

The Prophet's mission

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Article taken and slightly adapted from: alifta.net

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Divine Revelation first descended upon the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) at the age of forty during his solitary retirement for Tahannuth (worship) in Hirah Cave There, the Angel Jibreel (Gabriel, *peace be upon him*) was sent down to him during one of these retreats and embraced him powerfully, then released him and said, "Read!" This was the beginning of the prophetic mission.

`Aishah, the Mother of the Believers (*may Allaah be pleased with her*), related the event, saying: The first of revelations that the Messenger of Allaah (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) received was good dreams. Whichever dream he (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) saw came true, as clear as daylight. Then seclusion was endeared to him. He (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) used to retire to the Cave of Hirah and engage in Tahannuth for a certain number of nights, before returning to his family to take provision for the same purpose. He would return to Khadeejah and replenish his provisions for a similar period until the truth came to him while he was in the Cave of Hirah. There came to him the Angel (Gabriel) who said, 'Read!' He (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) said,

'I am not a reader (i.e. I do not know how to read).' So, the Angel took me and embraced me powerfully until I was exhausted, he then released me and said, 'Read.' I said, 'I am not a reader.' He took me and embraced me powerfully for a second time until I was exhausted. He then released me and said, 'Read.' I said, 'I am not a reader.' He took me and embraced me powerfully for the third time. He then released me and said, [Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists).] [He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood).] [Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.]

After receiving the Divine Revelation, the Messenger of Allaah (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) returned home to his wife Khadeejah bint Khuwaylid (*may Allaah be pleased with her*), his heart shivering. He (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) said, '**Cover me! Cover me!**' They covered him until his fear subsided. Then he told Khadeejah what had happened and said, '**I feared for myself.**' Khadeejah said, 'Never! By Allaah, Allaah will never disgrace you; you keep good relations with your kith and kin, speak the truth, support the poor, earn a living for the destitute, entertain your guests generously, and assist those who are stricken with calamities.' Khadeejah then accompanied

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him to her paternal cousin, Waraqah ibn Nawfal ibn Asad ibn `Abdul-`Uzza. He embraced Christianity in Jaahiliyyah (pre-Islaamic time of ignorance), and used to write in Hebrew and write from the Gospel in Hebrew as much as Allaah willed for him to write. He was an old man who had lost his eyesight. Khadeejah said, 'O my cousin, listen to your nephew.' Waraqah said to him, 'O my nephew, what have you seen?' The Messenger of Allaah (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) recounted to him what he had seen. Waraqah said to him, 'This is the same Namus (the Angel entrusted with Divine Secrets, i.e. Gabriel) whom Allaah had sent to Moosa (Moses). Would that I were young and could live until the time when your people will turn you out.' The Messenger of Allaah (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him*) asked, '**Will they turn me out?**' Waraqah replied, 'Yes, never did a man come with the like of what you have come with but was treated with hostility. If I should live to see that day, I would support you strongly.' Waraqah died a short while later and Divine Revelation ceased for a while.¹

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