Al-Hijrah

With the advent of the 1,432nd year of the Islamic Hijri calendar, this topic was most relevant and timely.

Ameer Mustapha began by reminding the congregation that the Islamic lunar calendar began on a day corresponding with the first day of Muharram and was based on the Hijrah or migration of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE. Every Islamic New Year is reminiscent of this very significant occasion in the history of Islam, which brought in its wake an end to tyranny, persecution, discrimination, pain and grief of the believers in Mecca and ushered in a new era of freedom, fraternity, equality, and justice in Medina. Indeed, the Hijrah was the beginning of a new phase in the life of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his companions.

The first phase of the Prophetic mission known as the Meccan period lasted for thirteen years (610-622) and the second phase which began with the Hijrah and is called the Medinan period lasted for ten years (622-632). This Hijrah from Mecca to Medina was executed by the prophet and his companions under a divine command and was mandatory unlike the optional migration of a few companions to Abyssinia in the early days of the Prophet’s mission. This mission had begun with the first revelation to the Prophet in the cave of Hira situated at the peak of Jabal al-Noor. It was a simple command to “read” (iqla”) and hence began the journey, which along its way transformed his companions into beacons, illuminated with the light of Iman, and led to the establishment of Islam as a concrete historical reality. This was the fruit of the Iman that had been instilled in the minds and hearts of the believers during the Meccan period. Their tarbiyah (training) and their tazkiyah (purification) at the hands of the Prophet (SAW), the adversities endured by them in the path of Allah (SWT) and their life-experiences during the Prophetic era had made for them the hitherto metaphysical and eschatological concepts of the unseen, the life hereafter and the retribution on the Day of Judgment as something not only comprehensible but also real. They could not help but cry out: Our Lord! We have heard someone calling us to faith—“Believe in your Lord”- and we have believed. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, wipe out our bad deeds, and grant that we join the righteous when we die. Our Lord! Bestow upon us all that You have promised us through Your messengers- do not humiliate us on the Day of Resurrection- You never break Your promise (Al-Imran, 3:193-194).

The believers’ intense and deep rooted Iman made them withstand all forms of persecution, hardship and torture meted out to them by the arch enemies of Islam including Abu Jahal and the Prophet’s own uncle Abu Lahab who vented their wrath against them just for proclaiming the true testimony of faith and living by it. Bilal, Ammar, Yasir, Sumaiyya among other companions of the Prophet (SAW) were brutally tortured and some of them were actually slaughtered. The noble Prophet was subjected to verbal abuse and constant harassment and many intrigues and murderous plots were hatched against him. His agony reached a climax when he was not only chased out from the city of al-Taif near Mecca where he had gone to convey Allah’s message to its inhabitants, but even stones were pelted at him. But the Prophet’s mercy, kindness and magnanimity knew no bounds. When asked by the angel of mountains if he must chase out from the city of al-Taif, he said, “I will not allow the deeds of any one of you to be lost, whether you are male or female, each is like the other [in rewards]. I will certainly wipe out the bad deeds of those who emigrated and were driven out of their homes, who suffered harm for My cause, who fought and were killed. I will certainly admit them to Gardens graced with flowing streams, as a reward from God: the best reward is with God.”(Al-Imran, 3:195)

Allah (SWT) in His infinite mercy responded to the cry of the believers who were being tormented day in and day out during the Meccan period at the hands of the Pagan Quraish and others, and ordered them to migrate to Medina, a city about 200 miles north of Mecca. The Qur’an says, “Their Lord has answered them: ‘I will not allow the deeds of any one of you to be lost, whether you are male or female, each is like the other [in rewards]. I will certainly wipe out the bad deeds of those who emigrated and were driven out of their homes, who suffered harm for My cause, who fought and were killed. I will certainly admit them to Gardens graced with flowing streams, as a reward from God: the best reward is with God.’”(Al-Imran, 3:195)

