THE PROPHETHOOD IN ISLAM

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ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF FIRST THREE CHAPTERS FROM *Al-Nubuwwat fil-Islām*

PART I

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Members of the Ahmadiyyah Anjuman Ishâ'at Islâm (Lahore - West Pakistan) believe that:

— After the holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him), God has barred the appearance of any prophet, new or old.

— Angel Gabriel cannot bring ‘prophetic revelation’ to any person as this would contradict the two complementary verses: “This day have I perfected for you your religion” (5:3), “Muhammad is the Messenger of Allâh and the Seal of the prophets” (33:40). It would otherwise violate the sanctity of finality of prophethood in Islam.

— All the Companions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (aṣḥâb) and all the spiritual leaders (îmām) are venerable.

— It is incumbent to believe in the missions of all reformers (mujaddid).

— He who believes that “there is no God but Allâh and Muḥammad is His Prophet” (kalimah) cannot be regarded an unbeliever or infidel (kāfîr).

— No verse of the holy Quran has been, or shall ever be, abrogated.
CHAPTER I

The Real Object of Prophethood ........................ 1

Divine promise that for the upliftment of humanity guidance from God will be sent—All prophets brought guidance from God—Moses and all the prophets who were raised before or after him were the bearers of guidance—The real object of prophethood is purification—Purification means perfection—The revelation of guidance is essential for the upliftment of humanity—The most perfect and the last of all the guides is the Messenger Muḥammad—The conception of guidance is wider than that of Šariʿah—Prophethood is a gift and not an acquisition—A person who acquires an excellence by effort can not be called a prophet.

The views of Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad: Separate guidance was revealed to every prophet—Prophets’ self-purification was not the result of their efforts but was done by God’s hand—Knowledge of God is attained only through prophets—Nubuwwah of Israelite prophets was not the result of acquisition i.e. the result of following Moses—Self-purification means man’s perfection.—The view of Šāh Wali Allāh that a prophet is one who makes a deficient person perfect, himself following no Imām—The view of Imām Ibn Hazm—The view of Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzi—The view of Al-Ghazālī—Two conditions for a prophet: (1) For the purification and upliftment of humanity he should bring guidance from God (2) Acquisition, education or anyone’s discipleship should play no part in it.
CHAPTER II

Prophetic Revelation and its Distinguishing Features

What is revelation? — Different kinds of revelation — In how many ways does God speak to man? — The first distinction: The Qur'ānic revelation was by the descent of Gabriel — Gabriel brought revelation to all the prophets — The Prophet's revelation before his advent — The great revolution wrought by the prophetic revelation — To raise a person to the office of prophet Gabriel must bring revelation to him — Special descent of Gabriel for the revelation to the prophets — The revelation of Mary was not prophetic revelation — The coming of Gabriel without revelation or his descent upon non-prophets — Gabriel's company with the Prophet before his call — Further clarification about prophetic revelation from ḥadīth — The revelation of Moses was also the result of the descent of Gabriel — The testimony of Ḥaḍrat Aḥmad that there can be no descent of Gabriel with prophetic revelation on a follower — The second distinction: a prophet follows his own revelation — The terms prophet (nābi) and follower (ummatī) — The third distinction: the prophetic revelation is a verifier of the previous revelation, the revelation granted to saints itself stands in need of verification — The fourth distinction: the possessor of the prophetic revelation is a leader while the follower is not — Aaron was also the possessor of command — The fifth distinction: a prophet is a follower of revelation, but non-prophet exercises his own judgment — The sixth distinction: the duty of a prophet is that he should communicate all his revelation to men but for a follower it is not necessary — The seventh distinction: the revelation of a prophet can alter or abrogate previous šarī'ah whereas the revelation of a follower cannot — The testimony of the Qur'ān that commands may be altered or modified — The eighth distinction: the revelation of a prophet completes the guidance — The ninth distinction: the prophetic revelation is recited in prayers — The tenth distinction: it is essential to believe in prophetic revelation and his denial is a veritable kāfir — The eleventh distinction: every prophet brings a book — The prophets whose books are not known — Israelite prophets who did not possess any book — The twelfth distinction: the prophetic revelation possesses all the excellences, whereas revelation granted to saints contains only mubashshirāt (good news).
CHAPTER III

Finality of Prophethood

The significance of the finality of prophethood—The first distinctive feature: the Prophet Muḥammad appeared for the whole world—When was the Prophet Muḥammad appointed for the whole world?—No prophet before Muḥammad appeared for the whole world—The second distinctive feature: Faith in the previous scriptures—The first reason for the finality of prophethood: perfection of guidance—The second reason for the finality of prophethood: protection of guidance—Historical evidence that the chain of prophethood has been cut off—What is the significance of khātam al-Nabiyyīn?—The meaning of expression khātam al-Nabiyyīn—When did he become khātam al-Nabiyyīn?—The finality of prophethood according to the Ḥadīth—The claimant to prophethood—The saying of ‘Ā’ishah explained—Had there been a prophet in this ummah it would have been ‘Umar—Other reports about the finality of prophethood—Another Ḥadīth explained: the prophets are brothers—The Prophet’s being khātam al-Nabiyyīn closes the door of prophethood—A prophet is raised by God and this work cannot be entrusted to a human being—There is no authority for the new meaning of khātam al-Nabiyyīn—The Qur’ānic verses in support of the continuity of prophethood analysed—The Qur’ān is the last of the books (khātam al-kutub)—A prophecy is not a proof in the discussion about the finality of prophethood—The discussion about Khatm Nubūvwah in the books by the Founder.

Appendix Chapter III
CHAPTER I

THE REAL OBJECT OF PROPHEThOOD

Divine Promise that for the upliftment of humanity guidance from God will be sent

To understand the object of prophethood (nubuwwat) and messengership (risālat) we shall first turn to that part of the Qurʾān where the creation of man has been mentioned and where a picture of man’s nature has been drawn together with a way for its attainment to perfection. This is the story of Adam, which has been related at several places in the Qurʾān:

"Surely there will come to you a guidance from Me," says God after referring to Adam and the error he had committed, "then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve. And (as to) those who disbelieve in and reject Our messages, they are the companions of the fire, in it they will abide." ¹

It has been pointed out here that men by their own efforts cannot reach that high state of life where, in the words of the Qurʾān, fear shall not come upon them, nor shall they grieve. Therefore God, in His perfect mercy and Lordship, has arranged to send guidance to mankind from time to time and those who follow it would continue to reach the height of moral and spiritual excellence.

All prophets brought guidance from God

Thus the story of Adam and the concluding verses show thereof that God’s attributes of Lordship (rabūbiyat) demands that for the upliftment of mankind, He should send guidance from time to time. And this is the very object of raising the prophets that they, through Divine guidance, should free men from the bondage of sin and help them to attain to moral and spiritual perfection. Accordingly, in the beginning of the Qurʾān the object of its revelation has also been described in the following words:

"This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who keep their duty." ²

¹. The Qurʾān, 2 al-Baqarah : 88-89.
². Ibid., 2 al-Baqarah : 2.
This in other words refers to that guidance the promise of which was given to Adam and his descendants that *Surely, there will come to you a guidance from Me*. Because, for us, all the scriptures have been incorporated in the Qur'ān and all the prophets' excellences have been blended together in the person of the Prophet Muḥammad (may peace and blessings of God be upon him), therefore, whatever object has been stated for the advent of the Prophet Muḥammad, should necessarily be considered the object of raising of all other prophets.

**Moses and all the prophets who were raised before or after him were the bearers of guidance**

Similarly the book of Moses was also called *guidance*, which in fact also referred to this original Divine promise. Further, the prophets who appeared before Moses and those raised among the Israelites after him, were all mentioned as being sent with guidance. This is clear from the verses of chapter *al-Awām*. After mentioning Abraham, the following other prophets have also been named: Isaac, Moses, Aaron, Zacharia, John, Jesus, Elias, Ishmael, Elisha, Jonah, Lot (peace be upon all of them). This list carries eighteen names of prophets which include those of Noah, Abraham, and Moses and those prophets also who came after Moses and did not bring any new *ṣharī'ah*. It has been said about all of them:

"And We chose them and guided them to the right way. This is God's guidance, wherewith He guides whom He pleases of His servants." 3

This was God's guidance, revealed to the prophets and, through it He guided whom He willed from among His servants. Thus He Himself guided the prophets and through them other people were guided. In further explanation of this point it has been said:

"These are they to whom We gave the Book and authority and prophecy." 4

Book (*kitāb*) is, in fact, the collection of the guidance which is given to every prophet so that by means of this he should uplift his people and lead them to the right path. This point will be dealt with in detail

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3. The Qur'ān, 6 *al-Awām* : 88, 89.
4. Ibid., 90.
later, but it must be borne in mind here that the thing granted to the prophets has been called guidance on the one hand and book (kitāb) on the other.

Together with this the fact has been mentioned that it was given to all the prophets. It is exactly as in the beginning of the Qur'ān; first the Qur'ān has been described as a book and then the name guidance has been given to it, and further in the chapter al-An'ām it has been stated:

"These are they whom God guided, so follow their guidance." 5 Thus it has been made clear that the real object of every prophet's advent whether he brought law or not, was the bringing of guidance and making his people follow it, which in other words, could be described as perfection and upliftment of humanity as God had promised in the beginning that, Surely there will come to you a guidance from Me. 6 It was, however, this guidance which He revealed to various prophets from time to time.

The real object of prophethood is purification

To understand the real object of prophethood and messembership it is enough for us to know what was the object of the advent of the Prophet Muḥammad. This has been mentioned in the Qur'ān at various places. For instance in the prayer of Abraham and Ishmael:

"Our Lord, and raise up in them a messenger from among them who shall recite to them Thy messages and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them." 7

5. The Qur'ān, 6 al-An'ām : 91.
7. Ibid., 2 al-Baqarah : 129.
And at another place in fulfilment of this prayer it has been stated:

"Even as We have sent among you, who recites to you Our messages and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the Wisdom."  

Again, in another chapter, after mentioning that God has decided to purify the believers from all defects, it has been stated:

"Certainly God conferred a favour on the believers when He raised among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting to them His messages and purifying them, and teaching them the Book and the Wisdom."  

Then in chapter al-Jumu‘ah, while referring to the universal and everlasting mission of the Prophet Muhammad, it has been declared:

"He it is Who raised among the illiterates a Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His messages and purifies them and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom—although they were before certainly in manifest error—and others from among them who have not yet joined them."  

It is, however, strange that at all these four places, the same object of his has been mentioned which includes (1) Recitation of God’s verses, (2) Teaching of the Book, (3) Teaching of Wisdom, and (4) Purification. In fact these are the four works which every prophet has been performing in his own way. As the former three points are a means for tazkiyyah-i nafs (self-purification), which in fact is the ultimate object of prophethood. I shall only discuss it here and leave the others for the second chapter.

Purification means perfection

What is meant by tazkiyyah or purification? There is a beauty in the Arabic language that the meaning of a word also contains a scientific significance. That is, the word possesses in itself a proof for its meaning. And this is so, exactly as every assertion and claim in the Qur‘ān is accompanied by a substantial argument. That is, very often the argument is not substantiated as such but it originates from, and is found in the claim itself as life is found in the body. Thus,
the distinction which the Qur'ān enjoys over other Divine scriptures is the distinction which the Arabic language enjoys over all other languages. It was for this reason that out of His perfect wisdom God selected the Arabic language for the revelation of the Qur'ān. Now the word *tazkiyyah* is derived from *zaka*, the root meaning of which is *it increases*. The famous lexicologist of the Qur'ān, Imām Rāghib, writes in his *al-Mufradāt*:

"The real significance of zakāt is the progress attained by Divine blessing (i.e., by the development of the faculties placed by God within man) which relates to the affairs of this world as well as to the hereafter, i.e., to man's physical as well as spiritual advancement. Thus it is said of the *zaka* of the crop when the increase and blessing is obtained by it . . . and from it is zakāt which a man takes out (of his wealth) as God's right for the needy, and giving it the name zakāt is because there is a hope for blessing in it or because it helps in the self-purification, i.e., in its growth by means of good works and blessing, or for both of them because they exist within it."

Thus the purification of the self (*tazkiyyah-i nafs*) in its original sense signifies the growth of the self, or in other words, its development and its acquisition of high rank and excellence. In fact the purification (*tazkiyyah*) includes both the aspects, i.e., the removal of the causes which stand in the way of growth of a thing and the acquisition of the qualities which would help in its progress. Unless defects are removed, the condition of growth can not exist, but the removal of defects alone is not enough unless such resources are brought about which can help man to progress. It is, however, a mistake to think that purification only means the removal of weakness and defects. A fine illustration of this point is that of a sown field. For the increase of the seed-produce the first thing which is essential is that the ground must be cleared of all defects, for instance its hardness should be removed, and stones, weeds, etc., should be picked out of it. But this alone is not enough. The ground must have the strength and resources which would let the seed grow and increase. For this reason the Qur'ān has compared the believers with seed-produce:

"Like seed-produce that puts forth its sprout, then strengthens it, so it becomes stout and stands firmly on its stem, delighting the sowers, that

He may enrage the disbelievers on account of them. God has promised such of them as believe and do good, forgiveness and great reward.”  

Here God by comparing the believers with seed-produce has mentioned two things. The first is maghfirah (forgiveness), the meaning of which is protection, i.e., protection from defects, and the second is the great reward, i.e., achievement of excellences. In short, the real meaning of tazkiyyah is to carry (a person or a thing) to perfection. Besides the testimony of the lexicon and the above references from the Qur’ān the same meaning is confirmed by other Qur’ānic verses as well, such as: He indeed is successful who causes it (nafs) to grow, and He indeed is successful who purifies himself. The word falāh signifies real success, as has been described in the beginning of the Qur’ān. After all, the fundamental principles of Islam have been mentioned along with the great principles of faith and righteous action; it has been stated about the righteous servants that These are on a right course from their Lord and these it is that are successful. That is, they would be successful in attaining to moral and spiritual excellences. The verse, he indeed is successful who causes (nafs) it to grow, has the same significance. That is anyone who purifies his self and helps it to reach to its perfection, he is the one who succeeds. Thus, to help men to reach the stage of self-purification (tazkiyyah-i nafs), which is synonymous with self-perfection (takmil-i nafs) is the real aim and purpose of prophethood.

The revelation of guidance is essential for the upliftment of humanity

To sum up, the revelation of some guidance is necessary, according to the Qur’ān, for the upliftment of humanity. Nobody can attain real perfection unless he is a follower of that guidance. All prophets of God brought guidance with them. So did the Prophet Muḥammad and Moses, and so did the prophets who appeared before Moses and the prophets who appeared among the Israelites after him: all of them brought guidance. The Word of God does not confine this universal principle to a few nations or tribes. It comprehends all the peoples

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13. Ibid., 91 al-Shams : 9.
15. Ibid., 2 al-Baqarah : 5.
of the world. As was promised with Adam that “Surely there will come to you a guidance from Me,” in a similar way it has been said in the Qur'ān that for every people a guide was sent, which means that the Divine law was not limited to the children of Israel or Ishmael, but that every nation had a bearer of guidance. The promise given was universal so it was universally fulfilled.

The most perfect and the last of all the guides is the Messenger Muhammad

But at the end of all came that perfect guide who was the first of all and the last. It has been mentioned in the Qur'ān:

“Certainly the first house appointed for men is the one at Bakkah (Makkah) blessed and a guidance for the nations.”

The word mubārak (blessed) in the Arabic language signifies the blessing which is never cut off. Thus in space and time this house spread its skirt far and wide and is a source of guidance for all the nations and men for ever. As this house is the first and the last, similarly the Prophet Muḥammad is the first Prophet and the last, as has been mentioned in a hadith, “I am the first Prophet in creation and the last in advent,” i.e., in creation I am the first prophet as the House of Ka‘bah is the first house appointed for men, and in advent I am the last, i.e., no prophet will be raised after him as Ka‘bah is the Qiblah appointed for me.

The conception of guidance is wider than that of Shari‘ah

This should also be borne in mind that the word guidance (hidāyah) has a wide significance and is not synonymous with law (shari‘ah). On the other hand, law is also a part of the same guidance, which was revealed more or less from time to time according to the needs. But the bringing of guidance is essential for every prophet being the chief object of the advent of the prophets. If we first look at the Qur'ān which could be a real guide to us in every matter because it is free from all alterations, substitutions and interpolations,

17. Ibid., 13 al-Ra‘d : 7.
19. Mubārak signifies the continuance for ever of the blessings which a thing possesses, or that from which extensive good flows. Imam ‘Allamah Abu ‘l Faḍl Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Mukarram, Lisān al-‘Arab.
we notice that the commands and prohibitions \((\text{awāmar wa nawāḥi})\), only form a small part of it, although every word of it is a source of guidance; therefore, the whole book is called \(\text{hudā}\). Commandments and prohibitions obviously are only a part of the book. No doubt God gave laws \((\text{shari'ah})\) also to the nations, as is stated in the Qur'ān: \textit{For every one of you We appointed a law and a way,\textsuperscript{20} but every prophet brings guidance (hidāyah) with him, whether he brings a law \((\text{shari'ah})\) or not. It is for this reason that in the Qur'ān, or for that matter in the authentic reports \((\text{hadīth})\), no distinction has been made between prophethood with a law and without a law. The same inference is also drawn from the verse: \textit{This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour to you\textsuperscript{21}} i.e., the law has been perfected as well as the guidance. Now in future neither would there be any alteration in the law nor would a new guidance be revealed for the upliftment of mankind. In view of this distinction no objection could even be raised about the meaning of the Qur'ānic verse where it is stated about the Torah that \textit{by it did the prophets judge for the Jews.\textsuperscript{22}} This only means that the judgment in the disputes among the Israelites was given according to the law of the Torah. But, as will be shown later, even alterations and changes in the law were also made by the prophets, because these codes were after all not perfect. At any rate giving of judgment according to the Torah does not mean that no guidance from God was revealed to these prophets. Such a conclusion is clearly opposed to the teaching of the Qur'ān.

\textbf{Prophethood is a gift and not an acquisition}

It is evident from the Qur'ān and the \textit{hadīth} that Muslim theologians are unanimous on the point that prophethood is a gift and not an acquisition \((\text{ikṭisāḥ})\). Nobody can acquire the office of prophethood by his effort. On the other hand, God, out of His bounty, whenever He wills, stations a person of his choice to this rank. In reply to the demand of the unbelievers that \textit{We will not follow till we are given the like of that which God's Messengers are given, the Qur'ān says, God best knows where to place His Message\textsuperscript{23} that is messengership is a

\textsuperscript{20} The Qur'ān, 5 \textit{al-Mā'īdah} : 48.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 5 \textit{al-Mā'īdah} : 3.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 5 \textit{al-Mā'īdah} : 44.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 6 \textit{al-An'ām} : 125.
favour of God and He knows best who is fit to receive it. Similarly, the following Qur'anic verse testifies the truth that the Divine revelation is granted only to the elect. Rūḥ (spirit) means the Divine revelation, not the soul which is given to every man. 24

"He makes the spirit to light by His command upon whom He pleases of His servants that he may warn (men) of the day of the meeting." 25

Similarly, the reports of the Prophet also confirm that prophethood is a gift and can not be realized by effort, as the Prophet is reported to have said, "I was prophet before the birth of Adam, or by way of creation I was the first among the prophets." 26

Thus to acquire prophethood by effort or by following some other person is against the plain teachings of all these Qur'anic verses and the reports of the Prophet.

A person who acquires an excellence by effort can not be called a prophet

After bearing this in mind it is easy to understand that prophethood is only conferred directly by God and what man realizes by his own effort or by following another person, however closely it may be to prophethood, cannot be called prophethood in reality. He who has been perfected and purified directly by the hand of God, is alone entitled to be called a prophet. All the prophets were called prophets in the sense that they were mediators between God and mankind, God made them perfect and stationed them at a place from where they could themselves make others perfect. And although at times one prophet after another might have appeared, or sometimes a prophet with another prophet might have been raised, yet one prophet had no share at all in conferring the office of prophethood on another. For it was essential that whoever was raised as prophet should reach the stage of prophetic perfection directly by the hand of God and not by following any other person. As for others, they should follow him in his footsteps and, by his care, attention and spiritual power,

24. The Qur'an, 40 al-Mu'min: 15.
should be able to reach the stage of self-purification. Their light is the light of their Master-prophet. The light which is a gift is genuine as the light of the sun but those who borrow it receive it in a reflection and their light is as the light of the moon; and as from this (reflected) light further light is not reflected, therefore such persons cannot be called prophets.

The Views of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad

Hadrat Ahmad’s belief that separate guidance was revealed to every prophet

“Thus I assure my opponents”, writes Hadrat Ahmad, Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement, “that Jesus Christ can never be a follower, although he, or rather the prophets, had faith in the truthfulness of the Prophet Muhammed; they were the followers of the guidance which was revealed to them and God had directly manifested Himself to them. It was never the case that, by following the Prophet Muhammed and by his spiritual teachings, they were made prophets, so that they may be called followers (ummatis). God had given them separate books and they were directed to follow and lead (according to the teachings of) these books as is witnessed by the Qur’ân.”

That the prophets’ self-purification was not the result of their efforts but was done by God’s hand

“Thus God’s purification,” writes Hadrat Ahmad at another place, “is also for making the man pure. As taking of repeated baths in a river removes all dirt from the body, similarly, those who only belong to God enter the river of His mercy by truly and faithfully submitting to Him and undoubtedly become pure too. But there is another community which like fish is born in this river and always lives in it; and cannot for a moment exist without it; they are the very people who are pure from their birth; sinlessness (ismat) is found in their nature. It is they who are called prophets and messengers.”

That prophets are impeccable (ma‘sum) in their nature

Again he writes: “Neither I nor any other person can claim to be impeccable (ma‘sim) after the prophets.” This reference clearly

28. _Sat Bachan_ (1st December, 1895), p. 86.
shows that, except the prophets who are born sinless by their nature, every other person can reach this stage only by effort. Thus any body who by way of acquisition (iktisāb) reaches this stage of impeccability which is the first step towards perfection or kamāl cannot be a prophet.

That the knowledge of God is attained only through prophets

"The question is", Ḥaḍrāt Aḥmad writes in Ḥaqiqat al-Waḥy, "what atonement Messiah offered for the attainment of spiritual excellences. For reaching God man stands in need of two things. Firstly, abstention from evil, secondly the acquisition of righteous actions. Mere refraining from evil is no virtue. The fact is that since man has been created both these powers exist in his nature. On the one side, physical passions drag him towards sin and, on the other, the fire of Divine love which is hidden in his nature burns the sins away as actual fire reduces straw into ashes. But the lighting of this spiritual fire that burns away the sins depends on Divine gnosis (ma' rifat ilāhī). Because one’s love of and attachment with everything is connected with its knowledge. You cannot love a thing, the beauty and goodness of which is not known to you. Thus, the knowledge of the goodness, beauty and elegance of God creates His love and the fire of this love burns away the sins. But this has been God’s practice that the common people get this knowledge through the prophets, and from their light they obtain light and whatever has been given to them they receive all by following them."

This clearly proves that, according to Ḥaḍrāt Aḥmad prophets are the only people who serve as means to help man to reach God or who are mediators between man and God for helping him to reach his destined perfection, and that the followers of prophets attain to that perfection, already possessed by the prophets, just by following them i.e., by acquisition (iktisāb). In other words, the prophet is like the sun, and this follower who has acquired perfection is like the moon. His light is not real but is only borrowed.

That nubuwwat of Israelite prophets was not the result of acquisition i.e. the result of following Moses

Again he writes in Ḥaqiqat al-Waḥy, "Although many prophets appeared among the Israelites their prophethood was not the result of

30. Ḥaqiqat al-Waḥy, (15th May 1907), pp. 59, 60.
following Moses. On the other hand, it was directly the gift (mauhibah) of God. The discipleship of Moses did not have the slightest part in it.”

Self-purification means man’s perfection

At another place in the same book he says: “And man’s highest effort is self-purification, which is the end of all devotion (sulāk). In other words, this is a death which destroys all the inner pollutions.”

The view of Shah Wali Allah that a prophet is one who makes a deficient person perfect, himself following no Imam

Hadrat Shāh Wālī Allāh writes in one of his books: “Similarly, people differ in their moral condition on which depends their happiness (sa‘ādat)...and in some people the moral condition is latent and its signs are manifested by them, but for its fuller expression they stand in need of an Imām for the betterment of this condition and according to this is the saying of God, the Most High: The oil whereof gives light though fire touches it not. Such people are called the forerunners from among them are the prophets. They can bring the excellences of this moral condition into action and can adopt its proper condition. Without the help of a leader and invitation from anyone they make the imperfect perfect and according to the nature in whatever way they act, their behaviour results into such a code that it remains with the people as a remembrance. They make it the way of their conduct.”

This clearly shows that prophets are those whose very nature is gifted with excellences from God and therefore they do not stand in need of any Imām, leader or guide.

The view of Imam Ibn Hazm

Imām Ibn Hazm writes:

“Thus it is correct that prophethood is within the possibility and it is the raising of a people who have been distinguished by God

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31. Haqiqat al-Wahy, 97 footnote.
32. Ibid., 99.
the Most High, with excellence not for any reason but because He wills it to be so. Thus God teaches them without being taught and without making them progress by stages and without their search for it and from among this kind is the vision (ru'yā) which comes true.”

This proves that learning without being taught is the condition of prophethood, which, in other words, is called ‘receiving without mediation,’ or a gift (mauhibah).

The view of Imam Fakhr al-Din al-Razi

Imām Rāzī divides all men into three classes, from among which the last class is of prophets about whom he writes:

“Those who are perfect in these two stations (i.e., knowledge and conduct — M. ‘Alî) and they have the power to cure the imperfect and can lift up the deficient from the depth of immaturity towards the height of perfection, they are the prophets (may the peace of God be upon them!).”

The view of al-Ghazali

Similarly is the opinion of Imām al-Ghazālī:

“With regard to the point whether messengership (risālah) is a matter of acquisition or is a Divine influence, I say let it be known that messengership is a heavenly influence, a Divine decree and a Godly gift. It can neither be acquired by effort nor by acquisition, God knows best where to place His messengership.”

Similarly, at another place, he writes:

“Prophets are a medium for the transmission of God’s command, as angel is a medium between the creation and the command. As by the mediation of the angel He revealed in every heaven its affair, similarly, through the mediation of a prophet, He revealed His affair

34. There is a revelation of Hazrat Mirzā Sāhib: “Every blessing proceeds from Muḥammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him, and blessed is the Master as well as the disciple.” In other words the Founder only learnt by discipleship.
35. Imām Ibn Hazm, Milāl wa ‘l-nahl.
36. Imām Fakhr al-Din Rāzī, Ma‘ālīb ‘Āliyah.
in every age. Thus the first revelation is measurement \((taqdir)\) and the second is obligation \((taklif)\).\(^{38}\)

Two conditions for a prophet: (1) For the purification and upliftment of humanity he should bring guidance from God. (2) Acquisition, education or anyone's discipleship should play no part in it.

The sum and substance of the whole discussion is that the real object of prophethood is to bring some guidance for the upliftment of humanity or for self-purification. A prophet serves as medium between God and His creation. The prophet's moral and spiritual excellence is a Divine favour \((mauhibah)\), but that of all other people is due to following the prophet, that is, by way of acquisition \((iktisâb)\). He receives his light directly from God, while other people receive their light from him, and whatever they receive is only the result of their discipleship. But prophets do not acquire their excellence by following others. Those who do so by following, are not in fact prophets. All these conclusions are confirmed by the Qur'ân, the Ḥadîth, and sayings of the Muslim Imâms and the writings of the Founder. Thus after full deliberations over the real aim and object of prophethood, we arrive at the conclusion that, according to the terminology of \(shari'ah\) about which the Qur'ân, the Ḥadîth and the whole ummah of Islam have unanimously agreed (and it should be remembered that ummah of Islam does not mean the common and illiterate people; to say this is rather a great audacity and impudence. The Founder himself is included in this ummah of Islam) only that person could be called a prophet who fulfils these two conditions: (1) he should bring some guidance from God for the perfection and (2) guidance should be the result of the gift of God and not the result of acquisition, i.e., by following somebody else. A person in whom these two conditions are not found the word prophet can not be applied to him in reality. To use a word by way of metaphor \((majâz)\) or simili \((isti'ârah)\) is another point; or in its broad literal sense the 'receiving of a name by a person is entirely a different thing which will be discussed at a later stage.

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CHAPTER II

PROPHETIC REVELATION AND ITS
DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

What is revelation?

I have explained before that a prophet and a messenger is, in fact, a medium between God and man and the real object of the institution of prophethood (mubuwwah) and messengership (risālah) is the purification or upliftment of humanity. In this chapter I should like to discuss that the gift of messengership and prophethood is granted to man in such a unique way that a clear difference could be marked between a prophet and a non-prophet. The real object of prophethood and messengership as we have seen before, is to communicate some guidance to men or, in other words, a prophet and messenger receives it from God and communicates it to other people. As far as the conveying of a message to other is concerned, it is quite simple to understand, for everybody knows how a man conveys his ideas to his fellow beings. The whole discussion, then, centres round the point how does a prophet himself receive guidance from God. A prophet is a human being and God the Most High is Unseen and Beyond of the Beyond, how could a man have access to His Creator and how could he get some instructions from Him? The way in which God speaks to men is given the name revelation (waḥy) in the religious history of the world. The same word has also been adopted by the Qur'ān:

“Say, I am only a mortal like you, it is revealed to me that your God is one God.”

Thus the distinction made here between an ordinary mortal and the Prophet Muḥammad is in the recipience of revelation. In other words, revelation is something which distinguishes the prophet from other people and it was through this that the Will of God was manifested to him as has been mentioned in the Qur'ān:

“I follow only that which is revealed to him.”

40. The Qur'ān, 18 al-Kahf : 110.
41. Ibid., 6 al-An'am : 50.
Different kinds of revelation

But, when we study the Qur'ān carefully, we discover that the word wahy has been used in the Qur'ān for other objects as well. At one place, referring to the earth, it has been said: as if the Lord had revealed to her that is, an inanimate object like earth could also receive God's revelation. At another place, it has been stated, and thy Lord revealed to the bee, and the revelation was: make hives and walk in the way of your Lord etc., and about the heaven it is mentioned: and (He) revealed in every heaven its affair, and about the angels: When thy Lord revealed to the angels I am with you.

Thus these four kinds of revelation are for non-human beings, but from among human beings non-prophets as well as prophets have been mentioned as recipients of revelation (wahy). Two instances of revelation to non-prophets have been clearly mentioned in the Qur'ān. Firstly, revelation towards the mother of Moses:

"And We revealed to Moses' mother, saying: Give him suck, then when thou fearest for him, cast him into the river and fear not, nor grieve; surely We shall bring him back to thee and make him one of the messengers".

At another place it has been stated:

"And when I revealed to the disciples, saying, Believe in Me and My messenger".

Here at both places is mentioned revelation towards human beings and in spite of receiving the revelation, the surest and clearest form of revelation indeed, they were not prophets, neither Moses' mother nor the disciples of Jesus. If we leave aside the word revelation (wahy), then God's speaking with Dhu-I-Qarnain, Mary and Luqmān has also been mentioned in the Qur'ān. Thus, if the revelation to earth is

42. The Qur'ān, 99 al-Zilzāl : 5.
43. Ibid., 16 al-Naḥl : 68.
44. Ibid., 41 Hā Mim : 12.
45. Ibid., 8 al-Inṣāf : 12.
46. Ibid., 28 al-Qāṣaṣ : 7.
47. Ibid., 5 al-Ma'īdah : 111.
48. Ibid., 18 al-Kahf : 86; 3 Al 'Imrān : 44; 31 Luqman : 12 respectively.
interpreted as the state in which the earth is, and revelation to heaven as measurement (taqdir) of heaven; and to the bee as its instinct, even then, among men, there are two kinds of revelation, one which is granted to prophets and the other to non-prophets. Thus, it is not acceptable in any way that a man becomes a prophet only by receiving revelation (waḥy). It is quite possible that a person receives a definite and clear waḥy and is enjoined to act upon it, and does so, but still he is not called a prophet.

