COURSE GUIDE

ISS 101
EARLY HISTORY OF ISLAM, FROM JĀHILIYYAH PERIOD TO THE DEATH OF THE PROPHET (SAW) – 632 CE (2 UNITS C: LH 30)

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INTRODUCTION

ISS 101: Early History of Islam, from Jāhiliyyah Period to the Death of the Prophet SAW, introduces students to the foundational developments that shaped the emergence of Islam as a religion and civilization. The course examines the socio-political environment of Arabia before Islam, the meaning and dimensions of the Jāhiliyyah period, and the conditions that prepared the ground for the final prophetic mission.

It also explores the lineage, birth, and early life of Prophet Muhammad SAW, the stages of the early call to Islam, the persecutions in Makkah, and the eventual migration to Madinah. The course further discusses the establishment of the first Islamic state, the leadership roles of the Prophet SAW, and the major events that contributed to the consolidation of the Muslim community.

By the end of the course, students will gain both historical knowledge and an appreciation of the exemplary qualities of the Prophet SAW and his companions. The course provides a strong foundation for the study of Islamic history, thought, and civilization at higher levels.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of ISS 101 is to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the early development of Islam, beginning with pre-Islamic Arabia and concluding with the death of the Prophet SAW in 632 CE. The course seeks to highlight the historical events, religious transformations, and leadership qualities that shaped the early Muslim community.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- describe the cultural, religious, and political conditions of Arabia before Islam
- explain the concept of Jāhiliyyah and its significance in Islamic historiography
- discuss the genealogy and early life of the Prophet Muhammad SAW
- outline the stages of the early call to Islam and the challenges encountered
- analyse the migration to Madinah and the establishment of the first Islamic state
- evaluate the Prophet’s leadership roles and his contributions to religious, social, and political life

- appreciate and adopt the exemplary qualities demonstrated by the Prophet SAW and other early Muslims
- discuss major events in early Islamic history with accuracy and authority.

WORKING THROUGH THIS COURSE

This course has been designed to guide you through the major events and themes that shaped the early history of Islam. Each module is broken into units, and each unit contains clearly stated learning outcomes, explanations, activities, and self-assessment exercises to help you measure your understanding. To succeed in this course, you are advised to:

- read each unit carefully and reflect on the historical developments being discussed.
- complete all self-assessment exercises, as they are essential for reinforcing your understanding.
- compare the information provided with the recommended texts for deeper insight.
- take note of key terms, dates, and personalities that are central to early Islamic history; and
- ensure that you attempt all tutor-marked assignments, as they contribute to your overall performance.

Working through the materials with consistency and attention will help you appreciate the roots of Islamic civilization and the transformational impact of the Prophet's mission.

The Components of this Course which you are expected to work through without leaving one on touched are:

1. This Course Guide
2. Study Units
3. Textbooks
4. Assignments File
5. Presentation Schedule

STUDY UNITS

There are fifteen units (of three modules) in this course. These are listed thus:

Module 1 Arabia before Islam and the Prophet's Early Life

Unit 1 Geography, Society, and Culture of Pre-Islamic Arabia
Unit 2 Political and Economic Conditions in the Jāhiliyyah Period
Unit 3 Religious Beliefs and the Meaning of Jāhiliyyah
Unit 4 The Genealogy of Prophet Muhammad SAW
Unit 5 The Birth, Upbringing, and Early Life of the Prophet SAW

Module 2 The Early Call to Islam

Unit 1 The First Revelation and the Beginning of Prophethood
Unit 2 The Early Converts and the Secret Call
Unit 3 Open Preaching, Opposition, and Persecution in Makkah
Unit 4 Migration to Abyssinia and Its Significance
Unit 5 Events Leading to the Hijrah to Madinah

Module 3 The Madinan Period, Leadership of the Prophet, and His Passing

Unit 1 The Hijrah and the Establishment of the Islamic State in Madinah
Unit 2 The Constitution of Madinah and Community Building
Unit 3 Major Battles and the Consolidation of the Muslim Ummah
Unit 4 The Prophet's Religious, Political, and Military Leadership
Unit 5 The Prophet's Character, Farewell Pilgrimage, and His Death in 632 CE

REFERENCES/ FURTHER READINGS/ WEB RESOURCES

Al-Bukhari, Muhammad ibn Ismail. Sahih al-Bukhari. Riyadh: Darussalam. Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj. Sahih Muslim. Riyadh: Darussalam.

Al-Halabi, Ali ibn Burhan al-Din. *Al-Sirah al-Halabiyyah.* Cairo: Al-Matba'ah al-Azhariyyah.

Al-Tabari, Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Jarir. *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk* (History of Prophets and Kings). Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif. (English translation: The History of al-Tabari, 39 vols., State University of New York Press.)

Haykal, Muhammad Husayn. The Life of Muhammad. Cairo: Maktabah al-Usrah.

Ibn Hisham, Abu Muhammad Abd al-Malik. Sirat Rasul Allah. Ed. Mustafa al-Saqqa et al. Cairo: Dar al-Hadith. (English translation: A. Guillaume, The Life of Muhammad. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955.)

Ibn Kathir, Isma'il. *Al-Bidayah wa'l-Nihayah* (The Beginning and the End). Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah. (English selections: Stories of the Prophets, Darussalam.)

Ibn Sa'd, Muhammad. Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir. Beirut: Dar Sadir. (English translation: S. Moinul Haq, The Kitab al-Tabaqat al-Kabir, Oxford University Press.)

The Qur'an. Any Reliable Edition with Recognized Tafsir (exegesis).

ASSIGNMENT FILE

Here, there are details of work you must do and submit to your tutor for making. Your scores from these assignments shall be used as part of your final marks in the course. Detail of this shall be found in ASSIGNMENT FILE and in Course Guide in the assignment section. Note that ASSIGNMENT will be marked based on tutor-marked assignment (TMAs) and a final written examination at the end of the course.

ASSESSMENT

Your assessment will be based on tutor-marked assignments (TMAs) 30% and a final examination which you will write at end of the course 70%.

TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Each unit has at least three or four assignments. You are expected to work through all the assignments and submit them for assessment. Your tutor will assess the assignments and select four, which will constitute the 30% of your final grade. The tutor-marked assignments may be presented to you in a separate file. Note that there are tutor-marked assignments for you. It important you do them and submit for 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 assignment by the due date. You should guard against falling behind in your work.

COURSE OVERVIEW AND PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

Unit	Title of Work	Weeks	Assessment Activity
Module 1: Arabia before Islam and the Prophet's Early Life			
Unit 1	Geography, Society, and Culture of Pre-Islamic Arabia	Week 1	Assignment 1
Unit 2	Political and Economic Conditions in the Jāhiliyyah Period	Week 2	Assignment 2
Unit 3	Religious Beliefs and the Meaning of Jāhiliyyah	Week 3	Assignment 3
Unit 4	The Genealogy of Prophet Muhammad SAW	Week 4	Assignment 4
Unit 5	The Birth, Upbringing, and Early Life of the Prophet SAW	Week 5	Assignment 5
MODULE 2: The Early Call to Islam			
Unit 1	The First Revelation and the Beginning of Prophethood	Week 6	Assignment 6
Unit 2	The Early Converts and the Secret Call	Week 7	Assignment 7
Unit 3	Open Preaching, Opposition, and Persecution in Makkah	Week 8	Assignment 8
Unit 4	Migration to Abyssinia and Its Significance	Week 9	Assignment 9
Unit 5	Events Leading to the Hijrah to Madinah	Week 10	Assignment 10
Module 3: The Madinan Period, Leadership of the Prophet, and His Passing			
Unit 1	The Hijrah and the Establishment of the Islamic State in Madinah	Week 11	Assignment 11
Unit 2	The Constitution of Madinah and Community Building	Week 12	Assignment 12
Unit 3	Major Battles and the Consolidation of the Muslim Ummah	Week 13	Assignment 13
Unit 4	The Prophet's Religious, Political, and Military Leadership	Week 14	Assignment 14

Unit 5	The Prophet's Character, Farewell Pilgrimage, and His Death in 632 CE	Week 15	Assignment 15
Revision			
Examination			

FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING

At the end of this course, you will write a final examination, which shall constitute 70% of your grade. In the examination, you will be required to answer three (3) questions out of at least five (5) questions.

COURSE MARKING SCHEME

This table shows the actual marks allocations

Assessment	**Marks**
Four Assignments	Best three marks of the four assignments count as 30%
Final Examination	70% of overall marks
Total	100% of course marks

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS COURSE

In distance learning, the study units replace the university lecture. This is one of its great advantages. You can read and work through specially designed study materials at your own pace, and at a time and place that suits you best. Think of it as reading the lecture instead of listening to the lecturer. In the same way a lecturer might give you some reading to do, the study units tell you when to read, and which are your text materials or set books. 'You are provided exercises to do at appropriate points, just as a lecturer might give you an in-class exercise. 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 to this is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. These learning objectives are meant to guide your study. The moment a unit is finished, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If this is made a habit, then you will significantly improve your chances of passing the course.

The main body of the unit guides you through the required reading from other sources. This will usually be either from your set books or from a Reading section. The following is a practical strategy for working through the course. If you run into any trouble, telephone your tutor. Remember

that your tutor's job is to help you. When you need assistance, do not hesitate to call and ask your tutor to provide it.

1. Read this Course Guide thoroughly, it is your first assignment.
2. Organize a Study Schedule. Design a 'Course Overview' to guide you through the Course. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units. Important information, e.g. details of your tutorials, and the date of the first day of the Semester is available from the study centre. You need to gather all the information into one place, such as your diary or a wall calendar. Whatever method you choose to use, you should decide on and write in your own dales and schedule of work for each unit.
3. Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything to stay faithful 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, please, let your tutor know before it is too late for help.
4. Turn to Unit 1, and read the introduction and the objectives for the unit.
5. Assemble the study materials. You will need your set books and the unit you arc studying at any point in time.
6. Work through the unit. As you work through the unit, you will know what sources to consult for further information.
7. Keep in touch with your Study Centre. Up-to-date course information will be continuously available there.
8. Well before the relevant due dates (about 4 weeks before the dates), keep in mind that you will learn a lot by doing the assignment carefully. They have been designed to help you meet the objectives of the course and, therefore, will help you pass the examination. Submit all assignments not later than the due date.
9. Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study materials or consult your tutor.
10. When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to pace your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.
11. 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 Tutor-Marked Assignment form and also the written comments on the ordinary assignments.
12. 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 the Course Guide).

TUTORS AND TUTORIALS

The dates, times and locations of these tutorials will be made available to you, together with the name, telephone number and address of your tutor. Your tutor will mark each assignment. Pay close attention to the comments your tutor might make on your assignments as these will help in your progress. Make sure that assignments reach your tutor on or before the due date. Your tutorials are important, therefore try not to skip any. It is an opportunity to meet your tutor and your fellow students. It is also an opportunity to get the help of your tutor and discuss any difficulties encountered on your reading.

SUMMARY

In this Course Guide, we have provided you a general overview of ISS 101: Early History of Islam, from Jāhiliyyah Period to the Death of the Prophet SAW – 632 CE. in which students pursuing Degree in Arabic and Islamic Studies programme must earn two credit Units. The Course Aims and Objectives and what learners will gain working through the Course Material and its Study Units are stated clearly at the onset. We have also provided you a list of textbooks and references for your further reading. As an inference in the Guide, to develop an active interest in the Course is a prerequisite for its successful completion. Assess yourself through the Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs). You will equally be assessed for grading purposes through the Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs). Thus, to do well- in the course, you must get yourself organized and try to conform to the presentation schedule.

CONCLUSION

Much as I cannot promise you a too-easy ride on this course, I equally do not envisage much difficulty as long as you play the roles assigned to you in the whole exercise.

We wish you best of luck and success in the course.

MAIN COURSE

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MODULE 1 ARABIA BEFORE ISLAM AND THE PROPHET'S EARLY LIFE

Unit 1 Geography, Society, and Culture of Pre-Islamic Arabia
Unit 2 Political and Economic Conditions in the Jāhiliyyah Period
Unit 3 Religious Beliefs and the Meaning of Jāhiliyyah
Unit 4 The Genealogy of Prophet Muhammad SAW
Unit 5 The Birth, Upbringing, and Early Life of the Prophet SAW

Unit 1 Geography, Society, and Culture of Pre-Islamic Arabia

Unit Structure

1.1 Introduction
1.2 Learning Outcomes
1.3 Geography, Society, and Culture of Pre-Islamic Arabia
1.3.1 Geographical Location of the Arabian Peninsula
1.3.2 Major Regions and Climatic Conditions
1.3.3 Social Organisation and Tribal Structure
1.3.4 Cultural Values and Societal Norms
1.4 Summary
1.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
1.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs)



1.1 Introduction

Welcome to the first unit of this course. To really understand the emergence of Islam and the mission of Prophet Muhammad, we need to first explore the physical and human environment of Arabia before Islam. Geography is not just a background story. It actually shaped how people settled, how they earned a living, how they organized themselves, and even their values and culture. The Arabian Peninsula created a very special setting that deeply influenced the way its people thought and behaved. Before Islam, Arabian society was mainly organized along tribal lines. Loyalty to your kin was the main source of identity and protection. This way of life was strongly shaped by the harsh environment, scarce water, extreme heat, and vast deserts that required resilience, tribal cooperation, and frequent movement.

Even with these challenges, Arabia was not completely isolated. Trade routes connected it with Africa, Asia, and the Mediterranean, allowing interaction with great civilizations like Byzantium, Persia, and Abyssinia.

In this unit, we will explore the geographical setting of pre-Islamic Arabia and see how the land and climate influenced the social and cultural life of the people during the Jāhiliyyah period.



1.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the geographical position of the Arabian Peninsula and its strategic importance
- identify the major regions of Arabia and explain their distinctive climatic features
- explain the relationship between geography, environment, and social organisation in pre-Islamic Arabia.



1.3 Geography, Society, and Culture of Pre-Islamic Arabia

The geography of the Arabian Peninsula played a huge role in shaping how people lived and the kind of culture they developed. The harsh environment basically decided whether communities became nomads who moved around or settled in one place. It also influenced their trade routes, conflicts, and cooperation with one another. That's why understanding the geography of Arabia is key if you want to fully appreciate how Arab society developed before the coming of Islam.

1.3.1 Geographical location of the Arabian Peninsula

The Arabian Peninsula is situated in the south-western region of Asia and occupies a vast area between three continents: Asia, Africa, and Europe. It is bordered by the Red Sea to the west, the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean to the south, the Persian Gulf to the east, and the deserts of Syria and Iraq to the north. This location gave Arabia strategic importance as a natural bridge linking major ancient civilisations.

Although much of the peninsula consists of deserts and semi-arid lands, its position along important trade routes enabled economic interaction with neighbouring regions. Caravan routes passed through Arabia, transporting goods such as spices, incense, leather, textiles, and precious metals. Makkah, in particular, became an important commercial centre because of its central position along these routes and its religious significance as a pilgrimage destination.

The geographical isolation of Arabia also contributed to the preservation of its indigenous culture and language. Unlike regions under direct imperial control, Arabia remained largely independent of foreign political domination. This independence allowed tribal traditions and the Arabic language to develop with minimal external interference, creating a unified linguistic and cultural environment that later facilitated the spread of Islam.

Imagine you were living in one of the major regions of the Arabian Peninsula before the advent of Islam. Which region would you choose to live in?

1.3.2 Major regions and climatic conditions

The Arabian Peninsula is commonly divided into several major regions, each characterised by distinct geographical features and climatic conditions. These regions influenced patterns of settlement, economic activities, and social organisation.

The Hijaz region, located along the western coast, includes the cities of Makkah and Madinah. It is marked by mountainous terrain, rocky valleys, and limited rainfall. Despite these harsh conditions, Hijaz became a vital religious and commercial hub. Pilgrimage activities and trade fairs attracted people from different parts of Arabia, making it a centre of social interaction and cultural exchange.

Najd, situated in the central part of the peninsula, consists largely of elevated plateaus and deserts. The scarcity of water and arable land encouraged a nomadic lifestyle based on pastoralism. The inhabitants of Najd relied on herding animals such as camels and goats and moved frequently in search of pasture and water.

Yemen, in the southern part of Arabia, enjoyed relatively fertile land due to seasonal rainfall and advanced irrigation systems. This allowed agriculture to flourish and supported settled communities and early urban centres. Yemen’s prosperity also made it an important participant in regional trade networks.

The general climate of Arabia is hot and dry, with extreme temperatures and minimal rainfall in most areas. These environmental conditions shaped key cultural traits such as endurance, hospitality, courage, and strong tribal solidarity. At the same time, competition for scarce resources often resulted in tribal conflicts, reinforcing the importance of kinship and collective defence in pre-Islamic society.

1.3.3 Social organisation and tribal structure

Social organisation in pre-Islamic Arabia was largely based on the tribal system, which served as the primary framework for identity, protection, and governance. In the absence of a central political authority or formal state institutions, the tribe functioned as the most important social unit. An individual's honour, security, and social standing depended almost entirely on membership in a tribe.

Each tribe was composed of extended families connected through real or assumed blood ties. Loyalty to the tribe, known as *'asabiyyah* (tribal solidarity), was a dominant value. This loyalty demanded absolute support for fellow tribesmen, whether they were right or wrong. As a result, justice was often subordinated to tribal interests, and conflicts between tribes could last for generations.

Leadership within the tribe was usually vested in a tribal chief (shaykh), who was selected based on qualities such as age, wisdom, bravery, generosity, and lineage. The chief did not rule through coercion but through consultation and moral authority. Decisions affecting the tribe were often discussed in councils made up of elders, reflecting a rudimentary form of collective decision-making.

Tribal structure also influenced patterns of settlement. Nomadic tribes moved in search of pasture and water, while settled tribes occupied towns and oases. Despite these differences, tribal affiliation remained the defining feature of social life, shaping marriage practices, alliances, and responses to conflict.

1.3.4 Cultural values and societal norms

Pre-Islamic Arabian society possessed a complex cultural system that included both admirable qualities and serious moral shortcomings. Among the positive values widely celebrated were hospitality, bravery, generosity, loyalty, and eloquence in speech. Poetry occupied a central place in Arab culture and was used to preserve history, praise tribal achievements, and ridicule enemies.

At the same time, the absence of a universal moral code led to widespread social injustices. Practices such as female infanticide, exploitation of the weak, unregulated warfare, and excessive pride in lineage were common. Social inequality was pronounced, with slaves, women, and the poor often subjected to harsh treatment and denied basic rights.

Customary laws governed behaviour, but these laws varied from tribe to tribe and were enforced selectively. Moral standards were therefore inconsistent, depending largely on tribal traditions rather than ethical principles. This moral imbalance is one of the reasons historians and Islamic scholars describe the period as Jāhiliyyah, a term that denotes ignorance not of knowledge alone, but of moral and spiritual guidance.

Self-Assessment Exercises

1. Why was the geographical location of the Arabian Peninsula important before Islam?
A. It was completely isolated from other civilizations
B. It served as a natural bridge between Asia, Africa, and Europe
C. It had vast fertile lands for large-scale agriculture
D. It was under constant control of the Roman Empire

2. Which region in the Arabian Peninsula was known for its fertile land, seasonal rainfall, and advanced agriculture?
A. Hijaz
B. Najd
C. Yemen
D. The Syrian Desert

3. What was the most important social unit in pre-Islamic Arabia?
A. The family
B. The village
C. The tribe
D. The kingdom

4. What does *'asabiyyah'* refer to in pre-Islamic Arabian society?
A. The power of the tribal chief
B. Tribal solidarity and loyalty to one's tribe
C. The system of trade between tribes
D. The religious beliefs of the Arabs



1.4 Summary

As we come to the end of this unit, let's take a moment to look back. We started by exploring the geography of the Arabian Peninsula and saw how the harsh deserts, scarce water, and strategic location shaped where people lived and how they traded. Then we travelled back into the tribal world, where loyalty to the tribe was everything. We saw how the shaykh led through wisdom and generosity, and how 'asabiyyah held communities together.