Ameer Mustapha explained that during the Meccan period of thirteen years, the Prophet’s mission was focused toward inculcating three basic doctrinal beliefs in the hearts of the believers: (a) faith in Allah (SWT), (b) faith in Prophethood, and (c) faith in the hereafter. These three cardinal articles of faith revolve around two-thirds of the Qur’anic text revealed during the Meccan period.
The implicit faith in the Creator that the Prophet (SAW) and his companions possessed and the intense desire to please Him caused them to march to Medina to establish a community where God’s rule would reign supreme. On his way to Medina, the Prophet established the first Masjid at Quba where the Muslims could freely worship Allah alone without fear of any persecution of any sort. The first thing that happened on the Prophet’s arrival at Medina was that the enmity between the two feuding tribes of Awa’s and Khazraj came to an end. Allah (SWT) fostered brotherhood between them. They came to be known as the Ansar or helpers. Allah (SWT) mentions this phenomenon in the following Qur’anic ayah, “… Remember God’s favor to you: you were enemies and then He brought your hearts together and you became brothers by His grace; you were about to fall into a pit of Fire and He saved you from it- in this way God makes His revelations clear to you so that you may be rightly guided” (Al-Imran, 3:103)

Three things of great significance occurred after this: First, the Prophet (SAW) upon arrival at Medina laid the foundation of the first Islamic Center, the Prophet’s Mosque - a Masjid cum school which catered to both the worshipping and learning needs of the believers. Many great companions were graduates of this school. Second, the Prophet engendered a strong feeling of fraternity between the Ansar and the Muhajirun (emigrants), which went a long way to unite and strengthen the Muslim community of Medina. The Ansars demonstrated a unique self-sacrificing spirit when they welcomed their Meccan brothers with open arms and cheerfully shared their wealth and possessions with them just for the sake of Allah (SWT). Third, the Prophet (SAW) executed alliance pacts with different tribes and communities including the Jews. This ensured the safety and security of Medina against foreign aggression as all parties to the alliance, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, whether hostile or friendly to each other were legally and morally bound to stand against their common enemy.

The Prophet (SAW) was constrained to engage in defensive wars when the aggressive pagan Quraish along with their allies invaded Medina. With the help of Allah (SWT), within a few years, the Prophet and his companions emerged successful and this success culminated when the Prophet (SAW) along with his companions marched towards Mecca and restored the sanctity of the sacred Ka’ba by cleansing it from idols and other objects of worship. This victory of Mecca was achieved without spilling blood and the Prophet, again in keeping with his usual benevolence declared a general amnesty, even for those disbelievers who had crossed limits in their persecution and opposition of the believers.

Two months prior to his demise in 632 CE, the Prophet (SAW) performed Hajj in which he delivered his famous farewell sermon. Among many advices, he admonished the believers to be good to one another, to be kind to women, to avoid usury, to eliminate prejudices of ethnicity and tribalism, and to be alert of the accursed Satan. On this occasion, Allah (SWT) signaled His pleasure to the Prophet (SAW) and to the community of believers by revealing what is believed to be the last revealed verse of the Qur’an: Today I have perfected for you your faith, and have completed My favor upon you, and am well-pleased with Islam as your din (system of life), (Al-Ma’idah, 5:3). Medina became the capital of the new born Islamic State.

The trials and tribulations of the believers in the Meccan period and their sincere commitment to struggle in the path of Allah (SWT) eventually resulted in the creation of a social order based on fairness and justice. This social order and stability was not restricted to Mecca and Medina rather it spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula and beyond.

Ameer Mustapha passionately invited the members of the congregation who were mostly Muhajirun (immigrants) to the USA to create the same bond of brotherhood and sisterhood with the native Ansar population of this land such as the African-American brothers and sisters among others. We have to be united and not divided. He also advocated to turn our masajids into centers of learning as evidenced by the fact that the mono enemy.

Ameer Mustapha asserted that the IONA Center tries to work on the same methodology and spirit of repelling evil with good. This is evidenced by the fact that our one time opponents, who were vehemently opposed to the establishment of our Center, here in Warren, have become our dear friends. By the grace of Allah, and the tireless work of our center working with other clergy in the city among other community leaders were able to influence the Mayor and city officials to put an end to discrimination and prejudice. The City Council of Warren passed a resolution upholding the American core values of freedom, equality, and justice - those inherent qualities that do not discriminate on the basis of religion, race, nationality, ethnicity, language and gender. As far as we are concerned, we have the perfect model in our Prophet (SAW) because Allah Himself attests to this, “The Messenger of God is an excellent model for those of you who put your hope in God and the Last Day and remember Him often.” (Al-Ahzab, 33:21)

End

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