

The Formal Declaration of Imam (Leadership) of Imam Ali (A.S.) at Ghadir Khumm

The learned historians and scholars of both sects have unanimously described the formal declaration of Imam (Leadership) of Imam Ali (A.S.) at Ghadir Khumm. Here we give a brief account to show what great arrangements were made to declare Imam Ali (A.S.) as the successor to the Holy Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.).

Ghadir Khumm lies in Juhfa between Makkah and Madinah. When the Holy Prophet of Islam (S.A.W.) was on his way home, after performing his last pilgrimage, Jibril brought him this urgent command of Allah:

O Apostle! Deliver what has been sent down to you from your Lord; and if you do it not, then you have not delivered His message (at all); and Allah will protect you from the people . . . (5:67)

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) stopped at once and ordered that all people who had gone ahead should be called back, and he waited for those who were following. When the entire caravan had gathered, a pulpit was set up by piling up camel saddles; the acacia thorns were swept away.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) ascended the pulpit and delivered a long sermon. The day was very hot; people had to stretch their cloaks under their feet and over their heads. The Holy Prophet addressed them as follows:

O you people! Know it well that Jibril came down to me several times bringing me orders from the Lord, the Merciful, that I should halt at this place and inform every man, white and black, that Ali(A.S.), the son of Abu Talib, is my brother and my wasiyy (successor) and my caliph, and the Imam after me. His position to me is like that of Harun to Musa, except that there is to be no prophet after me, and he is your master next to Allah and His Prophet.

O you people! Verily, Allah has appointed him to be your Imam and ruler. Obedience to him is obligatory alike on all the muhajirun (Emigrants) and ansar (Helpers) and on those who follow them in virtue, and on the dwellers in cities and the nomads, the Arabs and the non-Arabs, the freeman and the slave, the young and the old, the great and the small, the white and the black. His command is to be obeyed, his word is binding and his orders obligatory on everyone believing in the One God. Cursed is the man who disobeys him and blessed is he who follows him, and he who believes in him is a true believer.

O you people! This is the last time I shall stand in this assembly. Therefore, listen and obey and surrender to the command of your Lord. Verily, Allah, He is your Lord and God; then after Him, His Prophet, Muhammad(S.A.W.), who is addressing you, is your Master, then after me 'Ali(A.S.) is your Master and your Imam, according to Allah's command.

Then after him the Imamate will continue through my descendants begotten by him till the day you meet Allah and His Prophet. O you people! Meditate on the Qur'an and understand its verses; reflect over its clear verses and do not go to the ambiguous ones. For, by Allah, none will properly explain to you its warnings and expound to you its meanings except, this man (i.e., 'Ali) whose hand I am lifting up in front of myself. And I say unto you that

"For whoever I am his Leader (mawla), 'Ali is his Leader (mawla)."

and he is Ali(A.S.), the son of Abu Talib, my brother and wasiyy (successor); and wilayah (obedience to him and love for him) has been made obligatory by Allah, the Powerful, the Exalted.

The other Imams have also been briefly referred to in this address; and they are mentioned in precise detail in many other traditions. For example, on one occasion addressing Imam Husayn(A.S.) the Holy Prophet(S.A.W.) said:

"You are an Imam, the son of an Imam, the brother of an Imam, nine of your lineal descendants will be pious Imams; the ninth of them being their Qa'im (he who will rise)." [1] Even a casual observer would not fail to realize that, it was a matter of vital importance to Islam and that is why the Holy Prophet(S.A.W.), under the Divine Command, made all the possible preparations to accomplish it. Exposed to the scorching rays of the midday sun, he mounted the pulpit to make the important pronouncement.

First of all, he informed the audience of his approaching end and then called them to witness that he had faithfully discharged his duties. Then he asked them:

"Do I not have more authority upon you than you yourselves have."

All of them cried out that he certainly had more right on them than they themselves had. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) then said: "Whoever whose Master I am, 'Ali is his Master." In the end, he invoked blessings on 'Ali, saying: "O Allah! Love him who loves 'Ali, and be the enemy of

the enemy of 'Ali; help him who helps 'Ali, and forsake him who forsakes 'Ali."

