

## The Meaning of Bai'at

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. The meaning of *Bai'at* or pledging spiritual allegiance is to totally surrender yourself to a Spiritual Master (Murshid) to guide you to Allah Ta'ala.
2. One who helps you to walk on the path of Shari'ah and Tariqah is known as a *Peer-o-Murshid* and *Sheikh*.
3. One who walks on this path and follows this pious person is known as a *Mureed* (Disciple).
4. It is of great benefit to become a Mureed and is worthy of much blessing.
5. To become followers of Awliya and to become involved with them is a worthy action to gain reward in both worlds. It is, therefore, necessary for these four qualifying aspects to be necessary in a Peer, for one to perform *Bai'at* (take oath). These qualities are:
  1. He must be a Sunni with the correct beliefs, otherwise you may actually lose your faith.
  2. He must have enough knowledge so that he can complete his necessary actions by looking at books, otherwise he will not be able to differentiate between forbidden and acceptable, allowed and not allowed.
  3. He must not be a *Fasiq* (wrongdoer, one who does not follow Shari'ah) as it is necessary to disrespect a Fasiq and it is important to respect a Peer.
  4. His tree of virtue must be connected to the Holy Prophet (*sallal laahu alaihi wasallam*) otherwise he will not gain virtue from the top.
6. People, today, consider Bai'at to be some kind of fashion. They are ignorant of the reality of Bai'at. An example is given here to give you an idea of what Bai'at really is. Once a Mureed (Disciple) of the great Sheikh Sayyiduna Yahya Maneri (*radi Allahu anhu*) was drowning. Sayyiduna Khidr (*alaihis salaam*) appeared and said to the Mureed, "Give me your hand and I will save you". The Mureed replied, "This hand has already been given in the hands of Sayyiduna Yahya Maneri (*radi Allahu anhu*) and since it belongs to him I cannot give it to anyone else". Sayyiduna Khidr (*alaihis salaam*) disappeared and, instantly, Sayyiduna Yahya Maneri (*radi Allahu anhu*) appeared and saved him.
7. *Tajdeed* or renewal of Bai'at used to take place in the time of the Holy Prophet (*sallal laahu alaihi wasallam*). Once the Holy Prophet (*sallal laahu alaihi wasallam*) personally took Bai'at thrice from Sayyiduna Salmah bin Akwah (*radi Allahu anhu*) who was preparing to leave for Jihad. Therefore, one is allowed to renew his Bai'at with his Peer.

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### BAI'AT AND ITS BENEFITS

There are two types of Bai'at:

#### A. BAI'AT-E-BARAKAH:

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1. This is to initiate one's self for the mere Barakah (Blessing) of joining a Silsila and this is the general idea or reason of today's Bai'ats. This should, at least, be done with a good intention.
2. If Bai'at is taken for mere worldly gain or any reason other than spiritual upliftment, then such Bai'at is Baatil (null and void).
3. Sheikh Imam Ahmed Raza (*radi Allahu anhu*) states: *"The above Bai'at is not useless, but beneficial, in fact, very beneficial and profitable in Deen and Dunya. At least, his name would be recorded in the books of the Beloved of Allah (Mehboobaan-e-Khuda). By just having a link with a spiritual order (Silsila) is by itself a great fortune and blessing"*.
4. A divine link is connected with the Awliya and Saleheen. Rasoolullah (*sallal laahu alaihi wasallam*) says that His Rabb, the All Powerful and Almighty Allah says. *"There are those people who, by merely sitting with them, one will never become a Kaafir"*. (This refers to the Awliya)

