



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COURES CODE: ISLO10

COURSE TITLE: Celebrations in Islam

CORSE CODE: ISL010

COURSE TITLE: Celebrations in Islam

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TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
Course Materials	4
References/Reading List.....	5
Assignment file.....	5
Presentation Schedule.....	5
Assessment	5
Tutor-Marked Assignment.....	6
Final Examination Grading	6
Course Marking Scheme	7
Course overview	7
How to get the most from this course.....	8
Tutors and Tutorials	10
Summary.....	11

COURSE GUIDE

ISL010: Celebrations in Islam, is a one-semester two Credit-unit course. It will be available to all students as a course in Diploma programme. The course is also suitable for any one who is interested in the study of some of the celebrations in Islam.

The Course consists of 14 units discussed under 3 modules. The topics respectively discussed under the units are the introductory unit, Idul-Fitri, Idul Adhā, Mawlidun-Nabiyy, Nikāh, ‘Aqīqah/Naming, Walīmatu Khatimil-Qur’an, Janāzah, Laylatul Qadri, Laylatul Isrā’l wal Mi’rāj, Awwal Muharram/Hijrah, Tāsū‘ā and ‘Āshūrā, Miscellaneous festivals.

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS COURSE

The overall aim of ISL010: Celebrations in Islam, is to acquaint you with the historical origin, the mode and the advantages in some of the celebrations that exist in Islam so as to serve as guide for your day-to-day activities and to guide Muslims against involving in some celebrations which has no basis in Islam.

COURSE AIMS

The aim of this course is to put you through all necessary information you may need to facilitate your understanding of the Prophetic practices and those of his rightly-guided companions which they left over as legacies for the Muslim Ummah. This will be achieved by:

- Discussing with you the historical origin of some of these celebrations
- Explaining to you how some of them are celebrated.
- Bringing out to you some of the advantages of these celebrations.

- Bringing out to you argument for or against celebrating some of them.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

To achieve the aims set out above there are overall set objectives. In addition, each unit also has specific objectives. The unit objectives are always included at its beginning. You read them before you start working through the unit. You may want to refer to them during your study of the unit to check your progress. You should always look at the unit objectives after completing a unit. This way you can confirm whether you have done what was required of you by the unit.

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

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

- Give the historical analysis of the origin of some of the celebrations in Islam.
- Argue for or against the necessity for celebrating any of the celebrations.
- Explain some of the lessons that are derivable from celebrating any one of them.
- Identify those among them that are more celebrated than others and why.

WORKING THROUGH THIS COURSE

To complete this course, you are required to read the study units, read recommended books and read other materials provided by the National Open University of Nigeria (**NOUN**). Each unit contains self-assessment exercises, and at points in the course, you are required to submit assignments for assessment purposes. At the end of this course,

there is a final examination. You will find below list of all the components of the course and what you have to do.

COURSE MATERIALS

Major components of the course are:

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

In addition you must obtain the materials. They are provided by the **NOUN**. Obtain your copy. You may contact tutor if you have problems in obtaining the materials.

Each unit contains a number of self-tests. In general these self- tests examine you on the material just covered or require you to apply them in some ways and thereby, help you to evaluate your progress and performance in your assignments. The exercises will assist you in achieving the stated learning objectives of the individual units and of the course.

SET TEXTBOOKS

1. Abdul, M.O.A (1983) *Islam as a religion (Faith and duties) Studies in Islam series*, Book 1, Lagos: Islamic Publication Bureau.
2. Ali, A.Y (1977) *The Holy Qur'an English translation and commentary*. American Translation Publication (U.S.A)
3. Ali M.A (1973) *The religion of Islam* New Delhi: Taj Comp
4. Cowan, J.M (ed)(1976) *A Dictionary of modern Written Arabic* New York: Spoken Language service Ltd.
5. Chris Fox (ed) (2000) *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, Lagos: Longman Nigeria

ASSIGNMENT FILE

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

PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

The presentation Schedule included in your course materials gives you the important dates for the completion of tutor-marked assignments and attending tutorials. Remember, you are required to submit all your assignments in good time. You should guard against being late in submitting your work.

ASSESSMENT

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

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

TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

There are fourteen tutor-marked assignments in this course. You need to submit all the assignments. The best five (i.e the highest five of the fifteen marks) will be counted. The total marks for the four (4) assignments 30 %, will be of your total course mark.

Assignment questions for the units in this course are contained in the

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

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

FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING

The final examination of ISL010 will be of two hour duration and 70% have a value of the total course grade. The examination will consist of questions which reflect the type of self-testing, practice exercise and tutor-marked problems you have come across. All areas of the course will be assessed.

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

COURSE MARKING SCHEME

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

Assessment	Marks
Assignment 1-14	Best five marks out of fourteen count @ 10% each = 50% of course marks
Final Examination	50% of overall course marks
Total	100% of course marks

Table 1: course marking scheme

COURSE OVERVIEW

Units	Title of work	Weeks activity	Assessment (end of unit)
1	Introductory unit	1	Assignment 1
2	Idul Fitri	2	Assignment 2
3	Idul Adhā	3	Assignment 3
4	Mawlidun-Nabiyy	4	Assignment 4
5	Nikāh	5	Assignment 5
6	'Aqīqah/Naming	6	Assignment 6
7	Walīmatu Khatmil Qur'an	7	Assignment 7
8	Janāzah	8	Assignment 8
9	Laylatul Qadri	9	Assignment 9
10	Laylatu Nisfu Sha'bān	10	Assignment 10
11	Laylatul Isrāi wal Mi'rāj	11	Assignment 11
12	Awwal Muharram/Hijrah	12	Assignment 12
13	Tāsū'ā and 'Āshūrā	13	Assignment 13

4	Miscellaneous Festivals	14	Assignment 14
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Table 2: Course overview

HOW TO GET MOST FROM THIS COURSE

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

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

READING SECTION

Remember that your tutor's job is to help you. When you need help, don't hesitate to call and ask your tutor to provide it.

- 1 Read this course guide thoroughly
- 2 Organize a study schedule. Refer to the 'course overview' for more details. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units. Whatever method you choose to use, you should decide on and write in your own dates for working on each unit.

- 3 Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything you can to stick to it. The major reason that students fail is that they get behind with their course work. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please let your tutor know before it is too late for help.
- 4 Turn on unit 1 and read the introduction and the objectives for the unit.
- 5 Assemble the study materials. Information about what you need for unit is given in the "Overview" at the beginning of each unit. You will almost always need both the study unit you are working on and one of your set books on your desk at the same time.
- 6 Work through the unit itself has been arranged to provide a sequence for you to follow. As you work through the unit you will be instructed to read sections from your set books or other articles. Use the unit to guide your reading.
- 7 Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you are not sure about any of the objectives, review the study material or consult your tutor.
- 8 When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can then start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to face your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.
- 9 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 on what is written on the assignment. Consult your tutor as soon as possible if you have any questions or problems.
- 10 After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in this course guide).

TUTORS AND TUTORIALS

There are 8 hours of tutorials provided in support of this course. You will be notified of the dates, times and location of these tutorials, together with the name and phone number of your tutor, as soon as you are allocated a tutorial group.

Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignments, keep a close watch on your progress and on any difficulties you might encounter. He will also provide assistance to you during the course. You must mail your tutor – marked assignments to your tutor well before the due date (at least two working days are required). They will be marked by your tutors and returned to you as soon as possible.

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

CONTACT YOUR TUTOR IF:

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

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

SUMMARY

ISL010 introduces you to the textual studies of some traditions of holy prophet Muhammad. The traditions contain some moral lessons which are meant to

shape your daily life if you hearken to them and apply them appropriately. You can even do the society well by teaching people in your environment these moral lessons. In addition, proper study of the traditions will enable you pass the examination you are required to sit for after the course.

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



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Table of Contents	Page
Title Page	i
Publisher	ii
Table of Contents	iii
MODULE 1:	
Unit 1: Introductory Unit	1-5
Unit 2: The Preparation and Observation of <i>‘Idul-Fitri</i>	6-11
Unit 3: <i>‘Idul-Adhā</i>	12-18
Unit 4: <i>Mawlidun-Nabiyy</i>	19-26
MODULE 2:	
Unit 1: <i>Nikāh</i> Ceremony	27-35
Unit 2: <i>‘Aqīqah</i> /Naming Ceremony	36-44
Unit 3: <i>Walīmatu khatmil Qur’an</i>	45-51
Unit 4: <i>Janāzah</i>	52-58
MODULE 3:	
Unit 1: <i>Laylatul – Qadr</i>	59-63
Unit 2: <i>Laylatu Nisfu Sha‘bān</i>	64-67
Unit 3: <i>Laylatul Isrāi Wal-Mi‘rāj</i>	68-71
Unit 4: Celebration of <i>Awwal Muharram/ Hijrah</i>	72-76
Unit 5: Celebration of <i>Tāsū‘ā</i> and <i>‘Āshūrā</i>	77-81
Unit 6: Miscellaneous Festivals	82-86

MODULE 1

Unit 1: Introductory unit

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main contents
 - 3.1 Concept and origin of celebration
 - 3.2 Kinds of celebration in Islam
 - 3.3 Origin of celebration
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References and Further Readings

1.0 Introduction

As you might be aware prayer in Islam in its broadcast content can be divided into two major parts, daily obligatory prayers and special prayers. The obligatory prayers are the prescribed five daily prayers observed at prescribed time while the special prayers are observed on special occasions and not daily. They are also non-obligatory, but have stronger importance than the Sunnah prayers. Some of these special prayers are performed as special celebrations in Islam. They include *ʿIdul Fitr* and *ʿIdul adhā* celebrations. They are each observed once in a year. Therefore in this unit we shall examine the definitions, concept and origin of some celebrations in Islam.

2.0 Objectives

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

- define the words *ʿId* and *Walīmah* in Islam.
- describe the concept of celebrations in Islam.
- explain the origin of the celebrations in Islam.

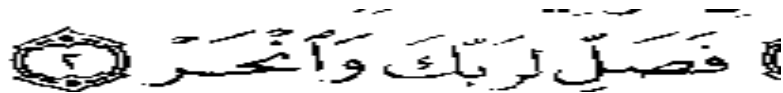
3.0 Main Content

3.1 Definition of the Words ‘*Id*’ and ‘*Walīmah*’

In his Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic, Cowan (1976:660) gives the meaning of the word ‘*Id*’ among others as feast, festival, and celebration etc. In Islamic terminology the word ‘*Id*’ and ‘*Walīmah*’ mean celebrations. On the other hand, in Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2006: 236) the word celebration is defined as an occasion or party when someone celebrates something. Further, Muhammad Ali (1973:359) opines that the word ‘*Id*’ means a recurring happiness. Therefore, in Islam there are special ceremonies which the Muslims celebrate. These include ‘*Idul-Fitr*’ and ‘*Idul-adhā*’.

The concept of celebrations in Islam revolves on the method of how to observe the occasion and most of these methodologies are contained in the passages of the Qur’an and the *ahādith* of the Prophet (SAW)

The Qur’an says:



“Pray unto your Lord and sacrifice” (Q108:2).

The Prophet (SAW) was also reported of saying that the people of Medina had two days that they used to celebrate during the Dark Age’ and the two days which have being substituted for you are the ‘*Idul- Fitr*’ and ‘*Idul adhā*’.

These two great festivals in Islam have some religious sanctions and in connection with them a congregational service of two *Raka’ah* is held and usually followed by a sermon. ‘*Idul- Fitr*’ takes place immediately after fasting in the month of Ramadan

which is the first day of *shawwāl*. With the observance of *‘Idul- Fitr*, the Muslim returns to his natural cause by fulfilling the demand of nature.

The *‘Idul adhā* is celebrated on the 10th day of the lunar month of *Dhul-Hijjah* in order to offer sacrifice to Allah as did Prophets Ibrahim and Muhammad (AS) in obedience to Almighty Allah.

The origin of other celebrations such as *Mawlidun-Nabiyy*, *‘Aqīqah*, *Walīmatun-Nikāh* could be traced to some of the traditions of the Prophet (SAW). In fact, the celebration of *Mawlidun-Nabiyy* is quite controversial among the Muslims.

3.2 Kinds of Celebration

In Islam, the celebrations could be divided into two categories in term of their occasion. The first category has to do with celebrations which are annual events and very popular worldwide. However, the other celebrations are the events which are celebrated round the year, not popular and have little or no Qur’anic supports.

In the first category are *‘Idul- Fitr*, *‘Idul adhā* and *Mawlidun-Nabiyy*, however, it should be noted that *Mawlidun-Nabiyy* in our Nigerian Society today has become an every month or every day event.

The second category could be seen as social events which are observed as everyday events, popular and without much reservation in term of its celebration. The social event are *‘Aqīqah* (naming ceremony), *Walīmatul Qur’an* feast at the end of the completion of the learning of the Qur’an and *Walīmatun–Nikāh*, the wedding ceremony. They are social events which are celebrated with all pomps and pageantry.

Self Assessment Exercise

1. Define the terms *‘Id* and *Walīmah*.
2. Discuss the major distinctions between *‘Id* and *Walīmah*.
3. Describe the origin of *‘Idul- Fitr* and *walīmatul – Qur’an*.

