

Lecture Two

In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful

Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds, the Creator of all beings, and may peace be with the servant of God, His Messenger, friend, the chosen one, the trustee of His secret and the transmitter of His Message, our lord and prophet, Muhammad and his pure and infallible progeny.

“He who forsakes his home in the cause of God, finds in the earth many a refuge, wide and spacious: Should he die as a refugee from home for God and His Messenger, his reward becomes due and sure with God: And God is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.” (4/100).

In the last lecture we discussed immigration and jihad, which have been mentioned repeatedly in the Holy Qur’an almost together. In this lecture we aim to continue the discussion about the significance of both these tenets, not least for their influence in cultivating man’s character in his progress towards perfection and particularly in the moral domain. However, we may, as the discussion develops, discuss the social dimension of these principles.

As you may recall, we have already examined the misinterpretation of the concept of immigration and jihad and explained their true meaning and parameters. Should we aim for the spirit, [not the letter], of both the concepts in all fields, be they materialistic or moral, we should conclude that by immigration (hijra), we mean forsaking the things that became part of man or he became attached to them.

The immigrant (muhajir) is the person who is capable of turning his back to any practice he has become hooked on, should the sharia law make it incumbent on him to do so. By jihad, we mean struggle, strife, and exertion, be it external, i.e. against the enemies of God, or internal, man: travel or staying put? Of course, one should not infer from this question that man i.e. against one’s own tempting self.

Without immigration and jihad man’s lot would be nothing other than degradation and misery. For man to be free in the full sense of the word, he has to free himself from all the shackles of humiliation that surround him. He should not let himself be enslaved by anything he might feel very close to his heart. Otherwise, he who submits to the circumstances that may govern his living and show weakness in getting rid of them cannot be deemed free at all. Rather, he is a prisoner of that state of affairs.

Embarking on discussing the semantics of immigration, especially its core constituent, i.e. travel, we would soon find ourselves confronted by this question: Which is better for should always be on the move, i.e. without permanent abode or home. Perhaps, we should paraphrase the question thus: Is it better for man to reside in his hometown/country without ever travelling abroad, or is taking to travel beneficial to him, being a kind of immigration? From an Islamic standpoint travel, in itself, is praiseworthy.

Although Islam discouraged wandering aimlessly in the land,¹ yet this does not mean that man should spend all his life in his village or town without venturing outside them, to other towns and countries. This status quo is liable to weaken one's spirit, making it subservient to the conditions being lived.

In contrast, the person who takes to travelling, travel is bound to broaden his horizons and sharpen his wit, especially when the aim is aspiring for personal advancement, acquiring new virtues and that which is capable of contributing to perfectly shaping one's personality. Travel has five benefits:

1. Releasing the pressure: Travel provides the tourist with an opportunity to unwind by relieving tension, grief and sorrow. As long as man stays put in the climate he has got used to, it would make him live and remember all the bad things and regrettable incidents. This is bound to put him under immense pressure. So, by venting out such pressure, the person would be able to recharge their batteries.

2. Looking for work: The smart among people is he who can win his bread by relocating. New opportunities will certainly arise where immigrants could better their lot in their host countries.

3. Pursuit of knowledge: This is yet another valuable benefit that comes with travel. Setting out in search of knowledge and scholarship beyond your hometown or country should provide you with new experiences. [When it comes to religious learning], each and every scholar [alim, plural ulema] is unique in his own right.

No doubt, the ulema in your town are great, and yet each flower has its own distinctive scent, in that the alim of a particular town could not be as knowledgeable as the one in your town. Nevertheless, he could have his own area of expertise. Should you decide to meet with him, you would find out that he has a brand of knowledge the alim of your town does not possess.

4. Attainment of moral excellence: You cannot acquire all morals depending entirely on abstract sciences and by staying in the same environment. By the same token, shorn of any foundation of knowledge, travel alone is not going to prove a panacea for claiming the high moral ground. Getting a blend of both would lead to good results. A traveler is bound to see and experience new situations he was not used to in his own hometown or homeland. The spiritual maturity gained through travel cannot be had by any other means, including reading.

