

دار
الكتاب

البَرَّهَانُ

إثبات الإمامة

مِنْ كِتَابِ أَهْلِ السُّنَّةِ

THE PROOF FOR IMAMATE

FROM THE BOOKS OF
AHL AL-SUNNAH

By Muhammad bin Taqi

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Author's Note

I dedicate this humble piece of research to the One who is the truthful (**al-Ṣiddīq**) of this ummah, and its distinguisher (**al-Fārūq**), and its narrator (**muḥaddith**). To the one who is **Hārūn**, and **Yūsha'**, and **Āṣif**, and **Sham'un** of the Ummah of Muḥammad (ṣallallāhu 'alayhi wa-ālihi).

To the one who is the door of repentance (**bāb al-Ḥiṭṭah**) of this ummah, and the ship of its salvation (**safīnat al-najāh**). To the one who is the mighty argument (**al-Ḥujjah al-'Uzmā**), and the greatest sign (**al-Āyah al-Kubrā**), and the Imam of the people of the world (**Imām al-Dunyā**), and the firmest handhold (**al-'Urwat al-Wuthqā**)—the bond that never breaks, the refuge that never fails.

To the one who is with the Truth, and the Truth is with him—wherever he turns, Truth turns with him; wherever he stands, Truth stands firm. To the one whose gentleness resembles the tenderness (**shaḥbah**) of Lūṭ ('alayhi al-salām), whose conduct mirrors the conduct (**khuluq**) of Yaḥyā ('alayhi al-salām), whose piety is akin to the piety (**zuhd**) of Ayyūb ('alayhi al-salām), and whose generosity reflects the generosity (**sakhāwah**) of Ibrāhīm ('alayhi al-salām).

To the one whose grandeur bears the majesty (**bahjah**) of Sulaymān ('alayhi al-salām), whose strength carries the might (**quwwah**) of Dāwūd ('alayhi al-salām), and whose name is written upon the curtains of Paradise—known to the angels, recited by the heavens, and preserved by the decree of Allah.

To him whose virtues were not created by words, but for whom words were created to bear witness; whose rank is not established by narrations, but by whom narrations attain meaning; whose light precedes expression, and whose reality surpasses description.

This work, with all its shortcomings and limitations, is placed in devotion and humility at the threshold of **Amīr al-Mu'minīn, Imām al-Muttaqīn, the Commander of the Faithful, Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ('alayhi al-salām)**—may Allah make us among those who recognize his right, follow his path, and be gathered beneath his banner on the Day when neither wealth nor lineage will avail, except one who comes to Allah with a sound heart.

I state openly and without reservation that I am not a scholar, nor do I claim any standing among the people of knowledge. Human error is inseparable from human effort, and deficiency accompanies every attempt that is not divinely protected. If there is any mistake in this research, it is from my own shortcomings and limitations.

If any correctness is found within it, then it is by the grace of Allah alone, for He is the source of all guidance and truth.

And if any light is perceived in these pages, it is not from me, nor from my pen, nor from my understanding—it is only a distant reflection of **Imām al-Ḥusayn (‘alayhi al-salām)**, whose sacrifice illuminated the path of truth for all generations. As for myself, I am nothing but a servant at his threshold; for all that I am, and all that I attempt, is in service of **Imām al-Ḥusayn (‘alayhi al-salām)**, and in hope of being counted among those who remain loyal to him in word, intention, and deed.

And Allah alone knows what lies within the hearts.

— **Muhammad Ibn Taqi**

Introduction

The question of leadership after the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is among the most significant and enduring discussions in Islamic thought. It is not merely a historical inquiry into political succession, but a theological investigation into how divine guidance continues after the completion of revelation. At its core lies a fundamental question: did the Prophet ﷺ leave the matter of leadership to human discretion, or was it defined through divine instruction and Prophetic designation?

This work approaches that question through a specific and deliberate method: an examination of Sunni sources themselves. Rather than appealing to sectarian texts or assumptions, the aim here is to analyze the Qur’ān and widely accepted Sunni hadith collections in a structured and cumulative manner. The goal is not to impose an external framework upon these sources, but to allow them to speak collectively and coherently.

The discussion begins with a set of well-established Prophetic narrations that speak of twelve leaders after the Prophet ﷺ—reports found across major Sunni compilations. These narrations, transmitted through multiple companions and chains, present a fixed number and a defined structure of leadership. From this starting point, the inquiry proceeds step by step: identifying the lineage of these leaders, narrowing the scope within Quraysh, and examining the distinguishing status of Banū Hāshim.

The Qur’ānic foundation of leadership is then explored, particularly the principle that khilāfah originates from divine appointment. This is followed by a detailed analysis of the event of Ghadīr Khumm, preserved in numerous Sunni narrations, wherein the Prophet ﷺ declared:

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

The interpretation of this declaration—especially the meaning of the term *Mawlā*—is examined through Qur’ānic context, linguistic usage, and classical Sunni scholarship. Subsequent chapters address common objections, including claims regarding the companions’ understanding and their actions after the Prophet’s passing.

Throughout this work, the method remains consistent: each premise is established independently, supported by accepted sources, and only then brought together into a cumulative argument. This approach avoids reliance on isolated proofs and instead seeks coherence across multiple strands of evidence—textual, contextual, and rational.

It is important to clarify what this work does—and does not—intend to do. It does not claim that Sunni sources contain a single, explicit list naming the twelve leaders in

sequence. Rather, it argues that when the available evidence is read collectively and without selective interpretation, it leads toward a specific and coherent conclusion. Nor does this work aim to engage in polemics for their own sake; its purpose is to present a reasoned case grounded in sources shared across the broader Islamic tradition.

The subject of succession has often been approached through inherited assumptions or theological commitments. This study invites the reader to set those aside, at least temporarily, and to engage directly with the sources themselves. The question is not what one has been taught to believe, but which interpretation can consistently account for all the evidence presented.

If the Qur'ān establishes principles of divinely guided leadership, if the Prophet ﷺ speaks of twelve successors, if those successors are confined within a specific lineage, and if a public declaration at Ghadīr assigns authority to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s), then the task is to determine how these elements fit together.

This work is an attempt to bring those elements into a single, coherent framework.

The conclusions that follow are not presented as assumptions, but as the result of a cumulative inquiry. The reader is invited to examine the evidence, follow the reasoning, and assess whether the synthesis offered here provides the most consistent understanding of leadership after the Prophet ﷺ.

This work has benefited from the efforts of those who have dedicated themselves to preserving and compiling the traditions related to Ghadīr and the question of succession. In particular, few of the references and source materials utilized in this study are drawn from the works of Team Bayat al-Ghadīr and the book *Kitāb al-Ghadīr* by brother Muḥammad 'Alī.

Their efforts in collection, verification, and presentation of these narrations have been of great value in facilitating this research. This work stands, in part, upon that foundation.

I ask Allah (swt) to accept their efforts, to bless them abundantly, and to make this contribution a source of reward for them in this world and the Hereafter.

O Allah, accept from us this humble effort, forgive our shortcomings, and make this work a means of guidance for those who seek the truth.

اللهم تقبل منا ومنهم، واغفر لنا ولهم، واجعل هذا العمل خالصاً لوجهك الكريم، وسبباً للهداية والنور.

This definition is critical, as it establishes that true succession (*khilāfah*) is inherently tied to **designation and appointment**, not mere chronological succession or political emergence. Thus, any claim regarding rightful leadership must be evaluated against the criterion of appointment.

The Prophet ﷺ himself articulated the framework of succession in multiple rigorously transmitted narrations, particularly in what is known as the tradition of *Thaqalayn*. We read in *Majma Al-Zawa'id, Vol 9, Pg 256, H14957* where Al-Haythami records:

Zaid ibn Thabit from the Prophet of Allah (saw) he said: “I am leaving among you Khalifatayn (i.e. two Khalifas). The book of Allah (swt) and my progeny Ahlulbayt (a.s) and they will not separate until they return to me at the pond (of Kawthar in paradise).”

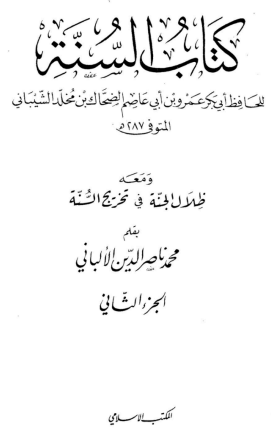
Footnote: The Narrators are Jayyid (Good).

