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SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

COURSE CODE:SL231 INTRODUCTION TO THE *SHARĪ'AH*

COURSE TITLE:INTRODUCTION TO THE *SHARĪ'AH*



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

COURSE CODE / TITLE: ISL231 INTRODUCTION TO THE *SHARĪAH*

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MODULE I

Unit 1: Meaning and Importance of the *Sharīʿah*.

Unit 2: Concept and Scope of the *Sharīʿah*.

Unit 3: Relation between Islam, *Sharīʿah* and *Fiqh*.

Unit 4: Pre-Islamic Arab customs and reforms introduced by Islam.

UNIT I: MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF *SHARĪʿAH*

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- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
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 - 3.1 The lexical significance of the “*Sharīʿah*”
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Islamic Law, just like any other legal system, has technical terms and terminologies some of which it shares with some other legal systems while others are peculiar to it. In this Unit, attempts will be made to explain *Sharīʿah* as a word in Arabic and a technical term. Light will also be shed on its importance as the body of the rules and regulations guiding the practice of Islam not only as a religion but as a complete way of life. Your attention will be drawn as well to the importance of the *Sharīʿah* in the life of individual Muslims and the society at large.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of studying this Unit, you are expected to be able to:

- Explain both the lexical and technical significance of *Sharīʿah*.
- Relate the importance of the *Sharīʿah* in the life of Muslims.
- Discuss the indispensable roles the *Sharīʿah* plays in the practice of Islam as a religion

3.0 MAIN CONTENTS

3.1 The lexical significance of “*Sharīʿah*”

The word *Sharīʿah* (شَرِيعَة) is from the three letter verb *sharaʿa* (شَرَعَ) which, among other things, signifies “to begin (to do)”, “to collect water”, “to be close to the road”, “to appear manifestly”, “to prescribe”, “to lay down a law”, “to legislate” just to mention a few. *Sharīʿah*, therefore, means a water hole, a drinking place, “the road to water” or “a place where one can get water directly”. (Cowan ed. 1974)

Look closely at the various connotations of the word “*Sharīʿah*” as used in Arabic for communication in everyday language as shown above. Is there any way you can relate them to the Islamic Law? Let us narrow down the various shades of the meaning to “a place where one can get water directly”. In short, this means a regular source of water where there is assurance of regular supplies any time without any let or hindrance.

The meaning above is applicable to the use of the word “*Sharīʿah*” for the Islamic Law. In the first instance, consider the importance of water as the source of life and its necessity to sustain life. You know that every living being - human, animal or plant - cannot do without water to keep on living. The meaning is applicable to the Islamic Law because it is indispensable in the life of man to enable him to achieve the purpose of his existence in this world and in the hereafter.

For water to sustain life, it must be free from pollution and mixture with substances dangerous to life. This accounts for the reason why people are educated on the importance of drinking only neat and safe water. Contaminated water leads to infections some of which may even claim one’s life. In the same sense, the Islamic Law is kept sacrosanct, pure and undiluted. It is not tampered with or fabricated. As such, the *Qur’ān* which is the primary source of the Law is jealously protected against such pollution (*Qur’ān* 41: 42). Have you ever heard of any old or new edition of the *Qur’ān*?

Let us look into the word “*Sharīʿah*” meaning “the road”. This meaning is significant in the sense that it is widely used in Arab countries as “*Shāriʿ*” to mean “Road” or “Street” especially a major one in the city. In this sense, *Sharīʿah* or the Islamic Law is the way to reach unto Almighty Allah by living one’s life according to His guidance and directives. Of course, there is no being that has the right, according to Islam, to make laws for man because Allah alone is the Creator of the universe and man whom He has made His representative on earth. He alone knows the purpose for the creation, the way to achieve it and the specific roles expected of man in that respect.

The purpose for the creation is to prove the existence of the Creator, Almighty Allah, so that all creatures will worship Him in recognition and appreciation of His divine attributes (*Qur’ān* 51:56). The way to achieve the purpose is to follow the way He has recommended in form of the *Sharīʿah*. Failure to keep to it leads one astray (*Qur’ān* 3:153). The general principle of maintaining law and order and avoidance of chaos and corruption constitutes the role expected of man (*Qur’ān* 3:110). Thus, the way is the only need of man to lead a successful life in this world and achieve felicity in the life after death. Yielding to the temptation by seeking a short cut is to succumb to the negative influence of Satan and forfeiting the glory and pleasure of being obedient to

Almighty Allah. Being guided to the straight way and keeping to it is so important that every Muslim makes supplication to that effect at least seventeen times a day when reciting *Suratu'l Fātihah* in his/her *Salāt* (Abdu-Raheem: 2009).

Self Assessment Exercise

- Elaborate on the lexical meaning of the word “*Sharī'ah*”.

3.2 The Technical Definition of the Term “*Sharī'ah*”

Sharī'ah has been defined by many scholars in various ways. Let us consider the following definitions bearing similarities and differences between them in mind:

The *Sharī'ah* is the Divine Law by virtue of accepting which a person becomes a Muslim... It is the embodiment of the Divine Will in terms of specific teachings whose acceptance and application guarantees man a harmonious life in this world and felicity in the hereafter (Naşr, 1972:93).

Sharī'ah is the path not only leading into Allah, the Most High, but the path believed by all Muslims to be the path shown by Allah, the Creator Himself, through His Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). In Islam, Allah alone is the sovereign and it is He who has the right to ordain a path for the guidance of mankind. (Doi, 1404 A.H/1984:3).

The word *Sharī'ah* is used in the *Qur'ān* itself. (Then We put thee on the right way of religion: so follow it... (*Qur'ān* 45:18) The religion or the *Sharī'ah* given by God is the same in essence, as revealed, for example, to Noah, Abraham, Moses or Jesus, or to Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam. (Qadri, 1986:15).

A law or institution prescribed by God, the right way or mode of action (Penrise 1976, 15).

Sharī'ah (شريعة *Sharī'ah*) is the body of Islamic religious law. The term means “way” or “path” to the water source. It is the legal framework within which the public and private aspects of life are regulated for those living in a legal system based on Islamic principles of jurisprudence and for Muslims living outside the domain. *Sharī'ah* deals with many aspects of day-to-day life including politics, economics, banking, business, contracts,

family, sexuality, hygiene and social issues. (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia [Http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sharia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sharia). (Retrieved Wednesday 22/7/09)

Muslim or Islamic law, both civil and criminal justice as well as regulating individual conduct both personal and moral. The custom-based body of law is based on the Koran and the religion of Islam. Because, by definition, Muslim States are theocracies, religious texts are law, the latter distinguished by Islam and Muslims in their application, as Sharia or Sharia law. ([http://www.duhaine.org/Legal Dictionary/s/Sharia](http://www.duhaine.org/LegalDictionary/s/Sharia)) (Retrieved Wednesday, 22/7/09).

If you look closely at the definitions given above, you will find out that they have certain things in common. The features common to them include the following.

- i. **Divine source of the law:** They all agree that the *Sharī'ah* is based on the *Qur'ān* as revealed by Almighty Allah to Prophet Muhammad, (P.B.U.H.) The *Sharī'ah* is not therefore the product of any person or group of persons. It is from Allah, the Creator of man and Author of the *Qur'ān*, the fountainhead of the Islamic Law.
- ii. **Comprehensiveness of the law:** The definitions identify the fact that the *Sharī'ah* covers all aspects of life without leaving any area untouched. It provides guidance on the private and public, spiritual and material aspects of life. With this, Muslims are expected to live the whole life bearing the divine guidance in mind. The *Sharī'ah* recognizes no dichotomy between moral and legal aspects of life.
- iii. **Balancing the pleasure of this life with that of the hereafter:** The definitions largely acknowledge the fact that the ultimate goal of the *Sharī'ah* is to enable Muslims to strike a balance between life in this world and life after death. This is based on the teaching of Islam that there is life after death during which the results of all deeds in this world will be seen. The righteous will be admitted into *Al-Jannah* (Paradise) while the evil-doers will be condemned to *An-Nār* (the Hell Fire).
- **Allah alone has the authority to make law:** The definitions stipulate that it is the teaching of Islam that Allah alone has the right to make law for man. This is based on the fact He is the sole Creator and Sustainer of the world as well as every creature in it including man. He knows everything. It is this perfect knowledge He uses to provide comprehensive guidance for man to live successfully and happily.
- **The need to submit oneself to the law:** Since the *Sharī'ah* extends beyond inter-personal activities to cover the private life, it is beyond the power of any law-enforcement agent to enforce it *in toto*. It is every individual that readily submits and makes his mind to live according to the law. This is in view of the personal

realization of the importance and effectiveness of the *Sharī'ah* in guaranteeing felicity and joy for him in this world and in the hereafter.

Now that you have an idea of the meaning of “*Sharī'ah*” both as an ordinary word and a technical term, let us consider its importance in the life of Muslims as far as the practice of Islam is concerned.

Self Assessment Exercise

- Give a detailed explanation of the terminology “*Sharī'ah*”

3.3 Importance of the *Sharī'ah*

The *Sharī'ah* is so interwoven with Islam in such a way that you cannot talk of one without relating it to the other. Islam is the house which one has to enter to attain prosperity, salvation, protection and more importantly, the pleasure of Almighty Allah who has brought one to life for a purpose. The *Sharī'ah* is the only road that leads to the house. Any other path leads one astray and deprives one of the beautiful things one is going to attain in the house. Without the road, you cannot get access to the house, and without the house in mind, there is no need or motivation to follow the road. Thus, both the road and the house, (i.e. Islam and the *Sharī'ah*) are important and indispensable for man's success in this world and in the hereafter.

The following points account for the importance of the *Sharī'ah* in the life of Muslims:

i. Prescription in the *Qur'ān*:

Many verses of the *Qur'ān* emphasize the importance of the *Sharī'ah* for the practice of Islam. Some of them are as follows:

And now have We set you (O Muhammad) on a clear road (*Sharī'ah*) of our commandment; so follow it, and follow not the whims of those who know not.

(*Qur'ān* 45:18)

Lo! We reveal unto you the scripture (the *Qur'ān*) with the truth, that you may judge between mankind by that which Allah showed you. And be not you a pleader for the treacherous.

(*Qur'ān* 4:105)

Lo! We did reveal Torah, wherein is guidance and a light, by which the Prophets who surrendered (unto Allah) judged the Jews and the rabbis and the priests (judged) by such of Allah's scripture as they were bidden to observe, and thereunto were they witnesses. So fear not mankind, but fear Me. And barter not My revelations for a little gain. Whoso judged not by that which Allah has revealed:

such are disbelievers ... such are wrong-doers ... such are evil-livers.

(*Qur'ān* 5:44-47)

And it becomes not a believing man or a believing woman, when Allah and His messenger have decided an affair (for them), that they should (after that) claim any say in their affair; and whose is rebellious to Allah and His messenger, he verily goes astray in error manifest.

(*Qur'ān* 33:36)

But say, by thy Lord, they will not believe (in truth) until they make you judge of what is in dispute between them and find within themselves no dislike of that which you decide, and submit with full submission.

(*Qur'ān* 4:65)

The first quotation from the *Qur'ān* above gives the information that it was Allah that revealed the *Sharī'ah* to Prophet Muhammad to implement and that he should avoid replacing it with any other system that people who know far less than Allah may fabricate or sponsor. The second quotation also affirms the divine source of the *Sharī'ah* and goes further to mention that it is for the purpose of guiding people and administering all their affairs in accordance with the will of Almighty Allah.

The third quotation establishes the fact that the *Sharī'ah* as revealed to Prophet Muhammad (P.B.O.H.) is a continuation of the same code revealed to the previous Prophets especially those sent to the Jews. Then the stern warning follows against failure to put the *Sharī'ah* to practice in private and public life for whatever reason. Persons or groups who fail to comply with this injunction are condemned as (*Kāfirūn*) “evil doers” (*Zālimūn*) “wrong-doers” and (*Fāsiqūn*) sinners. The last two quotations stipulate that no Muslim has any right to take chances with the *Sharī'ah* by deliberately refusing to obey and act according to it. Any person who falls into this mistake has gone outside the fold of Islam. He is a rebel against Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of the world.

Self Assessment Exercise

- Relate the importance of the *Sharī'ah* in Islam.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Sharī'ah as an Arabic word means the place where water is sourced or the road or path to it. As water is indispensable to life, so also the *Sharī'ah* is necessary to enable man to live a fulfilled life. In its technical sense, the *Sharī'ah* is the code of conduct covering the legal as well as other aspects of man's life which Allah revealed as guidance to make man achieve felicity in this world and in the hereafter. The *Qur'ān* lays emphasis on the importance of the *Sharī'ah*. It commands the Prophet and his

followers to comply with it, using it to judge cases of disagreement among them. It gives a stern warning against failure or refusal to keep to the law as instructed in the *Qur'ān* and the great danger of failure or refusal to keep the commandment of Allah in this regard. Those who are guilty of this face the risk of losing their identity as Muslims.

5.0 Summary

This Unit defines *Sharī'ah* as a word in Arabic Language and a technical term standing for the Islamic Law. It also gives a comprehensive discussion of the importance of putting the *Sharī'ah* to practice in one's life as prescribed in the *Qur'ān* and the great danger of failure or refusal to keep the commandment of Allah in this regard.

Tutor Marked Assignment

- Elaborate on the terminology *Sharī'ah*.
- Based on the relevant quotations from the *Qur'ān*, discuss the importance of the *Sharī'ah*.

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UNIT 2: CONCEPT AND SCOPE OF *SHARĪAH*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The concept and scope of law as applicable to the *Sharī'ah* are different from those of other legal systems in many areas. In this Unit, you are to learn the characteristics of the *Sharī'ah* as conceived in Islam and the various aspects of life it covers. Your attention will be drawn to experiences in the contemporary life in Nigeria to drive home the points discussed.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit, you are expected to be able to:

- Discuss the concept and scope of the *Sharī'ah*
- Differentiate between the *Sharī'ah* and other legal systems with particular reference to their areas of concept and scope.
- Establish the fact that the *Sharī'ah* cannot be separated from Islam in any aspect of life.

3.0 MAIN CONTENTS

3.1 The Concept of the *Sharī'ah*

Sharī'ah, the Islamic law, has some distinctive features that clearly differentiate it from other legal system known to man. Such features are as follows:

i. A complete or total code of conduct

The *Sharī'ah* covers, as said earlier, all aspects of man's life. It regulates his religious, moral, spiritual, social, economic, political and intellectual activities. It provides guidelines on what to do in any aspect of life such as when and how to pray, trade or sleep. The mundane and spiritual aspects of life as well as other issues relating to them are taken as a single unit. It has regulations on one's relationship with one's parents, wife, children, brothers and sisters. It touches on moral questions such as truthfulness, sincerity, good neighbourliness, courage and love. It tells Muslims what to do to earn their livelihood legitimately with adequate attention given to lawful and

unlawful enterprises such as hoarding, interest, bribery and corruption. Politics and issues relating to it are well articulated in such a way that every Muslim has enough information to guide him to succeed if he has chosen politics as his career. All this shows conclusively that the *Sharī'ah* takes the totality of man's life as a single unit with the consciousness of Allah serving as the foundation permeating everything he does. The question of dividing man's life into the spiritual or moral aspects under the aegis of religion and the socio-political aspect under the mundane authority is not accommodated in Islam.

ii. Perfection

Man is naturally imperfect. That is why everything he does cannot be perfect. This explains why laws are reviewed, repealed or amended all over the world. The case of the *Sharī'ah* is different. It originated from Allah, the Perfect, and there is no doubt whatsoever that it is perfect. The limitedness of man's knowledge does not, at times, allow him to understand and appreciate the lofty aims of the *Sharī'ah*. This makes some people criticize certain Islamic criminal laws as being too harsh. The laws are not too harsh. They are just realistic and result-oriented. The tendency is often to suggest or even attempt to amend the Law so as to make it conform to man's wishes. This is absolutely wrong because of its negative effects on the effectiveness of the Law to achieve its purpose which is to make man conform to the divine legislation instead of making the Law conform to his wishes. Some people criticize the *Sharī'ah* criminal provisions on stealing and adultery as being too harsh but none of their alternatives has been able to check the menace of these sinful and criminal acts which now threaten the existence of man itself. Cases of theft and infidelity are on the increase, assuming more alarming proportions with each day passing. The situation is as bad as this owing mainly to the undue emphasis on compassion to criminals with little or no attention given to the victims of their iniquities. The only way out is to adopt the perfect code of conduct which has been proved to be effective in solving these problems and others faced by man.

iii. A means of integrating man's activities into a single unit:

The human body is made up of many component parts such as blood, water, flesh, bone and sense organs. Man's actions result from various feelings that may be classified as animalistic, sentimental, rational or spiritual. When man does anything that may satisfy his immediate urge without thinking of the long-term effects, he is said to be acting according to his low or animal desires. In other words, he is behaving like an animal. It may happen also that one becomes angry, moody, defiant or unruly without any apparent reason. All these kinds of behaviour affect man in one way or the other and may present him as being inconsistent and unpredictable. The *Sharī'ah* is a sure way of avoiding this unfortunate situation of behavioural disequilibrium. It integrates all human actions into the spiritual unity which enables him to have a firm control over his passions and base feelings. The ultimate aim is to make man not to grieve when in adversity nor exult in success as enunciated in the *Qur'ān* 57:23.

The importance of the noble role of the *Sharī'ah* in man's life as mentioned above cannot be over-emphasized. To explain this further, let me draw your attention to the various arms of Government which, to some extent, can be likened to the various parts of the body. Let us take the issue of alcohol consumption for instance. The Ministry of Finance, in an effort to increase the State revenues, takes steps to encourage breweries to increase production. Ministry of Health and Social Development calls for a reduction in the production and consumption of alcohol in view of the adverse effects on the citizens. The Road Safety Corps enforces the legislation against selling alcohol in motor parks and petrol filling stations and forbids drivers to drink, at least, while driving or about to drive. Advertisers, Chambers of Commerce and Trade and distributors of beer see such steps as counter-productive and un-economical. This conflict of interests is certainly not in the interest of the Government and citizens as it brings about confusion and inconsistency in the public life. Hardly can such Government make any headway in curbing the consumption of alcohol or any other social problem for that matter. The same thing happens in the case of man. Uniformity of thought brings about consistency in action. Thus, for instance, the virtues of selflessness and compassion as demanded by the *Sharī'ah* influence the domestic, social, economic and political activities of Muslims. He is therefore seen as an epitome of the ideals of the *Sharī'ah* as a member of "the best community ever raised for mankind" (*Qur'ān* 3:110).

iv. Allah's blue-print for Man

Allah is the Creator of the world and everything in it. All this creation, as far as Islam is concerned, is with a purpose. In the case of man, the *Qur'ān* specifically mentions that he has been created solely for the purpose of worshipping Allah as His vicegerent on earth (*Qur'ān* 51: 56-58). Unless this purpose is explained and the way to achieve it is clearly enunciated with necessary guidance, man will find himself in confusion and frustration. To avoid this unfortunate situation, Allah, out of His infinite mercy and grace, has revealed the *Sharī'ah* explaining the purpose and providing guidance in detail to achieve it. Allah's unique position as Creator and Law – Giver enables Him to put everything man needs in consideration to achieve success, not only here but also in the life to come.

v. A veritable means of guaranteeing felicity for man

Man's life, devoid of happiness, success and satisfaction is miserable. This accounts, to a large extent, for the reasons why many people commit suicide out of frustration. Islam has adequate guidelines in form of the *Sharī'ah* to ensure that man is happy throughout his life. In terms of health, for example, the *Sharī'ah* tells him what to do to avoid diseases. It compels him to observe the rules of hygiene in eating, drinking, social, political, economic, religious and other activities. All things being equal, any person who allows the *Sharī'ah* to guide him should be contented and happy even if he does not have much wealth. On the other hand, it forbids all forms of exploitation such as interest, cheating, dishonesty and theft. Politically, it explains that leadership positions belong exclusively to Allah and He bestows them on and withholds them from whomsoever He wishes. Furthermore, any person who holds any leadership position does so as a trustee for which he is accountable to Allah. Thus, politics is not a do-or-

die affair according to the *Sharī'ah*. Any person who avails himself of these provisions not minding the unfavourable circumstances that usually prevail will be happy, contented and prosperous.

vi. Universal

Unlike any other legal system in the world, the *Sharī'ah* is designed for all times and places. It does not have any limitation of time and place. Its provisions are in such a way that they can easily be adapted to meet any exigency. This is due to the fact that reasons that usually necessitate restricting other laws to a particular time or place do not apply to the *Sharī'ah*. Allah, its Sole Legislator is everywhere at all times. The question of not taking into consideration future occurrences and the peculiarities of geographical locations does not arise at all. Although geographical locations and socio-linguistic differences may mark out one person from another, the fact remains that man is essentially the same all over the world. Enhanced communication and interaction between various peoples in the fields of education, commerce, sports, just to mention a few, have brought them closer and improved mutual understanding between them. The general impression so far is that the basic needs of man as well as his yearnings are largely the same. It is in view of this fact that the integration of members of the Muslim community which is world-wide under the authority of the *Sharī'ah* should be understood. The *Sharī'ah*, therefore transcends tribal or racial boundaries to cover the various parts of the world.

Self Assessment Exercise

- **Discuss the concept of *Sharī'ah* in some details.**

3.2 The Scope of the *Sharī'ah*

As Islam is not only a religion but a complete way of life, so also the *Sharī'ah* covers the whole of man's life. The following are some of the various aspects of life covered by the *Sharī'ah*.

i. Religious

The relationship between man and his Creator, Allah, receives adequate attention in the *Sharī'ah*. Two major aspects of the Law – ‘*Aqīdah* (Creed) and ‘*Ibādāt* (Worship or Acts of Worship) deal with this. The ‘*Aqīdah* is mainly on the Articles of Faith constituting the first Fundamental Pillar of Islam. It consists of belief in Allah, Angels, Divine Scriptures, Prophets, Life After Death and Destiny. All these are to give man a proper orientation and to lay a solid foundation, psychologically, for all his actions. The consciousness of Allah, thus, permeates everything he does. The fear of God, as commonly said, is the beginning of wisdom.

The aspect of ‘*Ibādāt* covers the other four Pillars of Islam which are practical forms of worship. They are the institutions of *Salāt* (Ritual Prayer) *Zakāt* (Obligatory Charity) *Sawm* (Fasting in the month of Ramadān) and *Hajj* (Holy Pilgrimage). The *Sharī'ah* gives the details of how each of these should be performed and what should be

avoided in doing so. As they are not empty rituals or meaningless physical exercises, their relevance to life in terms of the influence they exert on reforming and developing character is emphasized. In fact, failure to allow them to influence one positively in practical life attracts the wrath of Allah. *Qur'ān* 107:4-7, for instance, says:

Woe unto those who observe *Salāt*,
Who are heedless of their Prayer
Who would be seen (at worship)
Yet refuse acts of kindness.

Salāt is meant to inculcate the consciousness of Allah at all times in the mind of the worshipper. Bearing Allah always in mind will encourage one to be virtuous, righteous and self-restrained. This is because one knows that Allah is always present, witnessing all acts and deeds to give appropriate rewards on the Last Day. With this at the back of one's mind, one is constantly protected from committing acts of lewdness, indecency, iniquity and immorality as said in the *Qur'ān* 29:45. Owing to the various advantages derived from it, *Salāt* is the prop or the cornerstone of Islam distinguishing Muslims from non-Muslims.

As a way of showing that Islam is not only a religion that concerns itself with man's private life in relation to Allah alone, there is the institution of *Zakāt* which makes it compulsory for the rich to relinquish part of their wealth mostly to take care of the poor and the needy. Of course, there are other forms of charity such as *Sadaqah* (voluntary charity) and *Zakātu'l-Fitr* (Charity towards at the end of *Ramadān*), but *Zakāt* is the only one that can be enforced by the Law. The ultimate aim is to ensure even distribution of wealth. Those who have more than enough are required to give the excess, so to say, to those whose income is too low to meet their needs. In effect, over-concentration of wealth in few hands with the larger majority of citizens wallowing in poverty cannot arise in any society where the *Sharīah* is appropriately operated. It is the duty of State to ensure that every citizen has the basic needs or necessities of life. In such an ideal society envisaged by Islam, social problems arising from lop-sided distribution of resources such as robbery, armed or not, bribery, corruption, swindling, and fraud are totally eradicated or reduced to the barest minimum. Instead, there is peace, love, harmony and stability.

Experience, they say, is the best teacher. The *Sharīah* stipulates that fasting in the month of *Ramadān* should be undertaken by every able-bodied Muslim every year. This affords the rare opportunity to share from the experience of the pangs of hunger and thirst which are part and parcel of the daily life of the poor. This will enable one to be better disposed to render assistance to ameliorate the suffering of others. Leaving off food, drink and sexual inter-course in the day, and sleep in the night at least for the time of taking *Sahūr* (the early-morning meal) teaches that one can successfully do without things one often acquires illegitimately with a view to living better. If one voluntarily abstains from legitimate food lawfully belonging to one from sunrise to sunset when one is usually in need of food, it is easier to avoid stealing things of lesser importance such as clothes, books, just to mention a few. The same thing goes for adultery. Ability to

refrain from sex in the day throughout Ramadān even with one's legitimate wife proves that one can do that especially with illegitimate women, for the rest of one's life.

Hajj, the last principle, is the Holy Pilgrimage to Makkah expected to be performed by every Muslim that has the means at least once in his life time. It teaches the universal brotherhood of Islam regarding differences in the complexion, language, culture and social standing of various peoples as merely accidental and artificial. Putting on the *Iḥrām* (special uniform for pilgrims) and standing altogether on the plain of 'Arafāt teach asceticism in its purity and inculcate in the mind the remembrance of the Day of Judgment. Any pilgrim who bears these and other lessons of *Hajj* in mind after returning home is bound to be of better behaviour than he has been before it. Failure to imbibe the lessons means that such a person has just went on a pleasure or business trip.

Self Assessment Exercise

Highlight the religious life of a Muslim as covered by *Sharī'ah*.

ii. Social

The *Sharī'ah* takes into consideration everything necessary to ensure peace, stability and progress in the community. It takes the family as the smallest Unit of the society or, in other words, as the society in its micro form. The father, the mother and children have rights and obligations to keep the family together. The stability of each family leads to the stability of the society at large. All forms of anti-social behaviour are forbidden. To ensure the effectiveness of this, all practices such as drinking of alcohol, unrestricted intermingling of members of both sexes, gambling and discrimination that may and do encourage social disharmony are prohibited. Prevention, they say, is better than cure.

Care of children receives adequate attention under the *Sharī'ah*. The father is charged with the responsibility of providing food, cloth and accommodation but the woman can assist if she has the means so wishes voluntarily. Her primary assignment is to take care of the home and make it a haven for all the family members. Of course, she has the right and freedom to work and own property as an individual. The point is that her responsibility at home should not be sacrificed for material gains. This is mainly to guide against social malaise that delinquents unleash on the society. Unless women are made to appreciate their importance as home-makers and the society shows satisfactory appreciation for that, countries like Nigeria may not be able to get over social problems that confront them.

Using the family as the launching-pad, the *Sharī'ah* addresses the rights and responsibilities of every member of the society. Issues that one may consider to be very minute such as greetings, deriding, calling one another names and other forms of anti-social behaviour are addressed. It also has provisions on crimes like stealing, robbery, rumour mongering, prostitution, drunkenness and other social crimes. The ultimate aim is to have a society where there will be peace without rancour and wranglings.

With the prohibition of alcohol and restriction on inter-mingling between men and women, some feel that social life in an Islamic society will be very dull. Such people see

drinking and sex as the only means of enjoyment and relaxation. One fact that even such people cannot dispute is that health, social and economic problems resulting from such a perverted sense of judgment are devastating. One of the greatest problems confronting most of the developed countries is either alcoholism or sexual promiscuity. The *Sharī'ah* does not want to create a problem and then look for its solution. It prevents the problem from cropping up at all. As prevention is always better and cheaper than cure, it saves a lot of resources, time and man-power that may be dissipated in finding the solution.