There may be people who could claim that they can gain new knowledge and expertise without travelling abroad. In their judgment, reading books about the intended countries, for example, should provide them

with the required information. Without a shadow of a doubt, reading is beneficial. And yet, it cannot make the same impact travel and witnessing things first hand can.

In the Holy Qur'an reference is made to "touring the land", such as "Travel through the earth" (3/137) and "Say: travel through the earth" (6/11). Historians are unanimous in their interpretation of these holy verses, in that they suggest the familiarization with and drawing lessons from historical events. However, the Holy Qur'an does not confine achieving this objective to reading history annals. Rather, it calls on us to do that which is more tangible, i.e. to experience first hand the historical relics on the ground and draw the lessons thereof. In these two lines of poetry, which are attributed to Imam Ali (a.s.), he says:

Emigrate from your native country in pursuit of loftier positions, for there are five benefits to be had from travel: Alleviating anxiety, working for a living, acquiring knowledge, attaining moral excellence and the companionship of distinguished people.

So, travel far and wide and do not be like a caged bird. Travel and let your goal be gaining knowledge about the people and the countries you are heading for. For sure, you are going to experience new sets of morals and social norms, which you may sometimes find superior than your own and which you can make use of, or at least be in a position to compare between the two and, maybe, be in a position to select the more superior.

5. The companionship of distinguished people: In travel, you may come across more illustrious people and forging relationships with such distinguished people may benefit you, not least in shaping your character through the positive influences such associations would leave.

Friendship here does not necessarily mean that of imparting knowledge by someone and receiving it by the other, i.e. teaching/learning relationship. Rather, it means good companionship and what would come out of it, i.e. gaining practical experience.

When the Imam (a.s.) establishes the aim of travel by "seeking higher status", this should not mean that, in travel, one should restrict one's attention to finding the best food, hotels and the like. The aim should be attaining moral excellence, learning, knowledge, human consummate conduct and intellectual maturity. So, let these be the fruits of travel and migration.

History tells us that the scholars who made journeys or immigrated to other countries, especially after they had gone through the early stages of their maturity, gained new experiences in their progress towards perfection.

Examples of such luminaries abound. Ash-Sheikh al-Baha'ie, for instance, occupies a special place among the ulema. He was an encyclopedic scholar who excelled in various disciplines. Among outstanding poets, the name of Sa'adi features high. He stood out in the different departments of poetry – love, mysticism, and heroism to name but a few. The secret of his brilliance in all those poetry genres is attributed to his vast mine of education and knowledge.

Sa'adi lived some ninety years. He spent thirty years of his life in schooling, education and acquiring knowledge. The second thirty years, he spent in travel, and the third thirty years witnessed the stages of his intellectual and literary maturity, prowess, and achievements.

In his *divan*, or collection of poems, *Bustan*, he has this to say about his globetrotting and the benefits he had reaped from it, "I travelled all over the world and enjoyed the company of each person I met a number of days. I benefited something from every corner I happened to be in and garnered from every field a spike of grain."

In his short stories, *Gulstan* and *Bustan*, he said, "I was in a mosque in Baalbek, [ancient Heliopolis, village in East Lebanon], when such and such happened." In another place, he said, "I was in Kashmir when so and so took place." So, you may ponder the distance that separates the two places. In a third place, he said, "I was in India when thus and thus occurred." In a fourth place, he said, "I came across a man whose behavior was such and such. We were in each other's company on the way to Hijaz [modern day Saudi Arabia]."

Most of this imagery found its way to Sa'adi's poetry. No doubt, the poet's spirit would roam in new heights with these experiences. Indeed, this is true in Sa'adi's case, in that his travels contributed to his poetic and literary genius. This characteristic, you find in Mawlawi's poetic works. This was made possible by his wide travels that netted him diverse knowledge and experiences about other nations. Some of these were reflected in his poems, which boast some of those nations' culture, expressions and impressions. Thanks to his travels, he learned several languages.

In contrast with this, you do not find this quality in Hafiz's poetry. In spite of the fact that we hold him in high regard, as he was a mystic and notwithstanding his excellence in divine love poetry, so much so that, compared to him in this poetic genre, Sa'adi could not match him; his skill shined in that type of poetry. Maybe, this was because Hafiz stayed put in his hometown and never left it because he was attached to it. He even admits that attachment to his hometown, Shiraz, "Although Isfahan is the spring of life, yet Shiraz is far superior."

