



# Rebuttal

Responding to Questions and Doubts Regarding  
Ghadir Khumm

Center for studies & Responding  
to Religious Doubts  
(Islamic Seminaries)



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# Introduction

“Daḥ va Raḥ” is a reflection on current doubts [in the field of religion], which strives—while providing detailed answers—to adopt a proactive and preventive stance toward the questions and issues that create doubts or serve as sources of confusion within the intellectual sphere of society.

The divine and momentous epic that took place in the 10th year of the lunar Hijra in the region of Ghadir Khumm became the origin of numerous events and developments in the early period of Islam. This current has continuously raised many questions and ambiguities up to the present day.

In this issue, we seek to examine the most significant questions and uncertainties surrounding the topic of Ghadir; and to provide comprehensive and well-founded responses.



# The Hadith of Ghadir

**When did the Event of Ghadir take place? What is meant by the “Greater Weight” (Thiaql alAkbar) and the “Lesser Weight” (Thiql al-Asghar)? Which Qur’anic chapter was revealed regarding Imam Ali (a)? Who were the individuals that initially did not pledge allegiance to Ali (a)?**

The Holy Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him and his family), in the tenth year after the Hijra, traveled to Mecca along with a large number of Muslims in order to perform the rituals of Hajj and to teach its rulings. This pilgrimage coincided with the final year of the Prophet’s blessed life and is thus referred to as the “Farewell Pilgrimage” (Ḥijjat al-Wadā’).<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibn Abd al-Barr, *Al-Isti’ab fi Ma’rifat al-Ashab*, Beirut: Dar al-Jeel, 1st

The number of companions accompanying the Prophet on this journey is reported to have been around 120,000.<sup>1</sup> After the completion of the Hajj rituals and on the return journey from Mecca, the caravan reached the region of Ghadir Khumm<sup>2</sup>. It was there that the Prophet received a divine command to convey an important message. He ordered the caravan to halt, and the following verse was revealed to him:

“O Messenger! Convey what has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people.”

(Qur'an 5:67)

After the caravan stopped and everyone gathered at the appointed location, the Prophet stood on an elevated platform, took the hand of Ali (a), and declared:

“Whoever I am his master (mawla), Ali is also his master. O Allah! Be a friend to the one who befriends him, and be an enemy to

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edition, 1412 AH, Vol. 1, p. 44.

1. Al-Sharif al-Murtada, *Rasa'il al-Murtada*, edited by Sayyid Mahdi Rajai, Qom: Khayyam, 1405 AH, Vol. 3, p. 20.

2. Near Juhfa, between Mecca and Medina.

the one who opposes him.”<sup>1</sup>

With this proclamation, the Prophet fulfilled the divine mandate and openly declared what had been repeatedly hinted at during his mission.

Throughout his prophethood, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) had on numerous occasions spoken of Ali's succession. However, on the 18th of Dhul-Hijjah in the tenth year after the Hijra, by explicit divine command, he declared it publicly and unequivocally. During the sermon of Ghadir Khumm, the Prophet also stated: “O people! I leave behind among you two precious things. If you hold fast to them, you will never go astray.”

When asked what these two precious things were, he replied: “The Greater Weight (Thiqal al-Akbar), which is the Book of Allah (the Qur'an), and the Lesser Weight (Tiqal al-Asghar), which is my family (the Ahl al-Bayt). Indeed, these two shall never separate from each other until they meet

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1. Ibn al-Athir, 'Izz al-Din, *Usd al-Ghabah fi Ma'rifat al-Sahabah*, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, 1409 AH, Vol. 1, p. 364.

me at the Pond of Kawthar.”<sup>1</sup>

Due to his selflessness in charity, sacrifice, bravery, and truthfulness, numerous verses of the Holy Qur’an were revealed in honor of Imam Ali and the Prophet’s family (peace be upon them). Among these are:

- Verse 207 of Surat al-Baqarah
- Verse 33 of Surat al-Aḥzāb
- Verse 23 of Surat al-Shūrā
- Verse 55 of Surat al-Mā’idah
- As well as Surat al-Dahr, also known as Surat al-Insān or Hal Atā, which was revealed in their praise.

After the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) appointed Ali (a) as his successor at Ghadir Khumm, all the prominent Companions from the Muhajirun and the Ansar congratulated Ali and pledged allegiance to him as the Commander of the Faithful (Amir al-Mu’minin). No refusal to pledge allegiance on the day of Ghadir is recorded.<sup>2</sup> Even Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman were among the first to offer their

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1. Ibn Wāḍiḥ al-Ya’qūbī, Aḥmad, Tārīkh al-Ya’qūbī (The History of Ya’qūbī), Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, (n.d.), Vol. 2, p. 112.

2. al-Majlisi, Muhammad Bāqir, Biḥār al-Anwār, Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Wafā’, 1403 AH, vol. 37, p. 59.

congratulations and allegiance.

However, after the Prophet's passing and during Ali's actual caliphate, some individuals refrained from pledging allegiance to him. These included:

- Abdullah ibn Umar
- Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas
- Abu Musa al-Ash'ari
- Usama ibn Zayd
- Muhammad ibn Maslama
- Ka'b ibn Sur
- Abu Ayyub
- Zayd ibn Thabit
- Suhayb ibn Sinan<sup>1</sup>

These individuals were among those who remained neutral (known as Qā'idīn) and did not support Ali during his rule, even though many of them did not support Muawiyah either.

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1. Rashād, 'Alī Akbar, Dānishnāmah-yi Imām 'Alī, Tehran: Pazhūhishgāh-i Farhang va Andīshah-i Islāmī, 1380 SH, vol. 9, p. 16.

## **Is the Hadith of Ghadir Mentioned in Authentic Sunni Sources or in Their Sihah Sittah?**

Yes, the Hadith of Ghadir is indeed recorded in Sunni sources, including some of the six canonical books of Sunni hadith (al-Sihah al-Sittah). For example, al-Nasa'i—a prominent Sunni scholar and the author of Sunan al-Nasa'i, one of the Sihah Sittah—narrates the following in his work al-Sunan al-Kubra:

“The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family), upon returning from his final pilgrimage (Hajjat al-Wada'), reached the area of Ghadir Khumm. There, he ordered the people to halt. He said, ‘Soon I shall be called to my Lord and I will answer the call. Indeed, I am leaving among you two weighty things—one greater than the other:

1. The Book of Allah,
2. My family ('Itrah) and my household (Ahl al-Bayt).

So, watch carefully how you treat them after me. These two will never separate until they return to me at the Pond of Kawthar.’

Then he said: ‘Indeed, Allah is my Master, and I am the master of all believers.’ Then he took the hand of Ali (a) and declared: ‘Whoever I am his master (mawla), this Ali is his master. O Allah, befriend those who befriend him, and be the enemy of those who are hostile to him.’”<sup>1</sup>

While the full sermon of Ghadir—which was delivered by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) on that day—is not entirely recorded in the six canonical Sunni books, many of the key phrases regarding the wilayah (authority) and leadership of Imam Ali (a) are mentioned therein. It is fair to say that the most critical portions of the Hadith are included in these sources, though the full text of the sermon is absent. Nevertheless, this Hadith is considered authentic and undeniable by numerous Sunni scholars. A few testimonies include:

1. Ahmad al-Maghribi, a Sunni scholar, writes:

“The Hadith of Ghadir is sahih (authentic), well-established, and mutawatir (mass-

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1. al-Nasāʾī, Aḥmad ibn Shuʿayb, al-Sunan al-Kubrā, Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1st edition, 1411 AH, vol. 5, p. 45.

transmitted). It has been transmitted through over a hundred chains of narration, and many scholars have compiled independent works solely on this Hadith.”<sup>1</sup>

2. Ibn ‘Asim, another Sunni scholar, states: “The Hadith ‘Whoever I am his master, Ali is his master’ is extremely authentic. A group of Companions narrated it through various authentic chains.”<sup>2</sup>

3. Al-Iskafi, another Sunni scholar, affirms the mutawatir status of the Hadith of Ghadir among all Muslims.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Hadith of Ghadir in the Sihah Sittah**

While the full sermon of Ghadir is not found in its entirety, several key phrases and incidents from the event are narrated in the Sihah Sittah, especially under the section of Imam Ali’s virtues. Examples include:

#### **1. Sunan Ibn Majah (One of the Six Canonical Sunni Books)**

The Prophet is reported to have

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1. al-Maghribī, Aḥmad, Faṭḥ al-Malik al-‘Alī bi-Ṣiḥḥat Ḥadīth Bāb Madīnat al-‘Ilm ‘Alī, Iṣfahān: Maktabat Amīr al-Mu’minīn (‘a), p. 12.

2. Ibn Abī ‘Āsim, al-Ḍaḥḥāk, Kitāb al-Sunnah, Beirut: al-Maktabah al-Islāmī, 3rd edition, 1413 AH, p. 522.

3. al-Iskafī, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh, al-Mīyār wa al-Muwāzanah, [Place unknown]: [Publisher unknown], [Date unknown], pp. 71 & 210.

said: "Whoever I am his master, Ali is also his master."

This narration comes in the context of Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, who rebuked Muawiyah for disrespecting Imam Ali, saying: "I heard the Messenger of Allah say, 'Whoever I am his master, Ali is his master.'"

## **2. Sunan al-Tirmidhi**

Narrated from Zayd ibn Arqam: "Whoever I am his master, Ali is his master after me."

## **3. Al-Nasa'i's Other Works**

In addition to Sunan al-Nasa'i, he reports the Hadith of Ghadir in three other major works, indicating the Hadith's significance:

- al-Sunan al-Kubra, vol. 5, p. 131
- Khasa'is Amir al-Mu'minin, p. 50
- Fada'il al-Sahabah, p. 14

## **4. Another Narration from Sunan Ibn Majah**

Al-Bara' ibn 'Azib recounts that during the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet dismounted and gathered the people for prayer. Afterward, he took the hand of Ali and said:

"Am I not more entitled to you than your

own souls?”

They said: “Yes, indeed.”

Then he asked: “Do I not have authority over all the believers?”

They replied: “Yes.”

He said:

“Then this (Ali) is the master of whomever I am the master. O Allah, love those who love him, and be the enemy of those who oppose him.”<sup>1</sup>

### **The Hadith of Thaqaalayn (The Two Weighty Things)**

This hadith, also mentioned in the sermon of Ghadir, is likewise found in the *Sihah Sittah*:

- Sahih Muslim, considered the most authentic Sunni hadith collection after Sahih al-Bukhari, narrates from Zayd ibn Arqam:

The Prophet stood at Ghadir Khumm and said:

“O people! I am only a human being and soon I shall be called [to my Lord]. I leave among you two weighty things: the first is

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1. Ibn Mājah, Muḥammad ibn Yazīd, Sunan Ibn Mājah, [Publisher details same as previous citation], vol. 1, p. 43.

the Book of Allah in which is guidance and light—so hold fast to the Book of Allah. And [secondly] my Ahl al-Bayt...”

Then he said three times:

“I remind you of Allah concerning my Ahl al-Bayt.”<sup>1</sup>

- Al-Nasa’i, in his other works, considers the Hadith of Thaqaalayn to be part of the Hadith of Ghadir, which the Prophet delivered after appointing Imam Ali as his successor:
- Fada’il al-Sahabah, p. 15
- al-Sunan al-Kubra, vol. 5, p. 45
- Khasa’is Amir al-Mu’minin, p. 93

### Concluding Notes

The phrase “Whoever I am his master, Ali is his master” has been narrated in at least 67 Sunni hadith and tafsir sources, with over 230 independent chains of transmission—clearly establishing the authenticity and undeniability of the Hadith of Ghadir.

Likewise, the Hadith of Thaqaalayn (i.e., “I leave among you the two weighty things...”) appears in more than 48 Sunni books and

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1. al-Nisābūrī, Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d., vol. 7, p. 123.

has been transmitted over 102 times. In addition to these, many Sunni sources record narrations regarding the virtues of Imam Ali (a), including al-Nasa'i, who compiled an entire book titled Khasa'is Amir al-Mu'minin, in which he also references the Hadith of Ghadir.

**Suggested Sources for Further Study:**

Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal (The Imam of the Hanbali school of Sunni Islam), Volumes 1, 3, 4, and 5.

## **What is the evidence for the correctness of the Shi'a interpretation of the Hadith of Ghadir, which understands Mawlā to mean “guardian” or “leader”?**

Careful attention to the connected and disconnected, vivid and clear evidence and indications present in the Hadith of Ghadir leads us to the conclusion that Mawlā means Imamate and one who has authority to govern. Below are several points supporting this:

### **1. The Hadith of Hudhayfah ibn Asid**

It is authentically narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) said: “Do you not bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger?” They replied, “Yes, we bear witness.”

Then the Prophet said: “O Allah, be witness. O people, Allah is my Mawlā, and I am the Mawlā of the believers. I am more entitled to the believers than they are to themselves. So whoever I am his Mawlā, Ali is his Mawlā.”<sup>1</sup> Placing Wilayah (authority) in the context of the testimony of monotheism and

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1. al-Ṭabarānī, Sulaymān ibn Aḥmad, al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr, Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1404 AH, vol. 3, p. 180.

prophethood, and alongside the Mawlā of Allah and the Prophet, is proof that Wilayah here means Imamate and one who has authority to govern. There is no evidence to say that the meaning of Mawlā regarding the Prophet differs from its meaning regarding ‘Ali (PBUH).

## **2. The Verse of Proclamation (Ayat al-Tabligh)**

Allah says in the Qur’an: “O Messenger! Convey what has been revealed to you from your Lord. And if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people.” (Surah al-Ma’idah 5:67)

This verse commands the Prophet to convey a very important and critical matter, so important that failure to convey it is equated to not conveying the message of the mission at all. The danger of opposition from the people and Allah’s guarantee of protection shows this matter was weighty and sensitive — namely the announcement of ‘Ali’s Imamate and leadership. According to Sunni narrations, including those of Ibn ‘Asakir and al-Hibari, this verse was revealed on the day of Ghadir

specifically concerning ‘Ali.

It would be unreasonable and absurd for someone to say that this verse commands the Prophet to convey only love and friendship toward ‘Ali, and that the Prophet was so fearful of conveying that friendship that Allah had to reassure him, and the Prophet halted the Hajj caravan under the hot sun to hold a ceremony declaring: “Whoever I am his Mawlā, ‘Ali is his friend.”

### **3. The Verse of Completion (Ayat al-Ikmal)**

After the Prophet’s declaration at Ghadir, the following verse was revealed: “Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and chosen Islam as your religion.” (Surah al-Ma’idah 5:3)

This verse, revealed after the Ghadir sermon, is a clear and convincing proof that Mawlā means Imamate. No meaning other than Imamate and leadership justifies the description of religion as “completed.”

### **4. The Narration of Abu Hurairah on Fasting the Day of Ghadir**

Al-Hakimal-Hasakaninarratesauthentically from Abu Hurairah:

Whoever fasts the 18th of Dhu al-Hijjah will receive the reward of sixty months of fasting. This is the day of Ghadir when the Prophet took 'Ali's hand and said:

"Am I not the Mawlā of the believers?"

They said: "Yes."

He said: "Whoever I am his Mawlā, 'Ali is his Mawlā."

At that moment, Umar said:

"Blessings, O son of Abu Talib! You have become the Mawlā of me and every Muslim."

Then the verse of completion was revealed. The revelation of the verse of Ikmal after the Ghadir sermon is a strong indication that the meaning of Mawlā is Imamate, since nothing but Imamate can be called "the perfection of religion."

## **5. The Incident of Harith ibn Nu'man**

Abu Ishaq Tha'labi relates:

When the news of the Ghadir declaration reached Harith ibn Nu'man, he came angrily to the Prophet, dismounted from his camel, and said:

"O Muhammad! You ordered us to testify to God's oneness and to the Prophethood — we accepted. You commanded us to pray,

fast, give zakat, and perform Hajj — all accepted. But now you raise your cousin above us and say: ‘Whoever I am his Mawlā, this ‘Ali is his Mawlā.’ Is this from you or from God?”

The Prophet replied: “By Him besides whom there is no god, it is from God.”

Harith then turned away murmuring:

“O Allah, if what Muhammad says is true, then rain down stones from the sky upon us or punish us severely.”

Before reaching his camel, a stone came down from the sky and killed him.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly, Harith understood Mawlā here as authority and guardianship, because his anger and prayer for destruction would make no sense if the Prophet only meant friendship.

## **6. Understanding of Caliph Umar**

The clearest evidence that Mawlā means Imamate is Umar’s own understanding. When the Prophet asked for pen and paper to write a will to save the Ummah from

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1. Rezvani, Ali Asghar, *Shi’a Shinasi va Pasokh beh Shobahat* [Shi’a Studies and Answering Doubts], vol. 1, p. 651; citing *al-Kashf wa al-Bayan*, p. 234.

error, Umar told Ibn Abbas:

“I realized the Prophet wanted to assign leadership to ‘Ali, but I prevented him.”

This confirms that Umar understood the Hadith of Ghadir as appointing leadership and succession to ‘Ali.<sup>1</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Therefore, the connected and disconnected evidence shows that the Shi’a interpretation of the Hadith of Ghadir is correct and true, and the companions themselves understood the Hadith as Shi’a do — that Mawlā means leader, guardian, and one with divinely appointed authority, not merely a friend.

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1. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, ‘Izz al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd ibn Hibat Allāh, Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah, Qom: Mu’assasat Ismā‘īliyyān li-l-Ṭibā‘ah wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī, vol. 12, p. 78.

## **What Issues Did the Prophet (PBUH) Emphasize Most in the Sermon of Ghadir?**

In this sermon, the Prophet (PBUH) spoke on several key themes and repeatedly emphasized them to clarify their importance and consequences for everyone:

### **1. Monotheism and Oneness of God:**

After praising and glorifying God, the Prophet addressed the concept of monotheism, describing God's attributes:

"The God who is unique in His greatness, alone in His oneness, powerful and mighty in His dominion, whose knowledge encompasses everything, present everywhere and watching over all... He understands what is hidden and knows the innermost thoughts, and nothing is concealed from Him. He wills, so He accomplishes; He decrees, so it is determined; He knows, so He counts... I praise Him and constantly thank Him, both in ease and hardship, in times of distress and calm, and I believe in Him, His angels, His scriptures, and His messengers..."

### **2. Succession and the Virtues of Ali and the Ahl al-Bayt (Peace be upon them):**

The main part of the sermon was devoted to the issue of leadership and the merits of Imam Ali and the Prophet's family. The Prophet said:

"God revealed to me: 'O Messenger, deliver what has been sent down to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And God will protect you from the people.' The Prophet explained that this verse was revealed about Imam Ali and declared to the people:

'Indeed, Ali ibn Abi Talib is my brother, my trustee, my successor, and the Imam after me. His relationship to me is like that of Aaron to Moses, except there will be no prophet after me. God says in the Quran: 'Your ally is only God and His Messenger and those who believe...'. Ali is the one who establishes prayer, gives zakat while in ruku' (bowing), and constantly turns to God.' Then the Prophet went on to describe Ali's virtues extensively, saying:

"O people! Know and understand this: God has appointed him as your authority and Imam whose obedience is obligatory. He

is the clear Imam mentioned in the Quran: 'And We have made everything in a clear register (Imam Mubeen).' O people! Do not be led astray from Ali, do not turn away from him, and do not reject his authority. Honor him because God has honored him, and accept him because God has appointed him."

The Prophet raised Ali's hand and said:

"O people! This is Ali, my brother, my trustee, the repository of my knowledge, my successor in interpreting God's Book and calling to it. He is the Caliph of God and the Commander of the Faithful, the guiding Imam."

### **3.Warning About Hypocrites and Their Harm:**

The Prophet warned about a group of hypocrites who persistently troubled him and who would threaten the future of Islam: “O people! I asked Gabriel to ask God to exempt me from conveying this message because I know the fewness of the pious and the abundance of hypocrites and the harm of the slanderers and mockers of Islam... Also, because the hypocrites have often harmed me, calling me ‘a listener to every talk,’ thinking that because of my close companionship with Ali and my attention to him, I am as they accuse... but God commanded: ‘And among them are those who annoy the Prophet...’ I could name them, I could point to them, but I have dealt with them generously.”

The Prophet added: “After me, there will be caliphs who invite to hellfire and will receive no help on the Day of Judgment... Soon, the caliphate will be seized by injustice and force...”

### **4.Characteristics of the Friends and Enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt:**

The Prophet described the true friends of the Ahl al-Bayt as those whom God has said about:

“Those who believe and do not cover their faith with injustice – they shall have security and are rightly guided.”

And he warned:

“Know that the enemies of the Ahl al-Bayt are those who will enter the fire of hell, hearing its terrifying sounds and seeing its blazing flames.”

### **5. Calling for Pledge of Allegiance to Ali's Succession:**

Finally, the Prophet called on the people:

“O people! After I finish my speech, I will ask you to give your hands in pledge of allegiance to me and acceptance of Ali's leadership. Know that I have pledged allegiance to God, and Ali has pledged allegiance to me. I take your pledge for him from God's behalf: ‘Those who pledge allegiance to you pledge allegiance to God...’ The hand of God is over their hands. Whoever breaks this pledge harms only himself, and whoever fulfills the covenant of God will receive a great reward.”

He concluded:

“O people! Pledge allegiance to God, pledge allegiance to me, and pledge allegiance to Ali, Commander of the Faithful, and to Hasan and Husayn, and the Imams from their lineage.”

## **How Can the Text of the Hadith of Ghadir Be Verified According to Shi'a Narrations From the Perspective of the Sciences of 'Ilm al-Dirāyah and 'Ilm al-Rijāl?**

To clarify the answer, several points are noted as follows:

### **1. Meaning of Ghadir:**

Linguistically, Ghadir refers to a place where rainwater accumulates.<sup>1</sup> Technically, it is the name of a location at Juhfa, which is situated at a crossroads that separates the lands of the Hejaz region. The term Yawm al-Ghadir (Day of Ghadir) denotes the 18th day of Dhu al-Hijjah, which was a Thursday in the tenth year after Hijra. On this day, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) delivered the famous sermon and Hadith of Ghadir at Ghadir Khumm in the presence of approximately 90,000 to 120,000 people.<sup>2</sup>

### **2. The Tawātur (Massive Transmission) of the Hadith of Ghadir and the Lack of Need for Sanad (Chain) Verification:**

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1. Farāhīdī, Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, Kitāb al-ʿAyn, Qom: Muʿassasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 1st edition, 1414 AH, p. 598.

2. ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn Amīnī, al-Ghadīr (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, 2nd ed., 1366 AH), 1:9; cf. ʿAbd Allāh al-Shāfiʿī, al-Manāqib, 108.

The Hadith of Ghadir is accepted both by Shi'a and Sunni traditions. Allamah Amini, up to his time, lists 26 authors who have written independent books or treatises on the subject.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Respected researcher Sayyid 'Abdul-'Aziz Tabataba'i expands this number to 125 books. It should also be noted that the sciences of Rijāl (which assess the trustworthiness of narrators) and Dirāyah (hadith criticism) are typically applied to āḥād (single-chain) reports. However, in the case of the Hadith of Ghadir, such scrutiny is unnecessary because it possesses:

- Verbal Tawātur: Multiple independent chains with similar wording from the Prophet, making forgery virtually impossible and certain to the listener.
- General Tawātur: Some reports collectively ascribed to the Hadith of Ghadir definitely originate from the Prophet.
- Semantic Tawātur: The main meanings are consistently transmitted across different narrations in various

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1. 'Abd al-Husayn Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr* (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah, 2nd ed., 1366 AH), 1:153–157.

expressions and multiple instances.

### **3. Indicators of Trustworthiness in the Hadith of Ghadir:**

Besides comprehensive tawātur, the Hadith of Ghadir contains all the hallmarks of reliability because:

- First: It does not contradict the Qur'an; rather, it is corroborated by several verses such as Āyat al-Kamāl (Completion), Tabligh (Proclamation), Wilāyah (Authority), and Uli al-Amr (Those in Authority).
- Second: It does not conflict with definite Sunnah; numerous hadiths such as those of Thaḳalayn, Manzilah, Safinah, etc., support it.
- Third: It aligns with the Prophet's practice and reason; the Prophet appointed successors on short journeys, so it is unreasonable to leave the community without a successor.
- Fourth: It is sound and mutawātir from a sanad perspective. Thus, all the criteria for authenticity converge in the Hadith of Ghadir.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Al-Shāfi'i, al-Manāqib (Tehran: Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmīyah), 108.

**Based on the above introduction:**

- Firstly, the Hadith of Ghadir — the text of which will be provided — is a mutawātir, definitive, and incontrovertible tradition. This tawātur existed not only in the early days of Islam close to the Prophet's time but continued throughout all centuries and eras. Some Shafi'i scholars have noted that the Hadith of Ghadir exceeds the level of tawātur.
- Secondly, the version agreed upon by both Shi'a and Sunni is as follows:

“O people, am I not more worthy of you than yourselves?” They said, “Yes, O Allah's Messenger!” He said, “He whose mawla (master/guardian) I am, Ali is his mawla. O Allah, befriend whoever befriends him and be an enemy to whoever opposes him; help whoever supports him and forsake whoever forsakes him.”<sup>1</sup>

(According to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, this

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1. al-Amīnī, al-Ghadīr, 1:8; cf. al-Khwārazmī, al-Manāqib (Qom: Mu'assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 3rd ed., 1417 AH), 135 (narration 152); and cf. al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, Kanz al-'Ummāl (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 5th ed., 1405 AH/1985 CE), 11:609 (narration 33950).

sentence was repeated four times.)

### **Multiple Chains of Transmission:**

Allamah ‘Abdul-Husayn Amini compiled all the chains of transmission from both Sunni and Shi’a sources in his monumental work *Al-Ghadir fi l-Kitāb wa l-Sunnah wa l-Adab*. He names 110 Companions such as Abu Hurayrah, Abu Laili al-Ansari, Bura’ ibn ‘Azib, among others, as transmitters of the Hadith of Ghadir. He also mentions 84 Tābi‘īn (followers of the Companions) like Abu Rashid al-Bahrani, Abu Sulayman al-Mu’adhdhin, Asbagh ibn Nabatah, etc., who transmitted the Hadith. In the second century AH, 56 transmitters<sup>1</sup>, in the third century 92<sup>2</sup>, in the fourth century around 80<sup>3</sup>, in the fifth century 30, sixth century 20, seventh century 23, and continuing up to the 14th century, altogether about 360 scholars and hadith transmitters have narrated the Hadith of Ghadir.<sup>4</sup>

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1. al-Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 1:14-62.

2. al-Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 1:62-72.

3. al-Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 1:73-82.

4. al-Amīnī, *al-Ghadīr*, 1:123-152.

Furthermore, approximately 21 Sunni historians such as al-Baladhuri, Ibn Qutaybah, and al-Tabari, 25 Sunni hadith scholars such as Ibn Idris al-Shafi'i, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasa'i, al-Tahawi, and about 10 Sunni Qur'an commentators like al-Tabari, al-Sha'bi, al-Qurtubi, as well as about 7 Sunni theologians such as Qadi Abu Bakr al-Baqillani, al-Iji al-Shafi'i, and Sharif Jurjani, and around five lexicographers like al-Hamawi and al-Zabidi have all transmitted the Hadith of Ghadir in their works, totaling approximately 500 individuals.

### **Examples of Detailed Sunni Chains:**

#### **1. Al-Khwarizmi narrates:**

“Sayed al-Huffaz Abu Mansur Shahdār bin Shirwah bin Shahdār al-Daylami wrote to me from Hamadan that he was told by Abu al-Fath Abdus ibn Abdullah al-Hamdani, who wrote: ‘We were told by al-Sharif Abu Talib al-Mufasssal ibn al-Ja’fari from Isfahan, who was told by the Hafiz Abu Bakr ibn Mardawayh (with permission) from his grandfather, who said: Abdullah ibn Ishaq

al-Nabawi told me, who said Hasan ibn 'Alili al-'Anazi told us, who said Muhammad ibn 'Abdur-Rahman al-Dha'ir told us, who said Qays ibn Hafs told me, who said Ali ibn al-Hasan Abu al-Hasan al-'Abdi from Abu Harun al-'Abdi from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri that the Prophet (PBUH) on the day he called people to Ghadir ordered the removal of the thorn bushes under the tree, and that was on Thursday. Then he called people to Ali, took his arm and raised it until people saw the whiteness of his armpit (the whiteness beneath the mule's belly), and they did not disperse until the verse, 'Today I have perfected for you your religion...' was revealed. Then the Messenger of God said: 'God is greatest in perfecting the religion and completing the blessing and God is pleased with my messengership, and (so is) the Wilaya for Ali.' Then he said: 'O God, befriend whoever befriends him, and be an enemy to whoever opposes him, and help whoever supports him, and forsake whoever forsakes him.' Then Hassan ibn Thabit asked permission from the Prophet to say some verses, and he permitted him by

saying: ‘Say, by the blessing of God Almighty.’ Hassan ibn Thabit said: ‘O elders of Quraysh, listen to the testimony of the Messenger of God (PBUH), then he called out on the Day of Ghadir: Your Prophet is your star, listen to the Messenger proclaiming: I am your Mawla, yes, and your Prophet.’ They said, ‘There was no sign of blindness.’ Then the Prophet said to Ali: ‘Get up and come to me, I accept you as my leader and guide after me.’”<sup>1</sup>

**Other Sunni scholars such as Ibn Athir<sup>2</sup>, al-Qurtubi<sup>3</sup>, Ibn Kathir al-Dimashqi<sup>4</sup>, Ibn Majah al-Qazwini<sup>5</sup>, and al-Muttaqi al-Hindi in Kanz al-‘Ummal<sup>6</sup> have narrated the Hadith of Ghadir in different chains.**

Hadith transmitters have also narrated the

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1. al-Khwārazmī, Muwaffaq ibn Aḥmad. al-Manāqib. Qom: Mu’assasat al-Nashr al-Islāmī, 3rd ed., 1417 AH, 134 (narration 150), 135 (narration 152).

2. Ibn al-Athīr, ‘Izz al-Dīn. Usd al-Ghābah fī Ma’rifat al-Ṣaḥābah. 7 vols. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, [year], 4:28.

3. al-Qurtubī, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Anṣārī, al-Jāmi’ li-Aḥkām al-Qur’ān, Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1405 AH, vol. 18, p. 278.

4. Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-Fidā’ Ismā’īl ibn ‘Umar al-Dimashqī, al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, Beirut: Maktabat al-Ma’ārif, vol. 7, p. 350.

5. al-Qazwīnī, Muḥammad ibn Yazīd (Ibn Mājah), Sunan Ibn Mājah, ed. Muḥammad Fu’ād ‘Abd al-Bāqī, [Place]: [Publisher], [Year], vol. [X], p. [X].

6. Al-‘Alī al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, Kanz al-‘Ummaal fī Sunan al-Aḥwāl, Beirut, Mu’assasat al-Risālah, 5th ed., 1405 AH, vol. 11, p. 609, hadith no. 33950; p. 602, hadith no. 32904 and 32916; p. 609, hadith no. 32949 and 32950; p. 610, hadith no. 32951.

reasoning of Ali (a) based on the Hadith of Ghadir in various contexts, such as Abu al-Tufayl, Zayd ibn Arqam, 'Amr ibn Wathilah, Anas ibn Malik, 'Abdur-Rahman ibn Abi Layla<sup>1</sup>, Asbagh ibn Nabatah<sup>2</sup>, 'Umayrah ibn Sa'd<sup>3</sup>, Zayd ibn Shabah, Zadhan ibn 'Umar<sup>4</sup>, and Ibn Walid.

### **Regarding the Lack of the Hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim:**

If anyone who is fair-minded and well-versed in history studies the matter, they will admit that the Hadith of Ghadir is not at all questionable from a sanad perspective. The only objection raised is its absence from Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim.

- The answer is:
- Firstly, this is due to their ignorance or bias, not due to any defect in the Hadith itself.
- Secondly, Sunnis themselves have a principle called taqdim al-mu'akkad 'ala al-munafi (preferring positive

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1. Uds al-Ghābah, ibid., vol. 4, p. 28, chapter 'al-'Ayn.

2. Ibid., vol. 6, p. 126.

3. Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah, ibid., vol. 7, p. 348.

4. Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, Tadhkirat al-Khawāṣṣ, Beirut, Mu'assasat Ahl al-Bayt, 1401 AH, p. 35.

transmission over negative), as al-Halabi has stated: a transmitter's narration is preferred over someone who does not transmit it.

- Thirdly, Bukhari and Muslim never intended to collect all authentic hadiths. Ibn Hajar explains that Bukhari himself acknowledged that the authentic narrations he did not collect exceed those he gathered.

### **The Hadith of Ghadir and the Verse of “Today I have perfected your religion”**

The Hadith of Ghadir, which Shi'a claim clearly indicates the Imamate of Ali ibn Abi Talib, was conveyed on the 18th of Dhu al-Hijjah. Meanwhile, the verse of “Today I have perfected your religion” (Yawm Akmaltu Lakum Dinakum) was revealed on the 9th of Dhu al-Hijjah. Therefore, the completion of religion occurred on the 9th of Dhu al-Hijjah and the Imamate of Ali ibn Abi Talib is unrelated to the completion of religion!

Shi'a exegetes and scholars generally hold this view, but a number of Sunni scholars, commentators, and hadith

experts also believe that the verse “Today I have perfected for you your religion” was revealed on the 18th of Dhu al-Hijjah, the day known as Ghadir Khumm. Below, we cite some statements from Sunni scholars and commentators regarding this verse and the reason for its revelation:

1. Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, in his famous commentary *Al-Durr al-Manthur*, narrates under this verse that when Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) appointed Ali (a) as Imam on the day of Ghadir and proclaimed his Wilaya (authority), the Angel Gabriel descended and brought this verse.
2. Khatib al-Baghdadi in his historical work narrates:

“Whoever fasts on the 18th of Dhu al-Hijjah, it will be recorded for him as if he fasted for sixty months. That day is the day of Ghadir Khumm. When the Prophet (PBUH) took the hand of Ali ibn Abi Talib and said: ‘Am I not the wali (guardian) of the believers?’

They responded: ‘Yes, you are the wali of the believers, O Prophet of God!’ Then he said: ‘Whoever I am his wali, Ali is his wali.’ Umar ibn al-Khattab said: ‘Bravo, well done, O son of Abu Talib! From now on, you are my wali and the wali of every Muslim!’ Then God revealed the verse: ‘Today I have perfected your religion...’”

3. Ibn Mughazili, one of the prominent Sunni jurists and hadith scholars, in his renowned book *Manaqib Ali ibn Abi Talib (a)* — an unparalleled work among books on the virtues of Imam Ali — narrates a hadith similar to the above with slight differences and additions, explicitly stating that the verse was revealed on the 18th of Dhu al-Hijjah, the day of Ghadir Khumm.
4. Hamawi Juwayni, another notable Sunni scholar, in his famous book *Fara'id al-Samtayn*, with full chains of transmission, narrates:  
“On the day of Ghadir Khumm, the

Prophet called the people to introduce Ali (a) and ordered them to clear the thorns and weeds beneath the tree there. The people complied. That day was a Thursday. Then the Prophet raised Ali's hand so high that the whiteness of his armpits was visible. Before the Prophet and Ali separated, this verse was revealed: 'Today I have perfected for you your religion...' The Prophet said: 'God is great, the God who has perfected His religion and completed His favor upon us and is pleased with my prophethood, my message, and the Wilaya of Ali (PBUH). Then he prayed: O God, love those who love him and be hostile to those who are hostile to him; help his supporters and deprive those who do not help him.'"

We conclude this discussion with the valuable words of the late Allameh Amini in his book *Al-Ghadir*. After emphasizing that the verse "Today I have perfected for you

your religion...” was revealed on the day of Ghadir Khumm, he states:

“All the Imamis agree that this noble verse was revealed regarding the explicit text of Ghadir after the Prophet was in the desert of Khumm, concerning the Wilaya of Ali ibn Abi Talib (a). A text that was stated with clear and explicit wording, so that all the Companions recognized it and all Arabs understood it! Everyone who heard it argued by it, and many Sunni scholars of tafsir, hadith, and narrators of traditions have agreed with the Imamis on the matter of the verse’s revelation on the day of Ghadir Khumm.”

He then names more than fifteen Sunni scholars, along with their books and pages, who have explicitly stated that the verse “Today I have perfected your religion...” was revealed on the day of Ghadir Khumm.

## **The Meaning of Tawallā and Tabarrā in the Phrase “O Allah, befriend whoever befriends him, and oppose whoever opposes him”**

Since the question contains two parts, we are compelled to address each separately. Each answer will also clarify the other in greater detail.

### **A) The Word Walā’:**

The terms walā’, wilāyah (with a fatḥa on the wāw), wilāyah (with a kasrah on the wāw), walī, mawlā, awlā, and similar words all derive from the root w-l-y. This root is among the most frequently used in the Noble Qur’an, appearing approximately 124 times as a noun and 112 times as a verb. According to Rāghib in Mufradāt al-Qur’ān, the essential meaning of this root is “for one thing to be placed next to another without any separation,” that is, when two things are so closely joined that nothing separates them, the term derived from w-l-y is used. For this reason, the word naturally conveys the sense of nearness—whether spatial or spiritual. Accordingly, it is used in contexts of friendship, support, leadership,

authority, and other meanings that involve close involvement or connection.

This term is used in both material/physical and spiritual/intangible contexts. Regarding the specific word *wilāyah*, Rāghib explains that *wilāyah* with a *kasrah* on the *wāw* means “assistance,” while *wilāyah* with a *fathā* on the *wāw* refers to “authority and governance.” Some scholars consider both meanings to be fundamentally the same, with the essence of the word being the assumption of responsibility or authority. Similarly, the terms *walī* and *mawlā* share this meaning, though depending on the context, they may carry either an active or passive connotation. From a comprehensive study of the Qur’an, it is clear that Islam recognizes two types of *walā’*: positive and negative—*tawallā* and *tabarrā*, respectively. Muslims are commanded to reject and avoid one type of *walā’*—this is *tabarrā*, which will be discussed separately—and they are invited to embrace another type—this is *tawallā*. This positive allegiance itself is of two kinds: general and specific. The specific form of allegiance (*walā’ khāṣṣ*) also includes

several subcategories: walā' of love, walā' of imamate, walā' of leadership, and wilāyah takwīnīyah (cosmic authority). We shall now briefly discuss each of these:

### **1. General Walā' and Tawallā:**

Islam seeks for Muslims to live as a unified and independent entity, forming a cohesive and interconnected society in which every individual considers themselves a member of one body—the Islamic community. This unity strengthens the Muslim Ummah. The Qur'an states:

“The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong...”

This verse expresses that believers are close to one another. Because of their closeness, they act as supporters and protectors of one another, taking interest in each other's fate—thus enjoining good and forbidding evil. These actions stem from an emotional and faith-based bond.

### **2. Specific Walā' and Tawallā:**

This is the allegiance to the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). There is no

dispute—among Shia and Sunni scholars alike—that the Prophet called Muslims to a special form of allegiance toward his family. The verse of dhawī al-qurbā—“Say, I ask of you no reward except love for my near relatives”—explicitly states this specific walā’. Similarly, the well-known and widely accepted hadith of Ghadir—“Whomsoever I am his master, Ali is also his master”—also clearly refers to a specific type of allegiance. The verse “Your only allies are Allah, His Messenger, and those who believe, those who establish prayer and give zakat while bowing [in prayer]” is unanimously agreed upon by both Sunni and Shia scholars to refer to Imam Ali (peace be upon him), and it too expresses a specific walā’, contrary to what some Sunni scholars may interpret.

## **The Subcategories of Specific Walā’:**

### **1) Walā’ of Love or Kinship:**

This refers to loving the Ahl al-Bayt because they are the close relatives (dhawī al-qurbā) of the Prophet. Muslims are especially enjoined to show them affection—above and beyond the general love due to all believers. This command is rooted in Qur’anic verses and supported by hadiths from both Shia and Sunni sources.

### **2) Walā’ of Imamate:**

This is the allegiance to religious leadership. In this sense, the Imam is the religious reference point whose guidance must be followed, whose behavior serves as a model, and whose commands regarding religion are authoritative. Such a position requires infallibility, as the Imam’s words and actions are binding upon others. The Qur’an says of the Prophet:

“Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example to follow for whoever hopes for Allah and the Last Day...”

This position of leadership passed on to the purified Imams after the Prophet, as evidenced by many hadiths—including one

narrated by nearly thirty Companions and acknowledged by most Sunni scholars—in which the Prophet said:

“I leave among you two precious things: the Book of Allah and my Ahl al-Bayt...”

### **3) Walā’ of Leadership (Zamāmah):**

This refers to political and social authority—the right to govern and manage societal affairs. Every society requires leadership, and the person who assumes this role has authority over the collective affairs of the Muslim community. During his lifetime, the Prophet held this leadership by divine command. After him, according to strong and undeniable evidence, this leadership was entrusted to the Ahl al-Bayt. The verse: “Obey Allah, obey the Messenger, and those in authority among you...”

—as well as the opening verses of Surah al-Mā'idah, the Hadith of Ghadir, and the verse: “Your guardian is only Allah, His Messenger, and those who...” and the verse: “The Prophet is closer to the believers than their own selves...” —all indicate this form of authority.

### **4) Walā’ of Spiritual Authority (Wilāyah Takwīnīyah):**

This is the highest form of walā', involving a special cosmic authority and influence. It is related both to the latent potential within the human being and to the person's proximity to God. When a person attains closeness to Allah through the path of servitude, their spiritual essence becomes a focal point for divine realities. Such a person—due to their spirituality—becomes the leader of the spiritually inclined, a witness over the hearts, and the divine proof on earth. The earth is never devoid of a walī bearing this spiritual reality—i.e., the Perfect Human. This level of wilāyah is distinct from prophethood, caliphate, succession (wasāyah), and even imamate as legal-religious authority.

**B) Tabarrā or Negative Walā':**

The Qur'an is strict in its condemnation of Muslims forming friendly and submissive relations with non-Muslims in a way that would compromise Islamic identity. The prohibition of walā' toward non-Muslims means that a Muslim's relationship with non-Muslims should not be equivalent to their relationship with fellow Muslims—

such that a Muslim would become integrated into the fabric of non-Muslim societies or disconnected from the Islamic community.

However, this does not conflict with the Islamic principle of kindness toward non-Muslims. A Muslim can show generosity and compassion toward non-Muslims without granting them the kind of loyalty and integration that would threaten Islamic identity. Thus, *tabarrā* (disavowal) or negative *walā'* is fully compatible with human kindness and the universal compassion that Islam promotes.

A true humanist desires the well-being and salvation of all people. Therefore, every Muslim wishes for all of humanity to be guided to Islam. But when that guidance does not occur, Muslims must not sacrifice the integrity of their community for the sake of those who remain unconverted. The boundaries must remain intact—this is *tabarrā* or negative *walā'*.

Islam, in response to a corrupt and unredeemed society governed by disbelief and ignorance, issues two parallel commands: one, to fight in *jihad* and

uproot corruption—“Fight them until there is no more fitnah (persecution or corruption)”—and two, to exercise caution and avoid deep alliances, so that the Muslim community remains intact and spiritually healthy. This stance, far from contradicting humanitarian values, upholds them.

**The Hadith of Ghadir, which the Shi'a claim as proof of the Imamate of Ali ibn Abi Talib, was stated on the 18th of Dhu al-Hijjah. However, the verse regarding the completion of religion (al-ikmāl) was revealed on the 9th of Dhu al-Hijjah. Therefore, the completion of religion took place on the 9th, and the Imamate of Ali ibn Abi Talib has nothing to do with it.**

Most Shi'a commentators and scholars, as well as a number of prominent Sunni scholars, commentators, and hadith transmitters, believe that the verse "This day I have perfected for you your religion..." (al-Mā'idah 5:3) was revealed on the 18th of Dhu al-Hijjah, the day known as Ghadir Khumm. Below are references from some Sunni scholars regarding this verse and its occasion of revelation:

1. Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti, in his well-known commentary al-Durr al-Manthur, under the verse in question, narrates a hadith stating: "When the Prophet (peace be upon him) appointed Ali (peace be upon him) as the leader (Imam) on the day of Ghadir and

publicly declared his guardianship, the angel Gabriel brought down the above verse.”

