

New Islamic Year / Hijra 12-10-10

Tuesday, December 7, 2010 was the beginning of the new Islamic Year. This is the year 1432. The first day of the lunar month of Muharram in the Islamic calendar marks the start of a new year.

The Islamic calendar is counted from the year of Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) emigration from Makkah to Madinah known as the Hijrah. This journey is one of the most important events in Islamic history.

The unbelievers of Quraysh tortured and even killed Muslims to force them to renounce their Islam. Many people wanted to accept Islam but were afraid of the unbelievers.

It was the Prophet's practice to meet the delegates of the Arabian tribes during Hajj/pilgrimage and invite them to Islam. It was during the pilgrimage season, in the eleventh year of Prophethood, he met six men from Yathrib, which will become later Al Madinah.

Lesson 1: Be persistent. Do not give up, keep trying different path and you will succeed Inshaa Allah

Jews are people of the Book and they believe in God. A tribe of Jews lived in Yathrib and they always told the people of Yathrib that their Book tells them that now is the time for a Prophet to come. They would follow him, he will give them power and they will kill and massacre the unbelievers.

The Prophet (pbuh) presented to them Islam, explained what it means the six men said to each other: "This is the Prophet that the Jews are threatening us with; we should not waste time and be the first to join him". They accepted Islam immediately.

The following year, on the occasion of the pilgrimage, they came back 12 people. They accepted Islam and made a pledge to follow the orders of Allah (SWT).

When the 12 people were about to return to Yathrib, they asked the Prophet (pbuh) for a missionary to teach them Quran and Islam, and he assigned Mus'ab ibn Umair (first ambassador of Islam) to accompany them. The precedent for carefully selecting individuals was set.

The next year, the thirteenth of Prophethood, they were 75, seventy three men and two women. They took an oath, called "The Pledge of al-'Aqabah."

Lesson 2: Women were always a full partner to men and played a major role in Islam.

Mohammad (pbuh) accepted the people of Medinah's invitation to migrate to their city. The first Muslims who were told to migrate were the most vulnerable, the women and the slaves. The believers began to emigrate in groups, one after another.

Lesson 3: A true leader cares about his people first and not about himself. That will make his people willing to sacrifice their lives for him.

It was now the thirteenth year of the Messengerhood. Except for Muhammad (pbuh), Abu Bakr, Omar, Ali and a few other Muslims, everyone else had left Makkah. The Quraysh had finally realized what was happening. They felt threatened by the opening of a new avenue for the spread of Islam in Medinah. Their chance to kill Islam was slipping away. They came up with an evil solution that would eliminate the problem: to assassinate the Prophet. Abu Jahl suggested that a group of young men, one from each tribe, should strike Muhammad simultaneously with their swords. Muhammad's (pbuh) tribe will not be able to fight them and will be forced to settle and accept blood money (compensation).

"And when the unbelievers plotted to imprison you, to kill you or to get you out, they were plotting and Allah too was plotting, and Allah is the Best of those who plot. **(8:30)**

Allah (SWT) sent Jibril (AS) down to Muhammad (pbuh) to reveal to him Quraish's plot and give him his Lord's Permission to leave Makkah. He fixed to him the time of migration and asked him not to sleep that night in his usual bed. At noon, the Prophet (pbuh) went to see his companion Abu Bakr and arranged with him everything for the intended migration.

That night, the chiefs of Makkah ordered the group of young man to surround the house of the Prophet and to kill him when he comes out in the morning.

The Prophet (pbuh) and Ali (RA) were inside the house. So the Prophet (pbuh) told Ali (RA) to sleep in his bed and cover himself with his garment, and then, the next day, to return to the people whatever they had kept with him in trust.

Lesson 4: Muslim good character and behavior is not limited to Muslims only and is extended to all mankind.

The Prophet (pbuh) then went out, walking past those who were waiting to kill him. He threw dust on their heads while reciting:

"And We have put a barrier before them, and a barrier behind them, and We have covered them up, so that they cannot see." **(36:9)**

Allah (SWT) blinded their vision, they can see everything, but they could not see the Prophet (pbuh) walking next to them.

When Omar (RA) was ready to migrate he took his sword, dagger, bow and arrows, and went to Kaaba, prayed and went around it several times. The unbelievers were sitting in groups around the Kaaba. He went to each group and said: "You ugly faces, I am migrating and if anyone would like to see his wife become a widow or his children become orphans he can meet me behind that hill". The unbelievers were very afraid of Omar and no one dared to challenge him.

