

Ghadir Khum Part 2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

[The Meaning Wali, Mawla, And Wilayah](#)

No Muslim scholar could ever cast any doubt in the documentation of the tradition of Ghadir Khum, for it has been narrated with as much as 150 authentic chains of transmitters by the Sunnis alone. (Please see Part III for the evidences in this regard).

A Mutawatir report is a report which has been narrated unbrokenly and independently by so many people so that no doubt can be entertained about their authenticity. Even the students of Ibn Taymiyyah such as al-Dhahabi and Ibn Kathir who have proven their enmity toward the Shi'a, emphasized that the tradition of Ghadir Khum is Mutawatir and Sahih (authentic) (See al-Bidayah wan Nihayah).

However some people did try to interpret the tradition in a different way. They particularly tried to translate the words Wali (master/guardian), Mawla (master/leader), and Wilayah (mastery/leadership/guardianship) as friend and friendship. Dictionaries give a minimum of 20 meanings for the Arabic word Wali, depending on context, most have to do with the position of leadership and guardianship. Only in one instance it could mean a friend.

Arabic References:

- Elias' Modern Dictionary, by Elias A. Elias, Arabic-English, p815-816, Lebanon.
- al-Munjid fi al-Lughah, v1.

Some suggested that what really the Prophet (S) wanted to say was: "Whoever I am his friend, 'Ali is his friend." There was no doubt that Imam 'Ali (as) had a very high status in comparison with all other people.

He was the first male who embraced Islam (Sahih Tirmidhi, v5, p642; Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal v4,

p317; Mustadrak by al- Hakim, v3, pp 111,136; Sirah Ibn Hisham, p345; Tabaqat by Ibn Sa'd, v3, p71,72; al-Istiab by Ibn Abd al-Bar, v3, p30).

He received the title of the "brother" of Prophet (Sahih Tirmidhi v5, p363; Sirah Ibn Hisham, p504; Tahdhib v4, p251).

He was the one for whom Prophet said: "Loving 'Ali is believing, hating 'Ali is hypocrisy." (Sahih Muslim, v1, p48; Sahih Tirmidhi, v5, p643; Sunan Ibn Majah, v1, p142; Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal v1, pp 84,95,128).

Thus it does not seem to be logical for the Prophet (S) to keep more than a hundred thousand people in such unbeatable heat, and keep them waiting in such condition until those who have left behind reach the place, and then all to tell them was that "Ali is the friend of believers!"

Moreover how can we justify the revelation of Verse 5:67 which was revealed before the speech of the Prophet in which Allah said:

"O Apostle! Deliver what has been sent down to you from your Lord; and if you don't do it, you have not delivered His message (at all);

and

Allah will protect you from the people ..."(Qur'an 5:67).

Is it logical to say that Allah warned his Prophet that if he does not convey the message of "friendship of 'Ali", he has spoiled all he has done?!

Also what danger can be imagined for Prophet if he states "Ali is the friend of believers"? Then what danger from the side of people is the above verse referring to?

Furthermore, how can the phrase "Ali is the friend of believers" complete the religion? Is the verse of completeness of religion (5:3) which was revealed after the speech of Prophet suggesting that without saying "Ali is the friend of believers" the religion is not complete?

Also, as we quoted in the first part, Umar and Abu Bakr congratulated 'Ali by saying: "Congratulations O son of Abu Talib! Today you became the MAWLA of all believing men and women." If, here, the word Mawla means friend then why the congratulations? Was 'Ali the enemy of all believers before that time, so that Umar said that this day you became the friend of them?!

In fact, every Wali is a friend, but the reverse is not always true. This is why the Arabs use "Wali al-Amr" for the rulers, meaning the master of the affairs. Thus, logically speaking, the word Mawla can not be interpreted as friend, and we should rather use its other more-frequently-used meanings which are Leader and Guardian.