Self Assessment Exercise

“*Sharī'ah* is also concerned with what will bring about an ideal society”. Elaborate on this statement.

iii. Political

The political system recognized by the *Sharī'ah* is that which sees Allah as the Sovereign Law-Giver and the Real Owner of all authority. To Him belongs everything in the heavens and earth and He has absolute control over all creatures. He who holds authority under the *Sharī'ah* does so as a trustee. He is *Khalīfat Allah* (vicegerent of Allah) by doing the divine will as stipulated in the *Sharī'ah*. This post has been inherited from Ādam, our prime-progenitor. Man's responsibility, in this case, is to harness all resources to improve the quality of life and not to destroy it. Politically, one wields the power with the full sense of being accountable to Allah. The citizens have rights and obligations to defend and sustain their nation. Unpatriotic activities are condemned in strong terms and punishable.

Obedience to the lawfully constituted authorities is compulsory for every Muslim. He should do everything possible to help those at the helm of State affairs to succeed. Although the Western concept of democracy is not totally accommodated by Islam, there should be *Shūrā* (consultation) before taking decisions. The *Sharī'ah* abhors autocracy. State resources are to be used to promote what is good (*Ma'rūf*) and to forbid what is wrong (*Munkar*). The leader owes it a responsibility to obey Allah always. Should he fail to do this, obedience to him is no more compulsory for the citizens. In fact, all efforts should be made to impeach and replace him with another person more alive to the responsibility. Relationship with other nations should be based on justice and equity. Their security and sovereignty should not be undermined for political, economic or any other reason. Dispensation of justice should be entrusted to capable hands, pious and impartial. Nobody is above the Law. Perversion of the course of justice should be guided against at all costs. Poverty, low social status or poor family background should not deprive one of justice in the court.

Self Assessment Exercise

- Give a brief account of the political system recognized by *Sharī'ah*.

iv. Moral

As a complete way of life, the *Sharī'ah* attaches much importance to the moral responsibilities of its adherents in all spheres of life. In fact, the Prophet is quoted to have said. "If you have no shame, do all that you wish". The meaning here is that your sense of morality is enough to restrain you from shameful acts. It is in case when you lack this important quality that you are at liberty to give free rein to your caprices and whims. In that case, one is as good as a beast.

Morality under the *Sharī'ah* is based on the consciousness of Allah. It is part and parcel of the awareness that one is responsible to Allah to give one's account of stewardship in the hereafter. For instance, the Glorious *Qur'ān* 17:23 enjoins man to be good to his parents especially when they advance in age and are dependent on him, but the verse opens with the injunction to worship Allah alone. So also the case is in some other passages of the *Qur'ān*. The relationship between worshipping Allah alone and being good to one's parents is that the latter is a concomitant of the former without which it lacks its spiritual and motivating value.

Other moral issues such as truthfulness, generosity, large-heartedness, love, consideration for others, patience, forbearance, good neighbourliness, selflessness, doggedness, just to mention a few are qualities that can be consistently exhibited if? Only they are based on the consciousness of Allah. Otherwise, little temptations may distract one's attention to deviate from the course of rectitude and moral uprightness.

The *Sharī'ah* does not only compel Muslims to be conscious of the moral implications of their acts but also guides and facilitates the attainment of the objective for them. For instance, parents are enjoined to discharge their responsibilities to their offspring and educate them for both material and spiritual purposes. The State or society is also saddled with the responsibility of creating conducive atmosphere for the proper development of the young ones. A child who enjoyed the tender care of the parents, received balanced education and was shielded from negative influence of the society would be obedient, respectful and affectionate to the parents. Problems of broken homes, inadequacy of parental care due to financial reasons and negative impact of peer-groups, mass media, film houses and schools, at times, contribute to the cold attitude of many children to their parents. Lastly, the *Sharī'ah* has corrective measures to reform those found morally wanting.

Self Assessment Exercise

Expatiate on morality as one of the various aspects of life covered by the *Sharī'ah*.

4.0 CONCLUSION

You have learnt that the law as conceived in Islam in form of the *Sharī'ah* covers the totality of man's life. It is also perfect free from all the defects that man-made laws suffer from. This is in view of the fact that the *Sharī'ah* is from Allah who is perfect and cannot do anything imperfect. The *Sharī'ah* is, thus, a veritable means of guaranteeing bliss for man in this world and in the hereafter. It is universal and everlasting. Its scope covers the religious, social, political and moral aspects of life, just to mention a few. In

fact, there is nothing a person may wish to do without necessary guidance in the *Sharī'ah*. With these unique features, the *Sharī'ah* is different from any other legal system known to man.

5.0 Summary

This unit examines *Sharī'ah* as the code of conduct that Allah, the Creator of the universe, has recommended to guide man in all aspects of his life to achieve success in this earthly life and in the hereafter. It establishes that *Sharī'ah* is applicable everywhere and at all times without requiring any review, repeal or modification. It also looks at *Sharī'ah* as a divine law that covers all aspects of life in line with the comprehensiveness of Islam which is not only a religion but a complete way of life harmonizing between the moral, the spiritual and secular aspects of life.

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

- Explain the concept of the *Sharī'ah* in comparison with the Common Law.
- “The *Sharī'ah* is all that a Muslim needs to lead a happy and successful life”.
Discuss.

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UNIT 3: RELATION BETWEEN *ISLAM*, *SHARĪAH* AND *FIQH*

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The terms “*Islam*”, “*Sharīah*” and “*Fiqh*” are commonly used in the study of the Islamic Law. You are to learn, in this Unit, the meaning of each of these terms and the ways they relate to each other. This is to pave the way to the subsequent Units in which the terms are copiously used.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- i. Define Islam, *Sharīah* and *Fiqh* as technical terms in the study of the Islamic Law.
- ii. Analyse the areas of similarity and difference between *Islam*, *Sharīah* and *Fiqh* in relation to the Islamic Law.
- iii. Discuss, with appropriate examples, the issues involved in the comparative study of the three terms.

3.0 MAIN CONTENTS

3.1 Islam in Relation to *Sharīah* and *Fiqh*

“*Islam*”, as a word in Arabic Language, means ‘peace’ or “submission”. It is evolved from the verbal root-form plu *aslama* which is the quadrilateral (four-letter) form of the simple trilateral form, *salima*. The verbal noun is “*silm*” or “*salm*” meaning peace. “*Islam*”, therefore, being the verbal noun of “*aslama*”, means “submission” or “peace”. The term “*Islam*” (usually written as “Islam” in English) in this study refers to the conduct, way of life recommended by Allah through His archangel, *Jibrīl*, to humanity right from the time of Ādam to that of Prophet Muhammad who is the last and seal of the Prophets.

3.1.1 Islam Meaning Submission

The fact that Islam means submission means that you, as a Muslim, are supposed to submit yourself willingly to the will of Allah. By this, you are to surrender yourself to be guided in all aspects of life by the instructions Almighty Allah gives you with the explanations and practical demonstrations from the life of Prophet Muhammad. In case there is anything you want to do, you first think of Allah's guidance relating to it before deciding whether to go on or withdraw from it. You suppress your personal interests, gains or aspirations to those of Allah, the Almighty.

For one's submission to the will of Almighty Allah to be acceptable, it is necessary to satisfy the following conditions:

- i. **Conviction:** Islam as a religion, requires its adherents to be committed and devoted to it, no matter what the situation may be. This cannot be done except with necessary knowledge and practice as a result of which one will be convinced and sure that Islam is worthy of one's devotion. Unless based on firm conviction, one may not be able to live up to this condition especially in the face of threats or dangers to one's life or property. For this reason, coming to the fold of Islam should be voluntary and conviction. The *Qur'ān* says:

There is no compulsion in religion. The right direction is clearly distinct from error.

(*Qur'ān* 2:256)

- ii. **To be total:** The submission should be total in the sense that you worship Allah alone and you direct all your prayers to Him alone. Divided loyalty has no place in Islam. In fact, it is a sin. The *Qur'ān* says:

Oh you who believe! Come into submission (*silm* or *Islam*) wholly and follow not the footsteps of Satan. Surely, he is your open enemy.

(*Qur'ān* 2:208)

- iii. **To be unconditional:** Islam stipulates that its adherents should not set condition's for submitting themselves to the will of Almighty Allah. It is common to hear people say that they will become Muslims if they go to Makkah or become rich. Such an utterance shows ignorance about what Islam is. The worship by any person or group or refusal to worship does no good or harm to Allah, the Almighty. The fact is that Allah provides guidance. Those who take advantage of it gain from it while those who ignore it lose out. Islam is the right way and failure to follow it leads one astray. Basing one's worship on achieving material gains will not allow one to be consistent and principled. No wonder then to see some people always moving from one place of worship or religious group to the other. The *Qur'ān* says:

And among mankind is he who worships Allah upon a narrow marge so that if good befall him he is content therewith, but if a trial befalls him, he falls away utterly. He loses both the world and the hereafter. That is the far error. He calls, beside

Allah, unto that which hurts him not nor benefits him. That is the error. (*Qur'ān* 22:11-13)

Islam Meaning Peace

Another meaning of Islam is 'peace'. In this respect, Muslims are required to maintain peace in such a way that they enjoy it and extend it to others around them. To further emphasise this, Muslims greet each other by saying *As-salāmu 'alaikum* (peace be unto you). In addition, they conclude all the ritual prayers (*Salāt*) by saying the same thing. This shows that the essence of worship is to have peace and share it with others.

Some people wonder why Muslims claim that Islam means peace and aims to achieve peace in the world whereas its history is full of wars from the time of Prophet Muhammad. The fact is that Islam does not forbid its adherents to fight especially if that is necessary to defend themselves as it was the case during the time of the Prophet and in the early stages of Islam. Even at the time of Usman Dan Fadio of the Sokoto Caliphate, the wars began because the ruler attacked the Muslims who had to defend themselves at last, having relocated because of the high-handedness and persecution of the ruler. Contrary to the expectation, the Muslims succeeded in defending themselves and defeating the invaders and persecutors. Other kingdoms sympathized with the ruler and attacked the Muslims but they were defeated and subdued one after the other.

Most of the religious riots being experienced nowadays are either politically-motivated or result from misrepresenting Islam as in the case of Maitatsine and Boko Haram. More importantly, a nation that suffers widespread poverty, decay in social amenities, lack or insufficiency of infrastructural facilities, political instability, high rates of crimes and lack of social security cannot but experience outbursts of violence and chaos. This explains the emergence of militant groups across the nation and secret cults in the institutions of learning. Most of these groups have nothing to do with religion and Islam in particular.

As far as Islam is concerned, it teaches and encourages its adherents to maintain peace all the time. The teachings in this direction can be viewed from the following perspectives:

- i) **Maintaining Peace with Allah:** Islam requires that those who practise it should maintain peace with Allah by obeying and keeping His remembrance fresh in their memories always. The philosophy is that any person who bears the greatness, might and benevolence of Allah in mind will find it easy to worship Him and keep away from whatever He forbids. Such steadfast obedience cannot but earn one His pleasure and good rewards. By this one maintains peace with the Supreme Being broadly by:
 - a. Obeying in what He commands in form of worship, moral behaviour and selfless services and
 - b. Obeying Him in what He forbids by not refusing to worship Him and do other good things, and by keeping away from what He forbids in terms of polytheistic practices, immoral behaviour and anti-social practices. The *Qur'ān* says:

Those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah that hearts can find comfort. Those who believe and do good works – happiness shall be theirs and an excellent place of return.

(*Qur'ān* 13:28-29).

- ii) **Maintaining Peace with oneself:** Islam teaches that one who does not enjoy peace within oneself, at the same time, cannot extend peace to others around him. That is why it requires the Muslims to comply with its guidance relating to their well-being physically and spiritually. The two aspects are discussed as follows:
- a. **Physical well-being:** Islam teaches that Muslims should feed well, wear good dresses and tidy up their environment. They are forbidden to drink alcohol, impure and unhygienic food or wear dresses that may portray them to be shameless by not adequately covering their nakedness. The dangers and demerits of these practices are too apparent to mention here. Any person who leads a wholesome and disciplined life, as required in *Islam*, will enjoy good health, peace of mind and peace.
 - b. **Spiritual well-being:** Man is made of physical and spiritual parts. The physical part is taken care of as mentioned above. The spiritual part (soul) is taken care of by doing things that will enhance the functions of the conscience. If you do good things, your conscience proves you right and gives you a pass mark, so to say. But if you do an evil thing, the conscience keeps worrying you and troubling your mind. This is the reason why Muslims are to keep away from all evil deeds relating to '*Aqīdah* (Faith or Belief system) '*Ibādah* (Worship) and *Mu'āmulah* (Inter-personal activities). The *Qur'ān* says:

He indeed prospers who purifies it (soul) and he who corrupts it is ruined.

(*Qur'ān* 91:9-10)

- iii) **Maintaining Peace with People around us:** Islam does not allow keeping one away from the society in form of monasticism. While living together, it is necessary for everybody to be of good behaviour to have social harmony and peace. It is in view of this that Islam commands the Muslims to do good to everybody they come in contact with starting from parents, spouses, children, relatives, neighbours, and fellow human beings no matter where they come from, the language they speak and the religion they practise. The Prophet is reported to have said that any person whose neighbours do not feel secure from his evil deeds is not a Muslim Ḥadīth Book. He also said:
None of you is a Believer until he loves for his fellow brother what he loves for himself Ḥadīth Book. See also the *Qur'ān* 6:151-152, 17:23-38 and 49:1-18).

(iv) **Maintaining Peace with other creatures:** The *Qur'ān* presents the whole universe to Muslims as the handiwork of Allah and man as Allah's representative to maintain harmony and concord in it. All other creatures including the sun and moon are made subservient to man to enable him to discharge the duty assigned to him satisfactorily and successfully. It is not to make him brag and lord it over other creatures around. He can make use of them to improve the quality of his life but he should not be cruel or inconsiderate to them. For instance, Islam allows man to make use of plants and animals for food and other legitimate purposes. At the same time, he is enjoined to be nice and kind to them even at the point of slaughtering in the case of animals allowed for human consumption. A Ḥadīth says:

Verily, Allah obliges (you to be of) good behaviours (and proficient) concerning anything (you do). So, if you kill (animals), make the killing with courtesy; and if you slaughter (animals) slaughter (them) with courtesy. Let each of you sharpen the (Knife's) edge, and make the animal die peacefully.

Self Assessment Exercise

Give a comprehensive explanation of the term "Islam"

3.2. *Sharī'ah*:

This is the embodiment of the rules and regulations Allah revealed to guide His servants to the realization of the purpose of their creation and existence in this world for which they will be rewarded in the earthly life and in the hereafter. It covers the whole aspects of man's life because Islam itself is not only a religion but a complete way of life.

The broad guidelines of the *Sharī'ah*, the Islamic Law, are contained in the *Qur'ān*. In many cases, details are not given in the scripture. This should not be a surprise because if the *Qur'ān* should contain all the details of the law, it will be so voluminous that the purpose of being handy and easy to use will be defeated. In addition, it will be difficult to carry out the injunctions in different times and places. As the *Qur'ān* is at present, it is not difficult to use because the prevailing circumstances will be put into consideration to interpret and find appropriate meaning for the various injunctions in it. Another reason is that the *Qur'ān* is meant to be recited regularly in form of worship and to acquire knowledge and spiritual uplift. Should it be in many large volumes, reading the whole scripture will be cumbersome not to talk of memorizing it.

The role of Prophet Muhammad, as the recipient of the divine revelation, went beyond passing the messages to his followers and preaching to them. He served as the practical exemplification of the teachings of the *Qur'ān*. In other words, he practicalised the divine messages in such a way that his followers would have no problem to understand and carry them out. Such practical demonstrations were done by giving verbal instructions, acting and approving or disapproving what his followers did in his

presence. Such normative guidance constituted the *Ḥadīth* or *Sunnah* of the Prophet as the second source of the *Sharī'ah*. It gives the details of the teachings of the *Qur'ān*, their practical demonstrations or supplements them.

The passing on of the Prophet put an end to the opportunity of learning directly from him. His followers, however, carried on with the good works he had been doing by trying to keep to his teachings as much as possible. The rapid expansion of Islam to places beyond the Arabian Peninsula exposed Muslims to situations and circumstances different from what they had been used to. Some of the problems emanating from such new conditions could not be traced directly to the teachings of the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* of the Prophet. As such, scholars of the Islamic Law would have to come together and take decisions in the light of the teachings of the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* to guide the generality of Muslims. Such decisions unanimously taken are technically known as *Ijmā'*, Consensus of Opinions, serving as the third source of the Islamic Law.

On many occasions, new problems may crop up which require immediate attention without any opportunity to reach out to other scholars to take a joint decision. The solution here is to compare and contrast the new problems with others similar to them which took place at the time of the Prophet and the succeeding generations. Such a practice is to determine whether the new problems are allowed or not allowed in Islam and the extent of that based on the decisions previous taken on cases similar to them. This practice is technically known as *Qiyās*, which is the fourth source of the Islamic Law.

In essence, *Sharī'ah* is the law of Islam guiding Muslims in their day-to-day activities. Its sources are primarily the *Qur'ān*, the *Sunnah* of *Ḥadīth* of Prophet Muhammad, *Ijmā'*, (Consensus of Opinions) and *Qiyās* (Analogical Reasoning).

Self Assessment Exercise

Provide a bird's eye view explanation of the term *Sharī'ah*

3.3. *Fiqh*

As an Arabic word, *fiqh* means understanding or having a clear understanding of something. In relation to the Islamic Law, it means the understanding of the Islamic Law resulting from personal exertion in applying it to specific issues or cases. Bearing in mind the provisions in the *Qur'ān*, *Sunnah*, *Ijmā'* and *Qiyās*, the *Faqīh* (the practitioner of *Fiqh*, Jurisconsult) analyses the issues involved in a particular case and comes out with a verdict on the case which may be in any aspect of life. Such legal verdicts may be codified and documented to facilitate references.

Many scholars of repute have emerged from the various parts of the Muslim world distinguishing themselves as authorities in *Fiqh*. Among the *Sunni* Muslims, four of them have been recognized as the foremost authorities. They are the founders of the four schools of the Islamic jurisprudence. They are:

- i. Imam Abū Hanīfah, the founder of the Hanafi School
- ii. Imam Mālik, the founder of the Māliki School
- iii. Imam Ahmad b. Hambal, the founder of the Hambali School

iv. Imam Ash-Shāfi‘ī, the founder of the Shāfi‘ī School

The efforts of the experts in *Fiqh* cannot be over-emphasized. They have gone a long way to facilitate the understanding and application of the Islamic Law for the rank and file of Muslims. With this, every Muslim does not need to labour to go through the volumes of works on the exegesis of the *Qur’ān* and compilations of Hadīths especially in living their daily life according to Islam. Most of the issues involved have been analysed and discussed with verdicts and necessary guidance give on them.

In an attempt to simplify the *Sharī‘ah* provisions, the experts in *Fiqh* divide them into five broad groups as follows:

i. *Fard* or *Wājib* (Compulsory or Obligatory): These are the duties incumbent on every Muslim legally responsible who has no legally – acceptable excuse for exemption. Such duties earn one rewards if carried out as required but failure to carry them out attract severe punishments. Such duties include observing the five daily obligatory prayers and fasting in the month of Ramadān, just to mention only two.

ii *Harām* (Forbidden, Prohibited, Illegal or Unlawful): These are the things that are not allowed for Muslims legally responsible to do. Any of them who falls into the mistake of committing them stands the risk of being punished but those who avoid them based on the fact that they are forbidden in Islam will be rewarded for that. Examples of such prohibited things include alcoholic drinks and adultery, just to mention only two.

iii *Sunnah* (Supererogatory): These are the duties which attract rewards if performed but failure to perform them does not attract punishments. They are voluntary acts, so to say, which Muslims capable of them are encouraged to carry out. If, despite the capability to carry them, one fails or refuses to carry them out, there is no punishment for that.

iv *Makrūh* (Acts not encouraged): These are the acts legally-responsible Muslims are encouraged not to commit in their own interest. They are dissuaded from the acts for the fear that involvement in them portends dangers to one’s faith, life, property, morality or integrity. If one avoids them, there is a reward for that but there is no punishment for committing them. Of course, it is dangerous to take chances with acts that may take one to the periphery of sins or acts expressly forbidden. A minor slip, thereafter, will eventually land one in trouble. Prevention is better than cure. Examples here include wearing golden rings for Muslim men and playing cards.

v *Mubāh* (Neutral): These are the issues totally left for the discretion of the individual concerned. One is free to make a choice either to do or not to do such things. In this case, there is neither a reward nor punishment for any decision taken. Examples here include making a choice out of the variety of food items available to eat as long as they are all lawful, and choosing to wear a particular dress out of so many as long as they are made to conform with the requirements of Islam relating to dressing.

Self Assessment Exercise

Define “*fiqh*”, enumerate its celebrated scholars and the divisions of its provisions.

3.4 Comparison between Islam, *Sharī'ah* and *Fiqh*

The paragraphs above shed light on the definition and general introduction to each of the technical terms under discussion. Now that you have an idea of what each of them means, let us now consider how the three are related to each other.

The first area of similarity between Islam and *Sharī'ah* is that Islam is the totality and the ultimate goal of worshipping Allah which earns one the divine pleasure in this world and in the hereafter, whereas the *Sharī'ah* is the path, the road or the means of having access to it. In a nutshell, Islam can be likened to a house which every Muslim aspires to enter while the only road leading to it is the *Sharī'ah*. It is in the light of this that Prophet Muhammad is reported in many Hadīths to have said that Islam is “built” on the five fundamental pillars.

If you consider the intimate relationship between Islam as mentioned above, you will see that one is indispensable to the other. Without the *Sharī'ah* there cannot be “Islam” and without Islam, there is no need for the *Sharī'ah*. Owing to this symbiotic relationship, Muslims cannot do without the *Sharī'ah* to fully practise their religion and derive maximum benefits from it. No wonder then that Muslims in Nigeria continue to press for the full implementation of the *Sharī'ah* across the nation especially in Yoruba land.

Sharī'ah and *Fiqh*: *Sharī'ah* is the Islamic Law as enunciated in the *Qur'ān*, *Hadīth* or *Sunnah*, *Ijmā'* and *Qiyās*. It contains the provisions of the law in all aspects of human life. *Fiqh* is the laborious study and understanding of the law to grasp its import, purpose and relevance in successfully living as individuals and groups. Distilling the details of the law to provide simplified guides for the generality of Muslims has been a great contribution to the study and practice of the Islamic Law. The relationship between the *Sharī'ah* and *Fiqh*, therefore, is that of the law in its essence, on the one hand, and its understanding and simplification, on the other.

The importance of the close relationship between the *Sharī'ah* and *Fiqh*, as highlighted above cannot be over-emphasized. The *Sharī'ah* deals with all issues of all times and all places. The *Qur'ān* 6:38 declares that nothing has been left unattended to in it as the primary source of the *Sharī'ah*. Ordinarily, a layman without the knowledge of the rudiments of the law cannot but have problems in applying the law in his daily activities. Such problems have been alleviated as a result of the sacrifices and contributions of experts in *Fiqh*. These scholars painstakingly analysed the various law provisions, critically examined them and broke them down into simple Units to enable Muslims generally to digest and put them to practice. Without this effort from such scholars, the understanding and practice of the *Sharī'ah* would have been more difficult than it is at present.

Self Assessment Exercise

State the relationship between Islam, Shari ‘ah and Fiqh.

4.0 CONCLUSION

You have learnt in this Unit the meaning and importance of *Islam*, *Sharī'ah* and *Fiqh*. You have also learnt how these major terms in the study of the Islamic Law relate to each other. Without the *Sharī'ah* there is no way of practising Islam because the *Sharī'ah* is the way to it. The same relationship exists between *Fiqh* which is a means of understanding and practising Islam.

5.0 SUMMARY

Islam is the ultimate goal that every Muslim aspires. It is like the final destination of the long journey of life to enable Muslims to earn Allah's pleasure in this world and in the hereafter. The only access road to Islam, however, is the *Sharī'ah*. Without the *Sharī'ah*, there is no access to Islam, *Fiqh* on the other hand, is a means of understanding the *Sharī'ah* and facilitating its application. Without *Fiqh*, therefore, it is difficult, if not impossible, to understand and put the *Sharī'ah* to practice.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment:

- Define *Islam*, *Sharī'ah* and *Fiqh* respectively.
- In what way do *Islam*, *Sharī'ah* and *Fiqh* relate to each other in the study of the Islamic Law?

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UNIT 4: PRE-ISLAMIC ARAB CUSTOMS AND REFORMS INTRODUCED BY ISLAM

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This lecture will focus attention on the various aspects of the life of the Pre-Islamic Arabs, and the various reforms introduced by Islam. You are to learn the pre-Islamic Arab practices in the religious, social, political and economic aspects of their life in particular.

2.0 OBJECTIVE

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

- explain the Pre-Islamic customs of the Arabs
- Give account of reforms introduced by Islam
- Distinguish between authentic teachings of Islam and innovations
- Contrast between the pre-Islamic customs and reforms introduced by Islam as a basis.

3.0 MAIN CONTENTS

3.1 *Jāhiliyyah* and its Meaning

The period that preceded the advent of Islam in the Arabian peninsular was known as *Jāhiliyyah* meaning “ignorance” or “barbarism”. It was a period of ignorance because at that time, the Arabs had lost all ideas of divine revelations that could have brought them out of spiritual darkness to light. Although they descended from Prophet Ibrahim through Prophet Ismā‘īl (peace be on them) who bequeathed unmistakable guidance to them, the long lapse in time with attendant problems of misconception, misinterpretation, misrepresentation and forgery had robbed them of the clear understanding of the divine message. It was only very few individuals known as *Hunafā’* ([monotheists] pl. of *Ḥanīf*) that kept the memory and maintained the practice of monotheism. The situation

was largely that of dancing to the tune of one's caprices and whims in the absence of authentic divine guidance.

There is also every justification to describe the period as that of barbarism at the society level. The situation was that of the survival of the fittest where might was right. There was anarchy throughout the length and breadth of the peninsula. Strong communities or clans would just pounce on others without any cause whatsoever and dispossess them of their belongings. There was no rule of law. Any crime could be committed and the perpetrator would go scot-free as long as his clan was not ready to surrender him for trial of punishment. Members of weak clans were at the mercy of noblemen. Trivial issues such as misunderstandings between children would cause wars lasting for decades. Vengeance, greed, licentiousness, debauchery and other forms of willful brutality were the order of the day. It was the period of barbarism and disorderliness at its peak.

This is just an account of the *Jāhiliyyah* period as an explanation of the term. Let us take each of the major aspects of life one-by-one and see how the pre-Islamic Arabs' life was and the reforms brought about by Islam. This we do as follows:

Self Assessment Exercise

Define *Jāhiliyyah*. Illustrate your definition with adequate examples

3.2 Religious life of the Pre-Islamic Arabs and the Islamic Reform

The pre-Islamic Arabs can be divided, in terms of religious leaning, into polytheists or pagans worshipping deities beside Allah, Jews, Christians and monotheists. As it should be expected, the overwhelming majority belonged to the first group. Every family had its god or object of worship kept in the compound while the Ka'bah in Makkah served as the central shrine where about three hundred idols were kept. Some of the notable gods of those days were al-Lāt, al-Manāt, al-Uzza and Hubal.

The Ka'bah was not only the central shrine and sanctuary. It was the symbol of the Arabs' Unity. They used to perform annual pilgrimages to it from all over the Arabian peninsula. The opportunities offered by the yearly gatherings were used to organize fairs not only for commercial transactions but also for literary competitions. The most successful poems would be suspended on the Ka'bah as a mark of recognition and honour. For that reason, such compositions were known as *Mu'allaqāt* (pl. of *Mu'allaqah* meaning something hung or suspended).