4.0 Conclusion

In Islam, celebration is an aspect of life of a Muslim and there are several of such festivals or feasts. Mainly, they are of two categories, those that are of annual event, popular and celebrated in all the nooks and crannies of the Muslim world. In fact, they are supported in the passages of the Qur'an and Ahādith. These are the '*Idayn*': '*Idul-Fitr* and '*Idul adhā*. The second category is more of social events, get-together, not popular and not universally practiced in the entire Muslim world. The category includes '*Aqīqah*, '*walīmatul-Qur'an*, '*Walīmatun-Nikāh* and '*Mawlidun-Nabiyy*. In fact, the celebration of '*Mawlidun-Nabiyy* is quite controversial among Muslims as some people do not support it because, according to them, it has no scriptural backing.

5.0 Summary

This unit examined the definition, concept and the origin of celebrations in Islam. It discusses the two categories of celebration that we have in Islam, the annual category and the everyday category. Apart from this, each of the celebration is also briefly discussed. The unit concludes with a distinction concerning the two categories.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assessments

1. Define the term '*Id*' and '*Walīmah*'.
2. Discuss the two universal '*Ids* in full, stating their origin.
3. Describe either the '*Walīmatul-Qur'an* or '*Walīmatun-Nikāh*.

7.0 Reference and Further Reading

- Abdul, M.O.A (1983) *Islam as a religion (Faith and duties)* Studies in Islam series, Book 1, Lagos: Islamic Publication Bureau.
- Ali, A.Y (1977) *The Holy Qur'an English translation and commentary*. American Translation Publication (U.S.A)
- Ali M.A (1973) *The religion of Islam* New Delhi: Taj Comp
- Cowan, J.M (ed)(1976) *A Dictionary of modern Written Arabic* New York: Spoken Language service Ltd.
- Chris Fox (ed) (2000) *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, Lagos: Longman Nigeria

Unit 2: The Preparation and Observation Of ‘*Idul- Fitr*

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main contents
 - 3.1 Preparation for ‘*Idul- Fitr*
 - 3.2 Significance of the celebration.
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor marked Assignments
- 7.0 References and Further Reading

1.0 Introduction

In the previous unit, you learn about the definition, concept and origin of celebrations in Islam. In this unit, you will learn about the preparation and observation of ‘*Idul-Fitr*. ‘*Idul- Fitr* is one of the special prayers observed at the end of the Muslim fasting of Ramadan. It is a non-obligatory prayer but it is stronger than *Sunnah* prayer.

2.0 Objectives

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

- explain the necessary preparation for the celebration of ‘*Idul- Fitr*
- describe how to observe the ‘*Id- Fitr*

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Preparation And Observation Of ‘*Idul- Fitr*

In Islam, there are great festivals having a religious sanction and in connection with both of them a congregational service of two *Raka‘ah* is observed it is strictly followed by a *Khutbah*.

The Muslim celebration '*Idul-Fitr*' on the first day of the lunar month of *Shawwal* to mark the completion of annual Ramadan fast. The preparation for '*Idul-Fitr*' is similar to that of the preparation for the Friday service: One must take a bath, put on one's best clothes use scent and also do everything possible, to appear neat and tidy. The gathering for the '*Id*' is expected preferably to be held in an open place but in some circumstance could be in a mosque. An open space is preferable due to number of people that will participate in the observance of the prayer and a mosque might not be able to accommodate the number. In actual sense it is the gathering of Muslim living in the environment.

Among the preparation for the celebration are the following:-

1. To rise early enough in the morning of the day.
2. To arrange for one's personal adornment.
3. To give out the *Zakātul-fitr* before departure to the place where the '*Id*' will be celebrated if possible.
4. It is also desirable that some sweet things be taken before going for the prayer.
5. To reach the praying ground early enough before the commencement of the prayer.

Further, it is expected that the Muslim observing this prayer to go through one way and return by another way. When going to the praying ground, he is expected to be in full meditation by pronouncing the *Takbīr* on the way in a low voice.

In observing the '*Id*' time for the prayer is any time after sunrise before noon there is no need for *Adhān* nor *Iqāmah* as in the other prayers. The congregation would be arranged in lines. The *Idl* service consists of two *Raka'ah*. The two *Raka'ah* are necessary (*Wājib*) to be performed like all other voluntary prayers. After the first *Takbīr* the Imam pronounces other six one after the other and the congregation follows him simultaneously. The Imam recites loudly the *Suratul-fātihah* and another *Surah*. He will go to *Rukū'u* and *Sujūd*. This completes the first *Raka'ah*. Then the Imam and the congregation rise up for the second *Raka'ah*. The Imam then says five

Takbīr followed by the congregation. He recites *Suratul-fātihah* and another *Sūrah*, preferably *Suratush-shams* and with this the second *Raka‘ah* is completed with the *Rukū‘u* and *Sujūd*.

After the completion of the *Id* prayer, the imam delivers a sermon in which he admonishes the congregation concerning the principle of *Zakātul-Fitr* and shows gratitude to Allah on the completion of Ramadan fasts. He also discussed the contemporary issue going on in society. The *khutbah* is delivered in two parts though not necessarily for the Imam taking a little rest in the middle of the sermon while the congregation observes a silent short supplication.

A *Khutbah* is an admonition to the people, an exhortation to awaken the Muslims to their sense of duty and their responsibilities. Therefore, it should be given in the language of the people in the congregation or should be translated in their language if not delivered in their language. There are some orthodox and conservative people who believe that the *Khutbah* should be delivered in Arabic language only but the import of any sermon is for people to understand the message and apply it in their daily lives.

Furthermore, women are enjoined to participate in the celebration of the *Id* even if they are experiencing their menses. They would only not participate in the *salāt* but could stand-by to listen to the *Khutbah* which comes after and share the merriment of the celebrations with other Muslims.

The Significance of the Celebration

According to the Glorious Qur’an the days for the fasting in the month of Ramadan are either 29 or 30.

“The prescribed fasting is for a fixed number of days” (Q 2:184)

The implication of this verse is that the first day of the lunar month of *Shawwāl* should be celebrated as the '*Idul- Fitr*. The significance of this is that the day is a celebration day for all Muslims in all the nooks and crannies of the world. It is a universal celebration day for all Muslims, young or old, men or women. On this day every Muslim gathers in an open space or mosque to observe a two *Raka'ah* prayer known as '*Idul- Fitr* to show gratitude to Allah for successful completion of the fasts.

The '*Id* day is always declared as a public holiday in most of the Muslim countries in order to allow the Muslims felicitate with one another. It is a day when Muslims in their various environments exchange pleasantries and visit one another. Some Muslim organizations in Nigeria such as Ansar-ud-deen Society, Nawair-ud-deen Society, NASFAT etc, organize get-together luncheon, *bazaar* and parties for the Muslims.

Importantly, it is expected that the head of every Muslim family offers *Zakātul-fitr* on behalf of every member of his household. The essence of this offering is to allow the needy and the have-nots in the society to enjoy the goodies of the celebration. The institution of charitable fund is associated with '*Idul- Fitr*. The items that are used for *Zakātul-fitr* include wheat, barley or any other staple food of the community or its equivalent value in money which is paid per every head of the family including newborn babies. The *Zakātul-Fitr* is expected to be made available to its beneficiaries before the service is held and it is obligatory (*Fard*). However, in some other schools of thought it can be offered after the service up till the third day after the '*Id*. Therefore, '*Idul- Fitr* is an occasion where the spirit of brotherhood is demonstrated.

Self Assessment Exercise

1. Describe the ways and manner of preparing for the celebration of '*Idul- Fitr*
2. Describe how to observe the '*Idul- Fitr*.
3. Highlight some of the benefits in celebration of '*Idul- Fitr*.

4.0 Conclusion

The *'Idul- Fitr* is an Islamic celebration that is connected with fasting. It is a great day of happiness in which the Muslims all over the world get together in an open space or in the mosque to show gratitude to Allah for successful completion of 29 or 30 days of fasting. In celebrating the great occasion, there are some ways in preparing for it in order to achieve the blessings of the day. The preparation has to do with the physical and spiritual cleanliness.

Furthermore, there are procedures for observing the prayer in order to avail one the unique opportunity of this great celebration. Importantly, the celebration has some significant benefits. Beside the obligatory charity of *Zakātul-fitr* the celebration, in one way or other, fosters good relationship and brotherhood among the generality of Muslims whether young or old, male or female.

5.0 Summary

In this unit you have been able to learn about the preparation and observation of *'Idul-Fitr*, one of the celebrations in Islam. In celebrating this great festival a Muslim is not only remembering Allah by attending the divine service but remember his poorer members of the society. The celebration involved some preparation and procedure, for observing it. It is one of the unifying factors that promote good relationship and brotherhood in Islam.

6.0. Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Discuss ways and manner for the preparation of *'Idul- Fitr*
2. Describe the procedures for observing *'Idul- Fitr*.
3. Suggest some of the benefits of the celebration of *'Idul- Fitr*.

7.0. References And Further Reading

Abdul, M.O.A (1983) *Islam as a religion (Faith and duties)* Studies in Islam series, Book 1, Lagos: Islamic Publication Bureau.

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UNIT 3: 'Idul Adhā

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main contents
 - 3.1 Preparation for '*Idul Adhā*.
 - 3.2 Significance of the celebration.
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor marked Assignments
- 7.0 Reference and Further Readings

1.0 Introduction

In the previous unit you learnt about the preparation, observation and significance of '*Idul-Fitr*', In this unit you will be able to learn about the second great celebration in Islam, the '*Idul adhā*' which is celebrated on the 10th of lunar month of *Dhul-Hijjah* to commemorate the attempted sacrifice to Allah, by Prophet Ibrahim (A.S) of his son – Ismaīl, in obedience to the commandment of Allah.

2.0 Objectives

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

- explain the necessary preparation for the celebration of '*Idul-Fitr*'
- describe how to observe the '*Id*'.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Preparation and Observation of '*Idul – Adhā*'

The second great festival universally acknowledged in Islam is the '*Idul Adhā*'. The celebration has a religious sanction as that of '*Idul-Fitr*'. The Qur'an says:



“So pray to thy Lord and offer sacrifice” (Q 108:2)

The Muslims celebrate '*Idul Adhā* on the 10th of the lunar month of *Dhul – Hijjah*. As the name *Adhā* connotes, which means sacrifice, it is a festival connected with the duty of sacrifice as exemplified by Prophet Ibrahim (A.S). As for the preparation for the '*Idul Adhā* it has some similarities with that of '*Idul- Fitr* with a very little distinction. Therefore, the following things have been prescribed to the faithful Muslims:

- i To rise early enough in the morning of the '*Id*.
- ii To have a ritual bath for the '*Id* after *Fajr* Prayer.
- iii To put up the best available dress.
- iv To use perfume
- v To arrange for one's personal adornment
- vi To reach the prayer ground as early as possible.
- vii To go through one way while going to the prayer ground and return through the other way.

The major distinctions between the preparation for '*Idul- Fitr* and that of '*Idul Adhā* are that:

- it is recommended that the adult should keep fast till the end of the service;
- that while going to the service it is recommended that Muslims should be reciting the *tasbīhāt* and *takbīrāt* on the way to and fro the prayer ground.

The service for the celebration of '*Idul Adhā* as that of the '*Idul- Fitr* is observed in congregation preferably at an open space except for a circumstance beyond one's control that a mosque could be used. It is of two *Raka'ah* without *Adhān* and

Iqāmah. There is a number of **Takbīr** in addition to those that are meant to indicate the changes of position. In the first **Raka‘ah** the number of **Takbīr** is seven and five in the second before the recital of the **Fātihah** and other **Surah** in both **Raka‘ah**. The **Takbīr** is expected to be uttered aloud by the Imam, one after another, while he raises both hands to the ear level. Those who stand behind him should do same in lower voice.

The other major distinction in the performance of **’Idul Adhā** and **’Idul-Fitr** has to do with the sacrifice. Every Muslim who can afford to offer sacrifice should do so. Animals such as goat, sheep, cow and camel can be used for the sacrifice. Goat or sheep could be used by an individual household, while cow and camel could be offered by a group of seven people.

The offer of sacrifice should be done after the completion of the prayer on the day of **’Id**. It is also allowed to be performed during the second and the third day after. These days are known as, **ayyāmut-Tashrīq**. The sacrificial animal is expected to be divided into three parts according to the teaching of the Prophet (SAW), the first one third for personal consumption of the household, the second one third, for the poor and the last one third for the neighbours. However, it should be noted that there is no hard and fast rules concerning its distribution.

3.2 Significance of the *Idul- Adha*.

’Idul Adhā, one of the great festivals in Islam has some significance. The major significance of this religious celebration enjoined by Allah is obedience to his commandment. The Qur’an Says.



“So pray to thy Lord and sacrifice” (Q 108:2)

Ibrahim (AS) who was a Prophet of God, remained for a long time without an issue. While praying to Allah to be blessed with a son he promised of sacrificing the son to Allah if given. After he got the son, he was reminded of his promise. In fulfillment of this promise he took the son - Ismail, out of the town for sacrifice. When he was about to sacrifice the son, Allah ordered Angel Jibril to give him a ram as a substitute for the son and consequently, the sacrifice of animal in commemoration of this occasions becomes an important celebration in Islam.

Part of the significance of the celebration is the coming together of all Muslims from all walks of life - rich, poor, old and young and by this a good relationship and brotherhood are exhibited. The celebration, as opined by Ali (1973: 363), is intended to make Muslim hearts throughout the world, be in unison with the hearts of the unparalleled assemblage at Makkah.

