

# **Ghadir in the Light of the Book and Tradition**

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## **Preamble**

One of the decisive proofs of the Imamate (leadership) of the Commander of the Faithful, Ali (a.s.) which has been emphasized by the Quran and narrations, is the event of Ghadir Khum. There are verses in chapter Al-Ma'idah in this regard which, according to Shiite and also many Sunni interpreters of the Quran, relate to nothing but Ali's *wilayah* (guardianship) and Imamate. Also, numerous traditions have been transmitted by Shiite and Sunni sources explaining these verses according to which Ali's immediate succession [to the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.)] is an indisputable and accepted fact, to the extent that they leave no doubt and ambiguity in the minds of the seekers of truth about Ali being entitled to take charge of the caliphate. In this booklet, our aim is to study the event of Ghadir Khum and provide concrete proofs of Ali's Imamate and leadership with reliance on Quranic verses and narrative evidence. It is worth mentioning that this booklet was first published in small-sized editions by Naba' Publications under the title "Ghadir in the Mirror of the Quran and Narrations" and since it was greatly welcomed by the interested readers, it was published several times. The text of the book, written originally in Persian, has also been translated into English and it is now presented in the present format after it has been reviewed and its references authenticated and additions made to it. We must be thankful to the Department of Education and Research of the Supreme Leader's Hajj Mission Office for its cooperation and for the laudable task of making available the English translation of the book. Thanks are also due to all those who helped the author to get this work printed and published. We pray to Allah to accept this sincere service on their part and make all of us

the true followers of the household of the Holy Prophet, peace and  
benedictions of Allah be upon him and his family.

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## Historical Background of the Event of Ghadir

Upon the advent of the month of Zil-Qa'dah in the tenth hejira year, the Holy Prophet of Islam, peace and blessing of Allah be upon him and his family, informed the Muslims about his decision to perform pilgrimage of the House of God and fulfill the obligation of Hajj. This news spread quickly in the city of Medina and its outskirts, and around, and the area nearby. The news reached far and wide and those Muslims who lived in various parts of the Arabian Peninsula. No sooner the news spread than thousands of Muslims started to make preparations to perform the pilgrimage alongside the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of Zil-Qa'dah, the Prophet's caravan which, according to historians, comprised of one hundred thousand or less pilgrims<sup>1</sup> left Medina for Mecca. These pilgrims were other those people who had joined the pilgrims from other parts of the Arabia including the settlements around the holy city of Mecca.

Shaykh Mufid says in his *Kitab al-Irshad*:

The Farewell Pilgrimage took place following the Holy Prophet's malediction with the Christians of Najran and the events that followed. The Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, had sent Ali, peace be upon him, to Yemen to collect the fifth share (*khums*) of their

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<sup>1</sup> - Muslim quotes Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari to have said about the pilgrimage of the Apostle of God in the tenth year after his migration:

(ثم أذن في الناس في العاشرة؛ ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله حاج. فقدم المدينة بشر كثير. كلهم يلتبس أن يأتي برسول الله ويعمل مثل عمله.)

Vide: *Sahih Muslim*, Vol.2, p.886: chap. *Hujjat Al-Nabi* (s.a.w.); See also: *Sunan Ibn-e Mājah*, Vol.2, p.1022-1026, *Tarikh al-Tabari*, Vol.3, p.148.

gold and silver and collect the breastplates and other things which the people of Najran had agreed to pay. He went there to carry out the requests of the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family. In accordance with his instructions and speedily demonstrating his obedience, he performed his duty. The Apostle of God trusted in no one else as he trusted in him for that task. Nor did he consider anyone among the people appropriate to undertake it except him. He made him, peace be upon him, occupy a similar position to himself in that. He appointed him as his deputy, in confidence of him and secure in the knowledge that he would carry out the difficult tasks which were imposed upon him.

Then the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, decided to go on the pilgrimage and to carry out the duties which God, the Exalted, had ordained. He summoned the people to (join) him and his call went out to the furthest points in the land of Islam. A great many people set out with the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, from Medina to Mecca. He left Medina on the 25th of Zil-qa'dah. Meanwhile, the Prophet had written to the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, about going on the pilgrimage from Yemen but he had not mentioned the kind of pilgrimage he had decided to make. The Messenger of Allah, set off for Mecca in the company of Muslims and Hazrat Ali, peace be upon him, set out with the soldiers who had accompanied him to Yemen. When the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, was nearing Mecca on the road from Medina, the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, was nearing it on the road from Yemen. He was ahead of the army to meet the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, and he left one of their number in charge of them. He came up to the Prophet as the latter was looking down over Mecca. He greeted him and informed him of what he had done and of what he had done and of the breastplates and gifts he

had collected and that he had hurried ahead of the army to meet him. The Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, was pleased at that and delighted to meet him.

"Ali, have you consecrated yourself for the pilgrimage?" he asked him.

You did not write to me about the way you would consecrate yourself, O Apostle of God," he answered. "I have taken upon me a vow to perform the same pilgrimage as the Prophet<sup>2</sup>, whatever that might be, and I have brought thirty-four camels for the sacrifice".

The Prophet joyfully exclaimed, "Allahu-Akbar, (Great is the Lord), and I have driven sixty-six. You will be my partner in my pilgrimage, my rituals and my sacrifice. Therefore, remain in your state of consecration and return to your army. Then hurry with them to me so that we may meet in Mecca, if God, the Exalted wills."

The Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, was in Mecca for a few days to perform the Hajj rites. He delivered a sermon to the multitude of pilgrims on the Day of Arafah – and according to some reports – on the Day of Eid and in his sermon, he advised the Muslims to observe piety, respect others' rights and remain committed to moral

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<sup>2</sup> - In regards to oneness of Ali's intention and that of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, in the Farewell Pilgrimage, see *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Vol.2, p.650; *Al-Kāfi*, Vol.2 p.246; *Tarikh al-Tabari*, Vol.3, p.149. According to some reports, the Holy Prophet of Islam took one hundred camels from Mecca to Medina of which 34 camels were taken for Ali (a.s.) and 66 for himself. See also *Man La Yahzuruhu al-Faqih*, Vol.2, p.153; *Sunan Abi Dawud*, Vol.8, p.59; *Wasail al-Shi'ah*, Vol.8, p.164; *Tarikh al-Tabari*, Vol.3, p.149, *Sirah of Ibn-e Hesham*, Vol.4, p.249.

values.<sup>3</sup> Then he decided to leave Mecca for Medina. The order to leave Mecca was issued and once again the multitude of pilgrims accompanying the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, left Mecca for Medina. When this huge caravan of pilgrims reached near Juhfa, the archangel descended at a place called Ghadir Khum and brought down the following verse:

«يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ.»<sup>4</sup>

*"O' Prophet! Proclaim what has been sent down to you from your Lord; and if you do not, you would not accomplish the mission all; and Allah will protect you from the people; verily Allah guides not the unbelieving people".*

No sooner this verse was revealed than the Prophet ordered the caravan to halt. Those who were ahead of caravan, stopped, and those who were at the back of caravan, joined them. At noon, it was very hot, and a group of people put a part of their mantle on their head and a part under their foot. The time of midday prayers set in and the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, informed them to prepare themselves to hear a new message. Thereupon, the Muslims made a makeshift pulpit of camel saddles and the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, mounted the pulpit and called the Commander of the Faithful who stood on his right.

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<sup>3</sup> - For further information about this sermon, see *Sahih Muslim*, Vol.2, p.889-890; *Sunan Ibn-e Majah*, Vol.2, p.1015 and 1016; *Tarikh al-Tabari*, Vol.3, p.150-152; *Biography of the Prophet (al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah)* known as *Sirah of Ibn-e Hesham*, Vol.4, p.250.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Ma'idah: 67

Thereupon, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, delivered a sermon.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Sermon of the Prophet (s.a.w.) at Ghadir Khum**

Allamh Amini has narrated in his *Al-Ghadir* the Prophet's sermon at Ghadir Khum as such:

“All praise belongs to God. In Him do I put my faith and from Him do I crave support. Him do I trust and His protection seek against the malice of our souls and evils of our deeds. The misguided have no guide save Him, and those who are guided by Him can never go astray. I bear witness that there is no one worthy of worship save Him and that I, Muhammad, am His slave and Messenger.”

“O People, behold, the All-knowing God has informed me that the days of my life are coming to an end and the time is fast approaching when I shall be called away from your midst towards the eternal abode. But you and I, each one of us is answerable unto God for all things are due unto Him from us. What then do you say?”

The entire audience answered: "We shall bear witness that you did convey to us the message of Allah, and tried your best to guide us on the right path and always gave us good console. May Allah bless you with a good reward."

The Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, added: “I will precede you in departing for the next abode but I will leave two weighty things among you. Take care how you follow me with regard to them.”

“What are the two weighty things, God’s Messenger?” asked a man.

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<sup>5</sup> - Shaykh al-Mufid, *Kitab al-Irshad*, p.235-237 (summarized); Also, see: *A'lām al-Warā*, Vol.1, pp.259-263; *Sirat al-Mustafa*, p.693 (under the topic of Ghadir Khum)

The Prophet answered: "The major is Allah's Book and it is a means for your communion with God and the minor is my progeny; my household. The two shall never separate from each other till they join me at the Pool."

"O people, behold, precede them not, and adhere to them or else you shall be perished."

Here, The Prophet took Ali's hand and raised it so highly that the armpits of both were seen. Then, he addressed the people as such:

«أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ! مَنْ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ؟»

"O people, Who has more of a right over the believers than their own selves?" Everyone present proclaimed: "Allah and His Prophet know better."

The Noble Prophet (s) then said: "Allah is my master and I am the master of all the believers and I have more right and authority over the believers than they have over their own selves."

Then he continued:

«مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاهُ فَهَذَا عَلِيٌّ مَوْلَاهُ. اللَّهُمَّ وَالِ مَنْ وَالَاهُ وَ عَادِ مَنْ عَادَاهُ وَانصُرْ مَنْ نَصَرَهُ  
وَاخْذُلْ مَنْ خَذَلَهُ...»

"Whomsoever I am his master, this 'Ali is also his master. O' Allah! Love him who loves him ('Ali) and be hostile to whoever opposes him, support whoever supports him and desert whoever deserts him."

Then the Prophet said, "Go now, and let those who have been present here today repeat and convey to those who are absent all that they have seen and heard."

The people had not yet dispersed when the Angel of Revelation, Gabriel (a.s.) once again descended by the order of Allah and this time, revealed the following verse of the Qur'an:

«الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا»<sup>٦</sup>

*“On this day have I completed your religion for you and perfected My bounties upon you and am pleased with Islam as being your religion.”*

Then the Prophet (s.a.w.a.) said "Allahu Akbar" and added:

"I thank God for perfecting His religion, and completing His Blessing, and approving my mission and guardianship and succession of Ali after me."

At this time, the people approached Ali (a.s.) and congratulated him for the position (of guardianship and Imamate). Abu Bakr and Umar were the first to congratulate Ali. They said: "Congratulations, O son of Abu Talib, you have become my master and the master of every believing man and woman."