Perhaps one would ask why Prophet didn't use other words to further explain his intention. In fact, people asked him the same question, and the following Sunni documentations are the answers of the Prophet (S):

1. When the Messenger of Allah (s) was asked about the meaning of "whomever I am his MAWLA then 'Ali is his Mawla". He said: Allah is my Mawla more deserving of me (my obedience) than myself, I do not dispute him. I am the Mawla of the believers, deserving in them than themselves, they do not dispute me., whomever I was his Mawla, more deserving in him than himself (and) does not dispute me, then 'Ali is Mawla, more deserving in him than himself, he does not dispute him."

Sunni references:

- Shamsul Akhbar, by al-Qurashi, 'Ali Ibn Hamid, p38
- Salwat al-'Arifin, by al-Muwaffaq billah, al-Husayn Ibn Isma'il al Jurjani.

2. During the reign of Uthman, 'Ali protested by reminding people the following tradition. Also, he reminded it again during the war of Siffin:

When the Messenger of Allah spoke of (Tradition of Ghadir)..., Salman stood up and said: "O' Messenger of Allah! What does WALAA mean? and how?" Prophet replied: "The same way that I am your WALI (Wala-un ka wala'i). Whomever (considered me) I was more deserving in him than himself, then 'Ali is more deserving in him than himself."

Sunni reference: Fara'id al-Samtain, by Hamawaini (Abu Is'haq Ibrahim Ibn Sa'd al-Din Ibn al-Hamawiyia), section 58.

3. 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib was asked about the saying of the Messenger of Allah "Whomever I am his MAWLA then 'Ali is his MAWLA". He said: He erected me chief ('alaman). To the time I am up there, whomever contradicts me then he is lost (misguided in religion)."

Sunni reference: Zain al-Fata, by al-Hafiz al-'Asimi

4. On the commentary of Verse: "And stop them, they are to be asked (Qur'an 37:24)", al-Daylami narrated that Abu Sa'id al-Khudri said: The Messenger of Allah (S) said: "And stop them, they will be asked of WILAYAH of 'Ali."

Also, al-Hafiz al-Wahidi commented on the above verse saying: This WILAYAH that the Prophet (S) affirmed to 'Ali, will be asked about on the Day of Judgment. It is said that WILAYAH is what Allah meant in the verse 37:24 of Qur'an where He said: "And stop them, they are to be asked (37:24)". This means that they will be asked about the WILAYAH of 'Ali (ra). The meaning is: They will be asked if they truly accepted him as their WALI as they were instructed by the Prophet (S)? or did they loose and ignore it?"

Sunni references:

- al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Ch. 11, subheading 1, p229 quoted from al-Wahidi; also quoted from al-Daylami on the authority of Abi Sa'id al-Khudri.
- Fara'id al-Samtain, by Hamawaini (Abu Is'haq Ibrahim Ibn Sa'd al-Din Ibn al-Hamawiyia), section 14
- Nudhum Durar al-Samtain, by Jaml al-Din al-Zarandi
- al-Rashfah, by al-Hadhrami, p24

Countless scholars of Qur'an, Arabic grammar, and literature have interpreted the word MAWLA as Awla which means "having more authority."

The following Sunni specialists all confirmed the above meaning:

1. al-Wahidi (d. 468), in "al-Wasit"
2. al-Akhfash Nahwi (d. 215), in "Nihayat al-Uqul"
3. al-Tha'labi (d. 427), in "al-Kashf wal Bayan"
4. Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276), in "al-Qurtayan", v2, p164
5. al-Kalbi (d. 146, quoted in "Tafsir al-Kabir", by al-Razi, v29, p227)
6. al-Farra' (as quoted in "Ruhul Ma'ani", by al-Alusi, v27, p178)
7. al-Nasafi (d. 701), in his "Tafsir", v4, p229
8. al-Tabari (d. 310), in "Tafsir al-Tabari", v9, p117
9. al-Bukhari (d. 215), in "Sahih al-Bukhari", v7, p271
10. al-Zamakhshari (d. 538), in "Tafsir al-Kashshaf", v2, p435
11. Qazi Nasiruddin al-Baydawi (d. 692), in "tafsir al-Baydawi", v2, p497
12. al-Khazin al-Baghdadi (d. 741), in his "Tafsir", v4, p229
13. Muhib al-Din al-Afandi, in "Tanzil al-Ayat"
14. Mu'ammam Ibn Muthanna al-Basri (as quoted in "Sharh al-Mawaqif", by al-Sharif al-Jurjani, v3, p271)
15. Abul Abbas Tha'lab (as quoted in "Sharh al-Sab'ah al-Mu'allaqah", by al-Zuzani)

