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SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COURSE CODE: ISL008

COURSE TITLE: The Orthodox Caliphs



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ISL008: The Orthodox Caliphs

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome! ISL008: The Orthodox Caliphs is a two Units course available in the second semester for the Certificate programme in Arabic and Islamic Studies. This course aims at exposing you to the life history of the four Orthodox Caliphs. The course will lay particular emphasis on their biographies and contributions to the development of Islam.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS COURSE

Since it is a truism that a community without a leader is like sheep without shepherd the gap and vacuum created by the death of Prophet Muhammad called for appointment of a successor who will fill the vacuum. Good enough the prophet of Islam during his life time had around him men of high and sterling qualities. These people were such that could maintain the glory of the faith and follow hookline and sinker a path set by the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* of the Prophet. Such people exercised temporal and secular functions of Islamic polity.

The general object of this course therefore is to introduce you to a brief biography of the Orthodox Caliphs. The course will expose you to the period within which the rightly guided caliphs ruled; their reign being a most glorious age in the history of Islam. They did not jettison any of the traditions, ideals and policies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. Rather they were maintained by his successors. The course will also inform you about the nourishment and popularization of democratic ideals of Islam and initiation of an ideal State which the Muslims looked up to with pride and satisfaction.

COURSE AIMS

There are fourteen study units in this course and each has its objectives. You should read the objectives of each unit and bear them in mind as you go through it. Besides the objectives of each unit, the overall aims of this course are among other things;

- (i) To introduce you to the problem of succession arising from the demise of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).
- (ii) To familiarize you with the concept of *shūrā* as an Islamic system of appointment to the position of authority.
- (iii) To expose you to institution of Caliphate as the early system of government in Islam.
- (iv) To intimate you with the biographies of and services rendered by the four key actors in the caliphate during the glorious age in the history of Islam that lasted between 632 – 661CE.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Based on the general aims of this course, some objectives as a whole are set out for it. These are things you should be able to do by the time you complete the course. If you are able to meet the objectives, you would have achieved the aim of the course. Therefore, on your successful completion of this course you should be able to:

- (a) Define the Caliphate and the Caliph.
- (b) Explain the concept of “Shūrā” and its application in selecting rulers in early Islam.
- (c) List name of all the Caliphs and respective periods of their reign.
- (d) Highlight achievements of each of the Caliphs
- (e) Assess their contribution to Islamic history.

WORKING THROUGH THE COURSE

You have to work through all the study units in the course. They are ten (10) study units in all.

Meanwhile, the major components of the course are:

- 1. Course materials
- 2. Course guide
- 3. Study unit
- 4. Text books
- 5. Assignment file
- 6. Presentation schedule

THE STUDY UNITS

There are ten study units in this course broken into four modules they are.

Module 1: The Death of Prophet Muhammad and Assumption of Caliphate by Abubakr

Unit 1: The Death of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), the *Khilāfah* and the *Shūrā*.

Unit 2: Caliph Abu Bakr (632-634 c.e.)

Unit 3: The ‘*Riddah*’ Wars, Abubakr’s Achievements and Death.

Module 2: The Caliphate of ‘Umar *bn* al-Khaṭṭāb (632 – 644 C. E.)

Unit 1: Early life of ‘Umar and His Acceptance of Islam.

Unit 2: ‘Umar’s Election as the Caliph in 634^{CE} and His Reign.

Unit 3: Services and Achievements of ‘Umar (R. A.), Death and Burial.

Module 3: Caliph ‘Uthmān *bn* ‘Affān (644 – 656 c. e.; 24 – 36 A. H.)
and Caliph ‘Alī *bn* Abī Ṭālib (657-662 c. e.; 36 – 41A. H.)

Unit 1: Caliph ‘Uthmān *bn* ‘Affān (644 – 656 c.e.; 24 – 36 A. H.)

Unit 2: Caliph ‘Alī *bn* Abu Ṭālib (657-662 c.e.; 36 – 41A. H.)

Unit 3: Civil Wars Fought by ‘Alī and His Death

Unit 4: The Fall of the Caliphate and Mu‘āwiyah’s Foundation of the Umayyad Dynasty

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING: Every Unit contains a list of references for further reading. Try to get as many as possible of those textbooks and materials listed. They are meant to widen your knowledge of the Course. Some of such books are:

- * Abdul,M.O.A. (1980). *The Classical Caliphate*, Lagos:Islamic Publication Bureau
- * Hitti, P.K. (1980). *History of the Arabs*, London, Macmillan and Basingtoke
- * Ibrahim Alani Seriki (2000). *Prophet Muhammad and the Rightly Guided Caliphs*,
Alamsek Press Ltd; Ijebu – Ode; Ogun State Nigeria.
- * Khwaja Jamil Ahmad M. A. (1952). *Hadrat Aboo Bakr*, Athlone, Cape South Africa: Islamic Publication Bureau.
- * Rahim, A. (1992). *Islamic History*, Lagos: Islamic Publication Bureau.

Assessments file: In this file, you will find all the details of the work you must submit to your tutor for marking. The marks you obtain from these assignments will count towards the final mark you obtain for this course. Further information on assignments will be seen in the assignment file itself later in this course guide.

PRESENTATION SCHEDULE: The presentation schedule included in your course materials gives you the important dates for the completion of tutor-marked assignments and attending tutorials. Remember you are required to submit all your assignments by the due date. You should guard against lagging behind in your work.

The dates for submission of all assignment will be communicated to you. You will also be told the date of completing the study units and dates for examinations. Below is an overview of the Course and schedule for the presentation of the assignments.

	Title of Work	Weeks Activity	Assignments
Module 1: The Death of Prophet Muhammad And Assumption of Caliphate by Abubakr			
Unit 1	The Death of Prophet Muhammad (S. the <i>Khilāfah</i> and the <i>Shūrā</i> .	Week 1	Assignment 1
Unit 2	Caliph Abu Bakr (632-634 C.E.)	Week 2	Assignment 2

Unit 3	The 'Riddah' Wars, Abubakr's Achievement and Death.	Week 3	Assignment 3
Module 2: The Caliphate of 'Umar bn al-Khaṭṭāb (632 – 644 C. E.)			
Unit 1	Early life of 'Umar and His Acceptance of Islam.	Week 4	Assignment 4
Unit 2	Umar's Election as the Caliph in 634 C. E. and His Reign	Week 5	Assignment 5
Unit 3	Services and Achievements of 'Umar (R. A), Death and Burial.	Week 6	Assignment 6
Module 3: Caliph 'Uthmān bn 'Affān (644 – 656 C. E.; 24 – 36 A.H.) and Caliph 'Alī bn Abī Ṭālib (657-662 C- E.; 36 – 41A.H.)			
Unit 1	Caliph 'Uthmān bn 'Affān (644 – 656 C.E. 24 – 36 A. H.)	Week 7	Assignment 7
Unit 2	Caliph 'Alī bn Abu Ṭālib (657-662 c.e.; 36 – 41A. H.)	Week 8	Assignment 8
Unit 3	Civil Wars Fought by 'Alī and His Death	Week 9	Assignment 9
Unit 4	The Fall of the Caliphate and Mu'āwiyah's Foundation of the Umayyad Dynasty	Week 10	Assignment 10
Revision 1			
Examination 1			
Total 10			

Assignment: Your assignment will be based on tutor marked assignments (T.M.As) and a final examination which you will write at the end of the course.

TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (T.M.As): Every Unit contains at least one or two assignments. You are advised to work through all the assignments and submit them for assessment. Four of them will be selected out of which the best three will constitute the 30% of your final grade. The tutor- marked assignments may be presented to you in a separate file. Just know that for every unit there are some tutor-marked assignments for you. It is important that you do them and submit some for assessment.

Final Examination and Grading: At the end of the course, you will write a final examination which will constitute 70% of your final grade. The examination which will be electronic shall consist of three sections i.e. Multiple Choice Questions (M.C.Q.), Fill in the Blanks Questions (F.B.Q.) and two Comprehension passages. It will last for two hours..

Course Making Scheme

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

Assessment	Marks
Assignment	Four assignments, best three marks of the four count at 30% of course marks
Final Examination	70% of overall course marks
Total	100% of course marks.

HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS COURSE

The study units as presented above replace the university lecture. This is one of the great advantages of distance learning; you can read and work through specially designed study materials at your own pace, and at a time and pace that suits you best. Think of it as reading the lecture instead of listening to the lecture. In the same way a lecturer might give you some reading to do, the study units tell you where 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 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 it is the duty of your tutor's 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 dates 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 why students fail is that they got 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 are 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 due 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 prepared yourself for the finals 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).

TUTOR AND TUTORIALS

The dates, times and locations of these tutorials will be made available to you together with the name, telephone number and the address of your tutor. Each assignment will be marked by your tutor. Pay close attention to the comments your tutors 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

This course aims at exposing you to the life history of the four orthodox caliphs, their biographies and Islamization. The course also exposes you to their roles as maintainers of the glory of Islamic faith, the prophet's traditions and policies. The course will also pay particular emphasis on their contributions to the development of Islam.

We wish you outstanding success in the course and in all your future endeavours.

MODULE 1: THE DEATH OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD AND ASSUMPTION OF CALIPHATE BY ABUBAKR

Unit 1: The death of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.), the *Khilāfah* and the *Shūrā*.

Unit 2: Caliph Abu Bakr (632-634 CE)

Unit 3: The ‘Riddah’ Wars, Abubakr’s Achievement and Death.

UNIT 1: THE DEATH OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (S), THE CALIPHATE INSTITUTION AND THE *SHŪRĀ*

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 Prophet Muhammad’s Exit

3.2 The Caliphate Institution (*al-Khilāfah*)

3.3 The *Qur’ān* and *Hadīth* on “*al-Khilāfah*”

3.4 Institution of “*Shūrā*”

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor – Marked assignment

7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Unit will open by recalling the death of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) which you must have come across in your study of the Course on *Sīrah*. This will be followed by an examination of the Caliphate (*al-Khilāfah*) as an Institution. You will agree with me that the exit of the leader of mankind requires the appointment of able hands that would fill the vacuum being created for the sake of continuity of the laudable works on spiritual guidance. This unit will also intimate you with the stand of the *Qur’ān* and the Tradition of the Prophet Muhammad on *Shūrā*, the bedrock of political principles in Islam and the extent of its application in the appointment of the pious Caliphs.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- Expatiate on the demise of the Prophet Muhammad, its implication and reaction of the people around him.
- Define *khilāfah* and the roles of the *Khalīfah*
- State the stand of *Qur’ān* and *Hadīth* on *al-Khilāfah* and the title.
- Cite quotations from the *Qur’ān* and Hadith on *Shūrā*.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Prophet Muhammad's Death

Muhammad bn Abdullah (ﷺ), the seal of the Messengers Allah has raised to guide humanity, departed the ephemeral world to the great beyond on June 8, 632CE after brief illness at the height of his glory. This exit of his created a very great vacuum that must be filled not just by anybody but by a person who possesses the qualities which can positively maintain his legacy and move on the Muslim Ummah. His demise was envisaged and of course indirectly mentioned in his last sermon during the "*Hajjatu 'l-wadā'* (farewell pilgrimage).

Prophet Muhammad as long as he lived remained the legitimate supreme leader of the Muslim Ummah. He performed the function of Prophet, law giver, religious leader, chief Judge, commander of the army and civilian head of state. In short, he was all in all. Then that he was no more, there was that desire for someone to act as his successor (*khalīfah*). The person must be one who would follow the path set by the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*; who would maintain the glory of the faith and exercise Islamic polity in the temporal and secular matters. Here we are, the Prophet did not designate a successor even though in some occasions he did ask Abubakr to lead the Ummah in canonical prayers most especially when indisposed.

The commotion caused by the death of the Prophet among the people was allayed

by the venerable Abu Bakr who having ascertained the demise promptly addressed the crowd saying "*O people if you adore Muhammad know that Muhammad is dead; if it is God that you adore know that He liveth, He never dies*". This *Qur'ānic* reminder calmed down the wailing and despondent Muslims. 'Umar who was in a strong emotional state was even cooled down through the very brief but effective historic address of the great *Ṣaḥābah* Abu Bakr Ṣiddīq bn Abī Quḥāfah.

Self Assessment Exercise

Give the scenario of the Prophet Muhammad's death and describe how Abu Bakr was able to allay the commotion it caused.

3.2 Institution of the Caliphate (*Khilāfah*)

Immediately after the death of the noble master Prophet Muhammad, the question of who will be the Caliph i.e. successor of the Prophet in a Muslim State arose. Among the Arabs, the Chiefdom or Shaikhdome was not hereditary but elective. It is the only principle of universal suffrage recognized by which all the members of the tribe had a voice in the election of their chief. Besides, the Prophet did not clearly designate a successor; neither did he leave any male child; only one daughter Fatimah survived him. Thus the Caliphate was the first

problem Islam had to face. This gave room for individuals and groups having inordinate ambitions to assume the position. To this effect there were about four parties who laid claim to successorship. The contenders were:

The *Muhājirūn* (emigrants) who based their claim on having belonged to the tribe of the Prophet and of course the first group of people to accept the mission proclaimed by him.

The *Anṣār* (helpers) at Madinah who said that if they did not give Muhammad and the nascent Islam the needed asylum both would have perished and gone into oblivion. That their being positive instrument to the survival of Islam gave them an edge over all other contenders. Later the *Muhājirūn* and *Anṣār* came together and formed a coalition of “*īṢahābah*” (Companions).

The third party are the legitimists “*Ashābu `n-Naṣṣ wa ta’yīn*” who reasoned that Allah and His apostle could not have left the Ummah of believers to the chance and whims of an electorate; someone must have been designated to succeed Prophet Muhammad (S). They held that the only person so designated was ‘Alī bn Abi Ṭālib, the paternal cousin of the Prophet, the husband of his only surviving daughter and one of the first two or three believers. That he was the only legitimate successor.

Self Assessment Exercise

List out the parties who contended position of successor of the Prophet S.A.W

3.3 The *Qur’ān* and *Hadīth* on *Khilāfah*

The Holy *Qur’ān* and the Tradition (*Hadīth*) of the Holy Prophet Muhammad are replete with injunctions on the institution of the (*Khilāfah*) Caliphate in general and the (*Khilāfah Rashīdah*) rightly guided Caliphate in particular.

The *Qur’ān* in chapter 24 verse 55 enjoins that “*Allah has promised those among you, who believe and work righteousness, that He will surely grant them “Khilāfah” (inheritance of power in the land), as He granted those before them, and that He will surely establish for them their religion which He hath approved for them, and will give them in exchange safety after their fear*”

In chapter 21 verse 105 the *Qur’ān* goes further to say: “*My righteous servants will inherit the land*”. Closely to this is *Qur’ān* 22:41 where we read “*They are those who if We give them power in the land, establish Ṣalāt (Worship) and pay Zakāt (religious tax) and enjoin the right and forbid the wrong. And Allah’s is the sequel of events*”. There are a number of other verses in the Holy *Qur’ān* (vs. 2:30, 7:10, 69, 74, 129, 38:26 e.t.c.) in which *Khilāfah* has been defined in one way or the other.

The Hadiths of the Holy Prophet Muhammad also subscribe to the issue of *Khilāfah*. The Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said that ***“I have put you on a way which is clear and even its light is like an enlightened day. Nobody will deviate from that way after me but a doomed person. You would come across with differences after me. But you should stick to my Sunnah (ways) and the Sunnah of my rightly-guided Caliphs (successors). Hold to those ways with your teeth and follow them even though your ruler (i.e. Muslim Ruler) is black slave because a believer is like a camel whose nose has been tied, therefore he is obedient to who holds him (Ahmad)”***.

About the duration of the genuine Caliphate the Prophet predicted “*Khilāfah*” (Caliphate) would continue for thirty years (30 years) after *Nubuwwah* (Propethood) then it will change into kingship” (al-Hākim a`l-Tirmidhī).

It is pertinent to note here that the time limit concerning golden age of noble Caliphs ended at the Caliphate of ‘Alī . This is because Abu Bakr’s Caliphate was just two years, then Umar who reigned for ten years followed by ‘Uthmān’s twelve years of reign and of course ‘Alī ’s leadership which covered just six years. If all durations are counted together then thirty years as prognosticated by the Prophet would be fully completed.

In the matter of obedience to the Caliphs the Prophet (ﷺ) said ***“Obey every ruler (Amir), pray behind every Imam and insult none of my Companions”***

The Prophet further said, ***“If a slave who has been mutilated is made your ruler (Imam or Amir) and lead’s you in accordance with Allah’s Book, listen to him and obey”***. (Muslim).

None of the successors of the Holy Prophet Muhammad bore the nomenclature “*Khalīfatullah*” that is vicegerent of God. When Abu Bakr was so called by the Muslims, he objected saying that his title was “*Khalīfatu Rasūl Allah*” i.e. successor of the Apostle of Allah.

When Umar succeeded Abu Bakr he was called “*Khalīfatu Rasūl Allah*” though later on he was called “*Amīru `l- Mū`minīn*” the Commander of the Faithfuls. The same title was retained by ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī (*riḍwānullah alayhimah*).