2. Al-Khatib al-Baghdadi, in his *Tarikh Baghdad*, narrates:

“Whoever fasts on the 18th of Dhu al-Hijjah will have the reward of fasting sixty months. That day is the Day of Ghadir Khumm—when the Prophet (peace be upon him) took the hand of Ali ibn Abi Talib and said: ‘Am I not the guardian (wali) of the believers?’ They replied, ‘Yes! You are the guardian of the believers, O Messenger of God!’ Then he said: ‘Whoever I am his master (mawla), Ali is his master.’ Umar ibn al-Khattab said: ‘Congratulations, congratulations, O son of Abu Talib! From now on, you are my master and the master of every believing man and woman.’ Then God revealed the verse: “This day I have perfected for you your religion...””

3. Ibn al-Maghazili, a prominent Sunni jurist and hadith memorizer, in his renowned book *Manaqib Ali ibn Abi Talib*, a unique work on the virtues of Imam Ali (peace be upon him), narrates a hadith similar to

the above, with slight differences and additions, explicitly stating that the verse in question was revealed on the 18th of Dhu al-Hijjah, the Day of Ghadir Khumm.

4. Al-Hamuwi al-Juwayni, another Sunni scholar, in his well-known book *Fara'id al-Simtayn*, with his chain of narration, reports:

“The Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his family) summoned the people on the Day of Ghadir Khumm to proclaim Ali (peace be upon him). He ordered that the area beneath a certain tree be cleared of thorns and grass, and the people complied. That day was a Thursday. The Prophet then called the people and raised the hand of Ali (peace be upon him) so high that the whiteness under his armpit was visible. Before the Prophet and Ali had separated, the verse was revealed: “This day I have perfected for you your religion...”

The Prophet then declared: ‘God is the Greatest! Praise be to God who perfected His religion, completed His favor upon us, and was pleased with my prophethood and

the leadership of Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him).’ He then prayed: ‘O God, love those who love him, and be the enemy of those who are hostile toward him. Support those who support him, and abandon those who abandon him.’”

We conclude this discussion with the valuable words of the late Allamah Amini in his monumental work *al-Ghadir*. In the chapter on the verses revealed on the Day of Ghadir Khumm, after clearly affirming that the verse “This day I have perfected for you your religion...” was revealed concerning the declaration of Ghadir, he writes:

“All Shi’a Imamis agree that this noble verse was revealed regarding the declaration at Ghadir, after the Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his family) proclaimed the guardianship (*wilayah*) of Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) in the plain of Ghadir. The declaration was made in explicit, clear, and unmistakable language that all the Companions recognized and all Arabs understood. This report reached many, and people used it as proof. A large number of Sunni commentators, hadith scholars, and

preservers of tradition joined the Imamis in confirming that this verse was revealed on the Day of Ghadir Khumm.”

Allamah Amini then proceeds to name more than fifteen Sunni scholars, along with the names of their books and specific volume and page numbers, who explicitly stated that the verse “This day I have perfected for you your religion...” was revealed on the Day of Ghadir Khumm.

# Ghadir in the Qur'an

**What is the evidence that the word «Wali» in the verse «إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ» (Indeed, your Wali is Allah) means «guardian and leader,» as claimed by Shi'as who argue that it has the same meaning as in the phrase «من كنت مولاه فهذا علي مولاه» («Whoever I am his master, Ali is his master»)?**

The word Wali (and its plural Awliya') appears nearly seventy times in the Holy Qur'an and is used in various meanings such as helper, deity, guide, and in many verses, Wali clearly means guardian, protector, or one who has authority. Examples of verses include:

**a)**

“And He it is Who sends down the rain after

they have despaired and spreads His mercy.  
And He is the Wali, the Praiseworthy.”

(Surah Ash-Shura 42:28)

Here, Wali means guardian and one with authority. In this verse, the Wilayah (guardianship) is of the creative, divine kind (wilayah takwiniyyah).

b)

“And whoever is killed unjustly, We have given his Wali (guardian) authority...”

(Surah Al-Baqarah 2:178)

In this verse, Wali refers to legislative guardianship because the right of retribution (Qisas) is granted not to the friend of the murdered but to his legal guardian or heir. In many other verses, Wali is used to mean guardian, leader, and one who has authority.

### **The Meaning of Wali in the Verse Under Discussion**

In the verse “Indeed, your Wali is Allah...” (Qur'an 5:55), the word Wali means guardian, leader, and one with authority — not merely friend, ally, or helper — because:

1. The word “إِنَّمَا” (Indeed only), which appears at the beginning of the verse, indicates exclusivity, meaning that only

these three groups are the Wali of the believers, and no others. If Wali meant merely friend or ally, such exclusivity would not make sense, since many others can be friends or supporters of believers.

2. Furthermore, the numerous restrictions on “those who believe and establish prayer and give zakat” indicate a legal and authoritative status rather than mere friendship. All believers—even those who do not pray—can be friends or helpers, so such conditions would be unnecessary if Wali only meant friend.

Therefore, from the use of “إِنَّمَا” (which implies limitation) and the many conditions attached to “those who believe”, it follows that Wali in this verse means guardian and one with authority, not friendship or support. God, the Prophet, and the believers (with the conditions stated in the verse) are your guardians, leaders, and those who have authority over you.

### **Supporting Evidence from the Qur'an**

Verse 56 of Surah Al-Ma'idah, which follows the above verse, provides further evidence for this interpretation. God says:

“And whoever takes Allah, His Messenger, and those who have believed as allies—indeed, the party of Allah will be the prevailing party.”

(Qur'an 5:56)

Those who accept the Wilayah (guardianship/authority) of God, His Messenger, and the believers (with conditions) are the victorious, as the party of Allah (a collective group) is victorious.

Since party means an organized group, their victory implies political and social dominance. Thus, from the two verses, which were apparently revealed at the same time, it is understood that the Wilayah discussed is political and governmental authority.

### **Conclusion**

By careful consideration of every word and phrase in the verse, and regardless of the numerous hadiths interpreting the verse, it becomes clear that Wali here means Imam, leader, and guardian. Whoever accepts the authority of God, His Messenger, and the believers (with the conditions stated) will be victorious and supported.

## **How the Verse of Wilayah Indicates the Imamate of Amir al-Mu'minin (Imam Ali, peace be upon him)**

The noble verse: "Your [real] guardians are none but Allah, His Messenger, and those who believe, who establish prayer and give zakat, and they bow [in worship]."

(Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5:55)

According to Shia belief, the above verse explicitly refers to the special guardianship and leadership (Wilayah and Imamate) of Amir al-Mu'minin, Imam Ali (a), as his leadership was clearly announced during the event of Ghadir Khumm, where Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) declared his succession.

However, in response to some objections raised against this interpretation, the following points are clarified:

**1. The meaning of "Innamā" (Indeed only) implies exclusivity. If this verse is about Imam Ali (a), then what is the status of the other pure Imams?**

The word "Innamā" at the beginning of the verse indicates restriction and exclusivity, meaning that the guardianship is limited to three groups: Allah, His Messenger, and

those described in the verse. This clearly points to a political and authoritative form of Wilayah, not merely friendship or support.

Here, Imam Ali (a) is understood to be the foremost and explicit example of “those who believe, establish prayer, and give zakat while bowing” mentioned in the verse.

**2. It is said that Imam Ali (a) gave his ring to a needy person while in the state of rukū‘ (bowing), but the verse mentions zakat, and zakat is not paid on a ring. How is this reconciled?**

The term “zakat” in the Quran has a broader meaning than the specific obligatory almsgiving defined in Islamic jurisprudence today. It literally means purification and growth and includes all forms of charity and giving. The ring given by Imam Ali to the poor man while in rukū‘ is thus regarded as an act of charity (sadaqah), which the Quran also describes as zakat in a broader sense, meaning the purification and sanctification of wealth and self.

**3. Imam Ali (a) was only one person, so why does the verse use the plural pronoun “those who”?**

In Arabic literature and the Quran, it is common for a singular person of great significance to be referred to using a plural form to indicate honor, importance, or to generalize a ruling. For example, in the verse of Mubahalah, the plural “our women” refers specifically to Fatimah al-Zahra (a), a single individual.

Similarly, “those who believe” in this verse can apply to Imam Ali (a) individually, with the plural form emphasizing his supreme role or representing the authority delegated through him.

**4. Imam Ali (a) is known to be deeply immersed in prayer, sometimes unaware of his surroundings, such as when he pulled an arrow from his foot during prayer. Why then did he notice and give charity while in rukū‘?**

The states of spiritual absorption vary even among the prophets and Imams. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) himself experienced different spiritual states during prayer — sometimes deeply absorbed, other times attentive to external matters.

Therefore, Imam Ali’s (a) action of giving

charity during rukū' in this context aligns with his responsiveness to a needy person, which itself is an act of worship and obedience to God, integrated with his prayer, without contradiction to his spiritual states at other times.

**5. What about the exclusivity of Wilayah to Allah, the Prophet, and the believers mentioned? How does this relate to the succession of other Imams?**

The Wilayah exclusive to Allah by essence and to the Prophet and his appointed successor (a) by permission clearly establishes the concept of Imamate. Imam Ali (a) is the first and foremost manifestation of this appointed leadership.

Once his Imamate and guardianship are established by this verse, the leadership of the other pure Imams is also recognized as connected and consequent to his, since they are introduced and appointed through him. This explanation shows that, despite linguistic and contextual complexities, the verse of Wilayah strongly supports the concept of Imam Ali's (a) divinely mandated leadership, as understood in Shi'a theology, and addresses common objections raised by critics.

## **Why Is the Name of Imam Ali (a) Not Explicitly Mentioned in the Qur'an?**

In response to this question, two essential points must be considered:

### **1. Descriptive Identification Rather Than Explicit Naming**

Although the name of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (a), is not explicitly mentioned in the verses of the Qur'an, the Qur'an introduces him through descriptive terms and unique characteristics. This is the Qur'anic method of introducing Imam Ali and the other infallible Imams (peace be upon them). For example, in some verses, their infallibility is highlighted, such as in the Verse of Purification: "Indeed, Allah desires to remove impurity from you, O People of the Household, and to purify you completely." (Surah al-Ahzab, 33:33)

In this blessed verse, the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them)—of whom Imam Ali is the most prominent—are declared free from all forms of impurity and faults, and are described as being protected and immune from error and sin.

Similarly, in the verse: "Obey Allah, and

obey the Messenger, and those vested with authority among you (Ulī al-Amr).” (Surah al-Nisā’, 4:59) God commands absolute obedience to Ulī al-Amr (those vested with authority), which implies their infallibility. In this verse, obedience to three authorities is made obligatory: first, obedience to God; second, obedience to the Messenger; and third, obedience to Ulī al-Amr. The command to obey the Messenger is placed in line with the command to obey God, and obedience to Ulī al-Amr is similarly linked to obedience to the Messenger through a coordinating conjunction (wa). In all three cases, the command is for absolute, unconditional obedience.

It is evident that obligatory and unrestricted obedience to fallible individuals is irrational. Obedience to a non-infallible person—no matter how rare their mistakes may be—would imply obligatory obedience even in their errors, which is inconsistent with divine wisdom. God would never obligate obedience to someone who is ignorant or sinful.

These types of verses clearly indicate that the successors to the Prophet (peace be

upon him and his family) must be infallible, so that they, like the Prophet, are divinely mandated authorities and must be obeyed unconditionally. This characteristic is uniquely found in the Shi'a concept of the infallible Imams, the first of whom is Imam Ali (a). None of the other caliphs were claimed to be infallible, nor did anyone assert such a status for them.

Therefore, these verses establish the Imamate of the infallible Imams (peace be upon them)—particularly that of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali—using a descriptive rather than nominal method.

## **2. The Role of the Sunnah Alongside the Qur'an**

Islamic sources are not confined to the Qur'an alone; rather, both the Qur'an and the Sunnah (the sayings, actions, and tacit approvals of the Prophet) are fundamental sources of religious knowledge and law, a view acknowledged by all Islamic schools of thought.

Therefore, the role of the Sunnah in matters of Imamate—especially in interpreting,

explaining, and applying the verses of the Qur'an—must not be overlooked. The Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) is the primary authority for interpreting the Qur'an and identifying its intended referents. Just as the Qur'an mentions the obligations of prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and so forth in general terms while leaving the specifics to be explained by the Prophet, in the matter of Imamate too, the Qur'an outlines the principle and some of its characteristics, while the Prophet himself was tasked with identifying the specific individuals.

The Qur'an itself affirms this role:

“And We revealed to you the Reminder (Qur'an) so that you may clarify to mankind what has been sent down to them.”

(Surah al-Nahl, 16:44)

Therefore, in order to properly understand and interpret the relevant verses, we must refer to the words and teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), which serve as the decisive criterion. Fortunately, in the case of Imam Ali's Imamate, and the Qur'anic foundation

of this doctrine, many hadiths—transmitted in both Sunni and Shi’a sources—affirm that the third verse of Surah al-Ma’idah was revealed on the Day of Ghadir and is directly related to the issue of the Imamate of Imam Ali (a). A few examples include:

### **Selected Hadith Reports:**

**1. Al-Suyūṭī in al-Durr al-Manthūr narrates from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī that the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said:**

“When the Messenger of Allah appointed Ali as leader at Ghadir Khumm and declared his guardianship publicly, Gabriel descended with this verse: ‘Today I have perfected for you your religion, completed My blessing upon you, and approved Islam as your religion.’”

**2. Another narration from Abū Hurayrah states:**

“On the day of Ghadir, which was the 18th of Dhu al-Hijjah, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said: ‘Whoever I am his master, Ali is his master.’ Then Allah revealed: ‘Today I have perfected for you your religion...’”

**3. A narration from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī says:**

“The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) summoned the people to Ali at Ghadir Khumm, on a Thursday. He called Ali, held up his arms until the whiteness of the Prophet’s underarms could be seen. The people had not yet dispersed when the verse was revealed: ‘Today I have perfected your religion...’ Then the Prophet said: ‘Allahu Akbar for the perfection of religion, the completion of blessing, and God’s satisfaction with my Prophethood and the guardianship of Ali after me.’”

**4. Another narration states:**

“In the Farewell Pilgrimage, near the end of the Prophet’s life, Allah revealed the verse: ‘Today I have perfected your religion...’ Thus, the matter of Imamate is part of the completion of the religion, and He appointed Ali as the Imam and leader of the people.” These and other narrations—recorded in both Shi’a and Sunni sources—consistently confirm that this verse was revealed in connection with the issue of Imamate and the succession of Imam Ali (a).

## **How Can It Be Proven That the Term Mawlā in the Ḥadīth of Ghadīr Means Guardian and Leader (Imām)?**

While the term Mawlā appears in different meanings—such as helper, rightful owner, inheritor, relative, or friend—in various Qur’anic chapters like Ḥadīd, Muḥammad, Nisā’, Maryam, and Dukhān, how can we assert that in the Ḥadīth of Ghadīr it denotes “guardian” or “Imām”?

To answer this question, we examine the verses in which the word Mawlā appears:

### **1. Sūrat al-Ḥadīd (57:15):**

“So today no ransom will be accepted from you nor from those who disbelieved. Your refuge is the Fire; it is your Mawlā—and wretched is the destination.”

In this verse, Mawlā has been interpreted as helper, guardian, deserving, or one in control. Some narrations support the meaning of “deserving.”

### **2. Sūrat Muḥammad (47:11):**

“That is because Allah is the Mawlā of those who believe, whereas the disbelievers have no Mawlā.”

Here, Mawlā is interpreted as owner, helper, guardian, or protector.

### **3. Sūrat al-Nisā' (4:33):**

“To everyone, We have appointed heirs for what parents and close relatives leave behind.”

In this verse, Mawālī is understood as rightful inheritors or guardians.

### **4. Sūrat Maryam (19:5):**

“Indeed, I fear the Mawālī after me, and my wife is barren, so grant me from Yourself a successor.”

Mawālī in this context refers to relatives (e.g., uncles and cousins), who are considered rightful inheritors of Prophet Zakariyyā's property. Thus, it signifies those more deserving and closer in right.

### **5. Sūrat al-Dukhān (44:41):**

“The Day when no Mawlā will avail a Mawlā in anything, and they will not be helped.”

In this verse, Mawlā means friend, or one with authority over another, or one under the authority of someone else.

## One Word, Multiple Meanings

In Arabic, some words—such as those derived from the root W-L-Y—have multiple meanings. The root appears in different forms over 200 times in the Qur'an, with various usages. Thus, to determine the intended meaning, one must refer to contextual clues such as the surrounding verses or the overall theme.

Some possible meanings of Mawlā include:

- Helper and supporter
- Guardian and protector
- Owner and master
- Friend
- One who is closer or more deserving (awlā)
- Liberator or master
- Freed slave or servant
- Ally
- Inheritor or relative

Despite these various meanings, a common thread can be observed: the idea of closeness or being more deserving. This is because Mawlā is derived from Wilāyah, which fundamentally refers to a connection between two entities without the presence

of a foreign element. For instance, a friend is more deserving of helping his friend; an inheritor is more deserving of managing inheritance; and a master is more deserving of managing the affairs of a servant. Similarly, disbelievers are more deserving of Hell as their abode.

Thus, across all meanings, the core idea of priority and greater right in a contextually specific Wilāyah can be detected. Therefore, the diverse meanings of Mawlā do not conflict with each other.

### **The Term Mawlā in the Ḥadīth of Ghadīr**

To further clarify, let us briefly revisit the context and characteristics of the Ghadīr Khumm event:

- 1. The Prophet (PBUH) publicly declared** that this pilgrimage would be his final Hajj. Muslims from across the region made every effort to accompany him on this last pilgrimage.
- 2. A Divine command was revealed to the Prophet (PBUH):**

“O Messenger! Convey what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if

you do not, you have not conveyed His message.”

This meant that failing to deliver this final message would render the previous 23 years of prophetic mission incomplete.

**3. The Prophet (PBUH) ordered all companions to stop and wait in the scorching midday heat of the desert until those ahead returned and the entire caravan had gathered.**

**4. The Prophet (PBUH) delivered a lengthy sermon and emphasized two great legacies: the Qur'an and his family (Ahl al-Bayt).**

**5. The Prophet (PBUH) testified to God's Oneness and his own Prophethood, then asked the crowd:**

“Am I not more deserving (awlā) of you than yourselves?”

The people answered: “God and His Messenger know best.”

The Prophet (PBUH) continued:

“God is more deserving of me, and I am more deserving of you than yourselves.”

(As affirmed in Qur'an 33:6: “The

Prophet is more worthy of the believers than their own selves.”)

Then he raised the hand of ‘Alī (a) and declared three times:

“Whoever I am his Mawlā, then ‘Alī is his Mawlā.”

He then prayed for those who support ‘Alī and cursed those who oppose him. Finally, he commanded those present to convey the message to those absent.

**6. Before the crowd dispersed, the following verse was revealed:**

“Today I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen Islam as your religion.”

(Qur'an 5:3)

Considering all these circumstances, can it be reasonably said that the Prophet (PBUH) intended merely to say:

“O people! Whoever considers me his friend, ‘Alī is also his friend”?

Or:

“Whoever I help, ‘Alī also helps”?

This cannot be the case, because the concept of mutual friendship and support among

believers had already been revealed earlier in the Qur'an:

"The believing men and believing women are allies of one another." (Qur'an 9:71)

Moreover, everyone knew about the Prophet's immense love and affection toward 'Alī (a); such a public declaration would not have required so much ceremony and preparation.

So, what was the matter of such critical importance that its proclamation marked the completion of religion, the culmination of the Prophet's 23-year mission, and the Divine affirmation of Islam as a perfected way of life?

Nothing but the appointment of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a) as the Prophet's successor and guardian (Wālī). For after the Prophet's departure, who would guide the community, protect the revealed law from distortion, and ensure its correct application? Who could be more deserving (awlā) of this role than 'Alī (a)?

Thus, if 'Alī's Wilāyah were not established as the continuation of Prophethood, then the Prophet's mission would have

remained incomplete. That is why, after this declaration at Ghadīr, God proclaimed: “This day I have perfected your religion for you...”

### Sources

1. ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī, Tafsīr al-Mīzān, tr. Muḥammad Bāqir Mūsawī, vol. 5, Qom: Islamic Publications Office.
2. ‘Abd al-Ḥusayn Ṭayyib, Aṭyab al-Bayān, vol. 12, Tehran: Islam Publications.
3. Al-Ṭabrisī, Majma‘ al-Bayān, tr. Ibrāhīm Mīrbāqirī et al., vol. 5, Tehran: Farāhānī Publications.
4. ‘Allāmah Amīnī, al-Ghadīr.

## **How Is the Verse “This Day I Have Perfected for You Your Religion...” Related to the Proof of Wilayah and Imamate, While the Verses Before and After Discuss Permissible and Forbidden Meats?**

Before anything else, a few brief points about this noble verse must be outlined:

### **First Point:**

This segment of the verse has no direct connection with the preceding or following parts of the verse; rather, it presents an independent and distinct subject. The evidence for this claim includes the following:

1. If we remove this part of the verse and consider only the beginning and end together, the overall meaning of the verse remains coherent and unaffected.
2. The occasion of revelation (shā'n al-nuzūl) for this segment is different from that of the first and last parts. This observation by commentators indicates that this section is independent and unrelated to the

rest of the verse.

3. The beginning and end of this verse are similar to verses in Suras al-Baqarah (2:173), al-An'ām (6:145), and al-Naḥl (16:115), which also address similar topics (i.e., dietary laws) and are likewise unconnected to what precedes or follows.
4. Commentators have stated that Surah al-Mā'idah is a Madinan chapter, except for the verse "al-yawm akmaltu lakum dīnakum...", which was revealed in Mecca or on the way between Mecca and Medina. This comment by exegetes reinforces that this part is independent, as they have not applied the same exception to the entire verse.

