

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

After reciting the *Tashahhud*, the *Ta'uz* and the first chapter *Al Fatiha* of the Holy Quran, Imam Zafrullah Domun said:

Next Sunday, that is, on 23rd March, Jamaat Ahmadiyya will be 125 years old. From humble beginnings in the unknown village of Qadian to the world stage the Jamaat has spread the message of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), the Promised Messiah and Mahdi to the four corners of the world. For the sake of the new generation it is quite important for us to relate the news about those humble beginnings from time to time. So today and *insha* Allah in the coming Friday we will speak about these matters.

Hazrat Ahmad (as) had a great love for Islam since he was quite young. He used to spend his time in prayers and reading of the Holy Quran. He was deeply moved by the pitiable state of the Muslims particularly in India and around the world. He used to write articles in defense of Islam and got them published in newspapers. We learn from “The Renaissance of Islam” by Sir Zafrullah Khan that “In his first article published in *Manshur Muhammadi* of 25 August 1872, he announced that his experience and observation extending over more than a score of years had convinced him that the basis of all goodness in human affairs and relationships was truth and that an easy way of determining the truth of a religion was to discover to what degree it had put forth an effective and emphatic teaching designed to establish its followers firmly on truth. He challenged the followers of all religions to set forth from their recognized religious books their respective teachings in this behalf. He promised to award a prize of Rs 500 to any non-Muslim who would set forth from his own religious books one-half or even one-third of the teachings in support of truth that he himself would set forth from the recognized and authoritative books on Islam. No one came forward to take up the challenge.”(p16)

At that time the Christian onslaught on India was in full swing. He did whatever he could to defend Islam against all sorts of attacks whether they came from the Christians or the Arya Samaj that is the Hindus. Eventually, with great pains he published his first book “*Baraheen Ahmadiyya*” in four parts between 1880 and 1884. The book was a challenge to all other religions because it claimed to prove beyond any doubt the truthfulness of the apostleship of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw) and that the Holy Quran is a book that came from Allah. It was after writing this book that he became known to the world so to say. Many great Muslims of the time praised the book in very eulogious terms. For example Molvi Mohammad Hussein of Batala who would later on become the Promised Messiah’s arch enemy wrote about this book saying:

“In our opinion, keeping in mind this age and its circumstances, this is a book the equal of which has not been published in Islam to this day, whatever might happen

hereafter. The author has proved himself so steadfast in the service of Islam through his pen, his money, his tongue, etc., that few such instances are to be found among the Muslims.

If anyone should be disposed to consider our language an instance of Asiatic exaggeration he should point out at least one book which refutes the opponents of Islam, particularly the Arya Samaj and Brahma Samaj, so emphatically and forcefully and should name three or four such helpers of Islam who are determined to serve Islam not only with money, pen and tongue but also with their persons and who have challenged the opponents ” *Isha’atus-Sunnah* (vol. 6, Nos. 6-11)

That was a very difficult time for Islam. The Promised Messiah appeared as a champion of Islam. He would announce later on in 1884 that Allah had told him that he was the Mujaddid of the 14th Century AH. Sometime later he would say that he was an appointed one (*ma’moor*). So meanwhile people who knew what spirituality was came to him or wrote to him and asked him to accept their *bai’at*. But he refused saying that he had not been told by Allah to do so. Allah told him to start creating a Jamaat by taking *bai’at* in the beginning of 1888. However he delayed the announcement and made his intention public in a pamphlet known as “the Green pamphlet” published on 1st December of that year. Among other things he said:

I have to convey here another message to mankind in general and to Muslims in particular, which is that I have been commanded to take *Bai’at* of those who are seekers after truth so that they may know what true faith and righteousness are. They should give up indolence, faithlessness and all manner of iniquity, so that they may find the way that leads to the fountain of Divine love. Those who feel prepared for this should come to me so that I may befriend them and try to lighten their burden. God will bless them through my attention and prayer, provided they are fully prepared to carry out Divine instructions. This is a Divine command and I am hereby, today, conveying it to all. The Arabic text of the revelation is:

إِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ - وَاصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا -
الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ - يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ

i.e. When thou hast made up thy mind thou must trust in God. Make an ark under Our eyes, and under Our command. Those who will take *Bai’at* at your hands will really be giving their hands into the Hand of God. The Hand of God is over their hands.'

