

Religious Texts

The Quran

The Quran is the last in a series of divine books (e.g., the Torah and the Gospel) revealed by God to humankind through the prophets. The Quran was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad over a period of twenty-three years and consists of 114 chapters. The length of the Quran is comparable to that of the New Testament. The revelations were written by a group of people appointed by the Prophet. Imam Ali first compiled the Quran into a book form after the Prophet's death.

The Quran sheds light on many different aspects of life—legal, moral, social, political, economic, philosophical, mystical, and scientific, in addition to stories of previous prophets. God says,

“We have sent down to you the Book as an exposition of everything—a guidance, a mercy, and glad tidings for those who have submitted themselves to Allah as Muslims” (16:89).

Less rigid than prose but more beautiful than poetry, its peculiar melody transcends all other forms of linguistic sounds and writings. The Quran speaks only the truth, and its directives are universal for all places, situations, and times. It is the completion of the earlier revelations such as the Old and New Testaments, and it is the only divine revelation that exists in its original unchanged form. God said,

“Verily, it is We Who have sent down the Quran, and surely We will guard it from corruption” (15:9).

From the time of the Prophet until today, not one phrase of the Quran has been edited, altered, added, omitted, lost, distorted, or otherwise changed.

The Quran plays an important role in Muslim life. It constantly reminds Muslims of their duties, rights, obligations, and ultimate destiny. Muslims are invited to study, memorize, ponder, and reflect on the Quran, and then to implement its teachings into their lives.

The chapters of the Quran contain the supreme divine wisdom that is meant for all seekers of truth—ordinary people, scholars, specialists, old, young, Muslims, and non-Muslims alike. It addresses

all of humankind. Verses in the Quran attest to this fact by beginning with the words, “**O mankind!**” The Quran satisfies people with its symphony of words, science, narrations and intellectual discourse, and fascinates the reader with its vast richness and depth.

Science and the Quran

Many scientific facts and realities are present in the Quran. The Quran has proven not to contradict science. The creations of the embryological features are described vividly in the Quran. A careful comparison of this verse with the actual details of embryological development will reveal no contradictions.

And indeed We created man out of an extract of clay. Thereafter, We made him as mixed drops of the male and female fluids and lodged him in a safe lodging [womb of the mother]. Then We made the mixed drops into a clot [a piece of thick coagulated blood]. Then We made the clot into a little lump of flesh. Then We made out of that little lump of flesh bones. Then We clothed the bones with flesh. And then We brought it forth as another creation. So blessed be Allah, the best of creators. (23:12-14)

The creation of life, the earth, and the astronomical universe is also described in a way that parallels modern scientific theory. Many of the Quranic chapters are named after astronomical objects, such as the “Star”¹ and the “Sun.”²

Do not those who disbelieve know that the heavens and the earth were joined together as one united piece, and then We parted them? And We have made from water every living thing. Will they then not believe?

And We have placed on the earth firm mountains, lest it should shake with them, and We placed therein-broad highways for them to pass through that they may be guided, and We have made the heaven a roof, safe, and well guarded. Yet they turn away from its signs. And He it is Who has created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon, each in an orbit floating. (21:30-33)

By the sun and its brightness, and by the moon as it follows it, and by the day as it shows up in the sun's brightness, and by the night as it conceals it, and by the heavens and Him who built it, and by the earth and Him who spread it.... (9:1-6)

Although the people during the Prophet's time knew nothing about the sciences of the sun and stars, the Quran refers to the fact that stars exist for a fixed period of time.

And the sun runs on its fixed course for a term appointed. That is the decree of the Almighty, the Omniscient. And the moon, We have measured for it mansions to traverse till it returns like the old dried curved date-stalk. It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. They all swim each in an orbit. (36:38)

Human beings are asked to ponder on the creation of the universe and consider their role therein.

Truly, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day there are indeed signs for all who are endowed with insight, and who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and contemplate creation of the heavens and the earth, [saying] 'O Lord! You have not created all this without purpose! Glory be to You'. (3:191)

Are you more difficult to create or the heavens above? (79:27)

Even the expansion of the universe is alluded to. **“With power did We construct the heavens; verily, We are able to expand the vastness of space thereof” (51:47).**

The end of this universe is also described.

