

WHAT HAPPENED AT GHADEER?

EXAMINING THE HOLY PROPHET'S FINAL SERMON



AIME
To Proudly Serve the Awaited One

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INTRODUCTION

At a time when our core beliefs and doctrine are often overlooked and forgotten, the Holy Prophet ﷺ's farewell sermon at Ghadeer Khumm shines a light on one of the most critical aspects of Shi'a Islam: wilāyah. The wilāyah (authority/guardianship) of the 12 Imams ؑ, beginning with Amīr al-Mu'minīn, Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib ؑ, and ending with the Master of our Time, Imam al-Mahdi ؑ, is the crux of our tradition, from which we can begin to learn and understand our faith and our connection to God Almighty.

This text covers the history of the *Ghadeer* sermon in three parts: an overview of the Prophet's farewell hajj, the sermon at Ghadeer Khumm, and its aftermath. We present here the most important elements of this moment in history, wherein the Prophet ﷺ, with the utmost care and deliberation, gathered *over one hundred thousand* members of the Muslim nation to announce his final message. It was here, on the 18th of Dhul-Hijjah and having completed the hajj, that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ announced to all the Muslims gathered: "*For whomever I am his master, 'Ali is (also) his master.*"

We hope to make this declaration ring loud and clear for everyone at every point in time. We ask God Almighty to guide us and make this the mantra for our lives. By God's grace, we present you a discussion on the most important points of the Prophet ﷺ's farewell to the Muslim nation.

This text was originally written in Persian by Muhammad Baqir Ansari and translated by Reza Hemyari. It has been modified for length and content by AIME Association.

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FAREWELL PILGRIMAGE

FROM MEDINA TO GHADEER

Ten years after the hijra of the Prophet ﷺ, he made an official call to the Hajj pilgrimage, so that all able Muslims would partake in the journey. He declared it the Farewell Pilgrimage, to ensure it would be the most memorable journey one could take with the Prophet ﷺ. This was first time that such a large number of Muslims gathered in one place in the presence of their leader, the Messenger of Allah. On his way to Mecca, more than seventy thousand people followed the Prophet ﷺ. By the fourth day of Dhu-l-Hijjah, more than one hundred thousand Muslims had entered Mecca.

The purpose of this journey was to declare two important Islamic commandments that were not officially declared, nor entirely known by the general public up to that point. First, the Prophet ﷺ taught them how to perform the Hajj pilgrimage in the correct form. And second, the Prophet ﷺ addressed the issue of his succession and *wilayah* after his Prophethood.

FROM MEDINA TO MECCA

The enormous caravan of the Prophet ﷺ left Medina on the 25th of Dhu'l-Qa'dah. The Prophet ﷺ had ordered the people to take their pilgrimage garments, and he as well had done his ablutions, packed his own garments, and left for Masjid ash-Shajarah near Medina.

Everyone embarked on the journey, including the great progeny of the Prophet ﷺ. This included his daughter Fatima, his grandsons, Imams Hasan and Husayn, and his wives.

When they arrived at Masjid ash-Shajarah, they wore their *iḥrām* clothes and began their 10-day journey to Mecca. A great contingent of people accompanied the Prophet ﷺ on horseback or on foot. Picture 1 shows the path of the pilgrims.

On a Sunday morning, they rested until nightfall, and having prayed their night prayers, they continued their journey. The next morning, they

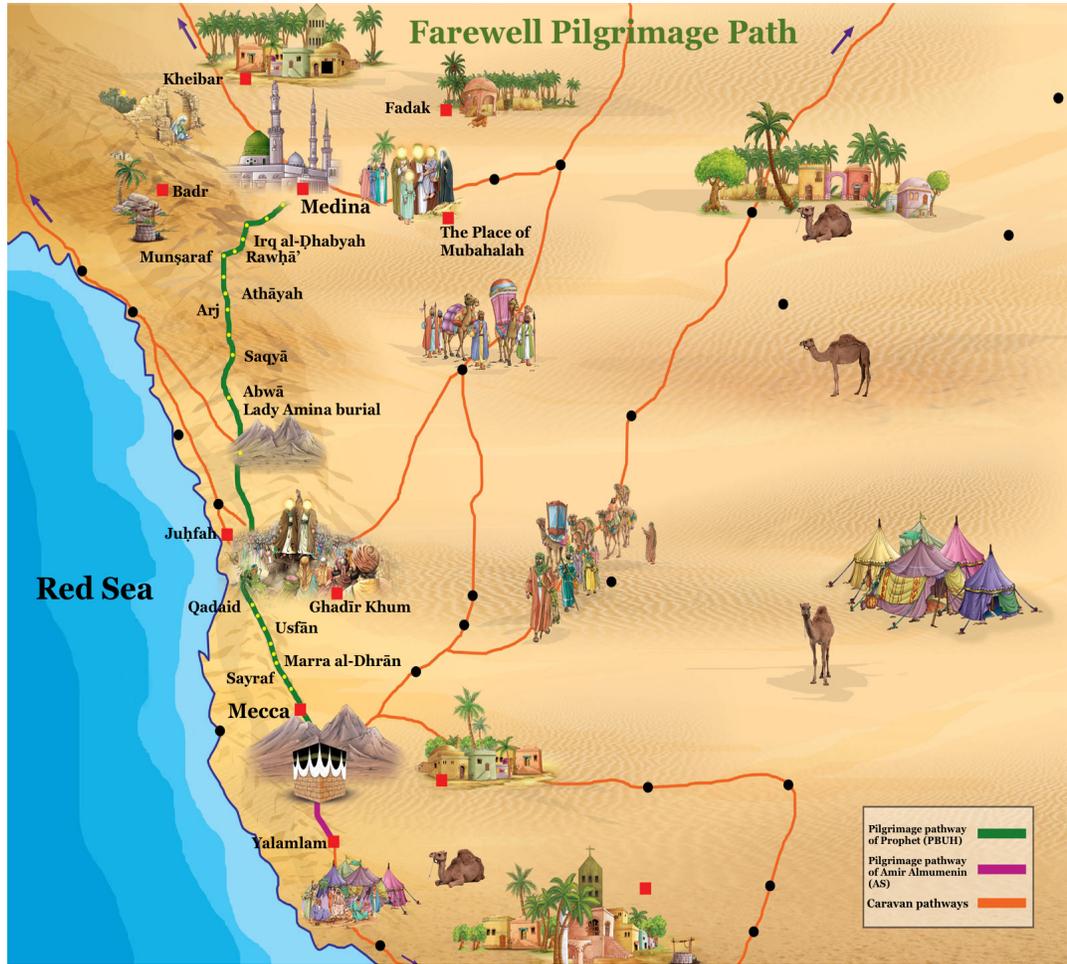
arrived at the *Iraq al-Dhabyah*, and again rested briefly at *Rawḥā'*. From there, they arrived at *Munṣaraf* for the afternoon prayer. They paused at a location called *Muta 'ashshā* for the nightly prayers and then to rest. For the morning prayers they came upon *Athāyah*. Tuesday morning, they arrived at '*Arj*' and on Wednesday, at *Saqyā'*.