Self Assessment Exercise

Explain the significance attached to the title of *Khalīfah* in Islam by the *Qur’ān* and *Hadīth*.

3.4 Institution of “*Shūrā*”

“*Shūrā*” is an essential element in the administration of the Caliphate. It means Consultation or Council of Elders. Islam opposes tyranny and autocratic ruling. This is so because the affairs of Islamic state and its ruling are subject to the regulation of the *Qur’ān* and *Sunnah*. The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ),

despite being the divinely appointed ruler of the “Ummah” still consulted his Companions on important affairs. The implementation of the *Shūrā* was enshrined in the Holy *Qur’ān*, Chapter 3:159 where Allah enjoins thus; “***And consult them in affairs. Then when thou has taken decision put thy trust in Allah for Allah loveth those who put their trust in Him***”

The *Shūrā* is composed of the principal Companions of the Prophet. This consultative body used to hold its sitting in the Mosque. All the people in the forum, even people who gathered there enjoyed perfect freedom of speech. The *Shūrā* came to decide important affairs of the state such as salary of the soldiers, establishment of various offices, appointment of civil servants, levy of taxes and a host of other decisions. All worthy successors of the Prophet followed the tradition of the great teacher. They put in place the *Shūrā* and sought its advice and aid in the affairs of the state. During the Caliphate of Abu Bakr members of *Shūrā* were placed in charge of important department of the state. For instance ‘Umar who happened to be a member was put in charge of judiciary and Zakat. ‘Alī, another member of *Shūrā* was in charge of prisoners of war (captives) and correspondence.

As the supreme Head of the state, the Caliph performed executive, judicial and military functions. He delegated authorities and functions to provincial governors, *Qādīs* and generals. The Caliphs had no legislative power because the rule of law as entrenched in the *Qur’ān* and *Sunnah* was imbibed as their law. There was no room for hereditary principles of succession before Abu Bakr died. He, through consultation, suggested the name of ‘Umar as his successor to the principal companions of the Prophet, which they whole – heartedly acknowledged.

At every point in time the membership of the ‘*Shūrā*’ was not based upon colour, race, wealth or worldly power, it was rather based upon service rendered to Islam, closeness to Allah and His Prophet. *Shūrā* becomes very necessary in the Islamic political system because;

- * Allah commanded the Prophet to consult his ‘*Ṣahābah*’ in matters on which *Qur’ān* and *Sunnah* are not categorical (Q 3.159).
- * It gives members of state a sense of belonging.
- * It generates ideas from different people since two good heads are better than one. Leaders at times may not think of some important ideas whereas their subordinates do.
- * Whenever people are part and parcel of a decision they try to see to the implementation of that decision
- * The *Ṣahābah* had always contributed to debates on matters brought to them by the Prophet for deliberation.

Self Assessment Exercise

Define *Shūrā* and examine its place in the Islamic political system.

4.0. CONCLUSION

The Caliphate institution was consequential to the death of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) which also exposed different personalities and groups inordinate ambition to rulership. Notable seceders among many Arab tribes from Islam and the rise of false prophets in Arabia threatened the very existence of the infant faith. Besides was the severeness of the strict rules of moralities which Islam enforced on the immoral and undisciplined people, the jealousy against Madinah's ascendancy as well as demand for exemption from payment of Zakat. Consequently four principal actors as temporal rulers were brought to the limelight in order to keep going the infant faith for effective governance. The principal actors employed some fundamental God-given principle among which was (shūrā) consultation.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have made you realize that Caliphate institution as supported by the injunctions of Allah from the *Qur'ān* and from the Traditions of the noble prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was put in place for appointment into leadership position in Islam after the exit of the Holy prophet Muhammed from the ephemeral world. The unit intimates us with the names of the parties who laid claim to successorship.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- What is the meaning of “*al-khilāfatū `r-Rāshidah*”?
- Define *Shūrā* and explain its significance in the Islamic political system.
- With *Qur'ān* injunction and Tradition of the Prophet Muhammed justify the need for the Caliphate institution.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

- Abdul, M.O.A [1982] *Historical Origin of Islam*, Lagos: Islamic Publication Bureau.
- B. Aisha Lemu [1989], *Islamic studies for Senior Secondary Schools Book One* Lagos: Islamic Publication Bureau.
- Hitti; P.K [1970], *History of the Arabs*, London: Macmillan 10th Edition.
- Rahim, A [1983], *Islamic History*, Lagos: Islamic Publication Bureau.

UNIT 2: THE CALIPHATE OF ABU BAKR `Ş-ŞIDDĪQ (632-634 CE)

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1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Early life of Abu Bakr, his Acceptance of Islam and contribution to the new faith.

3.2 Abu Bakr's Election as the first Caliph.

3.3 Post Election Address and accomplishment of Usamah's expedition

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked assignment

7.0 Reference/ Further Readings.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As mentioned earlier in Unit one, you will agree with me that the vacuum created by the exit of the Holy Prophet Muhammad should not allow for any delay in the choice of a successor. In this unit you will learn about the biography of the person on whom the mantle of leadership fell. You will equally be acquainted with his election, his acceptance of the post and his first assignment after election.

2.0 OBJECTIVE

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

- State the early history of Abu Bakr and his Islamization
- Recount his contribution to the new faith.
- Identify the factors considered for his choice as *Khalīfatū `r-Rasūl*.
- Highlight his achievements and leadership qu'Alī ties.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Early life of Abu Bakr ``Ş-Şiddīq and his Islamization

Abu Bakr [R.A] was born in 573^{CE} shortly after the Year of Elephant into a respectable family of Banu Tamīm a branch of Quraysh tribe. He was two years younger than the Prophet Muhammad (Ş). His name in Pre-Islamic days was Abu `l-Ka'b. On conversion to Islam he was named Abdullah. His patroniymic "*Kunyah*" nickname Abu Bakr became so famous that it overshadowed other names including his real name. His father's name was 'Uthmān Abu Quhāfah. His mother Salmah was popularly known by her [*Kunyah*] nickname as Ummu `l- Khayr.

Like the Holy Prophet Muhammad, Abu Bakr was born in an age of superstition and disbelief. At the time of his birth corruption and vices of the highest order

were prevalent in Arabia. He out of the mercy of the Creator grew up as a simple, sincere, pure, incorruptible and truthful person. Little wonder then why the Prophet nicknamed him “Aṣ-Ṣiddīq” the truthful for having no iota of doubt in his mind when the Prophet declared he has been commissioned by God. God gave Abu Bakr wisdom to embark on things that were right and praiseworthy.

At the youthful age he had imbibed the art of generosity. This endeared almost everybody to him. He through his sterling qualities won the hearts of the people and thus attained honourable and enviable position within the rank and file of his people. Even before his Islamization he disposed the barbaric customs of the days of ignorance and was never involved in pool-betting, wine drinking and promiscuity.

Abu Bakr’s main profession was trading like that of the Prophet Muhammad. His trading trips occasionally took him down to Syria and Yemen. He also accompanied the Prophet Muhammad in some of his trade missions.

Abu Bakr used to visit the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) even before the latter was called to the office of Prophethood. Since they grew up together, they had become bosom friends since their youthful age. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad disclosed to him secretly about the revelation of Allah, Abu Bakr accepted it immediately without any hesitation. The prophet once said, “Whenever I offered Islam to any person he showed some reservation before embracing it. But Abu Bakr was an exemption as he embraced Islam without the slightest hesitation on his part”.

In fact he was the first person among the adults to accept Islam. As soon as Abu Bakr accepted Islam he started the work of *Da‘wah* i.e. invitation towards Allah first secretly and then openly when it was so allowed by the prophet.

People like ‘Uthmān, Talhah, Zubayr and Sa‘īd [*ridwanullahi alayhim*] accepted Islam on Abu Bakr’s preaching. Some other prominent Quraysh such as Abu Ubaydah, Uthmān bn Maz‘ūn, Abdul- Rahmān bn ‘Awf also accepted Islam through him.

Despite the popularity and nobility of Abu Bakr among the Makkans he was not spared of harassment. He was one time after his preaching at Ka‘bah beaten up by the idolators so much that his face was besmeared with blood. Abu Bakr’s love for the Prophet was unbounded.

Abu Bakr had a singular honour to accompany Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) during the most critical days in his journey to Yathrib now Madinah and shared from the joy of the rousing welcome.

Abubakr rendered very valuable services to the Prophet and Islam. As the first elderly man to accept Islam he assisted the Prophet in laying the foundation-stone of the new faith in Arabia. He dedicated all his properties to the cause of Islam and suffered untold persecution from the Quraysh. He ransomed many Muslim slaves with his money. He gave all the needed support to the Holy Prophet Muhammad and stood by him always.

Self Assessment Exercise

Write short biography of the life of Abu Bakr up to the time of Hijrah to Yathrib.

3.2 Factors considered for the election of Abubakr as the first Caliph.

The old tribal custom was followed in the choice of a successor to the Prophet because the urgency of the time did not allow for any delay. The election was made on the basis of seniority among the surviving male members of the deceased chieftain family. The first party among the contenders triumphed. Other contenders were confronted with a “*fait accompli*” which they reluctantly accepted. Abu Bakr the wise and the most elderly was eventually chosen as the worthy successor of the Prophet. ‘Umar took the hand of Abu Bakr and declared allegiance to him. Other companions gave the “bay ‘ah” oath of allegiance. All the *Muhājirūn* and the *Anṣār* acknowledged Abu Bakr as the Caliph of the Messenger of Allah.

Various yardsticks were considered for Abu Bakr to become the first successor of the Prophet. First, the Muslims strictly adhered to the Arabian custom of electing their tribal chiefs. Two, the Arabs generally choose an elderly wise man as their chief. Considering age and wisdom Abu Bakr was senior to all. Three, the Caliph was to come from Quraysh family which Abu Bakr belonged to. Four, Abu Bakr was the most bosom friend and Companion of the Prophet. That was even mentioned in the Holy *Qur’ān* [9:40] “**The one among two in the cave**”. “Fifth, Abu Bakr had been commissioned to lead Muslims both in prayer and on Pilgrimage when the Prophet was in sick bed. The last was interpreted as an indication that the Prophet wished Abu Bakr as the first Caliph.

Self Assessment Exercise

List out five yardsticks considered for the election of Abu Bakr

3.3 Post Election Address and Accomplishment of Usāmah’s Expedition.

After the election of Abu Bakr and declaration of allegiance to him by the teaming crowd, he delivered his inaugural speech, to the following words:

*You have elected me your Khalīfah though I am not better than you.
I need all your advice and help. If I do right, help me. If I do wrong,*

correct me. In my sight the powerful and the weak are alike and to both I wish to render justice. You should obey me as long as I obey the Lord and His Prophet. If I disobey them, you should forsake me.

This inaugural address of the first Caliph of Islam shows that he was ready to run a responsive government which is purely democratic and constitutional. It shows that oppression and autocracy would not be brought into play.

Having said that Abu Bakr took the title “*Khalīfatu Rasūl Allah*” [the successor of the Messenger of Allah]. He was ready to keep intact the legacy of the Prophet [the religion, the state and the Ummah] Abu Bakr however could not succeed to the post of Prophethood because it was a divine gift.

Having been sworn in and have accepted the responsibility of Islamic leadership he swung into action. The first assignment before him as the first Caliph was to conclude the expedition already planned by the Prophet. The expedition was to be led by Usāmah the son of Zayd bn Thābit the adopted son of the Holy Prophet Muhammad who was slaughtered by the polytheists in the battle of Mu‘tah. Zayd had a son called Usāmah. This son was appointed by the Prophet to lead the army that would avenge Zayd’s death. Before the expedition began the Prophet who had brief illness died. Since it was the wish of the Prophet, Abu Bakr resolved to fulfill the desire of his great leader. Abu Bakr remained undaunted though ‘Umar objected. To the objection of ‘Umar and others, Abu Bakr said:

should the first act of mine as the successor of the prophet be to undo what my master has done? Am I to disobey the orders that my master gave from his death bed? Even if I know that hungry wolves were to come upon me and tear me to pieces, I would not stop this expedition”.

The firmness of Abu Bakr was displayed and the young Usāmah won a landslide victory over the Roman forces in Syria.

Apart from the fact that Abu Bakr did not fold up the flag already unfurled by the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) he equally did not dismiss the young and inexperienced Usamah already appointed by the Prophet despite pressures from some quarters.

The success of Usāmah’s expedition opened the eyes of those who thought Islam was dying out after the demise of the Holy prophet (ﷺ). The success brought back to Islam again some of the tribes who had already left through skepticism.

Self Assessment Exercise

Examine the post-election address of Abu Bakr and its constitutionality.

Justify the loyalty of Abubakr to the Prophet Muhammad and his firmness in taking action.

4.0 CONCLUSION

With the filling of the vacuum created by the death of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) through the election of best capable hand, the young faith which people felt would die prematurely waxed on stronger and stronger. The commitment and loyalty of the first successor of the Prophet and his firmness in issues brought back the doubting Thomasis to the fold of Islam.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed the early history of Abu Bakr and his romances with Prophet Muhammad from the youthful age up to the time of his conversion to Islam. We have equally discussed his election and the sterling qualities he possessed which qualified him as the first among equals and the display of such qualities in maintaining the constitutional and democratic setting put in place by his Master.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Write short note on the man Abu Bakr and highlight some of the factors that assisted him in attaining initial success.

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UNIT 3: THE *RIDDAH* WARS, ABU BAKR'S ACHIEVEMENTS AND DEATH

CONTENT:

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

3.1 False Prophets , *Riddah* war , causes , suppression and effects.

3.2 Illness of Abu Bakr and Umar's nomination

3.3 Abu bakr's Death, achievements and Distinctions

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment.

7.0 References/Further Readings.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will learn about fake prophets who set themselves up in vain attempt to achieve fame and power. The unit will also intimate you with brief account of four principal actors who perpetrated rebellion, disorder and apostasy. The unit will also discuss the illness of Abu Bakr which resulted in his eventual death. It will also intimate you with the solid preparation he made regarding the election of his successor and his burial. His administration acumen, his achievement as well as his noble example and selfless services in the religion of Islam will also be imparted to you.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- Define *Riddah* and state its causes.
- List the name of the false prophets who perpetrated rebellious threat in the state during Abu Bakr's reign.
- Describe the effort made by Abu Bakr to subjugate all false prophets who reared their ugly heads
- Explain the effects of *Riddah* war on the young faith and nascent democracy. Describe the circumstances that led to AbuBakr's death and preparation he made for Umar's nomination as his successor.
- Give account of his instruction to his daughter on his burial.
- State some of his achievements and describe his selflessness and administrative sagacity.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT.

3.1 *Riddah* Wars and Causes.

'*Riddah*' means apostasy or secession from Islam. *Riddah* wars were the battles that were occasioned by the withdrawal of many Arab tribes from Islam and the rise of false prophets in Arabia. The champions of *Riddah* wars were the four mentioned above. They became dangerously wicked and hostile to the infant faith and its adherents. They tried to find their footing and falsely laid claim to the prophet's office.

Many factors that are selfish and inordinate ambition in nature led to secession of the Arabs from Islam. Among the causes are:

- * Death of the prophet which created a great opportunity for the hypocritical Arabs to revert back to mischief and insincerity.
- * Moral elevation of a people like the Arab Beduins who had wallowed in notoriety and fickleness was not possible in short time. So, after the demise of the Prophet it was easy for them to return to their moral laxity.
- * The removal of the mighty hand of the Prophet which held the Arab tribes in check led to rejection of supremacy and ascendancy of Madinah. The Arab tribes were jealous of the authority of Madinah and wanted to have back their independence.
- * The Arab chiefs saw the Prophetic offices as profitable. They saw it as the easiest way to get power, influence and wealth hence the rise of some fake Prophets and prophetess.
- * Reluctance to pay tax and demand for exemption by many tribes. Since their demand involved a fundamental of Islam, the Caliph was not ready to compromise and did not allow the perfected faith to be mutilated.

Self Assessment Exercise

What is *Riddah*? Why did Arabs relapse into it?

The *Riddah* Wars: Causes, Suppression and Effects

Shortly after Abu Bakr became the Caliph some disbelievers who had inordinate ambitions declared their Prophethood and started revolt. The first principal actors in the rebellion were four. They were: Musaylimah, (*al-Kadh-dhāb*) who belonged to Banu Hanif tribe in Yamamah, in central Arabia. His tribe declined to follow the "Prophet of Quraysh" and so accepted him as a prophet. His secret ambition to become a prophet was openly declared after the death of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ). He had commanded an army of forty thousand Bedouins.

Aswad Ansī was a chief of the Ansī tribe of Yemen. He was known as "the veiled Prophet" because veil is always put on his face. He also had a big army.

Tulayha belonged to the tribe of Asad in Northern Arabia. He also rose in open revolt after the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

Saj'ah bnt Al-Hārith belonged to the tribe of Banū Tamīm. After the demise of the Prophet (ﷺ) a number of people from her tribe repudiated Islam and thus Saj'ah declared her Prophethood.

