**Quran**

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| [**Islam**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam) |
|  |
| [Beliefs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iman_(concept))  [Oneness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tawhid) of [God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_in_Islam)  [Prophets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophets_in_Islam)  [Revealed books](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_holy_books)  [Angels](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angels_in_Islam)  [Predestination](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predestination_in_Islam)  [Day of Resurrection](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_view_of_the_Last_Judgment) |
| [Practices](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_Pillars_of_Islam)  [Profession of faith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shahada)  [Prayer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salah)  [Fasting](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sawm)  [Alms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zak%C4%81t)  [Pilgrimage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hajj) |
| [Texts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Islamic_texts) and [laws](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia)  **Quran**  [Sunnah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunnah)  [Hadith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith)  [Fiqh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fiqh)  [Sharia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia)  [Kalam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalam) |
| [History](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_history) and [leaders](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_religious_leaders)  [Timeline](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_Muslim_history)  [Muhammad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad)  [Ahl al-Bayt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahl_al-Bayt)  [Sahaba](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahaba)  [Rashidun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rashidun)  [Imamate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imamah_(Shia_doctrine))  [Caliphate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caliphate)  [Spread of Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spread_of_Islam) |
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| [Culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_culture) and [society](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_world)  [Academics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_studies)  [Animals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_and_animals)  [Art](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_art)  [Calendar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_calendar)  [Children](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_and_children)  [Dawah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dawah)  [Demographics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_by_country)  [Festivals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim_holidays)  [Mosques](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mosque)  [Philosophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_philosophy)  [Politics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political_aspects_of_Islam)  [Science](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam_and_science)  [Women](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_Islam) |
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The **Quran** (English pronunciation: [/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA_for_English)[kɔrˈɑːn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA_for_English#Key)[/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA_for_English) [*kor-****AHN***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Pronunciation_respelling_key) ; [Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language): القرآن‎ *al-qurʾān*, IPA: [[qurˈʔaːn]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:IPA_for_Arabic), literally meaning "the recitation", [Persian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persian_language): [[ɢoɾˈʔɒːn]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA_for_Persian)), also [transliterated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_transliteration) **Qur'an**, **Koran**, **Al-Coran**, **Coran**, **Kuran**, and **Al-Qur'an**, is the central [religious text](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_text) of [Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam), which [Muslims](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim) believe to be the verbatim word of [God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_in_Islam) ([Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language): الله‎, [*Allah*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allah)). It is regarded widely as the finest piece of [literature in the Arabic language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_literature).

Muslims believe the Quran to be verbally revealed through angel [Gabriel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabriel) (*Jibril*) from God to [Muhammad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad) gradually over a period of approximately 23 years beginning on 22 December 609 [CE](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_Era), when Muhammad was 40, and concluding in 632 CE, the year of his death.

Muslims regard the Quran as the main [miracle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miracle) of Muhammad, the proof of his prophethood and the culmination of a series of divine messages that started with the messages revealed to [Adam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam_(Bible)), regarded in Islam as the first [prophet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophet), and continued with the [Scrolls of Abraham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scrolls_of_Abraham) (*Suhuf Ibrahim*), the [*Tawrat*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tawrat) (Torah or [Pentateuch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentateuch)) of [Moses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses), the [*Zabur*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zabur) (*Tehillim* or [Book of Psalms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Psalms)) of [David](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David), and the [*Injil*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Injil) ([Gospel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good_news_(Christianity))) of [Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus). The Quran assumes familiarity with major narratives recounted in [Jewish and Christian scriptures](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_the_Bible), summarizing some, dwelling at length on others and in some cases presenting alternative accounts and interpretations of events. The Quran describes itself as a book of guidance, sometimes offering detailed accounts of specific historical events, and often emphasizing the moral significance of an event over its narrative sequence.

**Etymology and meaning**

The word *qurʾān* appears about 70 times in the Quran itself, assuming various meanings. It is a [verbal noun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Verbal_noun) ([*maṣdar*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_verbal_noun)) of the [Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language) verb *qaraʾa* (قرأ), meaning “he read” or “he recited.” The [Syriac](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syriac) equivalent is *qeryānā*, which refers to “scripture reading” or “lesson”. While most Western scholars consider the word to be derived from the Syriac, the majority of Muslim authorities hold the origin of the word is *qaraʾa* itself. In any case, it had become an Arabic term by Muhammad's lifetime. An important meaning of the word is the “act of reciting”, as reflected in an early Quranic passage: *“It is for Us to collect it and to recite it (qurʾānahu)”*.

In other verses, the word refers to “an individual passage recited [by Muhammad]”. Its [liturgical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liturgy) context is seen in a number of passages, for example: *"So when* al-qurʾān *is recited, listen to it and keep silent"*. The word may also assume the meaning of a codified scripture when mentioned with other scriptures such as the [Torah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tawrat) and [Gospel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Injil).

The term also has closely related [synonyms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Synonym) that are employed throughout the Quran. Each synonym possesses its own distinct meaning, but its use may converge with that of *qurʾān* in certain contexts. Such terms include [*kitāb*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kitab) (“book”); [*āyah*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayah) (“sign”); and [*sūrah*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sura) (“scripture”). The latter two terms also denote units of revelation. In the large majority of contexts, usually with a [definite article](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Definite_article) (*al-*), the word is referred to as the “revelation” ([*wahy*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wahy)), that which has been “sent down” ([*tanzīl*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanzil)) at intervals. Other related words are: [*dhikr*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhikr), meaning "remembrance," used to refer to the Quran in the sense of a reminder and warning; and *ḥikma*, meaning “wisdom”, sometimes referring to the revelation or part of it.

The Quran has many other names. Among those found in the text itself are *al-furqān* (“discernment” or “criterion”), *al-hudah* (“the guide”), *ḏikrallāh* (“the remembrance of God”), *al-ḥikmah* (“the wisdom”), and *kalāmallāh* (“the word of God”). Another term is *al-kitāb* (“the book”), though it is also used in the Arabic language for other scriptures, such as the Torah and the Gospels. The term [*muṣḥaf*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mus%27haf) ("written work") is often used to refer to particular Quranic manuscripts but is also used in the Quran to identify earlier revealed books.