Those travelling on foot mentioned the difficulty of the journey to the Prophet ﷺ and requested riding animals. The Prophet ﷺ, who did not have any such animals, commanded that they wrap their clothes tightly around themselves and that they move quicker, at a brisk speed, between fast-walking and running. And indeed, the commands of the Prophet ﷺ proved effective.

On Thursday they arrived at *Abwā'*, where Lady Amina – the Prophet's ﷺ mother – was buried, and the Prophet ﷺ visited her grave.

Having passed *Juhfah* and *Ghadeer Khumm* on Friday, they arrived at *Qada'id* on Saturday. On Sunday they continued until '*Uṣfān*' and on Monday, to *Marra al-Dhrān*, staying there until nightfall.

At night, they left for *Sayraf* and upon arrival subsequently left for Mecca, their final destination. After travelling for 10 days, the first Hajj caravan of Islam, with its unique glory and grandeur, entered city of Mecca on Tuesday, the 5th of Dhul-Hijjah.



PICTURE 1: THE PATHWAY OF THE FAREWELL PILGRIMAGE

THE YEMENI PILGRIMS ACCOMPANYING IMAM ALI

When the Hajj pilgrimage was first announced, the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib علي بن أبي طالب was sent on behalf of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله, along with a military contingent to Najrān and Yemen. The reason for this journey was to invite [the people of that area] to Islam, collect the alms-, khums-, jizyah-taxes, and to resolve a dispute that had arisen between the people of Yemen.

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله, while departing from Medina, sent a letter to Imam Ali, ordering him to travel to Mecca, along with the military contingent and those from Yemen who wanted to participate in the Hajj ritual.

The Commander of the Faithful, after having completed his duties in Najrān and Yemen, left for Mecca with his contingent and approximately 12,000 residents of Yemen. While the Prophet's ﷺ caravan was travelling to Mecca from Medina, Imam Ali was nearing Mecca from Yemen and ordered the people to enter the state of iḥrām at Yalamlam.

Then, having elected a replacement for himself from among the contingent, Imam Ali ﷺ rode quickly ahead to meet the Prophet ﷺ. He met the Prophet ﷺ near Mecca and gave him the entire report of his journey. The Prophet ﷺ was overjoyed by this, and ordered him to bring the military contingent and the Yemeni pilgrims to Mecca. Imam Ali returned to the contingent, and along with them, entered Mecca at the same time as the Prophet ﷺ on Tuesday, the 5th of Dhu'l-Hijjah.

THE RITES OF HAJJ

On the 9th day of Dhul-Hijjah, the rites of Hajj began. The Prophet ﷺ went to the plain of Arafāt, and thereafter to Mash'ar; on the 10th he made the sacrifice in Minā, the stoning of Jamarāt, and completed the rest of the rites.

Then, he circumambulated the Ka'bah, completed his *sa'ī* and thereafter completed all the rituals in order, and with each ritual act, informed the Muslims which was mandatory and which was recommended. It was in this way that the 3-day pilgrimage was completed on the 12th of Dhul-Hijjah.

BESTOWING THE PROPHETIC INHERITANCE TO THE WALĪ

After completing the pilgrimage, a divine command descended upon the Prophet ﷺ stating:

Your prophecy has ended and your days are ending. Give to Ali ibn Abi Talib the Glorious Name, the relics of knowledge, and the inheritances of the prophets, for he is the first believer. I shall not leave the world devoid of one who knows and worships me, one who

is recognized with my wilāyah, and is the proof [of God] after my Prophet ﷺ.

The inheritances of the prophets ﷺ include the scrolls of Adam, Noah, Ibrahim, the Torah, the Gospel, the staff of Musa, the ring of Sulayman, and the other sacred vestiges that are only possessed by the hujaj Allah (Proofs of God). These relics were with the previous prophets and their successors, and have been passed down from each of them until they were protected by the final Prophet ﷺ, and now had to be given to his successors.

The Prophet ﷺ had called Imam Ali, established a private ceremony where he presented him the divine consignments, and in this way passed on the prophetic relics of 6,000 years. These divine consignments were given from one Imam to the next, and are now in the blessed hands of the Last Proof of God, the “Remainder of God” ﷺ.

GREETING HIM AS THE “COMMANDER OF THE FAITHFUL”

Before departing for Ghadeer, Gabriel had presented Imam Ali with the title of “Commander of the Faithful” upon divine command. It should be noted that this was not the first time he was given this title.

The Prophet ﷺ ordered that the most notable members of the companions should gather in a special ceremony, to call Imam Ali “The Commander of the Faithful,” greeting him as such: “Peace be upon you, O Commander of the Faithful.” In this way, he would make sure that they recognized Imam Ali as the Commander in his own [the Prophet’s] lifetime.

It was on this occasion that ‘Umar and Abu Bakr would protest to the Prophet ﷺ, asking, “Is this a right [given to Ali] from God or His messenger?”

The Prophet was angered and stated, “This is a right on behalf of God and His messenger. God has commanded me to this.”

THE UNIVERSAL CALL OF GHADEER

Although many expected the Prophet ﷺ to stay in Mecca for some time, this being his first and last Hajj pilgrimage, right after he completed the Hajj ritual he ordered Bilāl to announce to the people the following:

“Tomorrow, the 14th of Dhul-Hijjah, all must start traveling to the place called “Ghadeer Khumm” and no one, except the ill, must remain here.”

The area of Ghadeer was chosen by divine command. This area is notable for a number of reasons:

Firstly, for those returning from Mecca, it arrives right before *Juhfah*, the location where the different paths [leading to the various regions and provinces of Arabia] diverge.