We also reflected on the strengths and weaknesses of the culture, the virtues of bravery and hospitality alongside serious moral challenges.

All these elements we examined created the perfect setting for the arrival of Islam. The message of Islam was not only necessary but truly transformative in that environment. Well done for completing this important foundation.



1.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources

Adebayo, R. I. (2012). *Islam and the Development of Civilisation*. Ibadan: Kraft Books.

Balogun, I. A. B. (1980). *Islamic Studies: Historical and Cultural Perspectives*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.

Oloyede, I. O. (1998). *Islamic Culture and Civilisation*. Lagos: Islamic Publications Bureau.

Sulaiman, K. O. (2015). *Introduction to Islamic History*. Ilorin: Nathadex Publishers.



1.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

1. B. It served as a natural bridge between Asia, Africa, and Europe
2. C. Yemen
3. C. The tribe
4. B. Tribal solidarity and loyalty to one's tribe

Unit 2 Political and Economic Conditions in the Jāhiliyyah Period

Unit Structure

2.1 Introduction
2.2 Learning Outcomes
2.3 Political and Economic Conditions in the Jāhiliyyah Period
  2.3.1 Forms of Political Leadership and Governance
  2.3.2 Role of Tribal Chiefs and Councils
  2.3.3 Economic Activities and Livelihood
  2.3.4 Trade Networks and Commercial Relations
2.4 Summary
2.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
2.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs)



2.1 Introduction

Before the coming of Islam, Arabian society did not have a central government or formal political institutions. Political power and economic life were mainly guided by tribal relationships and long-standing customs. This period, known as the Jāhiliyyah, was marked by decentralized leadership, no written laws, and a way of life focused on survival, trade, and tribal strength.

Political authority was informal and based at the local level. Economic activities differed from place to place. Some communities depended on herding animals, others on farming, and some on trade. While this system gave people flexibility and independence, it also led to instability, inequality, and frequent conflicts between tribes. In this unit, we will examine the political structure and leadership patterns of pre-Islamic Arabia, and explore how economic life operated within this tribal framework.



2.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the political structure of pre-Islamic Arabian society
- explain the nature of leadership and governance during the Jāhiliyyah period
- discuss the role of tribal chiefs and councils in maintaining social order appreciate the limitations of the pre-Islamic political system.



2.3 Political and Economic Conditions in the Jāhiliyyah Period

The political and economic life of pre-Islamic Arabia was inseparable from the tribal system. Political authority, economic decision-making, and social control were exercised within the framework of kinship and customary law rather than formal institutions.

2.3.1 Forms of political leadership and governance

Pre-Islamic Arabia lacked a unified government or monarchy that exercised authority over the entire peninsula. Instead, political leadership was decentralised and based on tribal autonomy. Each tribe functioned as an independent political entity, managing its own affairs without interference from external authorities.

Leadership was not hereditary in a strict sense, although noble lineage played an important role. Tribal leaders emerged through consensus, based on personal qualities such as wisdom, courage, generosity, eloquence, and experience in warfare. Authority was moral rather than coercive, and leaders depended on respect and persuasion rather than force.

Governance was guided by customary law, which was unwritten and transmitted orally across generations. These customs regulated matters such as conflict resolution, blood compensation, alliances, and protection of guests. However, the absence of a central legal system meant that justice was inconsistent and often biased in favour of the powerful.

Political alliances were fluid and could change depending on economic interests or security needs. Warfare between tribes was common and often prolonged, arising from disputes over grazing land, water resources, or honour. Without a higher authority to enforce peace, cycles of revenge frequently destabilised society.

2.3.2 Role of Tribal Chiefs and Councils

The tribal chief (shaykh) occupied a central position in pre-Islamic Arabian society. He served as the representative, protector, and decision-maker for the tribe. His authority rested on his ability to safeguard tribal interests, mediate disputes, and lead in times of war or negotiation. The chief did not rule alone. Important decisions were taken in consultation with a council of elders, composed of respected and experienced members of the tribe. This council advised on matters such as warfare, peace

treaties, economic agreements, and inter-tribal relations. This consultative practice reflected an early form of collective governance, although it remained limited to elite members of the tribe.

Economically, tribal leaders regulated access to resources such as pastureland and water wells. In commercial centres like Makkah, leading clans-controlled trade caravans and managed commercial agreements with neighbouring regions. The Quraysh tribe, for example, played a major role in organising seasonal trade journeys to Yemen and Syria. Despite these structures, the system lacked accountability and protection for vulnerable groups. Slaves, women, and the poor had little political voice, and their welfare depended largely on the goodwill of tribal leaders. This imbalance underscored the need for a more just and universal system of governance, which Islam later introduced.

Can you tell why people in Najd mainly practice pastoralism, while those in Yemen focused on agriculture, and Makkah became a center of trade?

2.3.3 Economic Activities and Livelihood

Economic life in pre-Islamic Arabia was shaped largely by geography, climate, and social organisation. Because much of the Arabian Peninsula consisted of arid land with limited rainfall, economic activities varied significantly from one region to another. The major means of livelihood included pastoralism, agriculture, handicrafts, and trade.

In desert and semi-desert regions such as Najd, pastoralism was the dominant economic activity. Nomadic tribes depended on the rearing of camels, sheep, and goats for milk, meat, hides, and transportation. Camels, in particular, were highly valued because of their ability to survive harsh desert conditions and serve as beasts of burden for long-distance travel. The mobility required for pastoral life reinforced tribal cohesion and frequent migration in search of water and pasture.

In more fertile areas such as Yemen and parts of Ta'if, agriculture formed the backbone of economic life. Crops such as dates, grains, and fruits were cultivated using simple irrigation techniques. Agricultural communities were generally more settled and developed permanent villages and towns. Craftsmanship also developed in these areas, including leatherwork, metalwork, and textile production, which supplemented agricultural income.

Urban centres such as Makkah relied less on agriculture and more on commerce and services related to pilgrimage. The presence of the Ka'bah attracted visitors from across Arabia, creating opportunities for trade, hospitality, and seasonal markets. However, wealth was unevenly

distributed, and economic inequality was widespread. The absence of social welfare mechanisms meant that the poor, orphans, and widows often lived in hardship.

2.3.4 Trade networks and commercial relations

Trade was one of the most significant economic activities in pre-Islamic Arabia and played a crucial role in connecting the peninsula to neighbouring regions. Arabia occupied a strategic position along major trade routes linking the Indian Ocean, East Africa, the Mediterranean world, and the Near East. As a result, Arab merchants became intermediaries in long-distance commerce.

Caravan trade was the primary means of transporting goods across vast distances. Large caravans travelled seasonally, with journeys to Yemen in the winter and to Syria in the summer. These trade expeditions carried goods such as spices, incense, perfumes, leather textiles, and precious metals. In return, Arab merchants imported luxury items and agricultural products from more fertile regions.

Commercial relations were often governed by agreements between tribes and neighbouring powers such as Byzantium and Persia. These alliances provided security for caravans and access to foreign markets. The Quraysh tribe, in particular, played a central role in organising and protecting trade routes, which contributed to Makkah's economic prominence.

Despite its importance, trade was not regulated by formal laws. Commercial practices often favoured the wealthy and powerful, leading to exploitation through unfair pricing, usury, and dishonest dealings. This economic environment later became a focus of Islamic reform, as Islam introduced ethical principles aimed at justice, fairness, and social responsibility in economic life.

Self-Assessment Exercises

1. How was political leadership mainly exercised in pre-Islamic Arabia?
A. Through a central king ruling the whole peninsula
B. Through decentralised tribal leadership and autonomy
C. Under the control of the Persian Empire
D. By elected officials in every tribe

2. What was the main role of the tribal chief (shaykh)?
A. To enforce strict written laws across all tribes

B. To serve as the representative, protector, and decision-maker for the tribe
C. To collect taxes for a central government
D. To lead religious rituals only

3. What was the main economic activity in desert and semi-desert regions such as Najd?
A. Large-scale agriculture
B. Pastoralism (rearing of camels, sheep, and goats)
C. Fishing along the coast
D. Gold mining

4. Why was Makkah an important commercial centre in pre-Islamic Arabia?
A. It had the most fertile agricultural land
B. It was a major stop on trade routes and a religious pilgrimage site
C. It was the capital of a large kingdom
D. It had direct access to the sea for shipping



2.4 Summary

This unit examined the political and economic conditions of pre-Islamic Arabia. you learned about the decentralised nature of political leadership, the role of tribal chiefs and councils, and the absence of formal governance structures. we also discussed major economic activities, trade networks, and commercial relations, highlighting both their strengths and limitations. Together, these factors provide essential background for understanding the transformative impact of Islam on Arabian society.



2.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources

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2.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

1. B. Through decentralised tribal leadership and autonomy
2. B. To serve as the representative, protector, and decision-maker for the tribe
3. B. Pastoralism (rearing of camels, sheep, and goats)
4. B. It was a major stop on trade routes and a religious pilgrimage site

Unit 3 Religious Beliefs and the Meaning of Jāhiliyyah

Unit Structure

3.1 Introduction
3.2 Learning Outcomes
3.3 Religious Beliefs and the Meaning of Jāhiliyyah
  3.3.1 Polytheism and Idol Worship
  3.3.2 Monotheistic Groups and the Hanifs
  3.3.3 Meaning and Interpretations of Jāhiliyyah
  3.3.4 Moral and Spiritual Condition of Arabian society
3.4 Summary
3.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
3.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs)



3.1 Introduction

Religion was a very important part of life in pre-Islamic Arabia. It influenced how society was organized, how people behaved, their leadership, and even their economic activities. The Arabs lived in a religious environment shaped by old traditions, tribal customs, and beliefs passed down through many generations. These beliefs affected how they understood life, destiny, and the unseen world. Islamic sources refer to this period as the Jāhiliyyah. The word comes from the Arabic root *jahl,* which means ignorance. However, it does not mean the Arabs were backward or uncivilized. Instead, it describes a time of religious and moral confusion, marked by polytheism, moral excesses, and many social injustices.

In this unit, we will explore the religious beliefs of pre-Islamic Arabia, especially idol worship and the polytheistic way of life. We will also look at the presence of monotheistic communities such as Jews, Christians, and the Hanifs who still followed aspects of the pure teachings of Prophet Ibrahim. Understanding this religious background will help us better appreciate how Islam brought about a major positive change in belief, morality, and society.



3.2 Learning Outcomes

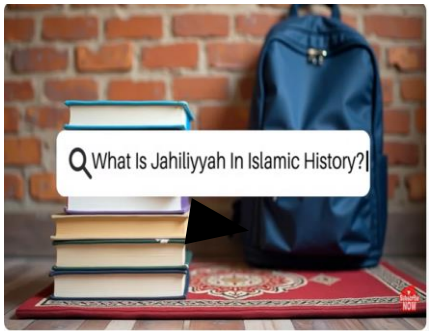
By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the major religious beliefs practiced in pre-Islamic Arabia
- explain the meaning of Jāhiliyyah in its religious and moral dimensions

- identify monotheistic communities and individuals who rejected polytheism
- explain how these beliefs prepared the ground for the message of Islam
- analyse the role of idol worship in Arabian religious life.

3.3 Religious Beliefs and the Meaning of Jāhiliyyah

The religious environment of pre-Islamic Arabia was neither uniform nor static. While polytheism dominated public religious life, traces of monotheism existed alongside it. Religious practices were deeply intertwined with tribal loyalty, social status, and economic interests, making religion both a spiritual and social institution.



Click the link https://shorturl.at/Qrzfg/video or scan the QR code

3.3.1 Polytheism and idol worship

Polytheism was the dominant religious belief in pre-Islamic Arabia. Most Arabs believed in a supreme deity known as Allah, whom they regarded as the Creator of the heavens and the earth. However, they did not worship Him alone. Instead, they associated other beings with Him, believing that these lesser deities could intercede on their behalf. These associated deities were represented physically by idols, which played a central role in Arabian religious life. Idols were made from various materials such as stone, wood, clay, gold, or silver. Some idols were simple stones, while others were elaborately carved figures. Each tribe often had its own idol, which served as a symbol of tribal identity and unity.

The Ka'bah in Makkah functioned as the most important religious centre in Arabia. It housed numerous idols, reportedly numbering about 360, representing different tribes and regions. Among the most famous idols were *Hubal,* considered one of the chief deities of the Quraysh; *al-Lāt, al-'Uzzā,* and *Manāt,* which were widely revered across Arabia. Religious rituals included animal sacrifices, offerings, vows, circumambulation of

sacred sites, and pilgrimages. These acts were often accompanied by superstitious practices such as divination using arrows, seeking omens, and invoking spirits. Religion was therefore closely linked to fear, hope for material success, and protection from misfortune.

Despite their belief in Allah, the Arabs justified idol worship by claiming that idols were intermediaries who brought them closer to God. This belief system weakened the concept of moral accountability, as worship was often disconnected from ethical behaviour. Acts such as injustice, exploitation of the weak, oppression of women, and tribal violence coexisted with religious rituals. This separation between belief and morality is one of the defining features of Jāhiliyyah.

3.3.2 Monotheistic Groups and the Hanifs

Although polytheism prevailed, pre-Islamic Arabia was not entirely devoid of monotheistic belief. Several communities adhered to religions based on belief in one God. Jewish communities were found mainly in Yathrib (Madinah), Khaybar, and parts of northern Arabia. These communities followed the Torah and maintained religious institutions, scholars, and legal traditions. Christian communities also existed, particularly in Najran, Abyssinia-linked regions, and parts of Yemen. Christianity influenced some Arabian tribes and rulers, especially through political and commercial contact with Byzantium and Abyssinia. While these communities believed in one God, Islamic sources note that theological differences and later doctrinal developments distinguished them from Islamic monotheism.

In addition to Jews and Christians, there were individuals known as Hanifs. The Hanifs were neither Jews nor Christians, nor were they idol worshippers. They consciously rejected polytheism and sought to follow the religion of Prophet Ibrahim, whom they believed worshipped one God without partners. The Hanifs were few in number but significant in influence. They upheld moral virtues such as honesty, justice, chastity, and social responsibility. They avoided idol worship, intoxicants, and immoral practices common in Jāhiliyyah society. Their beliefs reflected a spiritual dissatisfaction with prevailing religious practices and a longing for authentic monotheism.

The existence of monotheistic groups and Hanifs demonstrates that pre-Islamic Arabia was spiritually diverse. It also shows that the message of Islam did not emerge in a religious vacuum, but rather responded to existing beliefs while correcting distortions and restoring pure monotheism.

3.3.3 Meaning and Interpretations of Jāhiliyyah

The term **Jāhiliyyah** occupies a central place in Islamic historical and moral discourse. Linguistically, it derives from the Arabic root *jahl*, which signifies ignorance, lack of guidance, or acting without knowledge. In the Islamic context, however, Jāhiliyyah does not simply refer to illiteracy or absence of intellectual achievement. Pre-Islamic Arabs possessed poetry, eloquence, trade networks, and social organisation. The ignorance implied by Jāhiliyyah is therefore moral, spiritual, and religious rather than purely cognitive.

Islamic scholars interpret Jāhiliyyah as a condition in which divine guidance is either absent, distorted, or deliberately ignored. It denotes a worldview in which human desires, tribal loyalties, and inherited customs take precedence over ethical responsibility and accountability to God. In this sense, Jāhiliyyah represents a state of rebellion against divine order, manifested through polytheism, injustice, and moral imbalance.

The Qur'an employs the term Jāhiliyyah to criticise attitudes and practices that contradict divine guidance. It refers to assumptions of ignorance, pride in lineage, oppressive customs, and moral excesses that characterised pre-Islamic society. These references make it clear that Jāhiliyyah is not limited to a historical period but describes any condition where human conduct is guided by ignorance of divine values.

Classical Muslim scholars emphasise that the Prophet's mission was not merely to replace one religious system with another, but to transform a Jāhiliyyah worldview into a civilisation rooted in knowledge, justice, and moral consciousness. Thus, understanding Jāhiliyyah is essential for appreciating the ethical revolution brought about by Islam.

Did you know how tribalism affect justice, and what was the situation of women and the poor in the Arabian society before Islam?

3.3.4 Moral and Spiritual Condition of Arabian Society

The moral and spiritual condition of Arabian society before Islam reflected the broader realities of Jāhiliyyah. While certain virtues such as bravery, hospitality, loyalty, and generosity were admired, these values were often restricted to tribal boundaries and were not governed by universal ethical principles.

Social injustice was widespread. Tribalism shaped moral judgment, leading to the protection of one's kin regardless of guilt or innocence. The strong dominated the weak, and revenge was considered a legitimate means of restoring honour. Endless cycles of tribal warfare resulted from

this system, often sparked by minor disputes and sustained for generations.

The status of women was particularly precarious. Many women were denied inheritance rights, treated as property, and excluded from decision-making. In some tribes, the practice of female infanticide existed, driven by fear of poverty or social shame. Marriage practices were largely unregulated, leading to exploitation and instability within family life.
Spiritually, religious rituals were often mechanical and devoid of moral consciousness. Worship focused on appeasing idols rather than cultivating ethical responsibility. Superstition, divination, and fear of unseen forces dominated spiritual life, creating anxiety rather than moral clarity. Accountability in the Hereafter was either misunderstood or neglected, weakening the sense of ethical restraint.

Nevertheless, the society was not entirely devoid of moral awareness. Certain individuals rejected immoral practices and sought higher ethical ideals, particularly among the Hanifs. These moral contradictions highlight why Arabian society was ripe for transformation. Islam addressed these deficiencies by linking belief in one God with moral responsibility, social justice, and spiritual accountability.

Self-Assessment Exercises

1. Which of the following best describes the religious beliefs of most Arabs in pre-Islamic Arabia?
A. They rejected the existence of Allah and worshipped only idols.
B. They believed in Allah but worshipped idols as intermediaries.
C. They practised only Judaism and Christianity.
D. They believed that every tribe had its own separate creator.

2. Who were the Hanifs in pre-Islamic Arabia?
A. People who worshipped the idols in the Ka‘bah.
B. Merchants who organized caravan trade across Arabia.
C. Individuals who rejected polytheism and sought to follow the monotheistic faith of Prophet Ibrahim.
D. Tribal leaders who introduced new religious rituals.

3. According to Islamic understanding, the term Jāhiliyyah primarily refers to:
A. A society with no trade or economic activities.
B. A condition of moral and spiritual ignorance in which divine guidance is ignored or distorted.
C. The inability of people to read and write.
D. A period when Arabs had no form of social organisation.

4. Which of the following was a characteristic of the moral and spiritual condition of Arabian society during Jāhiliyyah?
A. Women enjoyed equal inheritance rights and political participation.
B. Tribal loyalty often took precedence over justice, and revenge was widely accepted.
C. Religious practices promoted universal ethical responsibility and accountability.
D. Tribal conflicts were rare because disputes were settled through formal legal systems.



