



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

**FACULTY OF ARTS**

**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**COURSE CODE: ISL241**

**COURSE TITLE: PROPHETHOOD AND PROPHETS IN ISLAM**



**ISL241**  
**PROPHETHOOD AND PROPHETS IN ISLAM**

Course Team    Dr Ismail, L.B. (Developer/Writer) - FCOE (Special) Oyo

Dr. Imam Aliyu U. (Reviewer 2020) - NOUN



# NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

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National Open University of Nigeria  
**Headquarters**  
University Village  
Plot 91, Cadastral Zone  
Nnamdi Azikiwe Expressway Jabi,  
Abuja

**Lagos Office**  
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way  
Victoria Island, Lagos

Email: [centralinfo@noun.edu.ng](mailto:centralinfo@noun.edu.ng)  
URL: [www.noun.edu.ng](http://www.noun.edu.ng)

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| <b>CONTENTS</b>                           | <b>PAGE</b> |
|---|-------------|
| Introduction.....                         | 1           |
| What You Will Learn in This Course.....   | 1           |
| Course Aims.....                          | 1           |
| Course Objectives.....                    | 1           |
| Working through This Course.....          | 2           |
| Course Materials.....                     | 2           |
| Textbooks and References.....             | 3           |
| Assignment File.....                      | 3           |
| Presentation Schedule.....                | 3           |
| Assessment.....                           | 3           |
| Tutor-Marked Assignment.....              | 4           |
| Final Examination Grading.....            | 4           |
| Course Marking Scheme.....                | 5           |
| Course Overview.....                      | 5           |
| How to Get the Most from This Course..... | 5           |
| Facilitators/Tutors and Tutorials.....    | 7           |
| Summary.....                              | 7           |



## **Introduction**

There is no gainsaying in the fact that prophet-hood forms an integral part of the world's three great monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The position occupied by the prophets and their roles is therefore underscored by the fact that through them, mankind have the knowledge about God, the unseen world, mysteries of the universe and the relationship between man and God. Also, as intermediaries between man and God and between man and man, prophets are to warn, to guide and to give glad tidings. This course provides a brief background of the concept of Prophethood in the view of the three religions. The life and experiences garnered by some of the Prophets sent by Allah and the reactions of the people they were sent to are also to be discussed in the course.

## **What You Will Learn in This Course**

The overall aim of ISL241: Prophethood and Prophets in Islam is to acquaint you with the life history of some of the Prophets of Allah. The study will cover their call to prophethood, the nature of their message, the people to whom they were sent, their experiences during the course of delivering their messages and possibly the effect of their messages on the people.

## **Course Aims**

The aim of this course is to put you through all necessary information you may need to facilitate your understanding of the historical account of some of the messengers and Prophets of Allah. This will be achieved by:

- taking you through the life history of the Prophets
- taking you through the mode of their call to Prophethood and what led to it
- explaining to you the people to whom they were sent
- explaining to you the effect of their messages on the people to whom they were sent.

## **Course Objectives**

There are overall objectives set to achieve the aims set out above. In addition to this, each unit has objectives, which are included at the beginning of each unit. Endeavour to read them before and after working through the unit. You may want to refer to them during your study of the unit to check your progress. This way you can confirm whether you have done what was required of you by the unit.

Stated below are the wider objectives of this course as a whole. By meeting these objectives, you should have achieved the aims of the course as a whole.

On successful completion of the course, you should be able to:

- explain what prophethood means
- mention some of the prophets of Allah and the messages they were sent with
- give account of their experiences in the course of delivering their messages
- identify some of their challenges
- explain some of the achievements recorded by the prophets.

## **Working through This Course**

To complete this course, you are required to read the study units, read recommended books and read other materials provided by the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). Each unit contains self- assessment exercises, and at points in the course, you are required to submit assignments for assessment purposes. At the end of this course, there is a final examination. You will find below list of all the components of the course.

## **Course Materials**

Major components of the course are:

- 1 Course Guide
- 2 Study Units
- 3 Textbooks
- 4 Assignment File

You may contact tutor if you have problems in obtaining the materials.

### **Textbooks and References**

Cowan, J.M. (Ed.). (1960). *Arabic - English Dictionary*. India: Modern Language Services.

Haneef, S. (1986). *What Everyone Should Know About Islam and Muslims*. Delhi: Taj Company.

Nadwi, S.A. (1978). *Islamic Concept of Prophet-hood*. Lucknow: The Academy of Islamic Research and Publications.

Sharif, M.M. (Ed.). (1963). *A History of Muslim Philosophy*. Kempton – Germany: Otto Harrassonitz.

Ali, A.Y. (1975). *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*. London: The Islamic Publications.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica (2004). Edition Vol. 9.

### **Assignment File**

In this file, you will find all the details of the work you must submit to your tutor for marking. The marks you obtain from these assignments will count toward the final mark you obtain for this course. Further information on assignment is provided in the assignment file itself and later in this course guide in the section on assessment.

### **Presentation Schedule**

The presentation schedule included in your course materials gives you the important dates for the completion of tutor-marked assignments and attending tutorials. Remember, you are required to submit all your



assignments in good time. You should guard against being late in submitting your work.

## **Assessment**

There are two types of assessments in the course. The tutor-marked assignments; second are the written examinations. In tackling the assignment, you are expected to apply information and knowledge acquired during this course. The assignments must be submitted to your tutor for formal assessment in accordance with the deadlines stated in the assignment file. The work you submit to your tutor for assessment will count for 30% of your total course mark.

At the end of the course, you will need to sit for a final two-hour examination. This will also count for 70% of your course mark.

## **Tutor-Marked Assignment**

There are 14 tutor-marked assignments in this course. You need to submit all the assignments. The best five (the highest five of the fifteen marks) will be counted. The total marks for the four assignments 30%, will be of your total course mark.

Assignment questions for the units in this course are contained in the assignment file. You should be able to complete your assignments from the information and materials containing in your set textbooks, reading and study units. However, you are advised to use other references to broaden your view point and provide a deeper understanding of the subject.

When you have completed each assignment, send it together with tutormarked assignment form to your tutor. Make sure that each assignment reaches your tutor on or before the deadline given in the assignment file. If, however, you cannot complete your work in time, contact your tutor before the assignment is done to discuss the possibility of an examination.

## **Final Examination and Grading**

The final examination of ISL241 will be of two-hour duration and 70% have a value of the total course grade. The examination will consist of

questions, which reflect the type of self-testing, practice exercise, and tutor-marked problems you have come across. All areas of the course will be assessed.

You are advised to revise the entire course after studying the last unit before you sit for the examination. You will find it useful to review your tutor- marked assignments and the comments of your tutor on them before the final examination.

### Course Marking Scheme

This table shows how the actual course marking is broken down.

| Assessment        | Marks  |
|-------------------|--|
| Assignment 1-15   | Best five marks out of fourteen count @ 10% each = 50% of course marks |
| Final Examination | 50% of overall course marks  |
| Total             | 100% of course marks   |

### Course Overview

| Units           | Title of Work   | Weeks Activity | Assessment (End of Unit) |
|-----------------|---|----------------|--------------------------|
|                 | Course Guide  |                |                          |
| <b>Module 1</b> |   |                |                          |
| 1               | Prophethood and Prophets in Islam-Some Conceptual Definitions | 1              | Assignment 1             |
| 2               | Prophets In Islam: Qualifications, Messages and Signs         | 2              | Assignment 2             |
| 3               | Prophets In Islam: A Discourse On Number and Status           | 3              | Assignment 3             |
| 4               | Prophet Adam (A. S)   | 4              | Assignment 4             |
| <b>Module 2</b> |   |                |                          |
| 1               | Prophet Nuh (A.S)   | 5              | Assignment 5             |

|                 |  |    |               |
|-----------------|--|----|---------------|
| 2               | Prophet Ibrahim (A.S)                        | 6  | Assignment 6  |
| 3               | Prophet Musa (A.S)                           | 7  | Assignment 7  |
| 4               | Prophet Musa (A.S) II                        | 8  | Assignment 8  |
| 5               | Isa (Prophet A.S)                            | 9  | Assignment 9  |
| <b>Module 3</b> |  |    |               |
| 1               | Prophet Muhammad: Life and Mission in Makkah | 10 | Assignment 10 |
| 2               | Muhammad Life and Mission in Madinah         | 11 | Assignment 11 |
| 3               | Other Prophets of Allah I                    | 12 | Assignment 12 |
| 4               | Other Prophets of Allah II                   | 13 | Assignment 13 |
| 5               | Other Prophets of Allah III                  | 14 | Assignment 14 |

### **How to Get Most from This Course**

In open and distance learning, the study units replace the university lecturer. ; Think of it as reading the lecture instead of listening to lecturer. In the same way that a lecturer might set you some reading to do, your study units provide exercises for you to do at appropriate points. Each of the study units follows a common format. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do. When you have finished the units, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If you make a habit of doing this, you will scientifically improve your chances of passing the course.

The main body of the units guides you through the required reading from other sources.

Remember that your tutor's job is to help you. When you need help, do not hesitate to call and ask your tutor to provide it. Below are guidelines to working through this course.

- 1      Read this course guide thoroughly.
- 2      Organise a study schedule. Refer to the ‘course overview’ for more details. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units. Whatever method you

choose to use, you should decide on and write in your own dates for working on each unit.

- 3      Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything you can to stick to it. The major reason that students fail is that they get behind with their course work. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, contact your tutor for assistance.
- 4      Assemble the study materials. Information about what you need for unit is given in the "Overview" at the beginning of each unit. You will usually need both the study unit you are working on and one of your set books on your desk at the same time.
- 5      Work through the unit itself has been arranged to provide a sequence for you to follow. As you work through the unit, you will be instructed to read sections from your set books or other articles. Use the unit to guide your reading.
- 6      Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you are not sure about any of the objectives, review the study material or consult your tutor.
- 7      When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can then start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to face your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.
- 8      When you have submitted an assignment to your tutor for marking, do not wait for its return before starting on the next unit.

Keep to your schedule. When the assignment is returned, pay particular attention to your tutor's comments, both on the tutormarked assignment form and on what is written on the assignment. Consult your tutor as soon as possible if you have any questions or problems.

- 10 After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in this course guide).

### **Facilitators/Tutors and Tutorials**

There are eight hours of tutorials provided in support of this course. You will be notified of the dates, time and location of these tutorials, together with the name and phone number of your tutor, as soon as you are allocated a tutorial group.

Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignments, keep a close watch on your progress and on any difficulties you might encounter. He will also assist you during the course. You must mail your tutor – marked assignments to your tutor well before the due date (at least two working

days are required). They will be marked by your tutors and returned to you as soon as possible.

Do not hesitate to contact your tutor by telephone, e-mail, or discuss with him if you need help. The following might be circumstances in which you would find help necessary: when you

- do not understand any part of the study units or the assigned readings.
- have difficulty with the assessment exercises.
- have a question or problems with an assignment, with your tutor's comments on an assignment or with the grading of an assignment.

You should try your best to attend the tutorials. This is the only chance to have face-to-face contact with your tutor and to ask questions which are answered instantly. You can raise any problem encountered in the course of your study. To gain the maximum benefit from course tutorials, prepare a list of questions before attending them. You will learn a lot from participating in discussion actively.

## **Summary**

**ISL241 introduces you to the meaning of prophethood, the life history of some of the prophets of Allah, the content of their messages, the reactions of the people to their messages and the effects which such messages have in the life of the people.**

We wish you success with the course and hope that you will find it both interesting and useful.

Course Code            ISL241  
Course Title            Prophethood and Prophets in Islam

Course Team            Dr Ismail, L.B. (Developer/Writer) - FCOE (Special) Oyo

Dr. Imam Aliyu U. (Reviewer 2020) - NOUN



## **NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

### **National Open University of Nigeria Headquarters:**

Universities Village, Plot 91, Cadastral Zone, Nnamdi Azikiwe  
ExpressWay, Jabi, Abuja

### **National Open University of Nigeria Annex Office Lagos:**

14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way

Victoria Island

Lagos

e-mail: [centralinfo@noun.edu.ng](mailto:centralinfo@noun.edu.ng)

URL: [www.noun.edu.ng](http://www.noun.edu.ng)

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| <b>CONTENTS</b>   | <b>PAGE</b>   |
|---|---------------|
| <b>Module 1</b> .....   | <b>1</b>      |
| Unit 1      Prophethood and Prophets in Islam-Some<br>Conceptual Definitions..... | 1             |
| Unit 2      Prophets in Islam: Qualifications, Messages and Signs...8             |               |
| Unit 3      Prophets in Islam: A Discourse on Number and<br>Status.....           | 15            |
| Unit 4      Prophet Adam (A.S).....   | 20            |
| <br><b>Module 2</b> .....   | <br><b>27</b> |
| Unit 1      Prophet Nuh (A.S).....  | 27            |
| Unit 2      Prophet Ibrahim (A.S).....  | 34            |
| Unit 3      Prophet Musa (A.S).....   | 42            |
| Unit 4      Prophet Musa (A.S) II.....  | 48            |
| Unit 5      Prophet Isa (A.S).....  | 55            |
| <br><b>Module 3</b> .....   | <br><b>62</b> |
| Unit 1      Prophet Muhammad: Life and Mission in Makkah.....                     | 62            |
| Unit 2      Muhammad’s Life and Mission in Madinah .....                          | 70            |
| Unit 3      Other Prophets of Allah I.....  | 77            |
| Unit 4      Other Prophets of Allah II.....                                       | 85            |
| Unit 5      Other Prophets of Allah III.....                                      | 92            |







## MODULE 1

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| Unit 1 | Prophethood and Prophets in Islam - Some Conceptual Definitions |
| Unit 2 | Prophets in Islam: Qualifications, Messages and Signs           |
| Unit 3 | Prophets in Islam: A Discourse on Number and Status             |
| Unit 4 | Prophet Adam (A. S)   |

### UNIT 1      **PROPHETHOOD AND PROPHETS IN ISLAM: SOME CONCEPTUAL DEFINITIONS**

#### CONTENTS

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 1.0 | Introduction   |
| 2.0 | Objectives   |
| 3.0 | Main Content   |
|     | 3.1 Conceptual Clarifications between Prophethood, Prophecy and Prophets |
|     | 3.2 Prophet-Hood and Prophets in Judaism and Christianity                |
|     | 3.3 The Position of Islam on Prophet-hood                                |
| 4.0 | Conclusion   |
| 5.0 | Summary  |
| 6.0 | Tutor-Marked Assignment  |
| 7.0 | References/Further Reading   |

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

There is no gainsaying in the fact that prophethood forms an integral part of the world three great monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The position occupied by the prophets and their roles is therefore underscored by the fact that through them, mankind have the knowledge about God, the unseen world, mysteries of the universe and the relationship between man and God. As intermediaries between man and God and between man and man, prophets are to warn, to guide and to give glad tidings. The Islamic view on prophet-hood and prophets in this course begins in this unit as an introductory part.

This unit is therefore meant to expose you to the general definitions of prophet-hood and prophet. It will also provide a brief background of the concept of prophet in Judaism and Christianity. The unit concludes with a discourse on the position of Islam on prophethood.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss in detail the general concept of prophethood
- give account of the concept of Prophethood in Judaism and Christianity
- discuss the position of Islam on prophethood and the prophets.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Conceptual Clarifications between Prophet-hood, Prophecy and Prophets

By a simple definition, prophet-hood is a state condition or quality of being a prophet. Then who is a prophet? The word 'prophet', which has its origin in the Greek word *prophets*, is generally defined as someone who prophesies; that is, someone who predicts the future. Going by this definition, whenever the word 'prophet' is mentioned, the concept of prophecy is implied. However, a critical look at the concept of prophet-hood seems to expose the inadequacy of this definition, as prophecy cannot be a sufficient condition for a person to become a prophet. For instance in Islam, prophecy is seen as a gift bestowed by God on certain prophets, yet this gift can also be bestowed – to a limited degree – on people who are not prophets. To this extent, while Islam does not reject the concept of prophecy in totality, it does not over – emphasise it as the key aspect of prophet-hood. In other words, Islam does not see prophecy as a test of prophet-hood.

Another reason why the above definition is inadequate parameter to measure what “prophet” really connotes, particularly in the religious sense, is the risk of seeing a prophet as a diviner or a soothsayer. In an apparent attempt at differentiating between a prophet and diviner or soothsayer, the Encyclopedia Britannica is of the view that:

While the diviner uses or manipulates objective techniques and signs to address what are primarily private matters, the prophet is impelled by a spiritual force to articulate a message of more general and fundamental imports providing principles and norms that are critical of the moment in a reforming sense.

Another definition, which seems to capture to some extent the essence of prophethood is given by Merfalann cited in Hughes (1985) which says that 'a prophet is one who speaks for, or on behalf of the Divine. He was thought to speak for God being inspired to declare His will. While this definition may also be accepted, it is instructive to note that the

religious concept of prophet-hood and their expected functions are more than passing the divine messages. For instance he (the prophet) needs to have a group, tribe or nation to address or he may found a new society where his message shall not only be delivered but also make manifest. In fact, the Encyclopedia Britannica has given the general characteristics of a religion with prophetic status and they are listed as follows.

- a. A dynamic conception of a deity
- b. Great emphasis on the will of God and man
- c. Constitutive factors of religious reality
- d. Dualism
- e. Awareness of the seriousness of sin
- f. An ethical outlook based on choice between good and evil
- g. Positive attitude towards society and the world in general.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE I**

Analyse in detail the general concept of prophethood, prophecy and prophet.

## **3.2 Prophet-Hood in Judaism and Christianity**

Prophethood is not unknown to the three great monotheistic religions which are Judaism, Christianity and Islam but each of them has its different perception of the concept. In Judaism for instance, prophecy in the sense of revelation or interpretation of God's will, has been a great phenomenon for many centuries. Between the 8th and 4th centuries B.C. when the Jewish independence was suppressed, a prophet was seen as any of the successors of saints and seers who did not only preach but also prophesied in the Hebrew Kingdoms of Palestine.

Moses was regarded as the greatest prophet of Israel by Jewish tradition during his lifetime. Apart from him are other prophets like Deborah and Samuel who reigned during the time of the Judges (12<sup>th</sup> century B.C) as well as Nathan, Shemayah, Elijah and Elisha who were preeminent prophetic figures in the days of the early Kings (11<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C). Apart from Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Isaiah and Jeremiah whose words and actions were recorded in the Bible, there are others whose books form part of the scripture. These are Amos and Hosea; Isaiah and Micah; Zephariah and Nahum; Habakkuk, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Others are: Joel; Obadiah; Jonah; Haggai; Zechariah and Malachi.

In Christianity, particularly among the adherents of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, the belief is more on the modern – day prophets.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

With examples, discuss the position of Judaism on Prophethood.

### 3.3 The Position of Islam on Prophethood

**Prophets in Islam (Arabic: الْأَنْبِيَاءُ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ : al-'Anbiyā' fī al-'Islām) are individuals who Muslims believe were sent by God to various communities in order to serve as examples of ideal human behavior and to spread God's message on Earth. Some prophets are categorized as messengers (Arabic: رُسُلٌ: rusul, sing. رَسُولٌ rasūl), those who transmit divine revelation through the intercession of an angel. Muslims believe that many prophets existed, including many not mentioned in the Quran. The Quran states: "There is a Messenger for every community". Belief in the Islamic prophets is one of the six articles of the Islamic faith.**

The Arabic word for prophethood is *an-Nubuwwah*. Prophet on the other hand is known as *an-Nabiyy* with the word "*Ambiya*" as its plural form. While trying to provide an Islamic definition of the concept of prophet, Haneef (1986) began by stating what prophet is not in the following words:

In Islam, the word 'Prophet' (Nabi in Arabic) does not in any way signify one who prophesies future events; rather it denotes one who is very near to God through the total surrender of his entire being to him and who receives revelations from him which constitute sources of guidance for men.

As a guide to humanity, the position of Islam is that prophets are as many as there are nations, tribes and races. In other words, there is no nation in human history that did not have one or more prophets at a particular period. The reason for this lies in the Quranic passage that states that Allah will not call a people or a nation to account until He (Allah) has sent a guide/warner to them.

Another importance of prophethood to Islam is that it constitutes one of its six articles of faith. Therefore, for an average Muslim to believe in Allah alone is not complete until one also believes in His Angels, His scriptures His Prophets/Messengers, the Day of Judgment and predestination. While the belief in the prophets is of paramount importance to Muslims, this belief is also unique in that they should not discriminate among the prophets on this belief. The wisdom behind this is that since all these prophets came from the same God for the same purpose of leading humanity to God, belief in all of them is not only essential but also logical. Allah's commandment to the Muslims in this regard is contained in *Suratul Baqarah* that is, Qur'an chapter 2 verse 136 where He says:

"Say ye: "We believe in God; and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) Prophets from their Lord: we make no difference between one and another of them: and we bow to God (in Islam)".

To believe in all these prophets also indicate that Muslims should also believe in their messages whether written or oral. *Suratul Nisa'*, chapter 4 verse 136 states:

O ye who believe! Believe in God and His Apostle and the scripture which He hath sent to His Apostle and the scripture which He sent to those before (him), any who disbelieveth in God, His Angels, His Books, His Apostles, and the Day of Judgment, hath gone far, far away.

Furthermore, it is imperative to note that since this belief is non-discriminatory, people of other faiths are also supposed to believe so. By so doing, they would have been following the right path. If otherwise, Allah made us to know that they are following their own whims and therefore, He is enough to take care of them. This is evident in *Suratul Baqarah*, chapter 2 verse 137 where Allah says:

So if they believe as ye believe, they are indeed on the right path; but if they turn back, it is they who are in schism; but God will suffice thee as against them, and He is the All – Hearing, the All – Knowing.