**In how many ways does God speak to man?**

Thus, it is essential to know whether the Qur'ān has made any distinction between the revelation of a prophet and a non-prophet. For this, one should reflect over the verse in which God has told us, if He wants to speak to His servants, in what way He does so. There is limitation has also been imposed that God expresses His actual Will or speaks to His servants in three ways:

"And it is not vouchsafed to a mortal that God should speak to him, except by revelation, or from behind a veil or by sending a messenger and revealing by His permission what He pleases."\(^{49}\)

Commentators and theological leaders ('ulamā') have given different explanation of these three kinds. Because we are particularly concerned with the third kind of revelation, it is unnecessary to prolong the discussion about the other two.

The primary significance of the word waḥy is, however, a hasty suggestion, therefore in illā waḥy-an (except by revelation) the word waḥy signifies infusing of an idea into the heart, which is technically called minor revelation (waḥy khaft), for the speaking of God in waḥy khafti is not done in a clear manner but by a hasty suggestion or by infusing something into the heart. As the Prophet has also said:

"The Holy Spirit has inspired (this) into my heart."\(^{50}\)

The second mode of God's speaking to man is said to be from behind a veil (min warā'i ḥijāb) which in fact signifies dream (ru'ya) because dream stands in need of interpretation. This includes vision (kashf) also as it resembles dream, the difference being in clarity alone. In this is included that state (of trance) also in which voices are heard.

\(^{49}\) The Qur'ān, 42 al-Shūrā : 51.

\(^{50}\) Abū 'Abd al-Rahmān Ahmad al-Nasā'i, Sunan al-Nasā'i.
or uttered or in which a thing may appear in a personified form, as, for instance, some writing or a voice. In all these states the angel i.e., Gabriel, does not bring a revelation in a particular shape. On the contrary, its mention has been made in the third kind where it has been declared:

"Or by sending a messenger and revealing by His permission what He pleases."

This is that form in which God sends His special messenger Gabriel with His kalām so that he may recite it to His messenger. This is the revelation that is recited in words (waḥy matlūw) to the prophet, which Gabriel with the protection of angels brings down on the messengers. It is the highest and most developed form of revelation, which can remove the errors of all kinds of revelation because God makes special arrangements for its protection. Accordingly al-Rāghib writes in the explanation of this:

"The coming of Gabriel with a particular message proves God's saying or He sends a messenger and He reveals."

And this has also been written in its explanation:

"A kind of revelation is through the agency of Gabriel, who is made present and whose person is seen and whose message is heard, such as the communicating of the message of Gabriel to the Prophet in a particular form."

The Qur'anic Revelation was by the descent of Gabriel

I should like to quote the testimony of the Qur'ān, before presenting the testimony of the continuous authentic Tradition, on the point that the whole of the Qur'ān was revealed to the Prophet through the agency of Gabriel. It has been mentioned:

"Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel — for surely he revealed it to the heart by God's command."

That is to say that it is Gabriel who has brought down the Qur'ān upon the Prophet's heart. Similar in meaning are these words of the Qur'ān, where it is stated:

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52. Ibid.
"The Faithful spirit has brought (i.e. the Qur'an) on thy heart."\textsuperscript{54}

By faithful spirit is meant here Gabriel. These two places in the Qur'an definitely prove that the Qur'an has been brought down to the Prophet by Gabriel. And the whole of it was revealed in the same manner, that is, by Gabriel, or in this third form (by sending a messenger and revealing by His permission). In other words, all the revelation of the Prophet found in the Qur'an falls under the category which comes down by sending a messenger and is not of the other two kinds (i.e., hasty suggestion or from behind a veil). This is, however, an accepted fact that before his advent the Prophet Muḥammad saw various dreams and voice of inspirations (ilhāms) reached his ears, as will be shown by Traditions, and then he was given minor revelation (wahy khaft), but the Qur'ānic revelation was a special kind of revelation, which was given to him by sending a messenger through the agency of Gabriel and there was no other kind of revelation (wahy) found in the Qur'an.

Gabriel brought revelation to all the prophets

The next question which arises here is whether the descent of Gabriel was only peculiar to the Prophet or other prophets had also revelation of the same kind, although there might be a difference in power and excellence. This is an established fact among Muslims that it was only Gabriel who descended on all the prophets with prophetic revelations as has been mentioned by Imām Rāzī under the verse, "Surely it is the word of an honoured Messenger."\textsuperscript{55}

"He is the messenger Gabriel and there is no doubt about it that he is a messenger towards the prophets."\textsuperscript{56}

The Qur'an itself is clear on this point, where it says:

"Surely We have revealed to thee as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him, and We revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and Jesus and Job and Aaron and Solomon, and We gave to David a scripture. And (We sent) messengers We have mentioned to thee before and messengers We have not mentioned to thee. And to Moses God addressed His word, speaking (to him), (We sent) messengers, bearers of good news and

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 25 al-Shu'ara : 193-4.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., 69 al-Hāqqah : 40 ; 81 al-Takhir : 19.
\textsuperscript{56} Imām Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr.
as warners, so that the people may have no plea against God after the (coming of) messengers.”

Now these verses show that God has declared the revelation of the Prophet Muḥammad to be of the same nature and form as was given to Noah and the prophets who appeared after him. But as there was mention, in the Qur’ān, of the revelation to non-prophets as well, such as “We revealed to Moses’ Mother” or when I revealed to the disciples,” therefore, the word revelation (waḥy) alone could not be a sign of distinction between a prophet and a non-prophet. But, after mentioning this peculiarity that the Prophet Muḥammad’s revelation was of the same kind which was granted to Noah and other prophets, there has not been mentioned a single name of a non-prophet from among the names of those who appeared after Noah. However, those who have made a distinction among prophets with a code (tashrīʿ) and without a code (ghair tashrīʿ) will find that such a distinction has not at all been accepted here. All the prophets received revelation of the same kind. The type of revelation which was granted to Noah was granted to Abraham, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon, Jonah and Jesus, my peace and blessings of God be upon all of them. It has also been stated that God has not mentioned all the messengers, some have been and some not. Thus it was shown in this way that the revelation of all the prophets was of one kind. And as the Qur’ān has pointed out this peculiarity about the revelation of the Prophet Muḥammad that his revelation was sent down through the agency of the Angel Gabriel, therefore, we come to the conclusion that the difference between the revelation of a prophet is this, that upon non-prophets Gabriel does not come with revelation. And the prophet’s revelation that is recited (waḥy matluww) which is called his book (kitāb) and which is given to him as basis for the guidance of men, is the same revelation that is brought down upon him through the agency of Gabriel. Thus, this is the only mark of distinction which makes the revelation of a prophet different from that of a non-prophet.

Imām Bukhārī has pointed out this fact in the beginning of his collection with a chapter on revelation entitled:

58. Ibid., 28 Qaṣaṣ : 7.
59. Ibid., 5 al-Ma‘īdah : 111.
"How revelation began to the Messenger of Allāh, peace and blessings of God be upon him."

This was immediately followed by the same verse of the Qur'ān:

"And the word of God: 'We have revealed to thee as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him.'" 60

Imām Bukhārī has shown, by putting this verse in the title, of the Prophet's special revelation viz., the revelation of the Qur'ān, about which he is going to deal in this chapter, is of the same kind of revelation which was granted to all the prophets. In this manner, in the very beginning of his collection he has made a clear distinction between the revelation of a prophet and a non-prophet and he has declared the revelation of the prophets as of one kind.

The Prophet's revelation before his Advent

Although there are many reports which show that it was only Gabriel who descended with Qur'ānic revelation, here we shall only quote a few such reports from al-Saḥīḥ of Bukhārī and al-Muslim. First of all, the hadith worth mentioning and which, in fact, decides about the nature of Prophetic revelation, is that unanimously accepted long tradition, narrated by 'Ā'ishah which starts with these words:

"The first revelation (waḥy) that was granted to the Messenger of God (peace and blessings of God be upon him!) was the true dream in a state of sleep, so that he never saw a dream but the truth of it shone like the dawn of the morning." 61

Here 'Ā'ishah, the Truthful, gives the name (waḥy) to true dreams which the Prophet Muḥammad saw before his advent. Although this was a revelation but not the Prophetic revelation which brings guidance to the world, therefore, inspite of this revelation, he was not raised to the status of prophethood. Neither is this revelation a part of the Qur'ān which clearly shows that all the revelation of the Prophet was not even of one kind, and the revelation the name of which is book (kitāb) and guidance (hidāyah) was a special waḥy revealed in a special way. Otherwise, how is it

60. The Qur'ān, 4 al-Nisa' : 163.
possible that, in spite of this 

possible that, in spite of this waḥy in the form of true dreams which appeared to have continued for a long time, neither did he consider himself to be a prophet nor the one appointed by God (māmūr) nor did any part of this revelation find its way in the Qur‘ān? Similarly, it has been mentioned in a report that before and after his advent the Prophet saw light and heard voices while he was awake and that stones greeted him. Obviously, these were also visions (mukāshfāt) and inspirations (ilhāmāt) but neither did these inspirations find place in the Qur‘ān nor on account of these did he regard himself to be prophet and the appointed one of God (māmūr).

The great revolution wrought by the Prophetic Revelation

After this ‘Ā‘ishah narrates that when solitude became dear to him and he used to seclude himself in the cave of Hirā, and therein he devoted himself to Divine worship for several nights before he came back to his family and took provision for himself and he continued to behave in a similar way until the Truth (i.e., Revelation brought by the Angel Gabriel) came to him while he was in the cave of Hirā. So the angel came to him and said, ‘Read’.

To make a distinction of this Prophetic revelation from the other, here it has been given the name al-Haqq (the Truth) and this is the revelation which is brought by Gabriel, as is obvious from the words “the Angel came”. It has been unanimously accepted that this waḥy is the first revelation; was the revelation which was first brought by Gabriel. With this is produced a great revolution in the life of the Prophet. No doubt, before this, he had dreams and inspirations but the coming of this revelation to him brought on him a heavy load of responsibility, so much so that he gave expression to the consciousness of this great responsibility in the words, laqad khashītu ‘alā nafsī (I fear for myself). This fear was due to this great task which was assigned to him and for which one person alone would have felt worried that perhaps he could not bear all this burden and it might cost him his life or raise such an opposition as might result in the end of his life. In any case, he was neither told in this revelation that he was a prophet, nor that he should invite people nor that a law (shari‘ah) would be revealed to him nor that he was raised for the whole world, nor that he was appointed for the reformation of the people. There was neither abundance of revelation nor warning
or good news of great events concerning nations but it was however, such a clear and distinguishing light, such a forceful voice, it carried such an effect with it and opened such doors of knowledge and made such disclosures, that he understood all this only from these five short verses:

“Read in the name of the Lord Who creates.
Create man from a clot,
Read and thy Lord is most Generous, Who taught by the pen;
Taught man what he knew not.”

With these few words, everything was disclosed to him. He knew as well that he had been raised for the reformation of mankind and that he had been sent to the whole of the world. It was only because of this that he said khashitu ‘alā nafsi i.e., I fear for myself. In other words, he felt this burden so heavy that he feared for his life. And this is not so surprising. The responsibility of prophethood is not a small thing. When Moses was granted this office, he requested God:

“And give to me a helper from my family.”

The circle of Moses’ prophethood as compared with that of the Prophet Muḥammad was limited. The Mosaic shari‘ah (Law) as compared with this shari‘ah was inferior, for it was confined to timely and national needs and still there were prophets who were to come for its completion. But for the Prophet Muḥammad, the whole burden was laid on his person alone. Everything was disclosed to him, that he was the last brick of the palace of prophethood, and had been raised for its completion and perfection. The black and the white were his nation; he was raised to the whole of mankind. To this effect a tradition has been mentioned in Sahih al-Bukhārī which says:

“I said, ‘O people, I am a Messenger of God to you all’; but you said: “You tell a lie”, but Abū Bakr said: “You are truthful.”

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63. Ibid., 20 Ta Ḥa : 29.
64. Sahih al-Bukhārī, Kitab al-Tafsir.
Prophehood in Islam

Obviously this hadith refers to Abū Bakr being the first believer because he did not doubt for a moment after listening to the Prophetic message. This incident, therefore, is of the early days of prophethood. Even at that time the Prophet knew that he was appointed for all men.

To raise a person to the office of prophet Gabriel must bring revelation to him

Then in this tradition of ‘Ā’ishah it has been mentioned that Khadijah took the Prophet to Waraqa ibn Naufal, who said after hearing all that:

“This is the Nāmūs whom God sent down upon Moses; would that I were a young man of this time! would that I were alive when the people would expel thee! The Messenger of God (peace and the blessings of God be upon him!) said, Would they expel me?” He said, ‘Yes’; never has a man appeared with the like of what thou hast brought but he has been held in enmity, and if thy time finds me alive, I shall help thee with the fullest help.’”

Thus, from this Gabrielic message which mentioned nothing about the office (mansāb) of prophethood, not only did the Prophet understand to which rank he was raised, but also a person from the people of the Book understood that the same angel Gabriel descended on him who had come to Moses. Although Waraqa was a Christian, his special mention of Moses shows that the Jews and the Christians alike waited for the coming of the like of Mūsā. And Waraqa understood this, too, that because he was raised to the station (maqām) of prophethood, the practice of God with prophets had been that they were held in opposition in the beginning, were persecuted, were turned out of their homes and had to undergo severe afflictions, therefore he would be treated in the same way. In short, the Prophet received revelation also before but this one Gabrielic message decided the issue for him that he was being raised for the reformation of the people and was being appointed to the station of prophethood. Thus, this hadīth also conclusively proves that the bringing of revelation by Gabriel is essential before a person is raised to the dignity of prophethood. And on whosoever Gabriel

65. Sahih al-Bukhari 1:3.
brings divine revelation he would be raised to the rank of prophethood from the day Gabriel descends on him with revelation.

It has been mentioned in another report as well that it was Gabriel alone who brought the Qur'ānic revelation on him and he did not bring anything new in the form of revelation except the revelation of the Qur'ān. The report which is found in al-Saḥīḥ of Bukhārī is as follows:

"Ibn 'Abbās said that the Messenger of Allāh was the most generous of the men, and he was the most generous that he could be in Ramaḍān, when Gabriel used to meet him and he (Gabriel) met him during every night of Ramaḍān and read with him the Qur'ān." 66

Special descent of Gabriel for the revelation of the prophets

At this place I do not want to enter into discussion as to what was the actual state of Gabrielic descent on him when he came with the revelation and to what kind of Gabrielic influence belonged his visions and inner revelation (wahy khaft) etc., or as the result of what type of Gabrielic influence is the revelation from God granted to non-prophets. This is entirely a separate discussion. But there is no doubt about it that the whole ummah has agreed on this, and the Qur'ān and hadith also confirm it, that Gabriel's bringing of revelation to the prophets of God, which is called Prophetic revelation (wahy nubuwwah) is a special descent in which none of the non-prophets can share. There is no doubt about it that every revelation flows from Gabrielic influence because the phenomenon of revelation or divine communication or spiritual life of the world has been associated with Gabriel. But there is a clear distinction between these Gabrielic influences and the descent of Gabriel with Prophetic revelation. We observe this clear distinction in the life of the Prophet. Although previously he did receive revelation in the form of various dreams (ru'yā sāliḥah) and some inspirations (ilhāmāt) it was only the descent of Gabriel that opened a new world before him. This Gabrielic descent, in other words, set before him an abridged plan for the reformation of the whole world with the details of which he was going to be acquainted by stages, because guidance (hidāyah) and law (shari'ah) have to be revealed to him by degrees. This Gabrielic descent made

it quite clear to him that he was appointed for the guidance of the world. But, as the real state of this descent could have only been known to his blessed heart, therefore about this descent we can only judge by the outward signs that it was indeed a special descent. About this the mujaddid of the present age, Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad has also expressed his opinion. Rejecting the views of those who thought that Gabriel had a special dealing with Jesus Christ because he stayed with him from his childhood till his last time he writes in Āinah Kamālāt-ī Islām:

“Such was the belief of these maulawīs that from the time Gabriel descended from heaven with revelation on the Prophets and after transmitting the revelation he would go back to heavens without delay. Now, contrary to this belief, a new belief about Jesus Christ was fabricated that for revelation Gabriel did not go to heaven. Instead the revelation fell down from above and Gabriel was never used to part from him even for the fraction of a moment. Gabriel saw the face of heaven on the day when Jesus Christ ascended to heaven, otherwise before that, he stayed constantly on earth for thirty-three years and never separated from Jesus Christ for a moment and that he continued to communicate revelation to him for thirty-three years and the manner of revelation too was different from that of all the Prophets. Because Buḥārī in his Sahīḥ, and similarly Ābū Dāwūd, Tirmizi, Ibn Mājah and Muslim have also agreed on this that the descent of Gabriel from heaven with revelation on the Prophet used to be from time to time (i.e. the manifestation tajāllī) which we have already explained.” 67

Thus in every way it is proved that there is not the least shadow of doubt in it that for the wavy matluww of the prophets there is a special descent of Gabriel, the right condition of which I shall explain later. For a non-prophet, that is for the revelation of a follower, there is no such descent. This is a distinctive sign by which a line can be drawn between the revelation of a prophet and that of a follower of the prophet.

The revelation of Mary was not Prophetic revelation

A question will now be raised here that when Gabriel does not descend with revelation on a non-prophet, what is the meaning of the following verses of the Qurʾān about Mary:

Then We sent to her Our spirit (rūhanā) and it appeared to her as a well-made man. She said: I flee for refuge from thee to the Beneficent, if thou art one guarding against evil. He said: I am only bearer of a message of the Lord: That I will give thee a pure boy. She said: How can I have a son and no mortal has yet touched me nor I have been unchaste? He said: So (it will be). Thy Lord says: it is easy to Me: and that We may make him a sign to men and a mercy from Us. And it is a matter decreed.”  

Now generally by the words “Our spirit” rūhanā is meant al-Rūh al-Amīn (The faithful spirit) i.e., Gabriel. Therefore, the objection is raised that Mary was not a prophetess but still Gabriel descended on her and even spoke to her, which means that the descent of Gabriel with revelation did not remain confined to the prophets and that he could also descend on a non-prophet i.e., a follower and communicate with her.

It should be understood here first of all, what is the meaning of Our spirit (rūhanā). I quote another verse of the Qur’ān, which sheds light on this. As there is a mention of the coming of Our spirit to Mary here, similarly in the other verse the words used for Messiah have been rūhan min-hu (a spirit from Him):

“The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is only a messenger of God and His word which He communicated to Mary and a spirit from Him.”

The rūh also signifies inspiration or Divine revelation as is mentioned in the Qur’ān:

“And thus did We reveal to thee an inspired Book (rūh) by Our command.”

It is obvious that rūh here means revelation. Now, in the story of Mary and the Messiah, it is mentioned at one place that the Messiah is a spirit from Him and there is only one way of reconciling these two statements that rūh should be taken to mean Divine revelation. This is correct that Divine revelation came to Mary and this is

69. Ibid., 4 al-Nisa’: 171.
70. Ibid., 42 al-Shūrā : 52.
also correct that the Messiah was good news (b̲iš̲h̲ārat) or a word from God. Thus in this case, the meaning of arsalnā ilaihā rūḥānā (We sent to her Our spirit)⁷¹ would be that God sent His revelation to Mary and that revelation appeared to Mary in a vision in the form of a person.

**The coming of Gabriel without revelation or his descent upon non-prophets**

Even if it is admitted that Our spirit (rūḥānā) means Gabriel, still it does not make any difference. The peculiarity of Prophetic revelation which I have pointed out does not mean that the descent of Gabriel is not absolutely possible without the transmission of Prophetic revelation; because this is generally acknowledged that the descent of Gabriel also occurs for the support of the believers. When in vision a person can see God, why should the seeing of Gabriel be an impossibility? If in a vision a man can talk with God, why cannot he do so with Gabriel? In the case of Mary, the appearance of Gabriel is just a vision or mukāshafah in which an angel becomes personified and communicates with Mary. This vision is quite a different matter. It is nowhere written in the Qur’ān that Gabriel descended on Mary with the Divine revelation. Our discussion concerning Prophetic revelation is only this that when Gabriel descends with Divine revelation, this descent of his is only specified for the prophets. The revelation which comes down upon non-prophets and a follower is not brought by the agency of Gabriel, but it belongs to one of the kinds of revelation about which the reference to the Qur’ānic verse has already been made:

"And it is not vouchsafed to a mortal that God should speak to him, except by revelation or from behind a veil."⁷²

The ordinary descent of Gabriel could even take place for the support of the believers, as has been mentioned in the Qur’ān that God strengthened them with a spirit from Himself.⁷³ In the hadith, it has been plainly stated that the Prophet had told Hassān ibn Thābit:

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72. Ibid., 42 al-Shūra : 51.
73. Ibid., 58 al-Mujadilah : 22.
"Reply to the satire of the unbelievers and Gabriel is with you."

Even Gabriel's talking with the Prophet is established from the authentic reports, but that has not formed a part of the Qur'ān because in fact that descent was not with a revelation. The following report from Sahih al-Bukhari will illustrate this point:

"Abū Hurairah reported that one day the Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him!) was sitting outside among the people, when a man came to him and said: What is faith? He (the Prophet) said: The faith is that you should believe in God and His angels and His meeting and His Messengers and that you should believe in life after death."  

The Prophet was then asked what was Islam, what was ihsan (goodness) and when is the Hour to come? After hearing the replies of the Prophet, the man left. The Prophet said: This was Gabriel who came to teach people their religion.

In spite of the appearance of Gabriel and in spite of his conversation with the Prophet it was not the coming of Gabriel with revelation. Therefore, it has not become a part of the Qur'ān. Similarly, it occurs in another report, which is unanimously accepted, that 'Ā'ishah asked the Prophet whether he had spent any day more troublesome than the day of the battle of Uḥud. The Prophet said that the day when he wanted to talk to 'Abdiyalail (a leader from Ta'if) and he rejected, it was a grievous day for him. He returned and was extremely grieved. Then he stayed in Qarn Thālib.

"I suddenly saw, it is thus reported from the Prophet, that there was a cloud which had overshadowed me. So I looked and there was Gabriel in it. He called me and said: O Muḥammad, God has heard the saying of your people and whatever they have done to you and He has sent the angel of the mountains towards you so that you may command him in whatever way you like. Then I was called by the angel of the mountains, he greeted me and said: O Muḥammad, God has heard what your people have said and I am the angel of the mountains and if you like then command me so that I throw on them

75. Sahih al-Bukhari, 2: 73.
akhshabain (two rugged mountains). The Messenger, (peace and blessings of God be upon him,) said: but I hope that God will raise from the backs (progeny) of these people those who will serve God and will not associate anything with Him.”

How generous was he, “the Mercy to the nations of the world!” That was the most painful experience of his life which he remembered and which he had at the hands of his people. Its wounds were still fresh and he was yet overpowered by its grief and had hardly time to breathe after escaping from the persecution of his people. But he never thought that his people should be punished. Even there was an external sign (for their destruction) but he still said that he did not like them to be destroyed. And he believed that from their generations good people would be raised. What a great faith had he that the message he brought would necessarily succeed in the world. It is clearly established by this hadith that Gabriel talked with him and even went to the extent of saying that God had told him so, and undoubtedly we accept it also a kind of the revelation of the Prophet; but this descent of Gabriel was not with the proper Divine revelation. Therefore, we do not find any part of it in the Qur’ān. Similarly, there are many other examples like that in the traditions of the Prophet. In the report about his Ascension (mi’rāj) Gabriel’s keeping company with him and talking to him is mentioned. Again, at the time of the battle of al-Ahzāb (the Allies) when the Prophet wanted to disarm himself, Gabriel appeared and talked with him. Furthermore, there is a hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari that a person asked him about the signs of the Last Hour etc., and the Prophet said:

*Gabriel has just informed me about these things,* though none of these things have been mentioned in the Qur’ān. Therefore it was also an inner revelation (*wahy khaft*).

Gabriel’s company with the Prophet before his call

Besides, this is also an acknowledged fact that even before his advent, the angels remained in the company of the Prophet, and, in fact, they should be with every prophet. When God, from the very beginning makes a prophet such that he is protected from every kind of evil and for the obtainment of sinlessness (*ismat*) he does not

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77. Sahih al-Bukhari, 1 : 1.
stand in need of acquisition (iktisāb), rather from the time of his birth angels are his protector — though his raising to the status of prophet- hood and his appointment for the call to the people takes place at a later stage — it has to be admitted, then, that the angels of goodness or the Holy Spirit i.e., the Gabrielic influences must necessarily accompany him.

"At last we end this subject", writes the Founder "by giving a few quotations, which would show that it was not the belief of the sages of yore that Holy Spirit used to descend on the Prophet at special occasions and that at other times the Prophet was entirely deprived of him. From among these references is one which is found on page 42 of Madāraj al-Nubuwah by Sheikh 'Abd al-Haq of Delhi, the essence of which is that angels of revelation were permanent companions of the Prophet.........Thus Isrā'īl stayed with the Prophet always. This was the condition of the Prophet till he completed his eleventh year. But Isrā'īl did not put any revelation to the heart of the Prophet except a word or two. Similarly, Michael also remained with the Prophet. And then Gabriel was commanded to stay in the company of the Prophet for full twenty-nine years before the revelation. After this the Prophetic revelation started".

**Further clarification about prophetic revelation from hadith**

In short, Prophetic revelation is a particular descent of Gabriel, which takes place with the Divine communication so that it may be conveyed to the person who has been raised to the status of prophet- hood. Though it has been clearly established that all the Qur'ānic revelation was owing to this descent of Gabriel, it is quite possible that somebody may think that in a tradition of Sahih al-Bukhari the coming of revelation has been mentioned in a different way:

"It is reported from 'Ā'ishah, the mother of the believers, that Hārith, son of Highm, enquired of the Messenger (may peace and blessings of God be upon him !) how revelation came to him. He replied: it comes to me sometimes as the ringing of a bell and this is hardest on me; then he leaves me and I remember from what he says; and sometimes the angel comes in the shape of a man and he talks to me and I remember what he says."

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Now this tradition does not show that the first kind of revelation came without the agency of an angel. In this case also the angel brought the message to him. Only its nature made it a heavier task for the Prophet to receive it. The words *I remember from him what he says* show that it was from the angel that the Prophet received this message to remember. In fact, by the mention of this *ḥadīth*, ‘Ā’ishah means to point out the severeness of the experience of the Prophet at the time of the revelation. After the question of Hārith and its reply by the Prophet she says:

"I saw revelation coming down upon him in the severest cold and when that condition was over, perspiration ran down his forehead."  

There are other traditions which show that his condition was completely changed at the time of the descent of revelation. A companion has related that he was sitting in such a position that his leg happened to be under the thigh of the Prophet when revelation came down upon him, and the companion felt as if his leg would be crushed under the weight."  

In short the apparent sign of the Prophetic revelation was that it was very severe in its nature. But at the occasion of inner revelation (*wahy khafr*) or at the time of meeting Gabriel, as is mentioned in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Kitāb al-Imān*, the Prophet’s condition was not much changed. However, the condition of revelation in the form of the ringing of a bell is also the form of revelation which was accompanied by the descent of the angel, and not without him.

**The revelation of Moses was also the result of the descent of Gabriel**

It seems also important to remove another doubt here about the revelation of Moses, whether or not it was a different type of revelation. Though I have already shown it from the Qur’ān that the Prophet Muḥammad’s revelation was similar to the revelation of other prophets and that the names of several prophets have been mentioned at that place  

but as the words about Moses have been *wa kallam allāhu Mūsā taklīmā i.e., and to Moses God addressed His*  

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81. Ibid.
82. The Qur’ān, 4 al-Nisā' : 163.
word, speaking (to him)\(^{83}\) which have been interpreted by some people that, as compared with other prophets, it was God Himself Who spoke to Moses. This is a great misunderstanding about the divine revelation. *Wahy* (revelation) is another name for the communication of God to man, which, according to the Qur'ān, takes place in three ways so much so that to inform of a certain matter in a dream is also a communication of God. But the highest manifestation of revelation is that which comes “by sending a messenger,”\(^{84}\) the way in which the Qur'ān was revealed. This is the most superior form of revelation. If Moses had experienced the highest manifestation of God and had been entrusted with a great message, as we all believe, he could have experienced it in the same way. A clear testimony to this fact has been given in the saying of ‘Ā’ishah where Waraqa said:

“This is the Nāmūs whom God sent down upon Moses.”\(^{85}\)

This clearly shows that it was Gabriel, who brought revelation to Moses as well. There is a special reason why God has made the descent of Gabriel an essential condition for Prophetic revelation and this point will be soon discussed.

The testimony of Hadrat Ahmad that there can be no prophet without the descent of Gabriel and there can be no descent of Gabriel with Prophetic revelation on a follower

It is acknowledged among Muslims that Gabriel descends on prophets with Prophetic revelation but in the case of a non-prophet or a follower this does not happen. I have quoted before a reference from *Imām* Rāzī. Below I give a few references from *Hadrat* ʿAḥmad’s writings:

Firstly: “And how was it possible that any prophet could come after the *khatam al-Nabiyyin* in the complete and perfect sense, which is one of the conditions of perfect prophethood (*nubuwat-i-tāmmah*). Is it not necessary that the perfect prophethood of such a prophet should contain the essential requisites of revelation and the descent of Gabriel? Because according to the express teachings of the Qur'ān, a prophet is one who has received the commands and creeds of faith through Gabriel. But a seal has been set on the Prophetic revelation

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83. The Qur'ān, 4: 164
84. Ibid., 42 al- ʿShūrā : 51.
for the last thirteen hundred years. Would this seal be broken then?"\textsuperscript{86}

This reference proves both the points:

1. Prophethood cannot be established without the descent of Gabriel with revelation and nobody can be called a prophet who does not learn the knowledge of religion by Gabriel. The Qur'ān has been declared a witness over this classification.

2. On a follower the descent of Gabriel with revelation is completely forbidden. These are the two points which distinguish a follower from a prophet. There can be no prophet unless Gabriel descends on him with revelation and on a non-prophet or a follower Gabriel cannot bring revelation. This is a definite and sure sign of Prophetic revelation.

\textit{Secondly}: "But the Messiah, son of Mary to whom Evangel was given and with whom the descent of Gabriel was considered an essential requisite, cannot become a follower in any way."\textsuperscript{87}

\textit{Thirdly}: No messenger comes to the world as a follower (\textit{ummati}) and a sub-ordinate (\textit{maḥkūm}). On the other hand he is a master (\textit{mutā}) and only follows such of his revelation which descends on him through the mediation of Gabriel."\textsuperscript{88}

\textit{Fourthly}: "Every wise person can understand that if God the Most High is true to His Promise, and the promise which has been given in the verse \textit{Khātam al-Nibiyīn} and whatever has been made explicit in the Traditions, that, after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad, Gabriel has been for ever prevented from bringing down Prophetic revelation, if all these things are true and correct then no one can ever come in the capacity of a messenger after our Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him)."\textsuperscript{89}

\textit{Fifthly}: "As it is impossible that there should be no light with the rising of the sun, similarly, it is quite impossible that a messenger

\textsuperscript{86} Izālah Auhām (3rd September 1891), p. 575.

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., p. 577.

\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., p. 570.