16. Ibn Abbas, in his "Tafsir" written on the margin of Durr al-Manthur, v5, p355

17. Abu al-Saud al-Hanafi (d. 972), in his "Tafsir"

18. and many more such as Yahya Ibn Zaid Kufi (d. 207), Abu Ubaida Basri (d. 210), Abu Zaid Ibn Aus Basri (d. 125), Abu Bakr Anbari (d. 328), Abul Hasan Rummani (d. 384), Sa'd al-Din Taftazani (d. 791), Shaba Uddin Khafaji (d. 1069), Hamzawi Maliki (d. 1303), Husayn Ibn Mas'd (d. 510), Abu Baqa Ukbari (d. 616), Ibn Hajar al-Haythmai (d. 974), Sharif Jurjani (d. 618), Abdul Abbas Mubarrad (d. 285), Abu Nasr Farabi (d. 393) and, Abu Zakariya Khateeb Tarizi (d. 502),...

Thus the word WALI or MAWLA in the tradition of Ghadir Khum does not mean a simple friend, rather it means master and guardian who has more authority over believers than what they have over themselves as Prophet himself mentioned by saying "Don't I have more authority (Awla) on believers than what they have over themselves?". At least 64 Sunni traditionists have quoted this preceding question of the Prophet, among them are al-Tirmidhi, al-Nisa'i, Ibn Majah, Ahmad In Hanbal.

Therefore, the opinion of the above Sunni scholars accords with what Prophet (S) said by using the word Awla before the word Mawla. In fact, when a word has more than one meaning, the best way to find out its true connotation is to look at the association (qarinah) and the context. The word Awla (having more authority) used by the Prophet gives a good association for the word Mawla. Also the prayer of Prophet after his declaration in which he said:

"O' God, love those who love him, and be hostile to those who are hostile to him. Help those who help him, and forsake those who forsake him",

shows that 'Ali (as) on that day was entrusted with a responsibility (rulership) which, by its nature, would make some people his enemy, and in carrying out that responsibility he would need some helpers and supporters. Are helpers ever needed to carry on a "friendship"?

Moreover, The declaration of Prophet (S) that "It seems the time is approached when I will be called away (by Allah) and I will answer that call" clearly shows that he was making arrangements for the leadership of Muslims after his death.

Also when at the end of his speech, the Prophet (S) said twice: "Behold! Haven't I conveyed the message of Allah?" or "It is incumbent upon every one who is present to inform the absent for they may understand it better than those who are present" (Sahih al-Bukhari, Arabic-English, traditions 5.688, 7.458, and 9.539) shows that the Prophet was conveying a very important message which was going to be transferred to all coming generations. This matter could not have been a simple friendship.

It is worth mentioning that Prophet did use the word Caliph in his speech in Ghadir Khum, but it does not appear in the majority of Sunni documents since there is no way to tamper the meaning of that word. However the Prophet (S) also used the word MAWLA in his speech to survive this event from being

wiped up from the historical records with no trace.

It is interesting to note that the words WALI and MAWLA are also used in Qur'an frequently with the meaning of master and guardian. For instance, the Holy Qur'an states:

"Allah is the Wali of those who believe; He brings them out of darkness (and takes them) into light."(Qur'an 2:257)

The above verse does not mean that Allah is just a friend of believers, because a simple friend who has no authority can not move anybody into light. Rather it means Allah is the Master of believers and that is why He moves them from darkness to light. In another verse Allah said:

"Surely the Awliyaa of Allah have no fear nor do they grieve."Qur'an 10:62)

The word Awliyaa is the plural form of Wali. The above verse does not mean that whoever is the friend of Allah does not have any fear. Many good Muslims may have experienced fear for some events in their lifetime while they are not the enemies of Allah. Thus the above verse suggests something else than a simple friend. Here the word Wali is in the form of Faeel with the meaning of Maf'ool. So the above verse means: "Those whose guardian and the master of their affairs is Allah are not subject to fear and apprehension."

