

Advice to a [Muslim] Resident in Non-Muslim Lands

Shaykh Aboo `Abd-al-Mu`iz `Alee Farkous al-Qoobee

Article taken and slightly adapted from: ferkous.com

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

It should not be overlooked that travelling to non-Muslim countries, residing there and living amongst them is from the greatest damages and dangerous risks on the religion of the Muslim.

Furthermore, his residency there entails damages and calamities which are reflected on his behaviour, morality and customs. He is not safe in three of his inviolable limits: body, honour and wealth. Cohabitation – as it is well known– entails conformity, and induces to the degeneracy and the acquisition of the unbelievers' character as well as to their imitation in their habits, celebrations, to speak their language and to resemble them in their behaviour and characters, in addition to what they manifest by way of their disbelief and atheism. All this leads –in one way or another– to their homogeneity that could result in losing the Muslim's Islaamic Identity in relation to his Islaamic traditions, dealings and actions, as the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم clarified in the hadeeth: "**Whoever assembles and resides with the polytheist, he is then similar him.**" It also applies to the person who is pleased with the unbelievers and loves them, based on the saying of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم: "**The person is with the one whom he loves.**"¹ The meaning of this hadeeth is supported by another hadeeth where the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "**Whoever imitates a given people, then he is of them.**"² Ibn Taymeeyah رحمه الله commenting on this hadeeth said: The hadeeth, at the very least, points to the prohibition of resembling the disbelievers, while the literal wording of the hadeeth points to the disbelief of the one who resembles them. It is similar to the speech of Allaah:

وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ

[And whoever is an ally to them among you - then indeed, he is [one] of them]³

It is because of these dangers and risks that emigration from the non-Muslim lands to the Muslim lands became a certain obligation on the one residing in the non-Muslim lands, who is being persecuted in his religion, body, wealth, or honour and who suffers to an extent that he neglects the obligations and leaves duties of Islaam, oversteps Allaah's limits and

¹ Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim

² Related by Aboo Daawood and Ibn Hibbaan graded it as Saheeh.

³ Soorah al-Maa'idah [4:51]

Advice to a [Muslim] Resident in Non-Muslim Lands

violates His prohibitions, and he is unable –Being in the Land of disbelief wherein there exist exigencies of psychological and intellectual pressures together with their physical mechanisms– to set up the reasons which revolve around faith and good deeds that would save him from the Hell fire; acting according to the speech of Allaah:

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

[O' you, who believe, save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones, over which are [appointed] angels, harsh and severe; they do not disobey Allaah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded]⁴

This being said, his emigration may not reach the level of being an obligation in the case where the harm he receives while living in the non-Muslim lands does not entail abandoning some of the Islaamic obligatory duties.

Therefore the main purpose of emigrating to Allaah is to provide a safe environment, without any type of fear and harm, and to bring about strengthening of the body with Halaal sustenance in a safe country that guarantees the worship of Allaah, which is a means of self purification and getting closer to Allaah, and for the Muslim will have firm trust and contentment that the promise of Allaah is true come to pass for certainty Allaah –Exalted be He– said:

وَمَنْ يُهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرَاعًا كَثِيرًا وَسَعَةً

[And whoever emigrates for the cause of Allaah will find on the earth many [alternative] locations and abundance]⁵

Therefore Allaah prepares for him in the land of emigrating safety, honour, sustenance and good living. Consider the first Muslims who emigrated, consider how Allaah gave them authority in the land, replaced their weakness with strength, their humiliation with honour, their poverty with wealth and their ignorance with knowledge. Allaah –Exalted be He– said:

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ الَّذِي ارْتَضَى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا يَعْبُدُونَنِي لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِي شَيْئًا

[Allaah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish for them [therein] their religion which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me]⁶

This is the promise of Allaah for those who follow his path and worship Him alone without associating partners with him in worship.

