



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful



THE CALL

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Editorial

Happy New Year !

Tuesday March 4, 2003 is the first day in the first month of the Islamic Year. Today is the 1st. *Muharram*, 1424 A.H. The year 1424 A.H. means One thousand Four Hundred and Twenty Four years After *Hijra*.

Hijra

The *Hijra* or The *Flight* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (U.W.B.P) from Mecca to Medina is a significant event in the annals of Islamic history. It is from this historic event that time, in terms of counting our Islamic years, begins. This period in the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad is referred to as the Flight or Migration. It was a time in the life of the Holy Prophet when all his efforts for the propagation of Islam, were thwarted by severe persecution of himself and his followers. While the persecution of Muslims was harsh and oppressive in Mecca and the spread of Islam was stagnant, Islam silently grew in the city of Medina. When the incessant persecutions became intolerable, the Prophet and

many of his followers gave up all their belongings, land and property, in an exodus to find refuge in Medina. This migration of Muslims from Mecca to Medina is referred to as the *Hijra* and it is from this period of time that the Islamic Year begins. It should be noticed the Islamic calendar year does not begin with the birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad as in the case of the Christian. calendar which begins with the year in which Christ was born. A birth that is not accurately recorded and of which there is much discrepancy.

Christian Era

There are those who believe that Christ was born in 6 B.C, 4 B.C, 2 B.C. and 1 B.C. This discrepancy was highlighted when the debate on the dawn of the twenty first century arose. Does the twenty first century begin in the year 2000 or in the year 2001? The Christian calendar, which every one uses, would record our time as 2003 A.D., which means

Two Thousand and Three Years in the Year of our Lord.(A.D. – Anno Domini , the Year of our Lord.). 6 B.C. means six years before the Birth of Christ.

Dionysius

When Jesus was born, no one used a calendar that measured time in years, before or after the Birth of Christ. The calendar we use today, was not invented until 500 years after the birth of Jesus. In 533 A.D. *Dionysius* a Scythian monk, invented the idea of the “Christian Era” and of reckoning time before or after the birth of Christ. He called that year 533 A.D. because he had calculated Jesus’ birth to be 533 years earlier. *Dionysius* calculated that Jesus was born late in the year that he called 1 B.C. The first full year after Jesus’ birth *Dionysius* called *Anno Domini* 1(Latin) - “ the year of our Lord,” 1, or 1 A.D. There was no year zero, since zero was not a known number at the time.

My Experiences of Hajj

Hajjin Natasha Baksh

Vice Principal, Fireburn Ahmadiyya Maktab Class

(Lecture delivered at the Monthly Qur'anic Reading of the Fireburn Ahmadiyya Jamaat)

Assalaamu `alaikum

Rabbish rahli Sadri, wa Yasirli Amri Wah lul Ukdatam Mili Sani, Yafkahu kawli.

This evening I was given the task to share with you some of my experiences about the pilgrimage I made - but to tell you the truth, it is an experience I can never really explain in depth. The inner feeling, which I felt to be in the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina, cannot be put in words. This was something I have always wanted to do and *Allah* made it easy for me.

Peace of Mind

As it is said - it is definitely a journey of a lifetime. Nothing else could give you such peace of mind and contentment. I believe today, *Allah* makes the means easy for whoever has the intention of making the pilgrimage, and also makes the pilgrimage easy for you to perform. What was the hardest part of the journey in my opinion was the travelling, because of the long hours from one place to another. Other than that, it was enjoyable and easy.

As you may be aware when someone leaves his/her home and travels to undertake this particular journey, he returns home in approximately

one month. The actual rituals pertaining to *Hajj* however, takes only five days.

Very good use is made of the other times spent, while awaiting the *Hajj*. This unique opportunity is treasured by spending all the time possible in the worship of *Allah* such as, making extra *tawaaif*, doing as many *Umrah* (the lesser pilgrimage) as you can, reading *Qur'an* and making plenty of *Duas*. The majority of pilgrims makes the intention for *Umrah* and then makes the intention to perform the *Hajj* when the time comes.