### B. BAI'AT-E-IRADAH:

1. This means to totally abolish one's desires and intentions and surrender one's self at the hands of a true Guide or Spiritual Master.
2. You have to sincerely obey and execute all his orders and methods entrusted on you by him.
3. Never take a step without his consent even though some laws and orders may not suit you or make sense to you. The Murshid's commands may cause great discomfort to you and at such moments the Mureed must regard this as the interference of the Cursed Shaitaan. Your every hardship and difficulty must be presented to him. In conclusion, the Mureed must totally hand himself over to the Sheikh like a corpse in the hands of a person performing Ghusal. This is known as *Bai'at-e-Salikeen*. Such Bai'at leads one to Allah Ta'ala. It was Bai'at-e-Salikeen that was taken by the Ashaabs at the hands of the Holy Prophet (*sallal laahu alaihi wasallam*).
4. Sayyiduna Obadah bin Samat (*radi Allahu anhu*) states: *"We had taken Bai'at (at the hands of Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) on the following principles: We will await his command and execute it in times of every ease and difficulty, every form of ecstasy or displeasure. And when the Master commands us we will never disobey or cross question him"*.
5. The command of the Murshid is the command of Rasoolullah (*sallal laahu alaihi wasallam*) and his command is the Command of Allah, the All Powerful, Who nobody dares disobey.
6. In *"Awariful Ma'arif"* Sheikh Shahaabudeen Suhrawardi (*radi Allahu anhu*) states: *"To be under the command of the Sheikh is to be under the Command of Allah and His Rasool (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) and is the revival of a Sunnah - Bai'at. This is only applicable on those persons who imprison themselves in the hands of the Sheikh, discard all desires and dissolve themselves in the Sheikh (Fana-fi-Sheikh)"*.
7. Sheikh Suhrawardi (*radi Allahu anhu*) also states: *"Abstain from criticizing the Sheikh for it is a deadly poison for the Mureed. It is extremely rare for a Mureed who criticise his Sheikh to find serenity and success. In any action of the Sheikh, which does not seem correct to the Mureed, he should remember the events of Sayyiduna Khidr (alaihis salaam). This is because the actions performed by Sayyiduna Khidr (alaihis salaam) were apparently questionable (e.g. making a hole in the boat of the poor and killing an innocent child), but when the reasons for these actions were explained then it became obvious that the Sheikh should not be questioned"*.
8. Sayyiduna Imam Abul Kaasim Kasheeri (*radi Allahu anhu*) states in his Kitaab, *"Risalah"*, that Sayyiduna Abu Sahal Sahlooki (*radi Allahu anhu*) states, *"Any person who says 'why' to any word of his Sheikh will never achieve success."*

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE MUREED AND THE MURSHID

1. The Mureed should not harbour any objections against the Murshid. This would cause the Mureed destruction if the Mureed has some doubt about the Murshid. He should keep in mind the example of Hazrat Khidr (*alaihis salaam*) because he did things that were apparently quite objectionable, for example, making a hole in the boat belonging to poor people and taking the life of an innocent child. It later became apparent that these actions were justifiable. Similarly, the Mureed should be convinced that even if some of the Murshid's deeds do not seem appropriate, the Murshid knows better and he has justifiable reasons for his actions.
2. The Mureed will not benefit from his Murshid unless he (the Mureed) is convinced that from all the Saints of the time, his Murshid is most advantageous to him.
3. One should become a Mureed for the sole purpose of purifying one's heart. To achieve Faiz (Grace) from one's Murshid, one's intentions and heart must be clear.
4. If a fellow Mureed gains more spiritual benefit from the Murshid then one must not envy or grudge him. This will lead him or her to Jahannam. Allah Ta'ala endowed Nabi Adam (*alaihis salaam*) with such a high status that he asked all the Angles to prostrate to him. Shaitaan, due to his jealousy refused and was thrown into Jahannum. If someone has more worldly possessions than we do, we should be thankful that we have fewer burdens than he does. If someone is greater than you are spiritually, you should recognize his greatness by reverence. Envy is actually an affront to Allah Ta'ala Who has given him more grace.
5. All doubts and hesitations must be revealed to the Murshid because the Murshid is a spiritual healer. To conceal any illness from the doctor (healer) would result in self-destruction.
6. It is incumbent upon the Mureed to regard his Murshid with utmost respect and reverence. If one attends the Majlis (gathering) of his Murshid, but does not really respect him, he will be punished. Allah Ta'ala will render the heart of such a person devoid of truth and he will become oblivious of Allah Ta'ala. According to some Saints, it is said that when a Mureed is disrespectful towards his Murshid, then the Noor (light) of Imaan (Faith) is snatched away from him.
7. It is recommended that the Mureed kiss the Murshid's hands, feet, hair, clothing, etc. The Ahadtih and the conduct of the Noble Companions (*radi Allahu anhum*) support this practice. Hazrat Zar'ah (*radi Allahu anhu*), who was from the delegation of Abdul Qais, narrates: "*When we arrived in Madina we hurried from our transport so that we could kiss Nabi's (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) feet and hands*". (*Mishkaatul Masaabih*)
8. A Mureed should not expect to see any miracles from his Murshid. Diligent obedience/observance of the Shari'ah and his continuous authentic Silsila (chain) is a sufficient requirement for the Murshid. Karamat is not a precondition for Wilaayat.
9. The Mureed should be like a deceased (corpse) in front of his Murshid. As a lifeless person is completely at the mercy of those performing his bath/Ghusal, so should the Mureed place himself before the Murshid. The Murshid has to guide his disciple through the thorny path of Tariqah. If the Mureed is "alive" he is actually interfering in the tasks of the Murshid.
10. When the Mureed is in the company of his Murshid, he should maintain an order similar to that when one is amongst sharks and beasts. The Mureed must not look at the poverty of the Murshid or think low of his lineage. He must not doubt the Ibaadah (works) of the Murshid since he cannot see the heart of the Murshid or cross any limitation set by the Murshid. (*Al Fathur Rabbani*)

