



Hijrah – THE MEANING OF MIGRATION

Umar ؓ the second Caliph adopted the Hijrah (the migration from Makkah to Madinah) as the starting point for the Islamic calendar. There were many other equally notable events that could have been chosen to mark the beginning of the Muslim calendar. Such as the birth of the blessed Prophet ﷺ or the coming of the first revelation, the ascension etc. Why did Umar ؓ choose the Hijrah? The answer clarifies for us the dynamic, the active, the energetic, and the vibrant nature of Islam.

"By God, O Makkah ! You are my dearest city and the most dearest to God. Had not your citizens expelled me, I would have never left you." (Tirmidhi) said the Prophet ﷺ on the night of Hijrah. His eyes flowing with tears. He was leaving behind the sweet memories of his ﷺ childhood, his ﷺ adolescence, the memories of his ﷺ wife, grandparents and all his ﷺ uncles and cousins. What a painful decision it must have been. But he ﷺ had to emigrate, he ﷺ had to leave Makkah. Madinah was waiting. Makkah no longer had the potential for receiving Dawah. Preaching of goodness, for welcoming the Invitation to Virtue. So what was the point living there? Madinah, 280 miles north was brimming with the Ansar (the helpers of Muslims). Madinah offered freedom to preach and worship. Madinah welcomed the Muhajiroon (the migrants from Makkah).

How then should we celebrate the New Year of the Hijrah Calendar? Prof. Ismail Faruqi ؒ offers this practical advice: "Every 1st of Muharram we celebrate the Hijrah by making special Dua, and making special Salah. But we want to celebrate it in a new sense, we want to celebrate it as an Iqamat-ul-Hijrah, and by this term we mean we want to live henceforth as we were Muhajirs, companions of Muhammad ﷺ from Makkah to Madinah. Now can you imagine ourselves as Companions of Muhammad ﷺ ?

Islam requires sacrifice from its followers. Migration was a tremendous sacrifice.

Britain, our new homeland, is in one sense our Madinah! What is your task? Your task is simply to be an Ambassador of Islam, representatives of truth, love, peace, human dignity justice and fairness. Your task is to establish morality, purity of character, modesty, chastity all the nobility that man is capable of.

The people of Britain need Islam, since without submission to the Almighty, none of these noble values can be realised, so let us invent our Hijrah with this new meaning, let us appoint ourselves ambassadors of Islam in this country and let us begin a programme, "a programme of real action."

As Ambassadors of Islam, learn to read the Quran properly, read it's meaning and reflect upon it's message. furthermore memorise it's Divine verses and embellish your cerebral cortex with these beautiful words. Secondly read and inwardly digest the Hadith and discover the wonderful life of the Prophet ﷺ. Thirdly, study Islamic Literature, books on different aspects of Islam, both the inner and outer dimensions. Studying is the most virtuous activity in Islam', and the Prophet ﷺ said "whoever sets out to learn his religion Allah makes easy his path to paradise" Build your own Islamic library at home. Be a student so that you can join ranks of scholars and deserve the Prophets ﷺ praise - "the scholar is far superior than the worshiper" and "the ink of the scholar's Pen is more holier than the blood of the Martyr."

As you deepen your knowledge you will naturally practice what you have learned. Islamic knowledge is not theoretical, it is practical knowledge which must be applied. You can not be an 'armchair Muslim', but one who is a living example. Islamic knowledge is a guide for self-improvement, moral development and spiritual enrichment. It is not a mere philosophy. The impact of the teachings of Islam is deep and lasting, as illustrated by the daily prayers, constant remembrance of Allah and life hereafter.

Moreover, there is a sense of responsibility towards the society. This is the transforming effect of Islam. This is the Hijrah, migrating from the passive and ignorant state to the active and enlightened state, where you become a Muhajir, like a bright lamp, the Muhajir shines, and brightens the surroundings; others benefit, receive friendship, love and care. They are affected, touched and moved, and they move closer to the 'lamp' and closer to the Muhajir and what he embodies. Let us be Muhajiroon in this sense. "Those who have faith and migrated and struggled in the path of Allah. They have the hope of the mercy of Allah, and Allah is the most Forgiving and most Merciful. (Surah Al-Baqara, Ayah 218)