

## **Various Forms of Specific Designation (*Tanṣīṣ*) of Amīr al-Mu'minīn Imam 'Alī (as) in the Words of the Prophet (pbuh)**

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### **Abstract**

The process of designating an Imam stands as one of the most pivotal and contentious issues in the context of Islamic leadership, serving as a primary locus of discord throughout Islamic history. Not only have diverse methodologies regarding the selection and appointment of an Imam underscored the unique character of Islamic sects, denominations, and doctrinal orientations but they have also engendered intricate debates within the Muslim intellectual tradition. Within this discourse, the Imamiyah School, drawing upon rational, Qur'anic, and Sunnah sources of knowledge, accentuates the significance of appointment and grants a privilege to textual sources (*naṣṣ*) as the exclusive conduit for discerning and expounding this perspective. Hence, one of the paradigms employed by the Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) in both the paramount aspect of his mission and in explicating the succession of Imam 'Alī to his prophetic legacy is characterized by a specific form of designation (*tanṣīṣ*). Through this approach, the Prophet not only corroborated the appointment but also elucidated and authenticated the essence of this pivotal issue, thereby substantiating his argument for the community. The research findings expound upon a linguistic framework utilized to convey the concept of Imamate, addressing seven titles such as Imamate, caliphate, successorship (*wiṣāyah*), wilāyat (lit. guardianship), vizieryship (*vizārat*), emirate (*imārat*) and commandership of Amīr al-Mu'minīn, Imam 'Alī (as), citing examples of these expressions in the Prophetic sayings.

**Keywords:** Designation, Amīr al-Mu'minīn, Prophetic Sayings, Imamate, Caliphate.



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## Introduction

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) is regarded as the foremost guide and educator of humanity, exemplifying the pinnacle of moral and instructional leadership. As articulated in the tradition, "He (God) educated his Prophet, and then He perfected his manners" (Kulaynī, 1987, vol. 1, p. 266), his character, teachings, and normative conduct, imbued with divine nurture, epitomize the profound wisdom of the Qur'an.

When the Prophet (pbuh) speaks of the bestowal of *Jawāmi' al-Kalim*<sup>1</sup> by God as an honor bestowed upon him (Ṣadūq, 1993, vol. 11, p. 240), it does not imply that all virtues and knowledge are encompassed within his words. Rather, it signifies a portion of his knowledge that he articulates in accordance with the intellectual capacity and comprehension of his audience. (Kulaynī, 1987, vol. 1, p. 23)

Such constraints on divine proofs (*hujaj*) have been inherent in their interactions with humanity, necessitating diverse methodologies and linguistic approaches to convey truths and reveal mysteries. Even the Quraysh tribe, renowned for their eloquence and rhetoric among the Arabs, found themselves captivated not only by the divine discourse but also by the eloquence, expressions, and rhetorical strategies inherent in the words of the unlettered Prophet (pbuh).

In the critical task of guiding the community, particularly concerning the succession of Imam 'Alī, the Prophet (pbuh) employed various linguistic frameworks to elucidate this pivotal matter conclusively. This strategic utilization of language served to leave no room for ambiguity, ensuring the clarity of his message and removing any pretext for dissent within the community.

Considering the structure and content of the Prophet's speech, as well as his audience engagement, his rhetorical patterns in elucidating the Imamate of Amīr al-Mu'minīn, Imam 'Alī (as) can be classified into three types, e.g. thematic content, rhetorical styles, and linguistic and



1. *Jawāmi' al-Kalim* is a prophetic term referring to a collection of comprehensive, concise, and meaningful sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. The term "kalima" in this expression refers to a collection of words, such as a sermon or a poem. Therefore, "Jawāmi' al-Kalim" refers to a comprehensive collection of sentences and speeches. In the terminology of Hadith, "Jawāmi' al-Kalim" refers to the comprehensive, concise, and meaningful sayings of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family.

communicative devices. This study specifically focuses on one of these types in the words of the Prophet (pbuh).

The most influential aspect through which the speaker guides his audience is the content and theme upon which his discourse is organized. Thus, a crucial pillar of speech, in addition to rhetorical style, linguistic devices, and language usage, is the substance and content of the discourse.

In his discourses, the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, employed various rhetorical occasions to explicate and affirm the doctrine of Imamate, particularly emphasizing the pivotal role of Amīr al-Mu'minīn, Imam 'Alī (as). On numerous instances, he unequivocally addressed the issue of succession, thereby precluding alternative interpretations from the consciousness of his audience. Moreover, the Prophet (pbuh) often dedicated segments of his orations to extolling the eminence of Imam 'Alī (as), urging Muslims towards discerning judgment in favoring the most qualified individual and elucidating criteria of superiority, including erudition, valor, renunciation, and precedence over revered figures such as prophets, angels, and other companions. Additionally, his speeches were structured to encompass three thematic dimensions: exegesis, appraisal, and informational elucidation, catering to the comprehension of his listeners.

This research endeavors to delve into the Imami perspective, acquainting the reader with the conceptual framework and doctrinal significance of explicit textual references (*naṣṣ*), and subsequently scrutinizes exemplars of prophetic texts elucidating the Imamate of Imam 'Alī (as).

### **Concept and Position of Textual Evidence (*Naṣṣ*)**

In linguistic terminology, "naṣṣ" denotes stability, elevation, and the explicit articulation of something (Ibn Athīr, 1989, vol. 5, p. 65). In other words, it refers to a term that signifies a specific meaning in a manner that precludes the possibility of alternative interpretations (Farāhīdī, 1989, vol. 7, p. 86). Considering the literal meaning of this term, *naṣṣ* in speech and discourse refers to conveying the intended speaker's message clearly, leaving no room for alternative interpretations.

However, with regard to the degrees of assertion and explicitness, *naṣṣ* can be divided into two types: *naṣṣ ḡāhir* (explicit textual evidence), which unequivocally indicates the intended meaning without requiring additional

context, and on the contrary, there is *naṣṣ khafī* which is the implicit textual evidence.

It is worth noting that one of the most significant points of contention between the Imamiyyah and other schools of thought concerns the appointment (*intiṣāb*) or selection (*intikhāb*) of the Imam. Within this discourse, the Imamiyya School's belief hinges on the issuance and denotation of textual evidence in determining the Imam after the Prophet Muḥammad's (pbuh) demise. Conversely, Mu'tazilites and the majority of Ahl al-Hadith and Ash'arites deny the realization of textual evidence in this matter, considering the appointment of the Imam to be the prerogative of the community's consensus and the decision made by the elites of the Muslim Ummah (for further understanding of the concept of *Ahl al-Ḥall wa al-'Aqd* [lit. people of Resolution and Settlement] and its conditions and duties, see: Sabzavari, Sayyid Hasan, "The Meaning and Position of Consensus of *Ahl al-Ḥall wa al-'Aqd* Imamate Studies, 10, pp. 35-86). However, another approach called "establishing dominion through subjugation and overpowering" has been proposed as a third alternative (Farā', 1969, p. 23).

