



كلية الآداب - جامعة بنها

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III

The Emigration

The city of Medina, some 280 miles north of Mecca, had originally been settled by Jewish tribes from the north, especially Banu The Nadir and Banu Quraiza. The comparative richness of the town attracted an infiltration of Pagan Arabs who came at first as clients of the Jews, and ultimately succeeded in dominating them.

Medina, or as it was known before Islam, Yathrib, had no form of stable government at all. The town was dominated by feuds of the rival Arab tribes of Aus and Khazraj, with the Jews maintaining an uneasy balance of power. The latter, engaged mainly in agriculture and handicrafts, were economically and culturally superior to the Arabs, and were consequently disliked. We shall see as soon as the Arabs had attained unity through the agency of Muhammad the attached and ultimately eliminated the Jews.

The migration of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina, The Hijra as it is called in Arabic, was a turning point, and was rightly adopted by later generations as the starting point of the Muslim calendar. Quraish made no serious attempt to prevent it, and Muhammad left at his leisure. He invited, rather than ordered his followers to go, and himself stayed until last in Mecca, partly no doubt in order to arrive in Medina, not as lonely and persecuted outlaw, but as the head of definite group with a certain status. The Medinese had invited Muhammed, not so much as a man of God, but as a man possessed by a spirit of unusual power, who might serve them as an arbitrator and settle their internal disputes. Islam was useful to them at first not so much as a new religion, but as a system that could give them security and discipline. Unlike the Meccans, they had no vested interest in paganism and could accept the religious aspect of Islam on approval, provided it satisfied their political and social needs. The full religious conversion of

the Medinese did not take place until much later. There were from the first, differences of opinion among the Medinese as to whether this “foreign” arbitrator should be called in or not. Those who supported Muhammed are known to the tradition as the answers (helpers), and those who opposed him are given the uncomplimentary title of Munafiqin (hypocrites). The religious quality of this difference of opinion is a projection backwards of later historians.

1- ترجمة النص وشرح المصطلحات التاريخية الواردة فيه.

2 - التعليق على النص (تكليف الطلاب بالرجوع لمصادر التاريخ الإسلامي الموثوقة للتعليق التاريخي على الأحداث التاريخية الواردة بالنص مع الاهتمام بنقد النص).