The sacrificial animals and the shedding of blood is not the major objective of this celebration but the underlying principle is the fear and absolute submission to Allah. The Qur'an establishes this fact in the following way:

لَنْ يَنَالَهُ اللَّهُ لُحُومُهُمْ وَلَا دِمَاؤُهُمْ
 وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْكُمْ كَذَلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ لِشُكْرِكُمْ
 اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَىٰكُمْ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

*“Not their flesh or their blood, reaches Allah,
 but it is your righteousness that reaches him”*

(Q 22: 37)

Just like it is applicable during the 'Idul- Fitr, everybody, including menstruating women, are allowed to visit the prayer site where the *Idul Adhā* is observed. This is to afford them the opportunity to share out of the blessings of Allah that accompany the celebration and to merry with their other Muslim faithfuls. The act of sacrificing

animal is in a way connected with righteousness, with submission to Allah, with humbleness of heart and with patience under suffering as declared in the Qur'an thus:

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا لِيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ
اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُم مِّنْ بَهِيمَةٍ الْأَنْعَامِ فَإِنَّهُمْ وَاللَّهُ
فَلَهُ اسْلَمُوا وَمِشْرَ الْمُخْبِتِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَّت
قُلُوبُهُمْ وَالصَّابِرِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَهُم وَالْمُقِيمِي الصَّلَاةِ وَمِمَّا
رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

“And for every nation, we appointed acts of devotion that they might mention the name of Allah on what he has given them of cattle quadrupeds, so your God is one God therefore on him should you submit, and give good news to the humble whose hearts tremble when Allah is mentioned and who are patient in their afflictions” (Q. 22:34-35)

Self Assessment Exercise

- i Mention some of the ways '**Idul Adhā** can be prepared for.
- ii Explain the procedure of observing the celebration of '**Idul Adhā**.
- iii Enumerate the significance of the celebration of '**Idul Adhā**.

4.0 Conclusion

The '**Idul Adhā**, one of the great celebrations in Islam, is the feast of sacrifice that is celebrated on the 10th of the lunar month of **Dhul-Hijjah**. During this celebration, the sacrifice offered is in commemoration of the absolute obedience and submission of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) to Allah.

The preparation for the ceremony is in the same way with that of '*Idul Fitri*' with a little difference. The only difference has to do with the fasting during the early part of the morning which accompanies the *Idul Adhā*; as well as the supplication that is offered while going and coming from the service.

Idul Adhā is an occasion for the exercise of charity. The sacrifice of animals that go with it also makes it different a little from '*Idul- Fitri*'.

The significance of the celebration could not be underestimated. The underlying objective is to commemorate the obedience and absolute submission of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) to Allah, that which is expected of the Muslims to emulate. It is a universal celebration which could be compared with the assembly of Muslims at Makkah during the annual Hajj exercise.

5.0 Summary

The Muslim celebration treated in this unit is *Idul Adhā*, the festival of sacrifice. The sacrifice of an animal in this celebration is not only to remember Allah but also serves as a moment of remembering the poorer members of the community.

The celebration has some ways and manners of preparing for it and some procedures of observing it.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Discuss some of the ways for the preparation of *Idul Adhā*
2. Describe the manners of observing the *Idul Adhā*.
3. Assess the significance of the celebration of *Idul Adhā*.

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Unit 4: *Mawlidun Nabiyy*

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 What is *Mawlidun Nabiyy*?
 - 3.2 The celebration and the controversy concerning *Mawlidun Nabiyy*
 - 3.3 The significance of its celebration
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assessment
- 7.0 References and Further Reading.

1.0 Introduction

In the previous unit, we discussed the preparation, observation and significance of *'Idul Adhā*. In this unit, we will be discussing the most controversial celebration in Islam, the *Mawlidun Nabiyy*. Today in many countries of the world the 12th day of the lunar month of *Rabi' al – Awwal* is celebrated as a public holiday. This unit will explain to you while the day is so celebrated.

2.0 Objectives

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

- ❖ define the term *Mawlidun Nabiyy*
- ❖ mention the controversy concerning the celebration of *Mawlidun Nabiyy*.
- ❖ enumerate the significance of its celebration.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 What is Mawlid?

According to Cowan (1976:1097), he defines the word *Mawlid* as to bear a child, give birth. The original Arabic definition of the word *Mawlid* is a place of birth or a time of birth. Hence *Al-Mawlid an-nabawi* refers to the place or time of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). This is the only definition known to Muslims from the time of the Prophet (SAW) until the seventh century after *Hijrah*, according to *Umm Muhammed* (1994:4). However, it should be observed that after the time, the term took on another meaning. From that time, it means the gathering of people in the mosques or homes for the purpose of listening to specific recitations of the story of the Prophet's (SAW) birth. In fact, today in many countries, the day of the birth of Muhammad (SAW) i.e. 12th day of the lunar month of *Rabi'ul – Awwal*, is celebrated as a public holiday.

Notwithstanding the controversy as for whether the day should be celebrated or not, Muslims from all walks of life do gather together on this auspicious day to celebrate the occasion. In actual sense there is no specific passage of the Qur'an that supports the celebration. However, it was reported that the Prophet (SAW) always observed fasting on Mondays and when he was asked the reason for the fasting, he replied "Monday was the day I was born". The Prophet never instructed anybody to observe any fast on Monday in celebration of his birthday, and there is no account from the companions of the Prophet (SAW) to attest to the celebration of his birthday.

3.2 The Celebration of *Mawlidun Nabiyy* and the Controversy Concerning it

The Celebration of *Mawlidun Nabiyy* as it is done today, particularly in Nigeria, generates some controversies. The controversy emanates on the position of the Prophet (SAW) on the issue. As earlier mentioned there is no account of the companions which suggests that the Prophet (SAW) celebrated any such thing.

However, the protagonists of the celebration are of the view that although the practice is not part of the Sunnah which has come down to us from the Prophet (SAW) himself, they see no harm in observing the occasion as long as it is free from *shirk* (idolatry).

Furthermore, they are of the opinion that the celebration should strictly be religious; that is, it should involve only things that are permissible (*Halal*). According to them, the permissible things include the righteous acts of supplications such as invoking Allah's blessings upon the Prophet (SAW), repeating words of *Dhikr* and reciting verses of the Qur'an.

On the other hand, the antagonists of the celebration are of the opinion that in the recent times, the *Mawlid* ceremony is often not exempted from some specific forms of *shirk* in various degrees, such as, the excessive praise of the Prophet (SAW) where certain divine characteristics are attributed to him or even seeking favour from Allah through his position of dignity or similar expressions which infringe upon the exclusive right of Allah. As part of the practices condemned by the antagonists is the act of rising from one's seat at the mentioning of the Prophet's (SAW) name. In some parts of the world the supporters of the celebration have gone to the extreme by including supplication directed to the Prophet (SAW) himself or even dedicating sacrificial animals to him. Also the *Mawlid* is no longer confined to the day or the month of the Prophet's (SAW) birth but it is celebrated throughout the year.

The antagonists of the celebration of *Mawlidun Nabiyy* argued that a study of the writings of the early scholars, including the founders of the well-known schools of thought were adamant and consistent in opposition to all forms of innovation in religion and also condemned all various deviations which crept into the understanding of certain aspects of worship in Islam.

The celebration of *Mawlidun Nabiyy* was first introduced according to Umm Muhammad (1994: 8) by the King Al-Muthaffar in the region of Mosul in the year

625A.H where he gave a prize of one thousand gold dinars for a composition prepared for the occasion. Therefore, it could be concluded that Mawlid celebration spread rapidly among the Muslim communities because of lack of proper understanding of the religion and blind imitation of other cultures.

3.3 The Significance of the Celebration

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was sent to mankind with complete guidance from Allah in all matters of belief and the application of that belief to the affairs of human life in order that men might attain happiness and contentment of this world and the next. The Qur'an says

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ
حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

“Indeed you have in the conduct of Allah’s Prophet a beautiful pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the last Day (Q33:21)

Furthermore the Qur'an declares:

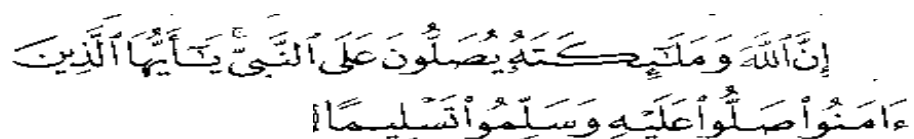
قُلْ إِن كُنتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ
فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

“Say’ if you love Allah, then follow me and Allah will love you and forgive for you your sins (Qur’an 3:31).

Therefore, from the teaching of these verses, there is nothing bad in our love of the Prophet (SAW) since the celebration is an expression of faith, love, and a means of

keeping the memory of the Prophet (SAW) alive. It is also a way of expounding his virtues, an assertion of devotion and honor to him. It could be assessed as an occasion of bringing joy to the hearts of the Muslims in as much as it does not contain anything that can be termed as *shirk*. On the other hand, considering the ways and manners in which the occasion is celebrated nowadays, particularly in Nigeria and especially among the *Tariqah* scholars who have made the celebration mandatory among their members, it may be considered outrageous and therefore too much to be acceptable to Islam. The event goes to an extent of exploiting money from members by distributing printed envelopes, collecting donations from high and low and printing of T-Shirts. In fact, the occasion is always a merry-making event with the provision of menu, refreshments and unlawful intermingling of opposite sexes, who sometimes sing and dance on such occasions.

Some of the protagonists of *Mawlidun Nabiyy* do defend the feeding and drinking that accompany the celebration as an avenue to feed the poor. This however, could be faulted as feeding the poor, hospitality and *sadaqah* are not limited to specific occasion but are encouraged at all times. Also the claim that the celebration is a means of increasing the love and reverence of the Prophet (SAW) could be negated by the Qur'anic injunction which enjoined the Muslims to always invoke blessing upon the Prophet (SAW). It reads:



 إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ

 ءَامَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا

*“Allah and His angels send blessing on the Prophet. Oh you who believe! You should
 also invoke blessings on him (Q 33:56)*

Self Assessment Exercise

1. What is *Mawlidun Nabiyy*?
2. Examine the controversy associated with the celebration of *Mawlidun Nabiyy*.
3. Of what significance is the celebration of *Mawlidun Nabiyy* to the Muslims?

4.0 Conclusion

The *Mawlidun Nabiyy* which is the celebration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) does not have a specific injunction in the Qur'an. However the celebration has now become part and parcel of Islam. The celebration and the origin are engulfed with several controversies among the scholars.

The celebration of the birthday of the Prophet (SAW) was first introduced by the King of al-Muthaffar in the region of Musul in 625 A.H, about 4th century after the death of the Prophet (SAW). He observed the event on the 12th Rabiul – Awwal which coincidentally was the birthday of the Imam Jafar b. Sadiq, the sixth Imam of the Fatimid dynasty. There is no evidence in the Qur'an or in the Sunnah of the Prophet concerning the celebration of the Prophet's birthday. The only proof is that which was quoted that the Prophet (SAW) always observed fasting on Mondays and when he was asked for the reason of observing the fast, he replied "Monday was the day I was born". Muhammad (SAW) never instructed anybody to observe any fast on Monday for the celebration of his birthday.

Nowadays, some Muslim scholars have made the celebration of *Mawlid* an obligation that must be performed with all pomp and pageantry. The Prophet (SAW) himself never celebrated his birthday, neither the Rightly Guided caliphs nor the Muslim scholars in the centuries that followed. Therefore some Muslims regard the celebration as (*bid'ah*) i.e. an innovation.

The reasons propounded by the supporters of the celebration of the *Mawlidun Nabiyy* are the following:

1. That it will lead to increase love and reverence for the Prophet (SAW).
2. That it is an event that promotes good relationship and brotherhood among the Muslims.
3. That the joyful occasion gives ample opportunity to feed the poor and be hospitable to members.

Conclusively, it could be observed that *Mawlidun Nabiyy* as is being celebrated by some Muslims in various parts of the world, is not only an innovatory celebration but is also occasionally intertwined with other islamically unapproved practices such as unguided mixture of opposite sexes, singing and dancing with musical instruments and sometimes consumption of alcohol and narcotic. Although Islam does not forbid a Muslim from seeking pleasure in lawful activities it however warns that such pleasure must not be sought beyond the approved limits. There is nothing to prevent Muslims from gathering to eat, talk and enjoy themselves in a *Halāl* atmosphere such as during celebrations like those of the '*Idul -fītr* and '*Idul Adhā* which could serve as alternatives for pagan traditional celebrations observed in different communities of the world.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have been able to learn about the meaning and the controversy concerning the celebration of *Mawlidun Nabiyy*. We have as well discussed the significance of the celebration.

Notwithstanding the controversy which characterizes the celebration, it has become an integral part of Islamic events in some parts of Muslim world. However, because of its interwoven characteristics with some unlawful practices, several scholars have condemned the celebration for the fact that they regarded it as an innovation (*bid'ah*). They argued that Allah has perfected the religion of Islam before the death of the prophet as evident in Q, 5:3 which reads:

“...This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion”

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments

1. Discuss the term *Mawlidun Nabiyy*.
2. “The celebration of *Mawlidun Nabiyy* in Islam is *bid'ah*”. Examine this statement.
3. Suggest some of the advantages derivable in the celebration of *Mawlidun Nabiyy*

7.0 References And Further Reading

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MODULE 2:

Unit 1: *Nikah* Ceremony

Contents

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Concept of marriage in Islam.

3.2 The significance of the observation of *Walīmatun-Nikāh*.

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments

7.0 References and Further Reading

1.0 Introduction

In the previous unit, you learnt about the concept, observation and significance of *Mawlidun-Nabiyy*. In this unit, you will learn about the concept, observation and significance of *Walīmatun-Nikāh* which is part of the celebrations being observed in Islam.

