

IQRA NATIONAL UNIVERSITY (INU), PESHAWAR

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Mid Term Assignment

Subject Name: Islamic Studies

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Q.1: In the light of Quran and Sunnah write down a note on Quran?

Answer: Introduction

The Qur'an

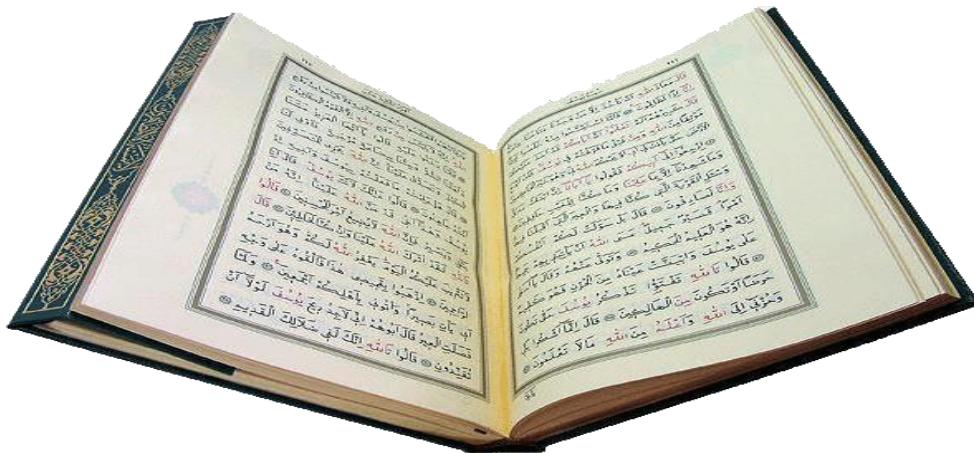
The Qur'an is the holy book for Muslims, revealed in stages to the Prophet Muhammad over 23 years.

Qur'anic revelations are regarded by Muslims as the sacred word of God, intended to correct any errors in previous holy books such as the Old and New Testaments.

Origin

The Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by God in Arabic. Some Qur'anic fragments have been dated as far back as the eighth, and possibly even the seventh, century. The oldest existing copy of the full text is from the ninth century.

Although early variants of the Qur'an are known to have existed, Muslims believe that the text we have today was established shortly after the death of the Prophet by the Caliph Uthman.



A copy of the Qur'an

Contents

There are 114 chapters in the Qur'an, which is written in the old Arabic dialect.

All the chapters except one begin with the sentence Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem, 'In the name of Allah the most merciful and the most kind'. This is the thought with which Muslims should start every action.

The longest chapter of the Qur'an is Surah Baqarah (The Cow) with 286 verses and the shortest is Surah Al-Kawther (abundance) which has 3 verses.

The arrangement of surahs does not correspond to the chronological order in which they were revealed.

The Qur'an is sometimes divided into 30 roughly equal parts, known as juz'. These divisions make it easier for Muslims to read the Qur'an during the course of a month and many will read one juz' each day, particularly during the month of Ramadan.

Translations

Translations of the Qur'an exist in over 40 languages but Muslims are still taught to learn and recite it in Arabic, even if this is not their native language and they cannot converse in it.

Translations are regarded by Muslims as new versions of the holy book, rather than as translations in the conventional sense.

Memorizing the Qur'an

At the time of the revelation of the Qur'an, books were not readily available and so it was common for people to learn it by heart.

Committing the Qur'an to memory acted as a great aid for its preservation and any person who is able to accomplish this is known as a hafiz.

Respect

The Qur'an is treated with immense respect by Muslims because it is the sacred word of God.

While the Qur'an is recited aloud, Muslims should behave with reverence and refrain from speaking, eating or drinking, or making distracting noise.

Sunnah and Hadith

In addition to the Qur'an, the other sacred sources are the Sunnah, the practice and examples of the Prophet Muhammad's life, and the Hadith, reports of what the prophet Muhammad said or approved.

Both the Hadith and Sunnah must adhere to a strict chain of narration that ensures its authenticity, taking into account factors such as the character of people in the chain and continuity in narration. Reports that fail to meet such criteria will be disregarded.

One famous example is that of the scholar of Hadith literature, Imam Bukhari, who travelled several hundred miles on horseback to acquire a Hadith. When he arrived, he saw the man that knew the Hadith deceiving his donkey into thinking there was grain in a sack in order to induce him to move forward. Imam Bukhari promptly left without approaching the man because he was not willing to allow any individual with a questionable personality to join a chain of narration or contribute knowledge that would define the practice of the religion.

Q.2: What is polytheism and how many categories of polytheism?

Answer:

Polytheism is the belief in, or worship of, multiple gods (usually assembled in a pantheon). These gods are usually distinct and separate beings, and are often seen as similar to humans (anthropomorphic) in their personality traits, but with additional individual powers, abilities, knowledge or perceptions. Common deities found in polytheistic beliefs include a Sky god, Death deity, Mother goddess, Love goddess, Creator deity, Trickster deity, Life-death-rebirth deity and Culture hero.

Animism, Shamanism and Ancestor Worship do not necessarily contrast with polytheism, but are other perspectives on ethnic or traditional religious customs compatible (and typically co-occurring) with polytheism.

The term "polytheism" (from the Greek "polus" meaning "many" and "theos" meaning "god"), is attested in English from the 17th Century (later than "atheism" but earlier than "theism").

Types of Polytheism

Hard Polytheism:

The belief, prevalent in mythology, in many gods and goddesses which appear as distinct and independent beings, often in conflict with one another. Examples are the ancient Sumerian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman mythologies, as well as Norse, Aztec and Yoruba mythologies. Another example of hard polytheism is Euhemerism, the postulate that all gods are in fact historical humans.

