al-Bay’aa wal Hizbiyyah
(Allegiance and Partisanship).

Saleh As-Saleh

All Praise is due to Allah, and may the salaah and salaam be on Prophet Muhammad, his household, the noble companions and those who follow them until the Day of Resurrection. The subject of this lecture is, “al-Bay’aa wa Hizbiyyah” (Allegiance and Partisanship).

al-Bay’aa (Allegiance):

Islam brought forth the obligation to give bay’aa (allegiance), and the Prophet (ﷺ: sallallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam) commanded it. The allegiance was originally given to him, then the leaders after him and then the khulafah (caliphs) afterwards. In our time, many deviated; making bay’aa to anyone they chose from those who set themselves up as leaders of Muslim groups. Due to the large number of groups, al-bay’aa has multiplied and varied, becoming even numerous. This has led to disputes, with each group claiming to be on the truth and that their leader deserves the legal bay’aa (allegiance).

Definition of al-Bay’aa:

Linguistically, al-bay’aa means to reach an agreement with respect to matters of trade or on obedience and following (i.e., a covenant).

As for the Islamic meaning (al-istilah), al-bay’aa means the covenant on obedience. It is as if the one who pledges allegiance gives the covenant to his ameer (leader), assigning him the ability to conclude matters concerning himself and the Muslims at large; this ameer can not be disputed with in any way. Similarly, the Muslim agrees to obey the ameer in what he assigns from certain tasks, whether it is in times of ease or difficulty, in that which he likes, and that which he dislikes.

When the people of the past used to give al-bay’aa to the leaders and give him the covenant, they would put their hands in his hand affirming the ‘ahd, confirming the promise of allegiance in a manner similar to the way people shake hands after reaching an agreement while selling and buying.

Definition of Hizbiyyah (Partisanship):

From the linguistic aspect, al-hizb means a group of people; the plural of hizb is ahzab (parties). The hizb of a man are his followers and his soldiers, who are holding to the same view as him. If a group of people’s hearts and deeds are in agreement, then they constitute a hizb, even though they may not physically meet. In addition, a hizb, linguistically, is a kind of people whose desires are the same.

The Islamic or legal meaning (i.e., in Islamic terminology) of hizb is not totally blameworthy nor is it entirely praiseworthy. It is blamed or praised in accordance with its intended use. For instance, Allah says in the Qur’an (in the translation of the meaning):

« Shaytan has overtaken them. So he has made them forget the remembrance of Allah. They are the party of Shaytan. Verily, it is the party of Shaytan (hizbu-shaytan) that will be the losers! » [Surah al-Mujadilah (58:19)]

Clearly, this is an example that is blameworthy. Similarly, in the same surah (chapter) of the Qur’an, Allah says (in the translation of the meaning):
Therefore, in one context, it was blameworthy when the *hizb* was associated with Shaytan, and in another instance, it was praiseworthy when it was the party of Allah, concerning the believers.¹ Certainly, if the *hizb* comprises the people of wickedness, desires, misguidance and disbelief, then all of that is blameworthy.

**Dangers of Hizbiyyah:**

Everyone who examines the Islamic history finds that *tahazub* (bigotry) to opinions, *madhahib* (schools of thought), and innovations splits the Muslim *ummah* and takes away from its unity. That is why the textual proofs are replete with calls for unity and keeping from all means that leads to splitting.

**The Ruling concerning al-Bay’aa**

Many textual proofs came to confirm the command of pledging allegiance and to warn against abandoning it and the consequences of that. Allah says (in the translation of the meanings):

> لَئِدَّ رَضُيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا يَبَاعُونِ اللَّهَ بُقْ نَهَا يَ بَلَغُوا فَغَلِبَّهُمْ فَتَحَطَّهَا قَوْيًا. (Al-Baqarah: 18)

«Indeed, Allah was pleased with the believers when they gave their Bay’aa (pledge) to you (O Muhammad ﷺ) under the tree, He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down As-Sakinah (calmness and tranquillity) upon them, and He rewarded them with a near victory. » [Surah al-Fath (48:18)]

Also, Allah says in the same surah:

> ‑ إنَّ الْذَّنِينَ يَبَاعُونِ اللَّهَ بُقْ نَهَا يَ بَلَغُوا فَغَلِبَّهُمْ فَتَحَطَّهَا (الْيَتْمَرَيْنِ) عَلِيَّةَ اللَّهُ فَسَيَتْوَيْ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا. (الْيَتْمَرَيْنِ: 10)

«Verily, those who give Bay’aa (pledge) to you (O Muhammad ﷺ) they are giving Bay’aa (pledge) to Allah. The Hand of Allah is over their hands. Then whosoever breaks his pledge breaks only to his own harm, and whosoever fulfills what he has covenanted with Allah, He will bestow on him a great reward. » [Surah al-Fath (48:10)].