**History**

**Prophetic era**

See also: [Wahy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wahy)



Cave of Hira, location of Muhammad's first revelation.

Islamic tradition relates that [Muhammad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad) received his first revelation in the [Cave of Hira](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hira) during one of his isolated retreats to the mountains. Thereafter, he received revelations over a period of twenty-three years. According to [hadith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith) and [Muslim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muslim) history, after Muhammad [emigrated to Medina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijra_(Islam)) and formed an independent Muslim community, he ordered a considerable number of the [*sahabah*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahabah) to recite the Quran and to learn and teach the laws, which were revealed daily. Companions who engaged in the recitation of the Quran were called [*Qari*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qari). Since most *sahabah* were unable to read or write, they were ordered to learn from the prisoners-of-war the simple writing of the time. Thus a group of *sahabah* gradually became literate. As it was initially spoken, the Quran was recorded on tablets, bones and the wide, flat ends of [date palm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Date_palm) fronds. Most chapters were in use amongst early Muslims since they are mentioned in numerous sayings by both [Sunni](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunni) and [Shia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shia) sources, relating Muhammad's use of the Quran as a call to Islam, the making of prayer and the manner of recitation. However, the Quran did not exist in book form at the time of Muhammad's death in 632.



Quranic verses inscribed on the shoulder blade of a camel.

[Sahih Bukhari](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahih_Bukhari) narrates Muhammad describing the revelations as, "Sometimes it is (revealed) like the ringing of a bell" and [Aisha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aisha) reported, "I saw the Prophet being inspired Divinely on a very cold day and noticed the sweat dropping from his forehead (as the Inspiration was over)". The Islamic studies scholar Welch states in the [*Encyclopaedia of Islam*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Encyclopaedia_of_Islam) that he believes the graphic descriptions of Muhammad's condition at these moments may be regarded as genuine, because he was severely disturbed after these revelations. According to Welch, these seizures would have been seen by those around him as convincing evidence for the superhuman origin of Muhammad's inspirations. However, Muhammad's critics accused him of being a possessed man, a [soothsayer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clairvoyant) or a [magician](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magician_(paranormal)) since his experiences were similar to those claimed by such figures well known in [ancient Arabia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pre-Islamic_Arabia). Welch additionally states that it remains uncertain whether these experiences occurred before or after Muhammad's initial claim of prophethood.



Part of [*Al-Alaq*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Alaq) - 96th *sura* of the Quran - the first revelation received by Muhammad.

The Quran states that Muhammad was *ummi*, interpreted as [illiterate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illiterate) in Muslim tradition. According to Watt, the meaning of the Quranic term *ummi* is unscriptured rather than illiterate.

**Compilation**

See also: [History of the Quran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Quran) and [Sana'a manuscript](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sana%27a_manuscript)



Quran manuscript from the 7th century CE, written on [vellum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vellum) in the [Hijazi script](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijazi_script).

The Holy Quran was written completely in the lifetime of prophet Muhammad. Many of the companions of Muhammad memorized the whole Quran. Based on earlier transmitted reports, shortly after Muhammad's death in the year 632 CE, the first caliph [Abu Bakr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Bakr) decided to collect the book in one volume. Thus, a group of scribes, most importantly [Zayd ibn Thabit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zayd_ibn_Thabit), collected the verses and produced several hand-written copies of the complete book. Zayd's reaction to the task and the difficulties in collecting the Quranic material from parchments, palm-leaf stalks, thin stones and from men who knew it by heart is recorded in earlier narratives. [Hafsa bint Umar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hafsa_bint_Umar), Muhammad's widow and Caliph Umar's daughter, was entrusted with that Quranic text. In about 650 CE, when the third Caliph [Uthman ibn Affan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uthman_ibn_Affan) began noticing slight differences in pronunciation of the Quranic, and as Islam expanded beyond the Arabian peninsula into [Persia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persia), the [Levant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Levant) and North Africa, in order to preserve the sanctity of the text, ordered a committee to use Hafsa's text and prepare a standard copy of the text of Quran. Thus, within twenty years of Muhammad’s death, the Quran was committed to written form. That text became the model from which copies were made and promulgated throughout the urban centers of the Muslim world, and other versions are believed to have been destroyed. This process of formalization is known as the Uthmanic recension. The present form of the Quran text is accepted by Muslim scholars to be the original version compiled by Abu Bakr.

According to Shias and some Sunni scholars, [Ali ibn Abi Talib](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali) compiled a complete version of the Quran immediately after Muhammad's death. The order of this text differed from that gathered later during Uthman's era in that this version had been collected in chronological order. Despite this, he made no objection against the standardized Quran, but kept his own book. Other personal copies of the Quran might have existed including [ibn Masud](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abd_Allah_ibn_Mas%27ud)'s and [Ubayy ibn Kab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubayy_ibn_Kab)'s codex, none of which exist today.

Qur'an most likely existed in scattered written form during the life of the Prophet, Muslim scholars believe that it was written as a complete text at the time of the Prophet’s death. The Quran in its present form is generally considered by academic scholars to record the words spoken by Muhammad because the search for variants has not yielded any differences of great significance. Although most variant readings of the text of the Quran have ceased to be transmitted, some still are. There has been no [critical text](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_text) produced on which a scholarly reconstruction of the Quranic text could be based. Historically, controversy over the Quran's content has rarely become an issue, although debates continue on the subject.

In 1972 in a mosque in the city of [Sana'a](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sana%27a), [Yemen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yemen), manuscripts were discovered that were later proved to be the most ancient Quranic text. The [sana'a manuscripts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sana%27a_manuscript) contain [palimpsets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palimpset), a manuscript page from which the text has been washed off to make the parchment reusable again, a practice which was common in ancient times due to scarcity of writing material. The faint washed off underlying text, *scriptio inferior*, however is still barely visible and believed to be "pre-Uthmanic" Quranic content, whilst the text written on top, *scriptio superior*, is believed to belong to Uthmanic time. Recent studies using [radiocarbon dating](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radiocarbon_dating) indicates that the parchments have high probability of belonging to the period between 614 CE to 656 CE.

