

139054 - The wilaayah of ‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib (may Allah be pleased with him)

the question

Was the caliph ‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib Waliy-Allah, as mentioned in the hadeeth of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that ‘Ali is “your ruler (waliy) after me” or “I am of ‘Ali and ‘Ali is of me”? Are these things true?

Are ‘Ali, Faatimah, al-Husayn and al-Hasan of the same status as the Prophets (not the Messengers)?

Detailed answer

Firstly:

‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib (praise be to Allah) – according to the belief of Ahl as-Sunnah wa’l-Jamaa‘ah – is one of the honoured close friends (awliya’ – sing. waliy) of Allah and one of the guided leaders (imams). He is the fourth of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, and the fourth of the ten who were given the glad tidings of Paradise, who are the best of the Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them). His virtues and good qualities are too many to be counted, to such an extent that some of our scholars compiled books focusing only on them, such as Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal in *Manaaqib ‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib*, and Imam an-Nasaa’i in *Khasaa’is ‘Ali*.

Secondly:

Among his virtues are the following:

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “You are of me and I am of you.”

Narrated by al-Bukhaari, no. 2699

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

That is, in lineage, relationship by marriage, in seniority (in Islam), in love and in other ways.

End quote.

Fath al-Baari, 7/507

Another of these qualities was mentioned in the report narrated by ‘Imraan ibn Husayn (may Allah be pleased with him who said:

The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) sent out an army and appointed ‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib as their leader. He went out on the campaign, and he acquired a slave woman as booty. They objected to that, and four of the Companions of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) made an agreement and said: When we meet the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), we will tell them about what ‘Ali did.

When the Muslims returned from a journey, they would start by visiting the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), then they would go to their homes. When the army came back, they greeted the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and one of the four stood up and said: O Messenger of Allah, have you not seen that ‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib did such and such? The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) turned away from him. Then the second one stood up and said something like what he had said, and he turned away from him. Then the third one stood up and said something like what he had said, and he turned away from him. Then the fourth one stood up and said something similar to what they had said. The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) turned to him, with anger visible on his face, and said:

“What do you want from ‘Ali, what do you want from ‘Ali, what do you want from ‘Ali? ‘Ali is of me and I am of him. He is the waliy of every believer after I am gone.”

Narrated by Ahmad, 33/154, Mu’sasat ar-Risaalah edition; at-Tirmidhi, no 3712; and many others, all of them via Ja’far ibn Sulaymaan, who said: Yazeed ar-Rashk told me, from Mutarriq ibn ‘Abdullah, from ‘Imraan ibn Husayn. Adh-Dhahabi (may Allah have mercy on him) said it is one of the reports narrated only by Ja’far. End quote from Siyar A’laam an-Nubala’, 8/199

Our scholars differed concerning this hadeeth; there are two views:

1.

The first view is that the hadeeth is acceptable.

At-Tirmidhi said:

This hadeeth is hasan ghareeb; we know of it only through this isnaad from the hadeeth of Ja'far ibn Sulaymaan. End quote.

Al-Haakim said:

It is saheeh according to the conditions of Muslim. End quote. Adh-Dhahabi did not say anything about it.

Al-Mustadrak, 3/119

It was classed as saheeh by Ibn Hibbaan as he narrated in his Saheeh, 15/374

Ibn 'Adiyy (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Abu 'Abd ar-Rahmaan an-Nasaa'i included it in his Sihaah, but al-Bukhaari did not include it (in his Saheeh). End quote.

Al-Kaamil, 2/146

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Its isnaad is qawiy. End quote.

Al-Isaabah, 4/569

It was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani in as-Silsilah as-Saheehah, no. 2223

Their evidence for the soundness of this hadeeth is that many of the scholars regarded Ja'far ibn Sulaymaan ad-Dab'i as thiqah (trustworthy) and that they found other two corroborating reports of the hadeeth, the first of which is from Ibn 'Abbaas in Musnad Ahmad (1/330) and in Musnad at-Tayaalisi (4/470 – Hajar edn under the supervision of Shaykh 'Abd al-Muhsin at-Turki). Its isnaad includes Abu Balj, concerning whom there is a difference of opinion. The second corroborating report is from the hadeeth of Buraydah ibn al-Husayb in Musnad Ahmad

(38/118). Its isnaad includes Ajlah ibn ‘Abdullah al-Kindi, who is a Shi‘i and da‘eef. It was also narrated by more than one narrator from Buraydah with different wording; one such report appears in Saheeh al-Bukhaari, no. 4350.

2.

The second view is that the hadeeth is da‘eef (weak).

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

It is false and fabricated according to the consensus of hadeeth scholars. End quote.

Minhaaj as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyyah, 7/385

It was classed as da‘eef by the commentators on Musnad Ahmad (Mu‘asat ar-Risaalah edn.)

