

Q: Describe the ways in which the Holy Quran was revealed between the years 610 and 632 AD?

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Ans: With age and growing understanding, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) became more and more aware of the corrupt Arabian society around him and it troubled him a lot. He often thought of the God of his forefathers. In his thirties, he started retiring to the cave of Hira to meditate and ponder over the truth.

One day towards the end of Ramazan in the year 610 AD when the Prophet (PBUH) was 40 years of age, the angel Jibrail (AS) appeared before him and asked him to read. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) replied, "I cannot read." After this the angel squeezed him so tightly that he thought he would die of suffocation. This same procedure was repeated for a total of 3 times after which the Prophet (PBUH) asked, "What shall I read?" The angel then revealed the first five verses of Surah Al-Alaq:

**"Read in the name of your Lord Who created.
Created man out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood
Read and your Lord is Most Bountiful.
He who taught (the use of pen)
Taught man that which he knew not."**

These were the first five verses of Surah Al Alaq and this marks the beginning of the revelations. These verses were imprinted on the prophet's mind there and then. From then onwards the Prophet kept getting revelations for almost 23 years.

Although the Holy Prophet (PBUH) never knew when a revelation would come, however, it is possible to link many of revelations with important moments in the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) life. For example the Holy Quran tells us about the Battle of Badr in the following verses of Surah Al- Anfal...

"And remember when you met, He showed them to you as few in your eyes, and He made you appear as contemptible in their eyes: so that Allah might accomplish a matter already decided"

The rest of the Surah gives us the detailed account of this battle which was fought in 624 AD. The two forces were very unequal, with the Muslims outnumbered three to one. However, this Surah tells us that Muslims won this battle with the help of Allah.

Another example is that of Surah Al Kausar in which Allah says, **"We have granted you the Abundance. Therefore to your Lord turn in prayer and sacrifice. For he who hates you he will be cut off (from Future hope)."** These verses were revealed when the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was passing through a period of great difficulty. The Quraysh had turned against him due to his propagation of Islam and when his two sons died in infancy, they said that he was cut off from the community. Hence this Surah was revealed to console the Prophet (PBUH) and to foretell the destruction of his opponents.

These revelations were then compiled in the form of surahs and these surahs can be divided into Makki and Madni Surahs. Makki Surahs were revealed before the migration to Medina whereas Madni Surahs are those which were revealed after the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) migration. The Makki Surahs are generally brief. They deal with belief in Allah and other Articles of Faith and contain teachings to develop one's moral character. Makki surahs had a strong vocabulary and language and they usually start with the phrase, "O you mankind." They also stress on the importance of fear of Allah, His powers and His knowledge. Surah Al- Ikhlas is an example of Makki Surah which is a short passage stressing upon the concept of Tauheed. On the other hand Madni surahs were much longer as compared to makki surahs. They deal with pillars of Islam and social, economic and political obligations of Muslims. For example Surah Al- Maida is a Madni Surah which contains laws about social life of Muslims like food laws. They usually start with the phrase, "O you who believe."

Whenever a revelation came the Prophet (PBUH) experienced different sensations. Sometimes he would hear ringing sounds which he said was the hardest on him, at other times he would start perspiring in the cold as mentioned by one of his wives Hazrat Aisha (RA). Sometimes he would become so heavy that the animal carrying him and his companions could feel his weight e.g. one of his companions relates that he was sitting beside the Holy Prophet (PBUH) with his leg under the leg of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and a revelation came at that moment and he felt his leg would crush under the weight. Still some times the angels would come in human form and talk to the Holy Prophet (PBUH). These revelations put a lot of stress on the Holy Prophet (PBUH). This is one of the reasons why the Quran wasn't revealed all at once.

The last revelation revealed to the Holy Prophet (PBUH) was in the plain of Arafat after he had given the sermon of Hajj. It said, **"This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favours upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your religion"** With these words Allah completed his revelation of the Holy Quran.

Whenever a revelation came, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) would dictate it to one of his literate companions and ask him to write it down as he himself was unlettered. Some companions even memorized the verses. The revelations were compiled on stone tablets, pieces of leather, date palm leaves etc

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