

Migration & The Choice Between A Permissible Difficult & A Forbidden Ease

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This text examines the profound Islamic concept of hijra (migration) and its forbidden opposite, at-ta'arrub, regressing into an environment that jeopardizes one's religious practice and the faith of future generations. S.L. Al-Hakim provides a straightforward juristic and spiritual evaluation of what it means to reside in non-Islamic societies.

Drawing heavily from the Holy Qur'an, prophetic traditions, and the rulings of contemporary scholars like Sayyid Ali Al-Sistani and Sayyid Ali Khamenei, the work confronts the realities of modern assimilation, youth identity crises, and double lives. Rather than offering abstract advice, the author incorporates a psychological framework – cognitive dissonance – to explain how Muslims justify remaining in environments that weaken their faith. This book serves as an honest guide for families navigating the serious generational consequences of their geographical choices.

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the Martyrs

Hajj Qassem Soleimani

and

Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis

Who were Martyred on 3rd of January 2020.

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Introduction

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

“But the believers, and those who emigrate and struggle in God's way -- those have hope of God's compassion; and God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate.” (The Holy Qur'an, 2:218).

All praise be to Allah and peace and blessings be upon the Prophet and his Purified Household, and may the curse be upon their enemies for eternity.

The question of migrating from one country to another is one that is both important and one that has jurisprudential implications upon the migrant. Migrating, in the Islamic sense, must be done within the boundaries of Islamic Laws, and while there is no objection in one migrating from one place to another, another suburb, another city, another country in itself, the aftereffects of such a migration must be considered. If these effects are detrimental to one's Islamic practices, this migration then becomes a forbidden one.

The concept of migration is not just a geographical one, a concept that will be explained. So, this discussion is not only intended for those who wish to travel from Islamic countries to non-Islamic countries – but can also apply to those who wish to do the opposite, or to stay with in either.

There are implications for the first generation that wishes to migrate, as well as second and ongoing generations of migrants. Then there are those Muslims born in a particular place, or are natural citizens of a country, reverts for example – So the question arises; when would there be an obligation to migrate – in any sense of the word?

And what role has the first-generation migrant played in the religion of the generations that follow?

These issues will be touched upon in this brief and limited document.

Syed Sistani's first chapter in his book *A Code of Practice For Muslims in the West* starts with the following comments:

A Muslim who is born and raised in a Muslim country where he consciously and subconsciously absorbs the laws, values and teachings of Islam, grows up into a young person who is aware of the customs of his religion, following its path and is led by its guidance.

On the other hand, a Muslim who is born, and brought up in a non-Muslim country demonstrates the influence of that environment very clearly in his thoughts, ideas, behaviour, values, and etiquette unless his Lord helps him. This un-Islamic influence is seen more in the second generation of those who have migrated to non-Muslim countries. [1](#)

The second paragraph can apply to Muslims born in non-Islamic countries as well as reverts who have always lived in such countries and have since embraced Islam.

The full text of Syed Sistani's comments and answers to some questions relating to this can be read in a later chapter.

There are two words that need to be clarified and explained in order to best understand the concept of migration in Islam and before proceeding to the implications of what our religion has to say on the issue. These words are Migration, and Ta'arrub.

[1. Syed Sistani: A Code Of Practice For Muslims in the West. Online at: <https://al-islam.org/code-practice-muslims-west-sayyid-ali-hussaini-sistani> \[9\]](https://al-islam.org/code-practice-muslims-west-sayyid-ali-hussaini-sistani)

Chapter 1: Definition of Hijra

The first term is “hijra”¹, translated as “migration”.

1.1: Lexical Meaning

“Hijra” – According to the Arabic dictionary Al-Qamoos Al-Muheet (المحيط القاموس) – is defined as the departing from one land to another. le – He migrated, and this is repeated in other Arabic dictionaries.

Migrate – According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary²:

Definition of migrate

1: to move from one country, place, or locality to another:

– Thousands of workers migrate to this area in the summer.

2: to pass usually periodically from one region or climate to another for feeding or breeding:

– The whales migrate between their feeding ground in the north and their breeding ground in the Caribbean.

3: to change position or location in an organism or substance:

– filarial worms migrate within the human body

The Oxford Dictionary³ is similar but also includes the following definition:

Computing

Change or cause to change from one system to another.

- ‘customers are migrating from mainframes to client-server environments’
- ‘save time by efficiently migrating data to secondary storage systems’

Transfer [programs or hardware] from one system to another.

- ‘the system will allow users to migrate applications across environments’

1.2: Practical Meaning

Almost all the above definitions are relevant and applicable in our Islamic discussion of Migration. A geographical migration would be when one moves from a country where they are restricted from practicing their Islamic rituals, for example, to a country where they may practice freely. One example of this is when the early Muslims migrated to The Holy City of Medina, where the Prophet established an Islamic Government.

A non-geographical migration, such as in the example of computing, given in the Oxford dictionary, would be when a positive change is made from a life of ignorance and disbelief to a life that upholds the values of Islam.

1.3: Migration in the Holy Qur'an

The Holy Qur'an states:

وَمَنْ يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَافِقًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكُهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

Whoso emigrates in the way of God will find in the earth many refuges and plenty; whoso goes forth from his house an emigrant to God and His Messenger, and then death overtakes him, his wage shall have fallen on God; surely God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate. (Holy Qur'an, 4: 100).

This verse describes two issues regarding migration:

Firstly – “Whoso emigrates in the way of God will find in the earth many refuges and plenty” – This is a reference to migration in the worldly life, and that once an intention is made and acted upon, there will be plenty of safe and possible options on the map of the world that one can migrate to⁴.

Secondly – “whoso goes forth from his house an emigrant to God and His Messenger, and then death overtakes him, his wage shall have fallen on God; surely God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate.” – This is a reference to the hereafter and the spiritual benefits of migration. Regardless of whether or not the emigrant reaches the destination intended, the victory is theirs. And despite the obvious reality that it is Allah (SwT) that will be giving the reward, the verse emphasizes this with “his wage shall have fallen on God”⁵.

History describes two major geographical migrations that took place during the time of the Prophet (S). One from Mecca to Habasha and the other from Mecca to the holy city of Medina⁶. A third one also took place after the agreement of Hudaibiyah^{7,7} where another migration took place again from Mecca to

Medina until the time of the Liberation of Mecca. Once Mecca was liberated and came under the control of Muslims, migration from Mecca to Medina stopped. This explains the narration of the Prophet (S):

ولا تعرب بعد الهجرة، ولا هجرة بعد الفتح

“There is no Migration after the Liberation”⁸

This hadith does not mean that there is no longer a need to migrate – but rather that the temporal need to migrate from Mecca to Medina has now ended. Whenever there are circumstances that reflect the scenario in which the Muslims found themselves while in Mecca, under the governance of polytheists, the issue of migration re-opens. The traditions of the Prophet do not only apply to Muslims in the beginning stages of the Islamic world; rather, they are a role model for us today and always, and this is no different. What resulted from the migration of the prophet (S) is a practical example for us in today’s world, since his is indeed the Final Message and he is the best of role models.

In the book, “Uloom Al-Qur’an” by Mohammad Baqir Al Hakeem⁹, the Muslim migration from Mecca to Medina is described as a pivotal point between two stages of the Islamic propagation – the Meccan stage, under the rule of a non-Islamic government, and the Medinian stage – ruled by an Islamic Government. This migration had such a significant impact that its effects extended from the prophetic era to the lives of Muslims in every age and in every place.

The lessons learnt from the migration can easily be applied to our current modern-day life. This migration was not only a physical migration from one land to another, but also a moral migration from one state to another. That is, the Muslims migrated from a state of weakness to one of strength, from a state of minority to one of majority, from a state of differentiation to one of unity, from a state of stagnation to one of development, and – most importantly – from a state of ignorance to one of enlightenment.

1. Al-hijra, الهجرة

2. Migrate, Definition by Merriam Webster Dictionary

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/migrate> [10] – cited 26/03/19.

3. Migrate, Definition of Migrate by Oxford Dictionary

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/migrate> [11] cited 26/03/19.

4. Shirazi, Al-Amthal Fi Tafseer Kitab Allah Al-Munzal. Vol. 3 p. 272.

5. Shirazi. Vol. 3 p. 272.

6. ‘At-Ta’arrub Badul Hijra – Series 14 for the Series of Repentance Week’.

7. Shirazi, Al-Amthal Fi Tafseer Kitab Allah Al-Munzal. Vol. 5 p. 131.

8. Al-Shaykh al-Saduq, Man La Yahduruhu Al-Faqih. Vol. 3 p. 359 h.4273.

9. Sayyid Al-Hakeem, Uloom Al-Qur’an. p. 76.

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Chapter 2: Definition of At-Ta'arrub

The second term needing to be defined here is “Ta'arrub” [At-Ta'arrub] [التعرب].

2.1: Lexical Meaning

In classical Arabic, “Ta'arrub” refers to those who live as Bedouins¹ in the desert away from civilisation.

Ta'raaba is a past tense verb that describes the action of the one who has moved to live with the Bedouins.

التعرب بعد الهجرة

2.2: Practical Meaning

At-Ta'arrub ba'dul Alhijrah التعرب بعد الهجرة is a phrase which means to return to a former, inferior state after migrating to a superior one. The term “Ta'arrub” is taken from the word “I'raab”, or Bedouins, who live in the deserts of ignorance away from civilisation, knowledge and religion, away from knowledge and in the deserts of ignorance and bewilderment.

In its practical application, At-Ta'arrub ba'dul Alhijrah is the return of a person who is now a Muslim to their former state of ignorance – as though they were returning to the backward and ignorant manners of the Bedouins in the deserts.

In other words, the meaning of “At-Ta'arrub” that is used in traditions is extrapolated from the regression of some Muslims from Islamic societies and governance to reside with ignorant Bedouins and adopt their etiquettes and manners. That is, they regress away from their own Islamic faith and theological understandings to adopt those of the Bedouins.

In the introductory stages of Islam it was obligatory to migrate to the land of the Prophet (S) in order to learn about religious duties and responsibilities. It was forbidden to remain in a non-Islamic nation if this caused an inability to uphold religious observations such as the prayers or fasting².

In explaining the concept of Ta'arrub after migration some scholars have written the following³:

What is meant by Ta'arrub is to travel to countries in which the Muslims' awareness of Islamic practices

is reduced due to the distance in which one finds oneself away from centres that teach religious duties and obligations.

So, it is apparent that the meaning of the term “Al-Aarabi” is the one who is ignorant with regards to Islamic rulings. This is especially so because of the narrations that we have to help us define this term, and so it is not specific to those Bedouins who live in deserts nor to those who move to live with them, but a much wider definition, in which one may fall under the category of “Al-Aarabi”.

2.3: Ta'arrub in the Holy Qur'an And Narrations

The following are verses from the Holy Qur'an in which the term “Ta'arrub” has been used:

وَجَاءَ الْمُعَذِّرُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ لِيُؤْذَنَ لَهُمْ وَقَعَدَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۖ سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۗ مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

And the Bedouins came with their excuses, asking for leave; those who lied to God and His Messenger tarried; there shall befall the unbelievers of them a painful chastisement. (Holy Qur'an, 9:90).

There are two identifiable groups of people that the above Ayah discusses:

A group who have genuine reasons for their inability to join the struggle, such as the lack of weapons or wealth: “And the Bedouins came with their excuses, asking for leave”⁴.

Another group who are not genuine, and find excuses in order to avoid the struggle: “those who lied to God and His Messenger tarried”.

The Ayah ends with a threat to the disbelievers belonging to the second group: “there shall befall the unbelievers of them a painful chastisement”⁵.

الْأَعْرَابُ أَشَدُّ كُفْرًا وَنِفَاقًا وَأَجْدَرُ أَلَّا يَعْلَمُوا ۗ حُدُودَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

The Bedouins are more stubborn in unbelief and hypocrisy, and apter not to know the bounds of what God has sent down on His Messenger; and God is All-knowing, All-wise. (Holy Qur'an, 9:97).

وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مَا يُنْفِقُ مَغْرَمًا وَيَتَرَبَّصُّ بِكُمْ الدَّوَائِرَ عَلَيْهِمْ دَائِرَةُ السَّوْءِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Among the Bedouins are those who regard what they spend as a loss, and they watch for a reversal of your fortunes. Theirs shall be an adverse turn of fortune, and Allah is all-hearing, all-

knowing. (Holy Qur'an, 9:98).

These verses warn that not only are there hypocrites amongst the Muslims within the cities, but rather, they are also amongst the Bedouins – and the Bedouins are even more stringent in their hypocrisy and disbelief. Their living further out from the centres of religious learning has led to a deeper level of hypocrisy and disbelief – “The Bedouins are more stubborn in unbelief and hypocrisy” – than their peers that live within the cities, and closer to those centres, “and more apt to be ignorant of the precepts that Allah has sent down to His Apostle”⁶.

The Bedouins also consider what they “spend in the way of Allah (SwT)” to be a loss, a tax, and a right that has been taken away from them: “Some of the Bedouins take what they expend for a fine and await the turns of fortune to go against you.” This shows the short sightedness of such people, and their stinginess in spending in the way of Allah (SwT). They wait in expectation for problems and calamities to reach others; but as the Ayah says – “Theirs shall be the evil turn”⁷.

وَمِمَّنْ حَوْلَكُم مِّنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مُنَافِقُونَ وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ مَرَدُوا ۖ عَلَى الْغَفَاةِ لَا تَعْلَمُهُمْ نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُمْ سَنُعَذِّبُهُمْ مَّرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَذَابٍ عَظِيمٍ

And some of the Bedouins who dwell around you are hypocrites; and some of the people of the City are grown bold in hypocrisy. Thou knowest them not; but We know them, and We shall chastise them twice, then they will be returned to a mighty chastisement. (Holy Qur'an, 9: 101).

سَيَقُولُ لَكَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ شَغَلَتْنَا أَمْوَالُنَا وَأَهْلُونَا فَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَنَا يَقُولُونَ بِأَلْسِنَتِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ ضَرًّا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ نَفْعًا ۗ بَلْ كَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ۗ

The Bedouins who were left behind will say to thee, 'We were occupied by our possessions and our families; so ask forgiveness for us.' They say with their tongues what is not in their hearts. Say: 'Who can avail you aught against God, if He desires hurt for you, or desires profit for you? Nay, but God is ever aware of the things you do. (Holy Qur'an, 48: 11).

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ ءِامَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا ۗ وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا ۗ أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۗ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِّنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

The Bedouins say, 'We believe.' Say: 'You do not believe; rather say, "We surrender"; for belief has not yet entered your hearts. If you obey God and His Messenger, He will not diminish you anything of your works. God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate.' (Holy Qur'an, 49: 14).