When the ceremony was over, the following verse of the Qur'an was revealed:

This day I have perfected your religion for you and I have completed My bounty upon you and I have approved Islam as your religion (5:3).

This Divine Communication clearly shows that because of 'Ali's appointment to the Imamate the religion was perfected, the bounty; and favour of Allah completed, and Islam approved by Allah. On the arrival of this glad tiding from heaven the believers congratulated 'Ali in the Prophet's presence and many poets composed poems on this event. All these facts stand recorded in books of tradition as will be seen in the following pages.

Oath of Allegiance

After his speech, the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) asked everybody to give the oath of allegiance to Ali (A.S.) and congratulate him. Among those who did so was 'Umar b. al-Khattab, who said: "Well done Ibn Abi Talib! Today you became the Leader (mawla) of all believing men and women."

Number of People in Ghadir Khumm

Allah ordered His Prophet (S.A.W.) to inform the people of this designation at a time of crowded populous so that all could become the narrators of the tradition, while they exceeded a hundred thousand. Narrated by Zayd b. Arqam: Abu al-Tufayl said: "I heard it from the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.), and there was no one (there) except that he saw him with his eyes and heard him with his ears."

Hassan b. Thabit's poetry

Immediately after the Holy Prophet's speech, Hassan b. Thabit, the Companion and poet of the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.), asked for his permission to compose a few verses of poetry about Imam 'Ali (A.S.) for the audience. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: "Say with the blessings of Allah". Hassan stood up and said: "O' people of Quraysh. I follow with my words what preceded and witnessed by the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.). He then composed the following verses at the scene: He calls them, (on) the day of Ghadir, their Prophet In Khumm so hear (and heed) the Messenger's call, He said: "Who is your guide and leader? (mawlakum wa waliyyukum)"

They said, and there was no apparent blindness (clearly): "Your God, our guide, and you are our leader And you won't find from among us, in this, any disobedient," He said to him: "Stand up O' Ali, for I am pleased to announce you Imam and guide after me (min ba'di imam(an) wa hadiy(an)), So whomever I was his leader (mawla), then this is his leader (mawla) So be to him supporters in truth and followers," There he prayed: "Allah! Be a friend and guide to his follower And be, to the one who is Ali's enemy, an enemy"

Revelation of Qur'anic Verse 70:1-3

Some Sunni commentators further report that the first three verses of the chapter of al-Ma'arij (70:1-3) were revealed when a dispute arose after the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) reached Madinah. It is recorded that: On the day of Ghadir the Messenger of Allah summoned the people toward 'Ali and said: "Ali is the mawla of whom I am mawla." The news spread quickly all over urban and rural areas.

When Harith Ibn Nu'man al-Fahri (or Nadhr Ibn Harith according to another tradition) came to know of it, he rode his camel and came to Madinah and went to the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W.) and said to him: "You commanded us to testify that there is no deity but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah. We obeyed you. You ordered us to perform the prayers five times a day and we obeyed. You ordered us to observe fasts during the month of Ramadhan and we obeyed. Then you commanded us to offer pilgrimage to Makkah and we obeyed. But you are not satisfied with all this and you raised your cousin by your hand and imposed him upon us as our master by saying 'Ali is the mawla of whom I am mawla.' Is this imposition from Allah or from you?"

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: "By Allah who is the only deity! This is from Allah, the Mighty and the Glorious." On hearing this Harith turned back and proceeded towards his she-camel saying:

"O Allah! If what Muhammad (S.A.W.) said is correct then fling on us a stone from the sky and subject us to severe pain and torture." He had not reached his she-camel when Allah, who is above all defects, flung at him a stone which struck him on his head, penetrated his body and passed out through his lower body and left him dead. It was on this occasion that Allah, the exalted, caused to descend the following verses:

"A questioner questioned about the punishment to fall. For the disbelievers there is nothing to avert it, from Allah the Lord of the Ascent." (70:1-3)

Hadith of Ghadir: Mutawatir

The following extracts (taken from authentic Sunni books) from the said lecture (khutbah) of the Holy Prophet are very important:

I am leaving behind, among you, two most precious things. . . (1) the Book of Allah . . . and (2) my descendants who are my family members. They will not separate from each other until they come to me near Kawthar (a pool in Paradise). Verily Allah is my Master and I am the Master of every believer. Then he took the hand of 'Ali and said:

"For whoever I am his Leader (mawla), 'Ali is his Leader (mawla)."