They all became dangerously hostile to the infant faith (Islam). All of them laid claim to the Prophet office and tried to establish themselves.

Self Assessment Exercise

Mention the names of the false prophets who laid claim to the prophets office and their respective tribes.

Suppression of the *Riddah*

Abu Bakr did not leave any stone unturned in order to subjugate all false prophets who reared their ugly heads. The task to save and rehabilitate the faith was so gargantuan and enormous. With firmness and calmness, the aged Caliph faced the hurdle and with punitive expedition forced back the rebellious apostates and recalcitrant tribesmen to Islam. He first repulsed an invasion of the apostate insurgents on Madinah. About the time, Usamah who had won the Syrian expedition returned. The Caliph strategized and divided the army into eleven divisions. He sent them in different parts of Arabia to deal with the rebels. Each battalion was put under the command of an experience commander. The principal task of suppression was entrusted to the chief commander Khālīd bn Walīd the brilliant general of Islam. He forced many tribes to submission without any encounter. He defeated Tulayha and his army in a bloody clash and reduced his tribe to nothingness. He also defeated Saj-'ah (the false prophetess) and her followers in several engagements. Musaylimah (the liar) and his supporters offered the most stubborn resistance to the Muslims. This was so because Saj-'ah married him and greatly strengthened his army. Musaylimah with 40,000 troops crushed two Muslim armies before Khālīd the general came round to ruthlessly deal with him in a sharp contested battle at Yamāmah. After this, Tulayha, Sajah and many tribes surrendered back to the new faith. Aswad Ansi was also eliminated by other Muslim generals in a protracted warfare. By this the apostasy movement which affected the whole peninsula besides Makkah and Madinah was totally suppressed. Islam once again became the only religion of the peninsula.

Abu Bakr After subduing the rebellion and re-establishing Islam divert his attention towards outside Arabia. He considered Khālīd bn Walīd the fittest and most suitable commander for the external expeditions.

Self Assessment Exercise

Highlight the strategies which Abu Bakr used in repulsing the insurgence of the Apostates.

Effects of *Riddah* Wars

After the suppression of apostasy all rebel tribes came back to Islam. The Arabs were again united into one people and nation. The law of the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* of the Prophet were re-established in the whole Arabian Peninsula. Jealousy on the ascendancy of Madinah was removed. Abu Bakr was regarded as the saviour of Islam. Khālīd bn Walīd was given the rank of the greatest general of Islam. Many of the Qur'ānic memorizers died in the war. Their death which caused jitteries in the spines of the Muslims led to compilation of the *Qur'ān* into a codified single book. Relief from the internal problem led to devotion of Abu Bakr to external affairs which threatened the existence of Islam. Abu Bakr had time to organize campaigns against the (Romans and Persians) two powerful empires of the time.

Self Assessment Exercise

Mention some of the effects of war of apostasy on the the nascent Islam and the Muslim *Ummah*.

3.2 Illness of Abu Bakr and Umar's nomination.

It was on the 7th of Jamada-al-Ākhira 13^{A.H} that Abu Bakr Aṣ-Ṣiddīq became seriously indisposed with severe fever. The sickness lasted two weeks. When the illness took a serious turn he summoned the "*Shūrā*" for consultation on who would be his successor.

The leading figures present in the "*Shūrā*" were 'Umar, 'Uthmān, 'Alī, Abdu |r-Rahman bn 'Awf; Mu'ādh bn Jabal, Ubayy bn Ka'b, Zayd bn Thābit and other leading *Muhājirūn* and *Anṣār*. He did this in order to display preference for the Muslims to decide the matter in his presence and to forestall the like of confusion experienced after the demise of the Prophet (S) on the selection of a Caliph. Having summoned the "*Shūrā*" Abu Bakr put his proposal for 'Umar to be the second Caliph before the members. Majority upheld the proposal except few such as 'Alī and □alhah who entertained fear about Umar's strictness. Abu Bakr convinced the members who objected, that the burden of Caliphate would make Umar milder. With the assurance, they all accepted Abu Bakr's view and declared 'Umar the next Caliph.

It must be borne in mind that though the appointment of 'Umar did not take place in the same way as it happened in respect of Abu Bakr, it was not undemocratic in the sense that the nomination of 'Umar took place after fair and due consultation with the "*Shūrā*". The employment of "*Ijtihād*" (personal judgment of a Jurist) after due consultation by Abu Bakr was informed of the fact that he did not want any ugly situation which would make Islam weak after him and at the same time wanted an agreed person to be nominated as his successor in his presence.

After the popular agreement on the nomination of 'Umar as the next Caliph Abu Bakr asked Uthmān to write down the will. Thereafter 'Umar was seriously admonished by his predecessor Abu Bakr.

Self Assessment Exercise

Describe the method adopted by Abu Bakr in nominating ‘Umar as the second Caliph.

3.3 Abu Bakr’s Death, Achievements and Distinctions.

The sickness that ran through a fortnight claimed the life of Abu Bakr on Tuesday, the 22nd Jamādā –l-Ākhirah 13AH (634CE). He was sixty one years old. Before his death he instructed his daughter ‘Āishah (Ummu ‘l-Mū’minīn) that his burial must be made simple and devoid of extravagance. He said ***“Do not use new cloth for my shroud. Wash the sheet in my use and wrap my corpse in it”***. Another wish of his was paying back all the money he got as salary since he assumed office from “*baytu ‘l- māl*” (Public Treasury) through the sale of his garden. He said that it was the pressure from ‘Umar that made him accept some allowances from the treasury, so as to devote full time to the duties of the Caliph. There was strict compliance to the wishes of Abu Bakr. He was simply buried and his allowances were paid back to the treasury.

Abu Bakr left behind a noble example of selfless service. He lived and worked for the sake of Islam to his last breath without seeking any reward. He was happily married and had some children among who was Āishah (R.A)”.

Abu Bakr’s Achievement and Distinctions

Abu Bakr the most trusted Companion of the Prophet and the savior of Islam assumed office of Caliph at the most crucial moment in Islamic history. After the death of the holy prophet Muhammad (S) he, through undaunted spirit gave a new life to Islam. He thus became one of the great forces in the world. He crushed all the futile powers that threatened Islam in its infancy. He together with other great champions of Islamic revolution within shortest time brought about the greatest social, political and economic changes in the history of mankind. He was one of the founders of the true democracy which existed in the world 1430 years ago, the like of democracy wherein the highest dignitary of the state (i.e. the Caliph) who was the most powerful monarch of his time roamed about in the street unguarded. He out of modesty and simplicity ate coarse food and wore tattered clothes such that even ordinary citizen could approach him at any time of the day and question his action publicly.

Abu Bakr was an embodiment of humility, kindness, generosity, piety and chivalry. One of his sayings is, ***“Cultivate humility, greatness will follow you. Aspire for death (in a noble cause); life will be conferred upon you”***. Abu Bakr maintained high moral standard which was laid down by the prophet so much that when he appointed. ‘Umar as the grand *Qādī*, no single complaint was lodged with him for full one year. This was so because people had been purged of all the immoralities of the pre-Islamic days and had imbibed honesty in their spiritual and social life. Later historians never mince words when paying

eloquent tributes to the services, character and achievements of Abu Bakr. Other achievements of his include:

- * Spread of Islam outside Arabian borders
- * Compilation of the Holy *Qur'ān*.
- * Democratization of governance through “*Shūrā*” consultation.
- * Consideration of people of high merit when appointing to offices.
- * Personal supervision of office and strict administration.
- * Establishment of Public Treasury (*Baytu'l Māl*) and administration of Revenue.
- * Administration of the Army and its division into battalions.
- * Preaching of Islam with wisdom and best admonition.
- * Appointment of Judges and administration of Justice.
- * Division of Arabian Peninsula into various provinces for administrative convenience and host of others.

Abu Bakr followed in-to-to the footsteps of his master Prophet Muhammed faithfully in all the affairs. Thus, he laid down the foundation of a true Islamic Republic upon full democratic principles. He was a man of simple, mild and gentle habit though stern when necessary. He did all his works with his own hands and never tolerated anyone to share his domestic duties. Whenever people praised him he used to say:

“O God! Thou knowest me more than myself and I know myself more than these people. Forgive those sins of mine which are not in their knowledge and do not hold me responsible for their praise”. His strong faith and Trust in Allah were reflective of his administration. A western historian, Sir W. Muir writes: his reign was short but after Muhammed (S) himself there is none to whom the faith was dearer”. His Caliphate lasted two years. All he was given for his private use such as camel and pieces of cloth were transferred to the new Caliph shortly before his death. On receiving the articles ‘Umar his successor burst into tears saying “Abu Bakr: You have made the task of your successor extremely difficult”.

Self Assessment Exercise

- Describe the simplicity of Abu Bakr up to the point of death despite the vantage position he occupied
- Abu Bakr was not a leader who seeks gratification in office. Discuss

4.0 CONCLUSION

The display of selfish and inordinate ambition by some recalcitrant peoples of the Arabian Peninsulas after the death of the Prophet constituted a very great challenge to the authority of Abu Bakr.

Every one of the Principal actors who became dangerously hostile had teaming followers and supporters. Abu Bakr mustered great courage and found means and ways to subdue the hostility occasioned through apostasy. He consulted with

his associates and resorted to punitive expeditions. He through the appointment of experienced commanders subjugated all false prophets and forced back the rebellious apostate tribesmen to Islam.

The position of the first Caliph would not have become vacant if not because of the cold hands of the Angel of death. The premonition the Caliph had during his protracted illness about the inevitable, propelled him to make a democratic arrangement through the “*Shūrā*” for the appointment of another capable hand who will fill the vacant stool.

His simplicity and probity including other sterling qualities prepared a good ground for governance during the tenure of his successor. His outstanding achievements threw a great challenge to his successors and the leaders of every given *Ummah* at all times.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit we have looked at the roles played by some principal actors who falsely proclaimed Prophethood after the death of the noble master Prophet Muhammad. We have equally discussed some of the factors that propelled the trouble shooters (false Prophets) and their people in secession from Islam. The unit also saw the frantic effort made by the incumbent Caliph (Abu Bakr) in suppressing apostasy and re-establishing Islam. We equally in this unit highlighted some of the effects of the *Riddah* wars on the Muslim Ummah and the young faith.

In this unit too we have discussed the sickness and demise of the first Caliph of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). We have also looked at the Caliph been a stake holder in the appointment of his successor. We also saw in the unit how simplicity was displayed by his daughter and the *Ummah* by carrying out his instruction on his burial. The unit also gave us insight on the outstanding achievements of the noble Caliph and his remaining firm on the footsteps of his master Prophet Muhammad concerning all affairs.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- Discuss the role played by Khālīd bn Walīd in triumphing over the forces of false prophets.
- Enumerate some of the achievements of Caliph Abu Bakr.
- Discuss Abu Bakr’s virtuous conducts and sterling qualities.

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MODULE 2: THE CALIPHATE OF ‘UMAR BN AL-KHATTĀB (632 – 644CE)

UNIT 1: Early life of Umar and His Acceptance of Islam.

UNIT 2: Umar’s Election as the Caliph in 634^{CE} and His Reign.

UNIT 3: Services and Achievements of ‘Umar (R. A), Death and Burial.

UNIT 1: EARLY LIFE OF ‘UMAR AND HIS ACCEPTANCE OF ISLAM.

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
 - 3.1 Life of ‘Umar before Islam
 - 3.2 ‘Umar’s Acceptance of Islam and the title al-Fārūq
 - 3.3 ‘Umar’s Migration to Madinah.
 - 3.4 ‘Umar’s Services to Islam before *Khilāfah*
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will teach you something about the life of Caliph ‘Umar bn al-Khaṭṭāb before Islam. You will also learn about his killer mission which miraculously brought about his conversion to Islam. The unit will equally intimate you with the title conferred upon him before his migration to Madinah as well as his service to Islam before he assumed office as the Caliph.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- Give account of the early life of Caliph ‘Umar
- Discuss the manner of his acceptance of Islam
- Discuss his services to Islam before he assumed office as the Caliph

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Life of ‘Umar before Islam.

Abu Hafṣ ‘Umar bn al-Khaṭṭāb was born in 583CE in the ‘Addy branch of the renowned Quraysh family. His birth took place about (40 years) forty years before the migration from Makkah to Madinah (Hijrah). Before Islam, ‘Umar was temperamentally bad and distinguished himself in wrestling and oration. He was among the few people in Makkah who knew the art of reading and writing. When the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) got revelation and invited people to Islam,

‘Umar became a sworn enemy of Islam and its Prophet. He proved to be a stumbling block in the progress of the new faith and religion. He became a changed person when he gave himself to God through acceptance of Islam in the sixth year of Islam. He was a business man.

Self Assessment Exercise 1.

- Apart from being literate, in what aspects did Umar distinguish himself before Islam?
- What were the attributes of Umar bn al-Khaṭṭāb before Islam?

3.2 ‘Umar’s Acceptance of Islam and His Confirmation with the title Al – Fārūq

When the mission of the Holy prophet Muhammad was just six years old the Quraysh leaders (of Makkah) having fed up with the progress being made by Islam despite all odds, summoned a meeting of their tribe and asked for a volunteer killer who would assassinate the prophet (ﷺ). ‘Umar offered himself to carry out the dastardly act. Everybody present supported his candidature. The blood thirsty ‘Umar headed for a spot where he would execute the prophet holding his sword. On his way, he met Sa’d bn Abī Waqqāṣ who enquired of him about his destination and mission. ‘Umar told him that he was going to eliminate the Prophet. At this point some discussion ensued between them. Sa’d said: “You had better take care of your own family first. Your sister and brother-in-law have both accepted Islam”. The enraged ‘Umar changed direction and headed straight to his sister’s house. When he knocked on the door, his sister and husband were busy studying the Holy *Qur’ān* from Khabbab (R.A). On hearing ‘Umar’s voice the sister became frightened and hurriedly hid the portion of the *Qur’ān* they were reciting. Having gained entrance, ‘Umar enquired about what they were doing and on finding out that they had embraced the new faith, he first did a dead blow on his brother-in-law before violently smiting the sister who tried to intervene on the face. The sister who bled profusely defiantly burst out saying ***“Do whatever you like, we are determined to die as Muslims”***. Though ‘Umar loved his sister very dearly he could not tolerate her conversion to Islam. He however was overawed and ashamed of his action when he saw blood oozing out of her. ‘Umar thereafter asked the sister to show him the page on which the Holy *Qur’ān* was written. The sister bluntly said that ‘Umar could only touch it after he must have ritually purified himself.

As God would want it, ‘Umar the heathen took the ritual bath and then read the beginning of *Sūratu – Tāhā* (Q20). When he got to verse 14 of the chapter which says: ***“Verily I am Allah: there is no god but I, so serve Me (only) and observe regular prayer for My remembrance”***. ‘Umar exclaimed, surely this is the word of Allah. Take me to Muhammad (ﷺ). Khabbab, the instructor who had taken cover because of ‘Umar came out of hiding and said: “Oh ‘Umar!. Glad tidings for you, it seems that the prayer of the Holy Prophet (ﷺ) which he said last night

had been granted in your favour. He had prayed to Allah. ***“Oh Allah, strengthen Islam with either ‘Umar bn Al – Khattāb or ‘Umar bn Hisham whomsoever thou pleaseth”***. ‘Umar then went to the prophet and willy nilly declared his desire to accept Islam. On hearing this, the Muslims shouted “Allah Akbar” i.e. (God is greatest). Before the conversion of ‘Umar, Muslims had lived in constant fear of unbelievers and most of them concealing their faith. Now that he had become a faithful man, the Muslims were able to offer their prayers openly without fear of harassment and molestation.

‘Umar led the Prophet and his followers to the Ka‘bah (the holiest Mosque at Makkah) and they all offered “*Ṣalāt*” there in congregation.

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) led the first historic *Ṣalāt* in the Ka‘bah openly. For this courageous and bold action of ‘Umar, the Holy Prophet gave him an appellation “*al-Farūq*” (the Separator of truth from falsehood).

Self Assessment Exercise 2

- Narrate the event that led to the statement “Do whatever you like, we are determined to die as Muslims”.
- On what occasion was the title “ *al – Farūq*” conferred on ‘Umar bn al-Khaṭṭab and what is the significance of the appellation?

3.3 ‘Umar’s Migration to Madinah

The city of Madinah before the *hijrah* was called Yathrib. The promise and readiness of the Yathribites to accept the Holy prophet and the faithful believers encouraged the Prophet to dispatch some Muslims to Yathrib for religious and political asylum. When the Muslims were ordered to migrate to Madinah, most of them secretly and quietly sneaked out. It was only the undaunted ‘Umar who declared his departure openly. When he was about to go he put on his arms and made straight to Ka‘bah. He performed ablution and offered the “*Ṣalāt*”. Thereafter, he challenged anybody who would be bold to stand on his way saying “I am migrating to Yathrib. If anyone wants to check me, let him come out. I am sure that his mother would cry for his life”. The Makkans kept their mute and nobody acted against the challenge. He thereafter migrated boldly to Madinah.