In his poetry, he often sings the praise of Shiraz and the beauty of its places. Although, he lived almost the entire of his life in Shiraz, it is reported that he ventured out of it once by travelling to Yezd. Yet, he was melancholic and felt homesick only to hurry back to Shiraz. He recorded his feelings in one of his poems where he expresses a wish to return to his hometown where he equates his seat there with the seat of Solomon, and expresses a wish to free himself from the prison of Alexander. Hafiz borrowed this metaphor from history. Fables have it that when he invaded Iran, Alexander, the Macedonian [Great] made Yezd a dumping ground for his prisoners, whereas, of old, Shiraz used to be described as the Seat of Power of Solomon.

This may exert some light on both the feelings of the poet vis-à-vis Yezd and Shiraz.² Some of his poems bear witness to the fact that the poet's dislike for Yezd had nothing to do with its inhabitants;

rather, it was to do with his affection for his hometown, Shiraz. The evidence is found in his poetry where he spoke highly of Yezd's people and their hospitality. However, when Hafiz was offered a trip to India to stay somewhere close to the seaside, he declined it outright.

No doubt a scholar as famous as ash-Sheikh al-Baha'ie, who travelled the world over, stands head and shoulders above others who did not venture out of Najaf, [in Iraq, the well known seat of Shia Muslim learning and scholarship] all of their lives. Sheikh al-Baha'ie got in touch with the followers of different faiths and schools of thought and came to know a lot about their beliefs, cultures, and customs. There are others of our ulema (scholars), like al-Baha'ie, who came in contact with people of other faiths, persuasions, men of letters, professors, and other disciplines.

History books tell us that those who took to travel and in the process came into contact with other people of different backgrounds benefited a lot from this cross germination of experiences and ideas, so much so that it enriched their knowledge, sharpened their wit, and broadened their intellectual horizon.

In contrast, there had been great ulema, who were as erudite, genius, and loyal as the aforesaid group of ulema, if not more superior, and yet they did not avail themselves of journeying outside the boundaries of their usual domicile. It goes without saying that members of the latter group were less experienced than the former.

This should lead us to conclude that there is another meaning for immigration (hijra) that is different from the patent one. This meaning has come out in the hadith (traditions) of the Infallibles (a.s.). It can be found in these words, "The immigrant is he who has turned his back (hajara) to committing that which is vile". And yet, one should not get the wrong end of the stick. That is, this interpretation does not, by any way, make the manifest meaning of hijra redundant.

On the contrary, the second meaning corroborates the fact that, in Islam, there are two types of hijra(immigration), one is patent and the other latent. In other words, the Islamic immigration is not restricted to leaving behind your family and homeland for a new destination as is dictated by the interest of Islam or for the aim of freeing oneself from becoming enslaved by one's own circumstances; should it be the latter, this could encroach on one's sole servitude to God Almighty, and thus one must break free from the clutches of circumstance.

Thus, the second type of immigration is getting rid of the yoke of [bad] customs and traditions on which one is brought up from a tender age, so much so that they become part of their very being. Inasmuch as one should not become prisoner to one's own spiritual climate, they should not be held hostage to the surrounding spiritual climate. Consequently, freeing oneself from this form of captivity is the type of immigration that should be gleaned from the second meaning, i.e. that which has been talked about in the hadith.

Man may become used to certain norms of personal habits or conduct as a result of the influence of social custom. He may become so attached to what he acquired from society that the acquired habits

become part and parcel of his personality.

Let us, for example, take smoking as a habit of a personal choice. Although the dangers of smoking to one's health are well known, yet when some people become ill as a result and are advised by their doctor to kick the habit, they find it difficult to do so, because they got addicted on it and that giving it up would exasperate the situation. Off course, this is some sort of idle talk. Nevertheless, "The immigrant is he who has turned his back (hajara) to committing that which is vile". That is, a real person is he who could give up that which they got used to doing, including smoking.

