

13. Migration in Islam

The Islamic calendar begins in 622 C.E., commemorating the migration of Muhammad from Mekka to Yathrib, later named “Medina”.¹ That is why it is called the *Hijri* calendar, westernized to *Hegira*. For Muslims, religious and political identity begins with a forced migration.

In Mekka, there had been a plot to kill Muhammad. To escape the plot, he left to go to Yathrib, where he had been invited to come to reconcile warring tribes. The *hegira*, the beginning of the Islamic faith, took place to escape persecution and to reconcile neighboring tribes which were hostile to each other.

“The Hijrah kindled the light of hope in the hearts of the early Muslims who set a shining example for all Muslims, in every generation, to emulate. ...He established brotherly relations between the Muslims who migrated from Makkah and the residents of Madinah who helped the Prophet and his companions. What was important was to have good relations between Muslims. They should have their brotherhood on the basis of faith, not on the basis of tribes as they used to have prior to Islam.

“...Prophet Muhammad also established good relations with other communities living in Madinah. There was a large Jewish community as well as some other Arab tribes who had not accepted Islam. The Prophet prepared a covenant for relations between these communities.”²

In large part this was a covenant between two communities which each had been forced to migrate from their homeland. “Yathrib had been established primarily by Jewish refugees from the diasporas of Roman persecution in the first and second centuries CE.... Jews were the second major population group in Medina at the time of the hijra.”³ The Jews had found refuge in Arabia from the oppression of the Roman Empire in their homeland. Like other migrant people groups in the peninsula, they established a city where they could live in peace; it became Medina.

In 615, before the hegira, Muhammad had told some of his followers to leave Mekka to escape persecution there. They went to Abyssinia (now Ethiopia), where a Christian King gladly gave them refuge. English dictionaries define “hegira” as “a journey especially when undertaken to escape from a dangerous or undesirable situation: exodus”.⁴

The use of the word “exodus” is appropriate because it identifies the migration of the Children of Israel from Egypt to the land of Canaan. They were in Egypt because Joseph, who had been sold into slavery, had become a ruler in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. With the wisdom God gave him, Joseph had saved Egypt during its great famine.

His father, Jacob, had temporarily migrated to find refuge in Egypt with his family during that famine. The Children of Israel lived there for centuries until “there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.”⁵ This new ruler was very short-sighted, thinking only of his own power; he did not consider that Egypt would have been destroyed had it not been for the wisdom God had given Joseph. He persecuted and sought to destroy the Children of Israel, primarily because God was blessing and prospering them; he perceived that as a threat to his own power.

The first part of Abra[ha]m’s faith and obedience was to emigrate from his country of origin to go to the land that God had chosen for him and his descendants. It was only by emigrating to that land that he would receive the promises of God. God told him, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed in you.”⁶

Centuries later, Moses fled from Egypt to the wilderness of Sinai to save his life. He returned to Egypt

because God commanded him to do so to enable all the Children of Israel to emigrate to the Holy Land. Pharaoh's political agenda caused him to fight against what God had ordained.

The parents of Jesus found refuge in Egypt when King Herod sought to kill the baby boy. King Herod, like the short-sighted Egyptian pharaoh, killed the boy babies of the Children of Israel in an attempt to preserve his own power.⁷ The text says that God sent Yosef/Yusuf and Yeshua/Isa as saviors, but, many centuries apart, the political powers wanted to kill them.

All these emigrations, especially that of Muhammad, are examples for Muslims in every generation. Because of these emigrations, there can be those who follow what Moses taught, and those who follow what Jesus taught, and those who follow what Muhammad taught. And if Abraham hadn't emigrated, there would be no obedience in his life to emulate.

