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'Khatam' in Dictionaries and Usage

We have just seen that in the context of the Qur'an and according to traditions, according to *Ijma'a* and according to Reason, the only meaning of "*Khatamun-Nabiyyin*" which is relevant is 'The Last of The Prophets', 'One who closed the prophethood. Now let us see what the dictionaries say about '*Khatam*' or '*Khatm*'.

ختم العمل = (*Khatam al-amal*) = He finished the, work given to him.

ختم الاناء = (*Khatam al-ina'a*) = He sealed the mouth of pot (so that nothing comes out of it and nothing enters into it).

ختم الكتاب = (*Khatam al-Kitab*) = Closed the envelope and sealed it (so that nothing is added into the letter or put into the envelope).

It must be mentioned here that 'seal' in Arabic does not mean the cancellation stamp of post offices which are put on the postal articles before sending them onward. It means the seal of wax which is put on the envelopes to protect it from forgery or additions.

ختم على القلب = (*Khatama alal qalb*) = He put a seal on the heart (so that no new idea enters into it and no old prejudice is removed from it).

ختم كل مشروب = (*Khitamu kulle mashrub*) = The last taste felt at the end of a drink.

ختم كل شيء = (*Khatematu kulle shay*) = End of *everything*; and its finish.

ختم الشيء = (*Khatamash shay*) = To '*khatm*' a thing means to come at the end of that thing. And it is in this sense that we use the word '*Khatm ul-Qur'an*', i.e., to read the Qur'an up to its end. Also it is for this reason that the last verses of each *Sura* are called (خواتيم) '*Khawateem*'.

ختم القوم = *Khatam ul-Qawm* = The last man of the tribe or nation.

These meanings are given in all the authentic dictionaries of Arabic language.

The Qadianis say that if someone is said to be '*Khatam ush-Shu'ara*' or '*Khatam ul-Mufasssireen*' or

'*Khatam ul-Fuqaha*', nobody thinks that after that person no other poet or *Faqeeh* (religious jurisprudent) or *Mufassir* (commentator) was born. Everybody thinks that it means that the said person was the most expert in that field of knowledge.

These people forget that if a word is sometimes used metaphorically (in full allegorical sense) that metaphorical use does not deprive it of its real meaning. If, for example, the word 'Lion' is sometimes used for a brave man, it does not mean that this word cannot be used for the animal, for which it was coined.

Such arguments show the hollowness of their minds and bankruptcy of their thinking. Even if one thousand persons are called '*Khatam ul-Mufasssireen*' (in the sense of 'the most perfect *Mufasssir*') the real meaning of the word '*Khatam*' would remain the same i.e., The Last.

A sample of Qadianis miscomprehension of subject matter may be seen in the following sentence of their Chief Missionary in Tanzania, Sheikh Muhammad Munawwar H.A.

It should be borne in mind that being 'last' of a group of people is no distinction in itself. Sir Richard Turnbull was the last governor of Tanganyika. Does this add to his status as a governor or indicates his superiority over the late Twining?" (A lively Discussion).

He does not pause to think that the *Nubuwwah* of Prophet Muhammad Al-Mustafa (S) is not like governorship of Sir Richard Turnbull. Sir Richard Tumbull was the last governor because the British rule came to an end with him. And a national government ousted him and his masters from the soil of Tanganyika. Muhammad Al-Mustafa (S) is the Last Prophet because his prophethood is not to be usurped by any impostor; he is the last prophet because his 'rule' will continue up to *Qiyamah*; and no one coming after him can use his title and name for himself.

To talk in Sheikh Muhammad Munawwar's language, if Sir Richard Turnbull's governorship were to continue up to the last day of the world, and all representatives of the British crown coming after him were obliged to keep his 'Chair' vacant for him, and not to use the Title of Governor for the themselves but just to sign as the 'Leader of the government', would it not have been a tremendous tribute to Sir Richard Turnbull?

The Qadiani Missionary had written to me:

"Imam Suyuti and Imam Ibn Athil' Al-Jazari were given the title of '*Khatam ul-Huffuz*' (The Last of those who remembered traditions); likewise, Abu Tammam at-Tai has been described as '*Khatam ush-Shu'ara*' (The Last Poet). Can it be said that there was no '*Hafiz*' after Imam Suyuti or Imam Jazari, or no poet after Abu Tammam at Tai?"