Self Assessment Exercise 3

“Once a soldier, ever a soldier” Explain this saying in the light of ‘Umar’s migration to Yathrib.

3.4 ‘Umar’s Services to Islam before Khilāfah.

The boldness and fearlessness of Umar gave courage to the other Muslims in Makkah at the early stage of Islam. His conversion made it easy for the Muslims to observe their “*Ṣalāt*” prayer openly. He became endeared and trusted to the Prophet and thus became one of his closest Companions. After Islamization

‘Umar had great love for Allah and His Prophet (ﷺ). He gave his widowed daughter Hafṣah to the Prophet in marriage. He participated in almost all the big battles such as Badr, Uhud, Hunayn, Ahzab, Khaybar etc. He gave half of his wealth in the path of Allah in the expedition to “Tabuk”. He was next to AbuBakr when sacrificing belongings for the cause of Allah. The Holy Prophet (ﷺ) had a deep love for him and once he remarked, “Were a Prophet to come after me, he would have been ‘Umar”. Another Hadīth narrated by Abu Hurayrah says that the Holy Prophet Muhammad said. “In Bani Israil (Israelites) there were people who were not Prophets but talked to Allah. Were anyone in my Ummah (People) like those people, he would be ‘Umar”.

He could hardly believe the death of the Holy Prophet Muhammad until Abu Bakr reminded him of a clear verse in the Holy *Qur’ān* on the subject. He received the death of the Prophet with a rude shock. He was the first person who pledged (Bay ‘ah) loyalty to Abu Bakr when made the first *Khalīfatu-Rasūlullah*. He stood by Abu Bakr throughout the duration of his rule and served him with great devotion.

Self Assessment Exercise 4

- Define *bay‘at* and expatiate upon it.
- List out some of the services rendered by ‘Umar to Islam before he became the Caliph.

4.0 CONCLUSION

It is true that supplication could bring about a positive change in the bad destiny of a man. This position is understood through the prayer offered for the two notorious ‘Umar’s in the Arabian Peninsula. The efficacy of the prayer turned avowed enemy of Islam and bitterest foe of believers in the new faith (Islam) to a dearest protagonist of the faith. His conversion made the early meek and feeble Muslims bold and courageous. Apart from being a great asset to Islam, he was among the in-laws of the Prophet.

5.0 SUMMARY

We have discussed in this unit the early history of ‘Umar bn al – Khaṭṭāb, his bad temperament and his area of distinction. The unit has equally pointed out his miraculous acceptance of Islam and the removal of fear in the hearts of the early Muslims when it comes to the practice of their faith. We also highlighted some of the meritorious services he rendered to Islam before he became a Caliph.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- “With God everything is possible” Explain this assertion in the light of ‘Umar’s conversion to Islam.
- In which areas did ‘Umar distinguish himself before he embraced Islam.
- Examine the effect of conversion of ‘Umar on the development of Islam.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2: ‘UMAR’S ELECTION AND REIGN AS CALIPH: 634^{CE} - 644 C. E)

CONTENT

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 ‘Umar’s election as the Caliph.
 - 3.2 ‘Umar’s Wars and Victories
 - 3.3 Causes of Arab success under ‘Umar.
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor – Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will learn about the election of ‘Umar as the second Caliph of Islam. The unit will briefly discuss only main events which took place during his Caliphate particularly some of the wars. It will also mention about the removal of the war general Khālīd bn Walīd from the command and fall of Jerusalem.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit you will be able to

- Explain the event that characterized the election of ‘Umar as second Caliph.
- Discuss some of the wars fought during his reign
- State reasons for his victory and the circumstances surrounding the removal of Khālīd bn Walīd from the command.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 His Election as the Caliph

During the terminal illness of Caliph Abu Bakr, ‘Umar’s name was suggested as the next successor through consultation with the principal Companions of the Prophet. Before Abu Bakr breathed his last, he had secured the acceptance of ‘Umar to succeed him. Going by the narrow margin by which chaos was averted after the prophet’s death, Abu Bakr determined to appoint a successor through ‘*shūrā*’ and after finding that majority favored ‘Umar, he asked ‘Uthmān bn ‘Affān to write out an ordinance appointing ‘Umar to succeed him. He equally commanded ‘Uthmān in the mosque to read same out to the assembled people. This way, and without any feasible opposition, ‘Umar became the Caliph-elect in August 23rd 634^{CE}. Although the election of ‘Umar did not take place in the same way as it happened with Abu Bakr it was not undemocratic. This is so because his nomination took place only after full and fair consultation with the ‘*shūrā*’. On assumption of office ‘Umar followed fully the ways of the Prophet

(§) and the policy of his predecessor with his characteristic zeal and vigour. It was his strict adherence to the “*Sunnah*” of the Prophet which helped him to subdue the mighty empires of Persia and Byzantine. His Caliphate marked the “Golden Age” of Islam.

Self Assessment Exercise (1)

Aduce few reasons why the election of ‘Umar is seen as being democratic.

3.2 ‘Umar’s Wars and Victories

Khālīd bn Walīd had conquered part of Persian Empire during the time of Caliph Abu Bakr (R.A). The conquered part was known as kingdom of Hīrah. After the conquest, Khālīd was ordered to join the expedition to Syria. At the time of departure, Muthana bn Harith was appointed as the commander of the Islamic army. The large army that was mustered by the Persian Emperor against the Muslims scared Muthana; and thus he requested for reinforcement which was led by another commander Abu’Ubaydah th-Thaqafi. At “Namariq” a battle ensued and a number of famous generals of Persian army were killed.

Other Battles fought are that of the Bridge, battle of Buwa`yb, battle of Qadisiyyah, and battle of Jalula. All the battles were fierce. In all, Muslims recorded victories because of their strong determination and faith in God.

By the year 23^{AH} the whole of Persia had come under the sway of Islam. It is pertinent to note that in all the wars fought by the Muslims under Caliph ‘Umar, thousand of non-Muslims voluntarily embraced Islam.

The conquest of the Persian empire provided the Muslims with unlimited resources which brought them in touch with luxuries that subsequently led them to giving up simple living and falling prey to some vices. In 638^{CE} Muslims established two military cantonments, one at Basra and the other at Kufa. These cantonments later on developed to important big cities of Islamic culture and civilization.

Subjugation of the Eastern Roman Empire was not left out in the conquest. The Byzantines (commonly called Romans) were equally defeated and rooted out by the Muslims on the Syrian front. The Muslims captured a number of cities like Basra and Ajnadīn. Damascus was captured shortly after Abu Bakr’s death along with other cities such as Himş and others. Khālīd bn Walīd displayed military prowess in all the wars. ‘Umar the Caliph even applauded his merit and tactics saying ‘May Allah bless the soul of Abu Bakr, he put Khālīd in a right place’. The fall of the important cities infuriated Emperor Heraclius. He sent a huge army to fight with the Muslims. Having heard of the big plan of the Emperor, the Muslims left some of the places they occupied and returned to safer border. On leaving, the Islamic armies paid back the “Jizyah” to the inhabitants of those places for not being able to protect them.

The Romans who had fled to Antioch a seat of Emperor Heraclius appealed for help against the Muslim armies. The Romans who were several times larger in

number marched against the Muslims after conceding to their plea. Khālīd initially was in charge of Muslim armies, it was just during the battle he received the letter from the Caliph deposing him from the post of commander-in-chief. Abu Ubayda was asked to take over the supreme command of the Muslim forces. Like a true soldier, Khālīd without hesitation submitted to the order of the Caliph. He handed over the army and served under Abu Ubayda who hitherto was his subordinate. Khālīd displayed the spirit of discipline inculcated by Islam. Khālīd's extravagance led to his deposition. The award of 10,000 dinars he gave to a poet which could not be backed with satisfactory explanation culminated to his sack. The deposition did not affect him. He fought on under the leadership of Abu Ubaydah until they attained victory.

The Muslim conquerors under the able leadership of 'Amr bn al-Āṣ, Abu Ubaydah and Khālīd bn. Walīd (R.A) captured Antioch, Aleppo and other key cities. They went further to lay siege on the great city of Jerusalem. The Patriarch having seen the defeat of Byzantines forces offered a peaceful truce with the proviso that the "Caliph: came in person to sign the treaty in their presence. 'Umar after consultation with the "*Shūrā*" accepted the offer. He went to Jerusalem and signed the treaty in the company of 'Alī his deputy. He accorded the Christians and other inhabitants of the place security of life, property and religion. After the fall of Jerusalem, the whole of Syria and Palestine came under the possession of the Muslims.

Umar together with the Muslims entered Jerusalem offered *Ṣalāt* and later on laid the foundation of a Mosque at a place where Allah sent revelation to Prophet Ya'qub. known as Qubbatu 'ṣ-Ṣakhrah (the Dome of Rock). It was at the same place where King Solomon built his great Temple. 'Umar also partook in the building of the mosque. The mosque is known as "Umar's mosque". After the conquest of Jerusalem, the Romans tried to recover their lost province. The people of Jazīrah (now North West of Iraq) plotted to oust the Muslims from Syria, despite the military support they received from Heraclius the Muslims frustrated their attempts and beat them off.

In the 17-18 A.H, Northern Arabia (Hijāz) was faced by drought and severe famine, food supplies were got from part of Egypt which had been conquered by 'Amr bn-al-Āṣ when the consignment arrived at Madinah, 'Umar took pain to personally distribute the grains among the needy. 'Umar prayed to Allah in a big gathering of Muslims when the famine became intolerable; and according to report he had not concluded the prayer when rain began to pour down.

About the same time plague spread in most parts of Iraq, Syria and Egypt. Both the civilians and the Muslim armies tasted from its havoc. The plague indeed consumed Abu Ubaydah, Mu'ādh bn-Jabal and Yazīd bn Abu Sufyān. There and then 'Umar appointed Mu'āwiyah as the governor of Damascus in place of Yazīd his brother. Egypt which posed great danger to the security of Hijāz was attacked by 'Amr bn 'l-Āṣ and his military collaborators in the conquest of Palestine.

A campaign was led against the valley of Nile. ‘Amr and others entered Egypt through al-Fusṭāṭ the strongest fort of Romans and conquered it after some time. He went further to attack Alexandria the strong hold of the Romans in Egypt. For six months siege was laid on the city. The task remained difficult until Caliph ‘Umar wrote to the army before victory was obtained. After the victory the inhuman custom which prevailed in Egypt where in a beautiful maiden is thrown to river Nile to appease it to bring more water was abolished.

Incidentally the Nile had very little water that year. ‘Umar in order to stop the un-Islamic practice wrote a letter which he asked ‘Amr to drop in the Nile. The content says. *“From ‘Umar the servant of Allah and “Amir” of the Muslims to the River Nile of Egypt. O. Nile if you flow of your own desire, we do not need you. If you flow by the order of Allah, we pray to Him to keep you flowing”*. The letter was thrown into the Nile and it overflowed its bank that year. The Egyptians realized the spiritual power of Islam, stopped their unislamic practice and entered its fold.

Self Assessment Exercise (2)

Why was Khālīd deposed of his military position and how did he display the spirit of discipline which Islam inculcates?

3.3 Causes of Arabs Success Under ‘Umar.

The most remarkable event in history is the conquest of the most formidable Persian Empire and the provinces of the Byzantine Empire. Like a furious hurricane, the hitherto barbarous and infamous Arabia demolished and humiliated the two Empires. The victories which supposed to take years were obtained within a decade. The reasons for the Arabs victory are due to:

- Discipline and spirit of nationalism which Islam infuses in the Muslims. The Arabs who had inculcated the spirit of brotherhood fought in a body and they rose and fell in a body. This made them very stiff fighters in the field.
- Muslims desire for martyrdom is another cause for their success. Victory or death was their resolution. They prefer death in the battle as it would open for them the gates of Heaven.
- The poverty-stricken Arabs were enticed by the prosperity of the enemies; they regarded their battles with them to be struggle for existence. They thus fought gallantly in order to win and obtain the fertile territories of the Persians and Romans.
- Arabs victory was greatly depended on the better generalship of Khālīd bn - Walīd, Sa‘d bn al-Waqqās, ‘Amr bn al-Āṣ, Abu Ubaydah and a host of others. The Muslim generals had no match in the ranks of the Persians and Romans in term of tactics, strategy, organizing capacity and dashing spirit.
- The extensive use of cavalry and camelry which the Romans had never mustered accounted for Arabs victory. The Arabs applied a military

technique in conquering the Romans and at the same time resorted to camelry in conquering Syria.

- The disobedience of the Persian and Byzantine empires led to Arab success. The internal disputes on succession, assassination, luxury, wine and women and other intrigues which shook their foundation even before the coming of the Arabs made them to be vanquished.
- The alienation of the peasants by the rulers through heavy taxation, and oppression propelled the subjects to welcome the Arabs deliverers from the shackle and state of miseries under the Persian and Roman rule.
- Racial and Religious differences in Persian and Roman empires also led to Arabs victory. Absence of homogeneity and national feeling in the Byzantine and Persian empires couple with racial differences and bitter Persecution led the subject people to look for the enlightened Arab Muslims as great liberators.
- The withdrawal of the ban on the advancement on Egypt and the fall of Alexandria after protracted siege into the hands of the Muslim is another cause for the Arabs victory.

Self Assessment Exercise (3)

- How did ‘Umar stop the inhuman and un-Islamic custom?
- Arabs victory was greatly dependent on the better generalship of Khālīd and others. Discuss.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The election of ‘Umar as the successor of Abu Bakr proved to be round peg in a round hole. The zeal and vigour displayed by Umar in following fully the ways of the Prophet Muhammad and policies of Abu Bakr made ‘Umar an institution to reckon with. Victories recorded during ‘Umar’s Caliphate was as a result of strong determination and faith in God. ‘Umar led by example in displaying good leadership in the area of spirituality and diplomacy. He personally supplicated when there was a drought and received succor from God. He equally went to sign peaceful truce with the patriarch before Jerusalem was handed over to the Muslims. As a disciplinarian, ‘Umar sacked Khālīd bn W’Alī d for extravagance.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have been furnished with democratic nature of the election of ‘Umar bn al-Khaṭṭāb through the ‘*shūrā*.’ You have equally been acquainted with wars fought during the regime of ‘Umar bn al-Khaṭṭāb, the committed generals that led the wars and the victories they recorded. The unit has also discussed the discipline meted on Khālīd bn Walīd for being immodest in spending. The unit has also furnished you with strong reasons why the Arab Muslims won their wars against the formidable Roman and Persian empires.

6.0 TUTOR – MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- Adduce various reasons why the Muslim army got landslide victory over the powerful empires during the Caliphate of ‘Umar bn al-Khattāb.
- Why was the period of Caliph ‘Umar declared the ‘Golden Age of Islam’?

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UNIT 3: SERVICES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND ASSASSINATION OF 'UMAR BN AL-KHAṬṬĀB (R.A)

CONTENT

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
 - 3.1 Services and Achievements of 'Umar bn al-Khaṭṭāb
 - 3.2 'Umar bn al-Khaṭṭāb as Religious Head of State
 - 3.3 Other Achievements of 'Umar.
 - 3.4 'Umar's Assassination, Last Assignments, Death and Burial
- 4.0 Conclusions
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment
- 7.0 References / Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will learn about 'Umar being one of the pioneering factors of Islamic democracy and the pioneer of civilization through the formation of a state based upon the Islamic tenets and principles. The unit will also make you see the reason why his democratic administration remains unparalleled both in the history of Islam and in the history of modern civilization. Indeed the unit will expose you to his method of separating powers and giving independence to judiciary.

You will equally learn how 'Umar bn al-Khaṭṭāb the valiant who shook the world through outstanding performance was slain. The unit will also acquaint you with his last assignment on who to succeed him and the consideration given to him by Āishah on his special demand for his final place of burial.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- Discuss Caliph 'Umar bn al-Khaṭṭāb's method of administering the state through Islamic principles.
- Explain how he was declared a marvelous combination of softness and sternness
- Narrate his conduct as the spiritual head of state
- Highlight some of his achievements, and his assassination
- And explain his last assignment, death and burial.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Services and Achievements of ‘Umar

Caliph ‘Umar bn al-Khaṭṭāb, apart from being one of the pioneers of Islamic principles, was also a pioneer of Islamic civilization. He formed a state based on the Islamic political system. This system was incorporated in the West as late as 19th and 20th centuries. He was the greatest democratic administrator whose example is unparalleled not only in the history of Islam but also in the history of modern civilization. ‘Umar remained exemplary leader for all great Muslim rulers during the whole of Islamic history. He decided all matters after due consultation with the “*shūrā*”

During his tenure, he upheld three types of *shūrā*. The first which consisted of very prominent and popular companions discussed and decided important matters. This is the higher advisory council which consisted of Uthmān bn ‘Affān, ‘Alī bn Abi Tālib, Zayd bn Thābit, and Ḥalḥal bn Zubayr. The second *shūrā* was the general Advisory council made up of many Companions from amongst the *Anṣār* and *Muhājirūn*. The body discussed all matters of general interest. Chief of all various clans and tribes were also included in this *shūrā*. The third type ranked in between the higher and the general Advisory councils. It comprised of some elected Companions among the *Muhājirūn* and the *Anṣār*. Matters of special interest were put before the *shūrā*, Freedom of opinion and expression was given to all members of *shūrā* whenever they held meetings. On many occasions Caliph ‘Umar said ***“I am but an ordinary person like you. I can only request you to co-operate in the work with which I have been entrusted by you”***. Decisions were usually taken on the basis of unanimity or sometimes by majority. The Caliph in the interest of Islam and Muslims may veto any decision which he considered very proper.

