

## **STATUS OF HIJRI CALENDAR IN OUR LEGISLATION**

Friday Sermon Presented by

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The advent of the new Hijri year leads us to ponder about an important issue related to our culture, our identity and our civilization, and about an affiliation our religion obliges us with. The Hijri calendar that has already begun depends on the lunar system, and man is in need for circumstances of time and place through which his movements and dealings should be disciplined.

The lunar calendar was applied before Islam by the Arabs, but they underwent *Al Nasi'*, (delaying and advancing the sanctity of certain months according to their whims and desires). They used to play with the circumstance of time and change it, in addition to their playing with the circumstance of place so that they changed and altered the rituals of pilgrimage, and ordered people at pilgrimage time to overflow from Arafat while only Quraish stayed in Muzdalifa.

When Islam began in the Arabic Peninsula, it did not neglect the solar calendar. It rather took it into consideration and related the responsible man to something connected with the solar system, but it made worship and dealings depend on the lunar system.

The year 1429 of the lunar calendar depends on the date that our Master, Omar (GBH), considered the

beginning of the history of Islam and Muslims. It was the birth of the Islamic state in the Enlightened Medina.

I am not going to discuss today the reckoning of the Hijri calendar and its beginning, for this is a matter discussed before. I rather want to draw the attention of the Islamic Ummah to the value of the lunar Hijri calendar because our religion relates us to it. Moreover, we have to be concerned with it, especially at this time when we undergo a lot negligence and confusion; at a time the world has become tied to one another, and each tiny information can reach every place in the world in seconds, not minutes. But we suffer from political crises that make our calendar confused, not because the bases of our lunar calendar are themselves confused, for the laws are quite clear and the Prophetic declaration about it is also manifest. In addition, the cosmic calculation laws are in complete conformity with what the Islamic text presents. But the confusion we live in nowadays is because we are suffering from a political crisis.

However the case is, we are in need for expounding the merit of our connection with this calendar.

As we are required to adhere to this calendar because we are one Ummah, we are also obliged to understand its merit and our connection with it. We have to exert our best effort to work and observe the circumstances of work in both time and place, otherwise neither discipline nor regularity will exist.

First, Islamic legislation takes into consideration the solar system. Read the following verse in the Holy Qur'an that refers to the two parts of day and night, and these, as is well known, depend on the relationship of the earth with

the sun: **"We have made the night and the day as two (of our) Signs"**. The Exalted Allah refers to the relationship between the earth and the sun, for the day and night are the result of the connection of the earth with the sun.

**-"the sign of the night have we obscured, while the sign of the day we have made to enlighten you; that ye may seek Bounty from your Lord, and that ye may know the number and count of the years"** (Al Isra', v. 12).

In this verse, the Exalted Allah does not mention the relationship with the moon. He rather refers to the signs of night and day, then He presents the advantage of their relationship: **" that ye may know the number and count of the years"**.

In the divisions of the day and in our daily worship, the relationship of the earth with the sun is to be observed as is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an. As man is living on this earth, he has to observe the changes connected with this earthly-solar relationship. For example, the Exalted Allah said:

**"Establish regular prayers at the sun's decline till the darkness of the night, and the morning prayer and reading for the prayer and reading in the morning carry their testimony. And pray in the small watches of the morning: (it would be) an additional prayer (or spiritual profit) for thee: soon will thy Lord raise thee to a station of praise and Glory !** (Al Isra', vs. 78-79). Notice the mention of the decline of the sun, the morning Qur'an and the night.

**- "So (give) glory to Allah, when ye reach eventide and when ye rise in the morning"** (Ar Rum, v. 17). 'Eventide and morning' refer to the beginning of the day and its end.

**- "Yea, to Him be praise, in the heavens and on earth; and in the late afternoon and when the day begins to decline"** (Ar Rum, v. 18). There is a reference to the evening and noon.

**- "Bear, then, with patience, all that they say, and celebrate the praises of thy Lord, before the rising of the sun and before (its) setting. And during part of the night, (also,) celebrate His praises, and (so likewise) after the postures of adoration"** (Qaf, vs. 39-40).

The Holy Qur'an also refers to the solar calculation in the mention of the notion of the day: **"He rules (all) affairs from the heavens to the earth in the end will (all affairs) go up to Him, on a Day"**. It is a well known fact that the day emerges from the rotation around an axis. Then the Exalted Allah said: **"the space whereof will be (as) a thousand years of your reckoning"** (Al Sajdah, v. 5).