These two traditions are referred to as the traditions of 'Two Precious Things' (Thaqalayn) and Mastership' (Wilayah) . They are singly and Jointly narrated by hundreds of traditionalists.

Nawwab Siddiq Hasan Khan of Bhopal, says: "al-Hakim Abu Sa'id says that the tradition of 'Two Precious Things' and of 'Whoever whose Master I am, 'Ali is his Master' are mutawatir (i.e., narrated unbrokenly by so many people that no doubt can be entertained about their authenticity), because a great number of the Companions of the Prophet have narrated them. So much so that Muhammad ibn Jarir has written these two traditions through seventy-five different chains (asnad); and he has written a separate book which he named Kitabu 'l-wilayah; and al-Hafiz adh-Dhahabi also has written a complete book on its asnad and has passed the verdict that it is mutawatir; and Abu 'l-'Abbas ibn 'Uqdah has narrated the hadith of Ghadir Khumm through one hundred and fifty chains and has written a complete book on it." [2]

Some writers have tried to cast doubt on the authenticity of the events of Ghadir Khumm. It is necessary to mention that this hadith is mutawatir, and the late renowned scholar al-'Allamah al-Amini in the first volume of his celebrated book al-Ghadir has given (with full references) the names of 110 famous Companions of the Holy Prophet who have narrated this hadith. As an example, I am enumerating the names given under letter alif. (The years of 1. Abu Layla al-Ansari (37); 2. Abu Zaynab ibn 'Awf al-Ansari; 3. Abu Fadal al-Ansari (38); 4. Abu Qudamah al-Ansari; 5. Abu 'Amrah ibn 'Amr ibn Mutassin al-Ansari; 6. Abu 'l-Haytham ibn at-Tayyihan (37); 7. Abu Rafi' al-Qibti, slave of the Holy Prophet; 8. Abu Dhuwayb Khuwaylid (or Khalid) ibn Khalid al-Hudhali; 9. Usamah ibn Zayd ibn Harithah (54); 10. Ubayy ibn Ka'b al-Ansari (30 or 32); 11. As'ad ibn Zurarah al-Ansari; 12. Asma' bint 'Umays; 13. Umm Salamah, wife of the Holy Prophet; 14. Umm Hani bint Abi Talib; 15. Abu Hamzah Anas ibn Malik al-Ansari; 16. Abu Bakr ibn Abi Quhafah; and 17. Abu Hurayrah. [3]

And there are not less than 84 tabi'in (disciples of the Companions) who narrated this hadith from the above-mentioned Companions. Again, the list under letter alif is given here as an example:

1. Abu Rashid al-Hubrani ash-Shami, 2. Abu Salamah ibn 'Abdi'r-Rahman ibn 'Awf; 3. Abu Sulayman al-Mu'adhdhin; 4. Abu Salih as-Samman, Dhakwan al-Madani; 5. Abu 'Unfuwanah al-Mazini; 6. Abu 'Abdi'r-Rahim al-Kindi; 7. Abu 'l-Qasim, Asbagh ibn Nubatah at-Tamimi; 8. Abu Layla al-Kindi; and 9. Iyas ibn Nudhayr.[4]

Traditionists have recorded this hadith in their books in every century and every era. For example, the names of those writers and scholars who have narrated this hadith in the second century of hijrah are:

