentaries upon Mishkat, Fiqah Akbar, Shifa, Shamail, Ainul Ilm, etc. He makes the meaning of Khataman Nabiyyin very clear: “If Ibrahim had lived and had become a prophet and in the same way Omer had become prophet, both would have been the followers of the Holy Prophet like Isa and Khizar and Ilyas (peace be upon them). So it would not contradict the word of God Khataman Nabiyyin because its meaning is that there will not come a prophet after him who can cancel his law and who is not from among his followers. (Mauzaadat Kabir, p. 69, Muhmadi Press, Lahore, 1302 A.H.)

Allama Zurgeji (d. 1122 A.H.), in Sharah Mawahibul Lohumni, Vol. II, p. 163, writes that the word Khatam means perfection and adornment.

Hazarat Sheikh Ahmad Sirhandi well known as Mujaddid Alf Thani (born 971 and died 1134 A.H.) was a great authority. He says: “The attainment of the high characteristics of prophethood by way of obedience and inheritance after the coming of the Khatam of Prophets (peace be upon him) is not against his being Khatam.” (Maktoobat Imam Rabban, Vol I, Newal Kishore Press, Kawnpur, 1303 A.H; p.432).

Sheikh Qurabud Din Ahmad, better known as Shah Wali Ullah Muhaddis of Dehli (born 1114, died 1176 A.H.) is of the same opinion. He says: “Prophets have been ended with Muhammad (peace be upon him) in the sense that there will be found no one after him who is commissioned by God with Shariat for men.” (Tafheemat-e-Ilahiyya, Part II, Barqti Press Bijnour, p. 72, 73).

In his famous commentary of the Holy Quran (Fathul Bari, Vol VII, p. 286) Abu Tayyib Siddiq bin Hasan bin Ali, Albuqhari, Aliqanouji (born 1248 A.H. at Brijelli) says that the meaning of Khataman Nabiyyin is that the Holy Prophet is the seal of prophets with which they were adorned.

Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanutvi (born 1248 A.H., died 1297 A.H.) was the founder of the famous Madrasa Deoband. He says: “Common folk think that the Holy Prophet was Khatam in the sense that he came after the old prophets and is the last in point of time, but it will be clear to the erudite that coming first or last in point of time is in itself no excellence.” (Tahzir-un-Nas, p. 3 Qasmi Press, Deoband). Further on he says that “the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) is not possessed of the fatherhood of any man in its general sense but the spiritual fatherhood of followers as well as prophets does belong to him” (p. 10). On page 25 of the same book the Maulana also says: “Even if it is assumed that after the time of the Holy Prophet is born a prophet, it will not be against his being the Khatam.”


Conclusion

All these quotations show that recognized Muslim saints of different countries, ages and climes have been interpreting the expression, Khataman Nabiyyin in a manner that allows the appearance of a prophet who does not bring a new Shariat after the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), and this has not been considered against his being the Khatam. So, Ahmadiyya Muslim belief in Khatme Nabwawat is based on the Holy Quran, the Hadith, and their interpretation by great Muslim saints.

Guided by clear and repeated revelations from Allah the Almighty, Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi wrote:

This honour was given to me only because I was a disciple of the Holy Prophet s.a.w. If I were not from the Ummah of the Holy Prophet s.a.w. and had not followed him, I would not have had the honour of receiving God’s revelations even if my good deeds had reached the heights of world’s tallest mountains, as all the prophethoods have come to an end except the Muhmmadi Prophethood. No law-bearing prophet now can ever come, but a non law-bearing prophet who is from the Ummah is possible. On this basis, I am an Ummati and also a Nabi. (Tajaliyat Ilahiyya)

May peace and the choicest blessings of Allah be upon Muhammad, the Khataman Nabiyyin.

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