The Arabic word for marriage is *An-Nikāh*, which etymologically means uniting or to unite. Another word sharing same meaning with it is *aqdu*. Marriage in Islam is a sacred contract which every Muslim must aspire to do except if there is a special and genuine reason for not doing so. The institution of marriage in Islam is as old as man. Adam (AS) our forefather was with all the pleasures in paradise *al-Janah* but he was still in need of something that he felt was missing. Allah blessed him with Hawwāu, in whom he now found complete solace. The Glorious Qur'an says.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ
أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

*“And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves
partners to find solace in them and he made between love and mercy...”
(Q 30:21)*

Furthermore, the traditions of the Prophet (SAW) also lay emphasis of the institution of marriage. He was reported to have said to certain people who kept away from marriage: “I keep a fast and I break it, I pray and I sleep and I am married, so whoever inclines to any other way than my Sunnah, he is not of me”.

More importantly, it is quite clear that marriage is a beautiful institution which gives solace and comfort between a man and a woman. It is therefore important that it should go with a feast, *Walīmah* which is the theme of this unit.

2.0 Objectives

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

- ❖ discuss the concept of marriage in Islam.
- ❖ examine the ways and manners of observing the feast of marriage in Islam.
- ❖ appreciate the importance of the wedding ceremony.

3.0 Main contents

3.1 The concept of marriage and the observation of *Walīmatun-nikāh*.

Most of the Islamic terminologies are defined in linguistic and technical terms. Linguistically, *an-Nikāh* means entering of something into something; it is also a legal bond. Technically it means a social contract which proposes to legalize cohabitation between a man and a woman. It implies the possession by a man the right of enjoying a woman whom he is not prevented to marry. In actual fact, some scholars

in Islam have also defined marriage as a contract with the object of the following rights:

- (i) enjoyment
- (ii) procreation
- (iii) solace
- (iv) comfort.

Another term used for marriage in Islam is *Zawāj*, meaning a partner or mate. Marriage is the union of two natures; the Qur'an repeatedly speaks of two mates; man and woman, as being created from each other. It says:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا
زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ
بِهِ وَالْاَرْحَامَ ۗ اِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

“O ye people! Keep your duty to your lord, who created you from a single being and created its mate of the same kind and spread from them men and women” (Q4:1).

Marriage is the method chosen by Allah as a means of procreation for human beings. Allah in His will and wisdom did not intend to leave men to behave in the same way as other animals. Allah has made the union of a man and a woman in marriage in order to earn respect and honour for one another, more importantly with woman's free consent.

There are several passages of the Glorious Qur'an that could served as authorities supporting the institution of marriage in Islam and some are mentioned earlier. However, we shall examine some of the *ahādith* of the Prophet (SAW) concerning the concept of marriage in Islam. They include the following:

“Ibn Abbass related from the Prophet (SAW) who said:

“four things there are, whosoever is given has been given much or the best of this world and the hereafter”. These things are:

- (i) Heart that shows gratitude to Allah.
- (ii) A tongue which constantly remembers Allah.
- (iii) A body afflicted with illness but person concerned maintains patience and tolerance without associating it to anybody as the causes.
- (i) Having a sincere believing wife

The Prophet (SAW) said: “O you young men, those of you who can support a wife should marry, for it keeps you from looking at strange women and preserves you from immorality; but those who cannot, should devote themselves to fasting for it is a means for suppressing sexual desire” related by Bukhari and Muslim. In another hadith, he said “You marry and procreate and become increasing in number, for I will be proud of your number over other Prophets on the Day of Judgment”.

In another Hadith, he said “the man who marries perfects half of his religion”.

From the aforementioned, it could be observed that Islam as a religion sets up rules and regulations concerning the function of a family whereby both spouses would find peace, love, security and relationship. The distinguishing factor between marriage and fornication is the publicity and the mutual consent between two parties. Becoming husband and wife does not become valid except with due publicity in the presence of witnesses. The Qur’an says:

فَأَنكِحُواهُنَّ بِأَدْنِ أَهْلِهِنَّ وَءَاتُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ غَيْرِ مُسْتَفْحَاتٍ وَلَا مُتَّخِذَاتِ
أَخْدَانٍ فَإِذَا أَحْصَيْنَ فَإِنَّ آتَيْتَ بِفَحِشَةٍ فَعَلَيْهِنَّ نِصْفُ
مَا عَلَى الْمُحْصَنَاتِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ
الْعَنَتَ مِنْكُمْ وَأَنْ تَصِيرُوا خَيْرَ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

“...So marry them with the leave of their master and give them their dowries according to what is fair they should be chaste, not committing fornication, nor taking secret paramours...” (Q 4: 25)

One of the essential features of **An-Nikāh** in Islam is the publication of the news by gathering together preferably in a public place. There are **ahādith** of the Prophet (SAW) that emphasize that marriage must be made publicly known, even with the beating of drum and music. For example it was reported that Aishah had with her, a girl from among the Ansār whom she married out. The Prophet (SAW) came and said, have you sent the girl to her husband? And on receiving a reply in the affirmative, he said: “Have you sent her those who would sing?” Aishah said No. Then said the Prophet (SAW): “The Ansar are people who love singing, and it would have been better if you had sent with her someone to sing thus and thus.”

In observing the wedding ceremony, there is the need to be very simple and moderate both in spending and dressing. The simplicity and humility demonstrated by the Prophet (SAW) during the marriage of Ali and Fatimah is a good example. When Ali humbly approached the Prophet (SAW) for the hand of Fatimah in marriage and immediately the revelation for the approval came, the Prophet (SAW) accepted the offer. At the time, the age of Fatimah was fifteen and a half years while that of Ali was twenty one years. After accepting Ali’s proposal, the Prophet (SAW) ordered Anas to invite Abubakr, Umar, Uthman, Talhah, Zubair and a group from among the Ansar. At the presence of those invited he recited the **khutbah** and the marriage was conducted. The dowry known as **Mahr**, fixed at four hundred **Mithqaal** (Silver), was paid. It was also reported that the foods which were served at the **Walīmah** of the **Nikāi** included corn bread, some dates and some delicious meat.

On another occasion, that is, at the **Walīmatun-Nikāi** of Abdur-Rahman b. Auf, it was related that the Prophet (SAW), on being told of his (Abdul-Rahman) marriage,

prayed for him and told him to arrange for a feast (*Walīmah*) and that there should be only one goat to feed the guests.

Therefore, it could be concluded that Islam lays a very great emphasis on *Walīmah*, that is wedding ceremony and the ceremony should be with all simplicity, humility and quite moderate.

3.2 The Significance of the Observation of *Walīmat Al-Nikāh*.

Men and women are created for mutual company, love, procreation, peace and tranquility. Marriage in Islam is a sacred contract which all Muslims, male or female must enter into except if there is a special reason for not been able to do so. The Prophet (SAW) was reported as saying “There is no celibacy in Islam”. He was further quoted to have said: “marriage is my tradition, whosoever keeps away from it is not from among me”. The significance of the observation of *Walīmatun-Nikāh*, wedding ceremony in Islam, can not be underestimated.

First, the essence for the publicity is obedience to Allah’s injunction which enjoined us to publicity announce the union between the couples in order to prevent any other suitor from seeking for the hand of the lady.

Secondly, the ceremony must be moderate and simple without necessarily resulting to extravagance. It should not be like most of the Muslims marriages of nowadays in our community which are characterized with unnecessary expenses, lavish spending on parties and gifts. The problem with the Muslims today is that they have thrown the *Sunnah* overboard completely and replaced it with western-oriented Christian practices.

The *Walīmatun-Nikāh* is also significant considering the opportunity it creates in bringing together people from all walks of life. The rich, the poor, the old and the young, come together to rejoice and celebrate with the couples and this equally promotes love and brotherhood and harmonious relationship in the society. The words

of advice given to the couples at the occasion will also serve as checks and balances for the couples in case there is any problem between them in future. Importantly, the celebration is an essential and a distinguishing factor between legitimate sexual relation and fornication.

4.0 Conclusion

The two Arabic words that are used to mean marriage in Islam are *an-Nikāh* and *az-zawāj*. They are used in relation to the institution of marriage in Islam. There are rules and regulations under which males and females are permitted to engage in sexual relationship to find comfort and happiness within themselves and also to procreate children with a view of preserving human species and their true continuity.

The most essential feature of this beautiful institution of marriage is the *Walīmatun-Nikāh*, the wedding ceremony. It is important that the coming together of a man and a woman should be made public as publicity of such union is the distinguishing factor between marriage and fornication. There are various passages of the Glorious Qur'an and Prophetic traditions that support the institution of marriage.

According to the teachings of the Glorious Qur'an and the *ahādith* of the Prophet (SAW), the observation of the *Walīmah* should be with some levels of decorum. Islam as a religion discourages extravagance and immorality. Therefore, the celebration should be with all simplicity and humility. All Muslims should shun the ideas of lavish spending and expensive engagement which are un-islamic practices of western origin that are already in vogue among the Muslim *Ummah* of today.

The significance of the observation of the *Walīmah* is for the benefits of the *Ummah* in general and the couples in particular. It includes among others the followings:

- (i) Obedience to Allah's injunction
- (ii) Announcing the union of the couples
- (iii) Preventing another suitor to seek for the hand of the woman in marriage.

5.0 Summary

An-Nikāh, marriage, is a form of civil contract that gives the opportunity of legal relationship between husband and wife. It is a compulsory institution in Islam as there is no celibacy in the religion. It is an act of devotion - *Ibādāt* to Allah, for it preserves mankind from pollution and guards human beings from indecency. It is an object of right of enjoyment and procreation of children that will lead to solace of life which is the primary necessity of man.

Therefore, there is the need to accord this particular aspect of life a good publicity. The publicity is what is in Islamic terminology known as *Walimatun-Nikāh*. The celebration of marriage otherwise known as wedding ceremony is a major distinguishing factor between lawful cohabitation and fornication as attested to by the following Qur'anic passage:

الْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حِلٌّ
لَكُمْ وَطَعَامُكُمْ حِلٌّ لَهُمْ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ
مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ
مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرِ مُسَفِّحِينَ وَلَا مُتَّخِذِي أَخْدَانٍ وَمَن يَكْفُرْ
بِالْآيَاتِ فَقَدْ حَيَّطَ عَمَلُهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَسِرِينَ

“And lawful for you are chaste believing women and chaste women from among those who were given the book before you, when you give them their dowries, contracting valid marriage and not committing fornication nor taking secret paramours”

(Q 5:5).

In observing the *Walimah* the stand of Islam is that it should be simple, moderate and with all sense of humility. The position of the Prophet (SAW) is demonstrated on the ways and manners he practiced it during the wedding between his daughter, Fatimah and Ali. The significance of the celebration is to announce publicly the coming

together of the couple and to prevent other suitors from seeking for the hands of the woman. It is also meant to foster good relationship between the couple and the family.

In summary, the present day celebration of marriage among our people that is accompanied with expensive pomp and pageantry should be totally shunned or reduced.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Identify two passages of the Glorious Qur'an which discuss the essence of marriage.
2. Describe the modest way of observing *Walīmatun-Nikāh* in Islam.
3. Assess the significance of *Walīmatun-Nikāh* in Islam.

7.0 References And Further Reading

Abdul, M.O.A (1983) *Islam as a religion (Faith and duties)* Studies in Islam series, Book 1, Lagos: Islamic Publication Bureau.

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Unit 2: *'Aqīqah* /Naming Ceremony

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main contents
 - 3.1 The concept and observation of *'Aqīqah*
 - 3.2 The significance of its observation
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor marked assignments
- 7.0 Reference and further reading

1.0 Introduction

In the previous unit, you learnt about the meaning of *walīmatun-Nikāi* and the significance of celebrating it. After a marriage has been contracted, the expectation of the couple, the family and of course the well wishers that witnessed the occasion will be to have children. And when such favour is granted, it calls for celebration and giving of names – *'Aqīqah* and all other things that are attached to it. In this unit, we shall discuss about *'Aqīqah*, its meaning and significance.

'Aqīqah is an emphatic *Sunnah* in Islam. According to Sayid Sabiq (:198) it is a term used for the animal to be slaughtered for the sake of a newborn baby in Islam. However, in the current usage *'Aqīqah* is a term used to describe the rites performed for a newly born baby in Islam

2.0 Objectives

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

- ❖ define the term *'Aqīqah*
- ❖ describe the concept of *'Aqīqah* in Islam.
- ❖ explain how *'Aqīqah* is performed in Islam.
- ❖ appreciate the significance of *'Aqīqah*.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 The Concept and Observation of '*Aqīqah* in Islam

'*Aqīqah* is *Sunnah Mu'akkadah* that is, an emphatic Sunnah observed as a religious rite in Islam. It is performed for a newly born baby. Since in every human society, there is the need for a name which will be used in calling and identifying a person. For this reason Islam has given particular importance to this rite.

There are some procedures for the observance of the '*Aqīqah* in Islam. The procedures are as follows:

(a) *Adhān & Iqāmah*: The first of the practice which the newborn baby should be greeted with according to the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) is the expression of the call to prayer (*Adhān*) into the ear of the baby. The *Adhān* should be made immediately after the birth of the baby. In fact, the *Adhān* should be said into the right ear while *Iqāmah* is said into the left ear. The essence of this is that at first moments of the life of this baby, the *Kalimat Tawhīd* i.e word of testimony is what first comes to his hearing. The *Adhān* and *Iqāmah* should be done in a low voice, not loud so as not to cause harm to the baby's auditory organ.

