

Narrated by 'Aisha (wife of the Prophet):

The beginning of the Divine Inspiration to God's Messenger was in the form of good dreams which came true like bright daylight, and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him. He used to go in seclusion in the cave of Hira where he used to worship continuously for many days before desiring to (return) to see his family. He would take provisions for his retreat with him on his journey, and then come back to (his wife) Khadija to get more provisions, until suddenly the Truth descended upon him while he was in the cave of Hira.

The angel came to him and asked him to read. The Prophet replied, "I do not know how to read." The Prophet added, "The angel grasped me and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read and I replied, 'I do not know how to read.' Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time until I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again asked me to read but again I replied, 'I do not know how to read.' (or 'what shall I read?') Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said, 'Read in the name of your Lord, who has created (all that exists), created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous.'" (96.1, 96.2, 96.3)