Secondly, it is crucial that in the future as well, for the Hajj caravans will pass by here on their path to Mecca. Upon reaching the valley of Ghadeer, they can pray at the Prophet ﷺ’s masjid, remember this pivotal event, and renew their allegiance to this ideal; indeed, as it would memorialize this event in the hearts [of the believers].

THE GEOGRAPHY OF GHADEER

Ghadeer Khumm is located in an expansive wilderness region, part of the floodplains of the Juhfah valley. These annual floods flow from east to west, and after passing by Ghadeer, continue until Juhfah and end in the Red sea, pouring the yearly storm waters into the ocean.

Along these floodplains, areas would appear where some of the floodwater collected, and for the duration of the year would be used to replenish water supplies. These oases would commonly be referred to as “Ghadeer”.

A number of these Ghadeers would appear in the various floodplains throughout the various regions, and each would be named differently to distinguish them. This particular Ghadeer would as well be distinguished by the name “Ghadeer Khumm”.

Next to the pond were five ancient yet verdant acacia trees, a type of tree resembling the plane tree that is indigenous to the desert regions. These five trees were ideal shelters for weary desert travelers with its incredible height, long branches, and plentiful leaves.

This area was chosen as the most ideal location for the 3-day Ghadeer ceremony. The area under the trees was determined ideal for the pronouncement itself, because it overlooked the expansive desert area where the people would gather, while providing shade for the sermon.

THE SERMON OF GHADEER

ENTERING GHADEER

On Thursday, the great caravan began their journey. This gigantic wave of people, exceeding 120,000 individuals, followed the Prophet ﷺ on the 5-day journey to Ghadeer. This included 5,000 Meccans and 12,000 Yemenis, who travelled in the opposite direction by the command the Prophet ﷺ to attend the Ghadeer ceremony.

In following the order of the Prophet ﷺ, none of the pilgrims remained in Mecca, all of them leaving to attend the largest congregation in Islamic history at the location of Ghadeer. The caravan returned on the same path they had taken from Medina to Mecca.

After leaving Mecca, they first arrived at ****Sayraf**, and from there, left for ****Marral-Ḍhahrān**. The next location was **'Usfān** and from there to ****Qadayd**. At this point they were close to **Juḥfah**, near which was Ghadeer.

REVELATION OF QUR'ANIC VERSE 5:67

Around noon, on Monday, the 18th of Dhul-Hijjah, just as they were nearing Ghadeer Khumm, the following verse of the Qur'an was revealed:

"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)

The last sentence in the above verse indicates that the Prophet ﷺ was mindful of the reaction of his people in delivering that message. But Allah informs him not to worry, for He will protect His Messenger from the people.

The Prophet ﷺ directed the caravan toward the oasis and stated:

"O people, respond to he who calls you to God, for I am the Messenger of God."

This indicated that an important pronouncement will be made. He then ordered the announcement to be made: **“All people wait here, all those who have gone ahead must return, and all those who are behind must stand here.”** And slowly the crowds gathered in the appointed area.

And he then ordered that no one is allowed under those ancient trees, for that spot must be left empty for the sermon.

After these Prophetic commands, all riders ceased their journey. Those who had gone ahead returned and the entire collective gathered at Ghadeer. They each began selecting a plot for themselves to setup camp for three days. And a calm began to emerge.

Indeed, gathered there was a diverse collection of men and women, from various tribes and clans, from towns far and wide, and with all different levels of priority and faith, all of whom had gathered to sit at the feet of the Prophet ﷺ. This itself illustrates a spectacular quality of the entire event.

In addition to the large crowds, there was the unbearable desert heat, the blistering sun and the scorching desert sands. It became so unbearable that the people had to cover themselves with whatever they could, pulling their garments over their heads and their feet, while others would wrap their legs with cloaks.

PREPARING THE PULPIT

The Prophet ﷺ had some of his closest companions prepare the pulpit under those ancient trees, all of which were in a row next to each other. These companions were Miqdād, Salmān, Abu Dharr, and ‘Ammar.

They would clear the ground near the trees of all thorns and sharp rocks, sweep the ground, washed it with water, and cut the low-lying branches hanging from the trees.

After that, they hung a sheet between two of the trees to serve as a canopy to protect against the sun. The area was now fully ready for the three-day ceremony.

Then they stacked some of the rocks on top of each other, placing on top some camel-saddles along with some saddles of the other animals. Draping a sheet on the large mound, they created a pulpit as tall as the Prophet ﷺ himself. This pulpit was located in the center of the crowd, and was well-positioned for many of the people to hear the Prophet's voice.

Because of the size of the gathering, Rabi'ah, known for his booming voice, was appointed to pronounce the Prophet's words for all to hear, especially those farther away.

THE PROPHET AND IMAM ALI ATOP THE PULPIT

By noon, the people had become restive. The Prophet ﷺ ordered the prayer to be called. The people emerged from their tents, and formed the prayer lines in front of the pulpit. The Prophet ﷺ as well emerged from his tent, took his place in the front, and began the congregational prayer.

After the prayers, the people saw the Prophet ﷺ ascend the Ghadeer pulpit and stood at its peak. Then, he called The Commander of the Faithful to stand on his right atop the pulpit. Before the sermon began, the Commander of the Faithful ascended the pulpit and stood only one step below the Prophet ﷺ on his right, with the Prophet ﷺ placing his hand on the Imam's shoulder.

The Prophet ﷺ looked to his right and left, observing the crowd, and waited for all to prepare themselves for the momentous speech. The women gathered as well and could clearly see the Prophet ﷺ.

After the people were completely ready, the Prophet ﷺ began his historic and final official speech for all the world to hear.

Having pictured this spectacular speech, where these two luminaries stand atop a pulpit with more than 120,000 surrounding observers, we attend to the Prophet's sermon itself.

We must note that this feat, where 120,000 people are gathered to listen to one speech, such that all are able to see and hear him is difficult even

today. Such an event was indeed unheard of in the entire history of Prophetic revelation.

THE SERMON OF GHADEER

The historic speech of the Prophet ﷺ known as the Sermon of Ghadeer lasted for approximately one hour and can be divided into 11 parts.

PRAISE BELONGS TO ALLAH

In the prelude to his speech, the Prophet ﷺ begins with praising the Divine and reciting the Divine Attributes of Might and Compassion, thereafter bearing witness to his own obedience in the face of the Divine Essence.

