

HISTORY AND IMPORTANCE OF HOLY QURAN [SESSION 7]

First Revelation:

When Prophet Muhammad was around forty years old, he would spend a lot of time alone, thinking and reflecting on the world around him. It is commonly stated that this is the time when the Prophets were always ordered to disclose their message. This was the time when the signs of Prophet hood became evident to the Holy Prophet. These signs included the greeting of the stones every time the Holy Prophet passed through them and his dreams becoming a reality.

Holy Prophet's start of the revelation occurred with his dreams becoming a reality and then seclusion became dear to him. In order to seclude himself he would go to cave Hira to engage himself in Tahanuth (devotion), for a couple of nights before reuniting with his family. He would bring some simple food (Sawiq which is barley porridge) and water and go to a cave called Hira' (a small cave 4 yards long and 1.75 yards wide) in the Mount Al-Nour. It was a small cave, and he would often invite travelers passing by to share his food with him. During this time, especially in the month of Ramadan, he would focus on worshipping and thinking about the world. He was troubled by the wrong actions and idol worship that were common among his people, but he didn't know what to do about it yet. This period of solitude and contemplation was important for him because it prepared him for the important role he would have later on. It helped him develop a strong connection with the unseen power behind the universe.

The holy month of Ramadan was his traditional month of retreat, and during the end of Ramadan in 610 AD (evidence states it was Monday, 21st of Ramadan) he experienced something unique. He was shocked by a voice which woke him from his sleep and said "Read". Holy Prophet at this time was shocked and as reported by Hazrat Aisha (from what she heard from the Holy Prophet) "I said: I cannot read! The Angel then took me and pressed me tightly" Then he repeated the words "Read", "I cannot Read." Said I; and once again he squeezed me and let go me until I was exhausted. The he said, "Read", "I cannot Read." Said I; and he squeezed me for a third time and then let me go and said *Recite in the name of your Lord Who created, created man from a clot of congealed blood. Recite: and your Lord is Most Generous. Who taught by the pen, taught man what he did not know.* As soon as the Holy Prophet heard it he started saying it out as well as if it had been imprinted on his mind.

Upon being shaken by this experience and running out, he started tripping on the rocks, afraid of what had happened to him. He then looked at the sky and it was filled with stars and on the sky he saw Angel Jibraeel hanging over calling him out: "I am Jibraeel, and you are Muhammad the Messenger of Allah". Then onwards he ran to his house and upon reaching he asked his wife, Hazrat Khadija "Cover me, cover



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me.” They covered him until he restored security. He told Hazrat Khadijah of the incident of the cave and added that he was horrified. His wife tried to soothe him and reassured him saying, **“Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your kith and kin; you bear the burden of the weak; you help the poor and the needy, you serve your guests generously and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones.”**

She then told him that she will be visiting her cousin, Warqa bin Nawfal, who had embraced Christianity in the pre-Islamic period, and used to write the Hebrew Scriptures. She took the Holy Prophet alongside and when they reached his residence, Hazrat Khadija said, **“My cousin, listen to your nephew!”** Warqa then said, **“O my nephew! What did you see?”** Holy Prophet told him what had happened. He replied, **“This is ‘Namus’, i.e. (the angel who is entrusted with divine secrets) that Allah sent to Hazrat Musa. I wish I were younger. I wish I could live up to the time when your people would turn you out.”** Muhammad asked, **“Will they drive me out?”** Waraqah answered in the affirmative and said, **“Anyone who came with something similar to what you have brought was treated with hostility; and if I should be alive till that day, then I would support you strongly.”** But after a few days Waraqah died.

Revelations from 610 to 632 AD and their circumstances:

After the first revelation, a long period of silence (Fitrat ul Wahi [the relaxation period]) continued in which no revelations came and this made Holy Prophet anxious. In a hadith reported by the Holy Prophet that a few days after the first revelation, **“While I was walking, I heard a voice from the sky. I looked up, and surely enough, it was the same angel who had visited me in the cave of Hira’. He was sitting on a chair between the earth and the sky. I was very afraid of him and knelt on the ground. I went home saying: ‘Cover me ..., Cover me ...’.** he heard the Angel Jibraeel reciting Surah Mudhatir [**“O you wrapped up in a mantle, arise and deliver the warning”**]. The verses also had commands for the Holy Prophet to stay away from the worshipping of idols, deliverance of Allah’s warning and giving charity. Holy Prophet stood up when Hazrat Khadija told him to rest but he told her that the time for rest is over and that now he has to give the message of Allah to the people. Hazrat Khadija told her that she accepts her message and became the first convert to Islam hence also becoming a pillar of support for the beloved Prophet.