Hassān bin Thabit came to the Apostle of God, may God bless him and his family, to recite poems in this regard. The Prophet peace be upon him and his family permitted him and he poetized:

*"On the day of al-Ghadir their Prophet calls to them at Khumm, so listen to the Messenger calling;*

*He says: Who is your master and your guardian? They said, without displaying blindness there:*

*Your God is our Master and you are our guardian, and you will not find among us anyone disobedient concerning the Wilaya.*

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<sup>6</sup> - Al-Ma'idah: 3

*He said to him: Rise, O `Ali, for I approve of you as Imam and guide after me;*

*Of whomsoever I am master (mawla), then this is his guardian;*

*Be to him followers of truth, adhering;*

*Thereupon he called out: O Allah befriend his friend and to him who opposes `Ali, be at enmity."*

After Hassān bin Thabit recited his poems to the audience, the Apostle of God said his very famous statement to him: "May you always be supported by the spirit of Holiness, Hassan, as long as you support us with your tongue."<sup>7</sup>

After the Holy Prophet's appointment of Ali (a.s.) as his successor, the Muslims stood up and each group set off towards a destination. The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, and a great many pilgrims who had come along with him from Medina also set out towards Medina. They entered the city of Medina when the tenth [hegira] year had not come to an end. A few days later, the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, fell ill and the illness resulted in his sad demise when he had already appointed the successor and the leader after him.

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<sup>7</sup> - For further information about the event of Ghadir Khum in the history of Islam and to read the details about the Holy Prophet's sermon see: *Musnad of Ahmad bin Hanbal*, traditions numbered 641, 950, 961,964, 19494, 18671; *Khasaes Nesai*, p.26 and 117, traditions number 9 and 79; *Mustadrak of Hākim*, Vol.3, p.323, *History of Ya'qubi*, vol.2, p.105; *Asad al-Ghābah* by Ibn-e Athir Jazri, Vol.3, p.605; *Tafsir al-Qummi*, Vol.1, p.174-175, *Kitab Al-Irshad* by Shaykh al-Mufid, Vol.1, p.235-242, *Sirat al-Mustafa*, p.693 according to citations made by different Sunni sources; *Tafsir al-Safi*, Vol.2, p.447-466 as cited by Al-Ihtejaj; and *Al-Ghadir*, Vol.1, p.31-34 with the Persian translation.

## Investigations into the Event of Ghadir Khum

### 1. The Status of the Event of Ghadir in Islamic Sources:

What is noteworthy in respect of the event of the Ghadir Khum is the revelation of two Quranic verses about this great event. These verses are verse 67 of chapter Al-Ma'idah, better known as verse of "Conveyance" (Tabligh) and verse 3 of the same chapter known as the verse of "Perfection of Religion". Considering these two verses, the discussion concerning Ghadir has inevitably become exegetic and has given rise to varied justifications on the part of Shiite and Sunni exegetes or interpreters. In addition, the event of Ghadir has occupied an important place and is widely documented in narrative, historical, theological and literary sources. According to researches conducted by Allamah Amini, at least 110 companions of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family,<sup>8</sup> and 84 disciples (tab'in)<sup>9</sup> narrated the tradition of Ghadir Khum. Additionally, over the past centuries, 360 Sunni scholars have reported the tradition of Ghadir Khum in their books in full or in parts<sup>10</sup>.

Another group of people that have focused their attention upon this historic event is the poets and writers who have composed, with inspiration from this event, the most beautiful literary pieces, odes and poetic works. Late Allamah Amini has mentioned specimens of Ghadir-related poems and odes composed over centuries in different volumes of *Al-Ghadir*. Thus, it can be said that no other historical event in the world, has been noted so much by different classes, including traditionist,

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<sup>8</sup> - *Al-Ghadir*, Vol.1, p.40 -112.

<sup>9</sup> - *Ibid*, Vol.1, p.113 – 128.

<sup>10</sup> - *Al-Ghadir*, Vol.1, pp.129 – 240.

commentator, theologian, philosopher, orator, poet, historian and biographer as the event of Ghadir Khum. As was stated earlier, one of the reasons for the eternity of this tradition, is revelation of two Quranic verses in connection with this event, and since Quran is eternal and everlasting, this historical event too will never be forgotten.<sup>11</sup>

Another reason that has caused Ghadir to be remembered, is the Muslims' annual commemorations of this event as one of the Islamic feasts (Eid). Many Muslim scholars including Ibn-e Khalakan in *Wafiyāt Al-A'yān* and Abu Rayhan Al-Beiruni in *Athār Al-Baqiyah* have called Eid Ghadir as one of the feasts which all Muslims observed and celebrated.<sup>12</sup>

Notwithstanding the discussions about the event of Ghadir in narrative, historical, theological and commentary sources, as many as 26 Muslim scholars have authored independent books in this regard. The names and specifics of these books have been mentioned in the first volume of *Al-Ghadir*.<sup>13</sup> The first book among this collection is entitled "*Al-Wilayah fī Tariq Hadith Al-Ghadir*" written by Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Jarir bin Yazid Khalid Tabari Amuli (310 A.H.). The author has quote the tradition of Ghadir from more than seventy sources.<sup>14</sup> Without doubt, the most comprehensive work that has so far been written about the event of Ghadir is *Al-Ghadir* by the great researcher, Ayatollah Abdul Hussein Amini. A careful study of the various discussions of this book leaves no ambiguity and doubt in the mind of any reader as to the guardianship and successorship of Ali, peace be upon him.

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<sup>11</sup> - *Farāzhai az Tarikh Islam* (excerpts from History of Islam), p.514.

<sup>12</sup> - *Ibid*, p.515.

<sup>13</sup> - *Al-Ghadir*, Vol.1, p.141 – 148.

<sup>14</sup> - *Ibid*, Vol.1, p.141; *Tahzib al-Tahzib*, Vol.7, p.297.

## 2 – The Reflection of the Event of Ghadir in the Commentaries of the Quran

### 1-2 – Shiite Commentaries

In their commentaries under the verses of *Tabligh* (Conveyance) and "Perfection of Religion", Shiite exegetes of the Holy Quran have considered these two verses related to the leadership of Ali, peace be upon him. In this regard, they have included different discussions and also referred to traditions of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, and sayings of the Imams (leaders) that have been passed on by the narrators of both sects. Also, theological discussions aimed at substantiating the Imamate of Ali, peace be upon him, has been presented in a way such that the correlation between the two verses have been clearly demonstrated. For example, *Tafsir of Al-Ayyashi* is one of the oldest Shiite commentaries of the Quran in which several narrations have been cited from different sources about the connection of the verses of "Conveyance" and "Perfection of the Religion" with the guardianship and Imamate of Ali, peace be upon him. For instance, Ibn-e Abbas and Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari have been quoted as having said: "God had commanded the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, to appoint Ali (a.s.) as his successor and inform the people about his guardianship, but the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, was afraid that lest the people should accuse him of supporting his cousin and start a rebellion; that was why he kept postponing its delivery until this verse was sent down:

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ.

***"O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message, and Allah will protect you from the people..."***

Upon the revelation of this verse, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, announced the guardianship of Ali at Ghadir Khum."<sup>15</sup>

Having mentioned the same narration, Late Fazl bin Hasan Tabarsi, the great Shiite commentator, writes in *Tafsir Majma'ul Bayan*: "Hākim Abul Qasim Haskani has mentioned this narration in the same way in *Shawāhid al-Tanzil*. In addition, Tha'labi has mentioned this hadith (tradition) in his Commentary with a chain of transmission which ends in Ibn Abbas."<sup>16</sup>

Then Tabarsi adds: "The narratives passed on from Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq, peace be upon them, about the tradition of Ghadir have become well-known and reached the status of *tawatur* (successive hearsay). According to these narrations, the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, was afraid lest the proclamation the successorship of Ali (a.s.) should be intolerable to some of his companions. He delayed the announcement till God sent down the verse of "Conveyance" in which guaranteed the Prophet's protect and persuaded him to deliver the divine message. Thus the meaning of the revealed verse is as such: If you do not deliver what has been revealed to you and if you conceal it, then you have not conveyed His message and you have offended your Lord."<sup>17</sup>

After the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, completed his mission by introducing Ali, peace be upon him, as his successor, this verse was sent down:

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<sup>15</sup> - *Tafsir Al-'Ayyashi*, Vol.1, p.360.

<sup>16</sup> - *Majma'ul Bayan*, Vol.3, p.344. Also see: *Shawāhid al-Tanzil*, Vol.1, p.187-193.

<sup>17</sup> - *Majma'ul Bayan*, Vol.3, p.344

«الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا.»<sup>18</sup>

“On this day have I completed your religion for you and perfected My bounties upon you and am pleased with Islam as being your religion.”

Al-'Ayyashi has narrated from Imam Baqir, peace be upon him, that he said to Zurarah: "The last obligation which God sent down [on the Ummah of Muhammad] was the guardianship of Ali bin Abi Talib, peace be upon him. Then Allah, the Exalted, revealed to His Prophet: "This day have I perfected for you your religion." God did not send down any obligation thereafter until the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, passed away."<sup>19</sup>

Tabarsi also cites the same theme from Sunni sources on the authority of Abu Sa'eid Al-Khudri. He has then added that upon the revelation of the verse of "Perfection of Religion", the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, said:

"Allahu Akbar" and then added:

"I thank God for perfecting His religion, and completing His Blessing, and approving my mission and guardianship and succession of Ali after me."<sup>20</sup>

### **1-1-2- Important Points in the Commentary of the Verse of "Conveyance"**

According to Shiite commentators,<sup>21</sup> there are important points in the verse of "Conveyance" which make decisive and indisputable the

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<sup>18</sup> - Al-Ma'idah: 3

<sup>19</sup> - *Tafsir al-'Ayyashi*, Vol.1, p.321.

<sup>20</sup> - *Majma'ul Bayan*, Vol.3, p.246.

<sup>21</sup> - For further information about these points, vide: *Majma'ul Bayan*, Vol.3, p.344, *Jawāme'ul Jāme'*, Vol.1, p.350, *Tafsir al-Mizan*, Vol.6, pp.42 – 52; *al-Tafsir al-Kashif*,

relationship of this verse with the subject of Ali's succession to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family. Some of those points are as follows:

**A)** The verse of "Conveyance" suggests that if the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, fails to convey the divine message to the people, he has not completed his mission.<sup>22</sup> In other words, this issue (i.e. proclamation of the divine message) is something equal to the principle of prophecy and prophetic mission of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, and dereliction of this duty would amount to damaging the principle of prophecy,<sup>23</sup> because it says: "and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message."

**B)** This issue has not been of the likes of prayer, fasting, hajj and other acts of worship or religious beliefs like Tawhid (oneness of God) and resurrection because the verse of "Conveyance" is in chapter Al-Ma'idah which is one of the last chapters sent down upon the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family,<sup>24</sup> and that all the principles of beliefs, prophecy, resurrection and the entire Islamic laws as well as the issues related to permissible and prohibited things had been delivered and explained for the people until then. It has been reported that Aisha said to Masruq as such: "If someone tells you that Muhammad (s.a.w.) had concealed an injunction which God had sent down upon him, he has lied."<sup>25</sup>

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Vol.3, p.96 – 99; *The Message of Quran*, Vol.9, p.190, *Tafsir Hedayat*, Vol.2, p.367 – 369; *A Study of the Personality of the Ahlul-Bayt (a.s.) in the Quran*, p.131.

<sup>22</sup> - *Al-Tafsir al-Kāshif*, Vol.1, p.96.

<sup>23</sup> - *Ibid*, vol.1, 97; *Jawāme'ul Jāme'*, Vol.1, p.350.

<sup>24</sup> - Vide: *Tafsir Tebyan* by Shaykh Tusi, Vol.1, p.413; *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Vol.2, p.81.

<sup>25</sup> - *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Vol.2, p.80.

