



ISL 172

***AS- SĪRAH: BIOGRAPHY OF
PROPHET MUHAMMAD***

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MODULE 1 THE EARLY LIFE OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD

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| Unit 1 | Arabia before Islam. |
| Unit 2 | The reforms Introduced by Islam. |
| Unit 3 | Prophet Muhammad: His childhood, youth and first marriage. |
| Unit 4 | The Holy Prophet's Marriages and the Orientalists Criticism. |

UNIT 1 ARABIA BEFORE ISLAM

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will learn about the Arabs and Arabia before the advent of Islam. It would interest you to know that the Arabs who today are the champions of the monotheistic religion called Islam were once polytheists worshipping idols of various shades and sizes. Not only that socially, they were nothing to write home about, their economic and political lives were also full of injustices, aggressions and oppression. This unit will give you some insights into the religious, economic, political and social situation of Arabia before the coming of Prophet Muhammad with the message of Islam.

2.0 OBJECTIVE

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

- Describe the religious, economic, social and political lives of the Arabs before the advent of Islam.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Who are the Arabs?

The ancestors of the Arabs are often traced through two lines of descent from Sām son of Noah. While the Northern Arabs' descent is traced from 'Adnān, a descendant of Ismā'īl (Ishmael), the Southern Arabs descent is traced back to Qaḥṭān who has been identified with Yoqtan (Joktan) the son of Abir (Eber).

They inhabit the part of the world called the Hijāz or Arabian Peninsula. That part of the world is today located in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia is one of the Middle East countries. Mecca and Medina are two of the prominent cities of Saudi Arabia. The Arabs, like every other people, have their distinctive religious, social-cultural and political features. In this unit, you will learn about the Arabs and especially about their religious, social, political and economic ways of life during the period that preceded the advent of Islam.

The period is usually referred to in Islamic history as *al-ʿAsru al-Jāhili* (meaning the period of ignorance). Some historians call it age of myth or period of darkness. That is because when you compare the prevailing circumstances then, as shall be described later, with the period when Islam had been introduced and gained firm footing in the Arabia, you will realize that it is not an over-statement to say that the Arabs during the said period were living in darkness and without any guidance.

3.2 The religious life of the Arabs before Islam

While a handful of the inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula, before the advent of Islam, were Jews and Christians, preponderant majority of them were idol worshippers. There were also some very few that followed the religion of Abraham. They were referred to as *hunaḥfā'* (sing. *hanīf*).

The point you should note here is that majority of the Arabs, during the *Jāhiliyyah* period, were polytheists worshipping idols. While some of them had idols, which they worshipped in their various homes, they also had clan idols. Yet, there were idols, which they worshipped centrally. This category of idols was kept in the House of Allah in Mecca [i.e the Ka'bah]. The Arabs were so much engrossed in idol-worshipping to the extent that they kept as many as over three hundred and sixty idols in the Ka'bah. Therefore, the idol they worshipped in a particular day was different from the one they worshipped the next day. Of all the idols, three were considered by them as the chief idols. These were Lāt, 'Uzā and Manāt. They were also regarded as goddesses. Lāt in its own case

was mould in human shape. Uzā had its origin in a sacred tree while Manāt had its own in a white stone. Reference is made to these three idols in the *Qur'ān* where Allah says: "Have you then considered Al-Lāt, and Al-'Uzā and Manāt, the third." [Q53: 19-20]. During the *Jāhiliyyah* period, Makkah was the centre of idol-worshipping. With the Ka'bah, harboring lots of idols, people from neighboring towns and villages trooped into Mecca on pilgrimage to participate in idol-worship.

Though, the Arab during the *Jāhiliyyah* period worshipped idols, yet they believed in the existence of the Supreme Being. In this regard, the *Qur'ān* says: "If you (Muhammad) ask them; who created the heaven and the earth? They will reply that it is Allah ... (Q39:38). You may therefore ask: why then did they still worship idols? The answer is that the Arabs considered the idols as small gods and intermediaries between them and the Supreme Being. They believed they could not have direct dealings with the Supreme Being; hence, they needed the intermediaries to bring them nearer to Him. And in order to gain the favors of the intermediaries, the Arabs worshipped them and made offerings to them from time to time.

In addition, the Arabs in the *Jāhiliyyah* also practiced sorcery. They believed in magical powers. They used charms, amulet and incantations. Quite a number of superstitious beliefs were also attached to all these things.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Give a vivid description of the religious situation of Arabia during the *Jāhiliyyah* period.

3.3 The economic life of the Arabs before Islam

Mecca was a great commercial centre. You will recall that we earlier remarked that people used to come to Mecca for pilgrimage. During the annual pilgrimage when people from different neighboring towns flocked to Mecca to join in the annual idol-worshipping, they also used to come along with goods to sell. So, buying and selling characterized the annual pilgrimage.

However, you have to note that trading during the period was characterized by cheating and defrauding. Since there was no divine guidance on buying and selling, trading activities were left to the whims and caprices of traders. Traders were free to sell whatever goods in their custody to their customers regardless of the condition of the goods. As there were also no price control measures in place, customers were left at the mercy of traders who were free to sell at whatever price they

desired. Reduction of weights and measures was another common practice among the *Jāhiliyyah* traders especially those dealing in grains. This set of traders, when they purchased goods, they would demand for full measures but when they sold to buyers, they caused them loss.

Another common feature in the economic situation of the *Jāhiliyyah* period was lending on interest or usury called *Ribā*. You will agree that money-lenders are usually the rich aristocrats while borrowers in most cases are the hard-pressed. There were among the Arab Aristocrats those whose major pre-occupation was money-lending. They charged interest on whatever amount they lent out to people. To them, lending on interest was considered a form of trading. They therefore saw nothing wrong with it even if the borrower was highly pressed.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Describe economic activities in Arabia during the *Jāhiliyyah* period.

3.4 The political life of the Arabs before Islam

The Arabs during the *Jāhiliyyah* period organised themselves under the leadership of clan chiefs usually referred to as *Shaykh*. Each clan had its own *Shaykh*. In every clan, there was a royal family the eldest member of which was made the *Shaykh*. There were however some clan leaders with whom the *Shaykh* consulted in taking decisions on crucial matters. As blood feuds were quite common amongst them, part of the duties of the *Shaykh* was to settle disputes between members of the clan, so that such would not degenerate. The council of elders assisted him in this regard.

One reason why such feuds were common was because of the revengeful nature on the Arabs. When a father was about to die, he would instruct his son to avenge his death if such was due from another tribe. It should therefore be noted that many a time, small dispute between members of different clans would be allowed to degenerate to serious feuds that lasted for many years.

3.5 The social life of the Arabs before Islam

The Arabs in the *Jāhiliyyah* period were given to a life of frivolities and entertainments. Quite a number of poets reigned among them describing intoxicants and women. Some writers have described the social situation in the Arabian Peninsula during the *Jāhiliyyah* period as 'barbaric'. For instance, the Arabs were heavy drunkards. Intoxicating drinks of all sorts were taken like water. Under the influence of the alcoholic drinks, all sorts of atrocities were perpetrated. Curses and

abuses were rained on fellow drunkards. Disputes and fights often broke out leading to infliction of injuries and murder. At times, the *Jāhiliyyah* Arabs drank heavily in order to be 'high' and be able to perpetrate criminal acts. The case of 'Imru'ū 'l-Qays, the notorious *Jāhiliyyah* poet, whose father was assassinated, is a good example. Determined to avenge the death following his father's instruction, 'Imru'ū 'l-Qays drank heavily and vowed saying "Today is for drink and tomorrow is for the avenger"

There were also some among the Arabs in the *Jāhiliyyah* period those who constituted themselves to social miscreants and urchins waylaying people especially women. Rape was, as such, a common experience in those days. Highway robbery too was another dreadful experience in the *Jāhiliyyah* period. Traders on caravan suffered most from the hands of the highway robbers who used to attack and rob them of their money and goods. The only tribe that enjoyed safety on the traveling routes to and fro Syria and Yemen was the Quraysh, the tribe of the Prophet, for being the custodian of the Ka'bah.

Discrimination against the women folk was very high. Women were considered use-less as they could not fight like men in battle-front. Indeed, an Arab man in the *Jāhiliyyah* period considered it a disgrace to have a baby girl. He would be ashamed of announcing to his friends that his wife was delivered of a baby girl. Afraid of being mocked and ridiculed by his mates, he would then decide on burying the baby girl alive. Describing the situation, the *Qur'ān* says:

When news is brought to one of them, of (the birth of) a female (child), his face darkens, and he is filled with inward grief! With shame does he hide himself from his people, because of the bad news he has had! Shall he retain it on (sufferance and) contempt, or bury it in the dust? ... (Q. 16:58-59).

Furthermore, women had no right to inherit their dead parents and husbands. The male children took over all the deceased estates. Women were also shared as part of the inheritance. Women had no honor and no dignity. They were used as dance girls. They used to dance naked before men who watched them with amusement. As women were considered commodities with little values, an Arab man was free to marry as many of them as he liked even when he could not take care of them. Women themselves used to have more than one man as husband and in case of pregnancy, she was free to attribute it to any of them she so desired.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Give an account of the socio-political situation of Arabia before Islam

4.0 CONCLUSION

The period before the advent of Islam was a period when the Arabs had no divine revelation to guide them in their religious, social, political and economic dealings. Consequently as you have read, idolatry, social ills and economic frauds were prevalent in their peninsular. Thus it is usually referred to as the *Jāhiliyyah* period.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have located the birth place of Prophet Muhammad. We have also described vividly the religious, social, economic and political situations of Arabia before the advent of Islam.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Who are the Arabs? Justify why the period before Islam in Arabia is usually called *Jāhiliyyah* or Era of Ignorance.
2. Mention some prevalent social ills among the Arabs of *Jāhiliyyah* period.

7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2 THE REFORMS BROUGHT BY ISLAM

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Religious reforms
 - 3.2 Economic reforms
 - 3.3 Socio-political reforms
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked assignment
- 7.0 References / Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The situation in Arabia before the advent of Islam was so serious that it called for reforms. In this unit, you will learn about the various reforms introduced by Islam into their religious, social, political and economic lives with the view to making them lead godly and decent life.

2.0 OBJECTIVE

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- State the various positive changes that Islam introduced into the religious, social, political and economic life of the *Jāhiliyyah* Arabs.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Religious reforms

In unit one, you have learnt about the religious, political, economic and social lives of the Arabs during the pre-Islamic era. You have also realized that the Arabs, during the said period, were not living a decent life. It was in the bid to correct and reform them that the Almighty Allah raised a Prophet – Muhammad – among them.

In this unit, you will be taught the various positive changes that the Prophet brought to the lives of the Arabs till they rose and became the envied generation and a pride and source of inspiration for the present day Muslims.

The Prophet, through persistent preaching, logical and convincing arguments made the Arabs to realize the folly in worshipping idols,

seeking their assistance and making offerings to them. The prophet categorically stated to them that all what they worshipped as gods were false; and that Allah is the only God. The *Qur'ān*, in that respect says:

If there were, in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides Allah, there would have been confusion in both! (Q. 21: 22).

Furthermore, the Prophet convinced them that it was not necessary to approach Allah through offerings made to small gods in the guise of intermediaries. They were made to realize the Omnipresence of Allah and that they could approach Him directly. Reference for this is contained in the *Qur'ān* where Allah says: We are nearer to him (man) than (his) jugular vein (Q. 50:16). On the basis of the above cited *Qur'ānic* references and numerous others revealed to him in the *Qur'ān*, the Prophet condemned polytheism and issued out threats of punishment that await those who stubbornly refused to denounce it. As substitute for polytheism, the Prophet preached monotheism (*Tawhīd*) to them. He rehearsed to them many revelations given to him emphasizing the unity of Allah. An example of such revelations is *Suratu 'l-Ikhlās* which reads thus:

Say: He Allah is One. Allah is He on whom all depend; He begets not nor is He begotten and there is none like unto Him (Q. 112).

The teachings of the Prophet also emphasized the need to rely on Allah alone. He also taught them that charms and amulets are impotent and that the only Omnipotent God who has the power to protect them from all evils is Allah.

Though, at first, the Arabs found it difficult to comprehend the Islamic concept of monotheism and therefore rejected it but with constant persistency of the Prophet, they gradually saw reason and professed belief in the Islamic monotheism.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Describe the reforms introduced into the religious life of Arabia by the advent of Islam.

3.2 Economic reforms

In the area of economy, the Prophet of Islam preached against all forms of cheating and defrauding that were prevalent in the *Jāhiliyyah* days. He emphasized the need to be just in business dealings.

Verses of the *Qur'ān* describing how Allah dealt with the people of Prophet Shu'ayb (A.S.) for being unjust in business dealings were revealed and rehearsed to the *Jāhiliyyah* Arabs. They were equally admonished thus: "And establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance" (Q55:9). To ensure that the defrauders among them change and become just in business matters, the following *Qur'ānic* verses issuing warnings were revealed:

Woe to those that deal in fraud. Those who, when they have to receive by measure from men, exact full measure, but when they have to give by measure or weight to them, give less than due. Do they not think that they will be called to account? On a Mighty Day, A Day when (all) mankind will stand before the Lord of the Worlds? (Q. 82:1-5).

Another economic reform introduced by Islam is the prohibition and ban placed on usury collection and the stern warnings issues to the obstinate among the collectors thus:

Those who devour usury will not stand except as stands one whom the Evil One by his touch hath driven to madness ... Allah hath permitted trade and forbidden usury. Those who after receiving direction from their Lord desist, shall be pardoned for the past; their case is for Allah (to judge); but those who repeat (the offence) are companions of the fire: they will abide therein (forever). Allah will deprive usury of all blessing ... O you who believe! Fear Allah and give up what remains of your demand for usury if you are indeed believers. If you do not, take notice of war from Allah and His Apostle ... (Q. 2:275-9).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Highlight the fraudulent economic practices among the *Jāhiliyyah* Arabs; then show the reforms introduced to it by Islam.

3.3 Socio-political reforms

In unit one, we submitted that the period before Islam in Arabia was that of barbarism. Some social ills that were prevalent among them were identified and discussed. Since Islam is a religion that concerns itself with the total being and existence of man, it does not limit itself to addressing man's relationship with his Lord alone. Instead, it also concerns itself with how men relate with one another. It was on this

basis that the Prophet of Islam saw it as his duty to cleanse the Arabian society of all forms of social ills. Various reforms were introduced on the various social ills identified in unit one. The reform identified wine and gambling as evils, abomination and the handiworks of the devil. The *Qur'ān* thus asked them to desist from them while it also enumerated some evils inherent in wine and gambling:

Satan's plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, and from prayer: Will you not then abstain? (Q5:94).

Also, serious campaigns, in the form of revelation and statements of the Prophet, were mounted to enhance the status of women who hitherto were tools in the hands of the pagan Arabs. With the reforms of Islam, women assumed their rightful place of being man's mates, partners and cover cloths. The Arab men were made to realize that the women were gifts for them from Allah so that they may dwell in tranquility with them. The Arabs were taught to hold women in honor; recognize their rights, in marriage, property and inheritance. The practice of burying female children alive was seriously condemned (Q.16:58-59). And, in the area of marriage, they were, of course, still allowed to marry more than one but not more than four at a time and on the condition that justice will be maintained among the wives. Highway robbery, theft, unjust eating of the orphans' properties, tribalism, bloodshed, political violence etc. was all seriously campaigned against.

Of course, it was not easy at first for the pagan Arabs to eschew all the various ills prevalent in their society during the *Jāhiliyyah* period but with the unceasing revelation of the *Qur'ān*, persuading them and at times, issuing threats coupled with the persistent preaching of the Prophet laden with convincing arguments against those *Jāhiliyyah* practices, the Arabs eventually realized the folly in such *Jāhiliyyah* practices and the beauty of Islam and the reforms it introduced.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Justify the claim that the advent of Islam brought about socio-political reforms among ancient Arabs.

4.0 CONCLUSION

With the emergence of Islam and the relentless efforts of the Prophet, the Arabs who were strict adherent of polytheism embraced the monotheistic religion of Islam. They equally discarded their evil ways of life as manifested in defrauding, rape, alcoholism, female infanticide

etc. Today, thanks to Islam, the Arabian Peninsula is a home of peace, safety, security and unprecedented tranquility.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed the various ways and manners by which Islam, through the continuous descent of Divine revelation (i.e. *Qur'ān*) and untiring efforts of Allah's Messenger, was able to successfully reform the pagan Arabs. We have also discussed in the unit the various aspects of the *Jāhiliyyah* life at which Islam directed its reforms.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Explain the various reforms introduced by Islam into the religious, social, political and economic life of the *Jāhiliyyah* Arabs.

