A New Approach Toward Accurate Chronology of The Early Islamic History

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I. Introduction

Needless to say that the lifetime of the Prophet Muḥammad represents the most important period throughout the history of Islam. And naturally, the Biography of the Prophet (known as Sîra) is an essential key to understanding

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the very basics and origins of Islam and its characteristic role in the history of humanity. However, several factors have contributed in rendering the study of Sīra very arduous and problematic. One of the major factors is that the Sīra has not been recorded in a clear historical order, neither using the Arab Hijrah calendar nor the Julian calendar.

This paper will discuss the above problem and its origin and attempt to tackle it by presenting an accurate lunar chronology of the Sīra using the Muḥammadi calendar (see al-Casnazâni et al. 1992). A Julian chronology of the Sīra is also obtained by converting the Muḥammadi dates to their Julian equivalents using a computer program that was designed for this purpose.

II. The Hijrah Calendar

Most old nations and civilizations used calendars for determining dates of some important events, such as coronation of kings, religious festivals, and agricultural seasons. These calendars, however, were significantly different in their accuracy and sophistication, depending on the degree of development of the civilization of the people who used them and the purposes these calendars had to serve.

The population of Arabia also had their own calendars since the first millennium B.C. Throughout the long history of their numerous tribes, Arabs