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Home > Spiritual Discourses > Discourse 11: Migration and Jihad 2

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Whoso goes forth from his house are migrants to God and His Messenger and then death overtakes him, and his wage shall have fallen on God; surely God is All-forgiving, All compassionate. (4:100)

My previous discourse showed that the questions of migration and holy war are frequently mentioned in the Quran together. Today I wish to add to my previous remarks concerning the value of these two injunctions in training and perfecting man's spirit ethically and socially. If we wish to discover the spirit of migration and jihad, we should remember that migration means freeing oneself from certain attachments which prove themselves to be undesirable and jihad means combating an enemy and the self. Without these two assets, man would be abject and enslaved for living in abasement in a material and spiritual environment shows total lack of spiritual freedom.

If we consider migration to mean travelling to other places the question arises whether travelling is better than staying in one place. In Islam, travel is praised though not as a permanent activity similar to a gypsy life. In the same way, staying permanently in a village or a town all one's life is a form of enslavement which is not recommended since it weakens one's soul and spirit. Travel, especially if one is equipped with knowledge gamed at home, is most profitable, while for an ignorant person, it is of little value. Even studying books cannot supply the maturity that travel produces in one's spirit. Without travelling to Islamic countries, for example, we cannot truly know the Islamic world and its problems. Solely through reading is to some extent valuable. Thus the Holy Quran tells us, "Travel in the earth"

Historians are unanimous about the need for the study of history but the Quran does not confine the study of history to reading books on history. It recommends visits to historical monuments and relics which are made possible by travel.

In a poem attributed to the first Imam, we are told to travel in the sea of attainment and eminence and that these are five benefits to be had from journeys. These are as follows:

The removal of sorrow from the heart. As long as one sticks to an environment, his mind is full of grief and sadness and for a time at least he feels relieved of their burden.

Earning a livelihood. If you are intelligent enough you can gain a living in travel and improve your financial condition beyond what is possible by staying always in one place.

Earning knowledge. You can also increase your knowledge by travel, by contact with the learned men of the places you visit, by becoming acquainted with their world and thoughts.

Earning experience in manners and customs. Travel makes you familiar with all sorts of customs which may seem to you better than your local customs, thereby improving your conduct by selecting ways which seem desirable and appropriate to you.

Earning experience in companionship. There is a special delight of conversation and companionship that is often afforded by travel. This contact with lofty minds may ennoble your spirit.

Thus the phrase in the first line of the poem means "Seeking accomplishments and distinction by leaving one's domicile for travel."

History shows that men of learning on returning from their travels have gained a polish and maturity which they did not have before. Shaykh Bahai is a good example of versatility among learned men because of his extensive travels. The poet Sa'di is another traveller who shows his wide knowledge and experience in his works. He spent thirty years of his ninety years of life in studying and another thirty in travel to various parts of the world after which his finest books were produced. In his books Gulistan and Bustan he made many references to places in India, Arabia and many other countries he had visited and wrote delightful anecdotes about various incidents he had met with here and there.

Rumi is another much travelled poet who became familiar with various countries and their languages and cultures. But Hafiz, in spite of his deeply spiritual poems, shows more limitation of experience since he disliked travel and preferred to spend his life in his beloved Shiraz. Once he was invited by a ruler of India to visit his country. He went as far as the Persian Gulf and, reconsidering it, decided to return to Shiraz and stay there.

Obviously there is a difference between Shaykh Bahai who had travelled all over the world and a clergyman who has stayed in Najaf for fifty years. Many of our learned clergymen who have experienced the joys of travel and have come into contact with great religious masters have proved more broad—minded than others whose genius has not been less than theirs but have always lived in limited surroundings.

So, in interpreting migration as abandoning undesirable spiritual conditions, it should not be supposed that this negates the actual abandonment of a place. Both kinds of emigration are important: Freeing oneself geographically from a town, zone, a climate, etc. and freeing oneself from habits and qualities which cause one's enslavement.

It is natural for a person to acquire certain habits or follow certain social traditions. Those who smoke

usually tell the physician who advises them not to do so that they cannot leave the habit. But this is not manly. One should be able to separate oneself from what is harmful. One is not human if one lacks the ability to migrate from vice.

The late Ayatullah Hujjat was almost a chain smoker and in his waking hours he rarely stopped smoking. He fell ill and the doctors advised him to give up smoking. He said jokingly that he wanted his chest for the sake of smoking and without it had had no need for a chest. They warned him of the danger. He agreed at once to give it up and with one word he changed himself into a migrant from where he had been.