٢٤٦ - كتاب المناقب / الباب ١٤ / الحديث: ١٤٩٨٥ و ١٤٩٨٦
 ورواه ابن شاذان القمي، والبيهقي إلى غيره، ويزيد في الخبر القطيب بن العباس
 وأحمد بن زيد، وثالثه لم يرد في غيره، وما رواه، وكنت أخصي هذا الخبر،
 هذا الحديث لإبراهيم، قال رسول الله ﷺ: **يأتيها لا تكفيت لثوبت آدم ولا غيره.**
 رواه رسول الله ﷺ كريمة في الخبر نظر بما أن كريمة، علي، يا رسول الله
 تعهدت فقال: **بما أيتها لا تقفنه ولا تقفنه ولا تقفنه ولا تقفنه** يعني النبي.
 ورواه يوحنا، لعشر ثلثه من ربيع الأول سنة عشر.
 رواه الطبراني بإسنادين في المعجم: الأوفاي، وفي الآخر: محمد بن
 الحسن بن زائدة، وكلاهما صحيح.
 ٢٤٧ - ١٤ - **يعلقه في فضل أهل البيت رضي الله عنهم**
 ١٤٩٨٧ - عن زيد بن ثابت قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: **يأتي ثوبت آدم**
 ١٤٩٨٨ - كتاب الله - عز وجل - **عَلَى مَقْدُونٍ مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ - أَوْ مَا بَيْنَ**
السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ - وَغَيْرِ ذَلِكَ مِمَّا عُلِّقَ، وَهَذَا أَنْ يَفْرَقَ عَنْ بَرْدَةَ عَمَّا عُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُ.
 رواه أحمد وإسناده جيد.
 ١٤٩٨٩ - عن أبي هريرة قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ:
أَبِي عَاقِبَةَ وَثَمَّتْ وَثَمَّتْ لَنْ تَعْلَمُوا بَعْدَهَا أَيُّهَا: كَانَ اللَّهُ وَتَسِي، وَلَنْ يَفْرَقَا
عَنْ بَرْدَةَ عَمَّا عُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُ.
 رواه البرز، وفيه: صالح بن موسى الطوسي، وهو ضعيف.
 ١٤٩٩٠ - عن زائدة بن النضر (٢٠٧/٢١١) (٢٠٧)
 ١ - في الخبر بعد: **عَلَى مَقْدُونٍ مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ - أَوْ مَا بَيْنَ**
السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ - وَغَيْرِ ذَلِكَ مِمَّا عُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُ، وَهَذَا أَنْ يَفْرَقَ عَنْ بَرْدَةَ عَمَّا عُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُ.
 رواه أحمد وإسناده جيد.
 ١٤٩٩١ - رواه أحمد (١٤٩٨٥) (١٤٩٨٦) (١٤٩٨٧) (١٤٩٨٨) (١٤٩٨٩) (١٤٩٩٠) (١٤٩٩١) (١٤٩٩٢) (١٤٩٩٣) (١٤٩٩٤) (١٤٩٩٥) (١٤٩٩٦) (١٤٩٩٧) (١٤٩٩٨) (١٤٩٩٩) (١٥٠٠٠) (١٥٠٠١) (١٥٠٠٢) (١٥٠٠٣) (١٥٠٠٤) (١٥٠٠٥) (١٥٠٠٦) (١٥٠٠٧) (١٥٠٠٨) (١٥٠٠٩) (١٥٠١٠) (١٥٠١١) (١٥٠١٢) (١٥٠١٣) (١٥٠١٤) (١٥٠١٥) (١٥٠١٦) (١٥٠١٧) (١٥٠١٨) (١٥٠١٩) (١٥٠٢٠) (١٥٠٢١) (١٥٠٢٢) (١٥٠٢٣) (١٥٠٢٤) (١٥٠٢٥) (١٥٠٢٦) (١٥٠٢٧) (١٥٠٢٨) (١٥٠٢٩) (١٥٠٣٠) (١٥٠٣١) (١٥٠٣٢) (١٥٠٣٣) (١٥٠٣٤) (١٥٠٣٥) (١٥٠٣٦) (١٥٠٣٧) (١٥٠٣٨) (١٥٠٣٩) (١٥٠٤٠) (١٥٠٤١) (١٥٠٤٢) (١٥٠٤٣) (١٥٠٤٤) (١٥٠٤٥) (١٥٠٤٦) (١٥٠٤٧) (١٥٠٤٨) (١٥٠٤٩) (١٥٠٥٠) (١٥٠٥١) (١٥٠٥٢) (١٥٠٥٣) (١٥٠٥٤) (١٥٠٥٥) (١٥٠٥٦) (١٥٠٥٧) (١٥٠٥٨) (١٥٠٥٩) (١٥٠٦٠) (١٥٠٦١) (١٥٠٦٢) (١٥٠٦٣) (١٥٠٦٤) (١٥٠٦٥) (١٥٠٦٦) (١٥٠٦٧) (١٥٠٦٨) (١٥٠٦٩) (١٥٠٧٠) (١٥٠٧١) (١٥٠٧٢) (١٥٠٧٣) (١٥٠٧٤) (١٥٠٧٥) (١٥٠٧٦) (١٥٠٧٧) (١٥٠٧٨) (١٥٠٧٩) (١٥٠٨٠) (١٥٠٨١) (١٥٠٨٢) (١٥٠٨٣) (١٥٠٨٤) (١٥٠٨٥) (١٥٠٨٦) (١٥٠٨٧) (١٥٠٨٨) (١٥٠٨٩) (١٥٠٩٠) (١٥٠٩١) (١٥٠٩٢) (١٥٠٩٣) (١٥٠٩٤) (١٥٠٩٥) (١٥٠٩٦) (١٥٠٩٧) (١٥٠٩٨) (١٥٠٩٩) (١٥١٠٠) (١٥١٠١) (١٥١٠٢) (١٥١٠٣) (١٥١٠٤) (١٥١٠٥) (١٥١٠٦) 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Another narration reinforces this formulation in **Zilal Al-Jannah, Vol. 2, Pg 643, H. # 1049:**

Narrated Zaid ibn Thabit: Allah's Apostle (saw) said: "I am leaving among you THE two Khalifas after me: The Book of Allah (swt) and my Itrah (Ahlulbayt (a.s)). Both shall never separate until they meet me at the lake-fount.

عن الزين عن القاسم بن حسان . عن زيد بن ثابت يرفعه قال :
 إني قد تركت فيكم الخلفين بعدي : كتاب الله وعترتي . إني ما ينفران
 حتى يردا علي الحوض .
 ١٥٩٩ - حدثنا أبو بكر . أنا أبو داود صير بن سعيد . ثنا شريك . عن الزين .
 عن القاسم . عن زيد قال قال رسول الله ﷺ :
 إني تارك فيكم الخلفين من بعدي : كتاب الله وعترتي أهل بيتي . وإني ما ينفران
 ينفران حتى يردا علي الحوض .
 ١٥٥٠ - حدثنا أبو بكر . ثنا محمد بن فضيل . عن أبي حبان . عن يزيد بن
 حبان قال : انطلقت أنا وحسين بن عتبة إلى زيد بن أرقم فجلستنا إليه فقال له
 حسين : يا زيد لقد أكرمتك الله رأيت رسول الله ﷺ وسمعت حديثه
 وفروقت معه .
 ١٥٥١ - حدثنا يا زيد ما سمعت منه . قال قال زيد : قام رسول الله
 ﷺ فخطبنا بما يدهي لنا من مكة والمدينة فحمد الله وأثنى عليه ووصف
 وذكر . ثم قال :
 أما بعد أيها الناس إني أنظر أن يأتي رسول من ربي فأجيب . وإني تارك
 فيكم الخلفين : أحدهما كتاب الله . فبه الهدى والنور فامسكوا بكتاب الله
 وعدوا به . فرب في كتاب الله وحديثه عليه . ثم قال أهل بيتي أكرمكم الله في أهل
 بيتي ثلاث .
 ١٥٥٢ - ثنا حسين بن حسن . حدثنا أبو الجواب . حدثنا عمار بن زريق . عن
 الأعمش عن يزيد بن حبان . عن زيد بن أرقم . عن النبي ﷺ :
 إني تارك فيكم الخلفين نحوه .
 ١٥٥٣ - حدثنا علي بن محبوب . حدثنا سعيد بن سلمة . عن عبد الملك . عن
 عطية العمري . عن أبي سعيد الخدري قال سمعت رسول الله ﷺ يقول :
 يا أيها الناس إني قد تركت فيكم ما إن أحلمتم به فلن تضلوا بعدي الخلفين .
 - ٦٤٢ -



Likewise, **Shu'ayb al-Arna'ut** authenticates a similar report in **Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal (Published in 1995). Vol 35, Pg 512, H 21654:**

Zayd ibn Thabit said: The Messenger of Allah (saw) said: "I am leaving among you two successors, the book of Allah (swt) and my Ahlulbayt (a.s), and they will not separate from each other until they enter upon me together on the fount-lake."

Footnote: Shu'aib Al-Arna'ut says: This narration is Saheeh (Authentic) with its witnesses (i.e. other narrations that support it), with the exception of the last part: "And they will not separate from each other until they enter upon me together on the fount-lake."

تحقق عن أبي الله ﷺ
 ٢١٦٥٤ - حدثنا أبو أحمد الزهري . حدثنا شريك . عن الزين . عن
 القاسم بن حسان
 عن زيد بن ثابت . قال : قال رسول الله ﷺ : إني تارك فيكم
 الخلفين : كتاب الله وأهل بيتي . وإني ما ينفران حتى يردا علي
 الحوض جميعاً .
 ٢١٦٥٥ - حدثنا عبد الأملئ . عن شعرة . عن الزهري . عن عمار بن
 زيد
 عن زيد بن ثابت . أن رسول الله ﷺ قال : أتخلفونني بشي
 شيئت القرآن .
 ٢١٦٥٦ - حدثنا يزيد بن عمار . أخبرنا يحيى بن سعيد . عن نافع .
 عن ابن عمر . قال :
 أخبرني زيد بن ثابت : أن رسول الله ﷺ وأهل بيته في الترك
 (١) يشاءه لهم . أو ساء - وهو سعيد بن سنان - ساءوا لا بأس .
 وبني ربيعة كات . ابن أبي عمير . هو عبد الله بن عمرو .
 (٢) روى (١١٨٥٠) .
 (٣) حدثنا محمد بن فضال . حدثنا أبو بكر . حدثنا أبو بكر . حدثنا
 الحسن بن علي . قال : حدثنا أبو بكر . حدثنا أبو بكر . حدثنا أبو بكر .
 (٤) روى (٢١٦٥٠) .
 (٥) إني تارك فيكم الخلفين . رواه عمار بن زريق . وقد جاء في نسخة
 في أبو داود وغيره من حديثه .
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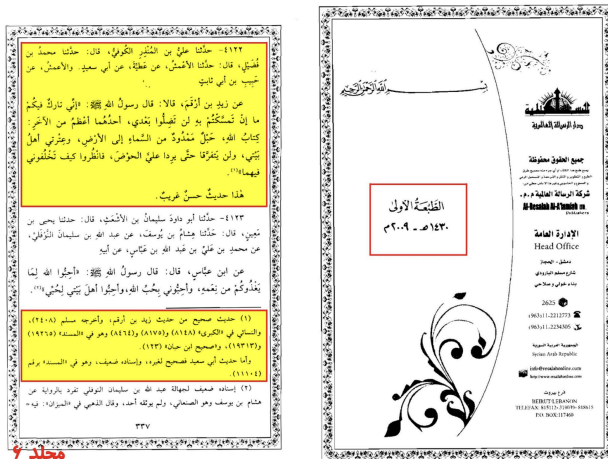


Al-Tirmidhī further records a widely transmitted version of this tradition in **Jami'a Tirmidhi Sunan Al-Tirmidhi(Published 2009), Vol 6, Pg 337, H 4122:**

“I am leaving among you [two things] that if you adhere to it then you should never go astray after [my death], and one is greater than the other, the Book of Allah (swt), which is an extended rope from the sky to the land, and my family whom they are my household, and both of them will never separate till they come back to me at lake-font, therefore be careful about how you would succeed about them.”

