All praises are due to Allah, Lord of the Worlds and may His salutations and peace be showered upon our beloved Prophet Muhammad, forever. As To what follows:

The beginning of the new solar year marks an important event for the followers of the solar traditions. Muslims are also affected by the New Year and begin it by looking back at the past twelve months and making resolutions for the coming year. Al Hamdulillah, the so-called Mayan prediction of the end of time was false and could not be authentically attributed to the early Mayan scholars. 2012 was a year of great changes in the world and an increase in natural catastrophes and upheavals. 2013 has already been a time of great trials and tribulations (Ayyaam al-Fitan) and there seems to be no decrease in sight.

So it was with the Last Prophet Muhammad, fourteen hundred years ago in the early Makkah period. By the fifth year of prophethood, when the repression of Quraysh had intensified on the Muslims and people were being humiliated, tortured and killed, the Quraysh looked for a means of falsifying the message of Muhammad (pbuh). They sent a high level delegation to Yathrib to ask the Yahood (Jews) how to deal with this man who claimed to be calling to the same message as Musa (a.s.). The Yahood responded and instructed Quraysh to ask him three questions. If he answered them correctly, then his claim to Prophethood was real. If he did not answer correctly, than they could do with him whatever they saw fit. The questions were as follows:

1. Ask him about a group in early times who escaped with their faith and had a strange experience.
2. Ask him about the righteous traveler who journeyed to the east and the west establishing justice.
3. Ask him about the soul. What is it?

Quraysh asked Muhammad (pbuh) the three questions and he responded that he would give the answer the next day. Contrary to his usual practice, he forgot to say, “Insha-Allah” (God willing). Fifteen nights passed as he waited for a revelation answering the three questions. With a scandal about to ensue, the revealing of Surat-ul-Kahf (The Chapter of the Cave) occurred and two questions were answered. The first was the story of the Companions of the Cave who fled from an evil king because of their religious
beliefs, and in the cave Allah put them into an extended sleep for 309 years. The second answer was concerning the righteous king, Dhul-Qarnain who traveled in the earth and established Tawheed (monotheism) and justice. He built a huge barrier high in the mountains to protect the people from Gog and Magog (Ya’juj wa Ma’juj) a ferocious, savage nation that destroyed everything in its path. The third question was answered by the revelation of Surah Al-Israa, verse 85:

“They ask you about the soul. Say: (Oh Muhammad) the soul is from the affairs of my Lord. And you have been given only a small amount of knowledge.”

The mistake of not saying “Insha Allah” was corrected by verse 23 of Surat-ul-Kahf:

“And do not say about any affair, “I will carry it out tomorrow except (by remembering to say), “by the Will of Allah.”

The main theme of Surat-ul-Kahf was movement of migration in the path of Allah. Believers should not stand idle in the face of oppression but should actively resist evil even if it means leaving their homes to live in a place of peace and security. The Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him (pbuh), instructed his followers to make migration to Al-Habasha (Ethiopia) wherein they would find a righteous king who would not oppress and did not allow oppression. The first Hijra had begun and the Muslims took refuge in the African continent with a Christian ruler!

The story of the Prophet Musa (pbuh) and Al-Khidr is also mentioned in detail. Musa (pbuh) was searching for someone who had more knowledge than him. He found a man who was inspired with wisdom but was not a mainstream prophet. This encounter emphasizes to us the need to benefit from the wisdom of our elders, our sisters, our educated people who are not necessarily “Islamic scholars”. Our challenges are so great today that knowledge of all types will be needed to solve our complex problems.

Hijra today, however, cannot be always made to other lands. Since there are no fully Islamic states and movement is extremely difficult for most people, how can this concept apply to us today?

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was reported to have said:

“The Muslim is one from whose tongue and hands the other Muslims are safe; and the Muhaajir (emigrant) is one who abstains from what Allah has forbidden.” (Agreed Upon)
So the essence of migration begins within the individual and affects his intentions, character and dealings with others. The first migration is from wrong deeds like drinking alcohol, taking drugs, lying, backbiting, gambling, adultery, stealing and other dangerous sins. This is probably our greatest test here in the Western lands. The younger generation is especially vulnerable. One recent study showed that from the year 2006, 97 billion dollars were spent here in North America on pornographic films. More money was grossed than Microsoft, Google, Amazon, E-Bay, Yahoo, Apple, Netflix and Earthlink combined! The largest users of pornography are teenagers between the ages of 12-17! This is a dangerous precedent as the loss of modesty and respect between people can cause an individual to do anything. The Prophet (pbuh) was reported to have said:

“If you don’t have modesty (know the limits), then you are capable of doing anything!”

Suratul-Kahf also gives us protection from the evil trials and tribulations of our times. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was reported to have said:

“Whoever memorizes the first ten verses of Suratul-Kahf is protected from the Fitnah (Trials and tribulation) of the Anti-Christ, Dajjal.”

He (pbuh) also said:

“Whoever reads the chapter of the Qur’an called “The Cave” on Friday (Jumuah) is protected for 8 days from every “Fitnah” that may appear and if Dajjal comes out, he is protected from him.”

Some Lessons from Suratul-Kahf:
1. In times of “fitnah” and chaos, do not be idle, but take action to preserve your religion.
2. Seek wisdom not only from books, but also from wise people whoever they may be.
3. In all affairs, always remember Allah and realize that everything ultimately is in His hands.
4. Seek wisdom and protection through the recitation and understanding of Al-Qur’an, the Last Divinely Revealed Book.
5. Migration begins within and even though there is no ideal, just society today, we can begin the change from within ourselves.
May Almighty Allah enable us to take in the wisdom of Al-Qur’an in these dangerous times, to change that which is in our hearts, to unite with all believers, to give aid and comfort to the weak and oppressed and to always send peace and blessings to our beloved Prophet Muhammad for the rest of our lives.

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