The late Ayatollah Hujjat, May God elevate his station, could be described as a chain smoker. When he fell ill and was taken to hospital in Tehran, the doctors advised him to quit smoking because he was diagnosed with chest infection and continuing smoking would complicate matters for him. He jokingly remarked, "I need my chest for smoking. If I stop smoking what need will there be for a chest!?" He enquired, "Is it true that smoking is bad for my health?" The doctors answered him in the affirmative. He then said that he would never smoke again. Thus, in a word, he turned his back to a habit of almost a lifetime.

It has been reported that al-Ma'moun [the Abbasid Caliph] was suffering from the habit of devouring dust. Conventional remedies were doomed to failure. In a gathering, people were talking about al-Ma'moun's habit and how he could not give it up. Among those present was a dervish who shouted that he had the remedy for al-Ma'moun's habit. The people turned their eyes in his direction and asked him as to what could this magic potion be. He answered, "A firm will of the sort kings are capable of." When the story of the dervish reached al-Ma'moun, he said that the man was right and took a decision to give the habit up completely and forthwith.

Therefore, it is incumbent on man not to become a hostage to any [bad] habit. It is regrettable to say that this is more widespread among women. They cling vehemently, i.e. more so than men, to social customs relating to ceremonies of marriage and memorial services. Whenever they are told off, in that it is not right, they, without any hesitation, answer that they cannot trample social norms and practices. And when they are asked about the benefit that could be reaped from those norms and practices, they say that they just cannot abandon those social customs. This simply means blind following and submission to those customs and entails a lack of willpower and sheer enslavement. Man ought not acquiesce to these impositions.

Sensible people should subject their behavior and the positions they take to the judgment of their intellect and common sense. It is noteworthy, at this juncture, to point out that it is not right, of some people, to dismiss outright as irrelevant all social customs and therefore the necessity to rebel against them. This is a kind of extremist view. We do not reject all social customs; rather, some of them, i.e. those which go against the sensibility of the human mind and common sense.

Islam, therefore, looks upon immigration (hijra) as a fundamental pillar in the life of people, the objective

of which is the revival and the shaping of man's character. The other aim is to combat one of the most salient factors which could thrust man into slavery, humiliation, and submission to the environment he lives in, or materialistic or abstract things he becomes used to doing.

It is not expected of man to become a slave to the environment in which he was born and brought up. It is incumbent on him, instead, to preserve his integrity, freedom and independence. In so doing, he would ensure that he would never become a slave to immoral practices and be shackled to bad social norms. That is, "The immigrant is he who has turned his back (hajara) to committing that which is vile". And immigration means breaking clean with all the unsavory things that surrounds man, worldly or non-figurative. Thus, immigration is an important educational tool in molding man's personality.

Jihad

Jihad means struggle (or battling with someone). However, the other definition of jihad is that of doing battle with one's tempting self. In as much as man should not fall under the sway of his own environment, he should not surrender to the impediments and difficulties, found in such an environment as a matter of course, which may encounter him in his life. Man has been created with a built-in mechanism to deal with these barriers and overcome them to reach maturity and perfection.

The Holy Qur'an says:

"He who forsakes his home in the cause of God, finds in the earth many a refuge, wide and spacious..." (4: 100) [3](#)

However, in the same verse, the above-quoted statement is immediately followed by this one:

"Should he die as a refugee from home for God and His Messenger, his reward becomes due and sure with God: And God is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful." (4: 100).

The Holy Qur'an's approach to this subject is unique, in that it talks, in verse 98 of the same Chapter, i.e. just three verses ahead of the aforesaid verse, about those who were deemed weak (mustadh'afeen):

"When angels take the souls of those who die in sin against their souls. They say: In what (plight) were ye? They reply: Weak and oppressed were we in the earth. They say: Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to move yourselves away (from evil)?" (4:97).

This discusses, in a dialogue mode, the pretexts of those who went astray of the path of right and guidance by condoning the status quo, i.e. of staying in the climate of injustice and vice.[4](#)

When the angels of death come to take their souls away, they find out that their records have turned black with the vile deeds and when they ask such people as why their balance sheets are full of debits, they reply, "Weak and oppressed were we in the earth." That is, they were living in conditions conducive

to misconduct and since they were deemed weak, they could not do anything to alleviate their situations. The angles' reply comes in no time, "Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to move yourselves away (from evil)?"