⁴ Soorah at-Tahreem [66:6]

⁵ Soorah an-Nisaa [4:100]

⁶ Soorah an-Noor [24:55]

Advice to a [Muslim] Resident in Non-Muslim Lands

However, If there is a legislated necessity or pressing need to reside temporarily in the land of the non-Muslims for the purpose of Da'wah or for an Islaamic reason or for a worldly purpose, whether it is a necessity or a lesser need, like work, business, education, medical treatment, or another reason which is permissible in Islaam and not possible to achieve or to attain in his native country, then in this case the scholars make an exception from the general prohibition [mentioned in the previous hadeeths and verses], so long as the person meets the compulsory conditions of travel to a non-Muslim land, which are as follows:

- The traveller must know the rulings (Ahkaam) of his religion that will be enough to protect his religion, so that his faith and Islaam will not be affected by the tribulations of doubts and the fear of being misguided by desires.
- He must be able to display the rituals of Islaam completely, performing it fully without fear or opposition. These include the establishment of the obligatory prayers, Fasting Ramadhaan, performing Hajj and suchlike. Also included is the outward appearance, of general forms of dress and etiquettes, where he will not be prevented from showing his difference from the polytheists in these matters.
- He must be able to stick to the belief of allegiance and disavowal that is one of the necessities and conditions of the Islaamic testimony of faith by avoiding any loyalties and association to the non-Muslims and loving them in their way. So he remains disliking them and having inward enmity to them and not being pleased with their actions because from the rights of disavowal is hatred of polytheism and disbelief and their followers, hatred that is devoid of any love or cordiality. Also he should not imitate them in what characterises them in their religion as well as in their worldly matters, where he is distinguished from them in his manners and his appearance without compromising his religion, without participating in their celebrations and festivities, without congratulating them on their celebrations and festivals, without taking them as supporters and without having affection for them because loving the enemies of Allaah necessitates agreeing with them, following them and being pleased with their actions without criticising it or disliking it, and this without doubt opposes the creed of allegiance and disavowal, which is the firmest pillars of Islaam. Allaah –Exalted be he– says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا عَدُوِّي وَعَدُوَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ تُلْقُونَ إِلَيْهِم بِالْمَوَدَّةِ

[O' you, who believe, do not take my enemies and your enemies as allies, extending to them affection]⁷

And Allaah –Exalted be he– says:

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا آبَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ

⁷ Soorah al-Mumtahanah [60:1]

Advice to a [Muslim] Resident in Non-Muslim Lands

[You will not find people who believe in Allaah and the Last Day having affection for those who oppose Allaah and His Messenger, even if they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred]⁸

And Allaah –Exalted be he– says:

وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ

[And whoever is an ally to them among you - then indeed, he is [one] of them]⁹

That includes keeping away of them, refraining from asking for their judgment [to resolve disputes], abstaining from approving their rule and leaving Allaah's rule out of account, not initiating greetings with them, not praising them with wording or actions. In a concise expression, it generally means not having any affection for them, i.e. not resembling them in outwardly or inwardly.

Travelling to the land of the non-Muslims and residing there is prohibited if the Muslim is unable to openly display the rituals of Islaam completely or if he does not have safety in his religion. It is feared in this case that he will end up loving the non-Muslims and taking them as allies which is one of the major sins. It is well known that any means and reasons leading to overthrowing what Allaah –Exalted be He– has commanded upon the commissioned like establishing the religion and demonstrating its rituals openly, and acting in accordance with monotheism (Tawheed) showing hatred and enmity for the non-Muslims, and disavowing are regarded forbidden according to Islaamic law. It is feared that he will lose his Islaamic character within the circle of disbelief. Furthermore, his manners, his Islaamic ways and appearance will be diluted. Consequently, he will agree with them and approve of their lifestyle without rebuke nor dislike. It is well known that approving of disbelief is itself disbelief and approving of sin is itself sin, whether it is in a land of war or a land of agreement and security, as in the hadeeth: "If a sin is committed on the earth, the one who witnesses it and dislikes it, is considered as being not witnessing. Whereas the one who does not witness it but still approving of it, is considered as committing it"¹⁰

Therefore travelling to the lands of the disbelief under the fears resulting from those dangers pertaining to polytheism, is not permissible in Islaam as is indicated in the verse:

إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا مِثْلُهُمْ

[Indeed, you would then be like them]¹¹

As well as in the Hadeeth that was previously mentioned where the Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever assembles and resides with the polytheist, he is then similar to him".