So if a believer totally submits to Allah, he then will not have any fear. But ordinary believers whose submission are not perfect, will probably be subject to fear of this and that, while we are still friends of Allah. Thus "Wali of Allah" is a person who has totally submitted his affairs to Allah and therefore he is totally protected by Allah from any kind of flaw and sin. This status is much higher than position of being just a "Friend of Allah".

Nevertheless Allah uses the word Awliyaa in its general meaning that is "protectors". The Holy Qur'an states:

"The believers, men and women, are Awliyaa of one to the other: they command to what is just and forbid what is evil"(Qur'an 9:71).

Looking at different translations, one can find that they have used the word "protectors" for the meaning of Awliyaa. The above verse does not want to say that believers are just friends of each other. Rather the believers are under a mutual obligation to one another, and are occupied with each other's affair. As a result of these obligations, they "command each other what is good and forbid each other what is evil" as the rest of above verse suggests. Thus here the meaning of Awliyaa, though is still higher than "friends", but it is clearly lower than "master" and "leader". Here Awliyaa has been used in its general meaning. But for a special meaning of Wali, see the following verse:

"Only Allah is your Wali, and His Messenger and those among believers who keep alive prayer and pay Zakat while they are in the state of bowing."(Qur'an 5:55)

The above verse clearly suggests that not all the believers are our Wali with the special meaning of WALI in this verse which is "master" and "leader". Again, here it is clear that Wali does not mean just friend, because all the believers are friends of each other. The above verse mentions that only three things are your special Wali: Allah, Prophet Muhammad, and Imam 'Ali for he was the only one at the time of Prophet who paid Zakat while he was in the state bowing (ruku'). Muslim scholars are unanimous in reporting this event. Here are just some of the Sunni references which mentioned the revelation of the above verse of Qur'an in the honor of Imam 'Ali:

- (1) Tafsir al-Kabir, by Ahmad Ibn Muhammad al-Tha'labi, under Verse 5:55
- (2) Tafsir al-Kabir, by Ibn Jarir al-Tabari, v6, pp 186,288-289
- (3) Tafsir Jamiul Hukam al-Qur'an, by Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Qurtubi, v6, p219
- (4) Tafsir al-Khazin, v2, p68
- (5) Tafsir al-Durr al-Manthur, by al-Suyuti, v2, pp 293-294
- (6) Tafsir al-Kashshaf, by al-Zamakhshari, Egypt 1373, v1, pp 505,649
- (7) Asbab al-Nuzool, by Jalaluddin al-Suyuti, Egypt 1382, v1, p73 on the authority of Ibn Abbas
- (8) Asbab al-Nuzool, by al-Wahidi
- (9) Sharh al-Tjrid, by Allama Qushji
- (10) Ahkam al-Qur'an, al-Jassas, v2, pp 542-543
- (11) Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v5, p38
- (12) Kanzul Ummal, by al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, v6, p391
- (13) al-Awsat, by Tabarani, narrated from Ammar Yasir
- (14) Ibn Mardawayh, on the authority of Ibn Abbas... and more.

Paying Zakat during bowing (ruku') is not a Sunnah. This is accepted by ALL Muslim scholars. Thus the above verse does not seek to set down the desirability or the necessity of paying Zakat during bowing (ruku'), nor does it want to lay it down as duty or something recommended legally in the Islamic sense as a kind of Divine Law (Shari'ah).

Rather it is a reference to an action which took place when someone did something in the external world, and now Qur'an is pointing that action to indicate that person. In an indirect way, the verse wants to say that this WALI is a special WALI whose authority has been put beside the authority of Prophet Muhammad (S) since they are jointly mentioned.