### **Second Point:**

Given that this segment of the verse is independent, the question arises: Why was it not placed as a standalone verse, but instead inserted in the middle of another verse? The answer given is that upon close inspection,

this verse describes a particular day with remarkable qualities, and from these attributes, the extraordinary importance of that day becomes clear. Due to the significance of this verse and the event it refers to, and in order to safeguard it from distortion or manipulation, it was embedded within other content. This is comparable to how valuable items are sometimes concealed among mundane things to attract less attention.

In this part of the verse, God describes the day with the following attributes:

1. It is the day on which the disbelievers despaired.
2. Muslims are commanded not to fear the disbelievers, but to fear God.
3. On this day, the religion was perfected.
4. On this day, God's blessing was completed.
5. God became pleased with Islam as the religion.

From these descriptions, we understand that prior to this day, the disbelievers still had hope of eventually eliminating Islam.

But on this day, God extinguished that hope. Before this day, Muslims also had certain fears about the future of Islam; but with the announcement of a divine decree, those fears were also put to rest. Additionally, up until this point, Islam had not yet reached perfection, nor had God's blessings been completed.

Now the key question arises: What divine command was issued on that day that brought about such consequences? Was it merely the announcement of dietary laws regarding permissible and forbidden meats? Could such rulings really have dashed the hopes of the disbelievers or relieved the fears of the Muslims? Certainly not, for a few legal rulings alone could not have such an effect. Moreover, these dietary rulings had already been presented in other suras such as al-Baqarah (2:173), al-An'ām (6:145), and al-Naḥl (16:115).

Was it, perhaps, the gathering of Muslims at 'Arafah and the completion of the Hajj rituals that caused the disbelievers' despair, as some have suggested? This is also unlikely. The disbelievers had already

lost hope after the conquest of Mecca, and even prior to this, the Declaration of Disassociation (Surah al-Tawbah) had been revealed, which had already extinguished their hopes. Hence, the verse cannot be related to the events of ‘Arafah.

It is well known that the disbelievers anticipated the death of the Prophet (PBUH) — the foundational pillar of Islam — as their opportunity to strike a fatal blow to Islam. However, when the Prophet (PBUH) appointed ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a) as his divinely-ordained successor, their hope for Islam’s collapse was lost, and the Muslims’ anxiety about the religion’s continuity was lifted.

### **Narrations Regarding This Verse:**

As for the verse “This day I have perfected your religion for you...” (Qur’an 5:3), many reliable Sunni sources report that its occasion of revelation was the event of the Prophet appointing ‘Alī (a) at Ghadīr Khumm. Some examples include:

Al-Khwārazmī in *Manāqib* narrates from Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī:

“The Prophet (PBUH), on the day he

summoned the people to Ghadīr Khumm, ordered that the thorns beneath the tree be cleared. It was Thursday. Then he summoned the people towards 'Alī, took his arm, raised it until the whiteness of the Prophet's armpit was visible. They had not yet dispersed when the verse was revealed: "This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion."

**Some of the Sunni Sources That Transmit This Report Include:**

1. 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥamwīnī, *Farā'id al-Simṭayn*, Vol. 1, pp. 73–74 (Beirut: al-Maḥmūdī Publishing, 1398 AH):

After quoting the hadith, al-Ḥamwīnī says: "This is the Hadith of Ghadīr, and it has many chains of transmission leading back to Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī al-Anṣārī."

2. 'Abdullāh al-Ḥaskānī, *Shawāhid al-Tanzīl*, Vol. 1, p. 202 (Tehran: Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, 1411 AH):

Quoting from Abū Hurayrah:

“Whoever fasts on the eighteenth of Dhū al-Ḥijjah, God records for him the fasting of sixty months. It is the day of Ghadīr Khumm when the Prophet (PBUH) took ‘Alī’s hand and said: ‘Am I not the master of the believers?’ They said, ‘Yes, O Messenger of God.’ He said: ‘Whosoever I am his master, ‘Alī is his master.’ Then ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb said: ‘Bravo, bravo O son of Abū Ṭālib! You have become my master and the master of every believing man.’ Then God revealed: ‘This day I have perfected your religion...’”<sup>1</sup>

3. Ibn ‘Asākir, *Tarjamah al-Imām ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, Vol. 2, p. 75 (Beirut: al-Maḥmūdī Publishing, 1400 AH).

Also: Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ‘Alī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. 8, p. 290 (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī).

These narrations are found in authoritative Sunni works, and many of their transmitters — such as Abū Hurayrah — are regarded as trustworthy and reliable by Sunni standards. Indeed, Abū Hurayrah is one

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1. Hassakani, Abdullah, *Shawahid al-Tanzeel*, Tehran, Institute for Printing and Publishing, Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, First Edition, 1411 AH, Vol. 1, p. 156

of the narrators most widely accepted by Sunni scholars. Moreover, these narrations are not exclusive to Shī'ī sources nor limited to a single chain of transmission. Therefore, the objection that "these are Shī'ī narrations and thus weak or unreliable" is baseless. Additionally, these narrations originate from the Prophet himself (PBUH), whereas the claim that this verse was revealed at 'Arafah is based only on statements by a few individuals, such as 'Umar, and these are contradicted by stronger and more numerous narrations.

**Recommended Sources for Further Study:**

'Abdullāh al-Ḥaskānī, Shawāhid al-Tanzīl, Vol. 1, p. 156.

# The Prophet (PBUH) and Ghadir

**Does the Prophet's (PBUH) request for pen and paper in the final hours of his life indicate that he had not previously, particularly at Ghadir Khumm, appointed a successor?**

In response, we first examine the reason behind the Prophet's (PBUH) request for pen and ink:

The covert and subversive actions of some companions, along with their refusal to obey the Prophet (PBUH) in joining Usama's army, compelled the Prophet to take decisive action to neutralize these clandestine efforts. Despite suffering from a high fever, he entered the mosque and declared in a loud voice:

"O people! The fire (of sedition) has been

kindled, and the sedition has approached like the dark patches of night. You have no excuse against me. I did not make anything lawful except that which the Qur'an made lawful, and I did not prohibit anything except that which the Qur'an prohibited."<sup>1</sup> Despite such declarations, certain individuals still awaited the Prophet's demise in hopes of seizing leadership over the Muslim community. The Prophet (PBUH), deeply concerned for the fate of Islam and the unity of the Muslims, requested pen and ink to document, once and for all, the issue of succession, thereby removing any future ambiguity. He sought to formally affirm the caliphate of Amir al-Mu'minin and his Ahl al-Bayt and to dictate a statement that would ensure the Muslim community would never go astray. Although some opposed this request and accused the Prophet (PBUH) of rambling, he nevertheless conveyed the intended message by other means. As recorded in history, while still suffering from illness,

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1. Ibn Hisham's Sirah, Vol. 2, p. 654; Ibn Sa'd's Tabaqat, Vol. 2, p. 216; quoted from Ayatollah Sajjadi, Forugh-e Abadiyat, Vol. 2, p. 855, 13th edition, Winter 1997, Islamic Propagation Office Publications.

the Prophet (PBUH) entered the mosque, leaning on the shoulders of Imam Ali (a) and his servant Maymuna. Ascending the pulpit, he addressed the people, saying: "Indeed, I leave among you two weighty things."

At this point, a man asked:

"What are the two weighty things?"

The Prophet's (PBUH) face reddened in anger and he replied:

"There is no room for such a question. I shall explain it myself: One is the Qur'an, and the other is my Ahl al-Bayt."<sup>1</sup>

In addition to this incident, there are other evidences indicating that the leadership of Ali (a) was affirmed prior to this final request of the Prophet (PBUH), including:

### **1. The Verse of Declaration (Ayat al-Tabligh)**

"O Messenger, proclaim what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the

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1. Bihar al-Anwar, Majlisi, Vol. 22, p. 476; quoted from p. 862, Forugh-e Abadiyat, Vol. 2, Ayatollah Subhani.

disbelieving people.” (Qur’an 5:67)

Fakhr al-Razi, a highly respected and authoritative Sunni scholar, states in his commentary that this verse was revealed concerning Ali ibn Abi Talib. When this verse was revealed, the Prophet (PBUH) took Ali’s hand and proclaimed:

“Whoever I am his master (mawla), then Ali is his master. O Allah, befriend whoever befriends him, and be the enemy of whoever shows enmity toward him.”

Upon hearing this, ‘Umar met Ali (a) and said:

“Congratulations, O son of Abu Talib! Today you have become the master and leader of every believing man and woman.”

## **2. The Hadith of Position (Hadith al-Manzilah)**

The Prophet (PBUH) said to Ali (a):

**“You are to me as Aaron was to Moses, except that there is no prophet after me.”**

This hadith was not limited to the expedition of Tabuk but was expressed on other occasions as well. Two notable examples include:

### **1. Umm Sulaym, a woman who endured**

great hardship in the path of Islam, narrated many hadiths from the Prophet. On one occasion, the Prophet (PBUH) said to her:

“O Umm Sulaym! The flesh of Ali is from my flesh, and his blood is from my blood. He holds the same position with me as Aaron held with Moses.”

**2. On another occasion,** when Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, and Abu ‘Ubaydah al-Jarrah were present, the Prophet (PBUH) placed his hand on the shoulder of Imam Ali (a) and said:

“O Ali, you are the first among the believers to accept faith, and you are the first among them to embrace Islam. Your position to me is like the position of Aaron to Moses.”

## **Why Did the Messenger of God (peace be upon him and his family), Despite the Divine Command to Announce Imam Ali's (PBUH) Leadership, Fear to Publicly Proclaim It?**

The content of the verse [Qur'an 5:67] contains an emphatic directive coupled with a severe warning addressed to the Prophet.

The message of the verse is twofold:

On one hand, the Prophet of Islam faced fierce opposition, to the extent that he feared for his safety in proclaiming the message. God, in response, reassures His Prophet with the divine promise: "God will protect you from the people." In doing so, God affirms the Prophet's sense of danger. On the other hand, failing to convey this message is equated with failing the entire mission of prophethood: "If you do not do so, then you have not conveyed His message." This clearly demonstrates that the subject of this message was as weighty and central as the very essence of prophethood and all religious teachings.

Although the proclamation of this matter had accompanied the mission of the Prophet from the very beginning of Islam

to his final breath—and although the Prophet had declared the leadership and guardianship of Ali (a) from the earliest days of his mission—yet, the formal and public proclamation of it in the manner seen at Ghadir Khumm did not occur until the revelation of the verse commanding its delivery.

Thus, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) harbored concern over announcing the matter due to the presence of staunch opponents. Through divine knowledge and observable signs, as well as the hostility of certain companions toward Ali (PBUH), he was well aware that some from among the Muhajirun and Ansar would rise in denial and opposition to this divine decree.

Accordingly, the Prophet waited for a suitable opportunity when the atmosphere was ripe, and a grand assembly of Muslims from all social strata was present. At that point, he could fulfill his divine mission by publicly naming his successor and obtaining pledges of allegiance from the people—so that the event would be preserved in

historical record and remain undeniable. The evidence for this delayed proclamation lies both in the severe warning within the verse and in a hadith from Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (PBUH). Imam al-Baqir said:

When the verse “Indeed your guardian is God, and His Messenger, and those who believe—those who establish prayer and give zakat while bowing in prayer” [Qur’an 5:55] was revealed, the Prophet was commanded to interpret and explain the guardianship (wilayah) of Ali (a) just as he explained the rulings of prayer, pilgrimage, etc. The Prophet, however, was deeply concerned about how to convey and explain this guardianship and was troubled by the possible denial by the people. Then God revealed:

“O Messenger! Convey what has been sent down to you from your Lord. If you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And God will protect you from the people. Indeed, God does not guide the disbelieving people” [Qur’an 5:67].

At the beginning of this verse, God commands and warns His Prophet; in the middle, He

offers assurance of protection from the people; and at the end, He threatens those who reject the message out of stubbornness and opposition, stating that God does not guide such disbelievers. This makes the verse unique in both structure and content. Therefore, as many commentators have noted, the term “disbelievers” in this verse refers specifically to those who opposed the guardianship of Ali (a) and the hypocrites among the community. This is because hypocrisy is a form of disbelief. In Qur’anic and linguistic usage, kufr (disbelief) means covering up the truth, denying or opposing it. Sometimes it refers to denial of God or the Prophet, and other times it applies to opposition against divine rulings. For example, regarding those who deny the obligation of Hajj, the Qur’an says:

“Whoever disbelieves [in Hajj]—God has no need of such people.”

Thus, it becomes clear that the Prophet’s concern was due to threats from within the Muslim community itself. The warning “God will protect you from the people” does not refer to disbelievers in general but to

certain Muslims. Therefore, one cannot argue, based solely on the surrounding context of the verse or the use of the word “disbelievers,” that the concern was about the People of the Book. This is because:

**First**, although People of the Book were present toward the end of the Prophet’s mission (when this verse was revealed), they no longer had significant power or influence. Their defeats at Khaybar, Ahzab, and the events of Najran had severely diminished their status.

**Second**, this verse does not impose any great demand upon the People of the Book that would justify fear or hesitation on the Prophet’s part in delivering the message. Hence, even if non-believers still existed at the end of the Prophet’s mission, the Prophet’s concern was with certain members of the Muslim community. This community consisted of true believers, hypocrites, and ordinary people who might readily believe anything they were told. In such an environment, the proclamation of this message could lead some to mistakenly believe that the Prophet had fabricated this

ruling for personal gain or to strengthen his own authority.

It is evident that if such suspicion were to take root, it would significantly harm the religion. Therefore, the Prophet's fear was not for his personal safety, but for the preservation of the religion and the severe consequences of rejection by the hypocrites and some companions. He feared that the Muslim community would fall into internal discord—not that his own life was at risk. After all, the Prophet's life and practice demonstrate that he never refrained from sacrificing himself for the sake of God's religion.

## **Did the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) Foretell Events Concerning Imam Ali (a) and the Incidents after Ghadir?**

One of the unique virtues of Imam Ali (a) is that he was nurtured and raised in the household of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny). Given that the Messenger of God—by virtue of his prophethood and through divine permission—was aware of past and future events, he dealt with Imam Ali (a) in a distinctive manner on various occasions to affirm his rightful succession. Numerous statements from the Prophet exist in this regard, and some of them explicitly refer to the events that would occur after his demise, including the usurpation of the caliphate, the Battle of Nahrawan, the Battle of Siffin, the truce with Muawiyah, and the martyrdom of Imam Ali (a) during the month of Ramadan.

1. It is narrated from Salman al-Farsi, the loyal companion of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), that during the final moments of the Prophet's life, he summoned Imam Ali (a) and said:

“O Ali, the Quraysh will wrong you after me. ‘You will encounter hardship from Quraysh after me.’ If you find supporters and helpers, rise against them to reclaim your right; but if you do not find assistance, be patient and refrain from putting yourself in danger.”

This statement clearly illustrates the Prophet’s awareness of future events and the unjust treatment that would befall the Ahl al-Bayt. It was for this reason that the Prophet instructed Imam Ali to remain patient. In another report, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) mentioned that certain individuals had secretly conspired to prevent the government from reaching Imam Ali. When Imam Ali (a) asked what his duty would be in such a case, the Prophet replied:

“If you find supporters, fight them. If not, then pledge allegiance and preserve your life.”

2. In the sixth year after Hijrah, during the treaty of Hdaybiyyah that was concluded between the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) and the Meccans, when the Quraysh representative Suhayl ibn Amr arrived to finalize the agreement, Imam Ali (a) began drafting the treaty. Upon writing, "This agreement is between Muhammad, the Messenger of God, and Suhayl ibn Amr...", Suhayl objected, saying, "If we accepted you as the Messenger of God, we wouldn't have opposed you in the first place. Write instead: Muhammad, son of Abdullah." Imam Ali refused to omit the title "Messenger of God." The Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), however, erased the phrase himself and said to Imam Ali:

"O Ali, I foresee a day when people will treat you in the same way."

Years later, during the Battle of

Siffin between Imam Ali and Muawiyah, due to the naïveté of some individuals, the Imam was forced to accept a truce. When the peace agreement was being drafted, it initially stated: “This is an agreement between Ali, Commander of the Faithful, and Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan.” But Amr ibn al-As objected—just as Suhayl had done before—and did not allow the title “Commander of the Faithful” to be included. At that moment, the words of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny), spoken more than thirty years earlier, were fulfilled.

3. Abu Sa’id al-Khudri narrates: After the Battle of Hunayn, while the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) was distributing the spoils of war among the companions, a man named Dhu al-Khuwaysirah al-Tamimi objected to the fairness of the distribution. Some companions requested the

Prophet's permission to execute the man, but the Prophet declined and said:

“Leave him, for I foresee a time when his followers, who pray and recite the Qur'an, will exit the religion just as an arrow leaves a bow, and they will rise against the best of Muslims.”

Abu Sa'id continues: “I witnessed the very events as foretold by the Prophet—this same group, with the traits he described, opposed Imam Ali (a) during his caliphate and instigated the Battle of Nahrawan.”

4. In one of his sermons known as the Sermon of Sha'ban, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) described the merits of fasting and the significance of the holy month. Imam Ali (a) asked: “O Messenger of God, what is the best deed in this month?”

The Prophet replied: “The best deed in this month is to abstain from

what God has forbidden.” Then, the Prophet began to weep. Imam Ali inquired about the cause of his weeping. The Prophet said:

“O Ali, I cry because a tragic event will occur to you in this month. I see you while you are in prayer, and the most wretched of the early and the later generations—the one who is akin to the killer of the she-camel of Thamud—will strike your head, staining your beard with your blood.”

Roughly thirty years after the Prophet’s demise, on the 19th of Ramadan in the year 40 AH, in the mosque of Kufa, this prophecy was fulfilled with the martyrdom of Imam Ali (a).

Therefore, the Prophet of Islam (peace be upon him and his progeny), at various times and circumstances, conveyed these foretellings to reveal the true rank of Imam Ali (a) to the people. Yet instead of being guided by this radiant light, they chose to oppose him.

**Suggested Source for Further Reading:**

Muntaha al-Āmāl, Vol. 1, by Shaykh Abbas  
Qummi

## **Why Did the Prophet(PBUH) Introduce Imam Ali (a) as His Successor from the Beginning of His Prophetic Mission, Despite the Event of Ghadir Khumm?**

Undoubtedly, the consolidation and expansion of a religion must begin with smaller, more intimate circles. It is most appropriate that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) began his first public invitation to Islam with his own relatives—those who were most familiar with his purity, sincerity, and moral integrity. Their close familial bonds made them more inclined to listen to his message with fewer tendencies toward jealousy or hostility. Thus, the Prophet's initial outreach to his relatives was a natural and strategic step.

Moreover, this initiative demonstrates the Prophet's unwavering dedication to his mission. He did not compromise or show favoritism, not even to his polytheist relatives; he called all of them openly and equally to the truth, divine unity, and justice.

According to Islamic historical sources, the Prophet (PBUH) was divinely commanded in the third year of his prophethood to begin public preaching. Prior to that, the call to

Islam had been discreet, and only a limited number of individuals had embraced the faith. However, with the revelation of verses such as:

**“And warn your nearest kin.” (Qur’an 26:214)**

**“Then proclaim what you are commanded, and turn away from the polytheists.” (Qur’an 15:94)**

he was ordered by God to proclaim the message publicly, beginning with his closest relatives.

Thus, the Prophet’s initial invitation to his relatives was not only a natural approach but also a direct command from Allah, indicating that this action was part of his divine mission.

As to why the Prophet (PBUH) introduced Ali ibn Abi Talib (PBUH) as his successor at that very early stage, the answer lies in the famous event when the Prophet invited his relatives to a gathering at the house of Abu Talib. They were about forty in number. After they had eaten, the Prophet addressed them:

“O sons of Abdul-Muttalib, I swear by

Allah, I do not know any young man among the Arabs who has brought to his people something better than what I have brought you. I have brought you the goodness of this world and the hereafter. Allah has commanded me to invite you to this message. So, who among you will support me in this matter and be my brother, my executor (wasiyy), and my successor after me?"

All of them declined except for Ali (a), who was the youngest among them. He stood up and said:

"O Messenger of Allah, I will support you in this cause."

The Prophet then placed his hand on Ali's neck and declared:

"Indeed, this is my brother, my executor, and my successor among you. Listen to him and obey him."

This profound event has been recorded by numerous Sunni scholars and historians, including Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim, Al-Bayhaqi, Al-Tha'labi, Al-Tabari, and Ibn al-Athir (in the second volume of Al-Kamil), as well as Abu al-Fida (in the first volume of

his history), among others.

This event, and others like it that occurred repeatedly throughout the Prophet's life—documented by both Sunni and Shi'a historians—illustrate several key points that help explain why the Prophet (PBUH) emphasized the succession of Ali (a) from the very beginning:

**a) Complementing the Message with Leadership (Wilayah):**

Just as the Prophet (PBUH) devoted himself from the outset to teaching the Qur'an and purifying the community—what is known as the greater trust (thaqal al-akbar)—he also gave consistent attention to introducing and affirming the role of divinely appointed leadership, the lesser trust (thaqal al-asghar). That leadership would serve as the interpreter and protector of the Qur'an after his passing. The Prophet never withheld any opportunity to introduce and promote this crucial dimension of guidance, ensuring that the Muslim community would not be left unaware or unprepared regarding the future of divine leadership. As the Qur'an warns:

**“Muhammad is but a messenger; messengers**

**have passed away before him. If he dies or is killed, will you then turn back on your heels (in disbelief)?” (Qur’an 3:144)**

**b) Prophetic Concern for the Future:**

The Prophet’s persistent and repeated emphasis on the role of Ali (a) and the Ahl al-Bayt (a) was not only an expression of divine command, but also a reflection of his deep concern for the future of the Muslim ummah. With divinely granted knowledge of the coming tribulations, betrayals, and violations of the covenant of Ghadir and other pledges, the Prophet (PBUH) was keen to establish the rightful leadership clearly and unequivocally. He did so not once or twice, but at every significant juncture, in order to leave no room for denial or confusion—despite knowing that his instructions would later be ignored by some.