7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 3 PROPHET MUHAMMAD – HIS CHILDHOOD, YOUTH AND FIRST MARRIAGE

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Muhammad's family background
 - 3.2 His birth and early upbringing
 - 3.3 His stay with Abū Tālib
 - 3.4 Association with the *Hunafā'*
 - 3.5 His marriage to Khadījah
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References / Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will learn about the family background of Prophet Muhammad. You will also read about his birth and early upbringing and particularly, his stay with his uncle, Abū Tālib. Muhammad grew up in the city of Mecca as a youth. In this unit, you will equally learn about his youthful age, his association with the *Hunafā'* and his formation of a Human Rights group. You will also learn about his noble characters and his eventually marriage to Khadījah.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Trace the family background of Prophet Muhammad.
- Explain the circumstances surrounding his birth and early upbringing.
- Discuss his stay with his uncle Abū Tālib
- Describe the noble characters exhibited by Muhammad as a growing youth in the city of Mecca.
- Explain the circumstances that led to the marriage of Muhammad to lady Khadījah

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Muhammad's family background

Prophet Muhammad belonged to the most prominent and most influential tribe of Arabia namely the Quraysh tribe. The Quraysh are the descendants of Prophet 'Ibrahim through his son, 'Ismā'il. Reference is made in the *Qur'ān* to the favours of Allah in terms of provisions and security of lives and properties enjoyed by the Quraysh people. The Quraysh was also blessed with many noble families, the noblest of which was the Banū Hāshim, the family into which the Prophet was born. The members of this family were the custodians of the House of Allah called the Ka'bah. They kept the keys to the house and offered water to those who came to the house on pilgrimage. Indeed as at the time of the birth of the Prophet, his grandfather, Abdul-Muṭṭalib was the chief custodian of the Ka'bah.

3.2 His birth and early upbringing

The Prophet's father was Abdullah son of 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib. He was a trader who used to travel with Mecca caravans to Yemen and Syria. The mother was 'Āminat daughter of Wahb. Two months after she conceived Muhammad, 'Abdullah, her husband died on his way back from Syria. Muhammad was therefore born posthumously about seven months after his father's death at Mecca on Monday, 12th Rabī'ū 'l-'Awwal in 570C.E. This situation endeared him to his grandfather, his uncles and other members of his family before and also after birth. Abū Lahab, one of his uncles who later became his bitterest enemy in life was reported to have slaughtered many camels following the birth of Muhammad while he also set free the slave that brought to him the news of Muhammad's birth.

In order to give children born in the urban centers such as Mecca the country- side upbringing and exposure to the country -side life and refined language, the Arabs used to send their growing children to renowned wet nurses. In the case of Muhammad, he was sent to the clan of Sa'diyyah to be nursed and brought up by a woman called Halīmah. The first incidence of the miraculous breast- cleaving as a result of which his human nature was purified, expanded and elevated, so that he became a mercy to all creation as mentioned in the *Qur'ān* (ch.94) took place when he was under the care of Halīmah.

The wet nurse Halīmah who had noticed some strange behavior in Muhammad took great and special care of him and returned him safely back to his mother when he was a boy of four.

The mother of the Prophet, 'Āminat used to visit some of her relations in Medina. When Muhammad was six, she decided to take him along so that they could both visit his father's grave on the way back. Unfortunately 'Āminat fell sick on the way and died at a place called 'Abwa'. Muhammad thus became a complete orphan at the age of six. When he was returned to Mecca, he was handed over to his grandfather, °Abdu 'l-Muṭṭalib who took care of him for a brief period of only two years. °Abdu 'l-Muṭṭalib died when Muhammad was only eight years.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Mention the family background of the Prophet and his early upbringing.

3.3 His Stay with 'Abū Ṭālib

The task of taking care of him thus fell on his uncle, Abū Ṭālib. Abū Ṭālib drew Muhammad close to himself. Abū Ṭālib, being a shepherd and a small-scale entrepreneur, trained Muhammad in tending his sheep and in his small business. Though, Abū Ṭālib had many children, yet he was very fond of Muhammad. He liked that he was always in his company. He once traveled with him to Syria at the age of twelve. It was during this business trip that they met a Monk called Bahīrah at *Başrah* in Syria. The monk made a great feast for the members of the caravan that Muhammad and his uncle joined in honour of Muhammad. He remarked thus: I see a cloud overshadowing this boy. And, after many enquiries from Abū Ṭālib, Bahīrah told him: " Go back home with your nephew and keep an eye on him; if the Jews see him and get to know about him what I know, they will certainly do him harm for a great future lies before this nephew of yours, so take him home quickly".

Earlier, Abū Ṭālib had had some inkling of the remarks made by Bahīrah about the future of Muhammad. Ibn Ishāq, the great biographer of Muhammad related that there used to be an old man of Lihb who was 122 years of age and was a seer. Whenever he came to Mecca, the Quraysh used to bring their boys before him, so that he could look at them and tell them their fortunes. Abū Ṭālib brought Muhammad along with some other boys to the old man who looked at him. Struck by his appearance, he exclaimed: "Bring me that boy". When Abū Ṭālib saw his eagerness, he hid him and the seer began to say: "Woe to you, bring me that boy I saw just now, for by Allah he has a great future". But Abū Ṭālib went away.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What is the role played by Abū Ṭālib in the life of Prophet Muhammad.

3.4 Association with the *Hunafā'*

You will recall that Muhammad was born posthumously while he also lost his mother at the age of six. The implication of this is that he did not have the opportunity of being brought up by his parents. He did not enjoy parental love, care and training. He did not grow to attain manhood under the supervision of his two parents. Muhammad therefore, as a growing youth in the urban centre of Mecca was exposed to all the social ills freely engaged in by both old and young. Fortunately for him, his stay with Halimah at *Sa'd*, his two-year stay with his grandfather and his stay with his uncle, Abū Ṭālib which lasted between the age of eight and twenty-five really rubbed off on him. Above all, he was always under the Divine Guidance of Allah. Therefore, he stood out among the youths of Mecca. He never joined them in those vices discussed in unit one. He was dissatisfied with the barbaric way of life of the *Jāhiliyyah* Arabs as exemplified in drunkenness, gambling, usury, rape, adultery and fornication, highway robbery and bloodshed. He did not join them in the worship of idols because he was not convinced that idols deserved to be worshipped. Instead, he associated with a small group of *hunafā'* following the footsteps of Prophet Ibrahim. Not happy with the way the youths of Mecca conducted themselves, he refused to join any group. Rather, he formed what may be likened to Human Rights group for the defense of the defenseless. The group fought for the rights of the down trodden who were subjected to massive exploitation and oppression of the rich and the aristocrats.

Muhammad as a youth in the city of Mecca was known for his noble character. He was polite, honest, truthful, amiable and kind. He was also modest, selfless and helpful. He was always just in his dealings with people. And for being trustworthy, he was nicknamed *Al-'Amīn* (the trustworthy) by the people who always kept their valuables with him. For his noble and exemplary characters, Muhammad became popular in the city of Mecca. Once, there was a dispute between two families about the placement of a corner-piece stone on the wall of the Ka'bah. The two families then agreed that whoever came there first among the inhabitants of Mecca would be given the opportunity of placing the stone. Not long, Muhammad appeared. The people were satisfied that it was *Al-'Amīn* that came. They therefore offered him the opportunity. He however surprised them when, in his wisdom, he requested that the stone be placed on a cloth and lifted to the corner by members of the two families present while he then placed the stone in its place. That was how he handled, in a wise manner, a situation that could have resulted in a feud.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What were the characters of the Prophet Muhammad in his early days?

3.5 His marriage to Khadījah

Muhammad's trustworthiness endeared him to all those that came in contact with him. His business trip to Syria with his uncle coupled with his involvement in the management of his uncle's small business gave him a world of exposure in business management. Soon, he joined the business firm of a woman called Khadījah. Khadījah was a highly successful business- woman in Mecca. Muhammad served this woman as a trader, traveling with her merchandise from Makkah to Syria. His trustworthiness and successful management of her business both endeared him to Khadījah who was a widow. Khadījah thus taught it well to marry the young Muhammad so that he could take over the management of all her businesses. Decided on the thought, Khadījah, who was then forty years old, proposed Muhammad. After due consultation with his uncle 'Abu-Tālib, Muhammad accepted the proposal and thus married lady Khadījah in the year 695 C.E. when he was only twenty-five years. Khadījah, a selfless and humble woman of nobility made over all her belongings to Muhammad. While Khadījah's marriage to Muhammad further added to his prestige in Mecca, her kind gesture further enhanced his financial status. Throughout the period of Muhammad's marriage to Khadījah, which lasted for twenty-four years, Muhammad did not think of marrying another woman even when there were younger ones who would have loved him to marry them as additional wives. That shows how good, faithful and excellent Khadījah was as a wife. Everything Muhammad needed in a wife was present in Khadījah. The couple made a success of the marriage and for that, they were respected in Mecca. The marriage was blessed with six children. Two boys namely: Abdullah and Qāsīm and four girls namely Fātimah, Zaynab and 'Ummu-Kulthūm and Ruqayyah.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Would you describe the marriage between Muhammad and Khadijah as unique? Why?

4.0 CONCLUSION

The Prophet was born into the noblest family in Mecca. He knew only his mother. And when at tender age, he became a complete orphan, his grandfather and later his uncle, took up the challenge of bringing him up, supervising him, guiding and protecting him. It was at the tender

age that the remarkable features of one destined for greatness had been noticed in him.

Prophet Muhammad became a complete orphan at very early age. That notwithstanding, he still stood out among the youths of Mecca by exhibiting the noblest of character which endeared him to the people of Mecca and made his first wife Khadījah seek his hand in marriage.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed the family background of Prophet Muhammad and explained the circumstances surrounding his birth. We have also looked at the role played by Halīmat of Sa'd in his early age. Also, we have discussed in this unit, the role played by his grandfather 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib and his uncle, Abū Ṭālib in taking care of him following the death of his mother. In addition, we have also discussed the Prophet's attitude to the various disgusting societal ills in Mecca and how on the bid to effect some corrections, he formed a Human Right group to fight for the down trodden. We also mention some of his noble characters which endeared him to the people of Mecca as a result of which they nicknamed him *al-Amīn* (the Trustworthy). We equally in this unit explain to you the circumstances that led to his marriage to his first wife Khadījah.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Trace the family background of Prophet Muhammad and explain the circumstances surrounding his birth.

Discuss the role played by each of Abū Ṭālib and Khadījah in the life of the Prophet Muhammad.

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UNIT 4 THE HOLY PROPHET'S MARRIAGES AND THE ORIENTALISTS' CRITICISM

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Marriages of the Holy Prophet
 - 3.2 His domestic life
 - 3.3 The Orientalists' criticism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) acting in line with the allowance given by Allah in the *Qur'ān*: Ch.4:3, led a polygamous life towards the end of his life. In this unit, you will learn about the circumstances surrounding his polygamous marriage. The orientalists of the West have also, in some of their literary endeavours, sought to vilify the noble personality of the Prophet by accusing him of licentiousness because he married more than one wife. Without being apologetic, this unit will also look at this allegation critically with a view to seeing whether it is a genuine allegation or not.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Discuss the marriages of the Prophet.
- Mention the circumstances surrounding his plural marriage
- Examine objectively the Orientalists' criticism.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Marriages Of The Holy Prophet (S)

You have learnt in unit 4 about the marriage of the Prophet to Khadījah. It should, however, interest you to note that contrary to the practice of the Arabs whereby men of the age bracket of the Prophet would engage in unlimited polygamy, the Prophet stuck faithfully to Khadījah who, apart from being older than him in age was also twice widowed before

Muhammad married her. While she was alive, the Prophet never thought of taking another wife.

However, following her death in 619 C.E. leaving some children behind, the Prophet, had to face the rigor of combining his prophetic assignments with domestic duties. Seeing the troubles the Prophet was going through, a woman *Ṣahābah*, Khawlah bint Hakam, wife of ‘Uthmān ibn Maz‘ūm advised him to take another wife who could relieve him of the domestic burden.

In the following discussion, we shall focus on those wives married by the Prophet after Khadījah.

1. Sawdah bint Zam‘ah – It was Khawlah that suggested to the Prophet to marry Sawdah. Sawdah was an elderly woman and could take care of the domestic duties of the Prophet’s family. Sawdah was of equal age with the Prophet and a widow with a baby. The husband, Sakrān ibn ‘Amr was one of the earliest Muslims who died shortly after his return with his wife from Abyssinia. Both Sakrān and his wife were very close to the Prophet. Just as the Prophet needed an elderly woman as wife who could take care of his domestic needs and those of his household, Sawdah and her baby equally needed protection. She was not ready to go back to her people who might want to force her to renounce Islam or even persecute her for her faith.
2. ‘Āishah bint Abū Bakr- Khawlah who suggested that the Prophet should marry Sawdah also suggested ‘Āishah to him. Equally, Abū Bakr, the father of ‘Āishah wanted the Prophet to marry her daughter as that would further strengthen the bond of love between them. As ‘Āishah was still very young, the *nikāḥ* was conducted by way of betrothal in 619 C.E at the age of six and moved to the Prophet’s household when she was nine. Moreover, her marriage to the Prophet was to break her betrothal to Jubayr ibn Muṭ‘im who was a non-believer.
3. Hafṣah the daughter of ‘Umar was married by the Prophet in 625 when he was 56 years old following the death of her husband, Khumayṣ ibn Huzāfah who died in the Battle of Badr. ‘Umar had earlier sought that ‘Uthmān should marry her since he had just lost his wife, Ruqayyah. But when ‘Uthmān refused, the Prophet married her to console her and her father and to boost their morale and further strengthen the bond of brotherhood between him and ‘Umar.

4. Zaynab bint Khuzaymah was also a twice -widowed woman. His second husband °Abdullah bin Jahsh was martyred in the battle of Uhud. The death of her husband really destabilized her and in order to comfort her, the Holy Prophet decided to marry her in 626 CE when he was about 57 years old. She however passed on two months after her marriage to the Prophet.
5. Ummu Salmā also lost her husband in the battle of Uhud. As at the time of her husband's death, she already had four children and was also in the family way. In order to help her out of her predicament, the Prophet married her after the death of Zaynab bin Khuzaymah and housed her and her children in the hut of Zaynab. Ummu Salmā was the last to die among the wives of the Prophet. She died in 59 A.H.
6. Zaynab daughter to Jahsh was a first cousin of the Prophet. The Prophet gave her in marriage to his freed slave and adopted son, Zayd. The family of Zaynab, in view of the difference between the social status of the parties objected to the union. They rather wanted the Prophet himself to marry her. Zayd himself was reluctant while Zaynab was also not willing. But the Prophet insisted on the union purposely to establish equality between man and man and to show that slaves and their masters are all equal in Islam.

Unfortunately however, the union did not work. Consequently, Zayd ultimately had to divorce her in 5 A.H. When it became obvious that Zaynab herself was not willing to remarry and nobody was willing to propose her; and on the intervention of Allah as chronicled in chapter 33 verses 33-37, the Prophet had to marry her in 5 AH when he was about 58 years old.

7. Ummu Habībah was the daughter of Abū Sufyān, a chief and one of the then staunch enemies of the Prophet. Ummu Habībah and her husband, °Ubaydullah were early converts who migrated to Abyssinia. The husband however died there and the wife with her daughter, Habībah were left unprotected and in great distress. When the Prophet learnt about her pitiable situation, to rehabilitate her and to also score a diplomatic point that after all, he was not an enemy of the Quraysh Chief (Abū Sufyān) but one who wished him well, he decided to marry the widow. Thus his marriage to Ummu Habībah, not only served the purpose of rehabilitation, but equally softened the hostility of an enemy like Abu Sufyān. The marriage took place in 628 CE when the Prophet was about 57 years old and Umm Habībah was aged about 36 or 37 years.

8. Juwayriyyah, formerly known as Barra' was married by the Prophet with a political reason of placating the Jews. Juwayriyyah's husband was killed by the Muslims in a battle which the Muslims fought with his treacherous tribe Banū Mustāliq. Juwayriyyah herself, along some other men and women of the tribe were taken as captives. She was later given to Thābit ibn Qays, a Muslim soldier. She, being the daughter of a chief felt much humiliated and made her presentation to the Prophet that she deserved better treatment. The Prophet was moved. He therefore ordered her release, paid Thābit her ransom and with her consent, married her. Following this action of the Prophet, all Muslims in honour of the Prophet voluntarily released all the slave men and women of the tribe of Juwayriyyah. This good gesture of the Muslims inspired the Jewish Banū 'l-Mustalaq and consequently all the tribe accepted Islam voluntarily.