Migration for the Sake of God

The hajj is a short-term migration to remind Muslims that they have a center other than where they live. "The Pilgrimage/al-Haj," speaks of those "who were expelled from their homes without right, only for saying, 'Our Lord is God.' Were it not for God's repelling people, some by means of others, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, wherein God's Name is mentioned much, would have been destroyed. And God will surely help those who help Him — truly God is Strong, Mighty."⁸

In the Quran, emigration because of faith is a very positive thing, with great reward. "Those who believe and emigrate and strive in the way of God with their wealth and their selves are greater in rank in the eyes of God. And it is they who are the triumphant. Their Lord gives them glad tidings of Mercy from Him, and Contentment; and Gardens wherein they shall have lasting bliss, abiding therein forever. Truly with God is a great reward."⁹

Being an immigrant is a distinction that leads to honor. "If people are equally versed in juristic knowledge and recitation, the earliest one in Hegira should lead people in prayer. Hegira here means moving from a place of polytheism to a Muslim one."¹⁰ It may be difficult to make the move and transition, but Muslims are encouraged to live in Muslim lands.

Every land belongs to God, because "unto God belongs sovereignty over the heavens and the earth, and unto God is the journey's end."¹¹ Every place can be holy enough in which to live and pray, but still there is a special merit attributed to those who leave their homeland to follow God. "And those who emigrate for the sake of God, after having been wronged, We shall surely settle them in a good place in this world — and the reward of the Hereafter is greater, if they but knew."¹² It is not unusual for an individual or a people to be wronged in this world, but there is a reward for those who emigrate to a better place.

"The Qur'an speaks of oppressed and weak people on earth and suggests that they could migrate from their oppressed positions to another land of God. The verse says, 'Was not the earth of God spacious enough for you to flee for refuge?' (4:97). The verse indirectly suggests that those who have authority should take care of refugees, since it speaks of God as the owner of the land. Therefore, the worldly owners and authorities should feel closeness and openness to those who are destitute and oppressed and therefore open the doors of their borders for them. The verse continues, 'as for the helpless men, women and children who have neither the strength nor the means to escape, God may pardon them. Surely God pardons and forgives. Those who migrate for the sake of God shall find many places for refuge in the land in great abundance' (4:99-100). Therefore, according to Islamic teaching, every part of the earth is God's land. Although today we have put up borders in order to divide nations and stop the flow of emigration and immigration from one land to another, in the

teaching of Islam all lands belong to God and all people are servants of God. A similar statement which indicates that the entire land belongs to God is found in one of the sayings of the Prophet: ‘God has made the entire face of the earth as a Mosque for me and its soil as pure.’

“...the Prophet’s migration to the city of Taif, seeking refuge from the hostile reaction and persecution of Meccan idol worshippers. In fact, this might not even be called a full migration, since the Prophet wanted to convince the people of the city to accept him and his followers for their full-scale migration. Instead of giving him help, the people of this city encouraged their children and slaves to attack the Prophet and his companions and even to stone them. His foot was wounded and bled. This event became one of the worst events in the life of the Prophet. According to the tradition, the Prophet did not ask God to punish them for their bad behavior against him in the hope that there might be some good generations to come out of the offspring of this people.

“...There is no doubt that the Muslims who migrated from Mecca were financially weak because they had to leave everything behind in Mecca. They were unable to carry their possessions with them. Their poverty and weakness was to be solved through the wisdom of the Prophet. Because there were Muslim citizens in Medina prior to the immigrants’ arrival, the immigrants were called muhajir (pl. muhajirun). In order to integrate immigrants with the local Muslims, the Prophet declared brotherhood between every immigrant and local Muslim, and he asked the local Muslims to help the immigrants. This historical brotherhood in Islam is called mu’kh’t. Such a unique event created two important groups in the history of Islam who became the subjects of praise in the Qur’an: Muhajirun (immigrants) and Ansar (helpers). Speaking of these people, the Qur’an says: “The men who stayed in their own city (Medina) and embraced Islam before them loved those who have sought refuge with them. They do not covet what they are given but rather prefer [their brothers and sisters] above themselves although they are in need. Those who preserve themselves from their own greed shall surely prosper. (59:9)”¹³

Migration is no longer commanded, but it is spoken of often in the Quran, and it is spoken of quite positively, even as a demonstration of faith. “Truly those who believe and those who emigrate and strive in the way of God — it is they who hope for the Mercy of God. And God is Forgiving, Merciful.”¹⁴ Those who emigrate hope for the Mercy of God, which everyone needs.