\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., p. 817.
should come for the reformation of mankind and there should be no divine communication and Gabriel with him."^{90}

"And, for the teaching and information of the messengers, the practice of God has been from the beginning that they are taught through the mediation of Gabriel and by means of the descent of Divine verses and the words of the Merciful."^{91}

Sixthly : "It is included in the true significance of the office of a Messenger that he should obtain the knowledge of spiritual sciences through Gabriel and it has been proved just now that the apostolic revelation (waḥy risālat) has been cut off (for ever) till the day of judgment."^{92}

Seventhly : "The Holy Qurʾān does not permit the coming of another messenger, whether new or old, after the Kḥātam al-Nabīyyīn, because a messenger learns the knowledge of faith through the mediation of Gabriel and the door of the descent of Gabriel with apostolic revelation has been shut. And this is also an impossibility, that a messenger should come in the world but should have no apostolic revelation with him."^{93}

Eighthly : In the Āʿinah Kamālāt Islām, where the Founder has admitted the coming of Gabriel to the believers for their support, he has also pointed out that the descent of Gabriel with revelation was only peculiar to prophets. Thus he writes:

"Bukhārī in his al-Saḥīḥ and similarly, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmizi, Ibn Mājah and Muslim have all agreed on the point that the descent of Gabriel from heaven with Revelation on prophets takes place from time to time."^{94}

Ninthly : "But those who bring Jesus back to the world again, believe that he would normally appear with his prophethood and continuously for forty-five years Gabriel would descend on him with prophetic revelation (waḥy nubuwwat)."^{95}

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90. Izālah Auhām (8rd September 1891 ), p. 578.
91. Ibid., p. 584.
93. Ibid., p. 761.
94. Āʿinah Kamālāt Islām (26th February 1898) p. 106.
95. Tuḥṣah Golarwiyyah (1st September 1902 ) p. 88.
Tenthly: "If in fact the Messiah came down to earth and for forty-five years Gabriel continued to descend on him with Prophetic revelation, then, what would be left, according to this belief, of the religion of Islam? And would it not be a stigma on the finality of prophethood (Khātm-i-Nubuwwat) and the finality of the Qur‘ānic revelation?" 96

These ten references are enough to prove that a line of demarcation or distinction between a prophet and a follower, is that the revelation to the prophet comes by the agency of Gabriel. He cannot be a prophet unless Gabriel descends on him with revelation. The coming of Gabriel with revelation to a non-prophet or a follower is absolutely forbidden. With the finality of prophethood, the door of the descent of Gabriel with apostolic and Prophetic revelation has been closed for ever. On these two points the Qur‘ān and the authentic Traditions and the sayings of the Muslim divines and Ḥaḍrat Mirzā Ghulām ʿAḥmad fully agree.

The second distinction: a prophet follows his own revelation

Thus, the first distinguishing mark between the revelation of a prophet and a non-prophet has been established and anyone who respects the Qur‘ān, Ḥadīth and the unanimity of ummat (ijmā‘ ummat) cannot escape such a plain and perceptible conclusion. Now I bring forward another distinctive feature of the revelation of a prophet from that of a non-prophet. A messenger or a prophet, first of all and above all, is only a follower of his own revelation. If he accepts the other revelations he does it only because his own revelation makes it necessary to accept them. And a non-prophet, in every way, accepts and follows the revelation of another prophet. And if he believes in his own revelation, he does so because it does not go against the other revelation to which he is obedient.

In other words, a messenger is not obedient (muṭī‘) to another messenger. He is a follower of his own revelation. And a disciple is obedient to the revelation of another messenger. The Prophet Muḥammad is asked to declare: "I follow only that which is revealed to me." 97

96. Tuḥfah Golarwiyyah, p. 84.
Similarly: "Say: I follow only that which is revealed to me from my Lord. These are clear proofs from your Lord and a guidance and a mercy for a people who believe."  

At another place it has been mentioned: "And follow what is revealed to thee." And in the place where the Prophet is commanded to submit and serve alone what is revealed to him it has also been stated: Say if I disobey my Lord (in my revelation) I fear the chastisement of a grievous day." That is, if a prophet does not follow his revelation, he is, in fact, disobedient to the Divine Command. Therefore, he does not pay attention to anything else except his revelation. His revelation is such that it alone should be followed, leaving aside all other thoughts and ideas. His faith in previous books and revelations is rather in an abstract and general way. Although he believes that they, too, were from God, if on some point his revelation differs from the revelation of some previous prophet, he would only follow his own revelation. This would also hold true when one messenger is the successor of another messenger. For example, after Moses, there was a chain of prophets that followed the Shari'ah of Moses but when any of them appeared it was incumbent on him to follow his own revelation in his own age. He acted according to the Torah only inasmuch as his revelation commanded him to do so. Those messengers who came among the Israelites judged according to the Torah, not because that it was Moses' Book and they were Moses' followers—in their becoming messengers the following of Moses had not a grain of influence—but because they were themselves directly commanded by their revelations to judge according to the Torah. And if in some matters, although God had commanded in the Torah differently as compared to their revelations, it was, however, incumbent on them to follow their own revelations and leave aside the earlier command of the Torah. Or, if a prophet had received a revelation which was against the revelation of some previous prophet or that of the Torah, he was not supposed to follow either of these, but only the revelation which descended on him, no matter even if that revelation was contrary to any of the previous revelations. It was so because in the previous laws (shari'ahs) some of the commands were limited to time.

98. The Qur'an, 7 al-At'arif: 208
100. Ibid., 39 al-Zumar: 13.
and place. Moreover, alterations had also taken place among them, that is to say, they did not remain fully protected. Nevertheless, whenever a prophet appeared in a part of the world or to a particular nation, he followed whatever was commanded to him in his revelation. But, as revelation has reached its perfection with the Qur'ān, religion has also been made perfect, so has been the guidance (hidāyah) for all ages and times and no deficiency at all has been left in the Shari'ah, therefore, no messenger or prophet can appear after the Qur'ān. This, in other words, means that no such person can come who abandons the Qur'ān and follows his own revelation or accepts the Qur'ān only because his own revelation has commanded him to do so. The revelation of every prophet is like the root which should be held fast in all circumstances, but the revelation of a disciple is like a branch; if it is attached to and fed by the root, it is acceptable, otherwise not. And then the followers of every prophet are commanded to follow the revelation of their prophet, his guidance and instructions. Accordingly the ummah of Muḥammad has been told: "And (know) that this is My path, the right one, so follow it, and follow not (other) ways, for they will lead you away from His way." 101 Again in the Qur'ān it has been repeatedly mentioned: "And obey God and obey the Messenger, 102 or say: If you love God follow me; God will love you." 103 In this ummah, obedience to those in authority has been restricted with a condition, as has been stated in the Qur'ān: "O you who believe, obey God and obey the Messenger and those in authority from among you; then if you quarrel about anything, refer it to God and the Messenger." 104

In short, the pride of a follower lies in complete obedience to his prophet and to swerve a hair’s breadth from this path should be like death to him. He should have absolute faith in this that the perfect way of guidance exists in the Book of his Prophet he follows. The thought of holding at his revelation above, or giving it an equal status to the Book or the Sunnah (practice of the Prophet) does not occur to his mind at all.

102. Ibid., 4 al-Nisāʾ : 59 ; 5 al-Māʾidah : 92 ; 64 al-Taghābun : 12 etc.
103. Ibid., 8 Al-ʾImrān : 30.
104. Ibid., 4 al-Nisāʾ : 59.
Prophetic Revelation and its Distinguishing Features

The terms prophet (nabi) and follower (ummati)

To make this distinction clear, the terms prophet and follower (ummati) have been used. A Prophet can only be a person whose self-purification has not been the result of his effort and acquisition (ikāsīb), but the result of God's gift (mauhibah). His nature (fitrat) has been shaped by God in such a way that it abhors all kinds of evil. Nobody can be called a follower in the truest sense unless he has followed a prophet for self-purification. Thus, as a matter of fact, non-prophet and follower are synonymous words. Every non-prophet must be a follower, but for very prophet it is essential that he is not an ummati (follower). Therefore an (ummati), though his revelation may resemble the revelation of prophets in some respects, does not at all deserve to be called a prophet in its fullest and truest sense. And although he receives sure and certain revelation from God, he must necessarily follow the revelation of his leader-prophet by following whom he has attained to the spiritual rank that he is able to drink deep at the fountain-head of pure and absolute Divine revelation. In accordance with this significance a prophet is not obedient (maṭbū‘) to another prophet. But every ummati must follow a leader-prophet, that is to say, a prophet by following whose command he has attained perfection, and a moment's separation from his submission turns him to be an unbeliever. Thus, the excellence of an ummati depends on always remaining obedient to his leader-prophet, therefore, in spite of his receiving the high spiritual rank and the supreme gift of the Divine revelation, he still remains obedient to his leader-prophet. The source of his guidance is not his own revelation but the revelation of the prophet he follows. He knows it perfectly well that all the excellences he has obtained have been given to him by virtue of his obedience to his prophet. And if for a moment he stops treading in the footsteps of that prophet, he immediately loses his spiritual excellences. But the case of a prophet is different. Whatever he gets is obtained directly from God. Therefore his excellence (kamāl) is only in following whatever is revealed to him. If he finds something contrary in his revelation as compared to the (previous) revelation, he would only submit to his own revelation, though he might still think the other also to be of Divine origin. But, on the other hand, if an ummati finds in his revelation anything contrary to the revelation of his prophet, he would immediately abandon his own
The Prophethood in Islam

revelation and only follow in the footsteps of his prophet. I quote below some references from the writings of the Founder that would substantiate what has been said above:

In Izâlah Auhâm he has explained that the two words prophet and ummaqi are antithetical in their significance. Thus he writes:

"In case Messiah, son of Mary, would be a perfect follower (ummati) at the time of his descent he cannot be in any way a messenger (rasûl); because of his being a follower. For the significance of rasûl and ummati is antithetical."

Then concerning the obedience to revelation, he writes elsewhere in the same book:

"But Messiah, son of Mary, to whom Evangel was given with whom the descent of Gabriel was considered an essential requisite, cannot become a follower in any way because it will be incumbent on him to follow the revelation that would descend on him occasionally as is befitting to the rank of messengers. And when he would be a follower of his own revelation and followed the new book which would he revealed to him then how would he be called an ummati? And if it is said that the commands which will descend on him will not go against the Qur'anic teachings, I say that only because of this concurrence (tawârud) he cannot be declared an ummati. It is obvious that a greater part of the Torah is in absolute conformity with the Qur'ân, then would it mean, God forbid, that because of this concurrence the Holy Prophet would be considered from the ummah of Moses? Concurrence is something else and obedience and discipleship is entirely a different thing. We have just stated that God says in the Qur'ân that no messenger comes to the world as a follower (mahkûm). On the other hand, he is a leader (mutâţa') and only follows such revelation which descends on him through the agency of Gabriel."

At another place he writes:

"The possessor of perfect prophethood can never be a follower. And he who is called a perfect messenger of God, his becoming a complete follower and obedient to another prophet is absolutely for-

71. Izâlah Auhâm (3rd September 1891) p. 575.
bidden according to the clear and express teachings of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. God says: *And We sent no messenger but that he shall be obeyed by Allah's command*; that is to say, every messenger is sent to be a leader (muṭā') and Imām. He is not sent for the object of becoming obedient and subordinate to others.

Similarly, in the Review on the debate between Maulawī Muḥammad Ḥussain and Maulawī 'Abdullāh Chakrālawī, he has declared the reality (ḥaqīqat) of a prophet and a follower as antithetical (mutnāqiḍ) in the following words:

"A prophet, who has been appointed as prophet before, to declare him a follower (ummaṭi) and then imagine that the rank which he possesses is not by himself but by virtue of his being a follower, is indeed a baseless lie! On the contrary, both these realities are antithetical. Because the reality of the prophethood of Messiah is this that he possesses it directly without having followed the Holy Prophet Muḥammad. Then, if Jesus is made a follower as is evidenced from the Ḥadīth *imāmukum minkum (he will be your leader from among you)*, it would mean that every excellence of his is derived from the prophethood of Muḥammad and we had just admitted that this prophetic excellence had not been illuminated by the lamp (chirāgh) of the prophethood of Muḥammad. And this is the combination of antitheses (ijtamāʿ naqiḍain) which is obviously false."

And in *Sirāj-i-Munīr* how clearly it has been stated that the task of a follower is nothing except this that he invites the people towards the revelation of the leader-prophet. Thus, while talking about himself, he (Ḥadīrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad) writes:

"So the last word is this, that we received every light by following the unlettered (ummi) Messenger and Prophet, and whoever shall tread in his footsteps will also receive it and he will be endowed with such an acceptance (maqbutiyyat) that before him nothing will remain impossible."
And in one of his last books he has written:

"And anyone who would look for a moment at the real significance of being a follower would clearly understand that to declare Jesus Christ a follower is tantamount to unbelief (kufr), because an ummati is a person who is simply deficient, misled and without any faith in his religion unless he is guided by the Holy Prophet and the Qur'ān. He, in fact, is endowed with faith and perfection by being obedient to the Prophet and the Qur'ān. Obviously to entertain such a thought about Jesus Christ is a blasphemy. He might be far inferior in his rank to the Prophet Muḥammad, but it cannot be said that unless he joins the ummah of the Prophet Muḥammad again after his manifestation in the world for the second time, he is, God forbid, a misled, erring and deficient in religion and that his divine knowledge is imperfect."

What further clarification is needed to prove that the significance of an ummati and prophet is anti-thetical? Thus, neither can an ummati be a prophet in the real sense nor can a prophet be an ummati in the real sense. This is something by understanding which the subject of prophethood becomes easy to understand and those who have stumbled unnecessarily over it have done so because neither have they kept in view the opposite significance of these words nor have they pondered over their reality.

The third distinction: The Prophetic revelation is a verifier of the previous revelation, the revelation granted to saints itself stands in need of verification.

The third distinction between wahy nubuwwat (prophetic revelation) and wahy wilāyat is this, that the former is confirmatory of the previous revelation of the same nature, that is to say, it verifies the truth of that revelation leaving aside the mistakes which have crept into it. Therefore, it is called the verifier (muṣaddaq) of previous revelation, whereas wahy wilāyat (revelation granted to the righteous servants), dependent on the Book of the Prophet it follows, is not acceptable unless it is applied to and confirmed by the Book and the practice (Sunnah) of the Prophet. It has been repeatedly said about the Qur'ān that it is: verifying that which is before it.78 This is, however, the status of the Qur'ān which has been called the verifier of all the (previous)Divine revelations. But Jesus Christ has also been declared a verifier of the revelation of the Torah in the following words:

78. The Qur'ān, 2 al-Baqarah: 97; Āl 'Imrān: 8 etc.
"We sent after them in their footsteps Jesus, son of Mary, verifying that which was before him of the Torah."  

Thus Prophetic revelation verifies what has passed before it, but wahy wilāyat itself stands in need of verification by the Prophetic revelation. That is why a prophet does not need his revelation to be confirmed by another revelation, but, for a disciple, it is essential that he should not accept his revelation unless it is in conformity with the revelation of the prophet he follows. It is because God has made special arrangements for the protection of the Prophetic revelation, as has been mentioned in the Qur’ān:

"For surely He makes a guard to go before him and after him, that He may know that they have truly delivered the messages of their Lord."  

Thus, this Gabrielic descent is such that the revelation which is communicated through it is specially guarded, for with this revelation is connected the guidance of men. A prophet who receives revelation in this way, free from all errors and delivered to him under special guard and protection, should be accepted independently without any reference to the previous book. Whatever that revelation would contain would be considered right and correct. If there is something which is not in harmony with the former revelations and books, then, either they had been interpolated or were limited in their scope. That is to say, they were meant for a particular time and for a particular nation, and the new revelation should be fully accepted and recognized as fulfilling the needs of a new age and a new nation. In case of difference, however, it is the new revelation which stands in good stead and must be obeyed and accepted, and the previous revelation which goes contrary to it wholly or partially should be abandoned after having considered it either specific, abrogated or interpolated. As against this, the revelation of a non-prophet does not enjoy this status. Undoubtedly there are certain non-prophets who are the recipients of surest and clearest form of revelations, but their revelations are just like branches and are not so much protected, for the guidance does not depend on them, therefore, the revelation of a non-prophet, in spite of its being clear and decisive, does not attain to

the rank of Prophetic revelation. If it is against the *wahy matluww* (Book of the prophet) or the prophet's *wahy khaft*, that is to say, his sayings and practices, the revelation of the non-prophet should be cast aside. The non-prophet himself adopts the same course. If his revelation does not confirm the revelation of his master, he would himself forsake it without a moment's hesitation. It has been mentioned about Syed 'Abd al-Qādir of Jilān that once he heard a voice from the Unseen in his dream that said to him, "O 'Abd al-Qādir, we are pleased with you and now you need not take the trouble of following the outward laws of *shari'ah* such as prayer, fasting etc." But 'Abd al-Qādir said, "O Satan, get out from here. I know that this cannot be the word of God; how can another person be free from the law which was binding on the Prophet himself?"

In short, a non-prophet might have attained any spiritual rank and his revelation might have been sure and clear, but, without exception, he must judge it in the light of the revelations of his Master, and if any part of it goes against it, he should abandon it and only follow the authoritative revelation, which is free from all error, which is divinely protected, which is the standard of guidance and which must in all circumstances be accepted and recognized. This was the belief of the Founder as is clear from the following quotations from his books:

"On this account, therefore, *ilhām wilāyat* (inspiration granted to the righteous servants) and the *ilhām* granted to the general believers is not binding unless it is not in conformity and in concord with the Holy Qur'ān."

Thus in this statement none in this *ummah* whose inspiration can be binding, unless it is in complete harmony with the Qur'ān. At another place he writes:

"And any person who utters a word the real basis of which is not found in the *shari'ah* (law), he might be a *mulham* (an inspired one) or a *mujtahid* (one exercising judgment in matters of religion); it is devils who are playing with him. And I believe that our Holy Prophet Muḥammad is the seal of the prophets (*Khātām al-anbiyāʾ*) and our book the Holy Qur'ān is the source of guidance. There is no prophet for us whom we should obey except Muḥammad and there is no book

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for us which we should follow except the Qur'an, the guardian over the previous scriptures. And I believe that our Messenger is the leader of the descendants of Adam and the leader of the Messengers and surely God has brought an end of prophets with him. And the Holy Qur'an, after Allah's Messenger, is protected from the interpolations of the interpolators and the mistakes of the mistaken. Neither an abrogation nor addition will take place in it nor will it become deficient after the Holy Prophet. And the inspiration (ilhām) of the true inspired ones (mulhams) cannot go against it. And whatever I have understood from the express teachings of the Qur'an and whatever I have received by way of inspiration (ilhām) is on the condition of its being correct, proper and true; and it has been disclosed to me that, (that inspiration) is pure and correct and it is undoubtedly in conformity with the sharī'ah. Neither is there any doubt in it nor any mixture nor incertitude. But assuming it goes against the Qur'an, we shall ourselves throw it away like a worthless thing, like phlegm.”

Again he writes in another book:

“And, by God! I said nothing about Jesus Christ’s death and his non-descent and that I was raised to this station, except after having received repeated inspiration poured on me like rain and after having visions which were clear like the dawn of the morning and after having judged my inspiration by the Qur'an and the genuine reports by the Prophet and after having made istikhārāt (special prayers for God’s guidance); and most humble supplications before God. Even then I did not make haste in this matter and caused a delay of ten years, rather rejected it all and waited for a clear and open command.”

“And look! I do not verify any inspiration of mine unless I have judged it by the Book of God. And I know whatever is against the Qur'an is a lie, heresy and impiety. Then how can I be a claimant to prophethood and I am from among Muslims.”

Then in Mawāhib al-Rahmān he has placed his own revelation under the authority of the Qur'an and the true reports of the Prophet.

82.Ā’īnah Kamālit-i-Islām (28th February 1898) p. 23.
84. Ibid., p. 79.
That is to say, the Qur'an and the true reports are the final judge. He has only placed his revelation above presumptive reports (zannī ahādīth) under certain severe conditions. Obviously zannī ahādīth are such the authencity of which have been doubted. Thus he states:

"And the revelation of the arbiter (ḥakam) that is to say of the Promised Messiah has precedence over the presumptive reports, but under the condition, that that revelation is in complete harmony with the Qur'an and that the narrations of such a ḥadīth and the Qur'an do not contradict each other."\(^{85}\)

The fourth distinction: the Possessor of the Prophetic revelation is a leader while the follower is not

The summary of the distinctions afore-mentioned is that the possessor of Prophetic revelation acts particularly by virtue of and on account of his own revelation. He acknowledges the other revelation not as such, but only because his own revelation has verified or made it necessary to accept the previous one. Therefore, he upholds his own revelation as compared with all others, whereas the disciple (ummāti) only submits to the revelation of his leader prophet and accepts his revelation only if it corresponds and is confirmed by the authoritative revelation of his prophet. That is why a prophet does not stand in need of getting his revelation judged by a previous revelation but a disciple does not enjoy this prestige.

Another distinction between the revelations of a prophet and a non-prophet is this, that, when a prophet is raised to the rank of prophethood and is endowed with Prophetic revelation, it becomes the duty of all those to whom he has been sent to follow him and only accept his revelation in preference to all other revelations. In other words, every prophet is a leader. The following Qur'ānic verse is a clear evidence to this fact: "And We sent no messenger but that he should be obeyed by God's command."\(^{86}\)

The significance of mutā is has been amply explained by me before and, as I will later show from the writings of Ḥaḍrat Aḥmad, the same meaning has been given by him.

The significance of mutā is that the people to whom the prophet is sent must by all means obey him and must acknowledge his revelation in preference to all other revelations. Every prophet is just like a new

\(^{85}\) Mawāhir al-Rāhmān (14th January 1908) p. 69.

\(^{86}\) The Qur'ān, 4 al-Nisā' : 64.
sun. It may have a lesser or greater light, but whenever and wherever a sun rises, all light would be obtained from it. Such is the appearance of a prophet. When he comes, he is the leader, the guide, the precept, the most excellent exemplar. Whatever he says and to whichevever direction he leads must necessarily be followed. It will be he whose spiritual power will work, it will be he who will help in self-purification and not the one who has passed before.

This is not difficult to understand about those prophets who were raised to different nations. The difficulty arises in the case of the prophets before whom a great prophet had passed and left a nation behind him wherein other prophets had also been raised in his footsteps. Although their prophethood was not the result of their discipleship to him but because they had to complete the work which he had started and had to reform the condition of that nation and had to guide it according to the needs of the new time, therefore, they were called the successors (khulāfā) of the former prophet. I want to explain by way of an illustration how, even in such cases, always the last prophet is the mutaḍ (leader). For instance, David was a prophet of his time from among the Israelites. When he was raised to the status of prophethood, the obedience of all the Israelite prophets became inherently connected with the obedience of David, because he was the prophet of his age; whatever his revelation contained had to be accepted, whether or not it was in agreement with a part of the previous revelation. The Torah, the book of Moses, was after all limited to a particular age and a particular nation and, according to the changed conditions of the time and the nation, it required corresponding changes and alterations. On the other hand, too, there was no promise for its protection and the fact is that it was not preserved in its pristine purity. Under these conditions whatever the prophet of the time would say must be accepted. If we do not accept this fact, the coming of prophets (among Israelites) becomes a meaningless affair. For every prophet must command allegiance from his people, and the people should have unconditional faith in his revelation. Whatever he commands, must be accepted whether or not it is against the Torah or the teaching of any other previous prophet. If we think that faith in every prophet depended on its being in conformity with the Torah, then we have to believe that unless Jesus Christ had come no alteration had taken place in the Torah and it was word for word the same book which was revealed to Moses, and this is against facts and history. Moreover, it follows
in this case that the Torah has not undergone any change until now. If for fifteen hundred years, that is from Moses until Jesus, not a jot or tittle of the Torah was altered, in spite of the lack of arrangements for safeguarding the scripture, in spite of the Jews suffering the worst of calamities, were there any special circumstances during the life of Jesus Christ or after him which caused alterations in it? Even a hostile critic of Islam, like Sir William Muir, admits that there has been no book like the Qur'ān, which has remained protected for full thirteen hundred years. If we do not agree with this we have to admit that in this respect the Torah stands superior to the Qur'ān as far its authenticity is concerned. This is untrue on the very face of it. Thus, in case the Torah kept on suffering at human hands, this does not seem befitting that in the presence of a prophet who received new revelation, the altered and interpolated book should be held above it. In short, such a view is not acceptable at all that the revelation of the Israelite prophet should be made subordinate to a book that has been seriously tampered with. The truth is, however this: that, leaving aside the prophets who appeared from time to time among various nations and countries, even every prophet who appeared among the Israelites was actually the muti' - the leader of his time. It was, therefore, necessary for the children of Israel to believe in all the prophets* who appeared among them at different times, that is to say that they were prophets raised for the reformation of the people in that age. It was in this manner that every new prophet who appeared among them was considered to be their real leader, and they received all the divine favours possessed by the new prophet by following in his footsteps, and by annihilating themselves in him and in his spiritual power. Thus every new prophet among them was their leader. The chain of wilāyat (sainthood) started with the new prophet and not the old one. But a disciple as I have explained before is himself a muti' (obedient) and his leader is his master-prophet. Therefore he cannot declare himself a leader. He would call other people to the same fountainhead from where he has quenched his own thirst because his prophet would be the guide, the leader, the exemplar and the preceptor unless another prophet takes his place.

Aaron was also the possessor of command

It is sometimes objected that Aaron was commanded to obey Moses, with whom he was a contemporary prophet and the following verse is advanced as an argument where Moses says to him:

* About the Promised Messiah there are no words like this in any hadīth that when he appears you believe in him as the prophet of his time. On the other hand the Prophet only said, 'Convey my greetings to him' suggesting thereby that you should side with him.
Prophetic Revelation and its Distinguishing Features

"Hast thou, then, disobeyed my order?" 87

These words were uttered by Moses when, in his absence, the Israelites started worshipping a molten calf and Aaron was not severe in preventing them from it. Now the question worth consideration is that, if Aaron was absolutely obedient to Moses why did Moses request God:

"Give to me an aider from my family: Aaron, my brother." 88

Could not he take his brother with him by himself? Did not the aiders and helpers of the Holy Prophet and Jesus Christ come out of their respective communities? And Moses was raised to a nation, which, although they showed many weaknesses in their practical life, did not hesitate at all in accepting him as a prophet. All of them paid allegiance to this messenger of God and followed him wherever he led them. When Moses appointed scores of other men to do various jobs, could he not entrust Aaron with a job? Would Aaron have disobeyed him? In fact, such a doubt only arises out of lack of understanding of the Qur‘ān. If there are, on one side, the words: Hast thou, then, disobeyed my order? on the other, in the prayer of Moses to God, the following words also occur:

"Add to my strength by him, and make him share my task." 89

And anyone who shares the task must necessarily be to an extent possessor of the command (sāhib-i amr) as well. On the one hand, Moses blames Aaron for disobedience, on the other, he believes him to be a sharer in his task. In fact, the point is simple to understand. There is no contradiction in it. Moses and Aaron were both possessors of command as is clear from the above verse (2: 26-30). By reading the Torah, in whatever condition at the moment it is, we know that some work was entrusted to Aaron and some to Moses. For this reason, the office of priesthood (kahānat) has been continued among the descendants of Aaron as their exclusive prerogative. So much so, that Mary, the truthful, who belonged to the priestly class, has been called in the Qur‘ān the sister of Aaron. 90 When, under the

87. The Qur‘ān, 20 Ta‘ Ha: 93.
88. Ibid., vv. 29, 30.
89. Ibid., 31, 32.
90. The Qur‘ān, 19 Mary: 28 “Mary belonged to the priestly class, as Wherry also admits, ‘because she was of the Levitical race, as her being related to Elizabeth it would seem she was,’ and therefore, she is rightly called ukhṭ Harūn (sister of Aaron),” the word ukhṭ being by no means limited to the close blood relationship. (Muhammad ‘Ali, The Holy Qurūnān English Translation).
Divine command, Moses went to the Mountain for forty days, Aaron was entrusted with all the work. A part of his work was that in which he was himself sāhib-i-amr and the other part of the work was that where he exercised the power delegated to him by Moses, and it was this work of deputation where Aaron exercised leniency so that Moses might not blame him for causing dissensions among the Israelites; and this has been made clear by the Qur'ān in the following way:

“And Aaron indeed had said to them before: O my people, you are only tried by it, and surely your Lord is the Beneficent God, so follow me and obey my order. They said, we shall not cease to keep to its worship until Moses returns to us. (Moses) said, O Aaron, what prevented thee, when thou sawest them going astray that thou didst not follow me?” 91

And the excuse which Aaron made was also clear:

“Surely I was afraid lest thou shouldst say: Thou hast caused division among the children of Israel and not waited for my word.” 92

To keep the nation united was the task of Moses. But, on the other hand, Aaron's saying his people ati‘ū amrī (obey my order) showed that he himself was also the possessor of command (sāhib-i-amr), as is evident by Moses' prayer, make him share my task. 93 The fact is, then, this that Moses had found himself unable to bear the whole burden. Therefore, he prayed to God that he should be helped by another prophet who should be responsible for a part of the work. For the same reason, the Qur'ān says about the Torah: and We gave them both the clear Book. 94 That is to say, the Book was given both to Moses and to Aaron. Thus, there is no doubt about it that Aaron was a sharer in the prophethood (sharīk fi al-nubuwwah) of Moses and both were the possessors of command, although in the absence of Moses it was Aaron only who possessed the command. It was because of this that Moses used the words afa a‘saita amrī (hast thou disobeyed my command?)

92. Ibid., v. 94.
93. Ibid., v. 82.
94. Ibid., 37 al-Sāffāt : 117.
Otherwise in their respective jobs they both were the leaders of the Israelites. About a messenger (rasūl) being muṭī', I have already quoted references from the writings of the Founder where it was shown that a prophet is not a follower (muṭī') and an ummati is a follower of his leader-prophet. I quote the relevant part again:

“No messenger comes to the world as a follower (muṭī') and a subordinate (mahkām). On the other hand, he is a master (mutā') and only follows such of his revelation which descends on him through the mediation of Gabriel.”

God says: “And We sent no messenger but that he should be obeyed by God’s command,” that is to say, every messenger is sent to be a master (mutā') and an Imām. He is not sent for the object of becoming a follower and subordinate to another.

The same significance attaches to the following statement in Haqiqat al-Wahy: “And We sent no messenger but that he should be obeyed by God’s command”. It is evident that, according to this verse, a prophet must be obeyed. Thus, how can anyone obtain salvation outside the fold of the obedience of a prophet?

The fifth distinction: A prophet is a follower of revelation, but non-prophet exercises his own judgment

The foregoing arguments from the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth also point out another distinction between a prophet and a follower, which is that, in solving the difficulties concerning matters of faith, a prophet waits for the revelation to come but a follower makes use of his judgment (ijtiḥād). The reason is obvious. When a non-prophet attains to all the excellences by following his prophet, at times of solving a religious problem it is, however, necessary that he should make his own effort and run towards the same source from which he had originally received light and guidance. But the source of the light of a prophet is God. Therefore, he turns towards Him for guidance. Thus, a disciple

95. Izālah Auhām (8th September 1891) p. 576.
96. The Qur'ān, 4 al-Nisā': 64
97. Izālah Auhām (8th September 1891) p. 589.
98. The Qur'ān, 4 al-Nisā': 64
exercises his judgment in matters concerning religion and a prophet gives judgment by the revelation he receives from God. A disciple cannot give this status to his revelation that it should be considered the basis for solving religious problems. But, as he also gets a little light besides his judgment (ijtihād), therefore, his revelations and inspirations can guide him in times of need, but he cannot advance them as arguments by themselves in solving these problems. He is not entitled to say that, because he has received a certain inspiration, therefore a certain point should be considered right in accordance with his revelation. His inspiration, however, serves only as an aid to him in his exercise of judgment (ijtihād). His mind is turned towards the truth by a revelation which is clearest and surest in its form and then by his own ijtihād he throws light on the various aspects of that problem. Thus, in this manner, the disciple’s revelation gives his ijtihād a high status and saves him from stumbling and from errors he has made in his previous ijtihād, this revelation removes that mistake. In short, the disciple gets all sorts of help in his ijtihād by his revelation. But, as, in reality, he by himself is nothing, so is his revelation of no independent value. It is only a means of help to him. A prophet also sometimes stands in need of exercise of judgment, but where ijtihād would not work he would be guided according to his need by the Divine revelation.

