

Al-Bayah Pledge of Allegiance In Sharia & Sufism

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In Sharia & Sufism**



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AL-BAYAH

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IN SHARIA & SUFISM





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(Translation of Bayat ki Ahmiyat aur Zaroorat)

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*This book
is dedicated to my Master*

***Sultan-ul-Ashiqeen
Sultan Mohammad Najib-ur-Rehman***

who taught me how to live.

I humbly request him to accept this little effort and
keep me in his servitude ever.

His servitude is the key to success in both the worlds.



CONTENT

	Page #
Preface	7
The Pledge of Allegiance in Sharia & Sufism (Al-Bayah)	9
Origin of Pledge of Allegiance (Al-Bayah)	12
Pledge of Allegiance in the Quran and Sunna	12
Types of Allegiance	16
Pledge of Allegiance of Women	25
The Need of Pledge of Allegiance and Its Significance	29
The Selection of Spiritual Guide	45
Renewal and Revival of Pledge of Allegiance	47
Prominent Sign of Perfect Spiritual Guide	49
Glossary	51
Index	52

PREFACE

In current times, there is a need to understand the concept of pledge of allegiance (*al-bayah*). The term, although mostly associated to Sufism, is an Islamic terminology that was practised by Prophet Mohammad. Whoever wanted to join the Muslim brotherhood, pledged allegiance to the Holy Prophet. Today, it is notably practised in countries such as Saudia Arabia, Sudan, Morocco and Pakistan.

It is quite disappointing to realize that hardly any published content is available on such a dire concept that is a compulsion to enter Islam. The Islamic history, if read from authentic sources, reveals that pledge of allegiance (*al-bayah*) is considered as much significant to become a Muslim as is shahada and the acceptance of Messengerhood.

Further, pledge of allegiance is still largely considered to be an alien concept even in many contemporary Muslim circles who wrongly claim it to be a heresy. Their stance is that pledge of allegiance (*al-bayah*) was initiated after Prophethood and their belief is strengthened when they see fraud Pirs promoting it in a wrong manner.

The primary intention of writing this book is to understand the Islamic concepts beyond what is generally read in the books and propagated by scholars in general. Also, pledge of allegiance is such a concept that needs to be promoted. Taking oath of allegiance (*al-bayah*) is purely an Islamic concept and it is written upon so that people may learn and understand its relevance for being a Muslim. This book is a translation of *Bayat Ki Ahmiyat Aur Zaroorat*.

Many people only follow the fundamentals of Islam such as hajj, zakat, saum, etc. oblivious to the fact that *al-bayah* is the first

step towards being a Muslim. Moreover, this book deals with the delicate subject of women's pledge of allegiance. The Holy Quran and Hadith provide evidence that the pledge of allegiance of women is as important as that of men. One cannot walk upon the path to Allah without the company and guidance of the perfect spiritual guide.

Only under the beneficence of the perfect spiritual guide, a person is able to learn the true essence of Islam. That is the point from where he performs even the fundamentals of Islam with the true spirit having a connection with Allah and His Prophet.

I offer special thanks to my honourable spiritual guide, Sultan-ul-Ashiqeen Sultan Mohammad Najib-ur-Rehman who gave me the opportunity to translate such an important subject especially in times where materialism prevails. Without his esoteric and exoteric help I could not translate this topic. I am thankful to Sahibzadi Muneza Najib and Mr. Mohammad Abdullah Iqbal for giving their valuable suggestions. I am extremely grateful to Yasmin Khurshid Malik Sarwari Qadri for proofreading the book and helping me to finalise it. I am also thankful to Mr. Ahsan Ali Sarwari Qadri for putting great efforts in compiling this book.

May Allah accept this humble effort.

Faiza Gulzar Sarwari Qadri
Lahore

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE IN SHARIA & SUFISM (AL-BAYAH)

Islam is the religion of seeking Allah esoterically. It has several physical deeds which are an expression of seeking Allah esoterically. Returning toward Almighty Allah is the core objective of all exoteric and esoteric deeds and prayers. For the accomplishment of this objective, Allah has guided human through two sources of guidance:

1. The Quran
2. The Sunna

Whosoever does not follow either one, denies or follows them half-heartedly cannot attain anything from the religion. Rather this attitude will entangle him in the unresolved religious and worldly affairs. Prophet Mohammad is the practical explanation of the Quran and the role model of all the religious matters. His esoteric and exoteric deeds shed light in the darkness for the umma. In order to explain the way of righteousness, success and seeking Him, Allah says:

❖ لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ (٣٣:٢١)

Meaning: Certainly! In Allah's Messenger there is for you a most perfect and beautiful model (of physical and spiritual life). (33:21)

Moreover, Allah says in the Quran:

❖ قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ (٣:٣١)

Meaning: (O Beloved Prophet!) Tell them, if you love Allah, then follow me, Allah will also love you. (3:31)

Therefore, it is the belief of every Muslim that obedience to the Prophet is the accomplishment of faith and guarantees closeness of Allah.

Every action of Prophet Mohammad is Sunna. His ability to perceive, behaviour, thoughts, morality and personality are a role model for the umma. All his actions are for the guidance and betterment of the religious and worldly life of umma. One who denies or objects any of his actions is a disbeliever. Thus, he will be disgraced in this world and the hereafter.

The Holy Prophet said:

❖ كُلُّ أُمَّتِي يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَبِي قَالَ: مَنْ قَالَ مَنْ أَطَاعَنِي دَخَلَ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَنْ عَصَانِي فَقَدْ أَبَى كُلُّ عَمَلٍ لَيْسَ عَلَى سُنَّتِي فَهُوَ مَعْصِيَةٌ

Meaning: Everyone in my umma will go to heaven, except those who deny.

The companions asked: “Who denied?”

The Holy Prophet replied: He who obeyed me will go to heaven and he who disobeyed me, it is he who denied. Any act against my Sunna is disobedience.

On another occasion, Prophet Mohammad said:

❖ He who evoked my Sunna, in fact he loved me. On the Day of Judgment, he will be in heaven with me.

Sahl al-Tustari said:

❖ Love for the Holy Quran, is the sign of love with Almighty Allah and love for the Holy Prophet is a sign of love for the Quran and Allah. In addition, the love of Sunna is an indication of love for Prophet Mohammad.

Another source of guidance along with Sunna is the Quran. The Holy Quran is a complete code of life. It is also a witness of Sunna and conveys them to the umma. It becomes obligatory for the umma to follow the Sunna verified by the Quran because it is the way of the Prophet verified by Allah Himself. Allah has instructed to follow those Sunna in Quran, which He considered

umma must follow them without any objection. Hence, Muslims must follow them as Allah's instructions.

Fuyuz al-Bari, the exegesis of *Sahih Bukhari*, categorizes Sunna as under:

1. Compulsory Sunna (*Sunan al-Huda*)

2. Optional Sunna (*Sunan al-Zawaid*)

COMPULSORY SUNNA (*SUNAN AL-HUDA*):

It is a collection of the Sunna associated with the path of guidance. One who renounces such Sunna is either excluded from Islam or fails to reach the exalted stations of faith. These Sunna include the basic pillars of Islam, belief in Oneness, shahada, salat, saum, zakat, and hajj. It also includes speaking the truth, fulfilling the promises, avoiding all the forbidden acts and practising all the basic principles of religion etc. The one who renounces these Sunna shall be questioned on the Day of Judgment that why did he not follow these despite their clear instructions in the Quran and Hadith. Denier of these Sunna is the denier of the Holy Prophet and his denier is indeed the denier of Allah. In short, *Sunan-al-Huda* includes all the Sunna mentioned in the Quran in any way.

OPTIONAL SUNNA (*SUNAN-AL-ZAWAID*):

It is the collection of the Sunna associated with everyday activities of the Holy Prophet. For example, the decorum of the Prophet's Assembly, style of conversation, use of *miswak* (to clean teeth), eating habits etc. These Sunna are *Mustahab* that is following these Sunna reflect love for the Prophet but not following these has no punishment either. On the doomsday, one would not be questioned about not following these provided one follows *Sunan-al-Huda*.

Pledging allegiance (*Al-bayah*) is compulsory Sunna and is categorized under *Sunan-al-Huda*.

ORIGIN OF PLEGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(*AL-BAYAH*)

Al-bayah is the Arabic word for pledge of allegiance. It is derived from the word *Baee* بيع. Its literal meaning is ‘trade or barter’. For example, two people make a pact where one is the receiver of a product he desires and the other is its giver who gets money or another product in its return. This type of pledge and trade is called *Baee* (بيع).