Al-Tirmidhi: This is Hasan (Reliable) in this form.

Footnote: The narration through Zayd ibn Arqam it is Saheeh (Authentic) and was also recorded by Muslim (2408), Al-Nasa'i in Al-Kubra (8148) & (8175) & (8464), also found in 'Al-Musnad' (19265) & (19313) and 'Saheeh ibn Hibban' (123). As for the hadeeth through Aboo Sa'eed, it is Saheeh (Authentic) according to its other witnesses, (even though) its chain is weak and it is found in Al-Musnad (11104).



These narrations collectively establish several foundational principles. First, the Prophet **صلى الله عليه وسلم** did not leave the Ummah without guidance; rather, he explicitly identified two enduring authorities: the Qur’ān and his Ahl al-Bayt. Second, these two are inseparable—guidance is preserved through their joint adherence. Third, the use of the term *Khalifatayn* (two successors) reinforces that succession is not merely political but deeply tied to divine guidance and continuity.

Taken together, the Qur’ānic precedent of twelve appointed leaders, the linguistic necessity of appointment in true succession, and the Prophetic designation of the Qur’ān and Ahl al-Bayt as inseparable successors establish the foundational framework of leadership in Islam. These texts do not yet enumerate individuals, but

they decisively define the structure: leadership is appointed, continuous, and inseparably linked to the Prophet's household.

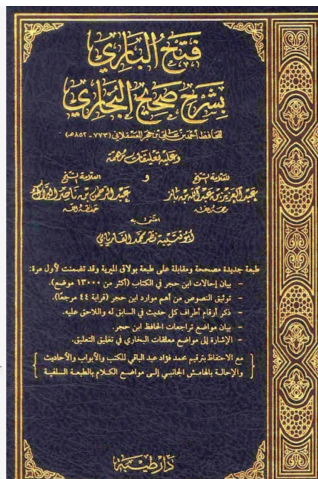
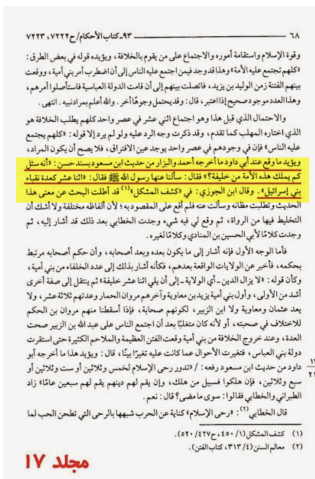
This foundation now allows us to move forward to the next stage of the argument: identifying the specific individuals who fulfill this divinely structured system of twelve leaders.

Chapter 02: The Number and Identity Framework — Twelve Leaders from Quraysh

Having established that leadership after the Prophet ﷺ is divinely structured and tied to appointment, we now turn to the explicit Prophetic statements that define both the **number** and **broad identity** of these leaders. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not leave this matter undefined; rather, it is reported through multiple chains and sources with striking consistency.

Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī records in **Fath Ul-Bari Fi Sharh Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Vol17, Pg68:**

Ahmad and Al-Bazaar have narrated from ibn Mas'oud through a Hasan (Reliable) chain, that he was asked: "How many Khalifas will rule this Ummah?" Abd Allah ibn Mas'oud replied: "Verily, we asked Allah's Apostle (saw), and he said: 'Twelve, like the captains of Banu Isra'eel.'"



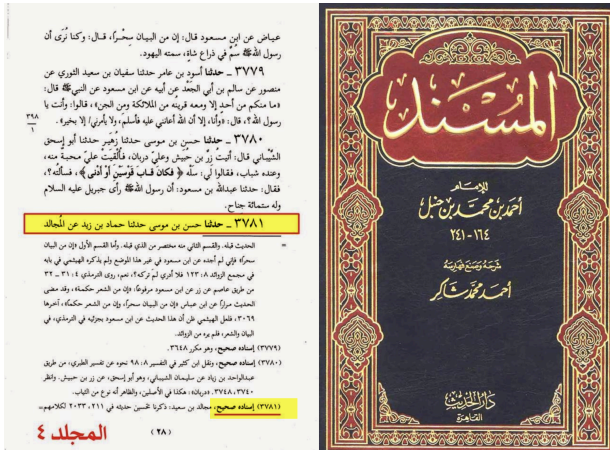
This report establishes two critical points: firstly, the number of leaders is fixed at **twelve**, and secondly, the Prophet ﷺ deliberately parallels them with the divinely appointed leaders of Banū Isrāʼīl, indicating a structured and covenantal system rather than an open-ended political succession.

The same narration appears with further detail in **Musnad ibn Ahmad, Vol4, Pg 28 - 29:**

Narrated to us Hassan ibn Musa from Himad ibn Zayd from Al-Mujalid from Al-Sha'bee from Masruq who said: "We were sitting with Abd Allah ibn Mas'oud and he was reciting the Qur'an to us. Then a man said to him: 'O Aboo Abd Al-Rahman! Did you (companions) ask Allah's Apostle (saw), the number of Khalifas that will rule this Ummah?' Abd Allah ibn Mas'oud

replied: 'None before you has ever asked me concerning this since I arrived in Iraq. Verily, we asked Allah's Apostle (saw), and he said: "Twelve, like the captains of Banu Isra'eel."'

Footnote: Narration is Saheeh (Authentic) according to Ahmad Shakir.



Alongside the determination of number, other narrations clarify the **lineage** of these twelve leaders. A widely transmitted report from Jābir ibn Samurah in **Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal. Vol. 34, Pg 429, H 20841** states:

Narrated to us ibn Numayr from Majalid from Amir from Jabir ibn Samura Al-Suwahi who said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) in the Farewell Hajj: "This religion will not stop being dear and invulnerable and it shall overcome all its enemies; the opposition and heretics cannot harm it, until there come twelve leaders from my Ummah, all of them." Then I could not hear what the Messenger of Allah (saw) said, my father was closer to the position of the Messenger of Allah (saw), so I asked: "O father, what did the Messenger of Allah (saw) say?" He said: "He (saw) said: 'All of them will be from Quraysh.'" He said: "So I testify about it what my father understood from it that, all of them will be from Quraysh."

Footnote: The narration is Saheeh (Authentic).

٢٠٨٤١- حدثنا ابن تميم، حدثنا مجالد، عن عامر

عن جابر بن سمرة الشَّوَّاطِي، قال: سمعتُ رسولَ الله ﷺ يقول في حجَّةِ الوداع: «لا يزالُ هذا الدِّينُ ظاهراً على من نأواهُ، لا يضرُّهُ مُخَالَفٌ ولا مُفَارِقٌ حتَّى يَبْضِي من أُمَّتي اثنا عَشَرَ أميراً، كلُّهم»^(١). قال: ثُمَّ خَفِيَ عَلَيَّ قولُ رسولِ الله ﷺ، قال: وكان أبي أقربَ إلى راحلةِ رسولِ الله ﷺ مِنِّي، فقلتُ: يا أبتاه، ما الذي خَفِيَ عَلَيَّ من قولِ رسولِ الله ﷺ؟ قال: يقول: «كلُّهم من قُرَيْشٍ» قال: فَأَشْهَدُ على إِيْهابِ أبي إِيْاي، قال: «كلُّهم من قُرَيْشٍ»^(٢).

٢٠٨٤٢- حدثنا أبو كامل، حدثنا زهير، حدثنا سماك بن حرب، قال:

تَبَّأني جابرُ بنَ سَمُرَةَ: أَنَّهُ رَأَى رسولَ الله ﷺ خَطَبَ قائِماً على المِنْبَرِ، ثُمَّ يَجْلِسُ، ثُمَّ يَقُومُ فيخْطُبُ قائِماً. قال: فقال لي جابرٌ: قَمَنْ تَبَّأكَ أَنَّهُ كَانَ يَخْطُبُ قائِداً، فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ، فَقَدْ وَاللَّهِ

= وأخرجه ابن سعد ٤٣٣/١، والترمذي في «الشمائل» (٤٣)، والطبراني (١٩٦٣)، والحاكم ٦٠٧/٢، والبيهقي في «الدلائل» ٢٣٦-٢٣٥/١، والبخاري (٣٦٥٤) من طرق عن حماد بن سلمة، بهذا الإسناد. وانظر (٢٠٨٠٧).

(١) وقع في (م) والنسخ الخلفية زيادة «من قريش»، والصواب حذفها ليستقيم الكلام فيما بعده، وقد سلف الحديث بإسناده ومثته دون هذه الزيادة على الصواب.

(٢) حديث صحيح، ولهذا إسناد ضعيف لضعف مجالد: وهو ابن سعيد. وهو مكرر (٢٠٨١٧).

٤٢٩

المجلد ٣٤

Another version reinforces the same wording in **Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Vol 34, H20904, Pg 461:**

Narrated to us Abdullah from Khalaf ibn Hisham Al-Bazzar Al-Muqri from Hammad ibn Zayd from Mujalid from Al-Sha'bi from Jabir ibn Samura who said: The Messenger of Allah (saw) preached for us in the Arafaat and said: "This religion will not stop being dear and invulnerable and it shall overcome all its enemies; the opposition and heretics cannot harm it, until there come twelve leaders from my Ummah, all of them will be from Quraysh." Or as he said.

Footnote: The narration is Saheeh (Authentic).

