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And whoso goes forth from his house as 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. (4:100)

The holy religion of Islam is based on the two pillars of migration and jihad (spiritual and religious struggle upon the way of God). The Quran sanctifies both matters and praises profoundly those who migrate.

Migration means leaving one's home and dwelling and Setting off for another destination in order to save religion and faith This matter is referred to in many verses of the Quran The Muslims of early Islam consisted of two groups: The Emigrants and the Companions. The Companions were

In Medina and the Emigrants were those who left their town and Went to Medina. Migration and jihad cannot be abrogated; both are permanent decrees which conditions might at any time make necessary.

To remove misunderstanding, let me explain that other interpretations are also made of both migration and jihad. It has been said, "An emigrant is one who abandons sins." Is this meaning proper? If so, then all penitents in the world who avoid sin are emigrants. Two examples may be given here: Fuzeil bin Iyaz and Bashir Hafi. Fuzeil was a thief at the beginning but a change of heart made him reject all sins and repent sincerely. Later he was known not only as a virtuous man but as a guide and teacher of others. In his former days he climbed a wall to enter a house where as it happened a devout man kept awake praying and reading the Quran. He heard the melodious voice of the man reading a verse of the Holy Quran.

When he heard it, sitting on the wall, he thought, "It is a revelation addressed directly to me. Yes, oh God, it is time, this very moment." He climbed down and from that moment on, he abandoned theft, drinking and gambling and whatever other vices he had. He restored as much property as was possible and whatever other vices he had. He restored as much property as was possible to their owners and made up for all his missed acts of worship. Thus, he was an emigrant from sin.

In the time of Imam Musa Kazim, peace be upon him, there was a man in Baghdad called Bashir Hafi who was a pleasure–loving aristocrat. One day the Imam was passing by this man's house when a maid came out to leave the rubbish somewhere. At the same time, the sound of music was heard from the house. It seemed that some kind of revelry was going on there. The Imam tauntingly asked whose house it was and whether or not the owner was a slave or a free man. The maid answered in surprise, "Don't you know? This is the house of Bashir Hafi. How could he be a slave?" The Imam said, "He must be free to be engaged thus. If he were a slave his conduct would be different. "Then the Imam went on his way.

When the maid returned to the house, Bashir asked why she had been gone so long. She related the conversation she had with a man who, according to her, looked very virtuous and religious. By her description, Bashir realized that it could not have been anyone but the Imam. He felt a sudden change of heart and eagerly asked which direction he had taken. On being told, he ran out bare–footed and managed to catch up with the Imam. He fell at the Imam's feet, sobbing and admitted his interest in being a slave from that minute onward, a slave of God. He repented his past conduct and on returning home, threw away all the implements of revelry and began a life of virtue and devotion. Thus he may be considered another emigrant from sin.

There is a similar interpretation about jihad. It is said that a mujahid (one who engages in religious and spiritual struggle in the way of God) is one who combats the self and fights against his or her carnal desires.

Ali, peace be upon him, says, "The bravest person is he who conquers his own desires." One day the Holy Prophet was passing through a street in Medina. He saw a number of youths who were engaged in a contest of lifting a heavy stone. The Prophet asked if they would like him to act as a judge of the contest. They eagerly agreed. Then the Prophet said, "There is no need to lift the stone to see which of you is the strongest. I can say that the strongest person is he who in his desire for a sin is able to control that desire. Such a person is truly a brave warrior."

A story is related about Puryayeh Vali who is considered a great world champion as well as a symbol of chivalry and manliness. Once he had visited another country for a wrestling contest with its champion. In the street he came across an old woman who was offering people sweets as charity and begging them to pray for her son. She approached Puryayeh and offered her sweets. He asked what it was for. She said, "My son is a wrestling champion who is challenged by a champion from another country. We live on the income he gets from wrestling and if he loses this contest, we will have nothing to live on." He said he was at a cross–road whether to show his strength or his manliness in the next day's contest. Although he was far stronger than his adversary, he wrestled in such a way as to let him win. He says that at that moment he suddenly felt that his heart was opened by God and it seemed as if he was surrounded by angels. He fought his own desire and thus joined the rank of saints.

There is another story about Ali, peace be upon him, and Amr ibn Abdawud, a champion who had stood

alone against a thousand men. In the Battle of the Trench, the Muslims were on one side of the trench and the enemy, on the other, so that the enemy could not cross it. A few of the infidels including Amr managed to get to the other side challenging the Muslims who were afraid to face him since they were aware of his strength. The Prophet asked who would take the challenge but no one moved except a young man of 23 or 24 and that was Ali, peace be upon him. The Prophet did not give him leave.

