170287 - He wants to migrate, fleeing for the sake of his religious commitment from temptation, but his father will not let him

the question

I am a young man from an Arab country. I feel that I cannot practise my religion in my country, because there is a great deal of immorality, falsehood and temptation, and what is prohibited is regarded as permissible. It has become difficult to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and ignorance has become widespread. You cannot find anyone to ask for a fatwa or to teach you about your religion, except by means of modern media such as satellite channels and the Internet. There is a lot of pressure so that one cannot outwardly show commitment to religion or speak the word of truth, which has made many people afraid of religious commitment. Moreover, it is very difficult, if I have children, to raise them as they should be raised in these circumstances. I want to migrate to a country where it is easier to be chaste and to get married, and where Islamic knowledge is readily available, and if I wish I can devote my time to seeking knowledge, or if I wish I can work and find an atmosphere that will help me to learn my religion and live my life purely for the sake of Allah, may He be exalted. The problem is that my father does not understand that; all he wants is to see me get a good job, buy a car, get married quickly and have children, and build a house. If he refuses to let me migrate, is it permissible for me to travel without his permission? What should take priority? Please note that he has threatened that he will never be pleased with me, and what worries me most is that my father has become an old man, and he is suffering from high blood pressure, especially when he gets angry, and I am afraid that my confronting him and my attitude may be a shock to him, and I am afraid of the consequences. If it is not permissible for me to do that, then for how long must I be detained, awaiting his permission? Is it until I get married? I’m asking you for advice, may Allah reward you with good.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Migrating from a country in which there is pressure, harm, temptation and evil, to a country in which there is safety, ease, knowledge and goodness is something that is prescribed and encouraged, because Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“He who emigrates (from his home) in the Cause of Allah, will find on earth many dwelling places and plenty to live by. And whosoever leaves his home as an emigrant unto Allah and His Messenger, and death overtakes him, his reward is then surely incumbent upon Allah. And Allah is Ever OftForgiving, Most Merciful”

[an-Nisa’ 4:100].

Abu Bakr ibn al-‘Arabi al-Maaliki (may Allah have mercy on him) wrote some valuable words about the different categories of migration, which we will sume up here. He (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Migration may be divided into six categories:

The first is leaving dar al-harb (hostile non-Muslim territory) for dar as-salaam (Muslim territory)…

The second is leaving a land in which bid‘ah (innovation) is widespread. Ibn al-Qaasim said: I heard Maalik say: It is not permissible for anyone to reside in a country in which the early generations are reviled. And this is correct, because if it is not possible to change evil, one should keep away from it. Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“And when you (Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him)) see those who engage in a false conversation about Our Verses (of the Quran) by mocking at them, stay away from them till they turn to another topic. And if Shaytaan (Satan) causes you to forget, then after the remembrance sit not you in the company of those people who are the Zalimoon (polytheists and wrongdoers, etc.)”

[al-An‘aam 6:68].

The third is leaving a land in which what is prohibited has become widespread, because seeking what is lawful is obligatory upon every Muslim.

The fourth is fleeing from physical harm. By the grace of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, He has granted a concession allowing this. So if a person fears harm in some place, Allah, may He be glorified, has given him permission to leave that place and flee so as to save himself from that harm. The first one who we learn did that was al-Khaleel Ibraaheem (peace be upon him), when he was afraid of his people and he said: “I will emigrate for the sake of my Lord” [al-‘Ankaboot 29:26] and “Verily, I am going to my Lord. He will guide me” [as-Saaffaat 37:99]. And Allah, may He be glorified, tells us about Moosa (interpretation of the meaning): “So he escaped from there, looking about in a state of fear. He said: ‘My Lord! Save me from the people who are Zalimoon (polytheists and wrong-doers)’” [al-Qasas 28:21].

The fifth is fear of sickness in a land that is unhealthy and leaving for a land that is safe. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) gave permission to the herdsmen, when they fell sick in Madinah, to go out to the pasture and stay there until they regain their health. But an exception to that is made in the case of fleeing from the plague. Allah, may He be glorified, forbade that in the saheeh hadith from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

The sixth is fleeing for fear of harm to one’s wealth, because the sanctity of the Muslim’s wealth is like the sanctity of his blood, and the sanctity of his family is equal to that or greater.

End quote from Ahkaam al-Qur’an by Ibn al-‘Arabi (1/612); quoted by al-Qurtubi in his Tafseer (5/330).

If you want to migrate to a land in which you can perfect your faith and increase in righteous deeds and beneficial knowledge, then that is basically prescribed, but you stated that you are living in an Arab country, and the Arab countries are similar to one another in terms of how closely or otherwise they adhere to the rulings of sharee‘ah. In every country there are those who are religiously committed and those who are otherwise; in fact in a single country its people will vary in adherence to Islam from one region or city to another. So where are you going to migrate to?

Moreover, nowadays it is difficult to migrate, because of the laws regulating visas and residence.

In addition to that, your father will not give you permission to migrate, and your migrating without his permission may affect him greatly.

So what we think you should do is stay in your country, honour your father and treat him kindly, look after him, take care of him and make him happy, especially as he is old. If Allah wills, you will inevitably find people in your own country who are good, religiously committed and righteous, so stay with them and help them, and they will help you to obey Allah, may He be exalted, and to seek Islamic knowledge and call people to Allah, may He be exalted. At the same time you can make use of modern media such as satellite channels and the Internet in order to seek knowledge and learn what is good. That is more appropriate, in sha Allah.

And Allah knows best.