

Understanding the Event of Ghadir

By: Zeenath Fatima Kazmi

Throughout the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAWA), specific events happened that were of great importance, of those one is known as Ghadir, held in a location called Ghadir Khumm. This is the day of nomination of Imam Ali(AS) as the successor to the Holy Prophet(SAWA) and commander of the faithful as the first Imam. But how many of us truly understand the true meaning of Wilayat? Does it just believe Imam Ali (AS) as the leader or do we even understand the significance of following a leader?

On this event 120,000 believer's witnesses and made allegiance to Imam Ali (AS) but soon after the Holy Prophet (SAWA) made his heavenly departure to heaven all the believers' abandoned Imam Ali (AS) except the few. What is the reason behind the behavior of the people? They loved Imam Ali (AS) but did not understand wilayat, the ayat of Quran which was revealed for Imam Ali (AS) and the famous sermon of the Holy Prophet (SAWA): "I am from Ali (AS) and Ali (AS) is from me like Haroon (AS) is for Musa (AS), whoever loves him is like loving me and Allah and whoever hates him, hates me and Allah".

Shia Muslims believe in 12 Holy Infallible Imams which means leaders, but the history says that they all were abandoned by majority of the Muslims except the few who lived and died for them. Hadith says: When the 12th Imam Mahdi (May Allah hasten his Second Coming and Reappearance), 313 companions will immediately come to help him. Then why have Imam not appeared until now when there are millions of Shia Muslims in the world? If we would have understood the true meaning of Ghadir then we would have been prepared for our Holy Awaited Imam (AS). We celebrate the event of Ghadir but it is not more than cultural event for majority of us.

What is the meaning of Wilayat? The word Wilayat is derived from Wala means power, authority or a right of certain kind. It is the authority invested by Allah in the Holy Prophet (SAWA) and the holy Ahlul Bayt (AS) as true representatives of Almighty Allah on this earth. It is an authority that makes it possible for the Wali to exercise his power over everything that exists. We need to understand this authority and practically help the Imam of our Time with our deeds.

What is the proof of this power or authority given to Imam Ali (AS) by Allah. The event of Ghadir is rejected by Wahabbis but they cannot reject the ayat of Quran. Proof is the descent of the verses of the Holy Quran.

The descent of two verses of the Holy Quran - (6:67) and (6:3) about the event of Ghadir has increased its importance and has made it eternal.

You will find friends only in God and His Apostle and in the believers (V: 55)

The Almighty bade the Holy Prophet (SAWA) to describe the office of Waliyat in detail to the people, and announce to them plainly the appointment of Hazrat Ali (AS) as Wali and Imam (Ruler) of the Muslims so that they could know and understand what it signified. The sacred Prophet (SAWA), thereupon, was greatly worried and feared that on hearing about the Waliyat and succession of Hazrat Ali (AS), Muslims might turn apostates and begin to disown and oppose him on which the Revelation came: O Apostle: Make known that which hath been delivered unto thee from thy Lord, for, if thou do it not, then thou hast failed to fulfill the mission of a Messenger. And God will certainly protect thee from (the evil-minded) men." (Q V: 67)

Hence, among Sunni scholars and their focus on the authenticity of the narration shows that a great number of Sunni scholars have narrated it in their books such as "Sahih".

On Thursday, 18th of Zi al-Hajjah (10 March 632), the Holy Prophet (SAWA) arrived at Ghadir Khumm. Before the inhabitants of Damascus, Iraq, and Egypt were separated from the caravan, Gabriel descended this verse upon the Holy Prophet (SAWA): "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".

This verse commanded the Holy Prophet (SAWA) to preach what had previously revealed regarding Imam Ali (AS). The Prophet (SAWA) commanded the caravan to stop at that location in which the Prophet (SAWA) ascended to give his famous sermon.

Then Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) raised Imam Ali's (AS) hands so that all people could see him beside Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAWA). Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) asked the people: "O People, Aren't I prior and superior to you than yourselves?"

People replied: "Yes, O Messenger of Allah!" Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAWA) continued: "O People! Surely Allah is my Master, and I am the Master of all believers."

Then he said: "He of whom I am the Master (Mawla), of him Ali (AS) is the Master (Mawla)".

He repeated this sentence three times. Then he said: "O God! Be the friend of him who is

his friend and be enemy of him who is enemy to him. Help those who help him. Forsake those who forsake him\".

Then the Holy Prophet (SAWA) addressed the people: \"O people! Tell this message to those who are not present.\"

Before the crowd scattered, Gabriel descended again and revealed this verse: \"Today I have perfected your religion and completed my favour upon you, and I was satisfied that Islam be your religion.\" (Qur'an 5:3)

After this event Imam Ali (AS) was abandoned by the people except the few, which made very clear that people did not understand the meaning of Wilayat. Being with Imam Ali (AS) means practically helping him with everything he does and says as that is the authority given to him by Allah. We should always be ready to sacrifice our entire life, family and wealth for the sake of Imam (AS).