⁸ Soorah al-Mujadalah [58:22]

⁹ Soorah al-Maa'idah [5:51]

¹⁰ Sunan Abee Daawood 4345. Grade: Hassan (fair) according to Al-Albaanee

¹¹ Soorah an-Nisaa' [4:140]

Advice to a [Muslim] Resident in Non-Muslim Lands

There is an exception [from the general threats mentioned in the evidences], for the guardian who is responsible for an ill or weak person, being originally a Muslim or a non-Muslim who embraced Islaam, male or female, who is prevented from emigrating due to some medical, administrative, geographical or political reasons that made emigration impossible, and he cannot afford emigration because of his weakness and the non-existence of any other means that enable him to emigrate. People under such conditions are not concerned with the threats if they are truthful; they are included in the generality of Allaah's saying –Exalted be He–:

إِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعِفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا. فَأُولَئِكَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَعْفُو عَنْهُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَفُورًا

[Except for the oppressed among men, women and children who cannot devise a plan nor are they directed to a way. For those it is expected that Allaah will pardon them, and Allaah is ever Pardoning and Forgiving]¹²

In conclusion, Muslims are required to take the means to establish honour in their religion, to avoid the reasons of humiliation that opposes their religion. Hence if he resides in the land of the disbelievers temporarily for a need, provided that he is able to manifest his religion and demonstrate its rituals overtly and completely without opposition, along with observing the principle of allegiance and disavowal, then that is permissible with the conditions aforementioned. The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم approved of some of his companions' travelling to non-Muslim land, namely: Aboo Bakr As-Siddeeq رضي الله عنه going to the land of the non-Muslims to run a business.

Whoever is unable to do that, then he should not put himself where he is included in the threats mentioned in those verses about those who cannot safeguard themselves from tribulation or those whose residence in the lands of the non-Muslims leads to loving them, as is in the speech of Allaah:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ظَالِمِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةً فَتُهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا فَأُولَئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا

[Indeed, those whom the angels take [in death] while wronging themselves - [the angels] will say, "In what [condition] were you?" They will say, "We were oppressed in the land." The angels will say, "Was not the earth of Allaah spacious [enough] for you to emigrate therein?" For those, their refuge is Hell - and evil it is as a destination]¹³

It is an obligation on him to make Hijrah (migration), seeking the pleasure of Allaah, –Exalted be He–, to be able to worship Allaah alone without associating partners in His worship, to support and give victory to His religion and His supporters, to be safe from the enemies of Allaah –Exalted be He–. If he does, then he will attain in the land of emigrating the greatest aim, which is the safety and security to perform worship without any opposition or harm,

¹² Soorah an-Nisaa' [4:98-99]

¹³ Soorah an-Nisaa' [4:97]

Advice to a [Muslim] Resident in Non-Muslim Lands

the integrity of his status, honour, nobility, dignity and good sustenance, that is promised for those who go out in the way of Allaah only seeking the face of Allaah –Exalted be He–. If he dies in that state before he reaches the land of emigrating, then he will get the reward of those who emigrated, including forgiveness of sins, reward in Paradise and salvation from the fire. Allaah –Exalted be He– says:

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

[And whoever emigrates for the cause of Allaah will find on the earth many [alternative] locations and abundance. And whoever leaves his home as an emigrant to Allaah and His Messenger and then death overtakes him - his reward has already become incumbent upon Allaah. And Allaah is ever forgiving and merciful]¹⁴

May Allaah make us from those who hear and follow beneficial speech and may He protect us from misguidance and tribulation, apparent and hidden, and guide us to the path of the righteous, raise us in the company of the pious, and enter us into paradise with good company, for verily Allaah is merciful and forgiving

Knowledge is with Allaah; our last prayer is all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet, his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

Algiers: Rajab 21st, 1434 H. Corresponding to May 31st, 2013

¹⁴ Soorah an-Nisaa' [4:100]