3.4 Summary

As we wrap up this unit, let us look back together. We have learned that pre-Islamic Arabia was religiously diverse but morally fragmented. Most people practiced polytheism and idol worship, while moral values were mainly based on tribal loyalty instead of universal ethical principles. We also discussed the meaning of Jāhiliyyah. It was not just about ignorance, but a state of moral and spiritual confusion that affected how people believed, behaved, and related with one another. Even though there were some good virtues and individuals like the Hanifs who believed in one God, society still lacked a strong ethical framework based on divine guidance.

This is why Islam came as a powerful and transformative force. It corrected these weaknesses and laid the foundation for a morally responsible and united community. Well done for completing this unit



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3.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

1. b. They believed in Allah but worshipped idols as intermediaries.
2. c. Individuals who rejected polytheism and sought to follow the monotheistic faith of Prophet Ibrahim.
3. b. A condition of moral and spiritual ignorance in which divine guidance is ignored or distorted.
4. b. Tribal loyalty often took precedence over justice, and revenge was widely accepted.

Unit 4 The Genealogy of Prophet Muhammad (Saw)

Unit Structure

4.1 Introduction
4.2 Learning Outcomes
4.3 The Genealogy of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)
    4.3.1 His Lineage and Noble Ancestry
    4.3.2 The Quraysh Tribe and Its Significance
    4.3.3 Banū Hāshim and Clan Relations
    4.3.4 Immediate Family Members of the Prophet
4.4 Summary
4.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
4.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs)



4.1 Introduction

The study of the genealogy of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) occupies an important place in Islamic history because lineage played a central role in Arabian society before Islam. In pre-Islamic Arabia, a person's ancestry determined social status, political influence, and acceptance within the community. Understanding the noble lineage of the Prophet (SAW) helps students appreciate how Allah prepared the social and historical context for the emergence of Islam.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was born into a respected and honourable family known for leadership, trustworthiness, and custodianship of sacred institutions in Makkah. His genealogy connects him to Prophet Ibrahim (AS) through Isma'il (AS), thereby linking Islam to the monotheistic tradition of earlier prophets. This unit examines the Prophet's ancestry and the significance of the Quraysh tribe within Arabian society.



4.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the genealogy of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to his noble ancestors
- explain the importance of lineage in pre-Islamic Arabian society
- discuss the position and influence of the Quraysh tribe in Makkah
- appraise how the Prophet's background contributed to his acceptance as a moral and social leader.

4.3 The Genealogy of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

Genealogy in Arab society was more than a record of descent; it was a source of identity, pride, and legitimacy. Families preserved their lineages through oral tradition, poetry, and historical memory. The genealogy of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is among the most carefully preserved in human history, reflecting both its social importance and its religious significance.

4.3.1 His Lineage and Noble Ancestry

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) belonged to a noble and distinguished lineage that traced back to Adnan, one of the well-known ancestors of the northern Arabs. From Adnan, the lineage continues through Ma'ad, Nizar, and Mudar, eventually reaching Quraysh, the dominant tribe of Makkah. From Quraysh, the lineage proceeds through Hashim, 'Abd al-Muttalib, and 'Abdullah, the Prophet's father.

Islamic tradition affirms that the Prophet's ancestry was free from immoral practices commonly associated with the Jāhiliyyah period. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself stated that Allah continuously selected him from the best of generations and the noblest of families. His grandfather, 'Abd al-Muttalib, was widely respected for his wisdom, generosity, and leadership, while his father, 'Abdullah, was known for his good character, although he died before the Prophet's birth.

This noble lineage gave Prophet Muhammad (SAW) social credibility in Makkah. Even before prophethood, he was known as ***al-Amīn*** (the Trustworthy), a reputation that reflected the moral standing of his family and ancestors.



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4.3.2 The Quraysh Tribe and Its Significance

The Quraysh tribe occupied a central position in Arabian society, particularly in Makkah. They were the custodians of the Ka'bah, which

made Makkah a major religious and commercial centre. Pilgrims from different parts of Arabia visited the city annually, bringing economic prosperity and political influence to the Quraysh.

Politically, the Quraysh exercised leadership through councils and clan-based authority. Economically, they controlled major trade routes linking Yemen, Syria, and other regions. Their seasonal trade journeys strengthened their connections with foreign communities and enhanced their status among Arab tribes.

Belonging to the Quraysh tribe gave Prophet Muhammad (SAW) an important platform for his mission. While many Quraysh leaders later opposed his message, they could not deny his noble origin or personal integrity. His membership in a respected tribe protected him, especially in the early stages of his mission, and ensured that his call to Islam was taken seriously across Arabia.

4.3.3 Banū Hāshim and Clan Relations

Banū Hāshim was a distinguished clan within the Quraysh tribe and one of the most respected families in Makkah. It was named after **Hāshim ibn ‘Abd Manāf**, the great-grandfather of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), who was renowned for his generosity, leadership, and service to pilgrims. Hāshim institutionalised the practice of providing food and water to pilgrims visiting the Ka‘bah, thereby earning widespread respect and moral authority.

The Banū Hāshim clan played a crucial role in Arabian society through its leadership in religious, social, and humanitarian affairs. Members of the clan were known for their sense of responsibility toward the weak and the poor. This moral reputation distinguished Banū Hāshim from other clans whose influence was primarily economic or political.

Clan relations in pre-Islamic Arabia were central to personal security and social identity. Loyalty to one’s clan was a fundamental principle, often superseding moral judgment. As a member of Banū Hāshim, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) benefited from clan protection, especially during the early years of his mission. Even when many Quraysh leaders opposed Islam, Banū Hāshim, under the leadership of **Abū Tālib**, continued to offer him protection based on kinship and tribal obligation.

The collective punishment imposed on Banū Hāshim through social and economic boycott further illustrates the importance of clan solidarity. The clan endured hardship together in defence of the Prophet, demonstrating the deep-rooted values of loyalty and honour within Arabian clan structures.

4.3.4 Immediate Family Members of the Prophet

The immediate family of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) played significant roles in his early life and mission. His father, ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abd al-Muttalib, died before his birth, leaving him an orphan. His mother, Āminah bint Wahb, cared for him during his infancy but passed away when he was six years old. These early losses shaped the Prophet’s compassion for orphans and the vulnerable.

After his mother’s death, the Prophet was placed under the care of his grandfather, ‘Abd al-Muttalib, who loved him deeply and recognised his unique qualities. Following ‘Abd al-Muttalib’s death, guardianship passed to Abū Tālib, the Prophet’s uncle. Abū Tālib provided protection, moral support, and guidance throughout the Prophet’s youth and early prophethood, despite not accepting Islam.

The Prophet later married Khadījah bint Khuwaylid, a noble and respected woman of Quraysh, who became his strongest supporter and the first person to accept Islam. His household later included his children, among whom Fāṭimah (RA) held a special place. These family relationships provided emotional stability and support, reinforcing the Prophet’s mission and personal resilience.

Self-Assessment Exercises

1. Which of the following best describes the significance of Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) lineage in pre-Islamic Arabia?
A. It made him the wealthiest merchant in Makkah.
B. It provided him with social credibility and reflected his noble ancestry.
C. It guaranteed that all Quraysh leaders accepted his message.
D. It made him the political ruler of Makkah.
2. Why was the Quraysh tribe highly influential in Arabian society before Islam?
A. They controlled all Arabian kingdoms through military power.
B. They were the only tribe that practised monotheism.
C. They were custodians of the Kaʿbah and controlled major trade routes, giving them religious, economic, and political influence.
D. They were the largest tribe in Arabia by population.
3. What was one of the most important contributions of Hāshim ibn ‘Abd Manāf, the great-grandfather of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)?
A. He established military rule over Makkah.
B. He introduced idol worship at the Ka‘bah.
C. He institutionalised the provision of food and water to pilgrims visiting the Ka‘bah.
D. He became the first ruler of the Quraysh tribe.

4. Why did Banū Hāshim continue to protect Prophet Muhammad (SAW) during the early years of his mission?
A. Because all members of Banū Hāshim had accepted Islam.
B. Because clan loyalty and tribal obligation were central values in Arabian society.
C. Because Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was the political leader of Makkah.
D. Because the Quraysh leaders supported his message.



4.4 Summary

This unit examined the genealogy of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) with particular emphasis on Banū Hāshim and the Prophet's immediate family. It explained the significance of clan relations in pre-Islamic Arabia and highlighted how lineage, kinship, and family support shaped the Prophet's early life and protected his mission. The unit also demonstrated how the noble ancestry of the Prophet enhanced his credibility and leadership within Arabian society.



4.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources

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4.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

1. B. It provided him with social credibility and reflected his noble ancestry.
2. C. They were custodians of the Kaʿbah and controlled major trade routes, giving them religious, economic, and political influence
3. C. He institutionalised the provision of food and water to pilgrims visiting the Ka‘bah.
4. B. Because clan loyalty and tribal obligation were central values in Arabian society.

Unit 5 The Birth, Upbringing, And Early Life of the Prophet (Saw)

Unit Structure

5.1 Introduction
5.2 Learning Outcomes
5.3 The Birth, Upbringing, and Early Life of the Prophet
  5.3.1 Events Surrounding His Birth
  5.3.2 Fosterage and Childhood Training
  5.3.3 Youthful Life and Moral Character
  5.3.4 Marriage and Social Reputation
5.4 Summary
5.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
5.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs)



5.1 Introduction

The early life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) provides essential insight into the formation of his personality and character before the commencement of his prophetic mission. Islam teaches that Allah prepares His messengers long before they are entrusted with divine responsibility. The circumstances surrounding the Prophet's birth, his upbringing as an orphan, and his exposure to diverse social environments played a crucial role in shaping his compassion, resilience, and moral integrity.

Born into a noble but not wealthy family in Makkah, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) experienced both care and hardship from an early age. These experiences fostered in him empathy for the weak, patience in adversity, and independence of character. This unit examines the significant events surrounding his birth and his early childhood training, highlighting how these formative years prepared him for leadership and prophethood.



5.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will able to:

- describe the major events surrounding the birth of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)
- explain the significance of his fosterage and early upbringing

- describe how his childhood experiences shaped his moral and social outlook
- appreciate the divine wisdom behind his early life experiences

5.3 The Birth, Upbringing, and Early Life of the Prophet

The birth and early upbringing of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) occurred within a society marked by strong tribal traditions and social inequalities. Despite the moral deficiencies of the Jāhiliyyah period, certain noble customs existed, such as respect for lineage and care for guests. The Prophet's early life unfolded within this complex environment under divine protection.



Click the link https://shorturl.at/mirvG/video or scan the QR code

5.3.1 Events Surrounding His Birth

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was born in Makkah in the Year of the Elephant, corresponding approximately to 570 CE. This year derived its name from a major historical event in which Abraha, the ruler of Yemen, attempted to destroy the Ka'bah using an army that included elephants. According to Islamic tradition, Allah protected the Ka'bah from destruction, signifying the sacred status of the city and foreshadowing the importance of the child who would soon be born there.

The Prophet was born into the household of 'Abdullah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib and Āminah bint Wahb. His father passed away before his birth, making him an orphan from infancy. This early loss exposed the Prophet to vulnerability and hardship, experiences that later informed his deep concern for orphans and disadvantaged members of society.

His grandfather, 'Abd al-Muttalib, named him *Muhammad*, meaning "the praised one," a name that was uncommon among the Arabs at the time. Islamic tradition holds that several signs accompanied his birth, symbolising hope and divine purpose. However, despite these signs, the

Prophet's early life remained simple, free from privilege or excess, reinforcing humility and self-reliance.

5.3.2 Fosterage and Childhood Training

In accordance with Arab custom, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was sent to live among the Bedouins in the desert to be fostered. This practice was believed to strengthen physical health, improve eloquence in Arabic, and instil discipline. He was fostered by Ḥalīmah al-Sa'diyyah of the Banū Sa'd tribe, whose household experienced noticeable blessings during his stay.

Life in the desert exposed the young Muhammad to simplicity, patience, and self-discipline. He learned endurance, honesty, and responsibility from an early age. The Bedouin environment also helped him develop clear speech and strong memory, qualities that later enhanced his role as a messenger of divine revelation.

After returning to Makkah, the Prophet continued his upbringing under the care of his grandfather and later his uncle, Abū Tālib. He participated in daily life, observing trade, travel, and tribal interactions. These experiences provided practical knowledge of human behaviour, leadership, and social relations, preparing him for the challenges of guiding a diverse and often divided society.

5.3.3 Youthful Life and Moral Character

The youthful life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was marked by exceptional moral discipline, integrity, and self-restraint, even before the commencement of his prophethood. Growing up in a society deeply affected by moral excesses such as idol worship, gambling, intoxication, and immoral social practices, the Prophet remained untouched by these vices. Islamic historical sources affirm that he never participated in pagan rituals or unethical activities common among the youth of Makkah.

From an early age, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) earned a reputation for honesty, truthfulness, and reliability. His moral conduct distinguished him among his peers, leading the people of Makkah to bestow upon him the title ***al-Amīn***, meaning "the Trustworthy." This reputation was not limited to a particular group but was universally acknowledged across tribal and social divisions. People entrusted him with their valuables and sought his judgment in disputes, confident in his fairness and impartiality.

During his youth, the Prophet engaged in lawful occupations, including shepherding and later assisting in trade. These experiences cultivated patience, humility, and responsibility. Shepherding, in particular, instilled

qualities of leadership, care, and vigilance, which later became evident in his guidance of the Muslim community. His moral uprightness during this period demonstrated divine protection and preparation for his future role as a messenger of Allah.

How can mutual respect in marriage and standing up for justice (even before prophethood) help a person develop strong moral character?

5.3.4 Marriage and Social Reputation

The marriage of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to Khadījah bint Khuwaylid marked a significant stage in his early adult life. Khadījah was a noble, respected, and successful businesswoman in Makkah who employed the Prophet to manage her trade caravans. His honesty, diligence, and ethical conduct in business impressed her deeply and strengthened his social reputation.

Their marriage was characterised by mutual respect, trust, and emotional support. Khadījah became not only his wife but also his closest confidant and supporter. This stable family life provided the Prophet with emotional balance and social standing within the Makkah community. It also reinforced his reputation as a responsible, trustworthy, and morally upright individual.

Socially, the Prophet remained actively engaged in community affairs. He participated in noble initiatives such as Hilf al-Fudūl, a pact formed to uphold justice and protect the oppressed, regardless of tribal affiliation. His involvement in such efforts reflected his deep commitment to justice and human dignity, values that later formed the foundation of Islamic teachings.

Through his marriage and public conduct, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) demonstrated exemplary moral leadership, earning widespread respect long before the revelation of Islam.



5.4 Summary

We have examined the youthful life, moral character, and early adulthood of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). It highlighted his ethical conduct, social responsibility, and commitment to justice, as well as the stabilising role of his marriage to Khadījah. The unit demonstrated how these experiences prepared him morally, socially, and psychologically for the responsibilities of prophethood.

5.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources

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5.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

1. B) It was the year Abraha attempted to destroy the Ka‘bah, and Allah’s protection of the Ka‘bah foreshadowed the birth of the Prophet in that sacred city.
2. B) It taught him simplicity, patience, self-discipline, eloquence in Arabic, and a strong memory quality essential for receiving and conveying divine revelation.
3. B) Al-Amīn (the Trustworthy) – because of his honesty, truthfulness, and reliability
4. B) It provided him with emotional support, social standing, and reinforced his reputation for honesty and responsibility.

MODULE 2 THE EARLY CALL TO ISLAM

Unit 1 The First Revelation and the Beginning of Prophethood
Unit 2 The Early Converts and the Secret Call
Unit 3 Open Preaching, Opposition, and Persecution in Makkah
Unit 4 Migration to Abyssinia and Its Significance
Unit 5 Events Leading to the Hijrah to Madinah

Unit 1 The First Revelation and the Beginning of Prophethood

Unit Structure

1.1 Introduction
1.2 Learning Outcomes
1.3 The First Revelation and the Beginning of Prophethood
1.3.1 The Event in the Cave of Hira
1.3.2 The First Revealed Verses of the Qur'an
1.3.3 Immediate Reactions and Experiences of the Prophet
1.3.4 The Significance of the First Revelation
1.4 Summary
1.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
1.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs)



1.1 Introduction

The beginning of prophethood marks the most decisive turning point in human history, as it represents the moment when divine guidance was once again communicated directly to humanity through revelation. For Islam, this moment occurred when Prophet Muhammad (SAW) received the first revelation from Allah while in seclusion at the cave of Hira. This event signified the transition of the Prophet from a private individual known for moral excellence to a universal messenger charged with guiding humanity.

Prior to revelation, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had developed a deep sense of spiritual reflection and moral concern for the condition of Makkah society. Disturbed by idol worship, social injustice, and moral corruption, he frequently withdrew to the cave of Hira to engage in contemplation and worship according to the monotheistic tradition of Prophet Ibrahim (AS). This spiritual preparation illustrates that revelation did not come abruptly but followed a period of divine nurturing and inner readiness.

This unit examines the circumstances surrounding the first revelation, the encounter with Angel Jibril (AS), and the profound meaning of the first Qur'anic verses revealed. Understanding this foundational moment is essential for appreciating the nature of prophethood, revelation, and the message of Islam.



1.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the circumstances leading to the first revelation
- explain the significance of the cave of Hira in the Prophet's spiritual preparation
- analyse the content and meaning of the first revealed verses of the Qur'an
- appreciate the psychological and spiritual impact of revelation on the Prophet (SAW).



1.3 The First Revelation and the Beginning of Prophethood

The beginning of prophethood was not a product of personal ambition or social aspiration. Rather, it was a divine initiative that transformed the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and redirected the course of human civilisation. Revelation in Islam is understood as a direct communication from Allah to His chosen messenger, conveyed through Angel Jibril (AS), without human authorship or influence.

1.3.1 The Event in the Cave of Hira

The first revelation occurred when Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was approximately forty years old. He was in the cave of Hira, located on Mount Nur near Makkah, engaged in solitary reflection. This cave had become a place of spiritual retreat for him, away from the noise and moral confusion of the city. According to an authentic narration reported by 'A'ishah (RA), the Prophet was suddenly confronted by Angel Jibril (AS), who commanded him to read. The Prophet, unlettered and unprepared for such an encounter, responded that he could not read. This exchange occurred three times, reflecting the overwhelming nature of the moment and the gravity of the divine call.

The Hadith records the event as follows as reorted by Aishah (RA):
Arabic:

مَا فَقُلْتُ اقْرَأْ فَقَالَ أَرْسَلَنِي ثُمَّ الْجَهْدَ، مِنِّي بَلَغَ حَتَّى فَغَطَّنِي فَأَخَذَنِي قَالَ بِقَارِئٍ .أَنَا مَا قَالَ اقْرَأْ فَقَالَ الْمَلَكُ فَجَاءَهُ
الثَّالِثَةَ فَغَطَّنِي فَأَخَذَنِي بِقَارِئٍ .أَنَا مَا فَقُلْتُ اقْرَأْ فَقَالَ أَرْسَلَنِي ثُمَّ الْجَهْدَ، مِنِّي بَلَغَ حَتَّى الثَّانِيَةَ.
فَغَطَّنِي فَأَخَذَنِي بِقَارِئٍ أَنَا

English Translation:
"Then the Angel came to him and said, 'Read.' He replied, 'I am not one who can read.' Thereupon he seized me and pressed me until I was exhausted, then he released me and said, 'Read.' I said, 'I am not one who can read.' He seized me again and pressed me a second time until I was exhausted, then he released me and said, 'Read.' I replied, 'I am not one who can read.' Then he seized me and pressed me a third time." (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb Badʾ al-Waḥy, ḥadīth no. 3.)