In short this also is a clear distinction between a prophet and a non-prophet. I may repeat it that in the intricacies of faith a prophet is supported by Divine revelation and a non-prophet by ijtihād. The prophet gets his light direct from God, therefore, for receiving further light he turns towards Him. The former gets his light direct from God, therefore, for receiving further light he turns towards Him. The latter gets his light from his leader-prophet therefore he always turns towards this source from which he originally received the light. The Founder has laid great stress on this point and has rather advanced it as an effective argument against the coming of an Israelitish Messiah among this ummah, as will be shown from the following references:

"(A prophet) is only obedient to such of his revelation that descends on him through Gabriel. Now it is quite simple to understand that when Messiah, son of Mary, would appear and Gabriel would incessantly start bringing revelation from heaven and through it would teach him the Islamic practices and creeds, such as fasting
Prophetic Revelation and Its Distinguishing Features

and prayer, charity and pilgrimage and various problems of jurisprudence, then in every respect the collection of these religious commands would be called the book of God.”

Further he writes in the same book:

“(Messiah) was a messenger and would appear as such, and with him the descending of Gabriel and the Divine communication would start again. As it is impossible that there should be no light with the rising of the sun, similarly it is quite impossible that a messenger should come for the reformation of men and there should be no Divine communication and Gabriel with him. Besides this, every wise man can understand that, if the coming of Gabriel and Divine communication would absolutely stop with the descent of Messiah, then how would he be able to read the Qur’an, which is in Arabic? Would he attend a school for a few years for the study of the Qur’an from a Mulla? Assuming that he would do so, but how would he be able to know, without Prophetic revelation, the details of faith as such as the number of rak‘ahs (sections of prayers) at noon and evening prayers, and on whom the giving of charity (zakāt) is obligatory and what is its nīṣāb (estate or property from which zakāt should he paid)? How would he be able to deduce all that from the Qur’an? And this has been shown, that he would not turn towards the traditions. If all this knowledge would be given to him through Prophetic revelation, undoubtedly the communication (kalām) by means of which he would know all the details and because of its being apostolic revelation (wahy-i-risālat) would be called the Book of God.”

At another place he writes about the exercise of judgment of the follower:

“It has been foretold that he shall be indeed from among you, O followers (of the Prophet), and he shall be your Imām; and not only his being a follower has been expressed in words but it has also been practically shown that, like other followers, he shall be a follower of the word of God and of the sayings of the Holy Prophet, and shall solve the difficult and intricate questions, not by prophecy but by ijtihād (exercise of judgment) and shall say his prayers after others. Now

100. Izâlah Auhâm (3rd September 1891) p. 576
all these clearly show that he shall not truly and actually possess the qualification of perfect prophethood.”\(^{102}\)

The sixth distinction: The duty of a prophet is that he should communicate all his revelation to men but for a follower it is not necessary

The sixth distinctive feature between the revelation of a prophet and that of a non-prophet is this, that the revelation of a messenger, by virtue of its being sent for the guidance of men, that is to say, because it contains in itself all that is needed for guiding men, and because it is specially protected and it is at that time to be held above all the previous revelations, it being sent from God for a special purpose who has made its acceptance most essential, therefore it is obligatory on the messenger also that he should convey and pronounce to mankind every word of it, which has been revealed to him. The Qurʾān is explicit on this point when it says, “O Messenger, deliver that which has been revealed to thee from thy Lord, and if thou do (it) not, thou hast not delivered His message.”\(^{103}\)

Similarly, it has been generally stated about the messengers:

“But have the messengers any duty except the plain delivery (of the message)? And certainly We raised among every nation a messenger.”\(^{104}\) Thus as the Divine messages have certain characteristics, similarly the communication of those messages has a certain peculiarity, which is, that every word of these messages should be conveyed to the people. This peculiarity only belongs to messengers because the revelation which is sent to them—\emph{wahy matlûw} (\emph{revelation meant to be recited}) is meant for the guidance of the people and it also contains commands and prohibitions. It is, however, the first duty of a messenger to communicate them to his people. But the position of the revelation of a disciple is different. In matters of guidance, commands and prohibitions and in the other details of \emph{Shari'ah} he totally stands in need of the revelation of his master-prophet, and his revelation generally consists of \emph{mubahsharât—good news} or prophecies, and it is not obligatory on him to communicate all his prophecies to others. Therefore, he is not commanded to deliver every word of

\(^{102}\) \textit{Isâlah Auhâm}, p. 582.

\(^{103}\) \textit{The Qurʾān}, 5 \textit{al-Mā'idah}: 67

\(^{104}\) \textit{Ibid.}, 16 \textit{al-Nahl}: 35, 36.
his revelation to the people. So this is the status of the revelation of the followers of the Prophet Muḥammad. Because their revelation according to the Ḥadīth Lam yabqā min al-nubuwwati illal-mubashsharāt, (there is nothing left of prophethood except the good news), is nothing except mubashsharāt (good news) therefore none from among this ummah is obliged to communicate every inspiration of his to others. Those who are divinely appointed for a special purpose are commanded to announce some of their inspirations (ilhāmāt). It is not because a certain ilhām is a special kind of revelation but because something needs an announcement, or the communication of some of these inspirations becomes essential for the manifestation of a sign which in its turn becomes the source of strength to the religion of Islam. The main object of prophecies is to aid the Divine religion. Therefore, only for the support of religion, or with a view to increasing the faith of the believers, or to silence the deniers these revelations can be made use of and for this object they can be published as well. Otherwise, every inspiration (ilhām) which a follower receives need not be communicated to the world. Thus, the inspirations of the Founder which have been published are much less in number than those which have remained unpublished according to the author of the book Haqīqat al-Nubuwwah. The number of his published ilhāmāt are only a few hundred but, according to this book, "there are thousands of his inspirations which have not been published." The Founder has himself explained this principle in reply to a critic. The following is what he has written:

"Then I am astonished at the remark of this unwise maulawī when he says that it is not the sign of a true prophet or mulham (the inspired one of God) that he should knowingly and intentionally hide a thing for twenty-five years for which he is commanded by God to preach. This unwise person does not even know as yet that preaching is done of Divine commandments and not of such prophecies for the circulation of which the mulham is not even appointed but has the right whether to circulate them or not." 

105. Mirzā Bāshīr-al-Dīn Muḥammad Ahmād, Haqīqat al-Nubuwwah, p. 294
106. Ibid.
The seventh distinction: The revelation of a prophet can alter or abrogate previous Shari'ah whereas the revelation of a follower cannot.

The seventh distinction between the revelation of a prophet and that of a non-prophet is that the revelation of the prophet can abrogate, alter, or add something to the previous Shari'ah but the revelation of a non-prophet, that is of the follower does not enjoy this status. For instance, God gave Moses a Law (Shari'ah) which contained details about mutual dealings and particularly about worship. After Moses many prophets were raised in this nation. Although the Shari'ah remained the same which was given to Moses, but those prophets were the direct recipients of the Divine grace like Moses. In other words, their relation with Moses was not the relation of master and servant but of Law-giver prophet and his successors or the one who laid the foundation of a building and those who completed it. The foundation of this nation was laid down by Moses, but it was not destined that he should make it perfect. So much so that during his life his nation could not get the mastery of the sacred land about which a Divine promise was given to them. Because this nation had an affinity to the last Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him), therefore God willed it like this that the nation of Muḥammad should also be specially educated. For such an education (tarbiyyat) many prophets were sent after Moses: We sent Our Messengers one after another,108 says the Qur'ān; the names of some of them have been mentioned therein. These prophets had been completing the building which was started by Moses till the chain of messengership was cut off in this nation by the appearance of Jesus Christ. As the Torah, the Shari'ah of Moses, was but endemic in its scope and teaching or besides its being meant for a particular nation (mukhtas al-qaum) it was limited to a particular age (mukhtas al-zāmān), therefore, these prophets also kept on communicating to their nations new teachings from God according to the new conditions. Whereas on the one hand their task was the self-purification of the Israelis on the other they also kept on making some changes in the commands of Shari'ah under Divine instructions. A clear evidence of this change and alteration is found at the time of Jesus Christ. The Holy Qur'ān has clearly described this fact in the words:

"I allow you part of that which was forbidden to you."109

108. The Qur'ān, 23 al-Mu'minūn : 44
109. Ibid., 3 Al 'Imrān : 49.
The Gospel, in whatever condition it is at present, explains very well this verse of the Qur'an where Jesus Christ openly declares: Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you: That you resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also."110 In other words, it is an alteration in the law of retaliation (qisāṣ). Similarly, he has affected a change in the law of divorce111 and some other matters, although the Messiah was the successor (khalīfa) of Moses as other Israelite prophets were who appeared after Moses. Thus, we can judge from it about others that they should have also made such alterations in their respective ages. It is, however, as clear as daylight that the Torah was not a complete and perfect book. Some of its commandments have been retained by the Qur'ān, for instance: Thou shalt have no other gods before me, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not steal, and honour thy father and mother.112 But some of the commands which were given according to the needs of the time as for instance, the severe law of retaliation, which was only a temporary measure, as the other aspect of the problem (i.e. forgiveness) was ignored in it, in such commands of course the need of change must have always been felt (by various prophets) as happened in the case of Jesus Christ. If the Torah did not stand in need of such prophets who would make changes in the Law under God's instructions, from time to time, and in accordance with the needs of their age, then the Law of retaliation would not have been left incomplete for the Gospel to fulfil this deficiency. It was quite possible that God would have revealed to Moses the following perfect teaching: And the recompense of evil is punishment like it; but whoever forgives and amends, his reward is with God.113 Now retaliation is here not made compulsory but the words miḥlū hā (like it) show that evil must be requited by punishment proportionate to the evil. On this golden rule are based to-day all the laws of justice of the civilised

111. It hath been said, whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement; but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" St. Matthew, 5 : 31-2.
112. Exodus, 20 : 3, 14, 15, 12.
113. The Qur'ān, 42 al-Shūrā : 40.
nations. And as in the Torah, vengeance in every case is not necessary. And then this teaching has removed the two defects of the teachings of the Gospel as well. Firstly, the exercise of forgiveness is not recommended in every case as has been done in the Gospel that "whoever shall smite thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also." This is quite impracticable and even a staunch follower of Christianity cannot make it a rule of his life. Secondly, the exercise of forgiveness has been restricted with amendment, that is one should only resort to forgiveness when it will mend the matter and be of some good to the wrong-doer. Now this perfect conception of justice is neither found in the Torah nor in the Gospel. The Torah contained a part of it which was imperfect because punishment was made compulsory and the Gospel contained another part which was also defective because there forgiveness was made essential and no scope was left for punishment. The real cause of all this was that the Israelites were not yet capable that Moses or Jesus Christ or the prophets who passed in between could give them complete and perfect teaching. And if it was, however, given to them it could not have helped them in any way. It was, however, expedient that they should be given at one time the Mosaic law of retaliation but when they went to the other extreme in the application of this law another aspect of the teaching was needed. This point can well be established by Jesus Christ's own word where he says:

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth (i.e. Aḥmād or the Paraclete) is come he will guide you unto all truth."\(^{111}\)

In short, this one instance is enough to prove that in the Shari‘ah of Moses some matters needed alteration or modification even before the shari‘ah of Muḥammad came into operation. This work was done by those prophets who came after Moses. Thus, there is no doubt that the revelation of a prophet can alter and abrogate the shari‘ah, but the revelation of a follower cannot do so. The follower does not come to perfect the religion, but only for its revival and he cannot substract from it or add anything to it.

\(^{114}\) St. John, 16 : 12-18.
The testimony of the Qurʾān that commands may be altered or modified

The Qurʾān has expressed this idea in a very subtle way. This is, in fact, such a pure and beautiful book that the more a person reflects and contemplates over it the more he becomes its admirer and his heart is involuntarily allured by it. The Qurʾān does not mention the abrogation of shariʿahs, because actually the whole shariʿah (Law) is never completely abrogated. After all, the first prophet who was raised by God was also given the command that God was one and He alone deserved to be worshipped and that there was no associate with him. The prophet who was sent last of all was also given the same message. Therefore, the shariʿah of even the first prophet can never be abrogated in its entirety. As all the prophets had been fundamentally giving the same teaching it is not even correct to think that a prophet could abrogate all the teachings of another prophet. It is for this reason that the Qurʾān has thus not mentioned about the abrogation of shariʿah, but has rather stated:

"Whatever message (or verse) We abrogate or cause to be forgotten We bring one better than it or like it."

This signifies that the verses of God which are revealed to the prophets have sometime, to be abrogated and sometimes people forget them. In both these cases God sends down other verses. That is His general practice. This does not specially refer to the Qurʾān but it has been stated that God has been doing so from the beginning. Thus, after the words which follow the above verse, knowest thou not that God is Possessor of power over all things? it has been stated, knowest thou not that God's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth? As a king finds it necessary to introduce changes from time to time for the betterment of his subjects, similar is the case with the Possessor of the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, as has

115. The Qurʾān, 2 al-Baqarah : 106.
116. Ibid.,
117. Ibid., v. 107. Detailed discussion on the subject of abrogation in the Qurʾān will be found in Muḥammad ʿAli's English translation of the Qurʾān, p. 47 under the verse 2:106; and in his work the Religion of Islam pp. 85–44. T.
been mentioned here that God reveals another verse after abrogating the previous one or He sends the new verse because the old one has been forgotten.

Actually, it is a hint towards a general principle. Evidently this work is done through the prophets. When it has been stated as an absolute principle at one place that God does so through the prophets and nowhere in the whole of the Qur'ān has it been mentioned that some prophets were exempted from this Divine law or practice, or that there have been prophets who could not alter or abrogate some of the verses and that the law of bringing "better than it or like it" did not apply in their case, then it has to be admitted that this Divine practice has continued throughout among all the prophets. In the presence of this general principle we need not bring out illustrations to this effect from the lives of every prophet. Even the Qur'ān has not mentioned by name all of them while, as to those who have been mentioned, their scriptures have not been fully included in the Qur'ān. Thus, such a demand is preposterous. God has in any case explained His practice and an example from among the prophets who judged according to the Torah has also been given. The fact, therefore, is established that a prophet can abrogate some of the commands of the previous shari'ah and give new command instead, whether he himself is called a prophet with a law or without a law. And this was the distinction which I referred to above, that the revelation of a prophet can alter or abrogate the law of the previous shari'ah. The question is not only of the potentiality of a thing but doing it actually, and such an illustration from the Qur'ān has been shown by me just now (3:49). On the other hand the revelation of a non-prophet cannot introduce the slightest change even in a minor law of the shari'ah. This is a clear distinction indeed.

Below I quote a few references from the writings of the Founder, which establish the point that the Prophetic revelation keeps on making alterations, modifications or abrogations in the previous shari'ahs, as and when the need arises:

"Besides this, he who is a follower of his Master Prophet (peace be upon him,) and has faith in his command and God's Book to try him like the prophets is a kind of ignorance because the prophets come for the purpose of introducing people from one religion into
another and for establishing one Qiblāh in place of another, and for abrogating some of the commands and to bring some new ones instead. But there is no claim of such a new revelation here. It is the same Islam as existed before, the same prayer, the same Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him!) and the same Book. There is nothing to be left out from the original faith which should cause such a great surprise. The claim of being the Promised Messiah should have been considered grievous and worthy of avoidance if, along with it (God forbid!) some alteration or addition would have taken place in religious matters and, in practice, our condition would have been different from that of other Muslims.\textsuperscript{118}

"And this does not beseech Him that He (i.e. God) starts the movement of prophethood again after it has been cut off and that He should abrogate some of the Qur'ānic commands or add thereupon and go contrary to His promise or forget about the perfection of the Qur'ān."\textsuperscript{119}

"As for the teaching and information of messengers the practice of God has been from the beginning that they are taught through the mediation of Gabriel and by means of the descent of Divine verses and the words of the Merciful. And in which case the whole of the Qur'ān and the authentic tradition of the Prophet will be revealed anew in the Messiah's own language, through the agency of Gabriel and as it has been mentioned in the Reports that some of the Qur'ānic commands concerning jizyah etc. will also be abrogated, then evidently by the revelation of this new book the Qur'ān will be abrogated like the Torah and the Evangel and the new Qur'ān of the Messiah, which to some extent will even differ from the Holy Qur'ān, will come into force. And the Messiah will recite his own Qur'ān in his prayer and willy nilly the same Qur'ān will be taught to others. And apparently at that time the Kalimah ‘ilāha ill-Allāhu Muḥammad-ur Rasūl ullaḥ (there is but One God, Muḥammad is the messenger of God), would also be considered somewhat liable to abrogation. Because when the shari‘ah of Muḥammad (God forbid, quoting of heresy does not amount to heresy) has been completely uprooted and another Qur'ān, though it may be somewhat like the Qur'ān we possess, is

\textsuperscript{118} Aṭi‘ah Kamālāt Islam (28th February, 1898) p. 339.

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., p. 377.
sent down from Heaven, the Kalimah would also necessarily be changed. Some people reply under extreme humiliation that undoubtedly this clearly is a bad show but what shall they do when it has been agreed upon that the Messiah would come in the capacity of a messenger and that for forty years Gabriel would keep on descending upon him and all this has been mentioned in the Reports. In reply to this I say that it is true so far, that if the same Messiah, the messenger of Allāh and the possessor of a book (Ṣāḥib-i-kitāb) on whom Gabriel used to descend would come, then he would never enter the pupilship of anyone for learning the laws of the Shari'ah of Muḥammad, but as is the practice of God the Divine revelation would descend on him through Gabriel and all the laws and the commandments of the Shari'ah of Muḥammad would be revealed to him afresh in a new way, new shape and new language and, as compared with this new book which would be revealed from Heaven, the Qur'ān would be abrogated. But the Most High God would never permit such a disgrace and ignominy to come to the share of this ummah or such an insult and affront to fall to the lot of His accepted Prophet, the khātam al-anbiyā, that, by sending a messenger with whom the coming of Gabriel is essential, He should let the House of Islam go to rock and ruin when He has already promised that no messenger would be sent after the Holy Prophet. The students of the Reports have certainly committed a great error when at the sight of the words 'Isa or son of Mary, they have believed that actually the same son of Mary, who was a messenger of Allāh would descend. They have not thought that his coming to the world, in other words, meant that Islam should take leave of the world. This has been the collective opinion and there is a Report also about it in the Muslim, that the Messiah will appear as a prophet of God. If by way of metaphor the words Messiah or the son of Mary apply to a follower who enjoys the rank of muḥaddathiyat, it does not cause the slightest damage (to Islam) because muḥaddath is in one sense indeed a prophet, but he is such a prophet who gets light from the lamp of the Prophethood of Muḥammad and he does not receive knowledge directly but by means of his Prophet.” 120

120. Izālah Auḥām (8rd September 1891) pp. 584-587
"Evidently the teaching of the Torah was tooth for a tooth, eye for an eye and nose for a nose and the teaching of the Evangell was that the wicked should never be opposed but the Qur'ān has declared both the teachings to be imperfect."\textsuperscript{121}

"According to the needs of the age the Torah has laid greater emphasis on retaliation and the Evangell on forgiveness, forbearance and remission ...... similarly, the Torah has gone to one extreme and the Evangell to the other."\textsuperscript{122}

And the following statement in the \textit{Haqīqat al-Wāhy} throws further light on this point:

"But Jesus Christ was only the inheritor of the Torah, the teaching of which was meant for a particular nation. It was on this account that the Evangell had to explain these things with clarity which were covered and concealed in the Torah. But we cannot add anything to the Qur'ān, because its teaching is most complete and perfect and, unlike the Torah, it does not stand in need of an Evangell."\textsuperscript{123}

But the clearest of all these statements is that which is found in the \textit{Mawāhib al-Rahmān}, where he has emphasised that the prophets came for the perfection of the shari'ah, but as the Qur'ān has made the Law perfect, therefore, now a new prophet cannot come. Here is what he writes:

"And God communicates and communes with His righteous servants (auliyā') among his people and they are imbued with the colour of prophethood, but they are not prophets in reality, for the Qur'ān has brought the needs of shari'ah to perfection. They are given nothing but the understanding of the Qur'ān. They can neither add anything to nor subtract anything from the Qur'ān."\textsuperscript{124}

This reference also clearly shows that the prophets' duty is to make additions and alterations in the previous shari'ahs and a prophet cannot come in this nation of Muḥammad because nothing can be added or altered in his shari'ah. Thus the sending of a prophet is a preposterous act and God is much above something absurd.

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Chashma-i-Ma'rifat} (15th May 1908) pp. 255, 259.

\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Sirāj al-Dīn 'Īsāī ke āhār swālōn ka jawāb} (22nd June 1897) p. 88.

\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Haqīqat al-Wāhy}, p. 151.

\textsuperscript{124} \textit{Mawāhib al-Rahmān} (14th January 1908) pp. 66, 7.
The eighth distinction: The revelation of a Prophet completes the guidance

Evidently, the object of the raising of a prophet is that he should show men the way to guidance which would help them in their self-purification and spiritual upliftment, so that they may attain to the perfection for which they have been created. Now, if a prophet does not show the way of guidance, the real object of his coming becomes void. In other words, his being raised as a prophet of God has no meaning at all. If it is said that he helps in the self-purification of his people, either by leading them in the light of some previously revealed guidance or by making them follow in the footsteps of a previous prophet, this work then is that of a mujaddid (renovator) or a muhaddath (one spoken to by God) who is a follower. This means that anyone who teaches the people to obey another prophet besides himself and tread in the prophet’s steps and to make the prophet their guide and pattern and to get from the prophet their spiritual blessing, is not a master but a servant. He himself has a master to whom belong all his karāmāt and supernatural signs. He calls men to the same fountain which has quenched his own thirst. Those who have thirst let them also come to this fountain of life. He calls men to the same source of light which has enlightened him. Those who grope in the darkness, let them go to this light. The prophets are a different people. They are themselves the source of light and guidance for men. They receive guidance from God and teach men accordingly. I have already discussed the point in the first chapter that in the Divine Scheme of things the object of the sending of prophets was to bring guidance to man, and it has also been mentioned in the Qur’ān that each and every prophet was the bearer of guidance (hidāyah) and that it was a prerequisite of his office that he should make the previous guidance perfect. This might have become indispensable for various reasons, perhaps that guidance was unable to help a nation any more to attain to perfection, or some defect might have crept into it or it might have been lost or forgotten, or the needs and circumstances of the nation might have changed, so that it had to be abrogated, altered or modified but the raising of a new prophet, however, meant that some thing was out of order in the previous shari‘ah.

About other prophets it is an acknowledged fact. But it is sometimes said that the Israelite prophets who came after Moses did not bring a new guidance. The Qur’ān, however, rejects this view. Let
us consider the case of the Torah and the Evangel. If it is proved that the Evangel brought new teaching, new guidance and new light, the position of all the prophets coming after Moses becomes clear. At one place in the Qurʾān it has been mentioned: "and He will teach him (i.e. Jesus) the Book and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel"; and at another place in the chapter al-Māʾidah (The Food), where it has been first stated about the Torah: "Surely We revealed the Torah, having guidance and light;" and then a mention has been made about the Gospel: And We gave him (Jesus) the Gospel, containing guidance and light and verifying that which was before it and a guidance and an admonition for the dutiful."

Thus, when in spite of the existence of the Torah a mention has been made of another prophet who brought guidance and light the case of other Israelitish prophets must be judged in view of this fact and it must be admitted that all the prophets who came after Moses brought guidance and light and were instrumental in perfecting the guidance. I need not quote more references in this respect from the writings of the Founder. The ones which have been quoted before while discussing the previous distinction also shed light on this point, for instance: But we cannot add anything to the Qurʾān because its teaching is most complete and perfect and unlike the Torah, it does not stand in need of any Evangel. This signifies that the Torah without the Evangel was not meant for the whole world, but even for the Israelites it was imperfect and that from time to time the Israelite prophets, like Jesus Christ, contributed their share towards the perfection of its teaching. The Founder however, makes it more clear at another place where he writes:

"Thus, only the Qurʾān has the right to make a claim for the perfection of its teaching. Besides no heavenly scripture has put forward such a claim. And it is evident that the Torah and the Evangel do not take a stand on this ground." This clearly proves that the Torah and the Evangel were two separate books and both contained defective teachings. Further on it is stated:

125. The Qurʾān 3 ʿAl-ʾImrān : 47
126. Ibid., 5 al-Māʾidah : 44
127. Ibid., v. 46.
128. Ḥaqqat al-Wahy (15th May 1907) p. 151.
“Obviously, if for the requirement of future times the listening to the Torah was sufficient there was no need, then, for the coming of a new prophet and for accepting the revelation which descended on him for exemption from Divine accountability.”

The ninth distinction: the prophetic revelation is recited in prayers

Another peculiarity of the Prophetic revelation, not shared by any other revelation, is that it is recited in the prayers. In fact, this revelation possesses such effect that its mere recitation even helps in the purification of self. Therefore, the first task of a messenger is that : yatlū ‘alaihim āyātihī i.e. he recites to them the messages of God and at some places after this a mention has been made of wa yuzakkī him i.e. and he purifies them, which indicates that the recitation of these messages (āyāt) is not an ordinary affair but is a means to self-purification. This is, however, an acknowledged fact that the wahy matluww (revelation recited in words) of every prophet, that is the revelation which is brought down on him through Gabriel, is recited by his ummah and his followers in their prayers. But, besides the wahy matluww of the prophet, no other kind of revelation is allowed to be recited in prayers. It is due to this that the revelation of a wali (saint), mujaddid (renovator) or khalīfa, however great his rank may be, cannot be recited during prayer.

The following reference from the writings of the Founder again clearly points out this distinguishing feature of the prophetic revelation:

“As for the teaching and information of messengers, the practice of God has been from the beginning that they are taught through the mediation of Gabriel and by means of descent of Divine verses and the words of the Merciful. In which case the whole of the Qur’ān and the authentic traditions of the Prophet will be revealed anew, in the Messiah’s own language, through the agency of Gabriel and, as it has been mentioned in the Report that some of the Qur’ānic commands concerning jizyah etc. will be abrogated, then evidently, by the revelation of this new book the Qur’ān will be abrogated like the Torah and the Evangel and the new Qur’ān of the Messiah, which to some

180. Barāhi'in Ahmadiyyah, vol. v, (15th October 1908) supplement pp. 8, 4
extent will even differ from the Holy Qur’ān will come into force and the Messiah will recite his own Qur’ān in his prayers.”

At another place he writes:

“If our opponents had adhered in their belief to the extent that Jesus Christ would definitely come but he would follow the teaching of the Evangel and would not be bound by the Muslim code of ḥalāl and ḥarām, (lawful and unlawful) he would say his own prayer in a separate manner and would recite the Evangel instead of the Qur’ān in his prayer and would regard himself as an independent prophet and not a follower. In short, he would not behave in such a way that he could be declared as a follower...........His prayers would be unlike the prayers of Muslims and would recite Evangel instead of the Qur’ān. He would eat those things which Muslims do not eat and would drink wine.............”

And in the Ḥaqqīqat al-Wahy, while mentioning about the coming of the Messiah, if by chance he is the Israelite Messiah, he says:

“And when people would read the Qur’ān, he would open the Evangel”.  

The tenth distinction: It is essential to believe in Prophetic revelation and his denier is a veritable kāfir

This is as clear as day light from the Qur’ān, that he who is raised by God is mu‘min bihī, that is to say to have faith in him is essential. The Qur’ān says to this effect: “The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord and (so do) the believers. They all believer in God and His angels and His Books and His messengers. We make no difference between any of His messengers.”

This means that belief in all the messengers is equally necessary. At another place in the Qur’ān it has been stated: “Those who disbelieve in God and His messengers and desire to make a distinction between God and His messengers and say: We believe in some and disbelieve in others, and desire to take a course in between, these are truly disbelievers.”

131. Izālah Auhām (3rd September 1891) p. 584.
133. Ḥaqqīqat al-Wahy (15th May 1907) p. 29.
135. Ibid., 4 al-Nisā’: 150, 151.
This means that the denial of any messenger makes a person kāfir. To the same effect revelation was sent to the disciples of Jesus Christ: "I revealed to the disciples, saying, Believe in me and My messengers."136

In short, belief in a messenger is one of the fundamentals of Islam and anyone who is the denier of a messenger is a veritable kāfir. When a Muslim believes in Muḥammad, the seal of the Prophets he, in fact, comes to believe in all the messengers. The names of some of the messengers have been clearly mentioned in the Qur’ān. Therefore, their denial takes a person outside the fold of Islam and as to the names which have not been mentioned, a general faith in them is enough. We believe in all the messengers, wherever they might have been raised, in India, Iran, China or Japan. But besides the messengers the other appointed ones of God, such as mujaddids, faith in them is not essential to become a Muslim. Their denial is the denial of only a part (branch) but the denial of a prophet or messenger is the denial of the fundamental, the denial of the root itself. Therefore, the denial of a part does not imply the denial of the whole.

In support of this, the following two passages from the writings of the Founder will be enough:

"This is a point worth remembering, that to call a denier of one’s claim a kāfir is the privilege of those prophets alone who bring from God law and new commandments, but, for the inspired ones (mulhams) and the ones spoken to by God (muhaddathān) other than the givers of law, however great be their dignity in the sight of God, and however much they may have been honoured by being spoken to by God, no one becomes a kāfir by their denial."137

"All prophets have been teaching: Believe that the Most High God is One without any associate and along with it believe also in our messengership. It was on this account that the sum and substance of Islam was taught to the whole of the ummah in the following words: la ilāha ill Allāhhu Muḥammad-ur rasūl Ullāh i.e., there is but One God, Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh."138

187. Ṭiryāq al-Qulūb (October 1902) footnote, p. 180
188. Ḥaqqat al-Wāḥy (15th May 1907) p. 111
The statement of the Founder that a man becomes an unbeliever only by denying such prophets who bring law (shari'ah) or new commandments and no one becomes a kafir by denying the other inspired ones and spoken ones of God, however exalted they might be in the sight of God is in accordance with the teachings of the other Muslim divines. This must be borne in mind that in the above passage the Founder has included the bringing of law or new commandments among the distinguishing features of a prophet. The underlying significance of this is that every prophet must necessarily bring shari'ah or new commandments, because he has separated all the others and have called them mulham or muhaddath. And further, the Qur'an regards the denial of prophets even appearing after Moses as kufr as has been mentioned in the verse: "(We believe in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord. We do not make any distinction between any of them."139

Thus, the truth is, as the Founder has emphasised, that a prophet must necessarily bring a new command. Otherwise, what is the significance of a prophet being raised if he has not brought something which has to be communicated to people? The making of prophety alone is not the object of prophethood. On this point a detailed discussion will be made afterwards. Here I only want to show the difference which has been made by the Founder between wahy nubuwwat and wahy wilayat, that by the denial of the former one becomes a kafir and by the denial of the latter one does not become a kafir though he is liable to account and if he increases in his enmity, a time comes when it causes destruction to his faith. The same has been the belief of the other Muslim divines. Thus Sayyid 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī makes the same distinction between prophethood and wilāyat (sainthood) in one of his books:

"And the difference between nubuwwah (prophethood) and wilāyat (sainthood) is this, that prophethood is the communication of the Most High God and with it is revelation with Spirit from God (i.e. Gabriel). This is that the acceptance of which is necessary and he who rejects it is a kafir because he rejects the communication of God. And sainthood is this, that the Most High God supports him with inspiration (ilhām) which is communicated to him. Thus kalām is for the prophets and hadith is for the saints (auliyā'). He who rejects the kalām is a kafir, because he rejects the kalām of God and his revele-
tion. And he who rejects the hadīth does not become a kāfir but unlucky (khā'ib) and that becomes heavy on him and his heart is flabbergasted because he rejects that thing from God which had brought the love of the Most High God."\(^{140}\)

The eleventh distinction: Every prophet brings a book

According to the Qur'ān, every prophet brings a book. In the chapter al-Ḥadīd (The Iron) we read:

*Certainly We sent Our messengers with clear arguments and sent down them the Book and the measure, that men may conduct themselves with equity.*\(^{140}\) This verse is a conclusive proof that a book was revealed to every prophet as the words anzālnā ma'ahum al-kitāb (We sent down with them the Book) clearly point towards this fact. Then in the chapter al-Baqarah (The Cow) it has been stated:

*Mankind is a single nation. So God raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the Book with truth, that it might judge between people concerning that in which they differed.*\(^{141}\) It is evident that God has stated a general principle here according to which sending down of books has been mentioned with the raising of prophets. What further evidence is needed when in the first verse above the revelation of the Book was mentioned with the messengers and in the second verse with the prophets. These two verses prove beyond doubt that, with every messenger and prophet who was appointed for the reformation of the people, the Book was also sent down. The Book of every prophet was his Prophetic revelation which descended on him for the guidance of men, whether it was in the form of law, or guidance containing certain commands and prohibitions, or only guidance for the self-purification. Those who have taken the Book as necessarily meaning the ṣhāri‘ah (Law) have found difficulties in understanding this verse.

