

FROM THE MINBAR

THE HIJRAH AND ITS MEANING FOR CONTEMPORARY MUHAJIR

Khutbah delivered by Imam Dr. Zijad Delic at SNMC on December 2, 2011 corresponding to Muharram 6, 1433 H.

BACKGROUND

Indeed all praise is for God, Lord of the worlds. Peace and blessings of God be upon Muhammad (S), his family, Khulafai Rashidin, all his Companions, and all those who follow in their footsteps until the Last Day. All praise is for God! We praise Him. We seek His help and ask for His forgiveness. We seek God's refuge from evils of ourselves and from our evil actions. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except God, alone, having no partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad (S) is His Messenger.

My dear brothers and sisters in Islam ~ *As Salamu 'Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuhu.*

INTRODUCTION

Following the season of Hajj – which signifies a time of forgiveness, mercy and renewed opportunities for unity among Muslims – the new year of 1433 Hijri just started. With the new Hijrah year, Muslims recall the Prophet's Hijrah (or migration) to Madinah (Medina), an event that gave the world a new chance.

Historically and factually, the Islamic term of Hijrah refers to the departure of Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah from Makkah Al Mukarramah, his birthplace and city, to the neighboring city of Yathrib; but from the time of his arrival there on September 24, 622 CE, Yathrib became known as Madinah Al Munawwarah.

In literal or general terms Hijrah means a self-separation from one's dear ones, or from one's country; in fact, a kind of exile. In the figurative sense, however, Hijrah denotes a shunning of bad habits. It also includes reviewing one's entire cultural and traditional heritage to find what is wrong with it, and where corrupt ideas and misunderstandings might lie.

Under the caliphate of 'Umar (r.a) the historical Hijrah was considered to be of such great importance that its date was declared as the true beginning of Islamic history.

Early Muslims could have chosen the birth or death of the Messenger Muhammad (s), or the beginning of the divine revelation of the Qur'an to him as the beginning of their lunar calendar. But instead they chose the Hijrah, through which believers learned to divide the Truth (Haqq) from falsehood (batil), as



'Umar (r.a) said when a Sahabi (companion) suggested the Hijrah as the best beginning of the Islamic calendar. In fact, this new way of measuring years was introduced as early as 638 CE.

LEARNING FROM THE PAST

The event of the Hijrah should not be discussed only from its historic perspective, for Muslims have always been encouraged to contemplate Hijrah on a far deeper level, attempting to discern through its philosophy the solution for our problems and to find ways in which to restore our dignity in the present day – here in Canada.

Thus, in both its concrete and conceptual senses, the Hijrah has provided a source of renewal and betterment for individuals and societies from early times to our current era.

One can imagine it as a running river from which true believers along the continuum of history have been able to quench their spiritual thirst, helping them to bridge the gap between past and present and guide them to make the best choices among what life offers.

THE SOURCE OF HOPE

With the advent of the new Hijri year, Muslims are drawn to contemplate the lessons of how that great event changed the face of the world, asking God Almighty to bestow mercy and peace on our society and the global village. They compare the strong

and enlightened state of Muslims following the original Hijrah to this new and less-certain reality that we live in today. And they try through Hijrah to derive the impetus to work for the betterment of the global Ummah, in spite of the divisions and lost potential that mark so much of the Ummah and the entire world today.

Why is this so? The Hijrah meant a great deal to early Muslims, for it was a turning point in the history of Islam. It was not simply a flight from persecution, as is often said by those who are ignorant of its true meaning and facts, but rather a separation of believers from Jahiliyyah (ignorance), Zulm (oppression), Fahishah (immorality) etc. and their reorientation towards the new light – the Noor of Allah (the light of Allah).

It was a point in history which transformed Muslims from a state of weakness into strength, from instability into stability, from disunity and oppression to the establishment of a just system never before experienced.

Thus the Hijrah has a direct bearing on our purpose as Muslims here in Canada. As Canadian Muslims, we are obliged always to strive towards the highest ideals and values; that is, to realize our religious identity, our position in our Canadian as its citizens; and to fulfill our opportunities to help ourselves, this beautiful country, and the world.

Indeed, the Hijrah could help each of us attain those beautiful qualities possessed by the true believer and citizen of the world.

This Issue 'From The Minbar' presents



THE HIJRAH: Its Meaning for the Contemporary Muhajir



In next issue: 'Domestic Violence'

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The Hijrah is thus a continuing process and we must all take part in it, for the aim of our collective Hijrah is to move towards the “new Madinah” – to a more Islamic way of life in all things. For Allah has given us a precious opportunity to establish ourselves in Canada so that we can live in peace, harmony, and kinship, sharing the message of Islam with others as did Muhammad (S) the Messenger in Madinah.