Praise belongs to Allah, Who is Sublime in His Oneness, and He is with all beings in His Loneliness. Glorious is He in His Domination, and He is great in His Foundations! His Knowledge encircles all beings without taking a move or having a dwelling; He subdues everything with His Power and Reasoning! He has eternally been praised, and so will be praised forever! There is no end to His Greatness, Dignity and Grandness; He is the Originator, Resurrector, and to Him all things return.

...

And I testify that He is God that all beings humble before His Dignity, and all are debased before His Glory; everything bows as submission before His Power, and all things are in state of humility before His tremendous and impressive Majesty!

THE MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGE

In the second section, he begins speaking on the matter at hand, declaring that he must state a very important decree regarding Ali ibn Abi Talib. If he does not, the Divine message would be incomplete and he fears the Divine recompense. And he declared that God revealed to him the following:

"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; surely Allah will not guide the unbelieving people” (Qur'an 5:67)

Thereafter he declared the clear Divine command regarding the issue of wilāyah, and said:

“O people! I have not been neglectful about publicizing what has been delivered to me by God. Now, I am to explain to you the cause of the Revelation of this Verse: Gabriel, bearing His Command, came down to me thrice from ‘Peace’, the Creator – for only He is [the source of] Peace – he brought it to me that to stand amid this vast mass and deliver God’s Command. Now, I announce you the colored or white that: Ali, the son of Abu Talib, is [as] a brother to me, and he is my executor, and successor to lead my people as an Imam after me! His relation to me is as Aaron to Moses is, except for no other messengers will follow me. After God and His Messenger, Ali is going to be your Conserver, and God has sent down a Verse saying: ‘Verily, your Guardian is Only God, His Messenger and the believers who pray and pay alms while are bowing down,’ (The Table: 5/55). Surely it is Ali who did set up prayer, and while bowing [down to pray], paid out alms, and always sought the Will of Almighty God.”

THE TWELFTH IMAM UNTIL THE END OF TIMES

In the third section, he announced the 12 imams after him so that all avarice (for the succession to the Prophet ﷺ) would end. The Prophet ﷺ makes a crucial point about the universality of the Wilayah of the Imams, applying to all mankind in whichever time and place, and that their words pertain to all issues, stating the following:

O people! It is my final rising in such a [huge] gathering. Thus, listen, and then obey well [the Words of] God! And submit yourselves to His Command! For God Almighty is your Master and your Lord; and after God, your Master is the Messenger of God, the Prophet, who is at present calling out to you. And after me, according to the Divine Command, Ali is your Master, and your Leader, [Imam]. Then after him, the Leadership will be preserved,

and perpetuated in my progeny, by his lineage, until the Day of Judgement when you come to encounter your God and His Messenger.

Another important issue the Prophet ﷺ addresses is that the Imams represent God and the Prophet ﷺ in every permissible and prohibited act, indeed in all issues pertaining to this world or the next, and states it as such:

Nothing is lawful but whatever God and His Messenger, and the Imams permit; and nothing is forbidden to you, unless God, and His Messenger, as well as Ali, and the next Imams forbid it. God, glory to Him in the highest, has stated to me all about permissible and the forbidden, and whatever lawful and unlawful that God has taught me in His Book, I have put it all in Ali's disposal.

Having stated all of this grandeur, the Prophet ﷺ warns the people against opposing them, stating:

O people! He has been picked as Imam by God; therefore, He does not accept the repentance of the deniers. It is the absolute God's will on those opposing Truth. Beware of opposing him in ill-will, or you will be caught up by the Fire whose fuel is stones and stone-men that have been prepared for all faith-rejecters!

Know that Gabriel brought me this news of God, [saying]: "One who rises against Ali, and does not accept his Leadership, then, let My wrath, and My course fall upon that type. It is just for a man to see what [good or bad] he has forwarded for his tomorrow – the Next Day. Thus, fear God, for by opposing Ali, lest your foot may slip after it is planted and found root! For indeed God is Aware of everything you do!"

At this point, the Prophet ﷺ was preparing for the most sensitive part of the sermon, one which also contained a call to action. So, to prepare the people, he said:

"O people! Do deeply reflect on the Holy Qur'an, and try to catch the Verses' sense and comprehend, then try to observe the even

*Verses of its, but do not dazzle at resembled Verses. By God!
Whatever is deeply rooted in it, and the true meaning and the sense
of its cannot be well explained to man, except by this man that I
am holding his hand high; now I announce that: **'For whomever I
am master, Ali is (also) his master!'***

*And he is none but Ali, the son of Talib, my brother, my successor
and my help, whose Leadership's Decree, has been sent to me from
God, Almighty.*

Then he painted a beautiful picture of the two greatest pillars of Islam,
stating:

*O people! It is obvious that Ali and my pure progeny born in this
family represent the minor benefit, and the Qur'an represents
major.*

*Either of these two heralds, and relates to another, or they are in
harmony with one another: they will not separate from each other
until they come to me at 'Kawthar', (on that Certain Day)! Let it be
known that: they are the Trustees of God among His creatures, and
are rulers by His Command on the earth.*

At this stage he unequivocally forbade anyone to dispute the status of the
person for which the event of Ghadeer was undertaken:

*Thus, let it be known that except this brother of mine, no one can be
called the 'Commander of the Faithful', who is here [as] a brother
with me. And let it be known that: after I am gone, the title of, 'The
Commander of the Faithful' is not allowed to be used by anyone
except for him!"*

FOR WHOMEVER I AM MASTER (MAWLA), ALI IS (ALSO) HIS MASTER (MAWLA)

By the fourth section, the Prophet ﷺ had introduced the issue and stated
the status of Imam Ali as the successor and the walī. In this section, so
that all sorts of doubt would be dispelled and all sources of dispute would
be nipped in the bud, the Prophet ﷺ enacted what he had until now
declared.

The Prophet ﷺ patted 'Ali's arm, lifting him up. Since the time when the Messenger of Allah ascended the pulpit, Ameerul-Mo'mineen was one pulpit step below where the Messenger of Allah had seated himself on his pulpit, while 'Ali was on his (Prophet ﷺ's) right side, one pulpit step lower, now they both appeared to the gathering to be on the same level; the Prophet ﷺ lifted him up, then raised his hands to the heavens in supplication while Ali's leg was touching the knee of the Messenger of Allah. The Prophet ﷺ continued his sermon:

Then he added: "O people! Who is to you, in most privilege than you yourselves?" They said, 'It is God, and His prophet – you.' So he said, "Now let it be known that, "

For whomever I am master, 'Ali is (also) his master." Then he added: "O Lord: please love those who love his Authority and be the enemy to one who is his enemy. And assist one who helps him, but do not support one who holds him apart.