In the above Ayahs, it is not the Bedouins who are being vilified, but the loss of faith, the ignorance of

religious laws, and the living in a place where it is not possible to fulfil our obligations to Allah (SwT). And so we find in some verses that Allah (SwT) praises the Bedouins who believed and had faith and acted upon the religious rulings. Those are the Bedouins that have earned Allah's Mercy:

وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيتَّخِذُ مَا يُنْفِقُ قُرْبًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَصَلَوَاتِ الرَّسُولِ أَلَا إِنَّهَا قُرْبَةٌ لَهُمْ سَيُدْخِلُهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

And some of the Bedouins believe in God and the Last Day, and take what they expend for offerings bringing them near to God, and the prayers of the Messenger. Surely they are an offering for them, and God will admit them into His mercy; God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate. (Holy Qur'an, 9:99).

And the Bedouins are given the choice to either obey Allah (SwT) and be rewarded or to turn their backs and be punished:

قُلْ لِلْمُخَلَّفِينَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ سِتْرٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ إِلَى قَوْمِهِمْ أَوْ إِلَى بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ تُقَاتِلُونَهُمْ أَوْ يُسَلِّمُونَ فَإِن تَطِيعُوا ۗ يُؤْتِكُمُ اللَّهُ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا ۗ كَمَا تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِّن قَبْلُ يُعَذِّبِكُمُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا

Say to the Bedouins who were left behind: 'You shall be called against a people possessed of great might' to fight them, or they surrender. If you obey, God will give you a goodly wage; but if you turn your backs, as you turned your backs before, He will chastise you with a painful chastisement.' (Holy Qur'an, 48: 16).

The reality of "Ta'arrub" is the opposite of migration. "Ta'arrub is to regress in your pursuit of perfection, while migration is to progress towards that goal. Ta'arrub is to remain in the desert of ignorance, rather than move towards the city of knowledge. It is contentment with what

you have in this world, without considering what you will be missing in the hereafter.

There are many narrations from the Ahlul Bayt which point to the need to progress and not regress.

Jaaber Al Jaafy is said to have heard Imam As Sadiq ('a) say: I heard Imam Baqir ('a) say: "I love to continue doing good actions until it becomes habitual. And if it was missed at night it would be made up for during the day, and if it was missed in the day it would be made up for at night. Verily, the most loved of actions to Allah (SwT) are those that are done consistently, for deeds are presented every Thursday and the beginning of each month, and the deeds of the year are presented in the middle of the Month of Sha'baan. So, if you become accustomed to a good action, continue to do it for a year.⁸"

Imam Al-Kadhimi ('a) is said to have said the following:

ليس منا من لم يحاسب نفسه في كل يوم فإن عمل حسنا استزاد الله وإن عمل سيئا استغفر الله منه وتاب إليه

Not from us is the one that does not take account of their actions every day, and if they have done good they seek more of the same from Allah (SwT), and if they have done evil they seek forgiveness from Allah (SwT) and repent back to Him⁹.

There are many other narrations pointing to the need to continuously progress and move forward and not regress in development.

The opposite of this becomes ta'arrub.

It is obligatory upon a person to gain religious knowledge. Some of the great scholars have considered abandoning the pursuit of religious knowledge after spending time pursuing it, to be a form of Ta'arrub.

Sayyid Sistani in his first chapter of "Minhaj Al-Saliheen", states:

It is obligatory to learn the jurisprudential issues that one encounters regularly, such as that of doubts and oversight in prayers, so that when one faces a situation in which there is an obligation upon them, they are aware of their obligations at the time in which they face it¹⁰.

From this, we can infer that it is obligatory upon a Muslim to learn about the issue of Hijra and Ta'arrub, and to understand their obligation to remain in, or move from, a particular place – depending on their circumstances.

Furthermore, if their obligation is to move, they must be knowledgeable about where they should be moving to.

These circumstances are dynamic in nature and change with time. A good and correct decision at one point in time is not necessarily the right decision for eternity – because times change, and choices need to be made according to the circumstances and opportunities of that particular time.

1. Al-Qamoos Al-Muheet القاموس المحيط

2. 'At-Ta'arrub Badul Hijra – Series 14 for the Series of Repentance Week'.

3. 'At-Ta'arrub Badul Hijra – Series 14 for the Series of Repentance Week'.

4. Reyshahri, Mizan Al-Hikmah. Vol. 5 p. 373.

5. Shirazi, Al-Amthal Fi Tafseer Kitab Allah Al-Munzal. Vol. 5 p. 321.

6. Shirazi, Al-Amthal Fi Tafseer Kitab Allah Al-Munzal. Vol. 5 p. 331.

7. Shirazi, Al-Amthal Fi Tafseer Kitab Allah Al-Munzal. Vol. 5 p. 331.

8. Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar. Vol. 84 p. 37.

9. al-Kulayni, Kitab Al-Kafi. Vol. 2 p. 453.

10. Sayyid Sistani, Minhaj Al-Saliheen. Vol 1. P. 10.

Chapter 3: The Holy Qur'an

Based on what has been discussed so far, we can conclude that a Muslim who prevents himself from gaining awareness of religious duties and distances himself from Islamic society, is – within the context portrayed in the Holy Qur'an – a “mutaarib” – or a Bedouin. That vilification which is found in the Holy Qur'an targets such people even though they live within towns and cities [and not in deserts]¹.

3.1: Was not God's earth wide enough?

It is noted in history that a group of people from the Muslim community, among whom were Qais bin Al-Kaffa and Qias bin Al-Waleed, did not migrate from Mecca to Medina even though they were able to do so. These so-called Muslims, who apparently declared their submission to Islam, disobeyed the order of the prophet (S) and chose to remain in Mecca due to their love and attachment to their land and wealth. Those “Muslims”, when it came to the battle of Badr, had to fight alongside the Quraish against the Prophet. This is because anyone who refused to do so was threatened by the leaders of Quraish with the destruction of their home and confiscation of their wealth.

The battle saw what is commonly narrated as being 313 Muslim fighters face 1000 or so fighters from the enemy side. Yet they appeared to their eyes to be twice that number and so doubt entered the hearts of the enemies and they were killed by the swords of the Muslims while fighting for the disbelievers. The following Verses were revealed concerning them²:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْنَاهُمُ الظَّالِمِينَ أَنفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا ۖ فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ قَالُوا ۖ كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا ۖ أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضًا
اللَّهِ وَسِعَةً فَذُفِّرُوا ۖ فِيهَا فَاؤْتِكُمْ مَا وَبَّهْتُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا

And those the angels take, while still they are wronging themselves -- the angels will say, 'In what circumstances were you?' They will say, 'We were abased in the earth.' The angels will say, 'But was not God's earth wide, so that you might have emigrated in it?' Such men, their refuge shall be Gehenna -- an evil homecoming! (Holy Qur'an, 4:97).

Sayyid Tabatabai mentions Verse 16:28 alongside the aforementioned Verse in his exegesis Tafsir Al-Mizan³:

الَّذِينَ تَتَوَفَّيْنَاهُمُ الظَّالِمِينَ أَنفُسِهِمْ فَأَلْقَوْا ۖ أَلْسَلَمَ مَا كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ مِنْ سُوءٍ ۖ بَلَىٰ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ ۖ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

Those whom the angels take while still they are wronging themselves. ' Then they will offer surrender: 'We were doing nothing evil. 'Nay; but surety God has knowledge of the things you did. (Holy Qur'an, 16:28).

Sayyid Tabatabai explains that the meaning of “wronging themselves”, is, as reinforced by 4:97, deviating from the religion of Allah (SwT), and leaving Islamic rituals because of being amongst non-believers. Living in such an environment where the strength is with the non-religious, and the believers are the weaker population, results in one being unable to seek guidance or perform one’s religious obligations. They will be asked: 'In what circumstances were you?' And they will answer, '***We were abased in the earth. ' (4:97).***

Sayyid Tabatabai then goes on to say that the rebuke by the Angels – “But was not God's earth wide, so that you might have emigrated in it?” belies the response of those people in question, those who claim to have not been able to perform their duties or learn their religion. For, unless the entire world was commanded by polytheists and non-believers, they should have been able to migrate. But they chose not to. They chose to stay. And an ill choice it was.

For further discussion on the meaning of “abased” (المستضعف), readers may refer to the exegesis of this verse in Tafsir Al-Mizan⁴.

The following is another verse where the vastness of the world is mentioned:

قُلْ يٰۤاٰمِنُوۡا ؕ اٰتَّقُوۡا ؕ رَبَّكُمۡ لِلَّذِيۡنَ اٰحْسَنُوۡا ؕۙ فِىۡ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ وَّاَرْضُ اللّٰهِ وٰسِعَةٌ اِنَّمَا يُوۡفَى الصّٰبِرُوۡنَ اٰجْرَهُمۡ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

Say: 'My servants who believe, fear your Lord. For those who do good in this world good, and God's earth is wide. Surely the patient will be paid their wages in full without reckoning. ' (Holy Qur'an 39: 10).

In this verse, after commanding that a believer must have “taqwa” of the Lord (SwT), and promising the reward of pious deeds in this world, it is stated that the earth Allah (SwT) has created is indeed wide!

According to Sheikh Naser Makarem Shirazi in his Exegesis Al-Amthal⁵, this portion of the verse is a response to those who claim weakness and find excuses, and say that they are unable to perform their duties because of the environment and government where they live.

In this verse, those who lived in Mecca under the governorship of the polytheists are told that if Mecca is not suitable for their faith, they should migrate to Medina. Indeed, not only Medina, but the entire earth is available for them to find a place to live where they can practice their obligations.

Sheikh Makarem Shirazi then states that one must migrate in order to be able to practice one’s faith, and

one must also migrate in order to be able to spread the faith.

With regards to 4:97, he emphasises that a believer who is capable of migrating in the way of Allah (SwT) – and does not – will in fact have no excuse when facing Allah (SwT) on the Day of Judgement⁶.

3.2: Migration is not easy

Towards the end of Verse 39: 10, there is an acknowledgement of the difficulty of migrating – ‘Surely the patient will be paid their wages in full without reckoning!’

Migrating is not an easy task. It takes a significant amount of psychological motivation and financial capability to successfully migrate from one land to another. Patience, perseverance and strong will are also essential.

When one decides to migrate to another country, especially from “western civilisation” to “eastern civilisation”, many friends and family members will likely exert their utmost effort to prevent the migrator from doing so. They will express huge concerns, present various statistics, and instil fear with regards to their children’s future, their own future, financial losses, the inability to return and many other such issues.

Despite all these concerns, the duty of the individual is to their own self and their own family:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ؕ قُوا ؕ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَاظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ

Believers, guard yourselves and your families against a Fire whose fuel is men and stones, and over which are harsh, terrible angels who disobey not God in what He commands them and do what they are commanded. (Holy Qur’an 66:6).

3.3: What of those who do not migrate?

As for those who believe, but have decided to remain behind, there is no obligation of “wilayah” to them – as described in the following Verse:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ؕ وَهَاجَرُوا ؕ وَجَاهَدُوا ؕ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ ءَاوُوا ؕ وَنَصَرُوا ؕ أُولَٰئِكَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ؕ وَلَمْ يَهَاجِرُوا ؕ مَا لَكُمْ مِنَ وَلِيَّتِهِم مِّن شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ يُهَاجِرُوا ؕ وَإِنِ اسْتَنْصَرُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ فَعَلَيْكُمُ النَّصْرُ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ ؕ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِّيثَاقٌ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

Those who believe, and have emigrated and struggled with their possessions and their selves in the way of God, and those who have given refuge and help -- those are friends one of another.

And those who believe, but have not emigrated -- you have no duty of friendship towards them till they emigrate; yet if they ask you for help, for religion's sake, it is your duty to help them, except against a people between whom and you there is a compact; and God sees the things you do. (Holy Qur'an, 8:72).

This verse and verse 75 of the same Surah describe the interactions between four groups of believers:

- a. Those who are believers and migrated [in this case from Mecca to Medina.]
- b. Those who are believers accepting those migrating to them [in this case dwellers of Yathrib].
- c. Those who believed but did not migrate [in this case remained in Mecca].
- d. And those who believed thereafter and migrated.

The first two groups have a loyalty towards each other and an obligation to each other. As for the third group, however, no loyalty or “wilayah” is prescribed towards them unless they migrate afterwards, or they need assistance when attacked. However, if attacked by an enemy that the migrators have a contract with – the contract takes priority!![7](#)

The fourth group is referred to in Verse 75:

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ۚ وَهَاجَرُوا ۚ وَجَاهَدُوا ۚ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ ءَاوُوا ۚ وَنَصَرُوا ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَّهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ
وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

And those who have believed afterwards and emigrated, and struggled with you -- they belong to you; but those related by blood are nearer to one another in the Book of God; surely God has knowledge of everything. (Holy Qur'an, 8:75).

Admittedly, those who were the first to migrate have a unique status with Allah. However, those who embraced Islam later on and migrated and struggled for the cause, are considered to be part of the same group⁸.

3.4: Is Migration Obligatory?

The jurists have used the following verses to deduce that migration is obligatory⁹:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْتُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ ظَالِمِينَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا ۖ فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ قَالُوا ۖ كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا ۖ أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَسِعَةً فَتُهَاجِرُوا ۖ فِيهَا فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا

And those the angels take, while still they are wronging themselves -- the angels will say, 'In what circumstances were you?' They will say, 'We were abased in the earth.' The angels will say, 'But was not God's earth wide, so that you might have emigrated in it?' Such men, their refuge shall be Gehenna -- an evil homecoming! (Holy Qur'an, 4:97).

إِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا

Except the men, women, and children who, being abased, can devise nothing and are not guided to a way (Holy Qur'an, 4:98).

These verses have already been mentioned and discussed.

Another verse which has been used to prove that migration is obligatory, is found in Chapter 29:

يَعْبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ۖ إِنَّ أَرْضِي وَسِعَةٌ فَإِيَّيَ فَاعْبُدُونِ

O My servants who believe, surely My earth is wide; therefore, Me do you serve! (Holy Qur'an, 29:56).

This verse follows verses that describe the challenges and pressures of living as a minority group of Muslims amongst non-believers. It does not only apply to the believers of Mecca, but is rather, a general statement to anyone who does not have the freedom of practicing their religion. To live in that place would be to live in humiliation, and “far from us are those who humiliate”¹⁰, and loss and adversity. In this way, migration to a place where there is freedom to practice one’s faith becomes a necessity¹¹.

After all, if the primary goal of mankind is worship¹², then what is the purpose of living if one cannot reach this goal? In order to fulfil one’s purpose, one must not be a slave of nationalism, or attachment to loved ones. These all have their rightful places and Islam has clear guidelines concerning them – but not at the expense of attaining the ultimate goal of worship and servitude to the All-Mighty (SwT). And in order to attain this, migration may be the only option¹³.

3.5: For those who fear migration

وَمَنْ يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَافًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكُهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

Whoso emigrates in the way of God will find in the earth many refuges and plenty; whoso goes forth from his house an emigrant to God and His Messenger, and then death overtakes him, his wage shall have fallen on God; surely God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate. (Holy Qur'an, 4: 100).

This Verse has already been discussed. Those who believe, and struggle, and migrate, will find plenty of opportunities if they look hard enough.