It is related about the Caliph Ma'mun that he was in the habit of eating soil. The physicians gathered to find a way of curing him from this strange habit. They prepared some kind of concoction and prescribed this and that, but it was of no use. One day a man dressed in patched garments came to their door and said, "I have the remedy for it. A kingly resolution." Ma'mumn felt humiliated and said that it was true and thus got rid of the habit.

Being enslaved by habits and customs is unfortunately more prevalent among women than men such as the ceremonies connected with funerals, weddings, etc. If you ask them why they follow these customs, they say it is a tradition. The meaning of migration is the revival of the human personality and combatting a factor which is the main cause of human abjection. A human being should have enough self–respect not to exchange one's freedom and independence for slavery to an environment or to habits and vices. Thus, migration is a necessary factor of self–refinement.

Jihad means struggling, combating ones desires and removing obstacles. The Quran says that when the angels come to take the souls of human beings and see their black records, they ask the reason and human beings answer that they were helpless and lived in a corrupt environment where they could do nothing. The angels answer that this is no excuse. A tree might offer such an excuse because it is stationary and cannot move elsewhere to escape from undesirable surroundings. Even animals cannot offer such an excuse for they are able to migrate. Pigeons, geese, swallows and other birds and animals and even fish keep on moving from one region or climate to another in different seasons. Locusts and other insects, too, migrate in a body to new lands. No living creature ties itself down to the soil and rocks. Why then should a human being do so? It is no excuse to say that the enemy leaves no alternative but subjection and abasement. It is a human being's duty to migrate to a position of strength and then give the enemy the same treatment. This is called jihad.

The spiritual interpretation of jihad is similar. You advise people not to tell lies and they say it is impossible not to do so. Or you tell them to concentrate on God and holy matters in prayer and not allow themselves to be diverted by other thoughts. Again they think it impossible. Why should a man bear defeat? God has not made him to be vanquished by other creatures. He has given him enough freedom to liberate the self from all kinds of fetters, to fight against one's whims and fancies, against love of pleasure and luxury. The choice is between freedom and subjugation. If you cannot dominate desires

and place them under your control, they will dominate you.

What was the philosophy of Hadrat Ali as to asceticism and his renunciation of the world? Just as he had no wish to be vanquished by renowned champions in the field of battle, so he had no desire at all to be in the clutches of desires.

It is related that one day he was passing by a butcher who invited the Imam to take away some fresh meat. The Imam said that he had no money with him. The butcher said, "I can wait for it." Ali, peace be upon him, answered, "And I will tell my stomach to wait." He could easily provide himself with the best food and the finest clothes but he refused to become the slave of worldly things. His wish was to be free from undesirable fetters.

Today is the day after the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Husain, peace be upon him, and his companions and relatives. All the vices and evils of which man is capable showed themselves in the battlefield of Karbala. The angels witnessed all of it but God Almighty told them to see the other aspect of it which showed all the virtues and fine qualities that man can show.

The enemy committed unheard of cruelties such as beheading children in front of their mothers or cutting them to pieces. They killed eight of them in this way. One of them was Ali Asghar, the son of Imam Husain, peace be upon him. The Imam was holding him in his arms and kissing him farewell. Another child was Asim, the son of Imam Hasan, peace be upon him, who was killed in the presence of his mother. Another youth whose death was witnessed by his mother was ibn Abdullah, the son of Zainab, the sister of Imam Husain, peace be upon him. His half-brother, too, was killed on the same day. A remarkable thing which shows the lofty mind of this woman is that neither before nor after the martyrdom of her son did she mention this happening while on the death of her brother's son she rushed out of the tent and cried, "Oh my brother and my brother's son."

Another youth who met his death in that battle was the son of Muslim ibn Qutb whose mother was Ruqiyah, the daughter of the first Imam. She witnessed the death of her son. Another youth who was killed after the Imam was a ten year old boy. As he rushed out of the tent and stood there looking stupefied, the enemy ran to him and cut off his head. Another sad event was the death of Imam Hasan's son, Abdullah, a ten year old orphan who had never seen his father and had been brought up by Imam Husain, peace be upon him. As the Imam was in his last dying moments, this boy rushed out of the tent and Zainab, his aunt, could do nothing to stop him. He shouted, "I will not be separated from my uncle." A man with a drawn sword rushed upon the Imam to deal him a death blow. The boy lifted his arm to shield his uncle but the blow of the sword cut off his arm and he cried, "Oh uncle." The Imam said, "Dear nephew, be patient. You will soon join your father's grandfather."

In conclusion, I pray to God to illuminate our hearts with the light of faith, full them with love for you and Your saints, grant our sick ones a speedy recovery, our dead ones, salvation, accept our efforts in mourning for the Imam, guide Muslims and grant us salvation in this and the next worlds.

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