In this section of the sermon, he declares the revelation that descended upon him, the revelation that states religion is completed with the wilāyah of Imam Ali, a declaration that was quite emotional and controversial. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"O Lord! When You Yourself appointed Ali as the Guardian, You sent down this Verse about him and announced: 'Today, I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed my Blessing upon you, and I have approved Islam as Religion for you; (The Table: 5/3). And also You stated: "In fact, religion in sight of God is Islam, (The Family of Imran: 3/9); You also stated: "And whoever chooses any religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter, he will be among the losers,"" (The Family of Imran 3/85).

"O Lord! I take You as a Witness that I uttered people Your Command.

THE DIVINE RELIGION HAS BEEN COMPLETED

In the fifth section, the Prophet ﷺ expressly declares:

“O people! God, glory to Him in the highest, has completed Religion with the Leadership of Ali. Thus, those who do not show their submission to him, and his successors, who are my progeny, and born from his lineage and are going to continue until the Day of Resurrection, their actions will become useless in this world and in the world to come. And they shall remain in the Eternal Flame, so that not a single torment will be reduced from them, and no delay is granted to them. (The Cow: 2/161)

Then, so that the people would appreciate the extent of this blessing, he said:

Your Prophet is the best of all Prophets, and your waṣī is the best of all waṣīs, and his offspring are the best of waṣīs.

Thereafter, while presenting just a small glimpse into the virtues of Imam Ali, he states:

O people! Indeed, with his jealousy, Satan chased away Adam from Paradise, thus, for God's sake, be not jealous of Ali, lest your deeds are rejected, and your steps slip. Adam was sent down to the earth for a single fault, while he was, in fact, the chosen one, by God; thus, how will it come to you? While you are no other than yourselves; and the enemies of God are also among you!

Here, having referred to the verse, “and have chosen for you as religion al-Islam...” he states:

O people! I took God as my Witness that I have delivered His Message to you, and “The duty and the mission of a Messenger is but to make known God's Messages and to proclaim them the things crystal clear! (Qur'an 29:18, Qur'an 24/54) O, people! Be heedful of God in such a way that He deserves, and try to be honorable Muslims and then die.” (Qur'an 3:102)

THE EVENT OF SAQIFAH

In the sixth section of the Sermon, the Prophet ﷺ presents this issue in terms of Divine Wrath. Having recited the Qur'anic verses of Divine curse and damnation, he states:

“O people! Believe in God and believe in His Messenger and in the Glorious [Book] which has been sent down with him, (Haggling: 64/8), before We blot out the faces and turn them backwards; or curse them as We cursed the People of the Sabbath – [The Jews who were to act wittingly against God] (The Woman: 4/47).

I swear to God that the true sense of this Verse is referred to a group of my companions whose names I know, but it is pity, I have been asked not to reveal their identity. Thus, behave you according to your hearts’ pleasure – whatever you feel: of love or hatred towards Ali.

At this stage he mentions the creation of his own and the Imams luminous primordial creation, stating:

O people! The Light, by God Almighty, is put inside me, and then inside Ali, and then inside his lineage, until Mahdi, the Upright, who shall demand the Divine Right as well our right. For God has put us as an irrefutable Proof, before those who are careless, and disprove us; who are throughout the world as: traitors, usurpers, sinners, tyrants, and oppressors!

Then referring to the leaders who will misguide the people and drag them towards hellfire, he said:

O people! Soon after me, there will come to you some leaders, who will call you enter the Fire, then, on that Day of Judgement, there is no assistant to rise for their aid! (The Narration: 28:41).

O people! Know that both God and I detest such crowd.

O people! These men along with their disciples, and their companions and their followers, will be thrown in the lowest part of the Fire; see how horrible is the place of such proud! (The Bees: 16:29).

At this point, he begins alluding to the event of Saqifah, the seeds of which were planted by the hypocrites during the same farewell pilgrimage, with the signing of the condemned *Manuscript* (declaration) that was finalized/concluded/agreed upon/sealed in Mecca, stating:

Indeed, these are the folks of the Manuscript; so, let each one of you look into his Manuscript!

When the Prophet ﷺ references the “folks of the Manuscript”, most of the people were unaware to whom the Prophet ﷺ was referring; only the people who implemented the Saqifah and the small circle of people whom the Prophet ﷺ had himself informed understood the Prophet’s intent.

At this point, having presented the grand message, the great Prophet ﷺ felt the burden removed from his shoulders. Here his words betray his contentment, stating:

O people! Now, I leave to you, [as documentation], the issue of the Leadership, and the succession, and its perpetuation in my lineage until the Day of Resurrection; I have passed on to you what I have been said to disclose, so that it becomes as a clear argument for those who are present and those who are absent; for those-who are here or not here-and those who are born, or even not born. Thus, those present today, should make this news known to those who are absent, that is, fathers [should tell it to] their sons, until the Day the Resurrection rises!

Here, with an even more explicit reference to the issue of Saqifah, he states:

But soon after I am gone, there will be some who shall unfairly take the Leadership by force, then replace it with Monarchy. May God damn the usurpers and those who take [the trusteeships] by force

Then, he speaks of the Divine test, and punishing those who usurp:

O people! God will not leave you on your own, except He has separated the pure from the impure; and God will not let you know of the ‘Unseen’, (The Family of Imran: 3/179).

O people! There shall remain not a single land, which has not been destroyed by God’s Will before the coming of the Resurrection Day, it is for the abjurations and the denials that their inhabitants will

have pronounced, and their places will be under the government of his holiness Mahdi, and God Almighty fulfills His Promise!

THE WILĀYAH AND LOVE OF THE AHLUL-BAYT

In the seventh section, the Prophet ﷺ refers mostly to the effects of the Wilayah and love of the Imams, reciting Surah Fatiha which all Muslims recite on a daily basis stating:

‘This Verse has been sent down regarding me, and the Imams are appointed and included in it. They are God’s Friends, and indeed they do not fear nor will they grieve! (Jonah: 10/62).

Ah, of course the party of God is victorious! (The Heavenly Food: 5/56)

He also stated that the possessors of the Straight Path mentioned in this chapter are in reality the Ahlul-Bayt.