The pledge of allegiance (*Al-bayah*) is also a trade with Allah. In this trade, one pledges to give Allah his own self and everything he owns in exchange for His closeness though everything belongs to Allah in reality. A person who did not trade with Allah how he could have Divine closeness? It is necessary to pledge allegiance to Prophet Mohammad. However, after Prophet Mohammad, one must pledge allegiance to his Companion and perfect Saints.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE IN THE QURAN AND SUNNA

Among the essentials of Islam, pledge of allegiance has utmost importance. Its evidence can be found in the Quran as well as in all the books of Hadiths. In the era of Prophet Mohammad, it was compulsory to pledge allegiance to Prophet Mohammad before following the pillars of Islam. This meant that a person could not be called a Muslim unless he swore allegiance despite his belief in the Prophet and reciting shahada. Hence, pledge of allegiance is compulsory to enter Islam as is shahada and belief in the Prophet.

None of the orders of Allah and His Prophet is without a reason or wisdom. Rather, there is a hidden treasure of guidance and wisdom for the umma in every single order. It is evident that pledge of allegiance has immense importance since the advent of Islam because no one can gain Divine beneficence or achieve perfect faith without it. There is no doubt that the Holy Prophet made it compulsory, solely as per Allah's order. As the Quran bears witness to it in these words:

❖ وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۚ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ ۖ (٥٣: ٣-٤)

Meaning: He does not speak out of his (own) desire. His speech is nothing but outright revelation, which is sent to him. (53:3-4)

How can any of his act be out of his own choice? Definitely all his actions are according to the Quran. In this way, pledge of allegiance is Allah's order and for the completion of faith it has same importance as verbal acknowledgement of Oneness of Allah and belief in Messengerhood of Prophet Mohammad. If it had not been compulsory then the Prophet would not have taken the pledge of allegiance from people at the time of embracing Islam. Pledge of allegiance is *Sunan al-Huda*, denier of which is the denier of Islam. Its importance is evident from Quran and Sunna as well.

Allah says in sura *Al-Fath*:

❖ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ ۖ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ ۖ فَمَنْ نَكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ فَمَآ يَزِيدُهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ۖ

(٢٨:١٠)

Meaning: (O Beloved!) Indeed those who pledge allegiance to you, in fact pledge allegiance to Allah. Allah's hand is over their hands (in the form of your hand). Then whoever breaks his pledge breaks it only to his own harm. But he who fulfils what

he has promised to Allah, He will bless him with immense reward.
(48:10)

On one hand, this verse shows the exalted station of Prophet Mohammad that his action is in fact the act of Allah, keeping relation with him is in fact relation with Allah and pledge of allegiance with him is the pledge to Allah. On the other hand, it also highlights the significance of the pledge of allegiance that it is not only a Sunna of the Prophet but also of the Divine Essence because pledge to Prophet Mohammad, in reality is pledge to Allah. Hence, not only it is the way of Prophet Mohammad but it is also the way of Allah. In the whole Quran Allah has not associated any component of worship with him except to invoke benedictions to Prophet Mohammad. He says:

❖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾ (٣٣:٥٦)

Meaning: Surely Allah and (all) His angels invoke salutation (salawat) and blessings on the Holy Prophet. O Believers! You (also) invoke salutation upon him. And salute him with a worthy salutation of peace abundantly (and fervently). (33:56)

Paying salutations to Prophet Mohammad is the Sunna of Allah. However, this is not Sunna of the Prophet as Holy Prophet does not invoke blessings for himself. Rest of the devotions are the practice of the Holy Prophet but not of Allah. Pledge of allegiance is the only component that is the Sunna of the Prophet as well as of Allah.

As per verse ten of sura *al-Fath* referred above, the pledge of allegiance is a promise to Allah. As pledge of allegiance is the greatest promise with Allah and a source of Divine closeness that is why Allah has given strict orders of its fulfillment and its failure would bear severe consequences. Allah says in the Quran:

❖ وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ إِذَا عَاهَدْتُمْ وَلَا تَنْقُضُوا الْأَيْمَانَ بَعْدَ تَوْكِيدِهَا وَقَدْ جَعَلْتُمُ اللَّهَ عَلَيْكُمْ كَفِيلًا ۖ (١٦:٩١)

Meaning: And always fulfil the pledge of Allah when you have made it. And do not break oaths after making them firm. (16:91)

❖ وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِكُمْ إِنِ الْعَهْدُ كَانَ مَسْئُولًا ۖ (١٧:٣٤)

Meaning: And always fulfil the promise. No doubt, the promise will be questioned about. (17:34)

Pledge of allegiance is also a source of achieving Allah's will and it blesses true believers (Mumin) with peace and tranquillity. As Allah says in sura *al-Fath*:

❖ لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ (٢٨:١٨)

Meaning: Surely, Allah was well pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you under the tree (at *al-Hudaybiyyah*). So, Allah knows (the passion of truth and fidelity) that permeated their inwards, and descended an exceptional calmness and tranquillity. And awarded them the forthcoming victory (of *Khyber*). (48:18)

The Holy Quran and a large number of unanimously agreed upon Hadiths, quoted in almost all authentic books of Hadiths, testify that pledge of allegiance is the greatest Sunna. In the beginning of Islam, some delegations came from Madina to Makkah. The Holy Prophet invited them to Islam. Some people accepted the invitation in first year, their pledge of allegiance was the 'first pledge at *al-Aqabah*' and the pledge of allegiance taken in the following year was 'the second pledge at *al-Aqabah*'.

Ka'ab bin Malik said:

- ❖ The night came when Prophet Mohammad had promised to meet. We slept earlier to wake up early. We woke up and gathered in the valley of *Aqaba* although people were fast asleep. Nobody was accompanying the Prophet. Prophet Mohammad preached and invited them to Islam. He recited the Holy Quran to persuade them. After hearing that, everyone embraced Islam and requested to pledge allegiance to him. He said, "Select twelve representatives out of your nation." We took out one representative from each group. Then everyone pledged allegiance to the Holy Prophet. (Bukhari)

TYPES OF ALLEGIANCE

1) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO EMBRACE ISLAM

On embracing Islam, the converts swore allegiance to Prophet Mohammad along with the verbal recitation of shahada. Such sort of oath is called pledge of allegiance for embracing Islam.

2) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE FOR REPENTANCE AND PIETY

It is a pledge to follow sharia after repentance on sins in order to gain closeness to Allah. The spiritual journey of a person starts after this oath. During the era of the Holy Prophet, the pledge of repentance and piety was included in the pledge of embracing Islam. However, many Hadiths bear witness that true believers also used to swear this allegiance separately.

In the present era, Muslims pledge allegiance to the perfect spiritual guide for repentance and piety and sole purpose of such pledge is to gain closeness of Allah.

3) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO CALIPHATE

Muslims swear allegiance to a Muslim caliph. Such pledge symbolizes that they, as a whole, accepted that particular person as a caliph or ruler. This allegiance is called pledge of allegiance

to the caliphate. This allegiance, along with the allegiance of repentance and piety, were sworn together till the time of Hasan ibn Ali but later on, they were separated.

4) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO LISTENING AND FOLLOWING

It is the pledge of listening attentively and acting whole heartedly upon the words and actions of your religious leader (Imam), caliph or spiritual guide. Several Hadiths certify this allegiance.

5) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO JIHAD

It is a pledge to fight against the enemies of Islam. Army pledge such allegiance to commander-in-chief to lay down their lives for Islam.

6) THE MYSTICAL PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

It is in fact another name of allegiance for repentance and piety. It has got this name because Saints upheld this oath. Purpose of this allegiance is submission of a disciple to his spiritual guide for purification of the innerself and sanctity of his soul. Only then a disciple's esoteric journey starts and he achieves closeness to Allah.

The tradition of taking allegiance for embracing Islam relinquished at the time of the Rashidun Caliphate. At that time, caliphate was expanding and millions of people started to accept Islam. It also includes those people who were afraid of the power of Islam. It was hard to find out who is embracing Islam purely for Allah and who is afraid of its increasing power. However, the tradition of taking allegiance to caliphate remained implemented and Muslims used to pledge allegiance to the caliph. The representatives of different tribes used to come for allegiance on behalf of their tribes.

The Rashidun caliphs, were stationed at the exalted status of religious scholars, spiritual guides and perfect Sainthood. That is

why allegiance for repentance and piety was the part of allegiance to caliphate. They were their sovereign as well as a source of esoteric beneficence as Prophet Mohammad. They had absolute beneficence, capability and authority of the Holy Prophet. Hence, they fulfilled exoteric and esoteric duties altogether.

The pledge of allegiance to caliphate had discrimination. For example, people having superficial values swore only allegiance to caliphate. While the pious and those fearing Allah swore the oath of repentance and piety as well. Everyone got benefit depending on the intention with which he had sworn the allegiance to the caliph. It is stated in almost all books of Hadiths that when Holy Prophet passed away, all the Muslims had sworn allegiance to Abu Bakr Siddiq and accepted him as the caliph and vicegerent of the Prophet. At the time of oath the words of Abu Bakr Siddiq were:

- ❖ Follow me as long as I obey Allah and His Prophet.

Therefore, this pledge of allegiance is considered as the allegiance to caliphate as well as allegiance of obeying the Prophet and the allegiance for repentance and piety.