And remember the day when We will roll up the heavens like a scroll rolled up for books. As We began the first creation, We shall repeat it. It is a promise binding upon Us. Truly, We shall do it. (21:104)

When the sun has wound around and lost its light and has been overthrown, and when the stars shall fall, and when the mountains shall be made to pass away...And when the seas shall become a blazing far or shall overflow. (81:1-3 & 6)

When the Heaven is cleft asunder, and when the stars have fallen and scattered, and when the seas have burst forth.... (82:1-3)

When the Event befalls—and there can be no denying its befalling—it will bring low some, and others it will exalt. When the earth will be shaken with a terrible shaking, and the mountains will be powdered to dust so that they will become floating dust particles.... (56:1-6)

And they ask you concerning the mountains. Say, “My Lord will blast them and scatter them as particles of dust; then He shall leave it as a smooth, level plain. You will see therein nothing crooked or curved.” (20:105-107)

The Qualities of the Quran

And know that this Quran is an adviser who never deceives, a leader who never misleads, and a narrator who never speaks a lie. No one will sit beside this Quran but that when he rises he will achieve one addition or one diminution—addition in his guidance and elimination in his [spiritual] blindness. You should also know that no one will need anything after [guidance from] the Quran and no one will be free from want before [guidance from] the Quran. Therefore, seek cure from it for your ailments and seek its assistance in your distresses. It contains a cure for the biggest diseases, namely, unbelief, hypocrisy, revolt, and misguidance. Pray to God through it and turn to God with its love. Do not ask the people through it. There is nothing like it through which the people should turn to God, the Sublime.3

Supplications to God (Dua)

Supplications and prayers (*dua*) focus on the idea that human beings are in constant need of God. Even those who reach the peak of wealth, knowledge, strength, and dignity still are in need of God. The word *dua* itself means to call out to God. *Dua* is of equal importance to people inflicted by calamities and hardships, as well as, the ones living in comfort and abundance.

Speaking with God through *dua* defends oneself against adversity and tribulation, and leads one to salvation and relief. Islam encourages its followers to offer *dua* constantly, either using their personal words—directly from the heart, or repeating some of the inspirational words of the Prophet and his successors [imams] that have been written.

God has guaranteed His servants that He will answer their prayers.

“And your Lord says, “Call on me, I will answer your prayer.” (40:60)

When My servants ask you concerning Me, I am indeed close to them. I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calls upon Me. Let them also with a will listen to My call and believe in Me that they walk in the right way. (2: 186)

Dua Kumayl

A man named Kumayl ibn Ziyad once asked Imam Ali ibn Abi-Talib for a way to approach God. In response, Imam Ali gave him this prayer and told him to recite it every day, if he could, or once a week, or even once a year, and if reciting it once a year was too difficult then to recite it at least once in his lifetime. This prayer became known as “*Dua Kumayl*” (the prayer for Kumayl). Many Muslims recite the prayer once a week, together, on Thursday night.

In the name of Allah, the Most Infinitely Merciful, the Most Compassionate.

O Allah, I ask You by Your Mercy which embraces all things.

By Your Strength, through which You dominate all things, toward which all things are humble, and before which all things are lowly.

By Your Invincibility, through which You overwhelm all things.

By Your Might, which nothing can resist.

By Your Greatness, which has filled all things.

By Your Power, which towers over all things.

By Your Face, which subsists after annihilation of all things.

By Your Names, which have filled the foundations of all things.

By Your Knowledge, which encompasses all things; and

by the Light of Your Face, through which all things are illumined!

O Light! O All-Holy!

O First of the first and Last of the Last!

O Allah, forgive me the sins which tear apart safeguards!

O Allah, forgive me the sins which bring down adversities!

O Allah, forgive me the sins which alter blessings!

O Allah, forgive me the sins which hold back supplication!

O Allah, forgive me the sins which dash all hopes!

O Allah, forgive me the sins which bring about tribulation!

O Allah, forgive me every sin I have committed and every mistake I have made!

O Allah, verily I seek nearness to You through remembrance of You, I seek intercession from You with Yourself, and I ask You through Your Munificence, to bring me nearer to Your Mercy, to bless me with gratitude to You and to inspire me with Your remembrance...

1. An-Najm, chapter 53.

2. Ash-Shams, chapter 91.

3. Nahj al-Balagha (The Peak of Eloquence), sermon 176.

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