

# Quran

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Also spelled Qur'ān, Kuran, or Koran

The Quran is the holy scripture of Islam. According to Islamic belief, it records the revelations Allah (Arabic for “the God”) sent to Muḥammad (c. 570-632 CE) through the angel Gabriel (*Jibrīl*) over approximately 23 years. The word Qur'ān literally means “recitation.”

For nearly all Muslims, the Quran—together with the Prophet’s Sunnah as preserved in *ḥadīth*—forms the primary source of religious authority (Quran-only interpretations, known as Quranism, represent a minority view). The Arabic text is traditionally believed to have been preserved unchanged, yet interpretations (*tafsīr*) of some verses (*āyāt*) differ among scholars and communities.

The book contains 114 chapters (*sūrahs*). Following the opening chapter, al-Fātiḥah, the subsequent chapters are arranged roughly from longest to shortest, though the sequence is not strictly determined by length. Modern scholars have also produced non-canonical chronological reorderings to study the historical development of the revelation.

Because the Quran presents itself as the literal speech of God—Allah frequently speaks in the first person—many Muslims hold that translations can only be explanatory renderings and are not equivalent to the Arabic original.

Theologically, the Quran positions Islam as the continuation and culmination of the monotheistic tradition originating with Abraham (*Ibrāhīm*). It refers to Jews and Christians as “People of the Book” (*Ahl al-Kitāb*) and frequently mentions biblical figures such as Moses (*Mūsā*), Jesus (*ʿĪsā*), Adam, Noah, John the Baptist, and Zechariah; Moses is the most frequently mentioned prophet. While acknowledging earlier revelations, the Quran states that parts of previous scriptures were forgotten, altered, or misinterpreted (e.g., Quran 5:48). Consequently, it declares itself the final, divinely protected revelation.

Today, the Quran remains a central reference for the beliefs and practices of many among the world's nearly two billion Muslims. This diverse global community spans Muslim-majority regions like South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa, as well as significant populations across sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, the Americas, and elsewhere. As a foundational text, the Quran inspires devotion while also being the subject of continuous interpretation and critical engagement—a tradition stretching back to early Islamic history and remaining vigorous today from both Muslim and non-Muslim perspectives.

This ongoing engagement addresses a wide spectrum of issues, including the application of Quranic teachings to contemporary life, ethics, social justice, and governance. Discussions often navigate the relationship between religious principles and modern societal norms, reflecting diverse local contexts and traditions. While major historical and political developments, such as large-scale post-World War II migration and global events of the early 21st century, have shaped public discourse surrounding the Quran, the scripture endures as a dynamic source of guidance whose interpretation continues to evolve in response to the complexities of the modern world.

## Further Reading List

- McAuliffe, Jane Dammen. (ed.). 2006. [The Cambridge Companion to the Qur'ān](#). Cambridge University Press.
- Rahman, Fazlur. 2009. [Major Themes of the Qur'an](#) [2nd edition]. University of Chicago Press.
- Sinai, Nicolai. 2017. [The Qur'an: A Historical-Critical Introduction](#). Edinburgh University Press.

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