The book does not necessarily mean ṣhāri‘ah. On the other hand, ṣhāri‘ah is a part of the book. To some prophets ṣhāri‘ah was revealed and to others it was not. There is, however, no doubt about it that every prophet brings more or less some messages (riāslāt)

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139. Ghunniyyah al-Ṭālibīn.
140. The Qur‘ān, 57 al-Ḥadīd : 25
141. Ibid., 2 al-Baqarah : 213
Prophetic Revelation and its Distinguishing Features

and communications from God. Thus, whatever are his risālāt in fact they are called his kitāb (book).

The third verse in this connection is found in the chapter al-Anām (The Cattle): And We gave him Isaac and Jacob. Each did We guide; and Noah did We guide before, and of his descendants, David and Solomon and Job and Joseph and Moses and Aaron. Thus do We reward those who do good (to others); and Zacharias and John and Jesus and Elias; each one of them was righteous, and Ishmael and Elisha and Jonah and Lot; and each one (of them) We made to excel the people. These are they to whom We gave the Book and authority and prophecy. 118

If we include Abraham, there are eighteen prophets mentioned in this verse. We find the names of Noah also along with Abraham, both of these were sent respectively to their nations at different times. There are also prophets who have appeared between Abraham and Moses, such as Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Ishmael. Moses himself, the great law-giver prophet of Israelites, is also mentioned and Aaron, too who was a co-prophet with him. The prophets after Moses have been also named here, such as David, Solomon, Job, Zacharias, John, and Jesus. In short, the names of all kinds of prophets are found here—givers of law and the non-givers of law, prophets raised to different nations and prophets consecutively sent to the same nation and also prophets who were appointed together. After mentioning them all it has been stated that these were they to whom the Book was given and the authority and the prophecy. It is evident that every prophet got authority and prophecy. It does not mean that the authority and the prophecy of a former prophet was passed on to one who came afterwards. It follows necessarily that every prophet should have received a book. It is not possible that only one Book was given to all, nor that some got the Book and others did not, nor that some got the Book by God’s own revelation and others were merely given some previous Book. The giving of one Book is not true because the Book which was given to Moses was not the Book which was given to Abraham. The Qur’ān has itself mentioned about the scriptures of Abraham and Moses separately (suhuf-i-ibrāhīma wa Musā). 119 Again, neither can it be that the book which was given to Joseph was also given to Ishmael. The giving

118. The Qur’ān, 6 al-Anām: 85-7,90.
119. Ibid., 87 al-A’lā: 19 (The scriptures of Abraham and Moses).
of the book to some prophets and not to others is not possible because in this manner the whole statement of the Qur'ān is rendered totally defective. Then it could also be said that, may be some of them were the recipients of the prophecy while others were not. As all of them got the prophecy, similarly, all of them got the book. How clearly this proves the point that kitāb, in fact, is the other name of Prophetic revelation. The possibility cannot be accepted that the Book was given by God by way of revelation to some prophets and others were only asked to act upon a previous book and this was considered the giving of a Book to them. This, however, does not seem agreeable, that the giving of a book to a prophet should mean the giving of a garbled and interpolated book. If it is such, there is no sense in its being given to a prophet. If a man who is guided and enlightened by God holds an altered and adulterated book in his hand and declares that this is the Book which has been given to him by God, then there is no faith left for anything else in the world.

Secondly the whole trouble is about the Israelite prophets who were raised after Moses. But, from among these prophets, there are some whose books have been mentioned in the Qur'ān, such as David and Jesus Christ. If all the prophets who came after Moses received the Torah as their Book, what was the peculiarity of David and Jesus. When two prophets coming after Moses were given the books, what prevented others from having them. Either none would have received any other book except the Torah and, if some had received it, for what reason could others have remained deprived of it? Again, the third point is that as the Qur'ān has clearly stated: ʿāʾtāʿnā-hum al-kitāb (We gave them the Book). 120 Similarly, in the case of David, it was mentioned: wa ʿātainā Dawūดา zabūrā i.e. and We gave David the Zabūr (Psaltern), 121 which signifies that the Book which was given to David was Zabūr and not the Torah. Again for Jesus Christ it was said: wa ʿātainā-hum al-injīl. (We gave him the Gospel). 122 This also shows that the book given to Jesus, and mentioned here, was Evangel and not the Torah. It will not be found in the whole of the Qur'ān that the Torah was given to David or Jesus Christ, nor that it was revealed to them. The

120. The Qur'ān, 6 al-An'ām : 90.
121. Ibid., 4 al-Nisā' : 168; 17 Bani Isrāʾīl : 55
122. Ibid., 5 al-Mā'idah : 46; 57 al-Ḥadīth : 27.
only mention in this respect has been that the Evangel was given to Jesus and the Zabūr to David. Although the word Torah has been used for Jesus Christ in the Qur'ān, it is in some other context. It is not said that the Torah was given to him but that its knowledge was, as has been mentioned in the Qur'ān:

wa yu ‘allimuhū al-kitāba wa'l-ḥikmata wa'l-injil, “And He will teach him the Book and Wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel”.148

This is the knowledge that God gives to the prophets. In short, the mention of the Evangel being given to Jesus and the Zabūr to David is found in the Qur'ān but not the giving of the Torah. Thus it appears from the verses quoted earlier (6 : 86,93) that the mention of the books being given to prophets were those books which were given separately to each and every prophet.

Let me remove another misunderstanding here. It might be said that the giving of or sending down of the Torah and the Qur'ān to all men has also been mentioned. This is indeed true. But can a wise person say that the Qur'ān was sent down to the Holy Prophet in the same manner as it has been sent down to the Muslims? When a book is given or revealed to a prophet it means the receiving of the Book through the revelation of the Most High God. And because, in turn, the ummah of every messenger is bound to act upon that Book, therefore, the giving of the Book to the ummah could also be used as an expression which, in fact, is only by way of metaphor. The underlying significance of the giving of the Book to a nation is that the Book was revealed to a messenger and, through him, it was communicated to that particular nation. But, when the same expression is used for a messenger or a prophet, the significance is different as has just been explained; it means the receiving of the Book by Divine revelation. For lack of space, it is enough to draw attention to the three verses which have been quoted above, which are sufficient to prove that, when the prophets of God are raised, they also bring a Book with them; or, in other words, God bestows on their revelation such a high status that He gives the name of kitāb (Book) to their Prophetic revelation. But the name kitāb cannot be given to the revelation of a follower.

148. The Qur'ān, 3 Al 'Imrān: 47 also 5 al-Mā'idah: 110
The evidence of the Founder that every prophet brings a book

In the writings of the Founder we find abundant material in support of this view that every prophet must necessarily bring a new book. The greatest argument which he has repeatedly put forward against the coming of the Israeliitish Messiah is that if he would come, a new book after the Qur'ān would also come into existence. At one place he writes:

"If the same Messiah, the Messenger of Allāh and the possessor of a book (ṣāḥib-i-kitāb) on whom Gabriel used to descend, would come, then he would never enter the pupilship of anyone for learning the laws of the Sharī'ah of Muḥammad". 149

This clearly shows that he regarded the Messiah as a prophet with a book and that his book was not the Torah but the revelation which descended on him through the mediation of Gabriel. At another place in the same book he has written:

"Because it will be his duty to follow that revelation which would descend on him from time to time as befitting to the rank of the prophets, and when he would be the follower of his own revelation and the new book which would be revealed to him, then how could he be called ummati". 150

And further on he states:

"Now it is quite simple to understand that when the Messiah, son of Mary, would appear and Gabriel would incessantly start bringing the revelation from heaven and through it would teach him the Islamic practices and creeds, such as fasting and prayer, charity and pilgrimage and various problems of jurisprudence, then in every respect the collection of these religious commands would be called the book of God". 151

This proves the same point again that, even when the existing laws are taught by the mediation of Gabriel and Prophetic revelation, then it forms a new book. On the other hand, a follower learns about these problems through his ijtihād (exercise of judgment). If some light is thrown on these points by his inspirations (iḥāmāt), even these could not be called a book of God.

149. Izālah Auhām (3rd September 1891) p. 585.
150. Ibid., p. 575.
151. Ibid., p. 579.
“And if all this knowledge would be given to him”, writes the Founder a little further, “through Prophetic revelation, undoubtedly the word (kalām) by which he would know all these details would be called the book of God on account of its being apostolic revelation”.

Here only the apostolic revelation (waḥy risālat) has been considered the book of God. Thus, how shall we accept that the prophethood was granted to them? And if it is one of the prerequisites of a prophet to have such a revelation, the same revelation is his Divine Book as the Founder has expressly stated this point above.

Now I will show from his other writings published after Izālah Auḥām that, according to Ḥadīrat Aḥmad, every prophet received separate guidance from God directly and not by following any other prophet, and this guidance or revelation was, in other words, his kitāb (book). This has been openly admitted by the Founder:

“In the Reports the name prophet, which has been used for the Promised Messiah”, writes he, “does not mean that this is applicable to Jesus Christ. Although in the same Reports the name prophet has been given to him, a condition has been attached to it which makes it impossible that this prophet should be the Israelitish Messiah. Because in spite of being given the name prophet this Messiah has been called a follower also. And anyone who could look for a moment at the real significance of being a follower, would clearly understand that to declare Jesus Christ a follower is a kind of unbelief (kufr) because an ummaṭi (follower) is a person who is lost, deficient and erring in his religion unless he is guided by the Holy Prophet and the Qur’ān. He is, in fact, endowed with faith and perfection by being obedient to the Prophet and the Qur’ān. Obviously, to entertain such a thought about Jesus Christ is a blasphemy. He might be far inferior in his rank to the holy Prophet Muḥammad but it cannot be said that, unless he joins the ummah of Muḥammad again after his manifestation in the world for the second time, he is (God forbid!) lost, deficient and erring as far as spiritual life is concerned and that his divine knowledge has remained imperfect. Thus I assure my opponents that Jesus Christ can never be a follower. Although he, and all the prophets too, had faith in the truthfulness of the Prophet Muḥammad, but they were followers of the guidance which was revealed to them and God had directly manifested Himself to them.

152. Izālah Auḥām, p. 579.
It was never the case that by following the Prophet Muḥammad and by his spiritual teachings they were made prophets so that they may be called followers. God had given them separate books and they were directed to follow and lead (according to the teachings of these books) as is witnessed by the Qur'ān.\textsuperscript{153}

In another book it has been mentioned:

"And the saying of God: And when Allāh made the covenant through the prophets, He said: Behold that which I will give you of the Book and Wisdom—then a Messenger will come to you verifying that is with you, and you shall believe in him and you shall help him".\textsuperscript{154}

Again, in Chashmah Ma'rifat, while commenting upon the verse "And thus have We revealed the Book to thee. So those whom We have given the Book believe in it, and of these there are those who believe in it; and none deny our messages except the disbelievers,"\textsuperscript{155} he writes:

"O messengers, as We have revealed the Book or previous messages, similarly, this Book has been sent down to you. Thus, those who were given the Book before you, the wise and the virtuous people among their followers believed in them".\textsuperscript{156}

And elsewhere in this book he has also written:

'\textbf{We declare our faith in the books which were given to all the prophets of the world by their Lord}'\textsuperscript{157}

In fact, the bringing of a book by a prophet is such an obvious and self-evident phenomenon that even a man of ordinary intelligence cannot deny it. The coming of a prophet or a messenger must fulfill the following four conditions:

1. The Sender, that is God.
2. The sent one—that is a prophet or a messenger.
3. To whom he is sent—that is his ummah or community.
4. The thing—with which he is sent—that is his book—his risālāt (messages), the communication of which is obligatory on every prophet.

If the follower of a prophet is Divinely raised for the reformation of a people he would not bring any messages, he would

\textsuperscript{153} \textit{Barūhīn Ṭakhtāshīyyah}, vol. v (15th October, 1908) Supplement, p. 192-93.
\textsuperscript{154} The Qur'ān, 3 Albira: 80; Ḥaqqīqat al-Wahy (15th May 1907) p. 130.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 29 al-'Askabīt : 47.
\textsuperscript{156} Chashmah Ma'rifat (15th May, 1908) p. 253-54.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., Vol. II, p. 5.
invite to the Book by the following of which he has him self attained to perfection. Therefore, he would not possess a book of his own. His main task would only be revival, that is to say, he would invite towards the Book which is true and of Divine origin, free of all defects and alterations. Thus, a book is essential for a prophet and without a book a prophet cannot be a prophet. And Prophetic revelation (wahy nubuwwah) is in fact the kitāb of a prophet and he who does not receive wahy nubuwwah is not a prophet, or he who does not receive a book is not a prophet. And a follower cannot possess a book. Because if he has a book—and a book is the name of the guidance given for the reformation of a people and the book and the wahy nubuwwah is one and the same thing then, by virtue of his being the recipient of Prophetic revelation he should be considered a prophet. His book will of course bring the previous book to perfection, which implies that the earlier book was defective and it was to remove this defect that the prophet who was raised later was given a book. In case a person is made the possessor of a book, the previous scripture must be declared as defective. And he who considers the Qur'ān defective is not a Muslim. Besides this, the earlier Muslim Imāms have had also such a belief that every prophet must necessarily bring a kitāb or sahifa (scripture). The great Muslim commentator Fākhīr al-Dīn Rāzī says:

"The Most High God has ended this chapter with this verse: "Surely this is in the earlier scriptures, the scriptures of Abraham and Moses", which means that every one of the prophets was given a book (kitāb) or a scripture (sahīfa)."

**The prophets whose books are not known**

As against this, it may be said that if it is true that every prophet must bring a book, then where is the book of John? I have, however, given a proof from the Qur'ān that every prophet must bring a book. The eighteen prophets, among whom are also found the Israelite prophets who appeared after Moses, the name of John also being mentioned among them, were all given a book from God. From the point of view of commonsense this has also been proved as well as from the sayings of the earlier Imāms. Now such a demand, that unless a proof is given to the book of a particular prophet, the whole principle is null and void, is against reason.

159. Māṭālib ʿAlīyāh.
Says the Holy Qur'ān:

"And there is not a people but a warner has gone among them."160

This broad doctrine that a prophet was raised in every nation, taught repeatedly in the Qur'ān, makes us believe that every nation had its warner, whether we know the name of the prophet of a particular nation or not. Anyhow, we believe in this great truth, which had remained hidden for thousands of years from the wisest men of the world, and had shone upon the mind of an unlearned Arabian, who did not even know what nations then existed and what scriptures they possessed. If, however, we cannot name for a certain prophet in Japan or Africa, it does not mean that no prophet was raised in these countries. Similarly, if the book of a prophet does not exist to our knowledge it is not fair to conclude that a book was not given to him at all. The scripture of Abraham has been mentioned in the Qur'ān, but who can tell where that scripture is. If the book of Noah is not mentioned in the Qur'ān, shall we say that he did not bring a book? In any case, if it is assumed that John did not have a book when the Book his brother Messiah was given is in existence and they possess the same status among the Israelite prophets, so much so that the Holy Prophet saw them in heaven at the same place, then if one of them possessed a book what prevented the other from having one? On the other hand for our purpose it is enough to show one book from all the Israelite prophets who appeared after Moses because, as far as the Law (sharī'ah) of Moses is concerned, their position and status was the same and the books of many prophets which have been mentioned in the Qur'ān are found in the existing Bible.

Israelite prophets who did not possess any book

Another point is raised against this, that the Founder has written somewhere that among the Israelites there were hundreds of prophets who did not have any book with them161 and that it has also been mentioned in one of the diaries that among the Israelites there were also prophets who only announced prophecies which they received from God.162 Now these two statements should be reconciled parti-

162. Diary published in Badr, 5th March 1908.
cularly when we notice that in the writings of the Founder, whether they belong to the early or the later period, the bringing of the book by a prophet has been considered essential. Th reference quoted contrary to it is from Shahādāt al-Qur’ān, in any case a book about which it is said that he did not at that time understand the true significance of prophethood.  

Then what is the use of quoting such a reference? Or shall it be thought that (God forbid) his mind was extremely confused about prophethood and that he uttered contradictory statements? But, when we look at the original words of the Founder, the two seemingly contradictory statements are automatically reconciled. The following are his words in the Shahādāt al-Qur’ān:

“This ummah (nation) stand in need of mujaddids (renovators) and spiritual doctors, as in earlier times the need of prophets used to arise. Nobody can deny that Moses was a God-sent prophet and his Torah was complete for the teaching of the Israelite... But, in spite of that, hundreds of prophets appeared after the Torah among Israelites and they had no new book with them. The object of the manifestation of these prophets was that in their respective times those who had fallen far away from the teachings...”

163. “The Question of prophethood became clear to him in 1900 or 1901” (Mirzā Mahmūd Ahmad, Ḥaqqīqat al-Nubuwwat, p. 121). For further discussion please see Ch. IX.

164. Here the Torah is said to be complete for the teaching of the Israelites. This does not mean that the Torah, in the form of guidance (hidāyat) was a complete book. It only refers to the law (Shari‘ah) which was found in the Torah and its completeness is also not absolute but as is evident from other references quoted elsewhere, the Founder considered that the Torah stood in need of the Evangel (Ḥaqqīqat al-Wāhy p. 151) and that the law of retaliation was altered by the Jesus’ law of forgiveness. Thus the perfection of the Torah is only relative. Moreover, if the Torah was a complete guidance for the Israelites, the other guidance for them was meaningless. But the Qur‘ān has, on the one hand, called the Torah light and guidance: “Surely We revealed the Torah having guidance and light” (5:44) and, on the other, the same has been said about the Gospel: And We gave him (i.e. to Jesus Christ Tr) the Gospel containing light and guidance (5:46). Thus, it is obvious that the perfection of the Torah is only relative here and it only refers to the part of the Torah which concerns with law (shari‘at). And the slight alterations in the law are assumed as if they did not exist. Otherwise the Founder does neither reject the Qur‘ānic description nor his own.
of the Torah should be drawn again towards the original teaching of this Book and those in whose hearts doubts, atheism and wickedness had crept in should be endowed with a living faith again. God says it Himself in the Qur'ān: *And We indeed gave Moses the Book and We sent messengers after him one after the other* so these messengers should support and verify the teaching of the Torah...Thus all these verses show that this has been the habit (‘ādat) of God that, after sending down His book, He does raise prophets for its support and verification. So much so, that for the support of the Torah even four hundred prophets had appeared at a time and about their appearance the evidence can still be found in the Bible".

The generalization of the above statement needs a little explanation. At the end of the passage it has been said:

"This has been the habit of God that after sending down His book He does raise prophets for its support and verification”.

The words are rather universal in their application, but would it be fair to conclude that the writer of the above lines similarly believed in the coming of prophets after the Qur'ān? In fact, he is only trying to establish a resemblance between the prophets and the spiritual *khalīfās* i.e. the renovators (mujaddidīn) of this *ummah*. Thus, to understand the meaning of the words “*that they had no new book with them*”, we shall refer to other writings of the Founder. In his book *Mawāhib al-Raḥmān*, published January, 1903, he has made a distinction between the mujaddids and auliya (saints) of this *ummah* and the prophets of previous *ummahs* which is that:

"...they are imbued with the colour of prophethood but they are not prophets in reality for the Qur'ān has brought the needs of law to perfection”.

Thus, it shows that, if the Qur'ān had not made the law perfect, these *auliyā‘* would have become in fact, prophets because, in that case, they would have continued to perfect the law of the Qur'ān, though they themselves would not have been the bearers of Law. Thus, between the prophets who were raised after Moses and the

khalifās who came after the Holy Prophet this distinction has been made that the prophets used to perfect the law but the Qur'ān does not stand in need of such a perfection. Therefore, the khalifās of this ummah are not prophets. Thus, the meaning of the words "that they had no new book with them" would only be that they did not bring any new law, and the book here would signify a book containing new law.

It should also be remembered, besides this, that here the Founder has mentioned messengers and prophets with those people who were given the name prophet only in the literal sense, that is, sometimes they made prophecies. Enough proof of this is that "for the support of the Torah even four hundred prophets had appeared at a time and about their appearance evidence can still be found in the Bible". But these four hundred prophets were not true prophets. It has been mentioned about them that they prophesied all together that a certain king would be victorious against his enemy, but he was defeated and killed in the battlefield. Now, it is evident that, if these prophets are accepted to be true prophets of God, no faith will be left in the institution of prophethood. Far from supporting the religion their precept rather destroys it that not one or two but four hundred prophets together make a prophecy which turns out to be absolutely false. A little thought would make the point clear that, in fact, they were ordinary seers, and seers were also sometimes called prophets. Otherwise, in reality, they were not prophets. At another place the Founder has also admitted that this dream of four hundred prophets was satanic. If satanic dreams and inspirations could also be had by the true prophets, nothing else could be accepted. God says in the Qur'ān that His revelation to messengers is sent under the protection of the angels:

For surely He makes a guard to go before him and after him.

168. "Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king" (I Kings 22:6).

169. "And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot." (Ibid., 22:35) Tr.

Another argument in favour of the point that they were not real prophets is that a little further in the same book he writes:

"During the fourteen hundred years, that is from Moses to the Messiah, thousands of prophets and *muhaddathīn* (inspired ones of God) were born among them."\(^{171}\)

Or again, "*Thousands of prophets were sent for the revival of this Law.*"\(^{172}\) Thus, in fact here only a general mention has been made about the names of those people along with others who supported the Mosaic faith. Otherwise, the clear difference between the work of a prophet and a *muhaddith* has been explained by the Founder in the same book. He has, however, summarised his writings on this subject in the following words:

"Now we write down here the summary of all that has been said above. The afore-mentioned arguments prove that, after the death of the Holy Prophet, at times of trials, tribulations and corruptions such reformers would appear who would be entrusted with this work from among the several works of the prophets that they should invite people to the true Faith, and remove every kind of innovation that had found its way in the religion, and after receiving heavenly light should manifest the truth of religion from every aspect to the people and should draw people by their own pure example towards truth, love and purity."\(^{173}\)

Now behold the work of revival (*tajdid*) has been declared to be one from several other works of the prophets. In this way, if any misunderstanding has arisen out of the first quotation, the above reference is quite sufficient to remove it. There is a great difference in the works of the prophets and that of the *mujaddids* (renovators), revival (*tajdid*) being only one of the works of the prophets. This shows that besides *tajdid* the real (*haqiqi*) prophets are entrusted with some other task as well. One of their tasks as has been shown by other references, is the perfection of the Law and guidance which they perform by the book that is given to them.

\(^{171}\) [Shahādat al-Qur'ān (22nd September 1893 C.E.)] p. 46.
\(^{172}\) Ibid.
\(^{173}\) Ibid., pp. 48-49.
The twelfth distinction: the prophetic revelation possesses all the excellences, whereas revelation granted to saints contains only *mubashsharāt* (good news).

This is the last distinction which the Word of God has made between the two kinds of revelations, i.e., prophetic revelation and the revelation which is granted to the righteous servants. Man is endowed with various faculties. His guidance and self-purification demands that all the defects in his faculties should be removed and these should be made capable for attaining to perfection. Thus, a person who is appointed for this work should himself be perfect in all his faculties and the means, i.e., his revelation, he employs to do his work should also possess all these aspects (which would help to attain perfection). When a prophet is raised for the reformation of his people, he is made a precept for them, a source from which all blessing is obtained. In these circumstances it is necessary that his revelation should possess more or less all the requisite excellences. The greater the revelation the greater are its excellences and the greater reformation of humanity could be achieved through it. As the Qur'ānic revelation far exceeds in its excellence than all other revelations, it has produced correspondingly a great revolution in the world. In the same way, according to their degrees of ranks in every country the message of prophets has done its task of reformation. A follower, while inviting towards guidance, calls to the revelation of his master Prophet and not towards his own revelation. Therefore, his revelation does not stand in need of those excellences, although it contains good news (*mubashsharāt*), which are from among the aids of religion. They are only a help towards bringing man to the ways of guidance. This difference arises out of necessity, as there are several other differences between *nubuwwah* and *wilāyah*. The Qur'ān is full of the excellences of the revelations of prophets. That is the true soul from which the world gets its life. About the revelation of the believers, it has been clearly mentioned: *lahum al-bushra fil hayat al-dunya wa fil-akhirah i.e. for them is the good news in this world’s life and in the Hereafter.*  

That is to say, the believers are given *mubashsharāt*, the rest of the things are found for them in the Qur'ān. But the need of

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174. The Qur'ān 10 Yūnus : 64.
the good news remains afresh and thus they are endowed with it. This is also confirmed by the authentic ḥadīth, which is:

\[\text{lam yabqā min al-nubuwwati ill al-mu\text{bash}sharāt}\]

"Nothing is left of prophethood except good news."\(^{175}\)

As the subject of mu\text{bash}sharāt has been discussed in detail elsewhere therefore nothing more is said about it here. It should be remembered that the good news is excluded from the real prophethood though in most cases it goes with it. Their door is open even after the termination of prophethood. If these were included in the real prophethood (as\text{f} nubuwwah), their door would have been shut with the Qur'ān. This is the view of all the scholars of religion.

In this connection, a few references from the writings of the Founder from his earliest and latest works would be enough. The detailed discussion will follow later. The following is what he wrote in one of his earliest books:

"The Prophet is reported to have said that nothing is left of prophethood except mu\text{bash}sharāt (good news) that is to say from the parts of prophethood only one part is left and that is the mu\text{bash}sharāt from the kinds of true dreams (al-ru'\text{y}a al-sādiqah), right visions (al-mukā\text{ Walsh}fhāh al-\text{Sāhih}ah) and the revelation which descends on the chosen ones among the righteous servants (khwās al-a\text{uliyyā').\text{.............}}\text{But the prophethood which is perfect and complete and possesses all the excellences of revelation, we have believed in its discontinuity from the day this was revealed:}

"Mu\text{hammad} is not the father of any of your men, but he is the messenger of Allah and khātam al-nabiyyīn, \(^{176}\) seal of the prophets."\(^{177}\)

And in his book Chashma Ma\text{rifat} he writes:

"The Holy Qur'ān does not terminate the continuation of Divine communion and communication, as has been mentioned in it: He makes the spirit to light by His command upon whom He pleases of

\(^{175}\) \text{Ṣa\text{hih} Al-Bukkārī, kitāb al-Ta'\text{bir}}\
\(^{176}\) \text{The Qur'ān 28 al-\text{Āh}zāb : 40.}\
\(^{177}\) \text{Tau\text{dih} Marām (22nd January 1391 C.E.) p. 10.}
His servants’; and at another place it is said: For them is good news in this world’s life and in the Hereafter. This means that for the believers only inspirations containing good news (mubashshir ilhām) have been left and the Law (shari‘ah) has come to a close because the age of the world is going to reach its end. Thus the Divine communication in the form of good news will remain till the Day of Resurrection.

On the next page he writes:

"We all agree on this that the shari‘ah has come to an end with the Qur‘ān, only mubashsharat, that is to say, prophecies are left".

These twelve distinctions between wahy-i-nubuwwah and wahy-i-wilāyah are such that anyone who will reflect over them is not in danger of stumbling over the question of prophethood. And “Allah leaves in error whom He pleases and guides to Himself those who turn to Him.”

178. The Qur‘ān 40 al-Mu‘min : 15.
179 Ibid. 10 Yūnus : 64.
181 Ibid., p. 181.
182 The Qur‘ān 13 al-Ra‘d : 27.
CHAPTER III

FINALITY OF PROPHETHOOD

The significance of the finality of prophethood

What is the significance of the term finality of prophethood? My first reply to this question is that the real object of sending the prophets, as stated in the Qur'ān, was achieved with the advent of the Prophet Muhammad. When that mission was fulfilled there was, in fact, no need left for the raising of prophets after him. All aspects of guidance, with explanation and necessary details, were given to the world by him. He received that perfect light from the Divine Source, the perfect light which is possible for the human being to receive, for the guidance, upliftment and purification of the whole of mankind for all time to come. As this Divine guidance has been communicated to the world, therefore the institution of prophethood has come to an end. A prophet was needed to explain some new aspect of guidance for man's spiritual progress, but, as the Qur'ān has brought all these aspects to perfection, the need for the advent of a new prophet has also ceased. The termination of prophethood, however, does not mean that a blessing (ni'mah) which was bestowed on human beings before has been intercepted. On the contrary, this favour has now been delivered to men in its perfect form. We have not been deprived of the blessing of prophethood, which is with us in its best form, but, as a lamp is not needed after the sun has risen, similarly after Muhammad mankind does not stand in need of any other prophet.

The first distinctive feature of the finality of prophethood: the prophet Muhammad appeared for the whole world

I have explained before that the real object of the prophets was only to convey guidance to men. This task was performed by them according to the needs and competency of their respective nations. A time came at last when the human mind reached the stage through the teachings of the prophets when it was able to receive the final message for the attainment of its perfection. And its distinguishing feature was that it was meant for the whole of mankind.
Muhammad's advent thus proved that a great revolution had taken place in the realm of prophethood. Because, by his appearance, a perfect guidance was delivered to the world following which men could attain, wheresoever they might be, the highest stage of spiritual perfection. A guidance meant only to fulfil the needs of a particular nation, could not feed all the branches of human nature. Different human faculties were developed among various nations, and for this purpose, various prophets were raised among men. This, in itself, is a proof that their teaching was not meant for the whole of the human race, and also that their teachings had not reached their highest stage of perfection. In fact, when the all-embracing guidance was sent down, the barriers of race, colour and country were broken. Thus the Prophet was commanded to declare:

"O mankind, surely I am the Messenger of Allah to you all". 183

And then it was said about Muhammad:

"And We have not sent thee but as a bearer of good news and as a warner to all mankind". 184

Again: 'And We have not sent thee but as a mercy to the nations". 185

Similarly, at another place the Qur'an says:

"Blessed is He Who sent down the Discrimination (al-Furqān) upon His servant that he might be a warner to the nations". 186 Thus it was in this way that all the national differences were obliterated, so that it may be proved that a complete guidance had come which could help man to attain that of which he is really capable.

When was the Prophet Muhammad appointed for the whole world?

Sometimes it is said that the Prophet did not receive the message on the first day that he was sent as a prophet to all the nations or that his teaching was meant for the whole of mankind. Some even go to the extent of saying that it was in Medina that he knew about his universal mission. This is, however, not correct. I have quoted before the hadith in which the Prophet is reported to have said:

183. The Qur'an, 7 al-A'rāf : 158.
184. Ibid., 34 al-Sabā : 28.
186. Ibid., 25 al-Furqān : 1.
"I said: 'O people, I am a messenger of Allah to you all, but you called me a liar, but Abu Bakr accepted me as true.'"\textsuperscript{187} Obviously this related to a time when only Abu Bakr had given testimony to his truth, while all people had rejected him. This shows that it was in the beginning of his prophethood that the Prophet Muhammad declared himself to be a messenger for all people. The question as to when these verses, quoted above (7: 158, 34: 28, 21: 107, 25: 1), were revealed does not stand in our way. The exact order of the descent of the revelation of the Qur'ān does not exist, so that we cannot positively and definitely say that a particular verse was revealed at a particular time, although it is worth remembering that the above-mentioned verses are supposed to be of the Meccan period. Further, it must be noted that the words of the second revelation qum fa-andhir i.e. Arise and Warn,\textsuperscript{188} of are rather general. It has not been said, warn your own people or the Arabs in particular. We notice that according to the Qur'ān every prophet was raised for his own nation, or to warn his own people, and to bring them out of darkness into light, but in the Prophet's revelation the absence of any mention about particularly warning his own nation clearly shows that his call was universal.

It is sometimes said about this second revelation that it belongs to a much later time as there was a cessation of revelation (fatrat al-wahy) for the period of three years between the first and the second revelation. But this is not an established fact. On the contrary, the version of Ibn 'Abbās, as recorded in Fath al-Bārī, is that the cessation lasted only for a few days.