Umar said to the Prophet that as no one came forth, Ali, peace be upon him, should be allowed to proceed. Ali, peace be upon him, faced Amr and knocked this great champion down and sat on his chest to kill him. But Amr spat in Ali's face in anger for his defeat. Ali, peace be upon him, was offended greatly at this mean conduct. He arose from the enemy's chest and walked about for a while to curb his anger. When Amr asked him the reason for his hesitation, he answered, "I did not wish to kill you in anger for I am fighting for God and in this task there is no room for wrath." This is what a brave warrior is like.

Another interpretation of the jihad is combatting one's self. The Prophet called it the greater jihad. But some people were diverted by this interpretation, supposing that migration was only abandoning sin and jihad was only against the self. Thus, they forgot that migration also means abandoning an undesirable place and jihad also includes fighting foreign enemies. Thus, Islam believes in two kinds of migration and two kinds of jihad. If we negate one type of either under the pretext of the other, we are diverted from the teachings of Islam.

The saints of our religion including the holy Prophets, Imam Ali and all the other Imams were all strivers and migrants. From a spiritual point of view, there are stages which cannot be passed except through these actions. A man who has never entered the field of jihad cannot be called a mujahid and one who has not migrated may not win the epithet of an emigrant.

From the view of Islam, marriage is sacred in several practical ways (unlike Christianity where celibacy is considered to be sacred). What is the reason for this? One of the reasons is in educating man's spirit. It is a kind of maturity and perfection which is not obtainable except through marriage. If a man or a woman remains single to the end of his/her life, even if that life is spent in asceticism, devotion, prayer and in combat with vices, there is still a kind of immaturity noticeable in each of them. That is why marriage is recommended as a necessary tradition.

The factors which are efficacious in man's education are so in their proper spheres and none of them can take the place of another. Migration and jihad, too, are factors which cannot be replaced by any other factor. Nor can one kind of each factor take the place of the other kind.

What is the duty of individuals under different conditions? For not all conditions are those of jihad and migration.

The Holy Prophet has seen to this and told us that the duty of a Muslim is to be serious in his intention to migrate or enter jihad whenever conditions so necessitate it. Thus a person who has never fought or never thought of fighting will in his death pass away in a kind of hypocrisy while those who cherish the

intention to migrate or fight in a jihad under necessary conditions, may attain the rank. of emigrants and crusaders.

The Holy Quran says,

"Such believers as sit at home, unless they have an injury, are not the equals of those who struggle in the path of God with their possessions and their selves over the ones who sit at home, yet to each God has promised the reward most fair and God has preferred those who struggle over the ones who sit at home for the bounty of a mighty wage..." (4:95)

What God is telling us here is that the Muslims who are mujahids, fighters in the path of God with their wealth and their lives and those who sit in their homes (in disobedience to the Quran) merely on the pretext of 'those who are ready to fight are enough," are not all equal. The Holy Quran does not reproach those who sit in their homes due to some excess like blindness or being lame or ill, whose mentalities and intentions are such that if they were not handicapped in this way, they would be the first to rush to jihad in the path of God. Perhaps they too have the level of mujahids.

When Ali, peace be upon him, returned from the Battle of Siffin, someone came to him and said, "I wish my brother was with you in the battle." Ali said, "What was his intention? Did he have an excuse or not? If he had no excuse for not joining us, all the better that he did not come. But if his heart was with us though he could not join us for a reason, he may be considered to have been with us." The man said, "He did intend to join you." Ali, peace be upon him, said, "Then not only was your brother with us but even those who are still in the wombs of their mothers or in the loins of their fathers may be considered as having joined us."

What is meant by 'waiting for the advent?' Some people suppose it to mean waiting for the twelfth Imam to reappear one day with his three hundred and thirteen special companions and other followers to destroy the enemies of Islam, to establish peace and prosperity and perfect freedom, for us to enjoy. What is really meant by waiting for relief (through the advent of the Imam Mahdi) is the hope of joining Imam Mahdi on his reappearance in the holy war and perhaps even attaining martyrdom. That is the hearty wish of every true Muslim and striver.

It never means sitting by until everything is put into order and then benefitting from the subsequent blessings. The Prophet's companions said, "We are not like Moses' tribe." When this tribe reached near Palestine, they said to Moses, 'You and your God can go and fight the enemy, and we will sit here until everything is all right." Moses asked, "What do you think is your duty? Your duty is to drive out the enemy who has occupied your home." The Prophet's companions said, "We are not like Moses' tribe. We will do whatever you command." Thus, waiting for relief means aiding Imam Mahdi in fighting and reforming the world.

