

Fruits for the Week

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THE SPIRIT OF HIJRAH

Alhamdulillah! Yesterday (10 February 2005) was the New Year of 1426 *Hijrah*. It means that the *Hijrah* (migration of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)) from Mecca to Medinah took place more than 1425 years ago. The *Hirah* was a physical journey undertaken by the Prophet (SAW) and his companions from Mecca to Medinah. It was a milestone in Islamic history, an event that signified the turning point of Muslims' destiny as well as an event that heralded significant changes in the direction of the world. It was a story exemplifying planning, patience, endurance and striving.

The *Hijrah* is an event for every Muslim to remember always for its tremendous significance on the success of Islam and its powerful impact on the attitude of Muslims. That is why it was institutionalized as the starting point of the Islamic calendar.

The Prophet (SAW), an Arab born on the soil of Mecca, lived at a time when the people were in a state of marked corruption and decay and in the grips of the worst form of idolatry. No society was considered more degrading and more debased than that society before it accepted Islam. Hence the period before Islam became known as the *Jahiliyyah* period, that is, the period of ignorance.

When the Prophet (SAW) began delivering *da'wah* to his people, they ridiculed his teachings and refused to accept changes for the better. They drank alcohol but Islam says alcohol consumption is forbidden. They practiced infanticide but Islam says this practice is cruel and should be stopped. They treated women as mere chattels but Islam gives women honour and right. All these

made the pagans feel that their culture and traditions were destroyed by the teachings of Islam. The Prophet (SAW) began to meet with intense interference and hostility from the pagans.

For 13 years the Prophet (SAW) has carried on his mission patiently, bearing all the agony and hardship of the persecution. In the appointed night when the assassins burst into his room trying to pounce on him and drive their swords into his heart during his sleeping, they received a rude shock. Only Ali (RA) was in the room. The Prophet (SAW) was nowhere to be found. He and Abu Bakar (RA) had left the place unnoticed with the assassins waiting outside.

On 2 July 622, the Prophet (SAW) stepped onto the soil of Madinah. Here he gave form and continuity to the Muslim community and the state with all the various elements of social, political and economic life he had been commanded by Allah (SWT) to establish. Here also, the parts of the Qur'an constituting legislation on various matters were put into practice. From here, Islam flourished and spread rapidly throughout Arabia. The Prophet (SAW) passed away in Madinah where he left for Muslims two permanent and unchangeable sources of guidance for all time — the Qur'an and his *Sunnah*. Whoever holds fast to these two sources of guidance shall be successful — an assurance the Prophet (SAW) gave Muslims in his Farewell Pilgrimage. Wallahu a'lam.

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