HIJRI NEW YEAR
AUGUST 9

OBSERVING THE NEW YEAR

New Year's Day, known as Al-Hijra, marks the start of Muharram, the first month of the Hijri calendar. Several major events in Islamic history took place during this time, making the entire month of Muharram, not just the first day, hallowed. Though it marks the start of a new year, Muharram is generally recognized as a solemn time, with observances differing among communities.

For Shia communities, the month of Muharram is a time of bereavement, as it marks the death of the Prophet Muhammad’s grandson Hussein. Devotees spend the first ten days of the new year fasting and mourning. The Sunni community observes the month by spending time with family, visiting mosques, and focusing on gratitude. It is a time of solemn prayer and reflection.

THE HIJRI CALENDAR

On August 9, 2021, 1.8 billion followers of Islam around the world will celebrate the new year. The Islamic New Year follows the Hijri calendar, which, unlike the Gregorian calendar, is a lunar calendar based on the monthly cycles of the moon's phases. Because this calendar depends on new moon or crescent moon sightings to determine the start of each month, major holidays move eleven days earlier each year.

The Hijri calendar is named after the Hijra, the day in which the Prophet Muhammad and his followers migrated from Mecca to Medina in the year 622 C.E.

This day was a major turning point in Islamic history, so much so that the Hijri calendar starts on this day rather than the birth of the Prophet Muhammad or the first Qur'anic revelation.

After facing persecution for their beliefs, the Prophet Muhammad and his followers migrated to Yathrib, which later became known as Madinat an-Nabi, or simply Medina. The "City of the Prophet" became the first Islamic community, and its charter guaranteed the rights of Muslims and people of other faiths.

(Excerpt from https://ing.org/islamic-new-year-information-sheet/ Observance information from https://nationalhijri.com/islamic-new-year/ )