Allah further emphasises this issue when he indicates that to deny one prophet means that all of them are equally denied. This is made clear in *Suratun-Nisāi*, chapter 4 verses 150 – 151 thus:

Those who deny God and His Apostles, and (those who) wish to separate God from His apostles, saying: "We believe in some but reject others": and (those who) wish to take a course midway, they are in truth (equally) unbelievers; and we have prepared for unbelievers a humiliating punishment.

However, the Islamic idea of belief in all the prophets is hinged on two conditions. As a religion whose adherents are called the middle course nation (*Ummatan Wasatan*), it discourages one end of extremism in the sense of revering prophets to the point of deification. To this extent, the concept of the existence of a half-man, half-God kind of prophet runs contrary to the doctrine of Islam. Islam also rejects the other end of the reverence spectrum in which some prophets were accused of committing cardinal sin that has negative effect on their faith and their moral character.

**The Quran speaks of the prophets as being the greatest human beings of all time. The Quranic verse 4:69 lists various virtuous groups of human beings, among whom prophets (including messengers) occupy the highest rank.**

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Define the word “prophet” and explain the position of Islam on prophethood.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

Religious connotation of prophethood indicates that prophets are sent by God to mankind for three main purposes: to guide, to warn and to give glad tidings. These functions separate them from diviners or soothsayers whose major preoccupation is to predict the future. The three great religions of the world viz, Judaism, Christianity and Islam do have prophets. However, while the messages delivered by these prophets are the same, the status confer on them (i.e. the prophets) varies from one religion to another. In terms of belief also, while the two earlier religions believe only in their respective prophets, Islam instructs that Muslims should believe in all the prophets of God without discrimination.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

You have learnt in this unit that:

- the Arabic word for prophethood is *an – Nubuwwah* while *an – Nabiyy* is the Arabic equivalent of “prophet”
- prophet in the general sense may mean someone who predicts the future but in the religious sense it is beyond that
- Islam believes that prophecy may be one of the instruments of prophet-hood but it is not a major test of prophethood
- in Judaism, there are different connotations of the concept at different periods
- Christians, particularly the adherents of Pentecostal and Charismatic movement, believe in modern day prophets
- Islam believes that the prophets are mortals like us who were specially sent to mankind
- major components of their messages are: to warn, guide and give glad tidings
- while other religions believe only in the prophets sent to them, Islam believes in all the prophets of God as messengers of God from one divine source.

#### 6.0 TUTOR -MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Critically appraise the concept of Prophet-hood in Judaism, Christianity and Islam.



## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Cowan, J.M. (Ed.). (1960). *Arabic-English Dictionary*. India: Modern Language Services.

Haneef, S. (1986). *What Everyone Should Know About Islam and Muslims*. Delhi: Taj Company.

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## **UNIT 2      PROPHEETS IN ISLAM: QUALIFICATIONS, MESSAGES AND SIGNS**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Prophets: Qualities and Functions
  - 3.2 Prophetic Messages: General Features of Their Contents
  - 3.3 Prophetic Signs: An Exposition on Miracles
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the last unit, general introduction to the concept of prophethood was made. In this unit, efforts shall be made to give the Islamic perspective on how prophets are chosen, what should be their qualification and the general account of the messages, which they were sent to convey to their people. Finally, the unit shall conclude with the signs given to some of these prophets, to prove the authenticity of their prophethood.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- give detailed account of the criteria for making someone a prophet in Islam
- discuss extensively on the general features of the messages sent to mankind through these prophets
- discuss the concept of miracle in Islam as well as its significance.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 The Prophets: Qualities and Functions**

In Islam, only Allah has the sole responsibility to choose and appoint someone as a prophet because He alone knows best with whom to place His message (*Suratul – An'ām*, chapter 6 verse 124). In other words, Allah bestowed prophet-hood on whomsoever He likes although with the condition that such person possesses all the needed materials that qualifies him for that post.

In this regard; a prophet, prior to his prophethood, should exhibit certain traits that would mark him out of others. For instance, he must be truthful, honest and free from all vices that would make people doubt his claim to prophet-hood when eventually bestowed. He must also be seen as the best person in terms of intellectual ability. Apart from these, he must also be endowed with other human attributes including bravery (*Ash-Shuja'*), patience (*As-Sabr*), charm (*Al-Fitnah*) and quick wittedness (*Adh – Dhaka'*). He must also be sagacious (*At – Tadbir*) and diplomatic (*As – Siyasiy*). When a person finally assumes the position of a prophet, he becomes a model and perfect example of the best of human beings. To this extent, he becomes infallible.

By simple explanation, infallibility means purity from both major and minor sins. In other words, a prophet can never commit sins particularly in matters of belief or revelation. The question of paganism or idol worship or tendency to do so does not arise in Islamic prophethood. Since the messages of the prophets are purely monotheistic, it then follows automatically that the faith of the prophets also remains so. In addition, Islam is of the view that prophets of Allah are totally free from cardinal sins or any other ones that could tarnish his image or soil his basic moral character.

Finally, on the issue of mistake or error, the teaching of Islam shows that like any other human beings, prophets of God are also susceptible particularly to error of Judgment in some cases. Even where this happens, such errors are usually noted and corrected through divine guidance. As a guide and model for humanity, three basic reasons can be advanced for the prophets to be free from sin. One is that if he commits sin and his followers are under obligation to obey him as a prophet, this obedience is definitely on error, which is wrong in Islam. Second, if his followers disobey him for committing sin, they had run contrary to the idea of prophethood, which makes obedience necessary. Third, if his speech or actions are such that have the possibility of either being right or being wrong, it may be difficult for people to follow him, then the whole essence of his prophethood is lost.

Ibn Sina on his part is of the opinion that for a person to be called a prophet, he must possess the following major characteristics.

- a. Intellectual and spiritual insight
- b. A very strong and vivid imagination
- c. Ability to launch a socio – political system

- d. Ability to go forth to humanity with a message, influence them and should actually succeed in his mission.

As earlier on discussed (in the previous unit), the major functions of the Prophets are to guide, to warn and to give glad tidings to humanity. With all the above perfect characteristics of the prophets, it is incumbent upon humanity to obey them since this is considered obedience to God Himself. *Suratun Nisai*, chapter 4 verse 64 makes it clear thus: 'We sent not an apostle but to be obeyed in accordance with the will of God'.

**Furthermore on the issue of the prophets being sinless or infallible, there is an agreement among scholars that prophets are protected from sins. The protection of all prophets from sins is an Islamic belief, which is a precondition to trusting the prophets' message and following their example. However, there is a debate among scholars on whether prophets (peace be upon them all) are subject to error in judgments in "human" matters. The word *'issmah* (literally: protection) is mentioned in the Quran in the context of the Prophet being protected from people's whims and Satan's delusions while he conveys the message of God. However, the Quran did correct Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) on a few occasions in matters of human judgment (Quran 8:67; 9:43; and 80:1-3). Nevertheless, some scholars rejected the possibility of erring in any prophetic decision whatsoever (for example, Al-Amedi, *Al-Ihkaam fi Usul Al-Ahkam*, vol.4, p. 99, Dar Al-Kitab Al-Arabi, Beirut, AH 1404**

Nadwi (1978) best encapsulates the qualities, knowledge and functions of the prophets when he says:

The prophets of God are endowed with innermost recesses of heart, sound understanding, intellectual talents and refined sensitivity but they never meddle with the arts and sciences of their time nor they ever claim mastery over them keeping themselves aloof from every other business, they whole-heartedly pursue the course for which they are commissioned by God. They always engage themselves with the transmission of divine message on which depend the salvation and doom of man's earthly existence.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Explain briefly the functions expected of the prophet of God.

### **3.2 Prophetic Messages: General Features of their Contents**

Prophets are given the divine mandate to deliver some messages to their people. These messages may be oral or written. Whichever one it is; the truthfulness and honesty of the prophets is underscored by the fact that they claim no divine authority over their messages. In other words, all the prophets state categorically that what they receive come

from God and that it is for the benefit of the humanity. Each of their messages confirms what was earlier revealed and what may be revealed in future. General information contained in their revelations includes the following.

- a. A clear concept of God, his nature and his attributes
- b. A clear concept about this life, the hereafter, the unseen world, Angels firms, paradise and hell among others
- c. Purpose of creating mankind and what would be the consequence for either obeying or disobeying God
- d. Clear information on how our lives should be ordered in accordance with the will of God.

Haneef (1986) further summarised the characteristics of these divine messages particularly the written ones by listing them as follows.

- a. The words of the scripture should be exactly as they were received from the divine source without the slightest interference.
- b. The message should be totally consistent - no part of it should contradict any other part.
- c. There should be no confusion among its concepts and teachings.
- d. Nothing in the message should be contrary to the objectively observed facts of the natural world.
- e. It should appeal to man's sense of reason and must be rational.
- f. It should provide spiritual insight and moral guidance of the highest order.
- g. It should not attribute to God, anything that is contrary to the unique exalted and transcendent nature of God.
- h. It should emphatically deny to anyone other than God, the right to be worshipped as God.
- i. It should emphasize brotherhood and equality among human beings and should not uphold the domination of some people by others.
- j. Its language should be eloquent and sublime and of the highest order of literary style and expression.

Any message that satisfies these and other conditions would no doubt further confirm the authenticity of the mission of the prophet that brought the message.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

List at least eight characteristics of a divine written message that may be used to determine the genuineness of a claim to prophet-hood.

### 3.3 Prophetic Signs: An Exposition on Miracles

When Allah appointed His prophet and has given him the message for onward transmission to his people, he also equipped him with some evidence and testimony that would complement his message so that he would not be seen as an impostor. This evidence is generally referred to as **miracle**. However, miracle in this sense connotes a different linguistic interpretation in Arabic. For example; the word *Karāmat* is known as miracle but this type is specifically performed by the saints. In the same vein, the word *Mu'jizah* is also interpreted as miracle, which is being used for any miracle performed by the prophet. However, while this is so, it is instructive to note that the pure Islamic understanding of this concept as contained in the Quran is 'āyah', which means **sign** when translated roughly. In other words, miracle is a sign given by Allah to a prophet to confirm the truthfulness of his message and become one aspect of his claim.

Muslims' belief is that prophets can perform miracles to show that they have some signs to prove their prophethood. However, their belief, like that of prophecy, is also different. While in some religions, miracles are given top priority to the extent of superstition where people use this opportunity to claim their supernatural power of healing through miracles, other people see miracle purely from superstitious angle and do not believe in it. In Islam, miracle, like prophecy, is just an aspect and not the essential core of prophethood. The purpose served by miracle in Islam is to appeal more to doubters who may be convinced by the awesome nature of such miracle. However, despite this miracle, some people still reject the message sent through the prophet. Other unique differences in the Islamic connotation of miracles are:

- a. The miracle so performed is beyond the ability of man. In other words, it must be such that is only within the capability of the Divine Creator
- b. All magicians or men of knowledge at that time when the miracle was performed must not be able to replicate it or perform its similitude.
- c. The miracle must coincide with the time of his claim to prophecy.

There are many examples of where miracles are performed on the prophets or the prophets were instructed to perform the miracles by God. One example of the first type is the story of Abraham (A.S) when his people wanted to burn him but was miraculously saved by Allah who ordered the fire to be cool and not to burn him. *Suratul-Anbiya*, chapter 21 verses 68-69 made ample reference to this when it says:

They said, "Burn him and protect your gods, if ye do (anything at all)!"  
We said, "O fire! Be thou cool, and (a means of) safety for Abraham!"

Concerning the performance of miracle by the prophets themselves as prove of their prophethood, it is important to note that such miracles are in accordance with the

important arts and sciences of their time. For example during the time of Prophet Musa (A.S), magic was the most popular art and therefore, the “Divine rod” used by Prophet Musa to swallow up the artificial snakes of the magicians was the evidence of superior power of God which was beyond the capability of any mortal. Another example was that of Prophet Isa (A.S) who lived when medical science was in vogue and many of his people were physicians. His curing of those who were born blind and raising the dead to life were the rare feat of that time which no scientist could imitate.

To further underscore the view that prophets do not perform miracle on their own volition except by Allah's commandment, Prophet Muhammad was sometimes asked to perform miracles according to *Suratul-Isra'* chapter 17 verses 90 – 93 which run thus:

They say: "We shall not believe in you, until you cause a spring to gush forth for us from the earth, or (until) you have a garden of date trees and vines, and cause rivers to gush forth in their midst, carrying abundant water; 'or you cause the sky to fall in pieces, as you sayest (will happen), against us, or you bring Allah and the Angels before (us) face to face, or you have a house adorned with gold, or you mount a ladder right into the skies. No, we shall not even believe in your mounting until you send down to us a book that we could read...."

In the concluding part of this verse (i.e. verse 93), Allah caused the Prophet (S.A.W) to respond; Say: “Glory to my Lord! Am I aught but a man, an apostle?”

Nevertheless, Prophet Muhammad was given the greatest miracle of all time in the Quran, which was the testimony of Arabs eloquence and oratorical power. To prove the authenticity of the Qur'an, Allah commanded the Prophet (SAW) to challenge those who doubt it to produce the equivalent, which eventually they could not do. *Suratul- Baqarah*, chapter 2 verse 23 made this clearer:

And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a Sūra like thereunto and call your witnesses or helpers (If there are any) besides God, if your (doubts) are true.

The uniqueness of the miracle of Quran lies in the fact that while the previous miracles were limited by time and place, the Qur'an is universal and everlasting. Similarly, its miraculous nature is also manifest in its style, content and spiritual uplifting.

Finally, it must be stated that not all the prophets of Allah had miracle, but to those who had, they possessed them through the Divine Grace of God as early stated and not by themselves. The Quran clarifies this in *Suratul Ghāfir*, chapter 40 verse 78 where Allah states: ".....It was not

(possible) for any apostle to bring a sign except by the leave of God...."

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

Critically assess the concept of miracle according to Islamic tenets.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The crucial roles expected to be performed by prophets were the main reasons why candidate for that exalted position should possess some characteristics that would make him the model of his people. With these as the primary qualities, his people would believe him and believe in the message he is conveying from his Lord. As a man already trusted also, whatever he brings as a symbol of his prophethood would equally be accepted as truly emanating from God. It is all these that really distinguish the true prophet of God from those who were impostors.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- prophets, as Allah's special messengers on earth, deserved to be truthful, honest and trusted even prior to their call to prophethood
- functions of the prophets are contained in their divine message which may be oral or written
- miracles in Islam is said to have originated from Allah to further prove the authenticity of a prophetic mission
- while Islam recognises miracle, it is not regarded as the essential core of prophethood
- miracles of each prophet is determined by the arts and science in vogue during his time
- the greatest of all miracles is Quran, which is unique in content, style, and is of universal appeal.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Examine in detail, the qualities which qualify the prophets of Allah for Prophet-hood.

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### **UNIT 3      PROPHEETS IN ISLAM: A DISCOURSE ON NUMBER AND STATUS**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Prophets in Islam: A Critique on Number
  - 3.2 Comparative Analysis between a Messenger and a Prophet
  - 3.3 Prophets in Islam: A Critique on Status
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Extensive study of the personality of a prophet, contents of his message and the symbol given as part of the necessary material for his mission were made in the last unit. In this unit, the focus shall be on the position of Islam on the number of those prophets, comparism between a prophet and a messenger and other beings. The unit shall conclude with analysis on the status of the prophets with particular focus on '*Ulul – 'Azm* (the Resolute Prophet).

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss on the prophets of Islam mentioned in the Holy Quran
- explain the major areas of comparism between a prophet, a messenger and others
- discuss the status accorded some few prophets in Islam.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Prophets in Islam: A Critique on Number

In Islam, prophethood began with prophet Adam (A.S) and found its completion in Prophet Muhammad. Between these two prophets are several other prophets in thousands who, at a particular period, were sent to their people. They were so many that conflicting figures were given on their actual number but the most common figure usually is 120,000. This figure cannot be argued as being too much or less since the Quran in *Suratul – Fatir*, chapter 35 verse 24 states: there never was a people without a Warner having lived among them'. The above quoted verse is corroborated by another verse which says: 'We sent messengers before you, among them those of whom We have told you and some of whom We have not told you... ". With these Quranic verses, one cannot say categorically the number of the prophets sent by Almighty Allah to humanity.

An Hadith of the prophet narrated by Abu Ahmad stated that when Prophet Muhammad was asked the number of the prophets he replied “one hundred and twenty thousand.” When further asked how many the messengers are, he replied “three hundred and fifteen.” This Hadith clearly show that the number of the prophets of God are many but those mentioned in the Holy Quran are 25 out of these eighteen were mentioned in just one chapter of the Quran. The remaining seven are mentioned in different verses of the Quran. The list of these prophets are hereunder presented in both Arabic language and their anglicized equivalents

|                        |          |         |
|------------------------|----------|---------|
| دم اء (ملسلا هلاء)     | Adam     | Adam    |
| يم اهبراء (ملسلا هلاء) | Ibrahim  | Abraham |
| ح ون (ملسلا هلاء)      | Nuh      | Noah    |
| ق سحاء (ملسلا هلاء)    | Ishaq    | Isaac   |
| ب وقعير (ملسلا هلاء)   | Ya'qub   | Jacob   |
| داود (ملسلا هلاء)      | Daud     | David   |
| ن اميلس (ملسلا هلاء)   | Sulaiman | Solomon |
| ب وبع (ملسلا هلاء)     | Ayub     | Job     |
| فسوير (ملسلا هلاء)     | Yusuf    | Joseph  |

|                   |           |                  |
|-------------------|-----------|------------------|
| موسى (موسى)       | Musa      | Moses            |
| هارون (هارون)     | Harun     | Aaron            |
| زكريا (زكريا)     | Zakariyah | Zachariah        |
| يحيى (يحيى)       | Yahya     | John the Baptist |
| يسى (يسى)         | Isa       | Jesus            |
| إلياس (إلياس)     | Ilyas     | Elijah           |
| إسماعيل (إسماعيل) | Ismail    | Ishmael          |
| إليشا (إليشا)     | Alyasa'   | Elisha           |
| يونس (يونس)       | Yunus     | Jonah            |
| لوط (لوط)         | Lut       | Lot              |
| هود (هود)         | Hud       |                  |
| شعيب (شعيب)       | Shuaib    |                  |
| إدريس (إدريس)     | Idris     |                  |
| ذوالكفل (ذوالكفل) | Dhul Kifl | Ezekiel          |
| صالح (صالح)       | Salih     |                  |
| محمد (محمد)       | Muhammad  |                  |

As stated earlier, Muslims are enjoined to believe in them and their messages.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Enumerate the names of the prophets of Allah mentioned in the Holy Quran.

### 3.2 Comparative Analysis between a Prophet and a Messenger

Controversy has trailed the differences between a prophet and a messenger. However, it is necessary to state at first that the word *Rasul* (plural *Rusul*) means 'a messenger' that is, someone sent to deliver a message. By the common understanding of many scholars therefore, while *Nabiyy* as a concept means 'a prophet', *Rasul* is interpreted as 'a Messenger'. To further emphasise this assertion is the oft-mentioned statement that a messenger is one that possessed a divine Book in addition to his prophetic missions. To these scholars therefore, while all messengers are prophets, not all the prophets are messengers.

Another school of thought that holds the above view although in a different manner is represented by As-Sabuni. While As-Sabuni believes in the superiority of messenger over a prophet, he had refused to use a divine book as a yardstick for this assertion. This is made clear in his definition of both concepts. According to him:

A prophet is a man among mankind who is divinely inspired by God to reveal but not entrusted with its proclamation in public

On the definition of a messenger on the other hand, he stated:

A messenger is a man among mankind who is divinely inspired by God to reveal, and ordered to proclaim the message to the people.

By these definitions, As–Sabuni is of the opinion that while the number of the prophets cannot be ascertained, all the 25 prophets mentioned in the Quran are equally messengers. In ample reference to these prophets, he cited the following verse of the Holy Quran: “We sent messengers before you, among them those of whom We have told you and some of whom We have not told you...” Perhaps, As–Sabuni holds this view because there is no specific place in the Quran where revelation in written form is made a criterion for distinguishing between a prophet and a messenger.

In the view of Abdul Rauf, which seems to corroborate the position of As– Sabuni, *Nabiyy* is sometimes called *Rasul* because they are usually used synonymously. He however stated that sometimes, they are used as two distinct terms. While clarifying the latter sense by which these two words are used, he explained that *Nabiyy* is someone who was given a divine message for himself to follow: but if he was instructed to teach his message to others as well, he would then also be called '*Rasul*'. It can be deduced from the above therefore that while all messengers are prophets, not all the prophets are messengers.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

With reference to Quran and the views of some scholars, differentiate between a *Nabiyy* and a *Rasul*.

### 3.3 Prophets in Islam: A Discourse on Status

In Islam, the prophets of Allah do not enjoy the same status as some are more eminent than others. In *Suratul–Baqarah* chapter 2 verse 252 Allah says: “Those apostles we endowed with gifts, some above others'...”. Another state: “We have indeed endowed some prophets above others...” These prophets that enjoyed this special position are called '*Ulul – 'Azm*' (the resolute prophets) in the Holy Quran. They are so called because of their determination and perseverance in the face of tribulations, mockery and oppression. Ample reference is made to these prophets in the Holy Quran where Allah says: “Persevere as the resolute prophets did among the messengers”. These prophets who are five in number were very dogged and determined in their apostolic works without minding the consequence of their divine mission. For example, Prophet Nuh underwent several centuries of denial as prophet by his people despite all efforts to liberate them. Not only this, 950 years sojourn on earth was marked with tribulation among his people that only very few of them believe in his prophethood. Yet, Prophet Nuh would not

despair until Almighty Allah vindicated him and save him and those who believe in him from the Tufan flood.

One can also cite the example of Prophet Ibrahim whose faith and commitment saw him through the oppression of his kinsmen and the successful conclusion of his divine mission.

The two prophets mentioned above as well as the remaining three (that is, Musa, Isa and Muhammad) are the five prophets that occupied the exalted position of *'Ulul – Azm* before Allah for total commitment, determination and resilience in the face of oppression, corruption and intimidation. Detailed history of these prophets shall be made in subsequent units.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

Who are the *'Ulul –Azm*? With example, give cogent reasons why these prophets are so called?

