

The revelation of the Qur'an

In the Cave of Hira'

The Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) spent most of his time in contemplation and worship. He would often go to Cave Hira', 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'ān 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