He recited a number of verses that refer to the people of paradise, and stated that these are the Shi’a and followers of the progeny of Muhammad ﷺ. He also recited a number of verses referring to the people of the hellfire, describing these as the enemies of the progeny of Muhammad ﷺ. For example, he explained:

Know that the Imam’s friends are these who shall enter Paradise in peace, in great security, and the Angels will move humbly to their encounter to greet them thus: ‘Peace upon you! You are purified, so then enter forever into Paradise!’ (The Rocky Tract: 15/46)

The lineage of Imams was however another issue, one that he explained in different, yet equally emphatic way:

O people! Know that I am the Messenger, and Ali is, after I am gone, my successor, and the holy Imams following him, his progeny are all of them.

And let it be known that I am their father, and they are Ali’s lineage, one after another!”

IMAM AL-MAHDI (PEACE BE UPON HIM)

In the eighth section, he presented a number of key descriptions of Imam al-Hujjat ibn al-Hassan, the Mahdi, the greatest “Remainder of God”, may our souls be sacrificed for his sake. He gave a detailed account of both his attributes and his status, while giving truly glad tidings of a future filled with justice and fairness, brought about by his hands. These words of the Prophet ﷺ were indeed amazing for the audience who had only recently begun on the path of Islam, as he proclaimed:

“Know that the last Imam, Mahdi, the Upright, is from us,

He shall dominate over the entire religions.

Lo! As he shall take revenge from the oppressors, therefore,

he is the victorious destroyer of the castles!

Lo! He is the conqueror of all the-lack-of-religion, and their Guide!

Lo! He takes revenge for blood shed from the men of God!

Lo! He will assist the religion of God!

Know that, upon great measure, he shall seize [the Divine Knowledge] from the deep sea!

Know that! He shall reward every well-informed, by measure of his knowledge, and does so with the uninformed, by the measure of his ignorance!

Lo! He is great and has been chosen by God!

Lo! He is the heir of all Knowledge, and he seizes upon all comprehension.

Know that he breaks the news from His God and elevates the Divine Verses [in proud]!

Know that he is upright and proud.

Lo! It is he that the entire authorities have been given to.

Lo! All ‘bygones’ had foretold of his "Revelation".

Lo! It is he who shall remain as an irrefutable Proof, for there will be, after him, not any proof. Faith and honesty, and light and glint are with him only.

Know that no one could defeat him, and those who are facing him, won't be assisted.

Know that! He is the representative of God on Earth, so is he the Judge among His creatures, and he is the Honest Trustee of His over the hidden and manifest.”

ALLEGIANCE TO GHADEER

At the ninth stage of the sermon, the Prophet ﷺ presents the issue of swearing allegiance, and described the value of this allegiance in the following way:

Know that I have sworn with God an allegiance and Ali has sworn with me an allegiance; and now, on behalf of God the Mighty, Majestic [Himself], I shall ask for your allegiance with Ali:

In support of this, he referenced the following Qur'anic verse:

“[O Messenger!] For sure, those who swear allegiance with you, in fact, they swear allegiance with God: God's Hand is above their hands; for any person, who breaks his oath, he does harm to his own soul; and anyone who fulfills his oath with God, he will be bestowed a great reward by God.” (Qur'an,48:10)

THE LAWS OF GOD ARE ETERNAL

In the tenth section, the Prophet ﷺ spoke of the Divine laws and speaks to a number of essential doctrinal issues. These are the following issues:

Foretelling the future crises that would plague the Muslim community:

O people! Perform prayer, and pay the due welfare tax, as God Almighty has ordained you to act; but if a long time has passed, and you have neglected or forgotten [them], then, Ali is your master, and he shall explain to you what to do. He is the very man that God Almighty has set up as His certain trustee after I am gone. He is from me, so am I from him.

He, as well as all those who will come to the world from my lineage, will answer to all your needs, and will let you know whatever you do not know.

Then he explained in length the universality of the Divine commands.

Know that 'the count of permissible and forbidden things' is much more than I could reckon, and to present them to you in one single session: [but only know that] the permissible things are ordained to you, and the prohibited things are forbidden.

Next were new issues that would arise in the future for the Muslims, and he addressed these in the following way:

Therefore, I have been commanded to take your allegiance, and that you swear it with me, and shake hands with me, so that what I have declared you about Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, on God's behalf, and his successors who will follow him. The ones who shall be coming from my lineage, but also from the 'Leadership' and his lineage; this Leadership is designated alone for them; and the last 'Leader' will be 'His Holiness Mahdi', until the Day he shall meet the Lord of the Providence and Fate!

Finally, that the peak of enjoining good and forbidding evil is to spread the message of Ghadeer:

But let it be known that the greatest act of goodness is to understand deeply what I have just expressed, and to relay this to those who have not been present here today, and to invite them to accept this from me, and to forbid them to oppose or object to me! For, this is a Command coming from God Almighty, and from me; and no invitation to do good, nor any prohibition of unlawful deeds will be accomplished or done, unless with the presence of an innocent Imam!

PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE TWELVE IMAMS

In the last stage of the sermon, the people gave their verbal pledges. To this end, two steps were taken:

Firstly, he stated the reason for this verbal pledge. The reason for this verbal pledge before the physical pledge was given as such:

“O people! You are too many to shake hands with me now! On the other hand, my Lord has commanded me to receive your oath and "word” regarding with Ali, Lord of believers, that I have declared; and about the Imams who shall come after him, as well those from my lineage and his lineage then – as I already defined it to you: they are my progeny, and are his lineage

Secondly, he selected each particular word of the verbal pledge with particular care and was equal to the physical pledge. And because this pledge was neither a simple or temporary matter, rather an essential doctrine that was to last until the end of times, the Prophet ﷺ verbally pronounced a very detailed pledge with definite terms and had the people reiterate each of the terms.