Calculation is performed depending on proportion only, that is, when we talk about the relationship of the earth with the sun, the day mentioned in the Holy Qur'an should be proportionate to what we are calculating.

On the other hand, our Islamic law depends on the lunar system. The Exalted Allah said: **It is He Who made the sun to be a shining glory and the moon to be a light (of beauty), and measured out stages for**

**her; that ye might know the number of years and the count (of time)".** There is reference to calculation and knowledge of years that emerge from the movement of the moon. **"Nowise did Allah create this but in truth and righteousness. (thus) both he explain his Signs in detail, for those who understand"** (Yunus, v. 5).

Most of our Islamic rules are connected with the lunar calculation. As the divisions of the day are connected with the sun, our work during the year and the month are connected with the lunar system. Thus, this can be understood depending on the teachings of our Islamic legislation, for giving alms '*Zakat*', fasting, pilgrimage, the woman's prescribed waiting period after divorce or after the death of her husband '*Uddah*', dealings among the Muslims, all depend on the lunar calendar, a system that implies a lot of wisdom.

For example, if *zakat* were paid only in winter and were connected with the solar system only, who would pay *zakat* to the poor in summer? And if it were to be paid in spring, who would pay it in autumn where circumstances of life are quite different?

Man's circumstances are usually different in the circle of the yearly seasons of the solar system and he has various financial needs in his different states in these different circumstances.

Another example is fasting. The Jews and a lot of Christians relate their worship to the solar system thus falling in the fault of *Nasi'* (delay). They noticed that their personal interests are continuous and stable when they take into consideration the seasons of agriculture and others.

On the other hand, our religion urges us to fast in the short season of winter, and in the long one in summer so that we train ourselves to be obedient to the Exalted Allah in hardship and ease.

Thus *Zakat*, fasting and other types of worship are practiced in all the seasons of the year.

To indicate that the righteousness of religion cannot be achieved unless we depend on the lunar calendar, the Exalted Allah said: "**The number of months in the sight of Allah is twelve (in a year) so ordained by him the day he created the heavens and the earth; of them four are sacred**". If the Exalted Allah did not say "**of them four are sacred**", we would have thought that He referred to the solar calendar. But He mentioned the four sacred month (Rajab, Dhul-Qu'dah, Dhul-Hijjah, and Muharram) in order to make us know that He referred to the lunar calendar. Thus, the sacred months exist only in the lunar calendar.

Then the Exalted Allah said: "**that is the straight usage**" (*Al Tawbah*, v.36), i.e., obeying the Exalted Allah and adhering to His Law can be attained only when man relates himself to this calendar, and by doing that, he commits himself to righteousness in legislation as explained by the exegetes (GBTH).

The Exalted Allah said: "**Verily the transposing (of a prohibited month) is an addition to unbelief: the Unbelievers are led to wrong thereby**".(*Al Tawbah*, v.37), When man plays with the cosmos and the calendar, he violates the rules of religion.

In the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

**"Time has completed its cycle and has come to the state of the day when Allah created the heavens and the earth"**, i.e., *Nasi'* (transposing of time) has come to an end, and calculation has become disciplined since the days of the Messenger of Allah. So Muharram is none but Muharram, Safar is none but Safar, and Rajab is none but Rajab. Before the Mission of the Prophet (PBUH), people got lost from the calculation of the lunar system till the Seal of the Prophets (PBUH) came and made it disciplined by means of Heavenly revelation after which the lunar calendar became disciplined.

**"Time has completed its cycle"**, i.e., time has become right as its first state when Allah created the heavens and the earth.

Some of the solar months are thirty days, more or less, but the lunar months vary between twenty nine to thirty days. The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said:

**"The month is twenty nine. If it exceeds, it is thirty."**

The crescent may be born but not seen. This is a well known fact by astronomers. But calculation of the days of the month should begin when the crescent is seen regardless of whether it is small or big. This is asserted in many Prophetic texts.

Nowadays, scientific calculation has reached a level that is unanimously agreed upon without any doubt. But the disagreement we have today concerning this matter

is the result of political confusion. If the Muslims' affairs in the east and west of the Islamic world were in the hands of authorities that were in concord with Islam and were void of any confusion, and if the notion of the one united Ummah about Islam became clear and directed worship to the religion of the Exalted Allah, we would not have fallen in the pits that made scientists make fun of what is going on in our Islamic reality.