Soft Polytheism:

The belief (similar to inclusive monotheism) in many gods and goddesses which are considered to be manifestations or "aspects" of a single God, rather than completely distinct entities. This view sees the gods as being subsumed into a greater whole, as in most forms of Hinduism and some New Age currents of Neo-Paganism.

Henotheism:

The devotion to a single god while accepting the existence of other gods, and without denying that others can with equal truth worship different gods. It has been called "monotheism in principle and polytheism in fact".

Monolatry (or Monolatry):

The belief in the existence of many gods, but with the consistent worship of only one deity. Unlike Henotheism, Monolatry asserts that there is only one god who is worthy of worship, though other gods are known to exist.

Kathenotheism:

The belief that there are many gods, but only one deity at a time should be worshipped, each being supreme in turn.

Ditheism (or Duotheism):

The belief in two equally powerful gods, often, but not always, with complementary properties and in constant opposition, such as God and Goddess in Wicca, or Good and Evil in Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism. The early mystical religion Gnosticism is another example of a ditheistic belief

of sorts, due to their claim that the thing worshipped as God in this world is actually an evil impostor, but that a true benevolent deity worthy of being called "God" exists beyond this world.

Misotheism:

The belief that gods exist, but that they are actually evil. The English word was coined by Thomas de Quincey in 1846. Strictly speaking, the term connotes an attitude of hatred towards the god or gods, rather than making a statement about their nature.

Dystheism:

The belief that gods exist, but that they are not wholly good, or possibly even evil (as opposed to eutheism, the belief that God exists and is wholly good). Trickster gods found in polytheistic belief systems often have a dystheistic nature, and there are various examples of arguable dystheism in the Bible.

Q.3: There are five pillars of Islam? Write down a detail note on any two?

Answer

The Five Pillars of Islam

The most important Muslim practices are the Five Pillars of Islam.

The Five Pillars of Islam are the five obligations that every Muslim must satisfy in order to live a good and responsible life according to Islam.

The Five Pillars consist of:

Shahadah: sincerely reciting the Muslim profession of faith

Salat: performing ritual prayers in the proper way five times each day

Zakat: paying alms (or charity) tax to benefit the poor and the needy

Sawm: fasting during the month of Ramadan

Hajj: pilgrimage to Mecca:

Write down a detail note on any two:

(a) Salat

Salat is the obligatory Muslim prayers, performed five times each day by Muslims. It is the second Pillar of Islam.

God ordered Muslims to pray at five set times of day:

Salat al-fajr: dawn, before sunrise

Salat al-zuhr: midday, after the sun passes its highest

Salat al-'asr: the late part of the afternoon

Salat al-maghrib: just after sunset

Salat al-'isha: between sunset and midnight

All Muslims try to do this. Muslim children as young as seven are encouraged to pray.

Prayer sets the rhythm of the day

This prayer timetable gives Muslims the pattern of their day.

In Islamic countries, the public call to prayer from the mosques sets the rhythm of the day for the entire population, including non-Muslims.

A universal Muslim ritual

The prayer ritual, which is over 1400 years old, is repeated five times a day by hundreds of millions of people all round the world.

Carrying it out is not only highly spiritual, but connects each Muslim to all others around the world, and to all those who have uttered the same words and made the same movements at different times in Islamic history.

Prayers of body, mind and soul

The set prayers are not just phrases to be spoken.

Prayer for a Muslim involves uniting mind, soul, and body in worship; so, a Muslim carrying out these prayers will perform a whole series of set movements that go with the words of the prayer.

Muslims make sure that they are in the right frame of mind before they pray; they put aside all every day cares and thoughts so that they can concentrate exclusively on God.

If a Muslim prays without the right attitude of mind, it as if they hadn't bothered to pray at all.

Woe to those who pray, but are unmindful of their prayer, or who pray only to be seen by people

Qur'an 107:4-6

Muslims don't pray for God's benefit

Muslims do not pray for the benefit of Allah.

Allah does not need human prayers because he has no needs at all.

Muslims pray because God has told them that they are to do this, and because they believe that they obtain great benefit in doing so.

Muslims pray direct to God

A Muslim prays as if standing in the presence of Allah.

In the ritual prayers each individual Muslim is in direct contact with Allah. There is no need of a priest as an intermediary. (While there is a prayer leader in the mosque - the imam - they are not a priest, simply a person who knows a great deal about Islam.)

Praying in the mosque

Muslims can pray anywhere, but it is especially good to pray with others in a mosque.

Praying together in a congregation helps Muslims to realise that all humanity is one, and all are equal in the sight of Allah.

Ritual washing

Muslims must be clean before they pray. They make sure of this by performing ritual washing, called wudhu. Mosques have washing facilities.

(b) Zakat

Zakat is the compulsory giving of a set proportion of one's wealth to charity. It is regarded as a type of worship and of self-purification. Zakat is the third Pillar of Islam.

Zakat does not refer to charitable gifts given out of kindness or generosity, but to the systematic giving of 2.5% of one's wealth each year to benefit the poor.

The benefits of Zakat, apart from helping the poor, are as follows:

Obeying God

Helping a person acknowledge that everything comes from God on loan and that we do not really own anything ourselves

And since we cannot take anything with us when we die, we need not cling to it

Acknowledging that whether we are rich or poor is God's choice

So, we should help those he has chosen to make poor

Learning self-discipline

Freeing oneself from the love of possessions and greed

Freeing oneself from the love of money

Freeing oneself from love of oneself

Behaving honestly

The 2.5% rate only applies to cash, gold and silver, and commercial items. There are other rates for farm and mining produce, and for animals.