One may object that even though 'Ali did this action, a plural form has been used in the above verse, thus it might encompass some other people as well. First, the history tells us that there was no other individual who did this at the time of Prophet. Second, this way of approach in Qur'an which uses plural form but actually referring to just one person who did that particular act, is NOT uncommon in Qur'an. For instance Allah mentioned:

"They say: If we return to Medina the mightier (element) will soon drive out the weaker."(63:8)

Here also Qur'an is referring to a story which took place, and uses the phrase "They say" while the speaker of the above sentence was not any more than one person. According to Shi'a and Sunni commentators he was Abdullah Ibn Ubayy Ibn Salul.

Qur'an tries to avoid using names of people as much as possible. This is done for many reasons such as generality to make it a universal book, and also to make Qur'an safer from any possible alteration by those who hate a special individual who has been praised in Qur'an, or by those who love a person who has been denounced in Qur'an.

Using plural while referring to single, has another application too. Sometimes the act of a single person is worthier than the deeds of a whole nation. This was the case for Prophet Muhammad, Imam 'Ali, as well as the case for Prophet Abraham. Qur'an mentions that Abraham (as) was a nation (Ummah), meaning that his deeds was more valuable than all other people.

Allah stated:

"Lo! Abraham was a nation (Ummah) who was obedient to Allah, nature upright, and he was not of the idolaters"(Qur'an 16: 120)

The famous and respected companion of Prophet, Ibn Abbas (ra) said:

"There is no verse in Qur'an in which the term 'Believers', unless 'Ali is at the top of them and the chief of them and the more virtuous one among them. Surely Allah has admonished the companions of Muhammad (S) in Qur'an, but He did not refer to 'Ali except with honor."

Sunni references:

- Fadha'il al-Sahaba, by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v2, p654, tradition #1114
- al-Riyadh al-Nadhirah, by Muhibbuddin al-Tabari, v3, p229
- Tarikh al-Khulafaa, by al-Hafidh Jalaluddin al-Suyuti, p171
- Dhakha'ir al-Uqba, by Muhibbuddin al-Tabari, p89
- al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar Haythami, Ch. 9, section 3, p196
- Others such as Tabarani and Ibn Abi Hatam

And further, Ibn Abbas said:

"There hath not been revealed in the Book of God regarding any one what hath been revealed concerning 'Ali," and that "three hundred verses have been revealed concerning 'Ali."

Sunni references:

- Ibn Asakir, as quoted in:
- Tarikh al-Khulafaa, by al-Hafidh Jalaluddin al-Suyuti, p171
- al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, by Ibn Hajar Haythami, Ch. 9, section 3, p196

Thus the verse (5:55) is actually saying that ONLY Allah is your WALI, and then Prophet Muhammad, and Imam 'Ali. Thus we can conclude that the WILAYAH (mastership/leadership) of Imam 'Ali is the same as that of Prophet Muhammad (S) since Allah put them beside each other. The authority of Prophet Muhammad is explained by the following verses of Qur'an:

"The Prophet has a greater priority/authority (Awla) over the believers than what they have over themselves"(Qur'an 33:6)

or:

"O' you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and those from among you who are given authority (by Allah)."(Qur'an 4:59)

One may look at other verses with regard to the authority of Prophet such as 4:65, 59:7, 9:103, 33:21. Putting all these verses beside the verse 5:55, one can derive that this priority and authority will also be for Imam 'Ali after the demise of the Messenger of Allah.

al-Nisa'i and al-Hakim have also recorded other versions of the tradition of Ghadir Khum with different wordings which provide more insight to the meaning of the tradition. They narrated on the authority of Zaid Ibn Arqam that:

Prophet added: "Certainly Allah is my MAWLA and I am WALI (master/ guardian) of all the faithful." Then he grasped the hand of 'Ali and said: "He ('Ali) is the Wali of all those of whom I am Wali. O Allah! Love those who love him and hate those who hate him."

Sunni references:

- Khasa'is, by al-Nisa'i, p21
- al-Mustadrak, by al-Hakim, v3, p109

In another wording:

Prophet (S) asked three times: "O' people! Who is your Mawla? They replied: Allah and His Messenger." Then he grasped the hand of 'Ali and raised it and said: "Whoever his Wali is Allah and his

Messenger, then this man is his Wali also."