1. Abu Muhammad, 'Amr ibn Dinar al-Jumahi al-Makki (115 or 116); 2. Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Muslim ibn 'Ubaydillah al-Qurashi az Zuhri (124); 3. 'Abdu'r Rahman ibn Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr at-Taymi al-Madani (126); 4. Bakr ibn Sawadah ibn Thumamah, Abu Thumamah al-Basri (128); 5. 'Abdullah ibn Abi Najih, Yasar ath-Thaqafi, Abu Yasar al-Makki (131); 6. al-Hafiz Mughirah ibn Muqassim, Abu Hisham ad-Dabbi al-Kufi (133); 7. Abu 'Abdi'r-Rahim Khalid ibn Zayd al-Jurnahi al-Misri (139); 8. Hasan ibn al-Hakam an-Nakha'i al-Kufi (ca. 140); 9. Idris ibn Yazid, Abu 'Abdillah al-Awd; al-Kufi; 10. Yahya ibn Sa'id ibn Hayyan at-Taymi al-Kufi; 11. al-Hafiz 'Abdu'l Malik ibn Abi Sulayman al-'Arzami al-Kufi (145); 12. 'Awf ibn Abi Jamilah al-'Abdi al-Hajar; al-Basri (146); 13. 'Ubaydullah ibn 'Umar ibn Hafs ibn 'Asim ibn 'Umar ibn al-Khattab al-'Adawi al-Madani (147); 14. Nu'aym ibn al Hakim al-Madayini (148); 15. Talhah ibn Yahya ibn Talkah ibn 'Ubaydillah at-Taymi al-Kufi (148); 16. Abu Mukammad Kathir ibn Zayd al-Aslami (ca. 150); 17. al-Hafiz Mukammad ibn Ishaq al-Madani (151 or 152); 18. al-Hafiz Mu'ammam ibn Rashid, Abu 'Urwah al-Azdi al-Basri (153 or 154); 19. al-Hafiz Mis'ar ibn Kidam ibn Zahir al-Hilali ar-Rawasi al-Kufi (153 or 154); 20. Abu 'Isa Hakam ibn Aban al-'Adani (154 or 155); 21. 'Abdullah ibn Shawdhab al-Balkhi al-Basri (157); 22. al-Hafiz Shu'bah ibn al-Hajjaj, Abu Bistam al-Wasit; (160); 23. al-Hafiz Abu'l-'Ala', Kamil ibn al-'Ala' at-Tamimi al-Kufi (ca. 160); 24. al-Hafiz Sufyan ibn Sa'id ath-Thawri, Abu 'Abdillah al-Kufi (161); 25. al-Hafiz. Isra'il ibn Yunus ibn Abi Ishaq as-Sabi'i Abu Yusuf al-Kufi (162); 26. Ja'far ibn Ziyad al-Kufi al-Ahmar (165 or 167); 27. Muslim ibn Salim an-Nahdi, Abu