C) The issue in the verse of "Conveyance" had been so crucial an issue that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, was afraid of people to expose it; he was worried of the consequences. That was why God guaranteed him protection from the people by saying: *"and Allah will protect you from the people."* God issued a decisive command and told the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, to go ahead and declare the message.

D) Those people whose opposition and rebellion the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, was afraid of were not the pagans of Quraysh because at this time, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, had sway all over the Arabian Peninsula and that idolatry had been eradicated and there was nothing left of the influence and trace of the power of the pagans. Also, those people were not the Prophet's adversaries from the People of the Book for they had no power and influence in Arabia close to the end of the life of the Prophet, peace and benediction of God be upon him and family. Especially the Jews had been brought to their knees and Muslims had put an end to their influence in Arabia.<sup>26</sup>

Therefore, the word 'people' in the Quranic verse *"and Allah will protect you from the people"* refers to no one but the hypocrites within the Islamic society who were following up the social developments with great sensitivity and who were worried about leadership of the Islamic society after the demise of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family. As shall be explained later, the Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him and his family, was afraid of no one but the hypocrites who sternly opposed to Ali's successorship.

E) In view of the above points, it becomes clear that the only important issue whose announcement had not been made publicly and openly, was

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<sup>26</sup> - More discussions will follow in this regard.

the issue of guardianship and leadership of the Muslim Ummah after the demise of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, and the introduction of its manifestation, i.e. Ali (a.s.). This issue was the most sensitive issue of that time. Since, Imamate (leadership) is considered to be a principle next to prophethood, God, the Exalted, warned His messenger:

*"And if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message, and Allah will protect you from the people."*

The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, went ahead with fulfilling his divine mission by adopting appropriate preliminary steps like: "O people, Who has more of a right over the believers than their own selves?"<sup>27</sup>

F) The last point is that: When the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, carried out the divine mission in compliance with the verse of "Conveyance" , this verse "*On this day have I completed your religion for you and perfected My bounties upon you and am pleased with Islam as being your religion.*" which indicates that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, announced the divine command without fear and that the religion was completed and the bounties were perfected with the declaration of the last divine obligation<sup>28</sup> during the life of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family.

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<sup>27</sup> - See the different forms of this hadith in: *Musnad of Ahmad bin Hanbal* with tradition numbers: 641, 950 and 964; *Mustadrak of al-Hākim*, Vol.3, p.323, *Khasa'es Nesai* with tradition numbers 9 and 79; *Asad al-Ghābah*, Vol.3, p.605 etc.

<sup>28</sup> - Imam Baqir (a.s.) says: "The divine obligations were descending one after another, and the last divine obligation was the matter of guardianship about which God says: *"Today, I have perfected for you your religion, and completed upon you My bounties..."*

## 2-2- Sunni Commentaries

Sunni commentators and exegetes of the Quran have, in their exegesis, emphasized on two more points which are as under:

**A)** The verse of "Conveyance" was revealed in Mecca in the beginning of the Prophet's invitation, and the purpose was to persuade the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, to declare the verses and divine laws to the pagans. In view of the fact that the unbelievers and pagans had Mecca under their control, God, the Exalted, promised His Apostle (s.a.w.) to protect him from his adversaries.

**B)** The verse of "Conveyance" was revealed in Medina by which the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, was ordered to declare the realities of Islam without fear from the People of the Book. God, the Exalted, also assured him protection from the deceptive designs of the Jews and Christians.

It is worth mentioning that in addition to these two views, other probabilities have also been mentioned in Sunni commentaries most of which imply that the verse of "Conveyance" was revealed in Medina.<sup>29</sup> For example, Fakhr Razi has mentioned 10 explanations and probabilities on the revelation of the verse of "Conveyance" and in the tenth probability, he writes as such:

"This verse was revealed on the merit of Ali bin Abi Talib, peace be upon him, and after the revelation of this verse, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, raised Ali's hand and said:

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Then Imam Baqir (a.s.) added: "In fact, God says that: I will not send down any other obligations because I have completed sending down the obligations. Vide: *Al-Kāfi*, Vol.1, p.289; *Tafsir Al-'Ayyashi*, Vol.1, p.322.

<sup>29</sup> - *Tafsir Ma'alem al-Tanzil*, Vol.2, p.51-52.

«مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاهُ فَهَذَا عَلِيٌّ مَوْلَاهُ. اللَّهُمَّ وَالِ مَنْ وَالَاهُ وَ عَادِ مَنْ عَادَاهُ.»

“Whomsoever I am his master, this 'Ali is also his master. O' Allah! Love him who loves him ('Ali) and be hostile to whoever opposes him.”

Then Umar met Ali, peace be upon him, and said: "Congratulations, O son of Abu Talib, you have become my master and the master of every believing man and woman."

Fakhr Razi has continued: "This narration has been transmitted from Ibn-e Abbas, al-Barrā' bin 'Azib and Muhammad bin Ali (Imam Baqir), peace be upon him.<sup>30</sup>

After writing these ten probabilities, Fakhr Razi says that although there are many interpretations of this verse, the probability which is most likely to be with the verse of "Conveyance" is the fear of the Jews and Christians in the Holy Prophet's heart. Therefore, God revealed to him that He would save him from the deceptive designs of the People of the Book and that he should go ahead with conveying the divine message to them. Fakhr Razi has come to this conclusion only because the verses before and after the verse of "Conveyance" are about the People of the Book (Jews and Christians). Therefore, according to Fakhr Razi, this verse should also be about them otherwise this verse will be rendered irrelevant and disconnected<sup>31</sup>.

Another Sunni commentator is Shaykh Muhammad Abdo who has written about the verse of "Conveyance" in his *Tafsir al-Manār*. Unlike Fakhr Razi, he believes that the verse of "Conveyance" was revealed in Mecca and the purpose of the revelation was to command the Prophet (s.a.w) to

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<sup>30</sup> - *Tafsir Mafātih al-Ghaib*, Vol.12, p.50.

<sup>31</sup> - *Ibid*.

declare the divine injunctions to the pagans. Shaykh Muhammad Abdo puts his comment under the said verse as such:

"What appears to us is that the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, was commanded in the beginning of his prophetic mission to propagate Islam among the general public as stated also by commentators in their books especially in narrative commentaries. If this supposition is not correct, it is likely that the purpose of the revelation of the verse was to instruct the Prophet (s.a.w.) to declare the realities of Islam to the People of the Book about whom the Quran talks in the ensuing verse. Thus it can be said that God commanded: [O Prophet,] declare what has been revealed to you about the People of the Book."<sup>32</sup>

It is noteworthy that many of the Sunni commentators like Fakhr Razi have discussed about the event of Ghadir Khum in their interpretation of the verse of "Conveyance" and they confirm the story of Ghadir being a historical event but at the same time, they endeavor to deny the relationship between the verse of "Conveyance" and the event of Ghadir Khum. Additionally, they interpret the word *mawla* in the hadith (Whomsoever I am his *mawla*, this 'Ali is his *mawla*) as friend.<sup>33</sup>

As we know, most of the Sunni scholars, without refuting the story of Ghadir Khum, practically endeavor to deny the relationship between the event of Ghadir with Ali's Imamate and leadership. Thus when it comes to the word '*mawla*', they reduce it to the Prophet (s.a.w.)'s friendship with Ali, peace be upon him.

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<sup>32</sup> - *Tafsir al-Manār*, Vol.6, p.467.

<sup>33</sup> - See *Tafsir al-Manār*, Vol.6, p.465; *Rohul Ma'ani*, Vol.6, p.194-195.

## **1-2-2- Criticisms and Assessment of Sunni Commentators' Beliefs about the Revelation of the Verse of "Conveyance"**

### **1-1-2-2- A Study of the First Supposition (Revelation of the Verse in Mecca)**

Some of the commentators of the Quran are of the view that the verse of "Conveyance" was revealed in Mecca and its revelation was aimed to recommend the Prophet (s.a.w.) to declare the laws of the Religion to the pagans. According to them, since the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, was in a weaker position as compared to the pagans, it was necessary for God, the Exalted, to give him assurance of His support so that he could go ahead with declaring the realities of Islam to the pagans.

These commentators have resorted to narrations which indicate Abu Talib's responsibility to protect the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family. One of the narrations says: "Whenever, the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, went out of his house, Abu Talib would send some people after him to protect him. He was doing this until the verse *"And Allah will protect you from the people"* was sent down. At this time, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, said to his uncle: "O uncle, God protects me and you need not to appoint someone to protect me."<sup>34</sup>

According to other narrations, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, said: "God protects me from the evil of Jinn and mankind."<sup>35</sup> Here, it becomes clear that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, engaged in carrying his divine mission without fear and apprehension. However, for some reasons, it is necessary to say that the view concerning

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<sup>34</sup> - *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Vol.2, p.81; *Tafsir al-Marāghi*, Vol.2, p.160.

<sup>35</sup> - *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Vol.2, p.81.

the revelation of the verse of "Conveyance" in Mecca and the safety of the Prophet (s.a.w) after the revelation of the verse "*And Allah will protect you from the people*" is completely void and rejected. The most important arguments [according to us] are the following:

A) As was mentioned earlier, the commentators of the Quran are unanimous that not only was chapter Al-Ma'idah revealed in Medina<sup>36</sup> but it was also one of the last chapters to be revealed there.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, how is it possible for the verse of "Conveyance" to be revealed in Mecca? In reply to this question, some exegetes have said: "The chapter Al-Ma'idah has been revealed in Medina except for some verses which were revealed in Medina." They mean the verse of "Conveyance" and the verse of "Perfection of Religion".<sup>38</sup>

It should be said in criticism of this answer that there is no decisive evidence or any narrations nor any rational reason to prove this claim because even if we suppose that the verse of "Conveyance" was revealed in Mecca and it was arranged in chapter Al-Ma'idah near the end of the Prophet's life, the question that arises here is: Where was this verse during the past relatively long years and how was it being recited? Had the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, kept it in an archive and waited until the other verses were revealed so that he could place it in the row of other verses of Al-Ma'idah?

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<sup>36</sup> - Tha'alebi, Qurtubi and Shawkani have written in their commentaries: "There is consensus that this chapter is of the Medinite period." See: *al-Jawāher al-Hesan*, Vol.1, p.404; *al-Jame' le-Ahkām al-Qur'an*, Vol.6, p.30, *Fath al-Qadir*, Vol.2, p.3.

<sup>37</sup> - *Tafsir Tebyan*, vol.1, p.433.

<sup>38</sup> - See: *Tafsir al-Bahr al-Mohit*, Vol.4, p.323; *Tafsir Ma'lem al-Tanzil*, Vol.2 p.5; *Tafsir al-Marāghi*, Vol.2, p.160.

This is a question to which there exists a clear and convincing answer. It is for the same verse that Ibn Kathir al-Demashqi after quoting the hadith concerning the Prophet's safety and revelation of "*And Allah will protect you from the people*" has written:

«هذا حديث غريب و فيه نكارة، فإن هذه الآية مدنية و هذا الحديث تقتضى انها مكية»

"This hadith is weird and it is against the famous standpoint because the verse of "Conveyance" is of Medinite period whereas the hadith implies that the verse was revealed in Mecca."<sup>39</sup>

Criticizing the second narration concerning the Prophet's safety and revelation of the verse "*And Allah will protect you from the people*", Ibn Kathir writes: "This hadith is weird too. The correct view is that the verse of "Conveyance" was revealed in Medina and that it was one of the last Quranic verses to be revealed there. God knows the truth best."<sup>40</sup>

B) The claim that the verse of "Conveyance" was revealed in Mecca and that God commanded the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, to declare the divine orders to the pagans and he was given assurance that he would be protected from the evils of the pagans, is rejected and the reason is that the foregoing two suppositions are contradicted by other verses of the Quran, because there are many verses in the Quran especially in the Meccan chapters in which God commands His Apostle to declare the revealed verses to the pagans and he has been assured of God's support and help against the conspiracies of the enemies. Two instances of these promises exist in chapter al-'Alaq and chapter al-Hijr both of which are among the old chapters revealed in Mecca. The Quran says in chapter al-Hijr:

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<sup>39</sup> - *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Vol.1, p.81.

