

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

You might recall that last week I said that we would be talking about repentance today. It has become quite common within Jamaat Ahmadiyya mainstream for all the members to renew their *bai'at* to the caliph at least once every year on the occasion of Jalsa Salana in London. This has been going on, if I am not mistaken, since 1993. Had people been renewing their *bai'at* yearly and had this translated in a marked improvement in their conduct, one might say that this International *Bai'at* is a good innovation (*bid'a hasana*) which helps the people in making a true repentance. Unfortunately, when we compare the behaviour of Muslim Ahmadis, particularly in Mauritius, we see that despite the repetition of the *bai'at* yearly they still miss imbibing the true teachings of the Promised Messiah in their daily lives.

Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has spoken lengthily about the importance of the *bai'at* and its philosophy so that no Ahmadi can say that he or she is not aware of it. I will share one such extract with you today. He says:

“What is the significance of *Bai'at*? The meaning of the word is to exchange one thing with another by mutual consent. The purpose of *Bai'at* is that one who enters into the covenant sells his self together with all its capacities to a guide so that in return he should obtain the true understanding and the perfect blessings which should become the means of acquiring cognition, salvation, and attaining the pleasure of God Almighty. It is thus obvious that *Bai'at* does not mean simple repentance, because man can bring it about by himself. Rather, it denotes the understanding, blessings and signs which pull one in the direction of true repentance. Its real purpose is to commit one's

ego to the service of one's guide and to acquire in return the knowledge, the understanding and the blessings which should strengthen faith and increase true understanding, so that a pure relationship may be established with God Almighty; and thus, having obtained deliverance from worldly hell, one might be delivered from the hell of the hereafter; and, having been cured of blindness in this world, one might be secure against blindness in the hereafter.[*Darurat-ul-Imam, Ruhani Khaza'in*, vol. 13, p. 498]

This is an extract that should be meditated upon by any Ahmadi, whether he or she is from our Jamaat or from the mainstream Jamaat if one seeks to understand why he or she chooses to enter the *bai'at* of one's guide. It is a bond that is entered by mutual consent with the purpose of getting a proper understanding of Allah and how one can reach Him. In order to emphasize the benefits that someone might get by joining Jamaat Ahmadiyya Al Mouslemeen, Allah has revealed to me a few times "*Innal lazina yobaye'ounaka innama yo'baye'ounal Allah. Yadoullaha fawqa aydihim*" meaning "**Those who enter into allegiance with you make allegiance with Allah. The Hand of Allah is above their hands.**" So, when someone decides to make *bai'at* with an Imam, it is not just a repetition of a few words. It is a decision to tread the path that will lead one to Allah and to stay away from all sorts of sins. May Allah grant all Ahmadi Muslims the true significance of their *bai'at*. Now I will read to you some extracts of the writings of the Promised Messiah (as) which will help all amongst us to understand what we should be looking for when we make *bai'at* with someone who has been given the right to take *bai'at* from the people. He says:

"That is, doubtless God befriends those who repent and those who wish to attain purity. From this verse (Allah loves those who turn to Him and loves

those who keep themselves clean), we learn that not only does God love those who repent but also **that true repentance carries with it the condition of true purity**. To be distanced from all manner of filth and impurities is a necessary condition [for true repentance], otherwise the mere verbal repetition of the words of repentance can lead to no benefit. Hence, when a day is so blessed that a human being repents from all his bad deeds and makes a truthful vow of peace with God and bows his head before God's commandments then without doubt he will be saved from the punishment that was being prepared because of his bad deeds. In this manner, he attains that which he did not even have any hope of attaining. You can imagine yourself what great joy a person would feel when having lost all hope of attaining something, in a state of complete hopelessness, he finds what he was seeking. His heart would feel a fresh and new life within. This is the reason for its mention in the Ahadith. From the Ahadith and previous holy books it is noted that God is very pleased with the life of a person when he escapes death from sin and finds a new life through repentance. In reality it is a matter of happiness that a person who is buried under sin, where death and destruction are closing down upon him from all directions, and the punishment of God is ready to swallow him and then, suddenly, he should repent from ill deeds and immoral acts that had become the cause of his distancing from God and move towards God. Such a time is a time of God's happiness and the angels in the heavens also celebrate this happy event. This is so because God Almighty does not wish that any servant of His should suffer ruin and destruction. On the contrary, God wishes that even if His servant has erred and displayed weakness, he should repent and thereby enter (a state of) peace.