Thus, when speaking to the people, he stated:

You, therefore, should say in one voice: "We hear, and we obey; we accept and we are bound by what you have conveyed to us from our Lord and yours with regard to our Imam 'Ali (Ameerul-Mo'mineen), and to the Imams, your sons from his loins. We swear the oath of allegiance to you in this regard with our hearts, with our souls, with our tongues, with our hands. According to it shall we live, and according to it shall we die, and according to it shall we be resurrected. We shall not alter anything or substitute anything with another, nor shall we doubt nor deny nor suspect, nor shall we violate our covenant nor abrogate the pledge. You admonished us on behalf of Allah with regard to 'Ali (Ameerul-Mo'mineen), and to the Imams whom you mentioned to be from your offspring from among his progeny after him: al-Hasan and al-Husain and to whoever is appointed (as such) by Allah after them. The covenant and the pledge are taken from us, from our hearts, from our souls, from our tongues, from our conscience, from our hands. Whoever does so by his handshake, it shall be so, or otherwise testified to it by his tongue, and we do not seek any substitute for it, nor shall Allah see our souls deviating there from. We shall convey the same on

*your behalf to anyone near and far of our offspring and families,
and we implore Allah to testify to it, and surely Allah suffices as the
Witness and you, too, shall testify for us. "*

It is evident that the Prophet ﷺ determined each word that the people were meant to say and selected each term so that each person would not decide their pledge based on their own whims. Rather it was a singular pledge, chosen by the Prophet ﷺ, and established as the pledge for all to recite. And the people would after each sentence, repeat exactly the same statement as was stated by the Prophet ﷺ, making their public and general pledge.

And he requested the people to be thankful for the blessing of not leaving them to their own incomplete and partial devices; rather the Divine Himself ordained this directly and made it necessary for mankind to follow.

The final few words of the Prophet ﷺ were of prayer for those who accepted his sermon and his curse upon those who denied his commands. And he ended (as he began), with praise of God, the Almighty.

THE THREE-DAY CEREMONY AT GHADEER

CONGRATULATIONS AND APPLAUSE UPON THE EVENT

Once the sermon ended, the people called out: “Yes, we have now heard. And in obedience to God’s command, by our heart and our lives, our hands and our tongues, we accept!” They rushed towards the Prophet ﷺ and the Commander of the Faithful, each trying to reach before the other. Emotions overflowed from the crowd and they cried with excitement, bestowing the already incredible gathering with even more grandeur. Among all this commotion, the Prophet ﷺ said, “Praise unto God who chose us over all the worlds.”

We should point out that only after the day of Ghadeer did the Prophet ﷺ say, “Congratulate and applaud me! For God has made me a Prophet and has distinguished my progeny for (and with) the Imamah.” Indeed, he did not mention this after any of his other victories, whether after battles or otherwise, or even the conquest of Mecca.

This tells us that this particular occasion was indeed his greatest victory and was the moment when disbelief and hypocrisy were truly revealed and destroyed.

The Prophet ﷺ ordered his crier to announce the following line to the people, a line that summarized beautifully the message of Ghadeer:

*Whoever among you takes me as his master, this, Ali is his master.
O Allah! Befriend whoever befriends him (Ali) and be the enemy of
whoever antagonizes him; support whoever supports him and
abandon whoever abandons him.*

This was intended as the eternal call of Wilayah, to be etched into the hearts of all believers.

THE ALLEGIANCE OF THE MEN

The Prophet ﷺ had mentioned within his sermon that he would take an individual pledge from the people after the sermon, when he had said:

Therefore, I have been commanded to take your allegiance, and that you swear it with me, and shake hands with me, so that what I have declared you about Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, on God's behalf, and his successors who will follow him. The ones who shall be coming from my lineage, but also from the 'Leadership' and his lineage; this Leadership is designated alone for them; and the last 'Leader' will be 'His Holiness Mahdi', until the Day he shall meet the Lord of the Providence and Fate!

The oath of Ghadeer was meant as an oath of allegiance to the Wilayah of the Twelve Imams. The contents of this oath were determined by the Prophet ﷺ and presented during his sermon, and in response the people had given their verbal oaths after his sermon concluded.

Now the pledge needed to become official. And so as to facilitate this process, for the enormous mass of people, so that they could give their pledge in an organized fashion, the Prophet ﷺ ordered two tents to be erected: he designated one of the tents for himself and sat therein, and the other for Ali from him to sit in. Then he would have the people gather: first, a few people at a time would enter the Prophet's tent, would give their allegiance by hand to the Prophet ﷺ, and congratulate and applaud him. Then they would proceed to Imam Ali's tent, address him as Imam and the successor to the Prophet ﷺ, give their allegiance and pledge their loyalty. And finally, by recognizing him as the "Commander of the Faithful", they would congratulate and applaud him.

This entire process lasted approximately three days, with the Prophet ﷺ remaining in Ghadeer the entire time. Everything was so well planned and executed that everyone was able to participate in the ceremony.

What is of particular note is that among those who participated in the Ghadeer ceremony were the first of those who would later break their oaths to the Imam and renege their allegiance to him. Indeed, after the

Prophet ﷺ passed, they would be the first to rise up and stand against the Imam.

Interestingly, ‘the second caliph, after having made his pledge, said, “May you be blessed! May you be honored O Abul-Hasan! You have become my master along with the master of all believing men and women.”

Even more interestingly, was that after the order of the Prophet ﷺ, all the people would without question come and pledge their allegiance to Imam Ali, and yet Abu Bakr and ‘Umar would ask the Prophet ﷺ, “Is this a decree from God, or is it from you?”

The Prophet ﷺ replied, “It is from God and his Prophet. Would such an important issue be decided without God’s command?” He also said, “Yes! This is a right given from God and his Prophet ﷺ that Ali is the Commander of the Faithful.”

THE ALLEGIANCE OF THE WOMEN

The Prophet ﷺ commanded that the women must as well pledge their allegiance to the Imam and having recognized him as the “Commander of the Faithful”, congratulate and applaud him. He particularly emphasized this pledge for his wives.

Yet because most of the women were unrelated to the Imam, the Prophet ﷺ ordered that a container of water be placed on the floor and a curtain be drawn above it. To fulfill the pledge, the women would place their hands in the water on one side, and the Imam would place his hand on the other side of the curtain.

We must remember that the great lady of Islam, Lady Fatimah was among the participants of the Ghadeer ceremony, along with all the Prophet’s wives, as well as Umm Hani, the sister of Imam Ali, Fatima, the daughter of Ḥamza the Prophet’s uncle and finally Asma, the daughter of ‘Umays.

THE PROPHETIC TURBAN

It is an Arab custom that whenever a chief declares his successor to his people, a large ceremony would be held where a turban would be fitted for the successor, functioning similar to a crowning ceremony. This custom would gain even more significance if the chief himself would fit his own turban on the head of his successor, symbolizing absolute trust and faith in him.