Given the unique process of determining the Imam through specific designation and in view of the illegitimacy of other methods within the Imamiyyah School, it is natural for this approach to be more evident in the utterances of the Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh), and for the role of explicating divine appointment in the Imamate of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (as) to be derived from this method. Additionally, the Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) repeatedly affirmed the process of determination and appointment of the Imam by the Almighty God when dealing with various tribes. The Prophet (pbuh) emphasized his role in this matter as merely that of proclamation and clarification. The Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) explicitly stated when encountering the Banū Walī'ah tribe: "The matter of succession is in the hands of God, and He places it wherever He wills." (Ibn Hishām, 1963, vol. 2, p. 289). Similarly, in a meeting with the Kindah tribe, after their request for succession, he stated: "Verily, sovereignty and dominion belong to God, and He gives it to whomever He wills." (Ibn Kathīr, 1976, vol. 2, p. 159).

Hence, the formation of belief in textual evidence regarding the Imamate of Amīr al-Mu'minīn, 'Alī (as) dates back to the time of the

Prophet Muḥammad himself (pbuh). Claims suggesting the emergence of this idea in earlier centuries, as proposed by some opponents, have been refuted and criticized by eminent Shi'i scholars such as Shaykh Mufīd (Mufīd, 1993, p. 5), Sayyid Murtaḍa ('Alam al-Hudā, 1990, vol. 2, p. 108), Muḥaqqiq Ḥillī (Ḥillī, 1994, p. 247), and other Imamiyya scholars and theologians. In terms of determining the successor, explicit and implicit textual evidence has been issued from the perspective of the Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh). These texts have been classified as *naṣṣ qawlī* (verbal evidence) regarding the subject-matter (Nawbakhtī, 1993, p. 80).

### **Types of Textual Evidence in Prophetic Utterances on the Imamate of Imam 'Alī (as)**

One of the rhetorical methods employed by the Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) to elucidate the Imamate of Imam 'Alī (as) is the method of textual evidence. The frequency of this method in his utterances has dispelled any doubts or uncertainties regarding the divinely appointed leadership of Imam 'Alī (as). The evidence for this claim lies in the formation of the foundation of belief in the process of specific designation concerning the appointment of the Imam during the time of the Companions who acknowledged this matter and articulated it on numerous occasions, both publicly and in their protests.

It should be noted that in some of the prophetic utterances, the name and person of the Imam are explicitly mentioned, while in others, the attributes of the Imam are explicitly stated, thus clearly elucidating and manifesting the identity of his successor for the community. This research refers to seven titles of the prophetic texts regarding the Imamate of Imam 'Alī, peace be upon him:

#### **1. Title of Imamate**

The word "Imam" in its linguistic sense derives from the root "amma, ya'ummu" and denotes anything or anyone followed in actions (Rāghib, 1984, vol. 1, p. 87). Considering the various usages of "Imam," multiple instances of its usage can be found in the Qur'an, such as the Preserved Tablet (Sūrah Yā-Sīn: 12), the clear and manifest path (Sūrah al-Ḥijr: 79), the heavenly book (Sūrah Hūd: 17), the divine prophets and guides (Sūrah al-Anbiyā': 73), leaders of misguidance (Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ: 41), and the weakened (Sūrah Al-Qasas: 5).

In the terminology of Shia theologians, Imamate has been defined in two ways. Some theologians, relying on Prophetic traditions, define Imamate as a divine covenant, authority, and divine sovereignty derived from the sovereignty of God over His servants. Accordingly, they maintain that it is a prerogative of God to appoint His vicegerent and successor among His servants on earth (Shaftī, 1991, pp. 12-23). However, others, with an extrinsic and comparative approach, define it as "universal leadership in religious and worldly affairs as the successorship and representation of the Prophet (pbuh)" (Mufid, 1993, p. 39).

Therefore, it is evident that the term *Imam* is one of the most explicit terms signifying the succession of the Prophet (pbuh), which he explicitly stated on numerous occasions, inviting everyone to the Imamate and leadership after himself. This term is often used in conjunction with other terms in the Prophet's utterances, indicating his consideration of such specific designation (*tanṣīṣ*).

In his books *Al-Yaqīn bi-Ikhtiṣāṣ Mawlānā 'Alī (a) bi-Imrat al-Mu'minīn* and *Al-Taḥṣīn fī Asrār Mā Zāda 'Alā Kitāb al-Yaqīn* which serves as a supplement to the first book, the late Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 664 AH) has narrated dozens of traditions indicating the designation of Imam 'Alī (as) by Allah and the noble Prophet (pbuh) as the "Imam."

"You are the Imam of my Ummah," "The Imam of the Muslims," "The Imam after me," "The Imam of the recipients of divine mercy," "The Imam of the nation," "The Imam of creation," "The Imam of every Muslim," "The Imam of guidance," "The Imam of the God-fearing," and so on, are titles mentioned in the traditions. Some of them will be discussed further.

### **1-1. You are the Imam of my Ummah**

Ibn 'Abbās narrates from the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) addressing Imam 'Alī (as) as follows:

"O 'Alī! I am the city of wisdom, and you are its gate. No one can enter that city except through its gate. It is a lie for someone to think they love me while they harbor enmity towards you, for you are from me and I am from you... You are the Imam of my Ummah, and after me, you are their leader. Blessed is the one who obeys you, and wretched is the one who disobeys you..." (Ṣadūq, 1975, p. 241)

Considering the text of the narration, the addition of the word "Imam" to "my Ummah" is a common usage. The explanatory phrases following it,

such as "leader after me" and "the happiness being contingent upon absolute obedience to him," specify and affirm the succession and Imamate of Imam 'Alī (as) and eliminate any possibility of absolute leadership and caliphate other than his after the Prophet (pbuh).