MESSAGES OF HIJRAH

What are the messages of the Hijrah for the Contemporary Muhajir? What can we learn today from this pivotal event in Islamic history?

The Hijrah institutionalized three important aspects of life: i) the social/religious dimension, including the establishment and construction of religious identity; ii) the economic dimension, or helping one another and alleviating need in material ways); and iii) the political dimension, especially concerning freedom of religion and human rights.

i) Identity Construction:

During the first twelve years of the revelation of the Qur’an, the Message focused on strengthening Iman (faith), but as yet the people had no pattern of a collective life based on true religious concepts.

It was only after the Hijrah that people began to see clearly that Islam is a complete way of life which pays attention to every aspect of human activity, providing direction for every moment of one’s conscious time. And it was only after the Hijrah that non-Muslims could see Islam’s example of social decency and success.

ii) Helping one another:

For us living in Canada the economic aspect of the Hijrah (helping one another) is of major importance.

Ansar (helpers) provided not only shelter and a peaceful home for the migrating Muslims – or Muhajirs (emigrants) -- but out of love for their new brothers and sisters, helped them in all ways and by all means.

This was a time when trade came into contact with agriculture and artisanship, resulting in a local economic revolution.

Muhajirs from Makkah were not carefree or irresponsible individuals. Having been taught and reformed by the Messenger for twelve years, they were aware of Allah and were righteous.

The welcoming Ansar were ready to divide all their belongings and share with the Muhajirs, but the latter did not want to live among them as idle dependents; so each one

adopted ways and means to earn righteously for themselves and their families.

Initially, the Muhajirs worked as field and construction laborers. Later, they started small trading businesses which eventually brought them into economic competition with the existing merchants of Madinah.

It was only after the Hijrah that agriculture, industry, and trade freely converged to bring about an integrated, balanced, and unfettered economy for the city’s Muslims.

iii) Freedom of religion and respect for human rights:

The third reason why the Hijrah is so important is due to the freedom Muslims attained in Madinah. Before the Hijrah, early Muslims had no say in any matter, internal or external.

The Hijrah turned those few hundred followers of Muhammad (S) into a highly successful society – in fact, the best community that ever appeared on the face of earth (*Khayra Ummatin Ukhrijat Linnas*).

HIJRAH: THE NEW DIRECTION

Thus, the Hijrah became a new direction towards the sphere of Halal and justice for *all*

As seen above, the true Muhajir of our time is one who will accept the truth by heart and who will follow it, stand for it and live by its principles.

The true Muhajir is one who will emigrate from the sphere of Haram (all that is bad and unlawful) to the sphere of Halal (where all is good and lawful). This is our priority and the only way to preserve our Islamic identity and human integrity.

The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (S) said: “The true emigrant (Muhajir) is the one who leaves [behind] all that is forbidden by Allah.” {Bukhari}

While an important element of Hijrah, as explained by the Prophet (pbuh), is to “avoid and desert the unlawful things,” the lessons to be gained from Hijrah go far beyond that, including:

1. The assertion of a unique identity for Muslims, distinguishing them as a community which is able to coexist with all other people on earth, regardless of their religious and philosophical backgrounds within any context they find themselves.

2. The refusal to live indefinitely as a misunderstood element of humanity and to correct this obstacle of injustice through all possible ethical and democratic means; an injustice to ourselves is also an injustice to society and in the world.

The Canadian Muslim community is one whose faith is derived from peace and whose collective efforts are devoted to achieving peace with God, inner peace for each individual, and peace among ourselves and all others.

3. The mandate to live as a model of interaction and co-existence with other non-Muslim communities on the basis of a mutuality of interests, or the common good.

CONCLUSION

This is the right time to make our Hijrah to Islam; to find ourselves, our place and our position in society as its valuable citizens; to find our brothers and sisters in Islam and in humanity who need help.

It is an excellent time to find Muhajirs and Ansars, so that we can help and support each other as the first generation of Sahabah (companions) did. Then with the help of our brothers and sisters in humanity we could make Canada – our home – the world’s best role model for social and cultural health.

May NEW YEAR be prosperous to ALL!

Allahumma Amin!

AN ACTION ITEM

If YOU like this Khutbah and what we, at your SNMC, do, PLEASE:

Support our activities & projects

Please Donate ONE Prayer Spot for \$2,500 and be the ONE who will build the Masjid and the Center so that it could help us and our children maintain Islamic Identity and build strong Canadian National Identity, Insha Allah.



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