So why Omar migrated publicly and the Prophet (pbuh) migrated in hiding even though Allah said in the Quran:

and (O Muhammad) Allah will protect you from the people **(5:67)**

Lesson 5: As a leader you must always be sensitive to the less fortunate, the weak, the old and the children. The Prophet knew that Allah (SWT) is protecting and nobody can touch him, however, if he will migrate publicly,

all Muslims will follow his practice and a lot the weak, slaves, women and children will be killed by the unbelievers.

Another example of the Prophet's (pbuh) sensitivity to the burden on his followers is his prayers (SalaT). When He prayed alone, he was seen one night praying and in one Rakaa he recited the Suraas of Al-Baqara, Aal-e-Imran, and a part of An-Nisa. However, when He leads the prayers with his followers he always recites short Suraas or few verses.

The Prophet (pbuh) and Abu Bakr (RA) walked until they reached the cave of Thawr and remained inside the cave for 3 days, until the search for them had lessened. After the Prophet and his companion entered the cave, a miracle happened. A spider hurried to weave its cobwebs and two wild pigeons build their nest and laid their eggs in it.

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If you will not help him (Muhammad), Allah certainly helped him when those who disbelieved drove him out, he being the second of the two, when they were both in the cave, when he said to his companion: Be not sad, surely Allah is with us. So Allah sent down His tranquility upon him and strengthened him with forces which you did not see, and made lowest the word of those who disbelieved; and the word of Allah, that is the highest; and Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise. **(9:40)**

The Quraysh were enraged upon learning that their plot had failed. They sent out men to search for the Prophet (pbuh) in every direction, promising anyone who brought him back or brought information about him one hundred camels. The search led some of them to the mouth of the cave. They stood outside it, but Allah (SWT) turned them away and protected His Prophet (pbuh) from their conspiracy. Abu Bakr (RA) had said to him, "O Messenger of Allah, if one of them should look down toward his feet he would see us." But the Prophet (pbuh) replied: "O Abu Bakr, what do you think about two of whom Allah is the third?"

Lesson 6: Trust Allah (SWT), do the best you can in planning and execution. Allah (SWT) will definitely help you.

After three nights, the guide they had hired arrived with two camels as previously planned. They then headed toward Madinah. Another observation in the migration of the Prophet (pbuh) is that even on this extremely critical journey he selected an unbeliever as his guide.

Lesson 7: Always choose the right person for the right job. Not for religion, country, family or friendship. If everything is equal, chose the Muslim.

Suraqah ibn Malik heard that the Prophet (pbuh) had taken the coastal route. He hoped to earn the reward offered by the Quraysh so he took his bow, mounted his horse and set out in pursuit. As he approached, the Prophet (pbuh) supplicated and his horse stumbled and fell. He realized that it was due to the Prophet's (pbuh) supplication and that he was protected. He requested security and promised to mislead his pursuers. So the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) supplicated for him and his horse regained its strength. He returned to Makkah and began deceiving people regarding the direction the Prophet (pbuh) had taken.

On the way they stopped at the tent of Umm Ma`bad. She had an old dehydrated goat that could give no milk. The Prophet (pbuh) took her permission to milk it and due to his blessing its udder filled with milk. He gave drink to her and to those with him and last drank himself. Then he milked it again, filled her container and left.

Lesson 8: Be humble. Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "He who serves others with drinking water should be the last to drink himself."

Abu Bakr and the Prophet (pbuh) entering Madinah.

After the prayer the Prophet (pbuh) entered Madinah from the south. From that day it was called "Madinat ar-Rasul" [City of the Messenger (pbuh)]. Later on, people abbreviated the name to Al Madinah (The City).

21 years after the Prophets' migration, Omar ben Khattab (RA), understood the significance of that event and he introduced the Islamic calendar. He decided to start the Islamic year from the year of migration of the Prophet from Mecca to Madina and to make Moharram as its first month. The Hijra of the Prophet (pbuh) marked the beginning of the Muslim nation, a nation that when it was ruled by Quran and the Prophet's Sunnah, it was able to lead the world in morality, science, medicine, military and all other fields of knowledge.

What we should take from the Prophet's experience is that in life, as Muslims, we should always do everything we can, to the best of our ability and leave the rest to Allah (SWT) and he will never let us down Inshaa Allah.