I asked him: First of all have those phrases been used in the Qur'an or tradition? As I told you earlier, the phrase '*Khatam un-Nabiyyin*' was never used in Arabic before Qur'an; and that the Qur'an has used it for the first time. Thus, the meaning given to this phrase by the Holy Prophet is its real meaning.

If someone else uses such phrases in some other allegorical sense, it does not make that allegory its real meaning. For example, "moon" has a real meaning which all of us know. If someone uses the word 'moon' for the face of a beautiful person it does not mean that 'beautiful face' is the real meaning of 'moon' or that it cannot be used for the terrestrial object for which it was made.

Thirdly, these references, in fact, show the writer's thought (though wrong) that Imam Suyuti (for example) was the last *Hafiz*. It was their mistaken idea, which has been proved wrong. And no wonder. Those writers did not know what was in future. But can you suppose that Allah also did not know the future when He said that Muhammad (S) was the Last of the Prophets? How can you compare the words of Allah with the writings of some mortals?

At the most you can say that those writers were wrong in believing that the person concerned was the last *Hafiz* or the last poet. But you cannot change the real meaning of '*Khatam un-Nabiyyin*' to make their writings correct.

If you tell an Arab '*Ja'a Khatam ul-Qawm*' he will never understand that the most learned man of the tribe has reached; he will always think that the whole tribe has arrived, till the last man.

It is because of this that every writer of the dictionary; and every commentator of the Qur'an, without any exception has written that '*Khatam un-Nabiyyin*' means '*Akhir un-Nabiyyin*', the Last of the Prophets.

If you look impartially at these proofs from the Qur'an, tradition, dictionary and language, you will have to agree that the Holy Prophet of Islam was the Last Prophet and prophethood ended with him. No prophet will ever come after him up to the day of *Qiyamah*; and anybody claiming to be a prophet would be an impostor.

Khatam ul-Awliya'?

The Qadiani missionary had written to me; "There is a tradition in Tafseer Safi (Sura *Al-Ahzab*, Ruku 2) that the Holy Prophet said to Imam Ali: "O Ali, I am Khatam ul-Anbiya' and you are Khatam ul-Awliya". Now can anybody say that Imam Ali was the last Wali and no other Wali can come after him?"

I wrote to him: This supposed tradition quoted from Tafseer Safi is not only without any Sanad (chain of narrators) but also it cannot be found in any other book of tradition.

On the other hand, there are some traditions in the books written by the Sunnis as well as the Shias which describe Imam Ali (a.s.) as "*Khatam ul-Awliya*" or "*Khatam ul-Wasiyyin*" (The Last of the successors of the Prophets). Here are two of the said traditions:

1. Sheikh Suleman al-Balakhi al-Qanduzi, al-Hanafi wrote his book '*Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah*' by order of Sultan Abdul-Aziz, the Turkish Caliph of the Sunnis; the book was published under the authority of the Turkish Caliphate in Istanbul, in 1301 Hijra. He quotes in the said book:

"Likewise, Al-Hamwaini has narrated the tradition from Abu Dhar that he said that the Holy Prophet (S) said, 'I am *Khatam un-Nabiyyin* and you, O Ali, are *Khatam ul-Wasiyyin* up to the day of Judgment".

2. Ubaidullah Amritsari quotes in his hook, Arjahul-Matalib¹, a long tradition from Anas, in which the Holy Prophet (S) described Imam Ali (a.s.) as "*Amir-ul-Mu'mineen wa Sayyid ul-Muslimeen wa Khatam ul-Wasiyyin wa Imam ul-Ghurri-Muhajjaleen*".

This tradition has been quoted from Ibn Mardwaih. It shows that Imam Ali (a.s.) was "The Commander of the Faithful, Chief of the Muslims; and the Last of Successors (of the Prophets) and the Leader of those who will come on the Day of Judgment with shining faces and illuminated hands and feet".

In fact, these traditions are one more proof of the Finality of the Prophethood. Imam Ali (a.s.) was "the Last of the Successors of the Prophets", because there was no other prophet to come after the Last of the Prophets Muhammad Al-Mustafa (S) up to the Day of Qiyamah (Resurrection). Had there been any other awaited prophet, Ali (a.s.) could not have been described as the Last or the Successors of the Prophets.