Both men and women enjoyed the freedom of opinion during his Caliphate. Once, ‘Umar was suggesting the quantity of dowry to be fixed at the time of “*Nikāh*” which was not in accordance with Islamic principle. A veiled lady immediately stood up and said “O ‘Umar, fear Allah” Hearing this ‘Umar realized his mistake and accepted her objection. As far as implementation of law is concerned, he was stern and just. He acted upon the principle of equity and brotherhood of mankind on one side and justice and truthfulness on the other. He made no discrimination between Muslims and non-Muslims in matters of justice, human right and fair play.

Self Assessment Exercise

Briefly explain the three types of *shūrā* which functioned during the tenure of ‘Umar bn al-Khaṭṭāb as Caliph.

3.2 Caliph ‘Umar bn al-Khaṭṭāb as the Religious Head of State

Like other Caliphs, ‘Umar bn al-Khaṭṭāb was the over-all religious head of the state. He used to lead the obligatory prayers five times daily as well as the Jum‘ah prayer in the Holy Prophet’s mosque at Madinah. He also led the ‘Īd Ṣalāts at the “Muṣallā for Īds in Madinah. At the time of Hajj, he was the leader of all the pilgrims and in his absence a person was appointed by him as his deputy. In all religious matters he used to give his verdict based upon the *Sharī‘ah* (Divine Law). In case of a question of law he usually consulted a special committee for that purpose working under a department known as “Shu‘ba-l-Iftā” (The department of Jurists), or sometimes he sent the matter directly to the committee. He never hesitated to inquire about any *Hadīth* which he did not know from the *Muḥaddiths* (Jurists) in Madinah.

Self Assessment Exercise

Highlight some of the spiritual traces in the leadership of the Caliph ‘Umar bn al-Khaṭṭāb.

3.3 Other Achievements of ‘Umar

There are a number of achievements credited to Caliph ‘Umar (R.A). Among his achievements are:

- **Division of the whole Islamic state into provinces for easy administration:** Each province had capital manned by a governor who was responsible to the Caliph at Madinah. The provinces are Hijāz, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Palestine, Mesopotamia and central province of Arabia. Besides the governor who stayed at the state capital, there were other officers who manned the provinces. Officers such as “*Ṣāhib bayti l māl*” (the treasury officer) “*Ṣāhib Kharāj*” (the revenue collector), ‘*Ṣāhib Ahdāth*’ (the Chief Police Officer), and “*Al- Qādi* (the Judge). All the officers were paid high stipend so that they may not indulge in bribery and corruption.
- **Administration of Justice:** The judicial functions were solely entrusted to the judges. For easy administration of justice the Caliph separated the judiciary from the executive. During his time, law was not a respecter of anybody. On a number of occasions the Caliph himself appeared before a *Qāḍī* to defend himself in some cases. No immunity was given to anybody even the Caliph and there was no perversion of justice.
- **Establishment of the Department of Education:** Caliph ‘Umar who had keen interest in imparting knowledge to the Muslims established schools for teaching the Holy *Qur‘ān*, *Hadīth*, *Sharī‘ah* and Art of reading and writing. Mosques were used as schools and the “*Hufāẓ*” (the memorizers of the whole

Qur'ān) were specially referred scholarship and other facilities that would make learning conducive were given to students.

- **Establishment of police Department and Institution of prison:** ‘Umar was the first Muslim Head of state to establish police department in order to curb crimes and maintain order. The police force at that time was known as “*Ahdāth*”. Before Caliph ‘Umar, there was no jail in Arabia. In order to curb excesses of the criminally minded people and to rehabilitate them, he personally bought five houses and converted them to prison in Makkah. He also had district jails at various provinces.
- **Administration of Revenue:** ‘Umar established “*Baytu `l māl*” and laid down the basic principle of the public treasury. He treated “*bayt al-māl*” as a great public trust. He ensured that it was solely used for common interest. He never spent a single “dinar” from it for his personal benefit. He ensured that proceeds from *Zakāt* were spent for the benefit of the poor Muslims. The officer in charge of the public treasury i.e. (*Bayt-ul-māl*) is known as “*Ṣāhib Baytu `l- māl*” There were treasury officers in each province too. The main sources of revenue at that time were.
 - (i) *Jizyah* (Defense or poll Tax)
 - (ii) *Zakāt* (Poor Tax)
 - (iii) *Kharāj* (Land Tax)
 - (iv) Booty (income from conquered places)
 - (v) Tax on non-Muslim merchants or traders who did not pay *Zakāt*
 - (vi) Tributes and others.

Apart from *Zakāt* that was spent in accordance with Islamic laws as given in the Holy *Qur'ān*, proceeds from other sources of revenue were used for expenditure on general administration and warfare. Excess money that was left was distributed as stipends among the Muslims. Both males and females young and old benefited from the stipends. Caliph ‘Umar was very cautious in spending the public fund. Once, his daughter Hafṣa (the chaste widow of the prophet (S)) came to him and demanded some share in the booty that came from a battlefield, saying; “Give me some because your relatives have certain rights over you” He replied, “of course my relatives have certain rights in my personal property but not in the property of Muslims”.

When ‘Umar fell sick and was advised to take honey by the physician. He had none but there was plenty of it in the *Bayti `l-māl*. He went to the Prophet’s Mosque and called general house of the “*shūrā*” When people assembled he said, “I need some honey, I would be thankful if you allow me to take some from the *Bayt al-Māl*”. Such example of his is unparalleled in the history of world civilization.

- **Establishment of Public Complaints Commission:** Caliph ‘Umar personally oversaw the commission on daily basis. At the end of every congregational prayer he used to sit back in the Mosque in order to listen to the complaints of the people in the area of need. He used to promptly attend to the yearnings of these people. In addition to sitting back in the Mosque, ‘Umar used to go out in the dead night in order to find out the needs of the people. During this normal routine, one night he stumbled on an indigent woman with her children on the outskirts of the city. The children were crying because they were hunger-stricken. He personally came to their rescue by providing meals for them. Once, he saw a Bedouin woman whose life was in the throes of child birth. ‘Umar instantly called on his wife who worked as a midwife on the woman.
- **Construction of Mosques:** Caliph ‘Umar built many Mosques. He also mandated governors of various provinces to build at least one Mosque in each city where religious instructions were given to people. He ensured the extension of *Masjid-al-Haram* (the Holy Mosque) in Makkah in order to accommodate the ever increasing Muslim population. He did same to the Prophet’s Mosque in Madinah. He also bought all houses and properties around the Mosque to pave way for extension.
- **Introduction of coins:** Caliph ‘Umar was the one who introduced coins bearing the inscription of “*Kalimatu `sha-shahādah*” (There is no God except Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger).

Other achievements of ‘Umar are the abolition of slavery in Arabia and setting prisoners of war free; introduction of Islamic calendar, maintenance of regular Islamic army and building of cantonment for soldiers where they lived with pure Islamic practices.

- Umar considered the great office he occupied as a trust, thus he was vigilant to the need of his subjects.
- Umar constructed irrigation and commercial canals thereby conferring a boon to trade and agriculture. He also gave security to tenure, to the peasant farmers and reduced their burden of taxation. He gave shape to Islamic republic.
- He assumed the title the Commander of the Faithfuls (*Amīr-al-Mū`minīn*).
- He led the Muslims in the prayers, in public affairs and in the battlefield. Though he could delegate authorities in religious, judicial, military and civil to his lieutenants, he remained the head of the Islamic state.

Self Assessment Exercise

Describe how revenue was sourced and administered during ‘Umar’s reign as Caliph.

Narrate how he with dispatch appointed *Shūrā* who would consider his successor.

Explain the essence of having consideration for others even at the point of death.

3.4 ‘Umar’s Assassination

After the reign of ten years, the glorious rule of ‘Umar came to an end with his death on Wednesday November 3, 644^{CE}. He fell at the hand of an assassin called Abu ‘Lu’Lu Fayrooze. This Christian Persian slave came to the Caliph (‘Umar) with bitter complaint about his master who used to place on him a burden he could hardly bear. The complaint was not all that genuine to ‘Umar thus he ignored it.

The slave was unhappy about the treatment meted out on him and became disgruntled. In order to avenge the ill-treatment, the Persian slave planned a dastardly act over the night. The slave on the early morning of the next day took cover in a corner of the Mosque. While ‘Umar (RA) was saying his prayer in the midst of the congregation the assassin emerged and stabbed him severally with a poisoned dagger. People quickly apprehended the assassin and overpowered him. The assassin did not wait for anybody’s judgment before he instantly took his own life with the poisoned weapon.

3.5 ‘Umar’s Last Assignment, Death and Burial

Caliph ‘Umar bn al-Khaṭṭāb had the premonition that he would die very soon since the injuries sustained by him from his assailant were so much. On his death bed he appointed a “*shūrā*” consisting of six most senior serving Companions and instructed them to select one from among themselves as his Successor. He gave three days ultimatum for the assignment. The six were ‘Alī bn Abi Tālib, ‘Uthmān bn ‘Affān, Talhah bn ‘Ubaydullah, Abdur –Rahmān bn ‘Awf, Sa’d bn Abi Waqqās and Zubayr bn ‘Awwām. He died the next morning.

It was the desire of Caliph ‘Umar bn Khaṭṭāb to sleep next to the Holy Prophet’s grave. He therefore sought express permission from *Ummu ‘l-Mū’minīn*, Āishah (R.A). The place had already been reserved by Āishah for her-self. Out of consideration and compassion she gave it to him. So when ‘Umar eventually died he was buried by the side of the Holy Prophet Muhammad. A genius greater than ‘Umar in Islam has not been born in the world judging by his character and achievement. Muslims are proud of this great personality of history.

Self Assessment Exercise

- Give the historical record of Abū Lu’lu’s devilish act.
- Give a brief account of ‘Umar’s reign as Caliph.
- How did ‘Umar realize his desire to sleep next to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)?

4.0 CONCLUSION

‘Umar proved himself to be the most successful leader and ruler of men. He was a genius with rare talent for capacity building and organizing constructive statesmanship. He consolidated Islam and built a great Empire for the Muslims. He was regarded as the practical founder of Islamic state. ‘Umar was an embodiment of softness and sternness. He was soft and mild to the meek. He was humble and a father to the poor and needy. He was at the same time harsh and stern to the unruly. The leadership trait of ‘Umar did lay solid foundation for leaders and administrators of all time. If leaves are borrowed from his method of governance, it will be a lot better for all the nations of the world.

The result of every anger which used to begin with madness is always a regret. This assertion is exactly what led to the fate of Abu Lu’lu who committed suicide after his negative behaviour. Every person should therefore imbibe patience and avoid anger.

We can see that the best assignment is its accomplishment. Umar through the appointment of the last “*shūrā*” became an accomplished ruler. It is equally very necessary not to encroach on anybody’s property without permission of the owner. Consideration for others is equally a good quality of a good Muslim.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit we have discussed the exemplary nature of Umar’s administration. The unit has equally acquainted you to his maintenance of equality and brotherhood of mankind. It gives a brief vivid account of various achievements recorded during ‘Umar’s reign. The martyrdom of the Caliph ‘Umar was not also left out of the content of the Unit. So also was the irrational behavior of his assailant. It shows how the caliph sought permission of where to be buried. We have equally realized that our faith is not yet complete until we have consideration for others need.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT.

Write short notes on five of the outstanding achievements of Umar.

Compare the Public Treasury during the time of ‘Umar with the public treasuries in some states in today Nigeria.

How did ‘Umar became accomplished during the period of his rulership.

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MODULE 3: CALIPH ‘UTHMĀN BN ‘AFFĀN (644 – 656 C.E.; 24–36 A.H. AND CALIPH ‘ALĪ BN ABĪ TĀLIB (657-662 C.E.; 36 – 41)

Unit 1: Caliph ‘Uthmān bn Affān (644 – 656 C. E.; 24 – 36 A. H.)

Unit 2: Caliph ‘Alī bn Abu Tālib (657-662 C. E.; 36 – 41 A. H.)

Unit 3: Civil Wars Fought by ‘Alī and His Death

UNIT 1: CALIPH ‘UTHMĀN BN ‘AFFĀN (644 – 656 C.E.; 24 – 36 A.H.)

CONTENT:

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

- 3.1 Birth, Parentage and Early Life of ‘Uthmān bn ‘Affān
- 3.2 Conversion to Islam and his characters
- 3.3 ‘Uthmān’s Migration to Abyssinia and His Conferment with the title of Dhū Nūrayn
- 3.4 ‘Uthmān’s Services to Islam before His Reign as Caliph
- 3.5 ‘Uthmān’s Election as the Third Caliph
- 3.6 ‘Uthmān’s Reign and Benevolence Institutions
- 3.7 Redaction of the Holy *Qur’ān* During the Reign of ‘Uthmān
- 3.8 Causes of Strife that ended the Reign of Caliph ‘Uthmān
- 3.9 Assassination of ‘Uthmān and its Effects of the Ummah

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment

7.0 References/Further readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit you will learn about birth, parentage and early life of the third Caliph, Uthmān bn ‘Affān. The unit will also expose you to the Caliph’s acceptance of Islam, marital life and conferment with the title “Dhu-n-Nurayn”. The discussion in this unit will also touch on the services he rendered to Islam before he emerged as a Caliph. It will also touch on his conquests and benevolent institutions of Islam during his era.

Furthermore, *“power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely”* is a popular English expression. This was the case with the third Caliph who started his rule on a good note but bastardized it at the later part through undue favour he gave to his family members. Since there is no smoke without fire, allegation and counter allegation rocked the Muslim empire at the tail end of his reign. The strifes eventually led to the termination of the life of the Caliph. Thus the political unity enjoyed during the tenure of the first two Caliphs was lost.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- Give account of birth, parentage and early age of ‘Uthmān bn ‘Affān and his character
- Discuss the services he rendered to Islam after conversion
- State reasons why he was called Dhū `n-Nūrayn.
- Narrate the method followed in ‘Uthmān’s election.
- Discuss his reign over the Muslim empire and state some of his achievements.
- List out some areas of ‘Uthmān’s failure
- Discuss those things that led to strifes and dissention among his subjects
- Discuss his murder and the effects on the Muslim Ummah.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Birth, Parentage and early life of ‘Uthmān bn Affān.

‘Uthmān bn Affān (R.A) belonged to a noble family of Quraysh in Makkah. He was from the Umayyad clan. His full name is ‘Uthmān bn Affan. He was born in the year 573CE. Before embracing Islam, he was known by his patronimc name (*Kunyah*) Abu Amr and there after Abu Abdullah. He was one of the few persons of Makkah who knew art of reading and writing. When he grew up a young man, he started business in textile which made him to be very rich. He used his money in good ways and always assisted the poor and the needy. He was simple and kind-hearted. The Makkans had great respect for him because of his noble qualities.

Self – Assessment Exercise

Describe the philanthropic qualities of ‘Uthmān bn Affān before Islam.

3.2 ‘Uthmān’s Conversion to Islam

‘Uthmān was one of the Makkans who accepted Islam at its early days. When Prophet Muhammad proclaimed his mission ‘Uthmān was just thirty four years of age. Abu Bakr was the first person who carried message of Islam to ‘Uthmān on his return journey from Syria. As he got the gist about Islam he went straight to the Prophet and embraced it. At the point of Islamization ‘Uthmān related a personal experience saying “I was just coming back from Syria” on the way at one place we were feeling somewhat drowsy when there came a voice: “Wake up ye sleeping ones, Ahmed has appeared in Makkah. On our arrival back here we came to know about your mission. ‘Uthmān incurred the wrath of his people because of his acknowledgement of the prophethood of Muhammad. The Quraysh who once loved him before his conversion became his enemies. His relatives even rebuked and chastised him severely. The reason for that was the

rivalry between Banū Hāshim (the Holy Prophet's family) and "Banū 'Umayyah" ('Uthmān's family). The holy Prophet Muhammad admired 'Uthmān for his simplicity, generosity and piety and thus married his daughter Ruqayyah to him.

Self Assessment Exercise

Why did 'Uthmān incur the hatred of his people after his sudden conversion?

3.3 'Uthmān's Migration to Abyssinia and Conferment with the Title Dhū 'n-Nūrayn.