Farwah al-Kufi; 28. al Hafiz Qays ibn ar-Rabi', Abu Mukammad alAsadi al-Kufi (165); 29. al-Hafiz Hammad ibn Salamah, Abu Salamah al-Basri (167); 30. al Hafiz 'Abdullah ibn Lahi'ah, Abu 'Abdi 'r-Rakman al-Misri (174); 31. al-Hafiz Abu 'Uwanah al-Waddak ibn 'Abdillah ai-Yashkuri al-Wasit; al-Bazzaz (175 or 176); 32. Al Qadi Sharik ibn 'Abdillah, Abu 'Abdillah an-Nakha'i al-Kufi (177); 33. al-Hafiz 'Abdullah (or 'Ubaydullah) ibn 'Ubaydu 'r-Rahman (or 'Abdu 'r-Rahman) al-Kufi, Abu 'Abdi 'r-Rahman al-Ashja'i (182); 34. Nuh ibn Qays, Abu Rawh al-Huddani al-Basri (183); 35. al-Muttalib ibn Ziyad ibn Ab; Zuhayr al-Kufi, Abu Talib (185); 36. Al Qadi Hassan ibn Ibrahim al-'Anazi, Abu Hashim (186); 37. al-Hafiz Jarir ibn 'Abdi 'l-Hamid, Abu 'Abdillah ad-Dabbi al-Kufi ar-Razi (188); 38. al-Fadl ibn Musa, Abu 'Abdillah al-Marwazi as-Sinani (192); 39. al-Hafiz Muhammad ibn Ja'far al-Madani al-Basri (193); 40. al-Hafiz Isma'il ibn 'Uliyyah, Abu Bishr ibn Ibrahim al-Asadi (193); 41. al-Hafiz Muhammad ibn Ibrahim, Abu 'Amr ibn Abi 'Adiyy as-Sulami al-Basri(194);42. al-Hafiz Muhammad ibn Khazim, Abu Mu'awiyah atTamimi ad-Darir (195); 43. al-Hafiz. Muhammad ibn Fudayl, Abu 'Abdi'r-Rahman al-Kufi (195); 44. al-Hafiz al-Waki' ibn al-Jarrah ar-Ru'asi alKufi (196); 45. al-Hafiz Sufyan ibn 'Uyaynah, Abu Muhammad ai-Hilali al-Kufi (198); 46. al-Hafiz 'Abdullah ibn Numayr, Abu Hisham al-Hamdan; al-Kharifi (199); 47. al-Hafiz Hanash ibn al Marith ibn Laqit an-Nakha'i al-Kufi; 48. Abu Mupammad Musa ibn Ya'qub az-Zama'; al-Madani; 49. al-'Ala' ibn Salim al-'Attar al-Kufi; 50. al-Azraq ibn 'Ali ibn Muslim al-Hanafi, Abu 'l-Jahm al-Kufi; 51. Ham ibn Ayyub al-Hanafi al-Kufi; 52. Fudayl ibn Marzuq al-Agharr ar-Ru'asi al-Kufi (ca. 160); 53. Abu Hamzah Sa'd ibn 'Ubaydah as-Sulami al-Kufi; 54. Musa ibn Muslim al-Hizami ash-Shaybani, Abu 'Isa al-Kufi at-Tahhan (Musa as-Saghir); 55. Ya'qub ibn Ja'far ibn Abi Kathir al-Ansari al-Madani 56. 'Uthman ibn Sa'd ibn Murrah al Qurashi, Abu 'Abdillah (Abu 'Ali) al-Kufi. [5]

Thus, this hadith continues to be narrated by so many narrators (ruwat) in every era as to make it mutawatir. Coming to the scholars and writers who have narrated this hadith in their books of traditions, it is enough to mention that al-'Allamah al-Amini has listed the names of 360 scholars according to fourteenth century . [6]

Some people have tried to cast doubts about the asnad of this hadith. As every student of Islamic tradition knows, if a hadith is mutawatir there is no need to look at individual's asnad at all. Still to show the hollowness of this charge, I would like to give here the opinions of some of the famous traditionalists (muhaddithun).

II. Asnad of Hadith of Ghadir:

a. al-Hafiz Abu 'Isa at-Tirmidhi (d.279 A.H.) has said in his Sahih (one of the as-Sihah as-Sittah) that "This is a good (hasan) and correct (sahih) hadith." [7]

b. al-Hafiz Abu Ja'far at-Tahawi (d. 321 A.H.) has said in his Mushkil u'l-athar that "This hadith is sahih according to the chains of narrators (asnad) and no one has said anything contrary to its narTators." [8]

c. Abu 'Abdillah al-Hakim an-Naysaburi (d. 405 A.H.) has narrated this hadith from several chains in his al-Mustadrak and has said that this hadith is sahih. [9]

d. Abu Muhammad Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-'Asim; has said: "This hadith is accepted by ummah, and it is in conformity with the principles.

Likewise, the following traditionalists (among hundreds of others) have quoted that this hadith is sahih:-

1. Abu 'Abdillah al-Mahamili al-Baghdadi in his Amali; 2. Ibn 'Abdi 'l-Barr al-Qurtubi in al-Isti'ab; 3. Ibnu 'l-Maghazili ash-shafi'i in al-Manaqib; 4. Abu Hamid Ghazzali in Sirru 'l-'alamayn; 5. Abu'l-Faraj ibn al-Jawzi in alManaqib; 6. Sibt ibn al-Jawzi in Tadhkirat khawaissi 'l-ummah; 7. Ibn Abi'l-Hadid al-Mu'tazili in his Sharh Nahji 'l-balaighah; 8. Abu 'Abdillah al Ganji ash-Shafi'i in Kifayatu 't-talib; 9. Abu 'l-Makarim 'Ala'ud-Din as-Simnani in al-'Urwatu'l-wuthqa; 10. Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani in Tahdhibu'l-tahdhib; 11. Ibn Kathir ad-Dimashqi in his Tarikh; 12. Jalalu'd-Din as-Suyuti; 13. al-Qastalani in al-Mawahibu 'l-ladunniyyah; 14. Ibn Hajar al-Makki in as-Sawa'iqu 'l-muhriqah; 15. 'Abdu'l-Haqq ad Dihlawi in Sharhu 'l-mishkat; and many others. [10]