“As a hadith states, ‘None of you will enter Paradise by his deeds.’ Someone asked, ‘Not even you, O Messenger of God?’ He said, ‘Not even me, save that God shelter me with His Mercy.’”¹⁵ Not even Muhammad expected his own righteous deeds to be sufficient.

The Psalms record some of the traditional prayers of those who went up to Jerusalem in pilgrimage. They prayed, “If you, Everpresent Lord, preserved [the record of] iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, that you may be feared.”¹⁶

No matter how faithful an individual is, no matter how zealous an individual is, it will still not be enough to earn God’s favor. Everyone needs God to show mercy to him or her. That means that every individual must show mercy to others. “The importance of displaying the virtue of mercy among all human beings is emphasized by a hadith: ‘God is not merciful to one who is not merciful.’”¹⁷

Those who emigrate for the purposes of God will receive mercy. “So their Lord answered them, ‘I shall not let the work of any worker among you, male or female, be in vain; each of you is like the other. So those who emigrated, and were expelled from their homes, and were hurt in My way, and fought and were slain — I shall absolve them of their evil deeds and shall make them enter Gardens with rivers running below, a reward from God. And God, with Him is the most beautiful reward.’”¹⁸

There are many evils that cause people to be dispossessed and displaced. That is the way of the world. The way of God is different. God promises a beautiful reward for those who persevere and emigrate. “Whosoever

migrates in the way of God will find upon the earth many a refuge and abundance, and whosoever forsakes his home, emigrating unto God and His Messenger, and death overtakes him, his reward will fall upon God, and God is Forgiving, Merciful.”¹⁹

In the Quran, emigration is often connected to the act of “brothering,” i.e. other people in the new country receiving the migrants as though they were family members. In this way, God forms an alliance between Helpers and Emigrants. “The famous ‘brothering’ (*mu’akhah*), in which the Prophet established relations of ‘brotherhood’ entailing inheritance between pairs of Makkan Emigrants and Madinan Helpers shortly after coming to Madinah, was an early Islamic version of such an alliance, but one with a spiritual and communal purpose.”²⁰

Believers can understand and appreciate “a spiritual and communal purpose.” They can value it more than an undisturbed existence. “Truly those who believe, and migrate, and strive with their wealth and themselves in the way of God, and those who sheltered and helped — they are protectors of one another. As for those who believe and did not migrate, you owe them no protection until they migrate. But if they ask your help for the sake of religion, then help is a duty upon you, except against a people with whom you have a covenant. And God sees whatsoever you do.”²¹

“As for those who believe, and migrate, and strive in the way of God, and those who sheltered and helped, it is they who truly are believers. Theirs is forgiveness and a generous provision.”²² Emigrants and Helpers alike will receive forgiveness.

Hardship, injustice, and other difficult situations test the faith of believers. “O you who believe! Reverence God as He should be revered, and die not except in submission. And hold fast to the rope of God, all together, and be not divided. Remember the Blessing of God upon you, when you were enemies and He joined your hearts, such that you became brothers by His Blessing. You were on the brink of a pit of fire and He delivered you from it. Thus does God make clear unto you His signs, that haply you may be rightly guided.”²³

Some people depend on their own judgment rather than that of God, so they do not believe Him. And “they will not believe until they have made thee the judge between them in their disputes, and find no resistance in their souls to what thou hast decreed, and surrender with full submission. And had We prescribed for them, ‘Lay down your lives’ or ‘Leave your homes,’ they would not have done so, save a few. And had they done what they were exhorted to do, it would have been better for them, and a stronger confirmation. Then We would surely have granted them, from Our Presence, a great reward, and We would surely have guided them unto a straight path.”²⁴

As it says in the Hebrew Holy Scriptures, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.”²⁵ By definition, one cannot be a believer without having faith in what God has said.