9. Şafiyyah's case was similar in many respects with that of Juwayriyyah discussed above. She was captured during the battle of Khaybar and given to a Muslim soldier as war booty. The companions however informed the Prophet that she was the daughter of the headman of Jewish tribes of Banū Nadīr and Banū Qurayzah and a wife of another chief. The Prophet then paid her ransom to the soldier she was given to and gave her two options thus: "We release you from prison and you are allowed to go back to your tribe as a free person. Alternatively, if you accept Islam, I shall keep you with me". Şafiyyah said: "I love Allah and His Messenger". Thus, the Prophet married her in order to rehabilitate her as all her relatives, including father, husband and brother fell during the battle of Khaybar.

10. Maymūnah daughter of Hārith was first a divorcee and later a widow. She was 51 years old when the Prophet married her. The only consideration therefore for marrying her was the alleviation of her suffering and to please her family members like ʿAbbās and Khālīd ibn Walīd who was her nephew. This marriage developed cordial relations between Muslims and other tribes. It increased the number of Muslims and their supporters.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Mention five of the Prophet's wives and justify his marriage with them.

3.2 The Prophet's Domestic Life

The holy Prophet as depicted above was a family man. He married and had children. He equally conducted marriages for his daughters. For instance, he gave two of his four daughters, one after the death of the other to °Uthmān in marriage while Fātimah, his only surviving child was married to 'Ali, his cousin. As a husband in the midst of many wives, the Prophet gave the best example of a just husband. He treated them equally and justly that none of them, for once, ever complained of being treated unjustly. It was a daily routine for him to enter their rooms one after the other after *Ṣalatu 'l- 'Aṣr* beginning with Sawdah, the eldest and ending with °Āishah, the youngest. Apart from this, he also used to share the nights among them with equity. Whenever he had to undertake a journey, he used to ballot between them and whoever won would accompany him on the journey. The holy Prophet, despite his very busy schedule still found time to play and crack jokes with his wives and help them in their domestic duties especially in the kitchen. The Prophet was very sensitive to the feelings of his wives; he showed concern for their feelings and would never do anything to hurt them. The Prophet never raised his hand against any of his wives, his children or his servants. Anas, his maid once said that he lived with the Prophet for ten years and he did not, for once, rebuked him for any of his actions or raised his hand to beat him.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Justify the claim that Prophet Muhammad was an exemplary husband.

THE ORIENTALISTS' CRITICISM While some Western Orientalists have, in their writings, extolled the noble personality of the Holy Prophet, some few others have sought to vilify him. His plural marriage has been a target of their criticism. For marrying many wives, they have accused him of licentiousness. In the following discussion, we shall critically look at this allegation and determine whether it is justifiable or not.

In the first place, it should be borne in mind that polygamy is allowed in Islam. Therefore, if the Prophet led a polygamous life, he had only acted within the ambit of *Qur'ānic* provision. As for his taking more than four wives, he had married all his wives before the verse of limitation to four was revealed in 628 CE, and following the specific instruction to him not marry again in chapter 33 verse 52, he complied but had to keep those he had already married since if he should divorce them, nobody could marry them. History bears witness to the fact that he married all his wives legally according to the dictates of the *Shari'ah* with their consent and after paying their *mahr*. He never had any secret

affair. Also since polygamy is a provision of Islam, it is perfectly in order that the Prophet as Muslims' role model should practice it.

It should also be noted that the Prophet would have married earlier like young men of his age if really he were as the Orientalists paint him and not wait till age 25. And, rather than marry a lady younger than him in age, he settled for a woman who was twice widowed and fifteen years older than him.

It should also be recalled that when he started his mission, the pagan Arabs sought to bribe him to abandon it on the promise of giving him the most beautiful Meccan lady. If he truly was fond of women as suggested by the Orientalists, he would not have turned down the offer, but gladly accept it.

For 23 years, the Prophet led a monogamous life with his first wife, Khadijah. It was after the death of Khadijah in 619 when he was close to fifty years that he decided to take another wife. Again, rather than take a young lady, he took another old woman who was a widow, Sawdah and after Sawdah, he married 'Āishah who was then a very small girl of just six years.

A cursory look at the marriages of the Prophet as discussed in the earlier section will reveal to you that they were all marriages of circumstances. Most of his wives were widows of either prominent Muslims who died in the cause of Islam or daughters of respectable Quraysh or Jewish chiefs whose hostility to Islam the Prophet wanted to soften. Indeed, only 'Āishah was married a virgin. Her marriage and that of Hafṣah were to strengthen the bond of friendship between him and their fathers who were prominent companions.

The most turbulent period of his mission was between 619 and 630 CE when he had to contend with the persecutions of the enemies. If really he was driven by sexual urge to marry those women most of whom were widows while he himself was close to sixty and very busy, he would rather have gone for younger ones and at a time when he was not as busy and still young.

In summary therefore, the Holy Prophet, contrary to the blasphemous suggestions of the Orientalists was not driven into those marriages by sexual urge. Rather, he conducted the marriages to cement the relationship with his most faithful and devoted companions; to provide protection and relief to the widows and orphans of his companions; and to soften the hostilities of some of his bitterest enemies amongst the Quraysh and the Jews and win their supports and sympathy for Islam.

The plural marriages of the Prophet were for humanitarian and political reasons.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Debunk the accusation of licentiousness leveled against the Prophet by some writers.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The plural marriages of the Prophet, which the Orientalists have criticized subjectively, apart from being marriages of necessity, were not at all a violation of the provision of the *Shari'ah*. The Prophet, far from being licentious, as blasphemously dubbed by the Orientalists, was a very modest and chaste man who was never a slave to his lust. The Orientalists beclouded by their subjective ideas have failed to see the diplomatic ingenuity of the Prophet and his humanitarian considerations both of which compelled him to take to plural marriage.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt about the plural marriage of the Prophet and the circumstances under which he took his wives. We have also acquainted you with his domestic life and the criticism of the Orientalists concerning his polygamous marriage. We have also, in the light of convincing explanation dismissed such criticism as baseless and subjective.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain the circumstances surrounding the marriage of the Prophet to Sawdah
2. Critically examine the allegation of licentiousness leveled against the Prophet by the Orientalists.

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MODULE 2 THE PROPHET’S MISSION IN *MAKKAH* AND MIGRATION TO *MADINAH*

- Unit 1 Muhammad’s call to messengership and the Mecca
Opposition.
- Unit 2 The *Hijrah*/the Prophet’s arrival and settlement in
Medina.

UNIT 1 MUHAMMAD’S CALL TO MESSENGERSHIP AND THE MECCA’S OPPOSITION

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 His visits to cave *Hirā'*
 - 3.2 Appearance of Angels Jibrīl to Muhammad
 - 3.3 His preaching and early converts
 - 3.4 The Meccans’ Opposition
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked assignment
- 7.0 References / Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will learn about how Muhammad used to distance himself from the societal ills in Mecca by visiting Cave *Hirā'* for meditation. You will also learn in this unit how angel Jibrīl appeared to him in the cave and commissioned him Messenger of Allah. In this unit, you will be given insight into how Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) began his mission as Allah’s Messenger in Mecca and the early converts. You will also learn about the supports he got from his uncle Abū Tālib. His mission was however, seriously opposed by the people of Mecca. This unit will also expose you to the factors responsible for the Makkans' opposition of his mission and the champions of such oppositions.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Mention the circumstance that led to Muhammad's visits to Cave *Hirā'*.

- Describe how Angel Jibrīl appeared to him in the Cave and taught him the first revelation. Discuss the support Muhammad got from his uncle Abū Tālib.
- Explain the factors responsible for the Makkans' oppositions of Muhammad's mission and the role played by Abū Lahab and Abū Sufyān.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 His visits to cave Hirā'

In the last unit, you were given some insight into the personality of Muhammad. You were informed that he was dissatisfied with the wayward life style of the Mecca Arabs. All what was happenings in Mecca gave him serious concern. He was always troubled and disturbed by the ugly daily experiences. It was in the bid to fence himself off those ugly sights that he developed the habit of secluding himself in a cave called Hirā' in Mecca. Muhammad used to spend some periods of time in this cave meditating. The practice of idol worshipping and the various social ills prevalent in Mecca usually formed the subject of his meditation. As mentioned in the previous unit, he was not at all convinced that the idols worshipped by the pagan Arabs deserved to be worshipped. Instead, he was always thinking of the Great Power behind the creation of the heavens, the earth and other marvelous things in creation.

3.2 Appearance of Angel Jibrīl to Muhammad

It was in one of such outings to the cave that he had a strange experience. Do you know what experience? An angel of God appeared to him to commission him a Prophet and Messenger of Allah. Of course, before this time, the Muhammad had been having dreams that were as clear as day. The experience being narrated here was in the month of Ramadan in the year 610 CE when he was exactly forty years. The angel that appeared to Muhammad was Jibrīl, the angel charged by Allah with the revelation of the *Qur'ān*. This incident marked the commencement of the revelation of the Glorious *Qur'ān* to Muhammad and the beginning of his prophetic mission.

Jibrīl appeared to Muhammad in the angelic form and blocked the entrance of the cave so that he could not run out of it till he had rehearsed to him the first revelation. Describing the experience, Muhammad reported that the angel held him, shook him and then left him saying: 'Read'. And as he had no formal education, he replied saying: "I do not know how to read". Thrice the episode was repeated. Finally, the angel read out the wordings of the first revelation while

Muhammad repeated after him. The meaning of the text of the revelation goes thus:

“Read in the Name of your Lord, Who created, He Who created man from a clot of blood. Read, and your Lord is the Most Bounteous, Who taught man by the pen, taught him what he knew not”. (Q. 96:1-5).

The angel afterwards disappeared. Terrified, the Prophet ran out of the cave and headed straight home shivering with fear. On getting home, he narrated to his wife the strange experience and then asked her to cover him up with cloth. The experience lingered on in his memory for a long time. He was highly disturbed and was always contemplating, lying down or sitting in his mantle.

For a period, which some writers put at about six months, the angel did not come to him. It was during this period that Khadijah reported the experience of Muhammad to one of her uncle Waraqah ibn Nawfal who was a Christian Monk. Waraqah, however, gave her the assurance that the figure Muhammad saw in the cave was that of an angel and that he had been appointed a Prophet while the recitations rehearsed to him were revelations from Allah. Thus, with the experience in the cave, Muhammad became Allah’s Prophet and Messenger.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Give a brief account of the Prophet’s retreat in Cave Hirā' and the factors that necessitated it. Then describe his first encounter with Angel Jibrīl in Cave *Hirā'*.

3.3 His preaching and early converts

You have just learnt above that after the Prophet’s experience in the cave, revelation to him seized for some months. It was during the period that Khadijah met Waraqah and brought to Muhammad the assurance of Waraqah that Allah had appointed him a Prophet. Muhammad however did not know exactly what duty he was to perform as a Prophet. Angel Jibrīl, however, appeared to him again and again with new messages different from the first one. The fourth time the angel visited Muhammad, he brought a chapter that gave him specific instructions to arise and warn (Q.74). He was specifically instructed to admonish his nearest Kinsmen (Q.26:214).

Following this instruction, the Prophet started preaching to the people the oneness of Allah. He spoke vehemently against polytheism and all the various social ills prevalent in Mecca discussed in unit one.

Qur'anic verses addressing oneness of Allah and warning the Makkans against the punishment of the Doom's Day should they persist obstinately in their evil way of life were severally revealed to him and rehearsed publicly to them. His wife, Khadījah was the first to express belief in the mission, followed by Ali son of Abū Tālib and later his closest friend, Abu-Bakr. During the early years of his mission, Muhammad made frantic efforts to win converts into Islam from his own family, his personal friends and the commoners. However, not all his nearest kinsmen accepted his preaching. For instance, all efforts made by Muhammad to make Abū Tālib accept Islam proved abortive. Though, he was never hostile to Muhammad rather, he supported him in fulfilling his mission. On the contrary, Abū Lahab, another uncle opposed him vehemently, cursed him publicly while his wife also always sought to hurt Muhammad. *Suratu 'l-Lahab* (Q. 111) was revealed to condemn Abū Lahab and his wife and to also predicted their doom.

3.4 The Meccans' Oppositions

The oppositions Muhammad received from the Meccans were as a result of certain factors, which may be identified as religious, political, economic and social. The Meccans knew him to be trustworthy, truthful, polite and humble. His antecedent was enough to convince them that he could not have been an impostor or lay false claim to prophethood. After all, before his call, he was not known to have assumed what he thereafter assumed.

Socially, the Makkans opposed Muhammad's mission because they were neck-dip in social vices such as adultery, alcoholism, gambling while they also derived unquantifiable pleasure and enjoyments in them. They therefore found it extremely difficult to abandon them.

Religiously, the Meccans claimed idol worshipping was the tradition of their forefathers and they would not be prepared to abandon their forefathers' way of life. You will recall that Arabs from all over Arabia used to come on pilgrimage to Mecca to worship idols. Politically, the annual pilgrimage conferred honour and prestige on the Makkans. They were the envy of other Arabs who saw them as leaders. The Meccans therefore feared that their acceptance of Islam as a result of which they would have to discard with the idols would make them lose such honour and dignity while the leadership status they enjoyed would also become a thing of the past. Still on the political factors, there were some of the nobles and leaders of Mecca who felt threatened that should they accept Islam, they would have to become followers of Muhammad after having been leaders. In addition to that was the age long rivalry that had existed between the Banū Hāshim, the family of the Prophet

and Banū Umayyah to which belonged Abū Sufyān. You should note that Abū Sufyān opposed the Prophet's mission and did all he could to bar people from listening to him or accepting Islam chiefly because of the rivalry that existed between his family and that of Muhammad. His acceptance of Muhammad's leadership, in his assumption, would mean stooping low and accepting the leadership of Banū Hāshim.

Also, the Meccans opposed Muhammad's mission for economic reason. In unit one, you were informed that Arabs from neighboring towns that came for pilgrimage in Mecca during the *Jāhiliyyah* period used to come with their goods for sale while they also in turn patronized Mecca goods. This greatly enhanced Mecca economy. The Meccans therefore felt that their acceptance of Islam, the implication of which is that they would stop idol worshipping, would mean that there would be no more pilgrimage and that the Mecca economy would suffer greatly.

All the above factors put together made the Meccans to develop thick skin to the preaching of Muhammad. And, in order to stop him, they first tried to entice him with worldly things. Offers of wealth, pretty ladies and power were made to him—all of which he turned down. He remarked that even if he were to be offered the sun and the moon, he would not stop preaching the message of Islam. They also tried to persuade his uncle to stop him or remove his protection on him. That too did not work as the uncle, after listening to Muhammad vowed that as long as he was alive, he would not allow the Meccans to harm him. He indeed assured him of his continuous support though he himself did not accept Islam. Shouting and raising of voice with coarse songs and noise were resulted to by the Meccans to drown Muhammad's voice whenever he was preaching. Upon all, the number of his followers continued to soar on daily basis. This further infuriated the Meccans who resorted to dispersing the Muslims whenever they wanted to pray. They were beating severally and severely punished. Muhammad himself was on many occasions harassed and ridiculed. Indeed, they would have loved to attack or even kill him but for the protection of Abū Tālib and the nobility of his wife – Khadījah. Yet, Abū Jahl, his distant uncle, placed camel's placenta at the back of Muhammad's neck when once he was absorbed in his prayers. All sorts of abuses were rained on him. They called him names. Some said he was a soothsayer, others said he was a magician. Yet some others called him a mad man and a liar. Little did they realize that he could not have been a crazy man and a liar at the same time.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss the supports Muhammad got from his uncle, Abū Tālib.

4.0 CONCLUSION

With the appearance of angel Jibrīl to Muhammad in Cave *Hirā'*, Muhammad became a messenger of Allah whose duty was to warn and guide the people of Arabia so that they might turn a new leaf and embrace the monotheistic religion with which he was sent. Thus a new beginning dawned on Arabia. Despite all the ridicules Muhammad suffered in the hands of the Meccans especially in hands of Abū Jahl, Abū Lahab and Abū Sufyān, he remained consistent and unwavering in his determination. So also were his followers. The Meccans became more annoyed with the successes he was recording in his mission, they therefore intensify their opposition and persecution of his followers. Injuries were inflicted on them. Some were maimed while some others were even killed.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed how Muhammad became dissatisfied with the happenings in the Arabian society. We have also discussed how he used to go for retreat in Cave *Hirā'* and how eventually Angel Jibrīl was sent to commission him a messenger of Allah. In this unit, we have discussed how Muhammad began his preaching in Mecca. Mention is also made of the early converts. We have also discussed the various factors responsible for the Meccans' oppositions of the Prophet's Mission; the roles played by the like of Abū Lahab and Abū Sufyān and the support he got from his uncle, Abū Tālib.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Explain the factors responsible for the Meccans' opposition of Muhammad's mission.

7.0 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

Abdul, M.O.A. (1982) *The Historical Origin of Islam*, Lagos: Islamic Publication Bureau, Isolo.