Anas ibn Malik narrates that when after the death of Abu Bakr Siddiq, Umar ibn al-Khattab was selected as caliph. I said to him:

- ❖ Please give me your hand so that, as per my capacity of listening and following, I swear allegiance as I had sworn to the first caliph before you.
- ❖ Saleem ibn Abi Amir stated that a delegation from Hamrah came to meet Usman ibn Affan and swore allegiance to him. They promised that they will believe in the Oneness of Allah, offer prayer and give zakat. They will also follow the Islamic rules for the month of Ramadan and leave celebrating the festivals of the fire-worshippers. (Musnad Imam Ahmad)

Moreover, the spiritual chains of mystic ways, continuing from these four pious caliphs are the proof of the fact that they were also a source of spiritual beneficence for the umma. This beneficence continues till now. Among the present chains of spiritual orders, particularly the *Sarwari Qadri* order, the spiritual journey of disciple does not complete until he gets beneficence from all the four caliphs. A disciple gets the blessings of veracity and truthfulness from the spiritual glance of Abu Bakr Siddiq, blessings of justice and accountability of inner-self from Umar ibn Khattab, beneficence of obedience and modesty from Usman ibn Affan and *Faqr* from Ali ibn Abi Talib.

Sultan Bahoo says:

- ❖ Beneficence of the Rashidun Caliphs which was started during their caliphate has been continuing since then.

In the present era, a person who is born in a Muslim family is already a Muslim by birth. He does not need to swear allegiance to enter Islam. However, to receive beneficence of the Prophet and the caliphs, it is compulsory to pledge allegiance for repentance and piety to the spiritual guide. Its references are present in a large number of Hadiths. The reference of verse ten of sura *al-Fath* does not refer to the allegiance for embracing Islam as Muslims pledge allegiance to the Holy Prophet after accepting Islam. Different references about pledge of allegiance for repentance and piety given in Hadith are as under:

- ❖ Ubadah Ibn as-Samit narrates:

❖ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَحَوْلَهُ عَصَابَةٌ مِّنْ أَصْحَابِهِ بَايِعُونِي عَلَى أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا تَسْرِقُوا وَلَا تَزْنُوا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ وَلَا تَأْتُوا بِبُهْتَانٍ تَفْتَرُونَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَرْجُلِكُمْ وَلَا تَعْصُوا فِي مَعْرُوفٍ فَمَنٍ وَفِي مِنْكُمْ فَأَجْزُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَصَابَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ

شَيْئًا فَعَوَّضَ فِي الدُّنْيَا فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَهُ وَمَنْ أَصَابَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ شَيْئًا ثُمَّ سَتَرَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ فَهُوَ إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنْ شَاءَ عَفَا عَنْهُ وَإِنْ شَاءَ عَاقَبَهُ فَبَايَعْنَا عَلَى ذَلِكَ.

Meaning: When a group of Companions of the Holy Prophet was present, he said, “Swear allegiance to me so that you will:

- Believe in Oneness of Allah;
- Not steal;
- Not keep extra-marital relations;
- Not kill your children;
- Not put false accusations on anyone;
- Not disobey in any good affair.

Amongst you, the one who will be loyal in his pledge, his reward is due on Allah. And whoever does any unlawful act, it's up to Allah whether He hides his act, forgives or punishes him.”

(Ubadah ibn as-Samit says), so we pledge allegiance to the Holy Prophet upon all these matters. (Sahih Bukhari-Vol: 1 pg 7-Vol: II page 1112, Mishkat Sharif-pg13, Nisai-Vol:II pg 80, Kanz al-Ummal hadith no. 1521, al-Tabarani Vol:8-pg-70)

❖ Ubadah Ibn as-Samit narrates more:

❖ بَايَعْنَا عَلَى السَّمْعِ وَالطَّاعَةِ فِي الْعُسْرِ وَالْيُسْرِ وَالْمُنْشِيطِ وَالْمُكْرِهَةِ عَلَى أَثَرِهِ عَلَيْنَا وَأَنْ لَا نَنَازِعَ الْأَمْرَ أَهْلَهُ وَأَنْ نَقُولَ بِالْحَقِّ حَيْثُ مَا كُنَّا لَا نَخَافُ فِي اللَّهِ لَوْمَةً لَا يَمِ

Meaning: We promised to the Holy Prophet to obey him in all conditions, convenience and hardship, happiness and sorrow, even in the state when someone else is made superior to us. We also promised that we will not fight over the matter of government of the deserving person. We promised to speak the truth and shall not fear from harm of the person speaking against Allah's affairs. (Ibn Majah Pg 211, Sahih Bukhari vol: II pg 1069, Nisai vol: II pg 179)

Both the above Hadiths are the proof of the pledge of allegiance of repentance and piety after embracing Islam. This is the base of the pledge of allegiance to the spiritual guides who are spiritual successors of the Prophet. The objective of such oath is to persuade Muslim to repent, invoke the name Allah and to renounce lust. Its aim is to seek Allah and complete the journey towards Allah with perseverance under the guidance of perfect spiritual guide.

The pledge of repentance and piety has always continued among the true Muslims for spiritual elevation. It has been continuing since the time of Holy Prophet till today. However, its forms kept changing according to the needs and demands of the time. Its first and foremost form is the same, which had been the Sunna of the Holy Prophet. That form is to pledge allegiance to the leader or the superior spiritual successor (the possessor of Divine Trust). This form of allegiance had continued during the Rashidun Caliphate. After Ali ibn Abi Talib, it remained in practice till Hasan ibn Ali took the responsibility of caliphate for a few months. He also took the oath of repentance and piety along with that of caliphate. However, Yazid raised an uproar on the matter of allegiance to Husayn ibn Ali. He committed blasphemy, oppression and tyranny against him and his sacred family.

Consequently, perfect spiritual guides segregated the pledge of repentance and piety from that of caliphate. One more reason was that the physical caliphate had gone into the hands of worldly rulers, who were incapable to give spiritual beneficence to the umma, rather they were harmful for the religion. Therefore, the pledge of allegiance for repentance and piety had been segregated from the pledge of allegiance to a caliph.

Shaikh Hasan of Basra even changed the form of the pledge of repentance and piety after martyrdom of Husayn ibn Ali. So that, the rulers might not take it as an oath of caliphate which they had considered a danger to them. He started granting his followers a patched cloak, commonly known as cloak, as a symbol of the

spiritual traveller. Along with cloak, he also started granting a turban which was a symbol of disciple's obedience to his spiritual guide. It also expressed right of getting spiritual beneficence from him. To grant a cloak was a prudently adopted form of pledge of repentance and piety. The Mystics and Saints called this act of granting cloak as the replacement of pledge of allegiance.

Sayyid Mohammad Zauqi Shah said:

- ❖ For many years even after that sacred era, pledge of allegiance could not be restored to its initial state because there was a fear of mischief and riot. There was also a fear that it might be misunderstood as the pledge of allegiance to caliphate and people might be a victim of the rulers' wrath. So, Hasan of Basra and after him his successors, Mystics and Saints called this act of granting cloak as the replacement of pledge of allegiance. However, after a long period, when the rulers, emperors and the sultans abandoned the custom of taking allegiance and their fears from the spiritual leaders faded away, Mystics revived this tradition in the same form as was in the time of the Holy Prophet. As Mystics had revived the allegiance of piety along with its essentials, so it has been named as mystical pledge of allegiance. (Sirr-e-Dilbaran)

Shahab al-Din Abu Hafs Umar Sohrawardi says in *Awarif al-Ma'arif*:

- ❖ Wearing khirqah is a symbol of connection between a Saint and his disciple. It is equivalent to the pledge of allegiance and a formal commencement of getting spiritual beneficence from his spiritual guide. Its ultimate purpose is to build an eternal connection with the spiritual guide.

The pledge of repentance and piety is such a great and sacred Sunna which has remained in practice in every era in one way or the other. The Holy Prophet's vicegerents and spiritual successors

are the only ones to keep this sacred Sunna alive forever. The credit goes to Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, the Reviver of Religion (Mohiyyudin), for re-initiating the pledge of repentance and piety. He got his cloak, while pledging allegiance from his spiritual guide, Abu Saeed Mubarak Makhzoomi. On presenting this *khirqah*, his spiritual guide said to him:

“O Abdul Qadir! The lord of the universe (Prophet Mohammad) presented it to Ali ibn Abi Talib. Then he granted it to Shaikh Hasan of Basra and then it reached me hand to hand.” (Bahuja-tul-Israr)

Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani is stationed at the highest spiritual and intellectual level. Allah bestowed upon him such a Divine power and autonomy that Abbasid Caliphs of the time could not resist his re-initiation of pledge of repentance and piety. Since then it is in its original state.

Shaikh Nadwi writes in his book *Rijal al-Fikr fi al-Dawah fi al-Islam* that:

- ❖ Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani opened the door of pledge of allegiance and repentance. People from every nook and corner of the world entered Islam. They renewed their promise with Allah that they would neither involve in infidelity, oppression, transgression and heresy. They promised not to make provisions lawful which Allah had made unlawful and would renounce the worldliness. They promised not to forget their religious obligations and the hereafter. The door opened by Allah through him let infinite number of people enter it. Their deeds and spiritual states improved and they became the best Muslims. Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani had made arrangements for their spiritual training and self-accountability. His disciples became responsible members of the society after the pledge of allegiance and renovation of their faith. This proves that pledge of allegiance to Saints plays an important role in individual and collective sanctity.