### 1-2. Imam of the Muslims

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: "I am the leader of the first and the last, and 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (as) is the chief of my successors. He is my brother, inheritor, and the successor to my community. His leadership is an obligation and duty, obedience to him is a virtue, and love for him is a means to approach Allah... He is the Imam of the Muslims, the master of the believers, and their commander after me." (Ṣadūq, 1988, p. 679)

### 1-3. The Imam after Me

In a lengthy narration, the Prophet (pbuh) addresses his companions and, with an oath, mentions the aforementioned epithet for Imam 'Alī (as) as follows: "I swear by Allah, he is the Imam after me, my successor, and the executor of my affairs. Therefore, obey him, do not oppose him, honor him, and do not precede him, for after me, he is the Caliph of Allah on earth." (Baḥrānī, 2001, vol. 4, p. 235)

### 1-4. Imam of the Recipients of Divine Mercy (al-Marḥūmīn)

While holding the ring of the Ka'ba's door, Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī stood before the people and elaborated on the verse of the selection of prophets, referring to some of the virtues of Imam 'Alī (as) based on the words of the Noble Messenger. One of the attributes mentioned in this narration for Imam 'Alī (as) is the Imamate over individuals who are recipients of divine mercy. (Ibn Ṭāwūs, 1993, p. 609)

## 2. Title of Caliphate

The term *Khalīfa* (caliph) derives from the root *kh-l-f* and the original word is *khalīf* while the addition of *ah* is for emphasis, similar to 'Allāma and its plural form is *khulafā'* and *khalā'if* (Rāghib, 1984, vol. 1, p. 294). The root word *khalf* refers to something that comes after another thing and replaces it (Ibn Fāris, 1995, vol. 2, p. 212). Thus, the person who comes after another and assumes his position is called a caliph. Also, as per the Qur'an, women who remained in the city while their husbands engaged in trade and warfare were referred to as *khawālif* (Sūrah al-Tawbah: 87) (Farāhīdī, 1989, vol. 4, p. 267). *Istikhlaḥ* means placing someone as a successor, and there is a sense of "seeking" in the word as well (Sūrah Al-

An'ām: 133). The concept of "one thing coming after another" is employed in this term, indicating that the caliph shares similarities and qualities with the one they succeed, and their absence is compensated by the presence of the caliph (Muṣṭafawī, 1990, vol. 3, p. 110).

Considering the meaning of this term, we find conformity between the concepts of Imamate and Caliphate; because just as Allah Almighty introduces Imamate as His covenant and attributes it to Himself (Surah al-Baqarah: 124; Surah Saba': 18), He has exclusively reserved the process of appointing a caliph for Himself (Surah al-Baqarah: 30; Surah Ṣād: 26) and considers the appointment of a caliph and successor to be contingent upon His decision (Surah al-A'rāf: 142). Therefore, the title caliph, given the clarity it holds in the context of Imamate and succession to the Prophet, is a clear indication of Imamate in various contexts and numerous occasions, issued by the Prophet (pbuh), eliminating any doubts or ambiguities regarding the Imamate of Imam 'Alī (as) (Ibn Ḥamza Ṭūsī, 1998, p. 118).

The incident of *Bad' al-Da'wa* or *Yawm al-Dār* is an event mentioned in the sources of hadith, history, and exegesis. Its occurrence followed the revelation of the noble verse "and warn your closest kindred" (Surah Ash-Shu'arā: 214), in which the Prophet (pbuh), by the command of the Lord, warned his closest relatives and invited them to Islam. The Prophet (pbuh), publicly and openly, announced his prophethood and pointed to the issue of his succession by raising this question, "Which one of you will support me in this mission, so that he will be my brother, my successor, and my caliph among you?" and the positive response from Imam 'Alī (a) introduced him for the first time as his caliph (Ṭabarī, 1963, p. 39).

In another narration, Ibn 'Abbās quotes the Prophet (s) as saying: "Indeed, 'Alī (as) is my successor and caliph" (Ṣadūq, 1988, p. 112). In a narration transmitted from the Prophet (pbuh), he mentions Imam 'Alī's traits and characteristics as follows:

"Truly, the one who has sent me forth as prophet and has chosen me over all people, I and these individuals are the most beloved creatures to Allah on earth. There is no one more beloved to me than them. But 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (as), who is my brother, my companion, the successor after me, the standard-bearer of my banner in this world and the Hereafter, the possessor of my pool and my intercession, is the leader of every Muslim,



the Imam of every believer, and the guide of every pious person. He is my successor and caliph over my family and community, both in my lifetime and after my death. Whoever loves him loves me, and whoever hates him hates me. Because of his authority, my Ummah receives mercy, and due to enmity and opposition to him, some of my Ummah are cursed" (Ṣadūq, 1988, p. 112).

### 3. Title of Succession

The terms *wiṣāyah* (literally, successorship) and *waṣī* (successor) derive from the trilateral root *w-ṣ-y* signifying the conveyance of a responsibility or authority from one individual to another (Ibn Fāris, 1995, vol. 6, p. 116). Consequently, *waṣīyat* adopting the morphological pattern of *fa ṭla* denotes verbal communication directed towards another individual (Ibn Fāris, 1995, vol. 6, p. 116). This is because the testator or will-maker (*mūṣī*) establishes a link between the trusteeship and administration, posthumously delegated through the executor, and the period preceding his demise (Ṭurayḥī 1997, vol. 1, p. 440).

*Waṣāyat* or *wiṣāyat* encompasses the act whereby the testator authorizes an individual to act as his proxy subsequent to his demise, typically involving matters such as settling debts, claiming dues, and assuming guardianship over minors or individuals of unsound mind over whom he exercised control and guardianship (Ṭurayḥī 1997, vol. 1, p. 440). *Waṣī* structured according to the *fa ṭl* pattern, functions semantically as an object rather than a subject, with its plural form being *awṣiyā*. Ibn Manẓūr elucidates:

"Alī is designated *waṣī* due to the intertwining of his lineage, cause, methodology, and approach with those of our master, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him [and his family]. I assert: May the Almighty exalt the countenance of Amīr al-Mu'minīn, 'Alī, and bestow blessings upon him..." (Ibn Manẓūr, 1988, vol. 15, p. 394.)

Thus, the act of designating a successor to undertake specific responsibilities and exercise discretionary powers entails granting him precedence over others. Essentially, the same authority and control vested in the testator are delegated to the successor, who assumes this role. Furthermore, the successor must possess the requisite qualifications for the position of succession and oversight, enabling him to effectively discharge

his duties and prevent any complications from arising. Given the authority vested in him, he must also issue commands and prohibitions pertaining to relevant matters.

The aforementioned principles (the precedence of the successor over others, the conferral of guardianship upon the testator, the eligibility criteria for the successor's position, etc.), derived from the conceptual framework of "waṣī" and "waṣāyat" (successorship), elucidate the intrinsic alignment between this term and the notion of "Imamate." Thus, what is inherent in Imamate and caliphate finds resonance within the concept of successorship.

Hence, one of the terms expressly articulated by the Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) concerning the Imamate of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a) is the title "*waṣāyat*," which, akin to the term caliphate has been invoked independently or in conjunction with the caliphate across diverse contexts and epochs. Expressions such as *Waṣīyyī* denoting "my successor" (Ṣadūq, 1988, p. 62), *Sayyid al-Awṣiyā'* signifying "Leader of the Successors, *Waṣī Sayyid al-Anbiyā'*" meaning "Successor of the Chief of Prophets" (Ṣadūq, 1998, p. 61), *Sayyid al-Waṣīyīn* denoting "Leader of the Successors" (Ibn Babawayh, 1984, p. 21), *Waṣī Sayyid al-Nabīyīn* (Ṭabarī, 1963, p. 66), and others, are indicative of the investiture of Imamate and succession upon 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (as). These appellations are recurrent across various textual sources.