And:

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ قُتِلُوا أَوْ مَاتُوا لَيَرْزُقَنَّهُمُ اللَّهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ

And those who emigrated in God's way and were slain, or died, God shall provide them with a fair provision; and surely God is the best of providers. (Holy Qur'an, 22:58).

That is, to perish in the way of Allah (SwT) when migrating, be it by natural death or by being killed, is tantamount to becoming a martyr, being provided for with certainty a provision that is the best of provisions¹⁴.

And:

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَلَآجِرُ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

Those who migrate for the sake of Allah after they have been wronged, We will surely settle them in a good place in the world, and the reward of the Hereafter is surely greater, had they known (Holy Qur'an, 16:41).

الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

Those who are patient, and put their trust in their Lord. (Holy Qur'an, 16:42).

Migration in this Verse means to leave your homes and country and family to protect your religion from those who are oppressive¹⁵, and away from non-believers¹⁶ in the way of the Prophet (S) and in the

way of Allah (SwT).

The points that can be taken from these verses are as follows:

Firstly, those who migrate because they wish to spread the religion or because of the need to protect their own faith, will be rewarded.

Secondly, if one is unable to resist the oppression and pressures of the enemy governing the state, one must migrate.

Thirdly, migration, patience, and trust in Allah (SwT) are the three secrets of defeating the enemy; and it is only trust in Allah (SwT) which will lead to the ultimate victory.

And finally, the fourth point is that without this test of migration and all its difficulties, comfort and ease cannot be obtained, so instead of fear one must put full trust in Allah (SwT) [17](#).

[1](#). 'At-Ta'arrub Badul Hijra – Series 14 for the Series of Repentance Week'.

[2](#). Shirazi, Al-Amthal Fi Tafseer Kitab Allah Al-Munzal. Vol 3. P. 267.

[3](#). Allamah Tabataba'i, Tafsir Al-Mizan. Vol 5. P. 50.

[4](#). Allamah Tabataba'i, Tafsir Al-Mizan. Vol 5. P. 53.

[5](#). Shirazi, Al-Amthal Fi Tafseer Kitab Allah Al-Munzal. Vol. 11 P. 377.

[6](#). Shirazi. Vol. 11 P. 478.

[7](#). Shirazi. Vol. 5 P. 127.

[8](#). Shirazi. Vol. 5. P. 127.

[9](#). 'At-Ta'arrub Badul Hijra – Series 14 for the Series of Repentance Week'.

[10](#). Far from us are those who humiliate – الذلة من هيات – Imam Husayn ('a).

[11](#). Shirazi, Al-Amthal Fi Tafseer Kitab Allah Al-Munzal. Vol. 12 P. 438.

[12](#). See Verse 51:56 of the Holy Qur'an.

[13](#). Shirazi, Al-Amthal Fi Tafseer Kitab Allah Al-Munzal. Vol. 12 P. 438.

[14](#). Qara'ati, Tafsir Noor. Vol. 6 P. 62.

[15](#). Shaykh Tabarsi, Majma' al-Bayan Fi-Tafsir al-Qur'an. Vol. 6 P. 557.

[16](#). al Bahrani, Al-Burhan Fi Tafsir al-Qur'an. Vol. 3 P. 422.

[17](#). Qara'ati, Tafsir Noor. Vol. 4 P. 524.

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Chapter 4: Narrations on Migration

There are also many narrations that discuss "Hijra" and the prohibition of "Ta'arrub". A few will be discussed here.

4.1: Even a hand span of land

It has been narrated that the Prophet (S) has said:

من فر بدينه من أرض إلى أرض وإن كان شبراً من الأرض، استوجب الجنة وكان رفيق إبراهيم ومحمد) عليهما السلام

Whomever takes flight with their religion from one land to another land, even if it be a hand span of land, Heaven is obligated for them and is a friend of Ibrahim and Muhammad Peace Be Upon Them¹.

4.2: Death during migration

It is narrated from A'krama that there was a group of Muslims in Mecca who were unable to migrate, and when the verses relating to migration were sent down, a man in Mecca called Jundu' bin Dhamarra heard it and said, "By God, I'm not of those God has made an exception for, for I shall find strength and I know the way." Although seriously ill, he said to his children, "By God, I will not stay overnight till I leave Mecca, for I fear that I will die in it." So they left, carrying him on his bed until the signs of death appeared to overwhelm him. He placed his right hand upon his left and said, "Oh Lord – this is for you and this is for your Prophet (S), I pay allegiance to you upon what he paid allegiance to you." Upon saying this, he passed away.

When the news of this man's journey and death reached Medina, some people said that if only he had reached Medina he would have earned the reward of migration!

In response, the following verse was revealed²:

وَمَنْ يَهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَافِعًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكُهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

Whoso emigrates in the way of God will find in the earth many refuges and plenty; whoso goes forth from his house an emigrant to God and His Messenger, and then death overtakes him, his wage shall have fallen on God; surely God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate. (Holy Qur'an, 4: 100).

4.3: Ignorance is not bliss

Although the belief that 'Ignorance is bliss' may be common to those living in the West, it is not the way of the Purified Household ('a). To turn away from knowledge in order to use ignorance as an excuse is not acceptable. For example, to say "Do not tell me about such and such a rule so I do not have to act

on it!", and then to be caught by law enforcement, the excuse of "Ignorance" will not be bliss in this court of law as it will not have any grounds for defence.

Imam As-Sadiq ('a) is narrated to have said:

Learn your religion, for the one from among you who does not is an "Aarabi", for Allah (SwT) says in His Holy Book:

لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا ۚ فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا ۚ قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا ۚ إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ

"To become learned in religion, and to warn their people when they return to them, that haply they may beware?" (Holy Qur'an, 9: 122).[3](#)

Imam As-Sadiq ('a) is also narrated to have said to his companions:

Obligated upon you is the learning of the religion of Allah (SwT), do not become "Aa'rab", for the one who does not become learned in the religion of Allah (SwT), Allah (SwT) will not look upon him on the Day of Resurrection and nor will their deeds be of any benefit⁴.

4.4: A Greater Sin

The narrations that forbid returning to a state of "Ta'arrub" after "Hijra" are numerous⁵. In the following narration, it is considered to be one of the Greater Sins.

Based on the narration from Muhammad bin Muslim from Abi Abd Allah (SwT)⁶ ('a):

الكبائر سبع: قتل المؤمن متعمدا وقذف المحصنة، والفرار من الزحف، والتعرب بعد الهجرة، وأكل مال اليتيم ظلما، وأكل الربا بعد البيئة وكل ما أوجب الله عليه النار

The Greater Sins are seven:

1. The intentional killing of a believer
2. Accusing a believing woman who is not an adulterer, to be one.
3. To turn your back in escape from enemy army on the battlefield.

4. At-Ta'arrub after Hijra.
5. Oppressively consuming the wealth of the orphan.
6. Consuming usury after it was forbidden.
7. And everything that Allah (SwT) obligated the punishment of Hellfire to.

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- [1.](#) Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar. Vol. 19 P. 31, and Reyshahri, Mizan Al-Hikmah. Vol. 4 P. 3431.
 - [2.](#) Allamahh Tabataba'i, Tafsir Al-Mizan. Vol. 5 P. 56.
 - [3.](#) al-Kulayni, Kitab Al-Kafi. Vol. 1 P. 31.
 - [4.](#) al-Kulayni. Vol. 1 P. 31.
 - [5.](#) Reaching the level of certainty in its authenticity – "Al Tawatur."
 - [6.](#) al-Kulayni, Kitab Al-Kafi. Vol. 2 P. 277.

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Chapter 5: Commentary by Scholars

We will now examine what our scholars have said regarding migration:

5.1: Sheikh Al-Tusi

Sheikh Al-Tusi [d. 1067] says in his book Al-Mabsoot there are three categories of people with regards to Migration:

1. Those who are recommended but not obligated to migrate.
2. Those who are not recommended nor obligated to migrate.

3. Those who are obligated to migrate.

The first group consists of those who became Muslim from amongst a nation of polytheists, but are protected by their family and clan. They are able to practice their faith openly, and are also able to migrate and propagate the religion of Islam. Al-Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib, a paternal uncle and companion of the Prophet (S), is an example of such a person.

The second group consists of those who are unable to practice their religion freely and as they should but are weak and unable to migrate due to financial, political, or even

psychological reasons, and so should build themselves until they can.

And finally, the third consists of those who are not certain of being able to protect their religion whilst among non-believers, and are able to migrate.

Sheikh Al-Tusi then mentions verses 4:97-99¹.

5.2: Allamah Al-Hilli

Allamah Al-Hilli [d. 1325] in his book, Al-Muntaha, also divides people into three categories regarding migration:

Those who are obligated to migrate. Specifically, Muslims in a non-Islamic nation who are weak amongst them and not able to show their religion. Additionally, they have no excuse to remain such as disease or the like. Allamah also mentions Verse 4:97 here.

Those who are recommended but not obligated to migrate. This refers to those who have become Muslim in a polytheistic nation but have family that will protect them; thus, they are able to practice freely, and are sure of protecting their faith.

Those who are not recommended nor obligated to migrate from polytheistic nations. These are those who are not able to migrate due to the enemy preventing them from doing so, an illness or the like².

5.3: Allamah Muhammad Baqir Al-Majlisi

Allamah Al-Majlisi [d. 1699], in Bihar Al-Anwar, has quoted a narration from Imam Ali ('a) in which he says:

سنة لا ينبغي أن يؤموا الناس: ولد الزنا، والمرتد، والأعرابي بعد الهجرة، وشارب الخمر، والمحدود، والأغلف

“There are six people who cannot be the Imam of congregational prayers: the one born of adultery, the apostate, the “aa’raabi” after migration, the consumer of intoxicating alcohol, those convicted of transgressing the boundaries, and the uncircumcised.”

Al-Majlisi then comments on this issue, saying, “...At-Ta’arrub after migration is of the Greater Sins as noted in multiple narrations...”; however, he concludes that the definition of it in the modern age is difficult to ascertain^{3,4}. In an earlier volume, Allamah Al-Majlisi has stated in a footnote that, “In our current time, it [At-Ta’arrub] is when one that pursues knowledge then leaves it, becoming a foreigner to it”⁵.

5.4: Muhammad Hasan al-Najafi

Muhammad Hasan al-Najafi [d. 1849], known as the author of Al-Jawahir, has said, “it becomes obligatory to migrate from a nation of polytheism on those who are weak to the point that they are unable to show their Islamic rituals such as the call to prayer, the prayer itself, fasting and suchlike. They are called rituals because they are signs upon the individual, or like a symbol that is a clothing upon the body, borrowed from the regulations relating to the religion”⁶.

5.5: Sayyid Muhsin Al-Hakim Al-Tabataba'i

Sayyid Muhsin Al-Hakim Al-Tabataba'i [d. 1970] says, “Al-Aarabi, even if it may be explained as the one who lives in the deserts, except that it actually means the one that takes up their religious behaviours based on leniency, even if it is not that sins are being committed.”⁷

5.6: Sayyid Abu al-Qasim Khoei

Sayyid Al-Khoei [d. 1992] explains, “At-Ta’arrub after Hijra” is to leave the Islamic lands after migrating to them and move back to polytheistic nations.⁸

He mentions two reliable narrations concerning the aa’rabi. In the first, the trustworthy Zurarah has quoted from Imam Baqir (‘a) that Imam Ali (‘a) has said, “...the aa’rabi should not lead the migrators in prayers...⁹”. And in the second, the trustworthy Abi Baseer narrates from the Imams, “Five groups of people are not to lead people in congregation in all cases, and this includes the “aa’rabi”^{10, 11} Sayyid Al-Khoei concludes from this second hadith that the aa’rabi are not only prohibited from leading the prayers of the migrators, as mentioned in the first hadith, but of everyone in general.

5.7: Sayyid Muhammad Hosayn Hosayni Tehrani

Sayyid Muhammad Hosayn Hosayni Tehrani [d. 1995], otherwise known as Allamah Tehrani, has written, “Ma’rifat Al-me’aad”¹², or “Eschatology” – the part of theology that discusses death and the journey of the soul thereafter. In Volume 2 of this book, while discussing specific verses of Surah Al-

Nissa, and the meaning of the term, “Al-Mustadhafeen” (المستضعفين) in the Holy Qur’an, he touches on this issue:

إِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا

Except the men, women, and children who, being abased, can devise nothing and are not guided to a way (Holy Qur’an, 4:98).

فَأُو۟لَٰئِكَ عَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَن يَعْفُوَ عَنْهُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَافِيًا غَفُورًا

Haply them God will yet pardon, for God is All-pardoning, All-forgiving. (Holy Qur’an, 4:99).

Allamah Tehrani the term “Al-Mustadhafeen”, translated as, “abased”:

, “...the “abased” are those who truly do not have real intellectual power; they are unable to be guided or are unable to escape the control of their father and mother. They are unable to learn without a teacher, and unable to oppose their surrounding environment and the current state of affairs. Or they are those women and children who submit to the control of their husbands and fathers and those who teach them whatever it is they may want to teach them – directing them however they please. They have no intellect, nor any knowledge, so that they may be able to differentiate between wrong and right, and are unable to save themselves from wrongful imitation because they cannot comprehend the possibility of error so that they may be able to correct their ways.”

“Some claim to be of the abased people according to the logic of the Holy Qur’an, so that hopefully Allah (SwT) forgives them and forgoes their sins that do not conflict with intellect or oppress the rights of others and betray them.”

“The abased are those who do not own the ability to identify the rightful religion, whom benefit nothing, nor do they benefit from studying truthful books, just as they do not meet with real scholars and mystics who have a clear, vigilant conscience who truly stay away from their whims and desires....”

“However those who own that ability and willingness to obtain knowledge of the Straight Path and to meet those scholars and divine teachers, and have the ability to research and comprehend the Holy Qur’an and the traditions of the Prophet ﷺ and the Imams (‘a), who are able to escape the obedience and submission to the oppressors of their time, and able to break the blind following of others while learning from and imitating divine and righteous scholars, except they have instead been distanced from the world of spirituality by their desires, neglect and confused desires and material wants – taking them to the path of misguidance.”

“So they are not of the abased, but rather, they are from the oppressors and of the people of Hell. They

will be taken and punished for their false beliefs, their vice attributes, and their oppressive actions that are not accepted. The angels will never accept any excuse as to not to seize their souls no matter how hard they try to describe themselves as those people who are abased. They will escort them to Hell in groups.”

Allamah Tehrani then quotes the subsequent verse of the same Surah, saying that it removes their excuses:

وَمَنْ يَهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَاعِمًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكُهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

Whoso emigrates in the way of God will find in the earth many refuges and plenty; whoso goes forth from his house an emigrant to God and His Messenger, and then death overtakes him, his wage shall have fallen on God; surely God is All-forgiving, All-compassionate. (Holy Qur'an, 4: 100).

Allamah Tehrani explains that this verse is “...so that there is no one that can say “But I cannot migrate because I was born and raised there, or that there is where my people and family and friends and work and house and garden and business and farm and wife and children and the rest of my life are. So, my life is settled there.”