From the above mentioned references, it is clear that pledge of allegiance is an important Sunna according to the Quran and Hadith. It is also the Sunna of the Companions and the Saints. Besides Oneness of Allah, prayers, zakat, fasting, hajj and jihad, the basics of Islam, it has been in practice since then. The fake critics who have incomplete and superficial knowledge of religion are neglecting its importance. They are raising objections against it and calling it infidelity and polytheism. They do not realize that an act proved by the Quran and Sunna and the actions of the great people of the umma, if proclaimed as infidelity, is a great infidelity in itself. Allah says:

❖ أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ (٢:٨٥) ؕ

Meaning: Do you believe in some of the parts of the Quran and deny the others? (2:85)

The scholars have agreed upon that the denier of a part of Quran is the denier of the whole Quran. These people act upon those orders of the Quran only which appeal them or they consider easy and object the ones which are unpleasant for their pride. The scholars have agreed upon that the denier of a part of Quran is the denier of the whole Quran. These people only act upon those orders of the Quran, which appeal to them or consider easy and object the ones which are unpleasant for their pride. They not only reject and disobey them rather they forbid others too. It is in *Fuyuz al-Bari*, the exegesis of *Bukhari Sharif*.

When someone forbids or declares anything unlawful or prohibited in Islam, he must prove his claim. If he fails to prove his claim based on authentic laws of Islam, he is a reprobate.

Since the deniers have no argument against pledge of allegiance according to the Islamic law, so they are among the damned ones. In fact, these people try to mislead the commoners by their hollow argument. They argue that there is no need to pledge

allegiance in the presence of the Quran and Sunna. This argument is as illogical as is their intellect.

The need of pledge of allegiance was vital even in the life of the Holy Prophet. The Quran, revealed upon him, how it could be more powerful than his own holy self. It did not have the power to guide the people without a leader. The one who would practically teach them what is in Quran. Even during the presence of Prophet Mohammad, there was a need of pledge of allegiance. In his absence its need increased far more.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE OF WOMEN

The critics object and humiliate the pledge of allegiance of women even more vigorously than that of men. References about the pledge of allegiance of women are separately present in the Quran and Hadith. If it had been forbidden then their account would not have been in these holy scripts.

In the sura *al-Mumtahanah* Allah says:

❖ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِذَا جَاءَكَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتُ يُبَايِعْنَكَ عَلَى أَنْ لَا يُشْرِكْنَ بِاللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَسْرِقْنَ وَلَا يَزْنِينَ وَلَا يَقْتُلْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ وَلَا يَأْتِينَ بِبُهْتَانٍ يَفْتَرِينَهُ بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِنَّ وَأَرْجُلِهِنَّ وَلَا يَعْصِيَنَّ فِي مَعْرُوفٍ فَبَايِعْهُنَّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُنَّ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٦٠﴾ (٦٠:١٢)

Meaning: O Prophet! When the believing women appear in your presence to take the pledge of allegiance that they will not set up anything as partner with Allah and will not steal, nor will they commit adultery, or kill their children or bring false blame which they have invented between their hands and feet (will not deceive their husbands declaring some other's baby as their own or disobey you in (any) matter pertaining to law, then accept their

allegiance and seek forgiveness for them from Allah. Surely, Allah is the Most Forgiving, Ever-Merciful. (60:12)

This verse about the pledge of allegiance of women is such an explicit argument that only an envious, proud and denier of the Quran can reject it. It is also obvious that it was not the pledge of entering Islam. Rather it was a pledge of repentance and piety because, at the beginning of the verse, there is a description of faithful women (believing women) who came to the Prophet for pledge of allegiance. It is quite clear that the women had already embraced Islam and were pledging allegiance of repentance and piety.

The references about the pledging allegiance of believing women are present in Hadiths abundantly. Salma bint Qais relates:

- ❖ I was present in the court of the Prophet and pledged allegiance along with the other women of Ansar. The Holy Prophet accepted our pledge of allegiance on the condition that we must not involve in polytheism, stealing or adultery. Neither murder our offspring nor slander anyone. Neither we will disobey the orders about virtuous deeds, nor would deceive our husbands. We swore our pledge and returned. (Musnad Ahmad, Abu Ya'ala, Tabarani)

Umaymah bint Zuqaiqa relates:

- ❖ I was present along with the other women at Holy Prophet's court and said:
 "O Prophet! We swear allegiance at the condition that we would neither make partners with Allah nor steal or involve in adultery. Neither would kill our offspring nor accuse anybody, nor disobey in the matters of good deeds."
 Then the Holy Prophet inquired:
 "Upon which things among these, do you have power and authority?"
 We replied:

“Allah and His Prophet are more merciful upon us than ourselves. Please! Honour us with your sacred presence so that, we can swear allegiance to you.”

Then the Prophet explained:

“I do not shake hands with women. My saying for one woman is equal to my address to a hundred ladies.” (Ibn Majah, Hadith No. 2874, Musnad Ahmad vol: II pg 357, Kanz al-Ummal Hadith no. 475-476, Dur al-Manthur vol: II pg 138)

Uza bint Al-Khayel narrated:

- ❖ She came to meet Prophet Mohammad and pledged allegiance that she will neither indulge in adultery nor kill or bury her children alive, secretly or publicly.

She said:

“I know about publicly burying alive but I did not ask the Holy Prophet about secretly burying alive nor did he tell me. Later on I got the idea that it must be directed to abortion. I swore to God that I will never abort my child ever.” (Al-Tabarani, Majma al-Zawa'id vol: IV pg 39)

In spite of the clear proofs of the pledge of allegiance of women in the Quran and Hadith, people object it. This is because, they are narrow-minded and malicious. They think of woman as a trivial thing of use only, having no value. They think that a woman has no right to progress in the world and religion. Her only job is to serve man. They are frightened of the awareness of women. They fear of her worldly and religious education that she will become aware of the rights, which Allah has granted. Although, Allah has no discrimination between man and woman while conferring them with wisdom and sensibility. Rather He granted the blessing of intelligence and wisdom to whom He wished, without the difference of gender.

Such fools do not understand that when a woman progresses in religion, she does not only become aware of her own rights but

also of her duties. After that she will perform her duties purely for the pleasure of Allah and even better than before.

Another problem of men with such perspective is that their own minds are full of lust and filth. They consider Saints to be like themselves whom women should not visit whereas her purpose is to get spiritual beneficence. Their mirror of inciting innerself is so dirty that they take light of the Saints (God forbid) as dirt. Obviously, Holy Prophet himself appoints Saints at the throne of Divine persuasion and guidance. Then how come they have lust? Rather, the highest status of such a Saint is beyond the thought and perception of these irrational people. It is unlawful to stop women from spiritual beneficence and gnosis through pledge of allegiance to a perfect Mystic. However, it is essential to be careful of the deceit and fraud of this era, as it is widely common these days. Before pledge of allegiance, one should confirm whether the pledgee is actually a spiritual guide and follower of sharia or not. However, to consider the perfect Saint as a fake Pir and to forbid others from getting his spiritual beneficence is unfair. Allah has promised to help those who try to search a perfect spiritual guide for gaining gnosis and He will help them Himself and never let them entangle into the trap of deceivers. Allah says:

❖ وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا ۖ (٢٩:٦٩)

Meaning: And those who toil hard for My closeness, I certainly guide them Myself in My way. (29:69)

A woman possesses the same right, to seek Allah and His love, the Prophet and his love, get Islamic faith and its education as a man. Allah has made woman equal to man and kept His spiritual relation with her at the same foundation. The souls appeared in the world, in the bodily covers of man and woman. It is because they have to perform their respective duties to run the system of this world. Otherwise, the soul is neither a man nor a woman.

Every soul has the relation of love with Allah. Men and women have equal rights to have the vision of Allah reaching at the status of *Miraj* (ascension). It is very unfair and cruel to stop women from receiving beneficence of a perfect spiritual guide.

It is beyond logic that nowadays most of the families have no objection over women's friendly relations with strangers whether in the form of a doctor, teacher, shopkeeper, relatives, class fellow or neighbour. They also do not even object when a woman visits a hotel, bazar and cinema, but when she visits a perfect spiritual guide for beneficence they violently oppose her and behave as if it is a satanic act (God forbid). No doubt, one who stops someone from right path, he is in fact second face of Satan. The Truth seeking women must not pay heed to such devils. They create hurdles between Allah and them. One should ignore such people thinking them as the dogs of the path and the spiritual journey to Allah should remain continued with steadfastness. No doubt! Allah will soon remove these hurdles due to their patience and steadfastness.