The reason for their describing it as da‘eef is Ja‘far ibn Sulaymaan ad-Dab‘i who was the only one to narrate it. Yahya ibn Sa‘eed al-Qattaan regarded him as da‘eef. ‘Abd ar-Rahmaan ibn Mahdi did not feel at ease with his hadeeth. Al-Bukhaari (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Some of his hadeeth go against other scholars. ‘Ali ibn al-Madeeni said: He narrated a great deal from Thaabit, and the rest of his hadeeth are munkar (rejected).

Ibn Sa‘d said: He was thiqah (trustworthy) but there was some weakness in him. See Tahdheeb at-Tahdheeb, 2/97.

As the hadeeth scholars were also unanimously agreed that he was an extreme Shi‘i who reviled Mu‘aawiyah, a number of scholars favoured the view that the hadeeths which were narrated only by him were to be regarded as da‘eef, because the hadeeth narrated only by someone like him is not to be accepted, especially since what he narrated in this case is something that supports his bid‘ah (innovation). This is the view we are inclined to favour with regard to the hadeeths which speak of virtues (of ‘Ali).

Thirdly:

Even if we assume that the hadeeth is saheeh and acceptable, there is no evidence in it whatsoever to support what the Shi'ah want to prove about the caliphate belonging to 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) after the death of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). This is for a number of reasons:

1.

The word waliy has many meanings in Arabic; what evidence do the Shi'ah have that what it means here is caliphate? Al-Fayroozabadi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Waly may mean closeness, nearness, or rain after rain. Waliy may mean: loved one, friend, or supporter. Wilaayah may mean rulership or authority. Wala' may mean ownership. Mawla may mean owner, slave, the one who manumits a slave, the manumitted slave, companion, relative such as a cousin and so on, neighbour, ally, son, paternal uncle, guest, partner, or sister's son. Al-Waliy may mean the Lord, the Helper, or the Bestower of blessings; or it may mean the recipient of blessings, lover, follower or son-in-law. End quote.

Al-Qaamoos al-Muheet, p. 1732

2.

If what is meant is rulership and caliphate, then how could the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) have said "the waliy of every believer after I am gone", when 'Ali was the caliph only of those who lived at his time, and he was not the leader of every believer until the Day of Resurrection?

3.

In some versions of the hadeeth it says, "The waliy of every believer in this world and in the Hereafter." Musnad Ahmad, 5/179. This version indicates that what is meant by waliy here is not rulership; how could he be a ruler of the believers in the Hereafter?!

4.

We have not heard of this hadeeth being quoted by ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) or by any of his supporters or even by any of the noble Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them), as evidence for the caliphate of ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) after the death of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

The correct meaning of this word is love, help and support. Love for ‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib (may Allah be pleased with him) is obligatory upon every believer, as is helping and supporting him in adhering to the truth.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The words “He is the waliy of every believer after I am gone” are falsely attributed to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). Rather during his life and after his death he is the waliy of every believer, and every believer is his waliy in life and in death. Wilaayah (love, support, friendship) that is the opposite of enmity is not limited to any particular time. As for wilaayah in the sense of rulership, the word should be waali (ruler) and not waliy; thus the wording would be, “the waali (ruler) of every believer after I am gone”, as it is said that in the funeral prayer, when both the waliy (the next of kin) and the waaliy (ruler or governor) are present, the waaliy (ruler) is given precedence with regard to leading the prayer, according to the view of most scholars; others said that the waliy (next of kin) should be given precedence.

The words “ ‘Ali is the waliy of every believer after I am gone” cannot be attributed to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), because if he had meant muwaalaah (in the sense of loving ‘Ali) , he would not have needed to say “after I am gone”; if he had meant rulership, he would have said “waalin ‘ala (ruler over) every believer”. End quote.

Minhaaj as-Sunnah, 7/278

See also the answer to question no. [26794](#)

He (may Allah have mercy on him) also said:

There is nothing in these words to clearly suggest that what is meant is caliphate. That is because the mawla is like the waliy. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, your Waliy (Protector or Helper) is Allah, His Messenger, and the believers...”

[al-Maa'idah 5:55]

“but if you help one another against him (Muhammad SAW), then verily, Allah is his Mawla (Lord, or Master, or Protector, etc.), and Jibrael (Gabriel), and the righteous among the believers, and furthermore, the angels are his helpers”

[at-Tahreem 66:4].

It is clear that the Messenger is the waliy of the believers and that they are also his mawlas. It is also clear that Allah is the Waliy of the believers and that they are His awliya' (pl. of waliy, i.e., close friends), and that the believers are awliya' of one another. So muwaalaah (love) is the opposite of enmity and it is affirmed in the case of both parties. Because one of the two parties (namely Allah) is greater in status, His wilaayah towards them is in the sense of kindness and grace, and the wilaayah of the other party (the believers) is obedience and worship. Just as Allah loves the believers and the believers love Him, muwaalah is the opposite of enmity, war and betrayal. The disbelievers do not love Allah and His Messenger, and they fight and oppose Allah and His Messenger. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Take not My enemies and your enemies (i.e. disbelievers and polytheists, etc.) as friends”

[al-Mumtahanah 60:1].