(b) *Tahnīk*: This is another practice of Islam expressly approved by the Prophet (SAW). At the first moment of the baby's life, he is expected to be fed with date palm before any other types of food enters his stomach. The child should be taken to a pious Muslim leader with sound belief who will do the *Tahnīk* and pray for the newborn baby. The following hadith was reported in Bukhari in relation to the practice of *Tahnīk* "Asma bint Abi Bakr as – Siddīq was pregnant for Abdullah b. Jubayr. She said we left for Hijrah while I was heavy and I got to Madinah and put to bed in Quba. Thereafter, I took the baby to the Prophet (SAW) who then ordered for date, he chewed it and placed it in the child's mouth. Thus he performed the *Tahnīk* and prayed for him.

(c) *Al-Halqu* (Shaving): Among the rites of ‘*Aqīqah*’ is the shaving of the head of the baby. It is expected that the head of the baby be shaved on the seventh day of the birth, that is, the morning of the actual day of ‘*Aqīqah*’. The manner of observing the shaving is that the right side of the head be shaved first, followed by the other side. In the situation when the baby is born without hair or there is so little hair and cannot be really shaved, then there is no need for the shaving. When the hair had been shaved, it should be weighed and the money value of it be given to the poor as *Sadaqah*.

(d) *Al-Khittān* (Circumcision). Among the practices prescribed as a part of the ‘*Aqīqah*’ rites is the surgical removal of the skin surrounding the head of the boy’s penis and the skin dangling about the girls’ vagina.

(e) The ‘*Aqīqah*’ i.e the naming ceremony proper: There are two positions concerning the day of naming. The first view has it that the naming could be done on the seventh day of the birth. While the second view is that the naming could be done on the very day of the birth of the baby.

The father and the mother are the ones to choose a good name for their child, but if they disagree about the name, the father has the right to choose the name. In fact, the naming of the child is the right of the father as expressed in the Qur’an:

اَدْعُوهُمْ لِأَبَائِهِمْ
 هُوَ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا آبَاءَهُمْ فَاِخْوَانُكُمْ
 فِي الدِّينِ وَمَوْلَاكُمْ وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا أَخْطَأْتُمْ
 بِهِ وَلَكِنْ مَا تَعَمَّدَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

“Call them by the names of their fathers. That is more equitable in the sight of Allah but if you know not their fathers, then they are your brothers in faith and your friends. And there is no blame on you in any mistake you may unintentionally make in this matter, but what matters is

that which your hearts intend and Allah is most forgiving, merciful. ” (Q33:5)

On the slaughtering of the animal which could be a goat, sheep, ram, cow or camel, the majority of the scholars are of the opinion that the slaughtering is Sunnah and not compulsory. On the other hand, there is another opinion that says it is compulsory based on many *ahādith* of the Prophet (SAW). The Prophet (SAW) himself and his companions did it for their children. It is recommended that two animal should be slaughtered for a male child while should go for a female child.

The consensus of opinion is that a parent that has the financial means should, as a matter of compulsion, do it. But parents who do not have the required financial resources should do it whenever they are enriched by Allah. It should be stated that provision of food and drinks that always characterize the *‘Aqīqah* this days are not prerequisite to it. When the animal is slaughtered, the real *‘Aqīqah* has been performed.

3.2 The Significance of Observation of *‘Aqīqah*

As mentioned at the beginning of this lesson, there is the need to give every object a name in order to identify or address the object is very important and it is as old as man himself. The act of giving name takes its source from the event that took place between Adam on one hand and the Angels of God on the other whereby Allah asked them to mention the names of some of His creatures as explained in the Glorious Qur’an:

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ
فَقَالَ أُنَبِّئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَٰؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ۖ قَالُوا
سُبْحٰنَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ

“And He taught Adam all the names, then he put the objects of these names before the angels and said: tell Me the names of these, if you are right”. (Q2:31-32)

Furthermore, the Prophet (SAW) was reported to have said that a Muslim should choose a beautiful name to give to his child. It is a matter of particular importance because good names have the profound effect which they will have upon the personality of the child, particularly when he is old enough to understand its meaning and the implication of the name. Therefore, the Prophet (SAW) recommended that the best names are those from the attributes of Allah such as Abdullah, Abdur- Rahman etc and those from the names of the Prophets’ of Allah such as Ibrahim, Ismail e. t .c.

The significance of the call to prayer - *Adhān* and *Iqamah* said into the ears of the new-born baby on the very day he was born is to welcome the child and announce to him the importance of *Kalimatut – Tawhīd* - the declaration that none has the right to be worshiped except Allah as this is done before his ears hear any other words in this world.

The significance of the shaving of the baby’s head is to allow fresh air to the head of the baby, the hair is weighed and the amount of the weight is given in monetary terms to the poor as *Sadaqah* given on behalf of the child. In the same manner the slaughtering of animal for the newly born baby avails the opportunity of announcing his arrival and bringing the Muslims and non-Muslims to felicitate with the family and the new baby. The meat of the slaughtered animal is to be shared to people. It should be noted here that though provision of food and lawful drinks is not compulsory, it is however not forbidden for whosoever can afford them.

The importance of circumcision as part of the rites of *‘Aqīqah* could not be underestimated in view of the fact that Islam teaches cleanliness as it leads to godliness. It is the belief that a person who remains uncircumcised is prone to carrying

urine under his foreskin and this may render him unclean while observing *salāt* and other religious rites that demand absolute cleanliness.

In conclusion, '*Aqīqah*' as a rite performed for a newly born baby in Islam, is considered an emphatic Sunnah which every parent should prepare for before the arrival of the new baby.

Self Assessment Exercise

- (ii) What is '*Aqīqah*' in Islam?
- (iii) Describe the process of '*Aqīqah*' in Islam
- (iv) Discuss the significance of the rites of '*Aqīqah*' in Islam

4.0 Conclusion

In Islam, the naming ceremony is known as '*Aqīqah*' and it is regarded as *Sunnatum-Mu'akkadatun*, that is, an emphatic Sunnah. The rites involved some procedures and these procedures are approved in one way or the other by the Prophet (SAW).

In the first instance, as the newly born baby is arriving, we are expected to welcome him with the call to prayer *Adhān* and *Iqāmah* on the right and left ears respectively. The essence of this is to allow him to know that it is only Allah that deserves to be worshipped.

Secondly, the process of giving beautiful names follows and there are different views concerning this. There is an opinion which agrees that at the very point of birth he could be given a name. The other view is that it could be done on the seventh day of birth. Importantly beautiful names that will make the child proud and happy in the future should be chosen. The Prophet (SAW) was of the opinion that the best names are the attributive names of Allah such as Abdullah, Abdul Aziz, Abdul Rahman etc and that of the Prophets.

Also, the *tahnīk*, the rubbing of a softened date palm upon the palate accompanied with prayer should be done for the baby. This should be the first food that enters into his throat.

The shaving of the baby's head on the seventh day and the weighing of the hair shaved is another part of the rites. The hair should be weighed and the measure should be given as *Sadaqah* in monetarily term. The hair shaved should be buried in the earth or be kept at any place.

Slaughtering of animal, be it goat, sheep, cow, camel etc, is done on the seventh day. It is a get-together celebration and the public announcement of the newly born baby's name. The slaughtered animal should be fried and shared and where possible it could be accompanied with food such as, rice, beans etc. However, provision of food is not a pre-requisite for '*Aqīqah*.'

The circumcision, that is the surgical removal of the skin surrounding the head of the penis and the skin dangling about the vagina, is done in order to allow for cleanliness of the body. The aforementioned processes are the practices of the Prophet (SAW) and that of the *salaf* i.e generations who followed the Prophet.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have been able to learn about the observation of naming ceremony otherwise known as '*Aqīqah*' in Islam. '*Aqīqah*', in its real sense, is today being misconstrued in our various communities. Many Muslims believe that '*Aqīqah*' is not complete without lavish spending and much publicity. However, Islam recommends moderation in everything.

The procedures for celebrating an '*Aqīqah* in Islam are as follows:

- (a) *Adhān* and *Iqāmah*:
- (b) *Tahnīk*:
- (c) *Al-Halqu*:
- (d) *Al-Khitān*:
- (e) The giving of name:

Conclusively, the practices of the Prophet (SAW) and that of the *salaf* are the rules and routines for '*Aqīqah*. It could be seen as an act of *Ibādah* and obedience to the Sunnah of the Prophet (SAW)

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Define and discuss the term '*Aqīqah*.
2. Assess how '*Aqīqah* is performed in Islam.
3. Enumerate some significance of the rites of '*Aqīqah*.

7.0 References and Further Reading

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Unit 3: *Walīmatu khatmil-Qur’ān*

Content

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objections
- 3.0 Main content
 - 3.1 The concept and observation of *Walīmatu khatmil-Qur’ān*
 - 3.2 The significance of the observation of *Walīmatu khatmil-Qur’ān*
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor marked assignments
- 7.0 References and further reading

1.0 Introduction

In the previous unit, we discussed the concept, observation and significance of *‘Aqīqah* in Islam. In this unit, we shall discuss the concept, observation and significance of *Walīmatul-Qur’an*.

In Islam, education is very important. When a child is born one of his rights which is an obligation on the parents is for him to be educated. The best of education a Muslim child needs first is the knowledge of the Qur’an and of course the knowledge of Islam. This is a solid foundation upon which he would build the rest of other types of knowledge he may want to acquire later in life. To show how important knowledge or education is, the first revelation of the Glorious Qur’an began with the command to the Prophet (SAW) to read and also the significance of the use of pen, which is the instrument of learning for human progress, is also stressed in the sacred book.

“Read in the name of thy Sustainer who created man from a clot of blood. Read for thy Sustainer is the Most Bountiful One who taught man by the pen. He taught man what he knew not”. (Q: 96: 1-5)

There are also various *ahādith* of the Prophet (SAW) which encourage seeking of knowledge. Some of them are as follows:

“Seek knowledge from cradle to the grave”

“The search of knowledge is compulsory for every Muslim”

“Seek knowledge even unto china”

From the aforementioned the seeking of knowledge is very important in Islam. It is for this reason that *Walimat al-Qur’an* is encouraged in Islam. It is a kind of feast that can be described as graduation ceremony for completing the learning of the Glorious Qur’an.

2.0 Objectives

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

- ❖ describe the concept of *Walīmatul-Qur’an*.
- ❖ discuss the methods of observing the *Walīmatul-Qur’an*.
- ❖ highlight the significance of the observance of the *Walīmatul-Qur’an*.

3.0 Main Contents

3.1 The Concept and Observation of *Walīmatul-Qur’an*.

According to Cowan (1973:1090) the word *Walīmah* etymologically comes from the verb *walama*, meaning to give banquet. However, in Islamic terminology, it means the witnessing of the completion of the learning of the Glorious Qur’an. Islam lays a great emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge as the first revelation received by the Prophet (SAW) speaks of knowledge. There are various passages of the Qur’an that enjoin the acquisition of knowledge. Some are as follows:

هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

“Are those who know equal to those who know not? Verily, only those endowed with understanding will take heed (Q. 39:9)

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالْذَوَابِّ وَالْأَنْعَامِ
مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ كَذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ

“And of men and beasts and cattle, in like manner there are various colours? Only those of His servants who possess knowledge fear Allah. Verily, Allah is Mighty, Most Forgiving” (Q. 35:28)

In fact, several verses of the Qur’an contain specific injunctions for the people in general and Muslims in particular to study and ponder on the heavens, the earth, the animals, vegetable, the human being and his formation from fertilization to birth etc. Therefore, a Muslim is to learn new things always. In the same vein, there are several sayings of the Prophet (SAW) exemplifying these passages of the Qur’an, such as follows:

“The ink of the scholar is more precious than the blood of the martyr”

“The learned person is harder on the devil than a thousand ignorant worshippers”

Acquisition of knowledge is very important in Islam and more important is the knowledge of the Qur’an because of its position as the book of guidance and a manual which Allah has given to man. It is for this reason that *Walimatul – Qur’an* is given prominence in Islam. At the time of the Prophet (SAW) it was reported that whenever he received any revelation from angel Jibril, he always taught the companions, who afterwards recited it back to the Prophet (SAW) who gave commendation to them

when he was dully satisfied with the recitation. This could be the beginning of what can be termed as the *Walīmat al-Qur'an*.

Further at the battle of Badr most of the Makkan that were captured who were able to read and write were asked to ransom themselves by teaching the Muslims the art of reading. This is also an indication that education for Muslims is a must-have asset.

It was also reported that when Umar b. Khattab, the second rightly Guided Caliph, successfully memorized *Surah al-Baqarah*, i.e. chapter two of the Glorious Qur'an, he celebrated the feast by inviting some people to join him in showing gratitude and adoration to Allah. Analogically, the acts could be regarded as celebration of *Walīmah*. Therefore, the action could be seen as having a tactic approval of Muslim scholars.

The celebration of *Walīmatul – Qur'an* is expected to be with all decorum of simplicity and humility. It is supposed to be a get-together in order to create awareness and motivation for the Muslims.

The Significance of Observance Of *Walīmatul – Qur'an*

The benefits accrued from the celebration of *Walīmatul – Qur'an* could not be underestimated. Some of the benefits are the following:

- (a) **Motivation:** it can serve as a motivational factor for children as this will allow the weaker ones to buckle up in order to do the same.
- (b) **Get-together feast:** It could serve as a feast that will foster cordial relation and brotherhood among the families of the graduands.
- (c) **Healthy competition:** The celebration could bring a kind of healthy competition among the graduands as they will likely want to out-play each other in the recitation. The reason for that may be because of the award of prizes.
- (d) **Avenue for propagation of Islam:** It could serve as a good opportunity to propagate Islam because the speeches to be delivered will be discussing topics on Islam. This will go in a way of showcasing the beauty of Islam.