This sort of excuse given by those people may, for a good reason, be accepted from trees whose environment became polluted, so much so that their leaves withered away and eventually died, having no choice of moving away since they were deep rooted. However, this cannot be accepted from man.

Even animals do not entertain such excuses. There are great numbers of migrating animals, such as birds, that got used to moving away from their natural habitat when the weather changes. There are some species of fish which migrate twice a year pursuant to the change of climate, i.e. from summer to winter and vice versa, covering thousands of kilometers in the process. Locust is yet another example of migrating animals. So, animals refuse to get bogged down in their habitat, taking to migration instead.

Thus, it is repugnant of man to give as pretext the unbecoming surroundings to justify his staying in the mire and falling prey to the temptations and immoral practices that engulf him, blaming the sins he has committed on the environment he has become part of, rather than himself.

This goes against the divine logic "He who forsakes his home in the cause of God, finds in the earth many a refuge, wide and spacious..." (4: 100). That is, you can get to the land where you would be able to fight back (or wage jihad) against the enemies of God in the same way they fight you to deny you your beliefs and principles. You should fight back against the enemy's beliefs and principles; in other words, you engage them in struggle (or jihad).

The other definition or interpretation for the concept of jihad is governed by the same principle of struggle. The difference being that you are battling with your tempting self, i.e. the enemy within. Some people have become compulsive liars and when you take issue with them as to why they do it, they say: Is there anyone who does not lie? No doubt, man can, sometimes, be driven to lying. Among other examples are those who you turn to and ask them to lower their gaze, i.e. not to look at that which God has ordained haraam (unlawful). They reply in astonishment, "Can any person not do that?"

You counsel another person among the faithful to set their hearts and minds towards God in prayer, and not to be distracted by mundane issues. They reply that it is impossible. And yet, should this appeal have been far-fetched, God would have not ordained it. The problem is that some people have become used to paying lip service to some devotional acts, especially prayer, not even trying to concentrate on the job in hand, and do away with inattention, while they are in audience with their Creator. If they had tried they would have said their prayer in complete submission, humility and attention.

Provided that you remain watchful for your own self and battle with it against its temptations, you should be in control of your intellectual capacity and conscience. Imagination is a transient state of mind and thus is not capable of overcoming your intellect, if you did not want that and make it possible.

Should you be in control, you would be able to restrain your mental power and prevent it from becoming victim to lack of concentration. Why should man become a slave to others while God has created him free from any bondage to any one? God has endowed man with power, freedom and independence. Consequently, if he so desires, he would be able to set himself free from everything; rather, it is in his power to control everything. Yet, this requires genuine willpower and jihad (struggle), not least with the enemy within, i.e. one's own self, which is inclined to beautify committing what is evil. It requires going against one's love for comfort, good living and the enslavement to lust. He who is not prepared to engage in such a struggle is not worthy of acceptance and respect.

God has bestowed on man the gift of reason. Thus, it is incumbent on him to choose one of two paths – either battling with his tempting self, which is often inclined to lure you to do what is vile, and put it under the control of your intellect, and this is the road of perfection and advancement. The second alternative is giving up that struggle in return for leaving the tempting soul rule supreme where the result would inevitably be that you become subservient to its own whims. This is the road that leads to the lowest point of the low. If you do not keep it preoccupied, it will engage you and keep you on your toes and at its service.

What was the philosophy of Imam Ali's (zuhd) asceticism (or indifference to worldly things)? It revolves around activating the power of freedom man enjoys and controlling his ego. Imam Ali (a.s) hated to be defeated in combat by external foes, such as Amr bin Wid and Marhab. Similarly, he hated to give in to the enemy within, i.e. his own ego and inclinations. That is, he did not want his desires to achieve a victory over him.