The physical and emotional intensity of this encounter left the Prophet deeply shaken. Upon returning home, he asked his wife Khadījah (RA) to cover him, expressing fear and confusion. This reaction demonstrates the human dimension of prophethood and refutes claims that revelation was self-induced or imagined. Khadījah (RA) reassured him, affirming his moral character and social responsibility. She later took him to her cousin Waraqah ibn Nawfal, a learned monotheist, who confirmed that the experience was consistent with previous prophetic revelations. This external validation further establishes the authenticity of the prophetic experience.

1.3.2 The First Revealed Verses of the Qur'an

The first verses revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) are found in Surah al-'Alaq (96:1–5). These verses establish the intellectual, spiritual, and ethical foundation of Islam.

Arabic Text:
يَعْلَمْ لَمْ مَا الْإِنسَانَ عَلَّمَ بِالْقَلَمِ عَلَّمَ الَّذِي الْأَكْرَمُ وَرَبُّكَ اقْرَأْ,عَلَقٍ مِنْ الْإِنسَانَ خَلَقَ ,خَلَقَ الَّذِي.“
”رَبِّكَ بِاسم اقْرَأْ
وَرَبُّ

English Translation:
"Read in the name of your Lord who created.
Created man from a clinging substance.
Read, and your Lord is the Most Generous.
Who taught by the pen.
Taught man what he did not know."
(Qur'an 96:1–5)

These verses emphasise knowledge, learning, and divine generosity as central to Islam. The command to read, despite the Prophet's inability to read or write, signifies that knowledge in Islam originates from Allah and is not limited to literacy alone. It also establishes the Qur'an as a revelation meant to enlighten humanity intellectually and morally. The reference to the pen highlights the importance of documentation, learning, and transmission of knowledge. This laid the foundation for Islamic civilisation's emphasis on scholarship, education, and intellectual pursuit. The Qur'an itself affirms the divine source of this revelation:

Arabic:

"وَمَا يَنطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ"

English Translation:

"He does not speak from his own desire. It is nothing but revelation revealed." (Qur'an 53:3–4)

These verses categorically establish that the Prophet's message was not a personal invention but a divinely revealed mandate.

1.3.3 Immediate Reactions and Experiences of the Prophet

The immediate reaction of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to the first revelation was one of deep emotional intensity and human vulnerability. The encounter with Angel Jibril (AS) was sudden, overwhelming, and unlike anything he had previously experienced. Although the Prophet had spent years in spiritual reflection, the weight of divine revelation surpassed ordinary human capacity. This reaction demonstrates that prophethood was not self-assumed but divinely imposed. Authentic Hadith literature records that after receiving the revelation, the Prophet returned home in a state of fear and trembling. He repeatedly asked to be covered, seeking comfort and reassurance. This moment reflects the seriousness of revelation and the psychological burden placed upon the human recipient of divine communication.

Arabic (Hadith):
« يَرْجُفُ : »
زَمِّلُونِي زَمِّلُونِي :فَقَالَ خَدِيجَةَ عَلَى فَدَخَلَ فُؤَادُهُ، يَرْجُفُ ﷺ اللَّهِ رَسُولُ بِهَا فَرَجَعَ

English Translation:
"The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) returned with it, his heart trembling, and he entered upon Khadījah and said, 'Cover me, cover me.'" (Sahih al-Bukhari, Book of Revelation)

Khadījah (RA) played a decisive role at this moment by providing emotional reassurance and moral affirmation. She reminded the Prophet of his noble character, his concern for the poor, his honesty, and his support for the oppressed. Her response highlights the social dimension of prophethood and the importance of moral credibility.

Arabic (Hadith):

« »
الْحَقِّ نَوَائِبِ عَلَى وَتُعِينُ الضَّيْفَ،وَتُقْرِي الْكَلَّ، وَتَحْمِلُ الْحَدِيثَ، وَتَصْدُقُ الرَّحِمَ، لَتَصِلُ إِنَّكَ ،أَبَدًا،اللَّهُ يُخْزِيكَ مَا وَاللَّهِ كَلَّا

English Translation:

"By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You uphold family ties, you speak the truth, you help the needy, you honour guests, and you support people in times of difficulty." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

This reassurance situates prophethood within moral continuity rather than rupture. Revelation did not contradict the Prophet's earlier life but crowned it with divine purpose.

The Prophet was later taken to **Waraqah ibn Nawfal**, a learned monotheist, who confirmed the nature of the experience. Waraqah identified the being encountered as the same Angel who brought revelation to Prophet Musa (AS), thereby placing Muhammad (SAW) within the historical chain of prophethood. This confirmation further established the authenticity of the experience.

1.3.4 The Significance of the First Revelation

The first revelation holds immense religious, intellectual, and civilisational significance in Islam. It marks the formal beginning of Islam as a divinely revealed faith and the start of Prophet Muhammad's mission to humanity. Through revelation, the Prophet transitioned from moral exemplar to messenger of Allah.

One of the most significant aspects of the first revelation is its emphasis on knowledge and learning. The command "Read" establishes that Islam is fundamentally a religion of knowledge, reflection, and enlightenment. This is particularly significant given that the Prophet was unlettered, underscoring that knowledge in Islam originates from divine instruction rather than human invention.

The Qur'an later affirms the exalted status of knowledge:

Arabic:

"يَعْلَمُونَ لَا وَالَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَوِي هَلْ قُلْ" .

English Translation:

"Say: Are those who know equal to those who do not know?" (Qur'an 39:9)

The first revelation also established the principle of accountability before God. By reminding humanity of creation and divine generosity, the Qur'an redirected human consciousness from tribal pride to moral responsibility. This message challenged the foundations of Jāhiliyyah society, which was rooted in lineage, power, and material dominance.

Furthermore, the first revelation affirmed the divine origin of the Qur'an. It was not a philosophical reflection or poetic composition but revelation from Allah. The Qur'an repeatedly emphasises this point:

Arabic:

لَحَافِظُونَ لَهُ نَّا وَإِالذِّكْرَ نَزَّلْنَا نَحْنُ إِنَّا.

English Translation:

"Indeed, We have sent down the Reminder, and surely We will preserve it." (Qur'an 15:9)

This assurance established the Qur'an as a protected and authoritative source of guidance for all generations.

In essence, the first revelation inaugurated a comprehensive transformation of belief, morality, and civilisation. It laid the foundation for Islamic theology, law, ethics, and intellectual tradition.

Self-Assessment Exercises

1. Where was Prophet Muhammad (SAW) when he received the first revelation from Allah?
A. In the Ka‘bah in Makkah
B. In the Cave of Hira on Mount Nur
C. In Madinah during migration
D. On Mount Arafat

2. According to the first revealed verses of the Qur’an (Surah al-‘Alaq 96:1–5), what central message is emphasized at the beginning of the Prophet’s mission?
A. The importance of military strength and political leadership
B. The obligation to perform pilgrimage immediately
C. The importance of knowledge, learning, and divine guidance
D. The requirement to migrate from Makkah

3. How did Prophet Muhammad (SAW) react immediately after receiving the first revelation?
A. He immediately began preaching publicly in Makkah.
B. He returned home trembling and asked Khadījah (RA) to cover him.
C. He travelled to Madinah to seek guidance.
D. He gathered the Quraysh to announce his prophethood.

4. what is one of the greatest significances of the first revelation in Islam?
A. It established military leadership as the foundation of Islam.
B. It emphasized knowledge, learning, and divine guidance as central to the Islamic message.
C. It required all Muslims to migrate from Makkah immediately.
D. It abolished all tribal customs at once.



1.4 Summary

This unit examined the immediate experiences of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) following the first revelation and analysed the significance of that revelation in Islamic history. It highlighted the human dimension of prophethood, the moral reassurance provided by Khadījah (RA), and the confirmation by Waraqah ibn Nawfal. The unit also demonstrated how the first revelation established knowledge, accountability, and divine guidance as the foundation of Islam.



1.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources

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Qur'an al-Karim.

Sahih al-Bukhari.



1.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

1. B. In the Cave of Hira on Mount Nur
2. C. The importance of knowledge, learning, and divine guidance
3. B. He returned home trembling and asked Khadījah (RA) to cover him.
4. B. It emphasized knowledge, learning, and divine guidance as central to the Islamic message.

Unit 2 The Early Converts and the Secret Call

Unit Structure

2.1 Introduction
2.2 Learning Outcomes
2.3 The Early Converts and the Secret Call
  2.3.1 The First Group of Believers
  2.3.2 Role of Khadijah, Abu Bakr, Ali, and Others
  2.3.3 Spread of Islam among the Youth and the Poor
  2.3.4 Nature and Purpose of the Secret Call
2.4 Summary
2.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
2.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs)



2.1 Introduction

The early phase of Islam was marked by caution, patience, and strategic wisdom. Following the first revelation, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) did not immediately declare his mission publicly. Instead, he embarked upon a discreet and selective process of inviting individuals who were known for moral integrity, sound judgment, and openness to truth. This period, commonly referred to as *al-daʿwah al-sirriyyah* (the secret call), lasted for approximately three years. This phase was crucial for laying a firm spiritual and ideological foundation for the emerging Muslim community.

It allowed early believers to internalize the core teachings of Islam without the pressure of public hostility. In an environment dominated by tribal loyalties and entrenched polytheism, secrecy was not an act of fear but a strategic response to social realities. The Qur'an later alludes to this gradual approach in calling people to faith, emphasizing wisdom, patience, and discernment in daʿwah.



2.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- identify the earliest converts to Islam and their characteristics.
- explain the rationale behind the secret phase of islamic propagation.
- examine the individual roles played by key early converts in strengthening islam
- assess the moral, social, and historical significance of the first believers.

- appreciate the strategic wisdom of gradual religious reform.



2.3 The Early Converts and the Secret Call

Back in 7th-century Makkah, Arabian society was all about tribes, idols, and old traditions. When Prophet Muhammad started spreading Islam, he kept it secret at first that's called the Secret Call phase. For about three years, he quietly invited only a few trusted people. The earliest converts included his wife Khadijah, young cousin Ali, loyal freed slave Zayd, and his best friend Abu Bakr.

These first believers were mostly sincere, honest folks, some from powerful families, others from the weaker sections of society like slaves and youth. They believed because of the Prophet's character and the simple, powerful message. Staying secret helped protect the new faith from the angry Quraysh leaders who didn't want any challenge to their idols and status.

2.3.1 The First Group of Believers

The earliest converts to Islam were distinguished by their moral uprightness, intellectual clarity, and close relationship with the Prophet (SAW). Their acceptance of Islam was not driven by material benefit or social pressure, but by conviction and recognition of truth. These individuals formed the nucleus of the Muslim ummah. Among the first believers were Khadījah bint Khuwaylid, Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, Zayd ibn Ḥārithah, and later others such as ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, al-Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwām, and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf. They endured ridicule, social boycott, and in some cases physical persecution. The Qur'an praises the precedence of these early believers and highlights their special rank:

Arabic (Qur'an 57:10):

الْمُهَاجِرِينَ
عَنْهُ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُمْ اللَّهُ رَّضِيَ بِإِحْسَانٍ اتَّبَعُوهُم وَالَّذِينَ وَالْأَنصَارِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ مِنَ الأَوَّلُونَ"
"وَالسَّابِقُونَ

English Translation:

"And the forerunners, the first among the emigrants and the helpers, and those who followed them with excellence, Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him."
(Source: Qur'an 57:10)

Although this verse refers broadly to early Muslims, classical scholars affirm that its spirit includes those who accepted Islam at its most vulnerable stage. The secret call often took place in private homes, notably the house of al-Arqam ibn Abī al-Arqam, which served as the first informal centre of Islamic learning. There, believers were taught the Qur'an, prayer, and ethical discipline, forming a spiritually resilient community.

2.3.2 Role of Khadījah, Abū Bakr, ʿAlī, and Others

Khadījah bint Khuwaylid (RA) was the first person to accept Islam and played an unparalleled role in supporting the Prophet (SAW). Her faith was immediate and unwavering. She provided emotional reassurance, financial support, and moral legitimacy at a time when the Prophet faced uncertainty and isolation.

The Prophet (SAW) testified to her unique status:

"She believed in me when people disbelieved, and she affirmed me when people denied me."

(Source: Aḥmad in *al-Musnad*; graded **ḥasan** by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmiʿ*, no. 4012).

Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (RA) was instrumental in spreading Islam during the secret phase. His social standing, gentle persuasion, and personal credibility led several prominent figures to Islam. Through his efforts, companions such as ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān and Ṭalḥah ibn ʿUbaydullāh embraced Islam.

The Prophet (SAW) acknowledged Abū Bakr's unique faith:

"I did not invite anyone to Islam except that he hesitated and wavered, except Abū Bakr."
(Source: *Musnad Aḥmad*; graded **ḥasan** by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmiʿ*, no. 5124)

ʿ**Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (RA)** accepted Islam while still a youth, demonstrating that Islam appealed across age groups. His early faith reflects the role of moral clarity and close observation of the Prophet's character. His acceptance within the Prophet's household further strengthened the internal support system of the mission.

Zayd ibn Ḥārithah (RA), the Prophet's freed slave, was also among the earliest believers. His acceptance of Islam illustrates Islam's radical message of spiritual equality, challenging the hierarchical norms of Arabian society.

Together, these early converts exemplified sacrifice, loyalty, and conviction. Their faith ensured the survival and eventual expansion of Islam beyond the confines of secrecy.

2.3.3 Spread of Islam among the Youth and the Poor

One of the most striking features of the early spread of Islam during the secret call was its strong appeal to the **youth, the socially marginalized, and the economically disadvantaged**. This was not accidental. Islam's message of monotheism, moral responsibility, and accountability before Allah directly challenged the rigid social hierarchy of pre-Islamic Makkah, where lineage, wealth, and tribal power determined human worth.

Young people were particularly receptive because they were less entrenched in the traditions of idolatry and tribal arrogance. Their moral intuition and openness to reform allowed them to recognize the ethical clarity of Islam. Figures such as **ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib**, **al-Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwām**, and **Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ** embraced Islam at a young age, demonstrating that Islam appealed to conscience rather than age or status. The poor and enslaved also found in Islam a message of dignity and spiritual equality. Islam rejected the notion that human value was measured by wealth or ancestry and replaced it with piety and righteousness. The Qur'an firmly establishes this principle:

"O mankind, indeed We created you from a male and a female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you." (Source: Qur'an 49:13)

This teaching resonated deeply with individuals such as **Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ**, **ʿAmmār ibn Yāsir**, and **Sumayyah bint Khayyāṭ**, who suffered severe persecution for their faith. Their steadfastness illustrates that early Islam did not spread through material incentive, but through spiritual conviction and moral courage.

The Prophet (SAW) later affirmed the special position of the weak and oppressed within the Islamic mission:

"You are supported and provided for only because of your weak ones." (Source: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī)

Thus, the early growth of Islam among the youth and the poor reflected the transformative power of its message and its challenge to entrenched injustice.

2.3.4 Nature and Purpose of the Secret Call

The secret call to Islam was not a concealment of truth, but a strategic phase of nurturing faith, discipline, and resilience. At this formative stage, the Muslim community was small, vulnerable, and surrounded by a hostile environment deeply invested in idol worship and tribal dominance. Public confrontation at this point would have led to premature destruction of the nascent movement.

The Prophet (SAW) focused on individual transformation before societal confrontation. Early Muslims were taught tawḥīd (oneness of Allah), patience, sincerity, and moral rectitude. Revelation during this period emphasized faith, the Hereafter, and ethical accountability rather than legal injunctions or political authority.

The Qur'an reflects this gradual method in divine instruction:

"O you who wraps himself [in clothing], stand [in prayer] at night, except for a little… Indeed, we shall cast upon you a weighty word." (Source: Qur'an 73:1–5)

This verse underscores the preparation of the Prophet (SAW) and his followers for a demanding mission. The secrecy allowed believers to gain spiritual depth and mutual solidarity, particularly through gatherings in the house of al-Arqam.

The purpose of the secret call, therefore, was threefold:

- to protect the early believers from immediate annihilation,
- to cultivate strong faith and discipline,
- to prepare a morally grounded leadership for the future public phase of daʿwah.

This method demonstrates that Islam values wisdom, timing, and strategic patience, rather than impulsive confrontation.

Self-Assessment Exercises

1. Who was the very first person to accept Islam, and what made her contribution unique?
A) Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq – because of his social influence
B) Khadījah bint Khuwaylid – she provided emotional, financial, and moral support
C) ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib – because he was from the Prophet's household
D) Zayd ibn Ḥārithah – as he represented equality for slaves

2. What does the text highlight about the early converts during the Secret Call phase?
A) They accepted Islam mainly for material benefits and social status
B) They were distinguished by moral uprightness, conviction, and close relationship with the Prophet (SAW)
C) They were all from the most powerful and wealthy Quraysh families
D) They publicly declared their faith immediately despite persecution

3. Which Qur'anic verse was quoted to highlight spiritual equality and that the most noble person is the most righteous?
A) Qur'an 57:10
B) Qur'an 73:1–5
C) Qur'an 49:13
D) Qur'an 9:100

4. Why did Islam particularly appeal to the youth and the poor during the secret call?
A) Because it promised them wealth and high social status
B) Because it challenged the rigid hierarchy based on lineage and wealth, emphasizing piety and equality
C) Because it supported the traditional idol worship of Makkah
D) Because it was enforced by tribal leaders

2.4 Summary

This unit examined the expansion of Islam among the youth and the poor during the secret phase of daʿwah and analyzed the strategic purpose of secrecy in the early Islamic mission. It highlighted Islam's message of equality, dignity, and accountability, as well as the Prophet's methodical and wise approach to religious reform.



2.5 References / Further Readings/Web Resources

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Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Prophet for Our Time*.

Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources*.

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī.

Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim.



2.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

1. B) Khadījah bint Khuwaylid – she provided emotional, financial, and moral support
2. B) They were distinguished by moral uprightness, conviction, and close relationship with the Prophet (SAW)
3. C) Qur'an 49:13
4. B) Because it challenged the rigid hierarchy based on lineage and wealth, emphasizing piety and equality

Unit 3 Open Preaching, Opposition, And Persecution In Makkah

Unit Structure

3.1 Introduction
3.2 Learning Outcomes
3.3 Open Preaching and Reaction of the Quraysh
  3.3.1 Command to Preach Openly
  3.3.2 Public Declaration of Islam
  3.3.3 Forms of Opposition by the Quraysh
  3.3.4 Social, Economic, and Physical Persecution of Muslims
3.4 Summary
3.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
3.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs)



3.1 Introduction

The transition from secret propagation of Islam to open preaching marked a decisive phase in the prophetic mission of Muhammad (SAW). This stage represented a shift from private moral instruction to public confrontation with the dominant religious, social, and economic order of Makkah. By openly proclaiming the message of tawḥīd (the oneness of Allah), the Prophet challenged deeply rooted traditions, idol worship, and the authority of Quraysh leaders who benefited from the prevailing system.

Open preaching exposed the message of Islam to wider scrutiny and resistance. While it attracted new followers who were inspired by its moral clarity and spiritual depth, it also provoked intense hostility from the Quraysh. This hostility stemmed not only from theological disagreement but also from fear of losing social prestige, political influence, and economic advantage tied to the custodianship of idols in the Ka‘bah.

This unit examines the divine command to preach openly, the Prophet’s public declaration of Islam, and the initial reactions of the Quraysh. It highlights how truth, when proclaimed publicly, often provokes resistance from entrenched power structures.



3.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the divine basis for open preaching in Islam
- explain why opposition intensified after Islam was preached openly
- examine the reactions of the Quraysh to the open call
- analyse the Prophet's method of public declaration of Islam.