**Significance in Islam**



11th-century North African Quran in the [British Museum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Museum)

Muslims believe the Quran to be the book of divine guidance and direction for humanity and consider the text in its original [Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic) to be the literal word of [God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_in_Islam), revealed to [Muhammad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad) through the [angel Gabriel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabriel) over a period of twenty-three years and view the Quran as God's final revelation to humanity.

[Wahy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wahy) in Islamic and Quranic concept means the act of God addressing an individual, conveying a message for a greater number of recipients. The process by which the divine message comes to the heart of a messenger of God is [*tanzil*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanzil) (to send down) or *nuzul* (to come down). As the Quran says, "With the truth we (God) have sent it down and with the truth it has come down." It designates positive religion, the letter of the revelation dictated by the angel to the prophet. It means to cause this revelation to descend from the higher world. According to hadith, the verses were sent down in special circumstances known as [*asbab al-nuzul*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asbab_al-nuzul). However, in this view God himself is never the subject of coming down.

The Quran frequently asserts in its text that it is divinely ordained, an assertion that Muslims believe. The Quran – often referring to its own textual nature and reflecting constantly on its assertion of divine origin – is the most meta-textual, self-referential religious text. Some verses in the Quran seem to imply that even those who do not speak Arabic would understand the Quran if it were recited to them. The Quran refers to a written pre-text that records God's speech even before it was sent down.

The issue of whether the Quran is eternal or created was one of the crucial controversies among early Muslim theologians. [Mu'tazilis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mu%27tazili) believe it is created while the most widespread varieties of [Muslim theologians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalam) consider the Quran to be [eternal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eternity) and uncreated. Sufi philosophers view the question as artificial or wrongly framed.

Muslims maintain the present wording of the Quranic text corresponds exactly to that revealed to Muhammad himself: as the words of God, said to be delivered to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel. Muslims consider the Quran to be a guide, a sign of the prophethood of Muhammad and the truth of the religion. They argue it is not possible for a human to produce a book like the Quran, as the Quran itself maintains.



9th-century Quran in [Reza Abbasi Museum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reza_Abbasi_Museum)

Therefore an [Islamic philosopher](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_philosophy) introduces a [prophetology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophet#Islam) to explain how the divine word passes into human expression. This leads to a kind of [esoteric hermeneutics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esoteric_interpretation_of_the_Quran) that seeks to comprehend the position of the [prophet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophet_of_Islam) by mediating on the modality of his relationship not with his own time, but with the eternal source his message emanates from. This view contrasts with historical critique of western scholars who attempt to understand the prophet through his circumstances, education and type of genius.

The [Basic Law of Saudi Arabia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basic_Law_of_Saudi_Arabia) declares the Quran and sunnah the sole [constitutional](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution) law of the kingdom.

**Uniqueness**

See also: [Quran and miracles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran_and_miracles)

Muslims believe that the Quran is different from all other books in ways that are impossible for any other book to be, such that similar texts cannot be written by humans. These include both mundane and miraculous claims. The Quran itself challenges any who disagree with its divine origin to produce a text of a miraculous nature.

Scholars of Islam believe that its poetic form is unique and of a fashion that cannot be written by humans. They also claim it contains accurate prophecy and that no other book does.

**Text**

Main articles: [Sura](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sura) and [Ayah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayah)



First sura of the Quran, [*Al-Fatiha*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Fatiha), consisting of seven verses.

The Quran consists of 114 chapters of varying lengths, each known as a [*sura*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sura). Chapters are classified as [Meccan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meccan_sura) or [Medinan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medinan_sura), depending on whether the verses were revealed before or after the [migration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijra_(Islam)) of Muhammad to the city of Medina. Chapter titles are derived from a name or quality discussed in the text, or from the first letters or words of the sura. Generally, longer chapters appear earlier in the Quran, while the shorter ones appear later. The chapter arrangement is thus not connected to the sequence of revelation. Each chapter except the ninth starts with the [*Bismillah*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basmala) (بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم) an Arabic phrase meaning “In the name of God”. There are, however, still 114 occurrences of the *bismillah* in the Quran, due to its presence in verse 27:30 as the opening of Solomon's letter to the Queen of Sheba.

Each chapter is formed from several verses, known as [*ayat*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayat), which originally means a “sign” or “evidence” sent by God. The number of verses differs from chapter to chapter. An individual verse may be just a few letters or several lines. The total number of verses in the Quran is 6,236, however, the number varies if the *bismillahs* are counted separately.

In addition to and independent of the division into chapters, there are various ways of dividing the Quran into parts of approximately equal length for convenience in reading. The thirty [*juz'*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juz%27) (plural *ajza*) can be used to read through the entire Quran in a month. Some of these parts are known by names and these names are the first few words by which the *juz'* starts. A [*juz'*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juz%27) is sometimes further divided into two [*hizb*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hizb) (plural *ahzab*), and each *hizb* subdivided into four *rub 'al-ahzab*. The Quran is also divided into seven approximately equal parts, [*manzil*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manzil) (plural *manazil*), for it to be recited in a week.

[Muqatta'at](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muqatta%27at) or the Quranic initials are fourteen different letter combinations of 14 Arabic letters that appear in the beginning of 29 chapters of the Quran. The meanings of these initials remain unclear.

According to one estimate the Quran consists of 77430 words, 18994 unique words, 12183 stems, 3382 lemmas and 1685 roots.

**Content**

Main articles: [Justice in the Quran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Justice_in_the_Quran), [Quran and science](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran_and_science), and [Legends and the Quran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legends_and_the_Quran)

The Quranic content is concerned with the basic beliefs of Islam which include the existence of [God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_in_Islam) and the [resurrection](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_eschatology). Narratives of the early [prophets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophets_in_Islam), ethical and legal subjects, historical events of the prophet’s time, charity and [prayer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salat) also appear in the Quran. The Quranic verses contain general exhortations regarding right and wrong and the nature of revelation. Historical events are related to outline general moral lessons. Verses pertaining to natural phenomena have been interpreted by Muslims as an indication of the authenticity of the Quranic message.



