

HIJRAH

I begin with the name of Allah the most merciful and the most kind, peace and blessing be upon beloved Prophet (S.A.W) All praise is for Allah.

DEFINITION OF HIJRAH

Literally speaking, Hijrah indicates moving from one place to another to live there. Taking it symbolically, Hijrah denotes shunning bad habits, traditions, and so on, or abandoning a certain culture to adopt another. The symbolic meaning of this word is referred to in Almighty Allah's words:

And all abomination shun] (Al-Mudaththir 74:5)

And bear patiently what they say and avoid them with a becoming avoidance] (Al-Muzzamil 73:10).

In this figurative sense Hijrah refers to reviewing one's entire cultural and traditional heritage to find what is wrong with it, and where therein corruption of ideas and misunderstanding lie.

In other words, Hijrah is identical to seeking repentance and purification of one's soul. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said,

“Hijrah will not cease until repentance becomes useless; and repentance will not become useless until the sun rises from the west” (Abu Dawud).

HIJRAH AND PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH)

It was the tightest and heaviest of times. After the death of the Prophet's uncle and protector, Abu Talib, the Quraysh council decided to scatter the blood of the beloved Prophet among the Arab tribes by getting a knight from every tribe to kill him. Even Banu Hashim, his clan, could not protect the Prophet anymore. The Muslims were experiencing the hardest of times. Then the Angel Gabriel went at an unusual time to relay divine guidance, to tell the Prophet what to do.

The Qur'an describes how Allah helped the Prophet escape from his murderers as a blocking of light:

And We have made before them a barrier and a barrier behind them, then We have covered them over so that they do not see (Ya-Sin 36:9).

From imminent physical danger to the Prophet's life and the darkest moments, Allah guided His Messenger to the nucleus of the everlasting radiance of the Islamic being and civilization in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, the Luminous City!

HIJRAH OF HEARTS: GREATEST KIND OF HIJRAH

We should follow the example of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) by modelling ourselves after his guidance and course of life and following in his footsteps in terms of talking and behaving. Allah Almighty has ordered us to do this, saying,

Verily in the messenger of Allah ye have a good example for him who looketh unto Allah and the last Day, and remembereth Allah much

(Al-Ahzab 33:21).

Linguistically speaking, the word hijrah in Arabic indicates separating oneself from others bodily, spiritually, or in speech. Legally speaking, it means departing from disbelieving countries, evil people, or evil deeds and dispraised practices. The hijrah in this sense is among the traditions of Ibrahim (peace and blessings be upon him) who said,

Lo! I am going unto my Lord Who will guide me (As-Saffat 37:99).

The verse refers to Ibrahim's emigration from the country of disbelievers, seeking faith. Some of his offspring accompanied him to Ash-Sham, where Al-Aqsa Mosque is located in Palestine, and then, accompanied by some others of his offspring, he moved to Al-Hijaz, where the Sacred Mosque is situated in Makkah. This is stated in the verse that reads

Our Lord! Lo! I have settled some of my posterity in an uncultivable valley near unto Thy holy House] (Ibrahim 14:37).

Hijrah was also established by Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) as he twice ordered his Companions to immigrate to Abyssinia to preserve their faith when the disbelievers in Makkah began torturing them severely. The Prophet, however, remained in Makkah calling people to Allah, in spite of the great harm he received. Then Allah Almighty permitted him to immigrate to Madinah. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) allowed his Companions to go to Madinah, and, accordingly, they began emigrating, leaving their homes and properties, seeking the bounties and satisfaction of Allah, and helping Allah's cause and His Messenger. Allah praised those Muhajirun (immigrants to Madinah) and promised them great reward. That is why Hijrah is mentioned in the Qur'an associated with jihad. Further, the Muhajirun became the best of the Prophet's Companions, as they sacrificed everything one may cherish; namely home, property, family, and relatives, in order to preserve their faith and to please Allah.