Narrated to us Yunus ibn Muhammad from Hammad ibn Zayd from Mujalid from Al-Sha'bi from Jabir ibn Samura who said: The Messenger of Allah (saw) preached for us in the Arafaat and said: "This religion will not stop being dear and invulnerable and it shall overcome all its enemies; all of them..." But I could not hear what he said after that, so I asked my father: "What did he say after, all of them?" He said: "All of them will be from Quraysh."

Footnote: The narration is Saheeh (Authentic).

● ٢٠٩٠٤- حدثنا عبد الله، حدثني سويد بن سعيد، حدثنا شريك، عن سيمك
 عن جابر بن سمرة: أن النبي ﷺ لم يصل على رجل قتل نفسه^(١).

● ٢٠٩٠٥- حدثنا عبد الله، حدثني خلف بن هشام البزار المقرئ، حدثنا حماد بن زيد، عن مجالد، عن الشعبي
 عن جابر بن سمرة قال: خطبنا رسول الله ﷺ بعرفة فقال:
 «لن يزال هذا الدين عزيزاً مريباً مريباً ظاهراً على من ناواه، لا يضره من فارقه - أو خالفه - حتى يملك اثنا عشر، كلهم من قريش» أو كما قال^(٢).

٢٠٩٠٦- حدثنا يونس بن محمد، حدثنا حماد - يعني: ابن زيد - حدثنا مجالد، عن الشعبي
 عن جابر بن سمرة قال: خطبنا رسول الله ﷺ بعرفات فقال:
 «لن يزال هذا الأمر عزيزاً مريباً مريباً ظاهراً على من ناواه حتى يملك اثنا عشر، كلهم» قال: فلم أفهم ما بعد، قال: فقلت لأبي: ما بعد «كلهم»؟ قال: «كلهم من قريش»^(٣).

= طرق عن حماد بن سلمة، بهذا الإسناد.

(١) حديث حسن، شريك - وإن كان سيء الحفظ - قد توبع. وانظر (٢٠٨١٦).

(٢) حديث صحيح، وهذا إسناد ضعيف لمجالد: وهو ابن سعيد. وانظر (٢٠٨١٤).

(٣) حديث صحيح، وهذا إسناد ضعيف لمجالد. وهو مكرر (٢٠٨٨٠).

المجلد ٣٤

This same is also recorded in Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Pg 1784, H7222 - 7223:

Narrated Jabir bin Samura: I heard the Prophet (saw) saying, "There will be twelve Amirs (commanders)." He then said a sentence which I did not hear. My father said, "All of them will be from Quraysh."

١٧٨٤
 ٩٣ - كتاب الأحكام

٧٢١٨ - حدثنا محمد بن يوسف أخبرنا سفيان عن هشام بن عروة عن أبيه عن عبد الله بن عمر رضي الله عنهما قال: قيل لعمرك ألا تستخف؟ قال: إن استخف فقد استخف من هو خير مني أبو بكر، وإن أترك فقد تركت من هو خير مني رسول الله ﷺ ما كنا عليه فقال: رغب ورهب، وودت أني نكرت منها فمخافاً لا لي ولا لعلي، لا تسملها حياً وتبئها.

٧٢١٩ - حدثنا إبراهيم بن موسى أخبرنا حماد عن معمر بن الأجرع السلمي أن ابن مالك رضي الله عنه أتى سبع خطبة عمر الأخرى حين جلس على المنبر. وذلك الغد من يوم تولى النبي ﷺ فتشبه وأبو بكر صامت لا يتكلم قال: كنت أرجو أن يشرح رسول الله ﷺ حتى يأتينا. يريد بذلك أن يكون أكرمهم. وإن يك ذلك محمد ﷺ قد مات لولا الله تعالى قد جعل بيننا وبينكم نوراً يهدون به ما بيننا وبينكم محمد ﷺ. وإن أبا بكر صامت رسول الله ﷺ حتى التفت - فله أقرني بالأمير، ففردوا فاجروا، وكانت طائفة منهم قد بايعوه قبل ذلك في تنقيته بني ساعد، وكانت يده الممنة على المنبر. قال الأجرع عن أبيه عن ابن مالك - سمعت عمر يقول لأبي بكر يومئذ: امسك المنبر. فلم يزال يده حتى صعد المنبر فبايعه الناس عامه. (الحديث ٧٢١٩ - سويد بن سعيد).

٧٢٢٠ - حدثنا عبد العزيز بن عبد الله حدثنا إبراهيم بن سعد عن أبيه عن محمد بن جبير بن مطعم عن أبيه قال: أتيت النبي ﷺ امرأة فكلت في شيء، فأمرها أن ترجع إليه، قالت: يا رسول الله أرايت إن جئت ولم أجدك - فأنها تريد الموت. قال: إن لم تجدي فاتي أبا بكر.

٧٢٢١ - حدثنا سعد بن حماد بن يحيى عن شيبان حدثني قيس بن مسلم عن طارق بن شهاب عن أبي بكر رضي الله عنه قال لؤي بن ربيعة: تكلمت أناث الإبل حتى توي الله عليه نبي ﷺ والمهاجرين أمراً يتوبونكم به.

٧٢٢٢ - باب: حدثنا محمد بن المنذر حدثنا فخر بن عثمان بن عبد الملك أسمنه جابر بن سمرة قال: سمعت النبي ﷺ يقول: يكون اثنا عشر أميراً. فقال كاتبة لم أسمعهما. فقال لي: إنه قال كلهم من قريش.

٥٢ - باب إخراج الخوصم أهل الزيب من البيوت بعد المعرفة وقد أخرج عمر أخت أبي بكر حين ماتت.

٧٢٢٤ - حدثنا إسماعيل حدثني مالك عن أبي الزناد عن الأعرج عن أبي هريرة رضي الله

These narrations collectively establish a clear and consistent framework: the leaders after the Prophet ﷺ are **exactly twelve in number**, and **all of them belong to Quraysh**. The repetition of this formulation across multiple companions, chains, and major Sunni sources elevates it beyond isolated reporting into a well-attested Prophetic declaration.

Furthermore, the context of some of these narrations—such as the Farewell Ḥajj—indicates that this was not a casual remark but a public and significant statement regarding the future of the Ummah. The Prophet ﷺ ties the endurance, strength, and invulnerability of the religion to the existence of these twelve leaders, indicating their central role in preserving Islam.

Thus, two essential constraints are now firmly established: **the number is twelve**, and **their lineage is Quraysh**. Any valid identification of these leaders must necessarily conform to both of these conditions simultaneously. The next stage of the discussion, therefore, is to examine how this Qurayshite framework is further narrowed and defined within the broader structure of the Prophet’s family and designated successors.

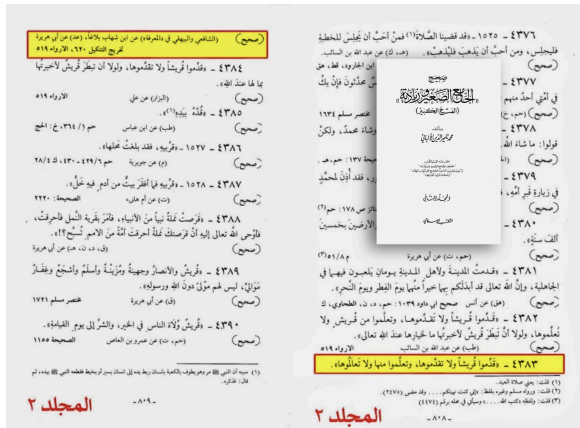
Chapter 03: Not All of Quraysh — Distinguishing Legitimate Leadership from Corruption

Having established that the twelve leaders are from Quraysh, it is necessary to address an important qualification: **belonging to Quraysh alone is not sufficient to establish rightful leadership.** While the previous chapter demonstrated that all twelve leaders must be Qurashī, the Prophetic narrations also make clear that Quraysh, as a whole, is not uniformly righteous nor uniformly fit for leadership. Rather, within Quraysh there exist both legitimate guides and corrupt elements.

A narration authenticated by al-Albānī in *Sahih Al-Jami' Al-Saghir, Vol 2, Number 4383, Pg 809* states:

The Prophet (saw) said, "Put the Quraysh in your front and do not lead them. Also, learn from Quraysh and never (attempt to) teach them."

Footnote: Narration is Saheeh (Authentic).



This narration establishes the general precedence and authority of Quraysh within the Ummah. They are to be placed in a position of leadership and guidance, indicating that authority is indeed centered within this tribe. However, this general preference does not imply that every individual from Quraysh is qualified or divinely sanctioned.

This distinction becomes even clearer in the narrations found in **Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Pg887, H3605**, where the Prophet ﷺ explicitly warns of corruption (fasaad) emerging from within Quraysh itself:

Narrated Sa'id Al-Umawi: I was with Marwan and Aboo Hurayra and heard Aboo Hurayra saying, I heard the trustworthy, truly inspired one (i.e. the Prophet (saw)) saying, "The DESTRUCTION of my followers will be brought about by the hands of some youngsters from Quraysh." Marwan asked,

In fact, these reports function as a filtering mechanism. If some members of Quraysh are explicitly described as agents of destruction, then they cannot simultaneously be the very leaders through whom the religion is preserved, strengthened, and made invulnerable—as described in earlier narrations. The true leaders must therefore be a **specific, distinguished subset within Quraysh**, not the tribe indiscriminately.

Thus, a crucial conclusion emerges: while the twelve leaders must be from Quraysh, **not all of Quraysh qualify to be among the twelve**. The criterion is not merely lineage, but a combination of lineage, righteousness, and divine alignment.

This naturally leads to the next stage of the discussion: identifying **which segment within Quraysh** possesses this distinction. If Quraysh is a broad category containing both guidance and فساد, then the question becomes—**which clan within Quraysh is singled out with divine preference, purity, and leadership?** The answer to this lies in examining the status of the most eminent and chosen branch of Quraysh.