Besides that, the first chapter of the Qur'ān also belongs to an earlier period, and in it the words al-ḥamdu lil lāhi rabbil 'ālanin (all praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all the worlds or of all the nations)\textsuperscript{189} are clear enough that God is responsible for the physical nourishment and sustenance (rabūbiyyah) of all the nations. How, then, can He neglect the spiritual rabūbiyyah of His creatures? The Qur'ān has left aside all the phraseology such as the Lord God of

\textsuperscript{187} Saḥiḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Tafsir, Excellences of the Companions of the Prophet.

\textsuperscript{188} The Qur'ān, 74 al-Mudāthir : 2.

\textsuperscript{189} Ibid., 1 al-Fāṭihah : 1.
Israel which confined him to be a God of a particular nation. 190 And the word rabb al-ʿālamīn have been used instead to point out that the Qurʾānic teaching was meant for all people. Similarly the words, And it is naught but a reminder for the nations 191 are also the words of the Prophet’s earlier revelation.

No prophet before Muhammad appeared for the whole world

This was, however, the first distinction of the finality of prophethood that the Prophet’s message was for the whole world. No doubt there had appeared before prophets who were sent to their own respective nations, but none of them claimed to have been raised for all the nations. Christians think that Jesus had told his disciples to “go forth to every part of the world, and proclaim the Good News to the whole creation.” 192 But this part has first of all proved to be a subsequent interpolation, and then there are other sayings of Jesus Christ which contradict this view; for instance, his reply to a Canaanite woman: I was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and to them alone, and it is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to dogs. 193 Jesus also commanded his disciples to go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 194 The same words have been confirmed by the Qurʾān, where it is said that God made him messenger to the children of Israel. 195 How could, after all, Jesus Christ claim to be a messenger for the whole world when he had clearly said: There is still much that I could say to you, but the burden would be too great for you now. However, when he comes who is the spirit of truth, he will guide you into all truth. 196 This in itself, is a sufficient proof that Jesus Christ never made a claim that he was raised for the whole of mankind. It appears that, when the Jews did not pay any heed to his message, his disciples turned towards other nations and then perhaps it was at that time that such sayings were attributed to Jesus Christ. However, there is no other prophet of God who laid claim to being the world’s

190. 1 Samuel 25 : 32 ; Romans 72 : 18, etc.
191. The Qurʾān, 68 al-Qalam : 52.
192. Mark 10 : 15.
195. The Qurʾān, 8 Ālʾ Imrān : 48.
teacher. Thus it is only the Prophet Muhammad who has been appointed for the whole world, which is a clear testimony to the finality of prophethood. When a prophet with perfect teaching has been raised, there is no scope for another to be appointed for this office again.

The second distinctive feature: Faith in the previous scriptures

Before the Prophet Muhammad no other prophet had claimed to have been appointed for the whole of mankind. Similarly, there was no other prophet before him who made it essential for his followers to have faith in all the previous prophets of God. This, in fact, is the distinctive feature of the finality of prophethood. It has been mentioned in the beginning of the Qur'an that the believers are those: *Who believe in that which has been revealed to thee and that which was revealed before thee*.

Now the words *mā unzila min qablika (that which was revealed before thee)* essentially require that one should have faith in all the *wahy-i nubuwwah* (prophetic revelation) which had been sent down before the Prophet Muhammad. On the other hand, the Qur'an says: *and for every people a guide (was sent)*, which shows that the bearers of guidance were sent to all nations. Thus in this way it has been made obligatory to have faith in all guidance which was revealed to various nations. This proves in two ways that Muhammad’s teaching was complete and perfect and that there would be no prophet after him. *Firstly*, if this teaching was not complete and perfect, and that he was not a Messenger of Allah, reciting pure pages *wherein are (all) right books (or ordinances)*, why was it made obligatory to have faith in all previous revelations? In other words, the raising of prophets among various nations before did, in fact, point towards the coming of a prophet, last of all, for the whole of mankind. The other prophets had prepared their followers for the acceptance of such a universal teacher. *Secondly*, the words *min qablika (before thee)* are clear enough that only faith in that revelation has been made obligatory which had been sent previously. This shows that there

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198. Ibid., 13 al-Ra'd: 7.
199. Ibid., 98 al-Bayyinah: 3.
would be no revelation after the Prophet Muhammad, belief in which was going to be a part of the fundamentals of Islam. This is a clear evidence of his being the last of the prophets. If someone says that at another place it is found in the Qur'ān that: *They all believe in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers*,\(^{200}\) or that according to the verse: *We make no difference among His messengers*\(^{201}\) that it is essential to believe in those messengers also who came after the Prophet, then such a statement is entirely baseless because the Qur'ān has made its meaning clear by the words *that which was revealed before thee* and no mention at all has been made for *that which will be revealed after thee*.

Thus, among *rusūl* (messengers), only those messengers would be included who fall under the category of those raised before the Prophet Muhammad. One verse could not be interpreted so as to contradict the other. Only that meaning would be acceptable which conformed to the text of other verse. As the words *that which was revealed before thee* cannot be stretched to include a later revelation after Muhammad, therefore he is, in fact, the last of the prophets. Besides, we should also remember that in the verse *they believe in Allah and angels and His Books and His messengers*,\(^{202}\) Books are clearly mentioned with the messengers, therefore, this verse also explains its own meaning.

Some people think that the words, *bi'il ākhirat-i hum yū'qinūn* i.e., *of the Hereafter they are sure*\(^{203}\) mean that *they have firm faith in what is yet to come*, i.e., the revelation or message of another prophet which is to come. A little reflection on these verses shows that for the upliftment of man the Qur'ān has mentioned in a beautiful way all the principles of Faith. Faith in God comes first and faith in the Hereafter last. It should also be borne in mind that a belief in Allah and a belief in the Hereafter: *who believe in Allah and the last Day*,\(^{204}\) often stand for a belief in all the fundamental principles of Islam. It is certainly a useless effort to leave this most eloquent expression and adhere to an anomalous interpretation. Again, not only do the principles of

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\(^{200}\) The Qur'ān, 2 al-Baqarah : 285.

\(^{201}\) Ibid.

\(^{202}\) Ibid.

\(^{203}\) Ibid., 2 al-Baqarah : 4.

\(^{204}\) Ibid., 9 al-Barā'at : 44 ; 9 : 29 ; 9 : 45 ; 2 : 8, etc.
Islam appear inadequate after accepting this strange meaning of *al-ākhirah*, but many other verses of the Qur'ān become meaningless. Moreover, in the chapter *Luqman*, these words have been mentioned exactly in the same manner: *who keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and are certain of the Hereafter* (bi’l-ākhirati hum yūqīnūn)—*These are on a guidance from their Lord, and these are they who are successful.* If the same interpretation of the verses be accepted here as in the chapter ‘The Cow’ (2:4), it would mean that, with the saying of the prayer and the paying of the poor-rate, the third article of faith is to have a belief in the revelation to come (i.e., the revelation of the Promised Messiah), whereas the appearance of the Promised Messiah is just a prophecy, and one could only have faith in it in an abstract and a general way. But what can, being certain of a prophecy, really signify? Another difficulty is that *al ʿakhira* would include faith in all the revelation that would come after the Prophet. Why should the revelation of one person be singled out? His revelation, after all, is like the revelation of other *mujaddids* (renovators). Then why should it not be essential to believe in all such revelations? Moreover, the words of the Qur'ān are, *that which has been revealed to thee and that which was revealed before thee*. Therefore *bi’l-ākhira* should necessarily mean *bīmā unzila bi’l-ākhira* (that which will be revealed after) but *mā unzila ilaika* (that which has been revealed to thee) means the Qur'ān, and *mā unzila min qablika* (that which has been revealed before thee) means the previous scriptures. Then what will be the scripture of the revelation which has to come? Because it is an established fact that neither any *mujaddid* nor even the Promised Messiah would bring any book. When there is no (new) book at all to demand our allegiance, of what shall we be certain and in what shall we have faith? If it is said, only in the revelation that has to come after Muhammad, I say there is no book after him which could be called *mā unzila bi’l-ākhirah* (that which will be revealed after). It is, therefore, quite unwarranted to take *al-ākhira* as meaning the message or revelation which is to come. The Qur'ān knows of no message coming to humanity after it. It is the last message, religion having been made perfect by it. The *ākhirah*

206. Ibid., 5 *al-Mā'idah* : 3.
of this verse is plainly spoken of as the Last Day in verse 8 of the same chapter.  

In short, the attempt at such an interpretation has no foundation at all and the only truth is that the verse that which has been revealed to thee and that which has been revealed before thee conclusively proves that the Prophet Muhammad is the Last Prophet and that the period of his prophethood extends to the day of Resurrection.  

The first reason for the finality of prophethood: Perfection of guidance

There is no scripture in the world which claims to have brought the guidance to perfection. On the other hand, hints are found in these scriptures at several places to the contrary. In the sayings of Jesus Christ such an admission has been openly made. If any person beside the Prophet Muhammad could be a claimant of bringing the guidance to perfection, it could only be Jesus Christ, for, between him and the Prophet Muhammad, history does not recognize the appearance of any other prophet. After the perfection of guidance there is indeed no scope for the coming of another prophet, because the real object of prophethood has been fulfilled. The purport of the raising of the prophets in the world was to communicate Divine guidance to men. This guidance, as the requirements of different nations rendered it necessary, was revealed according to the need and conditions of every age and nation. Again, it was not revealed to any prophet in its perfect form. Unless it were perfected, the coming of the prophets could not be terminated. In other words, he who brought the perfect guidance for all nations

207. "And there are some people who say: We believe in Allah and the Last Day (wa bi'l yaum-il-ākhiri), and they are not believers." Ibid., 2 al-Baqarah: 8.

208. Al-dār al-āl-ḥirah means al-nash'at al-thāniya, i.e., second life. Sometimes the word dār is omitted and al-ākhirah means dar al-ākhirah (Rāghib). This is the evidence of lexicon. When we study the Qur'ān we find that belief in al-ākhirah or disbelief in it has been mentioned eighteen times besides this verse (2:4), and not at a single place it means anything except life Hereafter. For references see 6:93; 6:114; 6:151; 7:45; 11:19; 12:87; 16:22; 16:60; 17:45; 23:74; 27:3; 4; 31:4; 34:8; 34:21; 39:45; 41:7; 53:27. Thus to believe that al-ākhirah means al-wakīl al-ākhira and then to conclude that there is another revelation after the Qur'ān is against the Qur'ānic teachings. (Muhammad 'Ali, Bayān al-Qur'ān, Urdu commentary, Vol. I, p. 20 under verse 2:4.)
of the world deserved to be called Ḳẖāṭam al-nabīyyīn, or the seal of the prophets of the world. As Jesus Christ was the last prophet before Muhammad, therefore, if he had made such a claim that he did bring the guidance to perfection, then his followers had the right to give him any rank they liked. He could have been called the last prophet, because with the perfection of guidance prophethood would have come to an end. But the Glorious God made Jesus Christ utter words that always would show that another prophet was needed after him and unless such a prophet had appeared the whole institution of prophethood would have remained meaningless because it would have left the real object—the perfection of guidance—in abeyance without which the human race could not have attained to real spiritual excellence. And these words are: There is still much that I could say to you, but the burden would be too great for you now.209 Had these words only been uttered by Jesus Christ, even then they must have forced the attention of the world to wait for another prophet because it was admitted by him that he had not brought the guidance to perfection. He had not made this confession alone, but had also expressly stated the great need for the coming of another person. However, when he comes who is the spirit of truth, he will guide you into all truth.210 Look, how plainly that man of a pure heart had admitted that another one was needed to lead mankind into all truth, that would be the person who would bring the guidance to perfection. Thus it was Jesus Christ alone who could make such a claim in the world’s history, but he confessed his shortcoming and added that the “Spirit of truth” must appear to bring the guidance to perfection. When he, the spirit of truth, came he declared: The Truth has come211 for whom the world waited. The creation of man would have become worthless but for his coming, because man could not have attained to his highest spiritual perfection without him. And, as it ought to have been, the Spirit of Truth after conveying his message to the whole world made that long awaited announcement (this is the only an-

211. The Qur‘ān, 17 Bani Isrā‘il: 81.
nouncement in the world’s history and would ever remain so, no voice has ever been raised against it nor would ever be raised): “This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed my favour to you”.212 This day, indeed, was the first day in the world’s history when sharī'ah (law) was made perfect as well as hidāyah (guidance). If a day could be called the day of ‘Īd (recurring happiness), it was this day. The Companions of the Prophet knew it very well that this was in fact a great day of remembrance. It is reported in Sahih al-Bukhārī under the interpretation of this verse:

“The Jews said to ‘Umar : you recite a verse, had it been revealed to us, we would have made it an occasion for ‘Id. ‘Umar replied : I know it well in what way it was revealed and where it was revealed and where the messenger of Allah was (peace and blessings of God be upon him!) and when it was revealed. It was the day of ‘Arafa (one day before the ‘Īd al-Adhā) and, by God! I was at ‘Arafa. Sufyān (another reporter of hadīth) says: I doubt whether it was Friday or not. And that verse is al-yauma akmaltu lakum dinakum —this day have I perfected for you your religion”.213

This was undoubtedly the day of ‘Īd and what a strange coincidence that it was revealed at a time when about one hundred and twenty-four thousand companions were busy performing the Farewell Pilgrimage (Hijjat al-Widā’) with the Prophet! It was here in the great plain of ‘Arafa that the Prophet delivered his famous sermon, at the end of which he said thrice, “Have I not told you ?”, and the plain resounded with the reply of his followers with one accord, “O our God, yes”. This was in fact the day of great rejoicing for Muslims.

The second reason for the finality of prophethood: Protection of guidance

Such an impressive and delightful spectacle with the news of the perfection of religion found place in world history only once, but it would not have remained so fascinating had it not been accompanied by the words of relief that its excellence would never see

212. The Qur’an, 5 al-Mā‘idah : 3.
213. Sahih al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Tafsir.
the day of decline. God had, of course, sent great teachings for the benefit of mankind, but they were tampered with by human hands. All the sacred scriptures of the world have, without exception, suffered alteration in their texts. Not only those books which were revealed thousands of years before but also the book which was only sent down six hundred years before the revelation of the Qur'ān, could not be found in its original form. A single Evangel of Jesus Christ gave place to four Evangelists. How could then his original teachings be protected? A humble servant of God who even refused to call himself good was made equal to, or rather better than, God in His attributes and powers. By this alone can be judged what might have happened to the previous scriptures. Thus it might have greatly hurt the Prophet to recite the verse: "They alter words from their places" with the thought in his mind that the same fate might attend to this great and perfect message of God. But fortunately he had received the Divine promise repeatedly: Surely it is a bounteous Qur'ān in a book that is protected and Nay, it is a glorious Qur'ān in a guarded tablet. Thus the protection of the Qur'ān was not left to human hands. The previous scriptures were no doubt the revelations of God but their scope was limited. The Qur'ān came for all nations and for all times and, if even a slight alteration had taken place therein, mankind would have suffered an irreparable loss, because after Muhammad no other prophet could come to rectify such an error. It was for this reason that it was declared by God: Surely We have revealed the reminder (al-dhikr) and surely We are its guardian. The sending down of al-dhikr (which is the real source of honour and eminence to mankind as is implied in its meaning) and the promise of its Divine protection is the second reason for the finality of prophethood. On the one hand, the guidance was brought to perfection, and on the other, a promise was given for its protection and thus the door of a new prophethood was closed. Henceforward it

216. Ibid., 56 al Wāqi'ah: 77, 78.
217. Ibid., 85 al-Burāj: 21, 22.
would be Muhammad’s prophethood that would meet the needs of humanity for all times to come. No other small lamp is needed when the sun in its full splendour has arisen.

Prophethood was not needed, therefore it was brought to an end

Everything exists by virtue of its need. But there are people who believe that only shari’ah (law) has come to an end and the door of prophethood without shari’ah ‘perfect prophethood’, (nubuwwat i kāmilah) is open. If it is asked, Why, after all, has the door of shari’ah been closed? their reply would be that the Qur‘ān has brought the shari’ah to perfection. As a new law is not needed, therefore, shari’ah has come to an end. If with the perfection of law, the door of law has been closed, similarly, with the perfection of prophethood, the door of prophethood has been closed. In other words, if a prophet is raised now, it means that Muhammad’s prophethood has been defective, which is obviously wrong.

Historical evidence that the chain of prophethood has been cut off

Still another point is worth consideration. If there existed the need of a prophet, then how did thirteen hundred years pass after the Prophet Muhammad without a single prophet being raised? In world history there is found only one period of six hundred years in which no prophet has appeared. And this great period of cessation of prophets was made a sign so that the world may wait for him who was going to be the pride of mankind, with whose advent the institution of prophethood was going to attain to its excellence. Man could not go further after reaching that stage. Indeed the whole world waited for six hundred years for a messenger because he was going to be raised for the whole world. Otherwise, in world history the prophets appeared at lesser intervals. Thus when the world looks forward for six hundred years for the advent of such a great man, there can only be two reasons now why the world should wait for 1300 years. Either a man far superior to the Prophet Muhammad was going to appear—which cannot be accepted by a Muslim for a moment—or prophethood had definitely come to an end. There has been no one in the world after the Prophet Muhammad like those who used to bring spiritual revolution in the history of mankind. This is the Divine evidence that
the Prophet Muhammad is the last of all the prophets, and so have the events of the world established this truth.

**What is the significance of Khātam al-Nabiyyīn?**

It is for this reason that the Qur'ān declares:

*Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the Prophets (khātam al-nabiyyīn) and Allah is ever Knower of all things.*

Three points have been mentioned in this verse. *Firstly* the Prophet Muhammad is not the father of any male descendant. *Secondly*, he is the Messenger of Allah, and *thirdly*, he is khātam al-nabiyyīn.

There is an obvious relation in all these points. *Firstly*, his physical relation of being the father of any male descendant has been denied because lineage continues by male and not by female descendants. It has been mentioned instead that he is the Messenger of God by using *lā kin* (but) (as *harf istidrāk*, a particle of emendation) which indicates that he still enjoys a kind of fatherhood (*abīwwāḥ*) which is spiritual in its significance, and such a relationship is borne by every prophet towards his followers. In other words, a descent of physical order is denied to him, but his spiritual lineage continues. Thus the underlying significance of this part of the verse: *Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah*, is that he is not the father in the physical sense, but, in the spiritual sense, he is indeed the father of his followers. After this, it has been mentioned that he is *khātam al-nabiyyīn* (the seal of the prophets)*, which shows that he has been given a more superior status than that of other prophets. Because, after the coming of another prophet, the spiritual lineage of the previous prophet was cut off and the new prophet, in fact, became the focal point, the rallying force of his people. All blessings were now obtained through him. Thus the spiritual fatherhood was transferred to this prophet, as it happened among the Israelites. The calling of the Prophet Muhammad as Messenger of Allah in the above verse might have given the impression that the

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spiritual lineage re-established by him was also going to be terminated after some times and another messenger or prophet might be raised after him, who would become the focus of spiritual blessing, and the relationship of spiritual *abūwwah* might be transferred to him.

This doubt was removed by the term *khātam al-nabiyyīn*, which means the last of the prophets, after whom no other prophet would appear. The underlying significance is that his physical lineage has, of course, been put to an end, but his spiritual lineage has been established in a unique form which will continue for ever. It must be borne in mind here that those who follow completely in the footsteps of the prophets bear a relation of sonship to them. As a son resembles, and shares in, some of the attributes of his father, similarly, the perfect followers of a prophet bear a resemblance to him and obtain for themselves some of his attributes by way of *zill* (reflection). Those who reach this stage by following the messengers are called their sons in a spiritual sense. Sometimes, by way of eloquent simile, the appellation “sons of God” has also been applied to men, but this was not to be understood in its literal sense. In brief, all prophets are brothers, and those who obtain the rank of excellence by following them are their spiritual sons. In fact, God has directed our attention here to two orders, physical and spiritual. In the physical order, Adam was the father of man with whom started the physical lineage. But the real perfection of man depends on spiritual order. All messengers in this spiritual order are like fathers and their line of descent is continued by their spiritual descendants. All prophets among themselves are brothers, but their followers do not stand in the same relation to them, but are only their sons. Again, all messengers have been given more or less their share of this spiritual offspring. But the height of spiritual perfection for mankind was connected with the appearance of the Prophet Muḥammad. With regard to his spiritual offspring, he was going to become the only spiritual Father of man because his spiritual lineage, unlike other prophets and messengers, was to continue for ever. Thus the suspension of the physical order in the case of the Prophet Muḥammad, which could only continue through his male descendants, pointed towards this reality that the spiritual order of his offspring would never be cut off. This is the underlying significance of the term *khātam al-nabiyyīn*. 
The meaning of the expression Khātām al-Nabiyyīn

The word khātām means a seal and also the last part or portion of a thing, the latter being the primary significance of the word khātām. When the word khātām is adjunct (mudaff) to a people, it always means last. The meaning of khātām al-qaum is the last of the people—ākhiruhum and nothing else.220 Thus the real meaning of

220. It would be appropriate here to quote what Mu'īmmad Ali has written, in explanation of this verse (33:40) in his English commentary of the Qurān:

"The word khātām means a seal or the last part or portion of a thing, the latter being the primary significance of the word khātim. It may further be noted that khātām al-qaum always means the last of the people—ākhiruhum (Tūj al-ʿArūs, Lane's Lexicon). Though the Holy Prophet was admittedly the last of the prophets, and even history showed that no prophet appeared after him in the world, yet the Holy Qurān has adopted the word khātām, and not khātim, because a deeper significance, is carried in the phrase Seal of the Prophets than mere finality. In fact it indicates finality combined with perfection of prophethood, along with a continuance among his followers of certain blessings of prophethood. He is the Seal of the Prophets because with him the object of prophethood, the manifestation of Divine will in laws which guide humanity, was finally accomplished in the revelation of a perfect law in the Holy Qurān, and he is also the Seal of the prophets because certain favours bestowed on prophets were for ever to continue among his followers. The office of the prophet was only necessary to guide men, either by giving them a law or by removing the imperfections of a previously existing law, or by giving certain new directions to meet requirements of the time, because the circumstances of earlier human society did not allow the revelation of a perfect law which should suit the requirements of different generations or different places. Hence prophets were constantly raised. But through the Holy Prophet a perfect law was given, suiting the requirements of all ages and all countries, and this law was guarded against all corruptions, and the office of the prophet was therefore no more required. But this did not mean that the Divine favours bestowed on His chosen servants were to be denied to the chosen ones among the Muslims. Men did not need a new law, because they had a perfect law with them, but they did stand in need of receiving Divine favour. The highest of these favours is Divine inspiration, and it is recognised by Islam that the Divine Being speaks to His chosen ones now as He spoke in the past, but such people are not prophets in the real sense of the word. According to a more reliable hadīth, the Prophet said 'there will be in my community,' i.e., among the Muslims, 'men who will be spoken to (by God), though they will not be prophets' (Bukhārī, 62:6). According to another version of the same hadīth, such people are given the name muḥaddath (Bukhārī, 62:6)." (Muḥammad 'Ali, The Holy Qurān, Arabic Text, Translation and Commentary, published by Aḥmadiyyah Anjuman Ishaʿat Islām, Lahore, Pakistan, 1951).
khātam al-nabiyyin can only be the last of the prophets although in the adoption of the word khātam there is a subtle hint that he has set a seal on the prophets. But the conclusion that setting a seal on the prophets mean that in future new prophets would be made by his seal is a thought absolutely devoid of meaning. If, however, we adopt this meaning of Muhammad’s being a seal on the prophets or of the prophets it would only mean that the mission of the prophets, that is, of guiding and perfecting human nature, would in future be accomplished by him. In other words, only his discipleship would help one to reach the highest point of perfection; after whom no other man could make such a claim. This also means the same that he is the last of the prophets. The Qur’ān had adopted the word khātam, which has a deeper significance and includes both aspects, i.e., perfection of prophethood combined with finality. He is the khātam (seal of the prophets) that is, the work which was done by the prophets before him would now for ever be done by the grace of his prophethood. He is the khātam (last) of the prophets, therefore no prophet would appear after him. If another prophet is raised after him, he could not remain khātam al-nabiyyin even in the first sense. If his spiritual grace (fa'ālād) cannot help produce perfect human beings how could he be considered the last of the prophets? In short, the word khātam (seal), which is full of significance, has been chosen for him to show that there would be no prophet after him and that his spiritual blessings would continue for ever, and whatever blessings of prophethood were obtained before by following other prophets would now be obtained only by following him. That is what is meant by his being the seal of the prophets for all times to come. It is on this account that the whole of the Muslim community (ummah), the parallel of such an agreement is hardly seen elsewhere, has accepted the term khātam al-nabiyyin to mean that the Prophet Muḥammad is the last link in the chain of prophethood. And whatever the Founder of the Aḥmadiyyah Movement has written at certain places, that Muḥammad (the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the seal of the prophets, is only in the sense what I have clearly explained above. For lack of prudence some people have thought that the Founder did not believe in the Prophet Muḥammad being the last prophet, on account of this verse. This is, however, absolutely wrong, as is evident from many references, which have been quoted elsewhere.
When did he become Khātam al-Nabīyyīn?

There is, however, another error, which results from lack of understanding. It is sometimes said that the Prophet, Muhammad was not the khātam al-nabīyyīn from the first day but was gradually promoted to this rank. The Muslim 'ulamā', on the other hand never agreed that there is a gradation in prophethood, which is a Divine gift and not an acquisition. The question may be asked, When did the Prophet become khātam al-nabīyyīn then? My reply to this is, on the same day when he was made a prophet. There are only two significances underlying the term khātam al-nabīyyīn: (1) that he is the last of the prophets, and (2) that the spiritual excellences which were received through the medium of other prophets would be obtained in future without cessation by following him.

Another question is raised then. Did the prophet know that he was khātam al-nabīyyīn or did he know it only when this particular verse of the chapter al-ʻAhzāb was revealed? My reply again is the same which has been given above. If he knew both these things that he was the last of the prophets and that his spiritual blessings were to continue for ever, then definitely he knew the real significance of the finality of prophethood. The work which he was doing was, at any rate, the work of the khātam al-nabīyyīn, that is, his teaching was perfect and free from error, the guidance which was revealed to him was also complete in every way and comprehended all aspects of human life. Again, he knew also that he was raised for the whole world. This is, however, obvious that when a person is raised to the status of prophethood he knows in what manner and to which direction he has to invite his people. In spite of all this, the Prophet’s knowledge keeps on increasing, as is mentioned in a prayer of the Prophet in the Qur'ān: O Lord, increase me in knowledge, but no promotion takes place in his rank of prophethood. He does not receive half the prophethood first and the second half afterwards, nor is he appointed as a minor prophet one day and a major prophet the next day. Nor is a person raised to the status of prophethood without knowing that he has been appointed to this office. The Jews and the Christians knew, even when he was

221. The Qur'ān, 20 Ṭā Hā: 114.
at Mecca, that he was the last prophet. Did not God give this knowledge to the Prophet Muhammad himself? When did Negus become a Muslim? Did not he know that the Prophet who was going to appear was the last prophet about whom prophecies were mentioned in the earlier books? In short, when all the characteristics pertaining to the finality of prophethood were found in him, he became the \textit{khātām al-nabiyyīn} at the same time. The reason for revealing particular things at particular occasions has been explained by the Qur'ān itself: \textit{so that We may strengthen thy heart thereby.}\textsuperscript{222} The Qur'ān was thus revealed in small portions to strengthen the heart of the Prophet.

This seems rather incongruous that the promise of the protection of the Qur'ān which is part of the finality of prophethood, was given at Mecca,\textsuperscript{223} but the verse of the finality of prophethood was revealed in chapter \textit{al-Ahzāb}\textsuperscript{224} at Medina, although the verse about the "perfection" of guidance, \textit{this day I have perfected for you your religion},\textsuperscript{225} was in fact revealed at the time of the Farewell Pilgrimage, eighty-three days before the death of the Prophet. The question could be raised by an ignorant person, did he become \textit{khātām al-nabiyyīn} first and was religion perfected later on? A proper time is needed for the revelation of every matter. Even before the promise of protection was given, the Prophet always took measures to safeguard the Qur'ānic revelation, and he continued to do so even after the Divine promise. The assurance of the preservation of the Qur'ān from destruction was given in face of the unbelievers' opposition to the Prophet and his mission. To set his heart at rest the revelation was sent to the Prophet, \textit{We have revealed the Reminder (i.e., the Qur'ān) and surely We are its Guardian.}\textsuperscript{226} The words used on this particular occasion not only assured him of a timely protection but also contained a promise of full protection of the Qur'ān not only during the life of the Prophet but also for all times to come. Similarly, there was an appropriate time to mention the

\textsuperscript{222} The Qur'ān 23 : \textit{al-Furqān} 32.
\textsuperscript{223} Ibid., 15 \textit{al-Ḥijr} : 9.
\textsuperscript{224} Ibid., 33 \textit{al-Ahzāb} : 40.
\textsuperscript{225} Ibid., 5 \textit{al-Mā'idah} : 3.
\textsuperscript{226} Ibid., 15 \textit{al-Ḥijr} : 9.
finality of prophethood. The Prophet’s son, Abraham, had died. Zaid, son of Hārithah, was known among people as the Prophet’s adopted son, who divorced his wife Zainab. The Prophet married her under Divine command.\(^227\) Whatever relationship of fatherhood he had with Zaid vanished from the minds of the people at this marriage. This was the right time that such a verse should be revealed to the Prophet that God had not sent him so that his physical lineage should continue through his male descendants, but that He had made him the last prophet so that the order of his spiritual descendants should never be cut off from the world. Because he had been given a great order of spiritual offsprings, therefore, to show that physical descendants and physical relations are of no value in the sight of God, it had been mentioned, *Muhammad is not the father of any of your men.*\(^228\) God has given him countless spiritual descendants and has extended this order till the Day of Resurrection; therefore, if having a son was of any value in His sight, He could not have deprived him of this favour.

**The finality of prophethood according to the Hadith**

The clear way in which the Qur’an has dealt with the question of the finality of prophethood and the reasons given for bringing prophethood to an end leaves no shadow of doubt in Muhammad’s being the last of the prophets. However, I should like to discuss this point from the Hadith as well.

First of all, let us take up the reports which are unanimously accepted. The first of these is:

"It is reported from Sa’d, son of Abi Waqqās, that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of God be upon him!) said to ‘Ali: You stand to me in the same relation as Aaron stood to Moses except that there is no prophet after me."\(^229\)

To understand this ḥadith the relationship between Aaron and Moses should well be kept in mind. It was Moses who gave Law to the Israelites, as is evident by his going to the mountain and leaving Aaron behind him as his deputy for forty days. If the real

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\(^{227}\) The Qur’an, 33 al-Ahzāb : 37 : 38.

\(^{228}\) Ibid., 33 al-Ahzāb : 40.

\(^{229}\) Al-aṣḥāb al-Bukhārī, al-Muslim, Mīshkāt al-Masābīh, chapter Manāqib ‘Ali.
issue is being a prophet with a law or a prophet without a law, then Moses was a law-bearing prophet and Aaron was a prophet without a law (what was the real status of Aaron has been discussed by me elsewhere). Now the Prophet Muhammad's realationship with 'Ali was the same as that of Moses with Aaron, with of course one exception. If this exception was not mentioned, then Muhammad had exactly the same relationship with 'Ali which Moses had with Aaron. If the report only said that you stand to me in the same relation as Aaron stood to Moses, then it might have been concluded that the prophethood without a law had not been terminated after the Prophet Muhammad. But the presence of the word illâ (except) has even removed such a possibility. Otherwise, the hadîth would have become meaningless. The words "except that there is no prophet after me" show that no prophet would come after Muhammad, neither with a law nor without. Anyhow, the saying negatives absolute prophethood; for, if the appearance of a prophet were possible, 'Ali would have been such a prophet. He bore such a relationship to the Prophet which a prophet could have with another prophet.

