

‘Moula’ Its Meanings from Holy Quran

Abbreviations:

saww: - Sal lal la ho Allay hay Wa Aal lay he Wasallam

azwj: - Az Za Wa Jalla

asws: - Allay hay Salawat-o-Wass Salam

ra: - Razi Allah^{azwj}

la: - Laan Allah^{azwj}

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ، وَصَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الطَّاهِرِينَ، وَسَلَّمَ تَسْلِيمًا.

In the Name of Allah^{azwj} the Beneficent, the Merciful. The Praise is for Allah^{azwj} Lord^{azwj} of the Worlds, and Blessing be upon our Chief Muhammad^{saww} and his^{saww} Purified Progeny^{asws}, and greetings with abundant greetings.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَجِّلْ فَرَجَهُمْ وَالْعَنِ أَعْدَاءَهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

Summary:

In all Ahadith books followed by Muslims, it is agreed that at the place of Ghadeer (after the last Hajj) Rasool-Allah^{saww} - in fulfilment of a Divine Commandment¹ - delivered a sermon and announced the Message regarding the authority Ali^{asws}. So at the top of the podium (built from the saddles of camels) Rasool-Allah^{saww} asked:

الست اولى بكم من انفسكم؟

Is my life not worthier one over all of your lives?

قالوا: بلى

They said: Of course

Then He^{saww} grabbed the hand of Ali^{asws}, and said:

‘مَوْلَاهُ’ مَوْلَاهُ فَعَلِيٌّ مَوْلَاهُ’ Whoever’s Master I was ‘مَوْلَاهُ’ (Moula) now Ali^{asws} is his Master ‘مَوْلَاهُ’ (Moula).

In some Ahadith, it is with an addition:

فَقَالَ مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاهُ فَعَلِيٌّ مَوْلَاهُ اللَّهُمَّ وَالِ مِنْ وَالَاهُ وَ عَادِ مَنْ عَادَاهُ.

(Rasool-Allah^{saww}) said: ‘The one whose Master ‘مَوْلَاهُ’ I^{saww} was, Ali^{asws} is his now his Master (Moula) ‘مَوْلَاهُ’. O Allah^{azwj}! Protect him who accepts him^{asws} as his protector and Be inimical to the one who is inimical to him^{asws}’².

In some narrations ‘فَهَذَا’ is found meaning ‘So This’ (Ali^{asws}):

يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ ۚ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ {67}

O you Rasool! Deliver what has been Revealed unto you from your Lord; and if you don't do so, then you have not delivered His Message, and Allah will Protect you from the people. Surely Allah does not Guide the Kafir people [5:67]

² Bashaarat Al Mustafa^{saww} Li Shia Al Murtaza^{asws} - P 8 H 13

مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاهُ فَهَذَا عَلِيٌّ مَوْلَاهُ

Whoever's Master I was 'مَوْلَاهُ' (Moula), so This Ali is now his Master^{asws} 'مَوْلَاهُ' (Moula)

The disagreement among the Muslim Ummah (Nation) is, however, not on these Ahadith and the small variations, but on the meaning of the word 'مَوْلَاهُ' (Moula). Some Muslims trivialise the meaning of 'مَوْلَاهُ' and say it means 'friend' so as per their interpretation, Rasool-Allah^{saww} said: As you have befriended me^{saww} so you should also befriend Ali^{asws}. However, if one compare this to what Al-Quran is saying about our Holly Prophet^{saww} will be able to understand whether is it right to call the holly prophet our friend or not!

النَّبِيِّ أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ (33:6)

The Prophet is preferred over all Momineen from their own lives.

Also in 49:1-5, Allah^{azwj} Command Muslims to respect and honour Rasool-Allah^{saww}, Appendix I.

Another translation of the word Moula is Servant/in service, so let's take this translation into context and see what it can also mean.

مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاهُ، فَعَلَىٰ مَوْلَاهُ

Whoever was in my service, is now in Ali's service.

The question arises, who is/was in prophet^{saww}'s service? In order to understand that, we will present an Amazing verse from Al-Quran.

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدٌ فَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْعَابِدِينَ.

Say (O Prophet) If Al-Rahman were to take someone as a Son, Then I should the one as I was the first of his obedient (43:81).

This verse was revealed to denounce the ideology of people who took prophet Jesus as the son of Allah^{azwj}. In other words, this verse is saying that Al-Rahman doesn't have any blood relationships and if he had any, our holly Prophet^{saww} would be the one because he is the first from the obedient ones. There are numerous Holy Verses and Ahadith in the praise of Rasool-Allah^{saww}, thereby establishing the status of Rasool-Allah^{saww} second to none, among the 'Abd' of Allah^{azwj}.

