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Prophet Dhul-Kifl [also known as Prophet Gautam Buddha] (Peace Be Upon Him) in The Glorious Quran

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Abstract

*The coexistence of Islam with Buddhism took place several centuries ago. Both religions originated from monotheist sources and Muslim scholars were the first to compare Islam with Buddhism. There are several verses (Surahs) in The Glorious Quran which indicates a strong similarity of Buddhist teaching with Islamic teaching. Muslims scholars like Muhammad Hamidullah (1974)¹ supported by Hamza Yusuf (2010)¹, Reza Kazemi (2010)¹, Imtiyaz Yusuf (2003)¹, and al-Qasimi (2002)¹ all have stated that Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) was Prophet Dhul-Kifl in The Glorious Quran. The justification is that Dhul-Kifl may stand for Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) because he was born in Lumbini and moved to Kapilavastu. Dhul-Kifl means "one from Kifl", whereas Kapilavastu means "one from Kapila" (vastu meaning "one from"). In Arabic there is no 'f' sound and therefore the Arabs used 'p' sound. Since The Glorious Quran is accurate in pronunciations, the Arabs doing trading at the time of Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) through the ancient silk route may have called Kapilavastu, Dhul-Kifl, which changed to Dhul-Kifli when applying it to a person. In other words, Kapilavastu equals Dhul-Kifl (both meaning exactly the same thing: "the one from Kilf or Kapila"), where Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) is named after the place, which is not too uncommon in Arabic."*¹

Keywords: The Glorious Quran, Prophet Dhul-Kifl [also known as Prophet Gautam Buddha] (Peace Be Upon Him)

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Prophethood in The Glorious Quran

There are 25 Prophets mentioned by name in The Glorious Quran. The names are as follows:

Adam, Idris (Enoch), Nuh (Noah), Hud, Salih, Ibrahim (Abraham), Isma'il (Ishmael), Ishaq (Isaac), Lut (Lot), Ya'qub (Jacob), Yusuf (Joseph), Shu'ayb, Ayyub (Job), Dhul-Kifl (Gautam Buddha), Musa (Moses), Harun (Aaron), Dawud (David), Sulayman (Solomon), Ilyas (Elijah), Al-Yasa' (Elisha), Yunus (Jonah), Zakariya (Zechariah), Yahya (John the Baptist), Isa (Jesus Christ), and Muhammad.

However, there is a Hadith that states there were 124,000 Prophets sent to various nations or communities and time periods. The Hadith is found in Mishkat al-Masabih, volume 3, Hadith Number 5737, and is also repeated in Musnad Ahmad, volume 5, pages 265 and 266. The Hadith states that Abu Dharr asked Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him): "O Prophet of ALLAH! How many are the Prophets?" to which he replied: "124,000 Prophets". A good number of Muslims belonging to the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat consider this Hadith as authentic. Other Muslims of Salafi, Shia, and Wahabi Jamaats consider it as a weak or fake Hadith.

Verses of The Glorious Quran describing Prophethood

- Surah Yunus 10:47: - "And for every community or nation there is a Prophet. After their Prophet has come, judgment is passed on them in all fairness, and they are not wronged."
- Surah An-Nahl 16:36: - "We surely sent a Prophet to every community or nation, saying, "Worship ALLAH and shun false gods." But some of them were guided by ALLAH, while others were destined to stray. So travel throughout the land and see the fate of the deniers!"
- Surah Ghafir 40:78: - "And, indeed We have sent Prophets before you (O Muhammad); of some of them We have related to you their story and of some We have not related to you their story, and it was not given to any Prophet that he should bring a sign except by the Leave of ALLAH. So, when comes the Commandment of ALLAH, the matter will be decided with truth, and the followers of falsehood will then be lost."
- Surah Al Mu'minin 23:44: - "Then We sent Our Prophets in succession: whenever a Prophet came to his people, they denied him. So, We destroyed them, one after the other, reducing them to 'cautionary' tales. So away with the people who refuse to believe!"
- Surah Fatir 35:24: - "We have surely sent you with the truth as a deliverer of good news and a Prophet as Warner. There is no community or nation that has not had a Prophet as Warner."
- Surah Al-A'raf 7:158: - "Say, 'O Prophet, 'O humanity! I am ALLAH's Prophet to you all. To Him 'alone' belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. There is no god 'worthy of worship' except Him. He gives life and causes death." So believe in ALLAH and His Prophet, the unlettered Prophet, who believes in ALLAH and His revelations. And follow him, so you may be 'rightly' guided."
- Surah An-Nisa 4:165: - "All were' Prophets delivering good news and warnings so humanity should have no excuse

before ALLAH after 'the coming of' the Prophets. And ALLAH is Almighty, All-Wise."

- Surah Az-Zukhruf 43:45: - "Ask 'the followers of' the Prophets that We already sent before you if We 'ever' appointed 'other' gods to be worshipped besides the Most Compassionate."