- (e) **Attracting new enrolment:** In view of the feast and the nature of our society, it could serve as an avenue to improve the enrolment level of students at Qur'anic study centres.
- (f) **Opportunity of good understanding of the Qur'an:** The celebration could be a unique opportunity for the Muslims, particularly the youths to seek the knowledge of reciting the Qur'an.

With the establishment of more Qur'anic Schools in our community, there is the need for encouraging the celebration of *Walīmatul – Quran*. The *Walīmatul – Qur'an*, which origin historically could be traced to the Prophet (SAW), is one of the celebrations in Islam. It is a feast of witnessing the completion of the recitation of the Glorious Qur'an. It is a kind of graduation ceremony.

Islam, as a religion, lays a great emphasis on acquisition of knowledge. The first revelation to the Prophet (SAW) has to do with education. The Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (SAW) himself was quoted in several of his *ahādith* to have encouraged the seeking of knowledge. It is for this reason that *Walīmatul – Qur'an* could not be underestimated in Islam because knowledge of the Qur'an is the basis for all other types of knowledge a child requires.

During the period of the Prophet (SAW) and the early *salaf*, the celebration of *Walīmatul – Qur'an* was not pronounced but it was observed with all sense of humility and simplicity. Unlike the way and manner it is being observed among the Muslims of today. Nowadays, the celebration is with all pomp and pageantry.

There are various values for the celebration of the *Walīmatul – Qur'an* which include: motivation for the pupils, get-together to foster cordial relationship among the graduating children and their families and also healthy competition among the graduands since it involves award of prizes. The celebration of the *Walīmatul – Qur'an* serves as an avenue for propagating Islam as it show-cases the beauty of

Islam. In the same vein the celebration also serves as an encouragement for increasing the enrolment level of the Qur'anic schools.

5.0 Summary

In this unit you have been able to learn about the concept, celebration and the significance of *Walīmatul – Qur'an*. The *Walīmatul – Qur'an*, which is otherwise known as graduation ceremony for the completion of learning the recitation of the Glorious Qur'an is as old as the religion of Islam itself. The Prophet (SAW) and early Muslim leaders did practice the event.

Islam enjoins the acquisition of knowledge both spiritual and mundane. It is for this reason that the celebration of *Walīmatul – Qur'an* is valid and recommendable. However, the observance of the celebration should be performed with all decorum of simplicity without unnecessary spending.

The essence of the celebrating *Walīmatul – Qur'an* include: motivation, get-together healthy competition and show-casing the beauty of Islam. It also encourages the increase enrolment of students and promotion of cordial relationship between brothers and sisters in Islam.

Conclusively, the Prophet (SAW) was reported saying; “whenever any of you is invited for *Walīmat* accept the invitation and be present at the ceremony”.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments

1. Examine the position of acquisition of knowledge in Islam.
2. Assess the historical origin of *Walīmatul – Qur'an* in Islam.
3. Discuss the ways and manner of observing the *Walīmatul – Qur'an*.
4. Enumerate some of the significance of the celebration of *Walīmatul-Qur'an*.

7.0 References and Further Reading

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Unit 4: *Janāzah*: Funeral Ceremony

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
 - 3.1 Concepts of funeral rites in Islam: its observation
 - 3.2 Significance of the funeral rites
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor marked assignment
- 7.0 References and further reading.

1.0 Introduction

In the previous unit, you learnt about the concept, celebration and the significance of *Walīmatul-Qur'an*. In this unit, you will learn about the concept of funeral rites in Islam and the significance of the rites.

Death is inevitable and the Glorious Qur'an states as follows:

Every soul shall taste death. Q3:185

Janāzah: Funeral rites unlike all other celebrations, are supposed to be deprived of feast. It is a religious service held over the dead body of a deceased Muslim, young, old or even infant who only lived on earth for a moment. The service may be held anywhere, in a mosque or in an open space or even in the graveyard.

2.0 Objectives

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

- explain the concept of death
- mention the way and manner of observing *Janāzah* prayers
- appreciate the significance of the funeral rites.

3.0 The Concept Of *Janāzah* Funeral Rites

Technically, the meaning of the word, *Janāzah* is the dead body lying in a bier and bier is something concealed or hidden. It should be observed that the death of a fellow being deserves sympathy, commiseration as well as condolence. Sympathetic feeling according to the teaching of the Holy Prophet (SAW) should not go beyond three days.

Within these three days, neighbours, relatives and well-wishers are expected to prepare foods and drinks for the bereaved family. This is in line with the *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet (SAW) who authorized some companions as to provide foods and drinks for the family of Ja'far b. Abu Tālib who was killed in a battle. When a person dies and having being confirmed dead the next thing is to prepare for the burial. The provision for the burial includes making available a piece of land, sheets of cloth, water, disinfectants and soap with which he will be washed.

The ritual bath, *guslul Janāzah*, is performed for the deceased by a relative, the wife, husband, or the children of the deceased. However, where none of these is available, a trusted member of the immediate family can help in doing it. When a person dies the body is washed with soap and some disinfectants which will cleanse all the impurities which may be due to disease. In washing the body, the parts which are washed during ablution should be taken first. The washing is expected to be done in odd numbers three, five or seven times while the water to be used should be mixed with camphor, disinfectant or any kind of scent. After the parts in which ablution is done are washed the whole body is then washed (Bukhaari 23: 8,9,11)

After the washing, the body is placed on a bier or if necessary in a coffin and carried on the shoulders as a mark of respect. The next stage is to observe the *Janāzah* prayer, a service which could be held anywhere, in a mosque or in an open space or even in the graveyard. All those who want to participate in the service must perform ablution.

The bier is placed in front of the Imām who stands facing the middle of the bier while the people form themselves into lines behind the Imām. The service consists of four *takbīrs* and without bowing, prostration, or *Iqāmah*. After the first *takbīr*, *dhikr* relating to the praise and glory of Allah is repeated in a low voice by the Imām as well as those who follow as in first *raka'ah* of a daily prayer. This is followed by the recitation of *sūratul fātihah* without adding any portion of the Qur'an. The second *takbīr* is then pronounced without raising the hands to the ears and *dhikr* known as *as-salātu alā nabiyyi*, preferably *salātu Ibrahimiyyah* is recited in low voice. After the third *takbīr* a prayer for the forgiveness of the deceased as well as the survivors and sympathizers is addressed to God. Then the fourth *takbīr* is said after which the *taslīm* is pronounced to signify the end of the *Janāzah* prayer.

When the divine service is over the corpse is taken to the grave and buried. The grave is expected to have been dug in such a manner that the body may be laid facing *qiblah*. The grave should contain an oblong excavation in which the body will be placed. The grave is then filled with sand and a prayer is offered for the departed soul and thereafter the people depart to their various destinations.

3.2 The Significance of the Rites

A divine service held over the dead body of every Muslim, young or old even an infant who lived for a few minutes or seconds on earth is known as *salātul Janāzah*. Funeral ceremony is unlike other celebrations, it is deprived of feast. It is a moment of sober reflection that is made up of sympathetic feeling, commiseration and condolence.

The significance of funeral ceremony lies in the fact that it is a garment that everybody will wear. It is the final resort of everybody. Therefore, everybody must be prepared for it. The Glorious Qur'an says:

“Say, the death from which you flee will surely meet you” Q 62:9

The demise of a fellow being requires sympathy; however, this sympathetic feeling should be within three days. Within these three days, the neighbours, relatives and well wishers should visit the bereaved family and also prepare them foods and drinks since they are in the state of mourning and they deserve commiseration and condolence. This is in line with directive and teaching of the Prophet (SAW)

One of the features of the Muslim funeral ceremony is the avoidance of extravagant spending in the performance of the burial. Another is the ritual bath known as *guslul Janāzah* in which items such as soap, disinfectant and scent are used in cleansing the corpse.

It is expected that when any dead body is being carried, one should stand up to respect the remains of the deceased irrespective of his religion. Also after the burial, the people are expected to return to their abodes and pay visit at intervals to the family of the bereaved within the stipulated three days of mourning. It is worth noting here that some practices, customs and traditions which are alien to Islam have crept into Muslim burials in many societies nowadays. What is in vogue among many Muslims today is the celebration of the eighth day and fortieth day *fidau* prayer celebrations for a dead Muslim during which parties are organized with food, drinks and dancing on display. All these are alien to Islamic culture and therefore should be discarded.

Self Assessment Exercise

1. What is *salatul Janāzah*
2. Identify some provision for a burial of a deceased Muslim.
3. Mention some of the significance of funeral rites in Islam.

4.0 Conclusion

Funeral ceremony, *al-Janāzah* is a religious service offered over the dead body of a deceased Muslim. It is organized for any dead Muslim irrespective of age, gender or status. It is a divine service that consists of four takbīrs and is devoid of *adhan*,

Iqāmah and *rukū'* and it could be held anywhere whether in a mosque, in an open space or even in the graveyard.

The divine service should be preceded by what is known as *guslul Janāzah* performed for the dead body by a relative of the deceased or any trusted member of the community. The other provisions to be made available for the corpse include a piece of land for the burial and some sheets of cloths for the shrouding. When the service is over, the corpse is taken to the grave for burial. The grave is dug in such a way that the body may lay to rest in it facing the direction of *Ka'bah (qiblah)*. The grave is generally four feet wide and six feet deep.

The significance of the funeral ceremony could not be underestimated, it includes the fact that death is inevitable and everybody should be prepared. The death of a fellow being requires sympathy, commiseration and condolence. However, the sympathetic feeling should be within the framework of Islam which is three days. The ceremony should be moderate with religious consciousness and should be devoid of excessive spending and merry making.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have been able to learn about the concept of funeral ceremony and the significance of the ceremony in Islam. It is a religious service held over the dead body of deceased Muslims, young, old or an infant who only lived for a moment on earth. It is service regarded as *Fardu Kifāyah* which means that it is sufficient that some Muslims should take part in it observance.

Salātul Janāzah consists of four takbīrs which should be led by an Imām and it is devoid of *iqāmah* and *adhān* and *rukū'*. All those to participate in the service must perform ablution. After the service, the corpse is lowered into the grave. The grave is expected to be dug in a convenient way and that the dead body should be laid in the grave facing the *qiblah* .

It is observed that there are some places where the deceased are buried far away from home, that is, at a special place designated as cemetery. It is expected that the remains of the deceased should be carried by men on shoulder and it is not forbidden if the corpse is in a motor vehicle. However, it is a directive of the Prophet (SAW) that Muslims should stand up as a sign of respect for a corpse been carried whether Muslim or non-Muslim.

In summary, Islam recommends strictly moderate expenses for the funeral ceremony and should be devoid of merry making and feast.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assessment

1. Describe how *al-Janāzah* is performed
2. Identify some of the provisions that should be made available for the burial of a Muslim corpse.
3. Assess the significance of the burial ceremony.

7.0 References and Further Reading

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Module 3

Unit 1: *Laylatul -Qadr*

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
 - 3.1 Concept of celebration of *Laylatul -Qadr*
 - 3.2 The significance of the celebration
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Total mark Assignment
- 7.0 References and further Reading

1.0 Introduction

In the previous unit, you learnt about the concept, observation, and the significance of *Janāzah* in Islam. In this unit you will learn about the concept and significance of celebration of *Laylatul -Qadr*.

Laylatul -Qadr is the night during which the revelation of the Glorious Qur'an began. The night falls within the last ten days of Ramadan. It is also known as the night of power, grandeur, or majesty. *Laylatul -Qadr* is one of the social festivals celebrated among the Muslims. However, its celebration is not as pronounced as the one earlier discussed.

2.0 Objectives

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

- mention the concepts of celebrating *Laylatul -Qadr*
- examine the ways and manners of celebrating it
- appreciate the significance of the celebration.

3.0 The Concept Of Celebrating *Laylatul -Qadr*

Laylatul -Qadr which is known as the Night of Grandeur, Night Power or Night of Majesty, is the night in which the revelation of the Glorious Qur'an began. The particular night has not been very definitely distinguished from other nine nights of the period (Abdul M.O.A 1980:63). There are differences of opinion among the learned scholars, some say that it is one of the odd nights in the last ten, while others were of the opinion that the 27th night was the night and some fix the 29th. In the Qur'an, the night was spoken of in two places in chapters 97 and 44. The whole of the chapter 97 is on the night which goes thus.....

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ
تَنزِيلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطْلَعِ الْفَجْرِ

In this chapter, this night is spoken of as the night in which the Qur'an was revealed and it is further stated that it is the night in which angels and the spirit descend.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ

In this portion, the night was called a blessed night (*Laylatul Mubāarakat.*) It will be seen that in both places in the Glorious Qur'an, it is spoken that the Qur'an was revealed on this night and elsewhere it is stated the Qur'an was revealed in the month of Ramadan which emphasizes that this night occurs in the month of Ramadan.

Therefore, *Laylatul -Qadr* is the anniversary of the revelation of the Glorious Qur'an. It is therefore, a duty of every Muslim to rededicate his life on the night of *Laylatul -Qadr* by reciting the glorious Qur'an with sincere devotion.