Concerning the passage above from the Quran, “The verse suggests that they would also have been unwilling to follow a Divine command to leave your homes, a command that tested many earlier prophets and prophetic communities, as well as Muhammad’s. It was, in part, the willingness of the Prophet’s Makkan followers to leave their homes and families and migrate to Madinah that earned them the high religious status of ‘Emigrants’ that they were afforded in the first Muslim community. And in the Madinan period, prior to the conquest of Makkah, leaving one’s home and family and migrating, or making hijrah, to Madinah was a requirement of full membership in the Muslim community (8:72).”²⁶

As we have seen in Torah, concern and care for the foreigner — the immigrant and refugee — is required of every member of the community of Israel. The people of Israel then and now know what it is like to have to leave one’s homeland for a new unknown. So do many of the Palestinians who originally came from the

Balkans, other parts of the Ottoman Empire, or other regions to the east, the west, the north or south, whether years, decades, or centuries ago. Migration and resettlement take perseverance, hope, and the help of others.

The Cairo Declaration expresses a general Islamic view of the help that Muslims are obligated to give: “Every man shall have the right, within the framework of the Shari’ah, to free movement and to select his place of residence whether within or outside his country and if persecuted, is entitled to seek asylum in another country. The country of refuge shall be obliged to provide protection to the asylum-seeker until his safety has been attained, unless asylum is motivated by committing an act regarded by the Shari’ah as a crime.”²⁷

Emigration for Jihad

From a very different perspective, and for a very different purpose, emigration is presented as an important part of faith in the appeals made to young men to encourage them to leave their homeland to engage in jihad in another country. “Abdallah Azzam is a towering figure in the jihad movement. He led the Arab-Afghan movement from its inception in the mid-1980s until his death in November 1989, and his writings and speeches are regarded as essential literature for jihadis today.

“The ‘Introduction to Emigration and Preparation’ (*muqaddima fi’l-hijra wa’l-i’dad*) is a collection of Azzam’s lectures, speeches, and sermons...”²⁸ In it, he explains to the young recruits, how blessed they are to have been selected by God to emigrate for jihad. “Emigration destroys shackles. Emigration is to get rid of this world’s mud. Emigration is a general declaration of faith in God and trust in him. Emigration is a slogan that God is the creator and the provider, not a ruler, named so and so.”²⁹

This is what is said and taught about emigration for the purpose of warring against others. The accompanying teaching on the glory of jihad is intended to stifle all human tendencies toward compassion, both towards the specified enemy and towards one own people. The jihadi must learn to embrace and manage savagery.

Abu Bakr Naji, wrote “The book *Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage through Which the Ummah Will Pass*, [it] was published by the *markaz al-buhuth wa al-dirasat al-islamiyya* [Center of Islamic Studies and Research], widely considered as an important, semi-official al-Qaida mouthpiece. It was released on jihadi websites for the first time in 2004, and attracted much attention...

“In Naji’s doctrine, the education and training of jihadi cadres is very much a mental process, produced by extraordinary experiences of the horrors of war, or as Naji puts it: ‘a journey of blood, severed limbs, and skulls.’ The jihadis need to accustom themselves to the brutality of war...”³⁰

From experience, he explains that “Whoever has practiced jihad knows that it is naught but violence, crudeness, terrorism, making people homeless, and massacring them.... It is impossible for the jihadi to continue to fight and move from one stage to another unless he from the very beginning is involved in massacring the enemy and making him homeless.... He cannot continue the jihad with softness.”³¹

So those who want to be involved in this modern version of jihad must be trained to be zealous for massacre, so zealous that they emigrate from their home countries to other targeted countries. But if this is what some are doing for war, certainly there are things that those who are zealous for peace can do. If some can give themselves to cause death, certainly there are others who can give themselves to preserve life.

If slaying one soul is equivalent to destroying humanity altogether; and if saving the life of one is equivalent to saving all of humanity; then the case can certainly be made that the greater emigration is that done to save a life; and the greater jihad is the struggle to save a life. If Allah is merciful, then mercy is a higher quality sometimes found in humans, and terrorism is a lower quality. Muhammad is reported to have said, “The fighter in Allah’s path is the one who strives against his lower self in obedience to Allah.”³²

A jihad that is “violence, crudeness, terrorism, making people homeless, and massacring them” is certainly not the best of jihad. To the contrary, the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: “The best of jihad is a just word spoken to an unjust ruler.”³³ Not the killing of the unjust ruler, but speaking a just word. Not the massacre of one’s designated enemies, but the striving to overcome them with good deeds.