<sup>40</sup> - *Ibid.*

«فَاصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ \* إِنَّا كَفَيْنَاكَ الْمُسْتَهْزِينَ \* الَّذِينَ يَجْعَلُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ.»<sup>41</sup>

*"Therefore declare openly what you are bidden and turn aside from the polytheists. Surely We will suffice you against the scoffers. Those who adopt, with Allah, another god: but soon will they come to know."*

In his explanation of this verse Ibn-e *Kathir* quotes Abdullah bin Mas'ud as having said: "The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, carried on his invitation covertly until the verse *"Declare openly what you are bidden and turn aside from the polytheists"* was sent down. There and then the Prophet and Muslims launched their open invitation.<sup>42</sup> Then he writes in his explanation of *"and turn aside from the polytheists. Surely We will suffice you against the scoffers"*: "This verse means: "Declare what has been revealed to you from God and do not pay attention to the pagans who are seeking to prevent you from proclaiming the divine verses, and do not be afraid of them because God will suffice you."<sup>43</sup> In regards to the verse "We will suffice you against the scoffers", Tha'alebi quotes Ibn al-Arabi to have stated that some degree of divine protection of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, took place in Mecca but when the verse "God protects you from the people" was revealed, God's protection of His Messenger was completed in Medina and God protected him from the evils of all people.<sup>44</sup>

Given that God declared His decisive support of His Apostle in Mecca, it is not acceptable to assume that the Apostle of God, peace be upon him

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<sup>41</sup> - Al-Hijr, Verses: 94-96.

<sup>42</sup> - *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Vol.2, p.579.

<sup>43</sup> - *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Vol.2, p.580.

<sup>44</sup> - *Al-Jawāher al-Hesan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, Vol.1, p.439.

and his family, was guilty of fulfilling his mission and was not certain of God's promise to protect him from the evils of the unbelievers and that the verse of "Conveyance" was revealed to reemphasize upon the proclamation of God's orders to the pagans and upon his protection from the conspiracies of his enemies.

### **2-1-2-2- A Study of the Second Supposition (Revelation of the Verse about the People of the Book)**

Some Sunni commentators hold that the verse of "Conveyance" was revealed about proclaiming the religious realities to the People of the Book. The most important argument put forth by these commentators is that the verse of "Conveyance" is connected to the preceding and following verses which deal with the People of the Book. Fakhr Razi subscribes to this view.<sup>45</sup> Abu Hayyan Tawhidi has followed suit. In his explanation of the verse "O Messenger, Deliver what has been revealed to you..." Abu Hayyan writes: "That is, O Prophet, deliver what has been revealed to you of stoning and penalty which the Jews and Christians had changed in Torah and the Gospel, respectively."<sup>46</sup>

Abu Hayyan continues, "It appears from the outward meaning of the verse that God protected His Prophet from the spell of the Jews and Christians and ordered him to take action to proclaim the Quranic verses revealed about them without having to pay attention to any one of them. It is unlikely for this verse to be disconnected from the preceding and following verses."<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> - *Tafsir Mafātih al-Ghayb*, Vol.12, p.50.

<sup>46</sup> - *Tafsir al-Bahr al-Mohit*, Vol.4, p.321. Also, vide: *Ma'alem al-Tanzil*, Vol.2, p.51 (*Tafsir al-Khāzen*), chap. Al-Ta'vil, Vol.2, p.62.

<sup>47</sup> - *Tafsir al-Bahr al-Mohit*, Vol.4, p.321.

Due to the reasons that shall be stated below, this probability is not correct either:

A) Not only Shiite commentators but also many commentators from the Sunni religion have stated that the verse of "Conveyance" was sent down in the last days of the Prophet's life, and specifically in the farewell pilgrimage.<sup>48</sup> The People of the Book were not in a position to endanger the Prophet's life and they had no sway of which the Prophet (s.a.w.) might have been afraid to proclaim the realities of Islam.

For further information, we reiterate that the Jews or the Christians did not have such a power during the days of the Prophet (s.a.w.) as to put his life in danger to such an extent as to be considered a hindrance in the way of Islam's progress. In the early days of prophethood, some Jewish tribes lived in Medina but they were considered as a minority, and it is said that they were so small a minority that they were expecting the last Prophet to appear so that they could, with his help, overpower the unbelievers from Aws and Khazraj.<sup>49</sup>

In a treaty signed, after the Prophet's migration to Medina, between the immigrants (Muhajireen), the Ansar (Medinite helpers) and other tribes settled in Medina, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, declared that the rights of the Jewish tribes to be respected<sup>50</sup> but after some times, they started conspiring and they entered an alliance with the

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<sup>48</sup> - See for example, *Majam'ul Bayan*, vol.3, p.344; *Gharaeb al-Qur'an* by Neishabouri, Vol.2, p.616; *Fath al-Qadir*, Vol.2, p.60.

<sup>49</sup> - The holy Quran says about the Jews in chapter al-Baqarah verse 89 as such: " When a Book came to them from God which confirms what is with them (the fact of truthfulness of the Prophet Muhammad in their Scripture), and, despite the fact that they had been praying for victory over the disbelievers (by the help of the truthful Prophet), they refuse to accept this book, even though they know it (to be the Truth). The curse of Allah is on disbelievers.

<sup>50</sup> - *Sirah of Ibn Hesham*, Vol.2, pp.147-150.

pagans of Quraysh and the hypocrites of Medina against the Muslims. Their opposition ultimately led to battles between Muslims and the Jews and the most important of these battles were the battle of Bani Quraizah and the battle of Khaybar. These battles left nothing for the Jews but defeat and destruction. In other words, the battles brought them to their knees and wiped out their influence from Arabia. The details of these battles, which took place at the seventh year after migration, are mentioned in chapter al-Ahzab and chapter al-Hashr<sup>51</sup> of the Quran.

As for Christians, they were not settled in Arabia especially the city of Medina and only on the ninth hegira year a group of the Christians of Najran went to Medina and learnt about the Prophet's invitation. As it is a well-known fact in the history, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, and the Christians entered an agreement about conducting a Mubahala (malediction) but on the day of Mubahala, the Christians gave up the idea of malediction and agreed to pay jizyah (poll tax paid in lieu of conversion to Islam).<sup>52</sup>

In view of all this historical evidence, how is possible that in the verse of "Conveyance, the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, was ordered to deliver the realities of the religion to the People of the Book while the Jews and Christians were already broken and they were overpowered by the Prophet of Islam (s.a.w.) and Muslims?"<sup>53</sup> In some

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<sup>51</sup> - Vide: chapter al-Ahzab, verse 26 and 27; chapter al-Hashr, verse 2. Also, see: *Sirah of Ibn Hesham*, vol.3, p.242 and 342; *Tarikh al-Tabari*, Vol.3, p.9-21; *Sirah al-Mustafa*, p.513 and 547.

<sup>52</sup> - Chapter Aal-e Imran: verse 61 known as verse of Mubahala. Also, see commentary of the same verse in *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Vol.1, p.375; *Majma'ul Bayan*, Vol.2, p.762 and *Shawāhid al-Tanzil*, p.120-129.

<sup>53</sup> - *Tafsir al-Mizān*, Vol.6, p.43.

chapters of the Holy Quran, emphasis had been laid on their abjectness and misery<sup>54</sup> and in some other chapters including Al-Ma'idah (The Table), their beliefs had been denied and denigrated,<sup>55</sup> and even in some verses of the Quran, Muslims have been commanded to fight the People of the Book (the apostates and conspirators of them) until they agree to pay jizya.<sup>56</sup>

**B)** The point that the verse of "Conveyance" is amongst the verses which deal with the People of the Book and the verse should inevitably be connected to the preceding and following verses is incorrect because there is no room for any doubt that the revelation of the Quranic verses and the completion of the chapters, especially the chapters of the Medinite period, had been gradual. And another point is that it is not necessary for a Quranic verse to be connected to its preceding or following verses in terms of the time of the revelation and the order of the contents in respect of one another. The order of the Quranic verse is "*tawqifi*" (i.e. on the Prophet's command)<sup>57</sup> and in some cases the connection of some verses with one another is very clear and tangible and in some other cases the relationship and coherence of the verses are vague and inconspicuous. However, as for whether or not the verse of "Conveyance" is connected

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<sup>54</sup> - See for example verse 61 of chapter al-Baqarah which says: "They were covered with humiliation and misery; they drew on themselves the wrath of Allah" and the like of it: chapter Aal-e Imran: verse 112.

<sup>55</sup> - See verses 153 to 161 of chapter al-Nisa, verse 63 onward from chapter al-Ma'idah and chapter al-Tawbah verses 30 and 31.

<sup>56</sup> - Al-Tawbah: verse 29.

<sup>57</sup> - *Al-Qur'an al-Karim and the Narrations of the Two Schools*, vol.1, p.213 and *History of the Quran* by Dr. Ramyar, p.574.

with the preceding and following verses, discussions will follow in this regard later on.

### **3-2- An Investigation into the Reason of the Revelation of the Verse of "Conveyance"**

One of the most correct view stated by both Shiite and Sunni commentators is that the verse of "Conveyance" was revealed in Hajjatul Weda' (Farewell Pilgrimage) with the difference that the Shiite commentators of the Holy Quran believe that the verse of "Conveyance" was revealed in connection with the event of Ghadir Khum<sup>58</sup> whereas some Sunni commentators have said that it was revealed on certain occasions – which will be explained later – in Medina or during some battles.<sup>59</sup>

Allamah Amini has proved with reliance on trustworthy Sunni sources that the connection of the verse of "Conveyance" with the incident of Ghadir Khum is also held as one of the views among Sunnis.<sup>60</sup> That is, this connection has not been claimed by Shiites only and that some of the Sunni scholars also consider the verse of "Conveyance" to be linked with the event of Ghadir Khum and they have reported as such in their books. One of them is Neishabouri who considers the connection between the verse and the even of Ghadir Khum as one of the foremost probabilities. He quotes Abu Sa'eid Al-Khudri as having said: "This verse was sent

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<sup>58</sup> - See: *Majma'ul Bayan*, vol.3, p.344; *Tafsir Noor al-Thaqalayn*, Vol.1, pp.651-658. Also, see Sunni commentators' books: *Tafsir Fath al-Qadir*, Vol.1, p.60; *Tafsir Gharaeb al-Qur'an*, Vol.2, p.616, *Shawāhid al-Tanzil*, Vol.1, p.187-193.

<sup>59</sup> - See: *Tafsir Ma'alem al-Tanzil*, Vol.2, p. 52.