Whereas this place referred to as “there” is where evil and vile acts are committed, malicious propaganda is spread, oppressive and unfair laws are enforced and seen as a necessary law, and the individual then says “the matter is outside of my control and I am not responsible for not having Divine laws enforced.”

“This logic is a fallacy because a person who is committed and who accepts responsibility, who is aware and conscious, who sees happiness in the perfection of the soul and the ascension to the highest levels of humanity, is obligated to withstand the problems and difficulties that are met at the start of the path that is well established and [armed with] the will power that is not shaky. They must choose an appropriate place for themselves to secure the journey of the soul, to reach spiritual perfection, to protect and guard themselves and their relations and children from corruption and from getting lost; and finally, to not be concerned about the fear and apprehension that may stand in the way and prevent one from reaching the intended destination.”

“And if a resolve such as this [i.e. to migrate] inside one is determined, certainly, Allah (SwT) will guide them to places that will suit them and will save them from their waver. And if we were to assume that they do not make it to their goal, they will suffice to have left their home migrating towards Allah (SwT), and that they have taken the steps to be striving on the path and direction of learning....”

5.8: Sayyid Mohammed Saeed Al-Hakeem

Sayyid Al-Hakeem is a contemporary marja' and one of the most senior jurists of Najaf, Iraq. In the English section of his official website, he answers a question pertaining to migration which was asked by someone who converted to Islam in a non-Muslim country:

Question: Many Sunni scholars insist that hijra – immigration is a necessity. I am a convert born in a non-Muslim country, and if I were to leave, it would most probably entail losing custody of my children. What is the Shia opinion of hijra?

Answer: It is not mandatory to immigrate to Islamic countries. A Muslim must live in any place where he/she can observe the religion to find happiness in this life and the hereafter. There might be a non-Islamic country with more suitable circumstances for Muslims to guard their religion than in an Islamic one¹³.

In the Arabic section of the same website, the following question is answered:

Question: What is the meaning of the term “At-Ta’arrub after migration” that has come in narrations listing Greater Sins?

Answer: The meaning of this term is to travel to a country in which a Muslim cannot protect their religion or is unable to perform what is obligated upon them Islamically in that country¹⁴.

5.9: Sheikh Baqir Al-Irawani

Sheikh Baqir Al-Irawani was once asked about the issue of migration by a student of the seminary. It was May 23rd, 2019, at a lecture following the noon prayers in Husayniah Al-Najjafia, Qom.

The student explained that his parents had moved to a Western, non-Islamic society many years ago, and he himself was now living and studying in Qom. His parents, although not specifically ordering him to return, were clearly unhappy about him being distant from them. The student feared that if he was to return, his faith and that of his children would be in jeopardy.

Sheikh Al-Irawani smiled and commented that the student should be thankful they had not ordered him to return, and that Allah (SwT) had in this way made the situation easier. He then asked for confirmation of the student’s fear about returning to a non-Islamic country, and the student confirmed his previous statements.

The Sheikh then advised the student to explain to his parents that he wished to not return in order to protect his faith, as “coming back” would put that at risk.

The student asked, “So should I say to them that I am not returning?”

Sheikh Al-Irawani warned him not to hurt his parents in any way, for that would be grievous. He suggested the following two options: Firstly, he could tell them that he does not intend to return, and explain the reasons behind his decision. This might put them at ease instead of continuously awaiting his return. On the other hand, if this would hurt them, he could suggest a future return with a “God-Willing...”.

5.10: Sheikh Farrokh Sekaleshfar

In a series of writings on his site entitled, “Shaping Muslim Identity in the West”, Sheikh Sekaleshfar, may his life be lengthened, makes various points in line with what has already been presented here, but adds some modern-day realities and a gnostic touch.

Before discussing the issue of migration itself, he discusses preliminary issues such as identity in the west, verses 4:97-100 of the Holy Qur’an, the term “mustad’af”, and also the choices we make under oppression.

With regards to identity in the west, he states, “identity is a function of your existence.” Sheikh Sekaleshfar continues by saying, “the identity we are referring to is not extrinsic to us, rather it is intrinsic. So, in short, whoever you are, wherever you are residing, your identity is the same i.e. manifesting or succeeding Allah’s divine perfect attributes

i.e. the attributes of pure existence.”

As for those who consider themselves to be mustad’af, he says:

“The Prophets’ call to humanity has been that of inviting them to submit to absolute perfection and to reject tyrants and despotic rule. The more your path towards perfection is barred, the less ‘free’ you are. Freedom is a function of your journeying towards perfection. Those who are shackled in captivity by their lust, whims, power, prejudice, wealth etc., have compromised their freedom, have compromised their journey to perfection and thus have compromised their identity.

“They choose to be a mustad’af – and that is not allowed.

“We are not allowed to assign ourselves as the suppressed!”

Sheikh Sekaleshfar then goes on to discuss the term mustad’af as it appears in Surah Al-Nissa:

“The mustad’af is one whose journey to perfection and whose objective and goal to be Allah-like has been compromised. Their freedom has been hampered either out of their own doing or others’. Such a state should not

continue. A people may temporarily experience and live under circumstances whereby they qualify as a mustad’af [suppressed], they must however not tolerate such a status quo and they must not integrate

into such a status quo and should therefore retaliate and minimize and endeavour in overcoming such a suppressed situation.

“Not doing so is tantamount to giving the green light to shame and self-abasement.

“Some people may have the highest of socio-economic statuses, highest of academia-related certificates and even the highest of seminary qualifications, but as a result of optionally living under a status quo whereby their journey to become Allah’s ‘caliphate’ is barred, they are in reality poor, ignorant and suppressed unless they either endeavour towards correcting the ambiance or in the very least, leave.

“Yes, they must – a spiritual must I must add – leave and migrate elsewhere where they can more comfortably reach one’s objective and exit the folds of being a mustad’af. Either endeavour or migrate. But never be comfortable with being a mustad’af.

“In the Holy Qur’an, 4:97, explicit reference is made to one of the questions angels are to ask many of us. In the ahadith, examples of questions that are to be asked are abundantly mentioned such as “Who is your Lord?”, “What is your Book?” and “Who is your Prophet?” – and we accept this.

“However, in 4:97, a question is referred to which in and of itself embraces all the hadith questions. Deliberate carefully!

“When the angels see the poor spiritual status of the person [applies to humans – Muslim or non-Muslim] and see that the person was drowned in wrong-doing, they ask the person: “In what condition were you in?” Why have you abased and shamed yourself spiritually? Didn’t you have a warner? Why did you make yourself susceptible to all this? Its game over now! No returning back! Why did you do this to yourself?

“Then, in 4:97, the poor person’s reply comes: “We were of the suppressed ones in the land!” Yes, the reason why their resurrection in the Hereafter is so unhuman and as a result of not attaining to perfection and not incorporating divine attributes, they are resurrected as apes, pigs, snakes, predators and the like, due to their integration into a capitalist, socialist, fascist, tyrannical, liberal or anarchical state that had hampered their progress towards perfection and they were okay with it!

“Then the angels exclaim, “Wasn’t Allah’s earth spacious for you to migrate therein?” The verse then ends stating that such people’s refuge is Hell and what an evil destination it is to be.

“It’s only when you have correctly endeavoured in not being suppressed [a mustad’af] will you be able to truly reply to questions such as who is your Lord, who is your prophet..”

Sheikh Sekaleshfar’s writings delve further into our responsibilities in situations where tyranny, or taghut, is being enforced. Citing the obligation, “reject all forms of taghut [16:36]. The taghut is that which hampers you from incorporating Allah’s attributes.

“Be it a government, a lifestyle, an ideology etc... we are not allowed to allow the many forms of taghut that exist to permeate and diffuse into our lives. Hence, the prescription from Imam Sadiq [peace be upon him] guiding us not to eat, clothe or walk like those who are the enemy, who assign lifestyles and systems whereby Man is inhibited in progressing towards perfection.

“An Islamic lifestyle dictates one to eat, walk and clothe etc. in a particular manner because that manner is on a par with one’s journey to perfection.”

Sheikh Sekaleshfar then makes a relationship between the terms “mustad’af” and “taghut”... where one, being the oppressed, makes a choice to favour the comforts of this world and reaches out for an excuse to remain in a status quo, yet under the protection of the oppressor:

“So imagine one lives comfortably – without endeavouring to compensate – under such forms of taghut and intentionally assign themselves as mustad’af and suppressed, not only have they ruined and wasted themselves, but they have added and participated and propagated and enhanced the taghuti system and they will be resurrected with such a system in the Hereafter.”

After addressing all these preliminary issues, Sheikh Sekaleshfar moves on to the main topic of Migration. He says, “We must migrate from such places wherein we are being suppressed”; and he endorses migration as “the first course of action for the common lay Muslim based on the explicit dictates of the Qur’an.”

He continues, “Assuming we cannot and must stay in such a land out of necessity, then we must endeavour and compensate for the ills that we are drowned in; we must compensate for the fact that we – as Muslims – are being resurrected as Jews and Christians. In 5:51, Allah says:

“O you who have believed, do not take Jews and Christians as guardians. They are guardians of one another. And whoever amongst you who takes them as a guardian, then verily they are one of them. Verily Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people” (5:51).

The operative clause being, “they are one of them”, meaning, in esoteric terms, they will be resurrected as a Jew or Christian.

This type of terminology is observed abundantly in the traditions of Ahl al-Bayt in relation to many rituals whereby, were they to be missed intentionally, one would be

resurrected as a Jew or Christian etc. This is the risk we are facing.”

Sheikh Sekaleshfar’s view of Muslims living in areas where they are not free to pursue their ultimate goal of perfection is as follows:

“However, blindness has struck most Muslims and the worldly life has diffused into their souls. How is it

that we go to the doctors when a simple common cold arises within us but are not willing to cure ourselves from the fire within.

Answer: it is merely out of our blindness and lack of faith in the unseen. The problem is we have not merited the label and the addressed form of “O you who have believed!” It is a serious concern. We have to plan!”

In a later post, he continues to describe these Muslims:

“They may assign themselves with pride for attending and going to the Mosque, local centre, community programs etc., but it’s a deception within an abode of deception. A mirage they are comfortably hypnotised with. A deep sleep they have sedated themselves with. What a state to be in!? They are submitting to Hell and turning a blind eye to it!

“Even if you have a nation whose rules and regulations are all Islamic but its head of state is non-Muslim, this would be substantially worse than living in a state ran by a just, competent mujtahid EVEN IF the rules and regulations are not entirely Islamic. After all, the former would not hold the

best interests of Islam; may bomb and murder our brothers and sisters in Yemen, Palestine, Iraq, Kashmir etc. We are not allowed to be led by such a leader.

Sheikh Sekaleshfar addresses this same issue in the very early part of his writings where he raises concerns over “communities/centres who decide to thrive “minus clerical supervision”?” calling it an “illness” [forgive the expression]” and is grieved by youth “beginning to have faith in an “Islam minus clerics” system! They manage things themselves and they learn a religious worldview from non-clerical speakers from different academic backgrounds.”

Interestingly, Sheikh Sekaleshfar also provides a direct answer to the very common question of “where” to migrate to. While this must be investigated according to individual circumstances, it would be appropriate to include these statements here also. He says,

“Until 40 years ago, we may not have been able to identify such a nation which is based on an Islamic constitution on a par with the teachings of the Holy Prophet.

Today however we have the Islamic Republic of Iran, whose constitution – give or take a few articles – are on the whole theoretically based on Islam.”

He then discusses the shortfalls of the government in the Islamic Republic of Iran, but ultimately “the fact that a just,

pious mujtahid is ruling as the guardian is sufficient” [reason to move].

Further commentary is given on the roles and duties of both the migrant and the government, and the

benefits to both in allowing such form of migration, confessing it is a “a heavy responsibility” upon the government.

Sheikh Sekaleshfar has the following message for those who migrated with their families years ago or were born to migrant families in the West:

“Our fathers and forefathers may have migrated to the land of kufr generations ago for materialistic reasons, but we are independent today and have to make our own choice, as individuals and communities.

We do not have to give in into thinking that we must remain under non-Islamic guardianship. Once upon a time, a race of people pertaining to the Hindu religion decided to embrace a denomination of Islam and withstood the Hindu authorities and were ready to flee and assigned a holy destiny for themselves [i.e. exiting the folds of being a mustad’af] and fled their hometowns and gave many martyrs in the process. This is very noble. Then they moved into a country not willing to channelize their wealth, knowledge and power to that country’s despotic regime. They were forced to flee again. Migration after migration.”

This last sentence, migration after migration, is an important one to consider. It opens up the opportunity to further discuss verses concerning migration such as 2:218, 4: 100, 8:72, 22:58, 9:20, 59:8, and 24:22 with the viewpoint that migration is not necessarily a one-time event.

The migration of parents or ancestors may have been appropriate for whatever reason at their time, but for those who have inherited the actions of their predecessors, a further migration may be necessary. Furthermore, a migration by one individual at a particular point in time does not rule out the possibility of another migration in the near future.

In fact – Migration is Islam. Starting from the spiritual level and ending in a spiritual level with what is in between includes the physical, geographical location also.

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1. Sheikh Al-Tusi, Al-Mabsoot. Vol. 2 P. 4.
 2. Allamah al-Hilli, Muntaha Al-Matlab, P. 898.
 3. Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar. Vol. 85 P. 60.
 4. Syed Khoei considers this to be a weak narration, but another two as correct. See Syed Khoei’s commentary.
 5. Al-Majlisi, Bihar Al-Anwar. Vol. 75 P. 267.
 6. al-Najafi, Jawahir Al-Kalam. Vol. 21 P. 34.
 7. Sayyid Al-Hakim, Mustamsak Al Urwat Al Withqa. Vol. 7 P. 331.
 8. Sayyid Khoei, Mustanad Al Urwat Al Withqa.– Kitab Al-Salat Vol 5 Part 2 P. 433.
 9. Shaykh al-Amili, Wasa’il al-Shia. Vol. 8 P. 325.
 10. U.S. Site of Syed Al-Khoei, <https://www.al-khoei.us/books/?id=2577cited> [12] 28/03/2019.
 11. Shaykh al-Amili, Wasa’il al-Shia. Vol. 8 P. 325.
 12. Ma’rifat Al-me’aad, معرفة المعاد, Vol. 2, p. 18.
 13. Official site of Syed Al-Hakeem, <http://www.alhakeem.com/en/questions/674> [13], cited 28/03/2019.
 14. Official site of Syed Al-Hakeem,

[1] [1]

SHARES

Chapter 6: Commentary by Scholars – Sayyid Ali Al-Sistani

In the introduction of Sayyid Al-Sistani's book, "A Code of Practice for Muslims in the West", there is a detailed commentary on the issue of migration, along with a number of questions and answers. The English translation of this has been included here, with editing only to the extent of paragraph spacing and dividing the text in to subheadings.