Written in 12th Century.

**Literary structure**

The Quran's message is conveyed with various literary structures and devices. In the original Arabic, the chapters and verses employ [phonetic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phonetics) and [thematic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theme_(literature)) structures that assist the audience's efforts to recall the message of the text. Muslimsassert (according to the Quran itself) that the Quranic content and style is inimitable.

The language of the Quran has been described as "rhymed prose" as it partakes of both poetry and prose, however, this description runs the risk of compromising the rhythmic quality of Quranic language, which is certainly more poetic in some parts and more prose-like in others. Rhyme while found throughout the Quran is conspicuous in many of the earlier Meccan chapters, in which relatively short verses throw the rhyming words into prominence. The effectiveness of such a form is evident for instance in chapter 81, and there can be no doubt that these passages impressed the conscience of the hearers. Frequently a change of rhyme from one set of verses to another signals a change in the subject of discussion. Later sections also preserve this form but the style is more expository.

The Quranic text seems to have no beginning, middle, or end, its nonlinear structure being akin to a web or net. The textual arrangement is sometimes considered to have lack of continuity, absence of any chronological or thematic order and presence of repetition. [Michael Sells](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Sells), citing the work of the critic [Norman O. Brown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman_O._Brown), acknowledges Brown's observation that the seeming disorganization of Quranic literary expression – its scattered or fragmented mode of composition in Sells's phrase – is in fact a literary device capable of delivering profound effects as if the intensity of the prophetic message were shattering the vehicle of human language in which it was being communicated. Sells also addresses the much-discussed repetitiveness of the Quran, seeing this, too, as a literary device.

**Interpretation and meanings**

***Tafsir***

Main article: [Tafsir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tafsir)

The Quran has sparked a huge body of commentary and explication (*tafsir*), aimed at explaining the "meanings of the Quranic verses, clarifying their import and finding out their significance."

Tafsir is one of the earliest academic activities of Muslims. According to the Quran, Muhammad was the first person who described the meanings of verses for early Muslims. Other early exegetes included a few [Companions of Muhammad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Companions_of_Muhammad), like [Ali ibn Abi Talib](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali_ibn_Abi_Talib), [Abdullah ibn Abbas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdullah_ibn_Abbas), [Abdullah ibn Umar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdullah_ibn_Umar) and [Ubayy ibn Kab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ubayy_ibn_Kab). Exegesis in those days was confined to the explanation of literary aspects of the verse, the background of its revelation and, occasionally, interpretation of one verse with the help of the other. If the verse was about a historical event, then sometimes a few traditions ([hadith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith)) of Muhammad were narrated to make its meaning clear.

Because the Quran is spoken in [classical Arabic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_Arabic), many of the later converts to Islam (mostly non-Arabs) did not always understand the Quranic Arabic, they did not catch allusions that were clear to early Muslims fluent in Arabic and they were concerned with reconciling apparent conflict of themes in the Quran. Commentators erudite in Arabic explained the allusions, and perhaps most importantly, explained which Quranic verses had been revealed early in Muhammad's prophetic career, as being appropriate to the very earliest Muslim community, and which had been revealed later, canceling out or "[abrogating](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naskh_(exegesis))" (*nasikh*) the earlier text (*mansukh*). Other scholars, however, maintain that no abrogation has taken place in the Qur'an.

***Ta'wil***

Main article: [Esoteric interpretation of the Quran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esoteric_interpretation_of_the_Quran)

See also: [Quranic hermeneutics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quranic_hermeneutics) and [Exegesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exegesis)

[Ja'far Kashfi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ja%27far_Kashfi) defines *ta'wil* as 'to lead back or to bring something back to its origin or archetype'. It is a science whose pivot is a spiritual direction and a divine inspiration, while the *tafsir* is the literal [exegesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exegesis) of the letter; its pivot is the canonical Islamic sciences. [Muhammad Husayn Tabatabaei](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Husayn_Tabatabaei) says that according to the popular explanation among the later exegetes, *ta'wil* indicates the particular meaning a verse is directed towards. The meaning of revelation ([*tanzil*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanzil)), as opposed to *ta'wil*, is clear in its accordance to the obvious meaning of the words as they were revealed. But this explanation has become so widespread that, at present, it has become the primary meaning of *ta'wil*, which originally meant "to return" or "the returning place". In Tabatabaei's view, what has been rightly called *ta'wil*, or hermeneutic interpretation of the Quran, is not concerned simply with the denotation of words. Rather, it is concerned with certain truths and realities that transcend the comprehension of the common run of men; yet it is from these truths and realities that the principles of doctrine and the practical injunctions of the Quran issue forth. Interpretation is not the meaning of the verse; rather it transpires through that meaning – a special sort of transpiration. There is a spiritual reality, which is the main objective of ordaining a law, or the basic aim in describing a divine attribute—and there is an actual significance a Quranic story refers to.

According to Shia beliefs, those who are firmly rooted in knowledge like the Prophet and the imams know the secrets of the Quran. According to Tabatabaei, the statement "none knows its interpretation except Allah"(3:7 ) remains valid, without any opposing or qualifying clause. Therefore, so far as this verse is concerned, the knowledge of the Quran's interpretation is reserved for God. But Tabatabaei uses other verses and concludes that those who are purified by God know the interpretation of the Quran to a certain extent. As Corbin narrates from Shia sources, [Ali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali) himself gives this testimony:

Not a single [verse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayah) of the Quran [descended](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanzil) upon (was revealed to) the [Messenger of God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad), which he did not proceed to dictate to me and make me [recite](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qira%27at). I would [write it with my own hand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mus%27haf), and he would instruct me as to its [*tafsir*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tafsir) (the literal explanation) and the *ta'wil* (the spiritual exegesis), the [*nasikh*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naskh_(tafsir)) (the verse that abrogates) and the [*mansukh*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mansukh) (the abrogated verse), the *muhkam* (without ambiguity) and the *mutashabih* (ambiguous), the particular and the general...