Everybody acts in accordance with their real values, not necessarily what they say they value. Everybody acts in accordance with what they truly believe, not necessarily in accordance with what they say they believe. Benjamin Franklin captured one of the great ironies and tragedies of human existence: “So convenient a thing it is to be a reasonable creature, since it enables one to find or make a reason for every thing one has a mind to do.”³⁴

What “one has a mind to do” begins in the heart. Desires and values precede reasonings. Each one of us chooses, in his or her heart, what values and standard, if any, will guide our lives.

“The servants of the Compassionate are those who walk humbly upon the earth, and when the ignorant address them, say, ‘Peace,’ ...and who ... slay not the soul that God has made inviolable, save by right...”³⁵ There are those who have chosen terror, mutilation, and merciless massacres as their life’s work. It would not seem appropriate to call them “servants of the Compassionate”.

Innovative Cities

Even with its intense global problems, this is a time of innovation and opportunity. Egypt has begun plans to build a New Administrative Capital city. “Once completed, the new capital will span an area larger than Madrid or Birmingham and will comprise a central park twice as long as New York’s and three times bigger than Hyde Park. It will boast the tallest tower in Africa, the largest church in the Middle East and the biggest opera house outside Europe, and will be home to six million people.... Work started on site in 2016 and has since proceeded at breakneck speed. Phase zero of the project involved the construction of a new government quarter that will house the Egyptian government’s 34 ministries, which are expected to relocate there over the next 18 months. They will be followed by the presidential palace, supreme court, central bank and stock exchange.”³⁶ Original estimates were that the city would cost about \$40 billion to build.

Saudi Arabia has more ambitious plans to build “Neom,” a futuristic megacity 33 times the size of New York City. “NEOM is not just a place — it is a mindset. Citizens of NEOM will embody an international ethos and embrace a culture of exploration, risk-taking and diversity — all supported by a progressive legal system compatible with international norms and conducive to economic growth. Imagine: A community of doers from all over the world — from a mix of homelands, religions and backgrounds – all living and collaborating toward a common goal.”³⁷

“It will cover 10,230 square miles, and cost Saudi Arabia’s Public Investment Fund at least \$500 billion — plus millions in foreign investment if it can get it.... The Red Sea coastline will be altered, according to the plans, with glow-in-the-dark sand added to its beaches.... Blueprints obtained by the Wall Street Journal detail wild plans for artificial rain, a fake moon, robotic maids, and holographic teachers.”³⁸ It will have solar and wind power, and water production and storage facilities.

Both these projects will meet some practical needs, but they go far beyond that. Each is intended to bring its home country into an innovative, technological mindset and physical reality. Each project has massive costs and is expected to change the lives of many people for the better. Each is intended to bring renown and honor to those who make it happen, to make the future of each country freer and more prosperous.

For those who truly believe in their Holy Scriptures, the best standard of evaluation is what God desires. The most valuable things are not necessarily found in the economic realm. The Quran speaks of the foolishness

of “seeking the ephemerality of the life of this world”.³⁹ Wealth, power, praise from others — these things are not ends in themselves, but the source of opportunities to serve God.

“Every soul shall taste death, and you will indeed be paid your reward in full on the Day of Resurrection. And whosoever is distanced from the Fire and made to enter the Garden has certainly triumphed. And the life of this world is naught but the enjoyment of delusion.”⁴⁰

If saving a single life is the equivalent of saving a whole world, then saving many lives is of inestimable value before God. Doing that is, therefore, of the highest value to the one who seeks to serve Him. Each of these massive projects can be modified to do that.

One could attach to the Neom project an amazing city for Palestinians who currently live in refugee camps in Jordan. That might bring a risk-taking mindset that would transform the entire world for the better. It would be a humanitarian venture of incomparable proportions. It would give deprived Muslims the opportunity to emigrate to the Holy Land of Islam. It would be praiseworthy not only before men, but also before God.