6.1: Sayyid Sistani – A Code of Practice for Muslims in the West

Introduction

A Muslim who is born and raised in a Muslim country where he consciously and subconsciously absorbs the laws, values and teachings of Islam, grows up into a young person who is aware of the customs of his religion, following its path and is led by its guidance.

On the other hand, a Muslim who is born, and brought up in a non-Muslim country demonstrates the influence of that environment very clearly in his thoughts, ideas, behaviour, values, and etiquette unless his Lord helps him.

This un-Islamic influence is seen more in the second generation of those who have migrated to non-Muslim countries.

This was the reason for Islam's view on At-Ta'arrub ba'd al-hijra as reflected in many ahadith. At-Ta'arrub ba'd al-hijra means "becoming shorn of one's precepts of faith after migrating [to Medina]," and practically, it means leaving an environment where you could follow Islam and moving to a place where you may be prone to not following Islam.

A Major Sin

Such a migration is counted as one of the major sins. Abu Basir says that he heard Imam as-Sadiq ('a) saying: "The major sins are seven: killing a person intentionally; associating someone or something with

the Almighty Allah [shirk]; wrongfully accusing a married woman of adultery; knowingly dealing in usury; running away from the battle-field in jihad; At-Ta'arrub ba'd al-hijra; causing distress to one's parents [by encroaching on their rights]; and wrongfully acquiring the property of the orphan." Then he says, "At-Ta'arrub and shirk are one and the same [in severity].[1](#)"

Ibn Mahbûb narrates that some of our companions wrote through me a letter to Imam al-Hasan al-'Askari ('a) asking him concerning the major sins. He ('a) wrote: "The major sins are the ones for which Allah has threatened with the Hell-Fire; the one who refrains from them, He will forgive his sins if he is a believer. Those seven which cause [one to burn in Hell Fire] are: killing an innocent person; causing distress to one's parents [by not upholding their rights]; dabbling in usury; At-Ta'arrub ba'd al-hijra; wrongfully accusing a married woman of adultery; unlawfully confiscating the property of the orphan; and running away from the battle-field in jihad.[2](#)"

Muhammad bin Muslim narrates from Imam as-Sadiq ('a): "The major sins are seven; intentionally killing a believer; wrongfully accusing a married woman of adultery; running away from the battle-field in jihad; At-Ta'arrub ba'd al-hijra; unlawfully confiscating the property of the orphan; dabbling in usury; and every act for which [the punishment of] the Fire has been promised"[3](#).

'Ubaydullah bin Zurarah narrates that he asked Imam as-Sadiq ('a) about the major sins. The Imam said, "In the book of [Imam] 'Ali, they are seven: disbelieving in Allah; killing a person; causing distress to one's parents; dabbling in usury; unlawfully confiscating the property of the orphan; running away from the battle-field in jihad; and At-Ta'arrub ba'd al-hijra." Then he asked, "So these are the most major of sins?" The Imam replied, "Yes."[4](#)

Imam ar-Rida ('a) explained the prohibition of At-Ta'arrub ba'd al-hijra as follows: "Since there is the danger that because of At-Ta'arrub, he [the immigrant] might abandon [Islamic] knowledge, get involved with the ignorant people, and drift away"[5](#).

Rewards for going to non-Muslim Countries

This, however, does not mean that entering non-Muslim countries is always forbidden. Other ahadith have described for us the reward of one who visits non-Muslim lands, the reward that every Muslim longs for.

Hammad al-Sindi narrates that he asked Imam as-Sadiq ('a), "I visit the cities of polytheism [i.e., of the polytheists]; and there are some among us who say that 'if you die over there, you will be raised [in the Hereafter] along with them.'" The Imam asked me, "O Hammad, when you are over there do you talk about our affair [i.e., our truth] and call [people] to it?" I replied, "Yes." The Imam asked me, "When you are in these cities, the cities of Islam, do you talk about our affair and call [people] to it?" I replied, "No." The Imam said, "If you die over there [in the land of the non-Muslims], you will be raised as an ummah by yourself, and there will be light in front of you!"[6](#)

Jurisprudential Rulings

Based on these and other similar ahadith, and other religious proofs, the jurists [mujtahidin] have issued the following rulings:

Recommendation to travel to non-Muslim countries

It is recommended for a believer to travel to non-Muslim countries for the purpose of spreading the religion [of Islam] and its teachings, provided that he can safeguard himself and his young children against the dangers of loss of the faith.

The Prophet said to Imam 'Ali, "If Allah guides a person from among His servants through you, then that is better than everything between the east and the west on which the sun shines.⁷"

When asked by a person for a counsel, he said, "I advise you not to associate anything with Allah...and to call the people to Islam. You should know that [the reward] for you for each person who answers [your call] is [equal to] emancipating a slave from the children of [Prophet] Ya'qub.⁸"

No negative impact on faith

A believer is allowed to travel to non-Muslim countries provided that he is sure or has confidence that the journey would not have a negative impact on his faith and the faith of those who are related to him. Similarly, a believer is allowed to reside in non-Muslim countries provided that his residing there does not become a hurdle in the fulfilling his religious obligations towards himself and his family presently as well as in the future.

Prohibition to Travel to Non-Muslim Countries

It is haram to travel to non-Muslim countries in the East or the West if that journey causes loss of the faith of a Muslim, no matter whether the purpose of that journey is tourism, business, education, or residence of a temporary or permanent nature, etc.

Role of the wife

If the wife strongly feels or is sure that her travelling with the husband [to a non-Muslim country] will result in loss of faith, it is haram for her to travel with him.

Role of mature children

If the baligh⁹ boys or girls strongly feel that their journey [to the non-Muslim country] with their father or mother or friends will cause loss of faith, it is haram for them to travel with those people.

What is loss of faith?

What do the jurists mean when they speak of, "loss of faith"? It means either committing a forbidden act by indulging in minor or major sins like drinking intoxicant, adultery, eating forbidden meat, drinking najis [impure] drinks, etc. It also means abandoning the fulfilment of a compulsory act like neglecting salat, fasting, hajj and other obligations.

No choice?

If circumstances force a Muslim to migrate to a non-Muslim country with the knowledge that the migration will cause loss of faith [e.g., a person seeks political asylum in a non-Muslim country in order to save his life], it is permissible for him to make that journey to the extent that it saves his life, and not more than that.

Obligation to return

If an immigrant Muslim, residing in a non-Muslim country, knows that his stay in that country will lead to loss of his faith or of that of his children, it is wajib on him to return to one of the Muslim countries.

As mentioned above, this loss of faith is realized by neglecting the obligatory acts or by committing sins.

The obligation to return to a Muslim country applies only if it does not lead to death [for example, for a political opponent who has fled his own country], or to putting him in untenable situation or, to an emergency situation where religious obligations are suspended [e.g., the necessity of preserving life which allows a person to eat haram meat in order to prevent his own death from starvation].

Implications of forbidden journeys

If the journey is haram for a person, then his journey will be considered "a journey of sin;" and, in such cases, he loses the benefit of the concession of praying [qasr] in four-rak'at salat and also the benefit of not fasting during the month of Ramadhan.

As long as his journey maintains the status of "sin," he cannot benefit from such concessions provided by the shari'a for travellers.

A son is not allowed to disobey his parents when they forbid him from travelling, if their refusal to give permission is out of their concern for the son, or if his journey will cause distress to them because of his separation from them – provided that he does not suffer loss by not travelling.

Authorities in non-Muslim countries

It is permissible to approach the competent authorities [like police and the justice system in a non-Muslim country] for various important issues – like prevention of harm befalling the person, the honour

and the property of a Muslim—provided that it is the only way for exacting one's right and preventing injustice.

6.2: Sayyid Sistani – Questions and Answers

Question 1 – Definition

What is the meaning of At-Ta'arrub ba'd al-hijra which is one of the major sins?

Answer: Some jurists have said that during our time, it applies to residing in countries that may cause the loss of faith.

It means the migration of a person from a country – where it is possible for him to learn the obligatory religious teachings and laws, and where it is possible for him to fulfil his obligations and refrain from what is forbidden – to a country where this possibility does not exist fully or partially.

Question 2 – Environment

A believer residing in Europe, America and other similar countries feels estranged from the religious environment in which he was born and raised. Neither does he hear the voice of the Qur'an [recited from mosques] nor the sound of the adhan¹⁰ coming [from the minarets]; and there are no holy shrines, and their spiritual atmosphere, that he can visit. Is leaving such an Islamic environment of his country and its positive aspects considered "loss of faith"?

Answer: This is not the loss of faith that would make residing in a non-Muslim country haram for that person. However, staying away from such a religious environment may, with the passage of time, weaken the religious resolve of the immigrant to an extent that he may consider negligence of wajib deeds and committing of sins as insignificant. If a person has this fear that he might lose the faith in this manner, then it is not permissible for him to take residence in that country.

Question 3 – Temptations

Sometimes a Muslim residing in Europe and America [and other similar places] indulges in haram activities that he would not have done, if he remained in his Muslim country. The manifestations of temptation in non-Muslim societies may attract a Muslim to committing haram deeds even if he is not inclined towards them. Does this come under the banner of "loss of faith" that makes it haram for him to stay in that country?

Answer: Yes; unless the sins he sometimes indulges in, and without insisting upon them, they are of the minor category.

Question 4 – Vigilance

At-Ta'arrub ba'd al-hijra has been described as "migrating to a country in which the religious knowledge of the immigrant will decrease, thus becoming more alienated from his faith." Does this mean that a Muslim in such countries is duty bound to be extra vigilant lest he should become alienated from his faith?

Answer: The extra care becomes wajib when not being mindful leads to loss of faith as described earlier.

Question 5 – The Preacher

If a religious preacher who is mindful of his faith starts facing more situations where he commits haram deeds because of the social environment [e.g., nudity and indecent exposures], is it haram for him to stay in those countries; that is, should he stop propagation [tabligh] and return to his own country?

Answer: If he indulges in some minor sins occasionally, then it is not haram for him to stay in that country, provided that he is confident that he would not be tempted to commit more serious sins.

Question 6 – Children

If an immigrant fears the loss of faith for his children, is it haram for him to stay in that non-Muslim country?

Answer: Yes, the same rule applies to himself also.

Question 7 – Arabic

Is it wajib on the immigrants in Europe and America [and other similar countries] to strive for teaching their children Arabic, and that ignorance of Arabic may lead in the future to ignorance of the main Islamic body of knowledge, and that will naturally lead to less familiarity with religious teachings and loss of faith?

Answer: To teach them Arabic is wajib only to the extent which is necessary for performing their religious duties that have to be done in Arabic [e.g., recitation of the opening chapter of the Qur'an, a second chapter, and other wajib recitations in salat].

Teaching more than that is not wajib as long as it is possible to provide them with religious knowledge in a foreign language. Of course, it is recommended to teach them the holy Qur'an [in Arabic]; rather it is important to teach them Arabic in a precise form so that they may benefit from the basic sources of Islamic teachings, especially, and foremost among them, after the holy Qur'an, is the Prophetic sunna and the sayings of the Ahlul Bayt [peace be with them all].

Question 8 – Financial difficulty

If it is possible for a Muslim to reside in a Muslim country with some financial difficulty compared to his present situation, then is it wajib on him to travel to that Muslim country and leave his residence in Western countries?

Answer: It is not wajib [to leave the Western country] except if he has no confidence in himself, in that he may lose his faith –as explained earlier– while residing in the foreign country.

Question 9 – Propagation

If a person has the ability to propagate Islam to non-Muslims or to disseminate religious knowledge among Muslims in non-Muslim countries without any danger of losing his own faith, is it wajib on such a person to do propagation [tabligh]?

Answer: Yes, it is wajib kifa'i upon him and all the others who have the ability to propagate [Islam].

Question 10 – Fake Identity

Is it permissible for a person to buy a passport [i.e., to illegally obtain a passport] or change the picture in the passport so that he may be able to enter a country, and then he would let the immigration officials of that country know the truth about his identity?

Answer: We do not allow it.

Question 11 – Temptation and Propagation

Is it permissible for a person to reside in non-Muslim countries with all its temptations that confronts the person on the street, the school, the television and other media while he has the ability to migrate to a Muslim country although that transfer would cause difficulty in residence, loss of material wealth and comfort, and constrain the worldly aspects of his life? If it is not permissible to remain in such a country, would his efforts in propagation among the Muslims [reminding them of their obligations and encouraging them to refrain from haram] change the rule for him and allow him to remain in that country?

Answer: It is not haram to stay in that country, if it does not create hurdles for him and his family in fulfilling their religious obligations presently as well as in future; otherwise, it would not be permissible even if he is engaged in some kind of propagation activities. And Allah knows the best.

6.3: Sayyid Sistani – Enjoying Good and Forbidding Evil

In Sayyid Sistani’s “The Comprehensive Explanations of Matters [in Islamic Laws]”¹¹, he lists a total of fifty–eight matters which are considered important when it comes to the obligation of Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil. The list includes polytheism, turning your back and running away from the battlefield, abortion, not paying religious alms such as Khums, gambling, magic, theft, backbiting, and At–Ta’arrub after Hijra.

He then continues to state that “for those Muslims who have travelled to non–Islamic countries and know that by staying in that country, their own faith and belief, or that of their family [wife] or children, is reduced, they must return to their own homeland.” Other terms used in the paragraph include “weakening” and “lightening of the colour (رنگتر کم)” of their faith and belief.

He then writes that one would only be permitted to remain in such a place if “to return to the homeland brings about imminent danger to one’s life or an extreme level of embarrassment and an overwhelming level of effort to do so, to the point of not being able to tolerate it”.

Furthermore, Sayyid Sistani explains that if there are extenuating circumstances preventing one from returning, then as soon as they are lifted, one must return. He compares this situation to when one is permitted to eat non–Islamically slaughtered meat in order to save one’s life and prevent death from starvation. As soon as this extreme situation is lifted, such types of food again become forbidden. Likewise, once the reason preventing one from migrating is lifted, the permissibility of remaining is also lifted and the obligation is to then migrate.

^{1.} al–Kulayni, Kitab Al–Kafi. Vol. 2 P. 281.

^{2.} al–Kulayni. Vol. 2 P. 277.

^{3.} al–Kulayni. Vol. 2 P.277.

^{4.} al–Kulayni, Vol. 2 P. 278.

^{5.} Shaykh al–Amili, Wasa’il al–Shia, Vol. 15 P. 100.

^{6.} Shaykh al–Amili, Wasa’il al–Shia, Vol. 16 P. 188.

^{7.} Shaykh al–Amili. Vol. 16, P. 188.

^{8.} Shaykh al–Amili. Vol. 16, P. 188.

^{9.} Translator’s Note [Original translator from the book]: Baligh means the legal age in Islamic laws which for boys starts at fifteen lunar years and for girls at nine lunar years. Growth of pubic hair or sexual discharge is also a sign of attaining the age of maturity.

^{10.} Translator’s Note [Original translator of the book]: Adhan means the call for prayer announced at prayer times from the mosques.

^{11.} Sayyid Sistani, Tawdheeh Al–Masa’il Jam’i. Vol. 1 P. 625.

