

هل إقامتهم في بلاد غير المسلمين تعد معصية؟

ARE THEY SINFUL FOR LIVING IN THE LANDS OF THE NON-MUSLIMS?¹

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Question:

Are the Muslims sinful for living in the lands of the non-Muslims, even those who have no choice except to live in those lands? I was born a Muslim in a non-Muslim country. I was raised in America and I married a Muslim from Australia and now I have taken up residence there. I thank Allah for guiding me after I was lost for a number of years. Right now, I am trying my utmost to remain in the best state as a Muslim and I am trying to raise and educate my children in accordance with the Book and the Sunnah. I have read and I have been told on numerous occasions that it is impermissible for a Muslim to reside in non-Muslim lands. Please note that I did not choose to be born in a non-Muslim country and I do wish to live in the lands of the Muslims. However, I do not know how to get to any of these countries, and I am also told by everyone that moving to these countries is impossible. Moreover, my brother wants to study Islam in Saudi, and I have two sons that I hope I can send to Saudi to study Islam when they are eligible for enrolment. Right now, this is nothing more than a dream of mine but I ask Allah to make this dream come true. Once again, I will ask if we are considered disobedient for residing in the lands of the non-Muslims, and if so, what should we do? Should I remain where I am and keep studying Islam as well as I can whilst keeping my distance away from the non-Muslims around me? Or am I required to try to move to the lands of the Muslims? If the answer is yes, how can I achieve this?

¹ Translation: Abu Ameenah AbdurRahman Bennett from the website *Islam Question and Answer*.

Answer:

Firstly, we praise Allah for guiding you a right, just as you have mentioned. And we ask Him to complete His favour upon you and to set yours and your family's affairs aright. Indeed, he is all-Hearer, the One who responds.

Secondly, there is no doubt that living in the lands of Muslims has a positive effect on a person with regard to his obedience [to Allah], His worship and his children's education and upbringing, just as living in non-Muslim lands sometimes has detrimental effects or destructive effects on an individual, especially those who were raised in those countries. Overcoming these detrimental effects requires a major concerted efforts on behalf of those who live there, along with good management and education and interaction with the Muslims who live there in order to produce a conducive and righteous environment for young Muslims.

Regretfully, some find it very difficult to move to Muslim lands, either due to their personal circumstances or due the immigration system of these countries.

Thirdly, taking up residence in non-Muslim lands can sometimes be permissible, sometimes recommended and sometimes forbidden. And this all depends on his state of residence, the reasons why he has taken up residence there and how much he can implement his religion openly and freely. We have responded to this type of question numerous times, but what we will do is present to you detailed words from Shaykh ibn 'Uthaymeen:

Taking up residence in the lands of the non-Muslims is extremely dangerous for a Muslim's Islam, his character, behaviour and mannerisms. We and others have witnessed the severe corruption of those who take up residence over there and how different they came back from the way they left. They came back morally bankrupt. Some of them even returned as apostates, becoming completely irreligious – refuge is sought with Allah – to the extent that they completely deny Islam and make mockery of Islam and its people – past and present. And for this very reason, we ought to... rather, we are required to safe-guard ourselves and put in place preventative factors that will stop people from tumbling down this destructive path.

Taking up residence in the lands of the non-Muslims requires two basic conditions

to be fulfilled:

The first condition is that a person must be secure in his religion in the sense that he is fortified with knowledge and faith and strong resolve that reassures him in his religious commitment whilst remaining cautious of anything that can lead to deviation and that he harbours an attitude of enmity towards those who disbelieve,² refraining from befriending them and loving them since loving them contradicts having faith in Allah. Allah the Most High states,

لَا تَجِدُ قَوْمًا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ يُوَادُّونَ مَنْ حَادَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَوْ كَانُوا
ءَابَاءَهُمْ أَوْ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ أَوْ إِخْوَانَهُمْ أَوْ عَشِيرَتَهُمْ^{٢٢}

You shall not find a people who believe in Allah and the Last Day befriending those who act in opposition to Allah and His Messenger, even though they were their (own) fathers, or their sons, or their brothers, or their kinsfolk.

[Al Mujādilah 22]

And the Most High states,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ
وَمَن يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنَهُمْ^{٢٣} إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ^{٢٤} فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ
فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ يُسْرِعُونَ فِيهِمْ يَقُولُونَ نَخْشَىٰ أَن تُصِيبَنَا دَآئِرَةٌ فَعَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَن
يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِهِ فَيُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا أَسْرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ نَدِيمِينَ^{٢٥}

O you who believe, do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends; they are friends of each other; and whoever amongst you takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them; surely Allah does not guide the unjust people.

