

by Imam Zafrullah Domun

By the Grace of Allah we are entering a new Islamic Year as from tomorrow Saturday 1st October 2016. The astronomical moon will be born on 11.30 UTC which will be 15:30 Mauritian time and hence it will not be visible tomorrow. But the moon for the year 1438 AH will be up in the sky as from tomorrow. So I take this opportunity to send my greetings of the new Hijra year to all our Muslim brothers and sisters around the world. May Allah grant to each Muslim in particular be he a man or a woman, the eagerness to carry out all their obligations due to Allah and their fellow human beings in a most excellent way. May Muslims around the world come to realize that they should learn to bury their differences and do their best to accommodate all Muslims as brothers and consolidate the brotherhood that unite us all. If Allah has qualified us "as the best Umma" let us do all we can to show in our words and deeds that the trust that Allah has placed in us is well deserved. This is not a collective responsibility. It is an individual responsibility and each one will be questioned alone and no one will bear the burden of any other. It is a serious matter and we should give it the importance that it warrants.

The Hijra was quite an important event in the history of Islam. In fact it took place on 22nd September 622CE. The abbreviation used for Hijra is AH which in fact means (*anno hejire*) year of the Hijra. Previously instead of the Common Era (CE) the practice was to say BC (before Christ) or AD (*Anno Domini* Year of the Lord). Since these abbreviations had Christian connotations they were dropped in favour of CE and BCE before the Common Era. As a historical footnote it is good to know that BC started being used in the sixth century.

In another sermon insha Allah I will say more about the calendar in general. But for now I will relate to you the emigration of the Holy Prophet to Medina as told by Hazrat Ayesha (ra). It is a bit long but it is quite interesting. She said:

"I never remembered my parents believing in any religion other than the true religion (i.e. Islam), and (I don't remember) a single day passing without our being visited by Allah's Apostle in the morning and in the evening. When the Muslims were put to test (i.e. troubled by the pagans), Abu Bakr set out migrating to the land of Ethiopia, and when he reached Bark-al-Ghimad, Ibn Ad-Daghina, the chief of the tribe of Qara, met him and said, "O Abu Bakr! Where are you going?" Abu Bakr replied, "My people have turned me out (of my country), so I want to wander on the earth and worship my Lord." Ibn Ad-Daghina said, "O Abu Bakr! A man like you should not leave his home-land, nor should he be driven out, because you help the destitute, earn their

livings, and you keep good relations with your kith and kin, help the weak and poor, entertain guests generously, and help the calamity-stricken persons. Therefore I am your protector. Go back and worship your Lord in your town."

So Abu Bakr returned and Ibn Ad-Daghina accompanied him. In the evening Ibn Ad-Daghina visited the nobles of Quraish and said to them. "A man like Abu Bakr should not leave his homeland, nor should he be driven out. Do you (i.e. Quraish) drive out a man who helps the destitute, earns their living, keeps good relations with his kith and kin, helps the weak and poor, entertains guests generously and helps the calamity-stricken persons?" So the people of Quraish could not refuse Ibn Ad-Daghina's protection, and they said to Ibn Ad-Daghina, "Let Abu Bakr worship his Lord in his house. He can pray and recite there whatever he likes, but he should not hurt us with it, and should not do it publicly, because we are afraid that he may affect our women and children."

Ibn Ad-Daghina told Abu Bakr of all that. Abu Bakr stayed in that state, worshipping his Lord in his house. He did not pray publicly, nor did he recite Qur'an outside his house. Then a thought occurred to Abu Bakr to build a mosque in front of his house, and there he used to pray and recite the Qur'an. The women and children of the pagans began to gather around him in great number. They used to wonder at him and look at him. Abu Bakr was a man who used to weep too much, and he could not help weeping on reciting the Qur'an. That situation scared the nobles of the pagans of Quraish, so they sent for Ibn Ad-Daghina. When he came to them, they said, "We accepted your protection of Abu Bakr on condition that he should worship his Lord in his house, but he has violated the conditions and he has built a mosque in front of his house where he prays and recites the Qur'an publicly. We are now afraid that he may affect our women and children unfavorably. So, prevent him from that. If he likes to confine the worship of his Lord to his house, he may do so, but if he insists on doing that openly, ask him to release you from your obligation to protect him, for we dislike to break our pact with you, but we deny Abu Bakr the right to announce his act publicly."