It was the common practice of the pre-Islamic Arabs, especially the Bedouin, who were nomads always on the move in search of pasture for their cattle, in contrast to those settled in towns, to consult their gods before any important decision was taken. That was however a formality because the result of the divination was not binding on them. But the agreement of the oracle's decision with their intention would stimulate and assure them of success. It was also not uncommon to see a nomadic Arab using the same stone deified as an object of worship for cooking or any other purpose if the need arose.

As the pre-Islamic Arab saw himself first as a member of his family rather than an individual in which case the society needed the consent of his family to discipline him for

any misdeed, he was expected to be a devoted believer in the family god. Failure to do this would present him as a dissident guilty of treason. This would explain the reason why the people of Makkah persecuted the Prophet and the early Muslims especially when the preaching of Islam became publicized. Obedience to the family god was a civil responsibility and this tradition was handed down from one generation to another.

3.2.1 Reforms introduced by Islam

The advent of Islam brought about revolutionary changes in the religious life of the pre-Islamic Arabs. All forms of polytheism were abolished. The Ka'bah was cleansed of idols and dedicated for the worship of Allah alone. The holy pilgrimage handed down from the time of Prophet *Ibrāhīm* was purified of paganistic and superstitious practices. Apart from nullifying adoration of idols, there were changes in the mode of performing it. *Ihrām* (pilgrims' uniform) was introduced instead of stark nakedness in which rites like circumambulation of the Ka'bah used to be performed. The circumambulation itself is now anti-clockwise instead of being clockwise in the *Jāhiliyyah* period. So also was abolition of the discrimination which used to characterize movement between *Şafā* and *Marwah* and standing on the plain of 'Arafāt by giving preference to families of nobility before others. Everything is now done together Muslims all over the world are equal. Divination is forbidden in Islam (Ālu'sh-Shaykh, (1413A.H.) : 235). Any Muslim attempting to do something and is worried about the success or failure of the venture is advised to perform *Istikhārah* which consists of a ritual prayer of two Rak'ahs and supplication for Allah's guidance, support and blessings. If the venture is to prove unbeneficial materially and spiritually, Allah is beseeched to disallow it but to replace it with another profitable in this life and after death. The *Qur'ān* 27: 65 is categorical that none in the heavens and earth beside Allah knows the hidden. Both the diviner and the one consulting or believing him are sinners. With this prohibition, Islam has nipped in the bud attempts to encourage superstition and falling victims to cheats and charlatans. Any Muslim that practices divination in any form cannot find any basis for the practise either in the *Qur'ān* or *Sunnah*.

Self Assessment Exercise

Describe the religious life of the pre-Islamic Arabs and the reforms introduced by Islam.

3.3 Social life of the Pre-Islamic Arabs and the Islamic Reforms

The social aspect of the pre-Islamic Arabs' life was full of instability, chaos and unrest. As there was no central authority to maintain law and order in the sense that each clan was independent, the practice was that strong clans or settlements would raid weak ones dispossessing them of their property, enslaving their children and women and getting rid of able-bodied men among them. The unfortunate thing was that this savage source of income, raiding, was considered legitimate without any public censure. The only measure to be taken to forestall falling victims was to be on the alert always and enter into alliance with stronger clans who could scare away prospective raiders or take vengeance on them, as the case might be.

Social discrimination was at its peak among the Arabs shortly before the advent of Islam. Men of nobility saw themselves as being superior to others and would avoid interacting with them particularly in marriage. Slaves and other people of not pure Arab stock were looked down upon. This was very much pronounced in the city of Makkah which had developed into a flourishing cosmopolitan metropolis.

The pre-Islamic Arabs were given to sensual enjoyment. Drunkenness was the order of the day. Their contact with Byzantines and Persians, the two world powers then at loggerheads competing for political and economic power, facilitated the importation of new brands of alcohol. Nothing, no matter how serious it might be, could disturb or curtail drinking sessions. Gambling was also common among them. It was a common occurrence that one would dispose of all one's property to have money to gamble with, and to watch the opponent carting it away if he won. Vengeance was considered necessary by the Arabs of those days to ward off shame. If any person should injure or kill a relation of another person, it would be the responsibility of the one that had lost his relation, so to say, to ensure that he killed the murderer of his relation. Had there been a central authority invested with the power to bring criminals to book, probably this problem might not have been a social norm.

The social status of woman in those days was at the lowest level. She enjoyed no social security or had any right whatsoever particularly if she was not from a noble family. As a daughter, the news of her birth was a bad omen. She was either to be buried alive or simply murdered. The few that escaped being so dealt with had to contend with degradation and cold attitude from all and sundry. At the time of marriage, she had no say whatsoever. In fact, she could be exchanged with another girl as gifts. In the house of her husband, she was treated as a chattel. The man could divorce or keep her in confinement throughout her life. There was no limit to the number of wives a man could marry. As a widow, she had no right to share from the husband's estate. Instead, she would be inherited along with other things bequeathed by the deceased. The eldest son of the deceased had the first claim to her. In case there was no son, a brother could take her. If the son or brother was not interested in marrying her, he could get her married and receive the payment on her.

Four forms of marriage relationship were recognized by the pre-Islamic Arabs. The first was that in which a man would propose to a woman and she would accept with the dowry paid. Another was that in which a man would ask his wife to invite another man of nobility to have dealings with her. At this time, the legitimate husband would desert her. When she became pregnant, he might resume having affairs with her. The child to be delivered would be his legitimately. This was done as a way of earning or bringing nobility to the family. Another form is that in which men, ten or less, would have affairs with a single woman. When she became pregnant and was delivered of the child, she would invite them and choose one of them as the father. Another one was that in which many men would have affairs with a woman. When she became pregnant and was delivered, a physiognomist would be invited to determine the most probable father. This was their brand of the present day prostitution. There was also marriage by exchange known as *Shighār*. In this case, a man would give out his daughter, sister or

ward in marriage in exchange for another girl he wanted to marry. No dowry would be paid for or to the girls involved in the process.

3.3.1 Reforms Introduced by Islam

Islam has a revolutionary impact on the social life of the pre-Islamic Arabs. First, it replaced anarchy and social unrest with orderliness and social harmony. Being a complete way of life aimed at achieving peace in all ramifications, Islam softened the hearts of the pre-Islamic Arabs and engendered love and concord among them. It was to the credit of the Prophet that the long-drawn hostility between 'Awz and Khazraj clans in Madinah was settled amicably. The constitution he drew in Madinah, for the first time, made the Arabs appreciate and respect the rule of law instead of taking laws into their hands as it previously used to be the case.

Universal brotherhood preached by Islam does not favour discrimination on any basis. All human beings descend from Adam who was created from sand. Although the *Qur'ān* recognizes the differences in geographical location, language, complexion, culture and social status, it does not consider them as sufficient reasons to alienate one person from another. They are only to facilitate recognition and identification of individuals. It is only piety, consciousness of Allah in everything one does, that is the veritable mark of honour. Incidentally, it is only Allah that can objectively assess that.

Islam strikes a just balance between otherworldliness and materialistic tendencies. It allows for eating, drinking and enjoyment generally but not without restrictions. All those things that may hamper man's welfare and progress materially and spiritually are forbidden. This teaching of Islam is necessary to make man lead a comfortable and prosperous life in this world and achieve bliss and felicity in the hereafter. Thus, alcohol, gambling and all other forms of unbridled sensual enjoyment are prohibited. Intoxicants either in form of liquid, sniff or drugs are unlawful. Gambling is condemned either as a pastime or a source of income. It is based on chance without any positive contribution to the economy. It does not involve the exchange of goods or services. It engenders, instead, ill feelings and grudge between those who are involved in it with adverse effects on the community at large.

Islam sees woman as a full-fledged human being endowed with capabilities physically and mentally to contribute to the progress of the society. It is true that she is physically not as strong as man, but her nature is the best to discharge her duties which are complementary to those of man in the interest of humanity at large. Thus, killing her as an infant, neglecting her as a daughter, maltreating her as a wife and cruelty to her as a widow are ill-motivated actions depriving the community at large of her immense potentials. Kind treatment with respect and honour that Islam recommends for her throughout the stages of life has enhanced her social status. Her birth is now greeted with happiness and joy. She is treated with compassion as a daughter, with respect as a wife, and as an inheritor or beneficiary of the estate of the deceased father, brother or husband instead of being part of the inheritance. She is free to own property and dispose of it willingly. She can also hold public posts in line with her nature and temperament.

All forms of man-woman relationship of the pre-Islamic days have been forbidden by Islam except the one in which the man would propose to the woman with her

consenting and the dowry is paid. There were some modifications to this before adopting it. Any relationship between man and woman that does not conform to the rules and regulations as laid by the *Sharī'ah* is illicit and a sin.

Self Assessment Exercise

Write a vivid description of the social life of the pre-Islamic Arabia and the reforms introduced by Islam.

3.4 Political life of the Pre-Islamic Arabs and the Islamic Reforms

There are two kinds of Arabs. The first consists of the nomadic or bedouin having no permanent settlement and always looking for water and pasture for their cattle. The other is that of those settled in towns, known as sedentary or town Arabs. Although there were differences between them in almost every aspect of life, the differences were more pronounced in politics. The nomadic Arabs had no idea of central government except that many clans forming a tribe would come together and choose a *Shaykh* or *Sayyid*, leader. The selection was the responsibility of the council of elders known as *Ahl-al-Ikhtiyār* (lit. people invested with the power to choose). The Shaykh was not a sovereign but first among equals. He was constantly advised by the *Majlis*, Consultative Council. He had no authority to enforce his laws. He was therefore more of an arbitrator and adviser than a ruler. He would have a quarter of the war booty as income.

The town Arabs were better organised, so to say, politically. Their settlements were mainly in valleys and around gases where they could easily get water. Makkah happened to be the most famous of such settlements shortly before the advent of Islam. The political system there was merchant oligarchy, that is, government by a small group of all-powerful merchants. This system arose from the fact that the religious roles played by the city which attracted people from the four comers of the Arab land had transformed it into one of the largest world markets and those who controlled the economy just discovered that the political power had also been conceded to them. As one could imagine, the system which concentrated power in few hands led to gross abuse, exploitation and oppression. Ability and moral uprightness did not matter at all as necessary qualities to be possessed by any person interested in political leadership. The important thing was to come from a noble and well-to-do family. That was why some people bitterly opposed the Prophet saying that there were persons far wealthier than he was.

The pre-Islamic Arabs had rights and responsibilities not as individuals, but as members of the family or tribe. Blood relationship was therefore the basis of social interaction. The Arab would stand by his brother, as long as the blood relationship had been established, whether he was right or wrong. It did not matter as well if he lost his life doing so. Except when threatened by external aggression, the pre-Islamic Arabs of various tribes hardly came together in Unity.

3.4.1 Reform Introduced by Islam

Islam sees the whole humanity as constituting a single community. Thus, the tribal boundaries to mark out political entities have been replaced with the universal

concept of Islam. The significance of this is that all tribal sentiments which, more often than not, tend to alienate one man from another leading to obnoxious policies such as apartheid are totally removed. There should be no discrimination whatsoever.

The Islamic political system is *Khilāfah* (Caliphate or Vicegerency). This in essence means that those at the helm of State affairs hold the posts in trust for Allah who is the real owner of all authority. With this in one's mind, one bears Allah in mind always before doing anything. This also signifies that the *Sharī'ah* is binding on one just like any other person in the community. It is therefore one's responsibility to safeguard and implement it to the letter. So also one exercises self-restraint to avoid abuse of power by allowing sentiments and subjective considerations to influence one's activities, unlike what used to be the case before Islam.

Islam teaches that positions of authority should be entrusted to those capable of holding them. Qualities like piety, knowledge, wisdom, good, health, courage and ability to uphold justice should be considered before choosing anybody as a leader. So also *Shūrā* (consultation) should be held regularly to ensure that the leader does not become autocratic, and to enable citizens to have a say in running the State. Concentration of power in few hands to the exclusion of the overwhelming majority is not in the best interest of the State. Sooner or later the suffering majority will be forced to seek redress which may lead to civil crisis and disorder.

It may be necessary to call attention, at this juncture, to the fact that there are fundamental differences between the Islamic concept of democracy and that of the West. Islam does not invest absolute authority in the majority or hold the opinion of the majority as the final say on every issue. The will of Allah, as made known in the *Sharī'ah*, is given priority over what may be the decision of the majority. The decision will be valid or deserves being considered at all if only it does not run counter to the injunctions of the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*. For instance, there is no authority for legalizing prostitution or abortion because the *Sharī'ah* expressly goes against it (*Qur'ān* 17:32-33).

Self Assessment Exercise

What are the reforms Islam introduced to the political system of the Jahiliyyah Arabia?

3.5 Economic life of the Pre-Islamic Arabs

The insecurity of life and property in the pre-Islamic period in the Arab land was mainly due to economic reasons. The harsh weather coupled with the fact that the desert covered the lion share of the land made life extremely difficult. Chief occupations then were farming which could be practised only at pockets of fertile land, cattle rearing and trading. To forestall falling victims of robbers and wild animals, traders used to go in caravans and their journeys used to take weeks and months.

To free themselves from economic hardships, the Arabs of those days used to attack caravans and settlements especially those with whom they had not entered into agreement. Raiding, plundering and robbery were recognised as legitimate sources of income and those involved in them used to boast of their exploits. It was through these means that articles plundered at the coast or borders usually found their ways to the other

extreme end. Except in the holy months set aside for the free movement of pilgrims to and from Makkah, nobody was safe to travel in the Arabian Peninsula.

Commercial activities were full of fraudulent and exploitative practices. These included using false measures and hoarding. The trader hardly thought of the interest of the buyer. All his concern was to make more and more money. He would swear by God without compunction knowing fully that he was telling lies to impress the prospective buyer. He would do everything possible whether honestly or dishonestly, to promote his trade and run down his colleagues. The pre-Islamic Arab trader was only conscious of money and money alone.

The unbridled quest for money made the pre-Islamic Arabs resort to many degrading forms of exploitation. The worst was misappropriation of orphans' wealth. The social instability, as we discussed previously, usually led to untimely deaths with widows and orphans at the mercy of whoever was in charge of taking care of the estate of the deceased. The tendency, on several occasions, was to deprive poor orphans, particularly the young ones, of the property. It was not impossible also to sell them as slaves if there was nobody to protect their interest. Widows were worse off as the social set-up was itself against them. They had no right whatsoever to inheritance. They were, in fact, part of the inheritance to be shared by the male heirs of the deceased especially the eldest son and brothers.

Lending money on interest was a popular and lucrative business among the pre-Islamic Arabs. The rich seized the opportunity to exploit the poor and the needy to get richer. The interests were so high that borrowers could not, in most cases, pay up. The result of this was that such unfortunate people would literally become slaves to lenders who could subject them to all forms of public ridicule and persecution. The stigma of being indebted was also on the members of their families and clans at large.

The pre-Islamic Arabs indulged in gambling and saw it not only as a pastime but also as a profession through which one could earn one's living. As success in it depended on chances, their fortunes and misfortunes alternated in such quick succession that hardly could one make out anything of its gains. Large amounts of wealth were daily squandered with attendant adverse effects on the family and society at large. Both the winner and the loser would bear a grudge against one another and there were occasions when the ill feelings could not be concealed, culminating in fights or wars. Gambling contributed in no small measure to the instability of the Arabs' society in the pre-Islamic period.

Reforms Introduced by Islam

As a way of life that requires that peace should form the bedrock of social interaction, Islam condemns most of the economic activities of the pre-Islamic Arabs. All commercial transactions should bring joy and satisfaction to the parties to it. In trading, for instance, both the buyer and seller should benefit from the transaction. The former should be satisfied that the article bought is of the quality or services expected while the latter should make reasonable gains for his efforts, investment and risks to make the article available for sale. Should either of them feel cheated, the transaction is

unacceptable according to the *Sharī'ah*. With this general principle briefly explained, one would see that major sources of income of the pre-Islamic Arabs were defective in one way or the other, judged according to the *Sharī'ah*.

Raiding through which one forcibly dispossesses others of their property and, at times, wounds or kills them, is completely outlawed by Islam. Theft and robbery are criminal acts according to the *Sharī'ah* with stiff penalties stipulated to serve as deterrents. Instead, Islam enjoins mighty nations or communities to be judicious and considerate in using their resources. They should not seize the opportunity to lord it over weaker nations and acquire their belongings illegally.

Trading is held in high esteem in Islam. That is why Muslims are allowed to engage in it even when at the holy land before or after performing *Hajj* (Holy Pilgrimage). But there are differences between the pre-Islamic Arab trader and the Muslim one. The latter steers clear of all forms of fraudulent practices of those days such as the use of false measures, covering up the defects of articles, frivolous swearing in the name of Allah and hoarding. He bears Allah in mind always, knowing that He takes an account of everything he does in the mosque, shop or somewhere else. He needs gains but not at all costs. His joy mainly is to contribute his humble quota to the progress of the community in obedience to Allah.

Muslims are brothers and sisters to one another. The Prophet describes them as parts of the same body, sharing the joy and agony of one another. If any of the parts of the body sustains an injury, all other parts will not be comfortable. Thus, when a Muslim passes away leaving behind orphans and widows, the person in charge of his property should do everything possible to alleviate their suffering. He should not maltreat them. He can spend part of the wealth as his charge for taking care of it if he cannot afford to do that freely. The *Qur'ān* strongly condemns exploiting orphans and dispossessing them of their legitimate property.

The *Sharī'ah* forbids charging interests on loans no matter how little. The concept is that money itself cannot bring in gains. Other inputs such as labour, planning, land and transportation are necessary. More importantly, all investments are risky – they may succeed or fail. The money lender avoids all the risks involved and takes it for granted that the investment or business undertaking must bring gains. The borrower toils day and night to make the two ends meet while the lender relaxes, watching his money growing and growing. Islam sees this as a form of exploitation. Unless you have a stake in a business, you cannot share from its gains. Borrowers are also disallowed to agree to the terms of paying interests. The world-wide economic recession being experienced at present may not be unconnected with the policy of charging interests on loans, no matter whether for commercial purposes or welfare services.

The *Sharī'ah* forbids gambling because it fails to fulfill the requirement of bringing joy and satisfaction to the parties involved in it. While the winner is happy, the loser is sad. This does not enhance mutual love and goodwill as required by Islam. Secondly, it does not contribute in any way to the improvement of the quality of life by providing goods or services. Lastly, it depends purely on chances which may lead to psychological depression and anti-social behaviour. This may happen because depending

on chances to be rich rather than on hardwork will make one look for quick means of getting wealth. This may ultimately lead to pick pocketing, stealing and swindling.

Self Assessment Exercise

Islam introduced reforms into the economic system of the early Arabs. Discuss.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The use of the term “*Jāhiliyyah*” applies usually in relation to the life of the pre-Islamic Arabs with particular references to their practices in the various aspects of life and their negative effects on the society. Islam introduced reforms to give the people a new orientation to worship only Allah and refrain from licentious life and believing that they would give accounts of their earthly life on the Day of Judgment. To this end, polytheism, drunkenness, adultery, exploitation of the poor and the weak, oppressive use of political power, lending money on interest, cheating, gambling and self-centredness as individuals and groups were forbidden. Instead of all these, Islam encourages universal brotherhood of man, self-discipline and probity.

5.0 SUMMARY

This Unit focuses on the definition and implication of *Jāhiliyyah* as a term used to describe the life of the pre-Islamic Arabs and their practices in the various aspects of life. It highlights the reforms Islam introduced to dissuade them from polytheism, all forms of anti-social behaviour, exploitative economic practices, abuse of political power and immoralities.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT:

- Explain the term *Jāhiliyyah* in relation to the life of the pre-Islamic Arabs.
- Identify the practices of the pre-Islamic Arabs in the various aspects of life and the reforms Islam introduced to them.

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MODULE 2 : SOURCES OF THE *SHARĪ'AH*

Unit 1: The *Qur'ān* as a Source of the *Sharī'ah*.

Unit 2: The *Sunnah* as a Source of the *Sharī'ah*.

Unit 3: *Ijmā'* as a Source of the *Sharī'ah*.

Unit 4: *Qiyās* as a Source of the *Sharī'ah*.

UNIT 1: THE *QUR'ĀN* AS A SOURCE OF THE *SHARĪ'AH*

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Contents

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3.2 The Significance of the *Qur'ān* as the first primary source of *Sharī'ah*

3.3 A Highlight of the legal verses of the *Qur'ān*

4.0 Conclusion

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Module 1 of this Course detailed you with the lexical and technical meaning of *Sharī'ah* and expatiated upon the importance, concept and scope of the Islamic law. The relations between the terms Islam, *Sharī'ah* and *Fiqh* were also analysed for your digestion. The last Unit of the Module focused on analysis of the pre-Islamic Arab customs and the reforms introduced by Islam.

In this Module, you are going to study and digest the sources of the *Sharī'ah* legal system which are the *Qur'ān*, the *Sunnah*, *Ijmā'* (Consensus of Opinions) and *Qiyās* (Analogical Deduction).

Since the *Qur'ān* is the first primary and the most important source of the *Sharī'ah* on which all other sources are based we are going to begin by shedding light on the importance and roles of the *Qur'ān* as a source of the *Sharī'ah*.

OBJECTIVE

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

- Give a general classification of the contents of the Glorious *Qur'ān*
- Expatriate upon the significance of the *Qur'ān* as the first primary source of *Sharī'ah*
- Highlight the legal verses of the *Qur'ān*

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 General classification of the verses of the *Qur'ān*

The verses of the Holy *Qur'ān* can be classified into four categories as follows:

(i) Those that direct mankind to learn lessons through the remembrance of the gift of Allah: (*a`-t-Tadhkīr bi ālā`i Allah*)

There are numerous gifts of Allah like water, air, sun, moon, day, night, heavens, earth, children, vegetation, animals, etc. which point out the existence of Allah, the Divine Lordship of Allah, Oneness of Allah, etc.

“Which of the bounties of Allah will you reject?” constitute the chorus of twenty-nine verses of *Qur'ān* Chapter 55, *Sūratu`r-Rahmān*.

(ii) Those that direct mankind to learn lessons through the remembrance of various happenings, incidents, etc. (*a`-t-Tadhkīr bi āyām Allah*)

A number of events show how Allah had helped His Prophets and other pious people, and how he had punished the wrongdoers. The example of Allah's help to prophet Ibrahim, Ismail, Musa, Harun, Isa and Muhammad can be seen throughout the pages of the Holy Book.

Also the example of Allah's punishment on the wrongdoers can be observed in the *Qur'ān* in the cases of Fir-`awn, (Pharaoh), Nimrūd, Qārūn, Abū Lahab and the communities of Ād and Thamūd.

(iii) Those that direct mankind to learn lessons through the remembrance of death and eschatology (*a`-t-Tadhkīr bi`l mawt wa mā ba`da`l-mawt*)

Death and all events which follow death are mentioned in the Holy *Qur'ān*. These are as follows:

- a) Questioning in the grave by the two Angels , Munkar and Nakīr
- b) *Barzakh*, the intermediate state after the death till the day of resurrection
- c) Resurrection
- d) The day of judgement
- e) Rewards and Punishments
- f) Heaven and Hell
- g) The Beatific vision (seeing Almighty Allah face to face)

(iv) Passages of the Holy Book that contain injunctions of Allah with which mankind should abide (*a`-t-Tadhkīr bi Āyāt al-Ahkām*). A highlight of this will be presented shortly after the following section.

Self Assessment Exercise

“The verses of the Qur ‘an can be classified into four themes.” Expatiate upon this statement briefly.

3. 2 The Significance of the *Qur'ān* as the First Primary Source of *Sharī'ah*

The Holy *Qur'ān*, as we mentioned previously, is the first primary source of the *Sharī'ah*. It has the final say on any issue that relates to the Islamic Law, or, to be more specific, way of life. This is in view of the fact that the Law in Islam does not only treat criminal, civil, commercial and international cases. It goes further to discuss morals, ethics, worship, eschatology, metaphysics and social interaction. In other words, everything that a Muslim needs is provided for by the *Sharī'ah*. The *Qur'ān*, as a Law Book, is therefore different from any other one man has ever known. The following are some of its distinctive qualities.

- i. **Complete way of Life:** As said while discussing the scope of the *Sharī'ah*, man's religious life is traditionally divided into three broad aspects by the early scholars of Islam. These are the '*Aqīdah* (creed) '*Ibādah* (worship) and *Mu'āmalah* (social interaction). The first, as the translation shows, relates to faith or doctrinal issues such as belief in Allah and the other Articles of Faith. The second is on the acts of worship such as *Salāt* (Prayer), *Zakāt* (obligatory charity) and other cardinal principles of Islam; while the third consists of legislations on what transpires between one person and another or a group of persons. This may relate to economy, politics, entertainment and social activities generally. That is why some regards it a misnomer to single out some verses of the *Qur'ān* and tag them as being the only ones capable of legal application.
- ii. **Synthesis of morality and law:** The modern concept of law does not have any regard for moral and ethical consideration. An obvious case can be perverted if the lawyer handling it is capable or knows how to play his card to influence the judge. The ultimate aim is to impress the judge without any consideration for the conscience. The *Sharī'ah* is different in this because it constantly reminds man of the omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience of Allah. He knows everything and will give appropriate rewards in the hereafter. The *Qur'ān* cautions those in charge of dispensing justice asking: "Is Allah not the Judge of judges?" (*Qur'ān* 95:8).
- iii. **Stipulating the Law Potentially:** By this we mean that the *Qur'ān* is just "the model illustration for future legislation and does not constitute a legal code by itself". It provides the principles in most cases without stipulating the Law explicitly or actually. Should it attempt to do so, it would be too voluminous and will not serve the purpose it is meant for. The explicit and actual legislations are furnished in form of *Sunnah* which is the second primary source of the *Sharī'ah*. This shows the indispensable roles the Prophet played as the recipient, interpreter and practical demonstrator of the *Sharī'ah*. The fact that the *Qur'ān* has not supplied details in every aspect of life also provides opportunities for interpreting the law to accord with all times and places. Had it given specific legislations in the light of the situation at the time of the Prophet, it would have restricted itself to

that time and the Arab land. In that case, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to make the legislations applicable in the present time. The need for its review would have been irresistible, just like the case of other codes all over the world.

- iv. **Perfect:** No man is perfect, and anything coming from him cannot be perfect. That is why the need is always felt to improve on policies by modification, review or outright change. As a result of this, constitutions all over the world are subject to review, amendment or repeal. But the case of the *Qur'ān* is different. Its source is Allah to whom the past, the present and future are the same. He knows everything. Owing to His infinite knowledge, He is fully aware of all possible future needs of man and how to meet them. As such, He has revealed the *Qur'ān* as guidance in which there is no doubt in accordance with man's nature. Any deviation from it will not only make man fail to achieve the desired aim but will also create difficulties for him. We are all witnesses to what happens in developed countries where technological advancement has failed to bring about peace and tranquility in the society. Organised violent crimes are the order of the day in most of them.
- v. **Facilitation of Implementation:** Unlike other legal codes which expose man to temptations and, at the same time, expect him to keep the law, the *Qur'ān* gives due consideration to the nature of man and takes steps to enable him to carry out the injunctions. For instance, raping is a crime all over the world but woman is encouraged to make herself as attractive and seducing as possible in dressing, keeping dates and visiting males. The case of Mike Tyson, the heavy-weight boxing champion jailed for six years for raping a contestant in a beauty contest is apposite here. The lady was approached and invited to his hotel accommodation. The invitation was honoured and only God knows how she dressed and behaved to arouse his carnal feelings. The situation can hardly arise in an Islamic setting. The woman is enjoined to dress decently without exposing her beauty. Members of the opposite sexes are instructed to "lower their gaze" and avoid promiscuous intermingling (*Qur'ān* 34:30-31). A woman or girl is not allowed to visit any man who is not her husband or relative. Thus, to commit fornication or adultery is very difficulty in the Islamic country unlike what obtains in the West. In fact, the principle in the Islamic jurisprudence is that anything that may lead to a sin is a sin in itself.