The current population of Saudi Arabia is approximately 35 million. Averaged over a land area of 2,149,690 square kilometers, its population density is 16 per square kilometer. The current population of Egypt is approximately 103 million. Averaged over a land area of 995,450 square kilometers, which includes the scarcely inhabited Sinai Peninsula, its population density is 103 per square kilometer.⁴¹

Egypt, through the Sinai Peninsula, borders the Gaza Strip, which is overcrowded with Palestinians living in UNRWA refugee camps even though it is part of Palestine. The current population of the Gaza Strip is approximately 1.9 million. Averaged over a land area of 365 square kilometers, its population density is 5,206 per square kilometer.

For thousands of years, Egypt has been known for its massive building projects. For thousands of years it has also been a place of refuge and settlement for people from other lands. Maimonides, the great medieval rabbi and physician, found refuge in Egypt. In his case, he was fleeing persecution from one set of Islamic leaders in Spain in order to find liberty and opportunity under another set of Islamic leaders in Egypt.

There are many good reasons to build a new city in Sinai on the Gulf of Suez or the nearby Mediterranean coast for Palestinians who currently live in refugee camps in the Gaza Strip. People who have been abused and exploited for generations would have genuine employment, housing, and educational opportunities, with citizenship too. That would show them the goodness of God through Arab leaders. It would be as ambitious, kind, and holy as any project could be.

“In 1939, Mojli Amin, a member of the Arab Defense Committee for Palestine, drew up a proposal, published in Damascus and distributed among Arab leaders, entitled ‘Exchange of Populations.’ Amin proposed that ‘all the Arabs of Palestine shall leave and be divided up among the neighboring Arab countries. In exchange for this, all the Jews living in Arab countries will go to Palestine.....

““The exchange of populations should be carried out in the same way that Turkey and Greece exchanged their populations. Special committees must be set up to deal with the liquidation of Jewish and Arab property... ”

““I fear, in truth, that the Arabs will not agree... But in spite of this, I take upon myself the task of convincing them...”⁴²

In a 1975 article, Sabri Jiryis, an Arab researcher, author, and member of the Palestinian National Council, wrote that ‘the Arabs were very active’ in the creation of Israel, although ‘this is hardly the place to describe how the Jews of the Arab states were driven out of their ancient homes, ... shamefully deported after their property had been commandeered or taken over at the lowest possible valuation.... This is true for the majority of Jews in question.’⁴³

Hundreds of thousands of Jews — a number equal to that of the Arabs who left Israel when the surrounding

Arab countries attacked — were driven out of Arab countries at the same time. They had lived in these countries for centuries, in some cases for thousands of years. Their property and possessions were confiscated. They were no longer allowed to live in what had been their homeland for a very long time.

Many of them found refuge in Israel. That is how the Arab states, though seeking to destroy the Jews, helped build the State of Israel. Half the population of Israel today is descended from these refugees from Arab countries. When they arrived, they were all helped to build new lives by their brethren and others around the world. None of them nor any of their descendants are still refugees.

After the Romans destroyed the Second Temple in 70 C.E., Jews fled from Israel to many other lands, including the Arabian peninsula. That is where Muhammad encountered them hundreds of years later. In that way, he learned things about Torah and about God. Later, he expelled them all from Arabia.

Expulsion and migration are not pleasant, but they are not unusual either. All over the world, millions and millions of people have experienced it. The first recorded expulsion and forced migration was from the Garden of Eden. There would be less pain and violence in the world if that hadn't happened, but humanity had made the very bad decision to disobey God, and that disobedience had consequences.

Had they known in advance what those consequences would be, would Adam and Havah have chosen differently? They knew in advance what God had said, but they still chose to do what they wanted to do. They believed a lie, and they acted on what they believed.

This explains a lot about the world in which we now live. And it explains a lot about the frequent Quranic references to the Gardens awaiting the righteous. We can't undo the choice that our first parents made, and we can't get God to pretend it didn't happen and annul the expulsion. But we can go on from here, seeking to hear and obey God's voice in doing what shows love for Him and for one another.