3.2 The Significance of Celebration of *Laylatul -Qadr.*

The source from which all the principles and ordinances of Islam are drawn is the Holy Book known as Glorious al-Qur'an. The Qur'an is considered the eternal miracle of Islam and the teachings of the Qur'an are universal. The teachings are addressed to

all people regardless of their tribes and colours. It was revealed to mankind to enlighten man's spirit, purify his morals, unify his society and replace the domination of the powerful with justice and fraternity as contained in Qur'an itself:

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ فَأَبَى أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ إِلَّا كُفُورًا

This Glorious Qur'an was revealed on *Laylatul-Qadr*, Night of Majesty. Therefore, the night is a significant night among the Muslims since the Qur'an is the scripture that makes distinction between the truth and falsehood. Significantly, the night of majesty is the anniversary of the revelation of the Glorious Qur'an. As the definite night could not be distinguished by the Muslims, the last ten days of every month of Ramadan are specially observed as days of devotion. During this period, Muslims are allowed to resort to ascetic life style by keeping himself in the mosques and giving up all worldly affairs and exert himself to seek nearness to Allah. This practice is called *i'tikāf*.

Self Assessment Exercise

- 1) What is *Laylatul-Qadr*?
- 2) Identify the period of *Laylatul-Qadr*
- 3) Examine the significance of the celebration of *Laylatul-Qadr*

4.0 Conclusion

Laylatul-Qadr, which is the celebration of the revelation of the Glorious Qur'an, is an important event in Islam. The night, which is known with other names such as *Laylatul Mubarak*, is mention in the Glorious Qur'an. It is also known as Night of Power. The revelation of Glorious Qur'an which was said to have occurred on this night, means that its revelation began on this night. In other words, the first revelation came to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) on this night. It is called a blessed night or the grand night because in it was laid the basis of a new revelation to the words which contains every command, full of wisdom and knowledge.

The last ten days of Ramadan are specially observed as days of devotion to celebrate the anniversary of the revelation of the Qur'an.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have been able to learn about the concept of celebration of *Laylatul Qadr* as well as the significance of the celebration.

Laylatul Qadri is the night during which the revelation of the Glorious Qur'an began. The Glorious Qur'an speaks of this night in two places. In fact, a whole chapter of the Qur'an, chapter 97:1-7, speaks extensively on the night. Also Qur'an 44:2-5 calls it a blessed night. The night falls within the last 10 days of Ramadan. Although this particular night has not been distinguished from the other nine nights, there are some *ahādith* of the Prophet (SAW) which allow the muslims to look for this night in one of the odd nights in the last ten nights of Ramadan (Bukhari 32:3) or in the last seven nights (Bukhari 32:3) while according to some other *ahādith*, it is the twenty-fifth or twenty-seventh or twenty-ninth night of Ramadan.

The significance of its celebration is for a Muslim to rededicate his life to Allah and involve in the recitation of the Glorious Qur'an and befitting exercises that will make him closer to Allah.

In summary, the glorious Qur'an which speaks of the night summarizes as follow:

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ

The night of destiny is better than a thousand of month

Q97:5

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Identify two passages of the Glorious Qur'an which discuss *Laylatul qadr*.
2. Describe how to identify the period for *Laylatul qadri*
3. Assess the significance of *Laylatul qadr*

7.0 References and Further Reading

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Unit 2: *Laylatu Nisfu Sha'ban*

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Historical origin of *Nisfu Sha'ban*
 - 3.2 The significance of the celebrations
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor marked assignments
- 7.0 References and further reading

1.0 Introduction

In the previous unit, you learnt about *Laylatul Qadr* the historical origin and the significance of the celebration. In this unit, you will be able to learn about *Nisfu Sha'ban*. *Nisfu Sha'ban* technically is mid-month of *Sha'ban*. In other words it is the night that precedes the 15th day of *Sha'ban*. The night has some historical origin. Most importantly the night is regarded as the night of destiny in which the destiny of man could be altered for better.

2.0 Objectives

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

- ❖ explain the historical origin of *Nisfu Sha'ban*
- ❖ describe the significant of *Nisfu Sha'ban*

3.0 Main Content

3.1 The Historical Origin Of *Nisfu Sha'ban*

The historical origin of *Nisfu Sha'ban* could be found in several *ahādith* of the Prophet (SAW). According to Uthman b. Hussan b. Mohammed al Shakry nd: 97) who reported that Abu Hurairah quoted an *Hadīth* in which the Prophet (SAW) was reported saying that in the mid-night of *Nisfu Sha'ban*, angel Jibril appeared to him

and ordered him to stand up to observe *Nawāfil*, and raise his hands to Allah for prayer because, the night of *Nisfu Sha'ban* is the night which Allah in His infinite mercy open all the doors of heavens with every blessing.

When the Prophet (SAW) further probed about the night, Angel Jibril told him it is a night which three gates of Allah's blessing are opened for man and in which Allah forgives all the sins and shortcomings of human beings who never associate anything with Him. However, the sins and shortcomings of magicians and sooth-Sayers are not forgiven.

From this *hadith*, the importance of the night of *Nisfu Sha'ban* should not be underestimated. It is a night that Muslims all over the world commemorate in order to avail themselves the blessings of Allah. It is also believed that it is a night in which the destiny of a man is changed for better. In most of our mosques, people gathered on this night to offer special prayer to Allah with fervent belief that their predestination would be changed for a better one.

3.2 The Significance Of *Nisfu Sha'ban*

Nisfu Sha'ban: Is the 15th day of *Sha'ban* and it is the 8th lunar month. In fact it is one of the Divine nights of blessing in Islam. The significance of the *Nisfu Sha'ban* among others includes the following:

- 1) That the Muslims come-together on this night to offer *Nawafil* and special prayers. This is in one way or the other make them closer to Allah.
- 2) That, in this night, it is believed that the predestination of man is changed for better.

In summary, the significance of *Nisfu Sha'ban* could not be underestimated as it is a kind of celebration in Islam.

4.0 Conclusion

Nisfu Sha'ban, which is the 15th day of the 8th lunar month, is a divine night which has its historical origin from the *hadith*. The *hadith* of the Prophet (SAW) speaks extensively on the blessing of the night. It is a night where the predestination of human beings is changed for better. Muslims, on this divine night, gather together in the mosques or other convenient places to offer *nawāfil*.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt about the celebration and significance of *Nisfu Sha'ban*. *Nisfu Sha'ban* is the 15th day of the 8th lunar month and it is a divine night in which Muslims from all nooks and crannies gather together on the night. It is regarded as a blessed night in which the predestination of man is changed for better.

The historical origin of the night has a good support in the *hadith* of the Prophet. The significance of this night is to rededicate one's life to Allah and move closer to Him. It is also a moment of changing the destiny of man to a better one.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Explain what is *Nisfu Sha'ban*
2. Assess the significance of *Nisfu Sha'ban*

7.0 References and Further Reading

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Unit 3: *Laylatul Isrāi Wal- Mirāj*

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 Historical origin of *Laylatul Isrāi Wal- Mirāj*
 - 3.2 The significance of the celebrations
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor marked assignments
- 7.0 References and further reading

1.0 Introduction

In the previous unit, you learnt about historical origin of *Nisfu Sha'ban* and its significance. In this unit, you will be able to learn about *Laylatul Isrāi Wal- Mirāj*. *Laylatul Isrāi Wal- Mirāj* was the night in which Allah took the Prophet Mohammed (SAW) from Makkah to Jerusalem and from Jerusalem to heavens. The Prophet (SAW) performed the journey in company of Angel Jibril. The journey took place on the 27th day of *Rajab*, the 7th lunar month.

2.0 Objectives

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

- ❖ explain the historical origin of *Laylatul Isrāi Wal- Mirāj*
- ❖ describe the significant of *Laylatul Isrāi Wal- Mirāj*
- ❖ discuss the significant of *Laylatul Isrāi Wal- Mirāj*

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Historical Origin Of *Laylatul Isrāi Wal- Mirāj*

Laylatul Isrāi Wal- Mirāj is the night in which the Prophet (SAW) in the company of Angel Jibril was taken from Makkah to Jerusalem. The night, according to some *ahādith*, fell on Monday 27th day of *Rajab*, the eight year of the Prophethood of Muhammad (SAW). *Rajab* is the seventh month in the Muslim calendar. From the historical perspective, Angel Jibril came in the midnight of that Monday and was knocking the door to the entrance of the Prophet (SAW). Fatimah, daughter of the Prophet (SAW), who was then nine years old, was with the Prophet (SAW). She went towards the door to see who the stranger was. As she opened the door, she found a strange person with two golden wings which could cover the north and the south and on his head was a miraculous golden crown. On this crown was an inscription which read *La illa al illa hah Muhammad Rasūlullah*.

On inquiry of who the stranger was looking for, he answered that it was the Prophet (SAW). She allowed him in and he moved directly to the Prophet (SAW). Thus, they started their journey.

He was taken from *Makkah* to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, he led other Prophets in prayers. From Jerusalem, he was taken to Heavens, where he saw the rewards for good people and the punishment for bad people. Eventually he was given the gift of *Salāt* the observance of canonical prayers.

3.2 The Significance of *Laylatul Isrāi Wal- Mirāj*

Laylatul Isrāi wal Mirāj which is the 27th day of *Rajab*, is an important event in the history of Islam. It was the time when Prophet Muhammad (SAW) ascended to the heavens. On this night, Prophet (SAW), in company of angel Jibril, moved out of the Makkah to Jerusalem and from Jerusalem to the heavens. It was at this period that he was given the gift of observing five daily prayers.

Therefore, the significance of this event lies in the fact that a way and manners of communicating with Allah was established. Muslims all over the world come together to offer prayers to Allah in commemoration of the night. As part of the significance of this day, it is a *Sunnah* that Muslims should keep a fast on the day as a religious service to Allah.

4.0 Conclusion

Laylatul Isrāi wal Mirāj is an important event in Islam. It is the 27th day of the lunar month of *Rajab*. The night in which the Prophet (SAW) ascended to heavens in company of angel Jibril.

The significance of this ascension lies in the fact that the five canonical Muslim prayers were given to the Prophet (SAW) and the Muslims. While on this journey, the Prophet (SAW) saw the rewards of good deed to be given to the righteous and punishment to be melted out to bad people. Therefore, in commemoration of this event, the Muslims all over the world celebrate *Laylatul Isrāi wal Mirāj*

5.0 Summary

Laylatul Isrāi wal Mi'rāj which is the ascension of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to the heavens occurred on Monday the 27th day of *Rajab*, the eighth lunar month. It is an historical event in Islam.

The Prophet (SAW) was taken from Makkah to Jerusalem and from Jerusalem to the heavens. There he met with many Prophets of Allah and he saw several people who were enjoying the results of their goodness while they were alive. On the other hand those who committed evils while on earth were being punished. Eventually he was given the gift of the observance of the five daily prayers. Therefore, it becomes an

important component in the principles of Islam and an obligatory duty to every Muslims.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Discuss the historical origin of *Laylatul Isrāi wal Mirāj*
2. Assess the significance of *Laylatul Isrāi wal Mirāj*

7.0 References and Further Reading

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Unit 4: **Celebration of *Awwal Muharram/Hijrah***

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
 - 3.1 The historical origin of Muharram
 - 3.2 The significance of the celebration
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor marked assignments
- 7.0 References and further reading

1.0 Introduction

In the previous unit, you learnt about the celebration of *Nisfu Sha'ban* and its significance. In this unit, you will be able to learn about the celebration of *Awwal Muharram* otherwise called *Hijrah*, and its significance.

Before the Prophethood of Muhammad (SAW) the month of *Muharram* was observed as one of the four sacred months. The others are *Dhul Qa'dah*, *Dhul Hijjah* and *Rajab*. They are meant to be the months of peace. The period before Islam was known for unrest, battle and confusion, that is, people from different Arabian clans attacking one another. However, during the four sacred months there was peace. It continued to be so during the period of Islam. The Muslims were all allowed to defend themselves in case of any aggression from non-Muslims.

2.0 Objectives

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

- explain the historical origin of *Muharram*
- describe the celebration of *Awwal Muharram*.
- assess the significance of the celebration.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Historical origin of *Muharram*

The pre-Islamic Arabs used to respect four months of lunar calendar before the coming of Islam. These four months are as follows:

1. *Muharram*, the first lunar month.
2. *Rajab*, the seventh month.
3. *Dhul-Qa'dah*, the eleventh month.
4. *Dhul-Hijjah*, the twelfth month.

When Islam came, it followed the same system to keep these months sacred. In Islam, these months are known as *Ash-hurul Harām*, the sacred months. During these months, it is a sin for Muslims to fight or wage war or to quarrel with anyone or to take revenge. They are months of peace and worship throughout the Muslim world. Three of these months *Dhul-Qa'dah*, *Dhul-Hijjah* and *Muharram*, follow one another as the eleventh, the twelfth and the first months respectively while *Rajab* is the seventh month. They are months in which many Muslims perform the minor hajj – *Umrah*.

The Glorious Qur'an states:

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرْمٌ

The number of months in the sight of God is twelve (in a year)

so ordained by Him the day He created the heavens and

the earth; of them four are sacred... (Q9:35)

Hijrah is a very important historical event in Islam. The *Hijrah* took place in the month of *Muharram*. What is *Hijrah*? This was the period when Muslims migrated from Makkah to Madinah due to continuous attack by the non-Muslims. The migration was a commandment from Allah. During the caliphate period of Umar b. Khattab, he found it necessary to have an Islamic calendar. The meeting of the

companions was organized to discuss the issue and it was unanimously agreed that the beginning of Islamic calendar should be anchored on the *Hijrah* event which is a turning point in the history of Islam. *Hijrah* is nowadays being celebrated in many parts of the world on the first day of the month of *Muharram* as a festival to mark the beginning of Islamic New Year.