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In Islamic teaching, we are made to know that the prophets of Allah are numerous since for every nation there must always be a Warner. Out of them however; are 25 prophets whose names were mentioned in the Quran. All of these regarded not only as prophets but also as messengers because they were also instructed to teach their messages to others. Yet some among them still occupied higher pedestal in their prophetic mission as a result of their perseverance. These are called *'Ulul – 'Azm* (the resolute prophets).

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- prophethood began with Adam (AS) and ended with Muhammad (SAW)
- the total number of the prophets of Allah are so many that they cannot be known but 25 of them are mentioned in the Qur'an
- Five of the twenty five prophets- Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, Isa and Muhammad mentioned in the Qur'an enjoyed special status as *Ulul – Azm* (the resolute prophets)

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

All the messengers of Allah are prophets but not all the prophets are messengers. Discuss this statement with relevant quotations from the Quran.

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## UNIT 4 PROPHET ADAM (A. S.)

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Adam and the Creation Story
  - 3.2 Adam, Iblis and the Concept of Original Sin
  - 3.3 Adam as a Prophet and Progenitor of Human Race
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we discussed extensively on the number of the prophets sent by Almighty Allah, differences between a prophet and a messenger as well as their status. In this unit, a comprehensive discussion on Prophet Adam shall be embarked upon. Major areas of discourse shall include how he was created, the roles of the Angels on his creation as well as the temptation of Iblis on him and his wife. The issue of original sin purportedly committed by Adam and the Islamic view on it; Adam's prophetic status and a study of human procreation from him also shall be made.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- give detailed account of the story relating to the creation of Adam
- discuss at length the temptation of Adam (A.S) by Iblis and the theory of original sin
- discuss extensively the status of Adam (A.S) as a prophet and the progenitor of human race.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Adam (A.S) and the Creation Story

Adam is generally believed to be the first man created by Allah. By this belief therefore, he is the progenitor of the human race (*Abul Bashar*) and the first prophet. The first indication of Allah's desire to create mankind on earth with Adam as their father is contained in *Suratul Baqarah*, chapter 2 verse 30 where Allah addressed the Angels thus:

Behold thy Lord said to the Angels, 'I will create a vicegerent on earth'. They said: Wilt thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? Whilst we do celebrate thy praises and glorify thy holy (name)?' He said: I know what ye know not.'

A critical look at the above verse shows that prior to the creation of humanity, the angels had been in existence. It also exposes the true nature of the Angels as obedient servants of Allah who would not be involved in mischief and blood shedding. Allah, who knows the purpose why Adam should be created, went ahead by perfecting his (Adam's) creation through three stages. The first stage was Allah's commandment to the angels to gather dust from different parts of the world for this purpose. Reference to this is in *Suratu Al – Imran*, chapter 3 verse 59 where Allah says: “The similitude of Jesus before God is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him: ‘Be’ and he was”.

The second stage was when the dust gathered was kneaded with water to become thick clay. Upon which he was moulded and fashioned in due proportion. Allah states in *Suratu Şād*, chapter 38 verses 71 – 72:

Behold, thy Lord said to the angels: I am about to create man from clay. When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of my spirit, fall ye down in obedience unto him.

Adam was said to have remained in a moulded clay form for 40 years before he got transformed into a complete functional human being. This is the final stage of his creation when Allah breathed His spirit unto him according to Quran chapters 3 verse 59 and 38 verses 71 – 72 as mentioned above.

Meanwhile, when Adam was created, Allah bestowed on him knowledge of all things, the kind which he has not given even to the angels. The depth of Adam's knowledge can only be quantified by the test given to him and the angels in which he emerged victorious. His victory necessitated Allah's commandment to the angels to bow for him (Quran chapter 2 verses 31 – 34).

However, the adamant nature of Iblis was to be seen when he refused bluntly to bow to Adam according to Qur'an chapter 2 verse 34 which runs as follows:

*And behold; He said to the angels: "Bow down to Adam:" and they bowed down: not so Iblis: he refused to and was haughty: He was of those who reject faith.*

A chosen look at the above verse may suggest that Iblis was one of the Angels of God. If however he is not then, who is he? While controversy has trailed his status among many scholars, it is pertinent to state – by temporary digression – that Iblis also known as Satan may not be an angel for the following reasons:

- a. If he were to be an angel, he would not disobey the commandment of Allah as angels do not disobey (*Suratu – Tahrim*, chapter 56 verse 6)
- b. Angels were created from light while Iblis was created from fire
- c. In Muslim theology, the theory of fallen Angels is not usually accepted therefore he couldn't have been one
- d. He was specifically referred to as Jinn rather than an angel in Qur'an chapter 18 verse 50.

The creation of Adam as a *Khalifah* (vicegerent) on earth became complete when Allah also created a partner for him in Hawa to act as his solace. In *Suratun – Nisa'*, chapter 4 verse 1, Allah made ample reference to this creation where he said:

*O mankind! Reverence your Guardian – Lord, who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, his mate.....*

Adam (A.S) and his wife were settled in the Garden of Eden, Having taught him the knowledge of all things in the Garden, He forbade him and his wife from going near the fruits of a certain tree therein. *Suratul Baqarah*, chapter 2 verse 35 makes this clearer:

We said: "O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden; And eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) ye will; but approach not this tree, or ye run into harm and transgression.

Thus was the commandment of Allah to Adam and his wife until the period of Iblis' temptation as shall be discussed in the next sub-topic.



## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Give at least four reasons why Iblis is not regarded as the angel of God.

### 3.2 Adam, Iblis and the Concept of Original Sin

It should be noted that Iblis disobeyed the commandment of Allah when asked to bow for Adam. This made Allah to curse him. Instead of seeking for forgiveness, Iblis in arrogance vowed to lead humanity astray. Meanwhile, Adam (A.S) and his wife Huwa were enjoying all the good things that Allah had provided for them. As a first step of Iblis' effort at seeking vengeance for humiliation suffered, he approached Adam (A.S) and in reference to the forbidden tree, which he and his wife must not touch, Iblis said: "...Your Lord only forbade you this tree, lest ye should become angels or such beings as live for ever" (*Suratul A'raf*, chapter 7 verse 20). Taking cognizance of their innocent nature, therefore Iblis lured them into temptation of eating the fruits of the forbidden tree. Prophet Adam and his wife had no course to doubt him particularly when he swore to them that he was their sincere adviser (*Suratul A'raf*, chapter 7 verse 21).

The deceit of Iblis eventually led to their downfall as a result of forbidden fruits eaten. They became ashamed of themselves especially when Allah queried their audacity to commit such a grave sin (*Suratul A'raf*, chapter 7 verse 22). In repentance, both of them (Adam and his wife) regretted their action and prayed to Allah for forgiveness. This is contained in Quran chapter 7 verse 23 which ran as follows:

They said: 'Our Lord! We have wrong our own souls: If thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy mercy, we shall certainly be lost.

The fact that Allah granted them paradise (*Suratul – Baqarah* verse 37) is an indication that Islam does not endorse the concept of original sin, as is the case in another faith. In other words, the idea of transmission of sin from Adam through generations to generation is alien to Islam. Moreover, Adam would not have qualified as a prophet, if his sin was not forgiven since the prophets are absolved from cardinal sins. To make good His promise of creating a vicegerent on earth, Allah ordered them both to leave the Garden (Paradise) for the earth where they will continue to live and from where they shall be having their means of livelihood. Besides, he told them that the enmity between them and Iblis (Satan) would remain forever and warned them to be careful of his temptation and seduction.

There is no consensus of opinion as to where Adam and his wife landed when they arrived on earth. Gemeiah (1996) citing an authority stated that Adam descended in Dihna; a place between Makkah and Taif while another source mentioned India for Adam and Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) for Hawa. Yet another report indicated that Adam descended

at As – Saffah while his wife descended at Marwa; both in Makkah. The theory of a place between Makkah and Taif was corroborated by Shawqi although he gave the name of the place as Dajnah rather than Dhina cited by Gemeiah. By and large however, it is widely believed that Adam came to the earth with *Hajaratul – Aswad* (the black stone) which now adores the Ka'bah in Makkah.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Describe in detail how Iblis (Satan) tempted Adam and Hawa and their reaction to this temptation.

### 3.3 Adam as a Prophet and Progenitor of Human Race

Apart from being the first man on earth and the progenitor of human race, Adam (A.S) was arguably the first prophet of Allah. However, there are divergent views among scholars as to whether Adam (A.S) was a messenger; and if yes, to whom then was he sent? To some authors, he was sent to his progeny. To support this claim are two verses contained in *Suratu Ta – Ha* which, according to these authors, implied both prophethood and messenger-ship. In this *Surat*, chapter 20 verse 122 Allah states:

But his Lord chose him (for His Grace)! He turned to him and gave him guidance

The following verse of the same *Surah* explained it more when Allah says:

Get ye down, both of you; all together, from the Garden, with enmity one to another; but if, as is sure, there comes to you guidance from me, whosoever follows my guidance, will not lose his way, nor fall into misery. (Ta – Ha chapter 20 verse 23)

In view of the above verse, Allah continued to guide Adam through inspiration and such messages of guidance were usually disseminated to his wife and his off – springs who care to abide by them. To this extent, Adam is a prophet as well as a messenger. There are yet other scholars who believe that Adam (A.S) is a prophet but not a messenger and their oft-cited source is an Hadith related by Muslim which states that people went to Nuh (A.S) and told him: "You are the first messenger of Allah on earth. They (these scholars) now said if Adam (A.S) were to be messenger, people would not have made this statement. Be that as it may, this Hadith may not hold water in the face of detailed analysis as to how did these people arrive at their conclusion and at what time did they recognize Nuh as Allah's messenger. Is it before or after Tufan flood? Allah knows best.

As the father of all humanity, procreation began with Adam (A.S) when he gave birth to children in pairs, a male and female according to Ibn Kathīr. According to this story, Allah commanded them to marry each male of one pair to the female of the other pair,

and vice – versa. Two sons among his children Kabil and Habil (Cain and Abel) later engaged themselves in a fight that eventually led to the death of the latter. It was further claimed that Shith, another son of Adam, was the head in the ancestral lines of the children of Adam as all other sons vanished. Directly following Shith in these lines was his son Anush, and his descendants in the following order: Qainin, Mihlayil, Yard and Khanukh. According to many scholars, Khanukh is believed to be Enoch known in Islam as prophet Idris. Nuh is generally believed to be the descendant of Idris while Ibrahim (A.S) descended from Nuh. From Ibrahim, the descendants divided into two branches: the Israelites and the Ishmaelites. The Israelites are regarded as the descendants of Imran known as Amzan in the Bible. From this line of Imran emerged Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) and later on Yahya (John the Baptist) and Isa (Jesus). The descendants of the other branch (that is, the Ishmaelites) are the Arabs from among whom Prophet Muhammad emerged.

Gemeiah (1996) described vividly how Adam died and was buried in the following words:

They took his soul, embalmed and wrapped him, dug the grave and laid him in it. They prayed on him and put him in his grave, saying: O children of Adam, this is your tradition at the time of death.

The exact life span of Adam and the place where he was buried when he died is difficult to ascertain. In an Hadith narrated by Ibn 'Abbas and Abu Hurairah, Adam was believed to have spent a thousand years and the record of this is contained in the preserved tablet (*Lawh al – Mahfuz*). Hawa' was also said to have died a year after the death of Adam. Concerning the location where Adam was buried, some scholars are of the opinion that he was buried in India near the mountain where he was believed to have descended from paradise. Other source claimed that the mountain is the Abu Qubais mount in Makkah.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

Justify the statement that Adam was both a prophet and a messenger of God citing references from relevant sources.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The desire of Allah to have a vicegerent on earth necessitated the creation of Adam without minding the disposition of the angels towards it. Endowed with knowledge, Adam's triumph over the angels made him to gain their respect except Iblis who is among the Jinns. The peace enjoyed by Adam and his wife Hawa while in paradise was short-lived because of the temptation of Iblis who was bent in leading man astray.

However, having realised their mistakes in falling into this temptation, they both sought for divine pardon, which was granted by Allah. Adam eventually descended into the earth

as a prophet of God and together with his wife; the process of human procreation and spread began.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Adam is the first man on earth, the first prophet of Allah and the progenitor of human race according to Q.2 Verse 30.
- The process of human procreation began with Adam and his wife.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Account for the life and mission of Adam as the first man on earth, the prophet and the progenitor of human race.

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## **MODULE 2 ‘ULUL – AZM (THE RESOLUTE PROPHETS)**

|        |                       |
|--------|-----------------------|
| Unit 1 | Prophet Nuh (A.S)     |
| Unit 2 | Prophet Ibrahim (A.S) |
| Unit 3 | Prophet Musa (A.S)    |
| Unit 4 | Prophet Musa (A.S) II |
| Unit 5 | Prophet Isa (A.S)     |

### **UNIT 1      PROPHET NUH (A.S)**

#### **CONTENTS**

|     |   |
|-----|---|
| 1.0 | Introduction  |
| 2.0 | Objectives  |
| 3.0 | Main Content  |
| 3.1 | The Birth and Mission of Prophet Nuh (A.S)          |
| 3.2 | Response to Nuh's Call and the Building of an – Ark |
| 3.3 | The Deluge and the Aftermath                        |
| 4.0 | Conclusion  |
| 5.0 | Summary   |
| 6.0 | Tutor-Marked Assignment                             |
| 7.0 | References/Further Reading                          |

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Discussions in the last unit focused on the history of Prophet Adam as the first man on earth and the father of human race. In this unit, detailed study of one of the five resolute prophets of Islam shall be made. He is Prophet Nuh and this study shall cover his birth and mission, his people's response to his call and the deluge that followed their denial of Nuh's prophethood.

#### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- discuss extensively on the mission and birth of Prophet Nuh (A.S)
- give account of this people's response to his call and its consequence
- analyse the issue of the deluge and what happened thereafter.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 The Birth and Mission of Prophet Nuh (A.S)

By name, he is Nuh bn Lamik bn Mutawashlikh bn Khanukh (Idris) bn Yazid bn Mihalbil bn Qainin bn Anush bn Shith bn Adam, the father of all human beings. He was both a prophet and a messenger whose resilience and doggedness made him one of the five bestowed the honorific title: 'Ulul – Azm' (the resolute prophet). As – Sabuni declared that the period between Nuh and Adam was more than one thousand years. The Old Testament as cited in As – Sabuni put the figure precisely at 1,056 years. According to Abdul Baki (1987) Prophet Nuh's name was mentioned in 43 verses spread over twenty eight chapters of the Holy Quran. Apart from this, Prophet Nuh (A.S) was so great that a whole chapter of the Quran was named after him.

The people to whom Allah sent Prophet Nuh to were called Banu Rasib and were reported – according to Shawqi (2003), to have lived in Southern Iraq; a place not quite far away from the present city of Kufah. These people were pagans who had special statutes that represented their gods and goddesses. Among their gods, five were so prominent that they were mentioned in the Holy Quran. These were Wadd, Suwa, Yaguth, Ya'uq and Nasr (*Suratu Nuh*, chapter 71 verse 23). While explaining this verse, Abdullah bn Abbas said that the names of the five gods mentioned above represented the names of pious people who lived in the period between Adam and Nuh. He stated further that after the death of these people, Satan incited their people to erect stone memorials in the places where those pious people used to sit; and to call them after their names. He concluded that as time passed by and peoples faith began to wane, the stone memorials were worshipped thus began idol – worshipping.

This was the situation when Allah sent Nuh to invite his people to worship Allah alone. In accordance with Allah's instruction, Nuh said to his people:

O my people! Worship Allah! Ye have no other god but him. I fear for you the punishment of a dreadful Day! (Al – A'raf chapter 7 verse 59).

Similar message is contained in *Suratu Nuh* chapter 71 verses 2-3 which states:

O my people! I am to you a Warner, clear and open: That ye should worship Allah, fear Him and obey me.

The mission of Nuh began to have positive effects on very few people who were very poor. The rich among his people who unfortunately were in the majority did not only disbelieve him, they also antagonised his teachings based on the facts that:

he was an ordinary man and a liar (Q11 : 27) he was possessed with madness (Q7 : 60) he could only be qualified as leader of the poor and the weak (Q11:27) as a condition for accepting his mission however he was asked to do away with the poor (Q11:30-31) or on the alternative call for the punishment of his Lord on them as a fulfillment of his threats (Q.11:32).

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Critically examine the reason while Allah sent Prophet Nuh (A.S) to his people and mention the basic contents of his message.

### **3.2 Response to Nuhs' Call and the Building of the Ark**

Prophet Nuh persisted in his mission to his people but the case of defiance remained. Later, disbelief led to mockery and eventually to intimidation and oppression. Their stubbornness was so great that for the 950 years sojourn of Nuh on earth in the midst of his people, only 50 people believed in his prophet-hood and followed him. Their obstinacy and hatred went to the extent that he was said to have been beaten in public and called all sorts of names. When the situation became unbearable, Nuh had no option but to present their case before Almighty Allah in the following statements:

...O my Lord! I have called to my people night and day:

"But my call only increases their flight (from the Right)

And every time I have called to them, that Thou mightest forgive them, they have (only) thrust their finger into their ears, covered themselves up with their garments, grown obstinate and given themselves up to arrogance.

(Suratu Nuh chapter 71 verses 5 – 7).

Prophet Nuh did not mince words in telling Allah what he had told them of Allah's mercy which they are enjoying in abundance. Having been convinced that he had done his best and had lost hope in redeeming them, he prayed to Allah for assistance by saying.... O my Lord! Help me: for that they accuse me of falsehood!" (*Suratul Mu'minun*, chapter 23 verse 26).

Nuh's invocation to Allah was followed by Divine commandment that he should begin the construction of an Ark. This instruction is contained in *Suratu Hud*, chapter 11 verses 36 and 37 as follows:

It was revealed to Noah!

'None of thy people will believe except those who have believed already! So grieve no longer over their (evil) deeds. But construct an Ark under Our eyes and Our inspiration, and address me no (further) on behalf of those who are in sin: for they are about to be overwhelmed (in the flood).

Prophet Nuh began the construction of the Ark and whenever the disbelievers among his people passed by, they mocked him but he did not relent until the construction was completed. Exegetes of the Quran had diverse opinions as to the length and width of this Ark which according to Ibn Kathir was 'matchless then and would remain so thereafter'. However, the account of Torah (Old Testament) put the length at 300 cubit and the width at 50 cubit. In the same account cited in Ibn Kathir; the height of the ark was 30 cubit and it consisted of three floors at 10 cubit each. It was further stated that the lower floor was assigned to animals and beasts, the middle floor to people and the upper floor to birds. With the completion of the ark, Allah commanded Nuh to take with him aboard the ark, those few who believed in his mission, and pairs of every specie made up of male and female (Q.11:40). The purpose is not only to sail with them into safety against the impending catastrophe, but also their survival through reproduction for the continuity of human life. Having done this, the stage was set for Allah's punishment for those who disbelieves.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

The stubborn nature of Nuh's people provoked his decision to pray against their obstinacy. Comment vividly on this and the response of Allah to Nuh's prayer.

### **3.3 The Deluge and the Aftermath**

No sooner had the followers of Nuh entered the Ark than the commandment of Allah came with the fountains of the earth gushing forth and as Ibn Kathir described it "Allah caused rain to fall on earth like it has never done before, nor will it ever do hereafter". This statement corroborates Allah's vivid illustration of the torrent in *Suratul Qamar* chapter 54 verses 10 – 12 which states:

So we opened the gates of heaven, with water pouring forth, And we caused the earth to gush forth with springs. So the waters met (and rose) to the extent decreed.



Some exegetes gave further description of the degree of coverage of the rain. Ibn Kathir for example, states that these exegetes opined that:

The water reached the highest mountain on earth, i.e. it went fifteen cubit high while others postulated that the water rose for eighty cubits. It dominated the entire globe, its mountains; barren lands and deserts so that none of the creatures that previously lived on earth survived.

Despite the rise in the level of waters, Allah caused the Ark to float with them on the waves (towering) like mountains (*Suratu Hud*, chapter 11 verse 32). Nuh and his followers were able to survive this deluge but not so for the disbelievers as *Suratu Nuh*, chapter 71 verse 25 says:

Because of their sins they were drowned (in the flood) and were made to enter the fire (of punishment); and they found in lieu of Allah – none to help them

Among those who perished, it is necessary to mention Yam; one of his children who is known in the Bible as Kan'an. History however was not clear about the fate of Nuh's wife who was also a disbeliever. Some were of the opinion that she died before the deluge while others held that she was said to be the mother of all Nuh's children: Ham, Sam, Yafith, Yam (Kan'an) and Abir. While Yam did not survive the deluge, the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) was quoted by Imam Ahmad on the authority of Samurah to have said that: "Sam is the father of the Arabs, Ham is the father of the Abyssinians, and Yafith is the father of the Romans'

With the commandment of Allah contained in *Suratu Hud*, chapter 11 verse 44, the rain stopped and the water dried up, thereby making the earth possible to settle and walk on. Thereafter, Allah asked Nuh to land the ark on mount Judi and come down from the ark (Q.11:48). Thus began a new life for Nuh and his people.

Prophet Nuh died later leaving his surviving children and people with keen consciousness of Allah. He enjoined them to remain steadfast in their services to him. It suffices to note here however, that 950 years of Nuh's stay with his people did not include the years he lived either before or after that. Similarly, there was no consensus as to where he was buried. While Gemeiah (1996) reported some scholars to have claimed Baalabak, he said others are of the opinion that his grave lied in the sacred Mosque in Makkah but Allah knows the best.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

With copious reference from the Quran, how would you describe the punishment meted out to Noah's people for their disbelief?

