

Responsibilities Of Muslim Immigrants

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O My bondmen who believe! spacious is My earth; therefore serve ye Me (and Me alone) (-XXIX: 56)

The aim of man's existence, in the sight of God, is submission, i.e., to attain a true awareness of God, and lead one's life in conformity with his commands, and seek His countenance by following the path laid down by the sacred Prophet, and make provision for the Hereafter. This is the real aim. All the other things are the means to it. You will, of course, be knowing the significance of ends and means. The seeking out of the ways of gaining the propinquity of the Lord, the creation of a suitable climate for it, and the development of a critical sense which made it easy to observe the God-given laws and there remained no question of compulsion or of any other power to obtrude or give a parallel call—all these are the means. The Quran has alluded to it in these words:

... Until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah. (II: 193)

What it denotes is that the state is reached in which Truth is triumphant and no battles are waged for the souls of men and they do not have to undergo the ordeal of deciding which way to turn: only God is obeyed and divine honours are paid to Him alone. There prevail justice and faith in Allah. For it is preaching, and the sanctioning of what is right and forbidding of what is wrong, and, if need be, even Jihad. For it is Islam to be made stronger and brought into power and authority so that even for the fainthearted people it might not become so hard to follow the path indicated by Allah that they gave way to despair and decided that it was beyond their endurance.

So, the end and object of all these things is the worship of Allah. I created the jinn and humankind only that they might worship Me. (LI: 56). Let us be clear in our minds for I have noticed a good deal of confusion concerning it in Europe and America. They fail to distinguish between the ends and means. The aim, simply, is to earn the good pleasure of the Lord. Our end and intention ought to be to spend in His way the life and capabilities He has granted us so that the object of life is fulfilled, God is pleased with us on the Day of Resurrection and favours us with His propinquity and we attain the highest place in Paradise. This is the real aim. If it is being realised any- where then blessed is the place, and if it is not being realised even in one's native land, it should be left for good, Home, parents, wives, children, kinsmen, property, trade—everything must fade into insignificance before duty to God. No worldly attachments should be allowed to stand in its way.

Say : If your, fathers, and your sons, and your brethren and your wives, and your tribe, and the wealth ye have acquired, and merchandise for which ye fear that there will be no sale, and dwellings ye desire are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in his way: then wait till Allah bringeth His command to pass. Allah guideth not wrong-doing folk. (-IX: '414)

The charm and attractiveness of Mecca is proverbial. We learn from the Quran that when Hazrat Ibrahim (Abraham) had settled his helpless wife and infant child in that uncultivable valley, he made the prayer: So incline some hearts of men that they may yearn towards them. (XIV: 37). The prayer was granted in all respects. Overpowering, really, is the beauty and loveliness of the city of Mecca where there is the Home of Ka'aba, the Well of Zam Zam, the hills of Safa and Marwa, and, then, close to it are Mina and Arafat. But when the holy Prophet felt that it was becoming extremely difficult for the Muslims to worship God in that wonderful town, he told them to migrate to Abyssinia. He did so in order that they lead their lives in conformity with the Faith. The Prophet observed: -You cannot worship God here: you cannot offer Namaz; you are forced to bow your heads before the idols; God is treated with insolence in your presence: so migrate to Abyssinia". Twice did the Muslims move out to Abyssinia. Finally, the Prophet himself was commanded to leave Mecca and go to Medina. If a city like Mecca could be abandoned for the sake of God, in order that He was worshipped in freedom, what to speak to the other towns whether they be New York. London. Toronto, Chicago, Delhi, Lucknow, Kufa. Basra. Cordoba. Granada. Cairo or Damascus. Only that place is beautiful and worth living in where the commands of the Lord can be observed, and where it may not be possible, even if it is one's native land or any other country, it should be left for good.

Brothers!

I travelled to the United States and saw a number of its cities. Now I am here in Canada. On the one hand, it has made me happy to see Muslims belonging to different countries in North America. and, on the other. I wonder if you can lead a fully Islamic life here. Will it be possible for your descendants to remain true to Islam ? Will the Islamic spirit abide in you undiminished? It is a serious matter. Do not take offence? Many of you have come here for economic reasons. A brother told me plainly, - We have come here to earn our livelihood." It is not sinful. There is no harm in going to a place where a purely materialistic way of life prevails and heedlessness towards the Futurity is rampant, but the decision to settle down there permanently requires careful consideration. If you are confident that you can live here in confirmity with the will of the Lord, and you are being useful to Islam and are safeguarding your own faith as well as caring for the faith of others, and are, also, engaged in economic activities according to your needs then it is alright, and -I will go on to say that your stay is propitious. God may take from you the task of spreading the guidance in this land, and, one day, it might adopt Islam. It is not inconceivable. When the Muslim traders arrived in the Far East, whole countries were converted to Islam and the Muslims are in a majority in Malaysia and Indonesia and in so many islands of the Indian Ocean even today. If you will care to enquire, you will know that Islam spread mainly through the efforts of the Arab traders or the Sufi-saints. In my own sub-continent, vast areas like Sind, Kashmir and Bangla Desh are indebted to the Sufi-saints for their conversion to Islam.