Moreover, Islam referred to the connection between the two calendars, as if bridges were stretched between this Ummah and the surrounding nations. It is when the Holy Qur'an talks about an incident that did not take place in the Arab countries. It rather happened in a country that used the Roman calculation and others. It is the story of the People of the Cave. In this story, there is astonishing miracle. It is when the Exalted Allah tells about the time of their staying in the cave:

**"So they stayed in their cave three hundred years, and (some) add nine (more)"** (Al Kahf, v. 25).

Concerning the explanation of this verse, exegetes said that the People of the Cave stayed there for three hundred years according to the solar calendar. To make it equal to the lunar calendar, more nine years should be added. In every 33.33 years in the solar system, there is one lunar years. Thus there are nine years more in the lunar calendar in each three hundred years of the solar one.

The Holy Qur'an connects the two calendars in a marvelous verse that says to the world: "Though the Holy Qur'an was revealed in the Arab land, it communicates

with the whole world and takes into consideration whatever is on this earthly planet."

Concerning *Zakat*, Al Mustafa (PBUH) said:

**"Zakat does not have to be paid on property until a year has elapsed over it."**

The year referred to in this Hadith is that of the lunar calendar.

Concerning fasting, the Exalted Allah said:

**"Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Quran as a guide to mankind" (Al Baqarah, v. 189)**

Ramadan is reckoned according to the lunar calendar.

As for pilgrimage, the Exalted Allah said:

**"They ask thee concerning the new moons. Say: They are but Signs to mark fixed periods of time in (the affairs of) men, and for pilgrimage" (Al Baqarah, v. 189).**

Some of the lunar months discipline people's dealings, others are time for pilgrimage which are: Shawwal, Dhul-Qi'dah and Dhul-Hijjah, as the Exalted Allah said: **"For Hajj are the months well known" (Al Baqarah, v. 197).**

In religious expiation, we have to depend on the lunar calendar:

**"Never should a Believer kill a Believer; but (if it so happens) by mistake, (compensation is due); if one (so) kills a Believer, it is ordained that he should free a believing**

**slave, and pay compensation to the deceased's family, unless they remit it freely. If the deceased belonged to a people at war with you, and he was a Believer, the freeing of a believing slave (is enough). If he belonged to a people with whom ye have a treaty of mutual alliance, compensation should be paid to his family, and a believing slave be freed. For those who find this beyond their means, (is prescribed) a fast for two months running by way of repentance to Allah" (Al Nisa', v. 92).**

Does this mean that he should fast March or August, or should he fast two months of the lunar calendar?

Certainly, he should fast two months of the lunar calendar of the Hijri year.

In religious expiation concerning divorcing the wife by *Zihar* (Injurious assimilation of wife to mother), we should notice that we sometime do not take into consideration an important issue as the following:

**"But those who divorce their wives by Zihar, then wish to go back on the words they uttered, (it is ordained that such a one) should free a slave before they touch each other. this is what you are admonished to perform; and Allah is well acquainted with all that ye do. And if any has not (the wherewithal), he should fast for two months consecutively before they touch each other" ( Al Mujadilah, vs. 3-4). This calculation is also reckoned by the lunar calendar.**

As for vital statistics of which Ila' (a vow by a husband to abstain from sexual relationship with his wife), the Exalted Allah said:

**"For those who take an oath for abstention from their wives, awaiting for four month is ordained; if then they return, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (Al Baqarah, v. 226).**

That is, after four lunar months of the Hirji calendar, the judge can divorce the wife even if her husband does not divorce her. This is ordained by the Exalted Allah because, by natural disposition, the wife usually becomes less patient to be away from her husband for more than four months.

In the Period of Ignorance, husbands used to vow to abandon their wives for years. Islam prevented this practice to honor the woman, for she should not suffer from such bad treatment. Consequently, the Holy Qur'an disciplined and restricted an emotional and instinctive issue. Depending on this rule, our Master, Omar (GBH) made the separation of the husband from his wife not more than four months. So when the fighter was absent from his wife for four months, our Master, Omar (GBH) used to call him back and send another one instead of him.

The *Iddah* (the period during which the divorced does not remarry) is also reckoned by the lunar calendar:

**"Such of your women as have passed the age of monthly courses, for them the prescribed period, if ye have any doubts, is**

**three months, and for those who have no courses (it is the same) ". (Al Talaq, v. 4).**

This verse came after the Exalted Allah addressed His Prophet (PBUH) saying:

**"O Prophet! When ye do divorce women, divorce them at their prescribed periods, and count (accurately) their prescribed periods" (Al Talaq, v. 1) .**

*Iddah* may depend on the circumstances of the woman as the Exalted Allah said in the Holy Qur'an: **"Divorced women shall wait concerning themselves for three monthly periods"** (Al Baqarah, v. 228). It may not be related to her circumstances, i.e., when she does not have monthly periods, then *Iddah* is reckoned according to the Lunar calendar: "their *Iddah* is three months".