<sup>60</sup> - *Al-Ghadir*, Vol.2, pp.88-114 which has researched this theme with reliance on as many as 30 source books.

down on the day of Ghadir Khum on the merit of Ali bin Abi Talib and after the revelation of the verse, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, took Ali's hand and said: "Whomsoever I am his master, this 'Ali is also his master. O' Allah! Love him who loves him ('Ali) and be hostile to whoever opposes him..."<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, some Sunni commentators have tried to deny the relation between the revelation of the verse of "Conveyance" and the event of Ghadir Khum; they have presented arguments in connection with the reason of the revelation which are insignificant and unworthy of attention. While quoting some of these probabilities, Fakhr Razi writes:

- Some have said that the verse of "Conveyance" was revealed about proclamation of the rules of stoning and penalty (because of the alterations that had taken place in the rules concerning these two subjects).
- Some hold that the verse of "Conveyance" was revealed about the Jews' faultfinding and taunts.
- Some hold that the verse of "Conveyance" was an instruction to the Prophet (s.a.w.) to proclaim to his wives to choose between two options.<sup>62</sup>
- Some have said that the verse was revealed to proclaim the commandment of Jihad which the hypocrites loathed.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> - *Tafsir Gharaeb al-Qur'an*, Vol.2, p.616. Also, see *Tafsir al-Durr al-Manthur*, Vol.2, p.298, *Fath al-Qadir*, Vol.2, p.60, *Rohul Ma'ani*, Vol.6, p.194, *Mafātih al-Ghayb*, Vol.12, p.50.

<sup>62</sup> - 'Rule of options' refers to verses 28 of chapter al-Ahzab onward according to which the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, left his wives to choose between divorce and enjoying the worldly life and also choosing God and the Prophet and living a contented life.

<sup>63</sup> - *Tafsir Mafātih al-Ghayb*, Vol.12, p.49; *Tafsir Ma'alem al-Tanzil*, Vol.2, p.52.

It is to be said in criticism of the foregoing views that none of the explanations or possibilities occupies so much important position that if it was left unannounced, it would amount to leaving the divine mission unaccomplished and that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, was afraid to announce and for which he needed God's promise to protect him. Moreover, as stated by Allamah Amini, none of the aforementioned probabilities is based on an authentic tradition or narration and that they are not but mere guesses and assumptions.<sup>64</sup>

The probability that the verse of "Conveyance" was revealed on the day of Arafah is also not acceptable because the Prophet's sermon on this day has been recorded in most of the narrative and history books.<sup>65</sup> In his sermon in Arafat, the Holy Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him and his family, addressed the Muslims about useful social and moral issues. This sermon, somehow, includes Islam's worldview in respect of social relations, Muslims' mutual obligation to respect one another's rights, observance of piety and divine limits and respecting women's rights. It goes without saying that reminding Muslims of their duties towards such matters was not unprecedented of the Prophet (s.a.w.) so that he might have been afraid to declare and that there was no need for guaranteeing protection of the Prophet from the adversaries. Furthermore, as we know, no sooner the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, acted as per the verse of "Conveyance", than the verse of "Perfection of Religion" i.e. "*Today, I*

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<sup>64</sup> - Al-Ghadir, Vol.2, pp.109-113.

<sup>65</sup> - See *Al-Kāfi*, Vol.1, p.403; *Sahih Muslim*, Vol.2, p.889-890, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, Vol.2, p.1015, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Vol.5, p.34; *Sunan al-Dārami*, Vol. p.74, *Sirah of Ibn Hesham*, Vol.4, p.250; *Tarikh al-Tabari*, Vol.3, p.150-152.

*have perfected your religion and ...*" was revealed which, according to the researches, was sent down after the event of Ghadir Khum.<sup>66</sup>

## **4- Examining a Few Issues Concerning the Verse of "Conveyance"**

### **1-4- What was the philosophy of the event of Ghadir?**

The most important question in regards to the commentary of the verse of "Conveyance" is to seek and find out the philosophy of the event of Ghadir. Given that the event of Ghadir itself has been proved undeniably through *mutawatir* traditions narrated by a huge number of the Companions, and a great many scholars of both sects have accepted that the tradition of Ghadir is *mutawatir*, the question that can be put forth here is: Why did the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, stop tens of thousands of Muslims at a place on a desert and by saying "*Whomsoever I am his master, this 'Ali is also his master*" he passed on his guardianship to Ali, peace be upon him? Part of the answer to the above question has something to do with the meaning of the word "*mawla*" which will be explained in its appropriate place. However, we should know briefly that the Sunni scholars, who interpret the word "*mawla*" as friend or helper, consider the incident of Ghadir as an action aimed at putting an end to the spite and aversion of some Muslims towards Ali, peace be upon him. Thus, they quote the example of Ali's mission to Yemen and some companions' complaints against him during this expedition. For instance the author of Tafsir al-Manār writes as such: "Some have said that the

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<sup>66</sup> - *Al-Kāfi*, Vol.1, p.289; *Tafsir al-Qummi*, vol.1, p.162, *Majma'ul Bayan*, Vol.3, p.246; *Shawāhid al-Tanzil*, Vol.1, p.156-160. Also, see: *Al-Ghadir*, vol.2, pp.115-137.

cause of the event of Ghadir was Ali's acquittal and exemption of certain allegations made against him by some of the individuals who accompanied him during the expedition. In order to appease Ali (a.s.), the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, delivered a sermon in which he expressed his satisfaction towards Ali, peace be upon him and declared his guardianship to the believers."<sup>67</sup>

As was stated in the beginning of this booklet, the incident of Yemen took place on the tenth hegira year. The Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, sent Ali along with some other Muslims to Yemen to accomplish a task. In this respect, Burayda Aslami says: "The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, sent two groups of Muslims to Yemen, one was headed by Ali, peace be upon him and another by Khalid bin Walid. The Holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, had said that when these two groups joined each other and became as one group, the chief commander would be Ali. In this expedition, we confronted Bani Zaid clan and we fought them as a result of which the Muslims overpowered the pagans. In regards to the sharing out of the booties, Ali's handling of them was objected by Khalid. Therefore, he wrote a letter to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, and informed him about the matter.

Buraida says: "When I met the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, I handed over the letter to him but when the letter was read out to him, I could see anger and wrath on the Holy Prophet's face. Then I asked: 'O Apostle of God, here it is where a person should seek shelter in God.' The Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family said: 'Do not have wrong thoughts about Ali for he is from me and I am from him. He will be

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<sup>67</sup> - *Tafsir al-Manār*, Vol.6, p.465 (summarized).

your guardian after me; yes, he is from me and I am from him and he will be your guardian after me."<sup>68</sup>

Tirmidhi has narrated the account of the Yemen expedition from al-Barrā bin Azib who said: When Khalid's letter was read to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, the color of the Prophet's face changed due to severity of anger and discomfort. Then he said: "What are you saying about a man who loves God and His Apostle and whom Allah and His Apostle do love? Al-Barrā bin Azib (or Burayda) said: I seek refuge in God from the wrath of God and His Prophet. I have just been a courier."<sup>69</sup>

Also, according to another tradition about the same mission, four individuals from the companions of Ali (a.s.) decided to meet the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, and inform him about Ali's strict and rigorous behavior concerning the distribution and protection of the bounties. Therefore, they began to speak about Ali, peace be upon him, one after another telling the Prophet (s.a.w.) that Ali (a.s.) did so and so. The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, listened to them but remained silent until the fourth person repeated what the individuals before him had said. There and then the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, stood up and while anger was visible on his face, he said:

«ما تريدون من علي؟ ما تريدون من علي؟ إنَّ علياً منِّي وأنا منه وهو وليّ كلِّ مؤمن من بعدي»<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> - *Musnad of Ahmad bin Hanbal*, Vol.5, p.355, hadith 23400. Also, see the same book, Vol.5, p.350-351.

<sup>69</sup> - *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Vol.5, p.597.

<sup>70</sup> - *Ibid*, Vol.5, p.590-591; *Mustadrak al-Hākim*, Vol.3, p.324, *Asad al-Ghābah*, Vol.3, p.604.

"What do you want from Ali? What do you want from Ali? [Don't you know that] Ali is from me and I am from Ali and he is the guardian of every believer after me?"

According to another saying, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, endorsed Ali's task about distributing the bounties and said: "Stop talking ill of Ali for he is very strict and uncompromising towards implementing a divine order. There is no flattery and reconciliation in his life."<sup>71</sup>

Yet, in another hadith, Ibn Abbas quotes Burayda as having said: "I took part in the Jihad of Yemen along with Ali and I saw his severity and rigorousness. When I met the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, I spoke ill of Ali but then I noticed that the color of the Prophet's face changed. The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, asked me: "O Burayda, do I not have more right and authority over the believers than they have over their own selves?" I answered: "Why not, O Apostle of God." Then the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, said: "Whomsoever I am his master, this 'Ali is also his master."<sup>72</sup>

Finally, Abdullah bin Burayda quotes his father that he said that the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, sent Ali (a.s.) to Khalid bin Walid to distribute the one fifth (*khums*) of the bounties or receive (according to a tradition) one fifth (*khums*) of the bounties. Khalid said to Burayda: "Do you not know how he has distributed the *khums*?" Burayda says: "I had grudge against Ali (a.s.). The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, asked: "Do you have a grudge against

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<sup>71</sup> - *Mustadrak al-Hākim*, Vol.3, p.346.

<sup>72</sup> - *Musnad of Ahmad bin Hanbal*, Vol.5, p.348, *Mustadrak al-Hākim*, Vol.3, p.324, *Khasaes*, p.15.

Ali's?" I said: "Yes". Then he said: "Do not keep his grudge in your heart." (According to another report the Prophet said to him: "Love him for he has more share in the *khums* (1/5<sup>th</sup>) of the bounties than he has used.<sup>73</sup>

Considering the various narrations existing about the Yemen mission, one can see and understand the different aspects of this event. Meanwhile, a precise study of the aforementioned narrations reveals the fact that, based on the reason that shall be stated below, there is no relationship between this incident and the event of Ghadir Khum:

**A)** There is no mention of the event of Ghadir Khum and Muslims' congregation at this place in any of the foregoing verses. In spite of the fact that the discussion concerning Ali's guardianship after the Prophet (s.a.w.) was raised in some of the previous narrations, there was no mention of Ghadir Khum in these narrations. It is understood from the context of the narrations about the Yemen incident that the complaints by some Companions against Ali took place either during the Farewell pilgrimage or in Medina<sup>74</sup> after the Holy Prophet's return from the journey.

**B)** The narrations related to the incident of Yemen show that the number of the people who complained to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, about Ali's strict conduct and management was maximum 4 people and they were people like Khalid bin Walid, Burayda Aslami etc. That was because there were few people accompanying Ali, peace be upon him, in his journey to Yemen and the dissidents were only a few people.

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<sup>73</sup> - *Musnad of Ahmad bin Hanbal*, Vol.5, p.360.

<sup>74</sup> - *Al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, Vol.6, p.162.

**C)** It is understood from the narrations that the dissidents met the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, in private and also sent him their complaints by writing him a letter. In other words, lodging complaints against Ali (a.s.) was not a social or a wide-ranging public issue so that there might have been a need for a mammoth gathering of people like that of the event of Ghadir Khum. However, the Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him and his family, by saying "verily, he is from me and I am from him and he is the guardian of every believing person after me" changed the incident of Yemen and the grievances of some companions against Ali (a.s.) into an opportunity to make known Ali's merits.

**D)** If we suppose that the purpose behind the event of Ghadir was to put an end to the grudge and annoyance of the companions against Ali, and that the Prophet (s.a.w.) wished to demonstrate publicly his friendship and love for him, then the question that arises is: Firstly, is it reasonable for the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, to delay this task for more than 20 days? (Because the annoyance occurred before Zil-hijjah and it was put to an end on the 18<sup>th</sup> of Zil-hijjah.) Secondly, what was the danger of declaring Ali's friendship and love for which God promised the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, protection.