In sum, the *Qur'ān* contains the totality of the *Sharī'ah* although in principle without going into detail in many cases. It provides the framework on which the elaborate exposition of the *Sharī'ah* in the Sunnah, *Ijmā'c* and *Qiyās* is based. Due to this unique role it plays, the *Qur'ān* is considered the most authoritative of the sources of the *Sharī'ah*. It has the final say on every legal issue. It is even used to determine the authenticity of Hadīth because all the sayings and practices of the Prophet are expected to

be in accordance with it. In case any statement or action is ascribed to him but is contrary to the *Qur'ān*, it will have no legal value. It must have been forged.

As the *Qur'ān* is meant to guide man to the realization of the purpose of his creation both here and in the hereafter, he is enjoined to ensure that he lives according to its provisions. The Prophet was specifically instructed to judge cases according to it. The *Qur'ān* 5:49 says:

To you we sent the scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety, so judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverting from the Truth that has come to you.

Failure to adhere to the provisions of the *Qur'ān* in dispensing justice is strongly condemned and those guilty of this sin are called *al-Kafirūm* (the unbelievers), *al-zālimūn* (the wrong-doers) and *al-Fāsiqūn* (the rebels) (*Qur'ān* 5:44-47). This means that the sin is so grave that it may rob one of one's faith and turn one into an evil-doer and a rebel. Hence, carrying out the *Sharī'ah* provisions as in the *Qur'ān* is part of one's responsibilities as a Muslim.

Self Assessment Exercise

Assess the importance of the *Qur'ān* as the first primary source of *Sharī'ah*.

3.2 A Highlight of legal Verses of the *Qur'ān*

Many *Qur'ānic* verses contain the commandments and injunctions of Allah for governing the conduct of every Muslim from birth to death; their observance will bring him eternal happiness. These verses are called *Āyāt al-Ahkām*. They may be grouped into four categories:

(i) *The Concise Injunctions*

These are the precise commandments contained in the Holy *Qur'ān*. But the Holy *Qur'ān* does not give detailed rules regarding these commandments. For example, the Injunctions concerning purification (*Tahārah*), prayers (*Ṣalāt*), fasting (*Ṣawm*), poor rate (*Zakāt*) and pilgrimage (Hajj) etc. are all mentioned in the *Qur'ān*, but the detailed rules about this are to be found in the traditions of the Prophet (SAW).

(ii) *The Consice-cum-Detailed Injunctions:*

This Injunctions are those which are contained in the verses some of which mentioned the commandments in brief but others mention them in detail and further leave them to the *Ḥadīth* and *Sunnah* as for example injunction on war, peace, Jihad, prisoners of war, booty and relations with non-Muslims. These details are not merely left to the

Hadīth and *Sunnah* alone but *Ijtihād* can also be a method to find suitable solution to the problems.

(iii) The detailed Injunctions:

These Injunctions are contained in the *Qur'ān* which give complete details of the commandments. Therefore, there is no room for *Ijtihād* e.g. all the *Hadd* punishments *Qiṣāṣ*, unintentional homicide, murder, theft, (*Sariqah*), robbery (*Hirābah*), *Zinā* (Fornication), and *Qadhf* (Defamation).

(iv) Fundamental principles of Guidance derived from injunctions:

The Holy *Qur'ān* also mentioned certain fundamental principles for the guidance of Muslims. But these principles have no clear cut definition either in the *Qur'ān* or the *Sunnah* except basic norms. They are to be provided through the due process of *Ijtihād*.

These principles are:

- a) Principles of freedom
- b) Principle of justice
- c) Principle of consultation
- d) Principle of public interest
- e) Principle of equality

It is the consensus of the opinion among the interpreters of the *Qur'ān* and Muslim Jurists (*al-Mufasssīrūn* and *al-Fuqahā'*) that any Muslim who legislatively innovates, or enacts laws inconsistent with what God has revealed, enforcing his own laws while renouncing the revealed ones - unless he believes that this innovated or self-imposed laws are correct interpretation of Allah's revelation- would be classified under one of the categories of either *Fāsidūn*, *Fāsiqūn*, *Zālimūn*, and finally *Kāfirūn*. For example, if a ruler does not apply the Islamic penalty for theft or slander or adultery, preferring the judgement of man-made law, such a ruler will be considered definitely an unbeliever. If a ruler fails to apply Islamic Jurisprudence for reasons other than disbelief, he is considered a wrongdoer, and if, as a result of neglecting Islamic Jurisprudence he violates a human right or overlooks a principle of justice and equity, he is considered a rebel.

List of some of the Legal Injunctions of the Holy Qur'ān

Ijmā' (Consensus of juristic opinion): *Al-Nisāi*, 4v59, 115

Qiyās (Analogy) *Al-Baqarah*, 2v227, *Al-Hashr* 59v2

Ijtihād: *Al-Ankabūt*, 29v69

Istiḥṣān (Juristic preference): *Al-Baqarah*, 2v185; *Al-Hajj*, 22v78

Marriage: *Al-Baqarah*, 2v222,235; *Al-Nisāi*, 4v4, 19,21,23,24,25;
Al-Māidah, 5v5,7; *Al-A'rāf*, 7v189; *Al-Nūr*, 24v3,22,26,32,33;
Al-Ahzāb, 33v37; *Al-Rūm*, 30v21; *Al-Mumtahinah* 60v10,11,12

Purpose of Marriage: *Al-Rūm*, 30v21; *Al-Nisāi*, 4v1; *Al-Nahl*, 16v72.

Choice of Partners: *Al-Nūr*, 24v31; *Al-Nisāi*, 4v3.

Polygamy: *Al-Nisāi*, 4v3,29.

Mahr (Dower): *Al-Nisāi*, 4v4,20,21,24,25; *Al-Māida*, 5v6; *Al-Baqarah*, 2v236
Nafaqah (Maintenance): *Al-Baqarah*, 2v233,241; *Al-Nisāi*, 4v34; *Aṭ-Ṭalāq*, 65v6,7;
Al-Ahzāb, 33v50

Good behaviour between spouses: *Al-Nisāi*, 4v19, 129, 130.
Code of conduct for believing women: *Al-Nūr*, 24v30,31
Responsibilities of man: *Al-Nisāi*, 4v34,35,128
Marriage with unbelievers: *Al-Baqarah*, 2v221
Marriage with Ahlul-Kitab: *Al-Māidah*, 5v6
Prohibited degree of Relationship: *Al-Nisāi*, 4v22,23,24.
Zihār (Injurious comparism) *Al-Ahzāb*, 33v4; *Al-mujādilah*, 58v2,3,4.
Īlā (Vow of desertion): *Al-Baqarah*, 2v226.
Li 'ān (Mutual Cursing): *Al-Nūr*, 24v 4-12
Ṭalāq (Divorce): *Al-Baqarah*, v227-232,236-237,241,242; *Al-Nisāi*,
4v20,21,35,128,130; *Al-Ahzāb*, 33v49; *Al-Talaq*, 65v1,2,6,7.
Khul'u (Redemption): *Al-Baqarah*, 2v229; *Al-Nisāi*, 4v128
Iddah (Retreat): *Al-Baqarah*, 2v228,234,235; *Al-Talaq*, 65v1-4.
Raja'a (Revocation of Divorce): *Al-Baqarah*, 2v228; *Al-Ahzab*, 33v49.
Suckling (*Radā'ah*): *Al-Baqarah*, 2v233.
Orphan and guardianship: *Al-Nisāi*, 4v2,3,5,6,8,10,127; *Al-Baqarah*, 2v220.
Succession or Inheritance: *Al-Baqarah*, 2v180,181; *Al-Nisāi*, 4v7,8,11,12,
Waṣiyyah (Wills): *Al-Nisāi*, 4v7,8,11,12,33,176.

LEGAL TRANSACTIONS

Trade and Business (Sales): *Al-Baqarah*, 2v188,275.
Writing and deeds of sales: *Al-Baqarah*, 2v282
Usury (*Ribā*): *Al-Baqarah*, 2v275,276,278,279,280,281 *Āl- 'Imrān*, 3v130.
Debt: *Al-Baqarah*, 2v245,280; *Al-Muzammil*, 73v20; *A't-Taghābun*, 64v17.
Mortgage: *Al-Baqarah*, 2v283
Trust (*Amānah*): *Al-Nisāi*, 4v35; *Al-Anfāl*, 8v27
Measurement: *Banū Isrā'īl*, 17v35; *A'sh-Shūra*, 42v181,182,; *Hūd*, 11v85.
Food and Drinks: *Al-Baqarah*, 2v168,172.
Justice: *A'n-Nisāi*, 4v58,135; *Al-Māidah*, 5v9,45,47; *Al-A'rāf*, 7v29; *A'n-Nahl*, 16v90.

CRIMES

Theft (*Sariqah*): *Al-Baqarah*, 2v286; *Al-Māida*, 5v41,42
Zina (Fornication): *Banū Isrā'īl*, 17v32; *A'n-Nūr*, 24v2-9
Wine for any intoxicant: *Al-Baqarah*, 2v219; *Al-Māida*, 5v93
Highway robbery (*Hirābah*): *Al-Māida*, 5v36,37
Killing (*Qatl*): *Al-Baqarah*, 2v178,179; *Al-Māidah*, 5v35
Defamation (*Qazf*): *A'n-Nūr*, 24v4,5,11,20,23,24.
Witness: *Al-Baqarah*, 2v140,282,283; *Al-Nisāi*, 4v15,135;
Al-Māidah, 5v9,109,110, 111; *A'n-Nūr*, 24v13; *Al-Furqān*, 25v72.
Oath (*Al-Yamīn*): *Al-Baqarah*, 2v224, 227; *Al-Māidah*, 5v92; *A'n-Nahl*, 16v94;

A`n - Nūr, 24v22, 53

Punishments: *Al-Baqarah*, 2v178,179; *Al-Nisāi*, 4v15, 16, 92, 93;

Al-Māidah, 5v36, 37, 41, 42, 48; *A`n-Nūr*, 24v2-5

Repentance (*Tawbah*): *A`t-Tawbah*, 9 the whole chapter especially v29 which deals with legal injunctions.

Lawful Relation (*Qaṣaṣ*): *Al-Baqarah*, 2v178; *Al-Māidah*, 5v35, 48.

Consultation (Shura): *Āl-Imrān* 3v158; *Al-Shurah*, 42v38

Law of War and Peace: *Al-Baqarah*, 2v217, *Al-Nisāi*, 4v71, 100; *Al-Anfāl*, 8v41, 61

In sum, an Egyptian scholar ‘Abdu `l-Wahhāb bn `l-Khallāf classified Qur`ānic legislations as follows: Constitutional Provisions – 10 verses; International law – 25 verses; Jurisdiction and procedures – 13 verses; Civil laws – 30 verses and Economic and Financial injunctions – 20 verses (Clinton Bennet: 1994. P.100)

Self Assessment Exercise

Enumerate the groupings of the *Qur`ānic* verses that contain legal issues with brief explanation.

4.0 CONCLUSION:

The *Qur`ān* is the first and the original source of *Sharī`ah*- the Islamic Law. It does not only stipulate but also provides guidelines on how to implement its provisions. It puts the nature of man into consideration always. The guidance provided in the *Qur`ān* covers all the aspects of life except that it does not go into details in most cases. As a legal treatise, the *Qur`ān* has the peculiarity of covering all aspects of man’s life. It contains the Law potentially and not explicitly. It is incumbent on Muslims to avail themselves of guidance the Book provides as failure to do so amounts to nothing less than disbelief and recantation.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit opens with a classification of the verses of the *Qur`ān* into those that direct mankind to learn lessons through the remembrance of the gift of Allah; through the remembrance of various happenings, incidents, etc. through the remembrance of death and eschatology and those that contain injunctions of Allah with which mankind should abide. It then gives a highlight of the significance of the *Qur`ān* as the first primary source of *Sharī`ah* containing provisions for all aspects of human life; and enumerating its distinctive qualities as a Law Book different from any other one man has ever known.

It then focuses on the grouping of *Āyāt al-Ahkām* (verses having bearings on legal injunctions) and concludes with a list of some of such legal injunctions in the Holy Book.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- Give a general classification of the contents of the Glorious *Qur`ān*.
- Expatriate upon the significance of the *Qur`ān* as the first primary source of *Sharī`ah*.

- The list of some of the Legal Injunctions of the Holy Qur'ān can be classified into four Groupings, i. e. Marriage, Divorce, Business transaction, and Crimes; quote five *Qur'ānic* verses for each of them.

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UNIT 2 : SUNNAH AS THE SECOND PRIMARY SOURCE OF THE *SHARĪ'AH*

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Contents
 - 3.1 Significance of “*Sunnah*”
 - 3.2 The Sunnah as the Second Primary Source of *Sharī'ah*
 - 3.3 Importance of *Hadīth* for both Religious and Legal purposes in Islam
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References and Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Course, ISL121 has introduced you to the science of *Hadīth* in detail. It enlightened you about the origin of *Hadīth*, its kinds, divisions, compilation, criticism, classification, and its famous scholars. The collectors of the six authentic *Hadīths* and their collections in particular were not left behind.

Meanwhile, Sunnah is next to the *Qur'ān* and is the second primary source of the *Sharī'ah*. Perhaps you should be reminded that *Hadīth* and *Sunnah* are sometimes interchangeably used for the tradition of the Prophet. This unit will carry you through the importance of *Sunnah* as a source of the *Sharī'ah* and discuss other related issues.

2.0 OBJECTIVE

At the end of this unit you should be able to

- Explain the significance of *Sunnah*
- Expatriate upon the *Hadīth* as the second primary source of the *Sharī'ah*,
- Discuss the importance of Sunnah for both religious and legal purposes

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Significance of “*Sunnah*”

As a lexical item in Arabic, *Sunnah* means a way or manner of acting. It is used in the *Qur'ān* in this sense to signify the mode of life of the previous peoples. Examples of this can be found in the *Qur'ān* 8:38, 15:13, 18:35, 35:43. It is also used to mean the way Allah deals with people or acts generally. As a technical term, it initially meant, first and foremost, the deeds or practice of the Prophet as distinct from his sayings which were usually assigned to *Hadīth*. Events soon overtook this separation and the two terms – *Sunnah* and *Hadīth* came to mean the same thing. Now, either of them means the sayings and actions of the Prophet and those of his Companions that got his Prophetic approval. Thus, we have *Sunnah* in form of *Qawl* (speech) *Fi'l* (action) and *Taqrīr* (approval).

The significance of *Sunnah* derives first and foremost from the emphasis laid on it by the *Qur'ān* as an indispensable guide to the straight path. Some of the relevant passages of the *Qur'ān* go thus:

Verily in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example for him who looks unto Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much.

(*Qur'ān* 33:21)

O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger and those of you who are in authority; and if you have a dispute concerning any matter, refer it to Allah and the Messenger if you are (in truth) believers in Allah and the Last Day. That is better and more seemly in the end.

(*Qur'ān* 4:59)

O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and render not your actions vain.

The first verse quoted above (*Qur'ān* 47:33) emphasizes the need for us to take the life of the Prophet as a model to achieve prosperity both in this world and in the hereafter. The second enjoins Muslims to obey Allah and the Messenger and concede their final verdicts on actions to the two of them if indeed they are believers. This, in essence, means that we should take as forbidden anything declared as such by Prophet Muhammad. The third warns against disobedience to Allah and the Prophet because that will surely lead to the nullification of deeds rendering them null and void. As we cannot see Allah and even the Prophet is no more, the meaning of obedience to them is to obey the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* which respectively represent their will.

By the time the Prophet passed away, the whole *Qur'ān* had been revealed while his life had taken its full course, leaving indelible landmarks in the various aspects and stages of life. He, therefore, had no doubt whatsoever in urging the Muslims to stick to the *Qur'ān* and his *Sunnah*. He said:

... I have left with you something which if you will hold fast to it, you will never fall into error – a plain indication, the Book of Allah, and the practice of His Prophet. So give good heed to what I say.

The *Sunnah* is significant in understanding and practising Islam because of many purposes it serves. Among such purposes are the following:

- i) **Explanation of the *Qur'ān*:** That the scripture covers all aspects of human endeavour does not mean that it gives every detail in each case. At times, it gives details while allusions or essential guidelines are given at others. The usual practice was that the Prophet would supply explanations, taking the initiative or in

answering questions. Examples here are cases of the ritual Prayer, *Salāt*, and the Pilgrimage, *Hajj*.

- ii) **Supplement to the *Qur'ān*:** In addition to the above, there are occasions when injunctions in the *Qur'ān* do not have direct bearing on a particular issue and it is necessary to make provisions for such. An example that may be given here is that of making necessary amendments in *Ṣalāt* when there is a mistake of omission, addition or both at the same time. In this case, the *Sunnah* will provide guidance to supplement the *Qur'ān*.
- iii) **Practical Exemplification of the *Qur'ānic* Injunctions:** But for the life of the Prophet, some people may think that many teachings of the *Qur'ān* are very difficult or utopian. A world in the firm grip of secularism and materialism will find it difficult to understand, for instance, the integration of the spiritual and temporal, the State and Religion, in such a way that the world is not rejected in favour of the hereafter or *vice versa*. Islam teaches that there should be “harmony and equilibrium” between man’s sensual, social, economic, political, religious, spiritual and cultural tendencies to enable him to live comfortably and pleasantly here, and to achieve felicity and bliss after death. The maxim, in fact, is to have the best of the provisions in this world as well as in the hereafter (*Qur'ān* 2:201). But for the fact that the Prophet, at the same time, played the roles of Head of State, Chief Justice, War Commander, Diplomat, Imam, just to mention a few, it could have been justifiably argued that the feat is impossible. There are other fundamental teachings relating to economic, judicial, political and spiritual issues, the understanding of which has been enhanced by the practical exemplification of the Prophet as recorded in the *Sunnah*.
- iv) **Shedding light on the Prophet’s life:** It is not uncommon to hear that mystery surrounds some aspects of the life of the previous Prophets. The study of the Ḥadīth of *Sunnah* and the nature of the Prophet’s mission have gone a long way to avoid the problem. Almost every detail of his life is known. His close associates, members of his household, especially his wives, and Muslims in general who were his contemporaries preserved such information for us. But for the *Sunnah* which evolved as a systematic way of recording such details, some aspects of the life history of the Prophet might have suffered the fate of being shrouded in mystery and forgotten.
- v) **Life history of Companions:** These are the Muslims who belonged to the generation of the Prophet. They were eye – and ear-witnesses to all his actions and speeches. The study of the *Sunnah* facilitated knowing their history especially when it became necessary to mention those responsible for the transmission of *Hadīth* from the source and the last reporter with a view to assessing the extent of

the authenticity of the *Hadīth*. This, in turn, led to the study of the life of those belonging to the next generation and the following ones otherwise known as *Tabi'ūn* or *Tābi'ū Tābi'in* (Successors or Successors of the Successors) as the case may be.

Self Assessment Exercise

What does *Sunnah* signify and what are the factors that make it important to a Muslim?

3.2 The *Sunnah* as the Second Primary Source of *Sharī'ah*

The Holy *Qur'ān* was revealed to prophet Muhammad (SAW) who never spoke from His own imagination but told only what Allah had revealed to him. The Holy *Qur'ān* bears witness to this fact:

“Nor does he say (ought) of his own desire. It is no less than inspiration sent down to him”.

This verse was revealed to counter the three wrong charges levelled by the Qurashites of Makkah against the Prophet to the following effect:

- (i) That he was going astray either through the defect of intelligence or carelessness.
- (ii) That he was being misled or deceived by evil spirits (*Jin*) and was a *Majnūn* (One possessed by a *Jin*); and
- (iii) That he was speaking out of his own whim or impulse, or from a selfish desire to impress his own personality. It confirmed that the Prophet (SAW) received direct inspiration from Allah which guided all his thoughts and actions. The real import of the above verse is that it shows the importance of the *Hadīth* and *Sunnah* in the interpretation of the entire message of the *Qur'ān* and in the formation of the Islamic System.

It is for this reason that after *Qur'ān*, which is God's word and the first source of *Sharī'ah*, *Hadīth* stands second as the hidden revelation (*Wahy Khaḥfiyy*). The *Qur'ānic* verse lends support to this fact:

“And we have sent down unto you also the message: that you may explain clearly to men what is sent for them, and that they may give thought”

In addition to the above *Qur'ānic* authority there is an authority available in the *Hadīth* confirming that *Sunnah* no less important in interpreting the *Qur'ān*:

“Undoubtedly, I am given the *Qur'ān* and the like of it (*Sunnah*) with it”

This is reported by the Holy *Qur'ān* itself. There is also an authority in the *Sunnah* to the same effect:

“Beware I am giving the *Qur'ān* and something like it along with it”

But in cases where the *Sunnah* is also silent as to the interpretation of the *Qur'ānic* verses, recourse may be had to the way the companion of the Prophet had interpreted them. This is understood by a saying of Ibn Mas'ūd:

“These were people among us when they learnt ten verses, they would not go further unless they knew their meanings properly and acted upon them. Thus we learnt the and based our actions on it”

This statement shows that the *Ṣahābah* were well versed in the interpretation of the Holy *Qur’ān* and that in the absence of any guidance from the *Qur’ān* and the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) the interpretation of the Holy *Qur’ān* by the *Ṣahābah* will be binding on the future generations.

The following example shows how the *Ṣahābah* used to interpret the Holy *Qur’ān*. A lady came to Abdullah Ibn Mas‘ūd and said:

“I have learnt that you preach certain things, and you say that those who tattoo and have themselves tattooed have been cursed by Allah Ta’ala, whereas I have read the *Qur’ān* from cover to cover and did not find therein what you are saying”

Ibn Mas‘ud Said: **“Go and read the *Qur’ān* again”**

After carrying out the order of Ibn Mas‘ūd she presented herself again and said:

“Even now I have not yet discovered in the *Qur’ān* what you say”

Ibn Mas‘ūd replied: **“What, have you not recited, ‘Whatever the messenger brought to you take hold of it, and whatever he forbids you of abstain from it”**

When the lady replied in affirmative, Abdullah bn Mas‘ūd said: “that is it i.e. what I have said”

In reality, the entire life of the Holy Prophet (SAW), whatever he did or said, was according to the teachings of *Qur’ān* and hence if all the events of his life and teaching are taken together with all the authentic *Hadīths*, we get complete Commentary of the *Qur’ān* put into practice by the Messenger of Allah himself, the bearer of the Divine revelations.

The causes of revelations (*Asbāb`n-Nuzūl*) and other explanations of the verses of the Holy *Qur’ān* that we find in the collections of *Hadīths* of Imam al-Bukhārī, Imam Muslim, Imam Tirmidhī, which forms the *Tafsīr Nabawī*, is not complete, although they have been arranged according to the chapters of the Holy *Qur’ān* by these great scholars of *Hadīth*. There might be traditions from the prophet (SAW) relevant to three or four verses of chapter while there might be nothing relating to its remaining verses. There are scholars, however, who believe that the prophet commented on the whole *Qur’ān*., and one of this is the famous scholar Ibn Taimiyyah. What seems more plausible is the statement of ‘Aishah: the Prophet (SAW) commented only on some verses of the Book of Allah (and his commentary consisted of) what Gabriel had thought him.

Abdullah bn Abbas used to comment on the *Qur’ān* even in the presence of the companions. Umar b. al-Khatab used to give priority to Ibn Abbas, over the companions, so they complained to him about this. Umar called Ibn Abbas and asked the companions about the explanation of chapter 110: **“When comes the help of Allah and victory”**. The companions remained silent. Ibn Abbas said that it referred to the time of the death of the Messenger of Allah. Umar endorsed that opinion and thereby justified his preference for the young Ibn Abbas.

It is significant that there is no explicit mention in the chapter of the time of death of the Prophet. What the statement of Ibn Abbas implies is that when victory comes

everything is completed, meaning that the Holy prophet (SAW) had completed his task. Hence nothing lays in store for him except to return to the mercy of Allah.

Before long attention came to be concentrated on the Prophet and his manner of life became in their eyes the ideal Muslim to be imitated by his followers. In other words the Sunnah of the Prophet became a standard of living which every Muslim should aspire to reach. Certainly, who else could be better guide for the Muslim than the Prophet himself. His words and deeds became a source a source of inspiration for all Muslims in all time to come.

After his death, reports of the prophet's wonderful sayings and doings began to circulate. These sayings continued to increase from time to time and became subject to standardization and selection.

These represented the words of the prophet as supplemented to the word of Allah. The *Hadīth* in other word is the second pillar after the *Qur'ān* upon which every Muslim rests the fabric of his faith and life. The body of traditions circulated orally for some time, as indicated by the word *Hadīth*, commonly used for tradition and which literarily means a saying conveyed to man either through hearing or through witnessing an event. It is also used to denote "conversation" i.e. the telling of something new. The record of the sayings, therefore, was called *Sunnah* (custom or usage). For its details the plural *Sunan* meaning customs was used.

The *Hadīth*, in short, is the storerooms of the Sunnah of the prophet, serving an essential need of the Muslims, be they individuals or communities. It was for this reason that they were taught by the prophet in the following manners.

- (i) Verbal teaching was done by the prophet himself respecting important things three times. Then he used to listen to the companions to make sure that they had learnt them correctly. Even, when delegations arrived in Medinah, the prophet had charged the Medinates not only to accommodate them to teach them the message of Islam and its practices through the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*. The prophet used to ask them questions to find out as to how much they had learnt.
- (ii) Teaching through writing was done by the prophet through various letters that he wrote to kings, rulers, chieftains and Muslim governorns. These letters contained instructions concerning *Zakāt*, taxes, forms of worship e.t.c.
- (iii) Teaching done by the prophet through practical demonstration like the how to perform ablution, how to say *Ṣalāt* - prayers, how to perform Hajj, and how to observe fasts. His instruction in respect of salat was:

“Pray as you see me offering prayers”

Self Assessment Exercise

Show the significance of *Hadīth* to Islam and the Muslims stating the attitude of the early Muslim predecessors towards it.

3.3 Importance of *Hadīth* for both Religious and Legal purposes in Islam

As we have seen earlier, the *Hadīth* has come to supplement the *Qur'ān* as a source of the Islamic religious law. Muslims can always turn to both sources for answers to all problems; be they legal or religious. The importance of *Hadīth* in this regard can be realized when one considers the Zeal and enthusiasm with which every group of Muslims, every party, every movement supplied itself with a selection of traditions which would give prophetic authority for its particular point of view.

After the death of prophet, every case that came up for decision had to be referred to either to the *Qur'ān* or to some judgement or saying of the prophet, which judgements or saying therefore, obtained a wide reputation. There are a number of numerous cases on record in which a right was claimed on the basis of a judgement or saying of the Holy prophet, and evidence was demanded to the authenticity of the saying.

For instance, Fatimah, the prophet's daughter claimed that she was entitled to an inheritance from the holy prophet. But according to Bukhārī, chapter 85, traditions no. 2, the holy prophet said: **“we the prophets do not inherit nor leave an estate for inheritance: whatever we leave is a charity”**. This saying was cited by Abu Bakr as against the claim of Fatimah. The truth of this *Hadīth* was not questioned by any one and Fatimah's claim was rejected. Incidents of these types occurred daily and became the occasion of establishing the truth of many sayings of the holy prophet.

Not only was the trustworthiness of the particular *Hadīth* established all doubt, but the *Hadīth* also obtained a wide circulation, and from being the knowledge of one man only passed to that of many. The *Hadīth* literature, as we now have it, provides us with apostolic precept and example covering the whole duty of man. It is that developed system of law, theology and custom which is Islam. Muslim law is so very comprehensive that all the minute acts of a Muslim are guarded by it. A Muslim, in reality, is told by his code not only what is required under penalty, but also what is either recommended or disliked. It will be relevant here to reproduce the five classes into which actions are divided in the Shari 'ah by way of emphasis.

- (i) Fard or Wajib: A compulsory duty the omission of which is punished.
- (ii) Mandub or Mustahab: An action which is rewarded, but the omission is not punished.
- (iii) Jaiz or Mubah: An action which is permitted but is legally indifferent.
- (iv) Makruh: An action which is disliked and disapproved by the *Sharī'ah* but it is not under any penalty.
- (v) Haram: An action which is forbidden. It is punishable by law.