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

Allah sent Nuh (A.S) as a Warner to his people who were deep rooted in idol – worship. They were not only recalcitrant but also showed their hatred to him and his mission that for 950 years he was with them, only 50 believed and accepted him. Their hatred and mockery as well as oppression made him to make an invocation to Allah for divine intervention. Succor came when he and his followers were asked to embark on an ark, which had earlier been constructed by Nuh through the divine order. Nuh and his followers survived while the disbelievers perished forever.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Prophet Nuh, one of the five resolute prophets, has his origin traced to Adam (A.S) the first prophet of Allah.
- Allah instructed him to construct an ark, which eventually saved him and his followers when Allah’s punishment came in form of flood.
- all the disbelievers, including his son perished in the flood and prophet Nuh as well as his surviving followers landed in mount Judi after the deluge.
- they (the survivors) continued a new life after the deluge and Nuh died sometimes thereafter.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give a comprehensive account on why you think Nuh should be one of the *Ulul – Azm*.
2. Discuss the religious experience of the people of Nuh (AS) at the time he commenced his prophetic mission.

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## **UNIT 2     PROPHET IBRAHIM (A.S)**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Birth and Mission of Prophet Ibrahim (A.S)
  - 3.2 Prophet Ibrahim: His Emigration and Family Life
  - 3.3 Prophet Ibrahim, the Great Sacrifice and the Construction of Ka'ba
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

One of the resolute prophets, Nuh was discussed in the previous unit. This unit shall focus on yet another resolute prophet: Ibrahim, treating particularly his name and place of origin, his response and reactions to Idol worship and the consequence; his emigration, family life and how Allah put his faith into test by instructing him to sacrifice his son. The unit concludes with Prophet Ibrahim efforts and that of his son in building Ka'bah.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- discuss in detail about the birth and mission of Prophet Ibrahim
- explain the purpose of Ibrahim in offering his child for sacrifice and the building of Ka'bah.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 The Birth and Mission of Prophet Ibrahim (A.S)**

According to the Quran, Ibrahim was the son of Āzar (Quran 6 verse 74) contrary to the opinion of many scholars and the Old Testament (At – Taurah). In the Old Testament he was referred to as Tarikh; a semblance of Ibn Abbas opinion that called it Tarih. The consensus of some scholars is that Ibrahim's father may be bearing two names or a name and a nickname but Allah knows best. Ibrahim was born along with his two brothers

Nahur and Hazan in al – Kaldaniyyah (Chaldean) which included Babylon and its neighboring areas, in a city situated between Tigris and Euphrates. Ibrahim (A.S) was an uncle to prophet (Lūt) as he (Lūt) was born by Hazan; one of Ibrahim's brothers. Ibrahim was essentially a shepherd who usually moved from one place to another with herds in company of his nephew, Lūt. The reigning king during the time of Ibrahim was, according to historians, called Namrūd; a powerful but tyrant king who was not only a pagan but who also claimed to be divine.

In preparation for his future assignment as the prophet of Allah, Ibrahim (A.S) was divinely guided to distinguish between paganism/idolatry and the worship of only one God. This is evident in *Suratul Ambiya'*, chapter 21 verse 51 where Allah declared: "We bestowed aforetime on Ibrahim his (portion of) guidance and we were well acquainted with him". Having received divine guidance, Ibrahim began his mission first with his father; an idol carver and a staunch idol worshipper. Much as Ibrahim tried in convincing his father to follow guidance, the more the father refused. Instead, Āzar got angry with his son and even threatened to stone him (*Suratu Maryam*, chapter 19 verses 41-48). He passed similar message to his people that it was futile and senseless to engage themselves in the worship of images, statutes and idols which could not benefit them (*Suratul Anbiya'*, chapter 21 verses 52-45, and verses 66-67). They also did not yield. The hatred Ibrahim had for idol worship made him wish he could destroy all of them. The opportunity came one day when all the people in the town were away from the town for an occasion. Having pretended that he was sick, Ibrahim did not go with them. In their absence, he broke down all the idols in the sanctuary leaving only one, which was the biggest. He cleverly hung the axe on it to indicate that it was it that had broken down the other smaller ones (*Suratu Saffat*, chapter 37 verses 91-96).

When the people returned and found all their idols destroyed, they became worried and wanted to know who did the havoc. Suspecting Ibrahim who had consistently spoken against their idols, he was summoned before the king for interrogation. Ibrahim asked them to direct their questions to the chief idol upon whose shoulder an axe was hung to know whether it can speak. When they heard this response, they were instantly confounded with shame that they did not know what to say. At last, however they said: "Thou knowest full well that these idols do not speak" (*Al – Anbiyya'* 65). This reply elicited a reaction from Ibrahim who admonished them in the following verses:

Do ye them worship, besides God, things that can neither be of any good to you nor do you harm? Fie upon you, and upon the things that ye worship besides God! Have ye no sense? (*Suratul Ambiya'* chapter 21 verses 66-67).

Ibrahim's superior argument put them in a difficult situation to argue further. In an apparent effort to conceal their defeat, the people of Ibrahim resorted to the use of force and passed a verdict. "Burn him and protect your gods, if ye do (anything at all) (Q. 21 verse 68)". In response to this verdict, a big furnace was prepared and Ibrahim was thrown into it alive. However, in Allah's desire to protect His own, He commanded:

O fire! Be thou cool and (a means of safety) for Ibrahim! Then they sought a stratagem against him: but we made them the ones that lost most.

Thus was the way Ibrahim triumphed over his people in Babylon. To the people of Harran also who worshipped the moon, the stars and the sun, Ibrahim demonstrated his faith in one living God. He showed them the futility in the worship of heavenly bodies because these could not be taken for God as they were mere handwork of Allah. Comprehensive account of this event is contained in *Surat al-An'ām*, chapter 6 verses 75 – 83.

The message of Ibrahim got to Namrūd, the reigning tyrant king of Babylon, who immediately instructed his attendants to bring Ibrahim to his palace. The conviction of Ibrahim of his own mission spurred him to preach the oneness of Allah to Namrūd without minding the consequence. Concerning this, the Quran states:

Hast thou not turned thy vision to one who disputed with Abraham about his Lord, because Allah had granted him power? Abraham said: My Lord is He who giveth life and death. He said: 'I give life and death'. Said Abraham: 'but it is Allah that causeth the sun to rise from the East: do thou then cause it to rise from the West? Thus was he confounded who (in arrogance) rejected faith. Nor doth Allah give guidance to a people unjust (Suratul Baqarah chapter 2 verse 258).

Namrud's claim to divinity was challenged by Ibrahim who put his divine nature into test by asking him to cause the sun to rise from the West. In the words of Muhammad:

Namrud was astonished and was unable to do anything front of this strange and difficult demand. His slander was revealed and he was shocked by the clear sign that Abraham has presented.

Because of stiff opposition from every direction however, Ibrahim decided to migrate to other lands.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Account for the opposition encountered by Ibrahim from the people of Babylon.

### **3.2 Prophet Ibrahim: His Emigration and Family Life**

The aftermath of the opposition encountered by Ibrahim both at Harran and Babylon was that he decided to emigrate to other places to further his prophetic mission. He took off together with his wife Sarah and his nephew Lot who also left with his wife. They moved from Kutha to Urd, then to Haran and later to Palestine. They traveled from Palestine to

Egypt and returned again to Palestine. It was from this place that Ibrahim (A.S) moved to Bir sheva where he settled. From Bir Sheva Ibrahim got connected with Makkah.

Meanwhile, Sarah the wife of Prophet Ibrahim could not give birth to a child and she was approaching the old age just like her husband. Considering this situation, she asked her husband to marry Hajar, their female servant. The marriage thus solemnized and Hajar gave birth to a bouncing baby boy called Ismail. Leaving Sarah behind, Prophet Ibrahim went with Hajar and his son and made their way to Makkah. The couple and their son settled by the Sacred House at a time when Makkah was not inhabited and there was no water. After some time, Ibrahim decided to visit his first wife Sarah in Palestine. His departure from his younger wife and her child was painful particularly when he was sure that there was no single person to look after them in his absence. Hajar also shared the same grief but Ibrahim, trusting his God who has never let him down during the period of need supplicated as follows:

O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Thy Sacred House; in order, O our Lord, that they may establish regular prayer so fill the hearts of some among men with love towards them, and feed them with fruits: so that they may give thanks. (Suratu Ibrahim chapter 14 verse 37).

Hajar remained with Ismail until the food and water in their possession finished. She became worried, hungry and thirsty. Her search for water eventually led her to *Safa* (a hill) and *Marwa* (a mountain) both in Makkah without success. She wandered between these hills seven times and the story remained the same. Meanwhile, the agony of a mother who had nothing to give to her little child increased when the cry of the child became persistent. She discovered to her amazement that while the baby was crying and moving his feet thus rubbing it on the land where he was laid, water suddenly began to gush out under his feet. After her initial surprise, Hajar saw the development as the mercy of Allah upon her and her child. She quenched her thirst and that of her child with this water popularly called Zamzam and which is still a divine attraction to all pilgrims. This water was also to attract later on the visit of some people from the tribe of Jurhum (from Yemen). From this event Makkah gradually came to life.

It is instructive to note here that through perseverance, prayer and faith, Sarah also gave birth to a son for Ibrahim called Ishāq (Isaac). History has it that Ibrahim was one hundred years old when he gave birth to Ishāq while Ismail was born when Ibrahim was 86 years old. To this extent, Ismail was 14 years older than Ishāq.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

1. Give a historical account of the migration of Ibrahim and his wife from Palestine to Makkah.
2. Describe the event that led to the discovery of Zam – Zam in Makkah.

### 3.3 Prophet Ibrahim, the Great Sacrifice and the Construction of Ka'bah

It should be noted that Ibrahim remained childless for a long time before he gave birth to Ismail. His prayer then was that Allah should grant him a righteous son. He went further to promise that should he be given one, he would offer him in sacrifice to Allah. Allah granted him Ismail but in order to test his sincerity to this pledge, Allah reminded him of his commitment to sacrifice his son (*Suratu Saffat*, chapter 37 verses 99 – 101). Prophet Ibrahim informed his son about this development. An account of this and the response of Ismail are in verses 102 and 103 of *Suratu Saffah* and are presented as follows:

O my Son! I see in vision that I offer thee in sacrifice: Now see what thy view is!  
(The son) said: O my father! Do as thou art commanded: thou will find me, if God wills one practicing patience and constancy

Prophet Ibrahim had hardly laid his son for sacrifice than Allah intervened through a divine call saying:

Thou hast already fulfilled the vision! Thus indeed do We reward those who do right. For this was obviously a trial and we ransomed him with momentous sacrifice. (*Suratu Saffah* chapter 37 verses 105 – 107).

Allah made good His promise by sending Angel Gabriel to give a ram to Ibrahim in replacement of his son. Ibrahim killed the ram in sacrifice instead of his son and thus began the sacrifice of an animal in commemoration of this occasion, which eventually became the *Idul – Adha* festival in Islam.

Prophet Ibrahim together with his son, Ismail, played major roles in the construction of Ka'bah. However, there are divergent views to whether Ibrahim was really responsible for the foundation of Ka'bah or whether they only rebuilt it. While commenting on this, Yusuf Ali is of the opinion that its foundation goes back to Ibrahim according to Arab tradition. According to another source, what Ibrahim did was only a reconstruction of a fallen building. This view according to tradition said that the Ka'bah was originally built by Adam according to a celestial prototype and was only rebuilt by Ibrahim and Ismail after the deluge. Allah knows best.

Prophet Ibrahim's commitment to his religion put him in the highest pedestal before his Lord. Through his unalloyed faith, he got so many appellations. He was a friend of Allah (Khalilur – Rahman), one true in faith (hanīf), one who fulfil promises (Alladhi wafa) and a honest man (Sādiqan). Further to the above, Allah fulfilled His promise to Ibrahim by making him an Imam to the nations (Q.2:124). This was made manifest in that many of



his offspring became the prophets of God (*Suratul – Hadīd*, chapter 57 – verse 26). For example, two great prophets, Ismail and Ishāq both of whom were his sons were also fathers to prophets. Ishāq was father to Ya'qub; another prophet known as Israil and to whom all the tribes belonged. Through him, prophet-hood was granted to many of his children and the chain of prophets sent to them was sealed by Jesus, son of Mary. In the case of Ismail, he was the father of the Arabs and the only prophet in his progeny was Muhammad (S.A.W), the seal of all prophets. Ibrahim lived at the same time with Lūt, his nephew. There was not consensus as to the actual age he attained before he died. While some put it at 175; Ibn Kathir, relying on a Hadith reported by Abu Hurairah, argues that Ibrahim lived for 200 years.

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Account for the origin of *Idul – Adha* in Islam.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

Determination, faith and resilience are the three major qualities that enhance the complete fulfillment of Ibrahim's mission. Against his people at Harran and Babylon, he fought with intelligence for the entrenchment of monotheism. His faith also became manifest when he decided to fulfill his covenant to Allah by sacrificing his son. Allah did not only compensate him for this sincerity of purpose through ram offerings, he also became the father of all prophets and received many divine accolades as the real and obedient servant of God.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Ibrahim son of Azar was sent as a prophet to his people in Harran and Babylon (Al – Kaldaniyyah).
- he was endowed with inspiration to preach monotheism to his people who were idol worshippers and worshippers of heavenly bodies.
- he met stiff opposition in his mission and was consigned to fire for audacity in destroying their idols.
- Allah saved him from fire unscratched and had to leave his people on emigration with his old wife Sarah and his nephew Lūt.
- Ibrahim moved from place to place until he arrived Makkah with a new wife and his new child.
- Ibrahim later left his new family in Makkah where they faced water crises

- Hajar's movement between Safa and Marwa hills became one of the Hajj rites until today.
- she later found miraculously a source of water- called Zamzam beneath the feet of her crying child.
- Ibrahim gave birth to Ismail and Ishaq both of whom later became great prophets.
- Ismail was offered in sacrifice as fulfillment of a pledge but Allah replaced him with a ram.
- both Ibrahim and Ismail played some roles in the construction of Ka'bah

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Ibrahim could be described as the symbol of faith. Discuss.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Ali, A.Y. (1975). *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*. London: The Islamic Publications.

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## **UNIT 3      PROPHET MŪSA (A. S.) I**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Prevailing Condition in Egypt before the Birth of Mūsa (A.S)
  - 3.2 Mūsa Birth, Upbringing and Marital Life
  - 3.3 The Call of Mūsa to Prophethood
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Prophet Ibrahim, one of the prophets with the honorific title of *Ulul – Azm* was extensively discussed in the last unit. Yet another prophet with the same title shall be our major focus of discourse in this unit. Efforts therefore shall be geared towards a discourse on the prevailing condition in Egypt before the birth of Mūsa; his birth, upbringing and

marital life as well as his call to prophet-hood. The unit shall be concluded with the encounter of Prophet Mūsa with Pharaoh and the issue of miracle.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- discuss the prevailing situation in Egypt prior to the birth of Mūsa
- narrate in detail how Mūsa was born, his upbringing, marital life and call to prophet-hood
- discuss extensively his encounter with pharaoh particularly on the issue of miracle.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Prevailing Condition in Egypt before the Birth of Mūsa**

By way of introduction, it is necessary to give a brief discourse on the link between Egypt and the children of Israel. This link dated back to the period when the entire household of Prophet Ya'qub (Jacob) was moved to Egypt as a result of the invitation from Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) who was one of them. With the passage of time, the children of Israel lost their glory and power in Egypt. They became a minority, weak and servitude. They were engaged in menial jobs like tilling of the lands and harvesting of agricultural products. They were also serving kings and the aristocratic class. In short, they were in bondage, yearning for deliverance.

Apart from the above, there were two other major factors prevalent in Egypt that deserved adequate discussion. One of these was their religious belief. Egypt was at that time the land of pagans; where the worship of idols and celestial bodies was the order of the day. Secondly and more important was the way they elevated their king Pharaoh to the level of divinity. It is important to state in passing here that the title of the king of Egypt was Pharaoh and the name of the Pharaoh in power when Mūsa was born was Al – Walid bn Mus'ab; a king who was alive for more than 400 years; many of which was spent in the torture and oppression of the people (As – Sabuni, 1980). The exploits of this tyrant and demi-god was best encapsulated by Muhammad who said that:

Pharaoh and his clique were intoxicated with pride of race and pride of material civilization and grievously oppressed the Israelites. Pharaoh exalted himself in the earth and made its people castes. He oppressed a certain tribe who were the children of Israel. In the period of his reign, they lived in hard times and were patient in spite of the great disasters that they faced.

Such was the situation of the Israelites and it was amidst this condition that Mūsa was born.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Mention and explain three factors that made the time ripe for Israelites in Egypt to seek for divine deliverance.

### **3.2 Mūsa: Birth, Upbringing, Marital Life and Call to Prophethood**

By name, he is Mūsa, son of 'Umran, son of Qahith, son of Azer , son of Lawa, son of Ya'qub, son of Ishāq, son of Ibrahim while the name of his mother is Yokabil. His birth and survival was miraculous because the king had been foretold by his soothsayers that a male child would be born in his kingdom who would be instrumental to his own destruction. To prevent this prediction from coming to pass, Pharaoh instructed his men to begin the killing of all the male children born during that period (*Suratul Qasas*, chapter 28 verses 1 – 4). Because of the fear of if pharaoh should know that a male child had been born, his mother Yokabil got the divine guidance to put him in a small box and throw the box into the river (*Suratul Qasas*, chapter 28 verse 7). His mother complied and before long, infant Mūsa found himself in the palace of Pharaoh by sheer providence. This is reported in the same Sūrah chapter 28 verse 8 which goes as follows:

Then the people of Pharaoh picked him up (from the river). (It was intended) that (Moses) should be to them an adversary and a cause of sorrow

The presence of Mūsa in the palace of Pharaoh was a delight to his queen who, according to Ali (1993), was said to have no son who could inherit the throne. Through divine providence, Mūsa was suckled by his mother having refused to be suckled by any other woman. He nonetheless spent his early life in the palace of Pharaoh where, according to Ali (1993), he was an inmate, brought up as a son and prince. His mother was also given the privilege to visit him in the palace. Prophet Mūsa had a strong, healthy well-built physique, . The weak and the oppressed used to resort to him for justice as a result of the wisdom divinely bestowed on him according to Quran chapter 28 verse 14.

The Quran in the same chapter verses 15 – 19 contains stories of two events that led to the flight of prophet Mūsa from Egypt. The first event was the feud between an Israelite and an Egyptian in which the former sought for the assistance of Mūsa against the latter. In the process, the Egyptian was killed and Prophet Mūsa became afraid and disillusioned and prayed to Allah for forgiveness. Another related event was when the same Israelite who had earlier sought for Mūsa assistance also called him for the same reason. As Mūsa was about to engage the Egyptian in feud, he resorted to blackmail by asking him whether he wanted to kill him as he killed another Egyptian a day earlier? (Q.28:19). Mūsa soon realised that the death of the late Egyptian in his hands was no longer a secret matter.

These reasons coupled with information that he was on a wanted list to avenge the death of the Egyptian killed, made him to run away from Egypt.

Mūsa made his way to Madyan; a city situated between Egypt and Syria. Without any material need, Mūsa according to Gemeiah (1996) traveled for eight nights, hiding mostly during the day; hungry, thirsty and fatigued. Mūsa got to a watering hole near Madyan where some men were watering their flocks and other two ladies who were keeping back their flocks for the men to finish theirs. On enquiry, the two ladies told Mūsa about their problem and he offered to assist them. He went to the watering hole and got their flocks watered (Q.28: 22 – 24). When the ladies got home, they informed their father called Shua'yb about Mūsa and in response, the old man asked that he be brought to him. When Mūsa arrived and narrated his ordeals to the old man, he was assured of safety and was later accommodated. When it was time for the old man to hire someone to tend his flocks, the choice fell on Mūsa based on the advice of his daughters (Q.28 verse 26).

The interaction between Mūsa and Shu'ayb on one hand and between Mūsa and the two daughters of Shu'ayb on the other continued to increase in leaps and bounds. It was therefore not surprising that the old man informed Mūsa of his intention to marry one of his daughters to him. He (Shu'ayb), however gave certain condition in this respect. The condition was that Mūsa would have to remain in the service of the old man for a period of eight years (and possibly add two more years). This condition appeared reasonable to Mūsa because if guaranteed him a job which was enough fulfilled the condition and served the mandatory period before he decided to return to Egypt.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Explain three reasons why you think it is expedient for Mūsa to move from Egypt to Madyan.

### **3.3 The Call of Mūsa to Prophethood**

Mūsa received the call to prophethood while on his way from Madyan to Egypt with his family. He had passed through Mount Sinai and was approaching mount Tur when he noticed a fire, which he believed, would serve him for warmth and illumination as well as guidance. No sooner had he reached the fire than a divine voice beckoned. Account of this event is in *Suratu Taha*, chapter 20 verses 9 – 14 which state thus:

Has the story of Mūsa reached thee? Behold he saw a fire: so he said to his family, tarry ye; I perceived a fire: perhaps, I can bring you some burning brand there from, or find some guidance at the fire, a voice was heard: 'O Mūsa! Verily I am your Lord! Therefore, (in my presence) put off thy shoes; thou art in the sacred valley Tuwā. I have chosen thee; listen, then, to the inspiration (sent to thee). Verily, I am God. There is no god but I: So serve thou Me (only), and establish regular prayer for celebrating my praise.

A critical look at the verses above revealed that the mission of Mūsa from God is monotheistic in nature. To equip him fully for the future assignment as a prophet Mūsa was given two signs. In Qur'an chapter 28 verses 31 – 32, Allah says:

Now do thou throw thy rod! But when he saw it moving (of its own accord) as if it had been snake, he turned back in retreat, and retraced not his steps: 'O Moses' (it was said) 'draw near, and fear not: for thou art of those who are secure. Move thy hand into thy bosom, and it will come forth white without stain (or harm) and draw thy hand close to thy side (to guard) against fear, those are the two credentials from thy Lord to Pharaoh and his chiefs: for truly they are a people rebellious and wicked.