When the persecution of the Makkans became hard on the Muslims Abu Bakr went to the Prophet (S) and sought for permission to take refuge in Abyssinia along with other Muslims having 'Uthmān and his wife crossed the Red sea together with other Muslims and migrated to Abyssinia. At the time of the migration, the Prophet Muhammad (S) remarked: "Uthmān is the first man of my "Ummah" to migrate (for the sake of Allah) with his family." He stayed at Abyssinia for a couple of months before he came back to Makkah as a result of wrong information given him by somebody that the Quraysh had accepted Islam. When he got to Makkah and discovered that the hearts of the people of Quraysh had not been inclined to Islam, he immediately migrated again with other Muslims to Madinah. 'Uthmān could not partake in the first battle of Islam against non-believers of Makkah at Badr. At the time of the war his wife was very ill and he needed to attend to her. The woman died before the Muslims returned from Badr after victory. To bring succor to Uthmān, the Holy Prophet (S) married his next daughter "Umm Kulthūm" to him and thus 'Uthmān was conferred the title "*Dhū 'n-Nūrayn*" (the man with two lights). Even when the second daughter died the Prophet said that if he had another he would have married her to 'Uthmān.

Self Assessment Exercise

- Discuss the events that led to the migration of 'Uthmān and other Muslims to Abyssinia?
- Discuss briefly the characteristics of 'Uthmān and why the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) gave him the epithet of honour "Dhū Nūrayn"

3.4 'Uthmān's Services to Islam before His Reign as Caliph

'Uthmān tremendously assisted the cause of Islam. He suffered persecution with the Prophet from the hands of Quraysh. He was among the emigrants to both Abyssinia and Madinah. He was wealthy and placed his money at the disposal of the Prophet for the service of Islam. "Uthmān was next to Abu Bakr when it comes to spending in the cause of Islam. He was simple and open-handed. He generously contributed in Madinah and in meeting the cost of campaigns of Islam. He served as a distinguished Companion of the Prophet. During the

Caliphate of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, Uthmān was among the principal counselors and assistants in the state affairs. He partook in all the wars of the Prophet with the unbelievers except Badr because at the time his wife took ill and even died before the victorious return of the Muslims from it (Badr). He was the one sent to Makkah for negotiation of Al-Hudaybiyyah. When there was a serious drought in Madinah it was ‘Uthmān who bought a well named “*Bi’ru `r-Rumah*” from a Jew for 20,000 dirhams for the use of the Muslims. ‘Uthmān was one of the scribes of the Prophet who wrote down revelations and other documents.

Self Assessment Exercise

Highlight some of the services rendered to Islam by ‘Uthmān bn Affān before he became a Caliph.

3.5 ‘Uthmān’s Election as the Third Caliph

It should be reiterated that Caliph ‘Umar in his sick-bed had nominated a body of six notable persons who would elect from among themselves a suitable successor. At the time of the death of Caliph ‘Umar, Talhah was unavoidably absent, so the five remaining nominees had to choose a Caliph after him. These five as usual formed the “*shūrā*”. The task was really difficult because both ‘Alī and ‘Uthmān featured and only one of them was to be considered. They therefore resorted to election. Eventually after a serious struggle the weaker of them (‘Uthmān) emerged as the Caliph-elect. ‘Abdur-Rahman bn ‘Awf (R.A) was the first to take the oath of allegiance (*Bay‘ah*). Other Muslims also took the oath and approved his candidature. Talhah the sixth person returned after the election and equally swore allegiance to Caliph ‘Uthmān. In this way he became the third Caliph.

Self Assessment Exercise

Describe the election of the ‘Uthmān bn ‘Affān as the third Caliph?

3.6 ‘Uthmān’s Reign and Benevolent Institutions

‘Uthmān bn Affān ruled over the Muslim empire for twelve solid years. During his *Khilāfah*, the empire expanded in Asia and Africa. The first half of his reign was peaceful but the second half was turbulent. He suppressed many rebellions and forced many territories to recognize the sovereignty of Islam and pay tributes to the Muslim rulers. His reign constituted a glorious period in the history of Islam. He ensured that the territories of Islamic states were immensely extended. He made a lot of conquests and recorded land mark victories. During his reign, he constructed a huge dam to protect Madinah against flood and to regulate the supply of water to the city. He built many roads and bridges, Mosques and guest houses in different parts of the empire. He also expanded the Prophet’s Mosque in Madinah and embellished it. ‘Uthmān established Arab navy and was the first to establish constabulary. Like his

predecessor, he administered armed forces, provinces, revenue and public treasury. He was a great scholar who spent a lot of his time in preaching to prisoners of war.

Self Assessment Exercise

List out some of the benevolent institutions which ‘Uthmān constructed.

3.7 Redaction of the Holy *Qur’ān* During the Reign of Uthmān

A remarkable work of Caliph ‘Uthmān was the redaction of the Holy *Qur’ān*. During his reign he noted that there were different reading and versions of the *Qur’ān* in different parts of the empire. He took a bold step in resolving dialectical differences. He therefore collected the correct version and set up a committee of scribes headed by Zayd bn Thābit. This board collected the authentic *Qur’ān* including the copy in the custody of Hafsa a wife of the Prophet. They made several copies of the standard edition and sent to different parts of the empire. They burnt the rest copies and retained the authentic *Qur’ān*. Since then the ‘Uthmānic edition remained in circulation.

Self Assessment Exercise

How did ‘Uthmān solve the dialectic problem regarding the recitation of the *Qur’ān* during his reign?

3.8 Causes of Strife that ended the Reign of Caliph ‘Uthmān

The second and latter part of Uthmān’s reign was however less prosperous and was full of strife. Troubles broke out in the empire particularly in Egypt and Iraq where people took advantage of Uthmān’s soft nature to create chaos and disharmony. The ring leader of the mischief-mongers was one ‘Abdullah bn Saba’ who had a number of followers. He and his followers pretended to be good Muslims whereas they were not.

They incited the people against the Caliph and his governors. They accused ‘Uthmān of nepotism and favoritism. The people noted that he favoured his kinsmen the Umayyad with high posts, valuable properties and estates. They charged all the governors he elected with inefficiency, oppression and misappropriation of the property of the *Baytu `l-māl*. It was also charged that many of the Umayyad acquired personal properties which were strictly forbidden in the *Khilāfah* of ‘Umar. Allegations also included: that it was during the Caliphate of ‘Uthmān that Talhah purchased a big estate in Kūfah and that ‘Uthmān even burned the Holy *Qur’ān*. All the allegations notwithstanding were refuted by the Caliph. He vindicated himself saying that he spent nothing from the public money; that he ate only from his own earning and gave to his kinsmen from his big personal property.

On the other hand Muslims were jealous of the ascendancy of the Umayyad in the *Khilāfah* of ‘Uthmān. They discovered that the Umayyad occupied enviable

positions and thus flourished in wealth and privileges. Muslims were disgusted about the scandalous manner of the Umayyad. Many Umayyad would appear drunk, an example was the case of Walīd bn Uqbah governor of Kufa who appeared drunk even in the Mosque.

- Another cause of revolt was the disappearance of the influence and position of the *Ansār* in Madinah.
- The Hashimites (i.e. ‘Alī and his people) lost their influence and position too in the rulership of ‘Uthmān. So they were not favourably disposed to the Caliph and his family.
- Promotion of Marwān to the high position of the Secretary of the state became extremely unpopular. His promotion caused division between the Umayyad and the Hashimides.
- Simplicity and leniency of ‘Uthmān greatly accounted for his own doom. He lacked firmness which is essential ingredient in governing unruly people.
- The banishment of Abu Dharr one of the most pious Muslims of his time irritated the feelings of the good Muslims.

Self Assessment Exercise

Give a brief critical account of allegations that caused the strife that rocked ‘Uthmān’s Caliphate.

3.9 ‘Uthmān’s Assassination and Its Effect on the Ummah

Rebellion broke out in Baṣra, Kūfah and Egypt. The insurgents drove away their governors and wanted them replaced. The Caliph promised to redress the grievances of the deputation and appointment of their choice. A letter written by Marwān to murder the deputation and their choice was intercepted when they reached Egypt. They asked the Caliph to surrender the writer which he refused. ‘Alī pleaded with them but they besieged the Caliph’s house and slaughtered him on 17 June, 656^{CE}, while reciting the *Qur’ān*. This was one of the worst crimes which the Muslims had perpetrated and one of the most important martyrdoms in the history of Islam. It can safely be concluded that the martyrdom of ‘Uthmān bn Affān opened the floodgate of bloodshed among the Muslims that could never be closed.

- The assassination of ‘Uthmān bn Affan destroyed the sanctity and sacredness of the person of the Caliph. The killing of ‘Uthmān established the notion that the Caliph was answerable to the Muslims for his actions and that if he is found wanting in the discharge of his official duties, he could be sanctioned and removed.
- That though the right to remove the Caliph on reasonable grounds may be exercised by a people, the use of violence or gruesome murder of such person is certainly not to be enjoyed by any section of the people.

- The gruesome murder of ‘Uthmān revived the old barbaric tribal spirit of the Arabs which had once disappeared through the teaching of the Prophet (ﷺ).
- The sad incident broke the tie and unity of the Muslims. It led to sharp division between the Umayyad and the Hashmides, which culminated into rival and hostile camps. It also introduces bitterness and rancor between the Madinites Ansār and the Makkan Umayyad.
- The city of Madinah and the Ansār lost their position in the *Khilāfah* while Kufah and Damascus came into prominence.
- The expansion of the Arab Empire suffered setback as a result of troubles which broke out after the killing of ‘Uthmān among the Muslims.
- The assassination of Caliph ‘Uthmān introduced the generation of civil strifes and wars in Islam. It resulted in the assassination of ‘Alī later. This assassination and the consequent civil wars gave rise to emergence of sects (schism) such as Shiites and Kharijites in Islam.

Self Assessment Exercise

What were the causes and effect of the assassination of Caliph Uthmān?

4.0 CONCLUSION

Simplicity and generosity are qualities that made Uthmān to earn great respect from the Makkans at youth and when he converted he became more prominent in spending in the cause of Allah. He abandoned his wealth and migrated twice with his relatives for the sake of Allah and was even ready to shed his blood at all times for the triumph of Islam. He, apart from maintenance of legacy of his predecessors provided many amenities which were of immense benefits to the Muslim Ummah. His reign also saw the standardization of the Holy Qur’ān. The murder of pious and gentle Caliph ‘Uthmān was the most unfortunate event in the history of Islam. He was a man whose characteristic features are simplicity, generosity, modesty and simplicity. The laxity he had in the firmness of mind, his feeble reactions to issues and other negative traits culminated into his murder. The vindictiveness of the assailants and their failure to overlook shortcomings of others are result of the disintegration and lack of cohesion being experienced in the ‘Ummah of the Muslims.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit you have been acquainted with the youth of ‘Uthmān bn ‘Affān and his conversion to Islam. The unit has equally intimated you with the efforts made by ‘Uthmān for the attainment of stability and growth of Islam. We also saw reason why he bagged the title *‘Dhū n`-Nūrayn*.

Other aspects the unit examined include the allegations brought against the administration of Caliph ‘Uthmān, allegations that led to strife and pandemonium in the Islamic state, the murder of the Caliph and its consequent effects on the Ummah.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- What are the services rendered by Caliph ‘Uthmān bn Affan to Islam prior to his reign as the Caliph?
- Nepotism only brings about rancor and animosity in ideal societies. Discuss this assertion in the light of the murder of ‘Uthmān.
- Highlight some of the notable effects of the gruesome murder of ‘Uthmān on the Muslim Ummah.

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UNIT 2: CALIPH ‘ALĪ BN ABĪ TĀLIB (657-662 C.E.; 36 – 41)

CONTENT

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 ‘Alī ’s birth, Parentage and Early Life
 - 3.2 ‘Alī 's Bravery and Virtue
 - 3.3 ‘Alī ’s Election as the Fourth Caliph and Policies
 - 3.4 Disobedience of Abdullah bn Saba and Other Problems
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) reciprocated the guardianship he enjoyed from his uncle Abū Ṭālib by bringing up his cousin ‘Alī. This facilitated ‘Alī’s being exposed to ideal and virtuous life right from the beginning of his life.

The enthronement of ‘Alī as the fourth Caliph was borne out of the fact that his predecessor was forced out of office through the wickedness of the assassins. The pandemonium and anarchy that were in vogue in Madinah the seat of government made ‘Alī a reluctant ruler. The trouble being fomented by the insurgents gave the signal to ‘Alī as to what policies he would make to have a hitch-free reign.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- Narrate the early history of ‘Alī bn Abu Tālib
- State his characters, qualities and virtues.
- Highlight the issues that culminated into his election as the fourth Caliph
- Discuss his policies during his reign.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 ‘Alī ’s birth, Parentage, Youth and Character

‘Alī was born some thirty years after the birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.). He belonged to the most respectable family of Quraysh the Banu Hāshim. His father was Abū Tālib an uncle of the Prophet (ﷺ). The father was the guardian and mentor of the Prophet after the death of Abdu `l-Muttalib the grandfather. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) took ‘Alī in his childhood from his father and brought him up like his own child. He did this in his household as a compensation for the valuable guardianship he enjoyed from his uncle Abū Tālib.

When the Prophet began receiving revelations, ‘Alī was just a boy of nine years or thereabouts. ‘Alī was the first among the youth to accept Islam. In fact when the prophet disclosed his mission before him, he unhesitatingly accepted. The Holy Prophet (S) loved him very much. ‘Alī supported the Holy Prophet in his mission from the beginning till the end.

On the night of Muhammad’s migration when the blood – thirsty tribesmen who plotted to assassinate him surrounded his house, it was ‘Alī who risked his life by sleeping on the Holy Prophet’s bed. When the Holy Prophet eventually decided to embark on migration to Yathrib, he gave all the deposits kept with him by the Makkans to ‘Alī to return to the respective owners. ‘Alī acted according to the instruction of his uncle (Muhammad) and returned all the deposits as trust before he also migrated.

‘Alī from boyhood had been the constant companion of the Prophet in the propagation of Islam. He was a great and astute warrior who distinguished himself in all the battles against the polytheists and the Jews.

Self Assessment Exercise

- Give brief account of the birth, parentage and upbringing of ‘Alī bn Abi Tālib.
- Discuss the role of Caliph ‘Alī during the Prophet’s *hijrah* from Mecca.

3.2 ‘Alī’s Virtues

The closeness of ‘Alī to the Holy Prophet Muhammad at a point changed to permanent relationship. The Prophet gave his most affectionate daughter in marriage to Him. He thus out of grace of God became the father of Hasan and Husayn. The two boys were dearly and devotedly attached to their grandfather Muhammad (S)

‘Alī was a most accomplished man of his time. He was known as **“the gate of wisdom”**. He occupied the position of a prime consular in the Caliphate of both Abu Bakr and ‘Umar because of his learning, wisdom and intelligence. ‘Alī was generous and large-hearted. He was brave, simple and frank. Indeed, ‘Alī was an embodiment of all humane virtues. His simplicity and large-heartedness made it easy for his cunning enemies to outplay him most of the time. Because of his bravery, ‘Alī was popularly called **“Asadullah”** (The lion of Allah), He displayed utmost bravery in all the battles and earned fame. He was ranked among the great warriors of Arabia. ‘Alī was not only a great warrior but a great scholar as well. About ‘Alī, the Prophet (S) said, **“I am the city of knowledge and ‘Alī is its gate”**. ‘Alī excelled in both sword and pen. He took pledges of loyalty on the hands of his predecessors and gave them fullest possible support.

Self Assessment Exercise

‘Alī was seen as the most accomplished man of his time. Discuss.

3.3 'Alī 's Election as the Fourth Caliph and Policies

Madinah, the seat of Islam, remained in state of anarchy after the murder of 'Uthmān for few days. The mutineers stayed back and remained in the control for these few days because who is who had fled to Damascus, some to Makkah. Most of the respected citizens disappeared into thin air. This situation was so because the insurgents' shameful act of assassination of the Caliph could never be imagined by people like 'Alī and other eminent Companions. After the rude shock, the mutineers became obsessed with the fact that the whole empire was now without a head and a government. In order not to allow the conquered provinces to be thrown into chaos, they quickly constituted central authority. They offered the Caliphate to 'Alī which he reluctantly accepted. So, on 23rd of June 656^{CE} many swore allegiance to him. Talhah and Zubayr at first did not want to take a pledge until the case of 'Uthmān's assassination was decided. They were compelled under the threats of the insurgents to take the pledge of loyalty at 'Alī's hands on the condition that 'Alī should be ready to decide matters according to the Holy *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* and that he should bring to book all the assassins according to Islamic law. 'Alī acceded to their conditions. Many of Banu Umayyah who refused to pledge went to Syria. It was the political situation of that time that made some to decline the pledge. It is clear from the above that the rebels who murdered 'Uthmān were the fore-runners in the appointment of 'Alī as Caliph. Majority of the Muslims in Madinah later pledge allegiance to 'Alī.

'Alī 's Policies

Caliph 'Alī, after assumption of office, resolved to follow the ideals and policies of both Abu Bakr and 'Umar. He determined to uphold the principle of *Baytu 'l-māl*" and re-acquire back to the public treasury all the illegal estates allegedly acquired by the Umayyad and others in the Caliphate of 'Uthmān. Besides, he was ready to remove all the governors against whom the people had grievances. He reshuffled, replaced and sacked some. Many of the dismissed governors consented to the caliph's policy of reorganization except Mu'āwiyah the then governor of Syria who bluntly refused and ignored the dismissal order. So Caliph 'Alī had to face troubles with him. The house of Umayyad represented by Mu'āwiyah wanted 'Alī to bring to book all the murderers of 'Uthmān.