After understanding the above frame work of Muslim law, it is understandable that it was essential to receive guidance from the life history of the prophet. For this reason, all the records of the manners and customs of the prophet and details of his life and conversation were collected.

Thus, traditions of the prophet were important in the development of Islamic legal system and jurisprudence. The *Muwatta* of Imam Malik bn Anas (d.

179 A.H.) shows, for example, how the law can be drawn from these usages and traditions of the prophet. This book, the first of its kind, helped to build up a system of law based partly on Traditions. It was followed by the *Musnad* of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (d. 241 A.H.). And thus, after the Holy *Qur'ān* the *Hadīth* is the primary source of Muslim law.

4.0 CONCLUSION

You have learnt in this Unit the meaning, importance and significance of *Sunnah* or *Hadīth* as the second primary source of the *Sharī'ah*, you have also learnt the preservation of the *Sunnah* and its compilation by the various scholars with the result that six compilations become recognized as the most authentic compilations. Social, political and theological problems that characterized the early stage of Islam starting from the latter part of the caliphate of °Uthmān b. °Affān led to the fabrication of *Hadīth* to support one group; or the other. That development necessitated setting standards for *Hadīths/Sunnah* for the purpose of authentication. In the end, *Hadīths/ Sunnah* were classified according to the extent of satisfying the conditions into *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Sound) *Ḥasan* (Fair) and *Da'īf* (Weak) just to mention only three.

5.0 SUMMARY

This Unit examines *Sunnah* or *Hadīth* as the second primary source of the *Sharī'ah*. It gives explicit expressions to the *Sharī'ah* in terms of practical exemplifications. It shows that the importance of *Hadīth* was recognized during the time of the Prophet resulting into efforts been made to preserve all that came from him. His passing away, all the more, made people attach importance to it in view of the reality of their situation. The concern continued to grow greater culminating eventually in the official attempt to compile it during the caliphate of °Umar b. °Abd al-°Azīz. Individuals later took up the challenge including the compilers of the Six Sound *Ḥadīth* Collections. Certain social political and theological problems cropped up in the first and second centuries of Islam, which made some people fabricate *Hadīths*. Scholars were fortunately equal to the task of detecting out such fabrications. The two component parts of *Hadīths* – *Isnād* (Chain of transmitters) and *Matn* (text of the *Hadīth*) received their attention. The result of this exercise was the division of *Hadīths* into many categories, the most important of which are *Ṣaḥīḥ* (sound) *Ḥasan* (Fair) and *Da'īf* (Weak).

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- Discuss the significance of Hadith showing the importance attached to it by the early Muslims.
- How can you justify the use of the *Sunnah* as a source of the *Sharī'ah* on the basis of the *Qur'ān*?
- Of what importance is the *Sunnah* for both religious and legal purposes.

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UNIT 3: IJMĀ^c : CONSENSUS OF OPINIONS

CONTENTS

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- 2.0 Objectives
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The two primary sources of *Sharī'ah* are the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* as presented in the foregoing Units One and two of this Module. In the following two units we shall discuss two other sources of the Islamic law viz. *Ijmā'* and *al-Qiyās*. As the final sanction for all intellectual activities in respect of the development of *Sharī'ah* comes from nowhere else but the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet these two instruments are regarded as secondary deriving from the legal stipulations from the two primary sources. This unit presents an examination of *al-Ijmā'* as one of the two secondary sources of Islamic law to you.

2.0 OBJECTIVE

At the end of this Unit you are expected to be able to

- Define *al-Ijmā'* and give its basis
- Highlight the divisions of *al-Ijmā'*
- Expatriate upon application of *al-Ijmā'* as a source of the *Sharī'ah*.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Definition and Basis of *al-Ijmā'*

al-Ijmā' is the consensus of juristic opinions of the learned scholars of the Ummah after the death of the Messenger of Allah. *Ijmā'* can also be defined as the consensus of the opinion of the Companions of the prophet (*Ṣaḥābah*) and the agreement reached on the decisions taken by the learned Muftis or Jurists on various Islamic matters.

Almighty Allah Himself encourages seeking the opinions of others on religious matters as is said in the Holy Qur'ān:

“It is through the mercy of Allah that you are lenient with them. If you are to be hard-hearted, they would have deserted you: pardon them and seek forgiveness for them and seek their opinions in the matters;”

whenever you decide upon something. Have believe in Allah surely Allah loves those that rely on Him”

Almighty Allah has also said:

“Those who answer the call of their Lord, and establish regular prayer (Salat) and whose affairs are a matter of counsel and spend out of what we bestow on them for sustenance”

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) also supported the process of *al-Ijmā‘* when he says in the *Hadīth*: *“My people would never agree on whoever leads them astray”*

The practice of *al-Ijmā‘* can be traced back to the days of the Companions of the Prophet as can be seen from the following examples. Almighty Allah does not state the type of punishment that should be applied to one who drinks alcohol. But the agreement was reached by the consensus of opinions of the *Ṣaḥābah* when Caliph Ali bn Abī Ṭālib said: **“he who drinks, get drunk, he who gets drunk, raves; he who raves, accuses people falsely; and he who accuses people falsely should be given eighty strokes of cane according to the injunction of the Holy Qur’ān. Almighty Allah has said:**

“Those that accuse the innocent women falsely, and they do not bring forth four witnesses, flog them eighty strokes of cane and do not accept their witnesses, they are the wrong doers”

Al-Ijmā‘ owes its origin to the following *Qur’ānic* verses in *Sūrah al-Nisāi*

“But whoso makes a breach with the Messenger after the guidance has come clear to him, and follows a way other than that becoming to men of faith. We shall leave him over to what he has chosen and we shall land him in the fire of hell- an evil refuge”

“O believers, obey Allah and obey Messenger and those in authority among you. If you should quarrel on anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger”

Consultation (*Shūrā*) and the use of juristic reason (*Ijtihād*) are normal preliminaries for arriving at a binding *Ijmā‘*. The Rightly guided Caliphs always consulted the *Ṣaḥābah* whenever a novel issue arose. The caliphate of Abu Bakr was based and run on the process of the *Ṣaḥābah*.

The following few examples are based on such process of *al-Ijmā‘*. The validity of a contract for the purchase of goods yet to be manufactured (‘*aqd al-Istisna‘*’) is based on an *al-Ijmā‘*.

The normal rule is that a sale of non-existence goods is not valid because of uncertainty. The juristic consensus was aiming at providing a practical solution. In the field of inheritance, for an example, it was agreed that if a person is predeceased by his father, then the grandfather participates in the inheritance of the estate with the son taking the share of the father.

It was also agreed that the grandfather is entitled to a sixth of the estate of the propositus. The *Ijmā'* on this issue, is based on a decision attributed by al-Mughirah Ibn Shu'bah (d. 50 A.H.) to the Prophet (SAW).

In the field of family law it was agreed that since the *Qur'ān* prohibits marriage with mothers and daughters then grandmothers and grand daughters (however remoted) by the same token fall within the prohibited degrees.

The minimum period of gestation is six months according to all *fiqh* schools, but an example of lack of *al-Ijmā'* is in fact the disagreement over the maximum period of gestation.

During the caliphate of 'Umar b. Al-Khaṭṭāb, Muslims conquered Syria which had a large expanse of fertile land being cultivated. In line with the stipulation in the *Qur'ān* 8:41 and the practice of the Prophet, in most cases the Muslim soldiers demanded that the land be distributed among them. The Caliph sensed the dangers in doing that. In the first instance, the distance between Medina, the capital of the Government, and Syria, was so long that the settlement of the soldiers in Syria would lead to their relocation. Secondly, having settled for cultivating the land, the soldiers' attention would be diverted from defending Islam and the Islamic Empire against external aggression. More importantly, Medina would lose the services of gallant soldiers and accomplished intellectuals who had been assets and pillars of the city.

In the end, the Caliph invited the generality of people versed in the Islamic Law to consider the problem dispassionately. In the end, they took the unanimous decision that the land be left in the hands of the original owners. In return, they would pay rents the proceeds from which would be used to compensate the soldiers and provide amenities for all the citizens. As from that time, *Kharāj*, rent paid on using Government land, became a source of revenues to the Islamic Government. Thus, he charged 'Uthmān b. Hanīf with the responsibility of administering the conquered land of 'Irāq, as well as of other places.

The example cited above illustrates how the explanation of the *Qur'ān* and its spirit can influence personal reasoning. It is true that the soldiers, according to the *Qur'ān*, had the right to share the four fifths of booties especially at the time of the Prophet because of their precarious financial condition and proximity of the territories subdued to the seat of the Empire.

Having the spirit of the Law rather than the text to guide one's reasoning also comes into play here. Despite the text of the verse and the Prophet's tradition, 'Umar has chosen to consider the far implications and the welfare of the society which both the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* aim to guarantee. Centuries after that bold decision has been taken, it is to be noted that events so far have proved him right. The territories still remain in the hands of Muslims to date.

Thus, the consensus of the '*Ulamā (al-Ijmā')* must be based on the Book of Allah, the instructions of the prophet (*Qawlu Rasūl*), the actions and demonstrations of the prophet (*Fi'l Rasūl*). But some actions of the prophet can be of a very special nature which can not be applicable to an ordinary man. Lastly,

the consensus must be based on preachings and speeches of the prophet (*Taqrīrāt al-Rasūl*).

Self Assessment Exercise

- Define *al-Ijmā'* and give its basis

3.2 Divisions of *Ijmā'*

The *Ijmā'* could be divided into three broad categories: *Ijmā' Qawlī* (the verbal consensus of opinion), *Ijmā' al-Fi'l* (consensus of opinion on an action) and *Ijmā' Sukūṭī* (silent approval).

The *Ijmā'* could also be sub-divided into two broad categories: *Ijmā' al-Azīmah* (the regular consensus of opinion) and *Ijmā' Rukhṣah* (the irregular consensus of opinion).

As regards the verbal consensus of opinion, if an issue is raised and all the Jurists assent to it by voicing out their approval, the consensus of opinion is regular. Nonetheless both of them are valid in Islam Law system.

As regards the practical *Ijmā'*, if a Jurist does something and none of the other Jurists challenges him, the *Ijmā'* is regular; but if a Jurist does something, and one or more Jurists question him, the *Ijmā'* is irregular. Nonetheless, both of them are valid as far as Islamic law is concerned.

During the time of Imam Malik and Abu Hanifah, the eligibility of Jurists who could sanction the *Ijmā'* became a matter of controversy. According to some Jurists, it is only the companions of the prophet who were in position to sanction the *Ijmā'*. According the Shites, however, the *Ijmā'* can only be sanctioned by *Ahlu'l-Bayt* (the people of the house of the prophet), that is the descendants of Ali and Fatimah, the daughter of the prophet.

According to Imam Malik, the *Ijmā'* can only be sanctioned by the Jurists of Medinah. But as far as the Hanafī school of thought is concerned, the *Ijmā'* can be sanctioned by any qualified jurist irrespective of his geographical place of abode or the religious sect that he belongs to.

The Jurists also disagreed amongst themselves as to the number of the Jurists who can ratify the *Ijmā'*. According to Imams Malik and Abu Hanifa, the number must not necessary be very great. Some Jurists put the number to three Jurists while some others say that two will suffice the purpose. The Jurist also say that any *Ijmā'* sanctioned by the companions of the prophet can only be repealed by no one else but by the Jurists who lived during their period. But any *Ijmā'* sanctioned by the Jurists who are not the companions of the prophet can be repealed by the Jurists of their generations as well as the jurists of their generation after them are empowered to do so because people consider their opinion as of the same weight in the Islamic legal system.

The jurists say that any *Ijmā'* that has to do with some marginal issue on *Ibādah* (religious worship), must be ratified by every member of the community that is concerned. If a layman says that he does not agree to a matter raised, it must

be accepted as invalid. But, on the other hand, if the *Ijmā'* has anything to do with Mu'amalat which need through reasoning, the layman's point of view must not be considered.

The Maliki school considers that the established practice of the people of Medinah (amal ahl al-Madīnah) provided valid *Ijmā'*. But other schools disagreed on this point. Some Hanbalis (as well as some other Jurists) accept only the agreement of the four Rashidun Caliphs as the only binding *Ijmā'*.

Similarly, other Jurists consider the Fatwas (Jurisdical opinions and decisions) of the *Ṣaḥābah* as binding *Ijmā'* for the Ummah. To the Shi'ites, however, the binding *Ijmā'* is that of ahl al-Bait, as well have seen before. Some Hanbali scholars are of the view that *Ijmā'* is not binding if reached more than one generation after the prophet's death, because it is nearly impossible to obtain the express agreement of every single qualified Jurist after that stage of the spread of Islam.

Most jurists have agreed that only an express *Ijmā'* is binding. But the Hanafi Jurists consider the silence of the jurists with regard to the vocal expression of a particular opinion as an effective implied agreement provide that (a) there is an evidence that the silent Jurist were really well acquainted with the issue (b) a reasonable period of time passed after the view was expressed to enable other Jurists to devote sufficient time for research and analysis. If both conditions are met, say the Hanafi Jurists, silence of Jurists amounts to an approval.

No matter the rank of the 'Ulamā' and their thorough deliberations, no amount of *Ijmā'* can abrogate a text (nass) i.e. a provision laid down in the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* of the prophet. It should also be recommended that no *Ijmā'* was reached or could have been reached except after the death of the Holy Prophet, that is after all the texts were revealed or stated, for *Ijmā'* is based on always on the interpretations of the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*.

If any *Ijmā'* is soundly founded on the texts of the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* it can not be repealed by any subsequent consensus; but if the *Ijma*, is merely based on public interest (*Maṣāliḥ Mursalah*), it may be repealed if the public welfare so requires.

In the fourth century of Hijrah era that is the tenth century A.D., some Muslim Jurists took a passive attitude and said that the *Ijtihād* and *Tafsīr* had been exhaustively accomplished by the early scholars of peerless ability.

Later, in the seventh century of Hijrah (the middle of the 13th century A.D.), a great catastrophe struck the Muslim world and the Tartars, headed by Holaku Khan the grand son of Chengis Khan, captured Baghdad and killed the Abbasid Caliph al-Musta'sim on 1258 A.D. the Mumluks who overthrew the Ayyubids in Egypt in 1205 A.D. fought the central Asian invaders and defeated the Mongols on more than one occasion, starting their campaign as early as 1260 A.D. under al-Sultān Nāṣir, a former army commander under the Ayyubids, that the Tartars were finally defeated. During the period when Baghdad was under the mercy of the Nomadic warriors of central Asia, the Jurist in Iraq reached a wrong consensus to

close the door of *Ijtihād* which they had not practised much anyway since the tenth century A.D. No one, in fact, had the right to put a stop to the process of *Ijtihād*.

In short, *Ijmā'* is Hujjah for all the four schools of Islamic Jurisprudence.

Imam Shafi' has fully discussed *Ijmā'* as one of the sources of Sharī'ah in his famous *Risālah*.

The following discourse of al-Shafi'ī throws enough light on *Ijmā'*. He says:

“Someone asked me ‘Do you assert, with others, that the consensus of the *Ulamā'* should always be based on an established *Sunnah* even if it were related (on the authority of the prophet)?” he replied

“That on which the Ulama' are agreed and which, as they assert, was related from the messenger of Allah, that is so. As to that which they may or may not relate as a tradition from the prophet, we can not consider it as related on the authority of the Holy prophet because one may relate only what he has heard, for no one is permitted to relate (on the authority of the prophet) information which may or may not be true. So we accept the decision of the Ulama' because we have to obey their authority, and we know that wherever there are Sunnahs of the Prophet, the Ulama' can not be ignorant of them, although it is possible that some of them are, and we know that Ulama' can neither agree on anything contrary to the Sunnah of the Prophet nor on error”.

Some may ask: Is there any evidence in support of what you hold?

Imam Shafi' replied: Sufyan (b. Uyayna) told us from 'Abd al-Malik b. Umayr from Abd al-Rahman b. Abd Allah B. Masu'd from his father, who said: The messenger of Allah said: “Allah will grant prosperity to His servant who hears my words, remembers them, guards them and hands them on. Many a transmitter of law is no Lawyer himself, and many may transmit law to others who are more versed in the law than they, etc.”

Self Assessment Exercise

- Highlight the divisions of *al-Ijmā'*
- Expatriate upon application of *al-Ijmā'* as a source of the *Sharī'ah*.

4.0 CONCLUSION

You have learnt in this Unit the definition of *Ijmā'* consensus of opinions, as a source of the *Sharī'ah*, based on the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*. You have learnt how it was practiced at the time of the Prophet, his successors and in the following generations known technically as *Tābi'ūn* (Followers) or *Tābi'ū Tābi'īn* (Followers of the Followers) as the case may be. It has also been explained to you how the peculiarities of each centre of learning in the Islamic Empire influenced the concept and practice of *Ijmā'* in each with minor differences here and there.

5.0 SUMMARY

Ijmāʿ, Consensus of Opinions, is the third source of the *Sharīʿah*. Its legitimacy is based on the *Qurʾān* and *Sunnah*. Its application which started informally at the time of the Prophet assumed larger dimensions in the following generations. This was in response to new challenges that arose at the time. *Ijmāʿ* can be in form of *Qawl* (Speech) *Fiʿl* (Practice) and *Sukūt* (Tacit Approval).

It can also be of the whole community, in which case it is binding on all Muslims, or of the learned alone when it relates to technicalities and difference of opinions is allowed. The concept of *Ijmāʿ* and its application differed from one centre of learning to another especially in relation to details.

TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- How can you prove that the use of *Ijmāʿ* as a source of the *Sharīʿah* is based on the *Qurʾān* and *Sunnah*.
- Comment on the application of *Ijmāʿ* during the time of the Companions.
- *Ijmāʿ* arose from the need to harmonise the divergent opinions of scholars. Explain the reasons why the scholars had to disagree with appropriate examples.

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UNIT 4: *QIYĀS* (ANALOGICAL DEDUCTION)

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3.0 Main Contents

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3.2 Variant views on the application of *Qiyās as source of Sharī'ah*

3.3 Conditions governing validity of *Qiyās*

3.4 Examples of *Qiyās*

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Unit three presented *Ijmā'* to you as one of the two secondary sources of *Sharī'ah* - the Islamic law. Its definition, basis, kinds and examples were all expatiated upon for your digest. This unit will focus on *Qiyās* (Analogical Deduction) which is the second of the secondary sources of the Islamic law. To be specific, the unit will present the definition of *Qiyās*, its origin, evolution and application, and contemporary issues relating to it. The legality of *Qiyās* will also be established on the basis of the *Qur'ān* and precedents from the early Muslims.

2.0 OBJECTIVE

At the end of this unit, you are expected to be able to

- Define *Qiyās*
- Give the variant views on the application of *Qiyās* as source of *Sharī'ah*
- Highlight the conditions governing validity of *Qiyās*
- Illustrate application of *Qiyās* with samples

3.1 Definition of *Qiyās*

As an Arabic word, *Qiyās* is a noun derived from the verb “*qāsa*”, meaning he compared, consider the extent, magnitude, depth, etc of something, he determined the extent ... etc. *Qiyās*, therefore, means measurement, measure, dimension, scale, relation, comparison, etc.

As a technical term, *Qiyās* is first met with in the letter of Caliph 'Umar to Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī. Among other things, the Caliph gave instructions that the Governor should learn the “parallels and precedents’ (of legal cases) and then ‘weigh up’ the cases (*qis al-Umūr*), deciding what in his judgement would be the most pleasing to God and nearest to the truth”. Apparently, the Caliph meant that the Governor should exercise

personal reasoning in judging cases which are not provided for in the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*. To avoid misguided judgments, he should use unanimous decisions or precedents as the basis of his decisions in this respect.

Perhaps, it will be pertinent to produce here the definition derivable from *Sharī'ah* – the Islamic Law by R.I. Doi. According to him *Al-Qiyās* could be defined in Islamic theological parlance as analogy, or analogical deduction. In other words, *al-Qiyās* is the legal principle introduced in order to arrive at a logical conclusion of a certain law on a certain issue that has to do with the welfare of the Muslims. In exercising this, however, it must be based on *Qur'ān*, *Sunnah* and *Ijmā'*.

3.2 Variant views on the application of *Qiyās* as source of *Sharī'ah*.

Qiyās was introduced as a legal principle by Imam Abū Hanīfah, the founder of the Hanafī school in Iraq. The reason why he introduced it was not unconnected with the intention of curbing the excessive thinking and digression of the people from the Islamic legal point.

During the period of the Abbasids, people engaged themselves in reading various text books on logical philosophy, etymology, linguistics, literatures of various places, foreign text books, which to some extent tended to corrupt their minds and lead them astray. They wanted to apply what they had studied in these foreign text books to Islamic Jurisprudence. Many new Muslim in far away lands had brought with them their philosophical outlook, their culture and even some religious and legal notions in the fold of Islam. Abū Hanīfah introduced *Qiyās* as a measure to curb the excessive thinking and to keep them on check.

However, the Mutazilites like Ibrahim bn Sayyar, and the scholars of Zāhirī school including Ibn Hazm of Andalusia, were among Jurists who opposed the use of *Qiyās*. In this regard, there are scholars and Jurists who may be termed as anti-*Qiyās* and pro-*Qiyās*. Each and everyone of them brought forth evidence to support his stand.

The following are some of the reasons put forward for rejecting it.

- i. **The notion that the *Qur'ān* is complete and covers all the areas of human need.** The *Qur'ān* itself says:

...And We have sent down to you (i.e. Prophet Muhammad) the Book explaining all things, a Guide, a Mercy and Glad Tidings to Muslims.

... Nothing have We omitted from the Book ...

(*Qur'ān* 6:38)

The argument here is that having recourse to *Qiyās* despite the claim made by the *Qur'ān* that it is all-encompassing is to deny the completion, perfection and comprehensiveness of the holy scripture. *Qiyās*, according to this line of thought, is therefore, unnecessary.

ii. **The alleged prohibition of *Qiyās* by the Prophet as shown in this *Ḥadīth*:**

The affairs of the sons of Israel have continued to prosper until there multiplied among them the children of the war captives, for these have measured (*qāsū*) what did not exist on the basis of what did exist, and so they have erred and led others into error.

In other words, the downfall of the Israelites was as a result of the “sin” of analogical reasoning committed by those who were not of the thorough Israel stock. This is another way of saying that *Qiyās* is such an evil that no well-bred person will ever attempt, and that it leads astray.

iii. **Difficulty in identifying the ‘*Illah* (effective cause):** As the application of *Qiyās* is based on identifying the effective cause (*‘illah*) of the revelation so as to use it to assess and determine the course of handling the problem on hand in form of analogy, it is argued that it is very difficult, if not impossible, to know the causes of the texts especially where they are not explicitly declared. This argument, based on reason, goes further to say that man does not rely on his thought or reason to worship Allah. Indeed, many of the rites may appear unreasonable. If this is the case, on what premises is *Qiyās* based?

In their response to the above, the proponents of *Qiyās* say that:

i. **The apparent support of the *Qur’ān* for the use of reasoning:** The *Qur’ān* supports the practice of *Qiyās* thus:

... consider, oh you possessors of sight”

Other verses in the *Qur’ān* where Allah addresses those who reflect (*yatafakkarūn*) or understand (*ya’qilūn*) as in 10:24 and 30:28 respectively, are also cited in this respect. In effect, the completion of the *Qur’ān* is in the sense of providing guiding principles potentially which the jurists will strive to understand, interpret and apply in the prevailing circumstances. Thus, *Qiyās* is solidly based on the *Qur’ān* as the scripture urges Muslims to reflect, reason and exert themselves to understand.

ii. **The support of the *Sunnah* for the use of reasoning:** So many *Ḥadīths* and practices of the Companions support the practice of *Qiyās*. For instance, the Prophet was pleased to learn from Mu‘ādh bn Jabal, whom he had sent to Yeman, that he would use his personal opinion to judge cases in the absence of guidance from the *Qur’ān* and *Sunnah*. Showing his satisfaction, the Prophet said:

Thanks to God that He has directed the delegate of His prophet to that opinion in which the Prophet of God finds pleasure.

When Abū Mūsā was sent to the same place, he was instructed not to hesitate to use his personal opinion (*ra'y*) to judge cases if the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* did not give necessary information. Companions are also known to have used *Qiyās* to decide many cases after the Prophet. Some of such cases are the election of Caliph to succeed the Prophet and determining the penalty for drinking intoxicants (*Khamr*). With respect to the latter, 'Alī is said to have reasoned.

“When one drinks he gets drunk; and when he gets drunk,
he raves; and when he raves, he accuses falsely”.

That was how the same penalty was fixed for drunkenness and false accusation of infidelity.

- iii. **The use of probability instead of exact facts when necessary:** Inability to understand or know the effective cause (*'illah*) of revelation does not necessarily mean that *Qiyās* cannot be based on it. In that case, one has to base one's action on what is most probable and “probability is sufficient for purposes of conduct”. The opponents are queried for using *Qiyās* in determining the *Qiblah*, the direction of the *Ka'bah* which they should face in prayer. They are also challenged for using *Qiyās* to determine the amount of compensation for property destroyed. Since the property is already destroyed, there is no basis for determining its exact worth.

The controversy above notwithstanding, *Qiyās* is recognized as a source of the *Sharī'ah* by the overwhelming majority of the jurists, with the exception of groups like the Mu'tazilites who cannot even be exonerated from it in practice.

Perhaps, it may serve a good purpose here to make some observations on the arguments put forward by the opponents and proponents of *Qiyās*. It is an established fact that the *Qur'ān* states and is believed to have covered all the areas of man's needs, but this is only by providing the guiding principles. If this argument is not faulty, it threatens the acceptance of all other recognized sources of the Law such as the *Sunnah* and *Ijmā'*. Contrary to this, it is generally known that without these additional and supplementary sources, the whole of the *Sharī'ah* would be out of tune with the practical needs of man particularly in the light of the dynamic nature of man's life. That is why the Prophet and the Companions could not but encourage and instruct that *Qiyās* and other forms of *Ijtihād* should be used in response to the dictates of circumstances.

Self Assessment Exercise

Examine the stand taken by both the anti-Qiyas and pro-Qiyas elements on its application as a source of Islamic law.

3.3 Conditions Governing validity of *Qiyās*

Many efforts have been made to ensure proper application of *Qiyās* and to avoid its abuse. Thus, certain guidelines were laid down specifying the conditions to be

fulfilled before *Qiyās* can be deemed to have taken place. The rules are elaborate and different, somewhat, from one school of thought to another. The following, however, is summary representing the views accepted by the generality of the jurists:

- i. **Applicability to general cases as against isolated cases:** *Qiyās* must be based on a stipulation or prescription that is general (*‘āmm*), and not of special (*Khass*), application. There are many legislations in the *Qur’ān* and *Sunnah* relating to the various aspects of life which do not apply to every Dick and Harry. An example that readily comes to mind here is the special allowance given to the Prophet in the *Qur’ān* to exceed the maximum number of four wives and to be exempted from some other laws applicable to marriage. The *Qur’ān* specifically mentions that “This is only for you, and not for other believers” (*Qur’ān* 33:50). No caliph or any Muslim ruler, no matter how highly placed, can therefore justify failure to comply with the general rules regulating marriage in Islam on the basis of the special allowance to the Prophet by analogical deduction. Another example is that of combining the *Zuhr* and *‘Aṣr* prayers at *‘Arafāt*, and the *Maghrib* and *‘Ishā’* at Muzdalifah, by pilgrims while on *Hajj*. This practice is compulsory on the special occasion of pilgrimage which cannot be extended to any other one. Ordinarily, combination of prayers (*Salawāt*) is a concession or allowance which one may take the advantage of or otherwise, if one is under the condition to enjoy it.
- ii. **The cause (*‘illah*) must be known and understood:** Justification for analogy is based on the premise that there is an operative cause common to the original case and the one on hand requiring a solution. Before the question of being common or otherwise arises, it must be ascertained that the cause is clearly identified and thoroughly understood. For instance, the *Qur’ān* 5:94 appears to state that the cause for prohibiting intoxicants and gambling is, among other things, that Satan uses them to set those involved in them against one another and prevent them from remembering Allah and observing *Ṣalāt*. This is understood and supported by experience. This injunction can therefore be used for analogy to prohibit anything that may do the same harm as mentioned above. On the other hand, the reason for having a particular number of Rak‘ahs for one *Ṣalāt* and the requirement to read aloud or silently is not given. Thus, these practices cannot be used as a basis for analogy.
- iii. **Basing the decision on the *Qur’ān*, *Ḥadīth* or *Ijmā‘*:** the *Sharī‘ah* principle *Aṣl*, being the precedent, must be based on an express injunction of the *Qur’ān*, authentic *Ḥadīth* or popular *Ijmā‘*. Any previous case not decided according to these sources of the *Sharī‘ah* is not suitable as a basis for any analogy. This is necessary to avoid digressing from the course of the *Sharī‘ah* in favour of one’s caprices and whims.
- iv. The decision arrived at as a result of analogy must not be contradictory to the *Qur’ān* and *Ḥadīth*. The rationale behind the use of *Qiyās* is to be guided by the *Qur’ān* and *Sunnah* in deciding new cases that do not directly come under any of

the injunctions. Thus, the spirit of the *Sharī'ah* should guide the decision. Except something goes wrong, the decision eventually arrived at should not run counter to the principles laid in the *Qur'ān* or *Ḥadīth*. If it does, the analogy is null and void, and is of no effect.