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UNIT 2 THE *HIJRAH*/THE PROPHET'S ARRIVAL AND SETTLEMENT IN MEDINA

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Migration to Ethiopia
 - 3.2 The Ṭā'if opposition
 - 3.3 The Aqabah agreement
 - 3.4 The *Hijrah*
 - 3.5 Muhammad's settlement in Medina
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

From the very moment Muhammad declared his mission to the Meccans in 610 C.E. they greeted it with stiff opposition while he himself was seriously opposed and his mission severely persecuted. A man they all nicknamed 'the trustworthy' (*al-'Amīn*) was thus declared a compulsive liar.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- State what led to the migration of Muslims to Ethiopia
- Discuss how the people of Ṭā'if treated the Prophet
- Narrate the incident of °Aqabah
- Discuss the *Hijrah* of the Prophet
- Explain how he settled in Medina

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Migration to Abyssinia (Ethiopia)

When Muhammad realized that the persecution was becoming too severe and almost unbearable for his followers, he had to send eleven families among them to Abyssinia in the present day Ethiopia and in 615 C.E., eighty-three other families followed them. In Ethiopia was King Negus who was known to be a just Christian king. He welcomed the

Muslims and allowed them to stay in Abyssinia despite the frantic efforts made by the Meccan pagans to discredit the Muslims before him.

3.2 The *Ṭā'if* Opposition

The opposition and harassment of the Meccans notwithstanding, the Prophet remained undaunted. As you learnt above, he enjoyed the protection of his uncle and that of his wife. But following the death of both his uncle and his wife in 619 E.C., he became exposed to the threats and persecutions of the Meccans and for the first time, he thought of leaving Mecca and taking his preaching to a neighboring town where perhaps he would be received. *Ṭā'if* first struck him but unfortunately, he was, on the instigation of the Meccans, turned down and even stoned by the people of *Ṭā'if*. In his usual character, rather than curse them, he prayed to Allah saying: 'O Allah, guide my people for they do not know'.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Reflect over (i) the migration of the Muslims to Ethiopia (ii) *Ṭā'if*'s opposition to the Prophets' message.

3.3 The *ʿAqabah* Agreement

Having escaped from the torture of the people of *Ṭā'if* he decided to return to Mecca. He had a brief stay at a place called *ʿAqabah*, which was like a border town to Mecca. Traders and pilgrims to Mecca used to camp at *ʿAqabah* before entering Mecca. At *ʿAqabah*, the Prophet met some traders from Yathrib and he preached to them about Islam. These men were moved by his preaching and convinced of the truth of his presentation. They promised to share his message with their people in Yathrib and that they would have to meet him again at *ʿAqabah* the following year.

The Prophet returned to Mecca and continued his preaching while the Meccans intensified their opposition and persecution of his followers. The people of Yathrib, true to their promise, shared the message with their people who were receptive to it and even offered to receive and host Muhammad and his followers in Yathrib. Migration to Yathrib from Mecca and its modalities therefore formed the main topic of discourse between Muhammad and the Yathrib traders when they met at *ʿAqabah* the second time. At the end of the discussions, the Prophet agreed with the offer. The people from Yathrib pledged their support and protection against any aggression.

Following this agreement, the Prophet started dispatching his followers to Yathrib batch by batch. When the Meccans learnt about the move, they tried to stop them by waylaying them. Their belongings were confiscated while some of them were utterly brutalised. The Meccan could not however, accomplish their aim as more and more Muslims migrated to Yathrib. Later, those who had earlier migrated to Abyssinia joined their Muslim brethren in Yathrib.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Say what you know about the meeting of Muhammad with the Madinites at Aqabah.

3.4 The *Hijrah*

Finally, the Prophet himself and his bosom friend Abū Bakr decided to join the Muslims, in Yathrib having been satisfied that a great number of them had complied with the directive. The Meccans pursued them in order to stop them. It was, however, an effort in futility. Reference is made to how Muhammad and 'Abu-Bakr hid themselves in a cave when they realized they were being pursued (Q.9:40). This flight or migration which eventually marked a turning -point in the history of Islam is today known as *Hijrah*. It took place in the 622 C.E.

On his arrival in Yathrib which was later changed to *Madinatu Rasulillah* (City of Allah's Messenger), the Prophet was given a rousing welcome. All the people trooped out to receive him. Those traders that met Muhammad at 'Aqabah had worked tremendously on their people, majority of whom had accepted Islam and were anxious to meet the Messenger of Allah.

3.5 Muhammad's settlement in Medina

In Medina, the first assignment the Prophet embarked upon was to build a mosque. A piece of land was donated for that purpose. And close to the mosque, a building to house the Prophet was constructed. Secondly, the emigrants referred to as the *Muhājirūn* were paired with the Madinite Muslims who were regarded as the 'helpers' (*Anṣār*) in brotherhood. The Prophet also tried to bring together the two tribes of Aws and Khazraj who, for years, had been at each other's throats. He also established a cordial relationship with the Jews and Christians that he met in Medina. In Medina, revelations continue to come down addressing mainly the practical aspects of Islam. *Ṣalāt* (canonical prayers), which of course had been introduced before the *hijrah*, with the construction of the Prophet's mosque, became better organized.

Zakāt (alms giving), *Ṣawn* (fasting) and *Hajj* (pilgrimage) were also institutionalized in Meadina. Verses addressing legal and social-political issues were revealed for the guidance of the nascent Muslim Community of Medina.

Muhammad, being the recipient of the Divine revelation, all the Muslims in Madinah looked up to him for divine guidance. Thus, he played not only the role of a religious leader but a political leader as well. Islam which, hitherto was practiced in Mecca as a religion of some selected few, now became a state religion in Madinah with overwhelming number of adherents who were ready to practice it not only as religion of set rituals but as a complete way of life.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Describe the events of the Hijrah and what were the first assignments the Prophet embarked upon on his arrival in Medina.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Following the serious Meccans' oppositions and persecutions of the Prophet and his followers, he had no choice but to look for a friendly and accommodating society. Finally, he had to migrate to Medina where he settled with his followers and established the first Islamic Commonwealth.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have dealt with the *Hijrah* of some companions of Prophet Muhammad to Ethiopia. We have also discussed the hostility of Tā'if people and how on the contrary the Medina pilgrims at 'Aqabah received the Prophet's message and invited him to come over to Medina. We have also discussed in this unit, the Prophet's migration and settlement in Medina.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Trace the events that led to the Hijrah of the Prophet from Mecca and how it ended in Medina.

7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READINGS

Abdul, M.O.A. (1982) *The Historical Origin of Islam*, Isolo-Lagos; Islamic P. Bureau.

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MODULE 3 THE BATTLES AND TRIUMPH OF ISLAM

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|--------|---|
| Unit 1 | Battles of Badr and Uhud. |
| Unit 2 | Battle of <i>Khandaq</i> . |
| Unit 3 | The holy Prophet and the Orientalist criticism. |
| Unit 4 | The treaty of Hudaibiyyah and the Conquest of Mecca |
| Unit 5 | The Prophet's Diplomatic Ingenuity |

UNIT 1 BATTLES OF BADR AND UHUD

CONTENTS

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| 3.1 | Internal problems encountered in Medina |
| 3.2 | The encounter at Badr |
| 3.3 | Preparation for the Battle of Uhud |
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will learn about the various internal problems the Prophet encountered when he got to Medina. Also, you will learn about the reasons why the Meccans decided to attack Medina and their preparations towards that end. Eventually, the two forces met at Badr. You will appreciate Allah's supports for the poorly equipped Muslims as they routed out completely the heavily equipped Meccans force. You will also learn in this unit about the battle of Uhud which is the second war the Meccans waged against the Muslim. You will agree that the main reason was to avenge the defeat and losses they suffered at Badr. You will equally learn how the Muslims, for disobeying their Prophet, suffered great casualties in the battle of Uhud. This unit also contains an account of the second battle of Badr.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- State the internal problems the Prophet encountered in Medina.
- Mention the reasons why the Meccans decided to attack Madina.
- Account for the Badr encounter.
- State the reason why the Meccans waged the war of Uhud against the Muslims.
- Describe the preparations of the Meccans and the Muslims for the battle of Uhud.
- Give an account of the battle of Uhud.
- Distinguish between the first and the second battle of Badr.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Internal problems encountered in Medina

In unit seven, you read about the *hijrah* of the Prophet and his followers from Mecca to Medina. You equally learnt about his arrival and settlement there. You will also agree that the *hijrah* was really a turning point in the history of Islam as the practice of Islam became much easier for the Muslims in Medina than in Mecca where they were opposed, harassed and persecuted. In Medina, the Prophet was able to record lots of success. That however, is not to say that the Muslims did not encounter any difficulty at all. One of the problems they had to contend with was that of the hypocrites (*Munāfiqūn*) whereas, in Mecca, there was no such problem. The enemies of the Prophet and Islam in Mecca were rather the polytheists (*Mushrikūn*). The hypocrites of Medina were the followers of Medina Aristocrat, Abdullah ibn Ubayy, who before the arrival of the Prophet in Medina had great influence. Of course, in order not to be seen as an opponent, he declared for Islam hypocritically. Whereas, deep down him, he was opposed to the coming of Muhammad and his leadership over the people of Medina. This hypocrite and his followers were always secretly meeting and planning to frustrate and jeopardize the effort of the Prophet and the Muslims. They were always divulging the secret plans of the Muslims to their allies among the unbelievers of Mecca.

It has to be mentioned also that apart from the betrayal of the hypocrites, a particular Jewish tribe of Medina, Banū Nadhir, contrary to the agreement signed with the Prophet, also betrayed the Muslims. It was discovered that the Jewish tribe also helped the Meccan pagans against the Muslims at Uhud.

Soon, the news about the acceptability enjoyed by the Prophet and Islam in Medina reached the Meccan pagans who decided that everything must be done to stop the growth of Islam in Medina. Their fear was that if they were to allow Islam to continue to flourish in Medina, soon, Medina will become a rallying point and its fame might overshadow that of Mecca. They also feared that the Muslims might want to fight back and run over Mecca.

You will recall that the Meccans had earlier resorted to raids against the Muslims who were going on *Hijrah* to Medina. The raids continued even after they had settled in Medina. The Meccans attacked and destroyed the Muslim's cornfields in the outskirts of Medina while they also killed the Muslims working in the field. The Prophet had to dispatch some Muslims to watch over the field. At a place called *Nakhlah*, this band of Muslims saw a Quraysh caravan. They attacked it and in the process, the leader of the caravan, 'Amr ibn Hazramī was killed. This incident infuriated the Meccans the more and therefore decided to completely wipe out Islam by the means of a large-scale military offensive.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Identify the internal problems that confronted the prophet in Medina.

3.2 The encounter at Badr

Meanwhile, the news of the Meccans' plan to overrun Medina had reached the Muslims who decided to act fast by intercepting the caravan. This action from military point of view would be seen to be justifiable.

Abu Sufyān, the leader of the caravan got a wind of the Muslims' plan to attack his caravan, he quickly sent to Mecca for reinforcement. Abū Lahab to whom reference was made in one of the preceding unit as an uncle of the Prophet and his bitterest enemy was the one that led the army of 1,000 soldiers from Mecca against the Muslims. As the well-equipped Meccan army advanced towards Medina, the Prophet with his ill equipped but highly disciplined and steadfast 313 soldiers set out to engage them. The two armies met at Badr which is twenty miles south-west of Medina. At Badr, a decisive battle was fought in 624 C.E., two years after the *hijrah*. The Muslims, though not up to one third of their enemies put up a fierce fight and not long, routed the unbelievers who fell in their hundreds. Some even tried to escape but were caught and held as captives. Thus, the battle of Badr, led by Abū Sufyān and Abū Lahab, was lost to the tiny but highly disciplined army of the Prophet.

Soon, the news of the victory of the tiny army of Medina over the men of Mecca spread in Arabia like wild fire. The victory was a victory for Islam against paganism. The Muslims became more convinced that Islam is truly a religion that enjoys the support of God and that indeed Muhammad was a Messenger of Allah. The victory gave Islam, the Prophet and the Muslims in general great prestige in Arabia and as a result, many neighboring Bedouin tribes who hitherto were not ready to accept the authority of the Prophet, voluntarily submitted and accepted Islam.

While ʿAbbās, an uncle of the Prophet was captured and held as a war prisoner, Abū Lahab, his other uncle escaped. Abū Sufyān also escaped. Back in Medina, the Prophet consulted with his leading companions on what to do with the captives. The conclusion was that certain amount of money should be paid as ransom or in lieu of that the literate among them should teach the illiterate Muslims the art of reading and writing. It should also be mentioned that among the captives were those that eventually declared for Islam while those who did not became its sympathizers because of the kind and humane treatment they received from the Prophet and the Muslims in Medina.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Account for the battle of Badr and the Prophet treated the war captives.

3.3 Preparation for the Battle of Uhud

Meanwhile, the leaders of Mecca could not believe what happened at Badr. They were greatly pained because of the heavy loss they suffered. Indeed, Abū Lahab one of the commanders of the battle died few weeks after the Battle of Badr in a state of melancholy as a result of the defeat the Meccan army suffered at Badr.

The Meccans felt disgraced and decided to take on the Muslims the second time. Series of meetings were held on how best to tackle the Muslims. ʿAbbās, an uncle of the Prophet and one of the captives of Badr who had developed sympathy towards the Muslims leaked the secret plans of the Meccans to the Prophet in Medina. At Badr, the Meccans were only 1,000, this time they gathered an army of 3,200 including some Quraysh women and headed towards Medina. They decided to camp at the foot of the hill of Uhud.

On the part of the Muslims, the Prophet announced the movements of the Quraysh and the agreement was that they should be engaged in a battle. A battalion of 1,000 soldiers volunteered to fight the Meccans. They had already set out when, in order to kill the Muslims' morale,

'Abdullah ibn Ubayy, the head of the hypocrites in Medina announced the withdrawal of his 300 men.

3.4 The Uhud encounter

The Prophet and the Muslims resolutely forged ahead. At Uhud, before the military engagement, the Prophet located an entrance from which the enemies could possibly enter upon them and attack them from behind. He acted swiftly by instructing fifty strong men to man the entrance with specific instruction not to leave the place unless and until he instructed them otherwise.

This battle of Uhud being discussed with you in this unit was fought in the month of *Shawwal* of 3 A.H. When the battle first began, the Muslims had upper hand. They routed the unbelievers who became confused and retreated. The Muslims pursued and killed many of them. Seeing the momentous victory, the Muslims relaxed and went for war booties. The fifty men on guard also left their position and took to the field.

Seeing that the entrance was no more under guard, a Meccan Army general, Khālīd ibn Walīd led his troop through and attacked the Muslims from behind killing hundreds of them. Confusion broke out and the Prophet also became exposed to the Meccan attack. He was indeed attacked by Ibn Kamiah who threw stones at him and broke one of his front teeth. It was also in this confusion that Hamzah who had displayed unusual bravery in the battle of *Badr* and at the initial stage of the battle of Uhud, fell under the spear of a sponsored assailant. The Muslims, for their gross indiscipline suffered great casualties at Uhud. Indeed, the enemies made attempts to kill the Prophet but for some companions who shielded him and received blows of machetes and arrow shots on their bodies.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

State the causes, the events, the outcome and lessons of the Battle of Uhud.

3.5 The Second Battle of Badr

While of course, the battle of Uhud may be considered a loss for the Muslims, you should however also know that, for the Meccans, it was not really a victory. They also suffered heavy losses. And since they did not succeed in killing the Prophet, they could not claim to have achieved their aim. And, indeed, it was the feeling of dissatisfaction that made the Meccans to attempt another battle almost immediately after that of Uhud referred to in Islamic history as the second battle in Badr.

The brain behind this battle was 'Abu Sufyān of the 'Ummayyad clan who led the Meccan force and encamped at Badr. The Prophet, this time, gathered a huge army the population of which scared both 'Abu Sufyan and his force. Not wanting to take the risk of facing the large Muslim force, the Meccans decided to retreat back to Mecca.