This narration establishes a clear hierarchical selection: from the descendants of Ismā‘īl, Banū Kinānah were chosen; from them, Quraysh were selected; and from Quraysh, **Banū Hāshim were granted eminence**. The Prophet ﷺ himself is then described as the most eminent within Banū Hāshim. This structured elevation indicates not merely honor, but **divinely ordained distinction within lineage**.

This same concept is reinforced through multiple narrations authenticated by prominent Sunni scholars. Al-Albānī in **Saheeh Al-Tirmidhi. Vol. 3, H. # 3605 / 3606, Pg. # 483** records:

Narrated to us Khalid ibn Aslam from Muhammad ibn Mus'ab from Al-Awza'ee from Abi Ammar from Wathilah bin Al-Asqa: That the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: "Indeed Allah (swt) has chosen Isma'il from the children of Ibraheem, and He chose Banu Kinanah from the children of Isma'il, and He chose the Quraysh from Banu Kinanah, and He chose Banu Hashim from Quraysh, and He chose me from Banu Hashim."

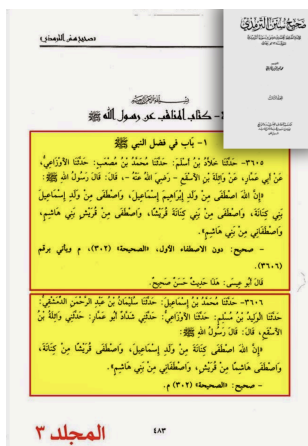
Al-Albani: It is Saheeh (Authentic), without the part "Allah (swt) has chosen Isma'il from the children of Ibraheem."

Al-Tirmidhi: This narration is a Hasan Saheeh (Authentic).

Narrated to us Muhammad ibn Isma'eel from Sulayman ibn Abdul-Rahman Al-Dimashqi from Al-Walid ibn Muslim from Al-Awza'ee from Shaddad Abu Ammar from Wathilah bin Al-Asqa: That the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: "Indeed Allah (swt) has chosen Banu Kinanah from the children of Isma'il, and He chose the Quraysh from Banu Kinanah, and He chose Hashim from Quraysh, and He chose me from Banu Hashim."

Al-Albani: It is Saheeh (Authentic).

Al-Tirmidhi: This narration is a Hasan Saheeh (Authentic) Gharib.



Likewise, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in his **Musnad**, Vol. 28, H. # 16986, Pg. # 193 records:

Narrated Abul Mughira from Al-Awza'ee from Abu Ammar Shaddad from Wathilah bin Al-Asqa: That the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: "Indeed Allah (swt) has chosen Banu Kinanah from the children of Isma'il, and He chose the Quraysh from Banu Kinanah, and He chose Banu Hashim from Quraysh, and He chose me from Banu Hashim."

Shuaib Al-Arna'ut: Its chain is Saheeh (Authentic) by the criteria of Muslim.



These narrations, transmitted through multiple chains and authenticated by leading Sunni scholars, collectively establish a decisive principle: **within Quraysh, Banū Hāshim holds a uniquely chosen and elevated status by divine selection.** This is not a matter of mere tribal pride or historical accident, but a structured hierarchy explicitly stated by the Prophet ﷺ himself.

When this is placed alongside the earlier conclusions, a clear narrowing process emerges. The leaders must be twelve in number. They must all be from Quraysh. Yet not all of Quraysh qualifies, as some among them are described as agents of corruption and destruction. Therefore, the only coherent conclusion is that the legitimate leaders must come from the **chosen and purified subset of Quraysh**—namely, Banū Hāshim.

This conclusion is not asserted in isolation but arises naturally from the convergence of multiple authenticated narrations. The circle of identification is now significantly narrowed: from the entire Ummah, to Quraysh, and from Quraysh, to Banū Hāshim.

The next step in the argument, therefore, is to move from **general lineage to specific designation**—to examine how leadership within Banū Hāshim is not merely by belonging, but by explicit Prophetic identification, beginning with the designation of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib(a.s).

Chapter 05: Who Has the Authority to Appoint a Caliph?

Having narrowed the identity of the twelve leaders to a specific lineage within Quraysh, a fundamental question now arises: **who possesses the authority to appoint a caliph?** Is leadership a matter determined by human choice, consultation, or political process, or does it originate from divine designation?

The foundation of this discussion is found in the Qur’ān itself. Allah (swt) states:

“Indeed, I am going to place a successive authority (khalīfah) on earth.”

Holy Qur’ān (2:30)

This verse is significant not merely for mentioning the creation of Adam (a.s), but for introducing the concept of **khalīfah** as a divinely initiated institution. Allah (swt) does not say that humanity will appoint a khalīfah, nor does He leave the matter open to creation; rather, He declares “**I am going to place**” (إني جاعل)—indicating that the act of appointing a khalīfah originates with Him.

While the immediate context of the verse concerns Adam (a.s), it establishes a broader principle: **the authority to designate a khalīfah belongs to Allah (swt)**. The concept of succession is therefore not rooted in human preference but in divine will.

This also reveals an important dimension of divine wisdom. Before human society even begins, Allah (swt) introduces the notion of a khalīfah. This indicates that leadership and guidance are not secondary developments, but foundational elements of human existence. A wise being begins with what is essential, not what is optional. Thus, the institution of leadership is embedded within the very framework of creation.

This understanding is supported by a tradition attributed to Imam Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (a.s):

“The proof of creation arrives before creation, along with it and after it.”

[Kamal ad-din, vol 01]

The implication is that humanity is never left without guidance or a representative who embodies that guidance. If creation were left without such a proof, it would contradict divine wisdom. Guidance must be continuous, not intermittent.

Rational Implications of Divine Appointment

From a rational perspective, the necessity of divinely appointed leadership becomes clearer. Divine law requires preservation, interpretation, and application. Without a

reliable authority, the system of guidance would become fragmented and subject to contradiction.

If prophethood had not been sealed, it would be necessary for a prophet to exist in every age to maintain this guidance. However, since the finality of the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ has been established, the function of preserving and safeguarding divine guidance must continue through another form—namely, **khilāfah (imamate)**.

Divine wisdom does not invite humanity toward confusion or disorder. Every command corresponds to a real need within human existence. Just as a physician prescribes treatment suited to the patient, Allah (swt), in His wisdom, establishes systems that align with human nature and necessity. The existence of leadership is not foreign to human reasoning; rather, it is an essential aspect of organized life.

Furthermore, the nature of an appointed successor reflects upon the one who appoints him. In ordinary human affairs, if a ruler appoints an unjust successor, responsibility is attributed to the ruler himself. Conversely, if the successor is just and upright, it reflects positively on the one who appointed him. By extension, when Allah (swt)—who is perfectly Just and Wise—appoints a khalīfah, it follows that such a representative must embody qualities consistent with divine justice and wisdom.

This leads to an important conclusion: **a divinely appointed khalīfah cannot be characterized by injustice, unreliability, or error in guiding the community.** The integrity of the appointment reflects the perfection of the One who appoints.

From the Qur’ānic principle and its rational implications, a clear framework emerges. The concept of khilāfah originates with Allah (swt), and the authority to appoint a true successor is rooted in divine will, not merely human selection. At the same time, such an appointment must reflect divine wisdom, necessitating a level of integrity and reliability in the appointed leader.

With this principle established, the discussion now moves from **who appoints** to **who was appointed**. The next chapter will examine the explicit designation of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s) through the event of **Ghadīr Khumm**, as preserved in Sunni sources.

Chapter 06: The Prophetic Declaration — Hadith of Ghadīr Khumm

Having established that leadership must be divinely appointed, and that such leadership is confined within a specific lineage, we now arrive at the central historical and textual moment: **the explicit designation of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s).**

This designation is preserved in what is widely known as the **Hadith of Ghadīr Khumm**, transmitted through numerous chains in Sunni sources. The volume of transmission is so extensive that scholars themselves have acknowledged its widespread reporting.

We read in **Fath al-Bari, Vol. 8, pg. 425:**

“As for the hadith, ‘Whoever I am his mawla, then ‘Alī is his mawla,’ it has been reported by al-Tirmidhī and al-Nasā’ī. It has very numerous chains of transmission. Ibn Uqda compiled them comprehensively in a separate book, and many of its chains are authentic (ṣaḥīḥ) and sound (ḥasan).”

٦٢- كتاب فضائل أصحاب النبي ﷺ / باب ٨ / ح ٣٧٠٧٣٠١ / ٤٢٥

حديث عمر وعلي نفسه وأبي هريرة وابن عباس وجابر بن عبد الله والبراء وزيد بن أرقم وأبي سعيد وأنس وقد استوعب طبر جابر بن سمرة قال أشقى الآخرين؟ عمار بن ياسر عينا بإسناد لين، وعبد واستدل به كان خليفة موسى قبل موسى باتفاق مني منزلة هارون الاتصال المذكور هارون المشبه به بحياته، والله أعلم وقد أخرج الأفضان، وسألت ومنها حديث قتاله البغاة وهو حديث أبي سعيد «قتل عمارًا الفئة الباغية»، وكان عمار مع علي، وقد تقدمت الإشارة إلى الحديث المذكور في الصلاة^(١)، ومنها حديث قتاله الخوارج، وقد تقدم من حديث أبي سعيد في علامات النبوة^(٢)، وغير ذلك مما يعرف بالنتج، وأوعب من جميع مناقبه من الأحاديث الجياد النسائي في كتاب «الخصائص»، وأما حديث «من كنت مولاه فعلي مولاه» فقد أخرجه الترمذي والنسائي، وهو كثير الطرق جدًا، وقد استوعبها ابن عقدة في كتاب مفرد، وكثير من أسانيد أصحابنا وحسان، وقد روينا عن الإمام أحمد قال: «ما بلغنا عن

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حديث عمر وعلي نفسه وأبي هريرة وابن عباس وجابر بن عبد الله والبراء وزيد بن أرقم وأبي سعيد وأنس وقد استوعب طبر جابر بن سمرة قال أشقى الآخرين؟ عمار بن ياسر عينا بإسناد لين، وعبد واستدل به كان خليفة موسى قبل موسى باتفاق مني منزلة هارون الاتصال المذكور هارون المشبه به بحياته، والله أعلم وقد أخرج الأفضان، وسألت ومنها حديث قتاله البغاة وهو حديث أبي سعيد «قتل عمارًا الفئة الباغية»، وكان عمار مع علي، وقد تقدمت الإشارة إلى الحديث المذكور في الصلاة^(١)، ومنها حديث قتاله الخوارج، وقد تقدم من حديث أبي سعيد في علامات النبوة^(٢)، وغير ذلك مما يعرف بالنتج، وأوعب من جميع مناقبه من الأحاديث الجياد النسائي في كتاب «الخصائص»، وأما حديث «من كنت مولاه فعلي مولاه» فقد أخرجه الترمذي والنسائي، وهو كثير الطرق جدًا، وقد استوعبها ابن عقدة في كتاب مفرد، وكثير من أسانيد أصحابنا وحسان، وقد روينا عن الإمام أحمد قال: «ما بلغنا عن

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١- الأعلام (٣/١٣٧).
 ٢- كتاب التفسير «البقرة»، باب ١٧، ح ٤٤٨١.
 ٣- كتاب الصلاة، باب ٥٨، ح ٤٤١.
 ٤- كتاب المناقب، باب ٨، ح ٣٦١٠.