To conclude with, it would be observed that these conditions were laid down quite a long time ago when the challenges were different from what we have at present. The world is changing everyday. It is necessary to have a critical look at these conditions and see if they can satisfy the modern needs. If not, further *Ijtihād* has to be exercised to bring them up to date. The ultimate conclusion is most likely to be in favour of reopening the gate of *Ijtihād* erroneously believed to have been closed for centuries in certain quarters.

Self Assessment Exercise

Discuss the conditions governing validity of the application of *qiyās* as a source of *Sharī'ah*.

3.4 Examples of *Qiyās*

During the life time of the companions of the prophet they arrived at various decisions on analogical deductions. As for example on the punishment that should be given to a drunkard Ali bn Abī Ṭālib said: **“he who drinks, gets drunk, he who gets drunk, raves; he who raves, accuses people falsely; and he who accuses people falsely should be given eighty strokes of cane”**.

From all that has been said so far, we can deduce that there is nothing wrong in using al-*Qiyās* in deriving at a logical conclusion in Islamic law in as much as that conclusion does not go against the injunctions of the Holy *Qur'ān* or the *Sunnah* of the prophet.

Another interesting example of analogical deduction is that of the *Qiyās* and *Ijtihād* by ‘Umar, the second Caliph. He asked the prophet whether a kiss during the fast vitiates the fast even though no organism is reached. The prophet posed a question: “Does rinsing ones mouth vitiate the fast” Umar replied “No, it was alright to do so”. So the prophet indicated that the fast is similarly not vitiated by a kiss if it is not accompanied by an orgasm.

Similarly, when a Muslim breaks his fast during the Ramadan intentionally, he is obliged to expiate for it in the following manner:

- (a) Manumitting a slave;
- (b) Fasting for two months consecutively in lieu of manumission;
- (c) If his health will not stand 2 months fasting, then he must feed 60 paupers

Another example of *Qiyās* is provided in the case of Bedouin who had a sexual intercourse with his wife during the time of fasting. He went to the prophet and confessed of his sin. The prophet told him that he should give a *Kafarah* (expiation). The *'illah* (effective cause for extending a rule by analogy) was

deliberate breaking of fast. Kaffarah (expiation) becomes incumbent upon the defaulter.

Imam Mālik has also given a verdict issued on *Qiyās* by a remarriage of the wife of a missing person after the court has issued a decree deeming him dead, although he subsequently appears, with the remarriage of a divorced wife who has been recalled by her husband into the matrimonial home bond but who has remarried because the recall was not communicated to her. In both cases the wife observes *Iddah* of death in the first case and the *Iddah* of *Ṭalāq* in the second case. In both cases the woman enters into the second marriage in good faith. Sayyidna Umar had given a *fatwa* that in the case of a woman who was not made aware of the recall becomes the lawful wife of the new husband. Imam Malik said the same applies in the case of the former wife of the missing person as she becomes the legal wife of the new husband.

The prophet was asked by a woman whether she could perform the Hajj on behalf of her aged father. The prophet replied in affirmative just as she may discharge on his behalf a pecuniary debt.

Self Assessment Exercise

Reiterate the above examples to justify application of *Qiyās* as a source of *Sharī'ah*

3.5 Kinds of *Qiyās*

There are two types of al-*Qiyās*: (a) *al-Qiyās al-Jaliyy* (the transparent *Qiyās*) and (b) *al-Qiyās al-Khafiyy* (the hidden *Qiyās*)

With regard to *Qiyās Jaliyy*, alcohol is forbidden on the grounds of its being intoxicant, other new intoxicants can also be equally forbidden in Islam based on this reason.

As regards the al-*Qiyās al-Khafiyy*, Almighty Allah asks us to give out *Zakāt*. It was the prophet who explained how it should be given out. He said among other things, that one goat must be given out as *Zakāt* on every forty goats. Giving a poor man a goat will do him little or no use. Therefore, we are allowed to sell that goat and give him the money. He would appreciate perhaps the money more than he would appreciate the goat.

The *Shī'ah* sect like the *Ithnā 'Ashariyyah* (the twelvers), the *Uṣūlīs* and the *Ibādīte* (Kharijite sect) employ the terms '*aql* and *ra'y*' for the same concept of *Qiyās*.

4.0 Conclusion

In this Unit, you have learnt the definition, importance and basis of *Qiyās* as one of the sources of the *Sharī'ah*. You have also been taught the various arguments in favour or against its application as a source of the Islamic Law. So also you have been introduced to the conditions to be satisfied before *Qiyās* is understood to have been

properly carried out and the need to review the conditions in view of the modern dispensation with a view to ensuring that the *Sharī'ah* practices keep pace with the contemporary situation.

5.0 Summary

Qiyās, analogical reasoning, is the fourth source of the Islamic Law. Its legality is based on the numerous verses of the *Qur'ān* that urge Muslims to reflect especially on the Book to understand and apply its teaching appropriately. There are also sayings and deeds of the Prophet and Companions that legitimize the use of *Qiyās* as a source of the *Sharī'ah*. To ensure that it is not abused, certain conditions are required to be satisfied. Some of them are:

- i) basing it on verses and Ḥadīths that are of general application,
- ii) proper understanding of the spirit and motive of the verses and/or Ḥadīths.
- iii) avoiding using *Qiyās* as the basis for *Qiyās* and
- iv) ensuring that the final decision does not contradict the principles of Islam.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- Define *Qiyās* justifying its application as a source of the *Sharī'ah* in the light of the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*. Cite cases to illustrate your answer.
- Critically assess the views of the anti-Qiyas and pro-qiyas schools and the two kinds of Qiyas. Discuss the conditions guiding the application of Qiyās.

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UNIT 5: *AL-IJTIHĀD* (EXERCISE OF REASONING)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the foregoing Units of this Module, you have learnt how the Qur’ān, Hadith, Ijma’ and *Qiyās* constitute the Sources of the Islamic law - the *Sharī‘ah*. To be able to derive legal provisions from these sources *al-Ijtihād* (exercise of reason) is a factor that must come to play. This Unit is therefore focused on this indispensable aspect in the exercise of formulating Shari ‘ah provisions from its sources.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After you must have completed the study of this Unit you should be able to

- Define *al-Ijtihād* and explain the role Imam a`sh-Shāfi‘ī played in its support
- Highlight the conditions under which *al-Ijtihād* must not be exercised
- Describe the qualities that a *Mujtahid* must possess in terms of erudition and morals
- Illustrate the concept of *al-Ijtihād* with examples
- State the Shīite’s stance on the concept of *al-Ijtihād*

3.0 MAIN CONTENTS

3.1 Definition

THE Arabic word for *al-Ijtihād* literally means an effort or an exercise to arrive at one's own judgement. In its widest sense, it means the use of human reasoning in the elaboration and explanation of the *Sharī'ah* – the Islamic Law. It covers a variety of mental processes, ranging from the interpretation of texts of the *Qur'ān* and the assessment of the authentic *Hadīths*. *Qiyās* or analogical reasoning then is a particular form of *al-Ijtihād*, the method by which the principles established by the *Qur'ān*, *Sunnah* and *Ijmā'* are to be extended and applied to the solution of new problems not expressly regulated before.

Al-Ijtihād, therefore, is an exercise of one's reasoning to arrive at a logical conclusion on a legal issue done by the Jurist to deduce a conclusion as to the effectiveness of a legal precept in Islam. Imam Muhammad Idris A`sh-Shāfi`ī has supported the idea of *Ijtihad* by quoting a verse of the Holy *Qur'ān* to substantiate his conviction over the issue. Almighty Allah said:

“Wherever you go, face the mosque of Haram, and wherever you are, turn your face towards it.”

Imam Shāfi`ī maintains that if one does not exercise his intellect, he would not be able to know where *Masjid al-Haram* is. Therefore, Allah Himself indirectly encourages us to exercise our reasoning faculty, a great gift to mankind, to derive a logical conclusion on certain matters.

3.2 Conditions under which *al-Ijtihād* can not be exercised

The Jurists have laid down certain conditions under which *al-Ijtihād*, must not be exercised:

- (a) *Al-Ijtihād* must not be exercised as to the extent of Allah. It is certain that Allah does exist; and any attempt to think on whether He exists or not will lead to disbelief.
- (b) *Al-Ijtihād*, must not be exercised as to the truism of the Prophets of Allah who were sent by Allah himself and any attempt to ponder over the idea of their prophethood is tantamount to disbelief.
- (c) *Al-Ijtihād*, must not be exercised on the authenticity of the *Qur'ān*..

Self Assessment Exercise

- Define *al-Ijtihād* vividly presenting the support given to it by Imam Shafi`ī
- Enumerate the conditions under which *Ijtihad* cannot be exercised

3.3 Qualities Required of a *Mujtahid*

Before one can be a *Mujtahid* he has to be knowledgeable about the religion of Islam, the *Sunnah*, *Fiqh* and *Uşulu `l-fiqh*. He should possess the following qualities:

- a) He must be so very well versed in the study of the *Qur'ān*. That he must know the reason why the verses and chapters of the *Qur'ān* were revealed (*asbāb al-nuzūl*)
- b) He must be well versed in the study of the traditions of prophet Muhammad. That is, he must know the distinction between authentic *Hadīth* from the spurious *Hadīth* ; he must know *Hadīth* Hasan (good *Hadīth*) *Hadīth* *Ḍa'īf* (weak *Hadīth*) and so on.
- c) He must know the principles of *Ijmā'* very well.
- d) He must know the Injunctions of *Qiyās* and the conditions that surround it.

The *Mujtahidun*, in addition must possess good character apart from academic excellence. Among the moral qualities he must possess are:

- (a) He must be a good practising and not nominal Muslim..
- (b) He must be very pious and law abiding to all the injunctions of the Holy *Qur'ān*.
- (c) He must not be influenced by an heretical inclination
- (d) He must be just, reliable, trustworthy and pure from iniquitous practices.

3.4 Classification of the Mujtahids

The *Mujtahid* can be classified into three broad categories:

- a) *Al-Mujtahid fi 't-Tashrī'i*: These were those who did *Ijtihād* in the matter of *Sharī'ah*. There were the Companions of the Prophet till the third century of Islam.
- b) *Al-Mujtahid fi 'l-Madh-hab*: These were those who did *Ijtihād* and later founded schools of Jurisprudence.

These are the Mujtahids that follow them:

- (d) *Al-Mujtahid fil Masā'il*: These are the present day Mujtahids who give *fatwā* or juristic opinions on religious matters.

3.5 Examples of Valid *Ijtihād*

Any form of *Ijtihād* must have its starting point in a principle of the *Qur'ān*, *Sunnah*, or *Ijmā'* and can not be used to achieve a result which contradicts a rule established by any of these three fundamental sources; whenever a new case or issue presents itself reasoning by *Qiyās* with an original case covered by the *Qur'ān*, the *Sunnah* or *Ijmā'* is possible provided the effective cause (*'illah*) is common to both cases.

As for example, wine is prohibited by the texts, and the *'illah* for this prohibition is an intoxication. Therefore other intoxicants like spirits, and drugs like hemp and marijuana are prohibited by *Qiyās* because they also lead to drunkenness and loss of senses. In this way the prohibition is extended by analogical deduction. The majority of the Muslims, including the four major *Sunnī*

schools, accept *Qiyās* and *Ijtihād* to determine Juristic matters by reasoning on the following basis:

- a) There should be original subject (*aṣl*)
- b) There should be an object of analogy, being a new subject (*far'*)
- c) There should exist effective cause common to both subject (*'illah*)
- d) There should also be a rule arrive at by *Qiyās* (*hukm*)

In the case of prohibition of an intoxicant like gin, the following four cardinal points must exist:

- (i) Wine
- (ii) Gin
- (iii) Intoxication
- (iv) Prohibition

The following are some other examples of arriving at an *Ijtihād* through the use of analogical deduction.

1. In *Sūrah al-Jum'ah* the *Qur'ān* prohibits the sale transactions after the last call to *Jum'ah* prayer. The rule is extended by *Qiyās* to other kinds of transactions and engagements which distract Muslims from attending the *Jum'ah* prayer.
2. In the *Sunnah* of the Prophet a killer is deprived from sharing in the inheritance of his victim. This rule is extended to the law of *Waṣiyyah* (bequests) as well.

The Shī'ites believe that *Ijtihād* is only the prerogative of their Imams who are presumed to be infallible. In the modern times, Muslim scholars like Jamal din al-Afgahani and his disciple Shaykh Muhammad Abduh tried to justify in the presence of a group of Muslim scholars in Cairo that the importance of reopening the door of *Ijtihad* was an Islamic response to imperialism prevalent in the Muslim world at that time. Muhammad Abduh, the Afghani's disciple gave fresh interpretation of the principles embodied in the divine revelation as a basis for legal reform. Although engendered violent controversy, the supporters of the fresh *Ijtihād* argued that the doctrine of the closure of the door of *Ijtihād* had not been established by an infallible *Ijmā'* as alleged by the opponents of the *Ijtihād*.

It was argued that any *Ijmā'* of the '*Ulamā'* in the period of intellectual stagnation and under fear as well as during any foreign domination like that of the Mongols in Baghdad around 1258 A.D. and afterwards could lead to harmful consequences. Therefore, fresh *Ijtihād* was launched in the 19th Century in the public interest. Thus it was believed that the door of *Ijtihād* was re-opened and *Ijmā'* reached in Baghdad in the 13th century was repealed. But the question is: was the door of *Ijtihād* ever closed? To Doi R. I., perhaps Shaykh Afghāī and Abduh, however, great scholars they were overplayed their role.

Self Assessment Exercise

- Highlight the qualities required of a *Mujtahid* and classify the *Mujtahids*
- Give copious examples of valid *Ijtihads*

3.6 Istihsān, Istiṣlāh, or Maṣāliḥ Mursalah: Public Interest

Istihsān, Istiṣlāh or *Maṣāliḥ Mursalah* has been mentioned indirectly in the Holy *Qur'ān* in the following verses:

“Those who listen to the word and follow the best meaning in it:

Those are the ones whom Allah has guided, and those are the ones endued with understanding”

The *Mufasirūn* (Commentators) have interpreted this verse in two ways. If “word” in this verse is taken as any word, the clause would mean that good and pious men should listen to all that is said and choose the best of it for general good-as long as that word is according to the spirit of Divine Message. But if the “word” is taken here to mean the word of Allah, it would mean they should listen reverently to it, and where permissive and alternative courses are allowed for those who are strong enough to follow the higher course, those endued with understanding should prefer to attempt the higher course of conduct. For example, it is permitted within limit to punish those who wrong us, but the nobler course is to repel evil with good. We should try to follow the nobler course.

Public interest is also regarded in *Sharī‘ah* as a basis of law. The Jurists of different schools have used different Arabic term to describe it. The Hanafīs call it *istihsān* meaning equitable preference to find a just solution. Imam Mālik calls it *Maṣāliḥ Mursalah* meaning public benefit or public welfare or public interest. The Arabic word Mursal literarily means to set loose from the texts; and *Maṣāliḥ* means welfare. Imam Ahmad bn Hanbal calls it *Istiṣlāḥ* seeking the best solution for the general interest. The Hanbalī scholar, Ibn Qudamah, as well as Malikī jurist, Ibn Rushd, have occasionally used the term *Istihsān*. The only school which does not recognise *Istihsān* as a source is the Shafī‘ī school. According to Imam Shafī‘ī, if it is allowed, it can open the door to unrestricted use of fallible human opinions since the public interest will vary from place to place and time to time.

It should be noted that the precept of public welfare and general interest can really be very helpful particularly in cases which are not regulated by any authority of the Book of Allah, the *Sunnah* of the Prophet or *Ijmā‘*. In that case, principle of public interest may apply instead of strict *Qiyās*.

The Shafī‘ī jurists have employed *Istidlāl* to achieve similar results by avoiding merely the application of strict *Qiyās*. *Istidlāl* is the process of seeking guidance, basis and proof from the sources although its dictionary meaning is merely an argumentation. With this brief introduction, we shall examine some examples of *Istihsān*.

1. The *Bay‘ bi ‘l-Wafā* or the sale subject to any future redemption which can be construed as a kind of mortgage was allowed because of the practical need for such transactions in the interest of public welfare.
2. Islam attaches a great importance to the proper dress of a woman (*Satru ‘i-Awrah*), No man except her husband can see certain parts of her body. But on account of necessity, a physician may be allowed to medically examine and diagnose a woman in the interest of saving her life.
3. Divorce given in death sickness (*marād al-mawt*), even though effected as irrevocable *Ṭalāq*, it will not deprive the divorced wife from her share in the inheritance. The husband in reality was trying to deprive her of her rights and wanted to shun his obligations. It was regarded as merely the divorce for an escape (*Ṭalāq al-Fārr*). Some Shafī‘ī and Zāhirī jurists disagree with the majority of ‘*Ulamā‘*’ on this issue. The Hanafi

jurists maintain that the entitlements of the divorced wife lasts during her *'iddah* period while the Hanbalis take the view that she will be entitle to participate as long as she has not remarried again. The Malikis however, accord her the right to participate in the inheritance even if she has remarried provided the deceased did not recover in between the death illness and his ultimate death.

4. The *Hadd* punishment of amputation of hands in case of theft will not be applied even if all evidences proved that it was really committed during the period of famine when no food was available and one was forced to steal. Imam Shāfi'ī says that he will apply this rule simply because Sayyidna Umar decided a case in this way. He does not think that it was done on the principle of *Istiḥṣān*.

5. The eating of meat which has not been slaughtered according to the Islamic ritual (*Dhabīhah*) is permissible where no other lawful food is available.

6. Destruction of lawful food-stuff is not allowed without any special reason. But Sayyidna Umar ordered the spilling of milk mixed with water as punishment that would prevent deceit of dishonest persons engaged in the sale of adulterated milk.

7. The second call of the Adhān for Jumu'ah prayer was not a practice in the time of the prophet and the two Rashidun Caliphs. Sayyidna 'Uthmān bn 'Affān, the third Caliph, started it as a reminder for the public benefit. Imam Mālik bn Anas gave several juristic decisions (Fatwās) based on *Masāliḥ Mursalah* (public-interest). Some of them are listed as follows:

- a) The Muslim ruler may exact additional taxes from the wealthy citizens in the period of emergency.
- b) A Caliph or a ruler does not have to be the most meritorious claimant, otherwise strife will be inevitable.
- c) Imam Malik as well as Imam Hanbal prohibited the sale of grapes, which is otherwise legal, to a wine merchant as he will use them to ferment wine which is unlawful.
- d) The sale of arms during a civil disturbance is prohibited as may intensify the struggle.

Most of these rules could fit into Hanafi's *Istiḥṣān* or Shafi'ī's *Qiyās*.

Self Assessment Exercise

Expatiate upon the place of Public Interest as a source law from the point of view of the various schools of Islamic law.

3.7 *Istiḥāb*: Legal Presumption

Istiḥāb means a rule of evidence or legal presumption of continuance of conditions. In other words, it is the presumptions in the laws of evidence that a state of affair known to exist in the past continue to exist until the contrary is proved. *Istiḥāb* is accepted by all schools of Islamic jurisprudence as a subsidiary source of the *Sharī'ah*.

There is a presumption of innocence until the guilt is established. This presumption is based on *Istiḥāb*. There will be a similar presumption of *Ḥalāl* things in

the absence of its specific prohibition. A debt is presumed to subsist until its discharge is evidenced.

Likewise, a marriage is presumed to continue until its dissolution (*Ṭalāq*) becomes known. In the case of devotional excesses ('*Ibādah*), mere doubt does not vitiate the validity of rituals. Supposing a man after ablution entertain a mere doubt as to whether he still has his ablution to perform the prayers, then there is a presumption of purity; and, similarly, if he thinks genuinely that he has performed the correct number of prostrations (*sajdah*) then a mere doubt will not affect his genuine belief. In the case of an ownership of title, a judge will presume ownership from valid title deeds until the contrary is proved. If a person is missing (*mafqud*), his wife remains his legal wife until the court, after due enquiries issues a decree presuming the contrary, namely death.

3.8 *Sadd `dh-Dharāi` (Blocking The Ways)*

Sadd `dh-Dharāi` really means blocking the ways even if the method involved is otherwise legal. This source of *Sharī'ah* is not much different from the *Maṣāliḥ Mursalah*, but it is used by Mālikī Jurists and some Hanbalīs under this name. Most of the rules categorised under *Sadd `dh-Dharāi`* can conveniently fit into the various subsidiary sources related to public interest or public welfare.

3.9 '*Urf* (Practice) and *Ādah* (Custom)

'*Urf* (the known practice) and *Ādah* (Custom) are recognised as a subsidiary source by all schools of jurisprudence. The Mālikī School attaches more importance to custom than any other schools. But customary rules are valid as long as there is no provision on the matter in the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*. If any of the customs contradicts any of the rule of *Sharī'ah*, they will be considered outside the scope of Islamic Law.

Self Assessment Exercise

Write notes on the place of the following in the *Sharī'ah*

- (i) *Istiṣ-ḥāb*: Legal Presumption
- (ii) *Sadd `dh-Dharāi`* (Blocking The Ways)
- (iii) '*Urf* (Practice) and *Ādah* (Custom)

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

Al-Ijtihād is an exercise of one's reasoning to arrive at a logical conclusion on a legal issue done by the Jurst to deduce a conclusion as to the effectiveness of a legal precept in Islam. Reasoning faculty is a great gift to mankind and its utilization is encouraged by Allah in many passages of the *Qur'ān*. In depth knowledge of the *Qur'ān*, the *Sunnah*, *Fiqh* and *Uṣūlu `l-fiqh* is essential qualification required of a *Mujtahid*. He must be of high moral integrity in addition to his academic excellence. There are three classes of *Mujtahids* i.e. (i) *Al-Mujtahid fi `t-Tashrī'i* (ii) *Al-Mujtahid fi `l-Madh-haband* (iii) *Al-Mujtahid fil Masāil*. The Shītes believe that *Ijtihād* is only the prerogative of their Imams who are presumed to be infallible. The Supporters of fresh *Ijtihad* argued that the doctrine of closure of the door of *Ijtihād* had not been established by an infallible *Ijmā`* as alleged

by opponents of the *Ijtihād*. Other miscellaneous source of *Sharī‘ah* include *Istihsān*, *Istiṣlāh*, or *Maṣāliḥ Mursalah* (all of which connotes public interest), *Istiṣhāb* (legal presumption), *Sadd `dh-Dharāi‘* (Blocking The Ways) *‘Urf* (Practice) and *Ādah* (Custom).

5.0 SUMMARY

In this Unit, we have extensively treated the place of *al-Ijtihād* in the frame-work of *Sharī‘ah* jurisprudence. The conditions governing validity of its application and the limitations to its application are well articulated. A highlight of qualities required of the Mujtahids and their classification are also provided. Copious examples of valid *Ijtihād* cases are also given as illustrations. The Unit concludes with a highlight of miscellaneous sources of *Sharī‘ah* such as *Maṣāliḥ Mursalah*, *Istiṣ-hāb*, *Sadd `dh-Dharāi‘ ‘Urf and Ādah*.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- Examine the concept of *Ijtihād* and support your submissions with illustration.
- State the perceived differences among the Jurists on the principle of *Ijtihād*.
- What are the qualities required of a Mujtahid; classify them into the three main groups.
- Mention two important miscellaneous sources of *Sharī‘ah* and explain them.

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MODULE III

Unit 1: The Beginning of the Schools of Thought

Unit 2: Imam Abū Ḥanīfah and His School.

Unit 3: Imam Mālik and His School.

Unit 4: Imam A`sh-Shāfi`ī and His School.

Unit 5: Imam Ḥambal and School.

Unit 6: The *Shī`ah* and the *Sharī`ah*.

UNIT 1: THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

As you should have been well aware, there are schools of Islamic law known as the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii, the Hambali and the Shiite. This Unit intends to discuss the definition of the schools of thought, the events leading to their establishment and the scope of differences between them. This, as a whole, is aimed at preparing your mind for the study of each of the schools, one after the other.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

It is expected that after studying this Unit, you should be able to

- Describe what is a Sharī`ah School (*Madhhab*)
- Explain the circumstances surrounding the foundation of the schools of Law
- Highlight the factors responsible for the characteristics of the *Sharī`ah* schools.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 What is a *Madhhab* (School of Thought)?

There is no official definition of a school of thought. This may be as a result of the feeling that it is so self-evident that it can be taken for granted to have been known or

understood by every student of Islamic Jurisprudence. In fact, the need for it is hardly felt here also except that one would not like to give room for confusion especially at the initial stage like this. For the purpose of this study, *Madhhab* (School of thought) may be described as a body of juristic opinions emanating from or ascribed to certain scholars of the past based on their efforts and self-exertion in the understanding and application of the *Sharī'ah*, notable among who are Imams Abū Hanīfah, Malik, al-Shāfi'i and Ibn Hambal.

Certain clarifications are necessary here. One is that, although there are many scholars of international repute nowadays all over the Muslim world, none of them is recognized as the founder of any school of thought. In fact, such scholars usually base their opinions on those of the above mentioned Imams. This does not necessarily indicate that there have not been others. There were and the list is long for the *Sunnis*, the *Shī'ah* and others among them. The important thing here is to note that only the four mentioned are the *Sunni* ones that enjoy universal recognition, cutting across those who subscribe to their points of view or otherwise, and have survived to the present.

None of the schools came into existence as a result of deliberate efforts by the founder. Rather, one can only identify the popularity of each founder as an accomplished jurist with a large following as the main factor. There was no line of demarcation between them. In fact, some of the founders met, learnt from one another and showed appreciation for the level of erudition of one another. Thus, the differences between them were not fundamental and did not set them against one another.

Self Assessment Exercise

- Expatiate upon the concept of a *Sharī'ah* School.

3.2 Factors responsible for the establishment of the Schools

The presence of the Prophet afforded his Companions access to him for questions and clarifications and did not create serious challenges for them to practise independent thinking. However, there were occasions when some of them were sent out as missionaries or administrators with the express instruction to use their reasoning if the *Qur'ān* and *Hadīth* did not provide required guidance. It was not uncommon that decisions of two persons on the same issue based on personal reasoning might be contradictory and, still, be accommodated. This created no serious problem as such decisions related only to issues that were not all that fundamental to the practice of the religion.

The Prophet is reported to have said that difference of opinions among Muslims is a mercy. This is apparently in view of the fact that the situation will challenge them to further investigations and researches, an action which is good for their intellectual development and progress. He is also quoted to have said that he who exercises personal reasoning and errs has a reward while he who is right has two rewards. In other words, the two of them deserve and really earn commendation. In this case, the fear of arriving at a wrong conclusion is no barrier to the exercise of personal reasoning inasmuch as it is based on piety, objectivity and sincerity of purpose.

