

Hope Is What We All Need

<http://www.islamonline.net/English/NewHijriYear/1431/NeverLoseHope/01.shtml>

By Wael Shihab

Reading and reflecting upon the Prophet's Hijrah from Makkah to Madinah, I see "real" hope is present in most, if not all, of its events and scenes. Prophet Muhammad, the most successful and effective teacher that humanity has ever known, never lost hope in Allah's help and in spreading Islam—with its peaceful and just message—all over the world.

Before the Hijrah, Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) and his followers faced the most brutal and merciless persecution and hostilities at the hands of Quraish, the Prophet's tribe. The Prophet, however, never lost hope in disseminating the noble message of Islam. Rather, he used to encourage his followers to keep patient and forbearing in the hardest and most difficult times while anticipating Allah's help and assistance.

Khabbab Ibn Al-Arrat narrated: We complained to Allah's Messenger (about the unbelievers' persecution and brutality against Muslims) while he was leaning against his sheet cloak in the shade of the Kaabah. We said, "Will you ask Allah to help us? Will you invoke Allah for us?" He (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Among those who were before you (a believer) used to be seized and, a pit used to be dug for him and then he used to be placed in it. Then a saw used to be brought and put on his head which would be split into two halves. His flesh used to be combed with iron combs and removed from his bones, yet, all that did not cause him to revert from his religion. By Allah! This religion (Islam) will survive until till a lone traveler travels long distances with no fear of bandits, anything, or anyone except Allah [indicating the prevailing safety due to the spread of ethics and morality preached by Islam]." (Al-Bukhari)

So, in the midst of trials and tribulations, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) gave them the glad tidings that a day will soon come when Islam will spread and people will be secure and safe everywhere. The Prophet's heart was so full with hope and trust in Allah, even in the hardest of times, that he used to see the victory of Islam as being very close. This, however, never made him fall short of working hard to achieve his goals.

Upon seeing his followers facing the most harsh treatment from the people of Quraish, who fought the noble message of Islam by all possible means, Prophet Muhammad migrated to At-Ta'if to find supporters for the new call. Unfortunately, the people of Ta'if were not any better than the people of Quraish with regards to harshness and hostility towards the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). Nevertheless, the Prophet never lost hope and continued to convey the noble message as best as he could.

The Prophet's Hijrah from Makkah to Madinah shows how much his heart was filled with hope and trust in Allah. When he (peace and blessings be upon him) and his closest friend, Abu Bakr, left for Madinah, the people of Quraish decided to block all roads leading out of Makkah and imposed heavy armed

surveillance over all potential exits. A reward of 100 camels each was set for capturing Prophet Muhammad and Abu Bakr and bringing them back to Makkah. Horsemen, infantry, and expert tracks tracers scoured the outskirts of the city. Once, they even managed to reach the mouth of the cave where the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and Abu Bakr were hiding. When Abu Bakr saw the enemy at a very close distance, he whispered to the Prophet, "If any of them should look under his feet, he would see us." He (peace and blessings be upon him) calmed him down, saying, "O Abu Bakr, what do you think of two (persons) the third of whom is Allah?" (Al-Bukhari)

Another brilliant scene that shows the Prophet's hope and immense trust in Allah is the incident involving Suraqah Ibn Malik. Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that Suraqah Ibn Malik followed him and the prophet. Abu Bakr told the Prophet, "We have been caught, O Allah's Messenger!" Prophet Muhammad replied, "Don't grieve for Allah is with us." The Prophet invoked evil on Suraqah and so the legs of his horse sank into the earth up to its belly. Suraqah then said, "I see that you have invoked evil on me. Please invoke good on me, and by Allah, I will cause those who are seeking after you to return." The Prophet invoked good on him and he was saved. Then, whenever he met someone on the way, he would say, 'I have looked for him here in vain.' So he caused whomever he met to return. Thus Suraqah fulfilled his promise. (Al-Bukhari). Some reports, furthermore, say that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) promised Suraqah the bracelet of Kisra, the King of the Persians. This promise was fulfilled during the time of Umar Ibn Al-Khattab's leadership after the death of Prophet Muhammad and his first successor, Abu Bakr.

The Hijrah as such implants real and unshaken hope in our hearts. Let us, therefore, reflect upon these experiences and work hard to change, improve ourselves, and help those around us. This is possible, God willing with faith and perseverance. We should never give up on ourselves or those around us. More importantly, we should never despair in Allah's eternal mercy, grace, and forgiveness. This is a significant lesson we can walk away with from the Prophet's blessed migration from Makkah to Madinah.

May Allah guide us all to what pleases Him and grant us happiness in this world and in the next. Ameen.

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