#### 4. Title of *Wilāyah*

The etymology of the terms *walī* (guardian), *mawlā* (master), and *wilāyah* (guardianship) traces back to the root *w-l-y* connoting closeness and proximity (Ibn Fāris, 1995, vol. 6, p. 140). In other words, "walā" and "tawālī" (successiveness) are used when two or more entities are in such a relationship that there is nothing intervening them (Rāghib, 1984, vol. 2, p. 533). Hence, whoever has authority over a matter or undertakes its execution, will be the guardian and patron thereof (Ibn Athīr, 1989, vol. 5, p. 228), and he will have priority in that task or matter. Therefore, he is more deserving of that task or thing than others ('Alam al-Hudā, 1990, vol. 2, p. 219).

In customary usage, *walī* and "mawlā" signify guardianship and being entrusted with the affairs of others, and the guardian has the right to intervene and make decisions regarding the affairs of an individual or others. This notion is applicable to expressions such as *walī al-marʿa*

(guardian of the woman) and *walī al-dam* (guardian of the blood). The intended meaning in the term "walī" in the context of the Holy Prophet's saying "If a woman marries without permission of her guardian, her marriage is null and void", is someone responsible for a woman's marriage (Ibn Athīr, 1989, vol. 5, p. 229).

Commentators interpret the noble verse "And whoever is killed unjustly - We have given his heir authority" (Qur'an 17:31) as referring to an individual who has guardianship and authority over the blood of the wronged and can seek retribution or compensation from the oppressor or pardon him (Ṭabarī, 1995, vol. 6, p. 248).

The terms *walī* and *mawlā* are also used in various contexts such as lord, owner, cousin, neighbor, freed slave, slave, son-in-law, emancipator of a slave, supporter, lover, confederate, etc., and in all cases of their usage, there exists a kind of kinship that stems from a form of control and ownership. Based on this, the application of these terms to different contexts is a form of semantic relationship, and in all contexts, there is a common denominator which is the kinship and specific closeness between the guardian and the person or thing under guardianship. It is worth mentioning that some scholars consider the commonality among the contexts as *awlā bil-shay'* meaning someone is more deserving of that thing than others (Mufīd, 1993, pp. 27-29; Ibn Baṭṭīq, 1987, pp. 113-115; Amīnī, 1995, vol. 1, pp. 640-650).

Considering the meaning of these terms, the Prophet of Islam (pbuh) designated Imam 'Alī (as) as a guardian and master of the believers after him in various contexts pointing to his guardianship and emphasizing it on various occasions. Some of these instances are elaborated upon below:

#### **4-1- The Term *Mawlā***

Among the significant texts worth mentioning is the noble hadith *Ghadir Khumm*. Most Sunni scholars consider this hadith authentic and have cited numerous chains of transmission for it, with many acknowledging its frequent occurrence (Ālūsī, 1995, vol. 3, p. 361; Hindī, Mīr Ḥāmid Ḥusayn, 1988, vol. 1). In *Ghadir Khumm*, the Prophet of Islam (pbuh) addressed the Muslims before stating the phrase "Whoever I am his *Mawlā* (master), 'Alī is his *Mawlā* saying: "Am I not more entitled to your affairs than yourselves?" After their acknowledgment and recognition of

this precedence and priority, he immediately declared the precedence of Imam ‘Alī (as).

The articulation of these statements in such combination and context serves as a clear and eloquent indication that the intended meaning of *Mawlā* in the Ghadir tradition is none other than leadership and caliphate. Because the intended meaning of the precedence that the Prophet wanted Muslims to acknowledge and which he, then, affirmed for Imam ‘Alī (as) is that whenever he makes a decision regarding the Muslims that contradicts their desires, it is incumbent upon them to follow the Prophet's decision. (Baghwī, 1987, vol. 3, p. 608). Interpreting the noble verse "The Prophet is more worthy of the believers than themselves" (Qur'an 33:6), Zamakhsharī writes:

"This verse is absolute and unrestricted, and the Prophet enjoys precedence and superiority over the believers in all matters of the world and the Hereafter. Therefore, it is incumbent upon them to hold the Prophet dearer to themselves than their own selves, and his command and decree regarding them should be more binding than their own command, and his rights should take precedence over their rights, and their affection towards the Prophet should exceed their affection towards themselves. They should sacrifice themselves for him, protect him by sacrificing themselves in times of war, and follow whatever he commands, for obedience to whatever he commands results in the salvation and prosperity of both parties, and he does not forbid anything except that its commission would bring about misery and lead to entering the fire." (Zamakhsharī, 1966, vol. 3, p. 523).

From the above, it is evident that the meaning of *awlā* in the noble verse implies guardianship and priority in discretion over matters, and in the event of Ghadir, the Prophet (s) affirmed this meaning for Imam ‘Alī (as), and this would be nothing other than the designation of Imamate and caliphate. Sayyid Murtaḍā clearly writes about this:

"The Prophet's words on the Day of Ghadir were explicit inasmuch as they referred expressly to Imamate and succession for the community, and no other possibility is plausible besides this meaning." (‘Alam al-Hudā, 1985, vol. 3, p. 252).

Other indications such as the congratulations of the companions to Imam ‘Alī (as) as a guardian and supervisor, the general pledge of allegiance to him obtained by the Prophet (pbuh) from everyone, the

understanding and reliance of the companions on the statements of the Prophet and their chanting of poems, and other contextual and verbal indications mentioned in their proper places, indicate that the term *Mawlā* in the Ghadir hadith signifies Imamate. The late Allāmah Amīnī, may Allah bless him, refers to twenty pieces of evidence and testimonies in his book *Al-Ghadīr*, indicating that the meaning of "precedence and guardianship" is implied in the term *Mawlā* (Amīnī, 1995, vol. 1, pp. 370-382).

In another narration, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh), while describing some qualities, addressed Imam 'Alī (as) as follows:

"O 'Alī! You are the owner of my Pond, the bearer of my standard. You are the clear path and the straight path, the leader of the pure-hearted, and the guiding star of the believers. You are the master of every individual whom I am a master of, and I am the master of every believing man and woman." (Ṣadūq, 1988, p. 307).

In another discourse, the Prophet, by explicating and entrusting the position of guardianship after himself to him, underscores the purport the previous hadith: "'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (as) is the guardian of every male and female believer, and after me, he is your guardian." (Ṭabarī, 1963, vol. 2, p. 120).

