

## Rambam – Epistle to Yemen

...It behooves the victim for the sake of his religion to escape and flee to the desert and wilderness, and not to consider separation from family or loss of wealth. For they are a slight sacrifice and a paltry offering due to God, King of kings, possessor of all things, the Lord thy God, whose Name is glorious and awful. God may be trusted to compensate you well in this world and in the world to come.

We have noted that godly and pious folk who are animated by a desire to get acquainted with the truth and those who are engaged in its pursuit, rush to the divine religion and, wend their way from the most distant parts, to the homes of scholars. They seek to gain increased insight into the law with the concomitant hope that God will amply reward them. How much more is it one's duty to go into exile, if the question of observing the whole Torah is at stake.

When a man finds it arduous to gain a livelihood in one country he emigrates to another. All the more is it incumbent upon a Jew who is restricted in the practice of his religion, to depart for another place. If he finds it impossible to leave that locality for the time being, he must not become careless and indulge with abandon in the desecration of the Sabbath and the dietary laws on the assumption that he is exempt from all religious obligations. It is the eternally inescapable duty, willy-nilly, of every one belonging to the stock of Jacob to abide by the Law. Nay, he exposes himself to punishment for the violation of each and every positive or negative precept. Let no man conclude that he may freely disregard the less important ceremonies without liability to penalty because he has committed under duress some major sins. For Jeroboam, son of Nebat, may his bones be ground to dust, was chastised not only for the sin of worshipping the calves and inciting Israel to do the same, but also for his failure to construct a booth on the Feast of Tabernacles. This is one of the fundamental principles of our religion. Understand it aright, teach it, and apply the principle widely...