Sunni reference: Khasa'is, by al-Nisa'i, p6

If WALI means friend, then why people answered only Allah and His Messenger are Wali? They should have answered all the believers are Wali. This clearly shows that people got it right, but they later chose to act otherwise. Now let us look at the following tradition:

'Ali came to the plain of Rahbah, and some people told him "Peace on you O' our Mawla!" 'Ali replied: "How can I be your Mawla while you are Arabs (free men)?" They said: "We heard the Messenger of Allah (S) on the day of Ghadir Khum who said: 'Whoever I was his Mawla he ('Ali) is his Mawla.'"

Sunni reference: Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal, v5, p419

If Mawla means friend, then why was 'Ali (as) asking the above question?

Was friendship new to Arabs? In fact Imam 'Ali was asking this question to reiterate the importance of the word Mawla and showing that people at that time did not mean it friend for him, and that what they meant is master of the believers.

Concluding the above discussion, it is clear that any individual who tries to trivialize the tradition of Ghadir Khum by saying that Prophet just wanted to say "Ali is the friend of believers", is neglecting the above-mentioned traditions of prophet in which he explained what he meant by Wali, and also neglecting the above-mentioned verses of Qur'an (those which were revealed in Ghadir Khum and those which explain the importance of Wali). Finally, the following tradition from Sunni references further illuminates the fact that WALI means Imam since the tradition uses the phrase "follow them" and "Imam". Ibn Abbas (ra) narrated that the Messenger of Allah said:

"Whoever wishes to live and die like me, and to abide in the Garden of Eden after death, should acknowledge 'Ali as Wali after me, and take his Wali (i.e., Imams after him) as Wali, and should follow the Imams after me for they are my Ahlul-Bayt and are created from my clay and are gifted with the same knowledge and understanding as myself. Woe unto those who deny their virtues and those who disregard their relationship and affinity with me, for my intercession shall never reach them."

Sunni references:

- (1) Hilyatul Awliya', by Abu Nu'aym, v1, pp 84,86
- (2) al-Mustadrak, by al-Hakim, v3, p128
- (3) al-Jamiul Kabir, by al-Tabarani
- (4) al-Isabah, by Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani
- (5) Kanzul Ummal, v6, p155
- (6) al-Manaqib, by al-Khawarizmi, p34
- (7) Yanabi' al-Mawaddah, by al-Qunduzi al-Hanafi, p149

(8) History of Ibn Asakir, v2, p95

'Ali Vs. Truth (Right Path):

In some versions of the Tradition of Ghadir Khum there is an extra sentence that is he Prophet (S) said:

"Wa dara al-haqq ma'ahu haithu dar", literally: "And the truth (the right path) turns with him (i.e. 'Ali) wherever way he turns."

Sunni reference: Tafsir al-Kabir, by Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, under the commentary of "al-Bismilah"

Similarly in Sahih al-Tirmidhi, it is narrated that:

The Messenger of God said: "O God, have Thy Mercy on 'Ali. O God, make the right and the truth with 'Ali in all situations."

Sunni reference: Sahih al-Tirmidhi, v5, p297

In Arabic, linguistically, the wording (balagha) could play tricks on the listener. Logically, truth is absolute and not variable. A person, relative to the truth, could be variable in action.

In this case, the person (i.e. Imam 'Ali) is placed as the absolute fixed axes around which the event is taking place; such that, if anything changes in the person's decision, the event is the thing that will change its track -- truth in this case!!! Since, such change is not logically reasonable due to the absolute nature of truth, then one can conclude that the two are married and are inseparable. Hence, 'Ali (as) stands for truth at all times.

Thus the saying of the Prophet (S) is a metaphoric way to stress 'Ali's importance and attachment to the truth (right path) such that 'Ali (as) and the "right path" are indistinguishable.

Whereas, if put in the reverse order (i.e. 'Ali turns with truth...) it would leave room, theoretically, for 'Ali to make other possible turns, by virtue of 'Ali being the moving object. This would sound weaker, and would imply the nature of a non-infallible person.

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