This was the first time that Hazrat Ahmad informed the people that he had been commanded by Allah to take the oath of allegiance from the people. In the beginning of the next year 1889 he would publish another pamphlet in which he would tell the people that in March he would be going to Ludhiana and those who wished to take *bai’at* should proceed over there. He said:

“God desires to found a community of the faithful to manifest His Glory and Power. He will make the Community grow and prosper, to establish the love of God, righteousness, purity, piety, peace and goodwill among men. This shall be a group of persons devoted to God. He shall strengthen them with His own spirit, and

bless them and purify them. He shall multiply them exceedingly as He has promised. Thousands of truthful people shall join His ranks. He shall Himself look after them and shall make the Community grow~ so much so that its numbers and progress shall amaze the world.”

On that particular day of 23rd March 1889, about 40 persons took *bai'at* with Hazrat Ahmad (as). The first one was Hazrat Molvi Nuruddin (ra). By the time of the death of Hazrat Masih Maood (as) there were about 400,000 souls who had taken bait with him. But just entering Jamaat Ahmadiyya is nothing unless and until such a person sincerely and continuously follows the teachings that Hazrat Ahmad has imparted to the world. These teachings are quite clear and we should all try to live our life according to them. Speaking about how important these conditions of *bai'at* are for the people Hazrat Ahmad (as) said:

“If anyone should deliberately contravene the conditions set out in the announcement of 12th January, 1889, and should persist in his rebellious attitude, he will be expelled from this Movement. The system of Bai‘at has been instituted solely with the purpose of bringing together a large group of the righteous, so that they should cast a positive influence in the world, and their unity should be a source of blessing and greatness and good harvest for Islam. Since they will be united for the same cause, they will be readily available for the pure and holy service of Islam. They should not be lazy, miserly and purposeless Muslims, nor should they be like the worthless ones who have done great harm to Islam through their dissention and inequity and have stained its beautiful face by their acts of transgression, nor should they be like the heedless dervishes and those who have withdrawn from the world, who are totally unaware of the needs of Islam and unconcerned with the welfare of their brethren, and who feel no eagerness for promoting the welfare of mankind. On the contrary, they should have such sympathy for the people that they should become the refuge of the poor and fathers to the orphans and, like passionate lovers, be always ready to sacrifice themselves for discharging Islamic duties. They should make every effort that their blessings should spread in the world and the pure fountain of love for the Divine and of sympathy for His servants should spring out of every heart, and their unity should be seen as flowing like a river. God Almighty, by His special grace and Favour, has designed to make the prayers and the attention of this humble one the means of the manifestation of their pure capacities. That Holy and Glorious One has inspired me with the eagerness to occupy myself with the inner training of these seekers, and to strive day and night to rid them of their impurities, and to beseech God to grant them the light whereby a person is delivered from the bondage of his ego and of Satan and develops a natural love for the ways of God Almighty. I would also solicit for them the Holy Spirit, which is generated by the strong relationship between perfect Providence and undiluted service to God. I would also endeavour to secure their deliverance from the vicious spirit which is generated by the intense relationship between Satan and Nafs-e-Ammarah [the Self that incites to evil. Thus, with the help of Allah, I will not be lax and lazy and will not be heedless in seeking the reform of my friends who have joined this Movement in full sincerity.

Indeed, I shall be ready even to face death so that they might live. I shall solicit for them from God Almighty the spiritual power which, like an electric current should activate their entire beings. I am sure that all this will come about for those who, having joined the Movement, shall wait steadfastly, for God Almighty has determined to create this group and to promote it for the manifestation of His Glory and His Power, so as to spread in the world love for Himself and sincere repentance and piety and real goodness and peace and prosperity and sympathy for mankind. Therefore, these will be His own people and He will strengthen them with His own spirit. He will purify them from a life of impurity and will bring about a pure change in their lives, as He has promised in His holy prophecies, and will cause them to grow rapidly and will bring thousands of the righteous into it. He Himself will water them and cause them to flourish, so much so that their numbers and their blessings will be looked upon with amazement. Like a lamp that is placed at a height, they will spread their light in every corner of the world and will be seen as the symbols of Islamic blessings. God will cause the perfect followers of this Movement to excel the followers of all other faiths in respect of every blessing, and to the Day of Judgment there will appear among them those who will be blessed with acceptance and help. The Lord of Glory has determined this and He has the power to do all that He wills. All power and all strength belong to Him.”(Essence of Islam Vol 4 page 240-243)

So if you consider yourself as a follower of Hazrat Ahmad (as) you should be imbued with the spirit and state of mind that he has described for us. We should not live our life as purposeless Muslims who do not have any regard for religion. We should be of those who have a great regard for religion and pray to Allah that striving for the life in this world only is not the limit of our knowledge. We should live in this world with a view on the hereafter. It is only then that we will accomplish the purpose for which Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) was sent to the world. May Allah help all of us to achieve the purpose that we have chosen for ourselves.