## The revelation of the Qur'an

## In the Cave of Hiraa'

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) spent most of his time in contemplation and worship. He would often go to Cave Hiraa', situated near the top of mount an-Nūr, approximately two miles outside Makkah1. He would stay there meditating and praying until his provision of food and water would finish.

He would sit for lengthy periods pondering the mysteries of creation. What is man's true purpose in life? From where does man come, and where will he go after death? What does God Almighty require from us? On the 21st of Ramadhan, 610 C.E., when the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) was 40 years old, the first verses of the Qur'an were revealed to him. Whilst he was sitting all alone in the cave, out of the stillness of the night, the Angel Gabriel suddenly appeared and said to him, "Read!" "I cannot read", Muhammad replied, shaken. The angel repeated the command, pressing him on, "Read!" The prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) once again protested, "I cannot read". "Read" the mighty voice commanded once more. "I cannot read", the Prophet replied. The angel then squeezed the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) a third time and said: "Read in the name of your Lord, who created Created man from a clinging substance. Read, and your Lord is the most Generous-Who taught by the pen- Taught man what he did not know"

(Surah 96: verses 1 to 5)

The occurrence in the cave left the Prophet shocked and confused. He (blessings and peace be upon him) trembled in fear, traumatised by what he had seen and heard. He set off for his house immediately. On reaching

home, the Prophet asked Khadijah to wrap him in blankets "Cover Me, Cover Me". When he calmed down, he related the whole story to her. Khadijah knew the character and integrity of the Prophet better than anyone else, after all she was his wife. She was well aware of his honesty and balanced personality. At once she reassured him: "No! God would never disgrace you! You keep good ties with your relatives, you look after the weak, you help the poor and the needy, you entertain the guests and suffer hardships, in the path of truthfulness."

Khadijah then suggested that they go and consult her wise elderly cousin Waraqah ibn Nawfal, who was a Christian. Waraqah heard the whole account and then said: "I am sure the angel that descended on Moses, has descended on you. Your people will abuse and mistreat you. I wish I could be alive to give you my support when your people will turn you out." "Will they turn me out?" The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) found this difficult to believe. Waraqah replied that the people have always turned against those who received a message from God. Waraqah lived only a short period after this incident and passed away.

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Q1: Describe what took place in the cave of Hiraa .( include in your account the parts played by Khadijah and her relative Waraqah).