Ibn Ad-Daghina went to Abu- Bakr and said, ("O Abu Bakr!) You know well what contract I have made on your behalf; now, you are either to abide by it, or else release me from my obligation of protecting you, because I do not want the 'Arabs hear that my people have dishonored a contract I have made on behalf of another man."

Abu Bakr replied, "I release you from your pact to protect me, and am pleased with the protection from Allah." At that time the Prophet was in Mecca, and he said to the Muslims, "In a dream I have been shown your migration place, a land of date palm trees, between two mountains, the two stony tracts."

So, some people migrated to Medina, and most of those people who had previously migrated to the land of Ethiopia, returned to Medina. Abu Bakr also prepared to leave for Medina, but Allah's Apostle said to him, "Wait for a while, because I hope that I

will be allowed to migrate also." Abu Bakr said, "Do you indeed expect this? Let my father be sacrificed for you!" The Prophet said, "Yes." So Abu Bakr did not migrate for the sake of Allah's Apostle in order to accompany him. He fed two she-camels he possessed with the leaves of As-Samur tree that fell on being struck by a stick for four months.

One day, while we were sitting in Abu Bakr's house at noon, someone said to Abu Bakr, "This is Allah's Apostle with his head covered coming at a time at which he never used to visit us before." Abu Bakr said, "May my parents be sacrificed for him. By Allah, he has not come at this hour except for a great necessity." So Allah's Apostle came and asked permission to enter, and he was allowed to enter. When he entered, he said to Abu Bakr. "Tell everyone who is present with you to go away." Abu Bakr replied, "There are none but your family. May my father be sacrificed for you, O Allah's Apostle!" The Prophet said, "I have been given permission to migrate."

Abu Bakr said, "Shall I accompany you? May my father be sacrificed for you, O Allah's Apostle!" Allah's Apostle said, "Yes." Abu Bakr said, "O Allah's Apostle! May my father be sacrificed for you, take one of these two she-camels of mine." Allah's Apostle replied, "(I will accept it) with payment." So we prepared the baggage quickly and put some journey food in a leather bag for them. Asma, Abu Bakr's daughter, cut a piece from her waist belt and tied the mouth of the leather bag with it, and for that reason she was named Dhat-un-Nitaqain (i.e. the owner of two belts).

Then Allah's Apostle and Abu Bakr reached a cave on the mountain of Thaur and stayed there for three nights. `Abdullah bin Abi Bakr who was intelligent and a sagacious youth, used to stay (with them) over night. He used to leave them before day break so that in the morning he would be with Quraish as if he had spent the night in Mecca. He would keep in mind any plot made against them, and when it became dark he would (go and) inform them of it. 'Amir bin Fuhaira, the freed slave of Abu Bakr, used to bring the milk sheep (of his master, Abu Bakr) to them a little while after nightfall in order to rest the sheep there. So they always had fresh milk at night, the milk of their sheep, and the milk which they warmed by throwing heated stones in it. 'Amir bin Fuhaira would then call the herd away when it was still dark (before daybreak). He did the same in each of those three nights. Allah's Apostle and Abu Bakr had hired a man from the tribe of Bani Ad-Dail from the family of Bani `Abd bin Adi as an expert guide, and he was in alliance with the family of Al-`As bin Wail As-Sahmi and he was on the religion of the infidels of Quraish.

The Prophet and Abu Bakr trusted him and gave him their two she-camels and took his promise to bring their two she camels to the cave of the mountain of Thaur in the morning after three nights later. And (when they set out), 'Amir bin Fuhaira and the guide went along with them and the guide led them along the sea-shore. The nephew of Suraqa bin Ju'sham said that his father informed him that he heard Suraqa bin

Ju'sham saying, "The messengers of the heathens of Quraish came to us declaring that they had assigned for the persons who would kill or arrest Allah's Apostle and Abu Bakr, a reward equal to their blood money. While I was sitting in one of the gatherings of my tribe Bani Mudlij, a man from them came to us and stood up while we were sitting, and said, "O Suraqa! No doubt, I have just seen some people far away on the seashore, and I think they are Muhammad and his companions." Suraqa added, "I too realized that it must have been they. But I said 'No, it is not they, but you have seen so-and-so, and so-and-so whom we saw set out.' I stayed in the gathering for a while and then got up and left for my home; and ordered my slave-girl to get my horse which was behind a hillock, and keep it ready for me. Then I took my spear and left by the back door of my house dragging the lower end of the spear on the ground and keeping it low. Then I reached my horse, mounted it and made it gallop.