These two signs: a staff turned to serpent and a hand turned white when tucked into the bosom became Mūsa's evidences to convince Pharaoh and his men. When Mūsa got the mandate to visit Pharaoh and preach to him, he complained about two things: One was his fear that he might be killed to avenge the death of their kinsman who had died in his hand. The second was his speech defect. Quite aware that his brother Haroun is more eloquent, he solicited for him as a helper from Allah. Allah granted his request and Haroun became a prophet (Q. 20:29 – 32). Haroun's prophethood therefore gave rise to the emergence of two prophets on the same mission, sent at the same time to the same group of people.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

Prophet Mūsa's call to prophethood was accompanied with some signs to prove his mission. Explain these signs with relevant examples from the Quran.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Mūsa was born when Pharaoh made it a taboo for any woman to give birth to a male child. Destined to serve as a succor to the children of Israel who were under Egyptians' bondage, Mūsa's call to prophethood and the signs given were the necessary instruments for their emancipation. If Mūsa's birth is miraculous, his way to prophethood was even more wonderful as the new assignment put him face to face with the reigning tyrant. Whose reign struck terror into the spine of even the most powerful men. Mūsa's success over this despot becomes the topical issue of discourse in the next unit.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- the children of Israel were under the yoke of Egyptian oppression prior to the birth of Mūsa
- their tyrant king ordered his guards to be killing all male children in obedience to soothsayer's prediction that a male child would cause his downfall
- by divine providence, Mūsa, who was born at that time, ironically grew up under the watchful eyes of the tyrant king.
- Musa left Egypt on murder case and arrived in Madyan where he married the daughter of prophet Shu'ayb
- on his way back from Madyan, Musa received a divine mandate to preach to Pharaoh as the prophet of Allah
- To help him in his message, Allah equipped Musa with signs and elevated his brother, Haroun into prophethood because of his eloquence.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Describe the background to the emergence of Mūsa as the prophet of Allah and the main thrust of his message to Pharaoh and his men.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Ali, A.Y (1975). *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary*: London: The Islamic Publications.

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## UNIT 4 PROPHEET MŪSA (A. S) II



## **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Encounter with Pharaoh and the Issue of Miracle
  - 3.2 Obstinacy of Pharaoh and His Downfall
  - 3.3 Mūsa as a Messenger and Peculiar Prophet of Allah**
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the last unit, the encounter of the Egyptians with the children of Israel and the arrival of Mūsa as their prophet were the major issue of study. In this unit, efforts shall be geared towards the study of the encounter of Mūsa with Pharaoh and the issue of miracle, the stubborn nature of Pharaoh and his eventual downfall, as well as the collection of Mosaic Law from Allah and others.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- explain generally the encounter of Prophet Mūsa with Pharaoh and the issue of miracle
- discuss fully on the stubborn nature of Pharaoh and his eventual downfall
- give account of Mūsa's mission as a lawgiver.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Encounter with Pharaoh and the Issue of Miracle**

Having been charged with the responsibility of carrying the message of Allah to Pharaoh and his people with the purpose of freeing the Israelites from the Egyptians bondage, Mūsa approached the tyrant king (Quran chapter 7 verses 103 – 105). He and his brother Haroun delivered the message of Allah to Pharaoh and in response, he (Pharaoh) reminded Mūsa of how he brought him up from cradle and the many years of his early life he had spent in his palace. Mūsa also responded by reminding him of his oppression

of the Israelites which he said was the reason behind his escape from Egypt and how after that he was inspired by Allah and became one of His apostles (*Suratu – Shu'ara'*, chapter 26 verses 10 – 22). Not convinced, Pharaoh now asked who this Allah was and the reply of Moses read: "The Lord and cherisher of the heavens and the earth, and all between if ye want to be quite sure (*Suratu – Shu'ara'*, chapter 26 verses 23 – 24). Pharaoh remained persistent on disbelief and he threatened to send Mūsa to prison but the latter assured Pharaoh of presenting before him a great sign that would convince him of his divine message.

It is instructive to state here that in those days, magic was the prevalent art among the Egyptians and they so much believed it. That obviously was the reason why the sign of Mūsa had a semblance of what people really believed in at the time; at least to expose their weakness and inability to do something as superior as those ordered by Allah. When Pharaoh challenged Mūsa to show his sign, he stood before the king and threw his powerful staff on the ground and behold, it was a serpent plain for all to see. Pharaoh was astonished at this feat but he would not accept defeat so easily, he asked Mūsa for another miracle. Mūsa did not hesitate to put his hand in his bosom and when he drew it out, it became white and attracted the attention of those present (*Suratu – Shu'ara'*, chapter 26 verses 29 – 33). As a die-hard non-believer, he accused Mūsa and his brother of pulling magic tricks with the purpose of dismissing his people from their land. To save his face from further ignominy, Pharaoh took to the advice of his men by sending for all the magicians in the land of Egypt. A day was agreed upon between Pharaoh and the two prophets when they would engage themselves in magical duel (*Suratu Taha*, chapter 20 verse 58) to know who is truly of God.

All the magicians in Egypt gathered on the appointed day; so also was Pharaoh and all his people. When Mūsa arrived, the magicians displayed their magics and their rods turned to snakes; but Mūsa who had remained calm all this while threw his own staff, which immediately turned to a big serpent with long neck and horrible appearance. This serpent did not waste any time in swallowing all their magics. Bewildered at the nature of the serpent and the manner in which it swallowed their magic, they all fell down in prostration as a mark of recognition for Mūsa's superiority. Their submission, which was done without any fear of punishment or fortune from Pharaoh reads: 'We believe in the Lord of the Worlds, the Lord of Moses and Haroun (*Suratu Shu'ara'*, chapter 26 verses 47 – 48).

The action of these magicians angered Pharaoh who queried their audacity to prostrate for Mūsa without his authority. Instead of Pharaoh to be the same line with the magicians by recognizing Mūsa as divinely sent, he threatened to punish them (the magicians) for submitting to the authority of Mūsa without his permission. The magicians not minding the threat said instead:

*For us, we have believed in our Lord; may He forgive us our faults, and the magic to which thou didst compel us: for God is Best and Most Abiding.*

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Narrate in detail the encounter of Mūsa with Pharaoh and the victory achieved by the former over the latter.

### 3.2 Obstinacy of Pharaoh and His Downfall

Mūsa remained undaunted in his mission to evacuate the children of Israel and the new converts out of Egypt to avoid the wrath of Pharaoh. Pharaoh got wind of this plan and as a way of keeping his kingdom and putting his mind at rest, he and his men decided to kill Mūsa. There were various Quranic accounts that quoted one brave man among the followers of Pharaoh who tried to convince him and other followers against this plan. The following verses are relevant with regard to this event: (Suratul – Ghāfir chapter 40 verses 28, 30 – 34 and 41 – 44).

The early sign of terrible time ahead of the Egyptians for their disbelief and for the plot to kill Mūsa started to unfold when River Nile, their major source of irrigation began to dry. Because of this, there was no water for irrigation and their fruits and vegetables began to disappear. Thus began the punishment of many years through drought. As if these were not enough, Allah, the Most High, afflicted them with plagues: mass death, locusts, lice, frogs and blood. It suffices to state that each time Allah's punishment came to these Egyptians; they consult prophet Mūsa saying:

O Moses! On our behalf call on thy Lord in virtue of his promise to thee: if thou wilt remove the penalty from us, we shall truly believe in thee, and we shall send away the children of Israel with thee (Suratul

A'raf chapter 7 verse 134)

While explaining this verse, Muhammad comments:

When the plagues came for punishment, each time the Egyptians suffered, they promised amendment and begged Moses (A.S) to intercede and cause the plague to cease. But every time it ceased, they went back to their evil attitude until the final retribution came. The irony of this event was that these disasters did not affect the children of Israel in Egypt, which apparently was an indication of the great signs of Allah.

Meanwhile, Pharaoh and his men continued their threat against Mūsa and the plan to kill him and the children of Israel intensified. Mūsa's followers were not comfortable with Pharaoh and were asking him to help them run away with him out of Egypt. Mūsa acceded to their request and together they fled until they reached the deep sea (Red Sea) where they can go no further. With Red Sea before them and the forces of Pharaoh

coming behind, their fear increased. Musa however, did not waiver as he built his faith in God who does not disappoint. He even calmed them when they became terrified by saying: 'By no means! My Lord is with me! Soon will He guide me (*Suratu – Shu'ara'*, chapter 26 verse 63).

With the approach of Pharaoh and his soldiers, all armed with swords, Allah commanded Mūsa in the following statement: "Strike the sea with thy rod! So it divided and each separate part became like the huge, firm mass of a mountain" (*Suratu Shu'ara'*, chapter 26 verse 64). The division of the sea paved the way for Mūsa and his followers to pass through. When they had all crossed and reached the other end safely, Pharaoh and his soldiers rushed inside it as Mūsa and his followers did. As they were well at the middle of the sea, Allah ordered prophet Mūsa to strike the sea once again with his staff. When he did so, the sea closed again and drowned all of them including Pharaoh himself thus becoming a typical example for others who would not believe. (*Suratu Yunus* chapter 10 verses 90 – 92).

## SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Describe two major disasters suffered by Pharaoh for their denial of the mission of Mūsa.

### 3.3 Mūsa as a Messenger and a Peculiar Prophet of Allah

After the great rescue of the children of Israel from Pharaoh and his soldiers, they began to think about a definite course to follow and the law to guide them. Mūsa, for this reason, called on Allah to send him a book, which would serve as their guidance. Allah instructed Mūsa to purify himself by fasting for thirty days and another ten days thereafter. He (Allah) also asked him to go to Tur Mountain where the law would be received. When Mūsa was leaving, he appointed his brother Hārūn to hold forth for him as his successor to the people of Israel until he arrived.

Mūsa left for Tur Mountain where he addressed Allah. In fact, he did not see Allah manifestly and would not have even seen Him because it would be too overwhelming for him to contain even though he made request to see Him. *Suratul A'raf*, chapter 7 verse 143 contained the oral communication between Mūsa and Allah in this regard and it goes as follows:

O my Lord! Show (Thy self) to me that I may look upon thee'. Allah said: 'By no means canst thou see me (direct); but look upon the mount; if it abides in its place, then shalt thou see me". When his Lord manifested His glory on the mount, He made it as dust, and Moses fell down in a swoon. When he recovered his senses he said: 'Glory be to thee' To thee I turn in repentance and I am the first to believe.

When Mūsa saw the futility of his demand as described in this verse, he sought for forgiveness from Allah. It was at this juncture that Allah specifically chose him and gave

him the law that would guide him and his people. This is well expressed in the same chapter 7 verses 144 – 145 thus:

'O Moses! I have chosen thee above other men, by the mission I have (given thee) and the words I (have spoken to thee); take then the (revelation) which I give thee, and be of those who give thanks. And we ordained laws for him in the Tablets in all matters, both commanding and explaining all things, (and said): 'Take and hold these with firmness, and enjoin thy people to hold fast by the best in the precepts: Soon shall I show you the homes of the wicked (how they lie desolate).

The laws given which were said to be in Tablets were made of precious stones. They included all the laws, which all the children of Israel must obey. These Tablets are collectively known as Taurah or the Old Testament.

Meanwhile, when Mūsa was away on Mount Tur, one man called alSamiriyyu fashioned a calf, which Mūsa's followers were following thereby believing what was false and rejected the indisputable truth. Upon arrival, Mūsa grew angry at their action and rebuked his brother Harun for not telling him when they were going astray. They however apologized for their misdeed (*Suratu Taha*, chapter 20 verse 87).

It is necessary to note in passing that Mūsa had problems with his followers; the reason why some of them wandered in the wilderness for forty years and eventually died there. It is also of necessity to state that he had a brief encounter with al-Khidr; a man of God and Qārūn a wealthy man who refused to spend his money in the way of God.

The peculiarity and uniqueness of Mūsa's prophet-hood was that he had a direct communication with God (Q4: 164). This was unlike the experiences of other prophets who were also communicated with but through some other modes like *wahy* (inspiration) or behind the veil (*min wara'il – hijab*). It was as a result of this that he got the sobriquet *Kalamul-lah* meaning one who was (directly) addressed by God.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

Write a critique on Mūsa as a lawgiver and a unique prophet of God.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Mūsa was emboldened by the message he received and the signs he possessed to confront the fiery Pharaoh. The arrogance of Pharaoh made him to doubt the message of Mūsa; not even the signs of God bestowed on Mūsa would soften his mind to the right belief. Pharaoh and his men faced two penalties for their obstinacy: one was the great disaster that befell and the second was the eventual destruction of Pharaoh himself. To establish

his people firmly on land, Mūsa got for them, the laws to be followed but some of his followers would not follow his guidance, the reason why they became lost in the wilderness for forty years.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Mūsa with his brother preached the word of God to Pharaoh but he disbelieved them
- Pharaoh gathered all the magicians but their feat could not withstand Mūsa's feat whose serpent devoured their own magics
- the magicians prostrated before Mūsa as a sign of superiority but to the annoyance of Pharaoh who promised to punish them
- Pharaoh's people were punished for their disobedience with plague yet they did not bother
- Allah eventually saved Mūsa and his followers from Pharaoh who perished together with his soldiers in the sea
- Mūsa got the laws for his people as guidance from Allah at Mount Tur
- Al – Samiriyyu planned the worship of Idols in Mūsa's absence □ this led to his rebuke and that of Haroun when Mūsa returned.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

What, in your considered opinion, was the main thrust of Mūsa's message: To rescue the Israelites from the grip of Pharaoh or to preach the religion of Allah to him or both? Cite the examples from relevant verses of the Quran.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## UNIT 5     **PROPHET ISA (A.S)**

### CONTENTS

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main Content
  - 3.1    Prophet Isa: Genealogy, Conception and Birth
  - 3.2    Prophet Isa: Call to Prophethood and Teachings
  - 3.3    Position of Islam on the Status of Prophet Isa
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary
- 6.0    Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0    References/Further Reading

### 1.0    **INTRODUCTION**

In the last unit, Prophet Mūsa was the subject of discussion. In this unit, a study of another prophet who belonged to the *Ulul – Azm* shall be made. He was Isa Ibn Maryam; the last in the long list of the Israeli prophets. Major areas of his discourse in this unit shall include his genealogy, his miraculous birth; call to prophethood and teachings as well as the controversies surrounding all these particularly his status and death from Islamic perspective.

### 2.0    **OBJECTIVES**

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

- give a vivid account of the genealogy, conception and birth of Isa (A.S) (Jesus Christ)
- explain comprehensively his call to Prophet-hood and the pattern of his teachings
- discuss the position of Islam on his prophethood.

### 3.0    **MAIN CONTENT**

#### 3.1    **Prophet Isa: Genealogy, Conception and Birth**

By name, he was Isa bn Maryam daughter of Imran and Hannah. Prophet Isa was also known and addressed as Al – Masih. The common name by which he was known i.e. Isa



ibn Maryam was because he was born without a father. This belief in Islam was a sharp contrast to another view from the people of the Book that ascribed Joseph the carpenter to him as his father. The name Isa is mentioned 25 times in the Quran. In the same scripture also Al – Masih and Ibn Maryam are mentioned 11 and 23 times respectively. A brief look at the history of Maryam revealed that she had been dedicated to the service of Allah even before she was born. While her father had died before her birth, the responsibility of her upbringing fell on the shoulder of Zakariyyah a prophet of God and the husband of her sister called Ashiah.

Maryam, having been dedicated to the service of Allah, never left the mosque except while menstruating or in a situation of necessity like getting food or water. She was in this state when Allah gave her the foreknowledge of the birth of Jesus. The message which was brought by Angel Gabriel reads thus:

Behold! The angel said: "O Mary! God gives thee glad tidings of a word from Him: his name will be Christ Jesus, the son of Mary, held in honour in this world and the Hereafter and of (the company of) those nearest to God (Q.3 verse 45).

This divine information was not only terrifying but also astonishing to Maryam who queried: "How shall I have a son when no man hath touched me?" Upon this she got a reply: "Even so: God createth what He willeth: when He hath decreed a plan, He but saith to it, Be and it is!" Since the conception of Isa did not follow the normal biological process of procreation, she had to leave Nazareth (in Galilee) for Bethlehem (Bait Laham) some six miles south of Jerusalem where she delivered her child. Yet, the Quran affirmed that the essence of Isa's conception was to make him and his mother a sign for all people. When Maryam eventually delivered her son Isa, she was gripped with fear of being accused of infidelity. She got the divine instruction not to engage in conversation with anyone (*Suratu Maryam*, chapter 19 verse 26). Truly when people heard of her new baby upon her arrival in her village, they began to talk evil of her to the point of calling her a prostitute (*Suratu Maryam*, verse 27 – 28). However, on hearing all these statements she did not utter a word. Instead, she pointed to her baby and asked them to direct whatever question they might have to him. They were in the process of asking her how she thought a child could talk in his cradle when Allah caused Isa to say:

I am indeed a servant of God: He hath given me revelation and made me a prophet; and He hath made me blessed wherever I be, and hath enjoined on me prayer and charity as long as I live; He hath made me kind to my mother, and not overbearing or miserable; so peace is on me the day I was born, the day that I die, and the day that I shall be raised up to life (again)!

So, thus went the miraculous birth of Isa, the controversy that surrounded it and how Isa himself exonerated his mother by giving a vivid explanation of his birth while in cradle.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Give a comprehensive account of the conception and birth of Isa bn Maryam.

### 3.2 Prophet Isa: Call to Prophethood and Teachings

It suffices to mention here that the glad tidings brought to Maryam by the Angel Gabriel did not end at the birth of a miraculous child. It also included the primary purpose why the child was born. *Suratu Āl- Imran* and *Suratu Maryam* provide a comprehensive account of the mission of Isa on earth. Summary of these verses are hereunder enumerated.

- a. He shall speak to the people in childhood and in maturity and shall be of the righteous.
- b. He shall be taught the Book and the Wisdom, the Law and the Gospel
- c. He shall be appointed a messenger to the children of Israel
- d. He was also given the power to perform miracle as signs of his prophecy
- e. He was also sent to attest/confirm the Law which came before him
- f. He was also to make lawful to the children of Israel what had earlier on been forbidden to them. (*Āl- Imran*, chapter 3 verses)
- g. He has enjoined him to observe prayer and give charity as long as he lived
- h. He has taught him to be kind to his mother, not to be overbearing or miserable (*Maryam*, chapter 19 verses 25 – 37).
- i. Above all he saw Allah as the only God worthy of worship.

The Quran does not provide much information about the early life of Isa (A.S): however, at the age of 30 or there about, he received the call to carry the message of God, in fulfillment of the early message already given to his mother prior to his birth. The period was also the beginning of the manifestation of the signs bestowed on him by God. With the revelation given to him, Isa began to call his people to the new religion. He completed his teachings with his power of vision with which he exposed all the hidden actions of the evil men in the society. Further to these also was his power to cure the blind, heal the sick, cure the leper and raise the dead among others, predicted before he was born. He did all these in the name and power of God who sent him.

While some people believed in his prophecy, there were some among the children of Israel who did not listen to him. They saw his miracles as mere magic. More than this was men of religion who instantly felt the threat posed by Isa and his religious dispensation. They therefore decided to harm him but Allah did not allow this as He protected his messenger against their plan.

Isa moved with his followers from village to village until they reached a remote desert. Having walked for long they became tired and hungry. Unable to bear it any more, they asked him to pray to God to send down to them a table set from heaven. Their demand was far from disbelief as they told him that they only needed to eat the food to satisfy their hearts and to further entrench their confirmation of his prophecy. Isa refused their request at first but when they persisted in their demand, he prayed to God to answer his demand. The table filled with food landed and everyone ate to his satisfaction.

Meanwhile, Isa continued to deliver Allah's message with his followers most of whom were peasants. Those who were opposed to his mission tried to resist him but they failed. Later they started to lie against him and even accused him of practicing a religion, which has no semblance with the doctrine of the Jews. All these did not diminish prophet Isa's resolve to intensify his preaching activities. At last, a plan was made to kill him but they encountered a big problem in the fact that Isa had no particular place where he could be located. Since God did not want him to be killed, it got to a terrible level where Allah raised him to heaven. Meanwhile someone who was his look-alike was soon caught for crucifixion. This is contrary to the view held in some quarters and which Quran also rejects vehemently. In *Suratu – Nisa'*, chapter 4 verses 157 – 158 Allah says:

That they said (in boast) "We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Apostle of God" But they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only a conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not:- Nay, God raised him up unto Himself and God is exalted in power...

Based on these verses cited one can state that the death of Isa was as mysterious as his birth and his activities in life.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Enumerate the basic elements of Prophet Isa's teachings and miracles as a prophet of God.

### **3.3 Position of Islam on the Status of Prophet Isa**

Islam does not subscribe to the attribution of sonship to Isa or to any other prophet for that matter. In Islam therefore, everyone is created by God. In *Suratul – Ambiya'*, chapter 21 verse 26, Allah described all the prophets of God as follows: "Nay they are honoured servants of God." In another verse, ample reference was specifically made to Isa that: He was but a servant on whom we bestowed favour and we made him an example for the children of Israel" (*Suratu – Zukhruf*, chapter 43 verse 59). In other words, his miraculous birth did not make him so special as to ascribe divinity to him. Comparing the birth of Isa with that of Adam, Allah says in the Quran: "The similitude of Jesus before God is as that of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him 'Be' and he was."

Similarly, from the Islamic point of view, the idea of trinity is vehemently opposed. Since the basic doctrine of Islam is oneness of Allah, belief in trinity God is a contradiction. Secondly, since every soul including that of Isa is created by God and the created cannot have equal share with the creator in essence and power, the idea of trinity is rejected. The Qur'an says:

Certainly they disbelieved who say: God, He is the Messiah, son of Mary. The Messiah said: O children of Israel, serve God, my Lord and your Lord, surely whoever associates any one with God, God has forbidden Paradise for him, and his abode is the fire, and there shall be no helpers for the wrong doers" (Suratul Ma'idah chapter 5 verse 72).