Therefore, when people look up the word in Arabic dictionary, the confusion persists as there are multiple meanings for the word 'مَوْلَاهُ', as it has been used in different cultures for over 1400 years giving a list of its possible usage. Therefore, one has to turn to the Holy

Quran and see in which context and meanings Allah^{azwj} has Revealed it and what are its meanings in the context of what Rasool-Allah^{saww} said in the sermon of Ghadeer:

مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاهُ فَهَذَا عَلَيَّ مَوْلَاهُ

As Rasool-Allah^{saww} would always be instructing believers in accordance with what had been Revealed to him^{saww} with the Words of Allah^{azwj}.

In most of Holy Verses, where the Word ‘Moula’ is Revealed, it is in the meanings of ‘Master’ and/or ‘Guardian’ and is mainly used for Allah^{azwj}. e.g.,

هُوَ مَوْلَانَا, أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَانَا, اللَّهُ مَوْلَانَا, أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا. Allah^{azwj} has Used the Word Moula in the meanings of Master (to be Obeyed as being His^{azwj} Messengers^{as}) His^{azwj} Angels^{as} and His^{azwj} Selected (Divine) Prophet/Imams. Moula is also used in Holy Quran when denouncing the fake imams and sins leading to Fire as well as those destined to Fire trying to looking for assistance from their associates, without success, from the wrath of Allah^{azwj} (22:13, 44:41 and 57:15).

In summary, Moula either means Master/Guardian (Allah^{azwj} and His^{azwj} Divine Authorities^{as}) or when Allah denounces the fake imams and sinners who will try to assist each other against the Decree of Allah^{azwj}.

Introduction:

We will try to better understand the meanings of the word ‘Moula’ as Revealed in the Holy Quran in order to eliminate the ambiguity caused by its, linguistic use, as found in the Arabic dictionaries. There are about 13 Holy Verses which refer to the word ‘Moula’ and its derivative (i.e., singular, plural forms), we will review these Verses in the following paragraphs:

أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا (Chapter 2, Verse 286)

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ ۗ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا
 إِن نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا ۗ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِنَا ۗ رَبَّنَا
 وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ ۗ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَارْحَمْنَا ۗ أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى
 الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ {286}

(Allah Said): “Allah does not Encumber a soul except to its capacity. For it would be what it earned and against it would be what it earned”. (The Rasool said): ‘Our Lord! Do not Seize us if we forget or we make a mistake. Our Lord! And do not Load upon us a burden like what You Loaded upon those from before us. Our Lord! And do not Load upon us what we have no strength for us with it; and Pardon (our sins) for us and have Mercy on us.

أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا ***You are our Master, therefore Help us against the Kafir people’.*** [2:286]

مَوْلَاكُمْ (Chapter 3, Verse 150)

بَلِ اللّٰهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ ۖ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ النَّاصِرِينَ {150}

But, اللّٰهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ (Allah is your Guardian) and He is the best of the helpers [3:150]

مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقُّ (Chapter 6, Verse 62)

ثُمَّ رُدُّوا إِلَى اللّٰهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقِّ ۗ اِلَّا لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَهُوَ اَسْرَعُ الْحَاسِبِينَ {62}

Then they are returned to Allah, مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقُّ, their True Master; Indeed, for Him is the Decision and He is the swiftest of the Reckoners [6:62]

أَنَّ اللّٰهَ مَوْلَاكُمْ (Chapter 8, Verse 40)

وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاَعْلَمُوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ مَوْلَاكُمْ ۗ نِعْمَ الْمَوْلٰى وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيْرُ {40}

And if they turn back, then know that اللّٰهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ (Allah is your Guardian); most excellent is the Guardian and most excellent the Helper [8:40]

(Chapter 9, Verse 51) هُوَ مَوْلَانَا

قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا هُوَ مَوْلَانَا ۗ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ {51}

Say: 'It will never befall us except what Allah Ordains for us. 'هُوَ مَوْلَانَا' (He is our Master), and upon Allah do the Momineen rely' [9:51]

(Chapter 10, Verse 30) اللَّهُ مَوْلَاهُمْ الْحَقُّ

هُنَالِكَ تَبْلُو كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا أَسْلَفَتْ ۗ وَرُدُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقُّ ۗ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ {30}