While many did break their pledges, the Prophet’s efforts served as a guide and proof for those who truly sought the truth. His intention, above all, was to ensure that the path to guidance remained clear. As the Qur’an states:

**“Surely there has come to you a Messenger from among yourselves; grievous to him is your suffering; anxious is he over you; to the believers he is kind and merciful.” (Qur’an 9:128)**

Additionally, his actions served as an unambiguous proof (itmam al-hujjah) against those who would later claim ignorance or deny responsibility.

**c) The Prophetic Mission: Rooting Divine Leadership:**

All of the Prophet’s insistence and efforts to introduce the status of Ali (a) and the Ahl al-Bayt (a) stemmed from divine command and were in harmony with the foundational purpose of his mission: to establish the culture of divinely appointed leadership (wilayah). What he did from the beginning of his prophethood to the Day of Ghadir was entirely based on revelation and the fulfillment of his prophetic duty. As the Qur’an affirms:

“Nor does he speak from [his own] desire. It is but a revelation revealed.” (Qur’an 53:3–4)

Suggested Source for Further Reading:

Tafsir al-Mizan, Vol. 15, by Allamah Tabataba’i  
(Translated into English)

# Imam Ali(a) and Ghadir

**Did Imam Ali's (PBUH) lack of overt effort to reclaim the Caliphate from its usurpers amount to neglecting a duty whose abandonment is impermissible? Why did he not publicly state his reasons?**

The political conduct of Imam Ali (a) during the difficult and challenging 25-year rule of the caliphs (11–35 AH) reveals his profound awareness and divine piety. While some of Islam's enemies, such as Abu Sufyan, sought to exploit the situation to exact revenge upon Islam and Muslims, the Imam firmly rejected their offers. Imam Ali (a), mindful of preserving the unity of the Muslim community and preventing ideological instability among newly converted Muslims, chose the path

of silence—and even cooperation—with the caliphs. This led some to assume that he approved of their rule.

However, his silence was not born out of fear or a desire for personal safety—for it was widely known that his love for martyrdom exceeded an infant's desire for its mother's milk. Rather, his restraint stemmed from the fact that any uprising or martyrdom at that specific juncture would only harm Islam. In defense of his wise and prudent approach, the Imam said:

“I observed that patience was better than causing division among Muslims and spilling their blood. The people were recent converts to Islam, and religion was like a waterskin that is shaken: the slightest weakness could ruin it, and the smallest disturbance could invert it.”

Imam Ali's (PBUH) Protest Against the Usurpation of the Caliphate

The Imam's policy of silence and tolerance did not prevent him from expressing his protest in various ways. Some of these methods include:

#### **A. Stating His Superiority and Right to**

## **Leadership**

After some pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr at Saqifah Bani Sa'idah, the Imam openly declared his rightful claim to the Caliphate and criticized their allegiance. He enumerated his virtues to establish his precedence for leadership. In *Nahj al-Balaghah*, Imam Ali (a) presents three key arguments for his right to the Caliphate:

1. The explicit designation by the Prophet (as in Sermon 2).
2. His unmatched personal qualifications—he was the only one fit to wear the mantle of leadership (Sermon 3, known as the “Sermon of Shaqshaqiyyah”).
3. His close familial and spiritual relationship with the Prophet (Sermon 195).

## **B. Refusal to Offer Voluntary Allegiance**

After denouncing Abu Bakr's lack of qualification, Imam Ali (a) refused to voluntarily pledge allegiance to him. In response to Umar ibn al-Khattab, who threatened him with force, he said:

“Milk the camel of the Caliphate; it will be yours in turn. Today, secure the Caliphate

for Abu Bakr so that tomorrow it may return to you.”

Most scholars agree that the Imam’s eventual oath of allegiance was coerced and occurred only after the martyrdom of Lady Fatima al-Zahra (peace be upon her), approximately six months after Abu Bakr’s appointment. In a letter to Mu’awiyah, the Imam recounts this forced allegiance:

“You said I was dragged like a camel with a halter until I pledged allegiance. By God, you meant to disgrace me, but you praised me instead. You wished to expose me, but you exposed yourself. A Muslim cannot be faulted for being oppressed, so long as his faith is unwavering, his certainty firm, and he is far removed from doubt.”

### **C. Critique of the Caliphs’ Conduct**

The Imam criticized the caliphs both in general terms and through specific grievances. Regarding Abu Bakr, his criticism focused on two points:

1. Abu Bakr assumed the Caliphate despite Imam Ali’s clear qualification for it.
2. While Abu Bakr himself felt unworthy

of leadership, he laid the groundwork for Umar's succession.

Of Umar, he criticized his harshness and frequent errors requiring correction. Concerning Uthman, the Imam references him approximately sixteen times in Nahj al-Balaghah, mainly in relation to the events surrounding his assassination.

#### **D. Holding the Muhajirun and Ansar Accountable**

In an effort to restore the Caliphate to its rightful course and reclaim his right, Imam Ali (a), accompanied by Lady Fatima (peace be upon her), went door to door at night among the Muhajirun and Ansar. They reminded the companions of their past pledges and called on them to publicly demonstrate their loyalty by shaving their heads in readiness for sacrifice and appearing at dawn. However, only a handful honored their pledge.

#### **References for Further Reading:**

Talkhīs al-Shāfī, Shaykh al-Tusi, vol. 3, pp. 72–86, Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmiyyah, 1394 AH.

**Did Amir al-Mu'minin (PBUH) himself explain the reasons behind his twenty-five-year silence after the event of Ghadir? Is there anything in Nahj al-Balaghah about this?**

The lives of the Pure Imams (peace be upon them)—especially that of Amir al-Mu'minin (PBUH)—are a complete manifestation of obedience and servitude to Almighty God. Their actions were always based on the welfare of the Islamic community and indeed, the benefit of all humanity. In their conduct, there was no essential distinction between silence and uprising, as both were based on divine duty and the interests of the Muslim ummah. They were more knowledgeable than anyone else about what was required by divine wisdom and the community's wellbeing.

Thus, whenever divine duty and the welfare of the ummah demanded it, they rose and fought; and whenever the circumstances called for patience and silence in the face of injustice, they opted for forbearance. However, such silence should not be interpreted as compromise or negligence regarding divine responsibilities or the

community's needs. On the contrary, this silence functioned much like an active resistance, serving the same purpose as an open struggle—namely, the protection of religion and the unity of the Islamic nation. To elaborate, let us turn to several statements by the Imam himself, found in multiple sermons and letters in *Nahj al-Balaghah*.

In Sermon 3 (the renowned Sermon of *Shaqshaqiyyah*), the Imam tells Ibn Abbas: “Behold! By God, the son of Abu Quhafa [i.e., Abu Bakr, originally named ‘Abd al-‘Uzza before the Prophet renamed him ‘Abdullah] put on the cloak of the Caliphate, while he well knew that I was the rightful claimant. My status in relation to the Caliphate was like that of the axis around which the millstone rotates—knowledge gushed from me like a flood, and no bird of intellect could soar to the heights of my wisdom. I let the Caliphate go, turned away from it, and began reflecting whether I should fight for my right with no supporters, or endure the blinding darkness wherein the elders became feeble, the youth grew old, and

the believer suffered until death. I saw that patience was wiser. So I was patient, though the pain was like having dust in the eyes and a bone stuck in the throat. I saw my inheritance plundered...”

He then continues, describing how Abu Bakr appointed Umar as his successor, even though during his life he had repeatedly asked the people to revoke his own pledge of allegiance by saying: “Relieve me, for I am not the best among you, while ‘Ali is among you.” Yet, just days before his death, he recommended Umar as his successor. These two divided the Caliphate like two udders of a camel shared between them.

He goes on to critique Umar’s harsh temperament and constant need to apologize for his errors. Later, he recounts how Umar, before his death, placed the Caliphate in the hands of a six-member council, including the Imam himself—equating him with others whom the Imam considered unequal to him. He says: “So I followed them during the ups and downs, and in all trials, I remained a patient observer.”

A close reading of this sermon reveals two key reasons for the Imam's prolonged silence during the rule of the first three caliphs:

1. The betrayal and abandonment by the people: Despite the Prophet's repeated emphasis on 'Ali's right to leadership—especially in events such as Ghadir Khumm—the majority turned away, motivated by tribal interests and personal ambition. The Imam himself states at the beginning of the sermon that he had “no hands”—meaning no army or loyal support—making armed resistance tantamount to suicide.
2. The need to preserve the unity of the fledgling Muslim community: The Islamic state was still fragile, built upon years of struggle, and any internal conflict could have torn it apart. Thus, Amir al-Mu'minin (PBUH), for the sake of safeguarding the foundations of Islam and avoiding civil war,

tolerated the usurpation of his rightful position. He even aided the caliphs when the survival of the community depended on it. As both Sunni and Shia sources narrate, Umar often said: “If it weren’t for ‘Ali, Umar would have perished.”

In Sermon 161, the Imam echoes these same points:

“The domination of others over us in the matter of Caliphate—despite our superior lineage and closeness to the Prophet—was because the Caliphate had become an object of desire. Some withheld it from those most deserving, while others [like the Imam himself] relinquished it for the sake of preserving Islam. God will judge between us.”

In Sermon 171, he clearly states the tribal conspiracy against him:

“O God, I seek Your help against Quraysh and those who assist them. For they have cut off my kinship, diminished my rank, and

conspired against me in the matter of the Caliphate, which rightly belonged to me.”

These three sermons provide a comprehensive overview of the Imam’s rationale for his silence. However, *Nahj al-Balaghah* contains over fifteen sermons, letters, and wise sayings that touch—explicitly or implicitly—on the question of the Caliphate and his strategic forbearance. For further study, you may refer to the following texts:

- Sermons: 3, 33, 37, 66, 152, 161, 169, 171, 188
- Letters: 6, 36, 45
- Sayings: 21, 175, 181

## **Did Imam Ali (a) consider his legitimacy to stem from public allegiance (bay‘ah) or from the Prophet’s hadiths such as Ghadir?**

The term legitimacy (mashrū‘iyyah) has multiple meanings. Among them are:

1. Legal validity;
2. Popular acceptance or public approval;
3. Religious and divine authority.

In the Islamic context, the term generally conveys the third meaning — that is, legitimacy in the religious and divine sense. Imam Ali (a) himself stated:

**“If it were not for the presence of those who had gathered (for allegiance), and the establishment of the argument by the existence of supporters, and if God had not taken a covenant from the scholars not to remain silent in the face of the gluttony of the oppressors and the hunger of the oppressed, I would have cast the rope of the caliphate on its own shoulders and left it alone.”**

(Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 3)

In this statement, the Imam conditions his acceptance of the caliphate on the presence

of the people and their support, i.e., public allegiance. This indicates his response to the people's request and their acceptance. In such a case, it becomes obligatory upon the Imam to accept the leadership. However, if the people oppose his leadership and the necessary conditions for his rule are absent, then he is not obligated to assume practical governance. In this case, it is the people who have failed to fulfill their duty and are accountable before God.

Therefore, the practical realization of Imam Ali's caliphate depended on public readiness, but his essential and intrinsic legitimacy did not derive from the people. Rather, his divine appointment as the rightful leader of the Muslim community was established by numerous verses and prophetic traditions.

For example, the Quranic verses:

- Verse of Wilayah (5:55),
- Verse of Proclamation (5:67),
- Verse of Obedience (4:59),

and many hadiths, including:

- **Hadith of Ghadir,**
- **Hadith al-Thaqalayn,**

- **Hadith of Warning (Hadith al-Indhār),**
- **Hadith of Brotherhood, and others,**

all point to Imam Ali's divine designation.

Furthermore, in Nahj al-Balaghah, Imam Ali has multiple statements where he asserts that the caliphate during the era of the three previous caliphs was rightfully his and that others had wrongfully seized it.

For instance, he says:

**“So I endured while there was a thorn in the eye and a choking bone in the throat. I saw my inheritance being plundered.”**

(Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 3)

The use of the word “inheritance” (turāth) indicates that Imam Ali viewed the caliphate as his rightful heritage, passed down to him by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) in accordance with divine tradition.

In another place, he says:

**“I looked around, and there was no helper for me except my family. I held back my hand, fearing for their lives. So I endured despite the speck in the eye and the suffocation in the throat. I bore the bitter taste of patience more difficult**

**than the taste of colocynth.”**

(Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 26)

And after the people pledged allegiance to him, he declared:

**“The right of authority belongs specifically to them (Ahl al-Bayt), and among them are the testament (wasiyyah) and the inheritance. Now, the right has returned to its rightful place and has been established where it truly belongs.”**

(Nahj al-Balaghah, Sermon 192)

Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, the Mu‘tazilī commentator of Nahj al-Balaghah, remarked that this statement clearly implies that the caliphate had not been in its rightful hands prior to Imam Ali’s rule and had been held by those unworthy of it.

Thus, it is evident from the Imam’s own words that he considered his leadership and authority to be a divine and religious right, not something dependent on the people’s votes or allegiance. During the time of the previous caliphs, this divine right had been usurped, though Imam Ali refrained from violent confrontation in order to preserve the unity and survival of the Muslim ummah.

**If the theory of appointing the Imamate by explicit designation (nass) of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) is established and widely accepted, then why, when the people came to Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib's door after the killing of Uthman to pledge allegiance to him, did he initially refuse to accept their allegiance regarding the Imamate?**

After the killing of Uthman, the Muhajirun (emigrants), the Ansar (helpers), and those who had revolted against Uthman turned to the justice of Ali (PBUH). It is narrated that the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and all classes of people rushed to the house of Ali (PBUH), surrounding it, and said:

“O Abu al-Hasan, Uthman has been killed, and we need a leader. Today, we find no one more worthy than you. You are the foremost among the people in Islam and the closest to the Prophet of God.”

However, the Commander of the Faithful, while distancing himself from the people, responded:

**“I have no need for your matter; whoever**

**you choose, I will be content with.”**

Ali (a) refused to accept their invitation and explained the reason so that people would not foster false hopes and realize that he foresees the difficult and troubled future with clear vision.

He said:

**“Leave me and seek someone else, for we face a future full of troubles and varieties of trials, a time where hearts will not stand firm, and intellects will not be stable...”**

The Imam knew that the deviations during Uthman’s time had deeply rooted themselves in the minds of the people, and many had grown accustomed to that way. The leaders of the crowds, especially Uthman’s governors and the Umayyad family who had plundered the public treasury, would soon rise against him to preserve their selfish and illegitimate interests. People habituated to Uthman’s style could not tolerate the justice of Ali (PBUH).

For this reason, he said:

**“The dark clouds have gathered and the clear path has changed. Know that if I respond to you according to what I know**

**and do not listen to the accusations of the accusers and the blame of the critics, and if you leave me, I am like one of you, and perhaps I will listen to you and obey you more, so that you may complete your matter, and I will be a minister for you better than a ruler.”**

Ali (a) briefly and succinctly described the state of governance to the people and by his initial refusal prepared their spirits to accept a government of complete justice. He declared that he would accept the caliphate only if he could eradicate the corruption of Uthman’s era, and that no one would have the right to object or blame thereafter.

From all directions, people rushed to pledge allegiance to him, so much so that he himself described their approach as:

**“They surrounded me like the fur of a wild animal; if each side had a right, they would have trampled upon Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn (my sons). My shoulders were hurt by the crowd. The people approached like a flock of sheep without a shepherd.”**

Yet still, Imam Ali (a) refused to accept the government unconditionally and said:

**“I give you until tomorrow morning. Go**

**and think if you are willing to submit to my rule, not to remind me of the past caliphs' deeds, to follow and obey me without a tongue of complaint. With this condition, gather in the mosque; otherwise, choose whomever you want."**

The next day, the people gathered in the mosque. The Commander of the Faithful came and stood on the pulpit and said:

**"O people! Yesterday we separated while I disliked ruling over you, but you insisted that no one but me should rule you. I will accept your rule only if the keys to your wealth are with me, and I do not want to use this for my own benefit. If you want me to govern you, fine; otherwise, I bear no responsibility over you."**

The purpose of this condition was that all unjustly taken wealth during Uthman's time should be returned to the people, and no one had the right to protest.

It is narrated that when Talha and Zubair came to pledge allegiance, Imam Ali said: **"If you want, pledge allegiance to me, otherwise, I will pledge allegiance to you."**

But they replied:

**“We pledge allegiance to you.”**

Thus, the pledge was done in such a general and universal manner that no other caliph had such a massive popular pledge.

For strengthening the foundations of his government, Ali (a) gave the people complete freedom and time to think and then appeared in the public center for allegiance, closing the door on excuses. The people also willingly and joyfully accepted his government. Even one of the Imam's enemies said about the pledge to Ali:

**“The Muslims came to Ali's caliphate with hearts full of satisfaction and certainty and hope for a bright future, whereas when pledging allegiance to Uthman, they did so with fear, doubt, and hesitation, without consensus.”**

In the end, Ali (a) accepted the caliphate as a duty and responsibility, as he himself said:

**“If it were not for the presence of those who had gathered and the establishment of the proof by the existence of supporters...”**

And the course of events later proved that the Imam's initial analysis was correct.

### **Why did Imam Ali (a) not claim his rightful right despite the obligation to establish justice?**

Claiming one's right is obligatory, and as the saying goes, rights must be taken. So, why did Imam Ali remain silent and refrain from uprising? The philosophy behind his silence is explained in various places in Nahj al-Balagha. Imam Ali (a) did not refrain from asserting his claim or seeking redress whenever appropriate. He bitterly mentions this silence, describing it as painful and intense.

He says:

“There was a thorn in my eye, yet I closed my eyes. A bone was stuck in my throat, but I swallowed it. My throat tightened and bitterness more severe than bitter colocynth was poured into my mouth, yet I was patient.”

Ali's silence was calculated and rational, not merely born out of fear or helplessness. He chose, out of wisdom and expediency, the harder and more exhausting path. It would have been easier for him to rise up, and the worst outcome would have been that he, and perhaps his sons, would be martyred due to

lack of supporters. Martyrdom was actually his wish. Indeed, in these circumstances, he famously told Abu Sufyan:

“By God, the son of Abu Talib loves death more than an infant loves its mother’s breast.”

With this statement, Ali made clear that his silence was not out of fear of death but because rising and being martyred at that time would be harmful to Islam rather than beneficial.

Elsewhere, he explicitly states that his silence was deliberate:

“I considered which of the two paths to choose: should I rise up prematurely or be patient in blindness? A blindness where the mature become weak and the young grow old... I saw that patience under this exhausting condition was wiser, so I endured despite the thorn in my eye and the bone in my throat.”

### **Why did he remain silent?**

Because Muslims were just beginning to show their strength and power to the world, thanks to the unity of their ranks and consensus. Their future successes were also

achieved due to this unity. As a principle, Ali maintained silence and tolerance for this very expediency.

But is it believable that a 33-year-old man could possess such farsightedness, sincerity, self-control, and loyalty to Islam that he would choose a path whose end is his own deprivation and destruction?

In another place, Ali states:

“I abandoned my clear right for the sake of avoiding division among the Muslims.”

And elsewhere:

“By God, if I did not fear division among the Muslims and the return of disbelief and destruction of religion, my behavior would have been different.”

He also says:

“I saw that patience was better than division among the Muslims and spilling their blood. The people are newly Muslim, and religion is like a skin that, if shaken, the slightest weakness ruins it and the smallest person can invert it.”

Ibn Abi al-Hadid, in his commentary on sermon 215 of Nahj al-Balagha, narrates a famous story: One day, Fatimah (peace

be upon her) urged Ali (a) to rise up. At that moment, the muezzin's call to prayer echoed: 'I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.' Ali replied to Fatimah:

"Do you want this call to be silenced?"

She said, "No."

He said, "My words are no different."

Allameh Tabatabai states:

Ali (a) did not initiate a bloody uprising due to the interests of Islam and Muslims and the lack of sufficient power. However, the dissenting groups, in terms of their belief, did not accept majority rule and considered Ali the rightful successor of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). They acknowledged him as the sole religious and scientific authority and invited others to follow him.

**Suggested resource for further study:**

Shi'ism in Islam by Allameh Tabatabai.

## **Shi'a Belief on the Divine Appointment of the Prophet's Successor and Imam Ali's (a) Reference to Consultation and Consensus in His Letter to Muawiyah: How Are These Reconciled?**

Shi'a believe that the successor to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) is appointed by God. On the other hand, in Nahj al-Balagha, Imam Ali (a) in his letter to Muawiyah cites the consultation (shura) and collective consensus of the Muslims as the basis of his imamate and authority over the Islamic community. How can these two be reconciled?

Two answers can be given to this question:

### **First answer:**

Given that Muawiyah neither recognized Imam Ali's divine appointment nor the message of the Prophet, and intended rebellion and defiance against Ali's rule, considering himself as the caliph and ruler of the Muslims, Imam Ali (a) wrote to him in order to refute Muawiyah's claims and to close all avenues of excuse and rebellion. Since Muawiyah did not adhere to reasoning and argument but ruled by misleading the people, Ali had to engage him using the best

form of argumentation (jidal ahsan), defeating him on the grounds acceptable to Muawiyah himself or using indisputable evidence.

Therefore, Imam Ali argued using standards accepted by Muawiyah, condemning him on those grounds: if you accept allegiance (bay'ah), then the people have given allegiance to me; if you accept consultation (shura), then the council of the Muhajirun and Ansar has chosen me—so what excuse do you still have? This approach is supported by many statements of Imam Ali asserting his right, which can only be justified by the fact that his caliphate was explicitly appointed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family). For example, Imam Ali states: “By God, I have been denied my right and usurped since the day God took the Prophet’s soul until this day.”