Yet another verse states:

Certainly they disbelieved who say: God is the third of the three. There is only one God. The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a messenger, messengers before him had indeed passed away. His mother was a truthful woman. They both used to eat food. See how we have made the message clear, and yet they are turned away (Suratul – Maidah, chapter 5 verses 73 and 75).

Islam also rejects the doctrine of inherited sin and the idea of atonement. In Islam, each person is responsible for his sin and shall also be personally responsible for its atonement as no one shall bear the burden of another. Since the doctrine of crucifixion is alien to Islam, the idea of atonement does not arise.

Isa is none than a messenger of Allah occupying a unique place among the prophets of God. The revelations of God to him are recorded in what is known as the **Gospels (Injil)**. Isa foretold the coming of another prophet after him whose name is Ahmad.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

Citing relevant examples from the Quran, explain in details the position of Islam on the status of Isa (A.S).

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The divine power of God became manifest in the conception of Isa by Maryam. The mother who got the glad tidings was not only surprised but feared the reaction of the people to a pregnancy that did not follow the normal biological process. The message of Isa, which also had already been foretold, was complemented with miracles, which he performed through the grace of God. His message was rejected by the Jews who also conspired to kill him. Isa, a messenger of Allah, was rescued and transferred unto Allah Himself. His messages were recorded in Gospel (Injil).

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Isa bn Maryam was a prophet sent to the Israelites
- he was born through the divine means without a father
- his birth was foretold as a prophet and a messenger who would speak at baby and in maturity
- Isa preached the oneness of God and healed the sick, cured the blind and raised the dead among others by the power of God
- while some believed in his teachings and accepted him, many others rejected him
- the men of religion even planned to kill him for preaching what was alien to their doctrine
- Allah protected him and brought him to heaven
- Islam rejects the concept of sonship, trinity and the concept of cardinal sin
- atonement for sin of others is alien to Islam.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

The death of Isa bn Maryam was as mysterious as his birth. Discuss.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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**MODULE 3      PROPHET MUHAMMAD AND THE  
OTHER PROPHETS**

- Unit 1      Prophet Muhammad: Life and Mission in Makkah
- Unit 2      Muhammad Life and Mission in M\$adinah
- Unit 3      Other Prophets of Allah I
- Unit 4      Other Prophets of Allah II
- Unit 5      Other Prophets of Allah III

**UNIT 1      PROPHET MUHAMMAD: LIFE AND MISSION**

## IN MAKKAH

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Muhammad: From Birth to Marriage
  - 3.2 Call to Prophethood
  - 3.3 Muhammad: Persecution and Migration
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Four of the *'Ulul-Azm* were the subjects of discourse in the last unit. In this unit however, efforts shall be made to discuss the fifth member of this group who was also the last prophet specifically sent to the entire humanity. He is Muhammad son of Abdullah (S.A.W). Major area of focus shall include his genealogy and birth, his marriage and call to prophethood as well as the persecution he and his followers faced during his mission in Makkah. This unit shall also discuss his emigration to Madinah.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss the birth of the prophet Muhammad up till his marital life
- give a detailed account of his prophethood
- analyse the mission of the prophet, his persecution and his emigration to Madinah.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Muhammad: From Birth to Marriage

By name he his Muhammad the son of Abdullah, son of Abdul – Muttalib, son of Hashim, son of Abdu Manaf, son of Qusayy, son of Kilab, son of Murrah, son of An – Nadr, son of Kinanah, son of Uzaymah, son of Mudrikah, son of Ilyas, son of Mudar, son of Nizar, son of Ma'dd, son of Adnan. His mother was Aminah the daughter of Wahb.

Muhammad, an Arab from the tribe of Quraysh was born in Makkah although the exact date of his birth is disputed. The general opinion however, is that he was born on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> of Rabi-ul-Awwal which corresponds to 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 571 C.E; a year popular known as the year of elephant'.

Abdullah, the father of Muhammad had died before he was born and as was the custom in Arabia, he (Muhammad) had to be handed over to a wet nurse for a special training in the desert. The lot fell on Halimah al Sa'diyyah daughter of Abu Dhu'ayb who took him and carried him with her to the desert. Muhammad remained with Halimah from the tribe of Banu Sa'd till he was five and was returned to his mother. Thereafter, Aminah, his mother, took him to Yathrib (later known as Madinah) in order to acquaint him with her uncles; the Banu Najjar. Along with them on this journey was Ummu Ayman, the housemaid left behind by her husband. Having spent about a month in Yathrib, Aminah prepared to return to Makkah with her son and the housemaid and on their way back, she became ill at a village called Abwa, where she eventually died and was buried.

Muhammad was brought back to Makkah by Umm Ayman and handed over to his grandfather, Abdul Muttalib. Muhammad was with his grandfather who loved him so much for about two years until the latter passed away. The care and protection of Muhammad now fell on Abu Talib, his uncle, who equally loved him so much that he gave him precedence over his own children. This love continued long after Muhammad proclaimed his mission and declared the new faith.

At the age of 12, Muhammad accompanied his uncle on a trade mission to Syria. As their caravan reached Busra in Syria, Bahirah, a monk, was said to have seen them and immediately recognised in Muhammad the signs of prophethood as foretold in Christian books. He (the monk) there and then advised Abu Talib to take Muhammad back to his country and guard him carefully for fear that the Jews might also recognize the sign in him and harm him. Upon this advice, Abu Talib hurriedly took the prophet off and returned to Makkah. As one who had already been guided by the truth, Muhammad preoccupation tested on his continuous ambition to discover the truth of life and the perfection of its inner meaning. His exemplary character and the perfection of his conduct earned him a sobriquet from the people of Makkah who all agreed to call him *al – Amin'* meaning the 'truthful'.

The popularity of Muhammad began to grow as an honest and truthful young man. Meanwhile, Khadijah bint Khuwaylid from the tribe of Banu Asad who had been a trader of honour and great wealth wanted an honest person whom she would employ and send on trade mission. The story had it that Muhammad was finally employed and his first assignment was to accompany Khadijah's trade caravan to Syria together with one of her slave called Maysarah. In this first trip, Muhammad's adeptness and loyalty' as stated by Haykal, 'enabled him to make great gains for Khadijah – indeed more than anyone had done before!' Maysarah, his companion in this trip also admired Muhammad's loyalty and



gentleness. When it was time for them to return, Muhammad bought some things, which Khadijah has asked him to buy from Syrian products.

Khadijah was highly impressed by the performance of Muhammad during the trip. This, coupled with other virtues of the prophet, attracted him to her and she decided to marry him. According to Haykal:

*despite her forty years of age and the indifference with which she rejected the offers of the noblest of Quraysh, her satisfaction with her employee was to turn into love.*

Khadijah married Muhammad when the latter was 25 years. Apart from Ibrahim, all the children of the prophet were from Khadijah and they consisted of two boys and four girls, namely: Al-Qasim, Abdullah, Zaynab, Ruqayyah, Ummu – Kulthum and Fatimah. While al-Qasim and Abdullah died before Islam, all the daughters lived into Islam, embraced it, and migrated with him to Yathrib (Madinah).

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Briefly trace the history of Muhammad from birth to marriage.

### **3.2 Call to Prophethood**

The traits of leadership began to manifest in Muhammad prior to his call to prophethood. One example of such traits was displayed when the Ka'bah was due for reconstruction and the responsibility to do so fell on four clans of Makkah. They began the work in earnest and as the walls rose from the ground and the time came to place the saved black stone in its place, they differed as to who would have the honour of laying it.

This led to an argument so keen that it almost led to a new civil war. When one of them, Abu Umayyah, son of Mughirah al – Makhzumi saw the situation, he used his power and prestige to tell the Makkans, "While we are all standing here, let the first one to pass through the gate of AlSaffah be our arbitrator in this dispute". Behold! The first one to pass through the gate was Muhammad, when they all agreed to accept his verdict, Muhammad, through wisdom and divine guidance, called for a robe, spread it on the ground and placed the black stone on it. He thereafter asked the elders of each clan to hold on to one edge of the robe. When this was done, they all carried the stone and Muhammad was the one who picked it up and laid it in its right place by himself. With this singular action, bloodshed was averted and the dispute solved.

Meanwhile, Muhammad's early occupation as a herdsman afforded him the opportunity to have enough time to contemplate about life, beholding the beauty of the universe and responding to invitation to ponder and to admire. His ultimate goal was to discover the supreme truth, to write his soul to it, to penetrate it, and to grasp the secret of its being. According to Haykal again:

He did not take much thought to realize that his people's understanding of the nature of this world, of their religiosity and devotion, was all false.

Based on this contemplation, it became the prophet's habit to go to the cave of Hira' for meditation whenever the month of Ramadan arrived. Such was his pastime until he approached the fortieth year of his age. One day, he was on such visit when Angel Jibril appeared and asked the prophet to read. Muhammad answered in surprise, "What shall I read?" The angel commanded for the second time "Read" and the same reply was: "What shall I read?" Finally, the angel replied, "Read in the name of your Lord, the Creator, who created man of a clot of blood. Read! Your Lord is most gracious. It is He who taught man by the pen that which he does not know." Muhammad followed the angel in recitation of these verses until they stuck in his memory. He was panic – stricken and in haste, he left the cave for his house. When he got home, he asked Khadijah to wrap him in blankets as he was shivering. When he calmed down, he narrated his experience to his wife who now consoled him and gave an assurance that there would be no problem.

Khadijah quickly went to her cousin, Waraqah Ibn Nawfal who was a Christian and narrated her husband's experience to him. Waraqah responded by saying that it is the same revelation as was sent down to Moses (A.S). In other words, he saw him as the new prophet of God. It did not take Khadijah much time to declare to him her submission as a Muslim and her faith in his prophet-hood. It was there and then that Muhammad (S.A.W) realized what his mission to his people would be and that was how his prophethood began.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Narrate the experience of Muhammad's encounter with angel and the aftermath of that encounter.

### **3.3 Muhammad: Mission, Persecution and Migration**

Muhammad began his mission as a prophet of Allah with Khadijah as his first convert. Ali Ibn Abu Talib who was still a boy and was living with the prophet also became the first youth to accept Islam. He was followed by Zayd Ibn Harithah, Muhammad's client. Thus, Islam was, during this period, restricted to Prophet Muhammad's household. The major problem facing the prophet at this period was how he would preach the new religion to the people of Makkah considering how attached they were to the religion of their forefathers. Islam got the first boost when Abu Bakr Ibn Abu Quhafah al-Taymi, a very close friend of the prophet, became a Muslim. Together with the prophet, Abu – Bakr succeeded in calling to Islam those among his people whom he trusted. Among those who converted were Uthman Ibn 'Affan, 'Abd al-Rahman Ibn Awf, Talhah Ibn 'Ubayd Allah and others. These people initially hid the fact of their conversion and

usually went to the outskirts of Makkah to hold their prayers. For three years, situation remained the same even though revelations from Allah the prophet continued. The divine commandment to proclaim the message of Islam to the nearest relatives came and Muhammad called them to a banquet where they were called to the way of Allah. They rejected his call vehemently and also reprieved him.

Prophet Muhammad did not stop his teachings on the way of Allah and his warning of the impending danger should they disobey the divine call. His private preaching metamorphosed into public rally as people began to join the religion gradually and his message remained shunning of idols and coming to the religion of Allah. The people of Makkah noted the rate at which he was attacking their idols and its socio-religious and political implications. The Quraysh went to Abu Talib to remove his protection over the prophet. Although Abu Talib had not joined the new faith but found it difficult to hand his nephew over to his enemies. However, as an uncle who had deep affection for his nephew, he pleaded to the prophet to exercise restraint. Upon this statement, the prophet declared to his uncle:

By God Almighty I swear, even if they should put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left that I abjure this cause, I shall not do so until God has vindicated it or caused me to perish in the process.

Muhammad continued his message and was deeply relying upon the protection of his/kinsmen; the Banu Hashim, but not so for many of his followers. Typical example was Bilal, an Abyssinian slave who was tortured by his master but could only get reprieved when Abu Bakr bought him and set him free. The persecution continued for a long time but rather than diminish their interest strengthened it. It was during this period that Hamzah, Muhammad's uncle embraced Islam.

However, when the persecution became intolerable, the prophet instructed some of his followers to escape to Abyssinia; the Christian Kingdom under King Negus. The first group to emigrate consisted of 11 men and four women and they were protected by the king when they got there. All efforts to get them repatriated by the Makkans proved abortive. The second group of eighty strong men besides women and children later followed. With this event, the Quraysh became embittered and their hostility grew when one of them, Umar ibn Al – Khattab, embraced Islam. They finally decided to boycott Banu Hashim and all others who were protecting Muhammad. For three years, the boycott continued until few of the Qurayshi leaders had a rethink over the injustice done to Banu Hashim and ended the boycott.

Hard times still awaited the prophet and his followers when he lost his uncle Abu Talib and soon after, his wife, Khadijah. So sad was the prophet that he called the year of their demise “**the year of sorrow**”.

With the death of these two pillars of support, serious offensive against Islam began and this growing hostility of the Quraysh became dangerous that the prophet decided to go to

at-Taif for assistance. His trip was unsuccessful as the people there treated him harshly by hurling stones at him.

Muhammad returned to Makkah to continue with his teachings and preaching. One day he met with some men from Yathrib who were on pilgrimage to Makkah and called them to embrace Islam and they did. Another twelve followed from the same city and met with the prophet at Al-Aqabah and gave him their pledge. This is called the first pledge of Aqabah. They went back to Madinah in the company of Mus'ab ibn Umar who was sent by the prophet to teach them the fundamentals of Islam. From there, Islam spread far and wide in Yathrib. The second pledge of Aqabah was in the following year when seventy – three men and two women from Yathrib came to pledge their allegiance to the prophet in Makkah and invited him to Yathrib. The prophet accepted their pledge. Meanwhile the successful acceptance of Islam in Yathrib became a nightmare for the infidels in Makkah and thus began their intolerable atrocities on Muslims. Seeing that Makkah was no longer safe to practice the religion, the prophet encouraged his followers to emigrate to Madinah in preparation for his own eventual arrival.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

Briefly describe the gradual process through which the message of Islam spread in Makkah and people's response to it.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The urgent need for a reformer necessitated the divine call of Muhammad to the service of Allah coming from humble background; Muhammad's exceptional character stood him out in such a barbaric environment where vices were order of the day. This same character he carried into his work and his eventual engagement with Khadijah; his wife and comforter. Becoming a prophet at forty was not as hectic as the problems encountered from his clan and the Makkans in the dissemination of his message, which was not only rejected but also elicited persecution. The little toleration enjoyed by Muhammad lasted as long as Abu Talib and Khadijah lived. Their death exposed the prophet and his followers to danger and led to their eventual emigration first to Abyssinia and later to Madinah.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Muhammad was born after his father's death, became a complete orphan at six and lost his grandfather and guardian at age eight

- his uncle Abu Talib took care of him and together they went on trade expedition to Syria
- his exceptional attitude earned him 'Al – Amin' and subsequently made him a trusted man under his employer, Khadijah, who later married him
- his seclusion in Cave Hira climaxed at age 40 when he was proclaimed the prophet of God through a revelation.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Discuss in detail, the roles of Abu Talib and Khadijah in the history of Muhammad.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## **UNIT 2      PROPHET MUHAMMAD II: LIFE AND MISSION IN MADINAH**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Beginning of the Yathrib Period
  - 3.2 The Battles of Badr, Uhud and Trench
  - 3.3 The Treaty of Hdaybiyah and the Conquest of Makkah
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Extensive study on the life and mission of Prophet Muhammad in Makkah was the major topic of discussion in the last unit. Further study of Prophet Muhammad's life and mission, this time in Madinah, shall be the major topical issue in this unit. Particular attention shall be focused on the beginning of a new life in Yathrib (Madinah), the great battles fought by the prophet like Badr, Uhud and Trench and the treaty of Hdaybiyah. The unit shall conclude with study on the conquest of Makkah.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- discuss the situation of Madinah immediately after the prophet's arrival
- give account of the Battles of Badr, Uhud and Trench
- discuss extensively on the treaty of Hdaybiyah and the conquest of Makkah.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### 3.1    **The Beginning of the Yathrib Period**

Muhammad left Makkah in company of Abu Bakr and headed towards Madinah. They made a brief stopover in cave Thaur where they were when the Makkans were looking for them. When the Makkans got to the cave and could not see any trace of human habitation inside it, they decided to return to Makkah. When they left, Prophet Muhammad and Abu Bakr continued their journey to Madinah. When they got to Quba, a place at the outskirts of Madinah, they stopped and lodged at the house of Amr Bin Awf for several days during which he (the prophet) built the first mosque in Islam, the mosque of Quba. Prophet Muhammad arrived Madinah to a tumultuous welcome. By divine instruction, the camel of the prophet did not stop until it reached the door of Abu Ayub Al – Ansarī where it knelt down. The prophet dismounted it, and entered the house of Al – Ansarī where he temporarily stayed. Meanwhile, the spot where the prophet's camel knelt was negotiated with the two orphans who owned it; purchased and eventually became the site of the prophet's mosque in Madinah. Building of the mosque was the first task the holy prophet embarked upon while in Madinah. The work was completed in a record time as it involved the efforts of two Muslim parties: the Muhājirūn (the emigrants) who followed the prophet from Makkah to Madinah and the Ansār (the helpers) that is, those who hosted the emigrants in Madinah as well as the prophet himself. Apart from being a place of worship, the prophet's mosque also became the headquarters of the nascent Muslim community.

Another early assignment of the prophet was to cement the relationship between the Muhājirūn and the Ansar by instituting a pact of brotherhood between them. This step was necessary to make the Muhājirūn who had left their homes in Makkah overcome their feeling of loneliness. With this pact, the Ansār were able to share their property with their brethren from Makkah. The importance of this spirit of brotherhood and selflessness among the Muslims in Madinah lies in the basic fact that it wiped out traces of the long established enmity among different tribes. A typical example was the Aws and the Khazraj who engaged each other in wars for a very long period.

The prophet also established friendly relations between the Muslims and the Jews of Madinah. He did this by making a covenant of mutual obligations that form them into a single community without any effect on their religious differences. This 18-clause covenant emphasised:

- i.      one community (Ummah)
- ii.     payment of blood money by the Muhājirūn, release of prisoners and showing of kindness and justice to people
- iii.    payment of redemption among or indemnity by believers so as not to leave them destitute

- iv. common fight by the Ummah against anyone who rebelled or seeks to spread enmity or sin; or injustice or corruption among the believers
- v. protection on equality basis vi. support and cooperation among believers vii. justice, aid and succor to whoever among the Jews that follows the believers
- viii. the indivisibility of the peace of believers
- ix. vengeance by the believers of the blood of one another shed in the cause of Allah
- x. retaliation for whosoever kills a believer unless the next of kin is satisfied (with blood money), in which case the believers shall be against him as one entity
- xi. the illegality of a believer's action in either helping a criminal or give him refuge
- xii. referral of any matters upon which there is difference to Allah and the Prophet
- xiii. contribution by the Jews to the cost of war so long as they are fighting alongside the believers
- xiv. non – compulsion in religion as 'to the Jews is their religion and to the Muslims is their religion
- xv. assistance among each people who are parties to this covenant against whoever attacks them.
- xvi. seeking for mutual advice and consultation by all parties involved in the covenant
- xvii. assistance for the oppressed xviii. that a man shall not be held responsible for his ally's misdeeds.

With this covenant popularly known as the **Constitution of Madinah**, a Muslim state was born with Prophet Muhammad as the Head of State.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Enumerate 10 of the major components contained in the constitution of Madinah.

### **3.2 Battles of Badr, Uhud and Khandaq**

In the second year after the Hijrah (migrating), the prophet got the news that a large caravan of Quraysh led by Abu Sufyan was on its way to Makkah from Syria. The prophet gave the order that the caravan be intercepted to compensate for the loss of property they left behind in Makkah. Abu Sufyan got wind of this and led his caravan off the main route. At the same time, he sent a message to the Quraysh about the development and asked them to come and defend their merchandise. Instantly, an army of about 1000 men, 100 cavalry and large supply of caravan was mobilised under the leadership of Abu Jahl. Both parties met at the well of Badr where the Muslims, with their small number and with virtually no weapon engaged the Makkans in battle. The Makkans were defeated with about seventy men among them and a similar number taken as prisoners of war. On the side of the Muslims, only 14 men died as martyrs. It is worthy to note that these prisoners were released after the payment of ransom.



The defeat of the Quraysh at Badr was a disgrace to them and this must be avenged. To realize this, an army of three thousand pitched warriors, two hundred cavalry with three thousand camels and fifteen women marched towards Makkah. The news got to the prophet who also marched out with an army of about one thousand soldiers with just two horsemen. This number depleted on their way to the battlefield when Abdullah Ibn Ubayy Ibn Salool, the chief of the hypocrites deserted the Muslim army with his followers numbering three hundred. This army marched on until they reached the mountain of Uhud where the prophet ordered them to stand in front of the mountain so that the hill will shield them. He thereafter placed a batch of 50 archers under the leadership of Abdullah Ibn Jubaid Al-Ansari on special guard and warned them not to leave their places even if they (the archers) saw them conquer the enemy. The Quraysh army advanced with Abu Sufyan commanding from the centre while Khalid and Ikrimah headed the West and the east flanks. This encounter took place near mountain of Uhud. The Muslims initially were achieving success by routing their enemies and the disbelievers taking to their heels. The Muslims pursued for a distance and later came back to busy themselves in the collection of the booty. The archers also in total disregard for the instruction of the prophet left their places to collect the spoils. To them, the battle was over. Khalid ibn Walid, one of the cavalry commanders of the Quraysh, utilized the opportunity of this situation to lead his men for a full attack from the rear. The attack was devastating as many Muslims were killed and others took to their heels. The prophet himself was injured in this battle. He would have been killed but for timely intervention of Abu Dujanah who shielded him with his body and the arrows shot at the prophet kept falling on his back.