According to [Tabatabaei](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Husayn_Tabatabaei), there are acceptable and unacceptable esoteric interpretations. Acceptable [*ta'wil*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ta%27wil) refers to the meaning of a verse beyond its literal meaning; rather the implicit meaning, which ultimately is known only to [God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God) and can't be comprehended directly through human thought alone. The verses in question here refer to the human qualities of coming, going, sitting, satisfaction, anger, and sorrow, which are apparently attributed to [God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_in_Islam). Unacceptable *ta'wil* is where one "transfers" the apparent meaning of a verse to a different meaning by means of a proof; this method is not without obvious inconsistencies. Although this unacceptable *ta'wil* has gained considerable acceptance, it is incorrect and cannot be applied to the Quranic verses. The correct interpretation is that reality a verse refers to. It is found in all verses, the decisive and the ambiguous alike; it is not a sort of a meaning of the word; it is a fact that is too sublime for words. God has dressed them with words to bring them a bit nearer to our minds; in this respect they are like proverbs that are used to create a picture in the mind, and thus help the hearer to clearly grasp the intended idea.

Therefore Sufi spiritual interpretations are usually accepted by [Islamic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam) scholars as authentic, as long as certain conditions are met. In Sufi history, these interpretations were sometimes considered religious innovations ([*bid'ah*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bid%27ah)), as [Salafis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salafi) believe today. However, *ta'wil* is extremely controversial even amongst Shia. For example, when [Ayatollah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayatollah) [Ruhallah Khomeini](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruhallah_Khomeini), the leader of [Islamic revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_revolution), gave some lectures about [Sura al-Fatiha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Fatiha) in December 1979 and January 1980, protests forced him to suspend them before he could continue beyond the first two verses of the surah.

**Levels of meaning**

Unlike the Salafis and Zahiri, [Shias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shias) and [Sufis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sufis) as well as some other [Muslim philosophers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_philosophy) believe the meaning of the Quran is not restricted to the literal aspect. For them, it is an essential idea that the Quran also has inward aspects. [Henry Corbin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Corbin) narrates a [hadith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith) that goes back to [Muhammad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad):

"The Qur'an possesses an external appearance and a hidden depth, an exoteric meaning and an esoteric meaning. This esoteric meaning in turn conceals an esoteric meaning (this depth possesses a depth, after the image of the celestial Spheres, which are enclosed within each other). So it goes on for seven esoteric meanings (seven depths of hidden depth)."

According to this view, it has also become evident that the inner meaning of the Quran does not eradicate or invalidate its outward meaning. Rather, it is like the soul, which gives life to the body. Corbin considers the Quran to play a part in [Islamic philosophy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_philosophy), because [gnosiology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gnosiology) itself goes hand in hand with [prophetology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophet#Islam).

Commentaries dealing with the [*zahir*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zahir_(Islam)) (outward aspects) of the text are called *tafsir*, and hermeneutic and esoteric commentaries dealing with the [*batin*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Batin_(Islam)) are called [*ta'wil*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esoteric_interpretation_of_the_Quran) (“interpretation” or “explanation”), which involves taking the text back to its beginning. Commentators with an esoteric slant believe that the ultimate meaning of the Quran is known only to God. In contrast, [Quranic literalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quranic_literalism), followed by [Salafis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salafis) and [Zahiris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zahiri), is the belief that the Quran should only be taken at its apparent meaning.

**Translations**

Main article: [Quran translations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran_translations)

See also: [List of translations of the Quran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_translations_of_the_Quran)



The first Quran to be translated into a European vernacular language: [*L'Alcoran de Mahomet*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L%27Alcoran_de_Mahomet), [André du Ryer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andr%C3%A9_du_Ryer), 1647.



Title page of the first German translation (1772) of the Quran.

Translation of the Quran has always been a problematic and difficult issue. Many argue that the Quranic text cannot be reproduced in another language or form. Furthermore, an Arabic word may have a [range of meanings](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polysemy) depending on the context, making an accurate translation even more difficult.

Nevertheless, the Quran has been [translated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation) into most African, Asian and European languages. The first translator of the Quran was [Salman the Persian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salman_the_Persian), who translated sura [*Al-Fatiha*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Fatiha) into [Persian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persian_language) during the 7th century. The first complete translation of the Quran was completed in 884 CE in Alwar ([Sindh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sindh), [India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India) now [Pakistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pakistan)) by the orders of Abdullah bin Umar bin Abdul Aziz on the request of the Hindu Raja Mehruk. The first complete translation of Quran was into [Persian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persian_language) during the reign of [Samanids](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samanid_dynasty) in the 9th century. Islamic tradition holds that translations were made for Emperor Negus of Abyssinia and Byzantine Emperor [Heraclius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heraclius), as both [received letters by Muhammad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad%27s_letters_to_the_Heads-of-State) containing verses from the Quran. In early centuries, the permissibility of translations was not an issue, but whether one could use translations in prayer.



Verses 33 and 34 of sura [Ya-Seen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ya-Seen) in this Chinese translation of the Quran.

In 1936, translations in 102 languages were known. In 2010, the [*Hürriyet Daily News and Economic Review*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H%C3%BCrriyet_Daily_News_and_Economic_Review) reported that the Quran was presented in 112 languages at the 18th International Quran Exhibition in Tehran.

[Robert of Ketton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_of_Ketton)'s 1143 translation of the Quran for [Peter the Venerable](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_the_Venerable), [*Lex Mahumet pseudoprophete*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lex_Mahumet_pseudoprophete), was the first into a Western language ([Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin)). [Alexander Ross](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Ross_(writer)) offered the first English version in 1649, from the French translation of [*L'Alcoran de Mahomet*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L%27Alcoran_de_Mahomet) (1647) by [Andre du Ryer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andre_du_Ryer). In 1734, [George Sale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Sale) produced the first scholarly translation of the Quran into English; another was produced by [Richard Bell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Bell_(Arabist)) in 1937, and yet another by [Arthur John Arberry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_John_Arberry) in 1955. All these translators were non-Muslims. There have been numerous translations by Muslims.