Chapter 7: Commentary by Scholars – Sayyid Ali Khamanei

7.1: Sayyid Ali Khamanei – Questions and Answers

Sayyid Ali Khamanei, the successor to Imam Khomeini in the Islamic Republic of Iran, has answered the following questions on the English¹, Arabic² and Farsi pages of his official website:

Questions

Q1375. What is the view on seeking political asylum in foreign countries? And is it permissible to fabricate a story to achieve that goal?

A: In itself, there is no objection to seeking political asylum in non-Muslim countries provided that it does not lead to bad effects. However, it is not permissible to resort to lying and fabrication to achieve that end.

Q1376. Is it permissible for a Muslim to immigrate to a non-Muslim country?

A: There is no objection to it provided that it does not involve fear of detesting and deviating from one's own religion. Having preserved his faith and observed caution, it is incumbent on the immigrant, to the best of his ability, to defend Islam and Muslims.

Q1377. Is it obligatory on women who embraced Islam in the land of infidels to immigrate to the Islamic land because they cannot declare their Islam for fear of reprisal by their families and society?

A: They are not required to immigrate to the abode of Islam, should this prove unbearable. However, it is obligatory on them to keep up prayer, fast, and other obligations to the best of their ability.

Q1378. What is the ruling in living in countries in which facilities for sinful acts, like nudity and listening to bad music cassettes are commonly available? What is the duty of those individuals who recently entered the age of ritual maturity there?

A: In itself, their residing and living there is no problem. However, they should avoid those acts considered haram by Islamic law. If they fail to do that, immigration to Islamic countries for them becomes obligatory.

7.2: Sayyid Ali Khamanei – “Islamic Thought In The Qur’an”

-1974

This book consists of a series of lectures given by Sayyid Ali Khamanei during the holy month of Ramadhan in the year 1974. Notably, at the time, he was under the supervision of the Shah’s government and SAVAK security forces. The book has been translated into multiple languages, including English.

In these lectures, Sayyid Khamanei discusses aspects of Islamic thought through the eyes of the Holy Qur’an, beginning with faith, and then moving on to monotheism, prophethood, and finally, Wilayat. In his 28th sermon, and the final chapter of the book, he discusses the issue of migration.

The following is a translation of this sermon as supervised by Professor Fazlullah Nikayin of the Sahba Institute in 2017³:

وَمَنْ يَهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَاعِمًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً وَمَنْ يَخْرُجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكُهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

“And anyone who migrates in Allah’s way, will find many places of refuge on earth and abundance of bounties; even if he does forsake his dwelling for the sake of God and His Messenger and thence death overtakes him, shall receive his meed in full from God, for God is Forgiving, Merciful.” (Sura Al-Nisa’, 4: 100).

In the Name of God, the Beneficent the Merciful. The very first thing I must mention in our discussion today is that the issue of migration is directly related to the question of Wilayat. I have already explained that Wilayat is there to guarantee the firm relations and unshakable solidarity among all believers and the prevention of any dependence on the opposing groups or fronts, and later the setting up of a strong, central administration to strengthen brotherly ties among all Muslim groups and Islamic communities. I also clarified the question of the wali, that is, the leader, imam or the supreme administrator necessary for the continuous progress of the umma towards divine goals. I also mentioned the Qur’anic verse about Imam Ali (‘a) giving alms to a poor man ‘while bowing down in his prayers.’

So we see that if we do not reduce the important principle of Wilayat to some petty, secondary issue, we’ll soon find out that migration is most related to belief in Wilayat, because if a believer is devoted to live in the shade of Wilayat, he’ll sometimes have to migrate from a Wilayatless society to a Wilayatful community. If one wants to really be a servant of God, not a follower of taaghoot and he feels that he lives in a Wilayatless community that leaves his existence, his life, his energies and his happiness under a satanic Wilayat, he should save his own soul by travelling to a place where he could live under the happy, resourceful shadow of Wilayat. The exit from that oppressive Wilayat and entering the just, divine

Wilayat is called migration [Hijra]. As you have noticed, I have already talked about 3 dimensions of Wilayat; Hijra is the 4th dimension.

Why should one escape the satanic Wilayat of taaghoot? I raise this question and, while I try to answer the question, I want you to think about it and find an answer, whether positive or negative, according to your knowledge of Islam and the Qur'an; and if your answer is the opposite of mine, we will discuss the matter further. Now this is the question: Couldn't we be under the Wilayat of taaghoot and still remain a Muslim? Can't we imagine a Muslim who happens to live under the Wilayat of Satan and yet be a servant of Al-Rahmaan? Is it probable that when an anti-divine oppressor dominates the whole horizons of humanity's life, when the people's way of thinking, their emotions and feelings are decided by the same ungodly ruler and, in one word, when all people are in the grips of a satanic, powerful authority, I repeat, is it probable that a Muslim remains a servant of God? Is this possible or not? I want you to try to analyze this question and I don't want you to quickly come up with an answer. It must be deeply thought about.

Now, I say a few words to help you think about this rather difficult question. The question is: could a person be under the Wilayat of satanic powers and still remain a Muslim? In fact this question consists of two parts closely connected.

Let's analyze these two parts and see what they really mean. The first part is about the Wilayat of Satan or satanic powers; what does being under satanic Wilayat mean? Well, if we look at the issue of Wilayat through the mirror of the Qur'anic verses we quoted in this respect, then we'll know what this evil Wilayat really means. What we understand from those verses, is that the wilayat of Satan, in its general sense, means that Satan or satanic authorities dominate all aspects of men's life, their talents, energies, initiatives, mental and intellectual powers; that is, whatever man thinks about is in the path of satans and whatever he does is exactly what satans wish. A simile for such a circumstance would be the condition of a person who has slipped and fallen down into the rapid current of a mountainous river and tries hard to save himself. Certainly he doesn't like to hit a rock, and surely he doesn't like the current to take him to the sea or into a swamp; he doesn't want to be drowned and he tries hard to get hold of something to save himself, but the current is awfully fast and strong and carries him along.

The Wilayat of satanic forces is similar to this simile and therefore the Qur'an warns:

“And We made imams [leaders] who invite people unto the Fire...” (28:41).

There are leaders, authorities and ungodly powers who lead their followers and those under their rule into the fire of Hell. Elsewhere the Qur'an tells us:

“Have you not ever thought of those who did repay God's Grace with unappreciation, and drove their people with them into the House of Ruination” (14:28).

“Known as Gehenna? They will surely reach it, but it's a wretched station!” (14:29).

Don't you ever learn lessons from those who were unthankful of God's bounties? What were the bounties of God? They could be everything: the blessing of authority, worldly power, the administration of the affairs of communities, God-granted talents or all the energies and instinctive, human gifts; these are all divine bounties that could go to serve the good of the human society.

If not under the power of such satanic Wilayats, the people could be among the best servants of God and sources of good for their communities but those satanic regimes led them astray: "...and drove their people with them into the House of Ruination." Well, we could say 'hell with those damned satanic leaders!' The more sorrowful was the fact that they led the masses into perdition and into Hell which is a horrible residence. It is reported that Imam Musa-bin-Ja'far read out this Qur'anic verse for the Khalif Haroun-al-Rasheed to warn him that he was leading himself and the people under his rule to final perdition and Haroun retorted 'do you mean that we are kaafirs [disbelievers]', that is, we don't believe in God, the Prophet and the religion of Islam?!' What the Imam meant was that those who frankly and openly announce that 'there is no God, prophets and prophethoods are myths and Qur'anic verses are lies' are one kind among the disbelievers, in fact, the best of disbelievers! Because they openly and candidly pronounce what they do not believe in and so you do know them and you could easily choose your approach to them.

Yet the worse kind of disbelievers are those who pretend to be Muslims and true believers but they are unthankful to what God has granted them, who employ God's bounties and God's blessing in wrongful ways and ultimately lead all people under their rule to Wilayat of taaghoot and ultimately to Hell. Those who live under the Wilayat of taaghoot are almost helpless. I don't say that they completely and absolutely lack the will to choose. As I said in the example of the one fallen in the current of a fast-following mountainous rivers, they do everything to save themselves but the flood-like current carries them on to death. They wish to save themselves from this current that takes them to Hell but they can't do anything about it, for everything and everyone about them are being carried in the same direction. You all may have happened to be among a crowd of thousands of people; you want to go left but the crowd presses you to go to the right and you are not allowed to go the way you intend to. A person likes to live a clean life, he wants to live as a Muslim and die as a Muslim but the tough social current does not give him a chance, no matter how weakly you try to go otherwise; the more painful fact is that sometimes you don't even feel you're being carried away despite your heart's desire! Just like the fish caught in a big net in the sea hundreds of meters away from the shore where the fishermen are standing and pulling the net; the fish are still being pulled towards them in the water but they don't know where they will soon end up!

This invisible net of satanic systems works the same; they pull you to where they want and you are unconsciously drawn to destinations unknown to you. They are taking you to Hell but sometimes you think you are being led to Paradise! This is the Wilayat of taaghoot or the Wilayat of Satan. All I said so far concerned the first part of the question: Could one live in a satanic system of Wilayat and still remain a Muslim? Now we know what it means to live under the rule of such ungodly systems. We could, of

course, delve into history and find out more about the evil conditions and circumstances of living under taaghoot domination.

You may take a historical glimpse at the Islamic community under the two dynasties of Bani-Umayya and Bani-Abbas. Under both ruling systems, there was great advancement in the fields of knowledge and science: we know of numerous great physicians, numerous great astronomers, numerous great translators and numerous great historians, artists and scientists in various fields. Some foreign authors such as the French Gustave Lebon are amazed at the incredible scientific progress and civilizational achievements under these two dynasties in the second, third and fourth centuries after the advent of Islam. Now we may ask: did all these great achievements end up in furthering and perfecting the Islamic society and humanity? Some ten centuries have passed since those golden days of progress and prosperity. We may not have any prejudiced outlook about those centuries. In talking to the non-Islamic world, we could boast about them and say:

Yes, it was the world of Islam that established so many universities and many highly-advanced schools of medicine, philosophy and natural sciences.

Yet, among ourselves as Muslims, couldn't we ask some fair questions such as: Did all those great achievements end up in the further prosperity and progress of the Islamic communities? After some 10 centuries, what do we have to show? What happened to all those rich scientific and cultural achievements? Why does the Islamic umma's civilization not shine today as in those early centuries? The briefest answers to these questions are that the satanic rulers wanted everything for themselves, not for the good and interest of the Islamic society. I try to explain this because some people may find my brief answer dubious and unsatisfactory. The Khalifs of the time, such as Haroun, Ma'moun or Mansour helped bring about a 'translation revolution' but their purpose was to elevate their own names, not to raise the knowledge and cognition of all Muslims; their other activities in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, literature, theological jurisprudence and natural sciences were aimed at their own fame and grandeur, but their rules were most oppressive which brought about great class differences, made the poor poorer, degraded the social and individual morals and debased the people's ethical values.

If you want to understand the issue better, let us take a look at the filthy civilization of our temporary world. The leaders of this present world boast about their incredible new inventions, their discoveries of this or that drug or surgery to cure certain lethal diseases, and other scientific achievements. But from a moral and humanitarian outlook, they are still living, say, in the Stone Age. One percent of the people own some 90 percent of the wealth and capital in these so-called advanced countries and millions of people live under the poverty line. This picture is exactly the same as that during those golden centuries of Islamic rule under satanic tyrants. These rulers and the aristocratic minority enjoyed all sorts of opportunities and amenities while the majority of people faced hunger and even starvation; other awful class differences were also witnessed but the faithless rulers did not care about the conditions of the masses and they cared less about the moral and spiritual progress and moral elevation of the people or

about Issues such as divine virtues and Islamic laws were forgotten.

Yet under these satanic regimes, there were honourable, virtuous people whom we could take pride in: Mualla-bin Khanees, a follower of Imam Saadiq ('a) and his deputy for collecting alms and charities was arrested, tortured and later put do death; Muhammad-bin-Abi-Omair-Azadi, a companion of three Shi'ite Imams, was arrested and ordered to reveal all the names of the followers of the Imams; he rejected the order. He was lashed a hundred times but did not speak a word; and in his later years of life he was arrested many times and tortured. Yahya-bin Zaid-bin-Ali-ibn-al-Husain, as a very young man, he was present at his father's uprising against Husham, the Khalif of the time. After his father's martyrdom he went to Khorasan, many people joined his struggle against the oppressive

Khalif and so he succeeded in seizing Herat. But in the ensuing battle with the Khalif's Khorasan army he was killed, and then his head was cut off and laid on a high post for all to see! We may also cite the example of Ibn-Umm-Tuwail who rose against the Khalif, but was arrested and executed; his hands and legs were cut off and his tongue was cut out of his mouth.

Thus, as we see, so many great people rose against the satanic regimes whose period of rule orientalist such as Mr. Gustave Lebon consider as the golden period of Islamic rule. Briefly speaking, in the Wilayat of taaghoot or Satan, you may witness progress in many fields and people's energies and talents could be employed to advance in many areas but the general state of the people is just like what we witness in the so-called advanced countries in the West today where human values, virtuous criteria and divine injunctions are not worth a penny!

So we may return to the question we raised at the beginning of today's discussion: Could one live as a Muslim under the Wilayat of taaghoot? What is the proper, Muslim way of life? Well, living as Muslims means that all human talents, all human powers and all human opportunities are completely under the Wilayat of God Almighty and that all their moments of life, their soul and minds, their property and wealth, their thoughts and activities or even their sleep and rest are spent in the service of God. Could you give us an example in this respect, you may ask? Yes, we have had examples of such groups, communities and societies of the past as the

groups who migrated from the domain of satanic forces and walked towards the path of God. And we do have the example the Muslim community at the time of the holy Prophet; at that time the people in Medina formed an Islamic society of servants of God. Any step taken was on the path of God. Even the Jews and Christians who lived under the Wilayat of the holy Prophet behaved in Islamic ways. That is, in their personal beliefs and behaviour, they were absolutely free but in the society they lived as Muslims; we could claim that their ways of living were far better than Muslims who lived in the age of ignorance! In the Wilayat of the holy Prophet everything belonged to God, money was to be used in the path of God, swords were being drawn in the path of God, tongues and thoughts were at the service of God and feelings and emotions were God-inspired ones.

We could also claim that under the Wilayat of Ali ('a), the Commander of the Faithful, the social circumstances were more or less Islamic despite all odds and enmities and deviations that the Muslim community had faced during the previous decades. In fact Ali ('a) inherited a community that had largely gone astray in the 25-year period after the demise of the holy Prophet; we could even say that if the holy Prophet were to reappear, he would be faced with the same problems and difficulties Ali ('a) faced. Please note that what we have said so far concerns the societies in general.

But among groups of people and small minorities the conditions differed; as an example, the groups of the people who followed our Imams in those centuries were exceptions to the general outlook we talked about. Unfortunately, today is the last day of the holy month of Ramadan and it is not possible for me to discuss the very important question of imamat. If we had the opportunity I would have told you about the quality and characteristic of Shi'ite communities during the lives of our imams, about the relationship of the imams with their followers, about the relation of Shi'ites with their surrounding taaghooti environment; how they lived under satanic regimes but travelled on an opposing path to the prevailing taaghoot rulers. Those who helped Imam Husain ('a) in Karbala, were good examples of those who never obeyed the ruling cliques. So you see, when you study history, that there did exist certain communities who, though under a satanic regime, were practicing true Islam.