It becomes clear from the foregoing discussion that the event of Ghadir has nothing to do with the Yemen expedition and the philosophy of the Prophet's task was much more important and profound and it was nothing but the appointment of a leader and a successor after him and making known its manifestation, i.e. Ali, peace be upon him.

## **2-4- The Connection of the Verse of "Conveyance" with the Preceding and Following Verses**

Most of the verses of chapter Al-Ma'idah have been revealed about the People of the Book and the verse of "Conveyance" is also amongst these verses. On this basis, as was stated earlier, some Sunni commentators believe that the verse of "Conveyance" has also something to do with the People of the Book; otherwise the verse would be semantically disconnected from the preceding and following verses and such a disconnection is not becoming of the Quran.

It should be said in reply to this question that even if it is proved that the verse of "Conveyance" was revealed independently and has no connection with the preceding and following verses, yet still we cannot decisively refute the revelation of the verse of "Conveyance" about the event of Ghadir; because in that case, the relation of the verse with the preceding and following verses is supposed to be a digression. According to experts of the Quranic sciences, one of the important reasons for correlation between the verses and chapters in the Quran would be the digressive relation.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> - A digressive relation is where the Quran abruptly discontinues speaking about a single theme and, for some expedient reasons, inculcates a new point in the minds of its addressees, and then goes back to its previous theme and carries it on. Meanwhile, the digressive statement has some connection with the main theme. For example, according to Zamakhshari the verse 26 of chapter al-A'raf which says "*O children of Adam! We have indeed sent down to you clothing to cover your shame, and (clothing) for beauty...*" is a digressive statement because the main theme in the beginning of chapter al-A'raf pertains to Adam's and Eve's disobedience in eating from the [fruit of] the forbidden tree as a result of which they lost their clothes and tried to cover themselves with the leaves of trees. In such a context, the verse which speaks of sending down clothes for the

In any case, according to many researchers, the verse of "Conveyance" despite having been revealed about the event of Ghadir Khum, is in harmony with the preceding and following verses and it is not disconnected. For example, Muhammad Taqi Mudarresi writes:

"Having ordered Muslims to admit complete guardianship of the Islamic society and reject the guardianship of unbelievers and polytheists (and the Jews and Christians), the Holy Quran now emphatically commands the Apostle of God and all the bearers of divine mission [such as Rabbis and the doctors of law] not to compromise or reconcile with anyone in conveying and propagating the divine mission. It is therefore clear that the contexts of the verses are identical and that they are joined together in a single theme which is guardianship or leadership. It was the subject of leadership which the Prophet (s.a.w.) delayed its conveyance lest the people should become apostates."<sup>76</sup> In order for us to better understand the relation of the verse of "Conveyance" with the preceding and following verses, it can be said that God, the Exalted, strongly forbids Muslims from accepting the *wilayah* (guardianship) of Jews and Christians in verse 51 of chapter Al-Ma'idah,. Thereupon, in verses 52 and 53, the Quran vigorously objects those who were inclined to accept their *wilayah*.

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children of Adam has been revealed parenthetically or digressively which is also not irrelevant to the main theme. Also verse 172 of chapter al-Nisa which says, "The Messiah does by no means disdain that he should be a servant of Allah..." refers to Jesus between the verses which are related to the Christians' faultfinding and exaggeration. For more details, see: Al-Etqān, Vol.3, p.373, al-Kashshāf, Vol.2, p.97, al-Burhan, Vol.1, p.41.

<sup>76</sup> - *Tafsir Hedayat*, Vol.2, p.367, with the title, "*Wilayah*, the Pinnacle of Faith".

In verse 55 of this chapter, the famous verse of *wilayah* has been mentioned about the guardianship of God, His Messenger and also the believers who keep up prayers and pay the poor-rate while they bow.

According to the narrations reported in regards to the reason for the revelation of the verse, the believers who paid the poor-rate during the revelation of the verse were none but Ali, peace be upon him.<sup>77</sup>

In verse 57 of the same chapter, once again God obligates Muslims not to take for guardians those who take their religion for a mockery and a joke irrespective of whether they are the People of the Book or the unbelievers. The verses of chapter Al-Ma'idah continue with such a backdrop until the verse 67 of this chapter is sent down upon the Prophet (s.a.w) addressing him as such:

«يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ»

*"O' Prophet! Proclaim what has been sent down to you from your Lord; and if you do not, you would not accomplish the mission all; and Allah will protect you from the people".*

Since the preceding verses somehow deal with *wilayah*, the verse of "Conveyance" – as was explained earlier – is nothing but the proclamation of the leadership and *wilayah* of Ali, peace be upon him.

When it comes to verse 69, i.e. the immediate verses after the verse of "Conveyance", the Quran once again addresses the People of the Book as such:

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<sup>77</sup> - The narrations and exegetes of the Quran are almost unanimous about this theme. See for example, *al-Kashshāf*, Vol.1, p.649, *Ma'alem al-Tanzil*, Vol.2, p.49, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, vol.2, p.74; *Madārek al-Tanzil*, Vol.1, p.418, *al-Tebyan*, Vol.3, p.559 and also *Behār al-Anwār*, Vol.35, p.183 -206.

«قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَسْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ تُقِيمُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَ الْإِنْجِيلَ وَ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ...»

*"O People of the Book! You have no ground to stand upon until you keep up the Torah and the Gospel and that which is revealed to you from your Lord (i.e. the Quran) ..."*

We believe that this holy verse, if it were to be acted upon on the part of the People of the Book, would entail no result except acknowledgement of the righteousness of the Apostle of God (s.a.w) and the guardianship of Ali (a.s.) because, according to the verses of the Quran, signs of the Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him and his family, had been mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel and the People of the Book had been cognizant of this reality but they were concealing the truth out of jealousy and animosity.<sup>78</sup> In fact, they were willing to maintain their authority and guardianship.

Given this analysis, the verse of "Conveyance", as written by some exegetes of the Quran, is a command from God to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, to proclaim Muslims' independence from the Jews and the transfer of guardianship and caliphate from them to the Muslims. The verse also instructs the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, to explicitly declare all this to the people and be not afraid of them because God shall protect him. In this case, the "people" whom the Prophet fears to be harmed by are the Jews, the unbelievers and the hypocrite Muslims because they were the people expecting to regain their control and authority after the Prophet's death since he did not have a son

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<sup>78</sup> - See chapter al-A'raf, verse 157 where it says "whom they find described in the Torah and the Gospel (which are) with them"; chapter al-Baqarah verse 146 and chapter al-An'am verse 20 which says: "Those to whom We have given the Book know this as they know their own sons, and..."

to appoint as his successor. Obviously, the preceding verse which dealt with rejecting and abandoning the guardianship of Jews and Christians and turning to the guardianship of God, the Prophet (s.a.w.) and after the Prophet (s.a.w.) the guardianship of Ali (a.s.) made the enemy extremely angry as a result of which they sought to hatch conspiracies against him. That was because this declaration amounted to the Jews' and Christians' deprivation of guardianship and caliphate and the transfer of the authority to Muslim and its continuation after the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family.<sup>79</sup>

Also, the verse of "Conveyance" can be considered as a background and factor for comparing between the situation which Muslims were likely to encounter in the future and the destiny which the Jews and Christians had met. Thus the following message could be derived from it: "O Prophet, the Muslim Ummah (nation) also, like the Jews and Christians, need a guardian and a leader after you so as to benefit from his guidance. If the Muslim Ummah remains without a master and leader after you, they will face a destiny worse than that of the Jews and Christians. Hence, the manifestation of the verse which was revealed to you and the first master of the believers who will have to take the authority after you has been introduced to you with a sign. Therefore, proclaim [as your successor] the person who paid the poor-rate while he bowed: "Make known<sup>80</sup> *those who keep up prayers and pay the poor-rate while they bow.*"<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> - *Tafsir al-Kāshif*, Vol.3, p.152.

<sup>80</sup> - *Ma'ani al-Qur'an*, Vol.1, p.118. Also, see: *A Research in the Order of the Quran*, p.109.

<sup>81</sup> - *Al-Ma'idah*: verse 55.

Thus, the coherence and identicalness of the verses show that the verse of "Conveyance", despite its perfect connection with the Jews, indicates the most important thing which was sent down upon the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, and which the Prophet (s.a.w.) was instructed to announce i.e. the termination of the caliphate and guardianship of the Jews and guardianship of God, the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, and Ali, peace be upon him.<sup>82</sup>

### **3-4- Why is Ali's name not mentioned in the verse of "Conveyance"?**

In view of Imamate being one of the ideological principles [of the Shiite religion], a question that arises in the discussion concerning Imamate (leadership) is that, why is Ali's name not mentioned in the Quranic verses, especially the verse of "Conveyance" and that there is only the phrase, "what has been revealed to you"? The answer to this question is: This objection is apparently justified on the part of those who are unaware of the Quran's method in presenting various ideological, social and historical topics, and also of those who interpret or take into consideration the Quranic verses apart from the circumstances and reasons of revelation as well as the connected or disconnected exegetic contexts. If, firstly, the Quran's method or style in presenting most of its themes is taken into consideration and secondly the Quran's approach towards clarifying the brief points is understood, then the said objection would be repelled and it will become clear that the realities of the Quran has been mentioned and explained in a completely desirable and appropriate way. In other words, the addressees of the Quranic verse would be convinced, if they pay attention to the following two points:

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<sup>82</sup> - *Tafsir al-Kāshif*, Vol.3, p.158.

A) The Holy Quran gives brief and general descriptions of themes including those dealing with ideological, social, historical and devotional aspects.

B) According to the evident text of the Quran including verse 44 of chapter al-Nahl and verse 2 of chapter al-Jumu'ah, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, was instructed to explain the realities of the Quran to the people.<sup>83</sup> Meanwhile, in order to carry out God's order, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family took action to explain all the verses of the Quran using the verbal and behavioral method. According to some traditions, the Prophet (s.a.w.) taught the realities of the Quran in ten verses.<sup>84</sup>

Now, it should be said that if the Prophet's verbal and behavioral traditions are considered as valid proofs in regards to verses like "Keep up prayers and give poor-rate"<sup>85</sup> and "Complete the *hajj* and *umrah* in obedience to God", and Muslims offer their prayers, pay the poor-rate and perform the *hajj* and *umrah*<sup>86</sup> according to them, then why are the Prophet's saying and conduct not taken into consideration for determining the manifestation of Ayat al-Tathir (verse of Purification)<sup>87</sup> or the

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<sup>83</sup> - The verse 44 of chapter al-Nahl says: "With clear arguments and scriptures; and We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them". And in chapter al-Jumu'ah, God, the exalted, says: "A Messenger from among themselves, who recites to them His communications and purifies them, and teaches them the Book and the Wisdom". According to this verse, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, has two positions: One that he recites the divine verses for them; second, that he teaches the realities of the Book and wisdom to them.

<sup>84</sup> - *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Vol.1, p.4.