**Second answer:**

If Imam Ali, in his letter, uses the consensus of the Muhajirun and Ansar as proof of his caliphate and leadership, this does not contradict what the Shi'a believe; rather, upon reflection, it may support their belief. The explanation is that Muawiyah, during Imam

Ali's caliphate, claimed legitimacy on the basis that he was appointed by the second and third caliphs (Umar and Uthman) as governor of Syria. These caliphs considered their rule legitimate because of the consensus against their opponents, so Muawiyah argued that by virtue of this appointment, his own rule was also legitimate.

Moreover, he used the excuse of avenging the death of the third caliph (Uthman), claiming that since he was appointed by Uthman, he was the rightful avenger of his blood, citing the Quranic verse: "And whoever is killed unjustly, We have given his heir authority." (Surah Al-Isra, 17:33)

In a letter addressed to Imam Ali, Muawiyah explicitly states:

"We follow those Imams and caliphs who preceded us... Our caliph, the Commander of the Faithful Uthman ibn Affan, was killed unjustly, and God says: 'And whoever is killed unjustly, We have given his heir authority.' So we are more entitled to Uthman and his descendants."

Clearly, Muawiyah sought to gain religious and popular legitimacy for his unlawful rule.

In his famous speech in Syria, he declared:  
“O people, you know that I am the successor of the Commanders of the Faithful Umar ibn Al-Khattab and Uthman ibn Affan over you, and that I have never invited any of you to disgrace, and I am the guardian of Uthman who was unjustly killed, and God says: ‘And whoever is killed unjustly...’.”

Therefore, Imam Ali replied to him:

“The people who gave allegiance to Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman have also given allegiance to me on the same terms; thus, neither those present at the allegiance nor those absent have the right to rebel. The consultation (shura) is for the Muhajirun and Ansar, and if they come together on one man and call him Imam, that is God’s consent.”

The consensus that took place for Imam Ali was undoubtedly higher and better than that which occurred for the previous caliphs. As Imam Ali says in Sermon 54 of Nahj al-Balagha:

“People attacked me like thirsty camels at the watering place, pushing and pressing so fiercely that I thought they would kill me.”

And in Sermon 227, he says:

“You extended your hands to pledge allegiance, I withdrew mine; you drew them towards yourselves, I grasped them. Like thirsty camels at a watering hole, you crowded me until my sandal strap broke, my cloak fell, and the weak were trampled... The young rejoiced in pledging, and the elderly shook as they came to pledge...”

According to both Shi’a and Sunni historians, such a consensus and pledge did not occur for any of the other caliphs. The first caliph (Abu Bakr) did not receive consensus between the Muhajirun and Ansar, as figures like Sa’d ibn ‘Ubadah (leader of the Khazraj and a prominent Ansari), as well as Imam Ali and many of the Prophet’s family and companions, either did not pledge allegiance or did so reluctantly and late.

The second caliph (Umar) was appointed by Abu Bakr, not by consensus, and the third caliph (Uthman) was chosen by a small group appointed by Umar, not by consensus of all, and not from prominent Muhajirun or Ansar but only from a subset of the Muhajirun.

Therefore, Imam Ali read and reminded

the council members of the clear texts from the Prophet about his immediate caliphate, criticizing the method of selecting previous caliphs.

According to Imam Ali, the caliph and leader of the Muslims, if chosen by the unanimous consensus of all Muhajirun, is a choice pleasing to God. This aligns with the Shi'a belief, which holds that if such consensus occurs, the appointed Imam chosen by God is surely among those gathered, and such consensus is binding and acceptable.

In summary:

Imam Ali's reference to consultation and consensus in his letter to Muawiyah was a rhetorical strategy to argue with opponents who considered themselves legitimate caliphs, not an acceptance of the kind of arbitrary or partial consensus that had occurred for previous caliphs.

# Ghadir in the Words of the Ahl al-Bayt

**Has the tradition of Ghadir been considered in the lives of the other Imams, and have they established the authority of the Imamate based on Ghadir?**

The event of “Ghadir Khumm” is among the mutawatir (mass-transmitted) hadiths. There is no doubt about its authenticity, and it is a reliable proof for the Shi’a claim regarding the Imamate of Amir al-Mu’minin (Ali, peace be upon him). This hadith has been used by the foremost Shi’a scholars to prove the guardianship (wilayah) of Amir al-Mu’minin (PBUH), and numerous books have been written on this subject.

The first of the Infallibles (peace be upon them) who referred to this hadith and this important event in the history of Islam

to prove his own guardianship was **Amir al-Mu'minin Ali** (a) himself. In several instances, he addressed this issue. After the caliphate of Abu Bakr began, the Commander of the Faithful (PBUH) said in the presence of the Muhajirun and Ansar: "By God, I am not afraid of anyone nor dispute with anyone regarding the caliphate, yet I never imagined that any of you people would dispute with us, the Ahl al-Bayt, in the matter of my guardianship, and would abandon the caliphate which God's generous grant has made lawful for us, and the narration of the day of Ghadir Khumm which the Chief of mankind and the leaders of the religion and the nation have heard, without proof or argument, but solely out of stubbornness and partisanship."

After this speech, twelve people stood up and acknowledged the superiority and right of the Commander of the Faithful regarding the caliphate.

Among the Infallibles who referred to the hadith of Ghadir was Fatimah Zahra (peace be upon her). On one occasion when 'Umar and his companions came to take allegiance

from Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH), she addressed them:

“It seems that you do not know or have forgotten the covenant and pledge that the Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) made on the day of Ghadir by the command of Almighty God, and you have chosen the way of rebellion and opposition. By God, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) took a covenant and pledge from you and the majority of the nation concerning the guardianship of Ali (a) on that day.”

**Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba (PBUH)** also referred to the hadith of Ghadir. During the war with Mu'awiyah, in a letter addressed to him, he wrote:

“O Mu'awiyah! You are astonished that the Creator of all creatures has appointed each of those Imams whom the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) introduced on the day of Ghadir Khumm, stating repeatedly that there are twelve, each appointed and designated by the command of the Almighty. Then he said, the first of them is Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (PBUH).”

And by citing the event of Ghadir Khumm,

he asserted his and his father's rightful guardianship and caliphate.

Another of the Infallibles who referred to the hadith of Ghadir was Imam al-Ridha (PBUH), who in the presence of a group of scholars—whom the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun invited for debate with him—cited the hadith of Ghadir as evidence for the Imamate.

Also, Abdul Aziz, a companion of Imam al-Ridha (PBUH), narrated:

“During the time of Imam al-Ridha (PBUH), we were in the city of Merv. On the first day of our arrival, we gathered in the Grand Mosque where the people were talking about the Imamate and the great differences among the people on this matter. I informed my master of the people's sayings. He smiled and said: ‘O Abdul Aziz, these people have been deceived by their own beliefs. During the Prophet's last pilgrimage, the verse was revealed: ‘This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and chosen Islam as your religion.’ The issue of Imamate is part of the perfection of religion. The Prophet (peace be upon him

and his family) did not pass away until he explained to his nation all that was necessary about religion, and appointed Ali (a) for them as a sign, banner of guidance, and Imam.”

This is a reference to the event of Ghadir.

**Imam al-Kadhim (PBUH)** also, in a debate with Harun al-Rashid, stated:

“Indeed, we believe that the guardianship of all creatures belongs to us, because of the Prophet’s statement on the day of Ghadir: ‘Whoever I am his Mawla (master), Ali is his Mawla.’”

Thus, whenever the Infallible Imams (peace be upon them) found the opportunity and suitable conditions for debate and discussion, they relied on the hadith of Ghadir and used it to prove the guardianship of the Commander of the Faithful and themselves. However, as history records, not all the Imams always had the chance to openly speak or debate their beliefs.

Nevertheless, they would, on certain occasions—both publicly and in private gatherings—promote and explain the hadith of Ghadir and inform their companions about it.

For instance, **Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (PBUH)**

said:

“Then, on the Day of Farewell Pilgrimage, on the day of Ghadir, Ali (a) was appointed as Imam.”

Also, **Imam Musa ibn Ja’far (PBUH)**, when interpreting the verse 8 of Surah Al-Baqarah (“They want to deceive Allah and those who believe...”), said:

“When the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) appointed Ali (a) on the day of Ghadir as the Imam and leader of the people, and ordered ‘Umar and all the leaders of the Muhajirun and Ansar to pledge allegiance to Ali (PBUH), they complied, and then God revealed this verse.”

Ghadir was not only cited by the Infallibles but also by some companions. For example, Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (PBUH) said:

“Salman al-Farsi, three days after the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) was buried, gave a sermon in which he reproached the people for taking the caliphate away from **Amir al-Mu’minin Ali (a)** and giving it to another. In parts of that sermon, he said: ‘Obey Amir al-Mu’minin Ali, by God, on the day of Ghadir, we repeatedly

greeted him under the title of Wilayah and Imarah in the presence of the Prophet, and the Prophet repeatedly urged us to do so. So what has happened that people envy him despite his knowledge and virtues?”

Moreover, Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (a) himself said:

“After Abu Bakr’s sermon, Ubayy ibn Ka’b stood up and said: ‘O group of Muhajirun, who seek God’s pleasure and are praised in the Qur’an, and O group of Ansar who reside in the city of faith, have you forgotten or pretended to forget? Have you broken the covenant and pledge, changed the religion, or chosen abandonment? Have you not forgotten that the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) rose among us on the day of Ghadir and held Ali (a) before all, and said: “Whoever I am his Mawla, Ali is his Mawla; whoever I am his Prophet, Ali is his Amir (leader)”?’ But no one was willing to listen.”

### **The Companions and Ghadir**

Despite 23 years of the Prophet Muhammad’s (peace be upon him and his family) efforts to introduce Imam Ali (a) as his successor,

especially through the widely narrated Hadith of Ghadir, why did the Muslims sideline Imam Ali (a)?

The noble Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) repeatedly introduced Ali (a) as the rightful successor for the Muslim community. The most important and final instance of this was at Ghadir Khumm. However, most Muslims did not pay heed to these directives, and a group in Medina gathered at the Saqifah of Bani Sa'idah and chose Abu Bakr as the successor instead.

Undoubtedly, multiple factors caused the Muslims present at Saqifah to disregard the Prophet's (peace be upon him and his family) recommendations. It seems that tribal prejudices, jealousy, and enmity towards Ali (a) were among the most significant causes of his sidelining. Additionally, two points must be noted: firstly, the selection of Abu Bakr was made hastily and rapidly; secondly, this was not the first time Muslims disobeyed the Prophet's clear instructions. Muslims repeatedly opposed the explicit commands of the Prophet, of which we

mention a few examples briefly:

1. In the Battle of Uhud, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) assigned 50 archers to position themselves on a hill behind the Muslims to prevent the enemy from attacking from the rear. He instructed them not to leave their posts even if the enemy prevailed. However, after the initial setback of the Muslims, the archers abandoned their positions chasing the spoils. Abdullah ibn Jubayr, their commander, reminded them of the Prophet's command, but they did not listen and left.
2. Disobedience to the Prophet's instructions during the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah, with Umar being the most vocal objector.
3. Ignoring the Prophet's advice during the Battle of the Trench (Ahzab). Ibn Hisham writes that one night the enemy was plotting to leave Medina, and the Prophet asked for someone to scout them out, but no

one volunteered until the Prophet called Hudhayfah by name.

4. Some Companions disobeyed the Prophet's explicit order not to join the army of Usama.

5. Opposition to the Prophet's directives regarding the division of the spoils after the Battle of Hunayn.

And many other instances which we do not detail here due to brevity.

**Tribal Prejudices:** Undoubtedly, Arabian society was tribal, with individuals deeply loyal to their clans. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) fought hard during his 23 years of prophethood against these baseless tribal prejudices but could not completely eradicate them. Tribal values revived in Saqifah. The statements of those present in that gathering reflect this clearly. When Abu Bakr spoke, he said, "We, the Muhajirun, were the first to accept Islam, and others followed after us. We are the tribe of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family), and yet we are the most moderate Arabs in terms of lineage." Umar replied to the Ansar saying,

“The Arabs will not allow you to dominate them when the Prophet was not from you, and the right is ours.”

One tribal value that favored Abu Bakr’s selection was his seniority and old age, which alongside other factors carried enough weight to overshadow the Prophet’s instructions.

Umar said to Ibn Abbas: “They did not turn away from Ali’s leadership except because of his youth.”

And Abu Ubaydah Jarrah responded to Ali’s objections by saying: “You are still young, and the people chose the elders of the tribe. Of course, if you are patient and live longer, considering your merits and that you are the Prophet’s son-in-law, then they will choose you.”

**Jealousy, Enmity, and Resentment Towards Ali (PBUH):** Without doubt, the hostility towards Ali and the Banu Hashim clan from Quraysh and some other tribes was one of the main reasons Muslims ignored the Prophet’s commands. This is well illustrated in a conversation between Umar and Ibn Abbas. Umar asked why Ali

did not join and cooperate with them, and why Quraysh did not support the family of the Prophet despite Ibn Abbas being the Prophet's cousin and nephew. Ibn Abbas said, "I do not know." Umar replied, "But I know and am aware that Quraysh do not want to allow prophecy and caliphate to be united in your family because that would give you pride and joy."

On one occasion, Uthman reminded Ali of Quraysh's enmity, saying: "What is my fault that Quraysh hate you because you killed 70 of them?"

Haskani narrates from Ali that he said to Ammar: "We are the ones meant by the verse: 'Or do they envy people for what Allah has given them of His bounty?' (Quran 4:54)."

Abdul Fattah Abdul Maqsoud also writes: "If Quraysh today did not accept the leadership of Ali, their greatest man, they did not accept the chosen Prophet of the world yesterday. The origin of this is their bitter hearts."

Another factor that intensified resentment towards Ali was his personality, virtues, and past deeds, which many could not tolerate.

For example, in the 10th year after Hijra, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) appointed Ali as commander to Yemen. When Ali returned to Mecca to attend Hajj with the Prophet and Muslims, he separated from his companions and came to Mecca ahead of them to meet the Prophet. He appointed a man to lead his companions, who then distributed the robes (hillah) brought from Najran among them. When Ali came out to meet them near Mecca, he saw them wearing the robes and was very upset. He reprimanded his deputy and ordered the robes removed and put away in their bags. This upset Ali's army, and they complained to the Prophet, who said: "O people, do not complain about Ali; he is severe in the way of Allah to a degree that no one can complain against him."

Lady Fatimah (peace be upon her) said: "The reason Ali was deprived of his right and the caliphate was taken from him was their fear of his severity and harshness in the way of truth, his sword's power, and his fearlessness in the path of Allah."

**Hasty Pledge:** It should also be noted that

the selection of Abu Bakr in Saqifah was done with haste and great speed. Umar said: "Choosing Abu Bakr was a rushed matter, but Allah protected us from its evil." He then added: "From now on, whoever pledges allegiance without consulting the Muslims, such allegiance will not be accepted, and anyone who does so should be killed."

Historians have written that before the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them) had even completed washing the Prophet's body, Ali and Abbas heard the sounds of people in the mosque pledging allegiance to Abu Bakr.

### **Conclusion:**

Although Ali (a) was repeatedly named by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) as his successor, factors such as tribal prejudices, jealousy, hatred, and Ali's just and upright character caused the Muslims to choose another person. This was not the first time Muslims disregarded the Prophet's clear instructions.

## **If Thousands Witnessed the Appointment of Imam Ali (a) at Ghadir Khumm, Why Did the Companions Not Object to Abu Bakr and Umar?**

The question of why the Muslims and the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) overlooked the rights of the Ahl al-Bayt (the Prophet's household) at the time of the Saqifah meeting and thereafter, despite the clear and public event witnessed by thousands at Ghadir Khumm, and despite numerous explicit references to this matter during the Prophet's life, depends on several factors. These can be briefly summarized as follows:

### **1. Pre-Islamic Tribal System:**

Before the establishment of the Medinan state by the Prophet (PBUH), people in major cities of Hejaz and the desert tribes lived under a tribal system. In this system, leadership was based on criteria such as age, generosity, bravery, patience, and nobility, and a tribal leader did not have the right to appoint his own descendants or relatives as successors.

## **2. Novel Institution of Government:**

The Prophet (PBUH) was the first to establish a state in this land, introducing values that transcended tribalism. He united various tribes of cities and deserts under a centralized government. People, seeing him as a divine messenger, accepted the formation of this state as a divine command and generally did not resist.

## **3. Rapid Spread of Islam:**

Before the conquest of Mecca, Islam was rapidly spreading among cities and desert tribes, to the extent that the year after (the 9th year of Hijra) was called the “Year of Delegations,” when many groups came to the Prophet to declare their Islam. Clearly, not all these new Muslims possessed deep and sincere faith.

## **4. Difficulty of Accepting Succession:**

One of the Islamic teachings that was difficult for people to accept was the issue of appointing a successor

because:

- a) People considered only the Prophet (PBUH) to have a divine dimension, accepting his supra-tribal government, but they did not believe his successor would have such qualities.
- b) Many were not fully committed to obeying the worldly commands of the Prophet, as shown by their protests in incidents like the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah (when Umar said he was greatly confused) and the distribution of spoils after the Battle of Hunayn.
- c) Many did not accept obedience to post-Prophetic worldly commands because they were still influenced by pre-Islamic customs that forbade a tribal chief from appointing a successor. Naturally, political leadership was regarded as more important than tribal leadership.
- d) Some newly converted Qurayshites believed the Prophethood was a tribal rivalry tool and dared not openly oppose the Prophet but protested

the appointment of a successor from Banu Hashim, using tribal culture to justify their opposition. e) In pre-Islamic times, only nobles over forty years old could attend the Quraysh consultation council (Dar al-Nadwa). Thus, accepting a successor to the Prophet, especially if a young man from Banu Hashim (like Ali) under forty, was more difficult. Abu Bakr reportedly told the Prophet he was still young and had opportunity to rule.

### **5. Two Additional Difficulties Regarding Imam Ali's Succession:**

- a) Among Quraysh, Ali was viewed negatively because of his valor in battles such as Badr and Uhud, where he fought fiercely against Quraysh elders. This led to extensive propaganda poisoning public opinion against him. Umar reportedly said to Ali, "Your people look at you like a cow looks at its slaughterer."
- b) Tribal leaders and conspirators

realized that if the succession was settled among Banu Hashim, it would never leave that family.

### **6. The Prophet's View on Ali's Succession Was Divine and Beyond Tribal Relations:**

The Prophet considered Ali's succession a matter of divine ordinance, preserving the religion of revelation, appointing the person most familiar with the Book and Sunnah and bravest in spreading Islam. Knowing the social context, the Prophet reminded people repeatedly about Ali's qualities and succession. Ultimately, he publicly declared it at the largest gathering of Muslims (some estimate over 100,000 people) at Ghadir Khumm, ignoring possible opposition. The Qur'an in Surah Al-Ma'idah (5:67) says: "And Allah will protect you from the people." This protection was probably not physical safety from an attack but protection from the harm of people's words, as the majority were newly converted Muslims with many opponents to Ali's succession.

## **7. Historical Silence and Two Important Phenomena After Ghadir:**

The period between Ghadir and the Prophet's death is silent in history, but two phenomena reflect the Prophet's concern for Ali's succession and opposition to it:

- **The Army of Usama:** Near the Prophet's death, he appointed the young Usama bin Zayd to lead a large army to the distant Roman border. Sending the army far away removed opposition forces from Medina at a crucial time and neutralized objections to Ali's youth. The army included many who opposed Ali's succession. Those who tried to avoid it were pressured to stay in Medina.
- **Prevention of Writing a Will:** At the end of his life, the Prophet asked for writing materials to document a clear will to prevent future misguidance. Opponents, fearing this would confirm Ali's succession, violently prevented the writing, calling the Prophet delirious.

Historical sources mention only one person but likely indicate a group acting together.

***8. The Saqifah Meeting and the Ansar:***

The first group to gather at Saqifah to appoint a caliph other than Ali were the Ansar, renowned for their loyalty to the Prophet and love for his family. Why the Ansar acted quickly before the Prophet's body was even washed is explained by their realization that Ali's succession had no chance due to opposition from the Muhajirun (Meccan immigrants). The Ansar sought a share of power to prevent their marginalization and upcoming conflicts with Qurayshite leaders, whose chiefs had killed some of their supporters during battles. Thus, all—companions, Muhajirun, Ansar, and people of Medina—remembered Ghadir and accepted its indication of succession, but witnessing the suppression of Ali's

supporters by opponents deterred the majority from protest or defense. Even Ali himself refrained from extensive argumentation at that moment.

Therefore, it is more puzzling historically that there was extensive argument for Ali's succession rather than none, since such argument would imply sudden acceptance of opposition views, which conflicts with historical evidence.

**Suggested Sources for Further Study:**

Tarikh Yaqubi, Vol. 2

Al-Ghadir, Allama Amini, Vols. 1-2

**Is it true that all historians agree that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not appoint a successor for himself at Ghadir Khumm, and that Abu Bakr was sent to the mosque simply due to his seniority in age, and that after the Prophet's death, the Muhajirun and Ansar chose him for the caliphate on this basis?**

1. This view contradicts the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH), since all historians report that whenever the Prophet left Medina even for a short period while still alive, he appointed someone as his deputy to manage the affairs of the people.

Examples include:

- The Commander of the Faithful Ali ibn Abi Talib (PBUH),
- Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah,
- Sa'd ibn Mu'adh,
- Zayd ibn Harithah,
- Abu Sa'd ibn Abd al-Asad,
- Abu Dharr al-Ghifari,
- Abdullah ibn Rawahah,
- Abu Ruhm Kulthum ibn Husayn al-Ghifari,

- Ibn Umm Maktum,
- Abu Labbabah ibn Abd al-Mundhir,
- Siba' ibn 'Arfatah, etc.

Given this precedent, where the Prophet never left Medina without appointing a temporary deputy, how could he leave the entire Muslim community permanently without a leader? This clearly contradicts the Prophet's established practice.

2. According to Sunni sources, the Prophet in his final days said:  
"Let me write for you a document after which you will never go astray."

However, 'Umar prevented this from being done.

3. Divine prophets always had successors appointed by themselves before their death, and certainly Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is not an exception.