But as far as the mass of ordinary people and the general public are concerned, one cannot remain a true Muslim in satanic, oppressive circumstances where all his energies, talents and opportunities could be employed at the service of God. No, as I explained before, it is almost impossible for the mass of ordinary people to remain true Muslims under taaghoot, and no matter how hard they try, at least parts of their faith in Islam would be at the service of the dominating, social forces and so they cannot be a perfect servant of God. There is a narration in the noble book, 'The Principles of Kaafi,' under the title of, 'The conditions of men who want to obey God under an ungodly ruler'. I give you a brief translation of this narration: 'The people who live under the Wilayat of God, despite their sins and

shortcomings in their personal or private lives, will ultimately be salvaged; on the other hand, those who live under the Wilayat of taaghoot or Satan, despite their good personal and private deeds, will suffer retribution'. I have often tried to explain this Hadeeth by citing a simile: Imagine you intend to go to Mashhad from Tehran. If [in the first case] the bus you are travelling in does take the right roads, you will surely reach your destination. But if [in a second scenario] your driver takes the wrong roads, or is, for some reason, intent on travelling to Tabriz, obviously you will not reach your destination of Mashhad. In this [second] case whether your fellow-travellers treat one another properly and politely or they swear at one another and constantly quarrel, you will not reach Mashhad in both cases; they may have suffered on the way but they do reach their destination. And if the driver is taking you to Tabriz and your fellow-travellers are very kind and polite people and help one another, but they keep quiet and do not object to the driver who is going the wrong way, you'll also never reach your destination.

In the first case, the driver was a trustworthy man who knew the roads well and he did take you safely to

your destination, though some people behaved badly on the way. But in the second case, the driver was not a trustworthy person or he was drunk or he had a personal business in Tabriz and didn't care about his passengers, and the passengers did not or dared not object to him, they would not reach their intended destination, despite the fact that the passengers were people of good deeds. In a society run by taaghoot or satanic rulers, the people, whose leader is like the bad driver mentioned, will not reach their destination of remaining a true Muslim and gain salvation.

Well, what are they, who are under such conditions supposed to do? Here again a Qur'anic verse answers the question:

“When angels seize the souls of those who are sunken in sins against their own selves, they ask, ‘How was your circumstance?’ They answer, ‘We were oppressed upon the earth ...’ (4:97).

The angels, while seizing the souls of those people who were unjust in their own lives, ask them: How was your behaviour in your lives, where did you live and why did you fall into such a wretched state? One feels that the angels, like doctors who visit their patients, are sympathetic with them! They answer, ‘We were among the oppressed of the world’, that is, we had no will of ourselves, we had no authority and we were being governed against our wishes. As I said previously the mustazafeen or the spiritually and materially oppressed are those masses of people who are helplessly ruled over by satanic authorities and all their social actions, directions and deeds are decided by others.

Thus, we see that the oppressed are those who are unaware of what goes on in the society and they don't know where they are being led to, they can't decide whether they go this way or that way, and they are being pulled this way and that way as harnessed animals, in fact like an oil-press horse on the upper millstone going around, with covered eyes, not knowing that it is not going anywhere! If this horse were an intelligent being, it would, in the evening, think ‘I must have reached the vicinity of Paris by now!! But when, in late evening, its eyes are uncovered, it sees that it is exactly where he was in early morning! It knows nothing about anything! This is the state that the oppressed are reined in. The opposite state of affairs are seen in the societies ruled by walees of God as in the governance of our holy Prophet when moral values and human dignity were respected; but even in such a society, God tells His messenger:

“... take counsel with them [the people] in the affairs...” (3: 159).

In such societies people enjoy human, moral values, and all people are dearly respected and God's advice is to consult with them about the affairs of the community. But under unjust, ungodly and oppressive, taaghooti systems people are kept in ignorance and therefore the mustazafeen form the great majority of the people.

Well, the sinners defend themselves and tell the angels that they were the oppressed. But the angels ask them:

“... Was Allah’s earth not vast enough for you to migrate therein?...” (4:97).

Here we do witness that the logic of the angels is similar to wise human logic. The angels in fact blame them for not making any wise, courageous move to get out of the hellish prison they lived in by immigrating to some other place on the vast earth of God. I think our great poet, Saadi saying:

‘Do not be bound by anyone or any place as God’s earth is immense’, was in agreement with the angels. Anyway, the angels blame them for not going to a spot on earth where they could be free to worship God, to employ their talents and energies properly and not to be suppressed by satanic rulers. The sinners do not respond to this second question by the angels; in fact, they seem not to have a logical answer. And the Qur’an further says that their final residence will be Hell, an awful place to live in!

There is of course one exception to this general statement: not all people are in a position to travel far and wide; old men and women, children, the sick, the very poor and the like are included in this exception. That’s why the Qur’anic verse goes on:

“...exempted are the helpless men and women and children who do not possess the means, nor do they know any routes or lines” (4:98)

“These are the ones whom God may pardon, for God is Benignant, Oft-Forgiving.” (4:99).

Such oppressed people cannot find a way towards the light of Islam and they are truly unable to do anything under the prevailing conditions. The verse of the Qur’an expressly announces that they may be hopeful of God’s forgiveness because God’s Most Forgiving.

And then in the same Qur’anic verses we read about God’s consolation concerning those who migrated, lest they think that migration may land them into misery and loss. The verse says:

“And anyone who flies in Allah’s way will find many a place of refuge on earth, and abundance of bounties....” (4: 100).

The pagans of Mecca would torture anyone who had spent one dirham in the path of God but when Muslims migrated in the path of God to Medina, they found out what a fantastic place it was under the guidance of the holy Prophet; they found out how they were spiritually elevated and how they could enjoy God’s bounties. Now what if when travelling from Mecca, the town of disbelievers, to Medina, the town of the faithful, they happen to pass away on the way? Well, again the Qur’anic verse tells us that their rewards will be with God Almighty because they were travelling on the path of God:

“...even he who does forsake his dwelling for the sake of God and His messenger and thence death overtakes him shall receive his meed in full from God, for God is Forgiving and Merciful.” (4: 100).

Well, our discussion of migration in the path of God is not complete but we have no more time, so I only

add that, as we said, migration is leaving the Wilayat of taaghoot to places where Wilayat of God, such as the Wilayat of the holy Prophet, the Imam (‘a) or a true walee of God prevail. Now the very last question is: What shall we do when there is no such place in the whole world? Should we remain under satanic Wilayats? The brief answer is that the holy Prophet himself was among the migrants but before the migration of the Prophet and his companions there was no such place, so the Prophet and his companions did create such a place by their migration. As we now notice, sometimes it is necessary to migrate and lay the foundation of a divine, Islamic community so that other believers could also join it. And this was a brief account on the importance of Hijra or migration.”

1. Official site of Syed Ali Khamanei, <http://www.leader.ir/en/book/32/Practical-Laws-of-Islam?sn=5728> [15], cited 28/03/2019.

2. Official site of Syed Ali Khamanei, <http://www.leader.ir/ar/book/14/> [16] اجوبة الإستفتاءات - sn=5487, cited 28/03/2019.

3. ‘Islamic Thought in the Qur’an – Sahbabooks’.

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SHARES

Chapter 8: Islamic Preachers Entering Non-Islamic Nations

The following has been narrated from Hamid Al-Samandary: “I said to Abi Abd-Allah (SwT) Ja’afar Bin Muhammad, peace be upon him, “I enter polytheistic nations and some of our companions have said that if I were to die I would be raised amongst them?!” So the Imam, peace be upon him, said: “Oh Hamid, would you mention our matters and preach them?” To which I replied affirmatively. He continued: “And if you were in Islamic cities would you mention our matters and preach them?” To which I replied negatively. So then he said, “Then if you were to die then you would be raised as a nation alone and your light will be between your hands.”¹

It is important for scholars and preachers to travel to polytheistic and non-Islamic nations in order to serve the Islamic communities in those countries and strengthen their identity, resolve fallacies, propagate Islam and facilitate interfaith activities. Those societies are not free from religious and social issues and problems and need the presence of a learned guide.

Furthermore, mosques and religious charitable centres such as hospitals and schools should be built, and global opportunities which benefit Islam should be taken advantage of.

Along with the building of mosques, the spirituality and education of the adolescent population of that

community should be attended to. That is, as well as preparing a nest for the chicks, care should be taken to nurture them appropriately. The spiritual nourishment of the young population, to be most effective, should be in the same language they speak and learn in, the language of the country they live in.

There are many examples where buildings continue to be built by elders of a community, and are run in a way that pleases the elders rather than the young adults that crave to learn. Usually, these programs are in the mother tongue of the country the elders migrated from.

This leaves the youth and young adults uninterested, pre-occupied with gadgets that keep them away from the programs of these centres and the education they would otherwise crave for. Furthermore, in what has become a fashionable trend, certain speakers and centres are asking for children to not even be brought to an event lest they interrupt the speaker or event. An unfortunate trend, and one that could lead to generations of Muslims only by name, if at all. A topic that needs to be dealt with independently.

Of course, the mother tongue and the language of the nation in which the children's parents have migrated from should be taught to the following generations so that a

migration back to their country of origin is possible, and is not met with the difficulty of a language barrier.

[1.](#) Shaykh al-Amili, Wasa'il al-Shia. Vol. 15 P. 101.

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SHARES

Chapter 9: Cognitive Dissonance

Cognitive dissonance is when one is faced with some new form of evidence or a thought that conflicts with another belief or previously held thought. These are times where one may find themselves in a position of mental discomfort or psychological stress due to being in a conflict between what one believes and a new piece of evidence conflicting that.

This real psychological discomfort, which can translate into physical anxiety, was first proposed as the theory of cognitive dissonance by psychologist Leon Festinger.

To counteract this discomfort, one must find a way to justify one's actions in terms of the new information in order to restore the balance and comfort of the mind.

A common example given is that of a smoker, where there is evidence to suggest that smoking is unhealthy, yet the individual continues to smoke. In doing so, they need to deal with this information and justify their actions – or else the conflict between the evidence and their behaviour will bring about physical pain.

In order for cognitive dissonance to occur, two conditions are necessary:

Firstly, there must be the freedom to make a choice. Cognitive dissonance does not apply in situations where one is forced into a position – such as being required to write a paper arguing a point of view that one disagrees with.

Secondly, there must be negative consequences if no action is taken to resolve the issue.

In the case of the smoker who is now confronted with mounting medical evidence of the harmful effects of their habit, they could either decide to stop, or they could decide to continue smoking and deal with the conflict they are facing using some other means.

There are generally four ways this conflict can be dealt with:

1. Change the incoming new information: This is to deny the new evidence and information, and to believe, for example, that smoking is completely safe. This conflicts with the new evidence or information, but, in the mind of the person who is experiencing cognitive dissonance, the issue has been resolved.

2. Change one's course of action to suit the new information: After researching and confirming the new information, this is to change one's behaviour in order to seek the best outcome. This would be the most sensible course of action. In the example of the smoker, this would be to attempt to quit smoking.

3. Add a new thought to justify ongoing action: This is to compensate one's actions to justify continuing one's behaviour. That is, to say, 'I will do "this" to compensate for the error of my ways'. A smoker, therefore, may be convinced of the new evidence that smoking harms the body, but will resolve the conflict by eating healthy foods, going to the gym, etc in order to continue smoking and compensate for the damage done by consuming cigarettes.

4. Trivialise the matter: This is to deem the new information as being unimportant and insignificant, looking for proofs contrary to the evidence at hand in order to soothe the mind. The smoker will look towards information that disputes the link between smoking and lung cancer, for example, or cite Sayyid Khoei, famously known to be a chain smoker who lived to over 90 years of age, as evidence that smoking does not shorten one's lifespan.

With this in mind, we can change the example given from that of a smoker who needs to justify their behaviour, to an individual who is living in a non-Islamic environment. As discussed already, living in this sort of environment restricts religious activities, distorts theological beliefs, and chokes the spiritual

growth of individuals and their families.

After reading the information presented here, the reader may be already experiencing this so-called cognitive dissonance: A feeling of discomfort, and the need to either act upon it, or justify where they are and what they do because they are comfortable and established in the environment they are in.

As listed earlier, there are four ways this dissonance can be overcome:

- 1. Deny the incoming new information:** The reader could deny this information by formulating thoughts such as, ‘this does not apply to our modern times’, or, ‘this does not apply to me’, etc.
- 2. Change one’s course of action to suit the new information:** The reader could decide to migrate, and if not possible, they will compensate proactively until they can migrate.
- 3. Add a new thought to justify ongoing action:** The reader could choose to remain where they are and compensate their actions, even though it is possible for them to migrate. There can be a fine line between someone like this and someone who has legitimate reasons not to migrate, such as the danger of persecution if they were to move.
- 4. Trivialise the matter:** The reader may attempt to disregard the information and convince themselves that the interpretation presented here is incorrect – and they will search for information that supports their own view and decisions.

Of course, while this is only a theory that is presented to us by modern Psychology, it is in sync with the narrations and verses of the Holy Qur’an, however this will take us away from the scope of this project.

Cognitive Dissonance and Migration

It must be emphasised that cognitive dissonance applies to where there is the freedom of choice, and not in situations where migrants have been forced to flee for their lives. However, if at some point these dangers are lifted and the freedom of choice is returned, then a choice must be made.

One can choose to study the information provided and act upon it, or else justify a “choice” to ignore it and act contrary to one’s duty. Either way, the choice made will have consequences.

Ultimately, this choice needs to be based on a leap of faith – for the heart that is full of faith in the All-Mighty will not hesitate in making the right decision.

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ۖ وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

Those who believe, their hearts being at rest in God’s remembrance -- in God’s remembrance are at rest the hearts. (Holy Qur’an, 13:28).

Chapter 10: A Fallacy

It is often said that raising faithful children in the West is possible, and that there are many examples of such children who are excellent Muslims. While there is no denying the possibility, this argument is a fallacy, and should be viewed within context.

By in large, the children being referred to represent a very small percentage of those raised in the West. It is very unlikely for a child's faith to be unaffected while constantly being fed misconceptions through education, media, and peers.

When the fundamentals of faith are shaken, parents and local Muslim communities start to focus on the children maintaining jurisprudential duties such as fasting and praying. But over time, even these begin to fade. Acting upon jurisprudential laws without a solid foundation in their beliefs causes a vicious cycle in the disintegration of their faith.

Unfortunately, the Muslim youth then end up leading double lives – one in front of their families and community, and the other, with their friends and in private.

Anecdotally, anonymous questions reveal the thought patterns of such troubled youth. Teenage girls and boys admit to addictions to pornography, alcohol, crystal meth and other similar drugs, and are concerned – not about their hereafter – but about their parents finding out what they are doing and then taking away their internet!