The English translators have sometimes favored archaic English words and constructions over their more modern or conventional equivalents; for example, two widely read translators, A. Yusuf Ali and M. Marmaduke Pickthall, use the plural and singular "ye" and "thou" instead of the more common "[you](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/You)".

**Literary usage**

**Recitation**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **“** | ...and recite the Quran in slow, measured rhythmic tones. | **”** |
| —**Quran** [73:4](http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/073-qmt.php#073.004) ([Yusuf Ali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdullah_Yusuf_Ali)) | | |

See also: [Tajwid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tajwid)

One meaning of *Quran* is "recitation". [*Tajwid*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tajwid), an Arabic word for elocution, is a set of rules that governs how the Quran should be recited and is assessed in terms of how accessible the recitation is to those intent on concentrating on the words.

To perform [salat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salat) (prayer), a mandatory obligation in Islam, a Muslim is required to learn at least some *sura* of the Quran (typically starting with the first one, [al-Fatiha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Fatiha), known as the "seven oft-repeated verses," and then moving on to the shorter ones at the end). Until one has learned al-Fatiha, a Muslim can only say phrases like "praise be to God" during the salat.

A person whose recital repertoire encompasses the whole Quran is called a [*qari'*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qari%27), whereas a memorizer of the Quran is called a [*hafiz*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hafiz_(Qur%27an)) (*fem.* *Hafaz*) (which translate as "reciter" or "protector," respectively). Muhammad is regarded as the first *qari'* since he was the first to recite it. Recitation ([*tilawa*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tilawa) تلاوة) of the Quran is a fine art in the Muslim world.

**Schools of recitation**

Main article: [Qira'at](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qira%27at)



Page of a 13th century Quran, showing [Sura 33](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sura_33): 73

There are several schools of Quranic recitation, all of which teach possible pronunciations of the Uthmanic [*rasm*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rasm): Seven reliable, three permissible and (at least) four uncanonical – in 8 sub-traditions each – making for 80 recitation variants altogether. A canonical recitation must satisfy three conditions:

1. It must match the rasm, letter for letter.
2. It must conform with the syntactic rules of the [Arabic language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_language).
3. It must have a continuous [isnad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isnad) to [Muhammad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad) through [*tawatur*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith_terminology#Mutawatir), meaning that it has to be related by a large group of people to another down the isnad chain.

These recitations differ in the vocalization ([*tashkil*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harakat)) of a few words, which in turn gives a complementary meaning to the word in question according to the rules of Arabic grammar. For example, the vocalization of a verb can change its active and passive voice. It can also change its [stem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_grammar#Verbs) formation, implying intensity for example. Vowels may be elongated or shortened, and glottal stops ([hamzas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamza)) may be added or dropped, according to the respective rules of the particular recitation. For example, the name of archangel [Gabriel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabriel) is pronounced differently in different recitations: Jibrīl, Jabrīl, Jibra'īl, and Jibra'il.

The more widely used narrations are those of [Hafs](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Hafs&action=edit&redlink=1) (حفص عن عاصم), [Warsh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warsh) (ورش عن نافع), [Qaloon](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Qaloon&action=edit&redlink=1) (قالون عن نافع) and [Al-Duri](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Al-Duri&action=edit&redlink=1) according to [Abu `Amr](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Abu_%60Amr&action=edit&redlink=1) (الدوري عن أبي عمرو). Muslims firmly believe that all canonical recitations were recited by Muhammad himself, citing the respective [isnad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isnad) chain of narration, and accept them as valid for worshipping and as a reference for rules of [Sharia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia). The uncanonical recitations are called "explanatory" for their role in giving a different perspective for a given verse or [*ayah*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayah). Today several dozen persons hold the title "Memorizer of the Ten Recitations."

The presence of these different recitations is attributed to many [hadith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hadith). [Malik Ibn Anas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malik_Ibn_Anas) has reported:

*Abd al-Rahman Ibn Abd al-Qari* narrated: "[Umar Ibn Khattab](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umar) said before me: I heard *Hisham Ibn Hakim Ibn Hizam* reading Surah [Furqan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Furqan) in a different way from the one I used to read it, and the [Prophet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad) (sws) himself had read out this surah to me. Consequently, as soon as I heard him, I wanted to get hold of him. However, I gave him respite until he had finished the prayer. Then I got hold of his cloak and dragged him to the Prophet (sws). I said to him: "I have heard this person [Hisham Ibn Hakim Ibn Hizam] reading Surah Furqan in a different way from the one you had read it out to me." The Prophet (sws) said: "Leave him alone [O 'Umar]." Then he said to Hisham: "Read [it]." [Umar said:] "He read it out in the same way as he had done before me." [At this,] the Prophet (sws) said: "It was revealed thus." Then the Prophet (sws) asked me to read it out. So I read it out. [At this], he said: "It was revealed thus; this Quran has been revealed in Seven *Ahruf*. You can read it in any of them you find easy from among them.

[Suyuti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suyuti), a famous 15th century Islamic theologian, writes after interpreting above hadith in 40 different ways:

"And to me the best opinion in this regard is that of the people who say that this hadith is from among matters of *mutashabihat*, the meaning of which cannot be understood."

Many reports contradict the presence of variant readings:

* *Abu Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami* reports, "the reading of [Abu Bakr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Bakr), [Umar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umar), [Uthman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uthman) and [Zayd ibn Thabit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zayd_ibn_Thabit) and that of all the [Muhajirun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhajirun) and the [Ansar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ansar_(Islam)) was the same. They read the Quran according to the *Qira'at al-'ammah*. This is the same reading the Prophet (sws) read twice to [Gabriel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabriel) in the year of his death. [Zayd ibn Thabit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zayd_ibn_Thabit) was also present in this reading [called] the '*Ardah-i akhirah*. It was this very reading that he taught the Quran to people till his death".
* [Ibn Sirin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ibn_Sirin) writes, "the reading on which the Quran was read out to the prophet in the year of his death is the same according to which people are reading the Quran today".

[Javed Ahmad Ghamidi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Javed_Ahmad_Ghamidi) also purports that there is only one recitation of Quran, which is called *Qira'at of Hafss* or in classical scholarship, it is called *Qira'at al-'ammah*. The Quran has also specified that it was revealed in the language of Muhammad's tribe: the [Quraysh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quraysh_(tribe)).