After the Prophet had returned and settled back in Medina, he visited the case of the Jewish Banū Nadhīr earlier on mentioned. The decision of the leading Muslims was that they were to leave the strategic position which they occupied, about three miles south of Medina, endangering the very existence of the *Ummah* in Medina. They first thought of resisting the order relying on their strength and the support of the Medinan hypocrites and their Meccan allies. But when the Muslims besieged them for eleven days and no support came from their allies, they realized their helplessness and surrendered to the Prophet's quit order. Though, the punishment for their treachery ought to be death, they were however spared and allowed ten days to move themselves and all their belongings. In order not to leave any habitation for the Muslims, they destroyed their own homes with their hands. Reference is made to the Banū Nadhīr's episode in *Sūratu 'l- Hashr* [chapter 59 of the *Qur'ān*]. Some of them joined their brethren in Syria and Khaybar while some others went to Mecca and joined the Quraysh.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The triumph of the tiny Muslim force over the heavily equipped large Meccans force at Badr was a triumph of truth over falsehood. The great lesson to be learnt is that success and victory comes only with Allah's support, steadfastness and high moral standard. Discipline in war, which entails obedience to the war commandant, is a *sine qua non* for the success of any military engagement. When the Muslims threw away discipline at the plain of Uhud, the battle which could have ended a victory for them ended with many casualties record on their side.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have identified the various internal problems that the Prophet encountered in Medina. We have also mentioned the reasons why the Meccans decided to run over Medina while we also accounted for their preparations towards that. The unit has also discussed the encounter of the two forces at the plain of Badr and how the Muslim force defeated the Meccan force. We have also discussed how the Prophet treated the war captives. You have also learnt in this unit the reason why the Meccans staged the battle of Uhud. You have also learnt about the preparation on both ends and the eventual encounter at the plain of Uhud. We have also made you realize the importance of discipline and obedience to the constituted authority.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. State the remote and immediate causes of the battle of Uhud.
2. Describe the preparations of both the Meccans and the Muslims for the battle.
3. Give a vivid account of the battle of Uhud.

7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2 THE BATTLE OF *KHANDAQ*

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Preparations for the Battle of *Khandaq*
 - 3.2 The Siege on Medina
 - 3.3 The Banū Qurayzah
 - 3.4 The Medinan Charter and the Christians
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References / Further readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will learn about the battle of *Khandaq* that involved the confederates who laid siege on Medina. The suggestion offered by a Persian Muslim that a ditch be dug round Medina saved the city from the imminent attack of the allied forces. You will also learn about how the Prophet dealt decisively with Banū Qurayzah for their treachery. You will equally learn in this unit the spirit of tolerance as demonstrated by Islam towards the Christians in Medina for their loyalty.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Mention the forces that constituted the confederates.
- Account for the defensive measures put in place by the Muslims against the confederates.
- Justify the stern measures taken by the Prophet against Banū Qurayzah.
- State the Rights provided by the Medinan Charter for the loyal Medinan Christians.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Siege on Medina

As remarked in unit nine, the Meccans could not claim to be the victors in the battle of Uhud. They equally suffered heavy losses and did not succeed in killing the Prophet. A grand plan that lasted for two years was therefore put in place to finally destroy the Muslim Community in

Medina. In the year 627 C.E., a strong and formidable force was raised by the Meccans. The force comprised of not only the Meccans, the expelled Jews of Nadhīr also joined. The campaign also attracted Bedouin as the Ghaṭfān tribe of Bedouin Arabs also joined the force. This alliance showed the determination of the Meccans to completely uproot Islam. Soon, the news of the plan of the alliance to invade Medina got to the Prophet. As usual, he put the matter before the leaders of the Muslim Community. Defensive measure was the upheld option as it seemed almost too late to plan for military engagement. A Muslim of Persian origin, Salmān suggested that a wide ditch (*khandaq*) be dug in the northern side of the city from where the confederates would want to enter upon Medina. This suggestion was gladly welcomed and strong men worked for days and nights to construct the ditch. All the Muslim families living in the area were relocated to the houses within the entrenchment. Then, the Prophet and 3,000 fully armed Muslim soldiers stood by the ditch from within.

When the Quraysh and their allied forces finally arrived with 10,000 men in Shawwal, 627 C.E. they could not invade Medina as planned. They instead met the deep and wide ditch. And, as crossing the ditch was not possible, they decided to camp by the side of the ditch. Occasional attempts to attack the Muslims were rebuffed and instead, the Muslims carried on irregular warfare, harassing them in every way.

For two weeks or twenty-seven days according to some writers, the Meccans laid siege on Medina. The siege however had no effect on the people of Medina who had made all necessary provisions to withstand whatever sufferings that might be encountered. On the other hand, the allied force suffered most. They run short of provisions. They suffered hunger and unceasing shower of arrows and constant assaults. To worsen their situation, Allah sent against them, hurricane blowing severe cold. Yūsuf ‘Alī describes the situation thus:

The enemy’s tents were torn up, their fires were extinguished, the sand and rain beat in their faces, and they were terrified by the portents against them. They had already well nigh fallen out amongst themselves and beating a hasty retreat, they melted away.

The confederates left in disarray unable to accomplish their mission. Medina, with the ditch dug round it, was thus saved from the imminent attack of the confederates that consisted of the three external forces namely, the Quraysh, the expelled Jewish tribe of Nadhīr and the Ghaṭfān Bedouin tribe; and two internal forces namely the hypocrites led by Abdullah ibn Ubayy about whom you have read briefly in unit nine and another Jewish tribe (i.e. the Banū Qurayzah).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss the siege of Medina. Highlight the lessons that can be learnt from it.

3.2 The Banū Qurayzah

These two internal forces gave supports to the enemies against the Muslims. The hypocrites in their own case taunted the believers saying: 'Allah and His Apostle promised us nothing but delusion' [Q 33:12]. They also incited the soldiers to withdraw while they themselves actually withdrew. But the Prophet could not do anything to the hypocrites for the simple reason that such might not be readily understood and might be easily misconstrued that he was fighting his followers since the hypocrites also pretended to be Muslims.

The case of the Banū Qurayzah who acted treacherously like their predecessors (i.e. Banū Nadhīr) was decided upon. Their matter was referred to their fellow men together with whom they all pledged their support and loyalty to Muhammad on his arrival in Medina. On the verdict of the chief of Aws tribe, Sa'īd ibn Mu'āz who applied the Jewish law of the Old Testament, the men of Banū Qurayzah were put to death while the women were sold as captives of war and their lands and properties were divided among the emigrants. The *Qur'ān* says:

“... And He made you heirs of their lands, their houses, and their goods, and of a land which you had not frequented (before) and Allah has power over all things (Q33:27).”

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Justify the treatment meted out to the people of Banū Qurayzah.

3.3 The Medina charter and the Christians

As for the Christians in Medina, they did not act treacherously towards the Prophet and the Muslims. For their loyalty and co-operation, the Prophet in the year 628 CE granted them a charter showing Islam's level of tolerance. The Christians were in the charter, accorded the rights of religion, life and property. They were free to practice their religion without any interference or hindrance whatsoever. They were also to be dealt with on every matter with justice and fairness. Their leaders were to be respected. No Christian churches should be demolished even in war times. The charter, in accordance with the *Qur'ānic* provision [Q5:5], also allowed Christian women married to Muslims to follow

their own religion. They should not be forced to practice Islam since there should be no compulsion in matters of religion. (Q2:256). Of course, the Christians, for living in the Muslim Community and enjoying the Muslims' protection, were to pay the tax known as *jizyah*. The charter, however, stipulated that they should not be oppressed; they should instead be fairly taxed.

This spirit of tolerance of Islam as demonstrated in the charter compared with the treatment meted out to the treacherous Jewish tribes of Banū Nadhīr and Banū Qurayzah is in perfect compliance with the directives of Allah as contained in chapter 60 verses 8-9 of the *Qur'ān* which read thus:

Allah forbids you not with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: For Allah loves those who are just.

Allah only forbids you with regard to those who fight you for (your) Faith, and drive you out of your homes, and support (others) in driving you out

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Justify the view that the Medinan Muslim-Christian Charter was an exemplary charter for a multi-religious society.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The spirit of consultation (*shūrā*) which the Prophet displayed when he upheld the suggestion of a Persian Muslim was one important factor that saved the city of Medina from the confederates' attack. While the Medinan Christians for the loyalty were given freedom of worship and some other concessions, the Jewish tribe of Banū Qurayzah for acting treacherously towards the Muslims were appropriately reprimanded.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed the composition of the allied forces that besieged Medina and how the big trench dug round prevented them from attacking the city. We have also discussed with you the stern measures taken against the Jewish tribe of Banū Qurayzah for aiding the allied forces against the Muslim; and the kind treatment enjoyed by the Christians for their loyalty.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Give a brief account of the causes, the forces and the events of the Battle of Khandaq.
2. Write notes on
 - (i) the treatment meted out to the Banū Qurayzah.
 - (ii) the Charter prepared by the Prophet for the Christians in Medina.

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UNIT 3 THE HOLY PROPHET AND THE ORIENTALISTS' CRITICISMS

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Orientalists' claim that the Prophet Muhammad was Epileptic.
 - 3.2 Their Theory of Jewish and Christian Sources for the *Qur'ān*
 - 3.3 Their Accusation of Use of Force
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will learn about some allegations leveled by the Orientalists against the Prophet regarding the authorship of the *Qur'ān* Jewish and Christian sources theory for the Holy Book; their claim that the Prophet was epileptic would also be examined. They have also accused him of spreading Islam by force, holding the *Qur'ān* on one hand and the sword on the other. We shall critically look at these allegations in this unit with a view to determining whether they are true or false.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

- Discuss critically the epileptic theory propounded by the Orientalists against the Holy Prophet Muhammad.
- State with explanation whether or not the Prophet plagiarized the *Qur'ān*.
- Critically examine the allegation that the Prophet used force in spreading Islam.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Epileptic Theory

The Orientalists of the West have accused the Prophet of suffering from epilepsy. They submit that the seizure of ecstasy, which he used to

experience whenever the *Our'ān* was being revealed unto him was rather an epileptic seizure. Let us however see the definition of epilepsy as given in the New Encyclopedia Britannica with a view to seeing whether the descriptions given are similar to what the Prophet used to experience. Epilepsy has been defined as “sudden and recurrent disturbances in mental function, state of consciousness, sensory activity, or movements of the body caused by paroxysmal malfunction of cerebral nerve cells”.

The New Encyclopedia Britannica further identifies four types of seizures namely: grand mal, petit mal, psychomotor and infantile spasms.

Grand mal according to the Encyclopedia ‘includes generalized convulsions in which there is sudden unconsciousness with falling and shaking of limbs.’ This falling to the ground is sometimes preceded by a loud scream. After the body falls to the ground it stiffens and sometimes respiration stops, followed by jerky movements in all legs and hands. Sometimes during the seizures the tongue gets bitten because of the involuntary contractions of the muscles of jaws. As a person goes through this, he experiences headache. The person will have no recollection of what happened to him. It is obvious that these symptoms are not applicable to Muhammad.

Petit Mal involves momentary lapses of awareness, and more than 70 percent of patients have their first attack before age 20. In Petit Mal there are no involuntary movements and it could therefore happen so many times in a single day without interruption of consciousness. Reacting, Hamzah Njozi says: It is difficult to see how Petit Mal can be equated with Muhammad’s revelation. Revelation came to him at 40 and revelation took several minutes as opposed to the momentary lapses of Petit Mal. Moreover revelation could never go unnoticed.

Psychomotor and focal seizures may involve generalized convulsions. ‘Focal onset may be manifested by localized movements or sensations of a part of the body or by subjectively experiences warnings called auras that last from a fraction of a second to a few seconds. Auras arising from specific areas of the brain include illusions that the environment is strangely familiar, auditory or visual hallucinations, ringing in the ears, and unpleasant odors or tastes’.

Again psychomotor seizures have nothing in common with Muhammad’s revelation. Moreover, the *Qur'ān*, which was recited by Muhammad is available today. When examined it does not look like the weird screams and mumblings of an epileptic.

Every time Muhammad received a revelation, he would be in complete control of himself and was completely able to recall everything after and have it recorded accordingly. He was so sure he even had this recorded in the *Qur'ān* 75:16-19.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Debunk the claim by the orientalist that Prophet Muhammad was epileptic.

3.2 From Jewish and Christian Sources

The Orientalists have equally accused the Prophet of plagiarism. They submit that he copied the Christian and Jewish scriptures and that he had Christian/ Jewish teacher who taught him the scriptures. One of the champions of this theory is Philip K. Hitti who in his *Islam and the West: A Historical Survey* has the following to say: ‘The sources of the *Qur'ān* are unmistakable: Christian, Jewish and Arab heathen’.

Others who have toed the path of Hitti include J. Christy Wilson, R.A Nicholson, Kenneth Cragg, H.A.R. Gibb and Richard Bell who argues in his book, *The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment* that ‘much of the *Qur'ān* is directly dependent upon the Bible, and stories associated with the Bible’.

Nicholson in his own submission says that the Prophet’s journeys with the trading caravans of *Makkah* afforded him the opportunities for conversation with Jews and Christians, of which the *Qur'ān* preserves the result.

Comparable passages cited by the Orientalists include *Sūrah* 21:104 with Isaiah, *Surah* 5:9-42 with Ezekiel 18:20; *Sūrah* 5:45 with Samuel 2:6, *Sūrah* 1:5 “Guide us in the straight path” and Psalm 27:1 “and lead us in a plain path”. The Orientalists are of the opinion that the Prophet only Islamized, Arabicized and nationalized the Jewish and Christian materials.

In the first place, the Prophet could not have sourced for the information contained in the *Qur'ān* from Christianity as there is no good evidence of any seats of Christianity in the Hijaz except in Najran, in Yaman (South of Makkah) and the Prophet never visited Najran. And to the north of Makkah, there were some Jewish tribes in Yathrib (later known as Madinah), but as you have learnt in the earlier units, the Prophet only visited *Yathrib* at age six when he accompanied his mother and stayed there for few days.

It should also be noted that the Prophet's contacts with Jewish or Christian scholars was very limited. He met with Waraqah ibn Nawfal, a Christian uncle of Khadijah mentioned in Unit twice. First, was when Waraqah was one day going round the Ka'bah and saw the young Muhammad. Having noticed in him the divine traits of a Prophet of God, he affectionately kissed his head. The second meeting was discussed in unit when Khadijah advised Muhammad to see Waraqah following the strange encounter he had with Jibrīl at the first revelation. Waraqah however died three years after this second encounter. Could the Prophet have learnt from him during these two brief meetings all that he later rehearsed to the people for 23 years?

We also wish to react to the argument of comparable passages mentioned above that there is bound to be such similarities since the *Qur'ān* and the earlier scripture given to Jesus and Moses are from one and same source (Allah). Moreover, the *Qur'ān*, in a number of passages clearly states that it has come to confirm the truth of the earlier scripture. We also want to argue that if truly the Prophet plagiarized the *Qur'ān* as they claim, there would not have been areas of disagreement between the *Qur'ān* and those scripture. On the issue of trinity for instance, the *Qur'ān* out-rightly disagrees with the Bible and instead advocates for monotheism. So also is the issue of crucifixion of Jesus.

Also, the Prophet's life-long illiteracy is another reason why he could not have plagiarised the *Qur'ān*. The *Qur'ān* itself suggests that many critics would have doubted the truth of his claim if he were to be literate. But the fact that he was not literate renders the allegation of plagiarism untenable. How on earth could the unlettered Muhammad have managed to gather all the materials from the Jews and Christians and yet recast the materials over a period of 23 years without the aid of a pen and without any contradiction whatsoever!

Perhaps, it is pertinent to quote here six questions put forth by Gamal Badawi to dismiss the Orientalists' allegation of plagiarism:

1. Why is it, that in spite of the abundance of historical material on Muhammad's life, and in spite of the extensive research on his life for centuries by his severe critics, why was it not possible to discover that mysterious teacher(s) through whom Muhammad might have learned all that?
2. It is known that Muhammad was opposed, ridiculed, and persecuted for nearly thirteen years by his own contemporaries. With this magnitude of severe enemies, was it not possible for them to prove to the masses that Muhammad's claim of revelation was sheer fabrication? Was it not possible for them to reveal and name which they alleged to be the human source or

- sources of his teachings? Even some of his adversaries who made this assertion changed their minds later on and accused him, instead, of magic or of being possessed by evil ... etc.
3. Muhammad was raised among his people and every aspect of his life was exposed to them, especially by the openness that characterizes tribal life in the desert. How could the multitudes of his contemporaries, including many of his close relatives who knew him so well, how could they believe in his truthfulness if they had any doubt that he was claiming credit for ideas taught to him by some other teachers without bothering to give them credit?
 4. What kind of teacher might have taught Muhammad a coherent and complete religion that changed the face of history? Why didn't he or they (if any) speak against the alleged student who continued learning from them, while ignoring them and claiming some other divine source for his teachings?
 5. How could many Jews and Christians amongst his contemporaries become Muslims and believe in his truthfulness if they knew that he was copying from their scriptures or learning from their priests or rabbis?
 6. It is known that some of the *Qur'anic* revelations to Muhammad in the presence of people. The *Qur'ān* was revealed on the span of twenty-three years, where then was that mysterious perhaps, invisible human teacher of Muhammad? How could he have hidden himself for so long? Or how could Muhammad who was constantly surrounded by followers, how was he able to make frequent secret visits to that mysterious teacher or teachers for twenty-three years without being caught even once?

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

State the theory that Prophet Muhammad plagiarized the *Qur'ān*. Why would you agree or disagree.