THE NEED OF PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

The sole purpose of the creation of humans according to the Quran is:

❖ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾ (٥١:٥٦)

Meaning: And We created the jinn and human beings solely for Our worship. (51:56)

If the purpose of creation is only to worship Allah, then every deed, action and thought should be likewise only for the worship to fulfil the purpose at every cost. However, man is lost in the needs and luxuries of this material and mortal world. He forgets the purpose of his creation and turns the direction of all his

actions, deeds, thoughts and even prayers towards the world or the heaven. Resultantly, he deviates from his Lord. This is by virtue of being a man which means the combination of good and evil. Until he receives righteousness from Allah, one cannot blame him. He has forgotten his pre-eternal relation with Allah after coming to this world. His body and innerself are inclined towards the world and the worldly needs. Thus, Allah has been creating the sources and means of righteousness, from the very beginning of this world. The sources have always been in the form of same 'human being'. Physically, the source is a man like the other humans, but inwardly his relation with Allah is stronger. Due to this strong relation, he finds righteousness directly from Allah. Hence, he becomes the source of transferring it to others. It has been the principle of Allah that He sends righteousness to man always through the source. Allah Himself says:

❖ **وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ مَلَكًا لَجَعَلْنَاهُ رَجُلًا (٦:٩)**

Meaning: And if (for the righteousness of people) We had made the Messenger an angel, even then We would have made him (the form of) a man. (6:9)

Thus, Allah explains very clearly about the source of righteousness that it can only be a human and a male. The source has always been the 'Perfect Man' of every era. They have guided people in the form of Prophets till Prophet Mohammad. After the Holy Prophet, they are guiding in the form of his spiritual successors. How can it be possible that Allah has guided His men continually since the very beginning of life but has ended this succession for the last fourteen hundred years?

According to some people, the only source of righteousness in this age is the Quran. But in the beginning of the Quran, Allah says about the Quran:

❖ **يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾**

Meaning: Several people have gone astray by the Quran and many find righteousness from it. But (only) those people go astray who (whose soul and inward) are polluted with sinfulness. (2:26)

It means that until one's inward is purged with the spiritual glance of the perfect guide, one would not be liberated from the inner diseases and even one fails to find guidance from the Quran. This is the reason that the Muslim umma which follows one Quran is divided into sects. Each sect reads the Quran and interprets it according to its own choice; resultantly a new sect is formed. If anyone was getting the same guidance from the Holy Quran then neither the Muslim umma would have been divided into sects nor would each sect condemn the other as infidel.

Allah says:

❖ وَمَا يُضِلُّهُ إِلَّا الْفُسْقَيْنِ ﴿٢:٢٦﴾

Meaning: But (only) those people go astray who (whose soul and inward) are polluted with sinfulness. (2:26)

The Quran has used the term '*Fisq*' in the above verse. *Fisq* is a vast term, which includes all the spiritual and inner diseases such as pride, arrogance, vanity, greed, envy, malice, avarice, self-conceit, lust etc. These ailments divert one from the straight path. Only the Prophets and perfect Saints are free from these spiritual diseases. These men of perfection possess the spiritual power that removes *Fisq* from their inwards and make them capable of gaining righteousness from the Quran. As Allah says about the Quran that:

❖ لَا يَسْطِئُ إِلَّا النُّطَهْرُونَ ﴿٥٦:٧٩﴾

Meaning: No one can touch it (Quran) except the purified (and cleansed) ones. (56:79)

‘Pure people’ (مُطَهَّرُونَ) in the above verse does not only refer to the physically clean people but it also refers to those whose inward is pure. ‘Touch’ in this verse means to reach to its reality and the true essence. Only the pure soul can find the reality of Quran and its message hidden under the veil of apparent words. Otherwise, learning Arabic grammar and thinking only about words as the true message is depravity. Unless one’s inward does not purify, his inward remains sinful. Thus, he cannot understand the soul of Quran. Its denier seeks guidance in all worldly matters but refuses the need of guidance to reach Allah. The Quran is a prescription for the cure of inner diseases. However, merely through a prescription nobody can recover, unless there is a doctor to describe and instruct the method of using the prescription. Therefore, whoever tries to cure himself only by prescription without a doctor gets harmed.

Similar to the physical world, it is impossible to learn any skill without a teacher or to travel on any path without the guidance of somebody who knows it. Even if someone knows the destination but is unaware of the path leading to it, he will not reach his destination. Likewise, it is essential to have a guide on the path of Allah, since a layman is unfamiliar to it. Satan also ambushes at every point to make people go astray. One cannot travel on this path of mysticism without a guide. When one cannot learn anything without a guide in the physical world, how one can travel the path of spirituality without a guide? It is beyond the boundary of the physical world! That is why, Allah says in the Quran:

❖ فَسَأَلُوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢١:٤﴾

Meaning: So, (O people) if you do not know (yourself) ask the men of invocation. (21:7)

‘Men of invocation’ means the men of perfection whose souls are stationed at the level of annihilation in Allah by the invocation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* (The personal name of Allah (الله) which represents His Essence including all His attributes unlike His other names which represent only one attribute). They are well aware of the ups and downs of the Divine path so they guide others by granting them spiritual purity with their spiritual authority. One must adopt the company of a truthful for guidance.

Allah orders as below:

❖ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٩:١١٩﴾

Meaning: Remain in the (company) of those who uphold the truth. (9:119)

Each command of Allah is an obligation. To adopt the company of the truthful men and Mystics is a must because they are the true friends of Allah. Every command of the Quran is universal, if Allah has ordered to ask the men of invocation and adopt the companionship of the truthful, then it is obvious that they are present in every age for the guidance of people. The Holy Quran was revealed during the life of Prophet Mohammad. After its complete revelation, Prophet Mohammad passed away. This proves that the command to seek guidance from the men of invocation and truthful is for the people who would come after Prophet Mohammad. They are the spiritual successors of Prophet Mohammad. Allah is ordering to search such people, in the following verse as well:

❖ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ

تَفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥:٣٥﴾

Meaning: O believers! Adopt piety persistently and keep looking for medium to (approach and get closer to) Him. And strive hard in His way so that you may prosper. (5:35)

No doubt the medium to get closeness to Allah will be the one chosen from the very first day of man's creation, the human being. As Allah has always appointed man for the guidance of other humans so the medium in the verse above is definitely referring to the perfect Man who has the authority to lead people to the way of Allah due to his extreme level of closeness to Allah.

In the book *Qaul-ul-Jamil*, Shah Waliullah writes in the explanation of this verse:

- ❖ Here medium neither refers to faith because the faithful are already being addressed. Nor it refers to the pious deeds like the prayer, fasting, zakat as they come under piety. Rather it refers to devotion, pledge of allegiance and the spiritual guide.

Shah Ismail Dehlvi, who is the leader of deniers of pledge of allegiance and perfect spiritual guides, also defines medium in these words:

❖ مراد از وسیله شخصے است کہ اقرب الی اللہ باشد

Meaning: Medium refers to that person who is closer to Allah in terms of grandeur and proximity.

It is evident that when Allah ordered to search a medium, obviously, He did not refer to an invisible notion like faith, piety devotion etc. because one cannot search them. The command was to search for the Universal Divine Man whose reality is unknown among the people. This verse also clarifies that the false and fraud Pirs are not medium to reach Allah, as one does not need to search them. They are present everywhere and have made themselves commercial. Medium can only be that person whose innerself is totally connected with Allah. Apparently, he is not famous and popular in the world nor does he reveal his spiritual status with his own tongue among the people.

QURAN STRESSES TO SEARCH SPIRITUAL GUIDE

In sura *Bani Israel* verse 57, Allah Himself defines medium as:

❖ يَتَتَّعُونَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمُ الْوَسِيلَةَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ (١٤:٥٧)

Meaning: Look for mediation to their Lord (themselves) as to who amongst them is most intimate (in the presence of Allah). (17:57)

In sura *Luqman* too, Allah commands to obey His chosen men of perfection, which is in fact the instruction to take oath:

❖ وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ (٣١:١٥)

Meaning: But (in the matter of faith and the Last Hour and the related affairs) follow someone who adopts the path of turning to Me. (31:15)

Allah also says:

❖ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِيَ الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ (٤:٥٩)

Meaning: O believers! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those (men of truth) who hold command amongst you. (4:59)

Even in this verse, Allah instructs to obey His Prophet and another human being. This enlightened leader must be the perfect Saint of his era, who follows the same path the Prophet has followed and his instructions conform to Allah and His Prophet. He will be the vicegerent of Allah and Prophet Mohammad. In every era there is always one such individual in the world. That is why, Allah commands to follow him. Undoubtedly, the enlightened leader does not refer to the worldly rulers because their path and deeds are usually against the commandments of Allah and His Prophet. Therefore, following them would make it impossible to follow and obey Allah and His Prophet. Hence, to follow and obey Allah and His Prophet it is essential to find out an enlightened leader. The one who has reached at the highest station of the Divine closeness by following Allah and His Prophet perfectly. In sura *Bani Israel* Allah says:

❖ مَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۚ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ۖ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ۚ وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا ﴿١٥﴾ (١٤:١٥)

Meaning: Whoever adopts the path of guidance follows it to his own benefit and whoever goes astray, then the evil consequences of his error also fall back on him alone. And no bearer of burden will bear the burden (of the sins) of any other and We do not torment (any people) at all until We send a Messenger (to them). (17:15)

This verse proves that Allah always keeps sending His chosen men to guide mankind towards righteousness in every age. He guides people in the form of Prophets or in the form of Mystics and He will not punish anyone as long as He does not make arrangements for his guidance. If a person follows the one who possesses righteousness, then there is salvation for him but if he refuses to obey the righteous one, then Allah punishes him. We pray in sura *al-Fatihah* during our five times prayers daily:

❖ اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴿٦﴾ (١:٥-٦)

Meaning: Show us the straight path. The path of those upon whom You have bestowed Your favours. (1:5-6)

However, people do not take pain to search for such rewarded people. We have a preconceived notion that rewarded people are only the Prophets who have passed away from this world and no more rewarded people exist in this world now. This is entirely a wrong notion that only the punished and wrath stricken group are left in this world. God forbid! Had it been the case, then doomsday would have befallen by now. This is the blessing of the existence of bestowed people that it rains and the earth grows crops. It is because of them that the sun rises and life exists. Every soul is taking birth in this world with a hope to receive guidance from them. Righteous people are not limited to Prophets only. Allah Himself explains about the rewarded ones in the Quran:

❖ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ ۖ وَحَسُنَ أُولَٰئِكَ رَفِيقًا ﴿٦٩﴾

Meaning: And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger are the people who will be in the company of those whom Allah has blessed with His (special) favour: the Prophets, the truthful, the martyrs and the most pious. And how excellent these companions are! (4:69)

There is no Prophet after Prophet Mohammad but the chain of truthful and pious will continue till the doomsday. That is why Allah ordered to remain in the company of truthful:

❖ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾

Meaning: And remain in the company of those who uphold the truth. (9:119)

In the verse of sura *an-Nisa* Allah urged the people to adopt their company by calling them the excellent companions. One can have their company after pledging allegiance to the perfect Saints. All the verses that command to acquire the company of His beloved men, obey and follow their path are in fact instructions of pledging allegiance to the Saints. Each order of Allah given in the Holy Quran is an obligation for a true believer so pledge of allegiance is a religious obligation.

According to the verse 85 of sura *al-Baqarah* referred before, Allah says:

❖ أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ ﴿٨٥﴾

Meaning: Do you believe in some parts of the Quran and deny some others? (2:85)

The denier of one aspect of Quran or a Divine command is the denier of the whole Quran. The denier of the commands of Allah

is the denier of Allah. Therefore, the denier of pledge of allegiance is the denier of the Quran, Sunna, Allah and His Prophet.

Allah says in sura *Bani Israel*:

❖ **يَوْمَ نَدْعُوا كُلَّ أُنَاسٍ بِإِمَامِهِمْ^ع (١٧:٧١)**

Meaning: On the doomsday, when We shall call every section of people along with their (enlightened) leaders. (17:71)

This verse of Holy Quran also refers to the need of pledge allegiance to spiritual guide and the one who had not found out his spiritual leader, would be alone on the day of judgement. Rather, his leader will be Satan. Some interpreters derive meaning ‘the Prophets’ from the word **إِمَامِهِمْ** in the above mentioned verse.

Allah used the word leader instead of Prophet. If it was Prophet of every nation, then Allah would have used the word Prophet. The relation with the Prophet also develops by pledging allegiance to the spiritual leader. As Allah says:

❖ **إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ^ع (٢٨:١٠)**

Meaning: (O Beloved!) Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you in fact pledge allegiance to Allah alone. Allah’s hand is over their hands (in the form of your hand). (48:10)

Allah set the principle that the pledge of allegiance to the Prophet is in fact the pledge of allegiance to Allah. Similarly, the pledge to successor of the Prophet is pledge to the Prophet and so the connection reaches to Allah. Whoever will pledge to the perfect spiritual guide who has annihilated in the Prophet, in fact he pledges to Prophet Mohammad through several means.

The explicit orders of searching the perfect Saint of an era and acquiring his company are present in the Hadiths. The Holy Prophet said:

❖ اَلرَّفِيقُ ثُمَّ الطَّرِيقُ

Meaning: First find the guide then set on journey.

❖ لَا دِينَ لِمَنْ لَا شَيْخَ لَهُ

Meaning: He has no faith who has no Shaikh.

❖ مَنْ لَا شَيْخَ يَتَّخِذْهُ الشَّيْطَانُ

Meaning: The one who has no spiritual guide, his guide is Satan.

❖ مَنْ مَاتَ وَلَيْسَ فِي عُنُقِهِ بَيْعَةٌ مَاتَ مَيِّتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً

Meaning: Who died in a state that he had not sworn pledge to the spiritual guide, he died in ignorance.

❖ الشَّيْخُ فِي قَوْمِهِ كَنَبِيِّ فِي أُمَّتِهِ

Meaning: A Shaikh among his community (followers) is like a Prophet among his umma.

❖ مَنْ لَمْ يَدْرِكْ إِمَامَ زَمَانِهِ فَقَدْ مَاتَ مَيِّتَةً جَاهِلِيَّةً

Meaning: Who does not discover the perfect Saint of his time with his insight, will die in ignorance.

❖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَى صُورِكُمْ وَأَمْوَالِكُمْ، وَلَكِنْ يَنْظُرُ إِلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَأَعْمَالِكُمْ

Meaning: Allah neither sees your faces nor wealth, but He sees your inwards and acts. (Musnad Ahmad: 8894)

Rumi says about Hadith No. 8894 of Musnad Ahmad:

- ❖ It is clear from this Hadith that correction of inwards is mandatory. So one should find out spiritual guide and pledge allegiance to him for the correction of inward.

The perfect Saints gain these levels by acting upon such orders of the Quran and Hadith. All the Mystics also pledged allegiance to certain perfect Mystic and had received spiritual training from

him. Even leader of all the Saints Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani had to pledge allegiance to Abu Saeed Mubarak Makhzoomi to cover the spiritual stations. Then how can common and imperfect people claim to reach Allah without the medium of a Mystic?

❖ Jalaluddin Mohammad Rumi says:

ہیچ کس از نزد خود چیزے نہ شد ہیچ آہن خنجر تیزے نہ شد
 ہیچ حلوائی نہ شد استادِ کار تاکہ شاگردے شکر ریزے نہ شد
 مولوی ہرگز نہ شد مولائے روم تا غلامِ شمس تبریزے نہ شد

Explanation: Nobody can gain anything without a specialist. Likewise, no piece of an iron can become a dagger unless handled by a blacksmith. A confectioner cannot become an expert by himself until he learns this skill from an expert confectioner. Even he reveals that he could not have reached this status himself until he had adopted the slavery of his spiritual guide Shams of Tabriz.

❖ He further says:

یک زمانے صحبتے با اولیا
 بہتر از صد سالہ طاعت بے ریا

Explanation: A single moment in the company of sacred Saints is better than the sincere worship of hundred years.

Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani expresses in these words:

❖ O people of Allah! You are in a material world of ways and means, so you require a medium. Ask for a doctor (spiritual guide) from your Lord who would cure the diseases of your souls. Ask for a curer who prescribes you your medicine. Seek such a guide who really guides you towards the true path of salvation. Get the closeness to the beloveds of Allah.

They are very close and respectful to Him. They are the custodians of the doors of the Divine path. (Al-Fath ar-Rabbani)

- ❖ Find such a man (spiritual guide) who is the mirror to the face of your religion. You would look into it as you look into a mirror and correct your face, turban and hair properly. Be a wise man; renounce the lust and appetites of the world. You proclaim (out of your pride) that you do not need anyone to train and educate you. However, the Lord of both the worlds says:

‘Mumin is the mirror for a Mumin.’

When the faith of a Muslim rectifies and becomes perfect, he converts into a mirror for the entire creature. As, they see the face of their religion in the mirror of his conversation during meeting and closeness with him. (Al-Fath ar-Rabbani)

- ❖ If you are desirous of salvation then seek company of a spiritual guide who is well aware of commandants and gnosis of Allah. He will teach you knowledge and attitude of reverence and acquaint you with the way stations of path leading to Allah. A disciple has no way out without a helper, guide and leader because he is in a jungle where there is abundance of dragons, scorpions, adversity, thirst and beasts to kill him. The spiritual guide will protect him from miseries and will instruct him about the points of water, fruits and shady trees. The disciple will get harmed in jungle full of beasts, snakes, scorpions and miseries if he will travel without a helper and spiritual guide.