Ka'abah

To visit and see the *Ka'abah* for the first time was a feeling as if one has finally reached his destination. I felt as if I had accomplished my heart-long feeling. It is almost impossible to describe. The impact on seeing the *Ka'abah* is great and you will feel very humble and ready to perform the rites, full of emotion because you feel you have finally reached your goal.

You know, as Muslims we were always taught about

our religion, about believing in one God and following all the principles. You know we face a certain direction to perform *salaat* but when you are actually in front of the *Ka'abah*, to which you have been facing for years, it makes you feel like you want nothing more than to devote your life to *Allah* and thank him for giving you this privilege.

I felt that I was so blessed among so many others to perform this duty at this time of my life. *Al hamdulillah!*

Hajj

During the *Hajj* a pilgrim enjoys the distinguished privilege of offering all his *salaat* in the very *Haram Shareef* towards which he had been turning his face from his home. When he puts on his *Ihram*, he undergoes the exercise of cleansing his morals, giving up temptations of the flesh, developing patience and tolerance and love for *Allah* and becoming a selfless fighter for the sake of *Allah*. These are all physical devotion. *Hajj* also serves the purpose of cleansing the heart of the love of worldly wealth

for the sake of *Allah* because the pilgrim spends his savings generously and offers sacrifices for His sake, with the sole purpose of winning His approval. *Hajj* therefore fulfills all the objectives of establishing a close relationship with *Allah*. It helps to purify oneself and to develop spiritually at the same time, provided it is performed with the sincere intention for the sake of *Allah* and not as a ritual. As a true believer, he has to make every effort to remove all his shortcomings and mistakes of behavior.

Ihram

A pilgrim therefore, who wishes to perform *Hajj* must pledge to sacrifice in Allah's path and try to attain nearness to him. When he puts on his *Ihram* and recites the *Talbiya - La baik, Allah huma La baik*, he must be prepared to give up all worldly desires and pride and adopt an attitude of humility. For in the eyes of *Allah*, all human beings are equal. Their only difference is in their piety and righteous conduct. This is the only way a person can be better than another.

All pilgrims rich and poor wear a simple dress known as *Ihram*, which shows that no one is above another since in the eyes of *Allah*, all believers are alike. The Pilgrim repeats the *Talbiyah* over and over again which means:

"Here I am, Oh Allah! Here I am, there is no one who is your partner, here I am! Surely all Praise and blessings are yours and the Kingdom. You are without companion"

So when you recite this, it is to say, "O Allah, I have heard **the call** and I have presented myself before thee. I acknowledge thy favors and blessings and I bear testimony to thy oneness"

Salaat

What amazed me the most in that city was when the *Adhan* was sounded. Everyone in sight left what they were doing and proceeded towards the *masjid* for *salaat*. All trading was put on halt, traffic stopped and the town looked bare. When the *Imam* said "*Allahu Akbar*" it was a pleasure to see all pilgrims responding and bowing together in the worship of *Allah* in *salaat*. People from all countries, colors and races were in such unity, which showed no distinction. Muslims living in various parts of the world got to know each other; laid the foundation of social culture; gave advice to each other, and provided the opportunity for collective struggle. *Salaat* was the priority there and much emphasis was put to show its importance. I now realize how much faith some people have in their Lord and are so willing in their efforts.

Many times I was reminded of my family and wished they were with me to experience this beautiful feeling. Many children were there with their parents and there were many more young people rather than old. Where the food was concerned, it was a little different to our style but yet delicious. We had

everything we could have imagined, together with desserts, fruits and all types of drinks to our heart's content.

The visit to *Medina* was very special. It is the Prophet's city. Being there and sending *salaams* to him make you feel close to him. People there are very friendly and it was a peaceful city different to Mecca.