When I approached them (i.e. Muhammad and Abu Bakr), my horse stumbled and I fell down from it, Then I stood up, got hold of my quiver and took out the divining arrows and drew lots as to whether I should harm them (i.e. the Prophet and Abu Bakr) or not, and the lot which I disliked came out. But I remounted my horse and let it gallop, giving no importance to the divining arrows. When I heard the recitation of the Qur'an by Allah's Apostle who did not look hither and thither while Abu Bakr was doing it often, suddenly the forelegs of my horse sank into the ground up to the knees, and I fell down from it. Then I rebuked it and it got up but could hardly take out its forelegs from the ground, and when it stood up straight again, its fore-legs caused dust to rise up in the sky like smoke. Then again I drew lots with the divining arrows, and the lot which I disliked, came out. So I called upon them to feel secure.

They stopped, and I remounted my horse and went to them. When I saw how I had been hampered from harming them, it came to my mind that the cause of Allah's Apostle (i.e. Islam) will become victorious. So I said to him, "Your people have assigned a reward equal to the blood money for your head." Then I told them all the plans the people of Mecca had made concerning them. Then I offered them some journey food and goods but they refused to take anything and did not ask for anything, but the Prophet said, "Do not tell others about us." Then I requested him to write for me a statement of security and peace. He ordered `Amr bin Fuhaira who wrote it for me on a parchment, and then Allah's Apostle proceeded on his way. Narrated `Urwa bin Az-Zubair: Allah's Apostle met Az-Zubair in a caravan of Muslim merchants who were returning from Sham. Az-Zubair provided Allah's Apostle and Abu Bakr with white clothes to wear.

When the Muslims of Medina heard the news of the departure of Allah's Apostle from Mecca (towards Medina), they started going to the Harra every morning . They would wait for him till the heat of the noon forced them to return. One day, after waiting for a long while, they returned home, and when they went into their houses, a Jew climbed up the roof of one of the forts of his people to look for some thing, and he

saw Allah's Apostle and his companions dressed in white clothes, emerging out of the desert mirage. The Jew could not help shouting at the top of his voice, "O you 'Arabs! Here is your great man whom you have been waiting for!" So all the Muslims rushed to their arms and received Allah's Apostle on the summit of Harra. The Prophet turned with them to the right and alighted at the quarters of Bani `Amr bin `Auf, and this was on Monday in the month of Rabi-ul-Awal. Abu Bakr stood up, receiving the people while Allah's Apostle sat down and kept silent. Some of the Ansar who came and had not seen Allah's Apostle before, began greeting Abu Bakr, but when the sunshine fell on Allah's Apostle and Abu Bakr came forward and shaded him with his sheet only then the people came to know Allah's Apostle.

Allah's Apostle stayed with Bani `Amr bin `Auf for ten nights and established the mosque (mosque of Quba) which was founded on piety. Allah's Apostle prayed in it and then mounted his she-camel and proceeded on, accompanied by the people till his she-camel knelt down at (the place of) the Mosque of Allah's Apostle at Medina. Some Muslims used to pray there in those days, and that place was a yard for drying dates belonging to Suhail and Sahl, the orphan boys who were under the guardianship of 'Asad bin Zurara. When his she-camel knelt down, Allah's Apostle said, "This place, Allah willing, will be our abiding place." Allah's Apostle then called the two boys and told them to suggest a price for that yard so that he might take it as a mosque. The two boys said, "No, but we will give it as a gift, O Allah's Apostle!" Allah's Apostle then built a mosque there. The Prophet himself started carrying unburnt bricks for its building and while doing so, he was saying "This load is better than the load of Khaibar, for it is more pious in the Sight of Allah and purer and better rewardable." He was also saying, "O Allah! The actual reward is the reward in the Hereafter, so bestow Your Mercy on the Ansar and the Emigrants." Thus the Prophet recited (by way of proverb) the poem of some Muslim poet whose name is unknown to me. (Ibn Shibab said, "In the Hadiths it does not occur that Allah's Apostle recited a complete poetic verse other than this one.")