Hence, whoever cannot declare his religion in a particular place must move to another place where he can freely declare his faith. Moreover, Allah Almighty has threatened whoever can emigrate for the above-mentioned reason and does not:

Lo! As for those whom the angels take (in death) while they wrong themselves, (the angels) will ask: In what were ye engaged? They will say: We were

oppressed in the land. (The angels) will say: Was not Allah's earth spacious that ye could have migrated therein? As for such, their habitation will be hell, an evil journey's end; Except the feeble among men, and the women, and the children, who are unable to devise a plan and are not shown a way. As for such, it may be that Allah will pardon them. Allah is ever Clement, Forgiving (An-Nisaa' 4:97–99).

Furthermore, Allah compensates those who emigrate for the properties left behind. The Almighty says,

To those who leave their homes in the cause of Allah, after suffering oppression, we will assuredly give a goodly home in this world; but truly the reward of the Hereafter will be greater; if they only realized (this)!] (An-Nahl: 41–42).

Among the different kinds of hijrah is the abandonment of wrongdoings such as acts of disbelief, polytheism, hypocrisy, and other evil deeds and bad morals. Addressing Prophet Muhammad, Allah Almighty says,

And idols, shun (Al-Muddaththir 74:5).

Avoiding idols, as stated in the verse, also implies denouncing them as well as the people who glorify them. Besides, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) tells us that a Muslim is the one who avoids harming Muslims with his tongue and hands, and an emigrant is the one who abandons all what Allah has forbidden. The hadith indicates that one should forsake any deed, rule, word, food, or anything Allah Almighty has prohibited, as well as forbidden gaze and forbidden hearing. All such matters should be forsaken completely.

Another kind of hijrah is to desert wrongdoers such as disbelievers, hypocrites, immoral people, and the like, as Allah Almighty says,

And bear patiently what they say and avoid them with a becoming avoidance (Al-Muzzammil 73:10).

Here, Allah orders His Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) to be patient with those foolish persons who belie him among his people, and to forsake them without blaming them.

The highest form of hijrah is the hijrah of the hearts to Allah through worshiping Him sincerely in secret and in public. In this form of hijrah, the true believer should not intend anything with his words and deeds except gaining Allah's pleasure and should not love except Allah and whoever is loved by Allah. Similarly, hijrah to Allah's Messenger can be fulfilled by following him and giving priority to obeying his orders over anybody else's.

That which comes from Allah is to be met with gratitude. And even all the mistakes done by us are to be dealt with through both our self-examination—not blaming others—and, more importantly, our absolute reliance on Allah to help us. Rage, vengeance, paranoia, dismay, ideology, zealotry, political rumpling, puritanism, and hatred will only harm **us**; by this, we are making more veils—more veils that will hinder us from receiving light, light from the Light.

It is difficult. It is meant to be so. The actual Hijrah as the Qur'an narrates it is that of doing what is difficult in a disciplined, faithful, mature, cautious, and sincere manner:

Let us not forget that. If we all just focus on one, simply one, bad character trait or thing around us and work on changing it for a year or longer—this is the way that brings us closer to lighting our souls.

SIGNIFICANCE OF HIJRAH

In the Glorious Qur'an, Allah, Most High, says,

Those who believe, and migrate and strive in Allah's cause, with their goods and their persons, have the highest rank in the sight of Allah: they are indeed the successful people. Their Lord does give them glad tidings of a Mercy from Himself, of His good pleasure, and of Gardens for them, wherein are delights that endure: They will dwell therein forever. Verily in Allah's presence is a reward, the greatest (of all)

(Al-Tawbah 9:20-22).

Hijrah was one of the most important events in the history of Islam. It is for this reason `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) adopted Hijrah date to calculate years. Muslims chose Hijrah as the focal point to reckon their chronology. In physical terms, Hijrah was a journey between two cities about 300 miles apart, but in its grand significance it marked the beginning of an era, a civilization, a culture and a history for the whole mankind. Islam progressed not only from the physical Hijrah, but because Muslims took Hijrah seriously in all its aspects and dimensions.

LESSONS FROM HIJRAH

In the grand welcome the Prophet received upon arriving in Madinah we find lessons and examples. For the people of Madinah welcomed him and the immigrants with great hospitality, knowing that they would have to share with the immigrants their money and homes and become their family - for the immigrants had left their families behind in Makkah - and asked rewards only from Allah. In this way, the Prophet achieved brotherhood between the Ansar (helpers of the Prophet) and the Muhajirun (migrants), and they became an example of the depth of belief.