

Section 1.2 - The First Revelation and the Qur'an

A. The First Revelation (610 CE)

1. The Context

- **Location:** The Prophet (PBUH) often retreated to the Cave of Hira on Mount Nur (*Jabal al-Nur*) for meditation.
- **The Reason:** He was troubled by the moral decline, idol worship, and social injustices in Makkah.
- **The Event:** During the month of Ramadan, when he was 40 years old, the Angel Jibrail appeared to him.

2. The Conversation with Jibrail

- **The Command:** Jibrail appeared and commanded, "Iqra!" (Read/Proclaim!).
- **The Response:** Muhammad (PBUH) replied, "*Ma ana bi qari*" (I am not a reader/I cannot read).
- **The Interaction:** Jibrail embraced him tightly three times until he felt exhausted. Each time the command was repeated.
- **The First Verses:** Finally, Jibrail recited the first five verses of Surah al-Alaq (96:1-5):

"Proclaim! (or Read!) in the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created—Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful—He Who taught (the use of) the Pen—Taught man that which he knew not."

3. Importance of this Experience

- **Establishment of Islam:** This marked the beginning of his Prophethood (*Risalah*) and the end of the *Jahiliyyah* (Age of Ignorance).
- **Validation:** Khadijah (RA) and her cousin Waraqa ibn Nawfal confirmed that this was the same "Namus" (Angel) that came to Moses, validating his mission.
- **Universal Message:** It shifted the focus from tribalism to the worship of One God (Tawhid) and the importance of seeking knowledge.

B. Importance of the Revelation of the Qur'an

For Muslims, the revelation of the Qur'an is the most significant event in history for several reasons:

1. **Divine Guidance:** It is considered the literal word of Allah, providing a complete "manual for life" covering law, ethics, and spirituality.
 2. **Final Revelation:** Muslims believe the Qur'an is the final, uncorrupted message from Allah, confirming and completing previous scriptures (Torah, Psalms, Gospel).
 3. **Miraculous Nature:** The linguistic beauty and scientific insights within the Qur'an are seen as proof of its divine origin (*I'jaz*).
 4. **Foundation of Practice:** It provides the basis for the Five Pillars and the Shari'ah (Islamic Law).
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C. The Compilation of the Qur'an

The Qur'an was revealed over 23 years. Its compilation occurred in three main stages:

1. During the Prophet's Lifetime

- **Memorization:** Many companions (*Sahabah*) memorized the verses as they were revealed (known as *Hafiz*).
- **Writing:** While the Prophet (PBUH) was illiterate, he had "Scribes of Revelation" (like Zayd ibn Thabit) who wrote verses on animal skins, shoulder bones, and palm leaves.
- **Ordering:** The Prophet (PBUH) specified the order of the chapters (Surahs) under divine guidance.

2. During the Caliphate of Abu Bakr (RA)

- **The Trigger:** Many *Hafiz* died during the Battle of Yamama. Umar (RA) feared the Qur'an might be lost.
- **The Process:** Abu Bakr commissioned Zayd ibn Thabit to collect all written fragments and verify them against the memories of the companions.
- **The Result:** The first complete written copy (*Suhuf*) was compiled and kept with Abu Bakr, then Umar, and finally Hafsa (the Prophet's widow).

3. During the Caliphate of Uthman (RA)

- **The Trigger:** As the Empire expanded, people in different regions were reciting the Qur'an in different dialects, leading to confusion.

- **The Action:** Uthman (RA) ordered Zayd ibn Thabit to make official copies based on the *Suhuf* held by Hafsa, using the Quraysh dialect.
 - **The Standardization:** These official copies were sent to major cities (Kufa, Basra, Damascus), and all unofficial versions were destroyed to ensure unity. This version is what we use today.
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Exam Section: Past Paper Style Questions

1. Describe Question (6 Marks)

"Describe the events that took place in the Cave of Hira."

- **Tip:** Mention the month (Ramadan), the Angel (Jibrail), the specific command (*Iqra*), and the Prophet's physical/emotional reaction.

2. Explain Question (6 Marks)

"Explain why the compilation of the Qur'an was necessary during the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs."

- **Tip:** Focus on the death of memorizers at Yamama and the need for a standardized dialect as the Empire grew under Uthman.

3. Assessment Question (12 Marks)

"The compilation of the Qur'an by Uthman was the most important factor in preserving Islam. Assess this statement."

- **Tip:** Balance the importance of Uthman's standardization against Abu Bakr's initial collection and the oral tradition of the *Hafiz*.