It should be noted that all the names mentioned above are of Sunni scholars; and in Sunni usage, a hadith is called "sahih" when it is uninterruptedly narrated by persons of approved probity ('adil) who have perfect memory, does not have any defect, and is not unusual (shadhdh). [11]

If the above virtues are found in the asnad of a hadith but the memory of one or more of its narrators is a degree less than that required for sahih, then it is called "hasan " [12]

So when the Sunni scholars say that the hadith of Ghadir is sahih, they mean that its narrators are of approved probity (i.e., they do not have any defect in belief and deeds) and have perfect memory, and that this hadith has no defect and is not unusual.

III. General Meanings of Mawla:

As the Sunnis cannot deny the authenticity of the hadith of Ghadir, they try to downplay its

significance by saying that the word "mawla" in this hadith means 'friend', and that the Holy Prophet wanted to announce that:

"Whoever whose friend I am, 'Ali is his friend!"

The trouble is that not a single person who was present in Ghadir grasped this alleged meaning. Hassan ibn Thabit, the famous poet of the Holy Prophet, composed a poem and recited it before the audience, in which he said:

The Prophet then said to him: "Stand up, O Ali, As I am pleased to make you Imam and Guide after me."

'Umar ibn al-Khattab congratulated 'Ali in these words:

"Congratulations, O son of Abu Talib, this morning you became mawla of every believing man and woman." [13]

If mawla means 'friend' then why the congratulations? And was 'Ali 'enemy' of all believing men and women before that time, so that 'Umar said that 'this morning' you became friend of them all?

al-Imam 'Ali (a. s.) himself wrote to Mu' awiyah: "And the Messenger of Allah granted to me his authority over you on the day of Ghadir Khumm. [14]

And there are many other Companions of the Holy Prophet who used in their poems the word "mawla" in connection with Ghadir Khumm in the sense of "master".

Countless scholars of the Qur'an, Arabic grammar and literature have interpreted the word "mawla " as "awla " which means "having more authority " . The names of the following scholars may be quoted here as examples:

Ibn 'Abbas (in his Tafsir, on the margin of ad-Durru 'l-manthur, vol. 5, p. 355); al-Kalbi (as quoted in at-Tafsiru 'l-kabir of ar-Razi, vol. 29. p.227; al-Alusi, Ruhul 'l-ma'ani, vol. 27, p. 178); al-Farra', (ar-Razi, ibid.; al-Alusi, ibid.); Abu 'Ubaydah Mu'ammār ibn Muthanna al-Basri (ar-Razi, ibid.; and ash-Sharif al-Jurjani, Sharhu 'l-mawaqif, vol. 3, p. 271); al-Akhfash al-Awsat (in Nihayatu 'l-uqul); al-Bukhari (in as-Sahih, vol.7, p. 240); Ibn Qutaybah (in al-Qurtayn, vol.2, p.164); Abu'l-'Abbas Tha'lab (in Sharhu 's-sab'ah al-mu'allaqah of az-Zuzani); at-Tabari (in his Tafsir, vol.9, p. 117); al-Wahidi (in al-Wasit); ath-Tha'labi (in al-Kashf wa 'l-bayan); az-Zamakhshari (in al-Kashshaf, vol. 2, p. 435); al-Baydawi (in his Tafsir, vol.2, p. 497); an-Nasafi (in his Tafsir, vol. 4, p. 229); al-Khazin al-Baghdadi (in his Tafsir vol. 4, p. 229); and Muhibbu'd-Din Afandi (in his Tanzilu 'l-ayat). [15]