The Sunnah also emphasized *al-bay’aa*, calling for the believer to give allegiance and stating that whoever dies without having pledged allegiance to the Muslim ruler dies in the state of the pre-Islamic era. This refers to giving the pledge to the general Muslim *imam* who most people give the pledge to in his time or in his country, in the absence of the general Muslim *khilafah*. This is the obligated pledge incumbent on every Muslim, and it is forbidden to abandon or dissent in terms of obedience on this pledge, whether in times of ease or difficulty, in that which he likes and that which he dislikes. This applies as long as the leader does not command sins, in which case, he can not be obeyed but rather is to be obeyed in other issues.

¹If any group would carry such a name, then it must not have convictions and practices that oppose Tawheed, like invoking other than Allah, and worshipping graves etc. This is *shirk*. So Muslims should not be deceived by emotional and (or) politically misleading practices.
whether he was set up by influential people in the country or assigned by his predecessor or even to the degree that he took leadership by force, it is forbidden to rebel against him as long as he does not commit clear, plain kufr and until the conditions of rebellion to remove him are fulfilled. First, his kufr must be clear and can not tolerate any misinterpretation, requiring an unambiguous proof from Allah and (or) the Messenger (ṣalla2) that his case (saying and/or action) is truly kufr. Moreover, there must be the ability to change him and that this change will not lead to a greater evil. When all these conditions are met, and it is obvious how difficult this is, only then can he may be removed; otherwise the Muslims are told to be patiently persevering until these conditions are fulfilled.

The Illegal Bay’aa:

In our time, numerous deviations have occurred with respect to illegal pledges, not condoned by shariah. This has had a negative impact on Muslim society at large. The following are some instances of deviant pledges.

The first example is that of the Sufis to their elders or their shaykhs. You find the Sufi mystic making an "eternal" pledge to his shaykh, such that he can never leave that shaykh’s way. Such a pledge has no basis in shariah; rather, it is without a doubt futile. Some mystic Sufis give the pledge by shaking hands between men and women. They say they will continue to be that shaykh’s students and adepts, no matter what that shaykh says. To that end, they even take the pledge to share their wealth and money with him. In fact, the shaykh can take a tax levee from them. These are criminal acts and mischief that have no basis in shariah and Islam.

From the second type of deviant pledges is that of group members to their group leaders; this is becoming widespread in many countries. Everyday you find these groups splitting, forming subgroups and sub leaders. In these groups, the leaders request from the members to make a full pledge, as if it were the legal pledge to the Muslim general leader or imam.

These groups vary with respect to the covenants they take. Some say that anyone who abandons giving the pledge of allegiance to the leader of their group is a kaafir (disbeliever). Others maintain that giving the pledge is fardh (obligatory) and that anyone who does not give it is sinful. As such, they assign an ameer for their group as a means to lift the sin from them. This kind of pledge is futile, baseless, and not found in shariah. Anyone who claims it is obligatory to give a pledge of allegiance to a leader of a group is certainly in error.

Consequences of the Illegal Bay’aa:

The consequences of the illegal bay’aa are many.

Firstly, we now have more than one pledge at the same time and in the same country because each group thinks that the correct bay’aa is for their ameer.

Secondly, these bay’aa lead to enmity, conflict, and hatred between these groups. In turn, they compete with each other to acquire larger and larger numbers for their groups.

Thirdly, it has spread misconceptions regarding takfeer because some of these groups believe that the one who does not give the pledge is a kaafir and feels that their ameer is the only ameer. Therefore, they make takfeer on anyone who does not give the pledge to that ameer.

Fourthly, it has led to the spilling of the inviolable blood. In some Muslim countries, a member of a particular group may be killed if he decides to leave that group. Likewise, a leader of a group may kill a
competitor or those who oppose his leadership. This is real, and not fictional, occurring in many places.

**Fifthly,** this has led and still leads to confrontations between these groups and the government. The consequences of that are terrible, including rebellion, bloodshed, harshness, takfeer, and evil on top of evil. It has reached the degree that some of these groups have adopted what they call “revolutionary concepts,” when even the term “revolution” has nothing to do with Islam.

**Conclusion:**

The consequences of these illegal *ahzab* (parties) who demand *bay’aa* are great. They have corrupted the souls and thoughts of many Muslim youths around the world. We refer the matter to Allah, the Most High. We ask Him to save us from falling into this mischief and to protect the *ummah* (Islamic nation) from such disputes.

There is no Power or Might except with Allah. May the *salaah* and *salaam* be on Prophet Muhammad, his household, the noble companions, and those who follow them until the Day of Resurrection.

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**Saleh As-Saleh**  
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