#### 4-2- "The Guardian of Every Believer after Me"

This statement, considering the meaning of the term *walī* explicitly denotes guardianship and caliphate. Coupled with the qualifier "after me," it indicates the direct designation of Imam 'Alī (as) as the successor. This title has been bestowed by the Prophet (pbuh) in various instances, some of which are mentioned below.

One of those instances is the recurrent hadiths known as the Hadith of *Wilāyah* narrated by Ibn 'Abbās, where the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said: "'Alī is the guardian and supervisor of every believer after me." (Kūfī, 1992, vol. 1, p. 490).

Moreover, when the Verse of Completion was revealed, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, exclaimed and said: *Allahu Akbar*, for the completion of blessings and the perfection of my prophethood, and the religion of Allah Almighty, and the guardianship of 'Alī after me." Abū Bakr and Umar arose and asked: "O Messenger of Allah! Is this verse specifically for 'Alī?" The Prophet replied: "Yes, it is for him and my

successors until the Day of Judgment." They said: "Introduce your successors to us." He said:

"Alī is my brother, my minister, my heir, my successor, and my caliph over my nation, and the guardian of every believer after me. Then Hasan, and..." (Ṣadūq, 1975, p. 276).

In another incident, the Prophet of Allah (pbuh) dispatched an army under the command of Imam ‘Alī (as) to a battle, and after the victory, he assigned the spoils to him. This act troubled four of the prominent companions to the extent that they confronted him. They made a pact to complain to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) upon their return. Each of them rushed to him and presented their grievances, but the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) remained silent. After they finished speaking, while anger and displeasure were apparent on his face, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) repeated this statement three times: "What do you want from ‘Alī?" and then explicitly stated the position of leadership and guardianship of ‘Alī over every believer after him. (Ibn Shahr Āshūb, 1960, vol. 3, p. 212).

#### **4-3- "The Guardian of the Believers"**

This title, which clearly denotes Imamate and guardianship, has been expressed on the tongue of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) on various occasions. Below are some statements from him:

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) addressed Imam ‘Alī (as), saying: "The first thing that every servant will be asked about after his death is bearing witness to the oneness of Allah the Almighty and the affirmation that Muḥammad (pbuh) was the Messenger of Allah and that you are the guardian of the believers after me. It concerns what Allah has decreed for you and what I have designated for you. So, whoever acknowledges this and believes in it will attain Paradise and endless blessings." (Ṣadūq, 1959, vol. 1, p. 137).

Furthermore, when some companions were doubtful about the conduct of the Prophet (pbuh) at Ghadir, they sent some individuals to inquire from him. The Prophet (pbuh) responded to them, saying:

"Tell them: ‘Alī is the guardian and supervisor of the believers after me, and he is the most compassionate person towards my community." (Ṭabarī, 1983, vol. 1, p. 103).

In another narration, the Prophet (pbuh) acknowledged the actions of three of his prominent companions, Abū Dharr, Salmān, and Miqdād, saying:

"Bear witness that 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib is the successor of Muḥammad (s), and he is the commander of the faithful, and obeying him is obeying Allah and His Messenger. The Imams are from his descendants, and loving his Ahl al-Bayt is obligatory for every man and woman. Also, bear witness [to their acts of] praying at the prescribed times, giving *Zakat* from their lawful earnings, spending from their wealth, and paying one-fifth of all their wealth to the guardian of the believers and their ruler, and after him, his descendants." (Ḥurr 'Āmilī, 1989, vol. 9, p. 553).

#### 4-4- "The Guardian of the Pious"

One of the achievements of the Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) during his journey to the heavens (*Mi rāj*) is as follows:

"Allah the Almighty has commanded me concerning 'Alī (as) with three things: That he is the master and leader of the Muslims, the guardian of the righteous, and leader of the people with radiant foreheads." (Rāzī, 1988, p. 58)

It is clear that considering the importance and explicitness of the term *Wilāyat* in designating the Imamate and Caliphate of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (a), one can find other instances through searching in the Prophet's speeches.

#### 5 - The Title of Viziership

The terms *Wazīr* (vizier) and *Wizārat* (viziership) are of Qur'anic origin and bear conceptual resemblances to the notions of "Caliphate" and "Imamate." According to linguistic analyses, these terms denote both a place of refuge and sanctuary (Farāhidī, 1989, Vol. 7, p. 380) and a sense of weight and gravitas (Ibn Fāris, 1995, Vol. 6, p. 108). These principles underpin the semantic breadth of the term. In light of these foundational concepts and the multifaceted applications of the term, *Wazīr* signifies one who shoulders the weighty responsibilities of his superior's directives and provides support and counsel (Farāhidī, 1989, Vol. 7, p. 380). In essence, the vizier assumes the substantial duties of governance, becoming a trusted confidant whose advice and judgment the ruler relies upon (Ibn Manẓūr, 1988, vol. 5, p. 283).

The Qur'an employs the term *Wazīr* to refer to Hārūn (s) in two verses, clearly indicating his role as a successor (Ṭā-Hā: 29 and al-Furqān: 35).

Additionally, in a separate instance, the term *Rid'* conveys the same connotation of viziership (al-Qaṣaṣ: 34). *Al-Rid'* denotes one who aids and supports another, encapsulating the essence of mutual assistance and collaboration (Rāghib, 1984, vol. 1, p. 350). The portrayal of Hārūn's viziership in the Qur'an underscores his shared responsibility in the prophetic mission alongside Prophet Mūsā (pbuh), illustrating his active involvement in preaching and fulfilling the obligations of prophethood.

The discourse surrounding viziership elucidates certain facets and roles of the Imam and caliph as the "vizier of the Prophet." These roles encompass various administrative and advisory functions, including:

A) Viziership, like caliphate and Imamate, is contingent upon divine appointment, and seeking viziership for an individual depends on the permission of the Lord, and its realization and determination are not within the purview of any of His servants. Therefore, in the Qur'an, the appointment to viziership is an act of Allah the Almighty and attributed to Him only. Phrases such as "We appointed with him his brother Hārūn" (al-Furqan: 35), "Appoint for me" (Ṭā-Hā: 29), and "Then send him with me" (Al-Qaṣaṣ: 34) serve as evidence for this claim.

B) The vizier assumes full responsibility for all the duties that the Prophet entrusted to him, including guidance, adjudication among people, administrative affairs of the Islamic society, etc. The verse "And associate him with me in my affair" (Ṭā-Hā: 32), following the request of Prophet Mūsā (as) regarding the viziership of Hārūn (as), indicates the important and heavy responsibility of the vizier. Based on this responsibility of the viziership, Hārūn (as) is questioned and held accountable by Prophet Mūsā (as) (Ṭā-Hā: 92-93).