It is related that one day the Imam (a.s.) was going through a marketplace when he passed a butcher's shop. The butcher said to him that he had fresh meat that day and pressed him to buy some of it. The Imam answered that he did not have money on him then. The butcher said that he would sell him the meat on credit. The Imam said, "Rather, I would say to my stomach to be patient. And if I cannot do that to my stomach, I would rather ask you to be patient until I got the money. Nevertheless, I shall say to my stomach to be patient." Speaking of his philosophy of asceticism (zuhd), he had this to say, "If I wanted, I would have found the way to enjoying the best produce of honey, wheat, and linen."

Thus, Ali (a.s.) could, if he wanted, acquire the best of this world's enjoyments, for he knew the way to them, and yet he did not want to. Why? This is his answer to this question, "How preposterous! I am not going to let my inclination win over my resoluteness." He then turned his attention to the life of this world and addressed it, thus, "O Life of this World! Leave me alone. I have given you free rein. I have managed to extricate myself from your clutches and slip away from your snares."⁵

[This is an epilogue to the lecture, i.e. going back to telling part of the story of the Karbala tragedy – the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (a.s.)]:

The eleventh of Muharram, 61 AH. [Circa 680 CE.] was one of the worst days that the Progeny of the

Prophet (a.s.) had witnessed. Examining the tragedy of Karbala from its both ends, i.e. the shining side that is full of vivid images of bravery, patience and sacrifice in the cause of God and the dark side that teems with the ugliest imagery of treachery, vileness, and crime, the implications of the dialogue between God and the angels when He was informing them of Adam's creation, would become manifestly clear,

“Behold, thy Lord said to the angels; I will create a vicegerent on earth. They said: Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? Whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)? He said: I know what ye know not.” (2:30).

All that which the angels saw of the nature of man and his ability to do mischief, his capacity for going astray and arrogance, was demonstrated at the battle of Karbala. And yet, alongside that evil, the epitomes of virtue and sublimity were also established. The angels did not see these luminous aspects of man, when God Almighty addressed them, thus, “I know what ye know not.”

Indeed, Karbala was a strange battleground for trials. The criminals committed the most heinous crimes. Among those was the act of violence perpetrated against children and young people, beheading them and tearing their corpses to pieces before the eyes of their mothers. Those who were massacred in this way on that day in Karbala were eight, three youth and five children. Among those eight victims was Abdullah bin al-Hussain, who was still an infant. He was martyred in front of the tent that housed the members of al-Hussain's family.

It has been reported by the historians of wars that Imam Hussain called on his sister, Zeinab and said to her, “Bring me my infant baby to bid him farewell.” As al-Hussain was taking the baby in his arms, cuddling it, Ibn Sa'ad shot him with an arrow that was embedded in his neck, slaying him.

Al-Qassim, son of Imam al-Hassan (a.s.) was another of the Karbala martyrs, whose killing, in that gruesome way, was witnessed by his mother. As for Laila, the mother of Ali al-Akbar, [the eldest son of Imam Hussain (a.s.)], she was not present on that day, despite the fact that there have been reports confirming her presence.

Awn bin Abdulla bin Ja'far was another martyr who was killed in the same way. His mother, Zeinab, [daughter of Imam Ali (a.s.)], witnessed his killing.⁶ Zeinab had demonstrated a noble character and sublime upbringing, in that historians are almost unanimous in confirming that she did not mention anything about her son, be it before or after his martyrdom, as she must have been aware of what was going to happen to her brother, Imam Hussain (a.s.). So, she treated the sacrifice of her son as a small contribution towards defending her brother and the principles he stood for. This self-denial was evident when she came out of her tent in the wake of the martyrdom of her nephew, Ali al-Akbar, lamenting his death.

Another of the martyrs of Karbala was a boy, aged ten. Historiographers have it that the boy came out of his tent disorientated after the martyrdom of Imam Hussain. He was distraught because the events,

which were unfolding before his eyes, overwhelmed him. He was spotted by one of the enemy camp who descended upon him, beheaded him and snatched two earrings he was wearing. This happened in the presence of his mother, who went out to look for him.

Another young boy met his death that day in a shocking manner. It was Abdullah bin Imam al-Hassan (a.s.), who was around ten years old. It is said that when his father died he was either still in his mother's womb or a suckling sibling. He was brought up by his uncle, Imam Hussain (a.s.). That is why there was a strong bond between uncle and nephew.

