

ومن كلام له (عليه السلام) في الإيمان و وجوب الهجرة و صعوبة الإيمان وعلم الوصي

Steadfast and transient belief and the obligation of migration (hijrah)

[أقسام الإيمان:] فَمِنْ الْإِيمَانِ مَا يَكُونُ ثَابِتًا مُسْتَقِرًّا فِي الْقُلُوبِ، وَمِنْهُ مَا يَكُونُ عَوَارِي بَيْنَ الْقُلُوبِ وَالصُّدُورِ، إِلَى أَجَلٍ مَعْلُومٍ، فَإِذَا كَانَتْ لَكُمْ بَرَاءَةٌ مِنْ أَحَدٍ فَكْفُوهُ حَتَّى يَحْضُرَهُ الْمَوْتُ، فَعِنْدَ ذَلِكَ يَقَعُ حَدُّ الْبَرَاءَةِ.

One belief is that which is firm and steadfast in hearts, and one is that which remains temporarily in the heart and the breast up to a certain time. If you were to acquit (yourself) before any person, you should wait till death approaches him, for that is the time limit for being acquitted.

[وَجُوبُ الْهَجْرَةِ:] وَالْهَجْرَةُ قَائِمَةٌ عَلَى حَدِّهَا الْأَوَّلِ، مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى فِي أَهْلِ الْأَرْضِ حَاجَةً مِنْ مُسْتَسِرِّ الْأُمَّةِ وَمُعَلِّهَا، لَا يَقَعُ اسْمُ الْهَجْرَةِ عَلَى أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِمَعْرِفَةِ الْحُجَّةِ فِي الْأَرْضِ، فَمَنْ عَرَفَهَا وَأَقْرَبَهَا فَهُوَ مُهَاجِرٌ، وَلَا يَقَعُ اسْمُ الْاسْتِضَاعَفِ عَلَى مَنْ بَلَغَتْهُ الْحُجَّةُ فَسَمِعَتْهُ أُذُنُهُ وَوَعَاها قَلْبُهُ.

[The obligation of migration :] And immigration stands as its original position. Allāh has no need towards him who secretly accepts belief or him who openly does so. Immigration will not apply to any one unless he recognizes the proof (of Allāh) on the earth. Whoever recognizes him and acknowledges him would be a muhājir (immigrant). istiḍ'āf (i.e. freedom from the obligation of immigration) does not apply to him whom the proof (of Allāh) reaches and he hears it and his heart preserves it. [1]

[صُعُوبَةُ الْإِيمَانِ:] إِنَّ أَمْرَنَا صَعْبٌ مُسْتَصْعَبٌ، لَا يَحْتَمِلُهُ إِلَّا عَبْدٌ مُؤْمِنٌ اِمْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ لِلْإِيمَانِ، وَلَا يَعِي حَدِيثَنَا إِلَّا صُدُورٌ أَمِينَةٌ، وَأَحْلَامٌ رَزِينَةٌ.

[Arduousness of belief :] Certainly, our case is difficult and complicated. No one can bear it except a believer whose heart Allāh has tried with belief. Our traditions will not be preserved except by trustworthy hearts and (men of) solid understanding.

[علم الوصي:] أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، سَلُونِي قَبْلَ أَنْ تَفْقِدُونِي، فَلَا تَطْرُقِ السَّمَاءَ أَعْلَمُ مِنِّْي بِطُرُقِ الْأَرْضِ، قَبْلَ أَنْ تَشْغَرَ بِرِجْلِهَا فَتَنْتَطَأَ فِي خِطَامِهَا وَتَذْهَبَ بِأَحْلَامِ قَوْمِهَا.

[The knowledge of the successor (wasi), his challenge “Ask me before you miss me” and prophecy about the Umayyads :] O people! ask me before you miss me, because certainly I am acquainted with the passages of the sky more than the passages of the earth, [2] and before that mischief springs upon its feet which would trample even the nosestring and destroy the wits of the people.

