

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

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

As you might recall we are speaking these days about early days of Jamaat Ahmadiyya International when Hazrat Masih Maood (as) started taking the oath of allegiance (*bay'at*) from those members who wished to follow the path that will eventually lead them to Allah. This is a very long tradition that started may be with earlier prophets but we know for sure that it was practiced by the Holy Prophet (saw) and his caliphs. There are some verses of the Holy Quran which mention the act of taking *bay'at*. For example we read in Sura Al Fath (ch48) that Allah says:

“Verily those who swear allegiance to thee swear allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is over their hands. So whoever breaks his oath breaks it to his own loss; and whoever fulfills the covenant that he has made with Allah, He will surely give him a great reward”(V11).

And we also read “Surely Allah was well pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to thee under the tree and he knew what was in their heart and He sent down tranquility on them and He rewarded them with a victory at hand.”(48:39). This verse refers to the swearing of allegiance which took place at Hudaibia under an acacia tree. It came to be known as *Bay'at al Ridwan*.

So swearing the oath of allegiance is a very important matter. When Hazrat Masih Maood took *bay'at* for the first time he did it on an individual basis to impress upon each individual its importance. These days, as you are aware, most Ahmadis around the world renew their oath with their caliph at least once a year in a ceremony known as *Alaami bay'at*. Unfortunately some people have thought that they are fulfilling their part of the *bay'at* engagement by just participating in that ceremony. The truth is that this is not what we have learnt from Hazrat Masih Maood (as). Explaining what is *bay'at* he says:

“*Bai'at* truly means to sell oneself; its blessings and impact are based on that condition. Just as a seed is sown into the ground, its original condition is that the hand of the farmer has sown it, but it is not known what will happen to it. If the seed is of a good quality and possesses the capacity to grow, then with the grace of Allah the Almighty, and as a

consequence of the work done by the farmer, it grows until one grain turns into a thousand grains. Similarly, the person taking *bai'at* has to first adopt lowliness and humility and has to distance himself from his ego and selfishness. Then that person becomes fit for growth. But he who continues to hold on to his ego, along with taking *bai'at*, will never receive any grace.” (*Malfuzat*, vol. 6, p. 173)

So anyone who cares for the oath of allegiance as it should be cared for will understand that he is committing himself to becoming a better human being by just taking *bay'at*. If anyone has taken *bay'at* but behaves in a way that is unislamic it means that he has not been able to derive any benefit from the engagement that he took. It is very important for each one amongst us to understand this most important point. If you still are what you have always been it means that your being an Ahmadi Muslim has not brought you any spiritual benefit at all. We all know that with age we become more knowledgeable, wiser and more experienced. Now if we are becoming old and we try to hide our age by all means possible because we do not like to age or to appear old we are deluding but our own selves. Someone said that the fact that our beard or our hair turn white is in itself a lesson for us and it everyday reminds us that with age they have changed and so should we. Hazrat Masih Maood (as) further says:

“To take *bai'at* means handing over your life to Almighty Allah. It means, ‘Today we have sold our life to Almighty Allah.’ It is wrong to say that by treading in the path of Allah anybody would ultimately suffer a loss. The truthful can never be in a state of loss. Only he who is false—i.e., who, for worldly gain, breaks the pledge that he has made with Almighty Allah— suffers loss. One who commits such an action because of the fear of the world should remember that at the time of his death no ruler or king of this world would come to procure his release. He has to present himself to the Judge of all the judges, who will enquire of him, ‘Why did you not honour Me?’ Therefore, it is essential for all the believers to believe in Allah, Who is the King of the heavens and earth and to make a true repentance.” (*Malfuzat*, vol. 7, pp. 29–30)

When an Ahmadi Muslim hears such words, it is incumbent upon him to take a moment and wonder how far he has been true to his pledge and wonder how much he has really honored Allah in the life that he led on earth. Each one should answer for himself. If there are regrets for shortcomings there should be no despair at all because Allah will always accept you whenever you decide to walk on His path. It is not at all sufficient just to say that we belong to the Jamaat where there is a caliph and we are numerous compared to others who disagree with the caliph. The fact is that Allah will ask each Ahmadi Muslim personally about his behavior on earth and each one should be ever prepared with his answers and that is where the *bay'at* might help.

Explaining the objectives of the Jamaat further Hazrat Masih Maood (as) said:

“This system of *bai‘at* has been established solely to gather together a group of the righteous people in a *Jama‘at* so that a weighty group of the righteous people should make a holy impact on the world. The unity of these righteous people should be a source of blessings, grandeur, and positive results for Islam. The blessings of being united on one creed may enable them to perform noble and righteous services for the sake of Islam. They may not be lazy, stingy, and useless Muslims; nor should they be like the unworthy ones who have done great damage to Islam because of their discord and disunity; nor such as have vitiated Islam’s beautiful countenance with their unholy conditions; nor should they be like those heedless dervishes and hermits who have no awareness of what Islam needs, nor have any sympathy for their brothers, nor have any enthusiasm to do good deeds for humanity. Rather, they should be such sympathizers of the nation that they should become a refuge for the poor and fathers for the orphans. In the service of Islam, they should be willing to sacrifice themselves like one overpowered with love. All their efforts should be devoted to spread Islam’s blessings throughout the world so that a pure fountain of the love of Allah and sympathy for humanity may flow from every heart and, being combined in one place, should look like a flowing river.... Almighty Allah desires to manifest His Glory and demonstrate His Omnipotence through this group, and then He desires to grant it further progress so that the world may be filled with the love of Allah, true repentance, purity, true goodness, peace, reconciliation, and sympathy for mankind. This group will be a special group of Allah, and He will grant them power through His Own Spirit, and He will safeguard them from unholy life, and He will bring about a pure change in their life. As He has promised in His holy glad tidings, He will increase this group tremendously and thousands of the truthful will join it. He Himself will irrigate it and make it prosper until its numbers and blessings will be a source of marvel for all who see. Like a lamp placed high, they will spread their light on all sides of the world, and they will be considered an example of the blessings of Islam. Allah will grant all kinds of blessings to the perfect followers of this Movement, and He will grant them victory over all others. Up to the Day of Judgment, there will be people among them who will be granted divine acceptance and succour. This is what the Glorious God has desired; He is All-Powerful and does what He desires. All strength and power belong to Him.”

(*Majmu‘ah Ishtiharat*, vol. 1, pp. 196-198)

When we read this extract from the pamphlet which Hazrat Masih Maood(as) published on 4th March 1889 we should wonder whether the Jamaat Ahmadiyya of today has truly fulfilled all the expectations of Hazrat Masih Maood (as). The honest answer will be that in very few matters we might have fulfilled his objectives but in many matters the members of the Jamaat are still the slave of their limited understanding and their prejudices and their baser nature. Contradictions between teachings and actions are still quite flagrant. And in many instances the Jamaat

together with its leaders have strayed from the path drawn by Hazrat Masih Maood (as).

As from 1889 after he had taken the first *bay'at* Hazrat Masih Maood (as) would spare no pain to advise the members who joined the Jamaat about his teachings. Here are some extracts of what he said from time to time. He said:

“By joining this *Jama'at*, you should bring about a complete transformation in your former life so that you have true faith in Allah, and He becomes your Helper in all calamities. You should not take His ordinances lightly, but should rather honour every one of His commandments and prove such honour in your actions. To turn towards worldly means for various reasons and to place your trust in them instead of trusting Allah amount to making partners with Allah, as if you were denying the existence of God. You should consider worldly means only to the extent that they do not amount to associating partners with Allah. My way is that I do not forbid you from using the worldly means, but I do forbid you from placing your trust in them. Your hand should be engaged in work, but your heart should be attached to the True Beloved.

He also said:

“All of you who have taken *bai'at* and have made a commitment, listen! To utter these words is easy, but to do justice to them is hard because Satan is always busy trying to make man careless about his faith. Satan shows the world and its benefits to be within reach, and faith to be distant. In this way, the heart is hardened and each subsequent condition is worse than the previous one. If you want to please Allah, put your entire strength and effort to abide faithfully to this commitment of freeing yourself from sins.”

He also advised us how to behave with one another. He said:

“Utter no words of mischief, spread no evil, bear the rebukes with patience, do not confront anyone, even if someone confronts you, and deal with him with kindness and goodness. Demonstrate a good example of sweetness of conversation.

Abide by all commandments with a true heart so that Allah be pleased with you and even the enemy may recognize the change in you after *bay'at*. Give true evidence in court cases. All those who join this Movement should establish themselves on truthfulness with full heart, full endeavor, and the entirety of life. (*Dhikr-e-Habib*, pp. 436–438)

These words are to be meditated upon and each one amongst us should do our best to live up to all these engagements if we are to be considered true Ahmadis.

Now we will say a few words about the early Ahmadis in Mauritius. We understand from some documents that have recently been published that the early Ahmadis after the arrival of the Sufi sahib were members of Sultan Ghaus Family from Phoenix. They were the grandfather of our friends Dr Mahmood and Zahoor Sooltangos, Mr Azim Sooltangos and his father and sisters. Immediately after some other members from Miajee Soobhan Rajaballee joined them. We all know that once these people announced that they were joining the Jamaat of the Promised Messiah they had to bear the full brunt of the social boycott that was applied by the majority Sunnis population. The *sunnis* stopped exchanging salaams with them and stopped attending their funerals and their marriage ceremonies. But most of the early Ahmadis stood firm and bore the brunt of these social insults. We understand that a young Ahmadi woman who was already married was divorced whilst she was pregnant only because she had joined the Jamaat. She never married again and lived with her only son to an old age. Great pressure was being exercised by the womenfolk's families to extricate their daughters from the Ahmadis but most remain firmed and stayed with their husbands.

It is a real irony of history that in the beginning of their history in Mauritius Ahmadis Muslims were the victims of social boycott and now they have become past masters in practicing social boycott and they have turned it into a virtue! May Allah have mercy on them and help them to see their actions as they truly are. More incha Allah next week.