However, the identification of the recitation of Hafss as the *Qira'at al-'ammah* is somewhat problematic when that was the recitation of the people of Kufa in Iraq, and there is better reason to identify the recitation of the reciters of Madinah as the dominant recitation. The reciter of Madinah was Nafi' and Imam Malik remarked "The recitation of Nafi' is Sunnah."

**Writing and printing**

**Writing**

Before printing was widely adopted in the 19th century, the Quran was transmitted in manuscripts made by [calligraphers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islamic_calligraphy) and copyists. The earliest manuscripts were written in [*hijazi*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hijazi_script) type script. The *hijazi* style manuscripts nevertheless confirm that transmission of the Quran in writing began at an early stage. Probably in the ninth century scripts began to feature thicker strokes, which are traditionally known as [*Kufic*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kufic) scripts. Toward the end of the ninth century, new scripts began to appear in copies of the Quran and replace earlier scripts. The reason for discontinuation in the use of the earlier style was that it took too long to produce and the demand for copies was increasing. Copyists would therefore chose simpler writing styles. From the eleventh century, the styles of writing employed were primarily the [*Naskhi*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naskh_(script)), [*muhaqqaq*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhaqqaq), *rayhani* and on rarer occasions the *thuluth* script. *Naskhi* was in very widespread use. In North Africa and Spain the [*maghribi*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maghrebi_script) style was popular. More distinct is the *bihari* script which was used solely in the north of India. [*Nastaliq*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nasta%CA%BFl%C4%ABq_script) style was also rarely used in Persian world.

In the beginning the Quran did not have vocalization markings. The system of vocalization as we know it today seems to have been introduced towards the end of the ninth century. Since it would have been too costly for most Muslims to purchase a manuscript, copies of the Quran were held in mosques in order to make them accessible to people. These copies frequently took the form of a series of thirty parts or *Juz'*. In terms of productivity the Ottoman copyists would provide the best example. This was in response to widespread demand, unpopularity of printing methods, and for aesthetic reasons.



*Kufic* script, 8th-9th century, Ink and color on parchment



*muhaqaq* script, 14th-15th century



*maghribi* script, 13th - 14th Century



*shikasta nastaliq*,18th-19th centuries

**Printing**

Short extracts from the Quran were printed as early as the tenth century in various parts of the Muslim world with a method known as [wood-block printing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woodcut). In this technique a page is carved in a wooden block, one block per page. A similar technique was widely used in China. Another technique, known as [movable-type](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Movable_type) printing, was used to print the Quran in Venice around 1537. Two more editions include those published by the pastor [Abraham Hinckelmann](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Hinckelmann) in Hamburg in 1694 and by Italian priest [Ludovico Maracci](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Maracci) in [Padua](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padua) in 1698. The latter print included an accurate Latin translation. In 1787 in Saint Petersburg, [Catherine the Great](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catherine_the_Great) of Russia, sponsored a print of the Quran by a Muslim scholar named Mullah Osman Ismail. This was followed by editions from [Kazan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kazan) (1803), Tehran (1828) and Istanbul (1877). [Gustav Flügel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustav_Leberecht_Fl%C3%BCgel) published an edition of the Quran in 1834 in Leipzig, which became popular in Europe. This edition provided a large number of readers with access to a reliable text and was referred to for a long time thereafter, until the publication of an edition of the Quran in Cairo in 1924 which was the result of a long preparation process by scholars from [al-Azhar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Azhar) university. This edition which standardized the [orthography](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orthography) of the Quran is the basis of current editions of the Quran.

**Relationship with other literature**

**The Bible**

See also: [Biblical narratives and the Quran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_narratives_and_the_Quran) and [Tawrat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tawrat)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **“** | It is He Who sent down to thee (step by step), in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this, as a guide to mankind, and He sent down the criterion (of judgment between right and wrong). | **”** |
| —**Quran** [3:3](http://www.usc.edu/org/cmje/religious-texts/quran/verses/003-qmt.php#003.003) ([Yusuf Ali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abdullah_Yusuf_Ali)) | | |

The Quran speaks well of the relationship it has with former books (the [Torah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torah) and the [Gospel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel)) and attributes their similarities to their unique origin and saying all of them have been revealed by the one God.

According to [Sahih Bukhari](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sahih_al-Bukhari), the Quran was recited among [Levantines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Levant) and [Iraqis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq), and discussed by Christians and Jews before it was standardized. Its language was [similar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Syro-Aramaic_Reading_of_the_Koran) to the [Syriac language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syriac_language). The Quran recounts stories of many of the people and events recounted in [Jewish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism) and [Christian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity) sacred books ([Tanakh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanakh), [Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible)) and devotional literature ([Apocrypha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apocrypha), [Midrash](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midrash)), although it differs in many details. [Adam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adam_and_Eve), [Enoch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enoch_(ancestor_of_Noah)), [Noah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noah), [Eber](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hud_(prophet)), [Shelah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shelah_(son_of_Judah)), [Abraham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham), [Lot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lot_(Bible)), [Ishmael](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ishmael), [Isaac](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac), [Jacob](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob), [Joseph](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_(Hebrew_Bible)), [Job](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Job_(Biblical_figure)), [Jethro](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jethro), [David](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David), [Solomon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solomon), [Elijah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elijah), [Elisha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elisha), [Jonah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jonah), [Aaron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aaron), [Moses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses), [Zechariah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zechariah_(priest)), [John the Baptist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_the_Baptist), and [Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus) are mentioned in the Quran as prophets of God (see [Prophets of Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prophets_of_Islam)). In fact, [Moses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moses_in_Islam) is mentioned more in the Quran than any other individual. Jesus is mentioned more often in the Quran than Muhammad while [Mary](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_in_Islam) is mentioned in the Quran more than the New Testament. Muslims believe the common elements or resemblances between the Bible and other Jewish and Christian writings and Islamic dispensations is due to their common divine source, and that the original Christian or Jewish texts were authentic divine revelations given to prophets.

