**THE HOLY BOOKS or DIVINE SCRIPTURES**

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**What is a “divinely revealed” scripture?**

A divinely revealed scripture is a holy book or collection of writings believed to have divine, rather than human, origins. Muslims believe God revealed scriptures to certain prophets to communicate His commandments and guidance to humanity. For Muslims, belief in the original scriptures revealed to Abraham (Scrolls), Moses (Torah, including the Ten Commandments), David (Psalms) and Jesus (Evangelium or original Gospel) is an essential component of faith. Indeed, one can not be considered a Muslim unless he believes in these previous scriptures in their original forms and their historical role in the spiritual development of humankind.

**How were divine scriptures revealed?**

The angel or heavenly Spirit Jibreel (Gabriel) is believed to have transmitted divine communication from God to human. As such, Jibreel figures prominently in the history of scriptural revelation, culminating with the holy book revealed to Muhammad. In 610 C.E., at the age of 40, while in spiritual retreat in the cave of Hira above Mecca, Muhammad was visited by Jibreel for the first time. During this encounter, Jibreel revealed the first of many divine verses that would eventually comprise the Qur’an. Muslims believe God revealed His holy scriptures to the prophets in their native language. For this reason, the Torah was revealed to Moses in Hebrew, while the Qur’an was revealed to Muhammad in Arabic.

“We have, without doubt, sent down the Message and we will assuredly guard it (from corruption).”(Hijr 15: 9)

“Verily this Qur’an guides to that which is most right (or stable) and give the glad tidings to the Believers who work deeds of righteousness, that they shall have a magnificient reward....” (Isra 17: 9)

**What are the names of the four great-books?**

 The revealed books which are mentioned in the Qur’an are;

a) **Torah** (Tawrah) of Moses (Musa)

b) **Psalms** (Zabur) of David (Dawud)

c) **Gospel** (Injil) of Jesus (Isa)

d) **The Holy Qur’an** revealed to Muhammad

**What is the QUR’AN?**

The word Qur’an literally means “the reading” or “the recitation,” and refers to the divinely revealed scripture given to Muhammad. Since Muhammad is considered the last prophet of God, the Qur’an is believed to be the final revelation from God to humanity. The Qur’an is not only a holy scripture for Muslims throughout the world, but also the supreme classic of Arabic literature. In its 114 surahs or chapters, it comprises the whole revelation believed to have been revealed to the prophet Muhammad as a final expression of Allah to human beings.

The Qur’an is considered by Muslims to be the literal Speech of God given to Muhammad in the Arabic language. The chapters and verses of the Qur’an were revealed throughout Prophet Muhammad’s mission, over a span of close to twenty-three years, from 610-632 C.E. Contrary to common misconception, Muhammad is not the author of the Qur’an. Rather, he is viewed as the chosen transmitter of the revelation and the ideal implementor of principles and commandments contained therein. The personal sayings or words of Muhammad are known as hadith, which are distinct from the divine origin of the content of the Qur’an.

As verses of the Qur’an were revealed to Muhammad and subsequently repeated by him to companions and other fellow Muslims, they were written down, recited and memorized. The Prophet also typically led the formal worship five times daily, during which he recited the revealed verses according to the procedure that he established. The verses were also recited out loud by designated Muslims in the early dawn hours and prior to the worship times and other important occasions. In short, the Qur’anic verses played an immediate and practical role in the spiritual lives of Muslims from the outset. Before he passed away, the Prophet arranged the 114 chapters into the sequence we find in the Qur’an. Scholars, both Muslim and non-Muslim, agree that the Qur’an has remained intact and unchanged to the present. The Qur’an as a scripture stands unique in this regard.

 Each word of the Qur’an is a revealed word. It was sent down to Muhammad (pbuh) through the Angel Jibrail. In reciting the Holy Qur’an; piecemeal and completed over a period of twenty three years.

• When you hear God’s name and His attributes, your heart should be filled with awe, gratitude, love and other appropriate feelings.

• When you read of the Day of Judgement, your heart should long for Paradise, and tremble at the very thought of Hell-fire.

• When you read of disobedient persons and nations who went astray and earned God’s punishment, you should intensely dislike being as they were.

• When you read of the righteous whom God loves and rewards, you should be eager to be like them.

• When you read of the promises of good and honour in this world, of forgiveness and mercy, of His pleasure in the Hereafter, let your heart be filled with a desire to work for them and deserve them.

• When you read of those who are indifferent to the Qur’an, who turn away from it, who do not accept it, who do not live by it, you must fear lest you be one of them,

• And when you hear the summons to obey God and strive in His Way, you should be determined to respond and achieve the peace and happiness that come from responding.

**How many chapters (surahs) are there in the Qur’an?**

 The Qur’an has 114 chapters / surahs. Chapters revealed when the prophet was living in Mecca are known Mekki and those revealed in Madinah are called Madani.

**When were the first Verses of the Qur’an revealed?**

 The revelation of the Qur’an began in 610 (CE) at Hira. The first verses are;

1) Read and call in the name of your Lord who created.

2) Created man from a clot blood.

3) Read your Lord is the most Generous

4) Who taught by the pen

5) Taught man what he did not know. (Alaq 96: 1-5)

**Which chapters of the Qur’an are the longest and shortest ones?**

 The longest chapter (surah) of the Qur’an is the Cow (Surah Al-Baqara) with 286 Verses.

 The shortest chapter (surah) is the Abundance (Surah Al-Kawthar), which has three Verses.

**What is the last verse of the Qur’an?**

The last verse of the Qur’an which was revealed shortly before Prophet’s (pbuh) death is:

“This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed my favour upon you and have chosen for you Islam as your way of life. (Maida 5: 3)

**Who suggested the compilation of the Qur’an?**

Each and every word of the Qur’an was recorded as soon as it was revealed by Allah to the Prophet through Angel Jibrail. The Prophet’s secretary Zaid bin Thabit and others used to record them exactly as the Prophet told them.

 He continued reading it back to the Prophet until 632 (CE). Shortly after the death of the Prophet in 632 (CE) Omar (May Allah be pleased with him ) suggested to caliph Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Qur’an should be compiled in one volume. Up to then, the Qur’an was written down in pieces in order as they were revealed. A Committee was formed under Zaid bin Thabit to gather the scattered material of the Qur’an into one volume. And Abu Bakr ordered the compilation of the Qur’an.

**Who were the most famous Huffaz?**

Huffaz (plural form of hafiz) are those people who memorised the Qur’an and who can read it by their hearts. Some of the most famous Huffaz are;

1) Mu’az Ibn Jabal

2) Ubadah Ibn Samit

3) Abu Darda

4) Abu Eyyub

5) Ubayy Ibn Ka’b (may Allah be pleased with them).

**What is the subject-matter of the Qur’an?**

The Quran, the last revealed word of God, is the primary source of every Muslim’s faith and practice. It deals with all the subjects which concern human beings: wisdom, doctrine, worship, transactions, law, etc., but its basic theme is the relationship between God and His creatures. Its teachings cover all areas of this life and the life after death. It contains principles, doctrines and directions for every sphere of human activity. It is a guide for all human beings, whether they are muslims or non-muslims. At the same time, it provides guidelines and detailed teachings for a just society and proper human conduct.