<sup>85</sup> - Al-Baqarah: Verse 43

<sup>86</sup> - Ibid, Verse 196

<sup>87</sup> - Al-Ahzab, Verse 33.

meaning of "what has been revealed" in verse of "Conveyance"? Can we consider the validity of the saying and conduct of the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, to be restricted to specific verses of the Quran? Or is it that the traditions in regards to the Prophet's conduct about the verse of "Conveyance", "those in authority" (Ulul Amr) and "purification" are less strong and less famous? The fact is never like this. What follows is Imam Sadiq's argument as an answer to Abu Basir's question. According to the narration, Abu Basir said:

"I asked Imam Sadiq (a.s.): Who was the verse "*obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority from among you*"<sup>88</sup> revealed about?

The Imam, peace be upon him, said: "This verse was revealed in the honor of Ali and his two sons, Hasan and Hussein, peace be upon them."

Abu Basir says: Again I asked: People want to know why the names of Ali and other Ahlul-Bayt are not mentioned in the Quran?.

Imam Sadiq said: "Respond to such people's objections by pointing out that Allah revealed five prayer times to the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, but why did He not stipulate whether the prayers are four Rak'ats or three? When the Quran remains silent in this regard, then the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, set out the Tafsir (interpretation) and explained the numbers of Rak'ats in prayers". The injunction concerning payment of poor-rate was revealed but it was not mentioned that you should pay 1 dirham out of 40. It was the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, who interpreted [and determined] the quantity liable to tax. The injunction concerning the obligation of Hajj was revealed while there was no mention of seven rounds of circumambulation. It was the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family,

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<sup>88</sup> - Al-Nisa: Verse 59.

who interpreted [and defined the limits of] the circumambulation ceremony. On this basis, God's order was sent down and He, the Exalted, said: "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority from among you" i.e. Ali, Hasan and Hussein. It was in connection with this order that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, said: " "Whomsoever I am his master and guardian, this Ali is also his master and guardian." And he also said: "I recommend the believers not to separate from the Book of God and my progeny for I have asked God not to separate the Quran from my family till both of them join me by the Pool of Paradise (*al-Kauthar*) and God accepted it. You should know that if the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, kept silent and did not introduce his family, the family of so and so people would claim that they were the people charged with authority among you."<sup>89</sup>

In addition to the said answer, other reasons can also be pointed out in regards to Abu Basir's question. One reason is that the verses of the Quran have given an account of the occurrences and have introduced the individuals and incidents related to them in a way such that they do not give rise to sensitivity conducive to distortion and destruction of the Quran. This is one of the reasons why the names of the lofty personalities have not been mentioned. Moreover, the method of the Holy Quran in explaining the social events is to provide the descriptions and features of effective individuals and events without having to introduce their manifestations. Hence, the Quran provides an opportunity for the addressees to apply those features and descriptions to themselves. For instance, according to the reliable interpretations, the manifestations of the nobles in chapter *al-Dahr* or *al-Insan* are Ali and Fatima, peace be upon

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<sup>89</sup> - *Al-Kāfi*, Vol.1, p.287.

them,<sup>90</sup> nevertheless, with the general description of the features of these nobles, this possibility exists for every individual to follow suit and be included in the category of the nobles.

In his interpretation of the verses "Only God, His Messenger, and the true believers who are steadfast in prayer and pay alms, while they kneel during prayer, are your guardians"<sup>91</sup> Zamkhshari first has quoted the reason for the revelation of the verse and then he has propounded the following question: "If someone asks as to how the verse could have been revealed about Ali, peace be upon him, while the word "*allazina*" (those) in the verse has been used in the plural form, I will respond to him that although this verse has been revealed about one individual, the plural word has been used so as to encourage others to do the same act and earn a reward like the reward which Ali, peace be upon him, earned."<sup>92</sup>

Indeed, Zamakhshari's saying is very correct except that the history has not recorded the name of any individual, after Ali (a.s.) to have paid the poor-rate in the state of Roku (bowing).

#### **4-4- Why was the Prophet (s.a.w.) afraid of proclaiming Ali's guardianship?**

In spite of the Holy Prophet's placing too much emphasis on the excellence of Ali, peace be upon him, among the companions, there existed some people who opposed his leadership. The reasons for their antagonism can be the following:

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<sup>90</sup> - See *Tafsir al-Kashshāf*, Vol.4, p.670, *Mafātih al-Ghayb*, Vol.30, p.244, *Anwār al-Tanzil*, Vol.2, p.552; *Majma'ul Bayan*, Vol.10, p.611.

<sup>91</sup> - Al-Ma'idah, Verse 55.

<sup>92</sup> - *Al-Kashshāf*, Vol.1, p.649. Also, see: *Madārek al-Tanzil wa Haqaiq al-Ta'vil*, Vol.1, p.418.

A) Amongst the companions of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, Ali (a.s.) has merits and virtues that are possessed by none of the companions. In one of his speeches, Ali, peace be upon him, himself counted seventy of these virtues.<sup>93</sup> Some of the merits are the revelation of verses and chapters of the Quran about him such as the verses of Laylatul Mabit, Wilayah, Mubahala, Tathir, Ulul Amr, Tabligh, Seqayat al-hāj, Mawadat, Najwa, Khairul Bariyah etc. and chapter al-Dahr.

Creating great epics in battles of Badr, Uhud, Ahzab, the conquest of Mecca and carrying out important missions such as the proclamation of the verses in the beginning of chapter al-Tawbah among the polytheists, the Yemen expedition, staying in Medina during the battle of Tabuk and attending the event of Mubahala (malediction) reveal part of his exclusive merits. In a conversation between Sa'd Abi Waqas and Mu'awiyah and which Muslim has related in his *Sahih*, it has been mentioned that Ali has three exclusive virtues and that if Sa'd had one of them, he would not exchange it for the red-haired camels. According to Sa'd, these virtues were Ali's role-playing in the battle of Khaybar, his attendance in the event of malediction and the issuance of the tradition of Manzilah (rank) about him.<sup>94</sup>

Obviously, the personality of Ali (a.s.) characterized by such merits would give rise to jealousy and profuse rivalries against him and in some circumstances, some individuals seeing Ali's virtues, would go as far as speaking ill of him. With such a background, what could have been the

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<sup>93</sup> - *Al-Burhan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, Vol.4, p.309 under the commentary of the verse of "najwa". Also, you can find the details of the seventy merits in *al-Bayan al-Jali fi Afzaliyat Mawla Amiril Momeneen*, p.230 under the heading: "Merits and virtues which Ali alone possessed and of which none had any share".

<sup>94</sup> - *Sahih Muslim*, Vol.4, p.1871.

reactions, if Ali's leadership after the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, had been announced?

**B)** As we know, in the battles of Islam (including Badr, Uhud, Ahzab, Hunayn etc.) Ali (a.s.) gave a miserable defeat to the champions of Quraysh and the chiefs of the polytheists, those whose relatives converted to Islam after the conquest of Mecca. Ali's role in these battles was not something to be forgotten so quickly by Arabs who were joined to each other through blood relationship and tribal tendencies. That was why after the abolition of idolatry and conversion of the chiefs of Quraysh (including Abu Sufyan) to Islam, the Quraysh especially Bani Ummayah still harbored a grudge against the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, and Ali, peace be upon him. Although the Quraysh leaders had apparently accepted Islam, they were seeking a chance to avenge themselves upon the Prophet (s.a.w.) and his progeny (a.s.). The Prophet's demise also showed that the Quraysh played the most important role in the developments of the Islamic society. Not only did they trample upon the rights of the family of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, but they also deprived the Ansar (the Prophet's comrades) of Medina of their rights. In this circumstance, Ali's leadership which is the continuation of the way of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, was too much for the Quraysh to tolerate. The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, was afraid of open defiance of the Quraysh as well as the hypocrites in respect of the appointment of Ali as his successor.

**C)** Ali, peace be upon him, appeared as a faithful and uncompromising personality in the time of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family. The Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, prayed for him as such:

«اللهم ادر الحقَّ معه حيث دار»<sup>95</sup>

*"Oh Allah, turn the truth in whichever direction Ali turns."*

Keeping this in view, Ali was the incarnation of faith and the axis of truth. He was a man who made all his endeavor to gain the pleasure of God and the satisfaction of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family. It is clear that such a personality was not tolerable for many a number of the sick-hearted individuals and the hypocrites. Ali, peace be upon him, gradually became a standard and a sign by which the believers were distinguished from the hypocrites. Abu Sa'eid Al-Khudri says: "We the comrades (of the holy Prophet from Medina) recognized the hypocrites through the amount of their hatred and grudge against Ali (a.s)."<sup>96</sup>

In view of Ali's such personality, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, knew that introducing him as his successor would not be free of difficulty especially that some of the sick-hearted people were trying to make others believe that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, was favoring his own relative and son-in-law.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, it is inferred from the sayings of some adversaries and rivals of Ali, peace be upon him, that they had taken Ali's young age as a pretext for denying him access to Imamate.<sup>98</sup>

It goes without saying that in order to consolidate the Islamic values and abolish a culture which was characteristic of the time of ignorance, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, practically appointed the merited youth for the important posts, an act which often

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<sup>95</sup> - *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Vol.5, p.522.

<sup>96</sup> - *Ibid*, p.593.

<sup>97</sup> - *al-Tafsir al-Kāshif*, Vol.3, p.97.

<sup>98</sup> - See: *al-Ghadir*, Vol.2, pp.370 and 371, as cited by Sharh-e Ibn-e Abil Hadid,

gave rise to reactions on the part of the opponents. For example, the Apostle of God, peace be upon him, ordered Muslims during the last days of his life to mobilize and leave for the battle of Tabuk with Osama bin Zaid as their commander. Then Many people refused to obey this command under the pretext that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, had given a youngster authority over a whole number of Muhajreen (migrants) and Ansar (the Holy Prophet's comrade from Medina), but the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family cursed the offenders and while he was sick, he went to the mosque and, after praising Allah, he said:

"Behold, O people! I am sad as to the delay of the departure of the army. It seems as though Osama's command (of the army) has been too much for some of you to tolerate. Your objection to my appointing Osama is not new. Similar objections were raised when I had appointed Osama's father Zaid as my commander. By Allah Osama and his father deserved to be made commanders."<sup>99</sup>

During the battle of Tabuk, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, asked Ali (a.s.) to stay back in Medina and he himself left with his army for Tabuk. The hypocrites, seeing Ali (a.s.) as a impediment to their plan in the city, objected to this and started gossiping that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, had treated Ali on a par with women and children by leaving him behind. When Ali (a.s.) let the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, know about this rumor, he (s.a.w.) consoled him and sent him back to Medina and said to him:

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<sup>99</sup> - *Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah*, Vol.4, p.300, *Tarikh al-Ya'qubi*, Vol.2, p.113; *Sirat al-Mustafa*, p.705-710 with the heading "Osama's Army".

«انت مني بمنزلة هارون من موسى الا انه لا نبي بعدي»<sup>١٠٠</sup>

*"You are to me like Aaron to Moses except that there will be no prophet after me."*

When in the Prophet's lifetime such reactions are shown against his nominations especially Ali's succession, peace be upon him, naturally the intensity of opposition towards Ali's appointment as the Prophet's permanent successor would be even greater. This is the very reality that made the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, to hesitate about openly proclaiming the divine message until God gave him assurance of his protection by saying: *"And God will protect you from the people."* Thus, with this promise, God obligated the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, not to delay the delivery of the divine message, or else, his mission would have been incomplete.

#### **5-4- What is the meaning of 'mawla' in the tradition of Ghadir?**

One of the issues that have been a matter of ongoing controversy between Shiite and Sunni religions is the discussion concerning the meaning of the word 'mawla' (master). According to Shiite religion, the word 'mawla' in the famous tradition of Ghadir Khum (*He whose mawla (master or guardian) am I, this Ali is his mawla*) means guardian or master whereas the Sunni exegetes of the Quran have interpreted 'mawla' as friend.