So is the case for the widow who lost her husband. The Exalted Allah said:

**"If any of you die and leave widows behind, they shall wait concerning themselves four months and ten days" (Al Baqarah, v. 234).**

This also depends on the lunar calendar.

The rule of pregnancy and sucking also depends on the lunar calendar:

**"We have enjoined on man kindness to his parents: in pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth. The carrying of the (child) to his weaning is (a period of) thirty months" (Al Ahqaf, v. 15).**

The Exalted Allah wants to state that the least period of **sucking** should not be less than six months when He said: **"The mothers shall give suck to their offspring for two whole years, if the father desires to complete the term"** (Al Baqarah, v. 233).

In you consider the previous two verses, you find that the least prescribed period for **sucking** should not be less than six months, a matter that is related to the vital statistics and has many other divergences.

Why do I mention all these details?

It is because I like to state that we are Ummah that is greatly negligent about our Islamic Hijri calendar. Scientific disciplining committees, which have referential aptitude of explaining this issue depending on scientific rules, should be constituted for people to resort to.

As we are concerned with developing industry, agriculture, commerce and other fields, we have to attain the level of development by organizing our dealings and our affairs according to the rules of our religion.

Islamic banks have already been set up in our country and Islamic legislative transactions have begun, though unsteady yet, but the process has started. Thus, we have to be aware of this important issue in this stage so that our civilization, our culture and our identity should come into being and so that we make our subordination less.

As I said before, divisions of our day are calculated according to the solar system, and in addressing the others, the solar system is also considered as is mentioned above in Surat Al Kahf.

The Messenger of Allah vowed not to touch his wives for one month. On the twenty ninth day, he (PBUH) came to his wife. She said to him:

"Oh Messenger of Allah, remember your vow."

He said:

"The month is twenty nine days."

As the month may be twenty nine or thirty, so why should he (PBUH) wait?

He (PBUH) teaches us discipline in treatment and movement.

It is a matter of legislation.

Nowadays, the divorced would say:

"I'll begin *Iddah* after three days."

This is *Nasi'* (unlawful delay). By doing that, she does not understand quite well the religious rules and she is not well tied to the straight religion.

There are some other uncrystalized matters we are ignorant of because of our distancing from our calendar, and because we do not adhere to the legislative rules through which justice becomes manifest.

Lunar calendar is not a mere system. It is rather a system that implies wisdom that results in many just issues, and over which social justice is built as is the case of *Zakat* that moves throughout all the seasons of the year when it is produced in the end of the year. Some would say: "Give your *Zakat* in Ramadan". I cannot say that that this is a right statement, because the Exalted Allah

commands us to present *Zakat* when the year is completed as everyone may begin his trade in certain circumstances and certain time. Thus leave Ramadan for fasting and night prayer, but give *Zakat* throughout all the year.

I was inclined to perform *Zakat* in the month of Ramadan, but after I knew the wisdom of *Zakat* and that it should be given when one year elapses, I knew that Islam comprehends the poor throughout all the year. By giving *Zakat* to the poor only in one month, i.e., Ramadan, and neglecting them in the other months of the year, justice and social solidarity become non-existent, so our religiousness should not be manifest only in Ramadan.

Leave the month of Ramadan for fasting, night prayer and giving much charity, but the legislation of *Zakat* should be performed throughout all the year because the poor live in agony, and the rate of poverty in our country has reached a very high rate.

Where is social solidarity that our Islam recommends us to follow?

Where is sympathy with the poor that our Islam calls us to feel?

Nowadays, we undergo anarchy...

We undergo confusion...

We undergo individualism...

We undergo social loss...

Through societies and the like, we should exert much activity in order to clarify these concepts, and regain

thereby the splendor of our Islam, and so that humanism may appear radiant with the light of our Islam, and so that we become distinguished in our behavior, in our treatment, in our social discipline before our Lord when we understand well the aim of our Islam and when we comprehend the purpose of our legislation.

Allahum..., guide us to You favorably, and make us from those who listen to wisdom and follow the best of it.

I say my words and ask Allah's forgiveness.