For example, Adam (PBUH) became ill eleven days before his death and advised his son Seth. Seth then instructed his son Enosh, and so on in a line of succession, not limited to inheritance of wealth

but encompassing leadership and guidance of the community and preservation of the law. This is important especially since Sunni scholars assert prophets did not leave material inheritance but spiritual and leadership legacies.

Salman al-Farsi once asked the Prophet:

“O Messenger of God! Every prophet has a Wasi (successor); who is your Wasi?”

The Prophet remained silent initially. Later, when he saw Salman, he said:

“O Salman! Do you know who was the Wasi of Moses?”

Salman replied: “Yes, Joshua son of Nun, because he was the most knowledgeable among them.”

The Prophet said:

“My Wasi, my trustee, and the best person whom I leave behind to fulfill my promise and pay my debts is Ali ibn Abi Talib.”

Salman said:

“God does not send a prophet except that He designates a successor for him. Has God designated one for you?”

The Prophet replied:

“Yes, Ali ibn Abi Talib.”

Ibn Barid narrated from his father that the Prophet said:

“Every prophet has a Wasi and an heir, and Ali is my Wasi and heir.”

4. The justification based on age is a return to the pre-Islamic Arab era when tribal leadership was determined by seniority. Islam, however, values piety and righteousness as criteria for superiority. Even if age were the criterion, Abu Quhafa (Abu Bakr’s father), who was older than Abu Bakr, would have precedence.

5. Abu Bakr and ‘Umar themselves admitted that the selection at Saqifah was sudden and a coup. How then can it be said that the Prophet appointed Abu Bakr due to his seniority? Moreover, many companions were older than Abu Bakr. ‘Umar said in a public speech:

“The pledge of allegiance to Abu Bakr was a hasty action...”

The word “hasty” indicates an impulsive, non-deliberate decision lacking

firm basis.

6. Abu Bakr's father wrote to him:

"If age were the criterion, I am older than you."

Ibn Abi al-Hadid, in his commentary on Nahj al-Balagha, reports that Abu Quhafa, after Abu Bakr's death, recited the Quranic verse:

"Say, 'O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from whom You will'" (Quran 3:26), and said:

"By what merit was my son chosen?"

When told it was because he was older than others, Abu Quhafa responded:

"If age were the criterion, then I am older than him."

Likewise, Tabarsi narrates that after the Prophet's death, when Abu Bakr was chosen by the people, Abu Bakr wrote to his father boasting that the people had accepted his caliphate. Abu Quhafa responded angrily, accusing Abu Bakr and others of usurping Ali's right, whom the Prophet had appointed

by divine command, and admonished Abu Bakr to leave the matter to its rightful owner.

7. According to al-Tabari, before the Saqifah incident, Abu Bakr was prematurely considered caliph: The Ansar gathered under the shelter of Banu Sa'idah to pledge allegiance to one of their own and said:

“One emir from us and one emir from Quraysh.”

Abu Bakr and 'Umar came and disputed until 'Umar wanted to speak but Abu Bakr prevented him. 'Umar said:

“I will not disobey the caliph of the Prophet of God twice in one day.”

Remarkably, no one had yet pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr; people were still discussing leadership among Sa'd ibn 'Ubadah. Yet Abu Bakr claimed to be the Prophet's caliph.

8. Besides many historical narrations regarding the Hadith of Ghadir, other reports exist. For example, Mu'awiya wrote to Abu Bakr's son:

“From the time your father was alive,

we recognized the virtue and status of the son of Abu Talib (Ali) and deemed respecting his right necessary. However, when the Prophet passed away, your father and 'Umar were the first to deny Ali's right and cooperated against him. Had your father not done so, we would not have opposed Ali and would have submitted to him."

Also, when the Prophet invited the tribe of Banu 'Amir ibn Sa'sa'ah to Islam, one asked: "If we follow you and God grants you victory over your enemies, will this 'matter' (leadership) remain with us after you?"

The Prophet replied:

"The matter is with God; He places it wherever He wills."

This shows that even during the Prophet's lifetime some tribes were aware and concerned about succession, so it is unlikely that in ten years no one asked or the Prophet said nothing about it. The Prophet did not reject the concept but declared it a divine matter.

Moreover, when people gathered to pledge

allegiance to Abu Bakr, Abu Sufyan asked Imam Ali to give his hand for allegiance, but Ali refused, knowing his intentions were not sincere. This indicates that the leadership issue was known and significant at Ghadir Khumm.

Mas'udi states:

“When Abu Bakr was pledged allegiance at Saqifah, Ali came and said: ‘You have ruined our affairs and did not consult us or preserve our rights.’ Abu Bakr replied: ‘Yes, but I feared sedition.’”

This excuse is superficial; the truth is that if Ali had been accepted, it would have prevented sedition, since Ali was a great strategist and peacekeeper.

Ibn Qutaybah writes about Ali's refusal to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr, noting the arguments that Ali was young and inexperienced, whereas Abu Bakr was stronger and more capable. Ali replied that the leadership belonged to the Prophet's household, the ones most familiar with the Quran and Sunna, and the best equipped to govern.

Ali even approached the Ansar with Fatimah,

the Prophet's daughter, seeking their support, but they declared their allegiance to Abu Bakr had ended. Ali responded that he did not want to fight for leadership but preserve the Prophet's legacy. Fatimah said: "Abu al-Hasan did what was due, and you will be accountable before God for your deeds."

Abu 'Ubaidah's acceptance of handing the matter to Abu Bakr shows that the issue at Ghadir was indeed about Ali's rightful leadership, which Abu 'Ubaidah insisted be handed over to Abu Bakr, basing his view on age rather than Islamic merit.

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr notes:

"After the Prophet's death, we claimed we were the Prophet's guardians and no one disputed our authority. Yet, the people refused and appointed others for the caliphate."

When 'Umar told Ali:

"I will not leave you until you pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr,"

Ali replied:

"Suckle from the breast of the caliphate as much as you can. Strengthen Abu Bakr's

authority today so that he returns it to you tomorrow.”

In light of the Saqifah process, which resembles more a military coup than a deliberate and rightful election, it is inaccurate to claim the Prophet appointed Abu Bakr due to age or sent him to the mosque to be recognized as successor. The Prophet appointed and supported younger leaders like ‘Atab ibn Asid, Usamah ibn Zayd, and others in governance and military command, showing that age was not the criterion for leadership. Islam prioritizes piety and capability over seniority.

**Why did the early Muslims, who were so diligent in compiling the Qur'an, forget the event of Ghadir and commit this great mistake?**

In response to this important question, it must first be stated that historical events and mistakes are not always caused by negligence or forgetfulness. Rather, many significant and minor errors occur out of awareness and specific motives. The incident of Ghadir Khumm falls into this category.

To clarify, the event of Ghadir Khumm was not a minor or simple occurrence that could be forgotten in a short time before the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him and his family) passing. On the contrary, it took place under unique circumstances, marked by an unprecedented large gathering in Islamic history at that time. One of the key factors that made this historical event eternal and unforgettable was the magnificent presence of the Companions during the ceremony where Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (a) was appointed by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family). According to both Shia and Sunni

historical and narrational sources, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family), on his return from the Farewell Pilgrimage in the tenth year of Hijra, on the eighteenth day of Dhu al-Hijjah, in the presence of an enormous crowd of pilgrims—reported to number about 120,000—announced by divine command the issue of the succession of Ali (PBUH). He introduced Ali (a) as the leader of the Muslims after himself and obligated those present to convey this message to those absent.

After the Prophet's speech, the massive gathering of Companions approached Amir al-Mu'minin (PBUH) in groups, congratulating him and giving their pledge of allegiance. Several prominent Companions, including Abu Bakr and Umar, personally gave the pledge of allegiance to Ali (PBUH). More than sixty Sunni scholars have recorded this event of Abu Bakr's and Uthman's bay'ah (allegiance) with Ali in their books.

This historical event echoed widely among the Muslims of that day, reaching every city and neighborhood, making the issue of the

Prophet's succession known to all. Given the unprecedented universal presence of Muslims from near and far at the pilgrimage that year—about 120,000 people at least—reports of this significant event were widely disseminated, and many took the account to different regions.

Among these were numerous Companions whose narrations of this event have been recorded in books. The late Allama Amini (may God have mercy on him) identified, from Sunni scholarly books alone, 110 Companions who each separately testified to the event. This number does not include many others who were present but whose names history did not preserve, or whose testimonies were deliberately erased due to political interference—especially starting from the era of the Caliphs, when political efforts aimed at erasing such records began and continued until at least the year 99 AH during the reign of Umar ibn Abd al-Aziz. The existence of this many narrations from the Prophet's Companions in Sunni books indicates that despite the opponents' intentions to suppress the story of Ghadir,

at least 110 accounts passed through the censorship and were recorded in historical pages for us.

In the second century AH, the era of the Tabi'un (successors to the Companions), 84 narrators of the Ghadir event, all distinguished Sunni scholars, transmitted it. In subsequent centuries, more than 360 narrators likewise narrated it, and 26 prominent Sunni scholars such as al-Tabari, Abu Sa'id al-Sijistani, Ibn 'Uqda, and others authored independent books on this subject.

A second factor that immortalized and illuminated the event of Ghadir Khumm is the revelation of verses 3 and 67 of Surah Al-Ma'idah in this regard. More than 46 prominent Sunni commentators and scholars agree that these verses were revealed concerning the appointment of Ali (a) by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) at Ghadir.

The recording of this historical event in the Qur'an as a permanent document for Muslims has ensured that the memory of Ghadir is always recalled and kept alive,

never forgotten. Therefore, the 18th day of Dhu al-Hijjah—the day of the revelation of these verses—is recognized as a Muslim festival day. Although Shia Muslims especially regard it as the greatest Islamic feast with a special attachment, it is not exclusive to them.

**Summary:**

From what has been mentioned, it is clear that the Ghadir Khumm event was not something that the early Muslims completely forgot or became mistaken about due to ignorance or lack of awareness. On the contrary, considering the Prophet's repeated instructions on this matter, especially during the great gathering at Ghadir, and the Qur'anic verses revealed on the subject, the event had the broadest possible resonance among Muslims, particularly residents of Medina.

The undeniable reality—which no impartial person can deny—is that the issue of Ghadir, and specifically the succession of Ali (PBUH), was denied by those who opposed his caliphate and forced others to deny or at least remain silent. Historical evidence and

proper analysis show this fact clearly. Therefore, the main problem with the issue of Ghadir Khumm was not the ignorance or forgetfulness of the people; at least this cannot be accepted regarding the more than 120,000 witnesses present. Rather, the fundamental problem, as the Qur'an terms it, was "denial" (juhd) of the matter. A group, motivated by selfishness and power-seeking, knowingly and deliberately denied it, which diverted the Islamic community from its true course. The negative and irreparable consequences of this continue to burden Muslims to this day.

# Sunnis and Ghadir

**Do Sunni historians and hadith scholars accept the Shia interpretation of the Verse of Completion of Religion (Verse 3 of Surah Al-Ma'idah)?**

Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti in his tafsir writes:

“Under the commentary of verse 3 of Al-Ma'idah, Ibn Marduwaih, Al-Khatib, and Ibn Asakir have narrated from Abu Hurairah that the day of Eid al-Ghadir, the 18th of Dhu al-Hijjah, was the time when the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) said: ‘Whoever I am his Mawla (master/leader), then Ali is his Mawla.’ Then the verse ‘This day I have perfected for you your religion...’ was revealed. The Messenger said: ‘Whoever I am his Mawla, Ali is his Mawla.’”

Ubaydullah ibn Ahmad al-Hasakani in Shawahid al-Tanzil under the same verse narrates from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri:

“When this verse was revealed to the Prophet, he said: ‘Allahu Akbar (God is the Greatest) on the completion of the religion and the perfection of the blessing, and the satisfaction of the Lord with my mission and the guardianship (Wilayah) of Ali ibn Abi Talib after me.’ Then he said: ‘Whoever I am his Mawla, Ali is his Mawla. O Allah, befriend whoever befriends him, and be hostile to whoever is hostile to him, support whoever supports him, and forsake whoever forsakes him.’”

Al-Hakim al-Walid narrated from Abu Hafs ibn Shahin from Abu Hurairah:

“Whoever fasts on the day of Eid al-Ghadir, it is like fasting for sixty months, because the Prophet took the hand of Ali and said, ‘Whoever I am his Mawla, then Ali is his Mawla.’ Umar ibn al-Khattab then said to Ali: ‘Well done, son of Abu Talib.’”

Ibn Asakir in Tarikh Dimashq records from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri:

“When the Prophet appointed Ali at Ghadir

Khummm and declared his guardianship, the angel Gabriel descended with the verse: 'This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have approved Islam as religion for you.'" Ahmad ibn Hanbal narrated from Ali ibn Hakim al-Audi

"We testify that we heard from the Prophet, who said regarding Ali on the day of Ghadir Khumm: 'Is not Allah the Wali (guardian) of the believers?' They all said yes. Then the Prophet said: 'Whoever I am his Mawla, Ali is his Mawla; whoever befriends him is befriended by Allah and whoever opposes him, Allah opposes.'" "

The same narration is also cited by Sheikh Muhammad Abduh in his Tafsir al-Manar, vol. 6, pp. 464–465.

Muhammad ibn Shafi'i in Matali' al-Su'ul (p.16), citing from Tirmidhi's Sahih with chains going back to Zaid ibn Arqam, mentions the event of Ghadir Khumm and Ali's designation as the Wali after the Prophet.

The famous Sunni scholar and historian Shams al-Din al-Dhahabi expressed

astonishment at the numerous chains of narration concerning the Wilayah of Ali and the verse of completion of religion (5:3) as well as the event of Ghadir Khumm.

### **Evidences from Sunni Sources Regarding Ghadir**

These references and narrations represent only a small fraction of Sunni sources and statements regarding the verse mentioned above. Detailed collections can be found in the following books:

1. Wilayah by the well-known Sunni scholar Ibn Jarir al-Tabari
2. Tafsir Ibn Kathir, vol. 2, p.14
3. Manaqib Khwarazmi, printed in Najaf, p.130 — section of general and specific narrations on the Hadith of Ghadir
4. Ithbat al-Huda, vol. 3, p.543
5. Numerous other Sunni books by authors such as:
  - Historical works: Ibn Qutaybah, Ibn Zulaq, Al-Shahristani, Ibn Athir, Ibn Abi al-Hadid, and others
  - Sunni Hadith scholars and historians: Ahmad ibn Hanbal,

Al-Hakim Nishapuri, Tirmidhi,  
Muhammad ibn Idris, etc.

- Sunni theologians: Sayyid Sharif Jurjani, Taftazani, Qushji, Qadi Abd al-Rahman al-Ayni, etc.
- Linguists: Hamudi, Ibn Duraid, and others

## **Do All Sunni Sects Accept the Hadith of Ghadir?**

Regarding whether all Sunni groups accept the Hadith of Ghadir and the significant statement of the Prophet (PBUH), “Whoever I am his Mawla, this Ali is his Mawla,” the majority accept the authenticity of the chain of narration. However, some may dispute its interpretation or the implications derived from it rather than its authenticity.

More than three hundred renowned Sunni scholars have transmitted the Hadith of Ghadir and the revelation of the verses of Tabligh (announcement) and Ikmal ad-Din (completion of religion), citing over a hundred companions of the Prophet as narrators. Sultan al-Wa’izin lists sixty of the most famous and trusted Sunni scholars and their works that mention this Hadith, including:

1. Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari (Tarikh, vol.1)
2. Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj Nishapuri (Sahih Muslim, vol.2)
3. Abu Dawud al-Sijistani (Sunan)

4. Muhammad ibn 'Isa al-Tirmidhi (Sunan)
5. Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (Musnad, vol.4)
6. Ibn Taymiyyah Ahmad ibn Abd al-Halim (Minhaj al-Sunnah)
7. Abu al-Qasim ibn Asakir (Tarikh Dimashq)
8. Abu Bakr al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (Tarikh Baghdad)
9. Muhammad ibn Yazid ibn Majah Qazwini (Sunan)
10. Al-Suyuti (Tarikh al-Khulafa)

Some Sunni scholars such as Muhammad ibn Jarir al-Tabari, a renowned 4th-century historian and exegete, wrote an entire book entitled Kitab al-Wilayah on the Hadith of Ghadir, transmitting it through seventy-five different chains.

Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Sa'id ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Kufi, known as Ibn 'Uqbah, in Kitab al-Wilayah narrates the Hadith from one hundred and twenty-five chains involving one hundred and twenty-five companions, with eloquent investigations. Abu al-Qasim al-Hasakani also elaborated

on the event of Ghadir with the revelation of the relevant verses in his book *Kitab al-Wilayah*.

Abu Ja'far al-Tahawi in *Mushkil al-Athar*, p. 308 states: "The chain of this Hadith is authentic, and none can be accused of weakness among its narrators."

Ahmad ibn Muhammad 'Asmi in *Din al-Fatwa* says: "This is a Hadith which the Islamic community has received with acceptance and which is consistent with principles."

Abu al-Faraj ibn Juzi al-Hanbali in *Al-Manaqib* writes: "Historians unanimously agree that the story of Ghadir after the return of the Prophet from Hajj al-Wada' on the 18th of Dhu al-Hijjah involved one hundred and twenty thousand people who heard the Hadith from the Prophet."

Conclusion:

Thus, from the Sunni perspective, the chain of narration of this Hadith is considered sound and free from any critical defects. The primary Sunni contention relates to the interpretation and implications of the Hadith rather than its authenticity.

**Suggested References for Further Study:**

1. Tarjamat al-Ghadir, vol. 2, translated  
by a collective of translators
2. 'Abqaat al-Anwar by Allama Mir  
Hamid Hussain
3. Shabhaay-e-Peshawar by Sayyid  
Muhammad Sultan al-Wa'izin Azimi,  
1580 AH

**Some Sunni scholars, in justifying the event of Ghadir, claim that before the Farewell Pilgrimage, Imam Ali (a) was sent to Yemen and that he did not deal well with the people there. They argue that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) wanted to improve the relationship between Imam Ali and the people of Yemen. What is the story of Yemen?**

Among the events of the tenth year (of the Hijri calendar) was the dispatching of missionaries by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) to various cities and regions. The acceptance and attention of the people of the Hijaz towards Islam, and the confidence the Prophet gained from the Arab tribes, gave him the opportunity to extend the influence of Islam into neighboring countries of the Hijaz. For the first time, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) sent one of his knowledgeable companions, Mu'adh ibn Jabal, to Yemen to explain the call of monotheism and the principles of Islam to the people there.

The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) gave Mu'adh specific advice, saying:

“Avoid harshness and give glad tidings to the people, for the glad tidings belong to the believers. In Yemen, you will encounter the People of the Book, and they will ask you: ‘What is the key to Paradise?’ Tell them: ‘Recognition of the Oneness and Uniqueness of God.’” However, it seems that despite Mu’adh’s knowledge of the Qur’an and Sunnah, he was unable to provide a sufficient answer to a question regarding the rights of a husband over his wife.

For this reason, the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) decided to send his appointed successor and trustee, the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (a), to Yemen. With his eloquence, sound reasoning, unparalleled courage, and strength, Imam Ali was to promote Islam and clarify the rulings of God — the lawful and unlawful — in that region. It is worth noting that before Imam Ali, Khalid ibn al-Walid had been sent to Yemen by the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) but had failed to achieve much.

Thus, the Prophet summoned Imam Ali and said: “O Ali! I am sending you to Yemen

so that you may invite them to Islam and explain to them the commands of God and what is lawful and unlawful.”

During his stay in Yemen, Imam Ali made astonishing judicial decisions, many of which have been recorded in the historical and hadith literature. The Prophet also sent a written letter to the people of Yemen through Imam Ali.

One of those who accompanied Imam Ali in Yemen was Bara' ibn Azib, who narrated that when Imam Ali arrived at the first border point of Yemen, he organized the ranks of the Muslim soldiers stationed there under the command of Khalid ibn al-Walid and led the morning prayer in congregation. Then he invited all the members of the Hamdan tribe — one of the largest tribes — to hear the Prophet's letter. Before reading the letter, he praised and glorified God.

Afterward, he read the Prophet's message, whose eloquence and grandeur deeply affected the Hamdan tribe, and they all embraced Islam within a single day. Imam Ali sent a letter reporting the event to the Prophet. Upon hearing the news, the

Prophet was so pleased that he prostrated in gratitude and then raised his head, saying: "Peace be upon the people of Hamdan." The conversion of this group led to the gradual spread of Islam in Yemen.

Therefore, Imam Ali's missions to Yemen, on both occasions when he was sent by the Prophet, were successful.

Hence, the event of Ghadir, by the command of God, was the final and definitive declaration of Imam Ali's succession and had no connection with the Yemen mission. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) introduced his successor to the people several times during his prophetic mission. The final stage was at the gathering of thousands of pilgrims from different regions, where he publicly announced Imam Ali as the Commander of the Faithful at the event of Ghadir Khumm.

**Is there any Sunni source documenting the opposition of prominent Companions such as Salman al-Farsi, Ammar Yasir, and Miqdad to the usurpation of the caliphate of Amir al-Mu'minin (Ali ibn Abi Talib), and their dissent against the ruling caliphs?**

The Sunni claim is that Ammar fought under Umar's command and that Salman al-Farsi was one of the governors appointed by the second caliph.

The most important Sunni argument for the legitimacy and validity of the caliphate institution is the matter of Ijma' (consensus) of the Muslim community, or more precisely the consensus of the elders and elite (Ahl al-Hal wal 'Aqd) of the Islamic society after the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Sunni theologians and historians have repeatedly referred to this consensus as evidence for the authenticity and authority of the caliphate. Ibn Taymiyyah regarded the pledge of allegiance (bay'ah) to Abu Bakr as a consensus, saying:

“The Muhajirun and Ansar who supported the Prophet (PBUH) and through whom Islam gained strength and honor, and through whom the polytheists were defeated and the Arabian

Peninsula conquered, all pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr; and everyone who pledged allegiance to the Prophet (PBUH) also pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr.”