**Similarities with Christian apocrypha**

The Quran has been noted to have certain narratives similarities to the [Diatessaron](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diatessaron), [Protoevangelium of James](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protoevangelium_of_James), [Infancy Gospel of Thomas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infancy_Gospel_of_Thomas), [Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Pseudo-Matthew) and the [Arabic Infancy Gospel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_Infancy_Gospel). One scholar has suggested that the Diatessaron, as a [gospel harmony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_harmony), may have led to the conception that the Christian Gospel is one text.

**Arab writing**



Page from a Quran ('Umar-i Aqta'). [Iran](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iran), [Afghanistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghanistan), [Timurid dynasty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timurid_dynasty), circa 1400. Opaque [watercolor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watercolor), ink and gold on paper Muqaqqaq script. 170 x 109cm (66 15/16 x 42 15/16in). Historical region: [Uzbekistan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uzbekistan).

After the Quran, and the general rise of Islam, the [Arabic alphabet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabic_alphabet) developed rapidly into an art form.

Wadad Kadi, Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at [University of Chicago](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Chicago) and Mustansir Mir, Professor of Islamic studies at [Youngstown State University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youngstown_State_University) state that:

Although Arabic, as a language and a literary tradition, was quite well developed by the time of Muhammad's prophetic activity, it was only after the emergence of Islam, with its founding scripture in Arabic, that the language reached its utmost capacity of expression, and the literature its highest point of complexity and sophistication. Indeed, it probably is no exaggeration to say that the Quran was one of the most conspicuous forces in the making of classical and post-classical Arabic literature.

The main areas in which the Qur'an exerted noticeable influence on Arabic literature are diction and themes; other areas are related to the literary aspects of the Qur'an particularly oaths (q.v.), metaphors, motifs, and symbols. As far as diction is concerned, one could say that Qur'anic words, idioms, and expressions, especially "loaded" and formulaic phrases, appear in practically all genres of literature and in such abundance that it is simply impossible to compile a full record of them. For not only did the Qur'an create an entirely new linguistic corpus to express its message, it also endowed old, pre-Islamic words with new meanings and it is these meanings that took root in the language and subsequently in the literature...

**Culture**

Respect for the written text of the Quran is an important element of religious faith by many Muslims. They believe that intentionally insulting the Quran is a form of [blasphemy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blasphemy_in_Islam).

Many Muslims memorize at least some portion of the Quran in the original Arabic, usually at least the verses needed to perform the contact prayers ([solat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solat)). Those who have memorized the entire Quran earn the right to the title of [*Hafiz*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hafiz_(Quran)).

The text of the Quran has become readily accessible over the internet, in Arabic as well as numerous translations in other languages. It can be downloaded and searched both word-by-word and with Boolean algebra. Photos of ancient manuscripts and illustrations of Quranic art can be witnessed. However, there are still limits to searching the Arabic text of the Quran.



Arabic Quran with [Persian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persian_language) translation.



Arabic Quran with Persian translation from the [Ilkhanid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ilkhanate) Era.



Quran with color-coded [tajwid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tajwid) rules.

**Treatment and disposal of the book**

Most Muslims treat paper copies of the Quran with reverence. Based on tradition and a literal interpretation of [sura 56](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Waqia):77–79: *"That this is indeed a Quran Most Honorable, In a Book well-guarded, Which none shall touch but those who are clean"*, many scholars believe that a Muslim must perform a ritual cleansing with water ([wudu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wudu)) before touching a copy of the Quran, or [*mus'haf*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mus%27haf), although this view is not universal.

Defiling or dismembering copies of the Quran is considered [Quran desecration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran_desecration). Pulping, recycling, or otherwise discarding worn-out copies of the text is forbidden. Worn-out, torn, or errant (for example, pages out of order) Qurans are left free to flow in a river, kept somewhere safe, burned, or buried in a remote location.

**See also**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | [***Quran portal***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Quran) |
|  | [***Islam portal***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Islam) |
|  | [***Bahá'í Faith portal***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Bah%C3%A1%27%C3%AD_Faith) |

* [History of the Qur'an](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Qur%27an)
* [Tafsir of the Qur'an](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tafsir_of_the_Qur%27an)
* [Quran and miracles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran_and_miracles)
* [Women in the Qur'an](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Female_figures_in_the_Qur%27an)
* [Persons related to Qur'anic verses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persons_related_to_Qur%27anic_verses)
* [Legends and the Qur'an](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legends_and_the_Qur%27an)
* [Criticism of the Qur'an](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_the_Qur%27an)
* [List of religious texts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_religious_texts)
* [Qur'anic literalism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qur%27anic_literalism)
* [Quran and Sunnah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran_and_Sunnah)
* [Qur'an alone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qur%27an_alone)
* [Quran reading](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quran_reading)
* [2010 Qur'an-burning controversy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dove_World_Quran-burning_controversy)
* [Dhikr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dhikr)
* [Digital Qur'an](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_Qur%27an)
* [Hafiz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hafiz_(Quran))

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* [Islamic theology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Islamic_theology)
* [Islam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Islam)
* [Islamic texts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Islamic_texts)
* [Medieval literature](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Medieval_literature)
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* [Articles containing Arabic language text](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Articles_containing_Arabic_language_text)
* [Wikipedia indefinitely semi-protected pages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Wikipedia_indefinitely_semi-protected_pages)
* [Wikipedia indefinitely move-protected pages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Wikipedia_indefinitely_move-protected_pages)
* [All articles with unsourced statements](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:All_articles_with_unsourced_statements)
* [Articles with unsourced statements from October 2012](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Articles_with_unsourced_statements_from_October_2012)
* [Articles with unsourced statements from November 2012](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Articles_with_unsourced_statements_from_November_2012)
* [Articles with unsourced statements from February 2012](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Articles_with_unsourced_statements_from_February_2012)
* [All articles with specifically marked weasel-worded phrases](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:All_articles_with_specifically_marked_weasel-worded_phrases)
* [Articles with specifically marked weasel-worded phrases from February 2010](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Articles_with_specifically_marked_weasel-worded_phrases_from_February_2010)

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