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) sustained injury in this battle that claimed so many lives including that of Hamzah, the prophet's nephew.

Another major encounter of the prophet with the enemies of Islam occurred in the campaign of khandaq popularly known as the battle of Trench or Ditch in 627 C.E. The Jews of Banu Nadir in Madinah who had been expelled on the order of the prophet, had decided to avenge their expulsion. To realize this, they sought an alliance with the Quraysh in Makkah for a joint attack on the Muslims in Madinah.

The prophet heard about this and together with his followers, dug a ditch round the city of Madinah for protection against the enemies' forces. No sooner had the Muslims finished digging that the confederates consisting of ten thousand warriors arrived Madinah with the determination to crush Islam. All their attempts to draw the Muslims out from their trenches were resisted as they found the city of Madinah impregnable. The situation remained the same for sometime until Allah sent down a strong wind with torrents of rain that wrecked havoc on the confederate's camp. It blew terribly for three days and nights and when they could no longer bear it, they decided to retreat. Thus, the battle ended without a single casualty.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Faith has a role to play in the victory of the Muslims over the pagans of Makkah in the Battle of Badr. Discuss.

### 3.3 The Treaty of Hudaibiyah and the conquest of Makkah

In February 628 C.E which was a year after the battle of the Ditch, Prophet Muhammad (saw) decided to perform the Umrah (Lesser Hajj) and therefore set out for Makkah at the head of 1500 followers. The Quraysh heard about this plan but they had no right to oppose him by force particularly when the period fell within four sacred months recognized by the Arabs as in which raiding or fighting was forbidden. Yet they got themselves prepared to block the chance of prophet's entry into Makkah. They however sent one Budayl from Kuza'ah tribe to Muhammad to ask what his mission was. The prophet was met at a spot called Hudaibiyah on the outskirts of Makkah where he told Budayl that the Muslim had not come for war but had come only to perform the rites of Hajj. Upon the return of Budayl to the Quraysh the prophet sent Uthman b. Affan to them for negotiation. This exchange of emissary finally paved the way for truce between both parties. Suhayl bin Amr represented the Quraysh in a well documented treaty while the prophet signed on behalf of the Muslims. This treaty of Hudaibiyah has the following terms.

- a) There shall be no war between them for 10 years.
- b) Whoever comes to Muhammad from the Quraysh without the permission of his guardian must be sent back
- c) Whoever comes to the Quraysh among the followers of Muhammad must not be returned back
- d) Both parties shall abstain from evil including raiding and disputations
- e) Whoever wishes to enter into covenant and alliance with Muhammad is free to do so and whoever wishes to enter into covenant and alliance with the Quraysh is also free to do so.
- f) Muslims were to go back without entering makkah that year and to return the following year during which the Quraysh will vacate Makkah for them for three days
- g) They shall come with their swords in scabbards, and shall not enter Makkah carrying anything else.

The Muslims went back to Madinah in compliance with the terms of the agreement. However, before they left, they slaughtered the sacred animal they brought for the hajj. A year after Hudaibiyah, the prophet led some two thousand Muslims on pilgrimage to Makkah. In keeping with the terms of Hudaibiyah treaty, the Quraysh left Makkah en masse for the Muslims to perform the rites of pilgrimage. After three days in Makkah the prophet and his followers went back to Madinah. Meanwhile, the Quraysh would not

keep the terms of this treaty for long and sooner they breached one of them and the prophet wasted no time in setting out for Makkah with a force of ten thousand men. The Makkans were subdued with no resistance and the Prophet made a triumphant entry therein. He and his followers took over Makkah and cleansed Ka'bah of idols. He spent between 15 and 20 days in Makkah dealing with a number of administrative matters, which included the defining of the boundaries of the sacred territory of Makkah. The Prophet went back to Madinah and in the following year (631 C.E); he could not make it to Makkah but sent Caliph Abu Bakr to perform that year's pilgrimage. The Prophet himself personally led the pilgrimage in 632 C.E and this happened to be his last hajj. Shortly after his return from the pilgrimage, he fell sick and died-according to Abdul (1988), on June 8, 632 C.E. and was buried in his mosque in Madinah.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

Assess the implication of the treaty of Hudaibiyyah on the conquest of Makkah in 630 C.E.

#### **3.4 The Prophet SAW was a human being**

**Throughout the Quran, prophets such as Moses and Jesus often perform miracles or are associated with miraculous events. The Quran makes clear that these events always occur through Allah and not of the prophet's own volition. Throughout the Meccan passages there are instances where the Meccan people demand visual proofs of Muhammad's divine connection to Allah to which Muhammad replies "The signs are only with Allah, and I am only a plain warner." (Q.29:50) This instance makes clear that prophets are only mortals who can testify to Allah's omnipotence and produce signs when He wills it. Furthermore, the Quran states that visual and verbal proofs are often rejected by the unbelievers as being sihr ("magic") The Quran reads: "They claim that he tries to bewitch them and make them believe that he speaks the word of God, although he is just an ordinary human being like themselves. (Q 74:24-25)**

**There are patterns of representation of Quranic prophecy that support the revelation of Muhammad. Since Muhammad is in Abraham's prophetic lineage, they are analogous in many aspects of their prophecy. Muhammad was trying to rid the Pagans of idolatry during his lifetime, which is similar to Abraham. This caused many to reject Muhammad's message and even made him flee from Mecca due to his unsafety in the city. Carl Ernest, the author of *How to Read the Qur'an: A New Guide, with Select Translations*, states, "The Qur'an frequently consoles Muhammad and defends him against his opponents." This consolation can also be seen as parallel to Abraham's encouragement from Allah. Muhammad is also known to perform miracles as Abraham did. Sura 17 (Al-Isrā) briefly describes Muhammad's miraculous Night Journey where he physically ascended to the Heavens to meet with previous prophets. This spiritual journey is significant in the sense that many Islamic religious traditions and transformations were given and**

established during this miracle, such as the ritual of daily prayer. (Q. 17:78-84) Muhammad is a descendant of Abraham; therefore, this not only makes him part of the prophetic lineage, but the final prophet in the Abrahamic lineage to guide humanity to the Straight Path. In Sura 33 (Al-Ahzāb) it confirms Muhammad and states, "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but is the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the Prophets. Allah is Cognizant of everything". (Q. 33:40)

The final and most important prophet in Islam is Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullāh, whom Muslims believe to be the "Seal of the Prophets" (Khatam an-Nabiyyin, i.e. the Seal of the Prophets), to whom the Quran was revealed in a series of revelations (and written down by his companions). Muslims believe the Quran is the sole divine and literal word of God, thus immutable and protected from distortion and corruption, destined to remain in its true form until the Last Day.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

The life of Muhammad in Madinah was totally different from what it used to be while in Makkah. The man who left Makkah as a fugitive was warmly welcomed in Madinah where he became a religious leader, a generalissimo, a head of state and a statesman. With the divine grace of God and the support of his loyal followers, Muhammad fought many battles on the path of truth and eventually made a triumphant entry into Makkah as a hero.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Muhammad arrived into a tumultuous welcome in Madinah where he established himself as a religious leader and a head of state
- he spent the remaining part of his life in Madinah where he recorded many achievements, which include the drafting of the Madinah constitution, reconciling many tribes who were in conflicts, and fighting many wars
- his major wars include Badr, Uhud and the Khandaq
- he performed his first pilgrimage to Makkah in 629 C.E and by the following year he conquered Makkah
- the prophet made his farewell pilgrimage to Makkah in 632 C.E; the same year he fell sick and died at Madinah where he was buried.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Explain in detail the events that led to the conquest of Makkah in 630 C.E.

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## **UNIT 3 OTHER PROPHETS OF ALLAH I**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Prophet Hud (A.S)
  - 3.2 Prophet Salih (A.S)
  - 3.3 Prophet Daud (A.S)
  - 3.4 Prophet Sulayman (A.S)
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Our discussion in the last unit dwelt on the concluding part of Prophet Muhammad's story as the last prophet of Allah and one of the Ulul – Azm. In this unit, other prophets of Allah who were not among the six previously treated shall be the focus. We shall begin this unit with the study of four prophets namely; Hud (A.S), Salih (A.S), Dawud (A.S) and Sulayman (A.S). Emphasis shall be placed on their mission, responses of their people to their mission and the consequence of their responses.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- discuss on the life and mission of Prophet Hud (A.S)
- give account of the Life and mission of Prophet Salih (A.S) □ narrate the story of the mission of Prophet Dawud (A.S)
- explain in detail, the prophet-hood of Sulayman (A.S).

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Prophet Hud (A.S)**

He is Hud the son of Abdullah the son of Rabah the son of Khulud who descended from Sam the son of Nuh. He came from the tribe called 'Ad. This tribe lived in a country situated between Yemen and Oman. They were said to have lived in complete luxury having been endowed with fertile lands to plant.

Ibn Kathir and As – Sabuni were of the view that the people of 'Ad were the first tribe to worship idols after the destruction of the Nuh's people through great deluge. In reference to them Quran states....'call in remembrance that He made you inheritors after the people of Noah, and gave you a stature among nations....' (Suratul – A'raf chapter 7 verse 69). Among their idols were Sada, Samuda and Hara and to these they paid great obeisance.

The mission of Hud to his people was to invite them to the worship of One God and not to associate any partner with Him. In Suratul A'raf chapter 7 verse 65 Allah says:

To the 'Ad people (We Sent) Hud, one of their (own) brethren; He said: 'O my people! Worship God! Ye have no other god but Him. Will ye not fear God?'

Apart from this, he also enjoined them to heed the word of Allah before the type of calamity, which befell the people of Nuh, visits them. He also warned them of the great torments from God if they continued in their pride and arrogance. All what they said in reply was '..... Ah! We see thou art an imbecile! And 'We think thou art a liar! ".

Persistent warning of Hud did not have any positive effect in their lives as they continued in their bad deeds. This was the situation when Allah sent His punishment to them and this was mentioned in the Qur'an chapter 69 verses 6-8 among others as follows:

And the 'Ad, they were destroyed by a furious Wind, exceedingly violent; He made it rage against them seven nights and eight days in succession: So that thou couldst see the whole people lying prostrate in its (path), as if they had been roots of hollow – palm trees tumbled down! Then seest thou any of them left surviving.

However, Hud and those who believed in him remained save from this terrible windstorm and when it calmed down, everything returned to normal. Hud retired to Hadramut after the destruction where he eventually died and was buried near a city called Yarim; East of Hadramut.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Write short notes on Prophet Hud and his mission.

### **3.2 Prophet Salih (A.S)**

By name, he is Salih son of Ubayd son of Asif with genealogy traced to Sam son of Nuh. He came from the people of Thamud; an Arab tribe that lived in Hajar between Hijaz and Tabuk. According to as-Sabuni, the Thamud were among the original Arabs. The people of Thamud came after the people of 'Ad and like their predecessors, they were blessed with fertile grounds for agriculture and were very strong and skillful builders. The extent of their power is described in the Quran as follows: "And ye carve houses but of (rocky) mountains with great skill." For this reason, they were called people of the Rocky Treats.

Also, like the people of 'Ad, the people of Thamud were idol – worshipers. As a prophet of God, Salih asked them to stop the worshipping of idol which have no benefit and focus their worship on Allah alone. He warned them not to be carried away by the opulent life they were living as such life was ephemeral. In response, they queried his authority in challenging them over what their forefathers had been doing. His persistent warning made some few weak and poor people believe and to follow him but not so for the wealthy ones who were hell bent in their old ways of life. At a point, they even persuaded him to join them in their worship, which was unsuccessful. When they noticed that Salih was adamant and his followers were increasing daily, they demanded for a sign from his Lord as a proof to convince them. Salih was inspired by God to show them a she-camel that appeared from a rocky mountain and attached some conditions. There are many verses that spoke about this event in the Quran. One of them is Suratul A'raf, chapter 7 verses 73, which says:

To the Thamud people, We sent Salih, one of their own brethren: He said: 'O my people! Worship God, ye have no other God but Him, Now hath come unto you a clear (sign) from your Lord! This she Camel of God is a sign unto you: So leave her to grace in God's earth, and let her come to no harm, or ye shall be seized with a grievous punishment.

The divine instruction to Thamud people is that they should alternate a day with the she-camel on the use of the general spring. Initially they complied but later they saw it as an insult and an effrontery. They even denied its divine origin. Therefore, out of sheer arrogance, they killed the she – camel. Quran chapter 7 verse 77 states:

Then they harmed the she-camel and insolently defied the order of their Lord, saying: 'O Salih! Bring about the threats, if you are an apostle (of God).

Their punishment was not delayed as a terrible earthquake came and buried them and as well destroyed their civilization. On this, the Qur'an says: 'So the earthquake took them unaware and they lay prostrate in their homes in the morning! (Quran chapter 7 verse 78). Salih and the few people who followed him were saved. Their number was put at 120 while those who perished were said to be more than five thousand families. Salih, according to majority views, was said to have died around the land of Palestine.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**



Explain the mission of Prophet Salih to his people and their reaction as well as the consequence of their reaction.

### **3.3 Prophet Dawud (A.S)**

According to as-Sabuni, Dawud was born to Isha, the son of 'Uwaid from the descendants of Yahudha, son of Ya'qub, son of Ishaq, son of Ibrahim (A.S). He was a prophet among the Israelites. Dawud came into limelight during the reign of Talut, an Israeli king who had gone to battlefield against the Palestinian forces led by Jalut (Goliath). Jalut had engaged in this war with a very strong force that virtually outnumbered the Israeli forces. With their small number but armed with faith, patience and hope, the Israeli forces met with their enemies and when the fight became hot, Jalut appeared in front of them all and asked them for a duel. His imposing figure was so frightening that no one dared to fight or even approach him.

Dawud approached Talut and sought his permission to kill Jalut. Talut refused at first but upon Dawud's insistence, he gave permission to proceed. Dawud's appearance before Jalut was a surprise to the latter who considered him too small to be engaged in duel. Dawud, who was undaunted, challenged Jalut to the fight and with stones put in the string and directed to Jalut, the latter's head was hit very hard and he collapsed and died with all his swords and coat of armour. Because of his fall, his army fled and the flag of victory over Jalut was raised by the children of Israel.

Talut the king married his daughter to Dawud in fulfillment of his early promise and made him his confidant and pillar of support in all the affairs of the kingdom.

Dawud's popularity began to grow in Israel but this became a source of worry to the king who saw him as a future threat to his kingdom. As a result, he asked Dawud to prepare himself for a battle against the

Canaanites who were planning to invade Israel. The king directed that Dawud must not lose the war but must come back victorious. To the surprise of the king who thought he had got rid of Dawud, Dawud went to the war, fought the people of Canaan bravely and defeated them. Dawud's victory became a nightmare to the king who was still bent on killing him. The advice of Dawud's wife who was privy to her father's secret plan was all that saved him as he ran away in the dead of the night. At last, Dawud reached a desert where he stayed and it was while there that his brothers joined him and they were followed by the children of Israel who supported him.

Meanwhile Talut began to lose his respect among his people and this led to his frustration. He therefore began to punish them irrespective of whether they committed offence or not. It was learnt that Dawud later began to threaten him in his throne. One day an opportunity came for Dawud to get him killed but which he did not do. Dawud's

magnanimity towards Talut made him (Talut) to feel remorse and regretted his action. To atone for his sins to his people and to Dawud, Talut sought for divine guidance and was told to leave his kingdom and go and fight in the cause of Allah until he is killed. In obedience to this instruction, Talut together with 13 of his sons fought in the cause of Allah till they were all killed. The kingdom of Israel thus transferred to Dawud.

Apart from Dawud's early life vocation as a shepherd, he was also a warrior, a king and a prophet preaching the oneness of God and abstinence from Idol Worship. He had a very sonorous voice with which he recited the Zabur: a scripture specifically sent to him by God as a guide to his people. He was also reputed to be the maker of coat of mail as Allah made the Iron soft for him (Suratu Saba' chapter 34 verses 1011). Dawud was father of Sulaiman; another prophet of Allah. Ibn Jarir, cited in as-Sabuni, claimed that Dawud spent one hundred years before he died which is contrary to the view of the Christians who claimed 77 years.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

The role of Dawud in the historical lives of the children of Israel cannot be over – emphasised. Discuss.

#### **3.4 Prophet Sulayman (A.S)**

Prophet Sulayman (A.S) was the son of Dawud who mounted the throne of his father as a king after the latter's death. He became the king early in life even though there was no consensus of opinion as to his actual age when he became the king. While one source claimed eleven years another claimed twelve while yet another claimed thirteen.

Sulayman was also one of the prophets of Allah from the children of Israel. Allah specially bestowed on him something that he had never given to anybody else before him. One was the power given to him to control the wind (Suratu – Saba' chapter 34 verse 12) and the power to understand the language of the birds. In other words, Sulayman used to speak to birds and animals and at the same time interpreted it to his people. It was also said that Sulayman had a carpet made of wood upon which he carried whatever he wanted like palaces, tents, goods, horses, camels, men and Jinns whenever he was traveling or was engaged in war. This carpet, it was stated would be raised by the wind and reached Sulayman wherever he might be. More important than this also was his capacity to control the Jinns.

As a prophet of God, Sulaiman embarked on the building of Jerusalem in order to facilitate the acts of worship and to move nearer to Allah. When he finished building the Jerusalem, he decided to prepare himself for pilgrimage therein.

Sulayman's endowed attributes in controlling the Jinns and the birds manifested in his encounter with Balqis, the queen of Sheba who also exerted high power in her kingdom. He had been told of a Queen in Sheba who together with her subjects was worshipping the sun instead of Allah. Sulayman did not want it and sent a letter to her to embrace the worship of God only. The Queen and her subjects decided to send some gifts to Sulayman, which he rejected. Instead, he invited the Queen to his palace and the sight of Allah's favour on Sulayman overwhelmed her. Instantly, she became a believer and Sulayman later married her. Sulayman was said to live for 52 years on earth out of which forty was spent as a prophet and as a king. His stupendous wealth was said to be responsible for people's inability to notice early that he was dead. He was said to be transfixed into his throne for years after his death only to discover that he had died when termites had eaten one of the leg of the throne.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4**

Discuss in details, the special attributes and signs bestowed on Sulayman as a prophet of God.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Two tribes that reigned one after the other were destroyed in quick succession for their total disobedience to God as presented to them by their respective prophets: Hud and Salih. While their disobedience was the same, their punishments differ. As for Dawud, Talut and Jalut, one could draw a lesson that, with God all things are possible; an indication that one with God is a majority. Dawud at death transferred his kingdom and prophecy to Sulayman, his son, who gave great account of himself by the special power of God bestowed on him to hear and interpret animals' language, to control the Jinns and to be highly endowed with wealth. All these were blessings never given to anyone else in life.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Hud was a prophet raised among the people of Ad, a wellendowed tribe that became the first to worship idols after the great deluge
- Hud warned against the worship of Idols but they denied him and were perished with sandstorms
- Thamūd upon whom Salih was sent also did the same and even rejected his signs of she-camel

- Dawud was a prophet that rose into prominence when he killed the giant Jalut (Goliath) to the admiration of Talut the king of Israel who offered him his daughter
- Talut later saw Dawud's fame as a threat and decided to kill him
- Dawud got kind of this, ran for dear lives, and only returned when he was to succeed Talut who eventually died
- Dawud, the first man to make a crat of mail, was a king, and a prophet who transferred his kingdom to his son Sulayman.
- Sulayman was blessed with prosperity, power to hear the language of animals and ability to control the Jinns.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Write short notes on any two of the following:

- (a) Prophet Hud (A.S)
- (b) Prophet Salih (A.S)
- (c) Prophet Dawud (A.S)
- (d) Prophet Sulayman A.S)

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## UNIT 4      OTHER PROPHETS OF ALLAH II

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Prophet Idris (A.S)
  - 3.2 Prophet Lūt (A.S)
  - 3.3 Prophet Ya'qūb (A.S)
  - 3.4 Prophet Yūsuf (A.S)
  - 3.5 Prophet Zakariya (A.S)
  - 3.6 Prophet Yahya (A.S)
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, our attention was focused on four prophets among those who were not part of the *Ūlul-Azmi*. In continuation of our discussion, this unit shall deal with six other prophets who are in the same category with the non- *Ūlul-Azmi*, focusing on their lives and mission.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss the lives and mission of the prophets under study
- give account of the tribulations they went through before and after they became prophets □ enumerate their achievements.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Prophet Idris (A.S)

Idris was the son of Bārid, son of Mihlahil and his genealogy was traced to Shith, the son of Prophet Adam (A.S). According to as-Sabūrī, he became the prophet of Allah after

shith and Adam. He was reputed to be the first man to write by the pen. Scholars did not agree on where he was born and how he spent his life. While some say he was born in Babel, others claim Egypt.

Idris was said to be of good character and that was why Allah praised him and gave a description of his personality in Suratul Maryam, Chapter 19 verse 56-7 where He says:

Also mentioned in the book is the case of Idris: he was a man of

truth (and security), (and) a Prophet:

And we raised him to a high station.

Idris was said to be alive for 308 years but his earthly sojourn, according to as-Sabun, was 82 years before he was raised.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Write short notes on Prophet Idris.

### **3.2 Prophet Lut (A.S)**

His name is Lut, son of Harran, son of Tarih. He was a nephew to Prophet Ibrahim who took him along when leaving Egypt. Soon afterwards, he left his uncle, Ibrahim, to settle in a city called Sodom. This indicates that Lut was not among the people of Sodom. This people were very corrupt, engaging in highway robbery and practicing Sodomy. Their males engaged in sexual relations with each other instead of women.