3.3 Open Preaching and Reaction of the Quraysh

The commencement of open preaching was not a spontaneous decision but a direct response to divine instruction. It signaled the universal nature of Islam and affirmed that the message was meant for all humanity, not a select private circle.

3.3.1 Command to preach openly

The command to proclaim Islam publicly came through clear revelation from Allah. After a period of secret da'wah that focused on strengthening the faith of early believers, the Prophet (SAW) was instructed to deliver the message openly, regardless of opposition.
Allah says in the Qur'an:

"So proclaim openly what you have been commanded, and turn away from the polytheists." (Qur'an 15:94)

This verse represents a turning point in Islamic history. The phrase "proclaim openly" indicates clarity, courage, and public accountability. It underscores that divine truth is not to be concealed out of fear of social backlash.

Another related command reinforces this obligation:

"And warn your closest relatives." (Qur'an 26:214)

This directive required the Prophet to begin with those most familiar with him. It also tested his sincerity, as calling one's own family to abandon ancestral beliefs was socially risky and emotionally demanding. The command highlights a fundamental Islamic principle: moral responsibility begins with one's immediate environment.
Prophetic traditions confirm that the Prophet (SAW) complied with this instruction without delay. His obedience demonstrates complete

submission to divine will, even when the message threatened personal safety and social harmony.

3.3.2 Public declaration of Islam

In response to the divine command, the Prophet (SAW) gathered the clans of Quraysh and addressed them publicly. According to authentic reports, he stood on Mount Ṣafā and called out the various families of Quraysh, asking whether they would believe him if he warned them of an impending danger. When they affirmed his truthfulness, he declared his mission as a warner from Allah.

The Prophet (SAW) said:

"If I were to tell you that an army is advancing against you from behind this hill, would you believe me?"
They replied, "Yes, we have never known you to lie."
He then said, "I am a warner to you before a severe punishment."
(Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Hadith no. 4770)

This moment was significant for several reasons. First, it relied on the Prophet's established reputation for honesty, known among the Quraysh as al-Amīn (the trustworthy). Second, it framed Islam as a warning rooted in accountability before Allah, not merely a philosophical or social reform. The public declaration also clarified that Islam rejected idol worship unequivocally. This rejection directly threatened the religious economy of Makkah, which depended on pilgrimage, idol trade, and tribal prestige. Consequently, the Quraysh interpreted the message as an attack on their heritage and authority. Despite the hostility that followed, the Prophet maintained a calm, dignified, and principled approach. He neither diluted the message nor resorted to coercion. His method illustrates that Islamic preaching is grounded in truth, patience, and moral consistency.

3.3.3 Forms of opposition by the Quraysh

The open proclamation of Islam provoked a coordinated and multi-layered opposition from the Quraysh leadership. Their resistance was not uniform but developed gradually, beginning with ridicule and intellectual dismissal before escalating into systematic repression. The Quraysh initially attempted to undermine the Prophet's credibility by labelling him a poet, magician, or madman. These accusations were aimed at confusing the public and discrediting the divine origin of the Qur'an. The Qur'an itself records these allegations and responds to them decisively. Allah states:

“And they say, ‘O you upon whom the Reminder has been sent, indeed you are mad.’” (Qur’an 15:6)

Such claims reveal the psychological dimension of Quraysh opposition. Unable to counter the moral and linguistic power of the Qur’an, they resorted to character assassination. This tactic also sought to discourage potential converts by portraying Islam as irrational and dangerous.

As Islam continued to spread, the Quraysh adopted political and social strategies. They attempted negotiations, offering the Prophet wealth, leadership, and marriage alliances in exchange for abandoning his mission. These offers were firmly rejected, demonstrating that the prophetic call was not motivated by material gain. Ibn Ishaq reports that when these offers were conveyed, the Prophet responded with unwavering resolve, emphasizing that even if the sun were placed in his right hand and the moon in his left, he would not abandon the message.

Another form of opposition involved manipulating public opinion by preventing people from listening to the Qur’an. Allah refers to this tactic:

“تَغْلِبُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ فِيهِ وَالْغَوْا الْقُرْآنِ لِهَٰذَا تَسْمَعُوا لَا كَفَرُوا الَّذِينَ وَقَالَ”

“And those who disbelieve say, ‘Do not listen to this Qur’an and make noise during it, so that you may prevail.’” (Qur’an 41:26)

This reflects fear of the Qur’an’s transformative power. The opposition was therefore not only religious but also ideological, aimed at preserving the status quo.

Can you tell what forms of persecution the early Muslims experienced from the Quraysh, and how the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his companions responded to these hardships?

3.3.4 Social, economic, and physical persecution of Muslims

When intellectual ridicule and negotiation failed, the Quraysh escalated their opposition into direct persecution. This persecution was particularly severe against converts who lacked tribal protection, including slaves, women, and the poor. Social persecution involved isolation, public humiliation, and pressure on families to disown members who embraced Islam. Economic persecution was institutionalized through the boycott imposed on the Prophet’s clan, Banū Hāshim. The Quraysh agreed not to trade, marry, or maintain social relations with Muslims and their

supporters. This boycott lasted several years and caused severe hunger and hardship. The Qur'an alludes to such trials faced by believers:

"يُفْتَنُونَ لَا وَهُمْ آمَنَّا يَقُولُوا أَن يُتْرَكُوا أَن النَّاسُ أَحَسِبَ"

"Do people think they will be left alone because they say, 'We believe,' and will not be tested?" (Qur'an 29:2)

Physical persecution represented the most brutal phase of Quraysh hostility. Many companions were tortured in public spaces to force them to renounce Islam. Bilāl ibn Rabāḥ was dragged across the scorching sands of Makkah with heavy stones placed on his chest, yet he remained firm, repeatedly affirming the oneness of Allah. The Prophet (SAW) witnessed these acts with deep sorrow but encouraged patience and steadfastness.

The Prophet himself was not spared. He was insulted, mocked, and physically harmed. On one occasion, while praying near the Ka'bah, filth was placed on his back. Despite this, he responded with restraint and prayer rather than revenge. His endurance embodied the Qur'anic instruction:

جَمِيلًا صَبْرًا فَاصْبِرْ

"So be patient with gracious patience." (Qur'an 70:5)

Authentic Hadith further illustrate this resilience. The Prophet (SAW) said:

"The people who were most severely tested were the prophets, then those most like them."

(Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Hadith no. 2398, ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ)

This persecution strengthened the moral character of the Muslim community and clarified that faith required sacrifice, patience, and trust in Allah.

Self-Assessment Exercises

1. Which Qur'anic verse commanded the Prophet (SAW) to proclaim Islam openly?
A) "And warn your closest relatives" (Qur'an 26:214)
B) "So proclaim openly what you have been commanded…" (Qur'an 15:94)
C) "O you who wraps himself…" (Qur'an 73:1)
D) "Indeed, the most noble of you…" (Qur'an 49:13)

2. Why did the Prophet (SAW) begin his public declaration by asking the Quraysh if they would believe him about an approaching army?
A) To test their military strength
B) To use his well-known reputation for honesty (al-Amīn) before delivering the message C) To threaten them with war
D) To ask for financial support

3. What was the main purpose of the Quraysh's economic boycott against Banū Hāshim and the Muslims?
A. To encourage trade with neighbouring tribes
B. To prevent Muslims from travelling outside Makkah
C. To pressure Muslims by cutting off trade, marriage, and social relations
D. To strengthen alliances with Banū Hāshim

4. How did Prophet Muhammad (SAW) respond when he was insulted and physically mistreated by the Quraysh?
A. He organised a military response against them.
B. He left Makkah immediately without preaching.
C. He responded with restraint, patience, and prayer rather than revenge.
D. He asked his companions to retaliate against the offenders.



3.4 Summary

This unit has examined the escalation of Quraysh opposition following the public declaration of Islam. It discussed intellectual ridicule, political pressure, economic boycott, and physical torture as tools of resistance. The unit also highlighted the moral resilience of the Prophet and his companions, emphasizing patience as a central Islamic virtue. These experiences laid the foundation for later developments in Islamic history, including migration and state formation.



3.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources

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3.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

1. B). So, proclaim openly what you have been commanded…" (Qur'an 15:94)
2. B. To use his well-known reputation for honesty *(al-Amīn)* before delivering the message
3. C. To pressure Muslims by cutting off trade, marriage, and social relations
4. C. He responded with restraint, patience, and prayer rather than revenge.

Unit 4 Migration to Abyssinia and Its Significance

Unit Structure

4.1 Introduction
4.2 Learning Outcomes
4.3 Migration to Abyssinia and Its Significance
    4.3.1 Reasons for the Migration
    4.3.2 Permission of the Prophet for Migration
    4.3.3 Reception by the Negus
    4.3.4 Ja'far ibn Abi Talib's Address and Its Impact
4.4 Summary
4.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
4.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs)



4.1 Introduction

The migration of some early Muslims to Abyssinia (al-Ḥabashah, present-day Ethiopia and Eritrea) represents one of the earliest strategic responses to persecution in Islamic history. This event occurred during the Makkan period, at a time when the Muslim community was small, vulnerable, and subjected to sustained hostility from the Quraysh. The migration was not an act of escape motivated by weakness, but a calculated decision aimed at preserving faith, human dignity, and religious freedom.

This migration also illustrates the universal outlook of Islam from its earliest phase. The Prophet (SAW) directed his followers to seek refuge in a Christian-ruled land because of the justice of its ruler, thereby affirming the Islamic principle that righteousness and justice are not limited by religious or ethnic boundaries. The Abyssinian migration laid an early foundation for Muslim engagement with other faith communities based on mutual respect and moral integrity.



4.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the circumstances that led to the migration to Abyssinia
- analyse the reasons behind the Prophet's decision to permit migration
- appreciate the role of justice and religious tolerance in Islamic thought
- assess the historical and moral significance of the Abyssinian migration.



4.3 Migration to Abyssinia and Its Significance

The migration to Abyssinia occurred in two waves, beginning around the fifth year of Prophethood. It involved men and women who left their homes, families, and livelihoods to protect their faith. This event stands as a powerful example of sacrifice, trust in Allah, and strategic foresight.

4.3.1 Reasons for the Migration

The primary reason for the migration was the intensification of persecution in Makkah. As Islam gained visibility, the Quraysh escalated their opposition through mockery, intimidation, torture, and social isolation. Weak members of society, including slaves, women, and those without strong tribal protection, were especially targeted.

The Qur'an alludes to the legitimacy of migration in the face of oppression:

"Indeed, those whom the angels take in death while wronging themselves, the angels will say, 'In what condition were you?' They will reply, 'We were oppressed in the land.'" (Qur'an 4:97)

This verse establishes that remaining in an environment where one's faith and dignity are under constant threat is not commendable when alternatives exist. Migration, therefore, became a religiously justified means of preserving belief and moral integrity.

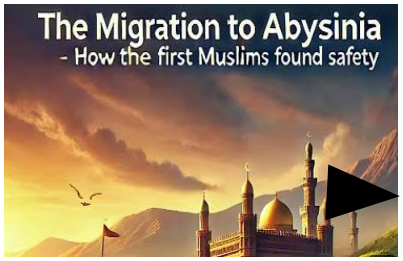
Another important reason was the availability of a just ruler in Abyssinia. The Prophet (SAW) described the Negus (al-Najāshī) as a king under whom no one was wronged. This demonstrates that Islam values justice above religious affiliation and encourages coexistence based on ethical governance.

4.3.2 Permission of the Prophet for migration

The migration to Abyssinia did not occur spontaneously. It was undertaken with the explicit permission and guidance of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). This highlights his role not only as a spiritual leader but also as a wise strategist concerned with the welfare of his followers. According to authentic historical reports, the Prophet (SAW) said:

"There is a king in Abyssinia under whom no one is oppressed. It is a land of truth. Remain there until Allah provides relief." (Reported in Ibn Isḥāq; authenticated through multiple sīrah sources)
This statement reveals several important principles. First, the Prophet recognised justice as a universal moral value. Second, he prioritised the safety and religious freedom of his companions. Third, he taught that seeking refuge under a non-Muslim ruler is permissible when justice and protection are assured.

The Prophet's permission also underscores the Islamic understanding of migration as a temporary measure, not abandonment of mission. The migrants remained spiritually connected to the Prophet and the Makkan community, awaiting divine resolution. Their eventual return and later participation in the Madinan state demonstrate that the migration strengthened, rather than weakened, the Muslim cause.



Click the link https://shorturl.at/cQAMo/video or scan QR code

4.3.3 Reception by the Negus

When the Muslim migrants arrived in Abyssinia, they encountered a political environment markedly different from that of Makkah. The ruler of Abyssinia, known by the title **al-Najāshī (the Negus)**, was renowned for his sense of justice, moral integrity, and respect for human dignity. Unlike the Quraysh leadership, whose authority was intertwined with idol worship and tribal privilege, the Negus governed according to ethical principles rooted in his Christian faith.

The Quraysh, alarmed by the migration, dispatched a delegation led by ʻAmr ibn al-ʻĀṣ and ʻAbdullāh ibn Abī Rabīʻah to demand the extradition of the Muslims. They presented gifts to Abyssinian officials and accused the Muslims of abandoning the religion of their people and sowing discord. Despite this political pressure, the Negus refused to act unjustly without first hearing directly from the migrants themselves. This decision alone reflects a commitment to fairness and due process.

The Qur'an repeatedly affirms justice as a universal moral value, regardless of religious boundaries:

"إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ"

"Indeed, Allah commands justice and excellence." (Qur'an 16:90)
The conduct of the Negus exemplified this Qur'anic principle. By granting the Muslims an audience and protection, he ensured their safety and freedom of belief. He rejected the Quraysh request outright, declaring that he would not surrender people who had sought refuge under his protection without compelling moral or legal justification.

This episode highlights an important Islamic teaching: justice and righteousness may be found beyond one's own religious community, and Muslims are encouraged to acknowledge and cooperate with such values wherever they exist.

Imagin this, why do you think Ja'far's words and the recitation from Sūrah Maryam had such a powerful impact on the Negus and his bishops?

4.3.4 Ja'far ibn Abi Talib's Address and Its Impact

Ja'far ibn Abī Ṭālib, a close cousin of the Prophet (SAW), was chosen to speak on behalf of the Muslim migrants. His address before the Negus stands as one of the most profound early articulations of Islam's moral and social vision. Ja'far began by describing the condition of Arabian society before Islam, emphasizing ignorance, immorality, injustice, and oppression. He then explained how the Prophet transformed their lives through monotheism, truthfulness, compassion, and social responsibility.

Ja'far stated that Islam commanded them to worship Allah alone, speak the truth, uphold family ties, protect neighbours, and refrain from bloodshed and immorality. This ethical framing presented Islam not as a disruptive force, but as a moral reform movement grounded in divine guidance.

At the request of the Negus, Ja'far recited verses from **Surah Maryam**, describing the story of Maryam (Mary) and the miraculous birth of Prophet 'Īsā (Jesus), peace be upon him. Allah says:

"And mention in the Book Mary, when she withdrew from her family to a place toward the east." (Qur'an 19:16)

The recitation deeply moved the Negus and his bishops, many of whom wept upon hearing the Qur'anic account. The Negus famously declared that the message of Muhammad and that of Jesus came from the same divine source, likening the difference between them to a thin line drawn on the ground.

The impact of Ja‘far’s address was decisive. The Negus rejected the Quraysh delegation, returned their gifts, and granted the Muslims permanent protection. This outcome demonstrated the power of truth conveyed with sincerity, wisdom, and moral clarity. It also affirmed Islam’s theological continuity with earlier monotheistic traditions.

Self-Assessment Exercises

1. What was the primary reason for the migration of some Muslims to Abyssinia?
A. To expand trade with neighboring kingdoms
B. To escape persecution and preserve their faith
C. To establish a new Islamic government immediately
D. To perform pilgrimage outside Makkah

2. Why did Prophet Muhammad (SAW) choose Abyssinia as the destination for the migrants?
A. It was the closest kingdom to Makkah.
B. It was ruled by a Muslim king.
C. It had a just ruler under whom no one was oppressed.
D. It offered the greatest economic opportunities.

3. Why did the Negus refuse to hand the Muslim migrants over to the Quraysh delegation immediately?
A. He feared a military attack from the Muslims.
B. He wanted to receive more gifts from the Quraysh.
C. He insisted on hearing directly from the Muslim migrants before making a judgment.
D. He had already accepted Islam before their arrival.

4. During his address before the Negus, what did Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib emphasize about the message of Islam?
A. Islam encouraged tribal superiority over other communities.
B. Islam promoted monotheism, truthfulness, compassion, and moral reform.
C. Islam required Muslims to seek political control of Abyssinia.
D. Islam discouraged interaction with people of other faiths.

4.4 Summary

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Welcome to the end of this section. Let us briefly reflect on what you have learned. The migration to Abyssinia was much more than a journey to escape persecution. It demonstrated that Islam upholds justice, religious freedom, and moral integrity, even when seeking protection from people

of another faith. You have also seen how the Negus' commitment to fairness and Ja'far ibn Abī Ṭālib's sincere and thoughtful presentation of Islam helped secure safety for the Muslim migrants. This reminds us that truth, wisdom, and good character can build understanding across religious and cultural differences.



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4.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

1. B. To escape persecution and preserve their faith
2. C. It had a just ruler under whom no one was oppressed.
3. C. He insisted on hearing directly from the Muslim migrants before making a judgment.
4. B. Islam promoted monotheism, truthfulness, compassion, and moral reform.

Unit 5 Events Leading to the Hijrah to Madinah

Unit Structure

5.1 Introduction
5.2 Learning Outcomes
5.3 Events Leading to the Hijrah to Madinah
  5.3.1 The Year of Sorrow
  5.3.2 The Visit to Ta'if
  5.3.3 The Pledges of 'Aqabah
  5.3.4 Preparation for the Hijrah
5.4 Summary
5.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
5.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs)



5.1 Introduction

The Hijrah (migration) of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) from Makkah to Madinah stands as one of the most decisive turning points in Islamic history. It was not a sudden or impulsive movement but the culmination of a prolonged period of hardship, rejection, and divine preparation. The events leading to the Hijrah reveal the depth of the Prophet's patience, resilience, and unwavering commitment to his mission despite immense personal loss and social hostility.

This phase of the Prophet's life highlights the intersection between human suffering and divine guidance. The increasing opposition of the Quraysh, combined with the loss of vital personal support, created conditions that made continued residence in Makkah both spiritually and physically unsustainable. Yet, these hardships also prepared the ground for the emergence of a new Muslim community grounded in faith, justice, and collective responsibility. Understanding the events preceding the Hijrah allows students to appreciate the Hijrah not merely as a geographical relocation, but as a strategic, spiritual, and moral transformation that reshaped the course of Islamic civilisation.



5.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the circumstances and significance of the Year of Sorrow in the life of the Prophet (SAW)
- analyse the visit to Ta'if as a critical moment of trial and perseverance

- identify Qur'anic and Prophetic teachings related to patience, trust in Allah, and perseverance in the face of hardship
- understand how these events prepared the way for the Hijrah to Madinah.



5.3 Events Leading to the Hijrah to Madinah

The period immediately preceding the Hijrah was marked by escalating opposition in Makkah and profound personal trials for the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). These experiences tested his endurance but also reinforced the ethical and spiritual foundations of his mission.

5.3.1 The Year of Sorrow

The tenth year of Prophethood is remembered in Islamic history as ʻĀm al-Ḥuzn (the Year of Sorrow). During this year, the Prophet suffered the loss of two of his greatest supporters: his wife Khadījah bint Khuwaylid (RA) and his uncle Abū Ṭālib. Khadījah had been his emotional anchor and first believer, while Abū Ṭālib provided crucial tribal protection against Quraysh hostility. Their deaths left the Prophet deeply vulnerable both personally and socially.