'Alī though lamented the murder; he did not take any concrete step to avenge it. Added to 'Alī's trouble was the withdrawal of allegiance earlier given to him by Talhah and Zubayr on account of his refusal to punish the assassins of Caliph 'Uthmān. The two contenders (Talhah and Zubayr) left for Baṣrah. They met 'Aisha who was returning from 'Umrah on the way. Having informed her of the murder of 'Uthmān and refusal of 'Alī to punish the assassins, 'Aisha who had continuously nursed the grudge against 'Alī joined them. They all went back to Makkah where they incited the house of Umayyad to avenge the death of

‘Uthmān on the head of ‘Alī’. The row caused by these people culminated into civil wars of 656-661^{CE}.

Self Assessment Exercise

Describe the situation at Madinah shortly after the murder of Caliph ‘Uthmān. Summarize the instances that led to ‘Alī’s trouble after assumption of office as the Caliph.

3.4 Disobedience of Abdullah bn Saba’ and other Problems:

‘Alī the fourth Caliph on his third day in office asked all the Sabaite insurgents to return to their places. Some of them complied while a party headed by ‘Abdullah bn Saba’ failed to obey the Caliph. Members of this party all the while pretended to be his friends and loyalists whereas they had a sinister motive of creating mischief in the state. Their refusal in the history of Islam was the first.

Apart from the disobedience of the Sabaites, ‘Alī also faced with other difficult situations. Some of the major problems are:

- * Establishment of peace in the state and normalization of deteriorating political situation.
- * The harculian task of fishing out the assassins and taking punitive measures against them.
- * The third problem was the measure to be adopted towards those Companions who would not pledge allegiance to ‘Alī unless he handed over the assassins to them or punish them according to Islamic law.

At this situation ‘Alī as a straight-forward man considered the Caliphate a great trust. His first aim therefore was to establish peace which had eluded the Islamic state. He therefore wished to tackle the assassins after restoration of normalcy.

Self Assessment Exercise

Apart from the disobedience of the Sabaites what other problems did Caliph ‘Alī face in his rulership?

4.0 CONCLUSION

‘Alī who earned the appellation “*Asadullah*” the lion of Allah was thirty years younger than his mentor Prophet Muhammad. Through the valuable guardianship he received from the noble prophet, he became so brave and highly knowledgeable. He indeed excelled in sword and pen. The sterling qualities he possessed earned him the great affection from the Prophet and thus became his son-in-law. From boyhood he became constant Companion of the Prophet. He enjoyed with the Prophet and at the same time swallowed bitter pills with him. He even risked his life for the safety of the Prophet during his Hijrah.

The premonition that ‘Alī had that he would be fishing in a troubled water made him a reluctant ruler. The chaotic situation at Madinah shortly after the assassination of ‘Uthmān sent jitters to his spines. None compliance of the

Sabaïtes to the order of the Caliph and their pretension to be his loyalists including other difficult situations created a bottle-neck for the Caliph. As a straight forward person, he knew that the Caliphate was a great trust, thus he first resorted to conflict resolution before tackling the assassins.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have discussed the birth and lineage of ‘Alī bn Abī Tālib. We have also described his qualities and character at youthful age. The unit has equally explained his bravery and intelligence.

In the unit also, you have learnt about the election of ‘Alī as the next Caliph after ‘Uthmān and the roles played by the insurgents who pretended to be his mentors and loyalists. You have also been acquainted with initial difficulties that faced ‘Alī in his reign. We have also discussed some of the policies he formulated in order to have meaningful and successful tenure.

6.0 TUTOR- MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- Highlight some of ‘Alī’s good qualities when he was a young man.
- Narrate important points in Ali’s life as a young Muslim until the event of Hijrah
- Account for the election of ‘Alī and highlight some of his initial problems in the Caliphate.

7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 3: CIVIL WARS FOUGHT BY ‘ALĪ AND HIS DEATH

CONTENT

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Battle of the Camel 656 C. E.
 - 3.2 Rebellion of Mu‘āwiyah and Battle of Şifḥīn
 - 3.3 Assassination of ‘Alī his Qualities and Achievements.
 - 3.4 Assessment of the Rightly Guided Caliphs
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor- Marked Assignment
- 7.0 Reference/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The refusal of Mu‘āwiyah and his ilk to give allegiance to the Caliphate of ‘Alī coupled with the failure of ‘Alī to bring instant punitive measure against the murderers of ‘Uthmān as demanded by Talhah and Zubayr caused a great dissatisfaction. The treachery and pretension displayed by the Sabaites and the demand by Āishah for the chastisement of the assassins led to Muslims preparing to fight against each other. ‘Alī though did not want to go to war with them, he tried to sue for peace yet Abdullah bn Saba’ and his henchmen made peaceful settlement a total failure. The various troubles which confronted ‘Alī’ from the inception of his *Khilāfah* mainly accounted for his failure to suppress the treacherous rebellion of Mu‘āwiyah. In men and resources Mu‘āwiyah was much stronger than ‘Alī. The Caliph was just a brave soldier, whereas Mu‘āwiyah apart from being a general was also a clever politician. The barrage of problem coupled with the formidable rebellion of Talhah and Zubayr further weakened the position of ‘Alī and strengthened the hands of Mu‘āwiyah. To cap it, was the trouble being fomented by the Kharijites who hated both ‘Alī, Mu‘āwiyah and ‘Amr bn al-Āṣ and thus planned to eliminate all of them.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- Expatriate upon the battle of the camel
- List names of the principal actors in the war and causes of rebellion.
- Discuss the battle of Siffin and the rise of the Kharijites.
- Mention some of the causes of ‘Alī's failure
- Discuss the plot of the Assassins and how ‘Alī alone was eventually killed.
- State more qualities of ‘Alī.
- Assess the rightly guided Caliphs.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Battle of the Camel 656^{ce}:

Talhah and Zubayr were the principal actors that displayed treachery and revolt against Caliph ‘Alī. The battle was named *‘The Camel’* because Āishah the mother of the faithful who supported the two actors rode on a camel. Caliph ‘Alī did everything humanly possible to avoid the war. He sued for peaceful settlement which many interested people did not like. These people wanted trouble at all cost so that the Caliph might not give his attention to deal with the murderers of ‘Uthmān. At last the inevitable battle took place and the superior military talent of ‘Alī soon succeeded in vanquishing the rebels. Both Talhah and Zubayr were slaughtered while trying to escape. Āishah was also taken hostage. Caliph ‘Alī treated her with utmost dignity and sent her back to Madinah. After the battle ‘Alī settled in Kūfah and established authority in Baṣrah.

In this battle about ten thousand Muslims on both sides lost their lives. ‘Alī felt deeply moved because of the loss of Muslim blood. ‘Alī after the battle took pledge of loyalty from the people of Baṣrah and appointed ‘Abdullah bn Abbās as the governor of Baṣrah. He also gave general amnesty to all those who fought against him including other persons of Banū Umayyah family.

Self Assessment Exercise

- What was the Battle of the Camel? Summarize the events of the Battle.

3.2 Rebellion of Mu‘āwiyah and the Battle of Siffin

Mu‘āwiyah bn Abī Sufyān, who had always been on the neck of ‘Alī, had inordinate ambition to become the Caliph. He used the murder of ‘Uthmān to pursue his desire. This Umayyad chief who had vast estate in Syria secured the support of his people so he became strengthened. Apart from the support of his kinsmen, he also mustered the Syrian Arabs. With the support of people numbering thousand and enough money at his disposal, he had ample opportunity to contest the post with ‘Alī. He began the pursuit of his desire by discrediting Caliph ‘Alī in the eye of the Muslims. He dangerously spread the campaign of calumny against ‘Alī. He went to the extent of exciting the feeling of the people through the display of the relics of assassinated ‘Uthmān and the chopped off fingers of his wife (Nāilah) who tried to save him in the mosque of Damascus. He (Mu‘āwiyah) also demanded that ‘Alī should fish out ‘Uthmān’s murderers and bring them to book.

Mu‘āwiyah who had got enough support became intoxicated. He refused to recognize the leadership of ‘Alī. He advanced with a large army and met that of ‘Alī’s at the field of Siffin. Caliph ‘Alī opted for peace but Mu‘āwiyah was hell bent that there could be no peace unless the murderers were produced and punished. Failure to reach peace accord led to a fierce battle. ‘Alī gallantly

fought and cleared the field. Faced with disastrous defeat, Mu‘āwiyah resorted to a trick by fastening copies of the *Qu’rān* to the lances of the soldiers. This strategy brought the fight to a halt and Mu‘āwiyah escaped.

A decision was thereafter reached that the dispute should be referred to two arbitrators who would mediate. Mu‘āwiyah was represented by the shrewd ‘Amr bn al-‘Āṣ while Abu Musa al-Ash‘arī stood in for ‘Alī . Surprisingly, the very soldiers of ‘Alī who had earlier clamored for arbitration denounced it. They said that arbitration by men is sinful that genuine arbitration belongs to Allah only. ‘Alī who had given his word for arbitration did not agree to renew fighting. By this, 12,000 of his soldiers left his camp and began to foment trouble in the empire particularly in Iraq. These people were known as the Kharijites (Khawārij) seceders. ‘Alī took arms against them and beat them severely. The arbitration thus ended in a farce because ‘Amr bn-al- ‘Āṣ suggested that both Mu‘āwiyah and ‘Alī should be deposed and fresh election to take place for the position of the Caliph. Abu Musa Al- Ash‘arī acceded to his suggestion. Though ‘Alī partly saw the proceeding of the arbitration as very treacherous, ‘Alī lost in the arbitration while Mu‘āwiyah gained equality. Meanwhile the trouble being created at home by the Kharijites and others made it difficult for ‘Alī to decisively deal with Mu‘āwiyah. He therefore concluded a treaty with him and this settled the dispute.

Self Assessment Exercise

Explain the causes, way and manner of the rebellion of Mu‘āwiyah against ‘Alī . Give account of the Battle of Siffin and its outcome.

3.3 Assassination of ‘Alī, His Qualities and Achievements

The trouble shooters in the land hated the compromise reached by Caliph ‘Alī with Mu‘āwiyah. The Kharijites planned to eliminate ‘Alī, Mu‘āwiyah and ‘Amr bn al-‘Āṣ and choose a Caliph of their own. They therefore selected three assassins. The trio according to plan were to strike at their assailants (the three personalities) at the same time on the same day. The appointed assassins were Abdur- Rahman Muljam, Bark bn ‘Abdullah and ‘Amr bn-Bark. Early hour of 17th of Ramadan, 40^{AH} was fixed for the operation.

As scheduled, the three appointed Khārijī assassins went straight to the respective houses of the targeted people on the 17th of Ramadan in the year 661^{CE} (40^{AH}) to carry out the dastardly act. Two of the Assassins missed their targets. Mu ‘āwiyah narrowly escaped with a scratch, ‘Amr bn-al- ‘Āṣ who was sick did not turn out either. Abdur – Rahmān the zealot who happened to be the third assassin struck a severe blow at ‘Alī while he was going to observe his morning prayer in the Mosque. It was a fatal blow which led to the death of ‘Alī three days later. Before his death he asked the Muslims to slay the apprehended assassin (Ibn Muljam) if the inevitable came. He also called on his sons and advised them to serve Islam and to be good to the Muslims. He was sixty years

old at the time of his death and he ruled for about five years. His real grave is not known because his son Hasan exhumed his body from the grave where he was buried because of the fear of the Kharijites who might come and mutilate it. He buried him at an unknown place.

‘Alī’s Qualities and Achievements

- He was the best- hearted Muslim that ever lived.
- He lived a very simple and ascetic life.
- He was so meticulous and scrupulous in maintaining the ideals of Islam.
- He adhered strictly to the principle of *Baytu ‘l-māl* and never spent a single farthing from the treasury on himself or his relatives.
- His death saw the end of Islamic Republic and ideal days of Islam.
- Mu‘āwiyah transformed the Islamic Republic to a “Mulk” and dynasty.
- Madinah, the Ansār and Arabs lost their influence in the Khilāfah.
- Supremacy of Damascus and Syrian Arabs was introduced in the empire.

Self Assessment Exercise

- How did the Kharijites hatch and carry out their plan to eliminate Caliph ‘Alī ?.
- Highlight some of the qualities of ‘Alī and state his achievements.
- How would you rate the performance of ‘Alī ?

3.3 Assessment of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.

Undoubtedly, the period within which the rightly guided Caliphs ruled was the most glorious age in the history of Islam. The period lasted thirty years between 632 – 661^{CE}. During this period none of the traditions, ideals and policies of the Prophet Muhammad was jettisoned by his successors. His ideals and teachings were rather perpetuated by these noble successors. The period nourished and popularized the democratic ideals of Islam and initiated a State which the Muslims looked up to with pride and satisfaction.

No Caliph was ordinarily nominated for the *Khilāfah*. They were appointed through *shūrā* system. They were all consensus candidates. This is so because the institution of the Caliphate was and remains a sacred office. Whoever occupies it must as a matter of fact be appointed on the basis of *Shūrā* and general consent.

The period of the orthodox Caliphs was momentous in history. It consolidated and saved Islam. It also laid the basis of greatness of the Muslims. The Pioneer Caliph Abu Bakr saved Islam from cracking and the Muslims from division on the issue of succession to leadership after the demise of the Holy prophet (ﷺ). He also saved Islam from the great danger of apostasy and pseudo-prophets. ‘Umar like his predecessor consolidated Islam, reformed the vices- ridden Arabia and

converted the wild sons of the desert into a disciplined race. He built a very strong empire comprising Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Persia and Syria.

The third Caliph 'Uthmān also added colour to the flag of Islam. His reign witnessed expansion of Islamic empire in central Asia and Tripoli. The last Caliph 'Alī did everything humanly possible to sustain the Caliphate. He witnessed a lot of internal squabbles and wrangling. He displayed magnanimity where he supposed to loose his head. His death eventually saw the end of State of Islam in the year 661^{CE}.

Self Assessment Exercise

Give a bird's eye view assessment of the periods of the rightly guided Caliphs rules.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The trouble and problems that bedeviled the Caliphate at the time of 'Alī gave much to be desired. It was not easy for Caliph 'Alī to find his bearings because of innumerable difficulties coming through the trouble shooters. Despite the fact that 'Alī displayed certain rare qualities his life was targeted. The zealous and notorious killers eventually accomplished their aim when they eventually axed him down on the fateful day when he was going to serve his Lord. The republic that would have endured on was therefore abruptly terminated.

The reluctance and conditions given by the subjects (Muslim) to 'Alī before signing oath of allegiance and the eventual withdrawal of allegiance by Talhah and Zubayr led to the battle of the camel. Other Muslims lost their precious lives in the Siffin through the shrewdness of Mu'āwiyah who cunningly fasted the *Qur'ān* on the lances in order to deceive 'Alī. What more was the resentment of the 12,000 Khawarij on the arbitration of man rather than that of God and their withdrawal from 'Alī's camp. The unit also saw the magnanimity and respect displayed by 'Alī on Āishah the mother of the faithful.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit you have learnt about the key figures (Mu'āwiyah, Talhah, Zubayr and Abdullah bn Saba') who played prominent roles in the civil wars within the Muslim fold. You have also seen the over-excitement of some people on the tragic murder of 'Uthmān. The unit has also exposed you to the inordinate ambition of Mu'āwiyah to become the Caliph. The unit also discussed the war strategy used by Mu'āwiyah which brought about arbitration of four men and his eventual gaining of equality with 'Alī through treaty.

In this unit we have described 'Alī as an embodiment of virtue. We have also discussed the evil plans of his adversaries and also highlighted some of the causes of his failure and laxity which eventually resulted to his murder. In the unit too we have had a cursory look at the performance of all the orthodox Caliphs and gave a bird's eye view assessment of them.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- Write short notes on the Battles of camel and Siffin.
- What role did Abu Musa al – Ash’ari and Amr bn al-Āṣ play in the arbitration between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiyah?
- Highlight some of the factors that led to the killing of Caliph ‘Alī .

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UNIT 4: The Fall of the Caliphate and Mu‘āwiyah’s Foundation of the Umayyad Dynasty

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objective
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Fall of the Caliphate
 - 3.2 Mu‘āwiyah bn Abī Sufyān (41 – 60 a.h. / 661 – 680)
 - 3.3 Factors Responsible for Mu‘āwiyah’s Assumption of the Caliphate
 - 3.4 Changes introduced by Mu‘āwiyah to the Caliphate
- 3.5 Social Situation during Mu‘āwiyah’s Reign**
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments
- 7.0 References and Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you will learn about how Mu‘āwiyah ascended to the seat of Caliphate and introduced dynasty system into Islam. It would interest you to note that the inordinate ambition of Mu‘āwiyah to rulership in the Muslim empire would only materialize consequent upon certain factors which shall be dealt with in this unit. In other words, this Unit will intimate you with the events that led to the seizure of the caliphate by Mu‘āwiyah bn Abi Sufyān and how he succeeded in transforming the Caliphate which was the commonwealth of Islam into a hereditary affair among the Umayyads.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of the unit you should be able to point out

- some of the factors that contributed to the collapse of the Caliphate
- Mu‘āwiyah's ascension to the seat of Caliphate
- shrewdness and administrative efficiency.