It would be a wonderful thing to find that there are Muslim Arab leaders who believe the positive promises of the Quran, who value above all their standing before God. For such an endeavor, Israel would gladly commit to a yearly *sadaqah/tzedakah* which could include technological expertise and holographic teaching. For such an endeavor, other nations of the world would gladly invest; and the funds that currently have almost no positive effect through UNRWA could be transferred to set the Palestinians free from the refugee camps.

The 1992 Constitution of Saudi Arabia states, "Alms tax/*zakaat* is to be levied and paid to legitimate recipients."⁴⁴ This provision could be applied to those Palestinians who are received. It would be part of brothing them (*mu'akhah*). This would be appropriate responses to the Israeli commitment to *sadaqah*.

Such an endeavor could provide the common ground for building a holy and righteous peace. Such an endeavor would require great courage and a significant faith in God. It would most likely bring vitriolic condemnation from some, even from some that one counted as friends and brothers, because some people are unwilling to consider and change their ways. But, I suggest, it would bring praise from God. It would be an innovative venture for which the whole world could be thankful.

"And God, with Him is the most beautiful reward."⁴⁵ "[F]or him who enjoins charity or kindness or reconciliation between men, and whosoever does that, seeking God's Good Pleasure, We shall grant him a great reward."⁴⁶ "To those who believe and perform righteous deeds, God has promised forgiveness and a great reward."⁴⁷ "God has promised forgiveness and a great reward to those among them who believe and perform righteous deeds."⁴⁸

Are the promises of God worth anything? Many people do not believe they are. That is what makes them "unbelievers". To the contrary, however, the Holy Scriptures in Greek say, "faith is the foundation of things hoped for, the certainty of things not seen."⁴⁹ Without faith in God, people are reluctant to build on hope. They

are uncertain about things He has promised.

Those who believe need to demonstrate it. And if someone else has a different faith, let them demonstrate it also. What is the best way to demonstrate one's faith? Not by killing those who don't believe what you believe, but as the Quran suggests: "So vie with one another in good deeds. Unto God shall be your return altogether, and He will inform you of that wherein you differ."⁵⁰

God judges nations, as well as individuals, and holds them accountable for the consequences of their actions. By definition, the major part of the refugee problem begins with the displacement caused by the 1948 war. Those Arab states which began the war by attacking Israel are therefore accountable before God. For their own well-being, they should recognize their guilt and fulfill their responsibility.

As Emile Ghoury, secretary of the Palestine Arab Higher Committee, declared after the war: "The fact that there are these refugees is the direct consequence of the action of the Arab States in opposing partition and the Jewish State. The Arab States agreed upon this policy unanimously and they must share in the solution of the problem."⁵¹

What would God do if there arose today a new generation of Muhajirun (immigrants) and Ansar (helpers)? What would it communicate to the world about the faith these people had? What would it communicate about the God they served? Egypt and Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Jordan could become part of the solution to a problem that has proven to be politically insolvable.

FOOTNOTES

1. *Medinat al-nabi*, "city of the prophet".
2. "Brotherhood" and "Intercommunity and Interfaith Relations," "The Significance of the Hijrah (622 CE)," Ibrahim B. Syed <https://historyofislam.com/contents/the-age-of-faith/the-significance-of-the-hijrah-622-ce/>
3. Sahaja Carimokam, *Muhammad and the People of the Book*, xlibris.com, 2010, pp.221,226
4. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hegira>
5. Exodus 1:8
6. Genesis 12:1-3. The promise about reciprocal blessings and curses is repeated to Jacob (Genesis 27:29) and to all Israel (Numbers 24:9).
7. Matthew 2
8. Quran, The Pilgrimage/*al-Hajj* 22:40
9. Quran, Repentance/*Al-Tawbah* 9:20-2
10. *A Summary of Islamic Jurisprudence, Vol. 1*, Salih Al-Fawzi, (Riyadh: Al-Maiman Publishing House, 2005) p.236
11. Quran, Light/*al-Nur* 24:42
12. Quran, The Bee/*al-Nahl* 16:41
13. "The Qur'anic Perspective on Immigrants: Prophet Muhammad's Migration and Its Implications in Our Modern Society," Zeki Saritoprak, *The Journal of Scriptural Reasoning*, 2017 <https://jsr.shanti.virginia.edu/back-issues/vol-10-no-1-august-2011-people-and-places/the-quranic-perspective-on-immigrants/>
14. Quran, The Cow/*al-Barqarah* 2:218
15. *The Study Quran*, note on 101:9 at 91087.
16. Psalm 130:3-4 *Shir haMaalot/A Song of Ascents*
17. *The Study Quran*, note on 48:29 at 74394.
18. Quran, The House of Imran/*Al-Imran* 3:195
19. Quran, Women/*al-Nisa* 4:100
20. *The Study Quran*, note to The Cow/*al-Barqarah* 2:33, at 12908.
21. Quran, The Spoils/*al-Anfal* 8:72