This statement alone establishes that the hadith is not isolated but **massively transmitted**, forming a strong evidentiary basis.

It is found in Musnad Ahmad Ibn Hanbal Vol 32 on pg 56:

From Abu Al-Tufayl’s testimony: “Ali gathered the people at Rahba and said to them: “I call all the Muslims to bear witness that they heard the Messenger of Allah

saying on the day of Ghadir Khum what he said." When he stood up, 30 men from among the people came to him (in affirmation of his claim) Abu Na'eem said: 'A lot of people stood up and looked on when he raised his hand. "Do you know that I have more authority over the believers than they have over themselves?" They said: "Yes! O Messenger of Allah! صلى الله عليه وسلم." He continued: "Whoever I am his Mawla, then Ali is his Mawla; O Allah befriend whoever befriends him, and be an enemy to whoever seeks enmity against him." He (Abu Tufayl) said: "I went out as if there was something inside me, until I encountered Zaid b. Arqam and said to him: "I heard Ali (r.a) saying so and so." He said to me: "Don't refuse it! For I (too) heard the Messenger of Allah (swt) saying that." Footnote: "The chain is authentic, and the narrators are trustworthy narrators of the Shaykain (Bukhari and Muslim)."

مُسْتَدْرَكُ
الإمام أحمد بن حنبل

شُعَيْبُ الأَرْنَؤُوطُ
مُحَمَّدُ رَضْوَانُ الرَّقِئُؤُوبِي
مُسْتَدْرَكُ الرَّقِئُؤُوبِي
رَبُّوَالرَّسَالِ
مُؤَسَّسَةُ الرَّسَالَةِ

نظراً عن أبي العليل قال:
جمع علي رضي الله عنه الناس في الرخبة، ثم قال لهم:
أَشَدُّ الله كل امرئ مسلم شيخ رسول الله ﷺ يوم؟ فغير حتم
ما سمع، لَمَّا قام، فقام ثلاثون من الناس. وقال أبو نعيم: فقام
نمسان كثير، فشهدوا حين أخذته، بيده، فقال للناس: «تَقَلُّوْنَ
أَنِّي أُرْوِي بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ؟» قالوا: نعم يا رسول الله.
قال: «مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاً، فَهَذَا مَوْلَا، اللَّهُمَّ وَالِ مَنْ وَالَا وَعَادَ
مَنْ عَادَهُ» قال: فخرجت وكأني نفسي شيئاً، فلقبت زيد بن
أرقم، فقلت له: إني سمعت علياً رضي الله عنه يقول كذا وكذا.
قال: فما شكرك؟ قد سمعت رسول الله ﷺ يقول ذلك له.⁽¹⁾

(1) في (م) وأخرجه: يقول يوم، وجاءت كلمة «يقوله» نسخة في هامش (س).
(2) في (ط) (137): أعاد.
(3) إسناده صحيح، رجاله ثقات رجال الشيخين غير فطر -وهو ابن خليفة- فممن رجال أصحاب السنن، وروى له البخاري مقروناً، وهو ثقة. حسين بن محمد: هو المؤدب، وأبو نعيم: هو الفضل بن كنين، وأبو الطفيل: هو عامر بن الوليد، أضر من مات من الصحابة. وأخرجه ابن حبان (1931) من طريق أبي نعيم، وهذا الإسناد يروي أبي نعيم يحيى بن آدم. ورواه قول أبي نعيم: فقلت لظفر: كم بين هذا القول وبين موته (يحيى بن آدم) قال: ثلاثه يوم.
وأخرجه مطولاً ومختصراً السناني في «الكبرى» (459)، وابن أبي عمير في «السنن» (138)، والبخاري في شرح مشكل الآثار (573)، والطيبري في «الكبرى» (1938) من طريق عن نظره، بعد.

193-1 - حدثنا أسود بن عامر، حدثنا شريك، عن عثمان بن أبي زُرعة، عن أبي سَلْمَانَ المَوْذُونِ قال:
توفي أبو سَريحة⁽¹⁾، فصلى عليه زيد بن أرقم، فكثير عليه أرقم⁽²⁾، وقال: كذا فعل رسول الله ﷺ.
193-2 - حدثنا حسين بن محمد وأبو نعيم، المعنى: قالوا: حدثنا
= (1913)، وإسناده صحيح، ونظراً ما جده.
قال السندي: قوله: «لا أثر لها» أي: الحسن - بأن أراها غير جائزة، ولم يُرد له يدوم على الحسن صلاً، والله تعالى أعلم.
(1) أبو سَريحة: هو خليفة بن أبيه الفخري، صحابي من أصحاب الشجرة، مات سنة اثنين وأربعين، روى له الجماعة سوى البخاري.
(2) شُيْبُ فُوقِ كَلِمَةُ «أرقم» في (137)، ونظر التعليق التالي.
(3) إسناده ضعيف لضعف شريك -وهو ابن عبد الله التميمي- وجهل حال أبي سَلْمَانَ المَوْذُونِ، وهو يزيد بن عبد الله (يروي في «تهذيب التهذيب»: يزيد ابن عبد الملك) مؤدب الحجاج، والاختلاف عليه فيه، وبقية رجاله ثقات رجال الصحيح، عثمان بن أبي زُرعة: هو ابن المغيرة.
وأخرجه الطحاوي في شرح معاني الآثار (1) 494، والطيبري في «الكبرى» (494)، وابن عبد البر في «المهذب» (337/1) من طرق عن شريك، بهذا الإسناد.
وختلف فيه على أبي سَلْمَانَ المَوْذُونِ: (494) عن علي بن عبد العزيز، عن فطر -أخرجه الطحاوي في «الكبرى» (494) عن أبي سَلْمَانَ أنه صلى مع زيد بن أرقم أبي نعيم، عن الملا - بن صالح، عن أبي سَلْمَانَ أنه صلى مع زيد بن أرقم على جنازه، فكثير عليها خمس تكبيرات، فقلت: أزعجت أم عمداً؟ فقال: بل عمداً، إن النبي كان يصلها.
ونظر (1913).

One finds again in *Musnad Ahmad Bin Hanbal Vol 32 on pg 29*:

He took the upper arm of Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) and said, "O people, do you not know that I have more authority over the believers than themselves?" So they said, "Yes." He continued, "Whomever I am his Mawla, Ali is his Mawla." I asked him, "Did he say, 'O Allah, be a Guardian to whoever takes him as a Guardian and be an Enemy to Whoever takes him as an Enemy?'" He replied, "I reported it to you just as I heard it."

Footnote: This narration is considered authentic through various chains and testimonies.

مُسْنَدُ
الإمام أحمد بن حنبل

(١٦٤-٢٤١م)

سُورَةُ الْمَائِدَةِ وَتَحْتِهَا عَابِدٌ وَمَعْتَقٌ عَلَيْهِ

شُعَيْبُ الْأَرْنَؤُوطُ

سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ

مُحَمَّدُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

رَبُّوَالِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ

مُؤَسَّسَةُ الرِّسَالَةِ

١١٧٧٩- حدثنا ابن أبي شيبة، حدثنا عبد الملك، يعني ابن أبي سليمان، عن مطر بن العوف، قال:

سألتُ زيدَ بنَ أرقمَ، فقُلْتُ له: إنَّ نَحْنًا في حَدِيثي عَنكَ بِحَدِيثِ فِي شَأْنِ عَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ يَوْمَ غَدِيرِ خُمٍّ، فَأَنَا أَحِبُّ أَنْ أَسْمِعَهُ سَكَةً، فَقَالَ: إِنَّكُمْ مَعْتَرِضُونَ أُمَّةَ الْعِرَاقِ فَيَكْفِيكُمْ مَا فِيكُمْ، فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ بَأْسِي، فَقَالَ: نَعَمْ، كُنَّا بِالْمَشَقَّةِ، فَخَرَجَ رَسُولُ اللهِ ﷺ إِلَيْنَا عَظِيمًا، وَهُوَ أَخَذَ بِنَعْضِ عَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ، فَقَالَ: «يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، أَلَسْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ أَنِّي أَوْلَى بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ؟» قَالُوا: بَلَى. قَالَ: «فَمَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاً، فَمَوْلَاُ مَوْلَاهُ.» قَالَ: فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: هَلْ قَالَ: اللَّهُمَّ وَالِ مَنْ وَالَاهُ، وَعَادِلٌ مِنْ عَادِلِهِ؟ قَالَ: إِنَّمَا أُصْرِكُ كَمَا سَمِعْتُ^(١).

