

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

As you are all well aware, being a member of Jamaat Ahmadiyya is different from being just a Muslim. We are born an Ahmadi Muslim or we convert to Jamaat Ahmadiyya by accepting and recognizing Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) as the Promised Messiah (as) and Mahdi (as) whose coming was prophesized by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw).

As an Ahmadi Muslim we accept the ten conditions of the *bai'at* in which are explained, in summary, what is expected of us as a member of the Jamaat of the Promised Messiah (as).

So as an Ahmadi Muslim we should familiarize ourselves with these conditions and do our utmost to fulfill all of them as best as we can throughout our life.

It is not my intention to remind you of all these conditions now. Each one amongst us should remind himself/herself of them so that they might become, so to say, second nature to us.

This *bai'at* is significant in many ways because when we peruse these conditions and we decide to make the *bai'at*, it means that we are making a promise to ourselves, to Allah through our guide, imam to live our life according to the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw). This is our intention. This is our promise.

But the truth is that despite our best intentions, despite our great determination, we fail to live up to these ideals as spelled out in these *bai'at* conditions.

Some people just accept this situation and they get on with their life admitting to themselves that they are weak and they do nothing about their situation.

But this is not the idea. It is understood that people enter into *bai'at* to improve themselves, in fact to transform themselves, to focus more on their destination, namely the hereafter without neglecting their duties in this world. In fact, it is through our life in this world that we shed whatever is bad and we cultivate what is good. And we should continue to struggle and never despair of Allah's mercy because if we do so we have not believed in him.

So, making *bai'at* is in fact an act of courage because we have decided to adopt a different course of our life than most other people. We choose VOLUNTARILY for ourselves another life project which is that our life will always be in accordance with the 10 conditions that have been specified. This is not an easy path. It demands from us struggle, efforts, determination to stick to it and conviction that it is the right path to take. It demands many sacrifices from us. If we do what is needed we will be rewarded with knowledge of Allah, love of Allah with peace and satisfaction of a life well lived when we will depart from here, *inchaAllah*. At least this is what is expected.

For today I have chosen to say a few very limited words about the third condition of *bai'at*. Some other time we might talk about the other conditions *incha Allah*.

In the third condition of *bai'at* Hazrat Masih Maood (as) expects us to do five things:

1. To be regular in offering our five daily prayers in accordance with the commandments of God and the Holy Prophet Mohammad (saw).
2. To do our best to be regular in offering the Tahajjud prayer.
3. To invoke Durood (blessings) on the Holy Prophet (saw).
4. To ask forgiveness for our sins daily.
5. We should remember the bounties of God and praise and glorify Him.

Concerning the five daily prayers we cannot do without them. In the beginning as a child, we might just be making the movements for prayer, *Qiyaam, Ruku, Sajda, Qada, Salaam*. As adults we are all expected to know each word that we pronounce in the prayers. If we do not, it is only through negligence because we have not thought it important to devote time to learning the meanings of all the words. The Holy Quran is very explicit about this. It says:

“Fawayloul lil musalleen allazina houn an salatehim saahoune, allazina houn yoraa'oune” meaning

So, woe to those who pray, but are unmindful of their Prayer. They like to be seen *of men*, (HQ 107:5-7)

So, we all need to know full well the translation of each of the Arabic word we use in our five daily prayers. If there is anyone amongst us who still does not know the translation of the words that he or she pronounces he should make an effort and do his best to learn them as soon as possible. If we learn

one word every day we will know all the words within a period of two months or even less and they will stay with us as long as we live incha Allah.

Now once we understand what we are saying we should also develop within us the presence of Allah while we pray. We should concentrate so much and not let our attention wander away from Allah even for an instant. This is ideal. If we get distracted, we should bring it back to Allah. Try it and you will see how difficult it is. But through seeking Allah's help this matter might become easy for you. When you start trying to concentrate you will notice that you will need to make the effort in each prayer. But practice will make you perfect. You should try it and keep doing it over and over in order to do it well. Remember your heart should be in prayer and not just your body.

For today I will stop here on the importance of the five daily prayers with the hope that you will make greater efforts to know more by reading the extracts of Hazrat Masih Maood (as) on prayer which is available on the net.

The second point on which Hazrat Masih Maood (as) says that we should make special efforts is Tahajjud Prayer. According to the Holy Quran, this prayer which is usually performed in the third part of the night is a means of spiritual elevation. Hazrat Masih Maood (as) advises us to be regular in it so that we might become elevated spiritually. Those who strive to say this prayer might know how difficult it is to offer it. But if you are in deep trouble it becomes quite easy. If we make the *bai'at* we should be committed to reading this prayer even only two *rakaats* seeking to improve our relationship with Allah. My experience is that when we are young we are more apt to offer it before we become old and the subject of diseases. I pray that Allah helps us all to strive to do this prayer as best as we can.

The third point on which Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has laid emphasis is the Darood on the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw). The Holy Quran is quite clear on it. It says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

Translation:

“Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! You *also* should invoke blessings on him and salute *him* with the salutation of peace.” (HQ33:57)

As Muslims we are all dutybound to recite this Darood regularly as best as we can. The technical term for this prayer in Arabic is *Salaat alan Nabi*. But in Persian and Urdu they most often use the word Darood and so do we.