Footnote :

[1] This is the interpretation of the word “muhājir” and “mustaḍ‘af” as mentioned in the Holy Qur’ān :

Verily those whom the angels take away (at death) while they are unjust to their (own) selves (in sin), they (the angels) shall ask (the sinning souls): “In what state were ye?” They shall reply, “Weakened (mustaḍ‘af — and oppressed) were we in the land;” They (angels) will say “Was not the kind of Allāh vast (enough) for you to immigrate therein?” So these (are those) whose refuge shall be Hell; and what a bad resort it is. Except the (really) weakened ones from among the men and the women and the children, who have not in their power the means (to escape from the unbelievers) and nor do they find the (right) way. So these, may be, Allāh will pardon them; and Allāh is the Clement, the Oft forgiving. (4:97—99)

The meaning of Amīr al-mu‘minīn here is that hijrah (immigration) was not only obligatory during the lifetime of the Holy Prophet, but it is a permanent obligation. This immigration is even now obligatory for attaining the proof of Allāh and the true religion. Therefore, if one has attained the proof of Allāh and believed in it, even if he is in midst of the unbelievers of his locality, he is not duty bound to immigrate.

The “mustaḍ‘af” (weakened) is one who is living among the unbelievers and is far from being informed of the proofs of Allāh, and at the same time he is unable to immigrate in order to attain the proofs of Allāh.

[2] Some people have explained this saying of Amīr al-mu‘minīn to mean that by the passages of the earth he means matters of the world and by passages of the sky matters of religious law and that Amīr al-mu‘minīn intends to say that he knows the matters of religious law and commandments more than the worldly matters. Thus, Ibn Maytham al-Baḥrānī writes (in Sharḥ: Nahj al-balāghah, vol. 4, pp. 200-201): It is related from al-‘Allāmah al-Wabarī, that he said that Amīr al-mu‘minīn’s intention is to say that the scope of his religious knowledge is larger than his knowledge about matters of the world.

But taking the context into account, this explanation cannot be held to be correct because this sentence (which is the subject of explanation) has been used as the cause of the sentence “Ask me before you miss me”, and after it, is the prophesy about revolt. In between these two the occurrence of the sentence that “I know religious matters more than worldly matters”, makes the whole utterance quite uncounted, because Amīr al-mu‘minīn’s challenge to ask whatever one likes is not

confined to matters of religious law only so this sentence could be held as its cause. Then, after that, the prophesy of the rising up of the revolt has nothing to do with matters of religious law, so that it could be put forth as a proof of more knowledge of religious matters. To ignore the clear import of the words and to interpret them in a way which does not suit the occasion, does not exhibit a correct spirit, when from the context also the same meaning accrues which the words openly convey. Thus, it is to give a warning about the Umayyad's mischief that Amīr al-mu'minīn uttered the words: "‘Ask me whatever you like’; because I know the paths and courses of divine destiny more than the passages of the earth. So, even if you ask me about matters which are recorded in the ‘preserved tablet’ and concern divine destiny I can tell you, and a serious mischief is to rise against me in those matters in which you should have doubt, because my eyes are more acquainted with those ethereal lines which concern the occurrence of events and mischiefs than with what I know about lives appearing on the earth. The occurrence of this mischief is as certain as an object seen with eyes. You should therefore ask me its details and the way to keep safe from it, so that you may be able to manage your defence when the times comes." This meaning is supported by the successive sayings of Amīr al-mu'minīn which he uttered in connection with the unknown, and to which the future testified. Thus, Ibn Abi'l Ḥadīd comments on this claim of Amīr al-mu'minīn as follows : Amīr al-mu'minīn's claim is also supported by his sayings about future events which he uttered not once or a hundred times but continuously and successively, from which there remains no doubt that whatever he spoke was on the basis of knowledge and certainty and not in the way of chance. (Sharḥ Nahj al-balāghah, vol. 13, p. 106)

In connection with this saying of Amīr al-mu'minīn it has already been shown and explained (in Sermon 93, Footnote No. 2) that no one else dared advance such a claim, and those who made such a claim had to face only disgrace and humility. About the prophecies made by Amīr al-mu'minīn see Ibn Abi'l-Ḥadīd, Sharḥ Nahj al-balāghah, vol. 7, pp. 47-51; al-Qādī Nūru'l-Lāh al-Mar'ashī, Iḥqāq al-ḥaqq (New ed.), vol. 8, pp. 87—182.)