And He will requite them for that, as He says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And if you do not do it, then take a notice of war from Allah and His Messenger”

[al-Baqarah 2:279].

He is the Waliy of the believers, and He is their Mawla. He brings them forth from the depths of darkness to the light. As that is the case, then what is meant by saying that Allah is the Waliy and Mawla of the believers, and that the Messenger is their waliy and mawla, and that ‘Ali is their mawla, is that muwaalaah which is the opposite of enmity.

The believers take Allah and His Messenger as friends in the sense of muwaalaah that is the opposite of enmity. This ruling is firmly established for every believer. And ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) is one of the believers whom the believers take as friends and allies (awliya’).

This hadeeth affirms that ‘Ali is a believer in the true sense and testifies that he is deserving of muwaalaah (love) both inwardly and outwardly. This is a refutation of what his enemies among the Khaarijis and Naasibis say about him, but it does not suggest that the believers do not have any mawla other than him. How can that be the case when the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) has mawaali (pl. of mawla), who are the righteous believers. Similarly, ‘Ali also has mawaali, namely the believers who take him as a friend. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Aslam, Ghifaar, Muzaynah, Juhaynah, Quraysh and the Ansaar have no mawla except Allah and His Messenger.” They are described as mawaali of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) just as the righteous believers are described as his mawaali, and Allah and His Messenger are their mawla.

To sum up, there is a difference between the waliy, mawla etc. and the waali. Wilaayah in the sense of that which is the opposite of enmity is one thing, and wilaayah in the sense of rulership is something else. The hadeeth refers only to the former, not the latter. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not say, “If I am someone’s waali (ruler), ‘Ali is also his waali”; rather the wording is: “If I am someone’s mawla (close friend), then ‘Ali is also his mawla.”

This is one of the things which indicate that he was not referring to caliphate. The fact that he is the waliy of every believer is true during the lifetime of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and is not deferred until the time after the Prophet’s death. With regard to caliphate, he could not become caliph until after the Prophet’s death. Thus it is known that this is not what is meant here.

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is closer to the believers than their own selves, during his lifetime and after his death, until the Day of Resurrection; if he appointed someone to a position of authority during his lifetime – or if we assume that he appointed someone to a position of authority matters during his lifetime, or we assume that he appointed to take charge after his death, and that person became caliph either on the basis of a text or consensus – then that person would be more entitled to the position of caliphate and he would be closer to the believers than their own selves. But no one other than the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) could ever be closer to any believer than his own self, especially during his lifetime. With regard to ‘Ali or anyone else being the mawla of every believer, this is true and applied to ‘Ali during the lifetime of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and after his death, and after the death of ‘Ali. So today ‘Ali is still the mawla of every believer, but today he is not waali (ruler, in charge) over people. The same applies to the rest of the believers; they are awliya’ of one another, in life and in death. End quote.

Minhaaj as-Sunnah an-Nabawiyyah, 7/322-325

Fourthly:

With regard to the claim that ‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib, Faatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn (may Allah be pleased with them all) are of the same status as the Prophets, this is a false and invalid claim. In fact it is kufr (disbelief) that nullifies a Muslim’s ‘aqeedah (belief), because it is contrary to the consensus of the scholars that no one other than the Prophets can attain the status of the Prophets. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Allah chooses Messengers from angels and from men. Verily, Allah is All-Hearer, All-Seer”

[al-Hajj 22:75].

The Messengers and Prophets are the chosen from among Allah’s creation. Anyone who claims otherwise is required to produce evidence, and no one can ever prove that ‘Ali, Faatimah, al-Hasan and al-Husayn are of the same status as the Prophets except by lying, distorting and fabricating hadeeths and reports.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Whoever exaggerates about the awliya' (close friends of Allah, "saints"), or those whom they call the awliya' of Allah, or the "people of Allah", or the wise, or the philosophers, and other names that they regard as akin to the title of prophet, and they regard them as being like the Prophets or better than the Prophets, should be asked to repent. If he repents, all well and good, otherwise he is to be executed.

End quote from as-Safadiyyah, 1/262

Shaykh Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhaab (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Whoever believes that someone other than the Prophets is better than them, or equal to them, has disbelieved. Consensus on that point was narrated by more than one of the scholars. What good can there be in a people whose beliefs imply that they are disbelievers?

End quote from Risaalah fi'r-Radd 'ala ar-Raafidah, p. 29. See also: al-Fasl fi'l-Milal wa'l-Ahwa' an-Nihal, 4/21

And Allah knows best.