

THE PREVIOUS BOOKS



Throughout time, Allah sent many Prophets to guide humanity to worship Him alone. The message has been the same from the very beginning with the first Prophet Adam, right until the final Prophet Mohammad. There were five major prophets who were given divine knowledge with which to guide their people, all of which were

in book form. All have been changed from their original by mankind with the exception of the Qur`an, which has never to this day been altered or re-issued as a new version.

The previous books were sent to Abraham (the Scrolls and the Tablets), to Moses (the Torah and the Tablets), to David (the Psalms), to Jesus (the Bible), and to Mohammad (the Qur`an).

The Qur`an does not exclude the possibility that additional holy books were sent to other prophets, but does not mention any. The Sunnah (traditions of Prophet Mohammad) narrates that the messengers counted scores of thousands, but the greatest of them are the 25 who were mentioned in the Qur`an, some with holy books others without. (See The Family Tree of the Prophets.)

The Islamic belief is to acknowledge and accept these previous books in their original form.

"...All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers, [saying], 'We make no distinction between any of His messengers.'" (Qur`an 2, 285)

THE HOLY QUR`AN

This is certainly the most important type of revelation for Muslims. Islamic beliefs about revelation are based on the Qur`an (the Islamic holy book). The Qur`an is different from any other book because it is composed entirely of the words of Allah.

In 611CE the Prophet Mohammad was reflecting in a cave when the Angel Gabriel appeared to him. Mohammad was illiterate but three times Gabriel ordered him to 'read':

The angel said: *"Read! In the name of your Lord and Cherisher, who created - created man, out of a (mere) clot of blood. Read! And your Lord is Most Bountiful, - he who taught (the use of) the pen, - taught man that which he knew not."* (Qur`an 96, 1-5)

Gabriel then told Mohammad that he was to be the Messenger of Allah. These revelations continued for the next 23 years:

"This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." (Qur`an 5, 3)

Mohammad remained illiterate and the Qur`an was written down directly by his companions, who then memorised it by heart. The Qur`an has 114 Surahs (or chapters), arranged in the order decreed by the Angel Gabriel from Allah.

For Muslims the Qur`an contains only the literal unchanged words of Allah. It is direct revelation from Allah to humanity. Because the Qur`an is the word of Allah it cannot be contradicted.

To preserve the true words of Allah, the Qur`an is always recited for worship in Arabic, because the true meaning of the words can only be found in the Arabic language. However, there are interpretations of the meanings in other languages.

The Qur`an is the last and most complete book of guidance from Allah and applies to all people forever. It is still widely memorised to perfection, throughout the globe and is the central part of every Muslim's daily life.

In his sermon on Mount Arafat, Mohammad made it clear that this was the final revelation; No prophet or messenger will come after him and no new faith will emerge.