After the second revelation, another long period of silence followed and Prophet was taunted by people that his Allah had forgotten him. It was then that Allah gave him the revelation of Surah al-Duha [“by



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the glorious morning light and by the night when it is still, your Lord has not forsaken you”]

whereupon he was instructed to help the creatures of Allah, thank Allah for whatever has been bestowed upon him and doing sacrifice in the name of Allah. Surah Al-Duha was the stepping stone after which the revelations followed for the next twenty years without any break. The gap in revelations is known as *Fitrat-ul-Wahi* [the relaxation period].

The revelations occurred during **two time periods**, the first of these time periods was the **Makkan period** which lasted for **12 years 9 months and 5 days** and the next one was the **Madni period** which lasted for **9 years, 9 months and 9 days**. In the Makkan period the Surahs were **short in detail and had a harsh tone**. The Surahs focused on the prevailing situation in Makkah at that time and were mostly about **consoling the Prophet**. They also served as a guide to the Muslims to stay away from evil and talked about harsh punishments that will be inflicted upon the ones going against the Messenger and will of God.

The Madni period had Surahs in the start of the Holy Quran and they were longer in length. They talked more about the legal aspect of the Quran and also told about the stories of the other Prophets in order to teach Prophet through analogy. The tribes discussed in them were those other than Makkans such as the Jews. Also, the tone used in them was lighter than the Makki Surahs

There were certain Surahs which were a result of the circumstances that followed for e.g. **Surah Kausar** [*“Verily we have granted you with abundance..”*] was revealed on the Holy Prophet to calm him down when the Quraysh e Makkah had started calling him an abtar and had started insulting him. Also, **Surah Tawbah** verse stating *“When the two of you were in the cave and your partner was afraid you said do not worry because Allah’s help is with us”* was revealed on the incident of what happened in the cave of Thawr. **Surah Ash-Shuara** [*“And warn all, starting with your closest relatives,”*] was revealed to tell the Prophet to go and call his family members towards Islam. **Surah Hijr** [*to expound openly and to turn away from Pagans*] was revealed to tell the Holy Prophet to preach openly after which he went on to the mount of Safa. **Surah-e-Baqrah** last two verses were directly revealed to the Holy Prophet by Allah when he went on to the night journey (Isra Miraaj). **Surah-e-Maida** [*“This day I have completed my favor upon you..”*] came during the farewell sermon which finally marked the completion of Quran stating how Allah has completed his favor upon the Muslims and has chosen Islam as the religion for them



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Holy Prophet had multiple experiences of getting a revelation which he has described himself *"Never once did I receive a revelation without thinking my soul had been torn away by me"* He also said that *"When a revelation came, sometimes it was as clear and articulate as if an angel was dictating a text from behind a veil"* He also said: *"Sometimes it came as a ringing of the bell and that is hardest upon me; the shocks afterwards decrease when I am aware of their message"* The companions also narrated that they saw Holy Prophet in great amount of pain to the extent that he would put his face between his knees and a look of great heaviness came appearing on his face. Hazrat Ali is also reported to have said: *"That he started to perspire a lot even in the extremist of cold"*

Every time the revelation would come; the weight of the Holy Prophet would increase. Hazrat Zaid bin Thabit narrated: *"Once I was sitting with the Holy Prophet and a revelation came to him, he had put his leg on mine and it became too heavy that I felt as if my leg would break"*. It is also reported that the Holy Prophet weight would increase so much that the camel he used to ride would hunch on its back.

Holy Prophet also saw the Angel coming in different forms. Sometimes the Angel would come in his original form and at other times he would come in the form of a man. The Angel came in the form of a man which Hazrat Umar described as *"One day while we were sitting with the Messenger of Allah there appeared before us a man whose clothes were exceedingly white and whose hair was exceedingly black; no signs of journeying were to be seen on him and none of us knew him. He walked and sat down by the Prophet. Resting his knees against his and placing the palms of his hands on his thighs, he said: 'O Muhammad, tell me about Islam'"*. It is stated that when the Angel came in the form of a man he would resemble the companion of the Holy Prophet Dahiyah-al-Kalbi.

During the first revelation the Prophet saw Angel Jibraeel in his original form which has also been stated by the Holy Quran *"And he [i.e. Muhammad] has already seen him [i.e. Jibraeel] in the clear horizon"*
[Quran 81:23]