In this regard, the author of *Tafsir al-Manār* writes: "According to Ahl-e Sunnah, the tradition of Ghadir Khum does not mean guardianship or mastership, i.e. Imamate or caliphate because this word has not been mentioned in the Quran in this meaning and that the word means love and support as also stated in verse 51 of chapter Al-Ma'idah: "They are only

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friends with each other."<sup>101</sup> Therefore, the meaning of the tradition would be as such: "Whomsoever I am his friend and supporter this 'Ali is also his friend and supporter." Or "whoever loves and helps me, he should also love and help him."<sup>102</sup>

It should be said in criticism of this view that the Arabic word '*mawla*' has been used in various meanings including the following: friend, supporter, master, lord, owner, guardian, patron etc. Whenever a word has more than one meaning, it is indeed a common practice to look at the internal and external context of the statement and the event to understand the intent of the speaker. Considering the context in the tradition of Ghadir, the word "*mawla*" should not be interpreted as guardian and leader. The contexts are too many and late Allamah Amini has mentioned as many as twenty contexts out of various contexts.<sup>103</sup> Here we mention some of the most important of those contexts:

A) Contrary to the view held by the author of *al-Manār*, the word '*mawla*' has been used in its literal meaning in the sense of '*awla*' (having more authority). The proof for this is the verse 15 of chapter *al-Hadid* which says:

«فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْكُمْ فِدْيَةٌ وَلَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مَأْوَاكُمُ النَّارُ هِيَ مَوْلَاكُمْ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ.»

*"This Day shall no ransom be accepted of you, nor of those who rejected Allah." Your abode is the Fire: that is the proper (more suitable) place to claim you: and an evil refuge it is!"*

As it can be seen, the word '*mawla*' in this verse has the same meaning as the word "*awla*" and "more deserving". Zamakhshari has written under the

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<sup>101</sup> - *Al-Ma'idah*: 51

<sup>102</sup> - *Tafsir al-Manār*, Vol.6, p.465.

<sup>103</sup> - *Al-Ghadir*, vol.2, pp.339-364 under heading "Fixed Contexts".

commentary of the above verse that the meaning of (هِيَ مَوْلَاكُمْ) is: "that is the more proper place to claim you". Thereupon, he has cited a poem from Lubaid to substantiate his point.<sup>104</sup> Tabarsi has also interpreted (هِيَ مَوْلَاكُمْ) as such: "The fire is the more appropriate place to claim you because of the sins that you have committed."<sup>105</sup> And there are other commentators who, as stated by Allamah Amini, interpret the word 'mawla' as 'awla' (more deserving).<sup>106</sup>

**B)** As was stated in the discussion concerning the philosophy of the event of Ghadir, Ali's friendship with the believers and vice-versa was not something to require emphasis or explanation. The Quran says:

«وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ...»<sup>١٠٧</sup>

*"And the believers, men and women, are protecting friends one of another..."*

And further than that, it says:

«إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ...»<sup>١٠٨</sup>

*"The believers are but brethren..."*

In view of all these realities, what does it mean for the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, to stop the multitude of pilgrims with him on a scorching desert and deliver to them the message of his friendship with Ali, peace be upon him?!

<sup>104</sup> -*Al-Kashshāf*, Vol.4, p.476.

<sup>105</sup> -*Majam'ul Bayan*, vol.9, p.355.

<sup>106</sup> - See: *al-Ghadir*, Vol.2, p.297-301.

<sup>107</sup> Al-Tawbah, verse 71.

<sup>108</sup> - Al-Hujurāt, verse, 10.

C) Before introducing Ali, peace be upon him, as his successor, the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, first addressed the people as such:

«الست اولى بكم من انفسكم؟»

*"Am I not more appropriate (to rule) you than yourselves?"*

After the people confessed that the people were more appropriate to rule them than themselves, the Prophet (s.a.w.) said:

*"Whomsoever I am his master, this 'Ali is also his master."*

As stated by Allamah Amini, most of the scholars who have narrated the tradition of Ghadir, have also narrated the prolegomenon i.e. *"Am I not more appropriate (to rule) you than yourselves?"*<sup>109</sup>

Keeping the saying of the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, into consideration, the word '*mawla*' will have no meaning other than "more appropriate to rule" because the Prophet's saying signifies the authority which, according to the verse (*The Prophet has a greater claim on the faithful than they have on themselves*<sup>110</sup>) God has determined for His Apostle. Without doubt, the Prophet's saying (*Do I not have more right and authority over the believers than they have over their own selves?*) is considered to be a decisive part of the sermon of Ghadir and that it is the most important context for understanding the meaning of '*mawla*' which is "more appropriate to rule or to be a guardian". This is the point on which great scholars like Shaykh Saduq in his *Ma'ani al-Akhbar* have capitalized.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> - Al-Ghadir, Vol.2, p.340 (with citation from 64 Sunni veterans).

<sup>110</sup> - Al-Ahzab, verse 6.

<sup>111</sup> - *Ma'ani al-Akhbar*, p.65.

Allamah Amini writes in an argument: "Had the Apostle of God, peace be upon him and his family, intended a meaning for the word '*mawla*' other than the meaning in the prolegomenon of his speech – *Am I not more appropriate (to rule) you than yourselves?* – then the various parts of the Prophet's sayings would have been disjointed and his speech would have lacked eloquence whereas we know that he, peace be upon him and his family, is the most eloquent person and his speeches the most eloquent speech in Arabic. Therefore, there is no way but to admit and confess the coherence between the various parts of the Prophet's speech by accepting the singularity of the meaning of the word '*mawla*' in the prolegomenon and in the main body of the speech. This is the universal truth in respect of every statement which originates in the divine revelation."<sup>112</sup>

**D)** The congratulations of the people in this historical event especially those of Umar and Abu Bakr suggest that the event was aimed at nothing but the appointment of Ali, peace be upon him, as the caliph because the Prophet's announcing friendship with Ali is not something to be congratulated publicly. As narrated in history books, Umar b. al-Khattab met Ali, peace be upon him, and told him:

«هنئاً يا ابن ابي طالب! اصبحت مولاي و مولى كل مؤمن و مؤمنة»<sup>113</sup>

*"Congratulations, O son of Abu Talib, you have become my master and the master of every believing man and woman."*

And the like of this sentence has been quoted from Abu Bakr also.

Shaykh al-Mufid writes: The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, led the Muslims in the mid-day prayer. Then, he peace be upon him (went

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<sup>112</sup> - Al-Ghadir, Vol.2, p.41.

<sup>113</sup> - *Tafsir Mafātih al-Ghayb*, Vol.12, p. 50.

to) sit in his tent. He ordered Ali, peace be upon him, to sit in his tent opposite him, and he ordered the Muslims to go in group after group to congratulate him on his position and to acknowledge his command over the faithful. All the people did that. Then he ordered his wives and the rest of the wives of the faithful who were with him to go to him and acknowledge his command over the faithful. They did that. Among those who were profuse in their congratulations on his position was Umar bin al-Khattab. He gave a public appearance of great joy at it, saying: "Bravo, bravo, Ali, you have become my master and the master of every believing man and woman."<sup>114</sup>

**E)** The poems that have been composed and recited in this regard are another proof showing that the poets understood nothing from the word '*mawla*' but Imamate and leadership. For example, part of Hassān bin Thabit's poem in this regard reads:

فقال له قم يا علي فأتني

رضيتك من بعدي إماماً و هادياً<sup>115</sup>

*That is, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, said to Ali (a.s.):  
Rise, O `Ali, for I approve of you as Imam and guide after me.*

In addition to poems, narrations have been quoted from the Companions which reiterate that after the revelation of the verse of "Conveyance" and the event of Ghadir Khum, Ali, peace be upon him, was known as master and leader of the believers.

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<sup>114</sup> - *Kitab al-Irshad* (The Book of Guidance), translated into English by I.K.A. Howard, p.125.

<sup>115</sup> - *A'lām al-Warā*, Vol.1, p.263, *Kitab al-Irshad*, Vol.1, p.240.

Al-Suyuti quotes Ibn Mas'ud as having said: "In the time of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, we used to recite the verse of "Conveyance" in this way:

«يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ...» - انَّ عَلِيًّا مَوْلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ - «وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ  
رِسَالَتَهُ»<sup>116</sup>

"O Messenger, deliver what has been revealed to you ..." – Verily, Ali is the master and guardian of the believers – "And if you do not do it, you have not delivered His message."

Indeed, Ibn Mas'ud meant that the sentence (Verily, Ali is the master and guardian of the believers) was an explanation of "what has been revealed to you", not an omitted part of the verse.<sup>117</sup>

F) After the event of Ghadir Khum, the verse "On this day have I completed your religion for you..." was revealed and this is yet another context indicating that the word 'mawla' in the tradition of Ghadir gives no meaning other than leadership and guardianship.

In other words, *wilayah* (guardianship) in some narration has been regarded as an obligation alongside other important divine obligations like prayer, zakat, hajj and fasting, and it has even been considered to be more significant than them. For example, Imam Baqir, peace be upon him says:

«بنى الإسلام على خمس: على الصلاة والزكاة والصوم والحج والولاية ولم يناد بشيء كما  
نودي بالولاية»<sup>118</sup>

<sup>116</sup> - *Al-Suyuti*, Vol.2, p.298 and *Tafsir Fath al-Qadir by al-Shawkāni*, Vol.1, p.60.

<sup>117</sup> - *Al-Durr al-Manthur*, Vol.2, p.298. See also: *al-Qur'an al-Karim wa Revayat al-Madrasatayn*, Vol.2, p.191.

<sup>118</sup> - *Al-Kāfi*, Vol.2, p.18

“Islam is founded upon five pillars: Prayers, Zakat, Hajj, Sawm (Fasting) and *wilayah* (Guardianship). Nothing has been emphasized so much as *wilayah*.” In another saying, Imam Baqir, peace be upon him, terms *wilayah* as the last revealed obligation with which the religion of God was completed,<sup>119</sup> whereas, if the word '*mawla*' was used for friendship and if the word '*wilayah*' was intended for friendship, then this theme has been mentioned in various verses before the verse of "Conveyance" and emphasis on it would have had nothing to do with the perfection of the religion. On the contrary, the perfection of the religion is linked to ascertaining the situation of the leadership of the society after the demise of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, which took place in the event of Ghadir Khum. As for friendship, although it is very much important by itself, it has nothing to do in any way with the perfection of the religion of God. That was why, following the revelation of the "verse of Perfection of Religion", the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, said:

«اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ! اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ عَلَىٰ أَكْمَالِ الدِّينِ وَاتِّمَامِ النِّعْمَةِ وَرِضَا الرَّبِّ بِرِسَالَتِي وَالْوَلَايَةِ لِعَلَىٰ مِنْ

بَعْدِي»<sup>١٢٠</sup>

"Allahu Akbar! I thank God for perfecting His religion, and completing His Blessing, and approving my mission and guardianship and succession of Ali after me."

In this sentence, Ali's guardianship is considered to be next to the Prophetic mission of the Prophet of Islam which incorporates by itself another emphasis on the meaning of leadership for *wilayah*.

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<sup>119</sup> - Ibid, Vol.1, p.289.

<sup>120</sup> - *A'lām al-Warā*, Vol.1, p.263; *Tafsir Majma'ul Bayan*, Vol.3, p.264.

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