

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

Last week I ended with a quotation from Hazrat Masih Maood (as). I would like to say a few words about this extract before I read its remaining part to you today. Hazrat Masih Maood (as) makes it quite clear in the beginning that those who are joining the Jamaat Ahmadiyya are making a commitment to accept him as a spiritual preceptor. The formal commitment to accepting someone as a spiritual preceptor is done through the *bay'at*. You will recall how in the early days in 1889 when he started taking *bay'at* Hazrat Masih Maood (as) took the *bay'at* of his *murids*, i.e. those who wished their *bay'at* to be taken, individually. Later on *bay'at* was taken in groups. In fact once the *bay'at* is taken the *murid* is under the care of the *Murshad*, the one who will show him the way to Allah. A spiritual bond should exist between these two and each one has his own responsibility. The *Murshad* does his best to guide and the *Murid* does his best to follow the instructions received. Some instructions might be delivered in private because every one's situation is not the same but most instructions are given generally. Unfortunately when there are many people the private work recedes in the background and is quite difficult and general instructions are given and there exists no mechanism to judge the effectiveness of instructions given. This spiritual bond is most effective and yields its best result when there is a close contact and the *murids* are allowed access to their *Murshad* when they feel the need to talk to him and speak to him about their questions or personal problems. As an adviser and a guide the *Murshad* is there to advise and guide and not to judge and helps the *murid* on his journey towards Allah.

Hazrat Masih Maood (as) makes it quite clear that for an aspiring or a longtime Ahmadi Muslim his or her aim in life should always be to show exemplary conduct and to attain to a high degree of righteousness. If you are a member of Jamaat Ahmadiyya this should be your twin aims. It is imperative that each one should bear this in mind at any moment of his or her existence. We need to see to it that under no circumstance should we allow ourselves to fail in striving to achieve these twin aims. One should do one's best in trying to remember this well. Hazrat Masih Maood (as) makes it quite clear that we should not behave badly with others. Then Hazrat Masih Maood (as) names several sins which an Ahmadi Muslim is expected to avoid completely and we are not going to repeat them here. Now we will continue with the extract. He says:

“These are matters and conditions that I have been urging from the beginning, and it is the duty of every member of my *Jama'at* to act upon them. (He means the instructions that he has given in the extract of which we have spoken above). You should indulge in no impurity, mockery or derision. Walk upon the earth with good hearts, pure tempers, and pure thoughts. Not every evil

is worth fighting, so cultivate the habit of forgiveness and overlooking defaults, and behave with steadfastness and meekness. Do not attack anyone improperly, and keep your passions under complete control. If you take part in a discussion, or in an exchange of views on a religious subject, express yourself gently and be courteous. If anyone misbehaves towards you, withdraw from such company with a greeting of peace. If you are persecuted or reviled, be mindful that you should not meet stupidity with stupidity, for otherwise you will be counted in the same category as your opponents. God Almighty desires that you should become a *jama'at* that should set an example of goodness and truthfulness for the whole world. Hasten to exclude everyone from your company who sets an example of evil, mischief, provocation and ill-behaviour. He who cannot dwell among us in meekness, goodness and piety, using gentle words and comporting himself in ways of good conduct, should depart from us quickly, for God does not desire that such a one should dwell among us. He will die miserably, for he did not adopt the way of goodness. Therefore, be alert, and be truly good-hearted, gentle and righteous. You will be known by your regular attendance at Prayer services and your high moral qualities. He who has the seed of evil embedded in him will not be able to conform to this admonition. (*Tabligh-e-Risalat*, vol. 7, pp. 42–44. *Ishtihar (The Announcement)*, May 29, 1898, p. 2)

When we read such a document we cannot but appreciate the effort with which Hazrat Masih Maood (as) strived to make it very clear to his followers what was expected of them. Unfortunately we see that not many of them do really care about what he said. Many prefer to do the contrary of what he said and distort his image and present his teachings in ways that he did not intend at all to present them. We have these days many people from the mainstream Jamaat who say they know better about his teachings but yet many amongst them continue to act in ways which are contrary to what he taught. This is quite an unfortunate situation. Unfortunately it is the result of doublespeak that is so current at the top of the Jamaat's leadership. Allah knows when the Jamaat as a whole will be saved from such hypocrisy, which is to say to preach something and to do its contrary.

In this second condition of *bay'at* Hazrat Masih Maood (as) also tells us that we should refrain from being dishonest. From the Holy Quran we learn “And plead not on behalf of those who are dishonest to themselves. Surely, Allah loves not one who is perfidious *and* a great sinner.”(4:108) And from the hadith we learn “Hazrat Abu Hurairah (ra) narrates that the Holy Prophet (saw) said, ‘If someone gives you something for safekeeping, return it to him. Do not be dishonest with anyone, even if he has been dishonest with you.’ (*Sunano Abi Dawud, Kitab-ul-Buyu', Babu fir-Rajuli ya'khudhu Haqqahu...*) We spoke about this matter in a previous sermon. Returning evil for evil is bad because you harm your own self by doing so.

Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has also advised us to stay away from mischief. From the Holy Quran we learn ““And seek, in that which Allah has given thee, the Home of the Hereafter; and neglect

not thy lot in this world; and do good *to others* as Allah has done good to thee; and seek not to make mischief in the earth, verily Allah loves not those who make mischief.’ (28:78). There are some hadiths related to this matter. The Holy Prophet (saw) said: “‘Combat is of two types: One that is waged for the pleasure of Allah under the leadership of an *Imam* [divinely guided leader]. A person engaged in such combat spends his best property in the way of Allah, is comforting to his companions, and avoids mischief. For such a person, everything—his sleeping and waking time—earns merit in the sight of Allah. And there is another who engages in combat for pride, ostentation, and to talk about his valour. He disobeys the *Imam* and creates mischief in the earth. Such a one can never equal the first one in rank.’ (Sunan Abi Dawud, *Kitab-ul-Jihad, Babu fi man yaghzu wa yaltamis-ud-Dunya*). Here we understand the combat mentioned as “jihad” meaning making efforts in the way of Allah. It may mean combating those who want to wipe you off the surface of the earth and making constant efforts in establishing Allah’s religion through your own person and together with others despite the odds.

In another hadith we read that the Holy prophet (saw) said:

‘Should I inform you about the best of people?’ The Companions (ra) said, ‘Certainly, tell us O Prophet of Allah.’ He said, ‘When they witness a desirable scene, they start remembering Allah.’ Then he said, ‘Should I tell you about the worst of people? The worst people are those who go about backbiting and creating discord between people. Their wish is that the obedient servants of Allah get involved in sin.’ (*Musnadu Ahmadabni Hanbal*, vol. 6, p. 459, printed in Beirut) This is an important hadith in the sense that it provokes us to think. There are always some worst people who wish that the servants of Allah get involved in sins for example in turning their back to a message that they have accepted and the like. There are a few persons who are busy in this kind of work and they spend their time in backbiting the good servants of Allah.

And again from the writings of Hazrat Ahmad (as) we read:

“ Do not engage in fighting or discord with those who leave you because you have joined a Movement established by Almighty Allah; instead, pray for them in secret that Almighty Allah may grant them the insight and cognition that He has granted you. With your pious example and good behaviour, prove that you have adopted the right path. Listen! I am appointed to admonish you repeatedly to avoid all occasions of discord and disturbance. Have patience even if you hear abuse. Respond to evil with goodness. If you encounter discord, slip away from that situation or respond with kind words.... I do not like when I learn that someone has quarreled despite being a member of my *Jama‘at*. Almighty Allah does not like that the *Jama‘at* that is destined to become a model for mankind should adopt such ways, which are not the ways of righteousness. Indeed, I tell

you that Almighty Allah has emphasized this matter so much that if someone—declaring his membership of the *Jama'at*—does not show patience and perseverance, he does not belong to this *Jama'at*. The utmost cause of your provocation might be that you hear people abusing me. Leave that matter for God to decide. You cannot judge it. Leave my affair to God; you should show patience even in the face of such abuse. (*Malfuzat*, new edition, vol. 4, p. 157)

This text makes it amply clear who is in the *Jamaat* of the Promised Messiah and who is not. It is as clear as the day that the true followers of the Promised Messiah are those who do their best to put his teachings in practice and not necessarily those who administer it. Someone might not be a member because his name does not appear in the official register of the *Jamaat* where he lives. But that same person can be at the top of the list of Ahmadis in the register that is kept by Allah if he or she does his best to follow the Promised Messiah's teachings. Mainstream Ahmadi members labour under the delusion that because they have a caliph their salvation is guaranteed. There is nothing further from the truth. Unless and until someone makes the necessary effort to sincerely follow the teachings of the Promised Messiah his salvation is not at all to be expected. Those who preach otherwise are deluding themselves and are deluding those who listen to them.

Hazrat Masih Maood (as) was a prince of love. Hate has no place at all in his *Jamaat* but not only in words rather more specifically in deeds. We need to understand as early as possible in our life that we will achieve nothing by just talking unless we walk the talk. The Promised Messiah (as) came to teach us to match our actions with our words. If we fail in this matter we fail in a most important behaviour that is expected from us. Actions speak louder than words as the saying goes and we need to show by our actions that we have imbibed the teachings of the Promised Messiah (as) and not by our speeches only. Saying something and doing something else is indeed very repugnant to Allah and as good Muslims we should seek Allah's Pleasure and do our best to avoid His Displeasure. May Allah help each one amongst us to realize that by our thoughts only or by our words only we do not have any worth at all unless we learn to show our good character in action. May Allah help each one who is in the *Jamaat* of the Promised Messiah to be an embodiment of his teachings in action.