You should remember, therefore, that the day when a person repents from his sins is a very blessed day indeed as well as the best of days because on such a day he finds a new life and is brought closer to God. In this respect, it is a day of repentance (as many among you have today vowed that on this day they repent from their sins and in the future, so far as is possible for them, they would abstain from sins). In accordance with God's promises, I trust that every person who has repented with a true and sincere heart shall be forgiven all of his previous sins by God. It is to such people that the following Hadith [tradition of the Holy Prophet (saw)] applies: The one who repents from sin is like the one who has not committed sin. That is, we can say that it is as if such a person never committed any sin. However, I say this again that for the achievement of this objective, there is the condition that one should move towards true purity and true piety. Moreover, that the repentance should not merely be a verbal repentance, but that it should be realized through action. It is no small matter that someone's sins should be forgiven — it is a most magnificent matter. (Malfoozat, Vol. 7, pp.147-150)

“Repentance is in reality a very effective means of aiding and stimulating the development of good morals and leads one to achieve moral perfection. In other words, for the person who wishes to bring about a change in his character in order to reform himself, it is essential that he should repent sincerely with a firm resolve. It should be remembered that there are three conditions for repentance without the fulfillment of which true repentance cannot be achieved. **The first** of these three conditions is to rid oneself of ill thoughts that lead to bad inclinations and propensities. In reality, thoughts exercise great influence. Every action has a notional existence in the form of 'thought' that precedes the action. Hence, the first condition for repentance is that evil thoughts and notions should be discarded.

For instance, if a man has an illicit relationship with a woman and desires to repent, it is necessary [in order to prepare himself mentally for this course of action], that he should think of her as unattractive and remind himself of her negative qualities. This is so because, as I have just stated, thoughts and fancies exercise a powerful influence. I have read that some Sufis carried their powers of thought to such extremes that they actually saw some people in the form of an ape or a pig. In other words, thoughts influence that which is perceived. The first condition of repentance, therefore, is that all ideas and thoughts which are considered to give rise to evil pleasures should be discarded altogether. The **second** condition of true repentance is **remorse**, that there should be some expression of regret and embarrassment. Everyone's conscience admonishes him over every evil but an unfortunate person leaves his conscience suspended. A person should express remorse over his sins and evil actions and should reflect upon the fact that the pleasure to be derived [from bad deeds] is temporary. He should also consider that each repetition of an evil deed causes a lessening of pleasure derived from it and that in the end, in old age, when his faculties are weakened, he perforce have to give up all such pleasures. Why then indulge that in which in the end has to be given up, even in this life? Most fortunate is the person who turns in repentance and becomes determined to discard all corrupt thoughts and evil fancies and having succeeded in ridding himself of these impurities he should feel remorse and regret for his past ill deeds.

**The third** condition (of true repentance) is a firm resolve that he will not revert to those previous vices. If he adheres to this resolve, God will bestow upon him the strength of true repentance and he will be rid altogether of his vices (and he will be enabled to) replace these with good morals and praiseworthy deeds and this is a victory over one's morals. However, it is for

God Almighty to bestow the power and strength for such a victory for He is the Master of all power and all strength, as He has stated (in the Holy Qur'an): "*Annal quwwata lillahe jami'an*", meaning "All power belongs to Allah". (Ch.2: v. 166) (Malfoozat, vol.1, pp.138-140)

It is quite apparent from that which God Almighty has informed us of through the Prophets and to which real events bear witness, that God has established a system of laws of punishment and reward that begins in this very world. The purpose of the punishment received in this world for whatever mischief and misdeed a human being commits, whether he himself feels it to be so or not, is reprimand so that a mischievous person may create a significant change in his condition through repentance and turning to God. In addition, that he may, by becoming aware, establish and strengthen the relationship of serving God which had been hitherto overlooked. The example of punishment received in this world by way of reprimand is like that of a school. Just as in a school light punishment is given to children because of their forgetfulness and laziness. The teacher's purpose in this is not to deprive a child from knowledge but to inform him of his own aim so that the child may be alert and careful in the future. Likewise, when God punishes wickedness and mischief, the purpose is to help the foolish human being whose actions are harming his own life to refrain from his mischief. Moreover, it serves to inform them of the consequences so that, as a result, they may fear God's omnipotence and turn to Him. I have repeatedly stated this fact and now repeat it before you that when a person performs an action, an act of God consequently follows upon it. For example, if we eat poison in sufficient quantity, the necessary consequence of this will be that we will be killed. Here, taking the poison is our action over which God's act unfolds in that it kills. Or, as a further example, when we close the windows of a room

in our house, this is our action upon which God's consequent action would be that there will be darkness in the room. This is the way in which the law of God's acts operates in the world: the actions of a person are followed by a consequence that is God's act. Just as this system is apparent in the visible sphere and we daily find its examples in the physical world, it has a similar relationship with the inner realm of one's being. It is the very principle that is essential for understanding the law of punishment, that every action of ours, good or bad, carries an effect which comes into being after our action has taken place.....”

We will stop here today. Members should reflect upon these extracts and try to act accordingly *incha* Allah. May Allah help each one amongst us to become a good Muslim.