There is a direct relationship between the availability of these Islamically forbidden products and services and the take up of their use. When it comes to deciding to live in such places, such factors as availability of these items and services, freely and with societies acceptance, and the lack of readily available Mosques, Islamic Schools, professional consulting services and the like, should be a significant factor in any decision.

Nonetheless, it cannot be said that it is impossible to raise pious children in the west. And it must be admitted that there are youth raised in Islamic countries who have gone astray despite their surroundings.

وعن الحسن تراه ولد في الاسلام ونشأ بين المسلمين يبيع دينه بكذا وكذا، وهؤلاء كفار نشئوا في الكفر بذلوا أنفسهم
الله.

You see a child born in to Islam and has been raised amongst Muslims but sells his faith for such and such, and you see those infidels [Magicians who immediately submitted to Prophet Moses, peace be upon him] raised in infidelity sacrificing themselves for Allah All Mighty¹.

10.1: Another Fallacy

Many Muslims have migrated to non-Islamic nations, either voluntarily or by force. Circumstances such as war and persecution have left many Muslims – in particular the Shia – with no choice but to migrate. Those who migrated voluntarily – perhaps to seek worldly gains – likely believed the fallacy that they would not be affected by the society's spiritual weakness, outward perversion, and ideological carelessness.

Despite acknowledging that when they first entered these countries, they were considerably affected and at times even drawn to the ill-natured doings of that society, they now feel that they have become so accustomed to the environment that they are no longer affected by what they run against daily.

They consider that it is not necessary for them to return to Islamic nations, especially considering the comfort and security they find themselves in and the services they have become used to.

Such is the fallacy that has made those now living in the West unwilling to return to their Islamic countries – despite the fact that the original excuse for the migration has long been resolved.

These people should be aware that their reasoning has the following fundamental flaws:

For those who voluntarily migrated, at the very outset, their migration to a non-Islamic country was potentially a transgression, since there may have been the fear of losing their religion and falling into sin.

The argument that they have become so accustomed to outward perversions and sinful behaviours that they are not affected by them, is in itself a significant calamity. What they are actually admitting to is a lack of disdain at such acts. Sin has become so widespread within the community that it appears to be normal. This is despite the fact that disdain of sin is one of the prerequisites of the obligation of Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil, and is the beginning of Repentance – because one who is repentant must feel regret and disdain of sin.

Who is it that can remain unaffected while constantly witnessing sin? And even if someone claims to remain staunch in every problematic situation, can the same be said of their children and family as they assimilate into the society?

Those who live in the West, will over time, slowly but surely, start to lose their Islamic beliefs and manners. Whether this happens consciously or unconsciously, they will become habituated to thoughts and ideologies that infringe on their Islamic values. They will become entrenched in materialistic modernisation and will eventually submerge themselves into the environment around them.

If those migrants somehow manage to salvage their beliefs, they will still – without a doubt – face exceptional difficulties in performing their obligations and abstaining from the forbidden. It will be almost impossible for them to keep away from all impermissible visual and auditory stimuli, unlawful foods, and prohibited earnings.

These migrants will also face significant hardship in raising their children and families to be faithful and practicing Muslims. Those who have become accustomed to western culture will have a materialistic worldview, and their religious faith and practices will perhaps fade to a stage where they do not even believe in the majority of the Islamic Laws!

The environment in which one lives has a significant impact on an individual's thinking, tastes and behaviour. For this reason, communities that are closer to the source of religious information will have a stronger commitment to religion.

It is written that Ali Ibn Musa Al-Ridha, peace be upon him, said to Muhammad bin Sinan:

Allah (SwT) has forbidden “Ta’arrub after Migration” because doing so results in regression from religion, leaving the support to Prophets, and the Clear Signs (The Imams), peace be upon them, and whatever else in terms of

perversions and revocation of the rights of those who own rights. And so it is, that if one understands religion in its totality, it would not be permissible for him to live amongst the ignorants. And there is concern for this individual in that there is no guarantee they will not leave behind the gaining of religious knowledge and enter into the realm of the ignorants².

¹. al-Zamakhshari, Al-Kashshaaf. Vol. 2 P. 103.

². Shaykh al-Amili, Wasa'il al-Shia. Vol. 15 P. 100.

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SHARES

Chapter 11: Thoughts of a Migrant

The following was written by an Iranian national, Sayyid Amir Bassam, who migrated away from his own country and lived in both Australia and New Zealand before migrating back to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Is the West the paradise that we are truly seeking?

This is a piece that is written by someone who has lived in the West for 21 years, in two countries – Australia and New Zealand – and 21 years in Iran. Whatever is written here comes from real-life personal experience.

I won't keep you waiting and will give you the conclusion from the outset. If you are looking for this world only [the Dunya], do not wait any longer – you should go to the West now. However, if you are concerned about your faith and are looking for what is best for your hereafter, then definitely be patient and stay in Iran.

That is not to say that in the West there is no religion, nor does it mean that in Iran, there are no luxuries of this world. But there is no shadow of a doubt that life is much more colourful in the West than it is in the East.

The truth is, while living in the West, one may feel that there is no God. Over there, there is no sound of the Call to Prayer, or writings [reminding us of God] on the wall, or any narrations, or Mosques, or the Supplication of Kumail, or Friday Prayers, or ceremonies of religious events, or the sight of two enlightened and spiritual faces.... None of these are present – and if they are, they are very minimal and much duller and more limited than what is available in Iran.

When you walk the streets of Iran during the holy month of Ramadhan, you know that most of the people passing by are fasting. You can almost feel that the doors and walls and streets, and even the birds, are fasting. The working hours of shops and banks and companies have all been adjusted accordingly. In fact, the dynamics of life have completely changed. Fasting, and that spiritual feeling which comes along with it, is everywhere you look and in abundance.

But in non-Islamic countries, on the other hand, and especially in the West, with all its beauty, majesty, orderliness and goodness, there is no such sense of spirituality. In fact it is so void of spirituality that one might think God has migrated and left that area altogether!

In the West you are distant from this air of spirituality, and any sight or sound related to faith or religion. At the same time, you are bombarded by multimedia full of unethical content – and eventually such content becomes completely normalised. Faithful and pious families come

together and watch inappropriate programs while being unaware of the calamity that is befalling their families and infallible children.

In such societies, the promotion of homosexuality is widespread – and is even taught to children in school. That is, children must learn that it is very possible and not unusual to have families with two fathers or two mothers.

Scanty clothing is the norm on the streets, and indecent images are prevalent on walls, billboards and buses. Lewd songs come in huge waves and are nasty and explicit but are broadcasted everywhere – even in recreation centres where one might want to go with children to simply spend some time exercising!

Festivals where people parade completely in the nude occur on an annual basis in the city centre and the event is broadcast unedited on the news channel that families watch together in the evenings.

Indecent and obscene advertising is present on television, national and local newspapers, magazines sold at petrol stations, and in restaurants and leisure centres such as bowling alleys.

The merciless attack comes from any and every direction. It comes fast and furious.

All these issues and challenges in the West make it a very difficult place for the soul of the human being – and most importantly, the soul of the child. These phenomena overwhelm and replace the children's Islamic teachings and ethics.

From one whose father built the first Shia Mosque in New Zealand, and who has seen thousands of Shia families firsthand, I can say from experience that the upbringing of pious and faithful children in such countries is far from possible and difficult to imagine. Even the greatest efforts of parents will result in – at most – an average Muslim who prays and fasts! One should in fact celebrate if they do not go astray. And to raise a child to reach high levels of Islamic attributes and morals in such an environment is simply too difficult to comprehend.

These effects are of course not restricted to children – and also apply to adults. If one is to reach an ideology, they must be immersed within the conditions of that ideology. Just as it is very unlikely for a Lionel Messi to emerge from the stadiums of New Zealand, it is also highly unlikely for the Nejabats, Behjats, and Tabatabeis to emerge from the society of New Zealand.

The Western environment, without one even realizing, drags one away from religious, spiritual and gnostic elevation. This happens in the same way that the height of your child increases unnoticeably to yourself, while those on the outside can see it clearly.

Those on the outside notice as the chador changes to a manteau, and the manto, shortening day after day, changes to a blouse that also shrinks over time. They can see that year after year, mosque attendance dwindles and the recitation of the Supplication of Kumail on the nights of Friday wanes over time.

They observe that Friday congregation prayers pass by unattended. They hear from cars the sounds of rap music playing for the children instead of the Holy Qur'an. They account that one recitation of the Holy Qur'an might take ten years to complete. And they notice eventually that all religious activities are either attended half-heartedly or stopped all together.

In the West, it goes without saying that you are less–exposed to spiritual and religious people, while at the same time the pressures of society are constantly diluting the colour of your faith and religion. After some years, you realise yourself how much less of a role religion plays in your life, how you have regressed, and how you have come to speak less of God, religion, the Prophet and the Purified Household, peace be upon them.

You come to realise that all of your efforts are being put into recreation, recreation, and recreation. And sometimes, recreation and work... going to coffee shops, restaurants, shopping centres, parks, cinemas, city centres, visiting others, buying the latest technology, and other similar activities, have become all that your life is about.

Alongside all this, you have the contentment that you are a Muslim, you are praying and attending Mosque, and everything is just fine, and there is no acute problem in your life. You completely adapt and assimilate, staying in that environment for decades on end and perhaps for the rest of your life. You might even end up being buried in the local Islamic Cemetery.

You may leave behind your inheritors [children] on this patch of land [in the west] who do not even have what little of religion you learned from your grandparents and country of origin. They have grown up to be completely part of the Western culture and thinking and have a very faint sense of religion, afterlife, God, Prophets, and the concepts of martyrdom and resistance.

Practically, you have a serious and precarious responsibility to yourself, your spouse and your children. In your obscured vision, you think you have fulfilled this responsibility – yet you are unaware and have turned a blind eye to reality. With the help of two tricks from Satan’s deputy, “open–mindedness” and “self–justification”, you have become completely satisfied with the position you are in.

And with regards to the issue that the West is a better place because the people lie less, are less likely to be two–faced, slander less, accept bribery less, etc... Yes, I too accept this. The West has some aspects that are better than ours, but they also have their own reasons as to why they are like this. It requires its own research in sociology and history, but what is apparent is that we are not born dishonest and arrogant nor are they born honest and angelic. These positive and negative moral attributes are not inherited in the blood of either.

There is no guarantee in reaching prosperity and wisdom simply by living in Iran, unless one also chooses the right friends and families to spend time with, in the right city, in the right area, with good neighbours, in the right schools, with the right teachers... and distances oneself – to a certain degree – from the parts of society that are not appropriate.

In Tehran, the capital of Iran, there are two types of places: There are places where praying is laughed upon and fasting is ridiculed, and if you enter a restaurant with a chador they will look at you suspiciously. Those living in these places are less conscience of God and religion. But there are also places that are very good, clean, healthy and religious. These places are not few in number either.

In any case, where Satan is able to manipulate, people without religion or God will also be around. In that there is no doubt.

So in Iran too, one must move forward with attention, effort, hardship, intellect, counsel, and devotion – with open eyes, and with friends and families and recreations that are of a suitable and healthy nature. Entering Iran will not automatically result in spiritual elevations and religious heights, and children will not suddenly transform into good and pious people.

Of course, there can be no perfect society until such time that the Imam, may his return be hastened, reappears. So we are not looking for a utopia, nor do we say that the society in Iran is ideal – but at least the greater number of Muslims, Shias and true believers within the society puts it apparently morally ahead of Western society.

And the “apparent” of society is not something to be belittled. It should not be considered to be insignificant. One takes form firstly with the outward apparent. What is seen and heard by an individual has an unbelievable effect on them. So even though the apparent is not sufficient, it is necessary, and has a great effect on one’s soul and future.

In any case, the world is like a scale that should have its parameters compared. For those believers who are not looking for worldly comforts, the best place is one that has more spirituality and more believers. This will allow them to reach their ultimate goal of getting closer to Allah (SwT) before their departure.

Where that place is, is open for discussion. From my personal experience, it is where there are more Muslims, more Shias, and more true believers. It is where there are more people who fast, more martyrs, more Behjats, Nejabats, and Tabatabeis. It is where there are more people who go for “Arbaeen”, and more gatherings for Imam Husayn, peace be upon him. The quality of the believers that I have known in Iran, I have not come across anywhere else in the world. The true believers that I have met in the West are so few that you can count them on your fingers – and even those have had their foundation formed back home in their Islamic countries, and then migrated out.

In conclusion, I hope that the Muslims, Shias, and true believers who have migrated out of their Islamic countries with good intentions and positive goals, return to their countries after achieving their goals so that they can serve their own country and people, and minimise the spiritual and moral damage done to themselves, their spouses and their children.

[1] [1]

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Chapter 12: Final Thoughts

In this brief account on the issue of migration, we have discussed the meaning of migration, its use in the Holy Qur'an and traditions, and finally, what classical and modern scholars have advised regarding migration.

By visiting the website, Practical Islam Online¹, you can also visit a videos page and view various scholars speaking on this issue.

What remains now, is the issue of “Subject Identification” (الموضوع تشخيص) – That is, can someone who is truly looking to act upon their obligations, after reading this booklet and researching the topic, identify that this subject of migration applies to their specific and individual circumstances, or not?

In other words, are the verses of the Holy Qur'an, the traditions, and the advice from the scholars, telling you that according to your circumstances right now, migration is obligatory on you?

In answering this question, keep in mind that you are not the only one who will be affected by this decision. You are deciding for not only for yourself, but for your immediate family, your grandchildren, and your future descendants. Introspect and ensure that you have your priorities clear.

What is your goal? Where is your final destination? Is there a trade-off to be made between the goals of this worldly life, and that of the hereafter?

Not everyone will reach the same conclusion, of course. That is for each individual and family to decide for themselves. Ultimately, we must overcome resistance to change, attachment to our comfort zone, fear of the unknown, fear of failure, the feeling that a decision is being imposed upon us, and some significant cognitive dissonance.

And finally, the choice will have to be made – between a permissible difficulty and a forbidden ease.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ؕ قُوا ؕ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ

“Believers, guard yourselves and your families against a Fire whose fuel is men and stones”
(Holy Qur'an, 66:6).

S.L. Al-Hakim

14 January 2020

1. The relevant page is <https://practicalislam.online/migration> [17]

[1] [1]

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Source URL:

<https://al-islam.org/migration-choice-between-permissible-difficult-forbidden-ease-sl-al-hakim>

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[7] <https://al-islam.org/tags/hijra-migration>

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[9] <https://al-islam.org/code-practice-muslims-west-sayyid-ali-hussaini-sistani>

[10] <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/migrate>

[11] <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/migrate>

[12] <https://www.al-khoei.us/books/>

[13] <http://www.alhakeem.com/en/questions/674>

[14] <http://www.alhakeem.com/ar/question/1464/%D9%87%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A9>

[15] <http://www.leader.ir/en/book/32/Practical-Laws-of-Islam?>

[16] <http://www.leader.ir/ar/book/14/>

[17] <https://practicalislam.online/migration>