

0. MUHAMMAD'S VISITATIONS - Story Preface

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This illustration depicts Muhammad with the Angel Gabriel at the Cave of Hira. It is known as “Muhammad's Call to Prophecy and the First Revelation; Journey of the Prophet” and is a leaf from a copy of the *Majma' al-tawarikh* ("Compendium of Histories"), ca. 1425; Timurid. Herat, Afghanistan. The language of the manuscript is Persian (Farsi). The source material for this illustration is currently maintained by The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Online via Wikimedia Commons.

To learn the story of what Muslims believe happened in the cave of Hira, let's use a respected English version of the Koran (the 1975 edition of the translation by A. Yusuf Ali). In the *Introductory Commentary*, at pages 8-9 (C. 29), we read:

*The Chosen One was in the Cave of Hira.  
For two years and more he had prayed there and adored  
His Creator and wondered at the mystery  
Of man with his corruptible flesh, just growing  
Out of a clot, and the soul in him  
Reaching out to knowledge sublime, new  
And ever new, taught by the bounty  
Of God, and leading to that which man himself  
Knoweth not. And now, behold! A dazzling  
Vision of beauty and light overpowered his senses,  
And he heard the word "Iqraa!"*

What does that Arabic word mean? The *Commentary*, at C. 30, continues:

*"Iqraa!" - which being interpreted may mean  
"Read!" or "Proclaim!" or "Recite!"  
The unlettered Apostle was puzzled;  
He could not read. The Angel seemed  
To press him to his breast in a close embrace,  
And the cry rang clear "Iqraa!"  
And so it happened three times until  
The first overpowering sensation yielded  
To a collected grasp of the words which made clear  
His Mission; its Author, God the Creator,  
Its subject, Man, God's wondrous handiwork,  
Capable, by Grace, of rising to heights sublime;  
And the instrument of that mission, the sanctified Pen,  
And the sanctified Book, the Gift of God,  
Which men might read, or write, or study, or treasure in their souls.*

Ubu'l Kassim thought he must be dreaming. He told his wife, Khadija, what had happened. Later, he told his wife's cousin, a Christian. The *Commentary* continues, at page 10:

*...She [Khadija] knew it was no dream or delusion.  
She went and consulted her cousin Waraqa,  
A devout worshipper of God in the Faith of Christ,  
Learned in spiritual lore. He listened  
And with her rejoiced that he, Muhammad,  
Was God's Chosen One to renew the Faith.*

The first words of the *Koran* are called the *Al-Fatiha*. Translated into English (which, to a devout Muslim is never as good as Arabic), they give praise to God and ask for His guidance.

*In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Praise be to God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds; Most Gracious, Most Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgment. Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek. Show us the straight way, the way of those on whom Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace, Those whose (portion) is not wrath, and who go not astray.*

To hear the *Al-Fatiha* in the original Arabic, follow this link.

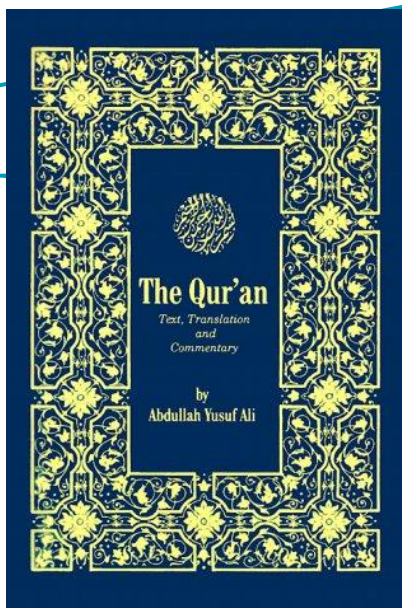
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/MUHAMMAD-S-VISITATIONS-Muhammad-the-Prophet>

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## Media Stream



### The Koran

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