Praying in his *Masjid* (*Masjid Nabwi*) and visiting his grave and graves of his companions are experiences that will never be forgotten. Also, *Masjid Quba* was visited on a daily basis. This was the first mosque the prophet (uwbp) constructed when he arrived in *Medina*.

Ziarah

Sometime was also spent in *Ziarah*. That is, visiting places where important incidents took place. When I was in these holy grounds I felt like I was back in the days of the Prophet Muhammad (uwbp). It was like my world did not exist. Nothing seemed important at that time, especially when you hear about the different battles that took place and revelations that the prophet (uwbp) got. You feel privileged to actually be at the same places where these things happened centuries ago. People gave their life for Islam in battles. Many things they had gone through we cannot even begin to know. It is amazing to hear about the unshakeable faith of the early Muslims. Among the places we visited were;

Cave Hira – where the Prophet (uwbp) received his first revelation.

Jabal Thur – Where the prophet (uwbp) hid with his companion Abu Bakr to escape from their enemies (the *Quraysh*) and Allah caused a spider to build a web to protect them. Just imagine He protected them with the weakest of houses, the house of a spider.

The actual place where battles were fought :

Battle of Badr ; Battle of the Trench ; Battle of Uhud – Here are buried, righteous people who fought in these battles and died.

Jannatul Mu'alla – It is the oldest cemetery in Makkah. Here are buried Bibi Khadija, the prophet's wife, their son, others of his descendant and many pilgrims who went to Makkah to perform Hajj and died while in the Holy city.

Mina - Here is where Hajj begins on the 8th of Zul Hijja (the first day of Hajj). Most of the Hajj days are spent in *Mina*. One of those days, the three *Jamrah* were stoned and the animal sacrifice took place,

which is an important rite of Hajj.

Arafat – Here is the mount of Mercy. It is from this mount the Prophet Muhammad (uwbp) delivered his farewell message.

It is one of the most important days of Hajj, which is the 9th of the Islamic month *Zul Hijja*.

Pilgrims must assemble here to perform *Waquf of Arafat*, which simply means, standing in *Arafat*. If one does not stand here in prayer for even 2 minutes, between *zawal* (after *Zuhr*) and sunset, he has not performed Hajj.

The prophet (SAW) is reported to have said on this day prayers and duas are accepted providing it is done sincerely.

Muzdalifa – This is a large open plain between *Arafat* and *Mina*. Pilgrims assemble there after leaving *Arafat* at sunset and spend the night in *Muzdalifa*. We collected pebbles during this time for pelting the *Jamrah* back in *Mina*.

These were only some of the sites I visited while awaiting the Hajj. Our leader took us to various places and our time was well spent. We also got the

opportunity to visit Jordan. A country before arriving in Saudi Arabia and got the opportunity to visit the cave of the *Seven Sleepers*. This story can be found in *Surah Kahf* in *Al-Qur'an* where 7 men slept for 306 years. Inside the cave, we saw the tomb with their bones and skull. It was really amazing to see this since the place appeared how it must have been centuries ago with stone and dirt.

The Best

In conclusion, I wish to say that making the pilgrimage left nothing but contentment within me. My greatest happiness lies in my faith and my goal is to gain Allah's pleasure. I am so grateful for the opportunity I got and the support of my family.

For me, it is the best place I ever went.

The best feeling I ever experienced.

The best thing I ever did.

I hope Insha Allah I could go again.

Ahmadiyya Youth Movement

Cordially invite

All Muslim Youths

to our

ANNUAL SPORTS DAY

on

SUNDAY MARCH 30, 2003

at 9.00 a.m.

Ato Boldon Stadium

Uriah Butler Highway,

Couva.

Name :

Address :

Fireburn Ahmadiyya Jamaat

Cordially invite

You, Your Family & Friends

to its

GRAND BAZAAR & B B Q

on

SUNDAY MAY 4, 2003

at 2.00 p.m.

The Mosque Hall

83 Uquire Road, Fireburn

Freeport.

