



The Holy Book Qur'an

What is Qur'an?

The word Qur'an is Arabic and means reading or reciting. The Qur'an has about 600 pages and consists of 114 chapters of 6236 verses. Muslims believe that the Qur'an is literal and symbolic (comprehensive) word of God. It was revealed by God to Prophet Muhammad through Archangel Gabriel in Arabic language in the 7th century for a period of 23 years. The Qur'an we have now is exactly the same Qur'an in terms of its content, which was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in the 7th century.

Allah created men, Qur'an and the universe. The Qur'an is the universe's counterpart in written form. The Qur'an and the universe are two expressions of the same truth. The Qur'an was revealed for specific purposes:

- to make us aware of the Creator,
- to affirm that He is known through His creation,
- to direct us to belief and worship,
- to order individual and collective life so that we attain real happiness in this world and in the Hereafter.
- The Qur'an deals with each subject according to the importance attached to it by God.

How did the revelation start?

In 610 AD, the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was on a retreat in a cave nearby Mecca. Archangel Gabriel appeared to him and commanded him to read. He was illiterate and he replied that he could not read. The angel embraced him and commanded him again to read. Then the Prophet asked "What should I read?". Upon this, Gabriel brought the first revelation:

"Read in the name of your Lord Who has created, Created human from a clot clinging (to the wall of the womb). Read, your Lord is the All-Munificent, Who has taught by the pen, Taught human what he did not know." (96:1-5)

How was the Qur'an preserved?

When the Qur'an was revealed, it was recorded by the scribes of revelation, and subsequently announced to the public. After the verses had been announced, many people memorized them and recited them in their daily prayers. Based on the records of multiple scribes, the Qur'an was compiled as a single book by a commission led by Zayd bin Sabit during the time of the First Caliph Abu Bakr. The Qur'an compiled from written records was subjected to confirmation by the most prominent memorizers of the

Qur'an at that time. During the time of the Third Caliph Uthman, several copies of the Qur'an were produced and sent to the largest cities under Muslim rule. Today, all copies of the Qur'an around the world are the same. The text has remained intact for over fourteen hundred years.

The Main Messages of Qur'an

The Qur'an talks about a variety of subjects:

- The unity of God and His attributes and names,
- The notion of prophethood and narratives of prophets,
- The Hereafter: descriptions of Heaven, Hell and Judgment Day,
- Islamic Law
 - 1) Individual and social obligations and responsibilities,
 - 2) Rituals of worship and manners,
 - 3) Regulations governing social and economic life.

The significant portion of the Qur'an details the essentials of belief and places them in broader framework of God's attributes and the mission of human beings on earth. Human beings are created to know and serve the One and True God. Human beings are tested during their life on earth.

Freedom of Believing

The Qur'an expresses freedom of believing:

"There is no compulsion in religion."
(Qur'an 2:256)

The Qur'an classifies all people into four main categories:

- Muslims,
- People of the Book, i.e. Christians and Jews. **So according to Islam, they are not disbelievers,**
- Disbelievers,
- Hypocrites.

Islamic scholar Fethullah Gulen says:

"For us, being human is more important than being Muslim, Christian, Jew, Hindu or Buddhist."

The Qur'anic View

Muslims are required to believe in the earlier prophets and their scriptures, in their originally revealed form. Muslims believe that the original texts were tampered with as they were passed from generation to generation. As such, Muslims regard it as normal that other scriptures contain passages not compatible with Islamic teachings. The Qur'an confirms the divine origin of the scriptures and Muslims believe that some passages of Old and New Testament may contain truth.

Salvation in the hereafter: Even Muslims are not guaranteed to be saved from hellfire without God's Mercy. Faith alone is not sufficient for salvation, and practicing the faith is essential. The Qur'an is very clear on the fact that every person will be rewarded for all good deeds and will be held accountable for bad deeds, regardless of his or her religion.

"Whoever truly and sincerely believes in God and the Last Day and does good, righteous deeds they will have no fear, nor will they grieve." (5:69)

The Literary Aspect

The Quran is regarded as an example of the purest Arabic, written on poetry and prose. Arabic grammar was standardized according to the Qur'an. There has not been any text equal or equivalent to the Qur'an ever written.

"If you have doubts about what We have sent down to Our servant, produce another surah equal to it, and call your witnesses, besides Allah, if you are telling the truth." (2:23)

"We have made the Qur'an easy to remember..." (54:22)

We have not taught him (the Messenger) poetry; further, it is not right for him. This is but a Reminder, a Qur'ān recited and conveyed (from God), clear in itself and clearly showing the truth. (36:69)

Scientific Miracles of Qur'an

The Expansion of the Universe

"And the heaven, We have constructed it mightily; and it is surely We Who have vast power, and keep expanding it." (51:47)

The Function of Mountains

"We placed firmly embedded mountains on the earth, so it would not move under them..." (21:31)

"You see the mountains, thinking them to be firmly fixed, but in reality, they (are in constant motion) and pass by like the passing of the clouds. This is the pattern of God Who has perfected everything. He is fully aware of all that you do." (27:88)

The Miracle of Iron

"And We have sent down iron, in which is stern might and benefits for humankind..." (57:25)

Iron and other heavy metals are formed only under extreme conditions like supernova explosions. So the earth has elements from an earlier supernova explosion.