3.3 Accusation of Use of Force

Another allegation by the Orientalists is that the Prophet was able to spread Islam by the means of the sword. They claimed that he held the *Qur'ān* on one hand and the sword on the other and gave his converts the option of choosing between the two. The implication of this allegation is that he waged war on the people in order to force Islam on them. When tested under the lenses of historical facts, the flaws in this allegation becomes manifest. In the first place, all the wars fought by the Muslim were in self defense. They did not start hostility. Rather, they fought back when the enemies' persecution became unbearable and following the permission given by Allah in the *Qur'ān*.

It is also a well known fact that the *Qur'ān*, according to Islamic History, was compiled into a book form only after the death of the Prophet. The question then is: Which *Qur'ān* did he hold on his hand? It is also a common knowledge that many of those who became Muslims did so after having listened to the truth of the Prophet's message as contained in the *Qur'ān*. The example of 'Umar, the second caliph is an apt one. He became a Muslim after having listened to the recitation of *Sūrat Tāhā*. Abu Bakr, 'Uthmān, 'Alī and a host of many others were, in their own case, preached to and consequently embraced Islam. There is not a single record of anyone in the history of Islam who was forced by the Holy Prophet to embrace Islam; more so that the *Qur'ān* clearly declares that there is no compulsion in religion. How on earth would the Prophet act contrary to what he preached.

From the foregoing therefore, it becomes obviously clear that war and use of force is not an objective of Islam. Islam is a religion of peace that wins people into its fold only by the means of intellectually convincing arguments.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Did Prophet Muhammed use force to spread Islam? Explain your answer.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The personality of the Prophet and his mission have, both been objects of serious attacks by the Orientalists. Many unfavourable, defamatory and scandalous remarks and comments have been made by them in their various writings. While some of such are directed against the divine authorship of the *Qur'ān* purposely to create doubt in the minds of Muslims, some others are direct attacks on his divine mission and noble personality. One of such taunts is that he suffered epilepsy. Another is that he plagiarized the *Qur'ān*. Yet another is that he spread Islam with the use of force. Fortunately enough, not only Muslim scholars have defended him and convincingly responded to all these allegations, Orientalists like Thomas Carlyle and Watt have also regarded all those allegations as lies concocted deliberately to defame him.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt about the Orientalists of the West and some of the allegations they leveled against the Prophet, the *Qur'ān* and Islam.

You have also learnt about the explanations given by scholars to show the weakness in those allegations and to clear the Prophet of the lies heaped round him deliberately to defame him and cast doubt on his divine mission.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Examine critically the Orientalists claim that Prophet Muhammed was epileptic.
2. Do you agree that the Prophet plagiarized the *Qur'ān*?
3. Criticize the allegation that the Prophet employed force in spreading Islam.

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UNIT 4 THE TREATY OF *HUDAYBIYYAH* AND THE CONQUEST OF MECCA

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Matching out for the Lesser *Hajj*
 - 3.2 The *Bay'atu r- riḍwān*
 - 3.3 The treaty of Hudaibiyyah
 - 3.4 Emissaries to Foreign Rulers and the Battle of *Mu'ta*
 - 3.5 The Meccans' Betrayal of the Hudaibiyyah Truce
 - 3.6 The conquest of Mecca
 - 3.7 The battle of Hunayn
 - 3.8 The Tabuk Expedition
 - 3.9 The Year of Delegations
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor- Marked Assignments
- 7.0 References / Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will learn about a treaty signed between the Prophet and the pagans of Mecca at Hudaibiyyah. You will equally learn about a Treaty that the Muslims entered into with the Prophet at the same place. Going through this unit, you will appreciate the level of commitment and readiness of the early Muslims to sacrifice all they had including their lives for Islam while you will also realize the leadership and diplomatic prowess of the Prophet with which he tackled the situations at Hudaibiyyah. You will learn in this unit about how the Meccans broke the truce they signed with the Muslims at Hudaibiyyah as a result of which the Prophet laid siege on the city and captured it. You will also learn about how the Hawāzin, the Ṭaifans, the Romans and the Syrian Christians tried to halt the process but to no avail. In the unit, you will also learn about how the Prophet received delegations that had come to embrace Islam and learn its precepts from various tribes of Arabia and other neighboring cities.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- State what led to the *bay'atu riḍwān*.
- Give a summary of the content of the treaty of Hudaibiyyah.

- State the significance of the treaty to the Prophet's mission.
- Discuss what led to the Battle of Mu'ta and its outcome.
- Describe how the Meccans broke the truce they signed with the Prophet at Hudaibiyyah.
- Explain how the city of Mecca was conquered.
- Discuss the attempts of the Hawāzins, the Ṭā'ifans and others to halt the conquest of Mecca.
- Explain the events that characterized the year of delegation.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Matching out for the lesser *Hajj* and the *Bay'atu riḍwān*

A year after the battle of Khandaq, the Prophet received inspiration from Allah directing him to go to Mecca to perform the lesser *Hajj* called *Umrah* with his followers. The announcement was made. While some of the desert Arabs hung back and made excuses, between 1,400 and 1,500 faithful Muslims marched out with him towards Mecca solely for the *Umrah*. They therefore did not carry any arm. The Prophet had deliberately chosen the month of Dhu'l-Qa'dah which is a month held sacred even by the pagan Arabs in which fighting was forbidden. The news of the Prophet's advancement soon reached the pagan autocracy at Mecca. Not wanting to take chances, they deviled the Arab tradition by marching out armed in the sacred month to fight the unarmed Muslims. The Prophet decided to encamp at a plain north of Mecca called Hudaibiyyah. From there, he sent a delegation led by *Uthmān ibn Affān* to Mecca to inform the Quraysh of their intention. The delegations were delayed and could not return on time to their camp. It was therefore rumored that they had been killed. The Prophet was greatly disturbed by the rumor that he had to summon all the Muslims and requested them to swear their fealty (*bay'at*) that should the rumor be true, they would march on Mecca even though they were unarmed. With great enthusiasm, the Muslims there present pledged to the Prophet. The pledge, which is known as *bay'atu – riḍwān* (Fealty of God's pleasure) was sworn under a tree at Hudaibiyyah.

Reference is made to the occasion in the *Qur'ān* thus:

Allah's pleasure was on the Believers when they swore fealty to you under the Tree. He knew what was in their hearts, and He sent down tranquility to them; and He rewarded them with a speedy victory (Q48: 18).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What were the developments that led to the pledge known as *bay'atu riḍwān*. Mention the reference to it from the *Qur'an*

3.2 The Treaty of Hudaibiyyah

Eventually, however, ʿUthmān and other members of the delegation returned to the Muslim camp. Some delegates from Mecca had come with them to dialogue with the Prophet and sign some agreements. After much discussion, the two parties agreed to sign a treaty later known as “the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah”. Before the agreement was signed, an argument ensued. The *Meccans* wanted Muhammad, Allah’s Apostle' written in the agreement to be changed to 'Muhammad son of Abdullah'. They argued that if they were convinced of his Messengership, they would not have been battling him for the past years. They claimed they only recognized him as a leader of a group and not as a Prophet or an Apostle. Since their recognition at that moment was somehow of little or no importance, the Prophet agreed to their request. A summary of the content of the treaty as given by Yusuf Ali is here under given.

- 1 that there was to be peace between the parties for ten years;
- 2 that any tribe or person was free to join either party or make an alliance with it;
- 3 that if a Quraysh person from Mecca, under guardianship should join the Prophet without the guardians permission, he (or she) should be sent back to the guardian, but in the contrary case, they should not be sent back; and
- 4 that the Prophet and his party were not to enter Mecca that year, but that they could enter unarmed the following year.

Viewed on its face value, the treaty would be seen to be one sided and more advantageous to the Quraysh. Indeed, that was the feeling of most of the Muslims present at the plain. To them, the Prophet had given too much compromise and concession to the Quraysh. But viewed deeply and critically, the Prophet scored a great diplomatic triumph from this agreement. In the first place, the Quraysh accorded him, for the first time, the status of a recognized leader. Also, the Prophet was sure that all those who had accepted Islam did so based on conviction. Therefore, he entertained no fear of losing any Muslim to the unbelievers, and should a Muslim decide to go back to Mecca, the Prophet was sure that his presence in Mecca would be an opportunity for him to proselytize for Islam and a great threat to the Meccans. And on the agreement to send back any Meccans willing to join Islam, the Prophet knew that

such people, even when not allowed to stay in Medina, would definitely not return to Mecca.

In addition to the above arguments, the Prophet also realized that the hostilities and persecution mounted by the Meccans against Islam and its adherents had greatly slowed down its spread but with cessation of such hostilities, for complete ten years, the message of Islam could be extended to other parts of Arabia.

After much explanation and persuasion, the Prophet at last succeeded in convincing his teeming followers. He therefore slaughtered his sacrificial animal there at Hudaibiyyah while they also followed suit. They afterwards returned to Medina.

You will recall that two Jewish tribes of Nadhīr and Qurayḥah earlier mentioned in units nine and ten were expelled from Medina for acting treacherously towards the Muslims. Many of them had joined their Jewish brethren in Khaybar near the Syrian boarder. They continued their hostilities, looting the Muslims' caravans, murdering them and raiding and destroying their corn- fields. The Prophet therefore decided to put an end to their hostilities. On his way from Hudaibiyyah, he marched against the Jews of Khaybar and after heavy fighting, the Muslims captured their strong fortress to which they had taken shelter. They therefore surrendered and asked for mercy. The Prophet forgave them and allowed them to live there but subjected them to pay a fixed land-tax.

In the year 629 C.E, the Muslims were in Mecca for three days performing the *Umrah*. They had access to the Ka'bah. Based on the treaty signed the previous year with the Muslims at Hudaibiyyah, the Meccans vacated the city. The Prophet and the Muslims, by conducting their affairs peacefully and adhering strictly to the dictates of the treaty during the three day stay at Mecca really demonstrated to the Meccans that Islam is a religion of peace and trust.

The peaceful and truthful disposition of the Muslims convinced some among the Meccans of the genuineness of the Muslims' religion, they therefore declared for Islam. It was during the occasion that 'Amr ibn al – 'Ās and the great army general, Khālid ibn Walīd and a host of others accepted Islam.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah. Mention the fruits it yielded to the early Islam.

3.3 Emissaries to Foreign Rulers and the Battle of Mu'ta

In order to maximize the opportunity of the long peaceful truce he signed with the Meccans, the Prophet after his return from Meccans in 629, decided to extend Islam to the neighboring countries. He sent messages to the chiefs and princes on the Syrian borders. To his utmost dismay, his messengers were seized and brutally dealt with. Some were even tortured to death. The Prophet was seriously grieved by this act of barbarism, he therefore resolved to tackle the murderers of his envoy. The Prophet sent an army under the command of Zayd, his adopted son to fight the Roman army led by Surahbil. The two forces met at Mu'ta where a fierce fighting took place. Both Zayd and Ja'far lost their lives in this battle but Khālid ibn Walīd took over the command of the Muslim army and won victory for Islam dispersing the Romans from the battle -field.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE.

Give a brief account of the Battle of Mu'ta and its result.

3.4 The Meccans' Betrayal of the Hudaibiyyah Truce

Again, in the year 630 CE, the second year of the treaty of Hudaibiyyah, the Prophet led the Muslims to Mecca for the lesser Hajj. You should remember that one of the items of the treaty signed in 628 C. E. was that any tribe was free to join either party or make alliance with it. The implication of this was that such allied tribe would also come under the truce.

Unfortunately, the Meccans in 630 C. E. broke the truce they signed with the Muslims. It happened that Banū Bakr, a tribe in alliance with the Quraysh attacked Banū Khuzā'ah, an allied tribe of the Muslims. There were also evidences that the Quraysh even aided the Banu Bakr in the attack in which a large number of Banū Khuzā'ah were murdered.

The people of Banū Khuzā'ah reported the outrage to the Prophet and demanded that he should come to their aid. The Prophet thus raised the issue with the Quraysh demanding for explanation and compensation for breaking the truce and for the mass killing of the allied tribe of Banū Khuzā'ah. The Quraysh, in their arrogance refused the Prophet's demands. The Prophet was therefore left with the option of redressing the harm done to the Muslim allies by taking up arms against the arrogant Quraysh.

3.5 The Conquest of Mecca

A large army of 14,000 men advanced towards Mecca. The force camped near Mecca. The Meccans, who were not prepared for any arm struggle, were frightened by the large force that had laid siege on them. At night, Abū Sufyān and two other Quraysh chiefs decided to spy on the Muslim force. Luck however ran against them as they were caught and arranged before the Prophet. The trio had taught that the prophet would deal with them ruthlessly considering the magnitude of the persecution he and his followers had suffered over the years from the hands of the Quraysh, especially Abū Sufyān. But, to their surprise, the Prophet queried them thus: What do you imagine I will do with you today? They replied: You are a kind generous brother, the son of a kind generous brother. He then pardoned them saying: "Go, you are free". The magnanimity of the Prophet really touched Abū Sufyān's heart and he instantly embraced Islam.

After this scene, the Prophet decided to enter upon Mecca with the promise that as long as arms were not raised up by the Meccans, nobody would be attacked. He also announced that whoever sought asylum in the Ka'bah and in the house of Abū Sufyān should not be attacked.

Seeing that Abū Sufyān the chief persecutor of the Prophet had embraced Islam, the Makkans were left with no choice but to follow in the foot step of Abū Sufyān. They therefore did not resist the Prophet when he entered upon them. Hence, without any arm struggle or bloodshed whatever, Mecca after twenty years of resistance featuring series of severe persecutions and bloody battles, fell to the Muslims. Again, the Prophet rather than avenge the persecutions suffered from the hands of the Meccans as a result of which many of his followers including his own daughter Zaynab lost their lives, decided to pardon them all. This triumphant entry of the Prophet into his native city, Mecca, in 630 CE is referred to as *fat-hu Makkah* (Conquest of Mecca).

The first point of call was the Ka'bah, the Meccans' Shrine where over 360 idols were kept for worship. The Prophet went straight into the Ka'bah and cleansed it of all idols. The Prophet's *Mu'adhin* (caller to prayer), Bilāl climbed over the Ka'bah and proclaimed loud and clear, the '*Adhān* (call to prayer). That day marked the triumph of truth over falsehood; and monotheism over polytheism.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Relate the immediate causes of the conquest of Mecca and give a highlight of its events.

3.6 The Battle of Hunayn

The news of the conquest of Mecca spread in Arabia like bush fire. It was a shock to some of the neighboring cities. A particular Meccan tribe namely the Hawāzin could not believe it. They therefore resolved to resist it. They assembled their men and tackled the Muslims near the valley of Hunayn. The battle of Hunayn as it is referred to in Islamic history was a fierce one. The Muslims relying on their numeric strength had taught that the Hawāzin would be defeated in no time but that was not to be the case as the Hawāzin fought with desperate courage. At last, the Muslims had upper hand and dispersed them. Reference is made to this battle in the *Qur'ān* thus:

Truly, Allah has given you victory on many battlefields, and on the day of Hunayn [battle] when you rejoice at your great number, but it availed you naught and the earth, vast as it is, was straitened for you, then you turned back in flight. Then Allah did send down His reassurance on the Messenger, and on the believers, and sent down forces [angels] which you saw not, and punished the disbelievers. Such is the recompense of disbelievers. [Q9:25-26]

Another city that equally attempted to resist the Muslims' victory over Mecca was Tā'if. You will recall the cruel treatment, which the people of Tā'if in 619 CE meted to the Prophet when he sought asylum with them following the severe persecutions he suffered in the hands of the Meccans. The Prophet, after quenching the Hawāzins' opposition turned to Tā'if and laid siege on the city and captured it.

The Prophet returned to Medina with his followers after the conquest of Mecca and successful quenching of the Hawāzin and Tā'if opposition. He now had time to engage himself with matters bordering on the organization of the Islamic commonwealth.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Relate the incident referred to in Q.9:25-26

3.7 The *Tabūk* expedition

Meanwhile, the news of the victory of Islam over Arabia had reached the Romans and the Christians of Syria who decided to stop the spread of Islam and possibly exterminate it. They therefore gathered a large army to march against Medina, the headquarters of Islam. When the Prophet heard about the plan, he quickly advanced with 40,000 men to oppose the Roman invasion of Medina. The Romans were, however,

startled at the approach of such a large force. Hence, they retreated and did not risk any military engagement. The Prophet encamped at Tabūk a few days and entered into a treaty with the Christian Prince of Aylah and some Jewish tribes of Tabūk. With the treaty, the tribes would enjoy the Muslims protection while they, in turn, would pay a tax known as *jizyah*.

‘The Tabūk expedition was a remarkable point in the early expansion of Islamic influence.’ Justify this statement.