The facts discussed above paved the way for animated efforts in form of independent personal thinking to find solutions to new legal issues. Five main reasons can be identified to have resulted in the establishment of the schools of thought to crystallize various opinions. The factors are as follows:

- i. **Focus of attention on the spirit or letter of the injunction:** It happens often that instructions are given to a group of people but may be carried out differently by them based on what each individual feels matters most in the instructions. An incident took place during the life of the Prophet which may be cited to illustrate this point. Some Companions were sent to Banū Qurayzah after the latter's misdeeds in Medina. The Companions were instructed not to observe the *‘Aṣr* Prayer until when they got to their destination. Incidentally, they were still on the way when it was time for the Prayer. Some of them felt that it was wrong to delay the Prayer beyond its normal time, and, therefore, offered it on the way. Others felt that they should act according to the letter of the instruction and did not pray until the nightfall after reaching their destination. The case was later reported to the Prophet but he did not say anything, meaning tacit approval of the two different interpretations. Such actions later became normative precedents.
- ii. **Lack of information:** It happens that some decisions are taken purely on the basis of personal reasoning due to non-availability of Ḥadīths relevant to the issue at the time. It may happen that another decision is taken on the same issue somewhere else or at another time in the light of some Ḥadīths. Usually, such different decisions will win the fancy of some later jurists for various reasons. An apposite example here is that of the question of a woman whose husband died without fixing the amount of dower or consummating the marriage directed to Ibn Mas‘ūd. After admitting having not heard any Ḥadīth on the issue, he opined that she should be entitled to the average dower of a woman of her social status and her full share from the heritage of the deceased, and that she should observe the *‘Iddah*, waiting period. Ma‘qūl b. Sinān (d. 63 A.H.) is reported to have corroborated the judgment saying “that the Prophet had given a similar decision”. However, Ibn ‘Umar (d. 73 A.H.) and Zayd bn Thābit (d. 45 A.H.) are reported to have given a different judgment on a similar case, giving no dower to the woman but recognising her share in the heritage. The difference of opinions here can be traced to the use of a Ḥadīth by the former while the latter relied solely on personal thinking. Caliph ‘Umar is also reported to have changed many of his decisions in the light of Ḥadīths later made known to him.
- iii. **Different interpretations of the *Qur’ān*:** Some verses of the *Qur’ān* are capable of being given different interpretations. An example is the *Qur’ān* 2:228 stipulating that divorced women should observe the waiting period for three courses (*qurū’*). *Qur’* (sing of *qurū’*) was understood by ‘Umar and some others

to mean a period of menstruation while ʿĀʾishah and some others said that the meaning was the period of purity between menstruations.

- iv. **Different interpretations of Ḥadīths:** The text of Ḥadīth may be understood differently by individuals. For instance, Ibn ʿUmar is reported to have narrated a Ḥadīth that a dead person is punished on the account of the mourning of his/her relatives. ʿĀʾishah is reported to have denied this saying that the Ḥadīth had been misunderstood. According to her, rather than being a warning the Ḥadīth in question was just a remark that the relatives of a Jewess who died were mourning her demise while she was being punished. In that case, the punishment had nothing to do with the mourning. This stand of ʿĀʾishah was later on found to be in line with the *Qurʾān* 6:165 which says “No soul bears the burden of another”.
- v. **Differences in Location:** Differences in geographical location and cultural background have some effects on the difference of opinions among the jurists. For instance, those of them based in Hijāz comprising Makkah and Medina which served as the cradle of Islam with the preponderance of scholars there had more access to the Islamic tradition than those of Kūfah and Baṣrah in Iraq far away. Yet, the distance between Syria and these centres of Islamic learning would have its impact too. While the people of Medina would take popular practices there for granted that they represented the teachings of Islam, those based in Iraq would be engaged in personal thinking in solving many of the new problems cropping up there. This would explain the charges of over-dependence on local tradition against the former and of giving preference to personal thinking over and above Ḥadīths against the latter. As it should be expected, there were differences between opinions popular in these areas.

The above is a brief survey and summary of the factors that led to the foundation of the schools of juristic thought, especially the four that are our concern here. We are now to discuss their founders one-by-one with emphasis on their contributions to the growth and development of the Islamic Jurisprudence.

Self Assessment Exercise

What are the factors responsible for the emergence of Sharīʿah schools?

4.0 CONCLUSION

The Schools of Thought are bodies of juristic opinions identified with certain groups under the leadership of able scholars. The schools have little or no difference with respect to the fundamental teachings of Islam. They disagree only on matters of detail. Factors responsible for differences between them include personal understanding of the injunctions in the *Qurʾān* or *Sunnah*, inadequacy of information available to them, differences in the interpretation of the *Qurʾān* and Ḥadīth, and in geographical locations.

5.0 SUMMARY

This Unit describes what constitutes a *Sharī'ah* school of thought and explains the extent of the differences of opinion between the schools. It highlights the factors responsible for their development as (i) focus of attention on the spirit or letter an injunction (ii) lack of information (iii) differences in interpretation the Qur'anic or Hadith naṣṣ and (iv) differences in location. It thus prepares you for the study of the foundation and characteristics of the four schools of Islamic law.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

- How would you account for the differences between one School of Thought and the other?
- To what extent do you think modern developments can help to bridge the gap between the various schools of thought?

7.0 References / Further Reading

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UNIT 2: IMAM ABŪ HANĪFAH AND HIS SCHOOL

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1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 Imam Abū Ḥanīfah: his birth, up-bringing and Early Education

3.2 His contributions to the development of the Islamic Jurisprudence

3.3 His Death

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

7.0 References and Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Imam Abū Ḥanīfah was a great scholar and founder of the School of Law named after him. Based in Kūfah, the capital of ʿIrāq, he had the opportunity of witnessing and benefiting from the theological and political activities of the time. His school of thought is one of those recognized by the majority of Muslims and has survived till to day.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit you should be able to

- Give account of the life history of Imam Abū Ḥanīfah
- Highlight his contributions to the development of Islamic jurisprudence and his school of thought.

3.0 MAIN CONTENTS

3.1 Imam Abū Ḥanīfah: his birth, up-bringing and Early Education

Abū Ḥanīfah whose original name is Nuʿmān b. Thābit was born in Kūfah, the ancient capital of ʿIraq, in 80/699 in the reign of ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān, when al-Hajjāj b. Yūsuf ruled over ʿIrāq. He spent the first fifty-two years of his life in the Umayyad regime and the last eighteen in the ʿAbbāsīd. He was therefore opportuned to witness the theological and political activities of the time most of which took place in Kūfah, his home-town.

Imam Abū Hanifah grew up to become a renowned scholar having studied philosophy, logic and theological divergences of sects which enabled him to enter into controversies with them. He was committed to intellectual activities which eventually led to the foundation of the Ḥanafī School of Law named after him. He led a life of piety, sincerity and moral uprightness. His sense of honour prevented him from accepting the post of Qādī (Justice) under the ʿAbbasid regime despite all the persecution he suffered from their hands.

Our man's thirst for knowledge took him to several centres of Islamic learning in those days. After completing his studies in Kūfah and Baṣrah, he went to Makkah and Medina where he learnt from many scholars including Imam Malik b. Anas. This was despite the fact that he was thirteen years older than the teacher. Abū Ḥanīfah's teachers are said to be in thousands. His aim was to broaden the horizon of his knowledge by exposing himself to the various ideas in vogue at the time so that he could take as many shades of opinions as possible into consideration in his teachings.

As a scholar, Imam Abū Ḥanīfah, was widely known. He attracted students from all parts of the Muslim world. His influence was so much that rulers, on many occasions, suspected his complicity in every upheaval that took place in those days. Probably due to his pre-occupation with teaching and traveling, he did not write many books. He bequeathed only *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* which is mainly on the Islamic doctrine. The other book, called *Musnad*, is not his original work. It is a compilation of Ḥadīths by one of his students.

3.2 His contributions to the development of the Islamic Jurisprudence

The importance of Abū Ḥanīfah's contributions to the Islamic jurisprudence cannot be over-emphasised. The most important of them are as follows:

- i. **Use of *Ra'y* (personal opinion) to resolve legal issues:** Although we cannot credit Abū Ḥanīfah for having introduced *Ra'y* in the Islamic jurisprudence because the practice is as old as Islam, it has to be acknowledged that it was he who first openly and courageously admitted its use and even championed its cause. His opponents accused him of giving preference to *Ra'y* at the expense of Ḥadīth and he denied it. The situation was so tense that he and his disciples were branded as *Ahl al-Ra'y* (People of Personal opinion). The fact was that he laid emphasis on the use of *Qiyās* (analogy) to which *Ra'y* served as a stepping stone. Incidentally, most, if not all, of other scholars did the same consciously or otherwise.
- ii. **Introduction of the principle of *Istiḥsān* (equitable preference):** This is defined technically as "the abandonment of the opinion to which reasoning by analogy (*Qiyās*) would lead, in favour of a different opinion supported by stronger evidence". This departure can be based on the *Qur'ān*, *Ḥadīth*, *Ijmā'* or necessity (*Darūrah*). This principle generated a lot of controversy as Abū Ḥanīfah was accused of neglecting revelations and *Sunnah* in favour of personal opinions. In reality, *Istiḥsān*, no matter what may be its misinterpretation and abuse, is of tremendous value in the Islamic Law. It provides an opportunity to resolve contradictions and to reflect the reality of the situation without incurring unnecessary hardships or inconveniences. For instance, it is a law that everything washed must be squeezed like cloth; but the reality shows that things like vessels, boxes, just to mention only two cannot be squeezed. In that case, *Istiḥsān* sees the case of such materials as exceptional and indicates that they should be washed without being squeezed.

- iii. **Codification of the Islamic Law:** Abū Ḥanīfah was far-sighted and broad-minded. Realising the precarious situation of theological disputes of his time and to forestall further deterioration especially in the absence of influential scholars who could serve as rallying points, our man embarked on the laborious task of codifying the Islamic Law. Assisted by his students, he used *Qiyās* mainly to take decisions on hypothetical cases after thorough discussions that lasted for days, weeks or months. For quite a long time after him, the codification served as the basis of judgement in most parts of the Muslim world especially on the hands of his disciples who became judges.
- iv. **Evolving the theory of *Uṣūlu 'l-Fiqh* (Principles of Jurisprudence):** Abū Ḥanīfah blazed a trail by systematically designing the methodology of using, interpreting, applying and synthesizing the sources of the *Sharī'ah*. He looked into the issue of complementing primary sources with the various kinds of *Ijtihād*, personal efforts, to solve legal problems. He defined *Fiqh* as “the self’s knowledge of what is to its advantage and disadvantage”. This is a broad definition covering the totality of what the *Sharī'ah* stands for and this seems to be the understanding of our man. Issues relating to doctrine, worship, inter-personal relationship, law, relaxation, just to mention a few come under *Fiqh* according to him.
- v. **His academic works:** Although *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* seems to be the only work that has been conclusively proved to be written by him, he should be credited for the work because it is no mean achievement. It should be acknowledged also that his views and inspiration led to many of the works compiled or written by his disciples especially Abū Yūsuf, *al-Shaybānī*. With the works, one has access to the opinions of the founding fathers of the Ḥanafī School instead of relying on secondary sources which may not give facts as they are because of controversies surrounding many issues identified with the School.

3.4 His Death

Imam Abū Ḥanīfah had problems with the Abbasid rulers towards the end of his life. As a result of this, he did not accept to serve under them as *Qādī* (Judge). The government’s overture was seen as a ploy to legitimize the administration. As all efforts to persuade the Imam failed, the ruler, Caliph Manṣūr, decided to persecute him resulting in his death in 150/770. Thousands of people took part in his *Janāzah* (funeral) prayer. His death transferred the responsibility of defending his cause to his disciples, the most important among whom were Abū Yūsuf and Muhammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī.

The followers of the Ḥanafī School are in Turkey, Central Asia, Turkestan, Bukhara, Samarqand and Hindustan. The School is noted for its humanitarian views

especially in relation to the treatment of non-Muslims, war captives, slaves, and the under-privileged generally.

4.0 CONCLUSION

You have learnt in this Unit the birth, up-bringing, education and contributions of Imam Nu'mān b. Thābit popularly known as Abū Hanīfah to the development of the *Sharī'ah*. You have also learnt of his efforts to complement the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* with the use of *Ra'y* (Personal Opinion) which eventually led to the systemization of *Qiyās* as a source of the *Sharī'ah*.

5.0 SUMMARY

Born in Kūfah, Imam Abū Hanīfah lived between 80/699 and 150/770. This period coincided with transition from the Umayyad Dynasty to the ʿAbbāsīd which was characterized by socio-religious crises. He started learning early in life. He travelled far and wide both as a student and a teacher. His only book, *al-Fiqh al-Akbar*, is a treatise on Islamic doctrine and jurisprudence. His major contributions to the study of the *Sharī'ah* include formalization of *Ra'y* (personal thinking) to resolve legal matters, introduction of *Istiḥsān* (equitable preference) codification of the Law, and regulating the use of the sources of the *Sharī'ah*.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

- Discuss the life of Imam Abū Ḥanīfah highlighting the socio-religious situation of his time.
- What can you identify as the major contributions of Imam Abū Ḥanīfah to the development of the Islamic jurisprudence.
- To what extent do you feel it is right to call the Ḥanafites *Ahl al-Ra'y* (People of Personal Thinking)?

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UNIT 3: IMAM MĀLIK BN ANAS AND HIS SCHOOL

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- 1.0 Introduction
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- 3.0 Main Contents
 - 3.1 Imam Mālik b. Anas: His Birth and Up-bringing
 - 3.2 His major contributions to the Islamic Jurisprudence
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Imam Mālik b. Anas was the founder of the School of Law named after him. He was also a great scholar based in Medina the capital of the Islamic state during the Prophetic era and the era of caliphs Abubakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān, the first three Commanders of the faithful who reigned after him. His legacy, the Mālikī School of Islamic law is really a monumental contribution to the development of the Islamic jurisprudence. Our focus in this Unit is on the school which has survived till today having followers in many parts of the Muslim world.

2.0 OBJECTIVE

At the studying this Unit you are expected to be able to

- Write a biography of Imam Mālik
- discuss his contributions to the Islamic Law.

3.0 MAIN CONTENTS

3.1 Imam Mālik b. Anas: His Birth and Up-bringing

Imam Mālik b. Anas was born in Medina in 93/712 and died there in 179/795.

The time of his birth coincided with the departure of the companions (*Ṣaḥābah* the last of whom passed away almost that time. The need was then realized to preserve as much of the Islamic learning inherited from the predecessors by *Tābi‘ūn* (followers). Thus, scholarly activities were at the peak, especially in Medina, when our man was born.

Imam Mālik belonged to the Arab royal family of Himyar from Yeman. It was his grand-father, Abū ‘Āmir, who first accepted Islam in the family and came to settle down in Medina. It happened that the family became reputed for their immense contributions to Islam particularly in the area of education. Many members of the family were trustworthy narrators of *Hadīth*.

Our man started acquisition of knowledge, as it could be expected, from the family. Later he learnt from great scholars such as Abū Radīm Nāfi° bn. °Abd al-Raḥmān, Ja°far b. Sādiq, Muhammad b. Yahyā al-Ansārī, Abū Hāzim Salmān b. Dinār, Yahyā bn Sa°id, and Hishām bn °Urwah. All these were specialists in the areas of the exegesis of the *Qur'ān*, Hadīth, and jurisprudence, biography of the Prophet, language studies, philosophy and mysticism. The opportunity that our man had to learn from them made his knowledge broadly based and comprehensive although jurisprudence seems to have had greater attraction to him than any other discipline.

Just as our man was privileged to be associated with renowned men of letters as teachers, so also he enjoyed interaction with young noble minds as students who grew to become erudite scholars of no mean repute. A good number of them copied and learnt the *Muwatta°*, the Imam's *magnum opus*, directly from him. After the completion of their studies, they would take their copies of the book home to their countries to impart the knowledge acquired to their kinsmen. That was why the *Muwatta°* became famous in North Africa, Spain and other parts of the Islamic world. Nobody could visit Medina at his time without attending one or two sessions of his teaching. Even Imam Abū Ḥanīfah and Imam Shāfi° did as they could not resist the urge to join the circle of Imam Mālik's students. The same thing applied to the Abbasid Caliphs such as Abū Ja°far Maṣṣūr, Mahdi, Hārūn Rashīd, Amīn and Ma°mūn bn Rashīd. Imam Mālik was a successful teacher.

Self Assessment exercise

- Give a short biography of Imam Malik bn Anas.

3.2 His major contributions to the Islamic Jurisprudence

Imam Mālik b. Anas left indelible landmarks in the development of Islamic jurisprudence. The large following he has to date is a testimony to his immense contributions to the understanding of Islam in general and its law in particular. In specific terms, one can identify the following as some of the major contributions of this great scholar to the Islamic jurisprudence.

- Codification of the Madinan *Fiqh* (Jurisprudence):** As said earlier, Medina, having been the centre of Islamic learning during the life of the Prophet and the first three Orthodox Caliphs, enjoyed the concentration and patronage of Islamic scholars more than any other place. The effect of this was that the practice in Medina became ideals and models. This pace-setting role of the city could not be sustained if not based on sound knowledge and critical self-examination. Otherwise, people might unconsciously deviate from the right course if they were to swallow everything from the predecessors, hook, line and sinker. Fortunately, there were iconoclastic scholars always at hand to sift facts from fabrications. Imam Malik played this important role at his time more than any other person. It

was he who codified the Madinah jurisprudence systematically and gave its distinctive identity in the form of his School.

- ii. **Emphasis on Ḥadīth as a source of the *Sharī'ah*:** That our man was based at Medina where most of the incidents and statements reported in Ḥadīth took place enabled him to have access to a large number of Ḥadīths. He was, however, extremely careful to accept any Ḥadīth to be authentic. He was aware of the numerous spurious Ḥadīths in circulation and he took steps to avoid them in deciding cases. On the other hand, he made sure that most of his decisions were based on reliable Ḥadīths or the opinions of the predecessors (*Salaf*) especially those of the four Orthodox Caliphs. It is therefore not a surprise that he and his followers are popularly known as *Ahlu'l-Ḥadīth* (the people of Tradition). This is to distinguish them from the Hanafites called *Ahlu'r-Ra'y* (people of personal reasoning) due to their reliance on and frequent use of *Ijtihād*. These nomenclatures do not necessarily mean that either of the Schools totally abstained from the use of Ḥadīth or Ra'y, as the case may be. Rather, they indicate the relative degrees of emphasis each laid on the sources respectively. The Malikites, no doubt, stressed the use of Ḥadīth more than the Hanafites.
- iii. **Preservation of the dignity of knowledge:** Imam Mālik was not only a man of letters but also of courage and integrity. He appreciated the worth of the endowment of knowledge Allah bestowed on him and would not like any person, no matter how highly placed, to treat it with contempt. Disrespect to a scholar is disrespect to scholarship. A scholar should not expose himself to ridicule to avoid negative effects on knowledge generally. This sterling quality of our man came into play on many occasions. Ja'far b. Sulamān, Governor of Medina under Caliph Manṣūr, once attempted to influence the Imam to uphold a case of divorce under duress but he refused and nullified it in the public. The Governor felt slighted and punished him for that. There was also another occasion when Caliph Hārūn Rashīd requested him to teach his children at home. Our man turned down the request saying that knowledge was so important that it would not go to people but those in need of it had to go to it. The Caliph was humble enough to let his children and others learn together. This quality deserves to be emulated by scholars nowadays particularly in the area of Islamic Studies if there is going to be an end to being taken for granted by rulers, wealthy men and policy-formulators.
- iv. **The book *Muwaṭṭa'c*:** The greatest legacy bequeathed by Imam Mālik is the compendium, *Mawaṭṭa'c*. It contains Ḥadīths compiled on various topics ranging from doctrine and law to socio-economic transactions. Extra care was taken to ensure that unreliable Ḥadīths were not included in it. In all, the book contains about one thousand Ḥadīths. It enjoyed so much reputation that Imam al-Shāfi'i once remarked. "There has never appeared on earth a book that is as close to the

Qur'ān as the book of Mālik". In North and West Africa, this book is used as the basis of judgements in the *Sharī'ah* courts.

- v. **Dissemination of Islamic learning through teaching:** There is no doubt that Imam Mālik inspired many scholars across the Muslim world. His students, numbering thousands, became, later in life, founders of schools such as his, for example Imams Abū Hanīfah and al-Shāfi'i. Others were rulers up to the post of Caliph, and scholars of international repute. The importance of imparting authentic knowledge about Islam at that time cannot be over-emphasised. The political crisis that characterized the overthrow of the Umayyads and the enthronement of the ʿAbbāsids, the end of the generation of the Prophet's Companions who had previously been the focus of attention for students of Islam, the animated *Ijtihād* activities at the various centres, and the unending theological disputations between the Muʿtazilites and Ashʿarites underscored the importance of having an inspiring and influential teacher that could command the respect of all and sundry and bring sanity to the situation. That important role Imam Mālik played satisfactorily.

Self Assessment Exercise

Itemise the major contributions of Imam Mālik in the realm of Islamic law

4.0 CONCLUSION

You have learnt in this Unit the birth, up-bringing, education and contributions of Imam Mālik b. Anas to the development of the *Sharī'ah*. You have also learnt that the Imam was a successful teacher having produced scholars of international repute and political leaders some of whom had the opportunity of heading the Islamic Empire. He wrote the *Mawāṭṭaʿ*, a compilation of Ḥadīths on various topics.

5.0 SUMMARY

Born in Medina, Imam Mālik b. Anas lived between 93/712 and 179/795. His place of birth, being the seat of the Islamic Empire previously, was the base of many scholars of note. The opportunity was seized by Imam Mālik to start learning early in life. He later became a renowned scholar attracting students from far and near. His major contributions to the development of the Islamic Jurisprudence include codification of the Medina juristic thought, affirmation of the authority of Ḥadīth as the second source of the *Sharī'ah*, and personal exemplification of the ideals of Islam. His book, *al-Muwattaʿ*, is not only a collection of Ḥadīths but also an important legal treatise held in esteem by scholars of the Islamic Law.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- To what extent did the situation of Medina as an important centre of learning Ḥadīth influence Imam Mālik in his views?
- What are the major contributions of Imam Mālik to the development of the Islamic Jurisprudence.

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UNIT 4: IMAM A`SH-SHĀFI`Ī AND HIS SCHOOL

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 Imam Muhammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi`ī: his birth and up-bringing

3.2 Contributions of Imam al-Shāfi`i to the development of the *Sharī`ah*

3.3 The influence of Al-Shāfi`ī School of Law

3.4 Imam Al-Shāfi`ī 's Disciples and Books

4.0. Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

7.0 References and Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Imam Muhammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi`ī was the founder of the Shāfi`ī School of Law. The contributions of this great scholar to the development of the Islamic jurisprudence are valuable. The school he founded has a large following in Asia, Yemen and Africa.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

Students are expected, at the end of this lecture, to discuss the life history of Imam al-Shāfi`ī with particular reference to his contributions to the development of the *Sharī`ah*.

3.0 MAIN CONTENTS

3.1 Imam Muhammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi`ī: his birth and up-bringing

Born at Askalon near Gaza in Palestine in 150/767, Imam al-Shāfi`ī was from the Quraysh tribe of Mecca and a descendant of the Prophet. He was given the appellation of *al-Imam al-Muṭṭalibi* (the Muttalibi Imam) because of his having °Abd al-Muṭṭalib as his ancestor. His father had been a bitter enemy of the Prophet before his conversion after the Badr war in which he was captured and later released on ransom.

Our man showed signs of being a brilliant scholar right from youth. He had memorized the whole of the *Qur'ān* from the age of seven and *Mawatta* of Imam Mālik at fifteen. He distinguished himself in his studies on theology, jurisprudence, Ḥadīth, exegesis of the *Qur'ān*, just to mention a few. At the age of twenty, al-Shāfi'ī went to join the students of Imam Mālik at Medina and remained there until the great teacher died in 179/796. By that time, al-Shāfi'ī had earned the reputation of being a brilliant jurist in Hijāz and other places. Before his association with Imam Mālik, he had studied *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) in Makkah. It was therefore not a surprise that his relatively short sojourn in Medina which afforded him the opportunity of complementing his previous studies with Ḥadīth from such an accomplished Traditionist as Imam Mālik brought him to the limelight so soon.

When the Governor of Yemen, during the caliphate of Hārūn al-Rashīd, visited Medina, he was impressed by the standard of Imam al-Shāfi'ī's scholarship to the extent that he persuaded him to go with him and work as an administrator. Our man took up the appointment. His frankness shortly after brought him in conflict with Government officials who implicated him in a case of conspiracy against Government. He was deported, as a result of that, to 'Irāq but the Caliph was kind enough to pardon him owing to the pleading of Imam Muhammad al-Shaybānī on his behalf and his ability to defend himself. Although the Caliph became his patron, al-Shāfi'ī refused to take up any other public appointment because of his past experience. Nevertheless, his peaceful stay in Baghdād and interaction with leading disciples of Imam Abū Ḥanfah, especially al-Shaybānī mentioned above, enabled him to study the Ḥanafī School.

Having been influenced by Imam Mālik whose School was noted for its emphasis on Ḥadīth, al-Shāfi'ī took up the Ḥanafītes on a number of issues. His discussions with them resulted in his gaining an insight into the Hanafī School and he had to shift ground on many issues. By and large, he began to modify some of his opinions based on the orientation received from Imam Mālik. In the long run, he carved a new identity for himself without being tied to any school. Thus, many Mālikites were disappointed by

him in his lectures delivered at Mecca on his way to Egypt in 188/804. However, there were others who were impressed and therefore accepted to study under him. One of them was Imam Aḥmad b. Hanbal who later became the founder of the Ḥanbalī School.

Our man left Egypt for Baghdād again in 194/810. But he was there for a period of three or four years only. The reason for this was probably his aversion to the Muʿtazilite doctrine which the Caliph had adopted. His living far away from the seat of Government would avert clashes that might arise from his possible utterances against the Muʿtazilite doctrine. He finally left Baghdād fro Egypt in 198/814 at the age of 50 years.

Imam al-Shāfiʿī continued to live in the old Cairo where he died in 204/820. He was pious, charitable and prolific in writing. According to Hughes, Imam Shāfiʿī's works "are more voluminous than those of any other Muslim doctor". He was broad-minded and soft-hearted.

There are 113 works written by Imam al-Shāfiʿī. The most famous among them are *Kitab al-Risālah fī Uṣūli'l-Fiqh*, commonly known as *al-Risālah* and *Kitāb al-Umm*. The former is mainly "to defend the view points of traditionists concerning the over-riding authority of the *Sunnah*", while the latter gives information on his discussions with, or study of the works of the leading scholars of his time such as Mālik, Awzāʿī, Abū Ḥanīfah and Imam Muhammad al-Shaybani, just to mention a few.

3.2 Contributions of Imam al-Shāfiʿī to the development of the *Sharīʿah*

He studied the schools of his forerunners and learnt from a number of most prominent scholars; he discussed and argued with the ablest and profoundest scholars and examined their teachings, from which he later on worked out a method combining the book, the *Sunnah*, the *Ijmāʿ*, and the *Qiyās*, and so he did not confine himself to one or the other of these sources, as was the case with others.

The ultimate object of the Imam was to reconcile the *Fiqh* and the Traditions, in which he seems to have succeeded, i.e. *jamʿahū bayna al-fiqh waʿl-sunnah*. He is considered to be the originator of the scientific principles in the legal theory of Islam. He is also considered to be an authority par excellence in the science of Traditions.