The Quraysh, emboldened by the loss of Abū Ṭālib, intensified their persecution. Insults, mockery, and physical harassment became more frequent, and the Prophet faced increasing isolation. Despite this, he remained steadfast, embodying the Qur'anic command to persevere with patience:

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ

"So be patient. Indeed, the promise of Allah is true." **(Qur'an 30:60)**

This period illustrates that prophetic success is often preceded by intense trial. The Prophet did not abandon his mission despite the emotional pain and social pressure he endured. Instead, his trust in Allah deepened, and his reliance on divine guidance became more pronounced.

5.3.2 The Visit to Ta'if

Following the death of his protectors in Makkah, the Prophet travelled to Ta'if seeking support for Islam and protection for his mission. This journey reflects his proactive leadership and refusal to surrender to despair. However, instead of acceptance, he encountered rejection, ridicule, and violence. The leaders of Ta'if incited children and the lower

classes to stone him, causing physical injury and emotional anguish. In this moment of profound distress, the Prophet turned to Allah in supplication, demonstrating complete humility and reliance on divine mercy. His famous supplication reflects both his pain and his unwavering faith:

"O Allah, to You I complain of my weakness, my helplessness, and my lowliness before people. O Most Merciful of the merciful, You are the Lord of the weak, and You are my Lord…" (Reported in al-Ṭabarānī, authenticated by scholars of Sīrah)

Despite the severe mistreatment, the Prophet refused revenge. When the Angel of the Mountains offered to crush the people of Ta'if between the mountains, he responded with mercy, expressing hope that future generations might embrace faith. This attitude aligns with the Qur'anic description of his mission:

"لِلْعَالَمِينَ رَحْمَةً لَّإِ أَرْسَلْنَاكَ وَمَا"

"And We have not sent you except as a mercy to all the worlds."
(Qur'an 21:107)

The visit to Ta'if thus represents a critical moral lesson in Islamic history. It demonstrates that rejection does not signify failure, and that patience and mercy are central to prophetic leadership. The experience also marked the final closure of avenues in Makkah and its surroundings, thereby preparing the ground for the eventual Hijrah to Madinah.

5.3.3 The Pledges of 'Aqabah

The Pledges of 'Aqabah represent a decisive turning point in the history of Islam, marking the transition of the Prophet's mission from persistent rejection in Makkah to emerging acceptance beyond it. These pledges occurred during the pilgrimage seasons and involved delegates from Yathrib (later Madinah) who encountered the Prophet and responded positively to his message. Unlike the Quraysh, the people of Yathrib were seeking moral leadership and social stability amid long-standing tribal conflicts.

The **First Pledge of 'Aqabah** was primarily moral and spiritual in nature. The pledgers committed themselves to monotheism, moral discipline, and obedience to the Prophet in righteous matters. This pledge closely resembled a pledge of faith and ethical reform. The Qur'an reflects the seriousness of such commitments when it states:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ

“Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you are actually pledging allegiance to Allah.” (Qur’an 48:10)



Click the link https://shorturl.at/GKiQ8/video or scan the QR code

The **Second Pledge of ‘Aqabah**, however, carried a far deeper political and social implication. It involved a formal commitment by the people of Yathrib to protect the Prophet as they would protect their own families. This pledge effectively invited the Prophet to relocate and assume leadership within their community. According to authentic historical reports, the Prophet clarified the gravity of this commitment, emphasizing that it entailed confrontation with Arab tribes and potential warfare.

Al-Bara’ ibn Ma‘rur reported that the Prophet said during the pledge:

“You pledge to protect me as you protect your women and children.” **(Musnad Ahmad, no. 20423)**

This moment signified the emergence of Islam as a community-bound faith with political responsibility, not merely a private spiritual movement. The Pledges of ‘Aqabah thus laid the legal, moral, and social foundation for the Islamic state in Madinah.

Reflect on the Prophet’s (SAW) preparation for the Hijrah. What practical steps did he take before leaving Makkah, and what do these actions teach us about balancing careful planning with trust in Allah in our own lives?

5.3.4 Preparation for the Hijrah

Following the Pledges of ‘Aqabah, the Prophet began careful and deliberate preparations for the Hijrah. This preparation reflects Islam’s emphasis on strategic planning alongside reliance on divine guidance. Muslims were instructed to migrate gradually to Yathrib, leaving behind property and social status in obedience to Allah’s command. The Quraysh, alarmed by the growing strength of the Muslim community in Yathrib, convened to eliminate the Prophet before he could migrate. Their plot involved selecting young men from different tribes to assassinate him collectively, thereby avoiding blood vengeance. The Qur’an explicitly references this conspiracy:

"And when those who disbelieved plotted against you to restrain you or kill you or expel you, but they planned, and Allah planned. And Allah is the best of planners." (Qur'an 8:30)

In response, the Prophet adopted practical measures while placing complete trust in Allah. He arranged for 'Ali ibn Abi Talib to sleep in his bed to return entrusted items, selected Abu Bakr as his companion, and concealed their route by travelling southward first. These events are meticulously recorded in authentic Hadith. 'A'ishah (RA) narrated:

"The Prophet said to Abu Bakr: 'Allah has permitted me to migrate.'" (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, no. 3905)

The Hijrah thus exemplifies the balance between human effort and divine reliance. It demonstrates that trust in Allah does not negate planning, but rather gives it moral clarity and spiritual purpose.

Self-Assessment Exercises

1. Why is the tenth year of Prophethood known as the "Year of Sorrow" ('Ām al-Ḥuzn)?
A. It marked the beginning of the boycott against the Muslims.
B. The Prophet (SAW) lost both Khadījah (RA) and his uncle Abū Ṭālib.
C. The Muslims were defeated in a major battle.
D. The Prophet (SAW) was forced to leave Makkah immediately.

2. How did the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) respond when the Angel of the Mountains offered to punish the people of Ta'if?
A. He accepted the offer immediately.
B. He asked that only the leaders be punished.
C. He refused revenge and hoped that their future generations would embrace Islam.
D. He postponed the decision until he returned to Makkah.

3. what does the Prophet's preparation for the Hijrah demonstrate about the Islamic understanding of reliance on Allah?
A. Believers should rely on miracles instead of making plans.
B. Careful planning and trust in Allah should go hand in hand.
C. Human planning is more important than divine guidance.
D. Migration should always be delayed until all risks disappear.

4.Which of the following was one of the practical measures taken by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) during the Hijrah?

A. He travelled directly to Yathrib by the main route.
B. He appointed ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb to remain in his house.
C. He asked ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib to sleep in his bed while he departed with Abū Bakr.
D. He publicly announced the exact date and route of his migration.



5.4 Summary

This unit examined the critical events that directly preceded the Hijrah to Madinah. It analysed the Pledges of ‘Aqabah as formal commitments that provided the Prophet with political legitimacy and communal protection. It also explored the strategic preparation for the Hijrah in response to Quraysh hostility, highlighting the Qur’anic affirmation of divine planning alongside human effort. Together, these events reveal the Hijrah as a divinely guided transformation in Islamic history.



5.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources

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5.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

1. C. To seek support for Islam and protection for his mission.
2. C. He refused revenge and hoped that their future generations would embrace Islam.
3. B. Careful planning and trust in Allah should go hand in hand.
4. C. He asked ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib to sleep in his bed while he departed with Abū Bakr.

MODULE 3 THE MADINAN PERIOD, LEADERSHIP OF THE PROPHET, AND HIS PASSING

Unit 1 The Hijrah and the Establishment of the Islamic State in Madinah
Unit 2 The Constitution of Madinah and Community Building
Unit 3 Major Battles and the Consolidation of the Muslim Ummah
Unit 4 The Prophet's Religious, Political, and Military Leadership
Unit 5 The Prophet's Character, Farewell Pilgrimage, and His Death in 632 CE

Unit 1 The Hijrah and the Establishment of the Islamic State in Madinah

Unit Structure

1.1 Introduction
1.2 Learning Outcomes
1.3 The Hijrah and the Establishment of the Islamic State in Madinah
  1.3.1 The Hijrah and Its Historical Significance
  1.3.2 Reception of the Prophet in Madinah
  1.3.3 Formation of the Early Muslim community
  1.3.4 Early Foundations of the Islamic State
1.4 Summary
1.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
1.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs)



1.1 Introduction

The Hijrah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) from Makkah to Madinah marks one of the most transformative moments in Islamic history. It was not merely a migration motivated by persecution, but a divinely guided transition that laid the foundation for the establishment of an organised Muslim society governed by moral, legal, and spiritual principles. Through the Hijrah, Islam moved from being a persecuted faith community to a structured socio-political entity.

This migration also signifies a shift in the nature of the Prophet's leadership. In Makkah, his role was primarily spiritual and moral, centred on preaching and patience. In Madinah, however, his leadership expanded to include governance, conflict resolution, community organisation, and diplomacy. The Hijrah therefore represents the birth of the Islamic state and the practical application of Islamic teachings in social and political

life. The importance of the Hijrah is further underscored by the fact that it later became the basis of the Islamic calendar, reflecting its enduring historical and religious significance.

1.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the historical and religious significance of the Hijrah in Islamic history
- analyse the role of the Hijrah in the establishment of the Islamic state in Madinah
- describe the reception of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) by the people of Madinah
- identify Qur'anic and Prophetic evidence that highlights the importance of the Hijrah.

1.3 The Hijrah and the Establishment of the Islamic State in Madinah

The Hijrah stands as a defining moment in the evolution of Islam from belief to practice, and from individual faith to collective responsibility. It marks the point at which Islam began to shape society through law, ethics, and governance under prophetic leadership.



Click the link https://shorturl.at/AmTcx/video or scan QR code

1.3.1 The Hijrah and Its Historical Significance

Historically, the Hijrah represents a deliberate and strategic movement undertaken under divine instruction. The Qur'an affirms that migration in the cause of Allah is an act of faith and sacrifice that carries immense spiritual reward:

"And those who emigrated for the cause of Allah after they had been wronged, We will surely settle them in a good place in this world." (Qur'an 16:41)

The Hijrah demonstrated the seriousness of commitment required of early Muslims. They abandoned their homes, wealth, and family ties in obedience to Allah and loyalty to the Prophet. This act redefined Muslim identity, placing faith above tribal affiliation and material attachment. From a political perspective, the Hijrah enabled the formation of a sovereign Muslim community. Madinah became a centre where Islamic principles could be implemented collectively. The Prophet now exercised authority not only as a Messenger but also as a statesman and judge, laying the groundwork for Islamic governance.

The Prophet himself highlighted the unique significance of the Hijrah when he stated:

"There is no migration after the conquest (of Makkah), but jihad and intention remain." (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, no. 2783)

This Hadith indicates that the Hijrah was a unique historical obligation tied specifically to the survival and establishment of the Muslim community.

1.3.2 Reception of the Prophet in Madinah

The reception of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in Madinah was unprecedented in Arabian history. Unlike Makkah, where hostility dominated, Madinah welcomed him with enthusiasm, reverence, and collective commitment. Men, women, and children gathered to celebrate his arrival, expressing joy and readiness to support his mission.

The people of Madinah, later known as the Ansar (Helpers), demonstrated extraordinary generosity by offering their homes, wealth, and protection to the Prophet and the Muhajirun. Their attitude reflects the Qur'anic praise of their selflessness:

"They give preference to others over themselves, even though they are in need." (Qur'an 59:9)

Upon arrival, the Prophet immediately took steps to stabilise the community by establishing the mosque as a centre for worship, consultation, and education. His actions reflected a leadership model rooted in unity, consultation, and moral discipline rather than domination or coercion.

Anas ibn Malik (RA) described the emotional impact of the Prophet's arrival:

"I have never seen a day brighter or more beautiful than the day the Messenger of Allah entered Madinah." (Musnad Ahmad, no. 12141)

This reception symbolised a collective covenant between the Prophet and the people of Madinah, laying the emotional and moral foundation for the Islamic state.

In your opinion, how did the establishment of brotherhood between the *Muhājirūn* and the *Anṣār* help strengthen the early Muslim community?

1.3.3 Formation of the Early Muslim Community

The formation of the early Muslim community in Madinah marked a radical transformation in Arabian social organisation. For the first time, a community was structured not on tribal lineage, blood ties, or ethnic loyalty, but on shared faith and moral responsibility. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) deliberately dismantled the dominant tribal hierarchy by establishing Islam as the primary bond uniting individuals from diverse backgrounds.

One of the most significant steps taken by the Prophet was the establishment of brotherhood between the **Muhājirūn** (migrants from Makkah) and the **Anṣār** (helpers of Madinah). This brotherhood was not symbolic; it involved real economic and social obligations, including shared property, mutual support, and collective responsibility. The Qur'an acknowledges this bond and praises it as a divine blessing:

"إِخْوَةٌ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِنَّمَا"

"Indeed, the believers are brothers." (Qur'an 49:10)

This newly formed community was characterised by cooperation, mutual sacrifice, and moral accountability. The Prophet acted as both spiritual guide and social regulator, ensuring that justice, compassion, and equality governed interpersonal relations. Disputes were resolved through consultation and revelation rather than revenge or tribal retaliation, marking a departure from pre-Islamic customs.

The Prophet emphasised collective responsibility as a defining feature of the Muslim community. He stated:

"The believers, in their mutual love, mercy, and compassion, are like a single body; when one part suffers, the whole body responds with wakefulness and fever."
(Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, no. 2586)

This Hadith captures the ethical foundation of the early Muslim community, which was built on empathy, solidarity, and shared moral purpose rather than coercion or power.

1.3.4 Early Foundations of the Islamic State

The early foundations of the Islamic state in Madinah emerged naturally from the moral and social cohesion of the Muslim community. Governance under the Prophet was not imposed through force but evolved through consent, justice, and shared values. The Prophet served simultaneously as a Messenger of Allah, a judge, a political leader, and a community organiser.

A central feature of this emerging state was the rule of law grounded in divine revelation. Authority was exercised within clear ethical boundaries, and leadership was understood as a trust rather than a privilege. The Qur'an affirms this principle of leadership as responsibility:

"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due." (Qur'an 4:58)

The Prophet also established consultation (**shūrā**) as a governing principle. Decisions affecting the community were discussed openly, reinforcing participation and accountability. This approach laid the groundwork for political stability and public trust in leadership. The Qur'an highlights consultation as a defining feature of the believers:

"Their affairs are conducted through mutual consultation." (Qur'an 42:38)

Security, justice, and welfare formed the core objectives of the early Islamic state. Protection of life, property, and religious freedom was guaranteed, not only for Muslims but also for non-Muslim residents. This inclusive approach distinguished the Madinan state from earlier tribal systems that prioritised group dominance over moral governance.

Self-Assessment Exercises

1. What was one of the most significant outcomes of the Hijrah to Madinah?
A. It ended all opposition to Islam immediately.
B. It enabled the establishment of a sovereign Muslim community governed by Islamic principles.
C. It marked the end of the Prophet's role as a Messenger.
D. It required all Arab tribes to accept Islam.

2. How did the people of Madinah (the Ansar) demonstrate their support for the Prophet (SAW) and the Muhājirūn?
A. They encouraged the migrants to return to Makkah.
B. They offered their homes, wealth, and protection to the Prophet and the Muhājirūn.
C. They asked the Prophet to remain outside the city.
D. They accepted only the wealthy migrants into their community.

3. What was one of the Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) first actions after arriving in Madinah?
A. He immediately organised a military campaign.
B. He established the mosque as a centre for worship, consultation, and education.
C. He returned to Makkah to retrieve the remaining Muslims.
D. He dissolved the tribal system of Madinah without consultation.



1.4 Summary

This unit examined the Hijrah as the foundation for the formation of the early Muslim community and the establishment of the Islamic state in Madinah. It highlighted the transformation from tribal loyalty to faith-based unity, the institutionalisation of justice and consultation, and the Prophet's multidimensional leadership. Together, these developments marked the beginning of Islam as a lived social and political reality.



1.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources

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1.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

1. B. It enabled the establishment of a sovereign Muslim community governed by Islamic principles.
2. B. They offered their homes, wealth, and protection to the Prophet and the Muhājirūn.
3. B. He established the mosque as a centre for worship, consultation, and education.

Unit 2 The Constitution of Madinah and Community Building

Unit Structure

2.1 Introduction
2.2 Learning Outcomes
2.3 The Constitution of Madinah and Community Building
  2.3.1 Background and Context of the Madinah Charter
  2.3.2 Major Provisions of the Constitution
  2.3.3 Rights and Obligations of Various Communities
  2.3.4 Significance of the Constitution in Nation Building
2.4 Summary
2.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
2.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs)



2.1 Introduction

The establishment of the Constitution of Madinah, also known as the Madinah Charter or Ṣaḥīfat al-Madīnah, represents one of the earliest documented examples of a written social and political contract in human history. Drafted under the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), the Charter provided a structured framework for regulating relations among the diverse communities living in Madinah, including Muslims, Jews, and other tribal groups.

This document was not merely a political agreement but a moral and legal framework grounded in Islamic principles of justice, coexistence, and collective responsibility. It addressed the urgent need for social stability following the Hijrah by redefining community membership beyond tribal affiliations and establishing shared obligations among different religious and ethnic groups.

The Constitution of Madinah therefore marks a decisive step in the transformation of Madinah into a pluralistic yet unified political entity, setting enduring precedents for governance, citizenship, and intercommunal relations in Islam.



2.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the historical circumstances that necessitated the drafting of the Constitution of Madinah
- identify and analyse the major provisions of the Madinah Charter
- assess the role of the Constitution in promoting peaceful coexistence and community building
- demonstrate how Qur'anic and Prophetic teachings informed the principles of the Charter.



2.3 The Constitution of Madinah and Community Building

The Madinah Charter functioned as both a constitutional document and a moral covenant. It established a unified political community while respecting religious diversity, thereby laying the foundation for stable governance and cooperative living.

2.3.1 Background and Context of the Madinah Charter

Upon the Prophet's arrival in Madinah, the city was characterised by deep-rooted tribal rivalries, particularly between the Aws and Khazraj, as well as tensions involving Jewish clans. These divisions had previously resulted in prolonged conflict, including the Battle of Bu'āth, which left Madinah politically fragile and socially fragmented.

The Hijrah brought together two distinct Muslim groups, the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār, each with different economic capacities and social experiences. In addition, non-Muslim communities formed a significant part of the population. The absence of a unifying authority capable of regulating these diverse interests posed a serious threat to peace and security.

In response, the Prophet initiated the drafting of a written constitution to define rights, duties, and mechanisms for conflict resolution. This initiative reflects the Qur'anic emphasis on justice and social order:

"Indeed, We sent Our messengers with clear proofs and revealed with them the Scripture and the balance, that mankind may uphold justice." (Qur'an 57:25)

The Charter thus emerged as a practical expression of Qur'anic justice applied to a multi-religious society.

2.3.2 Major Provisions of the Constitution

One of the most significant provisions of the Constitution of Madinah was the declaration of all signatory groups as a single political community (**ummah wāḥidah**) while allowing each group to maintain its religious identity. This was revolutionary in a society previously organised strictly along tribal and blood-based lines.

The Charter guaranteed freedom of religion and protection of life and property for all communities. It stated that the Jews of Madinah were entitled to practice their faith while remaining part of the political community. This principle reflects the Qur'anic position on religious freedom:

الدِّينِ فِي إِكْرَاهَ لَا

"There is no compulsion in religion."
(Qur'an 2:256)

Another key provision concerned collective security and defense. The Charter required all communities to contribute to the defense of Madinah in the event of external aggression. This fostered a sense of shared responsibility and mutual protection, replacing fragmented tribal defense systems with coordinated collective action.