It is worth mentioning that the vizier shares in the duties and positions of the Prophet, except for what may be allocated to him due to a separate rationale, just as the position of the viziership of the Noble Prophet (pbuh) was assigned to Amīr al-Mu'minīn, 'Alī (as) due to his being the seal of prophethood, and besides the matters of prophethood, all other aspects, duties and responsibilities are established for his vizier.

C) Another characteristic is that the vizier, in addition to sharing the burden and responsibility of the commander, assists and supports him in various personal and social matters, enhancing his performance in fulfilling his duties. Because it is beneficial for an individual to share a divisible

allowing each person to perform his own part. However, partnership is discussed where the vizier undertakes all the affairs and responsibilities of the commander and strengthens him. The Noble Qur'an also emphasizes this point after appointing Hārūn (as) to the position of vizier, stating: "We will strengthen your arm through your brother" (al-Qaṣaṣ: 35) and "Strengthen me with him" (Ṭā-Hā: 31). Therefore, in addition to the position of partnership in command, one of the privileges of the vizier is to support and strengthen his commander in various undertakings and duties.

D) The individual who assumes the position of vizier acts according to his own opinion and interests, thereby assisting the commander. Therefore, like a prince and commander, he holds authority and sovereignty over the matter. Lexicographers often point out that the personal opinion and judgment of the vizier contribute to the assistance and strengthening of the ruler, as his judgment lifts the burden of responsibility from the ruler, and the vizier becomes a refuge and support for the ruler. (Ibn Athīr, 1989, vol. 5, p. 180) Consequently, the recognized duties and functions of the vizier include sovereignty, authority, and reliance on his expression of opinion and interests.

After bestowing the glad tidings of the appointment to the deputyship and vizierate of Hārūn (as) to Prophet Mūsā (as), Allah states that He establishes effective sovereignty for him (Al-Qaṣaṣ: 35). In other words, considering the unity of divine sovereignty, the sovereignty and authority of Prophet Mūsā and Hārūn have been placed on the same basis and direction.

The Noble Prophet (pbuh) designated Amīr al-Mu'minīn, 'Alī (as) as a "vizier" on numerous occasions, making the reality of this position evident to others. Some of these instances are mentioned below:

During the event of *Yawm al-Dār* the Prophet (pbuh) declared, "Who among you will support me in this matter on the condition that he will be my brother, successor, and caliph among you?" The Prophet (pbuh) posed the general question calling on the close relatives to accept Islam and whoever accepted it, he would be entitled to viziership (*yu'āziru'nī*), which would elevate him to the "position of brotherhood, guardianship, and caliphate." He classified these three positions among the ranks of the vizierate, declaring their importance and confirming them for Amīr al-Mu'minīn (as). This event is mentioned in the sources of hadith, history,

and exegesis of both branches of faith. This occurred after the revelation of the noble verse "And warn your nearest kinsfolk" (al-Shu'arā: 214), in which the Prophet (pbuh) warned and invited his closest relatives to Islam by the command of the Lord. (Ṣadūq, 1988, p. 112)

Jābir b. Abdullah Anṣārī narrates that the Prophet (s) said: "Truly, Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, selected me, empowered me, entrusted me with prophethood, and revealed the Master of Books upon me. So I said: 'O my Lord! O my Master! You sent Moses to Pharaoh and asked him to accompany his brother Hārūn with him, who was his vizier, to strengthen his arm and confirm his speech. Likewise - O my Master and my God - I request You to appoint a vizier from my family for me, to strengthen my arm with him.' So Allah made 'Alī (as) my vizier and my brother, instilled courage in his heart, cast awe of him into the hearts of his enemies, and he is the first person to believe in me and confirm me, and the first person to worship the One God alongside me..." (Ṣadūq, 1988, p. 22)

It has been narrated that Umm Salama (as) defending the position of Amīr al-Mu'minīn, 'Alī (as) referred to the words of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) where the Imam (as) is introduced as the vizier of the Prophet (pbuh) in this world and the Hereafter:

"O Umm Salama! Listen and bear witness, this is 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, my vizier in this world and my vizier in the Hereafter." (Ṣadūq, 1988, p. 381)

Hence, upon contemplation of the two fundamental principles underlying the semantic domain of the term "vizier" and the consequent implications derived from its usage, it becomes evident that the status of caliphate, Imamate, and vizierate exhibit significant parallels when applied to the successor of the Noble Prophet (pbuh). Consequently, the utilization of these terminologies to describe an individual can be interpreted as a distinct and unambiguous attribution.

## 6 – Title of Emirate

The terms "imārat" and "emir" in the lexicons refer to a person in authority and a ruler. (Jawhārī, 1984, vol. 2, p. 581) Since this term is used in the context of someone being an emir (commander), the realization of the meaning of emirate is contingent upon the existence of an individual or group. (Shartūnī, 1983, vol. 1, p. 70) The usage of this term denotes the executive status of the emir who, as a leading figure, assumes the

administration and policymaking of the people based on the authority vested in him. (Jawharī, 1984, vol. 2, p. 581) The people follow him based on the authority he holds over them. (Muṣṭafavī, 1990, vol. 4, p. 161) During the time of the Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh), this term was used for military commanders and rulers of a region. (Ibn Khaldūn, 1981, vol. 1, p. 227)

In light of the foregoing, the designation "Dār al-Imāra" (lit. administrative seat or house of princes) refers to the locus where an individual opts to administer and govern. This term is frequently modified by suffixes that delineate the extent of the emir's jurisdiction, thus refining the concept of emirate beyond mere absolutism and imparting a specific connotation to the compound term. Examples such as *Emir al-Jaysh* and *Emir al-Hājj* prevalent among the Arabs in the formative period of Islam, illustrate this semantic elaboration.

It is pertinent to note that while initially conceived to encompass administrative and secular concerns, the notion of emirate transcends this realm to encompass religious matters as well, blurring the distinction between emirate and the concept of Imamate.

Throughout Islamic history, this term has frequently served as a rhetorical device wielded by usurpers and ambitious rulers. By appending qualifiers, they laid claim to the title of emir and assumed responsibility for the Islamic emirate, endeavoring to validate and portray their rule as inherently Islamic. This phenomenon underscores the conceptual resonance between emirate, Imamate, and caliphate in the collective consciousness of early Muslims.

The Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh), driven by his deep concern for the guidance of the Ummah following his departure, unequivocally designated the leadership of Imam 'Alī (as) and addressed this matter through various oral expressions.

The statements such as "the Imam after me and the commander" (Ṣadūq, 1988, p. 101), "Amīr al-Mu'minīn", "the emir after me" (Ibn Ṭāwūs, 1993, p. 477), "the commander of all believers after me" (Ṣadūq, 1975, p. 260), "the commander on earth and the commander in the heavens" (Ibn Shahr Āshūb, 1960, vol. 2, p. 247), and "the commander of the righteous" (Ṭabarī Āmulī, 1995, p. 622) signify the pervasive authority of the emirate of Amīr al-Mu'minīn (as) over the believers in heaven and on

earth. They also signify his uninterrupted leadership after the Prophet (pbuh), forging an inseparable bond between prophethood and emirate. Given that the establishment of the emirate of Imam ‘Alī—much like the nature of Imamate—is a divine decree, the alignment of these two concepts becomes more apparent.