Now, all Muslims of Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat consider these verses (Surahs) of The Glorious Quran to be authentic, except Muslims of Salafi, Shia, and Wahabi Jamaats who consider these verses (Surahs) of The Glorious Quran as very weak or fake and it is their ideology (Aqeedah) that ALLAH, The Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Omnibenevolent (also known as 'The Supreme Lord of The Universal Committee and Divine Council') sent only and only one Prophet in this world in the person of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) to the Arabic community or nation. Surprisingly, according to Muslims of Salafi, Shia, and Wahabi Jamaats; Adam, Ram, Krishna, Rishabhanatha, Mahavir, Zoroaster, Gautam Buddha, Moses, and Jesus Christ were all unbelievers (also known as 'Kafirs'). An authentic Muslim is one who believes in Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) only. This is the ideology (Aqeedah) of Muslims of Salafi, Shia, and Wahabi Jamaats.

Verses of The Glorious Quran about Prophet Dhul-Kifl [also known as Prophet Gautam Buddha] (Peace Be Upon Him)

- Surah Al-Anbiya 21:85: - "And 'remember' Ishmael, Idris, and Dhul-Kifl. They were all steadfast."
- Surah Sad 38:48: - "Also remember Ishmael, Elisha, and Dhul-Kifl. All are among the best."
- Surah At-Tin 95:8: - "By the fig, by the olive, by Mount (or Place of) Sinai, by this safe city, We [God] created man in the finest state then reduced him to the lowest of the low, but those who believe through confirmation and do good deeds will have an un-failing reward. After this, what makes you deny the Judgement? Is God not the fairest of judges?"

Gautam Buddha, Jesus Christ, Moses, and Muhammad

"Surah At-Tin 95:8 is speaking of four prophets: Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him), Prophet Jesus Christ (Peace Be Upon Him), Prophet Moses (Peace Be Upon Him), and Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). Here is why:

1. The Fig represents Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) as he sat under the Bo tree which bears figs; it is here when he got his 'enlightenment': All accounts agree that it was when Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) meditated (or remembered ALLAH [God]) under this tree that did he attain enlightenment and that it is right after this that he began to make this message public:
2. The Olive represents Prophet Jesus Christ (Peace Be Upon Him) when he started to give his first public sermons from the Mount of Olives. So, in general, Prophet Jesus Christ (Peace Be Upon Him) did a lot of communicating on the Mount of Olives.
3. The Mount Sinai represents Prophet Moses (Peace Be Upon Him) – he got his commandments from Mount Sinai and immediately after he descended therefrom, he began his sermons.

4. Lastly, the secure City is Mecca where Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) received revelation from the cave of Hira and he immediately began public engagement.

“Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) and Prophet Jesus Christ (Peace Be Upon Him) did not come with new laws — remember that Prophet Jesus Christ (Peace Be Upon Him) said in the Bible, in Matthew 5:17: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law of the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.” Likewise, Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) did not come with laws either, but only with an ethical system that debunked the caste system, superstition and, most importantly, a multitude of Gods so endemic in India, even at that time. Also, both Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) and Prophet Jesus Christ (Peace Be Upon Him) emphasized love and compassion more in terms of the percentage of their deliberations because they were countering extreme and irrational ritualism (that led to cruelty) etc. - so that is why these two are grouped together

However, Prophet Moses (Peace Be Upon Him) and Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) did indeed come with laws and they are grouped together for that reason and also because Prophet Muhammad's laws abrogate Prophet Moses' laws for the Jews and Christians, once they accept Islam, and thousands did so and are doing so currently, every year, despite all the nonsense portrayed in the media about Islam. Therefore, these two Prophets are grouped together in the sequence. Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is put last in the list, as he is The Last and Final Prophet of Islam with the final principles in The Glorious Quran, from which to derive laws for all times.

Many Islamic scholars, erroneously, think that the Fig refers to Mount Judi where Prophet Noah's Ark landed. However, there is no evidence of the linkage of Fig trees thousands of years ago on Mount Judi and it breaks the theme discussed above. In fact, Prophet Noah's ark on Mount Judi has nothing to do with the theme that becomes apparent or obvious on deeper analysis. The great scholar Muhammad Hamidullah drew attention to Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) in The Glorious Quran, for the public at large, concerning the Fig mentioned in Chapter 95 as being none other than Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him)."

Another theory is that Prophet Dhul-Kifl (Peace Be Upon Him) might be the Biblical Prophet Ezekiel (Peace Be Upon Him). However, this connection is not substantiated at all and no Fig was associated with him when he was alive.

Predictions of Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) about Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him)

In The Glorious Quran, it further states that previous Prophets spoke of the coming of The Last and Final Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) himself was one of those [just like Prophet Moses (Peace Be Upon Him) and Prophet Jesus Christ (Peace Be Upon Him)] who had predicted the advent of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). This further corroborates the Prophethood of both Prophet Gautam

Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) and Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). This is what Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) said¹:

Ananda said to the Blessed One, “Who shall teach us when you are gone?”