Many of us in praying wish to have accompanied Imam Husain, peace be upon him, to have won salvation. Is this claim made in all sincerity? In some cases it is, but in others it is not.

On the night before his martyrdom, Imam Husain, peace be upon him, said, "I know of no better and more loyal companions than mine." A great Shi'ite man of learning stated that he did not believe the above statement was really made by Imam Husain, peace be upon him, for, according to them, the Imam's companions did not do much against the enemy's cruelty. It was the duty of every ordinary Muslim to offer his service to the grandson of the Prophet and Ali's son. Those who abstained from assisting him must have been wicked people. This learned man says that God made him realize his mistake by means of a dream. He dreamed that he was in the battlefield of Karbala and had come to the Imam to offer his services.

The Imam told him that he would give him instructions in its proper time. It was the time of the ritual prayer and the Imam told him to stand guard in case the enemy started shooting while the Imams and his companions performed the noon ritual prayer. Suddenly an arrow was shot towards him and as he bent himself to avoid it, it struck the Imam. He says that in his dream he felt ashamed and penitent in evading the arrow and said he would not do so another time. But he repeated his former action to avoid the next three shots which again struck the Imam's body. "I never found better and more loyal companions than mine." His companions were men of action, not words. On the 10th of Muharram, most of Imam Husain's companions had been killed while a few of them and members of his household were still alive by noon.

In the first phase of the battle, the two sides faced each other. The Imam's side consisted of only 72 warriors but looking valiant and steadfast. The Imam arranged his little army by placing Zahir bin Alghin at the head of the right flank, Habib on the left flank and his brave brother Abul Fazl as his own standard bearer. The commanders asked permission to begin the fight.

Meanwhile Umar Sa'd as a commander of the enemy's side had been hesitant about beginning the battle, intending to satisfy both sides. He kept on writing letters to the Imam proposing some kind of compromise. Ibn Ziad as the enemy's commander–in–chief was annoyed at this conduct and ordered him either to act at once or yield the command to someone else.

Umar ibn Sa'd fearing that his former procrastination may have caused him loss of face with his superiors as well as the chance of being given the governorship of Rey, tried to make up for it by showing excessive cruelty and was the first man to shoot at the Imam's tent, calling the men around him to witness this act and report it in his favor to ibn Ziad.

The late Shaykh Ayati used to say in his sermons that the Battle of Karbala began with one arrow, shot by Umar ibn Sa'd and ended with another, when a poisoned arrow struck the Imam on the chest so that he ceased to proclaim his challenge against the enemy and only had time to pray to God. "In the Name of God, in God and for the sake of the nation of the Prophet of God."

One of Imam Husain's companions called Abbas ibn Abi Shubiyb faced the enemy bravely and challenged them. No one dared to take up the challenge. In anger he returned to the camp, took off his

battle dress and came back to the battlefield again almost naked and challenged the enemy. Again no one came forth but they treacherously threw stones and broken swords at him and finally killed him.

The Imam's companions showed amazing manliness and loyalty on the last day of the battle. Both men and women created scenes which are unrivalled in human history. Abdullah ibn Umar Kalbi was one of these valiant men who had brought his wife and mother with him. When he wanted to set off for the field, his newly wed wife stopped him demanding what would happen to her if he was killed. His mother interrupted her telling him not to pay attention to his wife since that day was a day of trial and if he did not sacrifice himself for the Imam s she would not forgive him as a mother. Abdullah joined the battle and was killed. Then his mother picked up a tent pole and rushed upon the enemy. The Imam told her to return as women were not obliged to fight in Islam and she picked up the head, kissed it and pressed it tightly to her breast, saying, "Well done, my son. I am satisfied with you." Then she threw the head back at the enemy saying, "We do not take back what we have offered in the way of God."

Among those who offered their service to him was a boy of twelve who had tied a sword to his waist asking for leave to fight as his father had already been killed. The Imam said, "I fear that your mother may not be willing" he answered, "It was my mother who gave me leave and told me that if I did not offer my life for the sake of the Imam, she would not forgive me." It was customary for the Arabs to introduce themselves on entering the battlefield but this boy did not do so and remained unknown. His battle cry in the face of the enemy was original for he said, "I am one whose master is Husain and what a good master he is, oh people." He considered this enough. In conclusion I pray to God to illuminate our hearts with the light of faith and make us true migrants and warriors in the religion of Islam and give us victory over its enemies and enable us to win His satisfaction.

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