The Constitution also established the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as the final authority in matters of dispute. This ensured legal consistency and prevented the escalation of conflicts. The Prophet affirmed the seriousness of such covenants when he stated:

"Whoever harms a person under covenant, I shall be his opponent on the Day of Resurrection." (Sunan Abī Dāwūd, no. 3052)

Through these provisions, the Charter laid the foundations for a society governed by law, moral accountability, and inclusivity rather than force or tribal dominance.

2.3.3 Rights and Obligations of Various Communities

The Constitution of Madinah clearly articulated the rights and obligations of all communities living within the Madinan polity. One of its most significant contributions was the recognition that political membership did not erase religious identity. Muslims, Jews, and allied tribes were

acknowledged as distinct religious groups while simultaneously bound together within a single political framework.

Each community was guaranteed the right to practice its religion freely without coercion or interference. This principle reflected the Qur'anic position on religious freedom and moral responsibility:

"There is no compulsion in religion; the right path has become distinct from error." (Qur'an 2:256)

Alongside these rights were clearly defined obligations. All communities were required to contribute to the collective defence of Madinah and to refrain from aiding external enemies. Security was a shared responsibility, replacing tribal self-interest with communal solidarity. This obligation ensured that no group could undermine the stability of the state for narrow political or economic gain.

The Charter also imposed ethical obligations related to justice and conflict resolution. Disputes among communities were to be referred to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as the final arbiter, preventing cycles of revenge that had previously destabilised Arabian society. The Prophet emphasised the sanctity of covenants and the protection of minorities when he stated:

"Whoever kills a person under covenant shall not smell the fragrance of Paradise." **(Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, no. 3166)**

This Hadith underscores the seriousness with which Islam treats the rights of non-Muslims living under Islamic governance and reinforces the constitutional commitment to justice and protection.

2.3.4 Significance of the Constitution in Nation Building

The Constitution of Madinah played a foundational role in the process of nation building by transforming a fragmented city into a unified political entity governed by law. Unlike earlier tribal alliances based on blood ties, the Charter established a civic identity rooted in shared responsibility, moral accountability, and legal order.

One of the most important nation-building functions of the Constitution was its replacement of arbitrary tribal authority with structured governance. Authority was exercised through agreed principles rather than force, creating legitimacy and public trust. The Qur'an affirms the necessity of justice as the basis of social order:

"إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ"

"Indeed, Allah commands justice and excellence." (Qur'an 16:90)

The Charter also institutionalised peaceful coexistence by acknowledging diversity as a social reality rather than a threat. By guaranteeing rights and imposing mutual obligations, it reduced the likelihood of internal conflict and provided mechanisms for cooperation. This approach enabled Madinah to function as a stable political community capable of collective decision-making and coordinated defence.

Furthermore, the Constitution established moral leadership as the core of political authority. The Prophet's role as leader was not absolute but bound by revelation and ethical standards. He stated:

"The leader is a shepherd, and he is responsible for his flock." **(Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, no. 893; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, no. 1829)**

This principle shaped governance in Madinah as a trust (**amānah**) rather than domination, laying a durable foundation for Islamic political thought and statecraft.

Self-Assessment Exercises

1. Why did Prophet Muhammad (SAW) initiate the drafting of the Constitution of Madinah?
A. To abolish all tribal identities in Madinah
B. To establish a written framework for rights, responsibilities, and peaceful conflict resolution among the diverse communities
C. To appoint military leaders for each tribe
D. To require all residents of Madinah to embrace Islam

2. Which of the following was a major provision of the Constitution of Madinah?
A. Only Muslims were entitled to legal protection.
B. All religious groups were required to adopt the same beliefs.
C. All signatory communities formed one political community while retaining their own religious identities.
D. Tribal leaders remained the highest authority in resolving disputes.

3. According to the Constitution of Madinah, who had the final authority in resolving disputes within the community?
A. The chiefs of the Aws and Khazraj
B. The Jewish tribal leaders
C. The council of the Muhājirūn
D. Prophet Muhammad (SAW)



2.4 Summary

This unit examined the rights and obligations of communities under the Constitution of Madinah and highlighted its significance in nation building. It demonstrated how the Charter replaced tribal fragmentation with legal unity, promoted peaceful coexistence, and established justice as the foundation of governance. The Madinan model remains a reference point for pluralistic governance in Islamic thought.



2.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources

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2.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

1. B. To establish a written framework for rights, responsibilities, and peaceful conflict resolution among the diverse communities.
2. C. All signatory communities formed one political community while retaining their own religious identities.
3. D. Prophet Muhammad (SAW)

Unit 3 Major Battles and the Consolidation of the Muslim Ummah

Unit Structure

3.1 Introduction
3.2 Learning Outcomes
3.3 Major Battles and the Consolidation of the Muslim Ummah
  3.3.1 The Battle of Badr and Its Causes
  3.3.2 Outcomes and lessons of the Battle of Badr
  3.3.3 The Battles of Uhud and Khandaq
  3.3.4 Impact of the Battles on the Muslim Ummah
3.4 Summary
3.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
3.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs)



3.1 Introduction

Bravo, you made it this far. The survival and consolidation of the early Muslim community in Madinah were not achieved solely through spiritual teachings and moral exhortations. They also required strategic defence, political foresight, and collective resilience in the face of persistent external threats. The Quraysh of Makkah, having failed to extinguish Islam through persecution and expulsion, continued their hostility by attempting to destabilise the new Muslim community militarily and economically.

The early battles fought by the Muslims were therefore not wars of aggression but defensive struggles aimed at protecting religious freedom, securing the community, and establishing political legitimacy. These encounters tested the faith, discipline, and unity of the believers, shaping the Muslim Ummah into a coherent socio-political entity.

Among these confrontations, the Battle of Badr occupies a central place in Islamic history. It marked the first major military engagement between the Muslims and the Quraysh and had far-reaching consequences for the consolidation of the Muslim Ummah in Madinah.



3.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the historical circumstances that led to the Battle of Badr
- identify the moral, spiritual, and strategic lessons derived from Badr
- analyse the immediate and long-term outcomes of the battle
- assess the role of the Battle of Badr in consolidating the Muslim Ummah.



3.3 Major Battles and the Consolidation of the Muslim Ummah

The early military engagements faced by the Muslims were formative experiences that shaped their collective identity. They reinforced obedience to leadership, reliance on divine guidance, and commitment to communal responsibility.

3.3.1 The Battle of Badr and Its Causes

The Battle of Badr occurred in the second year after the Hijrah (2 AH), against the backdrop of unresolved tensions between the Muslims of Madinah and the Quraysh of Makkah. One immediate cause was the Quraysh's continued economic warfare against the Muslims, including the confiscation of properties left behind by the Muhājirūn when they migrated from Makkah.

Another significant factor was the Quraysh's determination to assert dominance and deter the spread of Islam. Their trade routes to Syria passed close to Madinah, and they perceived the growing Muslim presence as a political and economic threat. The Muslims' attempt to intercept a Quraysh caravan led by Abū Sufyān escalated into a full military confrontation when the Quraysh mobilised a large army to protect their commercial interests.

Beyond material considerations, the Battle of Badr represented a confrontation between opposing worldviews. The Qur'an frames the conflict as a struggle between truth and falsehood:

"Allah had already given you victory at Badr when you were weak." (Qur'an 3:123)

The Muslims were numerically inferior, poorly equipped, and largely inexperienced in warfare. Yet they proceeded with firm reliance on Allah and obedience to the Prophet's leadership. The Prophet himself engaged in earnest supplication before the battle, emphasising the existential nature of the encounter. 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās reported:
"The Messenger of Allah prayed intensely on the day of Badr…" (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, no. 1763)

This illustrates that the battle was understood not merely as a military event but as a decisive moment for the survival of the emerging Ummah.

3.3.2 Outcomes and Lessons of the Battle of Badr

The victory at Badr had immediate and profound consequences for the Muslim community. Militarily, it neutralised the myth of Quraysh invincibility and demonstrated that discipline, unity, and divine support could overcome numerical superiority. Politically, it elevated the status of the Muslims in Madinah and among neighbouring tribes, many of whom began to reassess their attitudes toward Islam.

Spiritually, the battle reinforced the principle that success is granted by Allah, not by material strength alone. The Qur'an makes this explicit:

"You did not kill them, but Allah killed them." (Qur'an 8:17)

This verse redirected credit away from human effort alone and instilled humility and gratitude among the believers. It also reinforced reliance on divine guidance in all collective endeavours.

The Battle of Badr also established ethical norms of warfare in Islam. Prisoners of war were treated with mercy, and many were released upon ransom or acts of service. The Prophet said:

"Treat the captives well." (Reported in Musnad Aḥmad, no. 20423)

This humane approach contrasted sharply with pre-Islamic practices and underscored Islam's commitment to moral restraint even in times of conflict.

In the long term, Badr strengthened internal unity within the Muslim Ummah. It fostered a shared sense of destiny and sacrifice, binding the Muhājirūn and Anṣār together through collective struggle. Those who participated in Badr were accorded special honour, reflecting the battle's enduring significance in Islamic memory.



Click the link https://shorturl.at/0wvKi/video or scan the QR code to watch this 2 min video

If you were to choose one lesson from these battles that is most relevant to your life today, which would it be, and why?

3.3.3 The Battles of Uhud and Khandaq

Following the defeat of the Quraysh at Badr, hostility toward the Muslim community intensified. Determined to restore their prestige and weaken Islam, the Quraysh mobilised a large force that led to the Battle of Uhud in 3 AH. Unlike Badr, this encounter exposed internal weaknesses within the Muslim ranks and tested their discipline and obedience to prophetic instruction.

Initially, the Muslims gained the upper hand due to strategic positioning and unity. However, a turning point occurred when a group of archers abandoned their posts against the Prophet's explicit command, motivated by the desire for spoils. This breach allowed the Quraysh cavalry to attack from the rear, resulting in confusion, casualties, and the injury of the Prophet himself. The Qur'an directly addresses this event, emphasising the consequences of disobedience:

"Allah certainly fulfilled His promise to you when you were killing them by His permission, until you lost courage, disputed about the command, and disobeyed after He had shown you that which you love." (Qur'an 3:152)

The Battle of Uhud therefore became a powerful lesson in leadership, obedience, and moral accountability. It demonstrated that divine support is conditional upon discipline and adherence to prophetic guidance, not mere faith claims.

Several years later, the Muslim community faced an even more formidable threat during the Battle of Khandaq (the Trench) in 5 AH. This time, a coalition of Quraysh, allied tribes, and internal dissidents sought to annihilate the Muslims entirely. In response, the Prophet adopted an innovative defensive strategy by digging a trench around Madinah, following the suggestion of Salmān al-Fārisī.

The siege tested the endurance, faith, and unity of the Muslims under extreme hardship. The Qur'an vividly captures the psychological pressure experienced during this period:

"When they came at you from above you and from below you, and when eyes grew wild and hearts reached the throats." (Qur'an 33:10)

Despite the prolonged siege, internal betrayal, and scarcity of resources, the Muslims remained steadfast. Ultimately, divine intervention through severe winds and fear among the enemy forces led to the collapse of the coalition. The Prophet later remarked on the strategic shift this battle produced:

"Now we will attack them, and they will not attack us." **(Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, no. 4110)**

This statement signalled a decisive turning point in the balance of power.

3.3.4 Impact of the Battles on the Muslim Ummah

The combined experiences of Uhud and Khandaq profoundly shaped the Muslim Ummah, strengthening it morally, spiritually, and politically. While Uhud exposed vulnerabilities, it also cultivated humility, accountability, and renewed commitment to prophetic leadership. The Qur'an reframed defeat as moral instruction rather than abandonment:

"Do not lose heart or grieve; you will have the upper hand if you are believers." (Qur'an 3:139)

Khandaq, on the other hand, marked the consolidation of Muslim political authority in Madinah. The failure of the confederate forces demonstrated that the Muslim state could no longer be eliminated through military coalitions. It reinforced collective resilience and highlighted the effectiveness of consultation ***(shūrā)*** and adaptive leadership.

Together, these battles strengthened internal cohesion and clarified the ethical foundations of struggle in Islam. Victory and defeat were both framed as tests, cultivating patience, trust in Allah, and communal solidarity. The Ummah emerged more disciplined, strategically mature, and spiritually grounded.

Self-Assessment Exercises

1. What was the main reason the Muslims suffered a setback during the Battle of Uhud?
A. They lacked sufficient weapons and supplies.
B. The archers abandoned their assigned positions against the Prophet's command.
C. The Prophet (SAW) ordered the Muslims to retreat.
D. The Muslims refused to defend Madinah.

2. What innovative defensive strategy did the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) adopt during the Battle of Khandaq?
A. Building a fortress around Madinah
B. Launching a surprise attack on Makkah
C. Digging a trench around Madinah based on Salmān al-Fārisī's suggestion
D. Forming an alliance with the Byzantine Empire

3. What was one of the major impacts of the Battles of Uhud and Khandaq on the Muslim Ummah?
A. They led the Muslims to abandon Madinah.
B. They strengthened the Muslims morally, spiritually, and politically while reinforcing unity and trust in Allah.
C. They ended all conflicts between the Muslims and the Quraysh immediately.
D. They encouraged the Muslims to rely only on military strength.



3.4 Summary

In this unit, you explored the Battles of Uhud and Khandaq and their lasting impact on the growth of the Muslim Ummah. You learnt that both victory and setback served as valuable lessons, helping to strengthen the community's faith, resilience, and strategic thinking. The unit also highlighted how these experiences reinforced key Islamic values such as effective leadership, accountability, consultation (*shūrā*), patience, and perseverance in the face of challenges.



3.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources

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3.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

1. B. The archers abandoned their assigned positions against the Prophet's command.
2. C. Digging a trench around Madinah based on Salmān al-Fārisī's suggestion.
3. B. They strengthened the Muslims morally, spiritually, and politically while reinforcing unity and trust in Allah

Unit 4 The Prophet's Religious, Political, And Military Leadership

Unit Structure

4.1 Introduction
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4.1 Introduction

Welcome to this unit. In the previous units, you explored how the Muslim community was established and strengthened in Madinah despite numerous challenges, major battles and the consolidation of the Muslim ummah. In this unit, you will examine the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) during the Madinan period and discover how his roles as a spiritual guide, political leader, and military commander worked together to build a just, united, and resilient society.

As you progress through the unit, you will see that the Prophet's leadership was founded on divine guidance, justice, consultation (*shūrā*), compassion, and moral responsibility rather than force or personal authority. You will also explore how his religious, political, and military leadership complemented one another, enabling the early Muslim Ummah to overcome challenges while remaining firmly grounded in Islamic values and ethical principles.



4.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the nature and scope of the Prophet's religious leadership using Qur'anic and Hadith evidence
- analyse the Prophet's role as a political leader and administrator in Madinah

- assess the ethical foundations of the Prophet's military leadership and defensive strategies
- demonstrate how these leadership roles collectively strengthened the Muslim Ummah.



4.3 The Prophet's Religious, Political, and Military Leadership

The leadership of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) cannot be understood in isolated categories. His religious authority informed his political decisions, while his military conduct was governed by moral and spiritual principles. This integrated leadership model distinguished the Islamic state from existing tribal and imperial systems.

4.3.1 Religious Leadership and Spiritual Guidance

The Prophet's foremost role was that of a religious guide who conveyed divine revelation and embodied its teachings. The Qur'an explicitly affirms his elevated moral and spiritual status:

عَظِيمٍ خُلُقٍ لَعَلَىٰ وَإِنَّكَ

"Indeed, you are of an exalted standard of character." (Qur'an 68:4)

His religious leadership extended beyond ritual instruction to moral transformation. He taught the Qur'an, clarified its meanings, and demonstrated its application in daily life. His companions learned Islam not only through revelation but through lived example, making his character a practical interpretation of the Qur'an.

The Prophet also functioned as a spiritual mentor who nurtured faith, patience, and resilience. During moments of hardship, he reinforced trust in Allah and reminded the believers of the transient nature of worldly trials. The Qur'an describes his role in purifying and educating the community:

"He is the One who sent among the unlettered a Messenger from among themselves, reciting His verses to them, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and wisdom." (Qur'an 62:2)

His guidance fostered a community grounded in consciousness of Allah ***(taqwā),*** ethical responsibility, and mutual care.

Which aspect of his leadership do you think had the greatest impact on strengthening the early Muslim community

4.3.2 Political Leadership and Governance

As the head of the Madinan state, the Prophet exercised political leadership characterised by justice, consultation, and accountability. He governed not through inherited authority or coercion, but through moral legitimacy and collective consent. The Constitution of Madinah formalised this leadership, defining rights, obligations, and mechanisms for dispute resolution. Consultation (**shūrā**) was a defining feature of his governance. The Qur'an commands this principle explicitly:

"لأمرا فى ورهم وشا."

"Consult them in matters." (Qur'an 3:159)

The Prophet implemented this directive consistently, seeking the opinions of his companions on political, social, and military matters. This practice fostered participation, trust, and collective responsibility within the Ummah. Justice was central to his political leadership. He upheld the rule of law without favouritism, tribal bias, or social privilege. In a well-known Hadith, he warned against selective justice:

"By Allah, if Fāṭimah the daughter of Muhammad were to steal, I would cut off her hand."

(Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, no. 6788; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, no. 1688)

This uncompromising commitment to justice reinforced public confidence and ensured social stability in a pluralistic society.

4.3.3 Military Leadership and Defensive Strategy

The Prophet's military leadership was fundamentally defensive and ethically regulated. Warfare was not pursued for expansion or domination but for the protection of the Muslim community and the preservation of religious freedom. The Qur'an explicitly frames fighting as conditional and restrained:

"Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress." (Qur'an 2:190)

Strategically, the Prophet demonstrated adaptability, foresight, and discipline. He employed intelligence gathering, defensive positioning, and negotiation, as seen in the Battles of Badr, Uhud, and Khandaq.

His acceptance of Salmān al-Fārisī's suggestion to dig the trench exemplifies openness to innovation regardless of cultural origin.

Ethical constraints governed his military conduct. He prohibited the killing of non-combatants and the destruction of property. He stated:

"Do not kill women, children, or the elderly." (Sunan Abī Dāwūd, no. 2669)

His military leadership thus balanced firmness with mercy, ensuring that armed struggle remained subordinate to moral law.

What lesson from his approach to leadership do you think is most relevant for resolving conflicts in today's world?

The military leadership of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was fundamentally defensive, ethical, and strategically restrained. Unlike the warfare culture of pre-Islamic Arabia, which was driven by revenge, tribal pride, and material gain, the Prophet's military engagements were guided by divine instruction and moral accountability. Armed struggle was permitted only as a response to aggression and persecution, not as a means of coercion or domination.

The Qur'an establishes this principle clearly:

"Fight in the way of Allah those who fight you, but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not love the transgressors." (Qur'an 2:190)

This verse framed all military actions undertaken by the Prophet. War was never an objective in itself but a last resort to secure religious freedom, protect lives, and preserve communal stability. As such, the Prophet carefully assessed threats, avoided unnecessary confrontation, and prioritised peaceful solutions wherever possible.

Strategically, the Prophet demonstrated exceptional foresight and adaptability. He combined spiritual reliance on Allah with meticulous planning. Prior to engagements, he consulted his companions, gathered intelligence, and selected positions that minimised casualties. The Battle of Khandaq remains a prime example of defensive innovation, where the digging of a trench neutralised a numerically superior enemy without open combat.