Reference was made of them in Quran Chapter 27 verse 55 thus: “would ye really approach men in your lusts rather than women? Nay, ye are a people (grossly) ignorant.” Seeing this ugly attitude, Lut was inspired by God to call them to the worship of one God and to warn them of the consequences awaiting them if they disobey. Quran chapter 7 verses 80-81 explain it this way:

We also (sent) Lut: he said to his people: “Do ye commit leudness” such as no people in creation committed before you? For ye practice your lusts on men in preference to women: ye are indeed a people transgressing beyond bounds.

Instead of them to heed to his advice, they resolved to banish him from their town. This attempt made Lut seek assistance from his Lord (Q26 verse 169). His prayer was answered as God sent his angels to the people with the purpose of punishing them. The angels who paid a visit to Ibrahim on their way to Sodom arrived at Lut's house. He did not recognise them until they declared their identities to him and told him their mission. They therefore advised him to leave the town at night to avoid the impending wrath that would befall the people of Sodom. Lut left Sodom with his household except his wife who did not believe him and his message. After they had left, the town was turned upside down with a heavy earthquake, which perished them, rendered their land wasted and their houses desolated.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Give a detailed account of the vices of Sodomy people and how they were directly dealt with.

### **3.3 Prophet Ya'qub (A.S)**

By name, he is Ya'qub son of Ishaq, son of Ibrahim (A.S). His Mother's name was Rifqah daughter of Batuhil son of Nahur who was a Brother to Ibrahim (A.S). Ya'qub was also known as Israel and was the Father of the Children of Israel. In other words, he was the Father of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Ya'qub was born in the land of Canaan according to some historians and grew up under the care of his maternal uncle called Laban Ibn Batuhil in Fadān Āram in order to protect him from his jealous Brother. He set on his journey to Fadan Aram but could not reach the town on that day. This situation forced him to sleep in the desert where he dreamt about the glad tidings that awards him in his destination.

On arrival at his maternal uncle's house in Fadan Āram, he bought the hand of his uncle's younger daughter called Rahil in marriage and they latter agreed. This however was with the condition that Ya'qub would help him tend his cattle for seven years to serve as dowry. At the complete of seven years, Laban married Layat the elder daughter to Yaqub instead of Rayil. Ya'qub was surprised at this development because Lay'at was not his choice as she was not as beautiful as her younger sister. Laban told him that it was against their tradition to marry the younger daughter before the older one. He therefore decided to offer him Rahil (his second daughter) if Ya'qub is willing to serve another seven years in lieu of dowry. At that time, marrying off two daughter of the same parent to one man was allowed. Ya'qub accepted his uncle's offer and for another seven years he served them and Rahil was married to him as the second wife. Each of the two daughters was given a female housemaid. After that and as a result of their love for their husband, the two wives released their female maids to Ya'qub to marry. Together the four wives gave birth to 12

children who were usually referred to in the Quran as **asbāt** (the tribe). Reference to them is in suratu Nisāh, chapter

4 verse 163 which states

We have sent thee inspiration, as we sent it to Noah and the messengers after him, we sent inspiration to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes...

History was silent about the mission of Ya'qub, which made some scholars to doubt if he was really a prophet. However, this is contrary to the position of Islam as entrenched in the Quran where Allah says: ...We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob, and each of them we made a prophet... (Quran 19 verse 49)

According to As-sabūni, Ya'qub died at the age of 147 and was buried beside the grave of his father, Prophet Ishaq in Palestine

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

Prophet Ya'qub was the father of the tribe according to Qur'an chapter 19 verse 49. Explain this statement in detail.

### **3.4 Prophet Yusuf (A.S)**

Yusuf was the son of Ya'qub, son of Ishaq, son of Ibrahim. His mother, Rahil had died when he was young leaving him and his younger brother, Binyamin, in the care of their father. The Love of Prophet Ya'qub for this son, Yusuf, aroused jealousy among his brothers who planned to get rid of him. They conspired to throw him into well and lied to their father that he had been killed by fox. The old man did not believe their story but took the matter with equanimity.

Meanwhile, Yusuf was rescued by some caravan traders who sold him to a minister in Egypt. Yusuf soon faced another trouble when the wife of his master developed love interests in him. She made several attempts to seduce him but failed until one day when she invited him to her room. Her frantic effort to woo him led to struggle between them and in process, Yusuf's shirt was torn. They were in this condition when the minister arrived and the woman, in the characteristic manner of saving her face, instantly began to cry and accused Yusuf of trying to rape her. Yusuf was exonerated of this accusation when a witness confirmed that Yusuf's shirts would not have torn in the back if he had wanted to rape her. When the news of this ugly incident got to town other women were making jest of the minister's wife. She thereafter invited them to a function whereby she gave them knives to work with. When this was on, she called on Yusuf to walk around them. These women were so fascinated by Yusuf's handsomeness to the extent that they cut their fingers while looking at him. Notwithstanding Yusuf's innocence, he was jailed as a ploy to cover up the shame of his master's wife.



Yusuf was in prison for about seven years during which two other inmates, one a wine steward and the other a chief baker narrated their dreams to for interpretation. His accurate interpretation later helped him to gain his freedom when a freed inmate recommended him to the king of Egypt to interpret what the latter saw in his dream. Yusuf later became the king of Egypt and had a happy reunion with his brothers and father who had come to Egypt for food when famine hit them in their homeland.

Some historians claimed that Prophet Yusuf lived in Egypt for 110 years and that he died and was buried there. Allah knows best.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4**

Prophet Yusuf faced many tribulations in life. Enumerate these and explain them one after the other.

### **3.5 Prophet Zakariyā (A.S)**

Prophet Zakariya's lineage was traced to Prophet Sulayman the son of Prophet Daud. This line which ran through fourteen generations began with Zakariyā through Dān (his father) the son of Muslim son of Sudūq son of Sulayman son of Daud.

Zakariyā had become a prophet of God before the birth of Isa son of Maryam. He devoted his life to the preaching against the evil deeds of the Israelites and usually prayed to God to grant them salvation. Meanwhile Zakariyā was charged with the responsibility of taking care of Maryam, mother of Isa (Jesus) who was a niece to his wife. Zakariyā put Maryam in high esteem for her sense of devotion to Allah and as an old man without an issue he used to pray: 'O my Lord! Grant unto me from thee a progeny that is pure! For Thou art the hearer of prayer (Al-Imrān, chapter 3 verse 38).

According to As-sabūnī, Prophet Zakariyā was 99 years old and his wife was 98 years old when Maryam was put in their care. Allah thereafter accepted his prayer and he was blessed with Yahya; another prophet of Allah. Prophet Zakariyā was murdered by the Israelites as was the case with Yahya his son.

#### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5**

Write a short note on prophet Zakariyā.

### **3.6 Prophet Yahya (A.S)**

He was Yahya, son of Zakariyā, son of Dān, son of Muslim, son of Sudduq son of Hisghbān whose ancestral lineage can be traced to Sulayman, the son of Dawud. Yahya

was born about three months before the birth of Isa (Jesus). In other words, they are contemporaries and both of them lived together for some years. Allah had endowed him to become the prophet of God.

Yahya (A.S) became a prophet when he was 30 years old and according to As-sabūnī, he was instructed to engage in five major activities and also asked the children of Israel to do so. These activities include the following.

- i. Worship of only one God and shunning of idol worship.
- ii. Fervent prayer    iii. Fasting    iv. Charity
- v. Remembrance of God

Prophet Yahya (A.S) was said to have read all the verses of Taurah and knew them very well. Concerning the spread of Allah’s message based on the five major points mentioned above, he was dauntless as he feared none when calling people to the right path. This perhaps accented for why he was killed as one story narrated his death. He was said to have preached seriously against one of the kings of Palestine who had fell in love with his niece. His vehement condemnation of this act, which he said was unlawful in any religion, prompted an unusual demand from the woman, who had already fallen in love with the king, that she would like Yahya to be killed and his head brought before her so as to put a stop to his campaign against their marriage. The king obliged and by the following morning, the head of the murdered prophet was brought before her. Thus, did Yahya receive martyrdom from the children of Israel; the same fate befell his father.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 6**

Discuss in detail, the history of prophet Yahya laying much emphasis on his mission as a prophet of Allah.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The lives and missions of six prophets including their dedication and doggedness to the cause they believed in were discussed in this unit. Without minding the consequences of their divine call to the right path, they toyed ahead in their effort with total commitment and hope in the “Divine Being” who had bestowed this responsibility on their shoulders. The lesson therefore is to base one’s activities on conviction that come rain come sunshine one should not relent in his efforts till he pursues what he believes in to logical conclusion.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Idris was prophet of Allah who, like Isa, was raised into heaven after 308 years of Adam's life on earth
- Lut was sent to the people of Sodom where males engaged their male counterparts in sexual relations and were therefore punished for their action
- Ya'qub was another prophet who was popularly referred to as the father of the 12 children of Isreal among whom was Yusuf, another prophet of God
- Yusuf, as a prophet of Allah, faced many tribulations like being thrown into the well by his brothers, seduction by his master's wife and imprisonment before he became the king of Egypt
- Zakariyā in his old age prayed to Allah for an upright child like Maryam and was blessed with Yahya who also became the prophet of God.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Account for the tribulation of prophet Yusuf and how he survived them to become the king in Egypt.

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## UNIT 5 OTHER PROPHETS OF ALLAH III

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Prophet Ismail, Ishaq, Harun and Ayub (A.S)
    - 3.1.1 Prophet Ismail (A.S)
    - 3.1.2 Prophet Ishaq (A.S)
    - 3.1.3 Prophet Harūn (A.S)
    - 3.1.4 Prophet Ayūb (A.S)
  - 3.2 Prophet Shu'ayb, Yūnus, Ilyās, Al-Yasa and Dhul-Kifl (A.S)
    - 3.2.1 Prophet Shu'ayb (A.S)
    - 3.2.2 Prophet Yūnus (A.S)
    - 3.2.3 Prophet Ilyās (A.S)
    - 3.2.4 Prophet Al-Yasa (A.S)
    - 3.2.5 Prophet Dhul-Kifl (A.S)
  - 3.3 Relationship between the messages of other prophet of Allah and those of prophet Muhammed (S.A.W)
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 Reference/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we discussed the life and mission of six prophet of Allah namely Idrīs, Lūt, Ya'qub, Yūsuf, Zakariyāh and Yahya (A.S). In this unit, our attention shall focus on the remaining nine prophets of Allah mentioned in the Quran. We shall conclude this unit with discussion on the relationship between the messages of all other prophets of Allah and those of prophet Muhammed.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- give full account of the history of the entire prophets discussed in this unit

- explain the mission of all the prophets discussed in this unit
- discuss the relationship between the message of all other prophets of Allah and those of prophet Muhammed.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1.1 Prophets Ismaïl, Ishāq, Hārūn and Ayūb (A.S)**

**Prophet Ismaïl (A.S):** He is Ismaïl ibn Ibrahim and the name of his mother was Hajar. He was the eldest of Prophet Ibrahim's children; and the lineage of the Arabs to which Prophet Muhammed belong was traced to him. Reference to his prophethood is in Suratul Maryam, chapter 19 verse 54 which says:

Also mentioned in the Book

(The story of) Ismaïl he was

(Strictly) true to what he promised, And he was an apostle

(And) a prophet

Ismaïl is believed to have married from the Jurhum tribe of the Arabs who settled in Makkah and had 12 male children. According to Assabūnī, he also had a female child whom he gave to his cousin Al-Ays bn Ishaq in marriage. He lived up to 137 years in Makkah where he died and was buried.

#### **3.1.2 Prophet Ishāq (A.S)**

He is Ishāq ibn Ibrahim born to his father by Sarah when they were already old. He was the second son of Ibrahim and all the Israeli prophet were his descendants. History had it that he was sent to the cananites who populated Palestine and Syria. Prophet Ishāq got married to Rifqah, a daughter of his uncle, on the directive of his father. The marriage was blessed with two children: Al-Ays and Ya'qub. Ya'qub was later referred to as Ismail. Ishāq was said to have lived for 180 years before he died in Canaan and was buried there.

#### **3.1.3 Prophet Harun (A.S)**

Harun bn Imrān bn Qahith bn Lāwī bn Ya'qub bn Ishāq bn Ibrahim was a brother to prophet Mūsa (A.S). He was born three years before Mūsa and both of them were messengers and prophets of Allah. Hārūn emerged as a prophet because of his eloquence and oratorical power hence he was commissioned along with his brother

(Mūsa) to Pharaoh and Qā'rūn. Therefore, whenever the message of Mūsa is mentioned, Hārun cannot be left out. Hārun lived for 122 years according to historians and died eleven months before the death of Mūsa.

### 3.1.4 Prophet Ayūb (A.S)

Popular views traced the genealogy of Prophet Ayūb to Prophet Ibrahim. According to these views, he is Ayūb bn Amiūs bn Zarih bn Al-Ays bn Ishāq bn Ibrahim. Ayūb was a phosphorus man who lived in the northeastern part of Arabia. However, he was afflicted with a number of calamities and tribulations. For example, his cattle were destroyed, his servants were slain and his entire family members were crushed under his roof. Moreover, he was afflicted with sores that spread all over his body. Despite all these, he remained unshaken in his faith in his Lord and never gave up hope.

He was seen to have been sick for so long although historians did not agree on exactly how many years he was in this condition. Through patience, perseverance and belief in God, Ayūb survived his period of tribulation and came up more prosperous. All the brethren and friends who had deserted him before now came back. According to Muhammad, Ayūb raised a new family comprising seven sons and three daughters. Quran chapter 38 verses 41-44 is very explicit on this. Scriptural accounts and many historical records are silent on the mission of Ayūb and the particular people to whom he was sent. However, As-sabūnī was of the opinion that he was sent to the Romans.

On his mission, if Quran chapter 6 verse 84 which listed Ayūb among the descendants of Ibrahim are anything to go by, it is probable that the content of his message was the same with other prophets. Ayūb was believed to have married a wife called Rahmah. He was also said to have spent 93 years on earth before he died leaving behind 26 children.

### SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Write short note on Prophet Ayūb (A.S)

## 3.2 Prophets Shu'ayb, Yunus, Al- Yasa and Dhul- kifl (A.S)

### 3.2.1 Prophet Shu'ayb (A.S)

Shu'ayb was one of the descendants of Prophet Ibrahim who was raised after Prophet Lūt as a messenger to the land of Maan, an outskirts of Syria. They were Arabs by

origin and were called “**Companions of the Wood**” in the Quran because of the abundant trees and fruit that were available in the town. As people who were fraudulent, unjust and mischievous, Allah raised Shu’ayb among them to guide them to the right path. All his efforts proved abortive as only few people accepted his message. Those who were adamant insisted that Shu’ayb should show them the sign of his prophet hood before they could believe him or else he would be regarded a liar (Q26 verses 185-188). At a stage they threatened to either stone him to death.

When the persistent call to the right path failed, Shu’ayb became disappointed and he beseeched his Lord to punish them. Allah accepted his invocation as drought approached them and there were no shelters to protect them from the sun. They ran away from their village; and, on their way, they saw a cloud, which they thought, could protect them from the heat of the sun. They all gathered under it but immediately after that, an earthquake sized them and the land trembled under their feet. They all got perished (Q7 verses 91-92). Prophet Shu’ayb lived for some years thereafter before he died.

### **3.2.2 Prophet Yūnus (A.S.)**

While historians do not mention the genealogy of Yūnus from the line of his father, he was generally known as Yūnus the son Mattā, his mother. The people among whom Yūnus emerged lived in a very ancient town called Nineveh, about 230 miles north-west of Baghdad. They were popularly referred to as the “**Companions of the Fish**”. The people of Nineveh were idol worshippers when Yūnus became a prophet of God. He began his mission with them by wishing them to shun idol worship and worship the true God. His teaching was strange to them and therefore very difficult to believe in. He became disappointed and eventually left the town in frustration. Yūnus made his way to the sea where he and some other people boarded a boat to cross the sea. No sooner had they entered than the waves of the sea became violent and the people inside the boat, including Yūnus, faced the danger of being drowned. They immediately consulted each other for solution and it was decided that lots should be casted and the one who is chosen will be thrown into the sea in order to reduce the weight of the boat.

Unfortunately, Yūnus was chosen and he was thrown into the sea. Through the divine inspiration, a whale swallowed him without causing injury into his life. Yūnus stayed in the belly of the whale, noted his wrong doings by leaving his people in a hurry and prayed to Allah for forgiveness (Q 21 verse 87). Allah pardoned him and ordered the whale to throw him out and soon he was casted forth on the shore. He was thereafter inspired to go back to his people who had already believed in Allah during his absence.

### 3.2.3 Prophet Ilyās (A.S)

He is Ilyas ibn Yāsin ibn Qanhas ibn al-Izār ibn Hārun according to AtTabari in As-sabūnī. He was believed to have emerged from the people of Ba‘labak situated west of Damascus. This people were well known for worshipping an Idol Called Ba‘al. Proof of his prophet-hood is contained in Quran chapter 37 verses 123-125 where Allah says:

‘So also was Elias among those sent (by us). Behold, he said: will you not fear (GOD)? Will you call upon Baal and forsake the best of Creators?’

Ilyas denounced all the Idols of his people and enjoined them to worship only one God. There were few among them who believed in his mission but many outrightly rejected it. Qur’an made reference to this in chapter 37 verse 127 thus:

But they rejected him and they will certainly be called up (for punishment); except the sincere and devoted servants of God (among them).

### 3.2.4 Prophet Alyasa (A.S)

Historical records are scanty on the personality and lineage of this Prophet. In addition, the few available records did not show consensus opinions concerning his background. As-sabūnī argued that he has a lineage with prophet Yusuf (A.S). Alyasa’ is one of the messengers of Allah who must be believed in by Muslims. Reference to his prophethood is in Quran chapter 6 verse 86 which starts: “And Ismail, Elisha, Yūnus and Lūt, and to all we gave favour above the nations”. Alyasa’ was sent to the same people and with the same message, which prophet Ilyās was commissioned to deliver. His mission therefore commenced with the death of Ilyās in one of the cities of Syria during the period when the life of people was characterised by sins and reign of tyrant kings who used to lull the prophets of God and subject their followers to humiliation. He continued with his message and the persuasion of his people to worship only one God until his death.

### 3.2.5 Prophet Dhul-kifl (AS)

He is Dhul-kifi ibn Ayūb, according to historians, who also contended that his original name was Bishir. He was said to be pious and he stood by it till his death.

There are arguments among Muslim historians on whether Dhul- kifi was a prophet or not. The first school claimed that he was not a prophet but a pious man among the Israelites. This view however could not be substantiated until relevant proof is provided from the Quran. The second school on the other hand maintained that he



was a prophet citing as proof, Q38 verse 48 which goes thus: ‘and commemorate Ismail, Elisha and Dhul-kifl: Each of them was of the company of the Good’. Ibn kathir explained the above verse as follows:

The most obvious is that which had been mentioned in the Glorious Qu’ran; with his commendation alongside the prophets. Thus, this is the most authentic-, he was a prophet from his Lord.

It is necessary to note that detailed history about his life, mission and the people to whom he was sent is very scanty.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Account for the life and mission of Yūnus as a prophet of Allah.

### **3.3 Relationship between the Messages of other prophets of Allah and those of Prophet Muhammad**

A critical study of the missions of all the prophets of Allah- Prophet Muhammad inclusive, show some striking similarities in their messages in terms of content and method of presentation of those messages. It is quite amazing to note that even though the prophets were sent to different peoples at different times, all their messages and those of Prophet Muhammad, preached the unity of God, common mode of worship, righteousness and avoidance of sins.

They also told humanity about salvation for all who do good and divine punishment for wrong doers.

Apart from the content, all the scriptures from the original Torah to the Quran, showed the lucid, clear and unambiguous manner in which these messages were delivered, portraying the highest level of eloquence of these prophets and the simplicity of their languages. It is because of the similarities in the messages of all these prophets that Muslims are instructed to believe in all of them without exception.

While all these messages are the same, it is important to note that, the Quran is unique in that:

- (a) unlike other scriptures with their messages sent to a particular people, the message of the Quran is universal; duly addressed to all mankind
- (b) the message is the last one addressed to mankind since no prophet shall come after Muhammad who delivered it

- (c) it went beyond spiritual and moral emancipation of mankind to deal with other aspects of human endeavour: politics, law, economy, system of governance, international relations and diplomacy among others. This is why Islam is not just a mere religion but a comprehensive way of life.

Finally, to prove the veracity of the entire message delivered, some of these prophets were given some signs as the symbols of their prophethood. Having mentioned some of these symbols sometimes referred to as miracles, it suffices to state here that the greatest among these symbols is the Quran which has maintained its pastime purity and freedom from interpolation as is the case with other scriptures.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

State in detail the relationship between the messages to all other prophets of Allah and those of Prophet Muhammad.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Although the entire Prophets whose stories were told in this unit did not emerge at the same time to the same set of people, yet their conduct and the messages they delivered were the same just as is the case with prophets earlier discussed. As prophet of Allah, they were epitomes of love and high moral values. Similarly, the method they used in passing their messages were so pleasing that the authenticity of their messengership cannot be denied. Of all the written messages delivered, Quran, which is the final scripture, is the greatest miracle that has remained ever without any interpolation.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Ismail and Ishāq were both sons of Ibrahim from different mothers and were prophets of God
- Harun's genealogy can be traced also to prophet Ibrahim and in company of prophet Mūsa he was sent to the Israelites and particularly to Pharaoh.
- Ayūb was a prophet of God who suffered tribulations before Allah saved him
- Shuayb was sent to people of Madyan but they did not believe him until Allah's judgment came upon them
- Yūnus was another prophet of Allah sent to the people of the fish.
- Ilyas and Alyasa' were both sent to the same people, one after the other, to deliver the message sent to all other prophets □ Although Dhul-Kifl was another prophet of Allah, detail about his life and those to whom he was sent is scarce

- The messages of all the prophets are the same hence, Muslims must believe in them all.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

Discuss the life and messengership of the following Prophets of Allah:  
Ismail, Ishāq and Ayūb.

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