

Beginning of Islamic Calendar

The Islamic Year ends with the month of Zil-Hijjah with the sacrifice of Eid al-AdHa, and the new year begins with Muharram with memories of the historical martyrdom of Sayyiduna Imam Hussain (Radi Allahu Anhu). The martyrdom of Hadrat Imam Hussain (Radi Allahu Anhu) had breathed new life into the spirit of Islam regarding the values of Imaan. This philosophy of sacrifice in Islam teaches us the great lesson which forms the basis of spirituality in Islam, and this is the sacrifice of the nafs or physical desires, and the acquisition of sabar or patience.

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It was during the Caliphate of Sayyiduna Umar ibn Al Khattab (Radi Allahu Anhu) that the senior surviving Sahaba (Radi Allahu Anhum Ajma'een) were approached for their advice on deciding the beginning of the Islamic Calendar. Numerous proposals were put forward by the Sahaba with their relevant motivation. But it was due to the sacrifices made by the Muslims at the time of Hijrah, and the successful results produced by their sacrifices that weighed heavily in the favour of Hijrah being chosen by Sayyiduna Umar (Radi Allahu Anhu) as the beginning of the Islamic Calendar.

It is a co-incidence that the first date of Islamic year (first Muharram) is attached with his remembrance, the date of his martyrdom. His era after our Beloved Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Aalihi wa Sallam) was the golden period of Islamic history. He was the conqueror of forty four countries only within the span of ten years. In his period, once on the day of Hajj millions of people were performing Hajj, and Hadrat 'Umar was looking at them which made his eyes wet, someone asked him, that at this time of happiness why are you crying, he replied, I was so strong in my youth, my father had some camels and my duty was to control them. Every evening when I used to tie one of them the other would untie... at that time I was only 'Umar bin Khattaab... and I was a strong young man and could not handle a few camels... and today the same 'Umar bin Khattaab is controlling millions smoothly and peacefully and this strength and unity came from becoming a true and humble servant of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Aalihi wa Sallam).

On an other occasion his eyes became wet when after one holy war (of Madain) lot of valuable stuff came to Madinah, according to today's value, that stuff was worth billions. People asked why there are tears in your eyes, he replied that, these are tears of thankfulness to Allah Kareem, Why? Look at them, the people who brought the stuff which is worth billions, their clothes are tattered. And they did not even touch a single piece of anything. I am only crying to pay thanks to Allah Kareem that, with me there are such pious and God-fearing people... all this is due to the attachment with the Beloved Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Aalihi wa Sallam).

Today, where have this unity and purity of the Muslims gone?

We all claim that we have the love of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Aalihi wa Sallam), then why we are not trying to unite and become pure?

Hijrah is a Turning Point of Islamic History

This new Islamic Year 1431 A.H. demands more attachment to Islam and Shari'ah. The wisdom behind relating the Islamic Calendar to the Hijrah is that the Muslim Ummah should remember the history of the Hijrah which contains the sacrifices and deep love for Islam and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Aalihi wa Sallam).

The Islamic Year begins with the auspicious month of Muharram, which is the month in which the Holy Prophet of Islam (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Aalihi wa Sallam) migrated from Makkah to Madinah, an event better known as the "Hijrah". The Hijrah was a turning point in Islamic History from whence Islam progressively strengthened its power and support base.

Prior to the Hijrah, the Muslims were few in number, were weak and were therefore placed under physical, social and economics sanctions.

After arriving in Madinatul Munawwarah, Islam and the Muslims acquired economic and political strength within a short space of time, and eventually gathered the military might to conquer their oppressors of Makkah.

According to history, when Rasool-e-Paak (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Aalihi wa Sallam) arrived in Madina, Abdullah bin Salaam, the famous Jewish scholar was busy breaking dates in his garden. When news of Rasoolullah's (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Aalihi wa Sallam) arrival reached him, he immediately set out to observe Rasoolullah's (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Aalihi wa Sallam) activities. Before long he found himself in the midst of the Muslims of Madina where Nabi-e-Paak (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Aalihi wa Sallam) was addressing the Muslims thus, "O people! Get into the habit of greeting one another at all times, and feed one another, and treat your relatives and friends with love and kindness. And when everyone is

asleep at night, remember to pray to Almighty Allah at that time. If you keep up in practice with these things then you shall enter Jannah in peace."

This Prophetic advice bears glad tidings for Muslims throughout the ages. Alas! Had the Muslims of today only given heed to, and practised upon this advice, it would have produced the solutions to nearly all their problems. Hidden embodied in this advice is the secrets of the success of this world and the Hereafter.

This advice had produced a deeply profound effect on Abdullah bin Salaam, so much so that he went to the house of Sayyiduna Abu Ayub Ansari (Radi Allahu Anhu) and addressed the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Aalihi wa Sallam) in the following manner, "I accept your claim of Prophethood and I sincerely believe that your religion (Islam) is a true religion." Having made this announcement, he accepted Islam.

The oft-forgotten importance, of the genuine sacrifice of the early Muslims cannot be detached from this historical event. In a fragile and delicate moment in the history of Islam, these oppressed but brave Muslims, charged with the love of the great Prophet of Islam (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Aalihi wa Sallam) were put to the ultimate test. They had to choose between their settled lifestyle in Mecca and migrating with the Prophet of Islam (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Aalihi wa Sallam) to Madinah. Many had left with only the clothes they wore and left behind their houses, wealth, family and property. These were the Muhajireen, who were assisted in Madina by the Ansaar.

Remembrance of the Ahle-Bait

Muslims the world over, in their remembrance of the Ahle-Bait and Hadrat Imam Hussain (Radi Allahu Anhum Ajma'een), engage themselves in feeding the poor in their memory as a mark of respect. On this occasion, it is imperative to reflect as to what aspect of the great Imam's life we Muslims are emulating to improve ourselves spiritually. Should we lack the enthusiasm to put into practice the teachings of the Sunnah which Sayyiduna Imam Hussain (Radi Allahu Anhu) followed so truthfully that he paid the ultimate price for it, we should sit back and question our sincerity in the love for Almighty Allah, His Rasool (Sallallahu Alaihi wa Aalihi wa Sallam), the Ahle-Bait, and the beloved Sahaba like Sayyiduna Abu Bakr, Sayyiduna Umar, Sayyiduna Uthman and Sayyiduna Ali (Ridwanullahi Ta'ala Ajma'een).

It is the love of the Ahle-Bait and the Sahaba-e-Kiraam (ridwanullahi ta'ala ajma'in) that should produce the driving force in emulating closely in our lives the Sunnah of Rasoolullah (Sallalloho Alaihi wa Aalihi wa Sallam). This alone in these times would not only provide the guiding light spiritually, but also be a source of great Barakah and reward in this world and the Hereafter.