So you see, the correct tradition is not for you; it is against your belief. Now it appears that some scribes made a mistake in copying *Manaqib* (from where this tradition has been taken in Safi) and wrote *Khatam ul-Awliya'* in place of *Khatam ul-Awsiya'*. That is why you cannot find this tradition in any other book of traditions, except *Manaqib* or where it has been quoted from *Manaqib*. It is one more sign of the weakness of your cause that you have to clutch to such misquoted or wrong traditions!

Abbas: "Khatam ul- Muhajireen"

Qadianis say: "In the book "Kanz ul-Ummal", Vol. 6, p.178, Seyyidana Abbas (uncle of the Holy Prophet (S) has been called "*Khatam ul-Muhajireen*". Does it mean that he was the Last *Muhajir* (emigrant)?"

Fact: Yes. He was in fact the Last *Muhajir*. You must understand that *Al-Muhajireen* and *Al-Ansar* mentioned in the Qur'an and tradition have **a special** meaning. In other words, they are special terms. The word '*Al-Muhajireen*' is used only for those who in the earlier days of hardship of Islam left their towns and migrated either to Ethiopia or Medina. And '*Ansar*' is used only for those inhabitants of Medina who helped the Holy Prophet (S) and the *Al-Muhajireen* in those days.

Hijrat (emigration) was discontinued after Holy Prophet entered Mecca in the year 8 of Hijra. Before surrender of Mecca the Muslims of Mecca and other places were required to do *Bay'at* (allegiance) on Islam and *Hijrat*. After the surrender of Mecca, Mujalid bin Mas'ud accepted Islam and wanted to do *Bay'at* on Islam and *Hijrat*, as was the system.

But the Holy Prophet (S) said: "There is no *Hijrat* after the capture of Mecca", and Mujalid did *Bay'at* on Islam only. (See Bukhari Vol. 4, p.92).

Therefore; Abbas was in fact the Last of *Al-Muhajireen* who left their town for Medina as the word is

used in the Qur'an.

Hafiz Ibn Hajar writes about Abbas in his book *Al-Isaba Fi Ma'arifatis sahaba* (Vol. 3, p.668): "He did *Hijrat* shortly before capture of Mecca and participated in that capture."

History says that Abbas together with his family left Mecca for Medina; but met the Holy Prophet (S) in the way at Juhfa or Rabigh (who was going to capture Mecca with his army). There upon. Abbas sent his family to Medina and accompanied the Holy Prophet to Mecca.

Naturally when heard the Holy Prophet (S) saying that "there was no *Hijrat* after capture of Mecca", he was perturbed that perhaps he would not be counted among the *Muhajireen*. You see *Hijrat* was being abolished just after his migration from Mecca, and he had not yet reached Medina before that declaration. When the Holy Prophet (S) came to know of his anxiety he told him not to worry, because he was "the Last *Muhajir*".

"Do not worry, O uncle, because thou art the last of the *Muhajireen*".

I know that, according to the dictionary, anybody migrating from one place and going to another may be called '*Muhajir*'. But he will not be among the '*Al-Muhajireen*' of the Qur'an. Likewise anybody conveying the message of one man to another may be called '*Rasul*'. But he will not be the '*Rasul*' of Allah according to the Qur'an. And anybody bringing a news can be called '*Nabi*', but he will not be the '*Nabi*' of Qur'an.

Just to show how your argument has no leg to stand, I would like you to tell me how will you interpret the phrase '*Khatam ul- Muhajireen*'?

Does it mean "Superior to all the *Muhajirs*"? Impossible, because Abbas was never considered superior to Ali (a.s.), Hamza and many other *Muhajirs*.

Or does it mean "Seal of the *Muhajirs*"? If so then does it mean that other people became *Muhajir* by the seal of Abbas? Or does it mean that he was confirming the *Hijrat* of other *Muhajirs*?

Surely, none of these meaning can fit here, except the "Last *Muhajir*". Thus, it is clear that Abbas was called "*Khatam ul-Muhajireen*" because he was "The Last *Muhajir*".

1. printed at Nawal Kishore Press, Lahore, 2nd Edition, p. 25.

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