Beyond the scholarly debates about the validity of *ijma'* (especially when it conflicts with explicit texts), historical facts show that the formation of the caliphate institution was not a matter of consensus or unanimous approval by all Muslims or all leading companions during the early period. According to Sunni historical sources themselves, a number of the Prophet's great companions and notable figures in early Islamic history opposed the establishment and continuation of the caliphate. They initially refused to pledge allegiance to the first caliph.

Below, we refer to some statements by Sunni historians and scholars about the opposition of a significant group of the Prophet's companions to the caliphate institution.

From Sunni historical sources, it appears that the opposition to the Saqifah event was not limited to obscure individuals whose

names were omitted from some historical books, but rather a large number of the early Muslim community, including the Ansar of Medina, initially did not welcome the caliphate institution. Among them, only those whose names were recorded as opponents in history were those with high rank and status with the Prophet and among Muslims, such as Salman al-Farsi, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Ammar Yasir, and Miqdad—all of whom are mentioned in this regard. We will refer only to these figures whose opposition is reflected in Sunni sources.

1. **Muhammad ibn Isma'il al-Bukhari**, the compiler of *Sahih al-Bukhari*—regarded as the most authentic book after the Quran in Sunni Islam—reports from Caliph Umar that:

“After the death of the Prophet (PBUH), the Ansar opposed us regarding the caliphate of Abu Bakr, and they all gathered at Saqifah. Ali, Zubayr, and their followers also opposed us.”

Bukhari did not continue to name those with Ali and Zubayr, but

Sunni historians have listed them in detail.

**2. Abu'l-Fida Imad al-Din Isma'il ibn Ali,** in *Al-Mukhtasar fi Tarikh al-Bashar*, narrates:

“Umar pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr, and the people came toward Abu Bakr and pledged allegiance to him—except a group from Banu Hashim, Zubayr, Utbah, Khalid ibn Sa'id ibn al-As, Miqdad ibn Amr, Salman al-Farsi, Abu Dharr, Ammar, Burā' ibn 'Azib, and Ubayy ibn Ka'b—who did not pledge and inclined toward Ali (PBUH).”

These are the names of those who opposed the Saqifah institution. Bukhari, due to certain considerations, refrained from naming them explicitly.

**3. Zayn al-Din Umar ibn Muzaffar (Ibn Wardi), in his history, states:**

“They initiated the formation of Saqifah of Banu Sa'idah. Then Umar pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr, and the people came toward him... except a group from Banu

Hashim, Zubayr, Utbah, Khalid ibn Sa'id ibn al-As, Miqdad ibn Amr, Salman, Abu Dharr, Ammar, Burā' ibn 'Azib, Ubayy ibn Ka'b, and Abu Sufyan—who did not pledge and gathered in Ali's house in protest and sanctuary."

Utbah also composed poetry lamenting the caliphate being taken from Banu Hashim and questioning why the caliphate was not given to Abu al-Hasan Ali, mentioning his virtues and close relation to the Prophet (PBUH).

**4. Abd al-Malik al-Shafi'i** names those who refused to pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr as:

"On that day, Sa'd ibn Ubadah, a group of Khazraj, Ali (a) and his sons, Zubayr, Abbas (the Prophet's uncle), Banu Hashim, Talha, Salman, Ammar, Abu Dharr, Miqdad, and others did not pledge allegiance to Abu Bakr. Then all of them pledged allegiance, some hastily, some later—except Sa'd ibn Ubadah, who never pledged

allegiance to Abu Bakr or Umar until his death.”

The phrase “and others” implies that the number of those who initially refused allegiance was greater than those named, but historians only mentioned those with significant social standing and influence.

5. **Ibn Abi'l-Hadid**, a Mu'tazilite scholar, quotes a detailed narration from Burā' ibn 'Azib, in which it is mentioned that on a certain night, Miqdad, Abu Dharr, Salman, Ammar ibn Yasir, 'Ubada ibn Samit, Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman, Zubayr ibn al-'Awwam, and Haitham ibn Tayhan sought to restore the caliphate to the Muhajirun through a council. When this reached Abu Bakr and Umar, they consulted Ubayy ibn al-Jarrah and Mu'ghirah ibn Shu'bah, who advised tempting Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib with a share in the caliphate to gain his support and thus neutralize Ali ibn Abi Talib. This indicates that the opposition

of prominent figures such as Miqdad, Abu Dharr, Salman, Ammar, and others had reached political considerations and practical actions, but due to their small numbers, the conspiracies of their opponents, and also the advice of Imam Ali (a), these efforts ultimately failed.

### **Conclusion:**

The formation of the caliphate under figures such as Abu Bakr, Umar, and Ubayy ibn al-Jarrah was never supported by the unanimous consensus of all Muslims or the Prophet's companions. Rather, a significant number of leading companions—whose faith and commitment to the Prophet's lofty ideals are beyond doubt—opposed the Saqifah and the caliphate system. Salman al-Farsi, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Miqdad, and Ammar Yasir were among these.

Regarding the Sunni claim that some of these figures served under the caliphs or participated in military campaigns on their behalf, it must be clarified that such actions do not indicate approval or acceptance of the legitimacy of the caliphate. Rather, those

who opposed the caliphate institution, while considering it illegitimate in principle, engaged pragmatically in cooperation with the ruling authorities in matters of social duty and religious obligation, for the sake of preserving the welfare of the Muslim community and advancing the broad goals of Islam.

This pragmatic interaction was modeled after Imam Ali (a) himself, who despite opposing the caliphate system, cooperated with the caliphs as necessary for the public good and provided guidance in political, military, and judicial affairs. The extent of the companions' interaction with the caliphate institution, inspired by their leader Ali (PBUH), was limited by two principles:

- Maximum cooperation without aiding injustice or tyranny;
- Minimum engagement fulfilling religious and social responsibilities without endorsing the deviant Saqifah movement.

They thus calibrated their conduct based on these principles, always with the permission and guidance of Imam Ali (a).

For example, when Salman al-Farsi was offered governance of Mada'in by Umar, he accepted the position only after obtaining Imam Ali's consent.

## **How can we prove the Wilaya and Imamate of Imam Ali (a) from the Qur'an and Sunni sources?**

Multiple evidences have been presented for the Imamate and Wilaya of Imam Ali (a). Among these, the Qur'anic verses of Wilayah and Tabligh (Proclamation) serve as the clearest proofs. The verse of obedience (Taa'at) can also be used for argumentation. Here, we briefly discuss the first two verses:

### **1. The Verse of Wilaya:**

The verse states:

“Your guardian (Wali) is none but Allah and His Messenger and those who believe, who establish prayer and give zakah, and they bow down humbly.”

(Qur'an 5:55)

This noble verse, along with its Asbab al-Nuzul (occasion of revelation), serves as evidence for the Imamate and Wilaya of Imam Ali (a). Although the six major Sunni collections (Sihah Sitta) do not explicitly mention the occasion of revelation for this verse, some other Sunni sources narrate a tradition from the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) clarifying the

revelation of this verse and proving the Imamate and Wilaya of Imam Ali. A few of these narrations are as follows:

In *Majma' al-Zawa'id*, Ammar Yasir is reported to have said: A beggar came to Imam Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) while he was in the state of bowing (*ruku'*). Ali removed his ring and gave it to the beggar. Then the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) came and the beggar told him what Ali had done. At that moment, the verse "Your guardian is only Allah, His Messenger, and those who believe..." was revealed. The Prophet recited the verse to the companions and then said: "Whoever I am his master (*Mawla*), Ali is his master. O Allah, befriend whoever befriends him and be hostile to whoever is hostile to him."

In *Tafsir al-Durr al-Manthur*, numerous chains of narration for the occasion of this verse are mentioned. For example, Ibn Abbas is reported to have said that Ali gave his ring as charity while bowing, and then the Prophet (PBUH) asked the beggar who gave him the ring. The beggar replied: "The one who was bowing." Subsequently, the verse "Your guardian is only Allah and His

Messenger...” was revealed. Other narrators such as Abdul Razzaq and Ibn Mardawayh, citing Ibn Abbas, confirm that this verse was revealed concerning Ali ibn Abi Talib. Tabarani, in his Mu’jam Awsat, also narrates from Ammar Yasir the same incident. Ibn Mardawayh and Ibn Asakir have narrated similar traditions with slight variations. Ibn Jarir also reports from Mujahid that the verse was revealed in regard to Ali’s act of giving his ring while in ruku’.

Thalabi, in his tafsir, also transmits various authentic traditions indicating that this verse was revealed about Ali ibn Abi Talib (PBUH).

## **2. The Verse of Tabligh (Proclamation):**

### **The verse reads:**

“O Messenger, convey what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people. Indeed, Allah does not guide the disbelieving people.”

(Qur’an 5:67)

In this verse, God commands the Prophet emphatically to convey a newly revealed message to the people and promises to

protect him from potential dangers in doing so. The tone of the command shows that this message is extremely important and that the Prophet initially feared conveying it, delaying until an appropriate moment. The verse implies that if the Prophet fails to convey this specific command, it would be as if he had not delivered the entire religion. The narrations, both from Sunni and Shia sources, support the understanding that this verse was revealed concerning the Wilaya of Imam Ali (a). The Prophet feared that announcing Ali's leadership might cause misunderstanding among the people, so he delayed until the event of Ghadir Khumm, where he declared:

“Whoever I am his Mawla, Ali is his Mawla.” In *Tafsir al-Durr al-Manthur*, Mujahid narrates that when this verse was revealed, the Prophet expressed concern about being alone and unable to gather people. Then the phrase “And if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message” was revealed. Abu Sa'id al-Khudri relates that this verse was revealed to the Prophet concerning Imam Ali on the day of Ghadir Khumm. Ibn

Mas'ud narrated that during the Prophet's time, they would recite the verse as:

"O Messenger, convey what has been revealed to you from your Lord: 'Indeed, Ali is the Mawla of the believers,' and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message."

### **Sunni Narrations Supporting the Wilaya and Imamate of Imam Ali:**

1. The event of Ghadir Khumm is one of the most important moments in Islamic history regarding the Wilaya of Imam Ali, widely narrated in both Sunni and Shia texts. Sunni traditions related to this event fall into two categories: those that mention the revelation of the Verse of Tabligh at Ghadir and those that mention the event without mentioning the verse. The former category is less numerous but includes detailed narrations in books such as *Tarikh Dimashq* by Ibn Asakir, *Mafatih al-Ghayb* by Fakhr al-Razi, *Al-Kashf wa al-Bayan* by Tha'labi, *Fara'id al-Simtayn* by Hamawini, *Al-Fusul al-*

Muhimma by Ibn Sabbagh al-Maliki, and Ruh al-Ma'ani by Al-Alusi. The latter includes Musnad Ahmad, Al-Mustadrak by Hakim, Tarikh al-Tabari, and others.

Numerous Sunni sources also record the Prophet's statement:

"Whoever I am his Mawla, Ali is his Mawla," without mentioning the full Ghadir event. These include Sahih, Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Sunan Ibn Majah, Tarikh al-Kabir by Bukhari, and Tarikh al-Islam by Al-Dhahabi, among many others.

An-Nasa'i, a prominent Sunni scholar and compiler of hadith in Sunan al-Kubra, records the Prophet's farewell pilgrimage where he stopped at Ghadir Khumm, instructed the people to stand, said that he was soon to answer the call of Allah, and declared:

"I leave among you two precious things, the Book of Allah and my progeny and my household. Watch how you treat these two, for they will not separate until they meet me at the Pool of Kawthar. Allah is my Mawla and I am the Mawla of all believers." Then

he took Ali's hand and said:

"Whoever I am his Mawla, this Ali is his Mawla. O Lord, befriend whoever befriends him and be hostile to whoever is hostile to him."

The authenticity of the Hadith of Ghadir is beyond doubt and considered Sahih and Mutawatir (mass-transmitted) by Sunni scholars:

- Ahmad al-Maghribi states the Hadith is authentic, established, and mutawatir with over one hundred chains.
- Ibn Asim declares the phrase "Whoever I am his Mawla, Ali is his Mawla" is of ultimate authenticity with many sound chains of narration.
- Al-Sakafi asserts the mutawatir status of the Hadith of Ghadir among all Muslims.

In the six major Sunni hadith collections, phrases from the Khutbah (sermon) of Ghadir regarding the virtues of Imam Ali are mentioned:

- In Sunan Ibn Majah (one of the six canonical collections), Sa'd ibn Waqas became angry at Mu'awiya's

disrespect toward Imam Ali and said he heard the Prophet say:

“Whoever I am his Mawla, Ali is his Mawla.”

In Jami’ at-Tirmidhi, Zayd ibn Arqam reports the Prophet said:

“Whoever I am his Mawla, Ali is his Mawla.”

Bara’ ibn Azib narrates that during the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet said:

“Am I not more entitled to the believers than themselves?” The people said: “Yes.” He said: “Am I not the guardian (Wali) of the believers?” The people said: “Yes.” He said: “Then this (Ali) is the guardian (Wali) of whoever I am the guardian (Wali) of. O Allah, befriend whoever befriends him and be hostile to whoever is hostile to him.”

Khatib al-Baghdadi, a Sunni scholar, notes that when Umar ibn al-Khattab heard this, he said:

“Blessed are you, O son of Abu Talib! Congratulations that you became the Mawla of men and women believers.”

2. In Musnad Ahmad and other Sunni books, during the Yemen campaign, when Khalid ibn al-Walid disputed with Imam Ali over a slave girl, the Prophet became angry and said:

“Do not dispute with Ali, for indeed he is from me and I am from him, and he is your Wali after me.”

In Kanz al-‘Ummal, the Prophet is reported to have said:

“Leave Ali alone, leave Ali alone, leave Ali alone, for indeed Ali is from me and I am from him and he is the Wali of every believer after me.”

Many Sunni books contain numerous narrations supporting the Wilaya and Imamate of Imam Ali (a).

### **The Importance of Eid al-Ghadir from the Sunni Point of View**

Sheikh Fares Tabrizian Hassoun, by compiling materials from Al-Ghadir by Allama Amini, has authored an independent book entitled Eid al-Ghadir in Islam, proving that this Eid is not exclusive to Shiites. Likewise, Mohammad Reza Jabaran has written a book about Ghadir titled Ghadir from the Sunni Perspective, in which one section states:

## **The Historical Background of Eid al-Ghadir among Muslims**

Al-Ghadir min Sharaf al-Mustafa, authored by Abu Saeed Khargushi Nishapuri, quotes the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his family) as saying: “Congratulate me, congratulate me; God Almighty honored me with prophethood and my family with Imamate.”

Also, according to Al-Ghadir, the Prophet (PBUH) said: “The day of Ghadir is the best of the celebrations of my nation; it is the day when God commanded me to appoint my brother Ali ibn Abi Talib as a sign for my nation so that they may follow him after me. It is the day when God perfected my religion, completed His blessing upon my nation, and was pleased that Islam be their religion.”

Therefore, paying attention to the day of Ghadir as an Islamic Eid has its roots in the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who himself declared this day an Eid and was in fact the founder of this celebration. After the Prophet and the infallible Imams (peace be upon them), special attention

continued to be given to this day as an Eid. For example, on a Friday coinciding with Eid al-Ghadir, Imam Ali (a) delivered a sermon in which he said: “May God have mercy on you! Expand your household income today, be kind to your brothers, and continually thank God for this continuous blessing He has bestowed upon you. Be united so that God may gather your scattered ranks. Be good to each other so that God may have mercy on this love and unity. As God has bestowed upon you, multiply the reward of this Eid compared to other Eids. Acts of kindness on this day increase wealth and prolong life. Compassion on this day attracts God’s mercy and grace.”

As is known, during the caliphate of Imam Ali (a), many companions of the Prophet were present and heard these words. Had this Eid not been accepted by them, they surely would have objected. Historical evidence shows that Muslims throughout different eras have observed this day and celebrated it. For example:

- Abu Rayhan al-Biruni in his book *Al-Athar al-Baqiya* wrote: “The

eighteenth day (of Dhu al-Hijjah) is the Eid of Ghadir Khumm, the place where the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) descended after the Farewell Pilgrimage, gathered the baggage of the camels, held the arm of Ali ibn Abi Talib, mounted him upon the camels, and said: 'Whoever I am his Mawla (master/leader), Ali is his Mawla.'

- Ibn Talha al-Shafi'i wrote in *Matali' al-Su'ul*: "This day is called the day of Ghadir Khumm and it became an Eid because it is the time when the Messenger of God appointed Ali to a high position and bestowed upon him this unique honor above all people."
- Tha'alabi, in *Thimar al-Qulub*, mentioned the night of Ghadir among special occasions and wrote: "The night of Ghadir is the night before the day when the Prophet (PBUH) delivered a sermon on the saddle of the camels and said: 'Whoever I am his Mawla, Ali is his Mawla. O God, befriend whoever befriends him, and oppose whoever opposes him, support whoever

supports him, and forsake whoever forsakes him.' The Shiites honor this night and revive it with worship."

- Ibn Khalkan, in the biography of Al-Mustali al-Fatimi, son of Al-Mustanşir, wrote: "On the day of Eid al-Ghadir, the eighteenth of Dhu al-Hijjah in the year 487 AH, people gave their pledge of allegiance to him." In the biography of Al-Mustanşir al-Fatimi, he notes that he died on a Thursday at midnight in the remaining days of Dhu al-Hijjah in the year 487 AH, which coincides with the night of Eid al-Ghadir.

Historically, this day was recognized as an Eid during the times of Tha'alabi Nishapuri (d. 429 AH), Abu Rayhan al-Biruni (d. 430 AH), Ibn Talha al-Shafi'i (d. 654 AH), and Ibn Khalkan (d. 681 AH).

Geographically, the celebration of this Eid extended from the eastern parts of the Islamic world such as Transoxiana (where al-Biruni lived), Nishapur (birthplace of Tha'alabi), to Rey (birthplace and residence of Kulayni), Baghdad (birthplace and place of growth for Mas'udi), Aleppo (home and

burial of Ibn Talha al-Shafi'i), and Egypt (residence and burial of Ibn Khalkan). People paid attention to this Eid and celebrated it widely. This is assuming that each scholar reported based only on their local environment, while it is known that, first, many like Mas'udi and al-Biruni traveled extensively across Islamic countries, and second, their writings mention this day as an Eid for Muslims in general.

## **Why is Eid al-Ghadir Not Mentioned in Nahj al-Balagha Despite Its Importance?**

As Seyyed Radi, the compiler of Nahj al-Balagha, clearly states in the introduction of his book, he composed this work in response to the request of some of his friends who wanted a book that included selected speeches of Amir al-Mu'minin (Imam Ali, peace be upon him) in various fields and genres, including sermons, letters, admonitions, and ethics.

The late Seyyed Radi says: "I accepted this request and began the work... My intention was, besides highlighting numerous other virtues, to clarify the greatness and personality of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (a) particularly from the viewpoint of astonishing eloquence and exemplary instances of rhetoric. Therefore, I decided to select from among sermons, letters, and wise sayings first the 'beautiful' sermons, then the 'interesting' letters, and after that the wise words of the Imam."

He further mentions that he never claimed to have covered all aspects of Imam Ali's speeches in such a way that none of

his words had escaped him; rather, he considered it unlikely that what he missed was less than what he had found, and that what was available to him was less than what had not reached him.

It becomes clear that Seyyed Radi's aim was to select sermons, letters, and admonitions of Imam Ali (a) based on their eloquence and rhetorical appeal. For this reason, he named this precious collection *Nahj al-Balagha* (The Peak of Eloquence) and made it available to others.

From this perspective, one possibility is that Imam Ali's sermon related to Eid al-Ghadir, including his references to the Prophet's sermon at Ghadir, might not have met Seyyed Radi's criteria of eloquence and rhetorical excellence to be included in *Nahj al-Balagha*. Another possibility is that Seyyed Radi simply did not have access to that sermon and therefore did not include it—not that the sermon or Imam Ali's references to the Prophet's sermon on Eid al-Ghadir were lacking in eloquence by Seyyed Radi's standards.

As mentioned earlier, Imam Ali (a)

repeatedly referred to the well-known hadith of Ghadir to prove his rightful claim and immediate succession. He brought up the event of Ghadir many times. For example:

- When he asked the companions of the Prophet (PBUH) to testify about the event of Ghadir, saying: “Whoever was present at Ghadir, testify regarding the event of Ghadir.”
- When he asked members of the council: “Is there anyone among you to whom the Messenger of God (PBUH) said: ‘Whoever I am his Mawla (master), this Ali is his Mawla,’ other than me?” And everyone said no.
- When he debated with Abu Bakr and said: “I swear by God, tell me whether according to the hadith and words of the Prophet on the day of Ghadir, I am your Mawla and the Mawla of every Muslim or are you?”

Abu Bakr replied: “Rather, you are.”

- And when Eid al-Ghadir coincided

with a Friday during his caliphate, Imam Ali delivered a sermon in which he said:

- “O believers! On this day, God has provided you with two Eids... Know that belief in monotheism is not accepted except with acceptance of the prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH), and no belief or action is accepted except with acceptance of the guardianship (Wilayah) of the one God has appointed as your leader. The path of obedience to God will not be achieved except by holding firmly to the rope of God and those who are the People of God’s Household, that is, those about whom God revealed a verse on the day of Dooh (Ghadir) and expressed His will concerning His special servants, commanding the Prophet (PBUH) to convey this, excluding the misguided and hypocrites, and God Himself guaranteed their protection from their evil.”

He continued: “Thus God completed His

religion, and enlightened the eyes of the Prophet, the believers, and his followers. This is the event of Ghadir; some of you witnessed it and others were informed of it. Today is the day of covenant and pledge, the day of the completion of religion, the day of clear designation of the person, meaning those who are specifically appointed as leaders.”

**Conclusion:**

The event of Ghadir is repeatedly mentioned in the words of the infallible Imams, including Imam Ali (a). Its absence in *Nahj al-Balagha*—compiled by Seyyed Radi—is because *Nahj al-Balagha* includes only selected speeches of Imam Ali, not all of them.

**References for Further Study:**

Allama Amini, Abd al-Husayn, *Al-Ghadir*, Vol. 1, pp. 181–211.