3.0 MAIN CONTENTS

3.1 The Fall of the Caliphate

A number of factors contributed to the collapse of the Caliphate and the rise of the Umayyads. These include:

1. Assassination of ‘Uthmān (R. A.) by the Insurgents

The shrewd Mu‘āwiyah exploited the assassination of Caliph ‘Uthmān to discredit Caliph ‘Alī in the eyes of the Muslims. Thus strengthened, he refused to recognise ‘Alī as Caliph and defied his order. He demanded the immediate punishment of the murderers. Furthermore, he alleged that ‘Alī harboured some

of 'Uthmān's murderers within his soldiers. He repulsively incited his followers unrelentingly. As a matter of fact, he denied 'Alī any chance to arrange for the punishment of the murderers of 'Uthmān. But soon afterwards, Mu'āwiyah's ulterior motives became obvious to Caliph 'Alī who hoped to stabilize the situation to enable him engage in other matters.

2. The Battle of Şıffīn in the Month of Şafar 37A.H.

Subsequent to the murder of Caliph 'Uthmān bn 'Affān, 'Alī bn Abī Ṭālib was proclaimed as the fourth Caliph of the Muslim Commonwealth of nation and the whole Muslim Ummah acknowledged it. On his assumption of duty, all the governors against whom the people had grievances were asked to resign and make place for new governors. They all agreed except Mu'āwiyah, the governor of Syria. He refused to obey Caliph 'Alī, remonstrated him and alleged his complicity in the assassination of 'Uthmān. Not only that, he also instigated the Syrian Arabs against him and made a large army. Caliph 'Alī deemed it incumbent upon himself to compel obedience from Mu'āwiyah and repel his rebellion. Caliph 'Alī moved at the head of ninety thousand men while Mu'āwiyah advanced with a large army numbering eighty thousand to oppose the Caliph army. The two faced each other in the field of Siffin by the side of Euphrate's river.

The fierce battle between the two sides lasted for forty days. Faced with a disastrous defeat, crafty Mu'āwiyah on the advice of his cunning associate, 'Amr bn al- Āṣ fastened the copies of the *Qur'ān* to the lances of the soldiers, and thus demanded the reference of the dispute to the *Qur'ān*. 'Alī saw into the trick and ordered his soldiers to continue the battle. But his soldiers clamoured to stop fighting. So fighting stopped and they were doomed to failure.

3. *At-Tahkīm* (Arbitration): After fighting stopped, it was decided that the dispute should be referred to two arbitrators. 'Alī's side was represented by Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī while the Syrians appointed 'Amr bn `l-Āṣ to be an arbitrator from Mu'āwiyah's side. So the two sides assembled at a place known as Dawmat-al Jandal in the month of Ramadan Year 37 AH. It was concluded that both 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah should be deposed and fresh election should take place in order to allow the Ummah elect new person that they are pleased with by mutual consent.

Accordingly, Abū Mūsā first declared the deposition of Caliph 'Alī bn Abi Ṭālib and his contender Mu'āwiyah. 'Amr bn `l-Āṣ, on the other hand, feigned ignorance of the mutual consensus and proclaimed the installation of Mu'āwiyah to the vacant seat of Caliphate. This treacherous proceedings of the arbitrators enraged 'Alī's party men and the arbitration ended in a farce.

This proceeding among other things accounted for division among 'Alī 's party as well as the emergence of Khawārij (Kharijites) in addition to an unflinching support of the Syrians for Mu'āwiyah and their inexhaustible sources of strength all these accounted for 'Alī 's failure to suppress the rebellion of Mu'āwiyah.

4. Assassination of 'Alī on the 7th of Ramadan 40 A.H. Three men among the Khawārij came to terms and plotted to murder Caliph 'Alī bn Abī Tālib, Mu'āwiyah and 'Amr bn `l-Āṣ. Accordingly, they set out to execute their plot. Abdur-Rahmān ibn Muljam, the Kharijī zealot, struck a severe blow at 'Alī , while his two associate were both unsuccessful in their quest to assassinate the two remaining contenders; Mu'āwiyah and 'Amr. Mu'āwiyah afterwards declared himself Caliph and called for his recognition. He then assumed the title of Amīr al-Mūminīn, or the Commander of the faithful. He was recognised by Syria and Egypt as well as those provinces that were under his possession.

5. Abdication of Hasan bn 'Alī from the Caliphate Seat in favour of Mu'āwiyah in the Year 41A.H. This seems to be the largest stride that facilitated Mu'āwiyah's accession to the seat of Caliphate. That is to say that the Iraqi Arabs acknowledged Hasan ibn 'Alī as a sovereign leader after the assassination of his father. Mu'āwiyah thus invaded Kūfah with a large army intending to remove the Caliph Hasan in state craft and shrewdness. He was far more superior to his rival. Hasan on the other hand advanced with Iraqi armies to oppose the invasion but when they halted at the city of Madain, the Kūfans proved very fickle in their support of Hasan so Mu'āwiyah easily dispensed with him.

Being disgusted with the fickle mindedness of the Kufan armies while they sneaked away from him and also obliged by his own peace loving nature, Hasan agreed to abdicate in order to avoid bloodshed of the Muslims. This was done on the offer of certain conditions which both the two parties agreed on.

With the abdication of Hasan, Mu'āwiyah became the undisputable Caliph of Islam and this was designated as the year of party.

Self Assessment Exercise

List out five factors that contributed to the accession of Mu'āwiyah to the seat of the Caliphate.

3.2 Mu'āwiyah bn Abī Sufyān (41 – 60 a.h. / 661 – 680)

Mu'āwiyahh was the bn Abu Sufyān bn Ṣakhr bn Harb bn Umayyah bn Abd Manāf. His mother was bint 'Utbah bn Rabī 'ah. He was born at Khayf in Mina, 15 years before *hijrah*. He embraced Islam during the conquest of Makkah. He was shrewd and perfect in the art of writing and Mathematics. By the virtue of these qualities and being a brother in law of the Prophet, he won the confidence

of the Prophet, was honoured the position of the prophet's scribe and became dignified. He took prominent part in all Muslim conquest during the early time of the pious Caliphs in Syria and was appointed to govern Jordan while his brother Yazīd bn Abu Sufyān was appointed to rule Syria. After the latter's death, Mu'āwiyah eventually succeeded his brother to the governorship of Syria. Thus he had at his disposal the entire resources of the vast and fertile provinces of Syria until after the death of 'Uthmān.

Mu'āwiyah ruled over the entire Syria provinces for over twelve years during the reign of Caliph 'Umar and eventually subjugated it during the course of his rebellion with Caliph 'Alī bn Abi Tālib. He was finally proclaimed as the Caliph as an aftermath of the arbitration proceeding which further the struggle between him and 'Alī.

As Hasan bn 'Alī agreed to abdicate the seat of the Caliphate in favour of Mu'āwiyah, Mu'āwiyah eventually became the undisputed Caliph of the Muslim empire in the 41 A.H. as we have previously mentioned.

It must be recalled that the Kūfians elected Hasan the eldest son of 'Alī to the *khilāfah* and the people of Madinah recognized him as their Caliph at the same time Mu'āwiyah who had contested the position with 'Alī declared himself at Damascus. Syrians and Egypt recognized him too.

Being at vantage position, Mu'āwiyah planned to remove Hasan and invaded Kufah with a large army. Hasan was forced to take the field. Qays his faithful general was sent to arrest the advance of the invading army of Mu'āwiyah while himself stayed with the main army at Madinah. At this time Mu'āwiyah displayed his shrewdness and militarism thus surpassing his rival. Besides, the Kufians proved fickle in their support of Hasan thus Mu'āwiyah easily dispensed with him.

Hasan became disgusted with the fickle mindedness of the Kufians and obliged by his peace – loving nature agreed to abdicate in favour of Mu'āwiyah on the condition that his younger brother Husayn would be made Caliph after Mu'āwiyah. This and other conditions were agreed upon by the two parties having avoided bloodshed of the Muslims and agreeing on the terms, Hasan abdicated the throne and Mu'āwiyah became the undisputable Caliph of Islam.

Self Assessment Exercise

Give a brief profile of Muawiyah and how he assumed office as Caliph.

3. 3 Factors Responsible for Mu'āwiyah's Assumption of the Caliphate

A number of factors contributed to the eventual accession of Mu'āwiyah to the Caliphate. At first instance, the assassination of 'Uthmān bn Affan and the failure of 'Alī his successor to expose and punish the assailants was exploited by Mu'āwiyah. It led to his discrediting 'Alī and his refusal to carry out 'Alī's order by resignation. Also, his instigation of the Syrian Arabs against 'Alī contributed to Mu'āwiyah's becoming the Caliph at last.

Another factor that aided the enthronement of Mu'āwiyah was the war strategies he adopted in the Şiffīn war whereby copies of the Holy Qur'ān were fastened on swords and lances; and the clamour by the 'Alī 's soldiers to stop war. Another factor was the deception displayed by 'Amr bn al-Āṣ, one of the arbitrators in the dispute between 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah.

Other factor is the division among 'Alī 's party and emergence of Khawārij coupled with immense support Mu'āwiyah received from the Syrians.

Besides the above factors was the failure of the Khawārij to murder along with 'Alī other two contenders (Mu'āwiyah and 'Amr bn al-Āṣ) and the eventual abdication of Hasan bn 'Alī from the Caliphate seat in favour of Mu'āwiyah in the year 41 A.H. The stand of Hasan to create avenue for peace in the empire seemed to be the largest stride that facilitated Mu'āwiyah's accession to the seat of Caliphate.

Self Assessment Exercise

Enumerate the factors that facilitated Mu'āwiyah's accession to the seat of Caliphate.

3.4 Changes introduced by Mu'āwiyah to the Caliphate

The accession of Mu'āwiyah to the seat of the *Khilāfah* became a turning point in the history of Islam. Shortly after his accession he ensured the removal of the Islamic capital from Madinah to Damascus. This led to the loss of the imperial position of Madinah and Kufa in the politics of *Khilāfah*. The Arabs also lost their ascendancy and privileged position in the *Khilāfah*. Mu'āwiyah ensured that the ascendancy and aristocracy of the Syrian Arabs were established in the Arab empire. He thus removed the influence of the Anṣār.

Mu'āwiyah followed the policy of ruining the family of 'Alī so that rivalry to the tool of authority between the Hashimides and the Umayyad might cease for ever.

The *Khilāfah* of Mu'āwiyah also saw the revival of the old tribal feuds and spirit of the Arabs including the resurfacing of the animosity between the Yemen and Hijāz Arabs. He did this partly due to his faction's tendency and partly for the interest of his *Khilāfah*.

Another momentous change in the *Khilāfah* of Mu'āwiyah was the transformation of the Republic of Islam into monarchy. He simply terminated the democratic commonwealth and converted the *Khilāfah* into a "Mulk". His nomination of Yezīd his son as successor to the tool on 679 C.E established the dynastic rule of his family in the Caliphate.

Mu'āwiyah in doing this employed persuasion, inducement and cajolry to obtain allegiance of the principal men of the empire for his successor in his presence. He through this technically and cunningly introduced hereditary principle of succession and suppressed the elective principle employed throughout the periods of the pious Caliphs.

Mu'āwiyah was the first monarch in the history of Islam. He converted the *Bayt al – Māl* into his personal property; utilized, spent and disposed of it at will without caring for the purpose the "*Bayti `l-Māl*" was meant for.

Mu'āwiyah threw into the dust-bin the simplicity which characterized the pious Caliphs. He surrounded himself with splendid bodyguards who followed him anywhere he went. He involved in pomp, grandeur and pageantry befitting a Persian or Byzantine Empror and not a successor of the rightly guided Caliphs such as Abu Bakr and 'Umar.

He also introduced royal throne and set up a bower inside the Mosque reserved mainly for the exclusive use of the Caliph. He also introduced the reading of Friday *Khutbah* while sitting.

A change which seemed remarkable was the discarding of the "*Shūrā*" council of elders. Mu'āwiyah erased the system of consultation and maintained the absolute power of the ruler.

Finally Mu'āwiyah pioneered the system of becoming addicted to sensuality pleasure and conviviality rather than simplicity and piety.

Self Assessment Exercise

Highlight some of the changes that were introduced in the political and spiritual arenas during the rulership of Mu'āwiyah.

3.5 Social Situation during Mu'āwiyah's Reign: The accession of Mu'āwiyah to the throne brought about the emergence of three different sects each of which had a divergent opinion which they thought should form the basis of electing a would be Caliph to the throne. Those sects include:

1. The Partisans of the Umayyads: These were of two categories:

Al-Murji'ah: They were those that made peace with all and never accused any one of disbelief. They gave preference to an established fact and mutually accorded the Umayyads their allegiance. The second category included the petitioners and those that sought for political appointments.

2. *Ash-Shī'ah* (The Shīites): They were the Supporters of 'Alī and his offsprings. They favoured Caliph 'Alī and his offsprings to the throne. They asserted that 'Alī and his offspring had the Testamentary claim to the Caliphate than anyone else. For that reason they refused to accord the dynasty of Mu'āwiyah any recognition but considered him as a usurper.

Ash-Shī'ah were carrying on their activities against the Umayyad's administrators in Kufa, they defied and protested the authority of the governor. Although they took up no harms in their activities they resisted the blackmail of Caliph 'Alī .

Hajar bn Adī was the leading figure in the repulsive activities. He championed the course of leading rebellion against Mugīrah bn

Shu 'bah, the governor of Kufa and Zayād bn Sumayyah his successor. Eventually, Hajar and his associates were arrested and banished to Damascus. They were mercilessly tracked down during the course of their journey before they arrived the capital city.

Insurgent activities were gradually disappearing on account of this tragic events but it is only done secretly.

3. *Al-Khawārij* (The Kharijites): They had the notion that the seat of Caliphate should not be a hereditary monarchy but a potential right of every Muslim that possessed the required qualities. They upbraided the dynasty of Mu'āwiyah. The Umayyad's Caliphate according to them was absurd because it was devoid of mutual consultation. It lacked credibility. Thus the group saw the Umayyads as usurpers.

The Kharijites deem it lawful to shed blood and extort property from anyone who is insubordinate to them. For that reason, they began spreading sedition and trouble in the empire. In Iraq and Kūfah, even the position of the Caliph was far from secure. No sooner than Mu'āwiyah had established his position as the Caliph that Farwal ibn Nawfal al-Ashja'ī revolted against him and attacked Kūfah. It took the intervention of the Kūfah Arabs out of intimidation by the Caliph before he was finally killed.

Then emerged another dissident from the same region named Mustawrad bn 'Alfī a`-t-Taymī. Al Mugīrah unleashed his forces on him eliminated him and dispersed his troops.

Having settled with the above menace of the Kharijites the Umayyads had to contend with other rebellious activities that was spear-headed by Abu Bilāl Murād bn 'Adī. It took the formidable efforts of Ubaydullah ibn Zayād the then governor of Kufa to overcome him. He unleashed his forces on him and he was eventually eliminated and his union was dispersed.

In this manner, all insurgent activities were finally suppressed and the position of Mu'āwiyah was finally secured. He could finally place his dynasty on a stable and solid foundation.

Self Assessment Exercise

Describe the social situation during Mu'āwiyah's reign

4.0 CONCLUSION

The inordinate ambition Mu'āwiyah had in rulership led to the optimum utilization of his potentials. His shrewdness, organizing capability, administrative ingenuity and constructive statesmanship gave him an upper hand over his rivals. The solidarity given to Mu'āwiyah by his immediate family members and the loyalty the Syrians constituted the source of his strength. This led to his transforming the *Khilāfah* into hereditary monarchy of the Umayyad.

He discarded the "*Majlis Shūrā*" system of consultation and maintained authoritarianism. Despite all the anomalies he introduced into the Islamic State he was credited to have been the pioneer of many good things such as establishment of *Dīwānu 'l – Barīd*, *Dīwānu 'l – Khātām* and building the Arab navy.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit we have discussed the early history of Mu'āwiyah and factors that facilitated his accession to Caliphate. The unit has equally highlighted some of the reasons that accounted for the successes recorded by Mu'āwiyah during his Caliphate. The unit has equally explained some of the changes brought into the *Khilāfah* by Mu'āwiyah as well as his administrative prowess including legacies he left behind in the dynasty.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- Highlight the factors responsible for the fall of the Orthodox Caliphate.
- Examine the military ingenuity of Caliph Mu'āwiyah bn Abī Sufyān.
- Mu'āwiyah was said to involve in calumny and bitterness in achieving his political ambition. Discuss.

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