The claimant to prophethood is a liar

Another accepted report of high credibility runs thus:

The Day of Judgment will not be set up unless some tribes of my ummah have joined the polytheists and unless they have started worshipping the idols. And surely there shall be among my followers thirty liars, every one of them asserting that he is a prophet, but I am khâtâm al-nabiyyîn (the Seal of the prophets), there is no prophet after me.

According to this report, anyone laying claim to prophethood after the Prophet Muhammad is a liar. It has not been mentioned here that these thirty liars would lay claim to the prophethood with a code (tashrî'î nubuwwat), but only a claim to an absolute prophethood, has been mentioned. Thus, laying the claim to prophethood, in spite of being a member of this ummah, is also the sign of a

230. See ch. II.

231. Al-Ṣâhid al-Bukhârî, Kitâb al-Tawhid; Al-Muslim; Tirmidhî, Abwâb al-Fitan.
liar. Anyone who is within the *ummah* would necessarily believe in the Qur'an and the Hadith, otherwise he could not be considered a member of the *ummah*. Thus, a claimant of absolute prophethood (which in other words could be called perfect prophethood—*nubuwwat i-kāmilah*), so that it may be distinguished from partial prophethood, which can be obtained by a follower (as will be discussed in the next chapter) is absolutely forbidden for a Muslim who has faith in the Qur'an and the Hadith. To say that this has been obtained by following the Prophet Muhammad is not enough, because, whoever is within the *ummah* would say the same thing, and there is no difference in this respect between prophethood with a code or without.

Both these reports conclusively prove that the door of prophethood in this *ummah* is absolutely closed and no prophet can be raised after the Prophet Muhammad. If on one side the resemblance of 'Ali with Aaron destroyed any chance of even the continuity of prophethood without a code, on the other, the laying claim to prophethood by anyone within this ummah has been considered the work of a kazzāb (liar).

Thus, these two reports make the following points clear:

(1) Even a person who is most closely related to the Prophet Muhammad cannot be a prophet.

(2) Anyone who lays a claim to prophethood in this *ummah* is a liar.

(3) Prophethood with a code or without a code has been equally terminated.

The last brick of the house of prophethood

Then another hadith is recorded in *al-Sahih al-Bukhārī* as follows:

It is reported from Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him!) that the Messenger of Allah (may peace and blessings of God be upon him!) said: My likeness and the likeness of the prophets before me is the likeness of a person who built a house and he made it beautiful and made it complete except the place of a brick of the
corner. So people began to go round about it and to wonder at him and say: Why have you not placed this brick? He (i.e., the Prophet) said: So I am that brick and I am \textit{kha\text{"a}tam al-nabiyyin} (the Seal of the Prophets).\textsuperscript{232}

The brick of the corner in fact refers to the corner-stone about which a mention has been made in the Bible,\textsuperscript{233} and then by Jesus Christ in his parable of the vineyard.\textsuperscript{234} Thus, in the prophecies also, the Prophet has been called the corner-stone and in the had\textsuperscript{th} also he lays a claim of being the corner-stone. When there was room for only one brick in the house how could more room be found for another brick except that the brick which has already been laid should be removed? This had\textsuperscript{th} also proves that the question of prophethood with a code or without a code does not arise. No one can be the recipient of absolute prophethood. As there is no place whatsoever in the house for laying a “brick of prophethood with a code”, similarly there is no place there for a “brick of prophethood without a code”. Or it has to be admitted that the “brick of prophethood without a code” can only be laid in another house. The house of prophethood that has been referred to in the above report has neither place for ‘\textit{tashri\text{"i}"} prophethood nor \textit{ghair tashri\text{"i}” prophethood}.

The saying of ‘A’isha explained

All these reports cannot be rejected by a saying attributed to ‘A’isha, which runs thus:

Say \textit{kha\text{"a}tam al-ambiy\text{"	ext{"a}}} (seal of the prophets), but do not say, there is no prophet after him.\textsuperscript{235}

Now it has been established from authentic reports that the Prophet Muhammad has explained the term \textit{kha\text{"a}tam al-nabiyyin} by the words “there is no prophet after me” – \textit{ana kha\text{"a}tam an-nabiyyin la nabiyya ba’\text{"a}di}. Thus, how could the saying of ‘A’isha be accepted, which is entirely opposed to it, except that it should be interpreted in

\textsuperscript{232} Al-\textit{\c{S}ahih al-Buh\text{"ar}}, Kit\text{"a}b al-Man\text{"a}qib, ch. \textit{Kha\text{"a}tam al-Nabiyyin}; Al-\textit{Muslim}; Tirm\text{"i}dhi, Abw\text{"a}b al-Man\text{"a}qib, etc.
\textsuperscript{233} “The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner” (Psalms, 118 : 28).
\textsuperscript{234} Matthew.
\textsuperscript{235} \textit{Majma’ al-Bih\text{"ar}}
The Prophethood in Islam

a way so as not to contradict the saying of the Prophet himself? The words apparently mean only this, that the Divine phrase ‘seal of the prophets’ is a more comprehensive term than the explanatory statement, *there is no prophet after me*, the latter being a reference only to the one aspect of the finality of prophethood. The explanation of the second aspect is met with in the other reports of the Prophet, such as:

"There is nothing left of prophethood except good news (mubashshirat)".

But if another meaning is sought in the saying attributed to ‘Ā’ishah that the statement, *there is no prophet after him*, is wrong and opposed to the term the *Seal of the Prophets*, then in such a case the words of ‘Ā’ishah should be rejected according to the primary rules of interpretation of Hadith that the saying of a Companion should be rejected, if it goes against the saying of the Prophet. In this particular instance the report of the Prophet is authentic and unanimously accepted and recorded in *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Muslim* whereas ‘Ā’ishah’s saying has been quoted without giving the necessary chain of narrators. Thus, such words should be either interpreted according to the authentic hadīth or entirely rejected.236

**Had there been a prophet in this ummah it would have been ‘Umar**

It has been reported by ‘Aqbah, son of ‘Āmir, that the Messenger of God said:

"Had there been a prophet after me it would have been ‘Umar." 237

This hadith is found in Tirmidhi and, although it has been stated there, as *gharib*,238 in another edition of Tirmidhi the word *hasan*239

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236. As compared with this there are other authentic sayings of ‘Ā’ishah which confirm the finality of prophethood. For instance: *It has been reported from ‘Ā’ishah that the Prophet said*: No part of prophethood would be left after me except mubashshirat. They (the Companions) said: O Messenger of Allah, what are mubashshirat? He replied: True visions (Musnad Ahmad).

*It is reported from ‘Ā’ishah that the Prophet said*: I am the last of the prophets and my Mosque is the last of the prophets’ mosques (Kanzul Ummāl).—S. M. T.


238. Rare or unfamiliar.

239. Approved.
has also been added. Besides this, Imam Ibn Jauzi has recorded it. And Ahmad in his Musnad, Hakim in his al-Ṣ̱ahih and Tibrāni in his commentary have all reported this saying. And as its subject matter is in conformity with the Qur'an and the authentic traditions, therefore, there can be no objection to accepting it as true. This hadith is also a clear testimony that there can be absolutely no prophet in this ummah. If there was any such possibility, then 'Umar would have become a prophet. But as 'Umar was not a prophet, therefore, none other can be a prophet in this ummah.

Other reports about the finality of prophethood

Then Nasai, Muslim and Tirmidhi have reported from Abu Huraira that the Messenger of God said:

"Prophets have come to an end with me." 240

Similarly, in a report about Ascension, reported by Khatīb, Dailami and also by Ibn Jauzi through Anas, the following words occur that the Most High God said:

Do you feel aggrieved that I have made you the last (ākhir) of the prophets?

The reply of the Prophet was:

"I said, O my Lord, no."

If the door of prophethood has not been shut, how could Muhammad be the last of the prophets?

Another hadith, which has already been quoted, is that the Prophet Muhammad said:

"I am the first of the prophets in creation but last in appointment." 241

Now, if the raising of another prophet is accepted, this goes against his saying. Apart from these there are several other reports of the Prophet, or sayings of his Companions, which deal with the question of the termination of prophethood, but, for lack of space, I cannot enter into a detailed discussion.

240. Nasā'i, Muslim and Tirmidhi.
The Prophethood in Islam

Another hadith explained: The Prophets are Brothers

Against all these reports, many of which are correct and highly authentic, a saying attributed to ‘Abū Ishāq is put forward, which has already been explained above. Another hadith which is quoted in favour of the continuity of prophethood is:

Prophets are allāti brethren, their mothers being different but their religion is one. And I am nearest to Jesus, son of Mary, and there is no prophet between me and him. And surely he is going to descend. Thus, when you see him, recognize him.242

It is argued from this hadith that here by Jesus, son of Mary, is not meant the Israelite prophet because at the end his descent has also been mentioned, which refers to the coming of the Promised Messiah, therefore it is his prophethood which has been pointed out here. On the face of it this interpretation sounds good, but, as a matter of fact, the words which occur at the beginning i.e., prophets are allāti brethren make it abundantly clear that by Jesus, son of Mary, is here meant the Israelite prophet. The Promised Messiah who is a member of this ummah cannot be called a brother of the Prophet Muhammad. His relationship with him is of spiritual sonship, like all the people of the Prophet’s ummah, as is indicated by the phrase khātam al-nabiyyīn (the seal of the prophets). This has been discussed earlier. In any case, without the least shadow of doubt, the Promised Messiah’s relation with the Prophet is of spiritual sonship, whereas the Israelite Messiah bears the relationship of a spiritual brother to him. Thus the words I am nearest to Jesus, son of Mary, refer only to Jesus Christ and not in any case to the Promised Messiah. And this view is also supported by the words and there is no prophet between me and him. To think that these words refer to a future event in spite of their clear reference to the previous Messiah is to distort the real significance of the words. The point that the words surely he is going to descend prove that the whole report deals with the Promised Messiah, is not correct, because very often in such cases, the pronoun might refer to the like (mabīl) of the person or thing already mentioned, as in a well-known expression I took a dirham and its half. In this case the pronoun it refers not to the first dirham but to the like of it, that is, the half of another dirham. Such an instance is found

in the Quran as well, as follows:

So We turned them (i.e., Pharaoh and his people) out of gardens and springs and treasure and goodly dwellings even so. And we gave them (aurathnāhā) as a heritage to the Children of Israel.²⁴³

Now, surely Pharaoh's people were turned out of the gardens of Egypt and the heritage of the gardens and treasures was given to the Israelites in the land of Canaan, although the pronoun them (ḥā) obviously refers to the gardens from which Pharaohites were turned out, but, as a matter of fact, the pronoun them refers to the gardens of the Egyptians.

Similarly, the pronoun he in "surely is going to descend" (innah nāzil-un) refers to the like of Jesus, son of Mary, who has been mentioned before. The presence of the word ukhwat-un (brethren) in the first part of the hadith forbids its application to the Promised Messiah, because of the clear context that none but Jesus Christ is referred to here. But, in the latter part of the hadith, the pronoun He in inna-hū applies to the like of Jesus Christ, because he who has passed away does not come back. Thus, the latter part of the report permits the acceptance of a metaphorical meaning, particularly when such instances of change of pronoun can be found in Arabic literature and the Qur'an, and a clear indication is also found in the text.

This interpretation is very subtle and full of meaning, as compared with that in which, without any strong indication, the name Jesus Christ should be understood to have applied to the like of him in the beginning of the report. On the other hand, there is every reason to believe that this name applies particularly to Jesus Christ, the Israelitish Messiah, who, by virtue of his being a prophet, bears a fraternal relation with the Prophet Muhammad. Thus, it is not proved at all from this hadith that the Promised Messiah is a prophet or that the advent of a prophet is expected in this ummah.

The Prophet's being khātam al-nabiyyīn closes the door of prophethood.

Besides the saying of 'Āisha' and the hadith discussed above an attempt has also been made to prove the continuity of prophethood.

from some verses of the Qur'an. The only distinction which is made in this respect is that at first prophethood was directly received as a Divine gift (mauhibah) and now it is received by acquisition (iktisab) through the agency of the Prophet Muhammad—the only difference being that no part of the Shari'ah would be revealed any more. The verse quoted in support of this argument is:

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the prophets."\(^{244}\)

The interpretation put to the term khātam al-nabiyyīn (Seal of the Prophets) is that henceforward, by the Prophet's seal, prophets would be made, that is to say, at first God appointed prophets directly, but now they would obtain the office of prophethood by Muhammad's seal. The explanation of this verse given by me above shows that Muhammad being the 'Seal of the prophets' means that the work which was done by the prophets before would now always be done by his seal because there would be no prophet after him. This also refers to his prophetic excellences, because he whose spiritual beneficence is extended to the Day of Resurrection must necessarily be a great prophet. The age of every prophet came to an end after some time, as did his spiritual power, but the age of the Prophet Muhammad could never come to an end and his spiritual power would neither diminish nor become ineffective. The greater portion of the spiritual excellences his community has received, or would ever receive, as compared with those of the communities of other prophets, is due to the Prophet Muhammad. As his excellences are far superior to those of other prophets, therefore their penetration would also be proportionately greater in his ummah. If by 'Seal of the prophets' is meant that prophets could be raised like the prophets of yore, and that the prophetic revelation is continued, it would necessarily mean that it is not the Prophet Muhammad who is the last prophet but someone else, and that the consensus of opinion of the whole Muslim nation is wrong about the finality of prophethood and about the suspension of the descent of Gabriel with apostolic and prophetic revelation even after the death of the Prophet Muhammad! The truth according to such a view would be that the order of prophethood is still in existence, the prophetic revelation also

\(^{244}\) The Qur'an 33 Al-Ahzāb : 40.
has not been suspended, the only difference being that the work of bestowing the favour of prophethood, which was done before directly by God, has now been entrusted to the Prophet Muhammad, and the seal which God had in His own hand has now been given to Muhammad.

Strangely enough, those companions who came directly in his contact and were trained by him did not become prophets, even those for whom God repeatedly gave a promise of their "purification," and evidence for the fulfilment of such a promise has also been given in the Qur'an:

But Allah has eneared the faith to you and has made it seemly in your hearts, and He has made hateful to you disbelief and transgression and disobedience. Such are those who are rightly guided.\textsuperscript{245}

And these companions also did not become prophets who received the highest rank in the sight of God\textsuperscript{246} and about whom it has been said:

"And the foremost, the first of the emigrants and the Helpers, and those who followed them in goodness—Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them Gardens, wherein flow rivers, abiding therein for ever. That is the mighty achievement.\textsuperscript{247}

And those also who were called \textit{khair al-qurūn} (the best of the generations) could not become prophets. Even 'Umar, about whom it was said: \textit{Had there been a prophet after me, it would have been 'Umar}\textsuperscript{2} could not become a prophet, although he had the potentiality which could raise a person to the office of a prophet. It was even told to him by Muhammad that there was no hope of a prophet being raised after him. If it is assumed for the sake of argument, that the order of prophethood has not been suspended but instead of God's raising the prophets this task has been entrusted to the Seal of the

\textsuperscript{245} The Qur'an 49 \textit{Al-Hujurāt} : 7.
\textsuperscript{246} Ibid., 9 \textit{al-Barā'at} : 20.
\textsuperscript{247} "Those who believed and fled (their homes), and strove in Allah's way with their wealth and their lives, are much higher in rank with Allah. And it is these that shall triumph". (The Qur'an, 9 \textit{al-Barā'at} : 20).
\textsuperscript{248} Ibíd., 9 \textit{al-Barā'at} : 100.
\textsuperscript{249} \textit{Tirmidhi}.
Prophets, then a charge of falsehood is laid against Muhammad himself (May God forbid us all from such a blasphemy!) that he told one of his companions that if there was any possibility of the advent of a prophet, then he would have become a prophet, and to another he said: “O ‘Ali, you stand to me in the same relation as Aaron stood to Moses except that there is no prophet after me,” and yet to another he said, “O Abu Bakr, you are the first to enter paradise from among my ummah,” but he also did not become a prophet. Now it is time to stop and ponder that if a teacher is incompetent because he cannot make a pupil like him and if Muhammad was the Seal of the prophets in this sense that he was a prophet-making prophet, and now there was no need of prophethood which was directly received by God, and this honour, in a way a Divine prerogative, had fallen in his hands, then how was it possible that he could not make a single prophet like himself?

A prophet is raised by God and this work cannot be entrusted to a human being

In fact all this confusion arises from lack of due understanding of the Qur’an. To make a man a prophet is only the work of God:

“‘Allah best knows where to place His Message.”  

If sometimes God confers His prerogative on some of His righteous servants; what disaster would it cause if He did give the power of creating birds and raising the dead to life to the Messiah? Such is, however, not the Divine practice. The Prophet Muhammad came to discharge the same duties for which other prophets were raised. If some human being had made a prophet before, it could be assumed that it was possible for man to do so, hence it was lawful for the Prophet Muhammad as well. But, if there is no parallel like that, it necessarily follows that such powers only belong to God. If a teacher is not competent unless he produces a pupil like himself, then God was the teacher of all the prophets. Did He make His pupils like Himself? The Most High God has plainly attributed the teaching of the Prophet Muhammad to Himself thus: The Beneficent

250. Ibid., 3 Al‘Imrān : 49.
(al-Rahmân) taught the Qur'ân.  

It is clear that the Qur'ân, the last of the Books, was taught by al-Rahmân to the great prophet like Muhammad but still he did not become al-Rahmân. The Prophet Muhammad, in spite of his great rank and nearness to God, in spite of his receiving in his person Divine attributes by way of reflection (zîll), in spite of his being a perfect and complete manifestation of God, did not become God. Then shall it be said, what is this Teacher who could not make His pupil like Himself? If anybody has the right to say that he would only believe God to be the real teacher of the prophets when He is capable of at least making one of His pupils like Himself, then, of course, he has the right to impose the same condition on the teachership of the Prophet Muhammad. The powers and natural faculties Divinely conferred upon the Prophet Muhammad, who was made an epitome of mankind and the possessor of the highest potentialities in his nature cannot be transferred to anybody else by the Prophet. If he is able to do so, then it was better that he should himself appear in the world. How we wish that we could be resurrected with him? What else do we need if we get this priceless treasure in this life? But "Thou wilt not find a change in Allah's course", says the Qur'ân.

Some ignorant people raise the objection that, if God is Omnipotent (Qâdir mâţlaq), can He create another God? If the reply is in the affirmative, then two omnipotent gods would come into existence and God Himself would not remain Omnipotent. And if the reply is in the negative, how can God in fact be Omnipotent when He cannot create a God like Himself? It is exactly the same rigmarole in which the believers in the continuity of prophethood have fallen. The Prophet Muhammad (may peace and the blessing of God be upon him) is such a perfect teacher that a teacher like him has neither been born before nor can be born in the future. It is here that we are faced with a similar question of God being Omnipotent. If the Prophet can produce a perfect teacher like him, then his qualification of being unique is lost because another perfect teacher would replace him and this new prophet would become the source of spiritual beneficence, otherwise he would not be like his teacher, and without becoming the main source of

251. The Qur'an 55 al-Rahmân : 1, 2.
252. Ibid., 49 al-Fath : 28; 33 al-Ahzâb : 62,
spiritual blessing his becoming a prophet is a meaningless thing. And if the Prophet cannot produce a perfect teacher like him, then the thought makes some people worry that how can a person be a perfect teacher who cannot make his pupils perfect like himself. Again, if such a standard is accepted as true, there have been many teachers in the world whose pupils have superseded them. Then why cannot there be a pupil of Muhammad who can (God forbid!) supersede him? To reach the core of the problem is a difficult task. Why should God do something contrary to His attributes? The existence of another Omnipotent God is opposed to Divine attributes. Similarly, this is also opposed to His attributes that He should entrust a prophet or a messenger with a work which is His own. For this reason a prophet cannot make another person a prophet. And for this reason, too, it is against Muhammad's being a perfect guide that he should make another guide like him and give the charge of his own office to this new guide.

There is no authority for the new meaning of *khātam al-nabiyyīn*

I have mentioned above some reports in which the Prophet has himself interpreted *khātam al-nabiyyīn* as *la-nabiyya ba'di* i.e. there is no prophet after me. There are many other reports of this nature, which have been left by me for brevity's sake. As opposed to this, not a single *hadith* or saying, however weak it may be, can be acclaimed in support of the view that the expression *khātam al-nabiyyīn* (Seal of the Prophets) means a prophet by whose seal prophets would be made. On one side, there is such strong evidence from *hadith* and, on the other, next to nothing exists in the reports of the Prophet in favour of the new meaning. Thus, a person can judge it for himself what meaning is really acceptable. If there were even only one or two weak reports in support of this new interpretation, then one has the right to interpret this term differently. The conception of finality is strengthened by most reliable traditions, the number of which has arisen almost to forty. On the other hand, in support of the continuity of prophethood, not a single report, however weak and slender in authority it may be, can be brought forward. Even a saying of any of the Companions of the Prophet is not found in its support. Thus, it is evident that any interpretation as to the continuity of prophethood is not in the least acceptable.
As to the point that the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement has also given such interpretation, this is also wrong. After explaining the meaning of seal, he has discussed the overflowing of spiritual beneficence of the Prophet and has clearly said:

This is the meaning of the hadith that the Ulama of my ummah will be like the prophets of Israel.\(^{253}\)

This reference will be discussed later. Evidently, this refers to the same flow of spiritual beneficence which is accepted by the whole ummah. But the meaning, that it was God who first raised the prophets and in future they would be raised by Muhammad’s seal has neither ever occurred to the Prophet himself, nor to any Imam or muhaddath in this ummah, nor to the Founder himself.

**THE QUR’ANIC VERSES IN SUPPORT OF THE CONTINUITY OF PROPHETHOOD ANALYSED**

The strongest evidence put forward for the continuity of prophethood is the following verse of the Qur’an:

1. O children of Adam, if messengers came to you from among you relating to you My messages, then whosoever guards against evil and acts aright — they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve.\(^{254}\)

It is argued, on the basis of this verse, that the appearance of messengers after the Prophet Muhammad is not only permissible but also essential. But in this verse, all the children of Adam are addressed and the verse, in fact, refers to the incident after Adam’s story. To think that the address here is to the people coming after the Prophet Muhammad is preposterous. The meaning of the verse is clear enough. In the Divine scheme of things Adam received words from his Lord, but for the children of Adam, He would send messengers relating His messages to them. Those who would accept them and act righteously would be saved. It was under this Divine law that the Prophet Muhammad was sent to the world, who related God’s messages (ayāt), i.e., the Quran, to the people. The main

\(^{253}\) Haqiqat al-Wahy, pp. 46, 47.

\(^{254}\) The Holy Quran al-A‘rāf 7:35. (For the use of the word rasīl in the writings of the Founder see footnote 90—S. M. T.)
object of the advent of the messengers, however, was the communication of Divine messages, but when this object was fulfilled in the form of the Quran, a complete and perfect message—to all nations extending to all ages to the Last Day—then there was no need to raise another messenger. It is indeed a bold step to argue from this verse about the continuity of prophethood as opposed to the plain verses of the Quran, which mention his being khātam al-nabiyyīn\(^{255}\) and which clearly point out: *This day have I perfected for you your religion.*\(^ {256}\) Those Muslims who draw sophisticated conclusions from this verse should also ponder over the point that, if continuity of prophethood is established from this verse, it is an argument in the hands of the followers of Bahaism who, unlike Muslims, regard the law of the Quran as abrogated. It is not mentioned here that these messengers would be the followers of the Prophet Muhammad. "Children of Adam" is a general expression which may apply to any nation, Muslims or non-Muslims alike. And then this verse necessitates the revelation of messages on such persons. Anyone who believes in the coming of a messenger must also necessarily believe in the coming of the Shari'ah. If a new Shari'ah cannot come, neither can a new messenger come. At another place in the Qur'an the same subject has been dealt with which makes the whole point more clear:

Surely there will come to you a guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve.\(^ {257}\)

Thus, if at one place the advent of messengers has been described in the Quran as a general law, at another place in the same words, at the same occasion, the sending of guidance has also been described as a Divine practice. If from one verse it is correct to argue about the advent of the messengers after the Prophet Muhammad, then, from the other, it would be equally correct to argue for the coming of a new guidance. Thus, if at all this argument is put forward, it is done by the followers of Baha Ullah. For a Muslim, however, it is not in good taste to cling to such a reasoning.

\(^{255}\) The Holy Quran, 33 al-Ahzāb : 40.
\(^{256}\) Ibid., 5 al-Mā'idah : 3.
\(^{257}\) Ibid., 2 al-Baqarah : 38.
The Bahá'ís have been discredited by God in the way that the guidance which they believe came after the Quran, which according to their assumption abrogated the Quran, i.e., Mirza Muhammad Ali's book entitled, Al Bayân, is almost non-existent in this world. Further, Al-Bayân, before it reached the hands of the people, was abrogated by the Shariah of Baha Ullah. This gives the lie to their own assertions by their own people, for the book which was thought to have abrogated the Quran was itself abrogated before it could be published in the world. In short, according to the general principle enunciated in the above verse, we believe that the advent of the Prophet Muhammad was for all nations and for all times.

Another verse brought forward in support of the doctrine of the continuity of prophethood is:

2. "Guide us on the right path, the path of those on whom Thou has bestowed favours".  

It is said that, as those on whom favours are bestowed include the prophets, the truthful (siddiq), the faithful (shahid) and the righteous (salih), therefore, the prayer to walk in their footsteps shows that prophethood is still continued. The fundamental mistake committed at this place is that prophethood has been considered a matter of acquisition instead of a gift, as if prophethood is a station from among the ranks of piety (taqwā), which is attained by man in degrees by his efforts. Such a view is not correct. Prophethood is a Divine gift. Neither has this office been obtained by a prophet by his prayers nor would it ever happen like that. It is a Divine favour and is conferred by God on whomsoever He pleases and He knows best where to place his message. To pray for the station of prophethood is something which cannot be uttered by a person who even knows the elementary principles of the religion of Islam. Did Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him!) obtain prophethood by prayer or was this prayer taught after he was made a prophet? Every Muslim believes that the chapter Fātihah was the prophetic revelation, and that this prayer was taught to Muhammad after his advent. If he did not obtain prophethood by means of this prayer, nor did anyone else in this ummah, during the last thirteen hundred years, although there

258. The Qur'an, 1 al-Fātihah: 5-6,
have been thousands who have achieved nearness to God, then how is it possible that none could earn prophethood even though God had Himself taught the prayer for its acquisition to this ummah, to the best of ummah indeed? Even those were deprived of this favour about whom God had himself declared that there were a multitude from among the first,259 and a few from among those of later times,260 who have been drawn nigh to Him in Gardens of bliss, and even those about whom it was said: Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him.261 How strange it is that they were all unable to reach the status of prophethood!

3. And whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, they are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the faithful and the righteous, and a goodly company are they.262

The same fundamental mistake is here also committed. Obedience in actions is an acquisition (iktisāb), but prophethood is a gift (mauhibah) and cannot be earned by effort. Again, it would mean that during the last thirteen hundred years nobody obeyed completely. God and His Prophet, not even those about whom the Quran has given evidence that Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Allah,263 and not even those about whom it has been said:

Of the believers are men who are true to the covenant they made with Allah; so of them is he who has accomplished his vow, and of them is he who yet waits, and they have not changed in the least.264

The words with those in the verse under discussion clearly point out that by obedience the fellowship of the prophets and the truthful, etc., is obtained. At the end of the verse it has been stated: And a goodly company are they.

261. Ibid., 9 al-Bara‘at : 100.
262. Ibid., 4 al-Nisā’ : 69.
263. Ibid., 9 al-Bara‘at : 100.
264. Ibid., 33 al-Ahzāb : 88.
The mere companionship, however, does not include a person in the same category. Even the believers have the company of God, but they do not become God by virtue of this companionship. Thus, by being in the company of prophets, how is it possible to become a prophet? The Prophet is reported to have said: *The truthful and honest merchant is with the prophets, the truthful and the faithful.* Does it mean that honest and truthful merchants become prophets? A believer becoming a prophet is nowhere mentioned in the Quran. On the other hand, his becoming *siddiq* (truthful), *shahid* (faithful) and *ṣāliḥ* have been clearly stated. Thus, we read in the Qur’an:

And those who believe in Allah and His messengers, they are the truthful and the faithful ones with their Lord.

4. He makes the spirit (rūḥ) to light by His command on whom He pleases of His servants.

The rūḥ (spirit) here only means the Divine communication, which also takes place with non-prophets, as is reported in an authentic hadith that:

Among those that were before you of the Israelites there used to be men who were spoken to by God, though they were not prophets, and if there is one among my followers it is Umar.

Thus God’s speaking with His servants cannot become a proof for the continuity of prophethood. For this reason the *ḥadith* about the appearance of a *mujaddid* at the beginning of each century has been mentioned under this verse in the Quranic commentaries.

265. “Allah is with those who keep their duty” The Qur’an, 2 al-Baqarah : 194.)
268. “And those who believe and do good, We shall surely make them enter among the righteous (Ṣāliḥīn)” (The Quran 29 al-Ankābūt : 9).
269. The Quran, 57 al-Hadīd : 19. Further discussion on the verse 4 : 69 will be found in chapter 4.
270. Ibid., 40 al-Mu‘min : 15.
5. *Allah chooses messengers from angels and from men.*

Here the word messenger (*rasūl*) has been used. Every sent one is called a *rasūl.* It does not particularly mean a prophet. Every prophet is a messenger, but every messenger is not a prophet. By using the word *rasūl* for angels God has Himself indicated its wider significance. Thus, every appointed one (*māmīr*). of God can be called a *rasūl*, and *mujaddid* (renovator) is an appointed one of God. But the difficulty is that, wherever a word is found which suits one's fancy, a new principle is advanced without looking whether it is against the express teachings of the Qur'an or not. This verse occurs at a place where polytheism has been rejected. On this occasion, God has enunciated His principle in the words that the highest rank for an angel or a man is the rank of a messenger, and under no conditions can they become God, and that, when even angels and men cannot achieve any higher rank than this and cannot become partners of God, how can other things become his partners? In any case, to interpret a verse in a way so as to contradict openly the other verses of the Quran is a bold step. When the Quran has clearly stated the Prophet Muhammad to be *khātam al-nabiyyīn*, the significance of which is nothing except last of the prophets, then to draw a contrary conclusion from the verse *Allāhu yastaʿfī* (*Allah chooses*) is not a sign of intelligence. *Yastafi* is a preterite (*muḏāriʿ*), which could also occur

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274. The Qur'an, 22 al-Ḥajj : 75.
275. *Use of the word rasūl (messenger) in the writings of the Founder:*

"The word rasūl in general in which are included rasūl and nābi and muḥaddaḥ" (*A'īnāh Kamālūt Islām*, p. 322, published 23rd February, 1893 C.E.)

"In the Holy Qur'an the word rasūl (messengers) is used for singular as well as for ḥair rasūl (non-messenger)" (*Shahādat al-Qur'ān*, p. 29, published 22nd September, 1893 C.E. See also pp. 23-24).

By rasūl (messengers) are meant those persons who are sent from God the Most High whether they are nābi or rasūl or muḥaddaḥ or mujaddid" (Footnote p. 171, published 1st January 1899 C.E. See also *Ayyām al-Ṣūl*, p. 75.)

About the verse, *We have made some of these messengers to excel the others* (2 : 253) the Founder writes:

"And this thing is also worthy of note that saints of God (auliyā' Allāh) have also several ranks, as has been mentioned by *We have made some of them to excel others and some of them do reach that but the righteous servants (sulahā) of ordinary rank are unable to recognise them*" (*Chaṣmāmah Ma'rīfah*, p. 332, published 15th May, 1906 C.E., S.M.T.)
only for past continuous, as is mentioned in connection with the Torah that:

By it did the prophets who submitted themselves (to Allah) judge for the Jews.\(^{276}\)

It does not, however, mean that, in future, prophets would judge according to the Torah, but only that they used to judge in this way. Why do not the promulgators of the doctrine of the continuity of prophethood interpret the preterite yahkumu (they did judge) as they did in the case of yastafî? Only because it would have contradicted an established principle. The same difficulty arises in the case of Allah chooses messengers from angels and from men. If by rasûl is meant messenger-prophet, this would entirely go against the established principle of the finality of prophethood. It seems some people have set their hearts upon the currency of a false belief. If a little thought is given, and due respect is shown to the Qur'an, such ideas would not enter into their heads.