Some people may say we do so during the daily prayers. It is true but this is not enough because if we want to come closer to Allah we need to do more than what has been prescribed. You will recall that there is a hadith Qudsi which is quite famous among the Sufis because they engage in additional worship of Allah. The hadith is as follows:

“Allah (mighty and sublime be He) said:

“Whosoever shows enmity to someone devoted to Me, I shall be at war with him. My servant draws not near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with supererogatory works so that I shall love him. When I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask [something] of Me, I would surely give it to him, and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it... (Bukhari)

What Hazrat Masih Maood (as) has taught us is that we should read the Darood Ibrahim because it is the best and this is what the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) said. This is the Darood that we recite in our daily prayers. There is no prescribed number of times for its recitation. But the more we have love of the Holy Prophet (saw) in our heart, the more we will do it. There are plenty of hadiths on this subject and I advise you all to spend some time reading them and understand how this prayer for the Holy Prophet Muhammad (saw) will correct your faults and elevate your spiritual rank. However, I suggest that our members start by saying a few times and then as they get a taste of it they might increase it little by little.

The fourth point which the Promised Messiah (as) speaks about is (the asking of forgiveness (*istighfaar*)). There are plenty of verses of the Holy Quran where Allah shows us how we should pray for His Forgiveness. I will give you only two of them

رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا ۚ
رَبَّنَا وَتَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إَصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَيَّ لَا يَنْفَعُنَا ۚ
رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ ۚ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا ۚ
وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا ۚ أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ۚ

Translation: Our Lord, do not punish us, if we forget or fall into error; and our Lord, lay not on us a responsibility as Thou didst lay upon those before us. Our Lord, burden us not with what we have not the strength to bear; and efface our *sins*, and grant us forgiveness and have mercy on us; Thou art our Master; so, help us Thou against the disbelieving people.

Concerning the two last verses of **Sura Al Baqara** where these prayers are found, the Holy prophet Mohammad (saw) is reported to have said “*If somebody recited the last two Verses of Surat Al-Baqara at night, that will be sufficient for him.*” (Bukhari)

In hadith Book Muslim we read that Ibn Mas’ud relates : “*While the Messenger of Allah was with Jibril, he heard a noise from above. Jibril lifted his sight to the sky and said, ‘This is a door that was opened just now in heaven, and it was never opened before.’ An angel came down through the door to the Prophet and said, ‘Receive the good news of two lights that you have been given and which no Prophet before you was given: the Opener of the Book (Al-Fatihah) and the last Ayat in Surat Al-Baqarah. You will not read a letter of them, but you will be granted its benefit.’*” (Muslim)

But as an easier way to say it the Holy Prophet (saw) used to say just “*astaghfiroullah*” meaning “I seek forgiveness from Allah”. This he repeated three times as soon as he finished the obligatory (*farz*) prayers. Besides he is reported to have said that in a typical day he asked forgiveness from Allah more than seventy times. Now just imagine sinners like us how much should we be doing. We are all sinners. Sometimes we are aware of our sins and sometimes we are not. So, we should keep asking forgiveness everyday with the hope that if we sin deliberately or due to some weakness, Allah will forgive us and purify us eventually because our efforts are not sufficient.

So, if we really want to progress in spirituality we should start working on it and daily recite *astaghfaar* with due regret and repentance will help us a long way in that path.

The last point that Hazrat Masih Maood (as) asks us to dwell upon in this 3rd condition of *bai’at* is to constantly remind ourselves of Allah’s favours upon us and to respond by praising and glorifying Him. There are many words which are used for this purpose. But the simplest ones are saying “Pure is Allah” (*tasbih*), All Praise is for Allah (*tahmid*) and Allah is the Greatest (*takbir*) [*subhaanallah, alhamdolillah, allahoakbar*].

Just take a few seconds and imagine what a treasure your body and your mind are and think about your deprivation if you ever lost any part of them. You will not understand what I am saying unless you take the time to think about it. Then you might understand what is the immensity of Allah's Favours on you for having graced you with such a body and also how precious you are. Also imagine how you are repaying Him back for having given you such a marvelous body. We should all be often asking ourselves the question whether we are showing gratefulness or not. We believe that we are the proprietors of our body. In fact, we are only its administrator to some point.

Allah has taught us that we should pray to Him in the following words of the Holy Quran:

حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ كُرْبًا وَوَضَعَتْهُ كُرْبًا ۖ وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ
 حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَبَلَغَ أَرْبَعِينَ نَهًّا ۖ وَحَمَلُهُ وَفِصْلُهُ ثَلَاثُونَ شَهْرًا ۖ
 فَلَمَّا رَبَّاهُ عَنَّا أَنْ اشْكُرْ نِعْمَتَكَ ۖ تَتَىٰ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ
 وَ عَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْلِحْ لِي فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي ۚ
 إِنِّي تُبْتُ لَكَ وَ إِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ۖ

“And We have enjoined on man to be good to his parents. His mother bears him with pain and brings him forth with pain. And the bearing of him and his weaning takes thirty months, till, when he attains his full maturity and reaches *the age of* forty years, he says, ‘My Lord, grant me *the power* that I may be grateful for Thy favour which Thou hast bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I may do such good works as may please Thee. And make my seed righteous for me. I do turn to Thee; and, truly, I am of those who submit *to Thee*.’ (HQ 46:16)

We have many other things to say but we will leave that for another time. Incha Allah some other time we will discuss other aspects of what it means to be an Ahmadi Muslim. We should show our difference from what we do and not only from what we say. May Allah help me and help you all to fulfill all our obligations by showing great determination in treading the Islamic path, the straight path that will lead us all to Allah.

All praise is for Allah who has helped us to hold this Jalsa today. I would like to thank all the participants in the program. May Allah grant them the best reward for their efforts. However, remember well that the Jalsa cannot be a true success unless and until we all do our best to fulfill our obligations to Allah and to other human beings throughout every day and night that we live.

If we do so, there is no doubt at all that Allah will reward us for our efforts because we have chosen to live the essence of Islam not just its rites and rituals.

We hope and pray that I myself and all our members will strive our best to put into practice whatever good advice we may have heard today. May Allah bless us all. Ameen.