3.8 The Year of Delegations

After the Tabūk expedition, the Prophet returned with his followers to Medina. The news about the victories of Islam, its monotheistic nature and its high moral standard continued to spread within and outside Arabia as a result of which many tribes voluntarily decided to embrace it. The year 631 C.E known in Islamic history as *‘Āmu ’l- Wufūd* (Year of Delegations) witnessed delegations from the various tribes of Arabia and rulers of ‘Umān, Hadramawt and Yemen. The delegates stayed in Madinah for as long as they wished learning about the precepts of Islam. They afterwards returned to their people and taught them what they had learnt of the teachings of Islam while in Madinah.

Thus, the conquest of Mecca, Tā’if and Hawāzin and the reception of delegations from various tribes of Arabia and beyond really marked the accomplishment of the Prophet's mission and the fulfillment of Allah’s promise as contained in *Sūratu ’n-Nasr* thus:

When comes the Help of Allah and the conquest (of Makkah) and you see that the people enter Allah’s Religion in crowds. So glorify the praises of your Lord, and ask for His Forgiveness. Verily, He is the One Who accepts the repentance and forgives. (Q.110).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Explain clearly the victory and conquest referred to in the *Qur’ān* Chapter 110, Verse 1.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The agreement signed by the Prophet with the Meccans was really a victory of diplomacy for the early Islamic mission. It prepared ground for the eventual triumph of Islam over all its adversaries. The peace truce gave the Prophet ample opportunity to consolidate and to also extend his mission to foreign cities and their rulers. Trust and betrayal of

trust are mutual opposites. While the Muslims kept to the dictates of the truce signed with the Meccans in 628C.E at Hudaibiyyah, the pagans of Mecca decided to break the truce just after two years it was signed. This betrayal eventually led to their downfall while the Muslims for being trustworthy enjoyed Allah's support and became triumphant. The triumph was so firm that combined forces of the enemies could not stop it.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have dealt with the fealty, which the Muslims made to Prophet Muhammad at Hudaibiyyah. We have also discussed the content and the significance of the treaty signed by the Prophet and the Meccans at the plain of Hudaibiyyah. In the unit, we equally mentioned the efforts of the Prophet at extending his mission to foreign rulers and how their hostilities to the Prophet's emissaries resulted in the battle of Mu'ta. Equally, we have analyzed how the Meccans betrayed the truce they signed with the Muslims. We have also dealt with how the Muslim overran the city of Mecca. We have also discussed in the unit how some neighboring cities attempted to stop the conquest but failed. We have equally treated you to how people voluntary trooped into Islam by sending delegations to Madinah to learn about the precepts of Islam.

6.0 TUTOR- MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Trace the events that led to the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah. Give a summary of the content of the treaty of Hudaibiyyah and show the importance of the treaty to the success of the Prophet's mission.

Write notes on

- (1) the Conquest of Mecca.
- (2) the Tabūk expedition
- (3) Major events of the Year of Delegation.

7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 5 THE PROPHET'S DIPLOMATIC INGENUITY

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Diplomatic ingenuity displayed before and during the *Hijrah*
 - 3.2 Diplomatic ingenuity during the Hdaybiyyah
 - 3.3 Diplomatic ingenuity during the conquest of Mecca
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will learn something about the Prophets diplomatic ingenuity as displayed before and during the *hijrah* when he was to decide for his followers where to migrate to. You will also learn about the diplomatic ingenuity he displayed when he got to Madinah in his dealings with the Jews and Christians that he met there. The Prophet equally displayed high diplomatic ingenuity at Hdaybiyyah and during the conquest of Mecca. All these are the focus of this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

- Describe the Prophet's diplomatic ingenuity when he was in Mecca, during the *hijrah*, at Hdaybiyyah and during the conquest of Mecca.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Diplomatic Ingenuity before and during *Hijrah*

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was aided greatly by his political and diplomatic ingenuity, which he aptly applied in his dealings with the people he was sent to deliver the message of Islam to. The diplomacy employed by the Prophet in dealing with his friends and foes; in directing the affairs of the Muslim community; and in relating with the polytheists of Mecca and the Jewish and Christian tribes of Madinah and other neighboring towns really portrays Muhammad as a man of high diplomatic ingenuity.

The ingenuity was manifestly displayed in the manner in which he preached in Mecca. You will recall that at the early stage of his mission in Mecca, the down-trodden were the mostly attracted; only few wealthy ones like Abū Bakr and ʿUthmān became his followers. Knowing fully well that the conversion of any of the Meccan aristocrats to Islam will not only result in the conversion of a large number of the followers of such great man, but will equally help in reducing their opposition and persecution of his followers, the Prophet made subtle but bold efforts to win over such great men like Ibn Mughīrah to the side of Islam.

When eventually the Prophet was granted the leave to migrate from Mecca, he displayed diplomacy in arranging for the migration of his persecuted followers and in choosing for them the place of exile. Conscious of his responsibility for the protection of his followers who were then still relatively few and incapable of self-defense, he directed that a large number of them should leave Mecca. But where could they go and be safe from the Meccans' persecution? Not within the Arabian peninsular where the Quraysh were influential! So, he chose Abyssinia which was outside the Meccans' area of considerable influence and which was being ruled by a "just" king who was himself not an idol worshipper but a follower of a revealed religion i.e. Christianity.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

To what extent did the Prophet Muhammad employed diplomacy during the Meccan period of his mission?

3.2 Diplomatic Ingenuity on Arrival in Medina

On arrival in Medina, the Prophet realizing the danger in internal disintegration displayed high political and diplomatic ingenuity by attempting to reconcile the warring factions in Medina. Equally, in order to lessen the sufferings of his followers who had migrated with him from Mecca forfeiting their properties to the Meccans, he joined them in religious brotherhood with their Medinan brothers. Another very important diplomatic ingenuity displayed by the Prophet was the writing of the Medinan Charter earlier treated with you in Module 3 Unit 2. Certain provisions in Charter deal with issues bothering on the welfare of the non -Muslims living in the Islamic State of Medina. This ingenuity of the Prophet really accounted for the co-operation that Islam and the Muslims enjoyed especially from the Medinan Christians.

Apart from the above instances, there were many other occasions especially in the Medinan period of the Prophet's mission when he demonstrated organizational, military, or diplomatic ingenuity. But on no occasion did he display any ingenuity greater than that which he

demonstrated in connection with what was later to be known as the Truce or Accord of al-Hudaybiyyah.

In preparing for the *Hajj*, which would have given him the first opportunity to enter Mecca years after the *hijrah*, the Prophet (SAW) invited only Muslims to perform the rites with him, but also whoever wished to do so among the non-Muslim Arabs outside of Mecca. That was indeed a diplomatic strategy. He most probably knew that the Meccans were likely to resist his entry into the city; by ensuring that non-Muslim Arabs from tribes other than the Quraysh were in his entourage, he succeeded in subtly dissuading those other tribes from teaming up with the Quraysh in opposing the entry of the Muslims to Mecca.

Moreover, he thus demonstrated to those other Arabs that the Muslims were not out to destroy what had become the heritage of the Arabs such as the pilgrimage; or their economy which depended to a large extent on the sacredness of the Ka'bah as well as on the *Hajj*. That was another practical step towards ensuring that the Muslims were not isolated from the other Arabs by the Quraysh, it was the latter that were likely to be isolated from the generality of the Arabs if they prevented the Prophet (SAW) and his entourage from entering Mecca. So it would become increasingly clear to the non-Quraysh that it was not in their interest to team up with the Quraysh against the Muslims.

The Prophet (SAW) made it clear on leaving Medina for Mecca that he was going to perform the pilgrimage and not to give battle to the Quraysh. He made this peaceful intention of his known to all and sundry, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and assured those who asked him about it that he respected the sacredness of the holy month, the Ka'bah and its precincts. He established that peaceful intention by carrying no arms except those, which were normally carried by travelers, not fighters. Besides, he assured all that the message of Islam, which he had been commissioned to deliver was not that of violence but that of peace.

An effect of the Prophet's declaration of his peaceful intention was a division within the leadership of the Quraysh. While some of the leaders were of the opinion that the Prophet (SAW) and his entourage be forcibly refused entry and given the battle, others preferred allowing them entry into the city to perform the pilgrimage; yet another group opined that there be an accord between the Quraysh and the Prophet. Meanwhile, the Prophet kept admonishing his followers to exercise restraint and patience. But even at the time of negotiation, the Prophet did not disclose his real goal to anyone of his followers, not even to the closest of his Companions. Thus did he guard against the possibility of

the Quraysh getting to know it and reaching a consensus as to what should be their reaction.

You have learnt about the negotiation that took place between the Muslims and the Quraysh at Hudaibiyyah in Module 3 unit 4. It was during the negotiations between the Prophet (SAW) and Suhayl b. ʿAmr, chief negotiator for the Quraysh, and during the writing of the agreement that the Prophet (SAW) demonstrated an unequalled diplomatic feat. The demands which the Quraysh made sounded most unreasonable even to the closest Companions of the Prophet (SAW). The Muslims thought that the Quraysh had no right to prevent them from entering Mecca the outskirts of which they had actually reached. (al-Hudaibiyyah is situated on the outskirts of Mecca). Moreover, going back to Medina from Hudaibiyyah without performing the pilgrimage, they thought, would be a psychological defeat for the Muslims in the eyes of the Arabs and especially their detractors living in Madina. Worse still, the Muslims were not to spend more than three days in Mecca when they came back the following year. They would also be under obligation to carry no arms except their sword, which must be in their sheaths.

Moreover that the Muslims should send back to Mecca anyone who came over to them in Medina without the express permission of his or her Meccan patron; but, conversely, any Muslim who returned from Medina and joined the Meccan shall not be returned to Medina. These conditions were all apparently one-sided, certainly unfair and therefore unacceptable as far as the generality of the Muslims were concerned.

Yet the Prophet accepted them all! Being a foresighted leader, he had seen the implications of those conditions imposed by the Quraysh. The Prophet, having involved a number of non-Muslim non-Quraysh tribesmen in the attempt to perform the pilgrimage, the action of the Quraysh in turning back the pilgrims would enlist the sympathy of those other tribes for the Muslims rather than bring down the latter in the eyes of the tribes. As for the new converts who actually fled Mecca to join the Muslims but were to be sent back to Mecca, they would become, and became, a threat to the Meccans themselves as they could not return to Mecca; they were compelled by the circumstances to constitute themselves into a 'terrorist' group against the Quraysh trade caravans. Thus, the strategy of the Quraysh who had thought that such a term in the agreement would prevent further conversion to Islam in Mecca, failed. Rather, it turned out to be disadvantageous to them.

On the other hand, the Prophet (SAW) probably thought that there was no need to worry about anyone among the Muslims who might decide to return to Mecca thus demonstrating the weakness of his or her faith in

Islam. Moreover, he must have thought that had he rejected this term of the agreement, he would thus have contradicted the *Qur'ānic* claim that there is no compulsion in religion, that the supremacy of the Islamic faith is self-evident and that the acceptance of Islam is purely a matter of conviction. He thus demonstrated his confidence in the supremacy of Islam and his strong conviction that no true Muslim would ever go back to the polytheism of the Quraysh.

In view of the fact that the battles fought so far between the Quraysh and the Muslims were all at the instance of the former, one of the two terms of the agreement that the Prophet (SAW) would certainly regard as a great victory was that of ceasefire for ten years. He must have been worried by the insecurity, which the belligerence of the Meccans created for the Muslims and the cause of Islam. He must also have been bothered by the fact that the belligerence did not give him enough time to deal with the situation of internal insecurity created by the belligerence of the Jews towards the Muslims in and around Medina. The joy of this victory must have been reinforced in the Prophet's mind by the other term, which guaranteed each of the two parties the right to enter into alliance with any tribes or group that so wished.

The Prophet must also have seen these terms as providing a rare opportunity to preach Islam to those tribes who, hitherto must have been scared by the belligerence of the Quraysh towards the Muslims. He seized the opportunity to deal with the Jews of Khaybar, who had been engaged in incitements against the Muslims. Moreover, the breathing space as well as the alliance term allowed the Prophet (SAW) to receive delegations from far and near who came to make enquiries about Islam or to establish relations with Medina.

Conscious of the universality of his mission, the Prophet also seized the opportunity to send messages to the rulers of neighboring states such as Persia, Byzantium, Egypt and Abyssinia, inviting them to Islam.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE.

Identify some instances of good diplomacy employed by Prophet Muhammad during the early part of his mission in Medina. Mention the results of such instances.

3.3 Diplomatic Ingenuity at the Conquest of Mecca

All the above noted inherent advantages of the concessions given by the Prophet soon came by. The Quraysh realizing that as discussed in unit broke the truce thereby incurring the wrath of not only the Muslims but other non Muslims who were witnesses to truce at Hudaibiyyah,

Consequently, the Prophet (SAW) with his contingent marched on Mecca. However, he gave orders that there should be no bloodshed. To this end he adopted a diplomatic strategy, which proved successful. The leader of the Meccans, Abū Sufyān had come to meet him on the outskirts of Mecca and declared his acceptance of Islam. The Prophet took the opportunity to announce that whoever among the Meccans that entered the house of Abū Sufyān was guaranteed safety. There was a favorable response to the announcement obviously to the recognition, which the Prophet (SAW) thus accorded 'Abū Sufyān. This diplomatic strategy had the effect of reducing the Meccans' resistance to the barest minimum. Only a few skirmishes actually took place.

The Prophet adopted yet another diplomatic strategy which proved very effective when he assembled them, reminded them of the atrocities they had committed against him and the Muslims and then announced a general amnesty for them all. No doubt, that strategy must have impressed a large section of the Meccan population all of whom were soon to declare their faith in Islam out of their own volition, even though, obviously many had not eventually appreciated the values of the teachings of Islam: the conduct of the Prophet himself, coupled with the circumstances that led to the fall of Mecca.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The prophet was a great statesman who was able to put to the benefit of his mission and his follower his political and diplomatic ingenuity. The Prophet displayed high political and diplomatic ingenuity in his dealings with the Quraysh as well as the Jewish tribes of Medina, and religious leaders and rulers of empires that he had encounter with. As a result of his political and diplomatic ingenuity, he was able to endear himself to them and win converts and sympathizers for his religion, which hitherto to was maligned and treated with scornfulness.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt how the Prophet was able to endear himself to his adversaries and win their recognition and sympathy for his mission by displaying high level of political and diplomatic ingenuity. Of course, Allah has promised him victory and success, but a point that cannot be wished away is that his political and diplomatic ingenuity is one fount responsible for the success he was able to record in his mission.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give account of the diplomatic ingenuity displayed by the Messenger of Allah at Hdaybiyyah.
2. Prophet Muhammad was an exemplary man of diplomacy. Expatiate upon this point of view.

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MODULE 4 PROPHET MUHAMMAD – HIS TEACHINGS AND QUALITIES

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| Unit 1 | The farewell Message. |
| Unit 2 | Prophet Muhammad – A role model. |
| Unit 3 | Polemics on the celebration of the Prophet’s Birthday. |

UNIT 1 THE FAREWELL MESSAGE

CONTENTS

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| 3.1 | The Farewell Message |
| 3.2 | The Lessons contained in the Farewell Message |
| 4.0 | Conclusion |
| 5.0 | Summary |
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| 7.0 | References / Further Readings |

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will learn about the farewell pilgrimage performed by the Prophet. You will also learn about the last sermon he gave at the occasion and the lessons contained in it for Muslims throughout age.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Describe the farewell pilgrimage of the Prophet.
- State the lessons contained in his farewell message.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Farewell Message

All along, the Prophet had been going to Mecca for the lesser *Hajj* (*Umrah*). In the year 632 C. E., he decided to perform the proper *Hajj*. He set out with a large number of Muslims from Medina while many also joined them from among the Meccan Muslims. Halting at mount ^oArafah is a pillar of *Hajj* without which *Hajj* is invalid. It was on the day of ^oArafah which was the 9th day of Dhū ’l-Hijjah of 10 A.H. that the

Prophet addressed the Muslims who were there gathered. From the tone of the address, it was discernible that it was a farewell address. After praising and thanking Allah, the Prophet addressed the gathering thus:

“O people, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether, after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and take these words to those who could not be present here today.

“O people, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as Sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your Lord, and that He will indeed reckon your deeds. Allah has forbidden you to take usury (interest), therefore all interest obligation shall henceforth be waived. Your capital, however, is yours to keep. You will neither inflict nor suffer inequity. Allah has judged that there shall be no interest and that all the interest due to ‘Abbās ibn ‘Abdu ’l-Muṭṭalib shall henceforth be waived.”

Every right arising out of homicide in pre-Islamic days is henceforth waived and the first such right that I waive is that arising from the murder of Rabi‘ah ibn al-Hārith.

O men, the unbelievers indulge in tampering with the calendar in order to make permissible that which Allah forbade, and to forbid that which Allah has made permissible. With Allah the months are twelve in number. Four of them are holy, three of these are successive while Rajab occurs single between the months of Jumāda and Sha‘bān.