The Significance Of The Celebration

Awwal Muharram which is the first day of *Muharram* is the beginning of the New Year of the Muslims. The day is revered and celebrated by Muslims all over the world. In many Muslim countries the day is declared a public holiday.

Aside the *Awwal Muharram*, *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘*Āshūrā* are other important days in the month of *Muharram*. These two days, *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘*Āshūrā*, witnessed several important events in the life history of many Prophets of Allah. They are significant days in the lives of Prophets Musa, Adam, Nuhu, Ibrahim, Ayub, Yusuf, Yunus, Daud, Sulayman and Isa. In fact, the month was a great turning point in the life of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) because it was in it he migrated along side his companions, from Makkah to Madinah.

Self Assessment Exercise

1. Examine the historical origin of the month of *Muharram*.
2. Describe how the first day of *Muharram* is celebrated.
3. Discuss the significance of the celebration of *Awwal Muharram*.

4.0 Conclusion

Muharram is the first month of the Muslim calendar. It is an important month in Islam. It should be recalled that in the pre-Islamic era as well as the period of Islam, four months were regarded as sacred months. The months are *Muharram*, *Rajab*, *Dhul-Qa’dah* and *Dhul-hijjah*. They are months of peace and tranquility. They are months of worship in which many Muslims perform *Umrah*. The months that are meant to be the Muslims months. Those months are known as *Ash-hurul Harām*. It is a sin to fight or wage war against one another in those months except in defense of

any aggression. It is also a sin to engage in quarrel or revenge with fellow beings. *Muharram* is the first month in the Islamic calendar. Therefore the first day in it which is called *Awwal Muharram* is celebrated by some Muslims as the beginning of the New Islamic Year. It is called *Hijrah* celebration.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you learnt about the *Awwal Muharam*, the Muslims' first month, as well as the significance of its celebration. Before the coming of Islam, the Arabs accorded four months a great respect and honour. They are the months of peace and tranquility. War, quarrel, aggression or revenge are totally prohibited during these four holy months. The months are *Muharram*, *Rajab*, *Dhul- Qa'dah* and *Dhul- Hijjah*.

In view of the fact that *Muharram* is one of the sacred months, the first day of the month is regarded as the first day of Islamic New Year and it is so celebrated by Muslims in many parts of the world.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Discuss the historical origin of the celebration of *Awwal Muharram*.
2. Describe how *Awwal Muharram* is ought to be celebrated.
3. Assess the significance of the celebration of *Awwal Muharram*.

7.0 References and Further Reading

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UNIT 5: Celebration of *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘*Āshūrā*

Contents

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Celebration of *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘*Āshūrā*
 - 3.2 The significance of the celebration
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignments
- 7.0 References and Further Readings

1.0 Introduction

In the previous unit, you learnt about the celebration of *Awwal Muharram* and its significance. In this unit, you will learn about the celebration of *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘*Āshūrā*. As mentioned in the previous unit, *Muharram* was regarded an important month both in pre-*Islamic* and *Islamic* periods. The Arabs before *Islam* accorded this month respect so also did the Prophet (S.A.W) and his companions. The month is regarded as one of the four sacred months and they are months of peace and worship. The other three months are *Rajab*, *Dhu –Qa’dah* and *Dhul-Hijjah*.

Within this sacred month of *Muharam*, there are two other days that have some historical importance. The days are *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘*Āshūrā* which are the 9th and 10th days of *Muharram*.

2.0 Objectives

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

- ❖ explain the historical significance of *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘*Āshūrā*.
- ❖ discuss the celebrations of *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘*Āshūrā*.
- ❖ assess the significance of the celebrations of *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘*Āshūrā*.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Celebration Of *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘*Āshūrā*

‘*Āshūrā*, which is the 10th day of *Muharram* is of great historical significance in *Islam*. The significance could be observed in the following *Hadith* of the Prophet (SAW). Abu Qatāda (*Radiyallahu Anihu*) relates that the Holy Prophet (SAW), as related in the *sahih l- Muslim*, said that “the fast on the 10th of *Muharram* atones for the sins of the preceding year.” Also he was quoted of saying *Alhamdulillah* Allah (SWT) has blessed us to see another year. The first month of this year is *Muharram*. In this month, there is an excellent day, the day of ‘*Āshūrā* which falls on the 10th of *Muharram*. The Holy Prophet (SAW) recommended fasting on this day as part of his *Sunnah*. He also indicated how we should observe the fast of ‘*Āshūrā*.

The import of the *ahādith* above is that Muslims should keep fast on the day of ‘*Āshūrā* which is on the 10th day of *Muharram*. It is also part of the directives of the Prophet (SAW) to keep fast on the 9th of *Muharram*. Therefore, a Muslim should keep fast on the 9th and 10th of *Muharram*. Ibn Abbas (R.A.) reported the Prophet (SAW) saying ‘if we are survived till next year, I will definitely observe fast on the 9th of *Muharram* as well. (Sahih Muslim).

3.2 The Significance Of Celebration Of ‘*Āshūrā*

Tāsū‘ā and ‘*Āshūrā*, the 9th and 10th days of *Muharram*, are two great historical days in *Islam*. The significance of these days has to do with some important events which took place in the lives of some important Prophets of Allah. Among the events are the following:

- i. The *Hijrah* of the Prophet (SAW) which happened on the day of ‘*Āshūrā*.
- ii. The Jews used to fast on the day of ‘*Āshūrā* because of their belief that Prophet Mūsa (A.S) and his people were saved from the hands of Pharaoh while Pharaoh and his people were drowned in the Red Sea.

- iii. It was on this day that Allah accepted the repentance of Prophet Ādam (A.S) after his exit from paradise.
- iv. It was the day when Prophet Nūh (A.S) and his companions in the ark were rescued.
- v. It was on ‘Āshūrā day that the Prophet Ibrahim (A.S) who was thrown by Nimrod into fire was extinguished by Allah.
- vi. It was on this day that Prophet Ayūb’s health was restored from leprosy after many years.
- vii. It was on the ‘Āshūrā day that Prophet Yūsuf (A.S) was reunited with his father, Prophet Ya‘qub (A.S).
- viii. The ‘Āshūrā day was the day when Prophet Yūnus (A.S) was taken out from the belly of the whale.
- ix. It was on the day of ‘Āshūrā that Prophet Dā’ud (A.S) was forgiven and the kingdom of Prophet Sulayman (A.S) was restored to him.
- x. It was on the day of ‘Āshūrā that Prophet ‘Isā (A.S) was raised to heaven.

Conclusively, the significance of *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘Āshūrā days cannot be underscored in Islam. Various *ahādith* of the Prophet (S.A.W) exposed some of the reasons that make the two days important especially as many events that characterize the lives of some of the Prophets of Allah occurred in either of the two days. *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘Āshūrā days are celebrated mostly among the Yoruba Muslims. The celebration is popularly called *Kayokayo*.

Self Assessment Exercises

1. Describe the ways and manners of celebrating *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘Āshūrā by the Muslims.
2. Discuss the significance of the celebration of *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘Āshūrā.

4.0 Conclusion

Hijrah is an important landmark in the history of *Islam* and it was a turning point in the life history of the Prophet (SAW).

The celebration of *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘*Āshūrā* in this month has a great historical importance. The Prophet of *Islam*, Muhammad (saw) recommended the fasting of the 9th and 10th days of Muharam. The Prophet (SAW) kept the fast on these two days and he enjoined his companions to do the same. Fasting, according to the teaching of the Prophet (SAW), atones for the shortcomings of the preceding year.

Celebrating the 9th and 10th of Muharam by Muslims is very significant because several events which happened in the lives of many Prophets of Allah occurred during the period.

One other significance of celebrating the *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘*Āshūrā* is the fact that the migration of the Prophet (SAW) and his companions from Makah to Madinah took place at the time. The *Hijrah* was on the commandment of Allah when there were continuous attacks and hostilities by the non-believers on the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt about the celebration of *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘*Āshūrā* and the significance of the celebrations.

What makes the celebration of these days important in Islam is that some significant events took place during the period that turned the lives of many Prophets of God around. It was on the 9th day of *Muharram* that the Prophet (saw) and his companions were commanded by Allah to migrate from Makkah to Madinah to avoid the hostilities of the non-believers. This day is being celebrated with fasting and prayer.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Describe the term *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘*Āshūrā* and briefly assess the way and manner of celebrating the days.
2. Examine some of the significance of the celebration of *Tāsū‘ā* and ‘*Āshūrā*.

7.0 References And Further Reading

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Unit 6: **Miscellaneous Festivals**

- 1.0. Introduction
- 2.0. Objectives
- 3.0. Main concept
 - 3.1. List of some of the miscellaneous festivals.
 - 3.2. Concept and significance of their celebrations.
- 4.0. Conclusion
- 5.0. Summary
- 6.0. Tutor Marked Assignments
- 7.0. References and Further Reading

1.0 Introduction

Among the Muslims, there are some festivals not generally celebrated but observed by some Muslims.

These festivals include following:

1. *Idhat*: circumcision feasts.
2. *Khursu*: safe delivery feast.
3. *Naq'iah*: safe return from a journey feast.
4. *Wakirat*: house warming feast.
5. Celebration of birth and death of notable *Sufi* leaders and visitation to their tombs as in form of pilgrimage.

Some of these festivals are local customs of some communities but which have found their ways into Islam through one way or the other.

2.0 Objectives

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

- identify some festivals in Islam that do not have a universal acceptability.
- describe the significance of their celebrations.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 List Of Some Of The Miscellaneous Festivals

The following is the list of some of the miscellaneous festivals

1. *Idhat*: circumcision feast.
2. *Khursu*: safe delivery
3. *Naq'iah*: safe return from a journey
4. *Wakirat*: house warming feast.
5. Celebration of birth and death of notable sufi leaders and visitation to their localities as in form of pilgrimage.

Concept and Significance of Their Celebrations

As earlier mentioned, there are some festivals among the Muslims that do not have general and universal acceptability. However, in some localities, such festivals are celebrated. An example of such celebrations is the one associated with circumcision of male or female child. It is accompanied with *Idhat* feast or *Kashiah* as it is popularly known among the Hausa people in Nigeria.

Another of the miscellaneous festivals not commonly celebrated but observed by some groups is the feast for safe delivery of a pregnant mother. The period of conception of a woman is believed to be a difficult period and as such when there is a safe delivery for a mother, it calls for pomp and pageantry. The term used for this kind of feast is *Khursu*.

Another uncommonly festival is a safe return from a journey known as *Naq'iah*. This kind of feast is common among the Muslims who embarked on annual pilgrimage, *Haji*. In the olden days, the journey entailed a lot of sacrifices and risks because it was done either bare-footed or by riding, unlike nowadays that it is much easier performed. Therefore the return from this kind of a journey is worth celebrating. In fact, in some parts of Nigeria, it is celebrated with merry-making.

Another unusual feast is the house-warming ceremony known as *wakirah*. It is a general belief that having a shelter over one's head is a great favour from Allah. Therefore, when this favour is bestowed on anyone, it is believed that it requires merry-making and celebration.

The other uncommon festivals is the celebration of the birth and death of some notable *Sufi* leaders, such as Shaykh Abdul Qadir Al Jillānī, the founder of Qādiriyyah order, Shaykh Ahmad At-Tijānī the founder of Tijāniyyah order. Today, birthdays and the demise of many *Sufi* leaders are celebrated across many countries in West Africa. During these celebrations members of these orders pay visits to the tombs of these leaders to seek *barakah and rahmah* as done at the Prophet Muhammad's tomb in Madinah. It should be observed that most of these miscellaneous festivals have no specific references in the Glorious Qur'an except in some *ahādith*.

Self Assessment Exercises

1. Define the term miscellaneous festivals.
2. Mention *five* of the miscellaneous festivals.
3. Discuss the significance of *three* of the miscellaneous festivals.

4.0 Conclusion

There are some festivals in Islam that do not have universal acceptability but are only observed by some Muslim communities around the world. Such festivals include the following:

- 1 *Idhat*: circumcision feast.
- 2 *Khursu*: safe delivery
- 3 *Naq'iah*: safe return from a journey
- 4 *Wakirat*: house warming feast.
- 5 Birth and death of notable *Sufi* leaders.

Most of these festivals are observed based on belief and custom of the communities where they are popular. Firstly for instance, it is believed that the period of pregnancy is a period of hardship and risk, therefore when a pregnant woman is safely delivered of her baby, it calls for celebration.

Secondly, not everybody could have the opportunity of building a house for himself. Whoever is therefore blessed to have such opportunity celebrates it by organizing house-warming party and feast where friends and well-wishers come together to celebrate and rejoice with him.

Thirdly, returning from important journey such pilgrimage to the holy lands are considered an enviable feat that call for celebrations. This forms part of celebrations that have been institutionalized in some communities around the Muslim world.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt about some festivals which have no international recognition but are observed by some people in various localities. At the same time the significance of their celebrations was also highlighted. Some of such celebrations discussed in this lesson include *idhat*, *Khursu*, *Naq'iah*, *Wakirah* as well as the birth and the death of notable *Sufi* leaders.

The significance of celebrating some of the festivals is to show gratitude to God; particularly it could be seen as thanks-giving celebration. Most of the festivals have no specific references in the Glorious Qur'an but are mentioned in the *ahādith* of the holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

6.0 Tutor Marked Assessment

1. Describe some of the miscellaneous festivals in Islam.
2. Identify five of the miscellaneous festivals and assess their significances.

7.0 References and Further Reading

Abdul, M.O.A (1983) *Islam as a religion (Faith and duties) Studies in Islam series*, Book 1, Lagos: Islamic Publication Bureau.

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