22. Quran, The Spoils/ *al-Anfal* 8:74
23. Quran, The House of Imran/*Al-Imran* 3:102-3
24. Quran, Women/*al-Nisa* 4:65-68
25. Proverbs 3:5-6
26. *The Study Quran*, note on 4:66-68 at 13737.
27. Cairo Declaration ARTICLE 12
28. Brynjar Lia, "Doctrines for Jihadi Terrorist Training," p.520, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 20:518–542, 2008 Taylor & Francis Group, LLC
29. Azzam, "Introduction to Emigration and Preparation', p. 17, cited in Lia, "Doctrines for Jihadi Terrorist Training," p. 522
30. Lia, "Doctrines for Jihadi Terrorist Training," pp.527,531
31. Abu Bakr Naji, *Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage through Which the Ummah Will Pass* [in Arabic], p.31, cited in Lia, "Doctrines for Jihadi Terrorist Training," p. 531
32. Reported and graded hasan [sound] in Al-Tirmidhi, Sunan, no.1671 <https://muslimmatters.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/11/nafs.pdf>
33. Hadith No: 4011, From: Sunan Ibn Majah. Chapter 39, The Chapters on Tribulations, Narrated/Authority of Abu Said Al-Khudrithat
<https://ahadith.co.uk/searchresults.php?q=The+best+jihad+is+to+speak+a+word+of+truth+before+a+tyrant+ruler>
34. Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*, cited in Daniel Boorstin, *The Mysterious Science of the Law*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1941) p. 2
35. Quran. The Criterion/*al-Furqan*. 25:63,68
36. "Inside Egypt's new capital," Emanuele Midolo, 7 March 2019 <https://www.propertyweek.com/insight/inside-egypts-new-capital/5101721.article>
37. "Mission," <https://www.neom.com/en-us/about/#international> Accessed April 19, 2020.
38. "Everything we know about Neom, a 'mega-city' project in Saudi Arabia with plans for flying cars and robot dinosaurs," Bill Bostock, *Business Insider*, Sep 23, 2019, 10:12 AM <https://www.businessinsider.com/neom-what-we-know-saudi-arabia-500bn-mega-city-2019-9>
39. Quran, Women/*Al-Nisa*', 4: 94
40. Quran, The House of Imran/*Al-Imran* 3:185
41. <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/saudi-arabia-population/> and [worldometers.info/world-population/egypt-population/](https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/egypt-population/)
42. Transmission from Damascus, political agent, Political Department of the Jewish Agency, to Eliahu Sasson, Political Department, Palestine, May 16, 1939 (from the English translation), CZA-525/5630 (Central Zionist Archives) Quoted in Peters, *From Time Immemorial*, p.25
43. The Beirut journal *Al Nahar*, May 15, 1975. Quoted in Peters, *From Time Immemorial*, p.29
44. Chapter 4, Article 21;
45. Quran, The House of Imran/*Al-Imran* 3:195
46. Quran, Women/*al-Nisa* 4:114
47. Quran, The Table Spread/*al-Maidah* 5:9
48. Quran, Muhammad 47:29
49. Hebrews 11:1
50. Quran, The Table Spread/*al-Maidah* 5:48
51. cf.
<https://mfa.gov.il/mfa/foreignpolicy/mfadocuments/yearbook1/pages/11%20statement%20to%20the%20special%20political%20committee%20of.aspx>