Beware of Satan, for the safety of your religion. He has lost all hope that he will ever be able to lead you astray in big things, so beware of following him in small things.

O people, it is true that you have certain rights with regard to your women, but they also have rights over you. Remember that you have taken them as your wives only under Allah’s trust and with His permission. If they abide by your right then to them belongs the right to be fed and clothed in kindness. Do treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. And it is your right that they do not make friends with any one of whom you do not approve, as well as never be unchaste.

O people, listen to me in earnest, worship Allah, say your five daily prayers (*Salāt*), fast during the months of Ramadān, and give your wealth in *Zakāt*. Perform *Hajj* if you can afford to.

All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over white except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim, which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly, do not therefore, do injustice to your-selves.

Remember, one day you will appear before Allah and answer for your needs. So beware, do not stray from the path of righteousness after I am gone.

O people, no prophet or apostle will come after me and no new faith will be born. Reason well, therefore, O people and understand words which I convey to you, I have left behind me two things, the *Qur'ān* and my example the *Sunnah* and if you follow these you will never go astray.

All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness O Allah that I have conveyed your message to your people.

3.2 The lessons contained in the farewell message

Many lessons are contained in the farewell sermon of the Prophet. Below are some of such lessons.

1. Instruction to proclaim the messages of Islam to others.
2. Sacredness of the life and properties of Muslims.
3. Justice in dealing with fellow men.
4. Realization of the fact that there is reckoning of deeds in the Hereafter.
5. Dealing in *Ribā* (interest) in whatever form is forbidding.
6. Re-emphasizing the sanctity of the four Holy months of *Rajab*, *Dhu 'l – Qa'dah*, *Dhu 'l-Hijjah* and *Muharram* in which wars are forbidden.
7. The need to be wary of the devil's plots.
8. Realization of the rights of women and not denying them such rights.

9. Discharge of duties toward Allah earnestly by the means of the pillars of Islam.
10. Equality and brotherhood of mankind and condemnation of racial discrimination.
11. Re -confirmation of Muhammad as the seal of all Prophets.
12. Holding tenaciously on the guidance contained in the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The Prophet had the premonition that soon he would be leaving his followers. It was therefore necessary to give them a parting message that would serve as guide for them and generations to come. Going through the content of the last sermon, you will agree that it is indeed a farewell message containing virtually all the guiding principles the Muslims need in running their individual and corporate lives.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have given you the background to the farewell message. We have equally quoted the text of the message and mentioned the lessons contained therein.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Enumerate the lessons contained in the Prophet Muhammed's farewell message.

7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READINGS.

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UNIT 2 PROPHET MUHAMMAD – A ROLE MODEL

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Prophet Muhammad in the eyes of Non Muslim writers
 - 3.2 Some outstanding qualities of the Holy Prophet Muhammad [SAW]
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References / Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Allah has declared in the *Qur'ān* that there is certainly in the Messenger of Allah a good example to follow for whoever hopes for the meeting with Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much (Q. 33:21). In another verse, He clearly states: “And verily, you [Muhammad] are on an exalted standard of character (Q. 68:4). Of course, Muhammad was born posthumously into a rotten society. A society bedeviled with all sorts of evils and criminal acts. He also became a complete orphan at a very tender age. This pathetic situation notwithstanding, Muhammad still imbibed the best of character while he exhibited the noblest behaviors. He was an embodiment of virtues. His trustworthiness earned him a nickname (*Al-Amīn*)- a title, which nobody before and after him has qualified to earn.

In this unit, you will learn about the noble character of the Prophet. You will also learn of some remarks made by non-Muslim writers about Muhammad.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Relate some of the remarkable comments made by non-Muslim writers on Muhammad.
- State and discuss of the noble characters of Prophet Muhammad.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Prophet Muhammad in the Eyes of Non Muslim Writers

In a book written by Michael Hart, a Christian, in which he selected one hundred people he considered to be influential in the history of the world, Muhammad is rated by him as the most influential man that had ever lived.

Part of the argument advanced by Hart is that Muhammad was responsible for both the theology of Islam and its main ethical and moral principles. And in addition, he played the key role in proselytizing for the new faith, and in establishing the religious practices of Islam.

Also, Jules Masserman, a United States psychoanalyst and professor at the Chicago University, stated the qualities that the greatest leader of all times must possess which according to him are that:

- (i) The leader must provide for the well-being of the led.
- (ii) The leader or would be leader must provide a social organization in which people feel relatively secure.
- (iii) The leader must provide his people with one set of beliefs.

With these standards, Masserman conclude thus:

“Perhaps the greatest leader of all times was Muhammad, who combined all three functions

George Benard Shaw also wrote about Muhammad thus: "I have studied him – the wonderful man – and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of humanity".

The above are few of the non-Muslim writers who have made positive remarks about Prophet Muhammad [S.A.W].

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

How does Prophet Muhammad appear in the mirror of some non-Muslim Writers.

3.2 Some Outstanding Qualities of the Holy Prophet Muhammad [SAW]

If the above are the submissions of non-Muslims on Muhammad, then, it is important that we enumerate and discuss briefly some outstanding qualities that earned him those remarkable comments.

- (i) **Leadership:** The leadership offered by the Prophet remains till today a model worthy of emulation. He led by example and was always conscious of the fact that leadership is a trust from God for which one will be accountable before Allah on the Day of Judgment. The Prophet exhibited all the traits of a model leader not only in the sphere of religion. Prophet Muhammad was also a perfect political and matrimonial leader. The prophet also handed down a principle that a leader should see himself as a servant of the led. The implication of this is that a leader should assume the position of leadership only to serve the people. He should not allow the position he occupies to get into his head and as such feels that he is superior to his subjects. Rather, he should see himself as their servant and must be ready to serve them at all times.
- (ii) **Firmness:** This is another quality that the Prophet exemplified. You will recall that right from the time he started preaching in Mecca till close to the time he died in Medina, the enemies of Islam did not allow him breathing space. You will remember the reference made in unit six about how the Meccans tried to bribe him with worldly things so that he might abandon his mission. Rather than succumb to them, he remained firm, resolute and focused. He never looked back.
- (iii) **Trustworthiness:** Truthfulness, honesty and trustworthiness are other outstanding qualities of Prophet Muhammad. Even as a child, he was truthful. And as a youth in the city of Mecca, he was known to be trustworthy as a result of which the people always kept their valuables with him. You will recall as mentioned in unit four that this attribute of trustworthiness was the consideration for his being nicknamed *al-Amīn* in the city of Mecca. The Prophet never betrayed the trust reposed in him. He never broke any truce he entered into even with the unbelievers. You will also recall how he and his followers kept religiously to the letters of the truce they signed with the Meccans at Hudaibiyyah whereas the Meccans, on the other hand, betrayed the treaty.
- (iv) **Justice:** Prophet Muhammad was a just ruler and a just leader. He forbade injustice and oppression. In his dealings with people, he never denied any one of his rights. He was always just. In the eyes of the Prophet, the poor and the rich are equal. He would not allow the poverty of the poor to prevent him from doing justice while he would also not allow the nobility of the noble to affect his judgment. To him, the strong and the weak are the same when it comes to obtaining justice.

Once, a woman of repute from the tribe of Makhzūm was arraigned before the Prophet for theft. The people there present recognizing her status tried to influence him so that she might be let off. The Prophet refused their plea and remarked: "Had she been Fātimah, my daughter that stole, I would have certainly cut off her hand". So the lady's hand was chopped off.

- (v) **Equality:** The Prophet believed strongly in equality of man. He once remarked that men are equal and the same like the teeth of a comb. The Prophet exemplified this in the way and manner he related with his followers among whom were blacks and slaves. He did not discriminate between the Arabs and the black or between the free-born and the slave. You should note that Bilāl, the Prophet's *Mu'adhin* [caller to prayer] was a freed slave and a black man. Once a companion reminded Bilāl that he was a son of a black woman. When the Prophet heard of it, he scolded the companion saying: "Do you abuse him on the blackness of his mother. Shame on you, you are indeed a man of the period of ignorance".

Based on the above submission, the Prophet condemned racism and regarded it as barbarism.

- (vi) **Selflessness:** This is another outstanding quality of Prophet Muhammad. The prophet was humble and selfless. He was not self assuming. Though he was the prophet and the leader, yet he ate and dined freely with his followers as if they were equals.

The humility of the Prophet was such that those who did not know him before will find it difficult to recognize him when in the midst of his followers. His humility would not allow him to take unilateral decisions on matters of general interest. He would always consult with his followers before taking such decisions. You will recall as mentioned in unit ten that the suggestion to dig a ditch round Medina was made by a Persian Muslim during consultation and was upheld by the Prophet.

- (vii) **Tolerance:** Though, some Orientalists in their writing try to distort historical facts by accusing the Prophet of religious intolerance. The truth is that such writers themselves are the ones guilty of the accusation. History bears witness to the high level of tolerance demonstrated by the Prophet in his dealings with the *dhimmi* (i.e. non-Muslims under the protection of Islam). He even issued a verdict in their respect thus: "Whoever hurts a *dhimmi* I shall be his complainant and for whosoever I am a complainant, I shall ask for his right on the Day of judgment".

The points to be noted here are that non-Muslims are allowed to live in the Islamic state and that they have rights which must not be trampled upon. You will recall the clauses in the Medina charter discussed in unit ten in which the rights of the Christians living in Medina are stated and well guaranteed.

The above are few of the noble characters of the Prophet which Muslim and non-Muslim leaders and the led are expected to emulate.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss some leadership qualities displayed by the Prophet Muhammad.

4.0 CONCLUSION

One fundamental problem noticeable in preachers of God's words and leaders of humanity is that their behavior often belies their sermons.

Prophet Muhammad had taught humanity through his exemplary life that nobility of character is an essential asset that every one must strive to acquire. The Prophet did not preach the words of Allah only by mouth, rather, he exemplified and even epitomized the messages. People like Abū Sufyān, Khālīd ibn Walīd and a host of many others did not embrace Islam solely on account of the Prophets preaching but because they were convinced of the noble character.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have cited some positive opinions expressed by some non-Muslim writers in recognition of the Prophet's noble characters while we have also enumerated and discussed some of such outstanding qualities with the view to drawing out lessons from them.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

“And verily, you [Muhammad] are on an exalted standard of character” (Q. 68:4). Substantiate this *Qur'ānic* exaltation of the Prophet Muhammad.

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UNIT 3 ***MAWLIDU 'N- NABIYY-* POLEMICS OVER ITS CELEBRATION**

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 *Mawlidu 'N- Nabiyy* : Its Meaning And Origin
 - 3.2 Its Celebration
 - 3.3 The Significance of *Eidu 'l – Mawlid*
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Celebration of Prophet Muhammad’s birthday (*mawlidu 'n- nabiyy*) is today a very common phenomenon among Muslims of every nation especially those Muslims who have affiliation with one *ṣūfi* Order or the other. There are however some others who on their own part vehemently criticize the celebration; dubbing it as an innovation (*bid'ah*). Yet some others do not condemn its celebration but its features. In this unit, you will learn about these polemics surrounding the celebration of the *mawlidu 'n -Nabiyy* (Birth of the Holy Prophet)

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Trace the origin of the celebration of *Mawlidu 'n- Nabiyy*
- State the argument of the proponents and the opponents of *Mawlidu 'n-Nabiyy*
- Discuss the significance of *Mawlidu 'n-Nabiyy*

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 *Mawlidu 'N- Nabiyy* : Its Meaning And Origin

The literal and original meaning of the word *Mawlid* is “a place or day of birth. *Al-mawlid an-nabawī*” therefore refers to the place or time of the birth of Prophet Muhammad. This is the only definition known to Muslims from the time of the Prophet. It was not until the beginning of the seventh century after *Hijrah* that the term took on another meaning and interpretation such as the gathering of people in mosques or homes

for the purpose of listening to specific recitations culminating in the story of the Prophet's birth. Prophet Muhammad (saw) according to many early writers, was born in the year of the Elephant (i.e 570 C.E). It is unanimously agreed upon that the birthday was Monday, the 12th of *Rabi' u 'l- Awwal* (the 3rd month of the Islamic lunar year).

Celebration of the birth of the Prophet was first introduced in the 7th century of Islam precisely in 625 A.H by King al-Muzaffar in the region of Mosul. The king, according to a source, gave a prize of one thousand gold dinars for a composition prepared for the occasion called *at-Tanwīr fi Mawliidi 'l-Bashīri 'n-Nadhīr*. The King was even reported to have prepared for one of his subsequent *mawlid*s a feast of 5,000 roasted sheep, 10,000 chickens, 10,000 bowls of cream and 30,000 dishes of sweets and that he personally joined the *ṣūfīs* in their dances. Soon, celebration of the *mawlid* became widespread especially among the *sufi* groups.

You will note from the above that the celebration of the Prophet's birthday is not traceable to the Prophet while it was also not practiced by the *Ṣahābah* (his companions), the *tābi'un* (their students) or the general body of Muslims before the seventh century after *Hijrah*. It is for this reason that some have therefore termed it a *bid'ah* (innovation), i.e. something introduced into Islam which had no precedent in its lawful traditions rooted in the *Qur'ān* and prophetic *Sunnah*.

3.2 Its Celebration

Nowadays in many Muslim countries, the day of birth, 12 *Rabi' u 'l- Awwal* of every Islamic lunar year is a national holiday dedicated to the celebration of the birth of the Holy Prophet. In recent times, the *mawlid* ceremony is no longer confined to the day or month of the Prophet's birth but is often extended till the approach of *Ramadān* (which is the 9th month of the Islamic lunar month).

It has however been observed that the celebration of the *mawlid* in many quarters today is often characterized by some forms of excesses, such as use of musical instruments, free and indiscriminate mixing between both sexes, extortion of people and in some cases, excessive praise of the *shuyūkh* of the *ṣūfī* orders and the Prophet in which certain divine characteristics are attributed to the Prophet in utter disregard for his warning:

“Do not praise me exceedingly as the Christians praised the son of Mary. I am only His servant, so say, the servant of Allah and His messenger.”

Be that as it may, there is however some other Muslim scholars who see nothing wrong in the celebration of *mawlid* so far those excesses are done away with. They argue that the celebration of *mawlidu 'n- Nabiyy* is an expression of peoples' sincere affection for the Prophet and for Islam and an opportunity to participate in righteous acts of supplication, invoking Allah's blessings upon the Prophet, repeating words of *dhikr* (Allah's remembrance) and hearing verses from the *Qur'ān*. It is also an opportunity to listen to the life story of the Prophet.

3.3 The Significance of *Eidu 'l – Mawlid*

As mentioned earlier, celebration of the Prophet's is now a common anniversary among the Muslims the world over. However, few are those who really understand its significance.

The significance of the *Mawlid* lies in the opportunity it affords the Muslims and indeed mankind, to reflect on the life-style and teachings of the Prophet who is the Muslims role model. As a role model for mankind generally, there is hardly any human situation that the Prophet did not find himself; and in all of them, he led good example worthy of emulation for whosoever finds himself in such situations. He was an orphan, an employee, a husband, a father, a friend, a victor and a vanquished in battles, a ruler, a judge and a statesman. In all these situations, the Prophet led an exemplary life. Here lies the significance in the celebration of his noble birth. It should be an occasion for Muslims to reflect on his life with the sole intention of emulating him and further committing themselves to Islam the chosen religion of God for humanity perfected by God through His Messenger, the Prophet Muhammad.

It is only by this means can the commemoration of the Prophet's birthday be made meaningful and worthwhile.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The anniversary of the birth of the Prophet is though celebrated today by Muslims the world over, yet it is not traceable to the time of the Prophet and his *Sahābah*. Historical records show that its origin dated back to the seventh century AH. While some scholars have dubbed it *bid'ah* (innovation) and condemned its celebration because of the excesses usually committed during its celebration, some others have adopted a rather liberal approach. Their argument is that even if the celebration is not traceable to the time of the Prophet and the *Sahābah*, the celebration affords the celebrants and indeed mankind an opportunity to reflect on the life-style and teachings of the Prophet whose birth is commemorated. It should however be noted that commemoration of his

birth will only become meaningful when the occasion is used for self-examination, with a view to finding out the extent to which we have made the Prophet (SAW) “an excellent exemplar” for ourselves as enjoined by Allah.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt about the literal meaning of *Mawlidu 'n-Nabiyy* and the one it later assumed. Equally, you have learnt about how its celebration began and the two divergent views expressed by Muslim scholars over its celebration. Finally, we have discussed in this unit the significance of *Mawlidu 'n-Nabiyy* celebration.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Give the literal meaning of *Mawlidu 'n-Nabiyy* and trace the origin of its celebration.
2. Examine the views of scholars on the celebration of *Mawlidu 'n-Nabiyy*.
3. Discuss the significance of *Mawlidu 'n-Nabiyy* celebration.

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