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11. In Tariqah, it is necessary that the Mureed conduct himself with his Murshid in the most dignified manner. Then only will he gain the benefit of the Murshid's attention. If the Mureed is enriched either in knowledge or spiritually he must not credit himself, but accept it as the Murshid's grace (Faiz).
12. The Mureed must strive to achieve the status of "*Fana-Fish Sheikh*" or immersing oneself into the Sheikh. A'la Hazrat, Imam Ahmed Raza (*radi Allahu anhu*) has explained the way to achieve this. He said: "*The Mureed must imagine the Murshid in front of him and place his heart below the Murshid's heart. He must imagine that Faiz (grace) and Barakah (blessing) is flowing from Nabi (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) into the Murshid's heart and then flowing into his own heart. After a while he will see his Sheikh's image everywhere. It will not disappear; even at the times of Salaah the Mureed will always find the Sheikh with him*". (*Malfoozaat A'la Hazrat*)
13. The daily Wazaa'if (special prayers) prescribed by the Murshid must be read diligently and the Mureed must not object to anything the Murshid has advised. As far the rest of the Shari'ah Laws are concerned, he (Mureed) may learn them from any Ahlul Fatwa Sunni Aalim. In fact, these commandments can be learnt from any Murshid. The Murshid too can learn from any Aalim, from another Murshid or from his own Mureed.
14. After pledging allegiance (Bai'at) with a Murshid, the Mureed can only change the Bai'at if he finds any Shari' faults in his Murshid. However, renewal of Bai'at with his Murshid or *Bai't-e-Taalab* (becoming any Sheikh's student while having one's own Sheikh) with any Murshid is permissible. Sheikh Ibnul Arabi (*radi Allahu anhu*) said: "*Just as the world is not between two Gods, the Mukallaf (duty bound with Shar'i laws) is not between two different Shari'ahs of two Rasools. A wife is not between two husbands. A Mureed cannot be between two Sheikhs (Murshids) as well*".
15. If the Murshid commands the Mureeds to disobey the Shari'ah, for example, not to read Salaah, or not to fast, or if he tries to diminish the important of the Shari'ah and its practices, the Mureed should immediately disassociate from such a Murshid. The Mureed does not even need to consult anyone prior to his disassociation from such a false Murshid.
16. After the Murshid's demise, the Mureed should visit the Qabr (grave) of the Murshid and conduct himself in the following manner. He should stand four hand lengths away from the grave facing it with one's back towards the Qibla and read Fateha. He must be just as respectful as he was prior to the demise of the Murshid. He must enter the Mazaar from the front. He must visualise the Murshid's face and visualise that the Murshid is seated in front of him. Keep in mind that the Faiz (grace) received previously is being received now too, since a Wali is alive and transmits grace even after his demise. This reality is explained by Ghausul Aa'zam (*radi Allahu anhu*) who said: "*Those remembering Allah Ta'ala are eternally alive. They merely pass from one life to another and except for one moment, they do not die. Their death is a formality which is fulfilled by Allah*". (*Al-Fathur Rabbani*)
17. The Mureed should always conduct himself ethically and morally. A Mureed is a reflection on his Murshid. If a Mureed is a sinner, people will cast doubt and unwarranted suspicion on the Murshid.
18. The Mureed should always respect the Sheikh, his family and friends. Such (civil) conduct is pleasing to the Sheikh. A true lover even respects everything related to the beloved.
19. In the gatherings of the Murshid, the Mureed must sit with respect. He should not sit at a place higher than the Murshid or raise his voice above that of the Sheikh. He must avoid unnecessary chatter and queries. He must listen attentively when the Murshid speaks and spread the message amongst others. He should also seek advice from the Murshid.
20. When the Murshid is a guest of a Mureed, the Mureed should not take him to visit worldly people or engage the Murshid in hosting others. If there is an Aalim, Murshid or Islamic organisation present in the city the Murshid should be taken to visit them if he is willing.
21. A Mureed must not speak ill of other Murshids, as it may invoke the Mureeds of the other Murshid to retaliate. This

is not a practice of Islam.

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## THE EXCELLENCE OF RECITING ONE'S SAJRAH

There are many virtues in reciting one's Sajrah of which a few are mentioned below:

1. Memorising the chain of Awliya up to Rasoolullah (*sallal laahu alaihi wasallam*).
2. The Zikr and remembrance of Saleheen (Awliya) is the means of receiving Allah's Rahmah (Mercy).
3. Performing the Esaal-e-Sawaab for all the Spiritual Masters, which is a cause of receiving their spiritual guidance.
4. When the Mureed remembers them in times of ease the Awliya of the Silsila will remember him in times of hardship and will also be of assistance to him or her.

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