IV. Meaning of "Mawla" in the Context:

Now let us examine what meaning can be inferred from the context of this hadith. If a word has more than one meaning, the best way to ascertain its true connotation is to look at the association (qarinah) and the context. There are scores of "associations" in this hadith which clearly show that the only meaning fitting the occasion can be "master". Some of them are as follows:

First: The question which the Holy Prophet asked just before this declaration: He asked them: "Do I Not have more authority upon you than you have yourselves?" When they said: "Yes, surely," then the Prophet proceeded to declare that:

"For whoever I am his Leader (mawla), 'Ali is his Leader (mawla)."

Without doubt, the word "mawla" in this declaration has the same meaning as: (having more authority upon you) has in the preceding question. At least 64 Sunni traditionalists have quoted that preceding question; among them are Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ibn Majah, an-Nasa'i and at-Tirmidhi. [16]

Second: The following prayer which the Holy Prophet uttered just after this declaration:

"O Allah! Love him who loves 'Ali, and be the enemy of the enemy of 'Ali; help him who helps 'Ali, and forsake him who forsakes 'Ali."

This prayer shows that 'Ali, on that day, was entrusted with a responsibility which, by its very nature, would make some people his enemy (and that responsibility could not be that except of a ruler); and in carrying out that responsibility he would need helpers and supporters. Are helpers ever needed to carry on a 'friendship'?

Third: The declaration of the Holy Prophet that: "It seems imminent that I will be called away (by Allah) and I will answer that call." This clearly shows that he was making arrangements for the leadership of the Muslims after his death.

Fourth: The congratulations of the Companions and their expressions of joy do not leave room for doubt concerning the meaning of this declaration.

Fifth: The occasion, place and time: Imagine the Holy Prophet breaking his journey in midday, and detaining nearly one-hundred-thousand travelers under the burning sun of the Arabian desert, making them sit in a thorny place on the burning sand, and making a pulpit of camel saddles; then imagine him delivering a long lecture and at the end of all those preparations coming out with an announcement that: "Whoever loves me should love 'Ali,"

or "Whoever whose friend I am, 'Ali is his friend! "

Is such a thing excusable before common sense? No, but some people are ready to accuse the Holy Prophet of such childish behaviour!

Notes:

[1] al-Qunduzi: Yanabi'u 'l-mawaddah, [p.168; Amritsari: Arjahu 'l-matalib, p.448].

[2] Siddiq Hasan Khan: Manhaju 'l-wusul, p.13. death indicated in parentheses are in A. H.)

[3] al -Amini: al -Ghadi'r, vol 1, pp . 14-18 .

[4] Ibid., pp. 62-63.

[5] Ibid., pp.73-81.

[6] Ibid ., pp. 73-151.

[7] at-Tirmidhi: as-Sahih, vol. 2, p.298.

[8] at-Tahawi: Mushkilu 'l-athar, vol.2, p.308.

[9] al-Hakim: al-Mustadrak, vol.3, pp.109-10.

[10] al Amini: al-Ghadir, vol. 1, p. 295.

[11] Ibid., pp.294-313.

[12] Subhi' as-Salih: 'Ulumu 'l-hadith wa mustalahatuh, p. 145.

[13] Ibid., p.156.

[14] al-Khatib at-Tabrizi: Mishkatu 'l-masabih [p.557]; Mir Khwand: Habibu 's-siyar, [vol. 1, pt. 3, p. 144]; at-Tabari: [al-Wilayah]; [ar-Razi: at-Tafsiru 'l-kabir, vol. 12, pp. 49-50]; Ahmad: al-Musnad, [vol. 4, p. 281]; Ibn Abi Shaybah: al-Musannaf; Abu Ya'la: al-Musnad; Ahmad ibn 'Uqdah: al-Wilayah, and many others. [See also al-Amini: al-Ghadir, vol. 1, pp. 270- 83 - for further references.]

[15] al-Amini: al-Ghadir, vol. I, p. 340.

[16] See al-Amini: al-Ghadir, pp. 344-50, for detail references .