O traveller of the world! Do not separate yourself from the caravan, guide and the companions. Otherwise, your life, wealth, and everything will be lost. O traveller of the hereafter! You must ever remain along with the perfect spiritual guide; he will let you reach the destination. Serve him with dedication, pay respect to him and never contradict his opinion. He will

teach you the knowledge and bless you with the closeness to Allah. **(Al-Fath ar-Rabbani)**

- ❖ Since beginning, Allah has been providing spiritual training in a manner that one confers beneficence and other receives. It was same during the periods of all the Prophets, their vicegerents and then their trained persons and this will continue till the Doomsday. It is impossible that Allah would have raised a person to the highest spiritual stations without the training of a spiritual guide. No one can build reasoning over it because it is a continued practice that no one can cross the stages of spiritual journey without the guidance of spiritual guide. A disciple should not leave the company of spiritual guide unless he reaches his destination that is the Union with Allah. Without a spiritual guide it is impossible that one can leave superficial settled way of following religion, turn towards Divine reality, rinsing off arrogance and remain safe from the evil effect of suspicious and absurd speeches of atheist. **(Ghunyat al-Talibeen)**

Sultan-ul-Arifeen Sultan Bahoo says:

- ❖ No one has ever reached Allah without a spiritual guide because the spiritual guide knows every way station of the inward journey. He has the solution of every problem. He is another name for the Divine favour. Without Divine favour one cannot accomplish his job and he is also like a vigilant and skilled captain of the ship who is aware of all the hazards of the way and knows all the methods to overcome them. Without the captain, the ship would surely sink. For a seeker, perfect spiritual guide himself is the ship as well as the captain. **(Ain-ul-Faqr)**
- ❖ Mediation (through spiritual guide) is better than excellence gained by knowledge. Knowledge or excellence cannot stop a person from sin but mediator (spiritual guide) can. Just as Prophet Joseph was saved from the evil of Zulaikha due to

the mediation of his spiritual guide and father, Prophet Jacob.
(Ain-ul-Faqr)

Abu Hamid Mohammad ibn Mohammad al-Ghazali:

- ❖ To enter the class of the Sufis (pledge of allegiance to spiritual guide) is an important obligation. Nobody has exemption from faults and the diseases of the soul, except the Prophets.

He says:

- ❖ Initially, I was a denier of the spiritual states of the pious ones and Mystics. I remained so unless I received beneficence by the slavery of my spiritual guide Shaikh Yousaf Nisaj. He rinsed off my heart from evils with Mystic endeavours till I rose to the exalted rank where I came across with Divine incidents and then I was blessed with Divine vision.

Sultan-ul-Ashiqeen says:

- ❖ The union with Allah is impossible without the guidance of an accomplished spiritual guide. The path of gnosis, closeness and union with Allah pass through the door of sharia. On both sides of the door of sharia, the devil ambushes the seeker of Allah with his army. First, he does not let any son of Adam come at the door of sharia. If a courageous man arrives at the door (prayer, zakat, hajj), then the Satan tries to stop him. Thus, Satan involves him in the superficial scenes of the adornment of sharia. He does not let anybody approach the soul of sharia.

If a lucky seeker dares to step ahead, the devil endeavours to stop him with more force. Satan uses every tactic to stop him. When the seeker passes through the door of sharia and enters the kingdom of his inward, he has to wade through the vast and difficult jungle of inclination of the people (the creation seek his help for the solution of difficulties of the world). At this point, the seeker without perfect spiritual guide gets astray in the jungle of inclination of the creation.

Therefore, he is killed. Just like the knowledge of sharia one cannot learn the esoteric knowledge without the help of a perfect spiritual guide. The spiritual glance of the spiritual guide is such an alchemy which removes the impurities from the seeker. Hence, it makes him capable of having enlightened insight and conscience. (Shams-ul-Fuqara)

Sayyid Abul Faiz Qalandar Ali Sohrawardi says:

- ❖ If a person regularly fasts and offers prayers whole night, pilgrimages to Makkah and Madina, learns the Quran by heart. Whether he is a learned scholar of exegesis and Hadith but he did not pledge allegiance to a righteous spiritual guide, his hand is in the hand of Satan and he is in accordance with the following verse of sura *Bani Israel*:

❖ يَوْمَ نَدْعُوا كُلَّ اُنَاسٍ بِاِمَامِهِمْ ؕ (١٧:٧١)

Meaning: (Call to mind) the Day when We shall call every section of people along with their leaders. (17:71)

The person who has not taken pledge of allegiance will be called with Satan. He will not be under the protection of anyone. He did not have a spiritual guide and if he goes off the right way or slips due to any satanic whisper no one will guard him. Then how can he come to the light of righteousness from the darkness of evils.

Allama Iqbal says:

صحبتِ پیرِ روم سے مجھ پہ ہوا یہ رازِ فاش

لاکھ حکیم سر بہ جیب، ایک کلیم سر بکف

Explanation: The company of Rumi revealed this secret upon me that one man conversing with Allah inwardly and fighting with the inciting innerself is better than thousands of

philosophers drowned in the ocean of wisdom to find the secret of Allah.

حدیثِ دل کسی درویش بے گیم سے پوچھ

اللہ کرے تجھے تیرے مقام سے آشنا

Explanation: Ask about the ardent Divine love from a mystic Fakir who does not possess worldly riches. May Allah grant you with the awareness of your grandeur.

THE SELECTION OF SPIRITUAL GUIDE

In spite of knowing the importance of pledge of allegiance with reference to Quran and Sunna people are still hesitant from it. Its main reason is the widespread fraud and deceit and the abundance of fake Pirs these days. Though, Allah saves His sincere seeker from such fraudulents. Only, seekers of the material world are the trap of these fraudulents. In fact, every person receives what he desires and seeks. If he seeks this deceptive world then he will find the fake Pirs. If he is seeking paradise and its blessings, he will find such guides who will involve him in excessive prayers, forty days seclusions and specific spiritual exercises. These are pre-requisite to fulfil the desire of heaven.

Although, one who sets out to search a perfect spiritual guide to seek Allah, Allah Himself is his protector. As He has said:

❖ وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا (۲۹:۶۹)

Meaning: And those who strive hard (and struggle against the lower self vehemently) for Our cause, We certainly guide them to Our ways” (29:69)

Whose desire and intention is true, if initially he goes at wrong place, Allah guides him towards the right place. Hence, it is

necessary to rectify your own intention and desires first, instead of blaming the fraud guides.

Sultan-ul-Faqr VI Sultan Mohammad Asghar Ali says:

- ❖ I have heard that these days perfect spiritual guides are rare. Whereas the fraudulent and cheats are available everywhere in the guise of spiritual guides. Well! If you will seek the world or heaven instead of Allah then definitely such people will deceive you. A true seeker who really wants proximity of Allah never becomes victim of such people because his protector is He (Allah) in whose search he has set out. First check and rectify your own demand, then look for a spiritual guide, you will surely find the destination. Since there are no more seekers of Allah who set out to search Him truly and seek His closeness and recognition. Perfect spiritual guide has also concealed himself from the carcass worldly people. I again emphasize upon searching a spiritual guide with a true inward, sincere intention and without prejudice. Only then, you will find your destination. Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab could not recognize Prophet Mohammad inspite of being near him. While Uwais al-Qarani recognized him due to his true passion despite being physically away from him. **(Mujtaba Akhir Zamani)**

Sayyid Mohammad Zauqi Shah reveals some important rules to recognize the true spiritual guide. He says:

- ❖ After the acceptance of need of a spiritual guide one should not hesitate to select a spiritual guide but a beginner cannot judge the spiritual excellence of a guide and it is neither required too. When a guide is endowed with spiritual seniority the selector should observe the following points:
1. Visit that Shaikh and notice that as long as you were sitting there, whether you felt less worldly dangers, satanic whisper or not? Whether, you felt the love for Allah and the Prophet or not? After getting out of that place, your state may return

to as usual. But the time you stayed there, did you feel any change within yourself or not?

2. Did the disciples or followers of that Shaikh feel any spiritual change within themselves after becoming his followers? What was the state before becoming his disciples and what kind of change they felt afterwards?
3. The time you remained in his company, did he utter such words, which conform to your spiritual states? Moreover, did you feel any satisfaction with those words? Did his words solve any of your problems or unveil any secret upon you?

If you get a good opinion about these three matters then blindly pledge allegiance to that Shaikh. You would not find a Shaikh better than him as far as your betterment and righteousness are concerned.

RENEWAL AND REVIVAL OF PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Nowadays, another severe problem is that because of the abundance of imperfect spiritual guides, people swear allegiance to any available spiritual guide. They do not verify his authenticity and pledge allegiance even if he is imperfect or fake. This is so, because they do not want to take the pain of searching for a true and perfect spiritual guide. After pledge of allegiance, they imagine themselves free from fulfilling this Sunna whether they gain spiritual beneficence from it or not. This attitude is entirely wrong.

