

Al-Hijrah is a great source of lessons in every place AND time

## **DR HATEM-AL-HAJ: RAISING THE MUSLIM CHILD**

All praise is to Allah most High.

We have now entered the Islamic Year 1442 by Allah's mercy and grace.

The Islamic Year begins with the month of Muharram, which is one of the four sacred months mentioned by Allah (swt). The other three are Rajab, Dhul Qaddah and Dhul Hijjah. In fact, in one hadith the Prophet (saw) called Muharram "the month of Allah" and he said, "*The best of fasting after Ramadhan is fasting Allah's month of Muharram*" (Reported in Muslim)

Although we may be used to the Gregorian Calendar in our daily lives, the Hijri calendar is one that we should be proud of as Muslims. We should learn the names of the months and be aware of their significance - for instance, most of us know about the special blessings of the month of Ramadan, but are we familiar with the relevance of any other month? Do we know the important historical events that happened in different months that helped to shape our ummah? Learning our history over the course of over 1,400 years can help to reaffirm our identity as Muslims.

The history of the Hijri calendar system is itself interesting: it commemorates the Prophet (saw) migration from Mecca to Medina. However, the calendar was only implemented during the caliphate of Umar (ra), several years after the Prophet (saw) had passed away. For practical purposes, a standard calendar was needed at the time to date correspondence to the Muslim governors of different regions, especially since some of the regions had their own date system.

After deciding the Hijra was a good starting point for the calendar, Umar and his companions discussed what month the calendar should begin. (It is worth noting that the Prophet (saw) migrated during the month of Rabbi ul Awwal). It was decided that Muharram would mark the beginning of each year - since it was right after Dhul Hijjah when the people returned to their homes cleansed from Hajj, it was symbolic of a new beginning. The calendar came into being in the year 17 after the Hijra.

And 1441 years later, here we are with the gift of Islam as the part of the ummah of our beloved Prophet (saw). We ask Allah to bless our days and grant us the best in this life and the next.

*Interested in learning more about Islamic History? Register for our course [History of the Islamic State](#), this Fall inshaAllah. Our children are one of our greatest blessings in life. Their proper and wholesome upbringing is not only essential to the success of our families but the whole community at large.*

Dr Hatem al-Haj, who is both a scholar and practicing pediatrician, recently posted a series of advice on raising children. These enlightening notes are not only beneficial to parents, but to any Muslim tasked with the care of the next generation.

You can find links to all the posts released so far below:

[Raising a Child between Ages 2-7](#)

[Raising a Child between Ages 7-12](#)

[Raising a Child 12 and Beyond](#)

[Raising A Child 0 to 2 years](#)

[The Angry Child](#)

[The Timid and Anxious Child](#)

[The Autistic Child](#)

[The Jealous Child](#)

[The HyperActive and Inattentive Child](#)

## REJECTION OF INNOVATION REJECTION

Imam An-Nawawi Hadith 5, On the authority of Aisha-may Allaah be pleased with her. " He who innovates something in this matter of ours that is not of it will have it rejected{by Allaah}."{Bukhari & Muslim}.

Cultural practices have permeated Islam to such an extent that sometimes it is difficult to know what is from the Prophet (saw) and the salaf rather than a cultural innovation or bidaah. So what is bidaah? Linguistically, bidaah means to bring in something unprecedented. Technically, it implies a new methodology or practice. Ibn Rajab, may Allah have mercy on him, said, " A bidaah is any form of worship which has no basis in the Shariah which would warrant its legislation."

This hadith is a fundamental basis of our deen in guiding our outward actions. It complements the first hadith which talks about the inner aspects of an action which is intention, and adds the dimension of outward actions. The outward actions need to conform to the deen and the shariah, otherwise they will be rejected. In Surah Al Maidah: 3, Allah states "This day I have perfected and completed your religion for you, completed my favor upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." In this verse, Allah is telling us directly He has given us everything we need to follow the religion completely and perfectly through the Quran and Prophet (saw). Thus, by innovating we are basically criticizing Allah and the Prophet (saw) of neglecting to show us the correct way.

Growing up in the Middle East with an Asian background, I was taught many rites of worship which I now know have no evidence in the shariah. The intention of the people performing these rites is that they are doing "extra deeds" to get closer to Allah. So how could that be wrong or an innovation? Well, this is one of the biggest problems facing some Muslims today - the thought process that taking acts of worship to extremes will increase their reward somehow. But what they do not realize is that if these acts are not originally part of the Shariah or they have omissions, they may be rejected.

Any act must be in accordance with the Shariah with respect to cause, type, amount, manner, time and place. On the other hand, an example of an act that may be considered an innovation is the sufi chanting and dancing to get in a trance to get closer to Allah. Other examples include any act of worship based on fabricated hadith like the prayer of the month of Rajab called Raghaa'ib, calling adhaan other than for the five prayers, continuous silence, the way mawlid is celebrated in some places (controversial), and visiting and praying at graves of saints to name a few.

Bidaah can take us down the path of disbelief, which is a trick of shaytan since it does not appear wrong to the person doing it. Sometimes these innovations are so deeply embedded that any effort to counteract and educate leads to a response filled with hatred and rejection. The reason for committing bidaah are manifold and include ignorance of the religion of Islam, dependence on weak and fabricated hadith, blind imitation of the masses, cultural practices, and following one's whims.

The way we can avoid bidaah is to adhere to the Quran and sunnah, spreading correct knowledge, educating ourselves between the fabricated and sahih hadith, receiving knowledge from the correct sources and to some degree using our reasoning powers to think about what we are doing and why? Anas Ibn Maalik (ra) reported that the Prophet (saw) said, "Allah does not accept the repentance of an innovator until he abandons his innovation." (At-Tabraani and Bayhaqi).

When I learned about it and thought it through, it left me wondering about how many Muslims do not even perform the obligatory deeds constantly and correctly and yet have the time to innovate. If we want to get close to Allah then the best way is to perform the obligatory deeds that He has prescribed for us. If we want to achieve ihsan in our ibadat and increase in our worship with extra acts, then we have a treasure trove of recommended ibadat that can be performed such as the duha prayer, Tahajjud, fasting the three "white days" in the middle of the month, reading the Quran and forming a connection with it, and so much more.

May Allah make us among those who follow His guidance and that of the Prophet (saw), without additions or omissions?