Your stay here is not only justified, but also a Jihad if you have made sure of the preservation of Islam for yourselves and your future generations and are carrying out the duty of the preaching and propagation of Faith and presenting an image of the Islamic way of life which is attractive to others. But in case it is otherwise and your aim is simply to

make money then it falls much short of the Islamic ideal. It is not worthy of a Muslim to undertake such a long voyage only for economic gain.

The Lord is the Giver of sustenance, and this Attribute of His is not bound down by geographical limitations. I am speaking to you in a practical vein. All this is related wholly to action and practice. You can hear the intellectual subtleties at some other time and from some other theologian. I am only telling you frankly in the light of what I have seen here.

I unequivocally declare that if your life and your stay here are beneficial to Islam and you are paving the way for it, your migration to this land is not only justifiable, but also an act of worship. On the contrary, if your Faith and the religious life of your children are not assured, I shudder at the thought in what state death might come, and, then, would we tell God that we had come here only to earn livelihood. This is neither the Islamic character nor does it befit a Muslim. Nevertheless, if you have taken due care that your Faith remains unblemished, and you are associated with some religious endeavour, and have built up an Islamic environment or founded a circle in which religious activities are promoted and the Lord is remembered and attention is paid to the life of the Hereafter. and you have, also, arranged for the religious instruction of your children then you have my sincere good wishes. This last thing is very important for when, on the Day of Judgement, the children will be asked in what a miserable state they had come that they knew neither the name of God nor of His Apostle, they will reply: Our Lord; We obeyed our chiefs and our great ones. and they misled us as to the (right) path. (XXXIII: 67).

The Quran says:

O ye who believe; Ward off from yourselves and your families a Fire whereof the fuel is men and stones. (LXVI: 6).

Your children will, of course, be going to school. But, also, set aside for them a couple of hours in which they can receive religious instruction and learn about Monotheism and Apostle-ship, without which no one can be a Muslim, and it is impressed upon them, that it is sinful to die on another Way than Islam.

Die not save as men who have surrendered (unto Him). (-If: 132)

Forgive my plain-speaking, but these are some practical things you must give heed to after taking up residence in this country. If you devote a little of your time to the theological education of your progeny and the generation of an Islamic atmosphere then live here by all means. Maybe, God has sent you to this land for it.

I regard the stay of only those Muslims here as justified who have taken adequate steps for the protection of their Faith and made the preaching of the Word of God among the non-Muslims the aim of their life. Or else, even this much is not certain that a Muslim who dies here will be buried according to the Islamic rites.

A relation of mine called, Molvi Mudassir, who is settled in Boston, related to me that as a Haji died. He was told on the phone to participate in the last rites. On reaching there, he found that the dead body of the Haji, dressed in a Western suit, complete 'with the neck-tie and wearing a gold ring had been placed in a wooden chest, and Christian men and women

were coming in, kissing the body and placing wreaths on the coffin. May God bless Molvi Mudassir with a long life-education in the Arabic Madrassas, after all, bears fruit-, he took the Haji's son aside and told him that he was going back, "Why?" asked the Haji's son, upon which he said, "Will you do what I tell or not" ? The Haji's son replied, "I had requested your presence and will act on your advice". "Then", said Molvi Mudassir, "first of all, take off the suit and tell these people to go away from here. I will bathe the dead body and cover it with a shroud as prescribed by the Shariat. And, also, remove the ring", "Do not remove the ring", interjected the Haji's son. "Other- wise, my mother will die of shock" "I shall take off the ring," replied – Molvi Mudassir. "If you fear that your mother will die of heart failure, don't tell her now". After much persuasion, the Haji's son agreed and the ring was removed.

A youngman educated in our Madrassas happened to be present at that time, otherwise God alone knows how many Muslims are buried here in that way.

Another similar incident that has come into my knowledge is concerning an Egyptian scholar who was also the author of a book on Islam in English. He had an American wife. When he died, he was buried in a Christian cemetery as the Muslim graveyard was at a distance.

Happenings like these are so horrible that even if a Muslim saw them in a dream, he would scream, "Oh God! Have mercy on me". Fie upon us that they became common and we remained unmoved.

So, brothers, care for yourselves and for your children, and see to it that they remained Muslims. Otherwise your immigration makes no sense to me. You are in danger and so is your country. Had the brain drain not continued unchecked and the youngmen who are coming to settle down here from India and Pakistan stayed back, they would have been a source of strength to their communities, subordinates and parents. The number of Arabs- in America is increasing day by day. They could have proved a great asset to their native lands if they had decided not to migrate. Coming here merely for larger salaries and better living conditions is beyond my comprehension. It is a question upon which serious thought must be bestowed.