(١) (٥٠١٤)، والبيهقي في «معجم الصحابة» (٥١٦)، وفي تفسير سورة الفراء (١٣٨٥) من طرق عن إسماعيل، به. قال البيهقي: هذا حديث حسن صحيح. وفي الباب من عبد الله بن مسعود سابق برقم (٣٥١٣) وكثرنا هناك بقية أحاديث الباب. قال السندي: في الحاجة، أن: في شأنها. في الصلاة معلق به بكنية. بالسكوت، أي: عن الكلام بقدر الاجتزاء، وإلا فلا سكوت عن القراءة والتسبيح وتجويزها، فالقارئ بالسكوت هو السكوت عما لا يليق بالصلاة، والله تعالى أعلم.

(٢) في (١٣٥): آتيت.

(٣) صحيح بطريقه وهو صحيح، وهذا إسناد ضعيف لضعف عطية -وهو ابن -

In Musnad Ahmad Vol 32 on pg 73-74, he says,

"Do you not know, or do you not testify, that I have more authority over every believer than they have over themselves?" So they said, "Yes." He continued, "Whomever I am his Mawla, Ali is his Mawla. O Allah, be a Guardian to whoever takes him as a Guardian and be an Enemy to Whoever takes him as an Enemy."

Footnote: This narration is considered authentic.

كُنْتُ مَوْلَاً، فَإِنَّ عَلِيًّا مَوْلَاً، اللَّهُمَّ وَالِ مَنْ وَالَاهُ، وَعَادِلٌ مِنْ عَادِلِهِ^(١).

١٩٣٦٦- حدثنا يهز، حدثنا شعبة، أخبرني حبيب بن أبي ثابت قال: سمعتُ أبا المنهال رجلاً من بني كنانة قال:

سألتُ البراءَ بنَ عازبَ وزيدَ بنَ أرقمَ، قال: سألتُ هذا، فقال: أَنتَ فَلَإِنَّ، فَإِنَّهُ خَيْرٌ مِنِّي وَأَعْلَمُ، وَسَأَلْتُ الْآخَرَ، فَقَالَ مِثْلَ ذَلِكَ، فَقَالَ: نَهَى رَسُولُ اللهِ ﷺ عَنِ بَيْعِ الْوَرَقِ بِالذَّهَبِ ذَبْتًا^(٢).

(١) في (م) و(س) و(ص): اللهم عاد من عاده، ووال من والاه، والشيت من (١٣٥) و(ق).

(٢) صحيح، وهذا إسناد ضعيف لجهالة أبي عبيد؛ ذكره الحافظ في «التحجيل» وقال: ما عرفت من هو أبو عبيد هذا، ولا أورد الحسيني، ولا من تبعه بترجمة، قلنا: ولضعف ميمون أبي عبد الله، وبقية رجاله ثقات رجال الحسينيين. علقان: هو ابن شلم الصغار، وأبو عروة: هو الوضاع بن عبد الله التيممزي، والمغيرة: هو ابن شمس الضحى. وأخرجه البرز (٢٤٣٧) (٢٤٣٧)، والطبراني في «التكبير» (٥٠٩٢) من طريق علقان، بهذا الإسناد. وأخرجه ابن أبي عاصم في «السنة» (١٣٦٢)، والنسائي في «التكبير» (٨٤٧٩)، والذولابي في «الكنى والأسماء» ٦١/٢ من طريق عوف، عن ميمون، به. ووقع في مطبوع ابن أبي عاصم: ميمون أبي عبد الله، عن أبيه زيد. وهو خطأ. وسلف برقم (١٩٣٧٩)، وإسناده صحيح برقم (١٩٣٠٧). (٣) إسناد صحيح على شرط الشيخين، وهو مكرر (١٩٣٧٩) سنقاً ومثلاً، غير أنه قرن هناك مع يهز علقان.

١٩٣٣٣- حدثنا يهز، حدثنا شعبة، أخبرني قافة، عن الضمر بن أنس

عن زيد بن أرقم أن رسول الله ﷺ قال، فذكر مثله^(١). ١٩٣٣٤- حدثنا عفان، حدثنا شعبة، عن عمرو بن مرة، قال: سمعتُ ابنَ أبي ليلى، قال: قلنا لزيد بن أرقم: حَدِّثْنَا، قَالَ: كَثِيرًا وَنَسِيًّا، وَالْحَدِيثُ عَلَى رَسُولِ اللهِ ﷺ شَدِيدٌ^(٢).

١٩٣٣٥- حدثنا عفان، حدثنا أبو عروبة، عن الثميرة، عن أبي سعيد، عن ميمون أبي عبد الله، قال:

قال زيد بن أرقم وأنا أسمع: تَرَأَى مَعِ رَسُولِ اللهِ ﷺ يَوْمَ الْبُقَاعِ لِه: وَادِي خُمٍّ، فَأَسْرَ بِالصَّلَاةِ، فَصَلَّاهَا بِجَبْرِ. قَالَ: فَخَطَبْنَا، وَظَلَّلَ رَسُولُ اللهِ ﷺ نَوْبَ عَلِيٍّ شَجْرَةَ سَمُرَةَ مِنَ الشَّمْسِ، فَقَالَ: «أَلَسْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ - أَوْ أَلَسْتُمْ تَنْهَدُونَ - أَنِّي أَوْلَى بِكُلِّ مُؤْمِنٍ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ؟» قَالُوا: بَلَى. قَالَ: «فَمَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاً، فَمَوْلَاُ مَوْلَاهُ.» قَالَ: فَقُلْتُ لَهُ: هَلْ قَالَ: اللَّهُمَّ وَالِ مَنْ وَالَاهُ، وَعَادِلٌ مِنْ عَادِلِهِ؟ قَالَ: إِنَّمَا أُصْرِكُ كَمَا سَمِعْتُ^(٣).

(١) إسناده صحيح على شرط الشيخين. وهو مكرر سابقه غير أن شيخ أحمد هنا هو يهز، وهو ابن أسد العمسي.

(٢) أثر صحيح. رجاله ثقات رجال الشيخين، وهو مكرر (١٩٣٠٤) غير شيخ أحمد، فهو هنا علقان، وهو ابن شلم الصغار.

(٣) في (م) سيات، وهو خطأ. (٤) في (م) و(ص) و(ق) و(ج) و(س)، أزلستم، والمثبت من (١٣٥).

مُسْنَدُ
الإمام أحمد بن حنبل

(١٦٤-٢٤١م)

سُورَةُ الْمَائِدَةِ وَتَحْتِهَا عَابِدٌ وَمَعْتَقٌ عَلَيْهِ

شُعَيْبُ الْأَرْنَؤُوطُ

سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ

مُحَمَّدُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

رَبُّوَالِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ

مُؤَسَّسَةُ الرِّسَالَةِ

One finds in Musnad Ahmad Vol 2 on pg 262 that:

"Ali addressed the people at Rahba, saying that whoever had heard the speech of Rasulallah (peace be upon him) on the day of Ghadir Khum should stand up. Six people before Saad stood up, and six people before Zaid stood up. They all testified that they had heard Rasulallah say to Ali on the day of Ghadir Khum, "Does Allah

not have authority over the believers?" They replied, "Indeed." He continued, "O Allah, whoever You are his Mawla, then Ali is his Mawla. O Allah, be a Guardian to whoever takes him as a Guardian and be an enemy to whoever takes him as an enemy."

Footnote: Authenticated through multiple reliable chains.

And in *Musnad Ahmad Vol 30 on pg 430*:

"He took Ali's hand and said, "Do you not know that I have more authority over the believers than they do over themselves?" They said, "Yes." He continued, "Do you not know that I have more authority over every believer than they have over their very soul?" They replied, "Yes." He further stated, "Whomever I am his Mawla, Ali is his Mawla. O Allah, be a Guardian to whoever takes him as a Guardian and be an Enemy to Whoever takes him as an Enemy." He mentioned, "Omar met him after that," and Omar said to him, "Congratulations, son of Abu Talib! You have just become the Mawla of every believing man and woman."

Footnote: Authenticated through other reliable chains.

The same thing is found in **Fadha'il al-Sahaba Vol 1 on pg 610:**

He took Ali's hand and said, "Am I not more authoritative over the believers than they are over themselves?" They replied, "Indeed, O Messenger of Allah." He continued, "This is the Mawla of whoever I am the Mawla. O Allah, be a Guardian to whoever takes him as a Guardian and be an Enemy to Whoever takes him as an Enemy." Afterward, Omar met him and said, "Congratulations, Son of Abu Talib! You have just become the Mawla of every believing man and woman."

Footnote: This narration is considered Hasan through other reliable chains.

It is found in **Al-Sunan by Ibn Majah Vol 1 on on pg 34:**

He said, "Am I not more authoritative over the believers than they are over themselves?" They replied, "Indeed." He continued, "Do I not have more authority over every believer than they have over themselves?" Again, they said, "Indeed." So he said, "This is the Wali of whomever I am the Mawla. O Allah, be a Guardian to whoever takes him as a Guardian and be an Enemy to Whoever takes him as an Enemy."

Footnote: This narration is considered Sahih through other reliable chains.

It is also important to note that this event took place in a public setting—during the return from the Farewell Pilgrimage—where a large number of companions were present. This further strengthens its transmission and historical significance.

Scholars have also noted the breadth of its transmission. It is reported from numerous companions through more than 11 chains.

Due to this abundance, the hadith has been described as having **dozens of routes**, with some scholars documenting them extensively. For the sake of clarity and focus, only a representative sample has been presented here, though the full body of transmission is far broader.

The Hadith of Ghadīr Khumm establishes a direct and public declaration by the Prophet ﷺ concerning ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a.s). The structure of the narration, its widespread transmission, and its authentication by multiple Sunni scholars collectively give it a central place in discussions of leadership.

However, the precise implication of the term used in the declaration—“**Mawla**”—remains a key point of interpretation. Understanding its meaning is essential to determining the full significance of this event.

Accordingly, the next chapter will examine in detail the **meaning of the word “Mawla”**, its linguistic range, and its usage within the context of this hadith.