Duality in Creation

"All-Glorified is He, Who has created the pairs all together out of what the earth produces, as well as out of themselves, and out of what they do not know." (36:36)

The duality principle is one of postulates of Quantum Mechanics.

The Seas Not Mingling with One Another

"He has let flow forth the two large bodies of water, they meet together, (but) between them is a barrier, which they do not break through." (55:19-20)

The Birth of a Human Being

"Then We made it into a fertilized ovum in a safe lodging. Then we formed the drop into a clot and formed the clot into a lump and formed the lump into bones and clothed the bones in flesh; and then brought him into being as another creature. Blessed be Allah, Who creates everything in the best and most appropriate form." (23:13-14)

Future Predictions

The Victory of Byzantium

"The Byzantine Romans have been defeated. In the lands close-by; after their defeat they will be victorious. Within a few years when the Romans are victorious, the believers will rejoice." (30:2-4)

At the Battle of Antioch in 613, the Persians defeated Byzantine Empire. At the Battle of Ninaveh in 627, Heraclius won a decisive victory over Persians.

The Conquest of Makkah

"God has assuredly confirmed the vision for His Messenger as true: you will certainly enter the Sacred Mosque, if God wills, in full security, with your heads shaven or your hair cut short, and you will have nothing to fear. But He always knows what you do not know, and granted you a near victory before this." (48:27)

Selected Verses from the Qur'an

"Do they not contemplate the Qur'an? Had it been from any other than God, they would surely have found in it much (incoherence or) inconsistency." (4:82)

"Blessed and Supreme is He in Whose Hand is the Sovereignty; and He has full power over everything. He Who has created death and life, so that He may try you which of you is better in deeds. And He is the All-Glorious with irresistible might, the All-Forgiving." (67:1-2)

"Whoever takes the right way takes it for the good of his soul only; and whoever goes astray, goes astray but to its harm

only. No soul, as bearer of burden, is made to bear the burden of another. We would never punish (a person or community) until We have sent a Messenger.” (17:15)

“He is the One Who accepts repentance from His servants and excuses evil deeds, and He knows all that you do. He responds with acceptance to those who believe and do good, righteous deeds, and grants them more out of His bounty. However, as to the unbelievers, for them is a severe punishment.” (42:25-26)

“The true servants of the All-Merciful are they who move on the earth gently and humbly, and when the ignorant, foolish ones address them, they respond with words of peace, (without engaging in hostility with them).” (25:63)

“Never let your enmity for anyone lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. Always be just: that is closest to being God-fearing.” (5:8)

“Have you considered one who denies the Last Judgment? That is he who repels the orphan, and does not urge the feeding of the poor.” (107:1-3)

“The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto; but if a person forgives and makes peace, his reward rests with God; He loves not those who do wrong.” (42:40)

“Your Lord has decreed that you shall serve none but Him, and do good to your parents. Should one or both of them reach old age with you, never say ‘Ugh’ to them, nor scold either of them; but speak to them kindly and respectfully, spread over them the wings of humility and mercy, and say, ‘My Lord, have mercy upon them, as they raised me up when I was little.’ ” (17:23-24)

“O humankind! Surely We have created you from a single (pair of) male and female, and made you into tribes and families so that you may know one another. Surely the noblest, most honorable of you in God's sight is the one best in piety, righteousness, and reverence for God. Surely God is All-Knowing, All-Aware.” (49:13)

“The angels said: ‘All-Glorified You are. We have no knowledge save what You have taught us. Surely You are the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.’ ” (2:32)

Interpreting the Qur'an

The Quran cannot be interpreted just by reading its direct translation from Arabic language. Nowadays, it has to be a collaborative effort by Islamic scholars, jurists, scholars from all branches of natural and social sciences. While interpreting the Quran, the reasons of revelation have to be considered.

Reasons include:

- the time and place of the revelation,
- the circumstances at which a certain verse of the Quran was revealed,
- the general socio-political conditions.

Also our Qur'an interpretations should be consistent with the overall message of the Quran.

There are many interpretations of the Quran written in different centuries and places. Some of them are written by only one scholar, some are results of a collaborative effort. Quran interpretations commonly express more than one way to understand a single thing. So they try to be more comprehensive than being exclusive. There are biased interpretations of Quran inclined to some minor denominations or sects; however, they are not well respected by the majority of Muslims.

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