That is where every soul shall become acquainted with what it sent before, and they would be returned to, اللَّهُ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقُّ (Allah their true Master), and it be lost from them what they had been fabricating [10:30]

(Chapter 22, Verse 13) الْمَوْلَى

يَدْعُو لِمَنْ ضُرُّهُ أَقْرَبُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِ ۗ لَبِئْسَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَلَبِئْسَ الْعَشِيرُ {13}

He supplicates to one whose harm is nearer than his benefit. Evil is 'الْمَوْلَى' (the guardian) and evil is the associate [22:13]

(Chapter 22, Verse 78) مَوْلَاكُمْ & الْمَوْلَى

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ ۗ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ ۗ مَلَّةً أَيْبِكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۗ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ

وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ ۚ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ ۗ
فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ {78}

And strive hard in (the Way of) Allah, with a striving which He is Rightful of. He Chose you and did not Make any hardship upon you in the Religion, being a sect of your father Ibrahim. He named you all as the Muslims from before. And regarding this, the Rasool happens to be a witness upon you, and you happen to be witnesses upon the people.

Therefore, establish the Salat and give the Zakat, and adhere with Allah, He is 'مَوْلَاكُمْ'

(your Master). So, Excellent is 'المَوْلَىٰ' (the Master), and Excellent is the Helper! [22:78]

مَوْلَىٰ عَنْ مَوْلَىٰ (Chapter 44, Verse 41)

يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِي مَوْلَىٰ عَنْ مَوْلَىٰ شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ {41}

A Day, neither will 'مَوْلَىٰ' an associate avail anything from 'مَوْلَىٰ' an associate (against the Punishment of Allah), nor would they be helped [44:41]

اللَّهُ مَوْلَىٰ (Chapter 47, Verse 11)

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَىٰ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَأَنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ لَا مَوْلَىٰ لَهُمْ {11}

That is because Allah is the Guardian of those who believe, and that the Kafirs, there is no Guardian for them [47:11]

مَوْلَاكُمْ (Chapter 57, Verse 15)

فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُؤَخِّدُ مِنْكُمْ فِدْيَةٌ وَلَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۗ مَأْوَاكُمُ النَّارُ ۗ هِيَ مَوْلَاكُمْ ۗ وَبئسَ
الْمَصِيرُ {15}

So today, neither will ransom be taken from you nor from those who committed Kufr. Your abode is the Fire. It is your guardian, and evil is the destination [57:15]

مَوْلَاكُمْ (Chapter 66, Verse 2)

قَدْ فَرَضَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ تَحِلَّةَ أَيْمَانِكُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ ۖ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ {2}

Allah has Imposed for you all a dissolution of your oaths, 'وَاللَّهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ' and Allah is your Guardian, and He is the Knowing, the Wise [66:2]

اللَّهُ هُوَ مَوْلَاهُ (Chapter 66, Verse 4)

إِنْ تَتُوبَا إِلَى اللَّهِ فَقَدْ صَغَتْ قُلُوبُكُمَا ۖ وَإِنْ تَظَاهَرَا عَلَيْهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ مَوْلَاهُ وَجِبْرِيلُ
وَصَالِحُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۖ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ ظَهِيرٌ {4}

If you both repent to Allah, then He has Inclined both your hearts, and if you back each other against him, then surely Allah, 'هُوَ مَوْلَاهُ وَجِبْرِيلُ وَصَالِحُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ' He is his Guardian, and (so are) Jibraeel and the corrector of the Momineen; and the Angels after that are backers [66:4]

APPENDIX I:

Allah^{azwj} Commands Believers to Respect His Prophet^{saww}

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْدُمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ
{49:1}

O you those who believe! Do not precede in front of Allah and His Rasool, and fear Allah, surely He is Hearing, Knowing [49:1]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا بَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَن تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ {2}

O you those who believe! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, and do not be loud to him with the talk like the loudness of some of you to the others, lest your deeds become Nullified while you are not aware [49:2]

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَغُضُّونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۚ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ {3}

Surely those who are lowering their voices in the presence of Rasool-Allah, they are those whose hearts Allah has Tested for piety. They shall have Forgiveness and a Mighty Recompense [49:3]

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُنَادُونَكَ مِنَ الْخُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ {4}

Surely, those who are calling out to you from behind the chambers, most of them are not using their intellects [49:4]

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوا حَتَّىٰ تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ {5}

And had they been patient until you came out to them, it would have been better for them, and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful [49:5]