In the journey of Ascension, the Almighty addressed the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) regarding the introduction of the emirate and rulership of Amīr al-Mu’minīn (as) and cursed those who disobeyed his command. (Ibn Shādhān, 1987, p. 50) In another narration, the Prophet (pbuh) has explicitly stated that he had received revelation that ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (a) is the emir and ruler of the believers. (Ibn ‘Uqda al-Kūfī, 2003, p. 194)

Among these references, the epithet "Amīr al-Mu’minīn" stands as an exclusive title reserved for the Imam, symbolizing his role as the commander and leader of the faithful—a designation conferred upon him by the Almighty (Kulaynī, 1987, vol. 1, p. 412), and reiterated by the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) on numerous occasions. Noteworthy instances include the Prophet's instruction to Umm Salama to acknowledge and testify to him as the "Amīr al-Mu’minīn" (Mufīd, 1993, vol. 1, p. 47) the Prophet's prophecy to Anas b. Mālik regarding the arrival of someone holding the esteemed title of *Amīr al-Mu’minīn* prompting Anas to express his wish for the arrival of one of his kins (Mufīd, 1993, vol. 1, p. 47). Additionally, the historical context and timing of this designation, along with numerous corroborative narrations found in the literature of both branches of faith, lend credence to this assertion.

The prophetic declaration and insistence on this title unequivocally affirm the Imamate of the Imam to such an extent that no alternative interpretation remains viable. Moreover, observing the longing and aspiration of others to confer this name and status upon their own kin serves as additional evidence reinforcing this reality.

The late Sayyid Ibn Ṭāwūs (d. 664 AH), in response to those who contested the leadership of Amīr al-Mu’minīn, ‘Alī meticulously compiled over a hundred chapters in his works *Al-Yaqīn bi-ikhtiṣāṣ mawlānā ‘Alī bi-imrat al-mu’minīn* and *Al-Taḥsīn fī Asrār Mā Zāda ‘alā Kitāb al-Yaqīn*, the latter serving as an addendum to the former. Within these works, he extensively cites numerous narrations that attest to the designation of the

title "Amīr al-Mu'minīn" to Imam 'Alī by both the Almighty and the Noble Prophet of Islam, peace be upon him and his family.

It is worth mentioning that, in addition to the meaning of "commandership" derived from the compound phrase "Amīr al-Mu'minīn" as discussed above, in narrations based on another meaning of *Amīr* a different concept is elucidated for *Amīr al-Mu'minīn* namely, that the Imam nourishes the believers with his knowledge and wisdom. (Şaffār, 1984, vol. 1, p. 512)

### 7. The Title of Leadership (*Qiyādah*)

Another term synonymous with the concepts of caliphate and Imamate is the word *qā'id* or *qiyādat* generally denoting leadership and command. *Qawd* means to lead or pull something along, in contrast to "steering" which means to drive something forward. *Yaqūd al-dāba* means to lead the camel along. *Qiyād* is a rope by which a camel or something is pulled along. (Farāhīdī, 1989, vol. 5, p. 196 and Ibn Manẓūr, 1988, vol. 3, p. 3770)

*Qiyādat* is the act of leading, in contrast to "steering" which entails guiding from behind. Hence, Imam 'Alī (a) said, "I am the forerunner and leader of my Shia towards Paradise and the driver (steerer) of my enemies towards Hell." (Ibn Shādhān, 1987, p. 59) The terms *qiyādah* and *inqiyād* respectively, denote leadership and obedience.

The application of this term in line with the concept of Imamate entails that the individual upon whom this title is conferred takes precedence over others, who follow in his path and must submit to him. Realizing this meaning fosters a sense of affinity and harmony between the leader and his followers. Thus, the definition of *qiyādat* is stated as follows: "It is a method through which one influences others and guides them towards a specific goal through a particular manner, leading them along." (Mubārak Bāşbūş, 1988, p. 28)

The Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh) has introduced Imam 'Alī (as) as a *qā'id* in numerous narrations, emphasizing the imperative of obedience inherent in this term and making a clear declaration and designation of his caliphate. Titles such as *qā'id al-ghurr al-muḥajjalīn* (Leader of the Radian Ones) *qā'id al-barara* (Leader of the Righteous) *qā'id ummatī ilā al-jannah* (Leader of My Nation to Paradise) *qā'id al-mu'minīn ilā al-jannah* (Leader of Believers to Paradise) *qā'id al-nās ilā al-jannah* (Leader of the People

to Paradise) *qā'īd al-muslimīn ilā al-jannah* (Leader of Muslims to Paradise) and others, elucidate the significance of leadership and guidance by Imam 'Alī (as) both in this world and the hereafter. Below are some excerpts from these titles:

### 7-1- Leader of the Radiant Ones (*al-Ghurr al-Muḥajjalīn*)

The word *al-ghurr* is derived from *ghurrah* which refers to the whiteness on the forehead. And *al-Muḥajjalīn* is derived from the root *ḥajal* which refers to the whiteness on the hands and feet of a horse. (Farāhīdī, 1989, vol. 3, p. 79)

This combination of titles is used metaphorically for those with intellect, knowledge, good deeds, and honor. Therefore, in some sources of Prophetic traditions, it is mentioned that "the whiteness of the faces is on account of ablution," (Baghwī, 198, vol. 2, p. 280) and the intended meaning is the honor and respect with which one is treated on the Day of Resurrection as a reward for the Hereafter. (Ibn Athīr, 1989, vol. 3, p. 354)

In the Imami narrations, the title "Leader of the Radiant Ones" is specified for the Shiites and supporters of Imam 'Alī (as). The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, while reporting about his journey of Ascension (*Mi'rāj*) to Imam 'Alī, said: "... The believers, O 'Alī, are on thrones of light, while they are radiant-faced, and you are their Imam." (Ṣadūq (B), 2004, p. 36)

The description "Leader of the Radiant Ones" implies being the leader of those with luminous faces, an appellation chosen by the Almighty for Imam 'Alī, peace be upon him. Ibn 'Abbās narrates that the Prophet, peace be upon him, while sitting in the courtyard, had Diḥya b. Khalīfa al-Kalbī sitting beside him. At that moment, 'Alī (as) entered and greeted the Prophet (pbuh). 'Alī asked Diḥya how the Prophet (pbuh) was feeling that morning. Diḥya replied: "The Prophet (pbuh) was good, O brother of the Messenger of Allah!"