Equally significant was the Prophet's strict regulation of conduct during warfare. He prohibited indiscriminate violence and insisted on adherence to ethical limits. He instructed military commanders:

"Set out in the name of Allah… Do not kill women, children, or the elderly, and do not destroy crops or dwellings." (Sunan Abī Dāwūd, no. 2669)

This instruction institutionalised humanitarian principles long before the emergence of modern laws of war. It ensured that military necessity never overrode moral responsibility.

Moreover, the Prophet consistently sought to minimise bloodshed. He accepted truces, pardoned enemies after victory, and preferred reconciliation to retaliation. His conduct during the conquest of Makkah, where he granted general amnesty to former persecutors, illustrates the moral depth of his military leadership and confirms that power, in Islam, is restrained by mercy.

4.3.4 Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution

Alongside military preparedness, diplomacy formed a central pillar of the Prophet's leadership. He recognised that sustainable peace could not be achieved through force alone but required dialogue, treaties, and mutual respect. His diplomatic initiatives were rooted in justice, foresight, and respect for human dignity.

The Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah stands as a landmark example of prophetic diplomacy. Although some of its terms appeared unfavourable to the Muslims at the time, the Prophet accepted them in pursuit of long-term peace and stability. The Qur'an later described this treaty as a clear victory:

مُّبِينًا فَتْحًا لَكَ فَتَحْنَا إِنَّا

"Indeed, We have granted you a clear victory." (Qur'an 48:1)

This verse redefined victory not merely as military conquest but as strategic patience and diplomatic wisdom. The truce allowed Islam to spread peacefully and reduced hostilities, ultimately strengthening the Muslim position.

The Prophet also engaged in interfaith diplomacy. His correspondence with rulers beyond Arabia, including Christian and Persian leaders, reflected confidence, courtesy, and respect. These letters invited dialogue rather than coercion and affirmed the universal message of Islam without hostility.

Conflict resolution within Madinah further demonstrates his diplomatic skill. As an arbiter, he resolved disputes fairly among Muslims and between Muslims and non-Muslims. The Qur'an affirms his role as a judge guided by revelation:

"اللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ بِمَا بَيْنَهُم فَاحْكُم"

"So, judge between them by what Allah has revealed." (Qur'an 5:49)

His approach combined firmness with compassion, ensuring justice while preserving social harmony. Through diplomacy, mediation, and principled compromise, the Prophet laid the foundations for peaceful coexistence and long-term stability.

Self-Assessment Exercises

1. Which principle was a defining feature of the Prophet's political leadership in Madinah?
A. Rule through inherited authority
B. Consultation (*shūrā*) with members of the community
C. Exclusive decision-making by military commanders
D. Preference for tribal customs over justice

2. Which statement best describes the Prophet's (SAW) military leadership?
A. Warfare was used primarily for territorial expansion.
B. Military campaigns ignored ethical considerations during conflict.
C. Warfare was defensive, guided by moral principles, and protected non-combatants.
D. The Prophet rejected new military ideas from his companions.

3. What was the primary purpose of the Prophet's (SAW) military engagements?
A. To expand territory and increase political influence
B. To seek revenge against rival tribes
C. To protect the Muslim community, preserve religious freedom, and respond to aggression
D. To compel other communities to accept Islam

4. Which of the following was one of the Prophet's (SAW) ethical instructions during warfare?
A. Destroy enemy crops to weaken their economy.
B. Attack civilians to end the conflict quickly.
C. Kill only military commanders.
D. Do not kill women, children, or the elderly, and do not destroy crops or dwellings.



4.4 Summary

This unit examined the Prophet's military leadership and diplomatic engagement during the Madinan period. It highlighted how defensive strategy, ethical restraint, and conflict resolution worked together to protect the Muslim community and establish legitimacy. The Prophet's leadership model demonstrates that strength in Islam is inseparable from justice, mercy, and wisdom.



4.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources

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4.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

1. B. Consultation (*shūrā*) with members of the community.
2. C. Warfare was defensive, guided by moral principles, and protected non-combatants.
3. C. To protect the Muslim community, preserve religious freedom, and respond to aggression.
4. D. Do not kill women, children, or the elderly, and do not destroy crops or dwellings.

Unit 5 The Prophet's Character, Farewell Pilgrimage, And His Death In 632 Ce

Unit Structure

5.1 Introduction
5.2 Learning Outcomes
5.3 The Prophet's Character, Farewell Pilgrimage, and His Death
5.3.1 The Prophet's Moral and Ethical Qualities
5.3.2 The Farewell Pilgrimage and Final Sermon
5.3.3 Key messages of the Farewell Sermon
5.3.4 Final Illness and Passing of the Prophet
5.4 Summary
5.5 References/Further Readings/Web Resources
5.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises (SAEs)



5.1 Introduction

Welcome to this final unit of the course. In the previous units, you explored the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), the establishment of the Muslim community in Madinah, and the principles that guided his leadership. In this unit, you will examine the final phase of the Prophet's life and reflect on the enduring legacy of his mission. The final phase of the life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) represents the culmination of his prophetic mission and the full manifestation of Islamic moral, social, and spiritual ideals. By this period, Islam had been firmly established as a religious faith and as a socio-political system, guided by divine revelation and embodied in the Prophet's exemplary character. His personal conduct served as the living interpretation of the Qur'an, making his life an indispensable source for understanding Islamic ethics.

The Farewell Pilgrimage (Ḥajjat al-Wadā') marked a decisive moment in Islamic history. It was during this pilgrimage that the Prophet publicly delivered his final comprehensive address to the Muslim community, summarising the core principles of Islam, affirming human dignity, and laying down enduring guidelines for social justice, equality, and moral responsibility. This sermon functioned as a moral charter for the Ummah. The Prophet's death in 632 CE signified the conclusion of divine revelation and the end of prophethood. However, it did not signify the end of guidance. Rather, it transferred responsibility to the Muslim community to uphold the Qur'an and Sunnah as lasting sources of direction. This unit examines the Prophet's moral and ethical qualities, the significance of the Farewell Pilgrimage and Sermon, and their enduring relevance to Islamic civilisation.

5.2 Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the moral and ethical qualities of prophet Muhammad (saw) using qur'anic and hadith evidence.
- analyse the historical and religious significance of the farewell pilgrimage.
- identify the major themes of the farewell sermon and their implications for muslim society.
- appreciate the enduring moral legacy of the prophet in shaping islamic values and institutions.

5.3 The Prophet's Character, Farewell Pilgrimage, and His Death

The Prophet's final years provide the clearest illustration of how Islamic ethics are meant to be lived and institutionalised. His personal virtues, public teachings, and final address collectively define the moral framework of Islam.

5.3.1 The Prophet's Moral and Ethical Qualities

The moral and ethical character of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) occupies a central place in Islamic belief and practice. Unlike moral systems derived from philosophy or social custom, the Prophet's ethics were shaped directly by divine revelation and embodied in lived experience. His character functioned as the practical interpretation of the Qur'an, making his life a primary source for understanding Islamic morality.
The Qur'an explicitly affirms the exceptional nature of the Prophet's character in unequivocal terms:

.عَظِيمٍ خُلُقٍ لَعَلَىٰ وإِنّك" .

"Indeed, you are of an exalted standard of character."
(Qur'an 68:4)

This verse establishes the Prophet not merely as a teacher of moral values but as the highest ethical model for humanity. It indicates that his conduct was neither accidental nor culturally conditioned but divinely refined, serving as a permanent benchmark for Muslims across time and place.

The Farewell Sermon contains important messages about justice, equality, human dignity, and responsibility. Which message do you think is most relevant to addressing challenges in society today?

i. Mercy and Compassion

Mercy constituted the defining core of the Prophet's ethical personality. The Qur'an presents his entire mission as an expression of divine compassion extended to all creation:

"And We have not sent you except as a mercy to all creation." (Qur'an 21:107)

This mercy was comprehensive in scope. It encompassed believers and non-believers, friends and enemies, humans and animals alike. In practice, the Prophet consistently chose forgiveness over retaliation and reconciliation over revenge. His conduct during moments of power, particularly after prolonged persecution, demonstrated that mercy in Islam is not weakness but moral strength.

The Prophet's compassion also shaped his daily interactions. He showed deep sensitivity to human emotions and social circumstances, emphasising kindness as a measure of faith:

"The merciful are shown mercy by the Most Merciful. Be merciful to those on the earth, and the One above the heavens will have mercy upon you." (Sunan al-Tirmidhī, no. 1924)

Through such teachings and actions, the Prophet transformed mercy into a foundational social ethic rather than a personal virtue alone.

ii. Justice and Moral Integrity

Justice was another fundamental dimension of the Prophet's ethical leadership. In a society structured around tribal privilege and social hierarchy, he upheld absolute equality before the law. His refusal to compromise justice, even under social pressure, set a revolutionary moral precedent.

This principle is powerfully illustrated in his well-known declaration:

"By Allah, if Fāṭimah the daughter of Muhammad was to steal, I would cut off her hand." (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, no. 6788)

This statement underscores the Prophet's rejection of favouritism and his insistence that moral accountability applies equally to all members of society, regardless of lineage or status. Justice, in his leadership, was inseparable from integrity and obedience to divine law.

The Qur'an consistently reinforces this value by commanding fairness even when it conflicts with personal interest:

اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ

"Be just; that is nearer to righteousness." (Qur'an 5:8)

The Prophet's life exemplified this command in both private judgment and public governance.

(iii). Patience, Forbearance, and Moral Resilience

Patience (ṣabr) formed the backbone of the Prophet's moral resilience. Throughout his mission, he endured mockery, social boycott, physical abuse, and repeated threats to his life. Yet, he consistently responded with restraint, dignity, and unwavering trust in Allah.

The Qur'an directly instructed him to maintain steadfast patience:

"فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُو الْعَزْمِ مِنَ الرُّسُلِ"

"So be patient as those of firm resolve among the messengers were patient." (Qur'an 46:35)

His patience was not passive endurance but a conscious moral choice that prevented escalation of conflict and preserved the ethical integrity of the Islamic mission. It allowed moral persuasion to triumph over coercion and long-term reform to replace short-term retaliation.

(iv). Moral Excellence as the Foundation of Leadership

Taken together, mercy, justice, and patience formed an integrated ethical framework that defined the Prophet's leadership. He demonstrated that genuine authority is grounded in moral credibility rather than force, and that lasting social reform begins with personal ethical excellence.This understanding is reinforced by the Prophet's own statement regarding the purpose of his mission:

"I was sent only to perfect noble character." (Musnad Aḥmad, no. 8939)

Thus, the Prophet's moral and ethical qualities were not secondary attributes but the very essence of his prophetic role. Through his character, Islam established a model of leadership that remains morally compelling and socially transformative.

5.3.2 The Farewell Pilgrimage and Final Sermon

The Farewell Pilgrimage, performed in 10 AH, was the Prophet's only complete pilgrimage after the establishment of Islam. It symbolised the completion of his mission and the unity of the Muslim Ummah. During this pilgrimage, the Qur'an revealed a verse that signified the perfection of the Islamic faith:

"الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتْمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا"

"Today I have perfected for you your religion, completed my favour upon you, and have chosen Islam for you as your religion." (Qur'an 5:3)

This revelation confirmed that the essential framework of Islamic belief and practice had been fully delivered.

The Farewell Sermon itself stands as one of the most comprehensive moral declarations in human history. In it, the Prophet emphasised the sanctity of life, property, and honour, declaring them inviolable. He abolished pre-Islamic practices of injustice, including usury and blood revenge, and reaffirmed accountability before Allah.

He proclaimed the principle of human equality in unequivocal terms:
"O people, your Lord is One and your father is one. There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, nor of a non-Arab over an Arab, except by piety." (Musnad Aḥmad, no. 23489)

The sermon also reinforced the rights of women, mutual responsibility within society, and adherence to the Qur'an and Sunnah as lasting sources of guidance. He concluded by reminding the community of their duty to convey his message faithfully, making every Muslim a custodian of Islamic values.

5.3.3 Key Messages of the Farewell Sermon

The Farewell Sermon of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), delivered during the Farewell Pilgrimage in 10 AH, constitutes a comprehensive moral and legal framework for the Muslim Ummah. The sermon can be systematically understood through several key messages that collectively define Islamic social ethics, governance, and spiritual responsibility.

1. Sanctity of Human Life, Property and Honour

The Prophet began the Farewell Sermon by affirming the inviolability of human life, property, and personal honour. He declared that these rights are sacred, comparable to the sanctity of the holy day, the sacred month, and the sacred city. This statement established a fundamental principle of human rights in Islam and rejected all forms of unjust violence and exploitation.

This message is strongly reinforced by the Qur'an, which equates the unlawful killing of a single human being with the destruction of humanity:

"مَن قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا"

"Whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption in the land, it is as if he has killed all mankind."(Qur'an 5:32)

By placing life and dignity at the centre of Islamic ethics, the Prophet laid the groundwork for justice, social stability, and peaceful coexistence.

2. Abolition of Blood Revenge and Cycles of Violence

A major message of the sermon was the abolition of pre-Islamic blood revenge. The Prophet announced that all claims of revenge from the pre-Islamic period were cancelled, beginning with those involving his own family. This act dismantled tribal cycles of violence that had destabilised Arabian society for generations.

The Qur'an supports the principle of restraint and forgiveness as a higher moral choice:

"فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَاةٌ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ وَلَكُمْ"

"In legal retribution there is life for you, O people of understanding." (Qur'an 2:179)

By abolishing vengeance while regulating justice, Islam replaced chaos with lawful accountability and reconciliation.

3. Prohibition of Usury *(Ribā)* and Economic Exploitation

The Prophet explicitly prohibited all forms of usury, declaring them null and void. He emphasised this by cancelling the interest owed to his own uncle, thereby demonstrating impartial justice and moral leadership. This message targeted economic injustice and exploitation of the poor.
The Qur'an unequivocally condemns usury:

"يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَا وَيُرْبِي الصَّدَقَاتِ"

"Allah destroys usury and gives increase to charity." (Qur'an 2:276)

This principle established economic fairness as a moral obligation and discouraged systems that concentrate wealth through injustice.

4. Equality of All Human Beings

One of the most transformative messages of the Farewell Sermon was the rejection of racial, ethnic, and tribal superiority. The Prophet proclaimed that all humans are equal and that superiority is determined only by piety and moral integrity.

This principle directly reflects the Qur'anic worldview:

"إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِندَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ"

"Indeed, the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous." (Qur'an 49:13)
By abolishing inherited privilege, Islam created a moral community based on ethical conduct rather than ancestry.

5. Rights and Responsibilities Within the Family

The Prophet emphasised mutual rights and responsibilities between spouses. He instructed men to treat women with kindness and justice, reminding them that women are entrusted to them by Allah. This message corrected pre-Islamic abuses and elevated the moral status of women within society.

The Qur'an reinforces this obligation:

"بِالمَعرُوفِ وَعاشِرُوهُنّ"

"Live with them in kindness." (Qur'an 4:19)

This teaching established the family as a moral institution grounded in compassion and responsibility.

6. Accountability Before Allah

Another key message of the sermon was the certainty of accountability before Allah. The Prophet reminded the Ummah that every action would be judged and that individuals would answer for their deeds in the Hereafter.

The Qur'an affirms this reality:

"يره خيراً ذرة مثقال يعمل فمن"

"Whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it." (Qur'an 99:7)

This awareness of accountability serves as a powerful moral restraint and motivation for ethical conduct.

7. Adherence to the Qur'an and Sunnah

The Prophet concluded by directing Muslims to adhere firmly to the Qur'an and his Sunnah as lasting sources of guidance after his death. This instruction ensured continuity of leadership and moral direction beyond his lifetime.

He stated:

"I have left among you that which, if you hold fast to it, you will never go astray: the Book of Allah."
(Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, no. 1218)

This message established the enduring framework of Islamic guidance.

8. Responsibility to Convey the Message

Finally, the Prophet charged the Ummah with the responsibility of transmitting his message faithfully. This transformed every Muslim into a custodian of Islamic values and teachings.

He asked the gathering:
"Have I conveyed the message?"
They replied, "Yes."
He said, "O Allah, bear witness."
(Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, no. 1741)

This moment sealed the collective responsibility of the Muslim community.

5.3.4 Final Illness and Passing of the Prophet

The final illness of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) occurred shortly after the Farewell Pilgrimage and served as a profound test for the Muslim community. Despite physical weakness, he continued to guide, instruct, and spiritually prepare his companions for the transition ahead. His illness reminded the Ummah of the human nature of the Prophet while reinforcing his spiritual authority.

During this period, the Prophet repeatedly emphasised the importance of prayer, justice, and responsibility toward others. One of his final admonitions was:

“Prayer, prayer, and fear Allah regarding those whom your right hands possess.” (Sunan Abī Dāwūd, no. 5156)

This statement highlights his lifelong concern for worship, social justice, and the protection of vulnerable members of society.

The Prophet passed away on Monday, 12th Rabī‘ al-Awwal, 11 AH (632 CE), in the house of his wife ‘Ā’ishah (RA). His death marked the end of prophethood and divine revelation, as affirmed by the Qur’an:

”مَّا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلَٰكِن رَّسُولَ اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ“

“Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets.” (Qur’an 33:40)

The emotional impact of his death was immense, even causing confusion among some companions. It was Abū Bakr (RA) who restored composure by reminding the community:

“Whoever worshipped Muhammad, Muhammad has died. Whoever worships Allah, Allah is Ever-Living and does not die.” (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, no. 4452)

This moment reinforced the central Islamic belief that devotion belongs solely to Allah, not to any human being, regardless of status.

Self-Assessment Exercises

1. Which event marked the completion of the Prophet's (SAW) prophetic mission and the perfection of Islam?
A. The Hijrah to Madinah
B. The Battle of Badr
C. The Farewell Pilgrimage (Ḥajjat al-Wadāʿ)
D. The Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah

2. What was one of the key messages of the Farewell Sermon regarding social justice?
A. Wealth determines social status.
B. Blood revenge should continue to protect tribal honour.
C. Human life, property, and honour are sacred and must be protected.
D. Only Muslims are entitled to legal protection.

3. What was the significance of the Prophet's (SAW) death for the Muslim Ummah?
A. It marked the beginning of a new revelation.
B. It ended the obligation to follow Islamic teachings.
C. It marked the end of prophethood and transferred responsibility for upholding the Qur'an and Sunnah to the Muslim community.
D. It required the Muslims to abandon the Madinan state.

4. What lesson did Abū Bakr (RA) emphasize after the Prophet's (SAW) passing?
A. Leadership should always remain within one family.
B. Devotion belongs to Allah alone, who is Ever-Living.
C. The Muslim community should immediately expand its territory.
D. The Farewell Sermon should no longer be taught.

5.4 Summary

This unit examined the key messages of the Farewell Sermon, highlighting its emphasis on human dignity, justice, equality, and moral responsibility. It also explored the Prophet’s final illness and death, demonstrating how these events reinforced Islamic beliefs about leadership, accountability, and devotion to Allah. Together, they form the enduring legacy of the Prophet’s mission.



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5.6 Possible Answers to Self-Assessment Exercises

1. C. The Farewell Pilgrimage *(Ḥajjat al-Wadāʿ).*
2. C. Human life, property, and honour are sacred and must be protected.
3. C. It marked the end of prophethood and transferred responsibility for upholding the Qur'an and Sunnah to the Muslim community.
4. B. Devotion belongs to Allah alone, who is Ever-Living.