

Key Words

Monotheism	Tawhid	Sawm	Transcendence	Zakat	Rakat	Immanence	Beneficence	Du'ah
Shahadah	Hajj	Shirk	Sadaqah	Qur'an	Mihrab	Salat	Muezzin	Qiblah
Omnipotence	Adhan	Sunnah	Allah (99 names)	Islam	Minaret	Merciful	Halal	Hadith

The Qur'an

Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the most important book in their lives. It is regarded as the definitive and perfect account of Allah's exact words to Muhammad. In this way Muslims believe that it is a way of knowing Allah and what he demands of them. It is simply the most sacred text and a guide for daily life. In many countries the Qur'an is the basis of the law. Islamic law is known as Shariah Law. It is based on the Qur'an, the Hadith and Sunnah.

Iran and Saudi Arabia are two such examples although each country does interpret the laws differently. On a daily basis the Qur'an provides Muslims with guidance and, if they live by this guidance, they believe they will get to Jannah (Paradise). Arabic is the language of the Qur'an and, in its original format, it is regarded as some of the most beautiful Arabic ever written. However, this does lead to an important issue in modern life. The language of the Qur'an is about fourteen hundred years old, and so interpreting the meaning of such a text in the modern era and in countries where Arabic is not the main language can make it very difficult for Muslims to apply their religion in the twenty-first century. This is especially the case for Muslims living in non-Muslim countries such as Britain.

There are several examples of how Muslims treat the Qur'an with respect as the direct word of Allah. When not in use the Qur'an is always wrapped up to keep it clean. Muslims wash their hands before touching it and it must be kept on a higher shelf than any other book. When in use it is placed on a special stand called a kursi. Translations of the Qur'an are available, but it is only the Arabic version that is given this treatment.

Some Muslims learn the Qur'an off by heart as a mark of respect, a person who does so is known as hafiz. The revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad started in about 610CE in a cave on Mount Hira, near Mecca and the words were spoken to him by the Angel Jibril. As Muhammad could not read, he recited these revelations to followers who could write. The word Qur'an means 'to recite' and these revelations continued until his death.

The Qur'an is split into 114 chapters (surahs) and each chapter is split into verses. They are arranged roughly according to their length as opposed to the date they were handed down by Jibril. A popular view amongst Muslims is that the final words of Allah spoken by Jibril to Muhammad were: 'This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favour upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion.' (Qur'an 5:3)

Key Sources of Authority

Qur'an

Hadith

Sunnah