Although Imam Hussain ordered members of his family not to venture out of their tents, yet he could not bear staying put after his uncle fell to the ground having been fatally wounded in the battle. He broke free from her aunt's hands, Zeinab, who was trying to restrain him, and ran towards his uncle, shouting, "By God! I am not going to part with my uncle." Having reached the place where his uncle fell, he threw himself on his uncle's chest. Imam Hussain (a.s.) showed utmost forbearance and hugged the boy. In the meantime, a soldier of the enemy's camp was about to drive his sword into the body of Imam Hussain when the boy yelled at him, saying, "O son of the evil one! Are you killing my uncle?" He then raised his arm to prevent the sword blow from reaching the body of his uncle. The full force of the blow fell on his arm, severing it. The boy shouted, "O Uncle! Help!" [While still lying, suffering from his wounds], the Imam embraced his nephew tighter, saying to him, "O my nephew! Show patience for what has befallen you. God will soon unite you with your pure fathers and forefathers – The Messenger of God, Ali, Hamza, Ja'far and al-Hassan."

[It is customary to conclude lectures, such as this one, given to big gatherings, with the following prayer (supplication)]:

O God! Fill our hearts up with the light of faith. Fill them up with Your love and the love of your friends. O God! Increase our faith and make our hearts fast set on Your religion. O God! Grant the sick among the faithful a speedy recovery and shower our dead with Your forgiveness and mercy. O God! Accept our works and the works of those who seek, with effort and/or money, to hold commemorative assemblies for the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (a.s.) and glorify Your worship and propagate His injunctions. O God! Out of Your Grace, give us of the sustenance of this world and the next. There is neither power nor refuge except with God Almighty. And may peace be with Muhammad and his Pure Progeny.

1. The type of moving around that is not commendable is that the person wanders aimlessly about just to be aloof from people, with the intention of retiring to remote areas and mountains for exclusive "worship".

In Al-Hur al-Amili's *Wasa'il ush-Shia*, vol, 11, p. 10, it has been reported that Othman bin Madh'oun approached the Prophet and expressed a wish to retire to the mountains. The Prophet said to him, "O Othman! Do not do it, the journeying of members of my ummah (community) is jihad. "

Also, in Sheikh an-Nouri's *Mustadrakul Wasa'il*, vol. 2, p.245 (lithograph) it is related that a man took to a mountain to retire for worship. His family brought him to the Messenger of God (s.a.w.), [complaining of his behaviour]. The Prophet discouraged him from so doing, and said, "If a believer shows resilience and perseverance in jihad for only one day, it is

more meritorious for him than a forty-year worship”.

2. However, if we examine his statement from a spiritual perspective, we would find out that he was aspiring to shake off the yoke of materialism in order to roam in the noble world of spiritualism. In the metaphor, he likened the materialistic world to Alexander’s prison and the sublime spiritual life to the kingdom of Solomon.

3. “Finds in the earth many a refuge, wide and spacious” means that the earth is vast, that is, it is not confined to the vicinity where the person lives. “Muragham”, which came in the context of the verse, means fine dust or sand. “Dipping one’s nose in the dust or the like” is a metaphor for the voluntary practice in prayer, as an expression of humility before God.

4. The power of the expression/argument in this verse lies in the fact that it does not only set out to demolish the reasons “those who were deemed weak in the land” had put forward for going astray, i.e. the general decadence of society, but gives the alternative – the way out – to break free from the status quo. That is, commending the act of immigration in the cause of God, in that the immigrant’s reward would come from God; it also sets out the benefits arising from taking to immigration (hijra). That is, the immigrant would find in the land more space to observe one’s acts of worship.

5. The text is part of the letter Imam Ali (a.s.) sent to his governor of Basrah, Othman bin Hanif. (Vol. 4, p. 590, Darul Andulus, Beirut, as noted by Sheikh Muhammad Abdah). You may also look it up in Nahjul Balagha, Beirut new edition, Catalogued by Dr. Subhi as-Saleh, Letter No. 45.

6. Abdullah bin Ja’far, Zainab’s husband, had two sons who were martyred in the Battle of Karbala. One was Awn, who was Zainab’s son and the second was by another wife.

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