

The story of the Night of Power



In the month of Ramadan, the busy town of Mecca was hot and noisy in the midday sun. People dashed here and there, buying and selling, meeting and greeting, scolding and arguing in their bid to make money. Some headed to the temple, the Ka'ba, to worship. They prayed to many gods and to the idols that were all around.

Muhammad was tired of the heat and the dust. As he often did, he headed out to the silence of the rolling desert to think. This year, Muhammad was 40 years old. More and more, he hated the way people treated each other in his home town. Why couldn't they care more about each other rather than fighting for power? Why were they so interested in money? And why did they worship so many gods when he believed it was right to pray to just one? Muhammad was a kind and good man and he worried about the people of Mecca.

As Muhammad climbed ever higher into the steep mountains, he became weary.

'That cave looks cool and sheltered,' he thought to himself, and entering, he settled down to think and to rest.

Soon, darkness swept over the mountains and night wrapped itself around the desert and

the cave. All of a sudden, a loud voice shook Muhammad from his thoughts.

'Read!'

Shaking with fear, Muhammad gazed up at the angel who had spoken to him.

'I cannot read,' he replied in a trembling voice.

Again the angel, Jibreel commanded 'READ!'

Again Muhammad replied that he did not know how.

Now the angel took hold of Muhammad and squeezed him so tightly that Muhammad felt he would surely die, and in a voice like thunder the angel repeated his order, 'READ!'

Shaking to his very bones, Muhammad began to speak unfamiliar words, the first verses of the holy Qur'an. Then the voice spoke again.

'Muhammad, you are Allah's messenger on earth.'

Somehow, Muhammad managed to stagger out of the cave and back through the mountain passes and the sandy dunes. When his wife Khadijah saw him she was shocked.

'Whatever has happened?' she asked in concern, for Muhammad was as pale as the white moon.

When Muhammad told her about the angel, she immediately believed him, and so she became the first person to become a Muslim. After that, Muhammed shared his message with others.

At first, many people laughed at him, but after a while some began to listen more carefully as Muhammad explained that they should worship only one God, Allah, and all people were equal and should be treated fairly.

As people began to listen and believe, others became angry. The leaders wanted to keep their slaves, not set them free and treat them as equals. They wanted to be more important than others and hold on to their wealth and power.

So they treated Muhammad and his followers very unkindly and many Muslims were forced to flee the city of Mecca.