² TN: It is not to be understood here that we harbour the destructive attitude that consumes the likes of ISIS propagandists and their ilk. Rather, this attitude is principled and governed by the dictates of Islam. This attitude is a natural product of having true faith in Islam (love of something always creates hatred of its opposite), but it is an attitude that is moderated by justice and the guidelines of Islam.

But you will see those in whose hearts is a disease hastening towards them, saying:

We fear lest a calamity should befall us; but it may be that Allah will bring the victory or a punishment from Himself, so that they shall be regretting on account of what they hid in their souls.

It has also been authentically reported that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said,

مَنْ أَحَبَّ قَوْمًا فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ

“Whoever loves a people then he is from them.”

And he also stated,

وَأَنَّ الْمُرَّةَ مَعَ مَنْ أَحَبَّ

“And that a person is with those whom he loves.”

Loving the enemies of Allah is one of most dangerous things for a Muslim because loving them requires that one agrees with them and follows their ways or at the very least he will not disapprove of their ways. And this is why the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said

مَنْ أَحَبَّ قَوْمًا فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ

“Whoever loves a people then he is from them.”

The second condition is that he can implement his religion openly and freely in the sense that he can freely practice the rites of Islam. So he is not prevented from performing the five daily prayers or establishing the Friday prayer. He is not prevented from giving the zakah, fasting, performing Hajj or any of the other rites of Islam. If he is incapable of carrying out these rites then it is impermissible to reside there due to the obligation of hijrah.

Ibn al-Quddāmah said in *al-Mughni* (8/457) about the different types of people in relation to hijrah that one of them is he who is required to perform hijrah. And he is

the one who is capable of hijrah and is unable to practise his religion openly and carryout his religious obligations whilst residing amongst the nonbelievers. This individual is required to make hijrah based on the Most High's statement:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْتُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ ظَالِمِينَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ
فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَسِعَةً فَتُهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا فَأُولَئِكَ مَا لَهُمْ
جَهَنَّمَ سَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ٩٧

Verily! As for those whom the angels take (in death) while they are wronging themselves (as they stayed among the disbelievers even though emigration was obligatory for them), they (angels) say (to them), "In what condition were you?" They reply, "We were weak and oppressed on earth." They say: "Was not the earth of Allah spacious enough for you to emigrate therein?" Such men will find their abode in Hell - What an evil destination!

[An Nisā 97]

This verse contains a serve threat that points to an obligation because carrying out one's religious obligations is incumbent upon the one who is capable, and thus hijrah becomes a requisite for fulfilling this obligation. Anything required to fulfil an obligation is itself an obligation.³

We will finish by quoting Ibn Qudāmah words from *al-Mughni* (9/236):

The second type is the one who is not required to make hijrah because he/she is incapable due to illness, duress or weakness found amongst women and children. These types of people are not required to make hijrah, based on the Allah's statement:

³ *Sharh al-Usool ath-Thalātha* by Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen.

إِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ
سَبِيلًا^{٩٨}

Except the weak from among the men and the children who have not in their power the means nor can they find a way (to escape).

[An Nisā 98]

The third type is the one for whom hijrah is recommended but it is not obligatory. So he is capable of performing hijrah but he can practise his religion openly in the lands of the non-Muslims. So it is recommended for him so that he can partake in Jihad against them and increase the population of Muslims and lend them support whilst decreasing the number of non-Muslims to prevent mixing with them and seeing their evil. So it is not obliged [to leave their lands] because he can fulfil his religious duties without the need to make hijrah.

Then Shaykh Uthaymeen (رحمه الله) says,

After these two basic conditions have been fulfilled, the people who reside amongst the non-Muslims fall under the following types:

The first type is the one who invites and encourages people to accept Islam. And so this is considered a type of jihad, and it is a communal obligation upon those who are capable of carrying it out, provided that da'wah can be achieved and that there is no one to prevent it and there are people who respond to it. And this is because calling to Islam is a religious duty and it is the way of the Messengers (عليه الصلاة والسلام). The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) himself commanded during all times that we convey from him even if it is a single verse. He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said

بَلِّغُوا عَنِّي وَلَوْ آيَةً

“Convey from me even if it is a single verse.”⁴

⁴ Saheeh al-Bukhāri (1380).

So we learn from this that a Muslim living in these non-Muslim lands can be permissible or even recommended as long as he can (1) implement his religion openly and freely, (2) propagate it, (3) acquire knowledge to repel any doubts he may encounter and (4) form an allegiance and disallegiance for the sake of Allah. However, the environment around him is dangerous and can have detrimental effect upon him and his children. Therefore, this requires the Muslims there to cooperate and work together to build da'wah centres that are flourishing with the remembrance of Allah so as to attract the Muslim youth to learn what is good for them and propagate it to others.