6. *Nor do We chastise until We raise a messenger.*\(^{277}\)

The pith of the argument is that, as Divine chastisement is taking place in the world in these days, therefore a messenger must have been raised in this age. The question arises that, although there is no rasûl among us today, destruction, in one form or another, is still going on in the world. If it is due to the denial of a previous messenger, then why could not such a previous prophet be the Prophet Muhammad himself? Has his period of prophethood come to an end? Or has God put a limit somewhere that up till thirteen hundred years, whatever upheaval takes place, it would be the result of the denial of the Prophet Muhammad and thereafter the result of the denial of another messenger? If at any rate the Promised Messiah is a messenger, then it would be worthwhile to know how long the world would be chastised because of his denial so that one should look for a new prophet after his period is over.

7. He it is Who raised among the illiterates a messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His messages and

\(^{276}\) The Holy Quran, 5 al-Māidah : 44
\(^{277}\) Ibid., 17 Bani Isrā'îl : 15.
purifies them and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom—although they were before certainly in manifest error—and others from among them who have not yet joined them. 277

It is said that in this verse the appointment of two prophets is mentioned, one from illiterates (ummiyyin) and the other from among them—ākhirina minhum (others from among them). But this does not prove in the least that prophethood is continued. In case it is, then why was just one more prophet mentioned in a way which prohibited the coming of a third prophet? This confusion arises because the believers in this new doctrine have no basis to stand upon. They lay hand on any little thing which appears to go in their favour. The meaning of the verse is, however, clear. The Messenger of God is not only the teacher and the purifier of the unlettered people of his day but also of the people of later generations who have not yet joined them. Thus, in this way, the verse is a disapproval of the coming of any other messenger for this ummah. A messenger is a teacher and a purifier, and when the Prophet Muhammad is a teacher and a purifier for all the generations then he is also a messenger for all of them, and after him neither a new nor an old messenger could be raised. The point that there is a subtle hint in this verse about the teaching and purification of Muslims through the Divine 'ulama, mujaddids (renovators) or muhaddathin, does not go against the doctrine of the finality of prophethood. If this verse is interpreted to the effect that a messenger has been raised among the illiterates, similarly another one would be raised from among the later generation, then whoever is sent must do the same work with which the first messenger was entrusted, that is, the recitation of God's messages (āyāt). These messages must necessarily be revealed to him. If it is said that this appointment would be in the form of barūz (manifestation) then there might appear hundreds of barūz and this fact does not break the seal of the prophethood. This only means that a person who is entrusted with this work would be raised to the station of fanā fil-rasūl, i.e. the one who has been spiritually annihilated in the Messenger.

8. And when the messengers are made to reach their appointed time. 278

279. Ibid., 77 al-Mursalat : 11.
The inference made from this verse is that all the prophets would be made to appear in another person. Metaphorically the word *rusul* (messengers) could be applied to the *Khalifās* of Muhammad’s *ummah*. In the verse, *O ye messengers (rusul) eat of the good things,* some of the commentators have included in the word *rusul* the selected companions of the Prophet. It is merely catching at straws by trying to prove the continuity of prophethood by such verses.

9. Nor is Allah going to make you acquainted with the unseen, but Allah chooses of His messengers Whom He pleases. In this verse, however, the objection that why does not God Himself point out to the unbelievers the ways to follow His will has been dealt with. It has been simply stated how can God inform about His will to the people of impure hearts?

Sometimes it is said that the doctrine of the finality of prophethood was Pharaoh’s belief according to the following verse:

10. And Joseph indeed came to you before with clear arguments, but you ever remained in doubt as to what he brought to you; until when he died, you said: Allah will never raise a messenger after him. Thus does Allah leave him in error who is prodigal, a doubter: those who dispute concerning the messages of Allah without any authority that has come to them.

Pharaoh was even a denier of God.

“Pharaoh said,” says the Qur’an, “O chiefs, I know no God for you besides myself.”

It is indeed surprising to make Pharaoh believe not only in prophethood but also in the finality of prophethood, whereas it has been clearly stated in the verse about Joseph that “you ever remained in doubt as to what he brought to you.” It is with such puerile arguments that an effort is made to destroy the firm doctrine of the finality of prophethood.

281. Ibid., 8 Al’Imrān : 178
282. Ibid., 40 al-Mu’mīn : 34-45.
283. Ibid., 28 al-Qasas : 88.
The Quran is the last of the books (khātam al-kutub);

Let us ponder over the question of the finality of prophethood from another point of view. I have shown before that it is essential for a prophet to bring a book. In fact the prophetic revelation (wahy nubuwwah) of a prophet is his book. Thus the people who deny the doctrine of the finality of prophethood and think those accursed and rejected who believe Muhammad to be the last of the prophets, and say that if prophethood had come to an end with Muhammad, then he was (God forbid) a curse to the world (although this has been the belief of the whole ummah by consensus of opinion), I put to them a simple question: Whether they


"And this is the love that forces me that I should, as far as it lies in my power, repudiate the belief in the total closure of the gate of prophethood because this is an insult to the Holy Prophet....Only that teacher in the world is called competent (tāiq) whose pupils are competent as well."

God forbid as if all the other prophets were untalented and incompetent. Then he goes on to state:

"If the appointment of prophets came to an absolute end after the Holy Prophet, it would mean that he has barred the world from the grace of prophethood and that after his advent God has brought this favour to an end. Now explain whether according to this belief the Holy Prophet has proved a mercy to the nations or just opposite, may God protect us from such a belief. If this doctrine is accepted it would mean, God forbid, that the Holy Prophet appeared to the world as a curse. And he who thinks like that is rejected and accursed (himself)" (p. 187).

I know that there are several persons among the disciples of Mīān Maḥmūd Ahmad Sāhib who consider the Holy Prophet as the Last Prophet. Are they really accursed and rejected? Then how woeful is the relationship between the disciples and their leader that in spite of calling them accursed they are still his special mureeds (disciples). And how woeful is the condition of those mureeds (disciples) who have given preference to the mundane relationship to that of the spiritual, and they have taken bai'at (pledge) at the hand of such a person who calls them accursed (la'natī) and rejected (mardīd). Again I say that the whole of ummah from the Holy Prophet up to the Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement (or according to Mīān Maḥmūd Ahmad Sāhib with the exception of the Founder), all the righteous people of the last thirteen centuries including all the imams and the narrators of hadith, did all of them think that the Holy Prophet was (God forbid) a curse to the world? And were all these people, God forbid, really accursed and rejected? The companion who was told (Contd.)
believe the Quran to be the last of the books (khātam al-kutub) or not? If the Quran is the khātam al-kutub then Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him) is the khātam al-anbiya (last of the prophets), and if he is not the Khātam al-anbiya, then the Qur'an is not the khātam al-kutub and some other book must come after it which would, in fact, be the last book, and the prophet who would come after Muhammad would be the last prophet. In this case the Quran's claim for the perfection of guidance, God forbid, must be considered as false. But if the Qur'an is the last revealed book then the Prophet Muhammad is also the last of the Prophets.

you stand to me in the same relation as Aaron stood to Moses and the companion who was told, had there been a prophet after me it would have been Umar. Did they not believe in their hearts that there could be no prophet after the Holy Prophet? If they did in what way they should be judged according to the standard put forward by Mi'ān Sāhib. And then what is the position of the prophet himself who uttered those words (about the finality of prophethood)? Alas the religion has been made a plaything of the children. The doctrine of the finality of prophethood is such on which the whole ummah has agreed. Nobody has accepted the coming of a nabi (Prophet) after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Did all those narrators of hadith who have recorded reports as quoted above, who have declared the Prophet as last brick of the palace of prophethood consider him a curse for the world? I may further point out that Mi'ān Sāhib also believes that only the Founder is particularly chosen to receive the name of a prophet in this ummah. Obviously if another prophet appears after him this peculiarity will be lost. Mi'ān Sāhib wants to prove from the verse, Others from among them who have not yet joined them (62: 3) that there is no messenger besides the Founder. Here is what he wrote:

“On the other hand, at some places he (i.e. the Founder) has clearly confined the application of the words ākhirina to his own followers. If the coming of a similar messenger before him is accepted his (i.e. the new messenger's) followers would also become the companions of Allah’s messenger according to the verse wa ākhirina minhum, but as the followers of none else except the Promised Messiah have been declared as belonging to this community of ākhirin it shows that the Promised Messiah is also the only messenger” (Haqiqat al-Nubuwwah p. 231).

In this case the Promised Messiah would be the last messenger with whom the chain of messengership would be terminated. Now would he be a curse, God forbid, for the world or not? Again in what way such a doctrine help the position of the Prophet Muhammad? The coming of just one messenger after him during the period of his prophethood which extends to the day of Resurrection is rather immaterial. Moreover does not the Qur'an after which no other book will be revealed, fall under the same category. Could not the same objection be raised against it as has been done against the prophethood of Muhammad? Is the Qur'an then a curse to the world that there is no book after it?
Has the Qur’an become a curse to the world by being the last book because with it the coming of other books has come to an end?

Thus if the significance of khātam al-nabiyyīn is that by the Prophet’s seal new prophets would be raised, the significance of khātam al-kutub would be that with the seal of the Quran new books would be made. Therefore, to put the matter in a simple way, if there could be a book after the Quran then there could also be a prophet after the Prophet Muhammad? If, however, with the revelation of the Qur’an the revelation of other Divine books has come to an end, then the advent of the Prophet Muhammad has also terminated the advent of all the other prophets.

A prophecy is not a proof in the discussion about the finality of prophethood

From among the reports of the Holy Prophet I have already discussed one hadith which is brought forth against the conception of the finality of prophethood. Yet there is another well known hadith reported by Nawās bin Samān relating to the descent of Jesus, son of Mary, the prophet of God on the Eastern minaret of Damascus.285 I would like to remark here that the report of this nature and the one already discussed by me286 should not be brought forward in the discussion as it would absolutely go against the principles of understanding.

Simile and metaphor dominate the text of prophecies. There are in fact many prophecies relating to the advent of the Holy Prophet where his appearance and manifestation has been declared to be the appearance and manifestation of God.287

The reason Christians have stumbled over the position and claim of Jesus Christ has also been this, that in some of the prophecies, which they apply to him, there are words which seem to describe his appearance as the appearance of God in the world. This is the chief reason why they have made Messiah to be God. Therefore, it must be well remembered that an established principle of law and religion cannot be violated on account of a prophecy, otherwise there would be no firm ground left for any belief.

285. *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Muslim*.
287. *Haqiqat al-Wahy* (15th May 1907) p. 63
Finality of Prophethood

All the prophecies about the advent of particular persons comprise of many expressions which need interpretation. The prophecy under discussion reported by Nawās bin Samān in particular is full of similia and metaphors. The greatest obstacle is the occurrence of the name Jesus, son of Mary. The previous Imāms had been so cautious about this matter that, in spite of this prophecy, they never admitted that Jesus, son of Mary would come to the world again as a prophet. On the other hand, in view of the doctrine of the finality of prophethood they believed that he would not be raised as a prophet. But as it was a matter concerning the future, therefore they did not make a special effort towards solving this problem. In fact this was the right course to follow, that unless a prophecy was fulfilled an opinion must not be pressed too hard in one direction.

The present controversy about the finality of prophethood exists between the two Muslim groups who both regard that Hadrat Mirzā Ghulām Aḥmad of Qādīān, the Founder of the Aḥmadiyyah Movement, has fulfilled the prophecy about the second coming of Jesus, son of Mary, in his person. In this prophecy the two angels on whose shoulders the Messiah would descend placing his hands signify two clear proofs of truth. Qādīān stands in place of Damascus and the eastern minaret means a place in the East. Breaking the cross and the killing of the swine are also interpreted in this prophecy metaphorically. In short, all matters without exception mentioned in this prophecy have been accepted by them as tropical and metaphorical expressions. When all these difficulties have been overcome in this way, is it wise to stick to the word nabi in particular (and accept it in the real sense)? It is, however, an established fact that the words of the hadīth have not been preserved like that of the Qur’anic revelation. It is just possible that the Holy Prophet mentioned about the descent of Jesus, son of Mary, without using the words ‘Prophet of God’. In al-Bukhārī, however, the name of Jesus is only mentioned. Some narrator might have added the words ‘prophet of God’ in the report mentioned in al-Muslim thinking that Jesus, son of Mary referred to the Israelitish Messiah. And this

288. Some of the remarks on this hadīth by the Founder of the Aḥmadiyyah Movement will be found at the end of this chapter. T.
indeed is true because in another version of the same hadith found in Tirmidhī the words ‘prophet of God’ do not occur although the rest of the report is just the same. Instead of the words nabi ullaḥ the name ‘Jesus, son of Mary’ has been repeatedly used. In this way this report also supports the version mentioned in al-Bukhārī. Again it is also possible that this term was used by the Prophet himself by way of metaphor as all the other expressions in this report have been used in that manner.

It has been said that the designation ‘the Promised Messiah’ cannot be a metaphor,289 and nabi ullaḥ is his designation. But

289. In Ḥaqīqat al-Nubuwwah, Mirza Maḥmūd Aḥmad writes while discussing this hadīth:

“They people say about this report mentioned in al-Muslim that it is full of similia, thus the word nabi occurs in this hadīth it should also be considered a simile. But these people should remember that there is a limit to the use of the word simile. If there are a few similia in a writing, this does not mean that all the words used therein should be considered as such; there must be some reason for their use. The words indicating the signs (of appearance) may be used as a simile because they are meant as a trial but what relation a simile has with describing the designation of a person... Therefore, although in this hadīth the tropical expressions have been frequently used, the designation of Promised Messiah cannot be called a simile, otherwise a person could say that as this report is full of similia, the name Messiah is also a simile and so is Mahdi. This means that neither a Messiah would come nor a Mahdi” (p. 191).

Unfortunately the writer of the above lines has not carefully looked into the words of the report and has arbitrarily imposed upon the reader a few rules about the use of simile i.e., the designation of a person cannot be described in the form of a simile whereas the signs about the appearance of a person may contain such expressions. And then he states, Otherwise a person could say that as this report is full of similia the name Messiah is also a simile and so is Mahdi. There is, however, no mention of Mahdi in this report at all, only the expression Jesus, son of Mary, has been used which has been accepted by Mirzā Maḥmūd Aḥmad Șāhīb as a simile. What a meaningless discourse is this that in this way someone will take Mahdi and Messiah also as tropical expressions whereas these words have been considered by himself as forms of similia. The word Messiah does not mean that his (actual) name would be Messiah nor Mahdi means that his name would be Mahdi. The Promised Messiah was neither given the (actual) name of Jesus, son of Mary nor of Muhammad. These have been used by way of simile then. And wherefrom this principle has been taken that in describing
Messiahship is also his designation although this (particular term) has not been mentioned in the hadīth. The words ‘Jesus, son of Mary’ are mentioned which indicate this designation indirectly. The question of designation, however, is not determined by this prophecy but by the following hadīth:

“Most surely Allah will raise for this ummah at the commencement of every century one who will bring about the renovation of their religion.”

Now it is clear that the Promised Messiah should come according to this hadīth and this is also clear that his work should be nothing else except the renovation (tajāīd) of religion. Thus when he is sent according to the Divine promise of raising the mujaddid in this ummah and his work is in no way different from them his designation should necessarily be that of a mujaddid. In fact this hadīth about the coming of mujaddids is an absolute proof about the finality of prophethood, because if some prophets were also to appear, the promise a designation a tropical expression is not used? Why such an expression is used for the name then? The hadīth neither mentions the name nor the designation but only the coming of Jesus, son of Mary. One reporter has mentioned his coming with the name Jesus, son of Mary alone and another reporter under the impression that it might be the same Israelitish Messiah has called him ‘Isā, the prophet of God’. To think that every word of this report is uttered by the sacred tongue of the Holy Prophet Muhammad is to betray one’s complete ignorance about Ḥadīth. It is, however, an accepted fact, particularly reports concerning narratives, that sense is given and not the exact words. Another version of the same report in Tirmīdī, as I have discussed above, does not mention the words the prophet of God but only Jesus, son of Mary. The speculative difference which Mirzā Maḥmud Aḥmad Šāhib has created between a designation and a name is nowhere to be seen. Further it has been stated by him that there is a limit to the use of similia. Should that limit be accepted according to the wishes of the writer of those lines? That is to say whatever is declared by him a limit should be considered as such. It does not matter if he considers the two yellow mantles as two diseases, nor does it matter if Damascus is taken to stand for Qādiān, nor Jesus, son of Mary for Mirza Ghulām Ahmad but at the use of the words ‘prophet of God’ the metaphor reaches its limit! It may be only because it goes against his wishes, or is there any other reason besides that? There is a mention of the Dajjāl (Antichrist) in this report as well. Let him declare it as a reality as well and renounce the Ahmadiyyah Movement!

of the appearance of mujaddids would not have been given. There would remain believers also in this ummah, but a promise is always given of a superior thing. There is, however, no promise of the raising of the prophets in this ummah. On the contrary their non-appearance is clearly mentioned in the reports. And those who would be raised in this ummah have been called mujaddids. About the prophets it has been stated: had there been a prophet after me it would have been ‘Umar, and there is no prophet after me. There is no ḥadīth which mentions that prophets would also be raised in this ummah. Wherefrom this conception of the advent of prophets is derived then? To refute the doctrine of the khatm nubuwwah, expressly held by the Qur’ān and the Ḥadīth, it is not right to argue from a report which is full of metaphorical expressions. This prophecy cannot set at naught all the basic clarifications of the Qur’ān and the Ḥadīth. In this way the Messiah could also become God. According to the Divine law man cannot become God nor God can appear in the world as man but when it has been mentioned in a prophecy that God would appear in the world why should not one literally believe in it? After all this could also be a designation, and as has been said, designation cannot be called a simile! Thus such a discussion is entirely absurd in which a prophecy is brought forward as an argument against the fundamental principles of the finality of prophethood.

Whatever prevents a man from becoming God also prevents the coming of another prophet after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. This is in fact a mercy for the world and not a curse. Otherwise a person could also say that the raising of a single prophet for the whole world was also a curse. When separate prophets came for separate nations, each nation following its own prophet, why should all the nations be forced to follow an Arabian prophet? Again if the raising of a prophet for all times was a curse to the world, by the same sort of argument one could say that why should there be one prophet for all countries and all people, depriving the other nations from receiving the favours of prophethood directly? Before the advent of the Prophet Muhammad all these nations were blessed with this favour.

Thus the one who was *a mercy to the nations*\(^{293}\) according to the above logic becomes a curse to the world, God forbid. I hope those fond of breaking the seal of prophethood after pondering over this point would also refuse to admit of the advent of the Holy Prophet for all the nations of the world! But let them remember that breaking this seal and believing in another prophet after the Holy Prophet Muhammad and declaring this other person to be the last prophet instead of the Prophet Muhammad is nothing else but demolishing the House of Islam. They cannot of course further extend the chain of prophethood, because there is a Divine promise that whoever would make a false claim to prophethood would be destroyed, but they have made the Founder a prophet after his death and have only done this service to the Holy Prophet that an ordinary servant of his, who was just a drop out of his rain, a shadow out of his person, has been made *khātam al-nabiyyīn*.\(^{294}\)

**The discussion about khatm nubuwwah in the books by the Founder**

Now I will briefly discuss what the Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement has written on the subject of the finality of prophethood. There is no doubt about it that the whole of the Muslim *ummah* has agreed on this point that the prophethood has come to an end. As the Holy Prophet Muhammad is the Prophet for all the times, he is also the Prophet for all the nations. The period of his prophethood extends to the Last Day. His prophethood in fact brings all the peoples of the world under its mantle. This is not a curse to humanity but a mercy all in all, because in the Divine scheme of things God wanted to unite all the nations of the world under one leader; He wanted to create a great universal brotherhood by striking at the root of national differences and hatreds and this could not be achieved unless people believed in one God, one Book and one Messenger for all human beings and for all times to come.

With regard to the writings of the Founder I want to emphasise the point that it is a piece of grotesque stupidity to think that his writings concerning prophethood prior to 1901 C.E. have been abrogated. I think no one can insult him more than this that he should consider of no earthly value hundreds of pages of his books

\(^{293}\) The Qur’an 21 *al-Anbiyā’* : 107.

\(^{294}\) See end of footnote 284 p. 126
written before 1901 C.E. on this subject. Denying his writings is in fact denying the Founder himself in a concealed manner. Anybody who will give a little thought over this matter will easily understand that the belief of the Founder (concerning prophethood) by no manner of means has undergone the slightest change. Whatever he wrote in his first book, Taudi Marām, was exactly repeated in his last book, Chashma Marīfat. The references on the subject of mubashshirāl (good news) in these two books, quoted at the end of the second chapter, make this point as clear as crystal. Similarly on the question of finality of Prophethood he has written in Izālah Auham, one of his earliest books, exactly the same what he has stated in Ḥaqīqat al-Wahy, one of his last books. For the sake of comparison I quote below passages from these two books."

_Izālah Auham_

"Many doubts arise at this place that when the Messiah, son of Mary, would be a perfect follower (ummati) at the time of his descent, he cannot be in any way a messenger (rasul) because of his being a follower, for (the words) rasul and ummati in their meanings are antithetical. Moreover, our Prophet being khātam al-Nabiyyin forbids the coming of any other prophet except such a prophet who receives his light from the light of the prophethood of Muhammad and does not possess perfect prophethood, who in other words is also called a muhaddath (one spoken to by God). Such a person is outside this restriction. On account of his discipleship and annihilation in the Messenger (fanā fi al-rasul) he is included in the being of the seal of the Messengers (khātam al-Mursalin) as a part is included in the whole."\(^{296}\)

_Ḥaqīqat al-Wahy_

"And prophethood has been cut off after our Holy Prophet, (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him) ... except that I have been called a prophet of God by the tongue of the best of men and this is a matter of zill (reflection) and this is obtained by the blessings of following (the Prophet) ... ... ... And surely our Messenger is the khātam al-Nabiyyin and the chain of messengership has been cut off"
with him; so no one has the right to claim prophethood substantially after our Holy Messenger. And nothing remains after him but the abundance of revelation and this is bound with the condition of discipleship."^297

Now as far as the alleged claim of prophethood goes, the statement in Izāla Auhām is more forceful than the one in Ḥaqiqat al-Wāhy. It has been clearly stated in the former book: Except such a prophet who receives his light from the light of the prophethood of Muhammad ...... Such a person is outside this restriction. On account of his discipleship and annihilation in the Messenger, he is included in the being of the Seal of Messengers as a part is included in the whole.

Let us take now a writing of the middle period. And this is the writing about which it is said that it has abrogated all the previous writings. Just read it carefully and see whether there is a wee bit alteration in his belief of the first, middle and last period of his life. I quote below a few lines from Ek Ghalatī ka Izālah:

"The real secret of all this is that the significance of khātam al-Nabiyyīn (Seal of the Prophets) demands that as long as there exists any veil of non-identity, a person called a prophet shall be nevertheless a destroyer of the seal of khātam al-Nabiyyīn. But if anybody is lost in the Holy Prophet to such an extent that he derives this name from his complete union and absence of unlikeness and reflects Muhammad's face like a transparent mirror then alone shall he be called a prophet without even breaking the seal, for he is Muhammad though by way of reflection (zill).^298

And in the footnote at the same place it has been mentioned:

"Therefore it has to be admitted that for the bestowal of this gift (mauhibah) only the doors of barūz, zill and annihilation in the Messenger (fanā' fi al-rasūl) are open."^299

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297. Ḥaqiqat al-Wāhy (15th May 1907), Supplement, Al-Istīfiā, p. 64.
All the necessary references about the finality of prophethood have been given in the supplement of this book. Below I quote a few which will clearly indicate that the Founder always took the expression kīhātam al-nabiyyīn to mean the last of the prophets and that it never occurred to him that it meant an initiator of a new order of prophethood:

"And evidently the coming of Gabriel with apostolic revelation after the kīhātam al-nabiyyīn is impossible.\(^{300}\)

"But the Most High God would never permit such a disgrace and ignominy to come to the share of this ummah or such an insult and affront to fall to the lot of His chosen Prophet, the kīhātam al-anbiyyā that by sending a messenger with whom the coming of Gabriel is essential He should let the House of Islam go to rack and ruin when He has already promised that no messenger would be sent after the Holy Prophet.\(^{301}\)

"The Holy Qur'an does not permit the coming of another messenger, whether new or old, after the kīhātam al-nabiyyīn, because a messenger receives the knowledge of religion (din) through the mediation of Gabriel and the door of the descent of Gabriel with apostolic revelation has been shut. And this is also an impossibility that a messenger should come to the world without apostolic revelation (wahy risālat).\(^{302}\)

"Because this is against the sayings of God Almighty, Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and kīhātam al-nabiyyīn (seal of the prophets).\(^{303}\) "Do not you know that God, the Bountiful, the Beneficent has declared our Prophet to be kīhātam al-anbiyyā without exception and our Prophet has interpreted this verse with lā nabiyya baʿḍi (there is no prophet after me)."\(^{304}\)

\(^{300}\) *Izālah Auḥām* (3rd September 1891), p. 583.

\(^{301}\) Ibid. p. 586.

\(^{302}\) Ibid., p. 761.

\(^{303}\) The Qur'an 33: *Al-Ahzāb*: 40.

\(^{304}\) *Hamāmat al-Buṣīrā*, p. 20. For reference to the saying of the Prophet see footnote No. 292.
“For the seekers of truth it is evident that if after our Holy Prophet we accept the lawfulness \( (\text{jawāz}) \) of the coming of another prophet it means that we have opened the door of prophetic revelation \( (\text{wahy nubuwwah}) \) which was closed and this is against the established principles as is not unknown to the Muslims. And can there be a prophet after our Holy Prophet when revelation has been cut off with his death and God has brought an end of prophets with him?”\(^{306}\)

“Can a miserable fabricator who claims to be a messenger and a prophet have any faith in the Qur’an? And can such a person, who believes in the Qur’an and considers the verse \( \text{but he is a messenger of Allah and khāṭam al-nabīyyīn}^{307} \) as the revelation of God, say that he is a messenger and a prophet after the Holy Prophet?\(^{308}\)

“And there is no need to follow separately all the prophethoods and scriptures that have passed before, since the prophethood of Muhammad embraces them all. And besides that, all other paths are closed. All the truths that carry one to God are found therein. Neither shall any new truth come after it nor was there any truth before which is not found in it. Therefore all prophethoods end with this prophethood and thus it ought to have been, for everything which has a beginning has also an end.\(^{309}\)

\(^{306}\) Ḥamāmat al-Ḫuṣrāw, p. 49.

\(^{307}\) The Qur’an 33 Al-Ĥzāb : 40.

\(^{308}\) Anjām Āḥlim (2nd January, 1897), footnote pp. 27, 28.

\(^{309}\) Al-Wasiyyah (20th December, 1905), p. 10. The translation published by the Rabwah commune of the last sentence runs thus: “Thus all previous prophethoods end in this prophethood. And indeed this is how it should have been, since there is a culmination and an end for everything that has beginning (The Will, p. 23, published under the auspices of the Foreign Mission’s Secretary, Rabwah, Pakistan). The word \text{previous} is not found in the text. Again, the book itself does not mention that the whole writing is a translation. Readers might get the impression that it was an original writing by the Founder. Long sentences have been added in between to suit their explanation. Words which are not found in the text are inserted to give a different twist to the passages under dispute. The same is true about their translation of \text{Ek Galati ka Izūlah} which is circulated by them under the name \text{A Misunderstanding Removed}.\)
Some of the remarks by the Founder on the hadith reported by Nawas bin Sam'an recorded in al-Muslim.

"Here if it be objected that the like of the Messiah should also be a prophet, because the Messiah himself was a prophet, the reply to this in the first instance is, that our Holy Prophet has not made prophethood a condition for the coming Messiah but has clearly stated that he shall be a Muslim and bound by the law of Islam like ordinary Muslims" (Tawdih Marám - 22 January, 1891, p. 9).

"This is the report recorded by Imâm Muslim in his Sahih, but Imâm Muhammad Ismā'îl Buḵhārî, the head of the narrators of Hadiţh, has left it out, because he considered it weak" (Izālah Auhām, 3rd September, 1891, p. 270).

"The hadith about Damascus advanced by the Imâm Muslim does not remain worthy of consideration because of the presence of another hadith in al-Muslim itself. And it is clearly proved that the reporter Nawās has been mistaken in narrating this hadith", (Ibid., p. 237).

"Of course it is also true that the coming Messiah has also been spoken of as a prophet, but he has also been called as a follower; nay, it has been foretold that he shall be indeed from among you, O followers (of the Prophet), and he shall be your Imâm......Now all these hints indicate that he shall not actually and truly possess the characteristic of perfect prophethood although imperfect prophethood (nubuwwat-i-nāqīsah) shall be found in him, which in other words is called muhaddathiyah and possesses one of the aspects of perfect prophethood" (Ibid., p. 532).

"The sign of the coming Messiah mentioned is that he would be God's prophet which means that he would be the recipient of Divine revelation. But here complete and perfect prophethood is not meant because a seal has been put on such a prophethood. The prophethood meant here is the one which is confined to the sense of muhaddathiyah" (Ibid., p. 701).
"But it should be remembered, as I have just explained, that in God's revelation such words are used by way of metaphor and simile for some auliya (saints) but these words are not applicable in reality. This is in fact the whole dispute which has been dragged towards another direction by the prejudiced ignorants. The name of the coming Promised Messiah which in al-Sahih of Muslim etc., has been declared by the blessed tongue of the Holy Prophet as nabi ullaah (God's prophet) is in accordance with the same metaphorical expression which is an acknowledged and ordinary phrase in the books of the honoured sufis (mystics). Otherwise how can there be a prophet after khutam al-anbiya (the seal of 24 prophets)" (Anjam Athim, 22 January, 1897, p. 28).

"I say it repeatedly that the words rasul, mursal and nabi, no doubt, occur about me in my revelations from God but they are not applicable in their real sense, and as they are not so applicable similarly the mentioning of the Promised Messiah in reports as a prophet is not applicable in its real sense. This is the knowledge which God has granted me. Let him understand who wishes to understand." (Siraj Munir, 24th March, 1897, p. 3). (Italics by the translator).

"It should also be remembered that in al-Muslim the word 'prophet' has occurred for the Promised Messiah, but by way of metaphor and simile" (Ayyam al-Sulh, 1st January, 1899, p. 75).

"Our opponents declare Jesus, may the peace of God be upon him, as khutam al-anbiya and say that in Sahih Muslim etc., the coming Messiah has been remembered as nabi ullaah by which is meant real prophethood." (Kithab al-Bariyyah, 24th January, 1898, p. 191 footnote).

"In hadith also the word prophet has occurred for the Promised Messiah. Obviously whom God sends is His sent one (faristadah) and the sent one in Arabic language is called rasul. And the one who tells the news of the unseen is called nabi in Arabic. The meanings in the Islamic terminology (Islami istilah) are different." Here only the literal (lughi)
meanings are applied” (Arba‘in No. 3, 15th December, 1900, p. 18, footnote).

“As against this the same doubtful (zanni) hadith by Muslim is advanced around which hundreds of doubts are sticking like ants, and which in its external appearance with regard to words is clearly opposed to the Qur’an ...... Shall we leave the Qur’an for a report by Muslim? ...... After careful consideration, however, it is found that this report is not a fabrication although full of similia” (Tuhfa‘ Golarwiyah, 1st September, 1902, p. 46).

“And surely prophethood has been cut off after our Holy Prophet (may the peace and blessings of God be upon him). After the Qur’an which is the best of all the scriptures there is no book and there is no law after the law of Muhammad. The Holy Prophet who is best of all men has given me the name prophet by his tongue. And this is one of the reflected affairs (zill‘ amr) out of the blessings of his obedience ...... And I have been called a prophet by God by way of metaphor and not by way of reality” (Haqiqat al-Wahy, 15th May, 1907, Istifi‘, Supplement, p. 65).