This interpretation is critical. It establishes that the Prophet’s authority is not limited to spiritual guidance or moral influence—it is **comprehensive authority**, encompassing judgment, governance, and obligation.

With this Qur’ānic meaning firmly established, the structure of the Ghadīr declaration becomes clear. The Prophet ﷺ first confirms his authority:

“Am I not more entitled over the believers than themselves?”

When the companions affirm this, he immediately follows with:

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

The sequence is deliberate and logically connected. The Prophet ﷺ is not introducing a new, unrelated concept; rather, he is **transferring the very authority he just established**. The term “Mawlā” in this context must therefore carry the same weight as “awlā”—authority, guardianship, and leadership.

If “Mawlā” were to mean merely “friend” or “beloved,” the entire structure of the statement collapses. It would be incoherent to first establish supreme authority over the believers and then conclude with a statement about friendship. The context demands continuity of meaning.

Furthermore, the linguistic range of the word “Mawlā” in Arabic includes multiple meanings—such as master, patron, guardian, and one vested with authority. In any given usage, the intended meaning is determined by context. Here, the context is unmistakably one of **authority and precedence**, not casual affiliation.

This is further reinforced by the wording found in other narrations of the same event, where variations include terms such as:

- “Wali” (guardian, authority)
- “Awlā” (one with greater right/authority)

These variations confirm that the semantic field of “Mawlā” in this hadith is firmly rooted in **leadership and authority**, not mere companionship.

Thus, when the Prophet ﷺ declared:

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

he was not issuing a statement of affection, but rather a **formal and public transfer of authority**—an extension of his own position over the believers to ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib (a.s).

The meaning of “Mawlā” in the Hadith of Ghadīr is not ambiguous when examined in its proper context. The Qur’ānic verse establishes the Prophet’s complete authority, Sunni tafsīr confirms this understanding, and the structure of the hadith demonstrates that this authority is being extended to ‘Alī (a.s).

Therefore, the declaration at Ghadīr Khumm is best understood as a statement of **authority, leadership, and succession**, not merely of love or respect.

With the meaning of “Mawlā” clarified, the next step is to address the remaining objections and alternative interpretations presented by Sunni scholars, and to examine whether they can withstand the cumulative weight of the evidence presented thus far.

Chapter 08: The Sahaba’s Interpretation Argument

A common objection raised is that if the Shi‘i understanding of the event of Ghadīr Khumm were correct, then the companions (Ṣaḥābah) would have understood it accordingly. Since—according to the objection—they did not interpret it as a designation of authority and succession, the interpretation itself must be incorrect.

At first glance, this argument may appear persuasive, but upon closer examination, it fails both logically and historically.

Firstly, this argument is fundamentally a logical fallacy known as *begging the question* (petitio principii). It assumes what it seeks to prove. The claim that the companions did not understand Ghadīr in the sense of authority is itself unproven, and then it is used as evidence against that very interpretation. Even if one were to assume, for the sake of argument, that some companions misunderstood or did not act upon the declaration, this would not invalidate the original statement of the Prophet ﷺ. The truth of a statement is not contingent upon the reactions of its audience, but upon its wording, context, and intent.

Secondly, if this objection is to be taken seriously, then those who raise it must provide clear historical evidence that the companions explicitly interpreted the term “Mawlā” in the narration of Ghadīr to mean merely “friend” or “beloved.” However, no such explicit interpretation from the companions exists. The absence of such evidence weakens the objection considerably, especially when contrasted with reports that indicate the opposite.

In fact, there are narrations within Sunni sources that demonstrate that the companions understood the declaration at Ghadīr in a sense far stronger than mere friendship.

It is reported in **Musnad Aḥmad, Vol. 38, Pg. 541–542:**

“A group of people came to ‘Alī (may Allah be pleased with him) in al-Raḥbah and said: ‘Peace be upon you, our Mawlā.’ He replied: ‘How can I be your Mawlā when you are Arab people?’ They said: ‘We heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) say on the day of Ghadīr Khumm: “Whoever I am his Mawlā, ‘Alī is his Mawlā.”’ ... Among them was Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī.”

Footnote: The chain is Ṣaḥīḥ.

This narration provides an even clearer insight into how the statement was received. The congratulation offered by ‘Umar is not consistent with a mere declaration of friendship. It would be meaningless to congratulate someone for becoming a “friend,” especially when that relationship already existed. Rather, the congratulation implies a **newly conferred status**, one that warranted public acknowledgment.

Furthermore, the wording again connects “Mawlā” with “Wali,” reinforcing that the meaning being conveyed is one of authority and guardianship.

Taken together, these narrations demonstrate that at least a group of companions understood the declaration of Ghadīr in a manner consistent with the Shi‘i interpretation—namely, that it signified authority and leadership, not merely affection.

The argument that the companions did not understand Ghadīr as a declaration of authority is both logically flawed and historically unsupported. Not only is there no clear evidence that they interpreted “Mawlā” as “friend,” but there are explicit reports indicating that they understood it in a much stronger sense.

Therefore, the interpretation of “Mawlā” as authority remains intact and is, in fact, reinforced by the very sources used by those who raise this objection.

This narration is decisive. The Prophet ﷺ explicitly informed ‘Alī (a.s) that the Ummah would not remain loyal to him after his passing. Therefore, the very scenario being used as an objection is, in fact, something that was **anticipated and foretold**.

In other words, the lack of universal allegiance to ‘Alī (a.s) is not evidence against his appointment—it is evidence that the Prophet’s warning came to pass.

Furthermore, the Qur’ān itself establishes that deviation after a prophet is neither unprecedented nor impossible. Allah says:

“Muḥammad is not but a messenger; messengers have passed on before him. So if he were to die or be killed, would you turn back on your heels?”

(Surah Āl ‘Imrān 3:144)

This verse was revealed precisely to warn the believers that the death of the Prophet ﷺ could become a moment of trial, wherein some might falter or turn back. It dismantles the assumption that the companions, as a collective, would necessarily uphold every directive without deviation.

History itself, even within Sunni sources, records numerous instances of اختلاف (disagreement), conflict, and political divergence among the companions after the Prophet’s death. Therefore, to claim unanimous and flawless adherence as a premise is historically inaccurate.

The “Sahaba’s Loyalty Argument” does not invalidate the Shi‘i interpretation of Ghadīr. Rather, it rests on an unfounded assumption about the infallibility of collective human behavior. The Prophet ﷺ himself foretold that ‘Alī (a.s) would face betrayal, and the Qur’ān warns of potential regression after the passing of a messenger.

Thus, instead of undermining the argument for Imamate, the historical reality of events following the Prophet’s death aligns with what was both **predicted in narration and cautioned in revelation**.

Final Conclusion: The Only Coherent Interpretation

Over the course of this work, a cumulative case has been constructed using sources accepted within Ahl al-Sunnah themselves. Each premise was established independently, and only then were they brought together. What emerges is not a forced interpretation, but a convergence that leaves little room for alternative explanations.

It has been demonstrated that the Prophet ﷺ foretold the existence of **twelve leaders** after him—an idea transmitted through multiple authentic narrations. These leaders were not arbitrary figures, but specifically identified as being from **Quraysh**. However, it was also shown that not all of Quraysh can fulfill this role, as even Sunni narrations acknowledge corruption and misguidance arising from among them.

The discussion then narrowed further: within Quraysh, **Banu Hashim** were singled out through authentic reports as the most eminent and divinely chosen clan. This was not a matter of tribal pride, but of divine selection—consistent with the Qur’ānic pattern of choosing specific lineages for guidance.

The question of *who has the authority to appoint a leader* was then addressed. The Qur’ān itself establishes that **khalīfah is initiated by Allah**, not by human consensus. The verse “Indeed, I will place a khalīfah on the earth” sets a foundational principle: divine authority is not subject to human election. This was further supported by rational argument—that a divinely guided system cannot be left to fallible and conflicting human judgment.

From this principle, the discussion moved to the historical event of **Ghadīr Khumm**, preserved in Sunni sources with multiple chains. The Prophet ﷺ publicly declared:

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

This statement was not isolated, but preceded by the Qur’ānic premise of authority: **“The Prophet has more authority over the believers than themselves.”**

Sunni tafsīr confirms that this authority is comprehensive—legal, political, and spiritual. Therefore, the transfer implied in the word “Mawlā” cannot logically be reduced to mere friendship. It is a continuation of authority.

This meaning was not a later imposition. Reports from Sunni sources themselves show that companions addressed ‘Alī (a.s) as their **Mawlā** in a sense that implies status and authority, and even offered congratulations—something that makes no sense if the declaration were only about love or friendship.

The common objections were then examined and addressed. The claim that the companions did not understand Ghadīr in this way was shown to be both logically flawed and historically unsupported. Likewise, the argument that they would have remained loyal if such an appointment existed was dismantled through both Qur’ān and hadith—demonstrating that deviation after a prophet is not only possible, but explicitly warned against.

At this stage, the discussion is no longer about isolated texts or interpretations. It is about **which framework can coherently accommodate all of the evidence**.

One must now ask:

- Who are the twelve leaders consistently identified in history?
- Who are from Quraysh, yet distinct from its corrupt elements?
- Who belong to Banu Hashim, the divinely elevated lineage?
- Who are tied to the Prophet ﷺ through the Ahl al-Bayt?
- Who align with the concept of divinely guided leadership?

There is only one answer that satisfies all of these conditions simultaneously:

The Twelve Imams from the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them).

Any alternative interpretation must either ignore the number twelve, dilute the meaning of “Mawlā,” generalize Quraysh despite its internal contradictions, or reduce divine appointment to human politics. In doing so, it fails to maintain consistency across the very sources it claims to uphold.

This is not a matter of sectarian preference, but of **intellectual honesty**. When all the evidence is allowed to speak—without selective interpretation or prior commitment—the conclusion is not imposed, but revealed.

The doctrine of Imamate, as understood in the Twelver Shi’i tradition, is therefore not an external construct imposed upon Islamic texts. Rather, it is the **only coherent synthesis** of the Qur’ān, the Sunnah, and the historical record.