A wholesome picture of the teachings of Imam Shāfi'ī is given in his own words: “God has not given it to anyone after the death of the Prophet to express opinion except on the authority of the knowledge (°*Ilm*) that came before him, and such knowledge consists in the Book, the *Sunnah*, the *Ijmā'*, and the sayings and doings (*Āthār*) of the Companions, and then, as I have explained, in Qiyās, upon the basis of what has preceded, and it is not allowed to anyone to use Qiyās until he has learned what has occurred before him in the way of practices (*Sunan*) and sayings of the predecessors, and the *Ijmā'* and differences of the people, as well as the Arabic language”.

He placed the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah* in the same class for the basis of *Shar'ah* knowledge. He said that both are from God though the reasons of their revelation differ, and every person has to accept that the language of the *Qur'ān* is Arabic and thus it is an essential element of knowledge. He said that the *Qur'ān* is comprehensive and contains a wholesome treasure of sacred laws. The explanations are furnished by the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. The *Sunnah* not being contrary to the *Qur'ān*, it may be abrogated by another *Sunnah* when a case of conflict arises.

Shāfi'ī justifies *Ijmā'* on the basis of the *Ḥadīth* in which the Muslims are enjoined to think collectively. He explains that, while isolated individuals are subject to error, the Muslim community as a whole is immune. He placed Qiyās as a source of law. He said that Qiyās should be strictly based on the revealed sources and *Ijmā'*. He termed Qiyās similar to and having the same meaning as *Ijihād* (*Risālah*, 288, paras 490-1). However, in cases of emergency, the Imam accepted the principles of *Istisḥāb* for the issue and formation of legal opinion in the absence of the fundamental sources and *Ijmā'*. He allowed large latitude to this process in the determination of the effective cause or °*illah* and thus came to more widely accepting the methodology of the *Ḥanafī* view on Qiyās.

The Imam always adopted a policy of continued research in bringing out reality and truth. He was never static and it may be said that he was ever a student of law throughout his life. He examined his methods and emphasized the living side of the law for which he is considered progressive in outlook in the study of jurisprudence. Researchers have shown that the shifting outlook of the Imam had an effect upon

jurisprudence developed by his School. His disciples and followers recorded the different views he gave on legal problems and this went a long way to enrich their knowledge and the practice of the *Sharī'ah*.

The Imam was an erudite lawyer and a genius; he visualized what was to be done on account of change of circumstances and time. In consonance with other Schools, he never claimed that his works had a binding authority on the Muslims. In his book, *al-Umm*, he states categorically that in cases of difference between those who exercise individual reasoning in the absence of a binding text, each of them is bound only by the opinion he holds, and none of them may abandon what he personally considers to be right in order to follow blindly the opinion of another person.

3.3 The influence of Al-Shāfi'ī School of Law

The School of Shāfi'ī was nourished in Egypt and also in Syria. It enjoyed royal patronage. It went to Iraq and expanded inside the territories of Yemen, *Tūrān*, Persia, Hejaz, Spain and India. It spread to North Africa and Spain by 300 where it eventually got a foothold.

The most intensive application under State authority was given to the School in Egypt and Syria. In these territories, *Shāfi'ī* judges were appointed. Though there were judges of other Schools also, the *Shāfi'ī* judges were considered superior. In Iraq, the Ḥanafī School was generally preferred. Later history shows that there were great controversies among the *Sunnī* Schools on sectarian ideologies. The *Shāfi'ī* School had to enter into a tussle with them. For a time, it gained a hold in Spain but, later, the continuous rage of conflict and no one particular School had a monopoly. The *Shāfi'ī* School was, therefore, established there along with other Schools. The controversy of different schools was not permitted to go to the general level and was largely confined to educated classes. The School received much attention in Egypt. However, the followers of the School are still found in many Muslims lands.

3.4 His Disciples and Books

A study of the researches on *Shāfi'ī* gives an idea of the comprehensive and vast ocean of *Fiqh* literature. He has collected in his books thoughts, critiques and analysis of the legal acumen of the jurists of other Schools who constitute the vast system of law in Islam. Through the works of the Imam, one can have perfect understanding of the law of the *Mālikī* and Ḥanafī Schools and of the thoughts of different sects of Islam. *Shāfi'ī* systematized the law for the generality of principles and paved the way for the furtherance of the cause of legal studies.

The life of Imam *Shāfi'ī* is full of continued struggles for the cause of law and its refinement of its presentation. He was an expert in philosophy, language studies, human behaviour and jurisprudence. He was so gifted in many aspects of life that hardly be imagined to be possessed by a single individual.

4.0 CONCLUSION

You have learnt that Imam Muhammad b. Idris al-Shāfi'ī, the founder of the Shāfi'ī School of Law was born in Palestine in 150/767. He was naturally gifted in academic works. He memorized the *Qur'ān* and *Al-Muwatta'* of Imam Mālik b. Anas and view-points of the Ḥanafī School. In an attempt to reconcile the views of the Mālikī School based mainly on Traditions or *Sunnah* and those of the Ḥanafī School which was more in favour of *Ijtihād* or legal logical reasoning, Imam al-Shāfi'ī ended up founding a new School of Law still in existence up to date. The School enjoys acceptance and wields a lot of influence mainly in Egypt with some following in many other Muslim countries.

5.0 SUMMARY

Imam Muhammad Idris al-Shāfi'ī was the founder of the Shāfi'ī School of Law. Apart from being a teacher with many students and a prolific writer, the Imam made a lot of contributions to the development of the *Sharī'ah*. Having studied the works of the Ḥanafī and Mālikī Schools respectively, he attempted to synthesise them by reconciling

the areas of difference. Incidentally, his efforts ended in founding another School of Law which continues to exist to date. It is based in Egypt even though some Muslim scholars all over the world subscribe to its views on many legal issues.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Write a comprehensive note on the life and works of Imam Muhammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi‘ī.
2. In what way was Imam Al-Shāfi‘ī different from Imam Maliki b. Anas and Imam Abū Ḥanīfah respectively?

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UNIT 5 IMAM AHMAD B. HANBAL AND HIS SCHOOL

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Contents
 - 3.1. Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal: his birth and upbringing
 - 3.2. The religious life of the Imam
 - 3.3 The contributions of Imam Ahmad to the development of the *Sharī'ah*
- 4.0. Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References and Further Reading

1.0 Introduction

You are to learn, in this Unit, the life history of Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal, his contributions to the development of the Islamic Law, his school of Law and its following in the Muslim world.

2.0 OBJECTIVE

At the end of this Unit, students are expected to be able to:

- i. Discuss the life history of Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal with particular reference to his birth, upbringing and education.
- ii. Explain the contributions of Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal to the development of the *Sharī'ah*.
- iii. Identify the distinctive characteristics of the Hanbali School of Law.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal: his birth and upbringing

Imam Abū ʿAbdullah Ahmad bn Hanbal was born at Baghdad in 164 H. (d. 241 H.). He was of pure Arab extraction and, through ʿAdnān Shaibānī, his family joins the Prophet in hierarchy. However, Imam Hanbal in his early childhood was, by nature, independent and scholarly. The untimely death of his father exposed him to poverty. As such, he learnt to be self-reliant, confident, patient, prudent, honest and pious. All these

qualities and others not mentioned here took him a long way to face challenges later in his life. He was brought up at Baghdad, then a centre of learning and high civilization. He learnt the *Qur'ān* by heart at an early age and began to study linguistics and writing at the age of fourteen years. He also specialized in other branches of learning such as mathematics, philosophy, *tasawwuf*, etc. He started to study the science of Traditions under Imam Abū Yūsuf, and other *Muhaddithūn* (experts in the study of Hadīth). He studied law under the 'Irāqī jurists and, getting further training from different traditionists, developed a bias for *Hadīth* sciences as compared to *Fiqh*. He also studied sciences under Imam Shāfi'ī and other noted personalities.

In his quest for knowledge and Traditions, the Imam undertook long journeys to Syria, Hejaz, Yemen, Kūfah, Basrah and other places. During the course of his educational pursuits, he got familiarized with the Persian language. He developed a special taste for following the *Sunnah* of the Prophet and intensively undertook to collect the Traditions. As a result of his keen interest in matters of religion, he became a disciple of Shāfi'ī and Dāwūd al-Zāhirī and leaned towards Mālikī thoughts. He became the severest opponent of the “people of opinion” and made use of *Rā'y* (personal reasoning) by basing his opinion only on the textual aspects of the law. His career as a specialist started at the age of forty years when he began his teaching.

The pious Imam led a life of austerity, poverty and virtue. He was a living example of a life full of hard labour and patience without accepting others' assistance. He refused to take presents even from authorities and was ever prepared to perform manual labour to secure lawfully earned food. He was of the opinion that a scholar worth his salt should be disciplined and put materialistic tendencies under effective check.

The Imam received learning from about one hundred great scholars. However, the most noted personalities who affected the methodology of Hanbal were two: Hāfiz Hashim and Imam al-Shāfi'ī. At the age of sixteen, the Imam enrolled as a student under Hāfiz Hashīm b. Bashīr b. Abī Hāzim and for five years studied under him learning all the sciences of Traditions. He later studied law under Imam Shāfi'ī. Thus, he had formal training in Traditions and jurisprudence of the Islamic Law. He was an inspired follower

of Sufyān Thawrī and Ibn Mubārak, though he did not have an opportunity to study under them.

3.2 The religious life of the Imam

Imam Ahmad was staunch in religion and very firm in faith. It is no surprise that he rejected the theory of the “creation” of the *Qur’ān* when he was called upon to accept it in the days of Caliph Wāthiq of the °Abbasid Dynasty. The particular heretical or ultra-innovatory dogma for which the Imam and others suffered being whipped and imprisonment, was that the *Qur’ān* was created. The Imam and others insisted on the uncreatedness of the *Qur’ān* fearing that acceptance of the createdness of the *Qur’ān* would lead to the belief that the time might come – nay, might be close at hand – when its exclusive authority would come to an end; or one precept after another might be quietly shelved as of merely temporary application, suitable perhaps first to Medina and later to all lands. The dogma initiated by royal authority was propagated and acted upon for its practical enforcement on all the Muslims, authorities and others, under impunity and sanction; even some of the *Muhaddithūn* accepted it. Mā’mūn’s policy (starting from 218H). was bitterly opposed by the pious and the faithful at serious cost of terrible persecution and Ahmad b. Hanbal continuously rejected the same. Its preaching and forcible imposition by curtailment of the human right of freedom of conscience and expression continued till 233H. when Mutawakkil put an end to it. The Imam became a historic model as a fighter for Muslim belief, freedom of fundamental human rights, dignity of man and safety of religious institutions in Islam.

3.3 The contributions of Imam Ahmad to the development of the *Sharīah*

The *Fiqh* of Imam Ahmad was a system raised and enriched under reliance placed upon the Traditions of the Prophet with an underlying emphasis on the opinions of the Companions. The methodology in legal development adopted by the Imam (especially in “transactions”) was a reliance upon principles of permissibility in cases where no direct authority was available in the *Qur’ānic* and Ḥadīth texts or reports information credited to the Companions, and where nothing was found against the exercise of *Ijtihād*.

The Imam considered the *Sunnah* as an explanation of the *Qur'ān* and in cases of difference of opinion among the Companions of the Prophet, he preferred the view of the rightly-guided Caliphs. Nevertheless, it is an established fact that the Imam accepted the action and practice of the Companions, but he preferred Traditions from the Prophet on religious matters and sacred principles.

3.4 The Writings of the Imam

The efforts of Imam al-*Shāfi'ī* to reconcile the science of law mechanized by Imam *Mālik*, have been a landmark in the history of Islamic jurisprudence. Studying the interior legal treatises of his forerunners, he gave the Muslim law a polished shape and provided a scope for further elaboration in the footsteps of other Schools. The *Usūl al-Fiqh*, originated by the great Imam, Abū Hanīfah, and developed by his disciples, Imam, Abū Yūsuf (*Kitāb al-Kharāj*) and Imam Muhammad Shaybānī (*Usūl al-Fiqh*), was made a specific subject of scholarly acumen of al-*Shāfi'ī*.

Perhaps he was the foremost legal thinker who, by personal journeys, continuously gave out his thoughts to the people and dictated books to his disciples. His methodology in the science of law was received with greater appreciation in Egypt and was thus instrumental in the later modern reformation in the country. His companionship with Shaybānī gave the Imam a new impetus and he developed an additional base in the law. His *Fiqh* influenced the learned and eminent lawyers of the time. He wrote his *Risālah* in Iraq. He later revised and updated it in Egypt on the basis of personal experimentations. The book is a landmark in legal research with particular reference to the *Sharī'ah*. It paves the way for systematic study of the *Sharī'ah* mechanism and systematization.

4.0 Conclusion

You have learnt that Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal was born in Baghdad in 164 A.H and died in 241 A.H. at the age of 87 years. He lost his father early in life, a situation which exposed him to a lot of the hardships of auster life. He memorized the *Qur'ān* early in life and studied many branches of knowledge common in those days relating to language, mathematical and theological studies. He distinguished himself in the study of *Sunnah* and Islamic Law. Although a student of Imam al-*Shāfi'ī*, he was independent in his

approach to the *Sharī'ah*. He ended up founding the Hanbali School of Law renowned for its emphasis on the importance of the *Sunnah* as a source of the *Sharī'ah* and an indispensable basis for deducing *Sharī'ah* provisions on novel problems. The School is also known for its stout defence of Islam against innovations and unorthodox ideas. It holds sway at present in Saudi Arabia, Syria, Palesline, Iraq, Pakistan and India.

5.0 Summary

Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal, the founder of the Hanbali School of Law, was a model of the teachings of Islam on self-discipline, courage and self-independence. Having been born in Baghdād then the theatre of political activities among the ruling class, on the one hand, and theological dsputations, on the other, the Imam went through a lot of persecutions as a result of his resistance against the Muʿtazilite doctrine of the createdness of the *Qur'ān* and brazen abuse of power. Nevertheless, he did not oppose Government openly. He was an accomplished scholar of the *Sunnah* and *Sharī'ah*, no wonder then that some people regard him as a Traditionist rather than a Theologian. However, he was both. At least, his work, *Musnad*, shows him as such. He studied under Imam al-Shāfiʿi but asserted his independence as far as the interpretation of the *Sharī'ah* is concerned. He eventually founded the Hanbali School of Law with a large following in Sandi Arabia and some other countries in the Middle East and Asia.

6.0 Tutor-Market Assignment

1. “Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal was an epitome of self-discipline and independence”. Discuss.
2. Explain the contributions of Imam Ahmad b. Hanbal to the development of the *Sharī'ah*.
3. Write a comprehensive note on the Hanbali School of Law.

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UNIT 6: THE SHĪ^cAH AND THE SHARĪ^cAH

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Contents
 - 3.1 Origin of *Shī^cah* and their Imamate doctrine
 - 3.2 The *Shī^c'ah* and the *Sharī^c'ah*
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References and Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In recent times, the Shī^cah has become a force to be reckoned with not only in the Muslim world but also in the global affairs. There have been moves towards bridging the gap between Shi'ism and Sunnism. The sect which spreads all over the Muslim world now has appreciable adherents in Nigeria. We used to be familiar with four schools of Islamic law studied in the four units above but now a work has been written which includes Shiite school and entitled *Al-Fiqh 'alā `l-Madhāhib al-Khamsah* (Islamic Jurisprudence according to the Five Schools). In this Unit our focus shall be the Shi'ites, their origin, doctrine and contributions to the *Sharī^cah*.

2.0 OBJECTIVE

At the end of this Unit, students should be able to explain:

- i. the origin of the *Shī^cah* group among Muslims, their doctrine and thoughts.
- ii. the contributions of the *Shī^cah* to the development of the *Sharī^cah*.
- iii. the differences between the *Sunni* and *Shī^cah* Schools of Law.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Origin of *Shī^cah* and their Imamate doctrine

The word *Shī^cah* literally means “party” or “group”. At the beginning, it was known as *Shī^cat 'Alī* (the Group or Supporters of 'Alī). It was later shortened to *Shī^cah*. The term stands for the followers of 'Alī, the fourth of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs in the Republican Islam, including his descendants. They later ended up being a sect in Islam.

Originally, the Shī^cites were simply partisans of 'Alī and his descendants, but in course of time, when the whole of Persia took up the cause of the family of 'Alī, Shī^cism became a receptacle of all religious ideas of the Persians such as Dualism, Gnosticism, and Manichaeism. Even in the lifetime of 'Alī, a Jew convert to Islam, 'Abdullah b. Sabā', had striven to introduce foreign elements into Islam. He alleged that 'Alī was to be adored as an incarnation of the Deity. These ideas, though rejected with horror by 'Alī himself and by the greater part of the first *Shī^cites*, gradually made way; and all the direct

descendants of °Alī became veritable deities in the eyes of their partisans. Through allegorical interpretation of the textual side of religion, permission was secured to see in the sacred texts of the *Qur'ān* a meaning sought by choice. It was carried out at a later date by founders of the different sub-sects of the parent sect. Whatever may be the historical argument, it is susceptible that there has been a multiplicity of sub-sectarian movements; some of them reached the stage of heresy.

To the *Shī'ah*, the concept of *Imamate* is not a general (public) interest to be delegated to the Muslim nation for consideration and appointment of a person to fill it. It is the pillar and fundamental article of Islam. No Prophet is permitted to neglect it or to delegate the appointment of an Imam to the Muslim nation. It is incumbent upon him to appoint an Imam for the Muslims. The Imam cannot commit sins, minor or major, for the simple reason given by the sect that he is *ma'ṣūm*. This view offers an interesting field of vast information and explanation. The *Shī'ah* give pre-eminence to Hadrat °Alī on their sectarian interpretation of the textual side of religion. Historical researches date the *Shī'ahs'* dogmatic veneration showed to °Alī before the year 11H. (632 C.E.). Many of the poets, for example, Abu'l-Aswad al-Du'alī, who fought by the side of °Alī at Ṣiffīn, praised him with more than ordinary infatuation” “When I looked into the face of Abu'l-Husayn, I was the full moon, which filled the spectators with reverent wonder. The Quraysh now know, wherever they may be, that thou art the noblest in merit and religion.

The *Imamīyyah Shī'ah*. The sect is named *Imamīyyah* for the reason that it attached fundamental importance to the Imam, held by the doctrine of infallibility of the Imams and believed in the coming of al-Mahdī. It is the largest of the *Shī'ah* sects and its thirteen million followers are spread over in Iran, the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and in other parts of the Muslim world. In Syria and Lebanon, they are known as al-Muta'awwilah and (also by other names as Ja'farīyyah, Ithnā' °Ashrīyyah). Iran has made it State religion with specification of Imam Mahdī's advent.

The sect interprets the textual law in support of the preference given to °Alī by the Prophet on the question of *Imamate* (cf. Ya'qūbī, *Tā'rīkh* (Leiden, 1883), II, 138). Further, it is contended that the texts prove both the personal appointment of °Alī and the fact that the *Imamate* is transmitted from him to his successors. Consequently, there follows a natural denouncement of the Caliphates of Abū Bakr and °Umar, who, according to them, do not need any oath of allegiance. Among recent *Shī'ahs*, the name of *Imamīyyah* is often restricted to the Twelvers or Ithnā' °Ashrīyyah. After °Alī they acknowledge °Alī's son al-Hasan, Hasan's brother al-Husain, Husain's son °Alī Zayn al-°Ābidīn, (Alī's) son Muhammad al-Bāqir, and (Muhammad's) son Ja'far al-Sādiq, (Sadiq's) son Mūsā al-Kāzīm, later °Alī ar-Ridā', Muhammad al-Taqī, °Alī al-Hasan al-°Askarī and, lastly, Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-°Askarī – the expected Mahdī as his successors to the *Imamate*. The *Imamate* is considered as one of the pillars of faith and psychological and religious arguments go to establish the sanctity of the institution. Upon the same are focused the hopes of the world, the love and devotion and other things.

Self Assessment Exercise

Trace the origin of Shi'ism and highlight its Imamate doctrine.

3.2 The *Shī'ah* and the *Sharī'ah*

The sources of the law, according to the sect, are the *Qur'ān*, the *Sunnah*, and the consensus of opinion. The *Qur'ān*, according to some, contains inaccuracies (the generality denies distortions), and only those Traditions are accepted which are reported through a chain of authorities going to the family of the Prophet or *al-Akhbār*. On a particular statement, the opinion of the infallible Imam is accepted, not alone of the jurists' consensus. The use of *Qiyās* is forbidden by some groups (as by *Akhbārīyyah*), though other groups (as the *Uṣūlī Shī'ah*) accept it.

In comparison with the *Sunnī* bases in the *Fiqh* or science of law, the Imamīyyah methodology approaches jurisprudence under preconceived bases having been divinely ordained or inspired. Learning being a continuous process, the formation of opinion on legal problems, according to them, differs vitally from the *Sunnī* theory on *Ijtihād*. Through belief in the innocence of the Imam, all the bases of the *Sharī'ah* evidences remain unstained and are perfect. The role played by Imam Bāqir and Imam Ja'far a'ṣ-Ṣādiq in the science of law is said to have been accomplished under Divine inspiration which they received for propagation among the people. However, the Imams gave out a methodology in the system of jurisprudence and its bases, though they did not lay down the principles of the science of the law or *Usūl al-Fiqh*. By attributing any particular method to the Imams, the jurisprudential methodologies took material shape. Though no books have come from the Imams such as Imam Bāqir, Imam Mūsā Kāzīm on the point under discussion, the later jurists of the sect compiled works on the basis of sayings or performances heard or received in any other manner. In this developing process, the jurisprudence of the sect has similarity of approach with other schools, with traditionists or with dogmatics.

In the light of what has been stated above, it is important to remark that the place and function of the *Mujtahids* or *Faqīhs* differ vitally in the *Shī'ah* jurisprudence from that of the *Sunnīs*. The scope of *Ijtihād* is thus circumscribed in the system for the simple reason that the lawyer is restricted, under the set-up of inspired inheritance, to be adopted by the Imamate doctrine. The jurists of the sect submit that, after a primary search for finding a basis in the Book and the *Sunnah*, if there is no direct authority, it is permitted to use wisdom (rationalism) as against analogical deduction. Nevertheless, it is said that the sectarian jurists are not unanimous on confiding in wisdom. Some take the view that reliance on wisdom should not be put for the reason that what the Imam has said is binding and, thus, what is known is sufficient. They rely on what is provided in such books as *al-Kāfī*, *al-Tahdhīb*, *al-Istabsār*, etc., containing the compilations of the predecessors and consider them to contain information on all legal problems. The branches of the *Sharī'ah* sciences are covered by what is written in the *Qur'ān* or what the earlier Imams and acknowledged persons have explained. However, the sayings or performances attributed to the Imams, on which reliance is placed by the jurists of the sect, contain different versions and meanings.

Illustration. On the question of *Mut-‘ah* or temporary marriage, it is held by the *Imamīyyah Shī‘ah*, that Imam Ja‘far al-Sādiq permitted it. However, the *Zaydīyyah Shī‘ah* hold on the basis of sayings of the same Imam Ja‘far al-Sādiq as contained in their books that *Mutā‘* was fornication or adultery.

In spite of the above methodological difference, it cannot be denied that the system and approach of the jurists of the sect hold a contributory place in the jurisprudence of Islam. The principles enunciated by the sect, if in consonance with the fundamental *Sharī‘ah* evidences, have played a vital role in the process of legal development and juristic analysis of the law. Thus, Egypt, Pakistan and other Muslim countries adopted the process of legal acumen as adopted by the jurists of the *Shī‘ah* sects along with their own systems. The most immediate illustration is furnished in the codification of the views of Ibn Taimīyyah who, in turn, borrowed the *Shī‘ah* system of counting three successive divorces at one time as one divorce in the family laws of these countries. It had been the historical contribution of the jurists of the *Shī‘ah* sects that in their genius of legal research, they remained wider in operation and took benefit from the good and beneficial aspects of others’ methods and approaches. The literature on the jurisprudence of Islam has become richer by the contributions of the *Shī‘ah* legal theories which are a living heritage of Islamic legal or technical juristic thoughts.

The sect of *Imamīyyah Shī‘ah*, similar to other Shī‘ite sects, is divided into many groups on points of details in religious matters. Some of them are said to be Hasan Nafsiyyah, Hakīmiyyah, Salīmīyyah, Shayṭānīyyah, Zarārīyah, Yūnusīyyah, Badā‘īyyah, Mafuzah, Bāqirīyyah, Mūsāwīyyah, Ahmadiyyah (followers of Ahmad b. Mūsā Kāzim), Akhārīyyah (traditionists), etc. They had peculiar beliefs as, for example, the Salāmīyyah view that God can take the shape of man, or that He has a body (by Shaitanīyyah or Nu‘mānīyyah), that Imam Bāqir is not dead but is waiting (adopted by the Baqirīyyah), and similar beliefs. However, the majority of the Imamīyyah sect are not outside the limits of religion. They are considered Muslims without any religious rancor.

It is contended by the jurists of the sect that in the process of the compilation of the Traditions of the Prophet, the first work of its kind was by Imam ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib. The collection was called *Sahīfah ‘Alī*. The first work on *Usūl* of the *Imamīyyah* was *al-Kāfi* containing 6099 traditions (cf. Sayyid Hasan al-Sadar, *Tā’sīs al-Shī‘ah*, 88) and written by Kulaynī. Some other works are: the books *al-Tawhīd*; *al-Tahdhīb* and *al-Istibsār* by Abū Ja‘far Muhammad b. ‘Alī Tūsī (d. 460 H.), also his book *al-Fihrist*; *a`d-Duriyyah fī ‘Ilm Uṣūl al-Sharī‘ah* by Sayyid Sharīf Murtadā (d. 443 H.); *al-Maṣādir fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, and *Tanqīh ‘an Taḥsīn wa’l-Tasbīh* by Muhammad b. ‘Alī al-Hamsī; *al-Nihāyah* and *Tahdhīb al-Uṣūl* by Āyatullah ‘Allāmah Jamāluddīn al-Mutahhar (also his book *Sharh Ghāyat al-Usūl ila-‘Ilm-ul-Usūl*); and *Sharā‘i al-Islam* by Ja‘far al-Hillī. There are many other works on law, bases of jurisprudence and even commentaries on the *Qur’ān* written by specialists of the sect.

Self Assessment Exercise

What are the sources of Shī‘ites sources of Sharī‘ah?

4.0 Conclusion

You have learnt in this Unit the meaning of *Shī'ah* as a lexical item in Arabic and a technical term referring to the group of Muslims who supported ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib in the crisis that engulfed the Islamic Empire at an early stage. You have also learnt that belief in Imamate is the exclusive right of the descendants of the Prophet through her only surviving daughter, Fatimah, married to ʿAli. You have also been taught that the *Shī'ah* do not recognize *Qiyās* as a source of the *Sharī'ah*. They recognize only Ḥadīths reported by or traced to the family of the Prophet as reporters.

5.0 Summary

The *Shī'ah* are the supporters of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib, the fourth orthodox caliph, in his contention with Muʿāwiyah as the legitimate leader of Muslims. The group believe that the post of Imam, the leader or ruler of the Islamic Empire should exclusively belong to the members of the family of the Prophet by descent. Such an Imam is *Maʿṣūm*, immune to errors or mistakes and his decisions are binding on all Muslims. They recognize the *Qurʾān* and *Sunnah* as the primary sources of the *Sharī'ah* except that they do not recognize the *Ḥadīths* not related by or traced to the members of the Prophet's family. They also accept *Ijmāʿ* but differ from the *Sunni* schools by recognizing only their members for the purpose of reaching consensus on any legal issue. They do not recognize *Qiyās* as a source of the *Sharī'ah* but allows for individual jurists to embark on *Ijtihād* to solve any legal difficulty. As a result of the importance *Shī'ah* members attach to the personality of ʿAli b. Abī Ṭālib, they recorded and codified his sayings as those of other leaders among them. This influenced other Muslims to codify legal verdicts a good example of which was Ibn Taymiyyah in his *Fatāwā*.

Tutor Marked Assignment

- Define Shiism providing a clear picture of its distinctive doctrine as a Muslim sect.
- Explain the sources of the *Sharī'ah* recognized by the *Shī'ah*.

7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READING

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