After the Ghadeer ceremony, the Prophet ﷺ took his own turban, named “Saḥāb” (cloud), and crowned Imam Ali with it, and having draped the end of it on his shoulder, said, “This turban is the crown of Arabs.” The Commander of the Faithful later said of this:

On the day of Ghadeer Khumm, the Prophet ﷺ fit his turban on my head and draped one side of it on my shoulder saying, “God supported me during the days of Badr and Ḥunayn with angels crowned with turbans like these.

GABRIEL’S DESCENT TO GHADEER

Throughout history, there have been particular times when angels have appeared in the guise of humans, functioning as sources of guidance for people. Ghadeer was one of these moments where after the sermon of the Prophet ﷺ, where, yet again, all excuses were removed.

A man, incredibly handsome and particularly well-kempt, stood beside the people and said, “By God, I have never seen a day like today. He has emphasized his cousin’s affair so much, having set an oath towards him that no one can renege on except the disbeliever. Woe unto he who breaks this oath.”

‘Umar came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked, “Did you hear what this man just said?”

The Prophet ﷺ replied, “Did you recognize him?”

He said, “no.”

The Prophet ﷺ said, “This was the Noble Spirit Gabriel. Be steadfast in remaining loyal to your oath. If you do not, God and His messenger, the angels and all of the believers will turn away from you.”

THE DIVINE MIRACLE AT GHADEER

Ghadeer was the occasion when the greatest message of Islam, namely Wilayah, was explicated. If for other occasions the Prophet ﷺ relied on miracles to prove beyond any rhyme or reason that what he said was true, Ghadeer was an occasion where this was the case. On the Day of Ghadeer, God would directly present a miracle, so that all hearts attained absolute certainty about what was being proclaimed. This was a divine stamp that would seal the message of Ghadeer and ensure its authenticity.

In the final hours of the ceremony, Ḥarīth al-Fihri, along with 12 of his companions would come to the Prophet ﷺ and ask:

O Muhammad! I have three questions of you:

1. Is bearing witness to God and his Prophet ﷺ a message you bring from yourself or on behalf of God?
2. Are the prayer and the alms-tax, the hajj pilgrimage and Jihad messages from your own behalf or on God's behalf?
3. Is what you said about Ali ibn Abi Talib, that “For whomever I am master, Ali is (also) his master,” from yourself or from God?

The Prophet ﷺ responded to all three questions, “God revealed these to me, and Gabriel is the intermediary between God and myself, and I am the messenger of God, and will not announce a message without God's behest.”

Ḥarīth said, “God, if what Muhammad said is true and this is truly on your behalf, rain upon me rocks from the heavens or beset me with a great calamity!”

And just as Ḥarīth's words ended and he began to leave, God rained upon him a rock from the heavens, hitting his head and killing him instantly. Indeed, God repeated for those 120,000 people what had beset the “People of Elephants” mentioned in the Qur'an.

After this, the verse “A questioner questioned concerning the doom about to fall (1) Upon the disbelievers, which none can repel, (2) From Allah, Lord of the Ascending Stairways (3)” was revealed. The Prophet ﷺ turned to the people and said, “Did you see (what happened here)?”

They responded, “Yes!”

He asked, “Did you hear (what was said here)?”

They answered, “Yes!” After this response, the Prophet ﷺ said, “Blessed are those who accept his Wilayah, and accursed are those who are his enemies. I can see Ali and his Shi’a on the day of Judgment while they are youthful, entering heavenly gardens atop camels. They are crowned and they neither fear nor are saddened by anything. They are magnificently content and blissful, as they are aided by God. This, indeed, is the final recompense! This continues until they reside in the Holy Abode near the Lord of the Worlds. Therein, they are given whatever they will, indeed whatever the eyes delight. They will reside therein eternally, a place where the angels will say to them, “(Saying): Peace be unto you because ye persevered. Ah, passing sweet will be the sequel of the (heavenly) Home.”

With this miracle, it quickly became evident to all that what was said and done in Ghadeer was in reality derived from revelation and was itself a Divine decree.

On the other hand, it also placed a burden on hypocrites who thought and believed as Ḥarīth al-Fahrī did. People claimed they believed in God and his Messenger, but after finding that Wilayah is given by God to Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him, said, “We cannot bear this!”

This Divine response was final and quick: **whoever does not accept the Wilayah of Ali, has rejected God and His Messenger.**

THE END OF THE CEREMONIES

The Ghadeer ceremonies having ended, were now memorialized as the “Days of Wilayah.” The Arab clans and tribes were now replete with Islamic knowledge and understanding. They now began returning to their

towns and cities, having said farewell to their Prophet ﷺ and recognizing the Wilayah of his successor (Imam Ali). The Prophet ﷺ as well embarked for Medina, taking the Prophetic ﷺ caravan to its final destination.

The message of Ghadeer quickly spread throughout the lands and was heard by all. The news was taken to the ends of the earth by travelers, caravans, and merchants, from Byzantine, China, Iran and beyond, and was even spread among non-Muslims.

In this way, the Islamic civilization again showed its greatness and protected itself from foreign invasion through the appointment of Imam Ali عليه السلام. And through these means did God remove all doubt regarding his religion and its perpetuity. The Commander of the Faithful himself said:

The Prophet ﷺ did not leave any room for anyone to doubt (the message of) the day of Ghadeer and for no one to speak (against it).”

We pray that 15 centuries later, we are still able to continue the message of Ghadeer. Having claimed the position of Ghadeer we must deny that of Saqifeh, until the flag of Wilayah soars through history and attains the beautiful satisfaction of the inheritor of Ghadeer.

CONCLUSION

Let us do *exactly* as the Holy Prophet ﷺ instructed: that we pass on the message of Ghadeer to everyone, from today until the End of Days. In our allegiance to the Prophet and 12 Imams, we need to stand by the genesis of *wilāyah* and recognize what it means for our faith.

Looking at the steps taken to prepare, gather, and broadcast this sermon, one can be absolutely certain of God Almighty and His Prophet's intention to publicize this message. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ spared no excuse, extinguished all doubt, and left no stone unturned when it came time to announce God's Divine appointment of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib ؑ as the Prophet's successor and Imam of the Muslim nation.

We proclaim Eid al-Ghadeer as the best of eids, for it hallmarks the perfection of Islam as God Almighty intended for humankind. We conclude with salutations to the Imam and Master of our Time, Imam al-Hujjat ibn al-Hassan ؑ, and prayers for his reappearance. In remembering the day our faith was perfected, let us also remember the one whose return is fiercely awaited.

اللهم عجل لوليك الفرج



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To Proudly Serve the Awaited One