The Blessed One replied: “I am not the first Buddha who came upon the earth, nor shall I be the last. In due time another Buddha will arise in the world, a holy one, a supremely enlightened one, endowed with wisdom in conduct, auspicious, knowing the universe, an incomparable leader of men, a master of angels and mortals. He will reveal to you the same eternal truths which I have taught you. He will preach his religion, glorious in its origin, glorious at the climax, and glorious at the goal. He will proclaim a religious life, wholly perfect and pure, as such I now proclaim. His disciples will number many thousands, while mine number many hundreds.”

Ananda said: “How shall we know him?”

The Blessed One replied: “He will be known as Maitreya...”

Maitreya in Buddhist Scriptures means a Mercy and the Blessed One. The only one who fits this description properly – as someone even more significant in impact than Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) is indeed Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him)—no one else can fit this bill. It cannot be Jesus Christ (Peace Be Upon Him) as he didn't have followers in the thousands in his lifetime. Furthermore, in The Glorious Quran it states: “We have not sent you, O Muhammad, but as a Mercy to the Worlds.” 21.107. Can this be other than Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), as no one else has been honoured with such a title? So, by the process of rationalisation and elimination we come to conclude that Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is the Maitreya.

Also, Maitreya means “three m's” in Pali (the language that Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) spoke) and the name **Muhammad** is equivalent to having three ‘m’ (*mim* in Arabic) sounds, (the middle m's being of longer duration). In Pali/Sanskrit the word for three is/can be *treya*. ‘M-treya’ literally means 3 m's.

Conclusion

According to Muslims of Salafi, Shia, and Wahabi Jamaats, Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) was an atheist and unbeliever (also known as ‘Kafir’) in spite of the fact that The Glorious Quran has mentioned about him in Surah Al-Anbiya 21:85, Surah Sad 38:48, and Surah At-Tin 95:1-8. However, the Muslims of Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat strongly believe that Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) was not an atheist and unbeliever (also known as ‘Kafir’), but was indeed Prophet Dhul-Kifl (Peace Be Upon Him) as stated in The Glorious Quran. How could someone who predicted the advent of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) and praised him for his pristine and divine qualities be an atheist and unbeliever (also known as ‘Kafir’)?

In the most famous of its scriptures, the Dhammapada², Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) clearly espouses a belief in a supreme Creator. Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him),

¹ Chakkavatti Sinhada Suttana D. III, 76: according to the *Sacred Books of the East*, volume 35, page 225, and according to the *Gospel of Buddha* by Paul Carus, page 217 and 218 (from Ceylon sources).

² Cleary, Thomas (Translator). (1995), *Dhammapada: The Sayings of Buddha*

contrary to being an atheist or a person who never answered or avoided answering the question of God's existence, as some of the present-day Buddhist sects and most Western and Eastern scholars portray, also believed in One God:

“Who is capable of praising one like a coin of finest gold, one whom the knowing praise after finding him impeccable, controlled, intelligent, insightful, ethical, and composed day in and day out? Even the gods³ praise such a one, even the Creator [*brahmuna*] (17:9,10).”⁴

In the Sutta-Pitaka which is part of the Tripitaka texts, translated by T.W. R. Davids of the Buddhist Pali Text Society, Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) has categorically stated, in the Teviggga Sutta, that he had a relationship with the Creator and they should listen to him and follow his ways, since they too want to know how to relate to the Creator:

“...to the Tathagat [the fully enlightened person] when asked touching the path which leads to the world of Brahma [the Creator], there can be neither doubt nor difficulty. For Brahma I [do] know Vashetta [the young Brahmin the Buddha was addressing], and the world of Brahma and the path that leads to it. Yes, I know it ever as one who has entered the Brahma world, and has been born within it!”⁵

His philosophy was a Monotheist Philosophy to the very core, without the mention of God and Religion. He taught Godliness without putting a huge emphasis on God, because at that time period people who believed in God(s) were polytheists and idol worshippers. He taught Religiousness without putting a huge emphasis on Religion, because at that time period people who believed in Religion(s) were dogmatic and superstitious.

This is NOT Paganism, but Buddhism. Unfortunately, his teachings have been distorted today [just like those of Prophet Jesus Christ (Peace Be Upon Him) by Christians who believe in Trinity ideology]. Also, we can see that Buddhists are believing in Samsara (the continuous cycle of birth, death, and rebirth driven by karma), and reincarnation. Prophet Gautam Buddha (Peace Be Upon Him) never taught Samsara and reincarnation, but rather belief in one Creator, and life after death when, on the Last Day of Judgment, the dead will come back to life to be judged by The Creator).⁶ [SANSKRIT: mrutyoh param jivanam yada antime dine mrutah allahasya (ishvarasya) nyayartham punah jivitah bhavishyanti].

³ *Deva* in the original Pali; this likely refers to the created angels or the good spirit entities.

⁴ Ibid., *Dhammapada*.

⁵ Müller, Max F., (1881), *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 11, p. 186.

⁶ Buddha: A Prophet in Islam by Nadeem Haque (Dissertation)