Amīr al-Mu'minīn, 'Alī (as) said, "May Allah reward you on behalf of us, the Ahl al-Bayt (as)." Diḥya said to Amīr al-Mu'minīn, "I love you. Surely, you are adorned with praise and commendation, which I give as glad tidings to you. You are Amīr al-Mu'minīn and the leader of the luminous ones. You are the chief of the children of Adam, except for the prophets and messengers. The banner of praise on the Day of Resurrection

is in your hand, as you will bring it joyfully, along with your Shia, towards Paradise with Muḥammad and his party. Whoever holds your guardianship in their heart will prosper, and whoever turns away from you will suffer. The lovers of Muḥammad are your lovers, and the enemies of Muḥammad are your enemies, whom the intercession of Muḥammad will be denied. O chosen one of Allah! Come close to me."

Subsequently, he gently cradled the head of the Holy Prophet and tenderly placed it within the embrace of Imam 'Alī. Inquisitive, the Prophet inquired, "What transpires in this discourse?" Imam 'Alī, respectfully, informed him of the occurrence. To this, the Prophet responded, elucidating, "It was not Diḥya al-Kalbī, but rather Gabriel, who addressed you by the appellation designated by God. This appellation engenders affection for you within the hearts of the faithful and instills apprehension in the hearts of the unbelievers" (Ibn Ṭāwūs (B), 1993, p. 440).

Moreover, beyond the textual references that affirm this epithet for Imam 'Alī, there exists a plethora of prophetic traditions on this theme, a selection of which is delineated below: Once the Messenger of Allah asked for water for ablution and then held 'Alī's hand and placed it on his chest, and then said, "You are the Warner." Then he placed the same hand on 'Alī's chest and recited the verse: "And for every people is a guide" (Qur'an 13:7). Then he said, "O 'Alī! You are the foundation of the religion, the guiding light, and the culmination of guidance, and you are the leader of the radiant ones. I bear witness to this for you." (Ṣaffār, 1984, vol. 1, p. 31)

Furthermore, in a lengthy address to Imam 'Alī, describing the Shiites and his supporters, the Prophet (pbuh) said: "O 'Alī! Give glad tidings to your brothers, as Allah has chosen them, as they have chosen you as their leader. O 'Alī! You are the Leader of the Radiant Ones. O 'Alī! Your Shiites are the chosen ones. If it were not for you and your Shiites, the religion of Allah would not have been upheld." (Ṣadūq, 1988, p. 561)

The renown of this title for Imam 'Alī had become so widespread that he himself, during a gathering, invoked the companions adjuring them in the name of Allah, and making them acknowledge this epithet. (Ṭabarī, Āmulī, 1995, p. 346)



## 7-2- Leader of the Righteous

The term *al-barara* [plural of *al-bārr*] refers to the righteous and noble individuals, which the Holy Prophet (pbuh) used on various occasions to describe Imam 'Alī as the "leader of the righteous." 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib is the leader of the righteous and the vanquisher of the disbelievers. Whoever assists him will be assisted, and whoever opposes him will be vanquished. Doubting 'Alī (as) is doubting Islam, and the best individual whom I will appoint as my successor and the best among my companions is 'Alī (as). His flesh and blood are my flesh and blood, and he is the father of my two grandchildren, and from the lineage of Husayn (as), the twelve Imams will emerge, and the Mahdi of this community will be among them. (Khazāz Rāzī, 1981, p. 97)

## 7-3- Leader of My Community to Paradise

"Leader of my community to Paradise" is another title that, in addition to elucidating the status of Imam 'Alī in the Hereafter, illuminates his leadership and Imamate from this world to the Hereafter.

The Messenger of Allah addressed Imam 'Alī (a) saying: "O 'Alī! I asked my Lord for five things concerning you, and He granted them to me: Firstly, I asked that when my grave is dug up, and the earth is poured over my head, you will be with me, and this was accepted by God. Secondly, I asked that when I am placed next to the scales of deeds, you will be with me, and this too was accepted. Thirdly, I asked my Lord to appoint you as the bearer of my banner, which is the great banner of Allah the Almighty, inscribed with the words: 'Successful are those who attain Paradise,' and God accepted. Fourthly, I asked Him to grant you the task of giving my community water from my Pool, and it was accepted; and fifthly, I asked Him to appoint you as the leader of my community to Paradise, and He accepted. I thank Allah the Almighty for bestowing this favor upon me." (Ṣadūq (A), 2004, p. 314)

In addition to what has been mentioned in this title, similar examples can be found such as "Leader of the Believers to Paradise" (Ṣadūq, 1988, p. 486), "Leader of the People to Paradise" (Shūshtarī, 1989, vol. 4, p. 218), and "Leader of Muslims to Paradise" (Shūshtarī, 1989, vol. 4, p. 272). Furthermore, in the final sermon delivered by the Noble Prophet (pbuh) in his mosque, Imam 'Alī (as) is introduced as the "Leader and Guide to

Qur'anic Guidance" ('Alam al-Hudā, 1986, p. 75; Majlisī, 1984, vol. 22, p. 487).

This title is also evident in the words and poems of the companions of the Ahl al-Bayt. 'Amr b. Ḥamq praised Imam 'Alī (as) in the following poem: *This is 'Alī, the leader whom we are satisfied with, the brother of the Messenger of Allah among his companions, Whose spear and sword are swift.*" (Ibn Shahr Āshūb, 1960, vol. 2, p. 346)

### **Conclusion**

Given the exclusive nature of the process of appointing the Imamate through divine designation and miraculous interventions, one of the most noteworthy aspects of Prophet Muḥammad's teachings concerning the Imamate of Imam 'Alī (as) was the method of explicit designation. Within the doctrinal framework of Imamiyya beliefs, where textual evidence holds paramount importance, diverse expressions of explicit designation can be discerned in the pronouncements of the Prophet. These encompass references to Imamate, caliphate, succession, guardianship, leadership, viziership, and commandership. This study embarks on an examination of the lexical nuances and methodologies employed in discerning explicit designation, followed by an exploration of the various terminologies employed in the Prophet's discourse. The narrative discourse of Prophet Muḥammad (pbuh), distinguished by its well-structured organization, substantive depth, meticulous explication, and clear elucidation tailored to the audience, serves as a potent rhetorical device in expounding upon the Imamate of Imam Ali. This discourse underscores the pivotal significance of succession and Imamate, serving to perpetuate the continuum of prophethood through the institution of Imamate. Through the symbolic enactment of this revered figure, the Almighty has metaphorically aligned the finalization and perfection of religion, alongside His satisfaction therein, with the acceptance of the pivotal doctrine of Imamate, thereby underscoring its paramount importance. Conversely, to disregard this doctrine is tantamount to rejecting the very essence of prophethood.



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