One must know that if the spiritual guide is imperfect and is not capable of benefitting his disciples then the pledge has not occurred at all. If the disciple does not feel change then he must not hesitate even a little bit to leave that spiritual guide. One must leave fake guide if seeker has not freed from pride, malice, vanity, conceit and greed despite his guidance. If someone could not feel the love of Allah and His Prophet then, he must not

follow that imperfect guide. He must set out to search a perfect spiritual guide and swear allegiance to him. The orders of pledge are similar to those of marriage, as both create a sacred and deep bond. Just like marriage with a eunuch cannot happen. Similarly, the pledge to an imperfect spiritual guide cannot happen as well. One must get rid of such spiritual guide and return to a perfect spiritual guide as soon as he comes to know the reality.

DIFFERENT SITUATIONS FOR RENEWAL OF PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

1. After pledge, if someone comes to know that the spiritual guide is imperfect and he does not belong to any spiritual chain or follow sharia or does not know the way to Allah. Then, the oath has not happened. Even there is no need to break it; one must look for a perfect one.
2. When the oath was taken for Divine closeness but disciple did not feel any inward change then it is clear that the spiritual guide is imperfect. Custodians and trustees of shrine of a Saint are often imperfect spiritual guides. They only earn money and enjoy political status through the inheritance of the Saint's seat. They have no concern with spirituality. May Allah save everybody from swearing allegiance to them. They in fact defame all the spiritual guides. The illiterate people, following their ancestor's footsteps, pledge allegiance to the inheritors of Saint. This is not spirituality instead an evil. Spirituality or Sufism is not hereditary. If any of the ancestors is a Saint then it is not wise to think that spirituality is their legacy. It is the way of Divine closeness and every human being has his own level of closeness depending upon his own efforts, abilities and competencies. Hence, such pledge has not happened and without breaking it one should return to the perfect spiritual guide for covering the true spiritual levels.

3. If the spiritual guide has died and the disciple could not cover the spiritual way-stations and his journey ended half way. Even he has not become capable enough to get benefit from his spiritual guide's shrine, and then the renewal is must.
4. When during the childhood, one swears allegiance under someone's influence without any understanding. This is called pledge of respect (*al-bayah at-tabarruk*). According to sharia, when someone has grown up and finds himself inclined towards another spiritual guide, he has the right to repeat pledge of allegiance.
5. If a spiritual guide does not pay any attention, at a stretch, to his disciple and does not train him spiritually. Then the disciple can go to another Shaikh. It is lawful for the second spiritual guide to take his allegiance and train him.
6. If the spiritual guide has lost and the disciple cannot contact him physically and spiritually and he does not have any information about him. In this situation one can renew his pledge of allegiance to the available perfect spiritual guide.

PROMINENT SIGN OF PERFECT SPIRITUAL GUIDE

According to Sultan Bahoo, the most prominent sign for recognizing a true spiritual guide are:

The perfect spiritual guide grants the seeker sultan of invocation i.e. Hoo هو for invocation. He blesses him with contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* and orders to inscribe Allah's name on the body. The spiritual guide, who cannot grant all this, is not capable of Divine guidance and instruction. Therefore, by breaking his oath, one can swear allegiance to the perfect spiritual guide who possesses all qualities.

Sultan-ul-Ashiqeen Sultan Mohammad Najib-ur-Rehman is the perfect spiritual guide of present era and the Shaikh of *Sarwari Qadri Order* of Sultan Bahoo. From the very first day of pledge of allegiance, he gives *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* for invocation, contemplation and to inscribe it on the body for purgation. He struggles hard to spread the beneficence of *Ism-e Allah Zaat* throughout the world. For this purpose his books are the torchbearer for the seekers of Allah. Millions of seekers are receiving this beneficence through websites and other forms of social media which are specially designed to spread the teaching of *Faqr*. Resultantly, they have pledged allegiance to Sultan-ul-Ashiqeen and started their esoteric journey. He sanctifies the filthy inward with his perfect spiritual sight and enlightens the soul with the gnosis of Allah. Undoubtedly, it is a proof of Sultan-ul-Ashiqeen's highest spiritual status and absolute dominion.

Come! Let's begin the journey of seeking Allah by pledging allegiance to Sultan-ul-Ashiqeen. Sanctify your inwards with the invocation and contemplation of *Ism-e-Allah Zaat* resulting in the unveiling of spiritual veils and Divine observation. May Allah grant the seekers of Truth the ability to continue this journey with persistence and sincerity of intention. Amen

GLOSSARY

Imam	Imam (امام) literally means leader and refers to a spiritual or religious leader. It is also used for the person who conducts prayer.
Ism-e-Allah Zaat	The personal name of Allah (الله) which represents His Essence including all His attributes unlike His other names which represent only one attribute.
Khirqah	It is the patched cloak which is the symbol of the spiritual traveller.
Sunan al Huda	Compulsory Sunna. It is the collection of those Sunna associated with the path of guidance. One who renounces these Sunna is either excluded from Islam or fails to reach the exalted stations of faith.
Sunan al Zawaid	Optional Sunna. It is the collection of those Sunna associated with everyday activities of the Holy Prophet.
Mustahab	Recommended or virtuous act
Shahada	Shahada is the Islamic creed, declaring belief in the Oneness of Allah and acceptance of Mohammad as His Prophet.
Salawat	Salutation upon Prophet Mohammad

INDEX

A.

Abu Bakr Siddiq 18, 19

Abu Jahl 46

Abu Lahab 46

Abu Saeed Mubarak Makhzoomi 23, 40

Abu Ya'ala 26

Ain-ul-Faqr 42, 43

Al-Fath ar-Rabbani 41, 42

Al-Ghazali 43

Al-Hudaybiyyah 15

Ali ibn Abi Talib 19, 21, 23

Allama Iqbal 44

Anas ibn Malik 18

Ansar 26

Awarif al-Ma'arif 22

B.

Bahuja-tul-Israr 23

Bukhari 11, 16, 20, 24

D.

Dur al-Manthur 27

F.

Faqr 19, 50

Fisq 31

Fuyuz al-Bari 11, 24

G.

Ghunyat al-Talibeen 42

H.

Hasan ibn Ali 17, 21

Hasan of Basra 21-23

Husayn ibn Ali 21

I.

Ibn Majah 20, 27

Islam 7-9, 11-13, 15-19, 21, 23, 24, 26

Ism-e-Allah Zaat 33, 49, 50

K.

Ka'ab bin Malik 15

Kanz al-Ummal 20, 27

Khirqah 22, 23

M.

Madina 15, 44

Majma al-Zawa'id 27

Makkah 15, 44

Mishkat Sharif 20

Miswak 11

Mujtaba Akhir Zamani 46

Musnad Imam Ahmad 18, 26, 27, 39

Mustahab 11

N.

Nisai 20

P.

Prophet Jacob 43

Prophet Joseph 42

Q.

Qaul-ul-Jamil 34

Quran 8-16, 24-27, 29-34, 36-39, 44, 45

R.

Rijal al-Fikr fi al-Dawah fi Al-Islam 23

Rumi 39, 40, 44

S.

Sahl al-Tustari 10

Salawat 14

Saleem ibn Abi Amir 18

Salma bint Qais 26

Sarwari Qadri 19, 50

Sayyid Abul Faiz Qalandar Ali Sohrawardi 44

Sayyid Mohammad Zauqi Shah 22, 46

Shah Ismail Dehlvi 34

Shah Waliullah 34

Shahab al-Din Abu Hafs Umar Suhrawardi 22

Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani 23, 40

Shaikh Nadwi 23

Shams of Tabriz 40

Shams-ul-Fuqara 44

Sirr-e-Dilbaran 22

Sultan Bahoo 19, 42, 49, 50

Sultan Mohammad Asghar Ali 46

Sultan-ul-Ashiqeen 43, 50

Sunan al Huda 11-13

Sunan al Zawaid 11

Sunna 9-15, 21-25, 38, 45, 47

T.

Tabarani 20, 26, 27

U.

Ubadah Ibn as-Samit 19, 20

Umaisah Bint Zuqaiqa 26

Umar ibn Khattab 18, 19

Umma 9-11, 13, 19, 20, 21, 24, 31, 39

Usman ibn Affan 18, 19

Uwais al-Qarani 46

Y.

Yousaf Nisaj 43

Z.

Zulaikha 42

Of all the promises made in the world, the best promise is the one made with the perfect spiritual guide where you offer your spiritual self and he blesses you with the closeness and vision of Allah. This book is an English translation of "*Bayat ki ahmiyat aur Zaroorat.*" *Al-bayah* refers to the trade between a slave and his Lord wherein one pledges to give Allah his ownself and everything he owns in exchange for His proximity though everything belongs to Allah in reality.

Among the essentials of Islam, *al-bayah* has the utmost importance. In this book importance of pledge of allegiance is revealed according to the teachings of Quran and Hadith along with quotes of Sufi Saints in a very beautiful and comprehensive manner. Along with pledge of allegiance of women, renewal of pledge of allegiance and different types of pledge of allegiance are also described very precisely in this book. It also highlights the fact that pledge of allegiance is the only Sunna of Prophet Mohammad sall'Allahu alayhi wa'alihi wasallam that is the Sunna of Allah as well. May this book be a source of guidance for all the seekers of Truth. Amen



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